Editorial

Another year has gone, a new one begins and it will soon be Christmas again! I am sure that all readers recognise this phenomenon. Time and ageing are two things that I cannot understand.

I have just received an email from Wally Pellatt who worked with me and a small group of 542/550/555 engineers based in Victoria House in 1959. Like me he continued with the company for 36 years, but our paths never crossed since those early days. We have had a very interesting telephone conversation recalling names of people, sites and machines.

Another very interesting ex-engineer I have made contact with as a result of Bits & Bytes is Don Adams who has a wonderful website **www.ventnorradar.co.uk**. Don like many other early computer engineers, including myself, served in the forces where we learnt our electronics. His website details square-bashing and he recounts the daily routines and living conditions in HM Forces in the 1950s. I thought that he must have kept a diary as all names and places are detailed. He assures me that he just remembers without any documentation to remind him. I recommend that all readers of B&B look at this website as it has links to many interesting things especially to early BTM/ICT/ICL machines.

The Computer Conservation Society is doing a fine job in saving hardware and software from the early days of the company. Just recently I have been contacted by Bill Gallagher in Ireland who is producing a modern day emulator of the 2812 and 7903 DCPs. Tim Marwood who was the project manager for the PF56 has provided some amazing copies of documents from 1969 and 70 to fill in the gaps of who were the designers, namely Alan Walton, Ray Jones, and Dave Warner.

I am still very concerned that the deaths of our old colleagues in the ICL Pension Fund are unknown to us. I urge all of you in the ICL Fund to register with the Fujitsu Pension Fund website at https://fujitsu.pensiondetails.co.uk and indicate that when you leave this mortal coil you would like your death to be reported in Bits & Bytes.

I have set up a page on Facebook called **ICL Pensioners** which many people have accessed and posted pictures. Have a look at it and post your pictures!

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LIDO

I joined ICT as a Student Apprentice back in 1965 & spent 4 years training including the mandatory stint at Engineering Training School Letchworth under the watchful eye of Bob Garrard the ICT Training Officer.

After graduating, I worked at the Labs in Stevenage on project LIDO (Logic In Diagrams Out) under Dennis Wise & the ubiquitous Keith Crook. Indeed, I even remember Keith Crook's team unveiling the totally unapproved game of 'TANKS' used to test the converted TV's which were interfaced to the 1900 series machines in order to provide graphical output for the tracking programs on project LIDO.

I spent many enjoyable hours playing badminton with the ICL team - along with Keith Bennett who was my section leader at the time.

Since leaving ICL (for family reasons) I've worked for numerous organisations, including Lucas Aerospace, Local Government, British Leyland & AT&T Istel. My last role was in management - recruiting & running a development department of 15 developing communications hardware & software. I tried to apply the principles which I had learnt during my time at ICL - and succeeded to a large extent with high standards and innovation being a top priority. We gained numerous patents for the work we undertook and managed to gain major market sectors in the Travel Industry.

I do not think that these outcomes would have been achieved had it not been for the professional training I received at ICL. I think it is a great loss that the UK has lost an organisation like ICL - it's principles engendered the very best in what was a cutting edge industry.
Terry Williams

How Things Change

Over the Christmas / New Year break I treated myself and my computer to a new back-up disc. In the post-Christmas euphoria, I decided that only the best would do and spent a whole £75 on a Seagate 2TB 'Backup Plus Slim' portable drive.

Being of a certain disposition (Asperger syndrome probably!) and background (mainframe sales support) it did not take me long before I started making some comparisons and calculations. I seem to remember that when the FDS20G discs (also Seagate discs?) were announced round about 1990 the cost of a 5GB module was £45,000. One thing that has not changed is the nominal and usable capacities are not the same so, for the sake of simplicity, I shall use the nominal capacities for the following calculations. Over the

past 25 years the cost of a GB of storage has dropped from £9,000 to 3.75p; a factor of 240,000. Looked at another way, 2TB of disc store in 1990 would have cost £18 million plus the cost of controllers, connection, etc. For an order that size I would have been tempted to offer a bit of a discount! Would any of our systems in 1990 have been capable of supporting 2TB of disc store? It would have needed 100 disc cabinets and 25 controllers for a start and would have occupied quite a lot of floor space. For better or for worse I do not have the FDS20G cabinet dimensions so cannot give you ratios for floor space or volume occupied. I rather suspect that it has shrunk by an even greater factor than the purchase price. If anyone has that information and the inclination to make the comparison, the approximate dimensions of my 2TB disc are 7.5 x 11.4 x 1.1 cm (or 3" x 4 ½" x 7/16" in old money).

Phil Sugden

From Aurelia Road to the stars

Firstly, although I am essentially new to the ICL newsletter, I do encourage you to carry on - so many of these legacy histories, and the associated stories and people connections, are gradually being lost

The reason for chasing you down is; I am an ex-ICL Thornton Heath (Aurelia Road) employee. Reaching the ripe age of nearly 63, I have become interested in documenting some life recollections, however I have completely failed to dredge up anything about the ICL factory where I started my working life as an apprentice Electronics Engineer (yes, they had Engineering apprenticeships then!). I'm very interested in learning anything of the history, ex-staff and apprentice trainers, and any photos from this site. There just doesn't seem to be anything around on the 'net'. I wonder if your alumni have ever mentioned this factory where the 1900 and 2900 were built from scratch?

I was an apprentice from 1969 until it closed down in 1972, and used to cycle there from my then home in Coulsdson, Surrey. The first year was in the apprentice school next to the works canteen and bike sheds, then we were cycled through each production/assembly department. The plating shop still haunts me as the most dangerous place I ever worked!

I went on to qualify in the GPO, and then emigrated to Australia, where I now work in radio astronomy for which computing is fundamental to the science. Those reginal skills learned at ICL have stood me in good stead down the years.

I'd be happy to write a potted history of my time at Aurelia Road, if anyone is interested. I have a couple of photos, showing the 1st year apprentices in about 1969. Dave Gray and Mick Alchin are the only two names I recall, but more may come to me...

Best regards
Dr Phil Crosby
Perth, Australia

A stroke of luck or was it many?

Continuing Eddie Greatrex's story in B&B No41

In 1975 after choosing redundancy when the Stevenage Labs shut, I booked on to a DMS (Diploma in Management Studies) course and had just started studies when I was asked if I would wind-up the equipment in the Stevenage Labs. 5/6 factory and de-commission and send the respective equipment to the relevant sites, namely West Gorton and Kidsgrove with some going to Bracknell. During this period of approximately 3 months, I was still doing the DMS course and working evenings, de-commissioning the kit at Stevenage Labs/5/6 factory. I came in one evening to find an envelope on my desk asking me to see a certain Mr. John Freer on the next morning; this alarmed me somewhat as I knew John was a Director of the Company and I thought that this was the end of my activities.

I did not know it at the time, although I do now, Geoff Smith who was Personnel at that time with the onerous task of running down operations in Stevenage had kindly mentioned my name to John who at that time was starting up a new company called CPI-Data Peripherals Ltd. The new operation was to be located in the 5/6 Factory with the aim of developing High Speed Tape drives (PE/GCR 1600/6250bpi) for the three parent companies, who were ICL/CDC (Control Data Corporation)/NCR (National Cash Register). The shareholding was split equally between the three, but after a year this was found to be unworkable and CDC was given the management control with 60% and the other two having 20% each. At this time in late 1975 there were only 4 employees, these being John Freer - MD, George Roberts - Engineering Director, Jim Prentice - Finance Director and myself, as Facilities Manager. I had little idea at this time what this role would entail - but I soon found out!

First I had to clear all the machinery that was left in 5/6 Factory and sell it off and essentially clear the whole 56,000 sq.ft. to four bare walls and start from scratch. John presented me with a Five Year plan giving manpower figures and potential activities (i.e. designing the High Speed Tape Drive) and said "Off you go I have other issues to address!!" This was a completely new challenge for me as it meant figuring out what telephone system we required, how were we catering for a canteen what furniture did we require etc. During the early start-up, we did not require the whole 56,000 sq.ft. factory (as you can imagine - 4 staff), so I set about seeking tenants to fill the unoccupied space, by erecting temporary partitions and letting out for varying rates of rent, parcels of space. This worked quite well until the time came to move the engineers down from Kidsgrove who were to design and develop the Tape Drive (ATS-111) for the parent companies. Things moved pretty fast from then on where I was faced with reducing the space rented out and providing the equipment required for the engineers to start on their tasks. The largest and most challenging of those tasks, for me, was the scoping and having built and tested, was the environmental chamber. This was specified by Charles Randall, the Project Manager of the ATS-111 and me sourcing a company which could deliver. Having hunted around, with one visit to France to review an Environmental Chamber manufacturer, I ended up assigning the contract to build the unit to a company based in Cambridge, U.K. who did a superb job, achieving the specification that was required, meeting the temperature and humidity extremes needed to test the tape drive.

Following a visit from the CDC HQ staff, shortly after the reassignment of shares, this included Tom Kamp -President of Peripheral Products CDC, Dick Sakoweicz- Programme Manager/Business Development Manager and several others. I was then

asked to become Programme Manager of the ATS-111 project reporting to John Freer/George Roberts AND Dick Sakoweicz and then promoted to Business Development Manager, whilst still running with the Facilities Managers job, which was quite a challenge.

Another challenge, especially for the design team and George Roberts in particular, was each of the shareholders wanted a different configuration of the tape drive. ICL wanted all bells and whistles, CDC wanted an OEM model, all stripped down and NCR wanted something in between. I am afraid I was not strong enough at that time to push back and get agreement to the ICL model, which could then be stripped of the various components to meet the other specifications!

We were then tasked with having to start building Band Printers which at that time were being manufactured in Rochester, Michigan U.S.A. I continued at CPI-DPL until 1982 when I was asked to transfer to UPL (United Peripherals Limited) where they were manufacturing the 300Mb SMD drives. Again the company was at that time designing a Disk Drive of 80Mb in an 8 inch format which we though was pretty leading edge!! Our MD at that time, Ed Dougherty (Ex Burroughs), took out a pack of 10 cigarettes and said that if we thought this was going small, then think again - how right he was.

From UPL I was then transferred to CDC in Wales where the factory was located at the very top of the Brecon Beacons (to get the clean air) where they manufactured Magnetic Tape and 300/80 Mb Disk packs, again for the use of the parent companies and other OEM's such as Nixdorf. This plant was managed by Tony Wassall, a great guy, who had at one time been my MD at CPI-DPL. However, we were having great difficulty in maintaining constant quality on both tape and disk pack lines and CDC decided to bring over the heavies with the net result I opted to leave the company after just under 22 years continuous service.

As I said as my title to this piece: - "A stroke of luck or was it many"?

To round off my career, after this I worked for Burroughs Unisys Lotus Developments BaaN - Holland Arontis AG - Germany - where all of these roles entailed World Wide travel and locations culminating finally in retiring at 64 and then working on a couple of start-ups.

Eddie Greatrex

Plus Ça Change
Continuing Nigel Greenaway's story from B&B No41
Cycles of Change
Thinking back to the early days of my career with ICL and Fujitsu, there are three facets of the industry from the 1970s that I would like to pick up on, and follow through to the situation that exists today.

Things that seem familiar keep coming around, but the environment and the capability of implementing them is different each time, though the basic ideas remain pretty constant

Of course, the world is very different now, but many of the fundamentals for IT today were envisaged in an earlier form during the 1970s.

So the three aspects that I would like to briefly discuss are: -
Virtualisation
Cloud Services
Development staff
Virtualisation
Virtualisation enables more efficient use of server resources and Virtual Machines (VMs) provide mechanisms for managing workloads. However, this concept isn't new – in fact ICL introduced this concept on their New Range systems (introduced as the ICL 2900 series in 1974) with their Virtual Machine Environment (VME) operating systems – the clue is in the name.

In recent years, organisations the world over have been virtualising their workloads to get better utilisation and management of their Unix and Windows systems. New suppliers have been setup and evolved to satisfy this requirement. Of course, this all seemed new and ground-breaking to our younger colleagues who had never encountered ICL mainframes (other brands are also available).
Cloud Services
In the 1970's many organisations did not purchase their own hardware but used a bureau model where the user simply submitted a job often as a pack of punched cards, without having to worry about employing operators, systems people or the hardware and its environment, nor its management and maintenance.

Bureaus were largely superseded during the 80s and 90s as organisations acquired their own IT in order to have greater control. Of course, the complexity was still there and gradually organisations tended to outsource more and more of their IT with systems integrators taking over the infrastructure and hosting responsibilities with operations and development often also being outsourced as well.

This trend is now reversing with a general shift back from outsourcers to use of one or more cloud providers under customer control. Cloud services may exist anywhere that is accessible over the internet and, once again, isolate customers from the implementation details whilst providing them with the capability of growing and shrinking their usage as demanded by their business. The hardware and cloud services are all managed by cloud suppliers who, to most intents and purposes, can be considered the computer bureaus of today.
Development Staff
In the1970s many of ICL's customers were IT-literate and wanted to do many things themselves rather than leaving it all to a large supplier. As capabilities grew and IT became more complex, the use of outsourcers and systems integrators became widespread, but as discussed above, organisations are now taking back control and responsibility for many aspects. One part of this is the so called digital trend where many customers wish to either take code development back in-house or manage a number of small organisations to develop code for them. Thus, customer relationships are continually changing as development responsibility moves between themselves and suppliers in a cyclical manner.

These recurrent trends can be comforting to experienced (≡older) staff because we've seen (some of) it all before. Whilst the technology used will change, a good basic idea (like style and good music) never goes out of fashion.

Thus, experienced staff are needed to manage developments and to pass their knowledge onto successive generations.
Fujitsu Technical Community Rejuvenated

Something else that 'went away' and has come round again is a company Distinguished Engineer scheme. This facilitates knowledge sharing through a company-wide network of role model technologists who are encouraged to communicate with each other and share views on current best practice. The scheme also provides personal recognition of outstanding technical performance. It is run by a group of Fellows who are personally appointed by the senior executive in the region (currently the Head of Fujitsu EMEIA). Being a Fellow is the highest technical accolade that the Company can award. Details of the ICL Fellow's scheme are available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ICL_Fellows (another aspects of things coming around again is a reference to issue 6 of Bits & Bytes in that article).

I was fortunate to be appointed as an ICL Distinguished Engineer in 1995 and an ICL Fellow in 1997.

Major company reorganisations meant that the scheme sunk in 2002-4 through a lack of management sponsorship at the time.

However, in 2012, I was delighted to be approached (along with the two other ICL Fellows still working for the company) to assist in setting up a Fujitsu scheme. This currently consists of 9 Fujitsu Fellows and some 140 Fujitsu Distinguished Engineers (FDEs).

The scheme is now stretching outside of the UK and Ireland. Four further Fellows are being appointed from the EMEIA region and FDEs across the region will be appointed within the next year. Thus, the current scheme will be bigger and better able to influence the direction of the company as a whole than the old ICL scheme was. Once again, the reinvention has moved things on but builds on foundations laid in a previous era.

We recently met with some of the ICL Fellows who gave us valuable insights when we presented the current situation with some key technologies to them.

Back to the Future

Incidentally, I can still grow hair and enjoy drinking, but I mostly leave it to the weekend these days (the drinking that is). Over the years, many of my ideas have come to me in pubs – indeed, the shape of this article was conceived in one. You can decide whether that shows through or not but it's another thing that remains much the same over the years!

Finally, a pensioner, Alan Thomson, recently presented to the FDEs on the 1900 range. The 1900s are one thing that won't be back but the audience saw many of the parallels between engineering in the 1960's and todays challenges.

Truly, there is little that is completely new in the world!

Nig Greenaway. Fujitsu Fellow

LEO Computer Society

The article about the 40 column system for trunk calls was most timely as I was with some people last Thursday and we were discussing the LEO systems that produced all the bills in the country, and read the 40 column cards at 2,000 per minute (with pocket select) using Uptime readers made in Sweden.

The LEO Computers Society email address is Secretary@LEO-Computers.org.uk (can you put @ signs in Bits and Bytes?) and the web site is at http://www.leo-computers.org.uk/

There will be a reunion in the Middle Temple, London on **Sunday, April 10th 2016.** Details on the web site.

FAR FROM THE MALDON CROWD

Browsing through an Essex map, I came across the names of Sybil Hedingham and Tolleshunt D'Arcy.

It brought to mind the apocryphal story about the village signpost with the directions," To Sybil Hedingham and Tolleshunt D'Arcy", where a wag had added "*a son*",

I realised I had at least a couple of characters for a plot. Determined to improve the image of Essex, I decided to use local dialect words, confident it would appeal to discerning readers.

TOLLESHUNT D'ARCY, one of the TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS, was the wayward heir of Sir BOWERS GIFFORD M.P. Maintaining a family tradition, he had his way with SYBIL HEDINGHAM, the slightly WIMBISH heiress of CASTLE HEDINGHAM, when her drawbridge was down.

A FEERING of WRABNESS was present with THE RODINGS, for he was betrothed to MARGARET RODING. Her brothers AYTHORPE and BEAUCHAMP RODING were incensed, vowing vengeance for his FOBBING, but were restrained by the ABBESS RODING, their aunt in the CHAPPEL, who made her POINT CLEAR, her niece could do better.

Things were getting UGLEY for Sir Bowers and he felt his position, as an MP was TENDRING to be ULTING. He applied for the Chiltern Hundreds. Unfortunately, the clerk to the Commons was PURLEIGH and BOXTED the WRITTLE application and so Sir Bowers was granted the Crown post of the CHAFFORD HUNDREDS, in the SOUTHEND of the county. This wasn't livestock country, more NAVESTOCK. Consequently, the soil was PLESHEY and it took much MUCKING and MESSING to improve the FOULNESS of the land. The labourers still used the FINGRINGHOE, so to improve the land, the introduction of the LAYER-de-la-HAYE method of producing animal feed was introduced. This was resented, as they felt he was BOCKING up their tradition. THUNDERSLEY and RAYNE triggered an outbreak of VANGE, the peasants were RAWRETH and they STISTED that the master was to blame. Some of the cattle showed signs of SHELLOW BOWELLS, but, fortunately, folk were ARDLEIGH and developed no signs of the dreaded DENGIE fever.

Eventually a GREAT WAKERING cleared the air, despite people being WEELEY, things improved, Sir Bowers prospered and became known as GAY BOWERS.

Meanwhile the ABBESS RODING had sent her agent CHIGNALL SMEALEY on a MATCHING errand to far BALSTONIA, where it was said HAROLD WOOD, a young merchant adventurer, had made a fortune in GREAT TARPOTS.

The agent had ARDLEIGH arrived before he and our hero were CRESSING back over the BRIGHTLINGSEA heading UPSHIRE where the Lady Margaret was NAZEING away and WARLEY tempted to enter the priory. Feeling LANGLEY and CLAVERING male company, her heart was FOBBING at the thought of our hero STEBBING into her life and BOVINGHER.

Soon the CANEWDEN couple were ORSETT to be wed. Though LOVE'S GREEN, just BORLEY a few months passed and she was showing signs of a HELIONS BUMPSTEAD.

On a MISTLEY morning soon after, a LITTLE BURSTEAD was born, the bells were TERLING and they all lived happily ever after.

Take PITSEA and have MERSEA on me. I know it isn't PURFLEET, but I think I've PRITTLEWELL reached the BEAZLEY END.
Dennis Goodwin

THE FIRST WORKING DAYS of THE OPTIMIST
(Pt 2 of Mike Leith's working diary)

I started in work (if you call it that – being paid to have fun I thought!) My first job was at 'Clive Courtenay (Photographic Flash) in a small 'shed' in Dorking (the name still exists in photographic circles except it's now just Courtenay Flash. The 'shed' was still there a few years back, - a kitchen furniture outlet then.

I got to know (and eventually married) the boss's secretary by going into her office to ask for some pins to hold my idea together (--–– a great chat-up line!)

At that time, I was going to College for HNC then HND. So had 1 day each week off for College. At Courtenay I was doing some prototype wiring work, but also helping the boss in the design of new ideas he was always having. I learnt about binary notation from him and even designed a binary counter for some digital scales that he was working on.

Eventually I saw an ad in The Sunday Express for engineers to join a newly formed EMIDEC 1100 (a fully- transistorised business computer by EMI). Of course EMI computers eventually became part of ICT then ICL then Fujitsu).

Thought it might be fun (ad said 'no experience required, just logical thought). So I went for interview at EMI Hayes Middx and got a letter by return asking 'could I start'. I had to leave Clive Courtenay (the boss said I'd regret it – I never did!). I was living with my parents in Horsham, so had to get 'digs' up in Hayes. (Weird - see later!!)

I attended a brief course given by design team and was put in 'sub-unit test section' to gain experience. My unit was to be the CRT display unit which I felt didn't seem to be much to do with the computer! So I got to staying on at night on my own (eerie silence) and 'playing' with the other sub-units on test.

My landlady didn't mind me being late and made me delicious sandwiches or an 'interesting' salad – not just lettuce and tomatoes but nuts, crisps and bits of ginger, raisins and other small goodies in it. I noticed something slightly unusual about her – but more of that later. I went to bed as soon as I had had my supper each night in the single room I had. An odd thing was that the room just had a single, dim, RED bulb in the main light!

Returning to my work progress, I got to chatting with the designers. I wanted to know how it multiplied and divided. They taught me. (Booth's algorithm I know now). Through the designers teaching me I learnt about the control sequencer and the arithmetic unit, etc etc.

Leaving sub-unit test and working on the main computer floor, I started staying behind when all had gone home, to 'play' with a whole machine (P1– 'Prototype1') on my own.

It was wonderful fun – just me playing with this huge great beast of a computer, with 4 Ampex tape decks, card readers, paper tape readers, two printers and its vast console. I got to know how to handle the whole thing, fix it and program it just by having it all to myself in the silence each evening!! What an opportunity – one that most people would NEVER get! I wrote test programs for it and quick sort routines and fast-find for the tape decks … A wonderful toy! I was eventually put as 'Engineer-in-Charge', and still have the large wooden sign board with my name on it which hung above that prototype computer. It's up in the loft for keepsake. Eventually I was asked if I would like to teach new engineers and develop a course for them. I loved it and stayed doing that all the rest of my working life with EMI/ICT/ICL/Fujitsu. (And after leaving Fujitsu, teaching at college)

Now a bit more about my 'digs'!

It was in Southall (Middx). There were only a few Asians and one Indian shop to be seen then, the early '60s. I say that because now it's apparently the new Bombay!

My landlady (Mrs X I'll call her) was a superb cook. Her husband was a thin, chain-smoking and chain-coughing long-distance lorry driver with a relaxed routine - he left every Monday at lunch time went down to the West Country with his lorry. Got all his deliveries done by Wednesday he told me (no tachos in those days!). He then went fishing and shooting with his fold-up shotgun the rest of the time!! He came home on Friday afternoon with ill-gotten fish and game birds for the pot! His arrival was usually just as I was leaving for home in Horsham. Very oddly he loaned me a book to 'read in bed'. The Diary of a Call-Girl' I think it was called. He loaned it with a great wink! Very peculiar, I thought!

So I was at his house with Mrs X and her two small children in the week. By now I was working a normal day in Hayes and coming 'home' to Southall in the evenings. As I wrote before, I noticed something slightly unusual about her behaviour. Or I thought so! So, I reckon would you!

She used to get into her nighty to watch TV with me, asking if I minded, saying that she felt relaxed in the evenings – no dressing gown on and no shame about her lack of modesty! And it showed!!

So there was I, a (by now) newly engaged man with Mrs X in semi undress, watching TV with me. Maybe hard to believe, but I just behaved politely as if nothing was amiss! But her cooking WAS first-class. In fact, she told me a few months later that she and her husband were selling up and leaving to buy a restaurant in St. Peter Port Guernsey – actually on the harbour front! She also told me that her husband was dying with lung cancer. He always had looked so terribly ill….

So that was the end of my strange 'non-experience' with Mrs X and I moved to a Mrs Carter, a terrible cook and perpetual moaner.

Shortly after that EMI Computers were bought by ICT – me with it – and I upped stumps to Letchworth. Lecturing at the ETC in Letchworth with my new-ish wife and newly-bought first house in Cambridgeshire.

I stayed with ICL/Fujitsu all my happy working life as I have written about in 'B&B' earlier. That prediction from the Boss at Courtenay WAS wrong!

A POSTSCIPT (Re: Mrs X)

My wife and I had a holiday in Guernsey within a few years of getting married and went to see Mrs X in

her restaurant! Yes, she was there, looking radiant, and invited us to a meal on the house. She showed me her kitchens whist my wife stayed at the table with our first daughter.

In her kitchen she gave me a big hug and a whispered something that I didn't catch. Thought it prudent not to ask and just smiled!!!'

That was all slightly weird. (X, the unknown quantity?) but I think I have written the word weird before -------.

Mike Leith

YES

In the Spring of 2015 Adrian put a note in the editorial of Bits&Bytes edition 40 that copy was getting scarce and perhaps the Autumn edition would be the last. Perhaps there were only 12 readers with names matching the 12 contributors to that edition. Was it all worth it?

So we devised a 'cunning plan.'   In order to try and gauge the readership and whether people wanted B&B to continue people could email a 'yes' (or no) to Bitcount   at outlook dot com (I have deliberately spaced out the email address to stop scammers grabbing this email address)

Guess who got the job of counting the yes's?   At first the yeses were slow with only a couple in the first week and worse still, half that couple was my own 'yes'. Anyway, things gradually picked up and we have now passed the 200 mark of people saying 'Yes Adrian, keep going, we like it'.

We are now asking those 200+ readers to contact any work colleagues they know of and get them to add to the readership as it was surprising that so many emailed to say that they thought B&B finished when it ceased to appear in the post. Tell them it's still going, send in a 'yes' with perhaps a few details of their career. Best of all ask them to send in something Adrian can use in the next edition. I recognised many of those 200 names and I know some of those will definitely have a story or two to tell! You know who you are!!

I am hoping to expand my new career of counting emails and sifting out repeat yes's, by sending out a reminder when the B&B Spring 2016 edition is out, so make sure the email address above doesn't disappear into your junk folders. However, if you are reading this the reminder most probably did arrive ok! The reminder will come out in batches over the period of a week so I don't get registered as a spammer. If you haven't had a reminder and see this article, then please send in another 'yes.'

Vince Celano HOM99 since Dec 2009

Three Scots

A very, very long time ago, I was involved in remote support for 3900 series mainframes. This involved reserving a line and getting the customer to dial in to the network so that you could connect to his system and investigate the problem. It didn't always go smoothly.

'Out-of-hours' we had an additional handicap of using OPDs to connect to the network from home. One night just after 1am I took a call from our control centre - I was given a name and a contact number, which I double checked, not wanting to wake someone in error at this time of night.

The number rang for a while and then I received what seemed like a blast of abuse in a very strong Scottish accent. I had been expecting to speak to a Scots person as the customer was in Glasgow, but I was alarmed to realise that I couldn't understand a word this man said. I tried to be professional, told him who I was and why I was calling. I gave him the number to dial from his modem and asked him about any observations he had that may help with the problem. This resulted in what seemed like another torrent of abuse. I was trying to 'tune in' to his accent but wasn't having much luck - I thought I heard, "Cannae fookin' deel unyware!" so I asked if his modem was broken.

This took things up in both tone and anger levels, so trying a change of tactics, I asked him about the lights. His mainframe should have a hexadecimal display panel of error lights and it might give a clue to the problem.

He seemed to go ballistic. I tried to calm the situation and explained that I was having a great deal of trouble understanding his accent. I asked him again about the lights. He became explosive.

When he calmed slightly I took the bull by the horns and asked if there was anyone else I could talk to, as I just couldn't understand him. He muttered something that seemed like agreement and a moment later a female voice came on the phone - it was still a Scottish accent but she spoke slowly & clearly - I could understand her!

She explained that the power to their part of the building had gone off at about midnight and they were bumbling around by torchlight. So that's why her colleague had got so heated when I asked about the lights!

I asked if the vending machine was working - she said, "No".

I asked if the photocopier was working - she said, "No".

I asked if she had phoned the people responsible for the vending machine and/or the photocopier - she said, "No".

I asked, "Why not?"

"There's no point - we have a power cut," she said.

"Then why did you phone ICL?" I asked in bewilderment.

"It says in our work instructions that we 'must phone ICL after an hour if the computer doesn't work' so that's what we did," she explained brightly.

I headed back to bed with 'mixed emotions'.

Brian Brusey

Advice on Spammers

One of the most prolific ways of encouraging a spam attack is to broadcast email addresses unnecessarily, and one of the most frequent ways this occurs is through the propagation of humorous emails. When you receive such an email, how many times do you simply forward it on to a group of your friends so that they can enjoy a good laugh as well? If you forward an email without any amendment, you are forwarding any email addresses that were already in the email. How many times have you opened such an email only to find that the amusing part is preceded by many lines of email addresses of previous recipients who have simply forwarded it to their friends?

When you forward an email, please think about what will be important to the intended recipient, and

remove the rest. Remove all the details about who has seen the message before unless they are actually relevant to the recipients of your email. Similarly, remove all the junk from the end of the email that covers confidentiality of information relating to a previous sender. By forwarding the email, you may very well be infringing any confidentiality notice, so why advertise the fact. Some virus scanners will also add their own advertisements to the end of an email. Does your recipient need to know about previous virus checks? Also, look for any unwanted attachments and discard them. If they do not add value to the email why waste time and mailbox space by sending them.

NEVER FORWARD AN EMAIL AS AN ATTACHMENT except when the recipient will need to see the full details associated with the email. Normally, this will only be the case if you are reporting a potential virus to your antivirus company, or you are having a problem transferring a particular email. An email forwarded as an attachment has additional information relating to the mail servers that have forwarded it. To a spammer, this additional information may give them another route by which they can propagate their evil messages.

So, getting rid of email addresses from emails you forward helps protect previous recipients of those emails. You can also improve the protection of your target audience for your email. If you are sending an email to more than one person, put your recipients as BCC addresses, unless you need them to be aware of who else has received the email. For humorous emails, it is unlikely that your recipients will need to know who else has received the email. By hiding the names of multiple recipients using BCC, if one of them accidentally releases the email to spammers, then it is only your own address that is at risk. If your mail service requires an address in the TO field, put in your own address. It will already be in the FROM field, so sending the email to yourself does not significantly increase your own risk. Many email clients, such as Outlook Express, will allow you to define a mail rule so that email from specific addresses will be deleted from the server without being downloaded back to your PC. If you sent the email, you should already have a copy and do not need to fetch another one.

Richard Taylor

Third ICL Anthology!

I've been busy on other matters for the last few months (specifically a large book on family history), but am now focussing again on matters ICL.
People have so far provided 64 generous anecdotes, but I need a lot more
Dik Leatherdale has provided a splendid number of cartoons, spoof Company announcements, and other such, which I will try to interweave.

I've also received a series of magnificent newsletters from Australia, from which I have permission to carve extracts
So I think I'm better than half way there, but not by much.

Incidentally, did nothing amusing or interesting ever happen in Manufacturing? Why are there no Manufacturing anecdotes? Come on, you Manufacturing chaps!
Hamish Carmichael jwscarmichael (at) gmail.com

Reunions
Stevenage & Letchworth Old Boys (renamed Punch Card Reunion)
The annual reunion will take place on **Tuesday 4th October 2016** at Stevenage Labs STE04.

As yet nobody has volunteered to give a talk! If no one person wants to speak for 30 mins I suggest that all attendees come prepared with an anecdote from their time in the company so that we won't be sitting around doing nothing!

Please send £15 to Adrian Turner, 5, Nun's Acre, Goring-On-Thames, RG8 9BE. Cheques should be made payable to **Punch Card Reunion.**

There is no need to provide a SAE, as I will not be issuing tickets.

Payment can also be made via Internet Banking, ring me for the bank details.
Adrian Turner 01491 872012

Newcastle Friday Club
On the first Friday of each month Ex (and current) ICL/Fujitsu employees from the North East meet for a beer and bite at Wetherspoons Quayside Pub in Newcastle; we meet at 12:30, and any Ex ICL/Fujitsu people from the North East or who have had any contact with the North East are welcome.
Mike Green 0191 386 6787

ICL Central London
The next reunion will be on Wednesday **20 April 2016** 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(at)gmail.com

MOD MOB
Retired and active staff from the London and MOD UK unit has met up for a number of years now, so we have now established ourselves as a sociable group of individuals. The date of the next meeting will be posted on Rod Brown's B&B Repository website.

Anyone who is retired or active and wishes to meet up with individuals who worked anywhere on MOD contracts or in the group is welcome. Lots of people worked in CHOTS as well as in the main MOD team and all are welcome, security clearance not required, just bring a smile. Email to **modmob(at)shedlandz.co.uk** for enquiries

Kidsgrove-Drawing-Office
The Annual reunion is held at the Bleeding Wolf, Scholar Green on the first Monday in December
brian(at)morrismail.co.uk

Watford-Harrow- Feltham
Mike Ray 01895 230194

East Grinstead 81 Club
Gordon Franklin 01342 328479

East Midlands UB40s
Brian Skeldon 0115 9725119

ICL Double Majority Association
ICL Midlands
Brian Trow 01785 257317

LEO Computers Society
John Andrews
GlobalLeoSociety(at)gmail.com

Liverpool Engineers

We now meet about midday on the second Wednesday of every month at Weatherspoon's, Great Charlotte Street near Lime Street Station.
Bill Wood 0151 426 4025

Surrey Engineers
Trevor Harding 01483 565144
trevor(at)harding14.plus.com

West Gorton Reunion
Eric W Watts 01457 875080

West Branch Engineers
Eric Reynolds has moved. No replacement notified.

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(at)yahoo.co.uk

OBITUARIES
Nortel Fund

Location	First	Surname	Date	Age
BRS06	David J	**Lye**	02/02/16	88
	John	**Pennington**	26/10/15	86
CRE01	David A	**Bennett**	07/12/15	89
ELS01	Joy	**Morgan**	26/01/16	87
GAT01	Thomas H	**Ferry**	06/12/15	85
GLA01	James J	**Cairns**	24/02/16	86
HOM99	Terrence G	**Furnival**	09/02/16	70
	Raymond	**Saker**	12/02/16	84
KID01	Ernest J	**Beckett**	09/10/15	83
	Brenda A	**Davies**	16/01/16	83
	Charles B	**Lawton**	14/12/15	79
	George W	**Williamson**	20/02/16	90
LET	Paul	**Woodhouse**	27/12/15	91
LET01	June C	**Hewson**	10/12/15	80
LET03	Winifred M	**Longhurst**	01/03/16	79
LET04	Barry	**Auburn**	06/10/15	82
LET05	Douglas C	**Batson**	22/10/15	92
	Antonio	**Colella**	15/12/15	87
	Gerald K	**Eversden**	02/01/16	89
	Joseph	**Filep**	06/12/15	80
	Noreen A	**Hills**	05/10/15	83
	Winifred I	**Jefferies**	09/02/16	90
	Kenneth J	**Mather**	04/12/15	85
	Raymond G	**Mitchell**	22/12/15	91
	Michael J	**Skinns**	02/10/15	81
	William J	**Woodward**	29/01/16	72
LET06	Frank E	**Mead**	03/02/16	84
LON11	Ulrich E	**Schaebbicke**	14/10/15	71
LON24	David E	**Barnwell**	25/10/15	66
LON30	Roy H	**Arklie**	22/02/16	84
	Peter C	**Brown**	12/11/15	85
LON31	Ronald C	**Dearn**	14/11/15	79
	Richard H	**Graves**	02/01/16	95
	Albert	**Pratt**	24/10/15	83
MAN12	John A	**Hemmings**	28/11/15	82
	Edward	**Patterson**	25/11/15	80
REA08	Douglas	**Chandler**	13/11/15	90
	Hillary F	**Mathias**	20/11/15	90
STE04	Percy G	**Irwin**	25/02/16	90
	Alan	**Matthews**	13/11/15	82
	Kenneth A	**Pailes**	24/11/15	91
STE08	George K	**Blencowe**	29/02/16	83
TAP01	Geoffrey S	**Walker**	19/11/15	90
WSR01	Raymond	**French**	29/12/15	80
	Jeffery E	**Neal**	05/01/16	73

No Known Location	First	Surname	Date	Age
	John F	**Allen**	20/01/16	96
	Jack	**Ashton**	12/01/16	92
	Keith F	**Bason**	29/11/15	78
	William L	**Baxter**	21/10/15	91
	Kenneth C	**Bingham**	19/01/16	89
	Kathleen	**Boddy**	02/12/15	90
	John L	**Bonney**	12/11/15	85
	Charles	**Boone**	26/09/15	68
	Ellen A	**Brett**	14/10/15	86
	Edward	**Chadwick**	05/01/16	89
	Joseph	**Cowsill**	28/10/15	95
LON11?	Geoffrey R	**Cross**	18/12/15	81
	Michael F	**Cumming**	26/01/16	88
	Laurence F	**Daly**	10/10/15	98
	Kenneth C	**Evans**	27/11/15	95
	Dennis W	**Everall**	17/01/16	85
	William R	**Fiddler**	28/11/15	92
	William P	**Gillott**	15/09/15	82
	Reginald W	**Gilmore**	28/01/16	93
	Abell	**Hamlett**	22/01/16	92
	Sidney J	**Hampshire**	22/09/15	88
	Reginald K	**Harding**	08/11/15	72
	Ellen	**Harrison**	21/02/16	93
	Patricia H	**Hirst**	15/09/15	92
	Eric	**Holdsworth**	08/10/15	88
	Derek T	**Kember**	23/01/16	74
	Margaret E	**Livesey**	10/01/16	87
	Peter	**Logan**	12/11/15	79
	Harold G	**Luby**	14/10/15	75
	Philip	**Lonsdale**	11/12/15	79
	Tomas E	**Moesen**	26/11/15	89
	Hilda	**Niblo**	13/12/15	82
	Thomas	**Nicholson**	04/10/15	87
	Mervyn E	**Owen**	26/11/15	73
	George P	**Palmer**	03/01/16	92
	John B	**Peake**	03/11/15	81
	Brian	**Penlington**	17/01/16	71
	Frank L	**Pigott**	26/01/16	94
	Margaret	**Roberts**	17/10/15	90
	Will	**Rose**	08/01/16	103
	Alan J	**Rutter**	08/10/15	68
	Herbert A	**Sale**	09/02/16	84
	John	**Shirley**	15/11/15	77
	John V	**Simms**	16/02/16	84
	Leslie J	**Telling**	18/10/15	88
	Edwin J	**Thompson**	29/11/15	98
	Ethel	**Woolgar**	13/02/16	94
	Frank A	**Worrall**	17/12/15	84

Fujitsu Pensions Website
https://fujitsu.pensiondetails.co.uk
To access Bits & Bytes click on the link given on the very bottom of the home page.
01235 797788

Bits & Bytes Archive
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.
www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk

NEXT ISSUE
Copy for the Autumn 2016 issue must be submitted by 1 September 2016, but would be appreciated earlier.