



Martin Westrick and Richard Brown with their radio mast.

Team rises to the challenge



Richard, Dave and Tony contend with 'bomb disposal'.



The Large Generators team!



Catapulted to success: Iain Lister (left) with Dave Wozny, Richard Cotton, Richard Brown and Tony Brindle

Martin and I had wanted to do the GEC Challenge for a few years – we thought it would be good for our development and a bit of fun, too.

We arrived on the Friday to be met by a series of activities sponsored by Oxfam. We were a team of engineers carrying out relief work. We were set six tasks including building a shelter, water tanks and food stores with materials that Oxfam's own engineers would use in the field. Oh, and we also had to retrieve our dinner from the middle of a lake!

After exchanging our Mazoomas for US dollars, we were allowed to buy materials. Several hours later, there we were in a makeshift shelter, sleeping out next to the M6. I never realised the motorway was so busy – even at 3 o'clock in the morning.

On the Saturday and Sunday we had to undertake 12 different exercises at various sites, and it was up to you how many you could fit in.

The hardest was probably "bomb disposal", where you had to retrieve a small cup with carbide in it which was sitting on a film of water, in a paint tin, inside a barrel. Sounds easy...except that we had to do it from a distance using

They came from near and far – 72 teams from GEC companies throughout the country descended on Trentham Gardens in Stoke to compete in the 1994 GEC Challenge. Here, Large Generators' team leader Iain Lister describes how, together with team-mates Martin Westrick, Richard Cotton, Richard Brown, Anthony Brindle and Dave Wozny, he got on during a weekend of exercises organised by the GEC Management College at Dunchurch.

bamboo canes, string and mirrors. One false move...the carbide would react with the water...and BOOM!

Another precarious exercise was to build a radio mast out of small bamboo canes and string which had to stretch 30 feet into the sky. Not easy on a windy day.

We had until Sunday lunchtime to complete the 12 exercises, and in the afternoon everyone was given a separate challenge. We had to project a tennis ball as far as possible, and our catapult design sent it about 30 metres. We did well on this and came second – our greatest success.

Overall we came joint 50th in the competition, but only a few points separated most of the teams so we were

about average. We did work well as a team, which was great considering we were all from separate departments. This has carried over to our jobs here, and my experience as team leader has made me more confident in managing my own work.

We all thoroughly enjoyed the weekend. The exercises were fun and other teams were willing to help each other. There was a great atmosphere.

We would all like to do it again next year, but I think we should learn from GPT Liverpool's example. They entered nine teams and wiped the floor with everyone. We all reckoned they had spent ages training for it, so our motto next year is "Practice Makes Perfect".