

# LIRC News

25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**WELCOME** to this quarterly publication from the **London IBM Retirees Club**

Information about all the events that the Club runs can be found in our monthly **Events Bulletin** mailshot. If you wish to book tickets/places for any event, please visit our web site <https://www.retireelondonclub.org>. The next LIRC News will be published on **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024** and future editions will continue to be published quarterly.

## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

There is a variety of articles, poems, amusing stories and more in this edition of our LIRC News:  
If the evolution of data storage technology interests you, please check the article on page 3.  
Your editorial team are always looking for suitable material for inclusion in the LIRC News:  
If you could help us with this, please check the article on page 6.

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## **FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN**

Dear Member,

A very Happy New Year to you all. We start year 2 of our new Club on a positive note and your committee is working hard to plan a varied programme of events throughout the year. We hope you find something to keep you interested, that enables you to socialise with colleagues and that also enables you to make many new friends. Your support for our events will enable our Club to continue and grow – without it, the Club will wither and die.

Our first AGM is upcoming on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February and we hope to see you join us remotely via Zoom. If you have not yet registered your proposed attendance or given your apologies, please do so now [HERE](#) or write to our Secretary, [Pauline Schurer](#). All our officers and committee members have offered to serve again for the coming year, but we do need “new blood” to take us forward, so please register your interest if you feel you are able to help. Your current officers and committee members can't go on for ever!

We live in challenging times with unrest at home and around the world. This will no doubt affect many of us in some way during the year but we are set up to be a Social Club, so our focus will remain on continuing in that vein and trying to brighten all of our lives in some way.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of LIRC News and that you are also signed up to receive our monthly Events Bulletins. If not, and you would like to receive them, please contact our Membership Secretary, [Peter Morley](#), and he will add your name to that mailing list. We have a varied programme in plan for this year and new ideas for consideration are always welcome.

Our aim is to surprise you, excite you and encourage you to have others join us too. Don't forget, we are now independent of IBM, so friends who have not been part of “Big Blue” are very welcome. Just send Peter Morley some details and he will contact them.

The dark nights will hopefully soon be gone, with an early Easter and warmer days coming. I hope we can enjoy those with you and that we can all stay well and happy.

**David Sparrow**

## EVENTS UPDATE

### National Portrait Gallery Guided Tours – October and November 2023

Three tours took place last October/November, each of them accommodating up to fifteen people. They received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our members.

*It was superb. Couldn't fault it. By far the best guided tour I've ever done. [Daniel] was great - well organised, knowledgeable, kept it light and interesting. He also seemed to manage to be easily audible without shouting!* Tina Harris

*This was an outstandingly good tour. The guide, Daniel, showed us how the place has been changed in the recent refurbishment, with the thinking behind it. We had a tour through the collection now on display identifying how the country has been ruled since the Tudors, and also, where appropriate, the arts, science and engineering highlights. Daniel's encyclopaedic knowledge was very impressive, his selection of information always interesting, and his delivery at just the right pace.* Sue Mansfield

*The tour was brilliant and fascinating - especially because the tour guide made all the portraits and associated history come to life! Please let him know how much we appreciated his wisdom and explanations.* Brian and Shoshana Foster



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Great news - subject to demand we will run more of these events in 2024. See the **February Events Bulletin** for further details. When the Events Bulletin comes out, remember this advice: **don't delay, book today.**

### Brick Lane Music Hall – Vincent's Jinglebell Christmas - Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023

This was a show to get everyone in the festive mood! We had entertainment by some of the finest music hall and variety artists from around the country, performing at out tables cabaret style, with a sumptuous afternoon tea served during the interval.

*I just want to say thank you from myself and my friend Jenny for such an amazing show at the Brick Theatre - we loved the whole afternoon. It gave us both the feel good factor. Thank you again, wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.* Anthea Winterton



### Carols & Ices at the London Canal Museum – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023

What a treat, a Christmas-themed evening at the canal museum, decked out with atmospheric lighting and candles, listening to the Camden Town Community Choir singing carols in the museum's ice well, plus a fascinating demonstration of the original way to make ice cream, using ice and salt without a freezer (sweet mincemeat was the flavour of the evening!).

*We thought that the 'Carols and Ices' at the London Canal Museum was excellent. The museum is a wonderful example of unknown London history. Not only are the museum and its events such as the ice cream demo interesting and informative, the staff and volunteers are all friendly, helpful and very knowledgeable. An all-round enjoyable evening.* Bob Hargreaves



## THE WRONG EMAIL ADDRESS

A Minneapolis couple decided to go to Florida to thaw out during a particularly cold winter, staying at the same hotel where they had spent their honeymoon some twenty years earlier. Because of hectic schedules, it was difficult to coordinate their travel arrangements. The husband therefore left Minnesota and flew to Florida on the Thursday, and his wife was to fly down the following day. The husband checked in to the hotel and then used a computer in the hotel lobby to send an email to his wife. However, he accidentally left out one letter in her address and without realising the error, he sent the email.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Houston, a widow had just returned home from her husband's funeral. He was a minister who had been called home to glory following a heart attack. The widow decided to check her emails expecting to find messages from her friends and relatives. After reading the messages she let out a piercing scream and fainted!! The widow's son rushed into the room and found his mother on the floor, and looking at the still open computer screen he read:

To: My loving Wife  
Subject: I've Arrived

I know you are surprised to hear from me. I have just arrived and checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you then! Hope your journey is as uneventful as mine was.

PS. It sure is hot down here!!

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## JUST FOR RETIREES

To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.

Age 60 might be the new 40, but 9:00pm is the new midnight.

The important thing to remember is that I'm probably going to forget.

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

I finally got eight hours of sleep. It took me three days, but whatever.

When I ask for directions, please don't use words like "east".

I'm not a complete idiot - some parts are just missing.

What used to be freckles are now liver spots.

Being "over the hill" is much better than being under it!

My mind not only wanders, it sometimes leaves completely.

When you do squats, are your knees supposed to sound like a goat chewing on an aluminium can stuffed with celery?

The things you used to care to do, you no longer care to do, but you really do care that you don't care to do them anymore.

It's easier to get up at 6:00am to play golf than at 10:00am to mow the lawn.

You have 3 sizes of clothes in your wardrobe, 2 of which you will never wear.

You forget names, but it's OK because other people forgot they even knew you.

You miss the days when everything worked with just an "on" and "off" switch.

You sleep better on a lounge chair with the TV blaring than in bed – it's called "pre-sleep".

Old is good in some things: old songs, old movies, and best of all, old friends!!

Mick Jagger is 80. Mitch McConnell is 81. The benefits of a life of sex, drugs, and rock-'n'-roll should not be ignored. 😊



I see people my age out there climbing mountains and zip lining and here I am feeling good about myself because I got my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.

You know you're over 40 when you have "upstairs ibuprofen" and "downstairs ibuprofen".

## THE COMPUTER SWALLOWED GRANDMA

The computer swallowed Grandma.  
Yes, honestly it's true!  
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'  
and disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely,  
the thought just makes me squirm.  
She must have caught a virus  
or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin  
and files of every kind.  
I've even used the Internet,  
but nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Jeeves,  
my searches to refine.  
The reply from him was negative,  
not a thing was found 'online'.

So, if inside your 'Inbox'  
my Grandma you should see,  
please 'Copy,' 'Scan' and 'Paste' her  
and send her back to me.



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## POINTS TO PONDER

Why does the sun lighten our hair, but darken our skin?

Why is it that doctors and attorneys call what they do 'practice'?

Why is the man who invests all your money called a 'broker'?

Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?

If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?

Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety-one or oneteen?

Why do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in our driveways and put our useless junk in the garage?

Why is '\*abbreviated\*' such a long word?

Why is lemon juice made with artificial flavouring, and dish washing liquid made with real lemons?

Why do croutons come in airtight packages – aren't they just stale bread to begin with?

Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist, but a person who drives a race car is not called a racist?

You know that indestructible black box that is used on airplanes?  
Why don't they make the whole plane out of that stuff?

Why do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and yet get a diet coke?

Why is the time of day when the traffic is the slowest called the 'rush hour'?

Why do banks leave vault doors open and then chain pens to the counter tops?

Why "Reading the Manual" is always a good idea...



## THE EVOLUTION OF DATA STORAGE TECHNOLOGY

Hard drives, also known as hard disk drives (HDDs), have played a pivotal role in the history of computing and data storage. They have evolved over the years to become a fundamental component of modern computer systems, enabling the storage and retrieval of vast amounts of data. Let's delve into the fascinating history of hard drives. The concept of magnetic storage dates back to the late 19th century when inventors experimented with magnetic recording techniques. However, it wasn't until the 1950s and 1960s that the first true hard drives were developed. In 1956, IBM introduced the first commercial hard drive, the IBM 350 Disk File. It was an enormous device that used fifty 24-inch platters, stacked together, and provided a storage capacity of about 3.75 megabytes. This massive machine weighed over a ton and was primarily used by large organizations and government agencies.



Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, hard drive technology continued to advance. IBM introduced the first removable hard drive in 1963, the IBM 1311, which allowed users to swap out storage units. It featured a whopping 2.6 megabyte capacity and became widely used in mainframe computers. In the 1970s, the introduction of the Winchester disk by IBM revolutionized hard drive technology. The Winchester disk incorporated sealed disks and a moving read/write head, which allowed for higher storage densities and improved reliability. These drives were more compact, offered faster access times, and became a standard in the emerging minicomputer market. The 1980s marked a period of rapid advancement in hard drive technology. The introduction of smaller form factors, such as the 5.25 inch and 3.5 inch drives, made hard drives more accessible to personal computer users. Companies like Seagate, Maxtor, and Quantum emerged as key players in the industry, developing smaller and more efficient hard drives. By the 1990s, hard drives had become an integral part of personal computers.



The capacity of hard drives continued to increase, with the introduction of technologies like perpendicular magnetic recording (PMR) and giant magnetoresistance (GMR), enabling higher storage densities and larger capacities. The 2000s saw further advancements with solid-state drives (SSDs) gaining popularity, offering faster access times and increased durability compared to traditional hard drives.

Today, hard drives continue to be widely used in various computing devices. They provide cost-effective and high-capacity storage solutions for storing vast amounts of data. Hard drives have also benefited from advancements in technology, such as helium-filled drives that reduce friction and shingled magnetic recording (SMR) that allows for even higher areal density. However, solid-state drives (SSDs) have emerged as a viable alternative to traditional hard drives. SSDs utilize flash memory technology, offering faster data access times, lower power consumption and greater shock resistance.

In conclusion, hard drives have come a long way since their inception in the 1950s. They have grown in capacity, reduced in size, and become an essential component of modern computing. While solid-state drives are gaining prominence, hard drives continue to be widely used due to their cost-effectiveness, high capacity, and proven reliability. The evolution of hard drives is a testament to the constant innovation and progress in the field of data storage technology.

## ***AN APPEAL FROM YOUR LIRC NEWS PRODUCTION TEAM***

We are always pleased to receive suitable material for inclusion in the LIRC News. This can be jokes (especially topical jokes), poems, hints/tips, news and articles that would be relevant to our readership. Please send them via email (either as an attachment or in the text of the email) to Simon and Joan Russell at [j.campanini@btopenworld.com](mailto:j.campanini@btopenworld.com).

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### ***THE FACE IN THE GLASS***

When you get what you want in your struggle for self  
and the world makes you king for a day,  
just go to the mirror and look at yourself  
and see what THAT face has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or spouse  
whose judgement upon you must pass,  
the person whose verdict counts most in your life  
is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people might think you're a straight shooting chum  
and call you a great gal or guy,  
but the face in the glass say's you're only a bum  
if you can't look it straight in the eye.

That's the one you must please, never mind all the rest  
that's the one with you clear to the end,  
and you know you have passed your most dangerous test  
if the face in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years  
and get pats on the back as you pass,  
but your final reward will be heartache and tears  
if you've cheated the face in the glass.

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### ***ON A LIGHTER NOTE***

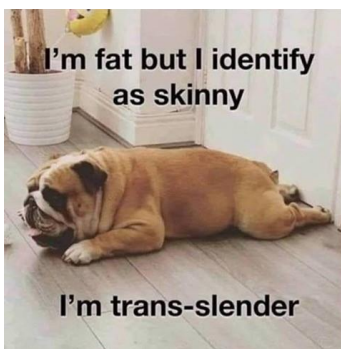
If people from Poland are called Poles, then why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, then doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

Is it true that you never really learn to swear until you learn to drive?

If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would not have put them on my knees.



**I went to the psychiatrist today. She told me I had a split personality and charged me 160 dollars.**

**I gave her 80 dollars and told her to get the rest from the other idiot.**

**Felt uncomfortable driving into the cemetery. The gps blurted out you have reached your final destination.**

## 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

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## HISTORICAL NEWS

Once again, we are including a historical article that appeared in a 1970's edition of **IBM UK News**. Over the past 50 or more years, IBM has opened and closed many offices around the UK, but the IBM laboratories at Hursley Park in Hampshire have remained as an IBM location throughout this time. The following article, which appeared in the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1972 publication, describes the fascinating history of Hursley Park.

### The History of Hursley

The history of Hursley Park, the once private estate which now houses IBM UK's laboratories, is the subject of an informative 50-page booklet just published by Hursley's internal communications department. The booklet, which traces the Park's history from 100 BC to 1940 AD, when Hursley Park House ceased to be a private residence, is the result of months of voluntary work by Len Peach. Len (not to be confused with the Personnel director), is a member of the lab's publications department.

Some of the more fascinating facts to emerge from the booklet (which many employees may not be aware of) are that the remains of a Norman castle stand in the Park, and that there was once a Tudor lodge on the site, occupied by Oliver Cromwell's son, Richard. It was originally intended that 'Perspective' (Hursley's in-house journal) would publish a series of supplements on the Parks history, but the material seemed better suited to booklet presentation. "I had been preparing a private survey for some time" commented Len. "My grandfather was house carpenter to the Baxendale's - one of the previous owners - in the 1890s. And now I work here, I have a natural interest."

Before he started the project, Len already had several books which dealt with aspects of the Park and over 60 photographs. "It accounted for over half the material used in the booklet." Len checked family connections with relatives of the three previous owners of Hursley Park House - the Heathcote's, the Baxendale's and the Cooper's - to endorse facts he had unearthed. The Cooper's were the last owners before Hursley House came into commercial ownership in 1940 under Vickers Aviation Limited. It was at Hursley that the design for the Battle of Britain Spitfires was prepared. "It was mainly a question of checking and rechecking, writing and rewriting" he added. "I used a number of sources, including local people and of course, the Hursley county and Winchester Cathedral archivists." The booklet was ready for editing by Hursley's Roy Bolton last April. "I'm not a writer" said Len, who is a keen collector of Victoriana, bric-a-brac and vintage car spares. "I don't regard the booklet as finished. Every book I see that has reference to Hursley, I pounce on and check the facts against mine."



## **ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS**

Sadly, we have to report the passing to final rest of our colleagues:

- Beryl de Brett who died on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2022
- Margaret Shiel who died on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023
- Trevor Glover-Wright who died on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Dave Chacksfield who died on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- Keith Rankin who died on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Maurice Botley who died on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Nick Temple who died on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**Maurice Botley** was a very active member of our club and many of us will miss his outgoing and cheerful manner. Maurice's friend, John Oakley, has written this lovely poem "Ode to Maurice" plus his own memories of his friend and colleague.

### **'Ode to Maurice'**

*A man of honour, dignity, and grace,  
Maurice brought joy with his smiling face.  
Devoted wholly to his dear wife Sheila,  
He stood by her side through good times and ill.  
Though life brought them sadness that no one should bear,  
Maurice met it with strength beyond compare.  
With patience and care, he lightened her load,  
And filled everyday moments with reasons to glow.  
A born teacher, he had the gift to explain  
Simply the concepts that often seem arcane.  
With clarity, wit, and an ease to admire,  
He enlightened students but never seemed to tire.  
The soul of the party, quick with a joke,  
His hearty laughter easily evoked  
Those fortunate to be called his friend.*



Maurice was a friend and colleague of mine for over 60 years. We first met at the IBM Education Centre in Sudbury where he was an instructor teaching about IBM peripherals. Maurice was an excellent instructor who had high standards. His chalkboard drawings were works of art and he was able to clearly explain complex topics. This set a high bar for me as I started my career in technical training. Maurice and I worked together as instructors, teaching about the IBM System 360 computers. We went to the US for 6 months together to learn about the IBM System 360/165 and to develop training materials. Even after our careers diverged and we left IBM, I continued to consult Maurice for advice. I would "Botleyise" new ideas to see if Maurice would approve. We stayed in touch over the years, visiting each other in the US and UK. On one of Maurice's last visits to the US, we were able to help fix an old IBM 360/30 at the Computer History Museum in Palo Alto. I credit Maurice with teaching me how to clearly explain complex technical topics in a simple way, which influenced my style throughout my career. When I retired to the UK we met several times a year, until our respective health made it difficult. I will miss him. John Oakley

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### **SOME FINAL THOUGHTS**

"Life" is a gift to you. The way you live your life is your gift to those who come after. Make it a fantastic one! Enjoy today! Live it well this year and every year!

Remember, It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.

Today is the oldest you've ever been, yet the youngest you'll ever be so - enjoy this day while it lasts.

It's not what you gather but what you scatter that tells what kind of life you have lived.