

EARLY START FOR CONTRACTING

By
**Jackie
Unsworth**

Staff views taken on board

INITIAL findings from the recent staff survey have now been received by Manweb — thanks to everyone who completed the questionnaire.

As promised, when all the information is available, the results will be communicated to employees.

Questionnaire

Public Relations Manager Sally Lingard said: "One thing that stood out from the questionnaire was that, generally, Manweb staff are not happy with the way Company information is given out.

"We were all asked how we would prefer to receive information, and the overwhelming choice was for team briefings, being told by line managers and newsletters sent to our homes.

Findings

"You'll be pleased to note that we have taken this on board and will be sending out the general findings — those issues that affect the whole of Manweb — in a Company newsletter.

"The issues affecting individual divisions and districts will be discussed in full at a series of team briefings later this summer."

MANWEB has launched its new wholly-owned subsidiary contracting business — two months ahead of schedule.

And it's all due to staff and the trade unions, whose cooperation made it possible to pull forward the starting date for Manweb Contracting Services Ltd.

The new company's Managing Director Allan Littler, former Contracting and Servicing Manager, said: "In my 27 years with Manweb I have often had to explain why projects have been running late. It gave me great pleasure to tell Chief Executive John Roberts and Trading Director Peter Hopkins that we were in ship-shape condition and would be up-and-running early."

Formed out of Manweb's existing contracting activities, the new company offers a wide range of quality installations and maintenance services.

Allan said: "Our most important attribute for the new company is our people. Their skills and knowledge was transferred to MCS when 90 per cent of employees decided that their future lay with contracting.

"This is a remarkable commitment from those staff, who were given the freedom of choice to either redeploy into the main business, take voluntary severance or continue with their career in the new competitive contracting environment."

Two Manweb plc Directors — Trading Director Peter Hopkins and Finance Director John Astall — have joined Allan on the Board of the new company, Mr Hopkins as Chairman and Mr Astall as a Director.

To help make the business more competitive, three new regional offices have been bought — including one in Norweb's area, at Birchwood, north of Warrington!

This office, close to the motorway network, has been the new base for Eastern Region staff, who previously operated from Mid Mersey District Office in Warrington, since July.

They have been joined at Birchwood by the Northern Region team, who moved out of North Mersey District Office at the beginning of

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Most important attribute is our people



Happy family . . . Pictured (l-r) are grandmother Dot Jones, holding 'miracle baby' Connor, six-year-old Calum and mum Collette holding Lewis.

BEING together was the best gift of all when twins Connor and Lewis Davies celebrated their first birthdays on August 21.

For Connor, who spent the first nine-and-a-half months of his life in hospital, is a miracle baby. He defied medical opinion and lived . . . although doctors were convinced he would not survive.

His grandmother, Dot Jones, Assistant Manageress of Manweb's Mold shop, said: "It's wonderful to have him home in Mold with his family at long last. Although Connor has to have two more major operations, he's doing very well — in fact, doing all the normal things a little boy of his age should."

The twins were born 10 weeks early — Lewis weighing just 3lb 13oz and Connor even tinier at 2lb 7oz. It seemed everything was going wrong for Connor, who developed a serious bowel condition — which resulted in major surgery when he was a day old and again at four months — then suffered blood poisoning followed by jaundice.

But the most baffling thing for the doctors at Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool was Connor's intolerance to any form of fat in his food — something a healthy, growing child must have.

"Everyone was convinced Connor was going to die," said Dot. "But the doctors came up with a special diet, which he is still on, and he has pulled through. He really is a miracle baby."

For mum Collette, dad Glyn and the twins' older brother Calum, aged six, Connor and Lewis really are a special pair. Sadly Collette had problems with previous pregnancies and lost another set of twins seven years ago and another baby two years ago.

Dot said: "At long last they are a complete family, and very happy. Connor is still undergoing treatment at Alder Hey, but he's putting on weight now and is a very content baby."

She added: "I would like to thank all of my Manweb colleagues who were so helpful and understanding during Connor's stay in hospital. Without their support I would not have been able to cope."

The twins also have a Manweb connection on their dad's side. Grandfather Eric Davies was Foreman at Llandudno Junction until his recent retirement, and was featured in 'Contact' when he was awarded the British Empire Medal in the 1989 New Year Honours.

HOME AGAIN AT THE DOUBLE

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EARLY START FOR CONTRACTING



Revvng up for their move to a converted car showroom in Abergele are members of the Western Region Contracting team.

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August. Central Region staff are scheduled to leave their present office at Dee Valley District by the middle of September, and will occupy offices and a depot on Wrexham Industrial Estate. The site includes facilities for panel building.

The Western team, currently based at Clwyd District Office, will later move to a new office located at the junction of the A55 at Abergele.

In addition to the new offices, a number of independent depots are to be established throughout the Manweb area, at minimal cost.

Allan said: "In this area we have used Manweb's resources wisely and finished up with suitable depots at prices we can afford. In Liverpool, for example, the substation at Vulcan Street will be the hub for Merseyside operations, while at Bromborough the old social club has been modified to create a depot for the Wirral.

"In Crewe, a disused building in Electricity Street has been restored for our launch pad to the Midlands."

He added: "We have not finished yet, as we are still looking for small depots in Oswestry, Aberystwyth and Caernarfon, and if any

employees know of suitable locations the Regional Contracting Managers would be delighted to hear from them."

Allan paid tribute to the staff who have already occupied their new bases. "They have shown enthusiasm and dedication by devoting their weekend break to moving out and organising their new office so they would be operational for Monday morning without inconveniencing their customers.

"I have been overwhelmed with the positive response from all our contracting staff in getting the new company

up-and-running.

"With this commitment, all looks well for our prosperity and success in the future."

The new telephone and fax numbers for the contracting regions are as follows:

Eastern and Northern Regions — tel: 0925 813000

— fax: 0925 818844

Central Region — tel: 0978 842455

— fax: 0978 842220

Western Region — tel: 0745 350486

— fax: 0745 339452



Planning Central Region's move to Wrexham are (l-r) Senior Contracts Engineer John Milne, Contracting Co-ordinator Jean Hollis, from Head Office, and Foreman Alan Peters.



Northern and Eastern Contracting staff outside their new regional office at Birchwood.

CHANGING FACES

Religious career beckons

MID Cheshire Distribution Manager Paul Wilkinson is on the threshold of a new career after taking early retirement from Manweb.

Pictured left with District Manager Jeff Hunt, Paul, who had completed 35 years' service with Manweb, is to attend Bible College to take a theological degree.

Colleagues past and present gathered at the District Office to wish him all the best for the future. Paul, who is also learning Hebrew, was



given an Interlinear Bible and a tripod on behalf of all his friends.

He joined Manweb in 1957 as a student apprentice and in 1962 was appointed Assistant Section Engineer. In 1965 he became 4th Assistant Engineer in Construction, Area 1, and in 1967 was appointed Assistant Section

Engineer at North Wirral.

Five years later he moved to Liverpool as 2nd Assistant Engineer and in 1983 became Senior Engineer in Mid Cheshire. This was followed by secondments to North Mersey and Head Office before he returned to Mid Cheshire in 1987 as the Senior Engineer.

Career boost for Christine

IN March of this year, Contact reported on the educational successes of Head Office Advertising Officer Christine Pighills. Congratulations are due again for Christine as she recently passed her course at Manchester Polytechnic with flying colours, and earned herself a Certificate in Marketing Communications at distinction level.

As part of the study programme for the two year, one-evening-a-week course, Christine had to complete a company based project titled 'Direct Marketing in the Retail Business' which in her

case focused on Manweb.

In Christine's opinion her studies have been highly beneficial. She said: "Personally it has been great for my career. I find I'm now more involved in the strategic decision making in my department. It has helped me appreciate how a company such as Manweb actually operates."

Her achievements do not stop here! Next year Christine hopes to take a diploma in Marketing and Communications — another step towards becoming a member of the Institute of Marketing.

VAL LEAVING EARLY

DEE Valley Clerical Supervisor Val Stock has taken early retirement from Manweb after completing 19 years' service in the electricity supply industry. Val, who worked in the Accounts Department at Rhostyllen, left the Company on July 31.

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Graeme Cooper reports on the Company's second Annual General Meeting

A SUCCESS - THANKS TO STAFF

MENUS were swapped for company reports when Manweb's Head Office restaurant hosted the firm's second annual general meeting last month.

There was seating for 800, plus standing room in the restaurant, and with over 900 shareholders expressing an intention to attend, there were worries that space would be tight.

On the day about 450 shareholders filed into the restaurant through a temporary reception area which could also provide additional seating if necessary.

As a plc Manweb is legally required to hold an annual meeting for shareholders. It is a chance for them to put questions to the company directors face to face and to vote on company matters.

As with last year's meeting the formal business consisted of seven resolutions, and after each one shareholders' questions were answered by Chairman Bryan Weston and other directors.

Resolutions to receive and adopt the report and accounts and to pay a dividend were both passed with large majorities.

Manweb's articles of Association require a proportion of the directors to retire at each AGM, and non-Executive Director Glen Nightingale and Director, Power Marketing Colin Leonard stood down and were re-elected.

As a director appointed by the Board Howard Kirkham, Director, Network Services, was required to retire at this AGM, but was also re-elected with a large majority.

Questions from shareholders covered Manweb's profitability, directors' pay and the relationship between executive and non-executive directors.

Also of concern were standing charges, electricity as an efficient fuel, charitable donations, profit sharing schemes for staff, and how the interests of customers are balanced with those of shareholders.

Further resolutions covered the re-appointment of Touche Ross as auditors, and the empowering the Board to raise a limited amount of capital through the sale of shares if required.

All resolutions approved by large majorities

The meeting was concluded in just over two hours, with all resolutions approved by large majorities.

Once again the success of the AGM depended largely on the Manweb staff who ran the event, led by Company Secretary Nick Williams and supported by the Commercial Presentations organisation.

Nick said: "It was an excel-

lent effort from all staff involved, and together with the Board I'd like to express my thanks for all the hard work. I'd also like to thank everyone whose usual arrangements were unavoidably altered, and hope the catering facilities met with their approval! Holding the AGM at Head Office was a success, and I hope we can do the same next year."



Chris Holmes, North Wirral Word Processor Operator/Clerk, at the AGM Question Point.



A shareholder questions the Board.



Shareholders arrive at the special AGM reception structure

Attacks spark be-on-guard warning

MANWEB apprentices are being warned to be on their guard following a vicious knife attack on a young employee.

Gareth Evans, an Overhead Line Apprentice from Aberystwyth, needed 17 stitches after he was slashed across his chest while going for a late night pizza in Hoylake.

In an unprovoked attack, the knifeman lunged at 22-year-old Gareth from the shadows as he walked along a dark road, then ran off leaving the young apprentice covered in blood.

He managed to stagger to Hoylake Police Station, where an ambulance was called and Gareth was rushed to hospital. He wasn't detained overnight and is now recovering at his home in Capel Dewi, Aberystwyth.

It is the latest in a series of attacks on Manweb apprentices while they have been lodging on the Wirral during their training period at Hoylake Training Centre.

Just a few months ago 3rd year Apprentice Electricians David Philips and Jason Bennett, from Mid Cheshire District, were beaten up under similar circumstances, again for no apparent reason, and

there have been previous attacks on young employees from some of the Welsh districts.

Peter Smith, Chief Instructor at Hoylake, said: "It is very worrying and we are warning all apprentices to be very careful when they are out at night."

"All of these incidents have been in very similar circumstances and in each case, nothing was stolen. There is no obvious reason why our lads should be attacked."

"Gareth is a very inoffensive lad and there is no way he could have caused this attack. He just happened to be in the wrong place at

the wrong time."

Ironically Gareth, a 2nd Year Apprentice, had that same afternoon completed his six weeks' training stint at Hoylake and was due to return home to Aberystwyth the following day.

A spokesman for Merseyside Police said the incident was being investigated. "Unfortunately Gareth didn't get a good look at the attacker, as he was approached from behind, and our only description is of a male, 5ft 10ins, wearing a dark jacket. However, we are doing all we can to find this man."

NO PRESS BAN

MANWEB'S second AGM was attended by business correspondents from leading national and regional press.

Due to limited space in the Head Office restaurant Manweb did not issue invitations to the media, and could not guarantee there would be room for them once

shareholders had been admitted.

This led to speculation that the media were banned from the meeting.

In fact there were no restrictions on press access, and space was easily found for journalists. The meeting was fully reported in The Financial Times, The Guardian, Liverpool Daily Post and Manchester Evening News.

ROOM FOR A VIEW

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

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

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

Continuing our series about the regions that make up Manweb Contracting Services Ltd, this month we focus on Central Region.

CENTRAL ADD TO THEIR SUCCESS



Central Regional Contracting Manager Arwel Lloyd and his team.

LARGE industrial contracts are the order of the day for Central Region Contracting.

Regional Contracting Manager Arwel Lloyd, who has responsibility for industrial work and utilities, and his 140 staff based in offices at Dee Valley, North Wirral, Oswestry and depots at New Crane Street and Newtown, have had tremendous success in the major works field.

Operating within a contrasting region that takes in parts of rural North Wales and the densely populated Wirral, Central has been particularly successful in utilities works, both on land and on water.

Central at present provides low and high voltage maintenance installation and repair work on a 24-hour emergency cover basis for both Welsh Water, involving approximately 370 sites, and the North West and Welsh Regions of the National Rivers Authority, with around 70 sites, including offices, pumping stations and fish hatcheries.

One recent Sunday rescue mission to which Central responded involved a compressors failure at one of the NRA fish hatcheries.

On land, Central Region is also on the road to success with two major street lighting projects. Work began in April this year on a stretch of the Shrewsbury to Telford By-pass — which runs through Midlands Electricity's patch. Valued at around £1/2 million, the contract is now nearing completion.

Closer to home, a three-mile stretch of the new Welshpool By-pass is due to be lit at intervals by Manweb with both temporary and permanent street lighting, and this contract is worth approximately £120,000.

Meanwhile, success is continuing in the general contracting arena across Central Region with:

- The Oswestry team handling a £300,000 refurbishment at the Marches Comprehensive School in Oswestry, where new blocks are being constructed and existing buildings refurbished.
- The Newtown team having just completed a major £1/4 million factory installation for Control Techniques UK in Newtown. Work involved complete HV and MV power installation and lighting for the internationally based company.
- Hawarden has been chosen as the location for another large project, a new manufacturing site for Mix-Alloy. The development includes offices, shop floor and an amenity area for the site, which is to be used to produce steel from powdered ore.

Top names take up specialist services

IN support of customers Manweb-wide, Central Region is home to Contracting's Technical Services Operation, which aims to offer specialist services to people with diagnosed or undiagnosed problems within their distribution networks.

Services include measurement and analysis of harmonics and network disturbances, power factor correction and uninterruptible power supply systems.

Amongst the customers taking up this service to date are British Aerospace, Shell UK and BICC.

Superseded

The Section is currently managed by Brian Neild, who is due to retire in the autumn and who will be superseded by Phil Jones as Technical Services Manager.

Although based at Central Region, the operation acts as a liaison point between customers and the wealth of knowledge existing throughout the whole of Contracting, Network Services and Power Marketing.

Within Contracting, the function is supported locally by personnel in each of the regional offices — Colin Arnold (Eastern), John Ashton (Northern) and Graham Monks (Western).

By Cheryl Stevenson

THE community spirit is alive and kicking for Central Region staff, who are involved in a variety of local activities and charity work.

Contracting Administration Manager Carol Dean has been an active committee member of Wrexham Sports Club for the Disabled for eight years. The club's primary objective is to encourage sporting activity amongst disabled people and members have in the past competed in events within the UK and Europe at both club and national level.

Carol is Club Treasurer and Escort/Driver for members travelling to and from events, including a recent trip to Holland. She is also an active fund-raiser and, together with two other members, is a key organiser of the biennial Wrexham Open International Games, next scheduled for 1993 and likely to attract competitors from as far afield as Norway and Iceland.

In a similar vein, Dee Valley Contracting Electrician Steve Jones joins forces every year with customers at the Collier Pub, Ponciau, to raise money for Powys School for Disabled Children, New Gresford.

The group recently took part in the Welsh 3000, a 32-mile walk from Aber Falls to the top of Snowdon. Money raised is being used to buy sports clothing for children taking part in the annual Welsh Sports Tournament to be held this year in South Wales.

A total Regional effort went into raising money for Cancer Research last autumn when Contracting Assistant Geoff Swindley organised a German 'Oompah Night' for Dee Valley staff and friends. The event raised £316 from ticket sales and a raffle of prizes donated by Contracting staff.

Last but not least, 3rd Engineer Geoff Edwards spends his spare time working with young people in his role as a Wing Staff Officer in the Air Training Corps. He has been involved with the No 2 Welsh Squadron



Contracting Assistant Geoff Swindley presents a cheque to the Cancer Research Campaign.

since 1967 and spends his spare time actively encouraging young people from age 14 to 22 interested in flying, gliding and outdoor sports such as shooting and abseiling.

Geoff recently led a group on a 10-day cycle ride from Ben Nevis to Scafell and Snowdonia to raise funds for Clwyd Dyslexia Group.

PROJECTS BOOKED IN

TWO projects that Central Region can be particularly proud of are to be featured in the Society of Welsh Architects Year Book — a prestigious publication circulated to local architects and electrical consultants.

Work for Maelor Borough Council on a new office block in Lambpit Street, Wrexham, is valued at over £1/2 million and Contracting will provide a total package consisting of power, lighting, rewiring and fire alarm systems, generators, uninterruptible power supply and Energy Management Services.

The second project has an international flavour. A new permanent site was completed recently to house the yearly International Eisteddfod in Llangollen.

A purpose-built hall has been constructed for the annual dance and music festival, which in the past has been held under temporary canvas.

"The construction is special because in order to maintain the traditional flavour of the festival, the main area has been built under a revolutionary permanent canvas canopy — posing an extra challenge for Central Region electricians and engineers," said Regional Contracting Manager Arwel Lloyd.

However, one unfortunate incident has marred this project — highlighting the risks to Contracting Electricians during the course of a normal working day. Site Supervisor Martin Jones was injured when he fell from a ladder whilst disconnecting the electricity supply on the Eisteddfod site.



The International Eisteddfod site at Llangollen.

New award for plain English



MANWEB has won a second award for the clear use of English in information to customers.

The Crystal Mark for Clarity was presented by Chrissie Maher, Director of the Plain English Campaign, to John Roberts, Chief Executive, and Tim Elliot, Regulatory Relations Manager.

The award was given for clarity of information contained in leaflets sent out with customers' bills. The leaflets, titled A Quality Service Backed By Guarantees, now carry the Crystal Mark — an approval from the Plain

English Campaign.

Manweb previously won the award three years ago for the quality and tone of their letters to customers. John Roberts said: "It is vitally important that we are customer friendly when and wherever possible. Therefore, we are delighted to receive this award once again.

Proud to accept the Crystal Mark were John Roberts (left), Chief Executive, Tim Elliot Regulatory Relations Manager, and Chrissie Maher Director of the Plain English Campaign.

Girls prove they can do it



MANWEB was among companies helping girls broaden their career horizons at a convention in Liverpool's St. George's Hall.

Organised by the Liverpool Careers Service the event — titled I Can Do That! — gave third year girls the chance to sample non-traditional jobs and raise their academic and career aspirations.

Manweb's stand was staffed through the week-long conference by ten of the company's female employees who work in areas not traditionally associated with women. They ran workshops featuring an interactive computer

simulation package developed for schools and aimed at highlighting the roles, usages and costs of electricity in the home.

The Manweb input was organised by Head Office Development Engineer Rachel Knight.

She said: "There was a great deal of interest in Manweb from pupils, teachers and advisers, and we gave advice on technical careers for women, both with Manweb and in general."

Dee Valley Service Surveyor Amanda Dodd is pictured at the convention with girls from Gateacre Comprehensive School.

Long service

CONGRATULATIONS to the following staff who are celebrating either 20, 30 or 40 years' long service with Manweb.

20 years: Head Office — Alan David Jones, Mechanical Fitter, CFU; Michael Artell, Administrative Assistant; Trevor Stuart Coates, Clerical Assistant; Christine Mary Durham, Assistant, Quarterly Enquiries; Hazel Mary Hopley, Clerical Assistant; James Neil Maghill, Settlements Manager; Peter Arnold Baron, Estates and Wayleaves Officer; Clwyd — John Kennedy, Customer Services Manager; Gwynedd — Thomas John Owen, Meter Reader.

30 years: Head Office — Alan John Moore, Senior Negotiator/NFFU Officer; Alfred James Bowen, 2nd Engineer, CFU; Dee Valley Richard Philip Jones, Engineer, Ellesmere Port Section; North Wirral — Anthony Joseph Robinson, Joiner.

40 years: Head Office — Robert Douglas Jones, Principal Auditor; Herbert Stanley Wood, 1st Engineer; Mid Mersey — John Rae, DLC Attendant; Dee Valley — Edward Clifford James, 1st Engineer, Supplies Office; North Wirral — William Holland, Service Electrician; Mid Cheshire — Kenneth Raymond Greenhough, Linesman, Northwich; Clwyd — Raymond Kingsby Davies, Electrician.

Everyone a winner

THE lucky number 651 earned retired employee J Lee the top prize of £300 in the EEIBA's March draw. The other winners were as follows:

£200 — J Williams, retired (2018); £150 — S Rees, Aberystwyth (1783); £100 — P H Williams, retired (1139); £75 — C. Henshaw, Head Office (1343) and A N Powell, retired (1565); £50 — A. Davies, retired (1799), M N Cobb, retired (2398), F J Isaacs, retired (159) and W Mongey, retired (1607); £30 — P M Rainbow, retired (1823), D J Jones, Dee Valley (2700), Pemberton, retired (2206), L Ellis, retired (150), W H Gittins, retired (640) and I D Ledson, North Mersey (8); £25 — A C MacDonald, retired (1737), M Griffiths, Head Office (447), C Heggie, Head Office (592) and D A Birch, Liverpool (1180).

ACCIDENTS DOWN AGAIN

THE accident toll has fallen again at Manweb, continuing the trend set in the last financial year.

During the first quarter of 1992/93 there were just 19 reported accidents resulting in absence from work of more than three days, compared with 41 recorded during the same period — April, May and June — last year.

In terms of all lost time accidents, the total for the quarter was 49 compared to 77 in the corresponding three month period in 1991/92, and a breakdown of these figures is shown on the chart.

Looking at accidents per 100 employees, the annual rate for over-three-day accidents fell for the 12 months ending June 30 1992 to 2.3 compared with 3.0 for the year ending March 31 1992.

There was also a significant reduction in the rate for all time-lost accidents to 5.8 from 6.3.

Well into the second quarter of the year, Mid Mersey, North Wirral, Mid Cheshire, Central Field Unit, the Northern, Eastern, Western and Appliance Servicing sections of Trading as well as shops have not, at the time of writing this article, recorded any over-three-day accidents this financial year, and only one of the newly-formed Power Marketing Regions has recorded one such accident.

It is not all good news, however, and three accidents during the quarter had to be reported as major injuries to the Health and Safety Executive.

A joiner severed the top of his finger, a linesman received an electric shock and an electrician fell from a height and received a compound fracture to his leg.

All the over-three-day accidents involved industrial staff — seven

SAFETY



MANWEB ACCIDENTS INVOLVING INJURY

1st Quarter Comparisons

Divison/ Corporate	1st Quarter 1991/92	1st Quarter 1991/92	1st Quarter 1992/93	1st Quarter 1992/93
	All Accidents	Over 3-Day Accidents	All Accidents	Over 3-Day Accidents
Network Services	57	34	37	15
Trading	12	6	8	3
Power Marketing	6	1	4	1
Corporate	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	77	41	49	19

linesmen, four cable jointers, three electricians, two fitters, a general duties assistant and a meter operative.

Nine of the 19 reported accidents resulted in sprain or strain injuries, and this is an area where improvements can be made through better

training in lifting and handling techniques.

Many of the accidents were sustained by people falling or lifting objects incorrectly, and most could have been avoided by taking a little extra care.

Mixed reaction to smoking ban

THE subject of smoking at work continues to smoulder on in Manweb, and is discussed at most of the Company's Health and Safety Committees.

The voluntary ban in some offices works well in some Manweb locations, but not in others.

Looking outside Manweb, it seems to be the trend in many large companies to have a total no smoking policy in the workplace. Earlier this year,

Midland Bank made such a move.

Reported statistics now show that 31 per cent of all employers have imposed a total ban on smoking at work. Approximately 13 per cent have designated smoking areas with time limits imposed, and 44 per cent have designated areas without time limits.

Of the employers that have imposed some sort of control over smoking, 55 per cent have warned employees they will be disciplined if the rules are broken.

Pension scheme invites nominees

INDUSTRIAL members of the Manweb section of the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme are invited to nominate candidates for a forthcoming election of Group Trustees.

Under the Electricity Supply Pension Scheme, each employee group has its own body of Group Trustees, three appointed by the employer, three elected by industrial members and a further three elected by non-industrial members.

The term of office of the three Manweb Group Trustees who were elected by industrial members will cease on December 31, 1992 and it is necessary to hold an election by that date to fill the vacancies.

Two of the Group Trustees to be elected must be members of the Scheme who are industrial employees of either Manweb plc or Manweb Contracting Services Ltd. The other Group Trustee to be elected must be a pensioner member who was an industrial employee of either the Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Board, Manweb plc or Manweb Contracting Services Ltd.

Nomination forms and copies of the rules of the election are available on request from the Pension Section, Manweb plc, Sealand Road, Chester CH1 4LR (tel. 0244 652582).

Each nomination form must be signed by 10 industrial members and the completed form must be delivered or sent to the Group Administrator at the same address, to reach him by no later than October 5, 1992. A copy of the official notice of the election is displayed on all relevant notice boards.

NALGO DATE

THE next meeting of the Retired Members' Section of Nalgo's Merseyside and North Wales Electricity Branch will be held at Aberystwyth District on Thursday, September 24, 1992, starting at 2pm.

THIS NEW MOLE IS KING OF THE ROAD

HAVE you noticed the increasing number of potholes appearing in our local roads? Many of these are caused by poor restoration work carried out by the utility companies or their contractors after pipes or cables have been installed underground. Here Management Services Senior Consultant David Edge explains why trenchless cable installations will be increasingly important to Manweb and gives the background to the company's new state-of-the-art Jet Trac cable laying machine.

PUTTING roads and foot-paths back the way they were before they were dug up to lay cables or ducts involves Manweb and other utilities in a great deal of time, effort and expense.

As the company which has dug the road up, Manweb is responsible for carrying out temporary 'reinstatement', as it is known after excavations. Local authorities do permanent work later and invoice Manweb — often some time after the company regards the job as closed, making budgeting and cost control extremely difficult.

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By Graeme Cooper

pressed air powered machine, affectionately known as a mole, which can be used to bore under roads just like their furry cousins.

The extent to which these machines are used varies greatly across districts. For example, one district has used its mole, which cost Manweb £1,500, to complete 200 road crossings over the last six months. The estimated saving to the company is at least £60,000 in reinstatement costs alone.

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Because less ground is disturbed trenchless installations are also considered to be safer: reduced ground disturbance means there is less chance of hitting other utility plant.

Last year Manweb's costs for laying high and low voltage cables ran into millions of pounds. On many cable laying jobs it has been estimated that excavation, backfill and reinstatement can account for up to two thirds of the total cost.



Terry Hackett and Sam Gardiner using the Jet Trac. Water cools the head and radio beacon, and assists cutting. In sandy soils additives can be mixed with the water to help support the bored-out passage until cable or ducting is installed, and a range of heads is available to cope with most types of ground. Earthing mats can be seen under and around the machine.



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... The job, involving
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... machine however, the work

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... had removed extensive scaf-
... folding. The Jet Trac simply
... bored under the structure.
... Inside the site compound a
... compressed air mole was
... used to install the cable
... underneath the site offices.

... At the time of writing other
... jobs being discussed with dis-
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... and field crossings. For exam-
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Disturbance

... Excavation is not accept-
... able in many areas for envi-
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... as well as the removal and
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... no visible disturbance, and
... producing little or no spoil.

... Most low voltage overhead
... line refurbishment schemes
... in villages involve replacing
... 'like with like'. However, the
... Jet Trac's environmental and
... cost benefits give Manweb an
... additional option of under-
... grounding lines at minimum
... cost.

... What does the future hold?
... In a matter of years the Jet
... Trac will no doubt appear to
... be as archaic as the com-
... pressed air moles of 20 years
... ago.

... Talks have already taken
... place with representatives of
... other regional electricity
... companies to determine what
... type of machine manufactur-
... ers should be encouraged to
... develop to overcome the limi-
... tations of the present genera-
... tion of 'no dig' equipment.

... Manweb will continue to
... increase its use of trenchless
... techniques and will monitor
... new developments.



The installed Marconi PMR soon to be in use.



'Hands free' or 'press to talk' — the new PMR works much like a telephone.

PMR paves the way for better communications

By Rob Skinner

OVER the next 18 months, Manweb is set to implement a new FM VHF Private Mobile Radio (PMR) system for all network services district users. This pioneering system replaces the old AM network, now ten years out of date.

Manweb is joint fifth out of the RECs to introduce the new system, designed by Marconi. Its benefits seem endless, and users can be put in direct contact with the British Telecom network, as well as any Manweb District Office.

Derek Graham, Engineer Telecommunications Network said: "We plan a three-phase changeover to the new system. Phase one covers Manweb Districts one to five. The PMR will be up and running in North Mersey, Liverpool, and North Wirral by the end of October and in Mid Mersey and Dee Valley by the end of November.

"Phase two and three cover Manweb districts six to ten and is scheduled for 1993/4. They include the installation and commissioning of the PMR system and subsequent changeover in each district. District radio users will be trained by Telecoms staff and their vehicles fitted with the system."

Overall control of the PMR lies with the Regional System Controller (RSC) at Head Office. Below this, there are three Local System Controllers (LSC) situated at Head Office, Caernarfon Grid and Lister Drive. In addition, there are 37 base stations around the Manweb region that transmit and receive signals on the system.

The PMR uses a four figure dialling method, compared to the verbal call signs used on the current system. This allows the user to make direct calls to any other system user, Manweb District Offices or even to a number on the BT network. The PMR is not an open channel, however it does carry a similar feature which allows group calls between a pre-arranged selection of users.

Derek Graham said: "In effect, the new system works much like a telephone. It shares many features, such as pre-defined calls, user-defined calls, last-number redial, call diversions, call logging, and three way conversations.

"The PMR incorporates a three stage call priority system. This guarantees access for emergency calls when the system is busy and calls are being queued. An eight in front of the number gives the user priority to the top of the queue for urgent calls. In a serious emergency,

a nine in front of the number lets the user clear down an existing call and go onto the system straight away."

To avoid queues on the system, users are encouraged to keep calls brief and to the point. At peak times, all calls are shortened to one minute with a five second cut-off warning.

Users have a choice between 'press to talk' and 'hands free' operation, and can speak via a personal microphone and listen via a loudspeaker. This is, for one, a useful feature but also a legal requirement — it is against the law to use a handset while driving.

To cut down on the number of speech calls, the PMR has incorporated a message facility. Status messages, such as "arrived on site" or "with contractors" can be sent directly to any user, displayed on the LCD screen common to every PMR handset.

Derek Graham continued: "This new technology is set to pave the way for much better communications within the Manweb region. The PMR offers a broad range of facilities that make it far superior to the current system. Once it is up and running, our on-the-road engineers can be on site with much greater speed and efficiency."



Radio Technicians Ian Bewley (left) and Gary Henshall checking systems.

NEW MOLE IS THE ROAD

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As the company which has dug the road up, Manweb is responsible for carrying out temporary 'reinstatement', as it is known after excavations. Local authorities do permanent work later and invoice Manweb — often some time after the company regards the job as closed, making budgeting and cost control extremely difficult.

The Street Works Act, due to be implemented next January, will make Manweb and other utilities responsible for undertaking their own permanent reinstatement. There will be a two year guarantee period for the company's work. If the reinstatement fails during this period it will have to be repaired and guaranteed for a further two years.

Permanent

Manweb has already carried out trials of 'one shot' reinstatement. This means that permanent reinstatement has been carried out within 24 hours of completing work on site, so avoiding doing the job twice.

Another requirement of the Act is that only trained operatives will be authorised to undertake work on the public highway. Plans are progressing for training of both site staff and supervisors.

But the additional responsibilities placed on Manweb by the Act could mean an increase in costs. If excavation was avoided in the first place these costs would not be incurred.

Manweb's Management Services Department has for a number of years been aware of the benefits to be gained from trenchless cable installation methods.

There is essentially nothing new about the concept. Every district has at least one com-

pressed air powered machine, affectionately known as a mole, which can be used to bore under roads just like their furry cousins.

The extent to which these machines are used varies greatly across districts. For example, one district has used its mole, which cost Manweb £1,500, to complete 200 road crossings over the last six months. The estimated saving to the company is at least £60,000 in reinstatement costs alone.

Two years ago during the Operational Efficiency Project in Liverpool the then District Manager, Bob McMahon and his staff gave their full cooperation to Management Services in carrying out initial trials. Former Network Services Manager Bill Tubey has since

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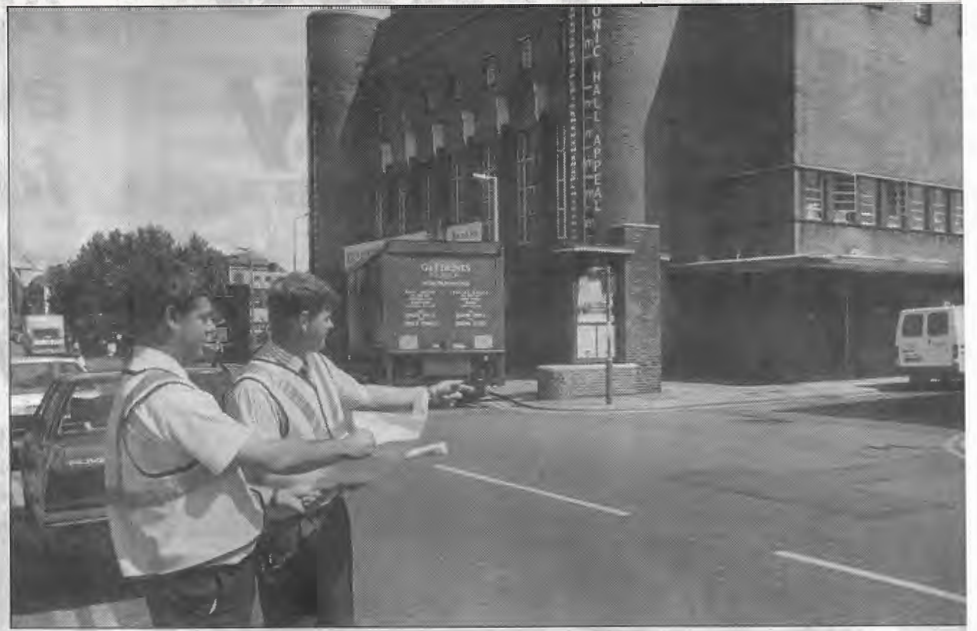
Because less ground is disturbed trenchless installations are also considered to be safer: reduced ground disturbance means there is less chance of hitting other utility plant.

Last year Manweb's costs for laying high and low voltage cables ran into millions of pounds. On many cable laying jobs it has been estimated that excavation, backfill and reinstatement can account for up to two thirds of the total cost.



Liverpool District Manager Bill Tubey (2nd from right) presents operators Terry Hackett (left), Sam Gardiner (2nd from left) and Keith Roberts with training certificates from Jet Trac.

By Graeme Cooper



David Edge (left) studying plans outside Liverpool Philharmonic Hall with Cable Laying Foreman Steve Wilson.

Having read about the virtues of trenchless cabling you are probably wondering what the problems are. There appear to be few.

Steve Wilson commented: "David Edge and I have spent the last two years encouraging colleagues throughout the company to use moles and other techniques more extensively. There are still staff who used compressed air moles about 20 years ago, they only remember the jobs which failed. Most jobs are successful. The company cannot afford to miss the opportunity because the savings are so great. A small minority of jobs may fail because not all ground conditions are suitable, but these will be in the minority."

Underground

A recent innovation is the availability of hydraulically powered machines which can be steered underground from the surface. One of these, the Jet Trac, was used on trial in Liverpool.

It installed 230 metres of low voltage 95 sq mm Waveform cable in a day, saving Manweb over £4,000 in reduced reinstatement and labour costs.

The Jet Trac will bore to a maximum diameter of approximately 200 mm at depths of up to 4.5 metres. It will go for distances of up to 150 metres before needing to be repositioned.

Following the trial, Denis Farquhar, then Network Services Director, sponsored further investigations into the viability of trenchless cable installations.

George Balcombe, Equipment Development and Maintenance Manager, sees the wider adoption of trenchless techniques as an important cost reduction initiative that will have an increasing effect on the company's street works activities. Whilst other machines were considered, the Jet Trac proved to be the most suitable and safest for cable installation. It features an extensive cable strike and

alarm system which operates in the unlikely event of a cable being struck.

As part of the Jet Trac's overall safety system, operators must wear insulated gloves and boots and stand on an earthed mat which is electrically bonded to the machine. These measures ensure operator safety in the event of cable damage.

As with conventional cable laying, records are obtained from other utilities and the site is checked with a state of the art Subsite 80R electronic detector before any work starts.

The Jet Trac's major plus factor is its ability to be guided underground. Steering depends on a radio beacon mounted just behind the cutting blade from which the R80 receives signals at depths of up to 4.5 metres. With the blade stationary the detector shows the direction in which it will bore. Corrections can then be made before the machine is restarted.

Liverpool District has now taken delivery of a Jet Trac, which will put Manweb at the forefront of modern cable laying technology. The machine, manned by its team of trained operators, will be available to undertake work for other districts.

Six staff have qualified as operators. Liverpool Craft Attendant Alec Grant and General Duties Assistant Sam Gardiner form the main team. The other trained staff are Steve Wilson, and General Duties Assistants Terry Hackett, Keith Roberts (both Liverpool) and Mike Ray (North Mersey). Having several trained staff available ensures cover for holiday periods.

The machine was recently used to install a low voltage cable for an extension to Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall.

The job, involving installing 40 metres of cable under a flagged footpath — on the face of it a routine job saving about £500 in reinstatement costs. Without the machine however, the work

would have been unless the main had removed external folding. The Jet Trac bored under the site of compressed air used to install underneath the site

At the time of jobs being discussed districts include river and field crossing. It is planned to install a cable underneath a field in the Oswestry District.

Apart from trenchless installations, cheaper compared with conventional 'open trench' laying they are a mentally more friendly

Disturbance

Excavation is able in many areas. Environmental reinstatement involves surface replacement of layers of earth. Trenchless go under the surface producing little or no visible disturbance.

Most low voltage line refurbishment in villages involves 'like with like'. The Jet Trac's environmental cost benefits give additional options for grounding lines at a lower cost.

What does the Jet Trac will no doubt be as archaic as compressed air moles ago.

Talks have already taken place with representatives of other regional companies to determine the type of machine which should be developed to overcome the limitations of the present 'no dig' equipment.

Manweb will continue to increase its use of trenchless techniques and will be developing new developments

TAKING STOCK ON SHARES

IN general, transferring shares in Manweb plc to which an incentive (bonus or electricity vouchers) is attached will result in the loss of entitlement to that incentive.

There are, however, exceptions to this, some of which can result in a saving of tax.

Individuals who were registered with the Electricity Share Information Office by November 14 1990 and who bought shares under the Offer for Sale were eligible to receive free of charge from HM Government an incentive in respect of shares in one REC.

Eligible customers of Manweb could apply for electricity vouchers or the customer share bonus for Manweb plc, or the non-customer share bonus on shares bought in the Offer for Sale of any one other REC. The last of the electricity vouchers will be paid out on August 1 1993.

The customer share bonus is one share for every ten shares in Manweb bought in the Offer for Sale and held continuously until December 31 1993, subject to a maximum bonus of 300 shares.

The non-customer share bonus is one share for every 20 shares in a REC bought in the Offer for Sale and held continuously until December 31 1993, subject to a maximum bonus of 150 shares.

If shares eligible for an incentive are disposed of before December 31 1993, your entitlement to incentives may be lost or reduced (whether or not you later acquire more shares).

There are four instances, however, when a transfer will not result in loss of entitlement:

- Death. Transfer involving registration of shares following the death of the owner in the name of individuals entitled to the shares under the owner's will or his or her intestacy.

- No change in beneficial owner. This is where the transfer will not involve any change in the beneficial ownership of the shares and is to either:

1. An approved manager
2. The beneficial owner immediately prior to the transfer, for example where shares were held for a child who has reached the age of majority.

- Adding of a joint holder. This is where one or more joint holders are being added by way of gift.

This could be useful in reducing tax.

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

By Geoff Standing

Example 1: A Manweb employee adds the name of his or her unemployed spouse as a joint holder of the shares. The dividend income would then be split 50:50, and if the unemployed spouse did not have investment income of more than the single person's tax allowance of £3,445 in 1992/93, he or she could claim a refund of the basic rate tax deducted from his or her share of the dividends. By leaving the shares in the name of the employed spouse only, such a reclaim would not be possible.

The tax bill on half the dividend income is therefore reduced from 25 per cent (for a basic rate tax employee) or 40 per cent (for a higher rate tax employee) to nil.

Example 2: A higher rate tax Manweb employee adds the name of his or her basic rate spouse as a joint holder of the shares. In this example the tax bill on half the dividend income would be reduced from 40 per cent to 25 per cent.

These tax advantages would continue beyond December 31 1993, but after that date when bonus shares have been issued, consideration should be given to transferring all the shares into one name to achieve the most tax advantageous position.

- Transfer by joint holders. For example, where two joint holders decide to transfer into the sole name of one of them, provided the transferee was the owner of the shares at the time of the original allocation.

Again, following the reverse of the examples above, a more advantageous position can be gained by effecting such a transfer.

To be eligible for any of the above four transfers without loss of entitlement to incentives, a special certificate should accompany the share transfer form. Both share transfer forms and the special certificate are available from Trevor Williams, Senior Secretarial Assistant, Room 4C20, Head Office.

Moving to a more modern way

THE move to regional customer accounts offices has provided Manweb with the opportunity to replace existing VDU equipment with more modern personal computers.

Head of Income and Accounting Bob McMahon recognised that these newer PCs have an advantage in that the screen display can be made more 'user friendly' — if not immediately, then certainly over a period of a few months.

The use of a 'mouse' and the opportunity to use several 'windows' on the same large screen would help make the move from the existing VDU style to a more modern way of working.

Having made the decision to move to PCs, Bob McMahon asked Information Services to recommend the best PC for the job.

The first thing we needed to do was to imagine what the new PCs would be doing in the next three years so that the machines chosen would be able to handle that work. It was apparent to the PC group within IS that the PCs often used for simple 'personal computing' would not be ideal for this work, and a different specification was defined.

The Data Centre took on the role of finding the best supplier to provide the PC.

Amongst the suppliers we asked to bid was Memorex, which has in the past been a supplier of mainframe disks, printers and VDUs to Manweb, providing good quality displays and keyboards popular with the staff. Memorex engineers already have a good working knowledge of Manweb and have provided a good level of service to us.

Memorex has now moved towards providing PCs, and was keen to gain the business from an established 'prestige' customer. It's strength in offering a good deal came from the fact that it was keen to be the most competitive on price, but could



Hi-tech agreement . . . Pictured signing the contract are (l-r) Ron Jones, Account Manager with MemorexTelex UK Ltd, Manweb's Head of Income and Accounting Bob McMahon and Data Centre Manager Peter Goulding.

By Mike Edwards Network Communications Manager

also supply support from the mainframe computer down to the PC itself. Many other PC suppliers lack this breadth of experience.

As such, Peter Goulding, Data Centre Manager, was able

to negotiate a deal which gave Manweb a good quality PC at a lower cost than many of the 'bargains' shown in PC magazines.

The PCs chosen for the job — a 4865 machine with 17 inch

monitor — is a machine which can also handle traditional personal computing.

If any section member has a defined business requirement for the use of a PC, they should contact their section manager who will be able to obtain details of this very attractive deal struck with MMX and, providing usual justification procedures are met, take full advantage of the special negotiated terms

NOTICE

OWSESTRY DISTRICT'S ANNUAL MEETING OF EMPLOYEES

To be held on Friday, October 9, 1992
at The Wynnstay, (Ascot Suite), Church Street, Oswestry. Commencing at 7.00 p.m.
Guest Speaker: Dr Peter Burke, Company Medical Adviser
Admission by ticket only.
Contact Miss C Garbett, Secretary, Maesbury Road, Oswestry

WHITE BLOB?

A MANWEB employee named 'David' sent Head of Public Relations Joy King the following letter and asked her to reply through 'Contact'.

We would not normally reproduce letters unless the sender gives his or her full name and address or work location (although names can be with-held on request), but "David" has made a number of points about Manweb's corporate identity, and Joy King has risen to the challenge.

Dear Madam,

I am a Manweb employee and have been so for several years. I recently received a leaflet in the post explaining our new advertising strategy. You know the one: "Manweb — make life easy, see the man"

I would simply like to say "Brilliant, Fantastic, Excellent."

It also says that an advertising agency, namely Still Price: Lintas helped to give Manweb this new "Human Face". However not to take anything away from yourselves, I think you have all done very well indeed — a good new slogan to last a good few years.

I had seen a couple of the new posters but the penny never dropped. Well it certainly has now together with my personal smile and approval. My wife also likes the idea of this campaign. Such a good idea should be used as often as possible. I was particularly impressed to read the part about advertising on T.V. A very good, sound idea.

But don't put the advert on the T.V. as often as the Lever Bros. soap powder adverts — I don't think people will get bored, but we will probably use up all our prof-

its!!! (Sorry, I couldn't resist that sarcastic comment). I am sure all our customers will love it. Well done all of you at P.R.

However, one sentence in one paragraph in the leaflet reminded me of something I was going to write to you about but never got round to. The sentence: "You will see 'The Man' on Manweb vehicles and on tee shirts we use in publicity events."

"Nothing wrong with this," you may think. Not at all — just a small part of a basically brilliant idea. But one question comes to mind (well, my mind anyway). The question is: How can such a well proven company such as Manweb come up with such a good idea and yet not many months before decide in their infinite wisdom to reduce what is probably our most powerful means of advertising to a boring white blob with just the name "Manweb" on it?

As you have probably guessed, I refer to our fairly large fleet of vans. Why have we stopped applying the orange and yellow stripe to new vehicles? For the want of trying I still haven't come up with any understandable reasons why this is so. IN FACT quite the opposite.



If you look at, say, a two year old van then I bet you can tell it's Manweb over 100 yards away. Now look at a new van. Even with good eyesight you would be hard pressed to tell it was Manweb even 30 yards away!! It can't be that the stripes are too expensive. They're sure to pay for themselves many times over by the customers they attract. The appearance and eye-catching ability of our vans probably reached its peak with the stripes. Better than the maroon or yellow vans of some 10 years ago and certainly better than the boring white blob of today. Come on — apply the stripes and be proud.

We're Manweb, not Joe Bloggs Electrical.

I am by no means saying that the no-stripe idea belongs to P.R. But I am sure that P.R. know whose idea it was. Whoever it is, please tell them that it isn't a clever idea.

I now return to my initial comment in this letter: Congratulations on coming up with the "See the Man" theme. Well done, it's very well thought of.

Regards,
David.

P.S. I dare you to answer my question and send your reply together with the WHOLE of this letter to CONTACT!!!

Head of Public Relations Joy King replies:

Dear David

Many thanks for your letter and its comments. I am actually having to reply to you through 'Contact' as you omitted to include your full name and address and I didn't want to miss the opportunity of replying to your questions. There are two reasons the orange and yellow stripes have disappeared from our vehicles. Firstly the stripes are no longer part of the logo. They will in time disappear completely from those few areas where they are still used. This was a deliberate decision, made to clean up the logo, make it look modern and get rid of what proved to be a very expensive addition to the logo as it made it, believe it or not, a four colour logo, which is costly to reproduce.

The second reason is that we knew we wanted some new advertising on our vehicles and we decided that the stripes would make anything we put on the sides of the vehicles look cluttered. Again it's the clean modern look that we are trying to achieve. We are therefore preparing the ground for the new slogans we will be putting on the side of vehicles and I hope that when you see those that you will understand why it was done and that you will feel it is a strong part of the same message being delivered by the rest of the advertising.

Thank you for your support. I hope it continues.

Yours sincerely
Joy E King
Head of Public Relations

HOW MANWEB PEOPLE PULLED TOGETHER FOR TELETHON APPEAL

'Backbone' brings £30,000

IT was enough to drive staff up the pole when the TV cameras rolled in Aberystwyth during the Telethon charity extravaganza.

Aberystwyth District was once again the 'backbone' for the 27-hour non-stop fund-raising event, held every two years, and helped raise £30,000 towards the appeal.

Chairman of the Aberystwyth and Mid Wales Telethon Committee is Manweb Energy Sales Account Manager Tomos Davies, who said: "Manweb was the main sponsor for the Telethon in Mid Wales — in fact, the event has become known as the Manweb Telethon!"

"It was an incredible weekend, far better than previous years, and everyone enjoyed themselves enormously.

"We're now turning our attention to the next Telethon in 1994 and, of course, we intend to make it the biggest and best yet."

Around 80 different events at Aberystwyth were televised, including interviews with District Manager John Brown and a number of other Manweb employees, including Tomos.

Dozens of volunteers, most of them Manweb staff, manned the telephones at the District Office to help accept cash pledges from the public.

Other employees took part in a variety of fund-raising stunts — and amongst the most spectacular was an up-the-pole event which brought in £1,600.

Linesmen Mike Hartnell, Ken Dewhurst, Aled Lewis and Graham Lewis spent the entire 27 Telethon hours — with occasional 'rest' breaks — having a bird's eye view of the proceedings below from a cradle at the top of an electricity pole.

Manweb's helicopter, normally used for overhead line patrols, also had a slice of the action when it whisked a pair of celebrities, actors Brian Murray and Kenneth Waller, who are better known as Shifty and Grandad in the popular TV series 'Bread', plus HTV presenter Eleanor Jones up to Aberystwyth from the Telethon centre at Cardiff.

The helicopter was also used by Daihatsu's free-fall parachute team, who dropped in from 5,000 feet above the Promenade.

Other money-spinning events included non-stop exercises by Aberystwyth Aerobics Team, a mountain climb and abseil by the Royal Welch Fusiliers, and a mouth-watering barbecue organised by the local Air Training Corps.

Longboat races planned for the Sunday morning had to be cancelled due to bad weather, but an impressive rescue display by a Sea King helicopter and the local inshore lifeboat went ahead as planned, and Aberystwyth Telethon '92 was brought to a spectacular close with a massive fireworks display.



Driven up the pole — Manweb's Linesmen get a bird's eye view of the Telethon events going on below. (Photo by Arvid Parry Jones).



Volunteers man the Telethon 'pledge lines' at Manweb's Aberystwyth District Office. (Photo by Arvid Parry Jones).

Welsh team boost appeal

MANWEB staff played a starring role when they helped boost the Telethon appeal in North Wales to the tune of more than £26,000.

Energy Sales Account Manager Chris Jones was a member of a four-strong Telethon committee set up to mastermind fund-raising events at Rhyl Sun Centre, one of four Telethon centres in Wales.

Amongst the biggest attractions was the death-defying antics of an escapologist and the Manweb pull-a-thon, when teams were challenged to tug a double decker bus across the sands. Manweb's side was eventually kicked into touch by a team representing Abergele Rugby Club!

Other crowd-pullers were a Police dog display, and the Centipede Challenge, when 560 people lined up 'conga style' on the beach in a bid to beat the world record. They did — by 66 people — but Telethon-goers in Swansea did even better.

Onlookers watched open-mouthed as a Manweb vehicle screeched to a halt on a Rhyl street and four villains whisked away a pedestrian. But the 'kidnap' was all in good fun and the victim was later released unharmed after members of the public paid a ransom.

There was also an auction of Norah Batty's tights — donated by 'Last of the Summer Wine' actress Kathy Staff.

Chris Jones and fellow Energy Marketing Account Manager Tony Owen manned a caravan selling Telethon merchandise, and were joined there by presenters from local radio station Marcher Sound.



Something shifty was going on at Rhyl when Bread stars Kenneth Waller (Grandad) and Brian Murray (Shifty) took part in the Telethon Trolley Race. Deputy Mayor of Rhyl, retired Manweb Foreman Eric Davies, is pictured with them at the starting line. (Picture by Bob Hewitt).

ON THE RIGHT LINES

A FUND-raising stunt went full steam ahead when Mid Cheshire District went 'loco' for charity.

Thirty-four staff and their friends represented Manweb in the Telethon 'train tug' challenge — a race against time to pull the 156-ton steam locomotive 'Duke of Gloucester' 150 yards down the line!

And they were clearly on the right track when their strong arm tactics brought in over £157 for the charity appeal.

Ten teams from various companies took part in the day-long event at the Railway Age Heritage Centre in Crewe.

Manweb fielded two sides — and the District's 'A' team, made up of 24 men and just one woman, had high hopes of steaming into the lead and winning a crate of beer.

The 'B' team included five women and three children, and according to District Manager Jeff Hunt, they were definitely regarded as the underdogs by the 'A' team!

"In fact, the lads were really quite chauvinistic about it," said Jeff, who led both teams.

"They didn't want any women in their side, and eventually made just one exception for Admin Officer Sarah Goff."

But it was the women and children who had the last laugh. Their team managed to pull the train in one minute and 16 seconds — just one second behind the men!

"To be fair, there weren't quite enough people to make up a full complement of 25 on the 'B' team, so some of the lads from the 'A' team agreed to give them a helping hand."

Providing some extra 'steam' from Head Office for both teams was Head of Regulation Mike Metcalfe and Retail Operations Manager Paul Sharkey.

Jeff said: "We were told that 25 people was a good number to have on the team, but that the train could actually be pulled by 12. Those 12 people would have to be built like the wrestler Giant Haystacks! The train was incredibly heavy.

"At the end of the pull everyone was on their hands and knees on the track puffing and panting!"

The 'A' team, which was the first to compete, set the pace and the one minute 15 second record held out for quite some time. But they more than met their match when a hefty team representing British Rail's Traction Maintenance Department at Crewe had runaway success, racing down the tracks in just one minute four seconds.

Manweb's 'A' and 'B' teams took 7th and 8th places respectively.



In training for the Telethon . . . Members of the 'B' team get up steam for the challenge ahead.



Heave ho! The 'A' team sets the pace for the Telethon train tug.



Full steam ahead for the 'B' team as they tow the locomotive into eighth place.

IN THE SHOPS

A CONTACT SPECIAL
REPORT ON PROGRESS
IN MANWEB SHOPS



ANOTHER FIRST FOR MANWEB

MANWEB has become the first regional electricity company to introduce National Vocational Qualifications as part of its development programme for shop staff.

The City and Guilds certificate in retailing is currently available at levels one and two, but Trading Division aims to extend this.

Certificates

Retail Operations Manager Paul Sharkey is pictured (2nd from left) presenting certificates to three of the first five staff to pass level one. They are (l-r) Donna Horton, of Bangor Shop, Gillian Jones, of Wrexham Shop, and David Hughes, formerly Wrexham but now Wallasey Shop.

The two other recipients not pictured are Bernie Jordan of Huyton Shop and Willow Williams of Wrexham Shop. All five will now continue to level two.

Fifty staff drawn mainly from new recruits to Manweb's shops are currently taking NVQs, and a further 50 have been nominated.

Retail Support Manager Roy Jones said: "Shop Managers have had to take the City and Guilds certificate to become Assessors for the staff taking NVQs.

"We are also looking at introducing levels three and four for our Assistant Managers and Managers.

"It is all part of our development programme covering everything that happens in the shops, including cash and stock control, health and safety, merchandising and display.

"NVQs have been introduced by many of the multiples, such as B&Q, Mothercare and Boots, and are now being promoted in schools. Eventually all our shop staff will be put through the course."

Commitment scores on skills training programme

MANWEB's shop staff are getting back to basics with a new style training programme aimed at sharpening up their retail skills.

Staff are being sent a series of 'Business Basics' questionnaires to test their knowledge on a range of subjects.

The programme has been put together by De Brus Marketing Services Ltd, who specialise in retail and manufacturing training, and will cover such topics as customer care, selling skills, credit care, energy efficiency and selling for profit.

"It is a different concept of teaching," said Retail Support Manager Roy Jones. "The programme will help us to discover any problem areas and enable us to identify the training needs of our staff."

The first 'module' covered Customer Care and there was an 83 per cent return of the questionnaires. Of those who took part, there was 88 per cent accuracy which, according to De Brus Marketing, is extremely high and shows commitment from staff.

The second questionnaire was titled 'Selling Skills 1', and the results are now due in. This is being followed up by 'Selling Skills 2'.

Staff taking part stand to gain the Certified Award for Retail Excellence (CARE) in

three grades — Credit (up to 65 per cent), Merit (65 to 80 per cent) and Distinction (over 80 per cent).

"Obviously those who choose not to participate will not receive an award," said Roy.

A 'MYSTERY' TO HELP CUSTOMERS

THERE's an air of mystery in Manweb's shops . . . and it's helping to keep the staff on their toes!

As part of the drive to provide a top quality service for customers, shop staff are constantly being tested under Trading Division's 'Mystery Shopper' scheme.

But they never know exactly who is doing the monitoring! And every customer who comes through the door or telephones might be the person keeping score!

Working on behalf of Manweb, London-based Business Efficiency Monitoring Ltd awards marks based on personnel, premises and product knowledge and every quarter a Top Shop emerges.

Past 'Top Shops' have been Garston, Barmouth and Nantwich (joint winners) and Warrington, and the prize has been a slap-up meal for the sales staff.

At the end of the first 12 months, Shotton Shop was awarded the title 'Shop of the Year' for

DRIVE'S ON TO RAISE STANDARDS

AS part of Trading's drive to improve standards and reduce the risk of poor customer service in Manweb's shops, the Division has entered into a Service Level Agreement with Power Marketing.

"The principle objective of the agreement is to establish performance standards for key services provided on behalf of Power Marketing in our shops," said Retail Operations Manager Paul Sharkey.

Performance levels will be monitored and reviewed by the two Divisions on a regular basis. These review meetings will make recommendations for changes and will agree an action plan to resolve any problems.

The standards of service to be provided by shops are specified in the agreement and cover the areas of accounts transactions, sale and exchange of meter cards, accounts-related enquiries, tariff-related enquiries, general customer service, energy efficiency and conservation-related enquiries, display of appliances and leaflets, and a commitment to joint promotions.

Paul Sharkey said: "In addition to specified areas, Retail Operations has agreed to the roll out of a quarterly mystery shopping survey of the standard of customer service found in our shops.

"The survey will provide both Divisions with comprehensive information which will include telephone enquiries, accounts



Director Power Marketing, Colin Leonard (left) and Director Trading Peter Hopkins sign the Service Level Agreement between the two divisions.

queries, energy matters knowledge, product knowledge and shop housekeeping.

"In carrying out this agreement, Managers will learn valuable lessons and will be able to clarify future requirements for systems, operating needs and training."

He added: "Trading and Power Marketing are totally committed to improving customer service in shops, and the emergency of this agreement is a positive step forward in focusing people's minds on the most important person in our business — THE CUSTOMER."

DAY TRIP

A TRIP to Blackpool is planned by Manweb's Chester and Head Office Retired Staff Association on September 29. The outing includes lunch at the Sandcastle Complex, a visit to an old time music hall and a detour to see the famous illuminations.

The next excursion, on October 21, will be a shopping trip to Bolton and a visit to Stockbridge Mill at Padiham.

Speakers at the Association's forthcoming meetings will be:
September 30 — Miss E Jackson: 'Speke Hall'.
October 28 — Mrs J Evans, Senior Dietitian at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

SADNESS

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

Vera Lewis, 70, who died on July 7, worked in Debt Recovery at Dee Valley before retiring in 1981.

Roy Stewart was Assistant Chief Commercial Officer at Head Office before retiring in 1978. He died on July 26 aged 76.

Rachel Hulme, who died on July 29 aged 82, was Assistant Leading Shorthand Typist at Liverpool before retiring in 1970.

David Trevor Jones, who retired in March last year from Oswestry, where he was a General Duties Assistant, died on August 8 aged 62.



Retail Support Manager Roy Jones (3rd from left) presents Shotton Shop staff with their 'Shop of the Year' trophies. They are (l-r) Pauline Roberts, Libby McClane, Manager Chris Jones, Barbara Bell and Joan Humphreys.

constantly achieving high standards.

Retail Support Manager Roy Jones said: "Since introducing this scheme there has been a vast

improvement in standards within our shops. We hope these improvements will continue, so that Manweb's shops provide the best possible customer service."

GO UP IN THE WORLD TO AID CHARITY

MANWEB staff can give a helping hand to Multiple Sclerosis sufferers through a new fund-raising initiative set up in the North West.

A small team of two or three people is required to complete in the Multiple Sclerosis North West Three Peaks Trek, organised as part of the scheme.

Extravaganza

The sponsored trek, scheduled for Sunday October 11, will consist of a three-fold extravaganza comprising the well known Yorkshire Dales peaks Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-ghent — a distance of 25 miles and an overall climb of 7,000 feet!

Teams have just one day to scale the three heights consecutively, with prizes awarded for both the fastest aggregate time, and the fastest individual.

All money, raised through the sponsorship from friends and colleagues, will be channelled into the Multiple Sclerosis Society's new Respite Care Centre in York. There, patients from the North of England and North Wales can spend a week or so, and experience various beneficial therapies.

Important

At the forefront of the initiative is Dobson Park Industries plc of Wigan. Chairman, Alan Kaye said: "There is an important role for organisations in the North West, in helping some of the 80,000 UK sufferers of Multiple Sclerosis. So far, about 20 companies are keen to submit teams for the Three Peaks Trek and with a bit of luck, it will become an annual event."

If you feel you have got what it takes to be first (or even last) over the horizon, or if you just wish to complete part of the circuit then please call Sue Linton, H.O. ext 2538, for details.

GARY'S GREAT PICTURE PRIZE



SOCCER STARS MAKE MANWEB TREBLE TOPS

MANWEB's First XI football team has scored a hat-trick of successes following a stunning season.

The squad (pictured) pulled off a brilliant treble by winning the Chester and District Premier Division, the Challenge Cup and the Tom Gerraghty Memorial Trophy.

"It's been a fantastic season," said Player Manager Brian Carman, Customer Liaison Manager at North Wirral District. "We've won cups before but never all three. The team really has done well."

Manweb's First XI hold the distinction of having been the first team from the electricity supply industry to have gone behind the iron curtain. Last year they played — and beat — teams from East and West Germany.

Over the years they have also been to Belgium, France and Holland to play power workers, and have hosted return matches. This year it is the turn of the Germans to visit Chester.

Brian said: "It is our aim to get into the West Cheshire League and another successful season might just do the trick!"

The team plays at Overleigh School in Chester and

trains at Blaenau High School on Thursday nights.

"Anyone interested is welcome to come down and see us," said Brian. "We're always on the lookout for Manweb players and we also need committee members."

Amongst the team's supporters is Manweb's Chief Executive John Roberts, who said: "To win the Premier Division alone would have been outstanding, but to add the Chester and District Challenge Cup and the Memorial Cup to bring off a brilliant treble was indeed a magnificent achievement."

"If Manweb plc can do as well as the First XI, we have no problems!"

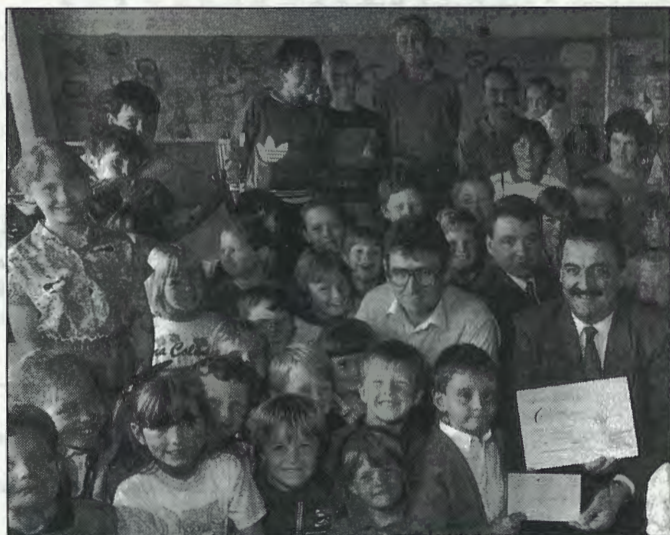
CLUB
CALL

MID Cheshire Sports and Social Club has set its sights on the great outdoors and plans to form a Caravan and Camping Club. District staff both past and present, along with employees from other Manweb locations, are invited to join the Club, which aims to stage a variety of social events including meetings and rallies.

Further information is available from Dave Sadler or Sharon Webb at Mid Cheshire District, int. ext. 2132.



The winners (l-r) Tim Roberts, Brian McDonald, Peter Newbrook, Colin Roberts, Gary Jaros, Pat Byrne, Trevor Coates, Mary Mulvihill, Paul Morrison, Julie Foy.



ANGLESEY schoolboy Gary Bolton is shown (centre left) receiving a Highly Commended award from Manweb Customer Service Manager David Grady for his entry in a picture competition to help children understand electricity.

Also pictured (behind David) is Manweb Education Officer Nigel Charlton.

Gary (7), from Ty Croes, attends Ysgol Pencarnisiog, and was joined by staff and pupils for the presentation. As well as the certificate he received a £20 prize in the national Understanding Electricity competition.

NOW ALL THE TALK'S ABOUT CARD METERS

THERE are several ways that Manweb customers can pay their electricity accounts. One is the card meter, which is specially for those who like to pay for electricity as they use it, writes Ken Smyth of Management Services.

The card meter combines the function of a certified credit meter and a value card reader. Originally, card readers were fitted in conjunction with a certified meter, but now certified card meters are available.

Card meters are replacing prepayment and thrift meters and can be used to collect unpaid bills at an agreed weekly amount.

When Ian Basford, Special



Catching 'em when young



MANWEB employees Harry Wyn Owen (right) and John Cowen made a real splash when they recently competed in their favourite sport — angling!

Harry Wyn of Caernarfon

and John of Aberystwyth came third in the recent Home International Fishing Competition, at Lough Melvin in Ireland. Other contesting countries included England, Ireland and Scotland.

Competition is not the only side to their sport. Both are involved in passing on their skills and knowledge to keen young fishermen, and when possible attend weekends to teach youngsters the art behind angling — even how to make your own flies!

Cueing for prizes

PICTURED left are just some of the winners and runners-up from the Lunchtime Snooker and Pool Knockouts, pocketing their trophies at the recent awards presentation at Manweb Head Office.

There to congratulate the players and hand over the prizes was Snooker Secretary, Pat Byrne.

Amongst the ten finalists were father and son team Peter and Mark Newbrook who battled through the seven month tournament to take the Snooker Doubles Final.

The results were as follows:
Mixed Pool Runners-up Brian McDonald and Julie Foy. Winners Paul Morrison and Mary Mulvihill.
Pool Doubles Runners-up Tim Roberts and Andy Kelsall. Winners Trevor Coates and Martin Jones.
Pool Singles Runner-up Dewi Jones. Winner Nigel Rowley.
Snooker Doubles Runners-up Colin Roberts and Adrian Hendry.
Winners Peter Newbrook and Mark Newbrook.
Snooker Singles Runner-up Gary Jaros. Winner Colin Roberts.

Projects Manager (Network Services) wanted to find a way to answer customers' most frequently asked questions, he asked Management Services to help.

Consultant Chris Kilfoyle worked with Special Projects to produce a friendly video, entitled 'Talk About Card Meters', featured BBC Radio Merseyside presenters Billy Butler and Wally Scott.

Karen Conner, Principal Assistant in Training, completes this easy-to-understand video by outlining the do's and don'ts associated with card meters.

Selected card meter customers on Merseyside have been shown the video and have found it very useful in understanding how this type of meter operates. The video is being shown continuously in selected Manweb shops and is available, if requested, in other shops.

It is expected that new card meter customers will also be shown the video in their own home whilst the meter is being fitted. This should help reduce the number of queries received in the Districts.

To back up the video, Ken Smyth of Management Services has produced a colourful leaflet that outlines the main points.

Other initiatives are planned, including a video currently in production and featuring TV personality Stuart Hall, which will be used for staff training purposes.

If you want to see the 'Talk About Card Meters' video, either ask at your local Manweb shop or contact your District or Regional Manager. Head Office staff can borrow a copy from Management Services.