

LIRC News

29th October 2026

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

The next LIRC News will be published on Thursday 28th January 2027.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Travelling abroad with IBM was normally a positive experience, but not always.

One of our retirees has shared with us some of the challenges and unexpected events that he experienced – if you would like to know more, please see the article on page 3.

Many people, IBMers and others alike, have often asked about the origins of IBM UK.

Some years ago, one of our retirees prepared a booklet on this topic called “The Founding History of IBM” – it is a fascinating read, so please check it out on page 6.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

This is our last LIRC News of 2026 as we near the close of what has been an amazing year, weather-wise, and during which we hope you've been able to enjoy many of the events that your Club has offered. We know from feedback that you've also enjoyed these quarterly issues of LIRC News and we thank our editor, Tony Shortman, for his time and effort in creating them for us – long may he continue to do so!

We have tried to offer a good range of events and your committee members will continue to try to find more in 2027, but we welcome ideas from you that we can explore. Sometimes, those that we receive may not always be suitable as a Club event, for example, if the event is free and there are no costs involved in running the event, then it would be inappropriate for us to apply a charge. We have included information in this issue about two venues that we think might appeal to you and which offer direct booking with the venue. Please keep those ideas coming.

Your committee works hard arranging things for you and we sometimes struggle to cope with the workload, so please think about joining us and helping spread that load whilst having fun! Your Club can't exist and be successful without your contribution. I take this opportunity to also thank all our Club officers and committee members for their hard work and time this year. It has been invaluable.

We have decided to try having our Christmas Lunch in London this year to enable those of you who live further south to join us. Our Lunch at the Blue Check in Bushey was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended last year and we feel that this year's choice at The Vincent Rooms in Victoria will be excellent too, albeit somewhat more expensive because of its location. Almost 70 people have already booked and paid to come and we have reserved 80 places, so if you want to be sure we can accommodate you, get your bookings in quickly. You can book through this link:

<https://www.retireelondonclub.org/event/christmas-lunch-2026/>

I am looking forward to spending a week with some of you in Cyprus next month; our first venture abroad since lockdown forced us to cancel our Club holiday to Montenegro, and if this one goes well, maybe we can look at the feasibility of going somewhere in 2027 too.

For those of you that I won't see there, or at our Christmas Lunch, I wish you and your families and friends a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

David Sparrow

EVENTS FEEDBACK

London Walk - Pepys, Plague and Fire – Wednesday 8th July 2026

We met our guide at the Tower Hill tube station and were taken on an exploration of some of the locations where Pepys lived, worked, shopped, socialised and spent time in prison! Diarist Samuel Pepys witnessed some of the most momentous events of the 17th Century including the restoration of the monarchy, the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. Our walk featured a beautiful “secret garden”, the elegant 18th century Trinity House, a grand hotel with a garden telling the story of Pepys’ life, the Monument to the Great Fire of London and atmospheric narrow streets.

We are so pleased that we didn't allow the heat and our cancelled train to deter us from joining in on the London Walk. Diane (guide) read some fascinating entries from her copy of Pepys diary, a diary which he never intended to be read by any another person. We were led from one small garden oasis to another always discovering historical facts of the plague and the great fire. All these areas are now overlooked by huge, shiny new buildings. Simon and Joan Russell



Brooklands Museum - Wednesday, 19th August 2026

The Brooklands Museum of Motoring and Aviation is spread over a large site where we were able to explore classic vehicles, racing cars, motorcycles and more. It has a large selection of historic aircraft including the world famous Concorde. Brooklands was built at Weybridge, Surrey in 1907, the birthplace of British motorsport and includes the world’s first purpose-built race-track. The circuit includes two huge banked sections nearly 30 ft high and the track was 100 ft wide, made of concrete and incorporating two long straights, the total length being 3.25 miles. In 1909 an area in the middle of the track was cleared to create one of Britain’s first aerodromes, from which Louis Paulhan gave Britain’s first public flying demonstration. Other pioneers were attracted to Brooklands, including Tommy Sopwith, who learned to fly at Brooklands in 1910. He subsequently formed the Sopwith and later the Hawker aircraft companies which produced Britain’s fighter aircraft in the 20th century.

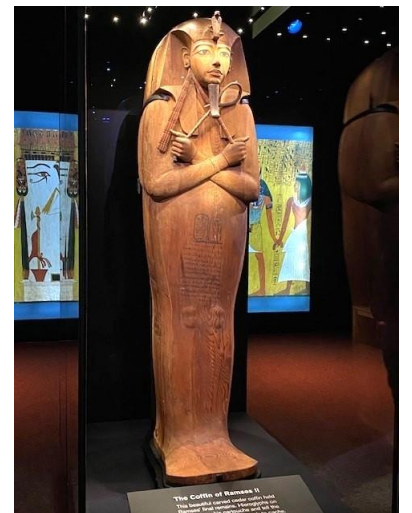


Ramses & the Pharaohs' Gold: The Exhibition - Tuesday 20th October 2026

If you have an interest in ancient Egypt, then this was an exhibition you would not want to miss. It was an amazing collection of 3,000-year-old artefacts from Egypt’s most ambitious, self-aggrandising pharaoh - **Ramses II**. It took us on a journey through Egypt’s golden age from the temples of Abu Simbel to the Valley of the Kings. There were 180 priceless treasures on loan from the Supreme Council of Antiquities, and we saw gold masks and silver coffins from the royal tombs of Tanis, beautifully preserved animal mummies and amulets, dazzling jewellery alongside colossal sculptures, carvings and stone heads. The mummy of **Ramses II** is a masterpiece of the embalmer’s art. The amazingly preserved 3,000-year-old face with its proud, beaky nose looks much as it must have when he died at the age of 90, after ruling for 66 years.

That was a super exhibition from the smallest jewel to the vastness of the Karnac temple complex. It was quite magnificent. We found it really impressive that Ramses died aged 90 in 1213 BC.

Simon and Joan Russell



2026/2027 EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS

<u>Event Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Friday 30 th October and Friday 13 th November	Science Museum Innovation Park in Swindon	Derrick Daines
Wednesday 18 th November 2026	The Lives of Others at the Adelphi Theatre	Yvonne Raisin
Thursday 19 th November to Thursday 26 th November 2026	Autumn Break in Paphos, Cyprus	David Sparrow
Wednesday 16 th December 2026	Christmas Lunch at the Vincent Rooms, Victoria	David Sparrow
Saturday 19 th December 2026	Festive Family Carols at St. Martin in the Fields	Pete Wells
Thursday 28 th January 2027	Les Miserables at the Sondheim Theatre	Pete Wells
Friday 29 th January 2027	Cirque du Soleil: Kurios - Cabinet of Curiosities at the Royal Albert Hall	Pete Wells
Wednesday 14 th April 2027	Billy Elliot - The Musical at the Adelphi Theatre	Pete Wells
Thursday 10 th June 2027	Singin' in the Rain at Sadlers Wells	Pete Wells
Wednesday 16 th June 2027	Miss Saigon at the Prince Edward Theatre	Pete Wells
Thursday 8 th July 2027	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory - The Musical at the London Coliseum	Pete Wells

We advertise future events in the monthly *Events Bulletin* which is broadcast to Club members via a monthly email. All the events listed above have now been advertised with some no longer accepting bookings. The Christmas Lunch on 16th December is still open for bookings, so please submit your booking form if you would like to join us at the Vincent rooms in Victoria. You can find a description of each event, with information about its availability, together with an online booking form, on the Club's website at: [At A Glance – London IBM Retirees Club](#)

OVERSEAS TRAVEL WITH IBM – SOME PERSONAL HIGHLIGHTS

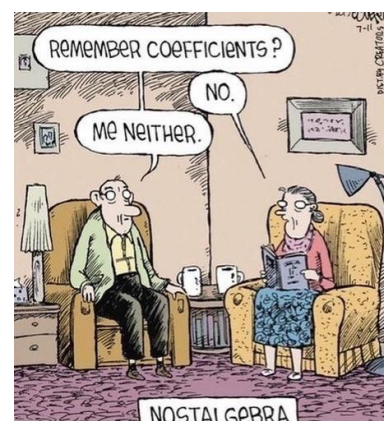
Travelling abroad on business with IBM was normally a positive experience, but at times it could also be challenging. A member of our Club (who was also a work colleague of your editor) offered to share with us some of the challenges and unexpected events that he experienced, and which he still remembers clearly from the years he worked for IBM. If you would like some light entertainment and read about these personal highlights of travelling on business with IBM, please click on the following link: <https://retireelondonclub.org/wp-content/uploads/keep/memories/Travelling-Abroad-With-IBM.pdf>

Many of us still travel abroad for holidays and as we all know, the most unexpected can happen. Do you have any standout memories you would like to share with us, especially if they were from overseas trips with IBM.

JUST FOR RETIREES



**NOT TO BRAG
OR ANYTHING
BUT I CAN FORGET
WHAT I'M DOING
WHILE I'M DOING IT.**



INTERESTING VENUES AND EVENTS

We have recently been including in the "LIRC News" information about Interesting venues and events that are unlikely to be advertised as Club events. The following includes a reminder about concerts at the Royal Academy of Music, plus information about a very historic and interesting venue, the Charles Dickens Museum.

At the beginning of 2025, we enjoyed an excellent LIRC visit to the **Royal Academy of Music** in London, where we had a fascinating guided tour and were entertained by some very talented musicians. During the visit we heard about the wide range of concerts that the academy puts on during the year, all available to the public at very competitive prices. We have considered purchasing tickets for their concerts, but with such a wide selection to choose from (orchestral concerts, organ recitals, wind ensembles, etc.) we felt that we should allow our members to book directly with the academy for those concerts that appeal to them. To do this and view all the concerts that are open for bookings, access their web site at Home | Royal Academy of Music. From the home page, click on the "performances" tab at the top of the screen and then select "What's On" on the left side of the screen. This gives you a search option to look for the concerts that interest you (and the option to book tickets). The academy is located at 1-5 York Gate in the Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5HT. The nearest underground stations are Regent's Park and Baker Street, just a short walk from the academy and there are numerous buses that stop immediately outside. For further information about the academy, including food and drink options, please check their web site.

The famous British author, Charles Dickens, wrote fifteen novels between 1836 and 1870, including some of the most outstanding works in the English language, such as *Oliver Twist* and the novella *A Christmas Carol*. The latter was credited with popularising Christmas as a holiday in Britain and America, as well as promoting some of the Christmas customs still enjoyed today, such as eating turkey and giving gifts. Charles was a strong advocate for the poor and working class families of Britain. His vivid depictions of life in the workhouse, or on the streets of London, have shaped our imaginings of the Victorian Era.

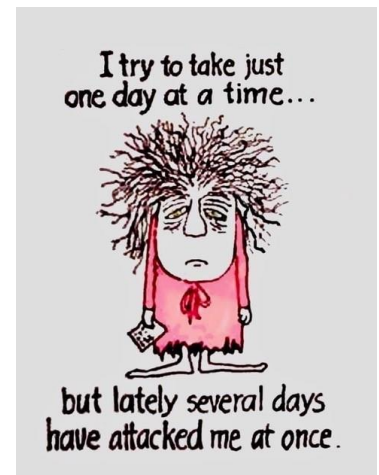
The **Charles Dickens Museum** is situated at 48 Doughty Street (WC1N 2LX). It was the London home of Dickens from 1837 to 1839 and while living there he finished writing *The Pickwick Papers*, wrote *Nicholas Nickleby*, and most famously of all, *Oliver Twist*. The house opened to the public in 1925 and houses a significant collection linked to Dickens and his works. It appears as a fairly typical middle-class Victorian home, complete with furnishings, portraits and decorations which are known to have belonged to Dickens. It is open from Wednesday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm. The nearest underground station is Chancery Lane on the Central line (a 10-minute walk to the museum). Tickets can be booked online at the museum's web site: Welcome to 48 Doughty Street, the London home of Charles Dickens – Charles Dickens Museum. The café and gardens are accessible from the ground floor of number 49 and there is ample seating. Audio guides are available from the shop. If you have a disability, please check the museum's web site when planning your visit.

.....



They say every
piece of chocolate
you eat shortens your
life by two minutes.

I've done the maths.
Seems I died in 1537.



THE ELDERLY COUPLE

An elderly couple went to the doctors because they were concerned about memory loss. The doctor put them through some tests. He told them they didn't have to worry too much yet, but it would help if they wrote things down. That afternoon they were sitting on the front porch enjoying the lovely weather.

The husband decides to get a bowl of ice cream and asks his wife if she would like one too. She says, "I would love a bowl of ice cream, but you'd better write it down." "No - I don't have to write it down - would you like chocolate syrup with your ice cream?" "I would love chocolate syrup, but you'd better write it down." "Don't need to. How hard can it be - ice cream with chocolate syrup. How about nuts and whipped cream on top?" "That sounds delicious. I'd love that, but you'd better write it down." "No - how hard can it be? Ice cream, chocolate syrup, nuts and whipped cream. I've got it."

So, he goes into the kitchen, and she hears him rattling around for a bit. Pretty soon he comes out with two plates of bacon and eggs. She says, "I told you to write it down. You forgot the toast!"

PUNS

A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.

I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about German sausages are the wurst.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.



I tried to come up with
a carpentry pun that
woodwork. I think I
nailed it but nobody
saw it.



JOKE OF THE
DAY-BUMPER
STICKER ON A
SENIOR'S CAR "I AM
SPEEDING BECAUSE
I HAVE TO GET
THERE BEFORE I
FORGET WHERE I AM
GOING"



YOUR LIRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We have included below a selection of the current members of your LIRC committee. If you have questions for your committee, please use the contact information below.

THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL ACCEPT TELEPHONE CALLS FROM YOU, BUT PLEASE TRY AND CALL ONLY DURING SOCIALABLE HOURS.

David Sparrow	Chairman	LIRCnews@gmail.com	020-8440-5871 07711-627788
Harvey Schonfeld	Treasurer	harvey.schonfeld@gmail.com	01276-453205
Alan Jarvis	Club Secretary & Minutes Secretary	alanjarvis029@gmail.com	07586-354341
Peter Morley	Membership Secretary	retibmlon@outlook.com	07779-102015
Tony Shortman	LIRC News Editor	shortmantm@gmail.com	01844-350014

THE FOUNDING HISTORY OF IBM

Many people, IBMers and others alike, have often asked about the origins of IBM UK. Some years ago, LIRC member Len Peach (no relation to the late Sir Len Peach) prepared a booklet exploring just this subject. Until now, the booklet has mainly been seen by IBM Hursley staff and a small number of visitors, so IBMers from other locations are unlikely to have come across it. With Len's kind permission, we are now publishing it so that it can reach a wider audience. The booklet draws on a set of posters produced by the Hursley Laboratories for IBM's Centenary in 2011. Len then developed this material into 'The Founding History of IBM' booklet.

Len is not only a retired engineer but also a historian of IBM UK from the point of view of the company, computer industry and the Hursley location. This aspect of history has been a pursuit of Len's for over fifty years. To view the booklet, please click on the link:

<https://www.retireelondonclub.org/wp-content/uploads/keep/memories/The-Founding-History-of-IBM.pdf> The text is quite small, therefore if you are viewing the booklet on your computer, use the zoom function (available on most PDF viewers).

THE FACE IN THE GLASS

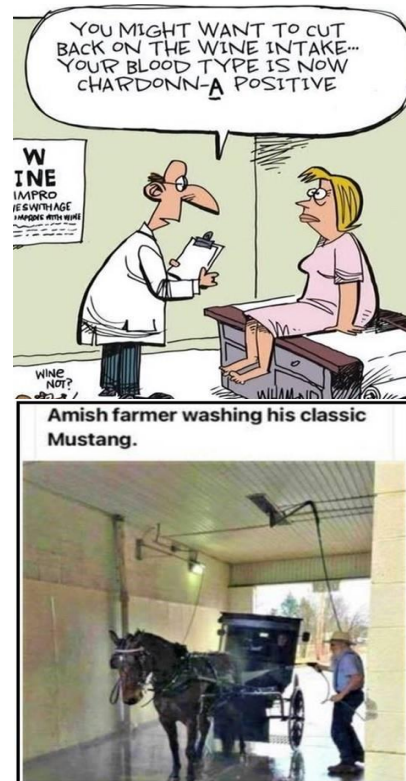
When you get what you want in your struggle for self
and the world makes you king for a day,
just go to the mirror and look at yourself
and see what THAT face has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or spouse
who 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.



ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS

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

- Paul McKernan who died on the 16th May 2024 (we have only recently been informed)
- Helen Williams who died on Thursday 23rd July 2026
- David Kohler who died on Thursday 6th August 2026
- Bruce Cornick who died on Wednesday 26th August 2026
- Colin McConnachie who died on Thursday 27th August 2026
- Pete Barry who died on Monday 14th September 2026
- Stuart Rangeley-Wilson who died on Sunday 20th September 2026
- David Livermore who died on Monday 21st September 2026

Helen Williams – who died on 23rd July aged 88

We were very saddened last July to hear of the passing of Helen Williams, someone many of you will have known. Helen was our Club secretary for many years, a vital role on the Club's committee, especially when trying to keep order at committee meetings! She also organised events as well as many short breaks which were thoroughly enjoyed by our members. When she left the committee in 2011, she remained a very active member of the Club, regularly attending events with Ray and joining in on most short breaks. She also became very active in the community of Farnham Common, where she continued to live until her passing on 23rd July. Helen was always very organised, which included arranging the order of service in advance for her funeral – much appreciated by her family. It was a funeral that many will remember, partly because of the visual tribute where pictures of Helen and her family were shown at various stages of her life. We have included here the picture of Helen on the front page of the funeral service booklet.



In Loving Memory of
Helen Williams
21st August 1937 - 23rd July 2026

THE TEA DANCE

It's the Sunday tea dance and they'll all be here today,
Aches and pains forgotten, dance the afternoon away.

Foxtrots, quicksteps, waltzes, some are slow but some still nifty,
With memories of how it was back in 1960.

Norman's in the toilet and a long time he will be,
He's got trouble with his prostate and he'll likely miss his tea.

Eddy's got a new love that he met in Thornton Heath,
She does a lovely tango, but she hasn't any teeth.

His latest fancy footwork nearly broke his partner's neck,
She mistook his outside swivel for a travelling contra check.

Ida's had her hair done and she's ready for the saunter,
She had a vinaloo last night and its coming back to haunt her.

Florrie's mini-skirt's revealing when she's spinning in the jive,
She really shouldn't wear a thong, approaching 85.

They've had their tea and cake and chat and had a little laugh,
And gamely rise with creaking knees to face the second half.

Norman's made it back in time for Rumba number one.
His Cucaracha's very neat, but he's left his flies undone.

Vera's fallen over in a massive Crimplene heap,
Bert's got indigestion and Mabel's fast asleep.

It's last waltz time and up they get for one more tune,
And then, good bye, take care, God willing – we hope to see you soon.



{ Three simple rules in life }

1. If you do not GO after what you want, you'll never have it.
2. If you do not ASK, the answer will always be NO.
3. If you do not step forward, you'll always be in the same place.

One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone.