

LONDON ON-LINE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

MEMORANDUM

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

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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*

- 1957 BScHons special degree in mathematics, King's College, London
- 1959 Programmer with Metropolitan Boroughs (Organisations & Methods Committee)
- 1960 Derek in charge of 9 programmers writing for a pilot scheme on a LEO II  
6 south London boroughs form a committee for computer systems on a LEO III
- 1962 Chief Programmer for consortium
- 1965 Chief Systems Analyst for consortium
- 1967 Head of Computer Division of London Boroughs Management Services Unit
- 1969 Assistant Director of LBMSU Computer Division
- 1970 Computer division goes independent
- 1971 LOLA is formed, with Derek as Head of Computer Services,
- 1982 Derek formulates, administers and judges the Local Government Chronicle IT82 competition
- 1985 Derek retires due to health problems - and lives happily ever after.

11/12/85

Dear Lolaites.

How pleasant it is to be able to write to wish you all a Happy Christmas without weighing every word, wondering about the best way to say "thank you " for the past year's work without sounding too pompous and how to encourage you to stay for another year's punishment! There you never realised that so much thought used to go into it did you?

Somebody once said " God made the country and Man made the town". Man was also very much responsible for the unheated trains( both ways!) when I last came up to the Brompton Hospital in November thus reinforcing that sentiment and persuading me that I would be unwise to attend the Lola Party as I had intended. I hope that you have a splendid time. that the Cabaret shows its usual inventiveness and that no-one gets arrested for transvestitism or being drunk and disorderly.

What have I been doing down in Dorset since Oct 8th? Well I suppose the best answer is trying to get the car into the garage. I made it just over a week ago but not without having to buy a Black & Decker for the first time in my life (yes-I had led a sheltered existence) and making so many trips to our local "Payless" for wood and grummetts and widgets and things to put up shelves that we decided to buy some Marley shares to get some of our money back! The lump sum now looks decidedly un-lumpy , in fact it would be very difficult to detect the slightest bulge. Apart from the trials of D.I.Y.. eveything is pure gain. The West Dorset countryside is simply magnificent with high chalkland and rolling valleys. One way out of Corscombe is up Hackney Hill (sic) which is 1 in 5 and the reason why one is advised to have a larger than normal deep freeze for the one Winter in seven that the village gets cut off -and there was I thinking that I had finally escaped from the Inner City influence

Did you know that you can still:-

get tradesmen who will deliver  
buy eggs so fresh that they take 20min.to  
hardboil

deal with shops which don't send their bills for  
over 10 weeks

make arrangements with people who keep  
agreed appointments

get a lady's wash. Blow-dry and cut for £6.h at  
the best hairdressers ( Claire-not me)

buy a super lunch for two including drinks for  
just over £6

The last example was only yesterday when we went to Bridport to get the car serviced. Claire had Moules marinieres and I had a large whole grilled Plaice- all the fish having been brought from France that morning.

However we don't want too many more coming to settle so I must also tell you that:-

there's no Sainsburys nearer than Taunton

the country lanes are full of 2mile an hour  
tractors or red car drivers hurtling round blind  
bends at 80mph

the post doesn't arrive till 9-15am & the paper  
on Sunday not till 10-30am

a bus to Yeovil goes every Friday and gives you  
two hours to shop

the prices are bound to increase once the  
tourist season starts

Let me end these rural reflections by wishing you a successful and prosperous New Year under your new Director and suggesting that at least some of you should make it your New Year Resolution to come to see us. Claire and I will look forward to that!

All our very best wishes

*Derek & Claire*

Derek & Claire Schartau

P.S. As you can see the typewriter is really  
earning its keep- this is the 8th ribbon!