The House Magazine of
Rank Xerox Mitcheldean
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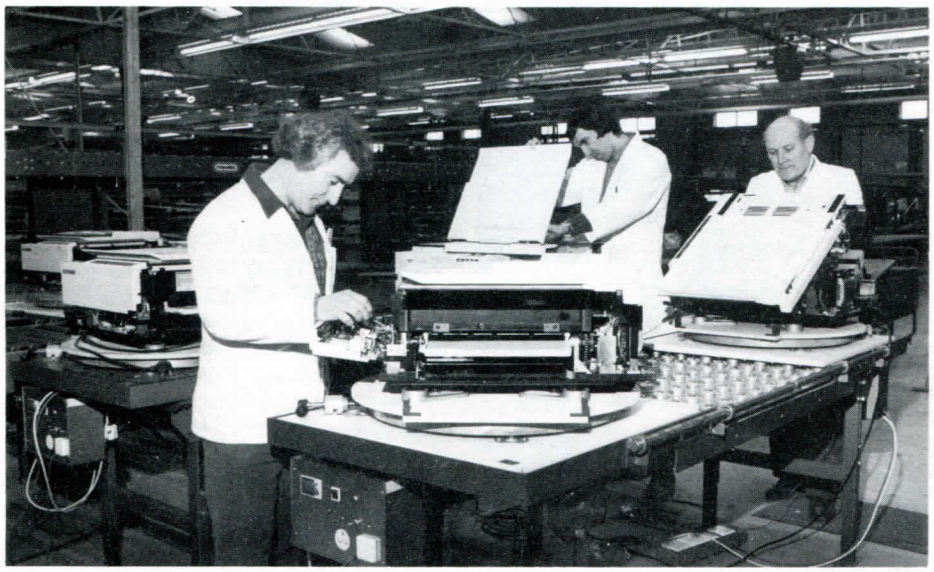
VISION

Xerox 2830 completes desk-top trio



First production models of the Xerox 2830 receive their end of line testing and adjustment; pictured (from left) are Norman Jones, Ian Dyche and Cyril Morgan.

On 16 March our latest machine came out from under the cover of a codename and revealed itself as the Xerox 2830. A desk-top copier which makes multiple copies from both A3 and A4 originals, it joins the Xerox 2350 and the Xerox 3300 (both launched at last year's International Business Show) to make a three-pronged attack on the fast growing and highly competitive low volume copier market.

While it was being introduced to the media in London, Mitcheldean people were given a video presentation in a number of canteen areas — a launch with their lunch, in fact!

The attractive features of the 2830, which produces 20xA4 copies per minute and size-for-size copies of A3 originals at 11 cpm, were pointed out to viewers by Judith Dingley (formerly of Severn Sound).

As we went to press, work was nearing completion on a £3 million purpose-built assembly line in bld. 32 which uses the latest computerised technology for assembly process and quality control.

Designed and developed by Fuji Xerox, our associate company in Japan, the new desk-top copier will be assembled at a higher production rate than any product ever built by Rank Xerox before, and eventually some 80 per cent will be exported. In the first year of operation, the value of these exports will amount to £30 million.

The 2830 is available for rental, or sale at around £1,950 including the optional storage cabinet (which is manufactured at Mitcheldean).

It is being marketed in Britain by the new retail and dealer outlets as well as direct sales. In addition to the four Xerox Stores in the London area, three more have been opened (one at Liverpool and two stores-within-a-store at Manchester and Newcastle) while two further stores are scheduled to open at Bristol and Cardiff soon.

The story of the Xerox 2830 calls for publicity in a 'multiple' manner, and we've reserved a big slot in the next issue of VISION for featuring the machine, the progressive style of its production and the people involved at Mitcheldean.

Marketing director Nick Kane and assembly manager Roy Powell at the Xerox 2830 press launch.

IT WENT WITH A BANG!

Just as the press launch was about to commence there was a 21-gun salute! But it wasn't a publicity stunt laid on by the UK Co. – it was the nation's welcome to the Sultan of Oman whose arrival in London coincided happily with that of the Xerox 2830!

Going for the gold

Under the eye of Derek Wade of training department, this level 1 group are using bricks to illustrate the building up of a histogram depicting a "normal distribution" pattern – a sampling method that can be used to estimate the variations in a manufacturing process.

Total quality control is our aim

Statistical techniques are the tools for the job

All over the site eye-catching posters have popped up bearing slogans that say it in a variety of ways: quality improvement is vital and everyone of us is involved.

A specially designed logo featuring a circle of gold links has blossomed not only on posters but also on drip mats and stickers which have attached themselves to mirrors, memos, telephones – and some quite unexpected places!

Saying it even bigger are the boards put up at the main gates which remind people when they come in to work, and when they leave, that quality matters.

It's a publicity campaign that has certainly got people talking; several have liked the posters so much they have asked for spares to take home, and visitors from other Rank Xerox locations have shown considerable interest.

In addition, weekly bulletins on our quality status have been put out on Freephone (ext. 1461) and VISION has done its bit by focussing on the specific tasks being undertaken in key areas – design, supplier conformance and in-process defects – as part of the quality improvement programme we are pursuing vigorously.

As a follow-up to the initial tape/slide QIP presentation made last year, a video has been prepared in which QA manager David Stokes puts over the broader message about how quality affects us and how we affect quality. This is being viewed by everyone at Mitcheldean, and it has also been shown at Welwyn.

David points out that while QA measure and communicate, the responsibility for quality rests with each functional area. 'We want quality work from everyone' – and that means avoiding mistakes in clerical work just as much as faulty components on the line.

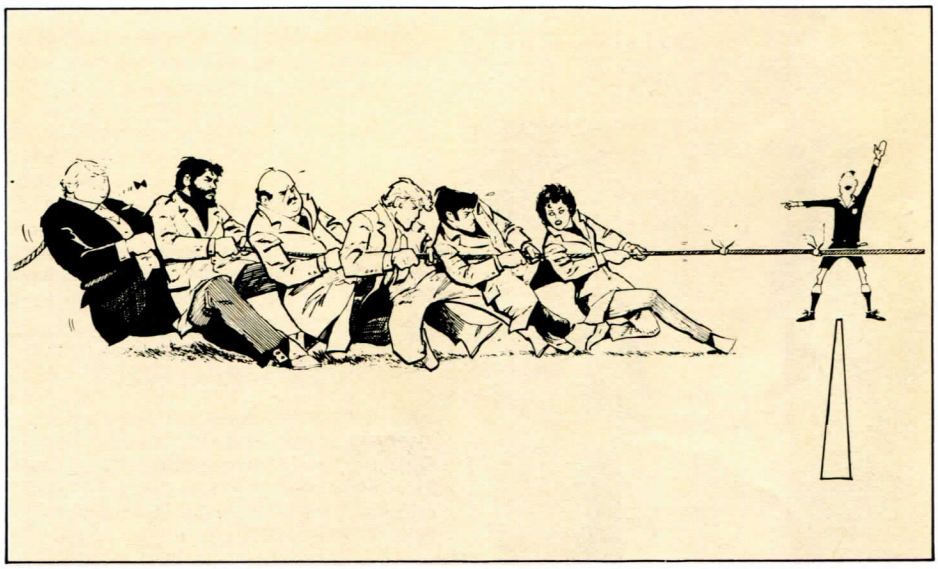
Major training programme

Such measures alone, however, won't get us the results we want. New statistical quality control systems are being introduced which are designed to prevent errors occurring. To operate those systems, people require training to a greater or lesser degree in the use of statistical methods of sampling, process capability studies and the use of charts.

These are the tools that will enable us to control the quality of whatever process we are engaged in.

After considerable research, attendance at courses, and delving deep into the weighty works of Dr Juran – the quality "guru" of international repute – a strategy has been prepared by Derek Wade with the assistance of Dave Mills, EMSD manager, quality systems assurance. It was launched early this year and will ensure that everyone has

"You're what makes Rank Xerox that much better" runs the slogan on this poster currently appearing on site.



an understanding of statistical quality control techniques at the level they need.

"O" and "A" levels

Five levels have been established, starting with zero level which will be given at normal communication sessions. This is intended for those who need a basic understanding of the measures being taken, and will ensure they are familiar with the jargon.

Level 1, which all managers, supervisors and engineers are currently receiving, is designed to give them an appreciation of process capability control, pareto analysis, cusum charts and other statistical techniques.

Said one supervisor after attending a session: 'It gave us some useful formulae and already I find myself taking a more analytical approach to my work.'

Some of the supervisors and engineers – the "drivers" who will be involved with the installation of statistical controls on site, or will be required to provide back-up to our suppliers – will also take the more advanced level 2. Those coming into the category of "system designers" will go on to the even more advanced level 3.

A specialist few will aspire to level 4 and will act as a "think tank" of in-house consultants.

For those with special needs (for example, setter/operators who have to use special tools and make magic marks on control charts), supplementary training will be arranged as required.

Initially, some 2,250 people have been identified for training up to the end of December – the remainder will follow in 1983.

Aiming for the bull's-eye

Aiming for zero defects may be seen by some as trying for a kind of Utopia. But we have to aim for the bull's-eye – "near enough isn't good enough".

Competition is getting tougher all the time, and as another poster slogan puts it, if the customer is spoilt for choice, Rank Xerox must spoil him for quality.

EMP – it's way out in front

As we entered the clubhouse function room on 26 January, we could sense the sheer force of energy being released. Yet the decibel count was very low, and the only sudden flashes were those of inspiration.

It was no disco in progress, but a 'quality circle' of managers from differing areas of operation concentrating their energies on cracking a site-wide problem.

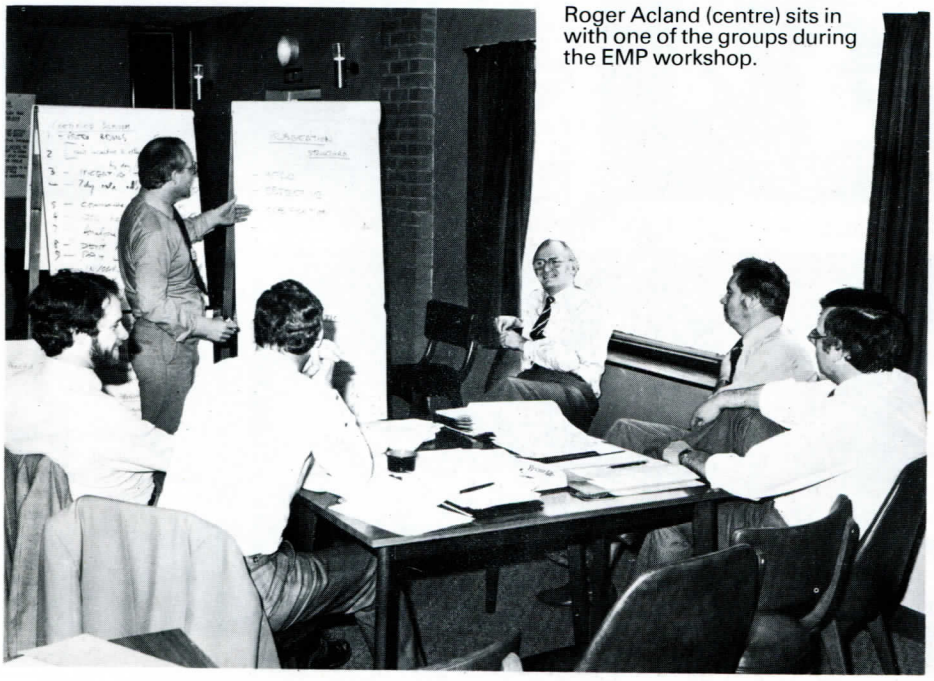
Papering the walls were checklists to remind them of 'force field analysis', 'generating alternatives' and other mysteries of management science, while on an easel was displayed a honeycomb-like model showing the tasks they had to tackle in order to 'clarify, create, organise, control and consolidate.'

EMPhasis on involvement

There was nothing new about the problem, but the techniques they were using to get results were rather special.

About two years ago our management training team introduced a course known as 'EMP'. Electronic Management Project? Extra Managerial Perception? Neither – it stands for 'Experienced Managers Programme.'

Evolved from the earlier MTTP ('Managing Tasks Through People') programme, EMP had been developed by Peter Grainger, Brian Buckland and Roger Acland (the present course leader) to give experienced managers training in techniques that would assist them in developing their skills in a certain structured and disciplined manner embodied within a task planning model.



Roger Acland (centre) sits in with one of the groups during the EMP workshop.

Those who participated in the course suggested improvements and a simpler model was built up, taking into account the greater emphasis now placed on involvement, skills of communication and high expectations of people.

Peter Grainger has presented the course on a number of occasions to Xerox and it is recognised as the best management training programme within the Corporation.

On 26 January, EMP turned 'full circle' when some Mitcheldean managers who had been on the original course in 1980 attended a follow-up workshop.

At a previous evening session they had been brought up to date with the improvements incorporated in EMP, and topics for discussion at the workshop were considered, the final choice being one on which senior management wanted their recommendations.

Armed with some useful data, they met at 8.30am on the 26th in the clubhouse – which is where this article came in.

Using the revised techniques, they had to clarify the problem, focus on the priorities, decide on the objectives, brainstorm ideas, develop the best option and formulate an action plan.

In their role as process leaders, Peter and Roger guided, cajoled and nudged as required. From time to time they chipped in with remarks like: 'That's expensive. It's not going to help our costs,' 'What do you mean when you say clarify?' and 'You have only about half an hour left before lunch and you still have to get an action plan out.'

The deadline was 4pm; that was when they had to make a formal presentation of their recommendations to senior management, and demonstrate how and why they had reached such conclusions.

A positive contribution

Said Peter beforehand: 'The workshop will stand or fall by the quality of the recommendations they make.'

It stood. Director Ron Morfee congratulated them on doing a very good job. 'You have made a positive contribution to an exercise already being carried out by a working party,' he told them.

What did the EMP workshop do for the individuals taking part? We asked around and met with favourable comments.

'I've taken part in quite a lot of management training and this was the most closely related to work – I thought it very good.'

'We were a mixed bunch who would not normally come together to discuss such a problem, so we got a fresh, individual approach.'

'When you're busy with day-to-day matters you can't step aside and take a long, critical look at *how* you are making decisions – this gave us the opportunity to do just that.'

Today EMP is being 'exported' from Mitcheldean to the rest of EMSD – tomorrow the world?

RX Lydney meet the stars

Steve Boyle jumps for the ball after a line-out.

Recognising the available talent of Forest rugby players at RX Lydney, former player and rugby enthusiast Malcolm Burnett decided it would be a good idea to organise a friendly match against the neighbouring factory of Cromptons Paper Mills at Lydney.

It duly took place and resulted in a very encouraging win for our team by 48-0.

The enthusiasm of the Lydney workers persisted and further games followed against teams such as the Forest of Dean Police, the Boat Inn Redbrook, and RX Mitcheldean (a side assembled by assembly department).

These all ended in victory for the Lydney team and provided good Sunday morning entertainment for all concerned.

It was jointly agreed by the players to form a club affiliated to the main Sports & Social Club, and arrange fixtures on a more regular basis against a variety of local sides.

A committee was formally elected, consisting of Malcolm Burnett (chairman), Malcolm Bevan (secretary), Rob Lewis (treasurer) and Alan Miles (fixture secretary).

The club now has 24 player members and is faithfully supported by many Lydney workers. Special mention should be made of their three first-aiders – Gilbert Hoare, Cyril Lancett and RX pensioner Jack Smart – who have helped out with the magic sponge on several occasions.

With much hard work by the players themselves in the organisation of draws and dances, and the support of the Lydney management, the team have now succeeded in purchasing their own rugby shirts in Rank Xerox colours.

These were proudly worn for the first time in their most ambitious game to date against the Gordon Sargent 'All Star XV' – a line-up consisting of eight Gloucester players, five Bristol players and two from Lydney, the majority of the team having represented England at international or under-23 level. A formidable challenge for any team!

Malcolm Bevan had had the idea of organising a match to raise money in response to a recent television charity appeal on behalf of the Women's National Cancer Control campaign, and it was through the influence of Malcolm Burnett and Gordon Sargent in local rugby circles that the idea became a reality.

An official programme was produced by the players which was sponsored by Rank Xerox and other local companies. It gave considerable advertising space to the Xerox 2350 copier produced at Lydney, and over 800 programmes were sold.

Despite arctic conditions and freezing rain

Above left: Here come the All Stars! **Above right**: Malcolm Bevan, Malcolm Burnett and Gordon Sargent confer before the match.

RX Lydney line-up – they were trembling, but only because of the freezing temperature!

RX LYDNEY		ALL STAR XV
Tony Powell	*Fullback*	Peter Butler, Gloucester & England
Rob Lewis	*Wing*	Richard Mogg, Gloucester & England
Roger Smith	*Centre*	Brian Vine, Lydney & Gloucestershire
Paul Howell	*Centre*	John Watson, Bristol & Gloucestershire
Geoff Tuffley	*Wing*	Alan Morley, Bristol & England
Keith Johnson	*Outside half*	Colyn Price, Lydney RFC
Steve Powell	*Scrum half*	Peter Kingston, Gloucester & England
Graham Eacups	*Loose head*	John Doubleday, Bristol & England U23
Roy Creed	*Hooker*	Steve Mills, Gloucester & England
Bob Harris	*Tight head*	Austin Shepherd, Bristol & England
Alan Miles	*Second row*	Steve Boyle, Gloucester & England B
Clive Adams	*Second row*	Andrew Elley, Lydney RFC
Philip Bowdler	*Flanker*	John Watkins, Gloucester & England
John Emery	*Flanker*	Mike Rafter (capt.), Bristol & England
Malcolm Smith (capt.)	*No. 8*	John Haines, Gloucester & Gloucestershire
Replacements	*Referee*	*Replacements*
Hugh Cromie	Cyril Davies (Glos.)	Gordon Sargent, Gloucester & England
Alan Powell		Alan Brooks, Gloucester & England Colts
Mike Rawlings		

at Dockham Road, Cinderford, on 16 February, the Lydney team put up a brave fight, but were treated to an exhibition of first-class rugby which resulted in defeat by 66 points to 14.

However, the team's spirits soon revived when it was known that £350 had been raised for the charity.

There were more 'stars' to come after this most successful event. At the request of the WNCC, several of the committee members attended a presentation lunch at Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane to present the cheque, and found themselves fellow guests of sporting and TV personalities like Judith Chalmers, Kenneth Williams, Jan Leeming, Roger Taylor – to name but a few.

The team have quite a few fixtures up to the end of the season, but are open to challenges from any worthy competitors!

As we went to press they were in the process of organising a weekend 'away' match to conclude a successful and exciting 1981/82 season.

M.B.

Malcolm Bevan presents a cheque to the WNCC chairman Pamela Cooper; on the right is Judith Chalmers, chairman of the appeal committee.

Emergency services called out

The works fire brigade, and the security force, were called out on 24 March. It wasn't an emergency though, but a presentation marking the retirement from active service of the three veteran firemen pictured – (from left) Vic Baker, Jack Barnard and John Hyett. Vic and John, who have both served for 15 years, and Jack, who has served for 11 years, were each presented with "Phoenix" tankards by chief fire officer Tony Cale as a token of appreciation. Having done their bit over the years in keeping the danger of fire at bay, helping in cases of flooding and carrying out special rescue operations (as happened during the January snows), the trio have now hung up their helmets, happy to know that others have come forward to keep the force at full strength.

On a proper footing

Apart from being a neat way of finishing off a pair of legs, feet are still a cheap and popular method of transporting the human body.

But they're vulnerable as well as valuable. So, when special protective footwear is available free to workers in areas where feet could be at risk, why don't they wear it?

Having no hard facts to go on, health and safety officer Dave Higman decided to do some research. He prepared questionnaires designed to reveal the problems underfoot and these were distributed in the areas concerned.

The effectiveness of the survey depended on the degree of employee participation – and Dave was delighted to get a response from some 950 people (representing around 1,900 feet, or 9,500 tender toes).

Of these, over half had at least one problem concerning protective footwear while some unfortunates had three or four problems.

Excessive wear on socks was a common complaint; some found the footwear too heavy and some thought it 'unacceptable' and 'hard on the foot.'

Other problems quoted were: incorrect fitting and lack of choice, high insteps, hammer toes and hot and sweaty conditions.

One form-filler commented that protective footwear was 'good for gardening, building and bovver, but made his legs ache.'

Another with unbelievably large feet (size 16 was the figure given) indicated that he had no problems whatsoever. Oddly enough, protective footwear only goes up to size 12!

Further fascinating foot facts have come to light – including the revelation voiced over 'Freephone' by Eric Toes (have we spelt it right?) that people in bld.29 have, on average, larger feet than others on site (facilities planning please note!).

Footnote

But, joking apart, the survey has proved well worthwhile; the results are now being evaluated and safety management are hopeful of finding an early solution to protective footwear problems on site.

Students get £1,500 in awards

We're working to a higher level

Quality was the theme at the annual presentation of financial awards for further education successes.

'We have tried to relate the awards and the efforts that have been made to our quality improvement programme – in short, quality starts here!' said David Lowde, manager training and internal communications, when he opened the proceedings on 27 January. The occasion naturally has a youthful slant, and David had something to say about the two schemes we run for those starting out in life.

About 50 per cent of the young people who had done projects at Mitcheldean since the inception of our work experience scheme had gone on to take full-time employment, and he said a personal 'thank you' to all those involved in getting the scheme off the ground and sustaining it.

Under the technical apprenticeship scheme, six HND awards were being made on this occasion, and David pointed out that about 40 per cent of those who could be taking higher national diplomas were doing so.

Sights were being raised, and it was intended that the youngsters now being recruited into the scheme should make the HND, rather than the HNC, their target.

'We also have plans to broaden their training by including planning management and interactive skills – in other words, to give them all-round experience and not confine this to the sphere of engineering. The idea is to make them aware of the many aspects of running a factory and being involved in industry.'

"Apprentice of the Year" Dominic Jury receives the An Dowding shield from director Ron Morfee. On the left is L Lowde, manager, training and internal communications.

Director Ron Morfee, who came along to present the awards, made further reference to the work experience scheme and said he was pleased to note that the Manpower Services Commission had been congratulatory about the effort and care that went into our programme.

'There has been a suspicion that companies would use the scheme as a means of cheap labour; that is not the case at Mitcheldean,' he said, and he expressed his gratitude to those who were taking an interest in young people by acting as mentors.

A question of application

'The main Xerox corporate goal for the 'eighties is to become the number one company in providing office productivity. Within that global target I want Mitcheldean to be the corporation's number one plant – both as regards cost-effectiveness and the delivery of defect-free products.

'The achievement of those two objectives depends mostly on the people who work at Mitcheldean.

'We have been comparing the ways in which we and our competitors (particularly the Japanese) operate. One key difference that emerges is the very high proportion of people engaged in manufacturing factories in

The successful students

Technical

Apprentice of the Year: Dominic Jury.

First Year Training Certificate: Daniel Baglin, Stephen Cooper, Robert Dix, David Harding, Dominic Jury, Richard Pittaway.

Technical Education Council: Mechanical – Gary Aston, Mark Barnard, Nick Hill, Jeffrey Jones, David Pudge, Adrian Shuttleworth; *Electrical* – David Baynham, John Ireland, Noel Jury, Stephen Wynn.

Higher TEC Certificate (Electrical): Martin Edwards, Royston Jones, David Pollock, Anthony Walding.

Craft Studies, Part III. Mechanical – Colin Harris, Martyn Wilks (2 credits).

Full Tech. Certificate: Mechanical – Colin Coles, Gary Hopkins, Alfred Mason, William Whitfield; *Electrical* – Michael Smith.

Higher National Diploma: Electrical/Electronic – Spencer Johnson, Philip Turner; *Electrical* – Martin Lee; *Mechanical* – Nicholas Farr, Martyn Jones, Mark Slater.

Indentures

Philip Birch, Clive Cooper, John Curtis, Martin Edwards, Nicholas Farr, Bill Greenman, Richard Jones, Martin Lee, Leslie Meek, Richard Pudge, Graham Read, Mark Slater, Andrew Walford.

Commercial

'O' Level Economics: Roger Hanson.

Business Education Council: National – Michael Hurcombe, Barbara White; *Higher* – Wendy Carpenter (distinctions), Stephen Hoskins, Mark Phillips.

University Degree

B.Sc.(Mathematics): James Couchman.

Professional

Institute of Purchasing & Supply: Part I – Mike Benbow, Martyn Cox, Neil Howell; *Part II* – Susan Keen, Mark Phillips.

Institute of Cost & Management Accountants: Foundation B – Graham Beach, Douglas Bevan; *Professional Part I* – Susan Ireland.

Institute of Personnel Management: Pat Hawkins, Richard Sullivan.

Managerial

National Examination Board for Supervisory Studies: Richard Canning, Roy Chamberlain, Christopher Coleman, John Elliott, John Ireland, Feruccio Marangon, Marvyn Martin, Steven Prosser, Dave Ravenscroft, Kevin Virgo.

Institution of Industrial Managers: Certificate – Malcolm Bevan, Brian Greaves, Malcolm Howard, Peter Roost, Terry West; *Diploma* – Peter Rounce.

Diploma in Management Studies: Keith Foster.

drew
David

Japan who are educated to higher levels than is normal in this country and the USA. The figures are fantastic – they have the edge on us in this respect.

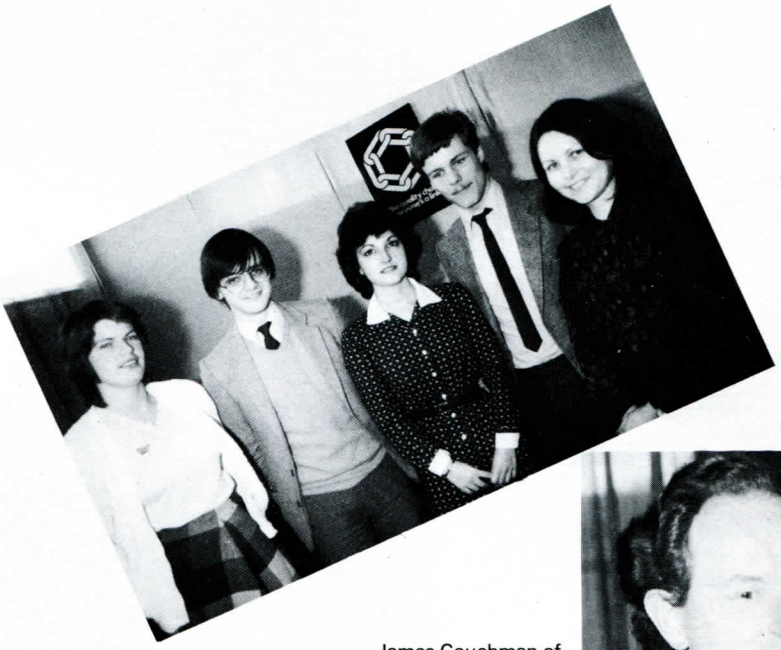
'By being here today, either as managers or as people receiving awards, you are showing that you understand how important this aspect is.

'The other essential ingredient is a willingness by everyone in the business to put all their skills and talents into their efforts at work at whatever level. We could have the best educated, trained force in the world, but if its members didn't apply that education and training, we wouldn't be getting very far.

'I ask you to find ways of using the skills and knowledge you have acquired at various levels and apply them for the good of the company; you will then be enhancing your own future as part of that company.'

Before handing out £1,500 'in a worthwhile cause', Mr Morfee added his sincere congratulations, particularly to those who had flogged away at studies in their own time after doing a full day's work.

Those successful in passing the NEBSS examinations.



Some of the "professionals".

Wendy Carpenter (supply centre) receives Mr Morfee's congratulations on gaining distinctions in her BEC Higher course. In the background is Eric Tose (training).

James Couchman of engineering who gained a BSc. degree in mathematics.

Left: A group of apprentices – some with their indentures, some with HNDs, and some with both.

Above: People with management qualifications.

To Moscow and Leningrad

with Peter Rounce of materials planning

There is an old Russian proverb which says 'If you go only once round the room, you are wiser than he who sits still.'

It was with this sort of feeling in mind that I decided to pay a New Year visit to the Soviet Union. Curiosity apart, there were other factors affecting my decision.

I have a basic knowledge of the Russian language from a distant 'O' Level; the Soviet Union is keen to expand its tourist industry, particularly to the West, and I was interested to see how they had progressed; also, New Year is the time of the Winter Festival in Moscow, a typically Russian cultural and artistic celebration.

Finally, I was keen to investigate, and maybe explode, a few myths about the Soviet system and way of life as presented to us in the Western Press.

My trip included Moscow and Leningrad, with an overnight train transfer between the two cities. It proved to be an unforgettable experience.

As I was travelling with Intourist, the Soviet Government tour operators, travel was by the state airline, Aeroflot. The aeroplanes, an Ilyushin 62 on the outward journey and a Tupolyev 154 on the return, were old and noisy, while the cabin staff were conspicuously inattentive throughout and their only appearance was to serve the meal.

I learnt later that Aeroflot cabin staff are instructed not to mix with passengers from the West, beyond a basic courtesy, and that the parking of the aircraft at a distant corner of Gatwick Airport was to prevent staff from disembarking during the stop-over.

Sticking to the rules

First impressions were not favourable. The flight was delayed, arriving late evening Moscow time, which meant the magnificent Sheremetievo Airport being kept open especially. However, far from hurrying us through the formalities, delays were endless.

Suspicion was rife, particularly of any printed matter being carried, while a thorough search of one's person and luggage was usual. Even my passport photograph (admittedly beardless and hairier) was the subject of a second and third opinion before it was deemed to be acceptable.

One could only assume that there was sensitivity because of the Polish crisis, but it soon became evident that a rigorous application of rules and regulations, and a general dogmatic approach, are features of the Russian character.

The Soviet Union is still learning the tourist business. The hotels in Moscow and Leningrad proved to be splendid buildings, the former erected specifically for the press corps at the 1980 Olympic Games, but both were lacking in the refinements which visitors require.

Lifts were inadequate, direction signs non-existent, bars too small (in Moscow I estimated that there was room for only some 350-400 people to sit down in bars/lounge areas in a 4,000-bed hotel) while the Russian obsession with bureaucracy was a constant source of irritation and frustration.

St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, Moscow. Below: The Alexander Column in Leningrad's Palace Square seen through the Triumphal Arch, with the Hermitage in the background.

Promptness for meals was essential, or one was liable to forfeit a course; but with variable mealtimes and no indication of these times, this was almost an impossible task.

At the time all this irritation seemed deliberate, to preserve a cold exterior, but, with hindsight, I believe there was a basic willingness to please which was hampered by ignorance, and an inability to communicate effectively with people of a different culture.

Although Moscow is one of the world's most populous cities, with over eight million inhabitants, its layout gives a marvellous feeling of space. The street pattern is regular, a series of rings which reflect the city's expansion since the 14th century from the central Kremlin, crossed by numerous main routes radiating from Red Square.

Contrary to popular opinion, Red Square is not named as a symbol of the Great October Socialist Revolution (their term, not mine) but because of its grandeur – the Russian word 'Krasnoy' means both red and grand.

The square itself is surprisingly small, but impressive, with the ornate St Basil's Cathedral on one side and the imposing walls of the Kremlin along another.

Everything associated with Tsarist Russia has been preserved in museums, maintaining the history and appreciation of art which could easily have been lost after the Revolution. With the exception of the Senate and the Palace of Congress, all the buildings within the walls of the Kremlin are museums, the principal one being the Armoury, which contains countless priceless treasures of Imperial Russia.

The Palace of Congress is a major venue for the Winter Festival, and I attended a performance there by the Bolshoi Ballet of 'Coppelia.' The production, one of some 60 put on at various theatres and palaces of culture throughout Moscow during the 12 days of the festival, was faultless. Being one of only a handful of foreigners among an enthusiastic audience of over 6,000, in a magnificent auditorium which shames any other I have seen, was in itself a very special experience.

Venice of the North

While Moscow is very much a working city, bustling and noisy, Leningrad exudes charm and beauty. I fell in love with the city – affectionately called 'The Venice of the North,' but with palaces, churches and boulevards reminiscent of Paris as well, all glistening romantically in the snow.

Leningraders, too, are very passionate about their city and have rebuilt to their original style all the buildings devastated during the 1,000-day siege in the last war.

Leningrad was the cradle of the October Revolution (celebrated rather perversely in November following the modernisation of the calendar), and the Palace Square, where the first shots were fired, is still a very atmospheric place.

Along one side of the square, and on the banks of the River Neva, is the majestic Hermitage, formerly Peter the Great's Winter Palace, and one of the great houses of art in the world.

My first visit was on an organised tour – a mistake, as the guide was obsessed with Flemish paintings, particularly those of Rembrandt, which left little time for anything else. My particular interest was in the modern art and French impressionism collection which is reputedly the best outside Paris. I was not disappointed on returning the following day.

The Soviet obsession with culture, physical and artistic, is very evident and pleasing. This even extends to the city underground systems which, while being highly efficient, are also a feast of architecture and sculpture, with waiting halls lined in marble, and statues and mosaics prominent.

The Russians themselves respect this cultural provision, and I found a genuine enthusiasm everywhere, particularly at the ballet and state circus performances I attended.

It was difficult to assess the general mood of the Russian people. They were usually unsmiling and unwilling to linger in conversation, conscious maybe of the constant military presence, but I found them

always ready to aid the often bemused stranger.

It is true that their lives are simple, and subject to rigorous conformity, and it is those who step outside this conformity that are oppressed by authority.

Russians are not permitted to expect much from life and are not given the opportunity to sample the luxuries enjoyed by Westerners, which may account for the thriving and much-publicised black market in foreign currency, denim jeans, chewing gum and British cigarettes.

I was convinced, however, that tacit consent was given to this black market as it was almost embarrassingly open, with no obvious attempt to control it.

The basics of life are assured, which guarantees broadly passive acceptance of an existence geared totally to the furtherance of the collective system at the expense of the individual.

Housing, in drab apartment blocks which stretch for miles, is available for all and dirt cheap (about 5 per cent of income).

No shortages

Unemployment is non-existent and transport is highly organised and cheap – the Metro, the most expensive means of transport, has a flat rate of 5 kopeks (4 pence) – while clothing and food are plentiful, including fresh fruit and vegetables in the middle of winter.

I saw no evidence of shortages, while the popular notion of endless queueing is more a result of dreadful service inefficiencies than anything else. It is worth noting, though, that most non-essential items are expensive and of dubious quality. A television, for example, is the equivalent of five months' income while a private car costs some ten years' income.

I found the Soviet Union a vigorous and exciting country and am keen to pay a return visit. Several memories will stay with me – of old ladies shovelling snow, the insistence of the hotel waiter that each guest was restricted to 30 grams of coffee at each meal (not very much!), endless queueing, the ubiquitous samovar, statues of Lenin, the smallest and hottest railway sleeper I have ever experienced, and finally, the sheer magnificence of Leningrad, one of the world's most beautiful cities.

If one can ignore politics, and the air of sinister officialdom, a visit to the Soviet Union is a delight.

Ted Adams retired in March after 33 years spent entirely in manufacturing operations at Mitcheldean. On joining in January 1949 he worked on autos, becoming setter and then leading hand. He joined supervision in 1967, moved to Cinderford with the various sections and eventually took over as manager there. Last year saw the consolidation of Cinderford with the main site and the appointment of Ted as manager, ridge operations. Said parts manufacturing manager John Wood at a farewell presentation: 'We will miss not only his considerable experience but also his helpfulness in coping with any crisis.' The LSA presentation was made by Vic Buhlmann, president and a former colleague of Ted's, who spoke of their happy years at RXC. The gifts of DIY equipment, and the fact that he has a three-acre smallholding, would seem to indicate that Ted's retirement will be a very active one!

March also saw the retirement of LSA committee member Eric Parsons of the apprentice training school. The first half of his 27 years with us was spent first in experimental dept (as the model shop was known) and later the tool room; then he joined the training school and for the last 14 years has been passing on the benefit of his experience as a skilled machinist to hundreds of young people – among them Brian Fowler, now apprentice training co-ordinator in charge of the school. A sporting man, Eric is well known as a trainer in another field – he breeds and trains gun dogs. Among his farewell gifts were a pair of binoculars and 'I'm going to be an outdoor type from now on,' he told us.

Reg Arnold

One of our longest serving employees, Reg Arnold died on 7 March aged 69. He started with Gaumont British (which subsequently became part of the Rank Organisation) in 1930 as a cinema projectionist in the Monmouth area, later becoming an installation engineer.

He transferred to Woodger Road, Shepherds Bush, and then in 1941 came to Mitcheldean where at one time he was in charge of our press shop. He was working as a production engineer when he retired in 1976 with nearly 46 years to his credit.

Our sympathy goes to his family.

The perfect attenders

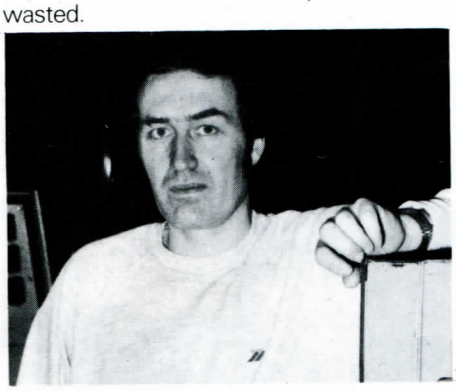
These drivers, managers, buyers, analysts, storemen and other materials department staff all have something in common – a record of perfect attendance in 1981 – qualifying them for an award under the new company scheme. Manager Richard Cowser, presenting them with gift vouchers (and an Argos catalogue to browse through), thanked them and said: 'We need people like yourselves in our drive to improve our competitiveness.' (We couldn't interview all those receiving awards, but we reckon that Maureen Baker (second from right), who is a leading clerk in stock control at Lydney, must be a super perfect attender, having had only two days off in 14 years!)

Stricter controls pay off

In the past year, the Sports & Social Club has had no less than three chairmen. So it is good to report that Dave Palmer (small batch), whom the committee elected at the beginning of December to see things through until the AGM, was unanimously re-elected to the chair on 11 March.

The main item of news in his report was that a new clubhouse cellar would have to be built and a special meeting would be held to discuss this; limited space in the existing cellar was causing stacking problems and presenting a safety hazard.

The incoming committee would have to keep a close eye on costs and wages in the present climate, he pointed out. The recession and recent budget changes would probably hit the licensing trade hard, and the good work done over the last two years could be wasted.



Club chairman Dave Palmer

A business-like footing

In their reports, both secretary Harlene Denning and treasurer Mike Keen spoke of the changes that had been made to put the club on a more businesslike footing, and showed how the introduction of stricter controls was now paying off.

Entertainments: Since these had not been well supported and had shown an increasing loss, live entertainments had been drastically reduced; instead, the function room had been made available for Saturday bookings by organisations and members, and this, together with regular Friday night discos and live entertainment on special dates only, was now resulting in increased income.

Wages bill: The aim had been to cut this considerably without affecting the standard of service and at the same time give the club staff an overdue pay rise.

This had been achieved by: franchising the kitchen to the private concern known as 'Chez Vous' (thus turning a former loss into a profit of £50 per month); introducing a proper hourly shift; and charging the various sections for excess hours worked by staff.

In addition, the company had agreed to allocate £5,000 to help with the wage bill.

Bar revenue: This had increased, though sales were down. A check on invoicing had paid off when it was discovered that a discount due had not been paid for 2½ years' back dealing. It was also discovered that a better discount could be obtained for certain spirits, so members benefited with cheaper prices.

Accountancy charges had been reduced now that accounts were audited on a six-monthly instead of a quarterly basis.

Juke box and video machines had increased in profit but *fruit machine* profits had decreased slightly (with the recent budget changes the duty per machine will increase to £750).

Film sales showed a loss (many out-of-date films had been sold off at half-price but no complaints were received!) and since the club cannot now compete with large stores it may be that film sales will have to cease.

Snooker profits were slightly down. Two new sets of snooker balls for match use had been purchased and the torn cloth on one table had had to be replaced.

Among the major items of expense, the greatest outlay was on carpeting and the provision of a new dance floor. The purchase of a microwave oven and an ice-maker had also been necessary for health and safety reasons.

A payment of £17,552, being one year's repayment of the building loan, left a balance of £70,208 owing to the company. A further payment that was due on 1 September 1981 had not been made pending negotiations with the company regarding the proposed cellar extension.

Mike was pleased to be able to announce a surplus profit of £12,151, which, compared with £9,030 the previous year, showed a promising trend.

Cause for concern

One matter that was giving cause for concern had no connection with finance and that was the disturbances in the Gloucester Road caused by youngsters (and sometimes full members) leaving the club, and Harlene appealed once again for the few who were responsible not to spoil things for the rest of the 3,500 members.

She also reminded members of the amount of work and time that had to be put in by the committee ('You have to be willing to give up at least two nights a week and it could be more sometimes, especially for the senior officers'), and there were times when it didn't seem to be appreciated!

As Bill Jones pointed out, without a committee the club would have to close, and he was very disturbed by the low attendance at the meeting.

We're glad to be able to report, however, that enough volunteers were found and the following were elected to serve for the ensuing year under Dave's chairmanship: *vice-chairman* – Bill Jones; *treasurer* – Mike Keen; *committee* – Brian Aitken, Dennis Beard, John Beard, Dave Brookes, Thora Brown, Betty Ellway, Sandy Gaylard, Robin Hale, Stan Seaborn, Reg Taylor, Ivor Townley.

Sheila Sykes was elected to join Margaret Cale and Bill Jones as a third trustee, while Harlene Denning continues as secretary for another year.

Their own judges

Photographic Club members had an enjoyable evening on 18 February viewing, and judging, their own internal competitions. There was a good entry of slides and the judges, selected at random from the membership, announced the following winners on points in the two classes: *Smoke:* 1st – Vance Hopkins, 2nd Terry Darrington, and Val Berks; *Open:* 1st and 2nd – Ted Meadows, 3rd – Val Berks and Terry Darrington.

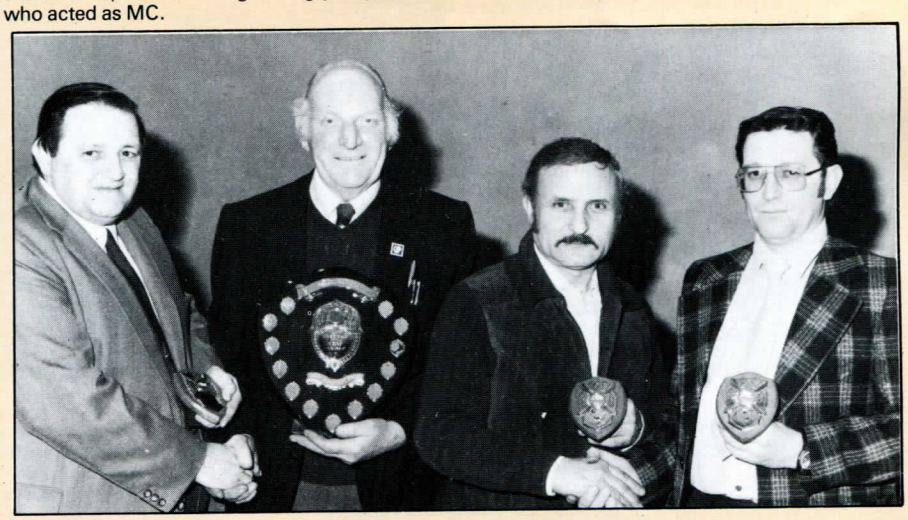
Meetings in April included an audio-visual show at Hereford on the 1st, a slide battle at Ross on the 14th and a portrait evening on the 19th (with real, live hairdressing models!), while the 22nd was reserved for the annual general meeting.

Mike Wilkinson

The cumulative total for the current safety year to February amounted to 19 – a big improvement on 44 for the same period last year.

Specimen trophies

Two members of the RX Sea Angling Club – Dave Pollock and Ted Chetcuti – beat the club record (which is near the British record) for specimen fish, and in so doing hooked some trophies. These were presented to them at a social evening on 25 March by S & SC treasurer Mike Keen. Our picture shows Mike, Dave (holding the big yearly shield he won), Ted and Angling Club treasurer Olly Evans who acted as MC.



The new darts champions – the Machine Shop Stragglers (from left) Melve Williams, John Townley, captain Robin Hale, Barry Burge, Ted Williams. **Right**: Runners-up — 914 Arrows Robert Partridge, Ian Stewart (extra), captain Graham Grindle, Bernie Frazer, Paul Wilkins, Alfie Price.

Lady champion presents prizes

When our leading darts players met in the clubhouse on 20 March to settle who would be champions in this year's interdepartmental tournament, they were watched by a certain quiet, unassuming lady guest who had kindly come along to present the prizes.

That lady was Marian Sullivan who has captained the England ladies' team twice and who, in this year's Gloucestershire county championship, beat her own sister, Irene Kendrick, who currently plays for England.

The evening began with the semi-finals in which Machine Shop Stragglers demolished Small Batch 6 : 1 while 914 Arrows beat the clubhouse team Barrow Boys 4 : 3.

The two winning teams then fought to the finish, resulting in a 4 : 3 victory for the Stragglers. But there was consolation for the Arrows in that their captain, Graham Grindle, was awarded the trophy for the highest shot out (125).

Marian Sullivan presents the winners' trophy to Robin Hale, the Stragglers' captain and organiser of the tournament.

Popular Pets

The February meeting of the RX Amateur Computer Club was well attended by both members and visitors.

The theme of the evening was the Commodore 'Pet' computer, which was ably demonstrated by Tony Penny of Milequip; his talk on 'The Silicon Office' presented an enlightening view of the type of software available for use with these computers.

There was a range of Pets available for use by anyone wishing to try their hand at programming or running one of the various games programs available and this proved very popular with the younger visitors.

The following meeting, also held at the Berry Hill Social Club, was the AGM on 24 March.

The following were elected to serve for the coming year: *president* – Keith Jones; *vice-president* – Mev Shelley; *treasurer* – Geoff Barnes; *secretary* – Mike Selwyn; *committee members* – Paul Milsom, Steve Hardcastle.

Party people

Here's a big "thank you" from 900 children to all those kind helpers!

Father Christmas ("protected" by security officer Lew Parry), a clown and a white rabbit all went down well at the January parties.

A record year

Philip Turner's performance in 1981 is well worth recording.

A newly indentured RX apprentice, now with works engineering department, he both gained his HND and was judged best cornet soloist in the Severn Sound Radio brass band competition, held for the first time last year.

His musical success is associated with the Cinderford Town Band; he has been a member for ten years and is now their principal cornetist. Other Mitcheldean members are: trombone Tony Murrell (finance), second cornet Steven Wintle (MED), and Mike Wilkinson (facilities planning) who plays the flugel.

The band as a whole have had a very successful year too; Gloucestershire champions several times over, they gained the championship again in 1981 winning all five prizes. They were also first prize winners at Weston-super-Mare contest and winners of the first 'Severn Sound Band of the Year' competition on local radio.

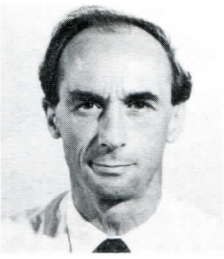
Their first LP recording, made in 1978, went so well they decided to make a second one, which was recorded in our ballroom last September. This features Philip playing the lovely 'Rusalka's Song to the Moon' as a soprano cornet solo. His mother, Christine, who is the band's resident vocalist, contributes one of her favourite songs 'Edelweiss', and Tony Murrell a trombone solo arrangement of 'The Ash Grove'.

To maintain their high standard the band practise three evenings a week; they do about 20 concerts a year and five or so contests.

A HAPPY NOTE

As we went to press it was announced that the 1982 Severn Sound brass band contest is being sponsored by Rank Xerox Mitcheldean.

Putting you in the picture



Tony Burke, engineering operations manager, presenting Ken Fox with a Sinclair ZX81, a company gift to mark his completion of 35 years' service, remarked that 'Ken has always exhibited a useful degree of constructive impatience.' RXEG director Don Stephenson gave Ken his 35-year award and also took the opportunity to present Tony with his own 15-year award. Pictured right are 30-year award winner Jeff Kew of engineering (top) and Bill Cinderey of QA with 35 years' service.

Service Awards

The extra-long service awards we feature this issue are divided equally between the engineering and production areas.

Last February, **Ken Fox** completed 35 years with us, during which time he rose from being a tool engineer to head up the engineering facility at Mitcheldean.

Having moved over to the design function, he had, by the late fifties, become a senior manager with responsibilities for design, draughting, prototype build and debug activities on Bell & Howell products.

With the demise of the cine business in the early 'sixties, Ken transferred his allegiance to the growing Xerox development (initially the 914). In the latter part of that decade he was made design manager of the 4000 machine, following which he assumed responsibility for the then range of products which included the 1824, 1860, 813, 720 as well as the 914.

1973 saw him become design manager of the 9200 and related programmes and, some six years later, he was given responsibility for all programmes. Then, in 1980, when Tony Burke moved to Welwyn as manager, engineering operations, Ken succeeded him as Mitcheldean's engineering site manager.

The recent introduction of Strategic Business Units into RXEG has resulted in some major structural changes; it has also meant a new title for Ken – that of product management and development manager – reflecting those changes.

Engineering has for some time been split into two factions – those in favour of Concorde and those who regard it as an environmental threat. While Ken, who trained as an RAF pilot, belongs to the latter group, **Jeff Kew** (a Lancaster bomber rear gunner in WW2) is strongly pro-Concorde. But happily this doesn't seriously affect the concord that exists between them!

They came to know each other in the early 'sixties when Jeff came to Mitcheldean. He first joined the company 30 years ago this April at the Woodger Road, Shepherds Bush, premises, and worked under the late Stan Pratt on the design of professional cine and photographic equipment.

His first association with Mitcheldean was in connection with the fast pull-down camera for telerecording on 16mm film; Ray Camp made the hardware in Mitcheldean's experimental department (one of the model-makers was a young Don Peates) and Jeff recalls testing it and installing it in various cities in Germany during the 'fifties. He also worked on the flat plate xerographic equipment and the Copyflo mentioned in our last issue.

When Stan Pratt came to Mitcheldean as chief engineer, he brought Jeff as his personal assistant, and during the years that followed Jeff's responsibilities embraced various aspects of engineering, from the reliability laboratories to the general office, from the 2400/3600 programme to the design and development of all input and output devices.

Ken Fox tells us: 'He has a great love for things mechanical and suffered real grief when one of his product children (Contact) was consigned to the breaker's yard. I suspect, however, that he still hoards some bits which he managed to rescue.'

Since 1976 Jeff has been in charge of engineering services, including general office management, the model shop and the drawing office (with the recent reorganisation, draughting facilities have become part of the product development team activity).

As well as being a keen amateur photographer, Jeff has recently taken up wood carving. Comments Ken: 'Having worked his way through the animal kingdom, I think that it is inevitable that he will graduate towards a hand-carved wooden supersonic transport – working model, of course!'

Over to production – and **Bill Cinderey**, who was a lad of 14 when he joined us in the carpentry shop 35 years ago this April. After a break on 'national service', Bill returned to work in the case shop where they made the housing for B&H projectors and speakers, rising to chargehand and then supervisor.

In 1966 he switched to assembly work on the 813 (later the 660), becoming an inspector, and for the last year he has been with spares packing.

He has been an AUEW shop steward since 1968 and has also served on the negotiating committee for the industrial unions.

Bill's wife June, who is secretary to John Smith, special fabrication operations manager, has reached her 21st year of service so, between them, they have notched up a good 56 years' service.

Another who joined us straight from school in April 1952 was **Jeff James**. He has worked in the machine shop on autos ever since and is now an auto-setter. 'I must like it or I wouldn't have stayed so long,' he commented.

Jeff courteously resisted our interviewing techniques; but we did discover that he is a hi-fi addict. He prefers tapes to records and has literally hundreds of them at home.

'It doesn't matter what I listen to – classical music, pop or whatever – it's the quality of the sound I'm interested in,' he told us.

Retirement
Jack Jenkins (commodity operations) after 13 years' service.
(See also LSA LETTER.)

Births
Nicholas Edward, a son for Mike Benbow (RX Lydney) and his wife Pat, on 23 January.
Sophie Marie, a daughter for Terry Kavanagh (engineering) and his wife Sally (formerly engineering), on 28 January.

Wedding
Nicholas Farr (engineering) to Julie Martin at St.Peter's Church, Clearwell, on 6 March.

Julie and Nicholas Farr

Obituary
We record with regret the deaths of the following: Ernest 'Rusty' Matthews (works engineering) on 24 March at the age of 54; Cyril Lancett (RX Lydney) on 16 April aged 42; pensioners Fred Harris, aged 68, on 18 February; Ernest Hatch, aged 60, on 26 February; Tom Knight, aged 67, on 28 February; John Matthews, aged 64, on 13 March; Jock Yuill, aged 69, on 3 April.

Our sympathy goes to their families.

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

Other awards
The following have also become eligible for company service awards:

25 Years
March – Bill Reed (mfg QA); *April* – Trevor Baxter (receiving inspection).

20 Years
March – Bill Evans (CMSA), Glyn Miles (QA engineering), Richard Williams (assembly); *April* – Bob Adams (RXL assembly), Len Jones (works engineering).