

Bits & Bytes

No 6

Editorial

In November 97 I met Dr Raymond (Dicky) Bird for the first time at the Thames Valley Club BRA01. In the history of ICL written by Martin Campbell-Kelly it says *"The BTM computer development group, under the technical leadership of a young electronics engineer, Raymond Bird, immediately began work on constructing a machine known as HEC (Hollerith Electronic Computer)"*. If you want to know more come to the Punched Card Reunion Group meeting at STE04 in October.

As a result of the first chapter of Frank Townsend's life in BTM I was telephoned by Tom Corbett from Dublin who wanted to re-establish contact with Frank. This I was able to help him with, but more importantly we were able to meet for a pub lunch when Tom and his wife Mary were visiting their son Pat who lives in Marlow. I am sure that there is a natural affinity between computer engineers as we had a very enjoyable afternoon together.

Following Graham Barwick's piece in B&B No5 on his job finding transmitter sites for mobile phone companies, Graham was contacted by an ex ICL technician who is now working in Portugal finding sites for Nokia transmitters. It's nice to know that B&B is providing a successful job agency service.

The closure of LON11, after 36 years, will bring to an end the company's presence in the Putney/Fulham area since the late 50s. It happened in Letchworth and Croydon, and ICL continued, but the roots of an organisation surely colour its culture and its approach to business, and ICL won't be the same without Putney. What did John Betjeman say about Slough?!

I am certain that you all appreciate how old we are getting, but it takes the death of an ex-colleague to bring home to all of us that we are not immortal and that we should live each day to the full. I have just returned from Herbie Manley's funeral in Bedford, (26 March) and I am sure all those who knew him would like to pass on their condolences to Ruth and his family.

Finally I would like to thank all those pensioners who sent me Christmas cards, with some very kind remarks about B&B. It makes it all worthwhile!

Adrian Turner
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ICL NEWS

ICL Makes Profit in 1997

On the 18 March Keith Todd announced a return to profit for ICL, which is an important step in ICL's plan to relist on the London Stock Exchange in 2000.

The financial position of the company in 1997 was considerably better than in 1996 when it had an operating loss of £6.6M. 1997 saw a profit of £32.5M on revenues of £2,477.1M.

ICL House Putney (LON11) Closure

The company had announced in the past that a move to the Thames Valley was planned, for better access by customers and employees. As the lease on the building has expired it has been decided to vacate LON11 by 24th March 1998. Approximately 110 staff will move to Slough (SLH06), while Keith Todd and his immediate staff will be located in Finsbury Square (LON49)

ICL Sorbus UK Repair Operations

ICL agreed terms for the sale of the UK Repair Operations on the 31 December 1997 with a management buyout team led by two managers within ICL Sorbus - Norman Elliot and Steve Holmes.

The new company, **Triage**, will take over the three Repair Centres in Birmingham, Edinburgh and Manchester under a long term business partnership agreement with ICL Sorbus.

ICL Management Changes

David Teague formerly Managing Director of High Performance Systems has been appointed to the newly formed role of Group Director of Operations for ICL. He will operate across the ICL Group worldwide in making the "One ICL" a reality.

Robin Hacking who was Group Sales and Marketing Director has been appointed Managing Director of High Performance Systems in succession to David Teague.

After a distinguished career spanning 15 years as Group Managing Director of ICL operations in South Africa **Fred Luyt** has decided to retire with effect from 31st December 1997. **John Jones** has been appointed to succeed him from that date.

Workplace Shopping with Waitrose

ICL employees at ICL Retail Systems REA24 can now shop from their desks. Any employee who has an account card with Waitrose or any other part of the

John Lewis Partnership can access the Waitrose site on the ICL intranet and browse through a structured list of items to compile their shopping list. Users can also dial into the network from home. Orders received before 09:30 can be delivered by REA24 by 12:30, and those received before 14:00 by 17:00.

ICL Good News

ICL Hungary win PC and Server order

ICL Hungary has been selected as one of five partners by the Ministry of Culture and Education to supply PCs and servers for a project known as "Internet for Schools"

The project aims to establish Internet laboratories in some 200 primary and 900 secondary schools across Hungary. The initial tender was for hardware and was divided into 5 separate categories for Intel-based servers and PCs, 1600 units per category.

Working closely with Fujitsu, ICL was able to beat Compaq, Digital, Olivetti and Albacomp (a local supplier) to win one of the categories. The contract is worth over £1.5M and positions ICL Hungary very well for future contents based tender in Education.

ForeningsSparbanken in Sweden

One year ago ICL in Sweden sold Fujitsu T-Birds to about 7000 home PC users employed by Forrenings-Sparbanken (the new Savings Bank constellation in Sweden). Now the bank has signed a renewed 2 year support contract with ICL Sorbus worth £1.1M.

C&G Improves Image with ICL

Cheltenham & Gloucester, part of the Lloyds TSB group, has upgraded its Imaging System as part of a £1.5M project with ICL to increase its customer service on mortgage applications.

The upgrade was necessary to modernise existing systems and deal with the increase in mortgage business flowing from C&G's expanded network. The UNIX based system upgrade is now capable of storing and retrieving 100,000 images of customer correspondence per day by 120 concurrent users.

ICL's Powervision/EM application running an Oracle database uses 5 ICL SuperServers and 4 TeamServers as the backbone of the system.

Part of this project involves transferring 15 million images from C&G's older EPOCH system as it is not Year 2000 compliant. ICL will manage the transfer.

Rolls Royce Cars Ltd

Rolls Royce Cars have signed an outsourcing contract with ICL for 5 years with a value of £7.5M. ICL CFM will provide an operational environment for Rolls Royce's Amdahl based manufacturing systems from its Salford Datacentre, as well as operational and technical support for AS400, VAX and NT based systems.

LIFE WITH ICL

For they are Jolly Good Fellows

There are now 15 ICL Fellows including one Visiting Fellow. Although each of the Fellows is an expert in one particular aspect of information

technology, each also has a broad knowledge of IT and its role in business.

Ron Bayley works in ICL Sorbus and specialises in performance and reliability engineering.

Ian Campbell-Grant is based in ICL CFM where he is working to facilitate the rapid growth of the Desktop Managed Services business.

Nigel Greenaway works in Business Planning and Strategy, Local Government(UK). He has spent the last few years working on application architectures for UK local government and encouraging their incorporation into the LogICL Application Portfolio.

Peter Henderson is the ICL Visiting Fellow; he is Professor of Computer Science at Southampton University. He works extensively on software engineering with the business, in particular Retail and High Performance Systems.

Nic Holt is a Systems Architect in High Performance Systems. His primary role is in system design and product strategy activities, particularly related to the Software Business.

Jack Houldsworth is known as the Father of OSI and has most recently been active in bringing together the previously irreconcilable ISO and Internet communities. He has now retired from full-time employment but remains available to ICL as Fellow Emeritus.

Michael Kay specialises in database technology and information management architecture. Based in ICL Interactive, he is working on the technical strategy and architecture for the ICL COMMANDS content management and delivery technology.

John Panter has spent the last couple of years paving the way for ICL's entry into the consumer multimedia market.

Jeff Parker is an Internet Consultant, working in Multimedia Solutions, which is part of Network Services. Previously he was a Process Consultant in Process Solutions.

Tom Parker is known throughout ICL as an expert in everything relating to IT security.

Ed Parton after many years as chief designer of ICL's mid-range UNIX platforms is now working on the engineering strategy for ICL Retail.

Charlie Portman has had a great number of jobs in a distinguished career with ICL. He is currently doing research with IC-PARC (Imperial College). His ICL organisational base is Group Technical Directorate.

Brian Procter is the leading authority on large systems hardware design, and is heavily involved in the development of the Goldrush MegaSERVER a massively parallel database server.

Peter Wharton is the ICL Chief Engineer based in the Group Technical Directorate. This is a corporate role covering engineering processes, ICL's technical research activities and associated external collaborations. He is also a visiting professor at the University of Southampton.

Chris Yapp is a Managing Consultant in ICL Interactive. He is involved in UK Government initiatives on lifelong learning.

LIFE WITH BTM

The Way We Were

Continuing Frank Townsend's history

541/542/550 Electronic Calculators

One customer which sticks in my mind is Peter Kevil. They had problems with their 541 spanning two months. The result was that the company had serious cash flow problems. Whenever the 541 broke down they could not produce invoices, so did not get paid. This meant that bank borrowings shot up. The machine was finally sorted out in October but as a result Consultants were called in by the customer. The upshot of this was that it was decided that the machine was not necessary in the first place. The existing system was that a Sales Rep. would visit a customer and take an order in the form of product and quantity required. This order was punched up and the 541 used to calculate the value of each item in the order before tabulating the invoice. The final result of the consultation was that the sales Rep. would calculate the item value and enter it on the order form. This meant that the punched order could be tabulated straight away. I cite this as an example that because a new machine is developed it does not mean that you must have it.

A further example that comes to mind was the 1200 at Collaro. When I visited this site I was shown the special Computer Room which contained a silent machine. When I asked what application was done by the 1200 no one could give me an answer. I was led to believe that the machine had been brought by the owner Major Collaro more as a status symbol than a useful machine.

In the autumn of 1954 I was sent to a private exhibition held in a hotel in Bradford. John Ellis was the Electro Mechanical Engineer and Ken Robinson was the Senior Engineer. This was the first time I met Ken and was to be the beginning of a long association. Also present was OHC (Dane) Courtney. Dane had a pedigree in punched cards. His father was one of the first employees of BTM back in 1908 and had gone on to be Manager for South Africa. This time the 541 behaved itself, but the Senior Tabulator played-up. In helping John, I was introduced to the intricacy of 'Multi Read Feed', what an ingenious device. In the basement of the hotel there was a snooker room and many hours were spent by us in it. Late one afternoon in the middle of the week the local engineer, Bert Davis, came in and suggested that we all go out to some club in Appleby Bridge. We all piled into Bert's Company Car, which was a Ford Popular of the sit-up and beg type, and flew off along the cobbled streets of Bradford. These streets were so bumpy that Ken and I, in the back seat, spent most of the journey suspended between seat and roof, no independent suspension in those days. The club was running a kind of strip show, but I remember very little of it as whenever I became involved with Bert Davis, this being the first of many, I always ended up having too much to drink!

On the last day of the Exhibition about half an hour before we were due to close, we started to pack up. At this point a rather scruffy man came into the exhibition room. He spoke to the Sales personnel and suddenly every one went into a flap. All the

demonstrations were re-started and the man was given a VIP tour. Afterwards we were told that the man was the chief buyer for a Wool Consortium. This taught me that you can't judge people by appearance alone.

During the 541 period, I was joined at Luton by two new recruits to FEHQ, Bob Smith and Bill Holloway. Bob went on to become a Field Engineer in Southampton, while Bill moved across to the 1200. Bob was a bit of a Ladies Man, and followed the philosophy that If you couldn't fix the fault then the next best thing was to chat up the operator.

One customer, which was having trouble at that time, received the attention of Bob and I, and also received the attention of the Heavy Brigade. Hawker Aircraft, Blackpool was where the machine was located in an office on the top floor of a great big Hanger. I was told that the passage outside the office, which ran the whole length of the hanger, was the longest in the country.

Anyway the problem was that all the wax condensers in one corner of the machine had melted. Again I was accompanied by Bob Smith, and again no real fault could be found. When we returned to Blackpool next week we were accompanied by Lorin Knight and John Sherlock. The machine was eventually given a clean bill of health after a large amount of replacement including cooling fans. On a subsequent visit to the site, Bob and I decided to try to find out what the cause of the trouble had really been. We took out the Supervisor and Operator to the local Pub. Having plied them with drinks their tongues loosened. I appeared that all the problem had been caused by the folded Dust Cover having been left on one corner of the top of the machine for a day thereby restricting the cooling from the fans in the base of the machine and causing the overheating.

Another trip I remember was to Cadburys accompanied by John Sherlock. As we started, with no advance warning, late in the morning there was no Pool Car available at FEHQ. Ted Fordham kindly said that we could borrow his. This was a Jowett Van. Anyway we drove to Birmingham and conducted our business and started the journey home. The time was now after midnight and on the route we were stopped by the Police as part of a routine check. We were asked the usual question, but fortunately not the one we were most frightened of. The Police wanted to know if it was our vehicle, where we were going etc. but they never asked us the Registration Number. Neither of us had the vaguest idea of the number and had we been asked I am sure we would have ended up in the local Police Cells.

Whilst I was travelling the country on 541 business, the development team had moved to a small factory in Stevenage, next door to Schriber Wood Industries. As the 541 was due to be superseded I was sent to Stevenage to learn it's successor. On arriving, I was shown the prototype 550 although the next machine, the 542, would be a reduced version of it. Apart from Woods-Hill, Trussell and Knight I also met Stan Massam and Bert Heath amongst others. Back in Letchworth opposite No 9 factory was the ex Hurle Whitley factory. In here the first pre. production was been built for British United Shoe. This work was

under Derrick Allatson. The machine was duly finished and installed in Leicester. This was the forerunner of many 542s.

As the number of machines flowing from production steadily increased, so the ranks at Luton swelled with an influx of engineers. We were joined by Ray Baker, Ernie Cutler, Bill Quinn, Bob Finch, Alan Ray, Don Bargery, Adrian Turner and Dick Edge to name but a few. I hope those that I have omitted will forgive me as memory dims with time.

Also John Hudson joined us at Luton. I had originally met John at the Min. of Food, Guildford. I had been told that John had a Tin Leg as the result of a motor cycle accident. The first time I saw him was as one of two engineers walking in front of me. As one was limping I assumed it was John, but in fact it was the other engineer as John walked perfectly with no sign of the disability. This was the beginning of a long association only terminated by his untimely death.

The 542 at Ironbridge, Southall was famous for the reason for including the 'X' register. On this occasion I was accompanied by Billy Woods-Hill, Alec Trussell and I believe John Sherlock. What sticks in my mind is the usual visit to the Pub to mull over the problem. Now Alec Trussell does not drink alcohol so each round included squash for him. After two or three rounds Billy Woods-Hill commented that you could not expect a person to consume squash in the same quantities as Beer so he suggested that on each subsequent round Alec Trussell should be bought a bar of chocolate. The result was that when we finally left the Pub Alec had this pile of chocolate bars.

As I have said before, we engineers were a breed apart. On one occasion I was fixing a 542, assisted by the local engineers, at Manchester. During the afternoon, the Regional maintenance Manager, Mark Leadbetter, arrived. I remember Mark by the fact that he always appeared to have a 'Rennie' digestion tablet on the end of his tongue. Anyway, nice chap that he was, he told us that he knew nothing about electronics but would stay and help by making the tea. The fault took us into the evening to fix and Mark stayed making numerous cups of tea and coffee. I wonder how often a Regional Manager has been reduced to tea boy by modern technology.

Universal Grinding, Stafford were situated alongside the main railway line. Bob Smith and I attended but could not resolve the problem. This caused us to be joined by Billy Wood-Hill and John Sherlock. I remember at one point Bill Woods-Hill got the idea that the problem could be caused by vibration from passing trains. To prove this, or otherwise, we had to jack up one side of the 542 on blocks and with a rope and bump the machine up and down. I can't remember what the final problem was on the machine, the only other thing I remember was that Billy Woods-Hill took a fancy to one of the operators. She wore a green dress and was christened as "The Vision in Green" and Billy really took a shine to her but with no avail. I am sure if John Sherlock is reading this he will remember the episode.

In 1955 a 550 was exhibited at the BEE. Having completed the installation, we engineers went to look at the opposition. On the Powers Samas stand there

was this large machine which looked like a row of cupboards. It came to light that it was the prototype PCC. It was so prototype that some of the covers appeared to be of Hardboard. Anyway, during the exhibition the PCC broke down, well what else could you expect. Before the Powers engineers would remove the covers and expose it's secrets to prying eyes, a large dust cover, the size of the machine, was draped over it and the engineers disappeared under it. Then all we could see was lumps and bumps moving about as they endeavoured to fix the machine. As if anyone would want to emulate the technology of a PCC!

One final point; on this PCC was the method of programming. Along the side were a series of slots each with an accompanying wheel. Programming was achieved by punching the program steps on Powers 160 column cards which were then inserted into the slots and the handle turned to lower sensing pins. On the production PCC I understand this was replaced by tracked boards with rivets inserted at intersections to define the program steps. It's amazing what lengths one has to go to when your whole system is mechanical based. In our case we say three cheers for the Hollerith 'Plugboard'.

In the mid 1950s a collaboration was set up with LFE in Boston USA known as ICC. A team of engineers went from England to Boston and spent some time on development, but unfortunately the project folded due to commercial reasons and the Diana complete with File Drums were shipped back to Stevenage. Although I was not involved with the project, what sticks in my mind was the File Drums. From what I remember these were wound with strip steel, the heads ran on rollers over the steel and the whole drum was cascaded with oil when running. Perhaps some reader is more familiar with the project and could expand further on the technology.

Frank Townsend Pinged Burry Port S. Wales

To be continued

Characters

In George Thomson's interesting recollections about Andy Garnet (B&B4) the mention of the Harris tweed jacket with elbow patches, cavalry twill trousers and check shirt immediately reminded me of a character in Field Engineering, Mike Crowther-Watson.

In the mid 1950s Mike and I used to travel around the country installing and fault finding on the Hollerith 1200 computer systems. Mike was the electronics man and I looked after the electro-mechanical parts, which on this system were merely a Card Reader and Card Punch. It seems amazing now that these puny machines were used by such important customers, for example RAE at Boscombe Down and Bedford, GEC and Esso Fawley. When processing calculations for the wind tunnels at Bedford the 1200 would spend an hour or two calculating and then punch a couple of cards. These cards were placed in the Card Reader and another hour or so of processing commenced. At the end of this time the output result was punched. In the event of an error or program hang-up it was hard to know where to start fault finding.

In those days company cars were rare and initially we travelled around in Mike's own car, a Dellow. Digressing for a moment, the Dellow was a specialist sports car introduced in late 1947 and designed for off

road competitions. It had a steel tube frame covered with alloy panels and a Ford 10 side valve engine. Interior space was very limited and my old black tool bag (which I still have) had to travel outside strapped on top of the twin spare wheels. Being designed for off road use high ground clearance was achieved by mounting the exhaust system close below the passenger side foot-well. On long journeys the alloy floor panel became really hot and I well remember suffering considerable discomfort to my feet. Later Mike was issued with a company car, a Morris Minor Traveller with wood framed body. This car travelled a huge mileage but rather a lot of these were "personal" to Mike, done with the speedo cable disconnected. Eventually he was cross to find that he had to pay for new tyres, the original ones wore out long before the appropriate mileometer reading was reached. We used to hare about everywhere at great speed but fortunately never came to grief.

Eventually our careers moved in different directions. I last spoke to Mike when I was working on the RCA301/ICT1500 at Putney in 1962. That system had a Record File, actually an RCA Juke Box mechanism with a rotating basket which carried 128 Read/Write disks of similar size to 45rpm records. Mike was trying to sell the idea of using this kit to process Football Pools. Does anyone have further news of Mike Crowther-Watson.

Peter Porter Market Drayton Shropshire

LIFE AFTER ICL

Cyprus Retirement

After 28 years of being retrained, reorganised, relocated, reprofiled, restructured, and ultimately declared redundant we decided to realise all our assets and relocate ourselves to Cyprus.

Having arrived here in December 1992, looking forward to a laid back relaxed and stressfree life in the Sunny Med, we find ourselves happily ensconced in our villa, named "Bankside" (what else!) situated in a sleepy little village called Armou which is on the outskirts of Paphos. We are 500 metres above sea level and have stunning views all around us - the mountains, the sea, truly magnificent sunsets, and with all the natural sounds of Cyprus, such as the goats, chickens, birds and the Cypriots!

We have the swimming pool, the pergola, the hammock, the fruit trees, the bougainvillea, in fact all one dreams of for the "Golden Years".

This dream did not come about easily - we soon learnt that "avrio", as "manyana" does not just mean tomorrow - and that "sega, sega" is *definitely* "slowly, slowly"!!

Getting things done in Cyprus is a mammoth task, getting them done correctly is even greater! However, after many confrontations and "discussions" with the builder and architect we are happy with our lot and all we have to do now is to survive the earthquakes and sudden storms. Certainly not for the faint-hearted - it's a weird feeling to have the earth move from under you! (*I was led to believe that it was the ultimate feeling! Ed*) During the last quake in October 1996 huge boulders were rolling down into the ravine opposite us and our pool was rather like a tidal wave - not an experience we want repeated too often!

A different life we wanted - that is certainly what we have! If any of you are ever on the island do drop

by for a cuppa or something else and see for yourselves! Telephone number is 06 251867.

**Mike & Marion Banks PO Box 2040 Paphos
Cyprus**

LETTERS

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

Cadburys Choc

Frank Townsend's article about the 541s reminded me of a couple of incidents at Cadburys when I was a TA in the Birmingham Office.

The first one was more of a running battle, rather than an incident, and took place in the Statistical Office, which was even larger than the Invoicing Office where the 541s were installed. It centred round the speeds at which the punched card machines were supposed to work. In particular the tabulators, whose specification stated that they fed cards at 100 cpm, but were much happier running at 98 cpm. The formidable lady in charge of the department would enter the room, (like a galleon under full sail as one engineer described her!) with a stop watch in her hand, at which sight our engineers heads sank! At 100cpm the tabulators had a marked tendency to breakdown whereas at 98 cpm they would chunter on day in day out (well almost!)

The second story occurred in the Wages Office where they had two 542 calculators which carried out the tax calculations. It was the vogue in those days for computers to be named, and the manager of the Wages Office (also known as the Hollerith Office) not to be outdone, arranged for some labels to be made and stood proudly on the 542s. **CHOC 1** and **CHOC 2** were Cadbury's Hollerith Office Calculators 1 & 2. The local engineer thought, before the acronym was explained to him, that that it stood for **Christ Help Our Calculations**.

John Vockings Hazel Grove Stockport

Computer Bites Girl!

In early 1955 or thereabouts we had a HEC2 (Hollerith Electronic Computer Model 2) in offices in Hertford Street, just round the corner from 17 Park Lane, the BTM (British Tabulating Machine) head office.

The HEC2 was installed on the first floor and dissipated about 7KW of heat. The room was not air conditioned and in summer the large windows which led out onto a balcony were left open. Late one evening one of the female Technical Assistants, either Margaret Lamb or Rosemary Gales, was working late programming the beast. The machine had a modified tabulator as the input/output device. The card reader being the input and the printer the output. Those who remember the tabulator will recall that the stacker rollers were fitted with a spring loaded guard over the rollers to protect the operators fingers, with a semicircular cut out to allow the operators thumb to hold the top of the cards being removed. The cards were removed by inserting the hand and removing approximately 700 cards when the stacker was filling up. (700 cards was known as "A comfortable handful" which subsequently came to be used by engineers to estimate breast sizes).

The operator on this occasion got her hand stuck when the guard dropped down on her thumb. Her

screams were heard by one of the "Hertford Street Ladies" who called the emergency services.

In order to free the hapless technician the firemen took the feed mechanism apart leaving a neat row of nuts and bolts etc on the carpet.

All that was really needed was to insert a finger and lift the guard off the thumb, which the operator herself could have done!

The Press next day carried the headline "Computer Bites Girl" (Bits & Bytes???)

Norman Wood Newcastle-under-Lyme.

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 secret!

Punched Card Reunion Group

The next reunion will be held in Stevenage (STE04) on Tuesday 6 October 1998 at 11:00. Dicky Bird will talk about the early days of the 1200 series computers in the British Tab. ***Tickets for the event can be obtained by sending a cheque for £7, with a stamped self addressed envelope, to the editor of Bits & Bytes.*** The maximum number that can be accommodated is 120, so tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis.

Adrian Turner 01491 872012

ICL Central London Group

The next reunion will be on **Wednesday 15 July 1998** at the usual venue, The Fox on the corner of Epworth and Paul Street just north of Finsbury Square.

John Doo 01245 259862

STE04 Office and Retail Systems

Derek Tourell 0181 386 9465

Watford-Harrow- Feltham Group

Derek Tourell 0181 386 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

West Kent Engineers

Ron Harding 01732 761076

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

Computer Conservation New Zealand 1301

I received a press cutting from the Otago Daily Times dated 14 October 1997, via Frank Tilley, with a picture of Bryan Laverty and Bruce McMillan alongside an ICT 1301 which they are restoring in the Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin. This system was installed in 1963 at Cadbury Fry Hudson Ltd and ran for 12 years. It was then stored in the Museum of Technology and Transport at Seacliff until it was taken into the care of the Otago Settlers Museum in 1994. The press item says it is New Zealand's oldest intact mainframe computer. Surely it is the only surviving 1301 in the world.

Kent 1301s

Having written the last sentence in the previous paragraph it was tempting fate. I have today (22 Jan) received a letter from Hamish Carmichael, who is secretary of the Computer Conservation Society, asking for ex 1301 engineers to contact him as there are two 1301 systems in a barn in Kent that they hope to get working.

Hamish Carmichael 0181 337 3176

BOMBE REBUILD Update 2

Since I produced my last report we have continued to make very good progress. The Frame was delivered to Bletchley Park on time and we were able to arrange a delivery 'ceremony' using an early 1940s Army lorry very similar to that used to collect the original Bombes from Letchworth. The frame is now on display at Bletchley Park in the original "Bombe" Hut. I have produced various display panels which highlight the vital work that H. H. "Doc" Keen and his team contributed during the war and for which they were not publicly recognised due to the secrecy that was imposed until recent years. The panels also say a little about BTM and the Bombe itself.

The Frame has been on display since September but since then little has changed at Bletchley because we have been concentrating on drawings and other administration. One of our problems has been with having difficulty copying the original drawings. Obviously we cannot allow our only originals out "on to the shop floor" so we have to copy them first. This is a major exercise which I am pleased to say is well under way. The activities are split into two, the drawings we need to complete the rebuild and those relating to other versions of the Bombes we need preserving for posterity. I need to add here that many of the drawings are genuine blueprints which are deteriorating badly and will be lost if not copied soon.

For the rebuild drawings we are laboriously redrawing these into CAD form. We have purchased our own large plotter and can now produce impressive colour prints of the originals. Some of these are now

on display at Bletchley. CAD is giving us considerable advantages which compensate for the long hours that colleagues have put in. For example we now have our first complex front plate cut on a Laser Cutting machine which took its input from our own CAD files. We do however need more help in this area and anybody who would be willing to learn how to draw using AutoCad on their own PC would be very welcome.

For the drawings being copied for posterity we are about to receive help from a group of Nortel pensioners based around Harlow who have located a copier which is specifically designed to copy blue prints. There is something rather satisfying in having help from both ICL and STC pensioners who due to a quirk of take-overs etc. are mostly paid out of the same pension fund. Incidentally Nortel are also providing funding for the Bombe Rebuild which obviously is greatly appreciated. However even though this is a very generous donation we still need a great deal more in the way of funding before the rebuild can be completed.

Ex Hollerith engineers will be particularly interested to hear that we are currently into our second "foraging" activity for standard BTM parts. I have produced a shopping list of the parts that we require together with an illustrated supplement. These have been circulated fairly widely and results so far have been very encouraging. Alec Trussell, John Sherlock, Frank Tilley, John Bennett and others which I ought to mention if space allowed have been very helpful here. The help has come either in tracking down old colleagues or in donating actually parts and is greatly appreciated. If anybody else would like a copy of our shopping list then please let me know and I will send you one.

Finally I would like to repeat my plea for major items which we are short of. These are two single plugboards, eight Multi Relays and a large clutch from a Tabulator such as a Senior Rolling Total.

If you wish to contact me on Email please use bombe@jharper.demon.co.uk

John Harper 7 Cedar Avenue Ickleford Hitchin Herts. SG5 3XU Tel: 01462 451970

Obituaries

ICL staff who were in the Northern Telecom Pension Plan

Taken from the autumn & winter 97 editions of the Northern Telecom "Diary".

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| Birmingh'm | Tuttiett | Josephine A | 27/06/97 | 63 |
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| | Tombs | Ivy B | 28/07/97 | 73 |
| Bracknell | Wilson | Christopher | 18/05/97 | 68 |
| Croydon | Mackenzie | John M | 26/10/97 | 70 |
| | Thomas | David C | 19/03/97 | 83 |
| Harrow | Bignell | Thomas J | 18/04/97 | 79 |
| | Deamer | John R | 11/07/97 | 82 |
| | Norton | Harold J | 17/05/97 | 81 |
| Kidsgrove | Hancock | John A | 24/04/97 | 82 |

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| | Mottram | John Henry | 13/06/97 | 78 |
| | Sloan | Eric | 19/05/97 | 77 |
| | Clewes | Samuel | 01/10/97 | 85 |
| Letchworth | Adamson | Alek | 16/02/97 | 71 |
| | Cannon | Joan F | 25/05/97 | 74 |
| | Carr | Frank | 07/05/97 | 63 |
| | Chellingw'rth | Howard W | 25/03/97 | 77 |
| | Davis | Edward W | 06/04/97 | 75 |
| | France | Winifred | 30/09/97 | 99 |
| | Jones | Cyril C | 31/03/97 | 85 |
| | Kitchiner | Donald | 20/08/97 | 77 |
| | Quinton | Robert A | 30/03/97 | 59 |
| | Toleman | Arthur | 19/04/97 | 70 |
| | Wharton | Joseph N | 04/06/97 | 79 |
| | Young | Ernest A | 13/07/97 | 81 |
| Manchester | Prince | Kenneth J | 28/08/97 | 70 |
| Putney | Arm-Riding | Phyllis I | 03/02/97 | 81 |
| | Eagle | Eileen M | 24/03/97 | 72 |
| | Kendrick | Catherine | 08/06/97 | 90 |
| | Raine | Josephine | 22/05/97 | 80 |
| Reading | Hoare | Maureen | 10/07/97 | 59 |
| Southamt'n | Hart | Rodney S | 30/06/97 | 84 |
| Stevenage | Heathfield | Philip N | 15/10/97 | 88 |
| | Kirkup | Vilma M | 04/06/97 | 84 |
| | Seward | Godfrey C | 11/06/97 | 73 |
| Stoke-on-T | Williams | Charles A | 30/04/97 | 69 |
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| | Kilgour | William G | 03/07/97 | 84 |
| | McMahon | James | 28/06/97 | 70 |
| | Nutt | Myfanwy | 16/06/97 | 82 |
| | Rogers | Eric R | 19/05/97 | 89 |

ICL Group Fund Pensioners

KID01
REA08
STE04
STE10

ICL Employee Offers

AA Membership

You should ring 0990 444444 Mon. to Fri. 09:00 to 17:00 stating that you are an ICL pensioner, your membership number and your address and you will be sent a form to claim a 15% discount.

Personal Computers

PC Interworks Ltd based in Kidsgrove can provide Fujitsu ICL equipment to ICL pensioners at 20% discount on currently listed products. Discounts of up to 50% are available on withdrawn products.

01782 777477

Leisure Travel Services

Discounts are available through Portman Travel. For further information call 0181 543 4433 09:00 to 17:30 Mon. to Fri. State that you are an ICL pensioner.

Voluntary Employee Benefits

ICL Personnel have selected a company to arrange a package of Benefits and Services for ICL Employees. This package is now being offered to ICL Pensioners. The announcement to ICL employees states:

"It is important to recognise that ICL is neither promoting or underwriting any of the services offered. The decision to use a service is entirely

yours and you should therefore seek the kind of independent advice that you normally would take”

The company chosen by ICL Personnel to manage the package is **Sedgwick Affinity Group Services**. For advice, queries or suggestions call their Helpline on **0171 481 5665 Mon. to Fri. between 09:30 and 17:30.**

Green Flag National Breakdown

For details and a brochure call: **0800 000 111 08:30 to 21:00 7 days a week quoting G9682** and stating that you are an ICL Pensioner.

Motor Insurance - Guardian Advantage

For details and quotation call: **0345 697 361 08:00 to 20:00 Mon. to Fri. 09:00 to 13:00 Sat.** stating that you are an ICL Pensioner.

New Car Contract Scheme - Freeway

Free quotations and further information call: **0345 697 361. 09:00-20:00 Mon. to Thurs. 09:00.17:15 Fri.** ICL Pensioner should be stated.

Household Insurance- Guardian Advantage

Same telephone number and hours as Motor Insurance. State that you are an ICL Pensioner.

Independent Financial Advice

Sedgwick Financial Services can give advice on their products when you ring **0500 12 13 12 09:00 to 17:00 Mon. to Fri.** State that you are an ICL Pensioner.

Annual Overseas Holiday Insurance

ICL Pensioners under 65 can get annual worldwide travel insurance from **Home & Overseas**.

For an application form and further information ring **Home & Overseas Customer Services on 0345 66 04 53 from 09:15 to 17:00 Mon. to Fri.** State that you are an ICL Pensioner.

STATE PENSION PROBLEMS

At a recent reunion in London Bill Williams told me that there have been many reported errors, (10 cases in 14months) with pensions paid. As John Dyer and Derek Hamlin both reported in B&B No 3 and 4 respectively you should get a forecast using form BR19 before you are 65 (or 60 in the case of ladies) to ensure that you receive your correct pension.

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**

Competition

BITLET

Keith Crook has come up with the idea of a regular competition for which he will donate a prize to the winner - a £5 book token. (ed)

A Bitlet is like a Bullet which some of you may remember from the extinct John Bull magazine. In a Bullet you have to complete a simple phrase in a pithy, succinct, original and preferably humorous way. For example “Turkish bath” was won by adding - “so do English”. This edition’s Bitlet is the marketing slogan “Fly United”. Send your answer to the editor, whose address is in the editorial, by the end of May.

ICL and SUN Offer Free Equipment

At the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) conference held in Buxton in February, ICL and Sun offered £250K worth of free equipment to schools and local education authorities (LEAs) who have demonstrated a commitment to develop their own Local Grid for Learning.

The Local Grid for Learning, an ICL initiative launched earlier this year, aims to develop an Internet solution to connect local schools, libraries and community centres together in order to deliver educational services to students, teachers and community learners alike.

Up to 20 kits are available. Each kit will provide a school/LEA with email access, a dedicated intranet information system and access to a secure managed Internet based service delivering a wide choice of educational content and resources.

NEXT ISSUE

Copy for the Autumn 98 issue must be submitted by 1 September 1998