

LIRC News

24th October 2024

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

The next LIRC News will be published on Thursday 30th January 2025

WHAT'S INSIDE

Do you remember the 80-column punch cards and those Keypunches and Verifiers?

If you do, check the article on page 4 which originally appeared in the IBM UK News in 1973.

Did you enjoy the Olympic Games and the Paralympics this summer?

One of our club members, Anil Shah, took part as a line judge - he has written about his amazing experience on page 5.

PLEASE KEEP SENDING YOUR PHOTOS

Over the past months, your club has been able to offer some great summer events, mainly at outside venues. We have really appreciated the feedback you have sent us and especially the lovely photos you have taken. In the LIRC News, we try to include both the photos and feedback you send us (especially your photos), so please continue to take those photos and share them with us.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

Trying to work out what the weather is going to do at the moment is probably occupying a fair amount of our time but at least it's still relatively warm! And as we see the onset of 'Winter Time' in a few days and the thoughts of how the 'Reeves' Budget' will affect us, it's easy to feel depressed! However, your committee continues to work hard and plan ahead, offering what we hope will be moments of cheer through the coming months to keep us all going.

Members have recently enjoyed a variety of events and my thanks go to the organisers who have put in many voluntary hours to ensure they happened: Sue & Keith Andrews, Pete Wells, Derrick Daines, Harvey Schonfeld and my wife, Penny, who helped me with mine! Read some reviews of them in this issue.

Alan Jarvis is organising the upcoming British Library Guided Tours; Derrick Daines, the Cinema Museum Guided Tour; Pete Wells, another appealing range of shows; Nigel Bartlett, the Carlo Gatti Music Hall; and I am organising the Festive Weekend at Potters Resort in Norfolk. All places on most of these are taken but your committee is organising more, so keep your eyes open!

Looking ahead, we are unfortunately seeing some of our long-standing and hard-working committee members standing down at our AGM in February 2025 but, happily, we have three members who have volunteered to join us, so we have co-opted them onto our committee now to enable them to become familiar with how we work and enable a smooth handover. We sincerely hope that we won't have put them off and that they will stand for election next year! So please join me in thanking them for volunteering and welcome Alan Jarvis, Pat Smith and Paul Welstead to your committee.

I hope you enjoy what Tony Shortman, our Editor, ably assisted by Simon and Joan Russell, has put together for you in this issue and that we will see many of you at our events in the coming months.

David Sparrow

EVENTS FEEDBACK

Battle Proms at Hatfield House – Saturday 20th July

We had a wonderful evening at Battle Proms - the whole programme was varied and enjoyable, with the Red Devils' parachute drops; the memorable sight of the Spitfire manoeuvring overhead; a varied and wonderfully celebratory evening of music and incredible fireworks display (see photo) that seemed to go on for ever! What a night! As a bonus, it even stayed dry and warm. Those who missed it should put a note in your diaries not to do so next year. Thanks to Pete Wells for establishing a unique sign to our seating area too!

David Sparrow



Shuttleworth Family Day – Sunday 11th August

The Shuttleworth Collection and Gardens was the host for this amazing Shuttleworth Family Day & Air Show. There were numerous vintage aircraft, many of which are still airworthy, designed and developed from Edwardian times up until the 1950s. It was a great day out, as there is nothing quite like an air show with the noise and excitement. Included in the air show was a fly-past by an Avro Lancaster Bomber, captured on video by one of our members. If you would like to watch this video, you can download it from the club's web site using this link [CLICK HERE](#) (but please note that it is over 100MB in size, so may take up to two minutes to download).

Black Country Living Museum – Monday 9th September

What a wonderful place to visit! So well laid out; so many memories; so lovely to see old trades and skills being used, plus those shops selling products of the past (see photo). It was well worth the visit. To cap it all, it was a dry and quite sunny day, so thoroughly enjoyed by the 16 people who made the trip. Most stayed over locally and attended the Morgan Experience in Malvern the next day too.



Morgan Experience Centre – Tuesday 10th September

What a fantastic experience it was too. We were taken through the whole process on the factory floor, watching and talking to people who are so skilled and dedicated to their trade and the Morgan tradition and Company. Our guide, Mike, was a retired employee too and lived and breathed the experience. He made it so interesting and worthwhile. Everyone knew him! The only downside was the torrential rain on the homeward journey! Thanks to Sue & Keith Andrews for organising such a wonderful day and the overnight stop.



Sculpture Park near Farnham – Wednesday 18th September

A huge thank you to Harvey for a super event yesterday. We thought the place was amazing, like an enchanted forest with us not knowing what was coming around the next corner. We didn't realise the exhibits would be so extensive and interesting and we so enjoyed the time we spent strolling through the various pathways. The weather was also perfect so a good day for exploring. Paul and Pauline Schurer

Well done, Harvey. What a great little trip you organised at the Sculpture Park, with over 990 statues (don't know how many we saw), a great walk through the woods meeting people throughout the walk. We even talked to one of the artists who was there working. He told us he was from Zimbabwe; his name was Biggy (short for Big Brain, he assured us) and he knew a number of the artists who had left their works in the park. Howard Barlow

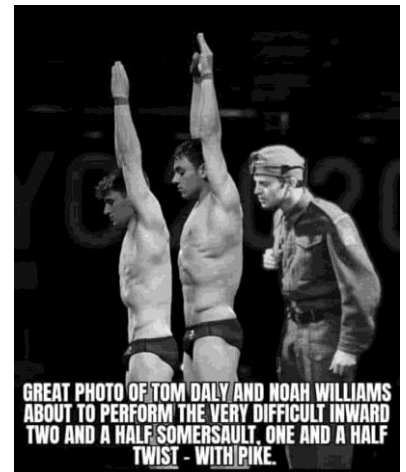


PARDON?

I know that my hearing is perfect, I've no doubt about that at all
I can hear a pin drop on a carpet and a leaf from a tree should it fall
I can hear when my wife looks straight at me and whispers her words of advice
Every word that she says has a value, and she never says anything twice!
It's just that some folk always mutter, and when you say 'What' they get cross
But, probably though, my not hearing is not really much of a loss
Then, those who parade on the telly don't speak as we think actors do
Those muttered asides can't be meant to be heard and their accents are very broad too!
So, I'm certain that it's not my hearing that's failing because I am old
It's everybody else who talks to me but they don't seem to like being told!

JOKES FROM THE FRINGE

I sailed through my driving test. That's why I failed it.
I started dating a zookeeper, but it turned out he was a cheetah.
I just deleted all the German names off my phone. It's Hans free.
I decided to sell my Hoover... well it was just collecting dust.
I've been taking salsa lessons for months, but I just don't feel like I'm progressing. It's just one step forward... two steps back.
I love the Olympics. My friend and I invented a new type of relay baton. Well, he came up with the idea, I ran with it.
I wanted to know which came first the chicken or the egg, so I bought a chicken and then I bought an egg and I think I've cracked it.
My dad suggested I register for a donor card, he is a man after my own heart.
I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship but I bottled it.
Ate horse at a restaurant once - wasn't great. Starter was all right but the mane was dreadful.
I tried to steal spaghetti from the shop, but the female guard saw me and I couldn't get pasta.



METEOROLOGY - AUSTRALIAN STYLE

It was September and the Aborigines in a remote part of Northern Australia asked their new elder if the coming winter was going to be cold or mild. Since he was an elder in a modern community, he had never been taught the old secrets. When he looked at the sky, he couldn't tell what the winter was going to be like. Nevertheless, to be on the safe side, he told his tribe that the winter was indeed going to be cold and that the members of the tribe should collect firewood to be prepared. But being a practical leader, after several days he had an idea. He walked out to the telephone booth on the highway, called the Bureau of Meteorology and asked, 'Is the coming winter in this area going to be cold?' The meteorologist responded, 'It looks like this winter is going to be quite cold.'

So, the elder went back to his people and told them to collect even more wood in order to be prepared. A week later he called the Bureau of Meteorology again. 'Does it still look like it is going to be a very cold winter?' The meteorologist again replied, 'Yes, it's going to be a very cold winter.'

The elder again went back to his community and ordered them to collect every scrap of firewood they could find. Two weeks later the elder called the Bureau again. 'Are you absolutely sure that the winter is going to be very cold?' he asked. 'Absolutely,' the man replied. 'It's looking more and more like it is going to be one of the coldest winters ever.' 'How can you be so sure?' the elder asked. The weatherman replied, 'Our satellites have reported that the Aborigines in the north are collecting firewood like crazy, and that's always a sure sign.'

HISTORICAL NEWS

We have another interesting article to share with you that appeared in the 11th May 1973 edition of **IBM UK News**. In 1953, IBM began production of the 80-column Key punch and Verifier at the IBM plant in Greenock, Scotland. Production continued for 20 years, and I am sure that many of us still remember them (known as Unit Record equipment) plus those 80-column cards that we fed into them. Maybe some of you still have some of those 80-column cards which you kept as souvenirs from your early years with IBM? Our committee member, Chris Nickless, was one of the first customer engineers to be trained on the 029 and 059 Key punch and Verifier, and when he visited Greenock for his training, he was impressed at how clean and well organised the factory and workshops were.

The historical articles that we have been publishing over the past few years have all been supplied by Chris, so we would like to take this opportunity to say a huge **Thank You** to him for ploughing through numerous IBM UK News publications, selecting articles that would be of interest to our members and uplifting the printed text into a PC compatible format. Here is our latest article.

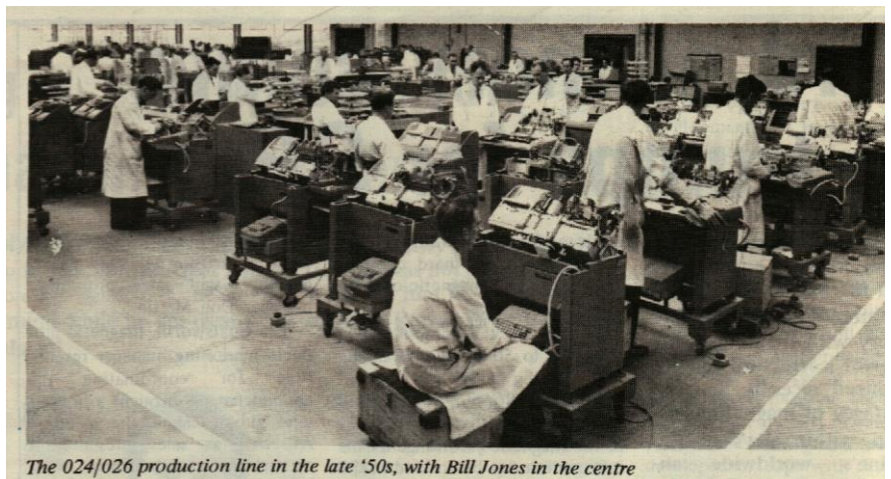
Greenock Says Goodbye to 029 Line

A twenty-year old slice of history left Greenock plant last month as the final 129 keypunch and verifier came off the assembly line. The line closed without ceremony and ended the production of 80-column punches that began in Scotland before the Spango Valley plant opened. In 1953, an alphabetic key-punch reworking line started at the old torpedo factory at Battery Park in Greenock. The machine was called a 131 and the rework line was to train men in the mechanics of the punch. Later, with full manufacture of the 131, the 116 numeric punch was added to the range.

When the Spango plant opened, the punch and verifier line was one of the first to move in. In 1956, alphanumeric punches were introduced at Greenock. The last 129 was built on basically the same frame as the machines built 17 years before. A list of the machine numbers is a roll call of unit record equipment—024, 026, 029, 059, and 129. Bill Jones, 129 production manager, joined the line in 1953 and has been with it ever since. Line technician Willy Bremmer joined a month before Bill and has also been with the line all of his life. They both remember times when schedules were really tight and they worked all hours of the clock. “But,” says Bill, “the most memorable thing is the way the line started so smoothly and continued to run so well. When it was finally phased out, this completed very easily.”

The run down began about four months ago as men moved to other product lines. Willy Bremmer, in charge of seeing right up to the end there were enough parts on the line, still managed to see the last machine off ahead of schedule. Bill Jones added: “The people in a department make the department and give it a personality. We had a good team on the P and V line, and it must have been one of the smoothest running in the plant. At least 14 assemblers from this area went on to be managers.”

John MacPhail, plant manager, gives the last comment on what the line meant: “The line had the highest British content of any of our products. Its introduction caused a lot of controversy here because it brought in new technology. But it forced an operating discipline on the whole factory and left a broad base of capability for the introduction of other products. It put us at the top of the league as far as cost was concerned. We could build cheaper than anyone else, and that paved the way for a lot of new products. Overall, it made a great contribution to the economy of the plant, the area, and the company.”



The 024/026 production line in the late '50s, with Bill Jones in the centre

EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS

<u>Event Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Tuesday 29 October	British Library Guided Tour	Alan Jarvis
Saturday 2 November	Carlo Gatti Music Hall at the London Canal Museum	Nigel Bartlett
Thursday 7 November	MJ the Musical at Prince Edward Theatre	Pete Wells
Tuesday 19 November	The Cinema Museum Guided Tour	Derrick Daines
Friday 29 November to Monday 2 December	Festive Weekend at Potters Resort in Norfolk	David Sparrow
Thursday 5 December	Dr Strangelove at the Noël Coward Theatre	Pete Wells
Saturday 7 December	Carols for Christmas at St Martin-in-the-Fields	Pete Wells
Wednesday 18 December	Nutcracker at the London Coliseum	Pete Wells
Wednesday 10 January 2025	Mean Girls at the Savoy Theatre	Pete Wells
Tuesday 14 January 2025	The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	Pete Wells
Tuesday 16 January 2025	Oliver! at the Gielgud Theatre	Pete Wells
Wed. 12 February 2025	Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club - Playhouse Theatre	Pete Wells
Wednesday 12 March 2025	The Devil Wears Prada at the Dominion Theatre	Pete Wells
Wednesday 2 April 2025	Matilda the Musical at the Cambridge Theatre	Pete Wells
Wednesday 18 June 2025	Just For One Day at the Shaftesbury Theatre	Pete Wells

MY SPECIAL EXPERIENCE AT THE PARIS OLYMPICS

This summer, many of us enjoyed both the Olympic Games and the Paralympics. One of our LIRC club members, Anil Shah, took part in the Olympic Games as a line judge and he has kindly written about his experience in Paris – **thank you** to Anil for sharing this with us.

It was an amazing experience to be part of the Paris Olympics over the past two weeks. I was a Badminton Line Judge at the Aréna Porte de La Chapelle in north Paris and spent 10 days watching the best players in the world going 100% trying to get a medal. I was also lucky enough to have time to do a little sightseeing in Paris after 52 years. I was accompanied by 79 other line judges from around the world, with a large contingent from France, and Umpires/Referees from around the world. I have been a line judge for 15 years and this is the pinnacle of my career. I will never forget the time spent with my line judge family, but on a sad note due to an age limit, this will be my last year line judging at the highest level (I did though have 15 IRS (Hawkeye) challenges and got all of them right!).



Tesla owners attempting to go on a long roadtrip:



"MY SATNAV" BY PAM AYRES

You may already be familiar with this poem by Pam Ayres, but I hope you enjoy reading it again as it never fails to amuse.

I have a little Sat Nav, it sits there in my car.
A Sat Nav is a driver's friend it tells you where you are.
I have a little Sat Nav, I've had it all my life.
It's better than the normal ones, my Sat Nav is my wife.
It gives me full instructions, especially how to drive
"It's sixty miles an hour", it says, "You're doing sixty five".
It tells me when to stop and start, and when to use the brake
And tells me that it's never ever, safe to overtake.
It tells me when a light is red, and when it goes to green
It seems to know instinctively, just when to intervene.

It lists the vehicles just in front, and all those to the rear.
And taking this into account, it specifies my gear.
I'm sure no other driver, has so helpful a device.
For when we leave and lock the car, it still gives its advice.
It fills me up with counselling, each journey's pretty fraught.
So why don't I exchange it, and get a quieter sort?
Ah well, you see, it cleans the house, makes sure I'm properly fed.
It washes all my shirts and things and keeps me warm in bed!
Despite all these advantages, and my tendency to scoff,
I only wish that now and then, I could turn the bugger off.

OBSERVATIONS ON GETTING OLDER

Ah! Being young is beautiful but being old is comfortable.

I have many hidden talents. I just wish I could remember where I hid them.

I exercise every morning without fail. Up down! Up down! And then the other eyelid.

The older I get, the more I understand why roosters just scream to start their day.

Friends like to do the same things together as they did when they were young, only more slowly!

I bought that electric comb with the little light on it. With my hair, the problem isn't combing it, it's finding it.

I was thinking about old age and decided that old age is when you still have something on the ball, but you are just too tired to bounce it.

The older you get the tougher it is to lose weight because by then your body and your fat have gotten to be really good friends.

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Some people try to turn back their "odometers." Not me - I want people to know why I look this way.

One minute you're young and having fun, and next, you're turning down the stereo in your car to see better.

There are three ways to tell if you are getting on: people of your own age start looking older than you; you become convinced you're suddenly equipped with a snooze button, and you get symptoms in the places you used to get urges.

"What's the matter little boy?" said the old man when he saw the lad sitting on the kerb crying. "I'm crying because I can't do what the big boys do" he said. The old man sat on the kerb and started crying too.

WEIGHT LOSS GOAL:

**TO BE ABLE TO CLIP
MY TOENAILS AND
BREATHE AT THE
SAME TIME.**

**I think
senility is
going to be a
fairly smooth
transition for
me.**

**Never seen
anyone jogging
and smiling, so
that's all I need
to know about
that.**

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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ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS

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

- Mike Cubitt who died on Monday 29th May 2023
- Andy Thomson who died on Monday 8th April 2024
- Terry Harrison who died on Wednesday 12th June 2024
- Ian Spacie who died on Wednesday 10th July 2024
- Bernard 'Bernie' Kiernan who died on Saturday 7th September 2024
- Dave McCormick who died on Wednesday 9th October 2024
- Clive Nicoll who died on Thursday 10th October 2024

We are also very sad to report the passing of Anne Hoadley on Friday 23rd August, the wife of Freddie Hoadley. Freddie was a member of the club's organising committee for a number of years, during which time he organised and ran various events for our members. Anne was always with him, assisting him in whichever way she could. Her passing was quite sudden and I am sure that everyone in the club who knew them both will want to join us in offering our condolences to Freddie and his family.

Clive Alexander Nicoll

Clive was born 82 years ago in Kirkcaldy, Scotland. Clive started his working life as a radio officer in the merchant navy, but got fed up with the long trips at sea. He then took a job as a technician in the Edinburgh police radio department. Clive joined the IBM branch in Edinburgh in 1968 as a customer engineer. He took an assignment to Sudbury Towers in 1975 and stayed until retirement under the voluntary redundancy scheme. After this Clive & Eleanor set up a private company in order to work as contractors to IBM Belgium mainly for ISO9000. Once the contract ended, he did some work for Stanmore college, in the admin office and running evening courses for home maintenance and tiling. Clive enjoyed playing golf particularly the IBM club matches. Two years ago, he was diagnosed with incurable oesophageal cancer. Clive died at home on 10th October.

Clive & I met at Sudbury Towers and became good friends. He was good humoured and there was never a dull moment when he was around. He bore his illness with great fortitude and always kept his sense of humour. We had many very happy lunches together with our wives. We will miss him very much.

Michael Foster