

Group MA-288, as it was.

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So it happened that in 2014 we were to go to summer practical training in Tallinn, Estonia.

The main (let's say, the only in the city) Tallinn's meteorological station is located just southeast of the city at a place called Harku. Quiet, nice, calm, and, most importantly, representative place chosen for the meteorological station since immemorial time.



*View of the main building of the meteorological station from its yard.*

The adornments are modest, but not that poor: not far from the main building there is an automatic apparatus to monitor the air quality.

To the left there is a theodolite rises proudly above the grass which is used to observe the movement of pilot balloons, and a little further there is a hangar formerly used for the production of hydrogen, and the observation site itself.

"Oh, what a native place for a meteorologist!" – You could think first. Observation site! You've been preparing for so many years for meeting with it, and have been learning to use psychrometers, hygrometers, frothing -at -the-mouth to prove classmates that urgent thermometer lies closer to you, have been trying to cope with gradient racks, actinometers and other cosmical devices...

And now you anticipate your triumphant passage through the carefully conducted lanes between devices and as you approach closer, you understand: "Oh no, it was not meant to be."

Because there are no lanes, and all the devices were automated ten years ago.

Not have time to droplet fall from the sky, as an operator of the station sees it on the monitor. Likewise with the other measurements.

On the one hand, it's just a load off one's mind: neither you come out every three hours nor hated calculations, but on the other hand, a meteorologist here is now just an observer, whose main task is monitoring the observation system and sending ready results to Environmental Agency and WMO.

It's sad to say, but all of our favorite aspiration psychrometers, hygrometers, voltmeters, milliamperemeters and anemometers found peace in one of the rooms of the station, build up as a museum. In the hall there is a little sad IVO on the floor. None of the oscilloscope was not found at the station by me.



*Time-honoured aspiration psychrometers is now nothing more than just exhibits.*



*Hand-held anemometer anemometers suffered the same fate.*





*The above-mentioned IVO.*

So times change, and the new always comes in order to replace the old.

I am glad only that something is everlasting: the technical manual, carefully collected on the shelves or any other Soviet encyclopedias, which is run to this day.

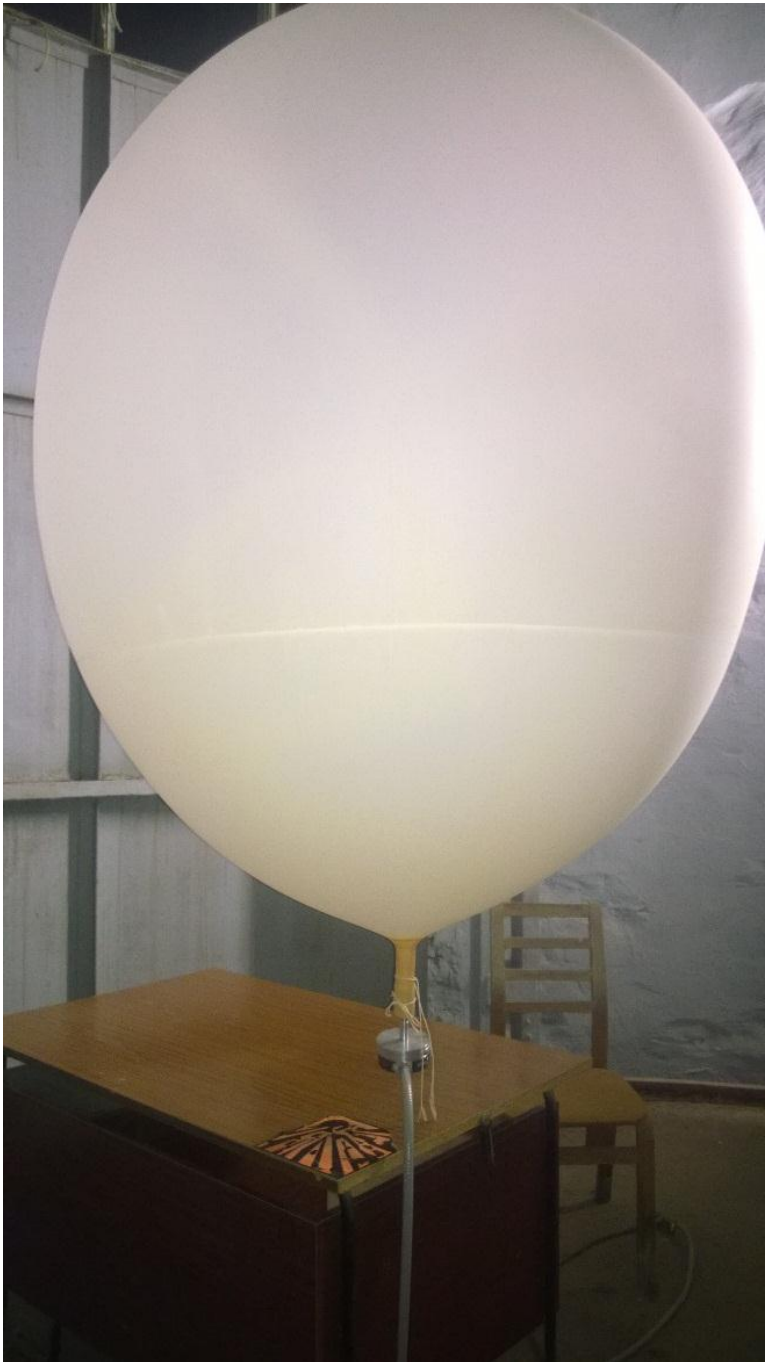
But the changes are radical and they continue to this day. Yes, there are two radars on the roof, station is fully automated, yes, but at the same time, it entails some problems, such as, for example, a permanent staff reduction. Recently, one shift consisted of 5 people who were on duty daily, now there is only one worker every shift.



*Now, neither of those awards are here, nor the former group.*

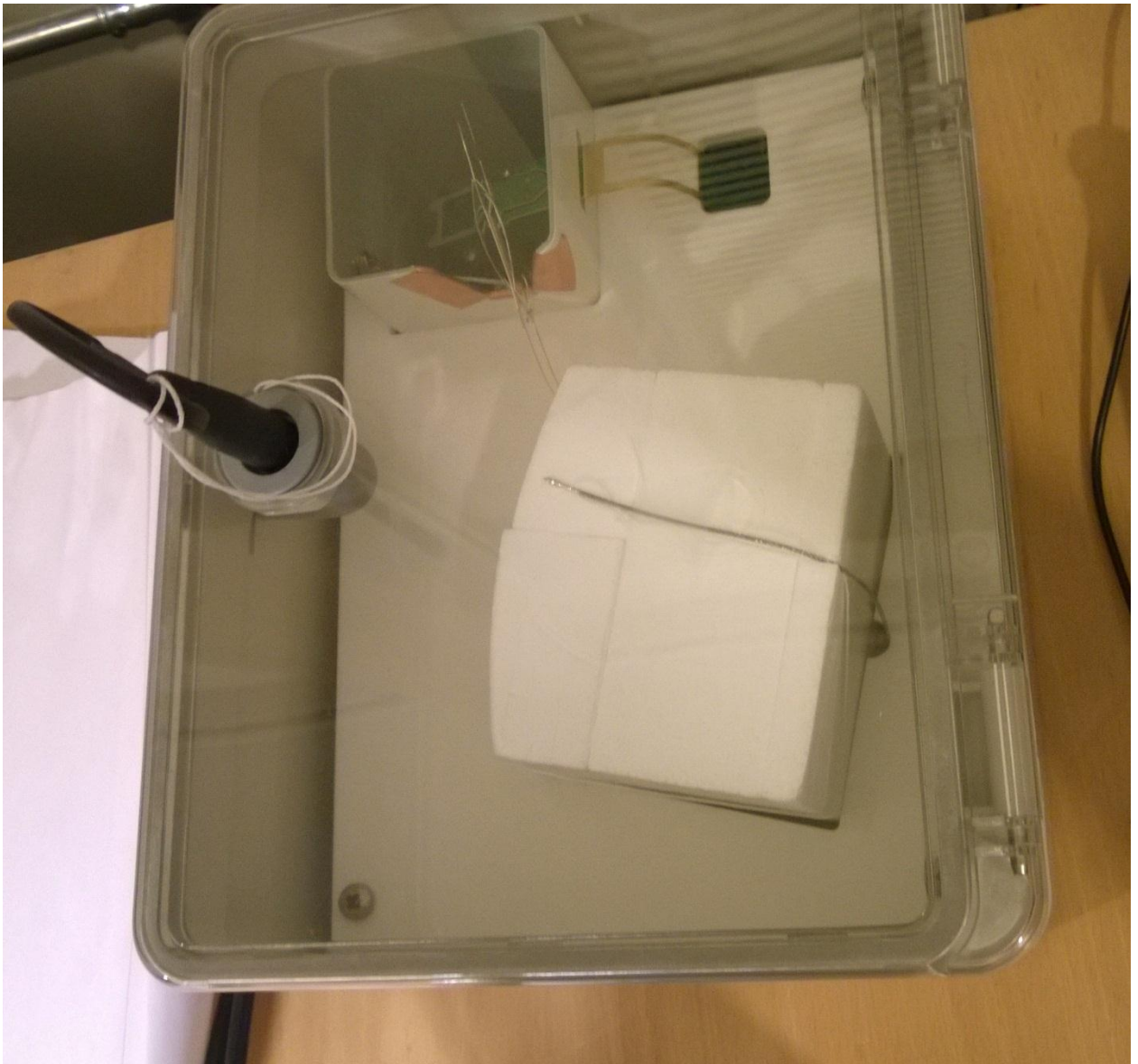
Anyway, modern austerity aftermaths are seen here with the naked eye: aerological probes now are run only once a day, at 02:00 a.m., to be precise, indeed before the 1990s sounding was performed four times a day. And the equipment is gradually changed: instead of proven Finnish probes produced by the company Vaisala, here now used cheaper, but at the same time less qualitative French probes.

What have we learned here? Seemingly, a simple question, but it is not so. The main problem of our new era is the total automatization. Yes, in fact we have launched pilot balloon, improved our skill of using a theodolite, even launched a probe into the night sky... but that's all. Nowadays nothing more is required from a meteorological technician.



*Refillable hydrogen balloon, which we used to run aerological probe.*





*And here is the probe. A pair of small sensors hidden in Styrofoam box. At the time the picture was taken it was on the calibration.*

Then, during the excursion to the Environment Agency we were told about what happens with the observational data after receiving it, what is the direct work of weather forecasters and experts in the field of aviation meteorology.

In conclusion, I would like to say that it is always interesting to see the modern meteorological equipment and to work with it myself. But unfortunately, students of the meteorological department of RSHU have no opportunity to practice with the new equipment during the education. On the other hand, practice in another country is aimed to learn something new, to see the technical equipment of the meteorological service in that country.

And yet experience of this summer practice left indelible impressions, nothing more to say.

Anyway, we were not bored.



*Sunset-sunrise at the meteorological station Harku. In such a semi-darkness we were returning home after duty.*