

An Interview with  
GARRY PEARCE

OH 447

Conducted by Thomas J. Misa

on

22 November 2013

Control Data Corporation History Project

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Center for the History of Information Technology  
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## Garry Pearce Interview

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### Abstract

In November 2013, CBI director Tom Misa conducted a series of oral history interviews with 13 former employees of Control Data Australia (1963-89) including the details of each person's career, before and after working for Control Data. Topics that are common to many of the interviews include Trevor Robinson's key role in organizing Control Data Australia; the early computer sales in Australia to the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Department of Defence, Postmaster General, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), Bureau of Meteorology, and several prominent Australian universities. Control Data Australia did business data processing for such large concerns as Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), Telstra, and others. A distinctive emphasis was its work in developing computer systems for race-track betting for the state of Victoria's Totalisator Agency Board (TAB) as well as for other Australian states and New Zealand. Other topics include relations with Control Data's headquarters in Minneapolis, business data processing, data centers, database management, networking and Cybernet, and projects done in several Far East countries.

Interviews were conducted with Richard Bament, John Baxter, Ron G. Bird, Tony Blackmore, Lyle Bowden, Marcel Dayan, Ian Downie, Julie James, George Karoly, John O'Neil, Garry Pearce, Rob Robertson, and Bruce Wilson.

Misa: My name is Tom Misa; it's 22 November 2013. I'm in Melbourne, Australia and this morning talking with Garry Pearce. Garry was with Control Data Australia from 1972 to 1985. Gary, just by way of background, can we pick up your story from the University of Melbourne, General Motors, and Arthur Andersen before you came to Control Data Australia?

Pearce: Okay, thanks, Tom. I graduated from University of Melbourne in January 1957; and I had studied there economics and finance, in a commerce degree. I then joined General Motors, in the economics department, and spent five years there before I got headhunted to Arthur Andersen and Co.

Misa: So the General Motors years would be 1957 to 1962.

Pearce: Yes. And I spent the next how many years? 1972, right about July, I think, I joined Control Data Australia from Arthur Andersen and Co.

Misa: Before we turn to CDA, describe some of your responsibilities at either General Motors or Arthur Andersen. You brought a different portfolio of skills and experiences to CDA.

Pearce: Probably that's true. My primary responsibility at General Motors in the economics area was to forecast the vehicle market, so that the manufacturing operations and the imports could be tailored to, and planned well enough in advance so that we got

our fair share of the market, and weren't either caught short or shockingly over. At Arthur Andersen I was in the consulting division, with a real battery of responsibilities. I suppose it went more to the accounting side and controlling finances, and planning in a lot of major companies, banks, airlines, insurance. I spent 18 months of that time overseas, working out of the London office, and in living in — would you believe it — the South of Ireland in Cork as a consultant to what was then the second largest company, behind Guinness, in the Republic of Ireland, a firm called Sunbeam Wolsey, in the textiles game. I resumed matters in Australia when I came back from there, and eventually was headhunted by Control Data Australia to take the senior financial position when Jim Mathis, who was the incumbent at the time, was returning to Minneapolis at the end of his tour of duty, if you like.

Misa: Senior financial position; do you remember the title?

Pearce: Look, I think it was General Manager Finance, or something or other like that. But it was, in the sense that you had an engineering manager, you had analyst manager, you had a finance manager, you had personnel manager; I think mine was general manager finance.

Misa: But the senior position?

Pearce: It was the senior position, yes. So I was there and I joined the board when Paul Sibalik replaced the outgoing Herb Hughes as the managing director. And I had the

unfortunate honor, when Paul was overseas and the major project we were working on at the time was with the TAB, and they decided to pull out from underneath us or get rid of us, I was the one who was left having to deal with the press and all the interviewers, just by pure accident.

Misa: So you had some public relations responsibilities, as well as financial oversight and accounting responsibilities?

Pearce: I couldn't be sure of the timing of that, Tom, but at one stage the public relations and advertising area was in my bailiwick.

Misa: Can you describe the notable projects or responsibilities during that early time, especially at CDA?

Pearce: Well I concentrated largely on the financial arena. I had more or less a supervisory role in the advertising and PR areas as well. And later on, during the course of my tenure in finance, I also inherited at various times, ownership of the manufacturing division down at Moorabbin, and the Data Centre when it was established out at Knox.

Misa: The Knox Data Centre.

Pearce: Yes, which was probably Data Services Division.

Misa: I know that you don't know the inside story about the manufacturing, but if you have any comments or observations about that facility, I'd be interested. That's a weak point in interviews I've been able to do so far.

Pearce: I probably can't help you much in terms of how it came to be, or why it came to be, but it was certainly there and the manager of it was originally Les Randell, and he was succeeded by Alan Brown. Now, it was during Alan's leadership of the manufacturing division, group, whatever you like to call it, when it was put under the bailiwick of the finance manager. That was very interesting to see. Then later on, when Nate Dickenson, whom I'd met before, was running La Jolla I went over there to work out the transfer of some manufacturing capability left to us, and what was required in making sure that we handled it properly.

Misa: La Jolla, in California?

Pearce: Right, just out of San Diego.

Misa: Do you remember looking at the finances of the manufacturing facility and seeing anything notable with that? In terms of profitability, revenues, what were they?

Pearce: It was a good deal, as far as we were concerned. It was financially viable, and well managed. And it was a good mix and a good fit for doing it out here, rather than

bringing them in and putting them all together; having the full bottle come in from overseas.

Misa: What kind of manufacturing was done here?

Pearce: They were called Business Products Division. We had a sales manager for Business Products, and we had a manufacturing manager, who was manufacturing some of the stuff that Business Products flogged.

Misa: When you first came to Control Data, you had worked for two well established companies, General Motors and Arthur Andersen. Do you remember thinking anything notable about Control Data Australia? The culture, the way people were working, how the environment was set up?

Pearce: Well, Arthur Andersen had a U.S. background; they were one of the major accounting firms in the world with a very well-known consulting division. And they were just like any other consulting outfit that I had previously observed. General Motors was the normal kind of company structure, where you had this “V” kind of a thing with a chief honcho on top, and then second rung below; and it got bigger and bigger as you went down. So in terms of the structure, there wasn’t a great deal of difference.

Misa: I'm thinking of not only the structure, but also the culture; the way people were trained or the way people were promoted; the type of internal culture. Was that notable for CDA, in your experience, compared with the other two?

Pearce: No, I wouldn't have seen a great deal of difference. If you, for example, had a vacancy caused by the retirement or the resignation of somebody at either of those two companies, firstly, with General Motors, it went through a personnel department style of thing; and you said hey, you better go and find a replacement for this. They would advertise, they would do the first cut interviews, and then come down to those within. The incumbent would look at them and say what've we got to do? Does he fit, or she? And that was the same with both cases; more so with General Motors because of its structure and its relationship with the overseas company. The division of Arthur Andersen that I worked for, which was the management services division or administrative services, you were looking for specific talents that suited the direction of the business and the opportunities that you perceived.

Misa: Right. So each of those three are American firms operating in Australia, that is, General Motors, Arthur Andersen, and Control Data. And I'm asking about anything that was notable or distinctive about CDA, the Control Data experience, and comparing that to either of the other two companies.

Pearce: I think probably that CDA directed more, in terms of letting you know the direction they wanted you to take, and then left it to the sales department, if you like, to

go out and find and develop the opportunities probably to a greater extent than the others did.

Misa: So where would the central direction for CDA come from?

Pearce: Well, CDA at the time was organized with an international division and we were part of that international group. So we had a person in; mostly, it was VP International, and from memory, Marv Swenson was the first one that I can recall. And then Bill Criego. But whatever it was, when I, for example, used to go over to have discussions on finance I would go to the particular division within international that had responsibility for us.

Misa: So you wouldn't be talking to CDC finance, but the CDC international people.

Pearce: Yes. But I knew the CDC finance people, I got to know them in a year; particularly the legal people, and guys like John Doyle.

Misa: What would be your observations on the relationship between CDA and CDC? You mentioned already that you had gone to La Jolla and had quite extensive contacts.

Pearce: But that was later on.

Misa: Could you give me a picture of what you saw here, looking to Minneapolis, and what people in Minneapolis may have seen when they were looking from there, here to Australia? I'm interested in the relationship between CDA and CDC.

Pearce: I think it was a very good relationship, generally. There were occasions, of course, when we didn't quite agree with the direction they were thinking we ought to go down. Our attitude was we're here on the ground and we know how to make it happen; you're a little bit estranged from that. But it wasn't too bad because we had regular visits from the key people in Minneapolis that we were responsible to the headquarters for our operations. In fact, there's one I can remember, Bill Criego, did you ever meet Bill or not?

Misa: No, I don't think so.

Pearce: Well, Bill was there; I'd come over to sort out something that we had a problem with. And I came into his office, and he said he was too busy to talk to me. I closed the door, leaned against it, and said I've been flying for 23 hours in a bloody plane to sort this out, and you're not going to talk to me about it? Well, try and get past me. He found time. [Laughs.] Sometimes you have to get a bit tough.

Misa: You said that there were sometimes disagreements about the direction. Were there times that you thought were a very strong and positive direction; and then other times where you thought that the disagreement may have been more sharp?

Pearce: Look, I'll be struggling to remember any of them in sufficient detail, okay?

Misa: Yes.

Pearce: That's just the impression I had . . .

Misa: Just your impression, yes.

Pearce: . . . that generally the relationship was very good when I would go over there, from my standpoint. And I'd have some of them come out here from Minneapolis, and we'd have our little differences of opinion, and everything. [Laughs.]

Misa: So it sounds like the personal visits were really important.

Pearce: They were.

Misa: So then you had a chance to meet people and talk to them, and even in this one instance, to confront somebody face to face.

Pearce: It was the same when I had responsibility for some non-financial areas where I had to go out to Arden Hills [Minnesota], I had to go out to Roseville, and talk with people out there. I always found those beneficial, too.

Misa: When you'd make a trip to Minneapolis, would it typically be for a week or two weeks? Or would you spend a month?

Pearce: Most often around two weeks.

Misa: Two weeks.

Pearce: And that was pretty much an annual visit.

Misa: About an annual visit.

Pearce: Yes, most times I would go over once a year. If it was something big that we had to go through an approval process for; for example, when we were going to change our location from 598 St. Kilda Road, then I would go over and talk with the people who were responsible for facilities in Minneapolis — Larry Reid, I think, was the guy that I would deal with — and he would pilot me around the place, Minneapolis, getting the necessary approvals for us to go ahead and take on this new operation.

Misa: Would it be helpful to talk a bit about the activities of the CDA board? You said you joined that quite early.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: What responsibilities did the board have?

Pearce: Pretty much the same as any commercial operation out here, and indeed in the States, would have. The board is responsible to the shareholders for the conduct of the business operations through the entire company. In this case, they were responsible in the eyes of Minneapolis, for making sure that we were going about business the right way. The board would meet monthly, and there would be a report from the managing director to the rest of the board so they all knew what was going on, and the managing director's report would summarize, with the assistance of the regional managers for each of the disciplines, that were going to be discussed. From my experience with Arthur Andersen, that was typically the way that boards operated.

Misa: But the monthly meetings sound a little more frequent than boards may have been meeting for a corporation, as a whole. CDC seemed to have a big annual board meeting.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: The story was that Bill Norris actually used the board very actively. So it wasn't because it was a non-active board, but monthly meetings would be quite a bit much.

Pearce: To be honest, I'm not sure whether they were monthly; they could've been every two months, or even three months; but I remember they were regular enough for us, as

regional managers with certain responsibilities, to have to contribute to the authorship of the report sent by the managing director.

Misa: From the regular board for a company, it's quite clear who the shareholders are; ultimately, the institution or personal officers; but here, with the CDA board you were reporting essentially to CDC?

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: In other words, when you would have a board meeting, what happened with that report? Would it go to Bill Norris? Would it go somewhere; presumably, to the executive office?

Pearce: To be honest, I'm not sure. I think it went to the person in Minneapolis who was responsible directly for the conduct of the operations in Australia and New Zealand.

Misa: So, VP International or whoever that was at that time.

Pearce: International, yes.

Misa: Do you remember the size of the board or how the board meetings were conducted?

Pearce: We only had four or five people, I think, on the board. The managing director, the finance director, I don't think the sales person was on the board, but there was a chairman who was not engaged in the day to day operations of the company, and the other director was the legal man.

Misa: So the chairman, was that a so-called outside director, or would that also be somebody from CDA?

Pearce: Well, in our case, as I remember, Trevor Robinson had a background with Control Data both here and in the U.K.

Misa: Right. So Trevor was the chairman of the CDA board.

Pearce: Trevor was the chairman of the CDA board, yes.

Misa: He was away for a couple of years.

Pearce: He came back and climbed back on board.

Misa: I've had many interesting conversations with people about Trevor Robinson. Do you recall anything notable about him? He was quite an interesting character.

Pearce: I remember one of his conversations. When he described somebody, whose business competence he found somewhat unimpressive, as having an IQ in the hat sizes.

Misa: In the hat sizes. Somewhat small. [Laughs.]

Pearce: Yes. [Laughs.] No, he was a good person, Trevor. He was good at talking to you and agreeing what should happen, but then leaving you to get on with it and not wanting to talk to you every day about how things were going or criticize. He was an excellent manager.

Misa: Yes, people have a high degree of respect for him. He had a notable set of contacts, and a notable set of people skills, too. Can I ask you to make comments or observations on the changes that you saw within CDA from 1972 to 1985, how the company changed, again from your vantage point?

Pearce: It's hard to discern any difference in the way one went about things. I suspect that probably the personnel arena became a little bit more influential simply by the character of the people that we had as personnel managers, and it was more prominent in more areas, in many ways, than what it was when I came. The normal personnel arena is you have the annual review of salaries, and you accept the guidelines, and this style of thing; have ideas about the hiring and how many people you need on the staff.

Misa: Were there notable people who were heading up personnel that stamped it with a particular direction, do you recall?

Pearce: When I joined, the personnel manager was Brian Sheehan. And he was, from memory, succeeded by Brian Donnolly. And Brian Donnolly actually went on and lived in Minneapolis, and worked in Minneapolis. I don't know whether he was mentioned in discussions or not.

Misa: He's been touched on but not extensively. So he ended up going to Minneapolis?

Pearce: Yes. He was the regional personnel manager; I was the regional finance manager. The region included New Zealand as well as Australia.

Misa: Okay. So across this period, 1972-85, the personnel function became more strongly active.

Pearce: Well it needed to because you were growing, you were hiring more people, you wanted to make sure they were good fits. And yes, it needed to be a bit bigger than it was.

Misa: One of the things boards oftentimes do is compensation or personnel policies; not individual people but the policies. Do you recall the CDA board being active in those areas?

Pearce: In personnel policies?

Misa: Yes.

Pearce: I don't think the board was tremendously involved in that kind of thing. We're just looking at is the number of people and what we're paying for the services associated with the people, appropriate to the level, and the nature, and the size of our business.

Misa: Anything about compensation policies?

Pearce: Compensation in what sense? Just the regular wages, salaries, the levels compared with somebody else?

Misa: The wages of individuals but then also the structure of retirement, the structure of contracts; not saying who's getting paid what, but what the levels were. For instance, incentives or other kinds of compensation issues for sales people. Did the board get involved in that?

Pearce: No, not really. I don't think there was a great degree of involvement of the board in that at all. They were just looking at what was the overall cost of personnel and was that appropriate? And they would look at, from time to time, who was being paid what, and that that's what everybody was earning, yes.

Misa: You mentioned that CDA had regional responsibilities beyond Australia.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: You said specifically New Zealand. CDA also had active interests in the Far East, as well.

Pearce: We had Thailand as well. We didn't have Japan, but we did have the responsibility and a very close relationship, as far as Thailand was concerned. I liked to go up there and they were quite interesting, too.

Misa: Could you make any comments or observations about those interactions with international partners?

Pearce: Certainly, as far as I was concerned, my relationship with both New Zealand and Thailand was very good. I think John O'Neil might've had something to do with Thailand at one stage or another, too. But no, the relationship and the way that we worked together was very, very good.

Misa: Do you think there were any things that contributed to that success? How did that positive relationship result?

Pearce: Don't know how it resulted; or how it built up. Whatever the New Zealand company did.

Misa: Let me explain the question a little bit. You commented that you thought the relationship between CDA and CDC in Minneapolis was a strong one, and one of the reasons that made it strong was personal interaction and travel back and forth.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: Now the culture between Australia and United States was not identical, but more similar than, for instance, the culture between Australia and Korea.

Pearce: That would certainly be true of Thailand, but not of New Zealand. New Zealand and Australia are very similar, in terms of attitudes.

Misa: Right, but for the Far Eastern countries, there could be interesting cultural differences that needed to have been managed.

Pearce: They were quite interesting in the sense that when you had a look at, for example, Control Data Thailand, which is the only one of the Asian countries that we actually, I think, were reasonably close to their operations and needed to weigh in and help them when we could. I remember going out there and the office boy, when I saw what he was paid to feed himself and his family, I couldn't imagine how he did it.

Misa: Oh, yes?

Pearce: Yes, it was just an entirely different culture and environment.

Misa: Do you remember notable aspects about how the Thailand operations was run?

Pearce: Well, it was, from memory, the head honcho there was Dr. Techapun.

John O'Neil probably knew him better than any of us. And my relationship was with the financial element more than anything else. To guide as I could on the financial level. The financial lady was a real lady called Daranee Clark, and she was a real character, too. In fact, she used to come to the financial get togethers or conferences that we used to have from time to time in Minneapolis. And I can remember one occasion when she was getting ready to come back to Thailand, and she asked me take her out to one of the shopping centers in Minneapolis. She walked around buying things for all her relatives, and friends, and everything else; and come the day of departure — she never left my side, she was a little bit shy — and I had to take her out to the airport to catch the plane on her way back, and she's got this whopping big suitcase and she's tiny as they come. And eventually, I keep bumping the cases forward, and we get to the desk, the booking clerk looks up and she says, well, what are you doing? He said I'm just calculating the excess baggage, ma'am, after I'd dumped it on the scale. She looked at him, dragged herself up to full height, and said, oh no, no. I have only little, and look at that man. [Laughter.] So the clerk turned around and he looked at the clock above him, and he looked at

Daranee and said alright lady, alright.

Misa: She's got this huge suitcase that may have well been overweight, but for sure, she was not.

Pearce: She and the suitcase. But she was a character like that, and she was very competent, and in terms of the information we asked for and got, you could always be assured it was damn reliable.

Misa: Do you remember other interesting or notable characters that you had contact with over the years?

Pearce: Lee Greenslit was one of the funniest you could meet.

Misa: So about him?

Pearce: Lee was the finance interface from when we first dealt. When I went to Minneapolis, he had responsibility for whatever, I'm not sure, it might've been Asia Pacific. He was a real wag. He was just so down-to-earth it was unbelievable. He used to have a business card that I should have brought in and showed it to you because I had one done for me in exactly the same way. He had Leon M. Greenslit, curmudgeon. [Laughs.] Bar room brawls quenched, or something or other; a great list of things; he had fires put out; a list that I liked.

Misa: Not your standard business card, which tends to be very dry.

Pearce: Yes. In fact, I ended up using that later on, when I was doing some other things after I left Control Data. It was very interesting, I think at a conference or luncheon, and I used this. I then had to put my name; the employer's name or phone numbers, anything on the back. They just remembered my name because of the funny card.

Misa: That's right. Everybody else has General Motors, or General Electric, or whatever it happens to be.

Pearce: That's right; this or whatever; a phone number.

Misa: I should try that some time.

Pearce: He was a great character. It was a great pleasure to work with him because I think he understood that he was behind the work. Some of the other people you get, that you tended to get involved with from time to time, were a little bit full of their own importance. But not Lee.

Misa: You traveled back and forth to Minneapolis quite a lot. Was there ever a time when you thought that you might actually relocate to Minneapolis?

Pearce: I was asked if I would contemplate living in Minneapolis, and spending some time there in a role we agreed in the financial area.

Misa: What did you think about that?

Pearce: I thought about it, but I thought about the family and decided that; my wife was teaching and enjoying it, and the kids were doing well at school, just starting to go to school and liking it. And we were well settled in there, so, no.

Misa: May I ask where you were living? Was it here in Melbourne?

Pearce: Yes, here in Melbourne.

Misa: So although moving was a possibility, you decided to stay here and handle these responsibilities.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: Any other interesting characters like Lee?

Pearce: Jack Eickhoff was a great friend of Marv Swenson. It was just their mannerisms that made you smile a little, and the way they spoke. I was just trying to think of the guy who was in charge of funding and finance. He had an accent that I found amusing and he

always used to talk about LIBOR - a banking arrangement. It was James [Jim] Tibor Halom - he was VP of Finance, or something like that. He was up in the lofty heights of the thirteenth floor, whatever it was.

Misa: You said that you wanted to not go into detail about 1985, when you were leaving CDA, but there was one notable exception. That was your efforts to sell Cybernet to Kobe Steel.

Pearce: In Japan.

Misa: Can you describe that a bit?

Pearce: The decision had been made that Control Data Japan should divest itself of the Cybernet Data Services operation in Japan and the suitor that had been identified was Kobe Steel, one of the biggest companies in Japan. CD Japan's managing director at the time, was a person with whom I still correspond, oddly enough, Yasuo Yokoyama. And he was a character because early in the piece, when we had some discussions about the prospect of Kobe Steel taking Cybernet, and I said have you spoken to the staff about it? And he said no. I said well, do you think you ought to, at least now that we're getting somewhere with it. Do you think it would be better to tell the staff what we intend to do and what we're aiming to do? He said oh, good idea; good idea. So the following morning he called the staff together. I didn't go into the meeting. And when he came out

of it I said how did it go? And he said oh, they all crapped. Now, crapped in Australia means something else. [Laughter]

Misa: Right. He probably meant clapped.

Pearce: He said clapped because there is no “R” in the Japanese language. [Laughs.]

Misa: So that would be one of those instances where there is a linguistic slipup.

Pearce: Yes. He was very good. The other thing that I can remember about Japan was that our data services center manager, Dick Bament had come up when I was there. And at the weekend he decided to go out of Tokyo. I didn't see him until the Monday morning following and when we were in there with the finance guy from CD Japan he said he didn't know where he went. Tell me about it, said the finance guy. He said, well, I can help you. I wrote down what it said on the sign on the station, on the map, and he said oh. So he gets it out and shows it to him, and he said oh, very difficult, very difficult. What do you mean difficult, don't you understand? He says oh, understand, he said. Well what's it say? He says, it say “you are here.”

Misa: You are here. [Laughs.]

Pearce: Yes. [Laughs.] He had very conscientiously copied down this thing on the map with the sign . . .

Misa: It said “You are here,” that’s the point. You see that in signs here. But he didn’t know the Japanese words for that.

Pearce: That’s the other thing I remember about that.

Misa: You’ve had quite some experiences.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: What about your reflections on how it’s the case that the CDA community has been notably strong, and some of the possible reasons for that.

Pearce: I think one of the big factors in Control Data being the success they were in Australia, was the linking and bondage, if you like, between the employees. And one of the things that epitomizes that, perhaps, were a thing we used to do in Melbourne. We had a football ground only about five minute drive, at most, probably even three away. And every Wednesday, we would put up in the personnel department first thing in the morning, a chart saying “Barbecue: sausages, steak so much, fruit juice so much, red wine, white wine, beer; giving the prices; you wrote your name down, you put your money in the bag, and the accounting department sent two of their people out just before lunch to the local shopping arena, purchased provisions, brought them down to the

barbecues, and the staff turned up at one o'clock. And the finance director was the chef for the barbecue.

Misa: That was you.

Pearce: Yes. And that happened every Wednesday.

Misa: So the barbecue was on Wednesday, too.

Pearce: Yes, the barbecue was on Wednesday, and we did that every week. That enabled the different areas of the company to come together and meet, and discuss, and actually get to know one another a lot better. And that was very, very popular; and the good part about it was the discipline about it was, as I was given to understand by an American visitor when he came down and was with us there, he said, if we held this in Minneapolis they wouldn't be back at their desk just after two o'clock.

Misa: So it would be 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. So an hour.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: Not a long time.

Pearce: An hour fifteen was all right. You might be five minutes late coming back. There was no abuse of it at all. And there were no people who imbibed to make their afternoon ineffective.

Misa: So it was a good time for getting . . .

Pearce: It was a good time for bonding, cross communication, understanding what other divisions were doing perhaps better than would've if that were not the case.

Misa: Would you like to make any observations on the remarkable, long-lived nature of some of those relationships, the fact that last Friday, there were two dozen people or so that were still meeting and still having a social time.

Pearce: I think that's a great testament to the bonding that this type of thing built between the different divisions of the company, the employees in different areas, they understood a lot better. And as you've seen, it's a long time since.

Misa: Yes, it's worth puzzling over.

Pearce: Yes. Oddly enough, I had experience the same way, when I went over to Telecom. We still have lunches, three or four a year, with Telecom people.

Misa: So may I ask if you could say a few words about your career after leaving Control Data Australia in 1985?

Pearce: Just trying to think which one came first. I got headhunted to a public company called Australia Pacific Resources. And that was the parent company of a group of companies; as Finance Director. And then, I saved them from some of the problems they were facing. There was one thing in between. The one between, I was there for 2-1/2 years, and it was OCE Australia, which was a subsidiary of a Dutch multinational, headquartered in Melbourne. They were looking for a top financial person, if you like. [Laughs.] So when we agreed that I'd sorted them out sufficiently well I decided I'd retire. But before I could retire I ended up at APR.

Misa: That's Australia Pacific Resources?

Pearce: Yes. And it had Australia Pacific Minerals, it had Multistack — an advanced modular air conditioning product — and three or four other subsidiary companies. And then I went to Telecom. It was Telecom at the time, it's now Telstra. But Telecom, at the time, had another communications business. Telecom and OTC were the two communications businesses that the company had. Obviously, Telecommunications unit was the OTC. They decided to merge them together for efficiency reason; they relocated Telecom to Sydney, which was the headquarters of OTC. I decided I wouldn't go up there but I stayed on as a consultant for twelve months. I was going to retire at the end of one year, but I decided I would retire on the 30th of June that year, when the government

announced that effective July 1 they were going to make massive changes on superannuation and I'd have spent the next two years working for the government.

Misa: Oh, okay.

Pearce: So it accelerated my retirement.

Misa: Your job responsibilities then would've been entirely connected to this, we would say, the pension scheme, right? The superannuation.

Pearce: Yes. I'd have been employed and therefore subject to the changed rules, whereas if I got out on the 30th of June I didn't have to pay the tax, and it was significant.

Misa: You were set, okay.

Pearce: Yes. And since then, I've dabbled [in several things] because of the reputation I had built in that short time with Telecom, in terms of the big projects they were doing in Malaysia and in India. I had written some planning programs that were very complicated in terms of they gave you the option of saying how much we'd got to spend in this currency; you could forecast the currency exchange, the volumes, and see the effect of it all on your return on investment. And that became the benchmark. And other companies would call up and say we've got this particular program that's being used, they say you

wrote it. And I said yes. And our Merchant Bank, when we told them you'd written it, they said alright, we don't need to look at it any more. [Laughs.] So that was good.

Misa: So it was something that got quite broad use, then.

Pearce: Yes.

Misa: Garry, are there any other observations that we could usefully include on the tape?

Pearce: No, I've said as much as my memory will permit.

Misa: Okay. Thank you so much for your time.

Pearce: It's been a pleasure.