

Vision

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House Magazine of Rank Xerox Mitcheldean Plant

All Eyes on the Warehouse

Roy Nivison, Manager of the Supply Centre at Mitcheldean, leaves his office behind him and walks at a smart pace past Building 41, accompanied by Steve Ferriman (right). As they pass down the loading dock forecourt, deserted for once, they take a look into the Warehouse, scene of the Queen's Award to Industry presentation on November 7. But their thoughts are not on past achievement right now — the present and the future are demanding all their attention. Mr Nivison joined Rank Xerox in 1963 and has held a variety of jobs within the Distribution

function; he was Manager, Supply Logistics Planning, at Denham prior to taking up his appointment at Mitcheldean this summer. Mr Ferriman has been with the Company for around 15 years, having worked at Mitcheldean, at Gloucester where he was deputy manager of the then International Distribution Centre, and at Denham, his most recent appointment being that of Manager of the IDC there. He is now returning to Mitcheldean to strengthen the Supply Centre management team. (See pages 6—10.)



SETTING THE STAGE

Our Member of Parliament and the Mayor of Gloucester, pensioners and pressmen, bankers and builders, councillors and sub-contractors, full-time union officials — they've all been invited to our Plant on Tuesday, November 7, to see us receive the Queen's Award to Industry.

Representative groups from Welwyn, Denham and Rank Xerox House, members of the Mitcheldean management team, and 500 of our working force (not forgetting the night shift) whose names have been taken fairly from the payroll will also be there.

It is particularly appropriate that the Supply Centre should be the scene of the presentation, for it is from here that the finished copier-duplicators and spares that we supply to nearly 80 countries are despatched.

Many of our guests will be seeing the Plant for the first time. For some of us it may well be our first visit to the newly created Supply Centre, the setting up of which has called for close co-operation between the Plant and Supply Division.

Looking on at the ceremony in the Supply Centre will be some silent watchers — key figures in the export achievement for which we have gained the award. RX machines, ready packed in cases with bold lettering declaring their destinations — Germany, Greece, Finland, Singapore — are to form the backdrop to the specially constructed

stage on which the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire, the Duke of Beaufort, will present the award to Mr Mal Thomas, Managing Director and Chief Executive of Rank Xerox Ltd.

An area of about 10,000 sq. ft. has been cleared for the occasion in Building 41, special arrangements having been made with operating companies to advance deliveries of stock so that space could be made available.

Here tiered seating is being erected to accommodate around 800 people so that all get a good view on three sides of the stage. This will be backed by decorative panels featuring the Rank Xerox logotype and Queen's Award symbol.

Temporary direction signs will make sure that, once arrived at the Plant, visitors easily find their way into the 'amphitheatre', via a working exhibition of a range of Rank Xerox equipment. (Car park B, adjacent to Building 42, will be at the disposal of visitors and, for that day only, people normally using this car park will use car park A.)

Once the ceremony is over, the assembly will move into the dining area, screened off from the stores by decorative partitioning, and take their seats for the champagne luncheon (Ronald Sills of Cheltenham are looking after the food side of the occasion). Vital though the packing cases are, we felt they didn't quite go with a champagne celebration!

Transplant Operation

English spoken with a Dutch accent has become very noticeable of late in PED and certain other areas of the Plant. Since mid-September we have been joined by contingents from Venray, averaging around 25 at a time, most of them production engineers and people from associated production departments.

Their visits are a result of the decision, announced by Mr Salmon in our September issue, to transfer the manufacture of our next new product to Venray.

Jim Evans, who has held the position of Manager, Production Planning and Control, Manufacturing Group for the past two and a half years, has been entrusted with particular responsibility for the whole operation, and his appointment as



SUPPLY PREPARES TO MEET

'The creation of the Supply Centre could not have been achieved successfully without the close co-operation of Manufacturing', says Roy Nivison, Supply Centre Manager.

As someone put it, 'We're not just a big black hole into which all the products of Mitcheldean disappear.'

The 'hole' he was talking about was, of course, the Supply Centre, known to us until recently as the International Distribution Centre or IDC.

Though not divorced from us, it lived apart for a while at Gloucester, returning to take up residence in Buildings 41 and 42 early this year. Then in the summer, like its brothers at Venray and Denham, it not only changed its name but transferred its allegiance from Manufacturing Group to Supply Division.

Set up under the direction of Gwilym H. Peregrine, Supply Division has total responsibility for the supply of all machines, spares and consumables to Operating Companies, distributors and East European Operations, and that includes machine and assembly refurbishing in the field.

'The creation of the Supply Centre activity at Mitcheldean could not have been achieved successfully without the close co-operation of Manufacturing,' says Roy Nivison, Manager of the Centre.

The adoption of the new name 'Supply Centre', he told us, was no mere nominal change; it reflected a widening of function. While carrying out the original responsibilities of the former IDC, the Centre now also embraced the function of Parts Requirements Planning; as Spares Programming, this used to come under the umbrella of Production Control Department.

Two of the major jobs which face the Supply Division, and with which the Supply Centre is very much involved, are: the setting up of Venray as a Supply Centre for the EEC countries (we are advising them on programming and will provide the supplies from which they can set up their own stocks); and the gaining of better control of corporate stocks throughout the Supply Centres and Operating Companies, generally preventing overstocking without prejudicing the service that has always been given.

It is intended that there shall be much more direct contact with Operating Companies in future, and the methods used by them to stock up will be studied with a view to improving methods and techniques all over the world.

Heading the Parts Requirements Planning function is Richard (Dick) Skyrme, recently returned from a tour of duty at Xerox Corporation.

'We have been bedded out and we are now going to grow on our own'.

As he puts it, 'The plant pot is off. We have been bedded out, and we are now going to grow on our own.'

Forecasting trends for 12 and more months ahead might appear to require a crystal ball. Spares Requirements Planning prefer more down-to-earth methods — mathematical systems with off-putting names like 'double and single exponential smoothing techniques'!

There's no mystique about this, our programming prophets assure us; it merely means working out a 'smooth path' by averaging requirements. The criteria by which they work are obtained by considering factors such as the expected life of the parts concerned, the circumstances under which they will be used, the time it takes to get them to their destination, etc.

Fed with data from our own computer at Mitcheldean, from Production Control, Field Spares Control in Uxbridge and other sources, the section is able to forecast future demand with workable certainty, although, crystal balls being hard to come by these days, such forecasts are liable to be affected by, for example, international situations and other unforeseeable developments.

'In the past, parts incorporated in our machines have been extensively common,' pointed out Alan Phelps, Dick's assistant. 'New models in the

A TALL ORDER



Above: Interface in action — Alan Phelps and (standing) Dick Skyrme of Parts Requirements Planning (Supply) with John MacDonald of Production Control (Manufacturing).

Left: Warehouse Systems Manager Geoff Gray looks at the 4000 launch plan with Export/Import supervisors Gerald Cooke (far left) and Bernard Measham (standing); far right is David Warrington, Stock & Order Control supervisor.



Above: Linda Ford (left) and Helen Roberts copy 'ticket frames' holding spares order documentation in see-through pockets; with its 30-bin sorter, the RX 7000 machine, which will reduce as it copies, is an integral part of the Stock & Order Control system. Above right: Joy Hyatt produces invoices on the mercator, a calculating machine with printing capability. Right: Section leader Jack Butlin (far right) and his team record incoming and outgoing movements of spares stock.





Pauline Rees sits at the communications centre, sending and receiving messages — enquiries, orders, flight details — to and from places as far apart as Holland and Hong Kong, and keeping us in direct contact with our Operating Companies and distributors. An 'emergency' order can be completed and on its way within four hours of being received via telex. The two machines are augmented by a Rank Xerox 400 Telecopier, which transmits documents over the 'phone. Pictured with Pauline are Geoff Gray and Gerald Cooke.

pipeline are taking on an altogether different feature and so more sophisticated techniques of control will be needed.'

Talking of systems, let's take a look at Stock & Order Control section, an administrative support function headed by Geoff Gray, Warehouse Systems Manager, where requests for current supplies are dealt with.

Spares orders usually arrive in the form of a coded 'ticket'. Adjustments are made to relevant stock records and the tickets, together with the necessary documentation — export declaration, invoicing address, picking instruction to warehouse, packing and despatch instructions, etc. — are copied on our 7000, an integral part of the system.

Part number tickets then go to the computer which keeps Parts Requirements Planning in the picture. While the order is picked and packed, invoicing is completed (we sell to our Operating Companies who in turn rent the machines to customers).

After packing of the order, Bernard Measham and his team of shipping clerks take over; they have to know about insurance, bills of lading, letters of credit and the other mysteries of export/import

operations. Here again tremors from political 'earthquakes' and other unpredictable developments make themselves felt. A change in a balance of payments, a Colonel Amin — and the section is faced with a sudden revision of procedures which may have existed unaltered for years.

'The primary aim is to keep our rented machines running and the revenue coming in.'

In building a copier, a minor slip could have far-reaching results; the same applies in this area. The primary aim is to keep our rented machines running and revenue coming in, so a disciplined system of control is essential.

'At present,' Geoff told us, 'we are in the process of revising the machine stock control and invoicing procedures to bring them into line with that for spares, so as to ensure greater flexibility and smoother working.'

Over to Warehouse Operations, a title which explains itself. Paul Adcock has the responsibility for the day-to-day running of the warehouse, including the receipt of machines and spares, their storage, packing and despatch, whether it be new machines off the production lines for storing and subsequent issue, or machines coming in for remodelling.

High bay racking with narrow aisles, through which the special Spacemaster and order pickers operate, makes possible the optimum use of space for parts.

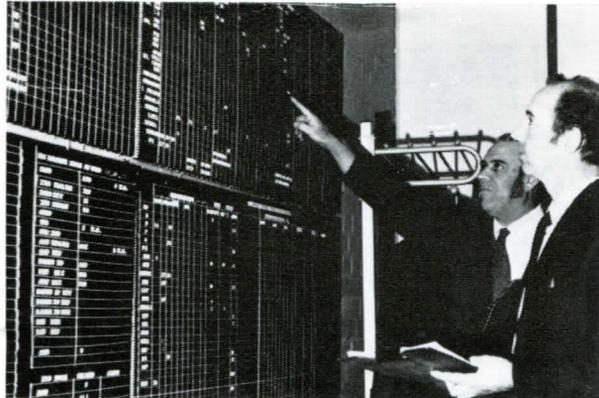
'Next year,' said Paul, 'we hope to introduce racking for the machines themselves and investigations are being carried out into the best methods to adopt.'

'We are also developing plans, in collaboration with Facilities Planning, for a complete revision of the layout of the warehouse itself, to make the flow of goods even smoother.'

To give you some idea of the volume of those goods, Transport clerk Terry Daunter informed us that spares weighing a total of over 7 million Kgs (that's approximately 7,000 tons) were moved to Operating Companies and Venray over the past 12 months; in the same period, in excess of 35,000 machines were despatched to various countries.

Packing these goods for despatch is carried out under Joe Rooke's supervision, the materials and methods used being the result of careful research by a small but vital section known as Packaging. Located within the warehouse, the

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Supervisor Ron Parker (right) and Ron Lewry study the machine allocations in Transport & Despatch, the section concerned with the movement of machines and spares in and out of the warehouse. The numbers of machines designated for the various countries are worked out by Machine Control at Denham and related to production.



A Spacemaster, operated by Tom Simmonds, pauses at the end of the aisle between high bay racking while Stores supervisor Frank Beard (left) checks an item with Paul Adcock, Warehouse Operations Manager. The stillage contains spares packed in plastic bags.



Moving stock — in and out of the warehouse

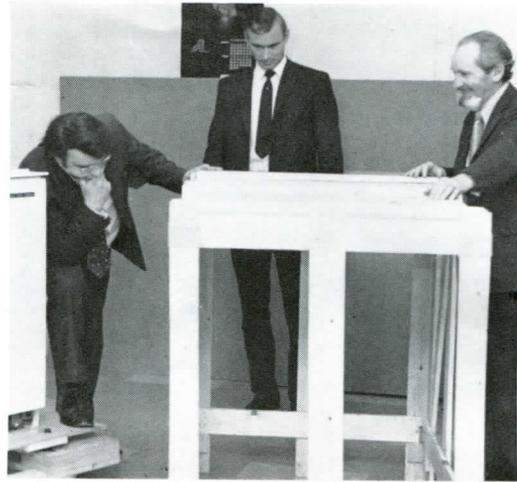
Above left: Roger Aylward of Transport & Despatch checks serial number plates on 4000 machines off the production line as they enter the warehouse. That's Tony Hopkins operating the forklift. Left: Watched by Paul Adcock, forklift driver Sam Reed loads 4000 machines into a TIR vehicle. Goods are also despatched by air, sea and rail freight services, consignments for UK destinations being carried mainly by our own fleet of eight heavy commercial vehicles.

section is sometimes referred to as the 'paper and string people' — an amusing but far from accurate name for a unit whose job it is to see that the machines and spares we manufacture are fully protected, whether being stored or transported halfway across the world.

Does the pack meet the 'fragility factor'? Is the cost economic? These are the kind of questions Packaging have to consider when designing a new pack for, say, a transistor, or a machine not yet in production.

They have to keep an eye, too, on fresh developments in the field of plastics, packaging methods, etc., and there is constant liaison with Venray, Denham and Xerox Corporation not only to exchange information but also to ensure there is no unnecessary duplication of effort.

Below : left, Charlie Weyman and Bob Hoyles pack spares in an overshipper carton ; right, John Boseley uses a steel bander to tighten and cut the steel bands around a wooden crate bound for South Africa ; helping is Brian Woodward.



Above : Eric Real, Packaging Manager, looks at a problem from a fresh angle ; with him are John Hodgson (centre) and Johnny Johnson.



Letter from Australia

Margo Fellows of Central Records, who runs the Mitcheldean Cub Scouts, was surprised to receive the following letter from down under :

'Even in Australia we read VISION. I am John Lynne and work in the Distribution Department of Rank Xerox Australia.

'I usually manage to read the occasional copy of the house magazine and as a friend of mine is in the Scouting Movement, I took particular interest in the article (issue no. 77, May 1972) where the cubs of 1st Mitcheldean were shown over the Production Engineering Dept. I gave him a copy of the magazine to show the cubs of his troop. He has since requested me to forward his address to you in the hope that you or your group members

will be interested in writing and exchanging badges with the members of his troop.

'He is the troop leader of 1st North Bondi Group and a very keen and conscientious worker for the cause. I would be pleased if you can write to him as it would be good for the kids to appreciate that the Scouts are a world-wide organisation.

'Regards from Rank Xerox Australia.'

In her reply, Margo has told John Lynne about our Plant and about the Mitcheldean Cub Scouts, in the hope that the exchange of information, and of badges, will be of mutual benefit. 'After all', says Margo, 'it is International Friendship Year, and we feel we've played a part in it now.'