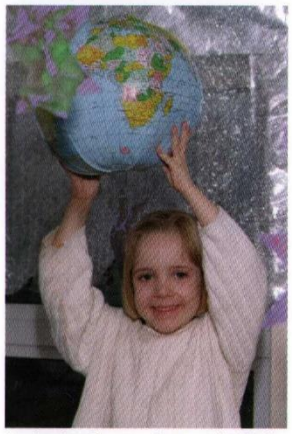
eCHO

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CULHAM SCIENCE CENTRE & HARWELL BUSINESS CENTRE MAY 1998

High praise for childcare at Harwell and Chilton



Jessica Lambourne, four, at the Little Stars nursery which was described as "happy, relaxed and provides a secure environment for children".

Recent OFSTED inspections at Harwell's Aldfield crèche and the Little Stars nursery, Chilton, gave unqualified praise about the high standards of childcare. Inspectors could find no weaknesses in any of the six areas examined.

The Harwell crèche, run by Kids Unlimited, was opened in 1990 and caters for 48 children, aged four months to five years. It mainly serves employees from the Harwell International Business Centre with a few community places for local children.

The team of 'dynamic' staff were commended including manager, Liz Hurley, who said, "I am delighted that the consistent praise we receive has been formally recognised but credit should go to all the staff including Ros Neale and Carol Underwood who work with the pre-school children. In fact, the children are always our ambassadors!"

Children's knowledge of the world was promoted by such activities as a French café including menus and labels in French. A 'finding out' exercise encouraged children to question the world in which they live and carry out primary scientific explorations. Further strengths included encouraging children to have a positive attitude towards people of all races, both genders and others with disabilities.

Words of praise were equally abundant for the Little Stars nursery set up just over a year ago for RAL staff, providing 40 day care places for children aged three months to five years. Run by Kinderquest Ltd, manager Anne Pearson commented, "It is very unusual for the inspection not to highlight any weaknesses but in our case the report said the nursery was promoting 'desirable outcomes' in every area."

Personal and social development was given a high priority at the nursery, particularly in developing children's confidence and independence. Children behaved well showing care and concern for each other.

Celebration of Science

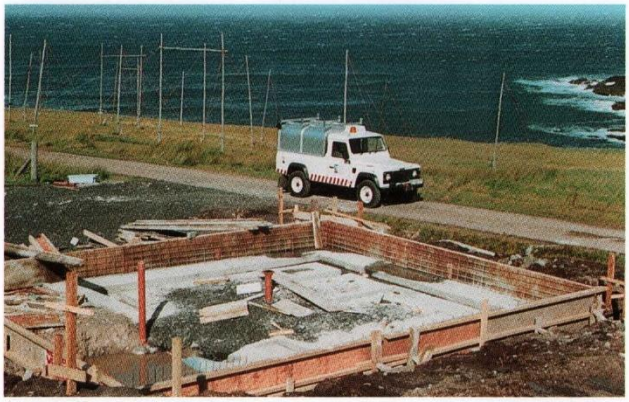
Children from ten schools in Abingdon arrived at the Abbey Hall to celebrate science at a festival sponsored by AEA Technology.

Organised by the Abingdon Schools Science Group, the aim of the event was to raise awareness of science as a stimulating and important subject. As well as exhibition stands, the children demonstrated experiments to members of the public and explained what they are taught at school and which aspects of science particularly interest them.

One pupil, Nikki Royle (yr 8, John Mason School) clearly found the exhibition a hair-raising experience! This electrostatic device uses similar principles to those employed in Harwell's Tandem Van de Graaff generator, producing high voltage but very little current.

This Month

Turning brown water clear



The new filtration plant under construction.

After years of peaty brown water, remote communities in the Scottish Highlands will now see crystal clear water flowing from their taps thanks to a new filtration plant produced by AEA Technology.

New European directives demand that water is not only safe to drink but is also clear. Determined to solve the problem, the North of Scotland Water Authority asked AEAT to find an efficient and cost-effective way to clean the water.

The plant is the first of its kind in the world and uses a cross-flow membrane filtration process developed in the nuclear industry. Ceramic filters are placed parallel to the direction of flow rather than across it so that the filters do not become blocked. The micro-porous structure not only removes the brown colour, it also provides a barrier to bacteria and other pathogens such as cryptosporidium, solids and toxic metals.

Water companies usually use a chemical process to produce clear water but this is expensive and only economically viable for large treatment works – a problem in remote rural areas. As the ideal alternative, AEAT's new plant receives untreated water from a nearby loch and will deliver up to 60,000 litres of clear water a day.

North of Scotland Water Authority

Obituary

Dr Kate Williams

1901–1998

Emily Katherine ('Kate') Williams' founder of Harwell's Occupational Department and personal physician to Sir John Cockcroft, died aged 97 on 26 March.

One of ten children, Kate was born in Cardiff on 11 June 1901. She studied chemistry at the University of Wales gaining her BSc (Hons); but with jobs scarce during the Depression, she left Wales to teach mathematics in Newfoundland. She returned in the 1930s, underwent surgery and was given only months to live. Undeterred she studied medicine, gaining brilliant awards, and obtaining Membership of the Royal College of Physicians.

She joined the Ministry of Supply (MoS) in 1941, working as a doctor in various ordnance factories and became the MoS Principle Medical Officer selecting medical personnel for government establishments. Attracted by the challenge offered by the new science of atomic energy research she seconded herself to AERE Harwell in 1946 and set up its Occupational Health Department. Dr Cockcroft, Harwell's first Director, asked her to be his personal physician.

Anxious to gain the latest information concerning the potential effects of radiation and their prevention, she lost no time visiting Los Alamos and other nuclear sites in the USA. Typically she overcame bureaucracy gaining access to top secret areas and co-authored the book "Radiation and Health". She went on to become a radiation expert to the World Health Organisation, was elected an Hon. Member of the Royal College of Radiologists and retired from Harwell in 1961.

Dr Alec Laylee, formerly of Winfrith's Occupational Health Department said, "First and foremost she was a caring doctor who showed a deep concern for her patients and was never too busy to sort out their problems." She retired to Mylor, Cornwall where she enjoyed painting, gardening and walking.

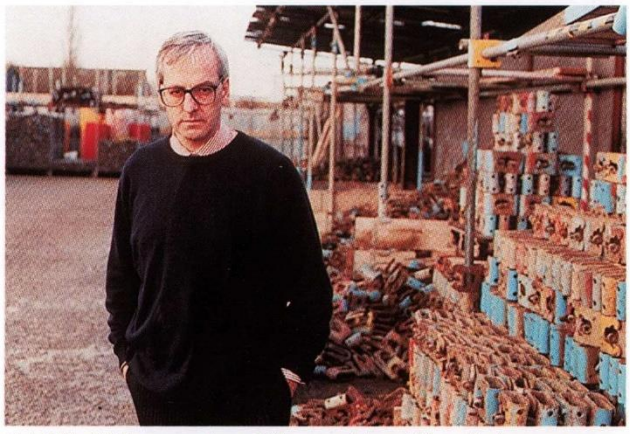
For the last four of her 97 years she was looked after by her grandniece Katy and her funeral was attended by several of her former colleagues, including Dr Robin Orr, a former Authority Medical Officer.

SCALING THE PUBLICITY HEIGHTS

Staff at H & H Scaffolding at Culham were shadowed by cameramen who shot around 40 hours of film to use in a BBC2 documentary called 'Make or Break'.

"The crew filmed us in our office with clients, in the yard and on site when we were in the early stages of changing the culture of the company," says owner, James Hill. "Our aim is to provide a consistent quality service and a special brand of customer care so that we can keep ahead of competitors. We are now working towards an Investor In People award."

The company has been at Culham since formation in 1993 and today employs around 36 staff, providing scaffolding services within a 50-mile radius. As part of a team building exercise staff were taking psychometric tests at the Heart of England TEC to discover their strengths and weaknesses and it was at this point that they caught the eye of the film director. Broadcast in March, the programme was also seen by employees at a private viewing.



H & H Scaffolding owner, James Hill, captured in a still from the documentary.

Composting – the way ahead

As local authorities work to meet stringent national targets for recycling and waste management, AEA Technology has launched a new composting project which provides an innovative and practical alternative to existing methods.

Open windrow production.

An AEAT-led consortium has developed a process for treating 10-20 tonne batches of organic waste using fully contained modular vessels. The technique is expected to bridge the gap between expensive, large scale, housed composting used by mass-producers, and the cheaper open windrow production, currently operated by some local councils.

A mobile, modular reactor has been built as a model for industry demonstrations and site open days. Based on the batch tunnel system used to prepare mushroom compost, the reactor is, in simple terms, an aerated steel box. Being contained it avoids many of the problems of windrow production such as wind, rain, varying temperatures and vermin, birds and insects. The system also includes biofiltration to eliminate dust and odour.

Affordable new system is ideal for local authorities.

In common with more expensive techniques it employs computerised process control. The result is a cost effective system which produces a consistently high quality end product.

The project is jointly sponsored by the BOC Foundation and the Department of Trade & Industry under its Biotechnology Means Business Initiative.

India looks to waste for power

A market in Delhi, producing 150 tons of waste per day, could generate up to one megawatt of electricity and provide power for around 5,000 homes, AEAT experts believe.

The company has been appointed by the Indian government to investigate whether vegetable waste from markets could be economically used to help the country's power shortage problems which stop some factories operating at full capacity.

A study at the Azadpur market in Delhi and the smaller Koyambedu market in Chennai (formerly Madras), will apply biomethanation or biogas technology. Slurried fruit and vegetable waste is passed through air-tight biomethanation reactors to produce a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide which can then be used to generate electricity. The raw material is free from toxins, allowing the residue to be used as compost.

AEAT is very familiar with such anaerobic digestion techniques, which has been successfully used in this country for many years. To benefit from AEAT's expertise, two groups of Indian representatives have already visited the Culham site.

Bug-free Millenium

AEAT computer systems expert, David Spinks, joined Prime Minster Tony Blair on the platform to urge companies to take action now to protect their organisations from the potential devastation of the Millennium Bug.

At a London conference David spoke about his team's role to give independent advice, first to assess the potential risk of component failure, how to reduce this risk and prepare continuity plans if unexpected problems arise. AEAT is already working with customers in the aviation, rail, finance, oil and gas, nuclear, military and shipping sectors to ensure that systems operate as usual as the clocks strike midnight on the eve of the new century.

The 'bug' will affect embedded software and chips found in a large proportion of equipment from railway signals to traffic lights and ships' navigational systems. AEAT is urging the many small and medium sized businesses, which supply products and services to larger organisations, to take preventative steps as soon as possible.

AEA Technology is also involved in Year 2000 work with major national and international companies.

eCHO BRIEF

Triple gold for UKAEA

For the third year running UKAEA has won gold awards for safety. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) awarded UKAEA its coveted Gold Award for Occupational Safety at all its sites, including Harwell and Culham. John McKeown, UKAEA chief executive, commented "I am delighted we have received these prestigious awards as it confirms that our standards are very high. But we can do even better because we still have too many avoidable injuries like slips, trips and falls. We will work towards reducing these even further."

Light-hearted boost

Patients awaiting a heart transplant donor will now be able to leave hospital and wait at home. A new artificial heart which is light enough to give patients greater mobility has been developed in the US, using light-weight lithium-ion battery packs developed by AEA Technology.

Refresher First Aid

For those staff whose First Aid certificates are about to expire – a certificate lasts three years – an HSE-approved two day refresher course will be run on 20 and 21 May. Organised by RGIT Ltd occupational health services, places on the course can be booked by calling H4135.

New MD

Dr Brian Walker has been appointed managing director of ERG (Environmental Resource Group), the effluent treatment and process plant specialist. Dr Walker, a fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, brings experience of engineering contracting and technical innovation from parent company, AEAT, where he was general manager of the engineering design group.

Out & About

Have a Ball

The MRC Summer Ball will be held on June 12th 1998 at Shillingford Bridge Hotel, Wallingford. 7.30 for 8.00pm until 1.00am, 3 course meal, live band, £25.00 per person. Smart dress. Tel: Deborah Pocock on 01235 834393 ext 230.

Crafty Event

Craft Fair and Art Exhibtion run jointly by Hagbourne School PTA and Didcot Art Society at Hagbourne School and Village Hall, East Hagbourne, near Didcot, on Sunday 17th May from 11.30am-4.30pm. The craft fair will include some 70 varied stalls while paintings in all media and styles will be on display at the art exhibition. Entrance (to both events) 50p adults (children free).

A Family Show

Hendreds Family Show on 16 May from 8.30am outside Eystom Arms public house. Cakes, plants or raffle prizes appreciated. Contact M Childs H4992 or Mike Harris on 01235 833126.

RAL Open Days

Partnership at the leading edge

Everyone is welcome to visit the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory on Saturday 27 June (9am - 4.30pm) for the public open day. There will be a central exhibition explaining about CCLRC and a series of tours, allowing you to guide yourself around the facilities in such areas as:

- ***Particle physics and astronomy***
- ***Materials***
- ***Technology and engineering***
- ***Life sciences and the environment***
- ***Information technology and communications***

Each tour will be colour-coded and will have a guide time, allowing you to make the most of your day. For those who can't stay long there'll be a 'highlights' tour. Refreshments are available throughout the day and entry is free.

To attend the industry day, contact the commercial office on H5700, or to come to one of the schools events contact Rachel Baines on H5950. For more details about the open days in general visit the web site http://www.cclrc.ac.uk/Opendays98/

Lecture a resounding success

Attended by a diverse audience including local secondary students and eminent UK scientists, the second annual MRC Harwell Lecture was held in the Cockcroft Hall.

Guest speaker, Lewis Wolpert, is Professor of Biology as Applied to Medicine in the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, University College, London. He has presented science on radio and television and writes a regular column in *The Independent on Sunday*. As chairman of the Committee for the Public Understanding of Science, he has the ability to both entertain and communicate complex scientific ideas to the public yet his theories remain thought provoking to scientists in his field.

Professor Wolpert spoke on the topic of "How genes control pattern formation in development". And began with the problem studied by all developmental biologists: how do organisms develop from a single fertilized cell into the complex adult form which contains a diverse array of distinct cell types? In multicellular organisms the basic body plan is laid down during embryonic development. Pattern formation is the process by which cell activities, such as division, migration and cell-cell communication are co-ordinated to create this basic body plan.

Evidence that Prof Wolpert had presented ideas in a convincing, yet easy to follow way was confirmed by the discussion and enthusiastic feedback which followed his talk. Questions were posed by all sections of the audience such as "Why does hair on the human head continue to grow? - something which seems unique within the animal kingdom" and "If we had to evolve again, would we end up looking the same?"

START stops

At midnight on March 31st, 1998, a group of twelve enthusiasts celebrated the final activity of the START experiment which had, in the last few days achieved its best ever performance to date.

As the world's first hot plasma 'spherical tokamak' (ST), START has been one of the world's most influential fusion experiments and has secured Culham's position as the leading fusion laboratory in ST research.

Pioneering fusion work was undertaken by Alan Sykes, Bas Pease and colleagues at Culham's theory department in the 1980's. At this time in the USA a proposed Spherical Torus eXperiment (STX) costing $6m did not get the go ahead so Tom Todd and Derek Robinson produced a much simpler design. Their version used mainly spare parts but provided plasmas of aspect ratio as low as 1.25, previously thought impossible. START was built in 1989-90 and the first plasmas were obtained in January 1991 using funds from the UKAEA's corporate research programme.

The exciting development of START, and its many achievements, are well known worldwide. Almost all international conferences have invited papers about the project. Other laboratories - notably Princeton (USA) - are building STs but Culham has high hopes for the new MAST facility. While the first results are awaited, detailed analysis of the START data will be carried out to explore the future potential of the spherical tokamak as a materials test facility or power plant.

START's original design team - (back l to r) D Robinson, J Booth, G Cunningham, J Humphreys, B Ward, J Hicks, (front l to r) T Todd, M Harte, A Sykes, R Smith.

Call for government action

Harwell-based Beven Recycling is urging the government to take immediate action to increase the recycling of scrap tyres and reduce the amount destined for landfill sites.

Although the government shares this objective, it has asked for research to be published by the end of the year rather than direct action. Beven Recycling is stressing that it has in place a cost-effective and legitimate process for recycling scrap tyres which has a proven 10-year track record.

As new legislation comes into force to make tyre producers responsible for proper disposal, Beven is in discussion with major industry players to help them comply with 'producer responsibility'.

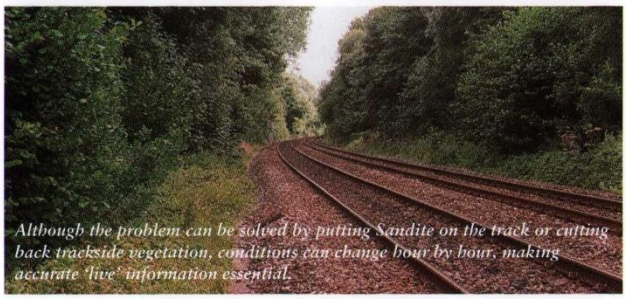
"We have an existing scheme which is ready to deal with the problem at a minimal disposal charge per tyre," comments Beven Recycling MD, Ann Jervis.

Satellites detect leaves on the line

AEA Technology Rail and Thames Trains are using global positioning satellites to pinpoint hazardous leaves on the railway line.

A Low Adhesion Warning System (LAWS) monitors on-board computers that measure loss of wheel traction. A message is transmitted by mobile phone and satellite to a central control room and a colour-coded map is produced showing areas of low adhesion for use by train drivers and rail maintenance teams.

Every autumn fallen leaves cause long delays for passengers. Wheel slippage can also pose a serious safety risk as highlighted by the collision at Slough station in 1994.



Although the problem can be solved by putting Sandite on the track or cutting back trackside vegetation, conditions can change hour by hour, making accurate 'live' information essential.

50 new jobs

Fifty new staff will be taken on at the BRR rail research centre following its acquisition by AEAT in December 1996. The Derby-based business is now part of AEA Technology Rail and has positions for signal engineers, track and rolling stock engineers and project managers, among others to boost its 250-strong workforce by 20 per cent.

Green light for a major recruitment programme.

Alternative roofing

Despite the heavy April showers this year, the new roof on Harwell's Building 1 will keep its occupants completely dry. A project to replace the roof on the Reception and Police Station has recently been completed by UKAEA property management and Johnson Controls.

The original roof, constructed from over 30,000 hand made clay tiles, had become brittle with age and was no longer weather tight, making maintenance costly.

As a sympathetic yet innovative solution, the property management team decided to replace the roof with metal profile sheeting designed to imitate traditional roof tiles. This style of roofing has many advantages. It carries a 10 year guarantee, gives a weight saving of over 75% when compared to conventional roof tiles, as well as being virtually maintenance free.

BEFORE – Project Manager, Pete Burrows (JCL) with the crumbling clay tiles.

AFTER - Future performance will be monitored with interest to determine its suitability for use elsewhere on the site.

Laboratory chief retires

After 36 years and a highly distinguished career, Dr Paul Williams has retired from his position as chairman and chief executive of the Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC) which operates RAL in Oxfordshire and the Daresbury Laboratory in Cheshire.

Since joining RAL in 1962 as a team leader working on a major high energy physics experiment, he has moved steadily forward, becoming head of the experimental physics group in 1970, deputy head of laser division on 1976 and RAL director in 1987.

Paul's work has been published in the scientific press and he has received a number of prestigious awards including the Institute of Physics Glazebrook medal and prize in 1993. He also received a CBE in the 1996 New Year's Honours and, in the same year, was awarded an honorary degree of doctor of science by Keele university. Most recently he was appointed a deputy lieutenant of Oxfordshire earlier this year.

"At school I had an inspirational physics teacher and that set the course of my career. I have never regretted the decision taken in my mid 'teens," he recalls.

Dr Paul Williams (left) said, "I wish RAL and its sister laboratory, the Daresbury Laboratory, every success in the future under new chief executive, Dr Bert Westwood (right). I'm confident that they will continue to be a major force in the world science scene."

"Physics has given me a wonderfully exciting career and through it I have made friends all over the world. Most of my working life has been spent at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and for the last 12 years I have been privileged to direct this world-class laboratory."

In his retirement Paul and his wife Marion are planning to stay in their home in north Abingdon. Paul plans to give more time to his work with the Methodist Church, to Abingdon School and Westminster College where he is a governor, to get back on to the Thames in his sailing dinghy and, most importantly, to spend more time with grandchildren in Beaconsfield and Houston, Texas.

Harwell Laboratories RECREATIONAL ASSOCIATION

1998/99 Membership Cards

A quick reminder that any ordinary member on the Harwell campus who has not received his/her membership card for 1998/9 by Friday 8 May, should contact the HLRA office on H3296.

'Good Sports' Lunches

Don't let cricket, rounders, croquet or aerobics stop you from having lunch! Order your baguettes, baps, sandwiches from the Social Club in advance by ringing H3296 or by fax H3250 for collection. A large range of tasty fillings, both hot and cold, is available at reasonable prices from 10.30am until 1.45pm. Vegetarian dishes are also available.

Cool It!

A variety of Walls Ice Cream is available from the Social Club takeaway – very welcome after a hot lunch-hour on the sportsfield. For members' convenience, there's a Coca-Cola machine on the main sports pavilion veranda.

Tennis Update

You may have noticed the recently painted courts ready for the new tennis season which has just begun. Existing members should by now have received their membership renewal and potential new members can get an application form from Derek Parkinson, on NRPB ext. 2714.

Club sessions have started on the three hard courts from 4:30 p.m. every Friday, weather permitting. Existing members and potential new members are all welcome. Members may use the courts during lunch hour or after work on most evenings and at weekends. Midweek men's and mixed matches are played in a Newbury League and mixed matches in the White Horse League on Sunday afternoons. Matches will begin in early May, which means three courts are not available on Monday and Wednesday evenings and occasionally on a Sunday afternoon when a home game is played. The single hard court and the grass courts (when open) are still available for general club play during these times.

Membership of the club costs £34 per season (£10 for under 18s) which includes provision of tennis balls. Applicants MUST be HLRA members. Coaching sessions for beginners and intermediate players will be organised during the season and anyone interested in receiving coaching should contact Derek Bingham on NRPB ext 2839.

The club receives an allocation of Wimbledon tickets each year through the Oxford Lawn Tennis Association and these are available to members winning in a 'ticket draw' which is available only to fully paid up members at the time of the draw on Friday 8 May.

Now is the time to consider picking up that tennis racket that has been hidden away for years (hopefully no wooden ones!!). Come and join us on the courts.

Sally's second bikethon

Cycling 26 miles through our capital city may be a risky business but, having raised £500 for Leukaemia Research in last year's London Bikethon, Sally Searis is eager to do it all again.

On Sunday 8 June, Sally of AEA Technology Energy, Harwell, will be taking the 'scenic' route - last year she chose the 'historic' route - starting and finishing at Battersea Park and taking in the Thames embankment. Her husband, Geoff, and daughter, Sophie, now sixteen, will be cycling with Sally again this year.

"For me it's not a race" she says. "The whole atmosphere in Battersea Park is like a carnival. About 2,000 cyclists took part last year, probably more this time, from all age groups. We're planning to stop in a pub for a drink half way 'round - it's important not to get dehydrated!"

Training has started already as Sally and Sophie get out on their bikes most evenings and at weekends. She is sure that their hard work will be rewarded by the generosity of friends and colleagues. Anyone wishing to support Sally with their sponsorship can call her on H4308 or by ccmail.

Vault Store Liaison

Members of Harwell's Local Liaison Committee toured the £50 million Vault Store, just prior to it going 'live'. The store is designed for the medium term storage of intermediate level waste. The group is pictured standing at the rear of the head-end suite where radwaste is assayed, sorted and packed into 500 litre stainless steel drums for storage in the vault. Stephen White (third from left) is the retiring LLC chairman; Philip Rendell (fifth from left), vault store manager, gave the tour; John Wilkins (third from right) is the incoming LLC chairman and Nick Hance (far right) is the LLC secretary. Mary Tame represented Oxfordshire Womens' Institutes and behind her is Joe Hamilton, head of RAL's administration; Prof Dudley Goodhead from MRC is sixth from left.

June collects MBE

A few weeks ago June Luker visited Buckingham Palace to collect her MBE. June is pictured here with her husband, David, daughter, Susan and son-in-law, Nigel. She received her medal in the New Year's Honours List for her career with UKAEA at Harwell, spanning 40 years and in particular for setting up a records system for the management and handling of radioactive waste.

SAFETY FACTS

Lost time accidents

These figures cover the period to the end of March to tie in with the fiscal year – the new reporting cycle for safety statistics – which replaces calendar year reporting. As UKAEA's reorganisation also takes effect from 1 April 1998, it marks an appropriate time to start new annual records. Next month's data will therefore start from the beginning of April and come under the new year 98/99.

Culham/Harwell	**C**	**H**
Recorded since last issue	0	2
Total this year	0	8
Total reported to HSE '98	0	3*
Total days lost in '98	0	44
Minor accidents (no time lost)		
Recorded since last issue	7	9
Total this year	13	44

***One lost time accident of three days recorded earlier this year has now become reportable to the HSE on further time being lost.**

There was one radiological incidents, designated category 2, and no non-radiological incidents reportable since the last issue of ECHO.

Contaminated hand

A small amount of fixed contamination was measured on a tenant employee's hand prior to leaving his work area. Staff from the site occupational health department removed the contamination using routine decontamination procedures.

Fusiliers 50th reunion

Ex-members of staff, chemists and metallurgists, who did their National Service in 1947-49 on secondment to Harwell from the Royal Fusiliers, visited Culham and Harwell in April as the highlight of their 50th anniversary reunion.

Ken Alberman, who led the group, said, "Nuclear research in the late 1940's was given national priority and although John Cockcroft, Harwell's director, had sufficient physicists and electronics engineers he was short of chemists. Those of us doing our national service and who had graduated in chemistry and metallurgy were suddenly ordered to report for duties at AERE Harwell!"

He continued, "We were billeted in an ex-POW camp at Grazeley Green, near Reading, and had an hour's journey by bus. One week I was escorting army abscondees and the next I was doing the chemistry of uranium!" The national servicemen called themselves 'The Harwell Fusiliers' and after the two-year period vowed to keep in touch. This they did, visiting Harwell in 1986, and again on the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

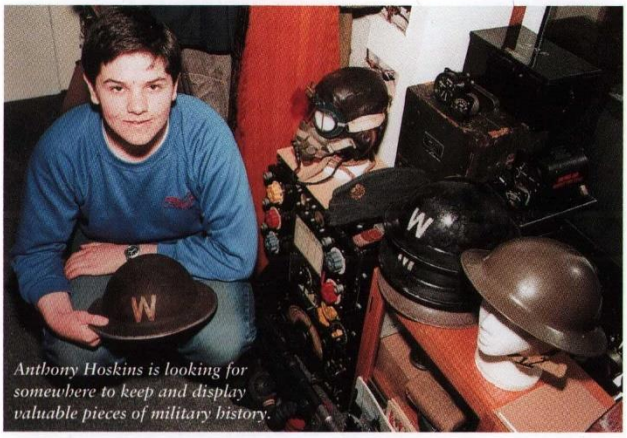
They toured JET and, hosted by Mark Nightingdale of UKAEA Fusion, saw the START, MAST and COMPASS facilities. Their visit co-incided with the closing down ceremony of START which since 1990 had become a fusion world-leader in achieving a plasma pressure to magnetic pressure ratio of 40% - up by a factor of three.

The party visited the Radiochemical Facility (B.220) at Harwell where Colin Lyon (UKAEA), second from right, and Amanda Kenway-Jackson (AEAT), fourth from right, showed them the remote handling suite of 'caves' and the Control Room. Ken Alberman is pictured third from right.

"Our visit reminded us once again of those far off days when Harwell had much of the atmosphere of a university. I think that we all regarded our time there as one of the most formative periods of our lives."
K. B. Alberman

Museum space needed

Fifteen year old Anthony Hoskins, son of RAL's apprentice training manager, Joe Hoskins, has a passion for military aircraft relics. He and a group of fellow enthusiasts have amassed a huge collection of 'finds' gathered across Europe from two world wars, but have nowhere to display them. Anthony is appealing to any ECHO readers who might have a suitable premises to contact his father (R6724).



Anthony Hoskins is looking for somewhere to keep and display valuable pieces of military history.

Lest we forget

The annual D-Day Remembrance Service takes place at the RAF Memorial Stone, Frome Road at 5.30pm, on Saturday 6 June. The service will include units of the British Legion with their colours and a procession of WW2 RAF vehicles. A wreath from the staff at Harwell, will be laid this year by UKAEA chief executive, John McKeown. Everyone is welcome to attend the short but moving ceremony that remembers those who flew from RAF Harwell on the eve of the D-Day landings in Normandy in June 1944.

The Martinet Mystery

Anthony has researched a fascinating story about an aircraft which crashed shortly after take-off from RAF Harwell in 1943 .....

On 11 May, 1943, two officers took a Miles Martinet on a routine mission. As the aircraft took off from the main runway at RAF Harwell it climbed in the direction of Hagbourne Hill, but at 2,000 feet it suddenly rolled to the left and plummeted into the hill. The pilot, L C Martin and flight officer J S Moore were killed instantly. The RAF inquest blamed pilot error and no other action was taken to investigate the incident.

HP245 was one of 1,724 Miles Martinets built at Woodley, near Reading. Not a combat aircraft, this cumbersome radial engined model was designed to tow a target drogue - like a large windsock - for ground fire target practice. Today no complete Martinets exist, although pieces are held in private and museum collections around the world.

Fifty-three years after the crash Anthony Hoskins began his search. The first piece of luck came when the farmer - who owned the land where the aircraft had come down - remarked that his mother remembered the event. She pinpointed the place of impact, which later proved to be accurate to within feet.

On a warm summer evening in 1996 an initial search was carried out using a powerful metal detector. Some debris was already visible but following cropping and ploughing a few months later, the surface of the field was a sea of green and grey metal. During the second excavation a small lead coin was discovered and taken to Oxford's Ashmoleum Museum where experts identified it as a small homemade token from the 15th century!

Further research in local newspapers and libraries has identified the names of the crew. The pilot's grave has yet to be found while flight officer Moore is buried in the small village of Adwell near Thame.

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