

Staff Diary
The First Eight Years
1938 - 1945



FROM

MUNICH TO V. J.

— AND BEYOND.

THE TEST HOUSE
SEES IT THROUGH.

VOL. I.

1938-1945

PREFACE

This chronicle is in no sense an account of the technical development of the A.I.D. Test House. The story of the growth and expansion of testing methods is told in official documents and in Departmental files, but this record is simply of Test House as a community. The comings and goings of very ordinary folk, their, sometimes brief, sojourn within the confines of Test House, and the various social events to which they have contributed may, I hope, prove of some interest to those whose livelihood has been bound up with this place.

Social scandals and glaring iniquities there may have been in plenty, but these are, to my mind, dwarfed by the spirit of tolerance and good fellowship which somehow or other has carried us through even the most difficult crises.

To be in the midst of such a community, and at the same time endeavouring to view it with some detachment has been an enchanting and illuminating experience.

My warmest thanks are due to the staff of the photographic section, to officers of the Social Club, to Miss Bartholomew for her excellent work in typing the MS., and to others for their assistance and co-operation in this work.

To one friend in particular and to many more whose comradeship has been a joy and inspiration through the dark years of war, this little diary is dedicated.

L.D.J.

P R O L O G U E

A traveller on the (in) famous '309' bus route between Uxbridge and Rickmansworth, on reaching the ancient village of Harefield, will probably hear the conductor announce with some solemnity - "Air Ministry" - and glance around expecting the most important-looking passengers to alight. Should the conductor be in facetious mood the announcement may be "Home of Rest", or "A.I.D. Guest House", but rarely is the correct name used.

The traveller may wonder to what this cryptic announcement refers, and peering from the bus windows will espy an eighteenth century mansion standing among giant elms behind a long brick wall, and then adjacent, partly hidden by the cottages fronting the village street, a large modern red-brick building. Here is the

A.I.D. Test House, Harefield.

This is the official name of the Establishment, but the mansion itself rejoices in the ancient and more aristocratic name of "Harefield House". Standing aloof from the modern erections clustering around it, the old house still preserves something of its former dignity, as if to proclaim its allegiance to tradition and perhaps its slight disapproval of "all these new-fangled places cluttering up its lovely gardens" (to quote from a local old inhabitant of the village).

Harefield House has had a long and interesting history, and there has certainly been a dwelling on this site for many centuries. The ancient and beautiful trees, some of which still stand, bespeak the careful co-operation of man with nature which must have gone on here since very early times.

The present house dates back to the year 1758 or 59, and one of the first occupants was His Excellency Count Bruhl, who was Envoy from Saxony to the Court of St. James. Count Bruhl was an amateur astronomer, and here he had an observatory for carrying on his astronomical hobby, though whether this was actually part of the house, or a separate building in the grounds, seems rather uncertain.

In 1767 Count Bruhl married Alicia Maria, daughter of Lord Carpenter, and widow of the Earl of Egremont. They resided at Harefield House until the Countess died,

in 1794, and two years later the Count sold the property and went soon after to live in Essex. Shortly after 1796 when the property came into the market, it was purchased by Phillip Champion de Grespigny Esq., member of a well-known Essex family, and he held the estate until his death in 1851.

The next owner was Capt. Cecil Dunn Gardner of Cambridgeshire, but he only held the property for eight years, selling it in 1859 to the Honourable Sir John Byles, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. Sir John and Lady Byles lived here until the latter's death in 1872, and Mr. Justice Byles (now the Rt. Hon. Sir John Byles, P.C.) until he died in 1884. Both are buried in Harefield Churchyard.

The property descended to Sir John's son who was also in the legal profession, reaching the rank of Judge, and it remained in the hands of the Byles family until 1922 when it was purchased by Mr. H.A. Tipping.

Mr. Tipping turned Harefield House into a guest house and it was run more or less successfully on those lines for several years, but his chief hobby was horticulture, and he lavished much care and attention on the gardens and grounds. It is said that at one time as many as ten gardeners were employed at once, and the grounds certainly became one of the show places of the neighbourhood, being opened frequently during the Summer months for fetes and charitable garden parties.

Mr. Tipping died in 1933 leaving Harefield House and its grounds to his head gardener Mr. Walter E. Wood, who had been largely responsible for the lay-out of the more modern parts of the gardens. Mr. Wood, however, did not take up residence in the house itself which remained empty for several years, but he holds the distinction of being the last of a long line of private owners, and from him it was acquired by the Crown.

At that time the Aeronautical Inspection Directorate of the Air Ministry - as it was then - was seeking a suitable site within twenty miles of London for the erection of a new Test House. Several properties were inspected, but none seemed to be more suitable in area or location than this. The purchase of the property by the Crown was first proposed in April 1937 and was finally effected in January 1938.

The A.I.D. Test House at that time was located in two places - the chemical, instrument, and mechanical test sections, together with the general stores was housed in two sheds at the R.A.F. Maintenance Unit, Kidbrooke, while the X-Ray and Metrology sections were at the Royal Airship Works, Cardington, where they had been since 1936.

It was found that with suitable alteration and renovation, the old house could be adapted for one section until the new building was ready, so it was decided to move the Metrology, or Gauge Measurement Section, here in October 1938.

The coming of A.I.D. to Harefield was a source of great interest to the local inhabitants and speculation was rife as to the real nature and purpose of the work to be carried on by "The Air Ministry" behind the high brick walls. It formed the main topic of conversation in the "Kings Arms", "Kings Head", "Mines Royal", and other hostelries in which the village abounds, and many a wiseacre shook his head with some misgiving as to what would happen to the old house and its lovely gardens "now they Govinment folk ha' got hold of it".

To return to October 1938 - the staff of the Metrology Division was safely installed in the 40 rooms of Harefield House, and a new era in the life of the old place began. The original Dining Room became the Screw Thread Measuring Room, the Front Bedroom was now the General Office, the heavy gauge inspection was done in the Lounge, while the servants hall was fitted out as Gauge Workshop.

Here the life of the "A.I.D. Test House, Harefield" really commenced, and we follow it on from October 10th 1938, in diary fashion, to see the original staff of 36 grow to more than twelve times that size.

Here is the original staff - 10.10.'38.

Miss D. Arnold	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. B.N. Aston	-	T.M.C.III
Miss M.W. Bradshaw	-	Laboratory assistant
Mrs. E. Bugbee	-	Cleaner
Mr. C.J. Byers	-	T.M.C.III & Caretaker
Mr. S. Cook	-	Examiner
Mr. T. Collier	-	Labourer & M/T Driver
Mr. H.R. Davenport	-	Examiner
Mr. P. Davey	-	Leading Storeman
Miss C. Davies	-	Laboratory assistant
Miss M. Dengate	-	Laboratory assistant
Miss N.E. Fagan	-	Woman examiner
Miss W.J. Garner	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. S.W. Harris	-	Toolmaker
Miss D.J. Harrison	-	Laboratory assistant
Miss M. Holmes	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. R. Holmes	-	Labourer
Miss E.R. Ickeringill	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. K.T. Jago	-	A.S.C.l.
Miss M. James	-	Established Typist
Miss U.G. Kinvig	-	Laboratory assistant
Miss G.I. Kinvig	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. R.L. McDougall	-	Labourer
Mr. R.A. McLellan	-	Examiner
Mr. T.W. McGuire	-	Labourer S/S
Mr. A.B. Phillips	-	Examiner
Miss J.W. Ramsay	-	Laboratory assistant
Mr. W. Roebuck	-	Examiner
Mr. S.C. Scott	-	Packer
Mr. D.E. Stainton	-	Senior examiner
Mr. A.E. Thomas	-	Examiner
Mr. A.E. Thomas	-	Gardener
Mr. W.T. Truby	-	Gauge Fitter
Mr. J.P. Tweedy	-	Asst. Inspector 1.
Mr. N.K.R. Wheatley	-	Senior examiner
Miss H.M. Wooding	-	Established typist



A.E. Thomas

3rd November, 1938

Mrs. I.E. Rayner - cleaner, engaged. This is the first addition to the original staff.

7th November 1938

Mrs. Kempster - cleaner, engaged, - here's one more at any rate!

18th November, 1938

Man cannot apparently live by work alone, so a meeting of all staff was held to-day to form a Club, for recreational purposes. Thus was born the "Harefield (A.I.D.) Sports & Social Club", with Mr. Tweedy, Inspector in Charge, as President, and Mr. K.T. Jago, Clerk in Charge, as Chairman.

19th December, 1938

Mr. H. Goode, T.M.C.III, engaged - the first addition to the Clerical staff.

16th January, 1939

Miss P. Chytreaus, tracer, commenced duties.

21st January, 1939

Mrs. Rayner, - cleaner, discharged. The first cleaner to be engaged after Test House opened, and the first to be discharged!

23rd January, 1939

Mr. E.W. Carter, examiner, commenced duties.
Mrs. J. Collett, cleaner, engaged.



E.W. Carter

30th January, 1939

Miss J.F. Stewardson, commenced duties as tracer. Miss B.M. Wright engaged as shorthand-typist - the first addition to the original typing staff.

* see Corrigenda, Note 1.

22nd March, 1939

Mr. Roebuck - examiner, left on transfer - the first member of the original technical staff to go.

28th March, 1939

We are now considered of sufficient importance to have a staff of A.M. Warders, and the following commenced duties to-day:-

Mr. C.P. Bartholomew	- Sergt.
Mr. H.C. Berry	- Warder
Mr. J.G. Dobson	- Warder
Mr. E.J. Warren	- Warder
Mr. D.R. McLean	- Warder

*

25th April, 1939

Bartholomew
Signature.

To-day is one we shall long remember as a historic occasion, for the foundation stone of the great new Test House was well and truly laid. The actual ceremony was performed by Mr. R.F. Barlow, I.INSAR, from Headquarters. Beneath the stone is deposited a zinc lined box containing a brief history of the Test House, as well as some coins, signatures and current press specimens. What a find for anyone in a thousand years hence!

†

8th May, 1939

Mrs. Collett - cleaner, discharged. She hasn't lasted very long.

10th May, 1939

Mrs. J. Berry - cleaner, engaged. A Scots-woman, a good worker, - the wife of H.C. Berry the Warder.

18th May, 1939

One of our warders, Mr. D.R. McLean has requested a transfer to Scotland, so he leaves us this week.

* see Corrigenda, Note 2.
† see Corrigenda, Note 3.

26th June, 1939

Mr. L.G. Archer engaged as examiner.

28th July, 1939

The Warder staff, who have been occupying a room in the house, were to-day installed in their hut (sorry! "Guard Room") just inside the gate.

1st August, 1939

Mr. N.T. Baines - senior examiner of "I.C.S.2(a)" took up residence with us to-day. The first member of an "attached" Department, outside regular Test House staff, to come to Harefield.

8th August, 1939

Our warder strength was increased by the engagement of Mr. J. Hough as additional warder, and Mr. F. Garner was also engaged as a labourer.

12th August, 1939

The International sky seems to be getting overcast, but here at Harefield the sun is still shining, so the Sports & Social Club hold their first garden-party. The grounds (what's left of them) are looking beautiful - there are sports and side shows, and parties of visitors from Kidbrooke Test House and Headquarters! "A very enjoyable time was had by all".

18th August, 1939

Mr. A.J. Dunkley - examiner, resigned.

19th August, 1939

Miss D.H. Arnold, laboratory assistant, resigned. Another member of the original (October 1938) staff gone.

9

21st August, 1939

Miss V.M. Marks, commenced duty as laboratory assistant.

22nd August, 1939

Mr. E.J. Warren, the warder, was called up. A significant sign!

25th August, 1939

Mr. R. Holmes, a labourer, called up. Another significant sign!

1st September, 1939

Mr. H. Goode - temporary clerk, and Mr. S.C. Scott, packer, were called up. Looks as though we shall all be gone soon!

However, a new Section was billeted on us to-day; four members of I.C.S.2.(a) - Mr. Nixon, chief examiner, with Messrs. Jobey, Jackson and Walker, senior examiners. The first evacuees from town?



4th September, 1939

L. G. Aslet.

The storm broke yesterday, and nobody seems to know what we may be in for. Dark blinds over the windows, hasty preparation of a refuge room in the Club kitchen - glass re-inforced with some rather fragile-looking anti-blast material, and identification-plate taken off the front entrance gate. Well, we have one new member of the staff - Mr. T.E. Jones engaged as examiner commenced to-day.

W. Jones

6th September, 1939

 Our staff is beginning to grow - Mr. L.G. Aslet was engaged as a storeman, Mr. L. Crook as a packer, and Miss E.A. Symmonds as a shorthand-typist. 

7th September, 1939

Edna A. E. Symonds
Signature

Mr. T. Brown engaged as an additional warder.

20th September, 1939

Mr. W.J. Wallington engaged in a dual capacity - as messenger and telephonist. A bright lad who looks as though he will be able to manage the two jobs quite successfully.

9th October, 1939

Two more technical staff to-day - Miss I.R. Poole, a laboratory assistant, and Mr. W.H. Scott, examiner. We are still going up.

16th October, 1939

Two new laboratory assistants commenced - Miss J. Thomas, and Miss J.M. Harris. We have now grown from 36 to 54 in the first year of our life at Harefield.

31st October, 1939

A new warder - Mr. G.A.D. Warren, was engaged to-day. Rather a rough-looking chap, but perhaps he will turn out all right.

2nd November, 1939

The first A.G.M. of the Sports & Social Club was held today. The club seems to be a promising young infant, after one years life.

22nd November, 1939

Mr. F. Garner, labourer, died to-day.

6th December, 1939

Miss S.M. Cook, another laboratory assistant, commenced duty to-day.

* see Corrigenda, Note 4.

23rd December, 1939

Mr. G.A.D. Warren, the new warder, was discharged to-day. Unfortunately he did not improve since engaged, and was yesterday found in one of the "locals" when he should have been on duty. We are better off without him.

28th December, 1939

The year closes with promise of great changes - the first contingent of clerical staff is expected from Kidbrooke early in the new year. Mr. K.T. Jago, Clerk in Charge, Chairman of the Club, and "big noise" in C.S.C.A. circles, was transferred away to-day. It means promotion for him, but he will be missed at Harefield. What is 1940 going to bring forth - we wonder?

5th January, 1940

The first event this year is one of some importance - the coming of a new Clerk in Charge, Mr. R. Broughton, from Test House, Kidbrooke. It is rumoured that he is the first of many - and eventually all - of the clerical staff to come from Kidbrooke.



8th January, 1940

The A.I.D. Stores have commenced their move from Kidbrooke to Harefield this week. At the moment we must house them in the kitchen and our fine Games room must become an office.

Mr. F.J. Langtry, A.S.C.III, arrived to-day from Kidbrooke, and Mr. E.E. Marshall, L/Storeman, Mr. C.H. Plato, packer and Mr. T. Fryer, labourer, have been transferred to us from No. 4 Maintenance Unit, Ruislip. Mr. C.B. Malkin was engaged as another storeman.

9th January, 1940

Mr. A. Stumbles, A.S.A.C. - one of the "old stalwarts" was transferred here, from Kidbrooke.



F.J. Langtry

10th January, 1940

Still the Kidbrooke clerical influx continues - Mr. R.L. Burfutt, Mr. L.D. Jarvis, and Mr. C.W. Knight - three temporary clerks came to-day, and Miss I. Duke came with them as shorthand-typist. Another shorthand-typist was engaged - Miss P.R. Bartholomew. She is the daughter of the sergt. Warder, and looks like becoming a very useful member of the staff.



11th January, 1940

Another warder, Mr. H.G. Stagg, was engaged to-day, also Mr. E.J. Collett, a labourer.

12th January, 1940

Mr. A.G. Walker - a semi-skilled labourer commenced to-day.

13th January, 1940

Miss S.M. Cook, one of the laboratory assistants resigned to-day. She has only lasted about 5 weeks.

15th January, 1940

Mr. T.J. Eddy, A.S.A.C. - another of the Kidbrooke "stalwarts" was transferred here to-day.



16th January, 1940

We set up a "Central Registry" here to-day. This is probably the first "A.I.D." Registry to be established - as distinct from A.M. H.Q. Registry, or Depot Registries. Mr. L.D. Jarvis - one of the clerks from Kidbrooke was placed in charge of this, with Mr. Wallington as part-time messenger for "staff".

18th January, 1940

The full rigours of winter are upon us. Severe frost and deep snow make travelling difficult, and many of the staff are arriving late.

24th January, 1940

Three new labourers commenced to-day - Mr. A.E. Harman, Mr. E. Binfield, and Mr. E. Moore.

27th January, 1940

Miss J.F. Stewardson - tracer, resigned.

30th January, 1940

Another warder - Mr. J.N. Browne, commenced duty.

5th February, 1940

Mr. W.P. Blair, an electrical fitter commenced duty.

12th February, 1940

Mr. L.L. Best, another transfer from Kidbrooke arrived to-day. He has just got his promotion to A.S.C.III.

13th February, 1940


Two of the three labourers engaged on 24th January, Mr. E. Binfield and Mr. E. Moore, were discharged to-day.

28th February, 1940


Miss P.E. Ralph, a shorthand-typist, commenced duty to-day. She has been allotted to "I.C.S.2.a", who have now finally moved down here from London, and are housed in the big room on the first floor, above the "Screw room".

6th March, 1940

Miss V.G. Cox joined us as a laboratory assistant to-day. A bright girl, who shows promise in mathematics.

11th March, 1940


Two more A.S.C.III were transferred here to-day. Mr. L.E. Fisk, who comes from the Library at Cranwell, and Mr. P.A. Clyne, who is apparently something of a "big noise" in C.S.C.A. circles.

*L.E. Fisk*16th March, 1940


Another labourer engaged to-day. Mr. C.W. Dockwray - an ex-soldier who saw service in the last War, and can spin a good yarn.

19th March, 1940

Mr. T.H. Bourne, was engaged today as a T.C.III, and Mr. Hannan who was engaged as a labourer on 24th January was discharged.

3rd April, 1940

Mr. J.N. Garland, "Jack", commenced as a laboratory assistant to-day.

15th April, 1940

Our clerical staff was strengthened and enlivened (!) to-day by the transfer of Mr. A.E. Humphrey, A.S.C.III, and Mr. F.G. Hurrell, A.S.A.C. from Kidbrooke. Mr. Humphrey comes here on his upgrading to A.S.C.I.

1st May, 1940

Mr. A.E. Hamman, who served us earlier in the year as a labourer, was re-engaged to-day as a packer in the Stores.

*Hamman*6th May, 1940

Miss Eileen Feasey - a young shorthand-typist from Mill End was engaged to-day, also Mr. S.A. Root, who comes as an examiner in the "Screw room".

S.A. Root.

10th May, 1940

Germany has invaded Holland and Belgium. We wonder what this will mean.

13th May, 1940

Whit. Monday. This should have been a Bank Holiday, but the holiday has been cancelled in view of the seriousness of the War situation.

16th May, 1940

Miss Duke, shorthand-typist, left us and returned to Kidbrooke. This was at her own request, but a move back to that side of London seems hardly wise in view of the air menace.

18th May, 1940

Miss Vera Marks, laboratory assistant, resigned.

20th May, 1940

Mr. H.E. Wood, a new labourer was engaged to-day. Knowing the men's fondness for nicknames, he will probably soon be called "Tubby", or something like that.



H. E. Wood

22nd May, 1940

Miss C.S. Noble, "Chrissy", commenced duties as shorthand-typist. Her father is on the clerical staff at R.A.F. Ruislip.

27th May, 1940

War, or no War, we must keep the garden in some sort of shape, so Mr. H.J. Carter was engaged to-day as a gardener.



29th May, 1940

Mr. J.N. Browne, one of the warders, resigned to-day.

1st June, 1940

To-day is a great day in our history, for we take over the responsibility of payment of salaries and wages to our staff. This has hitherto been done by No. 4 Maintenance Unit, Ruislip. This means the establishment of a "Pay Office" here, and the elevation of our Clerk in Charge, to the rank of Civil Assistant & Accountant, Mr. Broughton will continue to fill this post.

Two new warders were engaged to-day - Mr. A.M. Cutts, and Mr. E. Milton.

8th June, 1940

There has been a re-shuffle of clerical posts at Ruislip, and four of their clerks were transferred to us to-day, on becoming redundant there. They are:-

- Mr. H.J. Godwyn
- Mr. T. Gedge
- Mr. E. Pugh
- Mr. H.J. Staples.



12th June, 1940

A young lad joined us as laboratory assistant to-day. His name is Peter Hack - he doesn't seem very bright, but perhaps he'll improve.

15th June, 1940

The War situation is getting pretty serious, and every man is wanted. Mr. F.G. Hurrell, one of the A.S.A.Cs from Kidbrooke was called up.

17th June, 1940

At midday to-day came the news that France had capitulated. Well, we are up against it now!

Mr. D.C. Pointing, another ex-Kidbrooke clerk - an A.S.C.III, was called up.

21st June, 1940

We must have more help in the garden, so Mr. F. Dance was engaged as a labourer to help Mr. Carter.

25th June, 1940

Mr. W.J. Wallington, our bright telephonist-cum-messenger was called up to-day. We shall certainly miss him.

26th June, 1940

We recruited another member of the clerical staff to-day - Mr. W.J. Knight; and Mr. R.G. Nicholas, a local builder, joined us as a skilled labourer.



29th June, 1940

Miss J. Thomas, laboratory assistant, resigned.

1st July, 1940

Mr. A.J. Walpole was engaged as a temporary clerk to-day. A well-spoken and handsome fellow, but seems to have a good opinion of himself.

8th July, 1940

The duties of telephonist and messenger can no longer be combined, and we must have a whole-time telephonist, so Miss Sylvia Smith was engaged to-day. She is a relative of Mr. Truby who came with us from Cardington.

10th July, 1940

Mr. W. Clare, another temporary clerk from Ruislip, joined the staff to-day.

20th July, 1940

We engaged another gauge-fitter to-day; Mr. Jack Langton. We hear he has something of a reputation in the sporting world.

J. Langton

22nd July, 1940

Two of our technical staff were transferred to "I.C.S.2.(a)" to-day. They are Mr. S. Cook and Mr. R.A. McLellan - two of the original staff who came in October, 1938.

27th July, 1940

Miss C.S. Noble, shorthand-typist, resigned. She has only been here a little over two months, but her family are apparently leaving the district.

29th July, 1940

Mr. F.J. Wilkin was engaged as another temporary clerk to-day.

1st August, 1940

To-day is another red-letter day in our history, for we have a new Inspector in Charge. Mr. R.F. Barlow has been appointed to that post, but he is no stranger here, having had much to do with the place since its first opening - and before. As "I.G.", "I.INSAR" and latterly "I.C.S.2" he has been here a good deal - lately almost permanently with I.C.S.2.(a) - and has seen us grow from infancy. His long experience - since 1916 - in A.I.D. will doubtless stand him in good stead in the very responsible work he now undertakes. He comes on promotion from A.I.1. to Inspector.

5th August, 1940

No Bank Holiday again! I.C.S.2.(a) have gone back to London, and taken with them Mr. N.K. Wheatley, our Senior Examiner from the Metrology Division. Nobody seems to know quite why they have gone.

6th August, 1940

We recruited another shorthand-typist to-day, Miss Mary Willshire, who comes from Uxbridge.

M. P. Willshire
Signature

7th August, 1940

The comings and goings continue; Mr. A.G. Knight commenced duties as a warder, and Mr. T. McGuire, labourer, another of the original staff, resigned.

19th August, 1940

The Registry, which has been labouring under difficulties since Mr. Wallington was called up, must have another messenger, so Mr. A. Burn was engaged in that capacity to-day. Mr. J. Horn, another local labourer, was also engaged.



20th August, 1940

Mr. V.C. Anderson, an examiner, in the Aircraft Equipment Division, was transferred here from Kidbrooke.



21st August, 1940

Mrs. D.E. Keyte was engaged as a cleaner.

22nd August, 1940

To-day is another great day for us, for we commenced our move into the new building. The "Screw Room", heavy gauge inspection, and drawing office will all have gone from the old house to the new by the end of the week, with luck.

26th August, 1940

Mr. E.H. Cook, a retired bank official commenced duty to-day as an additional clerk in the Pay Office, and Mr. E. Luck from Hayes was engaged as a carpenter.



28th August, 1940

Mr. G.W. Edwards, and Mr. E.J. Judd, two local labourers, were discharged to-day.

2nd September, 1940

Mr. H. Lawrence, commenced duty as an examiner - in the paint and dope laboratory - a laboratory as yet without much furniture.

3rd September, 1940

Well, we have come unscathed here through the first year of war, but the enemy who now holds all the Channel coast on the other side is threatening us with dire things from the air. Perhaps he will not get as far West of London as Harefield in any strength. Mr. W. Thompson, an examiner in Metallic Materials, was transferred here to-day.



W. Thompson

7th September, 1940

The Enemy has attacked London in great aerial strength - most of it concentrated on the Docks and East End. We can see the glare of many fires in the Eastern sky to-night, but fortunately nothing within several miles of us here.

9th September, 1940

Now commences a very busy week, for, with the air onslaught on London, the transfer of the Test House from Kidbrooke is being speeded up. Miss C.L. Rich, an examiner in the Oil Laboratory came to-day, and we engaged three new laboratory assistants, Miss D.M. Clark, Miss P. Hall, and Miss R.M. Perry, as well as Mr. J. Kemp, examiner, and Mrs. Peverill, cleaner.



J. Kemp

P. Hall

Signature

10th September, 1940

Mr. J.P. Tweedy, who came with us from Cardington as Inspector in Charge, was transferred to-day after many years service with A.I.D. to a post in the Ministry of Supply. All the ex-Cardington folk will miss him. Miss M. Winrow, a laboratory assistant came to us from Kidbrooke, and Mr. J.E. Amer was engaged as a labourer.

Mr. James Tweedy, who was prominently associated with Harefield A.I.D. when it first came to the village, died at Hillingdon Hospital on April 5, aged 77. He lived in retirement in Derwent-road, Ickenham. Interment was in Harefield churchyard on Tuesday when the Vicar, the Rev. Dennis Connor conducted the service.

from the
Aylesbury Gazette
April, 1956

11th September, 1940

We had an "opening" ceremony to-day, when the new gates which have been erected were officially brought into use. They are quite substantial-looking, of iron hinged on brick piers, but they open on to a narrow part of the High Street not leaving much room for large vehicles turning in.

Two transfers from Kidbrooke to-day were Miss Betty Spanswick - one of the "bright young things" of the typing pool, and Miss M.L. Spurgin a laboratory assistant. Three new cleaners were engaged, Mrs. Cutts, Mrs. Stagg, and Mrs. Eaton - the latter being appointed as a charge-hand.

12th September, 1940

Mr. H. Kirkby-Johnson, examiner in Instruments was transferred to-day from Kidbrooke, and Mrs. M. Boyd was engaged as another cleaner.

H. Kirkby-Johnson



13th September, 1940

Things are pretty grim on the Kidbrooke side of London, and folk there are having a rough time with almost continuous air-raids, and sleepless nights. Mr. H.R.G. Reeve moved over to-day. He comes on recommendation for appointment as Station Engineer - a responsible post - but he is no stranger here, for he has been paying weekly visits for some time, supervising the installation of the electrical plant etc.

ARR 1940

14th September, 1940

A minor tragedy occurred to-day when at 11.18 this morning one of Pickford's vans, moving furniture and equipment from Kidbrooke, collided with our handsome new gates and demolished one of the brick piers. Well, that settles it - they will have to be set farther back, as many of us thought they would have to be.

Four more transfers from Kidbrooke to-day; Miss A.C. Davies, and Miss W. Scott, of the chemical laboratories, and Mr. W.R. Hinton and Mr. R.E. Spinney of the Electrical Section.

A.C. Davies

R.E. Spinney



*W. Daynes*16th September, 1940

Six more folk from Kidbrooke to-day, Mr. W. Daynes, examiner, Miss H. Jupp, Miss Harlow, and Miss Abraham, with Mr. J.G. Greenstreet, draughtsman, and Mrs. C. Bridges, an established typist. Mrs. S.R. Dickens was engaged as a cleaner.

17th September, 1940

Now some of the industrial staff are arriving from Kidbrooke. Mr. A. Pooley, and Mr. H. Dudley - two old hands - came to-day, as well as Mr. H.W. Parker and Miss W. Bainbridge, two examiners. Mr. A. Burn who was engaged some time ago as a messenger is found to be more useful as a mechanic, so he has been transferred to the machine shop, and Mr. E.L. Jones, engaged as a messenger in his place.

18th September, 1940

Three more transfers from Kidbrooke - Miss E. Birtwell, and Mr. R.C. Fisher, examiners, and Mr. A.R. Holtham, carpenter.

*R.C. Fisher*19th September, 1940

Miss B.L. Penn - an evacuee from London - was engaged to-day as a typist, and Mr. G.S. Smith, Chief Examiner in the Chemical Laboratory was transferred from Kidbrooke.

*G.S. Smith*20th September, 1940

Mr. L.T. Bower, examiner, lately joined the A.I.D., was transferred from Kidbrooke.

21st September, 1940

Mr. W. Arthrell, electrician, transferred from Kidbrooke.



J. Mackie



23rd September, 1940

To-day sees a great influx of new staff, as well as some transfers. Mr. F.J. Tranter, examiner, comes to us from Cardington to renew some old acquaintances, and Mr. J.R. Wheeler, examiner, comes from Kidbrooke. Seven new laboratory assistants commenced duty to-day; Miss H.R. Carr, Miss M.H. Chennels, Miss E.H. Davis, Miss B. Dent, Miss P.D. Peck, Miss E.L.D. Stoten, and Miss B.M. Webb. Two new typists were also engaged - Mrs. E.P. Leney, and Miss P.K. Pantham, as well as Mr. C.H. Baker, a labourer, and Mr. G.F. Eddy - son of Mr. T.J. Eddy of the clerical staff - as storeman. A total of 13 in one day!

Mr. Carr



24th September, 1940

Not quite such a rush to-day; Miss M. Grimsdell commenced duty as a laboratory assistant, and Mr. A. Bissett as Fitters Mate.

25th September, 1940

Mr. G.W. Clark, a local tradesman, was engaged as storeman; Mr. L.A. Bissett as an electrical fitter, and Mr. J.P. McDuell as labourer, while another labourer Mr. R.H. Walklin, was transferred from Kidbrooke.

R.H. Walklin

26th September, 1940

Mr. A.T. Josling, charge-hand electrician, and a very useful man, was transferred from Kidbrooke, and Mr. A.E. Herbert was engaged as a fitters mate.



27th September, 1940

Now that our Photographic section is installed we can take our own pass photographs. The first two "victims" went before the camera to-day. They were Mrs. Leney and Miss D. Clark.

28th September, 1940

We heard to-day of the death of Miss P. Chytraeus, tracer, who had been away ill for only a short time. She was a quiet unassuming girl, popular with her colleagues, and we are very sorry to lose her. This is our second loss by death since we came in October 1938.

Handwritten signature

30th September, 1940 *Handwritten signature*

Our staff influx grows only slightly less, and ten new members came to-day. Mr. M.W. Berry, A.S.A.C. and Mr. A.F. Bridal, T.C.III, with Mr. S. Lane, senior examiner, Mr. E. Hargreaves and Mr. T. Waters, examiners, and Miss D. Jones, examiner, arrived from Kidbrooke, while Miss E. Carter and Miss L. Hawkins were engaged as shorthand-typists, and Miss M. Noblet and Miss E.J. Ireland as laboratory assistants.

2nd October, 1940

This week, the move from Cardington is in full swing - to-day two laboratory assistants arrived from there, Miss M.O. Davies, and Miss D.B.E. White. Miss Davies is sister to Peggy Davies who has been with us since October, 1938. Miss S.A. Hanhart was engaged as a laboratory assistant and Mr. E. Kiss as a labourer.

3rd October, 1940

Two more transfers from Cardington to-day were Mr. R. Stokes, examiner, and Miss J.E. Bowerman, laboratory assistant. Two new labourers were engaged - Mr. A.T. Legon and Mr. C. Cooper, the former as semi-skilled.

4th October, 1940 *Handwritten signature*

Another labourer, Mr. A.W. King, was engaged to-day.



5th October, 1940

A whole-time M/T Driver was engaged to-day - Mr. E.W. Bailey. Mr. Collier has been doing most of the driving, but he is wanting to move back to Bedford as soon as this can be arranged.

7th October, 1940

Two more Cardington examiners arrived to-day - Miss J.M. Baker, and Mr. C.J. Faulkner.



8th October, 1940

J.C. Rockley

Mr. J.C. Rockley - practically the last of the Cardington staff - arrived to-day, and Mr. W.J. Brailsford was engaged as a warder.

We have now been here just two years, and our staff, which grew from 36 to 54 in the first year, has now grown to 179! - (147 have come and 22 have gone)

10th October, 1940

Mr. D.A. Smith, a fitter-turner commenced to-day.

11th October, 1940

Mrs. M. Bishop was engaged as a cleaner.

14th October, 1940

Mr. S. Potter was engaged as a labourer.

22nd October, 1940

The move of the X-Ray Division from Cardington was completed to-day, and at last all sections are safely (?) housed under one roof.

23rd October, 1940

Miss B.E. Jenkins commenced duties as a laboratory assistant.

28th October, 1940

The transfer of Mr. Collier to a job in Bedford has been arranged, and he left us to-day. Mr. A.W. Robinson was engaged as another fitter's-mate.

30th October, 1940

Two more laboratory assistants commenced to-day - Miss D.E. Ridley and Miss A.M. Eden.

4th November, 1940

B. Jepp

Mr. B.T. Jepp was engaged as an electrical fitter - it is rumoured that he is something of a musician as well as an electrician. Mr. J.R. Melotte was also engaged as a temporary clerk.



J. Melotte

5th November, 1940

Mr. L. Artis, another labourer, was engaged.

6th November, 1940

Mr. E. Pugh, T.C.III, has had enough of us (or we of him, I am not quite sure which) and he was transferred back to Ruislip to-day.

13th November, 1940

Miss J. Watts, another cleaner, commenced duties to-day.

14th November, 1940



Miss B.E. Cook was engaged as a tracer to-day. A very attractive girl, she is the daughter of our retired bank official, Mr. E.H. Cook of the Pay Office.

B. Cook
Signature

18th November, 1940

Another cleaner, Mrs. E.F. Warner, was engaged to-day. We seem to be getting a large recruitment to the cleaning staff, but the percentage of sickness and absenteeism among them is rather high, unfortunately. Mr. W.J. Gardner, A.S.C.III was transferred here from Stafford.

23rd November, 1940

The second A.G.M. of the Social Club was held to-day. With the actual and potential membership now three times what it was a year ago, we ought to do good things this coming year - (if Hitler will let us!)

25th November, 1940

I.C.S.2.(a) who went away to London in August (nobody quite knew why) have come back to us again (still nobody seems to know why). They have arrived with files and furniture, and are installed in the Conference Room. Mr. Wheatley has returned with them.



26th November, 1940

Mr. A.G. Goodman, commenced duty as assistant examiner in the Metrology Division.

27th November, 1940

Miss D.M. Taylor was engaged as a laboratory assistant to-day.

2nd December, 1940

Mr. Colin Smith, another assistant examiner in Metrology, commenced to-day.

6th December, 1940

Mr. C.W. Ryan, whose wife is ably managing the Canteen, was engaged as an additional warder to-day.

m.d.t.

9th December, 1940

Two more laboratory assistants engaged to-day. Miss J. Gilchrist, and Miss M. Gardner.

11th December, 1940

Mr. W.E. Beck, examiner, reported for duty here to-day. He is an ex-school-teacher, and has just completed his A.I.D. training.

13th December, 1940

Another cleaner - Mrs. I. Fell, commenced to-day.

18th December, 1940

Mr. B.V. Wright, a local man, was engaged as a labourer in the stores. He appears to have considerable skill as a sign-writer among other things.

19th December, 1940

Mr. J.E. Wallis, who has been through some of the London "blitz" was engaged as a T.C.III to-day.



21st December, 1940

Mr. E.E. Smith was engaged as a labourer. We held a Christmas Party in the Canteen, and considering the war-time conditions, had a marvellous time. The "eats" were excellent, and a varied programme included a "Mock Trial" which was most amusing.

24th December, 1940

As we "break up" for one day, I.C.S.2.(a) have now packed up and gone again - this time for good, we hear. There are rumours that this department is to be split up. The first "Canteen Committee" has been elected by the Club, and commences to function at once.

27th December, 1940

Mrs. R. Melonie, another cleaner, was engaged.

30th December, 1940

The two laboratory assistants, Miss Gilchrist and Miss Gardner, who joined us on the 9th, both resigned to-day. Mr. E.G. Porter, an examiner in Aircraft Equipment Division was transferred here from Coventry. So ends 1940!

3rd January, 1941

As the Enemy is increasingly making use of fire-bombs in his attacks, we are now compelled to organise a regular nightly "fire-guard" team. There are four men on duty now all night, with orders to arouse at once should the 'Alert' be sounded.

6th January, 1941

Mr. T. Waters, one of the examiners from Kidbrooke, was transferred to Birmingham to-day.

10th January, 1941

Miss J.E. Bowerman, one of the laboratory assistants from Cardington, resigned to-day. She is anxious to return to Bedford.

18th January, 1941

The local branch of the C.S.C.A. gave a luncheon to-day. Mr. Barlow presided, and an excellent menu of almost pre-war Christmas fare was provided. The Chairman of the branch - Mr. W.J. Gardner - proved himself a good host, and the luncheon was followed by a Social in the Canteen.

25th January, 1941

Mrs. I. Fell - one of the cleaners - resigned to-day.

28th January, 1941

Mr. P.G. Wing, an electrical fitter, was engaged to-day.

29th January, 1941

We had to discharge another cleaner, Mrs. M.A. Boyd, to-day.

30th January, 1941

Mr. P.M. Cutts commenced duties as a labourer to-day.

1st February, 1941

Warder E. Milton resigned to-day - presumably finding another more attractive job.

3rd February, 1941

Mr. W.G.D. Carpenter commenced duty as an examiner in the Non Metallic Materials Division, and Mr. S.W. Hollingum, a chief examiner in Metallic Materials was transferred here. The latter comes with something of a reputation as an expert in the examination of metals.

4th February, 1941

Two new Industrials commenced to-day, Mrs. Rochester, a cleaner, and Mr. C.G. Amondson, a labourer.

6th February, 1941

Mr. C.H. Evans - an ex-Naval man - was engaged as a warder, and Mrs. E.L. French, as a cleaner.

7th February, 1941

Mr. L. Artis, a labourer, was released, presumably at his own request.

10th February, 1941

Another warder, Mr. A.M. Cutts, resigned to-day.

12th February, 1941

To-day is entirely a woman's day - Mrs. L.C. Mallison was engaged as a cleaner, and Miss M.O. Davies, one of the laboratory assistants from Cardington resigned to return to her home in Bedford. Women are claiming to have an equality with men in most things now, so they are coming on to the fire-guard team. This will consist of two men and two women from henceforth, and everybody will be happy (we hope!)

15th February, 1941

Miss O.M. Welford, one of the laboratory assistants from Kidbrooke, resigned to-day.

18th February, 1941

Mrs. M.A. Stevens was engaged as a cleaner.

20th February, 1941

The Registry recruited another messenger to-day - Mr. A.J. Ford. He is a retired school attendance officer, but does not enjoy the best of health. He will probably be more suited for clerical than messenger duties.



24th February, 1941

We had our first death on the premises to-day. Poor old Plato, a packer in the stores, had a seizure, and although we got the Doctor round at once, he passed away before anything could be done. His pal Fryer, who came with him from Ruislip, will certainly miss him.

26th February, 1941

Still they come and go - Miss B.J. Peacock commenced as a laboratory assistant, and Miss A.M. Eden, another laboratory assistant resigned.

28th February, 1941

Mrs. Cutts - cleaner - resigned to-day.

5th March, 1941

Miss G.M. Greenstreet was engaged as a laboratory assistant, and Mrs. D. Moore as a cleaner. Miss Greenstreet is a sister of J.G. Greenstreet of the Drawing Office.

8th March, 1941

Mr. T. Gedge, "Tommy", who came from Ruislip resigned to-day.

10th March, 1941

Mr. W.S.I. Mahon, an examiner in Metrology Division, was transferred here to-day from Manchester.

W.S.I. Mahon

12th March, 1941

Mr. L.C. Doubleday was engaged as a labourer. A promising young fellow, but he will presumably be called up for military service ere long.

14th March, 1941

Mrs. E.J. Peverill, one of the cleaners, resigned to-day.

15th March, 1941

Two more labourers engaged to-day; Mr. W. Hammond - short and tubby, and Mr. A.J. Long - tall and lanky. Variety is the spice of life!

H. Marks

17th March, 1941

Mr. H.C. Marks engaged as a semi-skilled labourer in the Stores. An elderly chap, comes of a well-known local family, and looks pretty reliable.



19th March, 1941

Mr. F.C. Collins was engaged as a storeman to-day, and Miss Margaret Swan, who has been working in the Canteen, comes as a Registry messenger to replace Mr. Ford who is being upgraded to clerk.



21st March, 1941

Mr. T. Fryer, one of the storemen, resigned. He has been very lonely, poor fellow, since Plato died, and a change of work will no doubt do him good.

24th March, 1941

Mrs. V.L. Harrison, another well-known local resident, was engaged as a second Registry messenger, and Mr. W.E.D. Harries was engaged as an examiner.

25th March, 1941

Miss R.M. Perry, laboratory assistant, resigned to-day.

31st March, 1941

Mr. E. Hargreaves, one of the examiners in Non-Metallic Materials, resigned to-day. He has secured an appointment with some Asphalt Co. operating in Trinidad, and proceeds to the West Indies, we understand.

7th April, 1941

Mr. L.W. Oldham commenced duties as examiner in the Textile laboratory.



15th April, 1941

Mr. H.E.R. Polden, examiner, was transferred here to-day. He will serve in the Metrology Division.

17th April, 1941

Two of our Electrical Fitters - Mr. A. Bissett, and Mr. D.A. Smith - were released to-day. The call of the armed forces gets ever more urgent.

22nd April, 1941

Mrs. E. Letts, engaged, as a cleaner.

30th April, 1941

Miss E.L. Holmes commenced duties to-day as a laboratory assistant in the Paint Laboratory. She is a younger sister of May Holmes who came with us from Cardington in October, 1938.

6th May, 1941

Mrs. M.A. Stevens, one of the less satisfactory cleaners, was discharged.

7th May, 1941

To replace Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. M.A. Smith was engaged as a cleaner.

10th May, 1941

A hectic night to-night, with one of our closest air attacks. Bombs were dropped on Denham Studios, less than two miles away, and the Enemy planes dived in machine-gun attacks. Parts of the Studios are burnt, but the main buildings are intact.

14th May, 1941

Miss Evelyn Smith engaged as a laboratory assistant in the Metrology Division. A jolly girl, with a most infectious laugh.

16th May, 1941

Mr. R. McDougall, labourer, was released to-day, at his own request. Another of our 1938 "originals" gone.

17th May, 1941

Miss I.T. Kerr, one of the examiners from Cardington, in the X-Ray Department resigned to-day.

21st May, 1941

Mr. W. Clare, another of the clerks who came to us from Ruislip, resigned to-day.

26th May, 1941

Mr. W.O. Handley was engaged as an electrical fitter.

28th May, 1941

Mr. W.E. Weston was engaged as a labourer.

29th May, 1941

Mr. L. Watts was engaged as a labourer. Our industrial staff seems to be growing apace.

30th May, 1941

Mr. P. Moss was engaged as a labourer. He will probably be known as "The Father of the House".

6th June, 1941

Mr. W.A. Dewdney was engaged as a temporary clerk, and Mr. W.A. Handley, the electrical fitter who was engaged last week, was discharged. Evidently a square plug in a round socket.

9th June, 1941

Our third loss by death to-day, when Mr. Truby died after being ill for some time. He was one of our ex-Cardington "originals", and a very useful man. Many will miss him. We had another painful duty to-day - having to discharge Warders Berry and Dobson for neglect of duty and being asleep at their posts.


10th June, 1941

Another warder was engaged to-day to replace one of the two vacancies. His name is Mr. F.E. Harrison.

12th June, 1941

Mr. A.E. Bradley was engaged as an electrical fitter.

18th June, 1941



Mr. R.W. Sensier joined the staff as a temporary clerk. He has seen much service, having been in the Life Guards, but has had the misfortune to lose one leg. He has a fine bearing, and the anniversary of Waterloo seems an appropriate day for him to join. Mrs. M. Bishop, one of the cleaners, resigned to-day.

20th June, 1941

Mr. W.P. Blair, an electrical fitter, was released to-day.

23rd June, 1941

Mrs. E. Pearson was engaged as a cleaner. These women seem to be playing a game of "in and out".

26th June, 1941

Mr. G.E. Smith was engaged to fill the second
warder vacancy.

27th June, 1941

Mr. F.E. Harrison, the warder engaged on 10th
June, was discharged. Evidently the new broom did
not sweep any cleaner than the old one.

28th June, 1941

Miss J. Harlow, one of our ex-Kidbrooke examiners
resigned to-day. We hear she is getting married
shortly.

1st July, 1941

Mr. F.E. Bunker, another ex-Kidbrooke senior
examiner was transferred to Scotland.

3rd July, 1941

We held our Annual Sports in the grounds to-day.
All the usual events, and fair weather, though not very
warm, and a large number of visitors.

5th July, 1941

Miss P.D. Peck, a laboratory assistant resigned
to-day.

11th July, 1941

Mr. A.E. Bradley, an electrical fitter was
released to-day.

16th July, 1941

Miss E.R. Browyer was engaged as a laboratory
assistant. She is the fiancee of Mr. R.L. Burfutt of
the clerical staff. Mr. E.E. Marshall, our leading
storeman, was transferred to No. 4 H.U. Ruislip. Mr.
Collins, the storeman, will have to take his place here.



MR. A. NEILSON
 Mr. Alexander Neilson, 71
 Northwood way, died in Harefield
 Hospital on April 27, aged 48.
 He was an employee of the A.I.D.
 and during the war was the local
 secretary of "Holidays at Home".
 Funeral was on Tuesday afternoon
 being in the village churchyard,
 Canon Deacon, vicar of West
 Hyde, officiating. Messrs. Filkins
 were undertakers.

1954

18th July, 1941

Mr. A. Neilson was engaged as a Storeman. He is a Scot, and we hear he has a reputation as a cartoonist. Mrs. Moore, a cleaner, resigned to-day.



A. Neilson

30th July, 1941

Mr. L. Twyford was transferred here to-day as an examiner in the X-Ray Division.

5th August, 1941

Mrs. R. Desmond was engaged as a cleaner.

6th August, 1941

Mrs. E.F. Warner, cleaner, was discharged. I suppose we MAY get a settled staff of cleaners one day!

7th August, 1941

We held our second Annual Garden Party to-day. With some sports, side shows, stalls and competitions a very enjoyable evening was arranged.

12th August, 1941

Miss M.A. Nicholas commenced duties as a laboratory assistant. She is the daughter of Mr. R.G. Nicholas, and promises to be quite an asset to our community.

13th August, 1941

Mrs. M.F. Atchelar was engaged as a "bottle washing" cleaner, in the Chemical laboratories.

16th August, 1941

Mr. C.H. Evans, who has been employed as a warder, resigned to-day on grounds of ill-health. The irregular hours did not suit him.