Tuesday, March 5, 1968 was the Day of the Century.

NCR Post, February/March 1968.

It was the day on which a remarkable new family of NCR computers was simultaneously released in major business centres throughout the world. The day on which NCR demonstrated, beyond all shadow of doubt, its determination to become one of the world's great computer companies.

In a special eve-of-release message to vocational salesmen and others, Selling Organisation Chairman and Managing Director S. J. Conway said: 'Everyone of us in NCR has a personal stake in ensuring the success of the Century'.

The British release was held at the May Fair Theatre, London. In a series of presentations on March 5 and 6, Mr. Conway and other executives told the story of the Century to 150 members of the Press and over 600 top-level businessmen and, by March 15, over 50 stories had appeared in the daily and weekly press.

Among the VIPs who attended these presentations were Harry R. Wise, Vice-President, International Marketing, and E, K, Feerer, VicePresident, Manufacturing-European Operations and Managing Director of the Dundee Manufacturing Company.

Reports from outside sources have described this operation as one of the most successful computer releases ever organised in Britain. And the British Company has already received orders for a number of Century systems.

Because of the importance of this development, we are reproducing, in full, Mr. Conway's speech at the May Fair Theatre.

'I want to tell you about our plans to capture a much larger share of the computer market.
'The spearhead of this new operation is the release of a new family of high performance computers called the NCR Century series.' In terms of research, engineering, software, new manufacturing plant, and personnel training, the NCR Century series represents an investment of over £60 million. This is by far the largest product development effort in the history of NCR - and a dramatic demonstration of our commitment to computers - now and in the future.
'I started by talking about our claim to a larger share of the computer market. I should now like to be more specific.
'We expect to install at least 5,000 NCR Century systems throughout the world - a fair proportion of them in the United Kingdom. This initial sales target represents a total value of over £400 million.
'To achieve it, we are setting up a worldwide manufacturing programme. I am proud to announce that our British factories at Dundee will play an important part. Their job will be to make processors, memories, and control units - not only for the home market but also for export. This is a very significant development, because although the Dundee factories are already making small computers and electronic accounting

machines, this will be the first time that NCR has produced such advanced types of data processing equipment in Britain.

'Our factory space at Dundee has already been increased, by 50 per cent, to one and a quarter million square feet in readiness for the new programme, and we anticipate that its labour force will rise by at least 15 per cent during the next two years.

'From what I have said I hope I have conveyed to you that the NCR Century series is a very significant development.

'The remarkable thing is not that we have produced a computer family with advanced data processing capabilities. It is that we have brought those capabilities into a price range which will be attractive to thousands of businesses at present using keyboard or punched card accounting systems.

'There are only two ways of improving the price/performance ratio of a product. One is careful design, and the other is by reducing manufacturing costs. We have used both methods.

'The NCR Century series is the result of a complete development project in which hardware designers, software designers, and production men, worked together from the start.

'What may impress you is the way in which we have broken away from the old idea that some of the most important parts of a computer - memories, for example - have to be made slowly and expensively by hand.

'The development of new automatic manufacturing processes accounts for much of our huge investment. And, of course, it could only have been undertaken on the basis of a worldwide manufacturing and marketing programme.

'But it would be wrong to assume that our faith in the new family is based on technological advances alone. Throughout its development we have been very conscious that many businesses have rejected computers for the time being because they believe, with some justification, that it still takes too long and costs too much to get worthwhile results.

'Let's not mince words. We have all heard about and experienced the hardware troubles .. . the software delays . . . the muddles in system design ... that spoil so many promising installations.

'Our aim, therefore, has been to strike that very delicate balance between sophistication and simplicity . . . to create extra computing power, but to make sure that it can be implemented economically, efficiently, and on time.

'Recent surveys have indicated that implementation accounts for as much as 70 per cent of the total cost of a computer installation. This is the area on which our integrated design team have concentrated.

'After all, a computer user is not really buying hardware . . . he is buying results. Before he makes a decision, he looks for three things.

'First, he wants the data processing problems of his business to be carefully diagnosed by experienced, knowledgeable specialists.

'Second, he expects the manufacturer to provide solutions to these problems in terms of effective hardware and software.

'Third, he seeks an assurance that his installation will be continuously supported by prompt and reliable service, and by equally reliable systems advice.

'With the release of the NCR Century series, we are well equipped to meet these requirements.

'We have the right hardware. We will have the right software. And we have the experience and resources to see that our installations are fully supported.

'I could give you a great many facts and figures. But it is probably enough to say that we have been making and installing business systems for over 80 years... that we are the second largest business machines company in the world, with about 80,000 employees in 120 different countries... that in Britain we haave nearly 11,000 employees, a nation-wide network of service centres and the largest NCR manufacturing plant outside the United Slates.

'It is because because of this resources... this vast experience... that I can speak with confidence about the new family and its effect on the market.

'Computers are a tough business. Some of the companies that entered it with high high hopes a few years ago have been forced to choose between getting out, getting together, or going under. Marriages and even polygamous arrangements have become very fashionable. There is uncertainty as well as intense competition.

The NCR Century family will enable us to increase our share of this big and rapidly expanding market of the 20th century because it offers many businesses and other organisations a great deal more than they have been offered heretofore.'