

LONDON ON-LINE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

MEMORANDUM

To:- All Members of Staff.
From:- Director of Computer Services.
Date:- 12 June 1985
Subject:- Impending retirement.

Most of you will know that due to my increasing health problems I have requested permission to retire early from LOLA. Last night this request was granted and it was agreed that my last day of service will be 30 September although my last working day at LOLA will be in early July.

As you can imagine it was a very difficult decision for me to take as I played a major role in setting up the original organisation in 1970 and I have enjoyed the last 15 years immensely.

I leave LOLA with feelings of sadness, pride and gratitude - sadness on thinking how much I shall miss the atmosphere of camaraderie, good humour and of pride in the job and regret for the still unexploited opportunities and for the unresolved problems which I have now to leave to my successor.

Let me not, however, dwell on the feelings of regret but rather on those of pride. I would like to remind you all of just what has been accomplished in the 15 years of our existence although the many founder members, at least 30 of whom are still with us, will, I am sure, need little reminding.

We have accomplished most of the objectives set out in the Haringey Long-term Study which was the original blue-print for our activities.

We have succeeded in keeping within the budgetary provisions which we said were necessary at the outset and have done 'that despite the many problems, both technical and those of staffing and turnover. LOLA's reputation has grown and the computer industry generally has come to appreciate the qualities to be found in LOLA's well-trained and highly skilled professional staff. As a result the industry has done its best to entice still more of them away and made those problems worse.

We have produced some of the best systems within local government, some of which have already had a 13-year life and this must be quite exceptional in our industry.

We have responded to the rapidly changing technology by developing a much wider range of skills which now include support for 'do-it-yourself' and microcomputer users. As agents of change we remain adaptable and flexible: we are still searching for 4th generation tools to improve our own productivity and will be quick to respond once a suitable product is found.

We have provided many of the senior staff for other local government computer organisations.

We have established LOLA as being a pleasant place in which to work and play and sometimes to return to after disillusionment elsewhere!

We have created a LOLA identity and an extended 'family', having succeeded in maintaining contacts with many more of our ex members of staff than is warranted by our size and relatively short existence.

Finally I come to gratitude. None of these accomplishments would have been achieved without the sustained efforts and continued support of the LOLA stalwarts and the speedy transformation of our recruits into well-motivated, dedicated and highly skilled' members of staff.

I would like to thank you all for your good will, resilience, professionalism, sense of humour, and for helping to make LOLA an organisation which achieves results whilst demonstrating that staff and Management do not have to be in continual conflict. Working for LOLA has been intellectually stimulating and challenging in the best of company and for nearly all of the time most enjoyable!

In the days in which it is fashionable to denigrate the public sector I still think that LOLA exemplifies the very best of what can be achieved. Please keep up the good work and maintain your standards.

I shall be one of the many who will remain in touch although I am certainly not promising any guest appearances at the Christmas Cabaret!

I look forward to seeing you all at my farewell celebration which will be at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, 19 July at Haringey Civic Centre. At that time we hope to be able to tell you our new address in Somerset where Claire and I will look forward to seeing any of you who venture into those parts.

My thanks and very best wishes to everyone - may LOLA continue to develop and flourish for many years to come.

Derek A Schartau