

CORRESPONDENCE

Control(?) Panels

SIR,

In his consideration of future trends in digital control progress (p.123 of this issue), Mr. East suggests that the 'applicability of touch sensitive displays and buttons in lieu of levers is worthy of attention'. Has he considered also what would happen in thick smoke or if the lights go out, with the operator feeling for the controls? And what if debris is thrown against the control panel?

The automatic boggling control of the mind fails.

(Sgd.) C. Dog

J.N.E., Vol. 29, No. 1

SIR,

Clearly the questioner in wishing to remain incognito is not convinced of the substance of his concern.

Taking the remark about feeling for controls, button control of propulsion machinery has been used by the R.N.I.N. for some years and it is clear from conversations with the operators that the location and operation of these buttons becomes 'automatic', in that position and function are clearly imprinted in the memory. (They do not need the emotional comfort of a large lever).

No doubt the correspondent could operate a telephone dial in the dark if sufficiently motivated. Additionally, it is possible to back illuminate these buttons if it is proved necessary; the effectiveness of this illumination would of course depend upon the smoke density postulated.

The buttons themselves are recessed into a protective upstand so that the palm of the hand, boot, cup of coffee, or other debris cannot operate the function button, unless finger-sized and of correct pressure. There are many electronic ways to protect a touch sensitive screen: for example, it will not accept two simultaneous demands caused by a 'full hand' being pressed against the screen.

It is not inconceivable that debris, falling bodies, etc. could operate levers.

(Sgd.) D. W. East

Assistant Director Machinery Control, Sea Systems Controllerate

'H.M.S. Thunderer'

SIR,

I am grateful to you for sending me a copy of Admiral Pillar's review of my book *H.M.S. Thunderer* and to him for his most kind remarks.

What to leave out? There is a vast feast of stories of Keyham and Manadon (and Admiral Pillar has added to them). At one time I thought mention *must* be made of D'Arcy Lever, double-bass and all. Dined by the mess long after his (second) retirement he was pushed in a wheelchair up to his fellow guest Admiral Sir Charles Madden, then C.-in-C. Plymouth and greeted him with: 'Well, young Madden, how are you getting on?'

But yes; there are so many tales, where does one stop? The Admiral reminds me—oh! so rightly—of Hutchings, Teague, Blake, and Foster (who refused to go to bed one Reunion Dinner night 'Until the last officer has left, sir'). May I remind him of Venn? By the way, when Venn died there was no representative of the College at his funeral. Do we forget so soon?

Yes we could fill a book. I would gladly edit it if some one will get people to send me the tales and arrange its publication—no hope of a publisher taking it on I'm afraid, but perhaps we could manage a roneo'd version by subscription.

(Sgd.) Geoffrey Penn
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SIR,

Having only recently obtained a copy of Geoffrey Penn's splendid book, may I add a note to Admiral Pillar's admirable review in the last issue of the J.N.E.?

Commander Penn refers to the change in the Manadon building plans to preserve the trees of the Rookery. The visit of Gilbert Scott was arranged

through the good offices of Captain (E) Desmond Hoare (a relative by marriage to the Scotts) primarily to obtain his opinion as to how the trees could be saved. He fully supported our point of view, and drew up a rough plan which formed the basis of the new site plan subsequently adopted. His rough plan should be somewhere in the College records.

As one of the first mids (E) to join Keyham in 1922, may I follow Admiral Pillar's example by recalling a few notables of the 1922–1926 period? Engineer Commander Sam Wheeler and Engineer Lt-Commander Dibley, joint founders of the famous motor cycle club D.S.O.C.B.B.F.E.E. (Damn Slow On Corners But Bloody Fast Everywhere Else); Jockey Hall (Instructor Lt-Commander) who fathered the build-up of the College hockey successes referred to on page 74 of the book; and finally the arrival of Bachie Rebbeck with a new 20 h.p. Rolls—the first O.U.I.***, and possibly the last O.U.I. to do this.

(Sgd.) J. G. C. Given
Rear-Admiral (E)
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The 'Thunderer' Crest

SIR,

The tone of the remarks in the last issue of the Journal about R.N.E. College of 30 years ago, when the crest was last changed, seems particularly inappropriate since one could argue that those officers showed foresight and understanding ahead of their contemporaries:

The Shape: who but someone entirely divorced from the Navy would need any help *now* in telling a warship name from that of a R.F.A. or a shore establishment when we have so few of any of them?

The Figure: no change for the better here. The 'in' figure looks like a retired hippy in need of a haircut who is such a weakling that he gets terrible back pains even when he uses both hands to lift a sledge.

The Motto: while still incomprehensible to me (even the author does not attempt a direct translation) the inherited Latin motto could have been thought inappropriate for two reasons. First, those engineers of 30 years ago may have recognized already that the ability to quote or understand Latin mottoes was already fast losing credibility as a measure of intelligence or character; perhaps they considered that an English motto would reflect the modern image they hoped to generate. Secondly they would have thought it particularly inappropriate to use a motto that encouraged the pastime of gazing idly at the sky, wondering about the origins of weather, when they would want to engender an atmosphere of purpose and activity in which engineers would learn to get on with the job.*

I was not there 30 years ago, so this is an entirely unbiassed assessment! Hands up those young officers who will return in 30 years to restore Thor to his rightful place (who is this Jupiter chap anyway?).

(Sgd.) Commander D. A. Rowe
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*Surely the motto speaks of us being *freed* from such gazing, by getting down to harnessing power ourselves, to make our own noise and clouds (of steam and smoke). *Ed.*

**O.U.I.: officer under instruction

Dounreay Nuclear Submarine Prototype

SIR,

I was surprised that no mention was made of Vickers Armstrongs (Engineers) in Captain Bussell's interesting article in the June 1984 issue of the Journal. From the late 1950s VA(E), the main contractor for the submarine machinery, together with Vickers Armstrongs (Shipbuilding), was extensively involved with the building of DSMP. Before Rolls-Royce and Associates took up the role of operating and maintenance there, which was probably in 1963, the ARTE site was in fact run by VA(E). Without them, DSMP would have experienced great difficulty in having subsequently a justifiably proud 25 year history.

(Sgd.) F. S. Nailor
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