

The beginning of the computer age. Installation of Leo III computers at Hemel Hempstead and Wythenshawe

Fifty-five years ago this October Shell-Mex and B.P. announced its plans for the installation of Leo III computers at new computer centres at Hemel Hempstead and Wythenshawe. These were among the very first commercial computers anywhere. We look back to see why it was to be done and what the plans were. The story starts on Page 4.

Useful Contacts

The 44 Club – For anyone who worked for Shell-Mex and BP

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44 Club News

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The BP Society

- For BP Pensioners
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Please advise the Club Office (Email as under Colin Hill above) of your Email address.

You can also do this by visiting the Club website:
<http://www.44club.org.uk/>



Welcome

One of the pleasures of researching stories for the Club News is stumbling across snippets from the past - memories of people or places or events long forgotten. The back numbers of the 'Shell-BP News' or 'The Magazine of the Shell-Mex and B.P. Group' always throw up such nostalgic remembrances. Here's a couple from August 1968:

Colin Cowdrey meets his match



Colin takes first strike When England played Australia in the third Test at Birmingham, Colin Cowdrey became the first man ever to win 100 caps in Test Cricket. To mark the

occasion, South Eastern Region produced a souvenir book match. Colin is seen here taking 'first strike', when the designer of the book, Kevin Downes, SP and A, South Eastern Region, presented him with the first book.

1968 was something of a year in the spotlight for Cowdrey who not only scored his one hundredth 100 but also led England to an amazing win

in the Oval Test when the crowd helped dry the outfield so that Derek Underwood could weave his magic. I was there on that final day but left early. But that's another story! Colin looks suitably enthused about being given his book of matches doesn't he!

Norman and Satchmo



When he attended the luncheon given by Sir Max Aitken to celebrate Louis Armstrong's 68th birthday, Norman Monahan of HO IND/SPA presented the famous jazz trumpeter with a cigarette lighter fuelled with Bottogas Butane. 'Satchmo's' comment? 'Man, this is a real gas!'

Norman (now a sprightly 94) remembers: In 1968 the Daily Express held a competition, the five winners of which received an invitation to a lunch that Sir Max Aitken was giving for Louis Armstrong at the Savoy Hotel. I was lucky enough to be one of the winners and, after arranging things with Reg Leech, of happy memories, I went along.

There were approximately 150 guests, mostly from show business. I found myself sitting between Mary Quant and her husband, Alexander Plunkett-Green, an avid Trad Jazz lover (this was before all that modern stuff took hold!). Our table was next to the top table so we had a prime spot. Before the meal, I found myself close behind Louis Armstrong so I thought 'Why not' and sought out the official photographer and - I smoked then - took out my lighter and presented it to the great man. I gave the photograph to Harry Hossent who passed it to the Magazine. The quoted phrase, I am afraid, was my invention!

The afternoon finished off with a two-hour jam session at which many British jazz stars sat in with Armstrong's All Stars band. For me, always a Trad Jazz fan, it was a very memorable occasion!

Paddy Briggs



Generous members

We are so grateful to members who have voluntarily made additional donations to the Club when paying for their Diaries (£89 and rising at the time of writing). Thank you.

Branch Volunteers needed

The 'News from the Branches' emphasises again our concerns about a noticeable fall off in Branch activity. In some cases this is because long-standing organisers of events are for various reasons less able to carry out this task. One in particular is in the South East area covering most of Kent and East Sussex where Charles Richards after many years of sterling service would like to hand the task over. We would like to stress that the Club centrally will offer support – including financial if that is required. We did this for Bournemouth and Southampton a while ago and it is good to see the Branch buoyant again.

Buncefield Terminal

Next July 29th we can look back fifty years to the coming on stream of the SMBP Buncefield Terminal. It was built at a cost of £1.5m and covered 27 acres of the 74 acres of the overall complex (which also housed three other oil companies). It is sad that Buncefield is now known for the major fire of December 2005 but in its SMBP days it was a state of the art installation and many SMBP alumni worked there or had regular contact with it. This included over 100 drivers for the original fleet of 60 road tank wagons. We will look back on Buncefield in an upcoming Club News. Please share your personal memories with us.



Reinvigorating South Wales Branch

Club member Viv Perry has come forward to volunteer to reinvigorate activities in South Wales. Viv is writing to all active members to inform them of the planned regeneration of the Branch and has asked for help from anyone who can give it. Viv's Email is viv.perry1@btinternet.com

Next year's Reunion and AGM

The event next year will be in London on Thursday 26th April and we would love to see a good turnout. Why not combine the chance to meet with old friends at the reunion with a visit to London? More details in the next Club News but put the date in your Club diaries!

Welcome New Members

Mrs Jessica Ely - Inverness
 Mr David Fields - Uttoxeter
 Mr Robert Herbert - Beckingham
 Mrs Pauline Joyce - Inverness
 Mrs Doreen Smith - Chelmsford
 Mr Roy Weedon - Camborne

1962 – and the plans for Shell-Mex and B.P.'s move into computers were announced.

It is 55 years since Shell-Mex and B.P. entered the brave new world of computing! In October 1962 the 'Shell-BP News' revealed that

"...between March 1963 and October 1965, two Leo Mark III Computers will be installed at the new computer centre in Hemel Hempstead and will progressively take over the load of financial and statistical computation now handled by Divisional Offices in the south. Over a further eighteen month to two year period, starting in the middle of 1964, a similar Computer Centre will be set up in a location still to be selected to service the northern Divisional Offices...no redundancy will result"

Shell-Mex and B.P. was in the vanguard in Britain in its computing policy. The computer it acquired (see photo) was the latest version of the LEO developed by J. Lyons & Company, a British catering company famous for its teashops but with strong interests in new office management techniques, who had built their own digital computer – 'the World's first business computer'. The first LEO III/6 micro-programmed and controlled by a multi-tasking operating system was completed in 1961. It was a 'solid-state machine with a ferrite core memory' (I'm sure some of you will know what this means!). SMBP was, along with Dunlop, BOC and CAV, among the very first commercial companies to computerise. Of the first thirty Leo III to be built no fewer than five went to SMBP in Hemel or Wythenshawe (where the Northern Computer Centre was, of course, located).

Back in 1962 the Company's main task was to staff up Hemel Hempstead (and eventually Wythenshawe). *'The introduction of computers... provides an exciting challenge for those whose family circumstances make it possible*

to seek new opportunities in a new environment.' The Staff magazine described Hemel Hempstead as "... perhaps the most imaginatively developed and well-rounded of the new towns" and there were artists impressions of the town, its schools and its housing. "The company policy of contributing generously towards costs necessarily incurred by staff moved at its behest will of course apply to those who move to the new Computer Centres". Happy days! "The wives of those who move to Hemel Hempstead can be assured that the Town Centre has a satisfactory assortment of shops..." Truly a moment frozen in time!

The sales pitch for the brave new world concluded with an explanation of why SMBP was adopting computers. "Every means of increasing efficiency must be sought". This included "... the computers' intended function as a tool of management". Such areas as the routing of rail cars, evaluating options for new installations were cited along



with the obvious ones of invoicing, sales reporting, customer accounts, stocks etc.

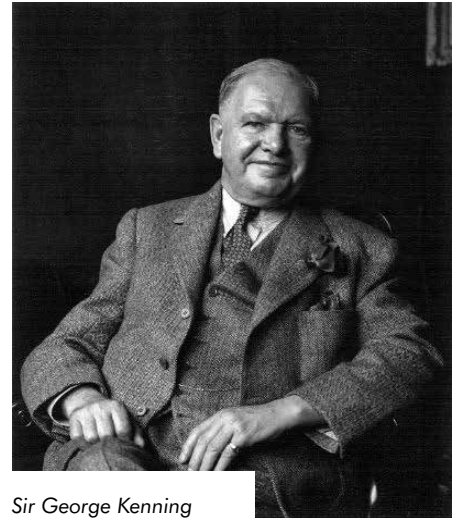
The article in the October 1962 magazine is both charming and cautious. There is a real sense of uncertainty about whether 'everything will go according to plan' which is rather engaging.

Were you around at the birth of computing in SMBP? What were those early years like? Do let us know.



Kennings and Shell-Mex and B.P. – a partnership that endured.

The story of Sir George Kenning (right) and the company he created is one of the great examples of entrepreneurship of the twentieth century and one in which Shell-Mex and B.P. and its predecessors and successors played a significant part. George Kenning grew up in Clay Cross, Derbyshire where he helped his father on a market stall where his later legendary selling skills were learned. In 1901 at the age of twenty he turned to the growing paraffin market as his father had signed an agreement with the Consolidated Petroleum Company – described in the Kenning group history as a ‘forerunner of Shell and BP’ – and which imported Kerosene and other products from Romania. The early years of the century saw the rapid growth of the automobile industry and Kenning saw his opportunity doing a deal with William Morris of Morris Cars. He also provided various services to the new car owners including of course petrol - Kennings was one of the first garage chains all with Shell, BP or National branded petrol and lubricants. Over the years his paraffin hawking business grew into an SMBP Authorised Distributor.



Sir George Kenning

Andy Hull takes up the story

Following the letter from Colin Jones in issue 155 where he touched on the ‘APD’ area in the East Midlands operated by Kennings I was reminded of the unusual and extremely close relationship between the two companies especially throughout the early years of my career.

When I joined SMBP at Nottingham Consumer Area Office early in 1968 to work for Maelor Jones, we shared accommodation with the Kennings Liaison Unit (being the nearest SMBP location to their HQ

at Chesterfield.) This was staffed by Terry Levy and Clive Woods along with their secretary Sue Hammond. Clive looked after the joint interests in real estate and Terry the Retail business interface.

Nottingham Consumer had responsibility for three Distributorships operated by Kennings Fuel Service; one at Brigg (Killingholme) in North Lincolnshire, Leicester and the APD area based at Chesterfield which covered the whole of Derbyshire where they had exclusive rights over all markets and all products

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operating out of Doe Hill Depot near Tibshelf which was more akin to a main line Terminal. Unusually for the 60s the principals of the Brigg and Chesterfield businesses were rather mature ladies – the much-feared Lily Wilson known by us as ‘Diamond Lil’ ran Brigg and Miss Whittingham (no one knew her first name!) ran Chesterfield, they were very powerful women, Miss Wilson having previously been Sir George Kenning’s Secretary. He had apparently made provision for her to be ‘looked after’ when he was no longer around and it was rumoured that Sir George’s office had remained exactly as he had left it complete with a cigar in the ashtray when he died in 1956.

What struck me as remarkable at the time was the strength of the SMBP relationship with the Kennings Group. SMBP’s company cars were all supplied

by Kennings and tyres had to be purchased from Kennings Tyre Service. Kennings also built road tankers at Osset and had major truck maintenance bases in Leeds and Derby which served SMBP’s road tanker fleet mirroring the work of Fulham Motor Repair Centre.

The Kenning Group employed around 8,000 staff and operated hundreds of Shell, B.P. and National retail sites across the length and breadth of the UK in addition to their numerous Authorised Distributorships marketing Domestic, Agricultural and Commercial fuels and lubricants for SMBP. They went on to build two Motorway Service areas in 1962 at Strensham on the M5 and Rivington on the M61 in 1971 but failed in their bids for more at Charnock Richard (M6), Taddington (M1), Keele (M6) and Medway (M2). The costs of submitting those detailed bids were quite a drain financially and unusually the motorway services were not to prove as successful as all their previous ventures. When finally leaving this venture, Kennings said they wanted to focus on their core motor dealership business.

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Today there is also very little remaining of this once mighty and pioneering organisation as in 1986 the Kenning Motor Group were bought by TKM (Tozer Kemsley and Millbourn) who broke up the Kenning Group of companies and franchises, selling them off separately.

John Smeddle adds:

There were three components to the SMBP/Kennings relationship – the Agency Area, Retail and the ADs. When, during the run up to Brand Separation, BP was told that Shell had Pilot Oils with Maelor Jones in charge (with Appleyards capital) they decided that they would like to have an AD area too. Kennings were selected and approached, and Brian Bowden saw me and offered me the job of GM. However, the whole project foundered on Kennings' insistence that

only George or David Kenning or their Finance Director could sign cheques! Had the deal not collapsed I'd probably have been 'branded' BP – on such small chances of fortune life's direction hinges!

Later in SUKO, from 1980 to 1986, I was the Retail 'lead' for all Kennings business and travelled to visit them quarterly, first with Geoff Dowling and latterly with Dudley Nicholls. We met in their boardroom with either David or George Kenning chairing. They were a very conservative organisation, indeed in many ways old fashioned, but they were very loyal to Shell and BP.

George and David (one had an MC from the war) ran the whole show with a tight grip. The family were very big in Chesterfield, I think one of them was a Director of Chesterfield F.C. and they certainly supported Derbyshire cricket, employing some cricketers in the winter. Very sadly, George and David died within about 18 months of each other in about 1984, and really, there was little succession planning. Later the business was sold and the name was lost to the motor trade.

The SMBP/Kennings relationship was very close. We bought a large percentage of our cars from them in 1946 – 1976; all our tyre business went to them, including distribution and car hire. They had an uncanny knack of finding out when we had not done some business with them which was quite uncomfortable. Until the mid-1970s,



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Eric Westray was head of Kennings Liaison which covered everything: the Agency Area; ADs; Retail; Tyres etc.

For me, Kennings could be summarised by their retendering of their whole dealer forecourt portfolio in 1984/5. We were given a year for this, so clearly both BP and Shell were anxious to hold what we had, and make some gains. Esso also got involved, and Fina. We made multiple offers: to purchase some forecourts; to convert from competitors; to redevelop etc. etc. After this considerable exercise, George told us they'd decided to leave everything as it was! No gains, no losses!!

The 'mucky smalls end' again.

By Cliff Quarrell

Since writing about my training years with the "Mucky Smalls End" of the Oil Market, a few years ago, it has struck me that a whole chapter of life has now almost gone for good. Most of the Authorised / Marketing Distributors associated with that era have ceased to exist, or have been swallowed up in some grand takeovers. Lost, along with the great people they employed and the tremendous customer service that they gave. Now "all just memories". These Distributors were set up in the

late fifties, to look after the 'small drop' end of the fuel delivery market, dealing with domestic customers, farmers, and small businesses. They also ran a boiler maintenance service which looked after the boilers and cookers that burnt the fuel. For most of my working life with oil, I was involved with the training and technical standards of these service units. They provided me with a whole lot of personal off beat memories which should not go completely unsung, or lost in the mists of time.

Just reading through a list of names of these Distributors, conjured up all sorts of images and locations, Tamar Oils, West Cumberland Fanners, Evans of Llanbradach, Island Oils, and Mayes of Wickford, Tincknells of Wells - to name but a few. Some consisted of no more than a depot, a couple of

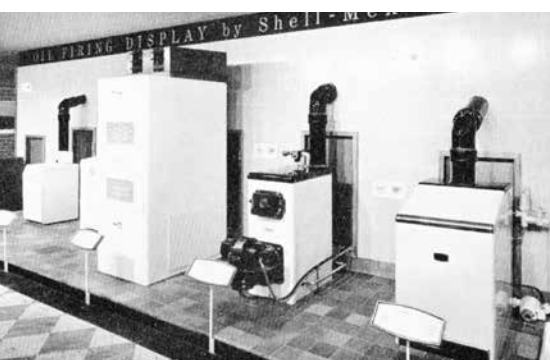




tankers, and half a dozen employees. Others were a small part of a much bigger outfit - William Cory's, Kennings, Hartwells. Whatever their size they managed to keep a fair proportion of the nation warm, and tractor wheels turning, in those days.

During my Fulham Years the Training, Technical Standards, Head Office liaison, and the AD/MD world, overlapped. This produced some wonderful memories. Just the mention of 'water washing a Perkins', 'COS oil flow meters', 'servicing Don Units in oil fired cookers', even 'Harcal Boilers' in which SMBP had a stake, will I know bring tears, frustration, and much laughter to many who remember. One of my roles in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was to visit their Service Departments to check that they were performing up to standard technically. It was then I met some of the wonderful characters that worked in that market place, and kept the flag of Oil flying high - or not, as sometimes occurred!

But first you had to find the depot or office. Often it was hidden away down a side street, around the back of where the railway station had once been, before Dr Beeching had his way. Sometimes it was still rail-fed, in others product came in by road tanker from the nearest mainline terminal. Some, like Bradburys at Yelland, was almost on the quay, and fed by sea from across the Bristol Channel at Llandarcy. Another at Newbury, (Hartwells) had a grandstand view of Newbury race course. Yet another one had offices which were not in the depot, but in a private house, (M



H Richards Newquay), or even over a shop in the main street, (Celtic Oils Swansea). Celtic also had a stores depot under the arches of the

M4 Motorway bridge at the Swansea turnoff. Many a course I ran there with the overhead thump-thump of thousands of wheels going over the expansion joints in the road all day.

Once you had arrived, you had to park your car in the right place, or else the yard foreman would be on your tail - Fire Regulations and access he said - (sometimes it was just the bosses' spot). There was always a warm welcome and a cup of coffee in the Boiler Maintenance office. Then down to work discussing how the latest new boiler was performing, interrupted now and then by the static and clatter from the base unit of the VHF radios that the service engineers had in their vans. It was always intriguing to listen to the service controllers operating this. They were often ladies of mature years and completely unflappable. With a phone held under the chin against her shoulder, the radio mike in one hand, a pencil in the other recording the details, and having a tripartite conversation between customer, engineer, and themselves, organising the next appointment for the engineer to call on a boiler breakdown. Salt of the earth those controllers.

It was strange that not far away from the depot there was always a good local pub at which the distributors' service staff were inevitably well known (they probably serviced the boiler). At one Hartwells depot, most staff were social members of the local Bowls Club situated just around the corner, and we always went there for an excellent home cooked meal. Great times they were with Service Managers Gerry Long, Arthur Cox, and Keith Wilkinson of Hartwells; Ken Roberts at M H Richards; that really thoroughbred Welshman Les Jones at Celtic. Not forgetting the 'tug of war anchor-man' at Bradburys, Rodney Murch. Some like Bruce Harris from Hartwells are still personal friends.

The bosses, the AD/MD Principals, were in much the same mould, switched on businessmen, but with quite different management styles. Some could be quite intimidating at first, but once you got to know them, great characters who

called a spade a shovel. The always smiling David Tucker from Celtic; the formidable Harry Williams of Kellands; the never to be forgotten, one and only, Rex Hatcher of Hartwells. They all seemed to have the knack of knowing you were on their premises. At times you would be summoned to the presence to explain why such and such a boiler was giving so much trouble. Especially



if it had been a Harcal 430! You might even be treated to lunch on occasions. At M H Richards Newquay run by David Causton, it was always the Hotel Bristol (above), where he always received very personal service from the Head Waiter (we serviced their boiler too). That hotel has other memories. The ADs needed support people from SMBP to cover all aspects of Finance, Sales, IT and Technical, (me). We would visit the Distributors in the South West Peninsular over a day or so and the Hotel Bristol Newquay became the place to stay overnight. By accident, (or more often design), two or three of us would be there together, add in some AD/MD staff, some Boiler Manufacturer's Reps, and the result was often a very merry late night. A lot of business was done and good contacts made on such occasions (obviously!)

From the late fifties to the late nineties these Distributors did a sterling job, delivering fuel and servicing the appliances that burnt it. Countrywide, and in all weathers (including a few grim winters). A drive down memory lane today would find, sadly, nearly all those depots gone. No railway lines, no oil gantries, no tankers, no offices. All lost under houses or factory estates. Perhaps even more sadly many of those stalwarts of the AD/MD world mentioned above are no longer with us. The 'Mucky Smalls End' is long gone, but not forgotten and very much part of the SMBP story - and an enormous chunk of my working life.

News from the Branches



It is very sad to see so many Branches inactive – or at least not informing us about their events. As the Club ages it is understandable that not all of those who have given Branches stalwart service over the years are able to continue to do so. If you feel you could help do please contact the Branch as listed or get in touch with Colin Hill.

Inverness

Contact: Keith Pickering
☎ 01349 368134
✉ kpyorkie75@gmail.com

Our Christmas lunch was held at the Kingsmill Hotel on Thursday 14th December. Approx 35-40 members and partners attended (more in the next Club News) plus guests from Aberdeen. We plan our first meeting for 2018 to be at the same venue on the last Thursday in March at 11 a.m.

Aberdeen

Contact: Graham Walker
☎ 01651 869206
✉ mrgrahamwalker@hotmail.com

Coming up:

January 8th: 10:30-11:30 Coffee morning Michies Coffee Shop, 391 Union Street.

February 12th: 10:30-11:30 Coffee morning as above.

March 12th: 10:30-11:30 Coffee morning as above.

Glasgow

Contact: Elaine Ellen
☎ 0770 3578614
✉ elaine.ellen@btinternet.com
www.smbp44glasgow.weebly.com

The first meeting of the season on 19 October was very well attended and members enjoyed a talk by Emma Martinelli from RSPB Loch Lomond. Emma showed slides of various parts of the reserve and explained the development of the reserve over the last two years. Everyone present can now identify the call of the Spotted

Crake - just listen for a dripping tap! Easy..... maybe not. The Spotted Crake (below) is a migrant who arrives in early May, only calls at night and only calls until he has found a mate, thereafter he remains silent. (Ed: No comment).



Spotted Crake

This was also our first meeting at our new venue and we were delighted with the extra space, light and warmth. Please visit our website for details of our Branch or contact Elaine. We would love to find some new members.

Our November meeting, held on Thursday 16 November, was also very well attended. Our speaker – Kathleen Cartwright – gave an extremely interesting presentation, with amazing photographs. Her topic was North Greenland and, as we discovered, she and her husband used to run a travel company that specialized in trekking type holidays in the North Arctic areas. Imagine being dropped off, in a very remote area, by small plane and then walking or going by small boat to see the geology, flora



Glasgow Branch



Glasgow Branch

and fauna of the area including the occasional sightings of polar bears (fortunately well fed and not therefore interested in the trekkers!). We all collectively 'aahed' at the photographs of the Arctic Fox cubs and various other similarly cute animals and birds.

Our new venue proved even better on the second visit as this time we knew where everything was!

Coming up

January 18th: Mr Watt: Antiques Road Show.

February 15th: Christine Miller: The Story Continues.

March 15th: Rear Admiral Mike Gregory: 'From the Army to submarines' (preceded by the AGM).

Belfast

Contact: Norman Mavitty
7 Barn Hill, Donaghadee BT21 0QA.
☎ 028 9188 3445
✉ nmavitty@hotmail.com

Londonderry

Contact: Mr. A.T. Hoy
125 Mill Road, Portstewart BT47 2QJ
☎ 028 7134 8337
✉ hoyschool@gmail.com

Northumbria

Contact: Keith Taylor
 ☎ 0191 4137 185
 📧 keithtaylor275@btinternet.com

Coming up:

Wednesday 10th January: The New Crown, Mowbray Road, South Shields, Tyne & Wear NE33 3NG

Also (as above) on the following dates:

14th February 2018.
 14th March 2018.

West Riding

Contact: Terry Morley
 ☎ 0113 2667326

Coming up:

Thursday 21st February: 12.00-12.30 The Queens Arms, (A61) 201 Harrogate Road, Leeds LS7 3PT.

Teesside

Contact: Ces Tate
 ☎ 01642 722 491

South Yorkshire & Lincolnshire

Contact: Jim & Audrey Broughton
 ☎ 01522 805 319
 📧 Audrey.brought2@ntlworld.com

Manchester

Contact: Pat Withers
 ☎ 0161 4372072/0776 11006720
 📧 witherspt@gmail.com

Coming up:

Manchester branch have their usual monthly pub lunch on the second Monday of each month at 12:30. Contact Pat for details.

North West - Western

Contact: Norman Waterfall
 ☎ 01829 270 095
 📧 normanwaterfall@talktalk.net

Our Annual visit to the Burnside Hotel at Bowness-on-Windermere October 11th coincided with one



North West Branch

of the wettest and windy days of late autumn. The trees had their usual beautiful colours, and Lake Windermere was certainly full of water. However fifteen hardy stalwarts battled through the inclement weather for a very enjoyable socialize and excellent lunch.

North Midlands

Contact: Frank or Carol Barnett
 ☎ 01384 833 132
 📧 carol.a.barnett@blueyonder.co.uk

Our second Skittle games this year was once again at The Squirrel, Alveley, Nr Bridgenorth, on 18th October 2017 and was attended by 21 members and guests. Although the weather was dry it was chilly and we had to ask for the heating to be put up as some of our group felt a little cold. We had great fun during the afternoon but most of us seem to be getting worse not better at knocking the skittles down but there was plenty of laughter. We took a break for a light lunch which once again was very good indeed. This was followed by our usual raffle with a lovely selection of prizes all supplied by some of our members and guests. Our thanks go to them for their support. Our last game was a knock out and was won by one of our Guests who very kindly donated his winnings to the club. Many thanks go to him.

Coming up (provisional):

January: Carvery Lunch The Plough. Far Forrest. Bewdley.

March/April: Skittles. The Squirrel. Alverly Nr Bridgenorth.

16th July: Proposed 5 day Coach Holiday to Skegness, if you are interested, contact Frank or Carol.

South Midlands

Contact: Malcolm Bury
 ☎ 01296 630169
 📧 malcolmgb@btinternet.com

Our final pub lunch of 2017 was held at the Three Horseshoes, Winkwell, just outside Hemel Hempstead, a venue very familiar to many former Hemel Computer Centre staff who used to escape there during their lunch hours. Throughout the year our pub lunches have been consistently well supported and our October date was no exception with more than forty members present on the day sharing a most enjoyable couple of hours or so. As one of our regular venues the Three Horseshoes was well organised for our visit and provided quick and efficient service to our large gathering.

Sadly, we had to cancel our advertised trip to Audley End House and Gardens which was planned for early September. Most unusually for our Branch, the outing failed to attract sufficient supporters to make the visit a viable one.

Coming up:

Our first pub lunch of 2018 will be held in early/mid-March and the actual date and venue will be chosen at our next Committee meeting in January. Our usual diary circular giving full details of our 2018 programme will be circulated to all active members in February.

Chelmsford

Contact: Peter Gobell
 ☎ 01206 867947
 📧 peter.gobell39@btinternet.com

A successful lunch was held on the 25th October at Orsett Hall. Fifty-two members attended unfortunately we had six cancellations on the day and four the previous week. The venue has been one of our long standing venues and the food and service first class. The chairman Peter announced that Albert and Win England were to celebrate their

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NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES



Chelmsford Branch

70th Wedding Anniversary and presented them with a bouquet to mark the occasion on behalf of the Branch. (See Wedding Anniversaries).

Ipswich

Contact: Tony Grayston

☎ 01473 219860

✉ rosemary.grayston@sky.com

Or **Contact:** David Cattermole

☎ 01473 610 534

✉ davidcattermole@yahoo.co.uk

A return visit to the Ski Lodge restaurant took place on September 26th when 23 members and guests attended. A special welcome was extended to two guests who had come over from Canada. The food was plentiful and excellent and likely to be on next year's schedule.

King's Lynn

Contact: Tom Cannon

☎ 01485 540346

✉ tomcannon36@gmail.com

Twenty-six members and guests enjoyed a wonderful carvery lunch with a huge choice of desserts, many home-made, at the newly refurbished Foldgate Inn, Stradsett. Mandy, of Angel, Watlington fame, had moved there so we knew the lunch would be delicious. This was a good attendance though some were unable



King's Lynn Branch

to come owing to medical problems or hospital appointments. (I don't think we have many members under the age of 80 now!!) Most of our loyal friends from Ipswich branch, and other distant parts, attended and all thought it was well worth the journey. We were praised as being a very friendly bunch! The camaraderie was certainly at a high level on this occasion!

Coming up:

Everyone is looking forward to returning to the Foldgate Inn in the Spring of 2018.

Greater Bristol

Contact: Roger Gamlin

☎ 0117 9684 638/ 07748787392

✉ rogergamlin@aol.com

Our Autumn Pub Lunch event took place on Thursday, September 28th 2017 – a return visit to 'The Salthouse' in Clevedon. We met at 11am for coffee and sat outside in lovely sunshine admiring the view of Wales, the pier and the boating lake. Plenty of time to reminisce about SMBP and to ask after old friends, etc. We sat down for lunch in a reserved area of the restaurant at 12-15 and ordered from the extensive menu. The event was organised by Roger Gamlin, our Chair, who was again thanked for his efforts.

Bournemouth and Southampton

Contact: Tony Reeve-Parker

☎ 01425 837285

✉ tonyrp456@gmail.com

We enjoyed The Kings Arms at Longham - we had a record attendance, thank you to all who came along. It became quite obvious why they won the award for the 'Best Dining Pub in Dorset' - from the time we arrived until we left nothing was too much trouble for the staff. The meal was served with quiet efficiency coupled



with the excellent quality of the food. The Kings Arms is certainly worthy of a return visit.

Coming up:

Our Spring Lunch will probably be in the Cadnam area - mid May – watch out for your invitation.

East Kent

Contact: Bernard Smith

☎ 01227 262 775

✉ tessdale2004@hotmail.com

Coming up:

March 15th: 11.30 for 12.00. The West End Tavern, Marden, Kent. (For non-attendees 'Beware the Ides of March!')

July 12th: 11.30 for 12.00. The Wagon and Horses, Faversham Road, Charing Hill, Kent.

Tunbridge Wells

Contact: Charles Richards

☎ 01892 528 231

✉ cajrichards@yahoo.co.uk

See under East Kent.

Guildford, Kingston & London West

Contact: John Burton

☎ 020 8977 3732

✉ john_a_burton@talk21.com

Harrow

Contact: Greta Chandler,
27 Elm Ave, Ruislip, HA4 8PE

☎ 020 8866 8452

✉ gretalon@gmail.com

Coming up:

January 18th: Lunch Sea Pebbles, 354 Uxbridge Road, HA5 4HR, 12.30 p.m. Bus stop outside restaurant.

March 23rd: Special celebratory lunch at Miller and Carter (The Plough). Please note the date!

Your Letters

John Orchard

Thank you so much for your very kind letter offering the Club's condolences on John's death. If I may, I would like to add a rather poignant footnote and reminder of how close-knit the 'Shell family' has always been. Listed in the same pages as John's obituary was an entry for Douglas Booth. 'Doug', as John called him, was a childhood friend, and they grew up together. In the early fifties it was Doug who suggested to John that he ought to apply to Shell for a job and make better use of his talents! John and Doug lost touch as their career paths took different directions and after 'Brand Separation' John left the company to pursue an academic career. I was deeply saddened therefore to see that the two old friends had died within three days of each other, both aged 93.

*Margaret Orchard
5 Little Stream Close
Northwood
Middlesex HA6 3LF*

SMBP and the Army Emergency Reserve

Shell-Mex and B.P. encouraged staff to join the Army Emergency Reserve (AER) and many served in the Royal Army Service Corp (RASC) whose responsibilities included the storage and transportation of the Army's Petrol Oil and Lubricants (POL). The Company gave paid leave of absence for the two weeks annual training. In the 1950s and 1960s, many staff were returning after completing their two year National Service and they had an obligation to serve three years in the AER. But volunteers also joined the Reserve. SMBP volunteers who served in the POL units were drawn largely from the Operations staff.

SMBP staff were dominant members of some of the POL units. In traditional SMBP style, officers came from the sales side, whilst warrant officers and sergeants were from Operations.



The AER were based at a variety of places, including Aldershot, Farnborough and Bedford. The annual two weeks usually included a few days under canvas - this was liked by officers under the mistaken belief that everyone else liked it too!

In the photo taken in 1961 at Bedford, three on the left are Warrant Officers class II from SMBP operating centres including Ron Murdoch, Edinburgh airport in the centre, next to him is Sgt David Roberts and Warrant Officer class I, Bill Barth of Shell International.

The emphasis of the training was the supply of fuel to motorised equipment in combat. We drove 3 ton trucks and were also thoroughly tested on map reading. The training programme included laying temporary pipelines and organising jerry can filling from rail cars. During membership of the AER all reservists were subject to being called up in the event of a national emergency. Between the mid-1950s and 1960s, there were nine areas of conflict involving British armed forces. Five thousand reservists were called up for Suez - just over 5% of the reserve force.

Some members of the 44 Club may remember Les Barker who retired at Brand Separation from Organisation and Methods. He was a Warrant Officer Class II who near the end of quite a vigorous fortnight, on being asked in the Sergeants' Mess bar if he had enjoyed his two weeks, replied that he "was just beginning to do so".

*David Roberts
11 Hillside Way
Withdean
Brighton BN1 5FE*

David Turner

It was good to see the letter from my old friend David Turner in response to his 83rd birthday card. I worked alongside David in 1957 when his awful trip to Charing Cross Hospital took place after he had succumbed to a gas leak in the basement of Cecil Chambers. It was me who enquired why David had not returned from his lunch hour - I established he was helping Tommy Barrow with a job in the SMBP Horticultural shop in Cecil Chambers. He had volunteered to decant some fertilizer into small bags there so we decided to check up on him. To our horror we found David laid out on the floor unconscious. The emergency ambulance crew had great difficulty in reaching him in the basement. I am so pleased I checked his absence in the office and that he was to make a full recovery. I believe a new suit from Fifty Shilling Tailors in the Strand was provided by Shell-Mex and B.P.!

*Mike Howard
25 Dove Park
Chorleywood
Rickmansworth WD3 5NY*

Accounts Sales

I enjoyed the article about Mike Howard's long association with SMBP and the 44 Club. Curiously, like Mike, I too spent some time in 1960 in Accounts Sales. Rattling my brain, I recall Rex Massey was in charge, sitting in a box. Other names from the section: Cyril Campion, who had one leg; George Grounds, who had the window seat and was very cheery; and Peter Garner was good fun, and deep into horse racing and betting. John Harris was the only person other than me under 30. We used to do the Accounts for Fina and others who picked up products from

continued on page 12

YOUR LETTERS

terminals; swaps; loans of fuels etc. I can't say I enjoyed it, but as an oddity, I do recall having to go to see Grace Arnold who stood over the photocopier. No one else was allowed to touch this very expensive piece of modern office equipment – her whole day was spent feeding the machine, while we clients stood patiently waiting for the output. When she went to lunch, or had a comfort break, the photocopier was closed!

(Ed: Regrettably a couple of John's more colourful/libellous recollections from his Accounts Sales days have had to be redacted.)

*John Smeddle
4 Taylors Place
Trottscliffe
West Malling ME19 5BS*

Shell House Bristol

On September 11th I had to attend a court hearing in what is now the 'Vintry Building', Wine Street, Bristol. (I was not on trial! I was assisting a family with an Appeal regarding their Housing Benefit! It was a score draw). But it was like going home. The previous name of the building was Shell House where I was based for several years and before that it was Shell - BP House. The waiting room was an office I occupied for 3



years looking out onto the Bank of England building opposite. The actual court room consisted of another office I had occupied plus those of David Richens and his secretaries. It brought back many memories of thirty plus years ago. The original brass plate recording the opening of the building is still there on the first floor.

*Maurice Husbands
6 Kewstoke Road
Stoke Bishop
Bristol BS9 1HB*



Birthday Thanks

In response to a number of enquiries this is to let you know that we try and mark every member's **75th** birthday, **80th** birthday and then every year thereafter. We are sorry if we ever miss you – please let us know and we'll try and get it right in future! Readers tell us how much they enjoy hearing about old friends and colleagues so we are always happy to print your thanks and memories.

75th It's hard to believe nearly twenty-five years have passed since I last darkened the doors of Shell-Mex House and returned north to Scotland to indulge myself of the joys of lowering



my golf handicap (unsuccessfully) and hill-walking. I climbed Ben Nevis (a bit more than a hill at 4,406 feet) on a most appalling day – nothing new there then. My doom and gloom has recently been lifted by the return to my life of the Swiss 'lass' I first went out with in London in 1964/5. She is rather sprightlier than me and came with 5 lively grandchildren. She has set me the task of learning not just Hochdeutsch, (Standard German) but

Schwiizerdütsch (Swiss-German) as well! As you can imagine I take an interest in migration ('Freedom of Movement') issues at the moment. New challenges and new horizons – long may it continue.

*Ken Guthrie
1a Bank Street
North Berwick EH39 4NY*

80th I am enjoying retirement and have many happy memories of my 25 years with the company. I have to say that the years with SMBP in Shell-Mex House rate the highest! All the best to the 44 Club and its members.

*Eileen Davis
23 Greenfields
St Neots
Cambridgeshire PE19 1SL*

83rd Hearing from you bucked me up immensely after a poor year in which I lost my dear wife Mary after 58 years together. Next year must be better. I send my best wishes to 44 Club members and those that make things like the birthday cards happen.

*Nigel Browning
8 Clarence Grove Road
Weston-super-Mare
N. Somerset BS23 4AQ*

83rd Yet another quick single on the scorecard! Although it is now 37 years since I departed from Group service the memories of 23 years in harness are strong as ever. Best regards to all of my erstwhile colleagues, particularly those around in the last 12/15 years in Shell Retail.

*Gordon Pattenden
127 Lower Green Road
Tunbridge Wells TN4 8TT*

84th Having started with Shell International in 1954, after ten years I joined Shell-Mex and B.P. as a Commercial Market Representative in Sussex and Kent. Dealing with real customers opened my eyes and turned me into a half decent salesman. The Company was very well organized and provided a sound base when I joined the management training team at the Node.

On the split into Shell UK and BP Oil I was happy to be invited to become Training Manager for the latter - another very well run enterprise. My final 3 years were spent in the Head Office of BP as Manager Management

Training and I enjoyed the international side of the business once again.

The 44 Club gives me the opportunity to meet former Shell colleagues, which is great. Long live the 44 Club!

(Ed: I don't think that you are the only member, Roy, to have worked for Shell, BP and Shell-Mex and B.P. but it's fairly unusual. Is there anyone else out there who'd like to reminisce about both our parents (having worked for both of them at some point as well as for SMBP)?

*Roy Fielder
12 Jameson Road
Harpenden SM5 2EN*

84th *Sent from my iPad:* Thanks to all...I still see a few members once a month as we meet for a drink and a chat. The years are going by a little bit faster now but my wife Brenda and I are still enjoying life.

*John (Charlie) Pearson
40 Crawley Down Road,
Felbridge,
East Grinstead RH19 2PS*

90th I joined Power on 1st April 1954 and on Brand Separation I moved to Leicester as a Commercial Rep. On the whole it was a happy time particularly in my last five years as Sales Manager for the Shell Distributor Autobrec Oils. I remember with pleasure the time spent on the Shell stand at the Royal Welsh Show in the 1980s. SMBP and Shell were wonderful to work for - and the pension scheme is brilliant. Please keep the magazine going, it's always interesting.

I'm glad to say I'm reasonably fit and I'm able to get around. I go every afternoon to see my wife who is in a care home with dementia.

*Barrie Wilson
New House
The Hedgerows
Ditton Priors
Bridgnorth WV16 6SA*

91st It is just 33 years since I retired - when 'Lubricants' moved to Cheadle Hulme. I have just passed my annual driving test and am reasonably fit and well. Many moons ago I used to share the night watchman's hut at Eccles Installation/Terminal with Dougie Booth and George Lees with just the odd visit from Tom Osborne - all notable Fuel Oil personalities of their day. Vintage stuff!

*Jimmie Robertson
Queensland
Australia*

Thanks also received from: Terry Morley (86), Peter Phillips (86), Gladys Fryer (96), Tom Burrows (75), TG Christie, Alan Pullin, Mike Webb (90), Doreen Lococo (87), Stanley Unwin (95), Ken Jenkins (89), Bob Beattie (91), Colin Charter (83), Margaret E Kershaw (86), John Long (75).

Thanks to Eric Lakey for his letter of appreciation of the work that our Birthday Cards team do and for his kind donation.

LANGDON AT LARGE



Forecourt automation - 1973 style

Obituaries

We regret to report the deaths of the following members. Our condolences are sent to their families, friends and past colleagues.

BEATY (90). Mrs Doreen Beaty of Brighton, Australia died on 26th February 2017. She was the wife of Mr Stewart Beaty once Manager, Aviation Department, Shell-Mex House.

BELL (85). Mr Edward Bell of Meopham died on 2nd October 2017. He was Print Room Supervisor, Shell-Mex House when he left group service in 1984 after 28 years.

CAMPBELL (97). Mrs Iris Campbell of Narberth (formerly of Hucclecote) died on 18th October 2017. She was the widow of Mr James Campbell once an Area Superintendent, UKP, Berwick Wood, Bristol.

CRISP (78). Mrs Ann Crisp of Corringham died on 6th September 2017. She was the wife of Mr Kenneth Crisp once a Driver at Shell Haven.

FARRINGTON (85). Mr Gordon Farrington of Coventry died on 20th September 2017. He was a Senior Airfield Operator at Birmingham Airport when he left group service in 1987 after 22 years.

GIBSON (82). Mr John Gibson of Frodsham has died. He worked in BP Retail Services, Manchester Office when he left group service in 1985 after 15 years.

HARRISON (81). Mr George Harrison of Oulton Broad died on 20th October 2017. He was a Driver at Buncefield when he left group service in 1992 after 23 years.

HIGGINS (95). Mr Ivor Higgins of Haverhill died on 4th October 2017. He was a Tanker Driver, Eastern Region when he left group service in 1953 after 16 years.

INGHAM (91). Miss Noleen Ingham of Fulham died on 15th October 2017. She was a Secretary in Aviation Department, Shell-Mex House when she left group service in 1986 after 13 years.

IRISH (86). Mr Donald Irish of Truro has died. He was a Driver at Falmouth Terminal when he left group service in 1991 after 24 years.

LIGHT (87). Mr Valentine Light of Southampton died on 12th September 2017. He was a Driver at Hamble when he left group service after 34 years.

MCGUINNESS (81). Mrs Carmel McGuinness of Raynes Park died on 25th August 2017. She worked in Shell Centre when she left group service.

MCNEILL (90). Mr William McNeill of Londonderry died on 24th September 2017. He was a Terminal Operator 1 at Londonderry when he left group service in 1983 after 26 years.

MUNDEN (76). Mr Keith Munden of Verwood died on 7th October 2017. He was Shift Manager i/c at Doehill Terminal when he left group service in 1980 after 19 years.

NAILER (93). Mr Cyril Nailer of Weybridge died on 14th September 2017. He retired from Shell Centre in 1982 after 35 years.

PALMER-LEWIS (77). Mr Ian Palmer-Lewis of Chipping Camden died on 16th September 2017. He was Regional Manager, Retail when he left group service in 1996 after 33 years.

RUSSELL (92). Mrs Joan Russell of Stratford-upon-Avon died on 29th May 2017. She was the wife of Mr William Russell, once National Customer Services Manager, Wythenshawe.

SMITH (80). Mr Alan Smith of Poynton (formerly of Cheadle Hulme) died on 27th September 2017. He was Disbursement Auditor at Wythenshawe when he left group service in 1991 after 33 years.

SNAITH (95). Mrs Isabella (Isa) Snaith of Shiremoor died on 24th September 2017. She was the widow of Mr Archibald Snaith, once a Cashier at Jarrow Terminal.

SOUTHWORTH (85). Mr John Southworth of Wilmslow has died. He was Marine Sales Superintendent at BP Oil Limited when he left group service in 1982 after 23 years.



Wedding Anniversaries

Platinum

Albert & Win England
(pictured below)
51 Gifford Cross Avenue
Corringham
Stanford-le-Hope
Essex
SS17 7NH
1st November 2017



Albert & Win England

Diamond

Keith & Frances Meredith
(pictured below)
207 Dunraven Drive
Derriford
Plymouth
PL6 6BA
5th October 2017



Keith & Frances Meredith

Golden

Robert (Bob) & Joan McKay
13 Peterborough Way
Jarrow
Tyne And Wear
NE32 4XB
8th March 2018

Graham and Barbara Chant
112 Rushetts Road
Langley Green
Crawley
RH11 7NQ
23rd March 2018

Sapphire

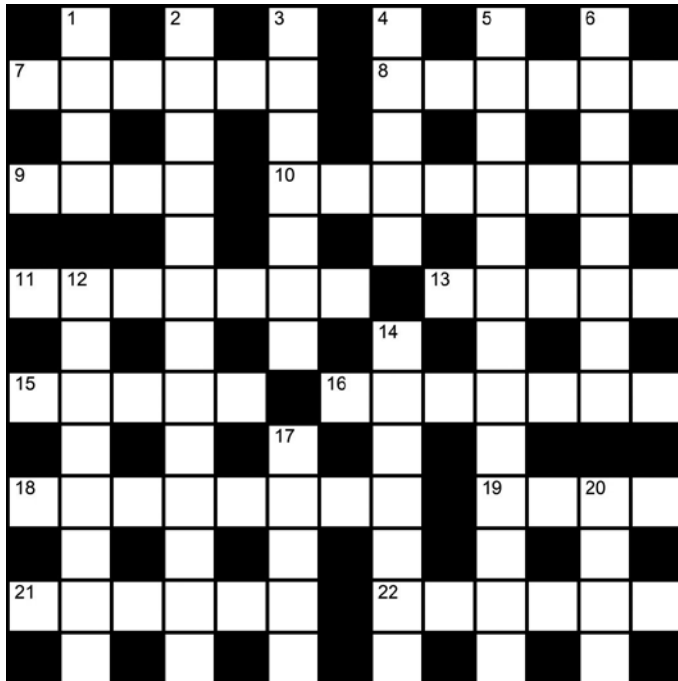
Alan and Patricia Pullin
37/36B Balmoral Suite
Summer Lane Care Home
Diamond Batch
Worle
Weston-super-Mare
BS24 7AY
31st May 2017

and Finally ...

Quotable Quote

"No computer ever had an original thought in its life"
Article in Shell-BP News on computing – October 1962

Prize Crossword

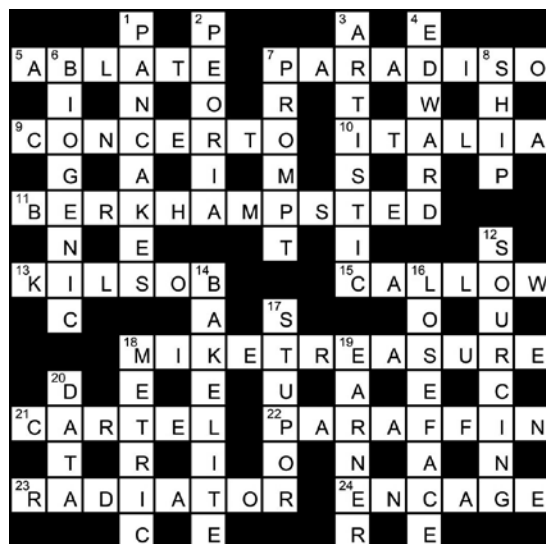


Across

- 7 A horse's toilet tissue? (6)
- 8 Useless (antonym) (6)
- 9 Language of what was once Siam (4)
- 10 A region of Nicaragua (8)
- 11 The man with the trumpet (7)
- 13 Programmers' language at Hemel ? (5)
- 15 From which great oaks grow (5)
- 16 Kent cricketer who met his match (7)
- 18 Get on well with (3,2,3)
- 19 Mr Grant who played Bridget Jones Boss (4)
- 21 Founder of Methodism (6)
- 22 Louis Armstrong's friend (6)

Down

- 1 You entered Shell-Mex House under one (4)
- 2 Impossible to see (13)
- 3 Have to be cleared to proceed (7)
- 4 Norman sat next to this Mary (5)
- 5 Hemel Hempstead's county (13)
- 6 Term to describe low quality lubricants blenders (8)
- 12 Source of historical documents (8)
- 14 The clever guys ! (7)
- 17 Olympic City in 2020 (5)
- 20 The endpoint of what we are trying to achieve (4)



Last Issue's Crossword

Thirteen all-correct entries from which our Leo III computer chose Colin Peachey of Hemel Hempstead as the winner. A copy of the 'Shell Guide to Hertfordshire' on its way to you, Colin.

Mea Culpa!

Clue 11 across had as its answer 'Berkhampsted' – a misspelling of the Town. Many of you picked up this error for which many apologies.

This edition of the Club News is available online at:
<http://tinyurl.com/ClubNews157>

Closing date for next issue
15th February 2017