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David Clegg (1963-1966)

We were in the old building near the Chamberlin Tower for my first year, and we were the first occupants in the brand new Muirhead Tower in the following academic year 1964-5. I remember Miss Kouttaisoff and Professor Davies very well.

At the end of my first year (1963-4), several CREES undergraduates went to Moscow (by train!) for several weeks to a summer school, together with students from France and several other European countries.

At the end of my second year (1964-5) CREES bought a Midland Red single deck bus, converted it to a camper van, and several staff and students drove it to Moscow! I didn't accompany them, as I had already agreed to go as an Interpreter with my brother in law, who was a teacher and took myself and 3 of his students by camper van that summer.

I joined a Birmingham based multi-national on graduating in 1966, which specialised in metallurgical developments in steel-making and over the next 23 years of Comecon's survival, travelled widely in most Comecon countries. I was involved in the first Licensing Agreements in the steel sector. This sort of business co-operation was just taking off in the mid 1960s, as the Soviet Union and the Comecon members were beginning to look for technical relationships with the West to improve their technology. All the Comecon countries had effectively closed economies from after WW2 until the 60s.

My first business trip was in December 1966 and I drove a Cortina Estate car from Birmingham to Dresden in the DDR to do field trials in Freital steelworks, picking up a technician on the way from our West German subsidiary plant near Duesseldorf. Next trip was to Katowice in Poland in a Hillman Minx to work with the Polish Foundry association. Great Times!

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