Editorial

One thing about retirement is that the time rushes by and here we are at the end of yet another summer and I have got to get B&B No3 ready for the printer. (The bad layout of No2 was the printer's fault not mine!).

Thanks must be given to all those who have contributed articles but it would be a pleasant surprise to get some stories from people other than ex-engineers! Have you all forgotten the wonderful world of ICL and the exiting people you worked with? I would also appreciate more short items, as pruning down very lengthy pieces takes time and may also upset the author!

By the time this appears the Punched Card Reunion Group will have met in Stevenage, one of the very many get togethers for old friends and colleagues that are happening on a regular basis. Let me know of any others that are not listed in this edition.

I visited Bletchley Park recently and would recommend it as a worthwhile day out for anybody interested not only in the Code Breaking activities during WW2 but many different aspects of recent history including computing.

Many ex-engineers will remember Ray Baker from FEHQ who emigrated to South Africa about 30 years ago. He returned with his wife Pauline for an extended holiday in the UK this summer You will pleased to know that they are both well and wish to be remembered to all who knew them.

Pat Sullivan has written to me from Florida where he lives for the winter months. Unfortunately he was unable to attend the Punched Card Reunion meeting in Stevenage and sends his best wishes to "all my old friends and colleagues". It was also good to hear from Ray Griffiths in Spain - read his piece *"Is there life after ICL"* in this edition. It prompts me to ask the question "How many pensioners have uprooted themselves and gone abroad, and would they recommend it?" Please write and tell me.

The major changes to the organisation of ICL at the beginning of 1996, appear to have settled down in that I have had no further information on the subject!

Adrian Turner
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ICL NEWS
Manchester Bomb

320 ICL staff who work in the Arndale Centre had to be redeployed to other ICL locations as a result of the explosion on the 15 June 96. None of the staff were injured but at the time of writing, mid September, they have been unable to return to their normal offices.

Zeneca selects ICL to supply Microsoft products worldwide in £6M contract

After a detailed evaluation, leading bioscience company Zeneca has selected ICL to manage the delivery of all the Microsoft software products needed by its world wide operations over the next 3 years.

A Microsoft Select Enrolment agreement, expected to be worth over £6M, has been signed by Zeneca with ICL. It is one of the largest single contracts placed for the supply of Microsoft products.

ICL is an accredited Large Account Reseller for Microsoft products and one of a small group of international companies to achieve Solutions Provider Partner status.

ICL has provided Microsoft products to Zeneca operations outside the UK and USA since October 1994. The new contract signed in May 1996 supersedes the original agreement and extends it to cover all Zeneca operations worldwide.

Document Management System Orders

Two more local authorities have signed up with ICL for document management systems, bringing the total now to 24.

Sheffield City and Cherwell District are the latest authorities to select the Image software to help in the handling of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits.

Sheffield is taking a 96 user system for use in its revenue division. The Image software will run on an ICL Teamserver, along with the Ingres database and Powervision for document scanning and storage.

Cherwell has ordered a 50 user system, complete with PC's and Teamserver , to be used in both Housing Benefits and Revenue departments.

Both councils will be using the systems to scan incoming mail, thereby saving filing space and making it easier for different departments to deal with queries.

£10M Contract for Immigration Control

After 12 months of continuous and highly successful operation, the computer based Immigration Control System installed by ICL at major airports and seaports in the UK, is to be extended nationwide.

The Home Office Immigration Service has placed a further contract valued at over £10M to install the system at all ports of entry throughout the country.

Installation work will be undertaken at 45 regional airports and seaports, from Aberdeen to Plymouth. Even the QE2 will be catered for by a portable system The project is scheduled for completion early in 1997.

ICL will enhance the existing secure client-server computer system and communications facilities to support the much larger distributed network on which the Immigration Control System will be made available. It will also supply and install a further 30 ICL Teamservers and 400 additional PCs , more than half of which will be portables.

Personal Computers with automatic passport readers will be used in immigration halls. Larger more powerful systems, capable of displaying photographs and handwritten documents, will be installed by ICL in back offices.

All will be linked to two central ICL DRS 6000 UNIX servers which hold a master and mirror image of a database of suspect persons currently containing nearly 400,000 entries.

The ICL Powervision document imaging system scans typewritten and handwritten documents and stores them in its database. DAIS, ICL's object request broker software system, is used to handle the movement of images and data across the network.

ICL in High Street Kiosk Trial

ICL has won a £4M contract to provide a network of multimedia kiosks for a pilot project which will see 200 touch screen interactive kiosks on the streets of London.

The kiosks will provide a predominantly free information service to the public and tourists, covering news, street maps and a What's on Guide in cinemas, theatres and restaurants.

ICL is providing hardware and software for the pilot project. Each kiosk will be equipped with a PC and will have facilities for coin handling, credit card transactions and printing.

Ticketing Contract From London Transport

London Transport has awarded a £4.5M contract to ICL to revolutionise and streamline the way tickets are issued by agents to passengers travelling on London's Underground trains and buses.

The contract covers the manufacture of automated, touchscreen, ticket machines and their installation in 1,750 confectioners tobacconists and newsagents throughout the London area.

The ticket machines will be linked to a central computer which will hold details of the London Transport fare structure so that bus passes and travel cards to any destination in the London Transport region can be issued in a matter of seconds.

The automation of what at present is a manual ticketing operation will simplify the issuing of tickets and speed up the service to travellers.

The issuing agents will also benefit. Because the tickets are printed by the machine the agent is relieved of the need to hold a large quantity of high value pre-printed tickets. Administration will also be reduced because the computer system will automatically calculate the value of tickets sold at each outlet and invoice the agent accordingly.

London Transport will benefit from the improved accounting and control provided by the computer system. High security features will reduce significantly the opportunity for theft and fraud. Printing , distribution and operational costs will be reduced and a range of management reports and statistics will be provided on sales by agents and types of tickets issued.

ICL Awarded £600K Systems Integration Contract at Dubai Airport

Advanced computing services which will improve check-in facilities for passengers and airlines using the new terminal now being constructed at Dubai International Airport, are to be supplied by ICL.

A contract for this work ,valued at £600,000, has been placed by DNTA, the sole ground handling agent at Dubai airport. DNTA is part of the Emirates group which includes Emirates Airline - the fast growing international airline of the United Arab Emirates.

The contract covers the development and installation of a departure control communications system. This will transfer details of passengers and baggage recorded on personal computers at check-in desks to the airline host computers of the Emirates group and other major carriers which fly to Dubai.

BBC & ICL to Develop Online Service

BBC Worldwide, the commercial arm of the BBC have chosen ICL as its partner to develop a commercial BBC online service that will be available over the Internet.

This pioneering venture, provisionally called BBC Online, will deliver a BBC branded web service and is expected to be launched next Spring. The service will be built around favourite BBC radio and television programmes and will cover news, sport, information and entertainment. As part of this service ICL will be creating a fast, simple and easy- to-use gateway to the Internet - with full customer care service support. This will be Internet with a familiar BBC face and will position BBC Online as one of the UK's leading Service Providers.

IBM Service For VME Systems

It could not have been imagined just a few years ago, but the computer industry isn't what it was!

IBM had a stand at the ICL CUA Information Society Convention in May saying "We will love, cherish, support, stay up late for, listen attentively to, worry over, polish, cuddle, and maintain your ICL equipment like it was our own".

ICL Retirements

Tom Hinchliffe, the head of ICL's mainframe division retired at the end of June after 36 years service at West Gorton.

He will work on a part-time basis for the company, serving on the Technical Strategy Board, and as a director of Fujitsu Systems Europe.

Bill O'Riodan the ICL Chief Scientist retired at the end of July. He will continue as Chairman of ECRC, the Internet Service Provider in Germany, jointly owned by ICL and Siemens.

ICL Year 2000 Programme

Mike Ormsby has been appointed Programme Manager for the Year 2000 Programme.

The "Year 2000 Problem" arises because many IT systems record dates using only two digits for the year. This will have widespread and far reaching consequences for the many customer applications and some ICL products which will be affected by this problem, for which there is no simple universal solution.

ICL has established this programme to ensure that every ICL business understands the potential impact of the problem and implements appropriate corrective action plans. This approach will help customers reduce the costs of tackling the problem and reduce any possible risk to their business.

Dateproof 2000 Services are being offered by ICL to enable customers identify what needs to be done and establish the resources, skills and timescales required for the customers business.

On the technical side a *Pilot Study* service is offered, *Validation* of testing strategy and an ICL *Validation Centre* will test applications. If necessary a *Data Conversion* service will be provided to those organisations who will need to change data structures.

PAST NEWS
The Heat Barrier

Perhaps the following will bring back some memories of working with early computers, in this case the Hollerith Electronic Computers known as the HEC range (or 1201/1202 ed).

We were at the BEE, Business Efficiency Exhibition at Olympia in the Spring of 1959 with the HEC4 on show and I was helping with the installation. The HEC4 was not new, but it was being shown for the first time equipped with Electronic Track Switching. The HEC4 used a 64 track drum for its Memory and hitherto the selection of any track had been via a bank of high-speed relays. Selection through relay points had some disadvantages; the actual relays required very delicate adjustment, the contact points could become dirty and the switching and settling time was quite long in programming time.

Incidentally when a relay switching system was running the relay box made a faint buzzing sound and if it was listened to by the old engineer's method of using a screwdriver pressed to the ear as a stethoscope, the most amazing rhythmic patterns could be heard!

The Memory Drum assembly lived in a large draw which took up the right hand side of the system operating console. The new electronic track switch unit consisted of a bank of small modules containing valves, and was located at the front of this drawer, close to the drum.

Using roller bars and sheets of steel to protect the exhibition stand floor, the System, complete with input output tabulator and card punch, was rolled into position and connected up. The exhibition programs were run and all seemed well. Then after a day or so, due to the May sun shining through the glass roof of Olympia, it became very warm. Intermittent system crashes started to occur - we had reached the Heat Barrier.

Diagnosis suggested the new track switch modules to be too hot and this was confirmed when the system ran well with the drum drawer open and an electric fan directed onto them. This diagnosis was only completed the day before the exhibition opened, so there was some concern. At this point I went home as it was late in the evening. (My wife has just read this and says I was late home most nights!) When I arrived at the exhibition next morning the solution to the problem was already in place.

The drum drawer was open and a fan blowing on the track switches, also a neat Perspex box enclosed the whole assembly. The public were invited to view the new unit in operation, with the explanation that the because the drum drawer was open *temporary cooling* was required! This worked well for the duration of the show and gave time to create a permanent solution.

Peter Porter Market Drayton Shropshire

Remember NPE?

It was nice to read Alan Gilman's piece " Tom Griffin OBE remembered" in the Bits & Bytes No 2. I would like to add to the picture Alan painted, by describing another aspect of the innovations made by Tom & Alec; the setting up of New Products Engineering (NPE)

When World Wide Manufacturing & Maintenance Group (WMMG) was formed early in 1972, I was invited to move from a product development role at Stevenage and join Alec Trussell's team at CED HQ as manager of NPE, taking over from Angus McDonald who had just been promoted to another role at CED HQ.

NPE was established to do three main things
- To influence the ICL product design/procurement functions so CED could deliver customer service which met the customers' needs and was profitable and competitive.
- To help prepare CED to service the new products as they entered the marketplace.
- To provide or organise certain supporting services needed by the field. e.g. Modification Instructions and Kits, Service Aids, Test Software distribution, Service Information Sheets and other Service Documentation.

I was privileged to inherit and lead a team of dedicated, able engineers, who were skilled and experienced in many of the diverse aspects of the service business we needed to address. Most had come from the field or support, and knew about life at the sharp end, on site, face to face with the customers.

What were the challenges and solutions?
- ICL were functionally organised - that was quite usual in those days - and the chasms between the various empires could be quite deep and wide. We played our part in building the bridges that eventually brought all the pertinent company talents to bear on the service issue.
- There were several product development sites, including Stevenage, Kidsgrove, West Gorton and Bracknell, each with their own way of doing things, and NPE had to be there. NPE also had to function as an integrated whole. Our organisation structure met those needs.
- We realised that acquiring technical knowledge about new products was only part of our task. Our

engineers also had to learn about and deal with service economics and the commercial issues. Training, teamwork (often across company functional boundaries) the infusion of new talents and the modelling tools we developed, helped us meet these needs.

- We had to use our multi-disciplinary knowledge of the service business to encourage our colleagues in product development and procurement to pay timely attention to service needs. We gradually earned their respect and recognition that their design responsibilities were wider than some of them perceived.

- We had to find out what our competitors were up to: in terms of product characteristics and design and in terms of service strategies, methods and results. Business intelligence, visits to multi-vendor sites, appropriate reading, attendance at conferences and exhibitions and inspired recruitment, all played their part in meeting this challenge.

- We had to keep in touch with the field - our ultimate internal customers. We used a variety of means to achieve this including structured site visits, secondments and a network of personal contacts.

- We had to give our own efforts a proper sense of direction and we did this by devising and working to service strategies and plans, in collaboration with our colleagues in the CED Systems Engineering units and CED Operations. Like everyone else dealing with the introduction of new products in the engineering units of CED HQ we were all subject to the disciplines of CED's own Project Management System.

What did we achieve?
- We earned recognition as a group of capable people who made a positive contribution to the development of products which would deliver customers good service and low whole life costs.

- We successfully applied our efforts to a very large number and wide range of new products - from large systems to terminals and from the first laser printers to tape systems.

- We developed numerical ways of illustrating many service issues, so that arguments for change could be logically and effectively presented. These methods were used to persuade the unconvinced that poor product reliability was the "killer" in the service business and that radical improvement had to be achieved.

- We made sure that CED did not prepare for the next war (e.g. the introduction of New Range) by simply polishing up the tried and tested methods of the past.

- We empowered and developed our people, so that they could function and communicate well in a rapidly changing work environment.

What happened in the end?
Around 1979, ICL embarked on major restructuring, which for each main product range, brought the Marketing, Development and Service functions under common management. The product engineering functions of NPE were transfered to the new units and NPE itself ceased to exist. But the spirit lived on, through its people who went to carry on the work in other parts of the company.
Louis Strazza Welwyn Herts

Lucky Break 1961/62
I was one of the lucky few to be sent to RCA, at Cherry Hill near Philadelphia, USA in 1961/62. My job was to learn and then support the RCA 301, soon to be marketed as the ICT 1500. The total contingent was 28. Some went for a few days, some for a week or so and some for five weeks, but Peter Porter and I from FEHQ Support, Don Ryan and Clem Gallup the first two site engineers and Stan Glassborrow and Mike Jefferies from the Training School went for three months. The 301 (1500) was a delight to work on and I was lucky to be in there first. Fully transistorised, simple bus architecture, gold plated connectors for the PCB's (as opposed to the horrible wrapped joints on the 1300), clever and elegant peripherals, good looks for its day and an operators panel that was so helpful to fault finding. The downside to the trip was that it was over winter and Christmas (the temperature fluctuated daily between 75 and 50 degrees F for two weeks and then rapidly dropped to 16 degrees (16 below freezing). The upside was that it was all new, we were first on the ground, the Yanks were very friendly, we were given a $100 sweetener for Christmas and with care and courtesy of Greyhound, sufficient expenses to see a bit of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Niagara and Washington. Thank you ICT.
Alan Wray Watford Herts

Is There Life After ICL?
I was very pleased to receive Bits & Bytes No 2 with its information about the Company and news and views of fellow pensioners.

Clearly ICL has changed dramatically from the Company we knew. I recognise some of the names but the organisation and structure is completely different. On the other hand many of the contributors seem to be ex-Customer Service colleagues of mine writing on subjects that are familiar to me.

Such reminiscences remind me very much of those wartime experiences our "older" friends are always so keen to tell us about. Most of us missed out on a real war but you could say that we engineers were involved in our own "30 Year War" for ICL! We always seemed to be fighting to make "silk purses" out of some of the "pig's ears" of equipment we had to maintain. I guess we all enjoyed the challenge and the occasional successes, so on reflection you could say, as I am sure someone else must have said

"It was the best of times and it was the worst of times"

My most vivid memories relate to The Battle of Bureawest" in the mid seventies.. We established our first bridgehead there when some 70 of us, working day and night, installed what was a prototype P4 and managed to get VME up and running in just five days. Then followed some two years of trench warfare during which time we changed out the processor two or three times, and carried out countless modification upgrades to try to keep VME up long enough to pass a trial. I can't for the life of me remember whether or not we finally managed it!

What I can remember is that on the day Bureauwest was to be officially opened by the Minister of Defence we actually managed to get the whole roomful of equipment up and running. With a sigh of relaxation just before the big moment I leaned back on the Emergency Off button (not then protected) and killed the whole room. Which is

probably why I was deported to Meteosat afterwards, but that is another story.

The point I would really like to make is that I believe that "The ICL Pensioners' Newsletter" should aim to strike a balance between the past and the present. ICL was a hard taskmaster that demanded total commitment and left us with precious little time for outside activities. So it would be nice to hear how people are taking advantage of the time they now have available. What new interests have they developed and where have they travelled.

In my case I have developed new interests which are mainly to do with where I now live. I have established a very comprehensive planned maintenance programme for the cleaning and pH control of my pool. Our "orange grove" is now flourishing as a result of a total service which ensures that the trees are pruned, watered, sprayed and finally harvested on time and within budget. We need to get it right this year as we hope to plant a third tree next year!

Now that my wife understands spreadsheets our monthly budget reviews can be completed within a day. I have written a Satellite Dish alignment and installation procedure and am working on a telesupport procedure for tuning problems. I also maintain a database of local restaurants which are given performance ratings by our friends in certain defined " key areas". These include such measures as "sit to order time", "order to serve time", "complaints" and "return visits". Then every month I publish league tables and issue copies to all our subscribers.

The only failure I can recall was when I tried to organise one of the local builders. I used up a complete flip-chart pad and he still didn't understand the difference between "Aims", "Purpose" and "Objectives". However I did learn from him the true meaning of "Manana"!

So then from the above it must be pretty clear that despite my ICL background I have made the break and have become fully integrated into the relaxed Spanish way of life/

If by any chance anyone reading this also lives in the area or just happens to be visiting sometime, then why not give me a ring on: (6) 5791139
Ray Griffiths Javea Spain

The Way We Are

I've thought about this for some time and Alan Gillman's well deserved tribute to Tom Griffin was the final trigger to get me going. You must think about family, friends and colleagues that you have known over the years - some with affection and some with less. Personalities are complex, influenced by people. Like me, you can probably think of some who gave generous help, guidance, encouragement and reward over the years, but what of those who had a strong personal influence.

My nomination goes to the late John Hudson, who some will remember. I was 22 when I first met him in FEHQ Support (he a family man of 30) and I was to work with him for only four years from 1957 to 1961, on the BTM 1200. It was some time before I realised that his gammy leg was artificial, lost, just below the knee, in a Sunbeam m/c accident, but I was to observe and admire the way he managed pain in order to have a normal life and there were few as cheerful as he. He drove his Ford Zodiac with panache (when personal cars were rare),better than most two legged colleagues. We rarely worked in the UK, but I thank John Sherlock for frequently teaming us on jobs abroad. Some of his patience and persistence, pride in work and work-on-regardless attitude rubbed off on me.

In Thurles, Eire, we stayed at O' Connor's Bridge Hotel. O' Connor was a dyed-in-the-wool Catholic and his wife was a fervent Protestant. John led with diplomacy and humour as we moved from the bar, where O' Connor plied us with drinks, all things catholic and gory tales of the twenties, to the dining room, where his wife plied us with homebaked breads, cakes and fresh cooked food and all things Protestant. She told us to be good Protestants (C of E was almost as good) and to go to her church, but I couldn't resist sometimes the Cathedral Sunday Mass , which was so cheerful, interesting and full of light and people. John taught me to fish: 1-2 lb. river perch/roach to a 17 lb. brute of a pike that we hooked, gaffed and hauled into a small dingy on Lough Derg. His cheeky banter got invitations into the Kilacky household and through the daughters to the girls of Thurles. He also made a shrewd acquaintance with a local priest, who proved most helpful, as he appeared to be present at every dance, function and house party in the area. John was so active on that trip that he broke his artificial leg joint. He had a temporary weld in the Sugar Company workshop and had his spare flown out in near Douglas Bader fashion. He (and Jim Donnovan, bless him) introduced me to draught Guinness, a little illicit liquor (pochene) and out-of-hours drinking - out the front at closing time and in via the back door. There was probably more drinking done after hours than in normal hours.

In Hamburg, in the customer office, it was the only time that I had seen a continuous lift. The linked, open cages went up one side and down the other. You stepped in as the bottom of the cage came level with the floor. John tripped and fell several times (with a laugh) until he learnt to swing his good leg in first before the base reached the floor. We explored the streets, parks, lake with water ferries, the posh area to the north and the riverside area on the Elbe. Private houses in Germany were and still are astronomically expensive. With Henry Bizek's help, we found a wonderful fish restaurant on a high mound in the middle of a flattened docks area - fish prepared and cooked in hundreds of mouth-watering ways. John (and Heinz Immermann) introduced me to the Reeperbahn, the naughty but nice area, with an eyeful of the shops of Herbertstrasser, the dance-hall, where only ladies could ask for a dance and the hot night-clubs where ladies performed on stage, starkers, then sipped drinks with you at ridiculous prices! We bought two tickets for the Altetheatre, International Cabaret and he showed remarkable tolerance and understanding when I took along a young lady from the customer office, but the next day was very quiet!

In Strasbourg, John (through John Mackensie) got introductions to the local/visiting ladies of BTM. One memorable evening he introduced me to Riesling. I can't remember half the things recounted the next day, but I well remember the thumping hangover we both had. We could not bend down without falling over, which was very difficult for someone with one leg. Strasbourg is a lovely old city and we loved it.

In Nairobi, John taught me to swim. He swam like a fish, even with one leg. We used the municipal pool during lunch breaks. Kenya was about to go independent and the pool was open to all races,

although we saw only two Indian families there the whole time. I had a fear of water, since an accident when I was seven. Yet John taught me to swim in just a few days, underwater first - surface swimming took a few more days. He made friends with some ex-pat's, many of whom were unhappy at this time. They included the BOAC admin.' manager and the Nairobi Bus Company technical manager. These two turned out to be interesting guys, but with seedy sides. Everything closed for Easter, including the customer, East African Railways HQ, so we took the car to Mombassa (brand new and generously provided by Peter Mullet, the local BTM General Manager). We picked out a nice looking beach hotel, only to find our two ex-pat' acquaintances there. One night with them was enough, around the dance-halls and "black" spots of Mombassa. John introduced me to the art of hard bargaining, and there was plenty of opportunity to practice. The wooden Masai warrior that we bought in Neiri still stands proud in our lounge today. That trip was definitely the best - good company, a tolerant, helpful customer, considering the mess we had to clear up, generous and friendly local people and a wonderful country.

It was a pleasure to share it with John. I promised that I would return and my wife and I did just that for three weeks in 1979.

Here's to your memory John.

Alan Wray Watford Herts

REUNIONS

*It has been pointed out that **any** serving or retired ICL person is welcome at these reunions but it is better to attend a gathering of people with whom you have something in common. Please inform Bits & Bytes of any reunions that are not listed here, unless you want to keep them select!*

The Walthamstow Mob

There may not be many who are part of the Bits & Bytes constituency who have heard of the Walthamstow Office, but those that have will remember that it was "that crowd" who had this chip on their shoulders of thinking they were the best engineers in the business.

Having given you a feel of whom we are writing about, this is just to let you know that many of them come together, not quite as a reunion, but at the behest of one of their colleagues, Derick Windsor.

Derick is involved with a charity called WISH (We're Involved with the Severely Handicapped), and to help with the fund raising Derick invites all those he has contact with to events organised by the charity.

The most recent event was a Quiz Night in March which was attended by over 50 old colleagues and their wives. Some came from as far away as Torquay and Bournemouth.

Although there were some expert Quiz buffs amongst the ICL gang, the top prize was taken by a group of ladies from the local tennis club. Not to be outdone the booby prize was collected (you can hardly say won!) by some ex-engineers from the Dagenham area.

The next event is expected to be an Old Tyme Music Hall held in Epping, sometime in the Autumn

If there are any readers who are presently not on Derick's mailing list and would like an opportunity to meet up with old colleagues and friends, and help the charity, please give him a ring.

01992 522761

ICL Central London Group

The next gathering will assemble in The Fox at Epworth/Paul Street from 12:00 on Wednesday 15 Jan 1997

John Doo *01245 259862*

Stevenage Group

Now meet at the old ICL Sports & Social Club In Whitethorn Lane Letchworth, at lunchtime on the first Thursday in the month

Dennis Evans *01462 811273*

Punched Card Reunion Group

Adrian Turner *01491 872012.*

West Branch Engineers

Eric Reynolds *01452 712047*

East Grinstead 81 Club

Bert Gill *01903 763370*

West Kent Engineers

Ron Harding *01732 761076*

East Midlands UB40s

Brian Skeldon *0115 9727835*

Oxford Region

Albert Brook *01235 531267*

LETTERS

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

Silver Migration

Peter Porter's piece on dry joints in B&B No2 reminded me of the problems on 902 tabulators with silver migration. The connectors for the plug-in relays were silver plated and the silver would migrate across the insulation and cause short circuits which caused fuses to blow. These faults were a devil to find. I remember one occasion when I was working in the West End and trying unsuccessfully to find such a fault. I called my supervisor, I think it was John Mackenzie and he replaced the fuse with a large bolt, switched on the power, the silver tracking was blown away and the fault was cleared!

Dennis Evans Shefford Beds

Retirement Pension Forecast

I took early retirement from ICL in 1991, and am now approaching 65. The following cautionary tale may be of interest to persons in a similar situation.

Prior to retirement I obtained a Retirement Pension Forecast which indicated I might expect a State Retirement Pension of £95. On nearing 65 I received a letter from the Benefit Agency to say my pension had been calculated to be £66! I replied and referred them to their original forecast. This went to an adjudication officer who confirmed that £66 was correct.

I then made a personal visit to the Agency during which the pension officer said that " it appeared that they had calculated my pension without possession of the full information". The Agency now says my pension will be £116! I believe the problem was due to the fact that I had paid SERPS contributions for a short time before joining the ICL pension scheme.

I would advise anybody approaching State Pension age to obtain a Pension Forecast by completing a BR19 form from the local Benefit Agency office.

John E Dyer Birmingham

**Computer man builds Mackintosh
(Not an IBM PC clone)**

A couple of years ago I had the idea of making an overcoat. Didn't really need the coat but thought of it as a sort of model making exercise - working from plans etc. I wanted to use Loden material which is supposed to be water resistant, and after some research found a manufacturer of Country Clothes at Mytholmroyd near Halifax. They use this material imported from Austria. I visited their works and they sold me 5 yards for my coat.

Last January when it was too cold for garage work (I've just finished my Westfield SRiW 1700) I got cracking on the coat and finished it in about 3 weeks. I really enjoyed doing it and am happy with the finished product, but I don't feel any great urge to continue on other clothing projects!

Peter Porter Market Drayton Shropshire

OBITUARIES
ICL staff who were in the Northern Telecom Pension Plan

Taken from the spring & summer 96 editions of the Northern Telecom "Diary".

Ashton	**Ferris**	Jean	6/2/96	63
Bradwell	**Fuller**	Rex	25/9/95	74
	Hancock	Absalom	3/1/96	79
Cardiff	**Powell**	Josephine	23/12/96	88
Croydon	**Blake**	Leonard	9/1/96	93
	Dixon	Thomas	8/2/96	82
	Myers	John B	26/1/96	87
	Pols	Leslie A	30/11/95	82
Dukinfield	**Ellor**	Charles W	14/11/95	79
Glasgow	**Christie**	Reginald	27/10/95	78
Ireland	**Murphy**	Michael	7/2/96	80
	Wooltorton	Kathleen	13/10/95	81
Kidsgrove	**Cooper**	Lillian	13/12/95	67
	Dixon	Roy Victor	1/2/96	69
	Elkin	William S	21/4/96	69
	Fisher	Peter R	16/4/96	70
	Heenan	Florence	29/11/95	77
	Lench	Joseph A	15/12/95	78
	Loftus	Vincent A	15/10/95	74
	McGuire	John	27/12/95	72
	Shank	Frank	17/1/96	75
	Whittaker	George E	6/1/96	76
Letchworth	**Allen**	Charles E	7/3/96	61
	Bowyer	Kenneth	1/3/96	84
	Clark	Charles M	15/4/96	75
	Constable	Henry B	7/12/95	95
	Cook	Morris	28/11/95	77
	Coomby	Jack John	14/4/96	72
	Hare	Stephen	20/4/96	68
	Heckles	George	26/3/96	76
	Howard	Harold	25/11/95	76
	Long	Donovan	24/11/95	71
	Mallon	Peter J	5/4/96	82
	North	Leslie	19/2/96	82
	Robertson	Gordon	28/4/96	81
	Roblett	Stanley C	13/2/96	68
	Ryall	Leslie A	22/11/95	92
	White	Kenneth	9/1/96	83
London	**Brierley**	John H	19/3/96	76
	Butler	Charles C	11/4/96	74
	Quy	George T	14/4/96	78
Maid'head	**Woodhouse**	William R	16/4/96	76
Manchester	**Barraclough**	Joyce E	11/4/96	71
	Dean	Francis X	27/2/96	53
	Hudson	Geoffrey	5/11/95	65
Norwich	**Bastow**	Henry L	18/11/95	88
Reading	**Ilsley**	Edmund J	17/2/96	84
Sheffield	**Bamford**	Raymond	2/11/95	66
Sydenham	**Roberts**	James H	14/10/95	62
Stevenage	**Thorne**	Arthur E	7/2/96	74
	Turner	Terence E	29/3/96	59
Winsford	**Cottam**	John	8/3/96	72
	Blakemore	Kenneth J	30/1/96	65
Windsor	**Brown**	Charles H	8/1/96	80
Other ICL Locations				
	Archer	Harold T	15/2/96	66
	Bishop	Florence	29/11/95	88
	Brackenbury	Thomas L	16/6/95	92
	Darby	John K	13/1/96	74
	Hall	William	14/9/95	80
	Harding	Florie	28/2/96	90
	Hilton	John G	22/1/96	68
	Jenkins	Joseph	13/3/96	76
	Kinnear	Peter	3/1/96	73
	Law	Diana	24/1/96	76
	Marples	Eric	20/10/95	69
	Miller	Aileen R	24/3/96	79
	Molyneux	Harry	3/3/96	70
	Mullowney	John	26/11/95	75
	Roblett	Stanley C	13/2/96	68
	Rushworth	Maud	11/10/95	71
	Sheppard	Ronald A	12/3/96	84
	Smith	Arthur	16/2/96	73
	Titmus	Walter G	21/4/96	80
	Vine	Ernest E	12/3/96	89
	Williams	Ernest	29/3/96	80

ICL Group Fund Pensioners

BRA01	**Hendry**	Alan R	28/7/96	53
BRA04	**Fairmaner**	Brian	21/5/96	59
BRS06	**Williams**	Raymond	3/8/96	58
LET14	**Abraham**	Peter J	6/3/96	63
LON11	**Yule**	David M	9/8/96	61
WAK01	**Barker**	Trevor A	1/8/96	57

The Computer Conservation Society

The Northern Group have arranged the following meeting in the Conference Room at the Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, Manchester on **26th November 96** at 17:30

The Use of Computers in the Fifties
Speakers: R.Lane (Avro and ICI)
P.Kirkham (CIS)
S.Rankin (Greater Manchester Police)

Future meetings in 1997 will include **The History of the NCC** and **The 1900 Systems**.

Queries to **Ben Gunn** on **01663 764997**

Bletchley Park

The story of the code breaking operations during the Second World War is told by people who worked there in **"Codebreakers"** edited by F.H.Hinsley & Alan Stripp. Published by Oxford Paperbacks at £7.99.

Bletchley Park,"Britain's Best Kept Secret," is well worth a visit. It is open on the following dates:

1996	October	5th/6th, 19th/20th.
	November	2nd/3rd, 16th/17th,30th.
	December	1st, 14th/15th.
1997	January	11th/12th, 25th/26th.
	February	8th/9th, 22nd/23rd.
	March	8th/9th, 22nd/23rd.

Opening times:	10:30 to 17:00
Last admissions	15:30
Entry	£3 Concessions £2
Telephone	**01908 640404**

The British Tabulating Machine Company (Hollerith) had a very big part to play in the code breaking activities. The Bombes, an electro-mechanical machine used to discover the wheel settings of the German Enigma machines, were manufactured at Letchworth.

Stephen Hare wrote an article for the Winter 95 edition of "Diary" entitled "Bombes & Ultra" which gave some of the history of these units. Unfortunately Stephen died in April this year.

How many engineers who built them and maintained them can recall working with them? John Harper is very interested in making contact with anybody who was involved, as he is trying to establish details on their design and function.

His address is **7 Cedar Avenue, Ickleford, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 3XU Tel: 01 01462 451970**

NEW BOOK

September saw the publication of Michael Cumming's (the first editor of ICL News) book **The Starkey Sacrifice: The Allied Bombing of Le Portel,1943 (Sutton Publishing Ltd, £18.99),** which focuses on 12 attacks within 16 hours on 8/9 September 1943 on long-range gun batteries at either end of a seaside resort a couple of miles south of Boulogne in northern France. Some 3,257 bombs were dropped by 413 RAF and US Air Force aircraft. The bombardment had little effect on the guns but the town was 93% destroyed - according to official figures - and 500 civilians were killed. The population had to be evacuated and no-one was there the following September to greet the Canadian soldiers liberating this part of France.

It is not giving too much away to say that the bombing was ordered in the run-up to the climax of "Operation Starkey", when it was thought that those particular guns would be the biggest threat to convoys sailing towards the Boulogne - Le Touquet coastline in a mock invasion. Maybe some of our pensioners were involved in the massive troop assemblies that formed a part of "Starkey" - though this part had a different name for security purposes , Exercise Harlequin.

ICL EMPLOYEE OFFERS
Insurance (House/Car/Travel)

Willis Coroon are ICL's Insurance brokers
0800 224422

Sun Alliance are offering discounts on premiums for ICL pensioners
0800 300 822 quoting ref. 65F9416

Royal Insurance are offering discounts on House and Private car premiums
01622 691234

AA Membership

ICL pensioners should ring **0990 444444** stating their membership number and their address and they will be sent a form to claim a **15%** discount.

Financial Advice

Fairmont Trust plc an independent financial advisory company offering a free consultation to ICL employees. Ring Tony Segaller for more information **01372 370000**

PENSIONER REPRESENTATIVES

Jack Kane 21, Hazlebank Close, Liphook, Hants. GU30 7BZ **01428 725169**
Bill Williams 98, Heddington Grove, Islington, London N7 9SZ **0171 607 9408**

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the next issue must be submitted by 1 April 1997