



# **e-DEFENCE ELECTRONICS NEWSLETTER**

The e-NEWSLETTER OF THE DEFENCE ELECTRONICS HISTORY SOCIETY  
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## **A new excuse for burying bad news?**

Some 600,000 documents that shed light on Britain's recent past may be released only slowly, or not at all, for lack of staff

### **WHO KNEW?**

DEHS members whose family includes younger generations will perhaps be familiar with the expression '*Who Knew?*' spoken sarcastically, to refer to events whose course or outcome has always been obvious to everyone except those in authority, to whom it apparently comes as a blinding shock, and who as a rule seem to require a lengthy judicial review to identify what went wrong (or to divert blame/ kick the problem into the long grass etc., etc.). Now, when presented with the alternatives of 'Conspiracy' or 'Cock-up', your Chairman is normally in the latter camp, his observations of endless boardrooms and their equivalent meetings being that it would be a miracle if the attendees could conspire to get a cup of coffee without spilling it, let alone anything more Machiavellian. Nonetheless, such headlines as that from '*The Independent*' above, should give us pause. The Foreign and Colonial Office (FCO) 'quietly made public' in 2012 that it held a **collection of files at Hanslope Park, never released to the National Archives, and numbering 1.2 million** (a figure later rapidly revised downwards, to 600,000). Examples of their contents include a 4.5 metre run (that is not a misprint – around 15 feet) of files relating to the KGB spies **Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean**, 'including the fallout in Whitehall over who to blame for their 1951 escape to Moscow'. And do MoD have similar undeclared files, you may ask? You may ask ....

This month, our articles are in various ways relevant to the theme '*Who Knew?*' I illustrate the **information and translations which the Bawdsey radar scientists were receiving** on a regular basis about developments in electronics in other countries, including patents and reports of exhibitions, well into 1940, long, long after the war was in full swing. The second article will, I hope, trigger some letters on the continuing debate about **why Window was not used earlier** – and into the tussle between **R.V. Jones and Derek Jackson**. I've included a note of a recent little-reported episode of some significant **Russian vessels sheltering in the Moray Firth**, and of the RN Daring-class **Defender** despatched to keep watch; and on the even-less reported **Darings' power defects** within their integrated system supplying power to both main shafts and to all ancillary purposes; is a re-invention of the donkey-engine in prospect, one wonders. Open to all is the search by **Arthur Bauer** and myself for information on the **Zeitdrucker 38** believed to be a fuze-time measuring device,

retrieved from Graham Winbolt's barn, and now in a much cleaned-up form in Arthur's excellent Museum.

There has been a recent flurry of interesting articles in other magazines – *MagWatch* lists some you might like to see, on subjects ranging from the *Eddystone QR2 (770R) vhf receiver* to the carrier *HMS Furious* and its *Type 285 HA radar*, via the *Canberra PR9*, the *MiG 19 drone*, the *Twin Mustang* and *arming early nuclear weapons*. Our ever-helpful source of sound counsel, *John 'Jacey' Wise*, contributes three thoughtful short articles, referencing *'jitter'*, *'stagger'*, and *FMCW radar* – in its turn taking us to a series of Thales announcements which span the trials of the *Watchkeeper* drone, the *2050 sonar*, *CAPTAS* towed array, *SMART* and *SCOUT* radars, and *Bluegate* IFF. Tailpiece moves on from pigeons to 'crows', *EW 'Crows'* to be exact, in some 'War Art', both present day and World War 1.

Two calls on your time and your pocket! **Book NOW, yes NOW**, for the **2014 DEHS Burns Lecture on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Shrivenham**, when our own *Professor Hugh Griffiths* will share with us the results of his latest historical researches, including an assessment of the Bruneval Raid and of the radar defences used by Britain as the first anti-cruise missile and anti-ballistic missile air defence systems. Secondly, **order a copy of DEHS' latest publication, Russell Burns' last work, on the fascinating Lord Cherwell, 'The Prof, Churchill and Science at War'!**

As always, suggestions for improvements, offers of articles and all general comments to me at [philjudkins@btinternet.com](mailto:philjudkins@btinternet.com) or [chairman@dehs.org.uk](mailto:chairman@dehs.org.uk).

Dr. Phil Judkins, DEHS Chairman.

## INDEX

Editorial	1
Index	2
1 April 2014: DEHS Burns Lecture: Professor Hugh Griffiths	3
Who Knew? - I: Bawdsey, German and Italian Developments	4
Who Knew? – II: Window	9
Who Knew? – III: It was Xmas Day in the Moray Firth	12
Who Knows? – <i>Zeitdrucker 38</i>	13
MagWatch	16
A Word from the Wise: John 'Jacey' Wise	17
Today's Equipment: Thales Announcements	20
Ops Board	24
DEHS Publication: Russell Burns' <i>The Prof, Churchill and Science at War</i>	25
Tailpiece: War Art - Crows, and more!	25