

SHOPS WILL BECOME 'CENTRES' OF ATTRACTION

A MASSIVE £4 million is to be invested in Manweb's 'High Street' operations over the next two years in a further demonstration of the Company's commitment to providing a customer service that is second to none.

The role of the shops will change as Manweb presses ahead with plans to alter the whole culture of its trading operation. The main thrust of the plan is to deliver the best possible customer service. Our traditional shops will be transformed to modern, new style customer service centres. Improved 'state of the art' computer systems and a large investment in staff training will form the basis of better service to our customers.

Apportioned

This new concept has already been partly introduced in the recently relocated Rhyl, Warrington and Oswestry shops, where greater floor space has been apportioned for bank or building society style customer service areas. The real thing will be seen for the first time when we relocate our existing Northwich shop in two months' time.

The Manweb Board had considered three options on

the best way forward for the company's retail operation.

These options were:

- Merging of Manweb's trading activities with another or several other companies, as some of the other REC's have done.

- Pulling out of retail completely.

- Standing alone, but with substantial investment to bring the shops, staff and systems up to a standard that will enable Manweb to deliv-

er excellent customer service and an acceptable retail performance.

Director Trading, Peter Hopkins said: 'After several debates and a lot of hard work, it was considered that the 'Stand Alone' option was the best route to take.

"In analysing the options the Board recognised that the shops have a vital role to play in delivering the Company's mission statement — 'Providing our utility busi-

ness customers with the very best service'. Customer research also confirmed that our customers value the personal, local, easy access provided by our shops.

"The Board has given its full commitment to this option and it is now down to us all in the Trading Division to deliver the plan."

Wondering

The announcement has ended months of rumour and speculation amongst staff about their future with the Company.

"It means we now have a future to pursue and we can



Director Trading Peter Hopkins.

now concentrate our efforts on the work in hand instead of wondering if we have a job at all," said Mr Hopkins, who stressed that it was not a case of 'just more of the same' but that there would have to be a radical change in Trading Division's culture and the role of the shops.

Trading has made a commitment to give the maximum profitable returns on the business by 'leveraging retail on the back of customer service'.

"The tremendous effort put into the retail side of the business is beginning to pay off," said Mr Hopkins. "As a result of improved purchasing, investment in RICS and MERAS computer systems and improved operational efficiency, the retail business is now operating profitably. Having turned the business around we now need to strengthen profit performance as well as deliver excellence in utility business services."

Options

Mr Hopkins said: "The whole issue of the future of our shops has taken a long time to decide and there was a huge amount of work by the management team. We came very close to alterna-

By
JACKIE UNSWORTH

Staff show community spirit



Wrexham Deputy Mayor, Mrs Willow Williams, fits in a part-time role at the Manweb Shop. (Picture by Mike Hall).

AMONGST Manweb's many shop staff there are some very busy people, who, in addition to their jobs do more than their bit for the local community.

These pillars of society include Mrs Willow Williams, a part-time sales person at Wrexham shop. Willow has fulfilled many community roles, as well as her two-and-a-half years as a Manweb employee.

Most recently, she became Deputy Mayor for Wrexham, in May 1992. After the year-long term is up, she hopes it will lead on to her becoming Mayor the year after.

Willow has been a Councillor with Wrexham Maelor Borough Council for over ten years. In addition, she has been Chairperson for the Housing and Health Committee at the Council since 1990, and a member of Gwersyllt Community Council.

She said: "Working at the Manweb shop fits in well with my responsibilities at the Council, and it gives me a first hand chance to experience Wrexham's bustling community."

Malcolm Swords is acting Manager at Manweb's Northwich Shop, and he is also Chairman of Rotaract (District 1050).

Rotaract is an international organisation supported by Rotary. All members are aged between 18 and 29, and organise general fund-raising to help the local community whenever possible.

Malcolm has organised many fund-raising activities, from car washing to collecting for Children in Need.

The Manager at Warrington Shop, Ian McGregor, has membership of the local Chamber of Trade and also Sefton Council. He is also a Governor at St Andrew's Church, Maghull.

Involved

For the past ten years, Corwen Manager, Emyr Jones has been a member and actively involved in the Corwen Community Council. He is also a past chairman of the Community Council.

Sue Wilson, Norris Green Shop Manager fits in her roles as group leader of St Andrew's Church, Maghull, and P.T.A. committee member.

Chief praises performance — page 3

New meter system — page 5

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A MATTER OF POLICY

IN furtherance of our environmental policy Contact has been printed on re-cycled stock: Lakeside extra wove.

IN THE SHOPS

A CONTACT SPECIAL REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE MANWEB SHOPS

continued from page 1

tive options which could have seen the demise of our retail business as we know it.

"I therefore want to make it quite clear to everyone that the objectives of the plan must be achieved.

"This means our customer service must be second to none and our commitment to delivering the necessary profit must be total. We have not got a reprieve but a Business Plan to deliver.

"I am convinced this is the best route for us to take and I am also delighted to know that the future of our business is now in our own hands."

He added: "I want everyone to stop talking about the uncertainties, and instead let's start talking about the positive things we can all do to deliver the best customer service in the country. I am confident we have the staff and commitment to achieve whatever we want. Let us therefore show the Board and our customers what we can do."



Garston was the top shop for the quarter ended September 1992. Pictured with their shield are (l-r) Pam Dickson, Teresa Parrry, Nick Lowe, Manageress Pat Walsh and Jayne Young.

They're top of the shops



Retail Operations Manager Paul Sharkey (right) presents Northwich Shop Manager Dave Kingston with the 'top shop' trophy for the quarter ended December 1992.

GARSTON and Northwich are top of the Manweb shops after successive quarterly wins in Trading Division's 'Mystery Shopper' scheme.

Both shops scored 515 points under the scheme, set up to assess the performance of staff as part of the drive to provide a first class service for customers.

Working on behalf of Manweb, London-based Business Efficiency Monitoring

Ltd awards marks based on sales technique, presentation, product knowledge, answering tariff enquiries, the account queueing system, telephone enquiry handling and the premises themselves. Each shop receives two visits per quarter from a mystery shopper.

This results in a 'top shop' being named every quarter and ultimately there is a 'shop of the year'.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

THE lucky winner of our super SEGA competition is David Roberts, of Elfed Park, Buckley, Clwyd, who will receive a fantastic SEGA Mega Drive plus 'Sonic' game, worth a total of £129.99.

Second prize of a SEGA Master System worth £49.99 goes to Meter Reader B Marsh, of Widnes.

Their names were the first drawn from the scores of entries received. The answers to the competition are as follows:

1. Game Gear; 2 Hedgehog; 3. Terminator; 4. 16 bits.

Best in the business

MORE than 80 Manweb shop staff achieved credits and a further 67 were rewarded with distinctions when they got back to basics and took part in the 'Business Basics' training programme.

There was a pass rate of over 65 per cent overall, resulting in a total 177 staff receiving the Manweb Certified Award of Retail Excellence (CARE).

All shop staff received at home a series of six modules aimed at sharpening up their retail skills. Each module covered a different topic — Customer Care, Selling Skills 1 & 2, Surecare, Creditcare, Selling for Profit and Energy Efficiency.

Staff had to read the modules and then complete and return a questionnaire. Those who fully completed all six modules to the required standard received the CARE certificate.

The results were as follows:

PASS

Bootle Shop: Eileen Maddocks; St John's: Tom Roddick, Peter Reed, Pat Smith, Ingrid Hines; Prescott: Phyllis Watkinson; Huyton: Pat Ellison; Allerton: Rose King; Garston: Teresa Parry; St Helens: Jean Peel, Margaret Sowerby, Margaret Hannon; Neston: Kath Thatcher; Birkenhead: Ruth Walton; West Kirby: Jacqui Eccles; Crew: Pat Benoy; Oswestry: Enid Thomas; Whitchurch: Molly Broadhurst; Rhyl: Carol Crankshaw; Prestatyn: Ann Jones, Robert Lane; Newtown: Sheila Rogers.

CREDIT

Bootle: John Quick, Lyn Coombes; Norris Green: Sue Clarke, Ian Ashurst; Waterloo: Sharon Kissack; Walton Vale: Joe Anderson; Southport: Pauline Garner; St John's: Thelma Kitcher, David Lloyd; Old Swan: Lisa Drew, Alison Gumley, Pat Montague; Allerton: Mark Marshall, Hilda Anson, Diane Henderson; Neston: Nick Lowe; Garston: Jayne Young; St Helens: Mark Fowler, Jackie Picton, Barbara Gavin; Warrington: Dorothy Litherland, Barbara Barlow, Lesley Peet; Warrington Superstore: Margaret Shrigley, Mark Sherrington, Darren Taylor; Frodsham: Lorraine Balmer, Lyn Wynne; Runcorn: Irene Barnes, Betty Johnston, Bev Edwards; Widnes: Karen Harvey, Irene Davies; Northwich: Kath Wilkinson, Viv Azouz, Shelagh Madden; Chester: Lyn Edge, Barbara Moon, Marie Warrington; Chester Superstore: Mike Davies, Wayne Howson; Ellesmere Port: Barbara Sexton; Wrexham: Julie Walsh, Willow Williams; Johnstown: Sheila Marsden; Shotton: Chris Jones, Joan Humphries, Barbara Ball; Birkenhead: Margaret Wales, Melanie Collings, Rita Richards; West Kirby: Carl Christian, Angela Smith; Moreton: Sue Davies; Wallasey: Steve Tonge, Rosemary Hale; Crew: Andrew Austin, Pat Reece, Jenny Simpson, Carol Looker, Geraldine Averill; Sandbach: Cheron Gregory; Nantwich: Patricia Rounthwaite; Flint: Glenys Davies, Vilma Latham; Oswestry: Joy Brown, Sue Payne;



In a class of their own...Some of the CARE recipients with their certificates. Back row, (l-r), Dave Kingston (Northwich), Steve Tonge (Wallasey) and Lorraine Balmer (Frodsham). Front row, (l-r), Lisa Drew (Old Swan), Sue Wilson (Norris Green) and Carl Christian (West Kirby).

Whitchurch: Doreen Kenny; Rhyl: Carol Bell, David Ogden; Ruthin: David Stevens; Prestatyn: Glenna Mayoh; Colwyn Bay: Beryl Williams; Llandudno: Nigel Gordon, Julie Thomas; Pwllheli: Adrian Jones, Julia Griffiths, Myfanwy Hughes; Blaenau Ffestiniog: Lol Williams, Eirwen Jones; Holyhead: Ann Desmond, Angela Williams; Barmouth: Sandra Williams; Aberystwyth: Terry Butcher, Yvonne Williams; Tywyn: Chris Davies; Machynlleth: Elizabeth Roberts; Newtown: Robbie Haden; RSM Secretary, Region 1: Kath Tickle.

DISTINCTION

Bootle: Margaret Wright, Margaret Bjork, Sue Johnson, Joan Kieley, Anne Lysaght; Norris Green: Sue Wilson, Jean Stalford; Waterloo: Shelagh Whitty; Southport: John Pritchard, Joyce Wilson, Rita Hughes; Warrington: Ken Roberts, Maureen Booth, Elsie Martin, Ann Whitty, Jean Barlow; St John's: Gloria Perkins; Huyton: Edie Kenneth, Bridget Scott; Old Swan: Steve Bentley, Margaret Hannah; St Helens: Ian Warlow, Dorothy Rhoden, Sue Anders; Widnes: Shirley Warlow, Gill Williams, Barbara Hanrahan; Knutsford: Marjorie Harris, June Curzon; Northwich: Dave Kingston, Wendy Hatton, Joy Bell; Chester: Paul Meacock, Sheila Banham, Anne Williams; Ellesmere Port: Ian Fitzsimmons, Joan Hill, Sue Smethurst; Neston: Christine Randall; Wrexham: Sheila Unsworth, Gary Thomas, Gillian Jones, Marita Davies, Ann Roberts, Diane Jones; Shotton: Pauline Roberts; Moreton: Sue Fitzsimmons, Chris Kaye; Crew: Julie Duffus; Nantwich: Sheila Gamble, Wendy Dutton; Prestatyn: Julie Boardman; Llandudno: Gareth Hughes; Llanrwst: Marian Scott; Caernarfon: Derfel Hughes, Jim Dennis, Susan Williams; Bangor: Philip Russell, Lesley Bollington, Donna Horton; Aberystwyth: Bryn Richards, Carole Davies, Linda Ingram; Dolgellau: Linda Jones; Head Office: Roy Jones.

THE GALE BUSTERS

MANWEB staff worked in the teeth of a gale to restore power to thousands of homes across the region as hurricane force winds swept the country at the end of last month.

Gusts of up to 90 miles per hour were reported, and Manweb's overhead line network was affected by wind blown branches and other debris as well as by uprooted trees being blown onto power lines.

Director, Network Services Howard Kirkham said: "The weather was exceptionally severe, especially in rural districts. Although this led to a number of faults on the network, staff worked long hours to get customers back on supply. Very few people were without power overnight, which is a tribute to the dedication of those concerned."

MOVING THROUGH THE TARIFF MAZE

TARIFFS is a subject which strikes fear into the hearts of many Manweb staff, but that is set to change with the launch of a new booklet, the Tariff Maze, produced by the Pricing Section.

Senior Product Development Analyst Marie Myles developed the booklet with Graduate Trainee (now Pool Development Analyst) Helen Barker.

Explaining the thinking behind the booklet Marie said: "Research in the shops showed that staff in the front line were not confident if customers asked them about tariffs, although the subject was often raised by the public. We needed to present tariff information in a way staff could find their way around easily, and Helen came up with the visual idea of showing a way through the 'maze' of tariffs."

Further research showed that a

BY GRAEME COOPER

lack of confidence about tariffs was common among staff who did not use them as an everyday part of their job, and it was decided to send a working draft of the Tariff Maze to a range of people throughout Manweb to gauge its usefulness.

Marie said: "We had very positive feedback from the shops and the Company as a whole. We've tried to keep the booklet light-hearted to make what can be a very complicated subject more friendly."

Readers are guided through the Tariff Maze by an amiable character named Econo Mick. En route such thorny issues as energy costs, transmission and distribution charges and fixed charges are

explained.

Briefing Notes and a reader Feedback Section go with the Tariff Maze booklet to make up a comprehensive training package which will prevent people from panicking when customers ask about tariffs.

Marie said: "It's important to show customers that our tariffs give value for money, and if we don't explain this clearly to the people who work for us that message isn't going to get across."

With totally free competition in electricity supply scheduled for 1998 customers are going to be asking more and more questions about what they get for their money, and if Manweb's staff can point the way through the Tariff Maze it can only be good for business.

If anyone is interested in receiving a copy of the Tariff Maze package please contact Pricing on Head Office extension 2805.



Marie (right) and Helen are pictured with The Tariff Maze.



Energy efficient solutions on show

MANWEB showed how electricity can provide solutions to heating problems when Energy Marketing exhibited at the Welsh Federation Housing Association's Symposium and Exhibition.

Held at Llandudno's Aberconwy Centre, the symposium was titled Housing Towards the Year 2000, and featured speakers including Margaret Simey from the Liverpool Housing Trust, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales Gwilym Jones, leading architect Bill Reed, the Most Reverend Alwyn Rice Jones, Bishop of St Asaph, and Housing for Wales Chief Executive Adam Peat.

The conference provided an opportunity for Manweb to meet important housing providers, and outline the advantages of electrical systems.

Manweb's stand was manned by Wales Energy Sales Account Managers Chris Jones and Tony Owen and Manweb's involvement was organised by Energy Marketing Engineer Roger Glover from Head Office.

Roger said: "Housing associations face some major problems in providing low cost affordable accommodation for people who are often living on limited incomes. Electric space and water heating and ventilation systems can provide energy efficient low cost solutions to some of these problems, and the symposium gave us an opportunity to further improve the good relationship we have with the Welsh Federation."

Roger is pictured at the exhibition with WFHA Marketing Manager Sian Callaghan.

GROUP TRUSTEES ELECTED

IN the recent election of Group Trustees in the Manweb section of the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme the following members were elected:

Industrial Employees
Mr Roland S Sands (re-elected)
Mr David S Hughes

Industrial Pensioner
Mr Frederick A Rose (re-elected)

These three members will hold office as Group Trustees until December 31 1995.

CHIEF PRAISES IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

By
JACKIE UNSWORTH

THE number of complaints about Manweb to the Office of Electricity Regulation has continued to tumble, reaching an all-time low of just 25 in December.

At the same time, payments for failure to meet guaranteed standards are moving in the same direction, falling to 36 in December compared with 136 during September 1992.

Congratulations

"These statistics show a tremendous all round performance," said Manweb's Chief Executive John Roberts, who has written to District Managers and Regional Managers asking them to pass on his congratulations to all staff.

"I am delighted with the results we have achieved," added Mr Roberts, who urged all employees to "keep up the good work and make our performance in 1993 even better".

Complaints about Manweb to OFFER have been falling steadily in recent months, from 97 in September, 60 in October, 48 in November and then 25 in December.

This is largely due to improvements in the level of service we provide and also in the way we handle complaints

A hit with the village people

NORTH Wirral Network Services staff worked long hours in bad weather to ensure everything was ready for Manweb to take over supplying power to Bromborough Pool Village (see story, page 8).

As well as updating 90 service connections a new high voltage supply had to be run into the village's substation.

Two jointing teams worked on the site. Under Foreman Bob Wales were Joiner Brian Gibson and Joiner's Mate Paul Letts, and Joiner Derek Norman and Mate Derry Cloney. As well as the cabling work security 'bubbles' needed fitting to the meters, and this was carried out by Meter Fixer Gary Skulthorpe.

Both the high and low voltage work were supervised by Projects Engineer John Pickard. Service Coordinator Duncan Jones ensured that everything at the office end ran smoothly.

made direct to Manweb. Fewer customers are finding it necessary to take their complaints further.

Two districts — North

Mersey and Oswestry — did particularly well during December, having to make NO Standards of Service Payments for the third month running.

Mr Roberts has written to District Managers Terry Keenan and Mike Jones asking them to forward his congratulations to their staff for achieving such high standards of customer service.

He said: "The performance of these two Districts is outstanding and deserves particular praise."



WEARING one of his other hats as Chairman of the Customer Focus Steering Group, Manweb's Director Network Services Howard Kirkham recently presented the Company's Facilitators with their 'certificates of completion' for delivering the Achieving Extraordinary Customer Relations programme.

Awarded by Kaset International, the American company that devised the course for the whole Manweb workforce, the certificates were presented during a meeting to discuss various Customer Focus initiatives taking place.

Mr Kirkham also discussed a number of issues raised by employees during AECR courses, via the 'car park' facility. Staff are able to anonymously

lodge their concerns about barriers to providing good customer service, and these comments are passed on to senior management to deal with.

Not all the Facilitators were available to receive their certificates from Mr Kirkham, and those not present at the meeting were awarded them at a later date.

Pictured at the presentation are (back row, l-r) Customer Service Training Coordinator Gary Williams, Mark Hollowood, Jean Shaw, Howard Kirkham, Anne Marie McKenna, Bob Blair, Roy Jones and Angela Meredith. (Front row, l-r) Glyn Jones, Karen Martin, David Roberts, Martin Williams, Amanda Nelson and Pat Hunt.

Awards follow customer care course

New sound system for all districts

By
ROB SKINNER

SINCE October 1992, Manweb has been installing a new FM VHF Private Mobile Radio (PMR) system for all Network Services district users. The PMR is now installed and working in five districts, North Mersey, Liverpool, Mid Mersey, Dee Valley and North Wirral.

Derek Graham, Engineer, Telecommunications Network, is pictured (left) putting the new radio into operation, in a North Mersey vehicle, the first region to be changed over. He is joined by Tony Brierly, band five craftsman.

District radio users are undergoing training which coincides with the radio changeover in each district.

Each three hour course contains an introductory slide presentation, followed by a feedback session and video outlining the procedures behind making each call. The trainees then have a chance to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice on



one of the test mobiles available in the training room.

So far there are over 500 users on the new system. The other five Manweb districts are due for implementation over the next twelve months.

Once the PMR is up and running throughout the Manweb region, users can expect many advantages over the old one. For the first time they will have a single communication device, through which they can contact any other user or Manweb District Office, and subsequently anybody on the British Telecom Network.

SAFETY



BRIAN'S AIMING FOR BEST SAFETY RECORD



MID Mersey District has appointed a full-time Safety Officer. Former Service Refurbishment Supervisor Brian Waugh is now masterminding a programme of health and safety improvements for his colleagues.

His ultimate goal is to achieve seven-star rating for the district under the International Safety Rating System. Mid

Mersey currently has three-star status.

Brian is pictured (left) receiving his National General Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health from Manweb's Chief Executive John Roberts, after recently completing an Open Learning course at St Helens community College.

He is now studying for a Diploma in the same subject at

Manchester College of Art.

Brian has long had an interest in health and safety matters, and was safety representative for his union, the EEPTU. He said: "It is my intention to make sure Mid Mersey District has the best safety record in Manweb. We're somewhere in the middle at the moment, so there are some big improvements to make, but it can be done if I can get people

to think 'safety'."

Father-of-three Brian, 36, who lives in St Helens, joined Manweb in 1986 as a Contracting Electrician and after training became Statutory Inspector in the Commercial Department. A member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Brian has also been Secretary of the local Shop Stewards Committee.

BY
COLIN HERBERT
Corporate Health and Safety Manager

ALL RIGHT IN SAFETY SEARCH

MANY readers entered our Safety Search Competition in December and I'm pleased to inform you that all the entries were correct. It meant the final decision on the winner rested on the tiebreaker slogan.

There were some very interesting ideas, especially from some of our retired colleagues. But the outright winner was Mr K Jones, of Bangor, with the slogan: "Look

and Plan, Be Safe With the Man", which the three of us in Corporate Health and Safety felt was in keeping with the current Manweb slogan and also had a good safety message. He wins a bottle of champagne and a personal stereo.

Efforts

We were also very impressed with the efforts of one of our younger readers, 11-year-old Julie Astall, from Higher Whitley, Cheshire, whose slogan was: "Safety First Makes Everyone Last". For this excellent contribution we are sending her a personal stereo.

Children's teach-in

FLASHBACK is the name of the new safety video for seven to 11-year-olds. It was launched recently in London by Understanding Electricity, part of the Electricity Association. The film replaces 'Play Safe', which was made well over a decade ago and has been a truly remarkable film for youngsters on electrical safety.

The new film is quite different in its format. It contains no animation as 'Play Safe' did, and is considerably longer. The video's aims are to encourage a healthy respect amongst children for the power of electricity without creating undue anxiety, to show the circumstances in which the main types of accidents involving power supply equipment occur, how these can be avoided and what action to take in an emergency.

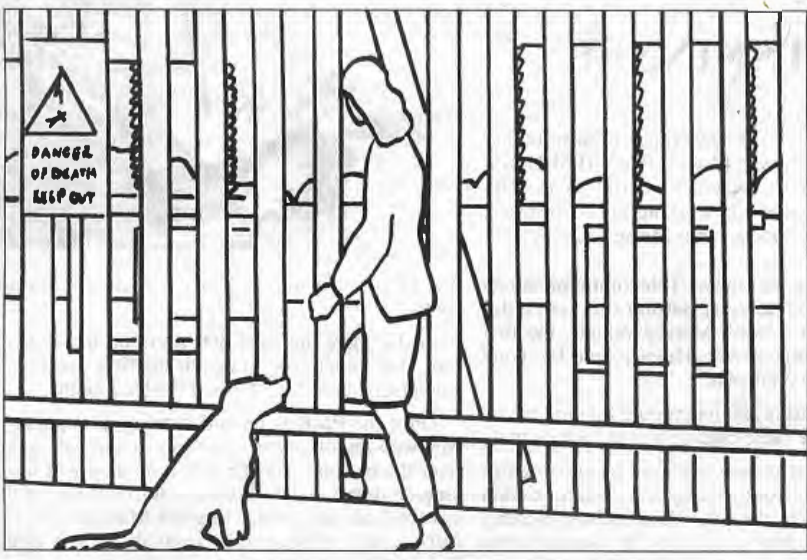
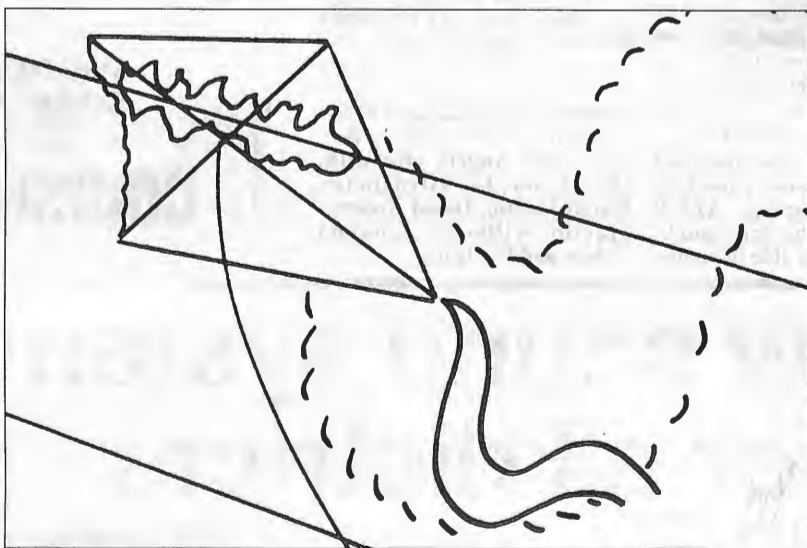
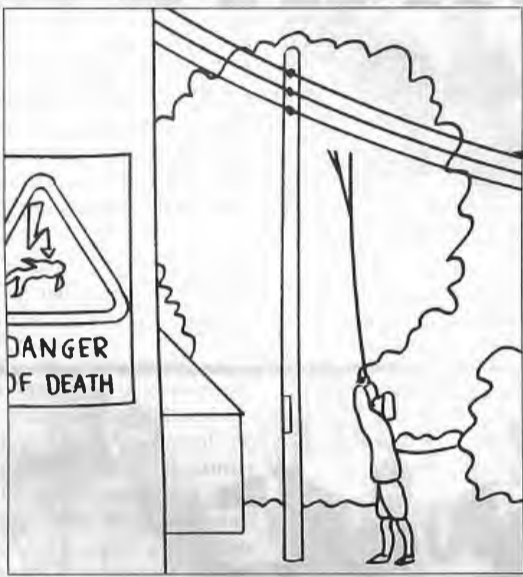
Discovery

In line with the National Curriculum, it aims to teach some basic points about the nature of electricity and the history of its discovery.

The video has support material — three posters, teachers' notes and a colouring in leaflet. It will be on general release in the very near future, but in the meantime anyone wishing to borrow a copy can do so from the Safety Video Library in the Corporate Health and Safety Section at Head Office.

CHILDREN'S CHANCE TO WIN A PRIZE

● CHILDREN aged 10 years and under can win a special prize by colouring in the four pictures reproduced here from Understanding Electricity's 'Flashback' Leaflet. Once you have coloured them in, using any medium, send them to: Colouring Competition, Contact, Room 5E1, Manweb plc, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, making sure you include your name, age and address. Prizes will be awarded to the winner and runner-up.



Dee Valley pioneers



Health & Safety experts at Dee Valley, (l-r), Chris Smith, Corwen Safety Rep, Peter Elphee, Foreman Committee Rep, Arthur Hughes, Health & Safety Coordinator, Malcolm Fowels, Garage Safety Rep, Derek Jackson, Corporate Health & Safety, Head Office, Fred Huxley, Safety Rep, Nigel Evans, Safety Rep, Geda Jones, LJCC Rep, Bob Norfolk, Safety Rep.

A SAFE work place is a healthy work place! That is the message from Arthur Hughes, Dee Valley Health & Safety Coordinator, who is pioneering to improve the levels of Health & Safety in the District.

Manweb has adopted the International Safety Rating System of audit, a measure used by many companies to give a framework of analysis of the standards of Health & Safety within the work place.

Dee Valley currently holds a four star rating, out of a maximum of ten, which is good in Manweb terms, but there is plenty of scope for improvement. Dee Valley is not complacent and Arthur Hughes is working to achieve a five star rating.

As Arthur explained: "With the help of the Head Office Health & Safety staff we have identified five main aspects that we as a District can work to improve. These are, Leadership and Administration, Planned Inspections, Personal Protective Equipment, Group Meetings, and General Promotion."

"In terms of general promotion, we took part in a recent European Health & Safety Week, to generate awareness of the need for Health & Safety in the work place."

As part of this week, there was a meeting of the Health & Safety representatives from throughout Dee Valley, who were addressed by Colin Herbert and Derek Jackson. They outlined each person's role, which is to ensure that accidents are reported, and that all individual projects are completed.

Also that week, John MacDonald, District Manager at Dee Valley made an entire tour of inspection of the districts in terms of Health & Safety. This included Legacy and New Crane Street Depots, and spot checks on overhead lines at Upton, Chester.

On a lighter note, competitions were run to bring people's attention to Health and Safety. People were asked to spot errors in working situations. Prizes were given for the most correct answer.

The pioneering attitude of Dee Valley HESAC members should ensure a safer and brighter future for the District, who are set to come out on top in the field of Health & Safety.



Dee Valley District Manager, John MacDonald, on his line inspection tour at Upton, Chester.

SPEED AND EFFICIENCY — THANKS TO NEW METER SYSTEM

By Rob Skinner

A NEW meter reading system has been fully installed throughout the Manweb region, and is set to speed up the billing process and reduce meter reading errors to give an all round more efficient service.

Manweb is one of four RECs to have adopted similar systems so far. The Mainframe to PC Meter Reading Communication system has now gone into operation in all of Manweb's ten Districts, Liverpool being the last to change. It has replaced the old sheet system on all routine meter readings. Meter readers now use a hand held terminal to record their work and keying in the information at each customer's premises. Then, at the end of the day, all readings are transferred directly to the mainframe, via the PC for customers to be billed.

Ian Basford, Special Projects Manager, Network Services has coordinated the project with the help of Jim Stead and Leo Moylem.

Advantages

Ian said: "Installation of the new system began in February/March 1992 and the first district to be converted was Mid-Mersey. Since then, all Meter Reading staff in all Manweb Districts have been trained to use the hand held terminal, and Network Services foremen trained to transfer the information from hand held terminal onto the mainframe."

The system's advantages mean an overall more efficient service for the customer. It is much quicker than the sheet method, as each day the data collected can go straight onto the mainframe. From there it is transferred straight onto the billing system, making the whole process quicker.

The hand held terminals contain a 'reading range' facility that will detect if an error has been made on the reading, and in such cases will automatically request a second one to be carried out. This substantially reduces the possibility of inaccurate readings.

With the obvious advantages that the new system brings, it looks set to be a sure sign of improvement. North Wirral District are currently experimenting at ways to make the whole process even quicker. On a trial basis, they are supplying meter readers on location with Radio Modem Communication Links, which means that information can be transferred to and from the meter reader immediately.



From the meter...The reading is keyed in to the hand held terminal by Keith Eakins, Meter Reader, observed by customer Karen Critchlow of Woodchurch.



To the main frame...From the hand held terminal, the data is transferred to PC and then onto main frame by North Wirral Foreman, Peter Morley.



Prize treat for school

MANWEB cooked up a treat for a Wrexham special school by donating a microwave oven.

The microwave will be used as a major prize in a forthcoming fund-raising raffle being organised by Powys School in Dodd's Lane, Gwersyllt.

Powys School caters for children and young people aged from two to 19 with severe learning or physical difficulties.

Head Teacher Jim Phillips is pictured (right) receiving the microwave from Gary Thomas, Assistant Manager at Manweb's Wrexham Shop.

Queensferry make it a double first

By
DENNIS FRICKER
Quality Manager

CONGRATULATIONS to the Meter Test Station at Queensferry in achieving Quality Approval to BS5750 Pt 2. This is the second time the Station has been awarded approval and on both occasions it has been at the first attempt.

This time Manweb has also been authorised by the Office of Electricity Regulation (OFFER) to carry out its own Certification and Sealing of single phase meters subject only to sample monitoring by OFFER. George Vose, Quality Assistant and Dave Callister, Quality Foreman, have received OFFER status as Authorised Examiners to certify meters under the independent control of the Quality Manager.

In presenting the certificate Gwilym Evans, OFFER's Deputy Chief Meter Examiner, congratulated the team on their success and commitment to quality which would now have to be maintained. He also warned that OFFER would be increasing its involvement in the handling and installation of meters after the meters had left



the Test Station. Manweb's Director, Network Services Howard Kirkham added his congratulations to Workshop Engineer John Ebbs and his team. Mr Kirkham commented that he was well aware of the

efforts involved in creating and maintaining satisfactory quality, performance, job security and reduced costs.

Howard Kirkham is pictured (centre right) receiving the Quality Approval Certificate

BS5750 Pt 2 from Gwilym Evans, watched by John Ebbs (2nd from left), the staff of the Meter Test Station, members of the OFFER assessment team and Manweb senior management.



SHOWTIME IN WALES

MANWEB Aberystwyth District staff are pictured at the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru, Ceredigion, Aberystwyth. Left to right are Senior Draughtsman John Phillips, Planning Manager Emrys Hughes, Energy Sales Account Manager Tomos Davies, Brychan Davies from Plas Lluest (see below), Customer Service Project Administrator Ursula Byrne (now a Facilitator for Customer Service Training) and Network Services Clerical Assistant Shan Rees.

Manweb continued its tradition of supporting the Eisteddfod, sponsoring the information point, as well as having its own stand for the first

time. Staff from Aberystwyth and other districts also helped run the Eisteddfod as well as participating in events.

Energy Marketing Advertising and Publicity organised a bilingual display, and Welsh brochures and company literature were to the fore, with some English versions tucked away for non-Welsh speakers.

The magnificent floral display was by "A Cause for Concern", Plas Lluest, Aberystwyth — a charitable home for people with a mental disability. Plas Lluest also has the contract to service Aberystwyth District Office's grounds, flower beds and indoor plants.



It was Surprise, Surprise, for Linesman Fred Huxley, when he drove his van into the depot last month.

First came a surprise inspection of his van. Then surprise no.2 ... he was told he had won the Best Kept Van Award.

Fred is the first to win this new competition organised for New Crane Street Depot by Section Manager, Cliff James, involving the Depot's 45 vehicles.

"It will take place about every three months, but the inspections will come without prior warning," said Cliff.

"We are aiming to encourage drivers to keep their vans clean and tidy in the interests of safety. We will be looking for cleanliness, tidiness, and if components are correctly stored."

A further surprise came Fred's way when he realised his win included a £30 donation to his nominated charity — Cancer Research.

The picture shows Fred (right) with District Manager John Macdonald.

**FRED'S
CLEAN
SWEEP
WINS
AWARD**

WILL COMPANY SMOKING POLICY BE REVISED?

Dear Editor

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager's article in last month's Contact about the HSE's revised leaflet giving advice to employers on preventative measures regarding passive smoking, mentions that liability may be imposed where an injured person can show injury was caused by exposure to smoking by fellow smokers.

Could Mr Herbert inform readers of the Company policy on smoking in the work-

place and whether this is planned to be revised?

As I understand it, non-smoking employees are at present at the mercy or whim of smokers who can choose to comply or ignore the current voluntary code of practice. In any case, the current state of affairs means that any non-smoker wanting to use the drinks vending machines must take a deep breath before entering the room and restrict the

number of drinks being obtained to one before running out of breath!

G Kenyon

Public Relations

Going green at less than 70mph

Dear Editor

I recently came across something that might be of interest to all your readers, especially the ones who would like to be 'green' this winter.

When you think of all the drivers that are employed by Manweb, if only half take an interest in the following article from 'Milestones' (winter 1992), we can first save money and also help the environment.

"Don't go up to 70:

A study for the Worldwide Fund for Nature suggested that if the 70mph speed limit was rigor-

ously enforced, Britain would cut its road CO₂ emissions by 2.5 per cent; if a 60mph limit were imposed and enforced the reduction would be 4.6 per cent and at 5.0mph 5.8 per cent. Fuel consumption figures show a vastly better mpg at 56 than 75, which saves on oil (a finite resource), toxic pollutants and your money. Set your own 'green' limit, ideally not more than 60."

B Emberton
Building Section
North Wirral

Corporate Health and Safety Manager Colin Herbert replies:

"Thank you for your very interesting letter. You will be pleased to hear that the subject of a smoking policy for the Company is being discussed at the Manweb Hesac. The current position is that the Trades Unions are putting a paper to the next meeting of the Committee and a policy will be formulated forthwith for the whole of the Company. I will inform Contact readers of the outcome of these discussions."

No discount

Dear Editor

I AM writing to you to air a little grievance. I was employed by the Board for 26 years, time spent with the Engineering Section as a Driver and later years with the Meter Section as a Reader at Crane Street.

I have been retired 10 years. Five years ago my wife and I decided to move to Weston-super-Mare to be nearer to our daughter. A few weeks ago my wife and I visited our local SWEB showroom to make a purchase and I asked for staff concession, but this was refused as I

had moved from Manweb to SWEB's area.

As they are now private companies, this has cancelled the concessions to the pensioners.

There seems to be a motto here — 'If you want to keep your staff discount, don't move from the area which employed you'.

Sorry to be a moaner.

Mr C D Birtles
46 Lansdown Gardens
Worle
Weston-super-Mare

SNAP TO IT

Dear Editor

I HAVE just received by copy of Contact. I will be brief and to the point! No mention of the Contact Photographic Competition in recent issues. Does this mean it is to be phased out?

For years we looked forward to the issues containing the winning entries. This often arrived for us on Christmas Eve, distributed before we departed from Lister Drive for the Christmas holidays.

Maybe there is a reason for the lack of information. Is it curtains for this event?

Ted Elcock (retired)
32 Broughton Hall Road
West Derby
Liverpool
L12 9JS

Editor's note: "It definitely isn't curtains for this popular event, which has been running for many years, and we hope to announce details of the 1993 competition in the next issue. As with last year, we plan to include a special section for Christmas photos."

Drying shame

Dear Editor

THANK YOU very much for the Contact newspaper. I read it from page to page for two reasons. Firstly, I am very interested in Manweb work and social procedures. Secondly, and most of all, because I feel the pleasure of contact with my dear 'lost' husband Frank Tomlinson. I used to read the Contact items to him.

A am writing now because I found myself considering, after a bath, that a hot air fixture would be a blessing. This thought occurred because I found it difficult to bend and dry my feet. I am 71 1/2 years of age.

Possibly there may be such an item on the market. If not, and I know a warm air item for hand drying is in current use, one to dry oneself after a bath or shower would be a blessing to an elderly or disabled person.

It would make it so much easier for anyone having to dry a

disabled person. I would certainly have valued a hot air fixture when I was nursing my dear husband and needed to bath him.

Possibly, Editor, you are young and will not know, sufficiently, how awkward it is to dry oneself when hands have aching joints and one's back has disc trouble in the spinal column. I hope you are not personally aware of such pains and aches.

Well, I hope I have not wasted your time with this letter. In fact I would be most pleased if such an item as a warm air body dryer had never been made and Manweb was able to profit from the idea.

Until then, I wish you, all your fellow workers of Manweb, at Chester and Bridle Road particularly, a happy, healthy and profitable New Year.

Mrs Muriel Tomlinson
Liverpool
(full address supplied)

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BY
ROB SKINNER

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This impressive sale of gas demonstrates the team's success in what is a relatively new market. Major customers such as National Museums and Galleries of Liverpool, Liverpool University, and the whole of the Owen Owen group have signed Gas contracts with Manweb Gas, through their local Account Managers at Energy Sales Merseyside.

Additionally, the team is striving to build positive relationships with possible future clients, such as the Merseyside Task Force, local authorities, The Housing Corporation, and other major housing associations such as Merseyside Improved Houses, Liverpool Housing Trust and Cooperative Development Services.

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The regeneration of Merseyside has thankfully started, and the Energy Sales team has adopted a positive outlook on bringing new life into the area.

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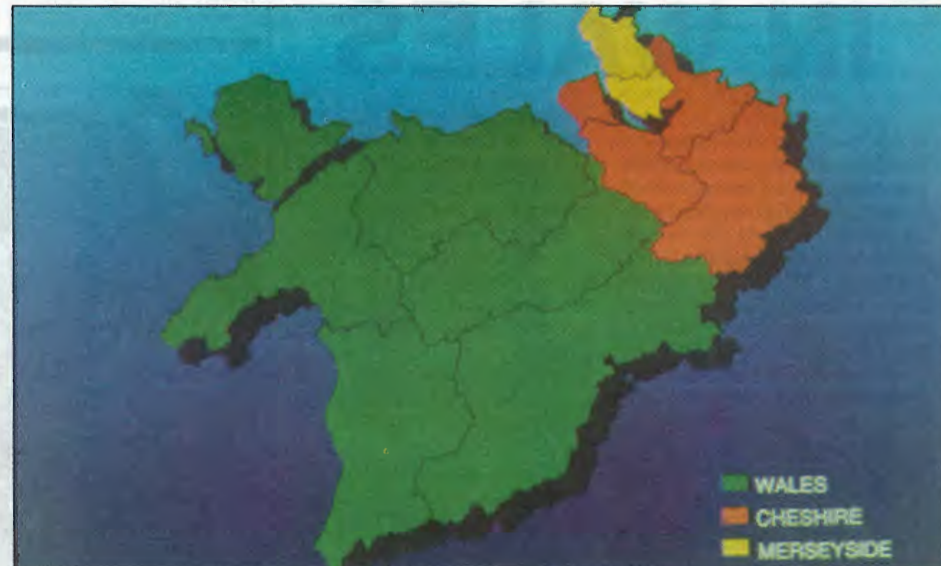
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With the vast number of high rise flats in Liverpool, this has become another major area regeneration.

Energy Sales Merseyside is working hand-in-hand with the Liverpool Housing Action Trust their consultants, and tenants, to refurbish 67 tower blocks over the next seven years, at a cost of £130m.

As experts in designing insulation and heat systems, the team can ensure that tenants will enjoy more comfortable conditions, with affordable heating in the future.

Their other successes in this field of regenerat



A Manweb Energy Sales overview, with the Merseyside Area in Yellow.

YOUR VIEW

DO you have a view you'd like to share or an opinion you'd like to air? Then why not drop us a line?

Write to: The Editor, Contact, Room 5E1, Manweb plc, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, making sure you include your name and address or work location. All letters are dealt with in strict confidence and your name can, upon request, be withheld.

There's a free Parker Rollerball pen for every letter published (offer applies to staff, retired employees and their families only).

The Energy Fagan, Jan Len Dorr, J

POP'S ON SONG

A NEW purchase order system — Purchase Order Processing (better known as POP) — fizzes into operation on Monday, February 22 and will replace the existing systems known as GORD, GBUL, GRNS and GINV.

A small project team drawing together experience from Finance, Network Services Purchasing and Trading Division has been set up, consisting of myself, Martin Hampstead (Purchasing), Graeme Jones (Finance), Lisa Darlington (Trading) and Hilary Davies (Purchasing). The team has been bubbling alone, refining, testing and preparing the order processing part of the system for implementation.

In addition the existing invoice processing system will be changing, and to this end Ian West, Creditors Payments Manager, assisted by Administrative Assistant Geoff Litterer, has been involved in the implementation of the Purchase Ledger (PL) side of the system.

By

PAUL ROSENBERG,
Project Manager,
Purchase Order Processing

The system offers increased functionality over the present facilities and meets requirements of EC legislation. As part of the OLAS (On-Line Accounting Systems) suite it integrates with Manweb's general ledger system, and a significant advantage over the present ordering systems will be the on-line updating of the ledger files. There will also be the facility to monitor purchasing expenditure against budgets from the commit-

ment stage through to the completion of the work. Liverpool District together with Human Resources and Public Relations at Head Office have been piloting the system since late

November last year, and this has provided live experience.

User training, including the familiarisation of managers with the authorisation and enquiry process, is being carried out in Head Office and Districts. After main implementation the system will be maintained by an administrative unit which will be known as POP Admin. In addition to providing system users with a help and support facility it will also arrange for any enhancements/updates to be made to the system.



WARPED KINDNESS

A big thank you was handed out to Manweb staff recently by Secretary Julia Kelly on behalf of her WARPED friends.

Julia, of Pricing Section, was delighted with the response to her pre-Christmas call for toys for the annual toy run organised by WARPED (Wirral Association of Riders, Pillions, Extraterrestrials and Dwarfs).

"It was magnificent," said Julia. "We had a car load of toys,

mainly donated by staff at Head Office and North Wirral.

The toy run, which Julia, a motor cyclist herself, and a member of WARPED, helped to organise, involved 170 of her motor cycling colleagues. They later rode around the area to deliver this seasonal toy tonic to children in Arrowe Park Hospital and other hospitals in the area.

"We are striving to make the event a continuing success, and I am sure we can, especially with the generosity shown by Manweb people," said Julia, who is pictured above (seated on motorcycle).



END OF LINE

IT was the end of the line for Dee Valley Linesman George Brown when he recently took early retirement. George, 51, who was based at New Crane Street, had completed 31 years' service in the electricity supply industry.

Also based at New Crane Street, Enhanced Craftsman Colin Bowyer has taken early retirement from Manweb after completing 38 years' service. Colin, 53, started his career as an Apprentice Electrician and after qualifying was made an Installation Inspector.

District Manager John Macdonald is pictured (centre) wishing Colin Bowyer (to his left) and George Brown (to his right)

best wishes for the future during a joint retirement presentation. Also pictured are Mrs Carol Brown and Mrs Margaret Bowyer, who received flowers, and colleagues from Dee Valley District.

* Three more Dee Valley staff took early retirement at the end of December, a fourth left at the end of January and a fifth is due to leave this month.

Mrs Marion Jones, who had clocked up a total 29 years' service, was a Typist in the Central Services Section at Rhostyllen, while Mrs Val Noble, who originally worked for Midlands Electricity but transferred to Manweb in 1977, worked in the Accounts Department at the District Office. She had completed 20 years' serviced.

Gareth Bowyer, a Chargehand Joiner in the Civil Department at Rhostyllen, had worked in the ESI for 16 years, while Clerical Assistant Ron Ball, who left on January 31, had completed 20 years' service. Ron, who started out in the Commercial Work Control Unit at Rhostyllen, was transferred to New Crane Street Depot in 1980 to provide clerical support for the meter readers.

Linesman Conway Evans, who retires on February 13 aged 65, joined the industry 38 years ago, starting out as a Labourer.

Baby talk

CONGRATULATIONS to Dee Valley District Manager John Macdonald and his wife Catherine on the birth of their son James Simon on December 21 1992. Mother, son and father are all doing well!

Also celebrating are Elizabeth Maddocks, a Clerk within the Services Section at Rhostyllen, and Dee Valley Linesman David Andrew Jones (better known as 'Tosh'), who became engaged on Christmas Eve.



Merseyside Team, contributing to the regeneration of Liverpool. From left to right, Mark Bowers, Howard Keating, Jitu Barua, Ian Birch, Cliff Haviland, Alan Davidson, David Hayes, Fitzgerald, Ian Cross, William Haspery, Stephen Lang, Pauline McGillis.

NG OVER UCCESS

include a new heating system design for six blocks of flats at Sefton. The design was originally administered by John Shead at Warrington, and has also created £2.5m of work for Manweb Contracting Services.

Liverpool Waterfront

Nowhere on Merseyside is the symbol of regeneration more evident than on the Liverpool Waterfront, and the area Energy Sales team can boast several successes along the River Mersey.

At Wapping and Waterloo, two Barratt luxury apartment developments are heated by electric storage heaters, part of a system designed by the Energy Sales team.

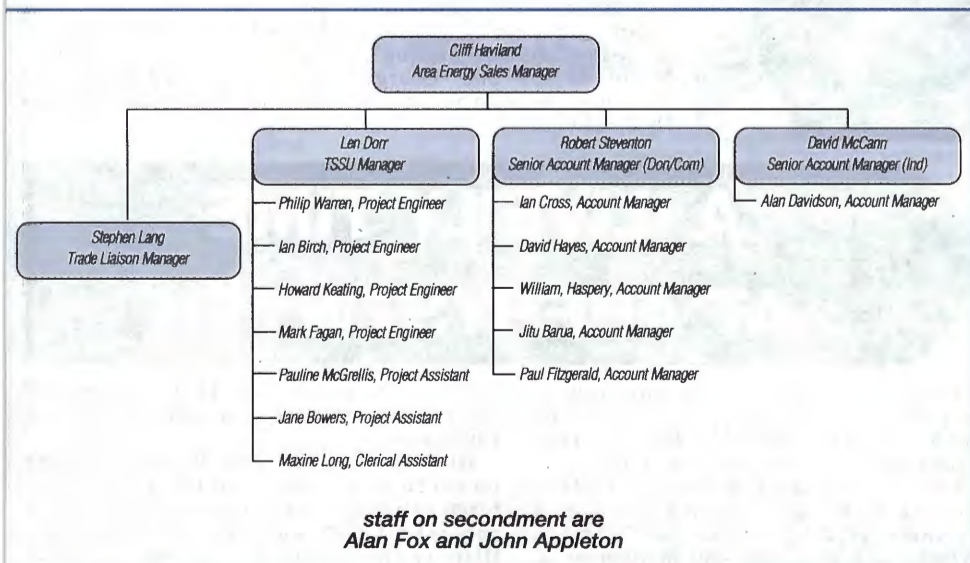
At the Albert Dock Village, the team was responsible for the design and commissioning of night-store boilers and Wet radiator systems for the new Collonade's luxury apartments. In addition,

they have supplied many of the Dock's all electricity restaurants, with specifically designed heating systems.

The Skillion Centre, the new Dolby Hotel and the Campanile Hotel are all now using popular, controllable electric heating systems, designed by the team.

And it's not all electric! The Merseyside Maritime Museum and the Liverpool Tate Gallery are now supplied with Gas, on a contract signed through one of the local account managers.

Through the regeneration of Liverpool, Energy Sales Merseyside has many opportunities to explore all aspects of Energy Sales in the Region, while helping to create a better living and working environment. By boosting the region's prosperity, the new team can hope to increase the prosperity of Manweb, its customers, employees and shareholders.



Manweb Energy Sales Liverpool.

LONG SERVICE

CONGRATULATIONS to the following long serving Manweb staff who have clocked up 20, 30 or 40 years' service in recent months.

40 years: Oswestry — Elvet Woosnam, Driver (now retired).

30 years: Head Office — Norman Keith Brooks, 3rd Engineer, Graham Lewis, Foreman, Peter Owen, 1st Engineer; North Mersey — Vincent O'Sullivan, Craftsman Jointing; Liverpool — Ron Burgess, Planning Manager, Harry Robertson, 2nd Engineer; Dee Valley — Dave Molloy, Engineer; North Wirral — John Fitch, Craftsman Jointing.

20 years: Head Office — Malcolm William Fowles, Mechanical Fitter, Pamela Powell, Clerical Assistant, Adrian Hendry, Principal Assistant, David Buchanan, Executive Officer, James Schofield, Foreman, Sheila Fennah, Data Prep Operator, Robert Foulds, Admin Assistant, Kathleen McHugh, Clerk, Geoff Ryan, 2nd Engineer; Mid Mersey — Dorothy Rhoden, Sales Assistant, St Helens Shop; Dee Valley — Val Noble, Clerical Assistant, John Evans, DRC Attendant, Malcolm Griffiths, Driver; Mid Cheshire — Geoff Willcock, Customer Service Executive, Jim Catterall, Mechanic, Norma Daniels, Cleaner, Northwich Shop; Clwyd — Glyn Jones, Flint Shop Manager, Ann Roberts, Clerk; Gwynedd — Hefin Thomas, Admin Assistant, Charles Jones, Storekeeper; Oswestry — Mike Norton, Engineer, Molly Broadhurst, Sales Assistant, Whitchurch Shop, Peter Corfield, Drawing Office Supervisor;

Aberystwyth — Geraint Howells, Network Services Administration; Customer Information Centre Region 1 — Ruth Moore, Customer Information Centre Representative; Customer Information Centre Region 2 — Kevin Mawdsley, Regional Customer Accounts Manager.

* In a previous issue, long serving employee Doug Jones was wrongly described as Principal Auditor, when his correct title was 3rd Engineer at Hoylake.

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**BY
ROB SKINNER**



The Energy Sales Merseyside Team, contributing to the regeneration of Liverpool. From left to right, Mark Fagan, Jane Bowers, Howard Keating, Jitu Barua, Ian Birch, Cliff Haviland, Alan Davidson, David Hayes, Len Dorr, Paul Fitzgerald, Ian Cross, William Hasperly, Stephen Lang, Pauline McGillis.

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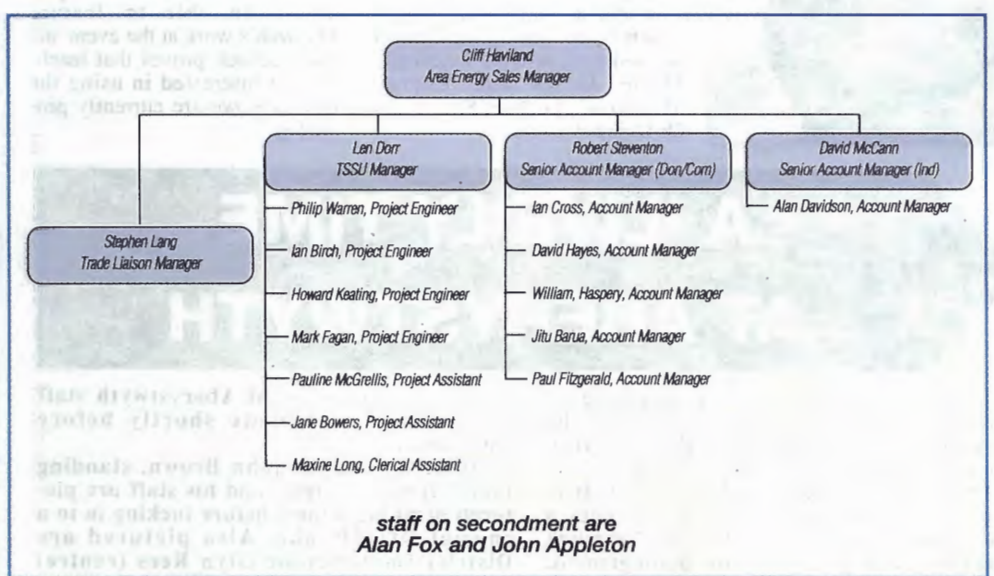
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TURNING OVER TO SUCCESS



A Manweb Energy Sales overview, with the Merseyside Area in Yellow.



Manweb Energy Sales Liverpool.

Putting you in the PICTURE



★ **DISABLED** young residents at a Clwyd home were left in a spin when their washing machine broke down...until Manweb came to the rescue.

The company ended their washday blues by donating a brand new appliance to 'Eithinog' Leonard Cheshire Home in Colwyn Bay.

Manweb's Clwyd District Manager John Hampson is pictured (right) showing Chris Elliott and the Home's Fundraiser Rachel Denyer how to use the new washing machine.



LIGHTING UP TIME FOR VILLAGERS

MANWEB, UML and Merseyside Improved Houses are pictured lighting up Bromborough Pool Village where 90 properties are now receiving Manweb mains electricity for the first time.

Locally-based company UML had previously supplied power direct from its own station next to the village, and a special switch over event was arranged for Bromborough Pool's residents with

Merseyside Improved Houses — a housing association which owns the village and surrounding land.

Pictured with local children are Manweb Director, Power Marketing Colin Leonard (holding switch, centre right), Manweb Project Assistants Pam Wild (3rd from right, back row), Karen Lummis (6th from right, back row) and Area Energy Sales Manager John Shead (2nd from right).



PRIZE GIFT

MID Cheshire Customer Service Manager Alison Eakins (right) presents a microwave oven to

Pam Bond, Co-ordinator of the local charity Crossroads Care.

Crossroads provides respite care to people who look after others with disabilities or care for their loved ones at home. The microwave will be used as a prize in a fund-raising raffle during the spring.

OLD FOLKS CHEER



CLWYD staff and retired colleagues played Santa to people less fortunate than themselves when they helped deliver some Christmas cheer.

Festive goodies, such as Christmas puddings, chocolates and mince pies, were bought out of the District's Benevolent Society funds, to give to around 50 local folk.

Retired Manweb staff volunteered their time to make up the food parcels, and many offered to deliver the packages.

Pictured putting together the Christmas goodies at Rhyl are retired trio (l-r) Joan Edwards, Jackie Espin and Denis Atkinson.



MANWEB HELPS WITH SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

MANWEB played host to 12 delegates from the National Schools Curriculum Conference held recently in Chester.

The conference was aimed at teachers who use industry and business as a model for economic understanding in schools. The 12 educational professionals who attended Manweb's session were drawn from as far away as London and Brighton.

Organised by Manweb's Education Officer Nigel Charlton, the session comprised workshops run by Pricing's Marie Myles and Energy Marketing's Graham Slatter and Dr David Walker.

In addition, Corporate Health and Safety Manager Colin Herbert and Clwyd County Council Education Inspector Eurwen Hulmston gave a presentation on the development of the 'Power Pack' teaching aid currently being used in Clwyd's primary schools.

Nigel, who is pictured with Angela Davies from Newtown High School, Powys, during the conference said: "I was delighted to be able to feature Manweb's work at the event and the feedback proves that teachers are interested in using the resources we are currently producing."

Housing scheme earns Civic Shield Award

AREA Energy Sales Manager Bill Hatton is pictured (2nd from right) presenting a Civic Area Shield Award to Brian Thomas, Chairman of the Denbigh-based Housing Association Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd, for the high standards of electric heating and insulation at a new housing development.

The opening ceremony for the 12 new properties at Maes yr Esgob, Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, was conducted by local MP Martyn Jones, who is pictured between the two men. On the right of the photo is Manweb Technical Sales Support Manager Fred Houghton.



A 'LIVE'LY TIME AT ABERYSTWYTH

CHAMPAGNE corks were popping in Aberystwyth when staff celebrated the launch of the DOJM Distribution Operational Job Management system.

Aberystwyth is the last Manweb District to go live with DOJM, which provides a fully integrated system for all Network Services work planning and management. Although they were originally programmed to launch the new system in February 1993,

early completion meant Aberystwyth staff were able to celebrate shortly before Christmas.

District Manager John Brown, standing fourth from the right, and his staff are pictured drinking a toast before tucking in to a special DOJM cake. Also pictured are District Implementor Glyn Rees (centre), and, seated to his right, District Administrator Marion Thomson.

A BRIGHTER RECEPTION AT OSWESTRY



Pictured at the official opening of the Oswestry District Customer Services Bureau are, (l-r), Manweb Chief Executive John Roberts, Mayor of Oswestry Borough Brian Chase, Mayoress Helen Case, Oswestry District Manager Mike Jones, and Director Network Services Howard Kirkham.

A NEW look Customer Service Bureau has been opened in Oswestry District following a £120,000 facelift at the Maesbury Road premises.

The Bureau, says Manweb Chief Executive, John Roberts, who was present at the opening, is part of a major drive to improve customer relations, and is complementary to a training programme for all Company staff.

The money was spent mainly on a new reception area designed to put people at ease when discussing problems.

The refurbished Bureau was opened by the Mayor of Oswestry Borough, Councillor Brian Case.

A timely reminder of the opening came in the form of a clock which had been assembled from a kit supplied by Manweb to help in occupational therapy at The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital. As a thank you to the hospital for assembling the clock, Manweb also donated a £100 cheque.



Receiving a cheque for £100 for the Agnes Jones and Robert Hunt Hospital is Graham Smout with (l-r), the Mayor and Mayoress; Derek Williams, also from the hospital, and John Roberts.

JOHN IN PILE-UP DRAMA

WHAT should have been a routine day turned to high drama for a Manweb Linesman when his transit van was involved in a motorway pile-up with a double-decker bus and a lorry carrying deadly substances.

And 'drama' was the right word to describe it, for all the police, fire crews, ambulance staff and other emergency services who raced to the scene were acting out reaction to a simulated disaster.

Co-operation

The mock event was organised by Merseyside Police to test the speed, skills, co-ordination and co-operation of the emergency services in dealing with a serious accident.

Those involved had not been told what to expect, although they knew it would be a major training exercise.

It happened on an unopened stretch of the M62 under construction, near St Helens.

Linesman John Parry of North Mersey Region became a 'victim' at the scene when his District Manager, Terry Keenan volunteered the services of John and his vehicle to help out.

"I had to act as though my transit was in collision with a lorry carrying chemicals," John explained. "It was so realistic and convincing." There were billows of smoke

everywhere, simulating the chemical gases. There were four fatalities and over 20 casualties. It seems that the lorry had blown a tyre and spilled its chemicals. The driver had been killed and John's transit and a bus packed with teenage passengers were caught up in the accident.

Lesson

"It was a very interesting day which taught the emergency services many lessons in how to handle such a situation," said John.

These lessons were later discussed by the emergency services at a special debriefing session.



John Parry (centre) and two other 'victims' after their mock motorway pile-up ordeal.

Association's new Chairman

OSWESTRY and District Retired Staff Association recently held its Annual General Meeting, when a new chairman, Mr W O Jones, was elected.

He proposed a vote of thanks for Mrs E Duffy, the retiring Chairperson. Mrs Duffy had been Secretary and Chairperson in the two years since the Association was formed and her help had been invaluable.

The Secretary, Mrs J Griffiths, reported that the Association had had an interesting year with various outings. The first was to Rheidol Power Station, followed by lunch at Aberystwyth District Office.

The next outing was to Llandudno, followed by a trip to Caernarfon. Lunch was at the District Office, where the visitors enjoyed the lovely view overlooking the river. Members then proceeded to Porthmadog in time for a cup of tea before the return journey.

The August outing was to Cheddar Gorge and Weston-super-Mare, which was very enjoyable, and the final expedition of the year was a Christmas shopping trip to Chester and lunch at Head Office.

A new venture during the year was the initia-

tion of talks on a monthly basis on a variety of subjects. In September Mr Derek Pratt gave a talk on 'What's in a Place Name?' and then in October Mr Roger Cross talked about his 30 years' service in the Police Force in Birmingham.

Three more talks have already been arranged for 1993, starting with Mr Leslie Oppitz speaking about local railways, complete with sound effects. On February 18 Mr Alf Strange will talk about country characters in and around the Smithy, and on March 18 Eric and Kath Crane will be entertaining members with a talk about their teaching adventures in New Zealand, Fiji and Tonga. They give talks to raise money for the Christian Aid Water Project in Mali, West Africa.

An early summer holiday is also in the pipeline, depending on support from members, to Croyde Bay in North Devon.

New and old members are always welcome at the meetings and it is a chance to renew acquaintances. If you wish to join, the annual fee is £1.50 and this should be sent to the Treasurer, Mr H Gwilliam, 13 Croeswylan Crescent, Oswestry. Any suggestions for future outings and activities would be most welcome as the Secretary is rapidly running out of ideas.

Director praises project presentations

NETWORK Services graduate trainees cleared their final hurdle in completing their engineering training and moved into their first job.

This was achieved by project presentations given to an invited

and critical audience including the Director and Chief Engineer together with section managers.

The presentation topics were 'Protection for Small Generators', Dave Kelly; 'The Effect of Fibre Contamination in

Insulating Oil', Jason Morgan; 'Extracting Management Information from the Geographic Information Database', Ian Hayes; 'The Effects of Connecting Small Generators to Long 11kV Lines', Eric Bell;

'Outdoor Substation Bus Bar Protection', Andrew Firth; 'Use of Hand Held Computer Terminals for Improving Customer Service in a Revised Service Alteration Procedure', Phil Baldwin.

Speaking to the trainees, Director Network Services Howard Kirkham said: "I was impressed with the standard of presentations you made, it is not easy to condense a long and involved project into a short relevant presentation and you all achieved that very well. I was particularly impressed that all the projects were very relevant to the various technical issues we are implementing at the moment in the division."



Pictured (l-r) are Dave Kelly, Andrew Firth, Jason Morgan, Eric Bell, Phil Baldwin, Howard Kirkham, Ian Hayes, Chief Engineer John Turner and Purchasing and Services Manager Geoff Abel.

Computer contract to improve services

MANWEB has awarded Ferranti International of Manchester a contract worth in excess of £4m to provide a state-of-the-art computer system for managing the distribution of power within the Merseyside and North Wales region.

Manweb is the second Regional Electricity Company to place a contract with Ferranti for a distribution network management system. This new business has been created as the newly privatised companies invest in new equipment to improve efficiency and increase flexibility in the supply and distribution of electrical power.

In announcing the award of the contract to Ferranti Manweb's Director, Network Services Mr Howard Kirkham said: "We are determined to keep on improving our services to all our customers."

"This new management system for the Manweb distribution network will significantly improve our remote control capability and provide the information to improve the management of the network."

"It will provide the basic infrastructure to meet the demands of our customers into the next century and will keep us at the forefront of this new technology. We are delighted to be working with Ferranti on this important project."

Make a date

A VARIED and entertaining programme of events is in the pipeline for members of the Manweb (Chester and Head office) Retired Staff Association during 1993.

Following a visit to the Catalyst Museum at Widnes and lunch at the Gateway to Wales Hotel on January 20, the next event planned is a guided tour of Liverpool and afternoon tea at Thornton Hough WI Pavilion February 17.

On March 24, the group will head for Kendal, and their tour will include a visit to the 'K-Shoe' Shop. Then, from April 15 to 19, members will embark on a coach tour to the Netherlands, visiting the bulb fields. A small number of vacancies for this trip exist, and anyone interested should contact Mr or Mrs Austin on 0244 347762.



PRIZE PAIR

BRIGHT ideas earned a pair of Manweb employees some super prizes in a recent Contact competition aimed at reducing our energy consumption.

Eric Clayton, a shift electrician at Warrington, won the first prize, a microwave oven, for his suggestion to use passive infrared detectors to control the lights in corridors and washrooms. Energy savings of up to 50 per cent can be obtained from the use of this type of lighting control.

John Humphreys, who works in the DRC at Clwyd District, came up with a similar suggestion for infra-red detectors and was presented with a plug-in timer and some energy efficient light bulbs.

Both Eric's and John's prizes should help them to be more energy efficient in their own homes.



'Bright Ideas' winner Eric Clayton (left) receives his microwave oven from Mid Mersey District Manager Barry Judd.



Bright spark John Humphreys (right) is presented with his prize by Derek Roberts, Energy Sales Senior Account Manager, Industrial.

John digs in at tree time

DEE Valley District Manager John Macdonald is pictured doing a spot of spadework at a recent tree planting ceremony to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.

A total 40 trees paid for by Manweb were planted on the site at Dodleston, during National Tree Week. The project was carried out in partnership with Cheshire County Council, Cheshire Parish Tree Warden Scheme, Dodleston Parish Council and the Tree Council.

Pictured helping John Macdonald to plant one of the young trees are Mr Phil Redican, Deputy Head of Cloughwood School, Tree Warden Mrs Jeannie Moorcroft and Cloughwood pupils Matthew Thurston and Robert Rolfe.



Manweb Chairman Bryan Weston is pictured (2nd from left) drawing one of the lucky tombola winners, with (to his left) EEIBA Secretary David Lucas, an Accountant in the Finance Department at Head Office, and (l-r) EEIBA Committee Members Alan Davison, Tom Jones (Chairman of the Social Executive Committee), Jack Buck and Alan Munnerley.

LUNCH SERVES OVER 2000

MANWEB helped the Electrical and Electronics Industries Benevolent Association raise over £2,000 during a fund-raising Christmas lunch at the Lord Daresbury Hotel, Warrington.

"The grand tombola was the main fund-raising attraction and a special thanks goes to those companies that donated a vast array of quality prizes," said Manweb Chairman Bryan Weston, who is also Chairman of the local EEIBA.

Thanks also went to TV star Vince Earle, who plays Ron Dixon

in the Channel 4 soap 'Brookside', for helping to auction a mountain bike and present prizes.

The EEIBA is a charitable foundation set up over 80 years ago to care for employees in the industry who require special care and support. The local branch is driven by volunteers from companies in the area. During the past year funds have been raised through an Annual Ball, Grand National Draw, Golf Tournament and through the Prize Draw Club

TAKING STOCK

By Geoff Standing

In 'Taking stock' this month we look at the 'ups' and 'downs' of Manweb plc's share priced from October 1992 to early January 1993, and discuss some of the factors that could have contributed to these trends.

The movement in the FT-SE 100 index during this period is also shown. The graph shows that the FT-SE 100 index increased steadily over this period from 2557 to 2861, before falling back towards the end. Since August 1992 the FT-SE 100 index has risen from 2300 to 2861, an increase of 24 per cent! This upsurge in the market is mainly a result of falling interest and inflation rates, and the expectation of recovery from the recent 'recession'.

Following the upward and downward trends on the graph:

(a) Upward Trend Rise of 25 pence

Following the recent decrease from 10 per cent to 9 per cent on September 22, the base rate decreased again to 8 per cent on October 16, and there was encouraging news of the prospect of a further decrease. See separate note on relationship between share prices and interest rates.

(b) Downward Trend Fall of 19 pence

Some Brokers were predicting that lower inflation meant that the RECs level of dividend increase could not be sustained and that the year's forecast of a 13 per cent increase was likely to be only 10 per cent.

Other electricity stock watchers added that political considerations would also overhang the rate of dividend increase with the RECs being put under pressure to rein in the rise until the controversy over pit closures blew over.

(c) Upward Trend Rise of 65 pence

The share price rose sharply over this period. Worries over dividend increases were short lived, the share price climbed steadily. A further interest rate cut was expected, and happened on November 13. The base rate was cut from 8 per cent to 7 per cent.

The last time the base rate was below 7.5 per cent was in 1977!

The relatively high yield of the REC's shares was again attracting investors.

(d) Downward Trend Fall of 46 pence

Several factors influenced the downward trend during this period.

The decision was announced by the RECs not to 'float' the National Grid during 1993/94 (The RECs between them own all the share capital in The National Grid Company plc, and Manweb plc holds 5.5 per cent of the shares).

Some of the increase in the share price since the election had been attributed to the hopes of a floatation of NGC plc. 'Floating' NGC plc would create a similar shareholder profile to the RECs with many thousands of 'private shareholders' owning shares. This would virtually have made certain that central government could not bring the National Grid back into state ownership or 'control', with all the implications that this might have had for the RECs.

The share price also fell amid the unsettling influence created by the government's Select Committee which made a suggestion that the RECs may have to bear the cost of supporting the coal industry in Britain, if the generating companies are forced to take on higher volumes of British Coal in future.

There was also a general move by investors out of the Utility sector into 'recovery shares', ie shares that had fallen sharply during the recent recession and were expected to show good increases upon a recovery from the recession. This also helped explain the opposing rise in the FT-SE 100 index (which is made up of several 'recovery stocks') during this period.

(e) Upward Trend Rise of 38 pence

Manweb plc announced its 1992/93 half year results on December 9. The results were in line with expectations and the share price hardly moved on the day.

The shares went 'ex-div' on December 14 and, as would be expected, fell 6.5 pence. The interim dividend is 6.1 pence.

(Side note: on December 15 Welsh Water plc sold its 14.9 per cent stake in South Wales Electricity plc which created quite a splash in the market. South Wales' share price was largely unaffected, falling 8 pence on the day. There were plenty of buyers.)

It was rumoured that at last there was a deal between the generating companies and British Coal, together with possible long-term price agreement between the generators and the RECs.

Meanwhile the FT-SE 100 index was falling, among fears that the government may be forced into making unpopular tax changes, poor profit announcements from some large companies in the index, and the renewal of hostilities in the Gulf.

REC prices rose as Investors looked for 'safe havens' in a falling market, and a shortage of Manweb stock contributed to a rise in its share price.

If you have any further queries on these matters, your professional advisor, bank, tax office or building society will probably be best placed to help you.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHARE PRICES AND INTEREST RATES

Share prices tend to be inversely proportional to interest rates. i.e. As interest rates fall, share prices tend to rise and vice versa.

This is because, given that a company's dividend is usually reasonably predictable (by analysts etc), then so the yield (dividend divided by share price) can be predicted:

eg if the share price today of XYZ Limited is 500 pence, and the dividend expected in the next 12 months is 20 pence (gross), then the expected yield (gross dividend yield) on the shares of that company is 4 per cent (20/500 x 100 per cent).

Ignoring any material effect on XYZ Ltd's profit and dividend performance caused by interest rate movements and the numerous other factors that could affect the share price, then if interest rates fall, say from 7 per cent to 6 per cent investors may switch from savings accounts into shares of XYZ Limited. This in turn will cause XYZ Limited's share price to rise, say to 570 pence, resulting in a lower expected yield of 3.5 per cent (20/570 x 100 per cent).

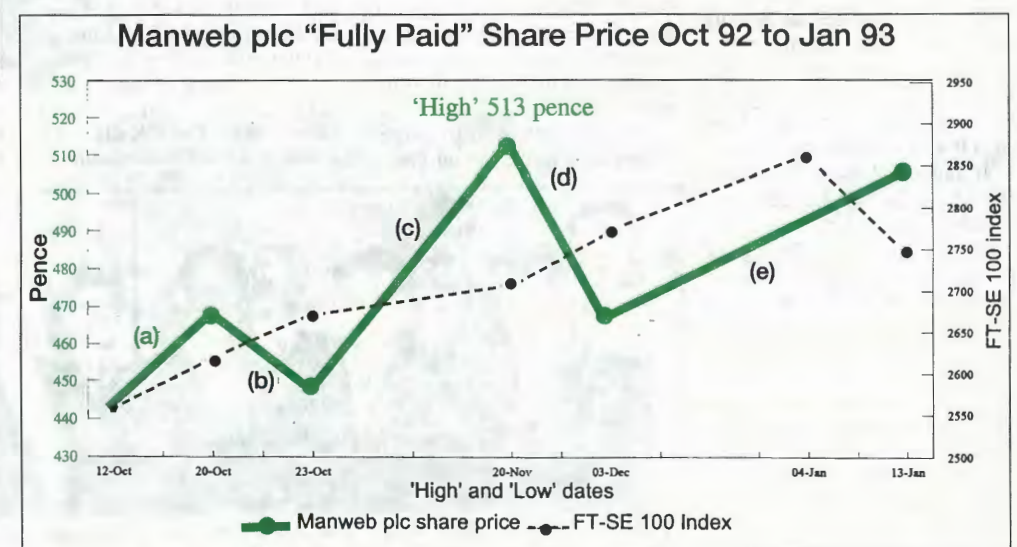
Dividend yields are usually always below interest rates, because as well as the dividend income receivable from a share, there is usually an expected 'capital' gain from a share, ie an increase in the share price over time.

Dividend yields quoted in the press are historical, not predicted.

At the time of writing the average gross yield of the 100 companies in the FT-SE 100 index is 4.3 per cent. The average gross yield of the RECs is 5.3 per cent. The base rate is 7.0 per cent.

The higher yield of the RECs compared to the FT-SE 100 index, reflects the perceived regulatory and political risk associated with REC shares, as with other regulated utilities.

Another reason why share price movements tend to be inversely proportional to interest rates is that, for 'interest paying' companies, lower interest rates should mean higher profits, because interest charges are lower. Higher profits should increase a company's share price.





The winners...Allstars team pictured with their trophies, back row, l-r, Ian Jones, Martin Jones, David Linton, Damian Hyland (captain), John Townend, Ken Sudlow, Mike Metcalfe. Front row, kneeling, l-r, Richard Bromley and Pat Byrne. Three other members of the team — John Richards, Andy Kelsall and Bill Bates — were not available for the photocall.



The runners-up...Members of the Billing 8 with batsman Tim Millington are, back row, l-r, Bernard Gorman, Doug Provan and Phil Summers. Front row, l-r, Alan Atherall, Mike Williams, Jez Lawes and Tim Hudson. Missing from the picture is 9th man Simon Ryder.

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Why not use the vouchers to purchase your summer necessities. Alternatively treat yourself to a weekend break at one of the many Trusthouse Forte Hotels either in England or abroad.

The decision is yours!
All you need to do to qualify for this prize is to enter a valid lead between 2nd February and 12th March.

But remember...
The more leads you enter
The more chance you have of winning

If you would like any more information, please contact Sharryn Tracey on Head Office 2811.

EGGSTRA, EGGSTRA!!

During this limited period, we are offering you the choice of Thorntons or Woolworths vouchers in addition to the usual selection.

Go on!! Be EGGSTRAVAGANT this Easter, splash out with Thorntons or Woolworths eggs.

CONGRATULATIONS

THE six Marks & Spencer luxury Christmas hampers were won by:

Tommy Winrow, Chargehand Meter Operative, Liverpool; Geoff Roynance, Network Services Shift Electrician, North Wirral; Frank Baldwin, Service Electrician, Mid-Cheshire; Dave Williams, Contracting Electrician, Oswestry; Liz Evans, Clerical Assistant, General Services, Clwyd; Donna Horton, Sales Assistant, Bangor Shop.



Clwyd District Customer Service Manager Phil Starkey congratulates Clerical Assistant Liz Evans on her success in winning one of the luxury Christmas hampers.

Allstars - top of ten

By
Damian Hyland

TEN teams battled it out to become the Manweb Head Office Sports and Social 8-a-side cricket champions.

The tournament initially saw eight teams in two leagues of four competing in 16 overs per side matches, with the winners of each league then going on to meet the previous year's two finalists, both of these teams having received a bye from stage one.

The two league winners from stage one were the Billing 8 and the Allstars, and these teams

were joined by the previous year's champions, Wangoes Winners, and runners-up Power Procurement, to form the final league of four teams in stage two.

After some thrilling matches and more than the odd close finish, this year's champions were the Allstars. They played and won six matches over both stages to receive this accolade. The runners-up spot went to the other stage one qualifier, the Billing 8.

Best individual performances of the tournament, with bat and ball, came from:

Batting:

1. M Harman (Full Tossers), 89 runs not out (v Long Deep Third Leggers)
2. D Linton (Allstars), 75 runs not out (v Long Deep Third Leggers)

Bowling:

1. D Hyland (Allstars), 4 overs 0 mdns 4 runs 4 wkts (v Full Tossers)
2. J Richards (Allstars), 4 overs 0 mdns 9 runs 4 wkts (v Power Procurement)

Peak performance from Manweb pair

IN tip top condition... That's Mid-Cheshire District Manager Jeff Hunt and Head Office Business Systems Controller Brian Sheppard who put their best feet forward and competed in the Three Peaks Trek, staged recently in the Yorkshire Dales.

Running as a team, the pair completed the course in six hours 29 minutes, each winning a couple of times before, and six hours 29 minutes is my best time yet. Neither of us expected to win, and obviously we were very pleased with our achievement.

"It was raining quite a bit on the day, and peat bogs are a problem. You can go in up to your neck if you aren't careful."

The Manweb pair completed the course safely although Jeff did manage to sprain his ankle on the first peak. "I was hobbling

rather than running for the rest of the way, and I was in pain for a month afterwards," said Jeff.

Not everyone was so lucky, however, and the pair learned afterwards that one of the other competitors had collapsed and died during the race.

Jeff said: "What won the race for us was a pair of soldiers in front who set the pace. They running well and looked very strong, but we managed to keep up with them, leaving the others well behind. When we got to Ribbleshead they suddenly

decided to pack it in, but by then we had managed to build up a very big lead and just kept going.

"We also managed to get back to base before the pubs closed, which was a bonus!" added Jeff who hopes more Manweb staff will take part in next year's race.

BRIAN PLUGS FOR POWER CHALLENGE

A CHALLENGE has been issued to Manweb staff to demonstrate just how fit they are. Teams are needed to compete in the Power Challenge '93, a gruelling test of stamina, teamwork and endurance.

Last year two Manweb teams took part in the event, finishing 20th and 25th in a field of 38, all representing the power industry. National Power's Ferrybridge team romped into first place.

The 1993 event will be held at Weston Park, near Shifnal, Shropshire, on June 12 and 13. The 17th century ancestral home of the Earls of Bradford, this sprawling estate has over 1,000 acres of woods, lakes, hills and a testing adventure course.

Head Office Business Systems Co-ordinator

Brian Sheppard, who took part in last year's competition and who is organising Manweb's entry in the 1993 event, said: "We want as many teams as possible from all over Manweb to enter this time."

"If we have too many teams, we'll have a play off so that the best ones represent Manweb in this very physically demanding contest."

Those planning to take part will need to prepare themselves for the event, and Brian is hoping to organise fell running and canoeing sessions. Each individual is also expected to raise at least £150 through sponsorship. Last year's event brought in over £60,000 for Operation Raleigh's Youth Development Programme.

Further details from Brian Sheppard on HO int ext. 2528.