

Stan Griffiths Instrument Collection

As we promised in last issue this is a continuation of our interview with Stan Griffiths about his collection of Tek instruments.

When did you start collecting instruments?

I started seriously collecting when I was a sales engineer at Tektronix in the early '70's.

Why Collect Tek instruments

I sort of fell into this. I was selling instruments to the University of Washington. They had a bunch of scopes they couldn't afford to get fixed. Having a background in the service center I fixed some for them. They were using one for a doorstop, which had a high voltage problem that I fixed for them. That's when they told me they had twenty more in the basement that they didn't know what to do with. We struck a deal in which out of each four instruments I would fix one for them, leaving three for me, one usually being for parts and two good ones. I thought I might be able to sell some to hobbyists. I found there was way too much work in that, even after having the scopes in my possession for free. That is when I decided to write my book. I kept the scopes from that bunch. I just liked them, which is how I got started. I had built a service center at home so I could repair the scopes for the University of Washington. They just became a neat thing to have. People would come around, admire them. I thought it would be good to have more. This just encouraged me, one thing led to another.

How many instruments do you have in your collection?

About 1150, which varies. More arrive here than leave. I am not anxiously looking for more instruments, I do not have the space. Even though my storage space is at a premium, I can always find enough room to save old Tek instruments from the landfill. There are however a few instruments that I am specifically interested in. 560 series plug-ins, 3A2, 3B2. Another one that comes to mind, that isn't all that old is a 432, and a 434. There are a couple Sony/Tek instruments that would be nice to have, 326, 335, but tend to be too expensive. I don't have anything in the 200 series. 211, 212, 213, or 214. They are still being used. I don't have much of a budget. It sounds like I have a lot of instruments. Probably the average I paid for instruments is less than \$10.00. If you wonder where I can get instruments under \$10.00, well I bought one estate that had 300 instruments for \$800.00, which brings the average price down, those instruments were less than \$3.00 each. They're not worth much more than that.

One thing I didn't mention is I would like to have a 104 or 104A. I think it is the first commercial instrument Tek ever sold. I wasn't working for Tek then. The other thing I would really like to have is a Tek electron microscope. No one knows where they are. I don't have a single thing out of Tektronix's machine control adventure. A 1791 (a control tape verifier) or a

1792 would be real nice, or any kind of machine control, there were very few made as Tek backed out of this market very early.

Tell me about a couple of interesting acquisitions.

People often think I should be excited about prototypes, however I am not. The documentation usually doesn't catch up with the instrument until near the introduction of the instrument into the field. It is hard to make a prototype work very well. Usually the performance is less than satisfactory, and it is not representative of the instrument.

I am trying to put together a museum, and prototypes don't fit. I think people would like to see in a museum what they remember from Tek. There is an exception. I have a 537 that few have heard of as it never went into production. It was a 531A with a 537 front panel and a Hughes Memoscope CRT. I have one of those, and I understand there were only two built, and the whereabouts of the other one is unknown. I have a 208, which was made by Tektronix. It has a bi-stable split screen CRT. It did get into production. I understand they made about 70 of them, but discontinued them because the yield rate on the CRT was not high enough. They were all called back. This one escaped the crusher and ended up in someone's garage. He gave it to me. I have a 570 Curve Tracer serial no. 195. It is a very beautiful example. I traded a guy two early restored 530 series with plug-ins, which is why I was able to afford it.

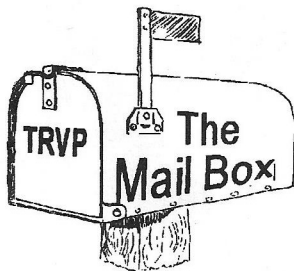
You had some interesting experiences finding instruments?

Many are finding me nowadays. The letter published in the TRN was helpful.

IDG products; I am looking for someone interested in collecting and maintaining some Tek history, mostly the 4000 series. No one has indicated an interest yet. I could really get them started with instruments I believe could be restored. Another thing that is often over looked is I can use incomplete instruments for parts. Sampling diodes are very rare. I have some tunnel diodes, but not all kinds. There are holes in my parts collection. There are parts in many garages in the Portland area. I cringe at the thought of parts getting tossed into the landfills. If you are cleaning out your garage and you have old Tek junk, I want it. Even junk you can't imagine, like old manuals. I also am interested in collecting length of service pins.

Tell me about the New York Art Exhibit

A sculptor is putting together an exhibit of a mockup of the Manhattan Project from during world war two. I sent two scopes, he sent me a 570 he found in the basement of the US patent office. The Manhattan project during world war two was too early for Tek instruments, but the artist doesn't have confidence in the Dumont scopes he has. He doesn't think they are reliable enough to run. He wanted 530/540 scopes, so I traded him two of these fully restored scopes for the 570.



Jim Manual and his wife Lynn traveled to Japan in September right after the September 11 attack. He wrote to say: We arrived safely a week ago and our daughter-in-law Kristy picked us up in their rental car with the flat panel global positioning driving aid and side mirrors that collapse into the car sides to get through the tight places in Tokyo streets. Their apartment has four bedrooms and four bathrooms and two air conditioning systems because Tokyo is very hot and humid. The only place I'm really comfortable is in some of the air-conditioned stores. Of course we are here to celebrate my son Robert's 40th birthday but he took off to help Nissan introduce a new car in Las Vegas on 12 September. The terrorist attack canceled the car show and his transportation home so he is expected late on the 17th. Meanwhile we've been to the grandchildren's school, their soccer lessons, dance lessons, and finally Lynn and I got brave enough to take the subways and trains to visit a park in which they have moved and preserved 23 17th and 18th century village houses. The thatched roofs are 2 feet thick and the houses are held together without nails. Beams are tied together and sliding doors are fitted together with careful carpentry and I guess glue. They know the history of each house.

Meanwhile Tokyo has been rebuilt after the 1923 quake and World War II bombing. The 26.5 million people utilize bicycles, cars, subways, and walking. One subway station has a couple of lines that handle 5 car trains of 3,000 people each every 90 seconds during the rush hours totaling 1 million people through that station twice a day.

The television here is dominated by the attack on America just as it probably is there, I hope your lives have not been made too difficult.

Christmas Reunion Astounding Success

Thanks to Bill Tescher there were over 130 retiree, spouses and friends gathered at the Elks on December 12th. There were several attending that had never attended before. It is a real joy to see so many taking the opportunity to see and visit with friends and acquaintances. The facilities were nicely decorated, the food was great and as usual Evelyn Marsh was present to ensure that everyone was signed in and having a great time. If you missed the occasion you missed a great opportunity.

Griffith (continued from page 2)

How did he find You?

I think he searched the internet and came up with my name. I have a web page that supports early Tektronix scopes in conjunction with Bill Den Beste, who owns the computer equipment and is the web master, and a former Tek employee in Systems Division. Bill also likes old Tek scopes and is a computer expert. There are now at least 50 Tek scope collectors with 20 or more instruments.

Would you like to give your web site URL?

Sure, <http://www.repise.com> When you go there you will find Bill hosts a web page for a lot of different people. Search the list for Tektronix Resource area for early Tek scopes.

What are recent Projects?

I just received permission from Tek's Legal department to copy obsolete manuals.

We plan to make a concept book on CD ROM which hasn't been done before. The plan is to more than copy the book on CD, but to store the text in ASCII form so searching will be very easy. This will be a very time consuming job.

I understand you have some instruments on display at Tek?

Some of the instruments in building 50 are mine. We plan to have a virtual museum on the web. I have a 511 on display in the Murdock Trust office building in Vancouver. My fondest desire would be to have the Murdock Trust operate a museum, and I would supply instruments. I think their fondest desire would be for someone else to setup and run a museum, and apply to them for funds.

Anything else?

We are looking for someone interested in the 4000 series stuff, IDG. I could sure give them a big boost. Another area is television products, I have a few examples, but none that are fixed up. It would be nice to have a 3260, but I don't know where I would put that. The 3260 was by far and away the biggest thing Tek made.

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