Bits & Bytes

Editorial

I write my 33rd editorial with great disappointment (to put it mildly, and that's not like me)..............

Up to now the Pensions department have mailed printed copies of this newsletter to ICL pensioners – to a large list of readers. But the Trustees of the ICL Pension Plan and the company have decided to cease printing and mailing this newsletter after this issue. I am not at all happy about this decision and have made representations but to no avail.

I intend to continue producing B&B, and hope it will continue to get to readers by some way or another – see suggested new arrangements set out in the next article. I have been producing Bits & Bytes since 1995 on my own PC and my own internet link. I don't get paid a penny for doing it, but I started it because I was a loyal member of a company that supported its staff and its pensioners. It seems times and the company have changed.

B&B has kept ICL people informed about "their company" in their retirement, and has enabled them to keep in touch with their old colleagues and be informed of the deaths of old mates.

I realise that many pensioners are now silver surfers and can access the online electronic version of the newsletter, but there some who are not on the internet. Particularly the very old or those with very little money to buy a PC and learn all about the internet. There was a Fujitsu Press Release on the 7 July 2011, which you can read in this edition, which expresses the `digital divide' in our society between those on the internet and those not. In the light of that, the decision made not to fund the printed Bits and Bytes is rather disappointing.

For those not on the internet I realise that it is no use posting updates on the web – and a form is included with this last mailing to help work about future arrangements.

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Distribution of B & B

For many years the company has supported the distribution of the Bits & Bytes newsletter and a website for ICL pensioners.

Following the closure of the ICL Pension Plan to further contributions, the Trustees and the Pensions Department have reviewed what communications to provide for Plan members. There is a drive for cost reduction throughout the Fujitsu UK company, which staff are well aware of.

The Pensions Administration system for the ICL Plan uses a pension's industry standard application package, and the system is being extended with some more facilities for members. The new system will provide online `my pension account' facilities and pension forecast facilities – a benefit for deferred Plan members.

The new system will include a new `Fujitsu Pensions' website which will provide information for all ICL Plan members, replacing what is currently provided on separate websites for staff and for pensioners. The information provided will be limited to that required for the delivery of pensions, and will not include the additional member support and networking facilities currently provided on the ICL Pensioners website. That has been decided by the Trustees and the Pensions Department for cost reasons. It has also been decided to cease supporting the printing and distribution of the Bits & Bytes newsletter.

The editors of the Pensioners website and of Bits & Bytes have had discussions in the last month with the Pensions Department which led to requests to the Trustees – and to discussion at the Trustee Board meeting in early September. However, the changes as above were confirmed – with a timescale of early 2012, and with communication for members on introduction and transition before then. That gives some time for members to make our own arrangements about future member support communication.

A new independent website for ICL people is being developed by members, and is expected to run alongside the new Fujitsu Pensions website – see the item of the back page for details.

The Autumn 2011 issue of Bits & Bytes will be the last to be printed and distributed by the Pensions Department. Sending out paper copies does incur significant costs compared with publishing online.

This issue and the archive of previous issues is available online on the current ICL Pensioners website, and will be on the new website for ICL people. It is recognised that there are readers of Bits & Bytes who may not be able to arrange to get a copy from a website, and a form is included with this issue to find how many people this would affect. Please read the form and complete and return it if you need to get a paper copy - but bear in mind that any arrangements will be up to members and that the costs of mailing will have to be paid for.

I have been pursuing the above in my role as a pensioner representative – a role that the company no longer recognises following the closure of the IPMC last October – but that is another topic!

Alan Thomson Pensioner Topics editor for the ICL Pensioners website

INHUMAN RESOURCES

It has been my pleasure to contribute to "Bits & Bytes" for a number of years. I've got a few bees out of my bonnet and ground a number of axes without any effect on society other than making me feel better and entertaining at least a dozen kind readers who have been aware of my stuff.

This however is different and I feel strongly about it. Fujitsu regard us as expendable.

It seems as we're all in this together, according to the Government, and economy is the watchword, as if pensioners haven't practiced it since retiring. Therefore the distribution of our magazine is a luxury Fujitsu can't afford. As an ICL Rep. I occasionally pointed out Japanese companies as paternalistic and their moral duty to their employees from "womb to tomb" I never thought they would lose face and as a multi-million yen enterprise would discard a few thousand pensioners for a few thousand quid savings of petty cash.

The claim we can keep in touch electronically is fair enough, for those who can afford to be on line. What about those who older Powers and Hollerith Relics who aren't PC literate or computer interested? They already lose out with offers or timetables only available on line.

A Fujitsu Report suggests only 15% of pensioners contact the local councils for information on line. The other 85% must be waiting on the phone to be put through to the right department! The company's non-understanding of getting old, is reflected in Adrian being told we could set up a Facebook site. I know of a few ex-colleagues who have been bullied on to Twitter, I-pad, Tablets or Blackberries by their grandchildren and even less who actively use the invasive, expensive monster.

I suspect a minority of readers download our journal and most prefer the printed page. Why would you wish to store my words of wisdom in a "cloud" when bound copies of our magazine are a tactile reminder of my breathless prose?

In a decade or so, the printed word may be as dead as a goodly percentage of the readers, hopefully Fujitsu won't be among the departed. Surely, for that brief span they could do the honourable Japanese thing and maintain the distribution of "Bits & Bytes" that links the housebound with the able, the on line with the disconnected, so we all know of reunions, who are dead, not forgetting my ramblings.

There are not many big employers where, twenty years after their demise, the ex-staff care about the present group and wish to keep in touch with their old colleagues. The idea of loyally serving 35 years may seem bizarre now, but without the dedication we showed, there wouldn't be a British arm of Fujitsu today and before dismissing us as doddery old farts the young at Head Office might ponder their future with a company that can be so cavalier with its pensioners' well being.

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Fujitsu News
Fujitsu Report: 'digital divide' for older citizens

London, 7 July 2011 – New research suggests a potential 'digital disconnect' between local authorities and older people according to an independent study commissioned by Fujitsu The findings of the report show a public sector keen to embrace the benefits which come from moving services online alongside some resistance from older citizens.

Key findings:

55% of councillors do not believe accessing services by internet is difficult

65% of older people say: "it would be difficult for me if local council services were only provided on the internet"

94% of councillors say: "my council is encouraging more people to use the local council website for information about local services"

73% of older people would still visit or phone the local council to receive services even if more services were online

86% of councillors agree that more people using the internet to access their services saves their council money

Just 15% of older people have used a local council website to find information

In the wake of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review all government bodies are under increasing pressure to move as many services as possible online. Against this backdrop, Fujitsu commissioned research to ascertain the extent to which this move online will affect certain groups who may be marginalised by the digital services transition.

Nicole France, Fujitsu UK & Ireland marketing said, "The public sector is under immense pressure to make cost savings, create time efficiencies and enable better citizen experiences. Moving as many services online as possible is one way to do it but this process has to be managed carefully and considerately. Fujitsu commissioned this report to explore people's opinions more thoroughly and to create discussion to support the Government's digital initiatives."

France continues, "As one of the country's two largest IT suppliers to the public sector, it would be easy to think that Fujitsu would be advocating a wholesale push online. But it is clear from our research that this would be a counter-productive approach. Instead we want to work closely with Government to develop digital solutions which achieve savings whilst also meeting citizens' needs."

User-exchangeable parts

On 5 April 2011 Fujitsu announced that it is offering retailers the opportunity to drive down store IT support costs by allowing users to swap faulty parts for new ones instead of relying on Fujitsu engineers to fix relatively straightforward problems.

Fujitsu estimates that most High Street retailers and supermarkets could reduce the volume of calls to their helpdesks by up to 70% by enabling their own employees to replace faulty parts, such as PIN pads, screens and keyboards.

Cloud Consulting Service

On 31 March 2011 Fujitsu launched a Cloud Consulting service. The new Consultancy service will help senior IT decision makers to understand how they could potentially be using Cloud within their organisation.

After several years of industry hype and mounting expectation around Cloud, the consensus is that Cloud is set to move from theory to practice. Industry analyst Gartner has recently predicted that 20% of businesses will own no IT assets by 2012 and that $150 billion in global cloud-related revenues are expected by 2013.

Fujitsu offers a UK self-service Cloud

Fujitsu announced 16 May 2011 that it is adding to its existing and established Cloud portfolio by becoming the first of the major global ICT services vendors to launch a self-service Cloud platform in the UK.

Known as 'Fujitsu Global Cloud Platform', organisations will be able to take advantage of the most robust and reliable self-service Cloud-based ICT infrastructure (compute, storage, network, test and development) available to organisations today. It offers organisations a globally standardised approach to service – regardless of size of organisation.

At the heart of this Cloud offering is a self-service portal that allows organisations to retain full control and management but with a massive leap forward in terms of ICT productivity, flexibility and agility. The portal includes its own drag and drop functionality meaning system managers can easily change the configuration of servers, hard disks or load balancers. Equally, applications can be installed or firewall polices changed all from a drop-down menu.

Fujitsu STYLISTIC Q550 tablet

Fujitsu announced on 22 June 2011 that its enterprise ready tablet PC, the STYLISTIC Q550, has begun shipping from its Japanese manufacturing facilities. Designed to address the growing issue of data vulnerability and loss within enterprise caused by employees introducing non-secure tablet devices into the workplace, the Fujitsu STYLISTIC Q550 meets enterprises' most critical security and integration demands for flexible mobile computing.

As potentially vulnerable mobile devices continue to infiltrate workplaces, so CIOs are increasingly challenged with trying to ensure that corporate information is not at risk from loss or theft. Fujitsu addresses this challenge with the introduction of the STYLISTIC Q550, its 10.1-inch lightweight tablet PC that integrates seamlessly into existing IT infrastructures thanks to its Microsoft Windows 7 operating system support

Fujitsu's STYLISTIC Q550 delivers intuitive and productive mobile use, and provides the battery power for a full and flexible working day. Thanks to integrated security features such as a fingerprint scanner and SmartCard reader, plus optional Advanced Theft Protection (ATP) security packages, Fujitsu helps ensure that even if lost or stolen, data carried on the STYLISTIC Q550 remains protected – and can even be managed remotely.

Essex Epistle
A DYING BREED

The phone rang. It was a woman. Even though there was no background chatter, I had a feeling it was a call centre, but I was wrong.

"May I speak to Mr. Goodwin?" she asked.

"Speaking" I replied warily.

"Did you know Harry Clarke?" she enquired. "I'm his daughter and I found your name in his address book" From her manner I guessed he'd died.

With monotonous frequency I get calls from the children of friends and immediately brace myself for the inevitable bad news. In this case I was perplexed, as I couldn't place a Harry Clarke. I offered my condolences, made some vague sympathetic remarks and pointed out I hadn't really know him that well and hung up. Later, I recalled a "Nobby" Clark I'd known casually back in Powers days, but I couldn't place him, apart from the name.

Dwelling on the subject, I realise I know more dead people than living! With my sphere of activity decreasing, I make few new friends. I belong to a yoga group, a reading circle, a creative writing group, a Wine Circle, attend a retired men's lunch and enjoy an occasional quiz night. With fees doubling this season, it isn't likely I'm going to meet many new acquaintances and the older ones are not renewing membership. An ICL reunion as the high point of my year seems to sum up the giddy whirl of my social life. On my daily walk or bike ride, I nod to a few dog walkers, but they only converse with other doggy people, though I am on speaking terms with a few un-muzzled hounds. When cycling, I'd be too breathless to chat if I could catch up with any young Lycra-clad cyclist!

Opening the front door, on my return from today's walk, I was beckoned to the phone to hear the son of another ex-colleague, relaying news of his death. Two in a week and it's only Tuesday!

Feeling depressed, I dozed in the chair and had a dream that explained the situation. I was dead and the obituary list in "Bits & Bytes" were being forwarded to me by Adrian (he has contacts). I'd been designated the ICL recording angel and my duties were to vet the list and decide who went UP and who descended to the other place! It seemed I knew everybody and had the "dream" job of writing each final career development report. I was literally in Heaven, having a writing project for eternity!

The phone rang and my reverie was shattered. I fully expected it to be another one gone, but the lady on the phone wanted to know if had thought about replacing my windows, but as the 25-year guarantee didn't extend to me, I declined the deal and hung up.

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Letters & e-mails
THE OPTIMIST'S JOURNEY

I've always thought about writing to Bits and Bytes, but never have. However Roy Guy's excellent 'What to do in retirement' set me thinking and even typing! I always like to read in B&B about other people's 'journeys' – perhaps some who knew me, or heard of me, would like to know - whatever happened to 'old' Mike from the Letchworth Training Centre?? Well, he's still about - down in Gloucestershire!

I always enjoyed my time with ICL - firstly with EMI on the EMIDEC 1100 Computer Project in Hayes, Middx, staying in digs during the week, and travelling home, Horsham, Sussex, to my parents for weekend fishing in the Sussex lakes and streams. We from EMI, had that Staff number beginning '140' - a real 'giveaway'. There I knew that incredible Brian Procter, who went on to design the smaller 1900 computers in Stevenage Development Centre, and later became a Fellow of ICL. Also knew – not so well - Geoffrey Houndsfield (later Sir), FRS, Nobel Prize Winner, all-round inventor, designer of the EMIDEC 1100 ferrite core/transistor logic gate, and ultimately, of the 'whole body' scanner, which came about by his realisation that one could determine what was in any box by taking readings at all angles through it!

Then a company move, when EMI's computer interests were taken over by ICT. As I like talking, and had done EMIDEC 1100 teaching to engineers in Hayes, I went into the Training Centre at Letchworth.

Working with many talented lecturers eg Clive Fleckney (who had 'done' everything), and Dave Wilkinson, quiet, but who, I believe, went on to good academic things after leaving ICL, as did slightly 'wilder' Mike Fox, I remember many others, both comic and clever, as I am sure many readers will. I always tried to make teaching fun – even used a Mexican jumping bean, bought in Hitchin market, on the overhead projector which jumped about when put in the projector's warmth. It helped the lecture along by jumping into unexpected places – very good for a Logic Diagram, and keeping the class' attention!! Had an old rusty bike (found in a nearby ditch) for local shopping and kept permanently in the bike shed. Padlocked at first, but people kept stealing the padlocks- - - .

I then was asked to be the technical trainer in the SREPS (ICL Customer Service Representatives) venture. Greatly enjoyable – teaching at Wokefield Park and Beaumont – even still have a toolkit given to me in those days – in occasional use, (nobody ever asked for it back!). A lot of the tools in it are never used these days – IC chip extractors, and 'trim tools' for work on CRT circuits, even an EHT discharge tool! And I have an SREP's suit awaiting a trip to the Charity Shop! The SREPs' grey storm-proof anorak is still in winter use!!

When the idea of 'devolving training to the regions' arrived, my wife Pat and I jumped at the chance of another company move (weren't they generous moves in those days!) down to the Bristol area, buying in Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire. We chose a 1930s house that was, putting it mildly, in a 'bit of a state', but with about 1 acre of land/gardens, a huge overgrown pond, a 40'x12' empty greenhouse and an orchard covered in brambles higher than the trees - in a lovely, peaceful spot, with superb views. So, six months were spent with builders, DIY and all the dust and banging that went seemingly on and on. The house was actually re-roofed on that Nov 5th, with the dry rafters open to the sky like a vast skeleton and flaming celebration rockets zooming overhead. VERY SCARY! Our newly acquired abode didn't go up in flames however…we are still here, in the same house now…in 2011, after about 27 years! The garden gets seemingly bigger as our age increases, but self-sufficient in vegetables, fruit and greenhouse produce. The pond is a managed wildlife haven. And I pretend that all the mowing, digging and hedge-cutting keeps me fit – I'm sure it does, and a beer afterwards is, I feel, essential!

So - on to running the Training Facility in North Bristol's 'Aztec West'. I and another chap were teaching DRS300 to engineers. Great! No-one often came down, and we were left alone to 'run the shop'! Eventually I was told that that training facility was to close, and would I like a relocation to (I think) Old Windsor!! No way! Pat and I were happy where we lived, and have friends around, (we are both now considered the 'Senior Citizens' of our neighbourhood – even had our much younger neighbours call round in the depths of 2009's freezing winter to see if we were OK!!). And we had 'tamed' the land, so had both decided that this is where we would spend the rest of our days – so, NO moving! Thus I chose an offered alternative – going into the customer telephone support team in ICL Bristol Office, BUT with a special brief to 'go on the road' to other ICL locations giving training to phone support teams. That was OK, but eventually the annual redundancy 'cull' came along, (didn't we all know it – always just before Christmas) and I was chosen to be 'culled'! Fine by me – excellent terms, and I could buy my company car 'for a song'. Also, knowing this was likely to happen, I had already been accepted by nearby Stroud College as a Technical Lecturer in Computing. So, aged 53 – happily employed for another few years! Then, aged about 61, I replied to a Secondary School advert (Rednock School is about 4 miles from our house) as the Network Manager to get the School networked with servers and about 1400 logins! Amazingly, I was accepted out of many applicants – even got a telephone call within 4hrs of my interview, saying I had the job and could I start the next day!!! So I did a quick read-up on networking stuff and servers, (the interview panel seemed more confident than I that I was expert in such matters!!!) Anyway time went on, we got a really good working network set up (as well as talking, I always like setting up 'systems'). Now I needed extra staff, as the teachers came to rely on it more and more, and a 10min downtime set all my phones ringing - - 'Mike, what's happening, we can't get on with the lesson until you fix it!!' or, 'Nobody can log on in Room SC5, when will it be mended?'. After a year I was even given the School's annual staff award for excellence (wow- must have read up on networking OK!!!) So my 'team' started. It grew to 6. But the network by now had extended to the whole school, and Interactive Whiteboards and laptops were coming in. Wireless technology was needed. We started to be a support hub for nearby primary schools. It went on and on - - - .

So when I was about 68, the whole thing was getting too big for me, with lots of paper and admin work, which I hate, so I 'secretly' chose my successor from

my team and 'sent' him into a spare room for a few weeks with some hardware, and freedom to buy whatever software he needed to take the servers and clients into the latest platform, which I knew we needed badly - - . He did brilliantly, thus I handed in my resignation and the recommendation for my successor. The nicest thing ever said to me job-wise, was from our Headmaster, who, having read my letter, called me in and said 'Mike, what have we done to upset you (!) – you don't have to leave, you know. Stay as long as you want!' I explained. My reason was accepted. I parted sadly, but, I felt, at the right time. 'Always leave the party at its height' is an expression Pat taught me! They gave me two cases of wine and a generous book token as an end-of-term send-off, knowing Pat and I like something stronger than cocoa in the evenings, and I like 'techie' books!!

And now? Well, I keep 'front-edge' in PC knowledge and help friends out when needed, as a hobby. Gardening is non-stop, and cookery is a major hobby too – I do it all, every day. I do multi-media PC work, editing and producing films, do photography, write music with my 'synthesizer bank' and Yamaha Digital piano. I do lots of photography as well. We love entertaining, also try to go on a European river cruise each year. I now have a lovely classic bicycle (a Dawes Galaxy, circa 1980), so do most of the local shopping, using my pannier bags. My bus pass gives me free rides to nearby Nailsworth. I go about once a week for a bit of extra shopping in William's Kitchen, noted for its fresh fish, deli counter, and oyster bar (but I had too many once and was sick – I'll try oysters again another time!). Also there's a great pub/brewery there, so a pint before boarding the bus home is 'de rigueur'!! Our average age is 76, and still active and healthy. So, what to do in retirement? Don't ask – just do it and enjoy whatever you are capable of!!! (Oh, and try to keep as fit as your health allows, remembering - if at first you don't succeed, sky-diving is NOT FOR YOU!)
Mike Leith

A Sad Day

After 48 years I had a disaster, I happened to be hanging some pictures for my daughter over the 2010 Christmas period, and guess what, the head of my small ball peen hammer flew off and the end of the shaft fell apart.

I must admit I almost shed a tear. I was given this hammer in my ICT brown tool case suitcase in August 1962. Shortly after joining ICT as grade 2 G or E computer engineer. I was on a 1300/1301 course at Stevenage with Instructor Bill Hoyes. I am afraid I cannot remember the course number but do remember some of the people on the course. There was Ray Griffiths from Bristol, Barry Kelly from London (Selfridges) Peter Newton who went off to New Zealand Nor Anwar from London, a couple of lads from Sweden and two from Germany; it was certainly a cultural mix up on the course.

I joined ICT after my national service and remember the interview with Tony Russell and Clem Gallup at Putney Bridge House North, there was no Putney Bridge House South then. Why do I remember it, well I had to travel from the Island of Unst the most northerly island in the United Kingdom where I was stationed at Saxa Vord a radar installation., and it took me two days to get to Putney.

Following the interview I was offered a job to be based in Bristol, where my fiancé lived, who has now been my wife for forty-eight years. However I did not get to Bristol right away and was sent to Putney to work on the 1301 systems P3/1 and P3/2 with one inch tape units. During the period at Putney I met some tremendous people some who I am still in touch with and many I would like to be.

After three and a half years at Putney I eventually had a move to Bristol join the engineers looking after the Bristol Siddeley 1301, its claim to fame was four drums, a Bull card punch and half inch tape units.

After Bristol Siddeley I moved to Imperial Tobacco in the middle of Bristol to look after a 1902 with all the attendant long courses at Stevenage. The Imperial Tobacco machines' claim to fame, was it got flooded in the 1967 floods and it was not flooded with just water. On the day of the floods the 1933 printer was flooded above the print hammers so you can guess what it did to the 1902. Ray Grifiths and I must be the only two ICT/ICL engineers to actually hose pipe a computer to remove the unmentionables. I did hear that when it was returned to Stevenage it was made to work again. The flood however did me a good turn as Imperial took the second 1902A ever produced. So off I went to Stevenage again for yet another long course with Mike Leith.

From then I went through most of the computer ranges ICL produced and retired/redundant in 1991. That's now twenty years ago.

However back to a sad day, I still have the brown tool case, having over the years replaced the hinges and the locks, and probably still have all the tools that came with it, such as a 10 thou wink spanner, the original allen key black plastic case and the allen keys, and the set of feeler gauges . The white hard plastic box I am afraid disappeared years ago. I am sure there are many of you out there who still have your toolkit.

It's still a sad day. I have to replace the shaft of the hammer, but doing this will remind me of the hundreds of tremendous people I worked with during my thirty years with ICT/ICL and how we all worked our socks off to keep ICL the finest computer company we knew.
Tony York

People keep the Strangest Things!

One thing you can be sure of is the predilection of retired hardware and software engineers to keep a small memento or two of their working life, and why not? Since retiring myself I have tried to clear out the surplus, but keep finding that some of this useless junk, turns out to be useful to someone or other out there. First you throw away the manuals (but keep just one of a set), then the dross from the tool bag goes (but not the double ended thingy that removed card wrecks from the Mk3 Number Muncher); you know the way it goes! However, soon after retiring I got involved with a project to resurrect a piece of computing history, an ICT 1301, from the early 1960's (just something Strange that the owner had kept safe for about forty years in a big shed). I needed specialised tools to restore this machine (see ict1301.co.uk) and, much to my delight, creating a website and asking for help from the retired community (yes, that is all you pensioners) which resulted in tools, information and wishes of support

pouring in, some support coming as far away as New Zealand and Singapore (Thanks to Bruce and Mike Curley).

Now almost eight years down the track the project has a mostly working 1962 CPU and has demonstrated the machine to over 1,500 visitors from as young as seven to over 70 years of age. The numerate amongst you will have spotted that next year the machine is 50 years old itself (so how old does that make me?) Well, old enough to know that I can make a difference by trying, as indeed can we all. Also old enough to be trusted not only with my own project but also some older pieces of British computing history, and in some cases the one and only surviving example of such pure British Ingenuity!

But as I said before, people keep the strangest items! The ICT1301 project has long sought information about the ultimate design produced by Dr Raymond Bird and his CDL design team. The 1302 was the ICT tool to create a software driven, full time-sharing solution way back in 1964. It ran a software solution called "Executive" a word which will chill the blood of all 1900 people. Only six examples existed of the 1302 (considered long dead and buried). But one valiant individual in the form of Peter Ling, not only kept the technical information, but also a complete console from this rare machine. Much chasing around resulted when Peter finally wanted to dispose of this gem. Your dedicated editor of Bits & Bytes, Adrian Turner got involved and ensured the connection was completed! Peter has now kindly donated this precious item along with all the technical information into our care at the project.

So who are we? We are the Computer Conservation Society and we keep British computing history alive and working at Bletchley Park, the London Science Museum as well as the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. We also function as a contact point for students of computing history, other retired people out there. We write emulators and rebuild whole machines from Babbage's Difference Engine to new projects such as the EDSAC replica. All of which are more than just a gleam in our collective eye I assure you!

So as I said to begin with "People keep the strangest things". And Thank God they do! For more news visit www.ict1301.co.uk or www.computerconservationsociety.org and follow the links. Have you kept something strange yourself? Then let us know! It may not be as strange as you think.

I have got to go now and write an email to a Kindly Lady in Canada who kept a full set of software manuals for the Ferranti Pegasus computer, Strange? Well what do you think?
Rod Brown.

Coincidences

I was intrigued by and, as usual, very interested in Dennis Goodwin's stories of coincidences. I have had several somewhat unbelievable chance meetings. Clearly they aren't as rare as one would expect

In the 1970s I had a serious car accident in Sweden. On the ferry on our return I met a man who noticed me wincing with my six broken ribs. He asked if it was my wrecked car that they had all watched being towed on board and I related the story. Three weeks later, back at work, I visited a supplier of OCR

equipment in Reading. Again the story of my holiday mishap came up. At the next meeting he told me that he had met a potential customer in Gloucester who had a similar tale to tell, second hand. Yes - it was the man I had met briefly on the Bergen to Harwich ferry!

Some twelve years later I had a holiday in Venice & Florence with my wife and a friend. As we were queuing for check-in on the return flight from Pisa airport, a voice behind me said "Hello, Ray." It was Maurice Blackburn whom I had last seen at ICL, Bracknell at least a decade earlier. Maurice was then working as an independent IT engineering consultant and was just returning to the UK from a meeting with a client.

More recently a distant relative ["distant" in both senses: living in western Canada and seventh cousin, six times removed - or something like that] came over to see a golf tournament and phoned us from Scotland: "Can we meet up in London tomorrow?" she said. "We are only there for one day." Unfortunately we had a visitor from Australia staying and had arranged to take him to Oxford for the day so had to decline. You can probably guess the rest. We hadn't mentioned going to Oxford but, on the way back to the car park after touring the colleges, a voice from behind us said "Surely that can't be Ray Hennessy, can it?" Well I was and there were the Canadians who had just decided, on a whim, to look around the university before going to their Heathrow hotel.

But all this pales into the ordinary with my last one. In 2007 we decided to blue all our freebie Halifax & TSB shares on a round-the-world trip, particularly to stay with friends in New Zealand. One day we all took a trip down the east coast of North Island and stopped for coffee at a "Bird Garden" café, in the wilds of nowhere at all.

We decided not to look at the birds but, just as we were about to leave, a couple appeared from the wooded area where the special birds were housed and, as commonly happens with tourists, we got talking. They were obviously British and said they came from Gloucestershire. We said we were from near Reading. So far, so boring, Then they said "Oh where?" "You won't know it, it's just a suburb." To cut a rambling discussion short they turned out to have moved from our town 30 years ago, and, amazingly, we had known them very well indeed - shared clubs and societies, parties, protests, elections, campaigns, etc etc. Once we knew this they gradually became more familiar. We could see beyond the grey hair and newish specs the people they had once been. In fact my eldest daughter was best friends with their eldest!

As we said at the time, we had travelled 12000 miles just to see them again!

Yes, it is truly a global village now. Keep looking around you. There is bound to be someone from your past within hailing distance! It might be me - or Dennis. So at least stop and say hello!

Best wishes to all ICL-ers and especially to ex-LEO staff.
Ray Hennessy LON24 and SLH06 1959-1991

40K by 2014

The year I retired my dear family gave me an exercise bicycle for Christmas, expecting it to be used once or twice before being relegated to the garage on its way to the tip. But somehow I got hooked, and have done 25 minutes virtually every morning for the

last seventeen years. The first bike wore out, but its replacement has proved sturdier. I also improved it by fitting a reading shelf on the handlebars, so that I can do the Times crossword while I pedal. In addition it has a distance recorder so that I could fantasise about where all these notional miles were taking me.

Then the late great Alan Coren wrote a short piece about his exercise bicycle on which he imagined himself riding across Asia towards his target of Shanghai. I wrote him a note, saying that on my bike I was going to visit all the cousins in New Zealand and that, having landed at Kuala Lumpur over Christmas, I was finding it jolly hard work to regain altitude. I received a splendid reply, suggesting that if I took the northern route home we might meet in the contra flow in the Bering Straits.

The target has now been re-expressed: I aim to achieve 40,000 miles by the time I'm 80. Against that, the current mark is 35,500, with three years to go.
Hamish Carmichael

Reunions

ICL Central London
The next reunion will be on Wednesday **19 October 2011** 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 4 October 2011** at Stevenage Labs STE04 when the speaker will be Dave Clark. 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. Its 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 01865 340388
kenwynjones@aol.com

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 Hall leosoc@freenetname.co.uk

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.harding@iclway.co.uk

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
ICL/Nortel Fund

BIR03	Kenneth	**Woodward**	24/07/11	88
BRA01	David S	**Bogie**	11/03/11	76
BRA04	Sonia V C	**Thomson**	03/06/11	68
BSN01	June R	**Watson**	11/08/11	82
KID01	Douglas	**Baskerville**	29/05/11	85
	Michael J	**Ellis**	05/05/11	70
	M	**Jones**	21/05/11	84
	Harvey	**Simmonds**	11/06/11	82
	William	**Stoddard**	14/03/11	99
LET01	William J	**Palmer**	07/04/11	92
LET04	Cyril D	**Rayment**	26/08/11	87
LET05	C W	**Bourne**	25/05/11	86
	Eugenie	**Falkner**	30/05/11	86
	Alexander	**Rankin**	01/03/11	89
	Benjamin	**Seaby**	04/05/11	86
	Barry	**Willgrass**	20/07/11	83
LET06	William G	**Eyles**	22/08/11	86
LON11	Janet M	**O'Donnell**	02/07/11	65
	James	**Wilson**	05/04/11	84
LON30	D G	**Burton**	19/05/11	81
	David A	**Smith**	07/04/11	79
LON31	Robert A	**Canacott**	17/03/11	75
	Ramon H	**Schwarz**	01/05/11	81
MAN01	Raymond J	**Cory**	25/04/11	72
	Rose M	**Maguire**	29/04/11	73
	Edward A	**Smith**	19/05/11	76
MAN05	Henry E	**Collier**	13/05/11	86
	John F	**Mulryan**	31/05/11	88
	Betty I	**Roberts**	09/06/11	80
MAN12	James J	**McLaughlin**	03/06/11	76
REA01	Richard	**Brown**	22/06/11	73
REA02	John W	**French**	22/03/11	68
REA08	Irvin R	**Grainger**	04/07/11	80
STE04	Donald B	**Moss**	27/05/11	75
	Albert P	**Russell Rayner**	11/05/11	83
	David L	**Sykes**	25/04/11	79
STE12	John W	**Snowden**	16/04/11	82
WIN01	Donald E	**Walker**	04/04/11	83
WSR01	Norman R	**Feeley**	11/05/11	91
Unknown Location	Horace J	**Allison**	13/04/11	89

Vera	**Barry**		21/03/11	85
Menahem	**Bekhor**		05/05/11	80
L	**Beverley**		05/07/11	93
Geoffrey M	**Bird**		10/04/11	85
J	**Butler**		12/06/11	87
Mary	**Cannon**		26/04/11	89
S D	**Chapman**		31/07/11	91
Robert G	**Coates**		10/08/11	70
J K	**Cooke**		21/07/11	78
S	**Dent**		22/08/11	83
Archie	**Dermont**		05/05/11	88
K D	**Edmunds**		25/04/11	96
Edward V	**Evison**		19/05/11	84
A	**Foster**		20/06/11	90
John A	**Freer**		03/07/11	81
Edgar J	**French**		05/05/11	85
E L	**Godfrey**		29/07/11	87
F	**Grocott**		23/06/11	80
M	**Hankey**		09/07/11	83
R	**Hegarty**		27/07/11	95
W T	**Hitchings**		17/04/11	95
Catherine	**King**		17/06/11	61
Lucy J	**Knowles**		21/07/11	89
A E	**Lunt**		01/06/11	80
John A	**Marsden**		06/03/11	70
Joyce A	**Masters**		18/03/11	84
Jacques J	**Monteil**		21/05/11	89
Marjorie G	**Morrison**		21/04/11	93
Erika A	**Nutter**		29/04/11	90
George D	**Paradine**		02/07/11	80
Robert J	**Patterson**		05/04/11	87
Stanley G	**Powderhill**		04/08/11	87
Dennis G	**Pullen**		26/06/11	84
Irene F	**Rhodes**		29/04/11	89
Veronica	**Rochford**		26/02/11	87
WilliamH	**Rollinson**		19/03/11	80
Leslie	**Rosser**		15/06/11	87
Stephen E	**Stokes**		04/03/11	96
D G	**Tracey**		19/05/11	92
Joan W	**Whetter**		11/08/11	89
JV	**White**		18/06/11	85
D F	**Whitehead**		02/03/11	87

ICL Fund

Includes people who died in service

BRA01	Philip	**Gibson**	02/05/11	48
BRA03	David S	**Sedgeley**	15/04/11	79
BRA05	Guy A	**Dennis**	29/07/11	80
BRA06	Richard G	**Bunn**	26/04/11	59
BSN01	Donald G	**Cumming**	31/03/11	70
Bucks	Roy	**White**	05/08/11	63
CRE02	John A	**Colclough**	10/08/11	32
EDI01	Edmund	**Moretta**	13/07/11	69
EDI05	Alastair	**Johnstone**	26/02/11	70
FCY02	David	**Hewer**	19/06/11	73
FEL01	Ian S	**Hunter**	28/05/11	69
HMR08	Dennis S	**Packer**	18/06/11	63
HOM99	Patrica E	**Cardiff**	19/04/11	67
	Tony	**Church**	31/07/11	52
	Edward	**Dawson**	24/07/11	80
	George B	**Done**	16/06/11	79
	Ivan F	**Fry**	02/07/11	77
	John	**Hunter**	24/04/11	67
	David	**Lomax**	26/08/11	62
	Sean	**Priest**	28/11/10	44
	Manohar S	**Sehra**	16/05/11	53
HOU01	Susan	**Holmes**	16/04/11	56
IRE11	Denis H	**Finlay**	15/03/11	57

KID01	Derek	**Barlow**	29/03/11	77
	Wallace	**Rhodes**	05/02/11	76
	Herrick	**Thwaite**	17/03/11	78
	Geoffrey	**Wallis**	27/04/11	65
LET01	Thomas F	**Jenkins**	15/08/11	79
LET06	David W	**Chastney-Parr**	14/04/11	72
LEW02	Timothy D	**Lamb**	08/06/11	49
MAN01	James F	**Malone**	05/07/11	75
MAN05	Richard H	**Higgs**	17/07/11	73
	Gilbert E	**Willetts**	24/01/11	76
	John	**Waterworth**	25/03/11	73
MAN12	Harry	**Frost**	26/04/11	75
NEW05	Clifford	**Woods**	23/08/11	75
SLH01	Bernard	**Hodgson**	25/07/11	77
SLH06	Geoffrey	**Forgie**	07/08/11	71
	Jeremy B	**Higgs**	21/02/11	53
	Derick	**Jukes**	21/08/11	60
	Frank T	**Walker**	20/06/11	79
	Keith	**Jameson**	12/06/11	74
STE04	William G	**Manley**	24/06/11	73
STE09	Michael	**Thomas**	22/08/11	67
STE14	Trevor S	**Gee**	28/07/11	78
WIN01	David J	**Skailes**	21/05/11	79
WSR01	Edwin P	**Simms**	04/05/11	62

PENSIONERS' REPS

There has been no formal role for Pensioners' Reps since the ICL Pension Members Committee (the IPMC) was dissolved in October 2010. The following former reps can be contacted by phone, or by email via the ICL Pensioners Website.

Colin Marshall
01538 371618

Dik Leatherdale
020 8977 5893

Hilary Robinson
01270 882818

Alan Thomson
01344 422993

PENSIONERS' WEBSITES

The current website for ICL Plan pensioners is at **http://uk.fujitsu.com/pensioner**

It has the current and previous issues of B&B, along with a member's area.

This website will be replaced in early 2012 by two new websites – one for Fujitsu Pensions and one for ICL People. Both are currently under development. The initial version of ICL People website for ICL plan members is at **http://iclpeopleandpensions.org.uk**

The ICL People website will enable B&B to be viewed online. In addition Rod Brown has set up a a backup repository for B&B at his website at **www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk**. Rod also has other interesting information about historic ICL computers on that website – to view click on the links on the left hand column.

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the **Spring 2012** issue must be submitted by **1 February 2012**, but would be appreciated earlier.