

Marea Arries (1986-) and Tricia Carr (1989-)

Between us we have a total of 51 years of service in CREES, which seems quite fitting for celebrating CREES's 50th Anniversary. Over this time we have interacted with so many people – students, staff and visitors to CREES – and this has made it a fascinating experience. These experiences have not only shaped CREES, but our lives too. The friends we have made, and memories we have amassed, will always remain with us. CREES has been an amazing department to work in. The people within this unique structure show great camaraderie and are basically a 'family' first and foremost.



Over the years we have watched the department progress and develop; shape-shifting with the times to accommodate the niche market that CREES aspires to. We have seen many students take up senior/prestigious posts in industry, world banks, foreign affair establishments, charities, etc. Quite a few CREES students have finished their studies then reappeared again in a different capacity as members of staff. After nurturing them and getting them out of tight spots with their studies as students, or being a shoulder to cry on, they end up being our leaders who we are responsible to! This is always strange, but also gives us a glowing pride to know we have been part of their journey.

We seem to have spent a fair amount of time moving and packing over the years we have been here, not only related to moving offices, but for some of those staff who have left us to take up posts elsewhere. This can be rather sad, but has also had its amusing moments too.

We have witnessed an Earthquake whilst in Ashley Building, when the earth literally did move – a bit worrying with the Baykov library collection directly above the General Office! Never to be forgotten is Derek Averre bursting into song – not always appropriately but always very tunefully. Thankfully we have also seen a lot of general technology advancement. In the early years administrators (formerly called secretaries) were responsible for one x four port connection telephone that had to be fed through to staff extensions when calls came in, each secretary being responsible for four extensions/staff each. Reprographics was a euphemism for a primitive photocopier, which was excruciatingly slow and continuously jammed, a Banda machine, which caused you to get covered in purple ink, or a Gestetner machine, for which you had to type up 'skins' and place them delicately on the drum of the machine without creasing them, whilst endeavouring not to get covered in black ink this time.

As technology improved we packed both the Banda and Gestetner machines off to Romania – well we had to retain the East European link. There was also a word processor to die for!! Well, it nearly killed us. This was a Rank Xerox affair that took up half of one side of the General Office. It was so loud when in operation that it had to be encased in a sound proof housing and then it still juddered and was far from quiet. When typing documents in different fonts, you had to change the Daisy Wheel to change the font – after you had printed off the document you wanted in the first font, you had then to re-feed the paper into the printer and reset it to print in the words required in another font to fill in the gaps you were missing from the document. You can imagine the fun we had when typing up the Russian/Polish exams! Much cussing occurred, and to add to our stresses, we had to book hours on the word processor, so everyone wanting to use it got a turn.

All in all, we have very fond memories, not least of the Annual Conferences in Windsor, the colourful Christmas socials with entertainment laid on by the undergraduates, the sharing of the successes of our fellow CREESniks, the interesting conversations to be had on a daily basis and even of our attempts to learn Russian.