

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

Bulletin

A Monthly Newsletter for RAL Staff

January 1994

Glittering prizes

In last month's Bulletin, we reported on RAL's success in the Vale of White Horse District Council Design Awards Scheme. At a ceremony held at the Guildhall, Abingdon on 11 January, certificates were awarded to the team involved in the project to restore The Cosener's House Shell Grotto, the Grade 2 listed building in the grounds of the Laboratory's conference and accommodation centre.

Peter Bradley (architect), Tom Rennie (project manager) and David E McDowell Ltd (builder), joined other prize-winners, judges, councillors and the Press at a reception after the ceremony. ■



From left to right, Peter Bradley, Ken Davies, Chairman of the Council, David McDowell, and Tom Rennie (94RC1065)

Abingdon Alzheimers Club

Rose Wadley would like to thank everyone who sold tickets and donated prizes (49 in all!) to the messengers' Christmas raffle and competition in aid of the Abingdon Alzheimer's Club.



Rose hands over the bumper cheque to Peter Varney, Vice Chairman of the Club (93RC5251)

A total of £902 was raised and handed over to Peter Varney, Vice Chairman of the Club, to help run the Club's Day Centre at Abingdon Hospital. "We hope to break the £1,000 barrier next year," says Rose, "so start looking out your raffle prizes now!" ■

Peter Nichols

We are delighted to report on the award in the New Year Honours, of an MBE to Peter Nichols of Particle Physics Department for his long and distinguished service to the SERC.

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The Great Escape!

It was with mixed feelings that Paul Williams contemplated the departure from the Laboratory last month of John Harries, Head of Space Science Department. Although delighted by John's appointment as Professor of Earth Observation at Imperial College, Dr Williams was also mindful of the leakage of talent from the Lab which his departure represents. John's appointment apparently brings the number of chairs of physics in universities which have been filled by RAL escapees to five!

John joined RAL in 1980 from the National Physical Laboratory. His reputation as a 'bright spark' was subsequently confirmed by his promotion to Grade 5 at the tender age of 37. The significance of this achievement was illustrated by a graph of age on promotion to Grade 5 displayed by Dr Williams, who observed that at least with John's departure, "the graph will become more even and less embarrassing to others!"



John, left, shares a joke with Deputy Director, Gordon Walker (93RC5364)

During his time at RAL, John has been appointed to a number of distinguished positions: visiting professor at UCL, visiting scientist at Cambridge and President of the International Radiation Commission, to name just a few. At the same time, he acquired the reputation as a popularizer of science, through his 'Earthwatch' lectures.

John looked forward to the challenge of setting up a new department but confessed to some anxiety about his first grant application. "It was much harder to write than to criticise!", he said. As grant applications are something of an occupational hazard for heads of university departments, let's hope that John can soon overcome this particular difficulty!

John has been succeeded as Head of SSD by Mike Cruise (see next month's Bulletin for further details). ■

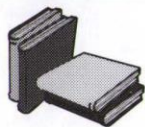
Out of Space!



Andrew and Kay engaged in earnest conversation (93RC5363)

John Harries' departure heralds a change of job for another person in Space Space Department - his secretary, Kay Knight. Kay moves to Science Department to become Personal Secretary to the Department Head, Andrew Taylor.

Kay scored a point for work-weary and harrassed secretaries everywhere when she warned her new boss "any trouble from you and you'll go on a sabbatical!" The significance of this threat is known only to a few, including Andrew! Requests for clarification of its meaning, or advice on how to deal with difficult bosses, to Kay Knight please! ■



School report

Europe comes to RAL!

On 2 December, 70 students from Wallingford School spent the day at RAL adding a new dimension to their studies into industry. The European Day was organised by Understanding Industry as part of a course intended to demonstrate to 16 to 19 year olds the way companies operate and how they contribute to the economy.

The day began with an opening address by Dr Dick Annells, Head of the UK Research and Higher Education European Office in Brussels. Small groups then looked at ways in which EC countries are stereotyped and produced posters representing the different countries. This developed into an exercise in which estimates were made of exports and employment in various countries.

The real business of the day began

when teams took on the role of chocolate manufacturers competing against each other to win a large order for chocolate bars from a wholesaler in Marseilles. All negotiations had to be carried out in French and the teams gave a presentation at the end of the day, on the strength of which the order was awarded. A representative from a local chocolate manufacturer gave an insight into how it *should* be done and awarded the winning team the biggest bar of chocolate you can imagine!

The day was made possible by the support given both by RAL staff and the companies who volunteered their staff to act as group leaders, among them, Esso, AEA and WH Smith. A vote of thanks to Nadine Valentine of Space Science Department for acting as floating interpreter, and to



Getting to grips with the problem: Students from Wallingford School plan their market strategy (93RC5130)

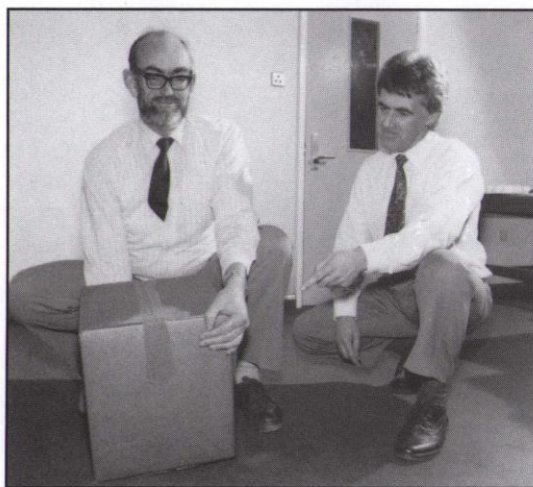
Jeremy Balchin, Mike Brown, Neil Meadowcroft, Andrew Pilling, Martin Torbet, and Martin Whalley for acting as group leaders.

Dawn Johnson ■

Heavyweight training!

Knees bent, back straight, chin and elbows in. The Director, Paul Williams, demonstrates the right way to lift a heavy load under the expert tutelage of Jim Wells of Health and Safety Group. Dr Williams is just one of many staff who have completed a Manual Handling course run by Health and Safety.

It is recommended that everyone on site attends the course for their own safety and the safety of others. If you would like to attend or would like to recommend someone, please contact Health and Safety Group on ext 5611. You may even enjoy it! ■



(93RC5385)

Noticeboard

Acknowledgments

Kay Knight thanks her colleagues in Space Science Department for the 'shock' but very pleasant surprise on her departure from Space back to ISIS and says good luck to all. Special thanks to the 'girls' of SSD who did a magnificent collection in just two days, plus the famous Jean Wigmore flower arrangement, "I will try to get you some customers in ISIS, Jean!"

Frank Close would like to thank all those who helped with his Royal Institution Christmas Lectures - for their suggestions, loan of materials, help with demonstrations and general support. Some of these were seen on TV but there were many others which did not make it to the final production. The Lectures were very much a team effort and RAL was a major player.

Djozic Salko, a Senior Mechanical Engineer from Zagreb, Croatia, has written to thank everyone who helped to arrange the visit to the Lab, in September last year, of participants in the Fifth International Congress on Shot Peening. Mr Salko was very impressed by what he saw of the Laboratory and was particularly taken by the hospitality shown to him and his colleagues.

Congratulations ...

to Alan Soper of Science Department, on his appointment as Visiting Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University College London.



Rec Soc News

Trivia quiz

There will be a trivia quiz in the Rec Soc on Saturday, 29 January at 7:30pm. Teams of four are invited. Entry fee is £4 per team. Supper will be provided. Names and entry fee to Natalie Bealing, ext 5777, by 22 January please.

Model Railway Club

RAL Model Railway Club will be at the Exhibition of Newbury Model Railway Club at St Bartholomews School on Saturday 19 February.

Charity appeal

Barry Brett will be running in this year's London Marathon on 17 April and is looking for a local charity, ideally working for the welfare of children, for whom he can raise cash through sponsorship. If you have any ideas, please contact either Barry on ext 6110 or Monica Brown on ext 5484.

Diary

RAL Lectures

24 February 3:00pm R22 Lecture Theatre
The origin of Life (provisional title)
Professor G Cairns-Smith, Glasgow.

Colin Pollard

It was with a great sense of shock that we learned on 12 December that Colin had died in hospital from complications following surgery.

Colin retired as Group Leader of the Mechanical and Electrical Design Group of Engineering and Building Works Division at the end of August last year, after 30 years at the Laboratory. Always extremely conscientious, Colin had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the electrical services at the Laboratory and, as Chairman of the Administration Department and EBW Safety Committee for a number of years, he made a significant contribution to safety at the Laboratory. Everyone found him a very pleasant and easy person to work with.

Colin was well known as a caravanner, taking his caravan to the Continent every year. Outside his immediate circle of colleagues, his interest and skills in piano and organ-playing were less well known.

Colin's recent retirement was a loss to the Laboratory but his death is a much greater loss to all who knew him. We extend our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

David Mann

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