

Bits & Bytes

No 4

Editorial

I'm sure many people reading this edition will have a wry smile when they see another *new* organisation for ICL. I did! I think that it used to be said, when I was an employee, that the organisation wheel continues to turn and within 10 years you see the same organisation again. Personally I'm pleased to see that the ICL brand is being reintroduced. I never understood why we were not proud of declaring that we were all part of the same group.

At long last the plight of Bletchley Park has been highlighted on BBC Radio 4 and BBC1 TV News. It seems that neither the Lottery Fund or the Millennium Committee think that it has enough priority.

I have written to Sir Peter Bonfield, whose father worked on the Bombes, and the reply on his behalf states, "BT is committed to playing its proper role in helping the Bletchley Park Trust preserve the heritage and grow the museum". Lets hope that all the parties concerned get the financial arrangements sorted quickly, so that the Park can be opened every day, rather than every other weekend.

I still need more letters and stories for B&B. How about some more input from younger pensioners, as the majority of this edition is about the British Tab.!

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ICL NEWS

ICL ORGANISATION CHANGES

Keith Todd made an announcement concerning the organisation of ICL on 13 January 1997.

"1996 was a challenging year for ICL. Despite this we made some significant progress towards our vision of being the best European-based systems and services company. We proved our ability to win major systems integration and outsourcing contracts. We disposed of D2D and Volume Products and I began a far-reaching programme to focus the way we work more closely on our customers. However, our financial performance still needs to improve.

To accelerate this progress in 1997, we must reinforce the focus on our customers and on being "One ICL". Equally, it is essential that our

management team responds effectively to the needs of our customers and that our organisation structure is streamlined.

I am therefore implementing the following changes to the ICL organisation"

ICL Enterprises (Northern Europe)

Torsten Vieth becomes Managing Director of ICL Enterprises, Northern Europe which comprises the existing Enterprises businesses in the following countries:

Finland	Henry Ehestedt
Norway	Arvid Oye
Denmark	Steffen Ibsoe
Benelux	Frank Boekel
Sweden	Kjell-Ake Jagenstedt (acting)

ICL Enterprises (Western & Central Europe, Middle East and Africa)

This business will include the UK based businesses and Enterprise operations in Western and Central Europe, Middle East and Africa. **Tim Gibson** will initially lead the total business on an acting basis prior to taking responsibility for all non UK activities.

UK Based

Enterprise Government	Richard Stokes
(Local & Central)	
ICL DESC Limited	Mike Coote
Enterprise Industry	Mike Stares
Enterprise Technology	Derek Sayers (act)
Telecoms	Nuno Caldeira

Non UK Based

France	Edgard Taureau
Portugal	Carlos Afonso
Ireland	David MacDonald
Czech Republic	Barry Caine
Poland	Jan Kluk
Romania	Mike Popa
Hungary	Lajos Ludman
Africa	Tony Cashel
Hellas	Tiki Hadjioannou
Bulgaria	Vasco Kolev
Russia	Bill Wolstencroft
Malta	Chris Stahl
Middle East	Walid Gad
Slovakia	Villiam Cik
Croatia	Steve Sarjeant

ICL Services

Will comprise three main businesses, all of which will include the ICL brand in their business name. **Nigel Hartnell** will be Managing Director - ICL Services.

ICL CFM, ICL's UK outsourcing business, will now include the existing Distributed Systems and Managed Service divisions of ICL Sorbus. It will be run by **Ken Mander**.

Corporate Sales	Neil Bagshaw
Client Sales Ireland	Robert Bailes
Corporate Services	Alan Cook
Commercial	Ian Deeks
Managed Service	Ian Lamb
Client Services London	Keith McDowell
Distributed Sales	Phil Murray
Technology	Alan Roberts
Distributed Systems	Dave Smith
Finance	Roger Tilbrook
Client Services Regions	Philip Wilson
Personnel	Chris Yexley

ICL Network Services which will consolidate all ICL's network based services, including our Internet access provider groups. An appointment as Managing Director of this business will be announced in due course.

ICL Net	George Hurlstone
ECRC Munich	Alessandro Giacalone
ICL Information Services	Sandy Smith

ICL Education and Consultancy, which will include the current Autonomous Businesses as well as ICL Power of 4. This will be managed by **David Wimpress**.

ICL Power of 4	Andrew Auty
ICL Peritas Learning Tech.	Paul Butler
ICL Consulting	Valerie Cliff
AMP Systems Ltd	Charles Croker
Human Resources	Debbie Entwistle
Enterprise Systems	Bob Rowley
Finance	Alan Teece
Executive Programmes	Liz Tout
ICL Peritas Managed Services	Les Underwood

Services HQ

Services Technology	John Elmore
Finance Director	Stuart Gilmour
Commercial Director	Nancy Bowen

ICL Sorbus

Will focus on hardware and software maintenance and associated support services across our European marketplace. **David Palk** has been appointed Managing Director - ICL Sorbus.

Scandinavia	Orjan Lindh
Benelux	Rob Brouwer
Central (Germany, Austria & Switzerland)	Jorn Sacksen
France	Bertrand Godin
Italy	Maurizio Tomasso

Sales & Marketing	Sergio Tansini
Logistics & IT	Reto Jost
Service Delivery	Franck Armaingaud
Profit Improvement	William Fisher

UK System Service	Peter Hutchinson
Helpdesks	Andrew Downing
Finance Director	Jo Peacock

Commercial Director	Tim Regan
Personnel	Peter Long
Projects	John Polatch

Financial Services

Run by **Tim Escudier**, will lead and deliver ICL's growth strategy in the international financial services marketplace.

TPLC

Will strengthen its role as the distributor of PCs and small servers, led by **Marie-Anne Van Ingen**.

ICL Retail

Under **Rod Powell**, will continue building on ICL's success and pre-eminent position in global retailing.

ICL Interactive

Run by **John Davison**, will further develop ICL's presence in this growing sector.

Technology Businesses

David Teague continues in his existing role, leading the deployment of ICL's technology-based hardware and software products through HPS and TeamWare.

ICL Pathway

John Bennett continues as Managing Director of this important business.

ICL Group Headquarters

Group Sales and Marketing Director

Robin Hacking becomes Group Sales and Marketing Director. He will also take responsibility for ICL's minority interests in joint ventures with Fujitsu.

Group Technical Director

The newly created role of Group Technical Director will be filled by **Andrew Boswell**. His responsibilities will include the identification of new technologies, building collaborative relationships with technology partners and enhancing ICL's reputation as a leader in IT.

Finance Director

Stefan Riesenfeld who joined ICL in 1996 continues in this role.

Legal and Commercial Director

Richard Christou remains in this position for the ICL group.

Personnel Director

A new appointment will be made in due course.

Director Fujitsu Relations

Hideo Watanabe will continue in his existing role.

ICL Retirements

Richard Livesey-Haworth who will pursue other interests at the end of 1997, will assist Keith Todd in implementing the new organisation.

Paul Whitwam has decided to take early retirement, but will continue as a special advisor to Keith Todd until the end of the year.

Ninian Eadie will retire at the end of March.

ICL Literature and Software Operations

The **Astron Group**, based in Letchworth, acquired the Literature and Software Operations business (LSO) of D2D from ICL in November 1996.

LSO will be combined with Astron's existing printing operations, to create a £30 million turnover business predominantly based in the UK.

The new group will continue to supply ICL with services and will benefit from the continuation of the close working relationships that currently exist with ICL.

ICL ServicePower

ICL has sold the Enterprise Technology ServicePower business to its management team.

The new company **ServicePower Business Solutions Ltd** is to be based in Manchester and Slough and will continue to market ServicePower.

ICL AccessManager

Platinum Inc, one of the world's leading software houses, has bought the ICL AccessManager product and is taking on board all of ICL's UK AccessManager staff.

AccessManager will benefit from the strong direct channel which Platinum has built up in the US, and which will now distribute and support AccessManager in the US, the world's largest software market. In Europe, South Africa, Japan and Australia, ICL has a strong presence and will retain its AccessManager reseller and integrator status in these areas.

ICL Sorbus S-Print

Under an agreement signed 23 December 1996, S-Print, the ICL Sorbus UK print services business, has been sold to **Continua**, an independent Service Provider specialising in the production print output environment. Rank Xerox has simultaneously concluded a 50% equity joint venture with Continua. Retaining the name Continua, the company offers a unique multivendor services capability within a production print environment.

Staff deployed in the S-Print business will either be transferred to Continua or redeployed within ICL Sorbus UK.

ICL Good News

Deichman

(Europe's largest shoe retailer) has placed a further order for 2m DM with ICL Retail Germany for 190 store systems. This is in addition to the current roll out exercise which has installed 750 systems in 4 months.

British Airways

Has placed a £2.85m order with Enterprise Industries for a crew tracking system. This follows successes in selling scheduling systems to airlines in Asia Pacific.

Andre Group

The French shoe manufacture, has signed a service agreement with ICL Sorbus for 750 IBM retail outlets spread across 500 sites in France.

Kesko

Finland's biggest wholesale company and second largest private company, selected TeamWARE Office more than a year ago. In 1996 they decided to upgrade from TeamWARE Office 3.0 to 3.5 and expand the system covering the whole head office, giving a total of 2000 users at the end of 1996. In addition to this ICL expect Kesko to expand the usage of TeamWARE Office to other parts of the company:

- Special chains, eg. consumer electronics, clothing (1000 users)

- K-Markets, big food stores (1000 users)

- Small K-Shops, small food stores (1000 users)

[Many engineers who worked on the large ICT 1500 systems - with Bryant Disk Files!- in Finland in the mid 60s will be pleased to see that Kesko have returned to ICL. Ed]

Kwik Save

After a six month sales campaign, ICL have become the preferred supplier to deliver a Managed Service Project to Kwik Save. The project will deliver procurement, integration, installation and maintenance services for Kwik Save's new Instore processing system (ISP). The implementation will be to 1000 stores all over the UK and is worth £1.3m. The platform for the rollout will be on Compaq servers running Microsoft NT

Life After ICL

Jump on the merry-go-round

Reading through the Autumn 1996 issue of Bits & Bytes, I thought I should send in something about myself and events since retirement five years ago.

The most obvious aspect is that I made a more or less complete break in activities and interests. It is only in the last year that I have re-engaged with the technology, having been running a regular Internet site since February 1996.

Those who knew me in the last year or so before I retired from being based in Bracknell may recall my keen photographic interests. These have become a mainstay of activities over the last five years, taken in conjunction with an emergent interest in the art, lifestyle and culture of old-time fairground owners and travellers. In 1993 and early 1994 I wrote a book on this subject which is called *Jump On, Jump On*, published in October 1994 by a small publisher, Navigator Books.

With such a specialised subject it was obvious from the start that I would need to become personally involved in its marketing in addition to the publishers themselves. This is where some of my ICL marketing training came into play, identifying the market segments, encouraging editorial publicity, drafting advertising copy, undertaking direct mail sales,

taking trade show stands etc. In fact this aspect has been and continues to be of interest and more importantly great fun. Just today I have been fulfilling an order from a full-time clown in South Africa. As my wife frequently says, if someone had told me before we retired (she is also recently retired) that we would be meeting the people and going to the events we now are, I would never of believed them in a million years.

In 1995 I discovered an active US group, about 1000 strong, who are devoted to the conservation and operation of the surviving carousels in North America. I have joined this National Carousel Association and my wife and I have made many new friends through attending their annual conventions these last two years.

And as mentioned above, I have been writing a monthly news report on the Internet, on news relating to UK merry-go-rounds. I take a broad approach to the scope of this, sometimes it is about events, sometimes about people such as painters and carvers. In December 1996 I discovered that the UK pop group The Spice Girls had had publicity photos taken on a merry-go-round at Brighton, which promptly got incorporated in my next Internet report.

It keeps you feeling young ,after all!

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LETTERS

Contributors are asked to give a telephone number on which they can be contacted.

British Tab Story

When I was leaving ICT at the end of 1966 to join the Hong Kong Government, I had a meeting with Cecil Mead at which he regretted the lack of "characters" in the company, but felt there was no place for them in the modern organisation. We spoke of Adrian (Andy) Garnett - one of the finest characters from the same mould as the late and great Seymour Dearden.

Andy was an Old Etonian and friend of Anthony Armstrong-Jones (Lord Snowdon), who had been tipped by certain tabloids as a possible Best Man at his wedding to Princess Margaret. Andy's standard dress whilst a Technical Service (TS) trainee at Moor Hall Cookham, when I first knew him around 1952, was a Harris tweed hacking jacket, with leather patches on the elbows, checked shirt, cavalry twill trousers (several inches too short) and suede boots, all well worn. He continued to be so attired after passing out from Moor Hall, and joining one of the Victoria House - Southampton Row London - based districts. The standard TS dress at the time, being white shirt with starched collar and sober tie, plain grey suit and black (highly polished) shoes.

John Bull, then Managing Director, having seen Andy in a corridor of Vic. House, and having ascertained that Andy was "one of ours" expressed a wish to meet him, at which the following conversation took place.

JB: How did you come to join Hollerith?

AG: My friend and I were walking down Park Lane one afternoon when we saw this brass nameplate

"The British Tabulating Machine Company" on the wall of No 17. We were intrigued, so made further enquiries, to find that there were two companies in this punched card business, the other being IBM. We felt that this line of business would be right up our street, but that neither company would be big enough to accommodate both of us , so we tossed for it and he applied to IBM.

JB: How did your friend get on with IBM?

AG: He more than doubled his salary. At the end of the interview the IBM chappie asked my friend what he was then earning. When he replied , "seven fifteen", he was offered eight hundred. My friend didn't have the heart to tell the IBM laddie that he was only getting seven pounds fifteen a week!

JB: Is your friend still with IBM?

AG: No. He left them to again double his salary.

JB: How did he manage that?

AG: Between you and me Mr Bull, he is a shit mixer at a mushroom farm. (He was actually selling mushrooms direct from the farm to West End hotels)

Andy left BTM shortly afterwards to set up a company to produce blown-up photographs laminated between two sheets of transparent Formica. Instructors charts were produced by this process and used at all ICT training schools.

Andy was by far the best motorcyclist, (he owned a 1000cc Vincent Black Widow) that I have ever come across. He was reputed to have driven from the Southernmost point of South America to Alaska for a £10 wager. I had the never to be forgotten pleasure of being on the pillion behind Andy going up Western Avenue one Friday afternoon.

George Thomson Christchurch Dorset

Something Bizarre...

I don't expect anyone to be interested in other people's personal stories like scooping the lottery but just occasionally something quite unusual, even bizarre, happens that seems worth recounting. Nothing at all to do with ICL!

My younger daughter Judith and her husband live in Sydney Australia. My elder daughter Liz and her husband went on a world tour last year, ending up renting a house in Port Cygnet Tasmania. In February 96 my wife Ann decided to visit them in April , so an arrangement was made that they (all five of them) would spend the weekend of April 28/29 by the sea. Ann flew to Sydney, stayed a few days then on to Tasmania. However Judith's mother-in-law in England was by then very poorly (she died a few weeks later) so Ann decided that "the Sydneys" should not fly and the weekend arrangement was cancelled. They listened to reports on the media of the massacre in Port Arthur in which 35 people were shot and killed, culminating in the burning down of the Seascope hotel and the death of everyone in it. As they were following events, Liz said to Ann "What a good job you cancelled the weekend. That was the hotel we were booked in to!"

I knew nothing about this in advance but I heard the news overnight on the BBC World Service, so rang first thing on Monday. I was slightly concerned by getting an answerphone, but was rung back soon after by a much relieved Liz.

The closest I've been to losing my entire family!

Keith Crook Hitchin Herts

555s in Wales

Thank you for the latest issue of Bits & Bytes. I was particularly interested in Derek Pring's reminiscences of the 555. I did not realise he lived in Lostwithiel, not too far from Gorran. Our paths had crossed many times during our years with ICL.

It brought back memories of working with 555s when I was in Cardiff in the early 60s. Our first machine had the honour of being on the local television news as the first computer in South Wales - that was at the Hospital Board.

[Rod Piggot and I installed a 1202 in Cardiff City Hall in the early 60s and I think that it was more of a computer than the 555! Ed].

We subsequently had double 555 installations at the Electricity Board and at the Ebbw Vale steel works. Much of the steel works is now a distant memory, but I remember when ICL was finally ousted the Chief Accountant arranged for a get together of all those ICL people associated with the site over the previous ten years, and a good time was had by all.

Yours, with every good wish for the future success of Bits & Bytes.

David Skailes Gorran St Austell Cornwall

Retirement Pension Forecast

The letter from John Dyer in B&B No3 disproved the thought that mine was a "one-off" case.

When I received my State Retirement Pension notification, the previously forecast additional pension had been reduced to zero. After a letter and a few phone calls in which I expressed just a little dissatisfaction, the eventual figure, like John's was agreed at more than the original forecast. An excuse, similar to the one given to John, was made by the Benefits Agency.

Perhaps the advice given in John's letter should be followed by all ICL employees whether taking early retirement or not.

Derek Hamlin Bourne End Bucks

REUNIONS

It has been pointed out that any serving or retired ICL person is welcome at these reunions but it is better to attend a gathering of people with whom you have something in common. Please inform Bits & Bytes of any reunions that are not listed here, unless you want to keep them select!

Tin Hut Reunion Group

In the days of Ferranti Mark 1, (Inaugural Meeting July 1951, in a place built for it by the Royal Society in Copeland Street, Manchester University) the engineers were designing in the factory and building in the University, but the programmers were programming in a tin hut on the Moston back lot. Literally. This is not perhaps the place to evaluate their program products, but on the arbitrarily chosen April 21st 1993, Olaf Chedzoy set up a reunion in Somerset thinking it right to have a 40th anniversary (well, within the limits of experimental error it was! - Ched's error correction routine included words like "Well it took 18 months to organise")

There was a reunion of 24 of the original programmers and engineers, some of whom had actually married in the meantime, and their spouses. (Note, not 'partners': we were all born 40+ years ago - see Bits & Bytes No2- and this word then meant

"associated with others in business or crime and the sharing of risks, profits and losses -, perhaps this might be describing what I am trying to avoid saying.) Some had travelled from Australia and the US, and a total of something like 40 people attended, many of whom had not seen each other for more years than they cared to remember! Four others regretfully declined owing to distance or illness.

Since that reunion, we must regretfully record the deaths of Bernard Swann and the ever popular Bill Wallace.

We are a very informal group, which exists as a group only in the cycle of invitations to Joyce (Ward) Clarke's birthday parties in Moreton-in-Marsh, which she has inaugurated since the Reunion - all two of them.

If any reader, connected with this Mark 1 group, but apparently unknown to its organiser, wishes to make contact with any of their old buddies, then I am sure that **Ched on 01278 741 269** will be able to help.

Adrian Clarke 01608 658 328

Copthall House Newcastle Staffs

Bob Green and Ken Champion are trying to get a list together of people who worked at NEL01 with a view to having a reunion. If you were one of the lucky ones to have worked there and would like to meet old friends and colleagues please get in touch with

Bob Green 01782 657763

email: r.l.green@btinternet.com

ICL Central London Group

The meeting that took place in The Fox on the 22 January 97 was very successful, attracting over 70 people, many of whom were attending for the first time. The next get together will be in the same pub, The Fox at Epworth/Paul Street, from 12:00 on Wednesday **16 July 1997**.

John Doo 01245 259862

Letchworth Group

Dennis Evans 01462 811273

Punched Card Reunion Group

Adrian Turner 01491 872012

West Branch Engineers

Eric Reynolds 01452 712047

East Grinstead 81 Club

Bert Gill 01903 763370

West Kent Engineers

Ron Harding 01732 761076

East Midlands UB40s

Brian Skeldon 0115 9727835

Oxford Region

Albert Brook 01235 531267

The Walthamstow Mob

01992 522761

Obituaries

ICL staff who were in the Northern Telecom Pension Plan

Taken from the autumn & winter 1996 editions of the Northern Telecom "Diary".

Belfast	Haywood	Henry W	29/4/96	66
Birm'ham	France	Dennis	11/5/96	66

Cardiff	Mabey	James	21/5/96	78
Croydon	Ashby	Lily E	17/11/96	88
	Brown	Dorothy	20/7/96	85
	Jacobs	Francis E	26/7/96	91
	Waller	Frank H	17/7/96	92
Dublin	Murphy	Michael T	7/2/96	80
Dukinfield	Bent	Frederick	28/6/96	75
	Leadbetter	Ronald	27/5/96	67
Euston	Jacot Boinod	Chris W	4/5/96	66
Kidsgrove	Baillie	Donald	12/9/96	75
	Cooke	Fred	2/7/96	70
	Johnson	Derek	9/5/96	67
	Rawlinson	Horace	7/5/96	78
	Sims	John	31/7/96	75
	Strass	Paul R	1/8/96	72
	Taylor	Jack	18/7/96	85
	Timmis	Charles H	11/5/96	77
	Wilshaw	James	30/7/96	82
	Albone	Dora E	1/9/96	92
	Andrews	Ethel F	4/7/96	90
Letchworth	Bailey	Arthur	31/3/96	88
	Bingham	Kathleen	21/7/96	74
	Field	James	3/7/96	82
	Franklin	Kenneth	14/9/96	68
	Garrard	Bob	6/5/96	75
	Hyde	Margaret	7/8/96	69
	Kelly	Peter J	1/7/96	71
London	Collins	Frank	1/3/96	84
	Massey	Eric	26/8/96	76
	Parkes	Ivy G	22/9/96	89
	Scott	Alan	20/9/96	81
	Waltham	Florence	29/9/96	94
	Bradley	Derek	3/7/96	61
Manchester	Croot	Roland T	26/4/96	87
	Roberts	David	29/6/96	70
Newcastle	Macmilan	Donald M	7/2/96	60
Oxford	Gourd	Russell C	11/8/96	79
Putney	John	Harry C	29/9/96	90
	Latham	John	7/10/96	67
	Maddox	Wilhelm'a	12/8/96	71
Sheffield	Armstrong	Robert J	8/4/96	72
Slough	Catling	John V	14/3/96	66
Southport	Beddoes	Dorothy	19/7/96	76
Stevenage	Bradley	Fred	4/9/96	63
	Gardner	Ronald J	7/4/96	63
	Gettens	Reginald	22/7/96	76
	Hughes	Percy G	29/7/96	76
	Pugh	Walter E	3/8/96	68
	Thomson	George E	18/5/96	84
	Welch	John W	28/4/96	57
Wakefield	Birchall	Stanley H	24/7/96	72
	Cudworth	Albert J	1/8/96	67
W. Gorton	Broom	Geoffrey	7/8/96	69
Winsford	Pirrazzo	Cosimo	4/5/96	76
Other ICL Locations				
	Bligh	Marion F	11/8/96	88
	Cooke	Brian T	7/5/96	90
	Feltham	Leslie R	16/6/96	88
	Ford	George E	6/5/96	79
	Georgiadi	C.	11/1/96	81
	Heads	George	17/6/96	92
	Hewitt	Cliff W	20/6/96	71
	Hill	Norman	17/4/96	80
	Humphreys	John J	5/7/96	63
	Joy	William	8/9/96	99
	Ladd	Reginald	11/5/96	82
	Marlow	Joseph	26/9/96	76
	Martin	Stanley H	7/9/96	81

Meredith	William C	10/5/96	67
Morgan	Robert	8/8/96	84
Ormerod	Keith	2/7/96	73
Self	Ronald J	3/5/96	72
Sinclair	Maureen	22/4/96	60
Smith	William H	2/7/96	70
Tebbutt	Donald T	24/6/96	65
Tilling	Robert H	21/8/96	67
Wells	Paul R	30/4/96	73
Whitby	Reginald	31/3/96	73
White	Robert J	14/6/96	70
Williams	Vera	10/4/96	81

ICL Group Fund Pensioners

BIR03	Gibbons	Peter S	22/10/96	65
Homewkr	Tidy	S D	21/1/97	58
LET01	Green	David J	20/11/96	62
LON11	Berry	David	5/11/96	61
MAN05	Higginbottom	G K	9/11/96	48
NEW05	Wells	S J	5/1/97	60
STE04	Wigglesworth	David S	15/9/96	66
STE10	Montague	W A	12/12/96	66
WAK01	Carr	Derek	19/11/96	63

The Computer Conservation Society 1900 Revisited

No not the year, the computer! Last May I spent a fascinating day at the Science Museum in a seminar on the 1900 computer series. Brian Procter had managed to dig up some remnants from Manchester of a 1906A platter and other hardware bits which I helped lug through the tunnel at South Ken. Virgilio Pasquali assembled a formidable team of speakers, covering every aspect from planning through the design to the actual management. Lord knows where he found them all, since only a few still work for ICL. Arthur Humphries, at his vast age, made a superb job of chairing the event and adding memories and timely anecdotes. Maybe there is some truth in the assertion that smoking keeps Alzheimer's at bay!

I found the whole day quite captivating and I learnt a lot about the 1900 that I hadn't known in the 60s when I was involved in the smaller end of the series. It was a wonderfully nostalgic day, meeting so many I hadn't seen for years. I strongly recommend such events to anyone of a nostalgic nature; they make a wonderful day out.

Keith Crook Hitchin Herts



The Bombe Rebuild Project

During my time with ICL I met many employees who felt that the work done by Hollerith in the last war was not fully recognised. A considerable number of electro/mechanical code breaking Bombes were produced at the Letchworth factories but due to their security classification the public were not able to be told about this vital contribution which shortened World War II considerably. These machines were sent to Bletchley Park and also to the numerous

outstations spread around Bletchley and the North West of London.

As an ex ICL employee but not quite old enough to be involved at the time, I feel strongly that recognition should now be given for all the effort that went in at the time. Until recently we were not able to act but now we can. Last year GCHQ released original Bombe drawings to Tony Sale the Museum Director of the Bletchley Park Trust.

Tony's objective is to rebuild a Bombe as we have with Colossus. We have now decided that our target is to be a 36 Enigma 3 wheel machine. This was the version which was manufactured in the largest quantity and was the main "workhorse" used in breaking the majority of the Enigma codes during the earlier part of the war when "we stood alone". Later versions were faster and a lot of "specials" were produced which were mainly used to break the German 4 wheel Enigma codes. However these were all developments or derivatives of the basic machine which we have started to rebuild.

With the help of some of those who were involved at the time we have sorted out the basic machine drawings but what we have run up against is the problem that whilst the specialist Bombe production drawings are mostly in existence the drawings for the parts common to standard early 1940s tabs etc. aren't. The irony is that the drawings for the specialist parts were preserved by GCHQ whilst the standard Hollerith drawings present us with a major problem.

Since the last Punched Card Reunion back in October last year I have had a tremendous response to my request for help with this project. I now have about a dozen "gentlemen" who are actively providing me with information on a regular basis. Most of these are ex BTM/ICT/ICL staff who would be well known to Bits and Bytes readers. Many of them are reluctant to have their names published but they know how much they are contributing and I would like to take this opportunity of thanking them. Others who are making a major contribution are from the Post Office, as it was called then.

I wish to cover in this article both the progress and the problems with which we will need some help. First progress. This can be split into two main areas, research and the actual rebuild

REBUILD

The rebuild has now started albeit in a small way with a first target of producing a frame this summer. One of our first problems was to locate some of the original heavy 'T' section steel that was welded together to form the main structure. Current metric equivalents are much lighter and not considered rigid enough. After a lot of searching, which included enquiries in the United States and South Africa where Imperial steel is still produced, we eventually located some second hand 'T' section in the UK which we had split down into two 'T' sections.

The welded steel frame is bolted down onto two large castings which were based on those used as the heavy feet of large pre-war tabulators. Exact drawings were not available but with a bit of research we were able to produce a new drawing of the basic casting. As I write, the pattern is half finished and will go to the foundry in the next week or two.

Large 6" diameter castors were fitted to the base of the bombes and it would appear that they were not removed whilst in operation so they are an important

feature of the rebuild. We have been very fortunate in that the original manufacturers Revvo are still in business and better still they have found the exact equivalents which they are refurbishing and donating to the project.

When the basic frame is complete we will produce the jack frame gate and hang this in place. Around 200 jacks were attached to this gate and here again we have been lucky. The jacks used have been traced back to STC and from this we have been able to establish that these were used on various Strowger exchanges and PABXs. We are now acquiring these with the help of BT and hope to have enough in time for their fitting to the gate some time in the autumn.

After this the problem starts to be funding. Ex electro-mechanical engineers will appreciate that tooling costs needed to reproduce precision gears and mouldings will not come cheap. We will need further sponsorship but the hope is that this will be forthcoming if we can display the frame and the excellent progress that we have made with the first phase.

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

So far I have written about progress and achievements but obviously there are some serious problems to resolve. As related above these are mainly in the area of basic Hollerith hardware where information and surviving hardware have not been subject to any Security Classification. The bombe specific drawings etc. have been preserved because they were classified until recently. Ideally we would wish to find complete units or sub-assemblies, but if this not possible we will have to consider re-manufacturing. In which case we will need manufacturing drawings or access to surviving equipment so as to produce new drawings.

Checking Unit or Comparing Unit

The Bombe Indicator Unit when fitted to Card Equipment was called a Checking Unit or a Comparing Unit. It was fitted to various machines. Some examples are as follows

- Hollerith Type 202 80 Column H.S. Reproducer No. 906479
- Hollerith Type 206 End Printing Reproducer
- IBM Type 513 Automatic Reproducing Punch

The assembly numbers used for virtually identical units was either BTM **906486** or **134610**. IBM may have used another number for the same virtually identical unit.

Plugboards

Three single 680 contact plugboards were fitted to the basic bombe. These were standard on so many types of Hollerith equipment that it is not worth listing them.

Relays

If anybody knows the whereabouts of any 'A' type, Multi. or Seimens relays we would very much like to hear from them. Even if they are not of the correct contact or coil specification this will be far better than having to start making them from scratch.

If any of the readers can help in any way with either the Bombe machines or the standard Hollerith machines then please contact me at the address below. All contributions however small would be gratefully accepted.

CANTAB LOGO

In Letchworth the bombes were either known by the type number 6/6502 or the name **CANTAB**. By early 1945 high level intelligence was no longer as important as it had been and the bombe programme was winding down rapidly. To mark this a celebration dinner was held in Letchworth and those who worked on the bombe were given diplomas. As part of this a Cantab logo was produced and appeared on these diplomas and on the menu card produced for the celebration dinner. We are proposing to use this logo as part of the rebuild project. All those who I have spoken to so far are quite happy with this but if anybody else has any comment we would like to hear their views.

INTERNET

<http://www.jharper.demon.co.uk/bombe1.htm>

If you wish to contact me on Email please use bombe@jharper.demon.co.uk

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NEXT ISSUE

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