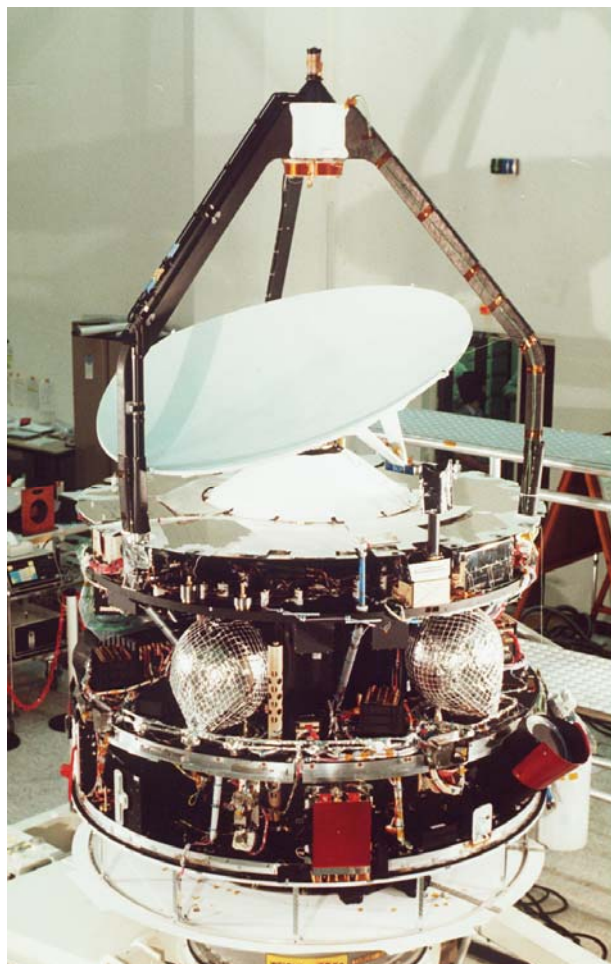


- 2. From the Chair.  
New members & Obituaries.
- 3. Social Report by Dave Curtis. Incl. Xmas Lunch booking form.  
More Aero Modelling by Tom Markham
- 5. RMSA - Website Update– Autumn 2011 by Rodney Farmer.  
Computers and all that by John Coad
- 6. ‘Who do you think I am then the effing coalman ?’ by Ian Oldfield
- 7. Day trip to South Wales and Where did all those sayings come from ? by Vic Rollo
- 8. My Life at Barnwell Hall by Peter Parfitt
- 14. Committee Members.  
Treasurers Comments and Subscriptions.



Above is an artist's impression of Giotto passing near to Halley's Comet in 1986.

The Giotto spacecraft built at Bristol for the European Space Agency is shown here during integration activities. It's solar panels have been removed to provide access. The white object at the intersection of the struts at the top is the Halley Multi - function camera.

## From the chair.

We haven't been able to organise the talk promised for this Autumn in the last two Newsletters, we hope to have more positive news on this for early in the new year.

We are pleased that most members are up to date in paying their subscriptions, just a small number are outstanding and I hope they will respond positively to a final reminder in the Newsletter they receive - see also Tug's comments on the back page. There are some four hundred plus persons in the RMSA and we endeavour to give everyone as good a service as possible. If anyone has any suggestions to improve it we would like to hear them. One way of improving the service to those who have a computer, for example, is to let us have your email addresses. This can be done by sending it to Rod Farmer of course giving him your permission. At present he has the addresses of some seventy colleagues. His email address is on Page 4 and the back page.

To everyone though I would be very grateful if we could be kept informed of changes affecting anyone's individual membership status, whatever it may be.

Browsing the local library recently, I came across an excellent publication called *\*British Workmanship at it's Best*. It's a compilation of the personal recollections and experiences of people who have been employed on the Filton and Patchway sites over the years and includes contributions from some of our RMSA colleagues. There is an article in it by Peter Parfitt which I found interesting and I have put it in this issue, it's on page 8; he recalls his time as Warden at Barnwell Hall of Residence. This was set up in 1961 and sited on the airfield as accommodation for BAC students and apprentices. When I joined Company at around that time as a trainee draughtsman, many of my contemporaries had boarded there and there was much banter about life there. It was much liked and was in use I think for or some fifteen years. Many people who were able to take advantage of it's facilities may well be our RMSA colleagues now. If you are one of these and can think of anything to recall of those days living at the Hall, in your youth; and which you could share with us, of course. I would be delighted to put it in a future Newsletter.

Those 1950s through to the early '70s; they were good times to work in engineering in the UK, there was plenty of employment especially for young, mostly men in engineering in the West Country especially. Many companies had their own training/apprenticeship schemes and BAC was among the best. The Cold War was at it's height, so it was to the defence industry that aerospace resources were very much concentrated and in our case at Filton and Patchway, the Concorde build programme was well underway

Today there is very little information about Barnwell Hall that I could find. It was obviously a social project set up by the Company or more likely the Government to help attract young people to become engineers in the industry and may well be in that regard, unique.

It was situated on the far side of the airfield, in the area of what is known as '501', I understand it used to be the officer's mess - 'out in the sticks' really, particularly in those days. There is nothing left now of the actual buildings. They are long gone, although if you 'google map' the area there is a 'shadow outline' of them in the ground. That's all.

\* *'British Workmanship at it's Best' is published by Filton Community History and may be obtained via Jane Tozer tel. 01179 694378 or by email [janetozer.bristol@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:janetozer.bristol@blueyonder.co.uk) or from most South Gloucestershire Libraries. Purchase price is £15.00.*

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## OBITUARIES

It is with sadness that we record former friends and colleagues known to have passed away since our Summer 2011 Newsletter. Mr C.H. Webb, Mr D. L. Rendell, Mr D. Preston.

**Our Sympathy is extended to all their families and next of kin**

NEW MEMBERS No one has joined us since our Summer 2011 Newsletter

**From the Social Secretary**

**REMAINING SOCIAL EVENT FOR 2011**

**FRIDAY 09 DECEMBER RMSA CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2011.** at 11. 45am. till 3.00pm. in the Ballroom of the BAWA Centre

**Cost £16.00. per person including gratuities** and comprises:-

- Glass of sherry or fruit juice on arrival.
- Choice of Starter.
- Main course of either Turkey, Beef or Vegetarian.
- Selection of Sweets.

Wine will be available by the bottle and the bar will be open.

**CLOSING DATE FOR YOUR APPLICATION(S) IS WEDNESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2011.**

**RMSA CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2011 BOOKING FORM.**

**NAME**

**MAIN COURSE CHOICE**

Turkey/Beef/Vegetarian.

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

3.....

.....

4.....

.....

**NOTE.** PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHOICE OF STARTER AND SWEET AT THE LUNCH.

TOTAL NO. OF PERSONS.....

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED. £.....

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE **RMSA** AND SEND WITH SAE TO:



**More Aero modelling by Tom Markham**

As someone who has still failed to grow out of the aero modelling bug after well over 60 years I found the comments in the last two issues of great interest and thought some of the ex - modellers may be interested about how the sport has developed over the intervening years and a little about the company aero modelling club.

When Ray Foot and I joined Bristol Aircraft at Filton in 1956 we found that the firm had an aero modelling club for the apprentices but the seniors were not catered for.

Soon after this we got together with a number of other enthusiasts and approached the airfield authorities for permission to form a club and fly on the airfield. After a stern lecture from Walter Gibb (we still chuckle over how it was like being in front of the headmaster) we were given the go ahead. We named the club "Bristol Bulldogs" after the famous fighter just being refurbished back to flying condition at around that time. The club had (and has) a mixture of Filton, Patchway, retired and non - site members, is affiliated to BAWA and is still active after more than 50 years. We still fly on the airfield although now, not as often in the past, the use of the airfield appears more than a little at risk to us!

During this time we have had a number of British Champions and one World Champion on the books together with a (full size) World Record holding Chief Test Pilot. However most members are, like myself, more interested in dabbling with a mixture of designing, building and flying for relaxation rather than competition.

When I started (aged about 12) the main models were balsa and tissue gliders and rubber models. Some rich lads had

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(Continued from page 3)

diesel powered planes and we had heard of large petrol engined planes but these were owned by the super rich and few of us had seen one.

By the time I arrived at Filton I had built my first radio controlled model and equipment. The model was 48 inch span of traditional balsa construction with a 2.5cc diesel engine and probably weighed around 3lb. The ground based transmitter, tuned to 27mc, was built into a biscuit tin, had an exWD 8foot aerial, a 67.5 volt HT battery, a 1.5 volt LT battery and a single microswitch for control. The receiver had 22.5 volt HT and 1.5 volt LT batteries. The receiver operated a sensitive relay which in turn needed a 4.5 volt battery to operated a rubber driven escapement to the rudder. The whole lot was unreliable, had to be retuned after every flight, and could only be used one model at a time (but there weren't many models). So, if this complex lot worked, then each press on the microswitch moved the rudder from neutral to full left rudder to neutral to full right rudder - no throttle, no ailerons, no elevator – only “bang-bang” rudder. If after an afternoon at the flying field we took the model home unbroken after a single successful flight we were highly delighted.

With the invention of the transistor the HT batteries were no longer needed and the equipment got steadily lighter and more reliable.

Today controls are fully proportional, transmitters hand held rather than ground based and with digital phone type technology as many models as one wants can be flown together. Models range from multi engine jets (yes there are now real jets and turboprops) weighing over 100lb to small helicopters weighing perhaps ½ oz with full controls and stabilised with multiple gyros.

What of the models themselves? There is still a quite a large group who fly traditional balsa and tissue models in much the same way as we did in the past and it is amazing to see sprightly octogenarians climbing walls and pushing through hedges to get their models back!

There still remains much interest in modern free flight, but now to be competitive one needs to invest in carbon fibre technology for stiffness and lightness and many flyers purchase ready made models from China or Eastern block countries. There is no longer the “build your own model” rule.

However today most people fly radio control models with construction spreading all the way from balsa to carbon with lightweight moulded foam also being very popular. Again there are still traditional balsa kits available – now often with individual parts very accurately laser cut – but most models are available either “almost ready to fly” or “ready to fly” from the far east.

Another large change in technology is that today with modern electronics, improved batteries and “brushless” motors almost all areas are moving towards electric power rather than internal combustion. Typically the complete package will be lighter than the IC equivalent.

A comment on cost – my first full proportional radio cost around £100 in 1972 and today I could get a lighter, much more reliable outfit to do the same thing at much the same price. However the sort of small rubber powered kits that cost perhaps 5 shillings will now cost around £20 but be of rather better quality.

If perhaps you haven't seen modern aero modelling then I can recommend going to one of the shows such as the Woodspring Wings show at Yatton on the first weekend in July.

A final comment. The move from aero modelling to the aviation industry is not always one way as Airbus Chester's former man in Toulouse now edits a popular aero modelling magazine.

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Footnote. Looking through some of the previous issues of the Newsletter on the website, there is an early article by Ray Foot on flying model aircraft ( iss.37 Spring '95). Ray was great for contributing items of great interest to the Newsletter sadly I understand that he is no longer able to do this.....Ken.

**If you have a story to tell whether long or short on any topic, it doesn't matter. Please send it to me and it will be put the Newsletter.**

## RMSA – Website News Update – Autumn 2011

[www.baermsa.org.uk](http://www.baermsa.org.uk)

Dear Fellow Members,

This update contains information relating to the latest updates to the website, since the Summer 2011 Newsletter – the latest additions to the website are shown below and will be announced shortly:

### **05/08/2011 - In-Service Version 4.0 (incorporates Version 3.40 Content)**

Mini Website and Mini Domain Portal site replaced by new RMSA Domain Gateway.

Domain Page (landing page) added to facilitate Gateway or Main website selection.

HomeZone pages modified to reflect the new RMSA Constitution approved at the 2011 AGM, also

Aims & Objectives and Membership Eligibility pages under General Zone and RMSA Membership Form under Contact Us section, also new printable application form links added plus minor consequential changes made to relevant site pages.

Jack Francis, Dan Sellars and Percy Soper retirement album added to Photo Galleries under Memorabilia Zone.

Online Radio Players (BBC and UK) added to Home Zone.

Spring 2011 and Summer 2011 Newsletters added to RMSA Newsletter Archive page and newsletter index page updated

And missing Spring 1995 Newsletter added.

Area 8 Newsletters 35, 36 and 37 added to Area 8 Newsletter Archive page.

November short break details added to Events News Page and online Events Calendar.

### **31/08/2011 - Version 5.0**

'[About UK Aerospace RMSA](#)' page added to promote RMSA to new members.

Google style Search Box added to Domain Welcome, About UK Aerospace RMSA, Domain Gateway and Home Zone pages to provide global domain search results - searches RMSA website page content for quick and easy access - search and sitemap links added to all main site pages.

[Member Login Page](#) and Member Secure Page with secure access added to main site Member Zone.

RMSA Facebook link added at key locations to promote RMSA online and, hopefully attract new members.

Main Site Home Zone page visually refreshed.

Daily crossword puzzles button added to [Domain Gateway](#).

The RMSA Events News Page and Calendar have been updated to show the latest 2011 RMSA social events as currently known. The highlights of this release include:

- 1)The addition of secure member pages allowing members only to access these pages to view the RMSA Constitution and 2011 AGM minutes. You can also search for names of all our current membership and request to contact members whom you may have lost touch with.
- 2)A new 'EasySearch' site navigation facility has been added, based on the popular Google Search, which allows you search the entire site for selected pages or page content with no need to understand the actual structure of the site – this is the simplest way to explore site content and will appeal to occasional and seasoned visitors alike..
- 3)Your committee has requested the addition of an 'About RMSA' page containing just RMSA information which will be most useful to prospective new members and this is now available from the 'Welcome' page of the site ([www.baermsa.org.uk](http://www.baermsa.org.uk))

If you have any retirement photos of ex- colleagues, or other memorable events, of interest to our membership and would like them added to the Memorabilia Zone please contact me.

On behalf of our Chairman and other members of the Committee, we hope you continue to enjoy browsing the site.

Rod Farmer – Membership Secretary & Website Administrator

Email: [rodney.farmer@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:rodney.farmer@blueyonder.co.uk) OR [webmaster@baermsa.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@baermsa.org.uk)

## **Computers and all that..... By John Coad**

Reading 'From the Chair' in the Summer issue, I noted a comment in the Spring Day Out paragraph saying that: 'there was no computer modelling in those days' - referring, I think, to around 1962. Certainly 'up the road' in GW there was bags of it going on, and doubtless there was a similar effort on the aircraft side of the business - as someone will surely

*(Continued on page 6)*

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expound. I joined GW in 1960, and there was already a lot of simulation and modelling work under way (mainly on the Bloodhound surface to air missile). This took place on one of the earliest general purpose digital computers – the English Electric DEUCE (Digital Electronic Universal Computing Engine). This was situated in the Odeon opposite No 1 DO, and in a department called Maths Services, run by John Hahn with a team of software writers. In those days everything had to be written in machine code, from equations supplied by the various GW design teams (no fancy Fortran or the like).

I spent many happy (?) hours, in my infancy in 1960, sitting by the DEUCE output card puncher, plotting the effects of changes to the Bloodhound aerodynamic model, and trying to make it tie in with the accelerometer and other readings that had been telemetered back from flight. This was an extremely slow process, with just the aerodynamics part of the model outputting data at minute or so intervals, representing 1/100 of a second steps in actual flight time!

In about 1961, Maths Services took delivery of a quite different machine – a large, rather posh looking general purpose analogue computer – the PACE 231R (Precision Analogue Computing Equipment?) from the US manufacturer Electronics Associates Inc (EAI). This was used for missile performance prediction and post-flight analysis studies, plus a variety of other work as well. Analogue computers can run their equations in whatever 'time frame' you fancy (within reason) so GW models suddenly went into real time – a huge bonus.

During those days, I recall we shared PACE computer time with a project which went under the name of SST, with a certain Terry Brown from the aircraft division at the helm. I often wonder what happened to that project?!!

The 60's also saw the introduction of a fancy Hybrid Computer (part analogue/part digital and also from EAI) in the GW 1220 Lab, and on which (amongst others), a lot of the design work for the digital Air Intake Control System for Concorde was conducted. But that's jumping the gun a bit.

In the meantime, there was a continual upgrading of mainframe machines at Filton, and a lot of GW work was also conducted out in Australia using the IBM machine at the WRE (Weapons Research Establishment) facility.

So, for the mathematical modeller, the early 60's was a fascinating and interesting period.

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## Who do you think I am then the 'effing' coalman? by Ian Oldfield

Sometime in the 1950s I was working in the Bristol Cars design office and alongside me there was an ex - RAF Spitfire pilot who had been wounded in the foot, whom I will call John. He was a typical wartime RAF pilot type, over six feet tall with swept back flowing locks of hair over his ears, a 'handle bar' moustache and a beautifully cultured 'wizard prang' accent.

He took great pains to inform everyone of his social connections, showing us a picture of his wife at a Lord Mayors' Garden Party. To emphasize his social credentials he took great delight in belittling the office drawing checker Harold as he had a broad Bristol accent with remarks such as 'What d'you say to your mother at tea A'rold 'Oi Ma pass the *effing* jam.

Anyway I digress, one day John arrived at the office clad in a magnificent full length camel hair coat which reached practically down to his ankles and proudly announced 'this coat was from **Austin Reeds the tailors** and cost £37', which at that time was a princely sum. This was repeated throughout the day to various people in the office.

Come the afternoon it was customary because of our huge workload to work some overtime, which meant a tea break was allowed in the canteen. Now the canteen was situated outside the Company's premises and the rule was that Staff personnel were allowed through the Company gate to it at 4.30 pm. while works personnel had to wait until 5.00 pm. This was all strictly enforced by Works Policemen at the gate.

One afternoon John, Ginger Burton and myself were working overtime that evening, it was getting close to 4.30pm. so we got ourselves ready to go to tea. John donned his magnificent camel hair coat, he did indeed cut a most impressive figure. We were about ten paces from the exit when there was a flurry of activity in the security box and out came a diminutive looking man, all of 4ft 10ins tall, he rushed up to John and barked to John 'Staff ?'.

There was a momentary pause, a look of incredulity appeared on John's face, that anyone should have the effrontery to suggest he was in anyway associated with 'works people'. This look changed to utter disdain as he drew himself up to his full 6ft 4ins and looking down on the little man uttered the classic phrase 'who do you think I am then; the *effing* coalman', leaving the man transfixed to the spot and utterly speechless, he promptly turned on his heels and marched forthrightly onwards in the direction of the canteen and tea.

## RMSA Day Trip to South Wales Vic by Rollo

Will it or won't it? We're off to South Wales for the day today, Tues 17<sup>th</sup> July, and all the weather gods are saying it's going to rain. So there I am, 9:00 in BAWA car park waiting on the coach along with everyone else and looking closely at the sky for the downpour to start.

Time for a few words with friends not seen for a while, then the coach comes into the car park and we can all get on and greet the rest of the party who had caught the coach in Downend.

Quick count of heads by Dave Curtis, and we're off, heading for the bridge and the road to the valleys. Slight pause while we blagg our way past passport control (oops sorry I mean the toll booth), and we're in Wales heading for our first stop, Aberdare

After a short circular tour of Aberdare town centre (the driver didn't have a map), we eventually find the bus station and we can get out for a leg stretch and some refreshment, only a quick stop here but we seem to have "lucked-in" with the weather as it's dry and actually quite warm.

Now we're off to our main stop for the day, Abergavenny, or we would be if we can find the road out of Aberdare. It does pay to carry a map or sort the route out before setting off. After a pleasant journey across the head of the Welsh valleys via Merthyr, Tredegar and Brynmawr we pull into the Abergavenny bus station.

We have 2½ hours here to see the sights, have lunch and see what bargains we can find in the historic Abergavenny market. Tuesday is the regular, 3 times a week market for general items, on other days throughout the month there are antiques fairs, flea markets and other specialist sales. Mind you, it was a bit far to go to find a shopping bag for sale advertising an exhibition in Bristol? Plenty of places to eat as well, and not all Starbucks or MacDonald's, though the selection of shops is all too familiar as all our High Streets are clones of each other these days.

Most people, however, appear to have found plenty to satisfy them, as there were quite a few shopping bags full of items loaded onto the bus, lots of fruit and veg etc, but nobody seemed to remember to get the beer?

Now we're off towards our last stop of the day, a garden centre around Gloucester. Unfortunately we didn't end up at the garden centre we were expecting, arriving at the 3 Shires near Newent. Although a, perfectly adequate garden centre, we arrived to find the restaurant closed and the cafe had stopped serving everything except coffee. So we're left to browse around the various sections, the tropical fish area was particularly interesting.

Back on the bus again with a few extra sprouting branches and pot plants and we're off on the road towards Bristol, I guess we must have had a good day; there were quite a few nodding heads on the way back down the M5, and as for those rain gods, they didn't appear the whole day, so much for weather forecasts.

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## Where did those sayings come from? By Vic Rollo

One of the highlights of our October 2010 visit to Chatham Historic Dockyard was a tour of the Victorian Ropery, the last remaining traditional rope-making facility in the world. As part of the highly entertaining tour, the guide, as well as showing us how the rope-making process evolved over the centuries, also introduced us to some of the less pleasant uses of rope on board ship.

Not unsurprisingly, one of the uses of rope on board ship was for punishment, the standard form of which was flogging. This was undertaken using a teased out length of rope which everyone will recognise as a cat-of-nine-tails. The "nine tails" comes from the nine strands which were used to make up the original rope, while the "cat" refers to the fact that after punishment, the miscreants back looked as though it had been scratched by cats' claws. This scratching lead to an expression everyone will recognise.

As it was usually a question of **when** a crewman would be flogged rather than **if** he would be flogged, and this punishment would be administered by a volunteer fellow crewman, then when a new crewman joined the ship he would often pair up with a fellow member of the same mess to mutually administer any punishment to each other as sympathetically as they could get away with, hence "***you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours***".

When punishment was decreed, the miscreant had to prepare his own "cat" and woe-betide him if he didn't produce a suitable example, additional strokes would be added to his punishment. When the cat was ready, it was placed inside a linen bag, which was then hung up in the miscreants mess, usually alongside his hammock. Come the dreaded moment, someone would "***let the cat out of the bag***" and all would repair on deck.

Punishments would be performed on deck, firstly to ensure that the whole crew could observe the punishment, presumably "pour encourage les autres", but also the space below decks was so tight, there was "***no room to swing a cat***".

NOTE. This is a copy of a contribution by Peter Parfitt in February 2009 for the book 'British Workmanship at it's Best' published by Filton Community History. It is reproduced in this Newsletter with their kind permission.

Peter was interviewed for this article by Joanne Williams from Filton Community History. Bill Wolstenholme was also present. For further info see page 2.



Photo of the Barnwell Hall buildings from the collection of Bill Wolstenholme

## **My life at Barnwell Hall by Peter Parfitt**

I was employed by the YMCA as warden at Barnwell Hall, with my wife as Matron, for the whole of its life from 1961 to 1976. Having completed about 20 years of farming I'd come to the conclusion I wanted to do something with people, rather than animals, and the people I was interested in were young people.

YMCA Community Services managed halls of residence for all sorts of people, and they had the opportunity to manage Barnwell Hall, starting from scratch. The person in charge asked us to move to Bristol to open this hall of residence. Before the Hall opened they had a prize giving in the College. We drove up from East Grinstead in this Bedford minibus and met all these new people, because we'd been told we were going to be coming here.

It was most interesting. We started off with the gentleman from BAC, Mr Bond, who was equipping the place. It was an empty RAF Officers Mess, absolutely ideal for a hall of residence for young men; except it was in the middle of an airfield, and so the young men had to walk quite a way to get to the joys of life like pubs and things. Setting up went on for several months with great support from the Works Department at BAC and eventually it was all done; the kitchen ready to my wife's requirements, they didn't want to give us a steam oven; they couldn't see why it was necessary; they didn't realise you needed one to make treacle puddings!

I should think it was quite well funded by the Company. The YMCA, an economical company to employ, would quote some figure, which I wouldn't know about, to manage the place, and that would include feeding and so on; an amount of money that was allocated for labour and food, and maintenance of the building, but nobody ever came to us and said, "Look you'll have to cut down." I am sure that what the apprentices paid did not cover the costs of running the establishment.

Gradually young men came to look and see if they'd like it, and one or two decided they would. Terry Flower, the Duckham twins, and another young man came along pretty soon; Bill Wolstenholme. We started off with 97 residents, built up at one stage to 140, because we took over some of the married quarters. The worst job was telling residents that they could not stop in Hall for a second year, which most of them would have liked to do. Then there was more enthusiasm for apprentice training and recruiting people from all over the country, not only local people who were able to stop at home or stay in lodgings. The Company thought it a good idea to have a hall of residence where the young men, some

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*(Continued from page 8)*

as young as 15, who all came from outside the Bristol area, could be together. After forty plus years Bill Wolstenholme is still in touch with young men who were there then and have spread their wings into all sorts of jobs.

The opening of Barnwell Hall was quite a grand affair. We had somebody from the Ministry of Aviation, he was a knight, and we were fortunate enough to have Sir Stanley White, and his wife and also Mrs Barnwell was there; Mr Barnwell had been Chief Engineer but died in an aircraft crash. Mr Sterland, Principal of the Technical College, and several Directors who were very supportive; It was good to have that sort of support. I got a letter from a Director called Freddie Pitts and one or two of them wrote nice little letters of satisfaction with the way things were being run. There was a great deal of interest from the Company. It was a new thing as far as they were concerned to start up something like this. Before Barnwell Hall the boys had to live in lodgings.

I was nothing to do with education, that side was the Technical College's responsibility. I obviously wanted to encourage young men to do their homework properly. I can't remember any trouble where a person came and said, "I can't study because there's too much noise next door." My idea was to develop things like an annual 25 mile walk done in the dark in local roads. There was an annual 40 mile walk from Bristol to Weston-super-Mare and back. Apprentices came from different departments of BAC and Rolls-Royce, also coming in groups from other parts of the Company in Lancashire and Derby for example. We had some good walkers at Barnwell Hall, and we just wiped the board. Phillip Brighton was several times winner of the 40 mile walk. We took young men to YMCA's national cross country races, to Leicester on one occasion and Lincoln twice. It was quite a long way to go in a day with these young runners; they never won or anything, but they were keen enough to be prepared to go and join in, which I thought was great. I took two teams to the Ten Tors expedition on Dartmoor on different years.

Bristol YMCA arranged annual YMCA sports days in those days and we entered the competitions and had quite a bit of opposition from the Colerne RAF apprentices, who were also under YMCA management. Then there was a 50 mile walk, quite a number of the young men went in for. Myself and one of the young men were the leading walkers to come in after a 12 hour walk from Bristol, through Bath to Weston-super-Mare, which was quite a one-off event, something they achieved, and I don't think they will ever forget it. We also had one other event, a six mile national road walk, from Chippenham to Calne, and quite a number of young men went in for it. Unfortunately we didn't know that you were not allowed to go on the pavement, and some of them got disqualified before the race had hardly started, because they went up on the pavement. About five of us finished, and some of us managed to get what they call a six miles in an hour badge, the lowest form of recognition from the Road Walking Association and quite good going. The top walkers were finishing in 42 minutes; we just scraped 60 minutes.

We also had a football team and two boys signed on with Bristol City. Quite a number of the apprentices went home at weekends, depending where they lived. A lot of young men came from Wales, the craft apprentices particularly, and quite a number of them would go off Friday evening and come back Sunday, but some would go home Friday and come back to play football for us on the Sunday, having played football for their own team on Saturday. They were keen. We also had a team in the Bristol Table Tennis League. The cricket team took part in departmental competitions on the cricket square, on the huge BAC, BAWA sports ground. One young man who was with us for quite a long while, Colin Dredge, became a Somerset fast bowler but went home to Frome every weekend, so didn't play much for us. We had a rugby team, with a County player playing for us; one of the smaller counties I must admit. We played Patchway High School and Staff. We had a NAAFI room in front of the Hall nearer the runway; very handy for five-a-side football in the winter.

There was considerable Christian involvement at the Hall; in 120 you're going to get a certain number. Some were very evangelical, they went to a church call Pip 'n Jay, [St Phillip and St James], it was one of the Bristol city churches which hadn't a parish; the Priests came out to visit the chaps at our place, they got into this business of talking in tongues, late at night in the bedroom above ours, so we did have to go up and remonstrate with them a little. The Christian involvement involved a Sunday service in the main dining hall for four or five years. The Industrial Chaplain based in Bristol, the Methodist minister and other religious leaders would come and lead the service on occasions.

They did two or three BAC apprentice prize givings, from Barnwell Hall. They were big events, with a huge marquee put up for all the apprentices' parents. They had well known people like Freddie Laker and George Woodcock, a trade union man, to present the prizes. On one occasion the boys had gone up in this huge marquee during the night and hung something up in the roof, and I had to clamber up there on ropes to take this down before the 'big people' came! And there was this big 'tiger in the tank', cut out of wood, nicked from a petrol station I expect. We had bits of fun like that.

The Blue Diamonds were formed in Barnwell Hall; all four of them were apprentices of the Company; they were 'accused' of not doing their work properly because they were taking up all this time with the band, but they all passed

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their exams very well. Ken Falcon who formed the band, became Doctor Ken Falcon; a brainy bloke, he was interested in motorbike maintenance.

I was called into the dining room by the residents once; they wanted a menu for some reason or other. My wife and I were absolutely against this; we didn't want to put a menu up, we wanted it to be homely; when they came in they didn't know what they were going to have. The apprentices wanted a menu, to know exactly what there was for the week. I managed to get away with it, we never had a menu. I can see that they would perhaps be disappointed if they come and find it's something they don't like, but there was never really any great trouble. No choice; each day it was up to us to try and keep variety over a month or something like that. We had a menu in the kitchen; you had to, because of the ordering, so we knew what the meal was, but we didn't publicise it. Experience helped us decide what meals to cook; if you found something was unpopular, you'd not repeat it. It was basic, English food. The meat was bought every week from the local butcher at Little Stoke, just up Gypsy Patch Lane, and if that meat wasn't right my wife said, "You can come and fetch it, I'm not having that," and he came, because it was quite a decent order for a little butcher. She was very particular about trying to get the best that was available, bread, milk and meat. The vegetables, my wife used to go up to the shop in Filton and buy them. Even for those numbers we bought locally but the rest was through wholesalers and delivered to the Hall.

One of the biggest troubles in Barnwell Hall was maintaining staff, because it was seven days a week. Although some residents did go home at the weekends, there were others who had to be fed and watered, and maintaining kitchen staff was an absolute nightmare. Staff provided breakfast and then they had hours to spare in the middle of the day, coming back to do the evening meal. My wife mainly ran the kitchen; without her I would have been lost. I was on the easy side of it really with the young men, but managing the staff! We had about 12 or 13 ladies who came over in the bus to do the cleaning everyday, and about six staff in the kitchen, a head cook and a second cook. My wife became a cook, as things quietened down and the numbers went down, (the reason it had to be closed really). Then she was responsible for the lot, so she was very much involved. We had a sick room, but I can't ever remember anybody being in it in 15 years. We had one quite big communal room for a bedroom with six young men in there, but there was no trouble, nothing that I can remember saying, "You've got to leave," except for one thief, who was caught and had to leave.

I can't remember having to go and separate a fight or anything like that, but they can't all have been angels. They were all interested in one thing, the aircraft industry and learning to be engineers, from craft boys who were going to do filing or whatever, through to the young men like Ken Falcon, who became a Doctor. Any serious problems I had to take to Mr Sterland, who was the Principal of the Technical College, where all the young men went, either full time or part time, to study. There was a huge basic training workshop, which the craft boys were mostly in, but the undergraduates had to do their turn through that as well. It was a very full life for them with studying. I did as much as I could do on the recreational and sporting side.

From time to time, if the lads in a particular bedroom didn't hit it off, they had the opportunity to swap. In the north wing there were only two to a room but there were no washbasins in the rooms, they all had to use the communal washing area. They had showers; a new thing for many, people were not so demanding in the 1960s. There was one dreadful accident; a young man was washing his socks in one of the basins and the basin gave way; he had very bad cuts. There was a lot of blood about; my wife was very good at that sort of thing; tied something round to stop the bleeding, and rushed off in the car to Southmead where it was sorted out. He lost the use of two fingers from it. I don't think he ever sued anybody or anything; there wasn't so much talk about suing in those days as there is nowadays. We had a broken leg on the football field on one occasion.

We had a lovely three quarters size snooker table, very good for wintertime, and very well used along with the table tennis room and darts. There was only one television, say 100 boys most of the time, but again I don't know whether the 'big bully boys' always won or not, I wasn't always there, but there were no serious problems. There must have been arguments I'm sure, but it was fairly well controlled. We didn't have the television going on 'til midnight and it was accepted. I used to tour all round the building at 11 pm to turn out unnecessary lights and close down public rooms and sometimes have a chat with residents in bed if their door were open. So for 15 years I was never in bed before 11.30 pm, quite late in the '60s.

I'm sure that I had to cope with young men who were perhaps finding it difficult to be away from home. One young man became an epileptic while he was there; he had a fit in the office when they were all lined up to pay their fees one day. He had to be guided into a certain area of engineering, away from machinery and into office work. Only one in all the residents that came to Barnwell Hall, didn't like it after the first week and he didn't pay for his first week's boarding, the only resident who got away with not paying. That wasn't because there were people twisting their arms; they just got into the routine. The one thing the YMCA wanted was that the residents paid each week for what they were getting, so

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they knew that it was their responsibility. They were paying for it; it wasn't being done for them. In the first year of opening the cost of accommodation, full board, seven days a week no midday meal, but midday meal on Saturdays and Sundays was three pounds eleven shillings (£3.55) including a shilling for the sports fund. Bill Wolstenholme earned four pounds thirteen shillings and eight pence (£4.68), and wasn't the lowest wage earner by any stretch of the imagination and worked to supplement his earnings. The young ones, the craft boys, their wages at that time were not enough to cover the board and lodging. They paid a fairly high proportion of what they earned. But there was no back sliding over it, my wife and I would be in the office every Thursday and they came and paid up. There'd be a few hang about and you might have to just go and knock on the door, "Did you forget today?" but there were never any bad debts. The craft apprentices had to go to the Youth Employment Office (a Government Dept) to get a top up if their parents were of lesser means.

Another big thing we did, and it was Eugene McEvoy who was the leader in this effort. We heard about a big corrugated iron shed that was going to be knocked down in Bristol. The boys had a look, took it down, got it transported to site and put it up again. It was a good size, and they built themselves a pit, for servicing. Right from the beginning one or two would have a car, and several would have motorbikes, so they always wanted to be doing repairs and this shed was a huge help; electricity was installed and benches. Because they were hands on, they did it. I wouldn't be into building, but they did that. As you would imagine the boys did quite a bit of model making, control line flying of model planes, and free flying.

There was no curfew, they were allowed to come and go. The front door was always left open, so there was no limit. All we said would be, 'If you're coming in late that's your business but don't disturb other people. Think of others.' Generally speaking they did. I did have two boys, sons of servicemen, and they'd moved around a lot and didn't like the discipline at Barnwell Hall. I used to go round and knock on the doors and see if they were alright, not everyone all the time, and have a few words. One evening, they'd set up the beer cans on the table and they were gambling. In Barnwell Hall we had YMCA Rules, there's no gambling, no alcoholic drink, and they'd set it all up so that they'd get kicked out. In fact they did leave and go into lodgings I presume. So it wasn't all kicking balls and so on, there was quite a bit of thought. We had film shows; we had a projector and could put on a certain number of films.

Homework would be the boy's responsibility and there are no parents there to push them. I'm sure that some of them back slid, but I'm sure they knew that their future lives depended on it, and because they'd chosen to come there, most of them were interested in getting on, whether it was a craft boy or an undergraduate or an HNC. I didn't get into the stage of saying, "Have you done your homework?" My wife and I did on occasions act almost as surrogate parents to some of the boys. There were certain ones that did draw towards you, particularly to my wife. I think really, some of them would be quite happy to come and sit in our flat in the evening, and some did. It was quite a quick turnover to begin with, we had the 97 in, and then the next year we probably, had 90 and some would just have to go to lodgings, because there was another lot coming in, and so we'd keep a few as a bit of back up.

I never had an assistant warden, I would think that every hostel or hall or residence the YMCA ran of that size would have an assistant warden, but we wanted to do it ourselves, and my wife and I managed it. When I had mumps aged 40 something, I was laid low, and my wife just coped. The apprentices knew, they weren't people who wanted to take advantage of difficult situations. I went away for a week, took my son, he was only about four or five and stayed with the family for a week. My wife stayed at the Hall and she coped with the help of one or two senior residents.

The apprentices were leaving school at 15 then if they were craft apprentices, and they'd be through to early 20s, so it was a five or six year age range. They would gather in their groups and you wouldn't get a great deal of undergraduates hobnobbing with the craft apprentices. But when involved with football, walks and those sort of things, what you were, what your background was didn't make a difference. Some of the young men were very bright and from very good backgrounds, and they settled in. I hope I'm not giving too rosy a picture of it. Some activities were annual, some seasonal and others all the time. We did have our own sports knock out competitions every winter. They would enter, be drawn against somebody, knock them out and go right the way through. We had a tennis hard court; it wasn't used as much as I would have liked, to be honest, but it was there, all done up by BAC for us.

There was a Barnwell Hall residents committee voted in on a wing basis; north, south and east wings I think it was. There were about 30 in each one who all voted and were represented. They had their own Secretary, Tony Foster; I was just there but they were quite happy to organise things themselves. One very adventurous thing, they were going to build a swimming pool, and they did mark it out down below the tennis court, but they built the Filton Pool at that time, thank goodness. It was decided it wouldn't be necessary for us to have our own, because it would have been very small; but it was an idea they had, and they tried to put forward. Another idea they had was the Barnwell Hall tie. We had a little competition to design this, and ended with the Bristol Fighter, which Captain Barnwell designed, and YMCA colours.

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There are a few of these about, but very limited; they ought to be worth £1,000!

The young men did not really get involved in things that were happening in the local community, or mixing and socialising with local people. Attached to the College there was an organisation called ACES, and this was the social side of the College. Residents of Barnwell Hall all came from outside Bristol. ACES was more for local living apprentices. All BAC apprentices could join in ACES activities, sometimes playing games like football and cricket, Barwell Hall in opposition to an ACES team. There was quite an amount of involvement in ACES. The only slight outside involvement would be with the churches, the Methodist Church and the Methodist minister. On one occasion I was absolutely furious, I'd got two boys who were happy to be confirmed, and I went to the chap at Patchway and he couldn't be bothered for some reason. But there was active involvement with the Methodist Church from Barnwell Hall, but not a tremendous amount I have to admit; we were a bit insular I suppose.

We had the odd dance, not very often, but we did have a dance or two, and we allowed the people running the dances to have a barrel or two of cider, which was probably more potent than beer. My wife used to stand by and see that there was no over indulgence. But there again it was all good fun. The Hall would be very well decorated with a huge backcloth to the stage. We also had the annual Christmas dinner, which was quite a big thing. They would all be sat down and the ladies that did the cleaning would do the serving, and we'd have the heads of the Apprentice Training Department and the Technical College join us on that evening. That was when I was shaking; you had to give a little speech about the activities of the year. It always went down well, but the trouble was, I would say something quite innocently and it would turn out that they could see something a little bit on the side, and you had huge guffaws and I didn't even know what they were laughing at!

My family coped very well with living on the site. My daughter had one or two boyfriends among the apprentices as she grew older. She was only about seven when we moved in so she had all her education there and went to teacher Training College at Cheltenham, so it wasn't very far away. My son was born there. We had a good steady handyman who was there for years and my son used to go round riding on the mowing machine with him, when he wouldn't go to Sunday School or nursery. It was murder taking him to school to begin with, he wasn't at all happy. He went Filton Hill Primary School, the one near to the Technical College. My daughter got involved with some activities the boys did. My son was never really old enough: when the place closed down he was 11 He used to support our teams at weekends and was always accepted well by the residents.

We had an annual sports day and parents came from quite a long way away to join their sons who were competing or not in the normal little sports activities. We'd have a slow bicycle race for boys who couldn't run. Tug of war was my favourite. I used to go right across Bristol to get a tug of war rope from the Police, I don't know where it was, a long way away, and take it back again. On one occasion they had a piano smashing competition. That was a team effort; they took iron bars and just had a go. I hung up a car tyre, and they had to break the piano into pieces small enough to go through the tyre, and the one who got them through first won. It's terrible really, it wasn't the thing that should have been encouraged, but people were just dumping them in the early 60s. Then we had the obstacle race; they had tyres as well which they just climbed through.

Nearly all the boys came with their parents except those from up north. Some came a long way and they'd arrive at gate 25, and I bet they must have wondered what the hell, because it was quite a walk from the gate. Sometimes I'd know and I could pick them up. Senior YMCA, R-R, BAC and BS staff attended as lots of parents came to see where their sons were going to be. We certainly never had a complaint from a parent, I'm absolutely certain of that. About 40, 50 parents came to the sports, open day but generally did not visit often. Again my wife was very good at putting on refreshments for anything like that. I think the annual prizes might have been handed out then. We had a lovely trophy cabinet, because the BAC and Rolls were generous in helping with anything that meant the boys were going to be doing things. At the end we tried to find people who'd done well at the sports and send the trophies to them; because I'd won the billiards that year when there wasn't so much competition, I got the billiards! Unfortunately it was stolen from me when I was working in London, it was absolutely no good to anybody else at all.

Things declined towards the end because of the numbers. The boys weren't paid very much, the wages of apprentices were very, very small but they were getting a training for the rest of their lives, and as a result of the trade unions boosting the apprentices pay, the companies began to find that it was becoming too expensive, and so recruitment reduced, and especially recruitment from further afield. They concentrated more on local recruitment, and it came to a stage where they just had to decide they were not recruiting enough young men needing the sort of accommodation the Hall provided. This started two or three years before and at the end there were only four or five boys there and one of them was attached to Air Traffic Control.

We had some ups and down with Air Traffic Control. Everybody had to cross the north runway (not the main runway).

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You come in from gate 25 and there would be traffic lights, and you had to wait if there were planes coming through. Of course you'd get young men trying to skip through, like they're doing on the level crossings now; but it was all fairly quietly dealt with through the apprentices' training officers. It wasn't used tremendously, mostly by the University Air Squadron Chipmunks, but it was active. On one occasion we made a very big mistake; we had a dog, a golden retriever and it was running down on the airfield. Air Traffic Control did come through to us pretty quickly, because the main runway was quite active in those days, with people coming in and out from Derby and all over, especially round about Concorde time. We went up into the Air Traffic Control once or twice, the controller was a bit stropky to begin with until he got to know us and it all became friendly.

I had quite a lot to do with the apprentices Training Officers from Rolls-Royce, BAC and Bristol Siddeley. There was a lot of co-operation between the Training Officers; they were very supportive of the Hall and really thought it was a good thing to have apprentices forming a community, rather than one in that house over there, and another one in a house down the road. I used to go into the Company stores for supplies, for toilet rolls and things because it was more economical for us to get it from there than to buy separately.

The stainless steel plane, the Type 188, did its testing right next door to Barnwell Hall. We had the Olympus engines there too in a Vulcan bomber not more than 400 yards away. They had silencers and they backed the engines up against the sides, but they were only partly silenced.

I was terrifically interested in the aviation side of it and what the apprentices were doing: I wasn't an engineer but interested through the enthusiasm of the young men. There was a lot of enthusiasm for Concorde, it was such a huge thing. When they're getting to the senior part of their apprenticeship they'd be in the Drawing Offices working with it.

Raymond Baxter from the BBC was in my office for the take off of Concorde; he watched it on a monitor and was telling the people all over the world about the excitement of the take off of the first Concorde in Britain. The French pilot was there as well; he'd already flown about a month before in France, he spoke to the residents. He was there with Brian Trubshaw, and all the crew, and the boys were there. On that day they didn't get a meal in the dining room because there was too much going on. I can't remember what we did, it must have been something *al fresco* at the side because the dining hall was taken over by the international press. Tony Wedgewood Benn was there as Minister of Aviation and top brass from the companies. Somebody built a lovely cake for the crew when they got back, cutting the cake up outside the Hall before they came in to be interviewed by the press. We were very closely involved with that.

We did have quite a bad time in 1963, there was a huge snow and we were isolated. Like everybody did we were running out of fuel and got very close. They were bringing in 40 gallon drums to keep the central heating going, because the lorries couldn't get over with the oil. There was no delivery of milk or anything like that. It was quite efficient, we were using chains; nobody's got chains in their car nowadays. But in those days you'd have a set of chains in your car, put them on and there was no trouble, so we used to be able to get backwards and forwards. It was quite a long spell of isolation but we were able to keep feeding the boys okay, but with quite a lot of extra work. When we were there in the first year we had a lot of very thick fog. You could walk miles before you found anything that was recognisable because it's a very open space; you know what the airfield is like. Then find you've been walking in the wrong direction for quite a long way up across the main runway or something like that.

Another little thing we did; the Company decided to use the camp Commanding Officers house just behind Barnwell Hall for Management visitors to stay. They used to have to come down for their food with the boys and it never really went off very well. That was a sideline for running the Hall of Residence for the apprentices.

We had a Coca Cola machine and a chocolate machine (profits to residents' fund). We had visiting students from South Korea, India, Hong Kong, Spain and Sweden at different times, and all got on well with our residents, and I am sure enjoyed their stays. I had many games of table tennis with one Korean. We had a table football machine which was very popular and profitable! We played in a local league with other youth clubs. We also took a lot of interest in the work of the Home Farm Trust, a local charity, and raised quite a lot of money to support it.

It is obvious how the camaraderie had built up at the Hall when Bill brought three ex-residents, all retired, to meet me and Mr Rilett after I had completed this recording and I am in touch with another six or so.

They were very generous when we left in 1976, there was a presentation of a lovely picture and £1000. It was money we had never experienced before. Mr Sterling worked that in somehow. It is probably the most interesting spell of my life working with those young men.

