



# Newslink

ISSUE NUMBER 11

FOR DOWTY PENSIONERS

AUTUMN 1991

## *Keeping in Touch*

Following the request for applications to become a trustee of the Dowty Group Pension Scheme carried in our last issue, we are pleased to announce that Mr. Ray Horsfield who lives in Cheltenham, has been chosen for the job and will take up his appointment on 1st October.

## *A Mystery Presentation*

Some of our older readers may be able to throw some light on a letter that has been received in the Pension Office from Mr. A. V. Cousins of Telford in Shropshire;

"Can anyone give details of a silver cigarette case that was presented to my father with the following inscription:— J. S. Cousins from the Directors of Aircraft Components Ltd. 1940."

My father died in 1944 but I would be interested to learn when he first worked for George Dowty and why the case was presented to him."

If anyone can help we will be delighted to send your responses on to Mr. Cousins.

# *Memories of Wartime*

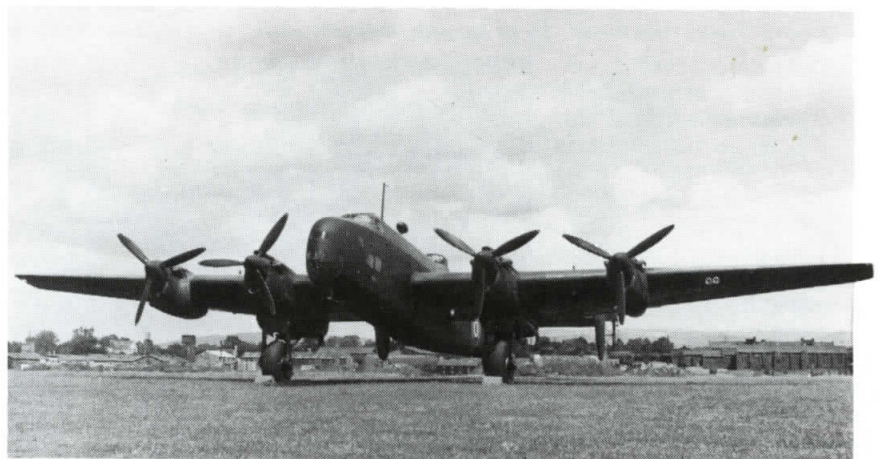
In a recent copy of 'Dowty World' detailing achievements over the past sixty years, mention was made of testing liquid spring suspension on motor cars during the Second World War, and the part played by Martin Fountain-Barber in its development. This prompted a story from one of the Rotol test pilots of the time, Squadron Leader Denis Dickson.

Dowty's were experimenting with hydraulic suspension for motor cars and Fountain-Barber's was so equipped. On the occasion of this particular incident he had spent the afternoon in Evesham where he had collected several punnets of fresh raspberries and these lay on the back seat of his car. In the evening he came into the RAF mess and asked Dickson and some of the other pilots to make a circuit of the airfield perimeter track in his car so that he could observe its handling. They each took a turn but he complained they were all driving too slowly. Getting into the car alongside Dickson, Fountain-Barber took the wheel and really put his foot down but took the final bend much too fast, the car turned over several times and he was thrown out. Luckily Dickson remained inside and apart from being considerably shaken was

unharmd, but his wife who had witnessed the events from the Mess hurried over and on seeing him covered in the red juice, feared the worst. This seems to have been the end for any further liquid spring car testing — at least by the Rotol pilots.

They were sometimes called upon to fly aircraft other than those connected with Rotol, one of them being a Halifax bomber fitted with a Dowty undercarriage. Dickson carried out one such exercise requiring a number of landings to be made in quick succession at Staverton, where the sight of this large

aircraft performing rapid circuits at low-altitude caused a great deal of local interest. Dowty's test engineer, the same Fountain-Barber mentioned above, tried to persuade the pilots to allow him to be strapped to the undercarriage in order to observe the impact on landing, but wiser council prevailed and he was fortunately dissuaded!



Halifax bomber used for test flying Dowty undercarriages during the Second World War at Staverton.

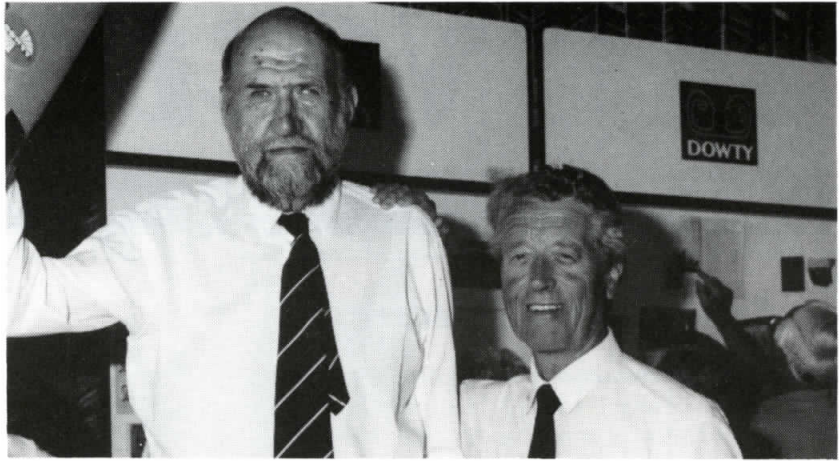


# Retrospective Reunion

As many readers are aware 1991 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Dowty Group but it also signifies the end of another chapter in the unfolding story of the Group. Dowty Aerospace Gloucester, which presently occupies the Staverton site, is in the process of dividing into separate divisions which will have the effect of moving the propeller division to new premises on the old No. 25 site, thus ending 53 continuous years of propeller making in the pre-war factory.

It was therefore fitting that the event should be marked in a special way and after months of planning and preparation the first grand reunion for all ex-employees who had worked at the Dowty Rotol factory was held in July. Together with their wives, husbands and friends, well over 250 people packed into the Sports and Social Club to enjoy the company of former colleagues, reliving the old days and playing the game that comes to us all as the years roll by — "Name That Face"!

Although the majority were from the local area a substantial number had travelled a considerable distance; in fact they came from all over the British Isles. The longest journey was made by Ted Hughes of Belfast but Bill Northwood, one time service engineer at Heathrow and now resident at Ashford in



Ian Golesworthy and Bruce Stait — 'The long and short of it'.

Middlesex was probably oldest of the long-distance travellers.

A display of company products past and present had been set up in the lounge and received a great deal of attention and there was also a large number of photographs and other memorabilia brought along by those along by those who attended. A message from LGF (L. G. Fairhurst the Technical Director) who was unable to be present was also much appreciated. As the day progressed many decided to sit outside on the sports field to take advantage of the fine sunny weather, during which time a short video and some 50 photographs were taken, a few of which are reproduced here.

Everyone agreed that the day had been a great success. As one of the wives remarked as she and her husband departed, "What a smashing atmosphere — we've really enjoyed ourselves. Thanks for a wonderful afternoon".

## ROTOL Compost Converter for garden waste composting.

Attractive · Portable · Wind resistant · Rot and Rust proof · Resistant to sunlight · Strong, stable and self supporting

This most successful compost maker with over 25yrs of sales achievement, creates the perfect conditions for garden compost making. The unique design of the **ROTOL** bin with its conical shape, stimulates bacterial activity within the rotting garden waste material to produce a valuable soil conditioning compost. When full, the **ROTOL** compost converter is easily lifted off the compost pile and moved to a new position.



Doug Grazier's letter to 'Newslink' probably sums up the general feeling of all who attended;

"Bruce Stait has recorded the early years of the Staverton factories in his excellent book 'Rotol — the history of an airscrew company' and now — with the help of Ian Golesworthy — he has organised a truly remarkable event that should become a regular feature in the Dowty Calendar.

The informality of the occasion made for a wonderful time to renew old friendships and meet colleagues of many years standing. There were faces from every department, almost all of them familiar even if the names sometimes escaped me. When Ernie Smith came from Rolls-Royce in August 1937 to take on the post of Chief Inspector, little did he think that 54 years later he would be attending a gathering of so many colleagues, whose skills over the past 50 years had helped in the development of major aerospace equipment for aircraft all across the world.

Bruce deserves the thanks and recognition of all who attended this memorable day; it was a privilege to be part of such a unique gathering."

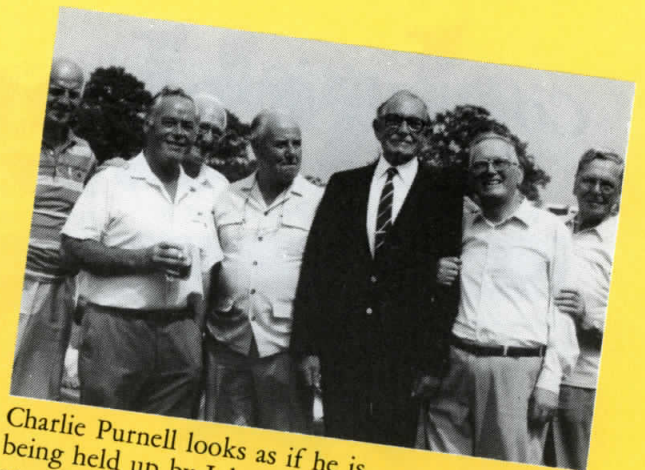
If any other groups or companies are planning reunions 'Newslink' will be pleased to have a report.

Among the old photographs and memorabilia on display was a modern advert for a compost bin — see left — that brought a few smiles to the faces of those who could recall when the name Rotol was more associated with aviation than horticulture!

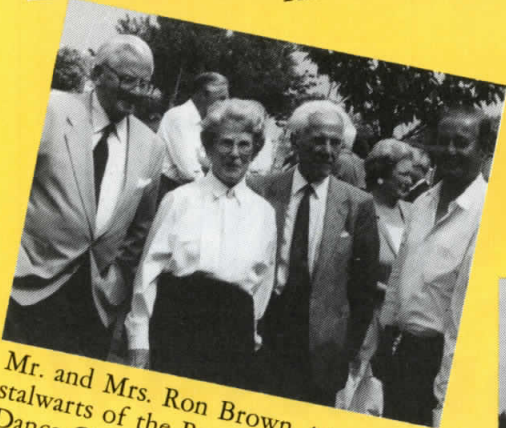




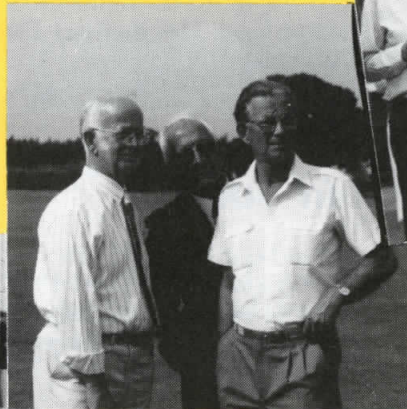
"This is one we made earlier"



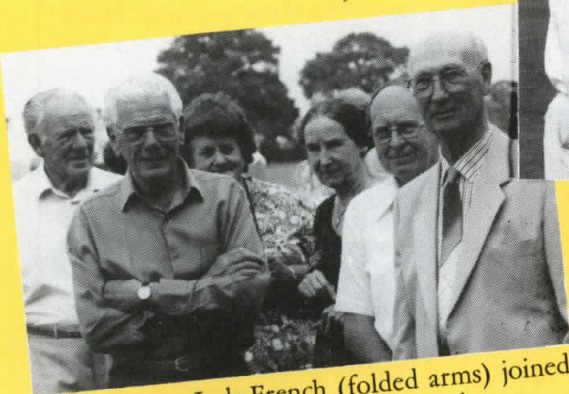
Charlie Purnell looks as if he is being held up by John Barnes. It must have been a great party!



Mr. and Mrs. Ron Brown, two stalwarts of the Rotol Old Time Dance Club with Ernie Smith, and Phil Jones.

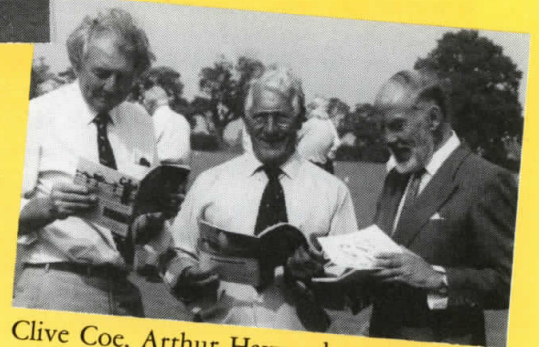


Doug Petford, Eric Oliver, Ron Bernescioni, Ted Williams, Sid Peers and Bruce Green all have a smile for the camera.

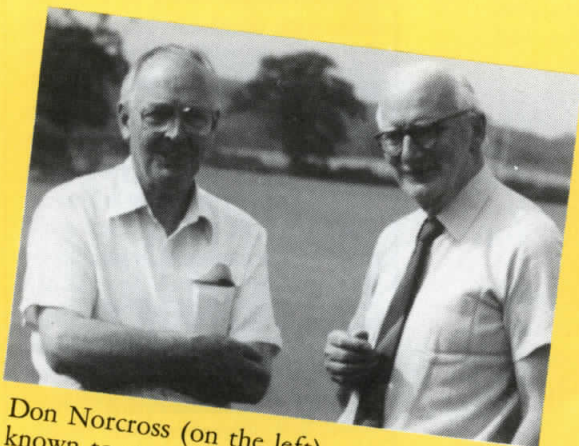


Jack French (folded arms) joined Rotol in 1937 when it began beside the docks in Gloucester. Eric Blundell is on the right.

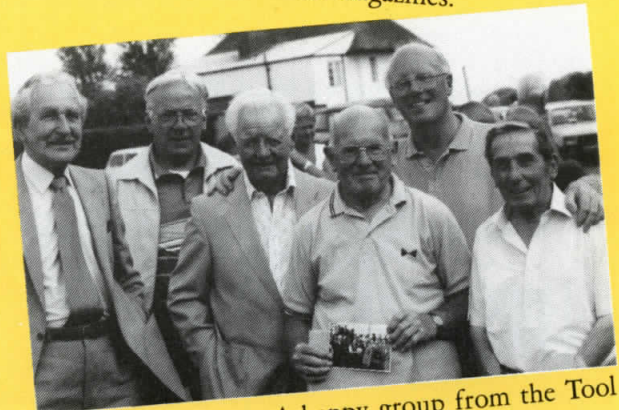
Left to right. Terry Elmes (first Dowty apprentice 1934) with Ron Wheeler and Ken Marshall, find something of interest just off the picture.



Clive Coe, Arthur Hayward (Dowty pension visitor) and Ivor Brooking, looking back over some old house magazines.



Don Norcross (on the left) known to many readers for his interest in improved pensions, with Bob Bass.



A happy group from the Tool Room.



# Competition

We have no idea what Pam Jones was really saying to Bruce Stait as

this picture was taken but we expect our readers can think of something appropriate — and printable! A prize of £5 will be awarded to the wittiest entry submitted before Nov. 1st 1991.



Congratulations to the winner of Summer Competition — Mr. R. P. Lord of Middlesex. Your cheque is on its way.

The answer to the Summer competition: Hot Summer Days (10 mins)

## Gardening with David Soley



Well, the 41st Dowty Horticultural Show has been and gone. The weather as usual was great, like the array of colour in the Town Hall, this being magnified by a very large number of sweet pea exhibits. Perhaps the show stopper was the Dowty Logo depicted in flowers as a carpet bedding scheme, to scale and colour grown by Arle Court Gardeners — a worthy show winner.

Now back to reality in our gardens, again this year we are in a drought situation, the grass generally is brown (unless you have been watering), the stick beans are old before they were young, most plants/trees are looking tired, still we gardeners are always complaining about the weather.

What should we be doing in our gardens? Well of course there are bulbs to be planted both in the garden and the specially prepared ones for Christmas, we all know this, its the little jobs that get forgotten, like deheading the roses, collecting up any fallen rose leaves; I recommend that these should not be composted in case they harbour any disease problems, this of course should be a general rule, don't compost any diseased material burn if possible. Clean the greenhouse both inside and out, remove the remains of the summer shading and disinfect all over. I personally use a strong wash of Jeyes Fluid, be careful to protect your eyes and don't use your sprayer as it will probably destroy the seeds. Sow winter lettuce, onions which have been dried should be hung up for storage, an old pair of tights are ideal for this. Outdoor tomatoes need to be gathered before the frost, (here we had our first early on Saturday 7th September) store in a warm dry place, most will ripen, don't forget green tomato chutney for the left overs.

Finally the watering of house plants should be curtailed, just give enough water to keep the compost from completely drying out, don't add any feed into the water after the end of September.

Contrary to appearances, this is not the Rotol retirement association newsletter! Newslink will reappear in its more usual format in time for Christmas and any contributions from our readers will be most welcome.

**It is with regret that we report the deaths of the following pensioners. We offer our condolences to their families:—**

### May

Barnard, J.; Ross-on-Wye  
Birch, J.; Hants  
Broadhurst, F.; Wolverhampton  
Byrne, P. L.; Cheltenham  
Coomer, G. L.; Cheltenham  
Devonald, W. E.; Gloucester  
Done, F. M.; Devon (Mrs)  
Gilson, J. E.; Evesham  
Hull, L. A.; Cheltenham  
Jackson, N.; Northants  
Jones, G. R.; Moreton-in-Marsh  
Lewis, B.; Cheltenham  
Lucas, G. C.; Cheltenham  
Preece, G. L.; Dyfed  
Searles, E. R.; Bristol  
Sturrock, G. M.; Middlesex  
Trinder, G. H.; Cheltenham  
White, J. W.; Cheltenham  
Wrighton, R. P.; Worcester

### June

Barnett, G. M.; Wolverhampton (Mrs)  
Boyes, T. J.; Cheltenham  
Brown, H.; Swansa  
Buresch, W. K. H.; Tewkesbury  
Colley, A.; Worcester  
Dovey, R. T.; Worcester  
East, W. F.; Worcester  
Evans, D. D.; Manchester  
Fullerlove, B. G.; Cheltenham  
Grayson, V.; Coventry  
Hopins, P. B.; Gloucester  
James, H. N.; Kingswinford  
Jevons, H. F.; Cheltenham  
Lea, W. R.; Gloucester  
Lewis, D. R.; Cheltenham  
Maisey, G.; Gloucester  
Malyon, J. W.; Cheltenham  
Meyrick, M. C. M.; Wolverhampton (Mrs)  
Minett, J. T.; Cheltenham  
Sadler, T. R.; Devon  
Sandbrook, F. H.; Devon  
Scott, W. H. B.; Wolverhampton  
Smith, E.; Cheltenham (Mrs)  
Smith, G. N.; Staffordshire (Mrs)  
Ursell, A. W.; Cheltenham  
Wilkes, J. E.; Wolverhampton  
Williams, M. D.; Tewkesbury (Mrs)

### July

Allen, A. C.; Gloucester  
Benbow, R. T.; Herefordshire  
Clark, S. V.; Wiltshire  
Davies, A. V.; Cheltenham  
Dodimead, F.; Wiltshire  
Ellaway, A. T.; Cheltenham  
Fuller, W. F.; Great Heywood  
Gage, F. E.; Gloucester (Miss)  
Gimson, K. E.; Coventry (Mrs)  
Godwin, D. P.; Cheltenham  
Handcock, E. H.; Gloucester  
Horobin, M. G.; Cheltenham (Mrs)  
Hyde, E. F.; Shropshire  
Jones, H.; Wolverhampton (Mrs)  
Malloy, J. J.; Dyfed  
Phoenix, J. C.; Wolverhampton  
Price, T. W.; Gloucester  
Taylor, J. J. M.; Cheltenham  
Thomas, F. D.; Gloucester (Mrs)  
Turner, F. H.; Tewkesbury  
Tyler, P. B.; Wolverhampton  
Wright, S.; Ross-on-Wye