

More reports!

We are halfway through the year & Elvaston Castle Rally to look forward to (weather & foot & mouth permitting) our two xyl's Len's wife & Glenys always look forward to Elvaston, more so this year with not having the RSGB rally at Hatfield. I was unable to be at Drayton Manor because it was the Organ Concert at Shrewsbury, I understand from reports that there was plenty to see both Radio & Computer wise although there was a complaint about admission costs. Len & His xyl were there, but that is the problem I have when interests fall on the same day. It will happen again this year.. Instead of being at Drayton on Sun & Mon of the Holiday week end 27th & 28th May I was at the computer fair at Dunstall Race course Wolverhampton. I was able to purchase at a very much reduced price, memory chips EDOs & a 233 mhz processor for the new computer I am working on. I hope they work? Len & Myself were there on Sun & because Glenys wanted something from Focus store not far from Dunstall Park. I decided to re-visit the admission on the Sun as it was free admission on Monday. I didn't intend spending anything on Monday. but I noticed something I had missed on Sun. that I could not have purchased from of either E-Bay or Yahoo since I have registered on the two Web sites at the prices they go for on those sites which seem over the top.

Both Len & My colleague, fellow GFS member Martin from Wem in Shropshire who works on telephone systems & Myself thoroughly enjoyed the day out at Bletchley Park. I never realised there was so much to see. The day didn't seem long enough to take it all in & having the Re enactment there made it that more interesting (i could have had the uke there & not seemed out of place & A R P uniform) But very many thanks to Wayne for organising & anyone else involved for organising the most interesting trip. Look forward to another one, its a change to travel by coach as Glenys & Myself were doing on the

previous Bank Holiday week end to celebrate Gleny's 60th birthday. We had three nights in Ostende, going with our local coach tour operator Walter Mills. I started writing this report on route to Dover. On 4th May had the 2m handheld I heard some of the locals on but didn't manage a QSO because of the language, however it was a good long week-end.

Going back to the Sun after Bletchley Park Len & Myself were at the 3 Counties Rally, there was not such a good turn out as previous years. I believe there was another rally at Luton I didn't purchase too much. I came into contact with some of the ex 7 ten passengers that I used to be in contact with each week day morning via the malvern Hills repeater in the 1980s & early 90s I also read in the May Rad Com that one had become a silent key on the 19th Feb Wilf Baker G3HDQ from Alcester. We used to have a get together at the Worcester, later 3 Counties Rally. How about a rally visit to Friedrichafen in Germany 3 day Hamfest?

How enjoyable I found the talk about the Wurlitzer even though I have been associated with the Buttermarket Shrewsbury Wurlitzer now for 7years, more since I was elected on the committee 4 years ago I am still learning about them and to be able to correct in faults that may arise, in a sense just like radios I used to repair especially valve type, if any STARs members are interested in attending the monthly concerts at the Buttermarket they are on the 3thd Sun of the month at 3pm, car parking free with the courtesy of Central Trains, there are no concerts in Aug Sometimes a member of the Wolverhampton Amateur Radio Society attend and during the interval one can see inside the organ chambers

well thats all for now Best 73s Roving Reporter Malcolm G8BOP Many thanks Wayne

The Day Out!

STARS VISIT TO BLETCHLEY PARK SATURDAY 12TH .MAY 2001

When it was first announced that **Wayne M5LLT** was organising this trip, "Doubting Thomas" here thought "He'll never get enough people to fill a coach". As usual I was wrong. In no time at all there were 40 names on the list. The next snag was that when Wayne telephoned to enquire about obtaining tickets he was told that they were fully booked for that particular day but, undaunted, he told them that we were coming anyway!

I was expecting it to be on the lines of a Radio Rally, a quick trip down there, a couple of hours looking around and then back home for about 2.30pm. Wrong again. Depart 8.00.am. return by 7.00.pm. A long day for some of us old-uns.

I had arranged to pick up **Bill HMD** and **Tony CZH** to economise on parking space at OSH. A last minute thought crossed my mind. I had to pass **Eric IVQ's** QTH on the way to Tony's - "I'll give him a ring to see if he needs a lift to the School". This was at 7.25 am. - No Reply! - "Must be on his way." - arrived at OSH - No Eric. "Oh heck another faux pas Gord." Maria told me later that he had returned the call and told her that he hadn't planned to go on the trip. Sorry for disturbing your slumber Eric.

We left OSH pretty well on time and proceeded to Quinton to pick up some more passengers. Slight delay here but eventually we were on our way and about 90 minutes later, after a fruitless stop for fuel (The Services didn't accept the driver's "fuel card") but a chance to buy a couple of cold drinks and some jelly babies, we arrived on the outskirts of Milton Keynes - pointing in the wrong direction! I think the map had been printed upside down -. Wayne?

The driver managed to find a lay-by and execute a U-turn and we finally entered Milton Keynes. From what I have heard from other folk who have been there it ain't the easiest place to find one's way around.

Bill remarked on the strange street name markings. E.g. "**V7 Saxon St.**" Well I eventually discovered that this is the grid system peculiar to Milton Keynes to help those poor unfortunates who are obliged to cross the boundaries to find their way around the place.

We arrived at the entrance to Bletchley Park and Wayne alighted to fetch the tickets. He returned about five minutes later. No tickets but we could proceed. Seems that the person he approached simply asked how many were in the party, took the cash and said OK, no tickets were being issued. Wayne reckoned that if he had said that there were only 10 we would probably have got away with it but we're an honest lot aren't we? And it's all in a good cause.

The first port of call was The Mansion to find out what was going on. The place was absolutely packed. In the entrance hall there was a small table where a lady was taking bookings for the "Special Tour" at £2 a throw. Bill was more or less in the queue so Tony and I asked him to get tickets for us at the same time. However the last ticket for the day was sold to the lady in front of Bill. Immediate eruptions - "Fancy coming all this way and then finding out that we're not gonna get a guided tour. I'm gonna write and complain about this" said Bill. "Do it now Bill" said I, egging him on. "There's a "Suggestion" box on that table over there"

Whilst Bill was busy "giving them a piece of his mind" in writing. I noticed this strange looking individual opposite standing motion-

less with a label attached to his lapel and with a steely look in his eye. Well you don't like stare do you? But it struck me as peculiar that he was wearing one black shoe and one brown, had a rolled umbrella and was holding a Chinese coolie's hat close to his chest. More of him later...

Bill had finished his screed and popped it into the "Box" and we decided that we would just have to have a wander around under our own steam when a official looking lady emerged from an adjoining room followed by a hoard of bodies, about 50 of them I would guess, so we tagged on to them. We were all shepherded into the dining room where she explained that she was going to show us around the place. This WAS "**The Guided Tour**" which we thought was the one we had been trying to book! The "**Special Tour**" was just for the **actual** "**Station X**" which is evidently a very small room and can only accommodate about 8 persons at a time. Hence the reason why we couldn't get tickets.

Off we went then; the first stop was outside the Post Office. The guide was chatting away but I couldn't hear a word. When the group moved on to the next point I lingered to collect a Ration Book and an Identity Card. Quite authentic reproductions, from what I recall from those far off days. By the time I had caught up I had lost sight of Tony and Bill and couldn't even see the guide let alone hear what was going on. To my rear I spotted a collection of vintage cars so decided to have a look at those. They were nothing to do with WWII but amongst them were a couple of Austin Princesses, a sort of oversized version of the A35. I had forgotten how big they were and a chappie who was also looking at them told me that some of them were fitted with Rolls Royce engines and designated "Princess R"

I could hear someone talking in rather strident tones in the adjoining hut and, on entering, I and behold, there was that odd looking character I described earlier, relating the part that Station X had taken in the battle against the U-boats. It appears that the German Naval code had been cracked and that from

the intercepted messages we were able to discover where and when the rendezvous with the supply vessel was due to take place and take the appropriate action. He turned out to be Peter Jarvis, one of the guides, and had a unique style of delivery, always restricting his comments to what was happening only up until this day in 1941 and never intentionally mentioning subsequent events –very difficult but very interesting. His odd mode of dress was evidently to emphasise the eccentricity of some of the types that worked at Bletchley!

I tagged on to this group and heard about some of the characters that were the leading lights at Bletchley in its heyday, their eccentricities and where they resided. We saw the "Bombe" The machine developed to break the enigma code but I must admit I couldn't fathom out how it worked.

That was about the end of the guided tour and we were left to our own devices and pointed in the direction of "The Cryptology Trail"

This is housed in a building with the various rooms (Communications etc.) off the corridors set up with static displays of equipment (telephone switchboards, typewriters chairs, desks and uniformed mannequins of the various Services). Each room has an adjoining room with a viewing window. The idea seems to be demonstrate the various stages from receiving an encrypted message through to de-coding and passing on to the relevant department

Half way around the "Trail" I heard the familiar roar of Merlin engines and dashed outside to see the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight disappearing over the treetops. I thought that I had missed them but a few minutes later they returned. I had seen them on TV but it was certainly an impressive sight. The Avro Lancaster bomber escorted by a Supermarine Spitfire and a Hawker Hurricane fighter plane.

It looked as though the two fighters would have fitted comfortably beneath the bomber's

wing. In fact it almost looked that way as they were in a very tight V formation. Yes that certainly brought a lump to the old throat. Machines of death and destruction yes but they did contribute in no small measure to the end of hostilities in that terrible conflict.

Well, after that, I never did get to finish the "Trail" and even forgot to go and have a look at "Colossus"

Our visit coincided with a "Re-enactment Day" when dedicated enthusiasts put on displays depicting all the different Services including the ARP or Civil Defence as it was later called (I can't remember seeing the LDV (Local Defence Volunteers / Look Duck and Vanish, later the Home Guard) but The ARP (Air Raid Precautions) were demonstrating extinguishing a fire with a Stirrup Pump. I recall trying my hand at that when I was about 12 years of age. Quite a strenuous business and the buckets of water were heavy too. I always thought it would be quicker to chuck the bucket of water. Hi.

One thing I did notice. Anyone who has been in the Services will remember that it was an unwritten (I think) rule that when one entered the mess hall, one always removed one's cap. In this case it was the café and bar and all of the "Service personnel" did just that, - apart from two "ATS MPs (Military Police / Redcaps)". I heard one say "Should we keep our caps on?" - Well, suppose it would depend on whether they were on duty or not ... hi

There were various military vehicles, all working, including 3 dispatch Rider's motorcycles, Ariel, Matchless, and BSA, I think, and a sidecar outfit. There was also a gaggle of Brough Superiors, the "Rolls Royce" of motorcycles in bygone days together with a Vincent and a Harley Davidson.

There's lots more there but I think James will run out of space so will leave it at that. Did meet **Stuart TBI** operating under the banner of the Military Wireless Group banner.

On the way home, Bill HMD pointed out the local hostelry "The Park" where vast quantities of "Flower's "Bulls Blood" were quaffed by Bill and his colleagues during his frequent visits to Bletchley attending various training courses whilst in the employ of HMG! Oh yes, he got very polite written reply to his "gripe"

A really enjoyable day and the weather was fabulous. Many thanks Wayne for an excellent day's outing. I would like to go again. There is loads of info on the Website.

Bletchley Park www.bletchleypark.org.uk

73 de Gord.

ALEC and DAISY HIGGINS.

Most members of our Society are probably unaware that this June sees the diamond wedding anniversary of Alec Higgins (G8GF) and his wife Daisy. Alec, then serving in the Royal Air Force with Y-Service, and Daisy were married on June 14th 1941 at St. Michael's Church, Brierley Hill. Brian, their son, has organised a celebratory dinner for close family and friends at a well known Eastbourne hotel with further celebrations arranged when Alec and Daisy revisit Stourbridge in late June.

I am certain that all members will want to join me in congratulating both Alec and Daisy on reaching their 60th anniversary and to wish them all the very best for the future with many more years of happiness together.

Joe Russon - G3APL

FOR SALE

Intel Pentium II Celeron
333MHZ PC
Contact James G7HEZ
for further details

Quiz Time!

Most of us live in the Black Country. But how much do we really know about the place where we live and work? Below is a selection of questions to test your knowledge of the area.

PUBS

1. What is the proper name of the Bull and Bladder in Brierley Hill?
2. What is the Glynne Arms in Himley better known as?
3. Which Netherton pub has been known as Ma Pardoes?
4. Which pub is George St, Woodsetton is the home of Holden's Beer?
5. Which pub in Netherton has a narrow boat as a bar?
6. Which pub in Pensnett held sessions of the Earl of Dudley manorial court?
7. What is the name of the pub in the Black Country Museum?
8. Where can you buy a pint of "Sedgley Surprise"?
9. Which inn was used as his headquarters by the "Tipton Slasher"?
10. The Queens Cross Brewery used to stand behind which Dudley pub?

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. At the time of the Domesday Book, which castle was in Sedgley manor?
2. A feature of Dudley Castle is the two guns captured after which battle?
3. Which nature reserve is recognised as a classic exposure of the upper silurian limestone?
4. In which year was Walsall FC founded?
5. Walsall town was one of the original clubs, name the other one?
6. Where is it said that pure Chaucerian English is still spoken?
7. Which company made the anchor for the Titanic in 1911?
8. Who was King Edward VI's Grammar schools famous son?
9. Which humorous magazine regularly parodies Tipton?
10. The old Borough of Rowley Regis was made up of which two town 5 towns?
11. What are the three main ingredients of lead crystal?
12. What is unusual about the "nine locks" of the Dudley No 1 Canal?

