

PENSIONER PROFILE - JOHN JENKIN

NCR in the sixties. A personal view through the eyes of a young District Assistant

(A neat piece from John Jenkin which also contains a nice tribute to the much missed Ernie Giles)

Wow. My first real job at the age of seventeen.

Having left Manchester Central Grammar School and spent nine months in a cotton warehouse cutting samples from reels of shirting material and sticking them onto bits of card so they could be sent to customers, NCR came as something of a surprise.

From the world of dark warehouses, jeans and caps to the bright lights of modern offices, bowler hats and starched collars. From the traditional Lancashire fayre of spinning and weaving to the modern, ever changing business machine world with a dash of American style and panache. From rented houses and buses to the world of mortgages and car ownership. From small family Lancashire business to multi-national organisation. From dead end to west end.

Neil Armstrong stepped foot on the moon on July 20, 1969, but that leap was insignificant compared to my giant step into the world of NCR on 1st July 1963

In NCR the salesman was king. Everything in the organisation revolved round selling and the value of customers to the business. NCR excelled in sales training and enjoyed a sales development ladder that would be the envy of many companies today.

New salesmen, there weren't any saleswomen in those days, were only allowed to sell adding machines and small book keeping machines. Each machine had a scripted demonstration, which had to be learned word perfect. I spent many hours with rookie salesmen listening to their 9KNS adding machine demonstration, script in hand, as they prepared for the big day when they entered the hallowed halls of the district manager's office to show off their new found skills. Until this task was completed to the district manager's satisfaction unaccompanied visits to our precious customers and prospects remained a dream.

"The colours chosen are those recognised by leading design consultants as being the most easy for you to work with" See, even I can still remember a small part of the 11KNS adding machine demonstration. I suppose the reference to the colour scheme, as "nigger and tan" would raise a few eyebrows today.

The weekly District Sales meeting

Every Friday morning, Ernie Giles would call his weekly meeting at which he would make a few short, pertinent announcements. My favourite was "NCR have offices throughout the world, and in other countries too". Securing a successful career in NCR sometimes came down to keeping a straight face. George W and Ernie would have got on well.

Each salesman was then invited to discuss his sales

successes for the week.

A rookie adding machine salesman would call out "One 9HLS worth half a point to Brookfield Engineering, Clayton" The inevitable analysis followed. "Did you use the five point sales plan?" How did you close the sale? "What objections did you get and how did you handle them? "Can we see a copy of your proposal?" "Was the dreaded Burroughs Organisation in there giving you a hard time with their inferior, poorly constructed adding machine at half the price being sold by inferior, poorly trained salesmen?"

Following this extended interrogation it was usually accepted that the NCR five point selling plan had again delivered a devastating blow to our competitors and our rookie adding machine salesman glowed in the success of his hard earned order for forty nine pounds ten shillings

"Can we have your points for the week Mr. Ross" Ernie would then ask after the applause had died down. "Twenty five NCR ten total Class 31 accounting machines with TCT and TCR to Great Universal Stores worth four and a half thousand pounds and a letter of intent for a further fifty machines for delivery next year"

"Next" said Ernie.



John Jenkin

Once the meeting was over and the pedestal pad had recorded the week's successes and failures in Ernie's illegible handwriting, these testosterone charged combatants left to impose more devastating blows on Burroughs, Sweda., Olivetti and any other company foolhardy enough to think it could compete with the mighty NCR.

After all, we were the best, and in those days we believed it and what's more, we were.

Why did our customers value NCR?

1. We only employed the best and the best wanted to be employed by us.
2. Inexperienced salesmen only dealt with small customers.
3. A minimum time in a sales position was required before promotion could be expected, irrespective of sales success. How else do you gain experience?
4. Your chance of promotion to a management position was increased if you were married and had a settled family life.
5. Customers investing in NCR equipment and services were backed up by a global organisation, or international as it was called in those days, committed to investment in R & D. We were always at the forefront of change and our customers knew that in an ever-changing world, NCR could always provide products that led the field rather than followed it. Our customers were proud to be associated with NCR as they believed we could meet their current and future needs without the need to change supplier.
6. Product quality could be seen in the products. They were beautifully engineered in factories wholly owned by NCR.

NCR included a technical demonstration facility for prospects in the engineering industry so they could see and appreciate the build quality of our accounting machines. The device was a frame within which the accounting machine was held, all two hundred weight of it. This allowed the salesman to rotate the machine until it was upside down, and with the bottom plate removed, the wonders of NCR engineering were there for all to see. Amazing.

7. The northwest of England was the heartland of retail catalogues and, with the huge volume of transactions they generated, and the need to mechanise their systems, NCR were drawn to them like an Irishman to a bottle of stout.

I attended a sales call with an experienced adding machine salesman in a large converted cotton mill where he hoped to close a large order for electric adding machines. Burroughs was the competitor as usual and after John Measures had done his usual list of benefits such as "the colours chosen are those recognised...etc, etc and how the "NCR live keyboard could reduce key depressions...etc.etc" he asked for the order. All good NCR stuff, he had followed the selling plan to the letter. As no commitment was forthcoming he went round the endless loop again stating benefits and answering objections. Price was never a negotiating tool for NCR salesmen, after all, we were the best. Eventually John picked up his 9KNS adding machine, stood up, held it at head height and said to mister important prospect "If I drop this machine on the floor (no carpets) and it continues to

work will you give me the order? If it fails then I am sorry to have wasted your time. Order promptly closed and a nice story for Ernie's next weekly sales meeting

John would have done it and the machine would have survived. They were beautifully engineered.

The Demonstrators

So you take a bunch of NCR accounting machine salesmen, enriched with the five point selling plan and the best products in the world and make this lethal cocktail even more powerful by allocating to each an intelligent, beautiful and customer friendly cell mate known as the demonstrator. Working for the best company in the world just got better.

"Do you work next door?" said the porter working at the Free Trade Hall located next door to Manchester office. "Yes" I replied, proud to be associated with the best company in the world and inventor of the five point selling plan "Why do you ask?" "One of the reasons I enjoy my work at the FTH is to watch the most beautiful girls in Manchester pass by me each day as they enter and leave your office, what do they do?" he asked. Good question!

Behind every successful NCR accounting machine salesman was a surprised wife. Why did he not achieve this success in his previous companies? He cleans his shoes every day, never has his collar line been so neat. He goes to the hairdressers more often than I do. He never complains when he has to work late and comes home whistling songs from the latest musicals that I have never been to. NCR has been a life changing experience and we have a brand new Ford Cortina in the drive. Of course the answer is 'the NCR demonstrator'

Day 1. Salesman arrives in office, cup of tea from Mrs. Coleman's tea bar in the basement having first threaded his way through Henry's stock of Class 31's awaiting delivery to GUS's. "If Ernie rings, shall I tell him you are down here asks Mrs Coleman "No, tell him I'm not here. Two sugars please love"

Meet with demonstrator to ensure she is ready for this afternoon's NCR Class 33 payroll demonstration. Let's go through the check list.

Is the demonstration room booked? Do you have the tax and graduated pension charts ready? Do you have the programme bars? Have you typed up the E & TR cards and perforated, multipart payroll sets? If you are short of any, speak to young John Jenkin, such a helpful lad, he will draw some up for you if you give him the programme bar. Is the demonstration tea set clean? When can we rehearse? After all we mustn't miss out on any features and benefits of this wonderful multi-total payroll beast. Love the bit at the end when all the totals automatically print out: total basic pay, total overtime, total gross, total tax, total graduated pension and total net pay. That can close an order in itself. This machine has more totals; in NCR speak known as registers, than any other business machine in the world. Isn't life great working for the best company in the world. Day 1 Total time with demonstrator 7hours.

Day 2. Cup of tea in Mrs' Coleman's tea bar with demonstrator. "If Ernie rings, shall I tell him you are down hear" asks Mrs Coleman. "Yes"

Tuck beautifully groomed demonstrator into shiny new Corsair, check hair and collar line in mirror and it's off to Stalybridge to design the new Sales ledger, Purchase Ledger

and Nominal Ledger system for Northwest Abattoirs. Excellent meeting. Customer loves the attention and sits back comfortable in the knowledge that he has just introduced the best organisation in the world into his company. No risk, ground breaking technology, TCT/TCR, easy terms courtesy of NCR credit department in Greenford and the colours chosen are those recognised by leading design.....etc.

The NCR demonstrators were probably the most efficient support group of their time. They had it all. Communication skills, technical expertise, diplomacy, experience and excellent training. They supported each other and team work came naturally. Attrition rates were low and when there was the need to fill a vacancy, we could choose from the best. NCR salesmen were proud to tell people about their job and their company, as did the NCR demonstrators.

Change happens

Some words, which have now become common, everyday NCR speak had not risen above the horizon in these heady, profitable times. Salesmen attended few meetings and, apart from holidays and CPC, spent all their time focusing on customers and prospects. This is what they were paid to do, this is what they enjoyed doing and this is why NCR sales attrition rates were some of the lowest in the industry. The knock on effect is that we developed a highly experienced, stable sale force able to take on the biggest companies in the UK and win.

It's simple really. Put good quality salesmen into as many selling situations as possible, train them well, support them well and they will be successful. If they do wrong, coach them rather than kick them, and they will pay you back a plenty.

"The number of the box is the number who's number is the number contained in box five" For me this signalled my introduction to the world of computers which is a story for another time.

John Jenkin

4tanglewood@tiscali.co.uk

Ps: I was very sad to learn of the death of Ernie Giles in the last edition of postscript. It was Ernie who employed me as a raw seventeen year old in 1963 and over the years he coached me and promoted me until I finally succeeded him as Northern Area Sales manager when he finally retired.

Ernie Giles was respected by all who had the pleasure of enjoying his company and I was always proud to be known as "one of his boys".

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Region 1 - Wallace Hay

On Wednesday 19th October 2005 we had EIGHTEEN fellowship members enjoy a leisurely lunch at the Art House Hotel in Glasgow, including new members Cecil Alexander and Bill Chapman.

I will just mention those members who had to call off: Alan Caldwell and John Falconer were not fit on the day so we all hope you will be feeling better soon. Moira Lang had to call off to attend a funeral, and Andie Aitken had a hospital appointment. That is two years now we have used the Art House Hotel and maybe its time to move on and try a new venue next year. It's worth a mention that John McElroy



Region 1 at The Art House Hotel - Glasgow

came down from Aberdeen to join us for the Lunch, as did Neil Bathie who used to be a member of the Glasgow Data Processing Centre when it was located at 227 West George Street in Glasgow.

If any of you Scottish Members would like to be included in the list to attend future get-togethers in Glasgow do let me know and I will contact you in plenty of time for the next one.

As usual please keep well and warm.

Kind regards.

Region 2E Pat Keogh

Lunch held at the Buckles Inn on Tuesday 25th October 2005

The Northeast Region held its first lunch, since the Company withdrew funding, at the Buckles Inn in York. The lunch was well attended by just over twenty friends and Pat Keogh thanked Maureen Burdis for the work she had done in organizing the lunches over the previous years.

John Burchfield also thanked Maureen when giving his after lunch talk. He gave a very interesting talk on recent developments on the Pension Plan funding and on the talks between the Company and the Trustees on Pension increases. He also said that it was nice to see the lunches up and running again and looked forward to attending again next year.

Pat thanked John for traveling such a long way to attend. A discussion took place on organizing future lunches and Pat promised to distribute next year's dates early in the new year as a number of people missed this event due to holidays. It is planned to hold two lunches in late April and mid October.

Region 2W - Charles Southall

The Autumn meeting and lunch in the North West Region of the new fellowship was held on Tuesday 27th September at the "Grange Country Club" in Heswall. We changed the room on this occasion to a very much brighter and very pleasant extension of the club, called "The Sky Bar" I had some very amusing comments made in my invitation replies. Corny too, like "We are not in the garden are we" and so on and so forth. It was a very pleasant room though and most people had something complimentary to say about it afterwards. The numbers were down though for some reason and eventually 39 attended. When all is considered that was pretty good. There were lots of hospital appointments and a good few holidays which had not been planned to fit in with what is really the most important date in the calendar. Perhaps not the most important.



lunch before and everyone gave him a very warm welcome. I am sure he was very encouraged to come over again. We most certainly hope so. What do you think Derek. You could even bring Mrs Taubman over with you. Perhaps you might get a smoother crossing next time.

Tom Wallbank and his wife Audrey were also made very welcome. Audrey recently had an operation to relieve the arthritis in her legs. I know she enjoys our meetings and it was a disappointment when they were not able to attend earlier in the year. Stan Howard and his wife were also absent and I know Stan has increasing difficulty with his walking. I do hope that your continual treatment will show some results Stan. We are all getting well past retirement age and Jack Hale is hoping to soon make another appearance I am sure. We haven't seen you at all this year Jack. I bet you will put in a surprise appearance in the Spring. See you then Jack.



A very pleasant surprise was the attendance of Derek Taubman from the Isle of Man. His former colleague Allan Cain who worked with Derek for many years unfortunately passed away last year. Allan came over on one occasion I remember 2 or 3 years ago, but we had not seen Derek at our



Region 3 - Eric Grace

The second of the new Fellowship Lunches was held at The George Hotel in Litchfield on 13th October 2005.

We now have 44 members, so it seems that more people are signing up for the new Fellowship, which is encouraging for the committee and organisers.

There were 32 Members and guests who enjoyed a very good three course Carvery meal.

We were fortunate that our Chairman John Burchfield was able to attend and he very ably updated us on the situation, as far as he knew, with the progress of the company.

He then updated the meeting with the Pension progress and the progress being made to obtain an increase.

Unfortunately Doreen Butterfield was unwell on the evening before the lunch and was unable to attend we hope she has made a full recovery.

There were messages from the following members who were unable to attend but they all sent regards.

M Alliband, Jon Page and A Thomas, had previous engagements. Mrs Owens' husband is still recovering and we wish him well. Sheila Williams also felt that she would not be well enough to come but we hope she will be able to come next year. Jill Macphail who usually brings Sheila Williams was also unable to attend.

It was obvious from the chatter and general noise that the

THE LONDON LUNCH 5th OCTOBER 2005

A MONTAGE



group were thoroughly enjoying catching up with old friends and having a good lunch.

I much appreciated the thanks given to my wife and I for organising the lunches and I must say that those thoughts give us great pleasure and make it worth a while effort.

Region 4 - John Burchfield

Following last year's successful gathering of the combined Region 4 luncheon, we again held the annual lunch at the London Cricketers Club. Attendance was very similar to last year with 105 members enjoying a sit down lunch served in two restaurants. Although we were missing some regular members, due mainly to holidays, many members attending for the first time compensated for this reduction. It never ceases to amaze me the distances travelled by members to attend the London function. The reason for this is of course due to many NCR employees who worked in the many offices in the London area, having now moved out into the provinces. Samples of some of the travelling involved were from Somerset, Devon, East & West Sussex, Hampshire and the Home Counties of the South East. I believe that this desire of these members to attend the luncheon is indicative of the strength of the new Fellowship. We were also pleased to receive Geoff Jackson who now resides in Exeter who acted as our photographer. Stephen Swinbank, Chairman of the Trustees of the NCR Pension Fund also accepted an invitation and he gave us a revealing talk on the current situation regarding the Fund. It was the unanimous agreement of the attendees that we repeat this function for next year, so we have already booked our luncheon for **Wednesday 4th October 2006** at the same venue where we believe that we will have another successful reunion.

Region 5 (Kent) - Peter Bodley

The George and Dragon Inn, Headcorn, Kent was again our venue for the annual lunch. Nineteen sat down to an excellent lunch including our past Regional Organiser, Ted Young and our Secretary, John Nash.

Unfortunately one of our regulars, Lillian Skinner was unable to make it as her husband, Reg has recently spent a spell in hospital but is now at home making good progress. We hope they can both make it next year.



At The George & Dragon

Everyone continues to praise this venue so I have booked it again next year on Wednesday 20th September. In addition to this lunch I am arranging for us to visit Denbies Vineyard, Dorking in the Spring date to be confirmed.

Wishing everyone in the Fellowship a happy new year.

Peter.

Region 6 - Alan Hutchins

The regional lunch for the eastern end of Region 6 was held at the Royal Coach at Shoreham-by-Sea on the 19th October. There were 19 present including partners. It's very good to renew old friendships; some had not met for many years. We were very pleased to have our chairman John Burchfield present who gave us very welcome news regarding the Pension Fund. It's nice to hear how hard the Trustees are working on our behalf to secure the fund and try to get us an increase, for this we are very grateful and send them our thanks. We will try and arrange a lunch for the western area of the region soon. It will probably be after Christmas now, the year just keeps rolling on.



Region 6 at The Royal Coach House, Shoreham-by-Sea



Region 7 - John Jones

I was going to wait until Postscript arrived before I called a meeting but following prompts from a couple of members I decided to call a get together for Tuesday 14th June 2005 at the Toby Carvery, Woodlands Lane, Bradley Stoke, Bristol. The cost of the meal still suits our budgets and the management contrives to keep our rabble away from the real paying customers



Region 7 at the Toby Carvery, Bristol

There are now officially 21 members of the New NCR Fellowship in Region 7, but as usual our get-togethers are open to anyone associated with NCR.

It was also a successful chance to tout for membership as two more signed up.

Those who attended were **Roy Back, Geoff Batcup, Ken Bloxham, Dave Calford, Elwyn Davies, John Jones, Jim Kembery, Dave and Jan Robinson, Alan and Stella Wall, John Watts, Bill and Eileen Park, Maurice and Pat Keene, Maurice and Doris Davis, Dick Keitch, Chris Mumford, Bill Hudson** and an exile from Kent, **Peter Bodley**

Maurice Chivers was organising ticketing for the Glastonbury Festival (must remember that for next year, **Pete Lacey** and **John Cooper** all had previous engagements, **Ken Bulbeck, Dorothy Davies** and **Bill Garbutt** feel that they can't do the travelling these days but send their best wishes. **Dave and Jean Jones** were awaiting a "plumber" (like gold dust these days) and **Don Pengilley** uncharacteristically failed to show up. Holidays prevented **Mary Bird, Thelma Ostone** and **Jean Cheek** from coming. Of course we all missed **Eric Thrush** who passed away earlier in the year following a long illness.

Our two new members **Jeff Russell** and **Miss Vasso Nicolaidis** were other wise engaged, but we hope to meet up with them some time.

I was unable to find a speaker so I cheated and asked **Stephen Swinbank** to email me a copy of the talk he gave to the General meeting about the state of the pension fund. This I copied and passed them around the assembled throng.

Following the meeting Post Script arrived and a couple of days later I received a phone call from **Betty Vickery** asking if we had had our get-together, she was sorry to have missed it but will get an invite next time. Hopefully in October.

Region 8A - Des Woodall

On October 5th, Region 8a met at the Black Horse, Swaffham Bulbeck, near Newmarket, for yet another enjoyable get-together lunch.

We were delighted to welcome guests Gloria Craigie, Betty Snape and Beryl Woodall to the event, and particularly newly retired members Richard Chamberlen, Tom Herbert, Ted

Long and Geoff Walter.

Regular stalwarts Richard Craigie, Roy Clifford, Jeff Fuller, Ted Miller and Peter Timlett also enjoyed the occasion.

The photograph clearly proves how retirement has not diminished the happy outlook of Region 8a members!

We were sorry that through ill health Win Hudston, George and Paddy Murray and Dick Woodcock were unable to be with us. John and Doris Limn had a hospital appointment and Denis Gill was on holiday. We are very much looking forward to seeing them next time.

We also missed not seeing some of our original members, and efforts will be made to try and encourage them to join the newly formed Fellowship. However, it was gratifying to know that 75% of the old Region 8a are still with us.



Region 9 - George Wallace

Region 9 held its annual lunch at the Three Horseshoes, Cowley on Monday 17th October and at which 20 members were present. We were pleased to welcome guests John and Pam Burchfield, the former addressing us on the present position regarding pension increases. We did not shoot the messenger but await developments!



Happy scenes at the Three Horseshoes, Exeter

More happy scenes at the Three Horseshoes, Exeter

From Bill Daniel:

Dear Geoff

You seldom feature ex Salespeople in the "Postscript" and the interesting article by Brian Turner prompted me to write to you as I remember him with great affection as a most kind and helpful gentleman. He knew every one of the ex salesmen to whom I am about to refer.

For about the past fifteen years now an informal group of ex AAMD / CIMEG salesmen from the Nottingham and Leicester offices have met annually, together with their spouses, for a jolly good lunch (it used to be dinner until some of us became reluctant to drive at night)

All of us had in excess of 20 years service with NCR and in most cases have known each other upwards of 40 years. Most but not all retired full term from NCR . Only Dick Baker is still earning a crust " wheeler dealing " which seems to keep him young and vigorous

This year again we met at Gibsons Grey Lady ,a charming country house restaurant on the Notts/Leics border. We met on 23rd June , the 3rd day of Wimbledon which was gloriously hot and sunny. The table of 14 was alive with chatter, perhaps to the chagrin of other diners, and all our reminiscences seemed like only yesterday. The wine flowed (wives were driving) and we concluded after 3 hours with coffee on the terrace.

Those attending this year were:-

Dick Baker and Christine (organiser), "Nat" Nation-Tellery and Margot, Harry Hardacre and Audrey, John Page and Louise, Ian Sutherland and Coral, Tim Snashall and Rachael, Bill Daniel and Gill.

Unable to Attend:-

Brian Briggs and Barbara (on holiday cruise).

Whatever may have befallen the ethos of the present day NCR the "Esprit de Corps" engendered in the East Midlands still exists today in this very tangible form. We are already looking forward to next year's meeting of this exclusive club and wonder if any similar groups exist?

Bill Daniel



Nottingham / Leicester salespeople lunch



VISIT OUR WEBSITES:-

www.ncr.org.uk
(maintained by Ian Ogilvy)

<http://ncrretfel.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/>
(maintained by John Jones)

LIFE WITH NCR COMPUTERS - 1968 TO 1978

As a regular reader of 'Postscript' I am always interested to learn of the experiences and reminiscences of NCR engineers who worked on the cash registers, adding and accounting machines they serviced during their time with the company. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has not been an article covering experiences working with the early NCR computers.

The first NCR computer was the 405, a valve driven machine of which very few were sold and my older colleagues are more suited to write about these units, as they were almost at the end of their life when I joined the company in 1967. My experiences in this article are about the main frame computers 315, 315RMC and the large Century 300, all made up of hundreds of small plug-in-boards (PIB's) about 8" X 4" in size, together with the 315 peripherals - 472 paper tape reader/punch and card reader. Card Random Access Memory units 353-1 and -3 (never did find out what happened to the -2 model, never left Dayton I expect). These units held data on 8" X 3" magnetically coated plastic strips hanging from rails, which could be randomly dropped, read or written to round a drum, and then shot back up to re-hang on the rails. These were complex electro-mechanical machines which had to be kept in tip-top condition to work correctly. Also the 334 magnetic tape reader/writer and the 640 printer, which could print at 2,000-3,000 lines per minute - still fast even by today's standards.



A computer installation then comprised of a very large room for the computer, its memory cabinets and all the peripherals, with equally large rooms for the air conditioning and power plant. The units were huge in size - the 315 computer was about 5ft in width, 2.5 ft in depth and 3ft high and that was just the operating console. There were then four bays containing the PIB's - each bay about 2.5 ft in width, 3.5ft in depth and about 5 ft high, with the memory cabinets as big as two bays. The computers maximum memory capacity was only 40k bytes - usually most sites only had 20k of memory installed - compare that to the 128M byte PC I am composing this article on - and I expect many of you have much larger capacity PC's.

The Century 300 was equally as big in size but a lot more powerful than its smaller brothers the Century 100 and 200. I had very little to do with the latter two machines, and there were very few Century 300s sold because by then miniaturisation, followed by micro-miniaturisation had started to come in and computers got smaller and smaller, cheaper and cheaper, and of course more powerful. Servicing technology also changed too, as these newer computers had something called Large Scale Integration (LSI) which was 1,000's of components on a single board, with each machine having just several of these boards. Witness the PC on your own study desk.

After I had completed my training on all this equipment which took 9 months, I was then a mobile engineer, which meant I could be sent anywhere in the country or abroad at a moments notice. In fact I always carried my passport in my briefcase with me. At its maximum there were approximately 50 315 computer sites in England and Scotland, and in the course of my travels I visited almost all of them. The operation was under the control of Computer Maintenance Section (CMS) headed by the deputy to the manager of Technical Service Division (TSD). The country was divided into two, with the Northern Region headed by FRED JANE and the Southern region being headed by STUART OSMER (with whom I am still in annual correspondence). The two regions were split into areas each looked after by a Senior Engineer - RON LYLE for the north and Scotland, DAVE TEASDALE for the midlands, TONY FLYNN and NOBBY PARTRIDGE for the London and South East area. There may well have been others, but these are the names that I can remember after almost 30 years. All of the computer sites were looked after by site engineers - up to 6-8 for some larger sites, as most of the sites were 24 hour 7 day working, and the customers maintenance contract with NCR specified that an engineer had to be on site all day and most of the night, though in practice, the night shift was usually operated with the engineer being on-call from home.

But I did not have a home - I travelled the country continuously, visiting about 35 sites a year, so you can see I stayed at one place for less than 2 weeks. These were either scheduled visits to take over from an engineer on holiday or a training course, or emergency visits where the engineer had gone sick, or the really urgent visits where the computer system had gone down. In those days the main frame computer was the only one the customer had - it did everything, payroll, accounting, stock control, billing, users records, etc, etc. So as you can appreciate, if the system went down, the whole of the customer's business soon stopped. One of the most critical sites I can remember was the Midland Bank Clearing site in London, with four 315 RMC computers, 14 cheque sorters, 12 printers, and I've forgotten how many mag. tape and cram units there were. The pressure on this site was that the bank had to clear its transactions by late afternoon to enable it to put its surplus funds on the overnight money market - these amounting to several million of pounds.

During that time for over three years, I lived in hotels continuously. I travelled with two suitcases - one with my winter/summer clothes in and the other, which I normally left in the car, contained the other seasons clothes, computer manuals and papers that I might need. My friends and colleagues all said how marvellous it was to live in hotels all the time - but was it. You could be called out at any hour of the day or night, so you had to be very careful about alcoholic consumption, you had to dress smartly to go into the hotel restaurant to eat - no slopping around in jeans and a T-shirt, and at the weekends you were usually the only person in the hotel. I remember one hotel in Birmingham where there were no staff on duty at weekends, so you made your own bed, and if you wanted to eat I was told to help myself from the frig. in the kitchen. Another hotel in Birmingham was a temperance hotel - that didn't trouble me, but when the small staff on duty at the weekend wanted a drink they always asked me to go round to the nearby pub to get them some cans of beer. In any case a lot of the Sundays were spent travelling to the next site I was due to visit.

Although the position of site engineer was important and responsible it could be a boring one. After the engineer had completed his routine maintenance of the equipment, usually between 7-9am, following the customer operators night shift, and before the day shift had started, then apart from some admin. work and stock control, as each site held its own supply of components, providing none of the equipment failed there was nothing for him to do. I even heard of one engineer who ran a business from his site office. The main admin duties consisted of filling in something called 'Pelly Plans'. These were a complex form about the size of four A4 sheets, that recorded all the up and down times of the computer system. Customers then were charged a fixed amount for engineering coverage, together with additional sums if they exceeded a certain numbers of hours their computer system was operational and used. So there were many discussions between the site engineer and the computer manager as to the exact number of hours and minutes allotted to either 'waiting engineer', 'repair time' or 'spoilt work time'. The Pelly Plans were devised by DAVID PELLY, the admin manager of CMS, and although they looked complex they served a vital purpose of allowing NCR to bill the customer for all the excess hours worked

Another activity was carrying out modifications (mods.) to the equipment. Some were simple - just a PIB change and could be done in a few minutes - providing you could persuade the customer to relinquish the machine for that length of time. Others were much more complex, such as the mod. to enable the 315 to communicate with mag. tapes units. This involved many board changes and over 300 alterations to the back panel wiring of the computer. I carried out two of these mods - one on the Dundee Manufacturing plant's 315 over a New Year period with the site engineer DAVID BANNERMAN - who became a personal friend - he and his family having stayed at my south coast home many times - dead now unfortunately, and one Mag. tape mod. which I carried out on my own to the NCR Northern Data Processing Centre's 315 at Manchester.



Young Peter Jenkin operates a 315

Two 315 computer sites spring to mind for quite different reasons. The Joseph Lucas site in Birmingham had the only 315 computer that was on-line to a customers remote parts centre. It was eerie at times to see and hear the computer and peripherals start working without any operator intervention caused by a stock enquiry from this remote centre. The passenger lift at this customers premises also fascinated me. It comprised of a vertical shaft the height of the building with a number of wooden boxes the shape of a shoe box on end

going round in a continuous loop, which travelled up the shaft at about 4mph. To get to the floors above them passengers stepped into one of the boxes and out again at the desired floor. You could only go up of course, and I never did discover what happened at the top of the loop. Health & Safety today would have a fit if they saw it. The other 315 site I remember well was at the Clydesdale Bank Head office in Glasgow which I visited many times I was sent there once to take charge while the site engineer-in-charge was away on a course. Apart from me there were three other engineers - one of whom was TOM BOLES - so I must be the only ex CMS engineer to have told a future Field Engineering Divisional Director what jobs he had to do on site each day.

My life as a computer mobile engineer was anything but boring. Even if I was engaged in a routine holiday replacement for the site engineer it was usually at a different place around the country, and if it wasn't routine, then an emergency call could be to anywhere and at any time. Let me recount one day I remember only too well and although not typical, it illustrates the unpredictable nature of computer engineering then. I was working a standard early morning shift at St Alphage House, the London Data Processing centre of NCR starting at 7.30am. I arrived at the site to be asked to go straight away to another NCR site in the city of London, at Moscow Narodny Bank (yes it was a Russian bank in London), which although the 315 computer was working, the card reader had developed a fault. Getting there I found an engineer who had been working all night without being able to resolve the problem and was so tired as not to be much help. So I sent him home to sleep and commenced to investigate the fault myself. Between 9 and 10am Stuart Osmer was on the phone saying, and I got to know this phase from him so well....'Michael, I know we said that problem was important, but can you now go to.....' In this case it was Francis Nicholls a wholesale fruit importer in Birmingham whose 315RMC computer had totally failed So I handed the Moscow Narodny fault over to someone else, walked back to St Alphage House, picked up my car, drove via my north west London bedsit to collect my usual emergency travel kit of electric razor, toothbrush and spare shirt and drove to Birmingham. Got there about midday and set to work with the site engineer to investigate the problem and to trace the fault. About 2pm Stuart was back on the phone again saying 'Michael I know we said that problem was important but can you now go to.....' In this case it was the Dundee Manufacturing plant's 315 Computer system that had failed. Fortunately I had almost completed the fault diagnosis and repair of the Francis Nicholls system, so about 3pm I drove to Birmingham airport where there was a ticket to Dundee waiting for me, caught the 5pm or so flight to Edinburgh, was met by the company limousine, driven to Dundee and straight to the factory to arrive about 7.30pm. There Dave Bannerman the site engineer was looking very puzzled at the dead computer. Working with Dave we traced the fault, got the system working and I got back to the hotel that someone had booked for me about 1am the next morning. An eventful day. But the next day instead of going straight back to London I still had to fly to Birmingham to retrieve my car, then drive on to London.

A problem you had when being called in to fix a computer fault was to remember to fix the site engineer first. Often he had been working long hours to try and rectify the fault, and the last thing you wanted when you arrived on site was for him to feel resentful at you being there. Usually he was despondent at not being able to fix the machine and resentful at having to

call someone else in, so the first thing you had to do was to boost his confidence. My procedure was to listen to a description of the symptom or be shown it - then to say 'This does seem a tricky fault - I don't really don't know the answer to this. I can quite understand why you had to call someone in - lets see what we can find out shall we' Of course if the engineer was too tired to help then I sent him home, and if it was someone I knew well, then I could be a little more jocular. Getting spares in an emergency (usually a PIB) could also be tricky - the sites only held a limited number of spares. So I always carried the phone numbers of all the UK 315 sites with me, then phoned the nearest of them to see if they had the wanted spare. If so, and the distance was driveable quickly, then one of their engineers would leave with the spare and one of the down site's engineers or myself would drive to meet him at a pre-arranged spot - usually a round- about over a motorway. This worked well for distances under about 100 miles, but if it was further, e.g. the spare had to come from central stores in London, then the British Rail Red Star parcel service was used. If used correctly a spare could be at the other end of the country in a few hours.



Computers in that era were mysterious, important and status objects. I well remember arriving at Automotive Products in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire on a routine assignment - a site I hadn't been to before, so I drew up at the main building's front entrance and asked the commissioner (he was too grand to be called a security guard) where I might park my car as I was visiting their computer room, and I knew some companies are very touchy as to where you park. 'Certainly sir' he almost bowed, 'Leave your car there and just follow me'. So with the commissioner carrying my brief case he escorted his VIP visitor to the computer room - those were the days!

Where else did I go and what else can I recall. On site during the day at Hull with a 315 system that kept developing memory problems, then driving to Otley, another part of the county to assist all night on a printer problem at another site, then back to Hull to keep investigating the memory glitches. I was up for almost 48 hours continuously on that occasion. Getting stuck or stranded in snow at least three times. Once driving back from Dundee to London, once driving London to Dundee and once coming back to London from the Midlands. Being fascinated by Glasgow's underground trains - didn't know at the time Glasgow had an underground system They are (or were) about half the size of the London trains. You had to stoop to get in them, sit with the roof a few inches above your head and watch the tracks flash pass through gaps in the carriage floor. A quite exciting ride - a fair ground would charge you a lot to go on one.

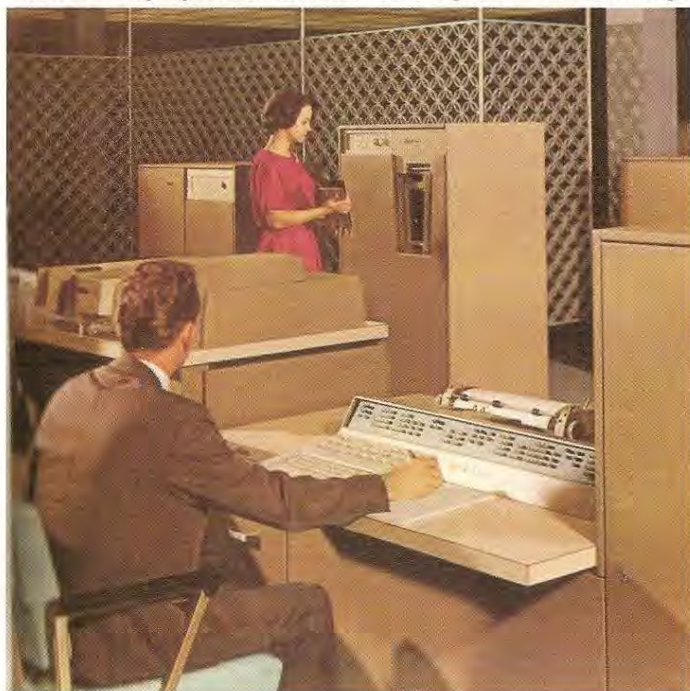
What overseas trips did I make. I went to the States three times - twice to Dayton for more training - once to a printer manufacturing plant in Michigan to liase with them over quality problems. Went to Baghdad in Iraq twice - once to install some mag. tape units the Baghdad Electricity Company had bought second-hand from somewhere. Once when they contacted UK Head office for assistance with a 315 computer problem. I flew out at a hour or so notice by Iraqi Airlines which wandered all around the Middle East because they were forbidden from over flying certain countries, to arrive at Baghdad airport gone midnight. I had no visa and there was a burly soldier with a rifle in his hands to prevent me leaving the arrivals lounge, so in the morning I phoned my Iraqi friends to say 'You asked for me - now come and get me out of here' Much to my amazement they did so within two hours - I still have my passport covered with Iraqi stamps and the visa permission - I often wondered how much they had to pay the officials to get me out of the airport. The irony was that when I was safely in their car they said 'We're glad to see you Michael, but why have you come' 'For this' I said, waving a copy of the telex asking the UK for help. 'Oh that' they replied 'A German fixed that fault a couple of days ago'. I think I maintained a diplomatic silence and spent a couple of days in Baghdad at the Iraqis expense.

I went to Oslo in Norway for 7 days but only walked around the city for two hours on the night before I was due to fly back. Every one used to say how wonderful it must have been to travel to all those overseas countries. Well the truth was you left at a minutes notice, were hopefully met at the airport by someone from the country, taken past the hotel you might sleep at, and straight to the computer site. You worked day and often night to fix the fault, saw a bit of the road between the computer site and the hotel, and when the fault was fixed you were driven to the airport for the flight back to the UK as the host country didn't want you a moment longer than was necessary as they were paying the UK for your services.

The places I didn't get to are interesting too - Switzerland, where I was due to take the place of a Swiss engineer on training. But either the Swiss rescheduled or didn't want to pay the UK for my service, so in the end I didn't go. Was due to go to Columbia once - I don't think Stuart Osmer knew where it was either, I certainly didn't, so looked at an atlas to find out it's in central America, the place we now know where the drugs come from. It was to assist on the large scale 315 computer mod. so the system could use mag. tape units. Had my yellow fever and other injections, packed my case, practically stood at Heathrow, but the local engineers must have been better than people thought, as in the end they didn't need me. Believe I was also due to go to Australia once, but this memory is a bit hazy - maybe its just wishful thinking.

Air travel could be interesting in those days too. Coming back from Oslo the aircraft landed somewhere (to this day I still don't know if it was in Holland or Belgium). I was tired and did not take much notice, all I knew it wasn't Heathrow. Passengers left and other people boarded and a stewardess announced as they do 'Welcome to flight XXX to Paris', at this I enquired when the aircraft got to London. It doesn't I was told, you have to change here and get another flight. Neither the Norwegians nor my ticket said that, or if they did I was not awake enough to remember. So I had to make a quick exit and find the right flight for Heathrow. Remember on one of the trips to Baghdad the aircraft made a scheduled stop at Beirut, some passengers got off, but the aircrew would not let any of the remaining passengers get off to stretch their legs, or even

to stand by the open cabin doorway as there was shooting going on around the perimeter of the airport. A little after the period of this article I was going up to Dundee weekly for a day and a bit from Head Office for several months. This involved five different methods of transport. Drive by car to Heathrow, fly by BA shuttle to Edinburgh, bus to Edinburgh



centre, train to Dundee and finally taxi to the manufacturing plant. And of course the reverse on return. BA's shuttle service was marvellous compared to air travel today. They operated three shuttles almost hourly to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast, and if you got to the departure lounge 20 minutes before scheduled take off time they guaranteed you a seat on that flight. No formality, no check in, no boarding passes, you need not even have a ticket. All the flight time was taken up in collecting fares. You could pay with cash, cheque, credit/debit card, or if you really wanted to, you could buy a ticket before departure. I've travelled many a time with just a few coppers in my pocket and a piece of plastic. The only problem was the departure area at Heathrow - it was a large room with three exit doors over which were small signs saying Edinburgh, Glasgow or Belfast. If you were half asleep, as I usually was for the first flight about 7am, then it was easy to go through the wrong exit door and so end up in the wrong city.

I was also caught out coming back from Edinburgh one day. Getting to the airport I noticed the British Midland flight to London left half an hour before the BA shuttle, so wishing to avoid the rush hour traffic around Heathrow, I caught the British Midland flight to remember as we landed that they operated out of Gatwick, so I lost several hours in getting back to Heathrow from Gatwick to collect my car.

That's my experiences with NCR computers between 1968 and about 1978, from then on I joined FED management, but that's another story or article.

Michael C. Taylor
July 2005

THANKS

It is not often, if ever perhaps, that one can say "thank you" to a firm that has made you redundant after 27+ years service. Certainly not in the period from the receipt of notice to being

established in a new earning position. But time has healed the wounds and, upon reflection, yes there are many things for which I can say thank you NCR.

First and foremost how could I not say "THANKS" for meeting Kathlyn. How is this for coincidence; we both started at the same firm, in the same department, in the same section, on the same day. We were not to discover this fact until some months later.

"THANKS" for people I met. J O McLaughlin known to us as Iain, the now famous Scottish International Rugby player. Many moons ago Iain joined NCR as a trainee Salesman in Adding Machines. After the initial training period Iain returned north of the border and took over a sales territory. His days off to play rugby soon amounted to more than his machine sales; with the obvious consequences!

John Curry; the Company sponsored him for a period of two years. These were the years before he achieved British, European and World Championships together with Olympic Gold. John would arrive at work between ten thirty and eleven thirty after training hard at Queens Ice Rink and promptly fall asleep! His job was receptionist in the Adding and Accounting Machine Division of the Company. Fortunately this was on the first floor of the building and not the ground floor where people in the street would have noticed him dozing. John's day was hard invariably on the ice from five in the morning and back again, after leaving work, for a further four hours in the evening.

"THANKS" for "posh places". Park Tower Hotel, Grosvenor House Hotel, Mirabelle Restaurant, London Hilton Hotel and Raymond Revue Bar (we shall draw a veil over the last one but inside they didn't!) Places that I stopped in or visited in the course of duty. The only time that I ever got tea or even breakfast in bed! These places would be practically taken over to stage Annual Conventions or twice-yearly contests.

"THANKS" for two days at Elstree Film Studios filming a sequence for the early TV series "The Invisible Man". The particular shot called for the invisible man to enter his laboratory, switch on a light at the top of the stairs, walk down stairs and sit at his computer (our accounting machine) and calculate how long before he became visible again. Very straight forward you would think? We had rigged the machine so that when the handless sleeve moved towards the "Start" button we would plug in "Off Set" and the machine would start to print figures.

After two days and "take" 46, I was summoned back to work. This was going to take years. The Invisible Man (a small man encased in a wire frame to hold clothes that made him seem normal size) could not coordinate his arm with the light switch at the start of the scene. All variations of "arm reaches switch" but "light comes on before or after he is halfway down the stairs", that you can think of happened - yes at least 46 times.

The machine was returned to us two weeks later. Whether or not the scene ever reached the viewers at home I couldn't say we didn't have TV in those days.

And I for one never wanted to see the inside of a film studio again. Oh it was funny up to the fourth "take but after that.....no thanks!

What work did this guy do I can hear you ask. Well that's another story and, if the fee is right, you may get more of the "Life of Brian" in a future edition. Can't wait can you!!

By Brian Floyd

(Brian wrote this back in December 1979 and I will try to persuade him to update the story for us. Ed.)

From Pat Hague

Hi Geoff,

I have just received my copy of Postscript, the Spring edition, and was intrigued by the photograph of NCR Finchley on page seven. I was in Finchley only last week visiting my daughter and the building is still very much there. The building in the photograph is I believe one of the two buildings at Brent Cross. I had the privilege of working in both buildings and the photo brought back many happy memories of my years with NCR.



*"You think it is Finchley, I know that it is Brent Cross!"
Pat Hague and George Pittom at the London lunch*

I worked in Finchley practically from day one until the move to Marylebone Road in 2003 when the building was closed. My fondest memory is when a few of us in the building decided to try and do something special to raise money for the B.B.C's Children in Need. We decided to dress up in fancy dress and go down the High Road with buckets to collect money. We passed it through Head Office who agreed to double any money we made. Meetings were held and a plan of action was decided.

The day arrived and we all rushed through our workload so that we could change into our various costumes and start collecting. We all gathered in the foyer of the Finchley building to have our photo taken before venturing out. There were girls dressed as St Trinians schoolgirls in stockings and suspenders, gypsies, men dressed as women and women dressed as men. Steve from Payroll dressed up as a baby girl in a huge pink babygrow complete with dummy and was pushed down the High Road in a Sainsbury's shopping trolley by John Atkins who was at that time the manager of Payroll. He was dressed up as a housewife complete with Nora Batty stockings and headscarf.

I went as Max Wall and it took me days practising his famous walk. Best of all though was the late Peggy Harman, who most people know, was always game for a laugh.

She wore a very tight red dress, black fishnet tights, ankle boots and a wig and went as the singer Tina Turner. Somebody had brought into the office a pair of very vibrant frilly red knickers and Peggy soon grabbed them and put them on over the fishnet tights. Going down North Finchley High Road she offered a flash of her knickers to anyone who would give her a £1. Needless to say she made a fortune.

At the end of the afternoon we had collected £1,500 and after a much needed drink in the Swan and Pyramid, the Credit Manager Mike Lovering went up to Marylebone to collect a further £1,500. A cheque for the total amount of £3,000 was then rushed up to the B.B.C and NCR was mentioned on screen as one of the fund raisers.

We had so much fun doing this and we made money for a good cause in the process.

All together I worked for NCR for twenty eight years and have so many happy memories of people I have met and worked with.

Kind regards

Pat Hague

A RURAL INTERLUDE

A farmer decided to go down to his pond and orchard as he hadn't been there for some time. He picked up a bucket to bring back some fruit. As he approached the pond he heard voices shouting and laughing with glee. He got closer to find several young women skinny-dipping in his pond. After he made the women aware of his presence they all moved to the deep end of the pond.

Being in a quandary, one of the girls shouted "We're not coming out until you leave!"

The man replied with a smirk "I didn't come down here to watch you ladies swim naked or make you get out of the pond naked. I'm here to feed the alligator!"



THE 2004/2005 FELLOWSHIP ACCOUNTS

Further to the Fellowship's accounts that were published in the Spring 2005 edition of Postscript, we can now report that a full audit of these accounts was completed on Thursday 2nd June by Mr. Brian Lancaster, formerly Senior Credit Controller and Mr. Dennis Marsh, formerly Finance Manager, Micrographics Division. These two retired senior administration managers found the accounts to be accurate in all respects and truly represent the financial activities of the Fellowship for the year ending 30th April 2005.

John Burchfield.
Chairman.

**THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE
HOPES THAT YOU WILL ENJOY
USING YOUR ENCLOSED
FELLOWSHIP DIARY**

From "NCR Post" April 1978



A day in the life of ... a field engineer

How many sales does a salesman make in one week? What exactly does a field engineer do? How does a Systemedia clerk spend her day? What is the real role of an office administrator? NCR is made up of individuals in various fields, each playing a crucial part in the success of the company, yet few people know what is the true nature of jobs outside their particular area. In this, the first of a series of articles, 'Post' describes a day in the life of an FED centre manager.

A warm, sunny early spring morning, following a harder than average Glasgow winter, put Scott Caldwell in good spirits which the early morning barrage of phone calls did not dampen.

Getting to his office at 8.15, Scott spent the next 45 minutes phoning and receiving calls from most of the 40 or so engineers in his area which covers over 1,100 square miles. Many of these calls were also handled by Scott's right hand man, district field engineer Mike Martin.

Among the vital messages flowing between engineers on territory and the Glasgow office was an urgent request from the Aberdeen depot wanting two kits sent out to enable engineers there to repair some accounting machines, a call from an engineer in Ayrshire wanting advice on how best to estimate the cost of overhauling all the cash registers in the Butlin's holiday camps on the Ayrshire coast, and a call from an engineer in Campbeltown on the Mull of Kintyre who wanted to know which job he should do next.

Such calls were, Scott reported, about average. "One thing that we must always remember is that we are here to serve the engineers on territory rather than they serve us. They have the problems, and I've got to help them solve them."

Advice

As soon as there was a pause in the calls, engineers who had come into the Glasgow office to repair the numerous cash registers that had collected there over the past two weeks, ot

asked Scott for advice. One particular problem concerned an optical font which had been giving engineer David Mackintosh a lot of trouble. Scott willingly gave his advice on this and other problems.

The next thing Scott did, as he does every day, was to make sure that all the parts that the office had telexed Head Office for had arrived at Glasgow Central Station. Once he confirmed this, he knew that other members of his team would put them on the necessary buses trains and vans to reach the engineers that wanted them.

At this stage in his day, sometime after 10.00, Scott dealt with the correspondence that the morning post had brought. This was relatively straightforward enquiries were answered and engineers were detailed to visit sites where machines were giving trouble.

Scott then visited Alec Watt, a computer engineer responsible for organising engineer calls for computer breakdowns. This meant that he had to decide which were the most urgent calls and then get engineers there as fast as possible. Alec described the system he had organised which enabled anyone in the office to locate a computer part that could then be sent to an engineer.

Administration

On his way back to his office Scott joked with the three girls that give FED in Glasgow such fine service: Christine Hamilton, Marjorie Anderson and Linda Nicol. In his office Scott explained that the girls were part of the office administration, yet performed all the vital secretarial back-up duties for FED.

They think of themselves very much a part of the FED operation," Scott explained. and they are not only very loyal to us but play an exceptionally valuable part in our day-to-day organisation. And, as if to confirm this, Linda brought in the coffee and reminded Scott that he had to phone London about the sickness pay of one of his engineers. Scott duly made the call and sorted out the matter to his satisfaction.

Then, after seeing how progress was going on the cash registers in the office workshop, he made a call to arrange a visit to the computer rooms at the Clydesdale Bank. The bank is the largest NCR computer installation in Scotland, and because of illness and jury service, there was a shortage of engineers to deal with the many problems that inevitably beset these machines. Area supervisor Jim McLaren, who has what he describes as a watching brief over the bank's computers, confirmed the visit immediately after lunch.

Scott and Mike Martin have made a habit of going for an early lunch. At 11.45 they headed for the restaurant in Glasgow's large Cooperative complex.

We made a rule to have a complete mid-day break during decimalisation,' Scott emphasised. At that time there was so much work to do that we all nearly went insane. Even now, I have enough work to keep me busy 24 hours, seven days a week, and still not get it done. But no matter how much there is to do. Mike and I take a lunch break away from the office, otherwise we would answer the phone all day long

Challenge

During lunch, Scott and Mike discussed morale inside FED in Glasgow. It was their firm belief that engineers were looking forward to working on more computers, especially as their training had, for some time now, prepared them for computer

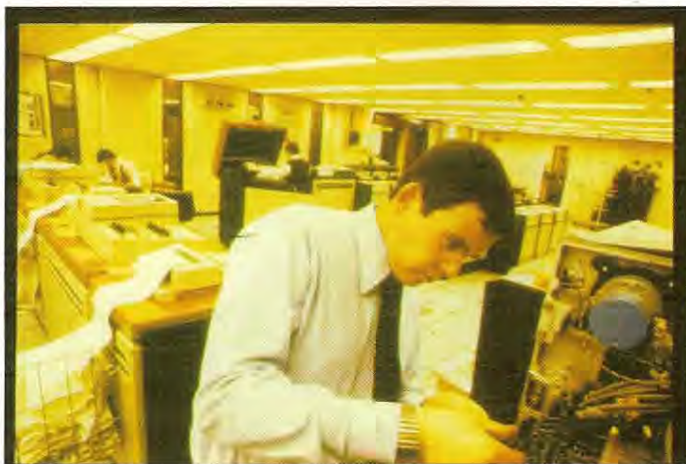
work. Glasgow FED. Mike said, felt computers offered a refreshing challenge.

Scott thought that FED changed to meet the prevailing circumstances. At the moment we are still in a period of change. Much of the work is still on cash registers, though our engineers are trained to handle computers. Thus, as soon as we begin to sell computers in volume we will have the engineers ready to cope with them. It's the sales we are lacking NCR should have far greater sales penetration."

Lunch over, and the weather still fine, Scott and Mike took a short stroll in an open area of the city, as they always do, weather permitting, "to blow the cobwebs away," Mike laughed.

Returning to his office Scott found the second post awaiting him, and quickly sorted through it. One letter caused him to frown: it was an estimate for the repair of an engineer's car. The engineer had crashed on the way to a training course in Dundee, and the estimate was for well over £100. "This means that I'll have to get this approved by the insurance office in London, and they will want a second estimate, which will take more time. No doubt they think they could save money, but we always deal with this garage as they are reasonable and do a good job."

Just as he was about to leave for the bank, Mike Martin brought him a telex that said certain parts ordered from London had been delayed. "Well," Scott smiled wryly "I suppose we'll have to do the impossible and get that part from somewhere," a task he put in the willing hands of Mike Martin.



Service

Scott and Jim McLaren then drove to the Clydesdale Bank, and after going through the rigorous security procedures, were let into the bank's offices. Accompanied by bank officials, they first looked into a large room where row upon row of NCR 482 encoders were working non-stop. One machine was being repaired by engineers Alan Pearce and Barry Josephson who are permanently in the bank servicing the encoders. Scott and Jim talked to them before going up a floor to the computer room. Here they were accompanied by Neil Gray, the bank's computer centre manager.

The NCR engineers and the bank obviously have a good working relationship. On this occasion, Scott, Jim and Neil discussed with engineers Hamish McKenzie and Fred Docherty the best way to resolve a maintenance problem concerning the NCR Century 200.

This done, Scott and Jim returned to the Glasgow office. "The Clydesdale Bank is very important to us. A team of engineers are based there, and Jim oversees the whole operation," Scott explained. Nevertheless, with a number of engineers off work, he wanted to make sure that Jim would have enough men there to properly service the bank's NCR equipment.

Back in the office, a little after 3.00, a phone call posed another problem for Scott. A customer's NCR 299 accounting system had broken down, and it was the firm's payroll day. Scott's main headache was that the engineer on this territory had been diverted to another territory because the engineer there was also diverted to cover a colleague attending a training course in Dundee. Taking the decision at once, Scott sent out David Mackintosh who was still repairing cash registers in the workshop.

This sorted out, Scott allowed himself the luxury of a cup of coffee, his third of the day. To add to his contentment, Marjorie Anderson brought him the news that the insurance office in London had approved a quote on another damaged car.

Examination

Mike Martin then took the opportunity to discuss a problem which personnel had brought up about a former engineer.

As soon as their conversation had ended, Scott phoned John Mill, Centre Manager at Edinburgh to clear up a problem about engineers' car allocations. This resolved, Scott called London to discuss how much money an engineer who had just left NCR should be paid.

During this call, Linda put an engineer's time sheet on his desk. After giving it a brief but close examination, Scott initialled it. "This information goes to London, and from it the customer is invoiced and the engineer paid," Scott explained.

Satisfied

The time sheet initialled, he then began phoning around his area to see what parts were needed and allocate jobs for the engineers to do the following day. Such monitoring not only gave him an overview of work being done, he explained, it also allowed him to prepare the following day's work.

Just before 5.30, with Glasgow office rapidly becoming deserted except for a few members of the FED team, Scott's phone rang. He was dreading this call, for if a customer rang at about this time with a breakdown, it invariably meant he had to stay late to organise an engineer and the necessary parts. Finally, he picked up the phone and then smiled. It was the Aberdeen depot, thanking the office for the dispatch of the two kits earlier in the day. They had arrived and had enabled the machines to be repaired. "Satisfied customers, satisfied engineers, and I even get thanked," Scott beamed, "That is unusual!"

The crisis period over, and no urgent customer calls to deal with, Scott, looking tired, decided to go home. Not deceived by the last of the sunlight, he put on his hat and overcoat before slowly leaving the building.

It had, he said, been an easy day.

(Readers will recall that Scott was our regional organiser for Scotland until recently and before his retirement was centre manager for Glasgow.)

TO THE GOLFING FRATERNITY!

In my hand I hold a ball,
White and dimpled, rather small
Oh, how bland it does appear,
This harmless looking little sphere .

By its size I could not guess,
The awesome strength it does possess.
But since I fell beneath its spell,
I've wandered through the fires of hell.

My life has not been quite the same,
Since I chose to play this game.
It rules my mind for hours on end,
A fortune it has made me spend.

It has made me curse and cry,
I hate myself and want to die.
It promises a thing called par
If I can hit it straight and far.

To master such a tiny ball,
Should not be very hard at all.
But my desires the ball refuses,
And does exactly what it chooses.

It hooks and slices, dribbles and dies,
Or disappears before my eyes.
Often it will have a whim,
To hit a tree or take a swim.

With miles of grass on which to land,
It finds a tiny patch of sand.
Then has me offering up my soul,
If only it would find the hole.

Its made me whimper like a pup,
And swear that I will give it up.
And take to drink to ease my sorrow,
But the ball knows,
I'll be back tomorrow!

Wallace Hay.

RUGBY

Some time ago, a large number of British and Irish rugby supporters arrived in New Zealand with the intention of enjoying themselves, seeing world-class rugby, making the Lions welcome and helping them into a winning frame of mind.

The authorities, the publicans and the general public feared the worst, having seen the behaviour of the UK soccer hooligans on TV. Nothing could have been further from the truth. The so-called Barmy Army were so well behaved and friendly that New Zealanders took them into their hearts and helped them whenever they could.

The renters of campervans imported over a thousand vans and that was not nearly enough. There was only one major road accident reported which was surprising considering the distances the visitors drove and some of the road code differences between UK and here.

I was lucky enough to be asked by the government to travel to Picton and back on the ferry after the Christchurch test, talking to the Barmy Army, telling them what a wonderful place New Zealand was and suggesting they settle here. The bar on the ferry was extremely busy but there was no

drunkenness. The trip was a pleasure; the supporters were friendly and polite and I really enjoyed my job. Luckily, Cook Strait was calm otherwise I would not have enjoyed it quite so much!

As far as the rugby was concerned, the Lions played 10 matches, losing only four. They lost to the New Zealand Maori and the three All Black tests. All Black supporters took pleasure in the way the Lions played and the Lions supporters really enjoyed the games. There was no acrimony. After the Wellington test, one of the main streets was closed to traffic allowing a huge and uneventful street party to go all night.

New Zealanders and in particular, rugby supporters, thoroughly enjoyed having the Barmy Army here and we all look forward to seeing them again. They made me very proud of my English heritage.

Mike Hughes

A Good Summer's Cricket

I was prompted to put this little contribution together as a result of my conversation with Geoff at the recent reunion of the Fellowship at the London Cricketers Club. Although how we were able to seriously converse with around 110 colleagues all talking at the same time, I do not know. What a great annual event this is turning into. A super effort by John Burchfield and the Fellowship 'management team'. Long may we continue to meet up like this.

However my conversation with Geoff led him to mentioning the large group painting hanging on the wall in the Compton Room upstairs, and did I recognise anyone on it.



Well yes - Trevor Bailey is standing on Dennis Compton's right and he played for Essex with a lot of success on 482 occasions between 1946 and 1967, not I am told as many as Keith Fletcher another Essex man, at 574, but impressive anyway. Trevor also made 61 Test appearances during his Essex years, and I wouldn't be surprised if maybe Doug Insole wasn't in that picture somewhere, but I didn't recognise him!

On the other hand, by comparison, whilst with Essex CCC, Graham Gooch was capped 118 times, and more recently Nasser Hussain achieved 96. In Nasser's last test for England in 2004 he scored a Century at Lord's. Incidentally, he scored another Century against Glamorgan in his final

game for the County also, after he had just resigned the England captaincy. He then retired from cricket.

With all the excitement this Summer associated with England's magnificent 2-1 (2 drawn) Test victory over the old enemy Australia and securing the Ashes again, it is important to recognise that right through from the first week in April to the end of September 18 Counties have been fighting it out in 4 day and 1 day matches in their respective Divisions.

However we must acknowledge the overall success of the England squad at home this year under Michael Vaughan's leadership. In the Test series against Bangladesh, England won 2-0, and in the Nat-West Triangular (one-day final) England tied with Australia. In the Twenty/20, England beat Australia by 100 runs. Success indeed! But give Australia their due, they did win the Nat-West one-day Challenge 2-1. With all of this International level activity it is, as I said, easy to forget that there has been a lot of County cricket going on.

I am a long-term member of Essex County Cricket Club, and our home is the Ford County Ground at Chelmsford. I am pleased to say that we won the Totesport (45 over) League by a good margin after a very impressive one-day performance this Summer under Ronnie Irani's capable captaincy.



Captain Ronnie Irani lifts the Totesport League Trophy aloft

This year in the Frizzell (4 day) Championship, Nottinghamshire won the Div 1 title, with Lancashire leading Div 2. And I mustn't leave out Hampshire's success in the Cheltenham and Gloucester final at Lord's. Ironically, Essex had beaten them in the one-day Totesport game at Colchester earlier in August. Essex unfortunately did not improve its position in the Div 2 championship table having failed towards the end of the Season with an 'unfortunate' declaration result against Somerset at Colchester in August, and a real old hammering from Lancashire in September.

It is now of course part of history, but in the 1980s and early 1990s, Essex were winning every trophy in sight year after year it seemed, but since then successes have been far between although we did pick up the Nat-West in 1997, and the Benson and Hedges in 1998. So the Totesport Trophy this year is a milestone for captain Ronnie Irani.

So back to the beginning, Geoff asked whether Dennis Compton had any Essex connections. Well no, he didn't play at any time for the County, and looking through the records I cannot see that he performed particularly against Essex



Essex toast their success

either. Perhaps another of our Fellowship colleagues can tell us more about him in a future Postscript, considering that we are using his premises for our annual luncheon!

But there is a very important connection which Dennis has with all 18 counties to this day - the NBC Dennis Compton Award. He launched this scheme in 1996 at Lord's and its aim is to aid the development of the most promising young English players at each of the County clubs. Alastair Cook of Essex CCC won the award in 2004.

It is presented each year at the Brian Johnson Memorial Dinner, also at Lord's. Alastair has gone on to score 1466 first class runs in 30 innings during 2005 with a highest score of 195, and an average of 52.35 - impressive eh!

By way of signing off - can I say that the London Cricketers Club certainly seem to have gone out of their way to make us feel welcome, to hear that the venue has been reserved again for next October's meeting (reunion) is most encouraging.

My best wishes to everyone - and to the continued success of our Fellowship.

Bryan Turner
October 2005.

WE ARE SORRY TO REPORT THE PASSING OF THE FOLLOWING UK NCR EMPLOYEES

Title	Initis	Surname	Date of Death
Mr	V A	Priddle	16/4/05
Mrs	E G	Hall	15/5/05
Mr	E J	Thrush	15/5/05
Mr	H T	Walker	10/6/05
Mr	D E	Kampf	09/7/05
Mr	J H	Whitfield	29/7/05
Mr	H	Cole	02/8/05
Mr	J A	Mounsey	04/8/05
Mrs	M	Moore	09/8/05
Mr	R W	Bishop	27/8/05

CONTRIBUTIONS / ARTICLES FOR POSTSCRIPT ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

**Thespian Memories of NCR in times past
as recalled by Brian Floyd
(a would-be Olivier of the period)
and related to Geoff Jackson.**

Drama played a considerable part in NCR at one time, whether it was for training salesmen or as pure entertainment for the company as a whole. At various times there existed a part of the Sports and Social Club named the Variety and Dramatic Section and, at others, the NCR Drama Section.

I have before me a review of Emlyn Williams play "Night Must Fall". With a cast of nine names, B Jarman, G Roberts and Mary Waller appear, the leading lady being Miss B Godbold. Gordon Langmaid is praised for his set and Brian Floyd receives particular mention and is congratulated on his excellent interpretation. Obviously a man of many parts as will be witnessed by his Carmen Miranda interpretation in the previous year's Christmas show! (see pic)



Another review I have is that for "Madam Tic-Tac" which had once again, as female lead, Mary Waller and was produced by none other than Ann Winter and participated in by her. Whilst the female cast were praised for their professionalism the chaps all came in for a bit of a slating especially a Rex

Fleet who was told that he needed far more life and impetuosity surging through him although he showed promise in brief moments!

Drama was also to be seen in sales training and the following picture is from a CPC London Convention and entitled "The Demonstration Do's and Don'ts."

Those featured are:

- 1 Mrs E Buckner (Buckie) "The Queen Bee" of AAMD Installation and Programming
- 2 Machine Operator name unknown
- 3 Salesman Brian Floyd (who comments that, as far as he is aware, is the only man to have been allowed to wear a CPC tie but never sold a machine! (Brian's expression could be straight out of a Bateman cartoon!)
- 4 Miss E Thurgood Head of Installation Operator Training

Mrs Buckner would usually write a playlet on a particular subject. Here the operator has allowed her beads to be caught around the 26" carriage of a Class 31 Accounting Machine. The playlet also had the classic line from salesman to prospect: "Any fool can operate it even you!"



Chairman John explains the current position regarding pension increases at the Exeter lunch (the hatchet poised over his head is not significant!) You will find briefing notes on pages 19 and 20

THE NCR LTD PENSION PLAN

Briefing Notes

The following notes were prepared by Stephen Swinbank for use at gatherings of Fellowship members (and used by him at the London Meeting in October). These notes are for members who are unable to hear either Stephen or John Burchfield deliver their contents.

Contents:

- **Strength of plan.**
- **NCR UK Ltd Accounts.**
- **Requirement for Corporate Guarantee.**
- **Trustee actions to 'persuade' Dayton to issue the Guarantee.**
- **Status of Pension Increase Request.**

Strength of Plan.

The NCR Pension Fund is held in Trust, entirely separately from the UK Companies Bank A/C's. The Trust fund is managed by The Trustees (current NCR Employees) who employ their own fully independent professional advisors covering, Investments, Legal, Actuarial & Administration. Keith Pyle is the Trustees Administration Manager.

The plan currently has in excess of £410m and can be regarded as 'strong'. However, The Trustees would like it to be a little stronger still as the security of the Company is not as great as it should be.

NCR UK Ltd. A/C's.

NCR Ltd. is named in the Trust Deed as 'The Principal Employer & Sponsor' of the Pension Scheme. By law it is required to ensure that the fund is adequately financed & secured. As a wholly owned subsidiary of NCR Corporation, NCR Ltd and its Directors are ultimately bound by Corporate Policy & practice.

In August 2004 The Trustees noticed that NCR Ltd A/C's for 2002 which had just been filed (very late) at Companies House showed that despite a good income exceeding £400m that the UK company was in fact 'insolvent' and could not provide the Security required to back up its Pension Scheme. [Similarly, in August 2005 when the 2003 A/C's were filed a similar position was confirmed in the Accounts].

Requirement for Corporate Guarantee.

A year ago on Nov 1st 2004 The Trustees wrote to the Corporation requesting that a Corporate Guarantee be issued directly to The Trustees for the UK Pension Plan to make good any shortfall should the need arise.

The Corporation immediately agreed to this request "in principle".

However, as of today The Trustees have yet to sign a 'legally' binding Corporate Guarantee.

.....So what are The Trustees doing about it....!

Trustee actions to 'persuade' Dayton to issue the Guarantee.

- Nov 1st 2004 Official Request for Corporate Guarantee issued.
- Jan-March 2005 Multiple Conf-Calls with Dayton & our Advisors.

- April Trustees issue 'Warning' that if G'tee not in place by June 2005 that Trustees will have no option but to begin to move from Equities into Bonds. (This would cost the Corporation real money so should get a response)!
- July 1st Trustees sell 10% of the fund approx. £40m of Equities and buy Bonds which provide a guaranteed return for our Pensioners. (The Pension Fund is now invested 60% in Equities & 40% in Bonds).

The reason for doing this is that if the Trustees can no longer rely upon the Company to support its Pension Scheme then we must NOT take any unnecessary risks with the Money that we are entrusted to look after.

- August 2005 Dayton, Corporate Treasurer and International Pension Investment Director, request to come to London for meeting with the Trustees!
- September 8th 2005 London The Trustees together with their Lawyer, Actuary & Investment Consultant meet with Dayton to 'negotiate' the draft Terms for a Corporate Guarantee. This is extremely complicated and will probably take approx. 2 more months to put in place.

Status of Pension Increase Request.

The Directors of NCR Ltd' submitted a request to Dayton on behalf of their Pensioners nearly one year ago in December 2004. (The last increase had been granted in January 2003 nearly 2 years ago).

[Note: It is The Trustees job to safeguard & invest the fund to ensure that pensions can be paid. - It is at the sole discretion of the Company when to grant an increase and for how much].

In March 2005 the Corporation granted the UK Company the right to make what was considered by the UK Board to be a derisory pension increase offer. This was rejected by the UK Company on your behalf.

Subsequently in May 2005 after further discussions they were again authorised to make what they considered an inadequate increase & it was rejected again.

The Trustees informed Dayton that if Pension Increase were not going to be granted that there was no point in us following such an aggressive Investment Strategy and without the Corp G'tee we would consider moving to 100% in Bonds to secure the funds that we had. [This could cost the Corporation \$200m+! ...Just as the Company has 'Sole' discretion over the granting of Pension Increases so The Trustees legally have 'Sole' discretion over the Investment Strategy that is required to safeguard and protect the fund, this includes against unnecessary risk taking!

..It is these two opposing levers are creating the opportunity to negotiate!

Current Status of Guarantee & Pension Increase

At our 'negotiation' meeting with the CFO in London on 8th Sept. a draft framework for a '30 Year Corporate Guarantee' was thrashed out.

Most importantly & second only to the intrinsic value of the Guarantee itself was a clause that states that if The Trustees do not observe reasonable pension increase behaviour that they will have the right to change our Investment Strategy accordingly. Similarly, if the Trustees change the Investment Strategy without agreement the Corporation would have the right to terminate the Guarantee.

CONCLUSION:

Dayton will need to be seen to act responsibly with Pension increases if it wishes the Trustees to follow the Corporations preferred Investment Strategy. - The Trustees have instructed the UK Board to formally re-submitted their Pension Increase proposal and as of 6th October Dayton has confirmed that they are 're-processing' it and hope to have some good news very soon. (Caution: this could still be a couple of months).

NCR UK Ltd Pension Plan Trustees.

Teresa Maclagan, Don Macqueen, Ron Gammie, Walter Bullen.

Stephen Swinbank Chairman.

FOLLOW UP:

Following the London Lunch an email was received from Dayton confirming that they were "actively" reconsidering the UK's request for a Pension increase. So at least they have released it for reconsideration.

Stephen comments: "I guess that it may still be a couple of months before they respond to the UK Board but all of our fingers are crossed and I hope that the outcome when announced will vindicate the stance that the UK Trustees and Board of NCR Ltd have taken with the Corporation.

Dated October 2005



**JOIN THE FELLOWSHIP AND
READ YOUR OWN COPY!!!**

NCR Retirement Fellowship

Membership Application Form

I would like to join the NCR Retirement Fellowship please:-

Name

Address

.....Postcode:Region

Send details and cheque for £10 (made out to NCR Retirement Fellowship) to: Lin Sandell, 9 Fangrove Park, Lyne Lane, Lyne, Surrey KT16 0BN

The NCR Retirement Fellowship

PRESIDENT: Harry Redington

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: John Burchfield

TREASURER: Lin Sandell

SECRETARY: John Nash

EDITOR "POSTSCRIPT": Geoff Jackson

REGIONAL ORGANISERS



Regional Adviser:
Ted Young

Region 1: Wallace Hay

Region 6: Alan Hutchins

Region 2E: Pat Keogh

Region 7: John Jones

Region 2W: Charles Southall

Region 8A: Des Woodall

Region 3: Eric Grace

Region 9: George Wallace

Region 4: John Burchfield

Region 10: Ronnie McGowan

Region 5 (Kent): Peter Bodley

Printed by The Print Workshop, Crediton, Devon EX17 1HB