

Best foot forward for Val



VAL Ward didn't have far to look for volunteers to help her get through the practical side of her reflexology course.

now a member of the International Federation of Reflexologists – and her work-mates enjoyed her sessions so much they are still coming back for more!

She said: "Reflexology has been a real benefit to me – I feel more in tune with my own body and more in tune with other people."

● Val is pictured massaging the feet of personnel manager Jane Guest.

Colleagues in her office at Prenton stepped forward and let her work on their feet so that she could clock up the 64 hours that she needed.

Performance analyst Val gained the qualification and is

Confident Clare gains martial arts Black Belt



Clare in training with instructor James Kelly.

CLARE Gardner's job is in Revenue Protection – and her hobby gives her a great way of protecting HERSELF!

Clare, a Manweb meter security technician, has just gained her Black Belt in the Korean martial art of TaeKwon-Do.

Introduced to the art four years ago by colleague and boyfriend Steve Gauller, Clare has competed in a number of national competitions and was Welsh Sparring Champion last year.

She trains and sometimes also teaches at Steve's Wirral TaeKwon-Do School, and said: "I love the fitness and the social side, and it has given me the confidence to defend myself."

Mountain climbing event helps charities

THE £8,000 raised by the joint Manweb and ScottishPower success in the Three Peaks Challenge is to go to the Save the Children Fund and Disability Sport.

The composition of the teams which conquered Snowdon, Scafell and Ben Nevis was specially mixed in a tip-top example of Manweb-Scotland team working.

Driving force behind entering the Challenge was ScottishPower team member Sheelagh Murray who was inspired to stage the event by the courage of her sister Doreen who last year scaled her own personal mountain – MS.

Fundraising boost for Trust

THE National Meningitis Trust has received a double boost from fundraising efforts by Manweb employees.

Arwel Hughes, Caernarfon, Dave Watts, Wrexham and Michael Jacks, Rhyl, all 132kV distribution engineers, joined the 22-mile Whitchurch to Newport leg of a John O'Groats to Lands End walk and raised £300.

Michael's 12-year-old daughter died two years

ago from the virus. He thanks all those who have given him support since.

A fishing match organised at Llyn Cwmystradlyn near Porthmadog by Len Hicks, team leader at Caernarfon, as secretary of the Pwllheli Angling Club and Robin Davies, Manweb underground assistant and chairman of the club, raised £1,180. Robin's 17-year-old nephew died last year of meningitis.

Employees praised for contribution to success

RESULTS SHOW BRIGHT FUTURE

MANWEB'S employees are being praised for their contribution to the latest half-year financial results which show that the company is facing the future with confidence.

Operating profits are at £68 million, up slightly from last year reflecting the drive for efficiency while still offering lower prices. Overall ScottishPower results show group profits at £247 million on a turnover of £1.44 billion, with an interim dividend for shareholders of 7.5p.

Bill Landels, Manweb Managing Director, said: "I am delighted with these results, which mirror my first six months with Manweb. The historic opening of the domestic electricity market in Chester in September, coupled with our entry into the domestic gas markets, has been extremely successful for us.

"Not only has our business contributed a solid set of financial figures, but we have also recorded our best-ever service achievements in reducing complaints from customers, in reducing the number of times we do not meet Guaranteed Standards, and in our management of the network.

"I would like to thank all staff for their own contribution to Manweb's success and I look forward to continuing to work with them in maintaining this excellent trend."

Mr Landels pointed to a positive future ahead for Manweb, with a successful start at the new gas call centre in Warrington and sister company ScottishTelecom continuing its expansion in the north-west by building its business from Manweb House in Chester.



Open to families

IAN Dylan Thomas, aged 14, son of Barry Lloyd, Metering Business team leader, was among those who attended the launch of the Pentre Bychan Open Learning Centre as a facility for family members. SEE STORY PAGE 8.

Highlighting new branding initiative

HAVE you been ScottishPowered? See our special four-page insert in this December edition on the subject of the new branding initiative, featuring staff reactions to the travelling Brandwagon, and a guide to the thinking behind the forthcoming ScottishPowered advertising campaign.

Property Services leads way on Y2K

PROPERTY Services are leading the way in ScottishPower's Y2K Project to ensure that Manweb properties operate normally in the run-up to, during and after the Millennium.

The "Millennium Bug," widely recognised as a computer problem, also causes problems for buildings where embedded chips can be found in fire alarm systems, access control systems, air conditioning, CCTV and security systems, lifts, fuel dispensing systems, weighbridges, kitchen and vending equipment.

The purpose of the project is to ensure that all Manweb buildings will be safe to occupy, accessible and that all the environmental conditions which enable a building to operate normally are maintained.

Other items that can be found in buildings, such as computers and telephones, are being checked out by ISD and ScottishTelecom.

A similar exercise is taking place in Scotland but within Manweb, the core team of Mike Gaskell, Joanna Helme-Wilde and Bob Campbell of ScottishPower Contracting Services is running the project which covers 45 buildings.

Over the past 15 months, access control systems hardware and



Mike Gaskell, member of the ScottishPower Contracting Y2K project for Property Services, places a compliance sticker on to the fire alarm system at Manweb House.

software have been changed, building energy management systems have also been rectified and most of the remaining building equipment has been upgraded.

The team is confident that all building systems will be ready by the end of this month.

THE Plant and Circuits database – the hub of Power Systems' AM2000 Programme – has gone live for Manweb, with Wales the first region.

A version of the system has been live in Scotland for two years but the Project team working at Paisley and Queensferry have been working hard to develop this latest version which contains many enhancements, and is more suited to the needs of the business.

The database is an easy-to-use Windows-based application designed to hold information on all Transmission and Distribution plant and substation assets, and provides users with a detailed view of all Power Systems assets.

Offering significant advantages in the control and safety management of the network, the database interfaces, or links, to other applications thus ensuring consistency of data across all applications.

Users will now be able to access a full life history of each asset held from its receipt into the company until the day it is scrapped, including a record of all work done, costs incurred and condition information such as test results and performance history. This clearer view on how assets are performing ensures effective focus on capital investment, and a far more effective process for applying and managing safety restrictions and modifications to plant.

To ensure that the data held is up-to-date and accurate, the Project team have undertaken a major housekeeping exercise on the data loaded from the old systems. However it is up to regional staff to ensure that the information they collect in the field on the customised Data Collection sheets is both full and accurate, and that missing data

Hub now live for Manweb



AM2000 Plant and Circuits Project Manager Steve Morris and Plant and Circuits Project Co-ordinator Neil Robertson are pictured at Pentre Bychan with regional staff Gary Evans, Projects Engineer, Wales Region, and Nigel Hughes, Quality Asset Co-ordinator, Wales Region.

records are collected and entered on the system.

Steve Morris, Plant and Circuits Project Manager, said: "The Plant and Circuits database will provide Power Systems with a

very powerful tool for managing our assets. Training of users and implementation of the database into Manweb has so far gone very smoothly and feedback from users has been very encouraging."

As domestic energy competition hots up

Customers stay loyal

COMPETITION in the domestic energy markets continues, with electricity competition reaching Merseyside and north Wales on December 14, three months after it all began in Chester.

Manweb is aiming to keep the vast majority of its customers in the opened-up areas, Liverpool and Wrexham across to Llandudno and down to Porthmadog.

Only a modest percentage of customers in the Chester area – which opened to competition on September 14 – have decided to switch away from Manweb.

More than 150,000 new Gas & Electricity customers have signed up with Manweb – 45,000 of them in the North West area. The Bolton area opened to competition on November 30 and Manweb sales teams have been out in force.

Regulator Professor Stephen Littlechild has announced that London Electricity will open its area from December 16. In addition, Midlands, Seeboard, Northern Electric and Scottish Hydro areas opened in October and November.

Targeted

Swansea, in the Swalec area, which is also being targeted by Manweb was due to open in December but, as *Contact* went to press, an announcement by Professor Littlechild about the robustness of Swalec's systems and a likely opening date had still not been made.

Bill Landels, Manweb Managing Director, said: "Competition is proving a major success for us – we are a major net winner in the competition stakes. This achievement has been due to a lot of hard work by everybody at Manweb and I am sure success will continue."



A map showing southward route of the balloons released in Chester.

Balloon blew 240 miles in just four hours

MANWEB'S 1,998 purple balloons went "up, up and away" on Deregulation Day – and the finder of the furthest-travelled in Britain has scooped £300 worth of vouchers.

The helium-filled balloons were released on September 14 at Manweb House, Chester, by Managing Director Bill Landels, and after travelling a staggering 240 miles in only four hours the winning balloon was plucked off the local golf course later that day by Enid Crapper, of Lovedean near Portsmouth.

Enid, who returned the competition ticket in her six-year-old grand-daughter Elizabeth's name, was presented with vouchers, to spend in any of ScottishPower's Electricity Plus superstores, by Jeff Morton, Regional Director, Southern Water.

Amazingly, a balloon released separately made its way across the Channel to Belgium. Dawn Hart, Construction/Administration Team Leader at Lister Drive, reports that her eight-year-old daughter Laura released the Deregulation Day balloon from their Warrington garden with the simple message: "Could you tell me where it is. Thankyou."

A note duly winged its way back a week later from Laureys Gaston, of Waasmunster, saying: "We found your balloon in our yard. Many regards."

Dawn said: "We were so surprised that the balloon travelled as far as Belgium, and Dawn can't believe she has received the note. She has written straight back to say thank you."



Our 125,000th customer

THREE generations of one family were treated to a VIP night out after becoming the 125,000th customer to choose Manweb's new combined Gas & Electricity Offer.

The Deakin family of Waverton near Chester enjoyed Liverpool's match against Fulham in the Worthington Cup

as guests of the company.

● Pictured above Peter Deakin (left) who attended the fixture with his wife Margaret, son Christopher and six-year-old grandson Deri, was also presented with £300 of vouchers for Electricity Plus by Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels.



Teams battle to restore power after flood chaos

EMERGENCY teams went into action when electricity supplies in the Conwy valley near Llanrwst were disrupted by floods in October. Wind-borne material brought power lines down as four feet of water saturated the ground so that support poles buckled, in two cases collapsing completely.

Manweb and ScottishPower Contracting Services teams from Llandudno Junction raced to the scene and used a mobile HV generator to restore power to 60 homes in Melin-y-Coed and Nebo. Within 14 hours of the night-time line breakage, JCB diggers – pictured left – had repositioned the support poles and supplies were restored.

Job-swap solution is touch of genius

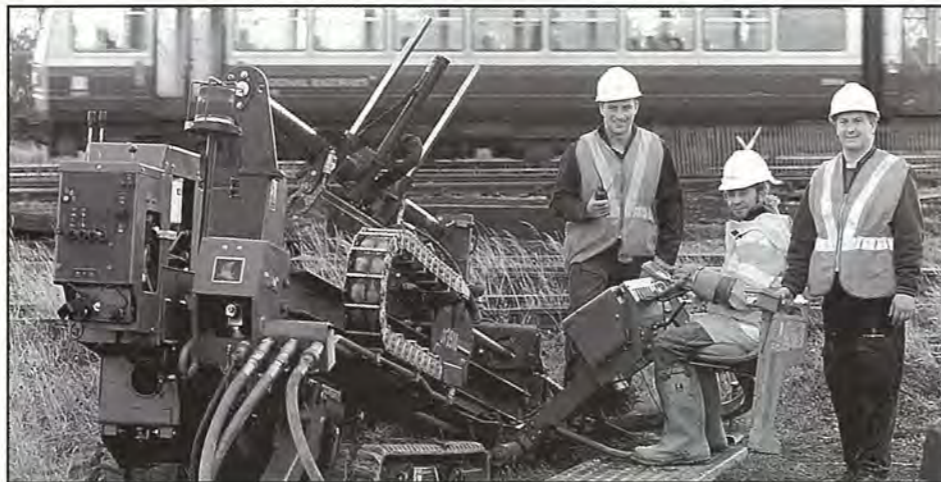
TRENCHLESS technology projects are being tackled by means of an ingenious “job swap” between Manweb and Scotland.

Manweb equipment, specially capable of drilling through rock, is being used by three Manweb staff from Rhyl to bore beneath the A1 motorway near Edinburgh, and under a river in Kilmarnock, in answer to a ScottishPower SOS.

In return, a three-man team from Scotland brought one of their machines to help on a £1.1 million project to put cables carrying 33kV under two rail crossings at Deeside Industrial Park, Flintshire, so avoiding disruption to train services.

The two teams stayed in hotels for two weeks, in their “host” areas, in a good example of team work and flexibility.

Bill Landels, Manweb Managing Director, said: “I am delighted that we are able to use the expertise developed within the company



ScottishPower workers, left to right, Jim Kelly, Steve Martin and Sandy McNeil at work drilling beneath a rail line to lay new electricity cables to Deeside Industrial Park.

to tackle projects in this way. Using resources like this demonstrates the benefits of Manweb being part of the ScottishPower group.

“The use of trenchless technology means that work can be carried out quickly, more cheaply and with much less disruption, which benefits everybody.”

A CUSTOMER from the Welshpool area has praised two members of Manweb staff for their generous help during the floods.

Wendy Ferriday’s car got stuck in rising floodwater on the Forden road.

She was rescued by Terry Edge and Jeff Ruscoe, Linesmen from the Oswestry depot, who stopped and towed her free with the help of another lorry. They also bailed the water out of her car, started the engine and lent her their mobile phone to ring her husband.

“I was so grateful to them for their

High praise for good Samaritans

kindness,” said Wendy, from Guilsfield. “They acted with great patience, reassurance and good humour and without them I don’t know what I would have done to get out of a very frightening situation.”

New challenges in Wales Region

THE new Manager of Wales Region is Stan Currie, who moves from his role as Manager, Forth Region, in Scotland.

Stan has always worked with ScottishPower and its predecessor, the South of Scotland Electricity Board.

Until his appointment in 1995 to Forth, which covers Edinburgh, central Scotland, Fife, and the Scottish Borders, he was involved in the Transmission and Distribution side of the business, holding appointments in Edinburgh,

Hamilton, Glasgow and Paisley.

Stan said: “I am looking forward to taking up my new role in Pentre Bychan on December 14 – there will be new faces, new challenges and a new culture.

“These, combined with all the changes taking place in Wales generally, means that it will be an interesting time for me.”

Stan, a former Chairman of the Power Section of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Scotland, intends to live in Wales and plans to pursue his hobby of golf.



Stan Currie

Taking on fresh post in Scotland

THE outgoing Wales Region Manager, Alan Laird, is moving to Scotland to take up the newly-created post of Technical Manager, Network Development.

He will be looking after a number of aspects of technical and construction standards, together with safety and technical performance protection.

The new job, based at Cathcart, starts on January 1. “This is a new challenge and I am looking forward to seeing a different side of the ScottishPower system,” said Alan. “I am changing from my day-to-day role to a more strategic job which involves shaping future direction.”

Alan, who joined Manweb from school on a sponsorship scheme and subsequently graduated from Leeds University with an honours degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, has previously been Supplies Manager, Network Planning and Operations Manager.

In 1998 he became Chairman of the Distribution Code Review group for England and Wales.

He is the Institution of Electrical Engineers representative within Manweb which mentors professional engineers, helping them towards chartered engineer status, and he has been acting as a mentor at St Joseph’s Secondary School, Wrexham, as part of the Business in the Community scheme.



Bill Landels (centre) with Professor Philip Love, Vice Chancellor of the University of Liverpool (left), and Christopher Gibaud, Chief Executive of The Mersey Partnership, in front of Liverpool’s Liver Building. Picture courtesy of the Liverpool Daily Post.

Key role in Mersey partnership

MANWEB’S Managing Director Bill Landels has been appointed Chairman of the Mersey Partnership.

As a member of several organisations supporting economic regeneration in the region such as the North West Business Leadership Team, the North Wales Economic Forum and CBI Wales, he is uniquely qualified for the post.

Mr Landels said: “I am honoured to take up this position, continuing Manweb’s commitment to The Mersey Partnership, which began when we became the first private company to join. I believe my business experience will help the Partnership to continue and expand its success story.”

Web site winner

THE winner of our September edition competition inviting suggestions on the ScottishPower Web sites is Paula Webster, based in Regulation at Manweb.

Country
chateau
offer



CONTACT is offering a short break in a country chateau or hotel in North-East France, courtesy of ICT.

Prices for bed and breakfast start at £39 per night including P&O ferry crossing for a car and four persons. For further details of the various packages please contact ICT on 0171-515 6577.



Training Co-ordinator Jenny O'Brien surrounded by the festive shoeboxes filled with toys.

To Russia with love

NEEDY children in Russia and Eastern Europe will wake up to a present on Christmas morning thanks to generous staff at Manweb.

Merseyside Region employees rallied round to contribute to the Operation Christmas Child appeal. They sent more than 70 shoeboxes full of small toys, sweets and other goodies to Lister Drive depot, which acted as a collection point.

Organiser of the Manweb contribution, Moira Renwick, said: "Children in many parts of Eastern Europe have nothing to look forward to this Christmas except hunger, cold and maybe war. Just knowing that somebody cares about them is a wonderful feeling."

Manweb has supported Operation Christmas Child, the world's biggest children's aid project, on previous occasions and this year also helped them find much-needed warehouse storage space. Moira put them in touch with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, which has donated premises at Bootle for six weeks.



Preparing the shoeboxes for despatch are, left to right, personnel assistant Yvonne Lucy, Jenny O'Brien and finance team leader Nigel Jones.

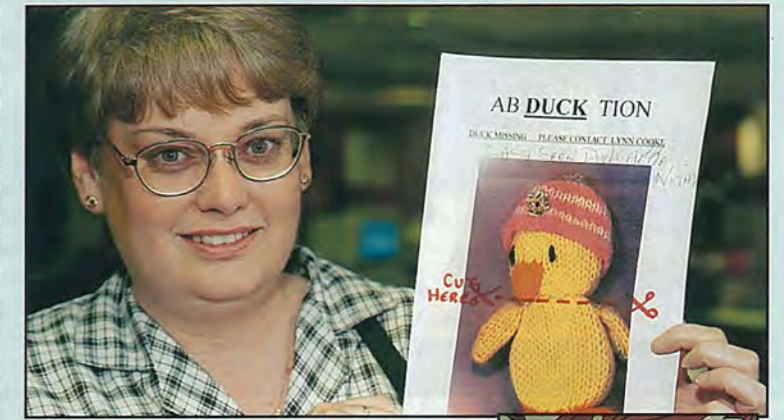
INTREPID MANWEB EMPLOYEES SUDDENLY FLIPPED ON A FRIDAY... BUT IT WAS ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE



Holy Sponge, Batman! The carwash underway at Pentre Bychan.



Top that ... wearing unusual hats are Warrington Call Centre staff (front left to right) Maureen Moston and Gill Casson and (back) Jan Kernot and Sue Howitt.



Lynne Cooke at Prenton office, shows a picture of her duck, the victim of the "ab-duck-tion."



Mike Townson, Power Systems, Wales Region personnel manager, in dune with the charity spirit.



Bara Brith and Welsh Cream Teas were the order of the day, with Melanie Jones, Open Learning Advisor for Wales, in costume.



Winners of the raffle at Prenton: (left to right) Santo Nardo, engineer, Arthur Hughes, multi utility supervisor, Barry Pierpoint, builder and Joyce Moore, operations helpdesk.



A pyjama party at the Warrington Call Centre.

Fun and fundraising for Children in Need

TWO of them washed cars dressed in Batman and Robin costumes, others spent eight hours at work dressed in pyjamas, and one group donned all-black costumes in mourning for Des Barnes of Coronation Street.

One received a ransom note for the toy duck which mysteriously disappeared from the side of her computer, another became an Egyptian Arab for the day, and yet another donned her husband's prison officer's hat.

Had Manweb's employees suddenly flipped on Friday November 20?

Take a charitable view (they did). The intrepid stunt-makers had all become extraordinary stars for a day in the worthy cause of the Children in Need appeal.

Pentre Bychan kick-started the proceedings, led by the two-pronged taskforce of Debbie Quinn, dressed as Batman, and Liz Maddocks as Robin.

The two admin. assistants from Power Systems Business Support dashed round the car park with Liz shouting "Holy Sponge, Batman!" and washed as many cars as they could get their hands on at £2.50 a time. By the end of the day they had raised more than £100.



In mourning for television soap Coronation Street's Des Barnes - Paul Whitby's "all black" section at Warrington.

Other highlights at Wrexham included the serving of Welsh cream teas, and Wales Regional Manager Alan Laird (soon to leave for his new post in Scotland) kitted out in a laird's kilt.

Prenton depot, the scene of the "ab-duck-tion" of purchasing officer Lynne Cooke's toy, held a raffle which raised £225. Lynne's ransom note, sent by the Fowl Freedom Front, demanded that to rescue her duck she had to raise as much money as she could for Children in Need, and provide proof by taping the receipt to her head and singing the Keith Harris and Orville song.

Meanwhile, at Warrington, sections in the Call Centre were all

striving to carry off the best "themed" effect. Employees who failed to turn up wearing pyjamas, unusual hats or black costumes and dark glasses were "fined" for charity. The office raised more than £500.

Staff in the depots were buoyed up by the promise of Charles Berry, Managing Director, ScottishPower Energy Supply Division, that he would match the cash totals raised.

Merseyside Region sponsored the Sportsman of the Year Award at the Annual Scousology Awards held at Liverpool's Crowne Plaza Hotel by Radio Merseyside, in aid of Children in Need, and also booked a table at the event for six managers and their partners.



Wales Region Manager Alan Laird appropriately dressed as... a laird.



Visiting the Teddy Bears picnic at Warrington is customer service representative Annette Norman.



At the Wales Student Innovation Awards, left to right: Roy Jones, ScottishPower Learning, Kevin Tulliver, design and technology teacher at Ysgol David Hughes, Menai Bridge, and winner Mark Jones, pupil at the school, with his Autosieve.

Schoolboy's invention scoops top award

A LABOUR-**SAVING** device for gardeners invented by a 16-year-old Anglesey schoolboy has won first place in the final of the Wales Student Innovation Awards, sponsored by ScottishPower Learning.

Mark Jones, who attends Ysgol David Hughes in Menai Bridge, came up with the design for his "Autosieve," which sieves soil, while he was helping his father lay down a new lawn.

"There seemed to be a mechanical device for every other function in the garden apart from this one, so I decided to design something myself," said Mark.

The judges at the finals, held at The Orangery, Margam Park, near Swansea, described the Autosieve, which is powered by a 12-volt windscreen wiper motor, as a "sophisticated piece of design which is ready for the marketplace."

TWO of Manweb's Open Learning Centres, already available to staff, have opened their doors to family members.

Both Chester and Pentre Bychan held special induction sessions for the launch – and other centres have been lined up to follow suit in the coming months.

Michael Metcalfe, ScottishPower Learning Regional Manager, did the honours at Manweb House on October 28, with the first 10 family members being treated to a buffet and a demonstration of the facilities on offer.

Steve Gauller, Open Learning Co-ordinator, said: "We are hoping to have many more families enrol in the future. We are issuing family members with ID cards to make access easy for them."

Free

Family members can include husband, wife, son, daughter or partner, and the free courses available cover topics like computer skills, personal finance, languages, law and marketing and sales.

Pentre Bychan went "family" on in the Summer, with Dave Grady, Business Support Manager for the Welsh region, welcoming visitors and praising the facilities.

Melanie Jones, Open Learning Advisor for Wales, gave a demonstration of the equipment and encouraged everyone to take an active role in learning how everything worked. She said: "Opening the Centre to families demonstrates ScottishPower

Learning for all the family



Some of the family members who attended the Open Day at the launch of the Pentre Bychan Open Learning Centre. Included on the picture are Dave Grady (5th from left), Steve Gauller (3rd from right), Melanie Jones (4th from left) and Jean Long (right.)

Learning's support for Lifelong Learning and access to learning."

● A Family Learning Fun Day was held at

Pentre Bychan the following month to support Family Learning Day. It featured games, brainteasers and surfing the Internet.

Support for community Cybercafe

AN exciting new Cybercafe has opened on Anglesey with help from ScottishPower Learning.

The tele-centre has been set up in Cemaes Bay on the first floor of a former bank, which

also houses a heritage centre, craft shop and cafe.

The Cybercafe contains IT equipment much of which, along with furniture, has been donated by ScottishPower Learning.

Roy Jones, of ScottishPower Learning, officially opened the exciting new project which has been devised by the Cwmni Cemaes consortium, working for the community.

"A great deal of time, effort and commitment have gone into this venture," said Roy.

"We are extremely delighted to be involved with the centre and wish everyone involved every success in the future."

Shorts

Campaign on target

THE "Make Mark Mobile" campaign to raise money at Wrexham CSC for a disabled customer who needs a special wheelchair has so far raised £1,309. The staff are currently arranging to raffle a TV that has been donated, following their recent wheelchair-push for cerebral palsy sufferer Mark Williams.

Carry on camping

MANWEB has donated £1,200 to the Chester-based charity Save the Family. The money will be used to purchase tents to take children and their parents from the charity's residential home at Plas Bellin, north Wales, on camping holidays.

Support for hospice

WIRRAL-BASED children's respite hospice Claire House is benefiting from a donation by Manweb. The company has funded a suction machine at a cost of £500, essential for keeping airways clear for children suffering from debilitating conditions such as cystic fibrosis.

Television donation

MANWEB has donated a 26" colour television set to the Centre for Brain Injury Rehabilitation Department at Broughton, Flintshire. The set will be used to screen the charity's promotional video to prospective sponsors.

Not so batty

THE natural habitats of bats and badgers are being protected by Manweb, working with environmental groups in north Wales.

Cash boost for recycling plan

A unique recycling scheme at a charity for people with disabilities is getting off the ground, thanks to a £12,000 boost from Manweb.

The company is sponsoring the Barrowmore Employment and Environment Project (BEEP) at Barrowmore, based at Great Barrow near Chester, which provides work, a home and support to more than 140 disabled people.

Under the scheme waste wood from the charity's garden furniture manufacturing activities will be recycled to produce wood chips for golf courses, playgrounds, picnic areas, paths and tracks.

The support from Manweb is part of a £26,500 long-term investment programme involving buildings and equipment. The scheme will also create job opportunities for the charity's disabled personnel.

Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels said: "We are especially pleased to support this scheme. It involves job creation, maximises the potential of people with disabilities, and offers long term benefits for Barrowmore."

Barrowmore Chief Executive Eric Lees said: "BEEP will play a key part in our business



Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels with Barrowmore Chief Executive Eric Lees at the charity's headquarters at Great Barrow, near Chester.

development plans into the next century. It's commercially sound to recycle, it's environmentally friendly and we are confident that the product will find a ready market, particularly in rural Cheshire. This generous support from Manweb will be crucial in getting the project off the ground."

Manweb sponsor Welsh culture festival

MANWEB has sponsored a unique Welsh festival of music, poetry and folk dancing.

More than 1,000 people from throughout Wales competed at the Gwyl Gerdd Dant, held this year at the Ysgol Maes Garmon/Alyn School campus in Mold.

The festival, which celebrated the traditional culture of Wales, included competitions for harpists, individuals, groups and choirs, folk dancing, recitation and poetry.

Nurturing business

AN APPEAL is going out to Manweb employees to become involved in supporting the Young Enterprise scheme run by a national charity.

Each year there is a need for business advisors from companies to work alongside teams of lower sixth formers in schools, helping in areas such as finance and health and safety as they set up their own businesses and work towards giving the final presentation on which they are judged.

Those interested in contributing two hours per week from September to March, should contact Bob Campbell, Building Manager in Manweb's Property Services. Manweb already awards a shield to the Best Young Achiever in the competition each May.

Festive get-together

A FESTIVE time was had by all at the Manweb Sports and Social Club Cheshire Regional Christmas Party, which was held at the Forte Posthouse Hotel, Runcorn.

More than 350 staff from Chester, Warrington, Prenton and Liverpool bopped away to the sounds of the Disco Infernos, a disco dance band, as balloons drifted across the dance floor. A raffle with prizes was held, and the revellers were treated to a buffet.

"There was a fun atmosphere, and it was a great chance to catch up with gossip and meet people you had only spoken to over the phone," said Jacqui Hughes, secretary of the Chester Sports and Social Club.

Royal Navy rating sails in to join team

Catchy songs aim to hit the right note

CUSTOMERS will soon be singing the praises of Manweb after hearing a new series of catchy tunes on the radio.

For the company's new advertising campaign has taken various different singing styles and written new lyrics to fit the familiar musical phrases.

Songs praising Manweb are sung in the style of an American blues singer, a Tammy Wynette-style country and western star, a Frank Sinatra-type crooner and a Mexican mariachi band.

Who knows - partygoers this Christmas might even be tempted into a bit of karaoke along the lines of: "I'd be nuts/To leave you Manweb, I'd be crazy, I'd be insane/'Cos you're givin'/Me a discount/Most of the ways I'm payin'" (an excerpt from the crooner's lyrics, to be sung in a Caesar's Palace-type atmosphere.)

Each song leaves the listener with the unmistakable message that Manweb is best. In the parting words of the blues singer: "You's doin' more to make ma life easier Manweb. Yeah."

NEW recruit Anthony Hogden has swapped a life on one of the UK's most famous warships to answer queries from consumers across England at Manweb's new Customer Call Centre in Warrington.

But it wasn't plain sailing for Anthony to take up his new job - he was offered a post by Manweb several times before he was finally able to leave the Navy and join the company, just days before his wife Angela gave birth to their first baby, Paul.

Anthony - pictured right at the Customer Call Centre - was awarded a medal for his time serving with the aircraft carrier *Illustrious* as a Rating in Charge, Communications, when it was operating in former Yugoslavia, and had transferred to HMS Grafton which was due to sail for the Gulf at the same time as the baby was born.

Now he spends his time dealing with enquiries rather than with top-secret messages. Warrington-born Anthony, aged 23, said: "I handed in my notice with the Navy because Angela and I planned a family but it takes time to leave - I was very disappointed when I wasn't able to take up the job when it was first offered."



"I applied to work for Manweb because I knew so many good things about the company, and I am really enjoying my time now that I have begun the job. The most rewarding part is talking to customers, helping them with queries, especially when they write to thank me. That's part of the personal touch, being able to give customers my name and direct phone number - it's a lot different from the Navy."



Charity boost was no accident

A CHARITY presentation was held at Lister Drive at the start of National Safety Week in October.

It focused on four main charities that are actively supported by staff within Mersey Region.

A total of £300 each was donated to four deserving charities. The money was mostly donated by Manweb after four months of accident-free working in the Lister Drive office,

and the cheques were accepted by and on behalf of four employees who are especially dedicated to charity work. The Liverpool Early Years Centre was nominated by Tommy King Senior who has been actively campaigning for the charity for a number of years.

The Imperial Cancer Research Fund was nominated by Yvonne Lucy, and the Spinal Injuries Association by Steve Durney (its fundraiser is former

Manweb worker Paul Doyle).

Glaxo Neurological Centre was nominated by Records Draftsman George Henson, who said: "The four of us were really proud to accept the cheques for causes we believe in. We would like to thank the staff for making the donations possible."

● Pictured above are Bill Tubey, Mersey Region staff and charity representatives at presentation.

Focus on the ongoing commitment to energy efficiency



Schoolgirl wins poster design competition

EMMA Louise Reid, a pupil from Ysgol-Y-Grango School, Rhosllanerchrugog, near Wrexham, has won a competition organised by Manweb and Energy Efficiency to design an energy efficiency poster.

The poster was displayed on large advertising boards around Wrexham in the run-up to Energy Efficiency Week in October, and

also in an exhibition at the Science Museum in London together with other regional winners.

Emma Louise, pictured at the poster's unveiling with Manweb Managing Director Bill Landels and an Einstein look-alike, won prizes including a mountain bike, £500 worth of book tokens for her school and a family season ticket to the Science Museum.

Tomato power unit is source of delight

AN AWARD-WINNING north-west tomato grower has found a new way to improve the quality and yield of his crop, thanks to a unique combined heat and power agreement with ScottishPower.

Philip Pearson, who runs a large family-owned business at Alderley Edge in Cheshire, is using Combined Heat and Power (CHP) technology to generate on-site electricity and at the same time produce heat, drawn from the waste emissions of the generator unit.

This heat, together with the ministrations of thousands of bumble-bees, is helping his tomatoes beat the competition. Pearson's, with 123,000 plants growing on an eight-acre glasshouse site, supplies Tesco supermarkets throughout the region.

The site is now powered by a 1.7 megawatt CHP energy centre, under a regime which is more than twice as efficient as conventional power plant and in an average year will reduce emissions of carbon by approximately 3,000 tonnes.

Dynamic

The power house is operated and maintained by ScottishPower which invested £1.1 million in building the plant.

Philip Pearson, a third generation partner and production director at the company said: "We are always looking for ways to maximise our productivity and the new CHP plant - which we chose because of ScottishPower's dynamic approach and value for money - has enabled us to make major improvements in our crop."

● Philip is pictured with samples of his quality tomato crop.



Saving energy and reducing pollution

MANWEB has revealed plans for new energy efficiency schemes which will help to save energy and reduce pollution.

A further 4,000 people on low incomes throughout Merseyside, Cheshire and Wales will get the chance to receive a new fridge for just £25 through Fridgesavers, a national

scheme adopted by Manweb.

In the past year the company has already distributed 3,400 new replacement fridges to qualifying households in the region, gaining significant savings on fuel bills, and ensuring the safe removal of potentially dangerous, CFC-generating older fridges.

In addition Manweb is drawing up a new

Community Low Energy Lighting Scheme, and plans are in the pipeline for property insulation in collaboration with local authorities and housing associations.

The initiatives are part of the company's ongoing commitment to energy efficiency which recently won praise from UK watchdog the National Audit Office.