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Life at the DVLC

LIFE for Don Price, Keycheck Supervisor, DVLC and his three engineers is different from that of other Customer Services Engineers in that they are permanently based at DVLC headquarters, the home of the largest data entry system in Europe. Don, who has been there for four years, and his colleagues, Chris Stone, Eddie Trayner and Jeff Doy, operate a shift rota to cover the DVLC working hours of 8.00 a.m. to 10.15 p.m.

The site has eight operating systems filling two floors, each system comprising two tape decks, a moving head disk drive, a serial printer, console typewriter, R2000A computer and 50 terminals. All eight systems run continuously from early morning until 5.00 p.m. when a further time shift of approximately 100 operators run two or more systems until 10.00 p.m.

Although with 400 terminals installed much of the working day is spent on terminal repairs, many hours are also spent investigating the cause of what may appear as minor faults so that possible major failures can be averted.

To this end, a spare working system with only three terminals is available into which core and disk saves from any other system may be loaded and investigations carried out with the help of the Keycheck software department with whom the engineers enjoy a good working relationship. Technical expertise is also available from the Regional Branch Manager, John Shepherd, who originally installed the eight systems and was the first engineer to be involved with the "new" R2000A driven Keycheck.

The ninth system is also a useful source of spares which may be substituted for a part in any of the operating systems, the worst case being a CPU which can take one to two hours to exchange. Faulty parts are then repaired on site ready for re-use.

Being the largest Keycheck installation, much of the training of new engineers is done on this site and, to date, Don has trained five although he feels that, as a site engineer, the process of

learning never really stops with each day producing a new problem to be investigated.

On site, the engineers have a spacious office area and are treated like members of the staff with every opportunity to enjoy the sports and social facilities. Chris is a member of their gardening club and Jeff and Eddie members of the film club.

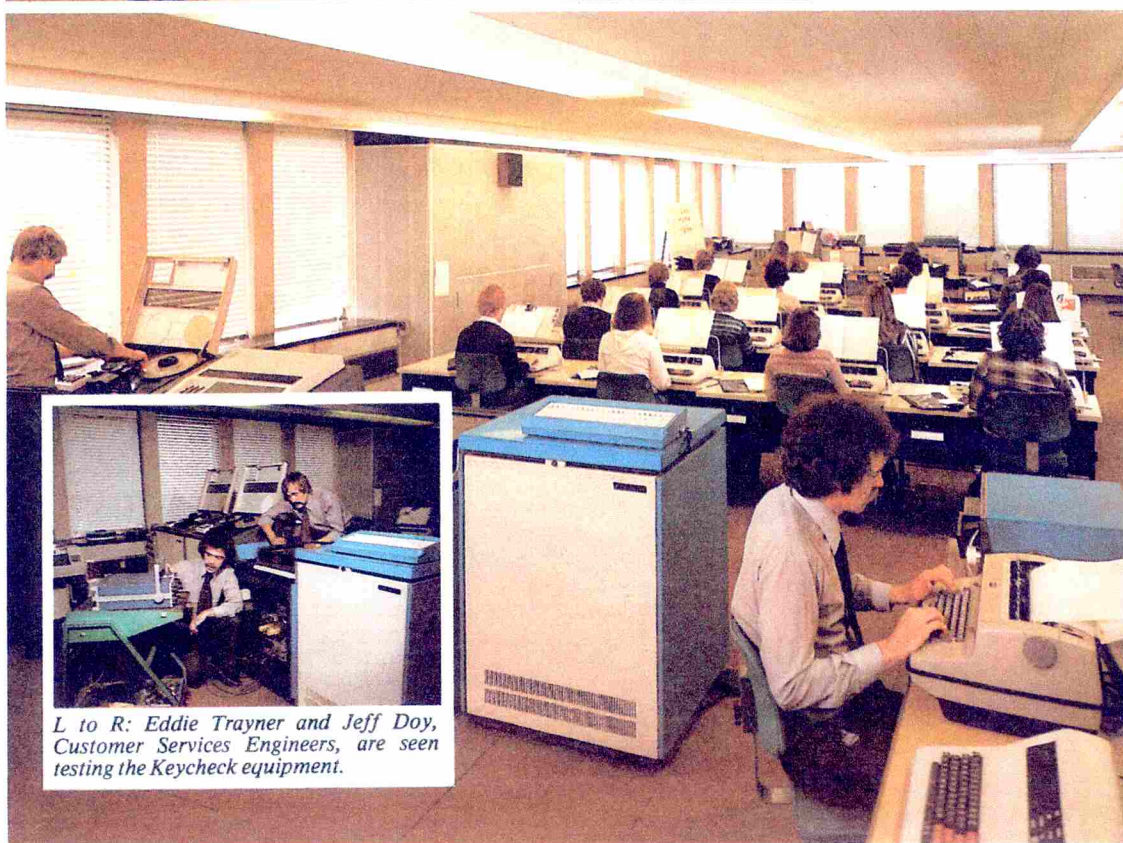
With a close-knit group such as this, with each relying on the others, one would expect to find a similarity of interests, but we find Chris interested in old G.W.R.

steam engines, Jeff in animal welfare and Eddie, the proud owner of a motor bike, which he enjoys riding around the country. It does, however, provide for a wide variety of conversation topics.

Overall, Don finds the job to be both challenging and rewarding. The result of his, and his engineers, efforts being reflected in the fact that the DVLC are well satisfied with Keycheck and its performance and return serviceability of 99.7% to 100% up-time on each system every month.



Don Price — Keycheck Supervisor, DVLC, Swansea.



L to R: Eddie Trayner and Jeff Doy, Customer Services Engineers, are seen testing the Keycheck equipment.