

Should you go back - a further reflection

Pursuing the theme of last year's editorial, I had to drive from Newbury to Bristol Airport last July to pick up family members returning from SW France. A beautiful sunny afternoon with plenty of time on my hands, so I opted to travel via the A4 - Hungerford, Marlborough, Calne etc - a more pleasant journey than the M4. And so of course I passed by the site of the former No 2 Radio School, RAF Yatesbury. Many fellow veterans will have passed through its portals during the years from the second world war until the end of National Service in 1961: a reduced demand led to its closure in 1965. My time was from April to November 1956 as an air wireless fitter trainee on AWF113, one of the last intakes to be trained on T1154/R1155. I had an early lesson in the perils of even small quantities of West Country scrumpy in the Black Horse in Cherhill!

No sign of the base now save for the road in from the A4 which passes the site of the guardroom - (Chiefy Dunlop?). It has been returned to farmland, but a small portion is occupied by the Wiltshire Microlight Centre. The runway appears to be a section of the main road through the camp running parallel with the A4, and their operations didn't seem to detract much from the serenity of the surroundings. Had I more time I would have had a short flight: it would have been very pleasant, a few hundred feet up over that part of Wiltshire, close to Avebury. An altogether happier experience than my visit to Watton a year earlier.

The RAF Yatesbury Association aims to preserve the memories and history of RAF Station Yatesbury and sister stations in the vicinity. Membership is open to all who have an interest in this area. A book - 'History of RAF Yatesbury' by Phil Tomaselli - ISBN 0-9548236-0-5 is available from the Association's secretary in addition to some of the usual on-line sources.

New Street - the saga continues

Peter Turrall, Chairman, MVA

The saga of our beloved factory continues. The buildings are falling into disrepair, the windows of the New Street frontage are boarded up, the garden has not been tended for at least four years and buddleia some eight feet high is growing out of the flower beds and some of the walls.

Various attempts have been made to get Chelmsford Borough Council to tidy the front area but to no avail. The administrators have been approached following break-ins and their only comment is that they are trying to sell the property and meanwhile have put in some CCTV to prevent vandalism. There is however little evidence of the presence of CCTV.

According to the local weekly newspapers, one of the big supermarket chains has expressed an interest in purchasing the site but nothing has been officially announced. It is alleged that a certain group is thinking about purchasing the building facing New Street and turning this into a museum and art centre. Again, nothing official has been released.

2012 sees the centenary of this building. It is hoped that some firm plans for its occupation and usage will be announced before the Marconi Veterans' Association celebrates this anniversary.

Many people have commented on how Marconi has been neglected in Chelmsford and the wonderful legacy he left. It would appear the leading citizens of Chelmsford are not interested in this or any of the legacies left by other great industrialists who set up businesses in the town such as Hoffmann, Crompton and Christy. It could become a major tourist attraction if only the local council attached much more importance to the heritage bequeathed by these pioneers.

Author of '2MT Writtle' joins the fray

Former Marconi employee from Bembridge IOW, Tim Wander, is the author of '2MT Writtle: The Birth of British Broadcasting' first published in 1988: an updated second edition was published in October last year. He now has a new book in preparation which deals with the history of the Marconi New Street site: it is due to be published next year to mark New Street's centenary. The Essex Chronicle carried news of this in a centre-spread feature in their 6th January edition.

When he visited New Street recently he was quoted by the Chronicle as saying that he nearly wept at the state of the building where Marconi, the man almost singly responsible for the technical world we live in today, had his office. He hopes that his book can raise its profile and help to get something permanent done before the place gets beyond salvation.

He plans to publish the book in a large format, and is appealing to former employees, town historians and indeed anyone who might like to contribute to come forward with photographs, stories, memories, reports and anecdotes from any period, but especially from the 1930s through to the late 1970s; one line or fifty, anything would be good. All contributions and contributors will be fully acknowledged in the book, and each mini-author will receive a numbered copy.

Contact: timwander@compuserve.com, or by post to PO Box 171, Bembridge, Isle of Wight, PO35 9DF

Mailbag

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 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; emailnewsletter@marconi-veterans.org

Family history researchers - please give **at least** the names and initials of the person you are asking about. Asking only if anyone can supply information about 'my grandfather who was a radio officer in the '40s' is not going to yield a result!

Some items in this issue are responses to articles or letters appearing in the 2010 edition which have already been posted during the last eleven months on the website. There is thus an inevitable duplication to cater for those Veterans having no access to the internet. Note that enquiries via the website are fielded in the first instance by webmaster Chris Gardiner who provides an initial response if he is in a position to do so. This may be all that is needed. If not, he passes the query on to other committee members for further assistance. In those cases, the original enquiry together with his response and his name as the informant will appear. He is not trying to hog the limelight!

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

Marconi transmitter type Y

From Roman Buja, Poland, 20th October 2010

I am interested in radio stations used in my country in pre-war years. One of them was British Marconi 0,5 kW spark transmitter type Y (models Y/A, Y/B and Y/C). Do you have any information on that set in your collection? I need basic data, picture and schematic diagram.

MVA webmaster Chris Gardiner replied:

When you mention pre-war I presume you mean the first world war as spark transmitters were very much in decline by around 1910 with the advent of the valve and a more thorough understanding of tuned circuits, and they did not exist as operational units by 1920.

I have never heard of these transmitters but will circulate your email in the hope that someone may have heard of them. There will certainly not be anything in any company archive as these were rather incomplete for the period pre-1939 and although reasonable from then on much of the material was lost with the loss of the Marconi Company in 2002. What survived is mainly held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and is inaccessible to us.

Some material and information still exists here in Chelmsford and is held in the Chelmsford Industrial Museum, but this is largely from ex-employees and is not organised and indexed, so any tracing of a particular item would be extremely difficult.

Roman then replied that the transmitter was used in the Polish Navy in the twenties as a reserve set, but he has no more details. I suggested that, as an overseas researcher, he may have more success with an approach to the Bodleian - www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/modern/marconi/marconi.html

Can any Veteran assist further with his researches? You can contact him via email to r.buja@wp.pl - Ed.

Request for information -

WWII wireless station at Stock

Last November Peter Turrall spoke on Marconi history to the Stock Heritage Society. During the ensuing question and answer session a member of the audience asked about a small wireless station which was set up during the 1939-1945 war on the outskirts of Stock village, at a farm which is now a private house named East View.

During tidying up work at the farm several bakelite pieces and ceramic insulators were found. The current owner of the property would like to know what sort of wireless station was there and also any details of the equipment. He remembers as a young boy seeing aerials erected in the farmyard, and although he has made enquiries in the village nobody has come up with any information.

Does any Veteran have any knowledge of this site? Please contact the editor who will pass on any information to the owner.

Sir Philip Watson

From Keith Chittenden, 26th February 2010

Very many thanks for such an excellent issue.

Despite having re-located to Gloucestershire, I still hope one of these days to make the annual reunion.

In the meantime however, may I express my sincere thanks for coverage of the death in December of Sir Philip Watson who was my non-executive Chairman when I ran Marconi Radar in the early 1980s.

Those of us who had the privilege to attend his very moving service of Memory and Thanksgiving in Oxfordshire on the 20th February felt the reading of Chaucer's description of the Perfect Gentle Knight was the perfect description of the qualities of such a wonderful man!



Did anyone know W (or Joseph) Gregson at Marconi's during WWII?

Carolyn Frost is seeking information about her grandfather, W Gregson. In October last she wrote:

I am hoping that you may be able to help in my search for information about my family. I have a Marconi Social Club membership card that was issued to my grandfather. His name was W Gregson (although he was known as to my grandmother as Joseph Gregson) and the card gives his name as PTE W Gregson, an address of 90 Ashley Road, Salisbury, and is dated 19/3/1942, so we know he was during WWII a private in the army. We don't know what the W stands for, we only discovered this when we found the Marconi card. It is possible he worked at the company during the war either as an employee or as an army signaller on attachment to the company on army duty - we were told by my grandmother he was in the Royal Corps of Signals.

Above is a photograph of the Marconi Social Club Ball in Chelmsford around 1939-1943. We hope someone may recognise him from this. My grandmother Audrey is in the front row, in the long black dress and her arm across her waist, to the right of centre, with her first husband Fred Hall, the tall man behind her and to her left, wearing a tie. Joseph (or W) is on the right hand side, second row down from the back, the last man half out of frame on the edge of photo. (*A small poor quality image which is probably not helpful - the whole of his face is not visible. Ed.*). We sadly do not know any of the other people in the photo.

If you could help in any way I would be most grateful as this is the only information we have.

I have suggested Carolyn makes contact with a local family history society in her part of the country for assistance, and also with the Marconi Archive at the Bodleian Library. She has already pursued the avenue of army records, via the Royal Signals Museum at Blandford Forum, and other military resources, but can make no progress in this direction because she has no service number to go on. If anyone can help in any way with this query please make contact with the editor.

Errors, omissions and corrections to the last edition

Firstly apologies for a number of unsightly hyphenations throughout; I haven't yet mastered hyphenation control on the DTP software I use.

Secondly, I was caught out by my practice of setting some photos at the top of pages to bleed off the top and right hand edges of those pages. Since the transfer of newsletter printing from Baddow to Basildon last year this is no longer possible.

Page 2 - the correct email address was davidlt@talktalk.net.

Page 7 - Second paragraph final sentence and accompanying photograph - ignore reference to Farnborough Air Show, the caption is correct, and of course the picture was not on the left!

The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was. Anon

Where are apprentices of the Class of '57?

The following digest of email exchanges started with one received via the website from David Samways in Australia on the 28th January this year:

Just found this website and would like to register. I joined MWT in 1957 at Chelmsford and would love to meet up with some of my colleagues on your website. How do I do this?

A reply by Chris Gardiner explaining the situation regarding the service qualification for MVA membership, and suggesting that the MOGS forum might be relevant to his situation resulted in a further email from David Samways the same day.

Thank you so much for your email - very efficient. I don't qualify because I was only with Marconi for eleven years so I will have a look at MOGS. (*See page 13 for more information about MOGS*)

Its quite curious really, it has been exceptionally difficult to locate any substantial information on 'old-boys' at either Marconi or the Mid-Essex Technical College - in the latter case apparently most of the records were destroyed in a fire!

David Samways has subsequently joined MOGS and entered into a dialogue with Mike Plant, another MOGS member with a similar interest. Then on the following day (29th January) Mike Plant wrote, referring to the MOGS forum:

I wonder if you know of any similar groups from other than just Radar Division? One of the MOGS members has said he thinks there could be a regular meeting of ex Communications people, along much the same lines as MOGS, but no detail has been forthcoming. I didn't realise for a couple of months following my acceptance into MOGS that it is mainly just comprised of Radar people.

I have renewed my interest in this possibility as a direct result of the exciting correspondence with David Samways on the MOGS site. I started in the same apprentice intake in August 1957. Already, since Ian Gillis' first mention of David, he and I have exchanged a number of long emails about friends from 1957!

I spent eleven years total with the company, five good years in Supplies in Chelmsford and a further two years in Baddow and Witham with Microelectronics, from which I joined a supplier and spent a busy thirty two years, but I mention this to illustrate the point that this will be of no interest to any except those with connections with the apprentice scheme as it ran in the 1956/7/8 period!

MOGS is a splendid group, but to ask them via chairman Ian Gillis whether we can 'adopt' their site for the sort of directory/ongoing exchange that I believe David Samways is looking for might be seen as unreasonable mainly as it is principally an ex Radar group, this partly explaining my interest in whether other divisions may have some similar activity to MOGS, but currently unknown to us...

Secondly, as David's interest starts with the apprentice intake, and mainly that of 1957, with some links perhaps a year or so either side, where individuals ended up while still in MWT clearly would involve most divisions that the company was operating in the late 50s and early to mid 60s. Traditionally, as I remember and understand it, the apprentice was normally offered a position in the last station to which he was posted at the end of the apprenticeship.

The above highlights the possibility or potential for other groups of ex-Marconi people. The Marconi Veterans' Association would welcome hearing from any such groups and could list them on our website. Accordingly, we invite them to contact the Secretary with their details (name of group, a brief comment on the general aims and composition of the group, details of meetings, if any, and contact) so that we can compile a register for publication on the website. Group name and contact details could also be published in the newsletter.

Regrettably, we are not able to assist in the formation of new groups other than to publicise requests for potential members to contact the (potential) organiser - this via the website and in the newsletter.

Group members who do not qualify for full membership of the Marconi Veterans' Association (21 years service) are cordially invited to become a 'Friend' of the Association and receive the annual newsletter.

Historic Marconi artefacts

Do you have a Marconi artefact of historical interest which you no longer want to keep, or do you know of someone who does? Marconi Veterans' Association committee members would encourage anyone wishing to dispose of such an item to donate it to the Chelmsford Industrial Museum at Sandford Mill. There are a number of veterans who collect items to do just that. In the first instance you should contact the editor, or any member of the MVA committee to discuss further. We can arrange to collect the item from you, or liaise with the museum curator, Dr Geoff Bowles, for any alternative arrangement.

You're a genius if you fly a kite during a thunderstorm and discover that lightning is electricity -- but you're an idiot if you fly a kite during a thunderstorm and discover that lightning can kill you.

The Marconi wireless station at Clifden

We received the other day an email from Shane Joyce of the Clifden and Connemara Heritage Society with news of the efforts to raise the profile of the historic Marconi wireless transmitting station site at Clifden in Connemara, Ireland, the first transatlantic station in Europe. Earlier editions of the newsletter have carried items about the station (2008, page 3, the Marconi Lancia; 2009, page 7, Marconi's telegraph station at Derrygimlagh). Below is an edited digest of information received in the ensuing exchanges of emails between Shane Joyce, Chris Gardiner and the editor.

The Clifden and Connemara Heritage Society is just beginning some research on the Clifden Transmitter Station with recently received funding of about £25,000. The site has been woefully neglected since it closed in 1922. The fact that Alcock and Brown landed here of course adds a huge extra dimension.

The project will involve:

- obtaining as much information as possible about the site from the Bodleian Library Marconi Archive
- carrying out a full topographic survey of the 300 acre site
- carrying out a geophysical survey (à la 'Time Team') on the main parts of the site.
- putting the material shortly on to our recently launched town website <http://www.clifden2012.org/>

We've engaged a professional researcher to comb through the archives. She paid her first visit there very recently and got on well. I've corresponded with the archivist by email over the last few months and have found them very helpful. *(The researcher is an Oxford graduate, resident in the Oxford area, and so presumably has better access to the archive than MVA enquirers have managed to achieve since it moved to the Bodleian in 2002. Ed)*

The local Clifden Chamber of Commerce has planned to develop this historic Marconi site as a walking trail. The information gathered will be a great help to make the site more accessible, easier to understand and visitor friendly.

We would be delighted to pass on any information that your members would be interested in.

Incidentally both HJ Round and CS Franklin were at the station on the census night of 2nd April 1911. I attach a pdf of the 1911 Census with some relevant entries to the station. You will notice Jack Phillips and it looks like the entire family Willey from Cornwall (possibly from Poldhu?)

By the way, the Marconi Railway locomotive was built by Dick Kerr & Co of Kilmarnock as you probably know.

Shane Joyce has sent the proposal document in PDF form which gives a good overview of the site with 'Then and Now' photographs, and has sent a number of additional photographs of both the Clifden transmitter and Letterfrack receiver sites. The editor also has a copy of a journal article by the curator of the RTE Broadcasting Museum on the history of the site which Shane considers the most detailed history currently available. The editor will scan and provide clean copy to anyone who would like to read it. (There is also a very good article in a local history of the area 'Beyond the Twelve' by local historian Kathleen Villiers-Tuthill)

The impression of a UK visitor to both the Alcock and Brown and Marconi transmitter sites posted on the Trip Advisor website gives an idea of why the Clifden Chamber of Commerce's plans are so necessary and to be applauded.

This site, and the closely neighbouring Marconi transmitter station site, is in the care of Duchas, the Irish government heritage organisation. To say that the sites are under-interpreted is understatement. Both hold huge interest for the inquiring visitor, but after trudging about a mile across a rough path on a boiling hot day (yes, Ireland has some!) we found there is absolutely nothing to explain anything about either site. So much of two of the most important 20th century developments (transatlantic flight and transatlantic communications) is right here on a few compact acres, and yet Duchas makes zero effort for the tourists who are so important to Ireland's economy. A huge disappointment. Don't go without visiting the small museum in Clifden first.

The accompanying views are of the engineers' building and adjacent aerial mast, then and now.



Marconi railway telegraph equipment From Dennis Yates, 10th January 2011



I have recently found a Great Western Railway Company wooden cased slot repeater made by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company. This has the company name on the front in the form of an oval black and gold transfer (see right) which dates it to the 1900-1904 period, I have collected Marconi wireless telegraph equipment from the 1900 to 1924 period for more than 50 years but have never seen any telegraph equipment made for a railway company before. Can you give me any information on this part of the company's history.

Chris Gardiner replied:

Most of the early history of the Marconi Company focuses upon the wireless side of the business either as wireless telegraphy or later wireless telephony. Wireless was, of course, the new technology of the time and so more exciting than line telegraphy that had been used for several decades.

The MVA doesn't have any specific details of this equipment and any details, if they still exist, will be in the Marconi Archive in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

There are two possibilities for this slot repeater. Either it was made by Marconi or it was bought in as part of a larger contract with the GWR and badged by Marconi. Although Marconi has re-badged many items over the years (I once persuaded Perkins to put Rolls Royce rocker covers on some diesel generators we supplied as part of a transmitter contract so it is not only Marconi that does these things) I suspect that in this case Marconi made the items and supplied directly to the GWR; the skills they would have had in the factory at the time would have been exactly what was needed to make the slot repeaters.

I am sorry we cannot be more specific but hope that these thoughts may clarify things a little.

Dennis Yates then asked about a second nameplate.

It was found on the instrument which is made of ivory measuring 2½ x 7⁄8 inches on which is written in uppercase letters The Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company Ltd (see right). I understand that this was Marconi's first company, founded in 1897, being the forerunner to the MWT Co Ltd. Incidentally, in my original email I said that the name Marconi Wireless Makers Telegraph Co Ltd was applied in the form of a transfer when in fact it is actually stamped into the wood and filled with engraving wax, I assume this was added some time between 1900 and 1904 when the instrument was sent back to the factory either for repair or modification.



If any Veteran can help with further information on this period of the company's history please contact Dennis Yates directly via email to dennisayates@aol.com

Long service awards 2010 - Rome 28/29th May Steve Perry- Basildon (Operations)

For the last few years employees at Selex Comms (formerly Marconi of course) who have completed 35, 40 or 45 years service have been invited to receive their awards, usually a watch, over in Italy at various locations including Genoa, Naples, and this year Rome. Having never been to the capital, the three day trip promised to be very interesting.

This account of my trip appeared on the company website.

After arriving at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport at mid-day we had time for a quick snack, before going back to the airport to catch the train into the city, a 30 minute journey.

By mid afternoon it was hot and humid, but we finally managed to find the Spanish Steps, and the wonderful Trevi Fountain.

On Friday morning it was another early start to get the bus, with all the rush hour traffic, where we were dropped off near the Vatican. After a quick look at the Pope's residence, we trooped off to visit just a few of all the splendours of Rome. The Pantheon and the Colosseum were just two of the monuments we were able to see.

After returning to the hotel, we soon set off again for the evening celebrations at the military air base at Pomezia. A large aircraft hanger had been emptied, and transformed into a huge dining area for about 1,000 people. All the 45 year service awards were presented to 150 employees as we ate and enjoyed a glass of wine, and an Italian brass band ended the evening festivities.

We managed a few hours sleep before returning to Pomezia for the morning air-show, which featured three different jet fighters and a large turbo prop transporter. Then off in the distance someone spotted the white green and red contrails of the 'Blue Arrows' the Italian display team, who gave a great display of loops, dives and fly-throughs.

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The Antiques Roadshow and WWII Marconigrams

Ken Earney, Newsletter editor

Just before Christmas I saw the repeat of an Antiques Roadshow from Belfast in the former Harland and Wolff shipyard Titanic Design Office, first broadcast around two years ago. One of the most interesting segments of the programme for Marconi Veterans would have been the gentleman who brought along a number of Marconigrams dating to the outbreak of WWII. How many of you saw it?

The Marconigrams were all messages received and sent by the SS Southern Cross on the 3rd September 1939. The first, timed at 12.15 (photo 1), was from the Admiralty advising all ships of the outbreak of war with Germany. Then, some ten hours later at 22.10, an SOS from the SS Athenia (photo 2) with over 1400 civilian passengers on board stating that she had been torpedoed by a U-boat and was sinking fast. The submarine was the U-30 and this was the first U-boat action of the war. (An error by the U-boat crew which was covered up at the time. U-boat commanders were under orders not to attack civilian ships. Ed). The Southern Cross responded promptly with a message to the Athenia (photo 3) advising that she was 50nm distant and steaming with all possible speed to her assistance. The owner revealed that his grandfather was the master of the Southern Cross who, being aware of the historical significance of these message forms, had kept them for posterity.

Since seeing the programme I have been in contact, initially via the BBC, with the gentleman concerned to ask if he would be prepared to provide the Marconi Veterans' Association with copies of the Marconigrams that we can place with other Marconi memorabilia in the Chelmsford Industrial Museum. He has generously agreed to do so, and also provide copies of other information that has come his way from far and wide as a result of the interest generated by the item. He told me:

"I have been inundated with information that I received after the first broadcast of the programme and there have been some incredible related stories from Norway and Canada as well as the UK. The U-Boat radio operator who intercepted the signals is still alive and I have also discovered much more about my Grandfather's ship, the Southern Cross, which was built for Howard Hughes and was carrying a Swedish armaments manufacturer (who was a friend of Dönitz!) to visit his friends the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in Bermuda. I also have other Marconigrams informing British Shipping about the outbreak and also the end of the war. The telegrams that you saw on the programme are now on loan and display in the 'Outbreak 1939' exhibition in the Imperial War Museum in London which will run until this October."

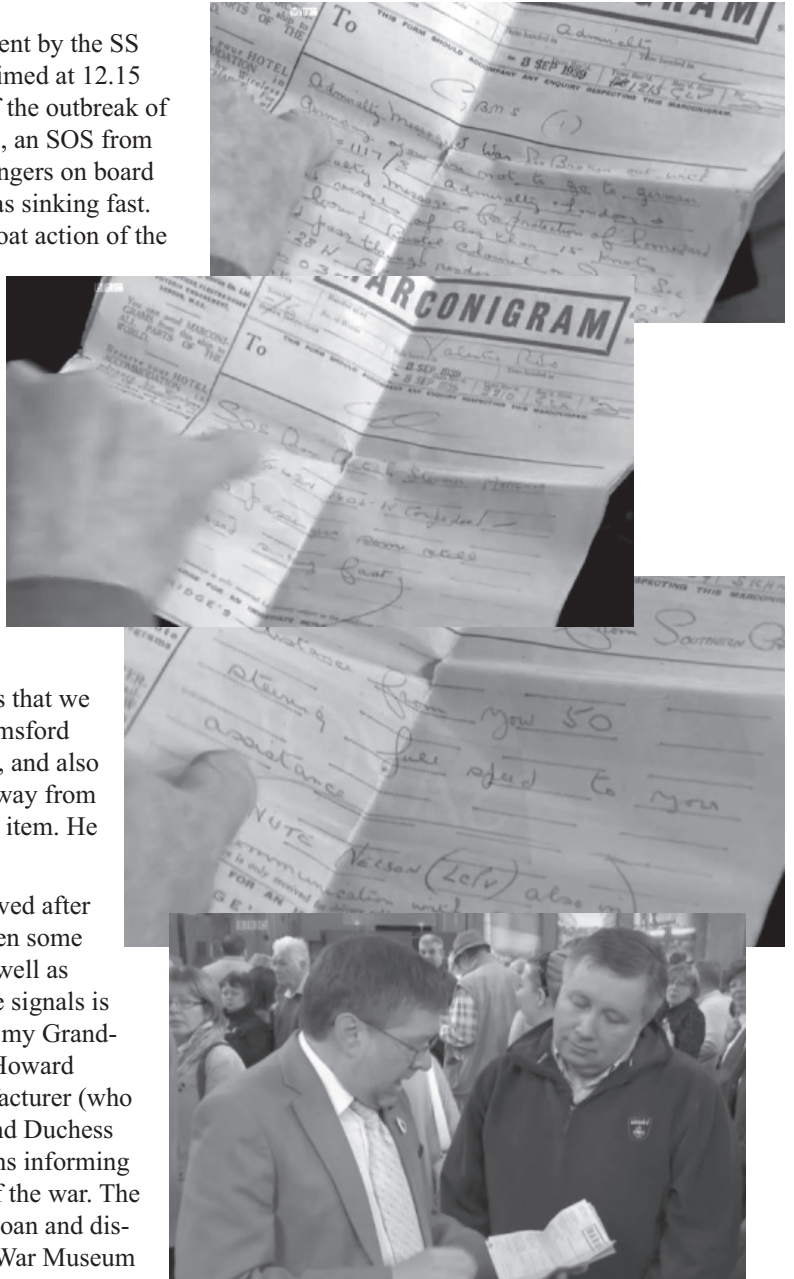
I have a recording of an extract of this programme which I can make available, within limits, to anyone wishing to see it. Ed

Continued from page 6

It was now time for lunch, and during the several courses the 35 and 40 year service presentations were made on the stage, in different groups.

The final group, with Selex Comms (UK) amongst them, were called on stage for their awards - saving the best to last?

Despite the busy schedule everyone seemed to enjoy their brief stay close to Rome. It was well organised on a grand scale by our Italian friends, who were very helpful and friendly throughout.



2011?...What, already!...So where did 2010 go?

From the Secretary

Some hopes of slowing down - perhaps this year (but then I seem to remember expressing similar sentiments last year).

Aside from our visits to the caravan, we managed a week down in the New Forest where I looked up a few ex-colleagues from Christchurch. However, for the first time in over 30 years (on and off) of visiting the area, the weather was so bad that for two days we were unable to set foot outside the B&B except for finding somewhere for dinner.

This year, we have booked a coach trip (no, NOT Saga!) to Belgium. On various day trips from Dover to Ostend and Bruges, we had promised ourselves to stay for long enough to visit Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels and this trip will cover them all. It will also take us to Ypres for the evening service and Last Post.

Whilst composing the piece on discounts (see below), I got to thinking about Chelmsford in the past.

My first recollections are of travelling there, with my Mother, from Crays Hill for the market. This occupied the entire area from Tindal Street right down to, and including, where the current puny remnant is, underneath the multi-storey car park.

I will always remember that the livestock was up at the Tindal Street end and it was there that I saw a farmer passing one of the pens just as a cow lifted its tail and well, you can guess! He was covered – I hope he didn't have to use public transport to get home!

I also remember Grippers, the hardware shop, where they had a 'petrol pump' dispensing paraffin right in the middle of the shop. What today's Health and Safety police would have to say about that I don't know (well, I do but it's probably unprintable).

Then there was Heindrich Kraaft in one half of what remained of the King William pub in New Street. A rather gruff and intimidating man but, when it came to pay, always prepared to let us poor apprentices wait until the next pay day before we settled up.

Tindal Street was a young man's paradise with practically wall to wall pubs. In James Dace, you listened to records but never bought because every time someone walked near the counter, the floor bounced sending the needle skittering across the disc.

But I digress. I am still getting the odd order for the Photo CD and will have a few for sale at the reunion. If we sell out, you can order one to be sent to you as soon as I have made it.

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 recent reductions in service requirement.

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 20 members and any more would be welcome.

The three registers (the Main register, 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 am now retired from SELEX Communications and can be contacted at the address below. Finally, I would like to wish you all a very prosperous 2011 and hope to see as many of you as possible at the reunion.

Barry Powell, Secretary, Marconi Veterans' Association, 22 Juliers Close, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 7EP

01268 696342 (answerphone if we are out, please leave a message and I will ring you back); Secretary@marconi-veterans.org

Remember the days when

...you could show your Marconi ID card in a shop and get a discount?

I had forgotten them too, until I went to buy a new car. At the showroom, we were struggling to bridge the gap between the price of the car and what I could afford to pay. We then got to talking about who I had worked for before I retired and, when I said that I had worked for SELEX Communications, suddenly there was an extra discount available from Vauxhall.

Apparently there is a 'Partners' scheme whereby employees and pensioners of certain companies receive a discount from the list price of a new car before you start beating the dealer down.

So, if you want to buy a new Vauxhall, go to County Motors and ask if you qualify for the extra discount under the Partners Scheme. I think BAE was another of the companies and it shouldn't be too difficult to link Marconi Communications with its new name of SELEX. Mention The Marconi Veterans' Association if you do and, maybe, Vauxhall will make us a Partner.

It makes me wonder if there are any other traders who would still give discount to employees (past and present) of the old Marconi empire. Although I doubt it in these difficult times, it might be worth asking.

GEC-Marconi (Leicester) Retired Employees Association

Many Veterans, former employees of GEC-Marconi (Leicester) having a BAE Systems pension, will have read in the November 2010 edition of the pensioners newsletter 'Pension update' about the GEC-Marconi (Leicester) Retired Employees Association. For the benefit of those who did not see the item and might be interested in joining the Association here are the essential details.

The Association celebrated its 30th anniversary in June this year, with a lunch at The Royal Arms, Sutton Cheney, attended by 60 members and their partners. The photo shows, from front left: Eric Hayes, Betty Simmons, Barbara Manning (hidden), Peter Elliott, Mary and Guy Jackson, Margaret and Ron Willis, Veronica (hidden) and Dennis White and Kathleen Hayes



The Association, known to members as the REA, is based on employees from the two main Leicester sites Blackbird Road and New Parks. Both sites have seen the transfer of staff from sites at Rugby, Trafford Park (Manchester), Chelmsford and Kidsgrove, and the Association has founder members still active who can trace their employment to the early days of the company in Leicester.

REA organises monthly outings on a Wednesday, visiting places of interest in the Midlands and beyond, as well as theatre trips, and an annual holiday. Later this year we will have visits to Hunstanton, Ironbridge and York, a dinner show in Worcester, a mystery trip with lunch and our annual Christmas lunch.

Membership is open to all retired employees, including those of BAE Systems, with their partners/spouses.

We warmly welcome new members: should you wish to join please contact our Secretary, Rhoda Aubrey on 01455 286116.

...and now, a commercial break. Back on page 10...

The Extraordinary Life of an Ordinary Man (ISBN 978-1-4461-8456-1) is the title of a book published by Alison Trowell based on the writings of her grandfather, Henry (Harry) Phare 1879-1966. Harry Phare was born in Torquay at the beginning of the greatest advance in technology that the world has ever seen. His notes and memoirs draw us into that world and paint a vivid picture of the life of an ordinary man surrounded by these extraordinary changes as they swept across Devon.

One chapter will be of particular interest to Veterans since it covers his time as a sea-going telegraphist for the Marconi Company in 1903/4 having trained at the Seaforth school in Liverpool and then working as a telegraphist on SS Tunisian followed by the SS Umbria.

Price £11.50 UK, £12.70 Europe, £14.50 USA, Canada, New Zealand from:

Alison Trowell, *The Old Vicarage, West Hanney, Wantage, Oxfordshire, OX12 0LW*. Prices include post and packing.

The Spies Who Lost the Battle of Britain by independent film maker Brian Marshall tells the story of the scramble to develop British radar and how, in a Zeppelin spy mission, the Germans nearly discovered its secrets. It uses a mixture of archive film, recent interviews and re-enactments, and those interviewed included a number of distinguished engineers and scientists who were amongst the radar pioneers. Note that Marconi Veteran Colin Latham was one of those interviewed. It was very favourably reviewed by the RSGB's journal RadCom, and to quote their reviewer's concluding remark "I enjoyed it, and I think you will too."

More details, together with clips of the documentary, at <http://www.boffinstv.co.uk/>

We hope to include a link to the review on the MVA website.

The First in the Field is the dramatisation of the story of Orfordness, Bawdsey Manor and Watson Watts' team of radar pioneers, in DVD form. Written by Suffolk playwright Suzanne Hawkes, it was performed last year in various venues in Suffolk.

Based on fact using documented records of the boffins and the oral and written records of those who worked with them as assistants and radar operators, ferrymen and security guards, it dramatises the events leading up to the Battle of Britain as seen through their eyes, and the struggle to develop a working defence chain of radar stations before the threat of German invasion became reality.

Price £10 from: *The Treasurer, Bawdsey Radar Trust, 1 Whitehouse Cottage, Gulphur Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9PU*

More information about the play at <http://www.bawdseyradar.org.uk/bawdseyplay.htm>

The 74th Veterans Reunion

The 74th annual Veterans' Reunion at the Marconi Athletic & Social Club in Beehive Lane took place last year on Saturday 17th April. Our president for the year was Veteran Ron Bradbrook, formerly Engineering Manager, Broadcast Transmitters, MCSL and the guest of honour retired Chief Superintendent George Harris of Essex Police.

Ron Bradbrook fleshed out Veteran Raymond Rowe's introductory resumé of his career with interesting and amusing anecdotes of a working life of over 45 years with Marconi, spent principally in designing high power broadcast transmitters and commissioning them in a number of corners of the globe. Picking out a couple of the amusing anecdotes, there was the time following a transmitter installation in Singapore when Alfie Amos, on a posting as the resident guarantee engineer, rescued a mangy station cat from the transmitter cabinet, where it had got itself locked in for some considerable time, to the relief of the cat which revived soon after its ordeal, but to the dismay of the Chinese staff who saw themselves denied a culinary delicacy. Then there was the time spent in communist Romania where the local food was so dreadful, but the lives of the team were made bearable when food parcels, or rather, packing cases full of food, arrived from the company. Ron closed by saying that it had been a privilege to work in an exciting job for over 40 years with such a great bunch of engineers in Broadcast, Comms, TV and latterly Space and Microwave.

Guest of honour George Harris was introduced by our chairman, Veteran Peter Turrall, as someone who had spent over 35 years of his working life as a 'copper', principally in CID - a local newspaper once reported that 'he was responsible for most of the major crime in Essex!' He has also spent a lengthy period post-retirement from the police, fund-raising for Farleigh Hospice. Having a retired policeman as our guest of honour linked into the year's theme - the role that wireless technology has played in the support of policing.

George remembered a police career commencing in the 'Met', and a few years later, needing the better accommodation for a young family that the county offered, transferring to Essex where he remained until his retirement in 1988. He was involved in a variety of prominent criminal investigations throughout his career, and a number of notorious names and cases were recalled - the Richardsons, Alfie Hinds, the murder of Tony Mafia, the Jeremy Bamber case.

Dealing with some lighter moments during his time as a beat officer based at Nevendon police station, he told of the team of north London decorators who, engaged to do a rush-job redecoration at Carreras factory in anticipation of a visit by the Duke of Edinburgh, managed to stash away a significant quantity of cigarettes in their van during the weekend, and of the plasterer who, the same weekend was supposed to be plastering the boardroom but instead got himself well and truly plastered with most of a bottle of Drambuie from the drinks cabinet.

As has been usual at recent reunions a coaster was produced to mark a centenary. In this case it commemorated the role played by Marconi wireless telegraphy equipment in the discovery and subsequent arrest in 1910 of Dr Hawley Harvey Crippen on board the transatlantic liner SS Montrose.

The 2011 reunion

Plans are well advanced for our 2011 reunion, which takes place on Saturday 16th April at the MASC in Beehive Lane, Chelmsford, commencing at 1.00pm. Doors open at 12 noon. We will be celebrating the 75th reunion: the first took place in London in 1928, with president at that time the company founder Marchese Guglielmo Marconi. Some 50 employees with 25 years or more service with the company enjoyed a sumptuous meal at one of London's top restaurants.

Typically these days we have nearly 250 members attending reunions, and this year we will have with us two lords of the realm. The incoming president, Lord Prior, was at one time chairman of the GEC Company during the reign of Lord Weinstock and before this a government minister looking after affairs in Northern Ireland.

Our Guest of Honour is the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Lord Petre, Her Majesty the Queen's representative in the county. The Petre family goes back a long way in the history of our country. Lord Petre's forefather was a well known figure in the 16th century. Living locally in Ingatestone, we are privileged to have him with us to help celebrate this anniversary.

More contributions please!

Do some items seem a little longer than they need be? A week ago I was struggling to fill twelve pages and the commercials on page 9 occupied well over a page, then within the last few days I've dealt with a flood of emails on the Marconi site at Clifden, the Class of '57 Apprentices and the Antiques Roadshow, and I was struggling to keep the number of pages down to fourteen. I have a two-page article in reserve, but I feel I have good reason for holding it back at present, and I trust its author will understand, but otherwise the cupboard is bare. So please, ladies and gentlemen, more items for next year.

Established Designs Group Christmas Dinner, 1964

Last year someone sent me three photos, which appear here, of the Established Designs Group, Comms Division, Writtle, Christmas Dinner, circa 1964, held in the Fox and Groom pub in Roxwell Road, Chelmsford. Unfortunately I have no record of the sender: they were scanned and returned last



March. The backs of the pictures are annotated with only some of the names of the people in the shot and I'm assuming the reason for my having them was to appeal for names of the unknowns.

On the back of the upper picture is written 'Established Designs Group (HK/HDE) & Drawing Office, Communications Division Writtle, Christmas Dinner 1964(?), Horse & Groom, Roxwell Road, Chelmsford'. The names from left to right are:

John Gardner, Malcolm ?, Carole ?, Jack (Cave?), Bill Garvey, Eric Mosses, Maurice Brown, Arthur Wreford, Fred Turner, ?, ?

The lower picture appears to name only those not sitting at the table. It commences, presumably, with the two on the extreme left, the first only half in the frame: ?, Roy Rodwell. Far corner: Les Saunders, John Brown. At rear (standing): Eric Mosses, Reg Whitelaw, Arthur Wreford.

The smaller picture of the three ladies, clearly not taken at the dinner in the pub, lists Carole, Caroline (?), Janet Lodge.

No doubt there are a number of veterans who can contact me with a full list which I will publish in the 2012 edition. If the owner of the pictures would also like to contact me, I can make my humble apologies for losing his or her details.

Wireless Technology

Posted by **Bernard de Neumann** on the **MOGS forum** on the **28th January**

After having dug to a depth of 10 feet last year, Australian scientists found traces of copper wire dating back 200 years and came to the conclusion that their ancestors already had a telephone network more than 150 years ago.

Not to be outdone by the Aussies, in the weeks that followed, an American archaeologist dug to a depth of 20 feet and, shortly after, a story was published in the New York Times: 'American archaeologists, finding traces of 250-year-old copper wire, have concluded that their ancestors already had an advanced high-tech communications network 50 years earlier than the Australians'.

One week later the Council in Essex reported the following: 'After digging as deep as 30 feet in Writtle, near

Chelmsford, Jack Lucknow, a self-taught archaeologist, reported that he found absolutely bugger all. Jack has therefore concluded that 250 years ago, Britain had already gone wireless.'

Just makes you bloody proud to be British!

Always curious about the origin of anecdotes like this, I thought 'let's Google it and see what comes up'. Nothing better to do, you see, just the MVA Newsletter and there's no great rush for that! (Tell that one to Barry Powell.)

I didn't bother to find out where or when it originated, maybe in December and kicked off by an Aussie, but it had gone viral, and there were versions interchanging Aussies, Americans and Brits in all three roles all over the globe, and even in the British version the self-taught archaeologist had made his find in almost every corner of the UK.

But Bernard - I like yours best. Ed.

Memories of the Marconi tool box

In an exchange of reminiscences about the Apprentice Training Centre which started up in August last year on the Marconi Old Geezers Society (MOGS) forum (<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/mogs> - see last issue page 14, and this issue page 12) Doug Field commented:

I am surprised that nobody has mentioned the Marconi tool box. Made from steel and riveted with copper rivets made in the 'pit', I still have mine - the Marconi paint job has lasted although it sits on my wet garage floor.

From this comment the following sub-thread started. It was first taken up by Sam Woolard.

I realise that this is an old thread but I have been out of the country for the past 6 weeks and have only just caught up with all the posts, but I did just want to add that I still have and still use my Marconi tool box lovingly crafted during the 16 weeks I spent in the ATC in the autumn and winter of 1957. And what's more I also have a set of screwdrivers, with handles turned by me on a capstan and blades tempered to the right shade of blue - plus my scribe, my very poorly made but still useable G clamp and toolmaker's clamp, a round brass box with lid and green baize lining for cigarettes and a rectangular brass box with lid designed to hold my set of BA spanners - how sad is that! Mike Plant and I started as Student Apprentices taking HND but didn't make the cut when the first set of results came out so we were demoted onto the HNC course. Somewhere in a box in my attic is the little blue book issued to all apprentices passing through the ATC that was checked and marked regularly - I rarely got more than 6/10 in any of the groups except for effort and up there in the attic with my little blue book are my signed indentures when I completed my apprenticeship in 1961 and joined Dennis Byatt's staff for the princely sum of £457 per annum.

Then from John Lancaster:

I threw out my tool box when I moved house three years ago, but I am sure they were made of aluminium in 1948/49. We made the boxes under the watchful eye of Jack Whitaker, but the corners of the lid needed welding, and he was the only one who could weld aluminium!

Mike Plant:

That sounds quite advanced for 1948/49. Certainly in '57 they were in mild steel!

Unlike Sam, I can't claim to have mine, it was stolen from my car about 1963 by a lad who had absconded from the 'Borstal' off Rainsford Road. I know that many of these tool boxes are still with their owners/makers in many parts of the world!

But I have no recollection of the little book that Sam mentioned! One of the strong points of these boxes that has assisted their long term survival is the high quality 'hammer finish' paint, process number 1426 (suffix A I think), that was baked on and rarely if ever cracked or peeled. In fact the New Street paint shop and plating shop had a reputation as the best in Southern England, almost certainly well deserved.

And finally Colin Drake:

This piece of nostalgia got me thinking, where did I put MY box?

I had removed it from my 'digs' in Chelmsford in January 1959 prior to joining the Royal Air Force under conscription, and taken it to my father's house in Tollesbury. Now, some 51 years on I have found it in his shed!

Made from steel and painted in Marconi Blue/Grey stoved enamel, the interior, including retained drawer, is raw (but surprisingly, with little corrosion). The lid contains a Marconi roundel badge, also the legend 'September 1954' and my name stamped upon it. Despite it being neglected all that time, after washing, it looks in prime condition.

Within were the following items -

- a robust clear plastic envelope held in position in the lower compartment by two slim brass brackets. Inside this envelope was the Apprentice Record Card. This had the names of the departments in which I had gained my experience during the 5 years training, together with the names/signatures of the chargehand and foremen involved with the training and a record of the types of work undertaken. All data on the card is still fully readable
- a 'G' clamp
- an instrument makers clamp
- a brass square box, again with name stamped upon the lid, inside of which was a diamond grinding wheel dressing stone, doubtless a 'spoil' of some time spent on the cutter grinding section of the Milling Machine Shop,
- but alas, no sign of those home-made screwdrivers.

This find has brought to mind the names of several fellow apprentices passing through the Centre during my time there and the thought - where are they now?

Happy days. Thanks MOGS, for bringing back the past!

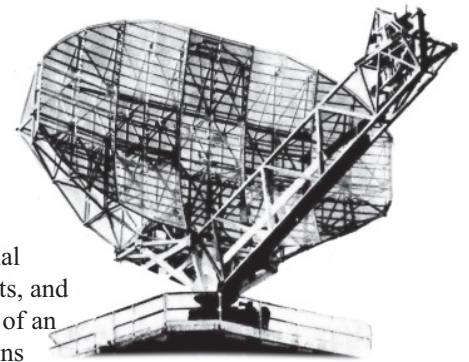
Creating a history of the Marconi Radar companies

Alan Hartley-Smith

The name Marconi has been associated with the concept of detection of objects by reflection of radio waves since the earliest experiments of Guglielmo Marconi himself; he speculated in a lecture in 1922 that by the design of suitable equipment the presence of ships could be revealed in fog or thick weather.

The trigger for the creation of the history was the publication in the MOGS on-line forum of a list of locations of Marconi establishments around Chelmsford. MOGS stands for Marconi Old Geezers Society, a group of former staff members who meet to natter and post messages about themselves and their experiences, so the posting of the list caused several to relate their particular memories of various sites; this revealed that with regard to the age of most of the members and the span of the activities much interesting material would be lost if not recorded. It was mutually decided to find a way to record recollections of the ways in which successive Marconi Companies translated the early ideas into one of the world's most successful ranges of equipment for providing the service of RADAR, which played a vital role in WWII, and postwar enabled on both land, sea and air continuing military security and the safe and expeditious air traffic control system for the burgeoning civil airline business.

Radar - Radio Aid to Detection and Ranging - was developed in the UK under the cover name RDF - Radio Direction Finding - during the late 1930s in preparation for defence against anticipated German aggression. From the start Marconi provided key elements for the transmission arrays of the metric CH system and later in developing and producing the new magnetron valve for centimetric systems at its Great Baddow laboratories and then a new Valve Works; in manufacturing in New Street. Re-engineering systems for different applications was also done. Postwar the company started in 1946 to design maritime radars and to refurbish service equipment. In 1948 a major company reorganisation resulted in the formation of a division to enter the market to design and manufacture complete radar systems. Subsequent research has revealed that in a list of all known British ground radars out of the 250+ types listed 25% are attributed to Marconi, making it by far the largest single producer.



Although many MOGS members still live in the Chelmsford area others are scattered round the UK, Europe and the USA so to enable them all to contribute we set up a wiki. This web-based method allows input of original text and digital pictures, scanned material from paper-based words and graphics, also the incorporation of audio and video segments, and especially the use of hyperlinks to include existing on-line sources, all under the control of an editorial group we call Marconi Radar Systems Archive Team who merge all contributions into a coherent and logical structure, raise queries and persuade members to raid their memories and tell us of any archives they know about. Thus we shall have a lasting repository of the life and times of our once-great company.

Currently the Marconi Radar History is hosted by Yahoo Groups and access is restricted to MOGS group members, but it is intended that the restriction be lifted in the near future. Everyone can see the MOGS home page at <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/mogs/> but access to the group's messages and other pages, including the Radar History, requires membership of the group which is initiated by clicking the 'Join This Group' button and following a routine procedure during which membership is approved by one of the group moderators. Those not already Yahoo members will need to register with Yahoo during the process with a User Name and Password. Membership approval for MOGS is contingent upon potential members having been employed by Marconi in one of its forms, and details of department, place of work and approximate period of employment are required. (Photo - type S654 radar antenna)

AEW Nimrod AMRICS

Trevor Sanderson, recently retired from ESA writes: I am interested in aircraft communications and have written several articles on WWII aircraft communications. (I worked briefly for EASAMs many, many years ago, and also worked as a summer student in Brough on the Buccaneer simulator, alongside the analog computer staff from Elliott's).

I am researching the AMRICS system used in the cancelled AEW Nimrod communications system. I am trying to put together a basic AMRICS system. Surprisingly, in the last 4 or 5 years, I have managed to collect together many of the parts, enough to make up a working system. So far, I have powered up the control units and connected them to a small microcomputer, and managed to work out the protocol used to control them. My next step is to control an AD120 VHF transceiver to the system with a serial to parallel converter.

The most difficult part is interfacing the volume control in the units. I read in a chapter written by Thomas T Brown of GEC Basildon, in the 1989 book 'Aircraft Avionics' that "AF gains are remotely controlled manually by variable gain op-amps in the central unit". Incidentally, I approached the MOD under the Freedom of Information Act, and was able to obtain from them the AMRICS maintenance manual Air Publication. Can you help and tell me how these op-amps worked?

If you can help, please contact the MVA secretary.

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 2011. We extend our sympathy to the families of those mentioned.

AD Ahrens, DJ Amos, DC Andrews, RTJ Baker, J Bodonyi, D Broadwell, MF Burrage, BR Carey, GW Claydon, P Cottee, CJ Cranfield, F Craymer, DJ Darby, RJ Ditchfield, GN Dyson, JE Eaton, ABE Ellis, WP Fitzgerald, CJ Golding, BR Goulden, AWJ Hepple, TO Hunter, TC Jocelyn, AC Jones, Miss MJ King MBE, RD Land, SJ Leeson, MA Malik, A Martin, LWB Miller, LHL Pavitt, HJ Rickwood, BF Rolfe, RP Rowe, RP Sarginson, JJ Scullion, CE Slade, E Smith, MEA Stearn, Miss JC Stuart, HF Suckling, WG Turner, H Waters, BJ Watkinson, HH Wilson

John Bodonyi

John (Janos) Bodonyi (1930-2010) graduated from the Technical University in Budapest in 1952, winning soon after a special medal for innovative design for the Budapest TV transmitter and antenna.

Following the 1956 uprising he and his wife came to England. He joined the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Aerial Group in 1958 winning, soon after, a commendation from the BBC for innovation in TV transmitting systems.

In 1968 he joined the Marconi Research Laboratories Microwave Engineering Group working in advanced microwave and millimetre wave systems including the proposed H01 circular waveguide trunk UK communications network, also in high performance high power transmitter combiners for Satellite Earth Stations.

He then moved into New Projects in the Radar Research Laboratory where his work eventually led him to HF Over the Horizon Radars, for which he provided basic designs for land and ship-based Surface Wave prototypes during the Falkland Islands conflict. Building on this, (and having moved to Marconi Radar Systems in 1983), came his winning design of Skywave OTHR for the Australian JORN surveillance system, now part of the US anti-ballistic missile defence shield.

In 1994, John received a richly deserved GEC Nelson Gold Medal, awarded in recognition of his exceptional innovation and outstanding technology contribution to the company. Although he retired formally in 1995, he worked as an HF Radar Consultant in AMS and BAE Systems until 2002, contributing to the significantly advanced design of a new coastal surveillance radar.

Life is the childhood of our immortality. Goethe



A Channel Islanders' musings

Barry Edward Bridel

Even though I am not a Marconi Veteran in your definition, I worked at the company for almost 4 years.

My home is on the Channel Island of Guernsey. In September 1968 I joined the company as an apprentice and worked at Marconi till I returned to Guernsey in 1972. In 1968 it seemed that there were many hundreds of us apprentices. I was only 16 years old (I am now 58 and retired) and keen to start work. Straight out of school and ready for work! So what did Marconi do? It sent me to Colchester College, NE Essex. I was not amused as nobody had told me that would happen.

I remember many things now, including working in different departments and finally ended up working with Dougie in High Power Transmitter test.

I have looked at the various photos on the internet and feel sad that the buildings are now in such a poor state.

The more I look across the internet the more memories that come back to me and I realise what a fantastic place Marconi New Street was. I did a short stint at Writtle and remember the first flight of Concord as it did a circuit of Great Britain - we watched from outside the building.

Anyway, thanks for the memories posted through your newsletters. I am going to write down what I can remember whilst I can. Some really good ones. I left in 1972 because I wanted to get back to Guernsey. Home sick. Tektronix offered me a job there, then the Telephone company. I eventually retired from C & W last year.

I owe my whole career to Marconi. Thanks

In connection with Barry's reference to Dougie, Chris Gardiner replied:

"I think the Dougie you refer to was Dougie Bowers. He was the power supply expert in the high power labs in Building 46 so was a 50Hz man rather than RF. The biggest power supply at the time you were there would have been for the 250kW broadcast transmitter BD272 although by the late seventies the B6124 transmitter produced 300kW. Dougie would have worked on the PSU design for the 500kW B6125 transmitter but this was never produced, and by the time the 500kW B6127 went into production in 1984 I think Dougie had retired."

International Marconi Day - Sandford Mill, Chelmsford

The public open day at Sandford Mill (Science for Schools & Industrial Heritage) commemorating the birth of Guglielmo Marconi will be on the 30th April 2011.

There are no details available at present, but check nearer the day by telephoning 01245 475498 or go to <http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6790>