

Vision

The house magazine of Rank Xerox Mitcheldean

Presenting — Mitcheldean's millionth machine

WE HUNG out the banners, flashed electronic messages of welcome to our guests and broadcast the proceedings throughout the plant when, on 14 December, a Xerox 5014 came down the line.

It was a rather special machine, however — the millionth new copier to be produced at Mitcheldean.

With us to celebrate this landmark in our history was former corporate vice president Frank Pipp, now a consultant at senior staff level, who was group director responsible for manufacturing and supply in Rank Xerox in the '70s.

He brought with him messages of congratulation from Xerox top management.

Joining him and site director David Stokes on the podium was Dick Holmes, vice president and director of European Manufacturing Operations, making one of his last appearances at Mitcheldean before his retirement.

David extended a warm welcome to the gathering who included not only senior Xerox and Rank Xerox management but also local MP Paul Marland, Eric Radley, Gloucestershire County Council chairman, Arthur Cooper, chairman and chief



Royal Forest of Dean College principal Gareth Nicholls is presented with our millionth copier by apprentice/trainee Jeremy Addis.

executive of the Forest of Dean District Council, and Les Tuffley, chairman of Mitcheldean Parish Council (Les worked on site for 40 years before he retired).

Another key guest was Gareth Nicholls, principal of the Royal Forest of Dean College.

There were among the audience a number of employees

who had been with us for over 30 years and who were associated with the production of the very first machine manufactured at Mitcheldean — the 914, so called because it took paper up to 9 in. x 14 in. in size.

Although the company had been in Mitcheldean in one form or another since 1940, it was not until late 1959 that this, the first xerographic machine, was made in Britain.

Until that time, as long-servers know, the factory was making cine cameras and projectors under licence from Bell & Howell.

The 914 was the first automatic copying machine, able to produce copies at the touch of a button. It was, however, slow and cumbersome with a copy speed of seven per minute, and the company had forecast that 750 machines would be sold over five years before the market was saturated.

The production of our millionth copier 30 years later thus beat the original requirement handsomely!

Realisation of the machine's revolutionary potential came quickly with the most extraordinary explosion of demand for these and subsequent

Frank Pipp conveys the congratulations of Xerox top management. With him are EMO vice president and director Dick Holmes and Mitcheldean's director David Stokes. The backcloth shows models we have produced since 1960.



Mitcheldean Plant — national award winners

From the left —

- Best Factories Award
- Environmental Commendation
- British Quality Award



Continued from page 1.

copiers. Once installed with customers, the copiers were switched on, long queues formed, and the revolution in the office had begun.

Eventually 200,000 Xerox 914s were produced in factories around the world.

Since 1959, Mitcheldean plant has been involved in the manufacture of no less than 34 types of copier.

These have included the 813/660, the 3100 and 3600 families, the 4000 family, the 5400, the 9000 family, the very successful 10 Series and, most recently, the 50 Series — through the 5046, 5018/5028 and 5012/5014.

Said David Stokes: "As an indication of how successful our product is and of the growing market, I would point out that it took 25 years to produce the first half million new copiers, and only five years to produce the second half million. I hope the trend continues!"

Sharing some further facts and figures, he said that:

- Of the one million copiers we have produced, over 80 per cent. are exported.
- The copier produced in the highest volume at Mitcheldean was the 1025 with 148,000 units manufactured.
- The largest machine produced was the 9700 which the refurbishing department still work on today; the smallest was the 1012.



David Stokes speaks of our past achievements and plans for the future to assembled guests and employees.



Sue Williams gives the millionth machine a final valeting and adds labels, instruction sheet, etc., before sending it on its way to the presentation point.

- If all the one million machines built here at Mitcheldean were working together today, they would be producing the staggering sum of 22 million copies per minute!
- If all the machines were placed alongside one another, they would reach to Land's End and back again.

"Today's event is not only a recognition of one million copiers produced at Mitcheldean, but also of several other significant

milestones achieved during the course of 1989," said David Stokes.

He spoke of the 1989 Best Factories Award, featured in our last issue, which established Mitcheldean as a benchmark factory, well above the UK average and equal to the world's best in the areas of quality, productivity, cost and customer satisfaction

On 19 October we achieved two million safe working hours for the first time, establishing a corporate benchmark.

On 4 December we received an award in respect of environmental improvements carried out as a result of the Mitcheldean Enterprise Workshops project (featured on page 4).

Then, just prior to the millionth machine celebration, had come the news that the joint management/trade union job evaluation team had won a corporate Team Excellence award.

It all added up to a fine finish for 1989.

Looking to the 1990s, David spoke of the Mitcheldean 2000 strategy which would involve significant investments in each of the areas of our business, and would ensure that Mitcheldean operated as a truly world-class manufacturing unit.

"I am sure that the strategy will be instrumental in our celebrating the production of two million copiers within the next ten years.

"In order to meet many of the objectives that we have set ourselves as part of M2000, it will be important that we continue to engage and train young people within business.

"So as to ensure that our business needs are communicated and understood, we have embarked upon a process of developing much closer links with educational establishments in the area.

"This process, I am sure, will enable us to define industry's requirements, and enable educational institutions to provide us with young people who have the education and training to meet our needs.

"We have worked very closely with the Royal Forest of Dean College for a number of years, and are very appreciative of the help and efforts given to training many of our young people.

"We thought an appropriate gesture in recognition of this close working relationship would be to donate to the College the one millionth copier produced at Mitcheldean."

Then a buzzer sounded, the specially labelled 5014 copier was lifted on to the pack line, and duly emerged at the end but minus the usual packaging.

It was presented to college principal Gareth Nicholls by one of our apprentice/trainees, Jeremy Addis.

He also handed over an inscribed brass plaque bearing the logos of the British Quality Award and the Best Factories Award.

Thanking the company warmly for this Christmas gift, Mr Nicholls said it would be placed in the college's library of resource learning where it could be used by students.

Time for a memento

As a memento of the occasion, every employee received a travelling clock, with a personal message from David Stokes.

He explained that the gift was also in recognition of the efforts made during the year by the Mitcheldean team towards meeting the objectives of:

- a 25 per cent improvement in product quality;
- achievement of inventory targets by end October;
- two million working hours without a lost time accident;
- and 100 per cent. delivery performance at year end.

We get 'Gold Disc' for millionth best seller



One for the record — David Stokes receives our chart-topping award from Gareth Nicholls.

THERE WAS a surprise addition to the awards which Mitcheldean has collected in 1989.

In expressing his thanks for the gift of our millionth copier to the Royal Forest of Dean College, Gareth Nicholls said that, as the father of two teenage children, he had become "a

middle-aged expert on pop music", and he was used to hearing all about who was top of the charts.

"Mitcheldean copiers make perfect copies of anybody's material," he asserted, and he was pleased to present the company with a 'Gold Disc' to mark its millionth best seller!

Changes in EMO organisation

DICK HOLMES, vice president and director of European Manufacturing Operations, retired on 31 January this year. He joined Xerox in 1972 and has spent his career with EMO.

In announcing the resulting organisational changes, Eric Steenburgh, senior vice president and general manager, D&M (MO), said that, under Dick's

leadership, the European Manufacturing Organisation has established a legacy of success by consistently responding to the needs of their customers. He added that Dick is an excellent businessman who has made significant contributions to Xerox's success.

He is succeeded as vice president and director, EMO, by

Stephen Tierney who joined Xerox in 1972 and has held several key positions in finance, planning and supply/demand control and planning, his most recent assignment being that of vice president, materials management.

He took up his new appointment on 1 January, 1990.

Raymond Stark, formerly plant manager, new build operations, has been appointed vice president, materials management, also with effect from 1 January, 1990.

He joined Xerox in 1963 and has held a variety of key positions in production control, materials management, supply/demand and manufacturing operations.

Both Tierney and Stark report to Steenburgh.

A model gift for Dick

THE LATEST claimant to the title of 'the smallest copier ever made at Mitcheldean' is a version of the Xerox 5014 which, as you can see from the picture here, is a palm-top rather than a desk-top machine.

Measuring just five square inches, it's a marvel of miniaturisation. But despite the print it appears to have produced (of a sheep!) it isn't operational.

The copier was built specially as a retirement gift for Dick Holmes from Mitcheldean.

Site director David Stokes presented it to him at a dinner held in his honour on 14 December, which was attended by Frank Pipp and senior UK European Manufacturing Operations staff.

Dick joined Rank Xerox in 1975 and was deputy manufacturing director for three years before becoming director of manufacturing & supply and, more recently, vice president and director, European Manufacturing Operations.

"His manufacturing accountability has spanned all the Western European manufacturing plants in Spain, Holland, France and the UK, as well as embracing others in India and even Eastern European countries," said David.

"We have come to know and respect Dick's broad business experience and management style, and we all wish him and his wife Paula a long, successful and

happy retirement."

On behalf of Mitcheldean plant, David then presented him with the 5014 replica and also a brass plaque, engraved with verses in true Forest dialect, illustrated by a familiar local ruminant!

Dick was highly delighted with the novel gifts, which were made entirely by the building 5 staff pictured below.

Paying tribute to his management team, he said he had seen tremendous improvements since he took over as EMO director and he had greatly enjoyed his time working in England.

Representing our skills

Mitcheldean management had wanted to give him some memento which would be representative of operations on site and demonstrate the unique skills available here.

They presented the challenge to parts manufacturing staff, who responded in an imaginative way.

It was Chris Barnard who came up with the idea of a copier replica.

The main credit for its creation, however, goes to Ron Evans who, working with a 5014 beside him, fashioned the one-in-five scale model out of a solid block of aluminium.

"I've made emergency parts

A 'reduced copy' of the Xerox 5014 — seen against the original.



for machines before, but this was the first time I've ever made a whole copier!" he told us. "It was an unusual challenge and I enjoyed it."

The copier lid, fixed in the open position so one could see inside to the plastic platen, was made separately; so too were the trays which were Dave Hart's contribution.

The user instructions on the console were correct down to the smallest detail — Chris Clarke took a series of photographs of the 5014 console until he achieved the exact size required and this was cut out and glued into position.

The paintwork was carried out by Graham Lockwood and Roy Davis; they even coloured in the green registration lines on the

platen and edged the trays in blue.

Finally, the little copier was mounted on ash wood and a brass plate suitably inscribed was added.

High tech. ram

In contrast to these manual skills, the illustration on the plaque — a Forest ram (64K RAM?) — was designed and processed through CAD/CAM.

It was created on an Intergraph machine by Roger Bailey, while Roy Chamberlain drove the machine which took the design on to the brass plaque. John Davies engraved the verses, and the plaque too was mounted on ash.

The final lines, "Best of luck, owld butt, thou bist welcome any time," aptly expressed the feelings of Dick's many friends at Mitcheldean.

The team who carried out the project — from left, Ron Evans, Dave Hart, Roy Chamberlain, John Davies (all of small batch), Roy Davis and Graham Lockwood (paint shop), Roger Bailey and Chris Barnard (technical support) and Chris Clarke, engineering manager, parts manufacturing.



A rewarding enterprise — viewed from any angle

FOR THE past five years numerous small businesses have been 'brewing' in the MEWS, their products ranging from microtechnology to wood-working.

In the early 1980s, the brewery buildings, from which the whole modern Rank Xerox plant had sprung, became surplus to requirements.

Conversion of the area into the Mitcheldean Enterprise Workshops (or MEWS), a scheme set up by Rank Xerox, has now won the company a major commendation "in recognition of human and social responsibility and environmental quality."

Site director David Stokes received the award on behalf of the MEWS from the Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment, at the Royal Society of Arts in London on 4 December.

Accompanying him were Mike Cooper, manager, works engineering & facilities, and Ferruccio Marangon, manager maintenance, energy & MEWS, Nickolas Schroeder, manager, real estate operations, from RXHQ, and Derek Knibbs, who was managing director of the MEWS from 1984 to 1986 and played a crucial role in its establishment.

The environmental award scheme is organised by Business and Industry Commitment to the Environment and it plays a significant role in focussing the attention of industry and commerce on this all-important issue.

Launched 14 years ago, the awards have rewarded initiative and innovation across virtually the whole spectrum of industrial development and activity and the

management of natural resources.

What makes them unique is that the assessors represent a wide cross-section of business — last year they came from organisations like Plessey, CEBG, National Westminster Bank, British Rail, and the Nature Conservancy Council.

Holiday villages, docks, collieries, canals, small workshops, literally any environmentally inspired undertaking, can compete on equal terms with factory, office, warehousing and retail developments, whether new or restored.

Rank Xerox chose to submit the environmental improvements that resulted from the MEWS and restored the centre of Mitcheldean to its original setting.

The two main MEWS buildings are more than 100 years old and until 1939 were owned by Wintle's Brewery.

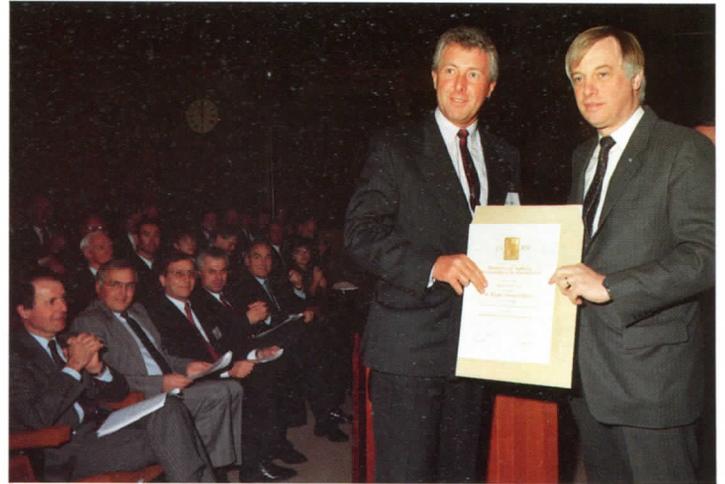
In 1984, as part of the MEWS scheme, buildings were demolished at the entrance to the area, thus opening up an excellent view for people passing through the village of the fine stonework of the main buildings.

Even in the days when the brewery was operational, these buildings had been obscured by stables, a garage, the beer store and a variety of sheds.

Today they positively enhance the appearance of Mitcheldean village.

The MEWS was initiated to create some 90 small workshops and office units, supported by a range of external services, to assist small businesses to start up during a period of high unemployment.

Rank Xerox allocated five



Site director David Stokes receives the environmental award from the Rt Hon. Christopher Patten, Secretary of State for the Environment.

acres of land to the project and invested £½ million in refurbishing the whole complex.

The old stonework was cleaned and reconstituted stone was used to fill in and match the original. The numerous windows, which are a particularly attractive feature, received special attention.

In one building some 20 frames were either bricked up or concealed by other buildings, only coming to light when the latter were demolished. Every one of the windows was restored to working order.

"Keeping it all up to the standard required for listed buildings is an ongoing task," commented Mike Cooper.

During the conversion work, granite blocks for the brewery horses to walk over were discovered and a few are displayed, together with a descriptive plaque to remind people of the history all round them.

The old bore-hole was maintained, the lift shaft

camouflaged with brown cladding, and stairs, doors and outer fence spruced up.

There was considerable refurbishing, too, of the more recent peripheral single-storey units including building 11 where the first few 914 machines were built.

The project was finally completed in 1988 (that was when the last unit was finished) and the workshops now provide employment for over 300 people in some 40 businesses.

Among them are quite a few former employees who have started up their own thriving concerns and who count the Rank Xerox plant among the customers for their products and services.

Earlier optimism about filling the units has proved to be fully justified. The rate of occupancy has been consistently high, and when the application for the recent environmental award was made in October 1989 it was 94 per cent.

The beautiful old buildings enhance the appearance of Mitcheldean's main street.



Bill Lowe visit

D&M EXECUTIVE vice president Bill Lowe, accompanied by his senior staff, visited Mitcheldean on 15 January for an Operations Review and site tour; he also conducted a communications meeting with senior Mitcheldean staff. Our visitors expressed positive satisfaction with the information provided at the review and excellent feedback was obtained on the CAD/CAM applications, Mitcheldean 2000 strategy, and manufacturing and assembly working environment, and the general work ethos and attitude.

We shall be featuring this visit in our next issue.

Pottery help for a Portuguese home

IAN ROBINSON had long wanted to have a pottery of his own.

He achieved his ambition when in 1984 he became one of the first people to rent a unit in MEWS building 11 — the very building where the first 914 copiers were built.

And there he set up 'Vision Pottery' — "You have to have foresight in this business!" says Ian.

But he never envisaged it would develop in the way it has, or that it would lead to helping a group of deprived Portuguese children.

A former potter who learned his art in Clevedon and later worked at Prinknash Abbey near Painswick (though not as a monk), Ian joined us at Mitcheldean almost 13 years ago.

Currently he does final run and test on the 5018/5028 line, but at the end of the day he leaves high technology behind and reverts to the age-old occupation of working in clay.

A few years ago he sought business advice from another hobbyist potter — Don Dickenson, who is full-time pastor at Mitcheldean Christian Fellowship.

They decided on a merger — Ian with Vision Pottery and Don with Dean Magna Ceramics — and looked for bigger premises. They found what they wanted in MEWS building 6 and moved into what used to be a part of the Rank Xerox training department.

It was Don who introduced Ian to 'hobby ceramics' — a scheme run by a subsidiary of a pottery craft company. Under this scheme, pre-cast moulds are supplied and pottery students learn how to make an item, decorate it, clean it and do other hand finishing operations.

Vision Pottery provides a sales outlet. "The items range from plates to ceramic Christmas trees," Ian told us. "Mugs are the most popular, however. We give a discount on all items to charities."

The students range from ten to 60 years of age or more. "We have more than 60 a week. Even so, this last Christmas we had a hard job keeping up with demand, and already we are bursting at the seams."

About two years ago Ian and Don came to hear of the Lar Evangelico Portugues, the Evangelical Children's Home on the outskirts of Oporto which



Ian Robinson and Don Dickenson (right) with a selection of ceramics, all of which have been made in the studio.

cares for around 125 children of all ages, and wanted to help.

"Some are orphans, or have been abandoned; others have been abused. The stories of some of them are quite horrendous," Ian told us.

The home gets no financial help from the state; it is privately run under the direction of an interdenominational Protestant committee, and is funded by donations.

This 'over-sized family' has many needs, but no children are ever turned away and some go on living there after they reach 18 years of age.

One such is João Pedro. A jack of all trades, he repairs shoes, works in the carpenter's shop and cuts the children's hair. Now he's acquiring another skill as a potter.

One of the home's newer buildings was earmarked for vocational training for the teenagers, but it lacked any equipment. Then some money was donated for this purpose and things got moving.

In October 1989 Ian was given leave by the company and he and Don went to Portugal to see the home and investigate the possibility of providing some vocational training in pottery.

They looked around to see what sort of clay and glazes were available, and researched the market. "We made lots of contacts, even though we had to travel nearly 200 miles to see just one person," Ian reported.

"We decided it was a viable project and set about acquiring the equipment for the teaching pottery.



Ian's wife Chris and their ten-year-old daughter Sian remove items from the oven after glaze firing.

Seen playing with the children at the home is Vilma Ruck, formerly in reception/telecommunications. She is now going out again, this time for several months, to work with the children.



"At the time of writing a kiln was being built in Portugal. We have received a gift of another from a pottery firm in Stoke-on-Trent and by the time this issue appears it should be on its way, transported free by courtesy of a shoe-making firm.

"We're hoping the lads in the home can convert one of the pig sties to house the latter kiln and connect it to the power supply.

"We've also bought an electric potter's wheel and are looking at ways of providing learning material."

João Pedro came over here for further training in January, and Don is returning with him to set up the pottery.

The families of both Ian and Don assist in the studio and Ian's wife Chris is going to Oporto this February to get the classes going and help João who will run them.

Accompanying her will be ex-Mitcheldean Vilma Ruck who will be staying for some months

at the home to work with the children.

The Mitcheldean Christian Fellowship are assisting in various ways and other schemes are planned by the 'Lar' Fund UK to help these disadvantaged young people equip themselves for a career.

Obituary

WE RECORD with regret the deaths of the following retired employees: Ethel Rodway on 26 October, believed to be 90; Arthur Downing on 3 November, aged 79; Ivor Kibble on 8 November, aged 73; John Creed on 10 November, aged 73; Anthony Williams on 16 November, aged 51; Donald Trigg on 23 November, aged 70; Alfred Cannon on 3 December, aged 60.



Site director David Stokes tells his audience: "Mitcheldean 2000 presents a major opportunity for the plant."

"A PARTICULARLY tough year for Mitcheldean" is how site director David Stokes described 1989 when he addressed members of the Mitcheldean management team, gathered in the clubhouse last November for the 1990 Year Start meeting.

As last year, he touched on the highlights of the year's achievements and results, and the challenges and opportunities lying ahead, leaving it to senior staff to deal with each business aspect in detail.

A variety of factors, mostly outside the plant's direct control, had affected our performance as a manufacturing unit.

The corporation's drive to improve its return on assets had meant a significant initiative to 'burn off' stocks of finished product in our Operating Companies. The consequence on manufacturing had been a marked reduction in build volumes across all products affecting all plants.

The impact had been further compounded by the levels of over-capacity that existed throughout the corporation. As a result, we had had two manpower reductions affecting our supplementary labour force.

"While these were obviously to be deeply regretted, we should feel a little easier in the knowledge that these people were recruited with a clear understanding that their employment was of a temporary nature. In the event, some had been with us for up to three years, and the experience and training they gained meant they were much better prepared for seeking employment elsewhere in the community."

Despite the difficulties mentioned, there were some notable successes. During the year we launched Mitcheldean 2000, a three-year programme embracing all facets of the business encompassing some 200-plus individual projects. "It embraces a space/building occupancy strategy and the creation of a focussed factory in building 1. It brings together

selected vertical integration opportunities and embraces the whole philosophy of 'Just in time' manufacturing.

"This presents a major opportunity for Mitcheldean. By the end of calendar year 1990 I would expect to see this plant configured differently, and moving rapidly towards a 'focussed factory' and 'Just in time' environment."

Another success during the year was the creation of a single bargaining unit with a common job evaluation and grading structure and two-year salary agreement. (The joint management/trade union job evaluation team's success in winning a Corporate Team Excellence award at Leesburg will be featured in a following issue).

"I am also excited about the tremendous amount of work that's going on between ourselves and local colleges/schools, to enhance the availability and training of young people.

"Equally, the utilisation of our 'open learning' centre is encouraging — as, too, are the various training initiatives, particularly in the area of technical staff, which are receiving considerable emphasis within the corporation."

The reduction of raw material inventory deserved special mention, he pointed out; and the regular achievement of refurbishing and conversion programmes, coupled with the 1045/1065 start-ups, the achievement of planned profit targets for Squirrel and asset recovery, and the response of manufacturing to increasing production volumes, were all notable performances during 1989.

David Stokes spoke of the continuance of full occupancy rates in the MEWS and added that major marketing initiatives on the Business Park are looking extremely positive.

"During the year no fewer than 275 QIP projects were completed and there are currently 250 projects in progress. My commitment to Leadership Through Quality is unabated. I believe that people's involvement in projects, and the philosophy of project-by-project improvement, is fundamental to a successful manufacturing unit.

"Management stimulation of project teams is an essential element and is mandated upon all of you. I wish to see you encourage the formation of self-led QIP/PSP teams. Future performance will be measured against your success in this area.

"Whilst I know on many aspects of our business we are a

1989 SUCCESSES,

benchmark plant, not just in terms of Xerox, but in terms of UK manufacturing, there is always room for improvement.

"At the end of the year we achieved yet another accolade in a significant list of acknowledgments over the last five years, namely that of winning a 1989 Best Factories Award, based on submitted data and following intensive site inspection.

"This is a significant achievement for the plant and recognises the considerable efforts of all staff at Mitcheldean. I know I can rely on your full support and commitment to ensure we build on the success of '89 and address the challenges of 1990."

Control

Controller Phil King had praise for the excellent efforts made by everyone to effect large reductions in inventory, which by the end of October last was down to the planned 24 days of supply.

"Inventory management through 1989 showed Mitcheldean people working at their best," said Phil. "The proper processes were rigidly followed, but it was such a tough task I was extremely concerned right up to the end."

This praise offset news of the impact on our costs of difficulties with certain programmes.

Phil went on to describe the feedback from the survey in which Mitcheldean participated, and which resulted in a 1989 Best British Factories award.

In most areas we compared extremely well with existing 'world-class' manufacturers; however, some areas for improvement were indicated:

- It is no longer possible to pass on cost increases even if they are below the annual rate of inflation; 'world-class' organisations are reducing cost to compete with Japanese and European organisations.
- 'World-class' companies operate with less inventory than we do.
- These companies accept far less scrap, parts re-work and lost material than Mitcheldean.
- They also operate with higher levels of housekeeping in factory and office areas.

The survey reaffirmed much of the benchmarking work that had taken place over the past year. "The conclusions as to where we weren't so strong were no great surprise," said Phil, adding that plans to tackle the problem areas were part of the M2000 project.



The management team listen intently to the ad



Quality & technical services

"The business and product quality mission is to further develop the site's total quality culture to achieve or better world-class standards of excellence in all that we do," said Brian Buckland, manager, quality & technical services.

In terms of product quality, he explained that we had made good progress in achieving zero defect weeks. Whilst that was important internally, Mitcheldean would be developing new methods of measuring customer satisfaction in 1990.

"We have also made some excellent progress in reducing line fallout; however, greater strides need to be made to reach the benchmark standard by 1992. Brian Reeves is working with a quality improvement team to achieve these demanding standards.

"Business quality is an area that will grow in 1990, the most important aspects of this activity will be the application of statistical process control across all business areas so that we control the processes rather than control by end result correction; and encouraging the development of self-led shopfloor and office groups.

"Both these activities are underway and we are looking to

1990 STRATEGIES



significant achievements in 1990.

"New technology and production engineering have some exciting prospects for 1990, including the delivery of processes and technologies for showcases, rapidly expanding CAD/CAM applications, promoting design for assembly/design for manufacture applications, developing links with industry-conscious universities, and enhancing our technical skills base."

For some light relief, Brian asked everyone how much their electricity bill was, the answers ranging from £250 to £400 per annum. Then he revealed that Rank Xerox Mitcheldean's bill was £500,000 per annum, and he asked for everyone's help in ensuring we do not waste electricity.

Safety had been a highlight of 1989 with a target of 2 million safe working hours achieved. Employee involvement had been a significant factor in achieving this target and if we continued at our current trend we would reach 3 million safe working hours on 22 February, 1990.

Brian also covered the MEWS and Business Park in his address. "It might surprise everyone to know that together they employ 800 people on site," he added.

Finally, he asked everyone to **think quality** in everything we do.

Materials

At the 1988 Year Start meeting the focus had been largely on the need for a new continuous flow manufacturing initiative, and materials manager Kevin Horrobin had spoken of the challenge of its foundation and early implementation.

"One year later we have a comprehensive strategy called Mitcheldean 2000 and the first phase of implementation — namely, the 5012/14 showcase — is on schedule for March 1990," he was pleased to say.

"On the surface, and judged by any standard, this is excellent progress, but it's below the surface where the truly impressive progress lies — progress in areas of understanding the full capability and benefits derived from JIT manufacturing; progress in clearly defining the levels of investment required; progress in fully comprehending the 1990 challenge associated with this strategy; and, most importantly, progress in sharing the challenge amongst all of the Mitcheldean team.

"From a materials viewpoint, and as part of the M2000 team, we see ourselves as responsible for delivering some of the early project requirements — in the areas of JIT part deliveries, local sourcing, electronic data interchange, stock accuracy, etc.

"While these projects are major challenges, we take comfort from the fact that the desire firmly exists within the plant to ensure the success of M2000.

"With that backing we are guaranteed to make even more impressive progress in 1990," added Kevin.

Refurbishing, harnesses & manufacturing

"All three areas form an integral part of the Mitcheldean 2000 initiative, with many exciting projects leading us into the 1990s," said Keith Grant, manager, refurbishing, harness & manufacturing.

"Firstly, in manufacturing we are looking at several major investments to enable us to make more of the parts for our products on site; this will help to speed up the whole pace of our production flow, reducing inventory and costs.

"The main areas we are looking at are the manufacture of plastic parts, increasing the manufacture of concentric parts (items such as shafts), and stepping up the in-house

manufacturing content of fuser rolls.

"In addition, within the manufacturing areas we are looking at the whole of the facility and layout with a view to increasingly changing our manufacturing methods from a batch environment to continuous flow manufacturing over the next few years.

"In the harness area specifically, we have plans to put in place a showcase facility during the early part of the 1990s. We now need to consolidate within this area, following the rapid growth in the last couple of years, and much work needs to be carried out this year in our drive to reduce overheads and improve competitiveness so as to enable growth to continue.

"We have plans to consolidate the refurbishing area into one building as part of the overall Mitcheldean site strategy, although this probably will not happen until the early part of 1991."

The major focus of efforts within refurbishing areas through 1990 must be to reduce costs and, above all, speed up our response to marketplace requirements, said Keith.

"As we start to develop our plans, considerable help from all members of the refurbishing team will be needed."

The customisation of several centralised electronic printing equipment for Operating Companies had proved a great success in 1989 and it was planned to enhance the level of activity within this area, added Keith.

Assembly operations (new build)

In the absence of John Flynn, manager, assembly operations (new build), Peter Whiles, 5046 assembly manager, presented a summary in which he laid emphasis on the need for the operations to improve their cost effectiveness.

During 1989, despite several difficult problems, quality improved across all products and supply/demand requirements were met, he reported.

"In achieving these goals we failed to meet our cost targets as it was necessary to work significant levels of overtime to recover lost production."

1990, he said, needs to be the year when through employee involvement and improved communication we achieve benchmark cost levels.

A major contributor to reducing cost will be M2000 with both 5012/14 and 5018/28 moving to building 1 by the spring holiday.

This in itself will drive

disciplines by removing waste from the build process, but additionally there are factors which require constant management and apply across all products.

The specific problems we need to tackle in 1990 are:

- Regular achievement of our daily schedules in their normal working time.
- Achievement of product quality targets to allow daily machine release.
- Achievement of the 250ppm line fall-out target on all models.
- Enabling both a pleasant and a continuing safe working environment through the highest level of housekeeping.

"There are many other targets," he said, "which we must strive to achieve and all of them will be communicated throughout new build operations early in the New Year. The major challenge is to engage the support of staff in assisting us with the tasks facing us in our drive for excellence."

Personnel

Many of the 1990 objectives for the personnel function relate specifically to M2000 with the main area being one of employee involvement.

Personnel manager Robin Fyffe stressed the importance of capturing the enthusiasm of employees from all areas of the plant following the M2000 strategy communication.

Many people have expressed a desire to become directly involved in the work that needs to be done, and it was emphasised that the management team have a responsibility to capture the ideas generated by the workforce, and to ensure that these ideas are investigated and implemented wherever possible.

A small team of managers and employee representatives will be formed in order to design a process to help facilitate this.

"Another major area will be the development of our training strategy, which will respond to the projected drop in young people available for employment through the 1990s," said Robin.

"Proposals have already been developed to reintroduce apprentice training programmes for craft and technician apprentices together with commercial trainees.

"This, linked with a marketing of Rank Xerox careers with schools and colleges, should ensure that we are able to attract sufficient young people of the right calibre into the Mitcheldean plant.

"In addition, training will play an increasingly important part in helping to retrain and develop existing employees to meet the changes facing us," he added.

Service Awards

25 years

I'M THE only thing in transport that ever fell off the back of a lorry!" claims Graham Jones. "I was checking a load, stumbled and fell overboard."

Our chat with internal transport's section manager was constantly interrupted — not with similar crises, but with calls and transmissions from drivers.

"We get some 200 enquiries a day here," he told us, "and we all thrive on the pressure."

"We have all the communication technology necessary, but we wouldn't survive without the terrific teamwork of the staff — they are a great bunch of blokes."

Some of them were working during the Christmas holiday; for transport is ever moving, and "you can get called out during the night — it's not an eight-hour job," Graham told us.

He started at Mitcheldean in raw material stores, switched to refurbishing as a driver/operator, then came into internal transport some 18 years ago.

Even though contractors are now used, it is necessary to know the job from the inside, and Graham holds an RSA certificate of professional competence in national road haulage operations as well as being a qualified forklift instructor.

Moving is not only his job, it's also his hobby. A former builder, he loves nothing better than restoring and improving properties. "I am a real DIY enthusiast and we have never lived in a place more than three years!"

At present he and his wife Marilyn are happily resident in a mobile home until they can move to a house with enough garden for exercising their three Border collies and Cavalier King Charles spaniels.

And Marilyn's long term plan is to set up a donkey sanctuary.

All **Bill Holloway's** leisure time is devoted to working for the Royal British Legion — "it comprises the whole of my social life," he told us.

He has been associated with the movement for 20 years, and for 12 years he has served on the committee of the Lydbrook branch. He was vice chairman and has now been chairman for nearly three years, "which means I do anything from calling the bingo numbers to helping in the bar."

Quite a number of his colleagues at work are members, too, along with Arthur Cooper, chairman of the FOD District Council (and a former Mitcheldean).

"We were very busy last Remembrance Day," Bill told us. "Arthur invited all the Gloucester branch of the Parachute Regiment (his former regiment) to the church for the service and then brought them back to the branch afterwards."

Bill's wife Margaret, who is secretary of Lydbrook Primary School, supports him in his Legion activities. She used to work in production control before she left to bring up their family. Daughter Sara is now a midwife at Hereford Hospital and son David works at Reeds Corrugated Cases.

Bill's career at Mitcheldean has been mainly in new build assembly — beginning with our first ever copier, the 914. He spent a month at Venray in the '60s doing a refresher course on the 2400 paper feeder before it was brought back to Mitcheldean, and he was among the pioneer workers on the 2300 at Lydney.

He later joined the 1025/1038 FR&T team and is presently engaged on 5046 refurbishing.

Like Bill, **Dave Howells** came to us from the AEI cableworks in Lydney, and he started in stores administration.



Bill Holloway



Dave Howells



Mervyn Davies



From the left: Roger Court and John Teague

A short spell in finance followed, then an opportunity arose for him to join data processing, and he has remained in computer operations ever since.

Today the computer centre in building 7/1 is known as the UK operations & technical support department, headed by Andy Herridge.

"We install and support hardware and software throughout Mitcheldean and other EMO locations," said Dave. "Most of the work is concerned with trouble-shooting, and no two days are ever alike."

Dave offsets his high tech. occupation with an interest in various sports. Having played football for Coleford, then Mitcheldean, he is now a rugby spectator. He also plays badminton, but his favourite sport is cricket.

For most of his life he's played for Berry Hill — now he is an opening batsman for Dymock. "And I did once manage a couple of games for Gloucestershire second XI," he told us.

This past year he and his wife Deirdre celebrated 20 years of marriage. They met at Mitcheldean when Deirdre was a secretary in

production control ("I well remember the date because it was in 1966 — the only year England won the World Cup!" says Dave).

She left after 14 years' service and is well known locally as a dispenser in the Brook Street surgery.

Their son Jonathan has been studying at Hartpury Agricultural College and is now in the third part of his course, doing evening studies and gaining practical experience during the day on a local farm.

As a former member of the RAF Regiment, **Mervyn Davies** spent some time out in Germany and Holland. "The Regiment mount all the guards of honour whenever the royal family visit an airfield, and I was once called on to join such a guard for the Queen Mother's visit to Cologne."

In late 1964 he joined us at Mitcheldean and has worked on the assembly of a wide range of machines, from the 813 to the 9000 family, subsequently becoming involved in the start-up of 9000 refurbishing.

Currently he is engaged on 5046 refurbishing which, he says, he finds "more of a challenge than new build because every machine is different."

Some of the harnesses he fits into the machines may well be built by his own son Michael who works in the harness assembly centre and was one of the first batch of supplementary staff taken on in 1986.

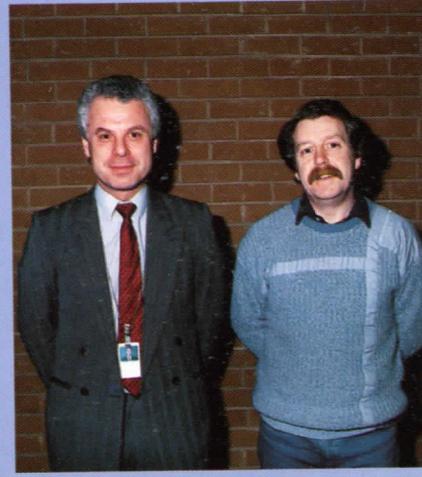
Michael plays for Worrall Hill FC, and for Temco Sports who have won two out of three cup finals in the Gloucester Sunday League. "He is also a Manchester United fan — he caught that off me!" says Mervyn.

Mervyn's own sport is skittles. He plays for Reeds Corrugated Cases, having signed on with them through a family connection, and has been playing for them for 12 years. He competes, too, in our interdepartmental tournament. "Our team has won once and reached the semi-finals twice."

Hazel, Mervyn's wife, also works on site — for Hygiene Services — and their daughter Nicola did two weeks' work

20 years

Pictured are a group whose 20 years of service were recently acknowledged by awards. They are (from left) Dennis Brain (low volume copier purchasing), Fred Bach (materials systems), Adrian Skillern (5012/14 assembly), Ferruccio Marangon (works engineering) and Roger Meek (tool inspection). Three others who qualified are Roy Davis (paint shop), Dave Batts (fuser rolls) and Peter Gargan (export).



They're working well in harness

MANY MARRIAGES are 'made' at Mitcheldean. Our service award feature frequently records the fact that couples first met each other on site.

But we can't recall any time when we (or, in this case, training department) played Cupid in the case of a couple as young as Debbie Knight and Andrew Embling.

At the age of 16, they left their respective schools and, having learned about our YTS scheme at different careers exhibitions, they joined it, within a month of each other, in 1984.

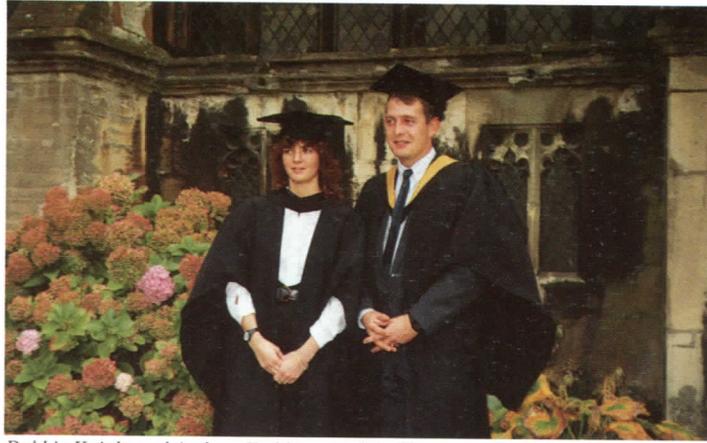
That same year saw the official opening of the MEWS, where the training school was then located, and in the same issue which covered that event we pictured, separately, Debbie doing electrical work and Andrew with a robotic arm he had programmed.

Time moved on, and first Debbie, then Andrew, were found jobs with Mills Associates where they repaired circuit boards under the supervision of former employee Barbara Merry.

In 1985, there they were in 'Vision' again — this time seen working alongside each other, and afterwards they became engaged, the firm by then having moved to Monmouth.

Then comes a disturbing incident in our 'Mills & Boon' story! A couple of years later both Andrew and Debbie found themselves made redundant.

"We lost no time; within hours of being given notice, we came



Debbie Knight and Andrew Embling outside Gloucester Cathedral after the graduation ceremony.

over to see Brian Fowler, manager, young people training, to see if he could help."

He could. He arranged for them to apply for a job at Mitcheldean and they were taken on as supplementary staff in 5046 assembly.

Both had an ONC, having been started on the course in the training school, and six months after joining they were given an opportunity to become trainee electricians. Meantime, they were studying for their HNC.

After their electrician course, their paths diverged somewhat. But towards the end of 1989 both could be found working in the harness centre as electrical inspectors — Debbie on the looms, Andrew in wire cutting operations.

This aspect of togetherness, we are assured, is entirely coincidental!

They recently gained their HNCs in electronic engineering at Gloscat and, as you can see, they were photographed together, capped and gowned, after their graduation ceremony at Gloucester Cathedral.

Now they're continuing to study together — for their HND. "We help each other," said Debbie. She is "more maths oriented," according to Andrew while Debbie maintains "Andrew is better at computer programming."

Ideally, they'd like to take their exams together, but the authorities don't seem to favour this!

Even in their leisure pursuits the togetherness continues.

They did martial arts for a while, went surfing at Newquay and are currently enjoying practising on the dry ski run at Matson, Gloucester.

Photography is another hobby they share, along with a camera. They take it in turns to look through the view-finder, and have just joined the Rank Xerox Camera Club to focus on technique (and avoid a double image?)

There are times when Andrew goes off with a group from Mitcheldean to 'paint ball', stalking his opponents through the 'jungle' like a Tarzan without a Jane — but only because, as Debbie says, "I haven't been able to get a place yet."

While Andrew is zapping away, Debbie devotes herself to the gentle art of music.

She has plenty of instruments to choose from — an electronic keyboard, a flute and a violin (she reached grade 5 in both at school), and even a vintage saxophone which Andrew bought her.

Andrew is not excluded from musical pursuits, however; he has a guitar which Debbie aims to teach him to play.

And then they'll really be in tune — once again.

CONGRATULATIONS to Debbie and Andrew, and also to another former electrical trainee, Richard Rowe, now working in refurbishing, who has gained his HND in electronic engineering.

experience here which later led to her landing a job as a receptionist in the Cinderford Health Centre.

Their eldest daughter Teresa is a secretary at Formwood and she is to be a spring bride this year.

Ever since he completed his craft apprenticeship, **Roger Court** has been engaged on the mechanical side of goods receiving inspection, working alongside another 25-year server, John Skilton.

Roger's job has taken him on occasion up and down the country, and once, in 1975, to an RX location little known by most of us — at Aulnay near Paris. "That was the last time I saw Paris!" says Roger.

Two years ago we featured the Court family in 'Vision' with their pets — four handsome rough collies who have amassed literally hundreds of awards in shows.

Roger, his wife Elizabeth and their two little daughters all take a hand in caring for and handling the collies. Having scooped the top

trophies in local shows, they have now been concentrating on bigger events.

They have had top prize at the British Collie Club and two of their dogs, Scott and Rocky, are unbeaten as a brace at any show.

Nine-year-old Mary was best junior handler at Bournemouth last year and is going to Jersey this year to represent the South West.

The only child in the country to have won four group championships in one year, she has just won the 'Tree Top' shield for the child who has qualified most times for the junior handler of the year competition at Richmond.

Her sister Sarah, aged six, is showing similar potential too.

Says Roger, "We plan to move to a bigger place where we can have up to ten dogs and branch out into breeding."

The family talents extend to 'show biz' as well as showing dogs. Roger, a guitarist, and Elizabeth, who sings and plays the mandoline, perform folk music at various gigs, and both they and their daughters

have won talent competitions at Avon Holidays centres — thus winning themselves further holidays.

The Christmas before last, **John Teague** fished his festive dinner out of the Wye!

One of his biggest 'catches' ever, it was a fine turkey, plus some bottles of cheer — his prize for winning the FOD Angling Club's Christmas match. (He didn't compete in 1989.)

A dedicated fisherman since the age of 14, John learned his skill from his late cousin, a professional gillie.

He goes fishing every Sunday ("I don't suppose I have missed 20 Sundays in the last 30 years") which must account for his outdoor look.

He has for long been a highly successful match angler, his top weight in a match reaching 66lb.12oz.

A member of a number of clubs, John fishes as a team member for Lydney Angling Club. In the winter,

he and colleague Mike Mould, who works with John on the 4030 desktop laser printer line, can be seen fishing the Wye and for the past two years they have won the Lydney two-day pairs event.

He was once a member of the original RX Angling Club too, but membership of the current club is ruled out since their fixtures tend to clash with team matches.

Incidentally, the biggest pike John ever took — a 30-pounder — used to be displayed above the bar in the old clubhouse. It is now parked in his garage!

Neither his wife Diana nor daughter Sarah share his hobby. "Sarah was only a 2lb tiddler when she was born, but she developed into a county cross-country runner in her teens!"

John started in 813 assembly and has worked on most models apart from CBA, chiefly in FR&T. He was among the first of the 2300 team at Lydney; later he worked on the 1025/1038 line until the programme ended last year and he transferred to the 4030 line.

Sowing the seeds of expansion

THE RANK Xerox Gardening Association is preparing to cover more ground.

At the annual general meeting held on 6 December, the constitution was altered to extend membership not only to past and present employees of Rank Xerox, but also to current employees of the Business Park and Mews companies, to associate members of the Sports & Social Club and to the immediate families of all.

This will, it is hoped, encourage the growth of the current membership of 32 paid-up members.

Having had five successful shows so far, the association is now planning to branch out in that respect too and in 1990 there will be around 40 classes covering a wider range of activities.

Home cooks will be interested to know that there will be classes for a Victoria sponge, apple tart and Welsh cakes, as well as home-made jam; and for those clever with their needles there is to be a knitted garment class.

Two floral arrangement classes are also being included in this domestic section.

Another totally new addition will be a photographic section, organised by the Rank Xerox Camera Club.

There will be a full range of vegetable and flower classes with small as well as big onions catered for and, biggest of all, a giant pumpkin class (the world record is currently 755lb!).

The date for the show is fixed for 1 September, so get that in your diary now. Judges will be Roger Keyse (flowers and vegetables) and June England, who will adjudicate in the domestic section.

Schedules will be available soon; if anyone has any queries they can contact chairman Phyllis Christopher (Dean 543319), secretary Harold Moore (542542) or treasurer Mike Rouse (Ross 65366), who were all re-elected at the AGM.

Bob Smith has been elected vice chairman and Robert Brain, Vere Christopher, Andy Gardiner, Mike Manns and Rex Turley are committee members.

The club meets on the first Wednesday in the month (in the clubhouse at 7.30 pm) and their first meeting in 1990 will be on 7 March.

Membership offers people two important benefits.

The association is affiliated to the National Society of Allotment

and Leisure Gardeners, which has a membership of thousands, and through that organisation's scheme, it is able to obtain seeds for both flowers and vegetables at much reduced prices (this also generates a small but useful income for the association).

Secondly, its experienced gardeners are always ready to give advice to those less experienced. Says Mike Rouse, "If we can't find someone within our own group to solve a problem, we can always approach the NSALG for help.

Top trophy winner, with his wife Carol, at last year's competition, and a member of the National Vegetable Society, Mike is often consulted on gardening matters. We give here Mike's answers to a few of the queries that frequently crop up:

• *What can I do to prevent neck rot in my onions?*

Mix a pinch of benomyl with the seed before sowing — this will help because the disease enters at the seedling stage and remains dormant until onions are stored.

• *How can I prevent the carrot rootfly from ruining my crop?*

Difficult to answer in a sentence, but if seed is sown late May/June the first generation should be missed. Sow thinly and try to avoid bruising when thinning as the flies are attracted by smell. Scattering bromophos or dimazinon along the rows after thinning may also help.

• *Why do the bases of my tomatoes go black?*

Blossom end rot seems to be the problem. This is caused by too little water or irregular watering.

• *My mother-in-law's tongue (sansevieria trifasciata laurentii) is wilting. What should I do?*

Thank your lucky stars!



Mike's blooming successes

MIKE TRIGG (refurbishing) is crazy about chrysanthemums.

A dedicated grower for some 13 years, he has specialised in indoor chrysanthemums for the past five and has won first prizes annually.

But last year he achieved something no one else ever has — he gained top honours in no less than four shows at Cinderford, Coleford, Bream and Ledbury.

He also had 'best bloom' in the South West of England division of the National Chrysanthemum Society. "It was just like a yellow shaggy dog!" he told us.

A member of the Rank Xerox Gardening Association committee, he has won the chrysanthemum class in its annual competition ever

since the class was introduced in 1987.

Our picture shows Mike with his fine crop of awards; on the left is his father Dennis, a materials analyst at Mitcheldean until his retirement, who has won quite a few gardening awards himself in his time.

"I learned my skills from him," says Mike, "and we work together."

Just before the New Year, Mike started wintering his cuttings, moving them out from their comfortable quarters in a large greenhouse to a cold frame.

"They require a great deal of attention," he told us, "and I have to work hard to keep the dreaded leaf miner and 'earlywig' at bay!"

Craig makes progress

CHRIS AND Jane Johnson, the parents of young Craig, are delighted that he has been invited to return to the famous Peto Institute in Hungary in March.

After a critical two weeks' trial period last autumn, the teachers at the Institute decided to continue the eight-week programme of learning exercises to give him more independence despite his disability due to cerebral palsy.

He spent 20 hours each week in intensive physiotherapy and co-ordination sessions. Meanwhile,

he kept up with his schoolwork with material sent by Chamwells Special School in Longford, Gloucester, where he is a pupil.

The trip has broadened eight-year-old Craig's horizons and the exercises are already producing some benefits; the experts believe that in time he may be able to walk with a frame.

Chris (who works in assembly) was able to make two trips to Hungary to visit Craig, while Jane stayed in Budapest for the entire eight weeks. Craig's twin brother Lee and their grandmother were

also able to visit.

Intensive fund raising at Mitcheldean last summer raised £5,000 towards the Craig Johnson Appeal, supplementing fund-raising undertaken by Jane Johnson's former boss in Cinderford, Alan Bowkett.

It just goes to show how much warm-hearted generosity exists in the Forest of Dean.

Camera Club entries are getting larger

THE RANK Xerox Camera Club brought their 1989 programme to a conclusion on Monday, 4 December, with a competition — their second — and a very successful one it proved to be.

Altogether 39 slides and 35 prints were entered and the standard was high, especially in the case of the prints.

The judge, Jim Hawkins of Newent Camera Club, spent a great deal of time studying the entries and he said he was particularly impressed by the number of enlarged prints (too many competitors, it seems, tend to enter prints which are on the small side).

He also commented on the quality of the mounting which he considered to be consistently high. So the training sessions held by the club on how to present entries in competitions had paid off.

Everyone said they thought the judge was very fair, and they appreciated his constructive

remarks on how to improve pictures — by careful cropping, for example.

The full results were as follows:

Landscape — Prints: 1st Terry Darrington, 2nd Margaret Murrell, 3rd John Deane; commended Glen Meek. Slides: 1st Roy Fowler, 2nd Terry Darrington, 3rd Roy Fowler; commended Adrian Griffin and Roy Fowler.

Portrait — Prints: 1st Adrian Griffin, 2nd Roy Fowler, 3rd Glen Meek; commended Roy Fowler and Adrian Griffin. Slides: 1st Terry Darrington, 2nd Roy Fowler, 3rd Adrian Griffin; commended Terry Darrington and Adrian Griffin.

As we went to press the 1990 programme had just started with an audio-visual show on 'Gloucestershire' by Bernard Baker, and a slide battle being fought between the Rank Xerox and Newent Camera Clubs.

This portrait of his father — club member Rob Meek (5012/14 assembly) — won third prize in the portrait prints section for 15-year-old Glen, the youngest member of the club.



Below: 'Old tree' by Terry Darrington, the winning entry in the landscape prints class.



New trophy for golfers

DESPITE THE dampness of the weather on the days out, the past season had been an enjoyable one, and Golf Society chairman Danny Haines, in his report at the annual general meeting on 15 November, thanked everyone for their support and especially the committee for arranging the outings.

Fixtures for 1990 have been arranged for Hereford, Cirencester, Knowle, Henbury and Malvern, with the Interplant Cup at Stoke Poges.

An addition to the array of trophies to be played for in 1990 is a rose bowl, kindly donated by Denis Ede who has now joined

the 'seniors tour', and thanks to him were expressed by the meeting.

Denis, who has missed only one outing over the past years, was pleased to donate the trophy in appreciation of many years of enjoyable golf with society members.

The Spring Bowl is awarded for the best team score in a pairs better ball Stapleford competition; this newly donated trophy will be for the best individual Stapleford score within that competition.

As the society is now sustained by a large associate membership, it was agreed to replace the Interdepartmental

Competition by a new competition for teams of three from an open draw, with the best two cards am and pm counting, based on a Stapleford format.

Honorary membership was conferred on three members who had recently taken early retirement from the company and had held office during the previous season — Don Meek as chairman, Tony Murrell as treasurer, and Bill Meek as captain.

Chairman Danny Haines, secretary Wilf Jones and treasurer Jeremy Barnard were all re-elected, and Steve Cooper, Gordon Davis and Ken Ellway

were elected committee members.

Dave James is captain for the forthcoming season with Wilf Jones vice captain.

With the formal business of the meeting at an end, Danny presented the trophies to the season's competition winners: *Spring Bowl* — Mike Hinton, Graham Beach; *Summer Cup* — Don Meek; *Scratch Cup* — Mark Barnard; *Powell Cup* — Steve Cooper; *America Cup* — Dave James; *Interdept. Cup* — Gordon Davis, Dave Robinson; *Round Robin* — Don Meek; *Rabbits Cup* — Denis Ede; *Order of Merit* — Graham Beach.

W.J.

Boxing Day baby

Welcome to Suzanna, a daughter for Adrian Skillern (5012/14 assembly) and his wife Sharon (formerly of harness assembly), who arrived on Boxing Day.

Any news for Vision?

If you have, then please — mail it to me in bld. 6/2, 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

At the final fixture for 1989.



When the balloon went up — with Dave

Dave Powell, manager, business planning & control, who won a top prize in the Craig Johnson Appeal raffle, describes an uplifting experience!

MY PRIZE — a trip in a hot air balloon — filled me with mixed emotions: I was concerned about the potential dangers but intrigued by the adventure.

Months passed and I thought (hoped?) that I had been forgotten — until Saturday, 25 November, when I had a 'phone call from Ian Ashpole of Wye Valley Aviation at 4pm asking if I was available for a Sunday flight at 7.15 am.

I arrived early; it was very cold with a white frost and also quite dark.

Two balloons were being prepared and I was introduced to Hamish, who was to be the pilot for the flight.

He promptly put myself and several bystanders to work. It then became apparent that the bystanders were also going on the same flight.

A quick count showed that there would be eight of us standing in the wicker basket. One passenger turned out to be Graham Forbes of Gloucester Micrographics in the MEWS, who had been given the flight as a birthday present by his wife at 6am that morning!

The balloon was laid out on the ground. It was made by Per Lindstram's company, who also made the balloon for the Richard Branson crossing of the Atlantic, and the balloon which was to attempt to cross the Pacific.

That attempt, featured on TV news the evening before my



Safe landing at Longhope (that's Dave on the far right).

flight, did not succeed — the balloon partly collapsed over the burners and never took off, which I didn't find encouraging!

Our balloon was quickly inflated and we all had to climb on board. Hamish then explained the landing procedure, which was to "face away from the direction of travel, hang on and do not leave the basket."

We were then supposed to float gently away, but, in fact, the basket had frozen to the ground and only by rocking it were we able to break it free.

Hamish held the balloon at different heights to get the feel of its responsiveness (it was only then that he told us he had not flown such a large one for a long, long time!)

We gently rose and began to drift over the River Wye. The reflection of the balloon in the river made you realise how beautiful it looked from the ground.

Very slowly we drifted around Ross-on-Wye and saw the second

balloon take off. Below, everything looked very different and it took a while to get one's bearings.

It was very cold and since there was virtually no breeze it took half an hour to travel from the Ross sports centre to the fire station on the A40 Ross-to-Gloucester road.

It was from above the A40 that we first saw the pick-up Land Rover — Graham Forbes' family and my wife Nora (who also works in finance) following by road.

The noise from the burners attracted the attention of the local dog population, who for some reason went wild with delight and woke everyone with their barking.

You couldn't tell if the people down there were shaking their fists in anger or waving — we just waved back.

After an hour's flight, we made an approach on an unsuspecting field for a landing.

Late into the descent Hamish realised the field was bearing a

vegetable crop and he decided to hop over a hedge and land in the adjacent field.

On rising over the hedge he spotted some horses grazing there so he gave up the idea and we soared skyward again — up to about 1,000 feet so as to clear power lines near the Lea.

The next available place to land appeared to be at Longhope; this allowed us an aerial view of Mitcheldean and the Rank Xerox plant.

Our pilot decided to attempt a third landing and we slowly descended into a field behind Longhope church — just as some local parishioners were entering the church grounds.

They watched in amazement as we narrowly missed the tops of some apple trees, then came to rest on a pile of logs.

The reason for the pilot's warning not to leave the basket now became clear. Hamish instructed one passenger to get out and, as soon as he did so, the basket rose slightly, allowing him to pull it off the logs and on to the ground.

Had we all got out, Hamish would probably still be up there now!

The balloon was then deflated and packed away, the pick-up Land Rover appeared and, when all the equipment was safely stored away, a couple of bottles of champagne were cracked open and enjoyed by all.

Would I go again? Definitely, but perhaps on a warmer day and certainly not over the Atlantic!

Dave Powell

'Total quality' calendar

EVER SINCE Mitcheldean plant introduced a 'quality calendar' early in the 'eighties, each successive year has presented a new challenge — how to put over the quality message in a different and eye-catching way.

We've had individual members of staff featured with their comments about quality. We've said it with cartoons. We've had combined illustrations showing locations and activities inside and outside the plant.

This year the aim was to reflect 'total quality' and to tackle the project a QIP team was formed under the leadership of materials manager Kevin Horrobin with Ken Jervis, business quality manager, Mandy

Powell (on industrial placement) plus artist Barry Herniman, and Logos, the Cinderford printers who have produced our calendars for the past six or seven years.

"We thought originally of going with some new cartoons this time," Ken told us. "But after seeing some mock-ups by the artist, and bearing in mind current environmental concerns, we decided the theme should be the 'total quality environment' reflected by scenes portraying the beauty of the Forest of Dean."

"The water colours which we then commissioned proved so attractive, we looked for an opportunity to make use of them in other ways as well.

"We selected the picture of

Mandy Powell, a member of the QIP team, shows the painting of Speech House.



Speech House (the September illustration) because it is the focal point of the Forest and has so much history behind it, and we had 100 limited edition prints made.

"These prints will be awarded, as part of the reward and recognition process throughout

1990, for QIP projects, team events, etc."

Presented to important visitors, they will also serve to remind them of our total quality environment, both on site and in the locality.