Number 17
January 2015

Marconi Veterans Association Newsletter

Marconi in the City of Chelmsford

Peter Turrall, MVA Chairman

According to recent reports from our local newspaper The Essex Chronicle, Chelmsford City Council is contemplating changing the dozen or so large brown signs on all the entries to our county town of Chelmsford which state 'Chelmsford the Birthplace of Radio'. These signs of course refer to our own Marconi Company and certainly make visitors and residents aware that history was made in this city many years ago.

The suggestion is for new signs to portray Hylands House, a good mile out of the city, which does not give any indication of Chelmsford's major industrial past. It was Marconi and other major industries such as Hoffmann, Crompton, Clarkson and Christy who put Chelmsford on the map, fostering its development from a sleepy market town with a population of 30,000 citizens in the early 1900s, to a major industrial centre. This gave employment to thousands and a start to other enterprises to set up shops and offices to cater for the needs of an increasing population which has now reached nearly 200,000.

Already strong comments have been made by local residents and ex-Marconi personnel to both the city council and the local newspapers stating that the signs should cover Chelmsford's industrial achievements especially as Marconi in Chelmsford was the start of worldwide wireless communications and other associated engineering achievements.

It is unfortunate that our city council does not highlight the industrial past of Chelmsford, which in itself, if portrayed correctly, is an enormous tourist attraction. Apart from the museum in Oaklands Park and, way out of the city, Sandford Mill, and a Marconi statue hidden behind the local bus station, there is nothing in the city centre illustrating the achievements of these world renowned organisations. It has been suggested to the city council that a kiosk giving information about local attractions of historical interest and where to find them could be sited opposite the Shire Hall in the city centre. At the moment this suggestion has not been acted on.

The Marconi New Street building, which has for over one hundred years been the centre point of all major visits to the company, is now in good shape having been modernised and the front gardens spruced up. This building will shortly be used by an unknown pharmaceutical company as their headquarters. To date it has not been possible to contact this organisation with the hope that the Marconi Veterans Association could utilise one of the areas to portray the history of the company and/or display some of the products manufactured in the original factory. *(Photo taken on 29th January, just before four workmen in hard hats and grubby high-vis jackets together with a heavy load fork-lift carrying a mini-skip turned up at the front door)*

The Editor's spot

I've had one or two unwished for problems in getting this issue off the ground. The main one was that I didn't have a recording of the speeches at the 2014 reunion to refer to when compiling the report on page 10: unwisely, relying on there being one, I hadn't made any notes. Up to the time of writing this they were missing from the website, but the full texts can now be found there. Given a fair wind the speeches will be recorded this year, but just in case, there will be a back-up plan.

The usual yearly situation with regard to supply of material. I report at committee meetings durng the year that contributions have not been very forthcoming, and I don't know if I'm going to have enough for a twelve pager, but then, when I get down to it in January I find that there is more that enough for fourteen or even sixteen. Sometimes however, as this year, an item will have to be held over until the following year.

You will see that a significant amount of space has been devoted to obituaries. I felt it appropriate to devote a full page to David Speake, such a prominent figure in the company story. He died very shortly before last year's edition went to press and we could at that time include only the briefest of tributes. Page 12 is given over entirely to the appreciation from one of his Baddow colleagues, Laurence Clarke. Unfortunately, as anno domini bears on more and more of us it's going to become increasingly likely that I have to decide whether or not to include a written tribute to a former colleague who has passed away, but I will have to guard against overdoing it.

Mailbag

As in previous years, a number of letters are from correspondents seeking information about former colleagues, for research into their family history, or for the preparation of articles, books, etc. If no contact detail appears with the letter then please direct your reply or any correspondence for the enquirer to: Barry Powell, Secretary, Marconi Veterans Association, 22 Juliers Close, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 7EP; 01268 696342; secretary@marconi-veterans.org – or to the editor, Ken Earney, 01245 381235; email newsletter@marconi-veterans.org

Certain items in this issue, particularly on this and the next page, are responses to letters or articles appearing in the 2014 edition which have already been posted during the last eleven months on the website. There is thus an inevitable but necessary duplication catering for those Veterans who have no possibility, or wish, to use the internet.

Finally note that, to avoid unnecessary repetition of the Association's name in full, the initials MVA have in places been used.

Leslie Frank Cox
From Marie-Ann Capps, 15 December 2014

My grandfather Leslie Cox worked at the Marconi site in Chelmsford during 1939 to 1945. He never told us what his role was there and when he disappeared to London in 1945 there was apparently a warrant issued for his arrest and return to Marconi.

The Bodleian Library could not trace any employee records for my grandfather and suggested that, during that period, there may have been many external organisations using the Marconi works. This would mean that he may not have worked directly for Marconi but for some other entity.

Is there anyone who remembers him? He would have been in his late 20s/early 30s when he was there as he was some years older than my grandmother. I don't really know much more than this apart from his name, Leslie Frank Cox, and that he lodged with the Crosier family in Brownings Avenue in Melbourne, Chelmsford during his time at Marconi.

I would be extremely grateful to you on behalf of my mother and her two sisters, as well as Leslie's son, if you could point me in the right direction of being able to trace records of his time at Marconi. Thank you.

Would anyone who can help please contact Marie-Ann directly at Mazziecapps40@btinternet.com

The fish in the New Street cooling pond
VJ Bucknell, 17 March 2014

With reference to David Emery's letter on page 3 of the last issue concerning the fish in the pond. These fish were originally in the large 30ft tank in Marine Test used for testing echo sounders. I believe there were originally three and they were put in the tank probably in the 1950s. When the tank was cleaned in the early 1970s they were moved to the pond beside Marconi Road.

VJ has also spotted an error in Peter Stothard's article 'Essex Clay': the fifth paragraph on page 11 puts Frinton north of Walton-on-the-Naze. In fact, it's south of Walton.

Marconi Heritage websites

David Samways has created a website to gather input for the Marconi Old Fellows Society (MOFS) site so Alan Hartley-Smith has decided to do the same for the Marconi Heritage Group (MHG). The following are the URLs for these two sites:

https://sites.google.com/site/oldmarconiapprentices/home
https://sites.google.com/site/callingoldmarconipeople/

This is an extension of the Meet-and-Greet session held during last year's Ideas Festival in Chelmsford so if you come across or are approached by anyone wanting to join in the quest to set up a Heritage Centre or donate material please give them this method of getting in touch.

A Chain Home app from Bawdsey Radar
Eileen Dew, Secretary, Bawdsey Radar
secretary@bawdseyradar.org.uk

If you are 'smart phone enabled' and interested in Chain Home then please try the new app from Bawdsey Radar. 'RADAR Chain' can be downloaded for free from App Store or from www.bawdseyradar.org.uk

RADAR Chain gives details of 63 Chain Home Stations around the UK with pictures and text wherever possible. We hope you find it interesting.

Post-war history of Great Bromley
LA Thomas, Swansea, 2 September 2014

I'm doing research work on the post war history of Canewdon and Great Bromley. During my time, I frequently consult the classified files at the Public Record Office at Kew. However, I write to you in the hope that some of the former Marconi radar people can assist me with some details of the post war history of Great Bromley. It appears from several files that during the late1950s experiments were carried out at Bromley on a project codenamed Zinnia, a sort of over-the-horizon radar. I am uncertain of the outcome of these experiments and would be interested to hear from anybody.

IT has spawned a huge growth industry - in selling manuals on how to use IT.

John Iorwerth (Yorrie) Morse, Marconi Marine
From John Morse, 28 February 2014

I am trying to trace my late father's employment history, particularly during WW2. He continued to be employed by Marconi during this time (his was a reserved occupation), and I believe that he worked in Africa for at least part of this period, as a civilian in naval bases. I have no idea what he did or where he was stationed.

I understand that the Marconi archive is now at the Bodleian Library and I will contact them, but I wonder if any of your members might have any information or guidance.

John says that he has written to the Bodleian but has not yet had a reply to his letter, and so would obviously still like to hear from any Veteran who may be able to help in his enquiries. He mentioned in passing a photograph of his father which appeared in the book entitled 'Marconi 1939 - 1945 - a war record', published by Chatto & Windus in 1946. On the right is that photograph, which has the caption "He is Wireless Operator and, believe it or not, his name is Morse!"

Marconi WW1 deaths in service
Bernard de Neumann, MOGS posting, 31 August 2014

During WW1 348 Marconi staff sacrificed their lives. Presumably their names are all recorded appropriately, and steps will be taken to ensure that their memorial is safeguarded. Does anyone know where the memorial is currently located?

The first three staff to lose their lives in WW1 did so on 22 September 1914. They were each wireless operators aboard HMSs Cressy, Hogue, and Aboukir, three battle-class cruisers, which were patrolling in the outer Thames Estuary when they were sunk by torpedoes in quick succession by a single U-boat, U-9, with the loss of almost 1500 lives.

At the outbreak of war Marconi operators aboard merchant ships were taken up by the RN as their ships returned to the UK and put to service aboard warships, rapidly causing shortages of wireless operators in the merchant service. Thus I am not sure whether the above three Marconi men were likewise inducted into the RN.

Marconi wireless in WW1 - Tim Wander
Alan Hartley-Smith, MOGS posting, 30 July 2014

In view of the current national interest in all things related to the First World War I have put a comprehensive article on our Marconi Heritage website, written by Tim Wander, which shows how the technology developed and was used by all three armed services. You can read it here:

http://www.marconiheritage.org/ww1intro-3.html

Marconi, Plessey, Ekco, etc in Essex
Bernard de Neumann, MOGS posting 16 May 2014

In my delvings into the connections/rivalries of the various electronics firms in the area I came across an interesting historical piece about the origins of these firms which is available for download from the University of East London website: https://www.uel.ac.uk/risingeast/archive07/academic/miranda.pdf

For those of you interested in such history it is well worth a read.

John Baker - Marconi Instruments

Arthur Foulser is trying to contact John Baker who worked at Marconi Instruments. If anyone can advise his current contact details would they please contact the secretary Barry Powell so that he can forward Arthur's letter to John.

Marconi Monument on the Isle of Wight
Jonathon Butterworth, Needles Park, IOW
14 August 2014

I'm Jonathon Butterworth and I work on behalf of The Needles Park on the Isle of Wight. I am getting in contact because I stumbled across the Marconi Veterans website last night and I thought I should inform you that we have a monument to the great man on our grounds, I'm sure you are aware of the work he did at Alum Bay and that is what we're commending. All the information about our monument can be found on our website (http://www.theneedles.co.uk/marconi-monument.php) – I just thought that it would be nice to share this with you and in turn you might want to share it with the visitors to your website.

Worth a visit because of its significance in company history, but be prepared to be disappointed by its location immediately adjacent to the visitor attractions of the Needles Park. Ed.

Some more aphorisms (*hopefully not already used in earlier issues!)*

Hard work pays off in the future. Laziness pays off now.

Shin, a device for finding furniture in the dark.

The colder the X-ray table, the more of your body is required to be on it.

The Secretary's bit

And welcome to 2015

Looking back, I realise that I have been Secretary for 10 years now and I must say that I have enjoyed every minute. The Marconi Veterans' Association 'office' is a computer cupboard at one end of our kitchen so dependent upon permission from 'er indoors (otherwise known as the Secretary's Secretary). Careful negotiations have worked so far – long may they continue to do so.

And our new caravan is now sorted and we have had a season to smooth out any problems.

With regard to the subscription, we are pleased to maintain the rate at £6.00 per annum but, regrettably due to increased costs, we must, again, raise the cover price for the reunion to £25.00. I am sure that you will agree that this is still excellent value for a four course meal with tea/coffee and wine.

Please note that the date of the reunion is Saturday 18th April where our President will be Veteran Basil Francis who, for many years, was Chief of the Installation Drawing Office of Marconi Communication Systems at New Street, Chelmsford. Guest of Honour is Mr John Warwicker MBE who had a varied career as a Metropolitan Police officer and close protection officer to a number of prime ministers. He has also written a number of books covering his professional career. No doubt he will be giving an interesting talk on some of his many experiences.

Last year's reunion (see report on page 10) passed off without any problems so I do not envisage any changes for this year.

With regard to the name tags, last year's arrangements seemed to work quite well so we will, again, produce the name tags on A4 sheets which will be at the merchandise table so you can collect your label as you enter the hall. When you order your ticket, please indicate, in the box provided, how you would like your tag to read. **The default will be to print your name as it appears on the first line of your address label.**

I won't bore you by repeating last year's description of the arrangements for the reunion – suffice to say that, if you are still unsure or have any questions, please give me a ring. I am always happy to talk and can give you names of those Veterans who attended recent reunions.

If you know of an ex-Marconi employee who does not receive the newsletter please urge them to contact me as soon as possible. It may be that they have moved or not replied to a confirmation request of a few years ago or that they left with 21 to 24 years service and have now become Veterans by virtue of the reduction in service requirement to 21 years.

The 'Friends of The Marconi Veterans' Association' has been set up to cater for anyone who does not qualify as a Veteran but wishes to be kept informed of things Marconi. Numbers are growing slowly with, currently, over 40 members and any more would be welcome. All three registers - the main register and those for In Memoriam and Friends - are now published on the website so please have a look if you can and let me know of any errors.

Please note that I may be contacted at the address below. Finally, I would like to wish you all a very prosperous 2015 and hope to see as many of you as possible either at the **reunion on 18th April** or the next Open Day at **Sandford Mill on Saturday 25th April**.

One final note - the 2016 Reunion will be on Saturday 16th April,

Barry Powell, Secretary, Marconi Veterans' Association, 22 Juliers Close, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 7EP
Phone: 01268 696342 (answerphone if we are out, please leave a message and I will ring you back)
Email: Secretary@marconi-veterans.org

Dr Geoff Bowles retires from Chelmsford Museums Service

Dr Geoff Bowles has now retired from the Chelmsford Museums Service after almost 25 years. Geoff, who was elected an Honorary Veteran at the 2013 Reunion, joined the Museums Service from Leicester in July 1990 as a Research Officer and progressed to become Curator of Science at Sandford Mill. During this time, he was largely responsible for setting up the Sandford Mill site and the educational activities it offers, and has done a lot to ensure the preservation and availability of Marconi equipment and documentation. He now intends to devote his time to a renovation project but does not rule out the occasional visit to Sandford Mill and, hopefully, the Veterans Reunion. We understand that Nick Wickenden is currently interviewing for Geoff's replacement – he will be a hard act to follow! We send Geoff all our best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

David Michael Griffiths - 1945 to 2014

In a professional career distinguished by an outstanding ability recognised at a young age, David Griffiths gave invaluable service both to Marconi and to successive UK governments. Promoted to Commercial Manager at the age of 24, in 40 years career he served as Commercial Director and Company Secretary at Marconi and, latterly, BAE Systems. He was a protégée of the late Max Stothard (2014 newsletter, pages 1 & 11). His professional career spanned the Cold War, the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the digital revolution with its new implications for national defence and the precarious alignments of the War on Terror. After retirement from industry, he acted in an advisory capacity to the MOD, and sat on the MVA committee. He was committed to his work and greatly fulfilled by it.

From a Welsh background, although born in Reading and raised in West London, he was educated at Latymer Upper School and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. His immediate forebears were miners; none had previously attended university or finished school. Paternal grandfather, James 'Pop' Griffiths, ran away to sea at the age of 14 and became a ship's captain and later Mayor of Cardiff. He was deeply proud of family ties to Wales, and nautical family history inspired his own love of the sea and sailing; he loved the shining dunes of Ynyslas and Aberdyfi. In his spare time, he skippered several boats of his own, and in last two decades he sailed from Tollesbury Marina close to his Essex home.

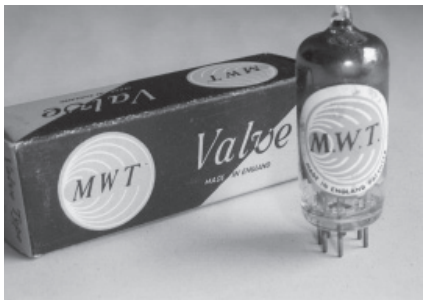
David Griffiths was hugely committed to his work and until fairly recently he was engaged in meetings and travel across Europe, the Americas, Australasia and the Far East. He once said that because of his career, he had been to every country he had ever wanted to visit, except possibly Iceland, and he thought he could accept that deficit. He greatly enjoyed meeting a wide array of people in so many countries, forging many and lasting friendships in Marconi's local offices at Chelmsford, Leicester and Frimley, as well with international partner companies in Rome, Montreal and Helsinki. He was enormously forgiving of others, getting the best from his colleagues by example and leadership. When ill-health forced him into a more sedentary lifestyle, he used online technologies to continue working as long as he could. He also embarked on substantial projects of amateur history, with a particular interest in the Second World War.

For more than twenty years he prevailed against deteriorating health, maintaining a wry sense of humour and determination and managing to joke about his condition until the end in October 2014. He is survived by his children, Joanna and Daniel, his former wife Susan who remained a close personal friend to the end of his life, and by two grandchildren.

Based on an edited version of the obituary which appeared in The Times last year.

Valves, Transistors and Integrated Circuits

Jim Cole



Poking about at home the other day, I found this EF91 valve, complete with MWT box. When I started work as a junior engineer in the wooden huts at Writtle in 1952, these valves, together with a smaller version, the EF95, were the staple tool of the trade. We used them for everything, from VHF to audio. They had 6.3 volt heaters, B7G bases, and often were provided with an aluminium screening can.

We worked in what was known as the 'end hut' directly under the tower. Warmly remembered colleagues included Colin Lewis, Ken Johnson, George Otley and Rex Willet.

Later on, when I had returned to Writtle in 1954, after National Service, we moved into plush new laboratories, where every engineer enjoyed the luxury of his own desk and bench. A big change from the cramped wooden huts. Now all the talk was of transistors. Initially we used the OC70/71, a germanium transistor. Were they point contact devices? (*No, junction - Ed.*) They were prone to damage and failure even on the lab bench, let alone in service. We had little faith in them! Later, reliable silicon junction transistors became available, and we started serious transistorisation of all our new designs.

The third stage of my story occurred after I had left development in the mid-1960s. At Beehive Lane works, we manufactured the Myriad computer. This computer owed its high speed to the first use of integrated circuits. These were the DAT7 and DAT10, made by Ferranti. The degree of integration was very modest by later standards. Just two transistors and two diodes on one silicon chip. Nevertheless, they were ground-breaking at the time. The Myriad computers were very high speed, and found application in many real time applications, from power station control to weather forecasting. I think we made over 100, together with a variant marketed by English Electric Computers.

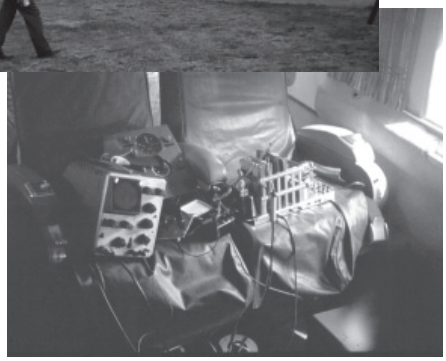
I expect many fellow Veterans across the Marconi Companies will have similar recollection of new technologies being introduced, perhaps prompted by these brief notes. In the 1950s and 1960s, I don't think any of us had any idea that this transition from valves to transistors, and then to integrated circuits, would so quickly lead to millions of transistors on one small silicon chip, and to the high speed computing and communications which we now enjoy.

A 'tour' of duty with Marconi

Graham Marriott

When I left grammar school I spent four years on a thin sandwich course at the City University. My sponsoring company was Standard Telephone and Cables (STC) at New Southgate. During the four years, when I was at the factory, I spent time in some of the following areas – the drawing office, the sheet metal shop and the printed board assembly area. Towards the end of the four years, I spent time in some of the development laboratories.

One of these areas was in developing radio altimeters. STC had its own Dakota (DC3) which was used to test the equipment and we flew from Stansted where the plane was based, sitting the equipment on one of the rear seats. On my first flight we flew out over the North Sea at about 1000 feet, just below some cumulus clouds. The heating was on and the tail of the aircraft was bobbing up and down in the disturbed air below the clouds: virtually all of us engineers on board had to visit the 'little room' at the rear of the aircraft, to relieve the discomfort in our stomachs!



Right, the DC3 at Stansted, and below it, Radio Altimeter equipment . (*Did the CAA know about this?*)

After gaining my BSc in Electrical Engineering I spent a further year with STC as an engineer. The laboratory I was in was developing error correction circuits for teleprinter signals sent over HF radio links. The teleprinter code consisted of five bits. (This evolved from a code proposed by Baudot and eventually became the International Telegraph Alphabet No 2 (ITA2)). The signal from an HF link would introduce errors in the teleprinter information in terms of the bit values of a hole or space being changed, so to provide error correction, five parity bits were added to the original five code bits and sent over the link. The error correction circuitry could correct a single bit error and detect multiple bit errors. There were no microprocessors in those days so the system used integrated circuits. So began my introduction to a career in electronics and avionics that lead to a 'tour of duty' with Marconi.

At this stage of my career I had the idea of becoming a lecturer in a college or university so I tried to gain a research or higher degree. With a grant from the Science Research Council I joined the University of Surrey at Guildford. My research in solid state physics was carried out at Aldermaston. Firstly I investigated doping semiconductors by using ion implantation, then I looked at secondary electron emission. This research didn't lead to a higher degree however so I decided to return to working in industry. Prior to joining the GEC group of companies I was working for RS Components (formerly Radio Spares) in the city. Having married in this period we had moved to Chelmsford when our first child was born. As I didn't see much of my son due to the commuting I decided to try and gain a local job. At that time Chelmsford was almost known as Marconiville with many Marconi or GEC companies located in it. I didn't manage to get a post in any of the Chelmsford companies: however I did land a job with Marconi Elliot Avionics Systems Ltd at Basildon. (I always called it Measles!)

So I started at Basildon in the Design Quality Assurance group in the Airadio laboratory in A Building. I remember Bert Holmes was one of the senior team members in this group. One of the first pieces of equipment that I worked on was the AD130. This was used in the Maritime Nimrod aircraft, and I was involved in the environmental tests on this and carrying out the reliability predictions for it. (These reliability predictions used a computer at the Research Laboratories at Great Baddow. The information was sent from Basildon via a teleprinter link. This took me back in remembering my time at STC on the error correction equipment).

Airadio also put me on a course to gain a City & Guilds in Quality Control. The course was held in Chelmsford at Marconi College and the course tutor was Alan Maycocke from Thurrock College. One of his students had been the top exam student winning the silver medal for the past few years. The rest of the class must have thought I looked intelligent as they turned to me and said, 'go for it Graham'! So I did and I won the Silver Medal, and a cement company and a group of small trade unions gave me monetary prizes for winning. GEC also gave me a small monetary prize as well. I used these monetary prizes towards purchasing my first 12 string guitar which I still have. (*Photo - Presentation by GEC of Silver Medal. From left Alan Maycocke; someone causing some perplexity - Graham thought it was Doug Farthing, but others disagree - can anyone put a name to this face please; Graham Marriott; Sue Marriott)*

When I joined Airadio I was given the option of transferring to development, so I joined one of the development teams. During my time in development I did some preliminary work towards the Merlin helicopter avionics and a control unit for the

radios in the Gazelle helicopter. Whilst working on this project I managed to cadge a flight in a Gazelle from Middle Wallop, during which I had a wonderful view of Salisbury Cathedral and the amazingly large grass airfield of Middle Wallop.

I then decided it would be great to work nearer to home and transferred to Marconi Radio at Chelmsford working under Brian Partridge. My section was responsible for the design and development of the large raster PPI displays for primary radar. I then worked in the project management team on the Bacchus project: this was a defence radar for Yugoslavia. It was interesting to reflect that when the Bosnia conflict arose I am sure the first thing the RAF did was to take out this defence radar. I sensed that contracts and work were running down at that time at Marconi Radars, so, like a 'bad penny' I returned to Basildon!

However this time I was recruited to the IT section in the Airadio Development laboratory rather than the development side. This involved looking after the Banyan Vines network that provided the inter-connection for all the PCs. In addition it involved looking after the Sun Solaris UNIX workstations. At that time PCs were so weak in terms of processing power that design work was done on the more powerful UNIX machines. During this time GEC sent me on quite a few courses. One was a Sun Solaris UNIX course which helped me on the next and final stage in my career. But I remember Don West who ran Airadio development asking me one day whether I was very busy at the moment. When I said that I wasn't too heavily loaded, he put me on a 'Compelling Presentation Course'. This taught one how to speak and use visual aids, but I never did use this for Marconi. However I like to think that has helped me in my preaching over the years in various churches. Well, I haven't seen anyone nod off to sleep yet, so I must have picked up something from this course!

But with my UNIX and network skills, late in my career, I gained a job in Addison Wesley Longman at Harlow, who are part of the Pearson group of companies. Pearson is one of the largest publishing companies in the world, operating mainly in the educational field. They own the Financial Times and Penguin books amongst their many brands and titles. Working for a succh a company was very different to Marconi, particularly the flavour of the old Wireless Telegraph company days. The Pearson building was a modern five storey building, with, on the ground floor, a café open all day serving food, hot drinks and even alcohol! When I worked in development in Airadio at Basildon it consisted predominately of me. However in Pearson there were an equal number of men and women. Publishing also had a very different feel and atmosphere to an engineering company like Marconi.

Pearson primarily recruited me for my UNIX knowledge. However they began to phase out their UNIX systems and go over to Microsoft NT servers instead. So I was trained in networking skills based on Cisco routers and switches. In addition I also helped administer the Checkpoint firewall and the telephone system for the building. This period with them complemented my engineering knowledge gained with the Marconi companies, giving me a quite extensive knowledge of PCs and particularly networking. This proves invaluable in sorting out my broadband problems and those of my family and friends!

Having retired I have renewed my association with Marconi as I now go out walking with a small group of men from the Airadio Division of Marconi at Basildon. (We call ourselves the Airadio Ramblers). Every two weeks we go out into the Essex countryside or sometimes into Suffolk. Our walks vary on average between nine to twelve miles. It is great walking with the Airadio Ramblers not just for the walking but as a reminder of my time in the Marconi companies, particularly in the Airadio Division at Basildon. It was through this group that I was encouraged to join the Marconi Veterans Association.
(*Photo top right - the Airadio Ramblers in August 2014. From left: Derek Juniper; John Little; Dave Neylon; John Rendell; Len Briggs; Mike Hopper; Mike Rowe)*

The Marconi Toolbox in use

Some time ago, prompted by a thread of the recollections of former Apprentice Training Centre trainees that ran over three or four bulletins on the MOGS forum (some of them were reproduced in the 2011 edition of the newsletter) a request was made to MOGS and to David Samways' Marconi Old Fellows website for a photograph of the legendary Marconi Toolbox showing it still in daily use some 50 years or more after manufacture in the Apprentice Training Centre. Keith Thomas down in Oz got in touch recently and sent these two photographs. He says: "I had intended responding at the time but then forgot about it. Today, I was reminded again when servicing my recent restoration of a 1958 Triumph motorcycle and made sure that I didn't forget for a second time!"

‘Apollo in Ascension’ must be on time

John M Brown

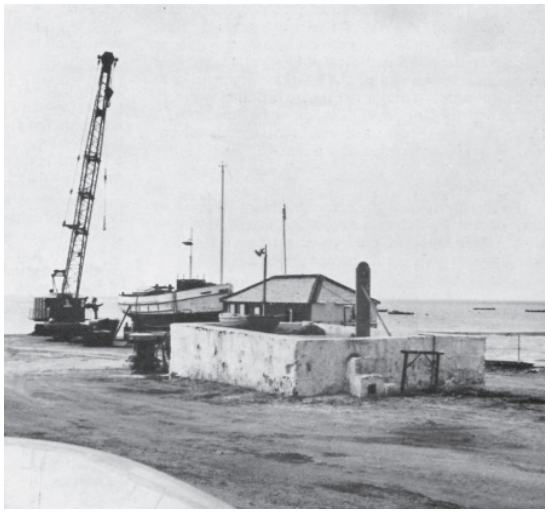
In 1965, I was Chief of Systems in Bill Quill’s Special Projects Group, Radar Division, New Street: our principal focus at the time was compiling the company’s technical and commercial input to the Hughes International Consortium bid for the £110M Project, NADGE (NATO Air Defence Ground Environment). The consortium had its offices in Paris (where NATO was at that time), so all of us were travelling regularly to Paris for meetings. Our Divisional Manager was Dr Tom Straker, who also had been following with interest the progress being made with communication satellites operating in synchronous orbit, pointing the way to global communications. Many readers will recall the design and development of the three SCAT (Satellite Communication Air-Transportable stations) for UK MoD, project-managed by Alec Kravis, which had to operate with random-orbit satellites, and were built around this time. (*Photo right - Ascension Island, 8º 15´ W in the South Atlantic, showing the desolate terrain of the satellite communication site)*

Although Dr Straker knew I was heavily involved with the NADGE bid, he tasked me to seek out any openings for the company in this possible new market of satellite communication ground stations, having already participated in some of the military study work carried out by the Baddow Research Laboratories, Hughes, and British Aircraft Corporation, which ultimately led to the UK’s SKYNET, and to Marconi’s provision of the central ground station at RAF Oakhanger, Hampshire.

I had visited Dick Cannon, Cable & Wireless’ Deputy Engineer-in Chief, during July to see if they were contemplating becoming Earth Station operators; however, their board had considered that it was too early at present. A month later, on a Friday afternoon, Dr Straker received a telephone call from its Managing Director to tell him that NASA had asked them to provide an Earth Station on Ascension Island urgently, as part of the Apollo ‘man on the moon’ project. Bids were being invited, and the tendering time would be only three weeks. An initial meeting was held on the Saturday morning, and Dr Straker tasked me to be responsible for co-ordinating the Company’s tender; the technical documentation would be available on the Monday. Having distributed this to the key engineers, I went across to Bridge Works, the company’s printing plant to see Peter Bass, the Superintendent. As always, Peter was most helpful and agreed to accept the tight timescale, even though he was as busy as ever. I held the first meeting on the Tuesday: everybody was enthusiastic, and appreciated the importance of winning this prestigious contract.Our principal competitor was likely to be World Satellite Terminals, a consortium set up by GEC, AEI, Plessey, and STC. The next two and a half weeks were hectic, but the material flowed in and was passed through to Peter Bass, after editing by me. The cost estimates started to come together as well, as the designers settled on their preferred plans. I delivered the twelve sets of tender documents to Mercury House before the deadline of noon on 9 September, 1965. After Cable & Wireless’ scrutiny of the bids, including clarification meetings, a month later we received the momentous news that Marconi’s had won the contract. At his own personal expense, Dr Straker held a ‘thank you’ lunch at Marconi College, and invited everyone who had contributed to the successful bid, including Peter Bass who had printed the entire document

Implimentation

The Marconi design was for a 42ft parabolic reflector, fully steerable in both azimuth and elevation, mounted on a 15ft tripod gantry (the turntable and gantry being similar to those supplied to NATO for the Early Warning Chain). Because of the need for high reliability, the transmitters and receivers were duplicated. The shortness of the timescale and the remoteness of Ascension Island necessitated careful planning of the project between the equipment designers, the manufacturing organization, the installation planners, and Cable & Wireless Chief Architect’s Department who were responsible for the buildings, antenna foundations, and main power supply. Within Marconi, a special management team was formed, under Iain Butler, with overall responsibility for the complete project. As well as the Marconi factories, English Electric Accrington made a major manufacturing contribution to the project. Some idea of the achievements in production can be gauged by the fact that the entire station was put together for the first time at Rivenhall, seven months after the start of the project. This trial run



Left - the jetty at George Town, Ascension Island, where all the station equipment was brought ashore

proved invaluable since any snags could be cleared by the design engineers on the spot. Customer confidence was also established when the new station communicated through Early Bird, specially released to the Company on two occasions. HRH The Duke of Edinburgh also came to see the installation during tests.

At the end of July 1966 the installation, having competed testing satisfactorily, was dismantled, carefully packed and crated and transported by a chartered ship from Harwich to Georgetown, Ascension Island. In early August a team of engineers departed from England for the island by a special charter flight to be ready to receive the equipment on its arrival. The speedy re-erection of the station was assisted by all the interconnecting cables between the antenna structure and the operations building being able to be dropped straight into prepared ducts, thereby eliminating the need to re-terminate cables, with all the inherent chances of faulty joints. *Left, the last petals going up to complete the dish in August 1966. In the foreground are Don Reed, David Oliver, and Dick Muir.*

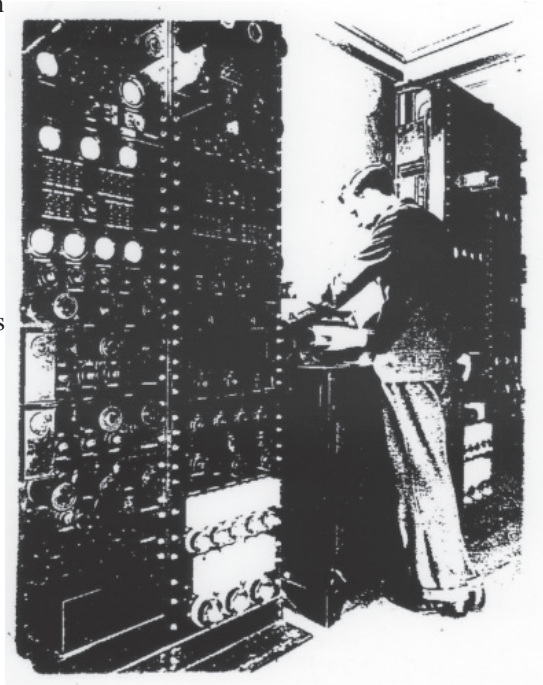
The station was satisfactorily commissioned and operationally demonstrated to Cable & Wireless using Early Bird, and handed over on 19 September, 1966, just eleven months from the commencement of the project. Thanks to the full steering capability of the antenna, the station was the first to lock-on, track, and communicate using the errant INTELSAT II Pacific satellite which had failed to achieve synchronous orbit, and was following a 12-hour elliptical orbit. Clear speech was transmitted from Ascension to Andover, Maine using the satellite. Perhaps the most significant achievement for the UK was that the Ascension Island station was the first to become operational in the Apollo network, although it was the last station to receive a contract to proceed.

Right, in June 1967, this photo of the completed satellite communications earth station on Ascension Island was taken by Richard Raikes, then the company's Publicity Manager, when in Ascension on the C&W visit.

Pictures by Wireless

Jim Cole

This photograph was taken around 1935 at Cable & Wireless headquarters on the Victoria Embankment. At the time, C&W were the Marconi parent Company. The engineer operating the scanning equipment is my late father, AW Cole, who much later became Manager of MWT's Communications Division. He had joined the Marconi Company in 1920, direct from school aged 14 as a telegraph messenger. He obtained technical qualifications through study at evening classes, and courses at Marconi College, and was appointed to the technical staff in 1927.



He became involved in developing the technology for the commercial transmission of pictures by wireless between the USA and the UK. This required collaboration with RCA, and visits to New York sailing across the Atlantic on the Queen Mary.

The system involved a scanner. The picture to be transmitted was wound round a drum, driven at 60 rpm by a motor, and a photocell mounted on a scanner head and driven the length of the drum by a lead screw. Reception was achieved by using the same system in reverse to expose a photographic film.

Early photographs, just black and white, were ill defined, but quite soon the pictures were good enough to be reproduced in newspapers, with the credit 'pictures by wireless'.

Since the only other practical method of getting pictures across the Atlantic was by ocean liner, taking 2 to 3 days, 'pictures by wireless' was a major innovation.

I think it is uncanny to reflect that, now, many of us have our own scanners and printers at home, and we can send and receive pictures (colour pictures even) to and from all over the world.

The 78th Veterans Reunion

The 78h annual Veterans Reunion took place on the 5th April 2014. Our President at the reunion and for the past year has been Mike Thornton. The Guest of Honour was Ray Hagger, formerly with Shell Mex and BP, subsequently a specialised training organisation and also a Pensions Liaison representative.

The toast to the President was proposed by MVA Chairman Peter Turrall MBE. In his introductory remarks he noted that Mike joined MWT in 1956 and has served in a variety of roles in Airadio at Basildon, travelling widely on company business initially in product support and then progressing through sales, marketing and divisional managerial roles, culminating in the position of managing director of Basildon site. He retired from that position having served the company for 39 years.

In reponding to the toast, Mike Thornton opened by saying it was somewhat difficult to know where to start his address, but he knew he had only seven minutes and thirty seconds to deliver it!

He reflected on the evolution of the avionics capability with the Marconi Companies over the years. In the early 50s and 60s Airadio Division achieved much success in the development and marketing of Doppler navigation systems, initially classified projects for the UK military, and radio navigation and communication equipments, at a time when the divisional capability was split geographically: engineering and product support based at Writtle in a collection of wooden huts (one of them the original 1922 2MT hut), divisional management, contracts and commercial departments at New Street and production at the Skating Rink in Chelmsford. This configuration continued through the fifties until new buildings were completed at Basildon when the full divisional team could be brought together as Airadio Division.

The products were widely installed on many aircraft, both at home and overseas. They were among the first systems in the world to use transistors in the aircraft environment, and formed the basis of a radio guidance system for the world's first blind landing installations on the Trident and VC10 aircraft of BEA and BOAC. An exciting period with the development of new aircraft and the introduction of jet engines, and the challenges for aircraft radio installations that these entailed. New concepts brought their own problems to be solved. Many test flights were undertaken during this period by both development and product support engineers to ensure that optimum performance was achieved. Exciting yes, but hitting an 11,000 volt overhead cable at 40 feet with the rotor blade of a Westland helicopter whilst testing a Doppler system can be just a little too exciting!

In 1960 the move of the whole team to a new purpose-built facility at Basildon was completed. The management structure remained unchanged, with the divisional manager reporting to the MWT Managing Director, the division continuing to use many of the MWT central facilities at Chelmsford. This situation lasted until 1967, when, in very short order, English Electric bought Elliott Brothers (with its own well established avionics business), then GEC bought that new group including Marconi's from English Electric**.** In two years the avionics business was reporing to the Elliott Bros headquarters at Rochester, within a new company Marconi-Elliott Avionics under MD Wally Patterson. Over these years the day-to-day liaison between Basildon and New Street virtually disappeared.

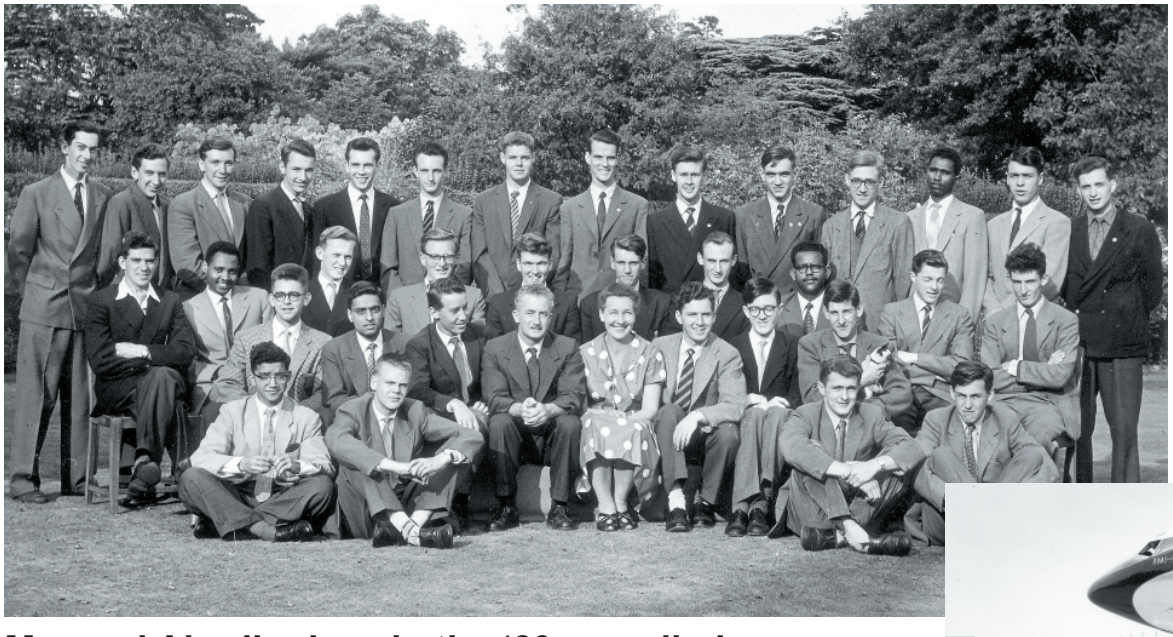
The defence market brought challenges from increased overseas competition. To meet it the total GEC-Marconi expertise had to be concentrated on new technology, for both ground and airborne systems. But before this policy could be implemented GEC sold the defence business to BAE systems, and the Basildon divisions were included in that sale.

The electro-optical divisions were by this time contracted to supply thermal imaging systems to UK and US defence services, the total Basildon business was almost totally defence-oriented and the sale to BAE was probably a wise move. As we now know, that business was then sold by BAE to Finmeccanica whose affiliate UK company Selex ES employs over 4000 people in the UK and whose headquarters in the UK are based at Basildon. They fully acknowledge their success is related to their Marconi history.

The Chairman then introduced the Guest of Honour Ray Hagger, a long-standing friend of our President. From the early 1970s he worked in the UK for Shell Mex and BP, in the marketing arm of Shell, mainly in commercial and industrial sales, principally in retail, especially marketing and project management, culminating as Head of Retail Management Training. After leaving Shell he worked with a specialised training organisation delivering a staff/management communication package to HMRC before finally renewing the connection with Shell as a Pensions Liaison representative.

Ray Hagger developed the theme of the Communications Revolution. Mobile phones and other hand-held electronic devices – e-readers, iPods, iPads – that enable world-wide personal communications, teleconferencing, the operation of social media services like Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and then online shopping and so on – these would have been unthinkable back in the '40s. They have brought about a more informed and open global society. **S**pace exploration has enabled this – consider its impossibility of these examples without satellites, GPS etc. One current instance - the Rosetta spacecraft mission to put the lander Philae on the surface of comet 67P – highlights the essential role of radio communictions in all of this, the brainchild of Guglielmo Marconi, the immigrant entrepreneur, whose belief, tenacity, and passion for scientific discovery made imagination into reality. A true Champion of Science.

*These are **heavily edited** versions of the speeches, the full texts of which can now be found on the MVA website. Ed*



Marconi Airadio days in the ‘60s recalled

David Whiting

While searching a possible Grundy relative I fell on your internet site: http://www.marconi-veterans.org/?p=1552&page=24 which refers to an editorial note under the article by Cyril Taylor about his RAF Yatesbury days – see page 14 of the 2012 newsletter. That paragraph reads:

“*Another coincidence. After the time when Cyril Taylor was testing AD107s at New Street, I was servicing AD107/114s from our Comet 4s in the Radio Servicing Section at RAF Watton in Norfolk. I can also remember having a visitation from two Marconi Field Support engineers (I later found out they were Eddie Ratcliffe and Phil Flowerday) whilst I was in one of the aircraft, out on the airfield, investigating a problem of tripping supply circuit breakers on the system. It transpired that the diameter of the trunking installed for the cooling air supply was inadequate.”*

After leaving school I had wanted to join the RAF and fly as both my father and stepfather had done. P/O JM Whiting, my father, was killed with his crew when their Lancaster from 630 Squadron was shot down over Denmark returning from dropping sea mines in Kiel Bay on the night of 21-22 May 1944. Following the telegram that the Lancaster was missing, my mother later wrote to the recently retired Air Chief Marshal Lord Dowding in the hope that he might have avenues of research to discover the fate of my father. They met to discuss the matter, and later on they married. Hugh Dowding bought me up during my school days. However, the prospects of flying with the RAF were not for me, as I’m colourblind, so Dad said he had contacts with Ferranti in Scotland and the Bristol Aeroplane Co in Filton. Scotland seemed a very long way from our home in Tunbridge Wells, so I went to Bristol in 1957 to start a 5-year apprenticeship. In around late 1959-60 I transferred to Marconi Chelmsford to specialise in electronics, staying first at the Marconi student hostel. On completion of my training I was offered a staff position with the Aeronautical Division, Basildon, in preparation to be the resident engineer at London Heathrow airport for the introduction of the AD2300 and later the AD560 Doppler navigation systems. (See http://www.flightglobal.com/pdfarchive/view/1963/1963%20-%200924.html)

The workshop manager at Heathrow was Jo Grundy, who lived near Croydon. My paternal great-grandmother was a Grundy I have recently discovered. The other resident engineer was Phil Flowerday. He left and went to work with Cossor Electronics I think in the late 1960s.

I wonder if you have any contacts with Marconi people who were based at Heathrow around 1963?

Top left, group photo at the Marconi hostel, Brooklands in 1960 - David Whiting, holding the cat, eighth in third row, recalls many faces, but not any names.

Perhaps I can help. ***From left, back row****: sixth Peter Whitnall, seventh Quinton Bullard, ninth Brian Bolton.* ***Second row:*** *first John Everett.* ***Third row****: seventh Martin Bates, eighth David Whiting.* ***Front row****: third Ron Farrell. I shared a flat in a very nice house on Danbury Common with Pete Whitnall, Quinton Bullard, Brian Bolton, John Everett and Martin Bates, they all, and Ron Farrell, came to my wedding in ‘63. Ed.*

Top right, a dummy shot of DW putting an AD560 unit in a Boeing 707. In reality the unit was accessed from the freight bay on the other side, under the galley.

David Speake - June 1919 - January 2014

David Speake died during preparation of the last newsletter so it was not possible to do him justice. The following is an edited version of the tribute paid at his memorial service in Shenfield by Laurence Clarke, a former Marconi colleague.

Reflections on David's professional life remind me of that of my father, who also lived into his 90s after a long research career and was to me a beacon of wisdom. David often reminded me of him when I was in difficult situations. Speaking at a Memorial Service so long after the professionally active time inevitably stretches the memory.

David had a long and productive professional life - so long that it is not really possible for one person to speak of it from beginning to end. His early work after the services in the war, running a physics group at Marconi Research before moving to research management, is unknown to me. Talking with one of his few remaining colleague of the time I learned that he already showed the helpfulness and understanding which I think characterised his life. From personal knowledge I can only cover the last 47 years since English Electric took over Elliott Automation shortly followed by the major revision of the UK electrical industry by GEC. These events brought us to work alongside each other in a number of ways. It means that I cannot refer to individual professional projects where David was successful. However I suspect that his more significant contribution to the field of electronics came from the way that he managed the transition from the world of Marconi to that of GEC, not only at Baddow but in the group as a whole.

David was a gentleman, in every sense of the word, who found himself thrust into the rather brutal business world of Arnold Weinstock - so very different from the steady, conservative and dare one say, comfortable, control of Lord Nelson and Bob Telford. He was running a major and well respected Research Laboratory at Baddow and as the Marconi Technical Director, overseeing the work of Marconi as a whole - work which was, in many ways leading the world. However in the new GEC empire there were other groups with claims of competing, groundbreaking work and this must have made life very difficult. Each of those projects had their dedicated teams who genuinely thought that they were doing the 'right' thing, and fought vigorously to maintain their independence. David calmly met the challenge seeking the best, and most efficient ways forward to achieve the overall aims without, as far as I know, riding roughshod over any of the parties.

It was not only Arnold Weinstock who introduced a 'brutal' financial regime. Industry as a whole was being controlled far more by the accountants and by Stock Exchange reputations. The old hierarchical structures of privilege for the bosses were on the way out. Perhaps the most extreme example of this to which AW put a stop, was the case where a company's Managing Director kept his dog under his desk in the office and under the table in the board's private dining room (I hasten to add that this was not in a Marconi company,).

Computers, arising to a great extent from the code breaking efforts at Bletchley Park during World War II, began to cause a major disturbance to established ways of working. One only has to look around today to see that with the Internet, Facebook and Twitter, we were only at the very beginning of a revolution which would have a major effect on the lives of everyone and not just the electronics industry.

Not surprisingly all the major elements of the new GEC complex had seen this as a field in which they should take a share. In the public eye this seemed to be entirely concerned with stand-alone machines used for business purposes. The Weinstock exercise rapidly resulted in the many GEC bits being merged into the growing ICL

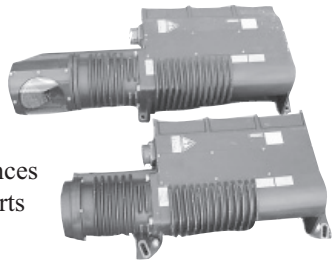
However the central part which computers and digital electronics would play in all GEC Marconi's traditional fields was less acknowledged. Radar, Avionics, Battlefield and Naval Command and Control systems were all becoming increasingly dependent on computers of one sort or another - and in each of these fields GEC found itself with multiple activities in dispersed locations and again, each quite sure that they had the 'right' approach. David's direction was again called for in resolving many of these situations.

This all took place more than 30 years ago and David's retirement was on the horizon, but the government was recognising that the spread of R&D effort in the country - industry, universities and government laboratories - was inevitably counterproductive in competition with the USA and Japan, and should, if possible, be pulled together. A major collaborative venture, the Alvey Project, was formed with substantial funding from government matched by industrial contributions. Having assisted in the management of the project as the monitor on several projects, towards the end of the project in 1986, David became a member of the Steering Committee enabling him to bring to bear his experience of GEC overlaps and difficulties forming collaborations with particular reference to a possible follow-on project. He became the right hand man of Sir Austin Bide, then Chairman of Glaxo, the man charged with formulating proposals. Sadly a change of government meant that the spotlight had moved in other political directions, and that follow-on did not materialise.

So David steered a path from the almost pre-war environment of Marconi in the 1950s to a position well on the way to the digital world he left, exerting his calm consideration to all who needed help - a rare quality.

Do you recognise these Marconi searchlights?

Michael Simpson, Tucson, Arizona, USA (michaels9@cox.net) - 2 November 2014



I don't know if it is appropriate to ask this of you, but I would like find information on two Marconi searchlights I have recently purchased. I am trying to restore these magnificent items, which seem to be prototypes produced at Leicester England. One of the boxes also references 'LE McAllister Control Engineers'. You may follow the link below to see documentation of efforts so far to restore them to working condition: one was working briefly, but is no longer.

http://www.candlepowerforums.com/vb/showthread.php?345748-1-000-Watt-Marconi-Radar-Systems-Military-Short-Arc-Searchlights

Please excuse me if I have submitted this request inappropriately but I would be ever so grateful for any assistance you could provide. I would like to ask if any of the Marconi Veterans remember this prototype project, and if they have any recollections about the history of the lights, their intended use, details of how and when they were manufactured, or any technical data about the project. I believe they may have been made around the late 1980s or the 1990s, but I am not sure.

Thank you kindly for taking time to read this request, and if you have any ideas about sources of information on these wonderful pieces of history, I would be most grateful.

Reply from MVA Secretary Barry Powell, 2 November 2014

These searchlights seem, from the markings, to have been made at the Leicester Factory of Marconi Radar Systems Ltd. From the photographs, I can see a part number SS1573 for the starter - this would translate to a drawing number S-**-1573. If you could find a similar identity label for the entire assembly, it should give the type/drawing number. Otherwise, the drawing for the starter should have a 'used on' entry which would enable you to track up to the overall identity.

I would recommend that you contact The Bodleian Library in Oxford who now hold the Marconi Archives - contact is a Mr Michael Hughes - michael.hughes@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

Some information may still be held by BAE Insyte who are the current incarnation of Marconi Radar Systems and I am copying this reply to a member of our committee who works there, and we will post your enquiry on our website and publish it in our newsletter, forwarding any replies to you.

Best wishes for a successful project.

(There are numerous photos showing close-ups of the details of the lights and suggestions concerning possible uses on the referenced forum page. A number of posts suggest a military aircraft application. Ed)

'Daisy' Sismore

Alan 'Matty' Matthews MOGS posting, 27 July 2014

Prompted by recent mention in the forum of the possible origins of Air Commodore Ted 'Daisy' Sismore's nickname (he died on 22 March 2012 - Telegraph obituary at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/air-force-obituaries/9181831/Air-Commodore-Ted-Sismore.html is an excellent resumé of his life and achievements) Alan 'Matty' Matthews posted this on the MOGS forum on the 27th July 2014.

I have probably told this story before, but sometime in the early seventies I went to the Paris Air Show from Southend in a 12-seater twin light aircraft with a group which included John Crispin (complete with red silk lined cloak), Barry France I think and Ted Sismore, who I did not know very well, but was my boss several levels up. I was in sales at a fairly junior level, but think I was probably taking Fred Kime's place for some reason.

When we got into the plane Ted asked the young pilot if he would mind if he sat with him up front. "Fine" said the pilot, and off we went. But when we landed at an airfield near Paris, the pilot said to some of us: "Who was the old guy who sat with me on the way here - he seemed to know every church, road, bridge and other feature in France, and knew quite a bit about flying?"

So we said: "He was an RAF Air Commodore and had the reputation of being the best navigator in the RAF during the war and was also a top pilot with multiple DFCs."

The pilot was horrified that his efforts had been seen by such an eminent flyer and asked if we could make sure Ted travelled in the back on the way home - though I am sure any of Ted's comments, if any, would have been kind ones.

On the way back, in France, John Crispin stopped the bus and bought many cases of wine to take home and these were packed into the big boot at the front of the aircraft. It must have exceeded our duty free allowance many times over but John with his impressive scarlet lined cloak managed to convince the Customs men that the cargo was legitimate and we later shared 'the spoils'.

Eric Walker

Eric Walker, for all his Marconi career an Airadio man, died on the 19th December 2014. The newsletter has carried two articles by him, one entitled 'What's the rate of exchange for kudos' in the 2007 edition and 'Life in the 50s and 60s at Writtle' last year. Two colleagues closely associated with him during his time, Ray Walls and John Rendell, have penned this appreciation of his career.

Eric Walker joined Marconi's in September 1950 as a Graduate Apprentice. His apprenticeship involved time at sheet metal, the drawing office school, commercial offices and finally a five month course at the Marconi College in Chelmsford.

With this experience he was posted in September 1951 to the development activity of the Aeronautical Division at Writtle where he joined a section of some nine engineers led by Geoffrey Beck. The task of this section was to take the design of an airborne navigation equipment that had started at Marconi Research at Baddow, and bring it to production. The project, using Doppler principles, enabled an aircraft to determine its speed and thus position without the use of ground aids. It was classified Secret and was given the codename Green Satin. Eric worked on the tracker unit that analysed the returns from microwaves beamed to the ground.

Some later flight trials of the developed equipment were made in a Canberra aircraft at Warton aerodrome in 1955. Eric gave on-site support monitoring the equipment and the results.

In the 1960s he led a team in the development of a transistorised Doppler sensor that was designed specifically for military helicopters. Eric liaised closely with RRE Malvern who was effectively the Design Authority. The requirement was more complex in that the system had to work down to zero altitude and at hover speeds, forwards, backwards and sideways. It was fitted to the Royal Navy Wessex 3 and the German Navy Sea King helicopters.

Then, in 1978, the Airadio business was divided into two divisions: Airadio Products and Airadio Systems. Eric was appointed Manager of the Airadio Systems Division.

This division was established to manage the development, manufacture and procurement of a communications equipments intended for the AEW Nimrod aircraft. The comms system was required to provide the flight crew and onboard tactical systems operators with automated access to intercom facilities and the various radios necessary to fulfil their mission role. A full-scale aircraft cabin simulator was set up at Basildon to test and demonstrate the system. Portable ground stations were supplied to support flight trials of both communications and radar systems. This was a multi-facetted programme with complex contractual and technical working relationships with the customer, other GEC Marconi companies, major US based sub-contractors and BAE, the airframe manufacturer. Eric successfully managed this challenging programme and despite eventual cancellation of the overall project it was acknowledged that the communications system had met its design and performance goals.

Under Eric's leadership Airadio Systems Division continued to prosper, with a series of contracts awarded for the supply of secure communications systems destined for installation in a wide range of RAF aircraft and Navy helicopters. All of this was accomplished at a time of ever changing government procurement policies and internal company restructuring. Despite these responsibilities Eric always managed to make time for his golfing, badminton and horticultural interests. Many working relationships were enhanced both within the company and with our customers by his enthusiasm for these activities.

Lady Betty Telford

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Lady Telford, better known to all of us as Betty, wife of our late Marconi Company chairman and former MVA President Sir Robert Telford. She died in hospital in early December following a short illness having broken her leg during a fall at home.

Many Marconi personnel attended her funeral at Rettendon Church on 15th December 2014 where many tributes were paid for her achievements and support of Sir Robert, her prowess in sporting activities and her ability in playing bridge.

Betty will be sorely missed as she was a loyal supporter of The Marconi Veterans Association.

In memoriam

We report the death of those Veterans notified to the secretary from the copy date of the last newsletter to the 31st January 2015 We extend our sympathy to the families of those mentioned.

FH Austin, RL Awcock, Mrs D Bateson, DG Beech, SC Beedie, J Bradley, HM Chandler, SC Church MBE, MJ Coombe, RE Cornhill, AS Dodd, GS Dunn, AV Forwood, PE Foulds, CJ Greenham, JK Gregory, RG Greygoose, DM Griffiths, PW Gurton, DE Hart, TF Heaton, PJ Humphrey, JA Jason, TH Kendall, RE King, AW Lamb, CG Marshall, Mrs FA Marshall, Mrs JR Mason, JW Milligan, JR Moody, PB Moore, J Nicol, CS Owen, E Pearson, ET Perkins, A Peters, Mrs C Pye, A Rayner, JC Ryley, GD Speake OBE, G Stevens, RF Taylor, Lady E Telford, TN Tisdall, RH Vanstone, JE Viles, EG Walker, RC Willis, RA Wood, V Wood, R Wray.