

Memories of the Baddow Tower by Ian Brighton

One of my favourite memories of the Baddow Tower occurred during the mid seventies when we were doing compatibility testing with the Bushey Hill site. I was working with the late Chris Arnold on the L-Band Surveillance Signal Processor for the GWS 25 contract when I received an order to take some equipment up to the 200ft platform from Keith Coleman of the project office, Peter Marlow's deputy. Apparently it had to be done immediately. Chris was at Bushey and I was in the portakabin. I gathered the test equipment required and with a trolley from produced by Ted Stripe dragged it to the base of the tower. Not knowing how to get the equipment up to the 200ft platform and with no help around I decided I would climb the ladders to the different stages. Taking the largest first I tied the HP 545B scope on to my back and proceeded to climb. I made it to the first level with some discomfort but as I was halfway up the second ladder the scope got stuck on one of the protective rings behind my back. Keith Coleman seeing I was in difficulty could only shout out that I was an idiot, didn't I know there was a lift on the other side of the tower. I thought no mate I hadn't a clue, I am a baseband man, all ones and zeros. Luckily one of John Brand's team Ray Brown, came along, being sent back from Bushey Hill by Chris to give me a hand. He clambered up the tower laughing his head off and after freeing me and my 545 we made our way to the 200ft platform. The rest of the equipment was hoisted up without difficulty. No sooner had we set up when there was a sudden unexpected shower. A from a relatively clear sky. Ray and I scrabbled around to get the kit into the little hut. After the shower we proceeded with the tests and a little later in the afternoon joined by Chris who happily saw the funny side of the tale. We were with all leaning over the rail having a chat when I noticed that there was a cemetery on the other side of Vicarage Lane. I think I may have said " Sometimes don't you wish you could fly?" to which Chris quickly answered " Well you wouldn't have far to go" whereupon we all collapsed with laughter. Such happy days at Great Baddow with so many lovely people. Without doubt the best years of my working life, especially with Chris Arnold a brilliant engineer as well as being a loyal friend and mentor now sadly missed.