

LIRC News

27th April 2023

WELCOME to this second issue of LIRC News, the quarterly publication from your
London IBM Retirees Club.

The LIRC News will be published on the last Thursday of the following months - January, April, July and October. Our monthly Events Bulletin mailshot advertises events that the club will be running with links to our web site for online booking - <https://www.retireelondonclub.org>

WHAT'S INSIDE

Our LIRC club welcomes membership requests from spouses, partners, close family members, etc. If you are interested in 'family' or 'friend' membership, please read the article on page 2.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

Spring has Sprung! The daylight hours are lengthening and the weather is warming up, as I hope we all are! Your committee is working hard to try to build an attractive programme of events for you to attend but we are facing some challenges as it appears that many venues have still not returned to "normal" since lockdown and seem to have a lack of volunteers to look after us when we visit, so please bear with us as we try to overcome those difficulties.

Having said that, what we have offered so far this year has been snapped up with incredible speed, so you are clearly hungry to sample what we offer! We are trying to judge better how many tickets or places may be needed though and, as we have to pay up-front to get the deals, not to over-buy. Hopefully, you will gradually see us offering more each time where we can, which will allow even more of you to have fun!

However, as I said in our last issue, even though our committee members have enthusiasm and creativity, it also relies on you to provide us with suggestions to explore and offer, so please keep feeding us with ideas. You and they are important for our future success.

Thanks mainly to Peter Morley's efforts, we are now approaching a membership of 1,100, not far removed from that of our old IBM Club. But remember that the old IBM rule no longer applies that stated you could only be a member of one IBM Club, so if you know of others who have joined another independent Club, let them know that they are still welcome to apply to join ours as well.

You may also know of others still in IBM who may be due to retire soon, so please make them aware of our existence. As a further thought, do you have close friends who you think might like to join and who might become our friends too?

Sixty of us have just returned from Potters Resort at Five Lakes (in Essex) and it was wonderful to be able to meet up again with so many that we haven't seen for such a long time. It was such a shame, though, that several missed out late in the day through illness and injury and we wish you all speedy recoveries and quick healing. Hopefully you can join us on a future holiday – we are exploring a few possibilities already.

Our Club is built upon a strong feeling of camaraderie and friendship and this will take us forward through 2023 and beyond, so make sure you join us wherever and whenever you can and "share the love" with others. Hoping to see some of you, somewhere soon.

David Sparrow

EVENTS UPDATE

All club events are now advertised via our monthly Events Bulletin. In the **April Events Bulletin** we advertised a West End show for which tickets are still available for booking - **The Time Traveller's Wife** at the Apollo Theatre on **Wednesday 18th October**. If you would like details of this show including the booking options, please click [HERE](#)

Our next **Events Bulletin** will be on **Tuesday 9th May** (Monday 8th May is a Bank Holiday) and it will include details of two West End shows, **The Book of Mormon** on Friday 7th July at the Prince of Wales Theatre and **The King and I** on Wednesday 31st January 2024 at the Dominion Theatre (both shows commence at 2:30pm). They will be open for bookings immediately after the Events Bulletin has been sent out on 9th May.

In March, 60 of us enjoyed a week of good food, service, activities and entertainment in Potters' new Five Lakes Resort in Essex. It was great to catch up with so many old friends and meet some new ones. Although the surrounding area was still quite wet from the recent heavy rains, the weather was kinder to us than expected and offered us some lovely sunny views across the golf course and fields. As the facilities are upgraded and extended, the venue offers great holiday opportunities for the future and I'm sure we will revisit soon either in a large or smaller groups. **David Sparrow**



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF OUR NEW CLUB

Our newly-established *London IBM Retirees Club* now welcomes spouses or partners and other close family relatives of employee and retiree IBMers as members, and we are pleased that a number of such 'family' members have already taken the step of joining the Club. Family members have exactly the same publication, event participation and voting rights as all other existing members of the Club – with no membership subscription dues of any sort (as is the case for all of our members).

When booking for events, any family member is entitled to bring a guest of their own to accompany them, and such bookings can be made independently of the original related member. Alternatively (for example), an employee or retiree member and an accompanying family member can now, between them, invite *two* guests (such as another couple) to come with them to Club events if they wish.

Recognising that our Club has several other loyal followers and wellwishers who are not IBMers, ex-IBMers or their relatives, we are also now happy to be able to welcome such individuals (subject to committee approval) as fully entitled 'friend' members of the Club.

If you are reading this, and 'family' or 'friend' membership would be of interest to you, please send an e-mail to the Chairman David Sparrow at <LIRCnews@gmail.com> or the Membership Secretary Peter Morley at <retibmlon@outlook.com>. Or you can apply directly via the Club's website <<https://www.retireelondonclub.org/>> (click on 'How to Join Our Club' under the 'Information' tab heading).

LAST NIGHT IT SNOWED, SO I MADE A SNOWMAN

- 8:00am - I finished making my snowman.
- 8:10 - My feminist neighbour asked me why I had not made a snow woman.
- 8:15 - I gave my snowman a sex change.
- 8:17 - My feminist neighbour then complained about my snow woman's large bosom saying that it objectified women everywhere.
- 8:20 - The lesbian couple living nearby threw a hissy fit and said that I should have made two snow women, so I made my snow woman a partner.
- 8:22 - The transgender man/women/person asked why I didn't just make one snow individual with detachable parts.
- 8:25 - The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot noses, as vegetables are food and not to be wasted to decorate snow figures.
- 8:28 - Black Lives Matter turned up and called me a racist because the snow couple were both white.
- 8:30 - I used food colouring to make one of the snow couple a different colour to be more racially inclusive.
- 8:37 - I was then, like Trudeau, accused of the even worse offence of applying a black-face onto a white individual.
- 8:39 - The Middle Eastern gent across the road demanded the snow women be dressed in burkas for the sake of their modesty.
- 8:40 - The police arrived and read out the list of complaints that had been made against me.
- 8:42 - The feminist neighbour returned to complain that the broom that the snow woman was holding should be removed because it depicted women in a purely domestic role.
- 8:43 - The local council Equality Officer arrived and threatened me with eviction.
- 8:45 - A TV news crew from the BBC showed up. I was asked if I knew the difference between snowmen and snow women. Jokingly, I replied, "Snowballs". The female news reporter denounced me as a sexist pig.
- 9:00 - I was on the TV news as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobe, and sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather.
- 9:10 - The police asked if I had any accomplices. My children were then taken into care by Social Services.
- 9:29 - Far-left protesters, offended by everything I'd done, marched down the street demanding my arrest for hate crimes.
- 9:45 - By now the story was all over social media. My boss called and fired me because of the negative association with his company.
- 10:00 - I cried into my drink because all I wanted to do was build a snowman 🧑‍🦲

LAWS OF NATURE – Forget Newton & Galileo, here are the real laws of nature:

1. Law of Mechanical Repair - After your hands become coated with grease, your nose will begin to itch, and you'll have to pee.
2. Law of Gravity - Any tool, nut, bolt, screw, when dropped, will roll to the least accessible corner.
3. Law of Probability- The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act.
4. Law of Random Numbers - If you dial a wrong number, you never get a busy signal, and someone always answers.
5. Supermarket Law - As soon as you get in the smallest line, the cashier will have to call for help.
6. Variation Law - If you change lines (or traffic lanes), the one you were in will always move faster than the one you are in now.
7. Law of the Bath - When the body is fully immersed in water, the telephone rings.

8. Law of Close Encounters - The probability of meeting someone you know increases dramatically when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.
9. Law of the Result - When you try to prove to someone that a machine won't work, it will.
10. Law of Biomechanics - The severity of the itch is inversely proportional to the reach.
11. The Coffee Law - As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something which will last until the coffee is cold.
12. Murphy's Law of Lockers - If there are only 2 people in a locker room, they will have adjacent lockers.
13. Law of Physical Surfaces - The chances of an open-faced jam sandwich landing face down on a floor, are directly correlated to the newness and cost of the carpet or rug.
14. Law of Logical Argument - Anything is possible if you don't know what you are talking about.
15. Brown's Law of Physical Appearance - If the clothes fit, they're ugly.
16. Oliver's Law of Public Speaking - A closed mouth gathers no feet.
17. Wilson's Law of Commercial Marketing Strategy - As soon as you find a product that you really like, they will stop making it.
18. Doctors' Law - If you don't feel well, make an appointment to go to the doctor, by the time you get there you'll feel better. But don't make an appointment, and you'll stay sick. This has been proven over and over with taking children to the pediatrician.
19. Pessimist's Law – Murphy was an optimist.

IBM IN FICTION

At one stage the letters IBM were used in everyday language for a generic computer ('Run it through the IBM'); certainly not to the extent that 'hoover' became imbedded in the language, but maybe on a par with xerox being used for any copier ('Take a Xerox of it'). 'Hoover' remains in the spoken word, but the other two have disappeared from the language.

But IBM has left a mark in the written word, and that will be more lasting. I remember in the autumn of 1965, in the time between my being accepted by IBM and actually starting work, reading a book by Mickey Spillane. His lead character was returning from a night's surveillance at six-thirty or so, and Spillane wrote (something like): 'The streets were empty, except for eager IBMers on their way to work.'

The memory stayed with me, and it was awoken by Ted Allbeury's book the *Judas Factor*, in which he wrote about a defector for whom clothes had been bought: 'Burinski looked quite smart in his Marks and Spencer two-piece suit. A pale biscuit colour ... he could have been middle management for any company except IBM.'

Allbeury did it again in *Deep Purple* in 1989, when someone was taken to a new KGB building and was later asked what it was like. 'Modern architecture. And inside could be IBM. Bright lights, teak furniture, Swedish style. Big mainframe computers. An air of efficiency.'

Ian Rankin provided a Scottish perspective in 1995, in *Let it Bleed*. Rebus is told: "IBM has had a presence in Scotland for forty years. They started in Greenock, and they're still there – the plant's massive, about a mile and a half long. But what took them to Greenock in the first place? I'll tell you. It wasn't economics or a skilled workforce – it was sentimentality. The head of IBM at the time was in love with the west of Scotland; and that's all it was." Is Rankin's claim true?

Simon Cochemé

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN BOOKING TICKETS FOR OUR EVENTS

We frequently offer events where we have a lower supply than we have demand. This is usually because we can not afford to “over book” tickets for any event when we have to make a financial commitment to the venue before we can gauge demand. This makes it more important than ever that you book early if you want to secure tickets or places at any of the events we run.

Not all events are booked at the same rate, but we have no way of predicting the “slow burners” versus the “rockets”. The *Canal Experience at London Canal Museum* took a month for all forty-eight tickets to sell, whereas *History & Mystery at the Magic Circle* sold out its twenty tickets within the first two hours. Wow, a real sell-out event!

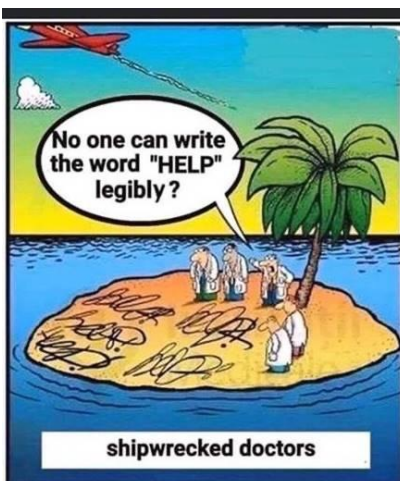
Booking for *History & Mystery* was left open, with a note on our website warning that we couldn't promise to obtain further tickets. By the end of the first day forty-one tickets had been requested. Booking was closed two days later when a total of forty-nine tickets had been requested. Fortunately, additional tickets were available and at the original price, so no-one was disappointed in this instance.

The story is not so good for the show *We Will Rock You*. The demand was higher than anticipated for this event, too. While we were able to buy additional tickets, these were at a £10 premium to the original tickets. Understandably this did not go down well with those who wanted these tickets; half of them declined to buy them, even though they were still 28% cheaper than face value.

This situation also disadvantages those who choose to make postal bookings. None of them would have been successful for an event that sold out in two hours. They would have been lucky to even make a booking within the first two days.

To attempt to mitigate this situation, we recommend the following:

1. If you can, **please book online**. Note that we are happy to accept online bookings with payment by cheque.
2. If you **cannot book online** please send a postal booking and also, if you can, email the event organiser explaining that you have posted a booking for the relevant event and include the number of tickets you require. This email does not have to come from you; any relative or friend with an email address will do! We will classify your booking as having arrived at the time the email is received, as long as the postal booking arrives within three days (please note that the event organiser's email address is always given at the end of the online booking form for each event, just above the “Submit” button).



HISTORICAL NEWS

For this second edition of LIRC News, we are featuring an article that appeared in the **17th September 1971** edition of **IBM UK News**. It has the title of "Typewriter thieves caught by engineer in cross-London car chase". We hope you enjoy it.

London North OPCE Dave Stones joined in a dramatic police chase across London recently resulting in the capture of a band of typewriter thieves.

Dave was called to a north London customer's office on what began as a routine call. In the course of conversation the customer mentioned he had another typewriter, brand new and still in its packing case, which had been offered to him at a remarkably low cost. The customer was suspicious and so was Dave. He phoned the serial number of the machine through to his office and they confirmed it was stolen. The police were immediately alerted. A trap was set for the bogus salesman by the customer but before the police could arrive the thieves arrived in a blue van, collected the machine and drove away. "I was sitting outside the customer's offices in my car when the van arrived." said Dave. "I saw some rough characters go into the building and later drive away. I had been told by the office to sit and wait for the police to arrive. But these fellows looked so suspicious that even though I wasn't sure they were the thieves I decided to chase after them. Using my radio telephone by now linked to the police network I gave a description of the van, its licence number and a running commentary on its latest position as I pursued it. They kept telling me the police were on their way but I couldn't see any police cars anywhere. At one stage the van stopped and I jumped out and had a quick look in the back. Sure enough the typewriter was in there." Dave continued the chase to a roundabout in Wandsworth. "Then police cars converged from all directions. And the chase was over."

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ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS

IBM is no longer informing us of the names of club members who have passed away. Therefore, in future, we will be relying on surviving relatives or friends to advise us instead so that we can report on such cases in the LIRC News. For this edition, we do have a few final restings to report:

- Allan Palmer who died on Thursday 12th January 2023
- Don Ralston who died on Tuesday 17th January 2023
- Maureen Stanley who died on Sunday 2nd April 2023

Don Ralston worked in IBM Croydon as the Phillips Manufacturing Salesman in the Manufacturing Branch and was very popular with his colleagues. Don sadly passed away in January after a long struggle with the problems caused by diabetes.

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YOUR LIRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

If you have questions for your committee, please contact one of those listed below.

PLEASE NOTE: COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL ACCEPT TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9.30 AND 19.00 MONDAY TO FRIDAY ONLY

David Sparrow	Chairman	LIRCnews@gmail.com	020-8440-5871 07711-627788
Harvey Schonfeld	Treasurer	harvey.schonfeld@gmail.com	01276-453205
Pauline Schurer	Secretary	paulschurer@virginmedia.com	01494-871993
Peter Morley	Membership Secretary	retibmlon@outlook.com	01932-241207