

SPECIAL EDITION

SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

There are many items of interest for present-day company managements to consider, besides the more obvious ones of finance, sales, manufacturing etc.

As a company consists of persons (its workforce) as well as buildings, plant, tools and the like - matters of concern affecting the personnel have their place in the considerations of the Board of Directors.

Marconi Avionics Limited are no different than others in this respect, but in one aspect, it has not always been obvious that, as a company, they have been interested in matters relating to the out of work activities of its personnel.

There are many reasons for this apparent disinterestedness, not least, that the Sports and Social Club, with its club-house at Featherby Road, Gillingham, has from its inception been membership controlled, without direct participation by company managements. Except that the grounds at Featherby Road, were purchased and are owned by Elliott Bros (London) Limited, the Company (under its many styles and titles) has been involved by making financial contributions, and taking on its payroll, the full-time officers of the Sports and Social Club and providing office accommodation, services etc., and have backed sports club controlled functions by allowing use of the canteen and its facilities.

The Company has through the years been conscious of the value of, and need for a healthy, progressive and well-organized social and sports facility, as also has the

management committee of the Elliott Sports and Social Club.

On the mergers with English Electric and GEC, a wide variety of clubs, club-houses and sports facilities became available for comparison. The Marconi Social Club at Chelmsford has been the envy of members of Marconi Avionics for some time. Certain divisions have organized outings to Chelmsford and continue to do so, and have asked "Why can't we have a place like Chelmsford?"

The Elliott Sports and Social Club, has over the years developed and prospered, due mainly to the hard work and devotion of the members of the various sections which at the present time total some 26 in number.

A programme of alterations was begun in 1981, to provide better accommodation and enlarge the facilities at Featherby Road club-house, which are entering their final phase. However, at that time, the Sports and Social Club complex at Four Wents, Hoo St. Werburgh, owned by the BP Refinery at Grain, was thrown into doubt by the decision to close the oil refinery, and cease operations at Isle of Grain within a short space of time.

The BP (Kent) Club, at Hoo, has been described in the local press as 'one of the most luxurious private clubs in the Medway towns' and its future was very much a matter of concern, not only to the Grain Refinery personnel who had, over the years, made it a family club - with all their social activities centred there - but to the community in general.

Many people at Marconi Avionics had sampled the facilities at BP Club, by visiting and participating in activities provided, and knew the sort of complex it was. The management became interested in acquiring the complex for the fulfilment of its desires to provide a facility for the workforce, which would give every employee a worthwhile centre for sports and social activities and which would also be in keeping with the size and status of a company such as our own. Negotiations have been taking place over a period of some months, and are now at the stage when Marconi Avionics has declared its interest and has made detailed proposals for the acquisition of the site.

The site comprises 15 acres of grounds, with the club-house and various section 'pavilions' included. At present, it has facilities for such sections as:

- Badminton
- Bingo
- Billiards and pool
- Bowls (outdoor green)
- Cricket (two squares)
- Target golf
- Netball (one court)
- Photography (dark room)
- Rifle and pistol shooting (purpose-built range)
- Soccer (one pitch)
- Squash (two courts)
- Swimming (heated pool)
- Table tennis (room large enough for two tables)
- Tennis (four championship-style courts)

It also has:
60ft x 30ft ballroom, with carpeted area known as hall annexe. This has a stage, with all lighting and a modern public address system.

A projection room with two Bell Howell projectors, the large screen is lowered from stage flies.
An upstairs room, for meetings, get togethers, wedding receptions, anniversary parties and the like.

Two bars (upper room and ground floor).
Kitchen.
Swimming pool which is 25 yards long and is heated to 83°F with a depth ranging from 3ft to 9ft 10 inches. It has a springboard and three tiered diving stages.

Members will have an opportunity of deciding whether to accept the company offer, of providing this facility for their use by means of a ballot, which will take place on 17 March.

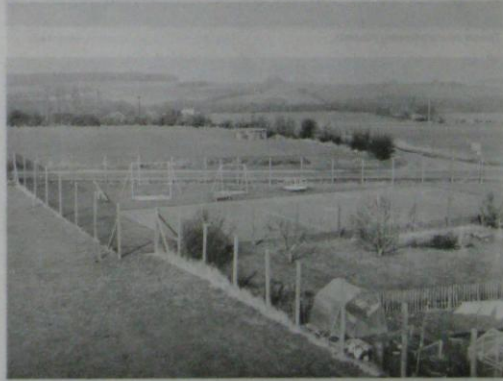
A meeting, held in the canteen on Monday 1 March heard Mr. W.H. Alexander O.B.E., B.Sc., Assistant Managing Director, outline the proposals and a vigorous and lively discussion ensued. Mr. Alexander said this was an opportunity for the Company to do more for the Social Club, as the existing facilities are considered inadequate. The offer of BP (Kent) Club, with its facilities considered second to none, and that all would be available to members of a new joint club to be known as the 'Marconi Avionics - BP Kent Club'.



Main entrance to BP (Kent) Club from Bell Lane, Hoo.



View across Bell Lane, Hoo, showing association football pitch and bowls green with pavilion.



Netball court and childrens playground. Deanridge Golf Club in distance.



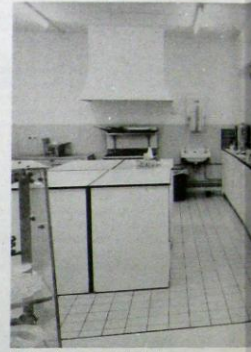
Entrance hall and foyer.



Main hall, showing stage and hall annexe.



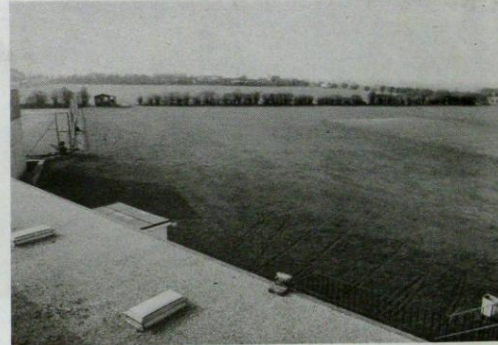
Bar lounge with window overlooking cricket ground.



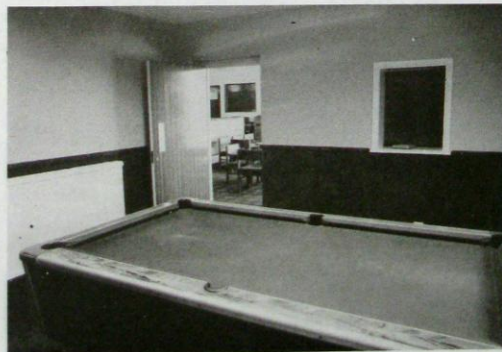
Kitchen (from serving hatch).



Tennis courts showing top field.



The cricket square looking from the building towards A228.



Billiards and pool table.



Table tennis room.



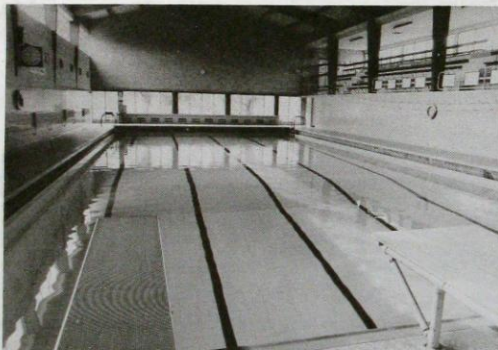
Hall annex - window on left looks out on to Bell Lane.



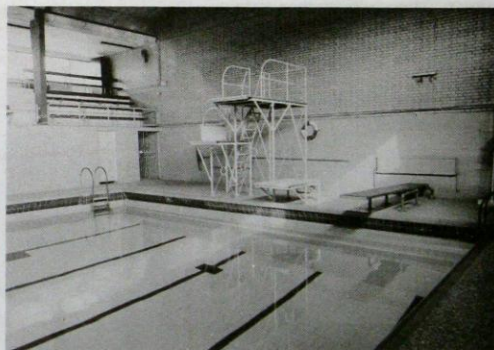
Bar and bar lounge.



Upstairs room.



Swimming pool - from diving board end.



Swimming pool showing diving board.



Squash court.



Rifle range - looking towards targets.

Some of the questions raised and answered were:

Q. Is it true that the existing committee of ES & SC are opposed to the proposal?

A. *(by the Chairman A. Snoswell) - In the main yes, as the committee felt that some facilities at BP were not adequate.*

Q. It is reported that a lot of money to support the scheme will be required, who will fund it?

A. *The Company is prepared to put a substantial amount into this venture, above what it has done hitherto.*

Q. As the site is so far away, how will people be able to cover cost of transport, as for example the '65 Club?

A. *That would be a matter for the new committee to decide but as a possible solution the '65 Club could use the canteen.*

Q. What is the proposed formation of a joint committee?

A. *President, Vice presidents and ten committee. Seven elected Marconi representatives, one Fisher Controls and two BP employees.*

Q. In the event of this merger going through what will happen to Featherby Road site and premises?

A. *It is intended that the two sites should work simultaneously, for about one year, and then the members will have an opportunity to decide on the disposal and realization of assets - any finance accruing would be 'ploughed back' into the Hoo complex.*

It was emphasised that the new joint management committee would have power to promote rules governing the club, and to amend existing arrangements as considered necessary.

(These questions and answers are not reported verbatim, but are the gist of what was said in relation thereto. Editor.)



Bowls club pavilion - showing refreshment capability.



Sign post at cross roads.

