

A move to help the handicapped

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'It's splendid', said Nora Tucker as she gave the new invention a tool tryout, watched by (from left) RX apprentice Tim Orson, Lydmet apprentices Gary Martin and Stephen James, Colin Burchell of the West Gloucestershire College of Further Education, and Colin Watkins, a Whitecroft-Scovill apprentice.

RX apprentice Tim Orson, along with three other apprentices attending the West Gloucestershire College of Further Education, had a project to do for his TEC 3 (higher tech. cert.).

This being the International Year for the Disabled, they decided on a joint effort which would benefit the handicapped.

From Ken Walker, manager of the Alpha Works, a day centre for the handicapped at Cinderford, they learned about the difficulties experienced by the disabled in carrying out everyday tasks; there was, for example, one lady who could not stand or move about without the aid of sticks and who needed something to help her handle household objects.

The four put their heads together and in due course produced the professional-looking device in our picture above.

This battery-operated elevating trolley, based on the Zimmer walking frame, now enables people like Nora Tucker to move an object from one surface level to another without having to lift or carry it by hand.

At the push of a button, the trolley tray will move up or down so the

operator can, for example, slide a pan on to it from a table, guide the trolley towards the stove, adjust the tray to the new height, and slide the pan on to the hob or into the oven.

The invention took the apprentices some eight months to design and build, much of the work being done in their spare time. Various companies, including our own, donated component parts and Tim mentioned in particular the kind co-operation they had received from our model shop.

At the handing-over ceremony, Mr Walker congratulated the apprentices on a magnificent achievement and assured everyone that the device would get the fullest use in the day centre. 'It will', he said, 'be especially useful in the preparation of dishes in the kitchen'.

Another invention — a special pincer-type can opener enabling a person to open a can with one hand — was the result of an earlier project in which RX apprentices Colin Cackett and Steve Thorpe were involved.

Both this and the elevating trolley were featured in a recent exhibition held at the Cinderford college to mark the Year of the Disabled.

Another interesting "materials handling" project (but on a much vaster scale!) has been carried out recently in our international supply centre — see pages 6 and 7.

STOVES

Tenth pensioners' reunion

Maintaining our two-way link

'I'm delighted to see so many young, fit and tanned people — they look younger than some of us at Mitcheldean', said director Ron Morfee, welcoming the 270 or so attending the annual pensioners' luncheon and reunion on 20 June.

This was the tenth such occasion and the numbers keep growing. 'We now have around 500 pensioners from Mitcheldean', reported Mr Morfee.

There were two "very long service" people present — Reg Arnold and Henry Phillips with 45 and 41 years' service respectively — and 20 people with 30 or more years' service, making a total of well over 680 years' service. ('There's enough expertise here to start two companies', commented Bill Austin afterwards).

Pensioners have a particular interest in how we are doing, and Mr Morfee was pleased to report that we had had an excellent year, delivering products on schedule with good quality, and doing something about cutting our costs.

The larger machines were going well and we put a night shift on in July to increase the output rate.

Doing the impossible

'We are doing the impossible and exporting high technology products to Japan in the shape of the FX9500', he said, and this had given us good publicity. The Lydney operation was very successful and in April this year we made the 50,000th machine there.

Following on that success we were planning to introduce two more products — one at Lydney and the other one here at Mitcheldean next year.

We had gone out to get work for the machine shop (in fact, a complicated part of the Borg Warner gearboxes installed in many cars was machined here at Mitcheldean), and refurbishing was also going well.

Referring to the 1981 manpower situation, he said that 'provided people are prepared to move within the site, we hope to solve that problem by voluntary means and by adding to your numbers.

'Members, past and present, can be proud of Mitcheldean. We are now back where we belong — at the head of the league.'

Proposing a vote of thanks, Jim Evans reviewed the progress of the RX

Pensioners' Association which was set up just over a year ago.

Jim is secretary of the west region, which now covers the whole of Wales and extends from Shropshire in the north through Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Avon and Somerset down to Devon and Cornwall.

With him at the top table were Fred Wickstead, Henry Phillips, Fred Court, Len Laken, Bill Beech and Stan Wheeler, all of whom are visitors for this region (Bernard Smith and Don Elliott, who were unable to attend, are also visitors, along with Harry Robertson from London).

Jim explained that the aims of the association were to establish and maintain a personal two-way link so that pensioners could still feel part of the Rank Xerox family.

The association had already produced three issues of its magazine; it was planned that each region should have its own news sheet within the magazine, and he appealed to pensioners to contribute more items about themselves for inclusion in the publication.

Visits were taking place regularly. The intention was that each pensioner should be visited at least once a year, but if anyone wanted to be visited more frequently, they had only to say so.

He also asked pensioners to watch the company's interests by noting any inaccuracies that crept into news put out locally. Some wildly inaccurate statements had been made recently and pensioners could help greatly by reporting these so that they could be officially challenged (ring Jim on Gloucester 830580).

After the luncheon, people danced, chatted and enjoyed a cup of tea. One major topic of conversation was the group holiday organized by Pensioners Association secretary Arthur Hughes in conjunction with Saga Holidays.

About 70 pensioners from all parts of the company went along and, though staying in various hotels, they all got together at pre- and post-holiday cocktail parties (these replaced the free ticket concession which proved impossible to distribute!).

It's early days yet, but it is hoped that further such holidays can be arranged in the future.

Overheard at the luncheon

'I asked my doctor whether I would live longer if I gave up wine, women and cigarettes. He said: "No, it'll only seem longer!"'



Jimmy moves to UK Co.

Jimmy Bake, who for the past nine years has handled public relations for Mitcheldean site, and for other Rank Xerox manufacturing plants, left us on 31 July to join the UK Company; he is taking up a similar role in the sales and service sphere as manager, external relations, based at Uxbridge.

As corporate affairs manager Jimmy has looked after countless visitors ranging from schoolchildren to top people, and has done much towards giving Mitcheldean a 'friendly face'. Group personnel director Ron Barnett, in presenting him with a leaving gift at a farewell dinner, thanked him for always being ready to help, whatever the problem.

His advice on journalistic matters and his cheerful approach will certainly be missed in the editorial office.



Ron Barnett presents Jimmy Bake with a ship's decanter; for Jimmy's wife Gillian there were flowers.

Engineering records go on line

In a recent issue of VISION EXTRA it was announced that PARCS had gone live. What does this mean to Mitcheldean? And what is PARCS?

PARCS stands for Part/Assembly Records Control System and is basically a method of keeping engineering records within a computer. Previously these records have been kept manually on card systems.

Why are engineering records necessary? Every product ever made has always required drawings to convey the ideas of the designer to the craftsman who makes the part. Each drawing is given an identifying number; when a product consists of two or more parts you have the beginnings of a parts list and a control problem.

No two different parts should have the same part number. And if more than one product is being made you need to be able to distinguish what belongs with what.

This is where engineering records come in. They assign the part number, they control the parts list and keep a record of what parts belong to which product.

A drawing is never issued for very long before it requires a change and this is where another form of control is required. The drawing now gets a revision and each time a change takes place the revisions increase.

Originally, when things were simpler, records were kept by hand and parts lists were also written, but with more and more products coming into the range it soon became necessary to use a computer.

Since the creation of SOLAR, engineering have always maintained their records on a data base called the "Design Where Used List". This data base has been fed by XCN's (Xerox Change Notices) and forms the basic data base used by manufacturing for all their purposes.

A disadvantage of this was it was not an on-line data base and, although it contained Welwyn and Venray records, it did not have information on Xerox records activity.

How PARCS was born

It was during the early 'seventies that the multinational programme took off and the idea of multinational single point design became a major objective of Xerox. Out of a range of multinational tasks, a major achievement was the creation of the XCN.

This meant that all of Xerox engineering could document their product design activity into a single document. This XCN soon began to highlight the fact that the next logical step would be to have one single worldwide engineering data base located at Webster.

Moves to create such a data base began in the mid 'seventies and a major computer system was considered under the title ECMS (Engineering Configuration Management System). This system would integrate all existing data bases and would provide all the records required by engineering on a worldwide basis.



Left: Gladys Kirk, supervisor master records, feeds information into the system, watched by Dave Weyman, senior supervisor engineering records, and engineering office manager John Brain.



Below: Gladys and Sue Lazarevic working at the old card system; until the autumn, both manual and computer record systems are being run in parallel.

Unfortunately the plan was too grand and failed through sheer size and complexity but as an interim measure to ECMS a temporary data base called PARCS was created.

This data base provided a means of taking all the manual records into a computer and allowing all necessary corrections to be made prior to loading into ECMS.

When ECMS was abandoned it was recognized that PARCS in itself was already a major step forward and was worthy of development as an engineering records system.

From the early days of ECMS, Rank Xerox engineering have taken a considerable interest in developments and a project team was set up. Later, this team was further strengthened by the appointment of the first project manager, Colin Bird. He controlled a team of members from Welwyn, Venray and Mitcheldean which provided information systems and user expertise. Mitcheldean was represented by John Brain and Dave Griffiths.

After the implementation of PARCS in Welwyn and Venray earlier this year the project management passed to Eric



Marie Hall (seated) and Margaret Townley refer to the old part history file; in these archives are kept records going back to our very earliest models.

Sugden of Welwyn, who is deeply involved with the implementation here in Mitcheldean.

Since January 1980, Gladys Kirk, Dave Weyman and John Brain have been busy loading and correcting records for loading into PARCS. To do this, a temporary data base was created at the British Oxygen Company to hold all of the 140,000 master records.

To ensure the correctness of records, every drawing master held in the engineering print room was checked for its number of sheets and size. Slowly and surely up until 1 June this year the accuracy of the file was improved.

On the first day of June the load took place; it was a very good load and was one of the best so far completed by Xerox.

To ensure Mitcheldean staff were correctly trained to use PARCS, Gladys Kirk visited Xerox in April and Kate Knowlton of Xerox came for a two-week stay in June.

Now the first Mitcheldean XCN's are being processed within PARCS and the system is being opened up to other users. Draughtsmen and engineers will be able to obtain information from the terminals themselves. Passwords have already been assigned to manufacturing personnel and they will be able to access PARCS through their own terminals.

As each new bit of information is processed into PARCS, part history is being created. The old part history file — the archives — will however be retained for the use of refurbishing, SQUIRREL and other functions which need to delve into the past.

Says engineering office manager John Brain: 'The PARCS system is going to be much more accurate and provide greater information concerning not only Mitcheldean engineering drawings but also those at all other sites, and it will form one of the main building blocks for further computerisation of our methods.'

Travellers' tales

A personal view by translator Barbara Snell

The Warsaw I saw

The Swedish-built luxury Victory Hotel, scene of the IX Translators' World Congress, looks out on Warsaw's main square where half a million citizens thronged to greet *their* Pope last year.

On a Saturday in mid-May I watched ordered lines of the three armed forces commemorating "VE Day" (Victory in Europe for the under 40's) from the hotel and three days later in that same square I saw a much larger crowd vociferously acclaiming the right of the agricultural workers to form a union.

This was an exciting time to be in Poland: on the following day the news reached the TV set in the hotel lobby of the attempt on the Pope's life a few moments before; soon everyone in the country was aware of it, as the Poles listen to their radios non-stop.

The morning bread and newspaper queues lined the pavements as I looked for the offices of "Solidarnosc", the union which is revolutionizing the country with its liberal attitudes. 'Through the archway, across the yard and up to the third floor flat', had been my instructions.

I found a roomful of young people, busily recruiting members, selling Solidarity badges and T-shirts and handing out leaflets which I could not read.

The openness and popularity of the movement were impressive. A banner hung across the street, posters were everywhere and many people, from chambermaids to congress delegates, sported the symbolic little badges.



Palace of Art and Culture

The 250 participants at this triennial Congress of the International Translators Federation came from 34 different countries, as far apart as South Korea and the Argentine; between them they spoke nearly as many languages.

A lot, we thought, until the Tanzanian delegate told us 'Africa is assumed to be the cradle of more than one thousand languages', and explained the difficulties involved in converting scientific terms into languages which do not have words for anything more modern than iron-age tools. These are the same problems which faced the Malays who use such terms as "fire carriage" for a train and "ship that fly" for a plane. These expressions are transparent to everyone who speaks the language but they become unwieldy in use and tend to hinder technical communication. In Swahili "silinda" and "skruba" are used for "cylinder" and "screw", but these words do not mean anything to local people unless they are learned in conjunction with the objects, and this inhibits their use.



Warsaw's main square

We heard how our word "system" is translated by "mfumo", the "act of weaving", which becomes very complicated in certain contexts; and we were told how the literal translation of "cocktail" into "mkia wa jogoo", (the tail of the cock) had caused confusion on social occasions!

The scope and nature of the papers presented at the Congress was very wide-ranging and their value was equally varied. There was the usual quota of pompous academic contributions, particularly from the Eastern European delegations who one could be sure were putting forward an "approved line".

Awareness of, and interest in, electronic aids for translators were equally mixed. Many of the participants from Europe already used or were considering the use of word processors in their translation work, and the members of the large Canadian contingent seemed astonished that anyone could still be using a mere typewriter.

An Algerian, on the other hand, stated that all a translator needs is paper and pencil to ply his trade. I made a convert of him, and by the end of the week he was anxious to hurry home and persuade his brother in the government to introduce word processors throughout the country!

My paper on "The Translator in the Office of the Future" was well received, particularly by people from the highly developed countries which numerically constituted the majority of the audience. The brochures I had taken on the Xerox 485 telecopier disappeared as fast as I put them out, as word processors are not yet fully able to handle Cyrillic or Arabic alphabets, to say nothing of Chinese characters.

Rolls Royces of the market

My trip to Warsaw was financed by Eastern European Operations (EEO) and it made an interesting change for me to be acting as a company salesman, if only indirectly. I learned that we are known only for our copiers, regarded as the Rolls Royces of the market and priced accordingly out of everybody's reach, it appeared! People said, often sadly, 'We used to have one of your machines but . . . ' and the story usually ended with a replacement Japanese model.

The 3107 which the company provided for the congress was used really hard and behaved very well all week, much to my relief! The copies were excellent and although it is only a small machine it did the work of a big one.

The Poles were most friendly and

hospitable people; they entertained us to a reception and tour of the town, culminating in an open-air concert in the park. Summer arrived suddenly and I shall long remember with nostalgia that sunny Sunday morning by the lake, sitting between a Bulgarian and a Finn, listening to Chopin exquisitely played on a grand piano placed under a statue of the Polish national hero. The pianist — ironically — was a young Japanese woman. (Do they do everything so well?).

There was music, music everywhere in Warsaw. I liked it least in the night club under my fourth floor window of the Grand (only in name) Hotel where the British delegation stayed.

I enjoyed it most from the youngsters who sat playing guitars on the steps of monuments commemorating the rebuilding of their shattered city, or the cheerful bands of street musicians who strummed around the open-air cafés in the squares (only drinks were on sale, food seemed to be "off" the menu).

You could buy excellent records for £1 each at the official rate of exchange (nearer 20p at black market rates) so long as you wanted Chopin; blank stares greeted requests for Russian composers and ears went deaf if one spoke Russian, although it is taught in all the schools!



The striking statue of Chopin

Warsaw struck me as a city of contrasts: the shelves of the food shops were empty but the churches were full; the quality of goods available was low but the production of Boris Godunov at the opera was breathtaking in its grandeur; the grass in the parks was long and neglected but the flowerbeds were a blaze of colour.

The dingy greyness of the high-rise blocks and noisy main streets gave an added savour to the picturesque "old town" — the heart of the city reconstructed according to old photographs and pictures out of the rubble of its demolition by the Germans in 1944 to as close a replica as possible to what it was before its brutal and systematic destruction.

There is little evidence of "forgive and forget" in Poland; the population, half of which is under 30, is constantly reminded of the past and I was glad we had been an ally of this nation of brave and charming people in the Second World War.

We in the West may imagine that the differences between countries behind the "curtain" are just cracks in an alliance: at close quarters the differences look more like chasms.

Since my return from Warsaw I follow news of Poland with special interest and apprehension.



Looking down on the great Kariba dam.



On a visit to Cecil Rhodes' grave.

Colin Weaver finds

Africa spectacular!

At an age when most English people would settle for a deckchair on the prom in the hope of seeing our elusive sun, Colin Weaver flew out to where he was certain to find it — in Africa.

A retired LSA member, 78-year-old Colin worked at Mitcheldean for 15 years, from 1953 to 1968, first in the machine shop and later on assembly and salvage work.

Colin has six children — four sons (two of whom, John and Mike, are both in our works engineering department) and two daughters, and it was through the elder of the two that he came to go so far south.

She and her husband went out to Africa in 1952, and Colin now has not only grandchildren but great-grandchildren living in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) and South Africa.

They invited him to visit them and, being a widower with only himself to suit, he made the decision to travel the 5,000 or so miles.

Disregarding a friend's advice to 'pack a Sten gun', he flew on 4 February to Bulawayo, arriving during their autumn with temperatures in the upper seventies and a tribal war in progress!

But the latter didn't disturb Colin (except during a couple of nights when he heard gunfire some distance away).

Cars last longer

Colin's daughter and her husband live on the outskirts of Bulawayo which he found a beautiful city. 'The roads are mainly dead straight and wide, even outside the city itself. I saw a lot of old Morris 1000s, the ones with the split windscreen. Cars last a lot longer out there because it is dry and you don't get salt on the roads. There are masses of cyclists too.'

Fruit is plentiful; so is meat in this cattle-rearing country, with best steak costing around 40p per lb., so it's not surprising they are great meat eaters.

Mealies (corn-on-the-cob) is the staple diet of the natives; they belong to different tribes but to white people they are all Kaffirs. 'I couldn't understand a word they said', commented Colin, 'but I found them a very cheerful, happy bunch'.

While in Zimbabwe, Colin visited the Matopos National Park and saw Cecil Rhodes' grave on a hilltop, surrounded by huge granite boulders. He also motored

with his relatives via a fine main road built through the bush to Salisbury for a five-day stay with his grandchildren, during which he got a rare close-up of the closely guarded prime minister's residence.

The most spectacular part of his whole trip was when he flew to the north-west on a never-to-be-forgotten six-day tour. The family party landed at Kariba and enjoyed a 'sundowner cruise' on Lake Kariba. This is the biggest man-made lake in the world, formed by the damming of the great Zambezi River which separates Zimbabwe and Zambia. 'It's 180 miles long', said Colin, who has an admirable memory for facts and figures.

Here he watched hippos and lions who obligingly came to the water for their own sundowners.

From the Kariba Heights he looked down on the famous dam, and he also saw the memorial to 'Operation Noah', the wildlife rescue operation which took place before the area was flooded.

Next on the itinerary was Wankie National Park, a huge game reserve; then it was on to see southern Africa's greatest show — the Victoria Falls. 'They're absolutely fantastic', said Colin, 'The roar can be heard three miles away. And when there is a full moon you can see a lunar rainbow'.

Meeting Dr Livingstone's statue at the Victoria Falls. He is reputed to be the first white man ever to have seen these Falls.



Twice as wide and twice as high as Niagara, they are divided into a number of individual falls — the Horseshoe, the Rainbow and the Main Falls, not to mention a couple of cataracts and a 'Boiling Pot'. And in the rain forest created by the spray there's a fascinating variety of plant and animal life — toucans, bulbuls and other colourful birds and exotic flowers and butterflies.

From the depths of tropical Africa Colin flew down to the great modern city of Johannesburg to see his great-grandchildren.

City-size Woolworths

'The centre of the city is mainly given over to business and administrative buildings and there are a series of shopping centres on the outskirts', he told us. 'I found myself in a Woolworths in Eastgate, about five miles outside Jo'burg, which would take the whole of Gloucester shopping centre!'

He visited the highest building — the Carlton Centre — a 54-floor shopping/hotel complex with underground parking for 1,500 cars.

Colin also saw another important building — the Rank Xerox centre close to the Jan Smuts airport, but 'I didn't have a camera with me, or I'd have taken a photo of it', he said.

While in South Africa he was taken to see a collection of practically every variety of the world's big snakes, from mambas to boa constrictors — not in the bush, we might add, but safely behind glass in the National Snake Park.

He flew back to Bulawayo before setting off, on 28 March, on his homeward flight, a journey of about 12 hours, with a change at Salisbury and a call at Nairobi on the way back to England, Heathrow and Ross-on-Wye.

He was back in good time for a spectacular spring snowfall!

ANY NEWS FOR VISION ?

If you have, then please —
 mail it to me c/o Corporate Affairs, Bld 51/4,
 or leave it at any Gate House for
 collection by me,
 or post it to me at Tree Tops, Plump Hill,
 Mitcheldean,
 or ring me — ext 566 or Dean 542415.
 Myrtle Fowler, Editor

These narrow-aisle cranes



A view down one of the 180ft long narrow aisles. The racking structure is 26ft high and has a total of over 2,500 pallet locations.

On 21 July last, a new £300,000 spares storage system was commissioned in Mitcheldean's international supply centre which will enable fast-moving spares to move some 20 per cent faster.

'It increases the amount of space available for spares and will enable us to respond much more quickly to orders from our operating companies around the world', says Terry Quartermaine, Rank Xerox manager of international supply.

Mitcheldean's ISC is responsible for the shipment of machines and spares, of which 80 per cent goes for export. The warehouse operation has grown in recent years and significant increases in the volume of these commodities are forecast for the future.

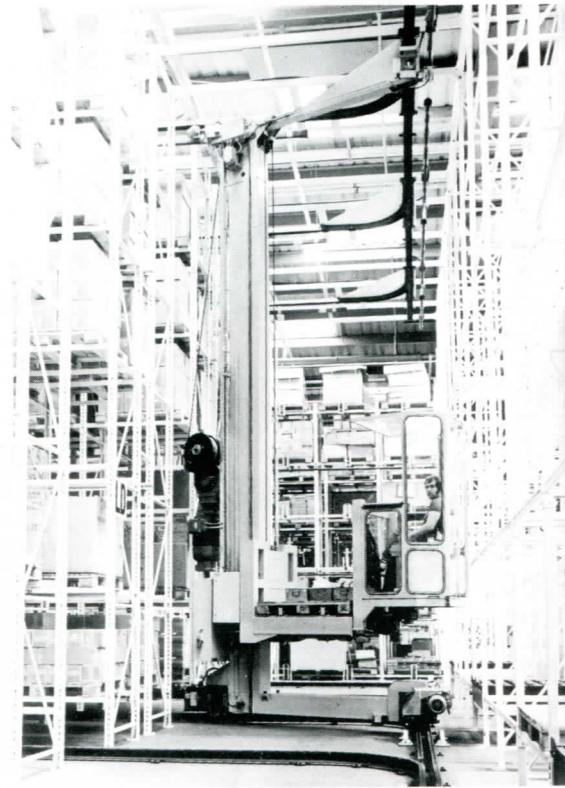
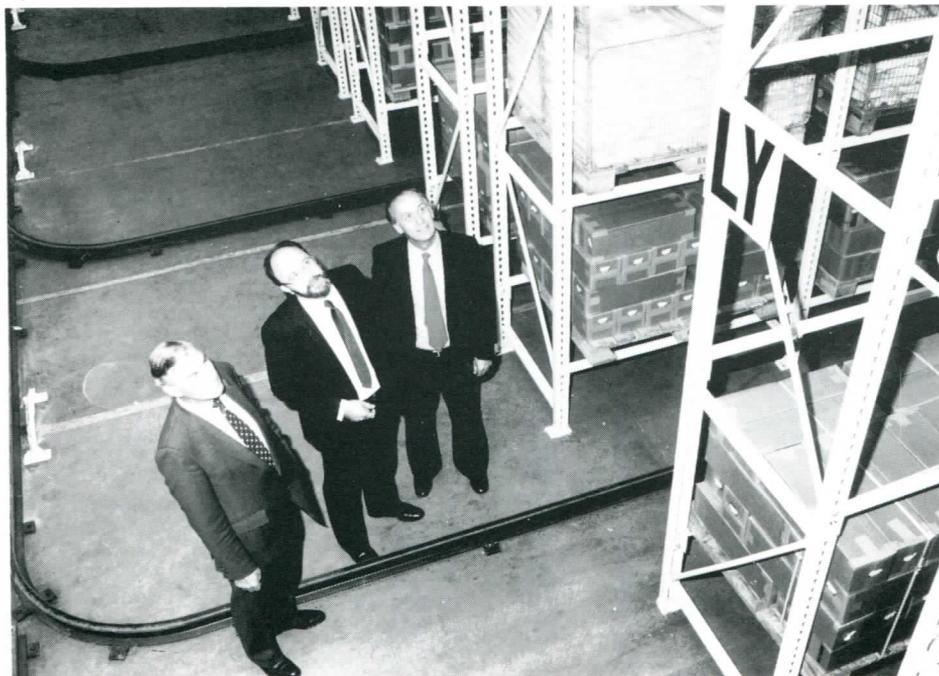
This posed the supply centre with the problem of how to gain better cubic utilization of the space available, and at the same time speed up throughput.

Operations manager Alan Phelps explained to us how, in conjunction with Integrated Handling Ltd of Brierley Hill, West Midlands, they came up with the solution — a storage system that is unique in this country.

'First we recognized the need to categorize our stock', he told us, 'and we went through a computer selection process, based on history files, which identified the items that move more frequently.'

'It is these fast-moving palletized items which are stocked in the new racking system and we review the status frequently to ensure that the specification is maintained'.

Inspecting the new storage system are (from left) John Hodgson, major projects manager, operations manager Alan Phelps and Ken Rule, warehouse operations manager.



There are transfer aisles at either end of the installation crane goes "round the bend" into one of the narrow aisles.

What makes the system operate faster is the use of stacker cranes, known as Rackstackers, which can drive round corners.

Their ability to "go round the bend" (the secret lies in the retractable guide-wheels) means that no expensive, time-consuming transfer carriage is needed to lift a crane from one aisle to another when required. The Rackstackers can be driven to where they are needed on the track rail.

This makes it possible for three cranes to operate the six aisles. Each is normally restricted to working within a two-aisle zone and when picking in one is completed, the list can be passed on to the next crane.

But if any crane develops a fault, it can be pushed along to the maintenance bay and its zone operated by another crane, so the whole system continues to be fully operational.

Controls in the cabs are manually operated but the instructions are transmitted to the machine via a microprocessor "brain" which also provides a diagnostic capability. Should something go wrong, the crane is plugged into a test set in the maintenance bay, the fault is identified on a diagnostic panel and repairs can go ahead.

Says John Hodgson, who as major projects manager was responsible for the implementation of the system: 'This cuts down-time to a minimum — hunting for a fault could otherwise take hours. But apart from this, the installation has an extremely low incidence of down-time (around 2 per cent) which also includes preventive maintenance.'



es drive our spares 'round the bend'

Further time is saved by the fact that, if the crane is to move from, say, a ground level to a top level location, the driver operates a joystick and the crane rises diagonally to the new position as it goes along the aisle.

There are over 2,500 pallet locations in the racking; goods are removed by telescopic forks, mounted on a platen between the mast and the cab, which will open out on either side.

Safety Factor

Great attention has been paid to safety. The installation is enclosed on its three accessible sides by a mesh guard, the whole area being sealed off by a special locking system so no one can casually enter and wander round.

Collisions are avoided by the fitting of infra-red scanners to the top part of each crane where it runs along a "steady rail". These scanners face both directions of travel and if an obstacle is detected, the power immediately cuts out.

The speed of the crane is automatically controlled at 125m per minute when moving straight along the aisle (that's 25 per cent faster than standard). But as the crane approaches the end of each aisle, it is automatically slowed down to 21m per minute, and it keeps to this safe speed as it is switched on to a spur, or continues along the straight track in the "transfer aisles" at either end of the installation.

At 1.25m (45in.) wide, the aisles are even

narrower than those of the neighbouring tote-and-stillage racking installed five years ago — there is a clearance of about 8cm (3in.) on either side.

But the high density effect is offset by the white-painted metalwork of the racking and the softer sodium lighting which is easier on the eyes of the operators.

To protect the high concentration of parts from risk of fire, the overhead sprinklers have been augmented by positioning sprinklers at two levels between the racks.

In fact, the whole sprinkler system in bld. 41 has been extended to give greater protection within the various types of racking so that any fire would be contained before it reached the building structure.

Looking ahead

'This latest installation is not the end of the line', says Alan Phelps. 'We are looking ahead to further development that will use our cubic capacity to the full, and provide even greater efficiency and speed of throughput.'

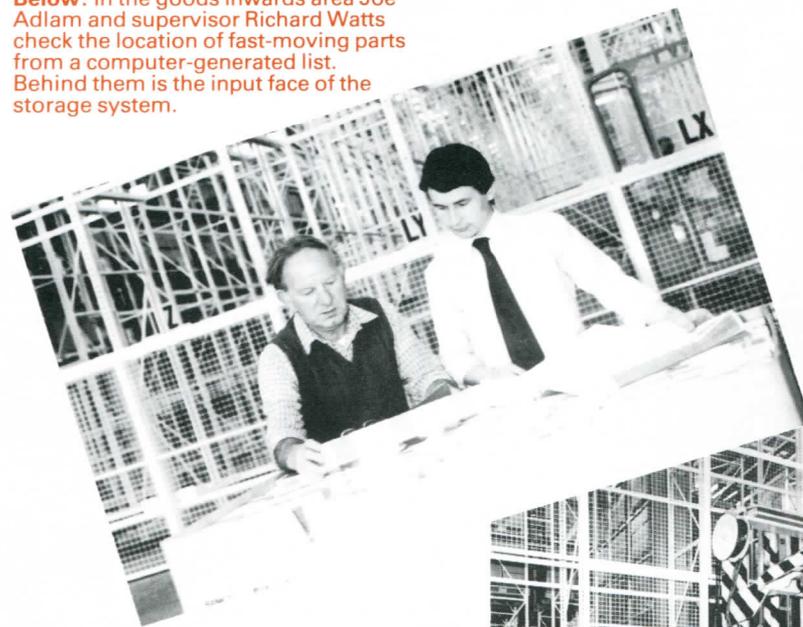
'The quicker and smarter we get, the better we can cope with demands made on us.'

Below: In the goods inwards area Joe Adlam and supervisor Richard Watts check the location of fast-moving parts from a computer-generated list. Behind them is the input face of the storage system.

The commissioning of this storage installation completes investment of £800,000 in Rank Xerox supply operations this year. Recently, a mechanization system on similar lines came on stream at Welwyn Garden City international supply centre



operations supervisor John French demonstrates the system, using a master key to release the three crane keys.



Right: The picked order is fed out by roller conveyor at one of the three pick-up points and taken by forklift truck to the marshalling area.

Left: Discussing the project during the planning stage are (from left) Graham Taylor (works engineering), Ray Turner (ISC) and Pat Madley (facilities planning).





Four-diamond Les leaves

Our longest-serving employee, Les Tuffley of the tool room, who retired in June, has enough anecdotes about his 40 years at Mitcheldean to fill the whole of this page — and some more.

For instance, there was the time when George Fricker, then tool room supervisor, called Les into his office and told him there was a mouse in the desk drawer. Suddenly they saw it running around the floor and Les took a swipe at it with a mallet.

The mouse escaped, but Les scored a bull's eye on George's foot. 'It kept him limping for nearly three weeks', said Les, 'but he didn't hold it against me!'

Then there was the time when the late Bob Baker, who was works superintendent and who normally gave warning when he was going to drop in during the night shift, called in unexpectedly and found one chap asleep.

He summoned the foreman who said: 'Oh dear, I'm always telling him about that!'

There was another unexpected visit in the small hours by a fearsome lady factory inspector — but if we go on we'll have no room for facts about Les himself.

He's very articulate which is probably one reason why, having been elected AEU

Now the possessor of a four-diamond 40-year service award, Les is all set to find more treasure with a metal detector, a gift to mark his long service,

presented (above) by Roy Powell, manager assembly. A week later Les shared a goodbye occasion (right) with colleague Roy Winstone who was retiring after 16 years' service. Roy took a particular interest in helping two of our work experience lads in the tool room. Pictured with Les and Roy are managers John Smith and Des Jones.



shop steward in 1956, he was made works convenor the same year and served as such for 15 years.

Les is one of our best known personalities, not only on site but also in Mitcheldean village and the surrounding area, and he has a long record of community service.

Elected to East Dean RDC in May 1958, he joined the Forest of Dean RDC on its re-organization in 1974 and he is currently chairman of the environmental health committee, and a member of the housing committee, as well as serving on six sub-committees.

He also represents the RDC on the board

of governors of the West Gloucestershire College of Further Education.

Nearer home, he is chairman of Mitcheldean parish council and is also treasurer of Mitcheldean sports club, having been its chairman for several years and a committee member for many more.

With so many commitments ('I have an understanding wife', explains Les) he is not likely to find time hang heavy on his hands. But he intends to devote some of it to treasure seeking.

For Les is a numismatist and, now that he's the owner of a metal detector, he says 'I'm banking on finding a haul of golden sovereigns'.



Having worked on night shift right up to the very last, leading hand Bob Hoyles came in to say goodbye on his retirement after some 22 years' service in the ISC warehouse. 'You will certainly be missed', said manager Ken Rule who made a presentation on behalf of Bob's colleagues.



Retiring after 21 years' service as a full-time union official for the EETPU, Don Houlden was presented with a pewter tankard by senior steward Bill Griffin as a token of appreciation from union members at Mitcheldean when he visited us on 10 July. Earlier he had toured the site, had been entertained by Bill, Dave Bunday and Colin Butler, and had talked with personnel manager Derek Knibbs. Mr Houlden said he was very impressed with the general cleanliness of our "extremely pleasant" plant. 'If there was an industrial relations league in being, I would put this company way up in the top half of the first division — about Liverpool standard!' he told VISION.



Two officers retire

The LSA committee recently lost two of its officers — through the retirement of former treasurer George Turner in June, and minute secretary Kathy Knight in July.

During his 26 years with the company, first in London and since the late 'fifties at Mitcheldean, George's work has involved dealing with money in one form or another — whether it was concerning credit control or sales ledgers, as chief time-clerk, as assistant wages supervisor or, more recently, as an accountant.

A member of the LSA committee for about ten years, he was a natural choice as its treasurer, a post he has fulfilled for the last seven years.

In the early days, due to his bearing and the fact that he always carried a camera around with him (in the hope of one day securing the 'scoop of the year'), George was known as 'King Farouk', and 'Farouk's Bar' was a mecca for many at Christmastime and at parties.

His ability to discourse on any subject, plus his excellent memory, also led to his being regarded as something of an oracle on site.

His wife Mary and two daughters have worked at Mitcheldean in the past, and he retains family associations with us through sons-in-law Rob Ryder in finance and Vic Jones in SQA.

Notes on Kathy

Though originally a secretary, Kathy came to Mitcheldean 21 years ago as an assembly worker. After some years, she decided she would like to return to secretarial work; so she took a refresher course and 12 years ago re-embarked on a secretarial career, working for various managers in the reconditioning/assembly areas — most recently for Graham Linley. She took over the additional job of minute secretary for the LSA when Daisy Bullock retired a year ago. 'She's done a good job and I'm very sorry to see her go', says secretary Dennis Barnard.

Kathy too has family associations with us; her husband Maurice, now a sergeant in security, joined us a month after she did, and she has a son-in-law, Derek Parker, working in payment operations.

Another June retirement was that of Gruffydd Jenkins, better known as Griff. He joined industrial engineering as a section leader in work study in January 1962 and remained an IE man for all of his 19 years with us.

Brian Bowen, in charge of the standard audit/standards procedure area where Griff was employed, presented him with a lamp in the form of a globe which came with his colleagues' best wishes for the future.

Tall story

Clive Brookes is one of four brothers, all over 6ft tall, who have worked at Mitcheldean. Myles left some six years ago; Nigel (MED) followed suit last year; then Clive recently opted to leave after 27 years' service. Now, out of 24½ft of Brookes brothers, we have only 6ft 1in. left — in the shape of Roger (a foreman in DBA assembly) who is in his 22nd year with us.

Somehow LSA dinners will never sound the same again!



At a lively skittles evening in the club house, Reg Malsom, manager general accounting, presented George Turner with a set of cut-glass Continental whiskey glasses as a token of everyone's regard.



"The lady with the lamp" — Kathy Knight receives the LSA's retirement gift from Tony Cale who was making his "maiden" presentation as an LSA vice-president.

To Swansea & the Mumbles

Having collected some 85 people from the Gloucester, Ross and Forest of Dean areas, two coaches met up at Coleford on the morning of 17 June and made their way to South Wales.

Their destination — Swansea and the Mumbles. Their passengers — retired members of the LSA and their guests, ready to enjoy the annual summer outing laid on for them by the association.

They were hosted by the committee plus two first-aiders, Jill Maxfield and Ken Hook, and thanks to the careful planning that went on beforehand, the whole trip went off without a hitch.

First stop was at Raglan Services, then it was on to Swansea via Newport. A stop for lunch was made in Langland Bay, the far side of the Mumbles. Bill Broome had provided an excellent packed meal and

tidy committee members went round with black plastic bags to collect the rubbish afterwards!

It was dry, if not always warm and sunny, and the party spent some two hours exploring before journeying to Swansea for a further two-hour stay, Edwards' drivers considerably depositing them right near the shops to save their legs.

They came back on the heads of the valleys road, calling in at Cripple Creek, an inn in Raglan, where they were invited to have their first drink 'on the LSA'.

They left about 8.15 pm and it was 10.30 pm by the time the last one was set down close to home, after (as one couple put it in their letter of thanks) a 'lovely outing which gave us so much pleasure'.



Since it wasn't possible to make a presentation to Helene West (configuration control) on her retirement after 20 years' service, LSA secretary Dennis Barnard took the opportunity to put things right during the outing.

Flying visit

Rank Xerox Aeromodellers got the professional's slant on things when, on 17 June, by arrangement with British Airways, they and their guests enjoyed an illustrated talk and film given by the Flight Manager Midlands, Captain R. M. Clarke.

With the aid of slides, he described the services run by British Airways out of Birmingham airport, the type of aircraft used, and all the pre-flight planning involved in getting an aircraft off the ground.

The fleet of B1-11s carry out a range of short-haul operations in this country and abroad; their scheduled services to the Continent are used mainly by businessmen and are timed to allow them to complete a day's work at Paris, Amsterdam, Düsseldorf or other near-European cities and return the same evening.

With most trips under the hour, and a turn-round of aircraft effected in half an hour, British Airways crews have to work harder on the ground than in the air.

A great deal of necessary information concerning weather conditions, fuel requirements, location of individual aircraft, development of any faults, etc., is supplied by computer.

In addition to planning the flight, a multitude of tasks has to be carried out in the half-hour run-up to take-off — checking, briefing, getting in supplies of fuel and catering supplies. But nevertheless they manage to average 95 per cent punctuality.

After a break for refreshments, Capt. Clarke showed a film on 'The Making of a Pilot' which revealed the comprehensive training undergone by those selected (mostly graduates these days) which transformed them into highly professional pilots qualified to climb into the cockpit of a passenger-carrying aircraft.

At the end of the film, Capt. Clarke obligingly answered a variety of questions from the audience (some of whom included a number of ex-pilots) before this most interesting evening came to an end.



RX Aeromodellers discuss flight management on model lines with Captain R. M. Clarke at the recent club meeting.

Winners in Wales

A smaller than usual group of golfers made their way to St Mellons on 16 June to compete for the Scratch and Powell Cups.

Some were unable to follow the Welsh road signs and made rather larger detours than were absolutely necessary.

The morning round was won by Danny Haines with a brilliant net 65; runner-up was Roy Taylor with a "farmed" 69. The afternoon round found a three-way tie between Terry Osborne, Goro Kushida and Danny Haines, all with a net 71.

Overall winner of the Powell Cup was Danny with a net 136 while Roy Taylor was runner-up with a net 142.

The other competition (!), the Scratch Cup, was won for the sixth consecutive time by Geoff Paton with a gross 159, while

Johnny Cash was a Scratch Cup "bridesmaid" with a gross 160.

Monday, 20 July, saw the visit to Clevedon for the Summer Cup. Scoring was on the low side, due to the windy conditions; however, Dave Robinson put together a very good morning round of net 67, Ken Ellway and Johnny Cash tying for second place with a net 77.

The afternoon round was won by Billy Gilmour, that evergreen Scotsman, with a net 69, the runner-up being Ron Carter with a net 70.

The overall winner of the Summer Cup was Dave Robinson with a net 143, while the runner-up yet again was Johnny Cash with a net 147.

Committee changes

There have been considerable changes recently in the Sports & Social Club committee.

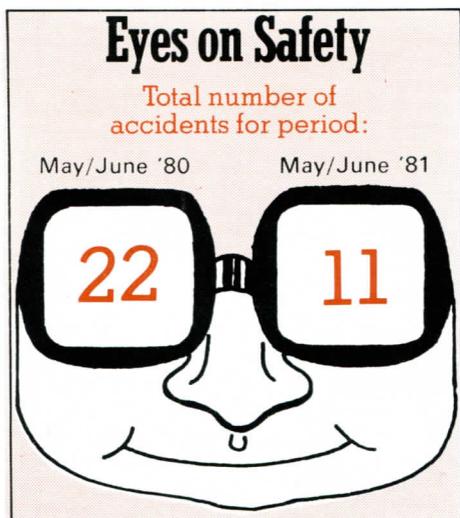
Because of increased commitments, Mike Cooper has relinquished the chairmanship and Ken Cook, who is also a trustee, has been elected to succeed him.

Two other officers have also resigned —

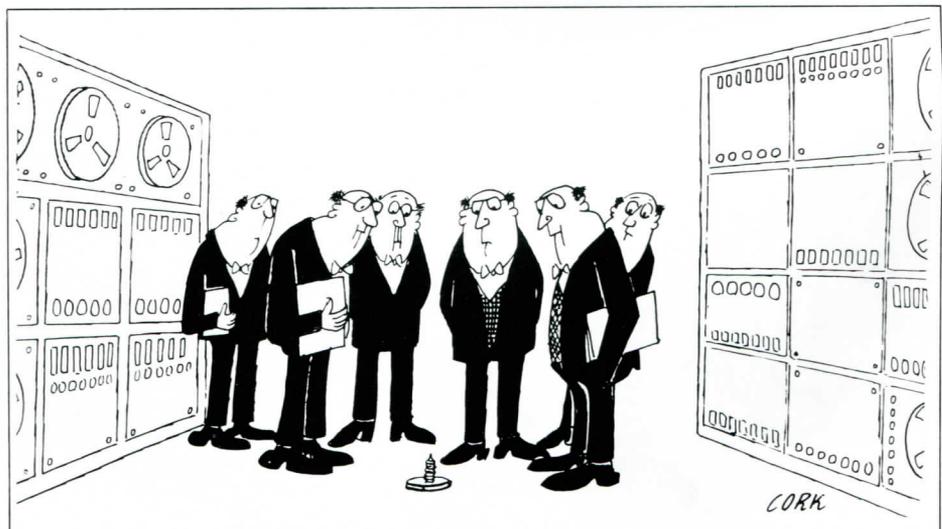
vice-chairman Brian Rhoades and treasurer Tony Sharpe. Dave Palmer has taken over the vice-chairmanship and Mike Keen has once again come to the rescue and is keeping the figures in order.

George Cooper, a former trustee, has now retired and a special meeting is being held to appoint a new trustee.

Committee member Sid Rhoades has also resigned and three new members have joined the committee — Brian Aitken, Robin Hale and Ivor Townley.



The cumulative total for the current safety year to June is 68, compared with 103 for the same period last year.



The not-so-gentle art of self-defence

Our thoughts being directed to all things Japanese, it occurred to us that there was a growing interest in yet another import from Japan — the martial arts of judo, aikido and karate — among Mitcheldean's menfolk.

What, we wondered, made them take up this kind of activity? Was it purely to equip themselves with a means of self-defence without weapons? Or did it help them to limber up mentally as well as physically, enabling them to cope better with today's challenges?

We did a bit of research among Mitcheldean's 'martial artists' — and at the same time tried to discover which of the styles would be most suitable/least painful for the gentle sex. (After all, they too have problems to wrestle with — and some of those problems are men!)

We've had a karate club here on site since the 1960's, so it seemed an obvious place to make a start. The club have a strong link-up with Abenhall School — so it can't be all that hazardous if girls as well as boys go along, can it?

It can.

We talked first to Brian John (he had a twisted toe joint). 'I'm the longest surviving member of the club', he said. (We didn't like the sound of that much.)

The popular image of karate is of the "hard" kind where they go in for free fighting, breaking bricks with a well-placed chop of the hand and suchlike. 'But', explained Brian, 'our club does Shotokai, which is a "soft" style, much less aggressive.'

Even so, you're likely to suffer a bruise or at least a stiff arm from blocking a punch from your opponent.

Club member Robin Healey of engineering optics (he does it basically as a means of keeping fit) said: 'I think our type of karate is quite suitable for women but we don't have any among the membership. I think they find the exercising part too arduous.'

What about judo? It's been called "the gentle art of self-defence" and seems to be very much a dad-and-son affair.

We talked to Mike Wilding (group purchase). We'd heard that he'd given up morris dancing ('I was hit by an excited chap during a stick dance and landed up in plaster in hospital') and had taken up judo instead at a Cinderford club. 'I felt it would be safer', he told us.

Sean White (left) demonstrates why a padded mat is useful at aikido sessions.



How had he been getting on? we enquired. 'It's stunning — I got laid out last Friday!' he replied. So much for padded mats!

Falls, we learned, are crucial in judo. It's essential to develop a good falling technique. You don't just relax like a soggy dish rag — you have to curl up and roll.

Then there are the numerous throws, arm-locks and other manoeuvres to master. It's all very energetic. In fact, Roland de Palma (RX Lydney), another judo man, said he found the sport a good slimming exercise.

Masochists

Some Mitcheldean men, it seems, are masochists about martial arts. Bill Smith (CBA assembly) — he's an instructor at Ross judo club — and Sam Phillips (MED) practise aikido as well as judo. Why both?

It must be insanity', laughed Sam. 'I've broken all my toes in turn', admitted Bill.

The techniques of aikido, according to the literature, provide "an effective method of self-defence in addition to fostering physical and mental well-being regardless of age and sex."

We recently had a chance to see a training session conducted by a visiting Japanese expert in the village hall at The Pludds, near Ruardean.

As we drew near the hall, we heard the familiar bangs one learns to associate with a "break fall". As you approach the mat at speed, and quite possibly upside down at the time, you slap the ground hard and this breaks the impact. That is — when you get the hang of it.

The club instructor is Mike Davies (CBA assembly) who is very hot on etiquette. He came to aikido by way of karate and believes passionately in its beneficial effects, both physical and mental.

'We don't learn aikido to get to know how to smash anyone up. We follow the principle of non-resistance — movements



Instructor Mike Davies (wearing the black "hakama") shows how aikido is done — in flowing style.

are flowing and rounded and you control your opponent through your knowledge of vulnerable points at wrist, neck, knee, etc.'

What did he get out of it personally? we asked. 'Aikido teaches you self-control, and I find I don't lose my cool so often now, he said. Of course, accidents happen from time to time, but that's true of many sports.'

The fact is that the martial arts aren't a pushover. They require a great deal of practice — painful practice — before they come in handy as a means of defending oneself. And where expertise is equal on either side, then it's always the stronger of the two who gains the upper hand.

However, it's all splendid exercise for sharpening your mind. In fact, your mind is the only part of you that won't get hurt.

As for women — the easiest form of self-defence (and it doesn't require any practice) still seems to be a good old-fashioned scream.

Betty gets her century

'I had three pints in a blood transfusion some years ago, so I thought I'd do something in return', said Betty Ellway of CBA assembly. But she gave far more than she'd been given — 100 pints to be exact, over a period of three and a half years!

Betty started as a donor at Mitcheldean sessions; then when it was found her blood was suitable for supplying the white cells used in the treatment of certain diseases, arrangements were made for her to attend Southmead Hospital at Bristol once a week.

As the pints mounted up, she collected a bronze, a silver and then a gold badge for her contributions; getting her century was marked by the presentation of a certificate and a Wedgwood plate bearing the symbol of the transfusion service, which she is pictured showing her workmates Olwen Bick, Rose Lloyd, Ada Blewitt and Freda Jones.

'I never minded giving blood', she told us, 'but I didn't like having my thumb pricked for the test!'



Putting you in the picture



Mr & Mrs Robin Maxfield



Mr & Mrs Armando Nardecchia



Mr & Mrs Kevin Baldwin



Mr & Mrs Stephen Wintle



Mr & Mrs David Baynham



Mr & Mrs Brian Weyman



Mr & Mrs Chris Warren



Mr & Mrs Phillip Wynn

Weddings

Robin Maxfield (MED) to Jill Mingham (commodity operations) at Newent Church on 4 April.

Armando Nardecchia (QA) to Elaine Hodges (electrical subs.) at St Stephen's Church, Cinderford, on 2 May.

Rosemary Meek (production control) to Kevin Baldwin at Holy Trinity Church, Drybrook, on 23 May.

Stephen Wintle (MED) to Christine Symonds at St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye, on 6 June.

David Baynham (MED) to Lynette Brown at St Stephen's Church, Cinderford, on 6 June.

Brian Weyman (PCD) to Vicki Beard at St Michael's & All Angels Church, Mitcheldean, on 6 June.

Chris Warren (tool control) to Jane Lucas at St Peter's Church, Newnham-on-Severn, on 20 June.

Philip Wynn (electrical maintenance) to Teresa Bevan at Lydbrook Church on 27 June.

Retirements

Joan Baird (stock control) 9 years; Nesta Broadman (stock control) 13 years; Bert Collett (receiving inspection) 18 years; George Cooper (PCD) 8½ years; Jack Freeman (CMSA) 14 years; Dave Griffiths (MG mfg eng.) 8 years; Gilbert Hawkins (QA) 17½ years; Hilda Howells (CMSA) 10 years; Joseph Hurley (support group) 14 years; Phil Kelly (works engineering) nearly 13 years; Len Lewis (internal transport) 15½ years; Laurie Rawlings (SQA) 18 years; Maurice Raw (business planning) 2½ years; Ivor Roberts (internal transport) 15 years; Joan Rooke (personnel reception) 14 years; Edwin Smith (stock control) 10 years; Donald Thomas (payment operations) 9 years; Walter Thomas (MED) nearly 9 years; Pete Watson (tool control) 12 years; Howard Worsfold (supply centre) 8 years; Mary Ireland (engineering) 14 years; Madge Price (supply centre) nearly 8 years; Marion Parsons (cleaning) almost 4 years; Jim Price (production stores) nearly 8 years. (See also *LSA Letter*).

Birth

Richard Andrew, a son for Ray Lawrence (press shop) and his wife Alma (formerly security), on 17 May.

Service Awards

Two people received extra long service awards last June: Les Tuffley qualified for a four-diamond award for 40 years' service and received this just before his retirement (see page 8) while George Hayward completed 30 years' service, which earned him a three-diamond award.



Currently working at Lydney, George joined us in 1951 to work on Bell & Howell projector assembly in the maltings; during his time with us he has worked on our small to medium machines, from the 813 to the recently introduced 5600. In due course he was made a leading hand and in 1973 was promoted to supervisor.

Both his sons, Paul and Derek, work in production control in bld 24 — Derek in refurbishing and Paul in assembly.

In his active rugby days George used to play prop forward for Ross-on-Wye, and today he likes to follow the fortunes of Gloucester RFC. He's also interested in gardening and, now that he has a greenhouse — his choice of company gift — he says 'I'll be able to produce some early tomatoes!'

Others who have become eligible for company service awards are:

20 Years

June — Bev John (toting control); July — Maureen Jaynes (file control), Barry Hall (commodity operations).

Obituary

We record with regret the death of Amy Miles (formerly assembly) on 20 July. Our sympathy goes to her family.



Above: A double farewell in CMSA to Hilda Howells (10 years' service) and Jack Freeman (14 years) on their recent retirement; manager Mike Cooper made the presentations.



Above: Dick Taylor, whose retirement was listed in our last issue, takes leave of his colleagues in tool inspection after 11 years' service, and manager Dennis Beddis presents him with a goodbye gift.