

'Swiss Rolls, Tea and the Electronic Office: A History of LEO, the first business computer'

Good news! The Leo Computers Society has won Heritage Lottery funding with our partners, the Centre for Computing History, Cambridge.

As you are aware we started our LEO Heritage project a few years ago to try to investigate, protect and catalogue as many LEO artefacts and documents ("stuff") as we could. We also needed a safe and accessible repository for the LEO "stuff" and were searching for a suitable partner to work with.

Last year the Cambridge Centre for Computing History (CCH) contacted us because they were interested in finding out more about LEO and indeed ran a LEO exhibition with our assistance last November. CCH is a wonderful small specialist museum run by real enthusiasts and dedicated to education and to demonstrating how computers have developed and their influence on the way we live our lives.

CCH suggested to us that we form a partnership: they were fascinated by the LEO story and wanted to offer us both archiving and exhibition facilities and we, of course, were thrilled to have an ideal home for material that is currently scattered and at risk of getting lost and deteriorating. They already had experience of successfully applying for Heritage Lottery Fund money and we agreed that we should apply together for funding to ensure the success of our LEO heritage work. Lisa McGerty of CCH was instrumental in putting together our application with our assistance. The HLF team were very complimentary about our application

At the end of September, we had the very exciting news that our application had been successful. As you can see from the attached press release, the grant is in two parts and for the next year we will be in the development phase. We will do as much as we can in that phase. We will then have to apply again for further funding for the second phase. We were warned that there is no guarantee that we will be successful again. This is largely because the sale of lottery tickets has gone down, meaning there is less money available for good causes. SO PLEASE BUY LOTTERY TICKETS to boost available funds.

I have attached our joint press release.

The Steering Group for the project will be jointly chaired by Peter Byford for the Society and Lisa McGerty for CCH. We will, of course, keep you informed with progress when we can: it is going to a busy time. The main areas of activity will be to collect and, where appropriate, digitise LEO documents and artefacts, to develop a Virtual Reality display of LEO I, to develop a LEO film and to generally publicise LEO and its importance to business computing to as wide an audience as possible. . If you have a picture of LEO I and /or remember the colours of the LEO I equipment please let us know. It is needed to help the VR work.

I hope you are as excited by this news as we are,
Regards,

Peter

P.S. You may wish to find out more about the Centre for Computing History at Cambridge on <http://www.computinghistory.org.uk>