



APPLETON LABORATORY NEWSLETTER

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Whither AL?

The decision of the Council to close the Laboratory has probably, in the light of the evidence, surprised most of the staff except those who have clung to the belief, despite assertions to the contrary, that the decision was really made long ago. During the prolonged discussions, staff representatives have considered it their duty to emphasise many disadvantages of the proposals which they thought might be overlooked or under-estimated. However, in the event, the Council has decided that these are outweighed by prospects of a long-term balance of advantage to the programme.

As with previous major decisions of this kind, such as the abolition of DSIR, NIRNS and the Atlas Laboratory, the pros and cons will remain matters of debate and opinion for years or decades, perhaps for ever. The effect of the decision depends to a large extent on the reactions of individuals and must therefore be highly speculative at this stage.

In looking to the future, one major uncertainty seems to have been removed, but the details are far from clear and staff will have a large part to play in ensuring that the disruption to the programme is minimised. We are assured that the identity of the Laboratory will be preserved, and that this is regarded as an important factor in the negotiations on the management structure. Once the framework is agreed, problems will need to be recognised or anticipated, and corrective action taken by the combined Laboratory managements, with the help of the staff involved.

To those for whom the decision can have no foreseeable advantage, I can only express my regret. The few members of staff who can see benefits in the move will hopefully transfer some of their optimism to their colleagues. For the rest, I hope that the disadvantages of the move will prove less serious than they appear at present, and that unsuspected advantages will emerge to compensate for the disruption to their work and family circumstances.

F Horner

Sailing

Once again the annual Civil Service Interdepartmental Offshore Sailing Race to Cherbourg was replaced by a series of races round the buoys in the Solent from Cowes. This was due to the forecast of gales, (7/8 locally 9) as last year, and the first two races were held in very windy conditions with big seas for the Solent. The S.R.C. entered two yachts; Festina Secunda with crew members from A.L., R.L. and Swindon Office, and sister ship Festina Tertia with an all Daresbury crew. The A.L. representatives were Martin Hall (skipper), Ken Pavitt and John MacDougall.

In advance of the racing we made a practise crossing to Cherbourg and back at maximum speed (12 hours each way), sampling the French sunshine and filling the bilges with duty free bottles. Later in the Solent we had several exciting moments fighting with the spinnaker, before the halliard snapped and it flew over the bows into the sea. John MacDougall bravely went up the mast to fit a new halliard in time for the racing, although as it turned out we did not use the spinnaker again.

In the first race we started cautiously, with storm sails set, but later changed up as we saw the opposition drawing away and managed to finish 5th. For the second race we tried dodging the tide inshore, and improved to 3rd, on handicap, putting us 2nd overall.

By the third and last race we realised we were in with a good chance, and had learnt how to use the available sails to keep the boat moving smoothly in the conditions. We slowly but steadily drew away from our rivals nearby except the immaculate Tamasin II (3 times winner for the Post Office), and to on the finish line to time the next few in and confirm our final position of second overall, beaten only by Tamasin. The Daresbury entry was one of several to suffer from breakages and gear failure during the races, and hence finished lower overall, exact place not yet known.

Ken Pavitt
Secretary
A.L.S.C.

Letter to the Outstations

Dear Colleagues

A golden autumn. Long shadows, tinted trees; sunlight dappling a tranquil, if somewhat depleted, moat. In the glow of an Indian Summer ripeness is all. About Ditton Park there is a pleasing melancholy, a hint of departing glory. A touch, as it were, of the incipient ichabods.

For us, though, this pastoral scene is the setting which we are asked to leave in order to be party to an arranged marriage. The intended partner is younger by decades and possessed of much property and land. We have but four acres and a cow; yet, no disrespect intended, we don't much care for the match.

The arguments seem not so cogent, the resulting dynastic destiny so assured, as to make us behave dutifully. To convince the majority that we should put on a brave smile, close our eyes and think of England is a task well beyond,

Yours sincerely

The Editor

SAILING PHOTO



All in the same boat

Festina Secunda with A.L., R.L. and C.O. crews.

Staff News

Congratulations to:

Brian Ellison on his marriage to Jane McBain at Eastbourne on 30th September.
Mr F Gadbury now Chargehand
Mrs J Pober now C.O.
Mrs L V Thomas now C.O.
Mr K Buckland now Cfn.II

Welcome to:

Mrs A C Turner	C.A. (Casual)
Mr G H R Liddiard	C.A.
Mr J V Canning	S.O.
Mr N W Whitehead	S.O.
Mr B A H Hodge	Apptce.
Mr J W Lewkowicz	Apptce.
Mrs M J Benson	C.A.
Mrs S J Biddle	C.A.
Mrs J Sandal	Casual Worker
Mr J M Middlecote	S.E.O.

Resignations etc.:

Mrs J M Wiltshire	C.A. Retd.
Mrs N Wells	C.A.
Mrs J Marshall	C.O.
Mr A Canning	S.O.
Dr A D Osborne	H.S.O.
Mr J Kitt	P.T.O.III
Mrs B Fensom	C.O.
Mr P Vanzeebroeck	Exp.Wkr.II
Mr J M Devine	Cfn.I

Dates to Remember

2nd December - Childrens' Party

16th December - Christmas Dance

Retirements

Mrs G Challis

Mrs G Challis retired on 30th September. Gwen Challis joined our Laboratory in 1950 in its old Radio Research Station days and over the years has become one of the best-known people at Ditton Park.

In those days much of the establishment consisted of clusters of wooden huts. Problems of cleaning were not made easier by the use of coke stoves which continuously deposited a layer of fine ash impartially over workers, papers and experiments. It was in perpetual conflict with such as this that Gwen's natural toughness of moral fibre ensured that she was neither subdued, submerged or otherwise ground down by stuff, staff or circumstance.

When, on occasion, we stood in need of advice as to our domestic shortcomings it was freely given in a pithy and penetrating summary of our deficiencies. We emerged better characters as a result.

In recent times it is the inhabitants of the Old Building who have been her especial care; however, not only they but all the staff who know her, join together in wishing her the best of fortune for the future.

G.G.

Mr R D Prince, B.E.M.

Mr R D Prince retired last month. Doug Prince, another of our staff whose service with us goes back nearly three decades, began his driving career some forty years ago.

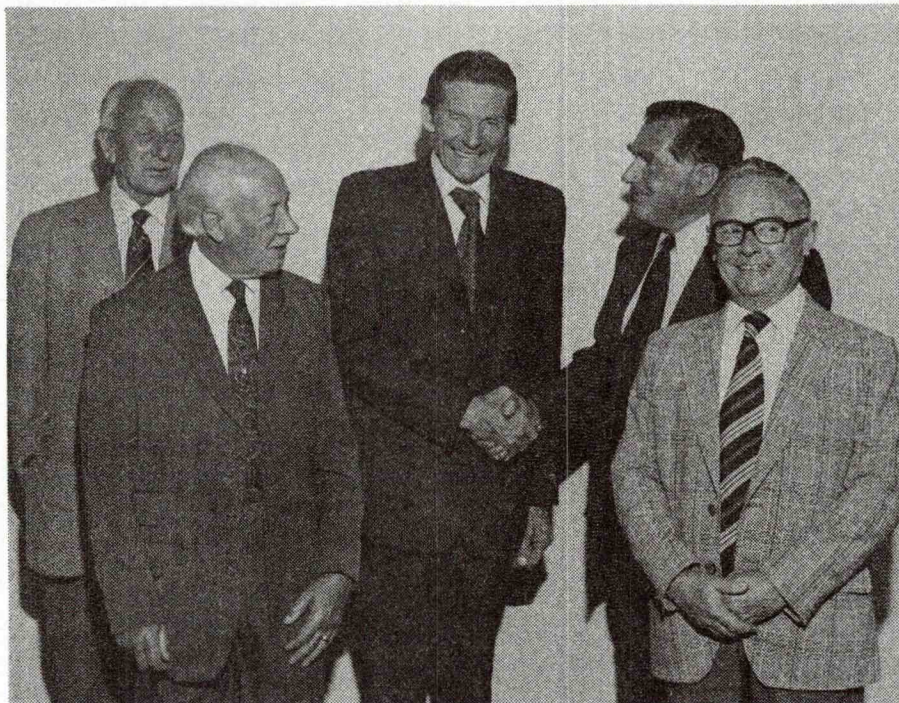
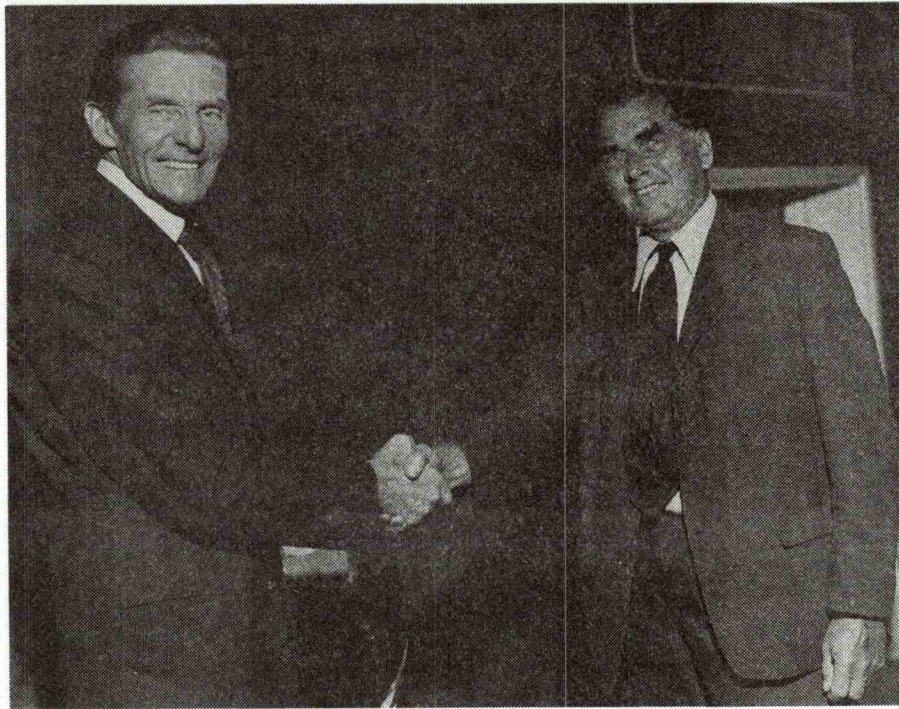
In September 1939 he volunteered for military duties and served throughout the war, particularly with the R.A.S.C. in 7th Armoured Division. At the end of hostilities, Sgt. Prince resumed civilian life and his occupation of driving for a private firm.

In January 1950 on becoming a member of the very small M.T. section of the Radio Research Station he found the duties many and varied. Driving staff around the countryside on expeditions using the elderly (sometimes near senile) Crossley or Fordson vans, dignified by the name of travelling laboratories, gave him an insight into the scientific mind about which he spoke with feeling. Driving Directors and V.I.P's gave him a glimpse of the corridors of power, about which he was discretion itself.

By 1973 he decided to give up driving, transferred to the Laboratory Stores and has continued there. Official appreciation of his services was marked by the award of the British Empire Medal in 1977. His colleagues made known their good wishes at a ceremony to mark a retirement which will, we trust, prove long and happy.

G.G.

Retirement presentation ceremony to Mr. R. D. Prince



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1978 REPRINT LIST

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- A1296 H Rishbeth
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- A1318 L T Little, P W Riley, D N Matheson
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- A1319 L T Little, G H Macdonald, P W Riley, D N Matheson
'Observations of interstellar HC_5N and HC_7N in dark dust clouds'
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- A1268 H Rishbeth, S Ganguly, J C G Walker
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