Bits & Bytes

Editorial

This Spring 2013 edition has been delayed by a decision made by the Fujitsu Pensions department, who administer the ICL Pension Fund, not to provide obits.

During the 18 years that I have edited this newsletter I have always published a list of people who have died since the last edition. The people who were in the Nortel and ICL Pension Funds were remembered by those who worked with them over many years. I have recently been informed by the Pensions Dept. that they can no longer provide this information because of the Data Protection Act.

I have made representations to the company without success. I have received considerable support from Alan Gillman and Hamish Carmichael who have both written to the Fujitsu UK Head Office in Baker Street.

Alan wrote:

"Bits & Bytes fulfils a number of well worth roles, it keeps pensioners up to date with news of their company, it keeps them in touch with ex- colleagues and friends, and it supports re-union groups across the UK, all activities you as a HR professional would applaud.

A section of B&B that is always of interest is the obituaries, both ICL/Fujitsu & Nortel.

Not for morbid reasons, as it reminds readers of good times with those who have passed on. It gives the opportunity to pay respects and above all to offer support to bereaved partners, something I personally have often done.

To my surprise Adrian has told me he has been informed he will no longer receive the information to include in B&B from your ICL Pensions dept. Nortel however are continuing to provide the input on ex-ICL staff who were members of their scheme as a result of STC brief ownership of ICL.

I am sure the person or group who made the decision to stop the input to Adrian had their reason for the decision. However can I, on behalf of the many ex-ICL/Fujitsu employees who gave so much to support the company, often through difficult times, ask you and your Pensions dept. staff to review the decision in light of this input and hopefully continue to provide Adrian the information all readers of B&B regret to read but appreciate being made aware of.

When you have had time to consider this plea, I would very much appreciate a response".

Today, 25 March 2013, I have received the following email from Duncan Tait's PA.

"Duncan is taking this matter seriously and has asked for a review as soon as possible. We may not be able to review this before your publishing deadline as it is the close of the financial year.

We would also like to draw your attention to the announcement in the press today on pensions which we hope will show you that Duncan and the Company care about pensioners"

As you can see on the last page I do not have any names in the ICL Fund list. If the decision is reversed I will update this edition and it will be put on the website as soon as possible.

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Fujitsu News

To see the latest Press releases go to:
www.fujitsu.com/uk/news/pr/

Life in ICT/ICL

One Day at The Gas.

The Eastern Gas Board ('The Gas' as it was always known around London) had been an important customer for ICT (later ICL) ever since we replaced a 1401 with a 1904. Although there was always a fierce battle between ICT & IBM for new customers it was rare indeed for one to capture a large established customer from the other. Hence The Gas was always given special attention. It was a customer that always wanted to be at the cutting edge and pushed the boundaries of what was technically possible. (As one example, they had a cross country microwave link bringing in data via a multiplexor plus every exotic peri except a graph plotter). It seemed to come as something of a surprise to them when, one day after another crash, I pointed out that this policy was not conducive to extended uptime. However The Gas proved, in recompense, an excellent customer from every point of view. Indeed, so good was the relationship between our two organizations that engineers often had to remind themselves for whom they really worked. The Gas grew and grew; the '04 became a '4F, then a '4A, then the '4As multiplied....

This rapid growth led to the appearance of a Mr M., in charge of all I.T. at E.G.B. He took a keen interest in the Computer Room and even, wonder of wonders for a senior manager, spoke to the engineers. Since The Gas worked 24 hours a day and weekends, this

raised the question, at times, as to whom he should actually address. Indirectly, this led ICL to set up its Engineer-in-Charge course, but that is another story.

One day the time came for yet another 1900 to be installed. This was never easy physically since the site had high flights of stairs at both front & rear of the building. It needed the road at the rear to be closed so that a crane could lift the kit up to a flat landing, whence the engineers could push it into the Computer room. On this occasion all went well till the last cabinet was lifted. The crane driver remarked that it appeared much lighter than the rest. That was odd, and once landed, a quick peep inside revealed the reason: the last cabinet was empty. A rapid phone call to the Office went as follows:

Office: 'Does Mr M. know?'

Me: 'No.'

Office: 'Right, lock all the cabinets, get the Morris Traveller (which we kept on site), go down to Putney and take all you need from one of their machines.'

So I told the chaps the news and went off as bidden. Putney was quite helpful, considering the extra work we were giving their poor engineers. However when we had finished loading the Traveller with the required backplane, boards, cables etc, I was a little dismayed to find that the Traveller's tyres were now flat under the load and its rear mud flaps draped along the road. Luckily there was a garage next door, so I lurched there gingerly and put 55 psi in the tyres. They rose accordingly to a more encouraging level, but unfortunately there now appeared to be daylight under the front wheels and steering (not to mention braking) seemed to be a little deficient. I transferred all the weight I could to the front passenger seat & consulted my atlas for a route from Putney to Enfield that did not involve turning corners. It was a slow & quite absorbing drive back but the stuff was delivered without mishap and all we had to do was to keep Mr M. out of the way while we manhandled the lot up the steps and into the Computer Room. Mr M. came in just as we were wiring up. We told him we were installing the latest mod., (as mentioned, Mr M. always liked to have the latest level). He gave us the strangest look but said no more and (mercifully) left us to it. It all worked out in the end, though I sometimes wonder what happened to the devastated Putney machine, and I certainly wouldn't like to repeat that journey in to-day's traffic.

Varos Shahbazian

Life in BTM

I took a quick look at Rod Brown's site and was very interested in many of the links, most notably the BTM. You may not be aware that I joined BTM in September 1955 when the "Test and Research Division of BTM" was headed up by John Drewe, a Cambridge trained Graduate who offered me a position as a "Test Room Assistant" at £598 per annum. A salary which exceded my expectation by £98. Not much by today's standards but significantly better than REME had paid me during my two years National Service Conscription period.

The Test Room was part of No.3 Factory In Icknield Way Letchworth and was next door to No. 4 factory which produced "Specials". By the way, Peter Bonfield's father was Superintendent of the Engineering Development Workshop and responsible for all development component procurement at the

time. I work in Jim Woodhead's group on Tape to Card and Card to Tape Translation equipment; Bert Morton's Group was dedicated to the development of the Type 33 High Speed Card Punch. Another new starter, Reg Cook worked within this group. He and I were demobbed from REME within the same two weeks. Reg a trained "Radar Craftsman Technician" and myself a trained "Base Station High Powered Wireless Craftsman Technician". After my training I was posted into the Training establishment as a lecturer for the rest of my service period. God bless REME.

Earlier in the 1955 year John Coyne had brought new electronics experience into the "Wire Head Interpreter" group. John Keene, Doc Keene's son, was busy pursuing storage techniques, whilst a somewhat larger group worked desperately to improve the performance of both the Junior and Senior Rolling Total Tabulators which currently were products in customer offices.

Wally Gentle worked in an adjacent small building dedicated to cadmium and nickel plating in one half, and in the remaining area the processes for material heat-treatment and cyanide hardening was carried out. Wally survived for many years in spite of the fumes and could be found on most days eating his lunch-time sandwich sitting on an old rickety chair just outside the main door of his den.

Bert Morton and Jim Woodhead were members of Doc Keene's development team during the 1939-45 war, and to us new starters, they were characters in their own right. Bert never used an Avo to time camshafts on his machines. 110v (the general machine voltage) was his accepted safe voltage and he generally used his right hand with his two middle fingers withdrawn to his palm, and index and little fingers extended as probes, to "feel" the open and closed voltage conditions at the cam contact points. He warned his team against trying to emulate his success in this measuring technique.

Jim Woodhead too was a character. Jim would regularly go asleep at his desk at about 2pm irrespective of what he was doing. Mid sentence or even writing a letter for the typing pool - silence would prevail for about five minutes, the pen would scrawl to a stop, the words spoken would decrease in speed and volume to be replaced by heavy breathing, At the end of his snooze he would awake to continue the written or spoken sentence.

The Test Room was a great place to work. The engineering was exacting; precision mechanical small parts fashioned to tight tolerances by expert toolmaker-trained technicians, electronics replacing electro mechanics, solid state devices phasing out discrete components - the surge towards faster speeds and smaller and smaller devices - driven by the desire to achieve better performance of products in development.

Yes this was a stimulating place to be at that time, but no time to dwell on the past - Staying with the game, influencing the future, increasing the reliability of the products were yet to be achieved goals of the day if we were to have a future at all. I leave you to decide if we were successful or not.

Ted Foreshaw

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Norman Sanders

Ever since I put my ICL pension into payment and started to receive "Bits and Bytes" I have been meaning to get in touch.

I was hoping to be nicely retired and resting by now, but find myself still working as a contractor and as always, spending Monday to Friday staying in a hotel somewhere. I currently have a contract with Capgemini on the HMRC Aspire account and find it quite amazing that I have recently worked on technical refresh projects that refresh legacy HMRC systems still based on VME (Virtualised, Virtual Machine Environments), nothings new..

To get to the point as to why I have finally gotten off my backside and I am writing this email. My wife and I have now lived in Tattingstone in Suffolk for 24 years now and when we first moved in, we met a village resident, Norman Sanders who I believe was responsible for the formation of ICL. Norman back in the 60's worked in the Computer Industry for Boeing and many other leading Computing using Industries of the time. He was also involved in the development of Fortran. He was a graduate of Cambridge University along with his friend Harold Wilson. Who in the mid sixties wrote to Norman requesting his views on current Technology and any suggestions as to how Technology could be used as a differentiator between Labour and the Tories. Norman showed me Harold's letter from No 10 and his response to it. In it, Norman suggested the formation of the British Computer Company by merging Ferranti, English Electric etc.. Bundling operating systems and compilers, Television Conferencing (rather than Concord) and encouraging Post Office Telephones to provide data communications services.

I believe the rest is the history of the formation of ICL after Anthony Wedgwood Benn then oversaw the implementation Norman's suggestions. (White hot Technology).

However, Norman is still very active in the Village and he contacted me yesterday as an ex ICLer, in the hope that I could assist with finding anyone who worked on the Ferranti Atlas system, as along with his ex collegues, they are planning a 50th anniversary event. I feel sure I remember reading an account of recollections of working on Atlas in "Bits and Bytes" some time ago. So I wonder, would you have any records of anybody who might like to attend a reunion bash for Atlas?

It must be at least 20 years since we last met, I was in 2900 Communications Support and you in New Products Engineering.

I hope you are keeping well and I think you are doing a great job in keeping us all in touch with our ICL past.

Editors Note: Norman Sanders has authored several books on Computing and Project Management, the Decline and Fall of the British Empire and the Impossibility of the Euro; all dedicated to St. Merino, the Patron Saint of Those Having the Wool Pulled over their Eyes.

Paul Tomlinson
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BTM HEC / ICT 1200 Computer
Origins and Early Life

I once read that the definition of age is a desire to talk about the past. That is true of me as my wife often tells me. My article may be of particular interest to my contemporaries. However, I hope that it will be interesting and impart some historical knowledge to the younger members of our company and highlight where some of us oldies came from.

I had the pleasure of a visit and lunch with Dr Ray Bird on the 6th December 2012. He is a fit and active 89 and still enjoys horse riding holidays. Ray designed the BTM Hollerith Electronic Computer (HEC) / ICT 1200. We reminisced and exchanged anecdotes about those days and he allowed me to browse and photograph his memorabilia, including photos and his PhD thesis on the HEC4. He also kindly read and corrected my article.

Although this article is primarily about the BTM HEC/ ICT1200, the story really begins with Andrew Donald Booth (later Prof Booth). He developed an interest in computing methods during WW2, especially after a meeting in 1945 with Professor DR Hartree from Manchester University, when working on complex crystallography, under ID Bernal. After WW2, Bernal headed crystallography at Birkbeck College, London University and appointed Booth head of mathematical methods. This was a time when top academics thought that a handful of computers would meet all national needs. Booth was to make a significant contribution to early development of computers, but did not receive the full recognition that he deserved.

It is interesting to note that Booth's father was an engineer and inventor and no doubt influenced the young Andrew.

In 1946, Bernal secured funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to send Booth on a short trip to visit computer researchers in the USA. The only one to give Booth any time was John Von Neumann, a mathematician and computer researcher at Princeton University, one of the most brilliant minds of his time and a friend of Bernal. The following year Bernal secured further funding from the Foundation to send Booth and Kathleen Britten, shortly to become his wife, to work alongside Von Neumann. They were there from March to September 1947. Booth concentrated on hardware and circuitry and Kathleen on software and programming.

When Booth returned to Birkbeck College, he utilised Von Neumann's circuits and architecture. He liked the hardware divider, but found the hardware multiplier an abomination. He redesigned and improved it, to be known as the Booth Multiplier and to be used in computers for many years. He also designed the first small rotating drum memory, with a recorded clock track, so that the computer was always in time with and independent of speed variation of the drum. The drum was the basis of data and program storage and a huge step forward for its time. This was built by his father and they created a small company called Wharf Engineering Ltd.

At this time, computers were being developed in universities or large research institutions. The only four centres in the UK were Manchester University (with Ferranti), Cambridge University (later with Lyons), NPL National Physical Laboratories at Teddington (using Alan Turing's design) and Booth at Birkbeck College. The first three were very large, expensive and unsuitable for commercial use. Booth believed that a smaller, less expensive machine would

be of wider use and that most universities of the time could afford one. However, even his machines still resembled laboratory equipment and were unsuitable for commercial use. However, during the period 1947 to 1953, this tiny group at Birkbeck College produced three machines, ARC, SEC and APE(X)C, a truly remarkable achievement.

The next key event in the story was the development by IBM of the CPC or Card Programmed Calculator, as related by Dr Ray Bird. They sold 60 in 1951 and this really worried BTM who regarded it as a serious threat to their huge electro-mechanical accounting business. Fortunately, at that time, IBM machines did not handle sterling currency.

BTM recruited John Womersley from NPL Teddington. In 1944, Womersley had visited Harvard University to see the large electro-mechanical calculator, which was dubbed "Turing in Hardware". Also, in the late 1940's, after WW2, he studied computer development in universities around the world. These were primarily for scientific purposes and he realised that they would be far too large and too expensive for commercial use and the technology was totally inappropriate for a customer's office. However, the relatively smaller machine called APE(X)C, designed and under development by Booth at Birkbeck, influenced by his stint in the USA, offered a possible path. Also, Booth had a careful eye for cost which he built into his designs. Due to lack of space at Birkbeck, Booth was developing the prototype in his father's cold, rotting barn at Fenny Compton in Warwickshire.

On advice from Imperial College, London University, Womersley recruited Ray Bird from GEC to BTM. Ray had been commissioned in the RAF and spent the last three years of WW2 on radio and communications. He was a post graduate and had recently completed his Masters degree at Imperial College. Womersley arranged for him to visit academic and commercial computer research centres in the UK.

Booth at Birkbeck was on a tight budget and he needed input/output devices for the APE(X)C. As a result of negotiations between BTM Head Office and Booth/Birkbeck, BTM agreed to provide Booth with input/output card equipment, in return for access to Booth's APE(X)C design and circuits and to use them in BTM designs and developments.

In March 1951 BTM sent Ray Bird, with Bill Davis and Dickie Cox, to Fenny Compton, north of Banbury in Warwickshire, where they spent many freezing days and nights copying on paper Booth's architecture, drawings and plans. When they had finished, they returned to Icknield Way, Letchworth and built an example of it, the first prototype, which they called the HEC 1.

Later, they moved to No 3 factory, Letchworth and it was interesting to hear Ray Bird's anecdotes about Doc Keen. I have a high regard for Keen, having worked on the Bombe Rebuild with John Harper and having worked with Doc Keen for a few weeks in early 1958 at Morgan Crucible. He was still sniffy about the computer and electronic valves in general, and I find Ray's stories of Doc Keen amusing. He advised his staff "Don't you go and look at those electronic folks, they're poison and you'll get some infection" and "Just wait until a lorry goes past – the valves will fall out".

HEC 1 was really a hardwired machine and surprisingly reliable. It had a very small drum – 16 tracks of 16 words, total 256 words, one inch wide and

five and a half inches in diameter, running at 3000 rpm. Unlike Booth's drum, it had a toothed clock track, with space between words to give time for computing. It had only two registers, an accumulator and a multiplier. But again, a clever Booth design allowed the product to fill the accumulator and then continue into the multiplier register as the multiplier diminished to zero. Steve Hare and Cyril Mead adapted the E6/6 tabulator for the HEC 1 and the machine was first switched on in November 1951.

The questions that really mattered to the team were: Card read speed? How many columns? What code? How many print wheels? Is it sterling or decimal? These and the preoccupation with getting data in and out and with cost and reliability was the big difference between the commercial world and the university chaps.

At this point the company decided to exhibit the machine at the Business Efficiency Exhibition at Olympia. The result was the HEC 2. The drum capacity doubled to 32 tracks, 512 words. The machine was re-engineered and skinned, but was riddled with plugs and sockets, resulting in three time as many soldered joints as on HEC 1. Booth, who was still closely liaising with BTM and the team, took one look at it and correctly forecast it would be bloody unreliable. The machine was exhibited at Olympia in 1953.

The machine was further enhanced and engineered and launched as the HEC 2M. Seven were delivered in 1955/56, mostly to research organisations.

About this time, Womersley was to disappear from the scene. Booth continued working at Birkbeck College for a time. However, with escalating costs, tight funding and lack of opportunity, he left in 1962 to pursue a distinguished academic career in Canada. Following his departure, the department at Birkbeck ceased its hardware activities.

In Feb/Mar 1956, while in the RAF at Leuchers in Scotland, I had an initial interview in Glasgow with personnel manager Ted Reeves and the local service manager. I then had a formal three day interview and practical test in FEHQ Luton in April. I joined BTM in August 1956 and initially worked on two HEC 2M at the RAE and the ARA wind tunnel establishments near Bedford.

I worked alongside Norman Wood (who picked me up each morning in Luton) and Mike Crowther-Watson – he of the bird-pulling, red Morgan sports car. I had missed a training course by five or six weeks and my new boss, John Sherlock, decided to kick-start me on the job. I was furiously learning how the machine worked from drawings, questioning Norman and Mike and helping on the machine. This was good grounding, working on the computer, the tabulator and the punch. In late 1956, Mike would often disappear, which we put down to amorous pursuits. However, he eventually surfaced with a formal company suggestion for a clever electronic switch for the drum. Drum track switching was by high speed relays and a track switch involved a track switch delay in the program instruction. Mike's idea was an electronic switch between odd and even tracks and speeded up the programming, for which he was given an award.

My six or eight months there were very interesting, relaxed and sometimes amusing. One day, we had a card reader problem and Mike called Tom Cheshire, the site tab engineer. In those days engineers wore a

suit, collar and tie. Tom got to work, his head over the machine, with Mike leaning over to watch. But Mike leaned on the start button and the machine did one cycle, taking Tom's tie and pulling his head within a couple of inches of the works. Mike calmly took the scissors from Tom's bag and cut short his tie, which he wore for the rest of the day. I also remember often eating lunch with the two RAE programmers who often discussed their generous holiday entitlement and how much sick leave they had left to use. It was very strange to someone in a commercial firm and just out of the RAF.

During this time, Ray Bird and the design team were developing and beginning to build the HEC 4, later renamed the ICT 1201, aimed at commercial customers. Ray was to use the HEC 4 to underpin his thesis for his PhD under the wing of Prof Booth. My boss John Sherlock now moved me to the new Stevenage production and design centre. I was introduced to the production manager Jack Saville, who attached me to Peter Watts, building and commissioning the computers from scratch, a superb way to learn the machine. The machine had been enhanced to meet commercial needs and now had four registers and a drum capacity of 1024 words. It had a similar selenium diode matrix board to decode instructions and open the appropriate gates. The control panel usefully displayed the 40 bits of each register (32 on HEC 2M).

I was also introduced to two guys from 1/3 Letchworth, Rod Piggott and Dennis Howell, who were shortly to join FEHQ Luton. I helped them to modify tabulators for the HEC 4 – another superb way to learn. Also, for some reason, I had freedom to rove through the labs and got to know several people, who were to be useful later when installing and supporting the 1200. I particularly remember Dickie Cox who taught me a lot about the drums. I would squat on a wooden stool, along side Dickie, as he showed me how to set up the relays, how to check the head gaps with a 1 ½ thou feeler gauge and to set the drum/head gap using Rizla Red cigarette papers.
Alan Wray Watford

Mike Forrest LinkedIn posts

Who doesn't remember Mike Forrest? I met him at different places for the first time in 1981 when I working on secondment at EDHQ (at that time in Puteaux) as launch manager 1500R - later baptised as DRS20.

Several years later - after I returned from LON11 to HOL01 and Mike had a function at ICL Europe - he was upset that Ninian Eadie invited me to continue my participation in the OS review meetings: "He (that was me) doesn't represent Europe, I do!". Several nice stories about him in the ICL Anthologies.books.

I only got recruited into ICL because Mike Forrest either couldn't tolerate any of the existing HR candidates put before him ... or those he could bear couldn't tolerate working for him! Personally I found him great, though others could neither understand him nor accept his gratuitous rudeness. His sharp intellect impressed me, and his other redeeming feature was an appreciation of opera.

One of my HR colleagues once entered the great man's presence. "Have we been introduced?" barked Mike. "Bill Marshall" said my friend and held out his hand. The handshake was spurned with a typical Forrest put-down "The answer to the question is 'Yes' or 'no'. I never asked you your name!

You can see how he didn't always hit it off with people.

The first time I met Mike was when he came to review the latest mainframe developments at West Gorton in 1989. The presenter before me was Bob Holloway. Bob had barely said two words when Mike interrupted him. "Who do you work for?" demanded Mike. Bob explained who his manager was "and who does he work for?" and so it went on until Mike exclaimed "Yes I have heard of him. It is clear that you are far too junior to be in the same meeting as me"

One time Mike phoned WWS at STE10 demanding to speak to Glen Coiley who was out at the time. The manager who answered the phone tried to explain several times that Glen was not around and was not sure where he was, which Mike simply refused to accept. Mike then proceeded to use the immortal words "Do you know who I am?".
"No", was the response. "I'm Mike Forrest!!".
"Do you know who I am?", asked the STE10 manager
"No" said Mike
"Good, then F... Off Mike!!", and hung up
I'm proud to be able to say I was there.

Alvey Project People

I worked on a collaborative project involving ICL (Reading and Manchester) and am trying to organise a bit of a 30th anniversary get-together this year of people who worked together on it. (some, sadly, have passed on).

The specific person I was thinking of is a chap called Graham Young, who was a programmer on this with me. He was a great character (and drinker - so, who knows?!) and a bit of a stalwart of the Reading Social Club, where he dragged me for some pub sports on more than one happy occasion.

The head of the whole project was a lovely feller called Charlie Portman, who I do know died. There were other ICL-ers but I can't remember all their names, alas!

The project in question was the Alvey DHSS Large Demonstrator, the ICL team involved being (I think) called 'Knowledge Engineering'.

I worked at Logic at the time, but ended up working on-site at Kings House with Graham and another chap who I recently also hooked up.

Basically, do you have any idea of how I might try and track Graham down and see if he'd like to come and see his old muckas? And possibly some of these other former colleagues?
Gary Flood gary@garyflood.com

FAMILY FORTUNES

Grandparents are a low-risk, potentially high-gain investment. Carefully cultivated, they may provide a nice little nest egg. With no capital outlay, all that is required is regular visits, to remind the asset of your existence. Appearances should not be too frequent, as one might come across as pushy, rarely showing up, there is the danger they might forget you exist!

For the duration of one's visit, which decently should last a couple of hours, their interests are in your interest. After the usual pleasantries, when you can give a not too detailed run down of your activities, it'll be time for you show a keen interest in their somewhat restricted activities. Subject matter, in order of importance, will probably be:

Their health.
Commiserate with their ailments, agree with their criticism of doctors, the NHS and the local hospital.

TV
Accept their generalisation that "There is nothing on these days" Don't mention the TV permanently flickering away in the corner.

Cost of Living.
Nod in sympathy over the price of everything. It wouldn't help to point out the fish and chip dinner at a "bob" they go on about, was an hour's wage in those days and is still about an hours wage at £8. Nobody retired can imagine wages of £300 a week, rightly so, compared to the state pension.

The War
Bear with the familiar anecdotes, as it was the most exciting period of their lives and the harsh reality has been softened with time and fading memories.

By this time they'll be tiring and as there's nothing new in their routine for them to thrill you with, the time may drag. I know it's difficult, but don't fiddle with your Blackberry. It won't impress. They've a built-in resistance to technology. They didn't have it and see no reason for it now.

Any attempt to convince them that life cannot exist without one, will be met with indifference based on fear of the new.

To them the phone is for real emergencies, not imagined ones like ordering a pizza.

The gulf between lifestyles is so wide there is little common ground. It probably always was, but ironically the rate of change in technical matters makes communication now more difficult.

Life was tougher then, but simpler. If you didn't work, you starved. If you got sick, you suffered unless you could afford treatment.

They may seem stuffy, querulous, dogmatic and dismissive of modern trends as I viewed my parents. I remember my mother telling me that, as a flapper in the Twenties, she'd arrive home from a "hop" around 10.30 pm, assuring her inquiring father upstairs in bed, that it was only 9.30pm.

It'll happen to you, as it did to me, despite my thinking my generation was different.

Today it's a question of surviving in a more complicated world and you will, even if the grandparents decide to blow your potential inheritance on a world cruise!

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Life after ICT

Flossie undone

Once the headache of the last few weeks was over I decided it was time to spend a little more time at home and convince my Wife that I was not leaving her for my Girlfriend! However the phone rang and a voice said ' Could I speak to Flossie's Dad '. Dammit the word was out, the story was blown and I and all the others who had just spent over 12 days with our

Girlfriend had to face the fact that we had been discovered. Now just in case you think this is a story from a philanderer the truth is that I, along with others have spent just over ten years restoring and rebuilding the last working ICT1301 computer working in the world today. The home of the project has had to be sold so the farm in Kent where the old lady stood is now in other hands.

Quite rightly not everybody wants a 50 year old computer, even if it is in it's own huge shed ! So the project has had to find a new home and all of that against the clock as the final date meant that the machine would default to the new owner of the farm and with a scrap value of over £10k her fate would have been sealed. As the machine had survived at least two threats of being scrapped already in its life the chance that it would be lucky a third time was slim.

A lot of promotion of this project had been undertaken in the later part of 2012 in newspapers, on the radio and on Local Kent TV to prepare for the 50th year celebrations! But now we just needed to save it and fast. Step one was to assess the size of the task. Dead easy as it is BIG, Very BIG with a floor footprint of 25ft by 25ft , weighing in at a slim 5.5 tons this is no lightweight. Next problem was how do you staff a major move, and that is where ICL pensioners and other ex-employees who stay in touch come in. So raising a trembling hand and crying HELP on the internet we were very pleased to find a raft of people who wanted to help. We thinned the list down by stating a few facts like, sorry but there are no toilets and there is almost no heating, all we can offer you is a few cups of tea whilst the kettle continues to work and the satisfaction of knowing you are saving a piece of computing history. And would you believe it we still had a few brave souls willing to try it and almost freeze to death in the process.

February the 4th saw the first working day and with donated supplies of bubble wrap, copious supplies of Tea, Coffee and Hot Cuppa soups, we all mucked in. So collectively we stubbed our toes, cursed at the rusty jacking bolts and got very cold lying on a dusty concrete floor, but slowly the old Lady came apart. Working on days when people could get there and the temperature was above freezing we managed to complete and get the machine ready along with a mountain of spares to roll out of the door on the 25th Feb .

So instead of driving away and leaving the machine behind on the 25th I followed the three lorries holding this piece of computer history and at junction 8 of the M20 waved it a fond farewell as it was taken for a long rest before we put it all back together at The National Museum Of Computing. Its new home sometime this year (we hope), along with it go all of the kind acts of the people who have donated equipment and parts over the years, and the determination of all who toiled and froze as we worked to save it

So hats off to George Brown, John Ross, Andrew Berridge and his friend John. Further salutes to Andy Keene, Stuart Fyfe, Chris Hewitt and Steve Garnet. But above all, well done to you all, for proving to us over the years that this piece of our past life was worth saving.

Visit www.ict1301.co.uk for more news or come and see the machine in its new home, when we get it working again that is. People are already volunteering

for that as well, this is real Computer Conservation in action if ever I saw it.

Now all I have to do is explain that my Girlfriend has moved, and get my Wife to let me have even longer away days ! Any suggestions for excuses ?

Rod Brown

Reunions

ICL Central London

The next reunion will be on Wednesday **17 April 2013** at **The Shakespeare's Head, 64 Kingsway** from 12 noon. The pub is on the eastern side of Kingsway just south of Holborn tube station.

Bill Williams 020 7607 9408

256meteorahlhorn@gmail.com

Stevenage & Letchworth Old Boys (renamed Punch Card Reunion)

The annual reunion will take place on **Tuesday 1st October 2013** at Stevenage Labs STE04.

Please send £10 to Adrian Turner, 5, Nun's Acre, Goring-on-Thames, RG8 9BE. Cheques should be made payable to **Punch Card Reunion** and accompanied by a **SAE**.

Adrian Turner 01491 872012

Kidsgrove-Drawing-Office-&-Engineering Staff.

The Annual reunion is held at the Bleeding Wolf, Scholar Green on the first Monday in December. It's organised by Jeff Parker, but people can contact me by email.

brian@morrismail.co.uk

Watford-Harrow- Feltham

Mike Ray 01895 230194

Oxford Engineers

Ken Jones' daughter has written to me to tell me that her father died after a short illness on the 9 Dec 2012. I have not yet been told of a successor as the contact for this group.

ICL Australia

ian.pearson5@bigpond.com

Copthall House Newcastle Staffs

Bob Green 01782 615290

East Grinstead 81 Club

Gordon Franklin 01342 328479

East Midlands UB40s

Brian Skeldon 0115 9725119

ICL Double Majority Association

Joseph Gardner 01438 362806

ICL Midlands

Brian Trow 01785 257317

LEO Computers Society

John Andrews

GlobalLeoSociety@gmail.com

Liverpool Engineers

We now meet about midday on the second Wednesday of every month at Wetherspoons, Great Charlotte Street near Lime Street Station.

George Lynn 01744 29984

Surrey Engineers

Trevor Harding 01483 565144

trevor@harding14.plus.com

Tin Hut Reunion

Olaf Chedzoy 01278 741 269

West Gorton Reunion

Eric W Watts 01457 875080

West Branch Engineers

Eric Reynolds 01452 712047

West Kent Reunion

Ron Harding 01732 761076

ICL Old Buggas

Les Mowbray www.cuin.co.uk/oldbuggas/

ExICL Kidsgrove

Nick Edmonds 01270 585953

nick.edmonds@yahoo.co.uk

OBITUARIES

Tony Riley

Died 12 October 2012

1959: Joined English Electric. DEUCE site engineer at EE Whetstone, **1960**: Site Supervisor Stafford Main Works DEUCE IIA with mag. tape. **1962**: Midland Bank KDP10, London **1964**: Maintenance Development, Kidsgrove. Some test s/w for KDP10/KDF8. moved to Copthall House. Peripherals introduction. Test s/w and documentation distribution. Peripheral introduction on 2900. **1986**: Moved to MAN 05. 2900 Product introduction. Test and engineering s/w development. Retired December **1991**.

Nortel Fund

BIR03	Albert F	**Drake**	18/12/12	84
FEL01	Michael G	**Simpson**	18/02/13	74
HOM99	Norman B	**Partridge**	29/12/12	84
IRE01	PC	**Casterly**	07/10/12	81
KID01	Dorothy	**Brunt**	17/09/12	85
	William A	**Simmons**	08/02/13	91
	Tony A	**Sladin**	17/10/12	74
	Harvey	**Willett**	29/10/12	76
LET04	E	**Wall**	04/01/13	92
LET05	T H	**Cox**	16/12/12	88
	Alec	**Kay**	28/12/12	91
	F C	**Matthews**	11/02/13	88
	Robert P	**Richardson**	11/11/12	80
LET06	Geoffrey C	**Turner**	12/12/12	84
LON01	Robert W	**Davis**	10/01/13	68
LON03	Josephine	**Reffo**	24/09/12	84
LON11	J R	**Bache**	30/12/12	88
	William I	**Morrison**	06/11/12	82
LON15	Peter J	**Mullett**	03/11/12	89
LON31	George E	**Roberts**	25/01/13	82
MAN01	Nora B	**Acheson**	03/02/13	79
	Gordon A	**Gibson**	21/11/12	89
MAN12	Terence P	**Barlow**	11/12/12	79
	Eric D	**Finlayson**	09/10/12	68
	Robert	**Haslam**	13/02/13	87
REA08	Samuel A	**Irvine**	01/11/12	71
STE04	William B	**Tedford**	01/11/12	79
STE10	Francis	**Cremins**	04/12/12	76
WAK01	C H	**Dickinson**	15/12/12	87
	Harold	**Marshall**	16/09/12	87
Unknown Location				
	Stan	**Adams**	30/11/12	79
	R J	**Arthur**	18/11/12	80
	John	**Avsec**	30/12/12	75
	Edward E	**Bailey**	04/01/13	94
	Joseph	**Barlow**	01/11/12	89
	E	**Cartwright**	14/10/12	85

Alan	**Childs**	28/12/12	77				
Winifred	**Conley**	31/12/12	86				
E	**Daniels**	07/11/12	90				
John G	**Davies**	02/11/12	85				
Emily	**Gooch**	19/11/12	83	**LSA01**			
G R	**Grant**	28/10/12	80	**MAN01**			
Joseph A	**Hankey**	27/02/13	85				
William D	**Hayward**	09/02/13	81				
Anthony D	**Heaton**	28/12/12	69	**MAN05**	Tony	**Riley**	12/10/12
Philip H	**Hinde**	26/09/12	84				
Robert S	**Hughes**	21/01/13	75				
W W	**Hughes**	30/09/12	87	**MID01**			
Eric G	**Knight**	06/10/12	88	**REA08**			
J E	**Miller**	06/12/12	81	**STE04**			
Arthur	**Mills**	28/10/12	81				
Enid	**Moore**	09/12/12	81				
Robert H	**Morgan**	13/09/12	88	**STE09**			
Joan G	**Morris**	11/10/12	91				
Ernest	**Murray**	25/10/12	97	**STH04**			
Sylvia M	**Noden**	05/10/12	84	**TEL01**			
Terence	**Parker**	18/09/12	85	**TOP07**			
David E	**Prior**	04/01/13	71	**WIN01**			
John G C	**Procter**	04/01/13	87	**WSR01**			
John R	**Purcer**	24/12/12	81				
Irene	**Quinn**	01/02/13	82				
Jack	**Roscoe**	11/11/12	88				
Edward J	**Rowley**	12/01/13	95				
Frances	**Salmon**	13/01/13	84				
Barbara I	**Sharp**	17/11/12	92				
John	**Skeldon**	30/10/12	80				
Harry	**Smith**	23/12/12	86				
Anthony J	**Swain**	20/10/12	78				
Frank E	**Vaughan**	25/09/12	88				
May	**Vickers**	14/10/12	93				
C R	**Ward**	06/01/13	91				
Elsie E	**Wareing**	19/11/12	83				
Madge M	**Watts**	02/12/12	92				
John J	**White**	23/01/13	76				
Arthur	**Williams**	12/10/12	91				
William F	**Wood**	28/12/12	80				
Deker P	**Woods**	13/10/12	89				

ICL Fund

BRA01

BRA05
BRS06
BTN01
DIMA97
EDI04
ELS01
EXE04
FEL01

GAT01

HAM02
HOM99

IRE02

KID01

Fujitsu Pensions Website

https://fujitsu.pensiondetails.co.uk

The new Fujitsu Pensions website has been launched to the full ICL Plan membership in phases. All registered members on this website have been mailed with an invitation to register on the new website, and mailing to all ICL Pension Plan members will be done shortly (to over 18,000 people in all).

Please be reminded that the new website will not have a members directory listing other members or facilities to contact them.

Although ICL pensioners have appreciated the member networking facilities on this website the ICL Pension Plan Trustees and the Company have decided not to carry these forward. It is now up to individual ICL people themselves to keep in touch with former colleagues via social networking or snail mail!

To access Bits & Bytes click on the link given on the bottom of the home page of this new website

Bits & Bytes

Rod Brown has set up a repository for B&B at his website **www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk**. The Spring and Autumn editions of B&B will be available in the last week of March and September each year. Please make a note in your diaries to access the website on a regular basis.

Rod also has other interesting information about historic ICL computers on that website – to view click on the links on the left hand column. The two ICL Anthologies produced by Hamish Carmichael are also on this site.

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the **Autumn 2013** issue must be submitted by **1 September 2013**, but would be appreciated earlier.