

# LIRC News

26<sup>th</sup> October 2023

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

The next LIRC News will be published on the last Thursday of January 2024 (25<sup>th</sup> January) and future editions will continue to be published every three months. Our monthly Events Bulletin mailshot advertises events that the Club will be running with links to our website for online booking - <https://www.retireelondonclub.org>

## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

Important information about the theatre tickets that we offer our members via the Events Bulletin:  
Before applying for tickets, please note the information contained in the article on page 3.

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## **FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN**

Dear Member,

When you receive this there will only be a few days left until the clocks go back and we head for Winter, which tends to be a depressing thought for many of us with the early dark nights! However, we have tried to brighten your days a little by offering a few extra events before Year End. Two of those, advertised recently, were booked up quickly and we have one more unusual one that we hope will appeal too – “Carols and Ices”. The event details were sent via a special mailshot and it is still available for booking via our website. If you do not receive our monthly Events Bulletins and would like to, please send an email to Peter Morley at [retibmlon@outlook.com](mailto:retibmlon@outlook.com) and he will add you to the mailing list.

Your committee continues to work hard to try to find attractive events for the coming months and we hope to have a varied programme for you in 2024. Our first AGM will be upcoming early next year and we will send details of that to you in due course. Our Short Break to Wells, Bristol & Bath\* in March/April next year has attracted 39 people so far and is still open for bookings if any of you want to come and/or bring friends. Booking details are on our website.

Recent events have clearly been enjoyed by many of you, particularly the tours of the Speaker’s House State Apartments, The National Portrait Gallery and several shows, and we have some great feedback which is lovely to receive and makes all our efforts worthwhile. You can read what some members have said on the following page.

Sadly, some of our colleagues and friends have recently passed away and we will miss their company. Tony Shortman, our Editor, has included a list of them on page 6, but as IBM no longer advises when a member dies, we have to rely on other people telling us. If you do know of others who have passed, please let Peter Morley know (our Membership Secretary) at [retibmlon@outlook.com](mailto:retibmlon@outlook.com). Peter would also be pleased to hear from anyone else you know who would like to join our Club.

I know Christmas is still some way off but as this is our last issue of LIRC News this year, I will take this opportunity to thank you for all your support in our first months since going independent from IBM and to wish those of you who celebrate it a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year. We live in very troubled times and I hope that you and your families and friends are able to keep clear of them and enjoy peaceful and safe times.

I also look forward to seeing a good number of you at some of our events before Christmas and, as I have said in earlier issues, “Keep sharing the love”.

**David Sparrow**

## EVENTS UPDATE

### Lunch in Style at the Guards Polo Club, Windsor - Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September

*The lunch at the Guards Polo Club this week was excellent. The food was very tasty and beautifully cooked, the venue was unique and the day wonderfully organised by Sue & Keith Andrews, very ably assisted by Sue's daughter, Nicky! The added bonus of being able to sit and watch a polo match in sunshine and with very pleasant company made the whole event very special and extremely enjoyable. David Sparrow*

*Dear Keith and Sue, thank you both once again for a great day! Sally and I both enjoyed it all enormously - a delicious lunch, great company and an amazing venue!! Brilliant. Please pass on our thanks to your daughter, too - particularly for getting the game of polo transferred to the Queen's Ground so that we could see it. The icing on the cake. Elizabeth and Sally*



### State Apartments of the Speaker's House Tour – September and October

*We would like to thank you for organising such an interesting tour. We learned quite a lot from our tour guide - such interesting facts behind the scenes of these very important government officials.*

Brian and Shoshana Foster

*Just a quick note to say how much we enjoyed the visit on Wednesday - it was fascinating and our guide, Philip, was excellent. Definitely one to recommend! Thank you for your work in organising this.*

Roger & Wendy Hopkins

*I thought I would let you know how much we enjoyed our trip to the Speaker's House today. We arrived at Westminster just after 10.30am and seemed to be fast tracked through security. We registered at the desk by 10.45 and were told to meet back there at 11.25, so plenty of time for a drink. Peter Morley joined us and we had a lovely conversation with him. As you had told me, the talk was so interesting. I really hadn't realised that so many people actually lived in the buildings, and the views of the river from the rooms were just stunning. Ann and Alan Jarvis*



## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THEATRE TICKETS**

### **Tickets are non-exchangeable and non-refundable**

Although we are no longer able to offer a subsidy on the price of theatre tickets, we are able to offer them to our members at very competitive prices. This is because we purchase them at special group rates. The terms and conditions though that come with these group rates mean that the tickets are **non-exchangeable** and **non-refundable**. This is particularly relevant at the moment due to the ongoing disruption to train services caused by strikes. Sometimes, theatres will cancel a show and when this occurs, we would be offered a refund or an alternative date (although the alternate date would be for our whole group).

### **Applying for tickets by post**

Whilst the vast majority of applications for theatre tickets are made online, occasionally members do apply through the post. To ensure members applying for tickets by post do not miss out, it is very important they contact the organiser by phone or email before submitting their postal application. With some theatre tickets, the number we will order may have to be finalised (and tickets purchased) within days of the show being advertised in the Events Bulletin. This timing is imposed on us by the theatre or agent when we reserve our block of tickets. Unfortunately, we may not be able to fulfil ticket requests received by post after this deadline passes and we would not want any member applying by post to be disappointed.

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## **JUST FOR RETIREES**

I've learned that pleasing everyone is impossible, but annoying everyone is a piece of cake.

I'm responsible for what I say, not what you understand.

Common sense is like deodorant. The people who need it the most never use it.

My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously there's a new strain out there.

It's not my age that bothers me; it's the side effects.

I'm not saying I'm old and worn out, but I make sure I'm nowhere near the kerb when out for a walk.

As I watch this generation try and rewrite our history, I'm sure of one thing: it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.

As I've become older, people think I've become lazy. The truth is I'm just being more energy efficient.

I haven't got anything done today. I've been in the Produce Department trying to open this stupid plastic bag.

Turns out that being a "senior" is mostly just googling how to do stuff.

I want to be 18 again and ruin my life differently. I have new ideas.

I'm on two diets. I wasn't getting enough food on one.

I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologizes.

My mind is like an internet browser. At least 19 open tabs, 3 of them are frozen, and I have no clue where the music is coming from.

Hard to believe I once had a phone attached to a wall, and when it rang, I picked it up without knowing who was calling.

Apparently RSVPing to a wedding invitation "Maybe next time" isn't the correct response.

There is no such thing as a grouchy old person. The truth is that once you get old, you stop being polite and start being honest!

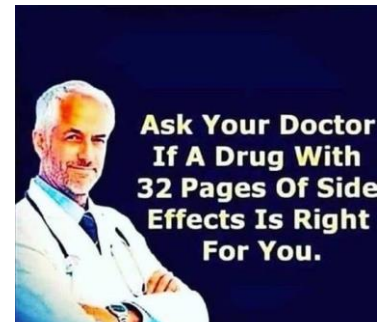
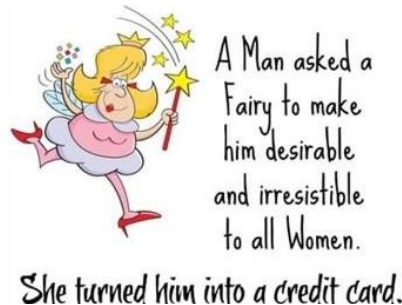


## YOUR LIRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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
Pete Wells	Event Organiser	petecwells@gmail.com	07540-984074
Tony Shortman	LIRC News Editor	shortmantm@gmail.com	01844-350014



## WHY DO THEY DO THAT?

Why do banks charge a fee due to insufficient funds; when they already know you're broke?

Why is it that when someone tells you that there are one billion stars in the universe you believe them, but if they tell you there is wet paint you have to touch it to check?

Why does Superman stop bullets with his chest, but ducks when you throw a revolver at him?

Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

If people evolved from apes, why are there still apes?

Why is it that, no matter what colour bubble bath you use, the bubbles are always white?

Why do people constantly return to the refrigerator with hopes that something new to eat will have materialized?

Why do people run over a string a dozen times with their vacuum cleaner, then reach down, pick it up, examine it and then put it down to give the vacuum one more chance?

Why is it that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table you always manage to knock something else over?

Why, in winter, do we try to keep the house as warm as it was in summer when we complained about the heat?

Why, Why, Why do we press harder on the remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?

## **HISTORICAL NEWS**

The historical article we are featuring in this LIRC News appeared in a **1971** edition of **IBM UK News**. The city of Venice and its lagoon is one of the most unique cities in the world, but is constantly under threat from high tides. This article highlights the role that IBM took in the 1970's to assist Venice in predicting when these high tide events would occur.

### **VENICE – THE DROWNING CITY**

In Venice, the handwriting is literally on the wall. It takes the shape of green slime that festoons the lower walls of buildings along the network of 180 canals. This is the mean high water mark and it forms a kind of deadly lace on the steps leading from the lagoon to the Piazza San Marco, one of the lowest spots in Venice. Writing in the 19th Century, Lord Byron foresaw the day when the city's marble walls are level with the waters. Venetians pray he was a better poet than prophet.

Luciano Lippi is the affable, soft-spoken head of IBM's Scientific Centre in Venice. He and his staff work closely on the Grand Canal. Together they are simulating the behaviour of the lagoon and the effects of physical phenomena on Venice. A System/360 Model 44 at the IBM Centre seeks to discover, as an aid to forecasting, how many of the tides that flush the lagoon twice daily are caused by weather conditions in the Adriatic Sea. "If we can do this," says Lippi, "we will have the forecasting instrument which is so urgently needed". Dr. Roberto Frassetto is Director of the Laboratory for the Study of the Dynamics of Large Masses. "In one year," Dr. Frassetto said "we have made a miracle. We started from scratch, no desks, nothing was here. Now we have a laboratory, which would not be born if it weren't for a symbiosis and cooperation with IBM. And we have the first system for measurements - the Texas Tower, which is the only one in Europe."

"Acqua Alta" or high water is the phenomenon that can flood the Piazza San Marco as many as 70 times a year. It is caused by a combination of three things: the astronomical tide, the meteorological tide which comes from storm surges in the Adriatic, and "seiches", which is the word used by oceanographers to describe free oscillation of water due to a recent storm. If these conditions can be discerned and forecast before they combine to advance across the lagoon, warning time will be gained to dilute the effect of acqua alta. At the IBM Centre, Angelo Goldmann works on a statistical model for predicting high water. He points out the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, whose marble walls were being corroded by the salinity in Venice's air. "The water and salt climb up the walls through capillary action," he explained. But the church has been girdled in plastic, and the experiment seems to be working. The rot has stopped. Each year, atmospheric pollution (salt, smoke from domestic heating, sulphuric acid from factories at Marghera, Venice's industrial satellite) causes the city to lose 6% of its marble works, 5% of its frescoes, and 3% of its canvas paintings.

In a special report on Venice, a UNESCO committee cites the increased warning time being achieved through computer findings at the IBM Centre. "Sound and thorough studies have been begun or continued," the report states. "They have provided a great deal of exact information, and there is less and less excuse for talking today about the 'mysteries' of the lagoon, the air or the sea."



*Dr Tomasin takes an early morning reading of the tidal gauge outside the palace. Partially shown at right is boat which takes CNR scientists to the Texas Tower platform in the Adriatic.*

## **IBM IS BACK IN THE VANGUARD OF REVOLUTIONARY TECHNOLOGY**

The following article about IBM's quantum computers was published in the 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023 publication of Time magazine.

For decades, "Nobody gets fired for buying IBM" was an immutable business maxim. The New York behemoth was so dominant that shopping elsewhere was admitting defeat. But IBM's crown slipped as Asian competitors gobbled its lunch. No longer. The \$120 billion firm is back in the vanguard of revolutionary technology, running more transformative quantum computers (60) than the rest of the world combined, while partnering with giants from Boeing to Sony. In just seconds, quantum computers can solve problems that would otherwise take years, from complex calculations about weather patterns to optimizing drug discovery, battery performance, and more. In November 2022, IBM launched the most powerful quantum-processing chip ever produced - the 433-qubit Osprey – and in May this year set its sights even higher, announcing a 10-year plan to make a 100,000-qubit processor.'

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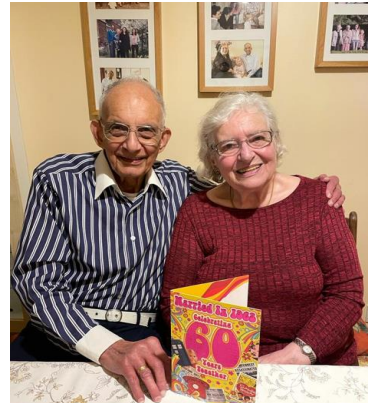
## **ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS**

Many congratulations to **Satish and Renate Bagga** who celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on 30<sup>th</sup> March this year.

Also, congratulations to **David and Ann Smith** who will be celebrating their 55<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

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

- Ian Pettifer who died on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023
- James Crosby who died on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2023
- Derek Lea who died on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023
- Mike Dilloway who died on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- Claus Stübner who died on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
(please see note below)
- Nicola Pyne who died on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023



**Satish and Renate**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you are celebrating a significant anniversary soon, or know of a club member who will be, and would like it mentioned in the LIRC News, please inform our club chairman, David Sparrow, and the LIRC News editor, Tony Shortman (contact details are on page 4). Although it is always sad to hear of members who have passed away, because IBM is no longer providing us with this information, we now rely on surviving relatives or friends to advise us instead. To enable us to report such cases in the LIRC News (and to update the club membership database), could you please inform Peter Morley, our membership secretary and the LIRC News editor.

**Claus Stübner** left a request that there be no formal funeral but that his ashes be scattered somewhere in the Chilterns. Accordingly, this has been arranged for Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November around 12:30 near The Plough pub outside Princes Risborough with a possible (self-funded) lunch afterwards. If you would like to be there on 6<sup>th</sup> November, please contact Tina Harris at [tinab.harris@outlook.com](mailto:tinab.harris@outlook.com)

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## **THE WARDROBE AND THE BUS**

A woman is having a problem with a wardrobe door in her bedroom. Every time a bus goes past, the door falls off. She calls a repairman and he comes around to see if he can fix the problem. He arrived and saw that every time a bus passes, the door does indeed fall off. "Okay" he says, "I'm going to get inside the wardrobe to see if I can figure it out". "Now close the door" he asks the woman which she duly does. At this point, the woman's husband suddenly arrives home to find his wife talking to someone in the bedroom. He rushes upstairs and opens the wardrobe door. He sees the repairman inside and shouts "What the hell are you doing in there?" The repairman meekly says "Well, believe it or not, but I'm actually waiting for a bus".