

## Appendix 5

### Speech by David Moor at the 24th ITTC Banquet

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I left the Tank world 21 years ago, I was invited to give the Sir Charles Parsons Memorial Lecture. I chose the title *Ship Model Experiment Tanks - the First Hundred Years. A British View*. In it I gave a formal historic description of the tank scene, and of some prominent people in it, as I saw them. Tonight, I thought you might prefer some strictly informal notes of my own period of forty years association with the Tank Conference.

Immediately after World War II, as a young naval architect in the Denny Tank in Dumbarton, the oldest surviving tank in the world, my formidably blunt bosses were James Allan and Willy Walker.

Before the war, Allan had urged comparative testing of different sized propellers in different tanks, and by 1939 had gathered together all the results of the Rome Series, but they had not been analysed when the war broke out and the Rome Conference was cancelled. A few years later, the war over, I was given the task of collating results and learned at first hand the disturbing differences then prevalent among tanks, but only part of the analysis was ready for Allan to present at the 1948 London Conference.

Walker was an enthusiastic practical investigator into the effects of turbulence in model resistance, and literally the day the London Conference opened in 1948, we at Dumbarton were observing, using hydroquinone diacetate, the extent of laminar areas on models with and without various tripping devices. Late that night, I boarded a sleeping-car train for London, clutching the first photographs for Walker to present to the Conference the following day. So, although not officially a delegate, I attended the meetings in the grand drawing room of 5, Chesterfield Gardens, Mayfair, where I was allowed to sit, somewhat awestruck, at the back of the room throughout the sessions.

The proceedings struck me as somewhat formal and subdued, and I was glad when we got away to more social events, where as a very young man I proudly met most of the greats of that era. Notably Horn, Kempf and Lerbs, who were welcomed back into the international community after the trauma of the war. I met too, Hans Edstrand, who became my dearest lifelong friend.

On a trip down the Thames, in the Port Authority yacht, "Lady Catherine", I was particularly interested to meet Davidson whom I wanted to advise me on manoeuvrability and course keeping,

for the post-graduate research scholarship which I then held. He surprised me by advising me to consult the more extensive wartime work in Paris by the German Albring, but conversation between us was interrupted, when a well known delegate cried out “what on earth is that noise?”. A low periodic grunting under the counter of the vessel. Professor Burrill scathingly replied “have you never heard a propeller cavitating before?”.

The 1954 Conference, in Scandinavia, the first I attended in my own right as a tank superintendent, had an altogether more confident air, and most complicated arrangements, taking place successively in Oslo, Gothenburg and Copenhagen.

On the way to Oslo I made one of my idyllic passages that I have ever had at sea in the new Olsen liner *Braemar*. After dinner Barnaby, Conn, Robb and I spent hours talking on the foc’s’le in the still, warm moonlight light. One of us noted that passengers were not allowed on the foc’s’le, but Barnaby calmly said “no-one will object, I designed and built this ship”.

Once in Norway, a few of us decided to visit the comparatively new tank at Trondheim. Conn and I decided to travel together on the famous “Dovre Express”. At Oslo Station, we met Wigley, on the same mission. In the crowded train, Conn and I were sitting together and once the train started sought out Wigley, only to find that he apparently was not on board. The train had only three coaches and we were sure that we could not have missed him. Half way along the fantastic journey over the mountains, the train stopped for a while to allow passengers to stretch their legs and buy some food, and there on the platform was Wigley. Asked how on earth he had got there, he explained that he had a passionate interest in railways, and had been allowed to travel with the driver.

In Gothenburg, I met Hans Edstrand’s family, on being introduced his little daughter Agneta rather shook me by curtsying to me, a delightful if flattering habit she maintained for years and years afterwards, until she was 21.

Travelling across the Sound from Malmo in Sweden to Copenhagen in the “Absolom”, was memorable for two completely different reasons. First, every time the ship turned in the passage through the sands she lurched from one side to the other and remained lolling there until the next turn. It was the first time I had ever sailed in a ship with negative GM. Far more entertaining was the virtual concert party set up by Mrs. Todd, Jean and Alison who had the whole ITTC group singing *Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen* and other songs. Later back on the land we were taken on a more erudite trip to Elsinore Castle, where Manley St. Denis enthralled us all by a long impromptu declamation from Hamlet.

The year 1957 took the Conference to Spain. Vickers, who owned the St. Albans tank, were very closely associated with the principal Spanish shipyards, and arranged for me to stay, not in the Conference hotel, but in a very upmarket diplomatic hotel, where I had a magnificent suite and services of a car and chauffeur, which came in very handy when I missed the bus for the excursion to Toledo! We visited the El Pardo tank, where I marvelled at the great marble slabs on which lines plans were drawn and too at Acevedo’s insistence on using the local value for ‘g’, since the tank was more than a mile above sea level.

The formal sessions were most memorable for the discussions which led to the 1957 model ship correlation line, when Newton, arguing his point, produced his Greenwich College student notes *as*

*evidence*. It was incredibly hot and most of us were delighted, when Troost drew the discussion to a close by striking a bell with his ring.

The social affairs were delightfully laid back. On one occasion we waited for nearly two hours *outside* an important government building for the minister to appear. By the time he did, some of the delegates had left, they missed a superb meal!

Needless to say Madrid tummy was rampant, and the Anglo-American block at least were relieved to have Jean Todd, a medical doctor, with us.

Not everybody wanted to go to a bull fight after a romantic dinner out in the country, and I remember long and happy conversations in the twilight with the Russian delegates, without once mentioning politics.

Paris in 1960 brings more irreverent memories. When we visited the Paris tank, Admiral Brard gave an introductory address in *French*, translated into *English* sentence by sentence by another French Admiral. After a while a bored American voice drawled "what a pity Admiral Brard doesn't speak English". Grinning at the speaker, Brard replied "oh, but I do", and carried on in French.

The formal meetings were held in the UNESCO building. Jack Hoyt, Jacques Hadler and I decided one day that we did not want another canteen meal and would go outside for lunch. We did not realise that the UNESCO building was in a not very salubrious district of Paris, and we could not find anywhere to eat. Eventually we found what in Britain might call a *workers caff*, and hunger and optimism drove us inside where I was appalled to realise that I was the only one of us who spoke any French. We had a pretty good meal, and afterwards Jack Hoyt asked me what the meat was. He looked very sick when I replied "horse".

On another occasion Hans Edstrand, Jacques Hadler and I decided to go to a night club. We found that all the good ones were fully booked, so went to a rather second rate one where some of the chorus girls' costumes were utterly ludicrous. Eventually we burst out laughing and a party from an American Widows' Tour at the next table turned wrathfully on us, saying "Young men, you are not supposed to larff", which of course redoubled our hysterics.

London 1963 was, for me, perhaps dominated by Carl Prohaska, calling together some of us in the Mitre Hotel, Hampton Court, an ancient inn well suited to conspiratorial meetings, to set up the North Sea Towing Tank Conference, on the grounds that the formal business of the ITTC was not sufficiently oriented towards the everyday needs of tanks dealing with ordinary merchant ships. The Peppermill Conference, as it became known, after Erika Lerbs took an ornamental music-box peppermill from the table at the inaugural dinner in Copenhagen. It went on to do in private, exceptional work on policy and business as well as technology, and introduced complete freedom for staff of its member tanks to visit each other for detailed discussions. It has long been a sadness to me that the two Conferences were not more closely linked, though of course all the members of the one were also members of the other. The Peppermill Conference was killed off twenty years ago, by a tank director, a very good friend of mine, who had been brought in from another branch of the profession and simply did not understand tanks, and he took the Peppermill home with him.

The social side of the 1963 Conference was notable for a splendid dinner of about a dozen of us in a London restaurant, where Van Lammeren announced that we were "going Dutch" and several delegates assumed that the Dutch were going to pay. They were soon disillusioned.

On another occasion, a strikingly beautiful Russian lady, who told me that she had a staff of fifty interpreters translating American and British published work into Russian, asked me what Todd's forename was, because his initials seemed to vary between 'F' and 'A'. She had never heard of Alison.

Arriving in Rome for the 1969 Conference, I was allocated a most dreadful room in the attic of the hotel. Refusing to occupy it, I was given the most beautiful room several floors down. Later another delegate told me that on arrival he had been given a large, far too sumptuous room and had demanded a smaller one. He changed to the room in the attic, where he was divinely happy.

In Rome, I discovered the delights of good Italian wine and successfully searched the city for espresso coffee with Carol Hadler. Formal entertainment was in spectacular surroundings but in one former papal palace all six courses were pasta, each of different colour. I think it was the green, or was it orange, that finally broke delegates' stoicism.

Dick van Manen, as befitted such an inveterate globe-trotter, had a list of recommended restaurants and we made for one, which turned out to be a large fish shop, far out in the dark suburbs. Inside, behind the shop, was the restaurant, superbly decorated with anchors and nautical ephemera, and we settled happily to the first courses. Then the waiter asked us to choose our fish from the display in the shop. By mutual decision, another Englishman, Dawson, and I were delegated to choose for all of us, and found ourselves faced by masses of ugly Mediterranean fish, which we had never even seen before. We chose some which looked most like North Sea fish, and thoroughly enjoyed our meal. Next day everyone except my friend Dick Couch and I and a Japanese delegate, were dramatically ill. We had all eaten the same and concluded that the trouble was that while Dick Couch and I alone had drunk wine, and our Japanese colleague had drunk *nothing*, all others had drunk copious quantities of beer and *water*.

At Ottawa in 1975, another of my countrymen was scarcely seen at the Conference, until at the end he pushed his way into the official photograph, because, he said, otherwise there would be no evidence that he had even been to Canada.

Mr. Chairman, lest you think that I, like him, have a very shallow, indeed frivolous, view of the Conference, let me remind you that its work is enshrined in seventy years of superb transactions containing the record of immense co-operative research and scholarship. When I left the tank world twenty years ago David Murdey, who started his career at St. Albans, pointed out that one half of the decisions and recommendations of the Conference to that date had originated at St. Albans. That tank has long gone, but I am proud to have been a Tank Superintendent and a Member of the ITTC. My lasting memory is of a great deal of fascinating work, accompanied by a lot of fun together in places we might otherwise not have visited, all leading to the formation of great and enduring personal friendships across many frontiers.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, please be upstanding and drink with me a toast, to the International Towing Tank Conference.