

# Dave's GEN

Titled in the memory of the late Dave Fairhurst, our former editor & compiler



**A link for members of the former London Test Section,  
who were based on Studd Street**

Re-published & more on [www.ltssac.org](http://www.ltssac.org)

Photos & more on <http://inspirebte.yuku.com/forums/65/LTSSAC>

## February 2014

Christmas done & dusted, I trust you all had a good one.

Val had a new knee on 13<sup>th</sup> December, so catering for all her family was not happening at our house. Christmas dinner for us, was taken at The Stuffed Dormouse in Caerleon.

An interesting experience for our party of 18! We had one vegetarian amongst us, who had pre-ordered her meal a month earlier. She reminded the restaurant manager of her pre-ordered veggie dinner and was told that she had had to confirm on Christmas Eve, (I think they forgot) and so she either had to have what was on the menu, or they could do her a bowl of pasta. At £50 for a bowl of pasta, it was declined and so she had nothing!

The food for the rest of us was good though, but it wasn't like an at home Christmas and we won't be going back there again for festive dining.

### Correspondence & Contact

I've had 'Not Known' returns from DG's sent by post to: A W Brown, Keith Robson and Mrs. E Clarke. These I'll delete from the mail list, unless someone knows an address for them.

But I have had phone calls from, Dave Coles, Ted Blanden, Dave Walton, Mrs E (Peter) West, Stan Mitchell, Jim Beard, Derek Crane and Arthur Monk, (who will be 94 in March) and tells me that he has now lost use of his legs.

A big thank you for all the cheques and cash received to fund future issues of Dave's Gen.

I also received Christmas cards from:

Martin Sharp, Alan Williams, John Sutton, Ted Blanden, Brian Martin, Pete Perry, Dick Wakefield, Terry Griffiths, Mike Stanton, Claire Towler, Brian Bale, Cyril Seabrook, Ron Cooper, Les Knightson, John Neil, Dave Oliver, Keith Rich, Jim Beard, Steve Dickens, Ian Boniface, Ian Torrance

### **From Ian Torrance**

Hi John, I thought I'd drop you a line to let you know that I'm OK, but I have been pre-occupied of late, dealing with Gwen, my wife's numerous health problems – back & forth to the doctor's & hospital. It's exhausting – trying to keep my head above water.

Hope all is well with you.

With regards, Ian

*Ian was worried about Harry Jenn, as he had not heard from him for a while, so I dropped Harry an email and got this response a few weeks later: (JT)*

Dear John, Have just got out of hospital & have contacted Ian tonight, last day of Jan. Thank you & keep well. Regards Harry J.

So that's solved that mystery!

I also had a letter from Ian's wife Gwen, who writes:

In the last issue of the newsletter, Derek Brown said that Alma Blyde enquired about Muriel Parr.

The person she remembers is Muriel Parry. She was indeed in the LMS in the fifties, together with Sheila Yule / Wills, Joan Moyles / Lovegrove and myself. I am in touch with all three.

I met Sheila this year at Westonbirt Arboretum, she runs a keep fit group and examines other teachers. Sheila is a good example of fitness.

Joan has moved to Hampshire to be near her family and Muriel is now in a care home in Cornwall. I phoned Muriel on Christmas Eve and she is in good form.

Greetings to Alma. Gwen Torrance

### **From Claire Towler**

Dear Mr Tythe

Your latest "Dave's Gen" received and found it both interesting & hilarious, the poem on page 7, had my friend Delorus & I in stitches with laughter – as they say in Australia 'Good on yer'

Not much to report over the past year, just hospital / doctor visits for ears and now eyes. No fun getting old, but will still enjoy life.

Keep up the excellent job you do to help keep everyone abreast of BT happenings.

Look after yourself. Clair Towler

I received an email from the son-in-law of Frank Helmore, who has reached 100 years old. Here are a couple of photos of Frank's birthday party – well done that man!



Frank Helmore Celebrating 100 years with his family.

**From Tony (Spike) Jones**



The photo is from just before the London to Brighton cycle ride (1982)

Centre of the photo is Peter Lawrence, Paul Chance and Alan Gobby (now Goby)  
Unknown people in the road and against the wall.

**From Bill Walker**

Hi John,

Just a quick note to all members (ex?) of the LTS to wish you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year, but especially to you, John, for keeping us all in touch.

Kind Regards, Bill Walker

**From Alan Williams**

I received lots of stuff entitled 'Some senile moments!' from Alan, unfortunately I was unable to copy it across from the email.

He says:

It comes to us all apparently – I'll wait and see

Regards – Merry Xmas Alan

**From Mike Ashwell**

Hi John,

I am still here in BT. Leading the development effort on all the new smartfone apps. Will drop over an update next week with what I am doing.

All the best

Mind Ashwell. (*Looks like predictive text has struck again Mike! JT*)

**From Steve Dickens**

Hi John,

Thanks for keeping the old 'Gen' going.

I'll definitely try to make it to the xmas get-together, and will send a reminder to everyone on my e-mail list (we ought to get-together and share e-mail addresses).

In the meantime - keep well, and don't work too hard (ha ha). Cheers Steve

**From Richard Creswell**

John,

I hope you are well...thanks for the Gen....I'll stop work and give it a read later.

Kind regards Richard

**From Andy Ellen**

Thanks John for your continued commitment to 'Daves Gen' It's good to be receiving them on my old PC.

Kind regards Andy Ellen

**From Les Knightson**

Dear John,

On reading the **Dave's gen** I received by email yesterday - I was astonished to read of your conversation with Bill Sarge. He and I sat opposite each in I Branch HQ when it was Wood Street - he was my mentor. I went to his retirement evening in November 1974. When I went on secondment and finally joined Eutelsat Satellite Organization in Paris in 1980. My wife and I kept in contact with Bill exchanging letters and Christmas Cards. When in Nov 2004 he phoned to tell me his wife Sarah had died he said that he would not write or send cards anymore, that was when he was 90. I would appreciate if you could let me know, if you have it, his telephone number or address. I would like to congratulate him on receiving a BT pension for 39 years. (*Job done - JT*)

Kind regards Les Knightson

And on Les's Christmas card: Thank you for keeping Dave's Gen going.

**From Mike Somers**

Thanks for sending your report. Regrettably I will not be able to attend the reunion meeting at the White Swan on 12<sup>th</sup> December as we are currently in Spain and will not be back in UK until 15/12/2013. Hope to see you in 2014.

Please wish everyone who attends the meeting a very happy Xmas and prosperous New Year on my behalf.

Kind regards, Mike Somers

### **From Brian Conroy**

Hello John,

Many thanks for the latest copy of Dave's Gen, please keep it going. As to Edna and myself, we are still enjoying our life in Waltham Abbey and are in constant touch with Steven and Gillian. Both of them started work at Studd St, but soon made their own way further into BT, or as it was at the time, the Post Office. Steve lives in Bishop Stortford but Gillian lives down the road from us in Waltham Abbey.

We recently met up with Richard Baldwin, he joined the Test Section along with myself and Dave Fairhurst and the rest. I am very pleased to have heard from you again and I will try and be with you on Thursday December 12<sup>th</sup>.

KRs Brian.

### **From Paul Reid**

Hello again John

I noticed that you mention in the latest issue that you have had contact with Mike Rogers. Would you be able to let me have his contact details please, as I'd love to get in touch with him?

Mike and I learned to ballroom dance together (no, not as partners!), at the Nimbus School of Dancing, which I think was somewhere out in Hornchurch or suchlike. It was only so that we had a few social skills (aka being able to pull the birds - though I was already engaged by then) - I certainly didn't take the dance thing any further and I doubt that Mike did.

I'd also be interested in contacting Fred Petrie. He used to give me a lift to work from time to time in his elderly car - I still remember the registration: UPF 69.

Any info would be appreciated. (*Job done- JT*)

Paul

### **Also from Paul**

#### **On the carpet**

I suppose we all 'did our time' on rubber glove testing. For a colleague and me, one particular day down there in the basement ended up with us quite literally 'on the carpet' (I think can I remember, even after all these years, who the colleague was but I will not mention his name, to avoid causing him any embarrassment!).

You will probably remember those huge wicker baskets, on castors, that were used by the postal service and in which the gloves were delivered to us. We had done our morning duty of unloading a batch of gloves from the basket, had checked and stamped them, and then went off for tea.

This was at a time when the football pools companies must have been trying to drum up new customers as they were sending coupons into – it seemed – every home in the

land. The result was that pools envelopes were found everywhere and folk were using them for all sorts of purposes.

Thus, when we got back from our tea break and discovered a pools envelope in the bottom of the basket, it never crossed our minds that it might have been anything other than part of a prank. Firstly, we were convinced that it hadn't been there when we had unloaded all the gloves. We told ourselves that it must have been put there during our tea break. And secondly, as you will recall, pranks were pretty prevalent in the Test Section!

So we slit open the envelope, expecting to find some jokey (rude?) message. Instead, we were shocked to find a pools coupon and a postal order...

This was serious! Without further delay, we scurried off to report our discovery to the AEE, thinking that would be the end of the matter. But no... before long, we were summoned to the office of the SEE!

Encounters between lesser mortals like ourselves and the SEE were very rare of course – it was close to meeting God. But there we were, standing sheepishly on the boss's carpet (remember? The size of carpet grew with rank, and his carpet was big enough to make us feel very small!). And we were being told that we had committed an extremely grave offence, tampering with Her Majesty's mail. We were warned that the consequences could be serious.

Thankfully, it seems our explanation and pleas of innocence were accepted as, some time later, we were re-summoned onto that carpet and told that no further action would be taken, although the incident would be noted in our staff files and remain there for six months.

That was almost 50 years ago, but I can still 'see' that basket. And that envelope. And God's office.

And that carpet...

### **From Sam Hawkins**

Hello John,

Thank you for the latest edition of Club Gen, always a welcome read. This e mail response is really to let you know that it has been received and therefore any future editions can be fired off without any problems.

You mentioned the difficulty of knowing whether former members are still, as it were, in the land of the living. Oh yeah I know that one; the only people who will know when I shuffle off will be members of my own family and they don't really know about Club Gen. Dave Fairhurst was a family connection but now, sadly, that link has been lost. I do have my email address list, of course, which is full of people whom I don't know and they don't know me!

If my family used that as a starting point then the world would be informed (you know the one where we are linked to everyone by a factor of six) and I would be just another immortal clutter.

So, as a New Year resolution, I will attempt to de-clutter my lists, leave precise instructions and bugger off quietly: just like my working life, I never did all the jobs I was supposed to do. Did anyone notice I wonder?

Other than all that, my life chunders on just the same, getting one year older every year.

I've twaddled enough, thanks once again for sending Club Gen. I hope to make it to the White Swan in December.

Best regards, Sam

**From John Hammond**

Hello John,

I was going through an old box of photographs and came across these two from around Spring 1987.

It looks like my scanner needs a clean inside to get rid of some dust.



Mick Lewis, Alan Parker, Mike Rogers, Richard Cossey, ?????, Mike Ashwell, Ted Clark



Colin Fitzpatrick, Peter Skelton, Steve Nicholas, Bob Frost, Roger Keys, John Hammond.

### **From Ron Cooper**

Yes, I am still alive and well and not on any medication & I still swim fairly regularly.

Why is it that more of our ex – colleagues do not write about themselves for Dave's Gen. Instead of articles just to fill a page, though I must say they are of interest. Perhaps you can use the enclosed:

For myself I run a Renault Scenic, with a 'V' plate registration. I badly creased the rear nearside passenger door, so after some weeks I approached my insurers, Frizzells, to have it repaired. A WRONG MOVE!

They wrote the car off, as repair costs were more than the car's worth of £810.

Now this is a car that is in excellent condition, with only 65,000 odd miles on the clock.

Anyways, I had the car back off of them, plus a cheque for £390 (Why 390? Don't ask).

I took the car to a local car body repairer, who did an excellent repair for £350.

Moral of this story? If you have an old car, just have third party insurance only and any small damage get it repaired yourself.

Considering that I have been with Frizzells since I first had a car in 1955, without ever having a claim, their cavalier attitude was un-believable in not giving a choice of having the car back without informing the DVLA.

So I now have to get V.I.C certification, to have the car re-registered before I can road tax it again. Fortunately I have road tax until the end of March 2014.

*I remember John Sawyer had a similar problem with Frizzells back in 1973. They took his money for fully comprehensive and then wanted to write off his pride & joy, his Vauxhall Cresta PA (like the one below) when someone ran into the back of it. He stuck to his guns and insisted that they repair it – and they did! John Tythe*



### **From Brian & Wendy Martin**

As requested, this is to let you know that as well as wishing you a happy Christmas, also to say we are still "ALIVE"

Best of luck. Brian & Wendy

### **From Pete & Ros Perry**

Thanks for keeping the 'Gen' going John – it's much appreciated by us oldies.

Cheers. Ros & Pete Perry

**From John Sutton & family**

We are keeping well, hope you are too. Thank you for your sterling efforts with the Gen.

**From Ted Blanden**

Dear John, thank you very much for the latest Dave's Gen., which, as with all previous issues, I have read with interest.

I am now 80 and do not have the skills or facilities for internet communications, as do many of my younger ex colleagues.

In response to Derek Brown's article on page 5 and the response to my late partner Muriel Parr., She did not work in Studd Street nor in LMS.

She joined the London Test Section following the closure of Siemens factory in Woolwich, where she had worked from age 14. She became our out stationed Clerical Assistant at S.E. London Contractors works e.g. PYE- TMC St Mary Cray and later Crayford Depot, where she was promoted to Clerical Officer and worked in support to an EE, Harry Bettridge and several AEE's, most efficient and loved by all.

Referring to the football photos on page 2, whilst I recognise many of the faces, I am not there! I had finished playing by then.

Best wishes to Uncle Bill (Sarge). I hope that he will be our first I Branch / LTS recipient of a letter from HM The Queen.

Thanking you once more and wishing you and all of your readers a Very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

(p.s. I think that page 7 may be aimed at me. ) Ted

**From Dave Walton**

Dear John, you could say this is me reporting in 'Sir'. It's great that both the 'GEN and yourself, seem to be doing a great welfare job. I guess that's a natural progression from Union Secretary.

**From Dick Wakefield**

Thanks for all your emails – still going strong!

**From Cyril Seabrook**

Nice to hear Bill Sargeant's still going strong. My wife & I celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year (2013). Just the family, including grandchildren and great grandchildren.

**From Dave Oliver**

Carry on the good work of producing Dave's Gen, it is greatly appreciated. Wishing you and yours the best of times. KR David Oliver

**From Martin Sharp**

Please keep up the good work. Best wishes to all.

Martin Sharp

**From Jim Beard**

Many thanks once again for all your great efforts!

Jim

**From Ian Boniface**

Thanks for keeping Dave's Gen going. I'll try & write something for the Gen.

Best wishes from Ian Boniface

**From John Neil**

Thanks for keeping the GEN interesting & informing.

**From Graham Whitehead**

Just a few lines to thank you for taking off the rubber gloves to edit Dave's Gen.

Yes I am still alive and working for a living. I left Studders & BT some time in the late 80s or early 90s to join Telephone Cables (TCL) in Dagenham, yes some of my ex work mates took great delight in coming to audit my new shiny ISO 9001 QMS (terrible proud of getting the QMS BSI approved, my boss & I worked our socks off for that. Being 64, I shall play the can't remember names, but Furry Face Travell, a 2 meters + tall young man, Dave Edwards & Denis Issacs were just 4 of the guys who took it in turns to, well entertain us.

TCL fell foul of BT's desire to reduce suppliers. I lost most of my QEs till only me & 2 left, then my turn. Joined another company, but they also suffered redundancies. So in 1995 I started the contractor game. Some good times, (Bently Motors, Lotus, Ford & some medical device manufactures. Some bad times, 16 months without a contract, thought I might have been retired, but then 18 months at Lotus.

Started my own company, to limit the tax burden, bought out my sons company, see [www.zestcity.com](http://www.zestcity.com). If anyone else is thinking of joining the contractor/consultant game, drop me an e-mail to [ckd@zestcity.com](mailto:ckd@zestcity.com). I will try to tell you the best way to go about things.

Been to Southern Ireland, twice, boy can they party in Galway, aquired a taste for the black & white, now look 8 months pregnant all the time. Germany & Turkey on week trips for Ford. Currently in Shanghai working for a company that make Stair Lifts, no I cannot get a staff discount, neither could I at Bently or Lotus, because of visa requirements the max stay in China is 30 days, then I fly home for 5 to 10 days. Great working here, even if I am just helping to export manufacturing jobs from the UK. The way they work here is some what different to the UK, here I suggest we may think about changing a part, within a week the new ones have been sourced & being

used, while in the UK, the R&D guys are still forming a committee to think about the proposed change. The workers are 95% female, all quite small, all married & all wear such short skirts, you don't know where to look next, I look at the stair lifts a lot, well at 64, you have to look after the blood pressure. Ok was going to make it to the Xmas re-union, but I will be seeing out my last trip out here (unless I get a new contract), fly back 16th Dec. Oh one big negative is the Mosquitos. They eat me alive, my feet just swell up & blister. I don't know much about thier life cycle, but I believe it is only pregnant females who do the biting, and their parents were never married. OK, I'm off to buy a hooky RORREX or ORYMPUS watch for the wife. Great job your doing here, well done JT. Me, retire! Well contractors don't retire, the contracts dry up, and my divorce has left me somewhat short in the pension department, that and another wife, 2 old Lexus cars and a taste for good holidays. Dull it isn't! OH, stayed up till well past midnight to watch the REDS (Liverpool) loose to some bum team from Islington.

Best regards Graham W

### **From Michael Stanton**

Merry Xms and a happy new year to you and your family and we hope you are looking forward to the Festive season.

Life in Spain continues without too many shocks, even the Exchange Rate has settled down/ The weather continues to be hot with not much rain.

Can it really be 22 years since I left BT? The world is a very different place now. Who would have guessed that you can now have a computer in your hand and use it to phone anywhere in the world!

Best wishes from Jan & Michel Stanton.

### **Hmmm, do we know these people?**

A group of blokes, all aged 40, discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Highbury because the waitresses was busty & wore mini-skirts.

Ten years later, at age 50, the friends once again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Highbury because the food and service was good and the beer was excellent.

Ten years later, at age 60, the friends again discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Highbury because they could dine in peace and quiet and it was good value for money.

Ten years later, at age 70, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Highbury because the restaurant was wheelchair accessible and had a lift for the disabled.

Ten years later, at age 80, the friends discussed where they should meet for lunch. Finally it was agreed that they would meet at Wetherspoons in Highbury, because they had never been there before.

## **John Tythe's bit**

### **Clash of accents**

Firstly you need to know that in Wales, 'Yur' can mean ear, year, or here.

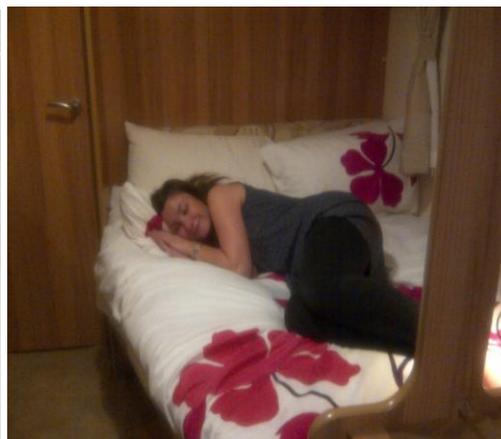
Talking with my neighbour, he said that he had been for a urine test and knowing that he'd had some problems down there, I asked him if that was why he'd had the test. "No, I'm going deaf and they reckon I need a yuring aid." came the reply!!

Well, I've re-joined the scourge of the Highway, and have become a caravanner again.

Over most the summer we were away camping, not on holiday, but as a place to stay while we were taking our turn in caring for Val's 94 year old mum, who sadly passed away in September.

It had looked like the caring was going to be a long term commitment and with us not getting any younger and Val needing two new knees and two new hips, erecting and taking down tents every week or so, was becoming more & more demanding.

So, in August, I had a look at what size caravan was suited to our car, and came up with this:



Bailey Orion 440-4. It sleeps 4, so plenty big enough for the two of us.

My Daughter Abby trying out the bed!!

It came equipped with radio/cd, with an auxiliary input sound system, plus a TV & radio distribution system, a microwave oven, a gas oven, a 3 burner gas hob, a refrigerator which runs on 12 volt, gas, or mains electric, a hot water system which runs on gas &/or electric, blown air heating system, which also runs on gas or electric.. It also has the added luxury of a washroom across the rear of the van, fully equipped with shower, hand basin and WC. A home from home on wheels!

The living area and dinette will each convert to two double beds, the dinette though, we leave as a made up bed most of the time.

This issue's web article is once again from my biker friend - Dave Hucker. Thanks Dave.

### **Senegambia 09 : A Tale of Two Estuaries**

<http://www.technobeat.com/Senegambia/Senegambia1.html>

## **No longer with us.**

### **Dave Eyre**

I have been informed that Dave past away peacefully in his sleep on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013. Dave had been diagnosed with a brain tumour in 2012.

### **Harry Hudson**

I heard from Tom Raitt, that Harry Hudson, formerly level 3 in QAD at Old Street and responsible for QA of submarine cable operations, died at home at the end of January, at the age of 94. Harry's wife Doris died in 2010 and he had been looked after since then by his daughter Denise.

### **Colin Baker**

I heard via Steve Dickens & Bob Beecham, that Colin passed away on 29th January 2014

Bob wrote: Colin had been in hospital for about two months, but he's been unwell for a long time.

After an operation on his back two years ago, which went well, he has had difficulty walking. He then contracted some sort of cancerous growth in his back called a myeloma. This seemed to go into recession.

His legs then became heavily ulcerated and he had not been able to walk for around 6 months. The ulceration led to a whole series of infections which ultimately led to his loss.

### **March meeting 2014**

The date of the next meet up will be on Thursday 20th March, at the Wetherspoons pub, the White Swan, in Upper Street, which is about 100 Yards from Highbury and Islington Station.

They are open early for breakfast, so you can arrive then, and stay all day. They have reasonable food, cheap beer and plenty of room for us to circulate in. See you there!

### **Contact**

If you have an e-mail account, or access to one, and would like to have Dave's Gen by this method, just mail back to [davesgen@virginmedia.com](mailto:davesgen@virginmedia.com) with your email address & your name, if it's not obvious who you are from the account name.

You may send in copy, and also update and make changes to addresses and telephone numbers, if you wish to, by sending to the same e-mail address.

Alternatively: My home address is: 17 Parkstone Avenue, Old St. Mellons, Cardiff CF3 5TY  
Tel. 029 20 777 455 Work: 01443 878 878, although following tradition, I'm still quite often, not at my bench!

Thanks for reading. Please keep in touch, one way or another. My best regards to you all.

John Tythe