

ICL AllStars Magazine

Issue 67* Summer/Autumn 2020* Keeping the ICL community in touch, in contact & informed

Here's a new edition a couple of months into the New Year. We hope you enjoy both to the utmost. We think that this issue presents a pretty diverse line-up of articles, so we are keeping our fingers crossed that everyone finds something of particular interest on which to reflect and ruminate.

Right up front, we finally catch up with our Sydney year-end celebrations. As readers will probably recall, we had to hold the report on this event over to the New Year, given the lateness of the NSW convocation. Making this item even more delayed, was a very serious computer problem at editorial central. All now seems to be fixed, and so our article and pics can include the event's choreographer **Peter Springett**, function photographer supreme **Phil Dodd**, along with **Jon Duggan**, **Dai Watkins**, **Sheilagh Brooks**, **George Webster**, **Rob Burns**, **Rod Rodwell**, **Ian Parker**, **Gil Thew**, **Mike Blyfield**, **Pam Garnsey**, **Raf Dua**, **George McMillan** and **Kent Brooks**.



We've additionally included a sample of our Festive Season inputs from overseas AllStars, such as those from **Keith Cornwell**, **Jean Hackett**, **Paul Blood** and **Christopher Greaves**. Right up front, we also have a serious contribution from **Ian Craig** (below right), who suggests that what we learnt at ICL stood us all in good (make that great) stead in our future endeavours. He elaborates on specific lessons learnt.



Included in **Ian's** incisive piece is mention of **David Jacques**, who was at one stage rushed to New Zealand to resolve (successfully) a major problem at our installation at NZPO, and **Merle Hill** (both below left).

Moving on, **Peter Byford** reports on this year's LEO luncheon in Melbourne. This now-regular annual event was attended by a stellar group that included **David Jones**, **Alan Sercombe**, and **John Hoey**.

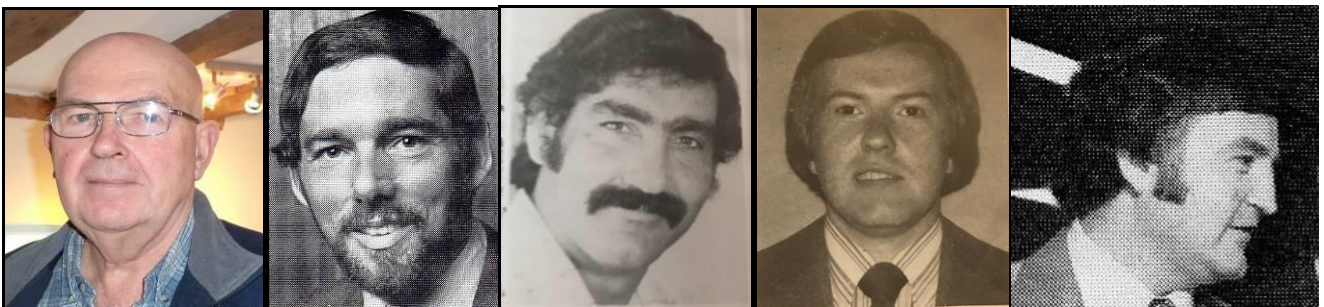


It was great, very recently, to welcome to Adelaide (above) both **Bob** and **Maria Shaw** and **Tony** and **Paulette Weber**. **PW** is pictured above right at a luncheon with **Brian Calvert**. This was all not just about marking the ICL link, but also the team's substantial endeavours with the Prophecy International software company.



We also have news of our *ICL Mates – I'll get by with a little help from my friends* project that caught up once again with **Mike Banham** (above), and at long last we record the Support Person of the Year Award won by **Lou Batistella**. Next, it's **Ross Leighton** (above) who recalls ICL's move into OEM maintenance, and reflects on the work in this arena by **Mario D'Allesandro** and **Barry Ross**.

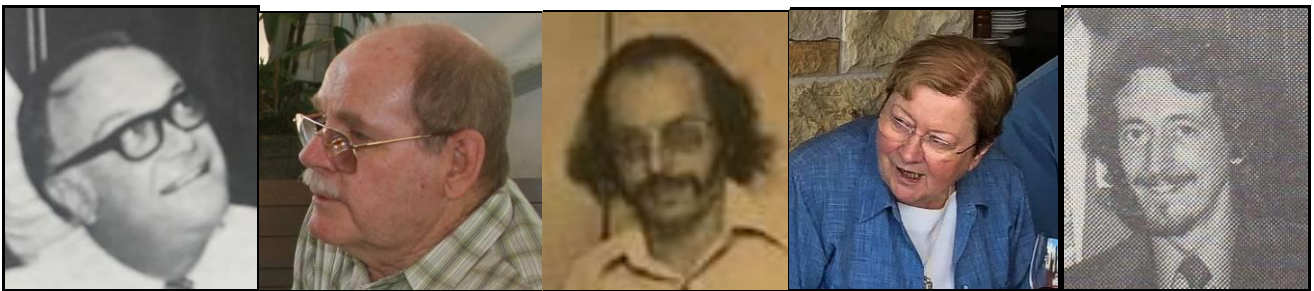
From the UK, **Bob Howard** (below) reports on a current initiative to trace all ICL Double Majority Club members, while back in Australia, we recall the corporate move into 'industry marketing', which involved super stars such as **Barrie Peters**, **Peter Hobday** and **David Hughes**.



Finally, it's off to our single-column section at edition end. Here we picture a raft of folk among whom are **Glyn Homer** (above, while below are), **Bob White**, **Robert Timms**, **David Stafford**, **Richard Freemantle**, **Ron Collett**, **John Offord**, **Miles Hampton-Chubb**, **Louis Velios**, **Malcolm Hudson**, **Alison Campbell**, **Derrick Davey**, **Alan Willis** and **Alan Southwell**.



Also included are **George Phelps**, **Paul Murrell**, **Vic Duath**, **Trish Stanley** and **Steve Callaghan**.



Well, that's about it for this issue.

As always, a special vote of thanks to all of those who have contributed to our highly eclectic content. As Dean Martin used to say: "Keep those cards and letters coming in".

Despite the amazing volume and range of magic inputs, there are still those we have never heard from. We'd love to receive a note from these fine folk reflecting memories, reflections, opinions and/or an update on current pursuits. Photographs – ancient or modern – would also be warmly welcome.

Our gratitude as well to our proof-readers **Jean Hackett** and **Anthea Vitarelli**, to database custodian **Raf Dua**, and to **Kent Brooks** who toils behind the scenes to chase up contact details for those where our information is inadequate or out of date. Which is not to forget the vast variety of key tasks carried out by **Peter Springett**.

Regrettably, very regrettably, the promotion to a higher place of our dear friend and colleague **Geoffrey Howell**, means we no longer benefit from his sage advice, counsel and efforts.

However, we are convinced that heaven or nirvana (**Geoffrey** was a keen student of Buddhism) is now embracing **GH's** database excellence, and welcoming his talents in overcoming stark deficiencies in the work of Mr Gates.

As ever, we hope you have a great read. From the desk of your humble editor. Best wishes to all. Ian.

Feedback

First of all, apologies to our gracious readers and an even greater mea culpa to those dedicated and brilliant folk who proof-read the drafts of this humble journal.

In our last circulation, we really ‘buggered up’ version control, and so those many, dutifully executed edits and corrections were passed over, in a (please insert here your own choice of very critical and highly sarcastic adjectives) way.

There are excuses. But we’ll not go down that path.

Simply let it be said: “Thanks for your understanding **Jean** and **Anthea**”. In short, it’s fixed. At least in theory.

Well, with that off the editorial chest, let’s get into another highly diverse issue.

At last, an item on our Sydney Noel luncheon

Our report from **Peter Springett** with superb pics from **Phil Dodd**

Editor’s note: *In our pre-Christmas issue, we explained that the Sydney Christmas bash was at such a late time in our modest production cycle that editorial diligence demanded we held inputs to the New Year.*

Well 2020 is here, and all the super material from the Harbour City gathering is well and truly with us. As such, the indefatigable organiser **Peter Springett** reports on the event, while the superb photographic creativity and delivery of **Phil Dodd**, is once again (and after a brief absence) very much its brilliant self.

Peter notes: Following feedback after the 2018 ICL NSW AllStars Christmas lunch, which was held at *The Little Snail* in Pyrmont, several of our group felt that the venue was not conveniently located to get to and from, while others noted that the beer and wine was quite expensive.

So we were tasked with the job of finding a venue which was easily reached via public transport, that offered a good selection of quality food and, most importantly, offered reasonably priced drinks.

Thanks to the support of a couple of fine folk, we eventually decided on *Club York*, which, as its name suggests, is in York Street and very close to Town Hall station.

Try to find something more central than that!

So we got a big tick on the transport front, for an all-you-can-eat quality buffet and inexpensive drinks.

That said, a not-insignificant number of attendees felt that the event wasn’t as intimate as previous gatherings. There were about 200 other people at the buffet (including some of ICL’s former clients), for instance.

The room was also rather noisy, so **Neil** was unable to give his customary AllStars Christmas message, which was disappointing.

With all of this in mind, let’s stress that we are already researching a more suitable venue for next year, perhaps the same location, but a private room.

We looked at that for this last gig, but there was a charge for the room and we didn’t know how many attendees we would get and therefore couldn’t decide what size room we needed.

Despite the lack of an intimate environment, it was great to catch up with everyone. We even had several ex-ICL staff attending their first ICL NSW AllStars event.

Pam Garnsey adds: “The lunch was held as usual on the last Thursday in November, a suitable time for Thanksgiving.

“As **Peter** has detailed, this year we tried out a different venue, namely the *York Club*, which is well placed for those using Town Hall Station.



Waiting for Santa: **Tony Weber** and **Pam Garnsey**.

“There seems to be a hard core of folks who always turn up. The first people I met trying to negotiate the new venue were **Jon Duggan** and **Gil Thew**. We eventually found out where to go, and settled at the allocated three long tables.

“Another stalwart is **Tom Shaw**, who was christened Little Tom by my mother, when the lad turned up wearing very heavy clothes at *Doyles Watsons Bay* on first arriving in Sydney on a hot summery day.

“**Biff Grindley** was warmly welcomed there as usual, as were **Kent** and **Sheilagh Brooks**. Also soon to arrive was **Tony Weber**, and I recall **Sheilagh** was his secretary in the 70s.

The Sydney Noel lunch cont ...



Rebels without a claus: **George Webster**, **Tom Shaw** and **Biff Grindley**.



But wait – there's myrrh: **Kent** and **Sheilagh Brooks**.

"It was lovely to sit with **Tony**, who has settled back into the harbourside suburb of Kirribilli after a few years living out of town to the north. The marvellous **Paulette Weber** was not at the luncheon, but since then I have had a lovely note from her.

"**Neil Lamming** was there in living colour, but again as **Peter** has noted, could not give his customary speech because of the layout of our tables.

"**Val Mickan** has not been to the lunches of late, which is a very great pity as he was an early and marvellous AllStars organiser after **Albert Cook** started the lunches at a Chinese restaurant in Belrose. **Val**, you are sorely missed by one and all."

Editor's note: *In our end-of-edition single-column spread, we have a photo taken at the last AllStars luncheon held at Belmont.*

Pam adds: "Just as an aside, I note that the unstoppable **Jim Tully** has been enduring much discomfort after a shingles attack, and he opines 'so get vaccinated everyone.'"



Feeling Claus-trophobic: **Dai Watkins** and **Jim Tully**.

"That aside, **Jim** was in his usual good form, as was the intrepid **Rod Rodwell**, my fellow Ratbag. Only the two of us and **Mike Beilby** are now left.

"Sadly **Mike** did not make the lunch from his new home and wife in Vietnam. I have had to visit him three times in Darwin, versus one lunch at Darling Harbour. Maybe next year in Sydney **Mike**?"

"The indefatigable **Raf Dua** had made the trek from his home in Victoria."



So where's the blooming frankincense? **Raphael Dua** and **Rod Rodwell**.

"He was going to lunch at *The Little Snail* the next day, determined not to miss out on his escargots having come all this way.

"After lunch, I had a most pleasant bus ride home with **Rob Hack**, who has downsized a little (to say the least) from the acreage spread he had on the Northern Beaches.

"It is amazing to me that I still have so many friends from ICL Australia in the late 70s.

"For the record, **Jeff England** in the UK tells me he is going to an ICL lunch started up in London, offering to remember me to old colleagues from an even earlier time."

The Sydney Noel lunch cont ...

“What a very special bunch of people we were privileged to work with.”

And so to more of our pictorial record of the 2019 Christmas event, courtesy of **Phil Dodd**.



There are three phrases that sum up Christmas – Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men, and Batteries Not Included: Neil Lamming and Ian Richard.



The four wise men: Jon Duggan, Gil Thew, Raf Dua and Rod Rodwell.



Not a wee, sleekit, cowering, timorous beastie in sight: Rob Burns day: Ian Parker, Rob Burns and Rob Hack.



Drink up we have to get back to watching our flocks: Bob Shaw and George McMillan.



Waiting for their mince pies: From right to left: Jenny Brundle, Bob Brundle, Lynda Tate and Ros Johnson (in red).



Enjoying some reinbeers: Tom Shaw and Mike Blyfield.



This gag will sleigh you: Rob Hack and Bob Shaw.

The Sydney Noel lunch cont ...



Q - What do you call Noel gifts when they die? A - Ghosts of Christmas present: In the rear are **Rob Hack, George McMillan, Neil Lamming and Peter Springett**. In the foreground are **Bob Brundle and Lynda Tate**.



Having the final sleigh: **Gil Thew, Mike Byfield** and he of the colourful shirt, **Peter Springett**. Hawaii next stop.



Feeling a tad santa-mental: Christmas stars: **Raf Dua, Rod Rodwell, Jon Duggan and Pam Garnsey**.

Going International

It is fantastic that our AllStars collegiate reaches far outside Australia itself.

So here are extracts from a few of the many overseas Festive Season reports that have landed on our editorial desk.

Again our abject apologies for the delay in getting this fabulous input to print. Our computer glitches, we trust, are now fixed, albeit with work-arounds and alternative software, all of which demand coming to grips with different ways of doing things.

From Christopher Greaves in Canada.

Hi AllStars, all is well with me, although I'm busier than ...

Nothing to report, really. Life goes on, people come and some sadly go.

Personally, I claim to be fighting-fit. That's a claim I defend by my recent blood tests, recorded as 24 'Normal' and 'K'.

I also continue to fight for what I believe in. Rarely winning, I need to add, but fighting at any rate.



Fight the good fight: Christopher Greaves.

I can't offer much in the way of pickies. I received an image of me, taken at a 2007 Toronto Dollar event and saw no difference in the hair style from today.

Cheers **Christopher**.

Editor's note: Readers, with good memories, may recall that **Christopher** selects his Christmas fare by the alphabet. So Noel 2019 was brought to him by the letter 'S' – so it was ruSSel Stover choccies, Swiss gruyere, Sliced Salami, root beer Soda and the like. We look forward to 'Z' when Zebra steaks must surely be on the menu, along with a more traditional zabaglione.

From Jean and Brian Hackett in the UK

Kicking off Christmas Day itself was a most worthy start.

We helped at a December 25th lunch for lonely elder local residents, before coming back home to have our own Christmas dinner. We had spent part of the previous evening at our younger daughter's home, and the visit was grandchildren-focussed.

Christmas international cont ...

Just after New Year, we had a visit from our daughter and son-in-law from the city of Bath to mark Brian's birthday.

They were actually travelling to Spain for two weeks on his birthday, so we had an early lunch. Another lunch followed at the weekend, as our other daughter's new partner had a 40th birthday early in the New Year.

Our valued voluntary activities started again equally early in January, along with life gradually returning to normal.



It's said that one of the greatest gifts you can give is your time: Sterling volunteers **Jean and Brian Hackett**.

From Keith Cornwall in the UK

In commenting on the jolly season and the start of the New Year, I wanted to both oblige the request for inputs and also give a bit of history and a modest soupçon of education.

Christmas. We are not actually at home for the 25th, but the first photo I present is of Dickon, our Spanish Water Dog, seen here guarding our Christmas presents in the fireplace while admiring the tree and what could be on it.

The fireplace he is in front of is an Inglenook, an ancient structure dating from when the house was first built.

If you peer carefully you will see one of the seats behind Dickon, where people would sit to be close to the fire in the depth of winter. A similar seat is opposite across the fire; winters were much colder then.

At the back of the seat you may also notice a white aperture where the inhabitants kept the salt; close to the fire to keep it dry.

Magic 2020. The second picture is of the outside of Home Farm House which will be 500 years old in 2020, so we will be seriously celebrating this towards the middle of the year.

This makes the house approximately twice as old as Australia and older than the Church of England (founded 1534) and it is nationally listed.

As it was an agricultural property originally, we have been able to trace the names of every owner (22) and occupying farmers (27 owner or tenant farmers) since the house was first built in 1520.

The property became separated from the farming activity in 1973 and we have lived here since 1998.

Much longer-term residents are the colony of Swifts that breed in the house's eaves each year. For centuries they have flown from Africa, arriving about May 1st and leaving around August 1st.

They eat, sleep and even mate on the wing, only landing at our house to lay their eggs and raise their young, before the whole family returns south again.



Gift-guarding duty: The intrepid Dickon Cornwell.



To the manor born: Home Farm House

Christmas international cont ...

Back to Canada

Hello from **Paul Blood** and family in Canada.

For the record, we spent Christmas at a ski resort in British Columbia.

As a throwaway line, it may sound exotic, but actually there are dozens of ski-hills in BC; ranging from one-lift hills, to Whistler, and everything in between.

***Editor's note:** Whistler is a town north of Vancouver, British Columbia, that's home to Whistler Blackcomb, one of the largest ski resorts in North America. Besides skiing and snowboarding, the area offers snowshoeing, tobogganing and ski jumping at the Olympic Park, a venue for the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.*

Our family is more into cross-country than downhill skiing. Which suits me, as I didn't see a ski-hill until my 40's, and I will never have the confidence (or recklessness) skiing that my grandchildren will have.

The fact is, that Canada has a lot of winter, so it's best to get out and enjoy it.

I know that a lot of my former colleagues in Australia are having a tough summer this year. Many Canadians have family and friends in Oz, so we hear about what you're going on and our thoughts are with you.



Snow place like home: A well-clad **Paul Blood** is the tallest of this delightful group.

From George Webster about Howard Cork.

Hi AllStars, I have received a Christmas/New Year card and letter from an old-1970s ICL HR mate, **Howard Cork**.

Howard and **Frances** have lived in the US for many years, but recently returned to the UK (Reading to be specific).

Unfortunately, **Howard** has been diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy (MSA) and is one of only five chosen to be part of an experimental treatment trial-run by the Department of Neurological Surgery at Oxford University.

George adds: “**Robin** and I will be in the UK next August and will endeavour to drop by and see them.

“As with **Mike Banham** it is always difficult to see our colleagues who were always so active, struggling with such issues.

“**Howard** certainly was a live wire. Hopefully, that characteristic will stand him in good stead as he faces the challenge ahead.”



Never did understand Australian Rules football: Howard Cork.

For the record, Howard took up the position of personnel consultant in our Melbourne office, after being poached, in 1973, from the UK by **Tim Baker**.

He is a graduate from London University, where he gained an honours degree in sociology.

He had keen sporting interests including hockey, squash and tennis. But it proved impossible to get him involved in Australian Rules football.

Regards. **George Webster**.

A memory of Geoffrey Howell From Anthea Vitarelli

It's so sad to imagine life without **Geoffrey**, he has been a treasured friend of mine since the 1970s.

Who could forget his challenging TDL3 parameter-driven software, his intimate knowledge of GEORGE3 and the legendary ZMarcos, written to fill the gaps our man felt Mr Gate's team omitted from the functionality of Excel.

Since our respective retirements, we would meet regularly for coffee at **Geoffrey's** favourite café, named *Where Is Henry*, although we never did discover Henry's actual whereabouts.

We had a table which we rather claimed as our own, located at the end of the café by the fireplace.



Let's do coffee: **Geoffrey and Anthea**. Great friends.

The conversations were always memorable: we covered so many topics such as opera, mathematics (**Geoffrey** was teaching me calculus), art, music, classical history, language, **Geoffrey's** special view on climate change, American politics, poetry, Buddhism and the list goes on.

The man had such an amazing wealth of knowledge in almost any subject on which any conversation focused.

Many years ago we established 'The Bizarre Book Club (BBC)'. Its purpose was to provide the most bizarre book that could be found for each of the members for birthdays and Christmas.

I have a delightful collection of 'rare' books and especially treasure 'The illustrated Old Testament in Lego' and 'Healthy Land for Healthy Cattle'. Although our membership numbers were low, (2), each festive event was eagerly anticipated to determine who could outdo the other in the ridiculous literary stakes.

In his honour, I went to *Where Is Henry* to let the staff know of his passing as they always were happy to see him.

Some time ago I gave **GH** an eco-wooden knife, as I thought he might like to use it as a book-mark to

accompany a bizarre book. He had a better idea, and placed it on one of the logs in the fireplace.

Each time we met, we would check if it was still on the log. Just now, I retrieved it and wrote on it 'In loving memory of **Geoffrey**', and placed it back on the log.

No risk of its going up in smoke as the fireplace is decorative only.

Very recently, **Geoffrey's** dear wife, **Cynthia, Anthea Gedge** and I went to *Where Is Henry* to fondly remember our dear man and also to ensure his 'memory knife' was still resting on a log in the fireplace.

Much to our joy, it was.

We had a very pleasant time reminiscing about **Geoffrey's** delicious idiosyncrasies, and **Cynthia and Anthea G** each placed another 'memory knife' on the logs. I added an eco-spoon.



Is this a dagger I see before me? With apologies to Macbeth we feature **Anthea Vitarelli, Anthea Gedge** and **Cynthia Howell**.

Anthea wraps her reflections up with the potent comment: "**Geoffrey** made the world special just by being in it, his friendship was an exceptional gift, goodbye my dear precious friend. "

And so say all of us. His contributions to this newsletter will be most sorely missed.

A Baric reunion in Balmain From Peter Springett

It was more than great to catch up and reminisce with my UK- based old ICL/Baric (FEL01) work mates after some 40plus years.

The venue selected for the reunion was a fine restaurant of Indian persuasion in Balmain (inner Sydney), and the food, the memories and the conversation were all of a most superior quality. .

Baric, of course, was an interesting IT joint-venture between Barclays Bank and ICL.

The first picture, taken in our Feltham UK offices, shows us as the top sales team in 1981.



Back row (L to R) Alan Collins and Dave Stewart, Front (L to R) Alan Fox, Sue Edwards and sales manager Peter Springett, in the UK mid-1981.

It was amazing that after all those years, not much had changed, other than we were a bit bigger and the gents had a bit less hair!!!



If the turban fits: (L to R) Dave Stewart, Alan Fox, Christine Fox, Peter Springett, Jo O'Donnell and Michael O'Donnell, at the Curry reunion.

Catching up with Mike Banham

It was another great memory-filled visit, when **Bob Shaw** and **George Webster** once again caught up with **Mike Banham**.

Joining the ICL Mates, was **Mike's** wife **Valerie** who reports that there is a lot of focus right now on enhancing the lad's mobility.

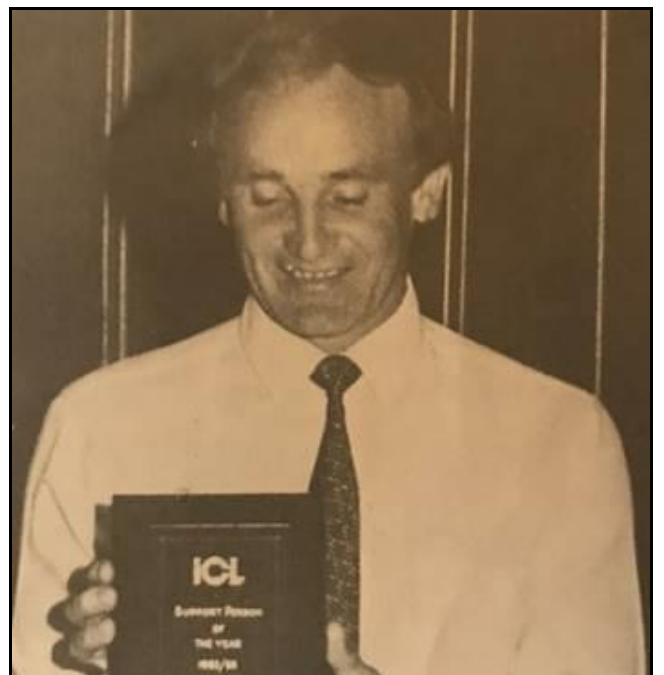


It's just what mates are about: **George** and **Bob** with **Valerie** and **Mike**.

Long overdue recognition

Over time, this magazine has recalled many support awards made in days gone by.

In all that, we must apologise for never remembering the Support Person of the Year for 1982/83, one **Lou Batistella**.



Lou and the plaque component of his award. A handsome cheque was also part of the spoils.

Long overdue recognition cont ...

For the record, **Lou** was a senior product specialist from customer service in our southern region.

Additionally, he, **John Byrne**, **Mike Hooker** and **Eddie Rubas** received the support team award.

Our valuable legacy from ICL By Ian Craig



Ian Craig receives his support award from **Tony Neville** (in 1983).

I have had a long 40-year work journey including the “ICL mothership”: it was my first job, and I was there for 20 years. It led ultimately to owning and eventually selling my own company operated out of Nelson, New Zealand, with clients of the stature of Delta Airlines, Air New Zealand, the US Postal Service, the US Department of Defense and numerous others.

With a staff of only 20, we implemented a worldwide Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) tracking network for the airline industry.



Tracking well: Ian with partner and co-owner **Annette Schleiss**.

However, the key point is I have very many fond memories of my time with ICL, particularly in Australia, and much to be grateful for. I'll explain.

At the old firm, ICL, I was in everything from support to development and ultimately sales, the latter not being my strong point.

But in setting up my own company, I realised “no sales equals no company”, and no cash flow is death.

Having been acquired, **Annette** (partner and co-owner) and I find ourselves back in the corporate world for at least a short period. We were debating whether to play by the corporate rules or just fully retire.

I said: “I am 65 (ouch) and used to making decisions in a heartbeat. I don't want to go back to the corporate bulls*** I dealt with when I was 45”.

On reflection I think that was unfair to ICL, and I started to see more similarities between ICL and the entrepreneurial company we sold.

International Computers was the little kid (like CORE) on the block, relative to the market leaders (IBM, Burroughs, etc) and the notable ICL characteristics were winning by:

- Technical innovation: think hamming store, virtual machines, multi-nodal systems, CAFS, fibre optics, etc.
- Risk taking: living on the leading edge and releasing products perhaps a little too early.
- Nurturing key customers in difficult times: think war rooms and going the extra mile.
- Project teams: empowered to get things done.

So similar to a small entrepreneurial company!!

Yes, there was a lot of risk, but it also created a culture of how to manage that risk and how to manage relationships through good times and bad.

It is bizarre, but leading edge products meant a high level of contact with customers at all levels.

I remember when the 2900 series crossed a threshold and stabilised. There is always a day on projects when you wake up and the last serious problem has been resolved and that also happened at CORE. You wonder what you will do tomorrow.

Suddenly, there is no need to talk to customers except through the sales channel. We lost the valuable feedback to the sales channel from the technical channel that built support inside the lower parts of the customers' organisations.

CORE produced leading-edge technology, not without issues, but by building trusted relationships with big organisations, we have managed to move from confrontational contractual relationships to trusted partnerships, and move the technology along to mutual benefit and to the benefit of the air transport industry: a shared risk model.

A quote from a senior AirNZ manager: “It has been such a pleasure working with you and the team at CORE, I am in so much awe of what you have both achieved. Simply amazing stuff”.

The legacy from ICL cont ...

But I didn't feel any different when I worked for ICL. There was a degree of honesty in dealing with customers in the mainframe days, where falling on one's sword worked better than being confrontational.

It is hard to be confrontational if you are wrong. But if you have something people want, maybe they will be patient if you keep delivering and nurturing the relationships. It is not whether you have problems but how you manage their resolution.

Running your own company means you can take risks and live or die by the sword not by the thousand cuts of the grey committees. In hindsight though ICL was relatively innovative and empowered.

Some illustrative stories from both worlds:

- ICL was in trouble at NZPO. My favourite boss, **Dave Rowlands**, and I agreed we needed to fly in the famous **Dave Jacques** ASAP. **Dave R** said: "Get it done"; **Dave J** flew first class and his dog came in cargo.

He dug us out. The bill came in. It needed sign-off from the CEO of ICL NZ. We debated a game plan. **Dave** said: "It's so bizarre but it worked, why don't we tell the truth?" It got signed off. **Lesson one.**

- **Dave** and I were at a CEO level review of QEGB. I gave a status report (somewhat grim) and then started on about how I would fix it. **Dave** said: "Coffee break", and in that break he said to me: "Don't tell them you can fix it, ask for things you need from them and make them help". **Lesson two.**



David Jacques sans dog.

- The war room at ICL West Gorton: the ultimate in focusing on fixing high customer impact problems. I used it at CORE. Our new IT Director never "got it",

and implemented Agile to fix "systemic IT process issues" promising major improvements within 18 months. I said: "We won't exist in six months if we don't solve these problems (there were three in number)". He got fired. **Lesson three:** fix things before they kill you.

- ICL was implementing remote support while releasing major new 2900 systems. Remote support is something done routinely today: ICL was probably over-reaching. I went to Trent Water frequently and saw the relationship damage caused by lack of personal contact and a poor support process. The ICL CEO (**Peter Bonfield**) asked me what I thought about remote support. I said: "Try putting a box over your head and solve problems with minimal information, and keep a customer happy". **Lesson four:** never treat a customer like a mushroom or let support staff be shielded from the customer's pain.

- Early in CORE, I went into a room filled with generals and admirals in full dress uniform: intimidating! One year into Iraq they were worried about a Congressional enquiry finding mail to troops was a disaster. Les, (USPS), told them CORE could fix it. He covered my ears and told them how much they could save. He took his hand off and said: "What are you going charge". I said "US\$250k per year". I should have asked for a lot more but regardless the contract has run for 12 years. We nearly lost it though inattention (the system was reliable: repeat lesson four). Then they asked us to predict the number of aircraft container slots needed to the war zone with the "surge" at the next peak season, a complex analysis which we got right: it recovered the relationship. **Lesson five:** make timely decisions under pressure and live with it.

- The biggest piece of business we ever did and still do required US\$2m in capital when the business was only doing US\$2m in revenue.

It was raised using personal guarantees. The consequences of failure was the loss of all our assets and those of our other shareholder.

When we signed it the lawyers, by law, had to warn us of the consequences, and it was clear that we wouldn't even have "a shoe box in middle of road" (Monty Python). The day it was approved I got a call from the bank and I said: "I have a bottle of champagne and a gun. Which one should I use?" **Lesson six:** risk is very personal.

Friends told me when I left ICL that I was mad. It was the best thing I ever did, *no* discredit to ICL, despite some very stressful times but I still look back fondly at my time with the old firm. It was one of the better companies at the time.

The legacy from ICL cont ...



Let them eat cake: Ian (third from left) with Dave and Merle Hill, Annette and Ian Sharrock plus Di and Peter Trethaway.

Of course my life might have been different if IBM had employed me.

I went to see them before I went to ICL and got a job.

Thankfully I was rejected (turtleneck sweater and long hair?) by Big Blue, while ICL tolerated me warts and all and allowed me to travel the world and enjoy the company of some very clever and astute people.

A darling of a project

Raf Dua reports: I have recently been working on the planning and scheduling on a major new Darling Harbour (Sydney) project, called The Ribbon.

For those interested in such things, the construction company concerned is Grocon P/L.



It's all about style: Another brilliant development for Darling Harbour. A facility that was initially a much-criticised idea of the then Minister for Works, or The

Minister for Billboards (as he was often sarcastically described), Laurie Brereton. The precinct went on to become a huge success as a tourism, retail, dining and hotel precinct. Sydneysiders will recall the saga. But just don't mention the monorail!

A Tour Down Under

It was so great to recently welcome **Tony** and **Paulette Weber** together with **Bob** and **Maria Shaw** to Adelaide, as the turning point in their recent motoring tour.

The trip took them to West Wyalong and a spot called Oulong. It was then back to Sydney via Horsham, Albury and Canberra, the latter to catch up with some old friends from Prime.

Their presence in the City of Churches, happened to coincide with South Australia's hosting of the classic 'Tour Down Under' international cycling race.

A great bonus, given **Bob's** marked enthusiasm for the sport.

For instance, he's been present at various legs of the Tour de France, on several occasions, as well as major cycling events elsewhere in Europe.

More specifically, Adelaide was selected as the 'go to' locale for the trip to enable the travellers to catch up with **Brian** and **Denise Calvert** (the gang stayed at their beach front escape at Aldinga), **Ed Reynolds** and **Adrianne** and **Susanne**.

All of these folk, and the visitors, were potent associates of the publicly-listed Prophecy International software company founded by **BC**.



Pedal power: Ahead of the rest of the merry travellers, **Bob** joined your humble editor at the start of the Norwood-based leg of the race. The editor in question, was volunteering for the Cancer Council, the official charity partner of the event.

Tony, for example, was part of the Prophecy Board for over 18 years, having initially worked on the business's IPO, while **Bob**, was a Board member for seven years.

A Tour Down Under cont ...



Food for thought: Paulette Weber, Brian Calvert, Maria Shaw, Tony Weber, Denise Calvert and Bob Shaw.



Let's do Italian: Maria Shaw, Bob Shaw, Ian Pearson, Paulette Weber and Tony Weber at Norwood's *Buongiornos* restaurant.



Obviously quite pleased with himself: One of the successful race competitors.

Industry Marketing

"It's not so much a matter of knowing everything about our products as it is knowing a lot about the customer's business that holds the key to successful selling from here on in."

Or, put differently, "hardware product selling is on the way out. Industry marketing is in".

That was the introduction to an article in *The Reporter* in early 1978 (editor **Brian Bayly** pictured below).

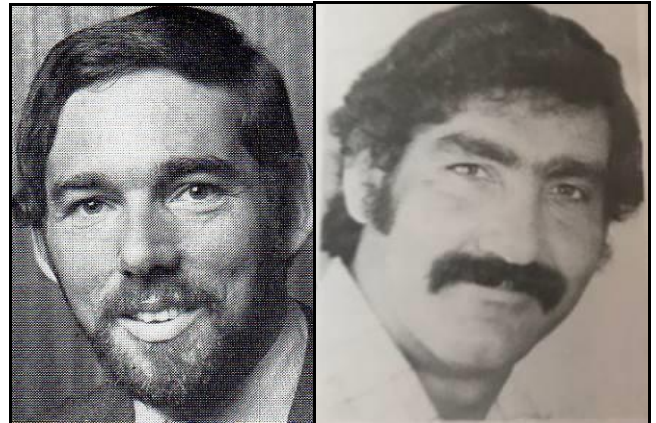
In hindsight, this may seem like a statement of the all-too-obvious. But, and it's a big but, at the time, it was a huge change in focus, attitude, organisation and sales thrust.

Nor was this just 'pie in the IT sky'. Indeed, a very detailed plan had been meticulously crafted, and the first part of the designated strategy saw the creation of a new specialised sales support unit known as Industry Marketing.

Heading that group was **Barrie Peters** who back then noted: "We've got to be able to talk the customer's language, not the other way around".

Initially, two very senior and talented consultants were appointed: **Peter Hobday** and **John Swarbrick**.

Peter became responsible for one of our designated target markets: mining. He joined us after several years with Conzinc Riotinto.



All mine: **Barrie Peters** and **Peter Hobday**.

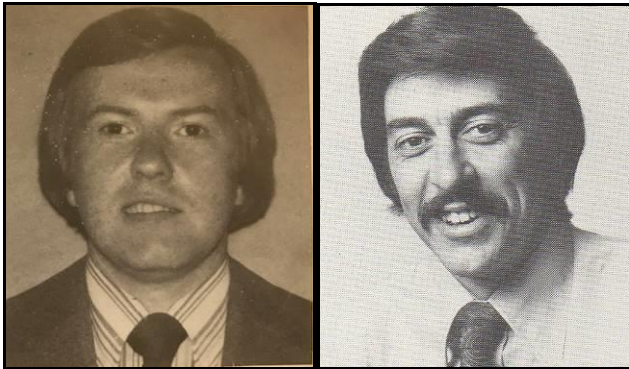
John, became our turn-to-man on the subject of retail, another key industry marketing target sector.

This singularly-qualified specialist had been a former exec at Waltons, and who had more recently (by the chronology of the day), been headhunted to supervise the POS installations at McDonalds, as well as at the East department store development on the Gold Coast.

Aside from retail and mining, the two other nominated industry sectors for immediate focus were local government and manufacturing.

In the local government arena, fulfilling vital consulting roles were **David Hughes** in Brisbane and **Adrienne Beusst** in Melbourne.

Industry marketing cont ...



Taking wise council: David Hughes and the ICL Reporter editor of note Brian Bayly.

(OEM) third party maintenance From Ross Leighton

It was the late 70s and ICL Engineering became Customer Service an initiative that amalgamated software support, customer development and call-centre desks.

As part of this, there was general encouragement to seek to charge fees for some services previously delivered free.

Also, there was a drive to seek contracts for new services, such as support, cabling, installation planning and the like.

In short, CS was encouraged to get out of its comfort zone, and seek OEM maintenance that would align with our workshop skills and the great talents of our existing personnel.

In Perth, about 1980, I had talks with Edwards Business Machines and Panasonic, before I began discussions with Ansett Airlines about their terminal network. This consisted of display terminals, some printers and interface units.

Most notably, this network was scattered around the vast State of WA and serviced by dispatching a changeover unit or calling in personnel from Melbourne. Practically no regular maintenance had occurred such as keyboard cleaning, ensuring air flow, and viable cabling of comms and power.

The network was centered at the Perth call-centre with 30 VDU units and four Centronics matrix ticket printers (no on-line tickets then, they were four sheets thick with carbon paper!) connected to a front-end 'maxi' comms interface computer.

Satellite sites, like country offices, each had VDUs, a ticket printer and 'mini' interface computer. Perth Airport had 5 VDU's and 2 printers, Karratha had 5

VDU's, Dampier 1, Port Hedland 3, Newman 3, Kalgoorlie 4 and Geraldton 4.

For those not precisely au fait with WA geography, it's probably useful to note that Port Hedland is 1700km from Perth, and two hours' flying time.

For us, an early step in our pursuit of this possible contract, was to critically look at the opportunity, taking into account the logistics of transport, the loss of manpower for our own customer commitments, risks, challenges and developmental opportunities.

A solid SWAT task indeed, and here I bounced all the issues around with my 2IC **Mario D'Allesandro**.

I also settled down for a detailed analysis with our extraordinary comms specialist **Barry Ross**.

Whilst Ansett provided some history of calls, we knew this would not hold up in practice, so **Barry** and I assessed a call rate and a maintenance regime.

Our involvement would amount to the scheduled visits, plus an estimate of callouts.



Bold decision and commitment making: Mario D'Allesandro.

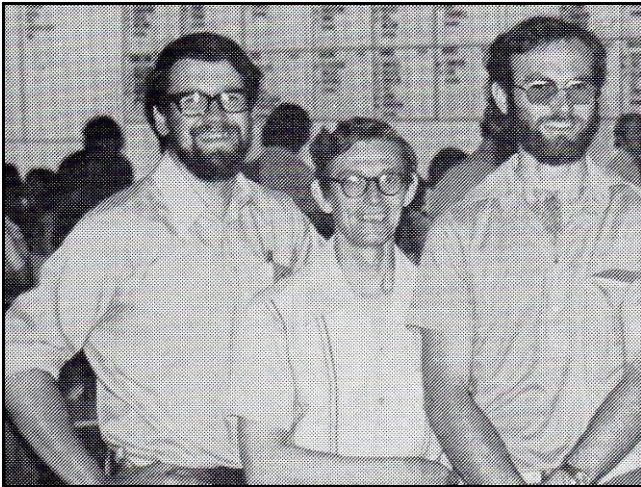
The first one-year proposal consisted of a visit to all sites in the first month for initial maintenance and assessment.

Barry learnt the system and hardware from self-study and onsite manuals and by talking to the Ansett support staff in Melbourne.

He also visited the Melbourne site, when there on ICL training, where he saw the 'largest computer room ever and more disc drives than imaginable'.

Barry then went on to train several of our staff including **Gary Percival** and **Kim Greenham**.

OEM maintenance cont ...



Mastering Ansett: Barry Ross with interstate engineering colleagues Alan Webster and Phil Jeffreys.



Ross and another blooming cake: Must be a further birthday.

A site visit was required by Ansett to every outlying country office every two months to service the VDUs and ticket printers, irrespective of need. The contract covered all air fares, hire cars and accommodation, if necessary, paid for by Ansett for all visits to sites including callouts.

The Port Hedland, Karratha and Dampier visits involved two days and a 250-km drive between. Monthly maintenance to the city call-centre was to be

as required as the VDUs and ticket printers were more heavily used on a 24/7 cycle and therefore experienced produced incidents. The change-out units were also repaired there, with parts ordered from Ansett Melbourne when required.

We would supply expertise and people only, under our contract, which was for a considerable amount of dollars.

And thus it was so, Ansett agreed to my tender for the first ICL Customer Service contract for OEM in Australia.

Cheers. **Ross Leighton** CS Manager 1976-82

Chasing all double majority AllStars From Bob Howard

The Double Majority Association was founded in August 1970 for employees who had completed 42 years with ICL and its antecedent companies, of which there are many.



Doubling up: Bob Howard with an appetite for input.

The first president was **Arthur Humphreys** who was the managing director of ICL at the time.

In April 2002, the ICL brand ceased to exist, and was replaced by the Fujitsu Services brand.

It was decided to change the name from The ICL Double Majority Association to The Double Majority Association sponsored by Fujitsu.

Since its formation in 1970, there have been 688 qualifiers, with the current membership standing at 201, with members in the UK, India, South Africa, Canada and Malta.

Bob adds: My purpose in writing this is to see if there any potential qualifiers in Australia.

Double majority cont ...

I would like to hear from anyone who feels they may qualify with a brief employment history (company name and dates) to the following email address dmacomm@virginmedia.com.

If in doubt please reply anyway. I have a list of all the companies involved.

Lions on the loose From Peter Byford

We have just staged our 2020 Melbourne LEO luncheon and I'm delighted to report it was excellent.

Our venue was **Giorgio's restaurant** in the suburb of Malvern. And we reflected that while last year's gig was held when the temperature was 42°C, this year it was less than half that at 20 °C.

Despite much of the rail network being disrupted by major engineering works, most people arrived around 12 noon.

The circulation list of Melbourne-area LEO members is around 20, so if all were able to come, some with spouses, we would have needed a larger space and possibly a different venue.

Among the group we had operators, engineers, programmers and consultants who had worked on the LEO Ills in the Sixties and Seventies.



On the left hand side we see **John Hoey, Judy Siede, Martin Fuggles, Dave Jones, Graeme Hunt, Colin Mitchell** and **Robert Timms**, while on the right are **Margaret Byford, Peter Byford, Alan Sercombe, Jill Timms, Jenny Fuggles, Lex Korngold, Rosemary Korngold** and **Len Edwards**.

Some had started or trained in England (Hartree House or Minerva Road) before moving to Australia.

Most had been Melbourne-based with Shell, Colonial Mutual or with LEO (there was a large LEO team in Australia). Several had also worked in Sydney, again for LEO itself and/or Tubemakers.

Many had met up at previous annual lunches, but others had not got together with their ex-colleagues for 50 years or so. A small group of them do meet regularly on the last Wednesday of the month at *Young & Jackson's*, that excellent pub/restaurant opposite Flinders Street Station.

It is perhaps interesting to note that among the LEO management in Sydney was **Wallace Weaving**, who sadly died some years ago. One of his sons is the noted actor Hugo Weaving.

For one of our shots, a very obliging waiter opened the window, went outside, moved a number of plants so he had a clear line of vision, and took the second photo through that windowpane. Such service.



Our second snapshot features on the left-hand side) **Len Edwards, Rosemary Korngold, Lex Korngold, Jenny Fuggles, Jill Timms, Alan Sercombe, Peter Byford**, and **Margaret Byford**. While to the right are **Robert Timms, Colin Mitchell, Graeme Hunt, Dave Jones, Martin Fuggles, John Hobbs, Judy Siede** and husband, plus **John Hoey**.

Regards. Peter.

Wits end From David Stafford

A doctor on TV said to have inner peace we should always finish things we start and we all could have more calm in our lives.

I looked around my house to find things I'd started and hadn't finished.

I finished off a bottle of Merlot, a bottle of Chardonnay, a bottle of Baileys, a bottle of wum, the remainder of Valiumun scriptins, an a box a chocletz.

Yu haf no idr how fablus I feel rite now. Sned this to all who need inner piss. An telum u luvum.

Perfection, down to a tee

From Bob Shaw

Hi Ian, Hope you are well.

Thought you might be interested in this bit of news for the *ICL AllStars magazine*.

In early March, the ICL Mates Golf Group held its annual luncheon presentation, followed by a round at our home links, the Mona Vale Golf course.

The ICL Mates Golf Trophy for 2019 was awarded to **Stephen Cooper** for the 'Best Performance' in 2019 (the most notable improvement in golf handicap).

The Trophy was presented by **Chris Howells**, our winner for 2018. For the record, **Warren Blood** won the award in 2017.

I would like to add that special thanks were extended to **John Nash** for his continued work during the past year in organizing The Mates games, documenting the results and distributing a report on each round after the event.

Everyone agreed: an outstanding job which has ensured the continued tradition of these weekly golf events.



My cup runneth over: A photo of **Chris** (left) presenting the award for 2019 to **Stephen Cooper** with **Bruce** officiating.

Incidentally, good luck to all in the 2020 season.



Playing through: **Warren** and **Chris**, previous winners of the highly-coveted trophy.



This goes straight to the pool room: 2017 winner **Paul, Rod** and **Chris**.



Bunkering down: A recent group photo of The Mates participating in some great golf club hospitality.

Doubling Up ...

So to our traditional end-of- issue single column presentation of old archive shots.

- The Musik (sic) Society of Arthur Street was a popular ICL social activity for our Sydney-based staff, with the evening's entertainment, when *The Reporter* ran the following item, having been compiled by **Alan** and **Sheila Southwell**.

The programme's selection included the diverse talents of Katchachurian, Carmen McRae, The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band, Borodin, and Stan Keaton.

With top stereo equipment, society members also ensured a lavish Chinese meal was provided with adequate vintage red and white wines to wash it down.



Seen enjoying the evening's music are Alan Southwell (standing), Alan Willis, Linda Gibson, Trish Stanley, Derrick Davey and Vic Duath in the rear; Eric Swinerton, Paul Murrell, Ann Griffiths and Roy Townrow in the centre; with Sheila Southwell, Joan and George Phelps and Chris Gibson up front.

- **Getting ready to be exhibitionists:** Part of our Dataskil team, seen here at an exhibition display, set up as part of the 3rd National Users Conference, are Miles Hampton-Chubb, John Offord, Janet Ketteringham, Roger Steel, Louis Velios, John Farrell, Phil Ketteringham, Richard Freemantle, Steven Callaghan and Malcolm Hudson.



- It was 1980, and Melbourne's industry area planning conference coincided with the horses' birthday and, (as we recall) also that of **Neil Lamming**.



Conference participants included those in the front row: **Bill Kither, Ann Hamilton, Frank Fey, Maria Kassourinis, David Stafford, Joan Davis, Ian Blair, Roz Laging, John Brett and Ron Collett**. In the middle row we see **Louis Vellos, Gerri van Vuuren, John Sims, Bob White and Daryl Foote**. Bringing up the rear are **Alf Vukic, Mike Benton, Robert Timms, David Savage and Cathy May**.

- Over the years, *The Reporter* had a lot of fun with the pictures it ran. The photographic creativity of ICL never ceased to amaze, and there used to be an informal rule, that the best sales-focused picture of the month scored front-page coverage. Take this Queensland shot (date unknown) for example. It presents what was described as our 'Bureau Brahman Breeders Beautiful Belles' with some BB output. The Breeders Association was an important customer.



Getting tied up in their work: Pictured are **Ella Strachan, Alison Campbell, Jan Francis, Gillian Geary, Barbara Sisson and Joan Herman**.

- For its 1979 sales contest, DS took as its theme the Wild West. In the interests of complete reporting, we record that Killer **Kevin Ryder** was the top-performing salesperson, with Lockjaw Country (our Brisbane bureau) being the top territory



Strength and courage from a bottle of redevye: Glyn Homer, John Erskine, Kevin Little, Roy Stephan and Ian Gaunt.

In reviewing our Sydney Noel celebrations, we threatened a photo from the days when our luncheons were held at a Chinese restaurant in Belmont. We'll leave it to you to fill in the names.



...ooOoo...