

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

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

February 2016

Here we are, 2016 and all is well.

No sign of snow, but a too wet and warm a winter for my liking.

Wet and warm is good and bad news though.

Good, because the wet prevents me getting out and cutting wood for the log burner and because it's warm, it's not needed anyway. Bad, because it's a bit muddy when we are away in the Caravan.

As I didn't retire from Glove Testing as I had hoped to do, I decided to spend some of the money I had put aside to pay my Taxes, on a new car. Being a CSMA member, I looked at their prices for new cars and was pleasantly surprised to find that the car that I wanted was on sale at £19,980.40, that's £7,129.60 off the list price. Job done!

Looks like I'll be working for at least another year!



Citroen C4 Grand Picasso Exclusive+ 150 Blue HDi in Shark Grey. One happy bunny! 😊

I was having a rummage through boxes of 'Stuff' rescued from the Studd Street skips, and I came across this box of balls, purpose built by the workshop.



Used on the Training Group in 1966, to train us apprentices how Sampling works. It contains 100 balls, of which 10 were green, to represent minor faults and 5 which were red, to represent major faults. A shake and then held upside down, it would randomly display 25 of the balls. Given enough samples, you could work out the number of red & green balls that were in the box. I remember that it made my arms ache!

Right, that's enough from me. See you at the March meeting at the White Swan.

John Tythe

Meet ups

We have two venues for meet ups, my nearest is at the Greyhound pub in Christchurch, Newport. The Joe Baker Old Boys, had their New Year meet up on 19th January.

Ron Tattam is the motivator for getting people along and in addition to Ron, the attendees were: Clarris, John Little, Dave Walton and myself.



Clarris



John Little



Dave Walton



RonTattam

The Christmas meeting at the White Swan

A good turn out once more for the Christmas meet up. A good natter was had by all.

A special thank you to John Reynolds, who now has great difficulty in walking and insisted on coming to the meet up, held up on two sticks and was flanked by his two 'Minders' his wife Hilda and his daughter. Well done that man. It was good to see you!

Photos of most of those who turned up, can be seen here:

<http://inspirebte.yuku.com/topic/553/LTSSAC-December-2015-Meet#.VrZiBR6LX-s>

Here is a selection of some of the attendees:



Correspondence

Since October I have received phone calls, cards & letters from the following.

Jim Beard, John Reynolds, Dave Walton, John Sutton, Reg Hooker, Les & Jenny Roberts, Derek Oswald, Dick Wakefield & Honor, Brian & Wendy Martin, Brian Bale, Mike & Joan Stanton, Steve & Lorraine Dickens, John Neil, Terry Griffiths, Alan Williams, Ron & Rene Tattam, Ron Cooper, Derek Crane and Ian Torrance.

Brian Martin confirmed that they were 'Alive & well. - Glad to hear it Brian!

Honor informed me that Dick Wakefield has lost 90% of his sight, but is keeping very positive & as active as is possible. – Wishing you well Dick.

From Ian Torrance

A few contributions from Ian. Thank you very much!

Firstly, a response to Mick Mariani's Fuller Slide Rule article in the previous issue. Ian writes: I very much enjoyed reading your interesting article about the Fuller's Slide Rule. Since you wished to know if there was a Fuller Slide Rule elsewhere in Studd Street, I can categorically say that there was and it was in a cupboard, under lock & key in the basement on Group 30. I remember it being quite large.

The Fullers cylindrical instrument was in with many of the Master Measuring Meters and these special Volt, Ampere and Watt meters etc. were only used to check, on occasions, other meters in general use, such as the AVO Meter when checking the test results more accurately.

The Master type meters were taken to the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in Teddington annually for re-checking and for any recalibration needed. It was all part of the Special Tests Unit on Group 30, conducted in a room tucked away near the Photometry racks and the Glove room and behind the beds of motor/generator and other heavy power plant.

The Special Test room was hot, windowless and airless, before air conditioning was installed and work was carried out under constant fluorescent lighting. Mounted on the wall, was the fish tank, if any of you can remember working in the basement back in the dim and distant past.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time doing the special tests and carrying out specified experiments on behalf of various Engineers from Old Street and Alder House in the City, who would draw up Specs. And diagrams on some newly designed or modified piece of equipment used in telephone exchanges or other installations etc. The Engineers would give us a brief of what was required and we would set up all the measuring instruments to run a series of tests in the special test room. An ordinary calculator or slide rule was used for general purposes, but to be absolutely certain, the results were gained by using the Fuller Slide Rule.

These tests were usually done by one T.O. at any one time, then when one's stint ended, generally six months to a year, to go onto another group, another T.O. would take over. In my time, during the 1950's to around 1972, others who worked on the Special Test Room included: Jim Warner, Joe Stack, Frank Keyhoe, Dimmock, Biddlecombe, Josh Hindmarsh, Buzz Billett, Dougie Andrews and others. At the end of the day, all the special instruments used and the Fuller S.R. were stowed away back in the cupboard for safe keeping.

The other important job to do was to feed the fish; all in a bygone age!

So, I hope I answered your question. I did see a Fuller Slide Rule at an antiques fair, but I had no use for it in retirement.

Incidentally, I also went to Hackney Technical College.

More from Ian

I thought that this card would be of interest.

There are not many museums or places which show a room full, of what was the old type of switchboard and teleprinter sets in vogue in the old days of the POED

I had a mate who worked at Canterbury Exchange. After the war, Hell Fire Corner, deep down inside Dover cliffs, was cleared and remained empty for many years, until it was thought to be a tourist attraction later on in the 1970's.

My mate was tasked to restore the rooms and so begged, borrowed and stole much of the obsolete equipment and installed it all to be seen today.

Well worth visiting, if you've not been there.

Ian.



Also from Ian

Morris and his wife Esther went to the state fair every year and every year Morris would say 'Esther, I'd like to ride in that helicopter.'

'Esther always replied, 'I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is fifty dollars and fifty dollars, is fifty dollars'

One year Esther and Morris went to the fair, and Morris said, 'Esther, I'm 85 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance.

To this, Esther replied, 'Morris that helicopter ride is fifty dollars and fifty dollars, is fifty dollars'. '

The pilot overheard the couple and said, 'Folks I'll make you a deal. I'll take

the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a penny! But if you say one word it's fifty dollars.'

Morris and Esther agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, 'By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!'

Morris replied, 'Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out, but you know, fifty dollars, is fifty dollars!'

Hmmm, we still seem to be short of copy, so here's an occasional bit of cut and pasting:

Humour

A software engineer's wife asks her husband;

"Could you please go shopping for me and buy a carton of milk, and if they have eggs, get six!"

A short time later the husband comes back with six cartons of milk.

The wife asks him, "Why the hell did you buy six cartons of milk?"

He replied, "They had eggs."

I delivered a 6 metre roll of bubble wrap to a neighbour. What do you want me to do with this?" I asked.

He replied, "Just pop it the corner"

4 hours it took me. 😞

One day, blonde Jill's husband came home from the office and found her sobbing convulsively. "I feel terrible," she told him. "I was pressing your suit and I burned a big hole in the seat of your trousers."

"Forget it," consoled her husband. "Remember that I bought an extra pair of trousers for that suit."

"Yes, and it's lucky for you that you did," said Jill, drying her eyes. "I used them to patch the hole."

My mate has OCD, so I bought him a framed photo of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

He's been going nuts trying to hang it on his wall.

The morality of dishonesty

Robbers entered a bank in a small town. One of them shouted: "Don't move! The money belongs to the bank. Your lives belong to you". Immediately all the people in the bank laid on the floor quietly and without panic.

This is an example of how the correct wording of a sentence can make everyone change their view of the world.

While running from the bank the youngest robber, who had a university degree, said to the oldest robber, who had barely finished secondary school: "Hey, maybe we should count how much we stole."

The older man replied: "Don't be stupid. It's a lot of money so let's wait for the news on TV to find out how much money was taken from the bank."

This is an example of how life experience is more important than a degree.

After the robbery, the manager of the bank said to his accountant: "Let's call the police and tell them how much has been stolen." "Wait, said the Accountant, "before we do that, let's add the £800,000 we took for ourselves a few months ago and just say that it was stolen as part of today's robbery."

This is an example of taking advantage of an opportunity.

The following day it was reported in the news that the bank was robbed of £3 million. The robbers then counted the money, but they found only £1 million so they started to grumble. "We risked our lives for £1 million, while the bank's management robbed two million Pounds without blinking? Maybe it's better to learn how to work the system, instead of being a simple robber."

This is an example of how knowledge can be more useful than power.

Moral: Give a person a gun, and he can rob a bank.

Give a person a bank, and he can rob everyone.

Factories Dept.

On the web site <http://www.lightstraw.co.uk/ate/facd/index.html> There is a bit of history on the Factories Division. Strangely, it makes no mention of the Factory on the 3rd floor of Studd Street, where amongst other things, they refurbished teleprinters.

The teleprinters were stripped down to component parts, which were washed with paraffin, in a wire caged room (to aid ventilation of the area) adjacent to 'C' staircase. There was significant spillage of paraffin in this area, which soaked into the parquet floor blocks and into the concrete floor beneath them. Even years after the Factories Dept moved out, there was still the odour of Paraffin in the air.

Before the building was closed down for the 'sell off', for what is soon to become Islington Square, the Royal Mail moved their Customer Services Centre onto the third floor, occupying what was the northern half of the floor, where we had the Training Group, Metrology, the Glove Test Room and the Workshop in the 1970's. It also occupied the Teleprinter Wash Area. All nicely open plan, with purple pink carpet and purple casing around all the pillars and all the windows boarded over and with 'up' lighting, it all looked very nice.

I had to return there for an investigation into an industrial injury and whilst chatting to the CSC manager, he asked if I knew what the 'Smell' was, as a number of the centres operators complained about the smell and that it made them suffer headaches and feel ill. All was revealed and he asked if I knew how it could be got rid of. I said to take up the floor and remove the concrete. His head was swimming at the thought!

I wonder if those nice new £1,000,000 apartments will have that strange Paraffin odour? 😊

Some more interesting stuff on Light Straw. <http://www.lightstraw.co.uk>

Just Googling around looking for copy, I found this on the Studd Street Anechoic Chamber. Too big to reproduce in print here, but viewable here: http://www.amps.net/media/files/library/techdocs/PostOffice_Anechoic_Chamber_POEJ_July_1975.pdf



Roy Shaw working hard!

Studd Street and families.

I owe my very existence to the Studd Street building. My dad, who worked in the GPO Stores, met my mum, who worked in the GPO Factory on the third floor. They got married in 1949 and I came along in 1950. So without that building I would most likely not be here. I feel an affinity for it, and it often features in my dreams. Val says I'm there more often in my head, than I was in real life! Should I ever win the lottery, I'll buy one of those apartments.

Many families relied on Studd Street for their livelihood. Apart from my mum, dad and myself, my brother was also in the factory plus two aunts, an uncle and a cousin. Towards the end, my step dad was also there. Just in the LTS, there were fathers, mothers, sons, daughter, brothers, husbands & wives. It was a good place to be!



My mum Rose, sweeping up in the LMS labs on the 4th floor.

A bit of History coming back to life

A long time ago, in 1973, I became the visits Secretary for the then Test Section Centre of the IPOEE Associate Section in London, arranging visits for our members to various places of special interest.

One of the popular visits arranged, was to the narrow gauge (2 ft) Post Office Railway at Mount Pleasant.

Web searches found some films of the railway:

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/g-p-o-underground-railway-and-sorting-office>

<http://www.britishpathe.com/video/gpo-railway>

It also featured as the Vatican Post Railway in the film Hudson Hawk.



But when the railway, (then know as Mail Rail), closed in 2003, it was mothballed and no further visits were allowed, although there has been one naughty one, where a group broke in and did some exploring on their own:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF-tDV86nKs>

However, things have progressed and in 2017, there will be the opening a unique new heritage attraction in Central London, with two experiences in one:

The Postal Museum & Mail Rail. <http://postalmuseum.org>

Visitors will have the chance to explore 500 years of social history and travel 70 feet under London to ride the Post Office's forgotten railway.

The new Postal Museum will explore centuries of inspiring and surprising British history through the colourful lens of the postal service. Community – Technology – Politics – Design - War. The history of the post touches us all and will be brought to life through incredible objects, amazing stories and interactive experiences.

Just down the road, Mail Rail will allow the public into the tunnels of the Post Office's private underground railway for the first time in its hundred-year history. Visitors will be able to ride a looping mile of track to encounter the industrial heritage and secret geography of the capital.



The Postal Museum and Mail Rail will be located next to one another at **Phoenix Place** in Central London (WC1X 0DA)

I'm looking forward to its opening.

Daily Mail Article: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3431833/Well-s-one-way-beat-rush-hour-Postal-Museum-open-Post-Office-s-underground-Mail-Rail-delivered-letters-70ft-beneath-London-traffic.html>

Guardian Article: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/gallery/2014/mar/25/royal-mail-open-mail-rail-public-in-pictures>

Studd Street info:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/property/article-3341057/Luxury-flats-Islington-Square-development-priced-1-8M.html#comments>

No longer with us

As far as I know, we are all present – if not altogether correct!

March Meeting 2016

The date of the next meet up will be on **Thursday 17th March**, at the Wetherspoons pub, the White Swan, in Upper Street, which is about 100 Yards from Highbury and Islington Station.

The White Swan is 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!

Dave's Gen : 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 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