

LIVEWIRE

Issue 15 Feb 98

UNISON Manweb Branch

The move to divisional bargaining at Manweb was brought in on the back of the narrow vote by staff in favour of last years pay deal. Hardly has the ink dried on the agreements for each new Business Council than a handful of mini Hitlers have decided to 'make their mark' by unleashing a wave of capability and disciplinary letters on overworked and stressed staff.

Staff under stress

Most of these managers don't appear to have even a nodding acquaintance with formal procedures and little concept of 'inspired leadership'. Staff in Metering have discovered that

UNISON AGM

THURSDAY 5TH

MARCH

From 6:00 p.m.

Plantation Inn,

Chester

Elections

Guest Speaker

Bar & Free buffet

BULLIES AT WORK



simple mistakes are now met with formal 'capability' letters. Staff in the Business Centre are being put under extreme stress by impossible targets and ridiculous deadlines. Mike Marron (Head of Fantasy land) believes a target to reduce debt to zero in a few months is realistic.

Health & Safety threat

This is nothing more than blatant bullying and intimidation and those managers who perpetuate this type of monstrous behaviour should be brought to

account. It does not serve the interest of staff or the company. It makes a mockery of long standing agreements and raises serious questions about the company's commitment to new Health and Safety rules which require all aspects of the working environment to be subjected to proper risk assessments and risk management - **including work tasks and targets.**

Unison will be to the forefront in the fight against bullying and will take all necessary steps to ensure the company does not breach existing agreements and commits itself to **reducing not increasing** stress in the workplace.

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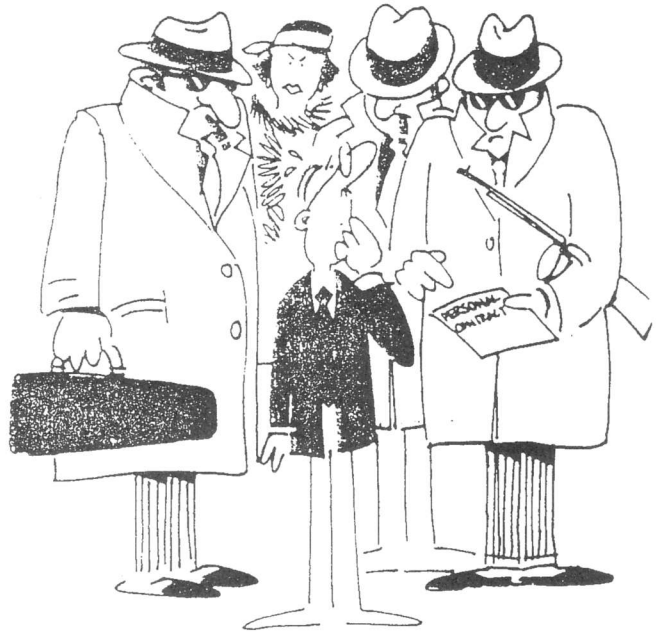
Its a Gas Sales Rep!

Recent media reports have indicated that the new age of gas competition has spawned a new menace upon the unsuspecting public akin to the advent of "won't take no for an answer" double glazing salesmen.

Representatives of more than a dozen companies have been out on doorsteps, their objective to encourage householders to sign new gas supply contracts.

Despite codes of conduct designed to protect the vulnerable there have been a number of disturbing cases of distress caused by hard selling reps. Such ploys as implying that British Gas is being replaced by the company that they represent or confusing customers about what they are actually signing. Some customers lead to believe they were signing for information, when they were actually signing contracts.

To those tempted by the offer of 'greener gas on the other side of the bank' we would say 'Beware and remember to always read the small print'



Any questions before you sign?

ISD - shogun wedding

All through 1997 IS Management held out a carrot to the demoralised staff of Information Services, by saying they were willing to negotiate a loyalty bonus on the likely increased workload caused by the YEAR 2000 computer problems.

Staff earn xmas bonus

Trade Unions have welcomed the Company announcement of bonus's for staff under collective bargaining who did emergency work over Christmas.

Those on personal contracts may be wondering how their efforts are to be recognised as they do not appear to have been included in the company's reward scheme on this occasion.

This offer was always clouded by the fact that they said, they couldn't start negotiations because the MJC agreement was still in effect but wait until we get Business Based Bargaining.

After the pay agreement in September was signed undue haste was shown, when a letter was sent to the UNISON full-time officer in Scotland asking for a meeting to discuss the move to a new set of Terms + Conditions for ALL IS staff (Manweb & Scotland). A protest was duly sent by the UNISON full-time official for Manweb to the company which resulted in an apology from the IS management. The Manweb Business Council for ISD was then set up albeit later than the 31st October deadline.

At the first meeting of the Business council the bonus issue was discussed but the

management strongly suggested that there was no likelihood of any moneys being made available. This was in stark contrast to a meeting of selected staff (namely MSP project) held later that day, when it was suggested that Personal Contracts would be offered (or imposed ?), to those who may be considering leaving the company.

This offer was then amended a week later, to include all IS staff unless we negotiate combined Terms & Conditions for Manweb and Scotland by the end of March. Reluctantly IS staff agreed to proceed with these negotiations.

WHY ARE ISD MANAGEMENT SO INTENT ON BY-PASSING THE AGREED PROCESSES OF NEGOTIATIONS ?

Howell Watson (ISD Rep)

Sealand Road debacle

Two years after Scottish Power announced its big plan to close Manweb Head Office there are still nearly 200 staff and contractors there and the prospective buyer is neck deep in legal wrangles over its plans for the site.

Meanwhile former Head Office staff now spend half their time travelling between sites for meetings with each other which wastes time and petrol.

End result - zero out of ten for efficiency and full marks for increased pollution !!

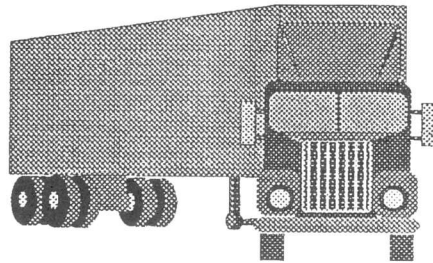
Saturday working talks near end

Three years after Manweb shops were sold to Scottish Power the Shops Agreement has almost ended.

Unison are close to agreeing a deal which would mean CSC staff receiving a fee if they work more than 1 in 4 Saturdays.

Young at Heart?

Unison has launched a Youth Forum to encourage young people to join and become active in the union. Bedevilled by low pay, short term contracts and lack of training, young workers need to become organised to have a voice.



Wage delivery for Mr. Kinski ?

...the grapevine

Movers & Shakers...

The sudden departure of 'Killer Kinski' (as he has become affectionately known) has led to speculation that his appetite for 'staff savings' was moving too close to Glasgow.

But hold it What luck, his part time seat on the board of Stagecoach has led to a more permanent job. With 2,000 job cuts under his belt as Manweb & Southern Water, staff at Stagecoach should prepare for a showdown.

...& fat controllers!

And just in case he needs some pocket money rumours suggest a package worth £360,000 per year has been struck. Phew! For a minute there we almost had to have a whip round!!

ITS YOUR AGM

Once a year the branch holds its Annual General Meeting and it is important you are there. The AGM is the time of year when you elect the people who will represent you in the forthcoming year; the people who will negotiate your future pay and conditions and represent you on Health and Safety matters.

All these are issues which must be important to you in your daily working life. For the AGM to be effective it is essential that enough members are there so that the AGM is

quorate. It also shows the company that you care about how you are treated at work. Issues over the next year are likely to include Flexitime, business based bargaining, annexing of individual sections

Contacts

Warrington	Shirley Vickery
Wrexham	Hilary Jeffries
Prenton	Geoff Littler
Liverpool	Andy Cribbin
Manweb House	Pat Lewis
High Street	Anne Lysaght
Sealand Road	Sarah Jones
Business Centre	Linda Evans
Queensferry	Howell Watson

out of the company agreement (as in Metering last year). For those attending the AGM the union will pay your travel and childminding expenses. If you need help with transport it may be possible to arrange a lift for you or a minibus or coach if numbers are large enough. Below is a list of local contacts if you wish to find out more.

So book the baby sitter, arrange your transport and make your voice heard on 5th March 1998.

**Remember,
YOU ARE THE UNION.**

Anne Lysaght (High St. rep)

Your chance to win a holiday for two in the Caribbean....

...No, but please read on because it is a story about competition and unfortunately this is not a fairy tale with a 'happy ever after' ending.

One day, the wicked Electric King decided that it was a very bad thing that there was no competition so he called his court together and announced that there would be an Electric Competition and all the Giant Users would be able to choose who they bought their Electrickery from and this would be a good thing. All the court cheered and shouted 'Hurrah for competition'.

But not everybody in Electricland was happy. There were some Little Users and they wanted some choice too so the Electric King scratched his beard and said 'There will be another competition for the Little Users and once the Giant Users Competition is running smoothly this one can commence'. There was great rejoicing at this news and everybody looked forward to saving lots of money.

However there was a long list of Competition Rules and as the closing date loomed closer and closer it became clear that it would be very difficult to enter the competition. Finally the deadline was moved as the promises that the Great Suppliers made couldn't be kept for the Competition turned out to be much more complicated than anyone had ever imagined.

Now in Electricland there were some very greedy Electrickers and they decided that they could make lots of money by offering cheaper Electrickery to other peoples customers - but how could they make it cheaper? This was a very difficult question and puzzled them greatly. Then one day a very devious Electricker came

up with a cunning plan. He suggested that the way to save money would be to cut all the wages of the Electrickometer staff below the accepted minimum wage and reduce the terms and conditions they currently enjoyed and give the higher paid ones a big bag of money to leave and then they would be able to make lots of money for themselves.

This they thought was a brilliant idea and so they decided to do it, even if the staff weren't happy about it. Everybody got to hear about this wonderful idea for cost savings and wanted to buy their Electrickery from the Electrickers because they were the cheapest people to buy from.

Now there were a group of people who were in the Trade Union Club and they told their friends in the Club that they were not at all happy about losing their jobs or being paid less or working longer hours. The Bigwigs in the club said how sorry they were, but wasn't this Competition and 'good idea' and wouldn't it be nice if all the members of the Club were able to benefit from cheaper Electrickery?

So the Trade Union Club made an agreement with the Electrickers to provide cheap Electrickery and all the poor workers lived unhappily ever after and all the greedy people made lots of money

READERS PLEASE NOTE
Any similarity between Electricland and Manweb / Scottish Power / TUC is purely coincidental

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Name..... Employee Number.....

Location..... SIGNED..... Date.....

(Please detach and send to UNISON, Shotton by Internal Mail or return to your steward)