

THE D.G.ENG BUGLE

A Happy 2004 to you all and here is another edition of the D.G. Eng **BUGLE** newsletter for your perusal. Ted has kindly stepped into the breach at short notice to provide a brief story of his career. My thanks to him for this.



Ted relaxing at his caravan in the Dorset countryside.

Life is funny when you think about it. Looking back over mine I think of the odd path that I trod before getting involved in the world of aero engines.

Having played around at our local Grammar school, I couldn't see myself going anywhere then, one day, our technical drawing master invited a friend from a local factory to give our class an insight into the world of local engineering. Well, I sat totally enraptured and then, at the end of the dissertation, the true reason for his visit came out: he asked if any boy was interested in a tool making apprenticeship. My hand shot up, there were no others, and an interview was arranged. Thank goodness, on the day of the interview, the factory managers questions concentrated on the only subject I loved, maths and, as a result of this, I got the job at the then local branch of Johnson-Matthey at Goring-on-Thames.

Six years later, after a happy apprenticeship shared between the factories at Goring-on-Thames and that on the old exhibition grounds behind Wembley stadium I finished and with my indentures and ONC in mechanical engineering safely tucked in my pocket, went up for my interview for National Service. Well after a typically illogical interview with the military staff involved, whatever I wanted to do that related to engineering was no go unless I signed up for 3 years. So what did they do but put me in the RAMC (The Royal Army Medical Corps to the uninitiated) where again I spent most of my time happily in Cyprus.

On returning to the factory in 1960, I felt that I was still looked on as the apprentice, so I looked around and found another job at our local Ministry establishment: the AEA at Harwell, thus began my career with the Civil Service. I spent 3 years there where I took advantage of furthering my education and then applied for a post with the Ministry of Aviation in London. I will always remember that interview because at the end they said, "just the chap we need, how do you fancy working at Malvern"; to which my reply was "where's that?" Naturally they said just outside Worcester and I accepted the job offered of a TTGIII. After which I made my way home and had a look at the map to find out where I had agreed to take our family. At Malvern my job

was not overly demanding in that it involved the technical assessment of items for NATO codification. The following year I moved on promotion and, most important in those days, as an established TGIL, to join the MoD(N) at Copenacre, again on codification. I remember buying a house just down the road at Corsham so that I could cycle into work. That didn't last long because, after 9 months, I was moved to DGW(N) at Enleigh Bath to work as a production inspector. The work was related to the procurement of sonar equipment for submarines and gunnery equipment for the last of our cruisers now moored near to Tower Bridge, yes, "The Belfast" and it was work I thoroughly enjoyed. My next move, after another 3 years, was to my first job in good old St Giles Court on aircraft production. I spent just over 4 years there, happily working on the introduction of the Nimrod MR Mk 1 and the conversion of the Shackleton MR Mk 2 to the AEW role.

You might wonder, after all this, how on earth I got involved with aero-engines. Well my next move took me, on a class to class promotion as an Eng. 2, to HQSTC at High Wycombe, working for the RAF. The job involved setting up a new multi-skill modification control cell employing both engineers and suppliers. I like to think that this was the original example for what has happened throughout the whole of the MoD since. There I made many good friends, but in particular with the engineers in the engine DEA area. As a result of this close association I worked with them and presented Strike Command's requirements at the engine modification Committee where I had many an interesting debate with our mutual friend Bill Moschini, affectionately known to me as Dad.

After nearly 5 years with the RAF, I felt that if I had a career I really needed to get back into the Civil Service proper. So I had a chat with my Civil Admin. masters, told them why I felt I needed to get back to a civilian job, that I didn't mind going to London but that I would like a job working on a new aircraft project. Well you can guess the outcome: I got a new aircraft project, the Tornado working in London but, believe it or not, I was in MoD(Air) working for a Wing Cdr. again. The job was excellent and gave me 2 very enjoyable years' experience as a working Role Officer responsible for the introduction of all Ground equipment required to support the aircraft.

Then came my PPTO promotion review and my eventual move into the engine world proper in January 1980. I will always remember the first Job, working for Norman Dimmock as the Production Officer responsible for the introduction of the RB199 into Service and tooling for all engines. We had a good team on the job, Chris Buck and Ben Wright and I enjoyed it immensely. Systems do not stand still, however, and with the amalgamation of DEngD and DEngP I found my responsibilities altered to cover design and production for such wonderful engines as the Olympus, the T56 and Thor, combined with the production aspects of the RB199.

David Lee called me in to his office one day in 1985 and asked if I would be interested in moving responsibilities to take on the Pegasus engine in its entirety from John Lang who was taking on the responsibility for another group of engines. He gave me an opportunity that I will never regret accepting. I worked with a marvellous team in the MoD, the RAF, the Royal Navy and the USMC. I also met some exceptional engineers in many parts of industry. We didn't always agree, but in the end we had one aim: to make the most reliable and safe engine possible for the Harrier. The job went through various changes, moving to become a part of the Harrier project where we also took on responsibility for the CFM56 for the AWACS. Finally, when I left, our work was being integrated into the multi-discipline office at Wyton. It is funny when I look back on the life of the Harrier, because, I believe that

just the same as when it was first developed, the RAF are again following the USMC by taking the -408 engine that MoD(PE) helped Rolls-Royce to develop. I am sure however that they will continue to do the job professionally but, unfortunately the people who really need it, the Royal Navy, will no longer have that chance.

After retirement in 1995, I spent a few happy years, employed as a consultant for CUK and as a mentor for young Engineering and Scientific Graduates employed by our Personnel branch at Bath during their training and development for Engineering Institute membership. The one thing the training experience taught me was that, providing our Government does not squander its opportunities, our future as a base for industry is assured in the quality shewn by these young people.

My finishing line however is that without such people as all of you, I would not have had had such a hell of a good life. See you at the party.

MOVING EXPERIENCES.

Setting up a new home is one of life's major stresses we are told. Those boys who worked on the RTO network had much practice in the art of house moving and obviously took the stress in their stride. For others of us not so accustomed we face this act with some trepidation. I was pleased therefore to have this contribution from Jim Blewett who took the plunge and invested in an English country garden abode. An interesting insight into a comparatively new way of enjoying those retirement years.



Jim's Garden - with gnomes!.

After my wife died in 1997 I decided that spending my remaining years rotting in Bloody Purley didn't appeal, so after sussing out the options I moved to Crittle's Court, an English Courtyard Association (ECA) retirement home in Wadhurst, East Sussex, in November 1998. Malcolm & Joan Hurry and John Lang have been to visit and evidently are sufficiently impressed to invite me to give a brief outline, from my own experiences, of what such places have to offer. Retirement Homes come in all shapes, sizes and prices. ECA ones are in the upper bracket, in fact the newest/poshest/biggest ones cost from half a million upwards. Obviously I can only speak from my own experiences of Crittle's Court but the concept remains the same: built to a high specification, architecturally attractive, spacious and reasonably close to shops.

The first thing to recognise is that one has to be completely self-propelling - no "room service", communal dining rooms or lounges. There is a resident manager(ess) whose responsibility is to manage the outside maintenance of the property, the very well landscaped gardens and, most importantly, provide 24-hour alarm call cover - very reassuring as one becomes increasingly decrepit. There's an annual management charge: for 2004 it will be £2,054, paid half-yearly. Of course you also pay directly for the usual utility charges.

From my personal experience I struck very lucky. Crittle's Court is in the form of a quadrangle with a large central garden, with 31 one or two storey flats (the latter called, rather pretentiously, "cottages"), spacious, well laid out and most with own patios. There is a communal laundry, a guest flat and own lock-up garages. A short alley leads to Wadhurst High Street which has pretty well all the shops one needs. Tunbridge Wells is about six miles NW (with bus service) and Wadhurst is on the Hastings line to Charing Cross (about one hour).

It is a very lively friendly town, with lots going on and the High Weald is gorgeous countryside, with plenty of pubs.

Disadvantages - very few but, of course, by its very nature the residents tend to be on the aged side and have a habit of either tottering off to a care home when they can't cope any longer, or anticipate the event by dying. I, being a mere child of 78, am one of the younger ones but many of the 80 plus ones are lively, go off on continental hols. and have drinks' parties: I was invited to my first one three days after my arrival.

Most of the residents are widows: we have six married couples and I am currently the lone single male, although semi-detached would be a better term (Malcolm can explain if pressed.)

If you would like to visit me to gain a better impression of an ECA development, give me a call on 01892 784045 and remember to wipe your feet before entering.

(Jim is remarkably open and candid about all the practical points of his life in Wadhurst and we have found our trips to see him, great days out; giving us much food for thought as to our next move. Thanks Jim for the new invitation!) Perhaps there are others who have 'moving' experiences and would like to share with the rest of us? Please let me know.

OBITUARY

It is with much regret that I report the death of Graham Batchelor who died in January last year. Graham was our doyen in the field of Fuels and Oils. An international figure in his discipline, Graham was an epitome of the English gentleman. A professional to the core he made light of an early health problem which only seemed to strengthen his natural ability to work and play hard. A world authority on his subject he continued working after retirement as a consultant travelling the globe only stopping to play his favourite game of golf in which he also excelled. We extend our sympathy to his wife and sons. He is sorely missed.

Your contributions urgently needed. There is plenty of room for smaller articles and pictures. It would be good to extend the number of people making inputs here. All very best wishes and keep smiling in 2004. Don't let anything keep you away on the 18th!

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