

# IN BRIEF

Lanes  
for Drains Ltd

THE NEWSLETTER OF LANES FOR DRAINS LTD  
ISSUE 2 : SPRING '05



**Graham Tattersall**

We're pleased to report that the first issue of In Brief was so well received we've had plenty of requests from both our staff and customers for the next issue. So, here it is.

And, we've plenty of exciting news to report: about new contracts and customers, about our own expansion and services, and about the people who make Lanes the successful and dynamic company that it is today.

Two of our depots - Preston and East Midlands - are moving into new and bigger, purpose-built premises, whilst Tyne and Wear is in temporary accommodation and currently on the lookout for a suitable new

## Onwards and upwards!

home. Also on the North East region: Eddie Roughley, who has done a sterling job managing the whole of our operation there, is finally able to hand over the Middlesbrough office reins to new manager Dave Hartley, and go back to concentrating on his own depot at Chester-le-Street.

In Scotland, we've established an office in Alloa to service Scottish Water Solutions for whom we're contracted to carry out 376 km of sewer rehabilitation and renovation over the next 4 years.

On top of that, we now also have Castlebrae Drainage in Glasgow, an extension of the LFD group and still headed by Tommy Easton. And we intend to extend our coverage to Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee soon, so watch this space.

Don't forget to let us know what you think of In Brief – good or bad – we'd like to hear your comments.

See you in issue 3!  
**Graham Tattersall**

## All aboard



**Lanes Rocky Arnold gets to work**

Lanes Engineering and Construction Limited is a major maintenance contractor on the London Underground and has direct contracts with both Tube Lines and Metronet Rail.

The contracts were originally awarded back in 2000, each for a three-year term, but have proved so successful that they have been extended for two further years.

A recent Lanes' project was considered newsworthy enough to be featured in 'Platform', the Tube Lines' in-house magazine, as an example of ground-breaking 'round-the-clock' station works which proved that completion times could be reduced massively.

Back in September, Tube Lines embarked on a pilot ambience improvement project at Leicester Square underground station. Lanes carried out all the work including repainting, replastering, relamping and refurbishment of doors and handrails which would, under previous arrangements, have taken four months. This project took just four weeks thanks to a new scheme which allows work to be completed outside the old 'engineering hours'.

That used to mean all maintenance work was done only between 1am and 5am – in reality about 2.5 hours' working time once tools had been set up and taken down afterwards. The new scheme allows working round the clock, but avoids the morning and evening rush hours, and it's proved to be a winner.

Kevin Harcombe of Tube Lines says that the new system will save the company money and time, explaining "By working most of the day, we've cut job times by 90 per cent. It also allows us to improve our performance. We can do more deep cleaning and accelerate things like escalator and lift maintenance - all at a fraction of the time it took before. Now that's massive!"

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# Lanes tackles Snowdon



## Lowering the waste treatment plant into position

It was nothing to do with climbing mountains though! This Snowdon challenge took 7 weeks and involved installing a new waste management system at the Snowdon Ranger Youth Hostel.

The hostel is a popular one, situated in Betws Garmon at the foot of the Welsh mountain in the heart of the National Park. It's perfectly placed for the many tourists who explore North Wales every year, so when it became clear that the old septic

tank system was coming to the end of its life, a solution had to be found quickly.

Graham Gartland from the YHA called in the combined services of Kee Process and Lanes for Drains to carry out the tricky task. Kee Process as the main project contractor, provided the NuDisc 1600 Sewerage Treatment Plant whilst we did all the preparation, installation and reinstatement of the site afterwards.

Allan Fellows of Lanes' Chester branch describes the difficulties facing the team: "Although the site was only 25 metres from the road, a substantial drop from the surface meant that only the crane could be brought in that way. Everything else – including a 20-ton excavator – had to be brought in across the National Park over a car park and through 100-metres of marshland. We had to build a road across the marsh, digging out 500 tonnes of wet earth and putting down 400 tonnes of stone," says Allan, adding "The ground

conditions were quite difficult too – clay with a jelly-like texture – so we had to lay 54-cubic metres of concrete to a thickness of 600mm as a base for the plant which would normally only require a platform of 225mm depth."

Another significant consideration was the sensitive location: the whole area is part of the National Park, and the site for the treatment plant was just 200-metres from a fresh water lake providing local drinking water which had to be protected. To cope with that we constructed a soakaway – filled with another 350 tonnes of stone, latticed with pipework and lined and covered with permeable terram – some 20 metres away from the plant.

Finally, the whole site was finished re-using the excavated marshland and materials dug out during the project – 1800 tonnes of earth in total – all of which was dried out first. As a finishing touch, a screen of mountain ash trees has been planted around the final structure.

# A 'newt' challenge



**The Lanes crew in action during the clean up**

We may be best known as the UK's largest independent drainage specialist, but sometimes we are called on to help out with more unusual projects.

This time it was to save the Great Crested Newt – a species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitat Regulations Act of 1994 – from an environmental disaster.

Lanes was brought in by environmental firm Ecologia which gives specialised support to insurance companies dealing with such incidents.

Tom Hayes, Ecologia's operations manager, summarises the problem: "5000 litres of domestic heating oil had leaked and contaminated a pond 250 metres away in an area designated as a habitat of the great crested newt."

"First we commissioned a survey to check for the presence of newts and, although there were none in the pond, there was evidence of them in the vicinity," says Tom. "The great crested newt spends much of

the year on land, but towards the end of winter adult newts return to their breeding pond and lay eggs on underwater leaves near the edge. It takes four weeks for the eggs to hatch as tadpoles and a further three months to develop into young newts capable of leaving the water."

The clean-up operation had to ensure that no newts or eggs were harmed, or damage

caused to the habitat – itself a criminal offence.

Avoiding the breeding season and waiting for the special licence from DEFRA to carry out the work gave experts time to plan for the logistics of the project.

The site was some 150 metres from the road through woodland and undergrowth giving difficult and limited access, so Lanes arranged to bring in additional high specification specialist equipment.

For instance, since there was no convenient water supply, a high volume pump unit was used to carry water from a lake – across country for 350-metres and up a 10-metre lift – to loosen the sediment in the pond.

Meanwhile, from the roadside, a Kaiser tanker provided high-pressure water jets to cut away the solidified matter, whilst a massively powerful 'DISAB' vacuum, also positioned on the road, suctioned out the contaminated material and carried it back up the 15-metre lift along 150-metres of pipe to the waste unit.

Lanes also spent two full days preparing the site before the decontamination process began. Regional manager Nigel Ward explains: "We took down fences and cut back huge amounts of undergrowth to open up the access. We also carved steps into the mud banks and set up hand rails and supports for safety."

It was certainly no easy task, but the work was completed within the allotted week and Tom and Ecologia are pleased with the success of the operation.

"We had worked with Lanes on a number of other projects, so knew its capabilities," he says. "But we were especially impressed with the way the Lanes' team communicated with us throughout this project. Nigel came down to the site straightaway and was very keen, very enthusiastic. After that he kept in touch regularly and our two companies really worked closely to solve the problem."

With work now completed and the pond decontaminated, everyone is happy – including – we hope – the great crested newts!

# On the high seas

Our sewer renovation crews can be called to anywhere in the UK, so they're quite used to travelling a fair distance to work.

This project is a little different though because the 'work' is in Lerwick, the main hub of the Shetland Islands, and it's 12-hours by ferry from Aberdeen!

As we go to press, a substantial Lanes' contingent is en route for Lerwick to carry out renovation work on 5km of sewers in Lerwick town centre as part of our contract with Scottish Water Solutions. Needless to say, there's a huge amount of kit to be got from A to B – or in this case, more like A to Z! – and it's all going by boat.

Speaking from Lerwick where he is preparing for the 1 February start, Jon Close, contract manager, explains: "The equipment is being packed into three freight containers specially kitted out for the trip. We will have our own crews, boilers and a fully functioning wet out plant so the logistics have been quite a challenge!"

"I just hope the crews bring their sea legs with them," says Jon. "A tanker crew came over to do some pre-cleaning and they looked pretty green when they stepped off the ferry!"

The Lerwick project is scheduled to finish by Easter.



Ready to disembark in Lerwick

## Shetland Islands Fact File

<b>latitude</b>	60° north	<b>population</b>	21,988 (2001 Census)
<b>longitude</b>	1° west	<b>length of coastline</b>	1,450km
<b>distances</b>	360km Bergen 228km Aberdeen 957km London 1,123km Reykjavik	<b>highest peak</b>	Ronas Hill (450m)
<b>area</b>	1,468 sq km	<b>most sheer cliff</b>	The Kame, Foula (372m)
<b>no of islands</b>	100+ : 15 uninhabited	<b>highest mean temp</b>	15° c (July and August)
		<b>all time UK record</b>	1.1.92 194mph wind

# Lanes looks to environment



John Glover (rt) gets his well earned diploma

Lanes' health and safety manager John Glover was awarded a Diploma in Environmental Management by the British

Safety Council at a ceremony at The Tower of London in December. He graduated after studying on the three-month course in York.

"Afterwards, the tutor admitted that it was the equivalent of the first two years of a degree course," explains John "Now I know why it was so tough!"

The course was very intensive. "We had to attend block sessions in a classroom environment, with assignments and extra work to complete in between," says John, adding "And of course I was still wearing my usual Lanes' health and safety hat too, so it was no mean feat, even if I say so myself!"

He obviously worked hard and now has a well deserved diploma under his belt, but what does it mean to Lanes for Drains?

"I have a greater, in-depth knowledge of environmental management which I can convert into good, sound working practices to reduce the environmental impact of our business. I'll also be developing and implementing new systems and procedures with the aim, ultimately, of attaining ISO 14001 standards across the group. Because we believe, as a company, that it's absolutely the right thing to do."

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## Keeping up with the law..



**Barbara and Steve check the small print**

With over 500 directly employed staff now at the Lanes' Group, it can be tricky making sure all the managers out in the field are kept completely up to date with new requirements - like the changes to the Employment Act 2002 which were introduced on 1 October 2004.

## Christmas bonus....

Last September, Lanes Engineering & Construction was awarded a 5-year contract by Tube Lines for Winter Working Activities. This involves de-icing track and station areas when necessary, to keep the service operational - and to save the clients enormous penalty payments.

At Christmas our boys on the front line were put to the test by the arctic conditions but, we're happy to report, obviously impressed the client!

That's why we called in ACAS. Steve Lee of Acas Yorkshire and Humber answered Lanes' "call out" by designing a tailored series of intensive training sessions for managers on basic employment law and anti-discrimination. Barbara Tattersall, Lanes' group personnel manager, was more than pleased with the result: "Steve Lee carefully considered our needs and put together a programme that was spot

on - good humoured and not too formal. It really worked for us."

Barbara adds: "On a similar theme, we are obliged to inform our employees about the new Dispute Resolution/Disciplinary & Grievance legislation which came in on 1/10/04, so we are including a detailed explanation on the company's intranet site which staff members can download for information.

Peter Radley, duty operational engineer of Tube Lines, writes: "I would like to thank Lanes for their response to the adverse weather warning issued on Christmas day. A number of staff put themselves out to assist our de-icing plans and supplied five teams to respond to incidents as requested. This contract is certainly a benefit to Tube Lines whilst the adverse weather season is upon us."

Well done to all those involved!

## Lanes puts employees' safety first

At Lanes we're big on health and safety. So, whenever we can do anything extra to look after our employees, we make sure we do just that.

That's why we've issued a special directory to all our regional offices which makes it easy for everyone to order all the safety equipment and clothing they need to ensure they get maximum protection whilst they're at work.

Our supplier, Suresafe, offers everything from waterproofs to hi-vis, from fleeces to hard hats, from coveralls to boots and gloves - and, where appropriate the clothing carries the Lanes' logo.



**Safety gear is a top priority**

# The darlings of Darlington?



**Lanes to the rescue at Lingfield House**

Well, that might be stretching it a bit, but certainly when a tenant reported a nasty niff coming from the drains at Lingfield Point near Darlington, it was Lanes who sorted out the problem, and Lanes who got a big thumbs up from the landlord and property

management company, Lingfield Investments.

Lingfield Point is an impressive site. Steeped in industrial heritage, it was originally built in 1950s by Patons & Baldwin and is being transformed into a prestigious business park by Lingfield

Investments. The showpiece, Lingfield House, is a lovingly-restored art deco building and the home of business support services giant Capita Group plc, with over 600 workers handling contracts for a host of high profile clients. So it's easy to see what kind of business disruption could have been caused if drains had made the

workspace unusable. Fortunately, prompt action by Lanes meant this wasn't the case. A van pack unit was despatched and relieved a blockage caused by lumps of grout, whilst a CCTV team found evidence of more grout within the lines. A Lanes' jet vac unit and high pressure cutting machine made short work of the blockage, and for peace of mind the camera crew has returned 3-monthly to reassure Capita and Lingfield that there is no danger of a repeat performance.

Eddie Humphries, Lingfield's estate manager, wrote to thank us for our 'prompt and effective' action, saying "Your co-operation in providing a clearance team and CCTV inspection facility at extremely short notice was greatly appreciated and went a long way in assuring the tenant that everything that could be done, was being done."

Thanks Eddie! It's nice to know that we're appreciated!

## John's on the right track

We've always said that one of the reasons for our success is the dedication of our staff, but even we were amazed when we heard that one of our engineers travelled by public transport to a job!

John Painter from our West Mids depot was on the way to a blocked drain call in Milton Keynes when his van broke down. Mercedes roadside assistance took the vehicle to a garage for repair and John had to be content with booking into a B&B for the night. In the morning, he jumped in a taxi to the garage to be told that the van wouldn't be ready until 17.00 hrs.

When the depot confirmed that it would be another 3-4 hours before a replacement Lanes' engineer could get there, John took matters into his own hands. He threw his tools and drain rods over his shoulder - and went by train!

John said: "I would have been hanging around all day otherwise, and realised that if I could get to the job it would be quicker for the customer than waiting for another engineer. I was happy to do it - though I'm not sure the other passengers were impressed at sharing their carriage with my drain rods!"

Luckily, John was able to fix the problem at the Revolution Bar in the Escape Centre on the spot. But, with all his paperwork still in the van, had to go back there to get sign off when the van was finally back on the road.

Regional manager, Dave Green, says "I think perhaps Mercedes Roadside Assistance could learn a thing or two about service from us! John finally arrived back at the depot at 21.00 hrs that night.



**John: above and beyond the call of duty!**

What he did was definitely 'above and beyond the call' - even for a dedicated Lanes' engineer!" adding "So we have acknowledged his dedication with a small bonus!"

And well deserved too!

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