

## The RDX Lab

When the decision was taken to build the RDX Pilot Plant on the South Site a new laboratory facility was needed so a small hut was built adjacent to the Main Lab specifically for that purpose (*presumably the 'Green Hut' that still stands. Ed.*)

This was necessary since one of the specification tests (carbon content) was so sensitive to contamination that a relatively clean atmosphere was required (even blowing into the reaction flask was enough to give erroneous results). Many rumours circulated about this new material, in particular that it turned one green. At least a change from the bright yellow from Tetryl that I was at the time! But eventually the lab was up and running.

Then, disaster; 'Our Lab' was to be taken over by a lot from Woolwich who had been bombed out. We didn't think much of that and, for a time, there was a certain animosity between us.

Ernie Bowell was one of the first 'evacuees', the others that I remember were: Wood, Clarke, Kemp, Quick, Townley (on whom I played the TNT coated bluebottle trick mentioned in an earlier edition) and, in particular, G J Bennington-Davies. We soon began to fraternise, especially when we discovered that they had an alternative use for the extraction bath, which was to keep a continuous supply (source unknown) of hot coffee available.

**Jim Jeacocke JUNE 2004**

---

## Initiation Japes - One That Went Wrong

We generally played japes on new entrants in the late 1930s and one I recall had unfortunate consequences, A large funnel was stuffed down the waistband of the victim's trousers and a coin placed on his forehead which was tipped back. He was required to tip the coin into the funnel. Before he could do that a beaker of cold water was emptied into the funnel. We soon found that acetone was more effective since it froze the nether regions. Unfortunately, Gary Cooper joined when he was several years older than most of us and he was wealthy enough to have invested in the new fashionable Celanese underwear. He not only got very cold but was enclosed in a sticky mess as Celanese was somewhat soluble in acetone!

**Dick Doe JUNE 2004**