



e-DEFENCE ELECTRONICS NEWSLETTER

The e-NEWSLETTER OF THE DEFENCE ELECTRONICS HISTORY SOCIETY
No 78 Part I: January 2019



...AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

DEHS members throughout the world will be aware of the pre-Christmas havoc at London's Gatwick airport caused by sightings of drones, and perhaps also of the quite remarkable series of comments made by British ministers, broadly along the lines of "This was an unprecedented situation" and "There is no commercially-available solution". Equally, DEHS members, like your Editor, may have felt inclined to point out that precisely such an episode has been hypothesised for many years, that there have been at least three international conferences since 2016 (those by Defence IQ, among others) focussed on the topic of countering drones, and that among the UK-developed responses to the challenge have been **Metis Aerospace's Skyperion** (above), together with the multi-national **Leonardo Falcon Shield** system, both on the market for 2 years plus, and both now 'deployed nationwide' within a remarkably low number of days, for systems supposedly 'not commercially available' (as we in the UK were told).

Certain of the assertions reported to have been made by ministers or their spokespersons were disprovable by a few keystrokes, a factor which does not aid credibility; **eDEN**, being non-political, passes no comment, other than to refer readers to **Tailpiece**, which reports an IPSOS Mori poll on the relative veracity of different professions, noting the scoring of engineers and scientists against politicians. Perhaps engineers and scientists might be more believed during 2019? Ah well, dream on

Of course, truth can be hard to find in matters historical, and our **Xmas Quiz - Where in the World?** - turned out to be a good example! The answers appear in this issue, with at least one reader producing further and better information than that of your Editor who set the quiz! Long may that be so – your Editor is always pleased to have new and better information, as this is the only way research goes forward. Going forward too is a motto of our friends and members at **Bawdsey Radar Trust**, whom we congratulate on winning not one, but **two** awards in this year of triumph for their efforts.

As is our practice, this New Year issue of **eDEN** looks across Army, Navy and Air Forces and across many years of conflicts and their legacies. In our leading article, **Pete Harry of the Bloodhound Preservation Group** responds to the challenge set in our November article on **Preserving Defence Electronics** and shows the excellent work of that group; we hope to feature more about them during 2019, and ask all members to support their efforts. **Mike Dean** then takes us into a lesser-known episode of the Second World War with his article **'Invisible' Illumination: A German U-Boat and the Manchester Ship Canal**, wherein the British attempt to learn from German techniques laid open by the capture of **U-570**, later commissioned into the Royal Navy as **HMS Graph**.

An insight into interwar developments of radios in Army Service is then given by our reprinting of the lecture **A History of Wireless Communication** by **W A S 'Bill' Butement**, who traces the story through into satellite communications. **Mike Dean** contributes a second excellent article, setting out previously unpublished facts about two **Events on the 27th February 1942**; first, evidence about the **'Channel Dash'** of 11/12th February contributed by radar operator **Aircraftsman Gubbins** and his colleagues, interviewed that day by an Air Marshal and an Admiral, and second, original evidence that the British were taking pre-emptive steps in the event of German retaliation for the **Bruneval raid**, which set out that night.

We next continue our look at a query about a **Naval indicator unit** from **Vin Robinson**, where help from **Clive Kidd** at **HMS Collingwood** and **Jerry Proc** in Canada led us to **RAF Shackleton sonobuoy systems** and particularly the **ARI 18108** system. **Peter Mills** at the **Gatwick Air Museum** has now been able to add more to what we have found – is there more which DEHS members can contribute?

Our final article reprints a lecture by **Air Vice Marshal E B Addison** on **The Radio War** in which he had played a major part; interesting as always – in addition to the lecture itself – are both his listeners' questions, and what Addison chose **not** to say in his talk; think of the results of the **Post Mortem** exercise!

DEHS members will recall that **Ben Newsam** has placed the manuscript diaries of his father, TRE scientist **Bernard Newsam**, on the internet, and asked for help in transcribing them into print and explaining the various terms and abbreviations used. **We repeat Ben's appeal - please give all the help you can to Ben in his endeavour**, for this will be of great utility to future historians.

Thales announcements this month cover two new products – simulators for the Tiger Helicopter and Satcom antennae, and as outlined above, **Tailpiece** considers the relative veracity of engineers, scientists and other professions with data from the **2018 Ipsos Mori Veracity survey**, showing engineers to be the fourth most trusted to tell the truth after nurses, doctors and teachers: *'Trust Me, I'm an Engineer'*?

Part II covers a rare subject for DEHS – a **Memorial Appeal**, in this case for those who died in the development of H2S is the **crash of Halifax V9977 on June 7, 1942**, including of course **Alan Blumlein**. Your Editor is reticent about many appeals, but in this case makes an exception, triggered by two factors – the popularity of the **Purbeck Radar Museum Trust** memorial on **St Aldhelm's Head, Worth Matravers**, to the radar research carried out there which has triggered much interest from those walking the Coastal Path; and an excellent piece of research – which we reproduce as the bulk of Part II – carried out on the causes of the crash by **W H (Bill) Sleigh**. Read it, for an account of how small errors lead to fatal tragedy.

As always, many thanks to **Mike Dean** for his invaluable help, and suggestions for improvements, offers of articles and all general comments to me at philjudkins@btinternet.com or info@dehs.org.uk.

Best Wishes for the New Year to all members of DEHS, and success to all your projects!

Phil

Dr. Phil Judkins, DEHS Chairman.

INDEX

Editorial: ...And A Happy New Year!	1
Index	3
2019 Ops Board: January	4
Xmas Quiz: Where in the World? Answers	5
Bawdsey Restoration Gains TWO Awards!	11
Preserving Defence Electronics <i>Pete Harry, Bloodhound Preservation Group</i>	12
'Invisible' Illumination: A German U-Boat and the Manchester Ship Canal <i>Mike Dean</i>	18
A History of Wireless Communication <i>W A S Butement</i>	32
Events of February 1942: Gubbins and Bruneval <i>Mike Dean</i>	54
Can You Help? Naval Indicator Unit <i>Vin Robinson Jerry Proc/ Clive Kidd/ Peter Mills</i>	66
The Radio War <i>Air Vice Marshal E B Addison</i>	68
Bernard Newsam: Internet Publication of Diaries – Can you help? <i>Ben Newsam</i>	84
Thales: Tiger Helicopter Simulators; Antares - LP active Satcom Array	85
DEHS Publications	87
Tailpiece: 'Trust Me, I'm an Engineer' <i>Veracity Index/ IET</i>	88
Part II: Memorial Appeal	89
The Crash of Halifax V9977 (Prototype H2S Radar) <i>W H Sleigh</i>	90
In Conclusion	135



Halifax V9977, subject of Bill Sleigh's fatal crash investigation in eDEN 78 Part II