

LIRC News

30th January 2025

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

The next LIRC News will be published on Thursday 24th April 2025

WHAT'S INSIDE

Our Post Office Museum & Railway visit in central London in 2019 proved so popular that we are now considering running an event called Tunnel Walks.

If this appeals to you, please check out the article near the bottom of page 3.

In the previous LIRC News we included an historical article about the 80-column Key punch/Verifier.

It provoked memories for a number of our readers, one of whom sent us an article for you all to enjoy - you can find it on page 4.

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all enjoyed good times with family and friends over Christmas and the New Year and are looking forward to better times ahead. I know that for some of you, that may not be appropriate, so to you I just say that your colleagues and friends in the Club offer our love and support during these challenging times.

We are at a time of change for our Club as we have five of our long-standing and hard-working committee members stepping down - Pauline Schurer, Keith & Sue Andrews and Simon & Joan Russell. Their commitment and support will be greatly missed and I know you will join me in thanking them for everything they have done for us all over the years and we hope to still see them at many future events.

Alan Jarvis joined our committee during the year and has already earned his stripes by organising some successful events and taking on the role of Minutes Secretary – thank you, Alan, and we know you are committed to offering us even more in the coming year.

Also co-opted were Pat Smith and Paul Welstead and we hope they will be elected to our committee at our AGM in February to enable them to help continue our events programme and fill the gap left by those standing down. Please give them and all the committee your support through 2025 and my thanks go to the remaining committee members too for everything they have done and I know will continue to do for us all in the future.

We have some events already in plan for the coming year and more ideas are being worked on but, as ever, your ideas and suggestions will help us to decide what appeals, so please keep them coming in. Tony Shortman, our News Editor (with input from Simon & Joan Russell) has included lots about recent events that members attended, so I leave you to read those and enjoy all the other contributions in this issue too.

It just remains for me to say that I hope many of you can join us at our AGM on **Tuesday 11th February** and that you will continue to support and enjoy everything that we do for you in the future. I look forward to seeing you at many of our events.

David Sparrow

EVENTS FEEDBACK

British Library Guided Tour – Tuesday 29th October 2024

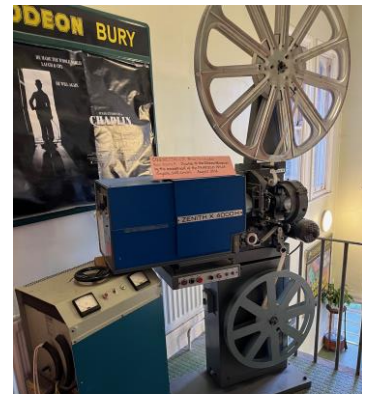
What an amazing place to visit and very much enjoyed by our members. It certainly proved popular as it was fully booked, requiring three tour guides with 15 of us assigned to each guide. The tour took us to many interesting areas of this vast building that can only be accessed when accompanied by a guide. We explored some of the many treasures it holds and we learnt about its history, book collection, architecture etc. Special thanks to Alan Jarvis (see photo) for organising this event, especially as Alan has only recently joined the committee and this was the very first event that he has run for the club – well done Alan!



Many thanks for making all the arrangements for the tour of the British Library on Tuesday. Pam and I greatly enjoyed it. We were fortunate to have such an excellent guide, with a good sense of humour and an impressive store of anecdotes. We also tacked on an extra visit to the Silk Roads exhibition, which proved to be fascinating too. Altogether an excellent day. Geoff Cole Thank you so much for organising today's trip. It was really fascinating with such an amusing and knowledgeable guide (Kevin). I was expecting walls and walls of books! Dyllis Wretham

Cinema Museum – Tuesday 19th November 2024

From the moment we walked through the door of the Cinema Museum we were greeted with a huge array of artefacts from long forgotten picture palaces - Information boards, projectors, lighting, usherette uniforms and much more - the list is endless. We started our visit with coffee and biscuits in the huge chapel at the top of the building (which was the old Lambeth Workhouse) next to a life size model of Indiana Jones complete with whip and a huge statue of Charlie Chaplin made from cardboard boxes by the museum's artist in residence. Very fitting because if you haven't already guessed the link to the building and the cinema is Chaplin as he was a resident of the workhouse with his mother and brother on two occasions as a child. We learnt about the fire risks of early film and hence the development of the purpose built cinemas in Britain where the projectionist could be isolated from the auditorium and how quickly this cheap form of mass entertainment became so popular throughout the world. We were reminded of what cinema going used to be like with an A film, B film and newsreel - it all stirred many happy memories. After the talk we were shown some short films - the Paris floods of 1910, the last trams in London, an abstract GPO film, etc. - all very nostalgic. It was a lovely afternoon spent in the charming hidden gem of the Cinema Museum. *Anne Daines*



Potters Short Break – Friday 29th November to Monday 2nd December 2024

There were 44 of us who enjoyed this Festive Weekend Break at Potters Resort with weather that proved better than predicted. As ever, the food was plentiful and varied, the entertainment excellent and many participated in the variety of activities on offer. Several were 'first timers' at one of our Short Breaks and I am now under pressure to get the next one organised! Watch for news. *David Sparrow.*

I must add my thanks for an amazing weekend at Potters. I had never heard of this huge resort, but once we had settled in everything was so easy to get to and so well organised. Lots of nice people to chat to in the dining room and so many activities. Steph Savage



OUR EXPANDED RANGE OF THEATRE TICKET OFFERINGS

Have you noticed in the past year how your club has expanded the number of West End shows that we now offer reduced price tickets for? In the list of events (see below) that are planned for the coming months, you will see that there are theatre events almost every month. This is all due to the efforts of Pete Wells! A very big **Thank You** to Pete, from the committee and all our members for the amazing job that he is doing for our club.

We often receive emails from club members after they have been to a West End show thanking us not only for the tickets but also for the excellent seats that we had provided them with. We recently received the following from Anita and Mike Milligan after they had been to the Nutcracker Ballet at the London Coliseum.

Anita and I thought it was a wonderful production. Thank you for organising it. The Coliseum is such a beautiful theatre, with the live orchestra and the little choir, it made for a magical afternoon. Anita is a bit of a ballet buff (we even went to see the Kirov Ballet in Leningrad during the Soviet era!). We have seen the Nutcracker at least 4 times and this was her favourite production by far. We loved everything about it, the feminist touches and the Basset Liquorice Allsorts. The ballet dancing was superb. Our seats were amazing (how did you manage that?). It was a memorable start to our Christmas.



EVENTS PLANNED FOR THE COMING MONTHS

| <u>Event Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Sponsor</u> |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Monday 3 February | Royal Albert Hall Behind the Scenes Tour | Alan Jarvis |
| Tuesday 11 February | LIRC Annual General Meeting (on Zoom) | David Sparrow |
| Wednesday 12 February | Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club - Playhouse Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Wednesday 26 February | The Last Laugh at the Noel Coward Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Wednesday 12 March | The Devil Wears Prada at the Dominion Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Wednesday 2 April | Matilda - The Musical at the Cambridge Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Thursday 8 th May | The Great Gatsby at the London Coliseum | Pete Wells |
| Wednesday 18 June | Just For One Day at the Shaftesbury Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Thursday 26 th June | Clueless - A New Musical at the Trafalgar Theatre | Pete Wells |
| Saturday 19 th July | Battle Proms at Hatfield House | David Sparrow |
| Thursday 14 th August | 101 Dalmatians - The Musical at the Eventim Apollo Theatre | Pete Wells |

AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE LONDON'S MAIL RAIL TUNNELS

Would you be interested in joining an LIRC club event called Tunnel Walks where we are led by an expert guide on an exploration of the underground Mail Rail tunnels, tracks and platforms? We have included a web link to the postal museum web site where you will find a detailed description of the Tunnel Walks (see below). In 2019, we had over 100 join us for the visit to the Postal Museum & Post Office Railway, so maybe this Tunnel Walks event might be of interest to those who came in 2019.

Before we book it, we would like to know how many members would be interested, especially as it is quite expensive (£58). Please let us know by emailing Derrick Daines at ukfreelander@netscape.net. We have no specific date yet for this event and we will need a minimum of 12 to enable it to be run. Here is the link to the postal museum's Tunnel Walks web site - <https://www.postalmuseum.org/event/tunnel-walks/>

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED 80-COLUMN PUNCH CARDS A MINUTE!

In the previous issue of the LIRC News we included an historical article from the May 1973 edition of the **IBM UK News**. It related to the production of the 80-column Key punch and Verifier at the IBM plant in Greenock, Scotland. Ronnie Strange, who worked at IBM Stanley Road in South Harrow, where the 80-column punch cards were being manufactured, has written about his time at this IBM plant from when he first arrived in 1962 to when he was the last person to walk out the door in 1978, taking the brass nameplate with him! The following is Ronnie's article - we hope you enjoy reading it.

IBM Stanley Road in South Harrow was such a prestigious place, it didn't need a street number. It was the only non-residential property at the end of the road containing a hundred two up two down Victorian terrace houses ending at the Piccadilly line viaduct. I vividly remember my first day in 1962 where I saw upright printing presses screaming away and thinking, if you put your hand in there that's the last you'll ever see of it. Even worse, on that first day the packing/taping machine was broken and we were told "DON'T JUST STAND THERE, TAPE UP THESE BOXES" which were coming down the conveyor from twelve machines producing eighteen hundred cards every minute. Nightmare. I finally got to grips with what was going on and after a while and 16 years later I was the last person to walk out the door in 1978, taking the brass nameplate with me. Within those 16 years I squeezed in a couple of years dealing with customer orders.

We were a diverse bunch, apart from the Welsh the Irish and the Scots there were some from Uganda, Jamaica, Barbados, Goa, Greece, some local individuals and long distance travellers from Edgware and Hammersmith. Our previous jobs and backgrounds were varied, retail assistants, non-official union reps, petty crooks, car mechanics (same thing) and office clerks to name just a few. None of us were ever subjected to the forensic/detailed examination of hourly production output in our previous jobs. Nevertheless, we mostly became very efficient and competitive operators.

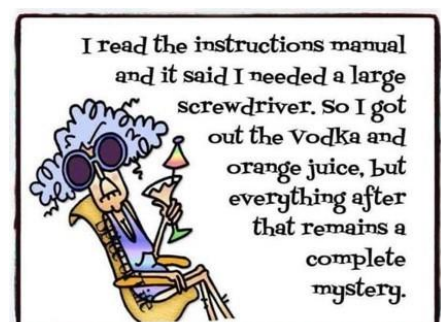
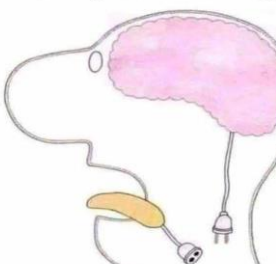
There were vending machines primarily used by the night shift and I had a key to the safe to provide change from the petty cash. One Thursday pay night, I found the safe open and the cash tin and pay packets gone. I phoned my manager then the police. The Flying Squad flew in, asked everyone some questions, especially those who were known to them and searched our cars and off they went without feeling anyone's collar. Soon after the safe incident I inherited the day shift plant operation as well and had about 40 A&C's to do. Another nightmare. Having IBM jobs In Greenford, Lodge Road, Sudbury, etc. I mostly had no idea what these jobs were for, unlike the Card Plant where there was something tangible to see at end of the day. When IBM realised they had too many employees and the voluntary disappearance scheme was activated, I was off like a startled gazelle.

Ronnie Strange (operator 23)

DO YOU ENJOY THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE LIRC NEWS?

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

Make sure it's connected
before you start talking.



STIMULATION FOR THOSE LITTLE GREY CELLS

What do these seven words all have in common?

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess

Are you struggling to work out the answer? Give it another try - look at each word carefully. You'll kick yourself when you discover the answer. No, it is not that they all have at least 2 double letters. The answer is at the bottom of the page!



LEXOPHILES

"Lexophile" is a word used to describe those who love using words in rather unique ways, such as "you can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish", or "to write with a broken pencil is pointless." A competition to see who can come up with the best one is held every year. The winning submission is posted at the very end.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.
When fish are in schools, they sometimes take debate.
A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
The batteries were given out free of charge.
A bicycle can't stand alone; it is two tired.
With her marriage, she got a new name and a dress.
When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.
When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.
A will is a dead giveaway.
Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.
A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.
The guy who fell onto an upholstery machine is now fully recovered.
He had a photographic memory which was never developed.
When she saw her first strands of grey hair, she thought she'd dye.
Police were called to a day care centre where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
Did you hear about the fellow whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now.
And the cream of the wretched crop:
Those who get too big for their pants will be exposed in the end.



MY NEW ELECTRIC CAR BY PAM AYRES

I bought a new electric car
me old one had gone West.
The salesman he convinced me
that electric cars are best.
"One charge lasts two hundred miles," he said.
But that's a con.
It's one trip up our drive
if you have switched the heater on.

95% of electric
vehicles are still on
the road.
The remaining 5%
made it all the way
home.

Answer to the seven word quiz: In all of the words listed, if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word, and then spell the word backwards, it will be the same word.

INTERESTING MEANINGS OF COMMONLY USED WORDS

BEAUTY PARLOUR - A place where women curl up and dye.

YAWN - An honest opinion openly expressed.

COMMITTEE - A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours.

DUST - Mud with the juice squeezed out.

EGOTIST - Someone who is usually me-deep in conversation.

HANDKERCHIEF - Cold Storage.

INFLATION - Cutting money in half without damaging the paper.

MOSQUITO - An insect that makes you like flies better.

RAISIN - A grape with a sunburn.

SECRET - A story you tell to one person at a time.

TOOTHACHE - The pain that drives you to extraction.

TOMORROW - One of the greatest labour saving devices of today.

WRINKLES - Something other people have....similar to my character lines.

CHICKENS - The only animal you eat before they are born and after they are dead.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS - A doctrine fostered by a delusional, illogical minority.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE CLOTHESLINE?

A clothesline was a news forecast to neighbours passing by,
There were no secrets you could keep when clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link for neighbours always knew,
If company had stopped on by to spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the fancy sheets and towels upon the line,
You'd see the company tablecloths with intricate design.

The line announced a baby's birth to folks who lived inside,
As brand new infant clothes were hung so carefully with pride.

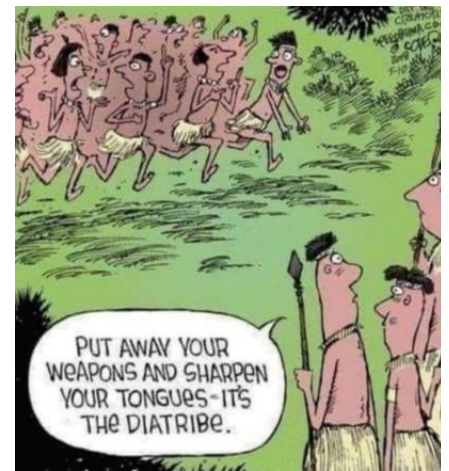
The ages of the children could so readily be known,
By watching how the sizes changed you'd know how much they'd grown.

It also told when illness struck as extra sheets were hung,
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too haphazardly were strung.

It said "We're on our holiday now" when lines hung limp and bare,
It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged, with not an inch to spare.

But clotheslines now are of the past, for dryers make work less,
Now what goes on inside a home is anybody's guess.

I really miss that way of life, it was a friendly sign,
When neighbours knew each other best by what hung on the line!



WHAT DO YOU CALL AN ALLIGATOR IN A VEST?



AN INVESTIGATOR.

YOUR LIRC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

If you have questions for your committee, please contact one of those listed below.

PLEASE NOTE: COMMITTEE MEMBERS WILL ACCEPT TELEPHONE CALLS BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 9.30 AND 19.00 MONDAY TO FRIDAY ONLY

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| David Sparrow | Chairman | LIRCnews@gmail.com | 020-8440-5871 07711-627788 |
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| Tony Shortman | LIRC News Editor | shortmantm@gmail.com | 01844-350014 |
| Nigel Bartlett | Website Administration | Nigel-LIRC@outlook.com | 07516-291298 |
| Pete Wells | Event Organiser | petecwells@gmail.com | 07540-984074 |
| Derrick Daines | Event Organiser | ukfreelander@netscape.net | 07758-491359 |
| Chris Nickless | Event Organiser | chris.nickless.rcl@gmail.com | 01268-771793 |

ANNIVERSARIES, WEDDINGS and FINAL RESTINGS

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

- Roy Weller who died on Sunday 28th January 2024
- Linda Young who died on Sunday 1st December 2024
- Duncan Gill who died on Sunday 22nd December 2024
- Dave Drage who died in December 2024

ON A LIGHTER NOTE

I intend to live forever ... So far, so good.
 How do you tell when you're out of invisible ink?
 I'd kill for a Nobel Peace Prize.
 Borrow money from pessimists -- they don't expect it back.
 A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.
 A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
 If you want the rainbow, you've got to put up with the rain.
 When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
 Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy.
 Hard work pays off in the future; laziness pays off now.
 If at first you don't succeed, destroy all evidence that you tried.
 Eagles may soar, but weasels don't get sucked into jet engines.
 What happens if you get scared half to death twice?
 My idea of a Super Bowl is a toilet that cleans itself.
 A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.
 If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
 Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
 The sooner you fall behind, the more time you'll have to catch up.
 Everyone has a photographic memory; some just don't have film.
 The hardness of the butter is proportional to the softness of the bread.
 The colder the x-ray table, the more of your body is required to be on it.
 The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
 If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
 To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.
 If your car could travel at the speed of light, would your headlights work?

