

## How Marconi formed the BBC and its legacy to Chelmsford

Peter Turrall Chairman Marconi Veterans Association

One hundred and twenty years ago in Chelmsford, Guglielmo Marconi established the world's first wireless factory. From a small unit outside the city centre around thirty employees manufactured products which eventually were sold worldwide, establishing communications in the widest sense to assist shipping and contacts by wireless communication, thus opening up a system where day-to-day contacts were possible.

Chelmsford became a centre of attention for many countries who wished to take advantage of this new means of communication having only previously had the telephone for this purpose. It was not long before Marconi's Wireless and Telegraph Company found larger premises near the centre of Chelmsford and eventually over a period of one hundred years employed many thousands of people.

Chelmsford should be proud that an Italian, who became an absolute academic engineering genius, set up the largest wireless company in the world giving large scale employment to citizens in and around the city of Chelmsford

In 1920 the company's Wireless Station known as 2LO, based in London with all equipment manufactured in Chelmsford, was taken over by the British Government to form the United Kingdom's first broadcast organisation known as British Broadcasting Company and later renamed British Broadcasting Corporation. Not only all the Marconi equipment but also the Marconi staff of Station 2LO came under the direction of the new organisation affectionately known as the BBC.

Chelmsford City Council has failed to recognise the asset this city has. The statue of Guglielmo Marconi, erected a few years ago and sponsored by a number of organisations including the City Council, is hidden behind the bus station - an insult to this great man.

Coming into the City of Chelmsford, there are signs at every point of entry stating 'Chelmsford the Birthplace of Radio'. Many times the City Council has been advised that the word 'Radio' should read 'Wireless' as Marconi named his organisation Marconi's Wireless and Telegraph Company. Marconi in Chelmsford did not make radios as the signs suggest.

In giving recognition and respect to one of the world's great engineers, Chelmsford City Council should re-erect the statue in the centre of Chelmsford in Half Moon Square and amend all entry signs accordingly.

## A year of change

Ken Earney, retiring editor

I was surprised to see that I'd been editor of the newsletter for the past thirteen years, and now I'm handing on the baton to Mark Watson-Lee who will edit the 2020 edition, with some guidance and assistance from me.

My first, in 2006, on taking over from Peter, was daunting. A sizable backlog of archived contributions had to be drip-fed in over three years. My wife Jackie, with experience on the Marconi magazine and our village newsletter, was a considerable help in getting me up and running. I am grateful that she has run an eye over what I believed was the press-ready product to correct any last minute goofs.

It's been an interesting job: I've had to learn a bit about product areas very different from my experience in avionics, so much about our companies I didn't know before. The most interesting part has been to follow up, on the internet principally, background material that could be used to supplement what has been supplied by you.

I've been conscious the material has been heavily Chelmsford and engineering staff biased, inevitable I guess since from Marconi's time company business has been the manufacture of high-tech electronic products with Chelmsford as its hub. I have tried to ensure that whenever possible there was coverage from outside these areas. You may not agree I've succeeded for which I can only apologise: I hope you've found some of it an interesting read.

A constant concern every year has been - will there be enough material to fill fourteen pages, or even twelve? When the real work begins in January it becomes apparent there will be (this year) enough for sixteen pages. Please keep Mark well supplied with your contributions - better too much than too little. Last year, scratching around for an item to fill over half a page, I'd completely overlooked one article that should have occupied that space (it is included in this edition.) Items not 'issue-date critical' can be archived for use the following year. Mark will accept material throughout the year, but preferably before January.

Thank you for the support you have given me, please do the same for Mark. I shall be 'editorial assistant' for as long as he wishes.



## 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:*

*Newsletter editor Mark Watson-Lee, email [newsletter@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:newsletter@marconi-veterans.org) or to the secretary, Colin Fletcher, Secretary, Marconi Veterans Association, 41 Sunrise Avenue Chelmsford Essex CM1 4JN Tel: 01245 267696, [secretary@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:secretary@marconi-veterans.org)*

*Items for possible publication in the newsletter should also be addressed, if submitting electronically, to the editor as above or to the secretary if submitting hard copy by post.*

*In the majority of cases published below the enquirer has been directed to the comprehensive guide produced by Barry Powell to the online resources which may be helpful with this kind of enquiry. Find it on the MVA website at:*

*[http://www.marconi-veterans.org/?page\\_id=3047/](http://www.marconi-veterans.org/?page_id=3047/) Enquirers have also been directed to the Bodleian Library.*

*Certain items in this issue, particularly on this and the next page, are responses to letters or articles appearing in the 2017 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.*

*Picking up on mention of the internet, many of the articles now come with links to web pages giving considerably more information on topics than can be included on these pages. For those not internet enabled, may I suggest you enlist the help of a friend or neighbour who is, or go to your local library - use them or lose them! - to enable you to see the material referred to.*

### Recollections of Frederick 'Freddie' Beales

From Mike Plant, 27 February 2018

Further to the item in this year's newsletter about Freddie, I cannot help in respect of the photograph but hope my own recollection of him will remind a great many ex-colleagues who will remember him as a progress chaser par excellence on the factory floor and often working around the machine shop area, Goods In and WIP stores.

The Progress Chaser had responsibility not only, on occasion, to speed things up, eg if a workpiece had been rejected and required to be reworked, stripped and replated, or similar circumstance needing extra priority, but perhaps more often to locate items required by assembly which had temporarily disappeared! There were many such events in my time, 1961 to 66, and Freddie would find the missing item every time, his success in this almost uncanny at times. And while he probably didn't (quite) break the 'no running' rule, he must have been very close a thousand times - energetic and hard working and never downhearted.

I single him out of a good bunch of contemporaries for his unique combination of all these characteristics, no criticism intended of others including Snowy White (not the Foreman of WIP store), and also coming to mind, Eddie Whitbread in the corner of section 17.

I had long wondered whether Freddie was still in the company. Then unexpectedly, and many years later, in 2014 or 5, I met him while helping to man the Marconi Heritage Group table outside the library as part of that year's Chelmsford Festival. I will never forget the discussion that took place with him and his daughter, such are precious beyond measure! His grandson Thomas Hunter no doubt could add much here: suffice it to say that I learned that Freddie had even emigrated and worked for a time in Australia! A hero to me.

### Photo of Frederick Beales- 1

From Nick Watts, 23 February 2018

A few facts relating to the photo (2018 edition page 12) of Fredrick Beales known to us all as Freddy. At that time Freddy was the stores supervisor at Rivenhall. The photo was taken outside Hanger 1 at Rivenhall. The equipment was an ICS3 System probably destined for the American Navy. The people in the photo as far as I can remember are as follows:- Back row 1st Phil (no surname); 3rd from left Brad (no surname); 4th Harold (no surname); 5th Bob Scorey (test supervisor). Front row 1st Malcom Smith (test supervisor); 3rd Freddy Beales; 4th Alf Goodwin (quality controller). At the time I was project controller for this equipment.

### Photo of Frederick Beales - 2

From Andrew Sargent , 11 March 2018

At the time of the photo, in the summer of 1985, I was a programme engineer on the LHD-1 project.

A label like the one shown was placed on the back of every photo taken by the in-house photographic department for identification, the number J8506-01K identifies the group photograph.

Moving on to the picture, it was taken at Rivenhall airfield, near Silver End, Essex. Several of the hangers and Nissen huts were used by Marconi Communications in the 1980s. Some of the people are Malcolm Smith front left, John Deacon front second left and Simon Akers back right. Malcolm and John were members of the Rivenhall test team, Simon was a member of the New Street programme team. The outfits are part of the USS Wasp's external communications system purchased by Litton Data Systems Division for the United States Navy. All the outfits were tested and packed at Rivenhall, then some 50 crates in total, were delivered to Ingalls Shipyard, Pascagoula Mississippi.

## Kenneth 'Ken' Hutley

From Andrew Hutley, 25 February 2018

My late father Ken was a lifelong member of MCSL. He died at the age of 94 in Broomfield Hospital on 25 January 2018.

I followed Dad into Marconi, joining in 1981, was issued with the adjacent employee number and worked through the apprenticeship scheme ending up in Space and Microwave Test between 1984 and 1988. In 1989 I joined the National One empire which was eventually devolved from MCSL.

What follows was read as a tribute at his funeral a couple of weeks ago.

Ken was born on 15 June 1923 to Florence and Amos Hutley in Witham. He went to school in Witham and subsequently to the North East Technical College in Colchester.

He applied to The Marconi Company for a job and after an interview began work at Chelmsford on 19 May 1939 where he progressed through a number of positions. His reserved occupation meant he was exempt from war duties: he did however serve in the Home Guard. During the course of his employment he worked at various sites and after a spell at Rivenhall he moved back to Chelmsford.

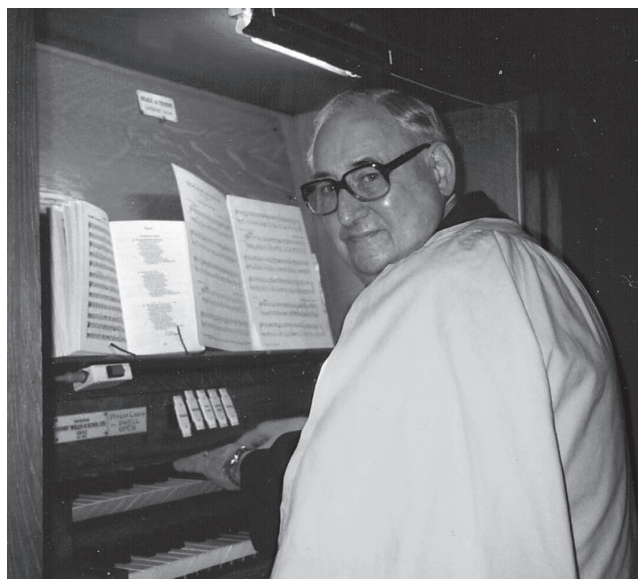
In 1961 Ken was given a new challenge - to set up an in-house department to repair all test equipment used in the Marconi sites around Chelmsford, where he remained until his retirement in 1987. During this time he worked at Writtle and Westway.

A few years before retiring he was encouraged to sit the Radio Amateur examination and this enabled him to keep in contact with many of his former colleagues who were already hams. This hobby was ultimately to provide a social lifeline in his later years and kept his mind alert and focused.

Music was always a key part of his life although his parents were not musical at all. As a lad the young Ken joined the church at Wickham Bishops and after having some piano lessons tried his hand at the organ. Ulting Parish Church subsequently required an organist and he took that position, then a while later in 1944 he took on the organ duties in Wickham Bishops where he remained providing music for nearly 57 years as organist.

Alongside the serious duties of church music, he had several other musical interests. Firstly, during the post war years, he joined a dance band called the Raggamuffins, playing piano alongside friends with drums, saxophones and other instruments; he regularly experienced the 'joys' of the local village hall pianos. Ken's other musical love was the cinema organ and it was partly this enthusiasm that led to the construction of an electronic organ at home to recreate the sounds of the cinema. At the flick of a switch, the home organ turned into a church organ, providing a much warmer environment in which to practice for Sunday services.

His health started to decline in 2008 when he narrowly escaped a kidney failure and through the course of 2014 and 2015 he was required to attend two hospitals on a regular basis. After his wife Marjorie passed away in February 2016, he experienced a fall and that, combined with other medical issues, resulted in frequent lengthy hospitalisations in 2016 and 2017. In between times, Ken required home care as he refused at all costs any suggestion to move to a place where 24hr care could be provided.



*Ken Hutley the musician*

## John Robson (1928 – 2018)

From Elizabeth and Anne Robson, 27 September 2018

Our father, John Robson, died on 29 August 2018, aged 90. He was an employee of Marconi Radar Systems between 1967 and 1991. Although not a member of the Marconi Veterans Association, he had happy memories of his time at Marconi and enjoyed reading about former colleagues and the history of the company on your website.

John spent 14 years, from 1944 to 1958, in the Royal Navy, trained in electronics and worked his way up from

Boy 2nd Class to Chief Petty Officer. In the early 60s, he worked as a team leader for the Radio Corporation of America at Fylingdales radar base on the North York Moors.

He moved to Great Baddow in November 1967 to join Marconi Radar Systems as a radar systems designer and latterly as a technical author, before retiring in July 1991.

He leaves four daughters who remember with affection the children's Christmas parties organised by the Marconi Sports and Social Club.



## Norman Day

On the 4 June 2018, Norman Day (David Day), celebrated 50 years of employment within the Marine Division. It's not many Veterans who manage (or survive) 50 years in continuous employment. Norman must be made of strong material, 50 years is an amazing achievement: these days it is mostly unheard of for individuals to continuously work for 50 years let alone stay with the same company, within the same department!

Norman started work 4 June 1968, and landed the job after one interview with MIMCO straight from school. Employed as an Office Junior within the Radio Traffic Department, referred to as A9. The majority of tasks involved filing and other office junior tasks. He progressed into processing invoices manually, processing call data from thousands of vessels and working with telegrams. He was the proud owner of the second calculator (personal calculator – office didn't provide!) within Marine after moving away from pounds, shilling and pence!

Jump forward 50 years and Norman now processes invoices and sets airtime rates for all marine airtime customers electronically and with a touch of a button - although technology does of course bring its own issues when nothing happens when you press that button. All invoices used to go out by Royal Mail and the office was covered with piles of paper ready to be put into envelopes, now these are sent electronically via email!

If ever short of conversation with Norman, you just need to mention motorbikes and beer festivals - and the conversation just flows - like the ale!!

It was called MIMCO when he started and he has gone full circle to SIRM (Societa Italian Radio Marittima SPA) also a former Marconi company.

SIRM know that their growth and success is dependent on having devoted and capable team members such as Norman, and they wanted to recognise the contributions he has made in helping them achieve their goals. To honour his 50 years of service, SIRM presented him with a gift – a tankard inscribed with the words “4th June 1968, Cheers to 50 years.”

*Most of the text was provided by Lisa Cornell from SIRM in South Woodham Ferrers whose input we thankfully acknowledge.*



## Peter Robinson

From Hollie Newton 20 February 2018

My name is Hollie Newton, and my grandad Peter Robinson worked for Marconi during the war. He was an engineer, I believe, working on radar.

I never got to meet my grandad. He passed away when my mum was only 17, leaving a Peter Robinson-shaped hole right in the middle of our family.

I now find myself writing a book about chain ferries, of all things, which has led me to the Haven Hotel at Sandbanks, Marconi's early experiments in long range radio - and the link to my own family history.

I wonder, if it doesn't put you to too much trouble, if you might have any information about him. Does anyone remember him? Is there any writing about him maybe? Even the smallest record would be very much appreciated.

## Keith Chittenden

From Brian Saunders, 15 January 2019

Keith Chittenden, the former Managing Director of Marconi Radar Systems, passed away on 29 December 2018 aged 84. He is survived by his wife Sylvia, his daughter Sandra and his son Jeremy.

He worked for the Company for many years. At one time I believe he was an installation engineer in northern Norway and learnt the local language. Before he moved to Radar he ran a Division in Frimley which included the

DN181 Blindfire Radar for the Rapier missile which was so successfully used in the Falklands. He will be sadly missed. A service commemorating his life was held at Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton Tuesday 2 January.

Keith wrote of his experiences on a visit to Oman in 1986 in the 2009 newsletter (No.11) page12.

## Eric Gildersleve - a memorable Marconi character

From Alan Matthews

Eric Gildersleve was living in a nursing home in Hertfordshire close to his family when he died in July 2018. Alan Matthews, a former colleague from Pottery Lane days, shared some of memories of him. Here is one such.

On one occasion, I was at a meeting at Writtle Road about software requirements for the Swedish TOR project and the tea and biscuits had just been delivered. The door opened and to our great surprise Eric Gildersleve walked in and sat down – not his sort of meeting at all. He had his tea etc and stayed another hour or so till the end of the meeting, but did not say anything at all. Outside I said to him: “What were you doing at that meeting, that is not your field of expertise?” “Well” he said “I had come over from Baddow for a meeting which was cancelled and walking past the room I could see a meeting going on with some refreshments, so thought two requirements could be satisfied - my need to go to a meeting and also for a bit of refreshment!

## A model for...?

Stewart Waring Flt Lt RAF (Ret)

This enquiry from Stewart Waring was sent to the secretary Barry Powell in April 2017. I intended to include it in the 2018 newsletter, but completely through oversight on my part it didn't appear. Profuse apologies to Stewart on realising my mistake and a promise to include it in the 2019 edition. I posted the enquiry on the MOGS forum and received a number of responses which confirmed it was extremely unlikely to be radar.

I recently bought in an 'antique' (on reflection a by-gones/bric-a-brac shop) in Grantham, Lincolnshire, a well (probably professionally) made model of a '6m Transportable Tropo'. A plate gives the information 'O/all Length 5m, Stowed Height 2.3m, Weight 1500 kgms'. The aerial, a decagon (flat plate dish) is mounted on a two wheeled trailer, the wheel hubs have the Marconi logo and the trailer the number plate SEC 207P (1975). The model adjusts for rake of the aerial, stowage etc. The scale is approximately 1:13-1:15 and it is mounted on a plywood, varnished board. Over the years I noted several good and interesting models in that shop, but not interesting enough to buy. This one was, however.

Would any of your members have any knowledge of this device, was it ever built, where did the model come from? Any information you may be able to obtain will be much appreciated.

As an aside I worked with Marconi when the ill fated Comet/Nimrod AEW project was being developed, flying out of RAE Bedford.

*In his reply, Barry Powell suggested that it looked like a model produced for publicity purposes by the Space and Microwave Division of Marconi's. Subsequently some of the MOGs suggested various directions for further enquiry:-*

*...radar systems sometimes used thin line tropo for remoting radar pictures? (Ian Gillis)*

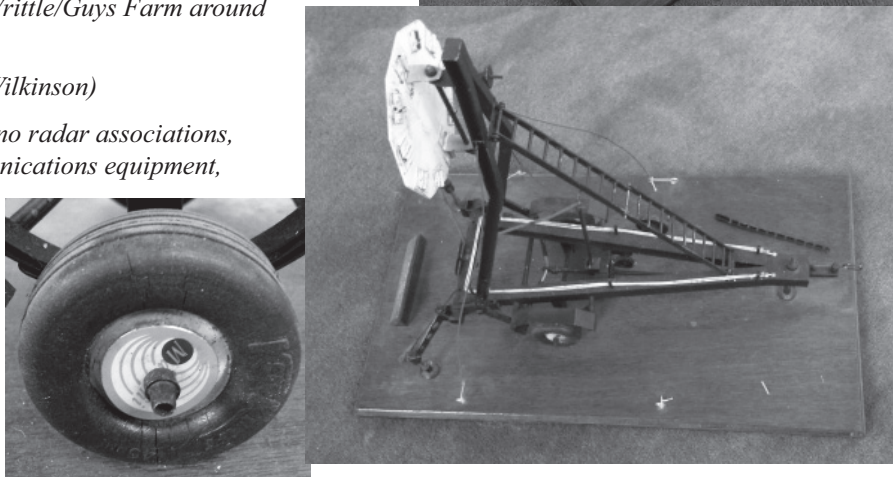
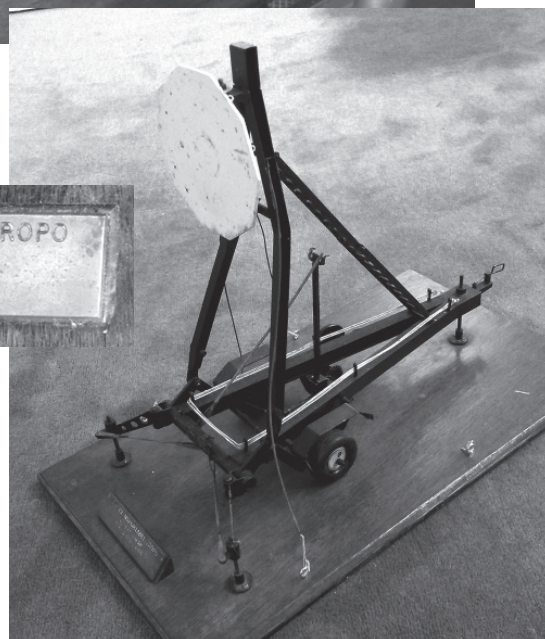
*...a polarisation changing plate and therefore whether the model contains a parabolic dish behind it? I remember examining photos of, and estimating the performance of, Russian SAM guidance systems, in which such a plate was a prominent feature. (Bernard de Neumann)*

*...there was work on Tropo scatter at Writtle/Guys Farm around 1959/60. (Mike Plant)*

*But, not one of ours at MRSL (Ken Wilkinson)*

*There appear to be more than likely no radar associations, rather a model for troposcatter communications equipment, confirming the abbreviation on the identity plate. A number of the MOGs suggestions were copied to Stewart, and have given me one or two leads to follow up which I've yet to do.*

**So now, can one amongst you solve this puzzle – for what kit was it a model?**



## Secretary's Soapbox

Colin Fletcher

As the 2019 Reunion approaches, I must thank my predecessor Barry for all his hard work over the past 14 years. Without his spreadsheet expertise in life would be extremely difficult. (Full details of the arrangements for this year's reunion are on page 12.

So far being Secretary has been within, but sometimes on the boundary, of my comfort zone (an expression now in common parlance). This year due to the early date of 6 April, the planning and scheduling of the reunion will be tight. As I write this article, I can only hope the deadlines are not too tight and, as the reunion approaches, I must admit to 'butterflies in the tummy'. Hopefully with Barry's calm guidance we will once again be able to sit down with old friends and colleagues on 6 April.

One of the sad duties of being Secretary is being informed of the passing of a veteran. Unfortunately, each year the numbers dwindle as we lose old friends and colleagues. That being said, or written in this case, it is pleasing to announce that we have three new Friends: Piers Chapman, son of Peter Chapman, Barry Watson, who gave the 1974 Marconi Foundation Lecture in Bologna, and Terry White (Titanic Terry), who has been giving lectures on the Titanic in and around the Chelmsford area for around 20 years.

On the brighter side and looking to the future, 2020 is the centenary of the first public wireless broadcast by Dame Nellie Melba (she of 'Melba Toast' and 'Peach Melba' fame), while 2022 is the centenary of the British Broadcasting Company, which was founded on 18 October 1922 and began broadcasting in November of the same year. Marconi played a large part in these events and it is hoped that along with the Chelmsford Civic Council, the Marconi Veterans' Association will play an active part.

If you wish to know more please contact me at [secretary@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:secretary@marconi-veterans.org)

### Hearty Thanks

I am pleased to report that during 2018 the Association has benefited from the generosity of Veterans and Marconi employees, both deceased and living. The Management Committee extends its thanks to the following for and their families for the donations both large and small.

**Peter Brian Chapman** who left a legacy of £500 in his will. This generous gift is most welcome.

**Ron Bradbrook** whose son Nick kindly donated his father's work papers and 2 working calculators.

**Robert George Stokes** whose family donated 216 Marconi Mariner magazines from 1947 to 1984 inclusive. These are now in the technical archive at Sandford Mill.

**Roger Sweny** who provided the Association with his duplicate coasters, all in excellent condition, four of which were previously unavailable.

### Coaster Swap Shop

On the subject of coasters, if you have any coasters from previous years and would like to swap them for coasters also from previous years, provided they are in good condition, then bring them along to the annual reunion. This is subject to availability and is limited to previous years and not coasters from the current reunion.

### Chain Home tower at Great Baddow

Currently moves are afoot to place an application to English Heritage to have the Chain Home tower at Great Baddow to be considered for listed status. At the time of writing Historic England was due to visit the site at the beginning of January. This is the only remaining Chain Home tower which is complete anywhere in the world and, given that partially intact towers are grade II listed, it is possible that this would also be grade II.

For further information please contact me at [secretary@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:secretary@marconi-veterans.org)

### General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

In May 2018, the GDPR came in effect. In order to ensure that the association complies with the regulation a policy document has been produced. If you wish for a full copy please contact the Secretary whose contact details can be found in the newsletter.

The GDPR does not change the way in which the association protects your data, which is limited to your contact details.

Finally, I would like to wish you all a very prosperous 2019 and hope to see as many of you as possible either at the reunion on 6 April or the next Open Day at Sandford Mill.

One final note – the 2020 reunion will be on Saturday 25 April.



## Edmund Taylor Wireless Operator SS Kalomo (London) Mercantile Marine Died at sea in late 1918, age 17. Not commemorated

There is no record of Edmund in the Commonwealth War Graves archives so it is probable that he died just after the war ended. Edmund was born on 29 January 1901 at The Manor, Little Longstone in the parish of Bakewell in Derbyshire. His father's name was Herbert Tinsley Taylor of independent means, his mother's maiden name Broomfield. Edmund joined Pocklington School on 18 January 1913, from Bridlington Grammar when his parents were living at Shean House, Filey. He joined Malton School on 19th September 1916 and left one month after his 16 birthday on 23 February 1917 to train as a wireless telegrapher.



At the time his father, still of independent means, was living at 58, Florence Terrace, New Biggin, Malton. The July 1918 school magazine records that Eric Fuller and Edmund Taylor have passed their 1st Class Wireless Examination and were home for a brief rest. In the December 1918 issue it was confirmed that Edmund had died at sea from influenza\* on board the SS Kalomo, adding in the LATE PRESS 'It is with great regret that we have to record the death at sea, from influenza, of Edmund Taylor, who though only with us for a short time, did much that was good for us. We wish to offer our deep sympathy with his parents.'

SS Kalomo (*see photo*) was completed in 1907 by Robert Duncan & Co, Port Glasgow, for the Bucknall Steamship Lines Ltd, London. She was re-registered in 1914 to Ellerman & Bucknall (Steamships) Co Ltd, London when a controlling interest in the Bucknall shipping line was sold to John Ellerman. She was broken up on 8 November 1931 by TW Ward Ltd at Inverkeithing after being renamed City of Halifax in 1926.

*\*The H1N1 influenza pandemic of 1918 – 1919 was deadly. It infected 500 million people across the world including remote Pacific islands and the Arctic, and resulted in the deaths of 50 to 100 million (three to five percent of the world's population), making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history.*

*Most influenza outbreaks disproportionately kill juvenile, elderly, or already weakened patients; in contrast, the 1918 pandemic predominantly killed previously healthy young adults. The majority of deaths were from bacterial pneumonia, a common secondary infection associated with influenza, but the virus also killed people directly, by causing massive haemorrhages and oedema in the lung. The incubation period for the disease is some 2 to 5 days and death can follow in hours or a few days from the first symptoms appearing.*



The text of the announcement at bottom right of poster reads:

**YOUNG MEN**  
BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 18  
SERVE YOUR COUNTRY AS  
WIRELESS OPERATORS  
EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE

Official Government Statement.

'Owing to the present urgent demand for Wireless Operators in the Mercantile Marine, students entering the school prior to their eighteenth birthdays, and making such progress that they are able to obtain the necessary certificates on or before reaching the age of 18¼, will be temporarily exempted from military service until a sufficient number of Operators has been obtained. This exemption continues so long as students of military age who have passed into the Mercantile Marine are employed as Operators at sea.'

Free Training.

Good Pay.

Permanent Positions.

Write or call for full particulars to  
THE MARCONI REPRESENTATIVE

City School of Wireless Telegraphy, 4 Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham.

## MVA appeal

Peter Turrall

The Marconi Veterans committee meets a few times each year mainly to organise the Annual Reunion but at the same time to gather news of veterans and of course to prepare information for our annual newsletter.

We ask all Marconi Veterans to let us have regularly items of interest to other veterans, in particular activities, families and of course births and deaths - anything which might be of interest to others. Please dig deep and send our incoming newsletter editor Mark Watson-Lee these snippets. He will accept any item at any time throughout the year. His email address is:

[newsletter@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:newsletter@marconi-veterans.org)

The MVA Committee also has an appeal to make. We would like any veteran to undertake on behalf of the Association some of the duties of the following:-

- a) **Lecturer or Speaker** to organisations such as schools or U3A organisations. (This requires somebody to visit and present a slide or disc on History of Marconi. Expenses are in most cases payable by whoever makes the request).
- b) **Press Officer.** Somebody to prepare small articles covering important events and send to local Press.
- c) **Liaison Officer.** There are excellent contacts by MVA with local civic authorities and other similar organisations but we need somebody who could take on the responsibility of regular contact with these people to promote the

activities of MVA and also to advise our committee on possible assistance with them.

You do not have to be a committee member of MVA and would attend MVA committee meetings only when necessary. If you feel you could help out with any of the above please contact Secretary Colin Fletcher at:  
[secretary@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:secretary@marconi-veterans.org)

## From the former Secretary

Most of you will be aware that, at the Reunion in April, I stepped down as secretary. This position has been ably filled by Veteran Colin Fletcher who, I am certain, will do an excellent job.

I would like to thank all those who have wished me well in my 'retirement', especially your committee who kindly presented me with a sum of money to purchase a reminder of my time in the secretary's chair. We have spent this on a water feature for our garden and a trolley to help with moving the containers around the garden. Chris also sends her thanks for the Hydrangea pot which is currently in a sheltered position in the garden ready for the ravages of winter. I will be remaining on the committee and assuming the role of first contact for new members (Veterans and Friends) so, if you know of anyone who wishes to join us, please refer them to me on 01268 696342 or by email to [membership@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:membership@marconi-veterans.org)

Here's wishing you all a happy and healthy 2019

Barry and Chris (the former Secretary's former Secretary!)

## For the rugby - a parade?

Charles Boyton

This tale, although about my National service, is very much related to my Marconi apprenticeship. I completed my apprenticeship October 1954, after having spent the last year in Transmitter Test in building 46.

During my first eight weeks training I was urged to apply for a trade test when I got to my next position. The Air Force had realised that it was better for the recruit to follow his civvy occupation if possible, rather than for example give a chef the job of a clerk.

I was posted to RAF Locking near Western-Super-Mare. I found myself in a billet with air radar mechanics. I passed my trade test and had six weeks familiarisation at the end of which I would get my rank of Junior Technician (ground wireless fitter). I was allowed free access to the library and was given a list of manuals for the equipment. For my practical work I had to check with the instructors which labs were not being used by the other trainees.

I must explain the layout of the station. It was built on a gentle slope, the main entrance, the parade ground, admin offices and the canteen at the top, the residential huts further down and all training facilities at the bottom.

Each morning I would wait for the air radar lot to leave for their classes. Then make my way down to the classroom that was mine for the morning.

One Thursday instead of the footsteps gradually fading away they got louder. I looked out of the door and saw that everyone was marching up to the parade ground. I quickly grabbed my cap and managed to join the last squad as they passed my billet. They were none too pleased at my joining their ranks, but as we ended up at the back of the parade I wasn't noticed. I expected to hear that some great emergency had occurred. World War Three? Wednesday afternoon was set aside for sports. That Wednesday the station rugby team was playing a crucial game against local rivals. The Station Commander was a keen rugby fan and was annoyed that there were only a few spectators on the touchline. For those who wanted to swim, a coach was run to the pool in Weston, the coach was always full. He sent the SPs to see how many airmen were in the pool. They found just a handful, all the rest were down at the seafront amusements. So that was why we were called out on parade!



## Marconi Heritage Group

Alan Hartley-Smith

The successful exhibition and lecture series in Hall Street in 2016 and the Titanic Event in Bond Street the next year stimulated a re-awakening of interest in Marconi Heritage, driven by a combination of the Chelmsford Civic Society, the Marconi Heritage Group, the MVA, the Monday Group at Sandford Mill and the Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society. Collectively these have given lectures, held television demonstrations, and succeeded in getting a commemoration board for the Hall Street factory, mounted on the wall of the Woolpack public house opposite (*see photo right*), as the owners of the new flats refused to have it on THEIR wall, and we finally found a photograph of the wireless mast used for the co-located WW1 direction-finding station.



Longer term there have been preparations for a Centenary Celebration of the broadcast by Dame Nellie Melba from New Street in 1920 and recently this has been transmogrified into Essex 2020, a county-wide, year-long celebration of Creativity, featuring science, engineering, the arts, cultural events, festivals and community projects, culminating in the British Science Festival at Anglia Ruskin University for its first appearance in Essex. Details will be published over the coming year, and there will be opportunities for volunteers.

Two years later there is occasion for the centenary of the 2MT Writtle broadcasts and the incorporation of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Ongoing are the twelve online wikis, now including one for MIMCO which came about partly through interest in WW1 wireless direction finding and partly from the discovery of a complete set of the journal Mariner dating from the English Electric takeover in 1946 until 1983. These have been scanned and mounted to provide a detailed record of personnel activities and equipment development for the second of the original companies.

### Stop press

At the time of writing (January) we have an application to list the Great Baddow Tower lodged with Historic England and their report is in circulation prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

## Point to Point

### A History of International Telecommunications during the Radio Years

- a new book by Paul M Hawkins (G4KHU); ISBN 9781787196278

This is a story about long distance radio communications and how it became an integral part of the international telecommunications network during the 20th century. The story follows the work of Marconi and how radio technology developed from crude beginnings, into a reasonably sophisticated network, evolving from spark transmitters, to valves and ultimately semiconductors. The transmitters and receivers were operated with minimal automation and a high degree of human intervention, managing and overcoming the limitations and difficulties of long distance radio propagation.

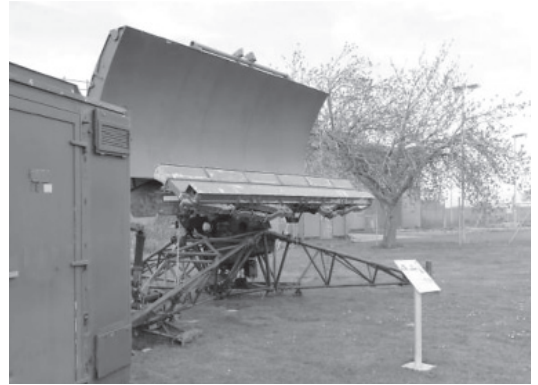
The book also describes the challenges faced by the radio stations during WW2, developments in spectrum regulation and life on a radio station. The relative efficiency of point to point radio and the cost of replacement satellite installations in the late 1960s resulted in radio playing a part in international telecommunications up to the 1980s, giving the author direct experience of this fascinating medium, which he recalls in an autobiographical chapter.

284 pages, illustrated with numerous photos, diagrams and tables; available from Amazon and other online sellers at £10.99. For signed copies contact the author at [paulhawkins1951@btinternet.com](mailto:paulhawkins1951@btinternet.com)

## S600 Radar at Air Defence Radar Museum Neatishead

*Dave Lowry and Grant Grafton of the RAF Fighter Control Association asked me several months ago if any Marconi Veterans might have photos of the interior of the S600 and S259 radar control cabins owned by the Air Defence Radar Museum at Neatishead in Norfolk (photo of the S600 right). Their requests were directed initially to MOGS, which has yielded some fruit - a couple of photos of the S600 cabin have been sent, but any further information/photos on both would be welcome. In another email a couple of weeks ago Dave Lowry gave some interesting information about the ADRM's S600.*

*Both his earlier request and that of this January follow.*



'I am searching for copies of any photos of the inside of the Control Cabin of an S600 Radar. I am a trustee of the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum based at RRH Neatishead near Wroxham, Norfolk. Our website is [www.radarmuseum.co.uk](http://www.radarmuseum.co.uk)

We have an S600 antenna and the engineering cabin which is virtually complete. We have an empty cabin which could be converted to a control cabin but, currently, the door is at the side and would need to be moved to the end. We also have many bits and pieces of the internals of a control cabin, including consoles. These were from Bushey and kindly donated to us. I am an ex-Fighter Controller and was very much involved in '82 in getting the S600 down to the Falklands and set up (see below), initially, on Canopus Hill. Later it moved to Mount Kent.

We are renovating the S600 and wish to reconstruct the control cabin using the equipment we have and fabricating the supports etc. For this our volunteers, who have worked on the S600 when still serving, need a few good photos as a guide. My memory would not be sufficiently accurate. It was a long time ago.

Have any of your veterans have any such photos? It would be very helpful if you could scan them and email to me.'

*In January 2019:*

'It's the radar that went down to the Falklands that is at the ADRM. Anything involving that particular model would be of interest. I know it was a rush job getting it together. Ian McDonald (sadly now deceased) and myself attended a course at Chelmsford at the same time. We then deployed to RAF Wattisham to form up. Then it was by lorry convoy to Marchwood to board RFA Sir Geraint. I accompanied the S600 on the sea voyage which took a few months. That's a story in its own right. The radar was then Chinooked from anchor in Port Stanley Harbour to be set up temporarily on Canopus Hill. Our RAF Engineers went ahead to prepare the site and the rest of the Operations Crew flew down later to join us. Later it was deployed to Mount Kent.

I fully agree with Grant's statement, the MOG's organisation is a very valuable source of information for us for which we are very grateful. We're meeting with George Duncan and Mat Pryce of BAe Systems at the ADRM at the end of the month to maintain our links with the present day organisation.'

Grant Grafton adds: 'I am still looking for a photograph, or even an artists impression, of the interior of a S259 control cabin. Otherwise very happy with all the fantastic information offered by the MOGs group.'

Finally, a post-script from Dave Lowry: if any of your members would like to form a small group to visit the museum please let me know. I could easily make arrangements.

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## What was happening in our Marconi family 50 years ago?

These snippets were culled from the January and February 1969 editions of the house magazine - 'Marconi companies and their people'. (The house magazine was to cease appearing in that form and frequency of publication thirteen months later, after 20 years, in March 1970.)

\* GEC-Marconi Electronics was formed in December '68 with Mr Robert Telford as MD.

\* Mr Neil Sutherland was knighted for services to export.

\* A Marconi Instruments team took part in the Hindu festival of Ayuda Puja when celebrated at the Madras works of the English Electric Company of India. They were making large quantities of MI Signal Generators on a big Indian Government contract.

\* Marconi apprentice Stephen Fletcher was to serve again as Boatswain on the sail training ship Sir Winston Churchill.

\* The people at Radar Division's Great Bromley stores featured. The article had a photo of the three CH towers, still standing (but two of them soon to be dismantled).

*Continued on next page*

## Ray Walls 1930 - 2018

### A tribute by former colleagues and friends

Ray, born in Chelmsford, lived all his life in the city. Leaving King Edward VI Grammar School in 1946, he joined Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co as a student apprentice. Towards the completion of his apprenticeship, he was sent to work at Writtle in the wooden huts, joining the Aeronautical Navigation Aids Development (ANAD) group under Geoff Beck, who were working on the highly classified Doppler navigation equipment for the V-bomber force.

In 1951 he was called up for National Service, but was called back to Writtle to continue developing the revolutionary, all thermionic valve Blue Silk and Green Satin navigation equipments. Life at Writtle was never dull, and it often involved flight trials in various aircraft. On one infamous occasion, the helicopter being used clipped power lines over a reservoir near Yeovil, but managed to limp home: parts of Somerset however were left without electricity!

A much-used trial route was the Old Bedford Canal, in Cambridgeshire – no fun at all flying at 500ft on a hot humid day in the company's old Viking aircraft, G-AHOP, but with all its landmarks, excellent for navigation accuracy checks.

In 1960, all the Writtle ANAD and the Communications engineers were moved to Basildon – life was never the same again!

Ray led a team developing a new Doppler system, AD560, using transistors for the first time. This equipment was fitted to many of the world's passenger aircraft, and proved to be a great success for the Airadio Division.

In 1972, he became Chief Engineer with responsibility for all the division's communications and navigation equipment developments. At this time, the division was producing airborne equipment for the military and civil markets, HF and VHF radios, landing aids, Doppler based navigation systems, TACAN navigation systems as well as ground proximity warning systems. He was responsible for all the technical aspects of the division's work, which involved liaising with the customers and suppliers, earning their high respect.

In 1978, he became Airadio's Technical Manager, and in 1984, the division's Applied Research Manager heavily involved with Baddow Research Laboratories on future business.

Ray's office door was always open, and he was in his element solving technical problems alongside his engineers. He would find time to visit sick engineers. Not a very keen sportsman, he nevertheless did participate in some group-organised events.

He retired in 1995 but continued his interest in all technical subjects – once an engineer, always an engineer! Ray was a regular at the IEE lectures in Chelmsford, with the essential pint of Adnams afterwards! He was an 'ever present' at the annual Marconi Veterans luncheons too.

Ray was held in high respect by his colleagues in Basildon, Baddow and Chelmsford and in his passing, will be sorely missed.

*Thanks Ray for the assistance you gave me when I needed some help with articles involving Airadio Division. Ed*




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*Continued from previous page - The Marconi family 50 years ago*

\* Boeing rolled out its 747 airliner, the 'Jumbo-jet'. BOAC, Air France and Lufthansa were planning to use it on their transatlantic routes, all three fleets fitted with Airadio Division's AD370 automatic direction finder (ADF). BOAC also specified the Marconi Teleprinter receiver AD308, SELCAL and Marker receivers for its aircraft.

\* Marconi Instruments introduced a new mobile showroom permitting them to tour Europe giving potential customers on-the-spot demonstrations of the company's range of instrumentation under operating conditions. Its predecessor had covered over 100,000 miles during its nine years service. Then, also MI, the Longacres works, the installation of a new PABX3 internal telephone system. This was when the present-day solid-state exchanges were still some way off.

\* An outrageous increase in the price of the magazine – from 6d to 1s! Outrageous? Well, it was 100%.

\* A record year for output at Gateshead works. Their contribution to the Apollo programme Satellite Comms earth station aerial on Ascension Island is reported, and preparing to pick up work on the new S600 radar aerials and mountings.

\* Many pages of events featuring the people taking part in sports and social events, presentations for retirements and awards at all of the company sites. No different however to any other edition of the magazine, they all carried a similar amount of coverage of this aspect of company life.

\* Finally, a splendid back cover photo in the February '69 edition by Ken Hutley of barges at the Hythe Quay in Maldon. *The report of Ken's recent death by his son Andrew is on page 3.*



## The programme for the Eighty-Third Reunion - 6 April 2019

Colin Fletcher

Our reunion and AGM will be on the 6 April, once again at the Marconi Club, now Hamptons Sports and Leisure Centre, off Beehive Lane, Great Baddow. John Bower will be the President and Albert Smith our Honoured Guest. Also, Friends of the Association are now invited to attend. So, if you know of anyone who would like to attend and have not yet registered as a Friend, urge them to contact me as soon as possible.

This year, we have returned to the standard menu offered by the caterers, opting for some of your favourites. Our selection for this year is: Brussels Pate with Melba Toast and a Caramelised Onion Chutney, Chicken Wellington stuffed with Sage and Onion, Pear and Blackberry Crumble with a Pistachio topping, cheese and biscuits, tea or coffee. The ticket price for the reunion will be £33 for Friends whilst Veterans will continue to pay the subsidised price – this year £28. We are pleased to maintain the subscription rate at £6 (£3 for Friends).

At this point it is probably appropriate to say a few words about the reunion to inform any of our Friends who may be considering attending and also to advise you all of some minor changes. When you complete the application form, just tick the box requesting a ticket and indicate which company you would like to sit with. If you have special dietary requirements (vegetarian, gluten free, Halal etc.) please mention it in the space provided. We can cope with most needs – if you are not sure, please ring me. By return, well almost, you will receive your ticket.

**The Member's bar opens at 11.00 am for you to meet old colleagues.** The main hall will open as soon as the caterers have completed laying the tables; its bar will then open and you can collect your name tag and reserve your seat at a table. We do not allocate actual places at table but only use the information from the application forms to ensure that there are sufficient places for each of the companies. If you wish to sit with particular people, arrange with them to reserve a suitable number of places on a table - there are 10 places on each - for the appropriate company. I am happy to advise you who is attending or usually attends and help you contact them.

You can now relax and enjoy the reunion until lunch is served. On one of the tables to the side of the hall there will be books containing messages from veterans unable to attend and a list of those veterans who have passed away since the last reunion. If you have requested a special meal, I would urge you to arrive as early as possible, reserve your place and then let me know where you will be sitting as I have to let the caterers know by 12 noon where to deliver them.

**You will be asked to take your seats at around 12.45 pm** and, shortly after, the top table (including the President and Guest) take their places.

On your table, for each person, there will be a commemorative coaster, menu, list of attendees and the papers for the AGM (more later). There will also be an envelope containing a strip of raffle tickets for which we would request £1 - someone will be around to collect this during the meal. After a minute's silence in memory of our founder, Guglielmo Marconi, and the grace, the meal is served. During the meal, there will be a few toasts as our President celebrates his year with parts of the Marconi Organisation that have a special meaning to him. At the end of the meal Veteran Valerie Cleare will pass on some messages from veterans unable to attend and then the speeches start.

There are only three – an introduction of the president, the president and his guest. They are usually light-hearted and last around 5 minutes each. **We have received a few comments about veterans carrying on individual conversations during the speeches. Please refrain from this as it is very discourteous to the speaker and distracting for other veterans.** Together with a few toasts this takes us to around 3.45 pm when there is a short break. At 4pm the AGM commences. This usually lasts for only a few minutes and is followed by the raffle which concludes the programme for the afternoon and leaves you free to carry on the reunion.

If you have any questions, please give me a ring. Again, we would like to thank Benefit, the San Francisco-based cosmetics company, and Hampton Sports and Leisure (The Marconi Club as was) for their hospitality and also Leonardo (the new name for Selex-es) who have kindly supported us for a number of years now.

If you are unsure about attending 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.

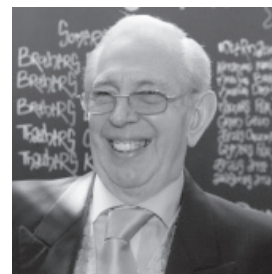
The 'Friends of The Marconi Veterans' Association' has been set up to cater for anyone who does not qualify as a Veteran but wishes to be kept informed of things Marconi. Numbers are growing slowly with, currently, over 70 members and more would be welcome. The three registers (the Main register, In Memoriam and Friends) are now published on the website - [www.marconi-veterans.org](http://www.marconi-veterans.org) - so please have a look if you can and let me know of any errors.

## Report of the 82nd Veterans Reunion - 21 April 2018

Chairman Peter Turrall introduced our President for this year, Martyn Clarke, as someone with a long and impressive career in the company behind him, from apprenticeship in 1954 until retirement in 1995. His apprenticeship was spent in a number of departments before settling on broadcast television and outside broadcasting as a career path: this took him to a large number of countries during those years.

Martyn responded by fleshing out Peter's introduction. He started with the company as an apprentice in 1954, doing the customary apprentice tour around various departments until settling on broadcast TV as his subsequent career path.

He started in TDU – Television Demonstration Unit (later to become Operational Services Group) - in 1955 and was involved in demonstrating, installing and maintaining TV studio equipments, cameras, telecine equipments etc, in 17 countries around the world until about 1980. It was during this 26 years that the company had provided the studios – Studio M in South Kensington - for a number of popular TV programmes such as BBC TV's 'Tonight', 'It's a knockout' as well as coverage of sports events, and Granada TV's 'Zoo Time',



A couple of interesting anecdotes during from those years. Firstly, the need to think on your feet. During a broadcast of 'Tonight' the line went down, so Martyn phoned the BBC engineer at Lime Grove and asked if he had a GPO equalizing amplifier. "Yes, we do." "Right then, your programme tonight will be coming over on this control line".

Hairy moments? The first, when in Ankara in May 1963 for a refit of the Turkish broadcaster's 1936 studio equipment there was an attempted coup, with armed military, weapons loaded and bayonets fixed, taking over the studios, and the lady duty announcer having loaded revolvers at her head as she read out their statement. Martyn was OK however! Then, rather than a hairy moment perhaps, an uneasy a period, when working at Ulster TV on the Ormeau Road in Belfast during 'The Troubles', and having to be very careful about personal safety. "Your flak jacket is on the back seat of the car!"

Then came a change of direction into production control, first in broadcast TV, then when that came to an end in 1985, to mobile radio, finally retiring in 1995. Since retirement he has been heavily involved with the 8-man volunteer team (known as the TDU!) at Sandford Mill museum, restoring, displaying and maintaining vintage TV equipments, as well as digitising for the Marconi wiki tens of thousands of pages of company magazines and journals from 1950 to 1992.

Peter Turrall then introduced Martyn's Guest of Honour, Dr Paul Marshall, an ex-Marconi man who he described as a 'boffin' who could talk about any technical subject under the sun, particularly television, but with another interest, a 6-acre plot of land on which he and his wife Jill keep a variety of livestock – sheep, chickens, turkeys and horses.

Paul spoke about his entry to the world of work, the Marconi apprenticeship, in 1975. As he had built a vidicon camera from a kit at age 16, for a training project he was given a motley collection of defunct items of TV equipment owned by the then moribund Marconi Apprentices Association with a brief to get it working. After many months of intensive work with the aid of another apprentice friend Dave Hill they had a crude programme-making setup. With this kit they were asked to make a feature about the re-invigorated MAA's activities: this was then shown to all 450 apprentices to the evident satisfaction of the Director of Personnel. His apprenticeship culminated in a 'wonderful summer at Goonhilly Down Earth Station'.

He left the company in 1983, going on to work in flight simulation visuals, a field in which he still works, but part-time since 2011. Alongside this he developed a parallel interest in the restoration of Marconi TV equipment which has developed into a significant business with a partner - 'Golden Age Television' – offering the hire of period cameras and monitors back into the

TV and Film industry as 'props'. To the stock of studio equipment has been added since 1995 four outside broadcast vehicles. Altogether the equipments comprise a living museum and much of the kit is still used either at shows and exhibitions or as fund-creating Golden Age TV activities.



How can this endeavour be continued? Where are the skilled engineers, technicians and wiremen to come from? Day-to-day terminology of yesteryear TV is a foreign language to today's electronic graduates. And this restoration effort is dealing only with broadcast TV studio and OB kit – what about the related transmitters, microwave links, marine equipment, radar and so on? The preservation effort going into steam history, aviation, computing is healthy, so how can we fight our corner? The museum sector looks at our efforts as an anorak activity, and it attracts little funding. What's to be done?

Not an encouraging picture, but perhaps one hopeful straw in the wind, the possibility of a TV programme being made which would deal with the restoration of a Marconi OB truck. That could raise the profile of this branch of restoration.

Following the main speakers, immediately before the AGM our outgoing secretary Barry Powell was presented with a cheque from the committee in recognition of his fourteen years service in the role and for the support he has had from his wife Christine - the secretary's secretary. (*See the item by Barry on page 10.*)

## A salesman's lot is, eventually perhaps, a happy one!

David Kirk

I fondly look back on my 40+ year defence industry sales career, the first 10 years of which were spent at the Avionics group, Basildon, selling various types of Electro-Optical systems both at home and abroad. Most of my period at Basildon went well. However, try as you might to avoid surprises, occasionally, something completely unexpected comes at you from out of the sun - and so it was, in this case.

A newly formed UK company had just designed an aircraft with a novel configuration. They had multi-million-pound financial backing and announced an intention to satisfy a variety of operational roles. One of these would be powerline surveillance. At Basildon, we had a new generation of thermal imager whose capabilities would be well suited, so I got in contact and arranged to visit. As it happened, their operational understanding of powerline flying was a bit thin; I gently 'educated' them, the best I could, whilst pointing out the relevant details of our thermal imager capabilities for their application. I quickly had their attention.

Some days later they got back to me regarding their forthcoming participation at the Paris Air Show; they would have an exhibition stand and wanted to include our thermal imager in their display. Great! We had suitable materials - including a set of video replay equipment showing airborne thermal video images from a power line operation and I immediately confirmed our enthusiasm to assist. Anyway, we were going to be exhibiting at Paris, as part of the Avionics group, so it would be easy to provide deeper support, should they need it.

A few days after this, they contacted me, again, with a much more challenging request. Their Paris exhibition stand was going to cost them £40,000 (this is back in 1983!) because our thermal imager would now be 'one of two exhibits' on their stand, they required us to pay them £20,000! I pointed out that, as a relatively small division (a headcount of less than 200) in the Avionics group, our annual divisional exhibitions budget was only a tiny fraction of £20,000 - and, anyway, our resources were already committed (even if we'd wished to help). After consultation 'upstairs' I was able to advise that, whilst our position on funding was unchanged, we would be more than willing to host dinner etc to any serious potential customers who might appear. I got the impression my response was accepted - however reluctantly, and in due course, we despatched the loan items for their stand.

It seems my various responses hadn't gone down as well as I'd thought. They probably didn't understand how GEC-Marconi functioned - well, why should they? Presumably, they assumed a very large company must represent a very large money pot. So, what did they do? They wrote a very pointed letter to Arnold Weinstock, to complain.

Some days later, my boss and I were in one of the Basildon meeting rooms with a couple of visitors from the MOD. In the middle of the meeting, my boss was called out to see the Divisional Manager. On his return, my boss quietly told me what it was about - and then it was my turn. Our Divisional Manager always looked a slightly nervous man. On this day, he looked terrified.

Lord Weinstock had sent a short letter response. Both the letter of complaint and AW's response had bounced their way from Stanhope Gate to the Avionics group HQ, at Rochester, thence to General Manager Wally Paterson, at Basildon, and finally to the desk of our Divisional Manager.

It was all cleared up, quite fast. I was actually patted on the head for doing the right things. It was certainly an interesting way for a 30-year-old salesman to get noticed - if not by a method I'd intended - and no, they didn't get the £20,000.

## Former GCI Station RAF Ripperston

John Dixon

I have been steered to your organisation by Grant Grafton secretary to RAF Fighter Controller Association. Grant and his wife stayed with us after we had invited him to a function that my wife and I were organising for Saturday 3 November to commemorate the ending of WW1 but also RAF 100. The event was held within the former GCI Station RAF Ripperston in south west Pembrokeshire (please see website [www.sethhousearts.com](http://www.sethhousearts.com) and follow the drop down menu for RAF Ripperston).

We felt very privileged with the attendance of Grant but also current and former members of the RAF and current Air Cadets. We are a family run enterprise that has been self-funded for the repair and maintenance of the site returning it back almost to its former condition. I give twice weekly tours and cover the history of radar and how the site fitted into the Dowding System. Unfortunately we have no previous electronic radar equipment to display but in an endeavour to give our visitors more of an experience I have been searching for some time to locate, if one exists, a former PPI radar console such that I can then install a PC inside running radar software.

Therefore my request is, would anyone in your organisation know if a console exists outside museums and if so whether it could be either purchased or donated for our future development? The radar in use at our site from 1942 onwards was a Type 7. I look forward to your reply and hope that we may be able to establish further contact on our common interest.



## Pam Reynolds 1920 - 2018

**Adventurous, funny, clever, a true friend - unique and will be sorely missed.**

From a notice in the Essex Chronicle of 16 August 2018

*(There were too many tributes from former colleagues and associates to include here. Below, links to the Marconi Family and Marconi Radar History wikis. Also links to two YouTube video clips of an interview with her in February 2016: one a fuller version of memories of VE Day 1945 than those in the 2013 newsletter, page 7. Contact me via [newsletter@marconi-veterans.org](mailto:newsletter@marconi-veterans.org) if unable to access the resources: I may be able to help. KE)*

Don Halstead wrote: many older Marconi-ites will remember Pam as a formidable member of the Marconi Publicity Department headed by Raymond Raikes. She served in the WRNS in World War 2 and once wrote a sparkling review of her experiences on VE Day to add to an article I wrote for News and Views on Marconi at War to mark the 50th anniversary of peace. She had 'come on board' the company in 1960. I first encountered Pam through the Marconi Dramatic Society, probably in the early 60s. She was an accomplished actress, who could hold her own against such as Dan Boyle, also of Publicity, when it came to consuming beer during rehearsals. There are numerous examples of her work in the archives, not least the brochure celebrating Marconi's Centenary. After retirement she edited the MRSL News and Views for many years, until it fell victim to yet another round of cuts, at which she instantly vanished from my sight. On the basis that she was probably at least 10 years older than me she must now have been in her 90s.

Then later: she died peacefully on July 12, aged 97. There is a suspicion that she might have been frustrated not to make 100 - which would be Pam all over. Apparently she was living in the Chelmsford area (*Ingatestone*) until she eventually moved into a retirement home, Mary Feilding Guild, in North London, where she became friends with the literary editor Diana Athill. Immediately after 'News and Views' folded I recovered from her desk in Eastwood House some material and archive photographs intended for the next, ill-fated, edition, which she had abandoned. I rang her to let her know what I had done, but got my ear bent for dragging her in from her sunbathing. Pam decreed 'no funeral' but there was a wake in September, so I promised to forward the various bits we have in terms of tributes, history snippets and her piece on her VE day experiences for folk to share.

The short notice in the Chronicle sums her up very well, I feel. I am glad to have known and worked with her. RIP, Pam.



*(John Keeble, the nephew of Pam's companion, Olive, said that friends met at Highgate Literary & Scientific Institute on Sunday 9 September to remember her and celebrate her life. Colleagues from Marconi days were there, and some of her work as editor of the in-house magazine was on display, as were photographs of Pam throughout the years, many of them exhibiting the mischievous, often surreal, sense of humour that was very much part of her!)*

See also Don's article in the 'Marconi Family' wiki about Marconi's in WWII:  
<https://themarconifamily.pbworks.com/w/page/65600445/Marconi%20at%20War>

Other tributes from John MB, Alan Hartley-Smith, Rob C in Marconi Radar History wiki at:  
<http://marconiradarhistory.pbworks.com/w/page/128154111/Pam%20Reynolds>

Links to video clips, recorded in February 2016, one about Pam's VE Night memories:  
<https://extendtube.net/watch?v=4nfdlzzh7TU/> (see photo left) gives a slightly longer version of what Pam wrote for Don Halstead for an edition of 'News and Views' in 1995).

<https://marconiradarhistory.pbworks.com/w/page/128154111/Pam%20Reynolds/> a short clip where Pam recounts a ridiculous 'Dad's Army' moment: Private Pike, perhaps.

### In Memoriam

We report the death of those Veterans notified to the secretary from the copy date of the last news letter to 31 January 2017. We extend our sympathy to the families of those mentioned.

Mrs FC Amos (Freda); S Atkins (Stanley); P Baird (Paul); Mrs H Barwick (Hilda); DC Bloomfield; PG Brogden (Phillip); MS Butcher (Mike); PB Chapman (Peter); AL Clegg (Arnold Lewis); Prof FB De Neumann (Bernard); RE Farrow (Roger); MJ Field (Michael - Mike); BE Francis (Basil Ernest); EH Gildersleve (Eric); ID Harrison (Ivor Denys); KW Hawthorne; D Hills (Douglas); KLJ Hutley (Kenneth Leonard John); KF Kippen; BO Lawrence (Barry Owen); RIH MacNee (Ian); D Mainhood (David); AD Marley (Tony); DK Marshall (Douglas Keith); V Martin (Vic); KJ May (Ken); RW Pendlebury; DW Norman (Donald); PM Reynolds (Pam); D Samways (David); REJ Scorey (Robert); GG Sefton Graham; RH Sleet; A Smith (Alan); G Smith Graham; GD Stocks (Geoffery); DW Varney; RJ Walls (Ray); Mrs K Weaver (Kath)

## Demolition of the old New Street railway bridge c1965

**T**op right, the scene in New Street in '50s - a phalanx of Marconis' and Hoffman's employees on bikes anxious to make a quick getaway at knocking-off time. The other was taken in the mid-60s whilst the old narrow road bridge was being demolished prior to installing the present-day wider roadway structure. Both pictures were supplied by Peter Turrall.



*Does anyone know the exact year the road widening took place? Ed*

## The end of an era

**The very last edition of the Marconi magazine in March 1970 - what stories did it cover?**

- \* Sadness and regret at the end of an era, thanking all involved over the 20 years and wishing two successor publications well.
- \* The Gateshead manufacture of 8 parabolic dish aerials for a new radio telescope at Cambridge.
- \* The retirement of George Millington, Head of Propagation Group at Great Baddow, and an internationally respected authority on electromagnetic wave propagation. Recipient of the IEE's Faraday Medal.
- \* Completion by Operational Services Group engineers of colour television studios at Tyne Tees Television's Newcastle centre.
- \* Build-up to the launch of Apollo 13. The satellite tracking stations on Bermuda and Ascension Island use Marconi equipment.
- \* The work of the Microcircuit Assembly Techniques Laboratory at Great Baddow - the MAT Lab.
- \* Right up to the end, much coverage of sports and social events at all of the company's sites.
- \* And finally, the MASC was to have a personal appearance by Mr Acker Bilk and his Jazzmen on Sunday 31 May.

**83rd Veterans Reunion - Saturday 6 April 12 noon**  
**Sandford Mill Open Day - Sunday 7 April 10am to 4pm - free entry**