

It was during the ICING Charity Dinner evening, last October that I was whisked back over forty years to the last few months of my apprenticeship.

Our Ambassador, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles gave a short address and happened to remark on the significant number of “double-barreled” names within the RGBB.

This started me thinking as HMA’s name always seemed to ring a bell and not just because of his recent appointments within this region.

The penny suddenly dropped, (in old money of course). During the last few months of my apprenticeship I was assigned to the metallurgical laboratory within my company, in an attempt to teach me some clever technical stuff and to be engaged in quality control.

A part of my duties was to monitor quality standards of incoming supplies against some rigid MoD standards. (I used to build heavy tank transporters amongst many other vehicles).

A specified metal protective finish that I became involved with was known as “SHERARDISING” !!!

This was a metal protective process invented by one Sherard Osborn Cowper-Coles, about one hundred years ago.

The process was far superior to others at the time, such as galvanizing, as it was ideal for protecting intricate parts, such as nuts and bolts. The new unique idea used the known protective qualities of zinc in a revolutionary way. The parts to be treated were put in a metal rotary drum along with zinc powder, a flux to deoxidize, and a fine abrasive sand to scour the surfaces of the products. The whole drum with its contents was rotated slowly whilst being heated up to 400 – 500°C for a few hours.

The final result was a nice corrosion resisting defused

[Reflecting on the piece above, I started to speculate on what other information might be hidden away in other peoples names. In Chris Maybury’s case I discovered that the family name traces back to to Norman origin and first appeared in Medieval records in Cheshire where they were seated as Lords of the Manor of Marbury. My own family name, Mead, apparently has a family motto: Toujours pret! Ready for what I wonder?

Anyway, the little grey cells eventually started to grind and voila a little test has been devised. Can you identify these characters from the jumble of words - Ed]

That the Chairman “knew boule” although apt, was probably too easy for you to solve but can you guess who “wore a new sari”?

zinc / iron alloy over the complete surfaces of all the components, reaching every crevice. The process did not interfere with the designed dimensions of the items, nor their mechanical properties and maintained its durability during use, such as the tightening of nuts and bolts. Sherard patented the process in 1901. Surely, a most significant contribution to our noble British industry.

The original SCC was borne on the Isle of Wight in 1867 and from what I understand, was largely self-taught. The ability and will to apply his powers of original, lateral thinking to meet the domestic and industrial needs of his time was very evident.

Well, I supped a bit more refreshment and plucked up enough courage to approach HMA.

“Have you ever heard of Sherardising” I nervously asked.

“Yes, it’s a process invented by my grandfather” was a surprised HMA’s reply and after enquiring how I came to know about such things, our Ambassador went on to inform me of other interesting inventions created by his recent ancestor. But that’s surely another story.

The Sherardising process is still in good use today, for quality applications but sometimes modified by using inert gasses instead the flux. Often today’s parts receive additional treatments, such as a zinc chromate final passivation.

Sadly, the Sherardising process is often considered a bit too time consuming for some of today’s mass produced parts and many suppliers resort to the faster, cheaper and inferior zinc plating.

Who else out there can have some claim to fame?

For starters, my dad did play the drums at Julie Andrews’ 21st birthday party. That of course was in the good old days before discos!

What about “herald or swan” or “tall prime men”, Do you think they’re related? Then of course there’s that other dynamic duo “nude lassie dog” and “age-old rum sage” better known as she who “sends dialogue” and her partner “rugged as a mole”.

Would you book your flight with “me slim jane” or do you fly courtesy of “african word”? How do you feel about banking with “ruby leg stain” or riding pillion with “my ruby chairs” or do you feel safer with “lincolns boil”? And can you guess who “liked raw wine”?

Just in case you’re gaging for more of the same, (though I very much doubt it) how about “posh led coarser crew”, and his deputy the “born lawyer”. Well if you’re not sure, here’s a final clue: they’re all members of the “dry tarnish of spurious gibberish”!

WHAT’S IN A NAME

by Chris Maybury

WHAT’S IN YOUR NAME