

**1968 AID Harefield Apprentice Intake**  
**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**



Held at Denham Grove - 9 September 2018

**Apprenticeship Memories and Mementoes**

A collection of photographs, letters and other documents,  
supplied by the following former Harefield apprentices:

Peter Berkley – 1955 (PB)

William Patton – 1978 (WP)

Neil Revington – 1968 (NR)

David Marks - 1965 (DM)

Compiled by David Marks

Pages 2 to 7 were supplied by Peter Berkley (1955 intake). I had asked Peter a number of questions about the 'early days' of the Harefield apprentice scheme. I have included Peter's response in total, without any amendment.

**Some bits of nothing for Dave Marks** from Pete Berkley July 2018

Accommodation before Halings House became the hostel in (I think) 1954/55. I am aware that some apprentices lodged with the Bignall family, that ran the local coal merchants business in Harefield.

Sorry nothing.

(I came from home each day but remember evenings stop-overs at Halings House - photo:)



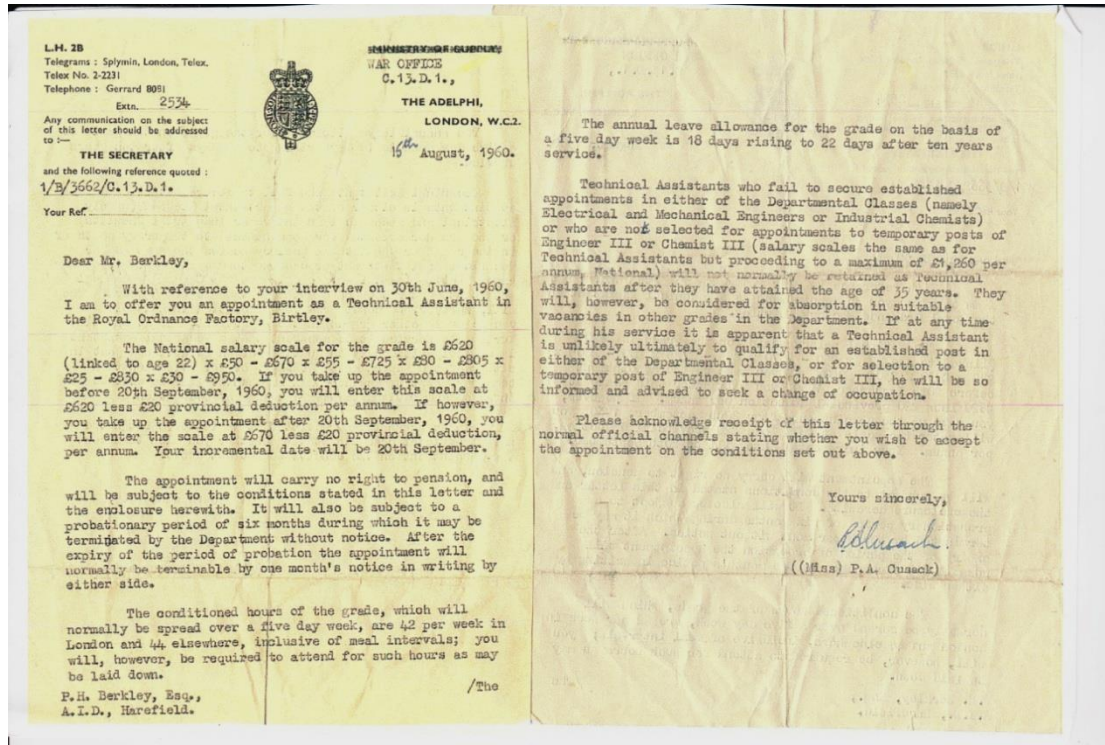
Any evidence at HH of when it was used for RAF accommodation.

Sorry nothing

## Rates of pay.

I remember my first week's wages in 1955 at AID was less than £1 (15shillings).

My first salary as a T.A, in 1960 was as hereunder



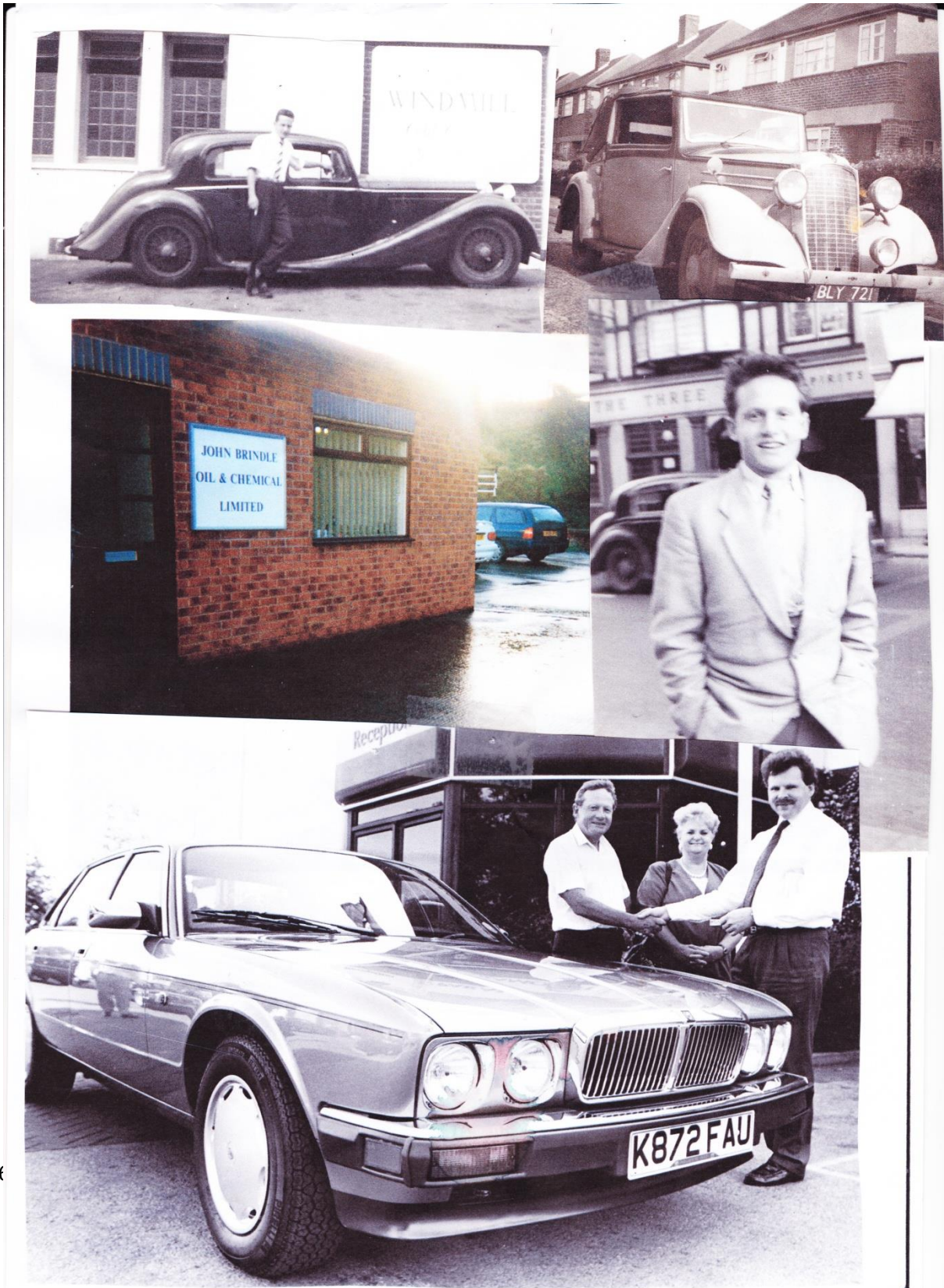
## Southall Tech

Only letter of my results - no interest to anyone else



## Any characters amongst the apprentices and/or training staff.

Johnny Brindle was our greatest character in 1955 intake. He was a fabulous guy, and always on the make and would supply absolutely anything anybody wanted from "unmentionables" to "unobtainables" (at a price !) He now lives in States ( a multi-millionaire)and I meet him here once a year.





Industrial training undertaken off-site.

Stories to tell here!

Your Ref.....  
 Our Ref. AMD/ED/HD/TW.  
 To Mr. Berkley. From Education Officers. Date 26th Oct. 1959  
 Subject Matter: TENTATIVE PROGRAMME OF MOVEMENT.

H.P. 293

**HANDLEY PAGE Lt.**  
Interdepartmental Memo

The following tentative programme has been arranged

From:-	To	
7.9.59	11. 9.59	Apprentice Schol.
14.9.59	30.10.59	M/C Shop; including Draw Bench & Stretch form Section.
2.11.59	20.11.59	Electric Spot weld. including X-Ray examination.
23.11.59	1. 1.60	Sheet Metal Shp.
4. 1.60	29. 1.60	Sub. assembly of Wing Components.
1. 2.60	11. 3.60	Production Control Offices.
14. 3.60	1. 4.60	Press Shop (Ralett)
	7.60	Flight Sheds (adlett)
	9.60	Test House (Pak Street)

*Welding Shop*  
*Machine Shop*  
*Routing Section*  
*Machine Shop*  
*Jig Borer (Tool Room)*  
*Stretch form*  
*Press Shop*  
*Wing Section*  
*Compartments*  
*Salt Bath*  
*Apprentice School*  
*Inspection*  
*Glaziers*  
*Shed*  
*Assembly*  
*Electrics*  
*Shop (Rubber Room)*

*Mr. Gaire*  
 .....  
 Headcon.  
 Education Officer.



## Cars and motorcycles owned by apprentices.

My first vehicle in 1955 FDU266 and my second AOL 1. Both were bought and sold for £20, but the number plate AOL 1 is now worth around £200,000 !!!! I saw it on a Rolls Royce a few years ago.



Pete Berkleys Bike (with Pat)  
made up of Harefield Bits

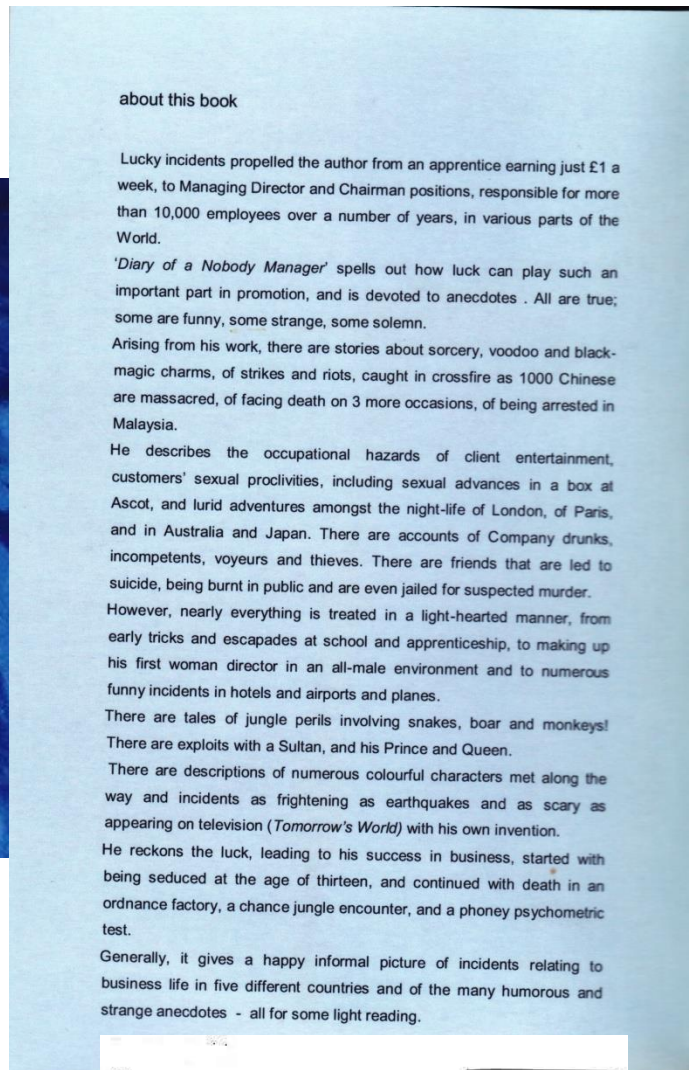
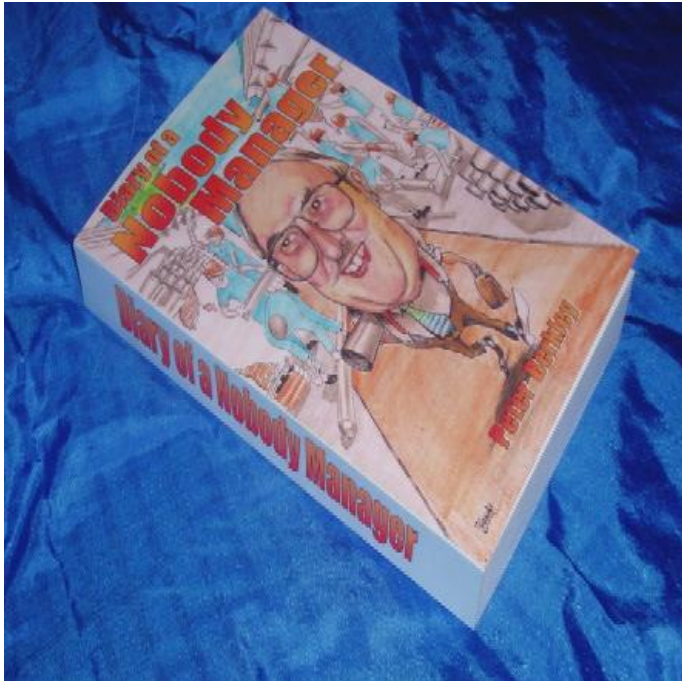


**FIRST CAR**

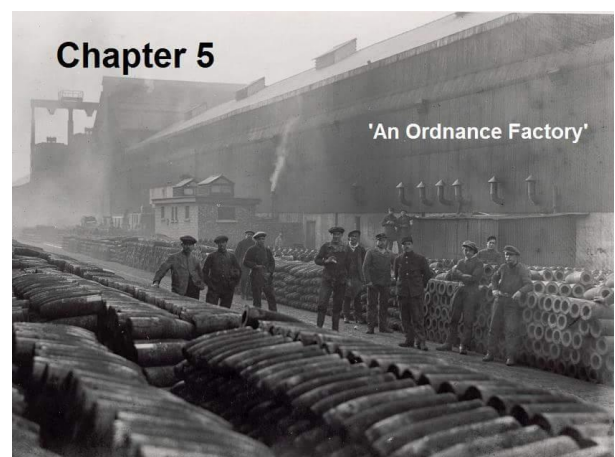
Singer Le Mans 9 (1933)  
4 cylinders 972cc 38hp  
Twin Carbs 75mph



And I did write a rubbish 466 page book with 3 chapters relevant to apprenticeship which is so ludicrous I'd only share it with my best mates !

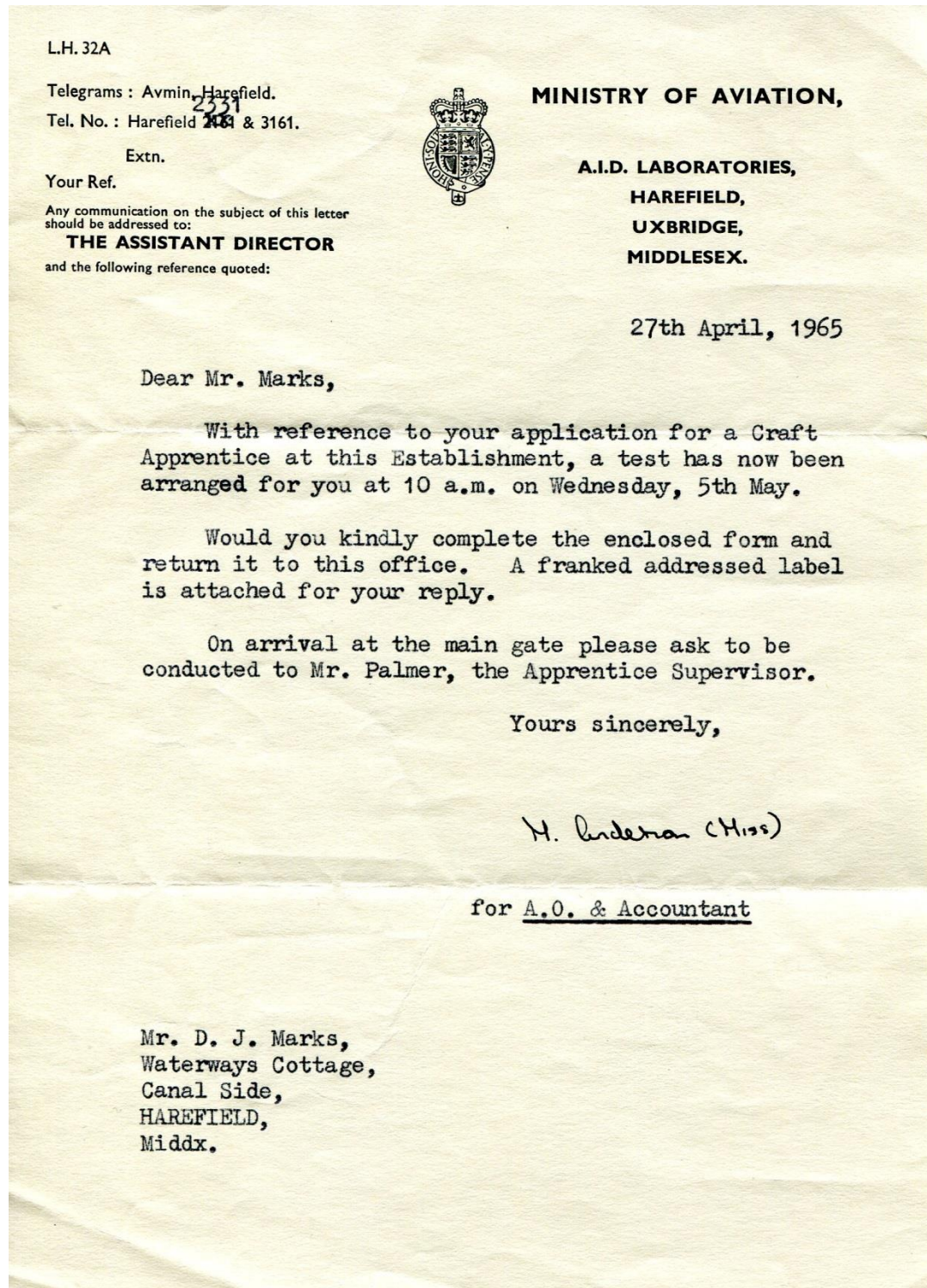


"Two chicken lip toasties and three salmon leg baguettes...I'm guessing you're a new apprentice."





Gaining an Apprenticeship - After completion of an initial application, all apprentices had to attend for a test and if successful, an interview. For me the latter was held at Harefield with the Apprentice Supervisor (Joe Palmer. *aka Smokey Joe*), plus a member of the Apprentice Board (Jack Langton, who was one of the on-site Craftsmen). - DM





L.H. 32A

Telegrams : Avmin, Harefield.

Tel. No. : Harefield ~~2331~~ 3161. & 2331

Extn.

Your Ref.

Any communication on the subject of this letter should be addressed to:

**THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

and the following reference quoted:

**MINISTRY OF AVIATION,****A.I.D. LABORATORIES,****HAREFIELD,****UXBRIDGE,****MIDDLESEX.**

31st August, 1965

Dear Mr. Marks,

Craft Apprenticeship

Further to my letter of 9th June, 1965, would you please report for duty on Monday, 6th September, 1965.

Please bring your birth certificate and national insurance card, which can be obtained from your local Youth Employment Office. The wage scale for Craft Apprentices is as follows:-

Age 15	£3	7s.	3d.
Age 16	£4	0s.	9d.
Age 17	£5	7s.	8d.
Age 18	£6	14s.	6d.
Age 19	£8	1s.	5d.
Age 20	£9	8s.	4d.
Age 21	£10	15s.	3d.

Your hours of duty will be from 7.45 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 7.45 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Friday inclusive of  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour for lunch. Wages are paid one week in arrears, therefore, your first pay day will be Friday 17th September, 1965.

/In

Mr. D. J. Marks,  
Waterways Cottage,  
Canal Side,  
HAREFIELD,  
Middx.

In 1965, my pay (following deductions) was a few pence over £3. From that £1 was given to my mother for my keep. Younger apprentices did get subsidised meals in the canteen. On a Monday morning we visited the Pay Office, to get our supply of meal vouchers for the week, worth 2/3d (12p) each. – DM

Joining Instructions – The format for these never really changed down the years, apart from the name of the Apprentice Supervisor and obviously the rates of pay. On arrival at the main gate of the establishment, new apprentices would be greeted by a member of the MOD Police, usually known as “the MOD Plod”.

*The weekly wage for an apprentice in the 1955 intake was about £1 15s 0d. - PB*

The rates of pay and hostel fees at September 1968\*

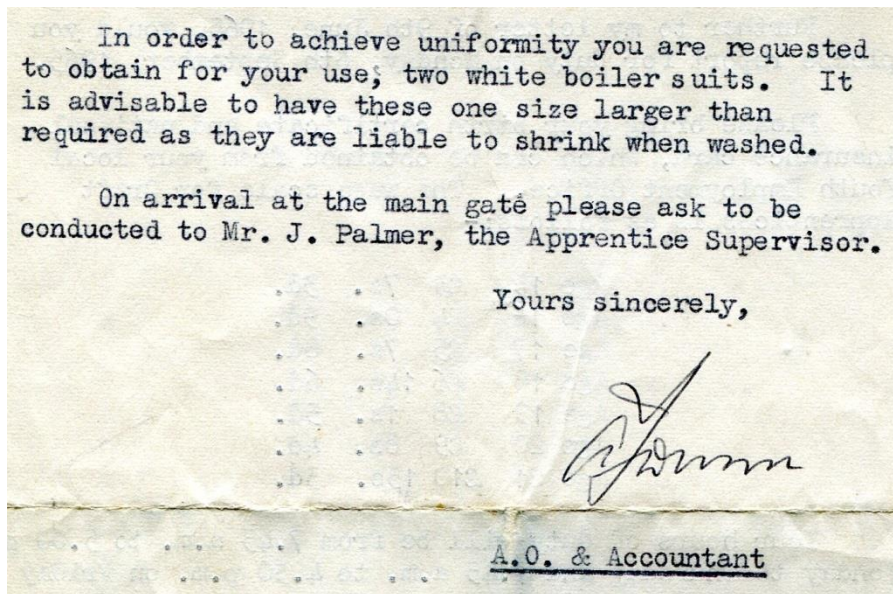
- London Area - age 16 - £5 - 19s – 6d
- London Area - age 17 - £8 - 0s – 0d
- London Area - age 18 - £10 - 0s – 6d
  
- Hostel Fee per week £3-19s-0d

Maintenance Allowance – Payable to those living away from home and whose wages did not exceed £7-16s-0d per week: For those at AID this would apply to those of 16 years of age who would receive an allowance of £1-7s-0d.

*\*Information obtained from Neil Revington*

So in 1968 a 17 year old apprentice after paying his hostel fees was left with about £4 per week. This obviously did not go a very long way, but luckily as far as *The Nightingale* or one of the other pubs in Denham where beer was apparently a very reasonable 2/9d a pint or in modern terms....14p – DM





In the mid 1960s, apprentices had to supply themselves with two pairs of white boiler suits. I can remember being asked: "Are you a new apprentice?" It was very obvious that you were a new apprentice, as kitted out in a brand new white boiler suit you tended to stand out like the dots on a domino! – DM

Those apprentices from further afield and accommodated in the Halings House hostel in Denham would also receive information about the hostel together with the fees payable. A contact telephone number was given for the hostel warden, but the number for residents was Denham 3000. I am sure all former hostel residents will remember that telephone number for the rest of their lives.

Copy : IND/LW/---  
Apprentice Supervisor



## Procurement Executive, Ministry of Defence

Aeronautical Quality Assurance Directorate  
Harefield Uxbridge Middlesex UB9 6BB  
Telephone Harefield (STD 089 582) ~~443-6343~~ ext 3  
Telex: 869297 3757

Mr W G Patton  
29 Greystone Park  
Linawady  
County Londonderry  
Northern Ireland

Your reference

Our reference IND/LW/---

Date 25 August 1978

Dear Mr Patton

With further reference to your Apprenticeship with the Procurement Executive, Ministry of Defence at Harefield, would you please report for duty on Monday, 11 September 1978 at 09.00 hours.

When you report here please bring your National Insurance number, birth certificate, and, if you have worked, P45. A National Insurance Number can be obtained from your nearest Employment Office.

Your hours of duty will be from 08.00-17.00 hours, Monday to Thursday, and 08.00-15.45 hours on Friday, inclusive of  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour for lunch. You will be paid weekly in arrears at the rate of £25.80 Pay Supplement I £3.60, Pay Supplement II £1.88, Outer London Weighting £5.27, your first pay day will be Friday, 22 September 1978.

Accommodation has been booked for you at the Apprentice Hostel, Halings House, Tilehouse Lane, Denham, Bucks. The current cost of the accommodation which includes bed, breakfast and evening meal Monday to Friday and full board weekends is as follows: £10.02 for the first 4 weeks, thereafter £9.72 per week (these prices inclusive of the appropriate rates of VAT). The Hostel is approximately 4 miles from the Establishment, easy cycling distance. The Hostel Warden's name is Mr Parfitt, the telephone number is Denham 2185. Please let Mr Parfitt know the time you expect to arrive on Sunday, 10 September 1978. Kindly sign and return the enclosed acknowledgement form as soon as possible.

On arrival at the Main Gate 09.00 hours Monday, 11 September 1978, please ask to be conducted to Mr Life, the Apprentice Supervisor.

Yours sincerely

B R WEATHERLEY (Mrs)  
for AO (S & A)



Hostel Parties: These were usually held about three or four times per year. Always well supported and a pleasant time had by all. Officially under YMCA rules, alcohol and females were both prohibited, but the rules were there to be broken.



The price of the ticket covered the alcoholic content of the evening and it was traditional for the instructors from the training section to act as bar staff.

Hostel Fees (1978): The present residents of Denham Manor (what was previously the Halings House hostel) would probably love to be paying only £10 per week for their accommodation, and most probably doubly pleased to be 18 years old again!

84296 *Denham* Hostel

RECEIVED with thanks from *Sutton*

M. *7.10.78* in respect of Hostel Fees for week ending:— The Sum of £ *10: 02*

Date *7.10.78* Warden *W. Smith*

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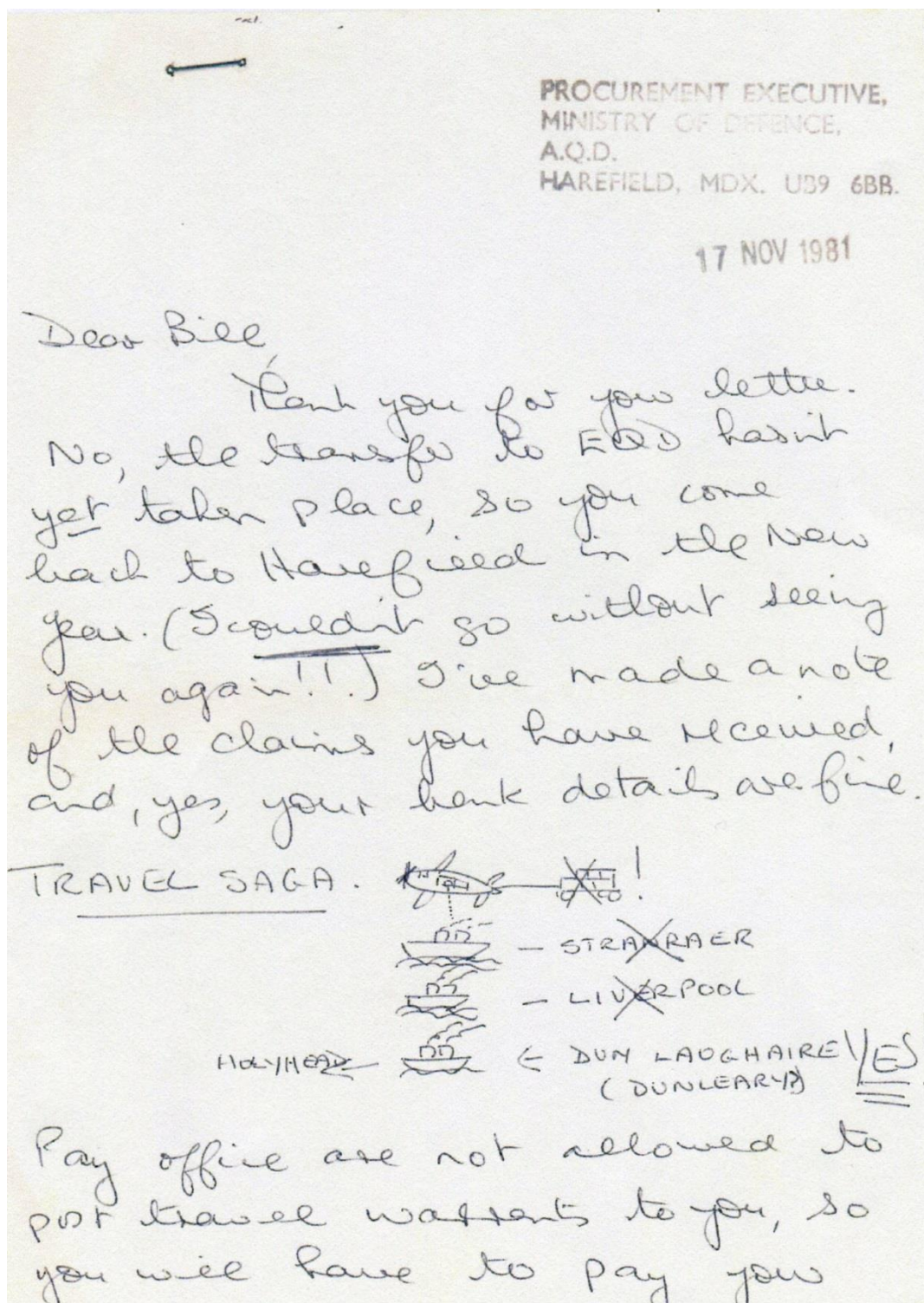
84394 *Denham* Hostel

RECEIVED with thanks from *Sutton*

M. *21.10.78* in respect of Hostel Fees for week ending:— The Sum of £ *9: 72*

Date *21.10.78* Warden *W. Smith*



Travel Arrangements: see Page 16

Travel Arrangements – Joyce Foale was the admin lady for the last five or six years before the training section closed. She was always very helpful in dealing with annual leave, sickness returns etc. Also in making travel arrangements for apprentices, ***although some needed a bit more help than others.***

I have been trying to decipher Joyce's hieroglyphics. The recommended method of travel was obviously the Holyhead to Dunleavy ferry. Not sure about why the Liverpool ferry was not to be used but it appears that the Stranraer ferry was in danger of receiving an aerial bombardment from the aircraft onto which William Patton could not take his car.

P.S. Joyce was also very good at showing apprentices how to sow buttons onto their garments.

Storekeepers – In addition to the admin staff, the workshop side of the training section also had number of storekeepers, dishing out tools and materials to apprentices. Down the years there was a selection of storekeepers, most very good at undertaking their job. Back in the 1960s there was Cyril Ibberson who was the former village barber in Harefield. He was also the First Aider. Then in later years there was Dougie Cusmans, who consumed Woodbines at a phenomenal rate, but who lived to almost 100 years of age. I can only assume that his long life was attributable to working amongst the apprentice at Harefield, particularly those that used to filch his fags and therefore reduced his consumption.



Annual Apprentice Prize Giving – This event normally took place on the Friday following Easter. There were normally two prizes for each apprentice year, plus prizes awarded for Safety, Most Improvement, etc. Apprentices that had “completed their time” also returned to collect their Deeds of Apprenticeship. The guest speaker, who also presented the prizes tended to be either a high ranking MOD employee or someone of equal stature from the aerospace industry.

The apprentice training staff used to gain entertainment by trying to match the facial features of Mum or Dad to the correct apprentice. The success rate was pretty high.



### Apprentice Prize Giving c1976

A “representative sample” of AQD’s finest. I think Chris Dawes (front/right) must have borrowed that outfit from his local Used Car Salesman! Everyone was a character and hopefully still is.

B C A Smith  
Apprentice Supervisor  
Room One  
Apprentice Section

February 1982

Dear Bice,

The Apprenticeship Board has authorized the award of

PROGRESS PRIZE FOR MOST IMPROVEMENT

to you for the year 1980 - 1981.

Will you please select books or instruments to the value of £22... and let me have precise details by Friday 26 February.

Selection in excess of the above amount may be made and the excess cost remitted to me.

Congratulations

Yours sincerely

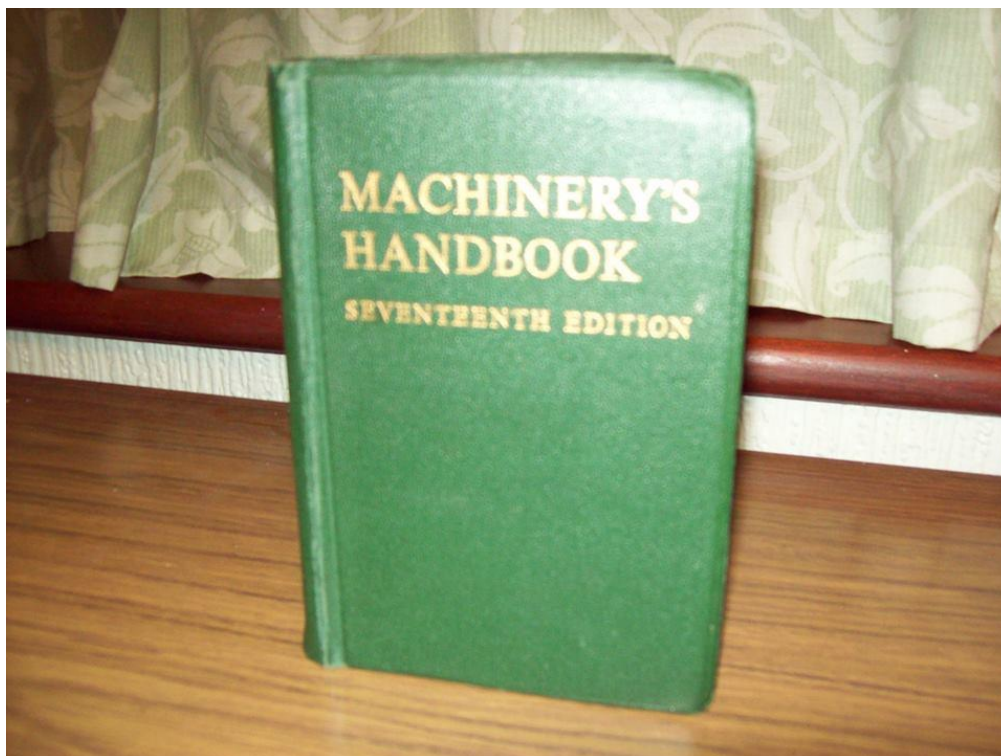
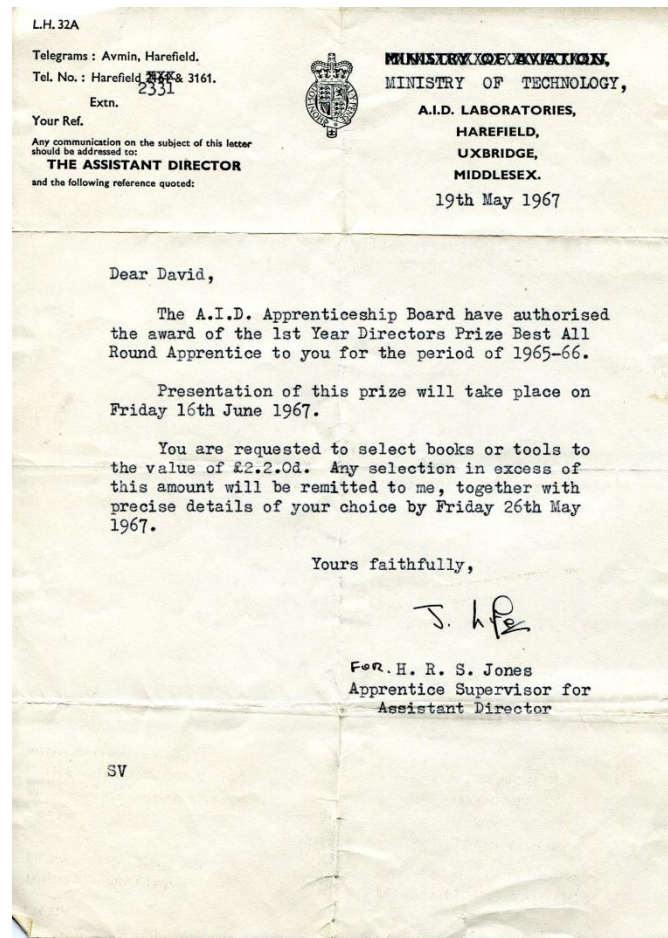
*B C A Smith*

B C A SMITH  
Apprentice Supervisor



William Patton receiving his prize in 1982, which (I think) was the final Apprentice Prize Giving held at Harefield





and it still gets used!

Sick Notes – Apprentices residing in the Halings House hostel were required to get a “chitty” signed by the Hostel Warden for their odd days off sick.

If anyone ever plotted a graph of *Quantity Issued* against *Days of the Week*, there would be a dramatic spike every Friday! This indicating either “too much sauce down the pub on Thursday night” OR a “long weekend” OR more likely a combination of the two.

AQD APPRENTICE SECTION

UNCERTIFIED SICKNESS

I was unable to attend work/college on:-

Date(s) ..... 1 - 5 - 79 .....

Due to ..... Henry Gold .....

Name ..... W. S. Sutton .....

Certified ..... [Signature] .....

Hostel Warden



College Attendance Record – These documents (in later years) were issued by Uxbridge Technical College and had to be presented to the apprentice admin office for vetting.

Back in the 1960s this document had not been introduced, but the Apprentice Supervisor obviously had a very positive and swift system for finding out if you had missed college ...including the dreaded night classes.

NAME PATTON CLASS F6L7C TUTOR .....

MON	Elec.		Mech.		Maths		Draw	T.H.R.	Draw		Man	Job	Rev.				
	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	2-4	2-5			130	33-5							
★ 1	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	19	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
★ 2	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	20	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 3	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	21	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 4	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	22	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 5	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	23	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 6	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	24	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 7	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	25	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				
JRP 8	RW	MB	MB	MB	MB	MB	Y	26	Y	MB	MB	MB	MB				

SLATER SALES & SERVICE  
1A WILLETS LANE  
DENHAM, BUCKS.  
DENHAM (332) 2831



Off to join the Legion! - William Patton has been trying to convince me that he once decided to run off and join the Foreign Legion but only got as far as the British Legion (Denham Branch).....*what a Carry-On.*

**THE  
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

**VISITING CLUB ASSOCIATE**

Name of Member W.G. PATTON

Club ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CLUB LTD.  
DENHAM, BUCKS.

Signed [Signature] Club Secretary

Date 19 MAR 1979

This card is valid only for the period covered by the Club subscription year which ends on 30 SEP 1979

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

Mr. W.G. PATTON  
Mrs. W.G. PATTON  
Miss W.G. PATTON  
is an Ordinary (c) member of the

**ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CLUB LTD.  
DENHAM, BUCKS.**

Subject to payment of subscriptions as required by Club Rules.

Signed [Signature] Club Secretary

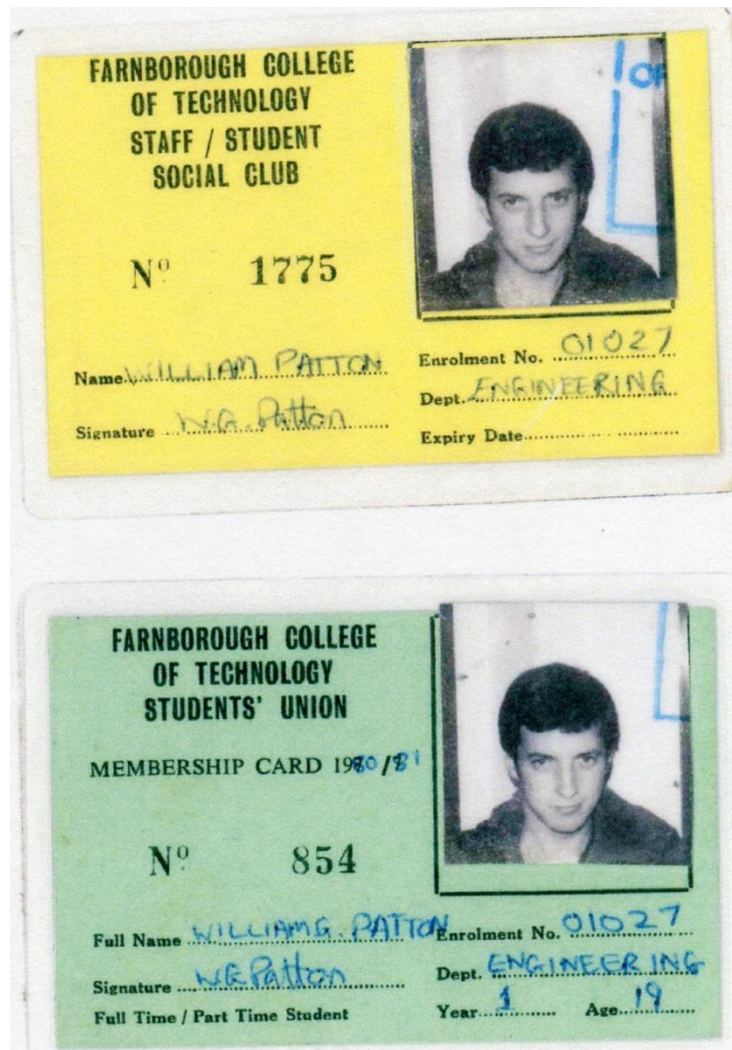
Member's Address HILLINGS HOUSE,  
TILK HOUSE LANE,  
DENHAM, Uxbridge

Member's Signature .....



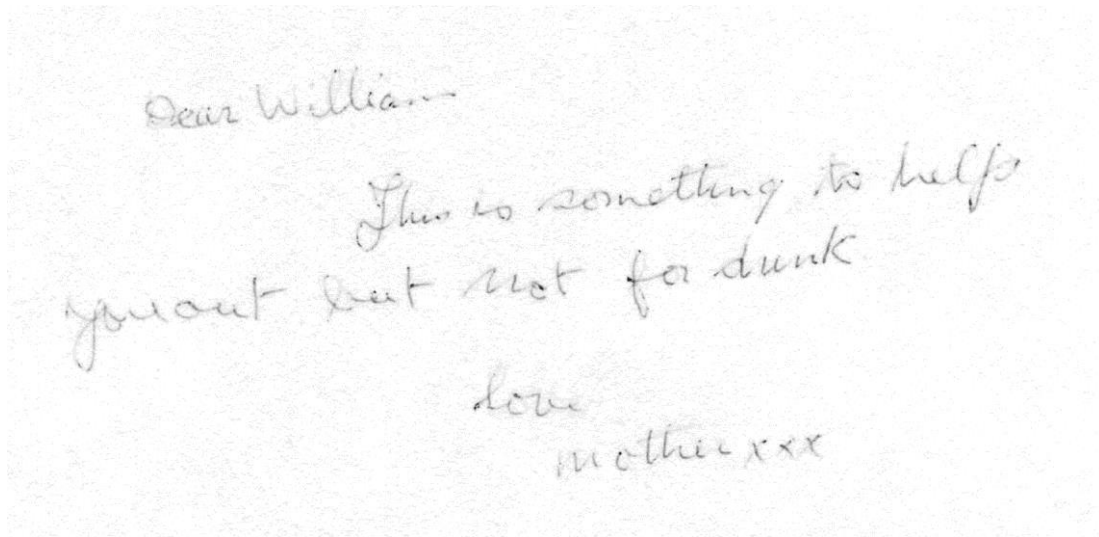


Student Life – William Patton attended Farnborough Tech to undertake an HND Course in Mechanical Engineering. So he sampled life in the Apprentice Hostel at the RAE as opposed to Halings House and was not overly impressed.



Does anyone remember Joke Shops? Here you could buy a wide range of items for “practical jokes”. One product line was imitation fried eggs made of a flexible plastic material. Strangely when I stayed at the RAE Farnborough apprentice hostel in about 1968, the cook had perfected a process to fry eggs with the same rubbery consistency. Very convenient if you accidentally deposited one of these on the floor, as it just bounced! - DM

The dreaded drink! – Some apprentices got food parcels others received sums of money from home



This reads: *“Dear William – This is something to help you out but not for drink – Love Mother XXX”*

Wisely he took no notice!



Apprentice Reunion – June 2018