

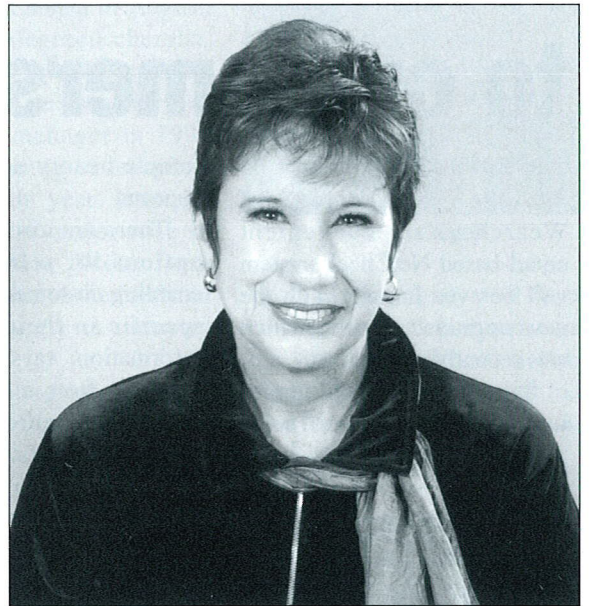
# Lesley Crawford is appointed managing director

LESLEY Crawford, co-founder of Wearcheck in 1975, has been appointed managing director of the Wearcheck Africa Division of Set Point Technology.

Lesley has been an integral part of the growth of Wearcheck over the years from its early beginnings as McCraw Laboratories with a staff count of three, processing 69 samples in its first month of operation, to its status today as the leading oil analysis company in Africa and one which compares with the best internationally.

Says Lesley, 'The Set Point board felt that there was a need to reassess the succession plan and restructure the management team to ensure Wearcheck's future growth in today's rapidly changing business environment. It is basically a consolidation of Wearcheck's strong current position and an assurance that we have the foundations in place for this to continue.'

Gary Brown, who joined forces with Lesley and the late Wally Crawford to form Wearcheck 27 years ago will remain as divisional



Lesley Crawford

director, in line with his decision to gradually start taking a less active role in the company.

He will concentrate on other aspects of his life, notably his passion for restoring and maintaining classic and vintage motor cycles and the chance to spend more time with his family. ✓

## Wearcheck Africa shines at international meeting

THE 200 employees of the nine members of Wearcheck International (WCI) process an impressive 1,5 million samples a year, 28% of which are performed by Wearcheck Africa.

This was one of the facts to emerge from the annual WCI meeting in Brannenburg, Germany, during May which was attended by representatives from most of the member companies in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hungary, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the USA.

According to Wearcheck Africa laboratory manager, Neil Robinson, who attended the meeting, Wearcheck's current status as the WCI lab with the highest sample throughput could change shortly if Wearcheck USA secures another contract with a major trucking

company which operates 180 000 trucks. This would expand their annual total to about 720 000 samples compared with the 342 000 samples processed by Wearcheck's Pinetown and Johannesburg labs.

### Strong growth

'The Spanish company is also achieving strong growth and moved its reach into Portugal last year, emulating several of the European WCI companies which operate across their borders,' said Neil. 'For example Wearcheck Belgium has a number of French clients and Wearcheck Germany operates in most of its surrounding countries. There is also a chance that Cuba may join the WCI fold, under the auspices of Wearcheck Canada.'

It emerged that the client and product profiles of the different WCI companies differ remarkably.'

'For example, while we have 2 800 active clients, 85% of whom submit more than 100 samples per year, Wearcheck Germany has 15 000 clients of which 4 000 are active, and only 3% submit more than 100 samples per year out of their annual total of 63 000.

'Three of the European companies do metalworking fluid analysis which we could introduce fairly easily in our lab if there were a demand,' said Neil.

Equipment-wise, most of the labs have similar equipment with some of the companies adopting innovations developed by Wearcheck Africa such as the

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# Faster NetCheck offers more benefits to customers

CUSTOMERS who were sold on the advantages of Wearcheck's convenient email-based NetCheck system will be even happier with the new upgraded version which was recently released.

Says senior systems administrator Lorain de Bruin, 'Apart from being much faster than the previous version, NetCheck Version 5 offers a number of other advanced features.'

The major benefit is that it includes several new graphs which have been requested by customers, and all graphs are now more simple to create. Simply clicking on a menu option gives users the status of a component at a glance, and a pie chart representing the

sample history automatically appears.

'There are also many more options for selecting data, enabling customers to be more specific in their search for information,' says Lorain. 'For example, from a simple menu option you can call up samples from specific components from a certain make and model of equipment with a specified severity within a certain time period. Being able to pinpoint the exact data needed is a great timesaver.'

More efficient management of a number of terminals connected to NetCheck is another plus. Previously, if more than one person wanted to view the reports, they each had to have a NetCheck installation and

each person had to update the data daily. Now, customers can nominate a central data base where the site is managed and maintained by one person, and any number of others can have viewing and printing access only, without the hassle of maintaining the site. This is ideal for managers with limited time and useful for companies which don't have email access for all their staff.

'We invite customers wanting to take advantage of NetCheck Version 5 to download the software from

Wearcheck's web site ([www.wearcheck.co.za](http://www.wearcheck.co.za) - select Products & Services, then NetCheck) or phone NetCheck software support in Johannesburg or Pinetown,' says Lorain. ✓

## NetCheck training course

A ONE-DAY NetCheck training course will be run at Wearcheck's Pinetown offices on 18 September, costing R1 550 + VAT per person. For bookings phone Cathy Bolton on (011) 392-6322. ✓



Delighted with the results of months of hard work upgrading the NetCheck system are senior programmer Simon Robertson, senior systems administrator Lorain de Bruin and IT manager Larry Baddock.

## Wearcheck Africa shines at international meeting

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Pinetown lab's sample racking and touch screen system.

'Of the eight instruments or concepts demonstrated at the meeting in Germany, one was of particular interest to us,' said Neil. 'Metrohm is developing an instrument to automate the measurement of TANs, something we have been considering for several years.'

Another valuable development is the establishment of a group-wide technical committee and web forum where problems experienced by any

of the labs can be posted and hopefully answered by another member of the technical team.

'The round robin sample testing system is continuing to establish an international standard amongst all of the member companies, another step towards the introduction of global trading,' said Neil.

'The opportunity to share ideas and experiences with associates from all over the world was, as always, of enormous benefit.'

The next WCI meeting will be held in South Africa in June next year. ✓

## Coming soon - colour email reports

IT WON'T be long before customers who do not use NetCheck will be able to receive colour reports via email.

'As soon as NetCheck Version 5 has bedded down, we will concentrate on making the new colour reports available,' says IT manager Larry Baddock. 'This will be of particular interest to industrial and marine customers and anyone who wants colour reports quickly but does not have the sample volumes or staff available to operate NetCheck.' ✓

## Need faster sample turnaround time?

IF YOU are looking for quick sample turnaround, try Wearcheck's Courier Plus pre-paid priority mail envelopes for overnight deliveries. Designed to be used with Wearcheck's courier kits, they can be sent counter-to-counter from most post offices - a convenient and cost-effective solution to speeding up turnaround time. ✓

## New chemist focuses on lab development

CHEMIST Paul Swan is set to boost the already impressive array of technical skills which ensure the smooth running of the Pinetown laboratory.

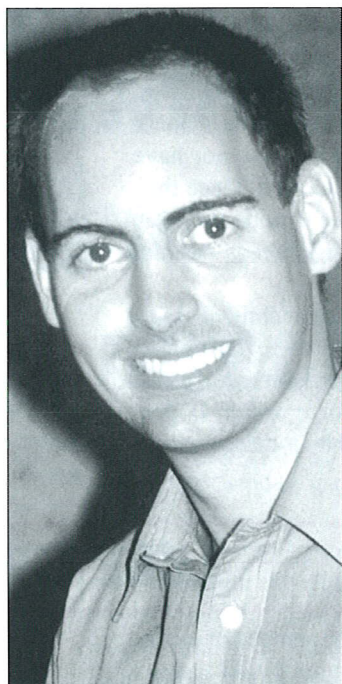
Paul joined Wearcheck in May, shortly after completing his Masters of Science in Chemistry at the University of Cape Town. Whilst studying for his degrees - he attained his B.Sc. at the University of Natal - he was involved in scientific research into anti-malarial drugs and practical demonstrations in pure and applied chemistry for second-year students.

His strong problem-solving abilities led to the development of innovative new methods in the university laboratories - from the synthesis of new compounds and the use of analytical methods to software development for data analysis.

During university holidays he worked for Zenex Oil (now part of Engen) at their Durban oil blending plant for four years. One of the development projects he worked on there involved investigating the feasibility of using the existing visible spectrometer to monitor the oil content in waste water. Another necessitated programming a batch blending vessel and interfacing this new technology with plant staff.

After familiarising himself with the equipment in the Pinetown laboratory and Wearcheck's systems, Paul's first task is to start developing the methodology for the new gas chromatograph.

'I am working closely with lab manager, Neil Robinson, to identify what adaptations are needed to integrate the instrument into the lab system,' he said. 'We will then



Paul Swan

develop the parameters for programmes and modify the hardware if necessary before testing the instrument alongside the existing GC until we are satisfied the results are uniform.'

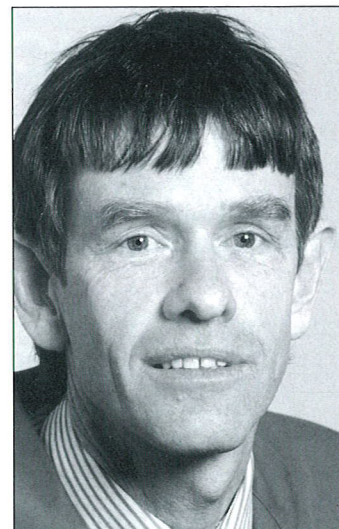
Paul will then start similar work on Wearcheck's new FTIR and Lasernet Fines particle quantifier.

'I am delighted to have an element of research and development in my work,' he said. 'Another appealing facet of the job is the variety. As Neil takes on more of Alistair Geach's responsibilities, including overseeing the Barlows laboratory in Johannesburg, I will be helping facilitate the smooth running of the lab. This will involve maintaining equipment as well as ensuring that instruments are correctly calibrated and lab methods are continuously upgraded so we remain at the cutting edge of technology.' ✓

### Farewell to Alistair

It is with great sadness that Wearcheck will bid farewell to technical manager Alistair Geach when he moves to Wearcheck Canada in August. Alistair, a degreed chemist, has been with Wearcheck Africa for 11 years, starting as laboratory manager in 1991 and progressing to technical manager eight years later. He has played a major role in ensuring that Wearcheck Africa remains at the forefront of the oil analysis industry globally.

Says managing director, Lesley Crawford, 'Alistair has left his mark in our laborato-



Alistair Geach

ries and this legacy will be a constant reminder of him and his fine work. We wish him everything of the best in his new career with our Canadian associates.' ✓



### Quality upgrade is success!

Quality administrator Melanie Hynd proudly displays Wearcheck's new ISO 9001:2000 registration plaque - the result of months of hard work updating Wearcheck's comprehensive quality management system to comply with the new standard. Says Melanie, 'This is a big achievement for us as we believe we are one of only a handful of companies in the province to have completed the conversion. A big "thank you" to all our staff for their co-operation, often under trying circumstances!' ✓

# Technical training is refocused to meet customer needs

MORE and more customers are finding that customised on-site courses are the answer to their oil analysis training needs.

So says Jan Backer, technical advisor for Wearthcheck who has trained more than 330 employees on the premises of customers throughout southern Africa over the past year.

'It is simply not practical for companies to take groups of employees off the job for training,' he says. 'When we do it on their premises, we cut out travel time and we fit into their schedules.'

'We also design training around customer needs - they select the modules of interest to them and we tailor-make the course to suit them.'

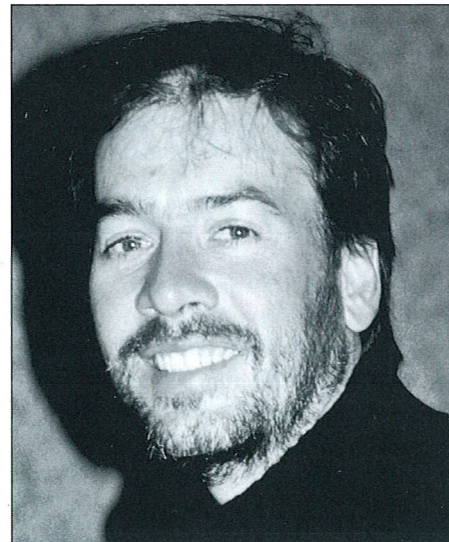
'We have found that the basic three-hour *How to take a sample* course is considered essential for mechanics and artisan assistants but is also of value to plant and workshop managers. Although it may seem like a simple step, sampling is a critical part of the oil analysis process and, if done incorrectly, can cause havoc with production schedules. Because it is a hands-on, practical course and is limited to 10 people, everyone gets a clear picture of how it is done.'

A Zulu version of the basic course is conducted by Wearthcheck's Isaac Mabaso, complete with English/Zulu

manuals which were translated by Josephine Rakolota of the Johannesburg office. Wearthcheck also offers a more advanced one-day course and is developing a third which will focus on case studies, troubleshooting, how to interpret reports, and how to adopt a holistic approach to condition monitoring and oil analysis.

'In technical training it is important not just to impart knowledge - the trainer must guide people through the process in practice,' Jan says. 'An employee cannot do his job properly if he does not have the tools and the skills to do it. Once they have the right skills they can do their job successfully, and success breeds motivation.'

'The major benefit of technical training is simply this: anyone who understands a system or procedure will do it smarter, and a workforce which is performing intelligently has a direct impact on efficiency.'



Jan Backer

Jan, who has been with Wearthcheck for six years but has been involved in condition monitoring since 1984, spends about one-third of his time training and two-thirds seeing customers. ✓

## LUBE TIP

WHAT are the possible sources of silicon in oil? Silicon is measured by oil analysis labs to determine dirt ingress. While more often than not, high silicon readings indicate dirt, there are several other possible sources. The four most common are:

1. Defoamant additive. Many oils contain defoamants based on organic silicone. Since silicone contains the element silicon, the presence of this kind of additive will show a positive silicon reading in spectrometric analysis. The typical levels of silicon seen under these conditions are around 1-10 ppm.
2. Silicone based sealant. Many sealants used for industrial and mobile applications are silicone based. The level of silicon observed will of course be directly related to the amount of sealant leaching into the lube system.

3. Casting sand. Some components are made by casting in sand (silicon oxide also known as silica). Although new components are cleaned thoroughly prior to installation, it is not uncommon to see 50-100 ppm of silicon from new equipment. This level should drop as the component breaks in and regular oil changes take place.
4. Coolant contamination. Some engine coolants contain inhibitors which contain silicon. In an engine application, high silicon readings in conjunction with other elements such as sodium, potassium and boron may indicate a coolant leak.

- Courtesy of Noria Corporation

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