

Fred/Freddie Irish.

Fred joined the Wood Lane Met. Lab. during the period 1958-59, at the invitation of Peter Gregory who had known him from their days together at the BNF (British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association). Fred was attached to the General Metallurgy Section under my leadership and was an instant hit with his colleagues and he and I became close friends for life. He later gained promotion to Section Leader.

Known for his repertoire of jokes, Fred could also laugh at himself. I recall him telling me about his interview for a job at the BNF as a young student. The interviewer was Dr. McKeown, a dour Scot, and all went well until he was asked about his hobbies. Fred said that he had to think quickly and came up with a few things including Meccano modelling. He got the job but, in his parting comments, Dr. M said, "laddie if you want to impress people with your engineering knowledge, don't tell them you play with Meccano!"

I am sure all Wood Laners will recall the technical report writing system in which drafts had to run the gauntlet of checking through the chain of command before authorisation by the Research Manager. I remember that Fred set himself the challenge of always including an obsolete word in his reports with the aim of getting one through the system, in particular, past Jim Condon's eagle eyes. I think he gave up when I became Department Head.

Fred was a keen Arsenal F.C. supporter and in his youth had been known to enjoy a game of football or even cricket. During the early 60s he talked me into taking up golf and would call in on a Saturday morning to take me and our golf clubs on his motorbike to a local public course. On one occasion we arrived to find the course covered with a thin layer of snow, and Fred rushed off to the shops and returned with a bottle of nail varnish to paint our balls red! I was never very good at the game and we eventually called it a day – or at least my wife did! I could go on for ages with my personal recollections of Fred and I am sure there are many other Wood Laners who could do the same. I think that Albert Pinching got it just right when he wrote in his recent note that Fred was always young at heart and part of the life and soul of Wood Lane in its heyday. Fred left Wood Lane in the early 80s and carved out a new and successful career in accountancy coupled with skiing.

I was privileged to be asked by Fred's wife, Vivien, to say a few words at the funeral about his Met. Lab–Wood Lane days without being too solemn and perhaps with a touch of humour. Following a prior discussion with several Met. Lab. colleagues, I included one of our favourite amusing anecdotes from Fred's repertoire. Fred was a special kind of person and I ended my tribute saying that he will be sadly missed by his many Wood Lane friends.

Alan Bangay.