



GridLine

There's a *Bonga* at the bottom of the road



The huge floating oil and gas production vessel *Bonga* gives the residents of Wallsend something to talk about after its trip up the Tyne. Full story on Page 4

PHOTO: NORTH NEWS

Safety tops list

SAFETY is given the highest priority by National Grid. The company is investing millions of pounds to try to ensure an injury-free workplace.

It has also set up special Safety, Health and Environment teams made up of representatives from a cross-section of the business who are dedicated to creating a safer environment.

"But our concern for improved safety performance goes beyond the company walls," said David Warner, National Grid's wayleaves head (South).

"We are working with our contractors to enhance working relationships and improve safety and we want our culture of safety to include all of our 19,000 or so grantors.

"Our own wayleave staff are always willing to assist grantors find the right solution to safety issues and our partners, the Farm Energy Centre, offers advice to help farmers and growers run a safe operation."

A current concern, said David, is the introduction into the UK of some of the latest types of combine and forage

harvesters which have received some attention in the farming press.

"These machines are much larger than anything we have seen to date, and although they may in the main be used by contractors, we felt that this was an appropriate time to reinforce the safety message."

A new safety leaflet, giving electrical clearance advice, is currently being produced by National Grid and will be distributed to grantors and agricultural contractors shortly.

Don't miss out on your payments

ARE YOU receiving the appropriate wayleave payments from National Grid?

"No grantor should ever miss out on payments due to them," said David Warner, wayleaves head (South). "So if you've just bought land crossed by National Grid power lines, then telephone the central helpline 0800 389 5113 or talk to your local wayleave officer.

"Every year we have large numbers of cheques returned because they are made out to the wrong person," said David.

"To help us save time — and ensure that payments reach the appropriate person — it would be enormously helpful if grantors could let us know about change of ownership."

Transco merger complete

NATIONAL Grid has completed its merger with Lattice Group, owner of Transco, to become the largest investor-owned utility in the UK and a leading international energy delivery company.

The new company, National Grid Transco, owns and operates the high-voltage electricity transmission network in England and Wales, and Britain's natural gas transportation system.

National Grid Company will continue to operate day-to-day as it does now.

"It will be business as usual for our grantors," said national wayleaves manager Hector Pearson.

Experts at the ready to pick up your call

NATIONAL Grid's new Wayleaves Enquiry Centre is up, running — and at your service.

The centre is based at the company's Hams Lane offices at Colehill near Birmingham and it offers a helpline — **0800 389 5113** — to give information to grantors about wayleave payments.

The launch of the centre this summer is part of the move to rationalise the wayleave function across the country and establish best practice so that everyone — National Grid and its grantors — can benefit from a more efficient and streamlined service.

But in no way does the centre replace or compete with the role of wayleave staff out in the field, says the centre's team leader Richard Walsh.

"Far from it," he said. "It is intended to complement the work of the wayleave staff — allowing them to maintain close relationships with their grantors, dealing with local issues, while the helpline staff take care of enquiries about payments or ownership changes.



Team leader Richard Walsh with Wayleaves Enquiry Centre staff, from left, Amy Jones, Janet Price and Carolyn Harvey. Missing from the picture are Martyn Blakeley and Helen Metcalfe

"Previously, grantors had to take up any payment issues with their own wayleave officer or area office. These queries were then referred to someone else to deal with. Now things are more efficient — grantors can just dial the helpline number."

The centre opened just after the new Wayleave Information

Management System (WIMS) was rolled out. This new National Grid grantor database contains up-to-date information about National Grid equipment, grantors, and where cheques should be sent to.

The Hams Lane offices also houses National Grid's planning and performance, and business

quality systems teams as well as wayleave administrative staff.

Richard is a BSc Geography graduate from Coventry University and a 1998 MA graduate in International Relations from the University of Warwick. After seeing service in the Royal Navy, working in supply and logistics, he worked

as an IT contractor at National Grid House on a number of IT projects.

He took over his present role in March this year, and his other responsibilities include dealing with the company's obligations under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991 — liaising with local utilities, local authorities,

and highways authorities — and overseeing something like 100,000 enquiries a year from third parties. Third parties may be major developers, local authorities or utilities that might need to establish the presence of National Grid equipment, and appropriate safety advice.

Getting the right helpline team together has been an important part of launching the Wayleaves Enquiry Centre. "We have been fortunate to recruit people with a wealth of varied experience, from overhead line work and wayleaves, to degree-level rural enterprise and land management training. All five helpline assistants have a genuine interest in people and the countryside," said Richard.

"Backed by such a strong and sympathetic team of people who really do understand grantors' problems, the centre is ready, willing and able to sort out payment queries quickly and efficiently."

● **0800 389 5113** operates during normal working hours. But there is an answering service. Just leave a clear message and contact number and one of the team will get back to you.

Standard laid down on doing business

NATIONAL Grid has unveiled its new framework for the way it conducts business.

It was developed, with the help of its employees in the UK and United States and more than 2,000 external people from a variety of backgrounds, including government, pressure groups, media, investors, customers and regulators.

The Framework for Responsible Business ensures that sustainable development becomes fully integrated into the company's day-to-day business, and it is centred on the goals of sustainable growth, profits with responsibility and investing in the future.

James Ross, National Grid Transco deputy chairman, says: "Laying the foundations for the future is essential if we are to be a long-term business. Delivering shareholder value is a very important part of this.

"We believe this value is based not only on the financial returns we provide, but also on the way in which we treat the environment, our employees and the communities in which we operate."

● *The Framework for Responsible Business* can be accessed on the National Grid Transco Group website — www.ngtgroup.com — which also features the company's first group-wide sustainability performance report.

This year's UK Social and Environmental Performance Report (SENSE) has also recently been published. It represents the contribution we are making in our UK operations towards maintaining our reputation as a responsible business. To view the report, visit www.nationalgrid.com/uk/social&environment/

New recruits join wayleave teams out in the field

A NUMBER of new appointments have strengthened National Grid's wayleave team, underlining the company's commitment to its grantors. Meet the new wayleave officer and wardens:



SANDRA STEVENS
Wayleave Warden (South)

There is nothing Sandra enjoys more than pulling on her wellies and getting out into the countryside.

So she is delighted to have left her desk job as a wayleave administrator and taken to the open road.

Sandra, who was born and brought up in Gloucestershire, spent many years as a senior PA to directors in the civil service and construction industry. She joined National Grid as a "temp" in wayleaves in 1994, becoming permanent wayleave administrator four years later.

"From 2000-2001, I worked as a temporary wayleave warden," said Sandra. "I loved those months and felt that working outdoors and meeting people was the perfect job combination.

"I did PR and marketing when I was a PA, so hopefully a wide range of experience will stand me in good stead for the future," she said.



PAUL GANLEY
Wayleave Warden (North)

Paul's new role has brought him down to earth.

For the past 16 years, he has worked as an overhead linesman, but is delighted to join the wayleaves team — it has been his ambition for some time.

"It's a different work culture, but one I know I am going to enjoy," he said.

Paul, 38, who has a young son, was brought up in the Midlands and after leaving school worked for six years as a thermal insulation engineer. He joined the CEGB in 1986 as a linesman, based at Drakelow transmission centre and later Bushbury substation.



ALISON WILLIAMS
Wayleave Warden (South)

Alison's experience with National Grid is standing her in good stead as a wayleave warden.

For the past five years, she has worked as section co-ordinator in Overhead Lines in the south-east, a role that has involved regular contact with wayleave staff.

"It's good to have the opportunity to work within the wayleave team, and I am looking forward to a new challenge and building and maintaining the relationships with the grantors," she said.

"I will be staying in close contact with my former colleagues within Overhead Lines as most of my new duties will be connected with overhead line work."

Kent-born Alison, 30, who is married with a 17-month-old son, joined the former CEGB on a two-year YTS scheme when she left school. After six months, she became a receptionist. Later, after a spell working in the personnel department, she was appointed section support officer at Northfleet West substation, part of the team planning for the operation and maintenance of high voltage equipment and overhead lines.



PAUL SAGE
Wayleave Officer (South)

Paul, 43, was born and brought up in Essex and has spent all his working life in the electricity industry — he joined Eastern Electricity as a trainee draughtsman at 16.

He moved to the Central Electricity Generating Board's Anglian Region in 1985 as an overhead line surveyor and public utilities street works engineer, responsible for issuing safety guidance to third parties.

"When I joined the wayleave team this summer, I found that one of my new colleagues was Brian Mead — he and I worked alongside each other when I joined Eastern Electricity all those years ago!" he said.

Paul, married with one daughter, is settling into his new role: "I am looking forward to new challenges and working with old friends."

Ship's safe passage is a huge operation

THE hull of a huge floating oil and gas production vessel made a spectacular sight as it inched its way up the River Tyne.

After a journey from South Korea, *The Bonga* was heading for the AMEC site at Wallsend near Newcastle where it is being fitted with 17,000 tonnes of complex topside production facilities.

By the summer or autumn, the 300-metre long and 50-metre wide vessel will head for offshore Nigeria as a 300,000 tonne floating production, storage and offloading (FPSO) facility complete with 311 miles of electricity cables, 31 miles of pipework, oil and gas modules and living accommodation.

It will be the culmination of around 18 months' planning by National Grid and others as *The Bonga* will be so tall it will not be able to pass under the 400kV overhead line that crosses the Tyne.

So for just a couple of minutes passage by the monster vessel, a major partnership operation has been undertaken by National Grid.

Since March 2001, it has been planning the removal of the overhead line to ensure *The Bonga* can return safely down the river with the minimum impact.

Sean Regan, National Grid's community relations manager, said: "Since we first heard about the proposed contract work, we have worked closely with AMEC to ensure that when the work is completed, *The Bonga* will have a smooth passage down river — and we

keep the lights on."

National Grid has to ensure that removal and reinstatement of all phases of the conductor on both circuits of the overhead line will have the minimum of impact on a range of locations.

A multi-disciplinary team including wayleave and health, safety and environmental staff, has been working closely with the Port of Tyne Authority, the Northumbrian Water Treatment Plant, South Tyneside Council and conservation bodies with regard to St Paul's Conservation Area.

"Long-term planning and close liaison with AMEC and others is allowing us to take a host of issues into account, including the use of public and commercial access roads, public safety, site security, and the use of a safety boat on stand-by for National Grid personnel working over the river.

"We also have to ensure the safety of staff working at the water treatment plant, and the protection of the plant equipment," said Sean.

The removal of the overhead line involves winding the conductors temporarily on to huge drums by a tension stringing technique. During the outages involved, electricity supplies will be re-routed, so there should be no loss of supply to customers.

"After many years of recession, it's great to see the Tyneside shipyards winning major contracts and huge vessels like *The Bonga* using the river," said Sean.



North West wayleave officer Dominic Toft in front of a L2 tower near Northwich in Cheshire

Towers get a revolutionary refit

A REVOLUTIONARY new procedure to reduce the potential impact of National Grid works on grantors land has been pioneered on a multi-million pound, two-and-half year overhead line refurbishment scheme being carried out by National Grid in the North West.

The procedure, to replace crossarms on L2 design towers, has been developed by contractors Balfour Beatty. It can, in some cases, eliminate the need for additional outages and temporary line diversions.

The refurbishment scheme involves about 60 kilometres of 400kV line from Daines substation near Manchester to Deeside substation in Clwyd. The line was constructed in the mid-1950s and last renovated in 1977.

The current refurbishment programme is split approximately in half, between contractors Balfour Beatty and Eve Transmission. The bulk of Eve's work takes place in 2003/2004 when it will be utilising its own methods for crossarm replacement and catenary support.

Conductors and insulators are being

replaced on 190 towers, and some steelwork is necessary to most of them. A total rebuild of some towers in Great Budworth and Comberbach in Cheshire is also needed. A small temporary diversion is ongoing and a major diversion is planned for next year.

The overhead line uses L2 design of towers and a steelwork condition survey identified that some crossarms were starting to corrode and needed replacing during the refurbishment programme.

The main bottom members of the crossarms meet in the centre of the tower body and form an integral part of the structure.

Whenever these have had to be changed in the past both circuits have been removed to maintain the stability of the tower — which has meant more outages, diversions and greater inconvenience to grantors.

Balfour Beatty's contracts manager Peter Taylor said that Balfour Beatty Power Networks took a fresh look at the problem.

"As a result, we have developed a

method of inserting temporary reinforcing bars within the tower body to take the load from the adjacent circuit conductors while the crossarm is removed. To enable the adjacent circuit to stay live, a lifting derrick was designed to fit on the face of the tower so there would not be any infringements of electrical safety clearances."

Balfour Beatty's training school line at Derby includes an L2 tower so several trials were undertaken last winter to prove the procedure could be done safely.

In the meantime, BBPN Engineering Department checked that the tower members, permanent and temporary, would not be overloaded when the procedure is used on lines in service.

"National Grid's project staff attended demonstrations of the operation in Derby, reviewed the calculations and gave the go-ahead for the procedure to be used for the first time in this year's programme of work," said Peter.

The refurbishment scheme started in May, and by the end of August, 24 crossarms had been changed on eight

towers with the adjacent live circuit left in situ.

Such a major project is keeping North West wayleave officer Dominic Toft pretty busy, although he is being assisted by fellow officers John Griffin, Martin Eagles and Alan Whitmore.

"We are liaising with nearly 300 grantors affected by the work," said Dominic. "The line crosses farms, a private housing estate at Kingsley, Heyrose golf course, Chester Zoo, three motorways, several rail crossings, canals and navigable rivers, a waste reclamation site, steel works, nurseries, pony paddocks — the list goes on.

"We are also working in some very environmentally-sensitive areas which are habitats for the protected great crested newt. There has been an on-going ecological survey since last November and we have had to undertake a number of special measures along the way to protect their habitats and other wildlife."

The refurbishment scheme is on target for completion by the end of 2004.



The Bonga moving up the Tyne

PHOTO: NORTH NEWS

Back on the straight and narrow...

THE first of three new supergrid transformers was safely delivered to National Grid's Rochdale substation at the end of September.

It replaces equipment that has been in service for almost 40 years and forms part of a major refurbishment of Rochdale substation to reinforce security of supply and help meet rising demand in the North West region.

The transformer was built in Edinburgh by VA Tech and weighs in at about 285 tonnes. Getting it to site provided a number of problems for the National Grid team led by project engineer Andrew Connolly.

Modifications to the access road after the development of a housing estate in front of the substation meant delivery of such a wide and heavy load was virtually impossible. But close collaboration with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council and the community helped isolate the problem and identify a solution.

"The road leading into the substation used to be a classic, Roman-type road — nice and straight," said Andrew. "When the estate was built, Rochdale council made traffic calming changes to the road layout by introducing a sharp left turn into the estate.

"As a result, access to the substation for any vehicle larger than a standard lorry was made difficult and quite out of the question for an abnormal load of over 32 metres in length and weighing nearly 300 tonnes!"

National Grid brought in independent transport consultants Wynns to explore the options. Initially, the council wanted a temporary solution. "I argued against this because we had more transformers arriving in the future and, of course, if there was an unplanned incident on site, how would we move the equipment on and off site?" said Andrew.

"After working closely with our communications team, our wayleave officers

and the council, we got the go-ahead to reinstate the original road — with certain provisos."

The permanent solution involved bollards which can be lowered for access, block paving on an island and planters to make sure motorists spot the junction easily.

The road was completed in early September — just in time for the delivery of a 180,000-litre interceptor tank. At the end of the month, the 240MVA transformer completed its seven-day journey from the manufacturers, first by sea to Liverpool Docks and then by road to the substation.

Andrew said: "With electricity demand in the area predicted to continue rising, we decided to replace the old transformer with a 240MVA unit which would double the capacity. Because the substation is close to local housing, including the recent construction of 99 new properties on land directly in front of the site, the new equipment has been designed to be the quietest on the National Grid system.

"We are currently completing some environmental work and have installed a new oil interceptor for the transformers together with a new building to house two further auxiliary transformers.

"In 2004 another two supergrid transformers at Rochdale will be replaced with larger 240MVA units and all of them will be housed in sound enclosures further reducing noise levels on site.

"Bringing this type of equipment into a substation like Rochdale, which is in a built-up residential area, is bound to cause a certain amount of inconvenience," said Andrew.

"The level of co-operation we have received from the local community, particularly the residents of Clay Lane, has been fantastic and is greatly appreciated."



Transport trio... project engineer Andrew Connolly, centre, with project service delivery engineers Chris Sonley, left, and Brian Burrow.



The transformer arrives at Rochdale as the huge load inches its way to site



Flashback to Matthew Staley, John Kington and Percy Claridge receiving the award from English Nature director Dr Andy Brown

Line revamp is completed ahead of schedule

A COMPLEX overhead line refurbishment programme in a highly environmentally sensitive part of southern England has been completed ahead of schedule.

During the project, which started in August 1999, National Grid and its contractors Eve Transmission were honoured by English Nature, the agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and natural features throughout England.

National Grid and Eve Transmission were jointly awarded the English Nature SSSI Award 2000 in recognition of their "brilliant" efforts at protecting the environment at Dungeness, Kent, which is one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in Europe.

Dungeness is one of the best examples of shingle beach in the world. The area around Dungeness stretching to Lydd is a Special Area of Conservation which is of international importance, falling under the jurisdiction of the European Courts rather than British.

This caused problems at the start of the refurbishment, as the legislation was recent and there was some uncertainty as to how to

implement it. The whole refurbishment involved 131 towers and spans along 44 kilometres of the 400kV line from Dungeness in Kent to Ninfield in East Sussex.

Originally, it was intended to change three full towers and 100 tonnes of minor steelwork because of damage caused by the harsh weather conditions. However, in the end 24 towers and considerably more steelwork had to be replaced.

For most of 2001 a temporary line of 14 towers (and 15 spans) had to be erected to maintain supplies along the south coast as work progressed.

Wayleave officer Percy Claridge said that a close relationship with English Nature was vital to ensure the overall success of the project.

"Although National Grid had stated its intentions to protect the environment, English Nature was understandably concerned at the prospect of heavy plant, 160-tonne cranes, materials and equipment coming on to the site, driving over and damaging the shingle and the lichen on that shingle.

"English Nature tells us that this lichen can take thousands of years to form. It finds the conditions more favourable for its formation under the shade of broom plants and National Grid is helping English Nature in research to hasten the recolonisation of broom in areas which have been disturbed over the past 100 years or so."

Regular meetings were held and English Nature's conservation officer Brian Banks gave his time and expertise to nurture the relationship.

There was full co-operation from Eve Transmission. Percy and Eve's site engineer, Matthew Staley, policed the requirements ensuring that both National Grid and Eve personnel were fully aware of the environmental issues associated with the area.

The area in question is owned by the MOD, numerous charities, British Energy and the RSPB, which supported the English Nature SSSI Award.

Tight contest to be kings of the plough



Heavy going... James Witty during the reversible ploughing competition at the British National Championships

HEAVY rain on the first day of the 52nd British National Ploughing Championships in South Yorkshire may have kept some visitors away... but it did nothing to affect the ploughing skills of more than 250 competitors.

"In fact, the quality of ploughing was outstanding," said event organiser Ken Chappell, executive director of the Society of Ploughmen.

"I think the cancellation of the 2001 event due to foot and mouth disease sharpened the competitors' appetites — the tight scoring in some of the classes certainly seemed to suggest this."

Better weather on day two of the championships at Wilsic, near Doncaster, attracted more spectators and there was a total attendance for the two days of almost 11,000. National Grid was one of the main sponsors again, along with Total Butler, Goodyear and Firestone.

"Without their help, it would be a hard job staging these championships every year," said Ken.

Welsh tractor and horse ploughmen performed well at the championships. Nigel Vickers from Whitchurch, North Wales, became the first Welshman to win the



Wayleave head north Alan Naylor congratulates the two ploughing champions, James Witty, left, and Nigel Vickers, at the British National Ploughing Championships

British National Conventional Ploughing Championships since 1987. Nigel beat Yorkshireman David Chappell from Hatfield into second place by three points. Third, and only a point behind, was Adrian Brewer from Wadebridge, Cornwall.

David, as the top scoring Englishman, will now

represent England in the Conventional Ploughing Championship at the 2003 World Ploughing Contest in Canada. He will be partnered by fellow Yorkshireman James Witty of East Lutton, Malton, who took first place in the reversible contest, winning the National Grid Trophy for the third time.

James pushed another Yorkshireman — John Hill — into second place, while his brother Simon Witty finished third. John, from Hoylandswaine, a former triple world ploughing champion and European reversible champion, and Simon, also a former European reversible champion, will represent England at the 2003 European Reversible Ploughing Championship.

The second Welsh triumph at Wilsic was in the horse ploughing classes when Jim Elliot from Montgomery won both the general purpose and oat seed furrow classes. Fellow Welshman Jim Reynolds of Ceredigion, was runner-up. There was further triumph for Wales in the National Young Farmers Conventional Ploughing Championship when Dewi Elfed Jones of Corwen, Denbighshire, romped to victory.

● For full results, visit www.ploughmen.co.uk

Backing extends to the grass roots

NATIONAL Grid also supports ploughing competitions at local level.

This year, it once again contributed sponsorship for three matches run in the Midlands by the Lichfield and South Staff Districts of the Staffordshire and Birmingham Agricultural Society and the Chaddesley Corbett District Farmers' Club.

National Grid wayleave officer Richard Evans was at the South Staffs District match to present the National Grid Perpetual Cup to the main class winner David Whitehouse from Lawnhead near Stafford.

The match was held, courtesy of National Grid grantors AS, PAC and JM Monckton, at Stretton Hall, Stretton.



Richard Evans presents the National Grid Perpetual Cup to David Whitehouse



David Whitehouse at the South Staffs District match



Tony Johnson tests his restored International B414 tractor

Vintage tractor works the land once more

ONE of the competitors at the Chaddesley Corbett ploughing match was National Grid's own Tony Johnson.

Tony, a power system engineer in Network Design, Coventry, was competing with his vintage International B414 tractor which he rebuilt himself.

He bought the tractor, first registered in 1962, in 1999 and spent three years working on it during his spare time.

"When I acquired the tractor, it was in poor condition and fitted with a loader and cab. A lot of work was required, including a new clutch, wheel bearings, oil seals, brakes, electrical fittings and filters. Several coats of paint and a new set of tyres finished off the

job. At one point I was up at 2.30am trying to fit it back together," he said.

Tony's car stayed outside his home in the village of Alvechurch near Redditch while the tractor monopolised the garage. He also has another tractor — a Ferguson TE20.

"I have always lived in the country, so I enjoy all things agricultural," he said. "Originally, I was interested in classic cars, but when their prices became prohibitive, I turned to a tractor restoration."

Tony says that although he wasn't a top scorer in the vintage hydraulic class at the Chaddesley Corbett match, it was just good to take part and made his efforts worthwhile.



Wayleave warden Sandra Stevens with Michael Stratton, from Haywards Farm, Theale, on the National Grid stand at the Berkshire Show, held in Newbury.



Wayleave officer Richard Evans, right, chats with grantor Mike Spuffard, from New Covert, Jeffreyton, at the Pembroke County Show, held in Haverfordwest



Wayleave administrator Mary Lawson with Ronald and Dorothy Wagstaff, from Parkstone, Three Legged Cross, at the Berkshire Show

Thousands make it a year to savour

ONE of the best years yet... that's National Grid's verdict on the 2002 agricultural relations programme, which took in 16 venues in England and Wales.

Thanks to an enthusiastic response from grantors determined to put the foot and mouth crisis well and truly behind them, we were able to welcome more than 6,200 grantors and their guests to the various agricultural shows.

And community relations manager Sean Regan said: "We are delighted to report that 3,000 have joined our new and exclusive National Grid Grantors' Club. This is a fantastic response, which I think highlights the strong relationship the company enjoys with its partners in the countryside.

"We really missed meeting our grantors in

2001 when we had to cancel 12 events, but I think we have made up for it this time. With such a positive response to the launch of the Grantors' Club, we look forward to welcoming more members and enjoying various club events in the future."

National Grid's agricultural relations programme was launched in 1996 to give the company an opportunity to demonstrate its working relationship with the rural community.

The programme kicked off at the Devon Show, at Exeter in May, and went on to travel thousands of miles around the country, visiting some of the country's highest profile shows. It ended at the National Ploughing Championships, in Doncaster in October.



GridCom acquisition manager John Reid at the Berkshire Show with Michael Besant and Julia Radford, from Ufton Nervest, near Reading



Grantor George Mathias, from Summertown Carew, near Tenby, with Linda Curphey, left, and Sue Chamberlain at Pembroke County Show

Draw winners on a roll with new set of wheels

JOINING our new Grantors' Club proved rewarding for Robert and Julie Nickols, from Lincolnshire — they have won an all-terrain vehicle in the club's first prize draw.

The couple's names were automatically entered into the draw when they signed up at the Lincolnshire Show in June.

And they were first out of the hat after the Newbury Show in September.

Their prize was a smart 425cc Polarais Magnum 6x6 all-terrain vehicle, which they received when they were our guests at the National Ploughing Championships, held near Doncaster, along with their children Joshua, nine, and six-year-old Amber.

The Nickols family run a 1,000-acre arable farm at Little Hale Fen, near Sleaford. The farm comprises mainly seed crops, of which a proportion is processed in the on-farm seed dressing plant run by Enterprise/NB. Also grown are sugar beet and onions.

The farm has been in the family for four generations. Robert, 39, works with his two uncles, David and Arthur, cousin Peter and father John.



Wayleave head north Alan Naylor, left, with prizewinners Robert and Julie Nickols and their children Joshua and Amber

Julie, also 39, is a secretary for Beever Feeds, a local company, supplying animal feed supplements and health care.

"We were really delighted to win the vehicle," said Robert. "We have one quad bike, but it is permanently attached to the slug pelleter, so some extra wheels will come in very handy."

Julie said: "National Grid gave us a really warm welcome at Doncaster. We were well looked after and had a great day."

Garden is a learning wonderland

A SHOW garden, partly sponsored by National Grid, has given schools the answer to the question of how to transform barren playgrounds into stimulating green spaces.

The Growing Schools Garden, also supported by the Department for Education and Skills, was featured at the Hampton Court Flower Show — the world's largest annual flower show.

It demonstrated the best school ground designs and was described by Schools Minister, Baroness Catherine Ashton, as a "wonderful illustration of outdoor learning".

The garden featured a butterfly and bee garden to attract wildlife, a storytelling/quiet area for literacy hour, a demonstration of alternative energy sources, a weather station, a raised vegetable bed, a wormery and an interactive music area.

It was launched by pupils from Coombes Infant School, in Reading, one of the 21 schools from around the country that were



A dance is performed at the garden's launch

involved in the development of the garden's features, artwork or plant rearing.

Among the schools were a number well known to National Grid. Palatine Special School, in Worthing, West Sussex, was a recent winner of a National Grid Community 21 Award and three other schools — Chaddesley Corbett Primary School and St John's CE First School, both from Kidderminster; and Windmill First School, Stourport — have all visited National Grid's environmental education centre at Bishops Wood in Worcestershire.

Experienced garden designer Claire Whitehouse was the creator, bringing together the ideas and concepts from the 21 schools to motivate and inspire all schools, whatever their situation, budget or resources.

National Grid's UK chief executive Steve Holliday said the company was proud to sponsor the garden, which he described as a showcase for schools.

● The Growing Schools Garden website is at www.schoolsgarden.org.uk

National Grid has 19,000 grantors involved in a wide range of activities. Each issue, *GridLine* takes a closer look at what they do. This time around, the focus is on Gravesend and Northfleet Football Club.

Fleet on the crest of a wave

THE Fleet are acclimatising to the choppy waters of the Nationwide Conference.

The newly-promoted part-timers have defied an injury crisis to consolidate their new status, ready to build on 2½ years of success that has brought six trophies.

The progress is no surprise to commercial director Rob Grindley. "The club has moved from treading water in the lower leagues to the brink of Football League status because, under chairman Brian Kilcullen, it is now run as a business. We have got the foundations right and we are now building on them."

The players may be semi-professionals, but the rest of the club is run on strictly professional lines.

"All our coaches are ex-pros. Manager Andy Ford has brought in dieticians,

Support on the quiet

National Grid is what Rob Grindley calls "a quiet sponsor" of Gravesend and Northfleet FC. The company sponsors five matches a season in return for eight hospitality tickets a match and has two ground advertising boards.

physios and fitness trainers. Our players are very, very fit and dedicated."

The Stonebridge Road ground itself is a hidden gem, surrounded by light industrial premises... and overlooked by National Grid's tower ZR6.

Externally, there is no clue what a cracking ground it is... but step through the entrance gate and its terracing and seating combine to make a red and white feast. The pitch — replaced in 2001 — is like a billiard table.

It took £150,000 to achieve all this, with heavy help from the Football Foundation, and if the club looks like moving into the Football League the same may need to be spent again.



Rob Grindley... 'We have got the foundations right and we are now building on them'

Not that this worries Rob, who thinks he is in the perfect job because it combines his advertising and printing background with a love of football.

Everything is going the right way:

- the first team squad has been increased to 26 players
 - a Junior Fleet club for young fans has been launched to make it cheaper for them to watch and get interested in football. They also get sports shop and leisure centre discount, and Christmas and birthday cards from the players
 - there are 13 other teams, from seven years old and upwards, including a PASE scheme team of 16 to 19-year-olds who are not only trained in soccer but undergo academic studies, too.
- "This is great for us, because, obviously, we have built-in progression," said Rob. "Three first team members have already graduated from the PASE scheme and won themselves contracts.

"It has taken us 2½ years, but the club is now in a better financial and community position than it ever has been."

Rob has tested his commercial arrangements against no less a club than Arsenal. "I went to Highbury to find out what they did on the promotional and sponsorship side. Everything they do, we have in place, but on a smaller scale. We are doing the right thing."

The rise and rise of Gravesend FC

1946: club formed, lease agreed on Stonebridge Road ground, elected to the Southern League.

1947-52: won Kent Senior Cup twice, but seesawing results in the Southern League saw them reach sixth place, but then have to apply for re-election in '52.

1953/54: first club in Kent, and one of the first in the country, to install floodlights, leading to friendlies against Football League and foreign sides.

1954/55: the club take 20 games to chalk up a win... but then began an Arsenal connection that was to turn everything round. Jimmy Logie arrived after a glorious career with the Gunners, swiftly followed by Arsenal-connected Lionel Smith as manager. After bottom place in '55, the club ended up 12th the following season, and fifth in 1956/57.

1957-58: great season, with 135 goals scored, to win the Southern League title and reach the final of the league's cup.

1959-63: the Fleet slipped from runner's-up in 1959-60 to just avoiding relegation the following season, the first for the expanding Southern League. The Logie/Smith era was over and relegation ultimately arrived in '63. Ironically, Fleet managed a record FA Cup run, reaching

the fourth round against Sunderland.

1963-69: years of struggle at the wrong end of Southern League Division One. In 1967, after finishing 21st out of 24, the manager and board of directors resigned and no players were retained. Locals rallied round, but the club limped along until it won the Kent Floodlight Cup.

1970/71: Alf Ackerman put together an experienced side to take them into the Premier in their silver jubilee year, only for top players to be poached pre-season. Fleet went back into what was now the Southern Division.

1972-76: Fleet climbed back into the Premier in '74/75, finishing sixth.

1977-94: Fleet won a coveted spot in the new Alliance League only to fall back into the Southern League Premier and then the Southern Division, before bobbing down and up between the two leagues until winning the SD title.

1995-97: Fleet steadied the ship in the SLP and it took Aston Villa to knock them out of the FA Cup in the third round in 1996. The club switched to the ICIS League Premier in May 1997.

1997: the Kilcullen/Ford era begins. Promotion to the Conference is won in 2002.

Pupils treated to thank-you trip

PUPILS from a Hertfordshire school were National Grid's VIP guests at its environmental education centre at Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

The 11-year-olds from Bushey Hall School, at Bushey, were treated to an evening of environmental activities in recognition of the school's co-operation during an underground cable project that cut across its playing fields.

The work to provide a 2½-mile 25kV connection for Railtrack from Elstree substation to Bushey Railway Station started in October 2000 and was completed recently.

National Grid project manager Graeme Bell said: "It is great to say thanks in a practical way to the school for its assistance in the difficult and essential cable works. This work was made considerably more straightforward by the co-operation we received from Bushey Hall School."



Pupils from Bushey Hall School study pond life

Site services manager Alan Day liaised with the National Grid team, particularly wayleave officer Andrew Carpenter and wayleave warden Lucy Williams. "National Grid has been absolutely brilliant," he said. "We have maintained a close working relationship with the company which has bent over backwards to ensure the minimum of disruption."

Riders benefit from neighbourly gesture!

NATIONAL Grid has given a boost to one of the UK's oldest and smallest Riding for the Disabled Association groups.

It donated £400 to subsidise riding sessions at Eston equitation centre, owned by grantors John and Elly Thompson, near Middlesbrough.

Wayleave officer Mike Ford said: "We felt it was a fitting way to thank the local riding community on Teesside, where work is under way on the second Yorkshire line."

Two towers are being erected on John's land, while another two are being dismantled.

Olga Maude, the chairman of the RDA's Teesside Group, said: "We started 30 years ago and take about 20 children to the equestrian centre each week. The children range in age from five to 10 and have a wide variety of physical or mental handicaps. It's hard to adequately describe the benefit of their riding sessions — they absolutely love them."



RDA secretary Mary Talbot leads Jay Warnes on Snoopy

Andrew brings down power bills

A VISIT by FEC's Andrew Kneeshaw has paid off for a long-established Nottinghamshire company that grows and packs vegetables.

The large storage and packing facility at Strawson Ltd's main site in Bilsthorpe has an electricity bill topping £100,000 a year.

But thanks to Andrew, it is now expected to show annual savings of between £5,000 and £10,000.

Andrew was invited to the site to advise on energy efficiency as part of the Government's Efficiency Best Practice Programme. He was welcomed by Jake Rice, the storage manager.

"One thing that soon came to light was that the electricity supply voltage was on the high side," said Andrew. "Recorded voltage was often over 250v and this led to the tripping of the computer UPS (uninterruptible power supply) and premature blowing of light bulbs.

"Higher voltage also has an effect on energy use. Work in the retail trade has shown that for every one per cent above the minimum voltage required, energy consumption will be as much as two per cent higher. Businesses that use a large amount of motor or lighting load over long periods can benefit from reducing voltage.

"With the Bilsthorpe site using many motors for refrigeration, cooling and



Jake makes some adjustments to help save money

conveying, voltage reduction was highly applicable."

Andrew said the site had its own transformer so it was technically simple to lower the voltage by adjusting the transformer "tappings". An authorised high-voltage contractor was employed to carry out this work.

Andrew said: "It is quite acceptable for voltages to be reduced to 217v and still be within statutory limits."

Jake said the outcome of Andrew's visit highlighted the value of the energy assessment. "It is interesting that such a small adjustment can have such an enormous impact."

For sites without their own transformer, an additional voltage reduction "auto-transformer" can be installed. Although this is more expensive, it can still be cost effective for intensive energy users.

- Call the Action Energy helpline — 0800 58 57 94 — for information about the Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme.

Fond memories of Queen Mother

The Queen Mother's death was particularly poignant for staff at the Farm Energy Centre (FEC) in Warwickshire, which she opened 35 years ago.

The unit, known then as the Electro Agricultural Centre and part of the Electricity Council — was set up to help develop energy technologies for farmers and growers.

Today, as the Farm Energy Centre, it is owned and run by a management group led by directors Stephen Bettany and Andrew Kneeshaw.

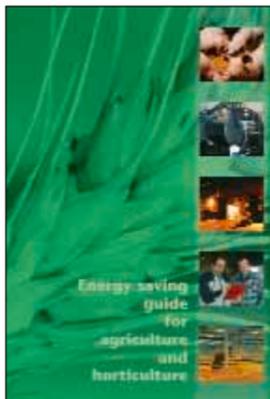
"Our customer base has changed from mainly electricity utilities, to farmers, Government agencies, agricultural equipment manufacturers and the levy-funded development councils," said Andrew.

"We still have major contracts with leading energy utilities like National Grid, SWEB, SEEBord and Northern Ireland Electricity, but we have much more diverse interests with research funded by the Horticultural Development Council, energy broking services offered through the National Farmers Union and energy efficiency advice services funded by the Government's Action Energy Programme."

- For further information about the FEC, or any of the issues highlighted on these pages, please contact the FEC, NAC, Stoneleigh, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LS. Tel 024 7669 6512 or e-mail info@farmenergy.com. Use the same numbers to obtain a list of FEC publications, including technical guides, and technical notes to help farmers and growers deal with electrical applications.



Booklet is an energy-saver



THERE is good news for small and medium-sized companies seeking to reduce energy use.

A new booklet — *Energy saving guide for agriculture and horticulture* — has been prepared by Farm Energy under contract to BRE's Sustainable Energy Centre and is available free under the Action Energy initiative.

The guide highlights key areas to help companies develop energy reduction plans. It is designed to help businesses check what they are paying for energy, find out how it is being used and if it is being wasted. It can also produce savings and help the environment through good energy management.

- Copies of the guide (Good Practice Guide 323) are available by phoning 0800 58 57 94 or by ordering on the internet site: www.actionenergy.org.uk

Into Action...

THE Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme has been renamed Action Energy — and all the support services such as design advice, telephone helpline, and site visits are now available by contacting one telephone number: 0800 58 57 94.

New to the programme is a scheme from the Carbon Trust for Energy Loans to help small and medium-sized companies practise energy efficiency. Loans of between £5,000 and £50,000 are available to companies in England and Wales to help buy equipment that will give energy savings. Each project will be assessed on its technical merits.

Guide to playing it safe

AMONG the many services offered by the Farm Energy Centre is safety advice to help farmers and growers run a safe operation.

ELECTRICITY and electrical equipment is safe when used properly.

However, there can be serious consequences if systems are not of the right type, or not correctly installed and maintained.

The Health and Safety Executive said that between 1986/87 and 1996/97, 47 people were killed through contact with electricity or an electrical discharge in agriculture, horticulture and forestry — and about two-thirds of the incidents involved overhead lines. All could have been avoided.

The Farm Energy Centre is committed to ensuring safety is given the highest priority and its publication *Safe Use of Electricity* is a reader-friendly, comprehensive and useful guide to staying safe — whether it involves wiring a 13amp plug or keeping the proper distance from overhead cables.

"Few staff working in UK agriculture have



Avoid danger when working under power lines

had training on the electrical equipment they use every day," said Stephen Bettany.

"The purpose of the booklet is to highlight hazards which arise from bad practice and to provide practical guidelines on the safe use of electricity on the farm and in horticulture.

"It not only identifies the dangers but also

advises on what to do should an accident occur. The booklet is **available free** to all National Grid grantors, and is part of a safety pack containing other useful HSE material.

"Accidents involving electricity often result in serious injuries, as the HSE statistics show, and several people die every year as a result of not following certain precautions. So don't put off getting our safety pack.

"An hour spent looking through the booklet could save your, or someone else's life."

- Act now! — contact Peter Smith at the FEC and order your pack.

STOP PRESS

National Grid is currently working with the Farm Energy Centre to develop a new safety campaign targeting grantors.

"We will also be highlighting safety matters in future issues of *GridLine* to ensure our grantors are kept well informed about safety," said National Grid's Sean Regan.

So watch this space!

Put a little sun into your life

RADIANT heat from the sun can still warm you even if the air temperature is close to freezing point.

That's why quartz halogen heaters — which operate in the same way — are ideal for heating large or draughty areas.

That's the advice from FEC director Stephen Bettany who said that using quartz heaters is often the most cost-effective solution in large uninsulated buildings which would otherwise be too expensive to heat.

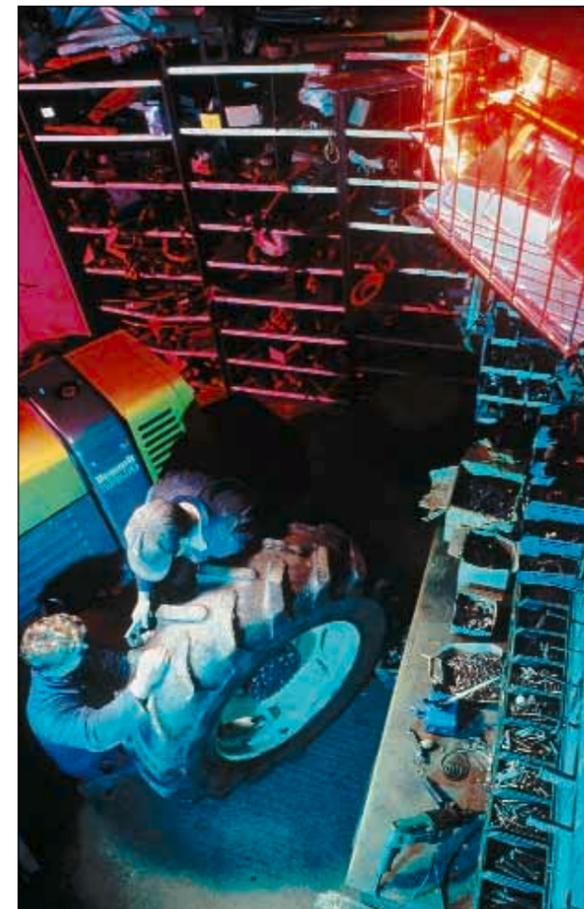
The heaters operate at the short wave end of the electromagnetic spectrum, which means heat is absorbed only when it comes into contact with people, or items, that require it. Very little is absorbed by the air.

"Because the heat is instant, the heaters are ideal for buildings that are used intermittently, such as farm workshops, grading lines, stables, churches and staff rooms," said Stephen.

"The heaters have been used successfully in milking parlours as one of the few effective methods."

The FEC has a booklet *Quartz Heaters for Farmers and Growers*, **available free** to National Grid grantors that explains how the heaters operate and suitable applications for them.

- Make sure your heater has been tested and approved for electrical safety (BS 3456 or IEC 335-1) and has been properly installed — in an appropriate area.



Wall-mounted quartz halogen heater doing its job



Better safe than slurry

If you are spreading dirty water or slurry, you must keep well clear of overhead lines.

Slurry is an even better conductor of electricity than water. If a jet of water or slurry touches an overhead line there is a serious risk that electricity will be conducted back down through the machinery, which could kill or injure anyone in the vicinity.

The safe distance is the maximum throw of the liquid from the machine plus an allowance for drift and it's a good idea to mark this in fields that carry overhead lines.

If you are employing contractors to do the work, make sure you warn them of any lines because you could be held responsible if an accident occurs.



ABOVE: Ashley Laking heads for victory; BELOW LEFT: runner-up Brendan Breen; BELOW RIGHT: third-placed Tim Ives

It's just the perfect day for Ashley

AS EVERY golfer knows, there are days when you pick up a club... and everything goes just right!

It was certainly one of those days for Ashley Laking when he took part in the final of the National Grid Grantors Club golf tournament at Henley Golf and Country Club, at Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire.

Ashley, 41, notched up 43 points, beating Brendan Breen of Whetstone, London, into second place. Tim Ives of Essex came third.

Ashley had not been confident on the day. "I hadn't played for weeks," he said. "But I had a great start, steady middle, and exceptional end!

"The chaps I was playing with were playing really well, which certainly helped the concentration. It was just a very relaxing and enjoyable day."

Ashley, who has a handicap of eight, has managed the

golfing side of the Foxhills Club and Resort at Ottershaw, in Surrey, for the past 12 years. He is responsible for the courses, golf services, golf shop and corporate events. But although he spends a great deal of time in the golfing world, he says he doesn't have a chance to play very often. "It's more fun and relaxing playing away from Foxhills," he said.

Brought up in South Wales, he studied hotel and catering after leaving school. "I started to play golf at school," he said. "My comprehensive encouraged us to take an interest in golf, and invited a golf professional along to teach us, so I actually learned to play on the school rugby pitch!

"The first club I joined was the Monmouthshire Golf Club — someone at the tournament dinner is a member of the same club and recognised my name from years ago. Small world!"

Ashley and his wife Julie have three young children. But he said none had so far shown the slightest interest in picking up a golf club.

Contacts

For further information please contact your local wayleave teams on:

North West: 0161 776 0706

North East: 0113 290 8236

South: 01268 642091

Wayleave payments

▼ For information on wayleave payments telephone the payments helpline on **0800 389 5113**.

Emergencies

▼ Emergency calls to report pylon damage to National Grid can be made on **0800 404090**. Make a note of the tower's number — found just below the property plate — to help crews locate it.

Electric and magnetic fields

▼ For information on electric and magnetic fields, ring the EMF information line **08457 023270** (local call rate).



● Quentin Elston, above left, clerk to the trustees of St John's Hospital almshouse at Chapel Court, Bath, won the longest drive competition and Lancashire farmer Henry Hesketh, right, scooped the nearest the pin prize.