The house magazine of Rank Xerox Mitcheldean

WITH COSTS a major challenge, it was appropriate that there should be a financial flavour to the Long Service Association's 41st annual dinner, held at its usual venue, the Chase Hotel, Ross-on-Wye, on Friday, 6 May.

Principal guest was Bill Goode, financial director for Rank Xerox and a member of the RX Board, who presented 25-year service awards to 26 people.

With him was David Maw, the financial controller for Rank Xerox Manufacturing & Supply Chain. Both were happy to renew their long association with the financial fraternity at Mitcheldean.

Human resources manager Robin Fyffe, as LSA chairman, warmly welcomed them to this high spot in the association's calendar.

Touching on life at Mitcheldean, Robin spoke of the difficult times experienced over the last 12 months. The slack demand for our products had been caused by a weak European economy coupled with the fact that in many cases our costs had been high compared with our major competitors.

Despite the "tremendous effort" from people on site in helping to reduce costs and improve productivity, there had to be staffing reductions mainly from within the management, technical and administrative areas. "I'm pleased to say that all of the reductions were achieved through early retirement and some voluntary redundancy.

"There now seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel and everyone's hard work is beginning to pay dividends. We're seeing more work coming to the site that's driving the need to recruit additional people into our production areas."

Feedback from the visits of corporate executives had been very encouraging - "They've noticed considerable improvement in our production facilities. Our performance is on track in terms of quality, delivery and productivity improvement. Above all, they were extremely complimentary about the workforce on site.

"It is down to us to maintain this momentum; we've got to continue to make sure that if and when work is available, it comes to us, based on our good reputation for quality products delivered on time at a cost that the competition can't match."

"I'm sure we can do it, but remember there are always others that are trying to achieve the same objective, so we must stay in front."

Before handing over to Bill Goode, Robin thanked all who had worked so hard to ensure the success...
of the dinner and other events organised for the LSA’s 720 members, and he proposed a toast to the guests, who included representatives from other LSAs – Pat Kelley and Mary Thompson, Rank Taylor Hobson in Leicester; Ted and Esther Giles, Rank Strand, London; Ron Caldicutt and Peter Rawlings, Rank Xerox Welwyn.

Speaking about the company’s performance generally and the outlook for the future, Bill Goode said: “Mitcheldean is today seen as not only the most flexible of facilities but also one of our most cost-effective. "The cost for every hour of value-added work is one of the best in Manufacturing Operations, and that being so, it’s probably one of the best in Xerox Corporation – you should be very proud of this.”

It had resulted in the site now having a Rank Xerox-wide mission. For example, “We have centralised all UK accounting in Mitcheldean, and the European Data Centre, which has to service the whole of Rank Xerox right across Europe, has been located on site.”

He then went on to talk about Rank Xerox priorities. “In the late 80s and early 90s, Rank Xerox found itself making less on its capital – and clearly that was unacceptable on a continuous basis. “So in 1992 the company embarked on RX 2000 – a three-year programme which involves resizing the business. Hopefully a more robust business will emerge. This is something which is taking place in just about every country.

“Our boxes are much more reliable today; they require less service, fewer service engineers. This necessitates a constant rethink of how we deliver the products and services. “If successful, that will get us 18 per cent return on assets (an internal measure of return on equity for our investors in the external market).”

We hope to achieve this by 1996. “Over the last few years we have returned about 5 to 6 per cent, a level not helped by the deep recession. But in the last half of last year a trend upwards was seen.

“We’re now getting more revenue and spending less on overheads to service that revenue; that means we are enjoying profit growth well into double digits. Marketing results are rather good but we’re still taking very tough actions on our cost base. “There will always be the need to ensure we manufacture the bulk of our products, not only because we are European, but also because it simply does not make any economic sense not to.

“The marketing company is moving in the right direction – you are part of that vision.”

Bill Goode thanked all at Mitcheldean on behalf of the Board for the progress made over the past few years, and looked forward to good service to the whole of Rank Xerox from GBAS and the EDC, “and also any other RX-wide projects we can put on site, because there is a lot more to manufacturing than purely bolting machines together.

“Nowadays it’s about software, it’s about networks, it’s about services, so you should think very broadly in terms of the role you are fulfilling.”

Having proposed a toast to the LSA, Bill presented the 25-year service awards, a task in which he had the assistance of Charlie Walker, human resources operations manager, who handled the responsibilities of MC to the manner born.

After the traditional free raffle, people got on with the business of socialising and renewing old associations, to the musical accompaniment of Double Up, a duo consisting of long-server Dave Bennett and ex-employee Gordon Hayward.
The Xerox 5334 – flagship of the range

WITHIN EIGHT months, we have launched three models – the Xerox 5328, the 5321 (a slower version of the 5328) and, most recently, the 5334.

“This hat-trick has been made possible through the excellent work by the teams involved,” said Roy Salmon, who acted as MRT manager for all three.

The latest model, the 5334, is being regarded as the flagship of the convenience copier range. Extremely user friendly, it is the most productive machine in that range and is very competitively priced.

A 32 copies-per-minute major upgrade of the 5034, it boasts a long list of improvements, while retaining the good points of its predecessor.

It’s not only 4 cpm faster; it also offers 20-bin as well as 10-bin sorter options, both with convenience stapler, or a catch tray.

The 5334 has more rounded contours than the 5034 and the appearance is brighter.

But the most noticeable difference is the touch-sensitive screen user interface, similar to that of the 5340/50 work group copier made in Venray.

The surface of the LCDM is made up of eight rows by 12 columns of touch-sensitive switches – you simply touch the screen for whatever function is required. The effect is to present the user with walk-through menu options and a clear yet simple pictorial presentation of fault diagnosis and copier status.

The 5334 pushes the convenience copier upmarket and is expected to replace the high running cost 5046s in the field.

It comes in two configurations – duplex and superduplex. Both have the duplexing automatic document feeder (DADF) as standard but duplex has three paper trays, and superduplex five.

There is a significant increase in paper capacity – the copy run is 250 compared with 99 on the 5034.

The new fuser, bypass/cassette and customer replacement unit (copy cartridge) all drive down service call rates; the CRU is expected to have a life of 60,000 copies and processes for CRU reclaim are in place.

There is a higher European content compared with the 5034. The frame for the paper supply module is made in our robotic frame weld cell in building 5 while the DADF and 20-bin sorter come from Lille. The 10-bin sorter, however, is from Brazil.

Colour modules, as on today’s 5034, are available in blue or red.

Ten into one do go!

There are now no less than ten small copier configurations all going down the same line in building 1, which must be something of a record.

There are three configurations each of the 5328 and 5321, two of the 5334 and one of the 5034 (plus machines for Xerox Latin America) – a state of things which will continue until the phasing out of the 5034 next August.

Said product assembly manager Norman Rudge: “We run every one of these models every week and trying to balance configurations to the weekly demand is no easy matter.

There are minor and major changes between the models. Keeping that all under control says a lot for the flexibility of the line and the section managers and their team.

“We have had to expand to make room for the extra people we need, but the only major facility changes have been in the paper supply module area and one or two in the fuser area.”

Prime revenue driver

The Xerox 5334 has been launched in two phases – in the UK, France and Germany at the beginning of April, and in all other OpCos in early May.

The total number of 53 Series copiers available to customers now stands at 21, making it the most extensive copier product line Xerox has ever had.

First launched in 1992, the Series is expected to contribute more than $7 billion in revenue worldwide through mid-decade.
How we’re forestalling failure modes

WHOEVER THOUGHT of the expression ‘what can go wrong, will go wrong’ was probably the inspiration for the concept of Failure Modes and Effects Analysis.

No matter how clear a process is or how complicated the tooling, if a part can be fitted backwards, upside down or even not at all, at some point sooner or later it will happen.

FMEA is a tool which can be used to examine the potential ‘what can go wrong’ in a process, so that its impact to the line can be reduced or ultimately prevented entirely.

Each element in the assembly process is examined and any faults (known as failure modes) which can occur are identified.

The potential impact of each of these failure modes is then assessed by estimating how likely the fault is to occur, how severe the resulting problem will be, and how likely the fault is to be detected.

Each of these factors is given a score and the scores are multiplied together to give the Risk Priority Number (RPN). The higher the RPN the greater the impact of the problem.

A picture of health on the 5047 assembly line

MORE AND MORE smiling faces, plus a few non-smiling ones, and just the occasional tearful one, have been appearing in 5047 assembly.

On display boards, that is – where their expressions indicate the health of the production situation.

“It’s all in the interests of process certification,” said Dave Tingle, section manager on the main line, where the first of these boards was installed.

By the time you read this, all the build areas on the production floor should have their own displays, showing at a glance where there is a concern.

As inspector Lyndon Lewis pointed out, “it enables us to see first thing in the morning where attention is required – for example, where a stand-in is working – so we can respond more speedily.”

The boards, which are updated by the section manager as the day progresses, are divided into three sections – operator, written process and materials – and indicate the situation at every single station.

A green smiling face shows there’s a certified operator at work; a red one with a neutral expression indicates a new operator, not yet expert in the job.

In the process section, a fully tried out and approved process earns a green smile; if it’s a new process, or there’s a process audit failure, there’s a red face.

If all materials are available for the station, with no defects, no purges, the green face smiles out at you; if not, it’s replaced by a red one. And if the situation anywhere is serious, the red face will have been moved to tears!

The visual aids were devised by Dave and his fellow section managers Nick Farr, Clive Griffiths and Mark Hoole-Jackson, the faces being made in our Markem facility and attached by magnet to the boards.

And, quite apart from their intended purpose, they bring smiles to the faces of visitors.

Once the high risk failure modes have been identified, action can be taken to reduce their impact either through changes to the process, to the tooling, or to the design itself. When feasible, failsafing techniques are used to eliminate the failure mode entirely.

A convenience copiers manufacturing engineering team, led by Steve Carter and including John Collins, Tim Davies, Dave Barby and Gerry Roberts together with many production operators, have applied FMEA to all of the products in building 1.

Some 3,600 ‘studies’ have been completed in the last 12 months and in-line defects have typically been halved during this period.

Keith Bradley, convenience copiers quality and technical manager, commented that “this team have, through the use of FMEA, contributed significantly to the goal of a defect-free product and their process will be shared as a ‘best practice’ in Xerox worldwide.”

Safety awards for 1993

WE’VE BEEN adding to our impressive collection of external awards for safety.

Our 1993 performance brought us, first, the National Safety Certificate from the British Safety Council, for which we had to demonstrate that our accident rate was 20 per cent or more below the national average for our industry.

Then came a top award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Having worked our way up from the bronze and silver to gold in 1992, we have now won the ROSPA Gold Award again; this covers all aspects of our operation – from training, procedures, auditing and fire precautions to occupational health.

Any news for Vision?

If you have, then please —
• mail it to me in bld. 7/3.
• or leave it at main reception for collection by me.
• or post it to me at Tree Tops, Plump Hill, Mitcheldean GL17 0EU.
• or ring me — ext. 566 or Dean 542415.

Myrtle Fowler, editor
Our payment operations team

THE SIGNS point to the 'cash office'. Many refer to it as 'the cashier's office'. But the correct departmental name is 'payment & expenses operations'.

That's a bit much to get on to a sign, we agree: but you see very little hard cash floating around the busy office within Great Britain Accounting Services on the top floor of building 7.

Let's deal with the bills first. All payments (except the payroll) go through here - to meet charges for production supplies, services such as gas and electricity, rents and rates for the many sites throughout the country; VAT - and of these some such as gas and electricity, rents and rates for the many sites throughout the country, VAT - you name it.

The majority go automatically through BACS into bank accounts. “We have just gone to two payments a week to all our suppliers because of the increase in volume,” says manager Nora Powell.

Foreign payments are the only exception and these are currently transmitted to Venray to take the advantage of the charges negotiated with their Dutch bank. This process is being reviewed as part of a QIP on payment processing and may well change.

But the major workload concerns reimbursement of expenses incurred by employees on the company’s behalf.

Of the staff of six, three work full time on expense claims (Cindy Powell, Heather Stuart and Julie Jones). Barry Williams is expenses administrator; he helps them with any particularly difficult problems (one query alone could take three hours to settle, especially if it’s about a lost payment); he also gets involved with overseas travel advances.

Over 3,000 claims come in each month - from places ranging from Aberdeen to Jersey - and of these some 9 per cent have to be rejected for various reasons.

They may not be properly authorised, the cost centre may not be valid, there may be an error in the figures, or it may simply be a matter of non-compliance with policy.

“We have to work to strict guidelines,” explains Nora. “However, not all the GB company locations have the same policies and procedures. Although we have developed a common reimbursement process with similar input documentation, the different policies in operation do not allow for total harmonisation of this process across all UK units”.

There are four phones in the office and they're going all the time. “Have you received my claim?” “Has the money been paid in yet?” “Oh, I’ve changed my bank - I forgot to tell you.”

The introduction of OLAS, an on-line accounting system, has done much to shorten these calls, since the account can be pulled up on screen and the status confirmed. Expenses are an emotive subject but the team keep it amicable and manage to take the drama out of the situation. In fact, there’s quite a bit of humour in the job sometimes!

Recognising the signatures is one of the hardest things to get used to, Nora told us, making a plea for legible writing, plus a printed name alongside to make doubly certain. It's important because those who sign the claims have varying limits for the amounts they can authorise. Claims come in seasons; there’s a deluge just before the start of holidays, especially Christmas.

But the team rarely have more than a day’s backlog, however. “We undertake that claims received by 9am on a Friday will be paid by the following Friday.”

If you shudder at reconciling your own bank statement, spare a thought for this unit. There are on average about 50 to 80 entries a day, and at the end of the calendar month the full bank reconciliation can take seven days.

Ellen Baldwin who, like Nora, has recently completed 20 years' service, deals mainly with these bank entries, checking them and dealing with queries, in addition to making the main payments to suppliers.

What about payments coming in? we asked. “We do have a sales ledger and EMC account for the biggest entry of incoming payments for third party work carried out,” said Nora.

In days gone by it was necessary to operate behind locked doors, and money was passed through a hatch. Today, cash transactions are made through the NatWest bank on site, and the cash office operate an open door policy.

Since the consolidation of financial accounting activities within GBAS, the team have to give cover until 5.30pm every day, including Friday. But, says Nora, “We have a rota system and we look forward to being able to get on with the paperwork then with few interruptions.”

Right about 'What's wrong?'

A SPILLAGE of oil, a broom left lying on the floor, a worker with faulty footwear - these were just a few of the ‘slips and falls’ hazards to be found in the factory. Not, we hasten to add, at Mitcheldean, but in a picture of an imaginary situation.

Having carried out an analysis of accidents on site over the past five years, safety management found trips, slips and falls came into the main category; so to increase awareness of these hazards they invited employees to enter a ‘What’s wrong?’ competition.

Contestants had to ring round the slips and falls hazards they could find in the factory scene pictured. Works convener Robbie Miles identified the highest number (23) to win top prize of £40. Barry Klein (business quality) and Steve Foxwell (convenience copiers) tied in second place, but a subsequent draw resulted in Barry getting the second prize of £20 and Steve the £10 third prize.

Human resources manager Robin Fryffe, as chairman of the main safety committee, handed over the cheques to the winners on 18 May at a small ceremony attended by plant safety representatives. We’ll be picturing the presentation in our next issue.

Process review

“BECAUSE OF the high volume and value of payment handling through this office, we have asked SPAD to undertake a review of the electronic funds transfer (EFT) process to satisfy ourselves and our customers that the controls we have established are both adequate and effective enough to protect the financial integrity of the company. We have to operate, and be seen to operate, this process in a tightly controlled environment,” says Charlie Gayton, GB general accounting manager, who sees the payment operations staff as a “very committed and loyal team.”
The big move

BY THE TIME this issue appears, one of the biggest switchrounds we have had for some time should be virtually complete.

"It's going to secure significant savings and will bring back jobs to Mitcheldean," said Hugh Colby, who is responsible for strategic planning on site.

The moves have been triggered off by the 'BEST Team' decision to bring back to the plant the carcass operations, hitherto contracted out to Keymood in Hereford, for incorporation in the asset management business centre.

This itself has been enabled by a change of strategy on European carcasses.

To create the necessary space for the incoming operations, there's had to be considerable relocation of activities from the ridge into building 1. All the low volume remanufacture operations, apart from 5025 and sorter operations in building 12/2, were moved in April to join the newly manufactured convenience copiers in building 1 south.

Finished product storage from building 13/1 has gone to building 1 South. The space to free up was to house the incoming operations.

The various moves and rationalisation of activities will achieve a 180,000 sq.ft, or 25 per cent, saving in space utiliséd, representing a greater return on assets.

It's all been like fitting pieces of a jigsaw, and it's involved the efforts of many people - too many to acknowledge individually here.

The changeround in building 1 was completed by the end of May. Peter Whiles, who led the building 1 south project, told us: "We were mindful of the fact that we must not interrupt product supply to customers. The whole team can be very proud of the fact that all this has been achieved without loss of production."

The key to success was breaking it down into sub-groups. Peter appointed four co-ordinators - Matt Jackson, Keith Marfell, John Evans and Tony Gattuso - to oversee specific aspects of the project, and they in turn pulled together their own teams of shop floor people.

"We had weekly project meetings of the four leaders who gave a status report, and we talked through any issues. Vance Hopkins (MED), plus Martin Exell and Colin McHugh (facilities engineering) sat in on the meetings, as did Tony Cudok, Chris Cinderey and Brian Whittington (materials), and from time to time the co-ordinators brought their own teams along with them.

"Glyn Clarke (control) was involved too - he kept us on track as regards budget." Communications was an important consideration; so Peter put out a regular bulletin on how it was all progressing, and each of the co-ordinators issued local 'Prontos' on specific items.

"We didn't want people coming in to work and wondering where their lockers had been moved to!"

Matt Jackson was the 'space man'. He had to plan and implement the move of existing facilities to free up space for the low volume remanufacture line.

"The biggest operation," he says, "was transferring the developer housing assembly from its location against the east wall right across the building to the former EV maintenance shop on the west side."

Before this could happen, the latter area had to be facilitated - lighting and heating had to be installed, safety aspects considered - all of which was completed before Easter.

The next stage was to move all the grids in the assembly area. By shuffling them in stages from east to west, the gangways were reduced to an equal size of 9ft.

"We moved the first one across by 1ft, and ended by shifting the last one 11ft, doing one grid per weekend over a six-week period. We effectively gained 6,000 sq.ft that way," said Matt.

It certainly proved the flexibility of the Flexigrid conveyors.

Tony Gattuso had to recognise the impact of more people coming into the building - about 70 in remanufacture and another 60 as a result of the growth in the small copier programmes. "That made an extra 130-plus in a single shift," he told us.

To cater for them, the kitchen in the main restaurant was completely redesigned; it was converted from electricity to gas, which meant putting in a gas supply and bringing across from building 3/2 some large gas cooking equipment which had become obsolete.

An extra servery was also installed, enabling a better quality menu to be offered.

Other changes were necessary: some offices were pulled down and new ones erected, a 'self-

Peter Whiles (centre) with some members of the project team - (from left, seated) Richard Williams, Keith Marfell, John Evans, Tony Cudok, Martin Exell, Nick Pegg; (standing) Glyn Clarke, Chris Cinderey, Matt Jackson and Brian Whittington.

From left: Tony Gattuso discusses some change issues with the 'BEST Team' Matt Jackson, Keith Marfell, John Evans and Tony Gattuso.

Working to a tick sheet, John Wilce selects parts for a 5018 machine; these travel on a kitting trolley with the machine trolley.
for the design of a new layout for the incoming remanufacture operation, capable of handling all 5012/14 and 5018/28/34 models. "We have switched from replenishment to pre-kitting before build, in line with the building 1 philosophy," he told us.

Each machine is now stripped down to a fixed level in a pre-operation area where the parts that require renewing and the 100 per cent new parts needed are identified. The machine travels on a trolley through the kitting section, in company with its kitting trolley, and both are wheeled into the cell build.

The completed copier finally reaches the pack section – which is where the AGV 'MAC' comes in handy. Arriving on its track from the prep-operation area right at the other end of the line, it does a complete turnaround, then stops – to be linked up with three empty machine trolleys. Then, like an engine with rolling stock, it hauls them back to prep-op.

Said section manager Richard Williams: "It has all bedded in nicely, though there will inevitably be further changes for improvement, and we're looking to use the operator pull materials system."

The absorption of building 1/2 stores in the building 1 north parts stores was the task undertaken by John Evans, as materials logistics co-ordinator. "The deliveries come in via the east dock area where Rapid Roll doors have been installed," he told us.

"The pre-kitting of low volume remanufacture has allowed us to downsize these stores, and we're getting smaller but more frequent deliveries of carcases and panels from building 5, so it's more Just in Time."

The asset management consolidation was due for completion as we went to press and we'll feature it next time.

Fun in engineering

UNDERSTANDING ENGINEERING at work was the theme of a project week organised by the Smallpeice Trust in April for 13 to 14 year-old schoolchildren from all over the county.

As in 1992, Rank Xerox Mitcheldean was invited to take part, alongside other sponsors such as GCHQ, British Gas and SmithKline Beecham. The aim was to give the young students an insight into the essential role engineering plays in industry and its career possibilities.

Our contribution consisted of three projects, based around RX activities, which were devised by a team of IP students – Donna McGrath, Martin Pittard, Teresa Redler and Louise Wright.

Said Teresa, who acted as co-ordinator: "We had a lot of goodwill from the managers concerned, who gave us time out to put the projects together."

The ones on harness and production flow were held at the Pershore Horticulture College on 12 April. The following day the children came to Mitcheldean to carry out the feed-head project and be taken on a plant tour. The harness project was designed to introduce the pupils to problem-solving after first having a presentation on the Xerox problem-solving process.

Louise Wright told us: "The task was to create a test board for a harness currently in manufacture, fit a tried and tested harness to that board, and finally test it."

Supplied with the appropriate paperwork, drawings and equipment, the youngsters set to work. They were given only limited guidance, and encouraged to use their own initiative to solve any problems encountered.

"At first a lot of baffled faces were seen but when the first basic steps had been carried out, there was no stopping them, and they needed only minimal guidance when linking the test set to the board."

"Altogether I feel that they gained a lot from this project, learning to work effectively within a problem-solving team."

The production flow project focussed on factory layouts and assembly lines, the objective being to highlight the principles and theories behind each.

Explained Martin: "We modelled the project on building 1, centering around its rise from storage warehouse to focussed factory. The pupils had to design the factory layout, calculate labour requirements, design and balance assembly lines – tasks they completed surprisingly well."

"They showed a large degree of enthusiasm and it was very refreshing to see unconstrained active imaginations at work."

"For the last project we asked the youngsters to build a S328/34 feed-head through the reading of engineering drawings. As they built it, they had to write a clear, concise assembly process."

"We also wanted them to identify any assembly elements that could be done incorrectly and think about ways in which these could be failsafed."

"Finally, after putting the completed part into a copier, they were asked to work out how the feed-head worked (unfortunately it didn't!). Nevertheless they learned some fundamental engineering principles."

At the end of two days, there was a conference dinner and lecture at the Horticulture College, where the team was joined by Brian Fowler (training).

Said Donna: "The lecture was given by Professor Heinz Wolff (remember 'The Great Egg Race' TV programme?) who is a world-renowned expert in the field of bio-engineering."

"His very interesting and amusing talk, entitled 'Tools for Living', pointed to the ways in which simple engineering techniques (the basis of the Smallpeice ethos) can be used to help people with disabilities. As examples he referred to the design of a cup that arthritic people would find easy to hold, and the more advanced 'speech box' designed to help people like the famous scientist Professor Stephen Hawking."

"After the talk came the dinner which gave the 'industrialists' the opportunity to chat with the children who had been involved."

"All in all, we had a very enjoyable – if hectic – two days doing something rather different from our 'normal' day's work. After all the effort it was great to see the youngsters learning some good engineering principles whilst having some fun, and very imaginatively tackling the problems which we set them."

Adds Teresa: "We were not used to dealing with such lively youngsters. But we became so immersed in the projects ourselves that we were able to cope with the innumerable questions."

"A couple of the girls said they were considering engineering as a career and this short course had confirmed their ideas!"
RETIREMENT MAKES a big impact on your life, so it calls for careful planning.

The choices, and implications, need to be assessed and there are courses you can attend – at a cost. But for RX employees of 50-plus, there's a more attractive option – the counselling sessions that RX Pensions are providing – for free.

These come in two stages. At the age of 50 you get an invitation to a one-day session called ‘Mid-life planning’, designed to open your mind to what the choices are.

Normally held at the Chase Hotel, Ross-on-Wye, for Mitcheldean people, it is carried out in works time and RX Pensions send along speakers who have expert knowledge of entitlements, finance, health, etc.

Bob Harris, employee services manager, is supplied with the names of those eligible to attend by RX Pensions and he picks out 30 or so names at random.

The first session this year took place on 10 May; but if you didn’t get an invitation, don’t think you’ve missed out. It is intended to hold a further two this year and invitations will be issued in good time.

A later opportunity exists for those who have reached the age of 55; they are offered a two day break – at Weston Manor Hotel, near Oxford, where, together with their partners, they can give positive thought to their future at a Pre-retirement Seminar.

These too are being held three times a year and invitations are sent out in the same way.

The first took place on 28 and 29 March and, by all accounts, it was hugely successful.

Said Ron Dixey (5047 assembly): “I couldn’t fault it in any respect, and it was made clear that there’s no pressure on you to opt for retirement.”

Jean Downing (5025 remanufacture) was so anxious not to miss out on the seminar, she rang up “to make sure I had an invitation.” She found it very informative, while colleague John Jenkins said: “It was an eye-opener on quite a few levels.”

He was particularly impressed by the session on claiming benefits and, as he pointed out, “When other people asked questions, you realised you needed to know the answers too, so it was useful to be among people who had reached the same stage as yourself.”

Norman Howells (parts manufacturing QA) said he also found out things he hadn’t known about entitlements, while Mike Emmis (5390 remanufacture) said it helped to firm up his ideas about the future. “It even persuaded me to take it seriously.”

The sessions covered the RX pensions scheme and State benefits, financial matters, health, and suggestions as to how to make effective use of your time in retirement – through doing voluntary aid work, taking up new interests, or perhaps getting a part-time job.

The speakers included a doctor, an investment consultant, and DSS and RX Pensions representatives; there was also an independent speaker who showed how he had coped with his own early retirement some five years ago.

John Treherne (5047 assembly) went with his wife Margaret (spares packing) and both have since retired; before he left he told us: “I’ve always believed you should try something new – we might take up market gardening.”

One thing that many of those attending liked about the seminar was that, if they wanted to, they could have a private chat with one of the speakers to sort out any particular queries.

Says Bob: “If you get only one bit of information out of the seminar that is useful to you, it is worth while.”

Judging from this feedback, people got far more than that, and had a very pleasant two days into the bargain.

Everything was paid for (apart from transport and incidentals such as drinks) and there was even wine with the dinner.

And more than one said afterwards: “If there was a chance, I’d willingly go again!”

WESTON MANOR has a history going back over nine hundred years. The core of the present house is 16th century with many of the Tudor features surviving, such as the Baron’s Hall with its minstrel’s gallery, now the dining room.

Like many an old building, it has its ghost stories, the most famous being that of Mad Maude, a young nun who broke her chastity vow and was burned alive (or was beheaded, according to another version) five centuries ago.

The Mitcheldean group were shown the bedroom with its four poster which Maude is said to haunt (no doubt she appreciates the present-day comfort compared with her former spartan accommodation). There were no sightings, but one person, reportedly finding it too spooky, made a quick disappearance!

### Weighing up the options at Weston

**Andy turns author**

IT’S NOT only politicians who turn to writing books when they retire. RX pensioners do, too – as Andrew Gardiner’s first publication ‘Tributaries of Ruardean’ proves.

That Andy has extended family links with this Gloucestershire village and his book records at least five generations of his family history. While primarily of interest to his relatives, it includes some fascinating facts which he has uncovered about the area.

There are also various fascinating old photographs, like the one of his blacksmith grandfather George working on the track for the patented weight-assisted aeroplane launcher invented by Charles Rolls. George accompanied Rolls around the country in the pursuit of the inventor’s interests in aviation, ballooning and the development of the Rolls car.

A maintenance engineer during his 18 years at RXMP, Andy has an inventive streak himself. From his daughter’s contribution we learn that when employed as an engineer at the local firm of Impregnated Diamond Products, he designed a device which was used originally for processing germanium and later in the manufacture of silicon chips.

His numerous interests include beekeeping, playing chess, gardening (he has a passion for growing giant onions for competitions), and he’s regarded as a major force for conservation in the village which he served as a parish councillor for 21 years.

Andy plans more books; the next is devoted to The Glossters regiment and, as he puts it, “It’s wrapped around the local chaps.”
TWO MEMBERS of our product safety staff have been working down a salt mine. But not in Siberia – this one is in Winsford, Cheshire.

Last March, product safety manager Mike Selwyn and senior engineer Derek Hewer each donned a miner’s helmet and lamp, logged in (for safety reasons) and went down a shaft, together with a 5334 copier, to a large cavern 200 metres/600 ft below the surface.

Here, where once the pale reddish-brown rock salt was extracted, chiefly to make the roads safer in icy weather, there is now a white pressurised tent.

This provides a dust-free and virtually noiseless ‘anechoic chamber’ – a radio frequency test facility which is free from outside interference.

The problem of interference between electrical and electronic equipment is increasing, and EC directives are becoming more stringent in an effort to harmonise the various national standards, Mike explained.

He pulled out a whole drawerful of EME (electromagnetic emission) standards – “and there’s a new EC directive due to be enforced in 1996. “We have to be ready to meet the implications of the new legislation, otherwise we could be faced with expensive redesign work and delay in introducing new products.

“And going down the salt mine is a lot cheaper than creating our own anechoic chamber.”

Our products have to conform to corporate as well as statutory requirements concerning electro-magnetic emissions, and to ensure they do, two kinds of tests have to be carried out.

Those for conductive emissions (for electronic noise which goes down the mains cable) are carried out in our RFI chamber in building 6/1.

For radiated emission tests, there has to be a ‘free field site’, and says Mike, “we have an extremely good one complete with turntable and remote controlled aerials on the ridge which was set up in 1989.”

Here machines are put through a test cycle that represents actual use. The emissions are monitored on the test equipment which shows whether they are within the limits set to avoid interference with other equipment – anything from a police or aircraft transmission to a personal pacemaker.

This free field site is in constant use. “We have to test machines not only when new but also when they are in production – that is every three to six months, or when modifications to the product could affect the emissions,” Mike told us.

However, if a machine emission coincides with another more powerful ambient noise – for example, a signal such as a commercial radio transmitter – it is impossible to determine from the monitor the actual level of that machine emission.

The only way to ensure it is not exceeding the limits is by using a suitable anechoic chamber.

Mike sits on a number of EME conformance committees and it was through a fellow member from ICL that he learned of the underground cavern they have leased from Salt Union Ltd (as the salt interests of ICI are now known).

Here measurements can be done at the full 10 metres distance specified for our product. The chamber has a rotating turntable and movable aerial to ensure machines are tested in a position of maximum emission.

The process is operated by remote control from a bunker beneath the test site while radio absorbing ‘wedges’ have been installed above the tent to absorb any stray emissions.

“It’s eerily quiet down there,” said Derek. Yet mine personnel are still working about four miles away taking a thousand tons of rock salt a day.

“The facility was first used by us to test the 5034; now it’s again proved very effective in testing the new 5334,” he told us.

“Testing can take from about a day to a week depending on the complexity of the product. The test in March was an ‘engineering’ one that took five hours and, because of the very dry atmosphere, we got pretty thirsty. Fortunately there was a Portakabin where we could get a subterranean cuppa!”

**NVQ awards in EMC**

A PILOT of National Vocational Qualifications was recently completed in EMC in association with the Engineering Training Authority (ENTRA), and two members of the hand assembly section who participated in it have been awarded the relevant qualifications in electronic product assembly (NVQ level 1).

Denise Townley (left) and Sandra Gibbs, holding their newly acquired certificates, are pictured here with their assessor, electronics training officer Brian Long (far left) and section manager John Shields.

Brian is one of a group of people on site who have gained the City & Guilds 7281/11 Skills Assessor Award for engineering: the others are Alan Hughes (fuser rolls), Andy Allan (training) and Andy Embling (EMC). Malcolm Norris (fuser rolls) and Lin Jones (EMC) were undertaking the qualifications as we went to press.

IF student Teresa Redler (training) has also gained the City & Guilds Assessor Award for secretarial skills.
**30 years**

**Jack Hale** worked on both our earliest copiers, the 914 and the 813, and he recalls the day TV personality Raymond Baxter, of ‘Tomorrow’s World’ fame, came to Mitcheldean for the 813 launch which was marked by a TV link-up with Rank Xerox in London.

He stayed with that long-lived model, which became the 660, until the last one came off the line, then joined the 2300 team at Lydney, returning to work on the 10 Series. He well remembers attending the splendid show at the Lyric Theatre when these were introduced.

Apart from a short spell in audit, he’s continued in assembly and for the last 13 years has carried out final run & test on small copiers.

When the new model he’s now engaged on was recently installed in some schools in Glasgow, Jack went up north to give assistance.

His wife Anne, who worked on inspection at the London Rubber Co. before retiring, is now cleaner-in-charge at Lakers School.

Jack has long been a firm supporter of Berry Hill RFC and used to play skittles for the Berry Hill Social Club. His other hobby is rather unusual – he’s been a plane spotter for 20 years.

“I got interested in studying air lanes and I enjoy identifying the different aircraft on the aprons of Bristol, Cardiff and Gatwick airports.”

He’s not particularly keen on flying himself, except for holidays – “My ambition is to fly to Kenya to spot and photograph the wildlife,” he told us.

**Mike (‘Moggs’) Morgan** is another who joined 914 assembly in 1964 and he’s worked on numerous models since.

Made a leading hand in 1972, he too joined the 2300 team at Lydney five years later.

In the late ’70s he became a mechanical inspector on the 9000 family both in new build and refurbishing; today he inspects remanufactured 5018/28 machines in final quality assurance, and has just settled in the line’s new location in building 1.

His wife Megan used to work in the export department; their two eldest sons are at work while the youngest is still at school.

Mike used to play football for several local teams and he has long supported Everton.

We recall one memorable sporting event in which Mike took part, back in 1979. It was a sponsored cycle ride which he and 26 other Mitcheldean cyclists did to Welwyn and back in aid of the Jimmy Savile Stoke Mandeville Hospital Appeal. The charity benefited by £2,000.

**25 years**

Apprenticed as a tool-maker, **Terry Jones** was the most junior of the technical staff when he joined production engineering. He worked on the 3600 ADF and later spent some four years on the 4000 family, becoming technical specialist.

In the early 70s he went abroad for the first time to Madrid to provide technical support at a business equipment exhibition. “Believing it would be like the Costa del Sol, I took no warm clothes – and found it snowing!”

More trips followed before he moved on to CBA products, and became MED team leader on the FX9500. After its launch he achieved his ambition, to go to Europe, which led to more travel. He was in the vanguard of the 5046 pilot team at Welwyn and later, as 5012/14 engineering leader, was involved with bringing those models into production.

For the past four years he’s been attached to the harness centre where he is now manager, engineering, quality and prototype development. “It’s absolutely great!” he says.

A former player for Viney Hill FC, his current sport is golf at Lydney GC – “and I like gardening.”

Since joining the 660 line, **Dave Elsmore** has worked on virtually every one of our models – high, medium and low – and he’s been engaged on final run and test ever since the 9200 era.

About six years ago he joined refurbishing of small copiers and he currently carries out FR&T on 5034 remanufacture.

An all-round sportsman, Dave has played football for quite a few Forest clubs, and to the refurbishing of the 5600 – he moved on to the 10 Series of copiers.

It was in connection with a mid volume machine in that series that Dave spent a fortnight at our Lille plant and “it enabled me to have a weekend in Paris, which I’d never visited before.”

Today he carries out FR&T on sorters for the 5028, 5034 and 5025 machines.

His son Richard, now at Bristol University studying ceramics and design, does motorbike trials and Dave obligingly provides the transport. Daughter Julie works in Winfield Hospital, Gloucester.

“I’ve worked with some wonderful characters here,” says **Roger Roberts** – and he’s worked on the assembly of most of our models, mainly in remanufacture but also new build.

Now in 5047 assembly, he is one of the team who prepare carcasses arriving from dismantle...
& clean to ensure all are at the same level.

After a day’s work on the shop floor, Roger likes to unwind by walking his dog along the banks of the river Wye. “My father used to breed Alsatians, but I’m happy with my little mongrel – a cross between a Sheltie and a spaniel.”

The river plays a key part too in his sporting activity – angling. He’s been a member of the Ross Angling Club as long as he can remember and his two sons who also belong are “pike fishing mad”, he says. Brian (18) goes to art college next autumn, while Paul (16), a brown belt karate student, leans more towards the crafts.

Roger favours another form of self-defence; boxing has been an “obsession” for at least 30 years.

Two years ago he, his wife Jane – a home care assistant – and their sons went on a holiday “obsession” for at least 30 years.

Malcolm Norris has made his career in parts manufacturing. Having centre lathe experience, he commenced as a setter-operator on Borematics, moving on to the first Cincinnati NC machines we acquired, and then on to the Burkhartd & Weber machine centres as a setter.

About ten years ago he moved into the fuser environment, progressing from stand-in to section manager early in ’93.

“We’re very into NVQs here,” said Malcolm, who acted as assessor for the first two people on site to achieve a level 1 NVQ. Four more from the fuser centre have since qualified and another 12 or so were working towards that at the time of our chat – quite a high proportion out of a total of 26 in building 5 who are involved.

Malcolm made his first ever trip to the USA in connection with the inertia welding project in 1989, since when he has returned twice – on holiday with his wife Janet – to explore more of the country.

They have two married sons; neither works at RXMP but Malcolm’s brother Kelvin and his wife Sue can be found in building 1, and Kevin, their son, is an RX apprentice.

Chris Hamblett has been a transport man all his 25 years, operating forklift trucks and lorries. In the days when we had satellite plants, he used to do runs to Cinderford and Lydney.

But for at least the past ten years he’s been working solely on site. “I don’t mind being out in all weathers,” he says, “it makes the job more interesting, in fact.”

Several members of Chris’s family have worked at Mitcheldean, including his wife Eileen. They have four grown children and at the time of going to press Chris was looking forward to becoming a grandfather for the third time.

He had no special hobbies to tell us about – “I just like walking in the Forest with my Cairn terrier,” he says.

From jig and tool design, Brian Sellick moved into parts manufacturing planning. Here he became involved with a subcontract and his particular knowledge of our quality requirements led him into SQA which is his field today.

“Although travel has reduced in recent months, I spent a year commuting to Scotland every week,” he told us. He’s also visited Sligo in Ireland and been over to Germany on SQA matters.

He wasn’t trained in that sphere, but he says he “seems to have coped with electronics work,” and he is enthusiastic about his new electronic assistant, a laptop PC.

“You can just plug it into a computer and send a fax, or gain access to RX programs – I find it invaluable.”

For most of his adult life Brian has been a sailing man and he’s done various crossings to Brittany and the Channel Islands in his craft.

His wife June works for him (she used to work in our former print room) and his 18-year-old daughter Melissa is a keen sailor too, when she’s not at college working on her business studies and finance course.

Les can’t take it easy

AMONG THE 500 or so canoeists making their way from Herford to Ross (28 miles) on 19 June in aid of Mencap we hope to see Les Lane, 74 years young and the most indefatigable RX pensioner we’ve ever come across.

We reported on his incredible fund-raising efforts, on hands and knees, from Mitcheldean to Cinderford in 1981 and again in 1992. Now he says he’s “in the mood to do it again – probably in August. But I’m not out to break my record.”

The cause this time will be the MacMillan Nurses and if anyone would like to join him they’re welcome, he says. Ring him on 0432-266032 if you’ve got what it takes.

20 years

Martin Exell (facilities engineering) and Peter Fluck (EMC systems/ATE maintenance) who recently passed their 20-year milestone.

Training co-ordinator Pat Hawkins was married to Brian Drinkall at Christchurch Church on 23 April.

A batch of long-servers

The small batch team in this photograph represent 466 years of service – that’s an average of 27.4 years each – which must be quite a record at Mitcheldean. They posed for this picture before the retirement of four of their longest serving colleagues – Roy Chamberlain, Ron Evans, Dave Hemstreet and Derek Wicks, who share 113 years between them.

Graham’s third marathon

WHEN IT comes to running marathons, Graham Welch is well to the fore. He completed his third London Marathon on 17 April, and then took early retirement (he assures us the events were entirely unconnected!).

Despite the very chilly, windy conditions, and suffering from a cold, he decided to have a go at achieving a time of 3 hrs 45 mins. But at the 18 to 22 mile stage “the energy levels suddenly took a noseive. I realised it was a matter of survival and by slowing down was able to recover and finish the last four miles as strongly as I had started, finishing in 3 hrs 55 mins 37 secs.”

Graham was one of the Rupert runners to great the finishing line in the 1992. Now he says he’s “in the mood to do it again – probably in August. But I’m not out to break my record.”

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Skills for Life update

THE 'SKILLS for Life' project, aimed at improving essential skills, has been running on site since last October.

The project workers, Jill Moss and Sheila Priest, tutors at the Royal Eorest of Dean College, are in the process of giving presentations on improving communications skills in the workplace to section managers, and attending level 1 meetings to outline the project and encourage new students.

The Friday afternoon sessions, run in the training centre from 1.30 to 3.30pm, are well established, with employees working on a wide range of skills, from computers to letter-writing.

On Wednesdays there is now a 'drop-in centre', open for most of the day, for those unable to attend on Fridays.

There is no formal course or syllabus to follow as the sessions are tailored to the needs of the particular employee, who is free to work at his/her own pace and level.

City & Guilds and RSA certificates are offered in a range of skills, from computers to letter-writing, computer skills and numeracy.

Employees are free to work towards long-term goals or certificate, but are also welcome to come along for short-term help.

In addition to group sessions, one-to-one tuition is offered, or if an employee wants to work at home, attending a half-hour weekly session to go through the work, this can also be arranged. The group sessions are always small (never more than 12), friendly and very informal. And all sessions are free.

You are welcome to join them at any time. Jill and Sheila are on site Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Friday afternoons, and can be contacted on ext. 1894 for a confidential interview. Alternatively, ring Brian Fowler on ext. 1126.

Do come along and see what's on offer.

Jill Moss and Sheila Priest.

A year of quiet progress

THAT'S HOW chairman John Gurney summed up the past year at the Sports & Social Club's annual general meeting held on 15 March.

The premises have been upgraded with new carpets for the bar and new lighting for the function room, and "we have quotes on the table to panel the walls of the foyer."

An exciting acquisition has been a 7ft square screen which can be linked into all TV channels, including Sky.

This means that major sports events - FA Cup finals, rugby internationals, boxing matches, the Olympics - can be screened.

And, as John pointed out, "What a lovely idea for those attending an after-the-wedding party to see on video the bride and groom emerging from the church!"

"The club has been highly praised for its organisation and catering for weddings. Prices are very competitive and meals, from formal dinners to Sunday lunches to evening bar snacks, are of outstanding value."

Future projects include the upgrading of the snooker room, the cloakrooms and perhaps the lounge and function room bars, and it is hoped that these will bring extra revenue into the club.

The perennial need is for involvement from the membership, whether to serve on the committee, offer suggestions for improvements such as new facilities or ideas for promoting the club, or simply support events such as charity nights, country & western evenings or (given a better summer than last year) barbecues.

As secretary Nora Powell reported, the club membership is still around the 1,500 mark, although a slight drop is expected.

Over 100 events were booked altogether in 1993, 28 of which were company-related, 10 were charity events and 12 either whole day weddings or evening receptions.

Because of lack of support, the club does not hold many of its own functions; but there are many activities for which it is used - ranging from the Pub Sports Challenge and bingo to blood donor sessions.

There are dancing classes on Monday evenings, chess on Tuesdays, two crib teams and two dancing clubs on Wednesdays, a ladies skittles team on Thursdays and two men’s skittles teams on Fridays. "And we still play short mat bowls on a Sunday," added treasurer Dave Lea.

"At the moment we have a pool team registered to start a new season. Snooker and dart teams have been considered and talks have started concerning the holding of boxing tournaments twice a year."

From the financial aspect, there was not a great difference between 1992 and 1993 accounts, reported Dave, but it was good to report that last September the club paid its last instalment on the loan from the company for the refurbishment of the roof.

New equipment bought in the past year included a washing machine for bar and tea towels, etc, a glass washer installed behind the bar, and a gas cooker which has replaced an old electric one in the kitchen; the heating system has also been upgraded.

The overall profit figure - £5,787 - was down on 1992, not surprising in view of all the expenditure referred to, and deposit account interest fell by £2,362.

"It is the intention of the committee to build upon the reputation the club now enjoys of good value and good service in a clean, comfortable and relaxing environment," said John, who continues as chairman.

Secretary Nora and treasurer Dave are now entering their third year of office; vice chairman is Richard Morgan, while he, John Howls and Pete Griffiths are trustees.

Four others make up the committee membership - Alun Williams, Mike Barnard, Chris Reed and Colin Brown.

Former chairman Geoff Duggan was accorded life membership for his services to the club.

Numerous suggested amendments to the rules, which members had had an opportunity to study beforehand, were passed - this was mostly a matter of "tidying up".

Obituaries

WE REPORT with regret the deaths of the following:

Frederick Hopkinson on 18 March aged 80. He worked in electrical inspection and flash test on the assembly floor throughout his 17 years with us and retired in 1976. His son Nick is a member of the QA staff in EMC.

Ian Morris on 28 March aged 67. He was with us for six years and worked in inspection, retiring in 1983.

Bruce Essex on 14 April aged 73. Foreman in the paint shop, he left in 1976 after some 19 years’ service.

Charlie Murrell on 16 April aged 76. He was with us for 18 years and was working in 4000 assembly salvage when he left in 1979.

Ted Adams on 2 May aged 72. He retired in 1982 after 33 years spent in parts manufacturing; he became manager of the Cinderford machine shop and later was appointed to manage engine operations. His son, Dave, is a section manager in the harness centre.

"It’s nice to see the membership increasing and the good response you’re getting with the youngsters," said Phil King, president of the Rank Xerox Chess Club, when on 26 April he presented prizes to the competition winners: Speed Chess - Steve Herbert, runner-up Tim Darrington; Potman Cup - Steve Rogers, runner-up Don Passey; President’s Cup (internal league) - Steve Rogers, runner-up Steve Herbert. Next time there’ll be a further prize; site director Gerry Lane has kindly agreed to sponsor a cup for the new division of the internal league.