



**RAGCHEW**

**E.R THOMPSON G3VZR**  
**29/02/1920 - 31/01/2021**

## Reminiscences of Roy G3VZR

### By Club Members

#### From Dave G4BCA, GARES Chairman

Roy passed away on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2021. He was just a month short of his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. I'm sure many of you will remember that Roy was a 'Leap Year' baby, having been born on February 29<sup>th</sup> 1920. There was plenty of discussion as to whether he was really a mere 25 years old on 29<sup>th</sup> February last year, rather than 100!

Roy had not been to the club for a while prior to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, but it is remarkable that he DID attend regularly not too long before then. We should thank a number of members for regularly checking in on Roy, and especially to Richard Tofts M0HMK who used to bring Roy to the club in recent years.

I'm sure we will fondly remember our oldest member, with his stories of Hoover in Merthyr Tydfil and his shop in Gloucester. Let's not forget his famous cushion, embroidered with his call sign, that made sitting on those school stools reasonably acceptable!

#### From Richard M0HMK

Roy would often make a large stew in his slow cooker and portion up the results to eat over the course of the week. One day I found him cursing the manufacturer of his slow cooker for the built in obsolescence of the appliance. He'd filled it with stock, meat and chopped vegetables as usual, switched it on and almost immediately it failed. So he then grudgingly decanted the sloppy mixture into another bowl and proceeded to dismantle the slow cooker. During this process, he discovered that there was a fuse hidden away in a housing between the double walls of the cooker in a location where it would inevitably lie undiscovered by most owners. This was in addition to the fuse already in the plug. It seemed almost inevitable that the fuse or its housing would fail on account of the heat and this was certainly the case here. So Roy removed it, got his soldering iron out and soldered a wire jumper across the location of the second fuse before putting the cooker back together and pouring the stew mixture back inside to cook. He was very disapproving of the 'sneaky fuse' which he concluded was not put there for safety reasons but simply to encourage less persistent people to throw the cooker away and buy a new one. He was very careful to avoid such waste as was obvious to anyone who'd visited his house or garage. Nothing ever seemed to be thrown away!

I had a conversation with Roy on the phone quite recently during which time I apologised for not having seen him for a while but explained that until the Covid restrictions were lifted, we'd have to make do with the telephone. The conversation then proceeded along these lines:

ROY - "Yes this Covid is dreadful. I've been alive for a hundred years and I've never experienced anything nearly as bad as this".

ME - "It certainly is dreadful, but I'm surprised to hear this is easily your worst experience. After all, you lived through World War 2 - surely there must have been some awful experiences then?"

ROY - "Well I did have some nasty experiences during the war, I suppose. I lived in Derby during some of that period and our house was only a few hundred yards from the Rolls Royce works. I remember leaving for work one morning and the Luftwaffe decided to drop a bomb on the factory just as I opened the back door. The blast sent me straight across the kitchen into the opposite wall. But this Covid, well it's just bloody awful....."

## From Vernon G0HTO

I first met Roy through visiting his shop in the mid seventies. (I discovered Roy's shop and Ted Birds at the same time). Back then the newsagents were full of electronics magazines and in order to tackle some of the projects I'd visit Barton street for 'bits'.

Roy's shop always had 'surplus' items as a ready source for salvage components etc. I remember it feeling like there wasn't really enough room for more than one customer at a time because most of the available space was filled!

As well as supplying parts Roy would test valves and provide advice to his customers. I remember him telling me about supplying speakers for his local (repeat) customers who were learning about the limits of speaker drivers, amplifier impedance and the like whilst building 'sound systems'.

I think Roy had mentioned Amateur Radio at some point but I didn't pursue that until some years later when I was living elsewhere (subsequently joining GARS in 1985 and meeting up with Roy again).

In Roy's latter years his enthusiasm for 'recycling' and creative reuse of equipment never diminished. He was always busy repairing something or sorting 'stock' at home.

Having had to cease playing golf due to mobility problems, Roy even managed to find another use for his golf cart; as a means of navigating his large garden and trimming the tree branches that he could reach, well into his 90's!

vintage-radio.net/forum/showthread.php?p=588675

12th Feb 2013, 6:18 pm #4

**phasedout**  
Pentode



Join Date: Aug 2009  
Location: Barnsley, South Yorkshire, UK.  
Posts: 207

**Re: Bygone radio traders**

Hi, another Radio Constructors heaven, was "Ted Bird's" in Barton Street, Gloucester. Up from there not far away opposite the Swimming Bath's was Richard's Electrics, run by Roy, a heaven for anything radio, both long gone now alas.

Alan.

Quote

Here's a snippet found by Vernon G0HTO on the internet

## From Malcolm G6UGW

It must have been around 1974 when I first visited Roy's shop and a very young Steve Richards was helping him as a "Saturday boy". I too was offered the opportunity to help on Saturdays but as I was about to leave school, I had to decline. I remember my first purchase was a bag of mixed connecting wire, some of which is still in use. A speaker enclosure I made and still use contains some of that wire! I remember that the famous cushion which was kept at club was made by Glenis, the XYL of Graham Coates G8NDH (SK) who also lived in the same village as Roy at Bromsberrow Heath.

### From Mike G4IZZ

I'd been a member of GARES for a few weeks before I ventured to have my first chat with Roy – this would have been sometime during 2015, I think. I'd been impressed before that though, noting his good sense in having a cushion to sit on, and therefore enjoying the best seat in the house. After a bit of 'ham' chat, I asked if he'd had other hobbies during his life, and was pleased to learn he'd played golf, as I also play. However, I soon learnt that Roy's golf and my golf were poles apart in the respective ability that we each brought to playing the game.

As he chatted, taking me from his early beginnings in the game towards the end of his playing time, I realised he'd been a high-class player who'd demonstrated an easily acquired natural ability which had led to him owning a very low handicap. To put that in perspective for non-golfers, the lower the handicap number, the better you are. I play off 17 – and at my 'peak' played off 11 for a short while. However, Roy played off single figures, around 1 or 2 if I recall correctly, and did so for many years. So, after exchanging a few golfing anecdotes, I asked him when (and why) he'd finished playing. He said "well, I was playing into my eighties, but my handicap had risen to 8, so I recognised my ability had gone, so I packed it in". It was rather hard to keep a straight face!! Roy had packed the game in when he 'fell' to a standard that the majority of us 'mortal' golfers could only dream of - and all said with genuine humility. He was a gentleman, in the true sense of the word.

### From Ian G4CLR

It must have been 1972 and I was in Barton Street paying one of my usual visits to Ted Bird's shop when I spotted a shop opposite the Swimming Baths, Richards Electrics. There was a QSL card in the window - GW3VZR - and I went in and introduced myself. Funnily enough Roy and I joined the club at the same time (*Ed - I can confirm that Ian and Roy's signature appear in the signing in book for the first time on Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> 1972 for the AGM held at the Oddfellows Club in Eastgate Street*). We both liked Harvey's Bristol Cream sherry and one meeting I would buy Roy a drink and the next meeting he would buy me one. On one occasion I had got the drinks and Roy tasted it and said "This isn't Bristol Cream!" The barman was buying cheap sherry and pouring it into the Harvey's Bristol Cream bottle. When we left there to move to the Drill Hall, Pat G3MA went to the Secretary of the Oddfellows Club to inform him we no longer required to meet there and the loss of the meeting room rent would probably be disappointing to them. "What rent? We don't charge rent, you buy drinks, that's sufficient for us" responded the Secretary. Our 50p or so "meeting room rent" was going into the pocket of the barman. For a year or so I worked full-time in the shop with Roy with the intention of taking over from him, but decided that times were changing with the appearance of shops like Tandy and Maplin and the future for this kind of shop was coming to an end. I was able, with Roy's agreement to attend the local Technical College for one day a week to



do a course in electronics as one of my responsibilities was repairing items brought into Roy's shop. He set a bench up for me, but such was his enthusiasm for buying surplus equipment for sale in the shop, the bench got used for storage. As one of the other contributors noted - there was never enough room. Realising that it would have been a mistake for me to take the business over, luckily I was able to resume my career at Stroud Technical College.

This photo was taken on the occasion of Roy's birthday in 2016 and was put on to his cake for his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Photo: Gary M0XAC*

## Nicknames in South Wales

by Roy G3VZR

(Originally published in the June 2015 issue of "Ragchew")

Having lived in south Wales for 28 years, I became used to this unique Welsh humour and thought this list might raise a smile or two, some were created by me. I don't know if this amusing practice is common elsewhere in Wales because I have only lived in South Wales.

Based on the name Dai - the Welsh name David, (Dai is pronounced as dye).

Dai Small Coal – this was the name given to a man who collected slack or small coal lumps dropped in the road when free coal was delivered to miners houses.

Dai Central Eating – this was the name given to a man with only one tooth in the middle of his jaw.

Some of my creations...

Dai Oxide – this was the name given to the Chief Metallurgist at the Hoover factory

Dai Pole - this was the name given to the Chief Electrical Engineer (a radio ham)

Dai Peroxide - this was the name given to the Chief Chemist

Dai Legs and Braces - this was the name given to a man who wore bib & brace overalls with his braces showing

Dai Agony - this was the name given to a man who was a habitual grumbler

Dai Abolical - this was the name given to a man who liked to tell outrageous stories

Dai Namu this was the name given to the electrical maintenance man.

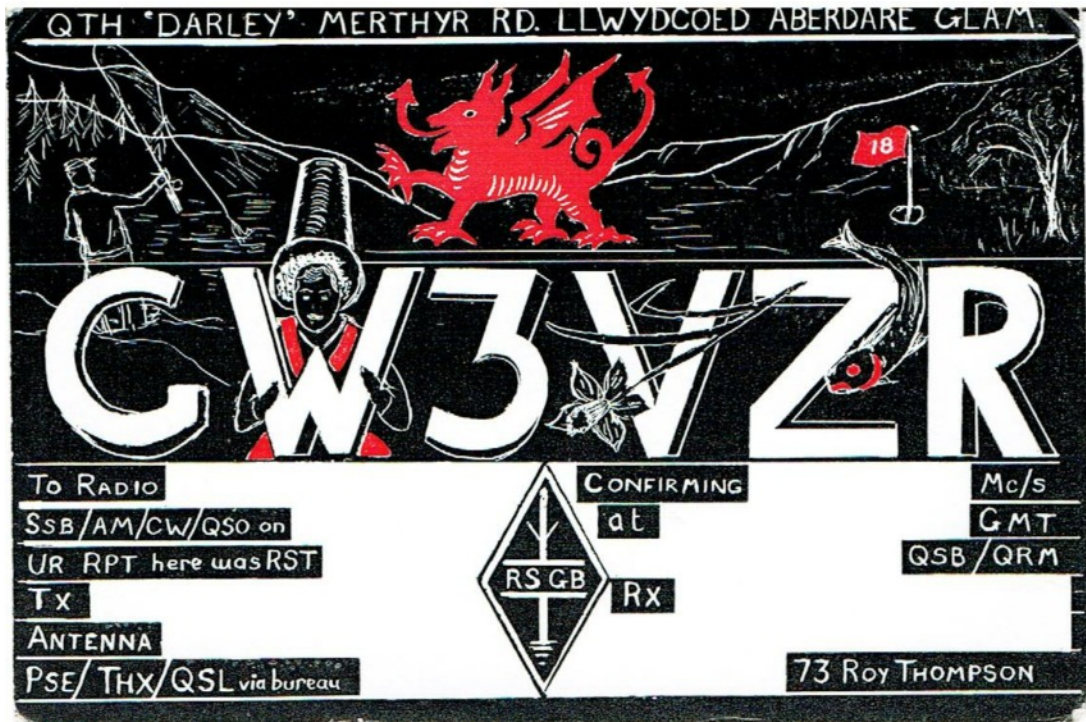
Dai List – could be the telephone operator

Dai Namic – could be a gymnast

Dai Lute - obviously a Welsh musician



An undated photo but believed to be late 1980s / early 1990s taken at a club skittles and buffet evening at the "Greyhound" pub in Eldersfield. L - R Mick G2H DU and his XYL Helen, Roy G3VZR, Olive XYL and Pat G3MA



Roy's QSL card from his time spent in Aberdare, near Merthyr Tydfil. Looking closely, it depicts his interest in golf and something I'd forgotten - fishing.

#### **Extracts from G4CIB Log Book - my first QSOs with G3VZR**

15/02/1980 1910 145.075 MHz in a net with G8VEP, G4CLR, G8KMR, G8UXP and G8VFO  
I was running 3 watts to a ¼ wave whip antenna

16/02/1980 1925 145.075 MHz log notes - on this day I erected an 8 element yagi outdoors

04/04/1980 2030 145.350 MHz log notes - I arranged a golf match with Roy

22/02/1981 1804 144.675 MHz log notes - I was running 2 watts FM

01/04/1981 0750 G3VZR/M in Gloucester. I guess he was going to work!



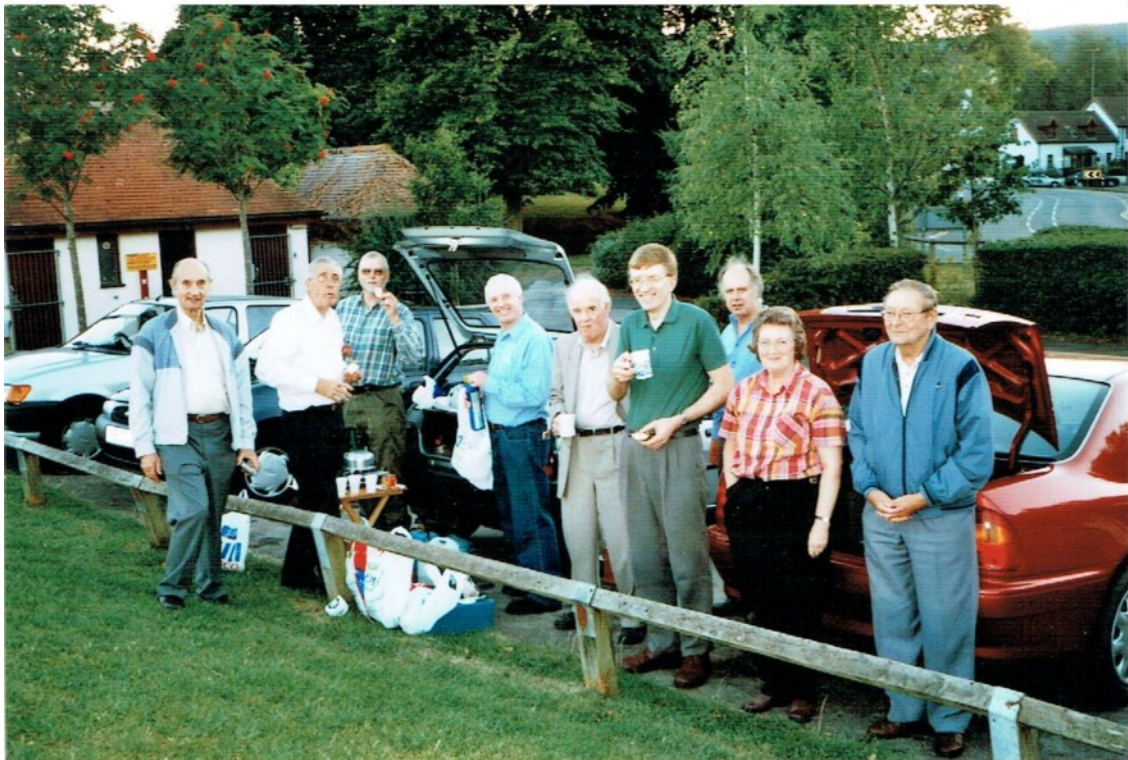
The club picnic at Newnham-on-Severn on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

Roy enjoying a well-earned brew!



A vintage themed garden party held at G4CIB/G4RHK QTH c2003 - note the wind-up gramophone! L-R Brian G4CIB, Carolina (XYL of Graeme G0EEA seated in the background), Leta G4RHK, Roy G3VZR and Anne 2E1GKY.

*(Photo - Anne 2E1GKY)*



Another group photo of the club picnic at Newnham-on-Severn 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005.  
Roy G3VZR centre stage

## Our Memories of Roy and Edith by Brian G4CIB and Leta G4RHK

In the early 1970s a small shop called Richards Electrics opened in Barton Street opposite the Swimming Baths and Leisure Centre. It was very welcome as previously the only place you could buy components, valves etc was Ted Bird, also located in Barton Street, but the other side of Barton gates (the railway crossing just south of Gloucester Eastgate railway station). It wasn't exactly service with a smile at the latter emporium and as a result Roy quickly built up a regular clientele, particularly amongst GARES members. As well as selling new components (mainly Radio Spares) and various electrical equipment, Roy would regularly receive batches of surplus electronic stuff, circuit boards etc, so a visit on Saturday would rarely see you leaving without making a purchase. It was here too that I met his wife Edith helping Roy in the shop, who I suspect was there on sufferance as she had other interests which I will explain later. It was meeting Roy in the shop that I learnt of his early years at Rolls Royce Derby and Hoover at Merthyr Tydfil also that he lived at Bromsberrow Heath and having been a keen footballer and cricketer, he was now into golf and a member, along with Edith, of the Ross-on-Wye Golf club at Gorsley.

In 1975 at an evening class in Gloucester, I met Leta, who lived at Gorsley, and was mad keen on golf and also a member at Ross-on-Wye golf club. I had hacked around the "pitch-and-putt" courses run by the local council at Westgate Bridge and Elmbridge and soon Leta persuaded me to join the club and Roy proposed me. Leta and I, as 5-day members had to be content with playing the course on summer mid-week evenings. Roy, a low handicap golfer and Captain at Ross-on-Wye for many years was in a different league but we occasionally met up and went round the course as a foursome with his wife Edith. One game we can recall was on a balmy summer's evening and it must have been quite late as we were on one of the final greens and the sprinklers came on. We finished the game dodging being sprayed. When Leta and I got married in 1978 we carried on for a while playing golf but found it difficult to find the time to get to the club in the evenings after long days at work, so after a few years we let our membership lapse.

Our first home was on a new estate at Longhope and Roy and Edith were one of the first guests we invited for a meal. Like many newly-weds, money was tight and although we had bought a new cooker, our other "white-goods" were second-hand and included a Hoover twin-tub washing machine purchased from an uncle. When Roy went into our kitchen he exclaimed "That's a Hoover model 3334 – the first Hoover twin-tub and the best we ever made!" Roy explained that this first model was over-engineered and subsequent models were got hold of at the design stage by the Hoover Value Engineering department to see where money could be saved. It served us for many years before it was replaced by a newer model.

During Roy's time at Hoover I believe he was a Superintendent and one of the workers under his direction was a union representative. This man, who by the way was of short stature, would have regular union convenor meetings. I tell this now in Roy's words: "He came into my office and asked for my permission to attend. I casually asked him what they would be discussing. Standing to attention and raising himself to his full 5 foot with chest out, he said 'Mr Thompson, the first item on the regenda is fuel economy and without it the company is in a dickament'". As Roy said, he had great difficulty in controlling his laughter.

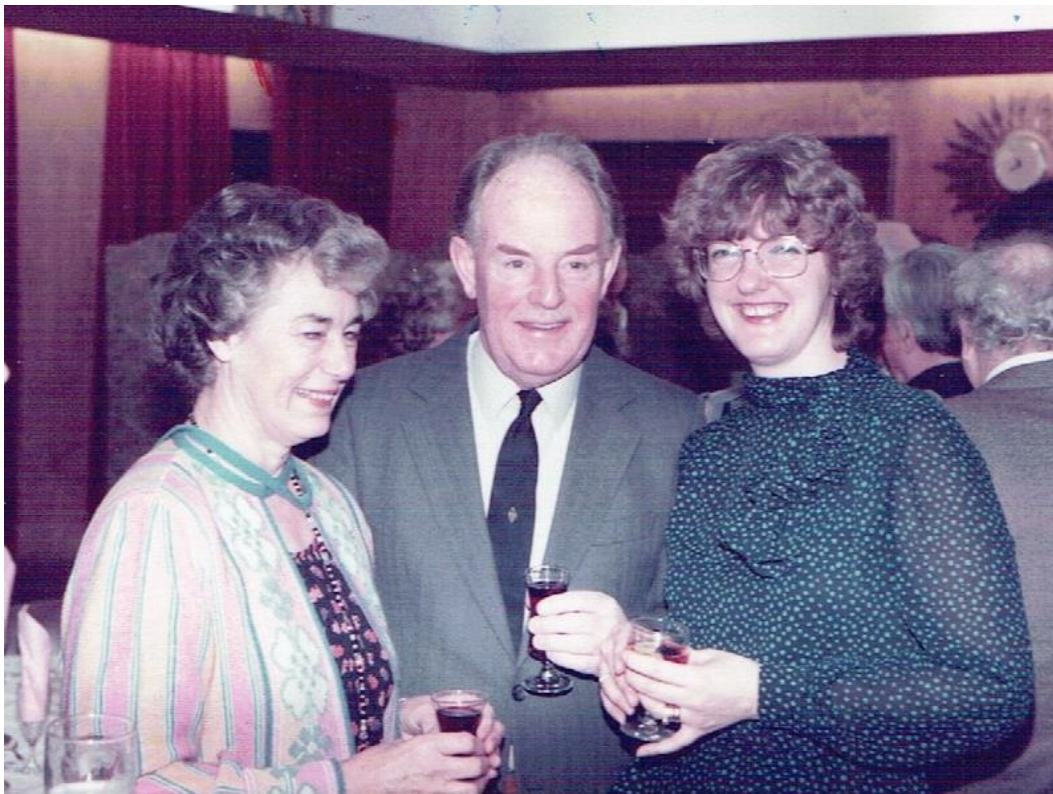
I mentioned earlier that Edith helped Roy in the shop occasionally, but I suspected that it was more out of duty than interest. Indeed Edith's talents were artistic. On coming to the area she had enrolled as a student at Gloucester Art College and had showed such ability that she ended up teaching at the College. I had always been interested in drawing and dabbled in water colour painting but had never seriously made any efforts to progress. Edith somehow got to hear of this and asked me to show her some of my efforts. I told her that as it was rubbish I had thrown it away.





She admonished me, instructing me never to throw any artwork away explaining that the only way you could measure your progress was to look back at previous efforts and compare them with your current paintings. To this day I have several large boxes of paintings and drawings thanks to Edith's wise advise. Some of them have even been framed!. Edith was kind enough to come over to our home in Corse Lawn with Roy and give me some water-colour tuition. On one occasion she brought over an unfinished painting of some lilac flowers in a vase (shown here) and completed it whilst demonstrating the various techniques. At the end she presented the painting to Leta and myself, which we of course framed and now has pride of place in our home. Roy told me afterwards that we were very privileged as Edith very rarely gave any of her pictures away.

With Roy's commitments in building up his business and all the administration that involved as a one-man-band, as well as looking after his large garden, he still managed to attend club meetings regularly. He also maintained his close links with the Hoover Amateur Radio Club at Merthyr, and on one memorable occasion a small group of GARES members travelled down to their Social Club for a skittles match. He and Edith supported our social activities at every opportunity. The photo below of Edith, Roy and Leta was taken at the club Dinner Dance held at the Fleece Hotel, Westgate Street in 1984. Leta remembers Roy as an excellent ballroom dancer and whizzing her around the dance floor - waltz, foxtrot, slow foxtrot and quickstep - he was a master of them all!



Sadly Edith started to exhibit signs of dementia and Alzheimer's Disease and during her final years Roy was unstinting in his support and care of her. During this time Roy was assisted by the charity Crossroads Together, and became a Trustee. I know that coming to club, although a brief respite from looking after Edith, was always a worrying time as he never knew what would happen during his absence. A few months ago when we visited Roy he told us that being a Trustee of the charity had worked out well as he too was now receiving care at a very advantageous rate!

Many members, past and present can testify to Roy's willingness to solve equipment problems and supply the necessary components required to effect a repair. As Richard M0HNK mentioned, Roy rarely threw anything away and many years after he retired his stock of components was incredible and many members left club meetings with with that elusive item to complete a project or just something that may come in handy one day! Indeed Roy was never happier than when he was sorting out a box of mixed components and carefully segregating them into their respective labelled boxes.

And now for a final story involving Roy which demonstrates how friendships can have interesting consequences. Just before Leta and I got married in 1978, I made a career move. I had been at Smiths, Bishops Cleeve for 10 years and having seen a bit of the world, thanks to a flight trials exercise with BEA, BOAC, Swissair and Court Line, also meeting sales representatives from many companies, I decided that I needed to move on. To cut a long story short, I joined Bourns (Trimpot) Ltd as their sales engineer for the West region and Ireland. This covered the whole of the M4 corridor from London, into South Wales also taking in the M5 to the south of Gloucester also Northern Ireland and the Irish republic. Major customers included the EMI Group comprising EMI Radar and Weapons Systems, Hayes along with their production site at Feltham also at Wells. These customers required weekly visits to meet engineers working on new projects, also purchasing people to get new orders and progress existing orders. As EMI Feltham was mainly a production site, my weekly visit there was to progress and update order deliveries followed by a lunch with my contacts. One day I arrived there and the buyer I had arranged to see was very apologetic but there had been a bit of a security problem and the Purchasing Director was interviewing every person who was visiting his staff to vet them. This was a large organisation and you would rarely meet a person at this level unless something was either very wrong or there was a huge contract in the offing. I was ushered into his office and after being grilled as to why I was there, I was escorted to the general office to meet my regular contacts followed by the usual lunch which on this occasion was somewhat subdued. The following Saturday, I was in Gloucester and paid my usual visit to Roy's shop, and he was always interested in what companies I'd visited during the week and I mentioned what had happened at EMI. He asked me the name of the Purchasing Director. When I told him, he was somewhat taken aback. Roy explained that there had been a scandal at Hoover Greenford involving some dodgy dealing with a sub-contractor and he had uncovered the sordid details and the Purchasing Manager had left Hoover under a cloud. It was the same person who had grilled me at EMI! The following week I turned up at EMI Feltham for my regular meeting. Once again the buyer apologised saying that I would have to see the Purchasing Director. I was ushered into his office and given the same grilling as the previous week and I got the impression that he'd forgotten that. At the end I was asked if I had any questions, and I said no, but commented that I had recently met a former Hoover work colleague of his. "What's his name?" was the gruff response. "Roy Thompson" I replied. It was like a book snapping shut. I was escorted from his office to meet my usual contacts and continued my weekly visits and lunches unhindered. The buyers could not understand why he never requested to see me again and I never told them!

Thank-you Roy!