



e-DEFENCE ELECTRONICS NEWSLETTER

The e-NEWSLETTER OF THE DEFENCE ELECTRONICS HISTORY SOCIETY
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ABOUT THE FUTURE.....

Events of the last few weeks have caused your Editor to muse upon “The Future of Our Past”.

Some have been sad: the passing of two men whose lives have been ones of especial achievement in the world of defence electronics – our Past President **Dr Bill Penley, CB, CBE**, a few weeks before his 100th birthday, and **Dr Alfred Price**, Vulcan crewman and author of over 50 books on defence and defence electronics, including the ground-breaking *‘Instruments of Darkness’* which triggered many an interest in defence electronics, including that of your Editor; details are given below of commemorative services for members who may wish to attend.



Other events have been cause for celebration; our own **Dr Liz Bruton**, above, has been appointed as Curator at the Science Museum, London – many congratulations, Liz! Liz's appointment stimulated my choosing as the heading photograph for this issue the attendees at **January's Secret Communications event at Arthur Bauer's Museum at Duivendrecht**, reported upon with many pictures below, Why? Because I was delighted to see that the attendees included a large number of young people, and in particular, of young women, who as a group have not historically been attracted in large numbers to defence electronics displays, although there have historically often been rather more women than men on radar stations, in Operations Centres, and at such locations as Bletchley Park. Perhaps a key challenge facing science and electronics-based museums for the future is continuing to expand the attractiveness of their offering to young people and to the (more than) half of the human race which is female, and the display created by **Paul, Marc and Arthur** to achieve that result is a great start!

This month, we lead off with a look at some of the defence electronics artefacts and remains to be found in the **Antarctic**, a region we have not previously covered in much detail, with a few surprises dating from the early 20th century to a pair of present-day Russian ships! We then move on with two post-war articles on the **Decca Navigator**, and then to reprinting a relatively unknown historical booklet published soon after WW2 on the history of the **Cossor** company. **Thales** bring us up to date with a series of announcements, and our **2016 Accounts** show a very satisfactory financial position - many thanks indeed to **Dick Green**. Part I's **Tailpiece** features an item from the 1963 catalogue of **Arthur Sallis**, then a well-known south coast dealer in surplus – and would that we could find such items today! In Part II, we continue our look at the **ground electronics vehicles of the RAF** in the decade or so after WW2, and reprint a rather whimsical article on the **RVT 100, 105 and 150** together with a contemporary miniquiz where you might like to test what you have forgotten - to spare your blushes, answers in **Tailpiece II!**

Events to put in your diaries this month include Cryptos and the IET/SYAM Lecture day, both in May, our own Symposium in October, and Arthur Bauer's 'Nachtfée' Lecture Day in November. Don't miss any of these events!

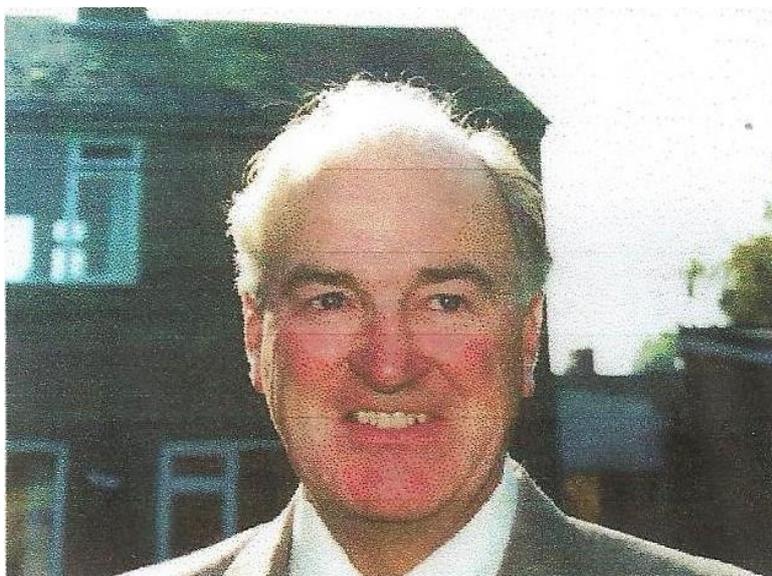
As always, suggestions for improvements, offers of articles and all general comments to me at philjudkins@btinternet.com or info@dehs.org.uk.

Dr. Phil Judkins, DEHS Chairman.



CELEBRATING LIVES OF ACHIEVEMENT

Tragically, two men who have individually contributed massively to defence electronics history died in January 2017. Above, our own Past President **Dr W H (Bill) Penley, CB, CBE**, the last of the senior wartime radar staff and certainly the last of the scientists recruited to Bawdsey. Below, **Dr Alfred Price**, RAF Vulcan crewman turned radar historian, whose *'Instruments of Darkness'* was the first accessible history of World War 2 defence electronics, and who went on to write some 50 books on this and related subjects. Alfred's cremation will be held at 11.00am on Saturday 11 March at Mendip Crematorium, Old Wells Road, Wells, BA5 3RR (please advise Fiona Bevan at fionakbevan@gmail.com if you wish to attend); a celebration of Bill Penley's life will be held at Swanage Church at 12 noon on Wednesday 22 March, at which I will attempt the near-impossible task of summarising the huge contributions which Bill made both to defence electronics and then, on his retirement, to defence electronics history. Detailed obituaries follow in next month's *eDEN*.



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