

Contributions still roll in, but ladies, where are you?

As you will see, there was more than enough material for this year's edition, since we've had to run to fourteen pages, which is very good news, but where are the contributions from you ladies? Only three in the 2006 edition, my first, and none since. And you'll note that there has been a predominantly engineering bias in all four editions that I've edited. Fair enough perhaps, we were an engineering company, but others who were not engineers must have amusing tales, hairy experiences or fond memories to share. So come on folks, let's provide a bit of counterbalance to the engineers!

At places throughout this issue are references to web addresses where further information about the topic can be found. Apologies to those of you who don't have access to the internet, but if you can't get to a library, or have family and friends to help out, then get in touch with me. Subject to negotiation, and so long as I'm not inundated with requests for reams of material, I'm happy to post out hard copies.

May I draw your attention to a special service taking place on the 26th April 2009 in Chelmsford Cathedral. The plaque which commemorates the seventeen employees who died when a bomb fell on the New Street works on the 9th May 1941 has been re-erected in the cathedral and will be unveiled at this service. Full details can be found on page 10.

It is with great regret that we report the deaths of two notable figures in our organisation which have occurred since the last issue; Sir Robert Telford, whose obituary appears below, and Charles Rand, who died very shortly after the last issue was published and days before the 2008 reunion. Charles' obituary appears on page 14

Sir Robert Telford CBE, DL

Life President, Marconi Company and Patron,
Marconi Veterans' Association

It is with great sadness we report the death at his home, in March 2008, of Sir Robert Telford, a well respected person and Life President of The Marconi Company. A memorial service for Sir Robert was held in Chelmsford Cathedral on 30th May when many business and company colleagues and friends attended. Lady Telford invited all guests to the Shire Hall for refreshments following the service. The cathedral was full and a number of tributes were paid by former directors of the company and other staff during the service.

Although Sir Robert was officially retired, he came to his office on the fourth floor of Marconi House on a regular basis until a year or so before his death. He was saddened at the collapse of The Marconi Company and found it hard to accept that such a great organisation would end its life so suddenly having been established for over 100 years on a worldwide basis.

He was pleased that steps were being taken to preserve the heritage of Marconi by a heritage centre being set up in the front building of Marconi's in New Street Chelmsford at a future date, but felt sadness that the majority of buildings on the complex where he had worked for well over 50 years were to be demolished under new ownership.

We extend our sympathy to Lady Telford and her family and give thanks that we were employees of The Marconi Company under the direction of a well respected President.

Peter Turrall



RK 'Robbie' Robertson is the new patron of Marconi Veterans Association

Robbie Robertson, formerly Managing Director of Marconi Communications Systems Ltd in Chelmsford, has agreed to be the patron of Marconi Veterans' Association, taking over from the late Sir Robert Telford.

Robbie lives in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, but has always taken a keen interest in all aspects of Marconi Veterans. After he left Marconi Communications and before he retired, he undertook special duties for GEC Marconi in Coventry hence moving to the area.

Robbie, married to Helen, has a son and daughter both of whom are married with children of their own. He takes over officially as our patron at the Marconi Veterans Reunion on Saturday 18th April 2009.

Mailbag

As last year, a number of letters are from correspondents seeking information whilst researching their family history, or for the preparation of articles or books. If no contact detail appears with the letter then please direct your own contact details, or any correspondence for the enquirer, to Barry Powell (see page 4), or to the editor, Ken Earney, 01245 381235 email newsletter@marconi-veterans.org

Bushy Hill history

From George Duncan, February 2008

I am trying to fill in gaps in the history of Bushy Hill (Radar Hill etc) and am hoping that veterans may be able to help. We have collected some pictures and information but more would be much appreciated.

We have also started to collect any info from other sites as the company has lost so much.

Long lost wedding photos

From Claude Meldrum, January 2009

I was hoping that you may be able to help. On February 6th 1971 I had my wedding day in Montreal and most of the officers and engineers of the Manchester City attended. The R/O whose name I have forgotten had offered to take all the photographs as his hobby was photography. However, after all these years I never did receive them and he never returned to Canada as far as I know. At the time my personal good friend Roger Llewellyn was the 2nd mate and tried to contact him sometime later, but was unable to do so. Roger is now with OOCL as Master. He is mostly running between Hong Kong and the west coast of the United States. At this point I thought it better to contact you as Bill Harrison (Electronics Officer Manchester Liners 1968-1982) has suggested. I know for sure that the R/O was employed by Marconi, and if it helps, the 4th engineer was George Prudhoe.

I may be grasping at straws here, but I thought it worth a try. I think as one becomes older one tends to think of the past and it has always made my wife and I quite sad that we can't even look back and see our wedding photos. Anything that you can do would be much appreciated.

Army Signals - Marconi SWB transmitters

The following is an extract from a message from Bill Barbone in website feedback to Chris Gardiner on the subject of British Army use of Marconi SWB transmitters.

You might be interested in the pages for the web that I wrote for the Museum of Communications in Vienna. These are both the story of Ham radio in Italy at the end of the campaign and also my descriptions of the use of Marconi SWB transmitters by the Army Signals in the overseas High Speed Telegraph links to the various operational Theatres.

Go to <http://www.QSL.at> then select English version and scroll down to 'Help us solve the XA riddle.' Click on this and you will get my article plus photos of SWBs in action in Italy at Carditello.

Looking for information about Victor Cooper

From his grandson Josh Hart - josh.hart@me.com

I circulated this request to former Basildon colleagues in my address book, and George Nicholson has already responded directly to Josh, but there must be many others who knew VJ that I would not have known about. Ed.

I have just begun researching the history of my grandfather, VJ Cooper. He worked at Marconi for many years before his early death in 1967. I found your site via Google and was excited to find that my grandad was in the Baddow photo, as identified by Cyril Marshall. That's certainly him!

VJ Cooper rose fairly high in the Marconi ranks (Chief Television Engineer amongst other roles) and was a true engineer. I believe he was involved in both television and radar in his time and in 1952 he was chair of the Royal Television Society.

If there was any chance of getting a message to Cyril Marshall and any other members who may remember him I would be eternally grateful. I'm interested in all and any memories, stories, photos, anything at all.

Thanks in advance.

A film entitled 'Merchant Navy Radio Officer'

From Max Brewster - pbrew4u@aol.com

I am trying to track down a film entitled Merchant Navy Radio Officer made in 1967 by Kinocrat Films and sponsored by Marconi. Do you know the whereabouts of a copy of it?

Thulium - Marconi Marine's telegraphic address

Thulium, soft silvery-grey metallic element, 69 in the periodic table, name of Latin origin, from Thule, in its turn of ancient Greek origin, said in ancient times to be a land in the northernmost part of the world. Does anyone know why MM chose it? An unresolved question from the Marconi Mariner of June 1956! If you can help, please get in touch with the secretary, Barry Powell.

Veterans' reunion 2009

The 2009 reunion will take place on Saturday 18th April at the MASC, Beehive Lane, Chelmsford, commencing at 1.00pm. This year's President is Veteran Phil Robinson, Senior Vice-President, Selex Communications, Basildon, who will be introduced by Veteran George Hill. The Guest of Honour will be Roger Casale, Independent Political Adviser to Selex Communications and Finmeccanica UK. He will be introduced by MVA chairman Peter Turrall.



Do you remember John Scarlett and his boat 'Essex Melody'?

My name is John Rogers and I am a member of the Little Ship Club in Maldon. Quite by chance an email to the club in January 2008 alerted me to the fact that Essex Melody was in a caravan storage depot near Nottingham and available to anyone who was prepared to bring her back to Maldon where she was built in 1957. The current owners had allowed her to deteriorate but when my wife Diana and I took a preliminary trip to view her we were very much taken by both her design and her history and realised that she would make a very interesting restoration project.

The more we have gleaned about John Scarlett and his boat the more interested we have become. We have discovered that John was one of those scientists working at Baddow Research in the mid-fifties who did so much to give the company its world recognition at the cutting edge of electronics. Like many of these research scientists he was incredibly dedicated, enthusiastic and determined to the extent that he was regarded as a brilliant yet eccentric character. I have been informed that some of these talented people had very unusual hobbies which not only challenged their intellect but also required enormous dedication and patience. Some chose to restore organs but John chose to design and build a 22ft 6in yacht himself. John was so meticulous that he kept a complete photographic and hours of labour record of Melody being built at Dan Webb and Feesey's yard in Maldon, from the keel being laid in July 1957 to her launch in September 1959.

Information has been passed down through the three owners since John sold the boat that he may have had access to the earliest forms of computing equipment to help him at the design stage. If this is the case Essex Melody may have considerable 'heritage value' as being one of the first boats in history to have been designed with the benefit of some form of 'computer' equipment.

John Scarlett also started up the Old Gaffers Association and was their secretary for a number of years. Unfortunately he died in 1984 at the early age of 53 but we have been in touch with his wife Miriam who still lives in Scotland.

If you can add anything to this web of intrigue about the design and building of Essex Melody or have any further information of John Scarlett himself, particularly if you worked with him at Baddow around 1956 to 1959, we would be delighted to hear from you. Alternatively if you live near Maldon come and see the boat for yourself and talk to us!

John and Diana Rogers, 31 Acacia Drive, Maldon, Essex CM9 6AW.
Tel: 01621 85384 email: diana.rogers2@btinternet .com



Marconi New Street, Chelmsford

Peter Turrall

Planning permission has been given to Ashwells of Cambridge to develop the Marconi site which includes the demolition of Marconi House and Building 720 and construction of three multistorey blocks of flats, small shops and houses etc. This is conditional on the developers carrying out certain projects in the town including redevelopment of Chelmsford Railway Station and a road from New Street through the complex to the railway station. Also included is for the main building fronting New Street to house a heritage centre, something the MVA has been pushing for, working very closely with the developers' advisors and consultants. Originally this was considered but not included in the original submission. We are pleased this is now included but unfortunately due to the credit crunch, the development of this site and the opening of the Marconi Heritage Centre has been delayed. It is thought it will be at least five years before anything significant happens.

To ensure artefacts and ephemera already collected by MVA members are not lost, these have been handed over to Chelmsford Industrial Museum at Sandford Mill where they will be catalogued and stored. A provision has been made that, should the heritage centre be opened in the future, then any of these items will be made available for exhibition or examination.

Marconi Veterans feel that age is against those most keen on preserving our heritage, and unless younger Veterans come along and pursue the possibility of opening a heritage centre, then this opportunity will be lost for ever. We are therefore appealing to Veterans to come forward and offer support to continue the preservation of the heritage of this once world renowned and famous company.

Artefacts and ephemera held by Veterans may be handed over to the Chelmsford Industrial Museum for safe keeping and you are urged to ensure that after your death, adequate arrangements are made to ensure this happens. MVA committee members will assist you when required in this matter.



A last look on the 6th June 2008

A word, or six, from the secretary

A room with a view?

I had intended to start with a light-hearted look back over the first few months of my retirement but this has been marred by the death of my father in October. Instead, I will talk about a visit I made to Italy in May.

Having completed 35 years service, I was invited to Florence to receive my long service award. My wife and I, together with Dave and Gillian Bennett, flew out a day early to do some sightseeing. Florence is a magical city – even when it is raining.

The proceedings started with a gala dinner in Florence where all the ladies received a gift commemorating the occasion. The following day, there was a lunch at a military air base in Pisa where the long service awards were presented. An air show preceded lunch including displays by the Italian equivalents of the Red Arrows and the Red Devils. For this Pisa airport was closed for 2 hours. Finmeccanica hired a fleet of coaches to transport us and, for the journey to Pisa, even laid on a police motorcycle escort.

Listening to the translation of the proceedings, I heard mention of Marconi several times and constant reference to 'The Finmeccanica Family'. Pier Francesco Guarguaglini, the current Chairman and CEO of Finmeccanica also made a point of shaking the hand of everyone receiving awards.

New Street site closure photos on CD

Just before the New Street site closed, Eric Peachey and I were allowed to take a series of photographs of the site and we intend to compile these, together with some taken by others at the open day in June, onto a CD for sale from April onwards. We hope to have initial copies (at £5 each) available for the reunion and AGM with the remainder being posted out shortly afterwards – please use the enclosed form if you wish to order a copy.

Website

Changes are afoot – see the webmaster's item on page 5.

Sandford Mill Museum

International Marconi Day - Saturday 25th April 2009

Entrance free, 10am - 5pm

Giulio Marconi's birthday is commemorated at this popular annual event. It's the chance to visit the Marconi collections, including the ship's radio room and the new exhibition in the Marconi Writtle broadcasting hut, from where the first broadcasts were made in 1922. The Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society operate a number of stations at the site throughout the day, the contacts worked by them being of particular interest to the youngsters, who are much in evidence. Photos on right (*courtesy www.g0mwt.org.uk - Chelmsford Amateur Radio Society website*) show young onlookers at the CARS station in the Marconi hut, and also in the hut, a display of old radio receivers. The centrepiece is a 1922 Marconiphone two-valve receiver, more than likely made in Chelmsford. CARS support a number of events at the museum during the year.

Mailing list

As we approach the end of the year, I am looking to the printing of the labels for the mailing of the annual newsletter. It seems, therefore, timely for me to ask you all to help me in two areas

First, do you know of a Veteran who would like to receive the newsletter and possibly attend the reunion? It may be that they have moved or not replied to a confirmation request of a few years ago.

Friends of the Marconi Veterans Association

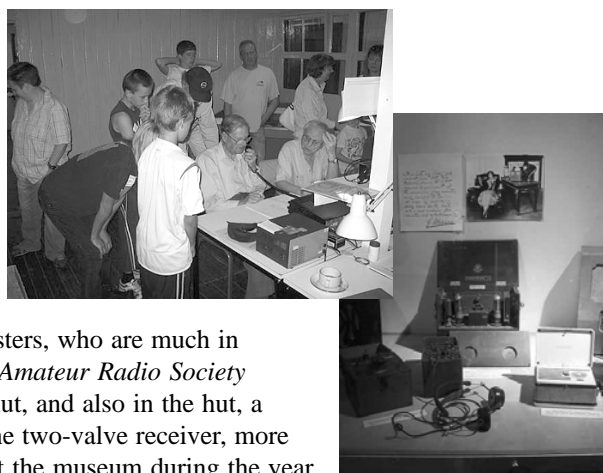
The second way you can help is if you know of someone who is not a Veteran but would like to receive the newsletter. Some of these (those who left with 21 to 24 years service) have now become Veterans by virtue of the recent reductions in service requirement and I would be delighted to hear from them and make sure they are on the mailing list.

With regard to the others, we are pleased to announce that we are compiling a list of those who, whilst not entitled to become Veterans, nevertheless wish to maintain contact with the Association. We are terming this 'Friends of the Marconi Veterans Association'. All 'Friends' would receive the newsletter and we would do all we can to keep them in touch with ex-colleagues but they would not be eligible to attend the reunion. The annual subscription will be £3. **In all cases, please urge them to contact me as soon as possible**

Secretary's contact details

Please note that I am now retired from SELEX Communications and can be contacted at the address below. Finally, I would like to wish you all a very prosperous 2009 and hope to see as many of you as possible at the reunion.

Barry Powell, Secretary, Marconi Veterans Association, 22 Juliers Close, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 7EP
01268 696342; secretary@marconi-veterans.org



The Guglielmo Marconi statue

Peter Turrall

Having sat in the foyer of the Essex Record Office for the best part of four years, the life-size statue of our founder Guglielmo Marconi has finally been erected on a pedestal in the west end of Chelmsford. At a ceremony held last May, the statue was officially unveiled by the Mayor of Chelmsford with support being given by Lady Telford, and with speeches by the mayor, the sculptor Stephen Hicklin, and MVA Chairman Peter Turrall.

To view the statue, from Duke Street one must walk down Fairfield Road alongside the entrance to the Chelmsford Civic Theatre and then behind the new bus station. Unfortunately there are no directions from Duke Street or the bus and railway stations to advise visitors to the town where the statue is situated. It is in an area known as Marconi Plaza, with views across Parkway and the railway viaduct - an area where it is unlikely to be seen by the majority of visitors to the town and therefore will not become a talking point. It should and could have been in the town centre, in the High Street if a little forethought had been given to it as a visitor attraction, honouring as it does the one man who put Chelmsford on the map and raised it from a sleepy market town with 30,000 inhabitants to one that is known worldwide through the very products produced by Marconi's in the New Street factory. At one time over 10,000 people worked there, giving Chelmsford an uplift through purchase of houses, supporting businesses and shops and other offset trading taking place. Chelmsford grew to what it is today, a town with over 150,000 inhabitants.



It is a great pity that the previous industrial wealth created by Hoffmann, Crompton, Christy and Marconi is not more recognised by Chelmsford. Where would we be without the inventiveness of Marconi who gave the world wireless, broadcasting, television, radar, computers and all the other associated communications which we enjoy today. And without Hoffmann, who invented ball and roller bearings, Crompton, who equipped the first city in UK and then worldwide with electric lamps and generators, and Christy, with its many manufacturing outlets for agricultural and electric equipment. There is also Clarkson, who invented one of the earliest steam buses in a factory in Anchor Street.

Chelmsford seems reluctant to highlight these achievements: most other towns on the continent and in the USA would give their eye teeth to have such a wonderful heritage. It feels as if it is still living in the past without any thought to raising its profile. The county town should be pushing hard to become a city, one with a modern outlook and pride in its heritage.

Marconi Veterans website

Chris Gardiner, Webmaster

When we set up the site in 2004 the Marconi Company wished to maintain ownership of the Marconi name and registered the domains Marconiveterans.com and Marconiveterans.org, then allowing the Association to use the domains exclusively for our web site. This website has been hosted completely separately from the Marconi system and all users of the site have been redirected to the host without realising it.

This host became unavailable on 1st February and we now have move to a new one. Unfortunately, Marconi Corporation no longer exists so the domain names are in limbo and there is no one who can redirect them to the new host. We are currently trying to resolve the problem through the administrators of the domain names but in the interim we have registered (direct to the MVA committee) the domain names Marconi-veterans.com and Marconi-veterans.org in order to keep the web site active. This new site will be active by the time you read this.

The new web site will be quite different from the present one and will have more interactivity with the possibility for veterans to post messages direct to the site.

Now that Barry Powell has moved away from Chelmsford, I have created new forwarding email addresses to facilitate website users' access the secretary, chairman, committee members, webmaster and the editor. They are as follows:-

newsletter@marconi-veterans.org (for the editor, Ken Earney) or .com in all cases
secretary@marconi-veterans.org
webmaster@marconi-veterans.org
chairman@marconi-veterans.org
committee@marconi-veterans.org (for all committee members, excluding the treasurer).

Test equipment didn't exist...!

Arthur Barton

I started at EMI Research Labs as an apprentice to AF Pearce, working five days and alternate Saturdays all day; there was a war on. Our group developed klystron valves, running stage 1 experiments on demountable rigs allowing electrode spacings to be optimized. The labs could not be missed, Marconi's antenna was higher than the 5-floor block where the 405 line TV system was designed in 1936 for Alexandra Palace. This was the original Alexandra Palace tower prototype for the Marconi/EMI system. Postwar TV reopened in 1946. About that time I remember a Television Society lecture by V Cooper, the transmitter king pin.

In those times valves were made by Marconi Osram, sold to staff at a good discount, with other goodies from 78 rpm records to Marconi radios.

After 7 years I changed to electronics, leaving the Physics Lab for the Television Design Group at Thorn, Enfield. A good move but with little relevant experience. I was in at the deep end, Mr RF depending on his sideline, making radios for friends; valuable know-how. Dickie Norman and four engineers comprised the lab. I enjoyed the work but 18 months later, getting married, no affordable housing, I plunged. We moved to Cambridge (available flats) with an offer by PYE Ltd in the TV lab, regarded highly as a television company. Salary £8 weekly. Sixteen years later surplus capacity forced companies out, takeovers delayed the agony, the receivers lasted too long. As Dickie had seen, a time bomb fitted to receivers would keep demand high, providing owners were protected...



Editorial licence - the familiar feature on the north tower of Ally Pally, not the EMI mast referred to in the article

Later, at Basildon (from 1967 onwards) I met several engineers I knew at PYE Ltd.

Ken Seaton worked in PYE Labs (studio equipment), prewar he was a BBC television camera man; Brian Warren worked in PYE Labs on studio equipment; Earnie Holland was in PYE TV Labs, joining Marconi Baddow in 1952; and John Bryson, PYE TV Labs, joined Marconi Baddow, later transferring to Marconi EOSD Basildon.

The original Marconi prototype for the Alexandra Palace TV antenna stood in the back yard of EMI Research Labs in my time there. I read later that the apprentice in the antenna team in 1936 was invited back, 1980s, to supervise its dismantling.

When Thorns took over EMI they closed Research Block. When I asked about it, its future seemed doubtful. Soon after they demolished it, just a rat kept me company when I visited it. Home of 405 line TV, would have been a great museum. Stereophonic birthplace too. I had checked with Thorn before it was demolished, they would build a new labs building. Serves them right that Thorn Enfield is now a Morrisons supermarket.

Aged 40 I applied to Marconi for a job, not answering for a specific post in Jobs Vacant. A smaller fish in the pond, as Mike Howe suggested. The job offer was microwave linked and I requested design on modules rather than systems. No problem with that, many were required for military surveillance systems at Marconi Basildon. The company lived up to its reputation, there was always a guru to help with expertise on problems, including Baddow Research and Chelmsford. All links to the past, my last project at EMI was a reflection oscillator for the GPO, part of their link equipment. At Basildon, my HF transmission link borrowed from that TV experience.

I started when there was only one transmitter, at Alexandra Palace, which was double sideband. All subsequent transmitters were single sideband, which brought problems with phase response - all receiver tuning was done subjectively on the display. Test equipment didn't exist!

Photo source - www.doramusic.com/alexpalace2.htm

Oh, I worked for Marconi. When were you there?

Garry Duguid

This is another of the backlog of items that Peter Turrall passed over to me when I took on the editorship. It's from a letter that Garry Duguid sent to Bryan Everitt in November 2004, at the time of his retirement from ITFC Ltd (ITV Facilities Centre) after 18 years, where he was Director of Engineering and Technology. Ed.

I particularly enjoyed the latest newsletter, as it reminded me of several experiences I had in the early days of my career in electronics. I joined English Electric (Guided Weapons Division) at Stevenage in 1959 - but soon found that the armaments of the Cold War held little fascination. So after a year I transferred to MWT (as it was then) and was based at New Street, Chelmsford for a further three years. I worked in most of the Test Departments, starting off in Marine. I was initially engaged in final tests of Alert, Autokey, Oceanspan, and Graphette Echosounder. The following year I was transferred next door to Radar Test, but can't remember any of the equipment names, then to Receiver Test to work on unit testing and ultimately final test of frequency synthesizers for military transmitter and receivers. This involved Admiralty Inspection

Continued on page 7

Marconi's telegraph station at Derrygimlagh



This picture is a composite of two shots taken by Dave Cannon, formerly in the Mat. Lab and then Maintenance at Baddow, where here was also in charge of the company fire brigade. He got in touch with me after seeing the piece about the Marconi Lancia in the last issue. Dave and his wife Ann, who has family in nearby Clifden, have made a number of visits to this corner of Connemara. Taken on one of those recent visits, this view shows the foundations of the main building of the former Marconi telegraph station, looking southeast. At the centre is Ann Cannon, seated on one of a pair of concrete mounting blocks, and behind her, to the left on the skyline is the obelisk marking the spot where Alcock and Brown landed at the end of their epic crossing of the Atlantic in a Vickers Vimy in 1919.

Continued from page 6

Department (AID) tests and clearance certification. There were about a dozen test engineers in Final Test. They were all called 'John' - apart from me, and a lady engineer, Janet.

It was during this time (1962-3, I think) that I was seconded to Rivenhall with several other test engineers to work on army D11/D13 mobile communications vehicles, some of which I think were destined for the Middle East. It was in the middle of winter, and my abiding memory is of how cold it was, even with Marconi-issue duffle coats and wellies (we had to give them back at the end of the six months' secondment, much to the disappointment of this impecunious apprentice). One Friday evening we had to rig a mobile aerial for the satisfaction of the AID Inspector. There was a terrific storm over the weekend, and we returned on Monday to find the installation in little bits on the ground outside the hanger where we had so proudly shown it off to the Inspector only days earlier. We never let on!

On my return to New Street I was put to work on a tropospheric propagation communications system for S Korea. With little knowledge of this sort of equipment and working at frequencies up in the gigahertz band, it was 'learn as you go'. In those days there was no test equipment available off-the-shelf to service our needs, so most of it was home-made by the Research Labs at Baddow (the heart of the sweep generator was a variable capacitor whizzing round, powered by a small electric motor - most ingenious!).

It was around that time I worked on setting up a demo for the Duke of Edinburgh who was visiting. The equipment was ECM (Error Correction and Multiplex) for FSK teletype comms. The system comprised about half a dozen 19" racks with a teletype at one end (for the Duke to type a greeting) and a similar teletype the other (to receive and type out the greeting) with a whole bunch of noise and distortion generators in between. The thing worked wonders (lots of flashing lights, etc) at decrypting the message in the presence of noise. But just in case it went wrong on the day, I had secretly wired a switch and direct connection between the two teletypes. Fortunately, I didn't need to throw the switch.

Shortly after this I went to TV Test for six months (Arthur Fisher), to help bring a backlog of transistorised SPGs through to completion. This spurred my determination to get into TV. I was fortunate in getting a transfer to TV Systems in 1964. There I worked on the design and development of the Post Office Network Switcher at PO Tower London as well as Birmingham, Manchester and Carlisle; the colourisation of ATV Studios in Elstree and Birmingham; relay (and later) semiconductor matrices. It was at this time I secured my professional qualifications (C Eng, MERE, etc) working under the guiding lights of engineers such as Henry Mirzwinski, Ray Moore, Jack Brittain, Roger Fenton, and many others.

It was through this grounding that I easily found employment over the subsequent years in a variety of TV facilities companies. I rose through the ranks as Engineering Supervisor at EVR and Ewart Studios, to Chief Engineer of Rank Video, Research Recordings, St Johns Wood Studios, Air Studios, and eventually Director of Engineering at ITFC Ltd.

I owe so much to Marconi and the thorough training I received in such a wide range of electronics. But perhaps more, the comradeship I experienced, and that I met so many people in the industry over the years who, upon introduction, said "Oh, I worked for Marconi. When were you there?"

Dimming the lights in Building 46!

Tony Curtis <http://www.iwishihad.com.au>

I am, I suppose, 0.25 of a Marconi Veteran. While working for British Relay Wireless I applied to Marconi for a job, circa 1965. My Mini broke down on the way from London to Chelmsford and I phoned Mr Cranston. Upon arrival he interviewed me in a dark room in Building 46, one with a long table. The job required a degree and I had only HNC, so I wasn't expecting the result. Mr Cranston advised that Marconi preferred proven abilities and my prior design work in vestigial sideband TV transmission showed ability.



The author

I started shortly afterwards, travelling daily from Southwark, London, to Chelmsford. I had been allocated to the High Power Transmitter Group in Building 46, as a Junior Engineer. I had a desk in an office and commenced work on a 100 kW LW Tx under the guidance of one Curtis Brown. The bloke in charge was Dave, and within the office were Gordon and Peter (none of whose surnames I can now recall), and another whose name totally eludes me.



Curtis Brown

My first tasks were the output coupler, tuning discriminators and the penultimate stage; Curt soon left me alone as it appeared my capability was acceptable. As the Tx. 'grew' I was delegated to design the control circuit. The output stage used an Eimac 4CX35000C pair with a magnificent Curt-designed Cu square section Pi coil made from large diameter pipe. I had never seen such an inductor as this before. It was to be the first device using feedback to linearise performance.

The saleable prototype was finished and fired up only to squeg when feedback was applied, dim the lights in 46 and emanate sparks everywhere, before 'dying', just before an ASWE evaluation! My weekend fixed things and the evaluation went off well with no feedback being applied.

Tom spent some time proving the feedback network had a phase-shift of 180 degrees at 160 kHz, ergo the instability. I suggested "tune out the Cin of the pen(*ultimate*) stage with an L". Curt laughed, yet he adopted my suggestion and Marconi got a patent out of it. We got one shilling and wrote it up in 'Point to Point!'

During that time I married and we moved to a Marconi flat in Noakes Avenue thanks to Wally Eden, the Marconi Housing Manager. Susan, my wife, got a job in the silver-service canteen at New Street and hobnobbed with people I had only heard of! It appeared some members had the penchant for 'guiding' her placement of the vittles by the laying of a hand on her rear?

Dave, the Group Leader was destined to take over the leadership but took a job in Surrey working for an RF heating firm. Either Bill Barbone or Raymond Rowe was mooted to get the job; that at least was what I heard from my level.

I was moved to Writtle, under Brian Skingley, to work on radio relay stuff it appeared, but when some bloke in a suit and tie wandered round and asked where the baseband combiner was, things changed.



Sue Curtis

I never worried. I had to design an FM discriminator for Goonhilly, Matt Snodgrass did the VCO, John Osborne the IF amp, Minnow Irani wandered about wasting people's time, John Rodgers was doing other stuff, Dudley left for Plessey and Mike Haygreen left for Beckman.

It then appeared that Raymond Rowe was to take over the 'Tropo' Group, (us) and we moved to the building opposite the cemetery. It was there I finished the baseband combiner and used the Baddow-generated film wire, much to the worry of Brian Skingley. But it worked! Thence on to the pre-detection combiner that, alas, I never finished as I left to join Cambridge Consultants.

From there we went to Africa for a short time, returned to UK and became a Marconi Principal Engineer at the Vineyards for a short time, then emigrated to Australia to design target range training equipment. Currently I teach ADF trainees the fundamentals of RF stuff in Wodonga, Australia.

I take great personal satisfaction in being lucky to have been associated with the engineers I worked with at the Marconi Company, Chelmsford.

If the book had come after the computer

If books had been invented after the computer, they would have been considered a big breakthrough. Books have several hundred simultaneous paper-thin, flexible displays. They boot instantly. They run on very low power at a very low cost. (*And you can read them in bed!*)

Prof. Joseph M. Jacobson, MIT Media Lab

Quoted in the New York Times, Apr 8, 1988, page B2

Fantastic memories

Brian Morton - brian@brianmorton.freemove.co.uk 07881 811719

Reminiscing during a lunch break recently bought to mind Saudi, SAGEU and tropospheric scatter whilst working at Marconi's in the '70s. Pursuing this train of thought on the web led me eventually to the Marconi Veterans' website. I'm not a Veteran, but encouraged by your editor to commit some reminiscences to email for a contribution to your newsletter, here are fond memories of a very enjoyable time.

I was a student apprentice with MCSL from 1971 until 1975, then stayed on until late 1977. The first four years were very formative, six months at University of Bradford alternating with six months at Marconi. Because I was 'autumn entry' and because Bradford squeezed in two courses into the academic year I first got to Chelmsford in February 1972.

Accommodation was at Springfield Green, I seem to remember a very large house full of crazy apprentices, generally with too much time on their hands. Because I arrived six weeks before the rest of my group I ended up in a hut, I think at Writtle, doing some odd jobs - one was cleaning a push-button display panel that had engraving for the text. The engraving had been filled with a black wax that melted if the light was lit - all over the operator's fingers! Interestingly, around me was the early 'Lincompex', the fore-runner of modern 30 channel speech systems. Another group were playing with motherboards and daughter boards, discrete AND and NAND gates for the Myriad computer. Then the whole logic gate came on one chip from a Marconi semiconductor subsidiary. Headly days!

Once the rest of the group arrived it was an incredibly well structured practical course, complementing the academic side of Bradford. Courses included test equipment appreciation, soldering, machine shop practice and drawing skills, long before AutoCAD came along. I remember being given a 2-inch cube of metal and being told to make it a one inch cube - ie to the nearest thousandth of an inch and with perfect 90 degree corners.

The second industrial training period a year later introduced me to the Marconi Broadcast Division at Waterhouse Lane. I was helping to build outside broadcast vans, develop TV studio technology and was even allowed to press the button to autoregister the camera with all those motorised 10-turn potentiometers. Another three months were spent in other areas of the Marconi/Chelmsford area world, whether it be telecoms or radar or multiplexing

Back to Bradford for my third academic year. You always got the annual visit from Personnel (this was before they were called Human Resources). The interview went like this:

"What do you want to do for your third year with Marconi?"

"Well, I quite like systems as opposed to component technology."

"Want to go to Saudi with the installation department?"

As a student I jumped at the chance. Spent a couple of weeks in Chelmsford waiting for a visa (and finding my baptism certificate) and spent 14 weeks (and my 21st birthday) on a documentation exercise for the SAGEU project. I managed to see pretty much all the installations, got involved in the tropo, muxing and radars as well as looking over the shoulder of the RSAF guys who were taking the systems over. Of course as the youngest I was always being tasked with climbing anything that needed a nav light changing, or mixing the concrete for an anchor for tensioning an HF cable.

Following graduation I then went back to Installation Division on the North Sea oil platforms, Beryl and Piper mainly. Once things were built and handed over to maintenance there followed 8 months in 1977 at a development workshop in an office block on the Baddow Road, getting bits sorted for Madley earth stations.

The thought of moving to a more business-orientated area of communications systems appealed (not that there was anything wrong with deserts, oil platforms and Hereford), so I jumped ship and moved to Cable and Wireless UK Services Ltd. From the excellent training I received from Marconi I have moved from comms to IT to Consultant Project Management.

My very best wishes to all Marconi 'alumni'



The Marconi Memorial Plaque

Peter Turrall

On 26th April 2009 at the 6.00pm evening service in Chelmsford Cathedral, the Marconi Veterans Association will be re-erecting a brass plaque which records the names of Marconi personnel killed on 9th May 1941 when a bomb from the jettisoned bombload of a lone German bomber returning to base hit the New Street factory. A total of 17 people lost their lives and many more were injured.

The service in the cathedral will be conducted by the Dean and the plaque unveiled by Lady Telford, widow of Sir Robert Telford, Life President of the Marconi Company. Many relatives of those mentioned on the plaque are expected to attend.

The plaque, designed and manufactured in the factory by colleagues of those killed, was originally placed in the foyer of Marconi House. It was rescued by the MVA following the closure of the factory in July 2008 and bears the names HW Bevers, G Cousins, CVR Cutts, CT Franklin, AA Griggs, HJ Harvey, HF Head, AV Joslin, CE Maggs, H Pearce, BG Reed, WH Scotchman, J Smythe, GF Vowles, SV White and HJ Woods.

Unfortunately the records of those killed are no longer available but the Association would like to invite relatives or friends of those who lost their lives to the re-dedication service. If you know of anybody associated with these people, please ask them to contact me, Peter Turrall on 01245 251494. All ex-Marconi employees are also invited to attend.

The large 1914-18 War memorial plaque formerly in Marconi House has been removed to the Chelmsford Industrial Museum at Sandford Mill where ultimately it will be erected.

The Winkle (Bard Hill) Hut

Roy Simons

Another item from the backlog archive. Ed.

This hut was originally at the TRE experimental site at Bard Hill (on Salthouse Heath in North Norfolk), where the trials of the prototype Type 80 (Green Garlic) radar were carried out from 1953. Bard Hill had been a wartime CHL station.

A study of a possible correlation system based on a proposed system by George Clark of RAE, had started at Baddow in about 1952 and resulted in a demonstration at Bard Hill, using a link to a remote site at Stenigot*, in collaboration with RAE in 1954. Jamming tests were carried out against this radar, indicating that a low power jammer could render the radar useless. The Air Staff became aware of this problem when the results were reported by RRE.

The development contract was placed in 1959 by RRE and production of Passive Detection equipment commenced in 1962 (before development was complete).

The work at Bard Hill ceased at the end of 1960, at which point the hut was moved to Baddow with the experimental equipment reinstalled.

Trials of PD continued using the Baddow CH tower, a high speed aerial at Bushy Hill and the Blue Yeoman radar at Great Malvern in 1964.

Passive Detection was installed in the UK by 1968 and offered as part of the NADGE programme but eventually discarded in final international compromise discussions, to provide a reasonable balance of contribution between participating nations.

The hut has been used for many purposes since the completion of Passive Detection, including extra space for display development, as a base for the Baddow Quality Section, the development of 'Smart cards' and a home for the GEC archives.

**RAF Stenigot in Lincolnshire. Background on this area of cold war defence activity can be found on web page www.subbrit.org.uk/rsg/s/stenigot and a linked page via the ROTOR link.*



Bard Hill is the high ground behind and to the right of the church at Salthouse. This view is from the coastal shingle bank.

Did you know Sydney Charles Parish?

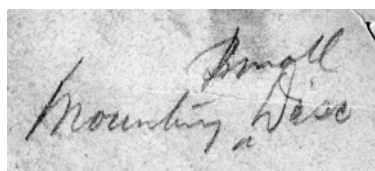
This photograph was published by the *Essex Chronicle* on the 11th December to accompany an appeal by John Parish for information about the year that it was taken. Mr Parish is Sydney Parish's grandson and he believes it to be one of his grandfather, although there is a trace of doubt about this. He says:

"My grandfather Sydney Charles Parish was given a gold watch manufactured by A & E Aston & Co Ltd, Lonsdale House, Dowsgate Hill EC4. It was presented to him by Marconi Works and Hospital Fund, and carries the date 8.12.40.

He and my grandmother lived in Swiss Avenue, Chelmsford, and they then moved to a bungalow called Straights at Great Waltham.

I think he also had one of the first motorcycles in Chelmsford!

Hope this helps as it would be interesting to trace some of his history!"



On the back of the photo can be read very clearly 'Chelmsford Works', and what appears to be the words 'Mounting Disc', shown here on the left.

John Parish knows that his grandfather worked for Marconi, and that he retired on the 6th December 1940. If any veteran can help in any way, would they please contact him by phone on 01376 324476 or email at j.parish.1471@btinternet.com

Report of the 2008 Veterans' reunion

The 72nd annual reunion at the MASC in Beehive Lane, Chelmsford, took place on Saturday 12th April. This was an occasion tinged with some sadness. In the report (on page 1 of the previous issue) of the award of the MBE to Veteran Charles Rand, our president for 2008, a brief note was made of a recent illness. In fact Charles was suffering from cancer and succumbed to the disease two days before the reunion. He had already resigned from the position of chairman, held for many years, and had indicated that he would not be well enough to attend the reunion. (See obituary on page 14.) Veteran Peter Turrall made a brief announcement at the start of the reunion during which he also noted the death some weeks previously, on the 10th March, of Sir Robert Telford, a former president of the Association. Charles Rand and Sir Robert Telford were included in the customary one minute silence in memory of the founder, Guglielmo Marconi before the start of proceedings. Peter Turrall felt certain he would have been speaking for Charles in saying that this sad news should not be allowed to mar the veterans' enjoyment of the reunion.

Last year's president, Veteran Roy Simons, a longtime work associate of Charles, then gave a brief resumé of his Marconi career, from joining as an apprentice in 1947 and rejoining the company following RAF service in 1954, then spending his entire career in a variety of manufacturing roles, ending with that of Chief Production Engineer of Marconi Radar Systems. Roy Simons felt that it was appropriate that this year the Association celebrates a century of Marconi manufacturing.

Chairman Peter Turrall then introduced the Guest of Honour Ray Clark, the voice of BBC Essex's Breakfast programme. Ray spoke of a desire, from the time that he left school in the 1970s, to work in radio. There was an early stint on various land-based pirate radio stations throughout the '70s, leading to joining Radio Caroline in the '80s for a short period, then a number of commercial radio stations, finally rejoining BBC Essex seven years ago. Along the way there was a spell of redundancy and some time spent driving coaches. He related an amusing story of the pitfalls waiting to entrap eager radio presenters taking their first plunge into the world of the radio phone-in. This was with North Norfolk Radio based in North Walsham. Having spent most of the first week appealing for listeners to phone in, a call came from Stan of Bluebird Taxis who was reporting an accident on the bypass that had caused an horrendous snarl-up in the vicinity. Ray duly reported this over the air. Within minutes a second call from Stan pointing out that the end of his call had been overlooked - there had been an horrendous snarl-up, but now everything was fine!

During the AGM Robbie Robertson gave an update on the situation regarding the GEC (1972) Plan Pension. He commended the quality and diligence of the three member nominated directors (members' representatives on the board of trustees) acting on members' behalf. The position appears to be that the plan is adequately funded and in safe hands.

This year's reunion is on Saturday 18th April (see page 2). Next year's reunion will be on Saturday 17th April 2010.

It's what normally happens - worry when it doesn't!

Keith Chittenden

I was delighted to read the comments last year on Lord Weinstock's management style by my old friend and colleague, Dr John Williams. He seems to have suffered slightly less from it than I did. I still remember being told that my monthly report should never discuss our aims and achievements but merely explain why any of the 47 statistical ratios did not show improvement. It's difficult for companies selling only a few very high value products such as Martello (or for Yarrow a warship) to show that the second derivative of the profit ratio (ie the monthly rate of increase in profit) always continues upwards!

But one of the most trenchant and abiding criticisms of Lord Weinstock's management style was his belief that, rather than encouraging synergy between his constituent companies, they should rather be expected to compete against each other even more than with those outside his control, and that any co-operation between his subsidiaries was not to be encouraged. (I still remember trying to explain to the President of Indonesia why three Marconi companies were simultaneously making presentations in Jakarta and bad-mouthing each other!)

The joint visit by Paul Robinson (Managing Director of Marconi Communications) and me, his opposite number as MD of Marconi Radar in 1986 to the Sultanate of Oman was thus somewhat remarkable. True, we two had previously been closely connected; I'd served as Paul's Deputy General Manager at MSDS Frimley before both of us were translated to posts in Chelmsford in the early 1980s following Arthur Walsh's acquisition of Marconi Group management responsibility.

But both companies had long been involved in the Sultanate, and, in typically encouraged GEC fashion, now had competing local representation. So the protocol of the joint visit was convoluted, while arrangements were not helped by Paul suffering a severe attack of shingles.

The itinerary initially concentrated on visits (usually by helicopter) to sites on which either company had previously installed equipment, but became more exciting as some of the proposed locations for Martello 713 Surveillance Radars were visited. It was, for instance, a little nerve-racking, (especially for those susceptible to altitude sickness), to visit the Jebel Akbar overlooking Muscat! But a trip to the Musandam, (the detached area of northern Oman), by helicopter far out into the Persian Gulf (to avoid Abu Dhabi airspace) was even more challenging. (Although we all regretted the recent death of the then newly designated Head of the Omani Air-Force who had lately died there in an air crash at Masalah).

We two MDs and our cohorts were first flown to Gebel Hamza (a proposed radar site) and there abandoned for an hour or so. It was difficult to forget that earlier personnel marooned there had perished from cold. We then flew on to Goat Island overloading the Strait of Hormuz. Here we were briefed by a British captain seconded to the Sultan of Oman's Navy. An American destroyer had positioned itself in the Strait and reaction was immediate. The Omani Navy (under British control) dispatched a gunboat, while Iranian, Omani, and US aircraft (ex Masirah Island) appeared on patrol. This confrontation was dismissed by the local British commander as 'What normally happens - worry when it doesn't.'

Then we were all flown to a picnic lunch on an uninhabited island once used as a repeater station on the telegraph line established in the mid 1980s to permit British communication with India. It was unfortunate that our visit coincided with one arranged (with very special permission to afford them privacy) for officers of the Sultan's Army.

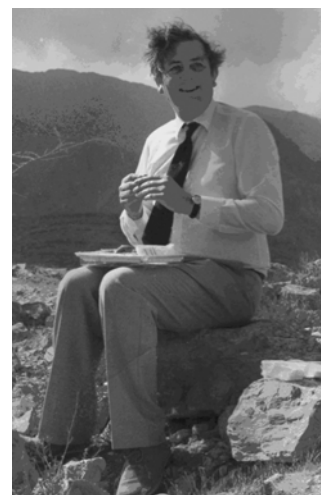
Chelmsford Museum: new extension and Marconi collection display

Nick Wickenden, Chelmsford Borough Council's Museums Manager recently announced that the Chelmsford Museum in Oaklands Park is having an new built, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2009. This will be home to the Essex Regiment collection and some other exhibitions.

"We've been looking for more space and it will enable us to provide facilities such as an education room.....we'll also be able to have a display of Chelmsford's industries for the first time. We are very aware that Chelmsford was something of an industrial world beater with the likes of Marconi, Comptons, and Hoffmans all here. We really haven't been able to do this justice due to the limited space," he said.

He also announced the return on loan of items from the Marconi collection, papers and objects relating to Guglielmo Marconi and the wireless company in Chelmsford which were passed to Oxford University in 2004. He said it was very sad a few years ago when the Marconi company's own collection was moved from Chelmsford to Oxford. "We're very pleased that we'll be able to have some of those items back in Chelmsford on loan, because Marconi is such a key figure in the town's history."

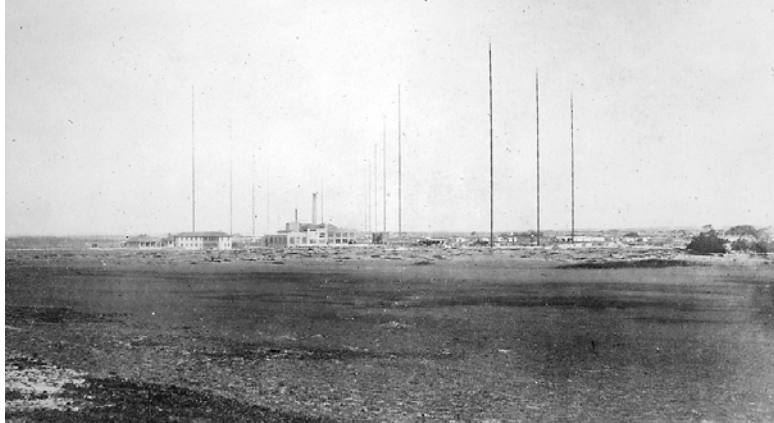
Source www.bbc.co.uk/essex/content/articles/2008/01/03/marconi_exhibition_feature.shtm Also have a look at www.bbc.co.uk/essex/content/articles/2007/04/24/marconi_feature.shtml



Early days in Hawai'i

This item was prompted by John Pringle, EOS at Basildon, GEC Marconi in Atlanta, Georgia, and latterly with four other ex-Atlanta crew running their own engineering services company in a corner of the old Marconi building in Norcross.

What follows comes from 'Roads less traveled', an article by Stu Dawrs in Hana Hou!, the Hawai'ian Airlines magazine. Stu is a Pacific specialist librarian at University of Hawai'i-Manoa Hamilton Library, and came across a construction engineer named Cedric (his surname is not known) and his partner in one of a collection of personal photo albums whilst researching Hawaiian history in the period shortly after the US' annexation of Hawaii in the early 1900s. Curious about the lives of the two individuals, he delved further and came across the story of the construction and remains of the Marconi wireless telegraph station on O'ahu. At the time of its inauguration in 1914 it was one of the world's largest. Here we reproduce an extract - he has previously described at some length researches that led him to the project on which Cedric was engaged.



In these days of instantaneous communication, it's hard to conjure the excitement generated when Marconi sent his first trans-Atlantic wireless transmission in 1901. Nor, for that matter, is it easy to grasp the enormity of the moment when the American Marconi Co set out to construct two wireless telegraph plants on O'ahu - a receiver on the eastern shore at Koko Head and a transmitter to the north at Kahuku. But this was, both literally and figuratively, huge. In 1899, even before Marconi's trans-Atlantic breakthrough, Hawai'i had been among the first places in the world to contract for commercial wireless telegraph service, and by 1906 a somewhat unreliable inter-island wireless service had already been up and running for a few years. But when the Koko Head and Kahuku projects came online, their giant antennae - Kahuku alone had twenty-four masts ranging from 300 to 500 feet tall - would provide a strong, reliable communication link far beyond Hawai'i's shores.

When ground was broken on the million-dollar (that's 1913 dollars) project, it generated a worldwide buzz. The local, national and international press breathlessly followed the construction, covering in minute detail the layout of each facility and the mechanics of wireless communication. For instance, in its April 19, 1913 edition, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin reports, among much else, 'In order to obtain an impression of the great power to be used at the Kahuku station in transmitting the messages to the coast and to the Orient, it may be said that the noise of the spark will be such that, were it not enclosed in a soundproof chamber, it could be heard for a distance of at least four miles.'

Opening day, Sept 25, 1914, was a gala affair, with a special train hired to take guests out to Kahuku, messages being sent by Gov. Lucius Pinkham to President Woodrow Wilson and the entire guest list for the day's events printed in the Star- Bulletin. Beyond their practical application, the new Marconi plants further served to bind Hawai'i to the American consciousness...

...Time slips past us all. The US entered World War I in 1917, and the wireless system played its part. But new technologies gradually emerged, and with them the players changed. In 1919, General Electric bought the American Marconi Co, and the Radio Corporation of America was created; in 1926 a merger between RCA, General Electric and Westinghouse gave rise to the National Broadcasting Co.; by the 1930s, shortwave radio had rendered the Kahuku plant's huge antennae unnecessary.

But the traces remain. I don't know how many times I've driven past Marconi Road without a second thought, except to notice the old-fashioned street sign and rough, two-lane road that veers into the farmland and scrub brush off Kamehameha Highway. It wasn't until I saw these photographs that I thought to follow this road.

This being prime oceanfront property, I assumed that there would be no trace of the Marconi plant, but it's still there, looking like the sort of derelict structure one occasionally stumbles upon in the Islands - if I hadn't known better, from a distance I would have guessed it was a remnant of the sugar industry. But having seen the photos, I now have a sense of eerie recognition: in the album is a picture of Cedric at work, peering through a surveyor's level. Cedric plumbing a wireless mast, Ms. X tells us. These masts were each plumbed twenty times during construction. *(Photo right. Images courtesy of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, Hawaiian Collection. Weblink - see below.)*

Some of the concrete slabs that held these masts are still visible, roughly 10 feet in diameter and rising six or so feet off the ground. Thanks to the Star-Bulletin, I also know that these slabs of solid concrete are sunk some twelve feet into the ground ... little wonder they have yet to be removed. The windows of the power plant are framed but missing their glass; everything looks unfinished. In other words, catch it in the right light, and it could be a building under construction rather than one in decline. "Cedric," to paraphrase a standard bit of Island graffiti, "wuz hea."

The full text can be found at www.hanahou.com in the December 2008 edition of Hana Hou! At <http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/hawaiianphoto/index.php>, amongst 700-odd images, are photos of the construction of the wireless telegraph station, Cedric, and his partner.



In Memoriam

We report the death of those Veterans notified to the secretary from the copy date of the last newsletter to the 29th January 2009. We extend our sympathy to the families of those mentioned.

PG Barnard, Miss KA Barnes, PAL Bass, IR Baxter, PH Bloomfield, J Briggs, KW Butcher, HJ Chaney, RS Cox, EA Curties, HER Dickson, RE Doubleday, SC Fisher, JFM Gordon, PE Gossling, AN Heightman, PB Helsdon, D Henderson, FE Johnson, C Kettle, DJ Moore, JR Morfey, I Morgan, WN Morrison, WS Mortley, RJ Muir, V Murrow, CR Orange, RAG Paddon, C Payne, HL Perry, EJ Porter, J Quill, CW Rand MBE., TJ Rattray, LD Reed, KJ Reid, JF Ridgwell, MJB Scanlan, EF Schellisch, WA Smith, R Stoneham, Sir Robert Telford, RW Theobald, DJA Thomas, FH Weavers, JL Wells, PH White, J Wild, M Wintersgill.

Reg Theobald

From his son, Clive Theobald

I should like to record the death of our late father, Reg Theobald, on 13th September 2008 at the age of 95.

First registered in your handbook in 1927 I see, he started work with The Marconi Wireless Company in 1914 after leaving school, initially within its shipping department and subsequently within its packaging department with Marconi Communications. His surviving sisters recall him putting together what was believed to be the first radio set within Ford End, fitting perhaps of his practical aptitude. Our father later went on to become Chief of Package Design at New Street before finally retiring from Marconi's in 1978 after putting in (we think) sixty years loyal service. It was very pleasing to see a couple of his previous work colleagues attend the funeral and express some kind words about him considering he had been retired thirty years!

WR 'Dickie' Dunderdale MBE

Tom Gutteridge

To all who may have found themselves in the Middle East in the late sixties and early seventies - passing through Beirut in particular - will have known and enjoyed the association with Dickie Dunderdale.

Sadly he has just died at about 93 years of age in his home area of Lancashire.

Although not a Marconi Veteran in respect of long service, this period of time was a quite intense period of business activity in the Middle East and he will be remembered for the expert knowledge and assistance he gave to the Marconi Company and all the 'visiting firemen' passing through the Marconi Office in Beirut which he headed.

Charles Rand MBE

Late Chairman, Marconi Veterans' Association

Charles 'Charlie' Rand died in Broomfield Hospital in March 2008 following a fairly long illness which he endured with much strength and determination. His funeral service was held in St Andrew's Church, Chignal Road Chelmsford, and the congregation was so great that many people had to stand outside. His cremation following the service with family present was at Writtle Road opposite to where he worked for many years.

Charles was employed at the original Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company at New Street as an apprentice. Following National Service in the RAF, he returned to the company and advanced through a number of engineering roles to the position of Chief Production Engineer at Marconi Radar Systems in Writtle Road, Chelmsford.

During his time with the company, he carried out many duties, responsibility for the Marconi Radar carnival floats being one of the more unusual. He was also a member of the Company Charity Committee and Marconi Veterans' Association, being chairman for many years.

Outside the company he was very active in the field of football management and was honoured in this respect by becoming President of one of the local leagues which he helped form.

His greatest honour was the MBE, awarded in January 2008, which was presented by HRH Prince Charles at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace last February. This was an honour richly deserved for all he did for local football.

Charles leaves a wife Betty and two daughters to whom we extend our sympathy.

Peter Turrall

Marconi memories

The response from veterans to the request to write down and send in, for later publication, memories of their Marconi experiences has been very disappointing. Only two positive replies have been received from over 1,500 veterans who receive our newsletter. This is a great shame because there are so many people with memories of working for Marconi that will be lost forever unless written down.

This is our final appeal for you to write down your memories, no matter how small, and send them either to secretary Barry Powell or editor Ken Earney. They will be published 'as is'. If we have enough support, in 18 months time we will have a book for sale.

Smaller organisations than Marconi have managed it, so it must be the case that, with 100 years of business behind us, a lot of memories exist.

You have until the end of 2009 to prepare your contribution - please do think about it.