

# **LIRC** News

30<sup>th</sup> October 2025

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

The next LIRC News will be published on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

## **WHAT'S INSIDE**

Our members recently enjoyed a short break at Potters Five Lakes Resort in the lovely Essex countryside and enjoyed great service; lovely food; good entertainment, etc.

We try to run at least two short breaks each year of different types and it would help us greatly if you could indicate your preferences – please see the article on page 3.

Your club committee regularly investigate possible venues and events that may be of interest to our members but sometimes find that it is not feasible to advertise them as a club event.

We have included information about some of these events - you will find them on page 4.

The LIRC News always includes a list of members whose passing has recently been reported to us, but we would like to be reporting happier events like weddings and special anniversaries.

If this is something you agree with, please see the article on page 8.

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## **FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN**

Dear Member,

The other day, I received a lovely letter from one of our members – I quote from it below:

“Thanks to you and the committee for all you have done to keep this club alive after IBM withdrew their funding. I always saw IBM as more than just a job – we were a huge family and what you and the committee are doing is keeping us all together, with your regular newsletters and your organising events like (The Christmas Lunch). Not only that – it’s done with such professionalism and devotion. Bless you all.”

The current and past committee members give so much of their time voluntarily to keep our Club running and it is so welcoming to receive an acknowledgement. However, it prompted me to think about why we do it and I recollected an old story from the “Chicken Soup for the Soul” books that I have illustrated below.

“Whilst walking along a Mexican beach, a friend saw a local inhabitant leaning down, picking something up and throwing it into the sea. He did it several times. As our friend drew closer, he noticed that what he was throwing back into the sea was a starfish. “Good Evening” he said. “Why are you doing that?”. “Well” said the local, “You see, the tide is high and these starfish have been washed up into the beach and, as the tide subsides, they will be stranded here and die”. “I understand” said my friend, “but there are thousands of these up and down these beaches, so you can’t possibly make a difference to them.” The local picked up another and threw it into the sea...”Made a difference to that one...!”

I hope I will see many of you fellow starfish at our future events (particularly at our Christmas Lunch) and, although it is very early, may I also wish those of you who celebrate it, a wonderful Christmas and New Year. We will do our best to keep things alive and interesting for you in 2026

**David Sparrow**

## EVENTS FEEDBACK

### Battle Proms at Hatfield House – Saturday 19 July 2025

We made a return visit to this year's exciting summer proms concert in the lovely grounds of Hatfield House. Battle Proms is a firmly established favourite that thousands of fans return to year after year. We packed our picnic, stocked up on fizz and joined the party (see photos)! We had a spectacular afternoon and evening of entertainment at Hatfield Park with a wonderful music concert, cavalry and parachute displays, fly-past by a Spitfire and much, much more.



### National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm – Thursday 18 September 2025

The National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm houses nearly 3,500 varieties of fruit in over 150 acres of farmland, and the Brogdale Collections charity provides access to, and education about, the National Fruit Collection. It is one of the largest collections of fruit trees in the world containing varieties of apples, pears, quince, plums, cherries, grapes and nuts. The Collections orchards have been based at Brogdale Farm for over 70 years and they offer a fascinating living reference library of 'heritage' fruit varieties from all over the world.

*A small group of us navigated the narrow lanes of Kent to visit the National Fruit Collection. It may be called a farm, but we learnt that in reality, this is a living museum of apples and fruit trees. From apple tree varieties that would have been familiar to a Roman palate to a pear tree whose seed had been in outer space. We were able to view the orchards from a tractor trailer and sample wonderful old varieties of apples straight from the tree. We also learnt that pink lady apples are only a brand name invented by the supermarkets and are just any type of pink apples! This whole and very enjoyable outing was rounded off with afternoon tea.*

Anne Daines



### Aston Martin Museum – Wednesday 24 & Friday 26 September 2025

Located in leafy Oxfordshire, we descended upon this 1000 year old Heritage Barn which houses the amazing Aston Martin Heritage Museum, containing vehicles from the oldest surviving Aston Martin in the world, the A3 (see photo) to definitive models from every era up to the cars of today. We immersed ourselves in the automotive story of one of the most famous marques in British history. More photos can be found at: [Aston Martin Heritage Museum 2025 - Google Photos](#)



*We had a splendid visit to the Aston Martin Museum where our guides Dom and Mike took us on a fascinating journey through the history of the Aston Martin company. We were provided with an amazing insight into the highs and lows during the Aston Martin years and the knowledge and enthusiasm with which so much information, interspersed with many amusing tales and anecdotes, was outstanding. For example, the author Barbara Cartland was an excellent racing driver! The beautiful cars we saw were all in pristine condition, gleaming and polished to perfection.*



*There was also a huge collection of models and trophies each with their own individual stories brilliantly relayed by our guides who are volunteers with the Aston Martin Heritage Trust. We really enjoyed our visit and would like to extend special thanks to Dom and Mike for their time and obvious commitment and dedication to Aston Martin that made the visit so memorable. Pauline Schurer*

## EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS

Event Date	Event	Sponsor
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Concert with the Royal Academy Symphony Orchestra	Alan Jarvis
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> November	Backstage Tour of the Old Vic theatre	Derrick Daines
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	Festive Family Carols at St Martin in the Fields	Pete Wells
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Lunch at the Blue Check Restaurant in Bushey	David Sparrow
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	The Importance of Being Earnest at the Noel Coward Theatre	Pete Wells
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Backstage Tour of the Old Vic Theatre	Derrick Daines
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	Woman in Mind at Duke of York's Theatre	Pete Wells
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Top Hat at Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank	Pete Wells
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> January	Cirque du Soliel - Ovo at the Royal Albert Hall	Pete Wells
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> March	I'm Sorry, Prime Minister at the Apollo Theatre	Pete Wells
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	Kinky Boots at The London Coliseum	Pete Wells

We advertise future events in the monthly *Events Bulletin* which is broadcast to club members via email around the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month. Some of the events above have already been advertised in an Events Bulletin and although some may no longer be accepting booking requests, others have places available. A description of each event, together with online booking, can be found on the club's website at [At A Glance – London IBM Retirees Club](#)

## THE CLUB'S SHORT BREAKS – IMPORTANT UPDATE

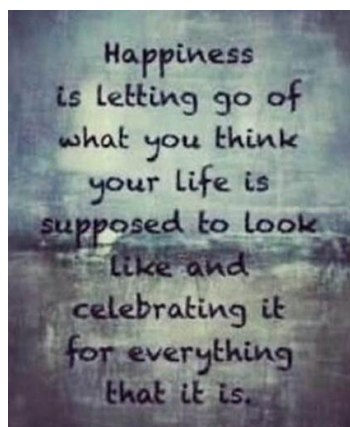
Our members recently enjoyed a week at Potters Five Lakes Resort, located on a 333-acre site that included an 18-hole golf course, all in the lovely Essex countryside. We enjoyed great company and service; lovely food; good entertainment and enjoyable activities - even the weather, though cool, stayed dry. Evening entertainment was provided and on Wednesday evening we enjoyed an outstanding "Four Seasons" tribute group. The link below gives an idea of what they were like at the end of their hour's performance (sorry about the recording quality!) and the guys in the photo are called "Frankie's Guys". Here is the link:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/qFvZLRSABvmFcjdr8>

These short breaks do seem popular, but if you would like us to continue booking venues like this one, or others, please let us know by sending a note to **David Sparrow** at [LIRCnews@gmail.com](mailto:LIRCnews@gmail.com). David Sparrow



## POINTS TO PONDER



## EXPERT FINANCIAL PLANNING

Dan was a single guy living at home with his father and working in the family business. When he found out he was going to inherit a fortune when his sickly father died, he decided he needed to find a wife with whom to share his fortune. One evening, at an investment meeting, he spotted the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Her natural beauty took his breath away. "I may look like just an ordinary guy," he said to her, "but in just a few years, my father will die, and I will inherit £20 million". "Impressed, the woman asked for his business card and three days later, she became his stepmother. Women are so much better at financial planning than men.

## INTERESTING VENUES AND EVENTS

Your club committee regularly investigate possible venues and events that may be of interest to our members. During the investigation process, we sometimes find that it is not feasible to advertise it as a club event. For example, The Victoria & Albert East Storehouse in East London, which is an extension to the V&A in central London, is free to visit and does not offer anything extra for organised visits (for example, a guided tour). Some interesting events and shows do not offer discounted tickets for group bookings and therefore the club can provide little benefit to its members by providing tickets for such events or shows.

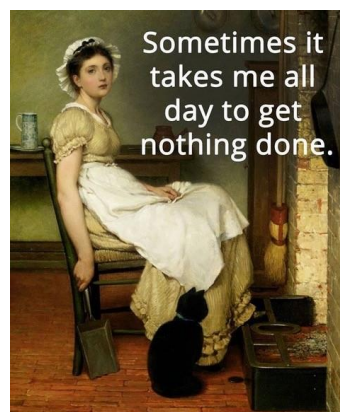
For these particular venues and events, the club may though like to tell you about them, sharing with you useful information that we have gathered during our research. Here are two examples that we have recently been investigating.

The first one is the *V&A East Storehouse* in East London (as mentioned above), which is typical of various venues that are free to visit. Derrick Daines visited it recently and spent over two hours viewing its wide selection of exhibits. These photos show the storehouse, looking from the central viewing area, with stairs up to each floor. It has a café and is open daily. It is located in Parkes Street, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Hackney Wick, London, E20 3AX. For more information, visit the web site: [V&A East](http://V&A East)



The second one is an event entitled "Emergence" which Professor Brian Cox is taking on a world tour, following the success of his smash-hit tour "Horizons". This world tour commences next year and is at *The O2* arena on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2026. "Emergence" is a celebration of the intricacy of the universe and an exploration of the laws of nature that sculpted it. From the largest structures in the known universe – the rivers and flows of galaxies that trace the cosmic web – to earth's interlinked ecosystems and the structure of the human brain – from black holes to snowflakes – we observe a world of dazzling complexity underpinned by magnificent simplicity. For more information and booking tickets, visit the web site: <https://briancoxlive.co.uk/emergence-world-tour-uk-and-ireland/>

## JUST FOR RETIREE'S



## INSULTS FROM THE GOOD AND THE BAD

The insults below are from an era before the English language got boiled down to 4-letter words. Insults from those days had some class!!

"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; Bring a friend, if you have one."  
- George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill.

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows, or of some unspeakable disease." "That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure." - Clarence Darrow

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." - William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway).

"Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I'll waste no time reading it." - Moses Hadas

"I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it." - Mark Twain

"He has no enemies but is intensely disliked by his friends." - Oscar Wilde

"I've just learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial." - Irvin S. Cobb

"Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?" - Mark Twain

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork." - Mae West

"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go." - Oscar Wilde

"He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp posts... For support rather than illumination." - Andrew Lang (1844-1912)

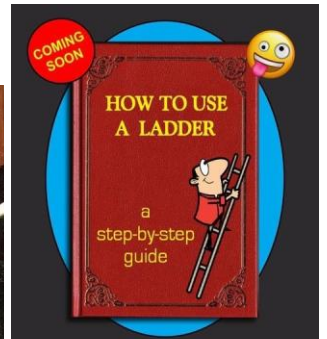
"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn't it." - Groucho Marx.

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire." - Winston Churchill

"He had delusions of adequacy." - Walter Kerr

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music." - Billy Wilder

"He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up."  
- Paul Keating



## FROM THE EDINBURGH FRINGE

"I've recently become a mother ... to my parents."

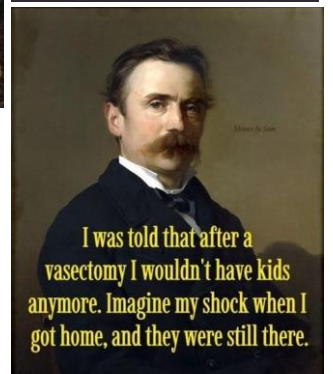
My sister has a lifesaving tool in her car designed to cut through a seat belt if she gets trapped. She keeps it in the boot.

"I've been getting really bad headaches ever since I got hit with a tambourine. The doctor thinks I might be suffering from percussion."

"I saw a lion and a witch trying to carry a huge wardrobe into the house next door. I asked what they were up to, they said, 'Narnia business'."

"My four year old godson's idols are **Legend** from *Gladiators*, **Godzilla** and a billionaire YouTube business-child called **MrBeast**. It's a worry, isn't it, when a little boy's least toxic influence is Godzilla."

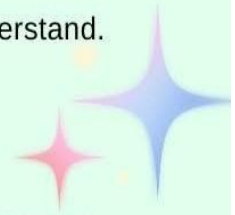
"Do people that get vasectomies tell their children about it? I feel like the message you're conveying is, 'I love you, but the thought of raising another you have made me decommission my testicles.'"



## DICTIONARY UPDATE

In the following list of 40 words, there may be some you have never come across.

1. **Agog** – Very eager or curious to hear or see something.
2. **Bumfuzzle** – To confuse or fluster.
3. **Cacophony** – A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds.
4. **Callipygian** – Having well-shaped buttocks.
5. **Cattywampus** – Askew or awry.
6. **Collywobbles** – A feeling of anxiety or an upset stomach.
7. **Defenestration** – The act of throwing someone out of a window.
8. **Discombobulate** – To confuse or disconcert.
9. **Doodle Sack** – An old word for a bagpipe.
10. **Erf** – A plot of land in a town (South African English).
11. **Flibbertigibbet** – A frivolous, flighty, or excessively talkative person.
12. **Gardylloo** – A warning shouted before throwing waste from above (historical).
13. **Gobbledygook** – Language that is meaningless or hard to understand.
14. **Hullabaloo** – A commotion or fuss.
15. **Impignorate** – To pawn or mortgage something.
16. **Jiggery-pokery** – Deceitful or dishonest behavior.
17. **Kerfuffle** – A commotion or fuss.
18. **Limerence** – The state of being infatuated with another person.
19. **Lollygag** – To dawdle or be slow.
20. **Malarkey** – Nonsense.
21. **Mumpsimus** – A stubborn person who keeps making a known mistake.
22. **Nudiustertian** – Relating to the day before yesterday.
23. **Oxter** – An armpit (chiefly Scottish/Irish English).
24. **Pandiculation** – The act of stretching and yawning.
25. **Pettifogger** – A lawyer who handles petty cases, often disreputably.
26. **Quire** – Two dozen sheets of paper.
27. **Ratoon** – A small shoot growing from the root of a plant (e.g., sugar cane).
28. **Sialoquent** – Spitting while speaking.
29. **Skedaddle** – To run away quickly.
30. **Snollygoster** – A shrewd, unprincipled person (especially in politics).
31. **Susurrus** – Whispering, murmuring, or rustling.
32. **Tittynope** – A small quantity of something left over (like a few grains of rice).
33. **Ulotrichous** – Having woolly or tightly curled hair.
34. **Ultracrepidarian** – Someone who speaks on things they don't understand.
35. **Wamble** – Stomach rumbling or a feeling of nausea.
36. **Widdershins** – Counterclockwise or in the wrong direction.
37. **Xertz** – To gulp down something quickly and greedily.
38. **Yclept** – Named or called (archaic).
39. **Zugzwang** – A situation in chess where every possible move is a bad one.
40. **Zenzizenzizenic** – The eighth power of a number (obsolete math term).



## **SOME MORE LIGHT-HEARTED THOUGHTS**

To steal ideas from someone is plagiarism. To steal from many is called research.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.

The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.

Latest survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75% of the world population.

The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those who got there first.

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.

In filling in an application, where it says, 'In case of emergency', notify: I put 'DOCTOR.'

The shin bone is a device for finding furniture.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

Everybody lies, but it doesn't matter since nobody listens.

I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.

You can't have everything. Where would you put it?

If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.

What do you call a super articulate dinosaur? A Thesaurus!

A clear conscience is the sign of a bad memory.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be. Nor is there any future in it.

Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

## **DID YOU REALLY SAY THAT?**

While looking at a house, my brother asked the real estate agent which direction was north; because, he explained, he didn't want the sun waking him up every morning. She asked, "Does the sun rise in the north?" When my brother explained that the sun rises in the east, and has for sometime; she shook her head and said, "Oh I don't keep up with all that stuff."

While working at a pizza place, I observed a man ordering a small pizza to go. He appeared to be alone, and the cook asked him if he would like it cut into four pieces or six. He thought about it for some time before responding. "Just cut it into four pieces. I don't think I'm hungry enough to eat six pieces."

I couldn't find my luggage at the airport baggage area, so I went to the lost luggage office and told the woman there that my bags never showed up. She smiled and told me not to worry because she was a trained professional, and I was in good hands. "Now," she asked me, "has your plane arrived yet?" So, I replied, "No madam, the pilot told us we're circling the airport, 3rd in line to land."



**I was so suspicious and paranoid about my wife having an affair, that we moved to a new town 700 miles away.**

**I couldn't believe my luck when we still managed to keep the same gardener.**

## **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.**

<b>David Sparrow</b>	Chairman	LIRCnews@gmail.com	020-8440-5871 07711-627788
<b>Harvey Schonfeld</b>	Treasurer	harvey.schonfeld@gmail.com	01276-453205
<b>Alan Jarvis</b>	Club Secretary & Minutes Secretary	alanjarvis029@gmail.com	07586-354341
<b>Peter Morley</b>	Membership Secretary	retibmlon@outlook.com	01932-241207
<b>Tony Shortman</b>	LIRC News Editor	shortmantm@gmail.com	01844-350014

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

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

- Pierre Bütikofer who died on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024
- Eric Sutcliffe who died on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025
- Sir Anthony Cleaver (known as Tony) who died on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025
- Jane Cockayne who died on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025
- Jean Scott who died on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Shirley Morley (loved member and wife of our Membership Secretary, Peter) died Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Please be aware that Peter will respond to club issues in due course.

In each LIRC News, we always provide a list of members whose passing has recently been reported to us. It is always sad to hear about members who have passed away, especially if the list includes a member who is well known to us. But this section could also include much happier news, about members who have recently married (or due to be married soon) or who have recently celebrated a significant anniversary (or has one coming up soon). Please let us know about them, whether they relate to yourself or to other members of the club, as we would love to hear about these happy events and share them with our members via this section of the LIRC News. The contact details for myself, Tony Shortman, and David Sparrow can be found in the table above.

### ***Sir Anthony Cleaver, Chairman of IBM UK from 1990 to 1994, who died aged 87 on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025***

Tony Cleaver was born in Lambeth, south London, on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1938. Brought up in Hertfordshire, he was educated at Berkhamsted School and did National Service in the Intelligence Corps at GCHQ and in Cyprus before taking up a scholarship to read Greats at Trinity College, Oxford. He joined IBM in 1962 and spent the following 32 years with the company. He joined as a trainee instructor and was one of the first to teach IBM colleagues and customers the capabilities of System/360 after its launch in 1964. He went on as a systems engineer to lead a team which designed the first cash dispenser for Lloyds Bank and installed IBM equipment for the first time at the Bank of England – a decision that had to be endorsed at Cabinet level, the Bank having hitherto been a customer of IBM's British rival, ICL. Rising steadily through the management hierarchy, he migrated from engineering towards marketing roles and served in New York and Paris before returning to oversee the UK launch of the IBM PC, the first mass-market desktop computer. Mentored by the then chairman and industry leader, Sir Edwin Nixon, he became general manager for the UK in 1984 and chief executive from 1986 to 1990, when he succeeded Nixon as chairman until 1994. He was passionately interested in music and his chairmanship of the Royal College of Music from 1999 to 2007 was "unquestionably one of the highlights of my life". He married first, in 1967 to Mary Cotter, who died in 1999, and secondly, in 2000 to Jennifer Graham, who survives him with a son and daughter from his first marriage.