



WSTG Reunion Newsletter



May 2008

www.wstg.co.uk

Another Memorable Christmas Party concludes our 2007 Programme

Those of you who have supported any, or all, of the events organised this year by Committee will have guessed by now that we are quite pleased with our efforts. At our first reunion in March 2004 our brief survey gave us the impression that some of our colleagues wanted to be a little more adventurous and were keen to meet for activities other than drinks, a buffet and a chat. And although we have not had quite the same support as for the reunions at Alexandra Bowling Club, our visits to HMS Collingwood Museum, The Tangmere Museum and HMS Belfast all had a manageable attendance. To be truthful the committee could have been in some difficulty if our trip to HMS Belfast had had the same support as our reunions! Nevertheless, we shall be pleased to see a few more at our Autumn 2008 outings, which we hope will be interesting and enjoyable.

Our Christmas party on 13

December was again "the best so far" if the comments on the event are to be believed. A traffic accident that closed off some roads close by did cause some concern, but everyone who was due to arrive made it, although some were a little later than expected.

So, what makes a good party? A convenient location; an efficient bar service (essential for WSTG!); a top class buffet; decent raffle prizes? Yes, all these aspects are relevant, and the Committee are fortunate to have had most of them from the outset, but our group photo shows the essential party ingredient - *our supporters!* These are unlike other works/staff groups. Frequent periods of "detached duty" required them not only to work together, but to live and socialise together in shipbuilding towns and other places around the UK and abroad. WSTG is



Carol entertains Trevor and Ted with the handbag and glass routine!

year, as did Barry Whybrow now we have his correct address! Anne, Ron White's new project manager following his retirement was also

different, and is, perhaps, the reason why our functions enjoy success.

This year, because of your support and the takeover of our account holder, the Portman building society, we were able to provide a little more than good value for money with the buffet, table décor and prizes. But the best surprises were seeing friends and colleagues who joined us for the first time ever, or after a long absence. We were delighted to see Carol Smith, who joined us for the first time, Peter Burt, another new supporter, and George and Eileen Scutt. We also welcomed Kath Wright and Mike Sims' wife. Trudy Strange also made it this

there to cheer us up!

As is the custom the Committee provided a table display. Ivan provided some enlarged photographic passes from the Archive where hair-styles provided some amusement. He also displayed a list comprising the Far East Fleet of 1944. It contained an impressive number of capital ships bearing little comparison with today's Royal Navy. Our laptop was available to view our website and we devised a caption competition! This used a selection of Dick Barton's photographs taken at earlier functions.

A few more of you took home quality raffle prizes than last year and we continued our Christmas party tradition of the ladies' free draw. Eileen Scutt was the lucky lady and received a tin of chocolates as her prize. Don Meakin won the caption prize, following disqualification of the more risqué entries!

Some friends who could not make this end of year get-together 'phoned us or wrote to apologise: Marion Stoodley could not come due to a back problem, and



"THE ENTIRE COMPANY" by JANET BARTON



VINTAGE WSTG: George Scutt chats with Bert Norris

Barry Hawkins was recovering from a second hip replacement. Ray Callaghan and Mandy had the best excuse: they were on the maiden voyage of Cunard's Liner "Queen Victoria", but promised to drink a toast to us before lunch!

It only remains now to thank those who help the Committee every year with our reunions and all of you who keep on turning up.

On 6 February 2008 Dick

Dick Hughes Retires

reached the age of 60 years and retired from the MOD at Abbey Wood. Like many of our colleagues Dick started his career as a Dockyard apprentice in Portsmouth.

Dick's eventual transfer from the Drawing office to WSTG in November 1975 has its beginning in a recommendation by David Stoodley following a discussion between wives, Frances Hughes and Marion Stoodley who worked together. It naturally concluded with Les Marks' wizardry at being able to ease potential recruits out of their present jobs and into WSTG.

IFF radars (Identification Friend or Foe) was Dick's first speciality, and work with Gordon Licence

(contracted from Cossor Electronics) and Eric Shoemith took him to shipyards throughout the UK and to many classes of ship. Other IFF assignments took him to Gibraltar Dockyard and often to sea for radar trials. Of those trials, probably the most significant were in HMS Illustrious working long hours preparing the ship to join the Falklands conflict. Over this period other contractors from Cossor joined Dick. Bill Bridgeman replaced Gordon Licence who moved to Cossor HQ, Harrow, and then Roy Wilkinson, who was known to WSTG through work on Seaslug, came to work with Dick, having retired from the RN.

Dick also worked on navigation radars with Barry Hawkins, on Type 992 and alongside Norman Dibley and Brian Dubber on radars Type 965 and Type 1022 in type 42 Destroyers.

Like his contemporaries Dick spent time on Seawolf and finally CACS. Dick left the Group on promotion. His new posting was to CASE/DCS/SS (Portsmouth) as manager of the Electromagnetic Engineering (Environment) section that dealt with EMC, MI, RADHAZ and TEMPEST. This work took Dick on many trips abroad both in Europe and the USA. The post later required him to transfer to Abbey Wood when MOD(N) procurement work was relocated out of the Portsmouth area.

Following the long tedious journey from the collaboration project to build a Nato frigate through Project Horizon (the place one can never reach!) to the Type 45 destroyer, this new ship-class provided Dick with

his final job in the MOD of managing the EME disciplines and Information Security.

During the 44 years Dick had spent with the MOD he served time in all the Technical Grades from PTO4 to SPTO now better known as grade C1.



Dick and Fran partying at Broad Oak

Some WSTG colleagues who worked with Dick in the past got the chance to celebrate his retirement and 60th birthday at a party held at Broad Oak Social Club at Hilsea on 9 February 2008. This proved a memorable occasion not only for Dick and Frances, but also for his family and many friends who attended the party. Moreover, with an excellent buffet, music, a well deserved tribute by Dick's son and, of course, a drink or two even the more arthritic of the WSTG contingent were dancing, though few of us could stay the course until midnight!

Happy retirement Dick and Fran'.

Footnote: *Broad Oak and Brown's Lane at Hilsea were names brought from Coventry when GEC transferred defence work to Portsmouth in the early 1950's. The company was involved with Seaslug work throughout the 1960's and occasionally visited by WSTG.*

Graham Collins Retires

Graham took early retirement from MCTA (CG) the successor organisation to WSTG, at the end of March 2008. Graham joined WSTG in the late 1970s and became a gyro compass and stabilisation specialist; later he was involved with alignment tasks. He also spent sometime working on DLA/DLB and Harpoon.

Graham left WSTG for a brief period to work at the SDF (Portsmouth), but returned to continue working for the Commissioning Group. In recent years he was involved with yet another different equipment type: the Bowmen comms. system, upon which he became a valued expert.

Graham's versatility has been used on many classes of ship and submarine, and occasionally shore establishments throughout his career. He retires as one of the few technical civil servants still involved in commissioning weapons equipment.



On 28 March 2008 colleagues both "ancient and modern" gathered at Wetherspoons, Guildhall Walk to wish Graham a long and happy retirement.

Full reports can be read on our Website:
WWW.WSTG.CO.UK

MUSEUM PIECES by Ivan Winter

A couple of years ago Ken and Ivan spent some time making sure that interesting archive items found in Win Dibley's attic were housed in local museums. Both the Tangmere Aviation Museum and the Amberly Working Museum benefited and were pleased to do so.

Some retired WSTG members are now using their work skills to assist local museums in getting items operational again and providing visitors with interesting displays.

HMS Collingwood's museum is a major collection of electronic items, both military and civilian, covering the period from the first wireless on warships up to the present day. Some items are unique such as radar items from the Graf Spee, early British radars and complete wireless offices from warships of the early 20th century. WSTG has always shown an interest in this museum, being well known to its curator Lt Cdr Bill Legg RN Rtd. When WSTG was run down the committee made efforts to ensure that the honours boards were kept. Bill Legg offered them a home at Collingwood and in early 2006 Adrian and Ken took them to the museum. It was during this visit that Adrian recognised many items from his WSTG working days and he found himself volunteering to do some "Setting to Work".

One problem was the limitation of appropriate power supplies for Adrian's task of getting a 643 Tx/Rx in working order, but he

set up "a test bed" which could be used as a diagnostic aid to check out the separate units.

This took a year (working only Mondays), and during that year Neville Maton joined him. A team was born!



Working on a CJP Power Supply.

In other parts of HMS Collingwood the 643 Tx/Rx was ending its days and the Navy was happy to assist Adrian with spares. The team now has two 643 sets in working order, the original task of getting one working set being overtaken by the ambition to get, via a tactical telegraph terminal, teleprinter, switch unit and duplexer system, two systems communicating with each other. Adrian and Neville continue with this task.

Adrian has recently recognised a collection of units as being from an ICS I system and, later, found the mainframe for these units. The task now set is that of reassembling the ICS I, including a good clean. Setting it to work is not possible due to its complexity.

In February of this year Ivan and Pat Cross arranged a visit to the museum, during which the requirement for an audit of the exhibits and the setting up a database was discussed. This task is really essential as the museum is under frequent threat of closure or

relocation. A database of its exhibits would make their safe move or takeover by another authority easier to manage.

Ivan and Pat have now taken on this task, which is formidable in terms of time. Armed with a laptop computer, camera and database a start was made on 17 February. Since that first day improvements to the database have accelerated progress. Those who wish to establish a national database of archived military electronics are showing an interest with advice from the Science Museum.

Ivan & Pat are no strangers to using their electrical knowledge in local museums.



Pat Cross connects up a 24v rectifier for a DC Alarm Bell.

For the last five winters, they have spent a few weeks at the Amberly Museum undertaking such tasks as rewiring a railway control centre (circa 1930), to the Swedish manufacturer's drawings. It came from Havant station and was used to switch voltage to required sections of the track when the rail system was first electrified. After several weeks work (and argument) they achieved a working system which can now be demonstrated by the curator.

Subsequently they have set up several working demonstrations. The first one showed the effect frequency has on power supplies. It comprised an oscilloscope,

frequency meters, lamps and a Mickey Mouse clock from the 1930s whose wagging tail pendulum indicates the frequency change. This seems to impress the school children most! Another project allows the visitor to see how a 3 phase Ferranti over-current trip from the early 20th century operates.

Their last project, completed in early 2008 allows visitors to simulate the synchronisation of two generators in a power station. The design of this was close to the heart of both Pat and curator John, as both were ex power station engineers. It of course had to include alarms etc for when a visitor fails to achieve synchronisation!

All jobs have been completed to John's satisfaction who, as the electrical halls curator, is a stickler for authenticity with regard to the cables, meters, relays and transformers used. Plenty of brass and

copper, but no plastic here!

Autumn Outings

1. Come with us to see how Chatham Dockyard has been reinvented since closure.

(By coach if we get enough support)

2. Less adventurous: We are arranging a light lunch and an exclusive guided tour of Fort Nelson (Royal Armouries). (Come under your own steam, or a pick-up can be arranged)

How do you get on these outings?

Fill in our attached Flier!

Summarised OBITUARIES

See www.wstg.co.uk

MICHAEL ARTHUR LAWSON. ISO

We were saddened to hear of the death of Mike Lawson on 4 November 2007 at the age of 89 years. Michael or Mickey, as colleagues in WSTG knew him, had suffered health problems, but he continued to live at his home at The Retreat with help from his son and daughter in law.

Michael was at our first reunion at Alexandra Bowling Club in March 2004 and made it to our Christmas Party that year with Dorothy, his late wife.



"At the 2004 Christmas Party"

Michael was born in October 1918 and, following secondary education in Oxford and London, started further technical education at Faraday House Electrical Engineering College. He gained a Faraday House Diploma in Electrical Engineering after war service.

In 1953 he joined the Admiralty at Bath and from AUWE Portland Michael transferred to WSTG in late 1964. He was posted to Portsmouth in 1967 where he was head of Underwater Weapons, a post he retained on promotion to Grade 7 in October 1974. At the age of 60 he continued in a coordinating post until he finally retired in 1982.

He worked tirelessly as a member of the Lions for

many years and was an active Christian.

At Milldam House where many social evenings were held, Michael could be relied upon to provide some of the food, also music and a very potent bowl of punch to make any party go with a swing. (On reflection it could be said Mickey was the un-attributed inventor of bio-fuel.)

A Funeral Mass, was held on 15 November 2007. Beside family members the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Portsmouth and their deputies, together with very many friends and colleagues were present.

WSTG was represented by Ted Arnold, Ivan Winter, Pat Cross and Ken Wingate.

MICHAEL K STENSON

We were saddened by the sudden and unexpected death of Mike Stenson on 14 February 2008. Mike had worked in WSTG for almost 31 years before retiring in March 1996.



Mike

"At our 2006 Christmas Party"

joined WSTG from Portsmouth Dockyard following an apprenticeship with an electrical/electronics firm and further education at the Portsmouth College of Technology. Like most young men of his time Mike was conscripted for National Service and served in the Royal Corps of Signal before returning to the Dockyard.

He had a life interest in sports cars and owned

several over the years including models from the Lotus and Triumph stables. Motor racing was a passion. Other interests included photography and cycling.

In later years he developed an interest in good wine and food that often encouraged him to return home with wine from a favourite haunt in Glasgow "The Ubiquitous Chip" (off Byres Road), sausages, when working in Barrow, from a world renown Cumberland butcher and "Smokeys" (kippers), again, when returning from Scotland.

Mike spent his WSTG career in the Sonar section, which he joined in 1965. He specialised in echo sounders and the smaller sonar equipments and could be relied upon to provide such equipments on time for "contractor's sea trials". Few remember Mike spending much time at sea, but due to his consistent reliability, he often provided the shore base for u/w communications at any selected location, on time, and at any time. He was happy to work alone.

There are some interesting stories arising from working with WSTG with, perhaps, some of them best left unrecorded. There is, however, none more extraordinary than one that involved Mike Stenson and a number of our WSTG colleagues who worked in the Clyde bank shipyards. This story illustrates the regard and affection for which an elderly Glasgow hotelier had for her WSTG guests. It is recorded in full on our website. Mike's funeral was held on 3 March 2008 at Portchester Crematorium where many WSTG colleagues joined his

two cousins and many friends.

Mike was, without doubt one of the really memorable characters in WSTG.

GORDON HOARE

It is with much regret that we report the death of Gordon Hoare, at the age of 83 years on 21 March 2008.

Gordon was born in Portsmouth and was an electrical apprentice with a local firm during WW2, when he worked on the Mulberry Harbour units.

He became an electrical fitter in Portsmouth Dockyard in the late 1940s and progressed to charyman and inspector, ending his career as a PTO2 in WSTG. Before joining WSTG in the late 1960s, Gordon had volunteered for service in Malta and Singapore. He spent brief periods in Portsmouth and in Nottingham as an overseer.

Gordon's time in WSTG was spent initially in the Radar Section followed by some time on sonar equipments, and finally as a member of the Coordination group. He retired from WSTG in March 1985.

Gordon was noted for a wicked sense of humour and his many artistic skills. His animal and portrait paintings were very much admired, and later, examples of his new found talent as a glass engraver; moreover, he had also a reputation as a very competent wood-turner.

His funeral was held at Portchester Crematorium on 1 April 2008 where a number of WSTG colleagues were among the large number of friends and family.

Our sympathy is extended to Gordon's entire family.