



Bills for electricity and gas to be reduced again

IT'S DOUBLE GOOD NEWS

MANWEB has announced double good news for householders and small businesses in north west England and north Wales – bills for electricity and gas are being reduced again.

Manweb's one million domestic customers on the standard electricity rate will see their prices fall to the lowest level since 1974 with the average bill now £264.89. This is the sixth consecutive price reduction since Manweb became part of the ScottishPower group in October 1995, with a cut in real terms of £61, for an average bill, since the take-over.

Domestic mains gas customers who pay by monthly Direct Debit will also enjoy a reduction in prices, bringing the average bill down to £265.86. An extra price reduction for gas prepayment meter users means additional savings of £15.26 for them, with an average bill of £327.19, equivalent to 17 days worth of free gas.

Following the opening of the energy markets to competition, more than 180,000 householders across the region have signed up for Manweb's exciting new Gas & Electricity Offer, with one energy statement, one payment and one point of contact.

Electricity prices for small business customers are also reduced by almost one per cent. On average, a small business customer's electricity bill has dropped by 28.9 per cent or £390 in the past three and a half years in real terms.



*As elections for the new National Assembly take place on May 6, with the Queen officially opening the Assembly on May 26, Manweb has published a new document about the company's economic and cultural contribution to Wales, called *Working in Wales*. In March, following a briefing for Plaid Cymru at Aberystwyth, Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels hosted a Business Breakfast at the Welsh Labour Party in Llandudno. The Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats have also been offered briefings about the company. Bill is pictured above with Welsh Secretary Alun Michael and Welsh Office Minister Peter Hain at Llandudno.*

Gas prices for small businesses have also fallen, with customers paying by monthly Direct Debit saving an additional £6 a year – equal to a massive saving of up to £41.95 a year compared to British Gas. Bill Landels, Managing Director of Manweb, said: "This

double bill of good news is further evidence of the way we are giving outstanding value for money.

Customers are able to make substantial savings with Manweb, the company they know and trust."

Year 2K video coming soon

A YEAR 2K video has been produced to raise staff awareness of the Millennium Bug issues. Watch out for the video over the coming weeks during your team briefing.

Manweb, in addition to its own displays, is assisting Action 2000 in the Business Connections 99 Conference being held at the Burtonwood Arena, Warrington on April 27-28. This joint initiative

comprises hosting three workshops, at the start of Action 2000's National Programme, on the practical issues in dealing with the Millennium Bug, aimed at small businesses with a compliance project who would benefit from learning the experiences of similar businesses.

Manweb's new Network Management System, a Y2K compliance project, successfully

passed its factory tests at Syseca's works on March 10 and site installation at both Prenton and Wrexham is well on track for system commissioning on May 3.

ScottishPower is among the leading group of electricity and gas companies in preparedness to beat the Millennium Bug, according to an independent survey by OFFER and Ofgas. They said: "Both sectors are



making good progress towards full compliance". ScottishPower scored 87 points in the UK electricity assessment programme compared with an average of 82 points.

Helping staff with Welsh rare bits...

Astron moves to new site

ASTRON, the information logistics company which provides a design and print service to Manweb, has moved to a new location in Warrington.

Previously sited at Queensferry, Astron's North West offices are now at 212 Europa Boulevard, Gemini Business Park. The company, whose headquarters are in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, offers a unique print management system.

Astron also ensures that stationery such as business cards and letterheads faithfully reflect the Manweb corporate identity.

POWER Systems staff are being helped with Welsh spelling and pronunciation to prepare them for when they become despatchers under the new Troublecall system.

All out of hours control and despatch activities will eventually operate from the Power Systems Management Centre at Prenton, and staff will be sent out to deal with network problems in Wales as well as the two other regions.

Jean Long, Open Learning Advisor was asked for help with training in Welsh speaking and she approached Melanie Jones, Welsh Open Learning Advisor, to deliver a course to give the staff an introduction to the Welsh language.

"The aim is to help them with pronunciations and the spelling



Open Learning Advisors Jean Long, left, and Melanie Jones are pictured with some of the Liverpool and Prenton staff who have taken the Welsh Course. They are, left to right, control engineer Nick Johnson, operations engineer Ian Taylor, control engineer Ted Pickstock and senior control engineer Brian Middleton (seated).

of Welsh names and locations," explained Phil Currie, Power System Manager, Central Operations. "This will minimise mistakes and errors and so stop field staff being sent to the wrong location and our

customers being without supplies longer than necessary.

"We also hope Welsh-speaking staff will appreciate the efforts of Manweb to reduce any frustrations they may experience."

Mike says fond farewell

MIKE Metcalfe has retired after 24 years of valued service with Manweb.

Mike, aged 52, leaves with the best wishes of all at the company. He first joined the internal audit section as a qualified chartered accountant and progressed to take charge of the administration of the Mid Cheshire District from 1978 to 1985.

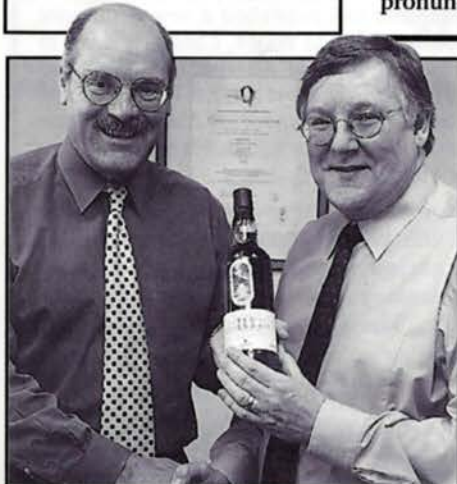
After subsequently becoming Personnel Manager, he went on to become Regional Manager of ScottishPower Learning and

Human Resources Manager.

Mike said: "I am sad to leave Manweb because I have had a great time and had a number of interesting jobs. Work is all about people, enjoying yourself as well as being professional."

Mike now intends to take up part-time employment plus consultancy work.

● Pictured right, Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels presents Mike with a drop of the good stuff.



Safe working pays dividends

SAFE working by staff at Aberystwyth depot has paid dividends for a Welsh cancer appeal.

The staff who have had an accident-free year were awarded money as part of Manweb's Health and Safety drive, and they presented it at a special ceremony at the depot to Bronglais Hospital Cancer Centre in Aberystwyth.

Emrys Hughes, Aberystwyth Depot

Manager, said: "I am proud of the excellent safety record of the employees and it is wonderful that thanks to their care, this appeal has received the donation of £500."

The appeal, chaired by Lord Geraint of Ponterwyd, former MP for the area, is near to reaching its target of £1m to build a dedicated Cancer Treatment Unit at the Hospital's Meurig Ward, with a CTC scanner.



Emrys Hughes, Manweb's Aberystwyth depot manager (right) presents a £500 cheque for the Bronglais Hospital cancer appeal to Lord Geraint of Ponterwyd.

Fundraising is a real knockout

CASH raised by the participants in It's A Knockout has been presented to the Alder Hey Rocking Horse Appeal.

A total of £4,730 was handed over towards the establishment of a new state-of-the-art cancer unit for children, with facilities for their parents, at the Hospital.

Last year's It's A Knockout took place at the Sports and Social Club, Thingwall Road, Liverpool and featured 17 teams from within Manweb, ScottishPower and Southern Water, all of whom raised money through sponsorship.

Organiser Phil Cato said: "We were more than glad to hand over the money.



It was very humbling to meet the children. The Hospital were extremely grateful for our help."

● Phil Cato (right) is pictured above meeting Acting Ward Manager Janet Arlan (centre) at the Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust Alder Hey Hospital during his visit to present the donation. On the left is Tracey Davies, Administration Assistant on the Home Services helpdesk, representing Contracting Services who chose the charity.



A step ahead on new walks

SEVENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD ace rambler Eric Coley, pictured above, thinks nothing of hopping on board a plane to places like Rome and Prague, so that he can have a day's guided walk round the cities.

And when he's not trekking abroad, he's devising new walks for the rambling group which he has set up for the North Wirral retired staff association.

Former Birkenhead District Foreman Eric makes sure he takes them on routes which reveal hidden facts about Wirral - like the little-known Dungeons Waterfall on the peninsula (between Thurston and Parkgate) and the region's five windmills.

In summer, the group ventures further afield to places like Betws-y-Coed and Lymm Reservoirs (an especially challenging walk where Eric ended up lifting the group members over an obstacle).

"We all find it really enjoyable and always find a pub for a drink and a chat along the way", said Eric. "Your two feet can take you to places you would never see otherwise. And in the words of the saying, if you don't use them you lose them".



First good neighbours awards

THE first Holyhead Good Neighbours Awards, modelled on Manweb's Community Champions scheme, were presented at a special dinner at the town's Canolfan Ucheldre.

Jan Cahill, Manweb Corporate Communications Executive, worked with Mayor of Holyhead Jeff Evans to set up the Awards. She said: "The Mayor attended our Community Champions dinner in

1997 and decided to set up his own scheme. He asked if we could provide backing, and we gave £1,500 to sponsor the scheme and the ceremony."

● Our picture shows one of the group winners, Holyhead Maritime Museum, along with Mayor Jeff Evans. Presenting the special Welsh slate prize was the former Wales national football manager, Mike Smith, who was guest of honour.

Engineers' course success

TWO Power Systems engineers have successfully gained Certificates in Project Management from Lancaster University.

Dave Roberts and Peter Roper, both members of the Major Projects Section at Prenton, were nominated to attend by Terry Gopsill, as sponsoring Manager.

The year-long programme of teaching modules and formal assignments included 13 full days of attendance at the University.

Dave, now a Project Engineer in Merseyside Region, said: "We both found that the course widened our viewpoint. We are now also eligible to become members of the Institute of



Dave Roberts (left) and Peter Roper with their Project Management Certificates.

Project Management." Terry said: "The main purpose of nominating Dave and Peter for the course was to improve project management processes within the group as

well as personal development". The two engineers were the first to go on the course; now two more from Major Projects have enrolled for this year's course.

Safety video targets children

MANWEB'S Community Relations Advisor Moira Renwick, who visits schools to talk to youngsters on electrical safety, helped unveil a vital safety message for primary schoolchildren across the UK.

She was one of a handful of such advisors in the country to be asked to work on a video called *Dangerous Close Up*, created by Understanding Electricity (UE), the educational service for the UK electricity industry.

The video drama, aimed at ages seven to 11,

was premiered at the Education Show in Birmingham and is the second UE film that Liverpool-based Moira has worked on. A Welsh-language version which Brian Davies, Manweb Community Relations Advisor for Wales, is helping to produce, will shortly be available for schools in the region.

Moira said: "I was delighted to be able to help with the creation of this video and honoured to be chosen to help launch it nationally."

What exactly is the EEIBA? Contact interviews the new North West Regional Manager of the charity to find out...

Long-standing charity with a modern role

OVER the years many *Contact* readers must have noticed our lists headed "EEIBA Prize Winners" and wondered exactly what lies behind the title.

In this article, we explain the purpose of the organisation – the Electrical and Electronics Industries Benevolent Association – and show how joining it could be both rewarding to yourself and beneficial to others less fortunate.

EEIBA was established in 1905 to support those in need within a fledgling electrical industry, and more than 90 years later it is the only charity servicing the electrical and electronics industries.

More than 3,000 men, women and children throughout the UK – including 15 "live" cases in Manweb – are currently being helped with counselling, financial aid or other projects. EEIBA looks after people with every illness, condition or form of distress, at any time of life.

John Connor, EEIBA North West Regional manager based in Stockport, said: "We are a registered charity which helps people who work or have worked in the industry. We want to raise awareness of our organisation – at the moment many new welfare cases are referred to us through other charities because people in the

electrical industry do not realise that we are THEIR benevolent fund.

"We would urge all *Contact* readers to consider joining our EEIBA Prize Draw Club, which raises funds for the charity while giving its members the opportunity to win cash prizes in a monthly draw."

At present the Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales Branch of the Club, whose 2,400 members are mostly Manweb employees, gives out more than £13,000 in prizes per year and in 1998 made a £13,400 donation to EEIBA.

Donation

One hundred new members would mean £50 per month extra in prize money and £600 more per year as a donation to London.

Members of the Draw (top prize currently £300) subscribe a minimum of £1 per month by direct deduction from their salary or pension. Those who already have one number in the Draw might consider buying a few more to increase their chances of winning, at a cost of £1 per number.

● *AN appeal is going out to CONTACT readers to convert some of their interests or social occasions into fund-raising activities for EEIBA – with the emphasis on fun. Those interested should phone John Connor on 0161 475 3948.*



Support for daughter to have vital treatment

MANWEB overhead linesman William Geary is happy to champion the cause of the EEIBA having seen first-hand one of the ways it can help.

The charity stepped in to help his daughter Kay, who suffers from cerebral palsy, when she was aged three in 1994.

EEIBA financed her

visit to the famous Peto Institute in Budapest, where she responded well to treatment, and later bought her a special walking aid that was not available on the NHS.

The help continued with funding for treatment that eventually became available in the UK, and with support for

a conversion of the family's garage into a bathroom and bedroom to suit Kay's needs.

William, who works out of Rhyl in Wales Region, said: "EEIBA have been most helpful and Kay has certainly benefited from their support."

● William and daughter Kay are pictured above.

Regional Managers changes announced



POWER Systems has made a number of management changes in the Manweb area.

John Marsh (pictured above), previously Asset Manager, Merseyside, is appointed Regional General Manager, Cheshire.

John, aged 34, was born and bred in Warrington. He joined Manweb as a student engineer at the age of 16 and moved on via Hoyle Training Centre to become Technical Services Manager at Wrexham.

Before becoming Asset Manager he was Connections Manager for the whole of Manweb based at Prenton and then Construction Manager at Lister Drive.

Bill Tubey is appointed Regional General Manager, Wales. Bill joined Manweb as a student apprentice and has previously been Distribution Engineer and Supplies Engineer in North Mersey District, Resources Group Manager, and Regional Manager, Merseyside, since 1995.

Bill is succeeded by Gerry Halas, previously Regional Manager for Cheshire. Gerry held several engineering posts in the South of Scotland Electricity Board before being appointed General Manager of ScottishPower's Fife District in 1994.

Stan Currie has been appointed Director of Regional Operations.

Previously Regional General Manager, Wales, he has spent all his career with ScottishPower and its predecessor, South of Scotland Electricity Board, and was formerly Manager of Forth Region.

Jailbreak fugitives on run for charity



Ready for the great escape... Manweb jailbreakers get in some practice for life on the run. They are, left to right, team leader Dylan Parry, Gareth Prytherch, Derfel Hughes and Gareth Hughes who are pictured at Caernarfon CSC.

THEY broke out of Beaumaris Jail on Anglesey at 8 am on Saturday March 27. Bystanders shuddered at the sight of their arrowed boiler suits as they piled into a waiting getaway car.

They only felt safe 578 miles later when they reached their "safe house" hotel at John O'Groats. Dylan Parry and his team, made up of Derfel Hughes, Gareth Prytherch and Gareth Hughes from Caernarfon and Holyhead Customer Service Centres were taking part in a (legal) fund-raising drive in support of Gwynedd and Mon Age Concern.

Team Manager Dylan said: "The challenge was to break out of the Jail and to get as far away as possible without spending money or breaking the law. We had the use of a Manweb pool car and we took sandwiches for food. We'd like to thank Holiday Inn Express at Livingstone near Edinburgh for allowing us to spend two nights in their hotel free of charge."

● Caernarfon CSC's new partnership with Age Concern was given a celebrity launch.

The charity is setting up its stall inside Manweb's Centre in Pool Street to give advice and guidance on a range of issues. In addition Manweb staff will soon be joining the charity's Lunch Bus - which is sponsored by the company - to provide advice to customers living in rural areas.

Dewi Rhys, who plays local rogue Dyff Jones in the S4C soap opera *Pobol y Cwm*, met customers to hand out free gifts, including low energy lightbulbs and thermometers warning of potential hypothermia.

Duke opens Foyer project

PRINCE'S Trust Volunteers were in attendance when the Duke of Gloucester officially opened the £1.143 million Wrexham Foyer project, which provides accommodation, training and support for young people in housing need.

The Duke's tour of the facility and his unveiling of the plaque had a special significance for ScottishPower Learning. They are represented on the management board of the Foyer, they have part-funded the training co-ordinator and the PTV, which they run in north Wales as the franchise holder, use the Foyer as a Wrexham team base.

During the Duke's visit the current PTV team leader Jonathan Yeoman, who is seconded from the Inland Revenue, and team members were present. The Foyer is an



Mike Metcalfe, Regional Manager of ScottishPower Learning and Head of Human Resources, welcomes the Duke of Gloucester to the Wrexham Foyer project.

excellent base for the Wrexham PTV teams since we are both involved in similar client groups who require additional training to improve their prospects for work in the future," said Roy

Jones, PTV Franchise Manager.

The next PTV programme starts on May 10. For additional information contact Kevyn Kerswell on 0836-331584 or 01244-652051.



A sign of the times gone by

READERS will remember this Manweb sign which was rescued from the Machynlleth Customer Service Centre after it closed.

The sign was installed in 1964 after the shop closed for a year for refurbishment, with a temporary CSC established in the car park.

The sign, which is pictured being taken into storage at the Aberystwyth depot, will be offered to a local museum.

● Taking down the old sign for storage are, left to right, jointer Andrew Turner, network manager Emrys Hughes, connections engineer David Williams, ex-Manweb employee John Connor and linesman Francis Gallimore.

Luxury cruise holiday offer



CONTACT readers are being offered an exclusive discount offer on two-night CruiseBreaks from only £39 to Denmark, Germany and Holland.

It's like no other travel experience! Scandinavian Seaways are offering the chance to cruise on ships that are rated four or five star by the AA, with two nights accommodation included on board the ship.

You can travel from Harwich or Newcastle (depending on destination) between April and December 21, with £79 the highest price from July 16-August 21, and with £39 the lowest price in December.

The offer for the two night CruiseBreak is based on the best available economy cabin (no facilities). Also included in the price are two continental buffet breakfasts and a complimentary sightseeing tour on your arrival at your chosen destination. Child discount (four to 15 years) – £20. Upgrade to Standard Cabin Accommodation with facilities: Washbasin Cabin: £10 (Amsterdam only). Best available standard cabin, with ensuite facilities: £20. Cabin upgrade is subject to



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availability. This offer is not valid for single or Commodore class cabins.

● Three night CruiseBreaks are available on selected weekend departures to Denmark, Germany and Sweden. For a £20 supplement on the standard cabin accommodation fare you can enjoy more time in your destination, staying on board ship, overnight in port (No facilities or entertainment is provided in port).

Valid for standard cabin accommodation only. The Weekend CruiseBreak to Sweden features city transfers only, offering an evening ashore in downtown Gothenburg.

For further details and to make a booking telephone: 0990-333-222. Making sure you quote the exclusive booking code: 2 nights: V3603; 3 nights: V3604.



Generation game

■ ERIC Hough, the 73-year-old chairman and secretary of the Mid Mersey Retired Staff Association, is to enter two mixed open golf competitions later this year. His partner is his 36-year-old daughter June Ryder, who has been keen on the sport for 15 years.

Off to York

■ A SPECIAL Millennium weekend break is planned by members of the Dee Valley Retired Staff Association. It was one of a number of suggestions made at their recent AGM, including a planned July outing to York.

Day trips

■ THE Gwynedd District Retired Staff Association are planning trips to Oswaldtwistle Mills, Accrington in May, the North Wales coast in July and Birkenhead Market in September.

'Twitchers' work on census

THREE Manweb "twitchers", one of them a pensioner, are working on a census of bird numbers in Cheshire.

As members of the Chester and District Ornithological Society, Roger Parry, Customer Relations Adviser at Pentre Bychan, Steve Holmes of Power Systems, and Dave Thomas,

retired Prenton engineer, join forces in regular bird-watching expeditions.

They visit the Dee and Mersey estuaries, woodland round Northwich and Frodsham Marshes – where Roger was once lucky to get a rare sighting of a Collared Pratincole, a tern-like wader.

"At the moment we're involved in survey and census work on 15 species," said Roger, who has been interested since he collected birds' eggs as a child.

"Being members of the society is good because we can hone identification skills while also enjoying the company."

Mission to help tragic orphans in Romania

A MOLD linesman is travelling to Romania next month as part of a Christian group in a mercy mission to help orphans with Aids.

Paul Burkhill is going to Constanta on the Black Sea where an orphanage houses 34 children in need. He and seven other members of the King's

Christian Centre in Mold are to give the building a lick of paint. He will also take voltage transformers supplied by Manweb to activate washing machines and tumble driers sent from America.

Paul said: "We are going for seven days and as well as working on the building we are going to give love and support to the children. We all feel called by the Lord to do this work."



Ready for his mercy mission to Romania - Mold linesman Paul Burkhill.

Former jointer now running a bed and breakfast

YOU'D never have guest it! Former Manweb jointer Ben Jones has started a second career doing Bed and Breakfast on the scenic North Wales coast.

Ben, now aged 66, retired three years after he had an accident at a substation, in 1985.

His wife Eluned, a former school cook aged 61, had started taking in guests at their previous house in Penrhyn, and when they moved into a new bungalow close to Porthmadog and Portmeirion, she decided to re-start the business and Ben lends a helping hand.

Beach

"It's a help with the cash and we both really enjoy doing it," said Ben. "We're open to guests between March and October, and we're situated in a pleasant place with the beach just below us, and within walking distance of the town."

Contact readers interested in staying can get in touch with Ben at Penrhyndudraeth on 01766-770564.



They all went to the zoo

ALMOST 300 Manweb staff, pensioners and families braved cloudy skies in March to take up a special reduced price offer for Chester Zoo, organised by Chester Sports and Social Club. Special meet-the-keeper sessions proved popular, as did feeding animals in the Children's Zoo. Four-year-old Cora Batley-Moss is pictured making friends with some of the Zoo's goats.

Singing over there

ARTHUR Rowlands' singing prowess is set to take him for the second time across the Atlantic, with the male voice choir of which he is a key member.

The Caernarfon Project Manager joined Cor Meibion Y Traeth at Benlleth on Anglesey 15 years ago, and is now deputy chairman.

Next year the 80-strong choir is due to visit Chicago in a repeat of two years ago when they also travelled to Tennessee and made contact with a local Welsh Society in Milwaukee.

Arthur, aged 46, is presently busy with preparations for the choir's entry to this year's Eisteddfod, which is to be held on Anglesey. "At the moment we're practising once a week, but that will increase as the pressure mounts," he said.

Manweb meter reader Richard Wyn Williams, based in Llangefni, is also a member of the choir.

Love at first sight for dance class partners

HOWELL Watson was introduced to a new partner at the dance class - and it was love at first sight.

Howell, a computer programmer for Manweb at Queensferry, had been attending the R&A Dance Academy, which holds classes in Christleton and the Guildhall in Chester, for some time.

"We had originally paired up with different partners and when some people dropped out we were put together in January last year, at the regular Wednesday ballroom and Latin beginners' class," he recalls.

Clicked

"It was one of those strange moments when you meet someone for the first time and you know there's something special about them.

"We just clicked, it was love at first sight."

Howell and Patricia, a nurse manager at a residential home, married last month at Chester Racecourse, and honeymooned in Paris.