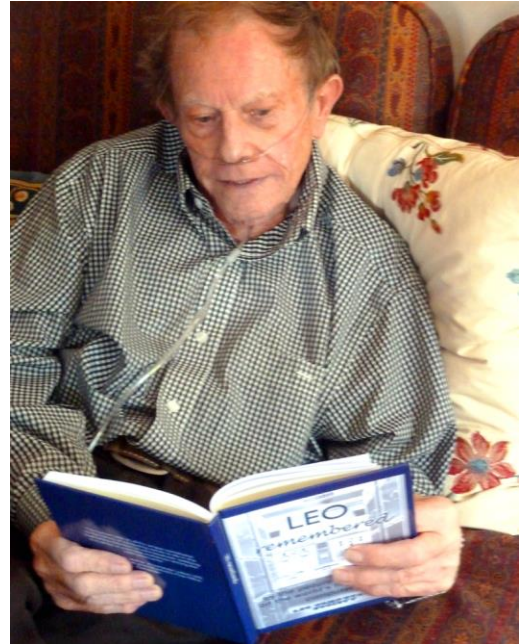


Peter Bird – Obituary

Peter Bird, author of *LEO: The First Business Computer* and *The First Food Empire: A History Of J. Lyons & Co.* has died at the age of 82. Published in 1994, *LEO: The First Business Computer* was the first to document the development in the 1950's of the World's first business computer by J Lyons and Co, who were then more famous for their tea shops and cakes. Peter then went on to write about the origins of J. Lyons & Co itself in 2000. Both books were meticulously researched and compiled, with original photos included from the respective documented eras.

Peter worked at J. Lyons & Co between 1964 and 1991, starting as a Computer Operator on LEO III and then eventually rising to Company Director of Lyons Computer Services. In the late 1980's Peter began his research into the origins of why and how the company decided to embark on building a computer. This initial interest led to writing these two important books.



It also led to him becoming an expert on all J. Lyons & Co related history and trivia and he was often asked to by TV companies to provide information and artifacts. The most famous being an appearance on Nigella Lawson's episode of *Who Do You Think You Are?* Nigella's great grandfather was a founding director of the company.

Peter was born in North London in 1934, the second son of a solicitors clerk Jack Bird and his wife Eileen (nee Darnell). Bombed out of their home in 1940, the family were evacuated many times. After the war Peter joined the merchant navy, rising to 1st Officer. He left in the early 60's and started work at J. Lyons & Co.

Whilst having never written any books or articles before, Peter got the writing bug when starting his research into LEO and this inquisitiveness and attention to detail were his guiding lights throughout the long process of putting together two very professionally authored and packaged books. He would continue to supply articles for the Lyons website and correspond with any Lyons related inquiries. A very generous and knowledgeable man, he was honored this year by the LEO Computer Society (<http://www.leo-computers.org.uk/>) when they dedicated their 'LEO Remembered' book to him.

He is survived by his son Philip Bird and two grandsons Alexander and Jake. Peter born in 1934 , died on 16th August 2017.