

THE D.G.ENG BUGLE

Where do the years go to? Welcome once again to the annual publication of the *DGEng BUGLE* - the 8th.. It is with much pleasure that we feature one of our most popular engineers who has supported the cause over the past 8 years. Chris Buck kindly volunteered to put on the line his working life spanning some 51 years in the business. A period which saw great changes in the economic and social life of the UK. Soon after writing this article Chris went to South Africa on a 'holiday of a lifetime'. It was extremely unfortunate therefore that after only a very short period into the holiday he suffered a very serious heart attack. Missing his holiday did not best please him one bit but I'm happy to report that he has 'bounced back' with renewed vigour. Try keeping him down!



The working life of Chris Buck 1935 - 1986:

My first employment was as an Engineering Apprentice. The Company was forced to close down in 1940 because the facility was required for war work. I found another job as a Universal Milling Machine Setter. Because of the shortage of skilled labour I was sent by The Ministry Of Labour to De-Havilland Engine Co at Car Mart Welsh Harp Hendon. This, I learnt, was the Development/Experimental department of the company. I was started as a Setter Operator in the Machine Shop. After a few days I asked 'what are we making'? I was told that it was an engine that would enable an aeroplane to fly without a propeller. I responded by saying; 'I am not daft enough to believe that'!. I didn't ask any more

questions. De-Havilland's Chief Designer was Major Frank Halford and after a few weeks he invited all company employees to a lecture he was giving in the works Canteen, at which he would explain and demonstrate the feasibility of what we were making. He said that the Germans were doing similar work, and that we were in a race with them. He continued with these meetings giving us progress reports and updating on all aspects of Design, Manufacture and Test. We were all fired with enthusiasm and when required would work continuously through day and night to make new or modified components ready for testing. During the time I worked at De-Havilland I had many promotions and when I left them it was as Section Leader of Planning and Estimating Department responsible for Prime Cost Estimates for engines. This work included; planning the manufacturing process for components for engines such as Goblin, Ghost, Gnome and Gyron (Junior & Senior) as well as Sprite and Spector Rocket Motors for assisted take off of heavy aircraft (R.A.T.O)

I Joined MoD. Tech. Cost. Branch in 1958. I stayed with them for two years then transferred, on promotion to D.Eng.P. where I monitored the repair and overhaul of various Rolls Royce, Armstrong Siddeley and Bristol Engine Company programmes which included the requirement for spare parts (C.R.S.P.) also modification meetings. I was responsible for and gave approval (or disapproval) to Main and Sub Contractors Tooling and Test Equipment Proposals and Special-To-Type capital equipment that was to be procured to support the contract. My duties also included the investigation of proposals for which Indemnity by NAMMA was requested for the RB 199 Engine programme and presenting these at meetings in Munich for approval. I spent 6 weeks with the Allison Engine Co in USA. to study Allison T56 overhaul procedures and on return to UK advised Rolls-Royce at Ansty in setting up a UK Facility.

I had a very interesting, exciting and rewarding working life and owe this to my apprentice supervisor whose last advice to me was 'When you get another job look for that work which no one wants to do. You take it on and do it better than anyone. It will be hard but you will soon get used to it and you will get on'. **AND I DID!!**

I am pleased to include in this issue, an open letter from Sue Jaques (now Flaherty of course) giving an update on her current travels with husband Graham for MoD in the far east. Sue sent me this photograph when she first went to Riyadh and I promised not to publish it. So I lied! An updated picture is in the pipeline I understand.



Sue in local dress - ready for the shops.

Yes it's me again from sunny Riyadh. Graham and I have been here now for nearly two and a half years. Time has really flown by I can tell you. Our three years will be up in July 2005 and we then get the chance to extend for a further year if we wish. (Watch this space).

We still live on a compound in Riyadh. The houseboy is still a god-send. He had a couple of days off this week for the Eid celebrations (end of Ramadhan) and I had to do the washing up and housework myself (tragedy). The weather here is still good at the moment (29 degrees as I am writing). Waiting for the sales to start following end of Ramadhan. (Graham sighs and holds his head in hands).

I am attending Arabic lessons with a couple of friends, what a laugh it is. This course is for the ladies only. My teacher is Egyptian. It is quite funny when you say something to a Saudi in Arabic as they look at you in amazement, as they do not expect you to attempt the language. Graham is also doing Arabic lessons through his work (men only). At least we can understand the odd word or phrase now. The ladies think that the numbers are important, especially when shopping in the Gold Souk!

Graham and I went to Dubai in October for a long weekend break. Dubai is fantastic. Although

very Arabic, it has lovely beaches, superb hotels with excellent service and loads of shopping centres and eating/drinking places to frequent. Yes girls, they also have Gold Souks there as well.

This year has not been a very good one personally for both Graham and I as both our mothers passed away. We were back in UK during July to September, but we apologise for not being able to meet some of you whom we would have liked, however, circumstances prevented this. I think I managed a few telephone calls and I briefly met up with Maxine for a quick drink and girlie gossip.

We are off to Australia for Christmas and the New Year. We have a short stay in Hong Kong, then to Sydney, Tasmania, Melbourne, Sydney and back to sunny Riyadh in the middle of January 2005. We are so looking forward to our trip. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year whilst raising a glass or two (alright then, loads more) when we are in Oz.

We are still enjoying ourselves out here in Saudi. We are always very wary of the security situation though. For instance, a slight panic the other night when a load of fireworks went off for the end of Ramadhan celebrations, which we were unaware were going to take place. A glance at one another with slight worried expressions before we realised what was going on. (A little heart flutter and a grab of the mobile phone – just in case of an emergency). Nothing like being prepared eh.

Anyway folks. Will say bye for now. Hope this write up finds you all well.

MASALAMA HABAIB (GOODBYE ALL FRIENDS)

Thank you for this Sue. Sue makes light heart of the inherent dangers in this area and we all, I am sure, wish her well for the future and a speedy return to a less hostile environment.

That is the lot for this issue of the Bugle but please keep your inputs coming in. Again, much thanks to both Chris and Sue for providing us with a short glimpse of their lives; both past and present. The seasons greetings to you all and a very happy New Year.

DGEng BUGLE No 8
JANUARY 2005