

CUSTOMERS SHARE IN SUCCESS

*Encouraging
sign of
economic growth*

INTERIM RESULTS FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 1994

	1994 £ million	1993 £ million
Turnover	393.5	437.4
Profit before interest & restructuring costs	56.2	55.4
Profit before Tax	23.2	54.9
Earnings per Share	13.9p	34.1p
Dividend per Share	9.8p	7.0p

MANWEB has announced pre-tax profits for the six months to September 1994 of £23.2 million (1993: £54.9m).

This figure takes into account an amount for debt repurchase and restructuring costs. The underlying trend shows an increase in operating profit to £56.2 million (£55.4m).

Domestic customers are seeing an early reduction in their electricity prices. Daytime unit charges in domestic tariffs fell by about two per cent from 1 January 1995. In addition, the discounts available for both direct debit/standing order payments and for payments through card operated meters are doubled.

Benefiting

"Our customers are already benefiting from our investment in customer service and we want to share our success at controlling costs by lowering prices," said Manweb Chief Executive John Roberts.

More good news for the region is illustrated by the Company's distribution figures which show a three per cent increase in the units of electricity distributed – an encouraging sign of economic growth.

Investment

With many of Manweb's major customer service projects nearing completion, capital expenditure costs are beginning to fall and the benefits of the investment continuing to show through. Manweb is now

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HIGHLIGHTS
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OFFER's top-ranked regional electricity company in terms of the number of resolved complaints from customers and still leads the field in having the lowest number of disconnections over the last 12 months – just 23.

Building

Manweb also remains at the forefront of energy efficiency initiatives. The company is building on the success of its Holyhead Power Save Project with a similar scheme, targeting industrial and commercial customers, in Crewe.

Partnership

In November, the Company announced that Objective One funding had been won for a 'shared savings' scheme, in partnership with Knowsley Borough Council, designed to encourage the use of energy efficient technology in businesses across the Borough.



Warming up with Songs & Dance

THE 'American Air Force' went to Bebington recently when an award-winning theatre company joined forces with Manweb in an unusual bid to help pensioners beat the threat of hypothermia this winter.

And pictured sealing their visit with a kiss are actresses Amanda Gibley (left) and Clare Barry, with one of the elderly visitors at Bramwell Court Day Centre.

Eyewitness Theatre Company wrote and performed a song and dance spectacular for pensioners' clubs within Manweb's region as well as to Age

Concern and Manweb's own staff to raise their awareness of the issues surrounding older people as they try to keep warm.

"The performances evoked memories of the cold winter of 1947, when war had passed but life was still difficult and the big band sound was all the rage.

"With that backdrop, we conveyed the serious message that if older people have difficulty nowadays in paying fuel bills, there is always help available," said John Kennedy, Manweb's Community Relations Manager.

INTERIM RESULTS

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HIGHLIGHTS

- * Reorganisation and cost reduction plans well advanced.
- * Interim dividend increased to 9.8p per share after rebalancing.
- * Earnings per Share rose 10.6 per cent to 37.7p (34.1p in 1993) before restructuring and debt redemption costs. After taking these into account, Earnings per Share were 13.9p.
- * Financial restructuring programme underway to enhance shareholder value.
- * Price reductions of 2 per cent for domestic customers from 1 January 1995.

"The Company continued to make good progress in the first six months of the year and all the businesses have performed well. Our continuing cost reduction and productivity enhancement programme will additionally ensure that we meet the requirements of OFFER's Distribution Review.

Manweb will sustain the drive towards consistently improving customer service and increasing returns to shareholders. In the first six months the opportunity was taken to give future financial benefit to the share-

holders by buying back 3.48 per cent of the company's equity and by repurchasing £57.0m of high interest loan stock offered for sale by the Treasury.

"No final decisions can yet be confirmed for the future of the National Grid Company, although terms for a flotation are being considered by its shareholders. If this occurs our intention at Manweb would be to pass on the benefits from flotation to our shareholders and customers."

**William Goodall,
Chairman.**

TWO OFFICES TO MERGE

TWO of Manweb's Merseyside offices are to merge... with no additional job losses to those already announced.

Staff from Bridle Road, Bootle, will gradually transfer to Lister Drive, Liverpool, over the next 18 months, in line with the reorganisation announced in September. Southport Depot will continue to operate as at present.

Howard Kirkham, Director Network Services, said: "This is a logical move. The two offices are less than five miles apart and so it makes commercial sense to combine the two under one roof. Staff have been fully involved in this decision.

"We will ensure our customers continue to receive the high levels of service the two offices currently provide."

THAT'S THE SPIRIT



Pictured arriving for a day out at Blackpool are Liverpool staff with their families. Although the weather was damp the spirits were high and everybody had a great day, reports Harry L. Robertson. Twenty-eight adults and 22 children booked on to the trip organised by Margaret Davies and her drawing office staff. Thanks, Margaret, from all who went. It was a great success.



LECTURE TIME FOR STUDENTS

PICTURED with Peter Simcock (front, seated) and Chris Stevens of the Telecoms Section, Network Services, are members of staff and students from Blackburn House Centre for Women in Liverpool.

The students were attending a lecture given by Peter and Chris in the Lecture Theatre at Head Office on Manweb's Telecommunication Transmission System.

After lunch the students went to the Company's workshops at Queensferry where they were shown around the Telecoms Operational Centre and given a demonstration of fibre optic

splicing by Alan Edwards.

Over the past two years Manweb, through the Telecoms Section, has built up a close relationship with Blackburn House. As well as giving lectures we also provide placements for work experience for the students. Peter is also involved in assessing projects that the students have been given to do as part of their course work.

Blackburn House was originally a famous girls' grammar school. It has recently been beautifully restored and now boasts a bistro, gym, and crèche, and is unique in that all of its students are women.

Trial leads to funding grant

MANWEB'S trial of advanced meter reading equipment in Crewe has won major funding from the European Community's energy efficiency programme.

A grant of 140,000 ECUs (about £110,000) from the SAVE (Specific Action for Vigorous Energy Efficiency) programme will be used to help Manweb gather information on how and when electricity is used, with the goal of developing tariff packages which will encourage the efficient use of energy.

A thousand homes in Crewe are taking part in the trial, which uses mains electricity cables to transmit half-hourly information on electricity use back to Manweb at Head Office.

The SAVE funding for the AMR project is the largest sum Manweb has received under the programme, and is a significant achievement for Manweb, whose Research

and Technical Support, and Domestic Marketing teams prepared the submission in-house.

Manweb is now leading the way in European energy efficiency grants, with two other schemes, the Holyhead and Crewe demand side management projects also attracting SAVE resources. The three projects bring

Manweb's SAVE funding to date to 315,000 ECUs (about £250,000).

Manweb's Director, Power Marketing Colin Leonard and Research and Technical Support Manager Dr David Walker have also taken part in a SAVE conference in Florence, where they outlined Manweb's approach to energy efficiency and

gave details of projects.

David Walker, has also scored a personal European success, having been appointed as a European Community Expert Assessor for another research programme. He is to advise the European Commission on home automation projects for managing electrical load.

Judges will find it so difficult

JUDGES representing Manweb and Chronicle Newspapers will have the difficult task of selecting the winners of the 1994 Chronicle/Manweb Community Awards when they meet at Head Office later this month.

Chronicle Newspapers have been inundated with nominations for this year's six categories - Man of the Year, Woman of the Year, Young Person of the Year,

By Mark Smith

Team of the Year, Environmental Winner and Charity of the Year - and popular nominations have featured regularly in the region's newspapers since September.

The judges will be selecting six winners from each category, to be invited to a Gala Dinner at the Moat House International Hotel in Chester on 25 January. To acknowledge their outstanding contributions to the community, the winners will each receive a cast bronze trophy. There

will also be an overall winner from each category who will be presented with a special trophy from the Awards Guest of Honour, the Duke of Westminster.

There will be around 220 people attending the Gala Dinner, including Chief Executive John Roberts and Chairman Bill Goodall. A new Master of Ceremonies is yet to be confirmed following the death of Carl Hawkins, who hosted the event since its inception six years ago.

SERVICES EXPLAINED ON TAPE AND BRAILLE

MANWEB has produced cassette tape and Braille versions of the Codes of Practice to help ensure blind and partially sighted customers have access to information on the Company's services.

The codes are 'Paying Electricity Accounts', 'Services for People who are Elderly or Disabled', 'Using Electricity

Efficiently in your Home' and 'Complaints Handling Procedure'.

English and Welsh versions have been produced, and copies have been distributed to groups representing the hard-of-hearing in Manweb's area, and to all regional subscribers to the Talking Newspaper service.

USABILITY LAB NOW OPEN

A SIGNIFICANT investment has been made in Information Technology as a result of process re-engineering and changes in procedures.

It is essential that these developments work in an efficient way and are accepted as easy to understand and use by staff.

It is a difficult, painful and often expensive lesson to find out for the first time in the working environment that the users have difficulty in operating a substantially different system. One viable approach to validating usability is to test out the procedures and systems in a controlled environment under strict laboratory conditions.

There was an opportunity to test this concept in late 1993 and early 1994 when there was a need to carry out an evaluation exercise on our Graphical User Interface (GUI) development. The usability exercise was carried out in IBM's Usability Centre at Sudbury North London. This allowed us to test the GUI concept using our own staff to conduct the tests.

A typical evaluation can identify between 100 and 200 areas for improvement. Although this sounds a lot, even the most insignificant issues can lead to expensive mistakes if full roll out is undertaken. A usability evaluation can help identify these, so that they can be eliminated prior to release.

The exercise at Sudbury was so successful that Manweb decided to build its own Usability Lab. IBM were brought in as consultants to help establish the Lab in the Income Training Suite at Chester. This Lab houses a fully equipped observation studio, featuring a sophisticated viewing gallery with remote control cameras which record what happens as real users get to grips with new business processes or systems.

Following usability evaluation, we should achieve:

- more effective business processes;
 - increased user acceptance;
 - enhanced credibility of the development and implementation teams;
 - more focused training and help facilities;
 - more effective application screen design.
- All of these should lead

OPEN

Mistakes can be identified and eliminated

to smoother implementation and improved user satisfaction.

Any developed project plan would include testing. It is important that Usability is included throughout the lifecycle of a project to obtain maximum benefit.

The first evaluation was carried out at the beginning of December on part of the MSP (Multi Services Project) development. The

Lab was set up as an office to evaluate two prototype customer enquiry systems. Following this evaluation, the Merits team set the Lab up as a shop to evaluate their payment handling system.

If you would like further details of the Lab or a demonstration of its facilities, please contact either Andy Pooley, ext. 2694, or Brian O'Connell on ext. 2633 at Head Office.

Team looks to the future

A SMALL team from the Multi Service Project became the first group to use the new Manweb Usability Laboratory. The aim of the evaluation was to provide valuable information to determine the look and feel of future Graphical User Interface (GUI) developments for Manweb.

Two GUI prototypes, which had been developed in conjunction with external consultants, were tested for suitability and design. The prototypes reflected different approaches to the way a complete billing system could be written. One adopted a 'tree view' structure, which is similar to that used in Windows File Manager. By clicking on the customer at the top of the tree, the view expands to show the services held with that customer. A click on a service expands the tree further to show relevant options specific to that service, which in turn may have further options linked to them. The other prototype is based on the idea of 'objects' and 'processes'. Selecting an object displays information specific to that object that may be a 'Customer' or a 'Premise'. A process links



Logger Melanie Duncombe and Team Leader Julie Conder try out the new Manweb Usability Laboratory.

the objects needed to complete a particular business process such as a tenancy change. Despite being prototypes and hence restricted in function, both had been developed to perform a range of processes realistically.

Eight people were selected to evaluate the prototypes, they represented the range of current CUDOS users. All were trained on how to use the prototypes and briefed on how the evaluation would take place.

During the week, they were shown the studio for the first time and given a



Director Power Marketing Colin Leonard cuts the ribbon to launch the Usability Lab. Also pictured are (l-r) Sue Reece, Income Training Officer, Head of Income Bob McMahon, Customer Accounting Manager Andy Pooley and Income Systems Co-ordinator Brian O'Connell.

NEW LOOK FOR CONTRACTING

MANWEB'S contracting business is being restructured to improve efficiency and profitability.

The measures are expected to save Manweb Contracting Services Limited (MCSL) £1 million and at the same time improve the company's competitiveness.

MCSL's Managing Director Allan Littler said: "Market conditions over the last three years have become progressively fierce with poor profitability in certain areas of the industry.

"We need to restructure MCSL in order to create a competitive company that can achieve adequate performance and returns. We will continue to focus on developing profitable niche markets in the electrical contracting and utility industries."

MCSL's 420-strong workforce will be reduced by around 35 'indirect' staff - managers, engineers, supervisors and administrators - and it is intended that this will be phased over the next few months.

Measures will save £1 million

Contracting's Abergele office will close and will be replaced by working depot at Llandudno Junction.

The offices at Redwither Road, Wrexham, and Birchwood, Warrington, will remain, along with existing Contracting depots, but site costs will be tightly controlled.

CONTACT

The newspaper for staff and retired employees of Manweb plc, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, telephone 0244 652090.

If you've an idea for a story or photograph, write, phone or come and talk to Editor Jackie Unsworth in Public Relations, Room 5E1, Head Office, ext. 2090. At the following locations, you can talk directly to one of Contact's correspondents.

North Mersey:	Pat Shaw	ext. 2204
Liverpool:	Harry Robertson	ext. 2160
Mid-Mersey:	Mike Townson	ext. 2231
Dee Valley:	Kath Sadowski	ext. 2202
North Wirral:	Janet Ford	ext. 2360
Mid-Cheshire:	Diana Wood	ext. 2117
Clwyd:	Min Williams	ext. 2187
Gwynedd:	Hefyn Thomas	ext. 2250
Oswestry:	Sandra Goode	ext. 2206
Aberystwyth:	Gloria Griffith	ext. 2261
Region 2:	Liz Newman	ext. 85504

HISTORY LESSON

Dear Editor,

Having read the article re Mike Bunting, I thought I'd pass on some ancient history.

The following is an excerpt from the Liverpool Daily Post dated 8 July 1960:-

"Mr W. H. Blunt, a Manweb Section Engineer based at Llanberis has a predilection for vintage cars, preferably Rolls Royces. He has three at the moment, one is a 1928 model, a powerful coupe, which makes short work of the mountain road along which he travels daily to his office.

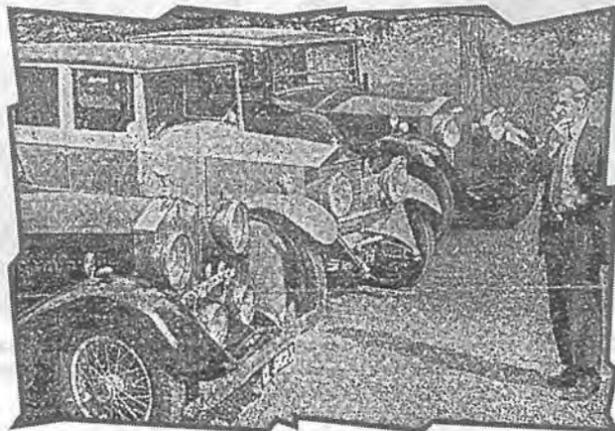
"His two saloon Rolls cars date back to 1923 and 1930.

"Mr Blunt, who served in the Royal Navy during World War II on motor torpedo boats, corvettes and destroyers has always been interested in cars. At first he started collecting vintage models of various makes, and then concentrated on Rolls Royces."

And from an early issue of Contact:-

"In the fastness of the Snowdon massif lurks a group of tough individuals known affectionately in No. 4 Sub-Area as the 'Stern Gang', but referred to in official and correct documents as 'The Llanberis Operations Gang'.

"From their lair at Victoria



Yard, Llanberis, they make frequent sorties into the surrounding countryside - but their activities are strictly benevolent. When lightning, snow and ice disrupt electricity supplies in their area they are always ready to go out in the foulest of weather to put things right.

"A Contact reporter who visited Llanberis recently discovered that among the hobbies of the gang leader, Section Engineer Mr. Wilf Blunt, was that of collecting ancient Rolls Royces.

"On returning to Board Headquarters our reporter was discussing his experiences with colleagues when someone said: 'Don't they use a hearse

for some job or other at Llanberis?' Smelling another 'story', we wrote to Mr Blunt, who replied to us in the following terms:-

"There was a hearse here once, the owner bought it, fitted it with chintz curtains and used it for his honeymoon. He said his wife didn't sleep very well in it, but it had the great advantage of being waved on in traffic and not charged at toll bridges and gates. Although he felt a Homburg didn't go with his golfing togs, he wore one out of courtesy to the people who stood bare-headed on the pavement whilst he passed'."

W. H. Blunt
Menai Bridge,
Anglesey.

Have you an interesting or unusual hobby? If so, please write to the editor about it.

Where are the winners?

Dear Editor,

Not for the first time has this query been raised as to why the winning numbers in the monthly EEIBA draw cannot be published in the staff magazine on time?

It is at least four issues ago that they were last printed. When free ads, post bag etc, can appear regularly, surely those people who voluntarily support this charitable cause, deserve better than the very infrequent insertions that appear in 'Contact'. On another note, assuming that all retired staff

receive 'Contact' each month, and also a separately posted salary advice, would it not be practical, and sound economy, to send both together cutting postage costs by half at a stroke? In my case anyway it invariably turns out that each one lands on the doorstep within days of one another, less hassle too for the postman.

F. L. Griffin (retd)
1A Barmouth Road
Wallasey
Merseyside

Words to watch for

Dear Editor,

As we come to the end of this year the words to watch out for are Downsizing and Outsourcing.

Now here's how to recognise someone who has been Downsized. They will give the appearance of calm panic, the reason for this is that instead of having one job they will have 10. Isn't it exciting?

When the unfortunate individual has fallen to the floor knackered, they will be replaced by a contractor or someone employed on a temporary basis. This is what's known as Outsourcing. As far as I know this is not Company policy... yet!

PS: May I take this opportunity to wish all my readers (getting smaller all the time) a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Brian Emberton
Building Section
North Wirral District

'Free' dom of the press ...

Dear Editor,

I am curious to know what you mean by 'Contact is printed on wood-free paper'.

Do you mean that none of the ingredients of the paper are made from wood or do you mean that it is made from 100% recycled paper?

I suspect that you actually mean that it is made from 'wood-free pulp'. This is a rather misleading term used in the paper industry and in essence, it means that the pulp has been produced chemically rather than mechanically. It certainly doesn't mean that it isn't made from wood. Wood-free pulp generally produces a higher grade of paper resulting in good print quality but unfortunately earns no environmental 'Brownie points'.

David Goate
Mid Cheshire District

Editor's Note: Wood free paper is, as you describe, made from wood-free pulp and produced chemically. We have checked with the paper mill who assure us that the term is not intended to be misleading and is the only name by which the product has ever been known in the printing and paper-making industries.

A FORERUNNER TO CLOSER CONTACT

By
Reg Morris
Technical
Representative
CFU Prenton

AT the Manweb Head Office Lecture Theatre the curtain rose on the inaugural EMA Annual Branch Conference. The former negotiating committee (now the Branch Executive) fronted the show with a bakers dozen of delegates from across the Company plus Larry Pickering the Standing Orders Committee.

Ahead was to be a day of ordered informality consisting of the annual report, 20 motions, nominations, two guest speakers with a rustle in the wings of emergency motions. Tensions was electric. We were now on our own. Joan Tanner of the EMA Altrincham office had efficiently done the front-of-house organising. Cue Chairman Kevin Smith, who welcomed everybody to the conference and explained how we now "decide our own path" in negotiations.

He emphasised the deep concern felt over the status of Engineers but reminded us there would be no tearless change. The local Association needed trust in its full time officials and also be prepared to "tell how it is" to the Company management, he concluded.

The Annual Report was moved by BEC Vice Chairman and NEC member Mike Powell. This reflected on the past year's distribution review, manpower reductions, terms and conditions pensions and the Association organisation. It was worth noting the 98 per cent of members who had signed again; there was a bedrock of support to be built on.

Bill Tubey, then Liverpool District Manager but now Resources Manager, chatted to the Conference about Manweb Power Engineering (MPE) and reorganisation. Bill gave a spirited defence of Manweb plans. Citing the need to control costs after the offer review and city expectations, income

reduction and returns, cost was a major factor in the decision on reorganisation.

Also the good will of the staff would not be allowed to be lost. There is still much to be discussed and nobody had all the answers, not even OFFER.

Imposition was not the answer so there was to be additional counselling as we went forward. Bill was left in no doubt from the floor that the feel good factor was decidedly missing when reading the sketchy script for change.

Thanks Bill for the good natured but robust and useful chat.

The second guest, Terry Lane, Deputy General Secretary of the EMA, after a period of quarantine in security, addressed the afternoon session. He based his remarks on three areas: the Association, the Companies, the Future. The 90s had been the era of the 3Rs: Restructuring, Reductions, Reorganisations. There would still be no end of permanent job losses in core activities.

The Association had gone through a shift of focus to the Company level. We had to make the best use of our money in this light. Was there need for a National Annual Conference? Many related issues were also aired. The Association was adapting and was in a position to provide members with professional assistance in all areas of their work.

Thirty-two pay settlements had been negotiated by national official and area SECS. For instance Yorkshire has 30 separate companies (what a waste of energy this causes). Recent studies in America show a strong Trade Union and a successful Company go in tandem.

Support the Association who will support the Company in the successful execution of its business for the benefit of all.

Non-ESO Directors do not accept the role of Trade Unions within companies. They need to study and learn.

Thank you Terry for much to reflect on, realistic and relevant. Some delegates were locked in their seats (fold over desk tops required manual operation) and almost missed the tea.

Motions on personal transport, petrol component rate, standby and control, provoked a good deal of debate and acceptance. Further motions on pay, transfer terms, safety matters, sleeping time, shares, flexi time were also successfully moved.

The best one-liner of the day was "Tell us your name, Geoff". Best Performance was an athletic display of hurdling to reach the lectern by a delegate from Wales. The Conference was a good forerunner to continuing contact between the Association officials (full time and lay) and members. Manweb was true to its aim of co-operation by making available the accommodation.

Thanks are due to the Chairman Kevin Smith, David Bellamy, Area Secretary and Vice Chairman and NEC Member Mike Powell. Particular thanks to all fellow BBC members and, of course, the delegates who made the Conference.



How they fixed it for Jim

WELFARE Officer Jim Wilcock just had to go on a lap of honour to mark his recent retirement. In fact, he had no option, for colleagues marked the occasion by strapping him to a

stretcher and carrying him around the building to say his fond farewells. Jim began his Manweb career as a junior clerk in Lister Drive in 1960.

He progressed through clerical jobs in Registry, Finance and Personnel before being appointed Clerical Work Measurement Analyst at Head Office in 1970. He first joined Welfare in 1977 as Administration Assistant and was appointed to Welfare Officer 12 years ago.

DIGGING IN AT THE CENTRE

MANWEB recently joined other local companies in 'digging deep' to help the newly-established Environmental Education Centre at Legacy to get started.

When Groundwork Wrexham, Maelor, appealed for help towards establishing facilities at the site, Manweb was one of a number of supporters to respond enthusiastically.

Dee Valley District provided a JCB and driver to dig out a pond on the site. This will be incorporated into a Celtic village display showing how villages grew up around natural water areas. The soil removed to create the pond is being transported to the front of the site to screen the entrance from the road.

Once complete, the site will offer opportunities for scientific study by all age groups. Hand-held microscopes and special weighing balances will help local schoolchildren to record data about the site.

The Centre will also demonstrate a sustainable living through a variety of special gardens, re-cycling points, and use of materials.

Wrexham Maelor Executive Director, Julia Baron, said: "We have been delighted with the help given by local companies - from building materials and labour to redundant office furniture. The public's imagination has been captured by the innovative use of this other-

wise under-used land."

The Environmental Education Centre has been created on 7.5 hectares of land owned by National Grid and leased to Groundwork.

The Centre has been developed as a partnership between the two organisations.

It will be one of a network of nine sites on National Grid land around the country.

Facilities will include, a log cabin-clad classroom,

resource centre, and workshop, with car parking, toilets, and facilities for the disabled.

Groundwork Wrexham Maelor is the 28th Trust in the national network of 34 charitable trusts promoting sustainable environmental improvement in areas scarred by industrial use. The essence of the groundwork approach is local action through partnership with local organisations to achieve practical improvements.

NEW TRAINING SCHEME LAUNCHED

MANWEB and training consultants Leading Edge have launched a National Vocational Training scheme to recognise customer service skills.

The NVQ award uses workplace assessment to judge people's existing abilities, and encourage and reward high standards in the delivery of customer service. Leading Edge - part of Cheshire County Council's Economic Training and

Development Unit - have been working with Manweb to train staff as assessors for the qualification.

Manweb's Project Co-ordinator Steve O'Brien said: "The NVQ recognises the existing customer service skills of our staff. It draws on knowledge they have developed in the workplace, and as a nationally recognised qualification the NVQ underlines the value Manweb places on their skills."

Manweb staff from Wrexham, Prenton, Warrington and Chester are now trained as NVQ assessors, and the company plans to extend the qualification to other offices in the future.

Customers now more satisfied

HEADLINE results from the October survey of domestic customer opinion show that overall satisfaction with Manweb service continues to inch upwards.

It now stands at 90 per cent (and has caught up to that of British Gas) and, for the first time, the 'very satisfied' rating has reached 50 per cent. Customers' ratings of the utilities were more favourable than in the spring but the relative advance by Manweb was real, nonetheless.

Customers increasingly believe that Manweb is becoming more customer oriented and that the Company provides the best service in terms of dealing with customer enquiries and the accuracy of bills. They also rate the

By Tony Harper
Market Research
Manager

Company more highly than the other utilities for having helpful and knowledgeable staff.

Survey questions about advertising showed a similar improvement in Manweb's standing and the re-showing of the commercial about Manweb's commitment to fewer estimated bills coincided with an upward shift in the Company's rating on a range of service quality measures.

In purely advertising recall terms, repeating the 'fewer estimated bills' commercial has resulted in the advert itself being remembered without prompting and has helped to move service issues up

the list of things Manweb is remembered for. 'Make life easier, see the Man,' continues to achieve significant recall.

A telephone survey of customers in the competitive market suggests some multi-site and large customers are beginning to have more complex servicing expectations. They are tending to group their reasons for contact with Manweb into commercial matters like energy prices and billing for one, the basic technicalities of supply provision as a second area and issues concerning equipment or operational effectiveness on their side of the meter as a third. Some, at least, appear to be expecting to deal with REC experts in competition with other consultants in several of these areas.



Preparing the ground at Legacy are: Dave Thomas on the digger and (l-r), John Hignett, Manweb; Steve Bound, Groundwork Trust; Joe Guatelli, Groundwork Trust and Clive Hawkins, National Grid.

Report on the Budget 1994

How it affects your tax

By Helen Connolly
Taxation Accountant

THE Chancellor's second unified Budget has brought only a few changes to employee taxation as most tax increases which will take effect in 1995/96 were announced last autumn.

1. Personal Allowances:

After 3 consecutive years of no uplift, personal allowances (with the exception of the blind person's allowance) have been increased slightly. PAYE codes will reflect changes in April 1995. Details of personal allowances for this year and for 1995/96 are as follows:

	1994/95	1995/96
Single Person	3445	3525
Married Couple's Allowance	1720*	1720*
Age Allowance:		
Single Person (75+)	4370	4800
Single Person (65+)	4200	4630
Married Couple's age allowance:		
(75+)	2705*	3035*
(65+)	2665*	2995*
Widow's Bereavement Allowance	1720*	1720*
Blind Person's Allowance (available to each qualifying spouse)	1200	1200
Sole parent family's allowance	1720*	1720*

*Relief for these allowances will be restricted to 20 per cent this year and to 15 per cent next year.

**Excess over personal allowance withdrawn by:

£1 for every £2 of income over	14,200	14,600
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2. Married Couple's Allowance:

The restriction of this relief to 15 per cent from 6 April indicates that this relief is on its way out. The restriction is provided for in employees tax codes.

The same restriction will also apply to the allowance for sole parents and widows and to the relief available for maintenance payments to a divorced or separated spouse. There is additional relief for those who have entered into arrangements to pay maintenance before 15 March 1988. Relief for maintenance payments made for the benefit of children will cease when the child reaches the age of 21.

The 1995/96 increase in the married couple's allowance for those aged 65 and over will compensate for the percentage relief restriction.

3. Mortgage Interest Relief:

It also looks as if this relief is on its way out. There is a further reduction of the relief to 15 per cent from 6 April 1995. The relief will continue to be given at source.

4. Rate of Income Tax:

1995/96 will see another increase of the lower rate tax band (20 per cent) to £3,200. The basic rate of 25 per cent will apply to the next £21,100 of income; income exceeding £24,300 attracts tax at 40 per cent.

5. Company Cars: Fuel for Private Use:

The Chancellor announced an increase in the benefit levels for those employees provided with fuel for private use:

Engine Size	Petrol	Diesel
1400cc or less	605	605
1401-2000cc	850	605
2001cc+	1260	780

6. Company Vans:

For the current tax year (1994/95) the Company has reached a special agreement with the Inland Revenue that employees with any home to work travel in their vans should be assessed to tax on the lower figure of £425 and not £500 as provided for in the Taxes Act. This agreement will be maintained for 1995/96.

7. National Insurance Contributions:

The upper earnings limit will be set at £22,880 for the year; employees earning less than £59pw will pay no NICs. Employees in the Company pension scheme will contribute at the rate of 2 per cent on the first £59pw of earnings and at 8.2 per cent on the balance up to the upper earnings limit. The rate applicable to other employees will be 10 per cent on earnings between £59pw and £400pw plus at 2 per cent on the first £59pw.

8. Capital Gains Tax:

The tax-free threshold increases to £6,000 per annum (£6,000 each per spouse).

9. Inheritance Tax:

The tax-free threshold increases to £154,000.

10. VAT:

There will be no extension of the VAT base this year. VAT on electricity will remain at the lower rate of 8 per cent for the foreseeable future.

BOOM TOWN GETS NEW SUPERSTORE

BOOMING business in St Helens means Manweb's shop in Bridge Street has moved to new superstore premises just 300 yards away in King Street.

The new store opened on Friday, 18 November and the Manager from the old shop, Ian Warlow, and his staff were all on hand to welcome customers. As well as the 11 existing sales people four new staff have been taken on.



St Helens Superstore staff with Manager Ian Warlow, centre, Retail Manager Terry Keenan to his left and Stan Hawtin, centre right.

Better service

Ian said: "I am delighted that we are able to offer our customers an even better service in our new superstore."

We have nearly five times as much floor space, and our full Customer Service Centre facilities are available.

These include private areas to discuss accounts, energy efficiency advice, and an excellent range of electrical goods."

The superstore is open for longer hours - 9.00am to 8.00pm Mondays to Fridays, 9.00am to 6.00pm on Saturdays, and 11.00am to 5.00pm on Sundays.

Other improvements include better access for disabled people, with all facilities sited on one floor, and free car parking.

... and Stan declares it open

AS a new era started, another finished when Stan Hawtin performed the tape-cutting ceremony to open the new St Helens Superstore.

For Stan, Retail Marketing Manager, it was his last official function prior to retirement on 31 December 1994. Stan joined Manweb in 1977 as Assistant Commercial Purchasing Officer. Two years later he was promoted to Commercial Purchasing Officer based at Head Office in a corner of a building where, he claims, he has been ever since.

After Army service with the Middlesex Regiment in which he served for two years in war-torn Cyprus, Stan joined Ford Motor Company until 1969 when he moved to Stoves Limited as Buyer. He was later head-hunted and joined New World Gas Cookers in Warrington as Chief Buyer before joining Manweb.

On privatisation of Manweb, Stan became Retail Purchasing Manager, later becoming

Marketing Manager and Marketing Adviser.

Stan's outside interests include, the Territorial Army, in which he served as a gunner-officer for 10 years. He is also a member of the Regular Army Reserve of Officers and claims to have been associated with the Army from the age of 18 to 50.

His retirement will now give him time to renovate and decorate the restored tweed mill he has bought in Oxfordshire, but he

will retain his Victorian property on the Wirral, which he has painstakingly refurbished as a labour of love, over the last 10 years.

He has an interest in clay-pigeon shooting, old English sports cars, real ale and antiques.

He leaves Manweb saying: "I am pleased that my Department and the people in it have made steady progress, many of

whom joined as juniors and have developed along the way. It's gratifying to think that the Department has met the challenges of the recession and of re-organisation and I feel I leave a team fit and ready to carry on. I have made many friends inside and outside the Company - and these are friendships I will retain for a long time."



The opening ceremony, (l to r) Jackie Picton, Ian Warlow, Stan Hawtin and Alison Sutton.



The long arm of the mechanical digger signals

CHALLENGE STILL YOUR

THE most vital ingredient in the Manweb Challenge is Manweb people.

That's the rallying call from team member Len Cornah who is pleading for further help from his Company's colleagues as the big community project gathers momentum.

The Challenge, which aims to raise £750,000 in cash or kind towards building a play and resource centre in Kirkby near Liverpool, has already benefited from fund-raising activities and help from Manweb people.

Aberystwyth, Warrington, Liverpool and Oswestry are areas which have already contributed to the kitty.



Spacious interior of the new Superstore.

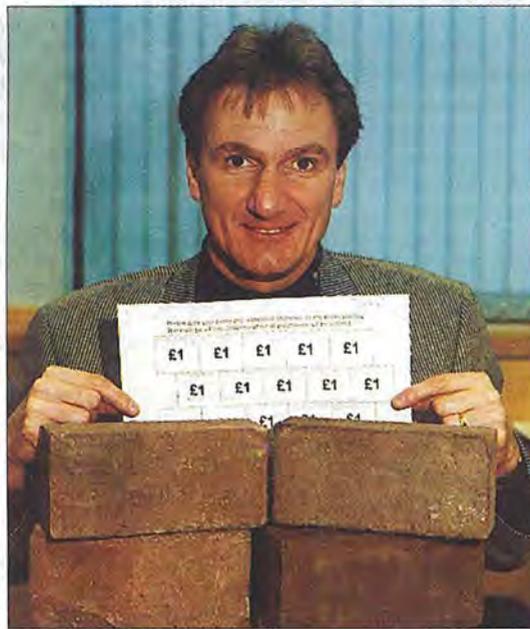


There was a surprise in store for shopper Marjorie Boyle of Widnes when she was presented with a kettle and toaster as the first customer at the new St Helens superstore. Manager Ian Warlow, who made the presentation, is pictured with Marjorie.



at site clearing has begun.

CHALLENGE NEEDS HELP



it, although site clearing finished and the foundations are being laid, more help needed says Len.

is only coincidental that project is in our area. The thing to remember is that it is a Manweb Challenge and should be seen as a Company-venture. We have plenty of offers of help, equipment services, but it is cash we need most to keep the project buoyant and ensure it is completed on time."

Len would welcome anyone where in the Company organising fund raising events or passing on new ideas to the team. He would even be prepared to visit various areas to discuss projects and offer advice he can.

One idea - the recent Buy-a-Brick campaign - is still

pulling in the pounds. Another venture in which Manweb teams took part, The Amdahl Charity Challenge, raised a staggering £9,000.

Four teams representing the Company and led by Mark Bellman, Colin Leonard, Bob McMahon and Len Cornah, were sponsored by John Roberts, John Peaker and Mike Jones. Organised by Amdahl, suppliers of the Company's mainframe computer, the event consisted of five sporting challenges.

There was beat the goalie, against experienced keepers; target bowls; indoor cricket; snooker and basketball, with 23 teams engaged in battle.

Granada TV filmed the event which may be incorporated into their Christmas show featuring the Granada

Phil Thompson, Patron of the Play and Resource Centre, makes the 'Buy-a-Brick' interim draw, which was won by Ian Kennerly of Allen Johnson partnership.

TV Challenge - the project which instigated the Manweb Challenge.

Len Cornah emphasised that every penny raised will go to help 35,000 children in the Manweb's area to benefit from the facility and its services. "Also, any cash we raise could be doubled if our bid for Objective One funding is successful," said Len.

Anyone wishing to start up money-making projects, big or small, can contact Len or any other member of the team who will be pleased to help and advise.

● Amdahl challenge pictures, next issue.

WIN

£100 GIFT VOUCHER from DUNN & CO

Runner-up prize

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If you would like to win either the 1st prize of £100 or 2nd prize of £50 worth of Dunn & Co vouchers please enter our competition. **How to enter:** Simply complete the wordsearch puzzle by moving horizontally, vertically or diagonally to find the following 10 hidden words: DUNN AND CO, CLASSIC, MENSWEAR, SUITS, JACKET, BLAZER, TROUSER, SHIRT, TIE and RAINCOAT. Then tell us in no more than 20 words why you would like to win Dunn & Co Gift Vouchers.

Send your entry to: The editor, Contact, Manweb plc, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR, to arrive no later than 31 January 1995.

M	S	R	E	Z	A	L	B	F	D	W	B	P
J	K	X	J	C	W	O	T	U	Y	I	C	L
L	B	U	P	E	M	E	N	S	W	E	A	R
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C	T	N	D	K	P	R	E	S	U	O	R	T

I would like to win Dunn & Co gift voucher

Name

Address

THEY SAID IT

Extracts from letters TO Manweb about Manweb people and the services they provide FROM satisfied customers around the region.

TO: Customer Service Department, Mid Cheshire.

FROM: D. A. Wright, Northwich.

"May I put on record my thanks and appreciation for the professional and courteous manner shown by your employee who attended my home to change the meter.

"Nothing was too much trouble for him. His advice and help was unsolicited. He carried out his work with a most cheerful manner and was a credit to your Company.

"It is such a pleasure to write a letter of thanks rather than one of criticism."

The employee involved was Fred Broadhurst, meter fixer.

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: Lilian Denne, Lydiate.

"I wish to inform you how very touched I was, at the thoughtfulness of a member of your emergency staff.

"My electricity supply was cut off, due to a fault. I am 75 years of age and live alone. I phoned and was told the fault was reported and was being repaired, I asked what I should do about my central heating clock, being alone, and was told that the supply would not be off for a long period, not to worry.

"An hour and 50 minutes later the light was restored and to my surprise in the next 15 minutes a member of your staff came to my home to see if everything was well with me.

"Words cannot express my sincere appreciation of this action and I felt I must write this letter to you. God bless whoever it was."

The employee was Mark Barry.

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: John Martin (Work Experience).

"Thank you for letting me spend two weeks on work experience at Manweb.

"I found my stay very interesting and enjoyable, especially the day I spent at the Drawing Office and going out on site.

"Please will you thank everyone who helped me, especially Mr Denis Judge and Jean Long."

TO: Region 3.

FROM: Ruth Shipman, Barmouth.

"Just to say thank you for courtesy, patience, honesty, and sensible advice by your staff in the branches here in Dolgellau (Mannon Evans and Linda Jones).

"Mannon served me regarding a purchase of a new TV and was very helpful and knowing my

circumstances made suggestions which have helped me save extra expense.

"Also Sandra Williams and her staff in Barmouth - hard-working and sometimes long hours without help. When things go wrong they never take it out on customers. Thank you for the 'Old School', nice girls, well trained.

TO: P. Stenton, Field Support Manager.

FROM: Hilary Jeffries, Irby, Wirral.

"I wish to let you know that the two men that came to my house on Thursday evening should be praised.

"They worked quickly and professionally, and were both polite and helpful.

"Working on the call centre, I usually only hear complaints from the customers, so having seen at first hand our men in action I was very impressed with the service."

TO: J. L. Milne, Senior Contracts Manager.

FROM: D. L. Curran, Waterlooville, Hants.

"I am writing to say how pleased we were with the quality of work carried out by the Installation Engineers who installed the E7 storage heaters at our mother's bungalow 'Lydene' Llanyfyndd.

"We would also like to compliment them on their understanding and patience they showed towards our 85-year-old mother.

"Thank you again for a job well done."

The staff mentioned were; W. L. Humphreys and E. O. Evans from Corwen Depot.

TO: J. L. Milne, Senior Contracts Manager.

FROM: T. Owens, Prestatyn.

"Having just recently had an Economy 7 radiator etc installed, I thought I would write to tell you that in my lifetime (81 years) I have had an amount of workmen doing all necessary work I could not do myself, but I must say in all fairness the two young men, Terry Griffiths and assistant who carried out the work were indeed a credit to your company.

"Having only taken over this property six months ago it required an enormous amount doing to it to make it worth living in.

"I could not have had more conscientious, caring and above all clean young men in my home. The job has been done to perfection and I am more than happy now to be on Economy 7."

The men concerned were; Terry Griffith, electrician, and Iola Griffiths, apprentice, from Bangor Depot.

TO: Appliance Servicing

FROM: Miss M. Jones, Fazakerley.

"I had the need to call on Manweb Services (Repair) to come and have a look at my twin-tub, which wasn't pumping the water away out of the dryer.

"A young man came out to see the machine and I am writing to say this young man, Mr Rob Martindale, was so kind to me. I am a senior citizen, 70yrs, and nothing was too much trouble for him, he examined my machine thoroughly, wiped up the water, did everything to help. After all the horrible things that are happening today it was refreshing to meet such a nice young man."

TO: Liverpool.

FROM: V. E. Carr, Hillside Road, Liverpool.

"The men came to see me to put plugs in for me. I am so very grateful to your Mr Edwards. I heard the men talking to each other, Derek, Andy, and a little chap, name not known.

"The job was first class. I am glad that Manweb is privately owned. First class service. I will always use Manweb."

TO: Liverpool.

FROM: Ellen Hayes, Prescot.

"I would like to bring to your notice a good deed performed by one of your staff.

"His name is Dave Holme, and he very kindly looked after me when I took ill at my home, and saw me to the ambulance, and locked my door and put the keys through the letterbox.

"I realise this is a little late, it happened six months ago, but I couldn't get to know the young man's name till he called again to read the meter, because I have been in hospital for six months.

"I think he deserved a mention to his employers."

TO: Liverpool.

FROM: Mrs Doherty, Ullet Road, L8.

"I would like to bring to your attention the kindness shown me by one of your electricians, Mr Charlie McGuinness.

"I am troubled with my eyes, and have difficulty seeing at times. I had a meter fitted and Charlie had to run a cable through. He cleared up after him and was most courteous to me."

TO: Manweb Contracting Services, Bangor.

FROM: Mr & Mrs B. Short, Eifion Stores, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

"We would like to express our gratitude to your staff for the most efficient way the re-wiring was done.

"All the lads involved were most polite, efficient, conscientious and helpful.

"In these days of moans and groans it is a pleasure to send this letter of thanks. Well done!!"

TO: Manweb Contracting Services.

FROM: D. P. Purcell, Senior Electrical Engineer, University of Liverpool.

"Re Rathbone Hall - Rewire.

"Further to your completion of the above project in early October 1994, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my thanks and compliments for the excellent manner in which it was carried out.

"The standards and efforts of your staff were a credit and made my role very easy.

"Minor outstanding items have been completed promptly or are in hand, whilst the 'as fitted' drawings (CAD), Tests Reports and Manuals are already in our possession.

"Particular mention should be made of your Manager, Mr D. Donaldson and Site Supervisor, Mr I. Downie, who made a very tight and urgent programme successfully.

"Trusting we may have the pleasure of working together again before long."

TO: Liverpool.

FROM: S. Davies, Speke.

"I would like to thank you for the considerate way you carried out our meter replacement, especially Mr Steve Laurie, who actually did the work, we found him to be quick, clean, efficient and friendly.

"Thanking you all once again."

TO: Liverpool.

FROM: Mrs H. M. Wady, Calderstones, Liverpool.

"After two of your men came to upgrade the metal fusebox at my home, I would like to say how quick, efficient and tidy they were.

"They took great care and provided their own covering to protect the light-coloured carpet in the hall."

"This was greatly appreciated."

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: Jeff Riley, Claire House Appeal.

"It was marvellous to have been able to visit Manweb in Bootle and say Thank You, in person, to everyone concerned for the £100 cheque which I received.

"It is excellent that a charity such as ours should be able to benefit from the good safety record at Manweb.

We are, of course, very grateful to Mr Danny Devlin for successfully nominating Claire House.

"I was very interested to hear about your role within the 'Play & Resource Centre' for Knowsley and wish you every success with this most original project.

"Once again, many thanks for your support and kind hospitality."

Martyn is Business Customer Service Manager



MARTYN JONES has been appointed as Business Customer Service Manager to establish a new Manweb-wide Business Customer Service Centre in Wrexham.

Martyn (43) was previously Manager of Manweb's Revenue Protection Unit, which was the first such operation in the country to be awarded British Standard 5750 Quality Accreditation. Martyn has worked with Manweb for 20 years, and has held senior managerial and accounting posts throughout the company.

Martyn said: "I will be working to bring together the various business service elements of Manweb's operations, concentrating on ensuring that customers receive excellent levels of service."

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: Mrs W. Edwards, Norris Green, Liverpool.

"I am writing on behalf of my husband and myself to thank you for the help you have given to us with respect to our property.

"Without your help we would have to have cancelled all our plans for the renovation of the front of our house as we could not have afforded the original £800 which was quoted to us.

"Once again we would like to thank you and the men who actually did all the work. Our neighbours are happy with the way their garden was left."

TO: Rachel Lloyd, Customer Information Centre, Region 1.

FROM: Mrs J. Holmes, Runcorn.

"Thank you for your letter in which you asked if I would feel better if my payment date was altered to 20th of the month.

"It is all right on the 18th as I know you would not give me your word that payment will not be taken before 18th if you were unsure.

"Thank you very much for offering to change the date, it is not often these days you find people willing to go out of their way to help you.

"I appreciate it, if there were more young ladies like yourself it would be a much nicer world!!"

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: J. M. Jones, Bootle.

"Just a note to say how clean and tidy and pleasant your men were when they changed my meter over.

"They cleaned up after themselves and left no mess. Also, thank you for arranging the work to be done on a Saturday so I did not have to take time off work."

The employees concerned were; Steve Lawrence and Ronnie Caddich.

TO: North Mersey.

FROM: Miss D. Milner, Aughton, Ormskirk.

"I would like to thank you and your men for your high level of service, and for the efficient manner in which it was carried out.

"I am very pleased with the work you all did, at my home, and the derelict cottage adjoining it. It has now relieved me of the worry I had about the electric wiring on the derelict cottage, which was very old indeed."

Those concerned were; Alan Coleman, Paul Ray and Peter Stanley.

New Manager for Revenue Protection Unit



ROBIN BRADSHAW has been appointed as the new Manager of Manweb's Revenue Protection Unit. The unit is responsible for detecting and preventing theft of electricity. Robin takes over from Martyn Jones, who has moved to Manweb's Business Unit in Wrexham.

Robin (40) joined Manweb in 1972 after leaving Oldershaw Grammar School, Wallasey. He won a Manweb scholarship to study at Liverpool University, where he gained a degree in Electrical Engineering. Before taking up the Revenue Protection post he was the Company's Emergency Planning Manager.

Robin is a Chartered Engineer, and has previously held various engineering posts with Manweb in Birkenhead, Aberystwyth, Warrington and Chester.

He said: "Manweb's Revenue Protection Unit is at the leading edge of the electricity industry in responding to the problem of electricity theft. I aim to build on the unit's existing strengths, and raise awareness of our role both inside and outside Manweb in the prevention and detection of electricity theft. As well as being a criminal offence, tampering with Manweb's equipment can have potentially fatal consequences."

KEEP IT CLEAN

New service for improved efficiency

BUSINESS efficiency can be improved by keeping computers and other office equipment looking as good as new.

Now a new service, which aims to do just that and provide many other benefits, has been introduced by Service Delivery Local Application Support Group.

It is an external valeting service, available to all parts of the Company.

Offers

Co-ordinated by Service Reliability Manager Geoff Barden, the new service offers:

- Savings in time and money
- Improved hygiene, thus enhancing the welfare of staff
- Less downtime on equipment, e.g. keyboards
- Help in complying with health and safety standards.

"It was obvious when we were undertaking the re-deployment of certain equipment in the Company, that many of the items had become considerably dirty, resulting in adverse comments from the recipients," said Geoff. "We realised that there was a market for such a cleaning service and decided to find a suitable company to work under our wing."

The company selected is Phonotas, who already supply a similar service to many top UK organisations. "They are dedi-

cated to protecting customers' investments and enhancing the working environment through a range of high technology care services," Geoff explained.

The service has been arranged to suit individual and departmental requirements. Phonotas will first arrange a survey of existing equipment, discuss options and provide initial quotations.

Manweb personnel wishing to take advantage of the service should contact Paul Brotherton direct on 061-877 9237. Further information can also be obtained from Office ID: IS-COMMS.

Phonotas operators will visit departments as arranged and clean to schedule. (Cleaning a PC takes about 10 minutes.) Workcards must be signed by the customer and Phonotas will invoice following each visit.

Typical current prices are: PCs £3.88; VDUs £3.11; Printers £2.41; Telephones 35p and Fax Machines £1.24.

The Local Application Support Group will continue to introduce and co-ordinate services where these are cost effective; employees should keep an eye on notice boards and future Contact articles.

Recently established is a series of factsheets - How do I...? on such subjects as use of software, computer training, borrowing equipment and, of course, cleaning.



GRAHAM CURTIS, Electrician in the Refurbishment Section, is presented with his City and Guilds certificate by former Liverpool District Manager Bill Tubey, looking on is Geoff Ryan, Planning Manager, who was also the Tutor.



THE Ynys Mon group of the Riding for the Disabled Association was given a fund-raising boost when Manweb donated a portable television.

Manweb's Holyhead shop manager Alan Jones is pictured presenting the TV, which will be used as a raffle prize, to Fiona Lightfoot, the Association's Group Secretary.



MANWEB has given a helping hand to East Clwyd Careline by printing the charity's stationery. The organisation provides an advice and support service for carers who look after older people with memory problems or Alzheimer's disease. Representatives of East Clwyd Careline picked up the stationery from Manweb in Chester. Pictured (l-r) are Print Supervisor Keith Chidlow, from Manweb's printers Williams Lea Facilities Management, Careline Volunteer June Harrison, Careline Coordinator Doug Aitken, Careline Chairman Peter Roberts and Studio Supervisor Peter Ellison from Williams Lea.



TRAINING ON THE CARDS

MANWEB recently hosted four training sessions which were attended by 95 delegates from Thresher stores selling our meter cards. The training sessions were conducted by Chris Jefferies (Thresher Head of Training) and Carol Wright (Manweb Agency Services Manager). The aim was to evaluate the service given to our Card Meter Customers, when visiting Thresher stores to purchase their meter cards, and implement methods of improving the overall service. Pictured left are some of the Thresher Branch Managers and in the centre from left to right - Ian Baird (Customer Accounting Manager), Graham Watts (Thresher Training Co-Ordinator), Chris Jefferies (Thresher Head of Training) and Carol Wright (Agency Services Manager).



A MODEL TEACH-IN

Vinny O'Gorman, produced a working model, showing electricity being distributed via overhead pylons, and sub-stations.

Denis Judge would like to express his appreciation to Jenny Ashton, Jean Long, Pat Shaw, Danny Devlin, Duggie Grice, and Mike Kelly for their time on the exhibition, which was also attended by the emergency services, and people from British Gas, British Rail, and Sefton Life Guard.

The five-day exhibition was very successful for Manweb. The open evening at which pupils brought their parents produced a wide range of questions for Denis and Mike to answer.



A FESTIVE treat was in store for local youngsters when Manweb sponsored a travelling theatre group's pantomime tour of special schools. Members of Wrexham-based Bitesize Theatre Company are pictured with pupils from Ysgol Belmont, Windmill Road, Buckley, after their performance of 'The Golden Voyage of Sinbad'. They were joined by Manweb's Clwyd Clerical Supervisor Min Williams (front row, 2nd from right), who dressed up for the occasion.



SOUTHPORT LIBRARY added to its collection of audio cassettes with a gift from Manweb Southport shop. Shop Manager, John Pritchard, is seen handing over a 'Standards of Service' cassette for the blind, to Senior Librarian, Val Owen. John also handed over a personal stereo for the library's use, which was donated by Southport shop.



GREEN ISSUES

National honours for award winners

FOLLOWING their success in the Manweb Business Energy Awards, Trearddur Bay Lifeboat Station and Shotton Paper Plc have gone on to receive national commendations for their efficient use of electricity.

The Anglesey lifeboat station was the winner of Manweb's Beta Award for energy efficiency in buildings.

Welcoming

It received the award for a heating system which has allowed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution to provide warm, welcoming conditions for crews arriving on call-out at all times of the day and night, or returning cold and wet from their life-saving missions.

Fan assisted storage heaters and heat recovery ventilation help ensure lifeboat equipment remains in good order while the station is unmanned.

Shotton Paper, which received Manweb's Power for Efficiency and Productivity (PEP) Award for a drying process that enables it to turn paper sludge into supplementary boiler fuel, is making total savings of around £60,000 per month. In addition to reducing oil consumption, the 20 feet long contact dryer eliminates the high cost of transporting sludge for landfill disposal.

With the new dryer on stream, Shotton Paper can now use large quantities of recycled paper without creating counter-productive effluent problems for Deeside. The process is also helping the mill to meet its environmental responsibilities by reducing sulphur dioxide emissions from waste sludge.

The national Commendation Certificates were presented at a special ceremony at the Cafe Royal, London.



(L to R): Dr Dickson Mabon of the Energy Saving Trust presents Beta winner Howard Ridings, of the RNLI, with his national commendation, watched by Manweb's Head of Business Marketing and Sales, Bob Hodson.



(L to R): Bob Pearce and Bob Powell of Shotton Paper receive their national commendations. Bob Hodson from Manweb is also pictured.



School's going

MANWEB has helped William Beamont School in Long Lane, Warrington, to 'go green' with a £500 donation for planters and seating in their outdoor recreation area.

Mike Townson, then Mid-Mersey Customer Service Manager, is pictured at the school with (l-r) pupils Marc Regan, Peter Cartledge, Darran Scott, Natalie Kerry, Shelley Martin and Gemma Silvester.

St Helens builder J. Yearsley & Sons Ltd also helped the school with the project.

DAVID SPREADS ENERGY EFFICIENCY MESSAGE

MANWEB'S concern with 'green issues' has gained a wider audience thanks to Research and Technical Support Manager, Dr David Walker.

David has featured in three major events aimed at spreading the energy efficiency message to audiences around the country.

David recently joined panelists in a debate on 'Engineers and the Environment' for the Institution of Electrical Engineers, Mersey and North Wales Centre.

Panelists presented a five minute set piece on their respective subjects followed by five key questions from the audience which were each debated for five minutes.

Panelists were invited to outline their organisation's approach to impacts associated with electricity generation and consumption.

Continues

After dealing with Manweb's position in the industry and giving a background to the Company, David went on to explain how Manweb continues to take an active part in shaping the national strategy in reducing CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions.

He told the audience how Manweb had given written evidence to the Environmental Select Committee for its enquiry into Energy Efficiency in Buildings and oral evidence to the Welsh Affairs Select Committee for its enquiry into Wind Energy in Wales.

Referring to Manweb's pioneering Holyhead Power Save Project - the largest demand side management scheme ever undertaken in the UK, David said it had reduced the peak demand for power in Holyhead by 10 per cent, and de-



Dr David Walker

ferred the investment in a third substation.

He also told the audience that as part of the Supply Review Standards of Performance, Manweb was investing £5.5 million over the next four years to help domestic and small business customers.

And he told how the Company continues to give support to the Government's Energy Saving Trust which is specifically charged with

making CO2 savings of at least 2 MtC by the year 2000.

He added that analysis of the industrial entries in Manweb's Business Energy Efficiency Awards Scheme, showed that 140 GWh of energy was saved in 1993.

Successful addition

'Passport so Sustainability' was the subject of a conference organised by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) at which David was a guest speaker. "His theme, Manweb and the Environment, was a successful addition to the conference which explored how governments would put the principles of environmental sustainability into practice following the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

David was again in action at the North Wales Energy Managers Group Meeting which, along with Manweb and the Energy Efficiency Office, presented a seminar entitled 'Towards an Improved Environment'.

David gave a presentation on Energy Efficiency and Manweb and Jim Stanway, Commercial Analyst in the Manweb Resources Group, talked on Demand Side Management in Holyhead.

CHARITY BOOST

LOCAL charities have received a £300 boost thanks to safe working by Manweb.

The cash was donated by North Mersey district to mark three accident-free months of working by staff.

Representatives of the Association of Sefton Disabled People, Alder Hey Hospital's Burns Unit and Claire House Children's Hospice in Clatterbridge visited the office in Bridle Road to receive cheques for £100. Pictured (l to r): Gillian Vicary (Alder Hey), Martin Davies, Andy Stubbs, Barbara Wood (Sefton Disabled), Chris Parker, Danny Devlin, Gary Grice and Geoff Riley (Claire House).





Pictured prior to setting out for their mountaineering skills course are, (l-r) standing, Dave Grady, CSM; Ron Jones, Resources Engineer; Dave Roberts, Linesman; John Owens, Overhead Line Foreman; Len Hicks, Streetworks Co-ordinator; Dave Frusher and Ian Whitehead, Instructors. Kneeling, John McSorley, Linesman; Gwynfor James, Development Officer; Ellis Griffith, Linesman; Brian Watkin-Jones, Jointer and Arthur Pritchard, Jointer.

IT'S A HIGH LIFE AT GWYNEDD

A GROUP of Gwynedd employees became men of the mountains recently when they undertook a two-day skills course in Snowdonia.

Led by District Development Officer Gwynfor James, the party of keen mountain walkers were there to improve their knowledge, skills and team working in more advanced mountaineering techniques.

The course, for which Manweb contributed half the cost and the Sports and Social Club, a quarter, included map reading, navigating by use of a compass, rope work, climbing, abseiling and general mountain safety. Members of the nine-man party took turns in team leading as the others put their skills to the test.

"It was an interesting exercise in team working with the emphasis on safety," said Gwynfor.

"Although we all have a great deal of local mountain knowledge, these skills will be invaluable when we tackle other mountains."

Anyone requiring information about such courses should contact High Trek on 0286 871232.



Gwynfor James (left) and Ron Jones using body harnesses to lower themselves from a cliff face at Tryfan (Dyffryn Ogwen).

OBITUARIES

IT is with sadness that Contact reports the deaths of the following retired Manweb employees. They will all be sadly missed by their friends and colleagues.

Kathleen Bell Aitken, 88, who died on October 28, was a Clerical Assistant in Area 1 before retiring in 1962.

Conwy Evans was a Linesman in Dee Valley before retiring in 1993. He died on November 8, aged 66.

Robert Harold Hughes, 65, who died on November 11, was a Transport Foreman at Legacy before retiring in 1991.

Thomas Lawrenson, an Electrician in North Mersey until retirement in 1986, died on November 16, aged 67.

Arthur Houghton, who died on November 19, aged 78, was a Joiner in Mid Mersey before retirement in 1981.

Frederick Cato, who was a Foreman in Liverpool until retirement in 1986, died on November 22, aged 73.

Sydney Francis Smith, 79, a Linesman's Mate in Clwyd until retirement in 1972, died on November 29.

Esmond Percival Hough, who died on December 2, aged 92, was a Commercial Assistant in Area 1 until his retirement in 1967.

Charles Upton, 78, a Records Draughtsman in North Mersey until his retirement in 1979, died on December 8.

Eric Awel Roberts, who died in December aged 80, was a Foreman in Clwyd until he retired in 1979.

Joan Byrne, 56, a Clerical Assistant in Mid Mersey before her retirement in 1991, died on December 10.

Roy Briscoe, a Craftsman, Jointing, at Mid Mersey until his retirement in 1991, died on December 13.

Cheerio to three

THREE employees from Network, Dee Valley have recently taken early retirement.

Ron James, who has been with the ESI for 34 years and worked as an electrician within the Metering Dept at Rhostyllen, left the Company on 22 December 1994.

Brian Carter, 56, had completed 35 years' service with the ESI. On retirement he was a painter at New Crane Street depot.

Graham Croft, who took retirement at the age of 51, had been with ESI for 27 years. He worked at New Crane Street depot as a Meter Fixer.

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FREE ADS

FOR SALE

For Sale, for Mazda 323, F, GLX car, 5 steel wheels (no tyres) at £5 each, ono. 4 matt silver wheel trims at £2 each. Contact Mr C. Whiteside, Manweb Head Office, Tel: 0244 652980. Home - 051-724 2054.

Caravan for sale, four-berth ABI Marauder 400CT touring caravan complete with all accessories, including awning; £5,000 ono. Contact L. Skingley, Widnes Shop. Tel: 0928 710840.

HOLIDAYS

Borders of Cumbria and Scotland. Cosy cottage retreat on Kirkclinton smallholding, sleeps 4. Fully inclusive. Open all year. Short breaks available. Lots to do locally. Excellent touring base. No pets. Brochure 0228 75650.

PERSONAL

Bilko, Bilko. Can anyone help with a copy of The Phil Silvers Show 'The Big Uranium Strike' transmitted on BBC-2 on Saturday, 19.11.94. Please call Dave on 700-3504.

Free Cabouchon Jewellery. Free jewellery to people who act as sales agents by introducing the Cabouchon range to others. Party Plan Hostesses are also required. Cabouchon offers a superb range of elegant, designer style jewellery. The collection is nickel free and of first rate quality. Guaranteed. With prices from £3.99 to £120, there is something for everyone. A full colour 70-page

catalogue is available. (4 First Class stamps, refundable with order). Would you like to earn an extra £100 a week or more for a few hours of your time? If you want your own jewellery business, we can show you how. Free training is provided to help you succeed. For information pack on becoming an agent, a hostess or the business opportunity, write to: Al Davies, Network Services, Queensferry, or Dee Sales Ltd, The Mount, Brynford, Holywell, Clwyd CH8 8HB. Tel: 0352 712408. Ansaphone if out.

Furniture Loose Covers. Handmade to measure, tailored for 3pc suites. 180 easycare, labour saving, washable, drip/spin dry, non-iron fabrics. Fitted on delivery (limited area). Cheshire, Wirral, Merseyside, South Manchester. 17% Discount for Manweb staff and retired personnel, (Quote MWB). Brochure write, Furnishing Options, PO Box 110, Warrington WA2 7DR. Tel: 0925 240027 inc evenings/weekends.

Professional Photographer. Bookings for weddings for 1995 now being taken, also sittings for portraits of children and families in well equipped studio. Friendly service assured. "Let me create your wedding album." Peter David Studio, Wrexham. Contact: Pete or Pat on 0978 263 448.

Furniture Polishing & Restoration. Colours matched. House interiors. Free quotations. Contact Gavin Pye on 0378 262513 or 0978 846539.

ACCOMMODATION

Sealand Road, Chester. Within walking distance of Head

Office. Three bedroomed semi-detached house comprising lounge with feature fireplace and gas fire. Kitchen/diner, bathroom/wc. Economy 7 storage radiators. UPVC double glazing. Decorated throughout. Garage and garden with open aspect to rear. Contact: Pat on 700-2196.

CHILDREN'S CANCER LEUKAEMIA CARE

Wanted

Any foreign notes or coins which you forgot about in drawers and sideboards, for these most worthy nurses. Also stamps (any), stamp collections, badges, books and medals.

A donation of any kind is most welcome.

I worked in the operating theatres with these unfortunate people for many years and saw the patients and nurses needs at first hand.

My grateful thanks.

Please send to:

DAVID BUNN
9 KINGHORN ROAD
NORWICH, NORFOLK,
NR2 3QP.

Telephone: 0603 57314

If postage is a problem I will gladly pay. Every penny goes to the nurses and patients welfare. My time is free.

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CARS RALLY FOR 50th

A CAVALCADE of cars, old, new and vintage models, cruised into Head Office car park recently as their owners came to Manweb for a special celebration.

It was a dinner party to mark the 50th anniversary of the RAC Rally being held and Manweb premises and facilities were chosen to accommodate the 450 guests.

Most of the previous RAC Rally winners were there for a Champagne reception and dinner served up by Manweb's caterers, Compass.



VOICE MAIL A SUCCESS

ON 1 May last year the single telephone number was launched with the aim of improving customer service by making it easier for people to contact Manweb.

Part of this project was to promote and encourage the use of 'direct dial inwards' (DDI) through-

out the Company.

At present around 175,000 calls per year using the DDI facility are unanswered, a clear breakdown in the customer communication chain.

To reduce the number of lost calls Information Services has evaluated 'voice mail'.

This is a voice messaging system which records incoming telephone calls and places them in mail boxes for retrieval at a later date.

A six-day trial of voice mail has taken place in Mid Mersey with a small number of users and this has been very successful.

In a survey of the users the majority felt they were giving their customers an improved service by providing a more efficient communication method. All wishes to continue with the facility.

In order to improve customer service to both internal and external customers voice mail will be made available to selected users in Chester and district offices.

Project

A project team has been set up to implement this with John Macdonald as the Project Sponsor and Tony Timmins the Project Manager.

The project involves identifying potential users and their training requirements, setting up an administration system and rolling out the equipment.

To ensure all telephone users understand the principles of giving excellent customer service and how to use voice mail effectively, a code of practice is being written, and this will be issued to all telephone users in the spring.

For further information contact Amanda Nelson in Customer Communications on 700 2817.



Charity begins at home and away

TWO soccer-mad colleagues got on their bikes recently to visit their home team ground as well as those of some of their main rivals.

Dave Rogers of Manweb Rhyll Stores and his mate Ross North, pedal-pushed for charity by cycling to Everton, Liverpool, Manchester City and

Manchester United to collect autographed footballs, pictures and scarves for a fund-raising raffle.

The lads, both Everton supporters, have raised over £400 to be divided between Hope House Respite Hospice, Oswestry, and Research for Leukaemia in Children.

Over £150 came from Manweb, £100 from the brewery for which Ross is a landlord, and over £100 from his pub regulars.

"It was Ross's idea to do the bike ride and visit the soccer clubs," said Dave. "The response has been marvellous and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to help these worthy causes."

Swing into action for the blind

CALLING all golfers! A challenge has been issued to Manweb staff to take part in a charity golf day to raise funds for St Vincent's School for the Blind, Liverpool.

The event will take place on Friday, 18 August 1995 at West Derby Golf Club, Yew Tree Lane, West Derby, Liverpool 12, and will include 18 holes on one of the city's best courses, a light lunch prior to play, dinner, a free grand draw ticket, participation in the team competition, nearest the pin competition, and best individual score competition. It is hoped that some well-known local personalities will also take part.

Sponsorship

The cost per player is £50, which may be raised through sponsorship, and teams of up to four people can enter.

All proceeds will go to St Vincent's School. Entry forms are available from Jackie Unsworth in Public Relations, 5E1, Head Office, Tel: 700 2090.

BALLET TREAT



MANWEB and Age Concern joined forces to give 60 Merseyside pensioners an early Christmas present - first class tickets to see English National Ballet's performance of Swan Lake at the Liverpool Empire.

Jane Howorth, a soloist with ENB, visited Age Concern Woolton to hand out the tickets, some of which were given to pensioners from St Helens and Wirral. Jane dressed up for the occasion in one of the costumes from the show.

Manweb was one of the sponsors of ENB's Swan Lake tour in Liverpool at the end of November.

POST BAG ... EXTRA

Dear Editor,

Glancing idly through the December issue of Contact, wondering if I would see a familiar face, I suddenly spotted one which made me choke on my toast and marmalade.

I refer to the photograph (page 4) taken circa 1970, showing a person revealing more than a hint of naked knee.

Shocking! That's what I call it. Surely a bit of respect should be accorded to someone who has reached the 'keep knees covered' stage of life. One shudders to think what other ghastly visions from the past are lurking in the photographic archives.

Is Contact following in the steps of the more lurid tabloids? Who will be the next unfortunate oldie to be exposed thus? If you intend to publish more of this 'page 4' sort of material, I fear drastic action must ensue.

Pensioners unite! Knit yourself a balaclava! I propose we launch a midnight raid to destroy the negatives.

Irene Matthewson,
Pensioner,
57 Overleigh Road,
Handbridge,
Chester CH4 7HN.