

Why we do this.....



We arrived at the Archives at the British Motor Museum last week to find a mysterious brown parcel addressed to Dave and me.

Having decided it was not ticking, we cautiously opened it and found a collection of ISTEEL/AT&T artefacts from Elizabeth Chignell.

Some of you will remember Elizabeth's late husband, Keith, sadly he passed away in 2014, Keith worked out of Highfield House and had an international role as Director, Backbone Acquisition Network Planning & Engineering. A role which he was very proud of, and the team that worked for him around the world.

Elizabeth goes on to say, "Sadly, my husband passed away in December 2014, and so in recent times I have

started to make some decisions about many of his possessions.

Enclosed with this letter are a number of items that were part of his AT&T/ISTEL career history. I would like to donate them to the Remembering ISTEEL Collection in the hope that they will be of interest to you and in memory of my husband Keith"

Dave contacted Elizabeth to thank her for her donation and received a reply which reminds us how important this project is.

In Elizabeth's words...

"Well, how delighted I was to receive your letter yesterday. Not only that I had made the right decision in sending the items to Gaydon but that you actually knew both Keith and Phil. What an absolutely wonderful coincidence. It's been over 11 years since Keith died and I still miss him every single day. I have found it very difficult to part with things that are his, but also it seemed disrespectful for things that were very important to him to remain packed away in the attic.

It was only as I discovered that the offices in Redditch had gone that I started to research the Communication Department of AT&T in London. I wasn't completely convinced that this anonymous destination was the right place but then I came across an article about your work remembering Isteel and how Gaydon museum was now the home. I looked at the lovely website too.

I'm so happy that Keith is remembered by you and now others who will continue to be part of the Isteel Project"

After publishing this story on our facebook group page a number of Keith's former ISTEEL colleagues posted on the site. These were some of the comments...

I first met Keith as a Failsafe customer and found him and Duncan Lee very helpful. I then joined BL Systems and worked with Keith through BLS, ISTEEL, AT&T ISTEEL AT&T Unisource and again at AT&T. From the early days of AT&T Istel Keith worked in an international role helping create our relationships with our overseas suppliers and in many cases competitors. Not an easy role but a very crucial one, both in terms of services and commercial profitability. A great bloke who was sadly taken away from Elizabeth, his friends and colleagues. God bless you Elizabeth and RIP Keith.

When I started in 1977 Phil Chignell was in the training department and he took the induction course and taught us the delights of JCL. IBMs Job Control Language. From the 3 week induction I then started as an operator on shifts at Longbridge and Keith Chignell was one of the guys on shifts. A really nice bloke. He used to live near Five Ways and dropped me off on nights and evenings on the way home until I bought my motorbike.

Kirk Waller well worded Kirk. "Chiggy" was a top bloke as well as a great boss giving us both the opportunity to join the embryonic Network Services Group monitoring the Infotrac network.

How touching and so glad Elisabeth is happy with her decision, must have been hard. I think everyone knew Phil and Keith in those days

I remember Keith during my time at CDC. One of the few people taller than me. I remember he had a part interest in owning a plane which he flew. Nice guy

This certainly stirred a few memories. I remember Keith very well from when I worked at CDC. Also Phil taught me IBM PL1 programming at the Studley training facility.

I worked with Keith during the mid 1990s as part of the RACA team. We were at Moons Park. He was a really great bloke.

So the final words from Elizabeth are

"That's lovely Dave, thank you. I'm not a user of Facebook so it's really nice to be able to see these comments.

I hope the work is progressing well. Maybe one day I'll get to visit at Gaydon and see the ISTEEL Remembered display.

Thank you again

Best wishes to all

Elizabeth"

That's why we do this.