Ray Hennessy December 1934 –15th November 2016

Ray was born in December 1934 in Sutton, Surrey and gained a scholarship to Kings College School, Wimbledon. After school he considered a possible career in Agricultural Economics but after National Service and gaining a 2nd at Exeter College, Oxford he decided that agriculture was not for him.

Being more interested in Maths by he found lots of job adverts with references to computers. He had four interviews but the LEO interview was different to the others. An aptitude test was followed by an interview with Doug Comish at Hartree House, where he got sight of LEO II/5, the bureau computer. He got on well with Doug and worked with him several times later in his career. He accepted LEO's offer was able to live in London, too. He went through his training course and was always trying to get at the fine detail and reasoning behind what was going on. A characteristic he kept to the end.

His first major task was as programmer on British Oxygen who had a computer at Edmonton in North East London. Based in Hartree House, on the top floor of Whiteleys Department Store in Queensway, he often travelled out to Edmonton with John Aris, the senior programmer, and they worked well as a team. These early relationships with Doug Comish and John Aris led to life-long friendships. After the successful implementation at British Oxygen, Ray became the senior programmer for the Hotpoint invoicing job that was run weekly on the Hartree House bureau.

In 1961 he transferred to Doug Comish's sales team with a brief to write system specifications. This was part of "the LEO way" where the aim was to work with the customer to ensure a real understanding of requirements, not just to sell a computer. Real business problems were tackled and the capability of what was, then, cutting edge technique and technology was harnessed to the customer's benefit. An approach at odds with the main stream of Computer Companies whose procedures were dominated by the need "to sell".

Later he moved to a group that was looking to establish LEO (LEO III) overseas and had to understand the rather different requirements in markets like Australia, South Africa and behind the Iron Curtain, where Ralph Land was the sales manager. Ray liaised with both technical and production directors to ensure that a coherent view of the opportunity was taken and that the company could afford any product changes the new markets called for.

In 1963 LEO was bought by English Electric which had "big company" systems, procedures and ways of thinking. This was a culture clash that he was to encounter yet again in 1968, with the rationalisation of the UK Computer Industry at the Government behest to create ICL.

Ray moved to Government Sales and began a lifetime's involvement with the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance (MPNI) that morphed eventually into the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). They had a wide variety of LEO / ICL equipment over the years and it was said that at one time Ray had a better understanding of this organisation than almost anyone else. He also worked on other Government systems whilst living near the Department in Reading.

Throughout the 1970's Ray worked primarily with the DHSS but also travelled overseas helping local ICL teams to win government business in their countries. He

also worked on a major research project with the Post Office and others looking at 'packet switching', which eventually became the primary way of carrying data over the internet.

In 1991, after 32 years with the company and 27 years on and off with the social security departments, Ray retired early but did some consultancy work until 1995 when he retired fully. In retirement he took the first real holidays he'd ever had and travelled the world with his wife. Outside work he had been a local councillor, been involved with the local Civic Society and worked with a voluntary group that helped prisoners to find productive community based work. He played a very significant role in the LEO Computers Society as a committee member, active participant and welcome contributor to its work in restoring the LEO history, a history to which his own work contributed significantly. He was a principled man throughout his life, both at work and in his personal life.

Ray was married twice and had three children. His wife, Sheena, survives him. He bore his last and painful illness with fortitude and his family and colleagues will miss him greatly.

John Daines