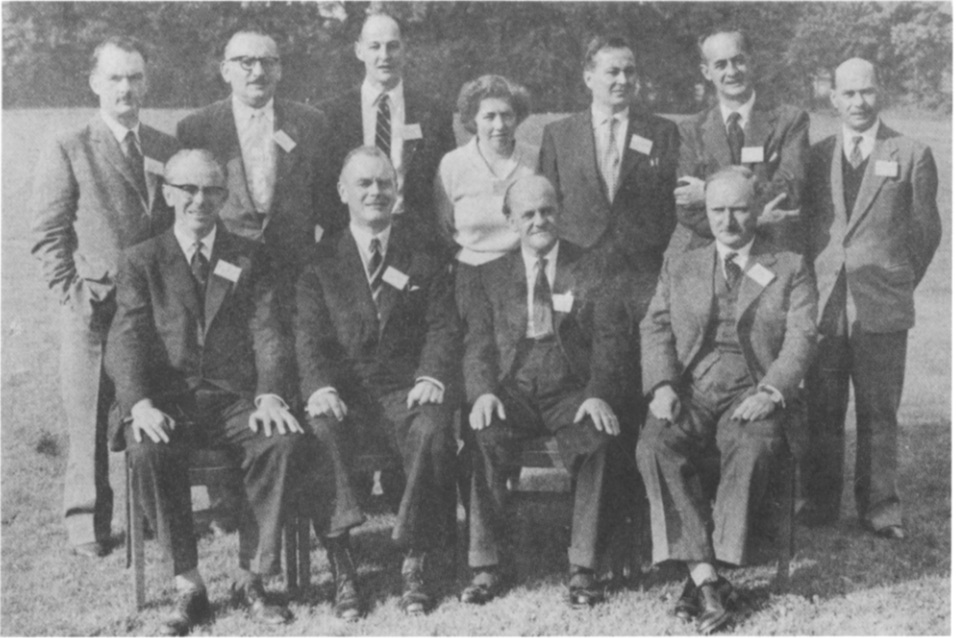


TO THE EDITOR — AVE ATQUE VALE!

Derek Collins has been actively associated with power sources for most of his working life. In 1939, after spending about one year as a Technical Officer in the Mine Design Department of the Royal Naval Establishment, HMS Vernon, he was transferred to the Battery Section of the Admiralty Engineering Laboratory at West Drayton, Middlesex. Here he was concerned especially with the performance, specifications and, indirectly, the manufacturing processes of the gargantuan lead-acid storage batteries used for submarine propulsion. In 1953, he was promoted to the rank of Senior Experimental Officer and head of the Battery Section and this brought him into direct contact with the technical departments of many of the UK industrial suppliers.

Batteries, however, were by no means Derek's sole responsibility. His Section also took on board the testing and evaluation, for special naval service, of the many new insulating materials under development, from petroleum-based feed-stocks through the exciting advances in polymer chemistry. In 1961, the Section expanded still further to include the testing of new types of cables and the setting up of novel equipment and techniques to carry out this work. There were links here with two aspects of his early training. After graduating with a BSc degree at St. Mary's College, University of London in 1935, Derek joined the technical staff of Standard Telephones and Cables, where his main preoccupation was the design of transmission testing apparatus for carrier telephony. In 1936 he moved to Germany as the Chemist and Assistant Manager of the Marb-I-Cote Manufacturing Company, where he spent two years in the development of processes for the manufacture of paints. His distinguished service with the British Admiralty began in 1938, when he joined the Staff of HMS Vernon and continued for 38 years.

The importance of batteries to the three armed services in the UK was recognised by the formation during the mid nineteen-fifties of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Batteries (IDCB) and Derek Collins was appointed Secretary. Frank M. Booth, who had spent several years with a battery manufacturing company and who was, at this time on the staff of the Signals Research and Development Establishment, later to become the Royal Signals and Radar Establishment at Christchurch, near Bournemouth, was also a member of the IDCB and, at his suggestion, arrangements were made to hold a Symposium covering aspects of Research and Development of all types of batteries at the SRDE in September, 1958. One hundred and eighty-three delegates from 9 countries attended this Symposium and the



2nd International Symposium on Batteries, 1960. The Organising Committee. Left to right, standing: A. J. Martin (IDCB) C. I. Spilfogel (IDCB) N. Hyde (IDCB) J. M. Plaw (Assistant to Secretary of Symposium) R. J. Doran (IDCB) P. J. Pengelly (IDCB) F. C. Wells (Secretary of Symposium Committee), seated: F. C. B. Smith (IDCB) D. H. Collins (Secretary IDCB) F. M. Booth (Chairman of Symposium Committee) G. A. Earwicker (IDCB).



2nd International Symposium on Batteries, 1960. Paying strict attention to the opening address by Sir Harry Melville KCB, FRS, Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Left: Mr. F. M. Booth (Symposium Organiser), right: Mr. D. H. Collins (Secretary IDCB).



Retirement presentation to Mr Derek Collins MBE, BSc by Mr T. H. Kerr, Director of the National Gas Turbine Establishment, 30 April, 1977. (Courtesy of Mr D. N. Harvey, NGTE and the *Journal of Naval Science*)

Proceedings were published by SRDE. This was the forerunner of a series of biennial symposia, which soon grew in size and scope to take their place among the most significant in their field in the international calendar. The next two were held in the more comfortable and prestigious environment of the Civic Pavilion at Bournemouth, and in 1964 the Metropole Hotel at Brighton became their permanent home.

Frank Booth was Chairman of the Committee for the Second Symposium, but sadly, he died in 1961 and Derek Collins then assumed the Chairman's role. Memories of Frank Booth's pioneer work in laying the foundations of these Symposia live on in the Frank M. Booth Memorial Medal, awarded for the first time in 1970 to persons who, in the judgement of the Committee, have made an outstanding contribution to the development of power sources, either technically or, indirectly, by increasing the effectiveness of the Symposia.

For the 1962 Symposium, a joint Committee was formed of equal numbers of representatives of the IDCB and British industrial companies, a number of whom had generously contributed some working funds and who have continued to provide many of the services essential to the smooth running of the Symposia. In 1964, the functions of the IDCB were taken over by the Joint Services Electrical Power Sources Committee with wider

terms of reference, to include all types of power sources other than those involving rotating machinery. The Symposium Committee adopted the same terms of reference and the pattern of operation remained the same, with the combined Committee of representatives of the Services Departments and UK Industry. There were two special features of these Symposia in which the Committee took justifiable pride. Pre-prints of the complete papers were circulated to all of the delegates before the Symposium and arrangements were made for recorded transcripts of the discussions to be checked by speakers before the Symposium dispersed. This material was included in the final bound volume of the Proceedings.

From time to time there were changes in the composition of the Symposium Committee, a member retiring and being replaced by another representative of the Ministries or Industry, while keeping the balance of equal representation of both sides. All of these members played their parts in the success of the Symposia. In addition to the Chairman, two people in particular helped to preserve the continuity and we know that Derek Collins would be the first to acknowledge the great help he received from both Monty Lemmon of the McMurdo Company, who busied himself with all manner of tasks, and Mrs Sheila Bourner who, having carried out full secretarial duties for several years previously, was, in 1970, officially appointed Secretary.

As the interest grew, the size of the Proceedings increased from a mere 30 papers and 300 pages in 1960 to 48 papers and 800 pages in 1976. The first four volumes were entitled "Batteries", though the 1964 edition included the wider terms of reference of power sources, and from 1966, the title was amended accordingly. At this time also, more than 30 countries were regularly represented and a limit of 400 had to be imposed on the attendance. As Chairman of the Committee, Derek Collins had considerable responsibility for all of its tasks. A man of considerable personal charm, he also had a keen sense of humour. He controlled the meetings with good-humoured firmness and tact and dealt with any crises with cheerful equanimity. He kept a sympathetic eye on the selection of papers from the large input generally received, and regularly gave a helping hand to continental Europeans, who were bemused by the all-too-frequent complexities of the English language. He himself presented two papers on work done in his own laboratory, "Some aspects of dry cell behaviour" in 1958 and "The lead-silver oxide cell" in 1970. At the Symposia, he led the team at the registration desk, occasionally took the chair at technical sessions and acted as host at the formal dinner. Probably his most onerous task, however, was editing the Proceedings and this he did with meticulous care and perception, as well as a good deal of relish.

In 1965 Derek was promoted to the rank of Chief Experimental Officer, at about the time when the Admiralty Engineering Laboratory was amalgamated with the National Gas Turbine Establishment. In 1966, his sustained work in the field of power sources earned the well-merited honour of the award of the MBE.

There is no doubt that Derek Collins' energetic and skilful leadership played a major part in bringing these Symposia from their humble beginnings to their present position as outstanding international fora for the examination of the science and technology of power sources. In 1976, it was the unanimous wish of the Symposium Committee that he should be awarded the Frank Booth medal, a decision warmly welcomed by all of the delegates at that meeting. In 1977, he retired from service with the National Gas Turbine Establishment and shortly afterwards was appointed Editor of the *Journal of Power Sources*. At that time also, he, and his charming wife Margaret, opted for a warmer climate and immigrated to Spain. His move to this Journal was almost a natural progression, enhanced by the testing apprenticeship he had served in editing the Proceedings of eight Symposia and he brought to the Journal the same painstaking care and erudition, which were the hallmarks of the earlier productions. It is now five years since the Journal was launched and during this period it has also become firmly established as an international publication of the highest standing.

In 1982, Derek Collins vacates his editorial chair. On the hint of his forthcoming retirement, many old colleagues and associates have expressed in tangible form their high regard and affection by offering papers for this special edition to commemorate the occasion. We know that we echo their sentiments when we offer Derek our warm congratulations on past successes, sincere thanks for services to international science and technology, well and truly rendered, and best wishes to him and to Margaret for a long, healthy, and happy retirement.

MONTY BARAK
Guest Editor
September, 1981