IT'S AN odd feeling, arriving at the Welwyn Garden City site in busy Bessemer Road and coming face to face with so many Mitcheldean and ex-Mitcheldean people.

There they are, working alongside WGC people in the 'H' block offices and looking as though they'd always been there.

It's even odder, entering the adjoining 'A' building, and finding oneself in what looks like a miniature Mitcheldean assembly floor, manned by people we are used to seeing on our home site.

This is the pilot plant — an essential part of the way we do business today when developing a new product and one that is putting Leadership Through Quality principles into practice.

In 1985 Rank Xerox Engineering Group acquired a new name when it became the headquarters of the Mid Volume Business Unit; Joe Marino, appointed vice-president and general manager of the Unit, came over from the States and settled in at Welwyn where the new programme, transferred from Henrietta, had got off to a good start.

This programme is of very special significance for Mitcheldean. For the first time, as programme manager Ron Caldicutt explained, our site has lead responsibility world-wide for the processor of a mid-volume product.

"It is very important — one of the most important programmes within the Reprographic Business Group," Joe Marino told us. "and Mitcheldean's excellent reputation for quality over recent years was a significant factor in the decision to give it a lead role."

The pilot plant is not, however, a 'first': the setting up of a manufacturing facility on a small scale to try out the design, processes and tooling, and identify and solve any problems that arise in advance of first production build, is an intrinsic part of the Business Unit concept.

Having a stable product at start-up with the minimum number of subsequent special actions enables a machine of the required quality to be produced on time in a cost-effective manner.

When the 1045 family, designed at Welwyn, was being developed, the pilot plant was located with the main production plant in Venray.

This time it was decided that, during the time of maximum change, the plant should be kept close to the engineering location. A joint WGC/Mitcheldean team master-minded the planning and setting up of this facility, led by Vernon Smith (a former Mitcheldean man), who is the pilot plant manager.

The mini-factory came into operation last year, and the first thing you notice over the entrance to this high security area is the words "Tomorrow is today" — a constant reminder of the pressure on the factory floor.
Bright and colourful, it covers some 30,000 square feet, the largest part being devoted to processor assembly with a main line, sub-assemblies, test, packaging, audit and stores.

There are separate facilities for the accessories being built at Welwyn and in North and South America, and the presence of representatives from these locations lends the place a multinational air.

There are offices for the technical quality and material logistics staff, and for Vernon Smith and production management, plus a conference room for the many meetings that take place. A further facility — much appreciated by the staff — is the refreshment area.

**Dedicated team**

Building of the new machine is carried out in blocks at specific stages of development, allowing the manufacturing process to be planned down to the last detail. Engineers, quality and training personnel work closely with the operators on the tryout.

Says production manager Peter Whiles: “The major contribution we make to the programme is to identify all the engineering and manufacturing problems we are likely to encounter and ensure they are closed out. And we all work together with the engineering community to resolve the problems.

“The emphasis in everything we do is on teamwork, and the team we have at Welwyn from all the various functions is dedicated to the successful introduction at Mitcheldean of a product that has achieved all its customer requirements.”

Readily accessible over in ‘H’ block (reached through a connecting passageway) are the design engineers and their research labs where the prototypes are developed with the aid of the most advanced techniques. More “expatriates” here — among them John Jones, Dennis Bendall and Bob Greenman who, incidentally, received his 30-year service award in 1986.

Explaining the benefits that engineering derive from co-location with the pilot plant, John said: “We get fast feedback in making design changes, and we can cope with them better because if any clarification is needed, we can contact the key person direct.”

**Further integration**

Development of a new product involves the development of new systems, the taking on of new responsibilities. Flexibility is the order of the day.

An appointment which recognises the importance of working together to bring the product through from the technical development stage to stable production is that of Geoff Paton as manufacturing resource team manager.

Geoff, who has worked in the USA and at Mitcheldean, reports to both Bob Osborne, chief engineer for this mid volume product, and to our site director David Stokes who says: “I think the manufacturing resource team is a strong concept and will work well for this programme.”

In his new capacity Geoff coordinates the pilot plant activities, spares and logistics, and advanced production operations (APO).

To have the procurement of hard and soft tooling carried out in the same place as the design, development and building of a new product is yet another innovation, involving further integration of staff.

After losing our way a few times in the upper reaches of ‘H’ block, we found some more familiar faces among the configuration control and forward products procurement (FPP) groups.

Here David Sanderson, as materials manager (advanced production), heads a team of planner buyers and SQA people; he reports to APO Manager Adrian Bruring, as does Welwyn’s Richard Cronin who is in charge of configuration control.

The new product is sourced using CCM supplier bases, and close on 100 vendors are involved, some of them new to...
A discussion of vendor tooling changes between (from left) John Rawsthorne, configuration control, SQA co-ordinator Terry Cooling, Dave Sanderson, materials manager (advanced production), planner buyer Bob Parsons and Paul Ace, WGC procurement.

"We have had Wim Haan from Venray here, to help us with the Continental suppliers," said purchasing manager Peter Street.

Materials are ordered through SOLAR and delivered to Mitcheldean for storage, supplies being sent on to the pilot plant as required.

Programme management responsibilities have also been re-aligned to facilitate the transfer. Ron Caldicutt, who has managed the programme from the early design stages, now reports into Kevin Horrobin who has manufacturing programme management responsibility for introducing the new product into our assembly operations.

Readiness to transfer has been reviewed with the MVBU on a monthly basis until recently. This frequency has been increased to weekly as the pilot stage draws nearer. The build-up of Mitcheldean personnel at Welwyn is now complete, and these people will form a core of experts who will play a key part in the smooth transition from pilot plant to this site.

Weighty effort

QC inspector George James had his own personal challenge. He went on a sponsored slim in aid of the spina bifida appeal and lost six stone in as many months, raising some £300. Since then, he admits he has "put a big portion" back on — no doubt in order to be able to slim for charity once again!

OBVIOUSLY THERE is much coming and going between our two sites; if you’re making a day visit, a journey of some 125 miles has to be tacked on at either end.

Most of the 50 or so Mitcheldean people now at Welwyn are residents, however; some have been there for a few months, others for more than two years.

Accommodated initially in hotels, the majority now live in rented houses or flats during the week. Every Monday morning around 5.45am they leave their homes to travel Welwyn-wards. An early start is vital because of traffic hold-ups due to roadworks at the Hertfordshire end which can play havoc with your timing. "Every time I think I’ve got it sorted out, they dream up some new diversions," said one commuter.

However, since the completion of the M25 things have improved considerably. "Time is something everyone is conscious of. "The week goes nowhere," said Peter Street in FPP. "We are here until 7pm or later if necessary. But it’s a creative atmosphere and we’re all working happily together."

There are plenty of activities available in the evenings; they range from courses at local technical colleges (anything from French to photography) to ‘keep fit’ activities such as swimming and circuit training. "The facilities are very good in this area, and you can travel up to London quite easily."

It’s a challenge

"The atmosphere is brilliant," was how Sandra Gardner put it. Until recently she was the only woman in the pilot plant team, and “she has proved an ideal candidate,” said Peter Whiles.

The atmosphere is brilliant” says Sandra Gardner.

Sandra works in the sub assembly section and she told us "It’s very interesting — you can see a big difference at each stage of development. If there is a problem, you have the satisfaction of being able to discuss it with the design engineer and get it put right fast. We’re kept busy even when we’re not building — there’s plenty of paperwork and so on to organise and meetings to attend."

Operator Mike Grindle didn’t know anyone when he came to Welwyn, but he’s found them all very friendly and says "I enjoy working on a machine in the early stages — it’s a real challenge."

Earlier, pilot plant people took on the Welwyn engineers at darts, ten pin bowling, snooker and pool and won the all-purpose trophy every time, though Welwyn halted this winning streak by beating them at soccer 4:3.

More recently, a number of our people have been taking part in a general darts tournament; it was won by an outsider, a WGC sub-contractor in production control, so neither side could lay claim to victory!

Quality award for Welwyn

RANK XEROX Welwyn has received a British Quality Award in recognition of 'outstanding achievements in overall business quality, and in raising to world state-of-the-art the manufacture of electronic systems of the highest quality.'

A major supplier of PWBAs and photoreceptors to other Xerox manufacturing operations, Welwyn has to demonstrate to its sister operations that there is no better source available for these components.

This policy has led to the introduction of a quality strategy embracing 'Leadership Through Quality' which has resulted in greatly improved product quality, reduced manufacturing costs and a marked increase in annual production output.

With his finger on the touch screen is electronics engineer Mike Hazell, setting up computer-controlled assembly tooling for the new product. This major automated tooling project was carried out by a multi-site team of Venray, Welwyn and Mitcheldean personnel (Mikes and Kevin James from our electronics laboratory). Led by Alec MacAndrew (MVBU), the project has recently earned an RBG Recognition Award for Excellence.

It's a challenge

"The atmosphere is brilliant," was how Sandra Gardner put it. Until recently she was the only woman in the pilot plant team, and “she has proved an ideal candidate,” said Peter Whiles.

Our residents

With his finger on the touch screen is electronics engineer Mike Hazell, setting up computer-controlled assembly tooling for the new product. This major automated tooling project was carried out by a multi-site team of Venray, Welwyn and Mitcheldean personnel (Mikes and Kevin James from our electronics laboratory). Led by Alec MacAndrew (MVBU), the project has recently earned an RBG Recognition Award for Excellence.

"The atmosphere is brilliant” says Sandra Gardner.

Sandra works in the sub assembly section and she told us "It’s very interesting — you can see a big difference at each stage of development. If there is a problem, you have the satisfaction of being able to discuss it with the design engineer and get it put right fast. We’re kept busy even when we’re not building — there’s plenty of paperwork and so on to organise and meetings to attend."

Operator Mike Grindle didn’t know anyone when he came to Welwyn, but he’s found them all very friendly and says "I enjoy working on a machine in the early stages — it’s a real challenge."

Earlier, pilot plant people took on the Welwyn engineers at darts, ten pin bowling, snooker and pool and won the all-purpose trophy every time, though Welwyn halted this winning streak by beating them at soccer 4:3.

More recently, a number of our people have been taking part in a general darts tournament; it was won by an outsider, a WGC sub-contractor in production control, so neither side could lay claim to victory!

Our residents

"The atmosphere is brilliant” says Sandra Gardner.

Sandra works in the sub assembly section and she told us "It’s very interesting — you can see a big difference at each stage of development. If there is a problem, you have the satisfaction of being able to discuss it with the design engineer and get it put right fast. We’re kept busy even when we’re not building — there’s plenty of paperwork and so on to organise and meetings to attend."

Operator Mike Grindle didn’t know anyone when he came to Welwyn, but he’s found them all very friendly and says "I enjoy working on a machine in the early stages — it’s a real challenge."

Earlier, pilot plant people took on the Welwyn engineers at darts, ten pin bowling, snooker and pool and won the all-purpose trophy every time, though Welwyn halted this winning streak by beating them at soccer 4:3.

More recently, a number of our people have been taking part in a general darts tournament; it was won by an outsider, a WGC sub-contractor in production control, so neither side could lay claim to victory!
Social success

THE LSA social gets more popular every year. Some 190 people gathered in the club function room on Saturday, 8 November, making a 20 per cent increase on last year’s attendance.

A drink to start with and an excellent plated meal with wine (from the club catering unit) came free and were much appreciated.

It was primarily an evening for chatting with old friends and colleagues, and there was a warm welcome for Fred Wickstead and his wife. But there was no lack of dancers. Mary Meek and her husband Ken, who celebrated their ruby wedding last September, demonstrated the style that has won them many medals, and even the most senior member there — 82-year-old Cyril Jamieson — took a turn on the dance floor.

Music was provided by the Tandem trio (an Irish joke!), and ex-Mitcheldeaners Gordon Hayward and Jeff McCoy enjoyed a chat with former colleagues in the interval.

Bill Cinderley ran the draw and £100 worth of prizes were handed out, including a mystery prize from Sadie Pritchard.

One snippet of news we picked up from Doris Barker was that the REX Club of Ross-on-Wye are busy sampling the alcoholic beverages for which this part of the world is noted with visits to Harvey’s at Bristol, Symonds Cyder and Wine at Stoke Lacey and, before long, Bulmers at Hereford!

Lost your tie-pin?

A service award tie-pin was found after the recent social. If you think it may be the one you’ve mislaid, please contact Alan Cryer.

Golden Oldies to go on show

THERE’S USUALLY a gap in the LSA calendar between the social and the annual dinner in May, but 1987 will be different.

An Open Evening is planned to take place in the club house on Tuesday, 10 March — open, that is, to all Rank Xerox personnel, not just LSA members. And the focus will be on old photos, films and memorabilia.

The films are ‘Golden Oldies’ of the sports days which used to be such a highlight in the old BAF days.

They cover the period from 1949 to 1955 and it should be fun trying to identify some of the participants.

As for the photos, it rather depends on you readers. Chairman Alan Phelps tells us that while the committee have quite a number, they would welcome more.

They can be of any functions held in the past at Mitcheldean, perhaps visits of celebrities, or groups of employees taken years ago — it’s the people in the picture who matter.

If you do have any items you would be willing to lend for the occasion, rest assured they will be taken great care of until returned to you.

If, on the other hand, you would be willing to donate them to the LSA archives for others to enjoy looking at not only on 10 March but also in years to come, the committee would be delighted to add them to their collection.

Please get in touch with Alan Phelps or Tony Allen no later than mid-February if you can help. And remember, when posting prints, to protect them with a card stiffening.

By the way, food, as well as drinks, will be available on the night for those who wish to purchase it. The fun comes free!

New members

WELCOME TO the following nine members who joined the LSA at the beginning of the New Year: Ken Dobbs (product engineering), Graham Hook (refurbishing), Graham Merry (harness section, parts manufacturing); Bernard Morris (divisional personnel); Jim Pearce (QA); John Spratley (site personnel); Des Symonds and Terry Wear (both of small copier assembly); Neil Williams (site logistics, materials management).
Old Timers entertain

AS LONG as there's a piano, the show can go on.

The only written programme consists of cards with a list of song titles and the key they are to be played in.

Nothing is rehearsed beforehand; it's spontaneous — and the audiences love it.

The performers — all retired Rank Xerox employees — call themselves The Old Timers. Their audiences are 'old timers' too, and their material dates from yesteryear.

Says long-server Bob Gladwin: "It all started around 1980, when Jack Benbow and I offered to entertain the old people at Townsend House in Mitcheldean. "Later we asked Arthur (better known as Andy) Hardy to join us and it snowballed from there." Now they go anywhere they are asked, weather permitting, just as long as it's in daylight.

During the recent festive season they were much in demand, with shows for the housebound, old people's homes and Darby & Joan Clubs at places ranging from Rudeford Woodside to Tuffley.

As we went to press they were due at the Miners Hall, Cinderford, to entertain the blind due at the Miners Hall, to Tuffley.

"We usually start by asking for a jug of water and three glasses, that keeps us going all the way through," they told us.

Yorkshireman Andy is an experienced entertainer who has won many awards for his singing, yodelling and comedy act; he also plays the mouth organ.

"One of the former Rank Xerox Variety Club shows, Andy learned his entertaining skills from his father, a professional who did variety club work for 25 years.

Also an ex-RX Variety Club performer, Jack Benbow comes from a musical family and does invaluable work at the piano, playing just about anything on demand, in any key required.

Jack trained at the military music school Kneller Hall and could play a number of instruments, on horseback and off! But the piano is his forte, so to speak.

Bob is yet another chip off the old block. "My father used to board the trains professionally — until he fell out with one of the impresarios!"

He specialises in the Stanley Holloway type of monologue and sings "between the notes" as he puts it.

Altogether he has about 40 choruses of old musical hall favourites in his repertoire, plus some numbers we'd never heard before, such as 'The Song of the Thrush'.

Often he takes people on a musical tour, starting with 'While London Sleeps' and travelling in song throughout the British Isles until he gets back to 'Home, Sweet Home'.

He and Andy sing together too, and they usually end the show with the promise 'We'll Meet Again'.

Oddly enough, their jobs when working at Mitcheldean were all connected with stores in what is now building 1.

After 19 years in the machine shops, Bob spent six years in production stores; Andy was in stores maintenance, while Jack was involved with ISC internal audit.

Bob's wife Eileen, who uses to work in electrical sub-assembly, plays an important part too by driving the trio to and from their engagements. "She's our get-away man!" they told us.

She also gives them useful feedback on audience reaction. (Eileen was very amused when, on one occasion, some visitors came up and asked her if she had enjoyed the show.)

There are inevitably interruptions when individuals are wheeled in or out, for example; and if anyone drops off to sleep, the Old Timers don't take it personally.

The old folk love to hear again the songs that remind them of their younger days and they're encouraged to join in. Bob and Andy wander about as they entertain and get close to their audience, some of whom are hard of hearing.

At the end of the performance there's usually a welcome cup of tea and biscuits for the group.

But their real reward is in knowing that "we have brought a bit of happiness to the old folk, and helped to keep alive some of the old songs."

BEM for the sergeant major

THIS YEAR started in memorable fashion for Fred Niblett, tool inspector in bl.d.4, with the announcement of his award of the British Empire Medal in the New Year Honours List.

It came in recognition of a long record of voluntary service to the Army Cadet Force, in which he holds the rank of sergeant major instructor.

He joined the 1st Cadet Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment (ACF), 28 years ago.

For the last 22 years he has been an instructor, during which time he has helped in the character development of many local boys, some of whom have gone on to join the regular army.

In 1970 he received the Lord Lieutenant's certificate of commendation; he also holds the Cadet Force medal and bar.

The Nibletts are very much an ACF family. Fred's brother Roger (who works in small batch) joined the same time as Fred and he too is a sergeant major instructor at Cinderford training centre, where Fred has been platoon commander for the past seven years.

His son Andrew is a cadet sergeant there, and recently his wife Pat and sister-in-law Jenny (Roger's wife) also received the certificate of commendation for services in the ACF.

Each year Fred organises a very successful one-day march (or walk, if you prefer!) which attracts participants to the Forest from all over the country.

Last year's was in aid of the Glos. Regimental Museum appeal. RXMP made a donation to help with the cost of certificates and medals for those who completed the course and to the museum itself.

Fred, who joined us in 1973, jumps to it when charity is involved; he was one of the sponsored Mitcheldean parachutists in 'leap year' 1980 and, a few years later, he jumped with the ACF.

He was featured again in 'Vision' when he helped train some Mitcheldean apprentices in 22 rifle shooting which led to their coming first in the annual Glos. Association of Boys' Clubs competition.

That's not the sum total of Fred's involvement with the community, he acts as treasurer of Ruspidge Memorial Hall, is a trustee of the local Welfare Committee and an observer for the Institute of Advanced Motorists.
UNDER A £5 million contract signed last April, Xerox 1025 copiers (both 1:1 and RE models) are being assembled in Bulgaria, and order books are bulging.

Rank Xerox has organised the assembly of copiers in Yugoslavia over a number of years and, more recently on a small scale in Hungary. But the Bulgarian project is outstanding, for several reasons.

This is the first major co-operation project in the COMECON group — Bulgaria being one of the principal manufacturers of office automation equipment within that group.

The copiers are being built from sub-assemblies (semi-knockdown — SKD) moving up to complete knockdown (CKD) this spring, when parts will be ordered to the normal Rank Xerox buy level; and the assembly facility is one commissioned from Rank Xerox — the first time this has ever happened in Eastern Europe.

A particular feature of the project has been the speed with which it has been accomplished.

Says Richard Wheatley, co-operation projects manager of Rank Xerox Eastern Export Operations; “While we have been selling our range of copiers, workstations, printers, telexcopiers and other products there for many years, dialogue with Bulgaria regarding local production facilities has been going on since 1983.

“However, last spring, following a round of economic reforms and the formation of a number of industrial corporations, EEO began discussions with an organisation now known as CPD (Combine for Peripheral Devices) and within a month a contract was signed for three years initially at a value of £5 million.”

Five-month programme

Through co-operation between EEO staff in London and Sofia, CPD staff in Bulgaria and EMSD manufacturing projects group (led by Andrew Smith with Geoff Howell, Don Presdec and John Wood), a programme was mounted to build an assembly line in a brand-new factory, train Bulgarian specialists in Mitcheldean and Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and ship equipment and goods from one end of Europe to the other — all in about five months.

Operations; “While we have been selling our range of copiers, workstations, printers, telexcopiers and other products there for many years, dialogue with Bulgaria regarding local production facilities has been going on since 1983.

“However, last spring, following a round of economic reforms and the formation of a number of industrial corporations, EEO began discussions with an organisation now known as CPD (Combine for Peripheral Devices) and within a month a contract was signed for three years initially at a value of £5 million.”

Five-month programme

Through co-operation between EEO staff in London and Sofia, CPD staff in Bulgaria and EMSD manufacturing projects group (led by Andrew Smith with Geoff Howell, Don Presdec and John Wood), a programme was mounted to build an assembly line in a brand-new factory, train Bulgarian specialists in Mitcheldean and Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and ship equipment and goods from one end of Europe to the other — all in about five months.

The facility, officially opened by EMSD director Dick Holmes on 6 October, was the first production unit to be installed inside the 12,000 square metre, single-storey plant built by CPD specifically for the manufacture not only of copiers but also typewriters, printers, floppy disk drives and other office equipment.

The plant is located in a big industrial zone in Plovdiv, Bulgaria’s second largest city.

The opening of the plant was timed to coincide with an international technical/trade fair in Plovdiv in the autumn, an event comparable to the Leipzig Fair in the spring, and the Bulgarians were keen to show their East European neighbours this new development.

That meant that things had to move fast. Tooling had to be specified, ordered, packed and sent out; the Mitcheldean build process had to be adapted and sent to Plovdiv for translation; sets of SKD kits had to be shipped out and our ISC export people were faced with another challenge as regards documentation and invoicing rules and regulations.

Martin Exell of facilities engineering designed a roller track conveyor system complete with ball tables, plus all the electrics, the whole layout covering an area 28 metres x 16 metres. The building of the system was sub-contracted to EMP (located in the MEWS) who sent four of their people out to Plovdiv in August for three weeks to set it up.

Things were hotting up in Bulgaria — in more ways than one. It was the country’s hottest summer for 100 years with temperatures soaring into the nineties.

Meanwhile, a group of technical and quality personnel from CPD came over here for
launch.
Say the team members: “We had splendid co-operation from the CPD staff. There were male technicians but the assembly operators were all young women.
“They were unfamiliar with the tools we had sent out but with the aid of interpreters and sign language we all managed to communicate pretty well.
“Quality was very strict, and the first machine they built had only two defects.”
The general feeling was that the mission succeeded because they all worked as a team. “If something needed doing, one of us got on with the job, no matter what it was.”

The launch
The product launch took place during the trade fair, at which the British Government was represented by Lord Lucas of the Department of Trade & Industry.
The newly built 1025s (they are marketed under the name Bultex, not Xerox) aroused great interest and there was little sign of the competition.
The event ran from 29 September until 6 October; on the 7th came the official opening of the CPF factory. It was attended by a number of Bulgarian dignatories and the British Ambassador was present.
EMSD director Dick Holmes, on behalf of Rank Xerox, unveiled a plaque to commemorate the opening of the first production unit within the plant and paid tribute to the Mitcheldean specialists on a very commendable achievement.
He also wished success to all the other projects and products to be accommodated there in the future.
All this attracted valuable TV and press coverage. The 1025 was pictured on the front page of a national newspaper and Mitcheldean staff featured in TV newscasts.
The results were gratifying, if not embarrassing — orders already exceed the initial production plan!

Innovative trading
Dealing with countries that have non-convertible currency calls for commercial innovation and flexibility, says Richard Wheatley, and Rank Xerox has resorted to measures that include counter-trading (the exchange of machines for goods and services).
“In the case of the Bulgarian project, we found a West German company whose supply of mechanical typewriters from a Far Eastern company had been frustrated. We proposed a Bulgarian version which, after some modification, was accepted. The project was thus funded by this triangular mechanism.”
The facility built allows plenty of capacity for expansion in volume and variety of products. Rank Xerox is already in discussion with CPD concerning diversification into other products such as telecopiers and computer printers.

“We’re international engineers at last!” was the first reaction of Tony Rawlings, one of EMP’s directors, when we asked him about their visit to Bulgaria to install the assembly line.
The installation components were flown out separately, but Tony, fellow director Malcolm Burson and their two assistants did not travel light.
“We took two big tool chests, weighing about 400lb, with us; they contained every bit of kit we needed for our work — we even took the paint.
“It was so hot there we just wore trainers, shorts and a shirt which came in useful for wiping the face, and we were topped up with crates of soft drinks and mineral water.
“For the first week we stayed at a place called Eagle’s Nest — way up a mountain. We were given English breakfasts of egg and bacon, but they came steeped in goat’s milk.
“It was something of a shock, too, to see three huge brown bears as we drove home from work one evening, one on a donkey cart and two walking behind on their hind legs.
“Later we moved to the big, international Novotel in Plovdiv. We were right at the top and one night I felt a bit unstable; I decided I had either underestimated the Bulgarian wine, or the wind was rocking the building.
“Later we moved to the big, international Novotel in Plovdiv. We were right at the top and one night I felt a bit unstable; I decided I had either underestimated the Bulgarian wine, or the wind was rocking the building.
Plovdiv, viewed across the river from the Novotel. The pedestrian bridge was erected specially for the trade fair.
This will call for additional counter-trade activities and the mechanical typewriters could well be succeeded by Bulgarian wine which, our Mitcheldean contingent assure us, is very good indeed!
New model adds more mileage

The machine was tested for radio frequency interference in the normal way in our RFI facility in bld.3 with satisfactory results.

But in order to gain VDE approval for Germany, where launch was planned to take place early in 1987, a 'free field test' had to be carried out.

This test involved a continuous scan over a frequency range of 10 KHz to 1,000 MHz.

Special test gear had to be hired to supplement our own measuring equipment, and the 9600 had to be pushed and pulled by the four men in our picture through 360°, with stops at intervals to take readings so that the maximum levels of signals could be established.

"We had to remove the guard rails around that part of the car park as these affected the results," said John Dennis, manager, CBA products refurbishing.

"The test took a week to complete so we just had to pray it would stay fine." And it did.

We're happy to report that the necessary approval was obtained in time and the launch in Germany got the go-ahead.

As those who visited the 9500 upgrade Top Team stand at the recent Quality Convention will have learned, sales have been going very well, not only in the UK but also in other European countries. (We hear Finland has acquired a 9600 too!)

In fact, sales expectations have been exceeded five times over, team leader Steve Watkinson (ROS) was happy to report.

The model provides a very useful replacement for the 9500; customers can see sufficient improvement in the upgraded machine to warrant moving up to the 9600.

The enhancements which bring about the transformation include, in addition to an up-to-date colour scheme, various modifications which make it quieter in operation and more user friendly.

Big impact

"The one enhancement that has made most impact is the 60 per cent. reduction in jam clearance time, plus the fact that in clearing the jam the operator only has to handle clean paper from one point, so there's no blacking of fingers from unfused toner," Steve told us.

Another enhancement, when the operator is doing single-sided copying, allows the automatic insertion of covers (perhaps in another colour) at set intervals; it also allows for printing on either side of the back or front cover.

A floating baffle permits the feeding of slightly heavier weight papers, and there's a self-monitoring device, too, to ensure consistent copy quality, no matter how the background of the original may vary.

All this has generated additional work for Mitcheldean refurbishing operations, and a number of 9400s as well as 9500s are now being upgraded to 9600 status.

DURING A spell of warm weather last autumn, an unusual vehicle could be seen parked in 'A' car park along with the Fords, BLs and Vauxhalls.

It was brand new, capable of performing at considerable speed, and powered by electricity.

But although it was mounted on four small wheels, situated one at each corner, these were in a fixed position, so the manoeuvrability of the vehicle was limited to going round gradually in circles — and that only when being pushed/pulled by four men.

This new machine was, as you'll have guessed, the Xerox 9600. But what was it doing in the car park?

The picture showing Mike Selwyn fixing up an aerial gives a clue.

Although upgraded from a 9500 machine — a project which earned those involved a Top Team award in 1986 — the 9600 was enhanced to such an extent it qualified as a new product with a new serial number. It was therefore necessary to re-apply for clearance before it could be marketed.
Service awards

30 years

"Industrial engineering gave me a good insight into all aspects of our operations" says John Haggar, who spent over 20 of his 30 years with us in that discipline. Five years' training under the 'learnership' scheme was completed in the work study department where John made a contribution to the setting up of the 'Xerox Building' (now bld.12). "I held the end of the tape for Dave Griffiths when he was measuring up the site!"

But 'learning' hadn't finished; work study proved to be another, tougher, school. "It provided excellent training in diplomacy and dealing with misfits", he jokes (we think). "We work study engineers used to stand with stopwatch and board watching operators at their tasks — an activity which did little for our popularity, since everything then was bonus-orientated."

John progressed to section leader, then section manager in resource planning; then came a new challenge. In October 1982 John was appointed to co-ordinate the transfer of the 1045 fuser roll operation from Venray to Mitcheldean, which involved the removal of some tons of machinery across the Channel.

"During the transfer we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because we had to make an emergency visit to the Dutch customs & excise because..."

John moved on to the rationalisation of our electrical vehicle fleet. Then, just two years ago, John moved into the quality organisation when he became manager, refurbishing QA; he is currently in charge of dismantle & clean and parts manufacturing QA.

This has proved "another eye-opener" and, says, John, "I appreciate the problems which line managers have to face in achieving both quality and output schedules."

Teamwork is something John knows quite a bit about, having played football until 1972 for Worrall Hill; he has also been the club's treasurer for the past 15 years.

He and his wife Doreen, who used to work in the harness-making section, have three children so there is little time for hobbies; but John does enjoy occasionally 'thrashing a guitar' in a trio which includes his sister and ex-Mitcheldeaner Brian Nelmes.

25 years

Both former pupils at the old East Dean Grammar School, Danny Haines and Bob Davies started on the same day in September 1961 as technical apprentices.

My earliest memory of that time was the humbling experience of being given a white 'smock' down to my ankles and being taken to my first department — the tool stores, located in what is now the MEWS," says Danny.

During the next few years, while the factory was growing rapidly in size, he and Bob were widening their knowledge of operations at Mitcheldean by spending a few months in most of the various departments.

Then in 1966 they both joined the electronics development lab, as fully fledged engineers to work on the 914/720 and 813/660 models. This was back in the time when Mitcheldean re-designed products for the European market, and it involved much interesting and original design and test work.

Says Danny, "These were the halcyon days for engineers at Mitcheldean, and the beginning of a period of unparalleled expansion on site. It was also the period of unparalleled practical joking as well, when it was quite a regular thing to see someone chained to a fence or walking round with a ball and chain attached to their ankle — the accepted treatment for bridegrooms-to-be!"

With the arrival of the 'seventies, Bob and Danny began to follow separate career paths.

In 1972 Danny transferred from engineering to manufacturing to join the electronic tool design department, initially working on the end-of-life tooling for the 9200 product. Four years later saw him moving into production engineering management, and he was associated with the introduction of the 7000DF and 5600 products. He pursued a management career through electronic tool design and business planning departments, being involved in projects such as the new digital telephone exchange, on-line telex and the introduction of 8010 workstations for electronic processes.

In his current post as manager, low volume product engineering, he has recently been involved in the introduction of the 1012 in bld.4. Danny played skittles and darts for several seasons with Drybrook RFC, but these days he is a confirmed golf addict, being a member of Ross-on-Wye Golf Club and a past captain and current secretary of the Rank Xerox Golf Society.

Boo Bob, who is the younger son of Les Davies, our former chief metallurgist — he remained in design engineering, and after work on the 5400, went to the USA in 1976 for two years where he was involved in the development of the succeeding product, the 5600.

On his return he was engaged on several projects including the design of the 1075 sorter and the high capacity feeder for the 1045. Later, he transferred to bld.32 (now bld.4) for general electrical work and safety support for the 1025/1038 models.

Shortly before Christmas Bob became a member of the national integration team working on the resourcing of components for the 1012 programme — a task which will necessitate some travel on the Continent.

Bob has been a singer since the age of 17 and belongs to a five-piece band called Tanglefoot whose lead guitarist is fellow engineer Clive Cowmeadow. This country and western group have performed at Mitcheldean on a number of occasions, and have put out a couple of cassettes. What with bookings for Christmas Eve, Boxing Night and New Year's Eve, the recent holiday was a busy time for them.

"We go all over the place," says Bob, "and we're already fixed up for a two-day country and western festival in Norwich next August."

Keith Horrobin was among the very first group of craft apprentices taken on in 1961, and is the only one to have made 25 years' service.

He recalls that "every Friday afternoon we had to mop the floor in the training school, and we had to make the mop — the squeegee type — between us. We got through quite a number as the squeegees fell apart!"

From 1964 until 1975 Keith worked in the machine shop, eventually becoming a milling setter operator. Then, after some months in small batch, he was invited to do a NEBSS course and, on successfully completing this, he was appointed an assembly chargehand in refurbishing. Unfortunately he broke an ankle about this time and had to commence his supervisory duties walking round the section on crutches!

1981 saw him in 4000 assembly where he became an assembly foreman (1), after which he joined CBA assembly on 9400/9500 new builds.

Since then he has worked on the majority of small copiers, starting with the 2300 at Lydney; in October 1983 he transferred to bld.4 where he is currently a..."
section manager on the 1025/1038 and, on occasion, acts as night shift manager.

His younger brother, Kevin — our manager, assembly operations — joined the company three years after Keith as a technical apprentice and has followed a somewhat different route. Both share an interest in rugby and, in particular, Berry Hill RFC where Kevin was chairman for a number of years.

Keith played with the club for about 20 years and is currently on the selection committee. So perhaps it is hardly surprising that his son Julian is showing great promise as a rugby player, having played for the England under-16s and under-18s in the last two seasons.

Keith has also played cricket for Berry Hill, and has captained the 2nd team for three seasons. Nearer home, he was captain of the bld.4 management side (“by courtesy of the other ten,” he adds) when they played a series of matches within small copier assembly. They remained unbeaten.

Keith’s wife Diane worked at Mitcheldean at one time. They met when she was secretary to Fred Court in manufacturing QA, and they also have a daughter, Joanne, attending Laker’s school.

**Dave Acton** came to us straight from school too, and took up his first job as shop boy in small batch. After a year he became an operator in the machining facility then known as 550 department, subsequently moving on to work on capstans and cutter grinding in the main machine shop where he remained for some 20 years (life was more stable then!).

With the scaling down of parts manufacturing activities, Dave transferred in 1984 to refurbishing for about 18 months; then in October 1985 he switched to small copier assembly in bld.4 where he currently works in the sub-assembly section.

**Adrian Eddy** joined us about a month later than Dave and he, too, started as shop boy — in the machine shop. He stayed there for more than 20 years, progressing from bar feeder and loader to stand-in setter on autos. In 1970 he went with the section to Cinderford for ten years; then, back in Mitcheldean in the early ‘eighties, he moved on to operating a CNC lathe.

As with Dave, the restructuring of operations resulted in his transfer to small copier assembly, and he now works on 1025/1038 frames.

Adrian has always enjoyed cycling — an activity he shares with his wife — and three years ago he started cycling to work “partly because it’s healthier but principally because it’s cheaper.” But he admits to being a fair-weather cyclist and when conditions get bad he reverts to motoring.

For ten years Adrian was a ‘Demon’, playing skittles for the Forge Hammer team of Cinderford and he has also taken part in our interdepartmental tournaments. He has a silver tankard to remind him of the men’s finals in 1975 when, as one of the Cap Flatteners, he helped to bring home the top trophy to RX Cinderford.

### 20 years

**Dave Wood**, who is a member of Danny Haines’ staff, joined as an apprentice in 1966. Like Bob and Danny, he went into the dev.lab after training where he worked on the 4500 and successive products. The lab was later merged with design engineering and from 1977 to 1979 Dave was involved principally with logic systems for CBA as well as DBA machines. In 1979 he switched to ‘P’ products, becoming section leader, electrical design, and he is currently a member of the national integration team along with Bob.

An oarsman, Dave has for the past 15 years belonged to Ross Rowing Club. “We go to all the local regattas and others up and down the country. At this time of year we are training for the London ‘Head of the River’ event in March.

“This is a timed race from Mortlake to Putney (it runs in the opposite direction to the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race).”

This stretch of the river will be pretty crowded then, for the international event attracts over 400 ‘eights’, all eager to improve on their previous year’s performance.

Dave firmly believes in rowing as a means of restoring physical fitness. After undergoing a series of operations in the past year he got himself back into condition — a determined effort for which he was voted Ross Clubman of the Year.

**Terry Zimmermann** began his apprenticeship at the same time as Dave but after his four years’ training he joined the 3600 reconditioning section as an electrical adjuster.

He subsequently worked on 914, 3600 and 4000 new build as well as on the 3600 sorter and ADF. Some five years ago he returned to refurbishing operations to work first on DBA products, then more recently the 2080, 7080 and 980 engineering products.

Terry was a member of the 1986 award-winning Top Team whose project was the improvement of DBA local communications. “We are still working on it with meetings once a fortnight.”

His father, Ralph, was refurbishing operations manager before he retired in 1983, so “he was my boss for a year or so,” said Terry. His brother Stephen also works at Mitcheldean in small copier assembly.

For relaxation, Terry plays skittles with Tudor United; in the summer they play in the FOD league and in the winter the Ross League.

He also plays football for Howle Hill. “Our ground is right at the very top, which is more than you can say for our position in the North Glos. league!”

**Sister Collins** was following in the family footsteps when she chose to enter the medical profession. She was born in India, came to this country in her late ‘teens, and trained at Gloucester Royal Hospital.

Following experience in industrial nursing at Pine End Works, Lydney, she held the posts of staff nurse and night sister at Lydford and Gloucester Royal Hospitals.

So what made her revert to industrial nursing? We asked her.

“It was chiefly because I hadn’t had a Christmas off for ten years,” she said.

But when it came to taking over from Sister Townroe, who was retiring, she was scared — not of the nursing responsibilities but of the documentation!

“Today we are geared up for anything from a stomach upset to the surgical removal of toenails (Dr Martin does the op. and we administer the anaesthetic — and it’s not liquid!). We can offer more preventive medicine too, such as heat, sight and hearing checks.”

Over the years our medical centre has raised some £8,000 for good causes.

“Now we are planning a fundraising project in support of the Frenchay Hospital scanner appeal and we hope everyone will be very generous,” says Sister.

While information about patients is, of course, confidential, she has a fund of amusing anecdotes. Her favourite is of the time when Mike Bullock asked Nurse Barbara Meek (now retired) to make an appointment for him with the doctor. By mistake, she rang the vet’s number and for some minutes he was under the impression she had a bullock in the surgery!

Looking back over her 20 years at Mitcheldean, she says: “I’ve enjoyed every minute looking after Rank Xerox
employees and I've had wonderful classes, plays tennis and first-aiders.”

Setting a new benchmark in quality (out of 125 production weeks there were 73 in which no audit defects were recorded), it continued that trend right up to the end, encouraging others to strive for the same standard.

Site director David Stokes told the assembled team: “It has been an enormously successful product for Mitcheldean and we believe its successor is going to be even more successful. Congratulations on finishing it off so well!”

Taking her leave at the same time was Norma Brown (seen centre behind the 1020) who had worked on the product since its introduction 3½ years ago.

---

The 1020 — an enormous success

The beginning of November saw the 83,750th, and last, 1020 machine come off the line in bld.3, having built itself a great reputation.

Setting a new benchmark in quality (out of 125 production weeks there were 73 in which no audit defects were recorded), it continued that trend right up to the end, encouraging others to strive for the same standard.

Site director David Stokes told the assembled team: “It has been an enormously successful product for Mitcheldean and we believe its successor is going to be even more successful. Congratulations on finishing it off so well!”

Taking her leave at the same time was Norma Brown (seen centre behind the 1020) who had worked on the product since its introduction 3½ years ago.

---

Y-Ciders lead again

Summer season 1986 — After two or three disappointing seasons, by Y-Ciders standards, they at last came good, winning 20 of their 26 matches to come top of the Forest of Dean men's skittles league, division 1.

Top averages were: 1st Chris Warren 35.25; 2nd Richard Matthews 34.52; 3rd John George 34.41.

The Rank Xerox 'B' team finished fourth in division 2, their top averages being: 1st Bill Jones 34.61; 2nd Paul Sologub 33.91; 3rd Ralph Smith 33.42.

Winter Season 1986/87 — At the time of writing the Y-Ciders had reached the halfway stage of the season and had won 8 of their 11 matches in division A, lying in third position in the league table, while the 'B' team were occupying fifth position in division D.

Special mention must be made of two long-serving Y-Ciders players.

Firstly, product engineer John George has just completed 25 years with the RX Skittles team. He first played on 8 December, 1961 (how old did he say he was?).

He is currently team captain and he has led the team through many victorious campaigns during his two spells as captain. Individually, John has always been one of the better players of the team, winning the league away averages at least twice and winning the Y-Ciders averages on numerous occasions.

Secondly, Roy Taylor (formerly a manager within PED) recently completed 20 years with the Y-Ciders. He made his debut on 30 September, 1966. Roy is one of the side's most under-rated bowlers but can always be relied upon to rise to the occasion when required.

He has won the average on just one occasion — the 1967/68 season.

Congratulations to both players!

---

A season up to par

THERE WAS a good turnout for the Golf Society AGM and prize-giving held on Tuesday, 11 November, the venue as usual being the club house.

The chairman, Don Meek, called order, and with military precision soon converted a pack of beer-swallers into an orderly meeting.

Reports by the treasurer, Tony Murrell, and the secretary, Danny Haines, indicated that 1986 had been a very successful year for the society.

Outings had been very well attended, including a visit to the Belfry — the scene of earlier Ryder Cup triumphs, and finances were sound, with a small credit carried forward into 1987.

Venues selected for the forthcoming season were: Rolls of Monmouth, Cirencester, Clededon, Stinchcombe, and Burnham and Berrow.

Officers were elected as follows: chairman — Don Meek; secretary — Danny Haines; treasurer — Tony Murrell; other committee members: Dave Robinson, Trevor Jones, Dave James, Bill Meek, Ron Caldicutt, Mark Barnard.

After glasses had been replenished, there followed the second and more rewarding part of the evening — the prize-giving, when the captain, Dave Robinson, presented cups and crystal tankards to the following winners:

- Spring Bowl — Dave Robinson and Nigel Bayliss; Powell Cup — Mike Brain; Summer Cup — Richard Matthews; Scratch Cup — Mark Barnard; America Cup — Dave James; Interdepartmental Cup — Dave Tyler and Dave James; Rabbits Cup — John Howls; Round Robin — Don Meek; Order of Merit — Mark Barnard.

Dave went on to thank all the society members for their past support, and he brought the formal part of the evening to a close by wishing Mark Barnard a successful year as the 1987 captain, urging all members to continue to support the society in the forthcoming year.

With neither the past captain nor the new captain willing to offer a round of drinks, everyone retired muttering to the bar!
**He followed the trail**

DO YOU know how many hearts an octopus has? Or who invented the flush toilet?

It was producing the correct answers to these and other tricky questions in ‘Trivia Trail’ that won Derek Cornock of goods inwards a handsome road atlas set with road maps for Great Britain and Continental Europe. Jointly sponsored by Sutcliffe and Henry Telfer, the quiz offered a consolation prize of an atlas for the first correct entry selected from each restaurant (a star prize of a £10 Eistedfa went to the first correct entry drawn from all the consolation prize-winners).

Derek had submitted his entry months ago so it came as quite a surprise when catering manager Bill Broome gave him the good news — and invited him to a free Christmas dinner in the Court Restaurant on Thursday, 18 December, when he was presented with the prize.

**Skittles tryout**

THE AM-81 automatic harness-making machine installed in the wiring section in bld.6 was recently handed over, and to mark the occasion and show their appreciation of the assistance of Rank Xerox personnel in the carrying out of tool trials, the suppliers — Molex Electronics — put up a trophy to be played for in a Rank Xerox/Molex match.

The contest took place in the club skittle alley on 4 November. While it was a very friendly occasion, RX staff were not disposed on this occasion to assist the Molex team, even though they had come all the way from Bordon in Hampshire!

Their own managing director was there to cheer them on while parts manufacturing manager Larry Sterrett turned up to support the RX side — which won by three pins.

Molex generously paid for the drinks and bar snacks, and are now looking forward to a return match.

The RX side pose with their newly won shield, presented by Molex industry specialist Tom Collett.

**Goodbye, brothers!**

JUST BEFORE Christmas we wished a long and happy retirement to two brothers who, although they have worked at Mitchledean for 13—14 years, have never seen the site.

For Ray and Lionel Jones are blind — Ray since he was 38 and Lionel since he was 11, due to an inherited weakness known as detached retina.

They worked on drills and capstans for some years after joining us, then moved into spares packing where Lionel has been employed for the past two years.

Ray transferred to bld.4 last April where, using a special tool, he has built 1025/1038 ducting assemblies, a job which even sighted people find none too easy.

Both are married and live in Monmouth.

Lionel learned to read in Braille when he attended the School for the Blind at Bridgend, and he loves listening to music — Dixieland jazz is his favourite. He is also an active member (top grade) of the RAOB.

Ray likes to “mess about with carpentry; I have special tools and a system of measuring,” he told us. He too gets pleasure out of music but his preference is for singers like Frank Sinatra; he also enjoys TV documentaries.

Before leaving, Lionel and Ray expressed their gratitude to the various people who over the years have kindly helped them get to and from work and guided them about the site during breaks.

**Obituary**

We are sorry to report the deaths of the following pensioners:

Leonard Lewis, aged 67, on 25 November; Ken Fox, aged 64, on 16 December.

Our sympathy goes to their families.