

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 1

23rd September 1983

NOW WHAT?!

From the Editor, John Law:

"What's this rubbish?" is the indignant cry I hear so often from my room beside the mail racks. But wait! This is actually interesting!

For a long time we've all felt that certain categories of news in the Laboratory weren't getting round quickly enough, if at all. Three of us (Benedict, Martin Lamont and myself) put this to Harry and Elizabeth, and they agreed that a staff News Sheet, for internal distribution within the Laboratory only, might be a good idea. I've been asked to produce one per month, until the material submitted for it peters out.

The plan is to keep it down to 1 sheet (bang goes that idea). It is intended for all of us (see attached Staff List) and we intend to concentrate on news items which heretofore have been communicated via "the grapevine" ("What grapevine?", you ask).

Things like especially interesting Colloquia will be advertised, but I personally will be more interested in advertising, for example, a forthcoming staff-student cricket match, or a Lab trip to The Lakes. These are of more interest to us all generally than highly specialised technical events, which are already advertised through other media.

Naturally, we will give emphasis to Laboratory business - but if you have a washing machine to sell (and could continue to work alongside its new owner), try The Horse's Mouth: if we've space, we'll put it in.

You will have noticed that I have been using "we" and "I" rather loosely above. This is because "we" is actually all of us, and I am merely (ha!) the person who puts all the material together.

NEW STAFF AT THE LABORATORY

We have no fewer than six new members of staff, as well as new Research Associates and Visitors....

READER IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Peter Hitchcock has come to us from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, where he spent four years teaching Computing Science.

His career up until then was: born and bred in London; BA in Physics at Oxford; IBM Hursley for three years; PhD in Computing Science at Warwick; IEM Peterlee for four years (including one year at Palo Alto); IBM Educational Centre in Brussels for two and a half years.

He and his wife have two boys, 14 and 3, and they've found a house in Gosforth. His special interest in computing is databases and database dictionaries.

TWO NEW LECTURERS

Rea' new blood, these two! The Laboratory is appy and relieved to see the "promotion" of:

Richard Hopkins has been a Research Associate with the Randell Team from about 1980. He comes from London, and his

career is as varied as Peter's above: BSc in General Science; worked for Burroughs for a year in New York city; three years with ICL Bracknell; six months BSRA; 2-3 years Vickers; 1 year's MSc here at Newcastle; two years PhD study; then joined the Reliability project.

He and his wife foster a girl (11) and live in Jesmond. His main interest in computing is parallel computer architecture. His outside interests centre on Buddhism: he is Secretary of the University Buddhist Society, and a trustee of a Trust which supports a Buddhist monastery near Belsay; he teaches yoga, and has taken up running in order to get fit for a five week walking holiday in Nepal (fixed up before he got the job, folks!). He gets up at 6 in the morning and does his running then; he also likes the climate here in the North East (honestly).

Martin McClauchlan comes from London (Harrow). He came to Newcastle to study for his BSc in Computing Science, then spent a year at ITT Business Systems (IDEC) at Cockfosters. Then he came back here to study for his PhD - student for two and a half years, then Demonstrator for another two and a half. His special interests in computing are functional programming, verification of software/hardware systems, and VLSI design.

He lives in Cramlington, and his main non-computing activities are in the Scout Movement, being a Warden in the Northumberland National Park (mainly around the Roman Wall), and fell walking.

TWO NEW COMPUTING SERVICE PROGRAMMERS

As you may know, NUMAC's Network Team (the NUNET Group) have been trying to sit on a suitcase full of alligators for some years now. To assist them in their work, two programmers have been appointed to the team:

Malcolm George comes from Great Lumley near Chester-le-Street, and likes it so much that he still lives there. He got his BSc in Computing Science here at Newcastle, then went into industry, working for the Bowater Paper Corporation for two years. It is thought that the dog-eat-dog, rat-race atmosphere of The Real World may have been a partial, though by no means adequate, preparation for the world of Networking. His main hobby is a much better preparation: war-gaming.

Brian Hamshire also used to work in industry (14 years at ICI). He has been two and a half years with Peter Lauer as Research Associate, and is now looking forward to getting his hands dirty "under the bonnet", so to speak.

Brian comes from the Lake District (Wasdale); he got a BA at Cambridge in Physics; his last project at ICI was running a hybrid computer for process simulation. He and his wife have two children (girl, 11, and boy, 8), and they live in Wylam. His main interests outside computing are singing in choirs and amateur dramatics.

RESEARCH PROGRAMMER

Andy Linton has actually been with the Reliability Project since Easter (how time flies), but you know how a "new face" stays "new" until it leaves five years later...

He comes from Lurgan, Northern Ireland. He's had a real variety of occupations, but the highlights are: mountaineering instructor for a year in County Down; then a BEd (Maths) at St. Mary's, Fenham; taught in a comprehensive; joined the Royal Navy as an Instructional Officer; MSc here at the Lab.; taught again for six months; then got this (temporary) job as Research Programmer on the Reliability Project.

He plays a guitar; he has the best running record in the Laboratory, having run "several" marathons in his time, but his family (girl, 3, and boy, 2 months) have put a stop to all that nonsense. Spent six years after school doing a variety of jobs to finance his climbing.

(Andy wants to sell his house: 2 bedroomed

semi in the Druridge Drive area of Fenham, looking for about 19,000.)

NEW RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

DICK SNOW'S PROJECT

"Tools for debugging mixed hardware and software systems"

Rick Brooker: Until this June, was an undergraduate in this Department; comes from Essex; outside interests: sailing and cycling.

Safwad Mansi: Was standing in for Santosh last year; comes from Sudan; came to U.K. in 1979; married; likes reading, playing tennis.

BRIAN RANDELL'S PROJECTS

Paul Ezhilchelvan: Comes from Tamil Nadu State, India; studied for his MSc (Computing Science) at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; is here with the Reliability Project until next September; is living in Fenham (but the rent's too high ...); outside interests: music and films.

Dave Mundy: Comes from London; BSc (Computing Science) at Queen Mary College (London); has been here 3 years as a PhD student; RA-ship on Phil Treleavan's Decentralised Computing Project funded by ICL's University Research Council (for 3 years); main hobby is fell walking.

Robert Stroud: Is working in "The Newcastle Connection" area. Born in Aylesbury, bred in the North East; Went to IEM Peterlee after school, then on to Cambridge, BA Maths; MSc here; is doing his PhD in "Distributed Programming Languages and Operating Systems"; hobbies bell ringing and alpine walking. His contract is for one year.

VISITORS

Li Wei: (Wei's his first name) Is here for six months as a SERC Senior Visiting Fellow, working with Peter Lauer. Is a lecturer at the Peking Institute of Aeronautics; did his PhD at Edinburgh in "Semantics and Translation Theory for Concurrent Programming Languages" (completed last year). Has a wife and daughter in China; likes films, reading novels and playing badminton; is living in Gosforth.

David Taylor: With the Reliability Project as Visiting Research Scientist for one year. Is a lecturer at the University of Waterloo in Canada, where he got both his Master's and

his Doctorate. His particular interests lie in fault tolerance in data structures and in networks.

RESEARCH PROJECT FOR TB AND IM

Terry Betteridge and Isi Mitrani are co-investigators on a new SERC Project entitled "Monitoring and performance evaluation of distributed Unix Systems". They get 3 years, one Research Associate (just advertised), and a PERQ (see the last article on this page).

PARLEZ-VOUS ACRONYMS?

SERC - Science and Engineering Research Council. Have piles of money.

PERQ - PERSONal Computer? (who really knows?) A small, very powerful, very expensive computer. Totally beyond the means of University Departments. But you usually get one free with every SERC Research Grant.

OPERATIONS PROBLEMS

The very bad news: Pushpa Rawat has left (gone to the CAT at Rye Hill); Dave Robinson has left (as efficient, friendly and helpful as Pushpa, but by no means as pretty) - gone to an NHS establishment in Newcastle. Both were Shift Leaders.

The bad news (for us - good for her): Ann Ki. has left on maternity leave. Ann is also a Shift Leader.

The good news: Valerie Ragan (who left us in c.1979) is starting on Monday 26th as a temporary replacement for Ann. Roger hopes to see two new operators (probably trainees) starting "soon".

BENEDICT'S CORNER

Benedict is full of questions...

Q: Who went to the MTS Workshop in Edmonton (Canada) this year?

A: Elizabeth Barraclough, Terry Ratcliffe, John Aspden, and John Law

Q: Has the third Data Entry System machine arrived?

A: Yes: this PDP11/44 is now in service.

Q: Are we going to get a laser printer?

A: Yes: Denis Russell is in charge of the Project.

Q: What's all this about a Waterloo Pascal?

Q: When 923 is given over to the students, are we all really going to get terminals in our offices?

Q: (from Dave Brownbridge:) How many new PhD students are starting this year?

Q: (From me, on your behalf): So what do all these new staff look like?

Answers to the last four next month.

WHY "THE HORSE'S MOUTH"?

I wanted to call this "Official Rumours", but Exeter University, who first thought of that title, wouldn't let me use it (it's the name of their Computing Service Newsletter). So I had to think of an even better title.

"The Horse's Mouth" is supposed to come out about the middle of the month: the number of new staff took me by surprise, so Number 1 has been delayed. All future issues will be out on time.

If you take a violent dislike to anything that appears in "The Horse's Mouth", please contact me. If you haven't met me, I'm easily recognizable: I'm 6' 4" tall, weigh 22 stone, and have a completely bald head.

COMPUTING LABORATORY STAFF

Below is a Staff List drawn up on September 23rd 1983. There are 109 of us, plus five Visiting members of staff. The list is arranged into groups of staff, and is alphabetically ordered by these groups, within the groups by surname.

This list is "machine readable", and I'll generate sticky labels for anyone who wants them (for Laboratory business).

Mr. John	Aspden	(JPA)	Computing Service
Miss Elizabeth	Barraclough	(EDB)	Computing Service
Dr. Terry	Betteridge	(TB)	Computing Service
Mr. Roger	Broughton	(REB)	Computing Service
Mr. Quentin	Campbell	(QGC)	Computing Service
Mrs. Maria	Coleman	(MLC)	Computing Service
Dr. Mary	Cooper	(MFC)	Computing Service
Dr. Ian	Doak	(IDD)	Computing Service
Mr. Mike	Douglass	(MARD)	Computing Service
Mrs. Jill	Foster	(GF)	Computing Service
Mr. Malcolm	George	(MJG)	Computing Service
Dr. Clive	Gerrard	(CG)	Computing Service
Mr. John	Givens	(JGG)	Computing Service
Mr. Lyn	Greenwood	(FTG)	Computing Service
Mr. Brian	Hamshere	(BCH)	Computing Service
Mr. Keith	Heron	(KH)	Computing Service
Mrs. Margaret	Hindmarsh	(MMH)	Computing Service
Mr. Alan	Hunter	(JAH)	Computing Service
Mrs. Judith	Hunter	(JMH)	Computing Service
Mr. Brian	Jones	(BJ)	Computing Service
Mr. Ron	Kerr	(RK)	Computing Service
Dr. Martin	Lamont	(ANL)	Computing Service
Mr. John	Law	(JAL)	Computing Service
Mr. Pete	Lomas	(PL)	Computing Service
Mr. Bob	Mahon	(RPM)	Computing Service
Mr. Ron	Pringle	(RGCP)	Computing Service
Dr. Terry	Ratcliffe	(TJR)	Computing Service
Dr. Nick	Rossiter	(ENR)	Computing Service
Dr. Denis	Russell	(DMR)	Computing Service
Dr. Val	Sargent	(VMS)	Computing Service
Dr. Geoff	Shearing	(GS)	Computing Service
Mr. Bob	Vine	(REV)	Computing Service
Mr. Eric	Watson	(EW)	Computing Service
Mrs. Janet	Wheeler	(JEW)	Computing Service
Mr. Pete	Whillance	(PW)	Computing Service
Dr. Chris	Woodford	(CIW)	Computing Service
Mrs. Mildred	Ashworth	(MA)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Iorna	Brown	(LB)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Sheila	Carter	(SJC)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Maureen	Evans	(ME)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Clive	Gourley	(OG)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Irene	Hackworth	(IH)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Elizabeth	Heenan	(EH)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Patricia	Johnson	(PJ)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Jean	Mackay	(JM)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Eileen	Scorer	(ES)	Data Preparation
Mrs. Marjory	Young	(NY)	Data Preparation
Mr. Roger	Millichamp	(RCM)	Demonstrator
Mr. Vince	Bilton	(VJB)	Digital Systems Engineer
Prof. Harry	Whitfield	(HW)	Director, Prof. Comp. & DP
Mrs. Joan	Armstrong	(JA)	General Office
Miss Ann	Laybourn	(AL)	General Office

Miss Carol	Pringle	(CP)	General Office
Miss Susan	Renshaw	(SER)	General Office
Mrs. Betty	Smith	(ENS)	General Office
Mrs. Joyce	Stone	(JS)	General Office
Mrs. Ann	Taylor	(AT)	General Office
Miss Diane	Wilkinson	(DW)	General Office
Mr. Dick	Woodman	(RW)	IBM Engineer
Dr. Tom	Anderson	(TA)	Lecturer
Mr. John	Clowes	(JSC)	Lecturer
Mr. Michael	Elphick	(MJE)	Lecturer
Dr. Jim	Eve	(JE)	Lecturer
Mr. Benedict	Heal	(JGEH)	Lecturer
Mr. Richard	Hopkins	(RPH)	Lecturer
Dr. Peter	Lauer	(PEL)	Lecturer
Dr. John	Lloyd	(JLL)	Lecturer
Mr. Martin	McClachlan	(MRM)	Lecturer
Dr. Isi	Mitrani	(IM)	Lecturer
Dr. Ian	Scoins	(NIS)	Lecturer
Dr. Santosh	Shrivastava	(SKS)	Lecturer
Dr. Dick	Snow	(CRS)	Lecturer
Dr. Ken	Wright	(KW)	Lecturer
Miss Shirley	Craig	(SC)	Librarian
Mr. Keith	Adams	(KA)	Operations
Mr. Dave	Alderson	(DA)	Operations
Mr. Paul	Baggott	(PB)	Operations
Miss Janice	Burke	(JB)	Operations
Miss Gillian(Jill)	Craig	(GMC)	Operations
Mr. Jeremy	Harrison	(JPH)	Operations
Mrs. Ann	King	(AK)	Operations
Mrs. Gillian	Lynch	(GTL)	Operations
Miss Deborah	Newman	(DN)	Operations
Mr. Malcolm	Paul	(MRP)	Operations
Mrs. Yvonne	Whitehead	(YW)	Operations
Mr. Bill	Foggo	(WDF)	Printer
Prof. Brian	Randell	(BR)	Professor, Comp. Science
Dr. Peter	Hitchcock	(PH)	Reader
Mr. Peter	Barrett	(PAB)	Research Associate
Mr. Rick	Brooker	(ERGB)	Research Associate
Mr. Dave	Brownbridge	(DRE)	Research Associate
Dr. John	Cotronis	(JYC)	Research Associate
Mr. Dave	English	(DEE)	Research Associate
Mr. Paul	Ezhilchelvan	(MDPDE)	Research Associate
Ms. Isabel	Lima	(IGL)	Research Associate
Mr. Safwad	Mansi	(SAM)	Research Associate
Dr. Lindsay	Marshall	(LFM)	Research Associate
Mr. Dave	Mundy	(DHM)	Research Associate
Dr. Fabio	Panzieri	(FP)	Research Associate
Mr. Robert	Stroud	(RJS)	Research Associate
Dr. Phil	Treleaven	(PCT)	Research Associate
Mr. Andy	Linton	(ASJL)	Research Programmer
Mr. Derek	Riley	(WDR)	Technical Staff (Air cond)
Mr. Ian	Rutherford	(IR)	Technical Staff
Mr. Tim	Smith	(TGS)	Technical Staff
Mr. Alan	Thompson	(AST)	Technical Staff
Mr. Rod	Walker	(RHW)	Technical Staff
Mr. Mike	Wardley	(MTW)	Technical Staff
Dr. Jay	Black	(JPB)	Visiting Fellow
Dr. Wei	Li	(WL)	Visiting Fellow (SERC)
Dr. David	Taylor	(DAT)	Visiting Fellow
Dr. J A	Farrell	(JAF)	Visiting Lecturer
Dr. K E	Forward	(KEF)	Visiting Lecturer
Mr. D.G.	Harris	(DGH)	Visiting Professor

Maria Coleman.

Maria Coleman.

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSION DETAILS

Ken Wright furnishes these details of applications from school leavers (et al.) this year:

Number of UCCA applications:	474
Number of initial offers made by us:	289
In June, No. accepted (firm, provisional, etc.):	111
In October, no. of successful A level candidates arriving:	32

Add to those 32, 9 "UCCA clearing house" candidates, plus 5 internal University transfers, and we end up with 46 First Year Single Honours students.

Add to our 45 Single Hons., all our Joint Honours students, and our "M & M" (Microelectronics) students, and also students doing Combined courses, and Tom Anderson finds that he's addressing something like 240 students in his First Year Computing lectures. (Next year he's hiring St. James' Park, and will have a backing group.)

Notes: Of 70 "conditional offers", only 7 A level candidates made the grades asked for. Standard initial offer was B,B and C, or B,C and C, with at least C in Maths.; on the "points system" (Grade A=5, Grade E=1) this means 11 or 10 points. In fact the average points score for new students (excluding special cases) was 8.8 points.

FROM THE COMMON ROOM...

PLANS FOR NEW SPACE

We are to get new space in 1984 in Claremont Bridge (parts of Floor 3 and either the old Arts Common Room on Floor 6, or Floor 4). A plan and document outlining some tentative proposals are available for "constructive comment". The committee will be pleased to receive ideas: ACT NOW! (or don't complain after the event). Note: the news about Floor 4 is a late development, as of 17/10/83.

THE HORSE'S EARS

(1) Rumour has it that Brian Randell's group may get two VAX 11/750's. One is the replacement for the ageing research 11/44's: prizes offered for what they might do with the other...
Late Flash: Another rumour has it that it's 4 (four) VAX's.

(2) Someone said that someone had muttered how on earth can we manage to produce "The Horse's Mouth" if we're so short staffed? It takes me one half-day per month: any more gets done in my own time. It takes Bill less than an hour to print it; if he can't fit it in, we pay Registrar's to photocopy it.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Extract from a Trip Report: "In 7 years or so, NAG has successfully identified and satisfied the need for a library of tried and tested numerical algorithms. But this must be regarded as a palliative. The other half of the job remains, that of providing algorithms which not only provide results, but also give error bounds and sensitivity estimates, and give numerical insight into the problem at hand... 'If the NAG routine gives a result, why worry?' ... Is an attitude which NAG itself may be responsible for."
(Chris Woodford)

NUMAC DETAILS

One comment which provoked, shall I say, a swift reply last month was "What do all those Computing Service people DO?". Most people in the Service staff are members of more than one group: This list shows their principle areas of involvement.

Chiefs

Elizabeth Barraclough	Executive Director of NUMAC
Terry Ratcliffe	Assistant Director, Systems and Operations
Brian Jones	Head of User Services
Ian Doak	Head of Development Group
Roger Broughton	Operations Supervisor
John Givens	Head of Hardware Group
Denis Russell	Coordinator, Networking Group

Indians

Terry Betteridge	Development Group
Alan Hunter	Development Group
Ron Kerr	Development Group; VAX
Eric Watson	Development Group
Vince Bilton	Hardware Group
Keith Heron	Hardware Group
Clive Gerrard	Micros
Bob Mahon	Micros
John Aspden	Networks (PSS etc.)
Jill Foster	Networks
Malcolm George	Networks (Local Area)
Lyn Greenwood	Networks (Local Area)
Brian Hamshire	Networks (Local Area)
Bob Vine	Systems (MTS)
Quentin Campbell	Systems (MTS)
Mike Douglass	Systems (MTS)
Pete Whillance	Systems (MTS)
Pete Lomas	Unix Systems (DES)
Maria Coleman	User Services Office
Mary Cooper	User Services (Statistics); Micros
Margaret Hindmarsh	User Services (Graphics); VAX
Judith Hunter	User Services (Information Officer)
Martin Lamont	User Services (Everything); Micros
John Law	User Services (Documentation)
Ron Pringle	User Services (Packages); VAX
Nick Rossiter	User Services (Databases)
Val Sargent	User Services (Arts)
Geoff Shearing	User Services (Medical)
Janet Wheeler	User Services (Documentation)
Chris Woodford	User Services (Numerical)

"VAX" refers to the VAX 11/780 computer dedicated to graphics applications. "DES" means Data Entry System. The job of the "Development Group" is to tackle problems which arise from the inexorable explosion of developments in computing; accordingly, the Networks Group is a subgroup within the Development Group; another example of current work is the evaluation and acquisition of a laser printer.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 2

Thanks to all contributors

18th October 1983

Edited by John Law (ext.225)

MUG SHOTS

Pictures of the new staff are not yet available, so Bill doesn't get the chance this month to break new territory and put *pictures* in a News Sheet.

LAST MONTH'S DELIBERATE MISTAKES

No prizes were awarded, because the first people to phone in were the individuals concerned:

- 1) Martin McLauchlan NOT McClauchlan
- 2) Safwat Mansi NOT Safwad
- 3) It is Jill (spelt Gill) Lynch and Gillian Craig, not the other way round.

STAFF NEWS

MORE NEW STAFF

Donald Harris is our new Visiting Professor. He is 45 years old, and comes from London. Professor Harris received his B.A. in Mathematics at University College London and then went into industry.

He is now a member of the Board of Tesco Stores (Holdings) Plc., and his responsibilities include distribution, administration and computer applications; previously he was involved in personnel, training and industrial relations. Among other activities, he is a member of the Computer Board for Universities and Research Councils, and a member of the Working Party set up by the Office of Fair Trading to investigate the effects on consumers of microelectronics in retailing.

His personal interests include opera, ballet, books, squash and TV. He is a Fellow of the British Computer Society.

His lectures should prove to be most interesting: look for the first one about the beginning of December.

Dave English was the one new Research Associate I didn't catch up with last month. He comes from Lancaster, and he achieved his BSc Comp Sci here, then went to Data Recall in Dorking for a couple of years, where he wrote word

processing software. He came back here to start his PhD, which has the title "A VLSI implementation of a parallel computer architecture". His Research Associateship with Phil Treleaven's Computer Architecture Group lasts for two years. His outside interests are photography, home computing on his Spectrum, and being a sub-warden at Castle Leazes, which he finds most rewarding.

The chap you might see walking round hunched up and cursing the blasted English winter is John Farrell, who is a 4-month Visitor on a British Council Research Fellowship. John has spent six years in the West Indies (Jamaica), where, he says, you can tell it's winter when the evenings become noticeably cooler than the day time: temperatures can drop from the daytime 80F to - ooh - 60F at dead of night. Awful!

He ought to have known what to expect, because he comes from Alnwick, and was educated at St. Cuthberts up the West Road. He got his BA (Maths) at York, and later got his MSc (Operational Research) at Birmingham. He spent some years working in that field for Local Government bodies, before moving to Jamaica and the University of the West Indies. The U of W.I. has really distributed computing, with separate computing centres in Jamaica, Trinidad, and Barbados.

John's main interests here at Newcastle are in networks and communications. He has a wife and 18 month boy, and they're living at the family homestead in Shilbottle. One of John's favourite spare time occupations is playing organ music.

Jay Black falls into the same category as Andy Linton did last month: a "new face" that's been here quite some time now... He is a Visiting Fellow with Brian Randell's Reliability Project. He came last September, and has just had his Fellowship extended another year. He comes from Calgary (hard by the Canadian Rockies), where he got his BSc Comp Sci; he then did 2 years at Grenoble (hard by the French Alps) for a Dip. Eng. (Engineering, not English), then returned to Canada where he studied for his PhD at the University of Waterloo ("Redundancy in Data Structures"). He has a wife (French) and a little boy, and their interests are (naturally) winter sports and alpine walking (chance would be a fine thing!).

BEEN AND GONE AND BACK

Yiannis ("John") Cotronis, former PhD student, is once more at the Lab., having been appointed Research Associate for a year with Peter Lauer ("Realisation of a high level COSY Notation").

GONE

Li-yi Lu has now gone back to China. He had spent a very successful 2 years with the Newcastle Connection group, on the Royal Society - Chinese Academy of Science interchange scheme. He also found for us the best Chinese restaurant in Newcastle: The Jade Garden!

AFFIANCED

Deborah Newman, whose disarming smile makes disgruntled users forget their lost output, has been snapped up: as of October 4th, she is engaged to one Robert Harris "painter and decorator of the first degree". Very best wishes, Deborah!

TRAINEE COMPUTER OPERATORS

2 trainee operators starting: Susan Dent (from 17/10/83), and Alison Craig (31/10/83).

NEW PHD STUDENTS

There are four this year:

Philip Brudenell (BSc Hons Comp Sci, Newcastle) (Tutor: HW)

Graham Dixon (BSc Hons Polymer Sci, Manch. Poly) (Tutor: BR)

Jonathan Garnsworthy (BSc Hons Applied Math & Comp Sci, Sheffield) (Tutor: TA)

Fariba Hedayati (BSc Hons Computation, Manchester) (Tutor: SKS)

BONFIRE NIGHT

John Lloyd is again one of the organizers of the Senior Common Room Bonfire and Fireworks Evening at Close House - this year it is on Friday 4th. November starting at 6.30pm; admission is 80pence (under fives free), everybody welcome (SCR members or not). As usual there will be a Guy Fawkes competition (children only, so put him back, please - we need him in the Lab.); food and drink will be on sale in the Mansion House. If you can't afford as many rockets-bangers-Golden Rains as you once could, the SCR Bonfire is wonderful value.

Extra enjoyment is to be had by gathering wood for the fire. The Close House woods are raided annually for dead trees, and John is always keen to find volunteers. The work is pretty hard (little children couldn't help, but they could go for a walk with Mum) (or Dad), and this makes the drink/lunch in the Mansion House so much more welcome at knocking-off time.

You have two chances to visit this marvellous bit of countryside before Bonfire Night: Sundays 22nd and 29th October, starting between 9.30-10.00am. Please contact John (ext. 260) to find out where to meet.

PASCAL LANGUAGE COMPILERS IN MTS

"What's all this about a Waterloo Pascal?" Asked Benedict last month. Here's the full story:

There are currently 3 Pascal compilers in MTS: UBC Pascal (in the public file *PASCAL), which we had all last year; IBM's Pascal/VS (in the public file *PASCALVS), which arrived during last year; and the Waterloo Pascal compiler (in the public file *PASCALW, but see below), which arrived over the summer.

UBC Pascal (*PASCAL) is only here for another month or two, so that certain MSc students committed to this compiler can finish their work. In effect, you can forget *PASCAL.

IBM's Pascal/VS has been converted to run in MTS and is available in *PASCALVS. The documents which tell you about it are IBM's Pascal/VS documentation (reference only - the set of manuals is terribly expensive), and the NUMAC document "Pascal/VS in MTS" (70pp). The latter has been queueing in the Print Room for two months now: it should be available in about a fortnight. If you need a copy now, see Maria, who will get you a line printer copy.

Good as it is, the IBM Pascal could not be adequately modified to be used as the Pascal Batch Monitor, needed by the Hordes. So we have obtained the Waterloo Pascal compiler to fulfil this role, and it seems to be spectacularly successful at the job. It lives in the file *PASCALW, but no documentation is needed beyond that in the DES Yellow book (which tells you where to put your \$PASCAL line) and one of the Pascal textbooks recommended by lecturers.

A Pascal "tidying" program is also available: see the MTS file INFO:PASCALTIDY.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 3

Thanks to all you contributors

21st November 1983

Edited by John Law (ext.225)

MUG SHOTS

Don't they all have beautiful smiles? Here are the new members of staff mentioned in Nos. 1 and 2.



Rick Brooker



Alison Craig



Susan Dent



Dave English



Paul
Ezhilchelvan

FIRE ALARMS

The old alarm system worked adequately with regard to ringing bells and therefore (hopefully) clearing the building of people. However, it was also supposed to call out the Fire Brigade automatically when it went off: this callout did not happen reliably. Our Safety Officers (Ian Scoins and Quentin Campbell) asked the University to look into this problem.

The Computing Laboratory has a greater interest than other Departments in the correct functioning of the automatic callout, because of our x-million poundsworth of equipment: we want it to work reliably so that, even when the building is empty of people, the computing equipment can be rescued by the Boys in the Red Engines. (This supposes that the Boys will be ever so careful, despite their Big Boots, axes, door levers, high pressure hoses, and foam sprayers, when they come to put out a fire in one of our machine rooms.)

The University looked into the problem by inviting the firm who now look after its alarm systems to inspect the system. Surprise, surprise, they said we needed a complete replacement.

The "looking into it" and subsequent events entailed a great deal of testing the alarms. This testing caused considerable annoyance over the summer, and, what's worse, caused some people to start ignoring the alarm bells.

Finally (after the start of term), the new alarm system went into operation. Someone, somewhere, knows why those old REALLY ALARMING bells were replaced by these retiring little wallflowers with the pretty red colour and the little tinkle which sounds just like the Computing Lab's post-5.15 telephone alarm. However, after a couple of false alarms, caused by things like somebody stumbling against one of the buttons (full turnout by The Boys! It really works!), we can now report that

THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM WORKS PROPERLY

If you hear the alarm you MUST leave the Building AT ONCE by your appropriate exit, ushering out any people not familiar with the Building; if you are on the Paternoster, you must get off at the next floor.

Oh - and the new, all-electronic, system is much more reliable at calling out the Fire Brigade automatically.



Malcolm George



Peter Hitchcock



Safwat Mansi



Dave Mundy



Robert Stroud

NEW SPACE PLANS

These are proceeding quickly: we have had two new versions since the last Mouth. Plan 'C' is now on the Common Room Notice Board. This entails us having the Arts Common Room and Floor 3 next year, and part of Floor 4 (Bridge) about two years hence. There is some discussion about how we might use the Arts Common Room: brilliant (sensible) ideas to Harry or to Ian Scoins, please. [I hope they don't turn it into a machine room: where will we hold the Annual Computing Laboratory Ball?]

NEW DEMONSTRATORS SOON

Martin McLauchlan's Demonstratorship has been advertised and candidates are being selected for interview. Roger Millichamp's post (see "Staff News") has been unfrozen and will be advertised soon.

NEW DEGREE COURSE

Proposals will shortly be made to the Faculty of Engineering in connection with a new 4-year degree course, which will be supported by British Telecom. The first two years of this course will be similar to the existing Microelectronics and Microprocessor Applications ("M & M") course. Later years will emphasise software engineering, communications and microelectronics.

Similar courses are starting in Birmingham and York. [It is reasonably certain that the courses will be unaffected by BT's being served up in the Stock Market soon.]

REVISION OF COMPUTING SCIENCE COURSE

Proposals to revise our Honours and Joint Honours degree courses have been approved in principle by the Faculty of Science. The Board of Studies is currently producing new regulations, and the detailed changes will be planned during the coming months. The new Honours degree will contain more on electronics and computer hardware than in the past. There is also to be an alternative to Computing Science (Level 1) called Computing Science A, which will contain less on computer architecture and hardware, but more on applications and algorithms. Other First Year variants are under discussion in collaboration with Mathematics and Statistics.

These changes may well increase significantly the numbers of students in Level 1 Computing. Discussions are also under way for a major collaboration with the Faculty of Arts.

UPGRADE FOR DURHAM MTS MACHINE

The NUMAC IBM 4341 at Durham Computer Unit has been upgraded (12-13th November) to a 4341 Model Group 11, and has had its memory increased from 4 to 8Mb.

For the elucidation of some of our readers, (and the further confusion of the others): say the revamped 4341 is 1 unit of computer power. In its old form, it was 0.8 units; and NUMAC's IBM 370/168 (downstairs in the Sub-Basement) is 2.4 units.

STAFF NEWS

MOVING ON...

Phil Treleavan has been appointed to the post of Senior Research Fellow at Reading University's Computing Science Department, starting in January. (Reading must be beginning to wonder what "The Newcastle Connection" really means: Prof. E.S. Page is their Vice Chancellor, and their new Director of Computing Services is Peter Kemp.) Phil's been here 6 years - we'll miss his cheerful demeanour; however, the Office's Xerox machine will miss him most of all.

Roger Millichamp decided a short while ago, having been here 4 years, that it was time for him to move on. He took the plunge and handed in his resignation: ah, these single young men with the world at their feet!

STAYING

We're very pleased to announce that Mary Cooper will be getting married next March, to that Mysterious Man in the Netherlands, whence she's been disappearing on and off for the last few years. We're also happy to announce that her husband-to-be Peter, who works for Proctor & Gamble, is to be transferred here to Newcastle - it was "feared" that he might be going to Cincinatti and taking Mary with him. NUMAC staff are particularly happy at the news, because Mary is our sole Adviser in the very popular field of statistics.

AMAZING COINCIDENCES - NO.1

John Farrell and Brian Hamshere were having a chat, when J says "Yours is an unusual surname, B - I have a relative with that name. We stayed with him in Ascot when we came back to England this time." "Oh yes?" Says B, "that's where my uncle lives..." It transpires that Brian's uncle is John Farrell's wife's aunt's husband. Blimey!

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 4

Thanks to all you contributors

13th December 1983

Edited by John Law (ext.225)

PARTY TIME!

There used to be two "office parties" in the Lab.: the General Office used to have a quiet little get-together, mainly for themselves to wind down after yet another frantic year; and the operations staff organised a somewhat bigger, noisier affair down in the Sub-Basement. In recent years, the General Office party has come to be organised on different lines; and coincidentally, the operators have started working the shift system, which has made it increasingly difficult for them to get organised.

This year, the General Office are hosting a get-together which will include a buffet, and drinks in the form of wine, sherry, etc. Naturally, this won't be free: if you'd like to meet your friends and work-neighbours in the congenial atmosphere of the General Office Party, please contribute £1.50, and put your name down by lunchtime, Monday 19th at the very latest.

The gathering will start mid-afternoon (for those who've paid!) on Thursday, 22nd December.

N.B.: A prize will be awarded to the person who manages to endure the longest time without talking shop.

The operators tell me that, although there is nothing organised, there will probably be the usual "cellar bar" atmosphere down in the old Common Room, created by people meeting more by force of habit than anything else: bring your own bottle of orange squash to this one!

PLANS FOR SPACE IN 1984

The news on our acquiring and using space in the Bridge Block is: discussion with the Bursar's Office of our proposed Plan "C" (see Common Room Notice Board) will not now commence until after the start of the new term.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN A CALENDAR?

It has been suggested that in the next issue we might print a "year at a glance" Calendar marked with significant dates in the Laboratory's year. Such dates might be: IBM Seminar; MTS Workshop (at Durham);

NUMAC Newsletter deadlines; dates of terms. Sounds like a good idea to me: it's only worth doing, though, if we get many such dates. I look forward to hearing from you!

(It is not true that pictorial interest will be provided by snaps taken on Thursday 22nd.) (In fact these will be available to the highest bidder on January 3rd.)

NEW TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

By the time you get this issue of "The Horse's Mouth", you may already have your copy of the NEW telephone/room Directory. Well done, Terry (B.) - how did you finally get everybody to stay in one place long enough?

STAFF NEWS

Ann King, Shift Leader, gave birth to a girl on November 21st., weight six and a half lbs., named Erica Jane.

Derek Riley has a new assistant on the air conditioning work: Jeffrey Craig (that makes four Craigs!) joined us on December 1st as a technician.

NEWCASTLE CONNECTION CONFIRMED?

Last month's theory that "the Newcastle Connection" might really mean that Newcastle University is where Reading University recruit all their talent has been given more weight: Roger Millichamp has got a job there working with Phil Treleavan.

Telephone .

✓/7

20th June 1974.

PDP-11 MYSTERY

Lindsay Marshall discovered this scrap of paper, dated 1974, plugging a hole in his office window: can anyone throw any light on the operating system referred to? Who is BR? Who is JL?

And what celebrations are the Reliability Project going to put on for their 10th Anniversary?

John Law.

Dear Doug,

I had hoped we would see each other at the recent W.G. 2.3 meeting in Switzerland but in the event I was unable to attend.

Some time ago you told me about the operating system for the PDP/11 computer that some of your colleagues had constructed. I believe that other people are now being allowed to use this system now, so would appreciate any help you could give us in obtaining more detailed information about the system, and about the possibility of acquiring a copy.

We are at present using DEC's DOS system for the initial experiments in our computer system reliability project. I enclose the most recent progress report, so as to give you an idea as to what are up to. Any comments, critiques, etc., you care to make you're welcome.

I will be away from Newcastle for the next I have a brief sabbatical at the University. I would be grateful if you could arrange for PDP/11 system, and its availability, to Robert Simpson, at this address.

I hope to see you at the Mun.

With best wishes,

Dr. D. McIlroy.
Bell Laboratories
Murray Hill,
New Jersey
U.S.A.

BR/JL

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 5

Great Thaw Bumper Issue (i.e. it's late)

31st January 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

NEW ACCOMMODATION

THE MILL

It was thought that the Arts Common Room could not continue to be so called after the Laboratory had taken it over, especially as its role is to change dramatically (we hope - see below). Accordingly it has been decided to call it "The Mill". There's an old stream by The Mill, called Pandon Burn: it runs under Claremont Road (and occasionally into the Basement/Sub-Basement). However: That's not the reason for the name. The "mill" was the name for the central mechanism in ancient computers; as, in its new role, the ACR will be the home of hordes of busy Computing undergraduates, along with their own terminals/workstations, it was thought that The Mill would be a good name for it. (Stand by for a Puns Competition ...)

Unfortunately, progress is currently held up on the Mill, because a condition laid down by the Laboratory, if we were to take it over, was that the door at the East (Hancock Museum) end must be kept locked - it would be useless as a laboratory-type work room otherwise. Naturally, protests have been made about our proposal by other Departments - for about 15 years, the Arts Common Room was a favourite "corridor" over the Bridge. Until the argument has been settled, we cannot proceed with our plans.

BRIDGE, FLOOR 3

This will be known as The Bus (because of the network people moving there); or as The Castle (because of the Research people, also moving there). (No, no - only joking.) Floor 3 is empty at the moment, and will remain so until certain problems with ventilation can be sorted out. Both these problems and those with The Mill will not receive attention from The Bursar's Office for some time - they are too busy with the new incumbents in the Old Library. (Follow all that?)

NO CALENDAR

One or two people came forward with some interesting dates for the Calendar suggested last month - but one or two ain't enough.

SWAN BRAND WATER THE BEST

Did you know that in Claremont Tower the only officially approved drinking water comes out of the "swan neck" taps (and those in the Kitchen, we hope)?

FIRE ALARMS LATEST

Five additional bells have now been installed in order to allow people working in noisy or "remote" (e.g. our Library) environments to hear the alarm when it goes off. HOWEVER: the system as a whole is still not working reliably, and we await resolution of the problems by the Bursar's Office. So if you hear either a fire bell or someone shouting "Fire!", leave the premises immediately.

PHONE FILES

We now have the new Lab. Phone directory. Terry Betteridge has kindly offered for public use one of the files he uses to produce it: CL30:PHONES contains the phone list sorted first by surname, then by Floor Level. You can take a copy and produce your own customised version if you wish.

COMPUTER BOARD REPORT

Working Party was set up by the Computer Board last year with the task of producing recommendations for the use of computers for teaching in Universities. Their report has now appeared. It is of great interest to staff in this Department, not least because it is also to be circulated to the Heads of all Departments in the University. Harry and Elizabeth each have a copy, and Shirley has a copy in her room. The title is "Report of a Working Party on Computer Facilities for Teaching in Universities", December 1983.

STAFF NEWS

Woe! The Lab. has not only said goodbye to Phil Treleavan and Roger Millichamp, but the Service side will be hard hit by the following people leaving:

Ann King has decided she prefers being a Mum to being a Shift Leader in Operations. (BUT: Post now being advertised.)

Val Sargent, her contract having expired, has got a job at Stirling University (with Peter Henderson, formerly of this borough). Val's post was a temporary one: we have no prospects for a replacement.

Lastly, and possibly worst of all, Bob Mahon is leaving in February, to run a company set up by him and a friend. Bob was one of two Programming Advisers (Clive's the other one) recruited specially to advise on micros. Needless to say, losing someone in that field, especially someone of Bob's calibre, is a severe blow. His post is being advertised.

SERVICE STAFF STRETCHED

For the past two or three years, the NUMAC staff in the Lab. have been under constantly increasing pressure as demands for computing, and computing advice, have grown, and as staff numbers have decreased. The pressure has been extreme for over a year, and now cracks are beginning to show in the service, if not in the staff themselves:

Val Sargent leaving means that the Arts faculty in this University have no designated member of staff to assist them in computing. A group of NUMAC staff will be attempting to plug the gaps, specifically with regard to the Report Generator program, the Oxford Concordance package, and literary data archives; Geoff Shearing will be coordinating the Exam Marking aspects of Val's work. Other areas will not be covered.

Mainly because of Bob's leaving, but partly also because of the massive increase in demands for advice on micros, Martin Lamont is abandoning his Duty Adviser slot on Friday afternoons, so that he can do two Micro Duty Adviser slots during the week (a "slot" is an afternoon). For the same reasons, Clive Gerrard has exchanged his main D.A. slot for another Micro Advisory slot, this one on Thursday afternoons. Therefore the Duty Adviser room will not be manned after 2.30 on Thursdays and Fridays.

FILE SERVER PROJECT ABANDONED, NCL.MICRO TO BE ENHANCED

We have a PDP11/44 down in the machine room which was ear-marked as the "File Server" machine: a way of storing files and information centrally on a distributed computing system. This project has now been abandoned because of the developments which will take place in 1985 (major upgrade for the NUMAC computing equipment).

The 11/44, a pretty powerful mini computer, is to take the place of the PDP11/34 which is currently hosting the NCL.MICRO service. The 11/34 will then be used for development work in the Unix-based service area.

FOR SALE

Now Phil (Treleavan) and his wife Isabel (Lima) have to sell their house - you get first crack: A lovely 2-bedroomed semi in Cochrane Park; gas central heating, much double glazing, garage, larger than average garden. Price 20-25 thousand.

WANTED

(1) Pedal car to suit 3-year old: Alexander Law (c.o. Daddy Law, ext.225).

(2) Garage to store a boat until April: Dick Woodman (ext. 252).

ENTERTAINMENTS GUIDE

As some of you may know, most of Martin Lamont's spare time is taken up with Amateur Operatics. Martin is ticket secretary of the Gosforth United Reformed Church Musical Society, and is also an acting member (i.e. one who acts). The Society do one show a year, usually Gilbert and Sullivan, usually in March.

This year's show is "Utopia Limited" by G & S, which will run from Monday 26th March to Saturday 31st March, 7.15 nightly. Tickets are £1.20 for Monday-Thursday, £1.50 Friday and Saturday. It's always a good evening out: book early for good seats - see Martin soon!

HIGHLY RELIABLE SYSTEM

This was pushed under my stable door:

"Celebrations of the Reliability Project's 10th. Anniversary started auspiciously on the 3rd January, with the unique event of their PDP11 system surviving the whole day without a single system crash. This milestone was achieved by an 'elegant sub-system isolation mechanism' (B.R.) known as 'disabling logins', which is a key element in the strategy of both the reliability project and the related secure systems project."

MORE ABOUT THE TEACHING STAFF

Harry suggested that the teaching staff might like to tell the rest of us the sort of things that they're involved with. When reading through this, remember that the whole makeup of the Lab's courses will change in the next year or two, as outlined in Mouth No. 3.

Almost all the teaching staff do their bit for what are called "service courses", i.e. courses provided by this Department for other Departments in the University: these generally take the form of teaching programming at various levels to classes of undergraduates. In addition, they each have administrative tasks, like directing courses, or monitoring applications for places on computing courses: these have been included only if the individual felt like doing so.

HARRY WHITFIELD

Apart from his duties as Director of the Laboratory, his interests lie in operating systems, languages and compilers (currently for VLSI design), and in data communication. He has just built, with Dick Snow, a terminal concentrator called NIMROD. This sits on the Cambridge Ring and talks "Newcastle Connection protocol". He is now working on a gateway between the Ring and NUNET. His main teaching duties are lectures on communications architecture and networks to 2H and a large bunch of Final Years. With the rest of his time he is writing a book on an operating system called GUTS (sic).

BRIAN RANDELL

Teaches machine architecture and information representation to 1st Years; programming languages to 2nd & 3rd Years & MSc's; i/c CSSD Projects. Research: reliability and security of distributed systems; recursive structuring of systems; history of computers; and almost anything else.

JIM EVE

Teaches logical design, compilers, design and analysis of algorithms, automation theory. Admin.: examination arrangements, allocation of teaching duties, backup on postgrad admissions. Interests: compilers, algorithm design and analysis; more recently concurrency and networks.

IAN SCOINS

Teaches elementary programming to Agrics.; combinatorics to 2H and 3JH; graph theory and mathematical programming to 3H. Research interests: graph theory and mathematical programming.

PETER HITCHCOCK

Teaches service courses, and taught databases last term to the CSSD students. Also an Open University TV star: next coming up in April/May (at 6.00am). Research interests: databases and database dictionaries.

TOM ANDERSON

Teaches initial undergraduate course to all First Years: 252 this year. Problems here include a substantial minority who arrive as Basic experts or, worse, machine code enthusiasts. At the other extreme, he lectures to Final Years on models of computation, recursive functions, automata, formal languages, software reliability, system specification, abstract data types, program verification, language semantics, etc., etc., etc. He is involved (with MARI) in a research project which is evaluating the cost-effectiveness of software fault tolerance techniques developed by Brian Randell's long running Reliability Project. A naval command and control system has been implemented on HMS Daysh for this purpose. Future research will address the reliability of software for real-time systems in general, with industrial collaboration via the Centre for Software Reliability.

JOHN CLOWES

Currently lectures on data structures to Second Years and MSc's, and gives programming courses at various levels. Has also taught numerical analysis, mathematical programming, and coding theory. Research interests: algorithms for the solution of problems of discrete mathematics (e.g. graph isomorphism problem); combinatorial optimization; complexity theory.

MICHAEL ELPHICK

Teaching duties: principally Computer Architecture, to various groups (Honours/Joint Hons. Computing, Microelectronics, M.Sc.). Admin. Etc.: editing the Technical Report series, and the annual IBM Seminar Proceedings, examination arrangements for Microelectronics courses. Interests: machine architecture, microprocessors, programming languages in general (NOT FORTRAN!).

BENEDICT HEAL

"I teach very basic digital design, a 'Small Systems Course' covering assembler programming and elementary system design, and for the Micro-electronics students a course on concurrent programming. I am much looking forward to the advent of the long-awaited reform in our undergraduate teaching, as this will involve considerably more hardware teaching than at present. When not organising micro-electronics seminars, liaising with schools, and nursing the permanent teething troubles of ncl.micro, I am attempting to find out about logic programming."

RICHARD HOPKINS

Teaches Machine Architecture. Research interests: novel, parallel computer architectures; non-von Neumann architectures, and languages (logic, functional); recursively structured computing systems.

PETER LAUER

Interests are: programming language design; formal semantics of programming languages; logic of programming; has also been concerned with programming environments, particularly those supporting rigorous software development. Has led a project on COSY, a specification language for concurrent and distributed systems, and its associated theory of concurrency. Also has interests in formal logic in general, and logic programming in particular. Currently teaching logic, semantics and concurrent systems.

JOHN LLOYD

Teaches numerical analysis, especially approximation, quadrature, and optimisation; programming techniques course for MSc., covering advanced features of Pascal and program design/development. Research: approximation, especially splines; variational and finite element methods; sideline interest in bin-packing algorithms. Admin: most aspects of higher degrees, but especially MSc/Diploma courses; with HIS and JSC, responsible for service courses/undergraduate computer use.

MARTIN MCLAUCHLAN

In addition to service courses, is teaching advanced programming to 2H and the MSc's. Research interests: functional programming; verification of soft/hardware systems; VLSI design.

ISI MITRANI

Teaches: Modelling, simulation, performance. Research: Modelling, simulation, performance.

SANTOSH SHRIVASTAVA

Teaches hardware-related courses to undergraduates, operating systems and reliability to MSc students. Looks after (with JGBH) digital and micro teaching labs; MSc (CSSD) and PhD admissions). Research interests: System reliability, distributed systems, operating systems.

DICK SNOW

Teaches concurrent programming and operating systems to Final Years and MSc's. Research interests: working with Harry on NIMROD; i/c Hardware/Software debugging project.

KEN WRIGHT

Research interests: Numerical analysis generally. In particular: numerical solution of ordinary differential equations; boundary value problems; numerical approximations; error analysis and application to construction of algorithms; control algorithms. Teaches more or less the same subjects, to Final Years. Looks after UCCA applications (x hundred last year).

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 6

27th February 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

DEADLINES FOR NUMAC NEWSLETTER

For the many contributors to the above, here are this year's deadlines:

April	Friday 16th March
July	Friday 15th June
October	Friday 14th September
Jan '85	Friday 7th December

Relevant files should be permitted to CSC5. Between Newsletters, articles should be sent to Janet for inclusion in the *FORUM News conference.

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY MICROCOMPUTER USERS' GROUP

Mike Brudenell writes:

After a reasonable start, NUMUG faltered and died with only two people turning up for one meeting. However, people still seem interested, so NUMUG Mk II is being born. If you are interested, simply put your name on one of the lists on the 2nd or 9th floors of Claremont Tower, or contact Mike Brudenell (on NCL.MTS through \$MESSAGE, or in room 816). Details of meetings and membership will be circulated as soon as some idea of numbers is reached.

John Law.

The Horse's Mouth

DONALD HARRIS ON ...

Through no fault of his own, the Horse missed advertising the first of our Visiting Professor's lectures this year. However, the next one takes place in the School of Chemistry, Lecture Theatre 1, on March 15th at 2.00pm. Professor Harris, a director of Tesco Plc., is taking as his subject "Computing in Supermarkets", and his lectures are concerned with showing the impact of computers in store, depot and Head Office. Although the lecture is intended for our students, you will not be thrown out if you sit quietly at the back.

STAFF NEWS

NEW LECTURER

A new lecturer has been appointed, to take up his post in July. His name is Chris Phillips, 34, married ... More personal details in July. He comes to us from Hull University, where he is currently a lecturer. He was formerly at Liverpool, where he gained his BSc., MSc. And PhD ("Numerical solution of Volterra integral equations of the second kind by step by step methods"). He originates in Bristol.

CONGRATULATIONS

... to Richard Hopkins, whom, in the immortal words of the informant, 'we have succeeded in "Doctoring"'. Dr. Hopkins' thesis is entitled "General purpose decentralised computer architecture".

27th February 1984

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

I have been asked to give any available information on the following:

370/168 REPLACEMENT

NUMAC's 370/168 system is due for replacement in 1985. The application for new equipment was submitted to the Computer Board in January (copy is in the Common Room). We are now awaiting the Board's visit to us on May 3rd/4th.

LASER PRINTER(S)

The Computing Laboratory (Service side) is purchasing a DEC LN01 laser printer, which should be arriving any time now. Although the LN01 is really at the cheap end of the laser spectrum, it will provide valuable experience for the many people (networkers, system programmers, documentation people) who will need to know about this important development in computer printing.

Durham Computer Unit is to have an IBM 6670 laser printer loaned to them for the duration of the 1984 MTS Workshop, which takes place there in July.

PERQS - 7 OF THEM

Now there are seven: 4 to the Reliability project (2 using the Newcastle Connection via an Ethernet, 2 using the Newcastle Connection via an ordinary RS232 line); 2 to Dick's project; and one to Peter Lauer's project.

COMPUTER SCIENCE RESEARCH FOR THE MAN IN THE STREET

Tired of all that mumbo-jumbo? Dave Brownbridge has something which may be more comprehensible (at least, no less incomprehensible). We reproduce the cover here:

データ駆動および 要求駆動計算機アーキテクチャ

ニューキャッスル大学計算科学部

P. C. Treleaven, D. R. Brownbridge, R. P. Hopkins

訳 萩原兼一

目 次

序 論	24	5. データフロー計算機	46
1. 基本概念	25	5.1 M.I.T. のデータフロー計算機	
1.1 制御フロー		5.2 テキサス・インスツルメンツの分散データ プロセッサ	
1.2 データフロー		5.3 コダのデータ駆動計算機 (DDM1)	
1.3 リダクション		5.4 アーバインのデータフロー計算機	
2. 計算機構	30	5.5 マンチェスターのデータフロー計算機	
2.1 分類		5.6 ツールズの LAU システム	
2.2 制御フロー		5.7 ニューキャッスルのデータ駆動フロー計算機	
2.3 データフロー		5.8 他のプロジェクト	
2.4 リダクション		6. リダクション計算機	57
2.5 まとめ		6.1 GMD リダクション計算機	
3. プログラム構成	33	6.2 ニューキャッスルのリダクション計算機	
3.1 分類		6.3 ノース・キャロライナのセル未計算機	
3.2 制御フロー		6.4 コダの並列型多量処理システム	
3.3 データフロー		6.5 S-K リダクション計算機	
3.4 リダクション		6.6 ケンブリッジの SKIM 計算機	
3.5 まとめ		6.7 他のプロジェクト	
4. 計算機構成	40	7. 将来の傾向	60
4.1 分類		謝 辞	
4.2 制御フロー		参考文献	
4.3 データフロー		参考書目	
4.4 リダクション		訳者付記	
4.5 まとめ			

† ACM Computing Surveys, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 93-143.
"Data Driven and Demand Driven Computer Architecture"
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THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 7

27th March 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

PUBLISHING POLICY

From the Horse:

- (1) "The Horse's Mouth" is supposed to come out mid-month. The January issue slipped badly and, try as I might, we haven't been able to get back to mid-month yet. But we live in hope - don't be surprised if you get two Mouths within 3 weeks at some point in the future.
- (2) We rely heavily on people volunteering information. Please don't assume that the Editor will find out "somehow" - why do you think we started the thing? (We rarely give credit to authors, so don't be shy.)
- (3) This Editor is prepared to burn the evidence if a particularly juicy item were to be published which occasioned a mole-hunt. (Fat chance!) But he will not consider articles which could be inferred as being personally critical - fair do's.

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME!

You will have noticed a new face in the office (and a new voice at the switchboard). These belong to Barbara Szpunar (pronounced Spooner) - a good old English name. Barbara has taken up Julie Lennox's old job as "Research Secretary" (not an official title). She was formerly a secretary at the Nuffield Centre for Health Service Studies in Leeds, but then came with her fiancé up here to Newcastle, where she spent 6 months at Zoology before joining us. Coming from Bradford, I at once divined that Barbara came from there too. Wrong - she comes from Blackburn (and, yes, her Dad's Polish).

CONGRATULATIONS

- to Mary Cooper, who from the 24th March is called Mary Morris. What a rotten day you had for it, Mary! But we hear that all went off very well, despite the weather. For their honeymoon Mary and Peter have gone to that torrid spot, the White Man's Grave - the Hebrides (well, at least they're in the best hotel).

Mary sends her thanks to all the Lab. staff who helped buy the "Lab. wedding present". We collected a handsome sum, and bought some pieces from the china service that she specified in her Wedding List ("Calypso" by Midwinter). It didn't look a great deal by itself on the Common Room table but, by golly, it's good quality!

CLEVER CLOGS

Well done, Mike Douglass, who, an eagle-eyed Times reader discovered, qualified as a runner-up in the North-East region of The Times Microcomputer competition. You had to write up to 1000 words on how a microcomputer might be used to help a small business, and Mike's effort, about "a poor man's Prestel" (tell us more, Mr. Douglass!), won him ... a Letter of Commendation. Biiig Deal! (I hope it's not signed personally by Mr. Murdoch.)

T.V. STAR

Talent spotters and NUMAC Course organisers are advised to be up late (2330) on 12th April and early (0645) on 12th May, when Peter Hitchcock will be giving two lectures in the Open University course "Computer-Based Information Systems".

THE CURSE OF THE KOALA

Brian Randell went to Australia in February, and stayed "down under". He has had a bad chest infection, contracted in Australia, which has kept him virtually incapacitated since he came back on the 24th February. He hopes to be putting in an appearance back at work soon.

NOW THERE ARE EIGHT

Following last month's roll-call of PERQs: Terry Betteridge and Isi Mitrani's PERQ has now arrived (see Mouth 2), and has moved in with the others in what has been christened "the Perqery" on top of the Daysh. TB and IM have also appointed a Research Assistant, but the Dept. of Emp. won't let her start work.

MICRO SOFTWARE DISCUSSION

We (some NUMAC staff) have started a conference (STAFF-MICRO) in the on-line conference system FORUM (on the DUR.MTS system) which proposes critical discussion of software packages advertised for micros. This field is exploding with even greater violence than the field of mainframe software, and is more difficult to come to grips with (can you get to grips with an explosion?), partly because of the numbers of packages involved, and partly because of the "optimistic" advertisements which promote some of the packages.

As with most other micro-ware looked at by NUMAC, the software discussed will be in the upper ranges of the price scales - the sort of thing that might be considered by someone with a research grant to spend. More details from John Law, if you don't know how to use *FORUM.

6TH FORM CONFERENCE

You may have seen a lot of particularly young-looking students around in mid March. These were 6th Formers, for whom a Conference had

been arranged by Schools Liaison people in Maths and Computing (JGBH). One of the features of this annual conference is "A typical University lecture", which this year was given by John Lloyd, on the subject of producing efficient code.

RE-EQUIPMENT IN THE SMALL SYSTEMS LAB.

The small systems Laboratory, used to teach low-level programming to undergraduates, is to be re-equipped with Motorola 68000-based micros, and perhaps with a couple of small Unix systems. This will happen in time for next academic year. Benedict's in charge.

DES TO LOWER THE VEIL?

It has been proposed that the Data Entry System command language be changed: either so that it is more like real Unix, with some additional Unix commands, or so that the current command set is synonymous with the 'real' Unix commands. The idea is that it will be a good thing to show students what a Unix system looks like (although the total freedom of a Unix environment will not be available).

If there is to be debate on this highly important topic it must take place before Easter, so that next year's documentation can be prepared. So if you wish to contribute, please speak to Benedict (coordinator) or John Law (editor) as soon as you like.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 8

17th April 1984

Edited by John Law (ext.225)

ACCOMMODATION NEWS

THE MILL

The Mill will be made available to students from Monday April 30th. Apart from the work-study-chat areas, The Mill will contain equipment: 8 terminals and one small printer to start with. The equipment is for the students, not staff.

The Mill is intended for students who specialise in computing, with the exception of 1st years; thus all postgrad students may use the equipment, if they wish.

BRIDGE FLOOR 3

The principal point here is that Bridge Floor 3 is to be a "closed" block, for which you will need a key outside normal hours - like the Basement is now. And, as with the Basement, if you want get in when Claremont Tower is closed, you will need 2 keys (1 for Bridge 3, 1 for the Bridge itself, which in effect becomes a separate building when Claremont Tower is closed).

The Bridge will be used from June, we hope, at the latest. Six pioneers will move in there and set up base camps (find the water supply and the kettle-points). These happy few represent the two elements of the Laboratory to be housed in Bridge 3: Jill Foster, Malcolm George and Denis Russell are tied up in Networks; Rick Brooker, Safwat Mansi, and Andy Linton are absorbed in Research. Rooms and phone numbers to be published nearer the time.

At about the same time as the people move, the equipment in M17 will move

to B359, and the ERDOS system will move to B326.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

The following people will move to the indicated new addresses at the turn of April/May:

Martin McLauchlan	- D808 to T911 (*)
Jon Garnsworthy	- T815 to T812 (*)
Dave Mundy	- T815 to T812 (*)
Robert Stroud	- T814 to T815 (259)
Jean Pennington	- T838 to T824 (*)
Graham Parrington	- T838 to T824 (*)
Mike Brudenell	- T816 to T838 (218)

* = no phone yet.

Note: Although we refer to this as "musical chairs", the object is a serious one of course: these people will all be getting more room than they had previously.

STAFF NEWS

BOB MAHON REPLACEMENT

Bob's post has been filled by David Sedgwick, who will join us on May 1st: all the gen. then.

STOP PRESS - DIANE'S GOT PROMOTION

It's our painful duty to have to report that Diane Wilkinson, the "Office Junior", is leaving on Friday May 11th. However, we are very glad to report the reason: she has got a Grade 2 Shorthand Typist job in Registrar's. She is delighted (no doubt) that at last she's saying goodbye to our switchboard (average 150 calls per day to be answered), and to the Post Book, which, among all the other things, have kept her working furiously for the last 2 years. Our very best wishes go with you, Diane!

17th April 1984

PROFESSOR VISITS AGAIN

Our Visiting Professor, Donald Harris, will be giving his next lecture on the 17th May, at 2.00pm (venue to be announced). This will be the third in his series of lectures on the impact of computing in commerce (Prof. Harris is a Director of Tesco Plc.).

WORKS OUTING

There is to be a Trip to the Lakes on Saturday June 16th. Usual activities: walking, sitting about, eating, nattering - all in the beautiful surroundings of Buttermere. More details next month, or from the chief organiser, Elizabeth.

CALL ME "JET"

Tom Anderson is now so important that he gets flown to the States on Concorde, though it's not yet diverted to Newcastle to pick him up. Seriously: he managed to wangle a flight on Concorde recently, and the tale of how it came about, told in his inimitable style, is in his trip report, in the Common Room. (It wasn't paid for by the Lab., or even by British taxpayers, by the way.)

COMPETITION TIME

This month's competition is for the most original solution to how one might use a hollow cylinder made of very hard plastic. The dimensions are 15" long, external diameter 1.25", internal diameter 1". You are allowed to use one, two or several cylinders in devising your solution.

First prize: 100 plastic cylinders;
Second prize: 200 plastic cylinders.

CORRECTION

Spelling mistake: the word for the room in the Daysh where the PERQs are kept is not "Perquery" but "Perquerie" - an old French word for a coffee house.

SUCCESS

The appeal last month for more Horse fodder has been moderately successful: keep it coming!

SPACE FILLER

Thanks to Peter Hitchcock for this:

18 Rules for good riting

- Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
- Just between you and I, case is important.
- Verbs has to agree with their subjects.
- Watch out for irregular verbs which has cropped into our language.
- Don't use no double negatives.
- A writer mustn't shift your point of view.
- When dangling, don't use participles.
- Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.
- Don't use a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it.
- About sentence fragments.
- In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.
- Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
- It's important to use apostrophe's right.
- Don't abbrev.
- Check to see if you any words out.
- In my opinion I think that an author when he is writing shouldn't get into the habit of making use of too many unnecessary words that he does not really need.
- And, of course, there's that old one: Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.
- Last but not least, lay off cliches.

* We are grateful to the West Virginia newspaper, *Hillbilly*, for these grammar rules.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 9

18th May 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME

A very warm welcome to Dave Sedgwick, who started on 1st May as Programming Adviser (Micros). In fact Dave has come home: he was at the R.G.S., and used to come and use our facilities as a member of that school's Computer Club. Between then and now, he went to Loughborough University as part of a sandwich course with ICL: 1 year at ICL Letchworth (Prestel); 2 years Loughborough (Elec & Elec Eng.); 1 year ICL Manchester (networks/micros, and mainframe design); final year Loughborough; 18 months ICL Manchester (mainframe design & micro-coding).

Dave, being unmarried, has lots of time for hobbies, which centre mainly on racquet sports and on activities at West Avenue Methodists (Gosforth). And here we have a REAL runner: he's done the Manchester marathon in 3.03 and the Newcastle in 3.13 (which is pretty jolly good, if you didn't know!)

FAREWELL (AND HELLO!!)

Jay Black will be leaving us in mid-June at the end of his 2-year stay here. He will be returning to Canada, to the University of Waterloo.

That bleary-eyed look you get from him in the coming weeks is not grief at leaving Newcastle, but the contribution of young Stephanie, who arrived on Sunday 13th May, at 6lbs 9ozs. Congratulations and best wishes to all (and - in advance - well done, Steph.: nothing like taking your first Jumbo flight at the age of 3 months!!).

HELLO - AND FAREWELL

They move fast, these Poles - we have to bid farewell to Barbara Szpunar (welcomed so short a time ago), who is leaving on June 8th: that fiance of hers has gone and got a better job in Manchester. Sigh... Leeds - Newcastle - Manchester: oh, the siren sounds of these faraway places...Best wishes, Barbara!

FROM THE SAFETY OFFICER...

"It is with deep regret that I have to report the nominal demise of TEN undergraduates in Computing Science, as well as an electrician and a painter, during a "no notice" fire drill in Claremont Bridge on 10th May.

"The fire bells rang in the Bridge for 8-10 minutes, and it is reliably reported that the "fire" was started by an electrical spark in the temporary paint store on Floor 3, and that the students were overcome by smoke on Floor 6 because a Fire Door was wedged open.

"The students will be posthumously awarded the degree of GHOST (unclassified), provided they become familiar with that program in heaven or elsewhere...

"But seriously: if the fire bells ring for more than

half a minute, you MUST leave the building concerned, get down to ground level, and only re-enter the building when told you may do so. Why should anyone risk their life in a real fire for those who won't react to the fire bell?

"Please remember: reports on real fires indicate that they can spread very rapidly: you cannot afford to 'wait and see what happens'."

ACCOMMODATION NEWS

BRIDGE ACCOMMODATION

Is going ahead as reported last month - equipment starts to move on Monday 21st May. On June 11th the air-conditioning will be tested in the new Research computer rooms (B338/9, B340); if it's OK, that equipment will move in after re-decoration.

There is an obstacle to other moves: the rooms in the central block (windowless) are to be used as terminal rooms. To fulfil this purpose they need new ventilation equipment. There is some difficulty about how this work is to be financed (10's of 000's): until this can be resolved with the University, moving the Graphics Vax cannot be planned.

CORRECTION

Those elusive PhD students did a deal between themselves, so that they are not now accommodated as reported last month, but in an arrangement which suits them better (but which hasn't solidified yet). If you need to contact one particular PhD student, any of the others will be able to tell you where to find him/her...

TRIP TO LAKES, 16TH JUNE

The outing will be to Buttermere, main activity is walking in the country: short, medium or long. Visit to Scale Force (weather permitting). Coach will leave the University at 8.30am, start back from Buttermere at 7.00pm; approximate costs (depending on numbers): 4.50 per adult, 2.50 per child (5-16 years). Arrangements have been made to provide a Bar meal at the Bridge Hotel at 6.00pm (children over 5 allowed), other arrangements possible; bring your own tuck hamper for lunch.

All welcome, including your friends/relations. Fun guaranteed - weather guaranteed - book by June 1st (booking list and more details in Common Room, or with EDB or Joyce)!

APRIL'S COMPETITION: THE WINNER

There is a clear winner for last month's competition. Congratulations to Dave Mundy, who gets a 3-week holiday in the Ban-a-Ban Islands, where these plastic cylinders are used as currency (I forgot to mention that):

'Older readers may remember the pneumatic system used in the larger department stores for the transmission of receipts and money to a centralised point in the building. Now that the Computing Laboratory has become even more decentralised perhaps it is time to re-introduce this system by using those surplus plastic cylinders mentioned in April's edition of the "Horse's Mouth". The cylinders should be joined end-to-end, with branches, to form a tree structure. The root of the tree should be located in the General Office, with branches on the different floors of the Computing Laboratory, and leaf nodes in the office of each member of staff.

Whenever a member of staff has a document to be communicated to the General Office it is placed in the tree and blown (or sucked) to the root. Similarly when the General Office wishes to distribute documents to members of staff, the documents are placed in the tree and sucked (or blown) to the leaf nodes in the offices. Members of staff will now be able to receive their mail without having to visit the mail-racks. A further development would be to use the General Office as a switch thereby allowing members of staff to communicate documents to one another without having to leave their desks. Perhaps suitable funding bodies could be persuaded to support research into this system which falls under the realm of "Information Technology".

HOW TO STAGE A SUCCESS

Geoff Shearing has been involved in organising one or two events in the Laboratory over the last few years. In order to help others who may need to organise anything from a seminar to a conference, he has put all his Handy Hints in an MTS file: CL02:ORGANIZER. You know what to do if you'd like your own copy - but if you have anything to add, Geoff will be pleased to receive your suggestions.

HONEST JOHN'S CAR MART

A real beauty, this:

Volvo 345DL (i.e. not the tank, the, shall we say, armoured personnel carrier). Well run-in (34,000 miles), price 3,300 pounds (negotiable, of course). Only one previous owner, a Canadian (they never go above 60mph, y'know). First registered August 1983, extended warranty to August 1985. Phone Jay Black, ext. 207.

MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT LAUNCHED

[Health Warning: trying to understand this article without the necessary jargon may hurt your brain (I spe k f m xpe i nc .) Resumb for benefit of non-technicals: the Lab. has been invited to participate in a new and prestigious research project, which will involve more equipment arriving and three posts of Research Assistant being created for (at least?) three years.]

Peter Hitchcock, our Reader in Computer Science, is to head Newcastle's contribution to the first Alvey contract in Advanced Information Technology. Alvey made the press announcement on 6th April. The project, called ASPECT, is a joint venture between three major commercial firms (SDL, GEC, ICL), MARI, the University of York, and the University of

Newcastle upon Tyne.

Newcastle's involvement will concentrate on (a) the distribution of function in the system, both at the host and at the embedded systems level; and (b) the distributed database system that will support the programming environment. The Newcastle connection also figures prominently in Alvey's press release (copies available from PH, BR, or JAL). This is a very interesting document, containing details of the Project and the participants (including ourselves).

Equipment (for us): an 8Mb GEC Series 63 with 800 Mb disk storage, connected to 2 PERQ 2's via Ethernet. People: 3 Research Assistants to be recruited. All to go in the Bridge.

HELP!!

Isabel Lima, having successfully sold the Treleaven-Lima house in Cochrane Park, now has to vacate it - but she's got nowhere to go! Can anyone help?

STICK 'EM UP

One or two people may be interested to know that we have a file which produces sticky labels for the Computing Centres at all U.K. Universities, using the full postal address. Versions exist addressed to Directors and to Information Officers, but it could easily be adapted for other purposes. John Law has the details.

John Law.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 10
Bumper Summer Bundle

1st August 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

Ha! So you thought you'd seen the last of me! Neigh, lad/lass...

The horse has been out to pasture in the tropical south, and was then made to work very hard at the Durham MTS Workshop (not, I might add, as a dray horse, though some might leap to that conclusion.)

STAFF

TCHAU

(Not a summer sneeze - the Brazilian way of spelling Ciao, i.e., Au Revoir.) Mrs. Treleven, better known to us all as Isabel Gouveia Lima has at last found a job Down South, and can join her husband Phil. She's becoming a City Lady, having joined that famous firm of ~~money-grabbers~~ chartered accountants, Peat, Marrick and Mitchell.

Before she left us, on Friday 27th July, Isabel successfully completed her Doctorate in Computing Science, thus bringing to a perfect end her x (?5) years with us here at Newcastle. We'll sadly miss her dimply smile and cheerful demeanour. Another loss to Reading ... and more to come ...

Safwat Mansi leaves his post as Research Assistant with Dick Snow's project for a lecturer's post at (you've guessed it) University's Department of Computing Science. We're very happy for Safwat, at obtaining a good (permanent) post, and wish him the best of luck.

Malcolm George left us rather abruptly at the end of June, on being offered a good post with ?NEI. Although he had been here less than a year, Malcolm had shown his mettle as a good worker and a nice chap to be with - he's missed.

Ah me..excuse me while I blow my nose.

Now on to a brighter notes...

ARRIVALS

Goli Montaser-Kohsari has at last managed to join the Betteridge/Mitrani research project. She had a lot of trouble persuading the Home Office that she really should be allowed to work here, in spite of the fact that she's been here for 11 years. She spent most of her time in Cardiff obtaining her BSc and PhD in Numerical Analysis and Mathematical Computing. Goli is from Iran, and has been married for only 6 months; unfortunately, her husband is in Manchester, studying for his own PhD, and so Goli travels there every weekend. Her interests are cooking, especially Persian food, and keeping fit: she runs and swims *every day*. Goli is with us for three years.

Another Research Assistant is Phesany Wong, whom I should have introduced some months ago: she took over John Cotronis' appointment with Peter Lauer's research project, after the Greek Army had finally succeeded in calling up John. Phesany is with us until next February. She'll have her work cut out for the last couple of months of her contract, as she and her husband are expecting a visit from The Stork in December! Phesany came here from Hong Kong 5 years ago, and has obtained a BSc in Computing

Science, and the MSc in Computing Software and System Design. Her hobbies are travel, reading, and listening to classical music - they'll all go out the window in December, Phesany!

Gary Hudson is a new operator; he joins us from Plessey, South Shields. His interests are "any sports", golf, snooker, and car rallying (can't afford to drive in them yet).

Susan Mitchell is, believe it or not, a "temp" in the General Office (she's been here for 2 months so far). Susan is doing a great job filling in for Diane - we can't tempt her to become permanent, though: she would miss the thrill of all those exciting new jobs (the present one, for example).

Chris Phillips joined us on 1st July as lecturer in Computing Science (Numerical Analysis side). His history is: born Bristol; to Liverpool University to do a BSc (General - Maths, Computational and Statistical Science); BSc (Hons - Comp/Stat Sci); MSc (Advanced Num Anal); PhD (Num Anal, Integral Equations); short further stay on the staff at Liverpool; 5 years at Hull, Lecturer in Computing Studies dept.; finally, to Newcastle! Chris and his wife Maggie have a 3-month old girl Zena, and have now moved into their new home in Ovington. Chris's main hobby is fell walking, hence the sensible progression Northwards in his career. He plays "most sports", including squash, and is a qualified soccer referee.

You will see Gail Barker flitting around from time to time in the future (Gail was formerly a Documentation Officer with NUMAC). It's not that she found her absence from the Laboratory unbearable: the offer of some money persuaded her to come back in now and again to carry out contract work for the Royal College of General Practitioners.

We expect two new lecturers to join us on October 1st. These posts are funded with "I.T. Money". That's all we know at present.

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Mike Douglass and his wife Janet (especially to Janet) on the arrival of Joanne Emma on the 1st August. A mere 9lbs at birth, Joanne is the third junior Douglass - the third girl, too. Is being surrounded by women a good thing?

PRINT ROOM JOBS

Bill Foggo has designed a new Print Job Form, which should make it easier to specify requirements, and to keep track of jobs. If you have occasion to pass a print job direct to Bill, it must be accompanied by one of the new forms, which are held in the General Office.

WEEKEND OPENING

Ian Scoins circulated a notice dated 29th June in which he details proposals for opening the Floor 2 area of Claremont Tower for weekend working (initially, Saturday mornings). The experiment will start in October. The notice is posted on the 2nd Floor and in the Common Room, and it invites "expressions of interest". Our management, and in particular Ian, are due our thanks for getting the thin end of a wedge under the University authorities: we, and even more so our users, have long been frustrated by the inability to use the computing facilities at weekends because the buildings, not the equipment, were not accessible.

THE MARI PRIZE

MARI Advanced Electronics Ltd is a company in which the Laboratory had a founding interest; it continues to be a very important outlet for research ideas formed in the Laboratory, and also feeds back into research projects practical expertise. MARI have now announced the award of an annual prize to the Computing Laboratory, the winner to be the student who submits the best paper on the application of microelectronics. The prize will be worth \$75-\$100.

The prize is bestowed upon the Laboratory in recognition of the services to MARI of our research staff: modesty has forbade the naming of names ... so we content ourselves with general congratulations to the Reliability, and related, Research Projects on earning this accolade for the Laboratory.

LASER DRILL

As the laser printer now installed in the Machine Room has not yet been configured to make holes in the right places at the LH margin of its paper, users have to punch their own holes using the 3-hole punches in the Library, or on the 9th Floor (RGCP has custody). Bill Foggo says he will drill the holes in your output for you - worth the trip downstairs if you've more than about 20 pages.

NEW TELEPHONE LIST

Terry Betteridge has produced a new list of names/telephones/bleepers, which is available from the General Office. Terry is to be congratulated on performing the five-loaves-and-two-fishes trick in managing to get all our staff on the end of a telecom line; he's managed this with the aid of a large number of volunteers to take beepers instead of telephones. As in the past, you can do your own phone/staff list by using the MTS file CL30:PHONES as a base.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 11

31st August 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

STAFF

NEW LECTURER (?)

Dave Mundy has taken up one of the two new IT lectureships mentioned in HM 10. Congratulations!

NEW RESEARCH ASSOCIATES (?)

Two of the Hitchcock ASPECT project (see Horse 8) R.A.'s have been appointed. Ann Petrie has been a well-known face at the University for some time: she has been a Senior R.A. in Occupational Health, a temp. lecturer in Stats, and did an MSc. in Computing in 80/81; her husband Chris is a lecturer in Engineering Maths.

Ray Weedon has been doing the MSc this last year; I always thought he was Australian, partly because of his accent, but mainly because he wears shorts when the sun has been out for more than a day. Actually, he's South African (Botswanaian). He first came to the U.K. 20 years ago - he came to do Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford, having been a civil engineer up to then; then he went to Rome to study for the priesthood; "the call" not having come in the years he was there, he then went back to Botswana as an economist; several years later he came back to the U.K., to Newcastle, where he was - wait for it- the tennis coach at Northumberland Tennis Club, Jesmond, for a year (well, he did play for South Africa in the Davis Cup...). Now Ray has finally made it, of course: he joins the Lab., like Ann, for a 3-year R.A.-ship. Welcome!

LEAVING

For once, somebody is not going to Reading! Congratulations to Dave Brownbridge, who is leaving his Research Associateship here to take up a post with the infant company High Level Hardware in Oxford (close thing, Dave). This makes HLH's total number of staff about four (4). HLH make Orion supermicros - see "Hardware" below.

BOUND FOR HAPPINESS

Keith Adams (Ops) gets married on September 1st. Congratulations, and our very best wishes to you and your wife, Keith. ("Bound for happiness" is right - his "friends" ball-and-chained him at his Stag Party.)

MATERNITY LEAVE

Operator Yvonne Whitehead is expecting her first baby "some time" (thanks, Doc) in October. Once more to our rescue comes Val Ragan, as a temporary fill-in. Val did the same for Ann Muers last year, you will remember.

SABBATICAL

Who is this? Born in Czechoslovakia; left Dresden 24 hours before it was flattened in 1944; was a Country Boy in Austria for a few years; spent his secondary school years in Alexandria, Egypt (with the likes of King Hussein (name-drop, name-drop)); spent the next couple of years as a Beach Boy at Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro; went to Louisiana State University to study chemical engineering; became a professional musician (sax & bass),

and travelled the U.S.A. West Coast; went back to University at Atlanta, Georgia; graduated in philosophy (maths); got a job at IBM, Vienna; then to Belfast (under Hoare); then here to Newcastle in 1972. It's Peter Lauer, who for the next 12 months will be Visiting Professor of Mathematical Sciences in the Unit for Computer Science at McMaster University, Ontario. Best wishes to you and Janie, Peter. (Peter's full address is available at the Office, or from me.)

HARDWARE

PER 'ARDWARE AD ASTRA

(Geddit?) (No - get on with it - Ed.) The thing about High Level Hardware (see above) is that they microprogram a Unix System (Berkeley 4.1) into their Orion supermicros. They wish to include the Newcastle Connection in this system, and with that aim in view one has "appeared" in our Research Laboratory. It is not true, my informant tells me, that we swopped Dave Brownbridge for the Orion.

The Orion really is a super micro, having just about the power of a VAX 11/750 inside its tea-chest-sized frame (but it's cheaper than a Perq). Anyone interested in finding out more about it is invited to contact Dick Snow pronto so he can show it to you all at the same time.

MOVES TO THE BRIDGE

The Research Machine Room (For~~t~~ Unix) in the Bridge is now operational, containing the 2 VAX 750's, the Orion, and the GEC 63 (plus some others). The Aspect Project's GEC machine runs a Unix (sort of) system called Unix 63.

The Nunet systems will move to the Bridge sometime in September.

The Graphics VAX 780 is to move to the Bridge on September 16th, and will be out of commission for a couple of days then.

COMPUTER LITERACY

We have it on good authority that the Norwegian Government has banned the teaching of BASIC in schools. They always were ahead of us in environmental matters.

SALES

For the Hot-Blooded Latin in you ... A 1.6 Renault Fuego; 1982; custom-fitted stereo; 16000 miles; 4000 pounds - special Comp Lab price. (Peter Lauer, or John Law this week)

For the Scotsman in you: an advantageously priced 1981 BL Metro 1.0 L; radio and rear wiper, etc.; 8mths MOT; 6mths tax; to you - 1995 pounds (save 250!) (Bob Vine)

For the Washerwoman in you: Colston Ariston spin drier; 5 years old; excellent condition; 30 pounds. (John Law)

John Law.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 12
Grand Anniversary Issue

9th October 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.225)

COMINGS AND GOINGS

WELCOME!

... To Silvia Pflieger (note 2 "i"s in Silvia), who has joined the Reliability Project as a Research Associate for a year. Silvia is German, and comes to us from the GMD Research Institute in Bonn; she combined her GMD post with one as a visiting lecturer at the University of Bonn. Before that, she worked for the German computer manufacturer Siemens for a number of years, with an interval at the University of Munich while she completed her PhD there. Silvia is over here with her 10 year old daughter, who has started school in Jesmond. Silvia's outside activities include swimming, table tennis, chess and walking.

... And to Carol Reynolds, who joined the General Office on September 10th in the post chiefly concerned with the Research side of the Lab. Carol was formerly in the Maths Department, but left them in 1982 to be an au pair in Arcachon near Bordeaux. Amazingly, she decided to return to the North East of England (actually, the job came to an end), and after a CSC refresher course, started with us on September 10th. Two of her outside activities are squash and badminton.

... And welcome back to Helen Slater who started again with the Lab. on a part-time basis (4 days a week in term-time) in September. Helen was in the U.S.A. (again) for a year, in Palo Alto, Ca. Helen is working on the computing service side, in the Unix systems group with Peter Lomas and Brian Hamshire.

GONE

That well-known night-owl Dave English has left the Laboratory for a job with Locomotive Systems of Dorking, a company formed by some of his friends. Locomotive do systems programming on micros & other odd jobs. They have recently come nearer to the public eye after writing the ROM for the Amstrad home computer (on time, on budget). Best of luck, Dave.

APOLOGY

In HM 11 I referred to "Val Ragan" - it's Val Douglas. In the same article I referred to "Ann Muers", who is actually Ann King. Silly me.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

This round of moves has taken place:

T = Tower B=Bridge D=Daysh

Dick Snow	to B350 ext.287
Chris Phillips	to T823 ext.210
Clive Gerrard	to D810 ext.
Fabio Panzieri	to B348
Robert Stroud	to B349
Graeme Dix	to B347
Graham Parrington	ditto
Ann Petrie	to B344
Ray Weedon	ditto
Helen Slater	to 131
Gail Barker	ditto

Note: most rooms above do not yet have phones. Two to come in the next fortnight: John Law to T811 (from the Basement), Judith Hunter to T815.

More moves next month; the new stable situation will be reflected in a new telephone directory which will appear later this term.

John Law, or John Aspden if you need more details or a lift.

SALES AND WANTS

Wanted: small bicycle for 9 year old girl (Jill Foster (for Emma)).

EQUIPMENT MOVES

The main news is that the VAX Graphics System has been successfully moved to its new location on the 3rd Floor of the Bridge. The various terminals are distributed piecemeal in the suite of rooms, until the proper terminal room is completed. Margaret (H.), Ron (P. or K.), and Keith (H.) might be in any one of these rooms if they're not to be found in their offices. (Sorry, M, R, R, and K.)

SATURDAY OPENING

As mentioned in "Horse" 10, Floor 2 of Claremont Tower will be open to users, particularly Comp Sci undergrads, on Saturday afternoons this term, starting on Saturday 3rd November. Opening times will be 1300-1700 or 1400-1800, depending on the Demonstrator in charge.

BANG!!!

The Senior Common Room Bonfire will take place as usual at the Close House estate on Monday November 5th. All welcome: tickets cost 80 pence (from John Lloyd), no charge for under-fives. The main event is the spectacular fireworks display; food and other refreshments will be on sale in the House.

Volunteers are needed to help build the fire on the next three Sunday mornings, starting at 9.30-ish. Meet at Close House: building the fire is sometimes more fun than being there, is wonderful healthy exercise in the beautiful autumnal surroundings of the Close House Estate ... And is completely free. Contact John Lloyd,

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 13
Extra Late Special

27th November 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.255)

SORRY ABOUT THIS

Partly because of the upheaval of moving 13 (thirteen) years' worth of NUMAC rubbish to the 8th Floor, and partly because the process of hunting out information doesn't get any easier, this issue is very late.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Computing Laboratory General Office Party is again thrown open (at a price) to all staff/PhDs in the Laboratory who would like to come.

The festivities will commence at 1530 in the Office; food, and moderate amounts of wines, beers, and soft drinks will be available. Sophisticated banter, intelligent conversation, serious discussion - you will find all this (if you look hard enough), as well as music, laughter and Much Jollity. The Party is due to close some time after 1700. Those who wish to may continue at the venue where the Office girls are to be found every lunchtime, i.e. in the Public Bar, Percy Arms. (Newcomers to the Laboratory should not take that last sentence too seriously.)

Ah - the cost. Please, you must add your name to the list in the Office if you wish to come; your contribution will be 1.80: excellent value!

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME!

Zubeda Sharif has joined the Network team, taking up the place vacated by Malcolm George earlier this year. Zubeda (zoo-bay'-da) obtained her BSc in Biological Chemistry at Essex University, and then went to Aston to study for an MSc in Information Technology. Her job with NUMAC's Network Team is her first (starting right at the top, you see). Her family lives in Newcastle, and Zubeda's staying with them for the time being. Her hobbies include squash, tennis, pop-mobility, etc.. Zubeda is still single, the world at her feet.

Visiting the Laboratory for about a year is Alexandre Yakovlev. Alex is Russian, born and bred in Leningrad. He is a lecturer at the Lenin Electrical Engineering Institute in that city, where he also did his Computing Science degree, and his postgraduate degree in "Interface Protocols and Self-timed Implementation". He and his wife Mary (anglicised version) have a little boy Gregor, who is nearly 4; unfortunately they are staying at home, so Alex is living in Ethel Williams Hall (should be educational for him!). His principal interests in computing at the moment are with David Kinniment, Peter Hitchcock, and Silvia Pfleger. Alex's interests include swimming, walking, chess, jazz, watching soccer, "jokes", and the English Language (which he speaks very well).

ANOTHER ONE DOWN!

Congratulations and very best wishes to Deborah, of the Operations staff, who has been Mrs. Harris since 6th October.

MORE NEW ARRIVALS

All the best people are Scorpios, you know ...

Yvonne Whitehead (Operations staff) has had a little girl, (as they say): 8lbs 10oz - not so little! Young Laura Kate was born on 12th November.

Safwat Mansi is now Daddy Mansi: his wife Mary gave birth to a little boy on 7th November. Young Christopher weighed 7lb 5oz.

[All bets are off as to whether Phesany Wong will make it or not to her "due" date on Friday December 7th: Wong Junior has been looking imminent for the last few weeks. Best wishes to the Wongs!]

TEMPORARY DEPARTURE

John Lloyd will be leaving us for a sabbatical from mid-January. He will be spending a year as a Visiting Associate Professor in the Computing and Information Science Department, University of Delaware, U.S.A. Apart from anything else, this means that he has a beautiful red, Y reg. Ford Escort Estate car (1.3L, 15,000 miles) to sell, and an even more beautiful 4 bedroomed semi on Kenton Road to let. Have a good time, John and Family!

CHANGE OF ROOM

Paul Ezhilchelvan to Br329 (5589)
Judith Hunter to 815 (221)
John Law to Room 811 (255)
Andy Linton to Br328 (5919)
Jean Pennington to 921 (276)
Silvia Pflieger to Br330 (5989)
Janet Wheeler to B17 (5389)

Moves to come, more details in the next "Mouth": Gail Barker, Alan Hunter, and Betty Smith.

GET WELL SOON!

We all wish a speedy recovery to Margaret Hindmarsh, who has been suffering awfully with her back for two months and more, now. It started in September when she tried to get a recurring back pain sorted out once and for all. The cure has so far been unremittingly painful, and we all think Margaret has by now had more than her fair share. She has been away from work for almost the whole time, and not only does she miss work: we need her unbounded energy and expertise back here! Graphics users, in particular, are wandering around like lost sheep! Heartfelt best wishes to you, Margaret.

PHD STUDENTS

I have added all our PhD students to the circulation list for the Horse's Mouth. They stay with us a long time (for The Duration, some of them), so they should be included. Our current PhD population (with current year of study) is:

Tahir Afzal (1st)
Josephine Anyanwu (4th)
Alan Brown (1st)
Mike Brudenell (2nd)
Graeme Dixon (2nd)
Jon Garnsworthy (2nd)
Fariba Hedayati (2nd)
Larry Hughes (1st)
Mike Lynch (3rd)
Graham Parrington (4th)
Jean Pennington (4th) (Demonstrator)
Nick Rothwell (3rd)
David Settle (1st)
Simon Wiseman (1st) (External, at RSR)

Larry Hughes (Canada) may be familiar to some: he was here doing an MSc 6 years ago. Adeeb Seleman is missing from the above list: he successfully

completed his PhD last month and has returned home to Iraq (here's hoping he doesn't have to go to war).

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Ventilation works in the Bridge have made some, but not enough, progress. The VAX Graphics Terminal Room is not expected to be available before Easter next year.

The Ethernet is to be extended to include the North side of the Bridge (as well as the South).

The Micro support machine is the first to have been moved into 200C of the Tower; DES 1, 2 and 3 are to be moved during the vacation.

SUB-BASEMENT MACHINE ROOM

A great deal of renovation work has been in progress over the past year, concerned with the main Computer Room. Claremont Tower is now ancient, by modern standards, being 17 years old. The work started in February this year, and is due to finish about February 1985.

The cooling tanks on top of Claremont Bridge and Tower, which evaporate the heat from the Computer Room's air conditioning plants, have been renovated, and the ducting, electronics, pumps, etc., of the two plants have been replaced. The false ceiling (3 tons weight) is being replaced, and the fire detectors are about to be replaced. All the below-ground lights have been replaced (24 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 17 years ...) This, of course, is a brief summary: Roger will amaze you with some figures about what goes on behind the scenes ("behind the screens"?) of our computing service.

OTHER OPERATIONS NEWS

The winners of the Roger Broughton Chocolate Orange Trophies were:

Cross-Machine-Room Paper Glider Competition: Keith Adams (50 feet)

Microfiche Reader Cut-Out Silhouette Competition: Susan Dent, with her rendering of A Horse.

(So that's what happens when things quieten down during the nightshift.)

MICRO OPEN DAY

Our noble lads in the Microcomputer Advisory Service have chosen Thursday January 10th to be "Micro Open Day". The occasion will be used mainly by 4 suppliers (Exxon, Hills, RML and Computerit) to demonstrate material of interest to University users: the emphasis this year will be on applications.

PRINT ROOM NOTES

Bill Foggo's magical and frightfully expensive Xerox printing machine is now in full production (after he sent the first one back for not producing top quality).

Bill asks that people handing in work for reproduction should not use staples nor paper clips to keep the work together: put it in a folder, or just leave it flat with the job sheet. Staples, and even paper clips, can crimp the work sufficiently to offend the master-feeding mechanism.

Secondly, if you make hand-drawn additions to your work (e.g. characters or diagrams) use black ink: anything else is not guaranteed to give satisfactory results.

Thirdly, note that Job Sheets are not required for simple "one-off" jobs such as binding, stapling, or plate making.

BLOOD DONORS

At least three Comp.Lab. donors sympathised with the Blood Transfusion people in the accommodation presented to them this time (in Education). Perhaps we could ask the Computing Laboratory to surrender Floor 6 of the Bridge again, for 2 weeks in the year, so that the BTS can again have access to what is for them perfect accommodation?

ATTENTION MICRO HOBBYISTS

Anyone out there interested in computers? Mike Brudenell announces:

Newcastle University Microcomputer Users' Group (NUMUG for short) is holding meetings once again. These are during Thursday lunchtimes (1pm-2pm), and are held in the Mill.

As well as getting to know other people with similar machines, NUMUG will form the basis of a mutual-help system. A helpline is available by joining the NUMUG conference in *FORUM on either MTS machine.

SALES

Coventry Eagle child's unisex cycle for sale. Would suit age group 7 - 11 or under-developed adult. Price 10 quid. Enquiries to unisexual Ron Kerr who has almost grown out of it.

Send your Christmas Sales/Wants to The Horse now: another Issue will appear before Christmas!

FIRST AID

The following people in the Laboratory are now recognised "First Aiders", having received the proper course from the Red Cross. Please let me know if you have names to add to the list.

Elizabeth Barraclough
 Quentin Campbell
 John Clowes
 John Law
 Peter Hitchcock
 Judith Hunter
 Martin McLauchlan
 Mary Morris
 Ann Taylor

Reporting a casualty to these people will, of course, result in 2 or 3 more when they fight each other for the privilege of bandaging the poor victim.

FROM THE COMMON ROOM NOTICEBOARD

Chest Freezer for sale, LEC 13.7 cu ft; 50 pounds. ~~Val Douglas (252).~~

Judith Hunter is collecting old Telephone directories on behalf of the local Boys' Brigade.

IT'S A BOY!

Phesany Wong had a little boy (really a little boy - 6lb 3oz) on Wednesday.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 14
Festive Number (Overleaf)

18th December 1984
Edited by John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME!

..to Thomas Aquinas Dongman Lee, who is with us until next September as a Visiting Research Fellow. Thomas comes to us from Seoul, Korea; he is known by his "official" name (D. L.) in Korea, and by his baptismal name (T. A.) in the West. He has an MSc in Comp.Sci. at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology and is here, for the first year of his PhD, on a KAIST Fellowship. His "business" interests are primarily the Newcastle Connection, to start with. He is currently living in lodgings in South Gosforth and is looking for a flat; he's single, likes playing guitar, skiing, and is a very keen table tennis player.

MOVES

Alan Hunter has already moved to the top of the Daysh, Room 817.
Betty Smith will be moving from her present room to the one next door to Brian Randell, B32.
Brian Jones will be moving from B14 to Floor 8, Room 816.
Tom Anderson will be moving from Floor 2 to the Bridge Floor 3 - Room 327.

Note that all the above will retain their present telephone extensions; those "unmoved" will do so when British Telecom fix a date for moving the extensions: hopefully New Year.

Goli Montaser-Kohsari will be moving to Tom's old room (213).
Peter Barrett has moved back from MARI to Judith Hunter's old room on the 8th Floor, 819.

NEW COMPUTER

A Bleasdale M68010 (10MHz) computer has been ordered for the Digital Systems Laboratory on the top of the Daysh Building. It will have 2Mb memory, 150Mb disk store, and a "tape streamer"; there will be 16 ports, plus 2 high speed (communications) ports. The machine will run under Unix and will have Pascal, C, and the usual Unix utilities. It will not be on Nunet in the foreseeable future, although it is hoped eventually to acquire hard- and software to make this possible. The M68010 will take a substantial load off NCL.MICRO. Delivery is expected late January.

COFFEE PRICES SOAR

About time, too! The current prices for refreshments in the Common Room have not changed since its opening in 1978. To avoid operating at a loss, it has finally become necessary to put up the prices to:

Coffee (Nescafe) 8 pence
Orange Squash 5 pence
Biscuits 4 pence
(Real Orange stays at 15 pence)

These prices will take effect from January 2nd. While we're about it, thanks to Ann Anderson, Ann Laybourn and the General Office for the smooth day-to-day running of the Common Room, and to Terry Betteridge and John Lloyd ("Common Room Committee" - yes there is one!)

CHRISTMAS COLOUR SUPPLEMENT

FESTIVE PUZZLE

This quiz went round the Department a couple of years ago: how many of you who did it then remember the answers? 12 additions have been made - some very topical.

Example: 16 = O in the P = Ounces in the Pound

26 L of the A	J C in the F	29 D in F in a LY
7 W of the W	16 T (and WDG?)	64 S on a CB
1001 AN	200 P for PG in M	40 D and N of the GF
12 S of the Z	7 S on a FPP	76 T in the BP
54 C in a D (inc.Js)	3 BM (SHTR)	24H from T
9 P in the SS	4 Q in a G	12 D of C
88 PK	24 H in a D	15 M on a DMC (YHH etc.)
13 S on the SF	1 W on a U	2 B in the W
32 DF at which WF	>1 W to S a C	7 D for SW
18 H on a GC	15 R on a ST	2 US (& 1 HP for C)
90 D in a RA	11 P in a FT	101 D
57 HV	1000 W that a P is W	1 FC

FESTIVE SONG: OH, COME ALL YE HOPEFUL

An A-Z of Not Making Connections, with the Switchboard Choral Society.

Good Morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(I'm sorry - I was dealing with three other calls)
Please hang on -
I'll see if I can find him...
Oh, A is at a meeting
And B, I think, is teaching
And C's not in this morning
Will you call again?

Good Morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(I know, but I'm trying to type the Annual Report)
Please hang on -
You say that you have bleeped her?
Oh, D is at a Conference
And E is on Sabbatical
And F is out at Senate
All afternoon.

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(I'm sorry - I'm gritting my teeth too hard)
What name was that please?
Are you sure he works here?
Ah yes - G left last summer
And H is in Australia
And J ran off last Wednesday -
We don't know where.

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(I'm sorry - I did not mean to frighten you)
What? Has your wife phoned?
How the heck would I know?
Oh, K is Duty Adviser
And L is down in London
And M is off on sick leave
For at least a month.

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(Now who has taken our pencil away?)
Ah, there I can help you:
You need to phone the RVI..
Oh, N is on the roof
And O is in the Plant Room
And P is in the Machine Room
under the floor...

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(No, no, not you - I wouldn't call you that)
Yes, he is in today -
At least: he said he would be..
Oh, Q is on a Course
And R is out at lunch
And S is across the road
at Registrar's.

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(No, no, not us - are you sure it bleeped?)
What's that you say?
Your program doesn't work?
Oh T is with a user
And U is down at Durham
And V is interviewing
The whole day long...

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(No, I'm alright - I just tripped on the flex)
What is it now?
No, she hasn't called yet..
Oh, W is at the Bursar's
And X is with a salesman
And Y is has gone to the airport
to meet you there
(what do you mean, you're still in New York?)

Good morning, Computing
How can I help you?
(I'm sorry, I'm the only one that's in here today)
NO you may not -
We have no outside lines today
Oh Z has gone off skiing,
And I am off my rocker
Thank goodness it's Christmas -
And (present) Opening Time!

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

1

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 15
Spot-the-Ball Issue

24th January 1985
Edited by John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS - AND FAREWELL

...to Pat Weatherburn, who has been with us since early last term as "the Temp." In the General Office, her main task being to deal with the switchboard. Having failed to discipline this Department, Pat has decided upon the much easier task of getting the Coldstream Guards organised: she's marrying one of them on 16th February (the day after she leaves us!) All the best to you and yours, Pat - your (how can one put it?) lively good nature will be sadly missed.

NEWS FROM THE SICK BAY

Still incapacitated by her poorly back is Margaret Hindmarsh. Because "bed-rest" at home has done her no good since it started last October, Margaret has now been moved to Ward 31 at the General Hospital (visiting hours 2.30 to 7.30, any day), where the specialists can finally locate and cure the problem. Margaret thanks us for our good wishes and says she misses us all very much (not half as much as we, and all those Graphics/Fortran users, not to mention your VAX, miss you, Margaret!)

MOVES

Betty has not yet moved, but will do so imminently: she will put a notice on the Common Room Notice Board when she finally does. Meanwhile, her extension is temporarily 241, reverting to 200 when she moves. See the next article also for news on moves ...

TELEPHONES

Terry Betteridge has again worked the miracle of producing a telephone directory for the Department - there are so many bodies moving to so many places, with so few telephones available, that it's a wonder that he ever manages to do it. The almost-final draft is on the Common Room Notice Board, and Terry hopes to distribute copies in about a week.

The new Directory reflects all recent and all pending moves, which means that Brian Jones, Tom Anderson, and Goli Montasser-Kohsari are all in the "wrong" place at the moment: they will move very shortly, when various wires have been re-routed to their new rooms.

CONGRATULATIONS

...to Josephine Anyanwu who achieved her Doctorate early this month; the title of her thesis is "Robust data storage in a network of computer systems".

Belated congratulations also to Dave Brownbridge, who was accorded his PhD in early December, his thesis being entitled "Recursive structures in computer systems".

FREE THE OFFICE COPIER!

The photocopier in the General Office is now a small, slow little thing, intended for doing single sheet work. If you have a job that will produce more than about 10 sheets, the job should be done on the super-duper, singing, dancing, Star Wars-type photocopier that shares the Print Room with Bill Foggo. This machine, which also makes Bill's coffee for him, is fast and clever, and is part of an operation that is intended solely for printing.

Please take advantage of our Print Room facilities. To do this, you need to fill in a Print Room Form; this is just like writing the tatty bit of paper you usually insert in your job, except that (a) it's all neat and tidy and (b) you have to put on a Job Number, which you get from the book in which the form is completed. Turnround from the Print Room is usually half a day; urgent jobs can often be done "on demand" IF you take a completed Job Form down to Bill with your job.

All the above is a guide, rather than a policy. All photocopying is done with reference to the laws on Copyright: see these on the counter in the General Office. If you have any questions about the abilities of the new copier, or about how to approach a copying or printing job, Bill will be pleased to talk to you and show you the facilities (ext.251).

FREE THE COMMON ROOM NOTICE BOARD!

If we all did the following (where applicable), we could wipe the Common Room Notice Board clean:

(a) Collect your Senior Common Room Membership card (OR: SCR Committee - start doing card checks, for once);

(b) Hand back to Joyce the OHP pens you've borrowed. (If you think public speakers should be issued with their own set, write to your local Head of Department!)

SUNNY SMILES

(OR "BETTER LATE THAN NEVER")

Some of the people below have been with us for months and months, but we have only just received the pictures from Photography:



Jeff Craig
A/C Technician



Garry Hudson
Computer Oper.



Graham Parrington
Demonstrator



Jean Pennington
Demonstrator



Ann Petrie
Res.Ass. (ASPECT)



Silvia Pfleger
Visitor, Research



Chris Phillips
Lecturer



Carol Reynolds
Typist (Research)



Dave Sedgwick
NUMAC (Micros)



Ray Weedon
Res.Ass. (ASPECT)

FESTIVE PUZZLE: THE ANSWERS

You were warned that some of the new ones were very topical. They were added on the assumption that The Children would end up helping Mummy and Daddy over the Christmas break. Perhaps this explains why one of our most Brilliant Research Scientists (O.K. - a wild overstatement) was unable to do the new ones.

26 Letters of the Alphabet
7 Wonders of the World
1001 Arabian Nights

12 Signs of the Zodiac
54 Cards in a Deck
(inc. Jokers)
9 Planets in the Solar System
88 Piano keys
13 Stripes on the States'
Flag (*)

32 Degrees Fahrenheit at
which water freezes

18 Holes on a golf course

90 Degrees in a Right Angle
57 Heinz Varieties

(*and 13 Strokes of the lash
for the Silly Fool who typed
13 S on the SF instead of
13 S on the AF)

3 Coins in the Fountain
16 Tons (and Wha'D'Yuh Get?)
200 Pounds for passing
GO in Monopoly
7 Sides on a Fifty-Pence Piece
3 Blind Mice
(see how they run)

4 Quarts in a gallon
24 Hours in a day
1 Wheel on a Unicycle

More than 1 way to skin a cat

15 Reds on a snooker table

11 Players in a football team
1000 Words that a picture
is worth

29 Days in February in a Leap Year
64 Squares on a chess board
40 Days and Nights of the Great Flood

76 Trombones in the Big Parade
24 Hours from Tulsa

12 Days of Christmas
15 Men on Dead Man's Chest (Yo-Ho-Ho, etc.)
2 Babes in the Wood

7 Dwarves for Snow White

2 Ugly Sisters and 1 Handsome Prince
for Cinderella

101 Dalmatians (sigh)
And there's only One Real ...

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

1

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 16

~~Valentine's Day Issue~~

4th Sunday in Lent

22nd March 1985

Edited by John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

Welcome!

...to Albert Koelmanns, who has joined us as a lecturer. Albert first appeared here in 1980, having been one of Harry Whitfield's students at Groningen (Netherlands). After completing his Master's degree he had to do his national service, and he came back to Newcastle in January 1983 as a Research Assistant in the Dept. of Elec. and Elec. Eng. He has been working on the VLSI Project there, in particular helping to design a chip description language with Martin McLauchlan; although not now on the Project, his interest in this area remains as strong. Albert and his wife Lydia are expecting their first child in a couple of months. He plays guitar, but recently this has taken second place to his main current "hobby": writing a book on Adventure Gaming on the BBC micro.



A warm welcome too to Maciej Koutny, who has joined the Lab. as a visiting Research Associate for 1 year. Maciej (Polish Matthew, pronounced something like "match-ye") comes from Torun (birthplace of Copernicus), but now belongs to Warsaw, where he has studied for the last 5 years. He will be working with Richard Hopkins on the Recursive Systems Architecture project. Maciej has a wife, Marta, and a little girl Alexandra who is almost 4: they are still in Poland, but he hopes to get them across here in summer. This is Maciej's first long visit to Britain; apart from computer systems, he enjoys basketball, swimming, films, theatre etc.

And we must also say hello to Carole Moffat, who is our new "temp" at the Office switchboard. Although a temporary employee, Carole will be here for quite some time, on past experience!

Goodbye-and-Hello-again to Phesany Wong. Phesany's work for Peter Lauer's project finished at the end of February, but she has been recruited straight away as Research Associate to Dick Snow's Hardware/Software Debugging project.

Goodbye... to Peter Barrett, who is not going very far, having been offered a post with MARI, where he has been working most of the time anyway in recent years.

And a fond farewell to Jeremy Harrison, who has been an operator with NUMAC for 6 years. Jerry is going

to the Prescription Pricing Authority (where Dave Robinson went some time ago). It's always sad to see a cheerful and reliable person leaving: best of luck, Jerry.

And, yes, the day has finally come when another very familiar face is leaving: Fabio Panzieri has come to the end of his contract with the Reliability Project. With a couple of friends, Fabio has set up a computer consultancy in Italy; his offices will be in Pisa and in Milan. He's enjoyed very greatly his time here in England, and says that we've changed him: he likes the "relaxed" attitude of the English race (so *that's* what's wrong with the country!), and he'll be back to visit us without a doubt. Although he didn't walk the corridors singing Neapolitan love songs, Fabio takes with him a breath of the Warm South. Arrivederci, Fabio! Molta Fortuna! Ah me - veste la giubba!

OLD NEWS

(This should have been in last month's)..

Jerry went on March 13th, but we had already had another sad loss to the computer operators at Christmas, when Keith Adams left to work for English Industrial Estates in Team Valley. The good news as a result was that Val Douglas has joined us on a permanent basis

Welcome to Carol Hellier, who has started with Mildred Ashworth's ladies in the Data Entry Service. Mildred's group is the tightest-knit in the Lab., and most of the ladies have been here since it was formed (mumble) years ago when NUMAC started. We could have a whole issue devoted to Mildred's Group (look out, Mildred...). We restrict ourselves to welcoming Carol, to saying a belated farewell to Olive Gourley, who left at Christmas; and to expressing congratulations and our very best wishes to Betty Mitchell, formerly Betty Heenan, who was married in February.

STOP-PRESS-LATEST NEWS

A new face among the operators is Derek Teasdale, who is here on a 16 week training attachment.

Very good news for the Department is that we have won yet another IT lectureship, to be taken up from October 1st, preferably in the field of Software Engineering. These lectureships are permanent appointments, intended by the Government to redirect resources into the "new technology" departments in Universities. Although we therefore have a better chance than most other Departments within the University, we must compete with all other

Universities in the U.K. for the posts that the Government makes available. Our Department now has 5 IT lectureships, and we can therefore be moderately proud of our reputation. - - Much more about us in the latest University Newsletter, distributed on Monday this week.

NEWS FROM THE SICK BAY

Wonderful news from Margaret Hindmarsh, in that she is now definitely on the mend. Margaret went into hospital in January, much to everybody's relief, because now we felt "they" would actually do something for her back. The optimism was well-founded: "they" found a lump on her spine and took the little blighter out: now all she has to do is regain the strength in her weak muscles and joints, the result of 4 months bed rest. The latest news is that she is feeling terrific, and hopes to be back at work in a couple of months.

MOVES

The following moves, planned for a long time, have now taken place:

Brian Jones to 816
Betty Smith to B32
Tom Anderson to Bridge 327
Goli Montasser-Kohsari to 213

Phones as in the current Lab. phone directory.

STOP THIEVES!

Partly because of our being spread over a very large area, and because we are a large department and don't all know each others' faces, the Laboratory seems to be suffering badly from thieves at the moment. One of our number has had her handbag stolen from her room; the microwave oven, believe it or not, was stolen from the Sub-Basement; certain technical equipment has been stolen. The other day someone knocked on my door on the 8th Floor: when I went to look who was there, all I heard was running footsteps (no, it doesn't happen to me all the time!).

We all suffer, no matter what it is that's stolen: if you see anybody acting suspiciously within the Laboratory, please ask what they are doing, or who they are looking for. Even if (possibly "especially if") he looks like a technician, but you don't recognise him, you should still ask him what he's doing. And even if the answer is convincing, you should confirm with an appropriate person that the work being done is known about.

Footnote: There is now a handsheet circulated by the University Security Officer with more details about the characters who stole the microwave oven. If you haven't seen it, there is a copy in the 9th Floor Common Room.

BUILDING CHANGES: NEW ENTRANCE

The following preliminary proposal has been discussed at Executive Board and submitted to the Bursar's Office for consideration:

Room B9 (Betty's old room) to be transformed into a new main entrance to the Computing Laboratory, hopefully with access for wheeled vehicles such as trollies and wheelchairs. If this were carried through, the present Ground Floor access to the Laboratory would be closed except to Computing staff, the object being to restrict even further public access to the levels below the Basement. This plan is at a preliminary stage, and suggestions are expected from the Bursar's Office and elsewhere.

OTHER BUILDINGS NEWS

We have progress with the VAX terminal room in the Bridge, but it still won't be ready until after Easter.

Also in the Bridge, facilities will be provided there similar to the old Common Room in the Sub-basement: a kitchen for use by all in that area. It will be off Room 370.

SHORTS

Brian Randell gave the 3rd Annual BCS/Computer Weekly Jubilee (sort that lot out) Lecture at the Royal Society on February 13th. His topic for this prestigious lecture was "System Design and Structuring". The text will be published shortly in our Technical Report Series.

As reported in The Northern Businessman (6th March) royalty cheques were exchanged between MARI, the British Technology Group and the University at a reception held to celebrate the approaching world-wide sales figures of £1m. for The Newcastle Connection. The Newcastle Connection has now been on the market for two years, and it is used in 12 different countries worldwide.

Many congratulations to NUMAC's Network Group, who installed the new Nunet network on 25th March. The Group have been working extremely hard towards this for a number of years. The primary object was to rewrite parts of Nunet to accommodate the new (and projected) international networking protocols. As much of this area of computing is, to say the least, "fluid", the Network Group are much to be admired for achieving a very difficult task. Unfortunately for them, this is not a project completed, merely a deadline achieved: the work goes on!

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 17
St George's Day Issue

23rd April 1985
Edited by John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

NEW CLERICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Tom Anderson is joint head of the "Centre for Software Reliability" (more about that in the next issue). A new member of secretarial staff has been appointed for the Centre, Mrs. Joan Atkinson, who will be starting on 1st May.

As they are both intended to support the research staff, Joan Atkinson and Carol Reynolds will be installed in new office accommodation in the Bridge, Room 346, telephone 241, from May 1st.

BIG DAY DRAWS NEAR

In case we don't get HM18 out in time, we'll take this opportunity of saying a fond farewell to Carol Pringle, who will be leaving us on Friday, May 17th. She is getting married the following week, and the happy couple will then be leaving the North East for (where else but) the Thames Valley. Not to Reading for once, but to Bracknell, where Carol's Stephen has a job. Carol has been with us since September 1982 as typist and Print Room assistant. We will miss you badly, Carol: our very best wishes to you and Stephen!

A SMALL APOLOGY

... is due to Albert Koelmans, whose name is spelt thus, not "Koelmanns", as we had it last month. Please note that Albert has now moved to the 8th Floor, Room 814, telephone 218.

Incidentally, the appalling quality

of the photo we had of Albert was due to the fact that we have to Xerox from a Xerox copy of a photo. There are ways of producing much better quality, but they are a little too expensive for "The Horse's Mouth", which is an extremely cheap production (in case you hadn't noticed).

NEWS FROM THE SICK BAY

A bad shock the week before last when Mildred Ashworth was taken ill at work. She suffered a thrombosis behind her eye and spent several days in hospital. She is at home now and is not expected back at work for a week or two yet. Get well soon, Mildred. (How on earth does somebody as busy as Mildred Ashworth manage to stay in a sick bed?!)

GOOD NEWS ON THEFTS

It is heartening to report that two microcomputers, one stolen from this Department and one from another Department in Claremont Tower, have been recovered, and the thief apprehended. Hard work by at least one prominent member of our staff led the police to their quarry.

TOP MAN

Congratulations to Paul Baggot, of the Operations Staff, who has become the University's Open Men's Squash Champion. As he is only 20, we are hoping for a long reign as Champ: very well done, Paul! (Actually, Paul is slipping a bit: he started playing at the age of 10, and at 13 he was Number 4 in Britain!)

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 18

7th June 1985

We're-all-goin'-on-our-Summer-Holidays Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

WELCOME...

...to no less than seven people! In the order that I managed to track them down:

Gordon Taylor, has joined us as a trainee operator. Gordon has joined us straight from the Sixth Form at Springfield School, Jarrow. His interests are playing football and swimming, and he plays the piano (he should get together with squash megastar Paul Baggott, who, a little bird told me, plays the flute, and track megastar Alison Clowes (see below)).

Luigi Mancini, arrived at the beginning of May to join Brian Randell's crew as a Research Associate for six months. Yes, he is related to the famous Henry, in a complicated way, but the surname is pronounced "Manchini" (i.e. the proper way). Luigi comes from Pescara on the Adriatic coast of Italy; he studied for his Italian Doctorate at Pisa, and has just spent a year at the University of Dortmund (hence the occasional German word, as he adjusts to life in England!). He is currently living in Seaton Burn, unmarried, likes photography, cooking, and before he became so busy with computer science research he used to enjoy writing poetry and painting; he also likes simply to converse!

Joan Atkinson used to be P.A. to the Finance Director of Laws Stores; she was one of the 130 people to have been made redundant when Laws were

taken over by William Low, and has joined us, on Bridge Floor 3, as secretary to the CSR (see later). Joan is married and lives at Washington; she devotes much of her time to showing and breeding dogs: Briards, which are like black, long haired Old English Sheepdogs. Joan and husband (car-mad, runs motorist's shop in Birtley), currently have four Briards, and have bred one litter so far: 10 puppies, each on a bottle every four hours (what fun!).

Stuart Hay started as an electronics technician ("Temporary (3 yrs.) Technician (Networks)") at the beginning of May; he works with Vince Bilton and Ian Rutherford. Stuart is married, with a girl (10) and boy (3), and lives in Grainger Park. He likes taking photographs, but spends most of his own time in D.I.Y. (an unwilling expert, if he's like me). Stuart has come to us from being a TV engineer, but that was the result of retraining after being made redundant from his 14 years as a metallurgist at Davy Roll in Gateshead - a successful, if fraught, move from heavy to light industry.

Alison Clowes (yes, daughter of a famous father) joined us on June 3rd., in the 2-year post of Temporary Programmer. Alison will be looking after the Physics/Mathematics purchase of Nimbus microcomputers/workstations: they buy the hardware, we provide the hard work. Appropriately, Alison got a BSc. in Physics and Maths a couple of years ago (here in Newcastle). Then she worked as a freelance programmer for a year, then she worked for British Shipbuilders at Hebburn, as a

"Software Instructor" teaching BASIC to Youth Training Scheme trainees: an uphill struggle, she says (actually, she says something else...) Alison's interests are: her horse; music - playing piano and clarinet, and singing lessons. And running: among her many achievements to date, Alison has won medals in the British Transplant Games, where she runs each year for the Newcastle team - she qualified for the Games some years ago by needing a kidney transplant (and by being able to run jolly fast since).

Moira West is the new System Manager for Peter Hitchcock's ASPECT Project, which means she'll be looking after their GEC 63 Series machine; her official post is "Temporary (3 yrs.) Research Systems Programmer". Moira comes originally from Sussex, did her BSc.(Special Computational Science) at Hull, worked for a year in Liverpool for the software house Fraser-Williams, and comes to us from Edinburgh, where she has been studying knowledge-based systems at Heriot-Watt (now I've spoiled the "spot the accent" game for you!). She's moved to the Newcastle area because she likes it round here; that may be connected with two of her main hobbies which are walking and ornithology; she also enjoys hockey, badminton, and most other sports.

TIME FOR ANOTHER STAFF LIST! One next month.

Our last new arrival is particularly special: Felicity Mary Koelmans arrived on 4th June, weighing 6lb 15ozs, at the Princess Mary Maternity Hospital. Many congratulations to Lydia and Albert, whose first child this is, and (dare I say it?) all felicitations to Felicity: we look forward to meeting you!

BIG DAY DRAWS NEAR

... For two more (Carol Pringle got married in May): On June 15th Alison Craig, of the Operations Staff, will be getting married; and on June 22nd Mike Lynch, PhD student, is also getting married. Very best wishes for the future from all of us in the Lab.!

NEWS FROM THE SICK BAY

Good news this month: Margaret Hindmarsh is at last back at work after her long absence. She is currently staying in Room B17, ext.229, until her back is strong enough to take on the 9th Floor again.

Mildred Ashworth is also back at work. She still has a problem with her right eye, but is otherwise good as new. I hope Mildred won't mind if I also report that she has given up smoking after being an enthusiastic smoker for ?? years (a long time, anyway): she deserves three cheers for a tremendous achievement! (Anyway, she tells me: she needs the money for her Iron Lady Health Service prescriptions.)

It's really good to see you both back at work: you were badly missed while you were away, ladies.

Someone else being badly missed at the moment is Mary Morris, who needed an operation in early May for the removal of a cyst. Mary has made a very good recovery, but she must have compulsory sick leave and rest for another couple of weeks yet.

NEWS FROM THE HUDSON'S BAY

(Not quite, but it makes for a snappy headline, which is all we journalists care about.) Our congratulations go across the Atlantic to Peter Lauer, who has been appointed to be Professor and Chairman of the Department of Computer Science and Systems, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, where he is currently on a year's sabbatical leave.

CALL ME DOCTOR PANZIERI

Congratulations to Fabio Panzieri, who has been awarded his PhD. His thesis is entitled "Design and development of Communications Protocols for Local Area Networks". (Now, that one sounds interesting.)

ATTENTION ALL PRINT ROOM USERS

Bill Foggo requests (again) that if you leave work in the General Office for reproduction, please ensure that no staples or paper-clips, etc., are left attached to the sheets; polythene bags are available in the Office for you to put your work in, in order to keep it, and the job sheet, all together.

BUILDINGS NEWS

BRIDGE TO BE LOCKED UP

Our accommodation on the Claremont Bridge will be locked on a regular basis, now that Carol Reynolds and Joan Atkinson have established a base camp for the forces of Organisation and Efficiency. They will be locking all four doors to the accommodation for 5.00pm (as it takes a few minutes to go round them all, you will find doors locked shortly before 5.00).

FIRE ESCAPE STAIRS, DAYSH

Please do not use the stairs from Floor 7, Daysh, as a means of access to Floor 8 (i.e., the approved access is via Claremont Tower's 6th Floor). The reason is security.

NEW ENTRANCE, BASEMENT

The proposal for a new entrance, outlined in HM16, has received approval, and work (i.e. !!!BANGING!!!) will commence after the end of term.

CENTRE FOR SOFTWARE RELIABILITY

("Tom's - er - you know - the ...") The CSR was formed in 1982 as a collaborative group of people from industry and academic communities who are particularly interested in software reliability. The present Chairman is Alan Wingrove, of the Royal Aircraft Research Establishment, Farnborough, and there are a dozen other members of CSR. Prominent among these are Bev Littlewood, of The City University, London, and our own Tom Anderson. These two have each set up Research Centres (in 1984) on behalf of CSR, in order to provide the mechanism necessary to carry out research programmes adopted by the Group. The money for CSR comes from running courses and workshops, and from the Alvey Directorate.

Both Research Centres are at present more apparent in their letterheads than in the number of people they employ, but with things like Cruise missiles thundering through the air with computers in their warheads, it's to be hoped that Reliable Software is going take off in a big way soon!

List of 3 pin plugs.

13 amp (4 used)

9	Counterpoise Lamps	{	Mr Eve
1	Floor polisher		Machine room
1	Two bar electric fire	Dr Page	
1	Marchant Calculator	General office (see below)	
11	Two kW Heaters	Miss Riddell	
1	Koneo 750	Workshop	
2	Electric Kettles	Store	
1	Oscilloscope	{	clearing cupboard
3	Soldering irons		Store
5	Keyboard perforators	{	Machine room
3	Tape editing & comparator equipment		Computing room
			central file
			duplicating room
			Kitchen
			workshop.
			Tape editing room
			Computing room
			(Tape editing room)

39 total.

30 plugs 3 pin. 2 amp brought
1 exchanged for 3 pin 2 p

5 amp.

1	1 kW heater	Dr. Leavis	1 5 amp 3 pin plug brought
1	Block		
1	Counterpoise 2 amp	General office	
<u>3</u>			

4 two way adaptors.

1	General Office.
1	Machine Room.
1	Workshop.
<u>3</u>	

W. H. Baker.
4 Dec. 1957.

Farewell, Rod and Derek: we wish you both a happy, long retirement. Alan Thompson, Rod's colleague for 10 years now, is left to cope alone ... for a little while: more soon on this subject, we hope.

EQUIPMENT

Magnum Force

The new main NUMAC computer is now installed, and the operation went extremely smoothly. To make a very complicated operation sound easy, NUMAC users went home on Friday having used the IBM 370 and started work on the following Monday using the Amdahl.

The Newcastle Amdahl is the most powerful general purpose computer installed in a British University. Leeds have the same model, but not as much memory, and London and Manchester have a Cray and a Cyber, which are more powerful only in their specialised processing abilities.

Our thanks and congratulations are due to the the NUMAC systems/operations team who carried out the installation. Roger Broughton has spent months beaver away in his Sub-Basement preparing the Machine Room. Quentin Campbell, Mike Douglass, Bob Vine (who missed the fun in the end), Peter Whillance and Ian Bell (Durham), spent weeks preparing the new MTS system. Lyn Greenwood and Vince Bilton slaved away leading up to the change-over weekend to make sure that Nunet would cooperate with the Amdahl, and as ever the job was not straightforward. Above all, credit should go to Terry Ratcliffe who must now be in a state of shock, after nearly 18 months of negotiations, operational requirements, research, benchmarks, meetings, meetings, meetings, late nights, long working weekends, and overseeing the the whole process, from acquisition to first

IPL.

When the time came, all these people combined with the Amdahl team to carry out an enviably professional job. The actual changeover involved Quentin, Peter, Lyn and Terry working over the weekend. The fact that nothing unusual (except an easy signon) happened on Monday the 7th was the perfect accolade for the work put in by the whole team.

Micros ACCUMULATE

No less impressive in a different way is the appearance on Floor 2 of the Computing Laboratory's first Workstation area. We have here (from 14th October) 36 RM Nimbus microcomputers, which can be used as stand-alone micros for developing Pascal programs, as Filers transferring files with sublime simplicity to and from MTS (and eventually other hosts), or as terminals into the Nynet network.

The main use for the Nimbuses (sic) will be for teaching 1st year Computing Science students (all 220 of them), but they will also be used for NUMAC's service courses, and have in fact been paid for partly out of the teaching, partly out of the service pockets.

What is impressive is the fact that the Nimbus is a completely new machine, and we took delivery of some of the first off the production line. The 3-in-1 Workstation is also completely new. The Nimbus team of Clive Gerrard, Martin Lamont and Dave Sedgwick have been working all hours, flat out, all through the summer to make the scheme work. Mike Wardley has been working at the same rate for the last month in order to get the Nimbuses out of their boxes and into their (heavily fortified) rooms. What these people have achieved is too big to be described here (but if it doesn't get trumpeted here, it won't anywhere). Well done, chaps!

Bonanza

The Department of Education and Science has now recognized that, when it comes to providing facilities to enable teaching and research, Computing is more akin to Engineering than to Mathematics. As a result, Computing Science Departments throughout the country have been awarded more money. Our own Department (Academic Teaching part) has been awarded an extra £290,000 per annum from 1985 onwards. (Although this is an awful lot of money, we still won't be getting as much per student-head as some Departments, so we have no reason to feel guilty about being rich.) This means that in the near future we will be spending more on teaching staff, academic support staff (e.g. programmers), technical, clerical and administrative staff, as well as on equipment. Watch out for new appointments as the year goes by.

SMALL ADS

For sale

Bedding for baby's cot: 5 blankets, 2 sheets: £5 : John Law (255).

Entertainments

Bar Rally: MARI versus Computing Laboratory: Teams of two (M and/or F) invited: details in General Office or from Tom Anderson (217).

John Law.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 20

9th December 1985

All the news that's fit to print

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

PEOPLE

Welcome

First, an especially warm welcome to a long awaited and "heavily advertised" young lady called Shirin. Goli Montaser-Kohsari gave birth to Shirin (8lbs) on 2nd November. Congratulations to Goli and her husband, and very best wishes for the future!

Alan Brown started work at the beginning of October as the 3rd Research Associate on Peter Hitchcock's ASPECT project (RM 8). Alan has already been here a year, having started as a PhD student last year. He came to us from a year's work as programmer/analyst for Fraser-Williams in his native Liverpool, having graduated in Computing Science at Hull. Alan's hobbies are walking, and any kind of sport, but in particular football: he's looking for a place in a soccer team - anyone need a star?

Welcome, too, to Kevin Renney, who started work on 2nd December with Jeff Craig, as assistant technician for the air conditioning plant. Kevin, from North Shields, was formerly at Whitley Bay High School as a laboratory technician (just a little bit quieter here, I think!).

Sad news

It is sad to have to report two untimely deaths associated with the Laboratory.

Many will know already of the death in September, after severe illness, of Dr. Sheila Jeffery, who had been studying for an MSC with us in 1984-85. Sheila was a well-known figure inside and outside the University, and had been a Research Associate in Rheumatology for some years.

The longer-established staff in the Laboratory will have been shocked to hear of the death in November of Bob Berry, from a heart-attack. Bob joined the Laboratory as an MSC student in 1964, and stayed, as a Research Associate, until 1970, when he moved to Lancaster University. During his time here, Bob met his wife Margaret (Robson), who was a computer operator, then systems programmer, from 1960-68. The Laboratory was represented at Bob's funeral by Brian Jones.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

New research projects

Santosh Shrivastava announces that he has been awarded 2 (two) 3-year research grants in the area of distributed systems. The first, entitled "Specification and design of protocols", is funded by the Royal Signals Research Establishment (RSRE), and has provision for one Research Associate. The second is funded by SERC/Alvey and is entitled "A programming system for reliable distributed computing". This grant covers acquisition of three workstations (a SUN and two Whitechapeis) and has provision for two R.A.s.

Graeme Dixon (3rd year PhD student) and Graham Parrington (Demonstrator) have been appointed to the two R.A. posts on the SERC/Alvey project. Graeme starts this month, Graham next month.

The R.A. post on the RSRE project is to be taken up next March by Giuseppe Pappalardo from Sicily - more about him when he arrives.

Moving Day

Maria Coleman will have moved her office, by the time this comes out. She (i.e. the User Services Office) has moved to Joyce and Ann's old accommodation in the General Office. For the time being, the contents of the Computing Service Bookshop are with Maria, too. Maria's telephone extension will remain the same (275).

It is intended to move the Duty Adviser also, fairly soon, from the Ground Floor to "somewhere" in the Basement - we don't yet know where.

BUN-FIGHT SECTION

Christmas Party

Yes, the news you've all been waiting for... our thanks go once more to the General Office for organising a Christmas Party. This year's is to be on Friday 20th December. It will cost you £2 for an invitation, worth every penny: for the lovely food, the drinks, and the scintillating conversation! Please give your name (and money) to the girls in the General Office.

Reliable Newcastle types

The Fifth Symposium of Reliability in Distributed Software and Database Systems, to be held in Los Angeles, January 1986, will have a strong Newcastle presence [not unnaturally, given the title]. Brian Randell will be giving a special invited lecture on "Reliability and security issues in distributed systems", describing the work done with John Dobson of MARI. Tom Anderson will be talking on "A structured decision mechanism for diverse software". Santosh Shrivastava will be there too, talking on "A characterisation of faults in systems", describing the work done with Paul Ezhilchelvan. Finally, David Taylor, University of Waterloo, will speak on "How big can an atomic action be?", describing work done while he spent his sabbatical here last year.

MISCELLANEOUS

Any old brass? Money?

Many staff will have heard of the current "Blue Peter" Appeal. The famous children's TV program is this year collecting "scrap metal" in the form of old keys (i.e. Yale types), foreign coins, etc. Janice Burke, one of the Operations Shift leaders, is coordinating a collection in the laboratory: please give what you have to her (ring 252 if unsure how to find her). Janice is doing a magnificent job so far: she's got more keys than Ian Scoins and Terry Betteridge combined!

Let there be light...

Whilst on the subject of collecting "rubbish": the operators have also found an address where you can send your old unwanted spectacles. The people concerned sort and classify them, then send them off to "the Third World", where they can be re-used, to give somebody the wonderful gift of good sight. The address to send them to is:

A. Premlin-Bailey
65b Sandy Lane

Church Crookham

Hampshire GU13 0DA

Cases are not required, and they'd like them for Christmas, if possible.

Correction?

After being jostled in the corridors, and receiving anonymous threats, I feel I should point out that I did not actually go to Tobago or the Atlas Mountains during the summer (HM19): this was what is known as "English Humour", or "Irony", or "Wishful Thinking".

Next issue:

My grateful thanks to Dr. Shrivastava for a lot of the items in this issue. Had it been next issue, I might have called it "Santosh's Special", but I don't think I would have dared, really.

Christmas Colour Supplement: we are anxiously awaiting a report from our Special Investigator, who recently set off on the trail of the mysterious Dr. Jaeger, who moved into an Office in the Bridge some months ago, and has never been seen since....

New Professor

If you aren't on any "grapevine", and don't frequent the Common Room, then you will not have heard that our first new Professor of Computing Science is our own Tom Anderson. Heartiest congratulations, Tom: a popular and well-deserved appointment!

New Demonstrators

At the other end of the academic scale ... it is with great pleasure that we can report the appointment to Demonstratorships of Tahir Afzal, Mike Budenell and Fariba Hedayati - all currently PhD students in the Lab. Congratulations!

Yet more new staff

Two new Professors and one Reader have been all but appointed. The appointments have to be approved by Senate, so cannot be publicised yet (presumably they will be, unless any of the appointees are discovered to be members of the Mafia). Interviews for other posts continue to be arranged and to take place: interviews for 4-5 Computer Officer posts took place last week. A 4-year fixed-term lectureship has been advertised, and two established (permanent) lectureships will be advertised shortly.

Local boy makes good

About half the Lab. will never have heard of him, while the other half will remember him well: we hear that John Rushby, another former member of the Randell Reliability Crew, has been appointed Acting Director of the Computer Science Laboratory at SRI - Stanford Research Institute (Corporation), California. John has been at SRI for several years now. His appointment to this post carries great prestige, and, however indirectly, reflects a warm glow back here. Congratulations, John, couldn't have happened to a nicer chap!

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Xerox workstations

As nobody who lives in the 8th, 9th or Basement Floors can fail to have realised, the Xerox Ethernet cable is now installed; the 21 workstations have also been delivered. For the past fortnight they have been used by Xerox Corp to give a course in Room 831 on the Xerox Development Environment (XDE), which will be the system under which our Xerox equipment will operate.

Participants in the course have been staff from the seven European institutions which have been given equipment by Xerox. Rarely have such intensive courses been given in this Department! Two staff from Xerox's Palo Alto Research Centre (PARC) have had them at it from 8.30 to 5.00pm every day the whole fortnight, with scarcely a break for lunch (judging by the fast-food leftovers in the Common Room). The XDE whizz-kids from this Department are Jim Eve, Dick Snow and Graham Dixon (part-time whizz-kid: Lindsay).

In parallel with the course here at Newcastle, one has been given in Edinburgh (also serving Europe), on the alternative for the Xerox stations, Interlisp - the system for the Artificial Intelligence bods.

OTHER NEWS

Computing laboratory telephone number to change

On Friday 9th May 1986 the Computing Laboratory's telephone number will become Tyneside (091) 232 9233 - in other words, another "2" has been added to the front. This change affects many phone numbers in the city centre, including the main University one, which will then be 232 8511. The exchange changes from Newcastle (0632) to Tyneside (091).

There are other internal University phone number changes to be noted. The University notice detailing these changes can be found in the General Office or on the Common Room Noticeboard.

Print Room hitches

The automatic accounting in the Xerox copier in the Print Room was blown up by a short circuit last week. Bill has had to do some reconstruction "by hand": he asks anyone who had copying work done in the first part of April to contact him and let him know what it was.

The other hitch in the Print Room is the same old one. The speed of the new copier makes it possible to do jobs more quickly than was possible with the old lithographic process. However, we seem to be taking the attitude that the increased speed allows us to bring in work even closer to the deadline, making life in the Print Room just as hectic as ever it was, and leaving just as many frustrated customers as ever there were. Therefore, please remember to schedule your work and have it down to Bill well in advance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Christmas Feast

(No kidding) Book now for the Computing Laboratory Christmas Night Out. You needn't actually book, but please express your interest if you think you will want to go. Maria Coleman is arranging the booking, and will not need to make a firm commitment for seats until later this year. However, she does need to know roughly how many will be going. She has about 40 names so far.

The venue for this spectacular event is the Jingling Gate, West Pelton (not the one at Westerhope), where the Office staff and others have already had many a brilliant night out. The food is reputed to be good, plentiful and hot, and the dancing etc. afterwards is not too loud, too quiet, too trendy nor too old-fashioned. The main point is that it's a great night out, and a good chance to have a good time with all your colleagues (for once, instead of talking about computing). A menu is in the Common Room.

Ah yes, the date: January 17th 1987 (it's really popular, that Jingling Gate!).

10-pin Bowling: Lab. team strike

Challenged by the staff of the ski-shop "Wilderness Ways" (Manager: Mr. P. Coleman) to a 10-pin bowling match, a Laboratory Team (Capt. Mrs. M.L. Coleman) slaughtered the upstarts 2 games to 1. (Another view is that Wilderness Ways beat Computing Casuals by so many points in the first game that even the two subsequent wins weren't enough to redress the balance.)

The Casualties team: M.L. "Striker" Coleman; Q.G. "Dad" Campbell (Campbell Junior was scoring); M. "This is Heavy!" Atkinson; J.A. "Overarm action" Law; and T. "The Theory is Correct" Anderson.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 24

4th June 1986

Blazing June Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

"A Centre of Excellence"

As we all know, the University Grants Committee (UGC) is in the process of re-planning University education in this country, according to needs perceived by the present Government. Part of the exercise entailed research assessments for each Department in each University.

Although our University (like almost every other north of Watford) was not among the beneficiaries of the re-deployment of funds announced in the national press last week, our own Department was one of four at Newcastle to be declared "outstanding" by the UGC. Professor Whitfield would like us all to see this note from the Vice Chancellor:

"I hope I may tell you how pleased and proud I am that Computer Science has been rated 'Outstanding' by UGC. This gives the whole University a boost, particularly as Computing is such an important field. I am grateful to you and all your colleagues."

The details of the research assessments, as interpreted by our Registrar, are posted on the Common Room notice board.

PEOPLE

Departures

We said goodbye last month to Goli Montasser-Kohsari, who has finally managed to get a job in the same city as her husband! (London)

Another one claimed by The South East and Family Life: we will shortly be saying a fond farewell to Zubeda Sharif, who has been with the Nunet Group for one and a half years. Zubeda is shortly to be married, and will be living in (guess where) London. Our very best wishes to you and your husband-to-be, Zubeda - we'll miss you.

Arrivals

"Chiefs" The appointments of senior staff in the Department hinted at last month were partially released the following week by the yellow University news-sheet. Santosh Shrivastava has been appointed to one of the Chairs in Computing Science, and Isi Mitrani has been appointed to a Readership. Heartiest congratulations to these two long established members of the Laboratory!

The third new Professor is to be Peter Lee, who will take his Chair sometime in August. Pete was in this Department as a member of Brian Randell's team for

several years, until about 1981, when he left to make his fortune in the United States.

"Indians" Four Computing Officers for the Academic side of the Department have been appointed. In order of taking post, these are Moirra West (1st June) - Moira was introduced last June (as the System Manager for Peter Hitchcock's ASPECT Project) - congratulations, Moira, on your appointment to this post. On July 1st Christopher Ritson will start - he is coming from London, more about him later. Gerry Tomlinson will start 1st August - he is at present with MARI, and before that was a CSSD student with us. And on 1st October, Nigel Hall will start: Nigel has been with NUMAC since 1975, when he was appointed to the Newcastle University NUMAC staff; he moved to Durham University in about 1980, staying with NUMAC; his appointment to one of these Computing Officer posts is a real gain for the academics - but he will be a severe loss to the NUMAC service.

New personage

Most people are aware that over the last year or two Terry Betteridge has been in charge of several things, most of which were formerly done by Ian Scoins; telephones, keys and locks, and furniture allocation are three examples. Over the next year or two, Terry will gradually be taking on more of the many things that Ian has done (officially and/or voluntarily) for so long. Room allocation is one of the more observable tasks that Terry will soon take over.

To give recognition to the fact that this work is a heavy responsibility in a Department as large and as volatile as ours, Terry is to be given a proper title: Computing Laboratory **Resources Manager** (or just plain Resources Manager, within our walls).

MISCELLANEOUS

Telephone lists

Further to the above ... telephone lists are produced by Terry quite frequently. Each new edition is now printed in a different colour, so that you can easily tell if you're up to date: the current one is pink, dated 9th May. You can obtain a copy from the General Office.

MISCELLANEOUS

Accommodation offered

Share of a large house and large garden in rural Seaton Burn. £100 per month, including gas and electricity. Contact Roger (Broughton) on 242, or phone 236 7580 evenings.

Wanted

Advertisements for this column! Don't forget we have a readership of 125 people, the interests of whom range across the entire spectrum. Success in selling or obtaining things seems to be about 50% - but it's free.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 25

1st September 1986

Blues Number

(Official End of Summer Issue)

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

Sorry for the two-month lapse since last issue. As I told you last year at this time, it's very difficult fitting this in between my month in North Africa and 3 weeks in the Caribbean. Day-oh,....

PEOPLE

Departures

A bit late to say goodbye, but at least to explain her absence: operator Susan Dent left us at the end of June, following two of our other big-time operators (Dave Robinson and Jeremy Harrison) to the Prescription Pricing Authority.

Deborah Harris has maternity leave for the next few months. [STOP PRESS: Deborah has given birth to a 7lb 4oz boy, Michael, on Friday 29th August.]

Isi Mitrani is away on sabbatical leave for the next year. He has gone to the Mathematics Center, AT&T Bell Labs, Murray Hill, New Jersey.

Farewell to Jon Garnsworthy, PhD student in the Lab. since 1984. Jon has secured a post with Plessey Electronic Systems Research at Roke Manor in Romsey, outside Southampton, starting 1 September. Oh lucky man: an exciting job in sunny, rural Hampshire - best wishes, Jon!

And a fond farewell to Benedict Heal, who leaves us on 30th September, having been appointed to a lectureship with the Open University, at Milton Keynes. Benedict joined the NUMAC computing service in 1976 as a Programming Adviser; in 1980 he moved across to the teaching side, and became a lecturer in Computing Science. His unbounded energy and wide interests (he came as an Arts programmer and leaves as a lecturer in digital systems) will be sorely missed in the Department. Best wishes to you, Benedict.

Arrivals

In order of appearance, we have welcomed this summer: George Brown, who started way back on June 16th as one of our electronics technicians. George has taken over the post formerly held by Stuart Hay [who has taken over the (established) post held by Ian Rutherford, who has been appointed to the technician's post vacated by Mike Wardley (who?)]. George had been an engineer with Radio Rentals, but was made redundant with the decline in demand for rental engineers. He enrolled for a course run by CDC (Manchester) for training computer engineers, which finished a couple of months before he started with us. George's interests include motorbikes and travel - he has so far visited 13 European countries (mostly on his BMW). Welcome, George!

The Horse's Mouth

1st September 1986

John Law.

Chris Ritson started on 1st July as one of our new "Computing Officers (Teaching)" - i.e. one of the programmers appointed to cater for the needs of the teaching side of the Department. [The other three are Moira West (last month), Gerry Tomlinson (below) and Nigel Hall (October).] Chris studied for his BSc in Computing and Electronics at Durham University. Before joining us he worked for Helix Software consultants in London. His wife Roberta teaches in an infant school in their new home town of Sunderland. Chris's outside interests are photography, walking, and playing the flute.

Sheila Donohoe half-joined us in August -- "half", because she is employed both by NUMAC and by the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS). She will be working with Mary Morris in statistical software, concentrating on the census databases. Sheila gained her BSc here in Newcastle (Biochemistry and Physiology); worked in Dermatology for a time; spent 18 months in the English Department on the Dove Cottage Project (Wordsworth's home); then did our MSC 1984-85; then worked with the Health Care Research Unit; and now joins us (another varied career!). Sheila lives in Jesmond and counts squash, badminton and gardening among her interests.

If ever you are tempted to think that there might be better parts of the world to live than the North East of England... Professor Pete Lee will confirm your suspicions. Nonetheless, Pete has returned to Newcastle after an absence of 5 years. Having joined Professor Randall's Reliability Project in 1975, Pete left for the U.S.A. in 1981. He was at DEC's East Research Centre in Massachusetts until 1984, where he worked on a distributed message-passing operating system, and then on the design and implementation of an object-based language (OWL). In 1984 Pete left DEC to join the computer manufacturing company Encore, newly founded by Gordon Bell (ex-DEC), Ken Fisher (Prime) and Henry Burkhardt (Data General). Pete was Product Manager (software, etc., etc.) for Encore's first product, the HostStation 100 - a high-resolution, high-powered workstation, designed to be attached to an RS232 connection. Pete will give you a lively description of the HostStation's capabilities. The Lee family (Judy, Jonathan (7) and Timothy (5)) are temporarily in Jesmond and hope to find a home in the Hexham area soon. A warm welcome back, Pete!

Gerry Tomlinson joined us in August as another Computing Officer (Teaching). His face will be familiar to some, because he gained his BSc in Computing Science here some years ago. After graduation he did our CSSD course (the first year it was offered); then to Burroughs at Cumbernauld; then BSRA, Walsend; then to York University as a research associate in the Computing Science department; then he joined a firm called MARI here in Newcastle. He was at MARI two years before joining us. Gerry and his wife Helen have two boys, Nicholas (4) and Gregory (1), and they live in Gosforth. Gerry's main interests (apart from the family) are music (piano) and cricket [Aside: isn't it about time the Lab fielded a cricket team in the intra-mural league?]

And on September 1st Iain Stewart joined us as a lecturer in Computing Science, in one of the 4-year British Telecom funded posts. Iain has come home: he went to RGS, before gaining his B.A. in Mathematics at Oxford. He then went to the University of London to study for his PhD, which he has just completed. Outside the mysteries of maths and computing science, Iain's recreational interests are cricket (definitely time for a team!) and football.

1st September 1986

The Horse's Mouth

Finally, welcome to Steven Perlish who also joined us on September 1st as a trainee technician, having spent a year at Sunderland ITeC on a YTS scheme. He will be spending some time with each group of our technicians over the next 3 years, the duration of his traineeship. Steven comes from Washington, and includes among his hobbies electronics, cricket(!), and car maintenance (Escort Mk1 fan).

More lecturers

We are very pleased to announce that Lindsay Marshall has been appointed to an established lectureship in Computing Science. Lindsay has been a Research Associate with the Reliability Project since 1981. We hope to be able to announce another appointment next month.

Nuptials

Dave Mundy and his fiancée Lesley are to be married on September 6th: warmest congratulations and our best wishes to you, Dave, from all of us in the Laboratory.

SMALL ADS

For sale

Mary Morris makes this generous offer: "Fujica ST605 SLR camera, with 55mm F2.2 lens. In good working order EXCEPT that the lens mounting has worked loose (so that the lens waggles slightly when the shutter opens). I am told that getting it repaired could cost about 40 pounds. I will give the camera away FREE! to anyone who would like to get it repaired, or take a chance on it being useable as it is." (Phone Mary on 265.)

Suffolk Colt ?14" lawnmower for sale (petrol engine); 5 yrs old, little-used; £50. Bill Foggo (ext. 251)

Reduced for clearance: JVC record player: deck, amplifier, tuner, speakers and stand: £75: Tim Smith (ext.283).

Records (loads of them) for sale: mostly good solid rock; Contact Paul Baggott on 252 to view (here in the Lab.); various conditions, various prices.

Yamaha flute; 1 year old; cost £250; selling for £160, including stand and music: Paul Baggott (ext. 252).

Snooker table; 6' x 3'; with cues, snooker and pool sets; good condition; £80: Gordon Taylor (ext.252).

Wanted: Child's car seat, for little boy aged 1yr 9months; please contact Phesany Wong (ext.236) if you have one you'd like to sell.

The Horse's Mouth
1st September 1986

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

SMALL ADS [Honest Tim's Exchange and Mart: for all items this month contact Tim Smith, ext.283].
JVC hi-fi system: tuner, record deck, speakers and cabinet rack: £75 or offers.
Electricloux upright vacuum cleaner: £45.
Yamaha Drum Kit: 5 drums, chrome finish, plus all accessories: bargain price (yes) £450. [You will not be allowed to keep it in your office.]

John Law

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 26

20th October 1986

Indian Summer Issue
(Commenced on 6 October!)

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

PEOPLE

Departures

We said Farewell on September 30th to John Givens, who has taken the option of early retirement. John joined the Laboratory in 1965. He was appointed Senior Logic Designer in 1974, that appointment being an attempt to reflect John's importance both as a lecturer in Digital Systems and as the driving force behind much of the innovative technical work which the Laboratory has had, perforce, to introduce over the years.

The latter takes in the whole range of problems associated with a Department whose very raison d'être is staying abreast, if not ahead, of current developments in computing machinery: these range from devising strategies to "wire up" the Department (a job which is like the legendary painting of the Forth Bridge), to designing completely new equipment to perform specific tasks, to designing new lecture courses for undergraduates.

During his career here, John has been the focal point for such technical problems. His incisive, intensely active mind has pointed the way out of many an apparent impasse, and has put many a hare-brained scheme brusquely into its proper perspective. We will miss John's energy, as well as his wisdom. Our very best wishes go with him for a long and happy retirement.

Welcome

The much-heralded Nigel Hall took post on October 1st. Nigel joins us from the Computer Centre at Durham University, having been with NUMAC for over 10 years (about 2 here, followed by about 8 at Durham). Nigel's appointment as the head of the "academic" Computer Officer team is good news for all. He will be the perfect bridge between the teaching and service sides of the Laboratory, for whilst in Durham's Computer Centre he collaborated frequently with their (separate) Computer Science Department: he already has experience on both sides of the fence.

Nigel and family live in Darlington, the cradle of Railways. Appropriate, because he is an extremely enthusiastic and active member of the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group (NELPG) which owns several steam locomotives and maintains a couple more. These are used to haul passenger trains on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. As a consequence Nigel spends most weekends getting absolutely filthy amongst the grease and grime of Grosmont loco shed in North Yorkshire - and claims to enjoy it....! (Your local ticket office for the NYMR is now Room 819 on the 8th Floor.)

A warm welcome too to Jim Wight, who has joined Peter Hitchcock's ASPECT Project as the System Manager. (He replaces Moira West, who switched in July to being a Computer Officer.) Jim comes to us from the Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetic Research in Edinburgh. He gained his M.Phil. in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy at Edinburgh University, studied for a Dip.Ed., and later gained an MSc. in Computing Science at Heriot-Watt. A Berwickshire lad, Jim has not lived in England before - fortunately there are enough unruly Scots around this establishment to make him feel completely at home.

And welcome back to Goli Montasser-Kohsari! Goli left us in May to join her husband, whose studies for his Doctorate were coming to an end. But then husband had to find a job, which he has done ... in Newcastle. As Terry Betteridge and Isi had not yet found a replacement for Goli, she was able to take up her old job as their Research Associate: a happy solution for all. Nice to see you back, Goli!

Gavin Johnson has joined us for 3 months as a temporary Research Associate. Some of you will know his face: Gavin was one of our Computing Science students until he graduated this year. Gavin will be going on to GCHQ Cheltenham, once they have made sure he isn't working for the KGB (or the CIA?).

New PhD Students

There are three new PhD students starting this year: Alan Tully, Michael Stoker, and Amer Saeed. All three studied for their Bachelor's degree with us, graduating this year.

A seat on the Board

Professor Whitfield has been appointed to the Computer Board (the "Quango" responsible for provision of computing equipment to UK Universities). [It will be noted that Newcastle cannot apply for major new equipment for another few years, thus his impartiality is assured.]

PLAGUE AND PESTILENCE SECTION

Legionnaires disease and the Laboratory

(from Terry Ratcliffe) You may well be aware of the recent concern over the number of cases of Legionnaires Disease occurring in this country. This disease is believed to be largely spread by breathing in water droplets containing the bacteria; the bacteria themselves like tepid 'stagnant' water. The University has a number of departments with equipment that could spread the disease and (with our air conditioning) we are one of them. There are two things we do that could lead to a risk: humidification and cooling.

Problems with humidification would essentially only affect Lab staff, as the areas we humidify are the main computer hall and the computer rooms on the Bridge. However we thought about this sort of contamination when we installed the Bridge A/C plant and upgraded the main A/C plants. In all cases the humidity is provided by vapourising water (by heating) rather than spraying droplets of water into the air (the alternative). This has two advantages; few water droplets occur, and the water temperature goes above 140°F (which kills

off the bacteria). In addition all the humidifiers are fed directly from the main water supply and also flush the boilers automatically and frequently (which means no 'still' water for the bacteria to breed).

The cooling towers, being external to the building, hold the potential for affecting both large areas of the campus as well as the general public, and the cooling units are more of a problem. The water is circulating in a loop with occasional interruptions, but is tepid, and exposed to the atmosphere (thereby almost inviting the bacteria to come). In order to reduce the risk of any problems we regularly dose this circulating water with a biocide (actually Naflloc A210). In addition we drain down the cooling system on a regular basis and flush out the system. With the present knowledge of the bacteria these are the only actions that can sensibly be taken. We shall, of course, change our procedures as the public health knowledge changes.

FUN SECTION (But it's all fun, isn't it?)

BANG!! - Bonfire night is coming...

Once again the Senior Common Room Committee is organising a large bonfire on November 5th at the Close House estate. The schedule is: 6.30 - bonfire lit; 6.40 - Guy Fawkes competition for children; 6.45 fireworks display commences (always a good one). Refreshments will be on sale in the Mansion House. Tickets are 80 pence (under-fives free), with free sparklers for the children. Get your tickets now for this popular event! -- from John Lloyd.

...the geese are getting fat

It's not too early (according to all the shops in town) to be thinking of Christmas. Just in case we on the editorial desk find time to do a Christmas Number, start sending in your entries now for "Announcements of the late arrivals at the Computing Science and Data Processing Ball" (surely everybody's listened to "I'm Sorry - I haven't a Clue"?). For example: The Butler announces the arrival of that famous Welsh academic in Computing Science, Professor Huw Rhystyk (and his nose-y Yugoslav wife, Voya). And sneaking in through the back door we have Mike Rowe and his loose-limbed girlfriend Floppy Dee Skette. And what about that Spanish beauty, Olivetti Typewriter, and her husband, Manuel? (outrageous!) If you can do better, let me know, and we'll have a gGrand Invitation List for Christmas.

P.S. Did anything ever come of last year's expedition to discover the identity of the resident in Bridge 325, Dr. Jaeger???

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 27

16th December 1986

Ho-ho-hollow-laugh Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

CHRISTMAS NOTES

Hols

As if you hadn't scrambled with the rest of us to read the notice... you won't be kicked out until the last minute this year. The University closes at 5.00pm on Wednesday, 24th December, and reopens at 8.45am on Monday, January 5th.

Not party time

Owing to pressure of work, the General Office will not be organising a party this year. So, this year, you will be able to go in the Office right up until 5.00pm on the 24th without fear of being embarrassed...

PEOPLE

New starters

Welcome to Jim Lyons, who has started a 3-year Research Associateship with Brian Randell's group. To start with, Jim is understudying Andy Linton, running the Cheviot, Kelpie and Ingram systems. Jim's is a familiar face, because he has just completed the 85-86 C.S.S.D. course. Originating in London, Jim flew helicopters in the Army for some years; from 1970 to 1984 he flew helicopters in oil rig support; during that time he and several colleagues founded and ran their own aviation company, and were based in Norway; he started the postgraduate diploma in systems analysis in 1984 at Aberdeen University; he then worked with the MicroPack consultancy in Aberdeen; and he moved to Hexham and our Department in 1985 (not your ordinary 3 A-levels and a BSc., then!).

New lecturer

A "welcome" also to Maciej ("Matthew") Koutny, who has been appointed to a lectureship in Computing Science. Matthew joined us in March 1985 as a visiting Research Associate. He was all but appointed in August, but the bureaucracy in Poland and in Britain have kept him waiting all this time for his work permit. Congratulations, and a hearty welcome, Maciej!

Departure

Many people will remember Ian Bell, who has been a System Programmer with NUMAC since 1975, latterly at Durham Computer Centre. He has been invaluable to NUMAC, especially in the specialised area of "deep system" MTS. Now he has been translated to the ultimate refinement of a system programmer and has joined Andahl (UK) in Manchester as a Regional Systems Engineer. We in the Computing Service will miss Ian badly: our good wishes go with him.

The Horse's Mouth

16th December 1986

Moves

Prof Pete Lee from T839 (ext.272) to T912 (272)
Lindsay Marshall from B345 (ext.290) to B324 (294) (bleep 5909)
Moir West from B334 (ext.290) to T212 (271) (bleep 5889)
Jim Lyons is installed in B345 (ext.290)

The following moves will take place shortly:

Mike Brudenell from T812 to T809 (ext.205)
Fariba Hedayati from B351 to B334
Giuseppe Pappalardo from B351 to B352
Stuart Wheeler from B351 to B352
... then four Xerox workstations from 923 into B351

The four Pericomms in 616 will be distributed into 616, 617, 618 and the Mill.

SMALL ADS

For sale

Only £5!:: ancient (c 1965) slide projector, Paximat, remote controlled, 35mm; flawed, but useable; price includes 4 slide holders, spare bulb and plug; £5 o.n.o.: contact Geoff Shearing (ext.211).

Contact John Law (ext.255) for any of these Baby/Toddler things:

Cosy-Toes (thick woollen foot-to-waist bag for wrapping up baby in buggy): £2.50
Fisher-Price Airliner (with people and luggage): for 2-4 year olds: very good condition: £4.00

Fisher-Price breakdown truck (with Beefy Bill and Chunky Charlie) £2.50.

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT

In the great tradition of Horse's Mouth (all 3 years) we have a Christmas Supplement which is even more trivial than the rest of the year's output. This year we have borrowed the idea from the popular radio program, "I'm sorry, I Haven't A Clue". If you don't enjoy puerile puns, you might as well throw this HM in the bin now (and a Merry Christmas to you, too)!

The material has been provided by a team of three, who can be referred to as the South African Regime - white martial law. Thanks also to British Rail, and the journey between Hexham and Newcastle. No apologies for doubtful taste, or for the puns, some of which are truly awesome.

As at any computing function people tend to gather in cliques, so there are some people's names which will be familiar, and some which some of us haven't a hope of recognising (will that worry you?)...

The Horse's Mouth

16th December 1986

Announcements of the Arrivals at the Computer Science and Data Processing Ball

Setting the tone for the evening - Music is being provided by the Bodo-Diyo Wide Band and in the quieter moments by Franz Lisp and his Matching Strings. Bodo-Diyo and Franz will be sharing the podium (sort of semi-conductors). Many of the announcements will be made by our Italian butler, Ferranti Digitiser, so please excuse some of the pronunciation...

Stand back: here come the typing pool: Daisy Weighell, Kay Board, Olive Ety, Zee Rox-Kopya and the triplets, Dot, May and Trix. Also the academic assistants, Kerry Coolem and Cilla Buss, accompanied by Stu Dent and Reggie Steer. Phillipa Glass and Mandy Switchboard have already arrived - they're dragging that ape, Rick Ott, off young Ivy Empey, see? Stacey Merry-Cubard is up to his tricks again, this time with the software support team - Anna, Liza and that sinner Claire Spectrum. Tsk!

Here's the popular female technician, Millie Amp; she shared a taxi with the Vice Chancellor's Personal Assistant, Ellie Troniksruveillance.



Hovering over the snacks and drinks table I can see that inebriated Mexican Ina Lupe, clutching her favourite tipple, Scotch on Xerox. "Have you seen my sausage roll?" It's the way you're holding the plate, Ina. [I don't know: she's as bad as that drunk Anna Litical and gin; or Dave Fair and his gin.] Have a pixelated onion - go on, give Meg a bite! Oh-oh, this chap can put a lot away: it's fat Gig O'Byte; and he's brought his terrier, Killer.

Thank goodness there are some more dignified guests: Professor Huw Rhystyk, and his nosy wife Voya. Professor and Mrs Ware, their son Harry D. Ware, and their daughter Sophie T. Ware. And their cousin, Vera M. Ware. Joining them in the Computer Science corner there's Dr and Mrs Koda, and their scooter loving son, the Mod, Yuli Koda; and their frosty daughter, whom no-one understands, icy Elle; and short, bespectacled, loveable Uncle Arthur "Askey" Koda. They're chatting with the two Annas - Liszt and Logge, the latter accompanied by Dicky Tall. [When tried by pathetic puns like that your patience ebbs, Dick, doesn't it?] Oh, and there's Elsie Phnott.

All the way from Hong Kong will you welcome please Professor and Mrs Fo-Pontoo and their stupid son, that Berk Li. Not to mention Eunice (no, don't mention Eunice *.)

Here's Mr and Mrs Chips and their childish daughter, silly Conny Chips; also their son, a Cambridge Blue, Mike "Rower" Chips, and his loose-limbed girlfriend, floppy Dee Skette. (Whoops - Dad's seen the punch and all his resistance has gone - Goodbye, Mr. Chips.)

Ah - the African contingent, headed by the three raving nuns, Sister M'Bootup, Sister M'Overlode, and Sister Matic-disintegration. From South Africa we have Brook Protokol; he's officially classed as "coloured", but it's nice to see he's arm-in-arm with Mr and Mrs d'Peeteleven, with their son Piet. And make way for

*Eunice is the tired Ma of Ettie and Thibault l'Abse.

Sheik Al Jebrek F'Untsun and his eunuchs [the trade mark of a tainted tyrant].

The fashion house "Vera" has proved popular with the ladies this year. Adding a touch of class to this event is Sir Kit Bray-Kerr, with his fashion-conscious wife showing off her latest extravagance, a genuine Vera tulle dress [what a beauty!]. And Mr and Mrs Accessmethod have come with their daughter, [what a clerk: not in a Vera creation, but still a stunner, is Indexed Sequin Sal [another peach!]]. The Bray-Kerrs are in the company of tonight's speaker, General Alec Trikke, and his mistress, Honey Welles (she's really in her prime).

A steady stream of academics, now: Dr and Mrs Eye and their tiny daughter, wee Alice; Dr and Mrs Dee and their glowing daughter, Ellie; Dr and Mrs Terrupdrivenprogram and son Ian; Mr and Mrs Sesson and their son, the golfer, Victor "Pro" Sesson; and their other son, dandruff-afflicted public relations man, scaly P.R.O. Sesson. The two Irishmen, Fyfe O'Cue and brother Lief, have come and gone, but here's the daddy of them all, Pop Stack and his latest sex-kitten of a wife, Puss.

But let's join the Latin-American group: we can hear the slow Spanish murmur of Juan Cigund, talking to his wife, Millie (close by is their Irish cousin, Nan O'Second - and her Peke). They have invited Mr and Mrs Monty Video, and their son Telly. Also in the group is Señor Manuel J'ment (Man for short). True to her name, here comes inebriated Ina Lupe again - surely she can't get any tighter? We should get her fixed up with Ray Curzon.

Over in the operations corner we have Pa and Ma Cheenrume, Mr and Mrs Conditioning and their heir; and Mr and Mrs Phil Tarr, with their son Dustin D. Phil Tarr - that's handy, there's Col, the engineer, with Helen O'Wan. (Lot of Irish here tonight - anybody seen Patrick Fitzalan and his friend yet?)

And there's the network crowd: Ern's got good odds tonight, he's with Janet, Effie and Diane. (They can all stow it away, alright; I see they're drinking that fizzy stuff for slimmers - low Cal Airy - but I suspect they'll still end up completely national-networked as usual.) Also in this corner: Here is Mo Dem, and her pushy friend, Lynne Driver, with their companions for tonight, Horace "Toothy" Rae II, and Cyril Ian Terry Face; and the inseparable twosome, T. Ron Schmidt and Reese Eve, looking bored as usual.

Did you hear Mona Terr scream? Ed hit her! Good job P.C. Luke Alike is on the door - things are getting a bit out of hand. Time to calm things down ...

Your attention, please: specially for the graphics people, there will be a refreshing display of limbo dancing from that Rasta man, Cal laGraffix later on tonight. And now, our two visiting American clerics have foolishly agreed to lead the carols: Canon Ike Alpass will sing, accompanied by that holier-than-thou gangster-turned-priest, Virtue Al Memrie. All together, now:

God rest you data processors

Let nothing you dismay

We're bringing back the typewriter

And pencil from today.....

MEMORANDUM

To: All members of Computing Laboratory staff

From: Professor T. Anderson

STOP PRESS! 

LAB. CHRISTMAS PARTY

A Christmas party will be held on
Wednesday 24th December, 1986,
starting at about 4.00 p.m. in room 365
(third floor of the Bridge).

All staff are invited - this year there is no charge
(however, you have to bring a bottle!).

Any suggestions or contributions to the current minimal level of
organisation are most welcome.



THE HORSE'S MOUTH

John Law.

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 28

30th March 1987

THE SOCIAL WHIRL

The Party (1)

Two events dominated the social calendar in the first quarter. Firstly, nearly 50 Lab. staff and spouses went to the famous Jangling Gate, West Pelton (yes), for "The Christmas Meal". The restaurant lived up to its reputation of providing wonderful meals, followed by fun and frolics on the dance floor. It was an excellent night out: gay abandon without any coarseness. Bookings are being taken now for next January (they were booked up, this January, for the 1987 Christmas period, which is the best testimonial to the quality!).

The Party(2)

... and on March 13th another party was organised, for all Lab. staff and students. Nearly 150 people attended this bash, held at the Time Out bar, Eldon Square. One of the highspots of this glittering evening was the award of the 1986-87 Golden Eggs: Sportsman of the Year: John Clowes; Lecturer of the Year: Dick Snow; Most Promising Beard of the Year: Ken Wright (well, at least that one is easy to fathom out).

Students? What students?

That party was the tip of an iceberg: there is a serious purpose behind it, namely the fostering of good staff-student relations. It was decided recently that the Lab. should try to do more in this area. It has always been difficult because we are not only big and spatially dispersed, but we have a huge First Year intake, many of whom switch to other courses as their careers settle into different directions.

Board of Studies appointed a sub-committee to look into ways of improving staff-student relations, consisting of Brian Randell, Ian Scoins, John Lloyd, Pete Lee, Lindsay Marshall, and Karen Jones. Their report was published in the form of a memo dated December 19th, a copy of which is in the folder entitled "Minutes of Meetings (NUMAC)(sic)", in the Common Room; a copy is also in the MTS Forum Conference SCAT (Society for Computing and Technology). [Incidentally, Forum is a good means of communication between our undergraduates and ourselves (if only it were used).]

SMALL ADS

For sale: Photographic Enlarger: LPL 330LD 35mm enlarger; converts to copying stand; inc. lens and coloured filters; one year old; price 45. Contact Bill Foggo (251).

"Oh to be in England,
now that April's there!"

Happy New Year! How nice to be back in Newcastle, after that onerous 3-month sabbatical in Acapulco. Here's all the news that's fit to print.

Easter Tuesday: 21st April

A notice from Harry Whitfield:

"Staff will be aware that although all University buildings will be open on Easter Tuesday, no support staff will be working on that day. This is because of annual holiday arrangements for Clerical/Technical staff, Computer Operators, Library Assistants and Precinct Services staff. The University's main switchboard and the catering department will be closed. Mail will be delivered to all departments, but there will be no cleaning services. Arrangements are being made for portering staff to open buildings.

In the Laboratory itself, the main MTS service will be running in Unattended Mode; our Departmental Library and the General Office will be closed; and our switchboard will be on night service [*]. No refreshments will be served in the Common Room.

Permission is therefore hereby given for academic and academic-related staff to take Easter Tuesday as part of their personal annual leave, if they wish to do so."

[*] (Ed.Note: "Night service" - incoming calls are signalled in the Computer Room, where they may be taken and redirected. This normally works smoothly when the operators are on duty. Outgoing calls can only be made by la crème de la crème, who have phones with special powers, or from the pay phone on the Ground Floor.)

STAFF NEWS

New faces

Two people are "just visiting" us for experience in office work. First, Katharine Evans, from Gateshead Tech., has been with the General Office for two weeks now, and is about to complete her 3-week spell here; and Elaine Joyce is visiting us from the C.A.T. for two weeks starting Monday 30th March.

We are pleased to say that Debra Fawcett has joined the General Office as a clerk/typist: an addition to the staff there. Debra joins us from Kooltech Ltd., in Gateshead. Half of her duties will be to assist Maria with computing service accounting and administration, specifically, that for undergraduates.

And in January the Computing Service Network Group were joined by Mary Hood. Her face may be familiar because she completed a 2-year part-time MSC with us

30th March 1987

The Horse's Mouth

The Horse's Mouth

30th March 1987

last September; she did her original degree, in Physics, here at Newcastle. She returned to the area 7 years ago when her husband became Vicar of Langley Park and Esh with Hamsteels; their two boys are now of an age when Mary can look to relax a bit and come out to work (instead of being just a Mum). Mary is on a 1-year part-time contract, and her first task is to produce software for gathering error counts and other statistics from Munet's activities. This valuable work has already led to the isolation and fixing of two deficiencies.

Farewells

Jean Pennington left at the end of February when her contract as Demonstrator came to an end. And Sylvia Pfleger left at the end of March, returning to her native Bonn to rejoin her old department at the University there. Sylvia joined us two years ago on a 1-year visit, but she enjoyed working here so much that she applied for the extra year's extension.

Lastly, Gavin Johnson (one of our 1986 graduates) has finally been declared whiter-than-white by Special Branch and has been allowed to take up his post at GCHQ (see HM26). While awaiting this approval, Gavin worked for NUMAC and produced, after consultation with Keith Heron and Vince Bilton, an interactive, graphical, real-time diagnostic display of Munet, which enables the operators and the technical staff to monitor the network. This software entailed a large amount of programming (obvious, when you see it run), and is a remarkable achievement for such a short-term project ... which demonstrates why Gavin got a job at GCHQ, and makes us proud to reflect that he is "one of ours". Good luck, Gavin.

Christmas Presents

[Sorry to evoke the miseries of the Christmas season in these glorious sunny days of Spring.] The many who contributed will be pleased to know that for Christmas the Laboratory staff bought Billy, our own porter, a jumbo-size bottle of Bell's Whisky; a half-bottle for Les (Head Porter, Claremont Tower). And for Ann Anderson (our Coffee Lady), a blouse and a lambswool cardigan, with which she was delighted.

Two Doctored

Heartiest congratulations to Drs. Larry Hughes ("Multicast communications in distributed systems"); and Nick Rothwell ("Generation of concurrent code for declarative languages"), who were awarded their PhDs recently. Larry will shortly be returning to Canada, where he has been appointed to an Assistant Professorship at the School of Computing Science, Technical University of Nova Scotia, Halifax; Nick left us in 1986 for the Dept. of Computing Science, Edinburgh.

2 posts advertised

You may have seen the advertisements for a Demonstrator and a lecturer for the Lab. The Demonstratorship is that held by Jean until her contract came to an end; the lecturer post is that vacated by Isi Mitrani (currently actually on sabbatical in, or near, Acapulco!) on his elevation to Reader. No news on appointments yet.

30th March 1987

The Horse's Mouth

OTHER NEWS

UNITE

Is it a football team? Is it a biscuit? No, it's University of Newcastle Information Technology Exchange, and we hope it will be a great step forward in the continuing efforts for improved cross-fertilisation between the University and Industry. The two Departments concerned are the Computing Laboratory and Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

The scheme involves inviting industrial concerns to pay an annual "membership fee", for which they receive access to advanced expertise in areas of research. The major event of the year will be an annual conference, the first of which is to be held May 14th - 15th in the new Medical School. Companies so far involved are, in no particular order, Plessey, Mari, Rank Xerox, ICL, Amdahl and BT. UNITE will provide, for the University, a means of output for research applications, and for industry a means of discussing the direction of research programmes, and of recruiting good graduates.

A copy of the UNITE publicity leaflet is pinned to the Common Room notice board if you would like to know more (it's very interesting). We wish every success to this new venture: apart from anything else, what's good for UNITE is good for the Lab.!

P.S. I am reliably informed that other suggestions for an acronym for the new venture were CLEETHORPES and HITLER. UNITE's pretty good, isn't it?

Undergraduate teaching equipment: proposals for the future

A working party composed of teaching and teaching support staff, chaired by Pete Lee, was asked by Harry Whitfield to make recommendations for future provision of computing equipment for teaching. The principal recommendation is that a multi-processor system should be bought which would eventually support in the order of 250 terminals/workstations, and would run under Unix.

Such systems can have (in total) more CPU power than the Amdahl: up to 20 separate processors can reside in one machine. This makes possible parallel processing of different activities. Manufacturers' names cannot at present be mentioned because the proposal will have to go out to tender. There would be three main roles for such a machine: research into parallel processing; testbed for industrial applications (a commercial service); and advanced teaching for 2nd and 3rd year undergraduates.

This report is still in the draft stage, but it should be available for general access in the near future: more in the next HM.

Multiprocessor Research Group

Not unconnected with the above is the following, from Pete Lee:

Given the SRC's recent request for more "big" grant applications (and in spite of the recent cut backs in funded research!), Pete Lee is hoping to put together a grant application concerning research into parallelism in multiprocessors. If anybody has any interests in this area and could form part of this grant application, they are urged to talk to Pete as soon as possible.

The Horse's Mouth

30th March 1987

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 29

22nd June 1987

"Summer has set in with its usual severity"
(S. Coleridge, 1826)

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

The last Horse's Mouth was 30th March! Editorial apologies to all, especially the two who read it, for the long period between issues.

STAFF NEWS

Departures

On June 3rd we said a fond farewell to Alison Clowes. Alison has been with us two years, during which time she worked for the Math/Physics CTI project. Based on Nimbuses, Alison's work for that project included writing the Tektronix emulator, the Nimbus graphics library, and the ProPascal version of the NAG library, which contains 70 NAG routines. Alison's despondency at the prospect of unemployment was dispelled on June 4th by a telephone call from someone in London who read her report in the CTISS Newsletter: she now has a job at the Institute of Cancer Research, at the Royal Marsden Hospital in Surrey. She will be an Assistant System Manager for their VAX systems. We are very pleased for Alison, and our good wishes will go with her when she starts her new job in August.

And Ray Weedon leaves us on Friday 26th June to go to the Open University, Milton Keynes. Ray's been with us for 4 years, the last 3 with Peter Hitchcock's ASPECT project. Rumours of vast wealth and plunder to be had in the Thames Valley have filtered through from Benedict, who left us for there last September.

New Faces

Welcome to two new faces in the Laboratory:

From Poland, Marta Koutny is Maciej's wife; she has joined us as a Research Associate on Richard Hopkins' project, Dynamically Structured Communicating Systems.

And we welcome from the People's Republic of China Weiping Zhu, who started one year's Visiting Research Associateship in April, working in the Distributed Systems field. Weiping ("way-ping") has come to us from Beijing (also known in Britain as Peking). He received his Master's degree in Computer Science at the Beijing Institute of Mining and Technology, having first gained his Bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Hunan University, Hunan Province. Weiping's wife and 4-year old daughter, Zhu Zhing, remain in Beijing while he is here in Britain. Weiping (and his wife) collect stamps - any swops out there? (he's in Room 921).

Last but by no means least, welcome to Helen Koelmans, born at 2.00am Monday 8th June, 8lbs 3oz, another daughter for Lydia and Albert, a sister for Felicity. Also, old news, welcome to Wing Yen Wong, 2nd daughter for Phesany, born Sunday

12th April, weighing 6lbs 11oz. Also (Stop Press news), welcome to Baby Boy (no name yet) Greenley, first child for operator Alison Greenley and her husband; born Friday 26th June, 6lbs 13oz. Congratulations to all these proud parents!

Advance Notice

Alan Smith will be joining us on 20th July as an electronics technician; he will be working with Tim Smith, assisting him in his work with micros and other teaching equipment.

Two new members of staff will be joining us on 1st August: a lecturer, Dr. Christopher Holt, joining us from Queen's, Belfast; and an electronics technician, William Stewart, who will be principally involved with microcomputer support. More details in August.

COMPUTING NEWS

New machine for teaching

Professor Pete Lee reports:

"After a lengthy and formal tendering process, the Computing Laboratory has decided to purchase a Multimax 120 computer system from Encore Computer Corporation. The requirements for the multiprocessor were drawn up by members of the Laboratory and specified in an Operational Requirement document which was sent to the two companies whose systems matched our needs (Sequent and Encore). The companies were requested to bid a system configuration against this Operational Requirement, one condition of which was the fixed price that we were prepared to pay. Both companies responded to the Operational Requirement, and both were it seems keen to not let the other get the contract! (As a result we have been able to get a system configuration significantly in excess of that specified in our Operational Requirement!) An evaluation of the two company's responses led to Encore being awarded the contract.

"The system we will be getting (hopefully by the beginning of July) will contain 8 CPUs (that's like 8 VAX-750s, approximately 6 MIPS in total), 16MB of RAM, 400MB disk and a 16-line Annex Ethernet terminal PAD. X25 networking hardware and software are due to be delivered within the next 12 months. This will be the first Multimax in the UK.

"Funding for the machine comes from Pete Lee's new Professor's Equipment Grant, from a successful request to the University Equipment fund, and from the Ewan Page Memorial Slush Fund (thanks Harry). The machine is to be used for research into parallelism, and also to support some teaching needs, as discussed in the recent report on teaching requirements. [Ed.: copy in Common Room].

"Following the tradition of naming machines after Northumbrian places, or after famous scientists, suggested names have been "newbiggin" (new big 'un), and "peterlee" (?), but [boringly], it has been decided to re-use the name TURING."

MTS Workshop XIII

We had four people attend the thirteenth MTS Workshop, in Vancouver, Canada, at the beginning of June: Harry Whitfield, Terry Ratcliffe, Denis Russell, and Ron Kerr. This was a particularly important Workshop: the other MTS sites, as well as ourselves, recognise that the time has come to think about replacing MTS, i.e. a monolithic operating system on a time-shared mainframe, with something better geared to the powerful workstations which will dominate University computing from the 1990's. Accordingly, the next Release of MTS, Distribution 6.0, will be the last Distribution, and this Workshop laid the foundations for the WINE "intersystem" (not an operating system, not a network). (WINE is a temporary acronym; it stands for Workstation-Intensive Network Environment; it may be replaced by a more commercial name in the future.) The Workshop appointed, full-time, a Project Manager and a Project Architect; the Project Consultant is our own Professor Whitfield, whose great experience in operating system design is thus recognised and appreciated by the rest of the Community.

Conference Proceedings are in a yellow Workshop binder, available for reference in the Library. The WINE environment continues to be discussed in the MTS Forum Conference MTS-FUTURES.

VM/CMS

Whilst on the subject of operating systems: NUMAC have now started up the VM/CMS operating system on the Amdahl. It is currently available only to a few selected "guinea pigs". In October a pilot service will be offered to those who need VM/CMS; and by October 1988 we should be in a position to start up a fully supported VM/CMS service. If you don't know what VM/CMS is, don't worry: you will, by next October. (Some say it is to replace MTS; some say it's not.)

1987 Computing Laboratory Seminar

The 1987 seminar is entitled "20th International Seminar on Teaching Computing Science: Logic and its applications to Computer Science". It is sponsored this year jointly by the University and Amdahl (UK) Limited. An advance notice is to be found on the Common Room noticeboard.

OTHER DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

A Near-Miss

Dr. Scoins, Departmental Safety Officer, passes on this sobering story:

"Near-Miss accidents have the advantage that, because no legal action is likely, the circumstances can be discussed and lessons learned.

"One evening recently one of the inhabitants of Floor 9 attempted to close one of the large windows before he went home. The window caught on the metal flashing surrounding the frame. The reason for the stuck window was not obvious, and a tug caused the window to buckle and break. Most of the glass stayed in the window but at least one piece, perhaps 9" in diameter, fell 10 floors and smashed on the pavement. Fortunately (as far as I know) no-one was close by. However, there could have been an accident to a person, and it could

have been fatal.

"So - be careful when you close big windows high up in the Tower. They are not very strong, and personally, I would rather they were NEVER left open. The small windows are reasonably safe, even in a wind.

"Remember that to lock these windows you usually need a coin, spoon, or other flat piece of metal to ease the latch to the safe closed position. Learn how to do this in Claremont Tower."

Embarrassment caused by 57 varieties

One of the tasks Nigel Hall recently set himself was to find out just how many terminals, and what sort, we actually have in the Laboratory. His conclusion is an amazing 425 terminals in total. Although some might think this an embarrassing figure (given the shortage of facilities in some areas of the University), it must be pointed out that the 425 includes all terminals, including those owned by the many research projects, by the teaching side of the Lab., as well as by NUMAC, and many which are in effect useless outside the Lab for technical reasons. The total number of different sorts of terminal represented is 57.

Daysh Building accommodation

The Laboratory has been allocated a large area of space in the Daysh building, namely Room 3.14 (Floor 3). This is a very large room which was formerly drawing studios; it will probably be used by us to house some of our technical staff and their equipment, and also many workstations and research equipment. It will not be an entirely public area; access, which will be restricted, will be from the Claremont Tower end of the Daysh Building, the present main entrance being converted to be goods/emergency access. We hope to be using it from the start of the new academic year.

The most pressing problem is devising a name for the new area. You will recall the inspired witticism which christened the old Arts Common Room "The Mill" (meaning a place where hard work is carried out; a place where sometimes "thiz trouble oop a't'"; a grinding machine through which things (or undergraduates) are passed; and most importantly recalling the business end of Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine, which he called the mill). Well, we need a similarly evocative name for this area. The first suggestion was The Redoubt (meaning a fortress placed defiantly far from headquarters; also a pun on "read-out" gettit?). Another one was The Rack (another part of Babbage's Analytical Engine; also an instrument of torture - some mistake, here, surely?). It is not too late to submit your suggestion to the Grand Master of Room Naming, Dr. Scoins; he will submit it to the Secret Seven, who actually decide these things.

Something to smile about

Dave Sedgwick reports "Research Machines are giving us some good publicity, (or trying to butter us up). I quote from their Summer 87 Newsletter,

" Newcastle University is one of the most ambitiously computerised sites in Higher Education, with a large number of microcomputers (from several makers),

LANs, micro to mainframe links plus their own NUMAC wide network... "

" Altogether, the Nimbus is popular at Newcastle because it is seen very much as a technical machine for a technical University. Even so, next year there are plans to incorporate use of Nimbus systems into French business studies as part of the Modern Languages faculty... "

1987 Summer Trip

The Laboratory trip this year is to the beautiful high Dales village of Dent, in Cumbria (once Westmorland). A coach will be going (£4.00), though you can make your own way there, and the evening meal is organised. Activities centre mainly on country walking in a very nice part of England, although there are attractions also for railway buffs. More details on the Common Room noticeboard. Weather is guaranteed. It is not too late to pass your name to Michael Elphick or Ken Wright, this year's organisers.

1988 Winter Trip

Once again, after many previous successes, a Big Night Out For The Lab is being organised at the Jingling Gate restaurant, West Pelton, round about the Christmas season. This trip is to be on January 9th and this time Ann Taylor is taking the names. Ann tells me that the restaurant requires deposits (£5.00) by July 30th (she had to book last January!), so please would all those interested pass their names and deposits to Ann as soon as possible.

A fine mess

This is old news now, but .. how many of us have fallen foul of the University Library's "new" policy of fines on Long Term Loan books? (5 pence per day from Return Date; Return Date still End of Term; max. no. books on loan by a member of staff: 50 (that's Fifty). (That's a lot of pennies by the end of the summer vac., folks.)

Currently the Departmental record is held by a tall, rugged Australian member of staff who wishes to remain anonymous: £8.00. Can anyone beat that?

Articles for sale

Tower 2-litre Slow cooker : reluctant to part with it for ... £7.00
Child's tricycle : yellow, with dumper at rear; much loved, much used; too small for the 4-year-old owner: £7.00
Contact John Law for either item (ext. 255).

Items For Sale/Wanted always welcome (no charges, circulation 130 wealthy, though canny, people).

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 30

12th August 1987

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

Waltzing McCulloch

It's with great pleasure that we record the marriage of Carol Reynolds on Friday 7th August to Mr. Alan McCulloch. The happy couple had known each other for several years when Alan went pioneering to Australia a couple of years ago. He returned this Spring to reacquaint himself with England, and Romance flowered. Obviously his acquired antipodean charm was sufficient to overcome Carol's natural reticence and shyness, and Bingo! Unfortunately for the Laboratory, Carol will be leaving us sometime in the next month or two to join Alan in Adelaide. Our fondest, best wishes for the future, Carol and Alan. [Look out, Aussies - this is one Pom you'll learn to respect!]

Arrivals

A warm welcome this month to Chris Holt, who joins us as a new lecturer. Chris was born in Reading but lived in the U.S.A. from the age of 2. He studied for his first degrees at Harvard, in Applied Mathematics, then came "home" to England, where he gained his D.Phil. at Oxford, in Computer Science. For the last few years he has been lecturing in Computer Science at Queen's University, Belfast. His main interest at work is constructive logic, whilst his outside interests include Scrabble and physical activities such as jogging, rowing, trampoline and badminton.

And we also welcome Bill Stewart who has joined us as a Grade 5 Technician, specialising in micro maintenance. Bill graduated with a 2(i) in Electronic and Electrical Engineering at the University of Surrey, and then joined the CEGB (Guildford), where he worked on digital transmission systems. Born in Shields, Bill's at present living in Tynemouth; his interests outside work are energetic: they include squash, weight training, etc.

Last but by no means least, we must mention Pearl Ferguson, who is temporarily the Departmental Lynchpin - i.e., she is at the switchboard and reception desk while Moirra Atkinson is off on maternity leave (I thought she was just putting on weight). Pearl's come to us from the Harrison Agency, and all being well will be with us until mid-November. And we'll take this opportunity of sending Moirra our very best wishes for her Happy Event.

More labour news

Val Douglas gave birth to a little girl on July 29th, 7lb 12oz, name still being chosen. Congratulations, Val (and Norman)!

John Law.

Aspen?
John
Mike
Kodan

Academic achievements

More congratulations - this time to Ian Rutherford, who has gained his BSc in Physical Electronics from the Polytechnic; and to Stuart Hay, who has gained his HNC in Electronic Engineering. I'm reliably informed that for both these gentlemen the next target is HNC in Brick Laying - get your extension plans drawn up now!

Room change

Mary Morris has moved to room Daysh 816, from Tower 832. Her new telephone extension is 203 (sharing with Vince Bilton), but for the moment she is keeping the same bleeper code (5-659).

SMALL ADS

For Sale

Looking for a new gas fire? Look no further: here's a beaut!

Coal-effect gas fire with brass surround and brass grate. Dimensions of surround: 36" wide x 24" deep. Mounted on hearth, which is brick with black stone top, and is 48" wide x 15" deep x 8½" high. Cost about £500 new (about 9 months ago): will accept offers in the region of £150-200. [Have to sell because the hearth is the right height for the toddlers to sit on.] Contact: Gillian Craig, ext. 252.

and Tim Smith (ext 263) is keen to clear space occupied by the following articles:

- (1) JVC stereo tuner, amplifier, record deck and speakers.
- (2) Electrolux upright vacuum cleaner.
- (3) Cast iron fireplaces.

Any Reasonable Offer Accepted!

And now I'm off for my summer hols.: Rambler's Association Adventure Holiday, this year - hunting opium smugglers in the Golden Triangle of Thailand.

Yours,
The Editor

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 31

5th November 1987

Special Bonfire Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

Greetings, fellow labourers! I have just changed the date at the head of this Issue from 28th September to St.Guy's Day. Thus do our dreams fall victim to Reality.

FAMILY DEPARTMENT

Some of these babies are probably teething, it's so long since they were born ... Congratulations to Moira (and Chris) Atkinson on the birth of their firstborn, Emma, on September 25th. Emma weighed 8lbs 5oz, and was two weeks late. Moira is coming back to work on November 16th!

Lindsay Marshall has been a Daddy since 1st August, when his wife Pen, gave birth to their firstborn, Alastair Auld, who weighed 8lbs 4oz.

Stepping (backwards) from the Maternity Ward to the Altar, our very good wishes go to newly-weds Martin McLauchlan and his wife Mary (married September 5th, honeymoon the Shetlands). And to Robert Stroud and his wife Laura (married September 6th, Venice and Lake Garda). (Sincere apologies from The Horse, for not gladdening these two gentlemen by making bigger announcements, nearer the time.)

And one step further back ... Susan Renshaw has become engaged to Peter Chester (well, you can't stay beautiful and single Susan). We are also glad to announce the engagement of Paul Ezhilchelvan to Ruth Beena Selvanayagam. Although Ruth originally comes from Newcastle, this affair is an all-Madras one (what a marvellous international coincidence!).

Our heartiest congratulations to all these happy people, and fondest good wishes for the future.

New Staff

We welcome (in alphabetical order) the following new staff:

Stephanie Barber joined us in September on a two-year research contract, the intention of which is to provide the University Library catalogue as part of a campus-wide "University Information Server". The Library is paying, but Stephanie is with us because Elizabeth is supervising. Some of us already know Stephanie because she was with us (mumble) years ago for 3 years as a Research Associate; also, completed an MSc with us in 1986.

Dave Bowen is the new trainee electronics technician - his face is familiar by now, as he joined us (from South Tyneside Technical College) in September. Dave will be with us for three years, plus one supernumerary year, and will be working with all groups of technical staff as part of his training.

Dave Kendall joined us in October in a 2-year Research Associate post, working with Dave Mundy. Dave completed his MSc with us this year, but before that he was a schoolteacher, Classics being his subject. Dave's wife Marilyn is also a Classics teacher, and she and their two small daughters are in the process of moving up from Devon. The Kendalls, being country dwellers at present, are hoping to find a home in the Tyne Valley.

Welcome to Krithi Ramamritham, who is visiting us for one year from the University of Massachusetts, where he is an Associate Professor at the Department of Computer and Information Science (Laboratory for Distributed Computing). His wife and 2 year old daughter are over here too, and they hope to see a lot of England while they're here. Krithi is working mainly with Santosh Shrivastava.

Kevin Robertson is the new Electronics Technician, who has been recruited to assist Tim Smith in the Micro-Electronics Lab. Kevin started on October 12th, and came to us from Lamp Metals Ltd, Wrekenton. Kevin isn't married -- except to his Yamaha XJ650, motorbikes being his big interest; he also enjoys camping expeditions.

New Staff (sort of)

Congratulations to Andy Linton on joining Nigel's group of "Systems Programmers (Teaching)" on 1st November. (This vacates Andy's former Research Associateship, which has nearly 2 years to run.)

New PhD students

Welcome also to no less than six new people who have embarked upon PhD studies: Christopher Bell from Adelaide [well, swipe me - we send 'em one, they send us one back (Carol McCulloch's just gone there)]. Marcos Euzebio from Brazil; Mark Little (newly graduated from Physics and Computing Joint Honours); Edward Scott from our own CSSD course; Andrew Thomas (ditto); and Yuguo Zhang from Shanghai, China.

DEPARTURE

Suds Giant puts NUMAC in a Lather

NUMAC staff were stunned to hear that Mary Morris will be leaving at the end of November. The reason (she says!) is that her husband Peter, is being moved by his employers Procter and Gamble to work in Woking, Surrey. (This sounds like soft-soaping to me: it's well-known that anyone who's worked for NUMAC for longer than 5 years starts to foam at the mouth in regular cycles. I think it's that which is making her leave.) It will certainly put us in a spin: there was a time when we had three Statistical Software Advisers. University cuts made that into two, then into one - Mary.

She has contributed an enormous amount to the NUMAC service since she first joined us in 1979. She is best known for her work in helping and teaching users of statistical software, but in fact she has been indispensable in most areas of NUMAC's User Services. She has always been keen to try out new equipment and new software, and to integrate such facilities into the service. But, desperately time-consuming as those activities are, she never allowed them to

impinge upon her primary role as Statistical Software Adviser. In addition to all that, Mary's intelligent, patient, and infinitely gentle way of working has been a great example to all of us. We'll miss you badly, Mary: best wishes for the future for you and Peter.

[Footnote: we have just heard that, incredibly, the University has frozen Mary's post. Well, in the end the University will get the Computing Service it deserves. Good luck to us.]

Doctored

Many congratulations to two new Doctors: Tahir Afzal PhD., and Robert Stroud PhD. Tahir left us a couple of months ago (I see from the new phone list): sorry to say I can't find out where he went.

OTHER NEWS

New telephone list

Terry Betteridge has produced a new internal telephone list. This one is yellow, to distinguish it from previous ones, and is available from the General Office.

The Rack

In case you're wondering what happened to it, preparation of "The Rack" (our new accommodation on Floor 3 of the Daysh Building) has slipped by five weeks so far. This has been caused by trouble with contractors not turning up. It is still in the hands of the Bursar's Office, who are overseeing the main preparatory works. So we will not be using it in January (as hoped for until now), or for a long time after.

New University telephone system

Terry Betteridge spoke to NUMAC staff recently describing the University's new telephone system, which will be working early summer 1988. This summary is as factual as it can be; Terry cannot at present answer as many questions as he would like.

British Telecom will start the new cabling work shortly; Claremont Tower and Claremont Bridge are two of the first buildings that will be tackled.

The exchange will be BT's Merlin BTeX system, made by GEC. (Pronunciation note: the 'X' is actually an 'x'; not a Chi, as in the silly name given to the very wonderful textformatting language TeX).

The present Laboratory exchange (2329233) will be dispensed with. All current handsets will be replaced. The technology will be "semi-digital": analogue (though push-button) handsets connected to a digital exchange.

Every line will have its own 4-digit number. [only] About 300 of the 2500 lines will have DDI (Direct Dialling In) which is the facility whereby external callers can telephone a particular extension directly. HOWEVER, it now seems

possible that we will NOT get DDI at all. [It is not known if the University is going to employ another switchboard operator to take all the calls that are going to come into the Laboratory via the switchboard.]

There are various Access Levels for each extension. The ones of interest to us are:

- Level 1 - Emergency only (dialled automatically on picking up the phone);
- 2 - Internal calls only;
- 6 - Internal, plus local calls, plus national STD capability between 1200 (sic) and 1800 hours.
- 9 - Anything, any time.

All calls will be logged: time, calling extension, number called, duration. The Departmental "statement" will be sent to the Head of Department at the end of each month.

Call Forwarding. There are two classes: Call Forward/No Answer (CFNA); and Call Forward/All Calls (CFAC). Most extensions in the Lab. will have CFNA set to be "the Office phone" (see below).

There will be at least two "Call Pick-up Groups" in the Laboratory, that is, areas where any phone can collect a call for any other phone in the Group when it rings. The two so far identified are the General Office and the Computer Room. One (or more) of the General Office phones will be designated "the" phone for Call Forward/No Answer (CFNA) forwarding from Laboratory extensions.

Bleepers: if you are like me you will not be aware of the complexity that allows our bleepers to be used with our telephone system. Still less of the great trouble Terry B. was involved in, to get BT to talk to Philips and get the two connected. Terry foresees another struggle to have the bleepers connected to the new phone system, but he (we) do think it will be well worth the effort.

SOCIAL

Now to the Past ...

The Laboratory is 30 years old! That means it was formed when I was still on the bottle! To celebrate this occasion, an Anniversary Party is being held on Saturday November 28th, from 7.30 in the Senior Common Room: you should all have received your invitation by now. Tickets £5.00 per head, which includes the magnificent Buffet Supper; note there is a cash bar.

An effort is being made to track down "long-lost former staff". (If that "former" wasn't there I'd suggest looking in the University Address Book.) Also wanted: historical photos of people associated with the Lab. Hope to see you there!

Yet another Party

The Christmas Party this year will be held from about 3.00pm on December 23rd, in Room B365, i.e. on the Bridge, 3rd Floor. To save the Office Girls all the trouble of making the buffet, which they have done so well (with little thanks!) in years past, this year we are getting the University caterers to provide food and wine: consequently you'll be asked to pay a small amount: £2.50 (Come on! That's only the price of a Cornetto and a Kiss-Me-Quick hat on your summer hols!) Names and money to the General Office by December 16th, please.

SMALL ADS

For Sale

SHARP

Car Radio Cassette with Auto-search, under 12 months old. £35.00 o.n.o.
Contact Debbie in the General Office.

Electric Shaver:

Boots 6000: good working order: ousted by a birthday present. £10.00 o.n.o.-
John Law (ext 255).

Cast

iron fireplaces available: space in house urgently needed. Best offer
secures: Tim Smith (ext 263).

"Chopper"

bicycle: FREE to anyone who wants it: suit medium-sized boy (i.e. 8-13 age
group): reasonable condition - Tom Anderson (ext 217).

Micro

owners are reminded of the MTS file INFO:MICRO.SALES which holds information
on 2nd hand micro equipment currently for sale privately and from
Departments.

Property Section

3-bedroom Victorian town house for sale in Morpeth. Located just by the Police
Station, the house has full gas central heating, extensive gardens, ample car
parking area, etc. Offers are invited in the region of £35,000. Contact Bill
Foggo in the Print Room (ext. 251).

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 32

13th January 1988

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

New Staff

A warm welcome to Dr. Neil Speirs who joined us as a Lecturer in Computer Science on December 1st. Neil received his BSc in Mathematics at Newcastle University in 1980. He joined the local software firm Sagesoft in that year, being one of their first two programmers, and stayed with them until 1982. He started his PhD in Theoretical Physics at Durham University in 1982, being "Doctored" in 1985. That accomplished, he joined MARI and was the Leader for their Delta-4 Project, which is an ESPRIT funded effort, the aim of which is to produce a distributed fault-tolerant system. Thus Neil's contacts with the Laboratory go back some way. Neil was born in Wallsend, and I was amazed to find he now actually lives in Northumberland Road ("above the Baths?" I said - but there are some yuppy flats around there, he informed me). Neil plays Bridge; likes a game of golf, and (like all the others who say they do it) plays the piano "badly". Neil's office is currently in the Basement, B14.

On January 4th Ann Pretswell started work in the 3rd Floor Bridge Office as the Research Secretary, working in particular for Professors Lee and Shrivatsava. Ann was formerly at NEI Parsons. She and her husband Norman like motorcycles; they used to have one each, but acquiring a house in salubrious South Gosforth put a stop to that, so they now share a Suzuki GSX 750. If the surname is familiar to you, you're right: Norman is a partner with his father in the well-known removals firm (which I can personally recommend (no charge, Ann)). Welcome, Ann: you'll have a good time with that wild, carefree Research lot.

Congratulations to Bill Foggo, who became Daddy Foggo on December 16th when his wife Christine gave birth to a little girl (6lb. 2oz.). Robin Laura is doing well, and (like all babies I have ever heard of except my two) is now just about sleeping through the night).

Finally, welcome also to Fernando Capretz, who just this week got off the plane from Brazil to start with us as a PhD student. Fernando will be in Room 824, along with 3 (three!) colleagues, Amer Saeed, Rafhat Iqbal, and Christopher Bell.

Departure

On Friday 8th January we bade a fond farewell to Gillian Craig, who has been with us as a computer operator for 9 years. Gillian has got a job with British Telecom at Aidan House, as a computer operator on their IBM MVS systems. Our best wishes go with Gillian: BT have gained a conscientious and helpful member of staff.

OTHER NEWS

Great Ormond Street Hospital Appeal

Bob Vine, who kindly organised the collection from the Lab., writes:

"The "Wishing Well" Appeal: I collected around 120 pounds from our Department for the Children's Hospital at Great Ormond Street. Thank you all on their behalf for your generosity. I shall be adding my lump to this and sending off a cheque shortly. Don't be too disappointed if I missed you this year as I expect they will want me to do it again in 1988!"

Laboratory Christmas Party etc.

A word of thanks to all who helped organise the "do" this year, which was held on the 3rd Floor (Bridge): this means the girls in the General Office, of course. Thanks also to Dr. Scoins and Tom Anderson, who did what everybody else forgets about, namely see that the place gets cleared out and locked up before we all disappear for 10 days! [Personally, I thought it was very successful; and I hereby apologise to anybody whom I embarrassed].

Thanks also to everybody who chipped in for the "Christmas Boxes": we were able to give a plant and a £30 Gift Voucher to our Coffee Lady, Ann Anderson, who does so much for us (and so uncomplainingly!) throughout the year. We bought a bottle of whisky for our own Porter, Billy, and a half-bottle for Claremont Tower's Head Porter, Les.

STOP PRESS New Lab phone directory available (pale blue) from General Office.

John Law.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 33

22nd March 1988

Special Spring Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.255)

STAFF NEWS

Departures

Peter Hitchcock will be leaving us on April 25th to take up a Readership in the Computer Science Department at York University. Peter is to head a new research group whose work will be connected with the ASPECT databases project, in which he has been heavily involved here. Peter has been with us since Issue 1 of "The Horse's Mouth": September 1983. Our best wishes go with Peter and his family. Peter's lectures will be taken over by Nick Rossiter until a replacement Reader in Data Processing can be recruited.

Alan Brown, currently a Research Associate with Peter, has also - coincidentally - obtained a post at York, as a lecturer in Computer Science. I'm told York's Computer Science department is expanding under Professors Wand and McDermid: obviously they know where to come to recruit staff of quality... Alan will be leaving us in May.

Carole Moffat is leaving us in two weeks time. Carole has been with us since March 1985, and has been a mainstay in the General Office and in the Print Room. Her leaving spells d-i-s-a-s-t-e-r for the Print Room: there is now a greater need than ever before for you to schedule your work months in advance!! Enough of our problems: Carole's new job is Receptionist for Gill Aviation at the airport (any chance of a cheap flight?). Very best wishes Carole: you'll be missed (and not just because we need you in the Print Room!).

New Staff

Let us welcome Geppino Pucci, who comes to us from Naples. Geppino (who speaks excellent English, by the way, although he's never been here before) will be with us for almost three years as the Research Associate on Tom Anderson's Software Reliability Modelling Project. Geppino gained his 'Laurea' at Pisa, where he knows Fabio Panzieri; his final year "thesis" was one of two to be awarded an IBM prize in competition with the rest of Italy (he didn't tell me that himself!). Geppino is interested in music, and likes to play the piano; he also likes the cinema, and his main sporting activity is gymnastics though he quite fancies taking up squash. Welcome, Geppino!

A warm welcome also to Brian Eliot who will be with us for several weeks working on "The Intersystem Project". The Project is a joint venture of the MTS Community to create, for the 1990s, an integrated solution to the problem of heterogeneous computing systems spread around the campuses of the Community. Brian, who is well known to many computing service people, is visiting us from RPI - the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. Brian is chief architect for the Intersystem Project, and he will be working with Ron Kerr, Denis Russell and Harry Whitfield while he is here.

Moves

Neil Speirs has moved to Claremont Bridge, Room B347, which he'll be sharing with Geppino Pucci; the telephone extension is 268.

Roger Broughton has been extracted from his lair in Mezzanine M3 to make way for new fibre-optic network equipment. He has moved to Neil's old room, B14. By a miracle of modern techonology, Roger has retained his extension 247.

BUILDING NEWS

1. The building work in The Rack is now on schedule and is expected to be finished early May. We hope to have the room operational at the start of the new academic year, in October.
2. New building work will start in the Mezzanine (Rooms M3, M5 and M6) on March 21st. This is to accommodate much of the fibre optic systems equipment which will form the heart of the new University Local Area Network (or "Campus LAN"). The new Campus LAN will not so much replace Nunet as supersede it over the next few years; moreover, certain facilities (such as Ethernet connection) now needed on campus cannot be supplied by Nunet.
3. The new University telephone system being installed by BT is on schedule. "Switch-over" date is the weekend July 2nd/3rd, so naturally the new phones will be in place before then.

OTHER NEWS

UNITE Conference

Advance notice that the Second UNITE Conference will take place in May, organised jointly by the Computing Laboratory and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The University of Newcastle Information Technology Exchange scheme was inaugurated last year, you will recall, to "foster mutually beneficial interaction between industry and the University's IT-related Research and Teaching activities. It is intended to assist companies to obtain access to some of the latest IT research and to aid their graduate recruitment programmes."

This year's Conference will take place May 19th and 20th; of the 11 speakers, five will be staff from the Laboratory. More details from the leaflet posted in the Common Room, or from Karen Jones.

PROPERTY MART (No Sale , No Fee ...)

Modern mid-link house in South Beach, Blyth. Within 30 mins drive of the University. Comprises three bedrooms, bathroom with electric shower, through lounge, kitchen, and gardens front and rear. Includes a newly built detached garage and extra parking space.

Just put on the market at £21,950 (including all carpets and curtains) to encourage an early sale. Please contact Alan Brown on extn 238.

At the lower end of the market, a bijou 5-berth Monza De Luxe Touring Caravan. Ideal for cheap holidays (or for those wanting to take their time when looking for a new home ..., dig dig). This is the 1983 360S model and it is in perfect condition: offers around £1,575. For more details please contact Val Douglas, extension 252.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

The Last Old Phone List; new ones start to arrive

Terry Betteridge has produced another internal telephone list: wheat-yellow, available for collection in the General Office. This is the LAST before the new University telephone system, which will be installed at the start of July.

As a run-up to that, Terry has appended the list of the new phones which are now being installed in offices gradually. Some of these work already. However, (for those who know what it means) Terry asks those who have new phones **NOT TO DIAL 9 YET!** Dialling 9 before July 4th will mess up the test system.

YET OTHER NEWS

Grand National Sweepstake: Scandal averted

As at least fifty people know, the girls in the General Office organise a sweepstake for the Grand National each year (50 pence a ticket). When the results were known on the following Monday this year, it emerged that First, Second, Fourth and Last Prizes had gone to girls in the General Office. Your fearless Editor remarked upon this coincidence, but he was assured that such questions were unnecessary, the sweepstake was completely 'above board', and, besides, he might never type again. (And, sorry Tom: they forced me to tell them who provoked me to ask.)

["But Seriously, Folks" ... thanks to the girls for organising the Sweep. Such diversions make life bearable!]

SMALL ADS

FOR SALE: Not one, but two (yes 2) Raleigh "Spartan" bicycles, good condition, blue/yellow in colour, suit children ~~50 years~~ 10 years. Price around 20 quid each. Small discount for bulk purchasers. See Tom Anderson (217).

A Fisher-Price Lift and Load Depot, complete with three trucks and men. Suits children aged from 2 (up to about 40). £6.00 - John Law (255). Special Bonus for the buyer who doesn't quibble about this extremely favourable price: a small crowd of Playmobil people.

Hotpoint Fridge/Freezer; only 4 years old, perfect working order; superseded by the fortuitous acquisition of a larger model: £65.

Single bed; also only 4 years old; hardly used (kept in spare room); complete with headboard; a snip at £35.

For either item contact Ann Pretswell (272).

WANTED: Greenhouse and a table-tennis table - please phone John Law (255) [Well I might as well make use of this journal!]

STOP PRESS: Welcome to two Temps" : Maxine Swift (General Office)
Lyn Nicholson (for Betty)

Inf

Number 34

Special Literary

STAFF NEWS

Departures

John Law.

On Friday 22nd April we bade a fond farewell to Betty Smith, who has retired after 13 years with the Laboratory. Betty and her husband Charles are retiring to a beautiful flat, with a spectacular view, in the quiet seaside resort of Wemyss Bay (that's pronounced "weems"), not far from their native city of Glasgow. When asked what she would be doing with all that lovely spare time, Betty said that if she gets bored she'll start doing some "temping" (i.e. being an on-call secretary for an agency). No surprise to those of us who know Betty: it is hard to imagine her slowing down! I suggested that perhaps Brian Randell (who must be feeling rather lost at the moment) should equip her with a micro and a modem: she could carry on as before then, though she wouldn't have that spice-of-life, the surprise interruption every two minutes.

With the cheque which we presented her with, Betty is going to buy a "whatnot" ... which is "a 19th Century stand with shelves for small objects" (Oxford Dictionary!). She's looking for a nice antique one.

Unfortunately, our resident poet A. Barrad has taken this as a good occasion for writing a few lines. With grave apologies to William McGonagall, Robert Burns; and to all visiting foreigners; And, come to think of it, to all native English speakers. And to Betty, who has the wonderful Glasgow accent, not the strange mix depicted by our poet. No apologies to the 5 remaining Scots in the Lab.:

It was in the year of nineteen hundred and seventy five
(When Guid Queen Bess the Second was still alive)
That Betty Smith arrived at oor door
And proceeded to organise the Research Group sho'or.

There was mighty Chief Randell,
an' Anderson, Lee, an' Treleaven
(wad ah cuid remember anither three, tae mak' up the seven!)
An' a' of them Professors this day,
(tho' what it is they profess tae be, ah wuidna like tae say)

"Is it London next week? Hawaii? Or was it Rome?"
It's nae trouble for Betty to arrange the humble home-frae-home.
Just tell her where ye're gooin,
(And approximately when)

She'll fix up y'r accommodation
["Ah: sorry, Betty - that should have been Rennes"]

Full thirteen years did Betty do her might an'main
Och, Highly Reliable! To her it was nae strain!
She saw the wee laddies come and go, and some she saw stay.
(And at least one she saw come back again,
after he'd gone away.)

(there's mair!...)

So guid was she that, inless ah miss mah guess,
 We'll no' know hoo guid 'til she's had at least a three-week rest.
 An' then, inless her innocent replacement has taken up the mace,
 She'll be back in B32 tae bring some order tae the place.

O Betty Smith, ye're gan awa'
 Wi' a' oor guid wishes an' a', an' a'
 Oh wad some power the giftie gie'us
 Tae see what'll happen noo that Betty's nae wi'us!

[Whoops - bit familiar that 2nd last line. Back to our side of the Border.]

Parewell also to Moira West who (surprise, surprise!) is going to York University. She has been appointed to the post of Experimental Officer at the Department of Electronics, where she is to begin the work of coordinating all their Suns, Nimbus networks, Ethernets etc., into some sort of order. Moira leaves us officially on May 17th, but she has some holiday to take... All the very best, Moira: been nice knowing you!

Arrivals

Welcome back to Sheila Donohoe, who has returned to her half-time statistics advisory job with NUMAC, after maternity leave. Sheila's office is still at the other half of her job, in the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (Bridge 4th Floor, ext. 4013). We're more than pleased to see Sheila, because she brings our total of stats advisers up to one half!

Advance news

Also on the subject of statistical advisory staff: NUMAC staff were extremely pleased to be told by Harry and Elizabeth that Mary Morris's post has been unfrozen by Staff Review Committee. "Unfreezing" is almost unheard of, and it is almost certainly due to pressure from our users that this post has been "clawed back".

Dynamic Duo forms

We're happy to announce the engagement of Mike Brudenell to Susan Hicks (3H Computing Science). Mike is well known to most us, arriving as an undergraduate in 1980 (Undergraduate --> Postgraduate --> Demonstrator). Congratulations and our very best wishes, Mike and Susan! (A right pair of Dinkies*, what? Two jolly clever Computing Kids - the South-East's their oyster!).

Dynamic Duo arrives

We're looking forward to welcoming Mike Alexander and his wife Susan in May, from the University of Michigan. Mike, who is on sabbatical, was one of the original authors of MTS in 1966. However he will be using his sabbatical as a good excuse to stay well away from MTS, and will be working, at least in part,

*Double Income, No Kids

with the Intersystem people here. Mike's wife Suzan is currently MTS Distribution Librarian at UM, and she'll be spending a little time here tidying up the LAST Distribution of MTS, Distribution 6. (Incidentally, Suzan comes from Edmonton: John Aspden wasn't the only one to get struck by Cupid at the 1983 MTS Workshop!) The Alexanders will be spending a few months here at Newcastle, and then will be moving to London, where Mike has arranged to spend the rest of his sabbatical.

News from Stirling

Many will be interested to know that our friend and former colleague Val Jones, who moved to Stirling in 1983, married last November and is now Val Shaw. John Law has Val's latest address and phone number if anyone would like it. Val is retaining her maiden name for work purposes, so she is still vmj@stir.cs. Val's flourishing: she's now writing a book on formal methods, and "me too" - Peter Henderson's formal specification method and language. She has three publishers fighting for the privilege of publishing it!

Honorary Degree to be conferred

Bill Carter is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science by the University at the Congregation on May 6th. Dr. Carter has had long association with the Research side of our Laboratory; he has twice been a visiting member of staff, and has joined in lecturing courses on Reliability. He will be giving a Systems Research Group Seminar on Thursday 5th May, entitled Evaluation of Fault Tolerant Computers. The following is taken from the notice for that talk:

"Bill Carter is one of the leading international figures in the area of fault tolerant computing research. In his talk he will discuss the work he has been doing recently since his retirement from the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center as a member of a very senior "Expert Team" set up by the U.S. Air Force to advise them on fault-tolerant systems."

OTHER NEWS

Dramatic changes in the offing!

Drastic changes in the look of the Laboratory this summer! It is hoped to move most NUMAC User Services (staff and equipment) down to low levels of the Tower, swapping them with staff and facilities which are less in public demand from the rest of the University. Partly, this will be possible because of other changes such as the disappearance of our own switchboard. But chiefly we owe thanks to "senior management", and in particular Harry, for perceiving a problem, seeing an opportunity, and taking decisive action to take advantage of it.

The User Services staff are confident that the moves will do nothing but a lot of good for the Service, and what's good for the Service is good for the Laboratory! Lots more details as the year progresses. [Many thanks in advance to Terry Betteridge, for whom, as the Laboratory Resources Manager, these changes mean an unprecedented amount of work.]

The Horse's Mouth

Informal Notes for Staff
in the Computing
Laboratory

Number 35

13th June 1988

Editor: John Law (ext.255 or 8115)

Souvenir! First Xerox Edition!

What do you think of this! Pretty smart, huh? This superior rendition of "The Horse" has been created using the ViewPoint system on a Xerox workstation (note use of advertising-type vocabulary to match up-market pretensions).

As Editor, I'm extremely grateful to *Gerry Tomlinson* for pressing the case for using the Xerox system, and also for doing all the work for this edition in this format, which to my mind is extremely readable as well as being compact. I'm rather keen to get your comments on the format. As we move into the typesetting age, in computing, we are each of us more at the mercy of our own eyes when deciding what is "readable": producing *The Horse's Mouth* in this way gives us a good chance to get a consensus on what is a good format.

STAFF NEWS

Arrivals

A warm welcome to *Jacqueline Rutherford*, who joined us on 7th June as *Brian Randell's* secretary, replacing *Betty Smith*. *Jacqueline* comes from *Coventry*, where she was a P.A./Secretary in an engineering firm. Since January she and partner *John* have lived in *Hexham*, with son *Steven* (12) who is enjoying life at his new Middle School. *Jacqueline* disclaims any hobbies and interests: she is studying for an Open University degree in Mathematics (which effectively obliterates your private life and half your sleeping time as well!) Welcome, *Jacqueline*.

Departures

We have a number of departures to announce ... in order of leaving:

Gary Hudson, who was an operator with us since August 1984, left at the start of May. As *Roger* says of him, "He was a good member of the operations staff, easy going and full of fun." We're sorry to see him go: good luck, *Gary*, with your new job at Northumberland County Council in *Morpeth*.

Steve Grimes leaves us on 17th June. *Steve* joined us in October 1985 as the Reliability Project's electronics technician. He will not be going far: he's joining a new firm "Public Access Terminals", who currently have premises in *St. Thomas Street*, where he will be Production Manager (he tells me he's only the third member of staff, though!). Best of luck to you and your family in the future, *Steve*.

Finally (I hope), we are about to suffer a grave loss, on July 1st, in the person of *Mike Brudenell*. *Mike* has been offered the job of Systems Programmer in the Computing Service at the University of York (fourth defection to York in two months!). *Mike* says "This is the end of my 8th year in the Laboratory! Needless to say, I will miss the many friends I have made around the place ... I'm afraid a new person will have to be unearthed to answer all those little questions like 'How do you get a BBC micro to ...?'; you needn't bother forwarding them down to me!" Well, it wasn't just BBC queries that *Mike* helped with. The Service will miss his expertise in several areas which required the delving which we rarely have time to do, and the teaching side of the Lab. will miss him even more, as a conscientious and sympathetic Demonstrator. Good luck to you and *Susan*, *Mike*.

OTHER NEWS

The Big Move Commences

Steve Snowball and *Alan Thompson* have moved from their 9th floor rooms into The Rack. Their room numbers are D385 and D384, telephone 7790 and 7761 respectively.

Telephones

Terry Betteridge reports that the new University telephone system is on schedule, and will be in service from Monday 4th July. *Terry* has done an enormous amount of work connected with the new system, not just for the Laboratory but for the University as a whole. He has spent little time in the last couple of months doing anything other than helping with the introduction of the new system. In addition to his expertise in resource management, and in dealing with "things digital" (for which there was a distinct lack of expertise elsewhere in the University), *Terry* has also, believe it or not, produced the new University telephone directory using the TeX typesetting program on one of our Sun systems. In the great tradition of the University, he'll get no credit for all his hard work and dedication --- except this hearty pat on the back. Thank you once again *Terry*.

Terry is glad to say that the production of the telephone directory is now well out of his hands: hopefully we'll all have one by July 4th, but it isn't his concern any more! We will also receive from BT a handbook and reference card for the new handsets.

THE LAB TRIP

Chris Ritson writes:

The Computing Lab trip this year is planned for July 16th (Saturday). It is being organised by Mike Elphick and (as punishment for enquiring about it in a staff meeting) Chris Ritson.

We will be going to Keswick, where there is lots to do, such as:

- Go walking
 - ▶ The old railway line (flat)
 - ▶ Skiddaw, possibly via Ullock Pike (A good long walk)
 - ▶ Catbells, using lake steamer (Shorter but still a hill).
- Go swimming.
- Boats on the lake to hire.
- Steamer service round the lake.

I will see what I can do about arranging good weather it has always been good weather whenever I have been on the Lab Outing!

Elizabeth has talked to the owners of the Platform Cafe, at the old station. We may be able to leave a bus there, and could eat there too. The idea was not to make a party booking (as that would mean that we could only go in at a set time) but to inform them we were coming, so that they would not be short of staff.

It is not too early to let me know if you'd like to go. I hope to put together a sheet of information about the trip, once I have checked with Mike Elphick.

MISCELLANEA

More trendy acronyms

With regard to "Dinkies" last month (and I hope you realised that Mike and his fiancée Susan are actually the last people to want to be South-Eastern Yuppies!)... Thanks to Dave Mundy for passing on this acronym from Larry Hughes, who coined it when he was here last year:

STINKO - Single Taxable Income, Number of Kids One.

Also, the opposite of Yuppies ...

POOPs - Poorly Off Older People.

SMALL ADS

FOR SALE:

General Interest

1. *Commodore 64*, fully equipped with B/W tv, cassette, joystick, and at least £50-worth of games. All in excellent condition. A real bargain at £80. (Debbie Fawcett, General Office, ext.240; or 8070.)

2. *Electrolux* upright 500 Series vacuum cleaner; only 2 years old; (house clearance sale): £25. (Tim Smith, ext.263; or 8160.)

3. *Caravan Sundries*: wind rammer, towing stabikiser, etc: Contact Jill Foster (ext.293; or 8250).

4. *Sindy Toys*: many and various: contact Emma - via Jill Foster, as above.

Specialist Interest

Contact Tim Smith (ext.263 or 8160) for any of the following:

1. Electric arc *welding / brazing kit*: about £80 (half-price!).

2. *Motorola 68000 MVME 101* single board computer, plus black and white Lear Siegler terminal: £400 or nearest offer..

3. *Z80 Second processor* for BBC-B: £80 o.n.o.

John Law.

The Horse's Mouth

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory



Number 36.

6th September, 1988

Special Old-Fashioned Issue.

We return to the former style of Horse's Mouth this issue because I don't have time to learn the Xerox system! Thanks once again to Gerry Tomlinson for formatting HM35: apart from three distinctly uninhibited responses, it was very well received. Gerry and I agreed as soon as it was printed that two columns would have been better than three. Some people did not like the small print, but that's easily remedied. Certainly, the Xerox Viewpoint system seems the best way to print a news-sheet like this (we could include photos easily!), but at present our Editor (cum typist) doesn't have time to acquire the necessary expertise.

PEOPLE

Arrivals

Horse's Mouth 35 was printed in June, so we have much to catch up on. We have had several new staff start over the Summer. In order of appearance: In July we welcomed a new operator, **Matthew Wong**. Matthew was previously employed as a joiner with Newcastle City Council for three years. Matthew comes from Walkergate, and he lists his two main interests, outside the wonderful world of computing, as HiFi and Cars (expensive tastes, huh?).

On 8th August **Lynne Taylor** joined the General Office, filling the place vacated by Carole Moffat who left us in April. Lynne will work partly in the General Office, partly in the Print Room, as did Carole. Before she joined us, Lynne worked in Medical Physics (General Hospital) as a word-processing typist. She's very active, being keen on badminton, swimming and generally keeping fit - a useful qualification for her first Laboratory social event, Susan Renshaw's Hen Night. Lynne comes from Stakeford, where she lives with

Mum, Dad and the two Labradors.

On 22nd August **Julia Thomas** started work as the electronics technician attached to Nigel's Academic Computing Services group. Julia has an interesting history, the notable part for the Lab. being that she studied for the B/Tec ONC in Computing Technology at Hackney College. Before that, however, (of particular interest to all us amateur Desk Top Publishers) she worked for over six years as a typesetter, with various printing houses: she should have some educated comments to make about the documents which have started to emanate from the Laboratory in recent months! Julia is on a day-release HNC course for Computing Studies; apart from that, she's just moved (from Lambley to Blackhall Mill), so "leisure time" is not a term she is familiar with. Julia (our first female technician!) is based in room D810 (phone 7822).

David Surtees started with us on September 1st as a Programming Adviser, with special responsibilities in statistical software. David has taken up the post vacated by Mary Morris, and his colleagues in the Computing Service are extremely pleased to see him! Originating in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, David did his BSc here at Newcastle in Zoology, but he has spent the last four years at Liverpool studying for his PhD in Medical Entomology. He has just submitted his thesis, which concerns *Simulium Damnosum*, or Black Flies as they are known in West Africa, where they contribute to the spread of River Blindness. Fortunately for us, his work entailed a great deal of statistical computing using the SAS package mounted on the VM/CMS system: just what we were looking for! David's main interest is playing guitar: he used to play in a rock group in Liverpool, and he also plays classical. He is currently staying at the YWCA and is keen to find some accommodation! (For future reference in internal Laboratory documents: David's initials are DPS.)

Departures

Three people have left the Department since the last Horse's Mouth: Chris Bell, Ian Weaver and Yuguo Zhang.

Susan

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THE GREAT MIGRATION

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B=Basement; Br=Bridge; D=Daysh; T=Claremont Tower.

Stepanie Barber	to the University Library
Gail Barker	to Room B21
Elizabeth Barralough	B13 (Prof Whitfield's old room)
Chris Holt	Br332
Keith Horn	D81
Dave Kendall	803 (phone 7957)
Karen Jones	7918
Martin Lamont	19 (EDB's old room)
Chris Phillips	19
Ron Pringle	T212 (will move later to B37)
Terry Ratcliffe	T917 (will move later to BR's old room)
Dave Surtees	19 (GFBS extension) (phone 7988)
Brian Stewart	D383 (The Rack)
Julia Thomas	D810 (phone 7822)
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PhD students

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Professor Whitfield and Ann Laybourn to the "East Suite", 8th Floor;

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Teaching/Research General Office to "West Suite", 8th Floor.

MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 36

6th September 1988

Special Old-Fashioned Issue

Editor: John Law (ext. 8115)

We return to the former style of Horse's Mouth this issue because I don't have time to learn the Xerox system! Thanks once again to Gerry Tomlinson for formatting HM35: apart from three distinctly uninhibited responses, it was very well received. Gerry and I agreed as soon as it was printed that two columns would have been better than three. Some people did not like the small print, but that's easily remedied. Certainly, the Xerox Viewpoint system seems the best way to print a news-sheet like this (we could include photos easily!), but at present your Editor (cum typist) doesn't have time to acquire the necessary expertise.

PEOPLE

Arrivals

Horse's Mouth 35 was printed in June, so we have much to catch up on. We have had several new staff start over the Summer. In order of appearance:

In July we welcomed a new operator, Matthew Wong. Matthew was previously employed as a joiner with Newcastle City Council for three years. Matthew comes from Walkergate, and he lists his two main interests, outside the wonderful world of computing, as HiFi and Cars (expensive tastes, huh?).

On 8th August Lynne Taylor joined the General Office, filling the place vacated by Carole Moffat who left us in April. Lynne will work partly in the General Office, partly in the Print Room, as did Carole. Before she joined us, Lynne worked in Medical Physics (General Hospital) as a word-processing typist. She's very active, being keen on badminton, swimming and generally keeping fit - a useful qualification for her first Laboratory social event, Susan Renshaw's Hen Night. Lynne comes from Stakeford, where she lives with Mum, Dad and the two Labradors.

On 22nd August Julia Thomas started work as the electronics technician attached to Nigel's Academic Computing Services group. Julia has an interesting history, the notable part for the Lab. being that she studied for the B/Tec ONC in Computing Technology at Hackney College. Before that, however, (of particular interest to all us amateur Desk Top Publishers) she worked for over six years as a typesetter, with various printing houses: she should have some educated comments to make about the documents which have started to emanate from the Laboratory in recent months! Julia is on a day-release HNC course for Computing Studies; apart from that, she's just moved (from Lambley to Blackhall Mill), so "leisure time" is not a term she is familiar with. Julia (our first female technician!) is based in room D810 (phone 7822).

David Surtees started with us on September 1st as a Programming Adviser, with special responsibilities in statistical software. David has taken up the post vacated by Mary Morris, and his colleagues in the Computing Service are extremely pleased to see him! Originating in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, David

did his BSc here at Newcastle in Zoology, but he has spent the last four years at Liverpool studying for his PhD in Medical Entomology. He has just submitted his thesis, which concerns *Simulium Damnosum*, or Black Flies as they are known in West Africa, where they contribute to the spread of River Blindness. Fortunately for us, his work entailed a great deal of statistical computing using the SAS package mounted on the VM/CMS system: just what we were looking for! David's main interest is playing guitar: he used to play in a rock group in Liverpool, and he also plays classical. He is currently staying at the YWCA and is keen to find some accommodation! (For future reference in internal Laboratory documents: David's initials are DPS.)

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If you don't know where the East and West Suites are, go and have a look!

The Library will be moving to Room 923, except for Computing Service reference documentation. The Vax Graphics System terminals will be leaving the 3rd Floor of the Bridge for a new home in the Gallery of the Rack. The Graphics MicroVax

itself will be moving to the main Machine Room, in the Sub-Basement.

Terry says that he will be doing a new internal Laboratory telephone list in the fairly near future, which will enable us all (and him) to keep track of what's happened so far.

The Rack in operation

The Gallery of the Rack is now in operation, all of the Computing Service workstations having been moved there from Room 923. Please note the access: Access to the Rack is freely available between the hours of 0900 to 1700, Monday to Friday. At other times access is by keypad to this room; the keypad codes are the same as those for the Basement at present. Access to the Daysh building itself is only guaranteed up until about 1800, Monday to Friday; access outside those times is only possible with a key. Equipment in the Rack and Gallery should be left switched on unless explicit instructions to the contrary have been issued in particular cases.

OTHER NEWS

Travellers' Tales

Here's a cheery little air-travel story, specially for all those who sat for a couple of hours at Gatwick this summer ...

Several people from Newcastle and Durham went to the Intersystem Workshop at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in June. Some unfortunate ones arrived 24 hours late, after much shuttling over Newcastle and Glasgow. However the 1988 Airways Agony prize went to poor Clive Bowery (Durham Computer Centre), whose tale of misery is so awful it certainly bears repeating ... "I understand that, apart from a minor problem with baggage, most people's return flight from the U.S. went without difficulty. Being made of sterner stuff, the airlines must have decided to make me suffer more on the way back than we did going.

The NorthWest flight to Toronto departed only five minutes late and proved to be uneventful - I even got a can of Coke and packet of peanuts out of them (which I very nearly kept as a souvenir remembering our previous efforts with NW). I then had something like a 3 hour wait at Toronto. I toyed with the idea of a ride downtown but, remembering my luck with transport of the previous days, thought it best to stay put. The flight to Amsterdam was eventually called, and we departed only 30 mins late at 6:30pm.

Forty five minutes into the flight, just as I was nodding off, the captain announced "Ladies and Gentlemen, we are about to commence our descent..." ('Funny', I thought, 'this is supposed to be a direct flight') "... into Toronto. Some of you may have seen vapour escaping from the rear of the plane, this is a purely precautionary action in order to dump fuel and make the plane lighter. (!!!!) There is no cause for alarm - just sit and relax ready for the landing at Toronto in a few minutes."

Well - I woke up pretty quick; thoughts raced through my head from "I don't believe it" to "Oh well another night in Toronto" to "I am destined to become a perpetual traveller for the rest of my life".

Back to Toronto and chaos: 300+ people all trying to get individual attention from six airline officials. They eventually announced that the reason for turning back was that one of the engines had failed and that they had hired another aircraft which would leave for Amsterdam at 11:00 pm. By this time I was past caring and just sat back and watched all the fun and games as many other passengers tried to sort out delayed connecting flights etc. - and with the heat, tiredness etc. things got a little nasty in one or two cases. I took the attitude, "Well I've seen all this before (two weeks ago to be exact), let's just wait and something will turn up." Then - guess what - we all got a meal voucher (just like old times).

After a meal, back to the check-in, through customs again (familiar ain't it) and into the departure lounge at 10:00pm.

The replacement plane was an old DC8, which compared to a DC10 would be like a sardine can - and so it proved. By 11:00pm we started to board, and then just sat, and sat; and sat. We eventually took off at 1:00am Tuesday (some 11 hours after I left Detroit). It was just one story after another: first they were waiting for food; then a net which kept the baggage in place broke and they had to get another. The plane was hot, stuffy, kids were crying, one woman had to go to the door because she felt faint, and altogether it wasn't very pleasant.

Well we eventually did take off and the 7 hour flight to Amsterdam went reasonably OK, considering everything. I was too tired, hot and bothered to care very much and fortunately managed to sleep through most of it.

We finally arrived in Amsterdam at 1:30pm (local time). By then of course I had missed my connection to Newcastle. After more waiting at the transfer desk (along with many other people in similar situations) I got on a flight leaving 5:45pm. An irony of the flight from Toronto was that we actually passed OVER Newcastle on the way to Amsterdam (I was looking for a parachute by this time). The 5:45 flight, I then learned, went on a circle: Amsterdam - Glasgow (flying over Newcastle AGAIN) then finally Glasgow - Newcastle.

After a trip into Amsterdam on the train (??!!!), I checked onto the 5:45 plane. Then the captain came on: "There is a problem with the A/C unit ... doing our best to solve it ... sorry for the delay". I will not tell you what I thought at this point. So after a minor (1.5 hour) delay we finally took off around 7:00pm (local time), that is 17 hours after I left Detroit. Up to Glasgow (again), back down to Newcastle (at last), picked up my case, got a taxi and eventually arrived back home around 8:30pm local time.

If I am correct with all the time changes, it took 20hrs to get back. Who said flying was fun? The only thing that didn't happen was the baggage getting lost.

Yours 'in the air', Clive Bowery

Nice work Clive. And No, I don't want to come with you to Majorca next year!

SMALL ADS

For sale

Berry Magicoal gas fire; c. 10(?) years old; electric log effect; measures 31" x 22" x 12". Offers about £30 pounds: John Law (ext 8115).

Saved from Scrap

I have 17 tailored plastic covers which I rescued from a pile of rubbish resulting from The Moves. They were tailor-made for Westrex Teletypes, but they are good dust covers for anything that's vaguely that shape such as a micro. If you know of Laboratory equipment which is used occasionally and could do with a dust cover, let me know; if you want one for your micro at home, I will let you have one if the Laboratory demands are not too great.

John Law (8115)

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

OTHER MATTERS

Request for help

From your Editor:

I would like to request input for "The Horse". Most people say they enjoy receiving it, but I do think that it gets a bit too trivial at times. This is purely because I don't get the input I need from you: I can only report what's happening if I'm told. Therefore please would you send me copies of correspondence and internal memos which relate interesting developments in the laboratory. I'm sure you can guess how much easier the job is if the material gets in electronic form. On the other hand, a paper copy to be re-typed is infinitely better than a verbal "tip-off" which I have to follow up personally; as you can see, I simply don't have time to do the "ace-reporter" act.

Also: don't forget our Small Ads section: you have a guaranteed circulation of 140+ "well-off" people! I get a bit embarrassed (very occasionally) at being the only person advertising. I know the appearance of the Horse has grown sporadic in the last year or so, but there's nothing to lose by dropping your "small ad" in my mail rack. Speaking of which

SMALL ADS

For sale

Little bicycle for child aged about 4 upwards. Called a Puffin, from Halfords, it needs a new back tyre, but otherwise it's in very reasonable condition; it has stabilisers. I'd like £5.00 for it: John Law (ext 8115).

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 37

13th October 1988

Quick two-sider

Editor: John Law (ext. 8115)

MOVES

Office News

You must have been in the Himalayas or somewhere if you don't know that Joan Armstrong and Debbie Fawcett moved from the General Office on Tuesday October 11th. They are currently housed in the Mill, Room 616, where they are very handy for Computing Science students. They will be moving to their new permanent accommodation in the "West Suite" of the 8th Floor later this term. Phone numbers, of course, remain the same.

The move leaves the "old" General Office free to take up its new nomenclature of Computing Services Office. Ann and Joyce have moved into the main office area, which clears the way for other moves and another phase of building work. Once the students get used to going up the Tower in pursuit of their needs, the new role of both offices should mean a great increase in efficiency, and consequently in satisfaction for staff and customers alike.

Please note that the separation of Office functions is by no means complete: arrangements for photocopying, mail, etc. will remain unchanged until the new General Office (Teaching) is properly established on the 8th Floor later this term: we will then publish a nice tidy list of who does what, and where.

Naming of Parts

It has been suggested that we need a name for the group of offices 615 to 620 inclusive, situated just inside the entrance to The Mill, in the same way that "The Mill" and "The Rack" needed names. Essential characteristics of any such name are that it be (a) very short, and easy to say, (b) unique for our purposes, (c) easily recognised and used (we all know how to spell "The Rack" or "The Mill" for example).

Other desirable but not essential characteristics could include that we continue to pinch words from the design of Babbage's analytical engine, or that it include "Mill" somehow. It doesn't have to be associated with Babbage:

This name would stay where it is, just inside the Mill, even after the Computing Science General Office (that's Joan and Debbie at the moment) moves to the 8th Floor.

Suggestions and comments welcome: to HIS or to Terry Betteridge.

New postgraduates

We welcome this term the following new PhD students: Miriam Capretz (who is married to Fernando, another of our PhD students); Darren Hodge; and Adrian Waterworth (former undergrad with us). Also Shangjie Jin, who will be with us for one year studying at the PhD level. Najl Khalil joined us a little while ago as a new M.Phil. student.

The whereabouts of all these people can be found in ...

Another telephone list

Terry Betteridge has produced yet another telephone list, which reflects all new room allocations and phone numbers up to October 12th. As it is not vastly different from that dated September 20th (except for the changes described above), it is pink, like the last one.

You may have noticed that the telephone outside Room 200B (2nd Floor Claremont Tower), was stolen some weeks ago. It is extremely likely that this will not be replaced, unless Terry can think of some way of providing a phone there which does not present an open invitation to thieves. He'll be glad to hear of any suggestions that are better than those he's thought of himself, and rejected.

LITTLE PEOPLE

Late announcements

Matthew Simon Aspden, born 13:25, Wednesday 20th July, 71b 3oz. Mum, boy (and father) all well. (Sorry for the late announcement, daddy Aspden!)

Neil Harris, born Thursday September 15th, 71b 12oz, to our [operator] Deborah and her husband Rob.

SAFETY

Three points from the Safety Officers

Dr. Ian Scoins and Quentin Campbell are our Departmental Safety Officers. The start of a new year is a good time to remind everybody of some standard safety measures. Dr. Scoins has asked me to write something concerning three in particular:

1. Laser printers We have many of these around the Department now. It is easy to forget that they work by heating up the paper that they print on. If ever there is a smell of excessive heat, or of burning, you should stop the printer immediately, turn it off, and call an engineer (or ask the advice of a Safety Officer).

This is especially important with printers (such as those attached to the Xerox system) which are situated remote from the workstation, and which may be left unattended for long periods.

2. Power points There are also many "four-way blocks" in the Department. These are the multiple sockets which are plugged into a single socket, allowing four pieces of equipment to be plugged in. You must not plug in "domestic equipment" (such as a kettle, or a fire) into a four-way block. They are not designed to take the load imposed by such equipment.

Further, it is inadvisable to plug in an electric fire to the ordinary socket in your room without first consulting a Safety Officer. The reasons are

- a. Your own wiring of a plug may not be as good as that of University electricians.
- b. You have no way of knowing whether or not you will be overloading the circuit to which your socket is attached.

If you are in any doubt as to the safety of plugging in "non-laboratory equipment" you must consult a Safety Officer. Don't forget that you're only here 8 hours a day [or more] [or less]: if you leave your own equipment plugged in overnight or over the weekend you may be causing a fire risk.

3. Broken Glass (or cups etc.) If you break your coffee mug, or have any other "sharp" waste, please take it directly to the special metal dustbin which is kept in the "binery" at the back of the Ground Floor. Please remember that it is not the fairies who empty your waste bin! It's a human being just like you and me: cleaners can suffer horrible cuts from sharp waste left in ordinary wastebins.

Thanks for your cooperation!

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

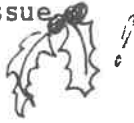
Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 38

3rd December 1988

Festive Issue

Editor: John Law (ext. 8115)



PEOPLE

Arrivals

A warm welcome to David Hunter, who joined us as a Research Associate on 1st November. Dave is employed on a 3-year contract in Santosh and Neil's SERC Project into Triple Modular Redundancy (TMR). Before coming here Dave was at BT's Applied Technology division for a year; before that at MARI for 2 years; and before that he was studying for his BSc in Computing at Sheffield Polytechnic. Dave lives at Hadrian Park, Wallsend, and he and his wife Joy have one little boy, Michael. Dave's hobbies are playing guitar and running; he's also another Big Bike fan: he has a Honda 650.

Welcome too to Gillian Lindsay who joined us on 7th November to fill the vacancy created by Susan's leaving. Among other things, Gillian is secretary to Santosh Shrivastava and looks after postgraduate admissions. She worked in Chemical Engineering's General Office for some time before joining us. Her many hobbies include dressmaking, knitting, keep-fit, swimming, her cat Wizz and two Chinese dwarf hamsters (nosey, aren't I?). If the Limpid Pools and the anglicised Scottish accent remind you of someone, you're right - Gillian is Ann Pretswell's sister.

Finally, December 1st saw the arrival of Trevor Kirby as a Computer Officer in Nigel Hall's Computer Service (Teaching) Group. Trevor was formerly Senior Programmer with UCS of Mountjoy, Durham; before that he was with BT's Applied Technology division, before that he was with MARI; and before that he studied to gain his BSc (Computing) at Teeside Poly. [Sound familiar? - yes, he and Dave Hunter have been bumping into each other for years.] Trevor and his wife Connie have two boys - Mark (6) and Martin (6 months) - and they live in Wallsend. Trevor's main hobbies are war-gaming, model-making, badminton, cycling; and he loves swimming.

Departures

"I've looked at life from both sides now ..." Congratulations and best wishes to Nick Rossiter who has been appointed as Lecturer in Computing Science from 1st January 1989. Nick fills the gap in database expertise which had been created by Peter Hitchcock's leaving in April. Nick has been the Computing Service's database systems expert since he joined NUMAC in 1975; he first joined the Laboratory in 1972 as an R.A. with the Medusa project. Nick's departure leaves NUMAC with no database expertise at Newcastle (Dave Thornton is at Durham), which is going to be trouble for our many database users - and for Nick when he tries to tell them that, though he's still here, he's no longer in the Computing Service! Best wishes in your new career, Nick.

Kevin Renney, Jeff Craig's A/C plant assistant, left us on November 30th for pastures new: he's got a new job as a production engineer with Brother in that pleasant part of the country near Wrexham.

Doctored

Congratulations to Graeme Dixon ("Object management for persistence and recoverability") who was awarded his PhD on October 14th; and to Graham Parrington ("Management of concurrency in a reliable object-oriented computing system"), who was awarded his degree on November 21st.

Hypothetical News

IF Chris Phillips receives the official letter he is waiting for from Registrar's THEN the following would be TRUE:

"On January 1st Chris Phillips will be taking up a 12-month appointment as Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Mathematical Software Research at Liverpool University's Department of Statistics and Computational Mathematics. The post is funded by the Esprit II scheme, and Chris will be working on developing mathematical libraries on a range of distributed equipment, mostly transputer-based."

Best wishes for your year away from us, Chris!

Wonderful, Wonderful, Wonderful

Welcome to Elizabeth, Claire and Rachel, in case you hadn't heard, who were all born to Laura Stroud (wife to Robert) on Sunday 23rd October; weights (in random order): 3lb 8oz; 4lb 4oz; 5lbs. All doing very well, when last I heard, with Laura becoming an expert juggler.

OTHER NEWS

Paternoster lift etc.

We have it on the best authority that the Paternoster Lift will never work again. It had been hoped to put it back into service as a temporary measure until another lift, outside the building, had been built. However Otis Lifts told the University that one of the chains needs replacement; the cost of doing this is too high, so the plan has been abandoned.

A consulting engineer is now studying traffic flow in Claremont Tower, Bridge and Daysh, with a view to recommending installation of one (or more) new lifts. When the recommendations are costed, they will be balanced against the cost of changing the use of floors in the Claremont complex.

Meanwhile, from Monday 12th December, the main lift will be made express, stopping at Floors G, 3, 6, 8 and 10 only. Call buttons on the other floors will be disconnected, and the buttons for those floors inside the lift will normally be inoperable. The porters will have lift keys.

The Moves; new phonest, etc.

Terry Betteridge has produced a new phone list to reflect new people, new rooms, and new phones since October 12th; it is dated 1st December and is cream in colour. The online version is in INFO:PHONES on NCL.MTS.

In no particular order, the changes made since the last one are: Harry Whitfield and Ann Laybourn now moved to Supreme Command Headquarters, East Suite, 8th Floor. Jim Eve now in 913; David Hunter arrived in 347, sharing with Neil Speirs on 8166; Geppino Pucci moved to 352 on 7856, sharing with Giuseppe Pappalardo; Gillian Lindsay arrived in 618 temporarily, no phone but reachable via 8072; Trevor Kirby arrived in 331 temporarily on 7594; Dong Ho Song in 335 on 8229 (PhD student); Andrew Thomas also in 335, moved from 361; three way swap with Stuart Wheater and Darren Hodge; Adrian Waterworth and Mark Little have swapped rooms and phones; Judith Hunter now in B12; Karen Jones moved to 815 from 918.

Nice work Terry! (A record of the main room-exchange exercise is kept in Terry's file CL30:MOVEPLAN on NCL.MTS.)

Help for the hard-pressed

Terry Betteridge is so busy, thanks to the continuous activity with telephones and with The Move, that he has been allocated some personal clerical help. Lynne Taylor will be assisting Terry in future: if you can't get hold of Terry, contact Lynne. Lynne will have her own telephone extension: 7929 (there's a change for your brand new telephone list!). [However, please note that Lynne works in the Office mornings only, being in the Print Room afternoons.]

FESTIVE SECTION

Christmas Party

The Lab. Party is to be held in the Common Room this year at 3.00pm on Thursday 22nd December. Cost will be £2.50 per head, which will cover a light buffet and wine etc. Many thanks, once again, to the girls in the General Office for organising this. You can pay either in the Basement Office or in the Teaching Office in the Mill.

I have been asked to point out that the adverse imbalance between food and drink last year, it is hoped, is being remedied this year. I have also been asked to point out that anyone not paying, but still attending, will be roughed up... [Yoo Hoo! I'm not going to payyy!!]

Small ads

For sale

One bike: Sunbeam Flyer, suit child 6-10 years old. £10 (Jill Foster, 8250)

Old Hygena kitchen units: suitable for garage or utility room. Any reasonable offer. (Jill Foster, 8250)

International Glossary of Scientific Research

For several years this amusing little cutting hung by a single drawing pin on a noticeboard on Daysh 8; when it finally fell off, it landed on your Editor's desk. I don't know whom to thank, or where it was originally published (New Scientist?), or where the author is now. He (the author) is Geoffrey Moore, and when he wrote the article he was a lecturer in Marine Biology, University Marine Biological Station, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, Scotland.

1. Persona

A graduate: someone who has worked under pressure once.

A PhD graduate: someone who has supplied his/her own pressure of work once.

An FRS: the qualification which refreshes those scientist which mere degrees cannot reach.

A research student: someone who cuts out job advertisements from "New Scientist".

A Chinese student: one who works 25 hours a day, 7 days a week, year after year.

A whiz kid: a pain in the neck.

A scientist: someone who reads "New Scientist", backwards.

A visiting scientist: someone who sits anywhere in the tea room.

A sleeping partner: a married person who listens to scientific diatribe while asleep.

A researcher: someone looking for technical help after 5.00pm.

A research assistant: someone who gets occasional assistance from his/her mentor, usually just before annual report time.

A supervisor: someone handed on from one research student to another to train in modern techniques.

A research director: someone struggling to keep abreast of the team working under him/her.

A research team: a group of individuals who cannot stand one another; working on a project of national or global importance.

A collaborative project: one in which individuals participate voluntarily, cooperate freely, rotate authorship seniority and disagree amicably; working on projects of no foreseeable use to anyone.

A chair: technical support.

A head of department: a committed scientist.

A rotating headship of department, a means of continually apportioning blame elsewhere.

2. Phenomena

An idea: what you have.

An original idea: what your supervisor has.

A fundamental contribution to science, that same passing thought in a grant proposal.

A research proposal: a means of letting members of grant-awarding bodies know what to apply for themselves next year.

A project outline: something which looks trendy when glanced through, but which leaves ample scope for a completely different, but interesting, investigation to materialise once the grant is awarded.

An accepted project proposal: one which sounds marvellous in outline but which is totally impracticable, given the limitations on facilities at the laboratory to which it is awarded.

A successful project: one which has already been done by the applicant before obtaining the grant, enabling publication of results within the lifetime of

the grant and the perusal of other topics necessary to establish the basis for next year's application.

A conference: an assembly of self-acknowledged experts gathered together to disappoint final-year postgraduates.

A pre-conference abstract: statement of results expected before the work has been started.

A conference presentation: something given by a scientist who is red-green colour blind.

A conference chairman: a part-timed appointment.

A conference lizard: someone who looks furtively for someone more important to talk to, while talking to you.

A significant result: one which backs up a preconceived idea.

Early retirement schemes: a chance for mature scientists who experienced first-hand the "never-had-it-so-good" 1950s and 1960s to re-enact the experience for their younger colleagues.

3. Publications

- Writing up: writing down.

A typist: someone who turns a mess into an MS.

An editor: someone who does the reverse.

Et al: a Middle-Eastern co-worker, willing to work like a Trojan on diverse projects without the prospect of senior authorship.

A senior author: someone above heeding "Instructions to ..." in journals.

A referee: someone who insists that you include his/her papers in your reference list.

A single-author paper: one where the person who has actually done the work puts his/her name first.

An internationally reputable journal, one which publishes your work.

A dubious journal: one which publishes your competitor's work.

A journal: an organisation designed to stockpile unpublished papers in case of a mass death of scientists sometime in the next two years.

A free choice of journals (British), an arbitrary exclusion from consideration of journals requiring abstracts in foreign languages; or, of journals with page charges; or, of journals not giving maximum number of free reprints.

Ibidem: a journal mysteriously missing from the "World List", possibly withdrawn from circulation after publishing the article which you want to read.

Reprints: immortality that is held together with merely one staple.

A mailing list: something which consumes an author's stock of reprints before he/she gets around to sending you one.

An introduction: an a-posteriori justification for assembling into a paper any hap-hazard collection of facts.

Acknowledgments: a means of pre-empting the editorial choice of potential referees by those who have already been cajoled into giving their unidentified positive or negative comments on the MS, usually in five minutes over coffee.

A bibliography: a list of the author's previous papers, etc., etc.

An important new publication (ed. Buggins): all the papers presented at the conference organised by Buggins last year, bound together in one huge, uncoordinated mass.

A major new work by Buggins: a re-hash of all the best ideas presented

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 39

14th February 1989

Spring Issue

Editor: John Law (ext. 8115)

You'll find the bias in this issue shows a shift towards real news! I sent a message to all Computing Lab staff asking for input. This has been made easy by our developing mail system - it has been possible for a long time to send messages to most Lab staff, but never before has it been so easy to reach so many people. Thanks to all the people who labour in the mail area. In particular, to Andy Linton for his continuing hard work with "sendmail" on the Cheviot computer, which is our mail "hub". Quote from the man in question: "It's a bowl of spaghetti in there. It's not so much a question of 'why doesn't this work' as 'why does any of it work?'"

PEOPLE

Arrivals

Welcome to Ron Chennells, who arrived on January 3rd to start a 2-year contract with Jill Foster's Networked Information Services Project (supported by the JNT). Ron was formerly a network support programmer at Dundee University Computing Service. He received his BA in Geography at Middlesex Polytechnic, then went on to get an MSc in Economics at Birkbeck, University of London, and then studied for the MSc in Computing at University College, London - a broad education! Among his interests are going to The Match (he's originally a local lad), a bit of squash, and swimming. As Ron is about 6'4" there's going to be an irresistible tendency to call him "Big Ron", to distinguish him from our other two Rons.

And on February 1st Dr Graham Megson started as a lecturer in Computing Science. Until he joined us, Graham was the Joint Atlas Research Fellow at Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Oriel College Oxford. Before that he studied for his PhD at Loughborough, before that BSc (Comp Sci) at Leeds; he comes originally from Wakefield. Graham's research interests lie in parallel algorithms and systolic arrays, and his PhD thesis (2vol, 900pp!) was entitled "Novel algorithms for the Soft Systolic Paradigm" (see below for an even better title for a PhD). At Rutherford Graham was a member of the SERC/DTI Transputer Initiative, and indeed he organised the first workshop on the subject in December 1987. He's therefore keen to meet fellow transputer enthusiasts here at Newcastle. Graham's leisure activities used to include rugby, judo, and squash, but those ole' systolic arrays have gradually taken over his life. Graham and his wife Helena are currently house-hunting in Gosforth.

Finally, welcome to another PhD student from Brazil, Rogério de Lemos, who has just joined us.

Welcome!

Congratulations to Iain Stewart and his wife Sheila on the birth of their first child, Joe. Joe was a healthy little 5lbs 14oz at birth, so Daddy's got him booked in to come weight-training in a month or so!

Doctored

Congratulations to Dave Surtees (Stats adviser in the Computing Service), who was awarded his PhD in November. Just in case you've forgotten already, his thesis (which we announced when he arrived last September) was entitled "Multivariate Morphometrics and Cytotaxonomy of the West African Simulium damnosum complex (Diptera: Simuliidae)".

Congratulations also to Simon Wiseman, the Invisible PhD Student, who has also been awarded his doctorate. Simon actually works at RSRE, Malvern. Brian Randell believes he set a precedent, when Simon started his PhD, by persuading the University that a full-time PhD student could successfully pursue his research even though he is not at this institution.

Arrividerci!

Luigi Mancini and Guiseppe Pappalardo will shortly be leaving us and returning to the land of pasta and chianti. Luigi, who is about to complete his PhD here, will be taking up a lectureship in Computing Science at the University of Pisa. Luigi joined us in May 1985 - we'll miss his happy smile after he leaves us on February 22nd. Giuseppe, who joined us in March 1986, will be leaving in March, but probably only for six months: he hopes to return in September for a 6-month extension to his research programme, having written most of his PhD thesis in the intervening period!

World Famous People Department

Professors Anderson and Lee were asked to give a course in the US at the end of January. Applied Computing Devices have AT & T as one of their customers; they analyse the telephone networks with a view to identifying slack time and selling it cheap. ACD were worried about the reliability of their systems, so called in the World Experts on Fault Tolerant System Design. Tom and Pete duly flew to Terre Haute, Indiana, and gave a week's course to ACD staff. (For fear of being ill over the phone, I refrained from asking Tom how they flew, and where they stayed, etc.)

Success with ESPRIT

Congratulations to Professor Brian Randell and colleagues, who have been awarded funds from ESPRIT to finance a project entitled "Predictably Dependable Computing Systems". Theirs is one of 60 successful applications out of a total of 300, and it is the fifth biggest in terms of funds allocated.

Known informally as the "Randell-Laprie" project (Laprie being Brian's chief collaborator at LAAS, Toulouse), a total of eight institutions are involved, the

principal contractor being Newcastle. 1.6 million ECUs* have been awarded, 530,000 to Newcastle. The grant will fund, for two and a half years, four people, plus workstations, plus travel. Brian hopes the project will start on 1st May.

The ultimate aim of the project is to develop a support environment for making the process of designing and constructing dependable systems much more predictable and cost-effective than it is at present. People who will be involved are John Dobson, Tom Anderson, Isi Mitrani, and also Santosh Shrivastava, Neil Speirs and Lindsay Marshall. Brian is particularly pleased with this success, for he has worked out that it took two man years of effort to prepare and submit the application: work that was well invested.

Pete's prestigious project

Professor Pete Lee has launched a project sponsored by the DTI for 3 years to establish a Centre for Multiprocessors. The aim is to promote awareness of shared memory multiprocessor architectures for British industry, and to provide experimental facilities for industry to use. To support the project, a second Encore Multimax computer was delivered on Tuesday the 7th. This machine has 6 NS32532 CPUs, each at 7MIPS, i.e. 42 MIPS total, and 48MB memory. (See also "Turing upgraded" below.)

More prestige via Reliability Randell

Congratulations (again!) to Professor Randell, who has become a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of OSF (the Open Software Foundation) the industrial consortium involving DEC, HP, IBM, et al, which is producing a rival UNIX to that of AT&T. This, Brian says, happened after he learned of their interest in funding our participation in a Europe-wide research project on distributed computing!

OTHER NEWS

East Suite, 8th Floor

Make an excuse to go see Harry soon: turn up early and enjoy waiting in the luxurious surroundings of the new East Suite (bar not yet installed). Seriously: it's very nice - and those plants have to be seen to be believed!

Railway revival: Platelayers and Programmers wanted

From Brian Randell: "We are hoping to resuscitate the model railway, for use in a research project on fault-tolerant computing and for student projects - volunteers to help will be welcome!" [The model railway is a splendid, if undecorated, layout which was built some years ago for student projects in computer controlled systems. It had to be dismantled a couple of years ago for lack of space.]

*1 European Currency Unit = c.66 pence.

Open days

From the New Scientist - and our own Common Room noticeboard: there is a little article on what prospective undergraduates should look for on Open Days. It's an amusing and interesting read; it was written by Andrew Lloyd, who is in the Genetics Dept at Newcastle.

SHOP TALK

Turing upgraded

Pete Lee tells me that the existing Multimax ("Turing") has been upgraded to 8 x NS32332 CPUs (approximately 2 MIPS each, compared with 8 x .75 MIPS which was the previous configuration), and to 48MB memory (from 16), and that 600 MB disk storage has been added to the system.

Jams on Cheviot stick up the Mail

Andy Linton sent me this, adding that it might help explain some of the delays people have mentioned recently ...

"The following table summarises the mail traffic through cheviot, the "mail hub", for the month of January.

Statistics from Sun Jan 1 02:30:23 1989

Mailer	msgsfr	bytesfrom	msgsto	bytesto
local	4632	17570K	1921	4452K
binmail	0	OK	2	4K
prog	0	OK	1867	7471K
ether	2537	11525K	14227	23968K
xerox	393	536K	522	1229K
uucp	494	1115K	2176	7445K
janet	12268	73316K	12691	26067K
jgate	4382	22051K	1307	5423K
news	0	OK	63	325K

Total messages processed = 59482

Total bytes processed = 202497K

The mailer channels perform the following tasks:

"local", "binmail" and "prog" are local channels, used to deliver mail to users and programs on cheviot.

"ether" is used to deliver mail to hosts on the Ethernet that support the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP). All our Unix hosts, ncl.boole and ncl.graphics support this option.

"xerox" is used to deliver mail to the Xerox mail hub via the Ethernet. This in turn delivers within the Xerox system.

"uucp" is used to deliver mail to three hosts at Southampton who only have a Janet pad connection. This usage will disappear at the end of February.

"janet" is used for mail directly to and from other JANET hosts.

"jgate" is used for mail going out of the UK via one of the four gateway machines - ukc, ucl.cs.nss, earn-relay and ean-relay.

"news" is a channel which allows users to submit articles to the usenet news

system by means of their chosen mail interface.

The last four channels cause traffic to pass through the infamous York Box. Last month this totalled 135742 Kbytes. Add to this approximately 80,000 Kbytes of news into the system and the same out back out to feed dur.easby, and we reach a total of ~300,000 Kbytes last month. The York Box has a 4800 baud connection to Janet, giving a data rate per month (based on 30 days) of ~1,244,000 Kbytes. Some sources estimate that a more realistic figure is an effective rate of 1200 baud due to unreliability, protocol overhead etc. This means a maximum data rate per month of 311,000 Kbytes.

Our network traffic is not likely to decrease in the near future: readers can draw their own conclusions!"

SMALL ADS

For Sale

Two 4'x18"x18" all glass fish tanks for sale. Buyer collects. No decent offer refused, as they're taking up space in the garage, but ... "All proceeds to my son's piggy bank." ... Trevor Kirby (ext.7594).

Kitchen units (incl worktops and sink) £100 ono: Ann Pretswell (ext.8049).

Also: Gas cooker £45 ono: Ann Pretswell (ext.8049).

Child's safety seat: Kangol "DreamSeat", complete with playtray: £20 o.n.o.: John Law (ext.8115).

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 40

6th June 1989

Special Sports Issue

Editor: John Law (ext. 8115)

My apologies for the absence of "The Horse" since the last issue, which was No.39, in February. As middle age draws on (No.40 this time - gosh it comes round quick, don't it?) things are looking bleak for the future of this venerable publication. However please don't let the tardiness of publication deter your contributions.

PEOPLE

Departures

On Monday 10th April we bade farewell to Mildred Ashworth, who had been Data Preparation Supervisor since the formation of the service in 1967. Mildred and her staff have always been tucked away out of the sight of most Laboratory staff (in the Mezzanine Floor for many years, and at present in the Ground Floor Extension). However for hundreds of users of the Computing Service, Mildred and her staff form one of the most important parts of the Laboratory.

The Data Preparation Service has a reputation for exceptional reliability, speed and accuracy. This is due to Mildred's unswerving devotion to running an efficient service. Entering the Data Prep room, one is always impressed with the relentless pace of the work and the mountains of jobs piled up for processing. Yet almost exactly the same team of ladies have been together, under Mildred, for 20 years and more. These things - mountains of work to be done, the same team of staff, and the continuity of 20 years - are in themselves testimony to the job Mildred has done for us.

Mildred's husband has retired at the same time as she, and so they are embarking now on a life of leisure together - happy days! We wish them the very best for a long and happy retirement.

Good luck, Carol

A small post-script to the above. Mildred's job has (naturally) been frozen. Until the post can be re-advertised, Mrs Carol Hellier, who has been with the Data Prep team since 1985, has volunteered to take on the distinctly unenviable post of "temporary Data Preparation Supervisor". Best wishes, Carol.

Arrivals

We are delighted and honoured to have with us since March Visiting Professor William (Bill) Carter; he will be with us until about the end of October. Professor Carter was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by this University last May, in recognition of his great contributions in the field of fault-tolerant computing research.

John Law.

Professor Carter left IBM Yorktown Research Labs in March 1986, after 29 years with that company (which takes you back to 1957, if you're computing dates). He was one of the first people ever to use the historical ENIAC computer, around the end of the War. His team had to take second place behind the military people, who had precedence in those days. It was as a result of this sharing the ENIAC that Professor Carter invented the Checkpoint-Restore mechanism - an ingenious solution to the problem of having to interrupt vast computations [that these days flash by as part of your average minute's work on a Sun]. Leaving academic research, he was one of the 34 founder members of the Honeywell computer company. Subsequently he joined IBM and worked on the design of the 360 Series - the machine that "made" IBM. He now works as a consultant from his home in Maine.

Professor Carter has had long associations with our own Department, and it is a pleasure to have him resident with us through this summer. We wish him and his wife Ginny a very enjoyable stay in England.

New staff

Welcome to Dave Scott, who joined us on 2nd May as our new Air Conditioning technician. He's come from Fraser-McNaughton (Chemical Recovery) in Sunderland, having been laid off from there. When Jeff Craig has shown him the A/C ropes it is hoped that Dave will also be able to assist in the micro maintenance field. Dave describes himself as ex-married, and has many hobbies. His primary interest has been studying for his OU degree in Physics and Chemistry, which he will receive this October. He is greatly interested in electronics as well as physics, and in addition has a yen for the sea, being drawn to sailing and to boats in general; he also hopes to start sub-aqua swimming 'very soon' (apparently the University has a good sub-aqua club). Dave lives in Sunderland, but in true Geordie style he is at great pains to point out that he comes from South Shields!

More Departures

Bill Stewart, micros technician, left us at the end of April to join the Regional Health Authority, doing similar work for more money (is it possible?!).

Graeme Dixon is leaving us in the middle of June to take up an appointment in Boston USA, with Kodak Research Labs: best wishes, Graeme, for what must be exciting prospects for you.

And, Big News, in case I don't get chance to put out another 'Horse' before then, Andy Linton will be leaving us in mid-August. Andy, Sheila, Nancy (9) and Sean (6) are emigrating to New Zealand. Andy has secured a post in the Computing Department of the University of Victoria, Wellington. Andy's departure will leave a big hole in the Computing Laboratory, and not just because he's our electronic Postmaster as well as one of our Unix wizards. He'll be sadly missed. However - as the world shrinks - it will be nice to have a contact in NZ, won't it?

Other staff news

Ben Moszkowski has been appointed a Visiting Lecturer until his departure back to his native USA in September 1990. Ben was formerly at Cambridge and while there published his book "Executing temporal logic programs" (C.U.P., £13.95) [thank you Ben, that'll do nicely]. He is working with Martin McLauchlan and Chris Holt. Ben is actually here to study at the Gateshead Talmudical College, but he is anxious to maintain all possible contact with Computing Science, hence his role here in the Department.

Jim Wight has been appointed to a Computer Officer post, thus bringing Nigel's team of Computing Officers (Teaching) up to full strength.

Don't go jogging with Jim

Jim Wight was in Andy's office when I was talking to him about New Zealand. It emerged that Jim's been to NZ: he ran the marathon for Scotland in the Commonwealth Games there! He hastened to tell me, before I could ask to see his medal, that he is one of those most unfortunate athletes who get all the way "there" and then come away with nothing - he had to drop out of the race with a couple of miles to go. However, using my No.3 crowbar I prised out of him the following information ..

As a member of Edinburgh AC, he represented Scotland in several international events. In 1974 he was a member of a World Record-breaking 24-hour 10-man 1-mile relay team -- Jim calculates that "we must have covered around 300 miles. I think the fastest of us averaged about 4:42 per mile and the rest were under 5 mins; we each did about 30 miles."

Jim won the 1972 New Year's Morpeth-Newcastle Road Race in a time of 65:47, a time only bettered thrice subsequently, each time by Mike McLeod, before the course was lengthened in 1984. 1972 marked the end of the famous Jim Alder's reign - he never featured again.

"The most I have done at a stretch is 36 miles, in the Two Bridges race (imagine being faced with another 10 miles after completing a marathon in around 2:25.)". Finally, Jim's best marathon time is "somewhere between 2:15 and 2:16".

Jim says he doesn't run any more now ... but No, Jim, I think I'll still decline any invitation to go for a jog!

Doctored

It was Brian who coined the usage, so it's most appropriate that we can report that

Professor Brian Randell was "doctored" in March, having been awarded an Honorary Doctor of Science by the University of London for his services to Computing Science. Featuring in the citation were references to Reliable Computing Systems and to the History of Computing. Congratulations!

Future Postmaster

Reference has been made to Andy's leaving in August. Arrangements have already been made for a new Postmaster: Chris Ritson will take over the job. This is merely for internal information: all queries should as normal be sent to "Postmaster" where appropriate, but it is useful to know with whom such queries end up.

[For those who don't know what I'm talking about: almost every electronic mail site in the world has a "Postmaster", who supervises the local e-mail system. It is a very onerous and responsible job which (like most service jobs) goes completely unnoticed when it's done well!]

New Mail Hub

Which take us on to .. Andy Linton proudly showed me the new Newcastle "Mail Hub" this morning. It is a Sun 4/110, which despite its impressive power (8 million instructions per second) and disk capacity (600 megabytes) could be mistaken for a briefcase (2' x 2' x 4") and a lunch box. We have Jim Lyons to thank for speaking the kind of talk that Sun understand, which got us a very good deal on this and other Suns recently arrived.

RESEARCH NEWS

Major research awards for SKS

Research effort in Reliable Distributed Computing is about to receive a big boost with the award of several research contracts to Santosh Shrivastava. These grants will support eight research associates and several PhD students.

The research effort is centred upon 'Arjuna', a programming system in development since 1985 with initial funding from SERC/Alvey, and upon transputer-based real time systems, which has had funding from SERC since 1988. A preliminary version of Arjuna, written in C++, has been completed.

Further development will continue with awards from SERC and ESPRIT. The ESPRIT award is for collaborative research, principally with the ANSA group at Cambridge. The SERC funded real-time systems work, concerned with replicated processing, will be extended with funding from ESPRIT (DELTA-4 collaborative project with Ferranti as the principal partner) and IED/SERC (post-Alvey initiative in IT). This extension will include work on porting Arjuna on large multi-transputer systems, in collaboration with Meiko, Perihelion and RSRE.

Negotiations are currently in progress for funding from OSF to extend the Arjuna based work to include wide-area networking (this was hinted at in the previous Horse's Mouth).

People taking active part in this research effort are: Graeme Dixon, Graham Parrington, Fariba Hedayati, Stuart Wheeler, Mark Little, Shangjie Jin, Paul Ezhilchelvan, David Hunter, Neil Speirs, Alan Tully and Adrian Waterworth.

Jim Lyons played a leading role in arranging the purchase of equipment (several SUNs) for these projects (and also for the Randell-Laprie project mentioned in the previous Horse's Mouth).

ENTERTAINMENTS SECTION

Grand National: Numbers Racket rumours quashed

Maria sent me this back in April, hoping to convince us that the clerical staff (who organise the sweep) do not score heavily in the prizes ... "We'll have no accusations of 'fixing' the National this year please - we spread it around a bit more :

1st	Gillian Lindsay
2nd	Kevin Robertson
3rd	David Surtees
4th	Stuart Hay

Last home with horse and rider intact - Ann Laybourn.

Bar Rally

Thanks to Trevor Kirby for organising the Bar Rally which took place in April. First place went to DONGHO (Song)'s DYNAMOs (despite their language handicap); Speediest Drinkers award to Andy and John (Aspden, not Law unfortunately); most-vociferous-complaints-because-they-got-some-wrong award - THE DYNAMIC DUO (also known as the Speediest Drinkers, which might have something to do with their second award); Curry Fiends Cup CHRIS, ANDREW and GERRY.

Although many Laboratory staff are too old and dignified, or have too many family commitments (any other excuse I can think of?), this is just the sort of thing that's needed. Keep them coming, Trevor!

SMALL ADS

New into the market place:

Woodworking tools:

Black & Decker Plus Workmate	£40
" " Wood-worker (for cutting out grooves and channels in wood)	£20
" " Drill with Sander and Saw attachments	£15

All in good working condition: contact Maria (8179).

Raleigh Scrambler - excellent toddler's trike. Two toddlers old. £10 is a fair price. (John Law, 8115).

Two booster seats for sitting children up to the dining table. Suitable age 2 to 5. Very useful. £3.00 each: John Law again.

Canoe, heavyweight fibreglass suitable sea or river. Complete with spraydeck, buoyancy bags, paddle and helmet: £60. Gutter-mounting roof rack also available. (Janet Wheeler, 8062)

Repeats - still time to snap up these bargains ... hurry hurry hurry!

Two large fish tanks (4' x 18" x 18") from Trevor Kirby: no reasonable offer refused.

Kangol "Dream Seat" - child's car seat for babies up to 4-year-olds, complete with play tray: £18 (John Law (again)).

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

OTHER NEWS

"Rogues' Gallery"

Everybody will be pleased to know that the set of photographs of Laboratory Staff is almost ready for being posted up again, after an absence of several months while new photos were obtained and mounted. Even better, there will be a copy on the 8th Floor as well as one in the Basement.

Gossip: Whitehall Farce in Claremont Tower

Rumours about a certain professor of ours must be scotched! He was seen entering the building one day recently, accompanied by his secretary. The rumours started when the porter picked up the professor's trousers from the floor after he'd somewhat hastily entered the lift. He wishes it to be known that the trousers in question were part of the suit he was carrying on a hanger at the time. [The Horse is always glad to publish denials like this: send your scurrilous rumours to The Editor.]

SMALL ADS

Wanted

- * People interested in playing badminton on Thursdays, 12.00-1.00pm. I need 3 or 4 people who can turn up most weeks. Arrangements very informal, standard "poor to middling". Contact: me (John Law: 8115).
- * A 14-hands pony (well, I told her I'd put it in - you never know). Contact: Gillian Lindsay (7965).

For sale

- * Now come on, it's about time somebody bought Debbie's brother's Ford Fiesta (R registration; 12 mths MOT, etc.): only £450. Very well looked after. Contact: Debbie Fawcett (8070).
- * Raleigh Scrambler tricycle (suit 2-4 year-olds); well-used but very presentable: £10.00. Contact: John Law (8115). (Yes, you have seen this ad before. Twice.)

COMING SOON

Another "Horse's Mouth" (honestly) to accommodate all these other new stuff. Send me your small ads and gossip as soon as you like: electronic

John Law.

Informal Notes for Staff in the Computing Laboratory

Number 41

2nd October 1989

Special Phoenix-like Issue

Editor: John Law (ext.-8115)

Old News

Many congratulations to Jeremy Doig, now a 3rd year BSc Hons Computing Science student, who won a competition 'Young Software Designer Award', run by Blyth Software Ltd, London. He was presented with a Tulip PC on Friday 9th June by Margaret Thatcher (excuse the bad language).

FAX Machine

The University's FAX machine (2611182) moved some time ago from our computer operators' domain into that of Precinct Services in the Armstrong Building. However the Computing Laboratory has its own FAX machine, number 2228232, which is stationed in the Teaching Office, 8th Floor.

New arrival

She's probably cut her first tooth by now, but welcome anyway to Nicole Helene, a third daughter for lecturer Chris Phillips and his wife Maggie. She weighed in at 7lb 10oz on 26th June. Which is pretty big for a girl, but pales somewhat when we hear of the 9lb 9oz weigh-in of young Sarah Greenwell on 10th September: congratulations and best wishes to Alison Greenwell (and husband John), of the Operations Staff.

NEW NEWS

More new arrivals

In alphabetical order ...

A belated but very warm welcome to Alison Baker, who started as a trainee in the Teaching Office in August. Alison joined us straight from Tanfield Comprehensive school, and she told me with an entirely serious face that she's 16 years old - "Nobody," I exclaimed, "is 16!" (except my own children in a very few years time ... oh dear).

Nick Cook started work on 21st August as Administrative Coordinator for the enormous Randell-Labrie project in Predictably Dependable Computer Systems (PDPCS, described in Horse's Mouth 39). Originating from Burton-on-Trent, Nick comes to us from City University, where he was the Office Manager in the Centre for Insurance and Investment. He and partner Lesley have one son, Joseph, aged 1 year; by a nice coincidence they have set up home in Two Ballonnen - which is where Andy Linton and family used to live!

Dave Harrison started work on 1st September in a 2-and-a-half year lecturing post, again sponsored by BT. Dave comes to us from Stirling University, where

his PhD studies (in functional programming and real-time systems) led to a Research Associateship. Dave will be doing some of Dave Mundy's teaching (see "Farrells"). Originally from beautiful Gromont, North Yorkshire, Dave is currently discovering the scenic pleasures of Jesmond Vale (e.g. -the Bluebell, the Cradle Well, ...). Dave is currently doing a heroic job of giving the first MSC lectures - nothing like starting in the deep end, is there?

Welcome to Dan McCue who started on 1st August as a lecturer in Computing Science (4-year post sponsored by British Telecom). His research interests lead him to be working with Santosh on the Arjuna project. Dan has a pretty good pedigree for working here, having worked in the research department at Digital, then at Encore computers, before moving into software engineering at Apollo computers. He and wife Charlene, Chris (3) and David (1) have moved from Chelmsford, Massachusetts, to Henham, where they currently rent a house in Allendale Road.

Alan Murphy started in September as our new Micro Maintenance Man (the job formerly done by Bill Stewart). A very canny lad from Gateshead, Alan was formerly with Marine Engineering for 3 years, in the marine engine test laboratory; before that he was a technician at Durham University's Computer Centre. He likes football as an outdoor pursuit, but (illustrating his adaptability) he's about to start drawing classes of an evening. Nice to have you with us, Alan.

Dale Oermann joined us in September for one year as a guest member of staff, from the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Indiana. Dale will be pursuing his research interests in systems design and fault-tolerant systems with Brian Randell, Pete Lee, Tom Anderson, et al. Dale, Paula, Amy Marie (12) and Teresa Maureen (8) are living in Belmont, Durham - Amy Marie's keen to start saxophone this year, so anyone who knows where to get a good 2nd hand one, or who knows of a good teacher, please contact Dale!

[Hello again to Giuseppe Pappalardo who is returning this month for a six-month stay working with Santosh.]

Welcome to Iain Wood who has started as the Systems Coordinator with the PDCS Project (see Nick Cook above). Iain has just gained his BSc Computing Science with us, so his face may be familiar to some. Iain and his wife Denise, with daughters Rachael (7) and Katy (6), live at Blackhall Mill, where Iain practises his pastime of making musical instruments (mostly woodwind, though he's made a lute); he also plays the guitar. As if all that weren't enough, Iain is keen to find someone who plays GD: do you? If so, please phone him on 8237.

Finally, welcome to Christopher Wright, who has started as a trainee technician. (Steve Perlish has completed his training and will be with us for a further "supernumerary" year.) Chris left school in 1988 and joined MARI in the YTS scheme; he'll be with us for 3 years. A native of Sunderland, Chris's hobbies include cycling, snooker, his Amiga computer and astronomy - his first pay packet's going towards a new telescope.

New Research Associates

Welcome to the following new Research Associates:

Mike Stoker (one of our PhD students) with Pete Lee, for 3 years in the Centre for Multiprocessors (CMP) Project.

Amer Saeed (another of our PhD students), with Tom Anderson for 18 months.

Andrew Blyth (CSSD graduate this year) joins John Dobson from 1st October for 2 years to work on the OMDIF Project (Organisational Requirements Definition for Information Technology).

If you're worried about us not having enough RAs, the following are due to start this week:

Jon Hall, with Richard Hopkins, for 2 years.

Steve Caughey with Santosh for 3 years.

Irvin Shizgal, with Santosh for 3 years.

Alan Tully, (at present a PhD student) with Santosh for 2 years.

Stuart Wheeler, (at present a PhD student) with Santosh for 2 years.

Departures

David Hunter, Research Associate with Santosh, left at the end of July to join the software development team at Claremont Controls of Rothbury.

Dave Kendall, Research Associate, left us in July to become a lecturer in computing at the Polytechnic. He's continuing his PhD studies, so we'll still see him about.

Andy Linton, Computer Officer (Teaching), who left for Wellington, New Zealand, to become a system programmer in the Dept of Computing Science at the Victoria University. Andy and his family have now been there a month and a half and are no doubt enjoying soaking up the antipodean sun.

Jim Lyons, Research Associate for the Reliability Project, has gone back to flying huge helicopters, in Suffolk. (His role, though not the title, which is defunct, is being taken over by Iain Wood.)

Dave Mundy, lecturer, who has been appointed to a Senior Lectureship in the Department of Mathematics, Chancellor College, University of Malawi for two years.

Giuseppe Pucci, Research Associate, has had to return to Pisa to continue his career there.

And last but far from least, Lynne Taylor, Computing Service Office, leaves us on October 9th to take up a post at the Medical Records Section (Outpatients), General Hospital. Don't forget to say hello to Lynne, next time you break your arm!

Contents: *EDITORIAL

*NEWS

.Staff Input

.Circulation method

.New staff

*FEATURES

.Origin of the title

*EDITORIAL

Those with long memories will recall that the last issue of "The Horse's Mouth" - an informal staff news sheet edited by me, John Law - was published last October (Number 41). From starting out at about one issue per month, the "Horse" declined to once a term, and then died after Issue 41. (Actually, I don't think many people noticed.)

The reasons for its demise were several, but the chief was that it took too much of my time. Small, scrappy thing that it was, it represented an awful lot of chasing round the department and talking to people, and a considerable amount of text editing and formatting. The plethora of incoming staff last Autumn/ Winter was too much.

Nonetheless, it has been decided that a staff news sheet is too useful a thing, in this very large and disparate department, to be allowed to disappear entirely. Accordingly, The Bosses have asked me to edit an electronic version of "The Horse's Mouth" and publish it at appropriate intervals. This may be more successful, because ...

*NEWS

.Staff Input

If I don't receive the news details in full, then they won't get published in full! In the past I would often be told in the corridor (or the Common Room, or the toilet) that "we have a new Research Associate starting next Monday - will you go and look her/him out?" This put me in a difficult position: either I went and located the [unfortunate] person and interviewed her/him in the great Horse's Mouth tradition, or they weren't mentioned at all. Until the Horse (paper version) died, nobody was not interviewed.

The new 'rules' are that senior staff who recruit or manage new staff should send me a message containing the details. This means:

- 1) What post they will be holding, and for how long.
- 2) Where they have come from, and what educational history they have (because that is often of interest).
- 3) At least as important, what hobbies, interests, and family they have (may encourage people with similar interests to make contact).

Mike Douglass left the Computing Service in August, having been with us since 1975. Mike was the fulcrum of our MTS system support in recent years. He's been lucky enough to secure a job at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, U.S.A. (which despite its name is a posh and venerable educational establishment, predating even Durham University by some years!) RPI will be running MTS for at least another decade. The user population of Newcastle and Durham are in for some horrible surprises in 1992, when MTS goes and certain other operating systems take over; Mike's leaving is a first tremor which will probably hit the surface before too long.

Bob Vine "left" on 21st September, having started with the Computing Service in 1967. Bob has been a mainstay of the Systems Group for all his time here. He hasn't really gone: he has been given (awarded? presented with?) early retirement, but will be coming back into work for one-third-time until MTS goes in 1992.

*FEATURES

.Origin of the title

For our many non-native-English-speaking staff:

"The Horse's Mouth" = a supposedly reliable source of information. The expression comes from the horse race track: if a person is given advice about which horse to bet money on, and he asks "how good is that advice?", he may be told "It's straight from the horse's mouth - the horse itself told me!".

[End of HM42.]

The Horse's Mouth Number 43 16 October 1990
 Informal Notes for staff in the Computing Laboratory
Editor: John Law (j.a.law) ext. 8115

Contents: *EDITORIAL
 *STAFF NEWS
 .Farewell
 .Don't go too far!
 .Hellos (5)
 *FEATURE
 ."Not a lot of people know that!" - The Micro Maintenance Scheme
 *SMALL ADS - Sales and Wants
 *BIG ADS - Rich computer fan wanted.
*EDITORIAL

This issue has a lot missing, but the New Editorial Policy is to increase throughput, so I will not be hunting news (and delaying publication) as much as I did in the past. Shortage of Teaching news in this one!

The frequency of this journal, now that it is electronic, will be determined largely by the amount of incoming material. I hope to produce another soon, which will contain an up-to-date staff list.

*STAFF NEWS
.Farewell

Apologies to service staff, who saw this in their recent Minutes: Alan Thompson, our longest serving technician, has done something wonderful. He handed in his notice here and has started at St Davids's College, Lampeter, where he will pursue a 4-year course in Swedish and Information Technology. His wife and two children will be joining him shortly. He will then pursue a lifelong ambition by emigrating to Sweden. An example to us all! Very best wishes Alan.

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.Don't go too far!!
Dave Sedgwick has kindly written his own semi-valedictory speech:

"I'm being seconded to Building Science for 2 years, starting in October. In practice I'm working 4.5 days per week there, and half a day a week working in the Lab. (The half day will be taken up with advice in different areas, software support, London meetings, and keeping track of what's happening, probably in the coffee room). [Hmm - a typical half-day, then Dave!]

"The project in Building Science involves specifying and setting up a common database for use by European Universities, so that their tools and expertise in different areas of Building Technology can be combined. The dept is actually writing 'windows' programs and investigating 'object-oriented' and 'distributed' environments."

And, being a good Horse's Mouth reader, Dave adds, "I did the Great North Run in 2hrs 5, pushing a wheelchair, and I have not got engaged."

[Which reminds me: thunderous applause to Pearl Ferguson for completing the Great North Run this year: she'd never run further than 5 miles before it!]

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.Hellos

Pat Edwards started work on October 1st in the Computing Service Office. Pat will be in charge of the clerical side of the Micro Maintenance Scheme (see "Not a lot of people ..." later). Pat, (husband Pip, sons Paul (8) and Christopher (5)) lives in Springwell. She's too busy to have hobbies any more, although she does enjoy reading and walking. In recent years she's been heavily involved with a charity organisation in Washington, "Bridge", which assists women back into the employment pool by providing education, training in non-traditional skills (e.g. IT, plumbing), and finding ways to assist working mothers.

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Patrick Gumbo also started on October 1st. Patrick is visiting us for one year, from the University of Malawi. [Some readers will know that that is where former Lab.lecturer Dave Mundy went, to become Head of the Computing Department.] That Department is at present largely academic computing science, but it is being required increasingly to service the rest of the University. Patrick is the senior member of staff on the technical side. He has come here to observe the ways we do things; although at present he is with our technicians, he will be moving from section to section as the year goes by. In addition he is pursuing a day release course at the Newcastle College in microcomputer studies, of which he has already formed a good impression. Patrick had hoped to bring his family (wife and five(!) children), but unfortunately that doesn't look possible at present. We're very glad to report that he has two fellow Malawians here this year doing our MSc course, so hopefully Patrick won't be too homesick!

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Ann Petrie has [re-]joined the Laboratory, as a Research Associate in the Parallel Computing Support Service (part of the Computing Service). Ann was last with us on the Aspect Project, in 1988. She will be joined in the parallel computing project by Seong-Gi Seo, as soon as the latter [Korean] has been able to renew his work permit.

Kevin Conner (ex- Comp.Sci.undergrad, ex- CSSD last year) will be the Support Programmer for the Project.

This project is being managed by Ron Kerr. Money from two Computer Board Initiatives (High Performance Distributed Systems, and Software Environments for Parallel Computers) has been awarded to the Computing Service to carry out this work. Ron's team will be working closely with Pete Lee's Centre for Multi Processors, developing tools, techniques and advisory services for the users who will be able to take advantage of the specialised facilities offered by the Encore Multimax machine.

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Cristyn Emmett has started work in Jill Foster's Networked Information Services Project (NISIP), taking the place of Ron Chennells (who left in July). Cristyn (the name is Welsh and is pronounced Christine!) has just completed her MSc with us. She used Ingres as a basis for her MSc dissertation, and she is an occupational psychologist by profession: these two attributes make her perfect for completing the user interface to the NISIP system!

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*FEATURES

."Not a lot of people know that!" (Michael Caine, passim)

The Computing Service's Micro Maintenance Scheme started in August 1987.

It saves the University thousands of pounds annually, by allowing micro buyers to pay 15 pounds (only) to the Computing Service instead of opening a maintenance contract with the supplier. The scheme is only for computers bought out of University Equipment Fund money. When the computer or one of its peripherals goes wrong, our technicians go out to inspect the device; if it *really is* broken, then we call in the external specialist contractors.

The essence of the scheme is that an experienced technician can usually find and correct a fault (55-59% of all calls) without the awfully expensive call-out of a contractor firm. There is sometimes disgruntlement on the part of the customer when our lads confirm that the equipment needs specialist repair ("Well *I* could have told you that!"), but these occasions are far outnumbered by those where the Wizard from the Computing Laboratory waves his wand and Hey Presto, it works again! (The technicians have some *wonderfully* funny stories to tell about "faults" they have had reported in equipment - no room here - sorry.)

The Micro Scheme technicians are Alan Murphy and Dave Bowen, often assisted by Ian Rutherford and Steve Snowball. And now they have Pat Edwards to do most of the paperwork, much to their delight!

There are 1860 machines currently registered in the scheme.

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*SMALL ADS
FOR SALE

Yamaha Flute (from Paul Baggott, Operators, 8075):
Perfect condition, cost 400 pounds: 250 pounds
(includes music stand + some books)

Children's bikes (from John Law, 8115):
Raleigh Budgie: suit 4/5 year old: 12 pounds
(includes stabilisers)
Raleigh Strikas: TWO: each, 10 pounds
(good for mucking about on; or offer
some spares included) for both

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*WANTED

Walking boots and clothes for little kids (7 and 9): John Law, 8115
Good bikes for 7 and 9 year olds : John Law, 8115
(Well, I might as well
use this news-sheet!)

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BIG ADS: Rich computer fan wanted:

"Energy"

IBM-compatible 386-33Mhz PC;
8Mb RAM, 1Mb Display RAM;
NEC Multisyn 4D Super VGA monitor;
200 (two hundred) Mb hard disk;
Hewlett-Packard Laserjet II printer;
Epson LQ860 24-pin colour printer.
Lots of software, including Unix, Xenix, MSDOS, MS Word,
Ventura publisher, Harvard Graphics, Turbo C, Turbo Pascal,
Turbo Assembler, etc. etc. ("with most manuals").

You can have the whole lot for 2750 pounds. Or components can be sold separately. *MUST BE SOLD* before end October: owner returning to Hong Kong.

Seller is Mr Alfred Leung, who says everything in Hong Kong is so cheap that it was easy for him to acquire all this equipment. He has used it for *two weeks* only, and some of it is still actually in the unopened boxes. Chris Phillips (7975) is liaising for him, and there are exceptional circumstances to warrant this sale.

[End of HM43.]

The Horse's Mouth Number 44 19 October 1990
Informal Notes for staff in the Computing Laboratory
Editor: John Law (j.a.law) ext. 8115

Contents: *EDITORIAL
 *STAFF NEWS
 .Farewells (out of date)
 .Hello (ditto)
 *FEATURE
 .Apology - more about the MMS
 *COMPETITION: Prizes!!

*EDITORIAL
Two in one week?! That's a bit much. However I did say that frequency would depend upon material donated, and I am away next week (and I don't want material building up like it used to).
Many thanks indeed to our reporters. (Anonymity guaranteed, if requested! Rumours checked out before publication! Gossip not accepted!)

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*STAFF NEWS
.Farewells (out of date)

Jacqueline Rutherford (Brian Randell's Secretary) left us in mid-September. She's gone to the Poly. to do a one-year Post Graduate Diploma in Business Information Technology.

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John Reed who held a short-term R.A. appointment (March/September 90) on Lindsay Marshall's Esprit-funded TOBIAS project left in September on the termination of the project.

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Anke Jackson (Jacqueline's replacement as BRs secretary) joined us in mid-August from NEI Reyrolle Protection, Hebburn, where she was employed as Secretary to the General Manager and the Financial Controller. Previously, she had held a number of senior secretarial and administrative posts - including seven years in tertiary and adult education - in the Netherlands, Australia and Switzerland, as well as in Southampton and York. Anke, who is Dutch, is married (to Nick) and has two children (at University). Her hobbies are skiing, squash, painting, boating and languages (in addition to English, and Dutch of course, she is also fluent in German and French).

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Darren Hodge has been appointed as Demonstrator from October 90 to September 92. Darren is one of our PhD students and is in the final stages of his research - he hopes to complete and submit his thesis sometime next year.

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Steven Varty was appointed Electronics Technician in mid-September replacing Julia Thomas who left earlier in the year. Steven came to us from Philips Components Ltd where he had been employed as Electronics Technician (Maintenance). He lives in Springwell, is single, and his hobbies are golf, squash, music and reading.

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*FEATURES
.Apology

In describing the Micro Maintenance Scheme (HM43) I omitted a vital

part: how do faults get reported in the first place? The answer is that the computer operators (who these days are so much more than operators) take *all* calls about faulty equipment. These are logged in their ERIC system, which in turn is checked through by the technicians to pick up the reports. Thus all calls come to one central point which is staffed throughout the day: extension 8075.

In addition to reporting the faults, the poor ops also often have to deal with enquiries such as "Why has nobody been to see my broken micro yet?". Until you have dealt with such queries yourself, you don't know what fun this can be! Fortunately, our ops are experts at dealing with people. (Well, nowadays they are!)

So - apologies to Alison, Dave, Deborah, Gill, Gordon, Janice, Malcolm, Paul and Val.

[Next Week: Operators as Sales People: the Computing Service Shop.]

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*COMPETITION TIME!

Roger Broughton has announced a competition which has a direct bearing on the Electronic Horse [I hope somebody can come up with a better name for this electronic rag!]. He has produced the picture below, and challenges us to come up with a better one, subject to the rules which follow. **Small** prizes are offered by Roger and The Horse for the winner and the runner-up, to be announced at Christmas. Depending on the volume of entries, there may be separate categories, in order to separate the amateurs from the professionals. Roger is also offering a booby prize for the worst one :->

Entries close on 17 December, results by Friday 21st.

From Roger....

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Rules:

1. Pictures must be original! Any familiar looking ones will be discounted from judging, though you're welcome to add them to the gallery.
2. Pictures to be made up of text characters only (i.e. no bit-maps).
3. Pictures to be displayable in standard Courier font on a *single* piece of A4 paper (normally, a text print on a laser printer). (Researchers with your Suns, kindly do not mock: you have things the rest of us unfortunately have not.)

>>>NOTE<<<: this refers to size: there is no need to actually print them out until the final exhibition.

3. No rude ones. [...will be passed for judging, or displayed in the public gallery.]

[End of HM44]

Contents: *EDITORIAL

*STAFF NEWS

.New arrivals

*CONGRATULATIONS

. Engagement

. A birth far away

*OTHER NEWS

. Another Laboratory Star

. Great North Runners

. Be There or Be Square

. Truth in this News

. DIY in a Big Way!

*HOW TOM HAS BROUGHT A FORTUNE TO THE LAB. <NEARLY.>

*TALES OF THE UNPROTECTED

*SMALL ADS

. For Sale

. Wanted

. Accommodation

*EDITORIAL

You will remember (don't you?) that I promised a Laboratory "Who's Who" in this issue. It's not forgotten: it's over 200 lines long, so it will appear later this week as a Special Supplement - bet you can't wait.

Neither Roger Broughton nor I received so much as one entry for the "type-a-picture" competition. The rumour is that, given the current economic climate in the University, a certain senior member of our Department threatened to cut off the typing fingers of anyone found using Laboratory equipment in this trivial pursuit! Hard to believe! - but it would explain why some people keep waving their fingers at Roger and me.

Happy Christmas, and good wishes for 1991.

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*STAFF NEWS

First, many thanks to Terry Betteridge, who provided us with a new phone list in November. Among the welter of messages received from him about new staff, was this: "The current phone list dated November 28th has remained up to date for three days, this is a record!"

[Incidentally, you may not know that Terry is a Computing Service Programmer/Adviser, *not* the Laboratory's own Accommodation Manager!]

.New arrivals

Here's what I know about staff who have arrived recently. (See the forthcoming "Who's Who" for a brief description of the research projects mentioned.)

Judy Baker - "replacement" for Dave Sedgwick, who has been loaned to Building Science until 1992. Judy is doubly welcome because she's been "partly" with us for some time: she did our MSc in 1986-7, having graduated at Bristol with a degree in French and Philosophy. Then she joined the University's Language Centre as their first Computing Officer (one of the University's first, outside the

Lab.)). She brings valuable experience and a different approach to advisory services (will Dave have his job when he wants it back?).

David Comish, a recent graduate in Microelectronics, has started a three year contract as Research Associate with Graham Megson, in his research into the Design of Multi-Layer Systolic Algorithms.

Tony Dale - Senior Research Associate on the Bainbridge project, from October 90 to April. Joined us from University of Hull where he was Senior Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy.

Mark Little - Research Associate on Santosh's ESPRIT/ISA project from July 90 to June 92. Mark has been here since 1984, when he started his undergraduate degree in Physics and Computing; on graduation he commenced studies for his PhD, working on Santosh's Arjuna project.

Phillis Jones/Linda Spencer - Job-share RAs on Pete Lee's SERC Grant "Visualising the Behaviour of Parallel Programs"; October 90 to September 92. Phillis and Linda will be familiar to some of us because they both took the MSc conversion course during 1989-90. They have been appointed to work half-time sharing one RA post - the first instance of job-share at the RA level in the Computing Laboratory.

Ron Kerr (manager of the project) has kindly supplied this item ...
"The Parallel Computing Project now has its full complement of staff. Ann Petrie has been joined by the other Research Associates, Kevin Conner and Seong-Gi (pronounced "sung-ghee") Seo.

"Kevin is one of last year's crop of CSSD students. He shares a house in Gateshead with some other lads and his hobby is role playing. He keeps his thirst going by playing football, badminton, squash and pool. Kevin is the system support programmer for the Multimaxes and is currently developing a check-point facility for parallel programs.

"Seong-Gi Seo has come to us from a job in London where his work as an engineering consultant included such intriguing activities as negotiating the supply of sewage treatment systems to the Korean government. Seong-Gi has a long association with this University: In 1980, he became a PG student in the Marine Technology department where he obtained his MSc and PhD degrees, followed by a year working as programmer and hydrodynamicist in the Emerson Cavitation Tunnel. Seong-Gi is married to Sung-A. They live in Kingston Park and have a daughter Ha-Neul (9) and son Dong-Hee (4). In Korea, Sung-A was an orchestral flautist. Seong-Gi enjoys a game of tennis and table tennis and wants to learn to play golf."

*CONGRATULATIONS

. Engagement

Many congratulations and kind regards to Keith Heron and Ros Strens, who announced their engagement in November.

. A birth far away

Congratulations to our visitor Jie Xu, who is spending time with Brian Randell's ESPRIT PDCS project - he has had the news he has been anxiously awaiting from China, namely the birth of his and his wife's first child, a girl named Yingxin Xu. Unfortunately he has some time to wait before seeing her.

*OTHER NEWS

. Another Laboratory Star

Darren Hodge writes, "Did you see my photo in the Newsletter? - inside page, top right. Since February, Sue (photo, far right) and I have coordinated the welcome of international students for the University Christian Union. Approx 60 students from about two dozen countries were met. Orientation proved a great success: working with the International Society is always interesting with such a rich variety of cultures" He adds "Oh to be photogenic!" [That's why I didn't notice it, Darren - it's nothing like you!]

.Great North Runners

Trevor Kirby writes: "Thanks to everyone who sponsored me for the Great North Run. The total raised was 139.45, which went to the British Epilepsy Association."

... And many will have noticed Pearl's thank you letter in the Common Room, which informed us that in the same event she raised 200.00 for M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis).

.Be There or Be Square

(I know which I am, usually, these days, [] sigh.)
Trevor Kirby has set up a new mailing list for people who are interested in social events bar rallies, walks etc. It's called clsocial and to subscribe you just have to send a message to clsocial-request

. Truth in this News

[old Soviet joke*]

Brian Randell reports that we have just had a visit from Alex Yakolev of Leningrad Technical University, who was here some time ago working on the VLSI project. During his visit he mentioned that his Dept of Informatics is now linked into world-wide Unix network, and that their email address is not "leningrad", but "spb", for "St Petersburg" - a sign of the times?!

[*Ed. Note: Old Soviet Joke: "There is no truth in The News and there is no news in The Truth". (Pravda means Truth, Izvestia means the News.) (Well *you* try and think up headlines for this electronic rag then!)]

.DIY in a Big Way!

I'm reliably informed that Stuart Hay is about to finish building his own house this week! He will be signing for it, all being well, after about about 13 months of work. The house is of course detached, with 4 bedrooms, one with shower room attached, one merely with wash-basin. Downstairs: open plan lounge, fully fitted kitchen opening into the dining-area, patio doors to the garden, etc etc.

There are about 35 houses on the site and all were built by the 35 members of the self-build scheme, with only brick work and roads contracted out (some brickwork was done by members). Stuart mainly did roofing, with other trade roofers, so he's now classed as a tradesman in that field.

Congratulations to Stuart & friends, who must feel very pleased with this achievement.

Ian Rutherford is due to start early in '91 building a similar house,

but slightly bigger, at Rowland's Gill. If anyone is interested in building their own house, there are a few plots still going - detached 3 or 4 bedroom with single garage.

[All those wanting a good brickie to build their extension]

*HOW TOM HAS BROUGHT A FORTUNE TO THE LAB. <NEARLY.>

Tom Anderson has been elbowed into overcoming his innate modesty, and has provided the following "minimal factual summary" of his efforts to bring in a fortune in research money over the past 18 months. He says that "despite phenomenal success he still has nothing to show for it!
... ..

- "1. SERC. We bid for 12 million over 6 years, in competition with 7 others. We won, but were recommended to get 7 million. Then the SERC changed its mind, decided to change the rules and only awarded 700K. We got this increased to 750K, but are now caught up in the 40 million SERC budgetting shortfall, so everything is (at best) postponed.
- "2. British Aerospace. We bid for 3 million over 6 years, in competition with 8 others. We won, but were only offered one year at a time (unworkable and unacceptable). This was extended to 2 years with a year rolling forward, for up to 10 years, at 500K per year, but with 1 month's notice of termination (unworkable and unacceptable). Last week, BAe agreed to 3 months notice with agreement to fund any committed expenditure after termination. I believe we can now accept this contract, but we still have to complete the paperwork and get BAe and the University to sign.

All the above is on safety critical/high dependability research and is jointly with York University (John McDermid)."

*TALES OF THE UNPROTECTED

.Beware the Shoulder Surfer!

Thanks to Dave Harrison, who lends his inimitable style to this report:

"As you know level 3 of the Bridge gets locked off about 4.30 pm. Because of this I was surprised when last year's MSc students were continually knocking on my office door after 5pm. After a while I asked them how it was done and was told that the electronic locks always responded to DDDDD. I was also told that this password was there as a safety feature - that the University Safety Officer required it (ironic in the circumstances).

"As far as I know this is the received wisdom amongst the student population. In other words, I don't think they were telling me deliberate porkies. I was a little overworked at the time, and forgot to check up on this piece of local folklore. I also assumed that if I knew so did everyone else.

"This year the students also discovered the DDDDD number (slightly faster than last year's I think). I mentioned this to Dick Snow, and as far as I can remember expressed the opinion that they were probably looking over the shoulders of members of Lab staff who were using DDDDD rather than take the trouble of remembering their own numbers. (Alan Hunter

calls this procedure "shoulder surfing" which I quite like.)

"Dick looked at me like I was from Mars (which is a fairly normal occurrence - like whenever I suggest teaching Miranda to the MSc students) and told me he didn't know anything about the DDDDD number.

"That lunchtime Ian Scoins greeted me in the SCR and asked what I knew about this. After I told him the story he asked me to check what the number was (which I did) and he has now had that number disabled. (The idea of it being required by the University Safety Officer was of course a myth.)

What seems to have happened is that DDDDD was included to make testing the lock system easier. It just never got removed when the system went "live". I assume that the students found out about it from other students --- and from watching certain lazy members of staff!"

*SMALL ADS

.For Sale

Bob Vine says: " Anyone want to buy my wife's car ? Its an A-Reg Mazda 323 (book value about #1500). Somehow I have to furnish the villa we have bought in Spain..." (ext. 8009)

Paul Baggott has just the sort of thing to appeal to Joe Cool, or to a 40-year old undergoing crisis:
Belstaff motorcycle jacket: 25 pounds, or near offer. (ext. 8075)

Ann Pretswell has for sale a Weider weights bench, with some weights and bar: 80 pounds or near offer (ext 8049)

.Wanted

Anyone got a Scalextric they want to sell??? John Law (ext 8115)

.Accommodation ...

... available in shared house. Seaton Burn (6m North of Newcastle, edge of countryside). Large garden - gardeners especially welcome. Terms negotiable. (Children as well, but there is already a house dog, so others and cats may not mix well!)

Roger Broughton, (ext. 8074)

[End of HM45, at last]

21/12/90

Who's Who in the Computing Laboratory
[See also "What's What", at end, for explanation of acronyms.]

In this list the term "manager" usually means "does the work of managing", not that the person holds a managerial grade post. Similarly, indication of special responsibilities does not mean that this person works harder than his or her colleagues! - but that here is where you might address a query about the indicated topic.

Many thanks to Ann Laybourn and Terry Betteridge for information supplied. Names herein are e-mail names. Report errors to John Law (J.A.Law).

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Dave.Alderson | Computer Operator |
| Tom.Anderson | Professor, Computing Science |
| Joan.Armstrong | Teaching Office; u/g admin; sec. to Karen Hunt |
| John.Aspden | Computing Service Adviser; Apple Macs |
| Joan.Atkinson | Secretary to Tom Anderson |
| Paul.Baggott | Computer Operator |
| Alison.Baker | Teaching Office, Reception |
| J.C.Baker [Judy] | Computing Service Adviser, micros etc. |
| Gail.Barker | Computing Service, part-time contracts |
| E.D.Barraclough [Elizabeth] | Executive Director, Computing Service |
| Terry.Betteridge | Computing Serv. Adviser; Dept'm'tal Accommodation |
| V.J.Bilton [Vince] | Computing Service, network hardware |
| A.J.C.Blyth [Andy] | R.A., Esprit ORDIT |
| David.Bowen | Technician |
| R.E.Broughton [Roger] | Operations Supervisor, Computing Service |
| George.Brown | Technician (networks) |
| Lorna.Brown | Data Preparation Service |
| Janice.Burke | Shift Leader, Computer Operators |
| L.E.Buzato | PhD student |
| C.M.F.R.Calsavara | PhD student |
| Q.G.Campbell [Quentin] | Computing Service Programmer; Postmaster |
| L.F.Capretz | PhD student |
| Sheila.Carter | Data Preparation Service |
| S.J.Caughey [Steve] | R.A., SERC FTMPs. |
| Ram.Chakka | R.A., Esprit PDCS. |
| Jarnail.Chudge | R.A., Esprit ORDIT |
| John.Clowes | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| M.L.Coleman [Maria] | C.S. Office; system accounting; dep'tm'nt invoices;MMS |
| David.Comish | R.A. SERC DMSA |
| K.N.R.Conner [Kevin] | R.A., PCP |
| Nick.Cook | Admin. Coordinator, Esprit Research Projects |
| Jeffrey.Craig | Technician (air conditioning etc.) |
| Shirley.Craig | Departmental Librarian |
| A.J.Dale [Tony] | Senior Research Associate, SERC Bainbridge |
| Tawfig.Danish | MPhil student |
| R.DeLemos [Rogerio] | PhD student |
| I.D.Doak [Ian] | Manager, Development Group, Computing Service |
| Gillian.Dobson | Teaching Office; Secretary to Santosh |
| John.Dobson [Jed] | Principal Research Associate, Bainbridge & ORDIT |
| Val.Douglas | Computer Operator |
| Pat.Edwards | Computing Service Office; MMS Admin. |
| M.J.Elphick [Michael] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Cristyn.Emmett | Computing Service R.A., NISP |
| M.J.C.Euzebio [Marcos] | PhD student |
| Jim.Eve | Senior Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Paul.Ezhilchelvan | R.A., SERC DHRDRS |
| Debbie.Fawcett | Teaching Office; undergraduate computing accounting |
| Pearl.Ferguson | Computing Service Office; Reception |

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|--|
| Bill.Foggo | | Departmental Printer |
| Jill.Foster | | Computing Service Programmer; NISP manager |
| C.Gerrard | [Clive] | Computing Service Adviser; PCs & networking |
| A.Greenwell | [Alison] | Computer Operator |
| F.T.Greenwood | [Lyn] | Computing Service Programmer; networks; Safety Officer |
| Patrick.Gumbo | | Visitor, attached to Computing Service |
| Irene.Hackworth | | Data Preparation Service |
| J.G.Hall | [Jon] | R.A., Esprit DEMON |
| N.F.Hall | [Nigel] | Manager, Computing Science Support Service |
| B.C.Hamshire | [Brian] | Computing Service Programmer; Unix, Suns |
| J.W.Harley | [Jon] | PhD student |
| Deborah.Harris | | Senior Computer Operator |
| D.A.Harrison | [Dave] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Stuart.Hay | | Technician (networks) |
| Fariba.Hedayati | | Demonstrator, Computing Science |
| Carol.Hellier | | Supervisor, Data Preparation Service |
| Keith.Heron | | Computing Service, network hardware |
| M.M.Hindmarsh | [Margaret] | Computing Service Adviser; graphics |
| D.R.Hodge | [Darren] | Demonstrator, Computing Science |
| Chris.Holt | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| R.P.Hopkins | [Richard] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Richard.Hughes | | [Engineer from Amdahl Corp.] |
| Karen.Hunt | | Administrative Assistant, Computing Science |
| J.A.Hunter | [Alan] | Senior Comp.Serv.Adviser; EMU mailer; Curlew editor |
| J.M.Hunter | [Judith] | Computing Service Adviser; text processing software |
| R.Iqbal | [Rafhat] | PhD student. |
| Anke.Jackson | | Secretary to Brian Randell |
| Patricia.Johnson | | Data Preparation Service |
| Brian.Jones | | User Services Manager, Computing Service |
| Phillis.Jones | | R.A., SERC VBPP |
| R.Kerr | [Ron] | Computing Service; Manager, PCP |
| N.Khallaf | | MPhil student |
| Trevor.Kirby | | Computing Officer, Computing Science Support Service |
| Albert.Koelmans | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Maciej.Koutny | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Marta.Koutny | | Demonstrator, Computing Science |
| A.M.Lamont | [Martin] | Senior Computing Service Adviser |
| J.A.Law | [John] | Documentation Officer, Computing Service |
| Ann.Laybourn | | Secretary to Harry Whitfield |
| P.A.Lee | [Pete] | Professor, Computing Science.; Centre for Multi Processi |
| M.C.Little | [Mark] | R.A., Esprit ISA |
| Liu Chunsheng | | R.A., Esprit PDCS |
| John.Lloyd | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Gill.Lynch | | Shift Leader, Computer Operators |
| P.Lomas | [Pete] | Computing Service Programmer; Unix |
| R.J.D.A.Macedo | | PhD student |
| Lindsay.Marshall | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Dan.McCue | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Jean.MacKay | | Data Preparation Service |
| Martin.McLauchlan | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Graham.Megson | | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Betty.Mitchell | | Data Preparation Service |
| Isi.Mitrani | | Reader, Computing Science |
| Carole.Moffat | | Computing Service Office; half-time Print Room |
| Ben.Moszkowski | | p/t Senior R.A., SERC ECICITL |
| Alan.Murphy | | Technician, MMS |
| M.Pakzad | | PhD student |
| Graham.Parrington | | R.A., Esprit ISA |
| Malcolm.Paul | | Shift Leader, Computer Operators |
| Ann.Petrie | | R.A., PCP |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Chris.Phillips | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Ann.Pretswell | Secretary to Pete Lee |
| R.G.C.Pringle [Ron] | Computing Service Adviser; VAX/VMS system |
| Brian.Randell | Professor, Computing Science |
| T.J.Ratcliffe [Terry] | Assistant Director, Computing Service |
| C.R.Ritson [Chris] | Computing Officer, Computing Science Support Service |
| Kevin.Robertson | Technician |
| B.N.Rossiter [Nick] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Denis.Russell | Senior Comp.Serv. Adviser; JNT network security project |
| Ian.Rutherford | Technician |
| A.Saeed [Amer] | R.A., SERC SRM |
| H.I.Scoins [Ian] | Senior Lecturer, Computing Science; Safety Officer |
| Eileen.Scorer | Data Preparation Service |
| D.J.Scott [Dave] | Technician |
| D.J.Sedgwick [Dave] | Comp.Serv.Adviser: attached to Building Sci. -> 1992 |
| S.G.Seo [Seong-Gi] | R.A., PCP |
| G.Shearing [Geoff] | Computing Service Adviser; advisory & teaching admin |
| Irvine.Shizgal | R.A., SERC DHPDFTS |
| S.M.Shotton [Steve] | Technician |
| Santosh.Shrivastava | Professor, Computing Science |
| Tim.Smith | Technician |
| C.R.Snow [Dick] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| J.S.Snowball [Steve] | Senior Technician |
| D.H.Song | PhD student |
| Neil.Speirs | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| J.M.Spencer | PhD student |
| L.M.Spencer [Linda] | R.A., SERC VBPP |
| Iain.Stewart | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| M.A.Stoker [Mike] | R.A, DTI CMP |
| Joyce.Stone | Computing Service Office; secretary to Elizabeth Barrack |
| Ros.Strens | R.A., SERC Bainbridge |
| R.J.Stroud [Robert] | Computing Officer, Computing Science Support Service |
| D.P.Surtees [Dave] | Computing Service Adviser; statistics; MSDOS wkstns. |
| Sha.Tao | R.A., Esprit DELTA-4 |
| Ann.Taylor | Computing Service Office; secretary to Brian Jones |
| Gordon.Taylor | Computer Operator |
| Gerry.Tomlinson | Computing Officer, Computing Science Support Service |
| A.Tully [Alan] | R.A., SERC DHRDRS |
| Steve.Varty | Technician |
| R.E.Vine [Bob] | Computing Service Programmer (part-time); MTS |
| A.Waterworth [Adrian] | PhD student |
| E.Watson [Eric] | Senior Computing Service Programmer; PC/NFS |
| L.M.Weatherill [Lorna] | Computing Service Adviser, databases |
| Stuart.Wheater | R.A., SERC DHPDFTS |
| J.E.Wheeler [Janet] | Documentation Officer, Computing Service |
| P.Whillance [Peter] | Computing Service Programmer; Unix |
| Harry.Whitfield | Prof., Comp. Sci., and Director of the Laboratory |
| J.K.Wight [Jim] | Computing Officer, Computing Science Support Service |
| D.I.Wood [Iain] | R.A., Esprit PDCS, i/c research computers |
| C.H.Woodford [Chris] | Computing Service Adviser; numerical applications |
| Chris.Wright | Technician |
| K.Wright [Ken] | Lecturer, Computing Science |
| Jie.Xu | R.A., Esprit PDCS |
| Marjorie.Young | Data Preparation Service |
| Z.B.Zhou | Visitor, Computing Science. |

WHAT'S WHAT

These are mainly research projects; they are not by any means all

PCP - Parallel Computing Project: research into practical applications of multiprocessing. Funded by the Computer Board. P.I.: Ron Kerr.

PDCS - Predictably Dependable Computing Systems - Principal Investigator Brian Randell. Funded by Esprit.

SRM - Software Reliability Modelling. Principal Investigator Tom Anderson. Funded by SERC.

VBPP - Visualising the Behaviour of Parallel Programs. Principal Investigator Pete Lee. Funded by SERC.

[End of Who's Who and What's What]

the projects active, which number dozens.

Bainbridge - jointly with York, funded by SERC. Nominally, Principal Investigators are TA and BR, but practically speaking this is John Dobson's project. Concerned with the development of a language for the representation of the procedures and conversations which take place in an IT environment as envisaged in the ORDIT Project (q.v.). Project is so-called because John and his colleague Mike Martin dreamt it up when they were staying at The Rose and Crown in Bainbridge (Wensleydale).

CMP - Centre for Multi-Processors: the hub of Prof Pete Lee's parallel processing projects. Mainly a DTI-funded affair.

DELTA-4 Principal Investigator Santosh Shrivastava. Funded by Esprit.

DEMON Principal Investigator Richard Hopkins. Funded by Esprit.

DHPDFTS - Design of High Performance Distributed Fault-Tolerant Systems. Principal Investigator Santosh Shrivastava. Funded by SERC.

DHRDRS - Design of Highly Reliable Distributed Realtime Systems. Principal Investigator Santosh Shrivastava. Funded by SERC.

DMSA - Design of Multi-Layer Systolic Algorithms. Principal Investigator Graham Megson. Funded by SERC.

ECICITL - Embedding Concurrent and Imperative Constructs in Interval temporal Logic. Principal Investigator Chris Holt. Funded by SERC.

FTMPS - Fault-Tolerant Multiprocessor Systems. Principal Investigator Santosh Shrivastava. Funded by SERC.

ISA - Integrated Systems Architecture. Principal Investigator Santosh Shrivastava. Funded by Esprit.

MMS - not a research project: Micro Maintenance Scheme. Set up by the Computing Service to allow all University Departments which purchase computers to reduce maintenance costs to a mere 15 pounds per annum - which saves the University thousands annually.

NISP - Networked Information Services Project; JNT funded; to promote networked group communications - a league up from the conventional LISTSERV-type operations. Project Manager is Jill Foster.

ORDIT stands for Organisational Requirements Definition for Information Technology. (Jed disclaims all responsibility for the title.) Main objectives: the development of a methodology, and a tool in support of the methodology, for the elicitation and analysis of organisational requirements on an IT system. By "organisational requirements" is meant those aspects, sometimes called 'non-functional requirements', which are concerned with fitness-for-purpose in the organisational environment. Examples are user-friendliness, support for co-operative working, information security and privacy, and respect for work role and organisational structure. A key aspect of the methodology is the identification of the procedures and conversations between role-holders which the IT system mediates and in which it participates - see Bainbridge project.

Contents: *EDITORIAL

*STAFF NEWS

.New arrivals

.Absent friends

*RESEARCH PROJECTS

.DCSC contract signed

.FASST project

*SMALL ADS

.Sales

.Accommodation

*COLOUR SUPPLEMENT

.New tear-off chit-chat section

*EDITORIAL

Happy New Year!

Last "Horse" was December 17th - time flies like an arrow! [Fruit flies like a banana.] Don't be put off by the tone (it *is* Friday) - there is interesting news herein.

I mentioned in January that I'd had no input for an issue "except for an article of dubious taste". Since it involved a spoof call-up for HM Forces, and since the Gulf War started soon afterwards, I decided not to publish it. It's all about how you run a war from a privatised economy, but I think *any* humour about the War should be left to the people who are actually out there, now that it's started..

The "Colour Section" has been added because it's all interesting stuff (contributed mainly by Brian Randell and by An Anonymous Source this month), but you know that when you reach it, you've reached the end of the "hard news" section.

Apologies in advance to anybody whose material I may have accidentally left out of this issue: I have included all the mail I filed. I'm in more of a rush than usual because I'm hoping to get the last train before the blizzards close in ... Happy sledging, folks.

*STAFF NEWS

The file WHOSWHO has been updated with new staff and project names. It is cl15:whoswho in MTS - I hope to find somewhere to put it in Turing, too.

.NEW ARRIVALS [that we have heard of]:

Dave Halliday has started work as Lindsay Marshall's R.A. on his Tobias Project (see WHOSWHO for what this is!). Dave is ex-BSc and CSSD here, so is well known to many of the teaching side.

Darren McCardle and Tim McGrath are here for just a month under Steve Snowball's supervision. They are studying at Consett Tertiary College for their BTech in Business and Finance, and they will be using their time here to look at various ways in which modern software can be used to bolster the infrastructure of businesses. Steve and the technical group generally have many tasks which could

be streamlined using software as diverse as graphics packages, databases and custom-written programs. [A masterly summary - Ed.]

.ABSENT FRIENDS

As most of us know, two of our staff are currently fighting a brave battle against severe illness. Alan Hunter was taken ill last July, and a brain tumour was diagnosed. This was partially removed in January. He went home on 1st February, but has now embarked upon a 7 week course of radiotherapy. Throughout his illness, Alan has retained his moral strength and, when he has the physical strength, his humour. He is wonderfully supported by Judith, who has been Alan's "other half", as well as holding down her job here in the Computing Service.

Ann Taylor, of the Computing Service Office, has had to restart chemotherapy treatment for a recurrence of the cancer which she successfully fought off eight years ago. She needs six months of this treatment: no elaboration is necessary. She will be badly missed during this time: we look forward to seeing her back at work in Summer.

Thoughts and prayers go out for Alan and for Ann, and their families, during these very difficult and painful months.

*RESEARCH PROJECTS

Tom Anderson writes,

"The DCSC contract has now been signed!!! Strictly, the contract is with York, and we now need a sub-contract from them."

(See "How Tom has brought a fortune to the Lab." in HM45.

Pete Lee writes,

"We're doing our bit to help reduce the ECU mountain of ESPRIT. (Not that Brian Randell has left much...) ESPRIT have just funded the FASST project (Fault-tolerant Architecture with Stable Storage Technology), which involves Pete Lee, Isi Mitrani and Keith Heron.

"The aim of the project is to prototype a generic architecture for fault tolerant computer systems, and involves partners in Germany, France, Ireland and Spain (guess where winter meetings will be held). The overall idea is to develop a shared memory multiprocessor architecture incorporating fault tolerance, and Newcastle's primary work will be concerned with cacheing sub-systems and modelling and simulations.

"Just over 38 months of funding has been obtained from the Commission, approximately 360,000 ECU (thats about 270K Pounds for non-Eurospeak people), and two new Research Associate posts are available - applications before February 22 please!"

*SMALL ADS

.SALES

Irvin Shizgal will be returning to Canada in a few weeks: get your order in *now* for some of the goodies he wishes to sell before he goes:

Fridge
White drop-leaf table
Microwave oven
Bed & mattress
Step-ladder

2 metal folding chairs
Mini-washer with drying rack
Vacuum cleaner
Coffee maker
Miniature TV
Stereo (cassette, CD, radio)

Irvin.Shizgal - ext. 8067

=====

Belstaff Motorcycle Jacket

Positively your second chance to acquire this desirable garment ...

Size 42 - Good Condition - 20 pounds

Paul.Baggott - ext.8075

=====

Small two wheeler BIKE, 20" wheels. Surplus to requirements;
Strong, sturdy construction, ideal for off-road riding, but hence not in
pristine condition! Needs some new parts (e.g. rear tyre). Suitable
for boys from about 6 years old (from what we can remember). Willing to
exchange it for a bar of chocolate or two!

Pete Lee - P.A.Lee - ext.8176

=====

.ACCOMMODATION

Irvin adds ... "Come to think of it, my landlords might also be
interested in finding a new tenant."

I can't contact Irvin at this precise editorial moment to find out where
he actually lives! However if you're looking for a place, you know
there's one *somewhere* near!

*COLOUR SUPPLEMENT

BLACK-WHITE-BLACK-WHITE-BLACK-WHITE-BLACK-WHITE-BLACK-WHITE-BLACK-WH

PROFESSORIAL TALES

This from Brian Randell in December

"I caught the lift one evening on Floor 4; when it arrived, a
student got out as I got in. I noticed that all the indicators
were on, showing that someone had just pressed all the buttons. I
also became aware of the sound of running footsteps fading into the
distance. With (if I might say so myself) commendably quick
reactions I shot out of the lift before the doors finished closing,
worked out from the fact that various swing doors weren't that the
miscreant had not gone through them but must have vanished round
the corner, and tore after him. After two four-wheel drift corners
I saw him in the distance scrabbling to get up the little staircase
and through the door into the Bridge. I requested his presence,
and he obliged, apologising all the way. After he had, on my
demand, produced his student card, and I had noted down his name,
number and department (Dept of Social Policy, which I found
somewhat unlikely) in order to complete my citizen's arrest, I
turned on my heel, walked round the corner, and collapsed in agony.
The next day at the doctor's I was told I was suffering from
"Policeman's Heel" from the strain I'd put on a ligament!

Next time I'll leave it to HIS!"

THE PERFECT LINK ...

And by ASTOUNDING coincidence, we have the perfect link into the next story: John Lloyd sent me this quotation in January -

"He wagged his bag like a frozen camel's hump,
dizzily turned the corner on one foot and,
by God, he was gone" '

This was Springer-Verlag's Mathematics Christmas Quiz: Identify the source of the quotation. OK, OK, for those few who don't know, the source is Dylan Thomas: "A Child's Christmas in Wales".

John was one of the three national prize winners, which was 50 pounds worth of Springer books. "I have not chosen the second edition of Lee and Anderson 'Fault Tolerance'!", says John (who remains mystified as to what the competition has to do with mathematics).

Well done John - a real polymath, huh?

MESSAGE FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

But, I hear you ask, where *is* Professor Randell? Didn't you know? ...

From: Brian.Randell @ fr.laas.laas
Subject: From Our Foreign Correspondent
To: j.a.law @ uk.ac.newcastle

"I am now just over three weeks into my short sabbatical at CNRS-LAAS in Toulouse, though in fact most of one week was spent at a PDCS project workshop in Viarregio, Italy (Pisa's Whitley Bay), and another involved a trip to IBM's Inter-Galactic Corporate Headquarters near New York, followed by a flying visit back to Newcastle.

"Some first impressions: LAAS is definitely MAC-rich! I've been provided with a MAC IIci in my office, and a MAC "portable" for my one room studio apartment. This incidentally is right in the heart of Toulouse, in a very nice district of old buildings, and hidden courtyards. It provides a stunning view over the rooftops to the 16th century Jacobins Monastery, and is very near to the Place du Capitol. This latter provides a very elegant open space in the heart of Toulouse, whose uses so far seem to have been limited to a weekly market, and an "alternative" entertainment/anti-war campaign last Saturday night.

"I normally travel to work by bus, the journey taking somewhat over half an hour - this gives me time to try and decipher the news in Figaro or Liberation. Incidentally, reading newspapers whilst commuting does not seem at all common here - I was told that people normally waited until they had arrived at work! However these papers and the French TV news are improving my French, and augment what I can learn from BBC World Service, and from the brief Sky News in English that one TV channel puts out four mornings a week. (Another TV channel has a late night long chunk of CNN news, but insists on providing a rather poor simultaneous translation which largely drowns out the English.)

"The weather here seems to change as much, though not so frequently, as in Newcastle. The last few days have been cold and fitfully sunny, once the morning mist has broken through, but there have also been some very wet days. Perhaps this means that the Canal du Midi, which passes close to LAAS, and which provides a nice but long walking route for much of the distance between LAAS and my apartment, will not virtually dry up

this Summer, as it has for the last two years.

"As regards work, I guess that so far I've mainly been getting established here MAC-wise, etc., and doing various PDCS-related tasks. However I hope shortly to spend more time learning about the various other research projects here, as well as to write a couple of papers whose deadlines are, unfortunately, rapidly approaching. In general email is keeping me in fairly close touch with much of what is going on at Newcastle (though for several days this week the mail server was down) and it is particularly nice to read various items sent to ncl.staff that I can ignore with a clearer conscience than is normally the case.

"Au revoir!

Brian"

In a later message, Brian added that perhaps the reason they clean their streets so frequently is because

"they seem to have trained their dogs only to use the pavements. ... And, perhaps as a result of my wife remarking that the French seemed to organize their streets very well, with lots of manhole covers so that they don't have to dig the road up all the time, within days of her leaving they started digging up vast areas of road and pavement very close to my apartment to install new electricity cables to all the buildings in several streets."

Oh well, Brian: "Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose" as we English are fond of saying.

PRETTY DASHED CHEEKY SECTION

And here is another view of the PDCS Project, and Brian's sabbatical, furnished by An Anonymous Source. [Nick Cook wants it made absolutely clear that it is **not** him. It's not. Guess who?]

Predictably Devious & Cunning Sabbatical

"Brian "Houdini" Randell is in charge of the Europe-wide research project known as PDCS [see WHOSWHO - Ed.]. Each year this project must organise and run a quite substantial conference. The first one was held in Toulouse, very successfully last May, so Brian attempted to get the French to run it again this year. Predictably this attempt failed since the French knew that Brian was really trying to get out of having to run it here in Newcastle. Very reluctantly, Brian conceded that Newcastle would host the 1991 PDCS Workshop. A few weeks later he fixed up a sabbatical for himself in Toulouse and will return just before the Workshop takes place in May! Escapism par excellence!

My position [says my source] is one of pure admiration, no rancour whatsoever, plus a total exclusion clause on any Workshop planning duties (only exception, attendance at important high quality dinners (if there are any))."

[End of HM46.]

Contents: *STAFF NEWS

.Hail

.Farewell

.Stay

*RESEARCH PROJECTS:

.DCSC Success!

*SMALL ADS

.Sales

.Wants

*STAFF NEWS

Welcome to ANDREW HILBORNE, who has joined the Computing Service in the Systems Programmer post vacated by Mike Douglass last year. Andrew will be working under Ian Doak, with special responsibility for Unix systems development. He is well qualified to do this since he comes to us after over 5 years with MARI, where he gained extensive Unix experience. His last work with MARI was as Senior Consultant, looking after their end of the DELTA 4 Project, which is joint with our own department (Santosh, Neil Speirs, and ???). Andrew, his wife Joanna and 7-month-old son Christopher live in Fenham. Another reason for his being known in the Lab. is that he studied for his BSc in Physics and Computing here, 1979-82.

A warm Hello to CHRISTINE DAVIES, who is "temping" in the Computing Service Office, mornings only, while Ann Taylor is on sick leave.

Finally, two new part-time Data Preparation ladies have started work with Carol Hellier's team. SUSAN CARRICK and JULIE POWELL start this month: a reflection of the greater amount of money being put into data preparation by University researchers.

.Fare Well

... to Karen Hunt, who left us on February 15th. Her post as Administrative Assistant for the Teaching side will not be re-advertised for the time being. Our very best wishes go with you, Karen!

Ann Pretswell started her maternity leave on 1st March - a severe loss to the Research groups. We wish her and husband Norman a smooth countdown to Birth Day!

.Extension

We're pleased to say that Christy Emmett's post as R.A. on the Networked Information Services Project has been extended for two months from March 9th. Here's hoping for another two years after that!

*RESEARCH CONTRACTS

Update (mostly now 3 weeks old) on Tom's two research contracts, which are collaborative projects with York University (John McDermid). They both concern safety-critical/high dependability. Tom says:

"1. SERC. We bid for 12 million over 6 years, in competition with 7 others. We won, but were recommended to get 7 million. Then the SERC changed its mind, decided to change the rules and only awarded 700K. We got this increased to 750K, but were then ensnared in the 40 million SERC budgetting shortfall.

"Latest information: SERC hopes soon to confirm our award, but with a delayed start date (eg Jan 1992) and with restrictions on the early rate of spend.

"2. British Aerospace: DCSC (Dependable Computing Systems Centre)
We bid for 3 million over 6 years, in competition with 8 others. We won, but were only offered one year at a time (unworkable and unacceptable). This was extended to 2 years with a year rolling forward, for up to 10 years, at 500K per year, but with 1 month's notice of termination (unworkable and unacceptable).

"Latest: BAe agreed to 3 months notice with agreement to fund any committed expenditure after termination. The contract was then signed by BAe and York. Financial terms have been agreed between York and Newcastle (we get 471K over the first two years)."

Latest latest: the subcontract with York has been signed.
Interviews are now taking place for the 6 posts available at Newcastle. SIX?? Ah yes - but the DCSC has lots of money, and they have arranged their own accommodation ... more in the next HM!

*SMALL ADS
.SALES

Victorian

cast iron tiled inset (not including surround) fireplace Original
tiles, Excellent condition 250 pounds or near offer
Ann Pretswell - 2855602

Pool table 7' x 4' slate bed, inc balls, cues etc. 300 pounds ono
Ann Pretswell - 2855602

Graphite Dunlop 600i squash racket..
Priced 70 pounds in Dixons: 25 pounds
Paul Baggott - ext 8075

.WANTED

Walking kit for little kids (ages 7 and 10): rainproofs and boots.
If you have any please contact me - John Law - ext.8115.

Contents: *EDITORIAL
 *Special Treat: Report from Academic Board
 *STAFF NEWS
 ."New" lecturer
 .Distinguished Visitor
 .NISP Empire grows!
 .Correction
 . Luxury apartment block for DCSC
 *OTHER NEWS
 .It's that man again ...
 .University phone directory
 *WANTS and SALES

*EDITORIAL:

Apparently a dearth of news, and a plethora of "Sales and Wants", in this edition! I use the word "apparently" because I have access to a certain file, i.e. Terry Betteridge's "Accommodation" file, which shows a heaving mass of activity, of staff going, gone, rumoured to be coming [from all parts of the globe] ... but little of it can be confirmed. Rest assured that as soon as I hear "official rumours", they get published here.

Much admiration for Terry Betteridge: if you ever got sight of his "Accommodation file", you would think that 3-D chess is easy!

"Official Rumours" was originally going to be the title for this publication. I hear lots of internal rumours, but none gets published until I know it's proper to do so. (So pass me all *your* internal rumours!)

* REPORT FROM ACADEMIC BOARD

Academic Board (for those many in this list who don't know) is the termly meeting where all the University's academic staff and other officers convene to review and discuss University affairs with the Vice Chancellor. Since I was there last night, and most of the rest of the University staff weren't (about 40 showed up), I will report for you what the Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Murchison, had to say.

It was a meeting - how should I put it - rather in the Minor key, made the worse by the astonishingly low turnout of staff.

Baldly, Prof Murchison said that this University, along with the rest of the University system in our country, is currently headed for the rocks. The Government has changed its rules once again, and is now saying that in order to get a reasonable number of funded student places at this University, we have to increase the number of fees-only places. (This, it seems, is a significant change from last year's policy.)

The University's Finance Committee has directed the University to erase its considerable deficit during the next year, since it/we can no longer afford to rely on contingency funds to underwrite the deficit. This will require swingeing cuts in the coming year (figures exceed a million pounds, I seem to recall - I can't raise

anybody at this moment to confirm figures). A new financial plan is currently being presented by the Bursar to the relevant University committees.

On the subject of (a) rescuing the Universities and (b) pay increases, Prof Murchison thinks that the current Education Secretary Mr Clarke is unsympathetic; he has the attitude "Well you've whined about this for the last decade, and you've always managed up until now"; and in any case he has his eyes set on becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer, and will therefore be keen to show himself to be tight-fisted. On the other hand, Mr Clarke has been known to agree that "University salaries are appalling" ... perhaps he was just being a politician, though!

Only three things were clear from what Prof Murchison reported: that the University sector is now highly competitive; that Newcastle is currently in the "[Red Brick] First Division" in most respects; but that we are going to have to work hard, with fewer resources, if we are to stay in this "Division".

*STAFF NEWS

. "New" lecturer

Congratulations to ROBERT STROUD on being appointed lecturer, with effect from April 1st.

. Distinguished Visitor

Richard Hopkins reports: "Prof Eike Best, the world-famous Petri Net Scientist, will be visiting the Lab for the week of 6th-10th May. Older (whoops, longer-standing) members of the Lab. may remember him as Research Associate here a long time ago."

. NISP EMPIRE GROWS!

HM47 reported that Cristy Emmett's "post as R.A. on the JNT Networked Information Services Project has been extended for two months from March 9th." We can now confirm that Cristy's post has been extended for three years, along with the extension and expansion of the whole project into NISP II. Congratulations to Jill Foster (Project Director); two and 2/3 more people are to be appointed soon.

. Correction

Cristyn Emmett also asked me to point out that the shortened form of her name (Welsh version of "Christine"), is Cristy - without the 'h'. (Sorry Cristy!)

. Luxury apartment block for DCSC

Here's a shortened version of Tom's announcement of last month. Note that Tom has not moved to Windsor Terrace yet, and nor has Joan. They expect to perhaps move there part-time in the near future, but until they are more sure about their "tenure", they can't plan too far ahead....

"As you may have heard, BAe are funding a major research activity here and at York University. The new staff cannot be accommodated in the Lab's existing premises, so the University has offered additional space for the

DEPENDABLE COMPUTING SYSTEMS CENTRE

"This will occupy the top two floors of 20 Windsor Terrace, which

has just been refurbished to the standards of the Faculty of Medicine, who no longer need the space. Windsor Terrace is across the motorway footbridge, just to the left of the Robinson Library. We are just past the Faculty of Law in a rather fine terraced house which is well worth a quick look. In fact, you may have to be quick because we could be evicted in a few months (but I'm working on it).

"Staff will arrive to join Amer Saeed over the next few months to make a total of five research staff.

"As yet the house is still normally locked up, so I suggest that anyone interested in visiting should check with Joan before calling. Visitors welcome!"

*OTHER NEWS

.It's that man again ...

On a completely separate topic, but related by the Reporter-cum-Director, Tom Anderson tells us ...

"On 15th April, the Centre for Software Reliability was visited by a "study team" of 30 Japanese delegates - all senior managers or engineers from Japan's software companies (one delegate was listed as the Vice President for Technology, Toshiba).

"Tom arranged a 1 day technical seminar with another 20 CSR and University participants. The Chancellor, Vice-chancellor, Registrar and Prof Whitfield (a junior member of University staff) joined us for lunch. The Japanese seemed to like the Museum of Antiquities best - they appeared to buy up most of the shop!"

.University phone directory

[Believe it or not] We in the Computing Lab. - actually Terry Betteridge - produced the last two University internal phone directories. Precinct Services have now taken it over again. I asked TB when he thought a new one might appear, and here's his answer:

"Up till Nov 89, the University phone book was produced annually during the autumn (copy submitted by departments August/September, book produced hopefully before Christmas). I'm told that Precinct Services hope to produce 2 copies every 3 years from now on, so no book was produced last autumn. As it happens, one is in production at this moment. I submitted copy for this department in February so it should be being put together right now: the stated intention is "during the Epiphany term"."

*WANTS and SALES

.WANTS:

Maria says: "I would like to borrow/hire(cheaply) a CHAIN SAW or a circular BENCH SAW for about a week to saw up a load of logs. Any offers?"
Maria - M.L.Coleman (8179)

.FOR SALE:

HONEY BEES!!! complete with hives, overwintered stocks.

Offers: Julie Powell (8081)

Amstrad VCR. 1 year old. 130 pounds.

Paul.Baggott (8075)

Graphite SQUASH RACKET (needs a re-string): FREE to good home.

Paul.Baggott (8075)

(New kitchen forces sale!) Offers invited for ...:

1 Philips upright (tall) FRIDGE/FREEZER - standalone

1 Hotpoint integrated larder FRIDGE (~1year old) - designed to go
under worksurface and have kitchen unit door fitted

Graham.Parrington (8067)

And another ...

FRIDGE FREEZER 1045mm x 525mm x 575mm :: 40 pounds or offer

Small portable single bar ELECTRIC FIRE :: 5 pounds

Electric KETTLE :: 5 pounds

Dave Scott (8079)

FREE

Child's first two-wheeler: rugged bike to suit 6 - 8 year old. Free to
anyone who wants it. More details on application ...

Pete - P.A.Lee (8176)

Finally, this month's STAR BUY!!! ::

Volkswagen Jetta 1982 (Y reg).

Family-size car; pretty fair condition, and much work done
recently. Over 40 mpg recorded over the last three months.

Two very reliable and well known previous owners.

Reality forces sale:: 800 pounds or adjacent offer.

John - J.A.Law (8115)

[End of HM48.]

1 DR. JAEGER AND MR. HIDE
A TALE SUITABLE FOR THE YEAR OF THE COMET

"I say, Soames" I said as I settled back on the old Ottoman, who had just got up to relight my pipe. "Who the devil is that chap Jaeger, anyway?"

We had just returned from our weekly perambulation round the labyrinthine byways of Claremont. The purpose of these patrols is to spot fire hazards, stray furniture, and other oddities, of which there are plenty in our domain.

We had noticed the new name tag "Dr. Jaeger" on a door in the dark slum quarter of Bridgend, but we had been diverted from investigating by an uproar which flared up from a nearby drinking den - the notorious Netty.

"Hmm," mused Soames, as he tuned his double bass. "Frankly, I don't know who Jaeger is, Walson. But," he added with sudden forcefulness, giving me the sort of shock you get when you see the Ground Floor disappearing past your eyes when descending on the Paternoster, "I want you to find out for me! We can't have people moving into the neighbourhood without our knowledge! Find out who he is! And stop his ID until we've got him brought to heel!"

The snow was falling thickly as I trudged across the Claremont Bridge towards the stews and bawdy houses of Bridgend. A cold wind blasted up the road, and I was beginning to regret my chosen disguise: I had had to choose something to fit in with my surroundings, and was dressed as a disco queen, sporting stiletto heels, fishnet stockings, and a rather fetching canary-yellow number that I'd picked up going cheap on the Quayside.

As I turned up the alley into the Latin Quarter, however, the snow and wind gave way to an uncanny, silent atmosphere, like that in a graveyard or a dormitory at 3 o'clock in the morning. A dense frog hung around in the narrow streets, impeding progress, but he got the message when I put the toe of my stiletto "a la derriere".

After some hesitation, and over-friendly looks from passers-by, I decided to take the direct approach: I strode up to the door bearing the mysterious nameplate and banged on it in the same way the police did that time they came round to my flat. I thought I heard a stifled curse, but then a tremulous voice enquired

"Who is it?" and the door opened.

"Er," I giggled, feeling somewhat foolish, "I'm looking for..for" My voice trailed away as the door opened and I beheld the strange fellow crouching before me. I looked down into the single discernible eye, glittering from between a veritable bush of black hair and a huge black bushy beard. The fellow was crouching in such an abject way that I decided to throw off my disguise immediately.

"My name is Walson," I said firmly, in as deep a voice as I could summon (constricted as I was by my Playtex 24-hour living girdle). "I am

Assistant Commissioner of this District, and have come to find out who you are, sir!"

He wore a long black jacket which almost reached the floor, an eyepatch over one eye, and a monocle in the other. But the most striking feature was the huge black beard, which would not have looked out of place on a Victorian explorer.

"Ah! AH!! Aaah" the fellow quavered. He paused, and then said "Control A. Come in. You will excuse my hesitancy, but I had thought you were a woman of ill-repute: clearly you are not vot you seem! Ha! - but which of us is?" he added mysteriously.

I could not place his accent - that touch of double-dutch about "Control A" made it more difficult.

"I wouldn't have dressed like this, I explained, "but it's unsafe in these quarters for the likes of me to wander around alone, dressed soberly."

"You are so right," murmured the mysterious Doctor. "Allow me to take your wrap."

"You are something of an enigma, Sir," I said, starting my pipe. "So," he said softly, "you wish to know who I am. Jaeger is the name. Orwell Jaeger, Doctor of Philosophy. I come here from.." his eyes scanned the filthy ceiling "...Whiteplains. I be - em - I mean, I vos studying vunce mid Professor Huw Rhys-Tyk, University of ...oohhhhhh" He groaned terribly, low and loud.

"Excuse me" he turned to one of the many keyboards on the desk and rattled off a few lines, with a sound of Rice Krispies dropping into the bowl. "Ah! By Jove I needed zat!" He spoke with renewed vigour.

"Yes, Huw Rhys-tyk at ze Universidy of Battenberg. A very hit-und-miss fellow, zat Huw. Bit like you, hein?" - he hit me on the shoulder - "He und I developed a famous operating system. A mess it vos. Oh, es was OK for ze biggy machines, yes? But ven I told Rhys-Tyk zat I thought ve, em, should re-design for smaller systems, he threw a fit (least squares): took a byte out of his desk and chopped his chair to bits! 'You nex,' he shouted 'You're not sirius' I laughd at him, but I didn't pause - Control A - for a moment: I sought pastures new. MacDonald, a well-known Battenberger, advised me to go see P.M. Phil Monfour, well known for putting people in the picture). Phil - terrific guy, tolerant, but totally unreliable - suggested Newcastle. So, I came here in..." his voice began to falter again. "...in September. Oh. I am going to groan again"

"To Groningen!" I replied brightly, that's where our Director, Herr E. Weissfeld was before coming here!"

"Fool!" groaned Jaeger weakly, "em-mus-t-osk you t'leave... 'scuse me again.." He turned to a keyboard behind him attached to a large white

machine that had "Black Magic" stencilled on the monitor.

The Rice Krispies noise started again, and went on for some time; thick, nimbus-like [I can't keep this up!] [as the..], began to appear above the machine, and Jaeger began to cackle. "Ha!! Zat's the stuff!!!"

I noticed his back straightening, his stature increasing by the second. His monocle and eye patch flew off in different directions, and the heavy beard wagged to and fro. Then it flew off: I realised now that I had not been the only one in disguise! "Jaeger" still had his back to me, but I began to be rather reluctant to find out who he really was, as the cackling and arm-waving increased.

"I say, Jaeger," I said, "are you feeling quite alright?" "Alright?!" screamed the demented figure, "I was until you stuck your nose in my Hide-away, you interfering fool!" I began to edge towards the door, but it was too late...he turned, and to my horror I found myself looking into the face of

31 or 32 pens/allusions!