

Spring 2005

News

Volume 11 Number 1

A Pearl for AXiS and VME

The year 2005 is already well under way as this Newsletter goes to press and preparations are also well advanced to celebrate the fact that VME and our User Association achieve a remarkable 30th anniversary. Using the terminology of wedding anniversaries we would call it our pearl anniversary. Of course the jewel usually associated with VME is the diamond crystal which was introduced by ICL many years ago to highlight the quality of VME. This explains for newer members why the AXiS logo shows a diamond above the "i". And diamonds are enduring, as indeed we hope will be the success of VME and AXiS.



It seems like only yesterday that we were marking the Silver anniversary. In December 2000 some 27 guests attended a most convivial evening at Beaumont College to mark the 25th birthday. This year it is intended to associate the celebration with the Spring Conference at Manchester on 19th and 20th April. This city was chosen for several reasons. Fujitsu Services have plans to vacate West Gorton for pastures new during the summer. It was thought that it would be very appropriate to hold the workshops here and offer delegates the last chance to tour the Development Hall. Why not indulge a little nostalgia? And there will be a timeline exhibition with mementoes spanning the history of VME.

The main Conference event takes place at Old Trafford, home of Manchester United Football Club. This venue generates mixed reactions depending on which football team you support or whether or not you like football. Your correspondent would feel more at home at the other Old Trafford stadium to hear the sound of leather on willow but he will have the consolation of being able to stay there overnight. Some delegates have told me already that

they must be there despite having no love for MUFC!! For staunch supporters of MUFC it should be noted that all spades and trowels must be checked in at reception!

Your Committee is very pleased that Professor Brian Warboys will be with us again to deliver the Keynote presentation. Who better than the Father of VME to open the proceedings and give us some views of VME through the ages? It is also a pleasure to record that Ed Wilson, also well known to older AXiS members, has agreed to give us some user perspectives. Those who have heard Ed speaking at Conference in previous years will know that he never shrinks from dealing with controversial issues. He takes a very jaundiced view about the modern 'fads' like Client / Server computing; PC Computing; Linux; and RUP(Rational Unified Process).

A special feature of Conference this year, designed to mark the anniversary, will be the VME Academy awards, our very own Oscars. This started out as a desire to recognise significant contributions made in terms of customer support. It has grown to a list of 10 categories which are identified later in this Newsletter. Coupled with this is an intent to give formal recognition to former ICL, Fujitsu, or AXiS activists who have contributed to the success of VME and AXiS (or its predecessor groups) through the AXiS Golden Circle scheme.

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Dates for the Diary

19th/20th April 2005 Spring Conference

Watch the Events page on the AXiS web site:
<http://www.axis.org.uk>

Advertise in AXiS News

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Full Page | £450 |
| Half page | £250 |
| Quarter Page | £150 |

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Editorial

Welcome to the first Newsletter of 2005 and the start of Volume 11 of AXiS News.

It seems that AXiS continues to break records. It is now the longest running of the four groups that have existed since 1975 to support users of VME. The 2900 User Group spanned the initial years until 1983 when changes in the ICL Computer User Association structure and mergers brought about the Large Systems User Group. This existed for 2 years before the merger with the Database Management User Group created AMSU in 1985. The Association for Mainframe System Users was perhaps the peak period in membership lasting until 1994. Sensitivity about the role of the mainframe and reconsideration of focus and membership services generated another change creating AXiS in 1995.

When we held our modest 25th anniversary celebration at Beaumont College in December 2000 there was a feeling that our group was reaching the end of its useful life but it is heartening to see that there has been something of a regeneration of interest since then. Though membership has reduced from its peak in the 80s and early 90s commensurate with the reduction in ownership of VME systems, remaining members continue to give good support to events as evidenced by strong early bookings for the coming Spring Conference. The main problem however is that the pool of members able to give time to the running of the group through the Executive Committee is seriously small now and additional members are urgently sought to ensure continuity.

Don Folland

Chairman's Column

The AXiS Committee is very busy making final preparations for the 30th Anniversary Conference on 19th and 20th April 2005. As has been mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter we are returning to Manchester, the home of Computing and VME. An exciting programme has been arranged with some special surprises.

I have just completed arrangements for the showcase - there will be a full complement of 14 stands. Delegates continue to book and even at the current time we will have over 100 people attending. So if you haven't booked already - please do so without delay.

I think the one thing that this shows is that there is still a lot of commitment to VME at customer sites.

Can I just conclude this piece by making an appeal for more volunteers to join the AXiS Committee. Running one of these events takes a lot of effort by a comparatively small band of stalwarts. If you have any ideas or can spend a little bit of time please let one of the Committee know. If you're not sure what is involved - please speak to me at the conference.

I look forward to meeting many of you again in April

Harold Cloutt



Obituary: Dame Hilary Cropper (1941 - 2004)

Long serving AXiS members who remember Hilary Cropper will have been saddened by her death on Boxing Day. She had been suffering from cancer for 3 years. Former colleague Dik Leatherdale recalls being seconded to her team in the late 1970s to work on a re-edit of the System Construction and Maintenance Manual.

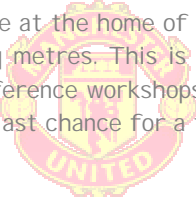
Dame Hilary joined ICL in 1970 and became the company's most senior woman executive. In 1985 she left ICL following an invitation from Stephanie "Steve" Shirley to become Chief Executive of FI. Steve had founded the company in Hemel Hempstead in 1962, running the business from her kitchen whilst caring for her disabled son and employing other women who wanted to work from home. Originally called Freelance Programmers, the company later changed its name to Freelance International or FI.

Dame Hilary eventually went on to become Chairman and Chief Executive of Xansa, the successful computer services group which evolved from FI Group.

AXiS Spring Conference 20th April 2005

VME Through the Ages

This year's Spring Conference will return to Manchester after a break of several years. The Conference, supported by a supplier Showcase, will take place at the home of Manchester United, in the Trafford and Salford Suites at Old Trafford, a total area of 690 sq metres. This is a chance for fans to visit the hallowed ground. Fujitsu Services will be hosting the eve of Conference workshops at their Customer Centre at West Gorton, and will be offering delegates what may well be the last chance for a tour of the Development Centre as the facility is being relocated over the next few months.

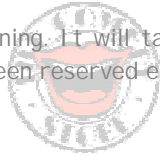


What is this event about?

This special Anniversary Conference will look at VME through the ages and provide as usual the opportunity to receive a strategic update from Fujitsu Services, and obtain product and service updates from partner suppliers. The main event will take place on Wednesday 20th April culminating in a treat for fans with a tour of the Manchester United Stadium. During the afternoon of Tuesday 19th April it is planned to hold Workshop and Masterclass sessions to facilitate technical discussion under the guidance of respected leaders.

There will be the usual Showcase but this time, because of logistics, it has to be limited to the Wednesday in support of the main Conference.

A Conference Dinner is planned for Tuesday evening. It will take place at 8 pm with a reception at 7pm at the famous Comedy Store in Manchester, which has been reserved exclusively for AXiS that evening.



Conference Main Programme

Wednesday 20th April 2005

- 09.30 Registration & refreshment
- 10.00 Welcome from AXiS Chairman, Harold Clouff
- 10.10 Keynote address: VME Through the Ages: Professor Brian Warboys
- 10.50 Fujitsu Strategy and Future Directions. Neil Stevenson, Director, Core Services Division
- 11.20 Refreshments
- 11.50 Fujitsu Services Product and Services Update: John Popplewell, Distinguished Engineer
- 12.20 Reflections on VME, and future perspectives: Ed Wilson, formerly Chief Architect, Inland Revenue.
- 12.50 Supplier Presentation: Richard Flanders, Fujitsu-Siemens
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 VME Academy, including Awards and Prizegiving
- 14.30 Websphere and Integration: Andy Heys, Software Technical Architect, IBM.
- 15.00 Formal Close followed by Tour of Manchester United Football Club

Pre-Conference Activity

Tuesday 19th April 2005

Registration from 13.30

- 14.00 Workshop: Everything you wanted to know about VME Comms but were afraid to ask: Derek Harrison, Fujitsu Services
- 15.00 Workshop: IT Service Management and BS15000 Standard: John Groom, MI SM
- 16.00 VME Masterclass: Margaret Leigh and John Popplewell, Fujitsu Services

plus

VME Through the Ages: a Timeline Display of old artefacts
Tour of the Development Centre at West Gorton

Showcase: Wednesday 20th April 2005

This will take place from 10.00am in the Trafford Suite at Old Trafford. Suppliers exhibiting include EMC, Fujitsu Services, Fujitsu-Siemens, Gresham Enterprise Software, Hopewiser, IDS, Miracle, Network Designers Ltd., Seagull, Storage Tec, Transoft. Fujitsu plan to demonstrate SuperNova on Windows and Linux.

Committee News

Executive Committee Elections 2005

The nominations for the posts of AXIS Chairman and Vice-Chairman, for the 2 years commencing on 1st April 2005, closed on 28th February 2005. The only nominations received were for the present incumbents. Therefore at the Executive Committee meeting on 1st March 2005 it was approved that Harold Cloutt should continue as Chairman and Ian Myatt as Vice-Chairman for the next 2 years.

The Year of the Volunteer

For members who might be thinking of recognising this Year of the Volunteer please consider offering a little of your time to AXIS by helping the

Executive Committee with the running of our Association and particularly providing some fresh input to the planning processes for the coming year. The Committee would welcome two or three additional members. Much of the business can be conducted electronically via email or short telephone conference. Physical meetings are kept to a minimum to avoid too much travelling. Last year 7 such meetings were held, mostly in London.

Please give this serious consideration. If you would like to discuss the commitment please contact the Secretary, Don Folland, by phone on 01603 279402 or by email at dfolland@axis.org.uk

Focus Group News

Early in the year the VME Support pages on the Fujitsu Services web site announced via Marketing Bulletin MB/05/001 and ION S185 the withdrawal of support for the Trimetra SY and the withdrawal of IONS, NEWS and FSETs from the Maintenance Knowledge Base.

Withdrawal of support for the Trimetra SY Range

In January Marketing Bulletin MB/05001 formally announced the complete withdrawal of support for the Trimetra SY range of servers at the end of

March 2006 in the UK. Withdrawal of support in all other territories had already been announced (MB/04/001). OpenVME support for this system will also cease on the same date.

Bulletin MB/05/002 provides useful background information which led to the decision to withdraw support.

Both Bulletins can be viewed by visiting the Support web site at:

<http://www.vmesupport.net/downloads/mbulletins>

Withdrawal of IONS, NEWS and FSETs from the Maintenance Knowledge Base. (ION S185)

As part of its policy of continuous improvement, Fujitsu Services introduced OpenVME and Trimetra support web pages via www.vmesupport.net in the year 2000. These pages include information and modules mirroring content of the Maintenance Knowledge Database (MKB).

The ease of access to IONS, NEWS and FSETs via the web has proved very popular with users. A consequence of this is that the number of requests

for IONS, News and FSETs on the MKB via SAM has fallen away dramatically.

Fujitsu Services have therefore decided that as of 20th February 2005 no new IONS, News Index, News items and FSETs will be published on the MKB. These will now only appear on www.vmesupport.net.

OpenVME repairs and envelopes will currently remain available via SAM/MKB.

This ION can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.vmesupport.net/vme/vmeion/ionsFolder/SIONS/S185>

Fujitsu News

Fujitsu hosts faith group consultation to discuss ID card implementation issues

Fujitsu Services, in association with the Faith Community Consultation Consortium (FCCC) led by the Hindu Forum of Britain recently sponsored and hosted four workshops on the Government-proposed identity cards programme. Eight major faith groups took part in these consultations in London, Birmingham, Leicester and Manchester at the end of January. The meetings were encourage the and discussion concerns on the identity cards. It is considered to be the first private and voluntary sector collaboration of its kind.



- ❖ Hygiene issues in multiple use of equipment at enrolment and verification
- ❖ Language and gender-related issues
- ❖ Possible limitations of identification posed by physical appearance and traditional dress of various faith traditions

As a direct result of the consultation, the FCCC leaders have agreed to disseminate information throughout their communities to help ensure that the identity cards scheme is better understood by all its members and that its introduction is as successful as possible.

A copy of the report can be obtained by contacting Ask Fujitsu on askfujitsu@uk.fujitsu.com

The consultation programme was supported by the Hindu Forum of Britain, the Board of Deputies for British Jews, the Muslim Council of Britain, the Network of Sikh Organisations, the Jain Sangha Europe, the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, and the Baha'i and Christian communities.

All views and concerns the Government may face on the issue of identity cards, including recording and reading of biometric data as well as verification of information held on the National Identity Register, were presented as a formal written response to the Home Office, who provided input to the workshop material.

Key findings include concerns surrounding:

- ❖ Access to enrolment centres, particularly for elderly members of communities
- ❖ Physical contact with biometric sensors, particularly fingerprint systems

"Good service" at



At the beginning of February Transport for London (TfL), the body that runs London transport facilities, awarded a five-year wide area data network management contract to Fujitsu Services. Fujitsu now becomes the sole provider of network services support to TfL's 400 London offices, bringing together the supervision of its disparate networks onto one common platform. By standardising the level of network management and consolidating the delivery of information, TfL can expect to make up to 40 per cent savings in leased-line and network management costs over the five-year term.

By introducing a single support platform TfL is also a step closer to meeting its information management and business strategy of bringing improved

integration of IT services to the group. The new measures will introduce a standardised approach to the delivery of business applications across the TfL Group, which includes London's buses, the Underground and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR).

Added benefits of standardising the administration of its network services onto one platform include a more focused approach to improving business continuity and increased network performance efficiency. Having just one platform from which to manage all networks also means TfL can prepare more effectively for future business applications such as mobility, CCTV over IP and IP telephony.

Fujitsu and Software AG Announce Strategic Alliance

At the beginning of March Fujitsu Limited and Software AG announced their intent to jointly develop, market and sell a means to help customers improve business processes and increase information visibility through a leading service-oriented architecture (SOA) infrastructure. SOA is a standards-based organizational and design methodology for redesigning business systems and applications to more closely align with the functional processes of the organization.

Using the strength of the companies' complementary technology platforms and global R&D expertise, Fujitsu and Software AG intend to deliver a methodology with a framework and integrated metadata repository designed to speed development, improve business productivity and enable flexibility to meet changing business demands.

Through this partnership, Fujitsu and Software AG plan to introduce a joint offering in the summer of 2005. Software AG is currently offering Interstage Business Process Manager, Fujitsu's business process management solution, in conjunction with its suite of products.

SOA is perceived as the technical foundation underneath service-oriented IT. Services provide the incremental building blocks around which business flexibility revolves, but services need a supporting architecture for their deployment, delivery, and management. SOA delivers business value on three dimensions: connections, change, and control.

Software AG provides a real-time single view of strategic business information by integrating applications and systems, in addition to modernizing mainframe and open system IT environments. Its offerings are based on the product families Adabas, Natural, EntireX and Tamino. More information about Software AG at www.softwareag.com.

Fujitsu Services helping the



WIRRAL Council and Fujitsu Services have announced a seven-year contract that will help transform the way Wirral provides services. The initiative has been named the Wirral's 1Business Programme. It will be carried out in partnership with Fujitsu Services Limited.

The partnership is designed to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council does by using new advances in communication technology to improve the way staff work, and deliver improved services faster and more effectively.

The first phase of the project is due to start early this year and involves the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM)* system which will allow staff to 'pool' data, and respond to the full range of customer needs quicker and more effectively.

The second and third phases of the project will respectively involve the replacement of back office systems, which deal with specialised technical areas and processes used by Council staff such as payroll and financial management, and knowledge management, dealing with how the council handles documents and internal data.

Returning to the fold?

In the early days of the 2900 User Group, the oldest ancestor of AXiS, WH Smith was a major player. Their membership of the group ceased many years ago as their strategic IT services moved in other directions. In 2000 they signed an outsourcing agreement with Fujitsu Services. At the beginning of March 2005 WHSmith decided to award a seven year IT outsourcing contract renewal, worth £37 million, to Fujitsu Services, to provide the 544 store strong retailer with a suite of outsourced IT services.

Following the appointment of new Chief Executive, Kate Swann, in November 2003, the company underwent a major organisational review to improve efficiency and customer focus within the organisation. Part of the review was to challenge the current mode of IT service delivery.

The contract includes the provision of end user services, including the rollout of new desktops and managing exchange and intranet services. A revised service delivery management structure based upon IT Infrastructure Library principles, driving best practice service in a fast moving retail environment, has also been incorporated.

Fujitsu provides WHSmith with data centre hosting services through the management of its estate of mainframe, UNIX and Wintel servers, in addition to a service desk function, providing a single point of contact for all head office users.

ATLAS Consortium is preferred bidder for MOD's Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) project

At the beginning of March the ATLAS Consortium was selected as Preferred Bidder for the UK Ministry of Defence's (MoD) Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) project. The ATLAS Consortium comprises EDS as lead contractor, tier 1 partner Fujitsu Services and key sub-contractors General Dynamics, EADS Defence and Security Systems and LogicaCMG.

The announcement of preferred bidder is for Increment 1 of the DII (F) project, which has a total contract value in the region of £2.3 billion. Further increments of work are expected to follow in due course, following MoD evaluation of Increment 1.

The DII (F) project will replace numerous individual information systems throughout the MoD with a single, more efficient information infrastructure. It will also enable many of the defence efficiency measures under the Defence Change Programme to be achieved. These include Network Enabled Capability - the ability to improve the capability of the armed forces through a single network of information - announced in the Defence White Paper.



DII (F) will achieve this by extending into the operational arena, interfacing with battlespace systems and improving shared information between headquarters, battlefield support and the front line. DII (F) will allow greater interoperability between the MoD and its allies, allowing significantly more effective operational support than currently available.

From the Archives

Looking back through the Newsletter of the Large Systems User Group in March 1985 there appears a report on the preparations for that year's Spring Conference which was planned for three days at Exeter University. The theme was "Computing - Past, Present and Future". Topics included: developing an IT strategy, data as a corporate resource, and experience with QUICKBUILD. This particular conference was noteworthy because the event was shared with the Central and Southern User group and the Data Management User Group. It laid the foundations for the merger of DMUG with LSUG to form, later in the year, the Association of Mainframe Systems Users (AMSU).

The Newsletter also records that a certain UK Provident was appointed Chairman of objective to: "examine the VME 2900 only available through the VME/B convergence gone ahead, would have moved pertinent, the lack of advice on judicious VME/B standpoint, the 'creeping facilities demanding VME 2900 standards.'" joined ICL and in due course made a to the AMSU Executive Committee.



Dick Norris then a user representing the Convergence Working Party. Its position, exploring those facilities still Environment Option which, had to the fundamental software set. Also use of the "B" option and, from the convergence' brought about by new As history shows Dick eventually significant contribution as ICL liaison



Tailpiece

A man walks into a Silicon Valley pet store hoping to buy a monkey. The storeowner points towards three identical looking monkeys in politically correct, animal-friendly natural mini-habitats.

"The one to the left costs \$500," says the storeowner.

"Why so much?" asks the customer.

"Because it can program in C," answers the storeowner.

The customer inquires about the next monkey and is told, "That one costs \$1500, because it knows Visual C++ and Object-Relational technology."

The startled man then asks about the third monkey.

"That one costs \$3000," answers the storeowner.

"\$3000!" exclaims the man. "What can that one do?"

To which the owner replies, "To be honest, I've never seen it do a single thing, but it calls itself a Consultant."

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30th Anniversary
Spring Conference
Manchester
19 & 20th April 2005

Book online: www.axis.org.uk

The 30th Anniversary event is being held in
Manchester United's Conference facility at Old Trafford

Special events include:

Keynote speech by Brian Warboys – The Father of VME
Tour round MAN05 (the home of VME) before it relocates
Manchester United Tour
Trip down memory lane – See all the old kit
VME Workshops
Technical Update
VME Roadmap Update
Competition Prizes
Plus lots more

The VME Event of 2005