

Bits & Bytes

No 10

Editorial

Now that we have survived the transition from MCMXCIX to MM I think that we should congratulate those early programmers who were not as stupid as some doubters thought!

As I suffered from 5 weeks of flu over Christmas and the New Year, I will remember the turn of the century for the flu bug, not the millennium bug!

A number of Nortel Pensioners have contacted me about getting the CD-ROM for *iclway*, the free ICL Internet service. All you have to do is to ring ICL Internet Services Desk on 0181 565 7993 quoting your company personnel number, name and address.

Roy Starr has suggested that to get more input for future editions that I should ask for contributions on specific subjects such as Minerva Road 1960-65, Breakdown Control, S4 in Manchester, and Bracknell during the occupation.

I received a letter and article from Ray Dowson on his time in EE! No room in this edition, but I promise it will be in No 11. (Coincidentally he mentions Minerva Road).

The ICL Pensions department have received 831 completed questionnaires from the 2600 plus ICL pensioners who were asked for their opinions on a number of subjects. The autumn edition of B&B will give the detailed statistics and the decisions made as a result of this survey.

I look forward to seeing many of you on 3rd October in Stevenage at the Punched Card Reunion. Details are in the Reunion section.

Adrian Turner

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YOK Problems

(Nothing is new in this world!)

Dear Cassius

Are you still working on the Year zero problems? This change from BC to AD is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having working happily downward forever, we now have to start thinking upwards. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left us to sort it all out at this last minute.

I spoke to Augustus Caesar the other evening. He was livid that Julius hadn't done something when he

was sorting out the calendar. He said that he could see why Brutus turned nasty. We called in Consultas, but he simply said that continuing downwards using minus BC won't work and as usual charged us a fortune for doing nothing useful. Surely we shouldn't have to throw out all our hardware and start again?

Macrohard will make yet another fortune out of this I suppose. The moneylenders are paranoid of course! They have been told that all usury rates will invert and they will have to pay their clients to take out loans. It's an ill wind. As for myself I just can't see the sand in an hourglass flowing upwards.

We have heard that there are three wise men in the East who have been working on the problem, but unfortunately they won't arrive until it is all over.

I have heard that there are plans to stable all horses at midnight at the turn of the year, as there are fears that they will stop and try and run backwards, causing immense damage to the chariots and possible loss of life.

Some say that the world will cease to exist at the moment of transition.

Anyway we are still continuing to work on this blasted YOK problem. I will send you a parchment to you if anything further develops. If you have any ideas please let me know.

Plutonium

(Translated from a Latin scroll dated 2BC)

ICL Good News

ICL Pathway Contract

ICL announced on 28 September 1999 that the Post Office has formally confirmed its Acceptance of the ICL Pathway service, in which all of the 19,000 post offices in the UK will be automated and maintained in a contract that runs until March 2005.

Acceptance is a formal legal milestone, it is important because:

It recognises that ICL have a system where the development and implementation is fully endorsed by the customer.

Formal National rollout starts immediately. Building on the 600 post offices already installed ICL will have installed at least another 1000 before they cease work in support of the Post Office's Christmas workload in early November 1999. ICL recommence rollout in late January 2000 and will quickly reach the rate of 300 post offices per week. Implementation is planned for completion in Spring 2001.

£500M contract for Customs

ICL has now finalised the contract to provide HM Customs & Excise with a secure IT and telecommunications infrastructure service. The contract is valued at some £500 million over 10 years and was procured through the Government's Private Finance Initiative. This is now the largest contract of its type to be delivered by ICL.

Under the Integrated Service Agreement (ISA), ICL will enter into a strategic partnership with HM Customs & Excise to implement and manage a total service for HMCE's IT infrastructure including desktop and fixed telephony supply and service, supporting 24,000 users over 300 sites throughout the UK.

ICL has a number of major subcontractors for this contract including Microsoft and Racal. Fujitsu will be supplying mobile, desktop and server systems.

Under this contract, up to 370 HMCE staff will transfer to ICL under TUPE regulations.

First "Millennium System"

Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council has confirmed contracts worth in excess of £1.5M (£1M) for data centre platforms and services over the next 6 years. Significantly, the deal includes the services and transition tools involved in moving to new generation *Trimetra* systems when they are introduced next year, in addition to immediate system upgrades. This move underpins the council's Microsoft-based application strategy, enabling it to reduce operational costs and improve levels of service both to end users within the Council and to their local citizens.

What makes this achievement all the more remarkable is that, less than 12 months ago; the customer raised a formal complaint with ICL over poor service levels. The excellent response of the ICL team has clearly turned the situation around, such that the council has now confirmed its long-term commitment to ICL solutions.

Adding Vision to Information

During October 99, sales of the Document Image Processing product ICLipse, passed £2M. As a highly parameterised product requiring a complementary application, specialist hardware and services the total business value to ICL from the 4,500 desktops running it is conservatively estimated to be £6M. In addition, annual ongoing service and maintenance revenues are estimated to add a further recurring £1.5M.

Whilst the majority of sites are in Local Government, many other customers have been getting a better view of their critical applications in Government offices, Commercial companies and Financial institutions.

And the good news doesn't stop there. ICLipse's Microsoft based functionality is at the heart of the 8600 HM Customs & Excise (HMCE) desktops committed to date and also a part of the Pericles Document Management and Workflow strategy being rolled out in Local Government.

US Armed Forces Awards IT Service Mission to ICL

ICL and its German based subsidiary, Sarcom, are taking over IT service provision for the US Army's Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS).

DoDDS unites all US army education services from playschool up to and including high school. The contract is due to run for 3 years with a total revenue of up to ?25M (DM50M).

The agreement includes all field and onsite services for the US Department of Education in Europe. ICL and Sarcom will not just be providing IT services for DoDDS support areas in Germany, but also in the UK, Italy, Iceland, Bahrain, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Netherlands and the Azores. All international service provisions will be co-ordinated via the central Service Centre in Germany. A proactive User Helpdesk guarantees optimal IT care for the non-European countries.

Within the framework of service provided, ICL will take care of the construction of the IT infrastructure for the US army schools department. This includes the restoration and maintenance of all PCs, printers, scanners, and monitors as well as software installation.

ICL and Siebel Systems Alliance

IT services company, ICL, and Siebel Systems, Inc. (NASDAQ:SEBL) announced 9 November 1999 a strategic alliance to market a comprehensive set of customer relationship management (CRM) products and services to help their clients maximise the value they deliver to their end-customers.

Under the agreement, ICL will train more than 500 consultants to deliver Siebel consulting and implementation services, positioning it as a key Siebel strategic partner. ICL will also deploy Siebel applications internally for key sales processes, involving the training of over 3,000 staff world-wide.

In addition, ICL becomes Siebel's preferred external provider of managed application services within Europe and, through its training organisation KnowledgePool, Siebel's preferred external provider of technical and end-user training services outside North America.

The companies will also collaborate on development of new CRM solutions for key industry sectors including Financial Services, Telecoms, Retail, Government, Travel and Utilities, and integrate ICL's award-winning loyalty and marketing applications, eBusiness solutions and customer data warehouse technologies with Siebel's market leading Front Office suite.

Adrian King, ICL's executive director for CRM solutions said: "This relationship is an important part of our overall CRM programme. Siebel's world class Front Office applications complement our eBusiness, marketing, loyalty and data warehousing applications, to offer our clients a complete CRM solutions portfolio. We are confident that this combination, together with our ability to provide Siebel customers with a genuine 'end-to-end' offering and powerful managed service option, represents a compelling proposition in the market".

"This is a bold and innovative alliance", commented Paul Wahl, Siebel's president and chief operating officer. "With their strong European presence, knowledge of key industry sectors and their credentials as a true 'end-to-end' service provider, we believe ICL is well positioned to help our customers derive maximum value from their investment in Siebel Front Office applications. This is an important alliance for Siebel, and one that draws upon the

synergy between our businesses to create a great proposition for our joint clients”.

ICL sees major market growth for managed application services over the next few years, as organisations realise the benefits of having new applications ‘piped’ into them on a rental basis, providing reduced costs, faster implementation and greater flexibility. ICL already operates numerous managed application services and web hosting-based contracts for major customers. Based on their respective skills and capabilities, ICL and Siebel will promote a comprehensive suite of ICL-developed outsourcing services in Europe, built upon Siebel Front Office applications. These services will enable clients to deploy Siebel solutions quickly and cost effectively.

Ian Elliott, director of business development for ICL’s Operational Services division said: “By subscribing to ICL managed services for Siebel applications, typically on a monthly ‘price per seat’ basis, our European clients will be able to concentrate on their core business. ICL will provide a guaranteed, flexible and secure Siebel service, piped to the desktop or mobile user. Our service has been engineered to include many features which will be of major benefit to our clients including: capacity on demand; business continuity; and guaranteed levels of service”.

As part of the agreement, Siebel will call upon the significant resources of KnowledgePool - the largest non-proprietary IT training provider world-wide - to expand its technical and end-user training capabilities outside North America. KnowledgePool will supply accredited technical trainers and deliver tailored end-user training programmes to client projects on Siebel’s behalf. In addition, KnowledgePool’s premier training facility at Beaumont, near Windsor in the UK, will be established as a European site for Siebel University and Siebel Partner Training programmes, which are key parts of Siebel’s service offering.

Steve Mankoff, Vice President of Technical Services at Siebel, commented, “Training is a key part of Siebel’s business - it is a major driver for customer satisfaction, which sits at the heart of Siebel’s corporate philosophy. We needed a partner with an exceptional track record in delivering quality training resources and programmes for major projects and KnowledgePool was a natural choice.”

ICL helps Silver Surfers

ICL, the IT services company, supported and participated in an IT forum in London to demonstrate ways older people can gain on-line access to information and local services and improve their lifestyles with benefits from new technology. Information can be accessed from libraries, kiosks and a variety of community locations and on home PCs via the Web. The Forum, ‘Quality of Life in Later Life’ hosted by the Better Government for Older People Programme (BGOP) provided a range of workshops on how IT can enrich life for those citizens over the age of 50.

ICL demonstrated its CyberSkills interactive learning workshop, which teaches people how to use the information on the Internet to suit their lifestyles and overcome any technology fears. ICL are also using their experience in IT systems to provide Internet, e-business and smart card kiosks in public areas to the advantage of older people. Accessing

information through these mediums replaces the need for older people to tour their area’s public service offices to get services.

David Denison, Industry consultant Government, ICL said, “ICL is committed to providing technology to pave the way for older people to get on-line. We are working with BGOP to promote recent government activities on social inclusion and this forum will show how IT can improve the quality of life for older people giving them quicker and easier access to vital information including mobility, transport and health.”

The BGOP initiative the Cabinet Office and 28 local authorities, with Age Concern, Help the Aged, the Anchor Trust, the Carnegie Third Age Programme and Warwick University Local Authorities Research Consortium.

The Forum, attended by 130 people from around the country, was aimed at Local Authorities and partner organisations and older people with an interest in new technology, who formed about a third of the workshop participants.

Martin Shreeve Programme Director, BGOP, said, “This event demonstrates that, given the opportunity, older people can take to computers and the Internet in a big way. It also showed that 50+ lifestyles can be greatly enhanced by some of the high-tech developments, whether in hobbies and leisure, learning, voluntary activity, the arts, home safety and automation or the way older people correspond with family and friends.”

Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Ian McCartney said: “Older people are among the biggest users of public services, yet they often suffer from a failure to respond to their needs and listen to their voices. Older people often find it difficult to get good information about the services they use. IT can play a major role in meeting that need, and I welcome this initiative.”

www.bettergovernmentforolderpeople.gov.uk is the web site where you can find out more.

European eHub for business trading

ICL is creating a pan-European business-to-business Internet trading community aimed at large and medium-sized companies.

Supported by the Irish Government, the trading community provides a ‘virtual marketplace’, which links buyers and sellers throughout Europe, enabling them to trade electronically. The first organisation to join the trading community is Dublin’s local authority, Dublin Corporation, which provides services and amenities to over 500,000 citizens in the Republic of Ireland’s capital.

ICL is responsible for the design, build and operation of this trading community, which will provide secure automatic procurement facilities for companies and result in reduced trading costs, improved efficiency and stronger customer relationships.

Kingfisher’s Intranet

ICL is designing, building and operating what will be one of the largest intranets in Europe for Kingfisher, one of Europe’s largest non-food retailers, specialising in DIY, electricals and general merchandise sectors and encompassing some of the best known retail brands in Europe - including B&Q, Comet, Superdrug, Woolworth and MVC in the UK.

The group-wide intranet allows the company's 51,000 office-based staff to share and manage knowledge better. The intranet will include content publishing, discussion groups, employee research and profiling, online job applications and tax forms.

Like most international retailers, Kingfisher is facing the challenge of globalisation and a faster moving market as well as more challenging customer demands. The intranet is a key part of ensuring effective communication and knowledge management across the organisation.

ICL helps Lloyds Register of Shipping

Lloyds Register of Shipping (LR), the world famous maritime organisation founded in 1760, is collaborating with ICL to design and implement a secure Internet-based system, Class Direct Live. The new eBusiness service will enable LR's surveyors and clients to keep track of the life cycle, status and safety record of every class item in over 6,400 registered ships.

The service brings together records held on a number of databases and allows the client and surveyor to see the whole picture through a single easy-to-use web interface. By reducing administration time, paperwork and room for error, the system keeps clients up to date and frees-up the surveyors' time, allowing them to concentrate on other activities like the supply of fleet information. This enables LR to give a higher level of service to existing and potential clients.

Class Direct Live also keeps track of each ship's survey schedule and this accurate tracking service improves maritime safety has been running for a year and is an example of how private companies can work with the Cabinet Office and Local Government to provide joined-up services to citizens.

LIFE WITH ICL

Story of ICL Train Printers

Background

In the late '60s and early '70s I was the manager of ICL's Peripherals Development at the HQ of the Data Processing Equipment Organisation (DPEO) at STE04. One of our tasks was to adapt or update existing peripherals to meet the requirements of the forthcoming New Range (2900), or to develop or source new peripherals where that was not realistic.

At that time ICL manufactured and maintained a range of high-speed line printers, which used barrel technology. Type numbers, like 1933 (Letchworth) and 454?, (Winsford) spring to mind. However the world was moving on - users wanted higher speeds, better print quality, high quality in multi-part sets, less noise, and some said 160 print positions. We had to meet that challenge - how did we do it?

At Stevenage we had two teams developing printers. One team, of "local origin", worked on newer versions of barrel printers and was developing "miniature front stop hammers" for them to reduce costs without loss of functionality. The other team, comprising former EEC staff who had transferred from Kidsgrove after ICL was formed, was beginning to address the challenge of designing and developing a Train Printer.

The train printer team itself comprised a small group working on the new technologies needed - including ballistic hammer technology - and a larger

group working on the basic development of the printer product itself.

Probably for historical reasons, ICL's top management was sceptical that a satisfactory train printer could be developed and made in-house so efforts were being made to find "better" sources elsewhere in the USA. OEM printers could have been bought outright and re-badged or made under licence in ICL plants.

Company organisational feuding and company politics were much in evidence too! This was an important factor since in those days the company was organised in a very functional way (to understate much sharper observations later made by Geoff Cross) and this meant that few people had knowledge and experience outside their own fields. For example, few designers and developers had direct experience of manufacture (and vice versa) and few had any opportunity to meet field service staff or end users and see products in actual use. In some quarters Quality was seen as something added to (beaten into?) a product after it was developed and built. Reliability was something "the Quality people dealt with". Costing was a problem too. Estimators were needed right from the start of the design process, not after the design die was cast. On the plus side we had begun to build a productive two-way relationship with CESO (later CED) on service matters.

What Happened

The barrel printer team and its miniature front stop hammer development activity were floated off as a special project with considerable autonomy, sufficient budget and the staff they said they must have. What happened along that road is another story.

The now main-stream train printer team settled down to the job of designing a profitable peripheral which would do a good job for ICL's customers, hold its own in the world and be a credit to ICL. The endeavour was classed as a technology project since its purpose was to create and demonstrate a complete working prototype peripheral that could be thoroughly explored and tested before embarking on full product development with its attendant heavy investment in tooling and other initial costs. To avoid futile contention and interference we kept our heads down and got on with the job!

The day came when I was presented with a substantial batch of clear and perfectly aligned 6 part print out, which had just been beautifully printed on our prototype train printer at 1500 lines per minute. I left it with a suitable manuscript note on the desk of one of the Equipment Group's sceptical top brass. This "lit the blue touch paper" and the event proved a turning point for the project.

We were speedily invited to present and demonstrate the prototype printer in action to our colleagues in the DPEO manufacturing, quality, and planning functions and to CESO. My team did just that - standing up and giving sound answers to many questions from thirsters for knowledge and cynics alike. The result was good: many doubters were converted, some obstructionists got out of the way, those who stood to gain got on the bandwagon. We got the DREO go ahead.

Apart from dealing with many practical issues leading to the successful introduction of the product (initially called the TP1500) and the eventual manufacture and sale of (I believe) over 2000 units, the first job was to legitimise the baby. That meant

getting ICL's Development Committee to consider the offering and, hopefully, to approve the full development. This august committee met regularly in Putney (of course) but we dared ask if they would meet in Stevenage for once and view the prototype printer in the flesh. They normally only had papers to look at. However they felt unable to do so. It was therefore agreed that the printer would be taken to Putney, and installed there with the help of our friends in CESO, so the committee members could view and have a demonstration of the printer in their lunch break or whenever. The project was approved and that's by far the main thing.

However I do remember hearing of the "visitors" asking penetrating questions like "why is it so big" (answer: it was bigger than we would have liked, but that was because we had specifically been asked to style it in compliance with New Range styling and to use prescribed electronics...), and "why has this work been done in secret without our prior approval" (answer: as a technology project their prior approval was not actually needed and if it had been sought before the machine was demonstrably successful, progress would have been nil).

Tributes

Nearly 30 years on I still feel proud of what was achieved by my own team and by my colleagues- seen and unseen- in many parts of ICL. Their dedication, skill, energy, perseverance and patience (often sorely tried) brought success. It was perhaps one of the last instances when a major peripheral was successfully designed, developed and built by ICL itself in the UK. I deliberately haven't mentioned the key contributors since I can't remember them all and to mention just a few would be unfair. Sorry chaps! Many thanks!

Louis Strazza Welwyn Herts

LETTERS

Contributors are asked to give a telephone number on which they can be contacted.

B&B content

I would like to put forward a rather different view on obits from the ones expressed in the recent newsletter.

The issue, in my view, is not so much the length of the obituaries but the imbalance of coverage in terms of the here and now, apart from company press releases. As a consequence of this imbalance the obituaries and nostalgic stories tend to take the dominant role. So keep the wide interest obituaries and the reminiscences from the past going but aim to achieve a balance by providing more coverage on the living!

What I have in mind is that many ICL Pensioners will have taken up new hobbies and recreations in their retirement and could not these activities also become a focus for getting together once in a while? What about a company sponsored, pensioners golf tournament, which might also involve our European pensioners? Would an Arts & Crafts exhibition/competition provide an opportunity to both show off newfound skills and meet up with ex-colleagues? Just a couple of ideas but if these sorts of things are already happening would somebody let me know! Regards

Bryan Clarke Newbury, Berks

Go Forth & Multiply

Those of us in the Nortel Pension Fund have no doubt been interested in reading the discussions in recent editions of "Diary" regarding punched card multiplying machines. They were sparked off by the comments of Peter Briggs, when he stated that multiplication could not be handled by "Steam Hollerith" systems due to the vast number of steps required and the slow speed of the then relays.

Rather than "multiplying" the discussion in the pages of "Diary", which I am sure would bore the pants off the thousands of non-ICL pensioners; I thought that my pennyworth could be aired more aptly in "Bits & Bytes". Perhaps Adrian you could allow this issue to be re-titled "Chips & Chads", pre flip-flops, you understand!

Dear John Bennett leaped to BTM's defence, reminding us about the 504 multiplier- Letchworth designed and built - but you see, Peter and John being relative newcomers to the company had, with the greatest respect gentlemen, forgotten that BTM was marketing the type 500/1 and 501 back in the 1930s and 40s.

These cleverly designed multipliers - admittedly IBM designed and built, were used extensively at Station X Bletchley Park, as John Brook reminded me recently.

I looked after one for a time in the early 50s at Pyrene. The training course at Gernon Road Letchworth was sketchy and I don't mind admitting this machine scared me. I never really understood fully how it worked.

The cards were pre-punched with multiplicand and multiplier (quantity & rate) and the resultant product was punched into the same card. This involved picking the card and reading it round a large contact roll (edge grippers I remember), dropping the card on to the flat bed of a step by step automatic punch, feeding the card serially through the die and stripper, by means of a skip bar to the appropriate product field, to await the answer. After punching the card was ejected with those horrible gripper fingers into the stacker.

In the machine were several counters and things called shift plates, which oscillated mechanically, and loads of relays and fixed wired multiplication tables. It operated one multiplicand digit at a time, units, tens, hundreds, etc. stepping up a digit one after another depending on the size of the multiplier. The individual digit totals were collected in the product counter and when calculation was complete the product was punched out serially into the same card. Slow and complicated its true - perhaps three cards a minute, but it worked!

Except that by the early 50s Pyrene's multiplier was clapped out and BTMs split with IBM after the War meant that no replacement was available. Hence the start of the 504, perhaps.

Their permanent night staff performed Pyrene's payroll multiplying run at 10:00 pm on Mondays. The payroll run was vital and Bill Compton and I took it in turns to phone the machine room at 11:00 pm to check that the damned thing was performing OK. Most time it was but I had a few gut wrenching motor bike rides from Watford where I was living to Brentford not knowing if I could fix it once I got there. You all remember the feeling (Well, all ex-engineers!)

Only once did I get stuck all night. A screw had dropped into the shift plate mechanism restricting its movement - occasionally. Bill Compton walked in at 9:00 am next day, looked over my shoulder, and picked out the screw with his fingers. Two minutes later the payroll proceeded. I could have killed him, but I was too tired and ashamed. Bill later admitted that he had "lost" the screw a couple of weeks earlier when doing some maintenance.

We were allowed to claim the princely sum of 7/6p, late meal allowance. The company did not pay for the phone calls or the petrol to get there and back. The Pyrene payroll had to run!

The step-by-step punch, as used in the multiplier was also used as a data prep punch known as a duplicator. These machines were anglicised by Castlereagh to form the Auto Key punch 21/- series, as Dennis Seacombe reminded me.

You may remember that they sort of worked but needed understanding, patience and a lot of servicing. Not unlike many of their operators!

I suppose I should have known better for in the seventies as a Sales Engineer with Production Division HQ Stevenage I helped sell hundreds of these punch mechanisms to OEM customers in Europe. NCR Augsburg, Seimag (later Philips) at Siegen and Nixdorf at Paderborn. There was also great business in East Germany with Buromaschinen Berlin who took large quantities of a system designed exclusively for them by those clever chaps at No 3 Factory, a tape to card machine using the same mechanism, which the Germans connected to their Soemtron systems.

Their engineers experienced similar problems with their machines as we did, but ICT earned much needed export revenue and we did good business with spare parts too.

Frequent trips to the Continent kept me in duty free fags and booze, which compensated a little for the privations of living in the Eastern Block. I saw quite a bit of Check Point Charlie as well.

One small anecdote: At Siemens we had a problem with pellet plucking which required changing out hundreds of dies and strippers on the stock of machines at their factory. Castlereagh management sent out two smashing lads from the production team to change them out. On the first day Mick said to Tommy "What's the German for Gents Toilet? Mick knew. "To be sure" he answered proudly "Tis easy. Look - it's on that door - Da men" Screams ensued!

ICL shipped the punch mechanisms from Letchworth to Siegen by road. The first time our own transport had shipped to the Continent. (Wartime excluded.) I accompanied our driver on the first run. The vehicle chosen was a well used, closed back van, that up to until then had been used exclusively to run hot food from No 1 Factory kitchens to various satellite canteens including the Training School, in the Letchworth area. I doubt the van had been further than 10 miles from Icknield Way in its life.

HM Customs sealed the van in Letchworth and the German Customs broke the seal in Siegen. When the doors were opened the pong of stale shepherd's pie and chips was "Bloody staggering".

Our driver was very tall, 6ft 7inch I think, and he was chuffed when the local hotel offered him an oversized bed. He did the regular run after that in order to "get a good night's sleep" Happy days.

Miss Jenkins, chief at Ocean Accident once said "Hollerith has a morbid fascination, so have the chaps who look after it" She was right!

Peter Walker Hampton Wick

English Electric Response

I've just got round to reading B&B after a lengthy sojourn in Portugal and offer my comment on your Editorial in the Autumn '99 Issue.

There is indeed an English Electric Computers Reunion - a 'Dinner'. The first was held in November '87 and the most recent on 16th October 1999. They have not been held every year and I have attended all but the last and the one in '93.

Note that it is NOT called the 'English Electric' event, but 'English Electric Computers'. I seem to recall that there was some form of 'eligibility' to be met but can't recall what it might have been.

The long-time Organiser of these events has been Cliff Robinson, a former Director of EECOMPUTERS, and his address is 'Little Worsley', London Road, Chalfont St. Giles, Bucks. HP8 4NQ.

On another point - that of the dearth of 'stories' from EECOMPUTERS people - I too have noticed the absence. As someone who might have contributed a Story - from 1955 and on - I suspect I have thought that they would be of little interest to anyone except the participants! (*If this is the case why am I publishing any stories from the past?! Ed*)

In fact, on 7th February 1995, I presented to the North West Group of the Computer Conservation Society, a Paper entitled 'DEUCE - its life and times', subsequently published in abbreviated form in RESURRECTION, The Bulletin of the Computer Conservation Society. In it I related several anecdotes and you might like to extract one - they are all 'One Paragraph' in length!

Keep up the good work

Regards

Jeremy.Walker@Talk21.com

542 Mouse

I joined BTM in 1955 to specialise in servicing the new 542 Electronic Calculators, and the soon to be announced 550 model. The plan was to ship me to Egypt immediately, but it was not considered a safe thing to do at the time- (for me, not them!)

Nowadays, a mouse is synonymous (clever phrasing!) with computer systems, but not in the days of the 542, as I will relate. It was a weekend, and I had been given a rare company travel voucher to enable me to visit my semi-deserted wife and family in Newcastle -upon-Tyne. I had expected to get away early Friday afternoon from my temporary secondment in London, but was asked whether I could "pop-in" to some financial house in the City en-route to Kings Cross. "They are gaining ten bobs on the 542" was the symptom.

Arriving at the customer's office I was amazed to see a camp bed in the Engineer's room. I first thought that it was for me, but was relieved when it was explained that it was "used by the resident engineer!" Much later that evening, and after running every test program successfully, I discovered that if one sat discontentedly musing, the ten bob position neon in the Product register would magically illuminate, all by itself. Ah! A duff turret, surely.

Having removed the suspect assembly, examination revealed a minute, and a very dead mouse, with jaws

clamped very firmly to the anode load terminal. The loss of body fluid had long since reduced its length and the mouse had been reincarnated as a small capacitor, so causing the financial institution to gain ten bob every 30 minutes or so. Had it been on the sister anode load, they would have, very intermittently, lost ten bobs, and I would still be looking for the cause!

Vic Hopkins Wisbech Cambs.

Book Sale

I am going to have a clearance sale to get rid of the several hundred copies of the **Second ICL Anthology**, which are still cluttering up the back bedroom. The price incl. P&P UK £6 Europe £7. Cheques payable to JWS Carmichael.

Hamish Carmichael 63 Collingwood Avenue
Tolworth Surbiton Surrey KT5 9PU

REUNIONS

Punched Card Reunion Group

The venue for the next event will be at ICL Stevenage on Tuesday 3 Oct 2000. I need somebody to volunteer to give a presentation on any subject, which will interest those people who always come to this event. Tickets will cost £10 each and will entitle you to a buffet lunch and tea/coffee, morning and afternoon. Cheques should be made out to **Punch Card Reunion Group** and sent to me at **5 Nun's Acre Goring-on-Thames RG8 9BE** with a SAE for the return of the tickets.

Adrian Turner 01491 872012

CAFS Reunion

The suggestion has been made to me that we ought to be considering a CAFS Reunion, and I would like to know the names and addresses of anyone who would like to attend such an event.

Hamish Carmichael 020 8337 3176

Liverpool Engineers

Bill Wood & Ray Dowson have contacted me, asking me to publicise the regular meetings that are held on the second Wednesday of each month in the **Trials Hotel**, Derby Square/Castle Street, Liverpool.

George Lynn 01744 29984

ICL Central London Group

The next get together will be on Wednesday July 19 at the usual venue - The Fox at Epworth/Paul Street, from 12 noon.

John Doo 01245 259862

West Kent Engineers

The group is moving its meetings to "The Vigo" public house Vigo Village near Wrotham Kent. It is on the A227 about 1.5 miles north of the junction with the A20. The first meeting will be on the 6th April. Instead of meeting on the first Thursday of every month, the meetings will be the first Thursday of every EVEN month ie. April, June etc.

Ron Harding 01732 761076

Polesden Lacey National Trust

Last year a number of ex ICL people met during the Craft Festival & Fair Day at this National Trust property near Dorking Surrey. This year the event is being held on Sunday 2 July 2000, from 10:30 until 17:00. For further details contact

Alec Garnham 01372 454407

ICL Double Majority Club

Jack Gifford 01462 677173

Leo Computers Society

Geoff Parry 01628 770129

West Gorton Reunion

Eric W Watts 01457 875080

STE04 Office and Retail Systems

Derek Tourell 020 8386 9465

Watford-Harrow- Feltham Group

Derek Tourell 020 8386 9465

Copthall House Newcastle Staffs

Bob Green 01782 657763

Letchworth Group

Dennis Evans 01462 811273

West Branch Engineers

Eric Reynolds 01452 712047

East Grinstead 81 Club

Bert Gill 01903 763370

East Midlands UB40s

Brian Skeldon 0115 9727835

Oxford Region

Albert Brook 01235 531267

The Walthamstow Mob

Derek Windsor 01992 522761

Tin Hut Reunion Group

Olaf Chedzoy 01278 741 269

Obituaries

ICL/Nortel Fund

Taken from the autumn and winter 1999 editions of the Nortel "Diary".

Ashton	Rothwell	Ernest G	14/01/99	85
Bracknell	Masters	Rhoda S	29/01/99	86
Bradwell	Leese	Richard M	24/05/99	81
Bristol	Ball	Maria R	11/10/96	70
	Rodd	Lawrence	06/08/99	68
Cardiff	Bowles	Harold C	07/09/99	80
Croydon	L'Esperance	Peter J	19/05/99	78
	Woodward	Alice E	07/09/99	96
Gloucester	Walker	Thomas	25/07/99	73
Harrow	Green	Clara E	30/05/99	92
Kidsgrove	Boulton	Sylvia	10/01/99	68
	Baynes	Edmund	25/08/99	59
	Bratt	Sylvia R	24/06/99	75
	Heron	William	12/10/99	76
Leeds	Varley	John R	15/04/99	80
Letchworth	Arnold	Peter G	25/05/99	77
	Byram	Robert C	28/05/99	79
	Cavill	Derrick	02/06/99	77
	Clements	Tom	21/08/99	83
	Crane	Norman	16/10/99	89
	Draper	Frederick	02/07/99	82
	Draper	Ian S	20/07/99	65
	Elliott	Albert E	28/07/99	84
	Gentle	Walter E	16/07/99	91
	Greenwood	David G	30/04/99	69
	Gittins	William	10/10/99	73
	Hannick	Barbara	11/08/99	75
	Hudspith	William	13/10/99	68
	Humphries	Geoffrey F	26/07/99	72
	Martin	James D	12/08/99	85
	Miller	S G	26/07/99	82
		(Dusty)		
	Moon	John A	30/07/99	76
	Odell	Raymond	04/07/99	
	Petit	Kenneth	15/08/99	72
	Sharp	Royston S	14/02/99	72
	Williams	Albert W	06/08/99	84

London	Faulkner	Cecil I	04/06/99	77
	Harcourt	John H	25/06/99	73
	Rice	Stanley J	25/03/99	89
	Roachford	McKee P	11/11/99	59
Manchester	Bunting	Donald	30/07/99	77
	Daly	James	30/06/99	71
	Pugh	James	22/05/99	82
	Renshaw	William	19/08/99	85
Norwich	Biddle	Peter	02/09/99	74
	Brett	Maurice L	14/09/99	70
Putney	Jarman	Henry A	08/05/99	77
S'hampton	Dowding	Norman A	04/07/99	65
	Marlow	Frederick	12/08/99	73
	Parkes	Peter J H	13/07/99	72
	Ashton	Wilfred G	13/06/99	80
Sheffield	Farrow	Brian T	11/09/99	66
	Gibson	George A	10/08/99	68
Stevenage	Leadbeater	Eric	19/08/99	71
	Tebb	Harold		
St Albans	Wainwright	Derek M	01/08/99	79
	Wakerley	Sheila	15/09/99	74
	Hubbard	Roy	09/10/99	71
	Ramsden	Clive A	27/04/99	61
	Aldred	Colin P	28/10/99	63
	Brooks	Thomas W	18/09/99	86
	Downey	Ronald	28/09/99	75
	Sullivan	James P	01/07/99	89
	Wright	Norbert	05/03/99	72
	Winsford	Leonard	09/10/99	80
Other ICL Locations	Kinsey	May	12/03/99	77
	Latham	Clifford	05/05/99	72
Bagshaw	Alan R	05/07/99	74	
Bedia	Gopal P	19/07/99	70	
Blows	Ellen C	27/07/99	85	
Brown	William R	09/06/99	77	
Clarke	Cyril A	20/06/99	81	
Harding	William B	21/05/99	74	
Harding	Charles E	28/07/99	77	
Hayler	Elsie G	16/05/99	86	
Hill	Ronald V	17/05/99	66	
Innes	Alfred A	12/05/99	76	
Jagielski	Jan	04/06/99	92	
Jalfon	L J	09/07/99	75	
Jinks	Edward	20/10/99	78	
Kearns	John C	26/04/99	74	
Knight	Reginald J	29/07/99	77	
Lockhat	Thomas J	05/05/99	89	
McCourt	Brian G	02/06/99	69	
McHenry	Carson	14/08/99	65	
Maher	Raymond	15/10/99	77	
Morris	Eric W	13/09/99	64	
Miller	William H	05/01/99	96	
O'Connor	Frances M	01/06/99	92	
Pearson	William	03/07/99	78	
Plain	John J	19/03/99	84	
Rowe	Eric H	28/08/99	71	
Ruddick	Thomas	01/11/99	85	
Skuce	Philip J	24/01/99	64	
Smith	Sophia	09/08/99	92	
Stephenson	Richard	04/06/99	78	
Taylor	Albert M	27/04/99	90	
Thomas	Ivor D	20/08/99	65	
Thorman	David S	15/08/99	65	
Vickery	Hubert J	05/03/99	83	
Yarnley	Frederick	03/08/99	87	

ICL Fund

BIR03	Birch	Kenneth	25/12/99	60
BRA01	Sawyer	Peter H	17/12/99	65
BSN01	Wick	Tibor	02/03/00	72
HOM99	Doyle	Charles A	27/09/99	68
	Wesley	John	13/01/00	64
KID01	Matthews	Barry	24/10/99	55
LON49	Leonard	Raymond	08/10/99	66
MAN01	Armour	Hugh	12/09/99	70
	Gorton	Thomas F	30/11/99	64
	Spiller	Clifford F	20/12/99	65
MAN05	Catlow	George W	18/01/00	62
	Rippin	Michael D	12/10/99	59
SLH06	Skeat	Frederick	29/09/99	65
WAK01	Stonehewer	Alexander	06/12/99	61
WIN01	Hume	James H	27/09/99	70
WSR01	Collins	John R	29/01/00	63

PENSIONER REPS

Jack Kane 21, Hazlebank Close, Liphook, Hants.

GU30 7BZ 01428 725169

Bill Williams 98, Heddington Grove, Islington,
London N7 9SZ 020 7607 9408

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the Autumn 2000 issue must be submitted by 1 September 2000 but would be appreciated earlier.

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