Editorial

Yet another year has passed and I cannot believe that it is 13 years since I got the big "R". What is even more amazing is that John Sherlock who interviewed me for my first job in 1958 at FEHQ Luton is now 95 and still living in Hitchin.

The Punched Card Reunion which takes place annually on the first Tuesday of October will have a presentation this year by John Harper on the completion of the **Bombe Rebuild Project**. All interested in hearing the full story of this historic achievement are invited to attend. You do not have to be somebody who worked with Punched Cards. Send a cheque for **£10** made payable to Punch Card Reunion, to me at the address below, together with a **SAE,** which covers the cost of a buffet lunch and tea/coffee.

I am always looking for a story for this publication which will elicit a flurry of correspondence. The OPD item in the autumn edition was one that did just that. Thanks to all those that responded. How about another such query which will have the same effect?

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Fujitsu Services Good News

New HQ for Fujitsu

As a result of the lease on LON49 expiring in September 2007 Fujitsu has now signed a lease on a new property, 22 Baker Street, London, W1.

This is an exciting development for Fujitsu Services as 22 Baker Street is purpose built accommodation, which will offer increased office space, a customer centre, flexible and innovative meeting rooms and will be a significant improvement on the existing London facilities.

Although timescales for the move have yet to be agreed it is likely that the building will be occupied on a phased basis throughout 2006.

Fujitsu NHS Care Records Service

Fujitsu Services awarded a contract to Cerner Ltd on Friday 2 September to utilise the healthcare information technology company's software for the NHS Care Records Service in the Southern Cluster.

After a detailed review, Fujitsu and NHS Connecting for Health signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June 2005 agreeing on the use of *Cerner Millennium®* software for the NHS Care Records Service in the Southern Cluster, subject to a final contract. The first systems will go live at the start of 2006.

Merseyrail new ticketing system

Merseyrail has become the first UK Train Operating Company to complete the roll out of STAR – an award-winning ticket issuing system from Fujitsu Services that helps station staff to improve customer service. The new system has been installed at all of Merseyrail's 64 stations, which cater for 100,000 passengers carried on 600 train services run in the Liverpool area every week day.

STAR reduces paperwork and makes it easier for Merseyrail staff to offer the full range of rail products without having to refer to paper based manuals, allowing them to focus more of their time on customer service. Merseyrail has used STAR to replace the old 'All Purpose Ticket Issuing System' originally installed in the 1980's.

Merseyrail is a joint venture between the Dutch public transport operator NedRailways and UK management services company Serco Integrated Transport. Since taking over the franchise in July 2003, Merseyrail has been working to improve the rail passenger experience in the Merseyside area. During its first year the focus was on improved punctuality and reliability. Having delivered on these targets, the emphasis has since been on station refurbishment.

The installation of the STAR systems was a key part of this programme. The roll out programme was completed in only three months, making Merseyrail the first UK train operating company to pass on the benefits of the STAR system to its passengers.

Fujitsu provided a range of supporting services covering roll out, implementation and training. The company will also be providing helpdesk and application and equipment support in the future. Journey planning will be provided via the central Rail Journey Information Service (RJIS), which Fujitsu operates for the rail industry as a whole.

The contract is the result of a formal procurement under EU competition rules, including trials of the competing solutions. Merseyrail decided that STAR was best suited to their business requirements and offered the best value for money. Another attraction was that STAR is a retail system designed specifically for the rail industry and so allows Merseyrail to

experiment with new ticket office formats in the future.

The successful roll out follows a recent accolade for Fujitsu in the 2005 Rail Industry Innovation Awards, where STAR was selected as the winner in the "Innovation in IT" category.

ICL MEMORIES

Was it so Great?

I have just read the latest copy of Bits & Bytes and am amazed that every edition has pensioners writing in with fond memories of ICL/ICT or whatever. What about all the not so good times?

I started with ICT at the age of 18 in 1967 as a punch card engineer (slotted hole) and worked my way through 1300, 1900 and 2900 computers into Customer Services management and on through to Regional User Support management in CHOTS towards the end of the 1990's. I took early retirement in 1999. In total 32 years with ICL.

Looking back I find it difficult to remember all the 'Good Times' (perhaps it's the symptoms of getting old expressed by Dennis Goodwin in the autumn edition of B & B's....but I'm only 56!) and mainly remember the experience as 'Surviving'.

Presumably I must have enjoyed some of it as I did tend to work very long hours...but from what I remember it was out of necessity rather than enjoyment.

I suppose the few good times started during the first couple of years with the company as that is where I ran my own site and I met my wife with whom I have been happily married for 33 years. After that it all tends to be a blur (except for an enjoyable period teaching "Zero Defects" in the Quality education programme which was great fun) until about 25 years later I joined CHOTS at the start of the project and was able to manage the implementation of User Support on their very first site and set the template for the project as a whole - that was a good year and was the only point at which I had a manager where I really respected his approach to the job and the assistance he gave me. However it was all downhill again after that as the project got drawn into the huge machine that was ICL and the last plonker of a manager I had was absolutely useless. Having said that, he probably did me one of the biggest favours of my career....he put me in Linkwise!
Linkwise was great, it allowed me to get some training I would not ordinarily have taken (website design) but more importantly it allowed me to spend 3 months totally stripping out and rebuilding my kitchen....all whilst being paid by ICL!! Obviously there were a few gaps where I did the training and went on Assessment centres and interviews, etc....but I quickly got the message that ICL did not really want me when I spoke to the managers of the Service Management Assessment Centre who told me that I had easily passed and was obviously an experienced manager but there would be no job offers as the company were really looking at the young new recruits to bring in some new blood and ideas. What a waste of everyone's time, - why was I not told this by ICL originally - I could have refitted the bedroom as well as the kitchen!

Anyway at the end of 1999 I took early retirement at the ripe old age of 50 (despite being offered a couple of jobs at the last minute - by which time I had already agreed to leave) and started up in business on my own in conjunction with a Spanish estate agent selling villas and apartments - originally this was supposed to be part time so I did not get bored but it immediately took off and I was working harder than ever...but I was also thoroughly enjoying it. After a couple of years I then helped a young Spanish couple set up their estate agency business in Almeria with me operating in the UK and this is now my main source of business

By this time I realised what a real favour this last plonker of a manager had done for me, why had I not gotten out of ICL earlier? The answer is simple, I had the security of building up a solid pension and a good redundancy package, materialistic or what eh?!

However once I was forced out (with a nice little payout) I believe I really found my true strengths - which is taking control and doing things the way I believe is best with little control from outside. In retrospect this reflects the few periods when I could do this in ICL and those periods I enjoyed. It's just a pity I did not recognise this years before as who knows what I might have achieved?

This might all sound like I am bitter with ICL but this is not true. I owe the vast majority of my working life to ICL and although it wasn't fun, fun, fun, all the way through, it can't have been half bad either or I would not have survived as long as I did....it was just not really that memorable.

The one thing I do thank ICL for is the experience I gained in providing the best possible customer service and how to deal with the public and this has paid dividends in my current business

I must admit the above is all a bit tongue in cheek...but I wonder how many other pensioners really have similar feelings.
Peter Pickett www.casasalmeria.com

Same Day Delivery

Sales targets had to be met. Cash flow and revenue were a priority as well as stock reduction. To achieve this lorries were loaded in advance and sent close to site so if an impending order was signed at the last moment, delivery could take place and the salesman was delighted, the customer was impressed and the company's books looked good.

It was I recall around Christmas Eve in 1982 that these plans were taking shape and Winston Walker (Transport Mgr) had one of his drivers camped outside a potential customer site, the night before the salesman was due to sign the contract. Unfortunately the driver has promised to do some late Christmas shopping for his wife and wanted to abort the planned delivery and return to Stevenage. It took some extreme seasonal powers of persuasion to convince the driver to hold on another hour for that customer signature, but what really persuaded him to stay was the mention of six bottles of his favourite whiskey that would be waiting back at the warehouse upon his return. Needless to say the customer signed the contract and when asked by the salesman when he would like delivery the customer replied "as soon as possible". The salesman who's name escapes me replied "would sometime today be convenient" pointing to the large vehicle moving very slowly into the customer car park!
RayMcNally

Whyteleafe Ways

I much enjoy "Bits & Bytes" having experienced two periods of employment with ICT/ICL. I am an "EMI original" tho' not absorbed into ICL having arrived by the "traveller's route"! However I have never read anything by or about the once splendid R&D laboratories where I spent a lively spell in 1960-61. Despite continuing to live in the general area I don't think I've ever met anyone (at the BCS or elsewhere) who admits to having worked there.

I understood the lab to be associated with the factory in Aurelia Road, Croydon (known to the locals as "The Acc.& Tab"!), now a furniture warehouse, and that many people had come from a Powers lab in Powdermill Lane Dartford. Presumably that lab had been associated with the then massive Vickers presence in Crayford? Many years later when I worked in Computer House, Euston someone told me David Talbot had been at Dartford but again I never knew anyone who owned up.

I have watched the building change hands a fair few times and now it has succumbed to the developer's ball! I well remember the smells (and the girls) from the nearby Givaudan perfume factory, now replaced by even greater exotica in the form of Ann Summers HQ!

I still have my April 1960 letter of offer of a position as lab technician on £15.10 per week, from Dai Nettell. I remember working for the legendary Dr. Noel Coates on the high speed card reader for the 558.

The decision was soon taken to relocate the lab to Stevenage and I did not fancy the journey. I doubt whether it suited the majority either. Again in my later spell in ICL I met Peter Williams in Letchworth and remembered his vintage Rileys! I believe there were others who spent some time at Whyteleafe and if any readers have any stories to tell of Echo Organ's early empire I would be interested to hear them! Or indeed from those who later crossed my path in LON24, BRA01, SLH01 or even survived Network Systems and ELS01!

jas.weir@btinternet.com
ICT 1960-61 ICL 1975-88

Letters

Plug Boards for Bombe

The Turing Bombe project is now nearing completion. The BCS Computer Preservation Society is a major sponsor and we hope to finish and commission early next year, before its 50th anniversary in May. The machine uses three single Hollerith Plug Boards, but so far we have found only one. We can get round the problem, but we aim to be as authentic as possible and still hope to find another two. If anyone has or is aware of one or two of these boards and the base units (with locking lever) I would appreciate a call or e-mail.

John Harper
 bombe@jharper.demon.co.uk **01462 451970.**

The Great OPD Debate

May I contribute my two penneth to the OPD success/failure debate?

Firstly, I am fairly certain that the OPD was a product of the mid-80s and not the mid-70s. I remember, from sales situations, it being roughly contemporary with the! Amstrad and other early 8-bit personal computers. Having said that, it was still, as Roy said, ahead of its time in terms of the combination of facilities that it offered and the integration of telephony with PCs and VDUs. One feature, which I think that Roy omitted to mention, was the OPD's ability to be an interactive terminal in addition to its other capabilities. I am not sure whether the protocol was 7561 or the earlier 7181 but whichever it was it enabled the OPD to go on-line to ICL mainframes. Thus, in the ICL context, it could truly be described as a One per Desk device.

The feature that I found of greatest benefit at the time was the telephony short dial ability. Using just 3 characters the OPD would automatically dial a number for you. With meaningful abbreviations you could have instant access to a large number of customer and internal telephone numbers without having to remember or look them up. Altogether it was a very versatile little box. So why was it not more successful even with BT selling it to domestic and non-ICL customers as the Tonto?

I have no idea how the potential market was segmented by Marketing at the time of the OPD's launch so the following comments are based on my guess that there were at least 3 identified market areas; the home market, the non-ICL mainframe user and the ICL mainframe user. It was clearly recognised that that ICL needed an addition channel to market hence the involvement of BT.

I suspect that for home use it was just too expensive for most people apart from the real enthusiast. The basic printer was a rather 'Mickey Mouse' thermal one that printed on to a roll of paper. It was nowhere near letter quality and could not feed single sheets of A4 in any case. The domestic user ended up with a clever phone, some potentially useful home office software but no ability to network, other than to an ICL mainframe. Not really very much for £1,000+ at 1980s prices.

For the non-ICL mainframe user it did not really live up to its name of One per Desk because of its limitation to an ICL communications protocol. If IBM 3270 had been available it might have been a different story. Using BT as a way into non-ICL accounts, and marketing the product under a BT badge, was probably a sound ploy assuming that the BT sales force had the right level of contacts and the right type of sales expertise but I think that they would have had an uphill task without the right comms protocols.

The OPD was obviously most suited to the existing ICL customer base. I have no idea how many were actually sold. I do know that many of its users were very enthusiastic about the OPD but this did not translate into mass sales. Why? The following is just my opinion so I am happy to be corrected by anyone who knows some actual facts.

At this time, the mid 80s, VDUs ("green screens") were used mostly for data capture, e.g. on-line order entry, manufacturing movements and processes and enquiry purposes. As a data capture device it would be in the hands of clerical staff. As an enquiry device it would be in the hands of the same or similar clerical staff plus a few managers who had a particular need or interest, typically in the progress of orders or stock levels or account balances. These staff would probably have found the OPD's black and white screen too small for them to do their jobs effectively. It was before widespread use of internal email. Thus people who did not have a specific need for a VDU tended not

to get one whereas these days the need is assumed. At that time having a VDU on your desk was not seen generally as a managerial status symbol particularly if you did not know how to use it. PCs were only just beginning to make an appearance and were viewed with some suspicion, particularly by IT departments who saw them as a threat. (Non-IT people, who had their own budgets, saw them as a way of getting around the IT bottleneck.)

I have a suspicion that the OPD concept would have taken root much more successfully if it had been introduced by IBM. There appeared to me to be a distinct cultural difference between ICL and IBM users and IT departments. IBM users were much more likely to buy a new product first and to look for a use after. ICL users mostly tended to wait 50 years to see if the idea it caught on and then buy one or two for evaluation. An exaggeration I grant you but one that I think has a germ of truth. ICL certainly did very little to show its own commitment to the product. The OPD was not rolled out around the company as a matter of course. This was still the era when internal IT was limited to "need to have" users where it could be "economically" justified. I only got my OPD by accident. It was not until the OfficePower era that a need for a screen was assumed and even then it was not universal. For far too long internal IT was seen as a cost and not as giving potential benefit and competitive edge.

So far as I can remember there was virtually no further development once the initial product had been launched. Perhaps the company was unwilling to throw more money at a product that did not look like succeeding. Probably the development of the first models in the Series 39 range were soaking up all the development funding that was available at that time. I think that a few 3rd party enhancements became available but nothing of great significance. In the end the OPD just faded away and ICL announced that it was ceasing production. I don't remember seeing a wave of unsold stock being distributed around the company following its demise but perhaps I was in the wrong place at the time.

Many users did like the OPD, myself included. After my OfficePower terminal eventually arrived I was told forcefully to dispose of my OPD. I then had to go through the painful process of relearning all the telephone numbers that I had reduced to meaningful short codes. Such was progress! I was told that I could take the OPD home if I liked but I could not keep it on my desk. I chose the former and used it happily until the screen died. It was then consigned to the loft where it remains to this day.

Philip Sugden
ICT/ICL, 1961 to 2000

OPD

I read with great interest the recent Bits & Bytes.

I must admit I normally just glance at it because I am one of those people who come from the non-engineering side of the business.

However the article that caught my attention was the one about OPD. I was for a couple of years, the Commercial controller for Userpoint the department that ran the order processing, shipping etc of the OPD. We were based in Letchworth at the 1/3 Factory.

I believe that I can answer the question "why was the OPD such a marketing disaster".

From the time I joined the department I made two comments about the product.

One was that the commercial paper work was too protracted, making it difficult for people either to sell or buy the OPD. We were working on contractual paperwork that fitted mainframe machines like the Series 39, which obviously, had much larger values involved. Whereas to try and sell something that started at £1,000 and have a sixteen page contract that went with the initial purchase was madness. There was too much 'red tape' when the rest of the world was doing business slicker and faster.

Two, we started with a delivery of 28 days, which again for a small machine was not conducive to high turnover.

Needless to say, I did air my views on various occasions and managed to get a meeting with the then Financial Director and Commercial Director to discuss the whole issue. However, this was close to the end of the OPD's days and sadly the changes did come but too late for an excellent product.

And yes I can confirm that the Duke of Edinburgh was a user and great exponent along with the Earl of Bradford.

Renee Dickinson nee Baker

ICL Australia

Readers of Bits & Bytes may be interested to learn that it has an Australian relative known as the ICL All Stars News. The readership however is not, as with Bits & Bytes, almost entirely retirees; it is aimed at anyone who at any time has had happy connections with ICL Australia. Most of the readers once worked for ICL, moved to other jobs and are still working. Also we have current Fujitsu employees or Fujitsu retirees who once were with ICL. Then there are retirees from ICL and people who left ICL for other jobs and retired (like me). I met a fellow at a recent party in Melbourne who left ICL (or perhaps it was one of the earlier companies) over forty years ago, worked elsewhere for thirty years, is now retired but attends the functions and thinks of ICL Australia as the best company he ever worked for. We also have recently accepted as an honoury member a partner of an ICL person who has sadly passed away.

The list totals about 450. Although located mostly in Australia there are a few scattered around in far-flung locations of the world. It has been observed that ICL Australia provided a disproportionate number of gifted computer professionals to the industry in Australia. Indeed, given the propensity of Australians to travel, there are not many corners of the world not represented. You can imagine that ICL All Stars News is distributed via email only!

Long before the 'ICL All Stars Newsletter' there was the 'ICL All Stars'. Under that banner an ex-ICL Melbourne young lady, Anthea Morgan-Long, (aka Anthea Gedge) decided to keep the ICL community together throughout the various Company changes. That it still flourishes today is greatly to her credit. The All Stars concept led to the development of an email database maintained accurately – no small feat – by another Melbourne personality and TDL3 aficionado, Geoffrey Howell. The database proved invaluable for social functions, most of them in Melbourne, and most of them organised then and now

by another Anthea – Anthea Saint James (aka Anthea Thompson). Some years later, when I in Sydney, realised the additional potential of the database and thought to volunteer to do the Newsletter, I found the Melbourne trio to be a great inspiration. Now, the four of us operate as a kind of unofficial committee.

The ICL All Stars News is a fifteen to twenty page quarterly, produced three times a year, in other words a very informal journal. It has helped to develop the social functions so that each year there is at least one in Brisbane plus two or more in Sydney and Melbourne. There is some inter-state visiting but anyone who knows Australian geography will appreciate that this is not easy.

We differ from Bits & Bytes in that we do not have any connection with Fujitsu and there seems no reason to develop one. Our patron, if that is the word, is Neil Lamming, the CEO who was at the ICL helm when the company was at its peak and is very well known and greatly respected. Indeed there is a very happy feeling about our experiences with the ICL Australia company as a whole, as indicated by the continuing connections and the many contributions to the Newsletter.

Our readers and contributors, unlike those of Bits & Bytes, do not have any preponderance of field (customer) engineers, although I was one. In fact I would say we (CEs) are not well represented at all.

If you would like a sample email copy of the All Stars News, email me at
albertcook@optusnet.com.au

And if you have had any connection with ICL Australia and would like to be on the regular distribution please ask. We, of course, would welcome any contributions- perhaps you had an Australian tour of duty and wish to revive old memories and pursue former colleagues from down under.
Albert Cook (Editor, ICL [Australia] All Stars News)

Life before ICL

60 Years Ago
My boat was the "Sea Nymph", a submarine, and we were alongside the submarine depot ship "Maidstone" in Subic Bay when a violent battery explosion brought an inglorious end to its short life.

An old friend in the "Spark" asked me to check out his radar as they were leaving on patrol in a few hours. While I was there I was invited to stay aboard for the trip, if nobody had any objection. Was I conned or politely Shanghaied?

Off we sailed to Borneo in company with "Stygian" and tied up alongside "Bonaventure" an X craft depot ship. Something was in the wind. It was rumoured that the British and Australian Armies were considering a landing in the Singapore area but the presence of two Japanese Heavy Cruisers in the area would have to be put out of action first.

"Spark" and "Stygian" set off for Singapore towing XE1 and XE3 respectively. Time was of the essence so we had to travel on the surface, but towing the X craft dived so that even if we were spotted it would not give the game away.

Getting near the boom the X craft "passage crew" were replaced by the 4 man "operational crew" and away they went on their op. Rendezvous was to be 24 hours later. All this in the pitch black, in a not so quiet shipping area.

The following night XE3 was reunited with "Stygian" and they set off for Borneo. XE1 was missing so we had to stooge around for another 24 hours, before returning to the rendezvous again (somewhat cautiously). We found XE1 and returned to Borneo. XE3 had dropped her load under one cruiser, but XE1 had run out of puff in their battery so had to find a quiet spot to anchor and run their engine to charge their battery.

When we arrived back in Borneo the inevitable question was "Will we have to make a return visit?" Thankfully the Americans provided the answer two days later by dropping the "A" bomb.

The X craft crews received two VCs and a variety of other awards – well deserved.
Peter Bradley (ex FEHQ Luton) Australia

Life after ICL
Rich Tapestry of New Life
I joined ICL in June 1985 and started working in Userpoint, a department that sold OPD's and was based at the 1/3 Factory in Letchworth where the product was warehoused and distributed. I left in February 2001 taking voluntary redundancy along with over 1,000 other people. In many ways I was both pleased and sad to be leaving. I had joked that the only way I would leave was if someone paid me to go, the VR fitted that bill. So I filled in my forms and left quietly. I had decided that this would be the ideal opportunity for me to do something else, something that I had wanted to do for a long time and that was to work for myself.

I had decided I would run my own business selling curtain fabrics, and a make-up service for curtains, roman blinds, cushions and anything else that goes into a room and can be called soft furnishings. I did have some knowledge of the market place I was going into, for a start I had made curtains for years, for myself and other people plus I could make tailored clothes, including coats and suits. Making curtains was a lot less complicated. As well as all that I had been buying fabric wholesale for years from various suppliers. I also knew someone who sold Designer furnishing fabric at a discounted price and what was more interesting was that she had decided to give up her business and move away. So I took the opportunity to buy some of the stock at a discount and introduced myself to some of her contacts who supplied furnishing fabrics.

We transferred the business from her company to mine, Country Fabrics, then it was down to me to convince each of the suppliers that they would work with me under the new Company name. Designers are very picky, not least about whom they will or will not do business with. So one or two of the companies interviewed me. I had been told that the most important one to keep was Designers Guild, and if they agreed the rest would follow. Thankfully the guy from Designers Guild and I got on like a house on fire and from there onwards the others suppliers followed. I would say, grandly, "I have an account with Designers Guild." Other names such as Romo, Monkwell and Malabar also agreed and now I don't have to search out new suppliers they find me. This is a wonderful position to be in.

In ICL I had worked as an Account Manager and had spent many hours pouring over spreadsheets, trying to come to grips with P&L' s or on courses at Beaumont, such as "Finance for non Financial Managers". Now suddenly everything that I had been taught had a personal financial meaning to me and suddenly it all made sense to me. Yes, now I do want to analyse the expenditure with each supplier and review the pricing structures, these were all things I hated as an Account Manager, now I am absolutely thrilled with the knowledge that I had gained and am amazed that now I find numbers so interesting. What a difference it makes when it's your own business. Also, the decisions of whether or not to do business are mine.

My clients come from people I know and word of mouth. I found advertising to be very expensive and brought more people selling me advertising space. Leaflet drops are a very good way of getting customers, especially locally where people are keen to use someone who is in the same neighbourhood. I have a website which I use only to refer people to so that they can see the sort of work I have done and I am listed in a directory on the internet for curtain maker. This directory resulted in a client from Australia. I got an email one day from a lady saying she wanted me to make curtains and blinds for a whole house she had just bought in Settle, Yorkshire, which was for investment. We had a few emails to establish styles and taste then I sent fabric samples to her and we did the whole thing across email. We only met once the job had been totally completed and now she and her husband come and stay with us when they are in the UK.

I am also pleased to say that ex-colleagues also get in touch with me and ask for my help with their curtains and blinds etc which is a really nice and I have customers all over the country, so if you are interested have a look at some of the work Country Fabrics has done, go to **www.countryfabrics.co.uk**.

So these days my time is spent knee deep in sample books, fabrics and designs for room settings. For me, this is wonderful because I enjoy fabric so much, the feel of it, the colours, texture and knowing how it will drape once the item is completed.
Renee Baker

THE DOORMAN

One morning recently, I'd glanced at the headlines in the paper and wondered. "Considering the state of the world, was it worth bothering to face the day?"

My gloom was interrupted by a rhetorical question from my wife. "Who broke the kitchen unit door?"

Her rhetorical questions are rarely such and demand a response. As I'm the only other person around, I know I'm expected to answer. The excuse I give is irrelevant, all I need to do is get my tools and fix things, as I've done for the last 50 years.

Squatting down, straining my neck trying to focus through my Varilux glasses, I fumbled with a complicated door hinge that had detached itself from the chipboard carcass of the unit. I unscrewed the top hinge, to see why the lower one had come adrift. Nothing seemed broken, so I oiled it, grateful for years of ICL training! Now neither hinge would anchor securely to the stupid frame. I levered myself up, leaning on the conveniently removed door, waited for the room to cease revolving and the circulation to return to my lower legs. As I regained my composure, I was losing any enthusiasm for the project.

Twenty years ago, by now I'd have replaced the units and thought nothing of it. Now, all I can do is go to B&Q, where I'll get lost trying to match the hinges. This negative approach seems normal as I get older. I know if I manage to get identical new hinges they won't fit into the doorframes.

The thought of the cost and upheaval of replacing the 20-year-old units is even less attractive. Even if subcontractors did the fitting, they would no more suit my wife than would my efforts and frankly I don't fancy the job! Talking with fellow old farts, this waning urge to mend things, is not uncommon when one reaches the age when people with clipboards ignore you.

All through my working years I mended things. Not always permanently, but at least successfully and inexpensively. To my young children, Daddy would fix it! By the time they'd grown up, those days had passed. Broken toys were discarded. Teenage must-haves were plastic and sealed for life (Six months). Some time in the 80's I dumped the tools carried in the car, as there were no familiar components they'd fit!

I'm clumsier. For example, fiddling about trying to put a new battery in a wristwatch is a major exercise. My fingers are less dextrous and focussing close up is a problem. When my wife suggests I'm impatient, I snap back that I'm not! Ideally, the decline into old age should be a gentle diminution of powers, largely un-noticed as one potters about in a mythical sunlit rose garden. The truth is, things go wrong, as they've always done, but minor tasks now seem major.

Routine is the magic word. Unconsciously, I follow a pattern and any unplanned deviation irritates me. In the past, the planning of a holiday was as exciting as the trip. Now, when I'm persuaded to go on holiday, I find for weeks before, I'm ill at ease with nagging worries about missing flights, lousy hotels, losing passports or bouts of deadly diseases.

Putting things in perspective, I've little to complain about. Glancing at the obituaries, enjoying 21 years of pension with reasonable health is a big plus. I take the fact that I'm able to walk or cycle for an hour as normal, though the hills round here seem to get steeper. The inability to remember recent events is frustrating. It takes me longer to grasp concepts, but not so long to forget them again! The other day I was fiddling with a dead torch and my son pushily took over and fixed it, whilst I was trying to recall how to use my circuit tester.

If I remember, I'll e-mail these random jottings off to Adrian Whatsisname in the hope he'll humour an old chap and print them, before I forget I've typed them.
Dennis Goodwin
dennis@dennisgoodwin.wanadoo.co.uk

Reunions
Punch Card & Stevenage Labs Reunion Group
The speaker at the 2006 reunion, on Tuesday 3rd October, will be John Harper who will speak about the **Bombe Rebuild** project which should have achieved a successful conclusion by this date.

Tickets for this reunion are available from **Adrian Turner** at the address on page 1. Please send cheque for £10, made payable to **Punch Card Reunion** with

a **SAE** for return of ticket, which will pay for tea/coffee and buffet lunch. **All pensioners are welcome.**
Adrian Turner *01491 872012*
ICL Australia

Albert Cook can be contacted via email at **albertcook@optusnet.com.au**
ICL Central London Group

The next reunion will be on Wednesday 19 April 2006 at **The Flying Horse** at **52 Wilson Street**, from 12 noon. The pub is east of Finsbury Square.
John Doo 01245 259862

OBITUARIES
AN APPRECIATION

Derick Windsor lost his battle with cancer in September 2005. He'd fought it, knowing it was terminal, for at least a couple of years.

Being pragmatic, he grilled the experts on his chances and eventual outcome and then did his best to ignore it, as his way of coping with the inevitable.

A group of us from Essex arranged get-togethers, but he was difficult to get hold of, as he travelled extensively until he ran out of strength. Somehow, this was characteristic of Derick. He'd analyse the problem, dive straight in and throw all his energy at it.

With the Powers/Hollerith merger, he became my supervisor and late one afternoon I met him for the first time. I was struggling with a Bridge card reader on the RCA/ICT 1500. He charged in like the 7th Cavalry and fired a dozen questions at me as to what I'd done. Seeming to ignore my answer, he scanned the drawings, as he'd never seen the equipment before and was immediately involved. By first light, we'd fixed it. He impressed me with his approach to the problem and his hands-on management.

His enthusiasm for work didn't rub off on the majority of his gang. It was appreciated when we were in trouble, but most of us had a home to go to! I've occasionally rung him at 2am. The ever patient Iris would answer the phone with no irritation in her voice and Derick would come on, naming the diagram one should be investigating for that particular fault. He was usually right! On one occasion he hurried into site in the small hours and received two speeding tickets en route!

The same enthusiasm ensured we had a full social calendar, even if we didn't always wish to attend. At one of the dances, in the middle of a waltz, he broke away from his partner Iris and tapped a fellow engineer on the shoulder, as if it was an "excuse-me-waltz" to remind him to call in a certain site first thing on the Monday morning to pick up some spare part! We found it funny, though our wives didn't, but it was typical Derick! I felt he thought a sense of humour was out of place at work. Consequently, stories circulated of his serious attitude to work, many of them apocryphal.

We were investigating drop-outs on a tape deck with the tape support engineer. Derick breezed in and took over. He removed the offending reel of tape and peered at the leader, wiping it with his handkerchief, insisting it was dodgy and there were bits of oxide coming off the surface.

The support guy, Alan Blaney, mischievously suggested that could be a "bogey" off Derick's handkerchief. Solemnly, Derick shook his head and assured us it was definitely oxide!

As a staff rep. I crossed swords with him on a number of occasions. He was fair, saw the engineers' point of view, but his commitment to the company was total and he didn't easily compromise. My personal divorce from him came at the age of 50 when I'd had enough of courses and wasn't keen on the possibility of shift work. He couldn't see my point of view and felt I didn't belong in his team. It was a genuine inability to understand my lack of enthusiasm. I think he felt sorry for me! Nevertheless I was posted out of the area to the City. Generously, it was over 6 months before he decided he'd like the company car back, much to the dismay of my wife, who told him so at the next dance. But I was still acceptable socially, if not a member of the "Flying Circus"

On his retirement I got to know him better, typically he threw himself into "good works" and rallied his old team to the cause. He worked tirelessly for the handicapped, being the father of a severely handicapped son. I realised he had a droll sense of humour and though he still shot off in all directions without listening to the answer to the question he'd asked, he was good company. I'm sure others closer to him would testify that he did see the funny side of things, but to me he was serious, dedicated, frustrating and uniquely likeable.

For the first year of his prostate cancer he was as hyperactive as ever, in public. As it took its toll, he slowed. I suspect this he found most frustrating. In my 38 years with ICL, he was one of the handful of characters I respected, admired and found unforgettable. I'll miss him.
Dennis Goodwin

Frank Townsend

Frank was one of the first people I met when I went to work at FEHQ Luton in 1958. He died on the 6 January 2006 at the age of 74. In the early days of Bits & Bytes he was a marvellous contributor. He sent me 14 pages of manuscript, (it was before e-mails became popular) and told the story of his career in BTM/ICT/ICL. I was able to serialise his biography from October 1997 until October 1999 especially when copy was rather scarce. Rather than write an obituary I advise you to read his story in Bits and Bytes 5 to 9 which can be found on the ICL Pensioners' website **http://uk.fujitsu.com/pensioner** in the members' area.
Adrian Turner

ICL/Nortel Fund

Birmingh'm	Bunker	George	05/09/05	79
BRA04	MacLean	D G	12/12/05	68
DXB01	Watkins	Reginald C	24/01/06	72
Edinburgh	Grant	William G	11/06/05	80
FEL01	Cleaver	L J	27/01/06	82
	Barnett	Frederick	30/08/05	76
HOC01	Pover	N E	02/02/06	81
KID01	Pope	L	04/01/06	83
	Adderley	Jessie	12/07/05	82
	Trevers	Dorothy M	25/11/05	73
	Farr	Geoffrey	11/06/05	73
	Polles	Frederick	18/06/05	83
	Beech	W	29/08/05	80
	Cooper	John G	09/09/05	68
	Wade	Dennis	21/06/05	76
	Mitchell	T H	18/09/05	82

	Knowles	S L	15/12/05	77
	Hiscox	David	13/06/05	65
KID02	Palmer	J S	22/08/05	74
LET01	Pickett	L D	19/10/05	79
LET04	Noel	Ruby C	10/01/06	76
LET05	Murray	Irene J	08/06/05	79
	Murray	George W	13/10/05	83
	Tait	Mary P	18/11/05	78
	Threadinghm	D G	14/08/05	82
	Putnam	Leslie	09/10/05	81
	Clark	D A	19/01/06	78
	Speck	Leonard	07/12/05	79
	Ralley	R C	26/10/05	86
LON11	Hirst	G	31/12/05	85
LON13	Tomlinson	L C	16/10/05	75
LON30	Norman	P E	09/08/05	74
	Reynolds	Leonard F	14/08/05	78
LUT01	Giddins	A J	09/10/05	73
MAN01	Griffiths	John	03/02/06	74
	Mercer	Thomas	11/09/05	83
	Calvert	John G	21/12/05	77
	Lee	R B	16/10/06	70
MAN12	Farrelly	John P	05/06/05	84
	Taylor	Jonathan	16/06/05	68
SAF23	Starkey	John S	19/10/05	81
STE04	Leers	M H	21/08/05	84
	Pratt	D O	16/08/05	72
	Rudd	R E	13/11/05	78
	Windsor	Derick	19/09/05	75
WAK01	Austin	G	20/07/05	71
WAR01	Warr	Timothy F	16/06/05	72
WIN01	Goulstone	Andrew J	27/12/05	62
	Watts	Alicia P	19/06/05	76
	Dykes	John R	26/02/06	76

ICL Fund

Includes people who died in service

BRA01	Stocks	Ruth	04/03/04	50
	Parry	Carol L	12/11/05	45
	Penfold	Chris	24/09/05	70
ELS01	Cherry	Dennis C	02/01/06	69
FEL01	Frisby-Boor	John M	07/12/05	67
	Hart	June E	05/09/05	52
FEHQ	Townsend	Frank	06/01/06	74
HOM99	Burke	Michael J	28/11/05	71
	Fletcher	David E	28/01/06	53
	Miszkowski	Henryk K	17/12/05	50
	O'Brian	William	16/12/05	57
	Smith	Michael C	26/01/06	67
IRE02	Scullion	James H	03/11/05	66
KID01	Moore	Anthony C	21/10/06	70
	Nixon	Donald S	05/01/06	72
	Oliver	Susan	15/01/06	53
LON49	Baker	Henry G	05/11/05	68
LON65	Richards	Len	29/06/05	48
MAN23	Coombe	Steve	28/11/05	51
REA08	Robinson	Anthony R	18/11/05	63
SLH06	Dubber	Stephen	20/12/05	52
Sorbus	Pearce	Norman	06/10/05	69
SOU05	Smith	Gerald E	08/10/05	73
STE04	Bache	Donald S	04/02/06	68
	Jones	Edmund B	18/08/05	73
	Nash	Graham T	06/09/05	54
	Read	Michael T	25/10/05	69
STE09	Riddle	John W	22/09/05	75
	Thomason	Stephen J	09/08/05	43
STE10	Cobb	Alan F	19/09/05	62
STE12	Sutton	John	03/01/06	69
STE14	Griffith	Clarence	29/08/05	77

STN02	Ferguson	Susan E	31/08/05	41
WAK01	Everitt	Andrew D	22/10/05	37
	Lyon	Harry P	31/08/05	70
WAR04	Hunt	Geoffrey	17/09/05	64
WAR08	Rowland	John	05/10/05	52

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Pensioners' Directory

Tony Riley maintains the directory for those pensioners who are on the Internet and want their email address and career details published.

His email address is: **tonyriley@europe.com**

Pensioners' Website

The website for ICL Group pensioners is **http://uk.fujitsu.com/pensioner**

News items are published as they arise, and a monthly news update is published at the time that pensioners get their payslips.

The site has a members area, including a directory of people who have registered - over 2900 have so far. Members can contact others on the directory using a message relay facility.

Bits & Bytes is also published on the website, and all previous issues are available in the members' area.

Saving Money

There are websites that can save you money. These list many items that you could buy on the High Street but can be delivered to your door for much less than even those shops that are "never knowingly undersold"

I have saved £150 when buying a camera and £230 when I bought an LCD Television.

www.shopping.com lists suppliers of non-food items and **www.ferretfixtures.co.uk** compares supermarket prices and informs you where you get two for the price of one and other promotional offers.

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the Autumn 2006 issue must be submitted by **1 Sept 2006**, but would be appreciated earlier.