

LIRC News

24th April 2025

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

The next LIRC News will be published on Thursday 31st July 2025.

WHAT'S INSIDE

During our tour of the Royal Academy of Music on Thursday 16th January 2025, we heard about their amazing series of summer concerts.

If you would like tickets for any of these concerts, please check the article on page 5.

You will find an article and photo that retired CE's who worked for IBM around 40 years ago, may find very interesting (the photo is from the 1987 IBM Customer Engineers Conference in Venice).

For further information about this, please check the article on page 6.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

I usually like to start with a positive thought, but a number of the committee have suffered personal losses in the first part of this year and some of our other members have also passed. I extend my love and thoughts to all who have been affected and hope that through family and friends you've found the necessary support to help you through the hard times. We must keep the fond memories and look forward to the good times. I hope that being a member of our Club helps you too.

Thank you to all who attended our AGM and for your participation. If you need a copy of the minutes, please send me a request and I'll send them to you. As ever, Robert Tickell's presentation afterwards was very well received and helpful – thank you, Robert.

Your new committee has been planning a varied range of events for those of you interested or able to attend and we hope that they will appeal to you. We are aware that one or two perhaps haven't been particularly good, but we'll keep looking. Please don't forget to let us have your ideas, as that way we can hopefully run events that appeal to more of you.

We have a great number of you joining us at Warners, Heythrop Park, for midsummer, with some even extending their stay in the region to sample The Pudding Club! A smaller number of us will be having fun at Potters in October and there's just room for a couple more before we close the bookings. With several other varied local events and theatres too in the coming months, I hope we'll meet up somewhere.

I don't know about you but all the recent talk of how well off we older people are and that's why we need to pay more to support our society came home to me when the new IBM pension payment came through this month. I think we may now just be able to afford one more bottle of wine, half a tank of petrol or an extra starter if we go out to eat; then it's trying to work out how we pay for all the 'usual things' that now all cost more and means we are actually worse off! I hope that doesn't mean you can't come to our events though – we are trying to keep costs low and get you the best possible deals.

I wish you, your families and friends continued good health and happiness in the coming months. Let's get out and enjoy life whilst we can.

David Sparrow

EVENTS FEEDBACK

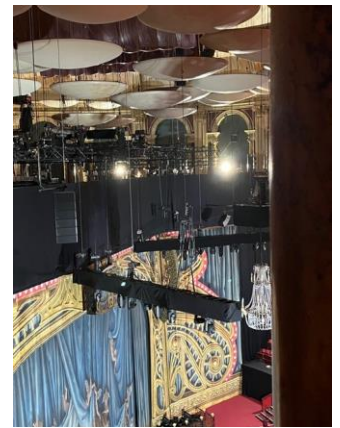
Royal Academy of Music Museum Tour – Thursday 16th January 2025

The Academy is one of the oldest music schools in the UK with a student community representing more than fifty nationalities. For this especially arranged visit, there were forty-six of us, split into two groups with each enjoying their own one-and-a-half-hour tour of the Academy. We were guided by two exceptional students who introduced us to the remarkable collections of both historic and modern instruments. One guide focused on stringed instruments, while the other showcased early harpsichords and pianos. Throughout the galleries, we had the privilege of closely examining a selection of exquisite instruments, artworks, and manuscripts. Our visit was further enhanced by student performances on the cello and grand piano. Additionally, we were able to closely inspect some of the first pianos ever built in London, making for an enriching and memorable visit.



Royal Albert Hall Backstage Tour - Monday 3rd February 2025

There were 61 of us who participated in three separate Behind-the-Scenes tours of the Royal Albert Hall. These exclusive tours provided us with a rare glimpse behind the curtain of this iconic Grade I listed building. We went beneath the stage, stepped inside dressing rooms, and ventured deep underground into the bustling loading bay, all the while learning about the Hall's rich history and the intricate process of staging a variety of performances. During the tour, we discovered how the Royal Albert Hall was founded on a sloping site and how engineers tackled one of the UK's most notorious acoustic challenges - the infamous Royal Albert Hall echo. The tour also featured exclusive behind-the-scenes elements, including access to the royal areas, such as the royal box and entrance. The journey took us from the upper levels of the Hall (see photo) down to the basement. Backstage tours are only possible on eleven days each year, as performances are meticulously scheduled for seamless assembly and disassembly, a testament to the precision and efficiency of the Hall's operations.



The Last Laugh at Noel Coward Theatre – Wednesday 26th February 2025

This really was a phenomenal show and only on for such a short run (until March 28th). The actors were great and if you closed your eyes for a moment, you would have thought it really was Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and Bob Monkhouse on the stage.

A big thank you for organising yet another great theatre trip. Roy and I thought the show was fantastic and it was such an appropriate setting to see it in too. The seats were great, so thanks for all your hard work organising it and all the others you arrange. Leigh and Roy Carter



Walking Tour of the Mail Rail Tunnels – Saturday 5th April 2025

From the Mount Pleasant Post Office Rail Mail station, we were led by expert guides into the 100-year-old tunnels that enabled quicker transport of letters and parcels between the Eastern District Office Whitechapel and Paddington Railway Station, stopping at six other stations including Mount Pleasant. Our walking tour explored a unique subterranean environment in the heart of London that many Londoners never knew existed. We were told surprising stories about the staff who built, operated and maintained the railway for over 100 years – from its construction in the early 1900s, to the eventual closure in 2003. Additional photos of this walking tour can be viewed at [Event Photos and Videos – London IBM Retirees Club](#)



EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS

<u>Event Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Thursday 8 th May	The Great Gatsby at the London Coliseum	Pete Wells
Thursday 15 th May	The Comedy About Spies at the Noel Coward Theatre	Pete Wells
Tuesday 20 th May	Tutankhamun Immersive Exhibition at Excel, Royal Victoria Dock	Paul Welstead
Thursday 5 th June	Thames Mudlark Tour	Alan Jarvis
Wednesday 18 th June	Just For One Day at the Shaftesbury Theatre	Pete Wells
Monday 23 rd June to Friday 27 th June	Short Break to Warners Heythrop Park	David Sparrow
Thursday 26 th June	Clueless - A New Musical at the Trafalgar Theatre	Pete Wells
Friday 27 th June	The Pudding Club Dinner and Overnight Stay at The Three Ways House Hotel	Pat Smith
Thursday 3 rd July	London Walk - Shakespeare's City of London	Pat Smith
Thursday 10 th July	Hadestown at the Lyric Theatre	Pete Wells
Tuesday 15 th July	Mrs Warren's Profession at the Garrick Theatre	Pete Wells
Wednesday 16 th July	Vitality Blast Cricket - Middlesex v Surrey at Lord's	Tony Shortman
Saturday 19 th July	Battle Proms at Hatfield House	David Sparrow
Thursday 14 th August	101 Dalmatians - The Musical at the Eventim Apollo Theatre	Pete Wells
Thursday 21 st August	Brigadoon at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre	Pete Wells
Thursday 28 th August	Good Night Oscar at The Barbican	Pete Wells
Wednesday 24 th Sept.	Oliver! at the Gielgud Theatre	Pete Wells
Monday 13 th October to Friday 17 th October	Short Break to Potters Five Lakes	David Sparrow

CHAUFFERING THE WIMBLEDON STARS

It's long hours and tiring, lots of waiting around, but I will be back this June as a returning Wimbledon driver! What a joy for a tennis player like me to chauffeur the stars around - yes Nadal, Djokovic, Pegula, and so many more, not to mention the VIP's, press, and taking ball boys and girls home safely. Many tales to tell, though we have to sign a Wimbledon non-disclosure agreement. There are lots like me – with 250 wonderful new Jaguar and Land Rover cars in action, Wimbledon needs many hundreds of drivers. Best of all is the ID pass which gives you unlimited access into the grounds, where you can see tennis for free. My favourite must be the top two lady seeds battling it out on centre court in a practice game the day before the championship started with an audience of just one - yes, me! Driver recruitment is over for this year, but if you are interested, I can tell you how to apply for next year! *Jay Rastall*



YOUR INPUT FOR THE LIRC NEWS IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED

Please continue to send us your jokes, poems and any light-hearted material for inclusion in the LIRC News. We always hope that our members find it an enjoyable read and any contributions to its content are always very much appreciated. Please send them to Simon and Joan Russell at: j.campanini@btopenworld.com

THE BEST VALUE GUINNESS IN IRELAND

Michael O'Leary, the managing director of Ryanair, arrives in Dublin. He enters a pub and orders a pint of draught Guinness. The bartender nods and says, "That'll be one euro, sir." Surprised, O'Leary replies, "Wow, that's cheap!" and hands over the euro. The bartender smiles and says, "We aim to beat the competition. We're the cheapest brewery in Ireland." "Cheers," O'Leary responds. Then the bartender notices, "Sir, you don't have a glass. That'll be three euros for one of ours." O'Leary sighs but pays up. He takes his beer and goes to sit down. "Sorry," the bartender adds, "there's a two euro charge to sit unless you booked online for just one euro." Annoyed, O'Leary tries to sit but finds the chair too small. "Sir, you're too large for our seats. You'll need an extra large spot for four euros," says the bartender. Frustrated, O'Leary stands up, places his beer on the bar, and shouts, "This is ridiculous! I want to speak to the manager!" "Ah, you've chosen the bar area," the bartender replies politely, "that's two euros more, thank you." O'Leary turns red with anger. "Do you know who I am?" he yells. "Of course, Mr. O'Leary," replies the bartender. "I've had enough," says O'Leary angrily. "I came for a quiet drink, and this is how I'm treated? I want to speak to the manager!" "Certainly, Mr. O'Leary," the bartender says cheerfully. "You can contact him between 9:00am and 9:10am every Monday and Tuesday at this number. Calls are free to connect but will cost ten cents per second." "I'll never come back to this bar!" O'Leary screams. "That's fine, sir, but remember we're the only pub in Ireland selling a pint for one euro." And a very Happy New Year to all!

POINTS TO PONDER

Which letter is silent in the word "Scent", the S or the C?

The word "swims" upside-down is still "swims".

Do twins ever realise that one of them is "Unplanned"?

If poison expires, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?

Have you ever noticed: The Roman numerals for forty (40) are XL.

Why is the letter W, in English, called double U? Shouldn't it be called double V?

The easiest way to find something lost around the house is to buy a replacement.

The sole purpose of a child's middle name is so he knows when he's really in trouble.

Maybe oxygen is slowly killing you and it just takes 75-100 years to fully work.

If you replace "W" with "T" in "What, Where and When", you get the answer to each of them.

The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The realist adjusts his sails.

Reading gives us somewhere to go when we have to stay where we are.

100 years ago, everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars. Today everyone has cars and only the rich own horses.

**MAYBE IF WE
START TELLING
PEOPLE THE BRAIN
IS AN APP, THEY'LL
START USING IT.**

**You come from
dust, you will
return to dust.**

**That's why I don't
dust.
It could be
someone I know.**

**You know how they
throw the ball into the
crowd after they win
the game? That's not
allowed in bowling.
I know that now.**

**One day you'll
find someone that
is obsessed with
you.
It's probably going
to be a dog, but
it is what it is.**



ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC CONCERTS

Following a brilliant LIRC visit to the Royal Academy of Music in January, some club members enquired about the series of over 100 concerts that will be hosted by the Academy during their summer season. With such a large selection of concerts to choose from, the club felt that it should not purchase tickets for any specific concert but allow members to book tickets directly with the Academy for those concerts that appeal to them. To view the full diary of concerts, please use the following web link – <https://www.ram.ac.uk/news/royal-academy-of-music-announces-summer-season-of-events> and then follow the link that is provided for online booking.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM AN RAF HERO

When Sir Douglas Bader was giving a talk at an upmarket girl's school about his time as a pilot in the Second World War, he shared the following with them. "So, there were two of the f***ers behind me, three f***ers to my right, another f***er on the left," he told the audience. The headmistress went pale and interjected: "Ladies, the Fokker was a German aircraft." Sir Douglas replied: "That may be, madam, but these f***ers were in Messerschmitt's"

SENIOR'S MORNING THOUGHTS

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

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

I've banished my scales to the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologises.

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

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.

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.

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 but obviously there's a new strain out there.

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

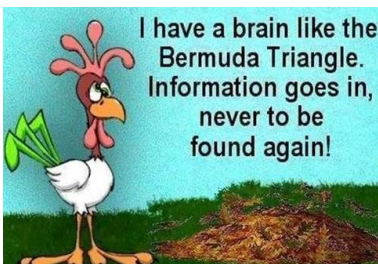
So, you've been eating hot dogs and McDonalds all your life, but you won't take the vaccine because you don't know what's in it.

Secrets to a long happy marriage



A old woman was sipping on a glass of wine, while sitting on the patio with her husband, and she says, "I love you so much, I don't know how I could ever live without you"... Her husband asks, "Is that you, or the wine talking?"... She replies, "It's me... talking to the wine."

When I'm an old lady I'm going to leave snacks in little bags on the floor all over the house in case I fall down



YOUR LIRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Included below is a list of all the current members of your LIRC committee. If you have questions for your committee, please use the contact information below.

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
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Peter Morley	Membership Secretary	retibmlon@outlook.com	01932-241207
Tony Shortman	LIRC News Editor	shortmantm@gmail.com	01844-350014
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Pete Wells	Event Organiser	petecwells@gmail.com	07540-984074
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Chris Nickless	Event Organiser	chris.nickless.rcl@gmail.com	01268-771793
Pat Smith	Event Organiser	patsmithpotton@gmail.com	07802-245623
Paul Welstead	Event Organiser	Welsteadp@gmail.com	07984-964503

SPOT THE FACES CHALLENGE - IBM CE LASER CONFERENCE IN VENICE

We have been sent a group photo taken in 1987 at an IBM Customer Engineers Conference in Venice. If you were a CE working for IBM around 40 years ago, maybe you might recognise some of the faces in the photo. We have uploaded it to the LIRC website and it can be viewed at:

<https://www.retireelondonclub.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/1987-CE-Laser-Conference.jpg>

If you do recognise anyone in the photo, please let our committee member, Derrick Daines, know (his contact details are above) as there is a group of retired CE's trying to put a name to each face.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM CHILDHOOD

I remember the corned beef of my childhood, and the bread that we cut with a knife, when the children helped with the housework, and the men went to work not the wife.

The cheese never needed a fridge, and the bread was so crusty and hot, the children were seldom unhappy, and the wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle, with the yummy cream on the top, our dinner came hot from the oven, and not from a freezer; or shop.

The kids were a lot more contented, they didn't need money for kicks, just a game with their friends in the road, and sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner, where biscuits for pennies were sold, do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic, or is it I'm just getting old?

Bathing was done in a wash tub, with plenty of rich foamy suds, but the ironing seemed never ending, as mum pressed everyone's 'duds'.

I remember the slap on my backside, and the taste of soap if I swore, anorexia and diets weren't heard of, and we hadn't much choice what we wore.

Do you think that bruised our ego or our initiative was destroyed?
we ate what was put on the table, and I think life was better enjoyed.



LIFE IN REVERSE

In my next life I want to live my life backwards.
You start out dead and get that out of the way.
Then you wake up in an old people's home feeling better every day.
You get kicked out for being too healthy, go collect your pension,
and then when you start work, you get a gold watch and a party on your first day.
You work 40 years until you're young enough to enjoy your retirement.
You party, drink alcohol, and are generally promiscuous, then you are ready for school.
You then go to primary school, you become a kid, you play.
You have no responsibilities, you become a baby until you are born.
You spend your last 9 months floating in luxurious spa-like conditions with central heating and room service on tap, larger quarters every day and then Voila!
You finish off as an orgasm. I rest my case. *George Carlin, 1937-2008*

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ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS

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

- Peter Chadwick who died on Tuesday 17th December 2024
- Barbara Porter who died on Thursday 9th January 2025
- John Norman who died on Monday 27th January 2025
- Bunty Atzenwiler who died on Friday 28th February 2025
- Graham Yearron who died on Friday 14th March 2025
- John Ewing who died on Sunday 6th April 2025

Our Sincere Condolences to Peter Morley

We offer our love and support to Peter & Shirley Morley on the loss of their son, Andrew, who passed unexpectedly recently whilst appearing to be recovering from a serious illness. He has left behind his wife, Jenni, and four-year-old daughter, Isobel, who is Peter & Shirley's only granddaughter. Losing one's child at whatever age, is one of the hardest things to bear and our admiration and thanks go to Peter who, despite this loss and other personal challenges, has continued to maintain his committee activities during these very sad times. *David Sparrow*

Herbert John Norman – known as John Norman (1932–2025)

Many of us remember John (and his late wife Jill) as they regularly took part in our club events. John, who died peacefully in January at the age of 93, was born in Hornsey and raised in Muswell Hill. In 1953, he graduated from Imperial College London with a degree in physics, specialising in acoustics. He met his wife, Jill, at a university dance, and they married in 1956, going on to raise three children: Liz, Sarah, and Bernard. He began his career in the family firm of organ builders, Hill Norman & Beard, where he became Managing Director in 1972. In 1974, following a disagreement over the company's direction, he made a bold career change and joined IBM. There, he worked on the promotion of STRUDL software for marine and offshore engineering, as well as writing for the IBM customer magazine. He remained with IBM into the late 1980s and found great enjoyment in the collaborative spirit of the company. John's passion for technology endured throughout his life - he bought his first all-electric car at 92 and embraced online dating after Jill's passing in 2018. Though he left the business, the world of organ building never left him and he continued to work in an advisory capacity on major projects, including his final commission for St James's Piccadilly, which he was still completing at the time of his death. John wrote various books about organs and was the founding editor of *The Organ Builder* journal. He held fellowships with several professional bodies and was a Freeman of the City of London. He will be remembered not only for his technical insight but also for his wit, warmth, and genuine love of learning. He leaves behind a legacy that spans both tradition and innovation. *Liz Norman*

