

# Bits & Bytes

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No 43

## Editorial

I am writing this now as the Olympics have finished and I now have time to do more important things!

On Tuesday 4 October the annual Stevenage reunion takes place in the "Stevenage Labs" where many memorable ICT computers and peripherals were designed until it was closed in 1975. Some employees were persuaded to relocate to Kidsgrove and West Gorton, others decided to stay in the south.

I was lucky enough to join the PF56 design team in January 1969 as CESOs representative to ensure that the 2812 EDS 30 controller had built in facilities for it to be maintained when it was installed in the field. This October most of the design team will meet again in Stevenage. So far 20 people have paid £15 for the buffet lunch, many others have indicated that they will be there. (I need the money before the day!)

There is space for many more interested people. Details are in the Reunions section.



PF56/2812/7903

This is the first edition of Bits & Bytes to have photographs. In the absence of words, which seem to have dried up, I think that maybe this will become a publication similar to "Hello" or "OK"!

I met another ex ICL engineer the other day who thinks that Bits & Bytes has finished. Maybe it should! It's been going since October 1995 and I find it exceedingly difficult to get people to send me stories of their glorious past.

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## Atlas 1 Computer

I joined ICT in January 1964 around the time ICT took over the Ferranti computer division. This included the forerunner of the 1900 series from Ferranti Packard in Canada and the Atlas 1 Computer developed in conjunction with Manchester University. At the time of its inception the Atlas was the most powerful system in the world. I was assigned to work on the London University Atlas based at Gordon Square in Bloomsbury. In the winter of 1967/68 Britain suffered its worst ever outbreak of foot and mouth disease which resulted in the cancellation of many sports particularly horse racing.



This obviously had a dire effect on the betting fraternity and the BBC sports transmissions. We were approached by the BBC to run computerised horse racing on the Atlas machine. This was set up and the BBC provided the program which was to be run live on Saturday afternoons. It was very amusing to see the BBC racing correspondent, Peter O'Sullivan, commentating as the results were printed out on our line printer live on television. I was called in to stand by in case the system crashed and the lady operators were allowed to get their hair done on expenses. On leaving the building afterwards I was approached on several occasions by punters wanting some insider tips. Of course I was unable to help as I was not involved in the software. Attached is a photograph from the Daily Telegraph taken in 1967 of Peter O'Sullivan being passed the printer output for him to commentate on. The person on the left is Bill Toombs,

one of the engineers, and the lady operator is now Mrs Hughes of 45 years.

#### **Brian Hughes**

**Ex Mainframe Hardware Support for Atlas 1,  
1906A/S, 2980, Atlas10**

### **From Aurelia Road to the stars**

Phil Crosby is currently Assistant Director: Western Australia with responsibility for CASS's executive level interactions with State Government, WA astronomy institutes, and industry. As CASS's Business Strategist, his responsibilities include long range planning, risk review, new program studies, industry engagement strategy, and oversight of CASS's Project Review Board.

Phil trained as an electronics and communications engineer with ICL and British Telecom, before joining Mt Newman Mining (WA) as field engineer, and prior to operating his own electronics business in Sydney. He moved into agribusiness in regional NSW whilst completing a business degree in Armidale. In 1989 Phil returned to Sydney as Director/General Manager of MACE, an environmental instrument manufacturer. In 1994, he joined NATA in the field of technical management standards, quickly becoming NSW/ACT State Manager, then National Operations Manager. In 1997 he jointly managed the transition of NATA's certification arm into a commercial entity, and became Business & Strategy Manager responsible for international growth and personally established offices in Korea, India, Chile, and Turkey. Phil also led several major studies, including an environment impact assessment of Antarctic stations. During 2005, Phil took an embedded role in Boeing Australia as Manager, Industrial Participation Strategy, and completed further studies in strategic planning. Phil joined the Leadership Team of the Australia Telescope National Facility in Marsfield, Sydney in February 2007. Between 2009 and 2011, he accepted a secondment to the SKA Program Development Office in the University of Manchester (UK), responsible for development and implementation of industry engagement plans, and support of SKA procurement strategies. His PhD is related to improving success in high-technology mega-projects.

#### **Dr Phil Crosby**

**Perth, Australia**

### **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**

### **A Terrier at Work and Play**

In September 1950, at the age of 18, I was called up for 2 years of National Service (NS) training in the Army. The following April, I managed to pass out of the NS Officer Cadet Training Unit at Aldershot as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery and was posted to a unique and extremely interesting small regular army unit based in North Devon.

The unit was called 267 Combined Operations Bombardment Battery Royal Artillery with an HQ near Barnstaple and teams in Trieste (Italy), Malta, Hong Kong and Korea. Although a gunner (Royal Artillery) battery, we had no guns – only lots of army radios. Our role was to direct the fire of naval guns to on-shore targets during the early stages of an amphibious landing from the sea.

For the invasion of Normandy, on 6 June 1944, there were 84 bombarding ships, each with a Gunner Bombardment Liaison Officer on board, and 63 5-man Forward Observation Bombardment (Spotter) teams, each with 3 radios on land. Most of the spotter teams came ashore across the beaches, but some dropped in by parachute.

I was fortunate to be posted to Trieste, which was occupied by British and American troops until 1954, for most of my 2 years, where I had a most interesting time working with both British and American ships. In 1952, due to the Korean War, National Servicemen had to do a further 3 ½ years of service in the Territorial Army (a Terrier) immediately after their full 2 years service. Accordingly, I was posted to the TA Battery (881 COBRA TA), based in Windsor and worked closely with the regular battery for many years.

The annual training requirement in the TA was one Drill Evening each week, one weekend per month and a 15-day camp each year. If you were employed by a government organization, you were given an additional 15-days of paid annual leave whilst you were at camp – double pay! Most small businesses could not afford to let Terriers have an additional two weeks leave and invariably made them take time out of their leave entitlement to attend their annual camp. I joined the British Tabulating Machine Co. Ltd, in February 1953, as a trainee punched card Technical Serviceman; BTM had an enlightened attitude towards TA Annual Camp; your pay was stopped whilst you were away, but if you returned with a letter stating how much the army had paid you, then the Company made up the difference – very fair I thought.

The only place in the British Isles deemed to be remote enough to permit the Royal Navy to practice firing at targets on land was, and still is, Cape Wrath – the extreme North-West corner of Scotland! Accordingly, many of our annual camps were spent up there exercising with ships from the Royal Navy and other NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) navies. However, we also had annual camps in Poole (where the regular Battery had been moved to), Norway (for winter warfare training in February!), Holland, Denmark, Germany, Sardinia, Malta, Libya and even Hong Kong!

In 1958, our TA Battery received a letter from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) ordering us to become trained as parachutists! So annual camp in 1959 was a 2-week course at the RAF Parachute School, Abingdon where you had to complete 8 descents in

order to earn you ‘wings’. In 1965, we got another letter from the MOD telling us that we now also had to become trained as Royal Marine Commandos! So annual camp in 1966 was a 2-week course at the Royal Marine Infantry Training Centre at Lympstone near Exeter; this was really tough and only 22 of us, out of 32, passed on the first attempt. In 1967, the TA was reorganized, we lost our TA Centre in Windsor and I found myself in command of a 40-strong little unit, which was the first, and to this day the only TA unit entitled to wear both the Red (parachute) as well as the Green (Royal Marine Commando) berets – a great honour. I ran my little unit (sometimes known as Patski’s Private Army) from my dining- room in Epsom (much to the distress of my wife!) with a lot of help from some very supportive ICL secretaries!

Parachuting was fun, even if a bit scary sometimes. Most of our aircraft jumps were made after dark on Friday evenings; I could leave my office in Putney at 5 p.m., drive down the A40 to RAF Northolt, pack my weapons container, fit a parachute, climb into a RAF aircraft (usually a Hercules C130), and be on the ground in Germany by 8:30 p.m.! Much quicker and less hassle than British Airways! The Hercules would kindly wait for us and then fly us back on Sunday evening.

However, the best way to keep up to date with parachuting was to jump from a cage (which held 4 parachutists) slung underneath an old wartime barrage balloon. The RAF used to fly them at various sites around the country, at weekends, especially for Terriers. Providing you were up to date with your ground training, you could roll up on a Saturday morning, do 2 or 3 jumps (weather permitting) and be home in time for supper!

The Parachute Depot was based in Aldershot and they used to fly a balloon periodically at Queens Parade during the week. I found I could drive over to Aldershot, do a couple of descents and be in my office in London before lunch without anybody (expect for my supportive secretary) being any the wiser! On one occasion, in the autumn of 1981, I drove over to Aldershot to find an officer and his wife watching the ballooning. He introduced himself as Lt. Col. H Jones and his charming wife Sarah. He explained that this was his first day as the new Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Regiment and he had just come along to see what went on. We chatted and he then suggested that we should do a jump; so we fitted a parachute each, went straight to the front of the long queue of soldiers waiting to go up in the balloon cage, went up 800 feet, and jumped out – all very quick and easy. Brilliant! We chatted some more, did another descent and I was in good time for a 1 p.m. appointment in my office in Computer House. Six months later, in May 1982, H. Jones was killed leading 2 Para to victory at Goose Green in The Falklands and was awarded a posthumous VC.

The TA, and parachuting in particular, was a source of some interest/amusement to my colleagues in ICL. During one Start of Year conference, I was just about to launch into a stirring presentation of our rather high Sector Sales Targets for the new financial year to a large audience, when a Teddy Bear suspended from a small parachute fluttered gently down from the ceiling of the conference hall! Edward Lucas-Smith, from the Harrow Office, was well known for his sense of humour and practical jokes.

When you mention parachuting, sooner or later people ask about injuries. The British military para community seemed to have a few fatalities most years. A particularly unfortunate incident took place after dark on a Friday night, when the RAF dropped a number of TA parachutists into the Kiel Canal in Northern Germany, 3 of whom drowned. My lads were ok, but one got hung up in a wood, unable to see the ground or raise anybody to help him. He hung there through the night, only to find when dawn came up, that he was just 1 foot above the ground! Over 25 years of parachuting, some of my soldiers ended up in hospitals in Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, but with nothing worse than a broken leg. I was very fortunate and my worst experience was to land after dark on a Friday night, on a cobbled farmyard, between a farmhouse and a barn somewhere south of Norwich.

All the time that I was in the TA (some 40 years), the MOD was not able to call us up unless a Royal Proclamation/Declaration of War had been made in the House of Commons; no such statement was made for the Suez Crisis, the Falklands, or the First Gulf War. At the start of the Suez Crisis in 1956, I received a letter from the MOD, asking me to transfer temporarily to the regular army so that I could be dispatched to join the Suez invasion force already forming up in the Mediterranean. I can clearly remember showing the letter to my then boss, Mr. Bill Kent, in his office in Park Lane. Without looking up, he read it and handed back to me with the comment “Young Morrish, you need to decide whether you want a career in this company or in the army” and carried on writing! As a 24-year old struggling to make a career in a big corporation, I reluctantly declined the MOD’s request.

In the early days of the Falklands War, three of my officers, who specialized in the role of the Army Liaison Officer on board a bombarding ship, received a Naval Signal from the Fleet Gunnery Officer, who was already in the Ascension Islands, requesting that they should immediately fly out there to join the British Task Force. Having updated their wills, sorted their affairs, etc. the MOD instructed them not to go!

In the autumn of 1990, shortly before the First Gulf War, I received four telephone calls from the MOD asking me to transfer to the regular army so that I could be sent out to Saudi Arabia, where our forces were forming up prior to the invasion of Kuwait. At the time, ICL had an agreement with the Government, that if any employee in the TA went to The Gulf, then ICL would guarantee them a job of equal status and salary on their return. Again a very generous agreement. I discussed the possibility of going to The Gulf with Peter Bonfield, ICL CEO, and he told me that he was shortly going to have to introduce an extensive redundancy program across the company and that he and I could end up as the only two people in the company who were guaranteed jobs! In the event, my wife was not at all impressed by the idea: “you stupid old f\*\*\*t, you can’t go to war at the age of 58” she said, and once again, I am afraid I declined the MOD’s invitation!

In 1996, a Reserve Forces Act was passed in the House of Commons, which permitted the Government to call up members of the Territorial Army and any Reservists (from the Army, Navy, Royal Marines and Air Force) as and when required, and without the need for a Royal Proclamation.

Accordingly, for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the ministry of Defence called up a number of specialists such as doctors, nurses, engineers, explosive experts, code breakers, radio specialists, truck drivers, etc. Subsequently, the net was widened and infantry, gunners, armoured vehicle and tank crews were also required. Generally speaking, TA soldiers were posted to a similar regular unit, where they replaced casualties and/or brought the regular unit up to full fighting strength. Throughout the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns, the TA provided approximately 10% of the total army strength, some 800-900 personnel on average. In 2012, the Territorial Army was retitled as the Reserve Army.

As a result of a Strategic Forces Review, undertaken by the last Government in 2010, the Regular Army is being reduced from 102,000 to 82,000. In my opinion, this is a great mistake and very regrettable. The Reserve Army has an establishment of 30,000 Reservists, but with all the pressures of modern life, is currently badly under strength.

I would like to think that those of us in ICL who served in the Territorial Army, gained some useful experiences (man-management, leadership skills, decision-making, discipline, planning and organization, communication, physical fitness, etc.) that enhanced our ability to contribute to the success of the company.

I was extremely privileged to have had a very interesting 39-year career in the Territorial Army. BTM/ICT/ICL/Fujitsu were always extremely tolerant and supportive of all of us who served in the TA – we will always be most grateful to the company.

**Mr Pat Morrish**

***Editor's note: For his work in the TA, he was awarded a MBE in 1974, which was presented to him by Her Majesty, the Queen.***

## **Who remembers who 'laid' the STE04 foundation stone and when?**

Well, high above the STE04 reception pond, the foundation stone with its red letters with a touch of gold colour sat ignored from 1966 until it was rudely thrown out during the refurbishment of 2006/7.

It was laid in 1966 by Mr Frank Cousins. I often wondered why a man famous for his trade union work was chosen for such a task but I now read that in 1964 Harold Wilson gave him the job of Minister of Technology. Perhaps foundation stone laying wasn't his forte as he resigned from his ministerial job in June 1966 just after his visit to STE04.

Back in 2002 it was decided that a building that had kept the rain off me for many of the 36 years since it was built, needed to be refurbished. It had survived the High Alumina Cement scare of the early '70's where as far as I could tell those that checked the building to see if I was safe for me just chipped samples from the cross beams and pillars. The analysis of the samples plus the fact that it didn't fall down on me while they chipped bits off showed it wasn't dangerous to be there.

The first refurbishment idea was drawn up in early 2003 which was quite a drastic refurbishment. By the time the plan was finally submitted it read "demolition of the existing building and the erection of two four storey buildings." I'm not sure why but by the end of 2003 that idea was dropped.

Moving forward into 2004 the final decision was to "refurbish the external envelope" which as far as I could see altered the inside as well. The majority of people moved out to STE09 in mid-2004 and we didn't get back to STE04 until its transformation was completed in late 2007.

Oh I mentioned STE09. For those of you that remember that 7 floor block that was variously Networks, Training School and miscellaneous other facilities, it is currently being converted to flats having been increasingly vandalised over the last 7 or 8 years while it's been empty and looking for a buyer. So you could move into STE09 soon if you buy a flat overlooking Stevenage Asda!

**Vince Celano**

## **THE ROYSTON DAYS of THE OPTIMIST**

(Pt 3 of Mike Leith's diary)

Well I was happily working at ICL Engineering Centre Letchworth but domestic life goes on. Some things that happened I thought worth writing to B&B about!

### **The Arrival in Royston**

My wife and I had taken a huge risk! We had sold our house in Cambridgeshire, moving into a 'pennies per month' rented house in Royston owned by a wealthy spinster who was in a home for the very aged.

I had in fact been asked to attend for an interview with her to find out 'if I was suitable'. She was an old lady 'of the grand style' and always thought she would return to that 1920's house that she had had built one day, so she just wanted a suitable person to occupy her house until she returned. (But she never did as she died in the 'home'). So we were 'sitting tenants'! It had always been on the cards that this situation would arise and being an optimist and having my 'ear to the ground' had sold our house as I said and moved in, taking the risk that it all could go 'pear-shaped'.

The house had not much altered since the 1920's, but was a lovely property known locally as 'The Doll's House' (actually 'Layston Cottage'). With old furniture, 2-inch radiator pipes, a maid's scullery and bells in every room wired to a bell board in that scullery!

Condensing that part of the story, a cousin of the lady had inherited the house (and us) and wanted to sell the house and garden to us and the 20-acres of land to a builder. So we bought the house and its contents outright and the land was eventually built on.

My wife and I started the huge task of bringing the house up to date without losing its charm.... and working at ICL as well! And I thank Duncan Frith (a colleague at ETC) for advising me on designing the central heating system!

My wife's parents were very old and lived up north. Her mother had suffered a stroke. Her husband was healthy, but in his 80s and they needed help, living way out 'in the sticks' even relying on their own well for water! So my wife went up each week, leaving me teaching at ICL Engineering Training Centre (ETC) Letchworth and doing work on the house in the evenings and weekends.

Everything seemed to start at the nearby Boar's Head (BH) pub in Royston..... (known locally as the 'Whore's Bed' though certainly nothing like that went on there.)

### **The Vicar**

As said, my wife was away, so in the later evenings I walked down to the Boar's Head for a bedtime pint (or three) and a chat with whoever was there. The first adventure was THE VICAR....

I had an old friend from boyhood up to stay for one week. He liked a bedtime pint with me, so we walked together to the BH. On that Wednesday we met a vicar in the pub – a stranger with a sad tale. He had gone to sleep on the train, accidentally dismounted at Royston on waking and left his case with money, vicar's clothes and other effects on the train. He had been en-route to a vicar's conference in London. He had walked into the pub in need of help. My friend and I bought him a pint and said he could come back to The Cottage for a bite to eat. He gladly accepted! We chatted to this affable vicar and where to stay for the night came up. I had a spare empty room, so I said he could stay.

In the morning he had breakfast and asked if he could borrow some cash for his fare on to the conference where he knew he would be in the safe hands of fellow clergy. He gave us the address and telephone number of his vicarage, assuring us he would return the money as soon as he got back. I hadn't much cash in the house so my friend took him out to the hall and gave him something.

We wished him well and I ran him to the station, where I left him. Returning back my friend said 'Are we sure he was OK? – I gave him £200..'

My friend persuaded me to dial the number he had given. UNOBTAINABLE!!!

.... The truth dawned – A CONMAN!!!! We just had to laugh...

### **The Motorbike**

A fellow lecturer at ICL ETC (Les Webber) had owned a BSA Bantam on which he rode to the ETC each day. One day he sadly had an accident and had 'written off' the Bantam and bought another. I am interested in restoring things, so asked Les if I could have the old Bantam. He gave it to me. I eventually restored it, but my wife did NOT want me riding a motorbike, so it had just stayed in the garage. My wife had to go away again so I was back to the evening BH 'ritual'. One evening a group of 'bikers' came in. I started chatting to them and told them about my Bantam, hoping for a sale!!!

However, they had another idea... apparently one of them had been riding a single cylinder 500cc 1955 Matchless motorbike which had broken a piston. He had hidden it in a nearby overgrown field and travelled on, riding pillion to seek somewhere for the night. As I said we happened to meet at the BH and had a very good session together. I said that they could come back to my house (the Cottage) and make their way on in the morning. We bought a few bottles to finish off at my house. In the morning the biker with the broken Matchless asked to see my Bantam.. He was impressed and made me a crazy offer! His idea was to take the Bantam, make a map showing where the Matchless was and travel onwards having done a level swap with the (unseen by me) broken Matchless!? He promised to send all the documents to me once they got home...

Anyway I must have been mad, but agreed!!!

Next day they (and my Bantam) left. – left me thinking about what I had done. ('another Vicar story'?)

Well, they WERE honest! The bike was where the map said, and the documents arrived in the post with a note of thanks for a great night...

All that was left was how to explain to my wife on her return the theory of motorcycle transmogrification. (*Best left to the imagination!!!*)  
**Finally – and he asked. "Why you look like that?"**

I was in pantomime. It was Cinderella. I was 'Baron Hard-up'. We had rehearsed for months and a really good show was ready. The first day's performances went like magic and were very well received. On the last day we were to do a matinee and then an evening performance. My idea was that after the matinee I would stay in costume and make-up, drive home and my wife would follow me in her car to the evening performance and go back home leaving me for the winding-up cast party.

Fine. The matinee went perfectly and I came back home in full dress/make-up as planned. As the evening performance got close we set off in convoy (she following as she didn't know the way.) I turned off the dual-carriageway appropriately but was HORRIFIED to see my wife going straight on not having seen me turn!!

I did a 'dodgy' turn back to follow my wife. I gathered speed to try to catch her. Round a bend I saw her parked in front of another car in a lay-by. I braked and pulled into the lay-by. I was going far too fast. I ran straight into the back of the first car, ramming it into my wife's car with her inside!

Silence.

My shoulder hurt where the seatbelt was, and the three cars wrecked. People climbed out. All seemed un-injured. My wife couldn't find her specs (they turned up in her back seat!). The driver of the car in front of my wife said shakily 'It is only bent tin!' I seemed the only one hurt (my shoulder).

There were no mobile phones in those days so a passer-by said he'd go to a house and ring an ambulance. About 10 minutes later the ambulance turned up and carted us all off to hospital for a check-up. I got some strange glances from the ambulance staff regarding my effete appearance!

In the ambulance my wife referring to the accident asked, 'Why did you do that?' There's no sensible answer!

At the hospital my Indian doctor looked and asked why I looked like that. I explained about 'Baron Hardup' whereupon he made a delightful slip asking me, 'What is Baron Hard-on'!!!! Everyone was pronounced OK, except me - a broken collar bone.

My thoughts were wandering to the final night of 'Curtain-up' by then. Someone had contacted the theatre but they already knew what had happened! Apparently an off-duty policeman had been in the audience and having been contacted by the director about my non-appearance had used his radio to ask about accidents and was told that a man 'in strange attire' had been involved, but was OK.

Sadly, the last night went on with 'prompt' reading my part!!!

So like Les Webber had been after his motorbike accident, I was also off work at the ETC for a while!

### **A POSTSCRIPT:**

It turned out that Pam Ayres was a relative of the old lady who had owned Layston Cottage! By finding that out I met her husband and passed on to him some

memorabilia that I had found up in the loft. In gratitude he gave me a signed book of her poems! ... Life IS strange when you think about it!

**Mike Leith ex ETS Letchworth**

## MY WORD AGAINST YOURS

Alighting from the tube on my way to a recent City reunion, I needed a toilet. As there are now no public ones, I ventured into a Café Costa. Reluctantly forking out over £2 for a coffee, I was entitled to use their "Loo" Hurrying to the basement I found I couldn't open the door. Panting upstairs, I gestured to the Italian waiter my problem. He finished serving and explained I needed to punch in the day's code. Impatiently, I pleaded as to what it was.

"Si, 1 2 4 8" He revealed.

Certain I'd remembered it, I punched 1248 in. No luck. I tried again, still it remained locked. Climbing the stairs with my legs crossed was tricky, only to have the number repeated. Back downstairs, looking again at the push button lock, I realised he was saying C1248 not Si, 1248. I suppose it's my, limited grasp of foreign languages, mishearing and being 89.

My only foreign lesson at the Tech was when the Headmaster's wife optimistically advised us to shout "Hander Hoch!" to any downed Luftwaffe airman we came across. Later this grasp of foreign languages made for a few interesting moments. I'd been swimming in the Med near Nice. Not wearing my watch, I asked a nearby sunbather the time. She looked French so I enquired "Adessair?" She shrugged her Gallic shoulders and turned over. Back at the hotel, I think I'd asked her the time in Arabic! I hadn't used the language since 1946 in Palestine. Why I'd thought it was French I've no idea. I once asked some French workmen for directions and on hearing "tout" and "droit" I translated it as "two on the right" and took the second on the right and ended up still lost. My 14 yr old son pointed out they'd said, "Keep straight ahead all the way right to the end of the road"

Round about 14, I was learning the clarinet and was taken by The New World Symphony by Dvorack, but kept his unpronounceable name to myself. Later, hearing the work on the wireless, I was relieved to hear the pronunciation of the composer's name, as there was a thirties "B" movie actress named Ann Dvorak, who I never mentioned, as I wasn't sure how to pronounce her name! I now knew it, but by then my attention had been diverted to Betty Grable, who had better legs and whose name I could pronounce!

Place names are excused. It was years before I found out in Norfolk, it was Hazeboro for Happisburgh and Stewkey for Stiffkey. Funny place -Norfolk!

Finding one has been getting a word wrong can be a bit awkward. Whether people are aware you've made a Malapropism or are too polite to correct you, I'm not sure, so you go on repeating it. Even on hearing one, I refrain from pointing out their error, especially if it's a good one to pass it on, but without attribution.

My Dad recounted coming home from school assuring my Gran he'd had "Gentle soup" for school dinner. Seeing I was confused, Gran explained his error, gentles being maggots used in fishing and not lentils, a veg used for soup.

I remember a neighbour announcing her son was home on "Embrocation Leaf" when he was going

overseas and another talking about a bomb-blast affected ornament "dis-interrogating" in his hand!

After one company reshuffle, I found out I was now a Comptroller. Not sure how to pronounce it, I didn't go around boasting of my appointment, thus avoiding controversy, especially as I had a problem pronouncing that too!

**dennis(at)dennisgoodwin .wanadoo.co.uk**

## Majority Club Watch

Forgive my presumption, but having read your newsletter, I wondered if you or your colleagues may be able to help?

I recently acquired a Longines gents watch, quite interesting in itself as it was produced only in limited numbers between 1959-61. (Sadly now in a little sorry state)

From its inscription, it appears to have been formerly owned by one "S England" of International Computers and Tabulators Ltd. It appears this marked the owner's membership of "The Majority Club", in 1960.

My so far limited research into the company and the later formation of ICL has been fascinating and I'm just reading through the ICL Anthology book. Your newsletters have also provided interesting insights into the past work of your colleagues.

So, forgive my ignorance! but, could you tell me what "the Majority Club." Is or was? And how one became a member.

I wondered also if there would be any way to identify the person named as; S England? One possible thought I have is, once restored, it may be possible to reunite the watch with the England family - quite often these items become separated by accident or because they seem beyond repair etc.

Many thanks in advance

**Terry Cawley**

## Time and Time Again !

The sign of a maturing history is not the depth of a subject, but its breadth, this year is typified for me by the breadth of the current interest in our industries history. The 4th of April saw me enjoying a trip to The National Museum of Computing to witness the designer of the BTM HEC Computer, Raymond Bird, see his work placed on public display in a glass cabinet partially funded by my own project. (the ICT1301 Resurrection Project ).

The HEC (a first generation valve computer, known within the Company as the 1200 Series) is on long term loan from the Birmingham Museum and is now well placed at TNMOC. This was within months of being contacted by Colin Skelton, who, whilst clearing out his loft, found a box he had been presented with when he left the Company. This contained a miniature version of the prototype of the DM1 which was one of the first ICL machines to feature the in house ICL designed C8K chips which were destined to power the whole of the Series 39 systems. This model is in transit to TNMOC to join its fellow pieces of History adding to our past experience.

So between these two events, they covered the first to almost the last hardware systems I was an engineer for and, in London, also local support. To have been granted such an experience profile was most enjoyable for each time the company produced

another "New Range" we had the chance to apply what we had learnt the last time round.

Yes, over and over, Time and Time Again!

To see more about this rich history which we were a part of, visit these links: -

**1301**

[ICT1301.co.uk](http://ict1301.co.uk) :- <http://ict1301.co.uk>

**The Computer Conservation Society** :-  
<http://www.computerconservationsociety.org>

**TNMOC** :- <http://www.tnmoc.org>

**DM1** :-

[http://www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk/CS\\_DM1-1.pdf](http://www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk/CS_DM1-1.pdf)

Then send your story into Adrian for us all too read.

**Rod Brown**

## Old Farts

It's not a bad thing to be called an Old Fart.

Old Farts are easy to spot at sporting events; during the National Anthem, Old Farts remove their hats and stand at attention and sing without embarrassment. They know the words and believe in them.

Old Farts remember World War II, Normandy, Spitfires and Hitler. They remember the Atomic Bomb, Vietnam, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Moon Landing and all the Peacekeeping Missions from 1945 to 2005.

If you bump into an Old Fart on the pavement, he will apologize. If you pass an Old Fart on the street, he will nod or tip his cap to a lady. Old Farts trust strangers and are polite, particularly to women.

Old Farts hold the door for the next person and always, when walking, make certain the lady is on the inside for protection.

Old Farts get embarrassed if someone swears in front of women and children and they don't like any filthy language on TV.

Old Farts have moral courage and personal integrity. They seldom brag except about their children and grandchildren.

It's the Old Farts who know our great country is protected, not by politicians, but by the young men and women in the Air Force, Army, and Navy.

This country needs Old Farts with their work ethic, sense of responsibility, pride in their country and decent values.

We need them now more than ever.

Thank Goodness for Old Farts!

I was taught to respect my elders. It's just getting harder to find them.

**Anon**

## Reunions

### Stevenage & Letchworth Old Boys (renamed Punch Card Reunion)

The annual reunion will take place on **Tuesday 4th October 2016** at Stevenage Labs STE04.

Dave Warner has "volunteered" to talk about the PF56/2812/7903 for which he was the lead logic designer. A number of people who worked in the Stevenage Labs at the end of the 60s on this project have said that they will attend. I'm looking forward to seeing them again.

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**

### The West Midlands ICL Pensioners

Meet for lunch, beer and a chin wag, bi-monthly on First Tuesday of the month, usually at The Square Peg, Corporation Street, Birmingham, B4 6PH from 12 noon. (Attendees are usually former Customer Services MF Engineers, POS, Key Edit, etc., from BIR03, BIR04 and 'guest visits' from NOT02).

All welcome!

**This is a new notification from the ICL Pensioners Facebook page**

### 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**

### 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**

### Watford-Harrow- Feltham

**Mike Ray 01895 230194**

### East Grinstead 81 Club

**Gordon Franklin 01342 328479**

### East Midlands UB40s

**Brian Skeldon 0115 9725119**

**ICL Midlands**

Brian Trow 01785 257317

**LEO Computers Society**

John Andrews

GlobalLeoSociety@gmail.com

**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**

BIR03	John	Wells	26/04/16	78
BRA01	Eugene	Kaye	01/07/16	93
	Peter T	Kenny	17/07/16	67
	Freda D S	Livesey	08/08/16	80
	Joan V	Wass	04/06/16	82
BRA02	Pauline A	Ellis	03/05/16	80
BRA05	Michael E	Nelson	17/06/16	80
EDI04	Andrew B	Muller	25/06/16	85
ELS01	Raymond	Harvey	02/04/16	83
FEL01	Herbert J	Thompson	03/06/16	82
HOM99	Raymond	Burford	25/04/16	81
KID01	Norman S	Annis	28/03/16	90
	Alfred	Brooks	30/04/16	94
	John K	Mathers	19/04/16	86
	Anne	Parton	01/06/16	83
	Russell G	Thomas	05/05/16	68
KID02	Joyce E	Bridgwood	26/04/16	82
LET01	John M	Govan	27/07/16	92
LET05	Colin P	Buckingham	09/07/16	72
	Barbara E	Devlin	18/05/16	82
	Antoni	Kuminek	23/04/16	91
	Cecil H F	Layton	21/04/16	90
	Peter L F	Matthews	07/08/16	88
LON12	Jean S	Sherren	11/04/16	82
LON24	Peter T	Miller	29/07/16	73
LON30	George W	Childs	06/05/16	91
	Joyce P	Williams	29/03/16	92
LON31	Robert D	Rowe	26/04/16	83
MAN01	Edith	Brittan	18/07/16	89
	Claris	McDonald	23/07/16	81
MAN05	Vincent	Hodgson	20/04/16	87
MAN12	Ronald	Richmond	07/08/16	89
	Charles F	Skeet	14/05/16	80
REA06	Rose M	Small	31/03/16	85
STE04	Ann P	Delf	05/07/16	85
	John D	Payne	28/07/16	83
	Eric E	Twaits	27/06/16	91
STE10	John W	Pocock	23/03/16	86
SWN01	Thomas J	Jenkins	08/04/16	84
WIN01	Robin P	Gibson	09/08/16	89
WSR01	Ian G le M	Girling	19/08/16	95

No Known Location	Peter H	Baker	23/05/16	88
	Alan R	Brett	21/07/16	83
	James K	Byrne	26/08/16	85
	James C	Clifford	01/04/16	93
	Dennis F	Dagwell	26/07/16	93
	Bernard J	Dyke	11/05/16	80
	I M	Foskett	16/07/16	92
	Raymond	Gee	28/06/16	74
	Leonard T	Hammond	17/04/16	93
	Ernest J	Holgate	30/08/16	82
	John T	Hudson	12/06/16	83
	Charles W	Jacobs	12/07/16	88
	Kathleen	Jones	09/06/16	87
	Donald W	Kilby	28/03/16	97
	George W	Matthews	09/08/16	99
	Patrick M	McCarthy	24/05/16	87
	Mary K	Minnis	14/08/16	91
	Anthony T	Moon	16/04/16	73
	Fred	Muir	01/06/16	93
	William	Perrin	22/04/16	89
	Horst H J	Preuss	24/04/16	83
	Peter G	Sara	20/07/16	89
	Barry W	Saunders	09/04/16	68
	Raymond	Smith	23/03/16	69
	Ronald E	Stanford	15/08/16	95
	Brian W	Thomas	18/07/16	88
	Joyce	Topping	01/04/16	90
	Joyce D	Wadsworth	04/05/16	91
	Maisie K	Wooffitt	07/04/16	96

**Fujitsu Pensions Website**<https://fujitsu.pensiondetails.co.uk>

To access Bits &amp; Bytes click on the link given on the very bottom of the home page.

Direct line to Pensions Department:  
**01235 797788****Bits & Bytes Archive**

The Spring and Autumn editions of B&amp;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](http://www.bitsandbytes.shedlandz.co.uk)**Facebook ICL Pensioners**

I know that many people think that Facebook is only for the young, but it is a good medium for posting pictures of old computers and old people! Have a look at it and post pictures that you may have of the past.

**NEXT ISSUE**

Copy for the Spring 2017 issue must be submitted by 1 February 2017, but would be appreciated earlier.