



Just over 3 years ago the Mathematics Department had on its staff 2 out of the 3 longest serving members at Wood Lane. Sadly Doris Murton died, Harry Charman retired after 50 years of service, leaving George Kitchie as the 'Father of the House' with 46 years of service under his belt. When George retired recently he accordingly became one of a very select group whose longevity in this respect is unlikely to be bettered if indeed equalled.

To be more exact George joined the Staff at Wood Lane on 3rd October 1938 as an Office Boy and Messenger at a salary of 15/- per week. His letter of appointment actually states - "Your duties will commence today, the 3rd October", showing that the typewriters of the past could spell no better than the Word Processors of today. Apart from a temporary absence

of just over 6 months due to being 'laid off' because of reduction in staff due to the outbreak of the 39-45 war, and some later war service, he spent all his working life at Wood Lane.

Studying part-time he obtained his B.Sc degree from London University and became one of the first people at Wood Lane to be involved with computers. He later rose to be the Section Leader of the Mathematics Department responsible for the main-frame computer and various associated activities. He played a major role in the development of the suite of Tower Programs for Mayday Rd. and those on railway electrification for Kirkby. However, despite rumours it is not true that the George III Operating System was named after him. Indeed I remember being asked by someone in Balfour Beatty what George III was to which I replied : "We have a number of Georges at Wood Lane, George I is George Moore (who was our Executive Director at that time), George II is George Kitchie and George III is the Operating System on the computer" - Oh! he said, and as far as I know he still believes me!

George's interests were not, however, confined to computers. Some years ago (about 12) his interest in union activities and staff welfare led him to becoming Vice-Chairman of the Wood Lane Branch of EESA, and later the Wood Lane Representative on the Management Roll Consultative Committee. Concurrently with this office he was elected to be a Member Director of "BICC Group Pension Trust Ltd", and served as such from 1976-1979. In this capacity and later he gave advice on pension conditions to many members of the Wood Lane staff.

He was at one time a keen bridge player and more recently has become interested in snooker. However, he has a prolonged interest in travel and his retirement will give him the opportunity to add to the list of exotic places he has visited.

Obviously we all miss his presence around Wood Lane, and wish him and his wife Terry well in their retirement.

Maurice Rothman.

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