

Tory funds drive hit by mail gaffe

By Jon Rees

The Conservative party's fund raising drive has suffered an embarrassing setback after it mistakenly told supporters in a mailing that it planned to raise taxes and sell out to Europe.

Tory chairman Jeremy Hanley mailed a two-page fund-raising letter to 25,000 people, but on thousands of the mail shots the crucial words, "We also have powerful criticisms of Labour" were missed out. So Hanley's letter says the Tories plan to endorse the Social Chapter and that spending plans will result in higher taxes.

The mistake arose when the laser printing programme for the letter failed, missing out the crucial line.

"The letter was not written incorrectly, but there was a problem on the laser printing for which Mail Marketing, which produced the letter for us, accepts full responsibility," says

Frances Penn, executive director of Team 1000, the Tory group which sent out the letter.

The Tories are generally given printed material for mail outs, data selection – in this case supplied by CCN – and the cost of the production of the mailings in donations or at a discount. The party pays for postage.

Hanley denies that the party is in financial trouble, though it has accelerated debt repayment to the Royal Bank of Scotland, which holds the bulk of its overdraft.

"Our finances are in an extremely healthy state. We are reducing our borrowings and building up our war chest to fight the general election. The borrowing certainly will be below £16m. We intend to reduce it to zero and build up the war chest within the reasonably near future," says Hanley.

Hanley says the party's income has increased, largely



Hanley: Mailshot blunder

because the cost of fighting the European elections has been absorbed. There have also been substantial bequests to the party from supporters.

It is understood that one of those supporters is Maurice Saatchi, who is believed to be keen to pay off the Tory party's remaining debt owed to Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising. Observers say that if the party was freed from this debt it would be easier to move the advertising account into Maurice Saatchi's new agency.

Shell faces libel threat from Don

Sales promotion agency Don Marketing is threatening to sue Shell UK for libel while at the same time circulating the results of a poll it claims to have carried out among Shell retailers.

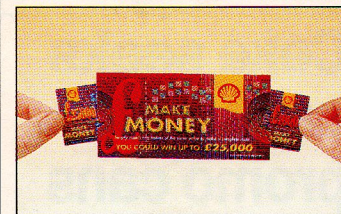
The two companies are due to meet in court over Don's accusation that Shell used its ideas in a series of promotions without permission or payment.

Don has sent a letter to Shell from solicitors acting for Don claiming a press release the company issued two weeks ago was defamatory and untrue (MW March 24) and is demanding a retraction.

Among issues covered in the press release was Shell's application to the court for security for its costs in the event of Don losing the case, to ensure Don will pay Shell's legal expenses.

But Don also says Shell's press release amounted to an "unfounded personal attack" on Alfred Donovan, the father of John Donovan the managing director of Don Marketing, who runs the Shell Corporate Conscience Pressure Group (SCCPG) even though "Shell is aware that Mr Donovan is a 78-year-old ex-regular army, war-disabled pensioner".

A spokesman for Shell says the company has no plans to retract the press statement.



Shell: Faces legal threat

Cooper was ousted by Eurotunnel

Eurotunnel's ex-director of sales and marketing Neil Cooper is understood to have been ousted from the company, with no grounds given for his dismissal.

Last week, the beleaguered Eurotunnel marketing department announced that Cooper was leaving the company by "mutual agreement".

The company also said that his role would be split in two (MW March 24).

It has emerged this week, however, that Cooper was told to

leave – a full year before his contract expires.

It is understood he is taking legal advice.

Eurotunnel is still maintaining that Cooper's departure was by mutual agreement.

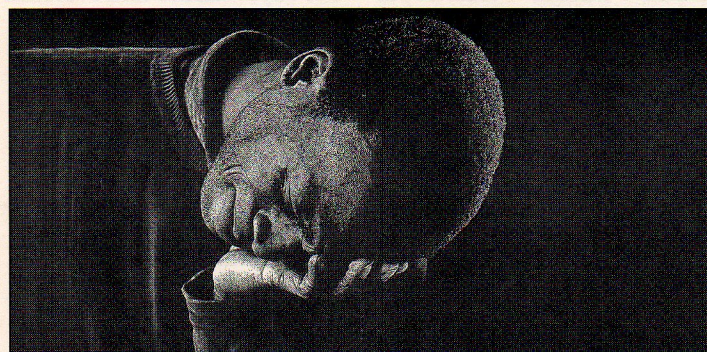
Cooper's exit follows a series of reorganisations within Eurotunnel's marketing department and the departure of commercial director Christopher Garnett in February.

One source close to the company says: "The real question is how many people are there in

Eurotunnel's marketing department who have extensive experience of marketing. Eurotunnel has had a lot of problems lately and it seems the scapegoat is in the marketing department."

Meanwhile Phillipe Maurier has been appointed marketing manager at Eurotunnel's Calais office. He reports to Jean Paul Courant – European sales and marketing director.

Maurier replaces marketing consultant Veronique Assachar, who has left the company.



Whatever you're going through, we'll go through it with you. The Samaritans

The Samaritans has launched its first fully-integrated ad campaign through Ogilvy & Mather. The £400,000 campaign, "whatever you're going through, we'll go through it with you", aims to highlight the broader range of issues the charity now deals with, as well as its 24-hour support service. The campaign will run on cinema, press and TV.

S&N's Edinburgh office may take Courage work

Scottish & Newcastle's proposed acquisition of the bulk of Courage and its portfolio of beer brands could lead to the consolidation of marketing under marketing director Richard Gibb at the company's Edinburgh office.

The takeover would lead to job cuts at Courage's London-based marketing department, and puts the future of marketing director John Nicolson under the spotlight at the merged business, say sources.

Scottish & Newcastle's acquisition of Courage is expected shortly, though it could be complicated by a number of side deals.

The takeover would give S&N a combined market share of 31 per cent, well over the 25 per cent limit set by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

One deal could involve Anheuser-Busch – which owns Budweiser – in the buy-out of Courage's Mortlake brewery.