
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

Bulletin

A Monthly Newsletter for RAL Staff

October 1993

The White Paper and the Laboratories

'Business as usual' will be very much the rule for RAL and Daresbury Laboratory as their long term future is mapped out in discussions over the next few months. Our overriding aim will be to maintain and progress our scientific programmes while the various changes flowing from the White Paper take place beneath them.

The first two changes will occur on 1 April 1994. From that date SERC will cease to exist, and the administrations of RAL and Daresbury will be formally combined. The staff of the two Laboratories will become employees of the new Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) - but it is expected that the combined Laboratories will have enhanced delegated powers enabling them to serve all the new Research Councils on equal terms.

The Laboratories will be carrying substantial programmes for five of the six councils - the EPSRC, NERC, MRC, PPARC (the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council) and the BBSRC (the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, which replaces AFRC).

Discussions are in progress about the next phase of the changes, arising from the report of the 'Boundary Commission' which was set up under the Chairmanship of Sir David Phillips to advise on the distribution of SERC's programmes between the new Research Councils. The report proposed that after a short interim period the combined Laboratories should form a self-standing institution under the aegis of the Office of Public Service and Science. This is a recognition both of the value and importance of the Laboratories to the Research Councils and the UK Science Base and of their unique ability to serve user communities in all the Research Councils' fields. A working party set up by the Office of Science & Technology and chaired by Sir David Phillips will be examining the detailed options. Professor Alan Leadbetter and I are fully involved and we will be working hard to ensure that the Laboratories' programmes and prospects, and, of course, their staff, are looked after.

We will be using the interim period, when we will be part of EPSRC, to work with Daresbury in establishing good relations with all the Councils. We expect that funding during the first financial year (1994-95) will follow the plans already established by SERC and that arrangements will be agreed to ensure the continuity of programmes on a rolling basis through the five year forward look period and beyond.

These are exciting times, and new information comes to hand day by day. I will use the RAL Bulletin to keep you in touch with events, but watch too for special announcements which will appear if there are any major developments.

Dr P R Williams
Director

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ISIS Muon Facility expands

The ISIS Pulsed Muon Facility has recently undergone a major expansion with the construction of three new beamlines and the establishment of a new Muon User Programme. This was made possible by the award of a £2million grant from the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) in July 1991 and has already resulted in a notable enhancement in the utilisation of the Facility.

The original ISIS Muon Facility was established in May 1987 to provide scientists with a new experimental probe for investigating, in microscopic detail, the structure and dynamics of a wide range of materials. As the number of successful muon programmes grew, so too did the demand for muon beam time to the extent that it could not be met by the single beamline. The award of the four year CEC contract has allowed scientists and engineers at RAL, in collaboration with their European colleagues, to respond to this demand by upgrading the original instrument to a triple beam facility which will enable many more experiments to be run.

Two of the three new spectrometers, MuSR and EMU, were commissioned in June this year, enabling the first users from the Universities of Birmingham and East Anglia to carry out their experiments on high temperature superconductors and metallic clusters respectively, in July. For the first year, the third beamline, DEVA, will be used to test and develop new equipment and techniques and to perform 'one-off' experiments which require specialised apparatus.

The new Muon User Programme has given research groups who are new to muon techniques the chance to collaborate with, and learn from, experienced muon scientists; many have now submitted their own proposals to use the Facility during 1994 thereby expanding the range of science being carried out at ISIS.

Young Inventors at RAL

There were eight entrants in the District Final of the Young Inventor of the Year competition which was held at RAL on Thursday 23 September.

Mike Morris, Chief Engineer at RAL, was one of the three judges. "It was a very difficult choice" he said, "but we chose the winner for the simplicity of the design and its commercial potential". Christopher Jones from Sutton Courttenay, won the £300 first prize and a place in the final with his design for TASC - Temporary Attachment for Securing Cables, a device allowing fast and temporary connection to a low voltage power supply.

This annual competition is organised by Rotary International for Britain and Northern Ireland and was generously sponsored by Plus Plan (UK) Ltd.

RAL welcomes new apprentices

The Laboratory hosted a reception evening for its new intake of apprentices and their parents on 9 September. The eight apprentices (pictured right), are the second intake of the new apprentice training scheme and will start their basic training at Abingdon College. They join the initial six apprentices who have recently completed their first year training and have returned to the Laboratory to begin their on-the-job training placements around site.

Virtually all of RAL's main scientific programmes rely upon teams of highly skilled Craftpersons, Technicians and Technical Engineers and maintaining this strong skills-base, through comprehensive training programmes, is seen as crucial to our continued scientific success. Each year, Engineering Craft Apprentices are selectively recruited to join the Laboratory's Engineering Craft Apprenticeship Training Scheme which takes the form of a four year indentured apprenticeship.

At the start of the Programme in September, the trainees join the Lab for a short induction before attending a local training centre, currently Abingdon College, for one year to carry out academic studies. They also attend an outward bound course. Subsequent years are spent at the Lab learning and developing engineering skills and gaining experience of the range of work which is carried out here.



Working with schools - a plea for help!

Since taking up my appointment as Schools Liaison Officer in June, I have been gathering information about the Laboratory's links with schools and current schools-related activities. My research culminated in a report submitted to the RAL Management Board at the beginning of September in which I proposed a policy for a co-ordinated approach to working with schools.

With the support of the Board, I am now working on a publication which will be sent to 33 local secondary schools informing them of RAL's activities and advising them of our commitment to working with schools.

Whilst I am extremely grateful to everyone who contacted me following the article in July's Bulletin, I would now like to hear from more of you! I am setting up a database of individuals at RAL who would be prepared to visit a local school and speak about any aspect of their work. This will enable me to match requests with suitable speakers. If you feel unable to give such a talk but still wish to be involved with schools, perhaps by

helping with interview practice or industrial awareness sessions, I would also like to hear from you. By volunteering at this stage you will not be committing yourself as I will contact you well in advance of any activity in which I feel you may wish to participate.

In addition, if you have a special relationship with any of the targeted schools listed below, or if you have worked with one of them in the past, then please let me know:

West Berkshire

Bradfield College
Down House School, Cold Ash
Douai Abbey School,
Upper Woolhampton
John O'Gaunt School, Hungerford
Mary Hare Grammar School,
Newbury
Pangbourne College
Park House School, Newbury
St Bartholomews School, Newbury
St Gabriels School, Newbury
Shaw House School, Newbury
The Castle School, Newbury
The Downs School, Compton
The Kennet School, Thatcham
The Turnpike School, Newbury

South Oxfordshire

Abingdon School
Carmel College, Wallingford
Cranford House School,
Wallingford
Didcot Girls School
Faringdon School
Fitzharrys School, Abingdon
Fitzwaryn School, Wantage
John Mason School, Abingdon
King Alfreds School, Wantage
Larkmead School, Abingdon
Matthew Arnold School, Oxford
Millbrook House School, Abingdon
Our Ladys Convent Senior School,
Abingdon
Radley College, Abingdon
St Birinus School, Didcot
St Marys School, Wantage
School of St Helen and St Katherine,
Abingdon
Tesdale School, Abingdon
Wallingford School

I hope to keep you informed of the Laboratory's work with schools, and continue to seek your help, through a regular spot in the Bulletin. I can be contacted on ext 5950 between 9:30am and 4:00pm or by e-mail (OV/VM id Dawn).

Dawn Johnson

One for the album?

The Paper Tigers are not the first RAL team to have won the rounders tournament after all (see last month's Bulletin 'Triumphant Tigers claw their way to the top'). I have been reminded that a RAL team named Atlas, now CCD, won what was one of the early rounders leagues in 1977, defeating Metallurgy by three and a half rounders to two and a half.

Some members of that team still work at the Laboratory i.e. Lorna Claringbold, Julian Gallop, Ken Robinson, Maureen Smith, Eric Thomas and Ann Walter and with scant regard to any pleas to the contrary, we have decided to publish a photo as evidence!



The team of '77: Standing (l to r) Ken Robinson, Eric Thomas, Julia Spears, Ann Walter and Maureen Goodchild (now Smith). Sitting (l to r) Harry Richardson, Martin Guest, Mike Claringbold, Brian Totham and Julian Gallop (24941)

Sylvia lands top Personnel job!

Congratulations to Sylvia Fones who last month was promoted to the post of Chief Personnel Officer of the Laboratory.

In addition to holding the distinction of becoming RAL's first woman to hold this critical post, Sylvia probably has an unparalleled range of experience of Personnel matters with some 30 years' continuous service in the Division. Quite an achievement for one who feels that she hasn't planned her career, which is in stark contrast to her early ambition to be a lady jockey!



Noticeboard

Acknowledgement

Brian Edwards would like to say a big "Thank You" for the super leaving presents and for the flowers for his wife, Brenda. "I've had a marvellous time at the Lab", says Brian, "and I will miss putting the world to rights over lunch!"

Ilsa Brown would like to say "Thank You and farewell" to all her colleagues at RAL. She was disappointed not to see everyone before she left when her retirement presentation was moved forward at the last moment.

Poppy Appeal

8 - 12 November

The Royal British Legion helps not only pensioners and widows from the two World Wars, but also service people who have served more recently, including those with the United Nations in Bosnia and the Middle East. Last year the fund's expenditure was over £22m. The work can continue only with your help.

Please give generously.



Diary

RAL Lectures

19 November 3:00pm R22
Lecture Theatre
(title to be announced)
Mr R Jackson MP

25 November 3:00pm R22
Lecture Theatre
An energy policy for the UK
(provisional title)
Dr M Archer

Rec Soc News

Anyone for cribbage?

Interested in playing cribbage at lunchtime? A new league will start towards the end of October. If you would like to enter a team (of three), or you would like to be included in a team, please contact Robin Wastle on ext 5278.

Lost and Found

Portable welders and power saw

Do you have in your possession or know the whereabouts of two portable welders and their controllers (inventory nos R37234, R37320, R37728 and R37729), and power saw (no R37725). If you do, please contact Edward Holton on ext 5386.

Heat gun, multimeter and joule meter

Lost - Joule temperature heat gun (inventory no R41434), digital multimeter (no R42703) and Gemtex joule meter (no R43100). Please contact Dr T Parker on ext 5109.

Video cassette

Brian Wyborn has in his possession a Memorex video cassette which has been left behind when the Rec Soc's video camera has been hired. The tape is labelled 'Mark's Assembly 25.11.92 - Do not tape over'. It's obviously someone's precious possession so if the owner would like to contact Brian on ext 5589 or by e-mail (OV/VM id BEW), he will be only too pleased to return it.

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