

Vision

The house magazine of Rank Xerox Mitcheldean

Working with vendors the 'Fair' way

IT WAS not our first 5046 Vendor Fair — we've had three earlier ones, in fact.

But the one held at Hatherley Manor Hotel, Gloucester, on 22 June was certainly the best attended, the most effective and the most exciting.

The main reason was that we had some very positive and encouraging information about our new mid volume machine to pass on to our vendors world-wide.

Whereas on previous occasions the situation had been one of "It's on the way", this time it was a case of "It's being built, it's selling superbly, volumes are up considerably and Xerox are now starting up in the States with our support."

For suppliers who had invested capital in production facilities and taken on staff in anticipation of orders to come, this was confidence-inspiring.

Guests appreciated the fact that the speakers were willing to answer questions on the spot; and the 'help desks' where

problems concerning the quality and delivery of parts could be ironed out were, in the words of one vendor, "a particularly good idea".

The fact that the event went so well was due in large part to the hard work of a small, youthful team, led by materials production purchasing manager Peter Street, who described their efforts as "absolutely super."

The team consisted of Dave Simpson, spares co-ordinator, planner/buyer Dean Bennett (both former RX commercial apprentices) and Rhys Williams, who is doing a degree course in business studies at the Polytechnic of Wales and spending a year with us gaining practical experience.

"Our recently acquired business skills certainly came in handy," said Dean.

The preparations were carried out in addition to their normal day's work, and involved everything from sending out invitations to both internal and external guests, to fixing up the tours of our 5046

The team who got it all together — (from left) Dean Bennett, Rhys Williams, Dave Simpson and leader Peter Street.



From the left: Mike Stevenson, Dave Sanderson and Mike Clark discussing capacity problems with a vendor.



The busy scene in reception.

assembly line which brought the day's proceedings to a close.

The team practised their negotiating skills on local hotel owners in securing a suitable venue for the 250 or so people expected, and reserving provisional accommodation for those requiring overnight stays. And they secured some substantial discounts.

Setting the scene at Hatherley Manor was complicated by the fact that they couldn't get into the hotel until 8pm the night before the Fair.

They worked until 11pm, then turned up next morning at 7am, in good time before the programme began at 8.30am.

People commented afterwards on how professional

it all looked. "We had great co-operation from Clive Cowmeadow and Steve Syer who engineered the appearance of four 5046 machines of different configurations," said Dave, "and Mike Wilkinson set up the all-important sound equipment and organised supplies of flip charts and other consumables."

The Fair was enlivened by a bit of razzmatazz. There were balloons and banners, and on arrival visitors were given 'Pure magic' note blocks, 'Magic wand' pens, red and white ties or, in the case of ladies, scarves which discreetly promoted the Xerox 5046.

The only thing that couldn't be organised was the weather, but it turned out to be a beautifully warm day and people were able to enjoy their refreshments in the garden.

Letters of thanks and congratulations flooded in after the event.

Said an executive of John McGavigan & Co., a supplier from Scotland, "None of our other customers, even the household names we deal with, go to such lengths as Rank Xerox to gain the support and commitment of their vendors. We found the day both stimulating and enjoyable as well as useful."

(See report on pp.6 & 7)



Derek demonstrates how his idea is preventing the lift gates from getting damaged; with him is his wife Maisie.

Derek puts curb on lift gate costs

IT WAS a simple solution and it cost next to nothing — but then the simplest ideas are often the best.

The problem was that the gates in the two goods lifts in the loading docks area of bld.3, which is often congested, were constantly getting damaged.

They folded in concertina fashion when opened, but, with the vibration caused by forklifts entering the lifts, they kept shifting out of position and working their way across the opening.

This meant that, with around 180 pallets per shift going up to floor 2, they were getting quite a regular bashing.

Both gates had already been replaced once at a cost of £1,000, yet six weeks later further repairs were necessary.

Forklift driver Derek Davies was finding the problem very annoying. It got in the way of his work and "I felt there must be a cheaper way of coping with the situation."

So he gave it some thought and came up with a possible solution. He found some old staples at home and a small metal bar. Then, with the blessing of section manager Gordon Blewitt, he did a tryout.

He fixed two staples on to a wooden batten on the inside of one lift and slotted the bar

through them; when the gates were opened, the bar was pushed across to restrain them. A clever idea — and it did the trick.

Works engineering were called in to see how successfully it was operating, and they duly replaced Derek's home-made device with proper bolts on both internal and external lift gates.

"We haven't had any trouble since," said a delighted maintenance manager Ferruccio Marangon.

"I think the gates will last for ever now," said Derek.

The lift manufacturers were impressed when they called. "Why didn't we think of that?" was their reaction.

To show their appreciation, management invited Derek and his wife Maisie to dine out at the company's expense.

Derek has been with us for 17 years, while Maisie, who works on the same floor in 1025/1038 assembly, has clocked up 23 years' service.

She received some unexpected publicity herself back in 1979; they were both at Lydney when the 2300 facility first started up and, as the only woman then working on the line, she was featured in that prestigious daily, the *Financial Times*.

New challenges

AS WE went to press it was announced that Bryan Cook, manager, manufacturing services, was leaving Mitcheldean to take up a position in the USA in the planning and control department of BP&SG Manufacturing Operations.

Bryan has worked at Mitcheldean since August 1984 and has made a tremendous contribution to the development and success of the plant over this period.

Robin Fyffe, personnel manager, Phil King, controller, and Alan Ladd, manager technical services and quality, who previously reported to Bryan, now report directly to site director David Stokes and have joined the Mitcheldean Operations Committee.



Kate is presented with gifts and a lovely bouquet by Bryan on behalf of her friends and colleagues.

A FEW weeks earlier, Bryan Cook made a farewell presentation to Kate Phillips who was leaving after 14 years to take up new challenges outside the company.

A wide range of people from within the plant and from other Rank Xerox locations gathered in the showroom to wish her well — a fitting venue since it was due in large measure to her efforts that this facility had forged links with the UK Co., providing them with a valuable service in their sales and marketing efforts.

As executive assistant and corporate affairs co-ordinator, Kate had done a great job for the company, carrying out all activities with a consistent, professional approach, said Bryan.

Taking up space

OCCUPANCY IN the MEWS has reached its highest level yet with 94 per cent. of all available space taken up by the 51 companies in operation.

This is due in part to the success of existing tenants. Briokay Sports & Workwear have doubled their activities on site. They now occupy the whole of the former training school's mechanical engineering section in bld.3/3 and at the time of writing were planning to recruit an additional 18 machinists.

The other part of the floor is occupied by Hawking International (surface coating technology) who have expanded here too, as well as having units in blds.6 and 11.

Another firm who have doubled their existing space are

Scotts of Mitcheldean (food manufacturers) in bld.6.

Farmplan Group from Ross-on-Wye have now moved into bld.10 which they have purchased freehold.

The three floors now accommodate two separate operations. Farmplan Computer Systems, who specialise in computer systems for rural businesses, occupy the two top floors while Farmplan Products, who manufacture protective screens for agricultural and industrial buildings, are located on the ground floor.

Since moving in, they have carried out various structural alterations to the building in order to facilitate the movement of materials.

Packing them in to meet the deadlines

TO SUPPORT the launch of the 5046 in North America, spares and export packing have prepared six region, 81 district and well over 1,000 van kits (emergency items for service engineers) in a series of waves over the past few months.

Each wave brought differences because of configuration changes and added information from the field concerning frequency of usage. But despite the size and complexity of the task, the bld.4 team, working closely with the MRP&SBU at Welwyn, have achieved their goals.

Commented Les Farley, Welwyn's spares & logistics resident at Mitcheldean, "After some teething troubles the quality was superb!"

With supplies of parts having to come from places as far away as Brazil and Taiwan, there were inevitably problems. "Everything that could happen, happened — except for a disaster at sea," said packing section manager Brian Sterry, "and with the tight time-scales,

it put the pressure on."

Staff worked late at night to meet the deadlines. On one occasion they did a normal day's shift and continued to work through until after midnight.

Export staff put in some long hours, too, to meet the deadlines. As Tony Eveleigh, export administrator, explained, "The USA requirement was for each of the 67 items in a van kit to be invoiced individually, rather than invoicing one complete kit, for distribution across different states, making it a very complicated procedure."

In short, it was thanks to a supreme effort on everyone's part that the very fast turn-round necessary was achieved.

Picking parts for the kit assembly facility are (from left) Adrian Scott, Daren Green (on steps), Bernie Marshall and, studying the picking list, Keith Jones with Jimmy Ryder.



From left: Section manager Brian Sterry, Fred Price and Mike Wood look over the contents of a van kit, ranging from a fuse to a print cartridge.



Below: Bruce Nash and (behind) George Murphy pack small, delicate items in yellow 'fishing tackle' boxes. A diagram in the lid shows the numbers of the parts in each compartment, making it quicker and easier for the service engineer to select the ones he wants.



Below: Cliff Jones uses the bander on a pallet of completed kits while (centre) Sean Hale tapes a box and Kevin Haysome tops up with polystyrene filler.



Big rise ahead

AFTER FOUR years as chairman, Alan Phelps stepped down at the LSA's annual general meeting on 22 June, a month before taking early retirement.

He is succeeded by materials manager Kevin Horrobin.

Alan paid tribute to the committee's achievements over the past four years, while secretary Dick Skyrme thanked him for his excellent leadership and wished him all success in his new life on the committee's behalf.

Dick reported that the LSA currently have 253 employed, 256 retired and 11 associate members, making a total of 520; but he said that increases in membership could boost that figure by 81 by the end of the year.

In 1989, 48 members become eligible for a 25-year award, nearly double this year's number.

This expansion presents problems for the new committee, particularly as regards the venue for the annual

dinner, and to cope with the extra work the committee membership has been increased to 12 including the chairman.

Deputies have also been appointed for certain officers — John Gurney is now deputy chairman and John Spratley deputy secretary.

Dick Skyrme continues as secretary, Dave Morris as treasurer and June Knight as publicity secretary while Gerald Clayson, Ken Buffin, Bill Cinderey, Pete Waugh, Graham Beavan and Colin Butler make up the round dozen.

Treasurer Dave Morris reported a healthy financial state of affairs despite the increased numbers attending all functions and the cost incurred in transferring old films on to video, and it was decided to do a trial run of ties and badges bearing the new logo to see how they go.

The summer outing will be to Bournemouth on 24 August, and another Archive Evening is envisaged though it will possibly be run on different lines.

How we played a part in

Building up a business

SIX MONTHS ago, 23-year-old Raymond Coles was unemployed.

Today he is the proprietor of a small but growing firm in Lydney, known as Western Building Preservation, which provides a damp-proofing, dry rot and woodworm eradication service, as well as undertaking new building work.

Rank Xerox Mitcheldean are happy to have helped bring about the change in his fortunes.

Ray had worked out what sort of business he wanted to start up; he had the right approach, the determination and the necessary skills.

What he lacked, like many another would-be entrepreneur, was sufficient capital.

His parents were semi-retired and unable to help (incidentally his father, David, was a Rank Xerox employee back in the '60s).

So Ray turned for advice to the Gloucestershire Enterprise Agency — an organisation which RXMP have sponsored annually since its formation by a fairly significant sum, and whose board members include our site director David Stokes.

From the GEA he learned about the Prince's Youth Business Trust, a national charity established by the Prince of Wales to help unemployed, disadvantaged young people between the ages of 18 and 25 to start up their own business.

And this is where RXMP come into the picture again.

There are 23 PYBT regional boards across the country, including Northern Ireland, with more coming on stream this year.

The Gloucestershire PYBT was set up about 18 months ago, since when they have helped some 60 new businesses to get started — they claim an 80 per cent. success rate.

Chaired by Ron Morfee, a former Mitcheldean site director, it has among its members MOC manager Kevin Horrobin (he recently took over from David Stokes) and also Peter Noblett, a successful entrepreneur himself whose companies, Dean Software and Dean Microcomputers, are based in the MEWS.

Rank Xerox Mitcheldean have contributed to the work of the board financially as well as in terms of involvement.

In recent months the PYBT



Ready for work — Ray Coles with the injector pump, drill and other essential equipment he was able to purchase with his PYBT grant.

have been running a fund-raising campaign which has so far brought in £25,000, including a contribution of £1,000 from Rank Xerox Mitcheldean.

The total sum is being matched by an equal amount from the Government, and from this funding the PYBT grant bursaries of up to £1,000 and loans of up to £5,000.

Before applying for a bursary, Ray had first to be assessed by the PYBT's voluntary co-ordinator, Roy Cartwright of Glos. County Council, who recommended him for support.

Since leaving school, Ray had acquired a variety of building skills and gained a good reputation locally for his quality of work; he even had some commissions lined up to support his entry into business.

"He impressed us as a level-headed fellow with a viable business proposal," said Mr Cartwright.

RXMP understandably wished to be able to help someone in the Forest area, so when his application was accepted, we asked for our contribution to be allocated to him.

"The help and encouragement that I received, plus the PYBT grant, were the keystone to setting up my business," he told us.

The £1,000 could be used only for the acquisition of fixed assets or training, not for working capital. Ray earmarked it for the purchase of an injector pump, injectors and hose, a drill and insurances.

The bursary, plus £500 savings of his own, ensured that

he qualified for the Government's Enterprise Allowance scheme, and he was able to obtain a loan from the NatWest at Lydney.

This meant he had enough to cover working capital needs and some start-up costs. So, last March, Ray commenced trading.

Investments in the Yellow Pages and a local paper brought

in some response. However, the bulk of his work has come from personal recommendation, a fact of which he is justifiably proud.

Such work is not confined to the locality. "I've just completed a five-week job in London, obtained through recommendation," he told us.

And it's no longer a one-man concern. Originally Ray had hoped to be able to take on an unemployed school-friend of the same age as himself.

But he's done even better. The work available has been sufficient to enable him to take on two full-time employees and one part-timer.

He's also buying a cottage and renovating it — for himself.

The PYBT have a follow-up system so that they can keep an eye on all who receive their support during the first year of operation, which is when new firms are particularly vulnerable.

Progress reports are provided by the business advisor which every accepted applicant has to have; in Ray's case, it is the Nat West manager who gave him a loan, and naturally *he* is delighted with the success of the venture.

So are the GEA, the PYBT —and Rank Xerox Mitcheldean. We wish Ray continued success in the future.

A man with a weight on his mind



'Big George' James, an inspector in 5046 assembly, is heavily into slimming again. Despite previous attempts (he raised £350 for spina bifida research in 1985 while at the Welwyn pilot plant), George's weight had crept up to its highest ever total of 24½ stone and a big effort was called for. So he had a word with our plant fund-raising 'professionals', Pete and Clive Griffiths, and they organised a sponsored slim, the aim being to lop 10 stone off George's weight in 12 months, and raise pounds for the British Heart Foundation in the process.

George is keeping to a special diet under medical supervision and Clive or Pete see him each day and arrange a weekly weigh-in to help him keep on the right lines. He lost 12lb. in his first week so hopes are high.

Since the medical centre scales only go up to 20 stone, George has been using the warehouse scales, and he good-naturedly agreed to pose for this picture when checking his progress.

Front runners in the Ross 9 road race

SIX MEN from Mitcheldean — making it our biggest entry to date — took part in the sixth Ross 9 road race on Sunday, 29 May.

All completed the course, and two 'new starters' (on site, we mean) won a medal for being among the first 50 to finish.

They were Chris Davis (5046 pre-configuration) and Steve Adams (production stores).

Chris, who came in 27th with a time of 53 mins. 18 secs, was first Rank Xerox man home, which didn't really surprise us. His father is Les Davis, the well-known local runner, who recently won the 15-mile Wydean race, setting a course record.

Les repeated his last year's performance in the Ross event by achieving third place and first male veteran's prize.

A member of the Gloucester Athletic Club like Les, Chris told us he's just commenced serious training, so we'll be watching to see if he can catch up with his fast-moving father.

The other four Mitcheldean participants were Mike Smith (audit), Robert Menhinick (production stores admin.), Andrew Leighton (Hygiene Services), and Graham Welch

Alan Ladd prepares to give the starting signal as the runners get ready for the 'off'. Below: Chris Davis congratulates his father, Les, on winning a first and a third prize.



(new build operations) who was treating the race as a training run for the Blackpool Marathon.

Rank Xerox Mitcheldean were co-sponsors of the event and Alan Ladd, our manager, quality & technical services, went along to start the field of around 140.

The weather was a vast improvement on last year's, a fact which may have accounted for the better times achieved.

Winner for the second time running was Steve Brown, who completed the course in 46

mins. 18 secs., 14 seconds faster than in 1987 and his club, Cheltenham & County Harriers, were team prizewinners once again.

Second was Andrew Clark of Rotherham Harriers, while the first lady home, Sandra Lappage (Tipton Harriers), just managed to secure the last of the 50 medals.

The deputy mayor of Ross-on-Wye, Mrs Eunice Roberts,

Steve Brown receives first prize from deputy mayor Mrs Eunice Roberts.

presented the prizes which this year took the form of engraved glassware plus baskets of fruit and bottles of vino.

She said that the newly elected mayor, Phil Cutter, was very keen to encourage athletics and the town council hoped to improve facilities in Ross for this purpose.



Mike Smith, Graham Welch and Andrew Leighton appreciate a cooling drink after their efforts.

Robert Menhinick and (right) Steve Adams discuss the ups and downs of the course after the race.

A FORTNIGHT after the Ross race, Graham Welch ran in his first, and Blackpool's first, Marathon — in support of I-CAN, Invalid Children's Aid Nationwide. Thanks to the sponsorship of friends and workmates, plus donations from various concerns including £200 from Rank Xerox Mitcheldean, he succeeded in raising £800.



Great team effort

FRIDAY, 10 June, brought the much awaited soccer match between undefeated RX Welwyn and RX Mitcheldean.

Thanks to infiltrators we were aware that Welwyn were more than a little confident, coupled with which there was the unavailability of some of our younger players.

Determined to uphold the honour of the site, however, eleven senior players set off to Bisham Abbey, Marlow, scene of the preparation of the England European Squad (thankfully, Bobby Robson had left).

The match kicked off, controlled decisively by Brian (Haircut) Weyman (he also drove the team coach, we think).

The first ten minutes were spent adapting to the all-weather pitch and Brian's refereeing, but Mitcheldean's goalkeeper was in splendid form and thwarted the Welwyn attack.

Les (Billy Wright) Lewis

marshalled his defence, and 41-years-young Gary Sleeman opened Mitcheldean's account with a tremendous volley.

Malcolm (Charlie) Robertshaw benefiting from playing alongside, ex-county league veteran Peter Williams produced the second goal and, with Peter probing, he too got on the score-sheet with two well taken goals.

Welwyn did manage to breach the Mitcheldean defence, taking advantage of two unstoppable shots. Mark Wood and Steve (Rod) Boseley contributed a goal each, making the final score Mitcheldean 6, Welwyn 2.

It was an exceptional team performance, leaving Mitcheldean as the only RX site so far unbeaten in the inter-site matches (played 4, won 3, drew 1). The team manager obviously extracted the best out of a good blend of experience and youth.

Bring on Radlett or, better still, Venray!

A.G.B.

Partnership without surprises

SOME 250 people, representing over 100 suppliers of parts for the Xerox 5046 programme, attended our fourth 5046 Vendor Fair held on 22 June at the Hatherley Manor Hotel, Gloucester.

From the Far East, the USA and Western Europe, they travelled here to learn the latest news about market demand for the product and to get up to date with the latest changes to be implemented during the remainder of 1988.

In addition to the large contingent from Mitcheldean (the materials department looked quite deserted on the day!), there were key personnel from other Rank Xerox locations, Xerox and Fuji Xerox, including CCM (central commodity management) team members.

'Partnership without surprises', which was the theme for the last Vendor Fair, had been maintained for this event, explained materials manager Kevin Horrobin, since it still stood firm as an essential part of our relationship with the suppliers.

He told how the 5046 — the first of a range of new products named the 50 Series to commemorate the 50th anniversary this year of the invention of the xerographic process — is establishing new industry standards for productivity, reliability, copy quality, user friendliness and appearance.

Product quality had, he said, remained excellent throughout the learning curves, although we

were having to rework an average of 20 parts per week for quality problems.

Details of the Rank Xerox launch plans world-wide were given by Dave Young, the 5046 launch manager.

He told the audience how pre-installations were being carried out during the first six months to ensure a high quality product reached the customer.

Quality to the factory also needed to be at a high level to ensure fast turnaround of many more pre-configured type systems, he emphasised.

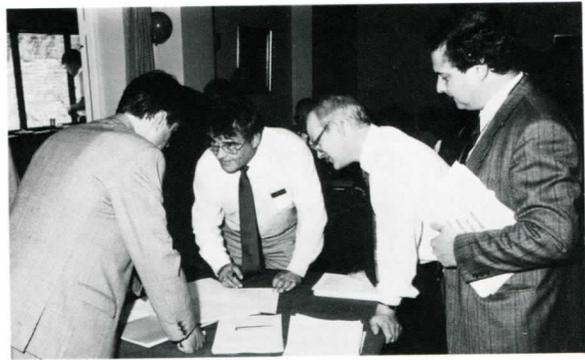
"We can sell all you can produce"

He was delighted to report that quality was better at this stage of the launch than with previous products and the OpCos had confidence in both quality and regular supply; this was reflected in the fact that some were giving a warranty of satisfaction.

The OpCos have told Mitcheldean "We can sell all that you can produce," he reported.

Peter Street, materials production purchasing manager, explained the problem vendor review process with its colour coding and categorisation of vendors. The latter were kept informed of ratings and he described the various ways in which they could help us with regard to invoicing, despatch information and new supplier delivery schedule.

The scene in the packed hall as Kevin Horrobin concludes the proceedings with some key messages for vendors.



Pictured centre — Eric Real (packaging) and Gerald Cooke (non-production purchasing) busy at the shipping and packaging 'help desk'.



Planner buyer Bob Ryland (far right) talks with vendors from West Germany.



Major quality problem areas, ranging from configuration errors to non-conformance in packaging, and the corrective actions which were detailed by SQA manager Brian Reeves, and he introduced the new process qualification package, an advance copy of which was available at the quality 'help desk'.

"The number of parts process qualified is our prime measure of material quality readiness for production build," he said.

Packaging and transportation matters were dealt with by Gerald Cooke, manager, non-production purchasing. He told vendors about a new packaging specification now ready for issue and the increased range of 'HA' boxes which now offered seven alternatives.

"Packaging is an area which has been causing transit, receiving and line problems," said Gerald, and consultant Alan Phelps has been visiting selected vendors to discuss these issues.

Dave Sanderson, manager, commodity operations, gave

details of the increasing build programmes for the 5046 processor, both at Mitcheldean and Webster, and the strategy for the progressive transfer to shipment of parts direct from vendor to Webster.

It was vital, he said, that problems which could impact both plants were communicated to the appropriate lead plant during the Webster start-up activity.

The Vendor Fair gave us an opportunity to welcome NAMD

The four configurations of the 5046 on display attracted considerable interest and UK Co salesmen were on hand to demonstrate what proving such a success.



Ric Gonzalez, 5046 manager at Webster Warner, Expedite director.



Left: Quality stage of the previous product, Dave Young, 5046 launch manager.

purchasing
with Neil
managing



s better at this
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ts, said Dave
nch manager.



Anne Giordano, Webster 5046 materials planning manager, discusses the switch to direct shipment of parts with some vendors.



Sensor commodity team members (from left) Bob Atkins, Reg Higgins and Dan Robinson, manager, take a break for lunch in the garden.



Vic Jones (centre) of SQA helps with the concerns of two attendees.

materials people Ric Gonzalez and Anne Giordano into the 5046 family and in their presentations they gave vendors information about the status at Webster.

The good news was that preliminary reactions from customers to the new product were excellent and demand was expected to meet, and possibly exceed, projections in the USA.

The audience were given plenty of opportunity to ask questions throughout the

programme and at its conclusion Kevin Horrobin summarised the key messages.

“Both Mitcheldean and Webster are absolutely determined that the 5046 product should become the Xerox benchmark for product start-up and quality.

“We face the most demanding phase”

“Currently we are on course to achieve this objective, but we face the most demanding phase of the programme as we move towards the top of the learning curve,” he warned, and vendors’ support in responding to those key messages was needed to enable us to reach our benchmark goals.

Then it was time for a buffet lunch — and a period of intense activity in the adjoining suite where the ‘help desks’ came into operation.

They provided an ideal opportunity to resolve problems which were causing difficulties on either side, and enabled an



Colin Phelps and Terry Cooling (seated left) deal with problems at the quality ‘help desk’.



Two directors of Elite, a Hong Kong based company, said how useful they had found the event.



Gerald Ward, 5046 production control, chats with a vendor.

exchange of constructive views.

Dave Morris, who with Dave Barnard was dealing with invoicing problems, told us: “I couldn’t exactly take a terminal with me, but we were able to sort out a number of items and I came back loaded with documents. Quite often it was just a simple case of the necessary details not being supplied by a vendor that was causing the trouble.”

Dave Sanderson, Mike Stevenson and Mike Clark discussed capacity problems; Terry Cooling and Colin Phelps covered quality aspects while Peter Street was observed working full speed at a flip chart

before a group of a dozen suppliers, making his point about lead times.

Packaging and shipping problems were dealt with by Gerald Cooke, Eric Real, Vic Jones and CCM member John Millo while Ric Gonzalez and Anne Giordano were engaged in helping vendors concerning the transfer to ‘direct buy’ process.

While the ‘help desk’ sessions were continuing, coaches conveyed successive parties of guests to Mitcheldean for tours of the 5046 production line which were conducted by RX apprentices Ian Britton, Neil Farnham, Tony Gattuso, Brian Janetta and Neil Jenkins.

RX apprentice Ian Britton conducts a tour of the 5046 assembly area.



Converted!

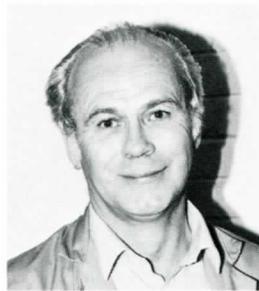
THE FAIR presented us with a golden opportunity to turn suppliers into customers. The UK Co. at Bristol co-operated by sending along a team of salesmen to demonstrate the 5046 machines on display, and they obtained a number of firm leads which bid fair to turn into sales.

One vendor said: “You were so hard on the price of the parts I supplied, how about a 25 per cent. discount on a 5046?”

We left them negotiating.



Clive Reid



Dave Witts



Mike Meager



Mike Baugh

Service awards

25 years

AN EX-MOTOR mechanic, **Clive Reid's** first job on joining was to help build the prototype of the 813, our first small copier. "The windows in the maltings building were all whited out for reasons of secrecy," he recalls.

Shortly after the launch in 1964 Clive became a leading hand on the line and, two years later, a chargehand.

Over the next 20 years he was involved with the start-up and remodelling of a number of products and, while in piece part recovery, was made a supervisor.

He had spells in subs, spares packing and the wiring floor before he settled in the DBA section of refurbishing, working in harness with Mike Bullock; then about two years ago he became section manager of the paint shop.

During the period from 1967 to 1986 Clive held various offices — as secretary, vice chairman and finally chairman of ASTMS before it ceased to be a bargaining unit. He was also vice chairman of the Sports & Social Club in the early '80s.

His personal social activities run on a different track — HO gauge model railways — and he has a 12 ft square German layout which he is still building. "I also collect Hornby Double and Corgi double-decker buses."

Most weekends find him attending swap-meets, toy fairs or exhibitions, some of which he organises along with two other enthusiasts. "We've got one lined up for August bank holiday weekend in Newport Leisure Centre," he told us, "with a percentage of the profits going to charity." (Tickets are available from Clive.)

He and his wife Josie met and married soon after she joined us to work in stores; she was in configuration control when she took early retirement last year after 23 years' service.

Josie helps Clive with his hobby and, in fact, is a collector herself of model cars, making theirs quite a 'model marriage'.

Most of **Dave Witts'** 25 years have been spent in parts manufacturing. He worked as setter on capstans and autos, moving into the fuser roll area in

1983 where, along with colleagues, he later contributed to the department's Top Team efforts that won them an RBG Recognition Award.

Towards the end of 1986 a computerised 'knitting machine' known as the Molex AM81 was introduced into the wiring section, then in bld.5; the most sophisticated of its kind in the country, it was designed to handle harnesses for the 5046 and another new product.

Dave, who was appointed setter, was selected to go to Germany for a four-day training course on an attachment to the machine.

Now working in the harness assembly centre in bld.6, Dave went off again this July on another course, this time in Zurich, in connection with a second, updated Molex AM81 which was installed during the summer close-down to help cope with the centre's heavy workload.

Dave's main hobby is photography and he used to belong to the RX amateur photographic club until it faded away. Today he is a member of the Gloucester Camera Club and he likes to specialise in portraits, so posing for his own picture on this page made a change!

Mike Meager's father, brother, sister — in fact, quite a few members of his family have worked at Mitcheldean at some time.

He himself joined the service repair department dealing with Bell & Howell cine and projector equipment in 1963, but a short time later it was moved to London and Mike went with it.

He was married while there (his wife Pat had also worked at Mitcheldean), but they found it very expensive for setting up home and on their return Mike took up a job in 914 sub assembly.

For the next 20 years he was involved in the assembly of mid and high volume products. It was while in CBA assembly operations that he went to Venray to assist with the transfer of the 3600 refurbishing activity to Lille and he was out there several months, returning home once a fortnight. When the 9000 family new

build ceased three years ago, Mike switched to the CBA section of refurbishing where he works today.

He used to play football for the former Cinderford Star team and enjoyed a game of cricket, but gardening and DIY around the home fully occupy his leisure time these days.

The Meagers' two sons are both in the army; one is serving in Germany and the other in Northern Ireland.

Having done his apprenticeship as a motor engineer and gained his qualifications, **Mike Baugh** spent just three months on the 914 assembly line before becoming an adjuster.

He has been part of a final run and test team ever since, working on mid, high and low volume machines in new build operations,

with about one year in reconditioning as a repair mechanic in the late '60s.

Mike has been abroad twice for the company, his most exotic assignment being to Moscow where he spent some 16 days along with some other Mitcheldeaners.

For most of that time they worked in the Moscow State Library doing after-sales service on 720 machines (derivatives of the 914). "We did manage a visit to the Bolshoi Opera, and queued up to see Lenin's Tomb (he looked very small)."

Some time later, he spent a fortnight in Venray in connection with 3300 machines.

He's also worked in Germany on several occasions, not for the company, but as a member of the TA (REME) on summer camps. During the eight years that he belonged he was able to put his engineering skills to good use working on army wagons.

A keen skittler, Mike belonged to the White Lion team in Ross-on-Wye for 18 years, occasionally acting as captain; he has also taken part from time to time in our interdepartmental tournaments.

Gardening takes up much of his spare time today; says Mike: "We've just moved house so my wife and I have a garden to recreate."

20 years

Five years after his cousin Ken had arrived at Mitcheldean (he works in refurbishing today), young **Kevin Kear** came, straight from school, to work as shop boy in spot-weld section.

Soon afterwards he moved to the wire-cutting section and, apart from a short spell in refurbishing in the early '80s, he has worked in that area ever since.

But though the activity has stayed the same, the equipment used has changed radically in 20 years.

"We had automatic machines in those days but they could only deal with a single wire at a time; now we have the Molex AM81 which can handle 32 all at once and it's being run almost non-stop."

Kevin works 'in harness' with Dave Witts, and like him he has been to Germany and, more recently, to Zurich on a training course for a second Molex.

June saw the beginning of the coarse fishing season — and a very busy time for Kevin. He's been a member of the Forest of Dean Angling Club for many years and is currently treasurer and match secretary.

"We have 600 members and matches every Sunday," he told us. "We're all fixed up for this season, but we'd welcome a challenge from the RX Angling Club for next year."

Even in the off-season he and other committee members have work to do on the ponds, cleaning up and doing repairs.

Kevin also plays football for Ruardean Hill FC which he joined at the age of 15.

Ivor Jones has worked on practically every one of our copiers apart from CBA machines in his 20 years, both new build and refurbishing, days and permanent nights. He's been a forklift driver, a wirecutter and press setter, and a cleaner of tool room machines in between times. Though most of his work has been concerned with small copiers he's also refurbished engineering products and has recently undergone training on the 4045 laser printer. Quite an all-round experience, not to mention being a GMB shop steward for the past 16 years.

Ivor takes a great interest in nature and 'all creatures great and small.' His main hobby is keeping birds (with help from his wife Christine) and he has a talking strain of budgies and cockatiels. "They're quick to learn so I have to watch my language!" he says.

Altogether he has 200 birds, including zebra finches and canaries, and three aviaries in which to house them. And, as a member of the Cinderford & District Cage Birds Society, he has won quite a few firsts and seconds.

Ivor also has two dogs — a golden retriever and a West Highland White terrier which he takes to training classes (for obedience, not talking!). Then there are cats, tortoises, ducks and fish.

Photography is another

interest of his — “I take anything from wildlife to weddings,” says Ivor.

For the first eight years, **Allan Baldwin** worked on new build and the remodelling/refurbishing of a number of products, with spells at Gloucester Trading Estate and Lydney.

In 1976 he was made an assembly build administrator, and since 1983 has been involved with material systems in refurbishing.

Like his own son Andrew, he joined the YMCA, Cinderford, when he was 11; today he is chairman and has Barry Barton (works eng.) as secretary and Dave Barnard (finance) on the committee.

Over the last six years the premises have been rebuilt, largely by the committee, and Allan was glad to report that “we are now in the black.”

Snooker is the main activity and the YMCA teams are front runners in the Gloucester snooker and billiards leagues as well as the Forest of Dean snooker league (Allan partnered the son of refurb, section manager Brian Kear in the Gloucester snooker pairs KO).

“We like to see the dads come along with their youngsters,” he says. “In the summer we often get together a cricket team of men and boys to play a local side.”

A football referee for 18 years, Allan is a linesman in the Hellenic League and a referee in the North Glos. Football League.

Another type of footwork he particularly enjoys is with the Sequence Dancing Club at Whitchurch, and he and his wife Patricia went to Spain last spring along with some 500 dancers.

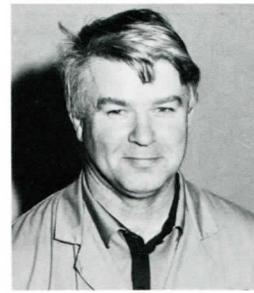
“We’ve just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary so it’s been a red letter year for us,” said Allan.

For most of the 20 years that **Bill Meek** has been with us, he has been a dedicated golfer.

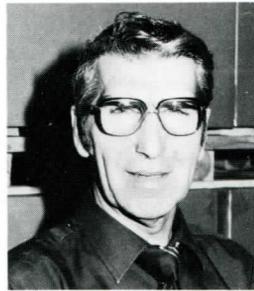
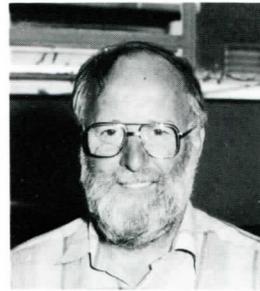
In that time he has accumulated some 40 trophies, playing for Ross-on-Wye GC as well as our own Golf Society which he joined at its inception.

This year he has got through to the quarter finals in the Ross club championship (not for the first time either); he was also a member of the ‘A’ team in the recent interplant golf competition held in Ireland and was

Left to right: Kevin Kear, Ivor Jones and Allan Baldwin.



Below (from left): Bill Meek, Mike Edmunds, Dennis Hanford and Ralph Jenkins.



Mitcheldean’s second highest scorer — its top scorer being his cousin, ‘Spot’ Meek from ROS.

“I play all the year round, and in summer four times a week to keep up with the competition,” says Bill, who has a handicap of 9.

“It’s good exercise — and there’s a lot of entertainment in the game.” (Especially when your opponent is playing from a bunker!)

Bill’s wife Jean worked at Mitcheldean in the 50s; his own early years were spent in the press & sheet metal shop, both at Mitcheldean and Cinderford.

He transferred to panel repair (part of the paint shop) in 1982 and, apart from short spells in dismantle & clean and small copier subs, this has been his job ever since.

Bill recently acquired some land — not to create his own golf course but for building a bungalow “in readiness for my retirement in a couple of years’ time,” he told us.

After six years in assembly, working on medium and low volume copiers (including the 660 which took him to Lydney), **Mike Edmunds** felt ready for a different challenge.

Around 1974 a vacancy occurred for a progress chaser; he took it up and has remained in production control ever since.

“We did a lot of running around in pre-computer days,” says Mike, “and I had to learn a

whole new set of phrases like ETA (estimated time of arrival) and bungalow brain (nothing upstairs!) when I worked under the late Paul Trollope; he had a novel way with words.”

Mike’s current job is concerned with parts for refurbishing operations, which keeps him on his toes. But he knows all about being nifty on his feet. He played football for his home village of Bream for 14 seasons.

When he gave it up he was persuaded to become a referee and he completed 18 seasons before he retired from that last year. For some strange reason, it earned him an award for just 15 years’ service.

However, he’s not short of exercise — “I get plenty of that working in our half-acre garden,” he told us.

Dennis Hanford is now even with his elder brother Bernie who gained his 20-year service award nearly two years ago (he opted for early retirement shortly afterwards).

It was actually through his marriage in 1968 that Dennis came to work in the supply centre. He joined 2400 sub assembly at first; but when the IDC, as it was then known, was moved to Gloucester Trading Estate, Dennis decided to transfer there because “I was getting married and we had acquired a flat in Tuffley.”

So this year he and his wife Pat celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary too; and since it’s the ‘china’ one, they are planning a trip to Worcester to buy something to mark the occasion.

Dennis has worked in the supply centre ever since as a warehouseman, packing and loading machines on to TIRs and containers destined for places all over the world.

“Some of the drivers don’t speak a word of English but we manage to get the message across,” says Dennis.

Gardening, and fly fishing in local lakes, are his main hobbies. His two daughters have just taken

‘O’ and ‘A’ levels respectively; they and his wife are keen Red Cross first-aiders and Dennis does his bit by acting as chauffeur.

Ralph Jenkins, who works on the opposite shift to Dennis, joined just a week after him. He too, has spent his 20 years in the warehouse, first at Gloucester Trading Estate and later alternating between Mitcheldean and Hereford until the stores there were brought back on site.

He did his national service as a member of the King’s Shropshire Light Infantry (so did Dennis); then later he joined the TA Hereford Light Infantry and was attached to the former Cinderford company.

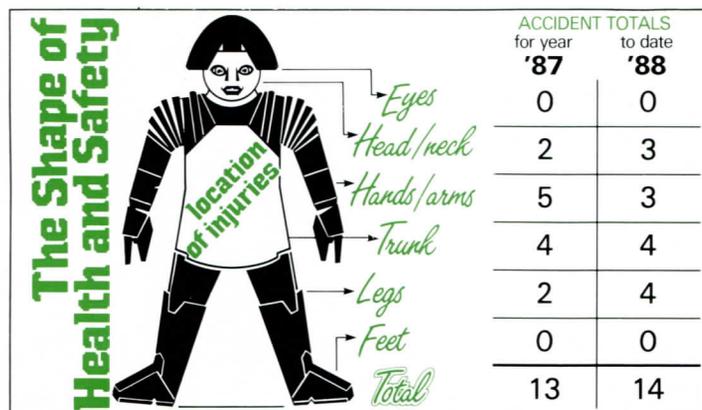
But when it comes to hobbies, Ralph and Dennis have nothing in common, for Ralph’s interest lies entirely in the collection of regimental cap badges and regimental history.

“I started getting interested in the badges, then the history of the regiments, and I learned a lot about British history in the process.”

The badges, he told us, often represent battle honours; for example, the sphinx on the Glosters badge indicates that they fought in the battle of Egypt.

Some regiments were formed as early as 16 or 1700; many have now been amalgamated so their former badges have acquired rarity value. Ralph has about 400 altogether, all mounted on red velvet, and he attends the military fairs held in Gloucester about once a quarter to see what’s available.

Ralph and his wife Gil have a daughter, and a son who works at Mitcheldean too — at Gico Technology. “Paul went there first under the YTS scheme and has now been taken on permanently,” he told us, “so we can travel to work together.”



The power lifting team from the FOD Fitness Centre.



Aikido expert Mike Davies takes a hand in the display — its owner got it back unharmed.



Pictured after the presentation of the cheque are (from left) Nora Powell, Pete Griffiths, nurse Collette Burt, Dr Bill Casey, Rene Histed from the club office and Clive Griffiths.

Coming in to land is Bill Smith, helped by one of his junior judo students!



Teenage Mr Britain — Martyn Wynn — takes up a pose that reveals his mass of muscles.

Intensive effort for the ICU

IT WAS a night of intensive effort — in aid of intensive care — and the fact that there was a doctor in the clubhouse was comforting, though fortunately he was never called upon.

Martial arts, power lifting and muscle building were on the programme on 15 June, and the audience contributed 'oohs', 'aahs' and sympathetic 'ouches' as they watched the devotees taking their punishment — slapping the padded mat (to show they'd reached breaking point), gasping with effort, and sweltering in the heat.

Clive and Pete Griffiths, who are 'black belts' at twisting people's arms when it comes to charity, were the power behind the event.

Over the last 12 months, Mitcheldean has raised £3,000 each for Children in Need and the Stroud Meningitis Trust. This time, said Clive, the aim had been to raise a quick £500 for children receiving treatment in the Intensive Care Unit at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

A raffle (for which people had given some super prizes) and various donations plus a plant-wide collection had brought in £638; this event had been organised to top up the

total a bit before handing the proceeds over to the ICU's representatives.

To kick off there were Bill Smith and his team of youngsters from Bridstow Judo Club. As Bill explained, judo is a close combat form of martial art and to see him floored by a slight ten-year-old lad must have made the evening for the young children in the audience!

Next came Mike Davies, a black belt (2nd dan) who teaches at the Gorsley Aikido Club.

Despite a torn ligament in his leg, he demonstrated a variety of armlocks and throws which put members of his team in some uncomfortable positions, to say the least. He even took on two at the same time.

Wooden 'swords' were used at one stage, but one of the team, who had travelled from Birmingham for the display, was an expert with the real thing.

And when he settled on the floor and raised his Japanese sword, we thought for one awful moment he was going to commit hara-kiri! But seriously, it was all very impressive, and one had to admire the skill and technique displayed.

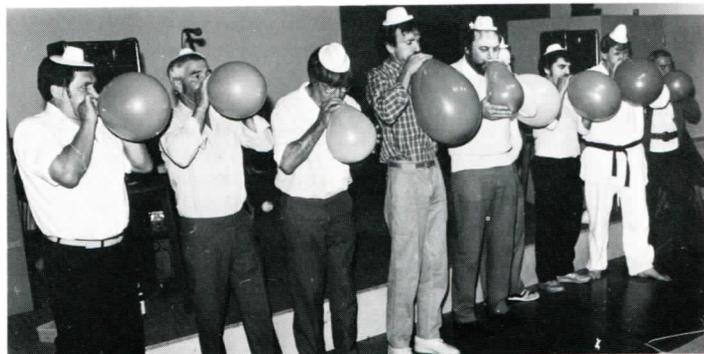
Originally there was to have been an all-male 'beauty contest with a difference' as part of the entertainment, but this had to be cancelled for lack of support.

Instead, there was a bit of audience participation when a number of men were challenged to blow up balloons to bursting-point, a lung-power contest won by ex-Mitcheldean Geoff Wood.

The second half of the evening's entertainment was provided by power-lifting and muscle-building star performers from the Forest of Dean Fitness Centre.

Their coach, Alan Elliott, gave a commentary while they shifted hundreds of pounds in the course of their workouts.

Men from the audience demonstrate their lung-power.



Martyn Wynn.

His well-oiled torso rippled in rhythm with the music as he took up various stances, bulging his biceps and other muscles that most of us didn't know existed. It was a masterly demonstration of bodily control.

Among those sitting in the audience was his father, Fred Wynn, one of our long-servers.

His elder brother Colin, who has just finished his apprenticeship with us and is working in refurbishing, also called in to see the show.

"Martyn has been training for 3½ years," Fred told us. "When you're body building you keep to a special diet — Martyn has five eggs for breakfast."

In the draw which followed, the prize of a celebration cake to the value of £10 which club secretary Nora Powell had kindly undertaken to make was won by nurse Collette Burt (she said it would be shared among the ICU staff), while power-lifting champ John Callanan got the giant teddy.



Entertainer Memphis Tennessee added further weight to the programme.

The proceeds of the evening, the cost of which was covered by the company, brought the total sum to £720 — well above the targeted amount — and this was handed over to Dr Bill Casey, consultant anaesthetist.

The money would, he said, be spent on specialised equipment needed for the treatment of critically ill children during their stay in the Unit and he thanked everyone for their generosity, adding "I've learned a lot of anatomy this evening!"

Any news for Vision?

*If you have, then please —
mail it to me in bld. 8/2,
or leave it at any gatehouse for
collection by me,
or post it to me at Tree Tops,
Plump Hill, Mitcheldean GL17
0EU,
or ring me — ext.566 or Dean
542415.*

Myrtle Fowler, editor

Interplant in Ireland

IT WAS with a sense of anticipation and, shall we say, controlled excitement that the players from Mitcheldean plant sailed on Saturday, 11 June, from Pembroke to Rosslare in the Republic of Ireland.

Last year's winners, the Irish team, were arranging and hosting this year's competition for the Interplant Cup, to be held on Monday, the 13th.

Our regular readers will recall that the Interplant Cup is played for by teams of six players representing various RX locations, with the best four stapleford scores out of six, morning and afternoon, going towards an overall team total.

This year, teams from the Irish and UK Opcos, IHQ London, St Helens refurb. centre, WGC and Mitcheldean (two) took part on the links at Rosslare GC.

Having watched England's demise at the hands of Jack Charlton's Irish team, much to the delight of the locals, it prompted a grim determination that they wouldn't get the double with the Interplant Cup.

Although the sky was clear (hadn't seen a cloud since we passed Newport on the M4), a strong breeze persisted throughout the match, making it difficult for most players not used to these conditions.

A few, however, managed to contrive very good scores — namely S. Hardman (St Helens), and J. Veillerot (IHQ) with 40 points, R. Brisco (St Helens) 39 points and D. Meek (Mitcheldean 'A') 38 points. (As a guide, 36 points equals playing to handicap.)

Upon completion of the morning round, St Helens emerged as the leading team by 3 points from Ireland, 148 to 145; Mitcheldean 'A' were some way behind on 137 points.

Whilst the majority of teams fared worse in the afternoon, the St Helens team improved, scoring 150 points, pulling away from Ireland and winning the Interplant Cup by a clear 13 points.

This fine effort was led by R. Brisco (a former scratch player now off 12) with another 39 points.

Richard Matthews on 35 points.

Fortunately, the rain stopped around midday and the sun came through, brightening up the course and players' spirits alike. With renewed vigour the challenge was on to catch the leaders.

Whilst some golfers improved, others — even experienced campaigners — wilted and fell away. Only Richard Matthews, of the early leaders, maintained his form, coming in with 37 points for a winning total of 72 points, while Clive Alcott scored 33 points to secure second place with 69 points.

Other notable scores in the afternoon were Bill Meek with 36 points and Terry Hook on 34 points.

Owing to the absence of captain Trev Jones (something to do with work commitments), vice captain Bill Meek stepped up to conclude the day in the customary manner.

Warm in Wales

FOR THE third outing of the '88 calendar, the Golf Society visited, on 22 June, the magnificent course set in the Rolls estate near Monmouth,

Full Interplant results were: St Helens 298, points, Ireland 285, IHQ 267, Mitcheldean 'A' 265, WGC 256, UK Opco 254 and Mitcheldean 'B' 250.

Notable Mitcheldean scores were: D. Meek 38 and 35, B. Meek 33 and 35, D. Haines 31 and 33 and G. Davis 32 and 35.

Finishing off the day in grand style, there was an excellent meal followed by a typically witty speech by the host team captain and presentation to the winning team.

The majority of the participants proved that celebrating victory or drowning sorrows have the same effect. Many readers will have heard of, and probably tried, the 'Amber' Nectar, but the locally brewed 'Black' Nectar is second to none — once bitten many times smitten!

Visitors to Ireland will find the hospitality and food unsurpassed; they certainly helped make the weekend very enjoyable and memorable 'to be sure'.

D.R.

Wet in Worcester

STEADY RAIN, soggy fairways and a few flooded greens greeted the participants on the second outing this year, when the Golf Society visited Boughton Park GC in Worcester on 26 May.

The pro shop did a roaring trade in wet weather gear as some players were ill equipped for the conditions. Yet, in spite of the continuous rain, play was possible, a tribute to the course drainage system and green-keepers.

The day's tournament was a 36-hole stapleford points competition playing for the America Cup, which incidentally was donated by John Wigg, now vice president, Webster machine mfg operations, when he was Mitcheldean's assembly manager in the late '70s.

Appearing more like trawler fishermen, 22 ardent golfers commenced play. Surprisingly, they were able to get on most of the main greens which putted very true and quite fast.

Setting the pace in the morning round were Dave James and Clive Alcott with 36 points each, closely followed by

the competition being a 36-hole medal tournament, playing for the Summer Cup.

A cloudless sky, in complete contrast to last year's event, a beautiful golf course — what more could one ask?

Opening up in the morning round with a fine round of 72 was Bill Meek; this was later equalled by Richard Matthews, despite taking a 7 at the 18th (a long par 3 over water near the green).

Ray Hook with a 74 and Ron Carter with 75 were the only other real contenders. As for the rest, their chances were blown with mediocre or poorish scores and no real excuses!

Leading the scoring in the afternoon were Dave James with a 69, Trev Jones a 71 and Terry Hook and Ron Carter with 72s. When all the cards were checked, Richard Matthews was declared the winner with a 2-round total of 146, beating Ron Carter by one stroke on 147.

This was Richard's second success of the season, he having previously won the America Cup in May — a notable achievement indeed.

Following a fine evening meal, the captain's speech and presentation concluded another enjoyable day.

D.R.

Peggy meets the Queen Mother

PEGGY HERBERT was one of the army of women who worked as Land Girls in the 1939-45 war. Her field of battle was Berkeley in the area now known as Slimbridge. She joined us at Mitcheldean in 1960, working in the machine shop; after 21 years' service she took early retirement and, a year later, did a moped marathon ride for charity from Land's End to John o'Groats. Just recently she was in the news again — Peggy tells all about it:

SIX HUNDRED former members of the Women's Land Army gathered in the Grand Hotel, Birmingham, on 30 April this year to attend their last national reunion. And there were even veterans of the 1914-18 war among them.

At the first such reunion, held in the Albert Hall in 1969, there were no less than 6,000 present, but time had taken its toll.

HM the Queen Mother was patron of the WLA from the time it was re-formed in 1938 to the time of its disbandment in 1950.

Then, following a small local reunion, the British Women's Land Army Society (BWLAS) was formed, and since then seven national reunions have been held.

As a member of the committee for almost 25 years I was involved with the organisation of these events and during my time at Mitcheldean plant Rank Xerox kindly helped with the printing of various literature.

The BWLAS have greatly appreciated the fact that the Queen Mother has always sent a telegram on the day of each reunion, thanking us all for our loyalty and service to our country.

But we are all getting older and last year we agreed that we would make the 1988 national reunion our last.

Her Majesty was informed and we were delighted to receive a letter from Clarence House saying she would be with us on this occasion.

At 2 pm on 30 April, the ladies attending were seated in the conference room and the committee, including myself, were at the door awaiting the Queen Mother's arrival.

I was third in line to be introduced. She asked me what

my job had been in the WLA and when I told her I had been a tractor driver, she commented "A very cold job in winter."

I mentioned that I had swapped my tractor for a moped and done a sponsored ride for charity five years ago.

The Queen Mother said that she admired all those who raised money for charity and that she always watches the London Marathon.

She was particularly interested to meet three ladies over 90 years old who had worked on the land in the First World War and others who had travelled from overseas to be present.

We were all very touched by Her Majesty's speech. "The King and I were very proud, and grateful to you all for your great contribution to the war effort," she said, "and I know the same spirit of comradeship loyalty and devotion to Queen and Country still remain.

"It gives me so much pleasure to be with you today, and thank you all." The Queen

Photo courtesy Sunday Mercury (Birmingham)



The Queen Mother meets veteran Land Girls.

Mother left at 3.45 am to fly back to London from Birmingham Airport, but not before she had walked around to meet more ladies. (Her equerry Sir Martin Gilliatt told me that when she is enjoying herself, Her Majesty doesn't worry about keeping to schedule!)

When she went out to her car, dozens of children ran from the crowd with flowers.

It was a day never to be forgotten. Only one thing marred the event and that was the behaviour of the press — our own photographer was knocked over and his camera was smashed, so we didn't get the



Peggy (right) with Anne Williams, relaxing after their TV session.

pictures we had hoped for to remind us of our memorable day. (If only we'd had a pitchfork handy!)

However, I'm happy to say that that will not be the last time we ex-Land Army girls will have a get-together. The BWLAS will continue to exist, but future reunions will be held on a local level only.

- and talks on TV with Bill Oddie

THE HOLDING of their final big reunion brought the BWLAS into the focus of TV cameras.

Last spring the society's chairman, two deputy chairmen and Peggy (a former deputy chairman) were invited to appear in Bill Oddie's weekly show 'FAX' and they travelled to the BBC Studios in Manchester for a pre-recording.

Because they were to be interviewed in front of a live audience and would be answering questions from them, there had to be considerable rehearsal beforehand, and presenter Bill Oddie was very friendly and patient, says Peggy.

Each of the four appeared in turn and were asked about the WLA's history and their own personal experiences.

Peggy said that she and deputy chairman Anne Williams were both Londoners and they were sent to a farm in Oxfordshire for the first three weeks.

"The farmer got us at cut

price because we were recruits! When we arrived we were issued with the rules of the house: no smoking, no drinking, one candle a week and don't forget the black-out!"

The good news was that once a week they could have a bath, and they could also borrow the owner's tandem to go to the cinema.

"So when our first opportunity came, we cycled off to enjoy ourselves. I remember we paid sixpence (2½p.) to see a John Mills film and a cartoon.

"But when we came out we found someone had pinched the back wheel and we had to carry the tandem the two miles back to the farm!

"The farmer docked 7s.6d. from our wages — quite a sum in those days — to pay for a new wheel."

The 'FAX' programme was screened on Sunday, 24 April, and Peggy's daughter Elaine (wife of Gordon Cruickshank in finance) videoed it so the family can have a repeat showing.

WE REPORT with regret the deaths of the following:

Jim Cannon

Jim came to Mitcheldean in 1964 to join production control.

When a separate configuration control department was set up, he was appointed its first manager (being closely involved with the introduction of the 9000 family of machines) and he held this position until his retirement in 1979.

He was 72 when he died on 31 May.

Skip Carpenter

Royston, or Skip as he was more widely known, died on 30 June at the age of 61.

He originally came to Mitcheldean in 1943 and worked in the experimental shop until he left to do his national service.

It wasn't until 1958 that he rejoined us, working in the finance department where he was in charge of the nominal ledgers and involved in the preparation of management accounts.

His sport was soccer and it was through his captaincy of the Sea Cadet football team in Cinderford years ago that he came by his nickname.

Skip took early retirement in 1982, while his wife Margaret was still working in the cashier's office.