

RECORD PUT STRAIGHT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

MANWEB has 'put the record straight' after a report in the consumers' magazine Which? criticised the electricity industry's prices and services.

Contrary to the report, Manweb's price increases in 1992/3 were 1.3 per cent below the rate of inflation, and in 1993/4 Manweb actually cut its prices by one per cent.

The Which? report also criticises the standards of work carried out throughout the electricity industry. However, Manweb was not used by the Which? researchers in their tests, and Manweb has every confidence in the standard of the work it carries out.

Which? also failed to mention that Manweb offers card meter customers a discount on their electricity price, and did not recognise that apparently high estimates for budget payment schemes often include a current electricity bill, to cover more than 12 months' electricity consumption.

By Graeme Cooper

Manweb's Select tariff, which has no standing charge for people using small amounts of electricity, was highlighted in the report, which also listed Manweb as being 'the worst' when it came to reading meters.

The Company is already aware of its high level of estimated bills, and has just announced steps to read meters every quarter.

Which? again failed to list Manweb as showing a clear message on estimated bills. In fact, Manweb has carried this message on bills for over a year.

Generally the Which? report said electricity customers were dissatisfied with the way complaints were handled by

electricity companies. While acknowledging that things can always be improved, Manweb points to research showing 80 per cent of customers are satisfied with Manweb's services.

Electricity company shops were also criticised for having high prices, but Manweb operates a price promise, and will match prices offered by other local retailers.

Manweb's Chief Executive John Roberts said: "The Which? report presents a position that is considerably out of date. In the last 12 months we have improved services dramatically. At a time when customer calls have increased by 70 per cent customer complaints have fallen by 70 per cent, service standards against targets have dramatically improved, and disconnections are at an all time low of 14 in the nine months to June. At the same time prices to customers have actually been reduced this year."

MANWEB MAKES ITS MARK

MANWEB has received a prestigious Charter Mark award, establishing the Company as one of the best public service providers in the country.

The Charter Mark scheme was established in 1992 by John Major as part of his Citizen's Charter initiative to recognise excellence in the delivery of public services. Only 129 Charter Marks have been awarded since the award was launched.

Manweb qualified for the Charter Mark by meeting nine independently checked criteria, which included making measurable improvements to the quality of service, and showing that customers are satisfied with the Company's service.

Application

Every member of staff was sent a copy of Manweb's Charter Mark application in July, and this contained all the information on which the Charter Mark judges based their assessment.

This was the first time the whole of Manweb had been assessed on customer service, and stringent 'spot checks' were carried out in Liverpool District, Birkenhead Shop and Region Two Customer Information Centre in Prenton.

Regulation Business



Manweb had to demonstrate that it was making innovative improvements to service which did not increase costs to customers.

Improvements underway in the company include a new telephone system which will make it easier for customers to obtain the correct service, and new cable laying equipment which avoids the need to dig up roads and does the job more efficiently.

Meter reading has also been reviewed to enable readers to call at more convenient times, which helps Manweb reduce the number of estimated bills. Readers now aim to call every quarter.

Trained

Staff are also being trained as multi-skilled representatives, who will be able to carry out a range of tasks when visiting customers, so reducing the need for repeat visits.

Manweb's Chief Executive John Roberts said: "In the last 12 months complaints have fallen 61 per cent, payments for failing our guaranteed standards have fallen by 80 per cent and disconnections have fallen 98 per cent to 17. At the same time prices to customers were reduced by one per cent. All our staff have contributed to the improvements in service our customers are receiving. I am delighted for them that their efforts have been recognised with the Charter Mark. We will continue to strive for even higher standards for our customers."

Manweb did not apply for the Charter Mark in 1992 as there were a number of services it wanted to improve.



Sailing together

MANWEB and Welsh Water have combined to help Llyn Brenig Sailing Club to keep afloat.

First Manweb sponsored an Optimist dinghy which has helped youngsters to learn to sail.

Now Welsh Water has provided a second Optimist — an eight foot dinghy ideal for 8-15 year olds.

"These dinghies are proving very successful in getting our younger members on the water," said club Commodore, Jeff Morgan.

Jeff who is Business Planning Adviser at Manweb, added: "Each sailing day there is a rush to get the boat on the water. The Optimists are ideal boats for the youngsters and I'm sure they'll continue to be in great demand."

The boats are designed as starter boats but can be raced competitively. The design and weight means that the young members can

launch and recover the dinghies themselves.

Jeff wrote initially to about 50 companies in the North Wales/Cheshire/Merseyside area with Welsh Water and Manweb being the only companies to provide major sponsorship.

"The club is very grateful to Manweb and Welsh Water for their generous sponsorship," said Jeff. "It is an excellent example of utility companies investing in the community, particularly the young, at grass roots level."

And as a measure of their appreciation Llyn Brenig Sailing Club has invited Manweb staff to the club for a day's sailing.

In the picture Manweb and Welsh Water sponsored dinghies set sail. The Welsh Water craft is manned by the Company's Northern Divisional Director John Williams.

Anyone interested should contact Sue Linton on 700 2538 who will make the necessary arrangements.

See sharing for success, pages 6-7.

WHAT A HOOT!

HEAD of Regulation Mike Metcalfe should be used to running the gauntlet by now. But his close encounter with a barn owl left him feeling a right twit two!



CONTACT IS PRINTED ON RECYCLED STOCK.



ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Before a Manweb team could move a large transformer they had to build a special road to take it along.

Mid Cheshire District was involved in replacing a 12.5 MVA 33/11kV transformer that had faulted at Elworth Grid and was beyond repair.

The replacement transformer which is not a standard Manweb size was recovered from ICI Lostock.

Weighing 60 tonnes, the transformer could only be moved along certain roads due to the ground loadings. So a temporary road had to be laid at the ICI site to accomplish the manoeuvre.

Mid Cheshire District Operations Manager Martin Cawson said: "All went well on the day thanks to careful planning by Phil Burrows, Operations Engineer and Mitch Hughes, Project Foreman.



North Wirral Receptionist Irene Costello demonstrates the pneumatic cash handling system to colleague Sheila Golbourne.

SAFER WITH NEW SYSTEM

MANWEB has introduced a new perspective to its customer and staff security, by installing rising security screens, and a cash/document pneumatic conveyor system in the new open plan reception at Oswestry, Crewe, Bootle, Liverpool, Rhyl and Prenton District Offices.

The system was created by Air Tube Conveyors of Birmingham, especially to meet Manweb's requirements.

"The introduction of open reception areas, in which direct contact with customers is an important feature, meant a revised system of cash and document handling," said Manweb Engineer Roger Nock.

Each of the reception areas is fitted with private interview rooms, that continue the open plan reception theme, but are also secure. The interview rooms are fitted with personal



Customer Service Representative Steve Austin uses the security screen at North Wirral District Office as he is confronted by colleague Dave Watkins in the role of an angry customer.

alarms, and in the case of the Prenton office, rising security shields.

Roger Nock explained: "We wished to maintain the ability to discuss matters directly with customers in these private rooms, however it was essential to provide staff with an effective quick means of pro-

tection in the rare instance of physical attack."

The partnership of Manweb and ATC has led to the introduction of a unique security system that ensures that our reception areas are user friendly to both staff and customers, but are also safe places in which to work.

Getting to know your telephone

THE Single Telephone Number (STN) Project has recently highlighted the need for staff to be trained on the features of the telephone.

Whether it is using the conference facility to arrange a meeting or forwarding calls to a different extension, the telephone system's capabilities should be fully utilised in order to provide an efficient service to both internal and external customers.

Package

An interactive computer based training package is now available for the standard telephone equipment installed within the Company. The computer based package is classed as a 'communications simulator' and operates by touch screen facilities. It will enable new or existing staff to be trained in telephone features in about 30 minutes with options to repeat and review sections if need be.

A 'Guide to Telephone Features' leaflet has also been produced to accompany the training package. In the future it will be possible to provide training on any telephone equipment as well as things like Voice Mail and ACD's.

The training equip-

ment (Telecom Knowledge PXE 1000) is scheduled to be available at all locations in the near future, however, additional details can be obtained from David Barratt (STN Project 700-2676) or from Training & Development Head Office.



Testing the equipment are (left to right): Gary Morris, Lisa Healey, David Barratt, Larry Pritchard.

WINTER WARMER FROM MANWEB

MANWEB has once again distributed thousands of free thermometers to local Age Concern branches to help guard elderly people from hypothermia.

The strip thermometers, marked in the Fahrenheit scale and contained on a printed card, show clearly when a room is too cold or too hot, enabling the occupants to manage their heating more efficiently.

Often on limited budgets, elderly people

are most at risk from the cold and are less able to detect changes in the temperature around them.

The temperature gauge ranges from 50 degrees Fahrenheit, when there is danger of hypothermia, to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, which is energy wasting. The cards also carry tips on conserving energy while still keeping warm.

Local Age Concern branches have welcomed the initiative and will be distributing the cards throughout the Manweb region to those most in need.

Mark makes music for Michael

CUSTOMER Service Facilitator Mark Hollowood arranged a 'thank you' fundraising evening for the Countess of Chester Hospital after the hospital provided life saving emergency treatment for his son Michael.

Michael (1), was rushed to hospital with a potentially fatal urethral valve condition, and speedy and expert treatment from the hospital's Children's Medical Ward team saved him.

Mark, who plays in a group, organised the thank you evening with live music, a disco and raffle at the St David's Park Hotel in Ewloe.

The event was completely sold out, with many Manweb colleagues attending. The total donated to the hospital was boosted to £2,000 by a sponsored

run by Retail Administration Manager Alex Lewis and Customer Service Facilitator Roy Jones. Manweb's Charity Chest also donated £150.

Mark said: "The Children's Medical Ward team did a fantastic job and I wanted to do something special to say thank you. I'd like to express our appreciation to everyone who came along to the evening, and to friends and colleagues who donated prizes for the raffle. We'd also like to thank the St David's Park staff, who were extremely generous in the help they gave us."

Pictured (l-r) are Mark's wife Nikki with Michael, Mark, St David's Park Manager Hamish Ferguson, Staff Nurse Christine McGinily and Ward Manager Karen Hird.



SWING SCOOPS TITLE

A 16-year-old girl has carried off the title of "Young Engineer for Britain 1993" — the second year running a girl has won the top award.

Lucy Porter, of Bath, won the coveted trophy, a £500 personal prize and £1,500 for the purchase of engineering equipment by her school. She also carried off The Engineering Council's VISE (Women Into Science and Engineering) award of £500 or the best project by a girl.

She won the awards by inventing a swing exerciser for children with special needs, who are unable to use their legs. She plans to be an engineer and said: "Engineering is really addictive — it is so satisfying to design and make something which can solve a problem."

Lucy was one of 53 finalists, aged 11 to 19, competing in the national final of the competition — the leading event of its type in Europe —

organised by The Engineering Council and held at Plaisterers Hall in the City of London. They had been selected at 12 regional events from a record 970 young people who had competed for prizes totalling a record £20,000.

Announcing the winners was Carol Vorderman, the star presenter of TV and radio science and maths programmes.



Lucy with her prize winning invention.

Barry Judd, Manweb Mid Mersey District Manager, who has been a judge in these competitions for the three years they've been held and this time headed one of the six judging panels said: "The standard has always been

high but this year the quality of entries was even higher!"

Barry explained that Manweb sponsors the N.W. Regional Final from which the winner goes on to the National Final.

"We are keen to be involved

with young people and it's pleasing to see there's still so many of them interested in engineering, especially young ladies."

Ray Palin Director of Cheshire SATRO said: "Cheshire County Council Education Services

working through the Cheshire SATRO, greatly value the many links which Manweb has established in the country and the high performance achieved by these young people as proof of how worthwhile these links are."

Manweb Meter reading service extended

MANWEB is improving its meter reading service. From the beginning of last month, we will visit most domestic customers every three months to read their electricity meters.

Remote

The exceptions are customers who currently receive only one visit each year (usually properties in remote locations or holiday homes) and Manweb plans to improve the service to this group of customers as well.

Meter readers will call during a wider range of hours, including early evening and Saturdays — at times when customers are usually at home. All our meter readers carry security identity cards which include a photograph. Customers can request to see the identity card.

Details

We have also introduced a new facility for the times when the meter reader does not find the customer at home. The meter reader will leave a card to indicate that he has called and which gives details of how customers can provide their own meter reading (all telephone calls at local rate). Customers' readings will be used, avoiding the need for estimated bills.

Bob Vernon, Meter Services Manager, said: "We are making these changes to improve the service we offer, as it is quite clear that customers do not like estimated bills."



Top Prize for lucky Rachel

WREXHAM customer Rachel Millington has landed the top prize of £500 in a Manweb competition and is pictured here receiving her cheque from Bill Bartlett, Manweb's Head of Market Planning and Research.

Rachel is amongst a group of 1,200 Manweb customers who read their meters each week and return this information to help the Company plan its electricity business.

Customers on the meter reading panel are offered a nominal fee to compensate them for their trouble, but 200 have chosen to trade their modest quarterly fee for the chance of a larger prize by taking part in a competition. To win, they have to correctly answer three questions about Manweb

and complete a tiebreaker.

Bill Bartlett said: "Other customers have chosen to donate their fees to local charities. For example donations have been made to help fund Riding for the Disabled and to buy equipment to assist a disabled child with her reading."

GAS FIND WILL AID BUSINESS

The discovery of coalbed natural gas in Wales and the North West was the subject of a presentation hosted by Manweb in September.

It was organised by Mike Rowley, Corporate Business Development Analyst, in his capacity as Chairman of the Construction and Environmental Forum of the Chester Chamber of Commerce.

Main speaker was Ian Thompson, Managing Director of Evergreen Resources, the company which made the discovery.

He described his experiences on the project and outlined the opportunities for businesses in the area.

He explained how methane, the purest form of natural gas, is present in most coal seams and occupies the pores within the coal. However, these pores must be connected to each other otherwise the gas cannot be extracted and the gas must be present in economic quantities to make the effort worthwhile.

He went on to say that, after much research, Evergreen believed that in parts of Wales and the North West, these criteria would be met. And he told how earlier this year, by drilling beside Sealand Road outside Chester, they were proved right. If experience in the US is repeated in the UK it is possible that future wells could produce 1 million therms. Although small by North Sea standards, each would produce enough gas to supply up to 2,000 homes, he said.

Using its experience in the US, Evergreen studied available geological information and was subsequently granted exploration licences covering 2500 sq.km. After further work, two wells have been successfully completed in Clwyd and Cheshire.

Evergreen's next task is to encourage a support industry with the UK to help them develop these reserves. Specialised equipment and experience will be required to drill and hook-up the large numbers of wells necessary to develop this exciting new discovery.

Mike Rowley said the presentation was interesting and informative and suggests that it is now up to local businesses to get involved. "Opportunities will exist for businesses that can develop the specialised equipment and experience at the right price," he says.

Further information can be

Christine is new Whitchurch Manager

MANWEB has appointed a new manager at its shop in Green End, Whitchurch.

She is mother-of-three Mrs Christine Prescott (pictured), who has lived in the Wrexham area since moving from Lancashire 26 years ago.

For the last three years Christine has worked at Manweb's Superstore on the Greyhound Retail Park, Chester, where she was able to



widen her knowledge of television and audio equipment, kitchen appliances and other electrical goods.

Knowledge

The winner of various manufacturers' product knowledge competitions, Christine said: "I am looking forward to meeting the people of Whitchurch and helping them to select from the wide range of electrical goods we sell at Manweb."

"My staff and I are committed to upholding Manweb's policy of providing the best

UK PRICES MIDWAY ON EC SCALE

UK DOMESTIC electricity prices are the fourth cheapest in the EC and industrial prices about midway on the EC scale, says a recent report from the Electricity Association.

It shows that only Greece, Ireland and the Netherlands have cheaper domestic electricity prices within the EC than the UK. For industrial

being achieved by companies with industrial contracts but these are not being taken into account in the report.

In world terms UK electricity prices are also competitive, falling midway in the range of domestic prices. For industrial customers, UK prices are considerably cheaper than

INSIGHT FOR MP



Alyn and Deeside MP Barry Jones visited Manweb's Head Office to gain an insight into some of the company's latest

our new planning software package, to Barry Jones (right), are (l-r): John Turner, Chief Engineer, Bryan Weston,



Lost or abandoned calls have virtually disappeared and complaints to OFFER have fallen dramatically thanks to the improved telephone answering service.

Calling a halt to those delays

AN improved telephone answering service is helping to ring the changes for Manweb's customers.

In the year since the Regional Customer Accounts Centres were set up, telephone answering standards have risen steadily to a point where we are now regularly beating the target level of 85 per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds.

"It was clear that the way we deal with customers who want to talk to us over the telephone was a critical area to get right quickly. Now lost or abandoned calls have virtually disappeared and complaints to OFFER have fallen dramatically, indicating that Manweb is on the right track," said Head of Income Bob McMahon.

Although the vast majority of calls are received by the regional customer accounts centres, up to 20 per cent are dealt with in other areas of the Company, where staff are often not equipped to deal with a high volume of calls covering a wide range of topics.

The calls are received on various numbers which can be obtained from various sources such as telephone directories, yellow pages, Thompson director, trade press and from correspondence.

Bob McMahon said: "It is clear from looking at any entry in the phone book that in an attempt to direct calls to the correct location, we have made it difficult for our customers.

"We have given customers a wide choice of numbers and when they choose one and ring it, if they get through, they may well be in the wrong place. And transferring calls is extremely unpopular with customers because they think they are getting the run-round!"

To help overcome this the role of the regional call centres will be widened to deal with as

many telephone enquiries into the Company as possible through the Single Telephone Number (STN) concept. About 65 per cent of all calls to the regional centres are now on the 0345 112211 number, and that percentage is steadily rising.

"We are carrying out a number of initiatives so we can increase the range of calls which can be handled in the regional centres without reducing the service," said Bob McMahon. "Conversely we are also trying to reduce the number of calls by tackling the root causes of the problems."

An example of this is to reduce the number of estimated accounts by improving meter reading practices.

New technology is also being used to help the call centre staff deal with a wider range of enquiries and to simplify the customer accounting procedures.

In addition, second level

help desks have been established so that if call centre staff cannot answer the call, they can transfer it — just once — to a trained back-up facility. There are second level help desks in each District for Network Services support and for such things as retail, contracting and appliance servicing.

"This, along with the promotion of direct dial facilities at all locations, should enable us to introduce the single number concept steadily over the next 12 to 18 months," said Bob McMahon.

From the beginning of October the call centre at Rhostyllen has extended its opening hours to 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday for all customer accounts telephone enquiries.

"Then, from about the end of the year, we will start to take calls from other numbers and gradually remove them from publication. At that stage

we will leave the emergency numbers with the Districts," said Bob.

"From the early part of 1994 we will therefore introduce a single number — 0345 112211 — for all non-emergency calls to the Company between 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am - 5pm Saturday. We propose to have emergency numbers as they are, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but this may well be reviewed to see if we can deal with all calls on the one number, including emergencies, by the end of 1994."

The Single Telephone Number project is just one part of the overall plan to improve the service we provide to our customers. One number, easy to remember, will put customers through to Manweb, where they will receive prompt, knowledgeable and polite attention and where, at worst, they will only be transferred once.

BRIEFINGS WILL KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED

A SERIES of briefing sessions has been launched at Manweb to tell staff how our customer service programme is progressing.

Over the coming months all employees will hear from their managers and supervisors what the Company is planning and doing to ensure the service we provide to customers is of the highest quality.

At the same time staff will have the chance to air their views and ask questions about these initiatives.

The first monthly 'team briefings' were held during October, covering our written and telephone communications with domestic customers (see report left).

Other topics to be covered include Field Services, which continues the theme of 'ease of contact', OFFER and our Standards of Service/Complaints Procedure, Customer Service Training and Supply Reliability and Restoration.

Concentrate

Head of Human Resources David Vernon-Smith said: "Each brief will cover what we are trying to achieve, what we have achieved so far and what it will mean for staff."

"We intend to address all areas of our business through team briefings, but we have decided to first concentrate on the Customer Service initiative."

Employees want direct contact with their boss

The briefings will be backed up by articles in Contact covering each of the topics within the communication programme.

By launching a series of briefings, Manweb is addressing criticism of internal communications made by those who took part in the staff opinion survey last year.

Employees expressed a preference for receiving important information via team briefings and from direct contact with their immediate boss.

Write lines

IN addition to improving the way telephone calls are handled, Manweb is working hard to ensure its written communications are on the right lines.

A new word processor package called Ami Pro has been installed at the regional customer accounts centres so that staff can provide the personal touch and prepare their own replies to written enquiries.

"We have also given a large number of staff refresher training in letter writing in a bid to achieve a consistently high quality," said Head of Income Bob McMahon.

He added: "On many occasions when customers write to us, we try to respond with a telephone call. We think this is a more personal, helpful approach, and in discussion with the customer we make sure we are dealing with the real problem as fully as possible."

AN EASIER LIFE ON THE CARDS

MANWEB'S ongoing campaign to provide customers with more convenient outlets at which to buy electricity meter cards, and which offer a wide range of opening times, has met with tremendous success.

Ian Baird, Manweb's Customer Accounting Manager, said: "The number of high street businesses who are willing to sell meter cards is continually growing. These businesses, such as Thresher, Spar, Telegraph Service Stations, Cellar 5 and many other independent garages and retail stores, see the arrangement as an extension to the service they already offer to customers."

He added: "We have taken our business to the high street because we want to

Far more flexible, quality service now on offer

offer customers a far more flexible, quality service and there is a growing demand to be able to buy meter cards until late in the evening, seven days a week. We originally only dealt with the Post Office but they have had to increase the price they charge us for selling cards. As we did not want to pass these increased costs on to our customers, new arrangements have been made for them to purchase meter cards at a variety of alternative outlets with longer opening hours."

However, customers will still be able to buy electricity meter cards in most rural post offices and some selected post offices in the more urban areas of the Manweb region.

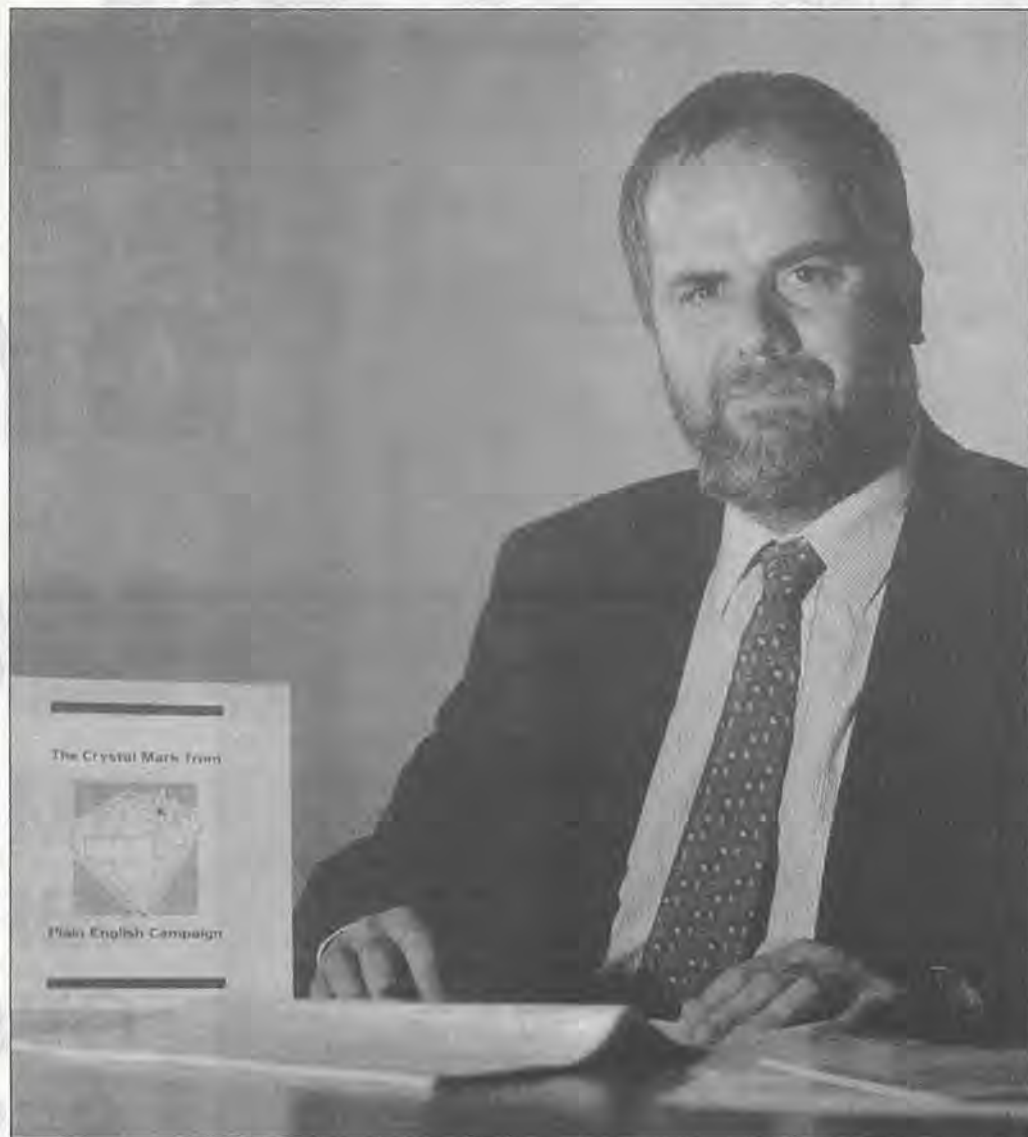
Ian Baird concluded: "Research has shown that customers are delighted to be able to purchase their meter cards at places where they can shop seven days a week and which operate extended shopping hours."

Meter card users are being informed by

letter of these more convenient new outlets with longer opening hours, and the select post offices within the Manweb region which will continue to sell meter cards. Customers will be continually updated as more and more outlets are opened up.

Manweb's aim is to provide a high quality service to its customers. By selling meter cards within these new outlets, which offer a wide range of opening times, some of them operating a 24 hour service, Manweb is confident its customers can buy meter cards at a place and time convenient to them.

Details on meter cards and where they can be purchased are available from any Manweb shop or office.



Tim Elliott — with Crystal Mark clearly visible.

IT'S PLAIN FOR ALL TO READ

MAKING things crystal clear for customers has paid off with an official seal of approval for Tim Elliott and his team in Regulator Relations.

Codes of Practice on Energy Efficiency in the Home, Services for the Elderly and Disabled and Payment of Bills have each received the Crystal Mark for clarity from Plain English Campaign.

Manweb was the first electricity company to get a Crystal Mark for a large number of its standard customer accounting letters and has now received the accolade for its Codes of Practice.

"The Crystal Mark acknowledges the efforts made by Manweb to produce easily understood literature without the gobbledygook often associated with this type of publication," said Tim, Manweb's Regulation Business Manager.

At present, three are approved and two which are currently being updated will be submitted to Plain English Campaign when completed.

Publications that have received approval will display the Crystal Mark logo.

Chrissie Maher, Director and founder of Plain English Campaign, said: "We have been very impressed with Manweb's commitment to the principles of plain English. They have worked extremely hard to make their information and letters clear, human and friendly. I applaud their efforts wholeheartedly."

Plain English Campaign is an independent organisation based at Whaley Bridge in north Derbyshire. It takes up the grievances of the 'victims' of gobbledygook and small print, and lobbies central and local

government on plain English issues. It pressurises industry, particularly the financial and legal sectors, to communicate clearly and therefore fairly. It produces information, publications and press releases to

spread the word of plain English.

It is funded by its own commercial section which provides editing, writing, design and training services in clear communication.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAIN ENGLISH

- Each year, sloppy letter-writing costs the UK about £6 billion as a result of mistakes, inefficiency and lost business.
- Companies now understand the importance of customer care. However, very few take the time to find out whether their customers are impressed with the clarity and quality of their documents.
- According to research in 1991, 58% of people with endowment mortgages do not know what an endowment is.
- Many government departments have forms design units with a wealth of expertise and experience in putting together clear, effective forms, and yet some departments seem to be disbanding their units.
- One of the keys to plain English is to avoid passive verbs. Unlike American children, most pupils in UK schools are never taught the difference between the active and passive 'voices'.
- Everyone complains about receiving small print, but most people put up with working in organisations that produce it.

Supplied by Plain English Campaign

WRITE TIME

THE thank you letters are still coming in from satisfied customers writing to praise Manweb staff for their commitment to efficient and courteous service. Here is a selection from around the Region.

To Alex Lewis, Retail Administration Manager, Manweb, from Peter Ainslie, Chester.

"Thank you very much for your sympathetic response to my letter concerning difficulties with MCS over security alarm maintenance. I am grateful to you for passing my complaint to Mr Littler which has ultimately produced results after a month of further correspondence.

I am particularly appreciative as other Manweb managers are unwilling or do not have the courtesy to reply to letters except through an intermediary."

From Marbury, Cheshire, Frank Van Worrell wrote:

"We are pleased with the Hoover Automatic washer bought from you.

If you can, will you please advise if there should be a standpipe for the outflow pipe. It does seem odd that such a piece of equipment should finish with the outflow hooked over the sink and tied with string. Neither safe nor sightly.

"I would add that my wife and myself were very pleased with the courtesy, care and competence of your showroom staff at Nantwich, also the mannerly approach of your delivery men."

"Having recently purchased a stereo from your Ellesmere Port store, I feel I must write and congratulate your Company for having the most job conscious employees.

"The shop manager and his assistants are most polite, and nothing is too much trouble for them. It is a very pleasant change these days to find such courteous and willing staff. If you want to use this letter in any promotion, etc., please feel free.

A very satisfied customer." David Rose, Ellesmere Port.

Kathleen Roberts, of Garston, Liverpool, sent the following letter:

"I am writing to thank you and the two members of your staff who were so kind to me after I had a fall. The First Aid lady brought me tea and comfort, and the second one (I think the supervisor) brought me the means to be taken home in a taxi and so carefully took me to the taxi rank and saw me safely in. Thankfully, no bones were broken. The following morning I was stiff and sore and rather lame, but hopefully that will pass without any more damage. I am an elderly lady and such kindness and care is very much appreciated. It is nice to know that there are caring people still around. Please do thank these two ladies for me, and for the help and company they gave me."

The two 'kind ladies' from St John's shop were Iris Sage, Supervisor/Senior Sales and Hazel Maddon, Sales Assistant.

A letter of praise came from Mr T. B. Jones of Caernarfon.

"During the 37 years of our marriage, my wife and I have purchased all our electrical equipment at your Pwllheli branch, including our latest Tricity Bendix cooker and I would like to place on record our appreciation of the kindness and consideration shown by your staff at the Pwllheli shop.

"It has been a pleasure to find, particularly these days, such courteous and helpful people and I would be glad if you could convey my thanks to them."

A congratulatory letter, also sent to the Chairman's office, was sent to Jim Brown, Services Manager, Trading Division, from W. E. Trinick, a customer from Colwyn Bay.

"Thank you for your letter of 8 September and for the small gift delivered with my Hotpoint 9537P which arrived at approximately 3.30 yesterday afternoon. I am pleased to tell we had the machine working shortly after tea and completed four washes reducing the laundry pile. At 7.20 this morning the machine is working again. We are not looking forward to the ironing.

"Your prompt action in dealing with my problem is greatly appreciated and the man-

ner in which you handled an irate customer could be used in a manual for training staff concerned with the customer relationship. You fully appreciated the reasons for my outburst and I am pleased you accepted it so calmly. It was refreshing to have a problem solved in such a courteous and prompt manner and took me back to yesteryear when problems were handled so differently than many are today.

"I was most impressed that you found time to telephone me from your home last evening, after completing your normal day's work, to enquire if the machine had been delivered and all was well.

"My wife and I take the view this matter should be referred to the Chairman of the Company because over a long period of time, problems which will inevitably arise have never been handled as well as this one and staff should be congratulated from the highest level for their contribution to an excellent relationship.

"I wish you well."

Referring to refurbishment of electricity supplies at her home in Mow Cop, customer B. Parles wrote:

"The young men who carried out this work were very pleasant; they even removed their bits and pieces after completing their work."

Mrs B. Philps of Sandbach, Cheshire, wrote regarding Gary Barnes, engineer in the Alteration Section, Mid Cheshire District:

"Thank you for your kind visits and letters. I am very conscious of the personal effort you have made to keep me informed of your maintenance necessity and hope that I have not made your job more difficult. It can firmly be said that your large organisation has responded magnificently and shown there is heart.

"It was a great pleasure to meet you and have you explain to me very clearly what your job entails and how it affects me and my neighbours."

Workmen in Liverpool District were praised by Pat Stevenson who said:

"I would like you to convey my thanks to the two workmen who worked at my home on Wednesday 25 August.

"Living on an estate which is going through major changes, I have experienced some really bad jobs and slip-shod workers during the past nine months. However, the two men from Manweb were efficient, courteous and to my amazement, left no mess.

"If other contractors and firms worked to your high standard, life on this estate would have been so much better.

"Thank you once again."

The efficient workmen were, Geoffrey Bent and Michael Preston.

More praise for Gwynedd District came from Mrs M. Devonshire who wrote:

"I would just like to express my many thanks for the gentlemen who have been to my flat over the fault in my meter. I am a 75 year old pensioner. It's a long time since I was shown any kindness from all sorts of people who I have been in contact with in the last few years.

"I just can't get over the kindness and respect they have shown to me. I thought kindness had left this country. But now I have changed my mind.

"I would like you to convey my sincere thanks to these gentlemen. I do wish all people we opened our doors to had a nice smile like these men. Many thanks for such people."

Two more customers from Caernarfon, Jenetta and Dustin Rodgers wrote to Eifion Griffiths, Gwynedd District:

"We would like to express our great appreciation of your time and trouble over the incident of the 26 July.

"Your personal appearance to express your Company's apology, and also your personal appearance with the tokens, was a pleasure few receive in this modern age. I was expecting postal communications.

"Once again, we thank you for your personal service."



Clwyd District office. The new Welsh Water Stores is the orange building.

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SUCCESS in the re-design of Clwyd District office can be seen in these pictures.

As well as giving a new-look to the reception area to provide improved customer service and facilities, many other features were incorporated in the refurbishment.

Up against a tight programme, the project team began detailed work in January this year, started work on site in May and had finished the job by August.

Bob Campbell, Manweb Property Services, was quick to praise those concerned.

"Various departments of Manweb were essential in the successful completion of the project and I should like to thank Clwyd District Staff; Head Office Network Services, Estates, Legal, Information Services, Transport, Photographic, and Public Relations; and opposite numbers in Welsh Water; the design team — Architect, Quantity Surveyor and Structural Engineer; the Main Contractor and many

subcontractors including Manweb Contracting Services.

"People have now settled in and the new relationships appear to be working very well," said Bob.

THE NEW ACCOMMODATION AT RHYL PROVIDES

- New Store building and external storage for Welsh Water.

- New material storage bays and separate waste stores.
- Re-design of existing stores layout.
- Shared accommodation for field staff of both companies.
- Ground floor office occupied and fitted-out by Welsh Water.
- Re-designed reception.

- New open reception for both
- Two separate rooms for customers in confidence.
- Disabled facilities including access and automatic doors.
- Audio loop for people with hearing difficulties.
- Secure cash handling using money away from the reception area.
- Installation of a security access system.
- New 250 sq.m. store for Welsh Water.
- New external storage for Welsh Water to 1750 sq.m.
- Improved packing and handling facilities.
- Enlarged stores office
- Lighting and heating in the stores to be more energy efficient.
- Improved waste storage facilities.



Reception area – during and after refurbishment.



New look at Rhyl.

Clwyd District Manager John... arrangement has been very enabled the district to cut op improved facilities for custome employees are getting on together."

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A JOINT venture between Manweb and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water was officially launched on October 1 1993 with the opening of the two companies' shared premises at Rhyl and Glan Conwy.

Rod Richards, MP for Clwyd North West, marked this special occasion by unveiling a plaque at the larger of the premises — Manweb's District Office in Cefndy Road, Rhyl.

Mr Howard Kirkham, Director Network Services, said: "There

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has been excellent co-operation between Manweb and Welsh Water on this project. The two companies have a similar customer base, geographical area, culture and customer service objectives, and co-operation between us is an obvious way to improve performance.

"By sharing accommodation we are both able to reduce operating costs and also improve local customer service facilities.

"There has been further co-operation in that Welsh Water staff are also sharing the Manweb depot at Corwen, and opportunities for sharing accommodation at other locations are being actively pursued."

Significant

And Mr John Williams, Welsh Water's Divisional Director, added: "This is a significant venture by two major utilities aiming to even further improve overall service offered to their customers — it makes good economic sense for two utility companies which share similar boundaries, to share all possible resources. Working closely with Manweb staff in this synergetic project has been exciting, and highlighted other future initiatives."

At Rhyl, Welsh Water office and field staff have relocated from Rhuddlan to occupy the ground floor and workshop areas and share the existing stores facility at Manweb's Clwyd District Office. In addition, a new central store has been built on the site to service Welsh Water's Northern Division. A new, modern reception area also serves both companies, where electricity and water customers can pay their bills.

In a reciprocal arrangement, around 30 Manweb field operatives, mainly overhead lines teams and cable jointers, have moved from Llandudno Junction to share Welsh Water's depot in Glan Conwy.

Garage facilities at the two locations maintain both companies' vehicles.



A plaque is unveiled to mark the opening of Manweb and Welsh Water's shared premises in Rhyl. Left to right, John Williams, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water Divisional Director; Rod Richards, MP; Manweb Chief Executive John Roberts; Manweb Director, Network Services, Howard Kirkham; Graham Hawker, Chairman Dŵr Cymru.

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The shared depot at Glan Conwy.

NEW LOOK FOR CORWEN AND GLAN CONWY

A refurbishment of Corwen Depot to accommodate Welsh Water office and field staff and provide space for their stores requirements was completed in July.

Improvements to the existing premises also improved working and environmental conditions for Manweb staff.

New ceilings, lighting, flooring and decor were installed, and the premises were completely rewired by Manweb Contracting Services who also installed a new fire alarm system.

Redundant prefabricated buildings from Dee Valley were given a new look to provide two stores buildings in the Corwen Depot yard. Boot cleaning facilities were provided and large areas of the yard re-surfaced.

Bob Campbell again praised those involved. "In addition to local staff, who carried out their duties under, at times, adverse conditions, the co-operation

between of Property Services, Manweb Contracting Services and Welsh Water was essential in the successful completion of the project."

Another refurbishment providing on-site accommodation was completed at Welsh Water Offices' Glan Conwy location.

Completed in under six months the refurbishment of the site's existing offices provides:

- Shared engineering stores.
- New material storage bays and separate waste storage areas.

- Shared accommodation (assembly and assessing) for field staff.
- Provision of office accommodation for foreman and visiting engineers.
- New reception facilities provided.
- New external compound storage facilities for Manweb.
- Provision of car parking facilities for private and Company vehicles.
- Offices equipped with appropriate IT equipment; telephone, computer, etc., linked back to Rhyl.

Specialists from various Manweb departments again formed the team to progress the project. All the electrical work on site was done by Manweb

Contracting Services.

"It's another example of co-operation between the two Companies where personnel have settled down to work well together with shared accommodation and facilities," said Bob Campbell.

"It's a unique and innovative venture. It provides a sound base for synergies; store systems for example. There is successful collaboration between the Companies in areas such as transport, servicing and fuelling.

"Following these successes were are now evaluating other locations to provide further shared accommodation," Bob added.



Share for success

AIMING
IMPROVE
OVER
SERVICES

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Together, success is working well

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New look at Rhyl.



GREEN ISSUES



IN THE CAN!

MANWEB'S Head Office aluminium can recycling scheme has been hailed as an outstanding success after only three months in operation.

In that time 89.6 kilos of cans have been collected, equivalent to around 4,000 cans. The money raised by staff — £31.36 to date — is being donated to the City Farm at Blacon Adventure Playground, Chester, which encourages local children to take an interest in wildlife and farm animals.

John Chapman, of Continental Can (Europe), the company that collects the cans for recycling, described the scheme as "extraordinarily successful and far better supported

than most company schemes."

Head of Regulation Mike Metcalfe, Chairman of Manweb's Environmental Working Group, who set up and administer the scheme, said: "Staff response to the can recycling project has astonished us all. We hope that other recycling schemes throughout Manweb will be as well supported and that in addition we can continue to improve our environmental performance in other areas."

Mike Metcalfe (centre) and John Chapman, of Continental Can (left) present the cheque to Robbie Connolly, Assistant Play Leader at Blacon Adventure Playground, with the help of Nelson the barn owl.

Join in this big cup game

MANWEB'S commitment to recycling schemes was 'measured' when Youth Market Development Manager Nigel Charlton placed a special order for 1,000 rulers made from used plastic cups.

Recycling

The rulers, which bear Manweb's logo and which are being used by Nigel in his education liaison work with local schools, are made by Save-a-Cup, the company that collects plastic cups for recycling from Head Office.

The scheme has been running for two months and around 50 per cent of the cups used at Head Office are currently being recycled. Staff based at Head Office use 330,000 plastic cups each year.

Encouraging

Roderick Manson, Secretary of Manweb's Environmental Working Group, who administer the scheme, said: "Overall, initial response to the scheme has been encouraging, but rather patchy.

"The bulk of the collection has come from two floors so far, but we are hopeful that things will pick up over the next few months. If anyone has any ideas on how we can collect more cups I'd be happy to consider them," added Roderick, who can be contacted on Head Office extension 3502.

A DERELICT pond is set to become a haven for wildlife thanks to sponsorship from Manweb.

The Company has helped Clwyd Countryside Service to create a 'man made' island at the old Brickworks Pond alongside Manweb's office in Cefndy Road, Rhyl. The site will provide a valuable habitat for wading birds, especially during the nesting season.

In addition Manweb has donated a strip of land alongside the pond to create a pathway for walkers.

Volunteers have been giving up their time to clear the overgrown site and to create footpaths. Trees and shrubs will also be planted and the pond will be stocked with fish. With the support of local industry, the site will gradually be transformed into an attractive recreation area.

Gary Davies, the Countryside Officer for North East Clwyd, said: "With Manweb's help we have been able to bring in a mechanical digger to create an island from what was an overgrown spur of land. It will be a



Phil Starkey, Manweb's Clwyd Customer Service Manager (right) and Gary Davies, Countryside Officer for North East Clwyd, at the Brickworks Pond, with the 'man made' island in the background.

perfect nesting site for wading birds.

"This is an important urban fringe site that has been undervalued in the past, but the project shows how local authorities, industry and the community can work together to improve the environment."

And Phil Starkey, Manweb's

Clwyd Customer Service Manager, said: "We are delighted to have contributed to this ongoing project which aims to create a very attractive area for local people and a haven for wildlife."

The site will form part of the North Wales Footpath, a scheme to provide a long distance walk from Caernarfon to Flint.

NOT AS DIM AS IT LOOKS

TO comply with both European Community and British Health and Safety Legislation concerning Visual Display Terminals which operate from 1st January 1997, the Head Office lighting which was originally installed 25 years ago will soon be the subject of a novel scheme to reduce the glare and reflections on VDUs and PC screens whilst also running at significantly less cost than the existing lights.

The old semi-resonant control gear within the existing lights will be replaced by high frequency dimming control gear and the yellowing diffusers which now prevent much of the light from passing through them will be changed to low brightness louvres, like those recently installed at Dee Valley, Clwyd and Aberystwyth District Offices and other locations.

Solution

Ben Foster, of the Property Services Department, together with Geoff Ravenscroft, the Energy and Environment Manager, liaised with more than 10 manufacturers to obtain a cost effective solution that did not entail changing the one foot square ceiling tiles which are no longer manufactured.

Another problem was to change the lighting without disturbing the normal business operations of Head office.

Two manufacturers were short-listed to produce sample luminaires which were installed above Ben's desk in 5S1. The sample produced by Thorn Lighting proved the most attractive and had the greatest potential to save our running costs.

Thorn was the original manufacturer of the air handling luminaires installed at Head Office. At that time the office was Britain's first completely integrated heating-lighting system of its kind.

Staff in the District Offices and at Edge Lane Superstore are already aware of the principles of presence detection con-

trol of lighting. Such controls switch the lights on when a person is in an area and off a quarter of an hour after the person has left.

This principle will be applied to every luminaire together with an ambient lighting control, which responds to external daylight conditions and will dim the lights to produce an even output throughout the day. The lights will dim smoothly from 100 per cent light output down to 25 per cent.

If the ambient light increases even further then the luminaire will switch off completely. Luminaires can rightly be termed 'intelligent' because of the features built in them.

Controls

The middle two rows of luminaires will become 'corridor lights' and will be linked to the Building Energy Management System (BEMS) in the Security Office. This presently controls the lighting and heating in the reception area and the air conditioning in the kitchen, restaurant and Sports and Social rooms.

The BEMS will ensure that the luminaires are on for the start of business and go off again at the end of the day. Staff who work beyond this time will still have their own luminaires to provide lighting. When the person eventually leaves his or her desk, the corridor lights will be triggered to switch on again from ultrasonic presence detectors. Thus a well-lit path will be provided to the lifts and stairs.

To ensure staff are satisfied with the new lighting scheme, rooms 4S1 and 5S1 will initially be refurbished. Refurbishment will be completed by a team headed by Charlie Whiteside, the Building Maintenance Engineer. It is expected that individual luminaires can be replaced in less than an hour.

As staff are away from their desks, the luminaires will be refurbished so that normal business operations will not be affected.

Geoff Ravenscroft said: "When the new lighting is installed the annual power consumption will reduce from 410 kW to 140 kW. This represents a saving of over £53,000 a year in running costs. High frequency lights work at a frequency of 35,000 Hertz (cycles/sec).

Savings

"When compared to an equivalent single tube fluorescent fitting they produce energy savings of over 32 per cent. They have the advantage of flicker-free operation, instant start, automatic shut down in the event of tube failure and can increase service life by up to 50 per cent."

Work is expected to start from the beginning of November when the first luminaires have been manufactured.

A FACTORY INSPECTOR'S LOT

by Derek Jackson

HEALTH and Safety Specialists today go about their work armed with advice in the form of Guidance notes, British Standards and European Standards, all backed by the strength of the Health and Safety at Work Act and many more pieces of legislation in the form of Acts or Regulations.

Health and safety at work however had very humble beginnings and almost two hundred years ago, the first Act of Parliament on the subject became statute. This was the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802. We had to wait until 1818 for the first "Cotton" Act and it was 1833 before full time officials "Factory Inspectors" were appointed to enforce the Textile Act of the same year. Four inspectors were appointed to cover the whole country. We still seek improvement in our standards of health and safety, but the extract below from a report by L. Homer, Esq., gives some idea of the enormity of the task facing the four factory inspectors in the early days:-

"It is well known that serious accidents from machinery, often attended with loss of life, are not unfrequent in factories. These sometimes arise in the working of parts of the machinery where no fencing off is practicable, but they are often caused by parts being left exposed which, in well regulated mills, are always carefully boxed, as it is termed. Within the last three months I heard of a woman having been killed at a mill in Manchester, in consequence of an upright shaft not having been properly boxed; and a very sad case was brought before me last month at Burnley, by a surgeon who had attended a poor girl of sixteen years of age who last January had been fearfully mutilated at a neighbouring mill in Rossendale; in this case also by an upright shaft that was not fenced off. Both her thighs, one leg, and one arm were broken, and she received besides severe bruises on the body and head. Contrary to expectation, she has recovered, and is now going about on crutches. I was informed at the same

time by the father of the girl, whom I sent for, that the millwright who put up the shaft advised that it should be boxed, and the day after the accident this was done, at an expense, as my informant believed, of about 5s. I am sorry to have to add that it was not at the time stated to me that the mill-owner has not only refused to give compensation for loss of wages to the poor girl, who was at the time of the accident in receipt of 10s. a week, but even to pay the surgeon's bill. The Act gives no power to the Inspector of Superintendent to interfere in such a case, not even to require that such dangerous parts of the machinery shall be fenced off; but as the 45th clause directs that the Inspector 'shall report the state and condition of the factories or mills, and of the children employed therein', I thought it my duty to report to your Lordship a case so serious, and so formally and circumstantially brought to my notice."

This report was written on the 30th June 1840.

MILESTONES WELL MARKED

LONG serving Manweb staff gathered at Head Office to celebrate a special milestone in their careers.

Chairman Bryan Weston presented framed certificates to staff who have clocked up 20, 30 or 40 years' service within the electricity supply industry.

Mr Weston is pictured, top picture (2nd from left) with (left) Head of Human Resources David Vernon-Smith, presenting certificates to retired Engineer Stan Wood, accompanied by his wife Vera, and ex-Hoylake Skill Centre Instructor Doug Jones, who brought along his wife Brenda. Both Stan and Doug have completed 40 years' service and to mark the occasion they and their wives were treated to a special lunch.

The picture, below, shows Mr Weston presenting certificates to Head Office staff who have completed 20 and 30 years' service. They celebrated with a sherry



reception in the restaurant.

Receiving awards were:

30 years: Gary Jones, Trading; Peter Edwards, Network Services; Tom Blundell, Property Services; Arthur Ellinson, Corporate Strategy; Arthur Mackrell, Network Services; Phil Swift, Network Services; George Harrison, Human Resources; Ian Baird, Income; Stuart Barker, Income and Colin Herbert, Corporate Health and Safety

(now retired).

20 years: Steve Chantler, Network Services; Harry Finch, Trading; Dave Buchanan, Human Resources; Roger Nock, Property Services; Mike Budd, Property Services; Gareth Owen, Power Projects; Sheila Fennah, Information Services; Mike Hall, Photographic; Helen Craven, Information Services; Trevor Coates, Financial and Bob Sheedy, Power Marketing.



Farewell gifts for Mary



STAFF at Queensferry gathered to wish colleague Mary Griffiths best wishes for the future when she retired after 33 years' service.

Mary, who worked in Appliance Spares was presented with a brooch, flowers and a bottle of Champagne by Systems Manager Brian Baker.

Married to Ken, with one son Richard, Mary now plans to devote more time to her hobbies: gardening and tapestry.

TIME TO PACK IN

PACKING as much fun, enjoyment and exercise into their retirement as they can this happy group is now inviting you to join them.

Leader of the pack — the North Wirral Retired Back Packers — is Eric Coley who organises a monthly ramble of between six and seven miles in the local countryside.

"It's all at a leisurely pace: no hurry; no hassle," says Eric. "We stop for lunch and always finish at a friendly pub in time for a swift half of shandy or whatever. Why don't you join us?" he asks.

Pictured (left to right, back row), Eric Coley, Peter Hunt, John Loftus, Doreen Loftus, Doreen Rushton and Arthur Langley. In front are Jess Cussons, Ena Ellison and Arthur Ellison. The picture was taken by fellow back-packer. Lil



The hospital, Oravita, Romania.

Basic items in such short supply

SEVEN trips from Warrington and two from Northampton have taken relief in the form of food, clothing, shoes, medical supplies, toiletries and disinfectants to churches in and around the area of Timisoara.

We have also taken toys and books to an English speaking kindergarten where the children are learning English as a second language.

Places of trust to deliver to are vital in Romania because of a still flourishing black market where items sent for relief would be sold for personal gain.

One of the many problems facing Romania at this time is the one of inflation linked with the ever rising exchange rate. At the present time inflation is running at 1054%, the exchange rate in January 91 was 65 Lei to the pound and in August of this year it was 1200 Lei to the pound. With the last of the subsidies being taken off food and fuel at the beginning of May prices in the shops are beyond the reach of the average Romanian.

Bread that was 150 Lei is now 300/500 Lei.

Petrol that was 6 Lei is now 300 Lei per litre.

An electrical engineer working for a Romanian owned company earns around 24000 Lei a month which is just one English pound a day.

So as you can see, a gallon of petrol is over a half a day's wage and a loaf about a third of a day's wage.

This year I have been twice to Romania. The first time was in March when I was installing electrical equipment, and help-

ing a joiner on a project that we started just over 12 months ago. This project was to provide a small village called Grosi with a bakery which would provide a number of villages with bread and some people with employment. The second time was in August after the equipment for the bakery had been delivered, to connect all the three-phase and single phase equipment like ovens, mixers, lights and sockets. Two weeks later a man from the company supplying the bakery equipment went over to Romania to teach a family how to use it. This project has now come to an end and the bakery is producing many different kinds of bread.

When in Romania in August we were taken to a hospital in a town called Oravita about 108 Km south east of Timisoara. This hospital has 100 beds and serves the needs of 40,000 people.

We were taken around the wards, the accident unit, the operating theatres, maternity

Mid Mersey Cable Joiner John Bradford made his first relief trip to Romania in January 1991. Later a number of people interested in Romania got together and formed Overseas Outreach. Here John reports on further trips and progress made in helping this devastated country, and he ends with an appeal for even more help.

ward and the laboratories.

This hospital is short of even the very basics from mops and buckets to medicines and bandages, blankets and bed pans. The list is endless — even things like stethoscopes, operating equipment, test tubes, slides, microscopes and the like are in short supply.

We hope to make provision of such items our next project and need contacts with businesses or individuals who may be able to help us in supplying anything for this hospital.

Please contact John Bradford on 0925 35740 evening.



The sparsely equipped accident unit.



One of Romania's hospitals.

'DETECTIVES' BATTLE AGAINST GROWING CRIME PROBLEM

AT the first ever National Conference on revenue protection, Manweb's Revenue Protection Manager Martyn Jones spoke of the way he and his team of 'electricity detectives' were battling against a growing crime problem.

They are trying to combat the organised crime which is reaping millions of pounds from meter fiddles.

The team has been responsible for 900 prosecutions in 12 months around the North West and North Wales.

At the conference, hosted by Manweb, the country's electricity, water and gas companies met to swap ideas on tackling this growing problem.

Fraud

Manweb was the first electricity company to set up a team, specially to track down fraud.

Martyn Jones explained to delegates how dangerous such a job can be.

"With us having an elite force we try to avoid conflict, that is part of the training."

Large companies are now

involved in getting crooked electricity supplies from sophisticated and well-trained crooks, it was claimed.

By tampering with meters and supplies the company pay small bills to Manweb and a second bill to the crook.

"It's the concern of the industry that the theft of electricity, and utilities in general, is on the increase. It's not just a casual thing but well organised, a multi-million pound industry," said Martyn.

"We are seeing a trend now, of links to organised crime, there are a lot of cases we are coming across involving far more than one address which have to be carried out by more than your average householder," said Mr Jones.

But although the electricity thieves are sophisticated their crime is very dangerous.

"That is the message we have to get across. There have been occasions where innocent people have received bad injuries because

of the way they interfere with the equipment."

Over the last 12 months, in 1,300 cases where there was suspected meter tampering, the revenue protection unit disconnected 900. In more than 50 per cent of properties where access was gained they discovered some kind of meter tampering.

Ingenious

"More efforts were being made to make the equipment tamper-proof, but the thieves were ingenious in devising ways of beating the system," said Martyn.

'I understand that it is intended to report in Contact the success of the 1st Revenue Protection conference. It may be of interest to readers to learn that the logo used at the Conference, 'Securing the Future' was designed by a Revenue Protection Technician. It is heartening to know that ideas from all levels of staff are being used.' — a letter to the Editor.



ENJOYABLE EXCHANGE

SPANISH student Josep Carbonell Navarro joined Manweb Contracting Services Site Supervisor John Coates on work placement as part of an exchange scheme organised through Sefton Education Authority.

Josep (18), comes from Barcelona is studying electronics and electricity. He thoroughly enjoyed his stint with MCSL, and is pictured at work with John.

ALL THE WINNERS

THE lucky number 2753 earned K E Newman, of Head Office, the top prize of £300 in the EEIBA's May draw. The other winners were as follows:

£200 - P M J Edwards, Oswestry (387); £150 - R J Snowdon, retired (2250); £100 - H V Collard, retired (405); £75 - E Doyle, retired (167) and H A Thompson, retired (2060); £50 - E L Roberts, retired (2320) and E A Parks, retired (1761); £30 - K J Sudlow, Head Office (982), J A McCarthy, Head Office (486) and P Stansfield, Head Office (2748); £25 - H G Weston, retired (574), H G Balcombe, Head Office (1748), C M Durham, Head Office (423), G Williams, Head Office (1082), A F Jones, retired (2391), K G Lea, retired (1731), E D Williams, retired (2777), G Naylor, retired (2333) and M P Harding, Contracting (1540).

Retired employee I Williams was the £300 prize winner in the June draw with the number 2721. The other winners were: £200 - M Edwards, retired (1955); £150 - E A Evans, retired (1695); £100 - J Ellis, retired (1380); £75 - M Griffiths, Head Office (306) and T C Jones, BICC (280); £50 - D J Walker, Head Office (1452) and A Barber, Mid Mersey (1232); £30 - L Price, retired (1047) and J Birchall, retired (1745); £25 - A N Smith, retired (1699), J P Parrish, Head Office (414), A Logan, retired (2298), R P Glover, Liverpool (1186), E F Maxwell, retired (1837), J F Perry, retired (255), R P Stephens, Dee Valley (767), R W Blair, Head Office (955), D G Owen, Head Office (539) and H G McCormick, retired (2358).

International acclaim for 'Power Save'

MANWEB's Holyhead "Power Save" project has placed Holyhead and the United Kingdom on the "International Map" for Energy Efficiency.

The company has had a major involvement in the 2nd International Energy Efficiency & Demand-side Management Conference, held recently in Stockholm, Sweden.

Colin Leonard, Manweb's Director of Power Marketing, in his opening address said: "When it comes to energy efficiency, we frequently find that organisations often abandon the principles of meeting customers' requirements and fall back to the

attitude of giving the customer what they think is in the customer's interests. In our view this is because energy efficiency is seen as only a technological matter. In fact in many of the best energy efficiency applications, the technology is well proven and of secondary importance.

"The real challenge in order to get widespread acceptance of the application is to first identify and then fulfil the genuine needs of our customers."

This practical approach has been the key to the Holyhead "Power Save" project where in-depth market research has been carried out to understand customer needs and behavioural patterns.

Over 20 countries from

around the world were so impressed by this practical approach that they requested further detailed information so that they may adapt the Holyhead "Power Save" project in their countries.

Manweb intends to continue its active role in encouraging customers to use energy wisely, by carrying out further trials in the Crewe area. The proposed project has already received support from the EEC's SAVE programme.

TRADE SHOW FORGES LINKS WITH EUROPE

MANWEB was present last month at a prestigious trade event designed to help forge new links with European Contacts.

The initiative, "Liverpool Europe Week", was held at the city's St George's Hall and jointly organised by Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Prosperity

Staff from Power Marketing, Network Services and Contracting manned the Company's stand at the event's three day exhibition. It covered most of Manweb's business areas and reflected the divisional contributions towards the future prosperity of Liverpool.

In addition to the exhibition there were receptions, seminars, meet the buyers, case studies and coverage of all aspects of exporting — all with a European theme.

Doug Barnes, who co-ordinated Manweb's involvement and manned the stand for Business Marketing said: "The exhibition was busy and successful.

Ideal

"It attracted many influential visitors, including Baroness Hooper (who was involved in the privatisation of electricity) and was an ideal opportunity for Manweb to demonstrate its involvement in the exciting developments which are taking place in the economy of Liverpool."

As a Board member of the Liverpool Chamber David Tinsley, Head of Domestic Sales, emphasised the growing confidence being shown by Liverpool businesses. The objective 1 Funding (the top level of EC grant assistance) along with the main business influencers coming together, was now starting to work. "This exhibition can and should be repeated, and widened, on an annual basis," was his prediction.

LINING UP FOR SUPER SALE



The pulling power of superstore sales was evident again — this time in Warrington — when crowds queued to cash in on the many bargains.

The three day event was a huge success and did its job in promoting the Warrington Superstore to a vast public.

PRIZE TIME FOR PAULA



★ **HOLYHEAD** High School pupil Paula Jones has won prizes worth over £1,000 in a Manweb Power Save Project energy efficiency competition.

Paula (15), along with over 50 other Holyhead High pupils, had to prepare a report on how to save energy in the home, suggesting more efficient appliances and ways to avoid wasting power.

The competition was part of Manweb's ongoing Holyhead Power Save Project, which aims to reduce peak power demand in the town.

Paula was presented with a £200 cash prize, while Mum Mrs Lynn Jones received Manweb's most energy efficient Hoover washing machine. For Holyhead High School there was a £500 cash prize.

Manweb's Power Save Project Co-ordinator Graham Slatter said: "Paula came up with a very professional report on how to save energy in the home, both in its content and presentation. Over half the power used in Holyhead is accounted for by ordinary households, and the competition really got the High School students thinking about energy efficiency."

Pictured at the presentation are (left to right) Graham Slatter, Paula Jones, Jonathan Lamkin, Marketing Officer and Richard Owen, Deputy Headmaster, Holyhead High School.

OBITUARIES

IT is with sadness that Contact reports the deaths of the following retired Manweb employees.

Henry Longmore Walls, who died on August 5 aged 80, was a Shop Supervisor in Liverpool until retiring in 1977.

Joseph Edward Pemberton, 67, died on August 21. He was an Administrative Assistant at Head Office before retiring in 1987.

Kenneth George Burden worked as a Driver in Dee Valley before retiring in 1983. He died on August 27 aged 74.

John Rimmer, 63, who died on August 29, was a Foreman in North Mersey before retiring in 1987.

John Marshall died on August 30 aged 77. He was an Overhead Linesman's Mate in Gwynedd before retiring in 1979.

Frank Webb, 80, who was a Substation Attendant in Mid Cheshire before retiring in 1974, died on August 31.

Leonard Dennett, 60, who died on September 3, was a General Duties Assistant in Mid Mersey before retiring in 1990.

Douglas Gardner Crellin, 86, who was a Clerical Assistant in Area 1 before retirement in 1967, died on September 8.

Alfred Stanley Ellis, 92, was a Joiner in Area 2/3 before retiring in 1966. He died on September 9.

Betty Nicholas, who died on September 13 aged 73, retired in 1980 at Mid Mersey, where she was a Clerical Assistant.

Hugh Thomas, 80, died on September 20. Before retiring in 1972, he worked as a Linesman in Anglesey.

Samuel Dudley Ward, 84, who was a Clerk in Liverpool until retiring in 1967, died on September 24.

STAFF SALES POLICY NOW REVISED

TRADING Division has revised its concessionary sales policy for Manweb staff and retired employees.

- The main points are as follows:
- Purchases can only be made by the applicant (not by spouses).
 - Purchases can be made for personal use or as gifts for sons, daughters, parents and parents-in-law only.
 - Proof of identity must be given, by producing either:
 - a Company ID card with photo.
 - a recent pay slip or pension advice slip.
 - a staff sale authorisation which is specifically for retired staff, widows or widowers of former staff who were never in receipt of a pension. Letters of authorisation have been sent out.

Retail Procedures Manager Peter Jones said the previous staff sales procedure had been considered outdated and had been open to abuse.

"Eventually we hope to have a special Company-wide identity card, but with the introduction of new shop systems this isn't possible at the present time."

Under the new concessionary sales policy, those eligible now qualify for all promotions, for example 'buy now, pay later' or interest free credit, except where staff and retired employees are specifically excluded.

There is also a new, simplified credit proposal form, replacing the previous long-winded credit application process.

The existing limit whereby goods can be bought without a staff note remains at £50.

Peter said: "The concessionary sales policy applies to all appliances on our appliance price list, approved manufacturer direct delivery products, contracting work (showers, storage heaters etc), appliance spares, and major appliance repair charges."

He added: "Remember — don't abuse it or you'll lose it!"

ANGLERS WANTED

THE Manweb Angling team competing in the E.S.I. National Championships finished eighth out of fifteen teams competing.

Their performance was not helped when they arrived in Nottingham to find that the match had been switched from the river Trent to the nearby National Rowing course at Holme Pierpoint, because the river was flooded.

The change of venue resulted in the end of a long run of wins

Electricity and Northern, although Northern did finish second. The championship was won by Nuclear Electric, South West Region.

This may lead to a change of location for the competition next year, possibly to the River Avon near Bristol or the Huntspill in Somerset.

The event usually takes place in September.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact John Turpin

FREE ADS

Holidays

Benaladena Costa - Saltillo Alto, Costa Del Sol. Apartments to let throughout the year. 2-3 persons from 9500 pesetas (approx £50 per flat) per week. Balcony overlooking extensive gardens with two swimming pools, kiddies pool, pool bar, lounge bar, entertainment most nights, weekly barbecue etc. For further information contact Brian Thomas on Clwyd int. ext. 2018 or 0745 822333 or (home) 492 580604.

Spain - Costa del Sol, Benaladena, studio apartment on lovely site. Beautiful pool and gardens, suitable for 2/3 people. Attractive rates, 8 miles from airport. Help with flights. Tel. Bette Flanagan on 0244 341097.

Seychelles - Why not try a different holiday on the island of Praslin, staying in a newly-built 6-bedroom guest house, standing in a 5-acre garden with its own beautiful beach 1 1/2 miles long. Details when you ring 0928 732530.

Borders of Cumbria and Scotland - Spend your autumn and winter breaks in a cosy cottage retreat on a Kirkcubright smallholding. Sleeps 4, fully inclusive, open all year. Lots to do locally, excellent touring base, no pets. For brochure tel. 0228 75650.

Llandudno - Privately owned Licensed Hotel in a central, level position close to shops, promenade and main attractions. Room and breakfast £14, en suite £16.50, optional 5-course candlelit dinner £6.50. Family rooms available with reductions for children. Christmas 3 night break from £159 all inclusive. New Year breaks from £59. You are assured of a warm welcome and good food. Branstone Hotel: Tel. 0492 876448.

Colwyn Bay - Swiss style chalet, sleeps up to five. Electric heating, bathroom flush toilet, fridge, colour TV, garden and parking. Situated in woodland dell near Eirias Park and beach. Weekly rates, weekend or mid-week breaks. Tel. 051 678 9854.

Property

French cottage (Normandy) set in 4 1/2 acres of mature orchard, 15 mins from coast, near medieval Rouen. Acc. 4 bedrooms, kitchen, 2 bathrooms, shower rooms, large lounge, dining room & garage. £48,000. Contact 0295 75885 after 6.30pm.

For Sale

Evening Dresses, size 12, one dark blue, long, with matching jacket, £20, one cream, mid length, could suit bridesmaid/register office, £15. Tel. 0352 781443.

Edinburgh crystal whisky tumblers, boxed set of 4, unused, £25. Several deluxe New Zealand sheepskin rugs and seat covers, from £12. Ian Stockdale HO 3076, office id STOCKID.

Small sofa bed, floral design, £25. Tel. 0565 633320.

Two bridesmaids dresses, colour lilac, lovely condition, ages 8 and 14, see www

2-berth luxury caravan, Abbey GT213, full oven, fridge, shower, large Trio awning, spare wheel & many extras. Immaculate condition, ill health forces sale. £3,250 o.n.o. Tel. 0978 364677.

Personal

Professional Photographer, weddings or portraits (framed) for wall or albums, studio work, families, children. "Let me create your wedding album". Friendly service assured. Mathew Harman, tel. Rhostyllen 84677 or 0978 263448.

Child Support Act - If you are an absent parent paying fair child support under a court order and have received a form from the Child Support Agency - Contact David Evans on 0925 721113 or Gordon & Lesley on 0928 710840 for some advice.

Photographer - For weddings or portraits (framed) for walls or albums. Studio work catered for. Let me create your wedding album. (Peter David Studio). Tel. Rhostyllen 84677 or 0978 263448 or contact Pete or Pat 0978 263448.

New Year '93/94 - From Thursday December 30 to Sunday January 2 at the double 3 star Alexandra Hotel, Hove, Sussex. All rooms en suite. Full board, gala dinner dance at Hove Town Hall on New Year's Eve. Entertainment in the hotel on the other nights. Luxury coach, deposit £40, full cost £150. Contact Mrs A. McDonnell on 051-489 4880.

Earn Extra Cash - Retired or with some spare time? We require men and women - full or part time - to promote a range of health nutrition slimming products for a fast growing British company. Telephone 0244 374628.

Vehicles

Rover 214 GSi - H-reg, immaculate condition, all usual refinements and alloy wheels, £5,800 ono. Tel. 09743 588.

Cavalier - Four road wheels with four nearly new Semperit LP tyres and new wheel trims, £195 ono. Tel. 0244 383887.

Leisure

Canal Cruise - Come and enjoy a meal with a difference aboard the 'Judith Mary'. Eat and drink whilst cruising from Chester Canal Basin for 2 1/2 to 3 hours on the Shropshire Union Canal. Party sizes 20-40. Full bar, taped music. Christmas parties, school trips, etc. Contact Pat and Keith Sowden, Chester (0244) 383887.

Wanted

A dressmaker's or tailor's adjustable dummy. Contact Joanne 051 609 2546.

The Following Compact Discs - Black Sabbath 'Seventh Star', Judas Priest 'Painkiller', Joe Walsh 'You Can't Argue with a Sick Mind'. Fair price paid, inc. P&P. Tel. 0974 202223.

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 District correspondents.

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Mid-Mersey:	Mike Townson.....ext. 2231
Dee Valley:	Kath Sadowski.....ext. 2183
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Mid-Cheshire:	Diana Wood.....ext. 2117
Clwyd:	Min Williams.....ext. 2187
Gwynedd:	Hefyn Thomas.....ext. 2250
Oswestry:	Cherry Garbett.....ext. 2201
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AWARDS FOCUS ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY



The winners and those commended with Prof. Heinz Wolff and Manweb Chief Executive John Roberts.

IN a major departure from previous years, Manweb took its annual Business Energy Awards to northern France at the end of September.

A party of 60, including finalists in the 1993 PEP and Beta Awards and invited guests from the region's business community, flew from Liverpool's Speke Airport to Brittany.

For the last nine years Manweb has used local venues to present the awards, but it was felt that this year's event, with its reduced compliment of participants, should be more focused on the theme of energy efficiency.

On arrival the group toured The Rance Tidal Power Station near St Malo, one of Europe's premier renewable energy schemes, before attending the awards ceremony and lunch at the 500-year-old Manoir du Vaumadeuc, with the Chairman of the judges Professor Heinz Wolff, of TV's 'Young Scientist of the Year' and 'Great Egg Race' fame, as the special guest.

Announcing the awards, Chief Executive John Roberts said the decision to stage the presentations

Prestigious event crosses the channel

in Brittany gave Manweb the opportunity to draw even greater attention to the link between energy efficiency, environmental action and business profitability.

"The visit to The Rance Tidal Power Station clearly demonstrates our openness as an energy supplier to all forms of power, whether established or innovative, which may be utilised for the benefit of the region we serve," he said.

Encourage

"This openness to so-called 'alternative' forms of energy is borne out by our continuing commitment to promoting energy efficiency and new sources of power."

The Business Energy Awards comprise two competitions. The PEP award (Power for Efficiency and Productivity) aim to encourage companies to take a fresh look at production processes and apply the latest and most efficient electrical techniques and equipment. There are separate PEP categories, one for organisations with 100 employees or more and another for those with less than 100 employees.

Beta awards recognise the designers and operators of commercial and public buildings where an electrical service or technique has saved running costs while at the same time creating a comfortable environment. There are separate Beta categories for new and refurbished buildings.



Prof Heinz Wolff, centre, with Peter Robinson, UCW, left, and John Rees-Evans, Penrhos Golf and Country Club.

Winners received an elegant PEP or Beta trophy, a cheque for £1,000 and are the Manweb nominees for the finals of the 1993 National Business Energy Awards. Last year, Manweb award winner Meadowbrook Nursing Home, of Oswestry, went on to win one of the 1992 national Beta awards.

Winners

The winners were: PEP Category 1 (up to 100 employees): John Pring and Son, Sandbach. The company, which makes steel wire, won the award for its installation of individual electric immersion heaters to replace an inefficient, central gas boiler at the heart of its manufacturing process. With the use of electrical technology, John Pring and Son has reduced its combined production and energy

costs by more than £3,000 per year.

Highly Commended: Borden UK, Denbigh. Commended: Sanoda, Mold.

PEP Category 2 (over 100 employees): Associated Octel, Ellesmere Port. A leading producer of chlorine, Associated Octel's installation of new electrolyser plant helped produce staggering cost savings of £1.2 million and a 25 per cent reduction in electricity consumption.

Highly Commended: Anglo Blackwells Ltd, Widnes. Commended: Pilkington Glass Ltd, St Helens.

Economical

Beta Category 1 (new buildings): University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. An extremely economical electric heating system installed in the new halls of residence shows 46 per cent energy savings, compared with the adjacent gas heated accommodation. As a spin-off, the University's Buildings Officer Peter Robinson intends to invest the £1,000 award and use the interest as an annual prize in an energy saving competition for staff and students.

Highly Commended: Penrhos golf and Country Club, Llanrhystud.

Beta Category 2 (refurbished buildings): Merseyside Improved Homes, Liverpool. An energy efficient electric heat pump and air conditioning system has been installed at the housing association's offices in Wavertree Road. The new system, which is likely to be extended to the association's other offices, provides an ideal working environment and offers close temperature control and heat recovery.

Commended: Charterhouse Tilney, Liverpool.



At the airport — l-r Hugh Evans, Merseyside Improved Houses; Bryan Weston, Manweb Chairman; Steve Holden, Merseyside Improved Houses and Bill Hasperly, Manweb.



La Rance tidal power station, Brittany.



ROB (and Skid) NET A MONSTER

It was not only catch of the day, but catch of the year for angler Rob Dolben when he landed a monster rainbow trout recently.

Rob, a meter operative in Dee Valley District, made his outstanding catch while fly fishing at Tree Tops Fishery, Llanfynydd.

It took him nearly an hour to land the fish, on only a 4lb breaking strain line.

At the weigh-in the huge rainbow trout caught on a yellow nymph fly was recorded at 11lbs.8oz — the biggest at Tree Tops this year.

Rob's catch was verified by fellow angler and Manweb colleague John (Skid) Hignett who had to come to Rob's aid to help land the fish.

"I've caught a bigger fish before — a pike over 13lbs.," said Rob, "but this is the biggest I've had while fly fishing. I'm amazed that he line didn't snap," he added.

MASTER CLASS



NEWLY-appointed District Manager Alison Eakins has been awarded a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) after completing eight years' part time study.

Alison (pictured) first gained a 2.1 Honours Degree in Business Studies at Manchester Polytechnic in 1990 before going on to study for her MBA at John Moores University in Liverpool. She took up her new post at Aberystwyth on October 1, having previously been the Customer Services Manager at Mid Cheshire District.