



Rochester Avionic Archives Newsletter

From the Curator

Firstly apologies for the long gap in these Newsletters. I have been moving house so it has taken a while to get back to normal. Meanwhile a lot has been happening. Our new website is visible in draft form now for us to review, so watch out for it going live with a new layout and lots more search capability.

We have had the Company Family Day and in November we will support the Long Service Dinner with our usual exhibition of equipment from 25 and 40 years ago.

We have been looking at how we could improve our Museum and we have produced a proposal to refurbish the old Fuel Flow Laboratory. This proposal is really quite exciting as we would gain a lot more space and a better environment for visitors and the team.

Apart from this the IET has been in touch trying to record archives of the founders of our great electrical engineering heritage. The Elliott brothers are poorly represented in the IET archives considering the huge importance of the company

Finally BAE Systems is producing a film to use for recruitment and publicity and all the Heritage sites have been asked to contribute a story about a key person and a key object. So, we have selected Staff Ellis and the Head Up Display. On the matter of people do read the bit below about Jan Jablonski-what a story!

Chris Bartlett

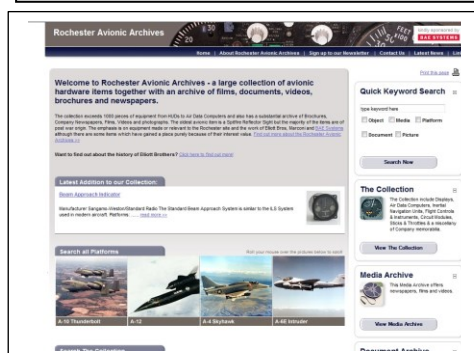
Curator

The new website

The original format for our website was designed some ten years ago and the databases were based on those produced in 2005 when the whole Collection and Archive was much smaller and simpler than it is now.

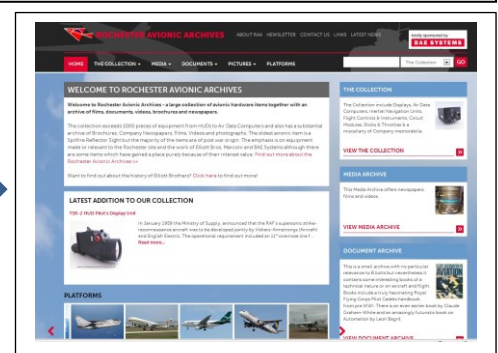
Surprisingly it has all stood the test of time quite well but it had become obvious that the commonality between the different categories was poor and the whole thing was looking rather tired. So soon now we will be able to offer much more powerful searches that can show for example the 'parent' or 'child' product, related items such as media and you will be able to see high resolution pictures. Much of the data will be automatically transferred from the old website to the new but the full capability will take some months to work up. We anticipate that the site will go live in November.

Another area we have addressed is the bulk emailing which never worked with the old system and while this will not be noticed by anybody it will be so much easier for us as we will no longer have to manually reject all the odd email addresses the site seems to attract.



← The old website

The new website →



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The Long Service award Dinner

The Long Service Dinner celebrates those who have served (survived!) 25 or 40 years in the company; that is those who joined in 1989 or 1974. This year it is a change of venue from Cooling Castle to Oakwood near Maidstone. The RAA will take a collection of items and newspapers from those years. So what was going on back then?

1974

First production Airbus entered service in 1974

The Lynx Helicopter was wowing the crowds at airshows and had already captured speed records

Marconi Elliott Avionic systems was upgrading the Shackleton AEW Radar

The COMPACT Test system was ordered by British Airways.

1000th Head Up Display for A-7 delivered to LTV.

In 1974 Staff Ellis designed the LED Helmet Mounted Sight which was used in the Point Magu trials with John Campbell in 1976.

1989

A £35m contract was awarded for the Tornado avionics upgrade

Contract for the Pilot's Side Stick Transducer for the F-22 awarded

Cats Eyes NVG for the US Marines

The Company is awarded a Queens Award for Export.

The Christmas Pantomime was 'The Golden Goose' with a nodding reference to Long John Silver! Starring Ray Newman.

In July teams from ISD and GSD entered 'Its a Knockout' at Strood and came 3rd and 4th with one memorable entrant dressed as a pumpkin.

Staff Ellis retired. After a career at Handley Page and Napier he joined Elliotts in 1949 at Borehamwood.

Plans released for the new roads at the Bridgewood roundabout.

Dick Collinson receives Silver Medal of Royal Aeronautical Society.

Trials of world's most advanced acoustic processing system AQS903 successfully carried out.



Navy Lynx XX510 being flown 'Hands-off' in 1974

Divisional Profile: Inertial Navigation Division

Way back in 1951 Elliot Bros was engaged in the design of a prototype inertial navigator system.

The first Elliott inertial platform to fly was the Master Reference Gyro which was a high accuracy heading reference for the 'V' Bombers.

This system was not to be fitted to the Bombers but was further developed for the Blue Steel stand-off weapon. Elliotts were called on for this system but also did much of the computing and interface equipment for the aircraft's Doppler-inertial system.

IND was formally established in 1958 and took on the Blue Steel work.

An important later development was the NAVWASS for the Jaguar aircraft. At the heart of that system was the E3R platform developed from the E3 fitted to the Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft.

ISD worked closely with the Airborne Computing Division to develop the special computers. The Naval Compass Stabiliser Mk1 was a further development for the Royal Navy which includes a gyro-accelerometer package and a digital navigation computer.

The Division diversified into projected map displays initially with a simple general aviation map called Radiomap. The Jaguar was fitted with an Elliott Projected Map Display which used a database on 35mm film.

In 1992 the Division merged briefly with Airborne Display to form Guidance Displays Division



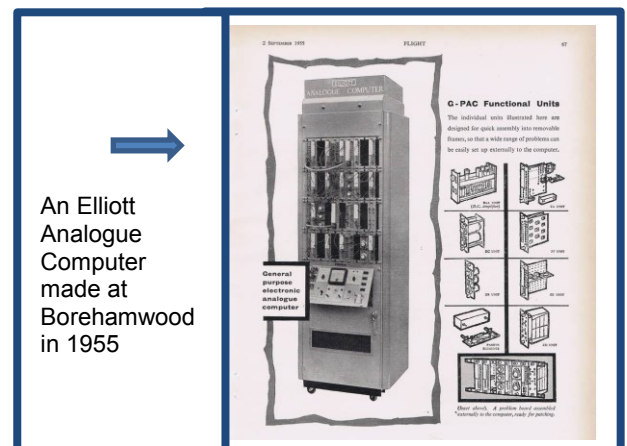
The Naval Compass Stabiliser Mk1

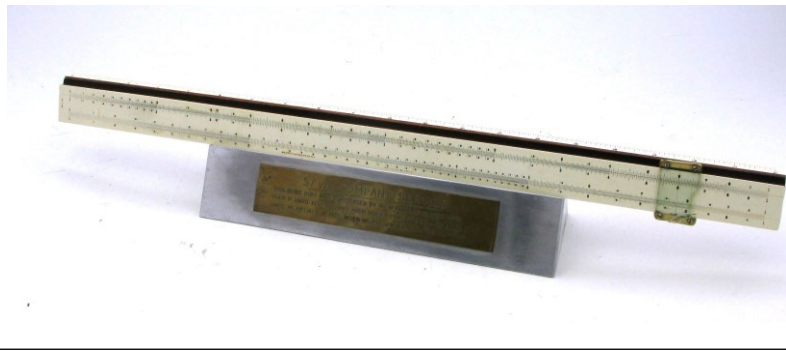
The British Caledonian Houston Cup

This was donated by British Caledonian Airways in 1977 to the Marconi-Elliott Flying Training Scheme for the pilot having made the most progress during the year.

Since the Scheme started in 1970 some 180 people had received training with 75 of them still active pilots.

Does anyone know where this Cup is today?





On the 1st November 1920 Mr W. Philips who worked for Elliott Brothers at Lewisham bought this Slide Rule. Mr Philips worked for Elliotts from 1893 to 1954 and when he retired he gave it to his friend Jan Jablonski who continued to use it until he retired in 1977 such that it saw a total of 57 years service with the Company.



Jan Jablonski receives the Slide Rule from Mr W. Philips for preservation within the Company

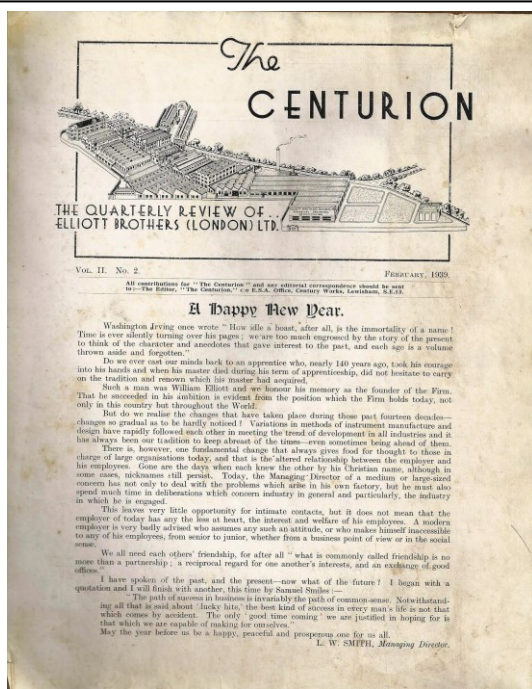
Jan Jablonski

Jan Jablonski was the son of a Polish railway official and was born in Poland, and decided early on to gain as wide an education as was possible. By sheer hard work and many sacrifices he eventually made it, and worked his way through Warsaw University gaining his Doc. Eng. Degree. His parents died when he was a young man and he undertook the responsibilities as head of the family, four sisters and two brothers. He became a Lecturer and specialised in Maths, Physics and Electricity (theory and practice), because he saw the future lay in these directions. In 1939 when war came to Poland he was called up and served in the Armed Forces against the invasion by Germany. As his country was overrun he escaped to France and joined the Polish Air Force which was being reformed, attached to the French Air Force. A fluent speaker in French as well as German and Russian he became Aircrew Radio-Navigator in a mixed French-Polish crew. On the collapse of France in May 1940 he was on the run again and escaped to England through Saint-Jean-de-Luz, a town in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques department in south-western France near the border with Spain. The Polish air force was now re-establishing itself in Britain, and he was accepted and sent to Benson Airfield, Oxon. After five weeks training he joined RAF Mixed Squadron, flying Fairey Battle and after many missions he eventually concentrated on bombers.

After one sortie, he brought his Wellington aircraft home, with all his companions dead beside him and only by using the oxygen bottles of his dead comrades was he himself able to survive. He crash landed at Kings Lynn, Norfolk and when rescued it was thought he was dead. His first recollection of this was that as he opened his eyes he saw what he took to be a heavenly vision of an angel: it was a nurse in immaculate white! At the invasion of Europe Jan, now Signals Officer, was in the advance party of an RAF contingent and moved into Europe to prepare the communication system for the RAF squadrons. He remained in Europe, except for a short spell of leave, when he married his English sweetheart, until the end of the war, with the second T.A.F. attaining the rank of Squadron Leader. For his service and exploits during 1939 to 1945 he was decorated with the 'Cross of the Order *Virtuti Militari*' (the Polish equivalent of the V.C.), Cross of Valour with three bars (Polish equivalent of the British D.F.C.) and four British and one Polish service stars and decorations.

On demobilisation he decided to settle in England and looked around for a job. This he found in Slough with Taylor Electrical Instruments and soon became their Chief Engineer. In 1952 he joined Elliotts, served in the new Aviation Division at Borehamwood on magnetic devices and process control, later coming to Rochester. As a Consultant Engineer he took part in the advances made in instrumentation and control of aircraft. His great love was gyros, but his wide knowledge and experience was used in direct service in the old FID, FARL and A S & R Divisions and indeed in all Divisions on special assignments. He had at least ten Patents covering many of the key products such as the True Mass Flowmeter for the Rolls Royce RB199 Engine in the Panavia Tornado aircraft.

(This is an extract from one of the 'People Profiles' the RAA is working on. Curator)



The Centurion

This journal is Volume II no.2 of the Quarterly Review from Elliott Bros at Lewisham and is dated February 1939. When you think about the year the front page message from Mr LSmith the Managing Director is sadly wrote 'May the year before us be a happy, peaceful and prosperous one for us all'.

This same L.W.Smith was not rated very highly by The Admiralty who wrote in 1943 that he was "not endowed with a faculty for adjusting human relationships on a sympathetic and harmonious basis"

I particularly like (Curator) the 'Aunt Gertrude's Heart-throb Corner' for the letters; a sort of Agony Aunt column. There is the story of one 'Tommy' Broughton of the Fire Control Department who was apprenticed in 1884 to a firm in Clerkenwell and later joined Messrs Theiler & Sons a firm which was amalgamated with Elliotts. He saw Elliott Brothers move to St Martins Lane and then to Lewisham. Interestingly there is an article about the Elliott Long Service Association annual Dinner which apart from the meal included entertainment by singers, entertainers and a magician.

The Journal has a lot of information about the equipment Elliott Brothers made for Heating and Ventilation of buildings.

Finally the Company had a wide range of social clubs, the Variety Orchestra, Century Players and the Camera and Art exhibition gets special attention.



Recently some colleagues acquired this picture of Rochester Airport on eBay. We have dated it to 1934 just one year after the Airport opened. The photo is taken from the South (where the Motorway runs now) and clearly show the Pobjoy Engine Works and Hanger No.1. There is nothing else on the Airport other than the circle on the grass and the legend 'Rochester'. In 1933/34 even before the first hanger was built Shorts moved in and were building a large four engine airplane for Imperial Airways out of doors! To make a factory, Shorts erected two airship hangars acquired from Kingsnorth, which were later added to, allowing them to continue assembly at the field.

Rochester Airport old and new

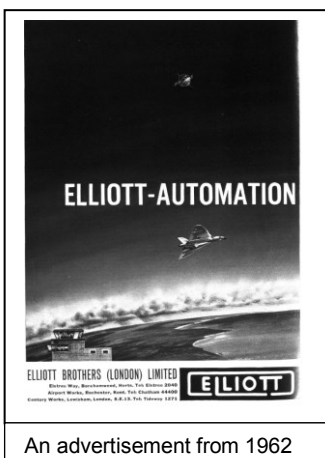
The Underground Hospital: While looking at the history of the Airfield we discovered some drawings of the underground 'Hospital' located on the corner of the airfield under the area of scrubland by the rear entrance to the site. Whether this really was a hospital is not certain but there are a large number of interlinked shelters there which is why this bit has never been developed.

Airport Development: The planning application for the paved runway and other works has been submitted and is now available on Medway Council's website Comments can be made until the 7th November 2014 when the public consultation finishes. The application should be determined by the end of the year. This development plan includes a scheme for a Museum centred on the Medway Aircraft Preservation Society.



Elliott Bros and early cinema.

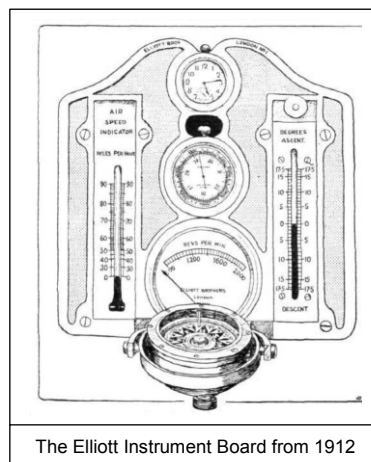
Robert Paul was born on 3 October 1869 at 3 Albion Place, off Liverpool Road, Highbury, North London. He was educated at the City & Guilds Technical College, Finsbury. Before starting business on his own account in 1891, he worked in the electrical instrument shop of Elliott Brothers in the Strand, where he obtained a practical knowledge of instrument making. His own business was conducted from 44 Hatton Garden. His main concern was producing instruments to meet the ever-growing demands of the electrical industry and in this he was remarkably successful. In addition to his achievements in the electrical field, Paul holds a unique position in the history of the early cinema. His genius and talents were such that he combined not only the roles of inventor and manufacturer, but also those of producer, exhibitor, and cinematographer. No other film pioneer ever matched his extraordinary versatility, yet Paul himself regarded his film work as just a side-line to his electrical interests.



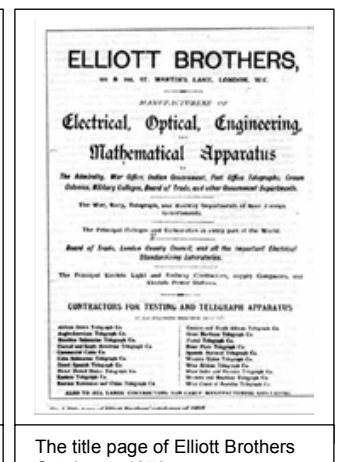
An advertisement from 1962



An advertisement from 1929



The Elliott Instrument Board from 1912



The title page of Elliott Brothers Catalogue 1873

World War I

'The staff of Elliott Bros made many contributions to the British Red Cross and the Order of St John to help those wounded in the war.'

