

# Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

# Bulletin

A Monthly Newsletter for RAL Staff

February 1994

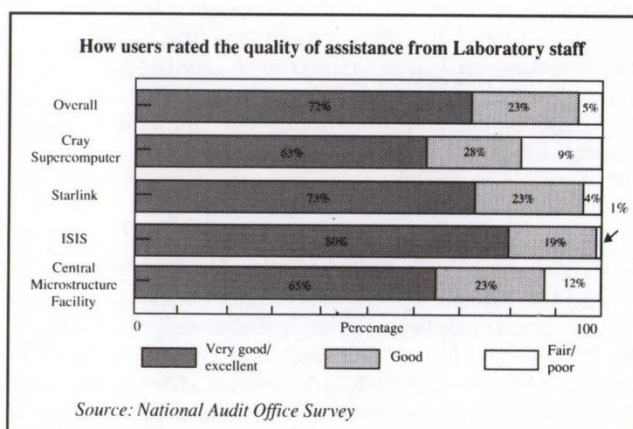
## NAO Report on RAL

The National Audit Office (NAO) is totally independent of Government. It holds the authority to report to Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which Government departments and other bodies have used their resources.

In early summer 1993 a survey was commissioned by the NAO of four key facilities at RAL. The NAO used this as a basis for its report on RAL, published on 21 January and available in the Library. The report concluded that RAL's facilities were highly valued by most users. However, it also identified a number of areas where action should be considered.

Users were highly satisfied with the assistance provided and were equally pleased with staff performance. In general, users were very happy with the performance of each facility and with the support services available to them whilst visiting the Lab.

The vast majority of the users surveyed thought that the facilities played an important part in helping them to achieve their research objectives. As might be expected when using facilities at the leading edge of scientific research, some users experienced some technical problems. However, most users said that they had not encountered any difficulties which had hindered them achieving their research objectives. ■



## The DAIWA Awards



Professor Mike Key of RAL's central laser facility and Professor Y Kato of Osaka University have been selected for one of four prizes for their work on X-ray lasers. These awards are made for scientific projects involving close collaborations between UK and Japanese teams. Mike's work with his UK colleagues from the Universities of Belfast, Hull, York and UCL has been chosen for the award valued at £10,000 from 130 UK proposals. The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation will present the award at the Royal Institution on 2 March. ■

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## Cruise in Space!

**A PhD in Space Astronomy, 18 years and Deputy Director at Mullard Space Science Laboratory and now head of RAL's space science department: Professor Mike Cruise has come a long way from his student days at University College London.**

Although those days are now in the (not so distant!) past, Mike still has a strong bonding to science education. He is a visiting Professor to the Cranfield College of Aeronautics and the Universities of Leicester and Kent. He views the scientist's role in the education of the young as "very important for the future of the country, for the future of science and for the future of the Laboratory" but points out that the need to teach is as important as taking the opportunity to learn from his students.

Two years after joining RAL in 1986 as Astrophysics group leader, Mike was called upon to take charge of the UK's largest funded space project SOHO/CLUSTER. This was in collaboration with 11 universities nationwide and is due for launch early 1995. This launch date coincides with that of SPECTRUM X, in which Mike was also heavily involved. This was Britain's first formal interface with pre-Glasnost Russia: it has been a project where Mike had to keep his membership of the American Cryptogram Association and his skills of decoding codes and ciphers to himself!



(93RC4984)

Paul Williams said of the appointment, "He (Mike) is one of Britain's most distinguished space scientists and has an enviable reputation in astronomy. I am confident that Space Science Department will be very effective under his direction". Mike now plans to go on from where John Harries left off, by taking the Space Science Department to where no man has gone before. ■

## Data Protection

**The 1984 Data Protection Act grew out of public concern about personal privacy in the face of rapidly developing computer technology. The Act is concerned with information about individuals and information which is automatically processed.**

It works in two ways, it gives individuals certain rights whilst requiring those who record and use personal information on computer to be open about it.

If you do store personal data you need to register with the Data Protection Officer, Chris Taylor (ext 6370, id CJT) although this may not be necessary where the data are:

\* held only in connection with personal, family or household affairs or for recreational use.

\* used for preparing the text for documents

\* used for distributing articles or information to data subjects

\* used for calculating wages and pensions, keeping accounts, or keeping records of purchases and sales for accounting purposes only.

\* held by a sports and recreational club which is not a limited company.

A leaflet and questionnaire will be distributed to staff shortly. ■

## Training Update.....



(93RC1441)

There have been several changes recently in the Training Section, including the appointment of Dr Sue Gill as Laboratory Training Officer. Before joining RAL, Sue was Staff Development Officer at the University of Oxford although her earlier background was in civil engineering.

Details of courses happening soon at RAL are listed in the Bulletin diary section and a wide range of courses is planned for the future, from 'Dealing with the media' to 'Vacuum technology'. Booking forms for all courses are obtainable from the Departmental Training Officers (DTOs) listed below.

You will also have received a copy of the latest "JTS courses" booklet with this issue of the Bulletin including notes on how to apply for JTS training.

Sue would welcome any comments or suggestions on how the training section can help. You can contact her on ext 5266 or by e-mail (OV/VM id SMG). ■

The DTOs are:

Dr Tim Pett  
Dr Ken Philips  
Mr Tony Eastwood  
Mr Robin Lascelles  
Mr Derek Cragg  
Mr George McPherson

Central Computing  
Space Science  
Technology  
Technology  
Technology  
Technology

Dr Sue Gill  
Dr Susan Hilton  
Dr Chris Batty  
Dr Martin Bowman  
Mr David Bushnell  
Mr Brian Boland

Administration  
Informatics  
Particle Physics  
Radio Communications  
Science  
Science

## National Schools Initiative

Following an SERC-commissioned report by Sheffield Hallam University, the first steps have been taken towards a national initiative aimed at improving the understanding of science by schoolchildren. The core initiative is to provide new teaching materials to every secondary school in the country to help with the scientific investigation strand of the national curriculum. This will be enhanced by

encouragement to research students to work within schools, an annual conference, and assistance to schools to hold science fairs.

Following the White paper, the future of the initiative looked uncertain as it had been planned around SERC. However, towards the end of last year, approval was given for a feasibility study. The study involves 10

schools and 20 research students trialling an example of the proposed materials and commenting on the proposed complementary actions.

RAL's schools' co-ordinator, Dawn Johnson, is involved in the feasibility study and two of RAL's local schools, Fitzharry's and Wallingford, are to participate. ■

## Diary

Department of Physics, Oxford.  
Astrophysics Colloquia in the  
Nuclear & Astrophysics Lecture  
Theatre. All begin at 4.30pm.

### 22 February

Dr A.F. Heavens,  
University of Edinburgh.  
Redshift-space distortions in  
cosmology

### 1 March

Dr R.E.S. Clegg,  
Royal Greenwich Observatory.  
Hydrogen-deficient planetary  
nebulae

### 8 March

Dr M. Stiavelli,  
Scuola Normale, Pisa.  
Cores of elliptical galaxies

Department of Physics, Oxford.  
Condensed Matter Seminars in  
the Clarendon Laboratory, Parks  
Road, Oxford. All begin at 4.15pm  
(Unless otherwise stated)

### 17 February

Dr I.D.S. Oliverira,  
Clarendon Laboratory  
Kondo effect in  $Ce_xNd_{1-x}Ni$   
Compounds.

### 24 February

Prof J.A. Weil, Dept. of Chemistry,  
University of Saskatchewan. Solid  
state science, 'Germane point  
defects in silicon dioxide' (4.30pm,  
Hume-Rothery Building lecture  
theatre, Dept. of Materials).

### 3 March

Dr H. Jenson,  
Imperial College, London.  
Thermally induced fluctuations in  
high Tc superconductors.

### RAL Lectures

#### 24 March

3.00 R22 Lecture Theatre  
Dr Penrose  
Title to be announced.  
Prof R Penrose, Oxford.

## Noticeboard



### And here lies.....

SERC memorabilia is on offer to  
those who create the most  
imaginative and appropriate SERC  
epitaph (20 words maximum).  
Closing date for entries is 4 March.  
Entries to Natalie Bealing, Press &  
Public Relations, R71. The Director  
will select the winning entries.

### It's a record.....

Stock control sent a fax to a  
company to ascertain the price of an  
item at 16.20. The return fax was  
received at 16.24, four minutes for a  
complete answer!

.....or is it?

## Courses at RAL

Introduction to project management.  
16 & 17 February.

Reporting Officer training.  
14 March

See inside on how to apply.

## Arty & Crafty!

The Arts & Crafts Exhibition 1994  
17th, 18th and 19th May  
Conference Rooms 12 & 13  
12 noon until 2.00pm daily  
with an evening viewing  
Wednesday, 18th May  
All exhibits welcome!

Contact Jenny Coates for further  
information on extension 6498.

## Rec Soc News

### Trivia Quiz

A very enjoyable evening was had  
by all who entered the quiz on  
Saturday 29 January. The winners,  
who received a John Smith tankard  
and teeshirts, were the 1/2 Chilton  
Shires - Pete Smith, Cathy Jury, Ian  
McCrea and Jane Woods.

### Farewell to SERC dance

A dance will be held on Saturday,  
26 March in R22 restaurant as a  
farewell to SERC. Free transport  
will be available and a buffet supper  
will be laid on. The dance is open to  
all staff, but preferential rates for  
tickets will be given to members.  
Please contact the following  
committee members for tickets/  
further details:

Newbury and Oxford areas: Diane  
Johnson x6817. Swindon and  
Wantage areas: Tony Peters x6203.  
Didcot area: Andy Nappper x6349.

Watch out for posters giving prices  
and other information.

## Mavis Daley

The news of Mavis Daley's death  
was greeted with great sadness.  
Mavis worked in the post room for  
25 years until her retirement in June,  
1991. Our condolences go to Mavis'  
son Terence, daughter Jacky and her  
many friends.

### RAL Bulletin

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Garrett Dearey & Andy Kurzfeld  
(Monica will be back soon)

Articles and ideas are welcome!  
Deadline for publication is 15th of every  
month.