



Neil is the Pavarotti of the power lines

HE'S Manweb's singing linesman. Tenor Neil Mason is often to be heard singing opera tunes at full voice at the top of a pole as he repairs overhead lines.

Overhead linesman Neil, who is based at the Sovereign Way depot in Chester, has been a member of the Deeside Amateur Operatic Society for 10 years.

He is appearing as Benny Southstreet, the shady gambler, in their production of *Guys and Dolls* at the Chester Gateway Theatre from November 8-13.

Neil last year received a ScottishPower Living Values award for his work taking opera out to the community for charity. He borrowed a Manweb wagon to publicise the latest show on the Lord Mayor's Parade.

He said: "I enjoy singing and dancing and being a member of an operatic society gives you a chance to be in the limelight for a week. I often rehearse for my roles while I'm working on the power lines."

Roman holiday for linesman

IT'S not every day that the life of an electricity linesman is compared with that of a Roman Centurion.

But the juxtaposition formed part of a recent BBC film about freelance linesman Tim Morgan for which Manweb were asked to provide assistance.

Tim, who lives in Dolgellau and owns an antiques shop there, spends his weekends at Living History demonstrations with the Ermine Street Guard, and The Antiques Show producers wanted to compare his exploits as a legionary with his day job.

Manweb assisted by isolating and earthing a low voltage pole in the grounds of the

Dolmelynlyn Hall Hotel, owned by Tim's father-in-law near Dolgellau, so that he could be filmed working as a linesman.

Manweb Distribution Engineer Graham Jones, who attended with a line team from Aberystwyth, said: "It was interesting to be involved, and to see how the BBC cut the shots backwards and forwards between Tim putting his climbing irons on and donning his leather sandals, and putting on his linesman's belt and helmet compared with his Roman belt and helmet."

John Byrne, Assistant Producer on The Antiques Show, said: "We could not have filmed the sequence without Manweb's help and we really appreciate their co-operation." The episode will be shown early next year.



Freelance linesman Tim Morgan in his Roman Centurion uniform.

Making a model spectacle out of his everyday work

AN everyday work scene involving a jointer and his mate has been created in miniature by ace model maker Steve Jones.

Steve, a cable jointer based at Lister Drive who is already known for his ace collection of Formula One models, has impressed everyone with the diorama built from plastics, solder, modelling clay and even pebbles. The scene shows a jointer on lamp service down a hole dealing with cable, and his partner standing

by the gate being offered a cup of tea by the lady of the house.

"It's all scratch-built apart from the characters which are from Formula One kits," said Steve. "I built it in my workshop at home and even the streetlamp works. It's had a good response because people associate with it. It's something we do as an everyday job at Manweb."

● Steve, pictured left with the model, would be happy to auction it and give the money to charity.



Contact

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NEWSLETTER FOR MANWEB PEOPLE OCTOBER 1999



Royal seal of approval for academy

GERRY HALAS, Merseyside Region General Manager, along with Gerry Kinsella, General Manager of The Greenbank Project welcomes Princess Anne at the opening of the Greenbank Sports Academy, Liverpool, a community sports centre which is fully accessible for people with disabilities.

In the background is Alan Waterworth, Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside.

Manweb has donated £3,000 multi-gym equipment suitable for wheelchair users and an industrial cooker for the Centre's training wing.

New £30m initiatives to minimise storm damage

MAKE READY FOR WINTER

AN appeal is going out to all Manweb staff to make ready for any storm emergency that may arise as winter approaches.

A number of new initiatives have been launched both in Power Systems and Energy Supply at a cost of £30 million to help ensure that the effect of a major storm is kept to the minimum.

The key message being sent to staff in both Manweb and ScottishPower is that the chain of response is only as strong as its

weakest link - every person, every division has a part to play.

The focus is on being ready, so that interruptions can be kept as limited as possible.

A virtual call centre, pooling the resources of Manweb and Scotland, is a key element in the storm readiness preparations.

New ways of managing an emergency have also been introduced, masterminded by Alan Laird, ScottishPower's Emergency

Programme Planning Manager, who played a major part during the 1997 Christmas storm and Easter snows of 1998 in Manweb.

Stewart Saunders, Manweb Managing Director, said: "Ensuring we are fully prepared to deal with a major emergency is a challenge for everybody in Manweb but I know from my previous experience that everyone will be able to meet this challenge".

Storm Readiness Alert - see centre pages.

Inside: Managers put in the stocks - all for a good cause



Flying colours pass

MANWEB has passed its latest surveillance audit with flying colours.

John Hastwell of EAQA (Energy and Environmental Accredited Quality Assessment) conducted his annual audit to ISO9002 standard.

The accreditation was confirmed, and Mr Hastwell found that standards had largely been maintained in monitoring and reporting guaranteed and overall standards of service since his last (interim) visit in February.

Only two non-conformances were recorded, relating to GS4 and OS8.

John Kennedy, Customer Relations Manager and the company's Performance Standards Representative, said: "This was a great result. Mr Hastwell was very impressed with us not taking our eye off the ball during a very challenging six months. Retaining ISO accreditation is a business imperative which we have, once again, achieved."

Peter Simester, Customer Relations Adviser, said: "The auditor was very impressed by the progress made since his last visit."

He commented on the positive attitude of staff towards the reporting and monitoring of the standards and he was impressed with the way people were adapting to the changes necessary as a result of implementing TroubleCall and WAMS."

Full re-accreditation will take place in September 2000.

'Red Adair' Steve saves trapped kite

WHEN Rupert Horry's precious £250 parachute-style kite became stuck 70 feet up in an oak tree during a gale, he feared he might never be able to use it again.

He waited until midnight underneath the tree on Overton-on-Dee playing field to see if it would free itself, and then the following day desperately contacted - without success - a number of agencies to see whether they would come out to rescue it.

Finally, the Overton Community Council put him in touch with ScottishPower Contracting Services - and he found his saviour. Steve Samuels of Street Lighting at Redwither Road, Wrexham, went out with a tower wagon and the kite was restored without damage.

Rupert, aged 21, who was visiting relatives in the area, was able to use it the following weekend at the Kite Festival at Weston Super Mare, where he lives.

He said: "The kite, which inflates like a parachute, has a 22 foot span and I often use it strapped to my wrists for skimming along the beach in Somerset. On this occasion it seemed like a good idea to go for a fly but the wind was blowing a gale and the kite became airborne, quickly followed by myself. There was a large



Rupert Horry receives the kite from Manweb's Steve Samuels after the "rescue".

crunch as the kite disappeared into the oak tree - and that was where it stayed until Steve came out to retrieve it.

"I would like to offer many thanks for the assistance. It was truly appreciated."

Guy Wilcox, Utility Operations Manager at ScottishPower Contracting, said: "We were delighted to help. Steve is now known as the Red Adair of Wrexham!"

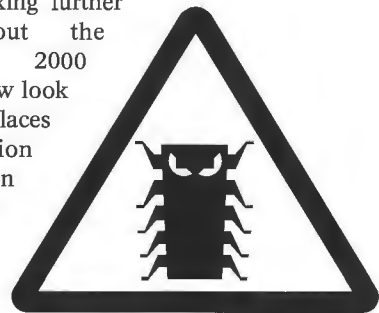
Tested to British Standard

MANWEB systems and equipment have now been tested to the relevant British Standards requirements for Year 2000 compliance.

● The Y2K Program teams are making use of the final days to the Millennium to carry out selected retesting of the systems and recheck contingency plans.

● As Christmas approaches it is expected that some Year 2000 viruses may start to emerge. Please do not forward any Christmas cards since they may have acted as carriers of these "nasties".

● Those people who are Intranet users and are seeking further information about the company's Year 2000 Programme can now look in a number of places since each division provides information in their area. Power Systems launched their website on October 19.



Staff spirit rewarded

ACTOR Dewi Savage of Welsh National Opera made the presentations at a prizegiving at the Celtic Royal Hotel in Caernarfon to celebrate the community spirit of staff at Manweb's Welsh and Mid Cheshire High Street Customer Service Centres.

Under the ScottishPower Team Challenge, Melanie Jones, SuperCentre Manager for the two regions, made a Power Point presentation to management on the Living Values theme of Trust in the Communities.

The judges were so impressed with the CSCs' help with WNO's outreach work in special needs schools, and their fund-raising for Age Concern, that it was decided to reward 34 staff with individual £200 shopping vouchers.



Pictured at the prizegiving evening are (left to right), Dylan Parry, Caernarfon CSC, Jan Boyton, Rhyl CSC, Dewi Savage, WNO, Melanie Jones, SuperCentre Manager Wales and Mid Cheshire, Gill Jones, Wrexham CSC.

MANWEB CHARITY FUNDRAISING EVENTS ARE A SPLASH HIT



Wet, wet, wet... left, Manweb Managing Director Stewart Saunders squeezing a sponge over the head of Graham Morris, Head of Finance, who was locked in the stocks during the fundraising fun at Manweb House. Above, the Managers get a soaking at the Caernarfon Super Centre. Pictured, left to right are: John Williams, Lorraine Jones, Gareth Hughes, Jason Procter, Dylan Parry, Liz Foulkes and Melanie Jones.

CHARITY donations for PowerPartners came rolling in as numerous plucky volunteers allowed themselves to be captured in the stocks and pelted with wet sponges at the group-wide launch.

Manweb's fund-raising events at the various depots were a definite splash hit.

The money goes straight towards the chosen charities: the Royal National Institute for the Blind, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, Disability Wales (RADAR in England), the National Children's Homes' Action for Children and Age Concern.

At Warrington Martyn Jones, Head of Customer Services, and Brian Carman, Regional Customer Services Manager, both got soaked and £116 was raised.

Martyn forgot to bring a change of shoes and had to slosh around Warrington in his wet pair for the rest of the day - but remembered them when he next took the plunge at Wrexham when £210 was raised.

Caernarfon raised £120, with all four managers volunteering for the stocks and the staff taking part in a fancy dress

Managers put in the stocks!

extravaganza featuring a special bangers and beans "cowboy style" lunch.

At Chester it was a dress down (or dress up) day with everyone wearing hats because the launch was billed as a Hat Trick event (the aim was to raise an initial target of "all the threes", £33,333, round the group).

Receiving sponges were Stewart Saunders, Managing Director, Graham Morris, Head of Finance, Bill Calder, Manager at ScottishTelecom, Roy Jones and Steve Gauller from Scottish-Power Learning, Mark Hughson from Claims, Martin Lewis, Finance and Rob Jones, Security Manager.

Linda Hinton, Planning Manager in Corporate Finance, donned a platinum blond wig and said afterwards that blondes really do have more fun.

Wendy Ellison, Manweb's PowerPartners Co-ordinator, took her turn in the stocks at Chester, where £248 was raised.

The stocks were also used at Prenton and Liverpool.

Wendy Ellison said: "Thanks to everyone for volunteering for the stocks, and to all those who gave valuable support. Manweb's water rates have gone up because so much water was splashed about!"

Landmark for electronic systems

MERSEYSIDE has become the very last region in ScottishPower and Manweb to go live with TroubleCall, ICOND and PROSPER - marking the successful culmination of this key element of the Power Systems AM 2000 programme.

The installation is being hailed as a landmark moment since it is not only the completion of the advanced electronic systems in all the Manweb regions but also the ScottishPower group as a whole.

"A lot of hard work has gone into making all the roll-outs go very smoothly," said Paul Sands, ICOND Project Manager. "This is a key moment and the quality of the work of

the data capture team has been recognised throughout the group."

Following on from the team's success, it will remain intact for a further period, to clean up TroubleCall Network Property Links data in Scotland remotely from Bridle Road.

Virtual

Further initiatives are being carried out to extend the Network IT systems and improve data as part of the Storm Review and to deliver improved customer service even in emergency conditions.

Changes to make ready for a virtual call centre have been completed, and work has

started to commission the 11kv telecontrol interface to ICOND.

● Chris May, the leader of the 30-strong data capture team, is moving on to work as a Business Development Manager for an IT company. He has worked at Manweb for 22 years, initially through the drawing office in the regions and latterly as the System Administrator for GIS across Manweb.

"Chris built the data capture team up from scratch," said Paul Sands. "Under his expert guidance it turned out consistently high quality data. The legacy of his team will be to improve the data in TroubleCall in Scotland."



Work on felling trees near to overhead power lines is part of the new Rural Care programme.

Cutting down tree damage to power lines

A UNIQUE environmental project has grown out of the need to cut down trees next to overhead power lines which might cause supply loss if they are uprooted in storm situations.

The Rural Care programme, a £20 million initiative to improve the supply of customers vulnerable to tree damage to power lines, incorporates plans to replace the trees with a variety of eco-friendly plant life.

Manweb and ScottishPower are the first in the UK to provide a positive answer to the technical and environmental challenge.

A 10-strong team based at Manweb House and led by Gordon Christie has surveyed Manweb's high voltage network by helicopter.

The removal of trees within felling distance is already underway after consultation with local communities.

Examples of the new planting schemes, to replace trees which have been taken down, include introducing hawthorn, blackthorn, bearded willow, grey willow and juniper on farmland near Holywell, and bringing broadleaf alder, mountain ash and blackthorn to a site at Llanbedrog.

Impact

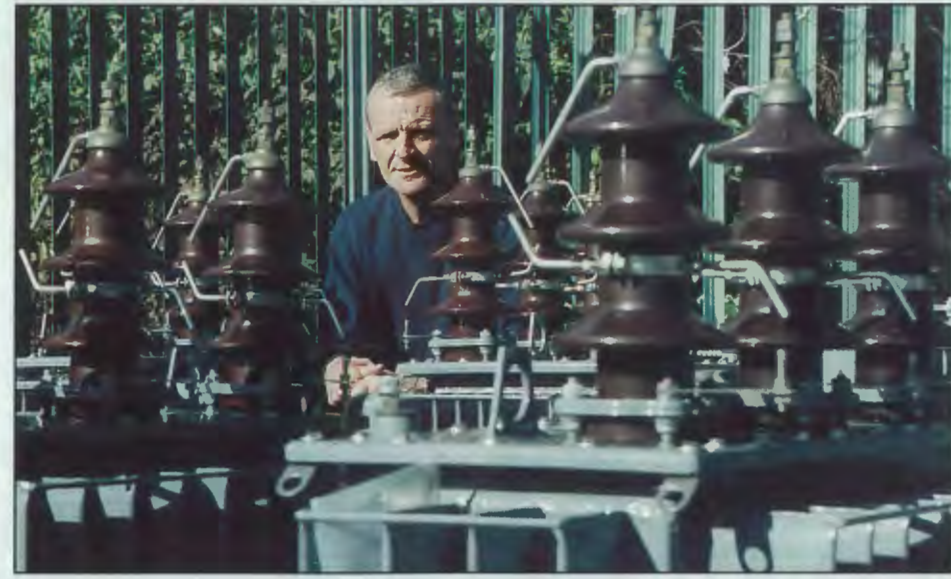
Ian Walker, Senior Project Manager, Rural Care, said: "In each area we are in contact with groups of people interested in the environment who are helping us draw up a planting policy.

"By encouraging the use of open space and broadleaf trees the scheme can have a huge impact on the environment. Using scalloped edges and low growing species gives a softer appearance to the woodland - and the new plants will also encourage wildlife."

NEW GROUP PHILOSOPHY IS TO BE PROACTIVE IN DEALING WITH WINTER WEATHER PROBLEMS



The busy Warrington Call Centre will become part of the virtual call centre in the event of a storm emergency.



Chargehand storekeeper Phil Jones at the Pentre Bychan Depot with supplies of transformers which are kept in readiness for use in an emergency.

A BIG storm is probably on its way this winter - so everybody must be on full alert to become STORM READY.

That's the message from Alan Laird, ScottishPower's Programme Manager for the Emergency Planning Programme, who is charged with improving the response of the business to major emergencies.

Alan, former General Manager for Wales Region, takes his cue from an analysis of the last five years when there has been a major emergency in each year in either Manweb Region or Scotland, and warns: "If I was a betting man, looking at the past records and based on the fact that our climate is becoming more extreme with hurricanes and ice storms, I would put money on another emergency this year. If there isn't - then it's a bonus."

A number of initiatives have been put in place following the recommendations of Scottish-

Better prepared for storm emergencies

Power's Panel of Inquiry into the problems experienced during the major storms of Christmas 1997 which hit Manweb's area and Christmas 1998 which struck Scotland.

The new philosophy is to be pro-active in dealing with weather problems, and a total of £30 million has been spent over two years to improve emergency response.

A virtual call centre, which transfers calls between Manweb and Scotland and can therefore draw on the resources of more call agents in the event of an emergency, is

scheduled to be in place at the end of October. The centre can handle up to 240,000 calls an hour and uses the latest interactive voice messaging technology.

A common system has been introduced to declare and describe the types of emergency that may arise. Level 3 warns of adverse weather, Level 2 is a local problem with supplies back on within 24 hours, and Level 1 is a major cross-region emergency extending beyond 24 hours.

Parallel

New ways of managing an emergency have also been introduced. Extra staff will be brought in from other sections of the business to enable a thorough damage assessment of the network to be undertaken in parallel with carrying out of repairs.

"Helpers" will be called in during a Level 1 emergency to assist in Emergency Action Centres, while staff from other parts of the company with local

knowledge will act as "guides" to help external staff find their way in storm-hit locations or act as go-betweens ferrying equipment and messages.

Craftsmen and jointers will accompany linesmen as "buddies", thus doubling or even trebling the number of linesmen able to go out on repair missions or make damage assessments.

IT systems are being enhanced so that an affected location can be shown graphically on-screen together with relevant postcode, constituency boundaries and even the name of the local MP, to enable media relations staff to give information to the relevant bodies.

New fully insulated overhead lines, manufactured in Sweden, which are more resilient to weather are being trialled in

Storm emergency levels

- LEVEL 3 - adverse weather
- LEVEL 2 - local problem
- LEVEL 1 - major emergency



Reinforcement work means that the power network is more able to withstand winter weather.

Regular local radio updates planned

A NEW initiative to provide information to customers, called Power Desk, will complement the new messaging system and call handling now being put in place at the call centre.

Power Desk is an agreement with local radio stations in both Manweb and ScottishPower regions to transmit regular updates about an emergency.

An initial launch will encourage listeners to ensure that they have batteries in their radios, and to tune in during severe weather.

As well as broadcasting an emergency message once a major emergency is declared, DJs at the stations will be supplied with regular updates to pass on to listeners.

These will also be given to the BBC and other news media to ensure that everybody is kept informed of the progress of work during an emergency.

Videos will put staff in the picture

A SERIES of video briefings are being held throughout Manweb so that every member of staff is aware of the emergency planning procedure.

The video produced by the company stresses that the chain of response is only as strong as its weakest link - everyone has a vital part to play.

Details are given of the way Call Centres are streamlined in a "Storm Mode" in the event of a Level 1 incident. Company, Divisional and Regional Emergency Action Centres, set up in a major emergency, are also described.

Leaflets have also been sent out to Energy Supply staff throughout the company asking them to sign up to the register of those willing to help out in some way when the company is faced with an emergency situation.



Storm readiness leaflets have been produced.

several locations across ScottishPower and Manweb. The company is the first Regional Electricity Company to test them, and a business case will be prepared for their future use if the trial is successful.

Commenting on the full extent of the emergency measures, Alan Laird said: "The overall aim is to be better prepared and better organised so that we improve our performance in the event of a major storm emergency."

Michelle joins training course

Community champion starts work

ONE of the star winners of the annual Community Champions awards has started work on a skill-seekers course in Manweb's Lister Drive office.

Michelle Lewis, aged 16, of Liverpool, was voted Overall Champion in 1997 at the awards run jointly by Chronicle Group Newspapers and Manweb, in recognition of her bravery for being well on the way to raising £1 million for charity despite having undergone 28 operations.

Now Michelle, who has just left school, is working as a clerical administrator in the personnel department at Merseyside Region, under ScottishPower Learning's youth development programme.

As well as gaining valuable work experience, she is working towards an NVQ Level Two in Business Administration.



Skillseeker Michelle Lewis at work at the Lister Drive office.

Michelle recently also attended one of the ScottishPower Learning personal development courses at the Outward Bound Trust centre in Aberdovey, and found it "did wonders" for her self-confidence.

Millennium projects

VOTES have been counted for projects which readers think the company should support to mark the Millennium.

After consultation it has been possible to decide on the following:

FLOODLIGHTING SCHEMES: Anderton Boat Lift, Cheshire, and Bangor Cathedral. Merseyside Region is still to be decided.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES: Tree and shrub planting at Mersey Forest, Knowsley, Merseyside; improving area next to sub station at Victoria Park, Warrington, Cheshire; scheme at North Wales Wildlife Trust woodland, Ruthin, which is used by schoolchildren, North Wales.

Fish survey

THE Mersey Basin Campaign, supported by ScottishPower, is asking Manweb employees who fish in the region to help monitor fish levels by completing survey forms which can be obtained from the Bulletin Board.



Merseyside Region Power Systems staff celebrate 58 weeks without lost time or reportable accidents.

Merseyside triumph

MERSEYSIDE has become the first region in ScottishPower to achieve a full year without lost time or a reportable accident.

In recognition of their achievement, staff are being given the chance to celebrate by attending one of a series of fun events ranging from paintballing to spending a day at Aintree Races.

Merseyside achieved the remarkable "clean bill of health" in the safety field as a result of their excellent record in the monthly checks which are carried out as part of the SuperSafe initiative.

Chris Parker, the region's Safety and Environment Co-ordinator, said: "The staff are proud of the achievement. We have a strong presence on site to make sure people are safe, and they all believe in the system. Safe working ensures there are no injuries, means that people are unharmed and keeps the paperwork down."

Other treats made possible by the cash prize given to the staff by Managing Director of Power Systems John Menzies are go karting, a golf day, a day at Electric Mountain and an evening meal.

Blooming lovely

IAN Catherall's garden is blooming lovely - it's official. The Employee Services team leader based at Lister Drive has won a competition run by the Stockton Heath parish council in Warrington.

Ian, who was entered for the competition by wife Pamela, will spend the £25 gift vouchers on buying more shrubs for the garden, which features a variety of flowers, trees and heathers.

Ian's secret? "I don't feed the plants with anything special," he said. "I make sure everything is well watered and keep the plants trimmed."

More plants

MANWEB is donating £200 towards the cost of plants in a community garden being built by the Albion Community Centre and Groundwork Trust next to the substation at Grecian Terrace in Everton. The community group has received National Lottery money to paint a mural on the sub-station wall.

Awards for long service

LONG service awards have been presented to four employees in the Aberystwyth area who have one hundred years at Manweb between them. Bill Tubey, Wales Region Manager (right) is pictured making the presentations to (from left) Emrys Hughes, 30 years, John Cowan, 20 years, Cliff Thomas, 20 years and Geoff Thomson, 30 years.



Father figure for Rhyl lifeboatmen

ERIC DAVIES is a "father figure" for the 25 members of the Rhyl branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.

At the age of 71, the retired Manweb engineering foreman is an active chairman of the Rhyl branch station, encouraging young lifeboatmen in their valuable work, and promoting up-to-the-minute training. Eric, who spent 38 years working with Manweb, still lives in the house in which he was born in Rhyl, and has been Mayor four times.

As well as recently receiving an RNLI statuette for loyal service, he was also awarded the BEM in 1989 for services to the electrical supply industry.

Eric said: "I have always been associated with the sea."

"I really do enjoy my work with the charity and go down to the boathouse on the promenade every day. I also get involved in most of the launches."



Eric Davies (left) receives his RNLI statuette from Lord Stanley.



Bowling fun at seaside

STAFF from Caernarfon and Rhyl Customer Service Centres spent an enjoyable social evening playing crown green bowls at the Queens Road bowling green in Llandudno, followed by a meal in a restaurant.

The event was organised by Gareth Hughes, customer service representative at the Caernarfon SuperCentre, who has represented Wales 25 times in the sport.

● Pictured above are both teams, with Gareth third from left.

PENSIONERS NEWS

Dancing in Yorkshire

THE members of North Mersey Retirees Association are fond of sequence dancing and waltzes - so they especially appreciated their recent stay at the Nidd Hall Hotel near Harrogate, Yorkshire.

The Warners hotel, which is for adults only, lays on old time dancing lessons. "It was nice to get away from noisy disco music," said Secretary Winnie Haskayne.

Talk on the cinema

RETIRED Prenton employee Clive Garner shared his vast knowledge of cinema with the members of the North Wirral Retired Staff Association in one of their regular talks.

Clive is well known on Wirral for the encyclopaedic command of film history which he has gained from years of research.

Preparing for Santa

EARLY Christmas shopping was the order of the day when Gwynedd District retirees went on a trip to Merseyside. The party split into two to explore the shopping centres either side of the Mersey, in Birkenhead and Liverpool.

Urgent plea for helpers

AN appeal is going out to retired Manweb staff to answer an SOS from a primary school in Kirkby, Knowsley Borough, Merseyside.

Ravenscroft Community Primary is seeking volunteer helpers to go into the school and help the youngsters, aged three to 11, with reading and other skills.

Headmistress Brenda Naisby said: "We are desperate for helpers and I am sure retired or part-time Manweb staff would be able to help us. They could come into the school and help the youngsters play games and give them guidance on IT skills and arts subjects, as well as reading."

Anyone interested in helping should contact Mrs Naisby on 0151 546 3047.