

M.O.M.'s the Word

Inevitably, when a senior member of staff is recruited externally and then displays a considerable degree of arrogance, not to mention enveloping his work in a degree of secrecy, there is bound to be an air of resentment. And so it was with a gentleman called Phil Morris who joined our ranks at Fulwood House back in the mid 1970s. Looking back on my own career and mistakes, perhaps one of the reasons I took a dislike to Phil at the time was that we were so much alike. Phil was, without doubt, a very clever chap and an experienced diver and, on reflection, deserved better than the following verse.

M.O.M is a play on M.O.P., which stood for Multiple Online Programming, I.C.L.'s terminology for terminals connected online to mainframe computers and Phil Morris' surname, giving Multiple Online Morris.

This is a tale about a software team
Paddling along their own little stream,
Not pulling together, as one might think,
More like the Titanic about to sink -
Panicking here and panicking there
Not one of them is aware
What the other two are at.
(No-one is, come to that.)
Now, come and meet them, each in turn
So that you, too, may learn
All about their dedication,
Loud mouths and innovation.
Führer Morris is their lender bold,
Came from the gas board, so I'm told,
To read the meter initially,
Until he heard we had George 3.
Now he cries around the section
"I'm the creator of all perfection.
Secret passwords and security high
Protect my users from prying eye
And no-one else can interfere
With restricted files when I'm not here,
For should you discover what I'm about
You might decide to throw me out.
Yes, I have done my job so well
Soon I shall be indispensable."
Now to his second in command,
Stuart Watson - a one-man band.
A real nice bloke - a kindly soul,
He does his best for one and all.
Without a doubt, we all agree
He's the best one of the three.
So to Geoff, who was before
Operator on the System 4.

Little knowledge of George had he
When we took delivery
Of our new machine. Still,
Now he's working with our Phil
And his time just seems to fly
Repeating the work of C.S.I.
Now you've met the wonder boys
Playing with their software toys.
Like three spoilt kids they want their way.
"The Macro Generator cannot stay.
I don't like it and that is that,
So with J.W.P. I'll have a chat.
He'll listen to my devious plan."
That poor misguided little man.
No, Fulwood House will not grieve
When smiling Phil takes his leave
With cloak and dagger and air-filled tanks
To join MI 5's depleted ranks.

Ken Dearden
c1975