HOURLY RATE	HOURS PAYABLE	TIME WAGES	BONUS OR STANDING ALLOWANCES	HIGHER DUTY PAY	SICK PAY	∗ NET HOLIDAY ADVANCE	CASH ALLOWANCES	ARREARS & ADJUSTMENTS	GROSS PAY THIS WEEK	NAME

THE COMPUTER TAKES OVER

TAX CODE	TAX WK NO	TAX PAID TO DATE	GROSS PAY TO DATE	NATIONAL INSURANCE	NATIONAL PENSION	INCOME TAX £ S.	OTHER DEDUCTIONS	NET PAY	CASH EXPENSES	AMOUNT PAYABLE

∗ This amount represents gross pay for the holiday period less national insurance and "other" deductions.   R = Refund

LONDON TRANSPORT'S new computer—all five tons of it—moved into its home recently . . . through a hole in the wall. It is expected to start taking over part of London Transport's mammoth payroll task early in the New Year.

The computer, an ICT/EMIDEC product, is housed in a new office block in Baker Street. The easiest way to get the main unit into the building was to leave a large hole in the wall at first floor level.

A Sunday morning, the quietest traffic time of the week, was chosen as moving day. A crane swung the two-and-a-quarter ton main unit through the gap. That part of the job was all over in twenty minutes. Then builders went to work to seal up the hole.

In his office in the new building, Mr. George Gallop, London Transport's computer manager, talked about the work the machine will be doing.

"Its first job will be the payroll," he said. "When the electronic machines that now perform this work began to show signs of wear, I was told to consider the pros and cons of transferring the work to a computer."

Mr. Gallop was also asked to find out whether a computer could be of any wider use to London Transport. "My answer was—Yes!" Not only could the machine handle the payroll for the 74,000 members of the staff, but it could also perform a continual stock taking of the 120,000 items in the stores. It would work out, from the weekly turnover of 30,000 items, what the money is being spent on.

When the computer takes over, one immediate benefit to the staff will be more information about wages on the payslip. There will be details of wages, bonuses and deductions, and payments concerning any higher duty pay, sick pay, arrears and expenses.

"We have been using our own computer at the manufacturers at Hayes for about six weeks already," said Mr. Gallop. "We have been testing programmes and carrying out some work on the London Travel Survey organised by the London County Council."

It was thought at one time that the computer would be able to work out timetables for a transport system. But in spite of its fantastic calculating speed, the factors both human and mechanical seem at present to be too numerous. To work them all out in all their possible permutations would take the computer many many years.

"The human brain can work with the same factors and produce a timetable in a matter of hours," said George Gallop.

The programmers for the computer have all been chosen from London Transport staff and trained in their new jobs by the computer manufacturer. There are six people working on the payroll programme and six on the stores.

No one will be put out of work by the computer. "The work it does take over will be covered by the normal rate at which people leave," explained Mr. Gallop. "The trade unions have been kept fully informed of what we are doing."

AIR-CONDITIONED ROOM

The computer must be treated like a delicate child. The working room is air-conditioned to prevent dust. Humidity and temperature must not vary more than five per cent and three degrees Fahrenheit respectively. There is a viewing window so that visitors do not disturb the operation.

"No one may smoke in the computer room," said Mr. Gallop. "If anyone does light up, an alarm system in the ceiling will respond immediately. We cannot afford to have the computer out of action for any time at all. We even have a resident engineer from the manufacturers."

The machine now waits for the finishing touches . . . waits to put into use its enormous memory and power for arithmetic to make many now complicated and laborious jobs simpler and lighter.

Freda Keeling, one of London Transport's new team of computer operators, pictured at the magnetic tape decks.