

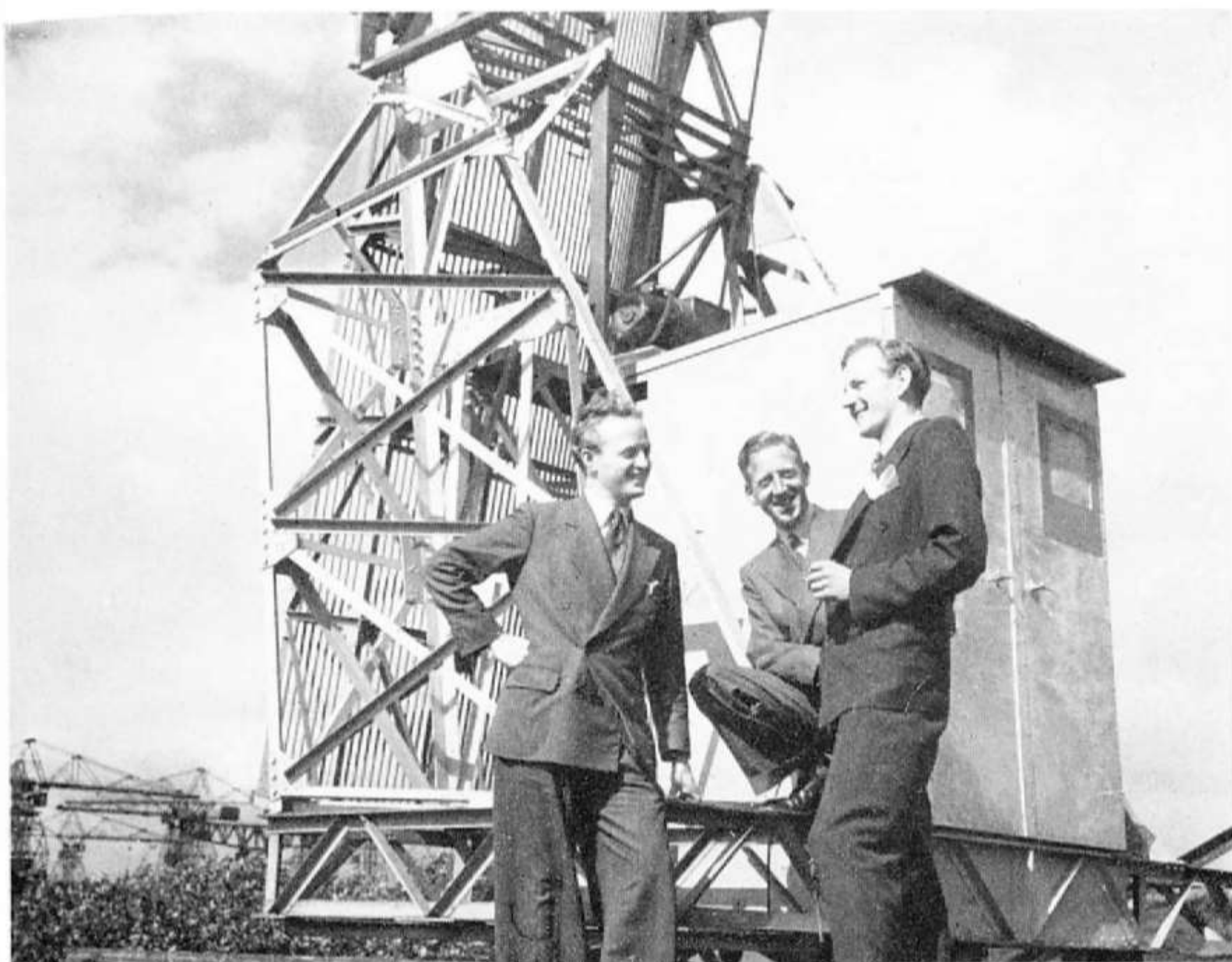
*"There's a river at the bottom of our garden"—Scanners Ltd. live right on the Tyne, and some of the staff are seen in the picture as they walk through the yard discussing aerial heads; l. to r., F. Langley, G. Carson and A. Irving*

By J. G. GRAY

SCANNERS LIMITED is the youngest member of the Marconi group of Companies, and as such is perhaps little known to the majority. This is possibly because the company is situated so far north in the County of Durham, and possibly because the products are not handled by many people in the group. The main purpose of the organisation at Bill Quay, Newcastle-on-Tyne, is the design, manufacture and installation of radar aerial heads. These consist of turning gears, reflectors or aerials and the necessary structure to cover or support them. Versatility is, however, visible at every step. One can see almost, but not quite, side by side, the assembly of aerial heads weighing

perhaps six tons and test bench instruments weighing only a few pounds.

The workshops and offices of Scanners have been built in a derelict shipyard on the south bank of the River Tyne. We are so close to the river that we can truthfully say it flows at the bottom of our "garden". As a shipyard, it grew from unpretentious beginnings to a yard of some importance during the first world war and had clustered around it a small community which later succumbed to the ravages of time and unemployment. Immediately after 1918 the boom died for the small and relatively unimportant shipyards on the Tyne. Woodskinner's Yard, as it was then, suffered with the rest and in 1921, Peter



*Something Marconi people know well, a static Type 13 Aerial Head, with Scanners staff J. B. McDonnell, F. I. Pounder, and J. G. Gray, author of the article*

Thompson the watchman was the only man there. "Old Peter" is now with us, still going strong at the age of seventy four after forty-nine years service in Woodskinner's Yard. The yard was re-opened in part in 1944 by Messrs. Parolle Electrical Plant Co. Ltd., who took over the compressor house in the old buildings together with one acre of land, and they started building aerial frameworks and rotation gears for land-based radar. Very soon after this, they began to manufacture driving units and reflectors for shipborne radar, but when hostilities ended in August 1945, their interests tended to revert to their original business as consultants in heavy electrical and mechanical installations.

Our present General Manager, J. K. Harlow, was at that time Chief Engineer for the Parolle Electrical Plant Com-

pany. He realised that there was a future for this type of work associated with radar, particularly in scanning equipment. He went ahead, promoted a new company, became its Managing Director, and Scanners Limited was registered in June 1946. The new Company took over all Parolle's interests in Woodskinner's Yard, and offered continued employment to over seventy works personnel. Whereas Parolle had to restrict themselves to a limited field of work, and consequently carried out a very small amount of capital development, Scanners were constantly looking for fresh avenues along which their slender feelers of new design could spread.

The increasing use of centimetric equipment in communications, brought the need for metering and testing equipment. The Company started to make



test bench equipment and this created more business. Orders also arrived from the Ministry of Supply for the repair and refurbishing of mobile land-based Radar Vehicles. Thus, within one year of its formation, the Company had developed new products and established important new customers.

The result was a steady increase in the number of works personnel and of capital development. More land and buildings within the shipyard were purchased. The design staff, which consisted initially of the Managing Director and three members in the design drawing office, began to expand to cater for the new test bench components and a development project on airfield control radar.

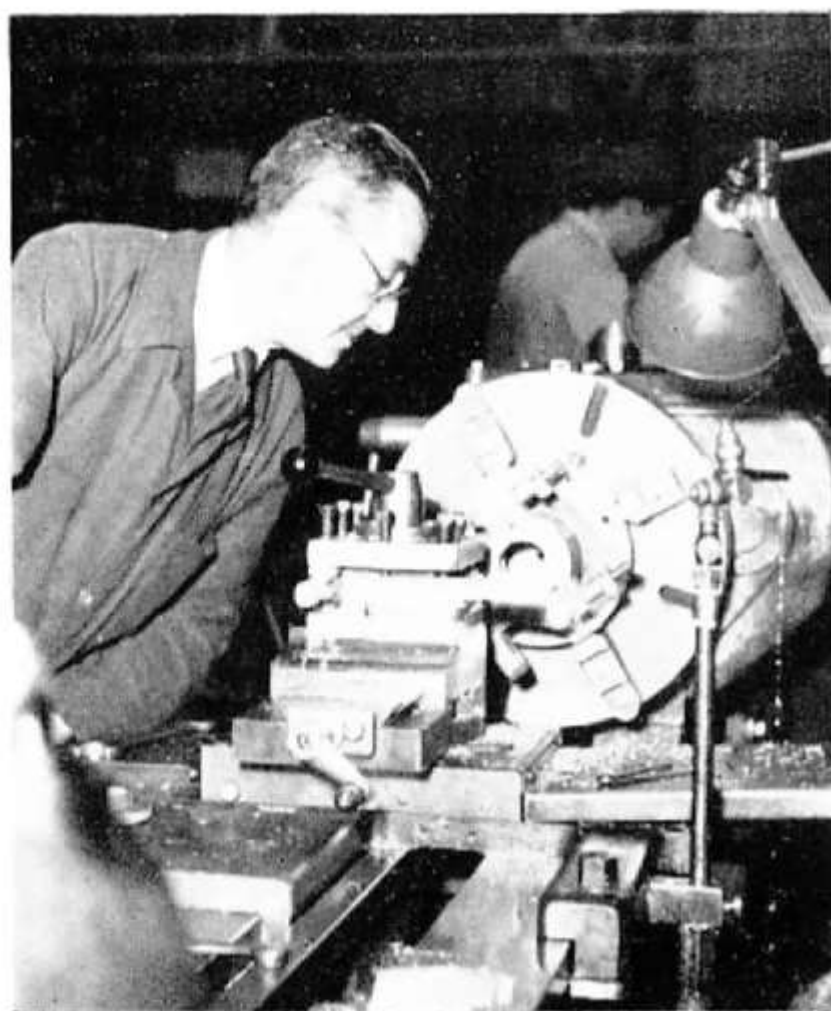
Our first association with the parent company came with an order covering design and development work on commercial land-based mobile radar. This was the largest order which we had as yet been given. Further increases in staff

of all categories were made, more assembly shops were put up. Then following the order for the first batch of equipment came a second. Now we are working on a third.

During 1951 Scanners became a member of the group of Marconi Companies. Personnel were unaware of this change until a general notice was posted on all the notice boards; one day they were employed by Scanners, and the next by Scanners under Marconi ownership.

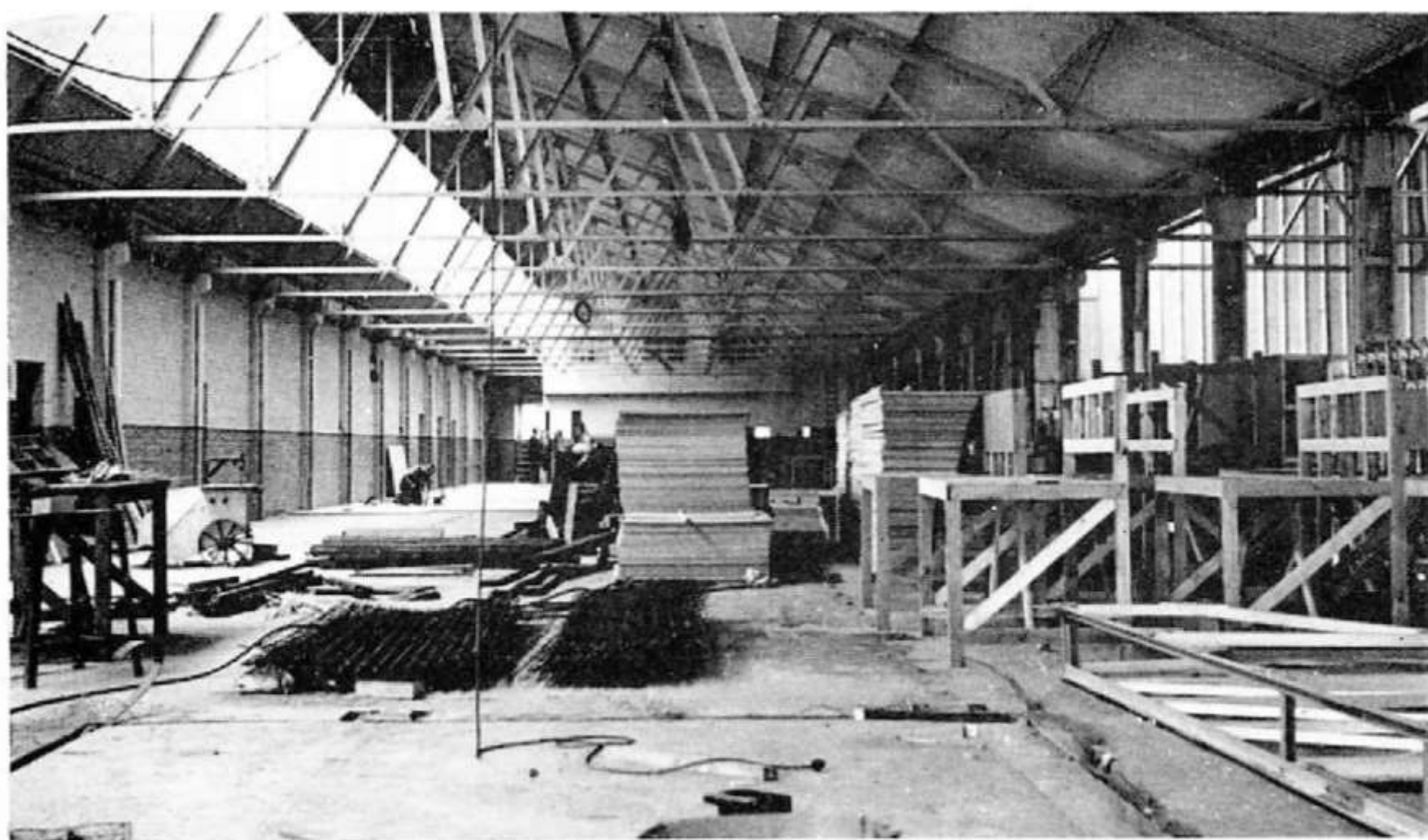
The policy of erecting new shops and buildings has gone ahead with an increasing tempo. Work has been completed on one new building combining a very modern machine shop with a light assembly shop. The assembly shop will cater for all brazing and test bench work as well as all work carried out by Radar Mechanics. Adjoining this as an annexe, is a new office block which will house all the necessary works offices of planning and progress on the ground floor and those of the design branch on the upper floor.

*The man with the delicate touch is one of the old stagers, Jack Hugall. He is turning a bearing for a T. 13 reflector on an 8 in. Atlas centre lathe*



*And the training of our forty or so apprentices receives diligent attention. Here you see Peter May and Robert Auchterlonie at the marking-off table*





*"The policy of erecting new shops and buildings has gone ahead with an increasing tempo." Our new light assembly shop looking eastward, during the course of erection and installation*

With the steady increase in the number of employees, a canteen was sorely needed, and this was completed in May 1952.

It is a very pleasantly proportioned, medium sized building capable of seating 350 people in the main hall plus a small senior staff room. It faces a large lawn surrounded by flower beds. It is a well established principle that a pleasant environment promotes better working, and with this point in view, the new buildings are being built on attractive lines with colourful effects. Hence the flower beds.

With the growth of the Company, welfare and social activities were bound to increase. The first was the setting up of a committee representing employees and the management, to discuss such subjects as working conditions and matters of production. This committee still flourishes and is the body responsible for the foundation of all other subsidiary committees attending to activities not related to work. A sickness benefit club

was founded and this is run entirely by Works people. A group of lively folk made themselves responsible for organi-

*Mopping-up operations in the main canteen "after the pay"*







*This is a mobile land based vehicle with (l. to r.) L. Robson, P. Culley, and H. Patterson on the vehicle and Inspector Watson on the ground*

sing smoking concerts in the early days, and for a long time these highly successful occasions were the only social gatherings it was possible to arrange. There is, however, an Entertainments Club whose committee held a very successful carnival dance in the canteen shortly after its opening. The canteen is virtually the clubroom and indoor sports and activities are popular. We have football and cricket teams which play in local leagues, but are at present hampered by the lack of a sports ground. This state of affairs will be remedied in the near future for we hope to acquire a ground.

The area of Tyneside which surrounds us is pretty grimy to look at, but tall chimneys and great pit heaps represent flourishing industries. However, there is great beauty in the nearby countryside of Northumberland and Durham and it is steeped in history. When the site for the Swing Bridge over the Tyne was being excavated, some of the found-

ations of a bridge built by the Romans were found. The city of Newcastle takes its name from a castle built and added to during the Norman and Plantagenet dynasties, and the Cathedral with its magnificent examples of flying buttresses is reputed to be the model from which the architecture of St. Giles's Cathedral in Edinburgh was copied. The border feuds were rife in the district, and the Roman Wall from Bowness to Wallsend (adjoining Newcastle), of which part is still visible, is evidence of the need for protection. Tyneside also knew the Young Pretender during the 1745 rebellion.

Great men like George Stephenson and Sir Charles Parsons, who introduced turbine propulsion for ships, have worked here. Great statesmen, admirals and architectural planners such as Grey, Collingwood and Grainger have designed and built the industries of Tyneside. Now in our turn we are contributing to the country's prosperity and to the welfare of all those people we employ.

*The man who has seen more of Wood Skinner's Yard than any of our people, the ever present and ever faithful Peter Thompson*

