WEAR CHECK® AFRICA
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MONITOR

ISSUE 17

Wearcheck's growth strategy gains impetus

NEW PREMISES, new staff, new products, new markets - the past six months has been a chapter of change and exciting new developments for Wearcheck - and this trend is set to continue well into 1997.

'Our planned growth phase is progressing to plan,' says managing director Wally Crawford. 'We have increased our sales and customer support staff and have additional technical, diagnostic and administrative staff in place to cope with increased sample volumes.'

Many Gauteng customers will have seen Wearcheck's customised new offices in Croydon. The photographs in this issue of Monitor will give those who haven't, an impression of this modern office park environment with its fresh, spacious interior design.

All customers will soon notice Wearcheck's new-look stationery which has been re-created by a leading design studio in keeping with the company's resolve to employ the latest technology in all facets of its operation.

Wearcheck's new office building in Croydon, Johannesburg was completed at the end of last year.

The stylish reception area at the new Croydon offices.

24-hour drop-off point in Jo'burg

ONE OF THE features of the new Johannesburg office is a 24-hour drop-off point for samples. Customer samples deposited in the box before 3pm will travel in Wearcheck's overnight bag which reaches the Pinetown laboratory the next morning.

Time-saving

This time and cost-saving option saves customers sending samples via post or courier and is accessible around the clock.

Strategic Partnerships

Wearcheck positions itself for the new millennium

TIMES ARE changing and business is changing. Lance Mansfield, Wearcheck's national sales manager outlines the direction the company will be taking to meet the challenges of the next decade.

SOUTH AFRICA today is not what it was 15 years ago. There is talk of hyper-competition and re-engineering. Advances in information, manufacturing and technology are accelerating so quickly that many processes, products and services have lives of three months or less before becoming obsolete.

Synergy

Wearcheck has adopted a philosophy of dynamic strategic interaction to meet the challenges of the new millennium. This means combining the maintenance strategies and techniques evolved by our customers with our own advanced technology, skills and experience ... and using this synergy to achieve greater all-round returns.

Key factors in maintaining Wearcheck's position as South Africa's leading oil analysis company are:

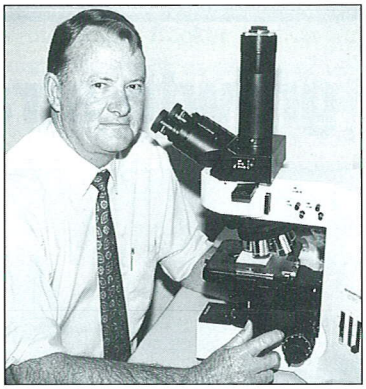
- Innovation skills, developed over the years by building our people skills around our core competency - oil analysis. The wealth of knowledge and expertise possessed by Wearcheck's laboratory and diagnostics teams is unparalleled in this country. This is one of our core strengths and we will build on this.
- Customer knowledge. Getting closer to our customers is vital to enable us to help improve clients' profits, efficiency and productivity. Our new expanded customer service and support team has been assembled for this purpose.
- Market penetration. The techniques Wearcheck employs are vital in many industries and will be marketed as such through our sales staff, our publications and the technical media.
- Flexible skills. We plan to introduce new products and services to satisfy the changing needs of a diverse customer base.

Quality staff

Clear-sighted management and the quality of Wearcheck's staff allows us to operate with flexibility. Our sales, customer services and technical support staff work in teams to afford them more control and responsibility and the ability to deal with customers' problems more effectively.

Wearcheck looks forward to the future with confidence, with its sights firmly set on providing customers with a world class service and making a positive impact on many different industries in a changing South Africa.

Ferrography (RPD) test pinpoints axle bearing failure, saves thousands



Wearcheck technical director Gary Brown conducts an RPD (ferrograph) examination of wear particles using a compound microscope.

WHEN OIL SAMPLES from the front axle of an MCC Plant Hire dump truck - one of a fleet of 210 prime movers working mainly on opencast mines on the Reef - showed abnormal wear, the company was faced with a difficult decision.

Says MCC technical director Nick Claassen, 'We had been receiving reports of high wear on axles on a number of our dump trucks. On this particular Bell B40A, samples from three points on the front axle taken at 6522 hours [1] all showed levels of bearing element wear (chrome and nickel), which were significantly higher than samples from the other two axles.

'We had checked the preloads on this dump truck at 6162 hours. We had also stripped another unit with similar readings fairly recently and found no problem. So, whilst we were reluctant to take the machine out of action, we weren't ready to take the risk of leaving the problem and waiting to see if it deteriorated.

'These were also the first samples we had ever sent to Wearcheck from this unit so we could not trend the results against previous samples. We needed to pinpoint the problem as accurately as possible so decided that the best alternative was to commission a Wearcheck RPD test .'

The RPD test, which provides an in-depth ferrographic analysis, revealed severe bearing and gear wear with slight evidence of sliding and chunky wear. Wearcheck's recommendation was to dismantle and inspect the front axle.

MCC waited a week until it was convenient to take the dump truck off site. They then decided to strip the differential first as the preloads of both final drives had been recently checked. Minor wear was evident here and a few small parts were replaced but Wearcheck was convinced that this was not the cause of the high sample readings and that it would be necessary to open the final drives. On doing so, they found the wheel bearings on the right final drive were close to failure, with bearing deterioration on the left final drive even worse.

R25 000 saved

Nick Claassen believes that the RPD test prevented the company from having to fit a complete final drive PEX unit in the truck, saving them about R 25 000 and the hassle of unscheduled downtime.

This was the first time that MCC had commissioned an RPD test in the year that the company has been using Wearcheck but these results have convinced them that,

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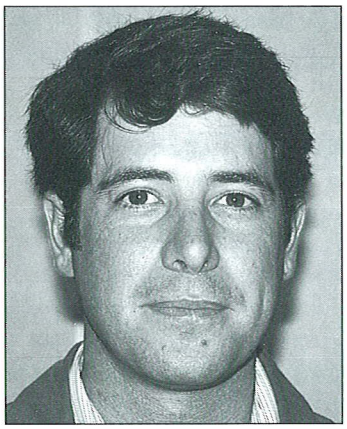
[1] The actual life to date on this machine was 12 000 hours.

NEW FACES

WEARCHECK's phased expansion continues to ensure that customer service levels are maintained as greater volumes of samples are processed. This article introduces you to the newest members of the team.

Broadening the diagnostics base

Swelling the ranks of the Wearcheck diagnostics team are mechanical engineers James Higgs, Michelle Gregory and Ashley Mayer who are all completing a six-month on-the-job training period to ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with the company's complex diagnostics procedures.



James Higgs, diagnostician

James Higgs

James Higgs obtained his B.Sc in mechanical engineering from the University of Cape Town, completing a thesis on the comparison of numerical methods of heat transfer for his degree.

He brings to Wearcheck three years of experience with Republican Press where, as assistant chief engineer, he was responsible for all machinery used by the company. This involved troubleshooting and maintaining equipment in peak operating condition, installing new machinery and managing a variety of related projects.

'Although oil analysis is not new on the market, it certainly is the 'happening' field at the moment, particularly as regards new techniques and advanced technology,' says James. 'It is exciting to be part of a field which is changing so rapidly both at Wearcheck and internationally.'

James enjoys sailing, reading, travelling and 'playing around on computers' in his leisure hours.

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should the need arise, they will use it again.

'The RPD test has shown management how effective it can be in pinpointing problems, and that oil analysis really does work,' said Mr Claassen.

'Since we switched all of our oil analysis work to Wearcheck last year to standardise our data base of samples, oil analysis is becoming increasingly integrated into our preventive maintenance programme.'

'We find that it helps us troubleshoot and identify problem areas early in the life of a machine, enabling us to make repairs early and extending component life. The Wearcheck programme is also a valuable maintenance management aid.'

Michelle Gregory

Michelle Gregory completed her B.Sc in mechanical engineering at the University of Natal, Durban last year.

Her post at Wearcheck is her first full-time position, although her previous work experience includes a temporary post with Acrylic Products (AECI) at Umbogintwini, where she was involved in the design and commissioning of their new R30 million plant.

Selecting oil analysis because it was an 'interesting career opportunity', Michelle is not phased by being the only female in the previously all-male diagnostics team.

'I am thoroughly enjoying my job, particularly being exposed to the advanced laboratory technology and gaining valuable experience working with the other diagnosticians,' she says.

Michelle knows all about team work - she is an avid hockey player, both indoor and outdoor - and enjoys social tennis, camping and spending time outdoors.

Michelle Gregory, diagnostician

Ashley Mayer

Ashley Mayer, who joined Wearcheck in November last year, graduated from the University of Natal in 1993 with a B.Sc in mechanical engineering.

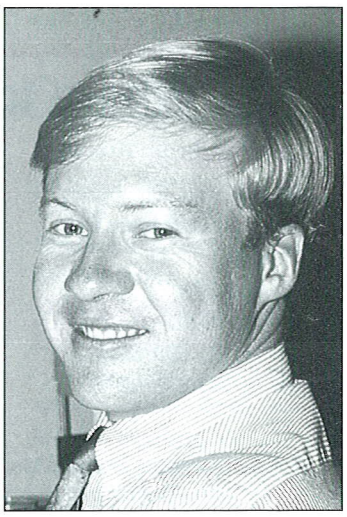
He made full use of his student years, serving on the board of the Faculty of Engineering for a year, acting as president of the Students' Engineering Council and tutoring second-year engineering students.

On graduating, he joined Chempute Equipment in Durban where he was involved in the design, assembly and commissioning of sophisticated plant and equipment ranging from hydrocyclone test rigs and centrifugal pump benches to fluidised beds and reactors.

Says Ashley, 'I am looking forward to completing my training and getting to grips with interpreting oil samples, liaising with customers and providing efficient and accurate diagnostic feedback.'

'I would also like to get involved in developing the industrial programme focusing on preventive maintenance for big industries such as sugar and paper mills.'

When taking a break from the lab, Ashley chooses to read or use his navigational skills exploring the waters of Midmar Dam on his catamaran.



Ashley Mayer, diagnostician

Wearcheck Technical Training Courses April - June 1997

Date	Course	Venue
8/9 May	4	Pinetown
13 May	2	Johannesburg
14 May	3	Johannesburg
15/16 May	4	Johannesburg
20 May	2	Nelspruit
21 May	3	Nelspruit
22/23 May	4	Nelspruit
3 June	2	Pinetown
4 June	3	Pinetown
5/6 June	4	Pinetown
10 June	2	Kuruman
11 June	3	Kuruman
12/13 June	4	Kuruman
17 June	2	Johannesburg
18 June	3	Johannesburg
19/20 June	4	Johannesburg

Course 1: *A practical introduction to oil analysis* (8h30 - 12h30). By arrangement. Cost: R120 (Wearcheck customers), R165 (others).

Course 2 : *The applications of oil analysis and an introduction to troubleshooting* (8h30 - 16h30). Cost: R395 (Wearcheck customers), R550 (others).

Course 3 : *Troubleshooting series* (8h30 - 16h30). Cost: R395 (Wearcheck customers), R550 (others).

Course 4 : *The technical management of oil analysis and lubrication* (Day 1: 8h30 - 16h30, Day 2: 8h30 - 12h30). Cost: R760 (Wearcheck customers), R990 (others).

All prices include VAT.

For bookings phone Melanie Hynd on (031) 700-5460.

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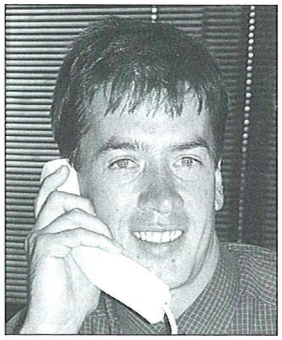
Enhancing customer support

TWO NEW sales specialists have joined the customer support division - Jan Backer in Gauteng and Glenn Harris who will be based in Pinetown.

Condition monitoring specialist **Jan Backer** sees his role at Wearcheck as providing customers with vital back-up support and advice and helping them to get optimum returns on their oil analysis programme.



Jan has eight years of working experience in the industry, having spent two years as vibration/infra red services manager at Engineering Dynamics, one year as a condition monitoring engineer at CMS International and five years as a senior technician for Iscor.

He holds a national diploma in mechanical engineering from Technikon Pretoria, has presented several papers at condition monitoring conferences, and has lectured post-graduate mechanical engineering students at the University of Pretoria on the application of the technique of infra red analysis.

Since starting at Wearcheck in January, Jan has already begun travelling to customers' premises to provide them with on-site technical support.

'I will also source new customers who could benefit from Wearcheck's informative oil analysis service, using it either to supplement an existing condition monitoring programme or to replace an out-dated one,' says Jan.

Aside from spending time with his family, Jan's passion in life is designing and building radio-controlled aircraft, some as large as 16 foot in length.

* * * *

THE CREATION of a Pinetown-based sales position - recently filled by **Glenn Harris,** who joined Wearcheck in February - is part of the company's drive to focus on client support throughout the country. Glenn will be responsible for KwaZulu Natal and Cape clients.

Glenn is not new to the oil analysis field. He worked for CMS (Condition Monitoring Services) in Johannesburg for a year before being promoted to branch manager and moving to the Free State to open a new branch for the company.

Prior to that he gained valuable mining experience working in the plants at Coronation Colliery in Vryheid and Brockwell Anthracite Colliery in Paulpietersburg. He has also completed specialised selling and management courses.

'After running my own branch of CMS, I have come to believe in consistency, particularly with regard to product and customer support. I aim to ensure that Wearcheck's KwaZulu Natal and Cape customers receive a hassle-free service.'

Glenn will travel to the Cape regularly, as well as doing regular country trips around KwaZulu Natal, calling on the 240 existing customers in his care, as well as seeing potential new customers.

Glenn's leisure hours are spent relaxing after a busy day at work, as well as going to gym and keeping fit.