

ORAL AND NARRATIVE HISTORIES

Note: The LEO Computer Society uses Dropbox to hold records of interviews, reminiscences and memoirs recorded by the Society. The Dropbox links are provided for some of the records below. However the link can only be activated by a few designated members of the Society. Anyone who wishes to download a particular item, please apply to Frank Land at f.land@lse.ac.uk

❖ **Interviewee: John Simmons**

Interviewer: Chris Evans

Date of Interview: 1970s

Edited Transcript: Science Museum

Copyright: Science Museum

Reprinted as Interview between J.R.M. Simmons, Director and Chief Comptroller of J. Lyons & Co., and the Science Museum, London. Appendix B, in Caminer, D.T., Aris, J.B., Hermon, P.M., Lanf, F.F. (editors and contributors) LEO The Incredible Story of the World's first Business Computer, McGraw Hill, New York, pages 360-374

❖ **John Pinkerton (1)**

Interviewee: John M.M. Pinkerton

1919 - 1997

Interviewer: John Pinkerton, self interview

Date of Interview: 23.08.1988

Role in LEO: Chief Engineer

Joined LEO: 1948

Abstract: Pinkerton begins by discussing his education and wartime work in radar technology in England. He then describes his movement into the computer industry after World War II and his work on the LEO I and LEO II computers. In this context he discusses the British computer firms J. Lyons and Company, Leo Computers, English Electric Co., and International Computers Ltd.

Repository: Charles Babbage Institute, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Transcript: 54 pages

Copyright: Charles Babbage Institute

Download:

<http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/107600/oh149jmp.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

❖ **John Pinkerton (2)**

Interviewee: John M.M. Pinkerton

1919-1997

Interviewer: Chris Evans

Date of Interview: 1975

Role in LEO: Chief Engineer

Joined LEO: 1948

Abstract: **John Pinkerton joined Lyons as chief engineer at the very beginning of the LEO initiative and** led the engineering side until the merger with English Electric. He held senior engineering appointments within the merged companies until his retirement. Much of the success of the LEO enterprise lay in his genius for bringing innovative ideas to practical fruition – one of the true heroes of the information age.

Repository: London Science Museum

Audio Recording: Tape 6 in Christopher Evans's 'Pioneers of Computing'

Transcript: Evans, Chris, (1983) **Pioneers of Computing**, IEEE Annals of the History of Computing, Vol. 5, No 1, pp 64-72, January-March.

Copyright: Audio, London Science Museum, Transcript, IEEE

❖ **Interviewee: Mary Coombs (née Blood) 1** **DOB:** 1929

Interviewer: Thomas Lean, British Library

Date of Interview: 2010 **Reference:** C1379/16 **Role in LEO:** Programmer

Joined LEO: 1953

Role in LEO: Programmer

Abstract: This is a full oral history of the life of Mary Coombs as part of the British Libraries Oral History series on the life of selected British Computer scientists.

Repository: British Library, National Life Stories, an oral history of British Science

Type of recorder: Marantz PMD661 on secure digital (Sessions 1-4) Marantz PMD660 on

compact flash (Sessions 5-9) Recording format: Wav 24 bit 48 kHz (sessions 1-4) WAV 16 bit 48 kHz (sessions 5-9) Total no. of tracks 9 Stereo Total Duration 07 hours:14 minutes:40 seconds

Transcript: <http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TRANSCRIPTS/021T-C1379X0016XX-0000A0.pdf>

Copyright/Clearance: Open except for 00:56:57 – 00:59:15 of track 7 and 00:21:51 - 00:22:49 of

track 9; these sections are closed for 30 years until June 2041.

❖ **Interviewee: Mary Coombs (née Blood) 2** **DOB:** 1929

Interviewer: Google

Date of Interview: 21.11.2011

Role in LEO: Programmer,

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: Google interviewed and filmed a number of old LEO employees including Mary Coombs as part of the celebration at the Science Museum of the 60th anniversary of the roll out of the first business application on the LEO I computer.

Narrated by Georgina Ferry/

Repository:

Interview Text

Type of recorder:

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrn24SdW64I>

Copyright: Google. Free to view.

References to Mary Coombs listed in Wikipedia:

1. **Jump up** ^ "Mary Coombs". *The British Library*.

2. ^ **Jump up to:** ^a ^b *computingheritage* (2013-09-05), Mary Coombs shares her story, retrieved 2018-07-26

3. **Jump up** ^ Douglas, Ian (2013-09-11). "Bletchley Park celebrates women in computing". *ISSN 0307-1235*. Retrieved 2018-07-26.

4. **Jump up** ^ "Women in Computing: a British Perspective - Google Arts & Culture". *Google Cultural Institute*. Retrieved 2018-07-26.

5. **Jump up** ^ "Mary Coombs - Computing History". *www.computinghistory.org.uk*. Retrieved 2018-07-26.

6. ^ [Jump up to: ^a ^b ^c ^d ^e ^f "Mary Coombs"](#). *Diversity in HPC*. Retrieved 14 April 2018.
7. [Jump up](#) ^ ["Museum celebrates women in computing"](#). BBC News.
8. ^ [Jump up to: ^a ^b Bird, Peter J. LEO: the First Business Computer](#). Wokingham: Hasler Publishing Limited. [ISBN 0-9521651-0-4](#).
9. ^ [Jump up to: ^a ^b ^c Ferry, Georgina \(2004\). A Computer Called LEO: Lyons Tea Shops and the world's first office computer](#). Harper Perennial. p. 106. [ISBN 1 84115 1866](#).
10. ^ [Jump up to: ^a ^b Janet., Abbate, \(2012\). *Recoding gender : women's changing participation in computing*](#). Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. [ISBN 9780262018067](#). [OCLC 813929041](#).

❖ **Interviewee: Frank Land (1)** **DOB:** 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Thomas Lean, British Library

Date of Interview: 2010 **Reference:** C1379/17

Role in LEO: Programmer, Systems Analyst, Marketing, Consultant

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: This is a full oral history of the life of Frank Land as part of the British Libraries Oral History series on the life of selected British Computer scientists.

Repository: British Library, [National Life Stories](#), [an Oral History of British Science](#)

Type of recorder: Marantz PMD661 on secure digital Recording format: WAV 24 bit 48 kHz Total no. of tracks 18 Stereo Total Duration: 15 hours:06 minutes:31 seconds

Transcript: <http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TRANSCRIPTS/021T-C1379X0017XX-0000A0.pdf>

Copyright/Clearance: No restrictions except for the following sections: track 1 [between 35:38 – 35:58, and 40:36 – 41:26], track 4 [between 31:46 – 34:56], track 8 [between 13:04 – 13:15 and 47:20 – 49:19], track 9 [between 18:21 – 18:41, 20:20 – 20:21, 01:02:54 – 01:03:31 and 01:08:31 – 01:09:46] and track 13 [between 18:10 – 19:11] which are closed for 30 years (until March 2041)

❖ **Interviewee: Frank Land (2)** **DOB:** 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Google

Date of Interview: 21.11.2011

Role in LEO: Programmer, Systems Analyst, Marketing, Consultant

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: Google interviewed and filmed a number of old LEO employees including Frank Land as part of the celebration at the Science Museum of the 60th anniversary of the roll out of the first business application on the LEO I computer. Narrated by Georgina Ferry/

Repository: **Interview Text:** Dropbox LEO Interviews

https://www.dropbox.com/search/personal?path=%2F&qsid=75695419906493629711857519034651&query=frank+land+google&search_token=maaZCi5EZfs9ghMHde3MaOmE5gIkeIs7mVIUbNhfSkQ%3D

Type of recorder:

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrn24SdW64I>

Copyright: Google Free to view.

❖ **Interviewee: Frank Land (3)** **DOB:** 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Professor Alan Eardley

Date of Interview: 21.02.2016

Role in LEO: Programmer, Systems Analyst, Marketing, Consultant

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: Professor Alan Eardley interviewed and filmed Frank Land as part of his collection of material on the history of computing for his inaugural lecture at Stafford University, April 14th 2016.

Repository: Pre-Interview response to interview questions: Dropbox LEO Interviews https://www.dropbox.com/search/personal?path=%2F&preview=Frank+Land+Feb+2016+unedited.doc&qsid=80177254035542482665344419183340&query=frank+land&search_token=maaZCi5EZfs9ghMHde3MaOmE5gIkeIs7mVIUbNhfSkQ%3D

Interview and Video: Editing in process

Copyright: Alan Eardley

Restrictions: Interview and video will be available to members of LEO Computer Society

❖ **Interviewee: Frank Land (4)**

DOB: 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Paul Jagger, Director Archive IT

Date of Interview: 22.05.2018

Editor: Helen Carter, ArchiveIT

Role in LEO: Programmer, Systems Analyst, Marketing, Consultant

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: Archives IT are conducting and archiving interviews of UK individuals who have contributed to the development and evolution of IT. Frank Land has been added to the archive with a whole life interview. Ninian Eady is also in the archive.

Archive IT repository: <http://archivesit.org.uk/interviews/frank-land/>

LEO Computers Society

Repository: <https://www.dropbox.com/preview/LEO%20Oral%20History%20project/leo%20Interview%20transcripts/FRANK%20LAND%20by%20ArchivesIT.doc?role=personal>

❖ **Interviewee: Ralph Land (1)**

DOB: 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Martin Garthwaite as part of LEO Computer Society's Oral History Project

Date of Interview: 31st October 2011

Role in LEO: Bureau Manager, Export Manager

Joined LEO: 1954

Abstract: Ralph joined the Lyons Teashop Division in 1953 as management accountant for the Teashops and transferred to LEO in 1954. He rose to manager of the LEO City Office followed by spells in promoting LEO exports in Paris and Dusseldorf before heading the LEO/English Electric team working in Eastern Europe including Soviet Russia. His subsequent career until retirement was with Rank-Xerox and Rolls Royce working on exports to Eastern Europe. Awarded OBE and subsequently CBE for services to UK export trade.

Text: Edited by Ralph Land and Hilary Caminer

Repository: [AAhttps://www.dropbox.com/search/personal?path=%2F&preview=Ralph+Land+unedited.doc&qsid=73304227362417986503993819006613&query=ralph+land&search_token=maaZCi5EZfs9ghMHde3MaOmE5gIkeIs7mVIUbNhfSkQ%3D](https://www.dropbox.com/search/personal?path=%2F&preview=Ralph+Land+unedited.doc&qsid=73304227362417986503993819006613&query=ralph+land&search_token=maaZCi5EZfs9ghMHde3MaOmE5gIkeIs7mVIUbNhfSkQ%3D)

Recording: MP3

<https://www.dropbox.com/search/personal?path=%2F&preview=Ralph+Land+audio+MP3>

[3.eml&qsid=34528291897312889742744536166909&query=ralph+land+mp3&search_t
oken=maaZCi5EZfs9ghMHde3MaOmE5gIkeIs7mVIUbNhfSkQ%3D](https://www.google.com/search?q=ralph+land+mp3&btnG=&oeq=1&oeq2=1&oeq3=1&oeq4=1&oeq5=1&oeq6=1&oeq7=1&oeq8=1&oeq9=1&oeq10=1&oeq11=1&oeq12=1&oeq13=1&oeq14=1&oeq15=1&oeq16=1&oeq17=1&oeq18=1&oeq19=1&oeq20=1&oeq21=1&oeq22=1&oeq23=1&oeq24=1&oeq25=1&oeq26=1&oeq27=1&oeq28=1&oeq29=1&oeq30=1&oeq31=1&oeq32=1&oeq33=1&oeq34=1&oeq35=1&oeq36=1&oeq37=1&oeq38=1&oeq39=1&oeq40=1&oeq41=1&oeq42=1&oeq43=1&oeq44=1&oeq45=1&oeq46=1&oeq47=1&oeq48=1&oeq49=1&oeq50=1&oeq51=1&oeq52=1&oeq53=1&oeq54=1&oeq55=1&oeq56=1&oeq57=1&oeq58=1&oeq59=1&oeq60=1&oeq61=1&oeq62=1&oeq63=1&oeq64=1&oeq65=1&oeq66=1&oeq67=1&oeq68=1&oeq69=1&oeq70=1&oeq71=1&oeq72=1&oeq73=1&oeq74=1&oeq75=1&oeq76=1&oeq77=1&oeq78=1&oeq79=1&oeq80=1&oeq81=1&oeq82=1&oeq83=1&oeq84=1&oeq85=1&oeq86=1&oeq87=1&oeq88=1&oeq89=1&oeq90=1&oeq91=1&oeq92=1&oeq93=1&oeq94=1&oeq95=1&oeq96=1&oeq97=1&oeq98=1&oeq99=1&oeq100=1&oeq101=1&oeq102=1&oeq103=1&oeq104=1&oeq105=1&oeq106=1&oeq107=1&oeq108=1&oeq109=1&oeq110=1&oeq111=1&oeq112=1&oeq113=1&oeq114=1&oeq115=1&oeq116=1&oeq117=1&oeq118=1&oeq119=1&oeq120=1&oeq121=1&oeq122=1&oeq123=1&oeq124=1&oeq125=1&oeq126=1&oeq127=1&oeq128=1&oeq129=1&oeq130=1&oeq131=1&oeq132=1&oeq133=1&oeq134=1&oeq135=1&oeq136=1&oeq137=1&oeq138=1&oeq139=1&oeq140=1&oeq141=1&oeq142=1&oeq143=1&oeq144=1&oeq145=1&oeq146=1&oeq147=1&oeq148=1&oeq149=1&oeq150=1&oeq151=1&oeq152=1&oeq153=1&oeq154=1&oeq155=1&oeq156=1&oeq157=1&oeq158=1&oeq159=1&oeq160=1&oeq161=1&oeq162=1&oeq163=1&oeq164=1&oeq165=1&oeq166=1&oeq167=1&oeq168=1&oeq169=1&oeq170=1&oeq171=1&oeq172=1&oeq173=1&oeq174=1&oeq175=1&oeq176=1&oeq177=1&oeq178=1&oeq179=1&oeq180=1&oeq181=1&oeq182=1&oeq183=1&oeq184=1&oeq185=1&oeq186=1&oeq187=1&oeq188=1&oeq189=1&oeq190=1&oeq191=1&oeq192=1&oeq193=1&oeq194=1&oeq195=1&oeq196=1&oeq197=1&oeq198=1&oeq199=1&oeq200=1&oeq201=1&oeq202=1&oeq203=1&oeq204=1&oeq205=1&oeq206=1&oeq207=1&oeq208=1&oeq209=1&oeq210=1&oeq211=1&oeq212=1&oeq213=1&oeq214=1&oeq215=1&oeq216=1&oeq217=1&oeq218=1&oeq219=1&oeq220=1&oeq221=1&oeq222=1&oeq223=1&oeq224=1&oeq225=1&oeq226=1&oeq227=1&oeq228=1&oeq229=1&oeq230=1&oeq231=1&oeq232=1&oeq233=1&oeq234=1&oeq235=1&oeq236=1&oeq237=1&oeq238=1&oeq239=1&oeq240=1&oeq241=1&oeq242=1&oeq243=1&oeq244=1&oeq245=1&oeq246=1&oeq247=1&oeq248=1&oeq249=1&oeq250=1&oeq251=1&oeq252=1&oeq253=1&oeq254=1&oeq255=1&oeq256=1&oeq257=1&oeq258=1&oeq259=1&oeq260=1&oeq261=1&oeq262=1&oeq263=1&oeq264=1&oeq265=1&oeq266=1&oeq267=1&oeq268=1&oeq269=1&oeq270=1&oeq271=1&oeq272=1&oeq273=1&oeq274=1&oeq275=1&oeq276=1&oeq277=1&oeq278=1&oeq279=1&oeq280=1&oeq281=1&oeq282=1&oeq283=1&oeq284=1&oeq285=1&oeq286=1&oeq287=1&oeq288=1&oeq289=1&oeq290=1&oeq291=1&oeq292=1&oeq293=1&oeq294=1&oeq295=1&oeq296=1&oeq297=1&oeq298=1&oeq299=1&oeq300=1&oeq301=1&oeq302=1&oeq303=1&oeq304=1&oeq305=1&oeq306=1&oeq307=1&oeq308=1&oeq309=1&oeq310=1&oeq311=1&oeq312=1&oeq313=1&oeq314=1&oeq315=1&oeq316=1&oeq317=1&oeq318=1&oeq319=1&oeq320=1&oeq321=1&oeq322=1&oeq323=1&oeq324=1&oeq325=1&oeq326=1&oeq327=1&oeq328=1&oeq329=1&oeq330=1&oeq331=1&oeq332=1&oeq333=1&oeq334=1&oeq335=1&oeq336=1&oeq337=1&oeq338=1&oeq339=1&oeq340=1&oeq341=1&oeq342=1&oeq343=1&oeq344=1&oeq345=1&oeq346=1&oeq347=1&oeq348=1&oeq349=1&oeq350=1&oeq351=1&oeq352=1&oeq353=1&oeq354=1&oeq355=1&oeq356=1&oeq357=1&oeq358=1&oeq359=1&oeq360=1&oeq361=1&oeq362=1&oeq363=1&oeq364=1&oeq365=1&oeq366=1&oeq367=1&oeq368=1&oeq369=1&oeq370=1&oeq371=1&oeq372=1&oeq373=1&oeq374=1&oeq375=1&oeq376=1&oeq377=1&oeq378=1&oeq379=1&oeq380=1&oeq381=1&oeq382=1&oeq383=1&oeq384=1&oeq385=1&oeq386=1&oeq387=1&oeq388=1&oeq389=1&oeq390=1&oeq391=1&oeq392=1&oeq393=1&oeq394=1&oeq395=1&oeq396=1&oeq397=1&oeq398=1&oeq399=1&oeq400=1&oeq401=1&oeq402=1&oeq403=1&oeq404=1&oeq405=1&oeq406=1&oeq407=1&oeq408=1&oeq409=1&oeq410=1&oeq411=1&oeq412=1&oeq413=1&oeq414=1&oeq415=1&oeq416=1&oeq417=1&oeq418=1&oeq419=1&oeq420=1&oeq421=1&oeq422=1&oeq423=1&oeq424=1&oeq425=1&oeq426=1&oeq427=1&oeq428=1&oeq429=1&oeq430=1&oeq431=1&oeq432=1&oeq433=1&oeq434=1&oeq435=1&oeq436=1&oeq437=1&oeq438=1&oeq439=1&oeq440=1&oeq441=1&oeq442=1&oeq443=1&oeq444=1&oeq445=1&oeq446=1&oeq447=1&oeq448=1&oeq449=1&oeq450=1&oeq451=1&oeq452=1&oeq453=1&oeq454=1&oeq455=1&oeq456=1&oeq457=1&oeq458=1&oeq459=1&oeq460=1&oeq461=1&oeq462=1&oeq463=1&oeq464=1&oeq465=1&oeq466=1&oeq467=1&oeq468=1&oeq469=1&oeq470=1&oeq471=1&oeq472=1&oeq473=1&oeq474=1&oeq475=1&oeq476=1&oeq477=1&oeq478=1&oeq479=1&oeq480=1&oeq481=1&oeq482=1&oeq483=1&oeq484=1&oeq485=1&oeq486=1&oeq487=1&oeq488=1&oeq489=1&oeq490=1&oeq491=1&oeq492=1&oeq493=1&oeq494=1&oeq495=1&oeq496=1&oeq497=1&oeq498=1&oeq499=1&oeq500=1&oeq501=1&oeq502=1&oeq503=1&oeq504=1&oeq505=1&oeq506=1&oeq507=1&oeq508=1&oeq509=1&oeq510=1&oeq511=1&oeq512=1&oeq513=1&oeq514=1&oeq515=1&oeq516=1&oeq517=1&oeq518=1&oeq519=1&oeq520=1&oeq521=1&oeq522=1&oeq523=1&oeq524=1&oeq525=1&oeq526=1&oeq527=1&oeq528=1&oeq529=1&oeq530=1&oeq531=1&oeq532=1&oeq533=1&oeq534=1&oeq535=1&oeq536=1&oeq537=1&oeq538=1&oeq539=1&oeq540=1&oeq541=1&oeq542=1&oeq543=1&oeq544=1&oeq545=1&oeq546=1&oeq547=1&oeq548=1&oeq549=1&oeq550=1&oeq551=1&oeq552=1&oeq553=1&oeq554=1&oeq555=1&oeq556=1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Restrictions:

❖ **Interviewee:** Ralph Land (2)

DOB: 24.10.1928

Interviewer: Google

Date of Interview: 21.11.2011

Role in LEO: Bureau Manager, Export Manager

Joined LEO: 1954

Abstract: Google interviewed and filmed a number of old LEO employees including Ralph Land as part of the celebration at the Science Museum of the 60th anniversary of the roll out of the first business application on the LEO I computer. Narrated by Georgina Ferry/

Repository: **Interview Text:** to be completed

Type of recorder:

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrn24SdW64I>

Copyright: Google Free to view.

❖ **Interviewee:** Ernest Kaye

DOB: 1922-2012

Interviewer: Google

Date of Interview: 21.11.2011

Role in LEO: Design Engineer, head of engineering procurement

Joined LEO: 1949

Abstract: Google interviewed and filmed a number of old LEO employees including Ernest Kaye as part of the celebration at the Science Museum of the 60th anniversary of the roll out of the first business application on the LEO I computer. Narrated by Georgina Ferry.

Repository:

Interview Text:

Type of recorder:

Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lrn24SdW64I>

Copyright: Google Free to view.

❖ **Interviewee:** Chris J. Date

DOB: 1941

Interviewer: Thomas Haigh

Date of interview: 2007

Role in LEO: Mathematical Programmer

Joined LEO: 1962

Abstract: Chris Date, well known for his work on Data Base theory and practice started his career with LEO in 1962 – 1967, and provides a description of his experience on pages 7 - 9 of the transcript of the interview. Very complimentary about LEO

Repository: Computer History Museum, California

Transcript: <http://archive.computerhistory.org/resources/access/text/2013/05/102658166-05-01-acc.pdf>

- 51 pages

Link to Museum: <http://www.computerhistory.org/collections/catalog/102658166>

Copyright: Computer History Museum CHM Reference number: X4090.2007

❖ **Interviewee:** Betty Cooper (nee Newman)
1930 **Died:** Aug 2019

DOB:

Interviewer: Janet Abbate

Date of Interview: September 2001

Role in LEO: Programmer on LEO I and LEO II/I

Joined LEO: 1953

Abstract: Betty joined Lyons as a labour cost clerk in the Statistical Office in September 1949. In 1953 she was selected for a LEO appreciation course, and as a result was offered a job as a programmer on LEO I. Despite scepticism about what LEO would be able to do she accepted the offer. She worked on a number of applications – payroll under Mary Blood (Coombs) and Tea Blending under Frank Land. She gained a reputation as a sound and reliable programmer. She left LEO to work as a programmer with EverReady before leaving to start a family.

Reference: http://ethw.org/Oral-History:Betty_Cooper and
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ix8tnvvm1pdxper/BettyCooper.doc?dl=0>