

## BICC Wood Lane Reunion news and gossip - Summer 2016

Exactly 50 of us made our way to The Bull this year for the annual reunion. The date was 20<sup>th</sup> May and, unlike the previous two years, the lift was working properly. Sadly **Eileen King**, who had cheerfully made light of the difficulties in 2014 & 2015, was unable to join the gathering as she was in Ealing Hospital recovering from a bout of pneumonia. **Shirley and Richard Hammond** arranged a card for all to sign. **Clive Carroll** is obviously happy to add his good wishes, as are **Peter Jennings, Peter Walters and David Sevant**.



*(Eileen has been greatly cheered by the card and by personal visits from so many of you. She has also enjoyed the reports of the reunion, and has seen many of the photos. At the time of this Newsletter she is still in hospital and pleased to see visitors. MH)*

Before devouring the excellent buffet that Kiki and her staff had organised and prepared, we paused to remember Absent Friends. Those known to have passed on since the 2015 event were:

**Christine Pratt** (Metallurgy)

**Norman Waterhouse** ("Projects")

**Michael Fox** (Physics)

Holidays prevented some from joining us. **Andrew Ainger** was in Guernsey, seeing their 3<sup>rd</sup> grandchild, whilst **Anne Huybrechts** was in France, as was **Alan Bangay**. **Vivien Irish** had hopped over to the Scilly Isles, **Elizabeth Ness** was off to Canada, and **Roger Hazelden** was in Venice.

**Barry Mitchell** brought news of **Les Ireland** who, when the Prescott library closed, came down to Wood Lane with Barry. Les now lives in a Methodist residential home in North Wales, (his daughter Judith is a Methodist minister). Unfortunately, he has been plagued with knee trouble caused by falls over the years and this has adversely affected his mobility, but he keeps himself up-to-date via the internet and e-mailing. Barry will be happy to help if anyone wishes to make contact.

The continuing growth and use of smartphones, with their attendant capabilities as a camera, resulted in additional candid shots to choose from this year. In this next photo **Stefan Verne**, whose knowledge of all things "Wood Lane" goes back as far as anybody's,

proudly wears the tie that was created at the time of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 1984. **Barbara Groombridge** has either finished her lunch or is preparing to do an “Oliver Twist” and ask for more!



Once again it was pleasure to welcome those for whom this was their first reunion. **John Flegg** was one of those, and he is seen here enjoying the buffet in the company of **Albert Pinching**.



John joined the Physics Department at Wood Lane in 1958, where he was soon joined by **Guy Secrett**, whom he knew from their school days at Latymer. A major part of John’s work involved use of the then-pioneering mainframe Elliott 405 computer, with its many valves and the need for a special air-conditioned room. He later moved on to Erith where he was briefly responsible for HV DC cable development, before finding his niche as a teacher at Bromley College eventually specialising in Software Engineering.

**Guy Secrett** was our only overseas visitor this year, but others came from well beyond the Metropolis. **Tony Blythe** came up from Clifton near Bristol, having moved there from Edinburgh, and **Sarah Cowper** joined us again, having missed 2015 due to her move to Devon. The north-western contingent comprised **Andy Platt, Jan and Peter Walters and Nick Thearle**. Jan and Andy are seen below finishing some of the excellent buffet.



As with last year, our photographers (many thanks) managed to capture the good spirit of Wood Lane in a group. This time (l to r) we have **Chris White, Nick Thearle, Eve Taylor, Shirley Hammond and Lesley Mulhall (formerly Irwine)**. It was good to see you all folks.



The other first-timer this year was **Ray Pinner**, who was prompted to join us following a day's cricket at the Oval where he met up with **Peter Raw**. Ray worked in Physics with **Tony Powell** as his line manager, before leaving in the early 1970s. Thus some of his former colleagues such as **Pedro Perez** and **Bill Dawson** were able to test their powers of recognition!! Ray now has four grandchildren including triplets. Is he unique amongst former Wood Laners? Here Ray pauses for the camera before continuing to catch up on 45 years of news with Pedro and his wife Anne.



**Bill Dawson** actually arrived a bit late, but he had been to .....a reunion!! Many will know of Bill's work and reputation as a JP, and he went to their event first as it was nearer to his home. Thanks for doubling up Bill.

**Rob Corne** sent apologies from Auckland, and also a photo with **Anne Buchanan**. Anne had been on holiday in NZ during the winter and, as well as Rob and Felicity, managed to catch up with **Annette Burgess**.



Another to apologise was **David Power**. That's the David Power who was in the Physics department as a young lad in late 70s/early 80s. The other David Power was the one who came along with his wife Lesley in 2013, and who was at Wood Lane around about 1960. He had worked with Alex Taylor in what later became Control Engineering.

The younger David, who hopes to join us in 2017, recalls working on "The Laminator", and being excited about having made "lightning". No doubt he will tell us more when we see him. He now runs his own company "Powerflex" employing 50 people, and manufacturing a variety of auto suspension parts, including for race and rally cars. His company has won a Queen's Award for Export Achievement. We look forward to meeting up next year.

At the 2015 reunion **Mark Hamlin** offered to arrange for a number of those present to visit Sir William McAlpine's private railway at Fawley, which is not open to the public and normally only accessible to the McAlpine family and the support group that maintain it; Mark and his family, all present on the day, are members of the group. Three others, **Bob Price, Bob Gerkin, and Brian Tilbury**, together with wives of the two Bobs, managed to get along on the day. The picture shows the group in front of the engine (where else?).

For this reunion Mark had to apologise as he was working on the railway!



A few more photos from the reunion can be found on the Wood Lane website which is kindly maintained by **Peter Walton**.

<http://www.woodlanebicc.co.uk/>

Our thanks as always to him for the work he does. Please continue to pass any potentially interesting material to Peter.

.....and finally, to repeat the message already given.

We will assemble again at The Bull on:

**FRIDAY 12<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017**

2017 is 30 years on from closure, and may be the last occasion when a significant number of you could attend a notable anniversary.

Please coerce and cajole all those within your circle, near and far, to set the date aside now, and join us next May. We aim to make 2017 a last “Big Hurrah”.

Your support will be hugely appreciated

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A full list of this year’s attendees and apologies is attached. As always, many thanks to everyone who supports, attends and keeps in contact – it is appreciated.

**Mike Hagger  
29 May 2016**

## 2016 Reunion – Attendees (50)

Jon Ballard  
Tony Blythe  
Anne Buchanan  
Clive Carroll  
John Childs  
Dennis Cooper  
Sarah Cowper  
Bill Dawson  
John Flegg  
B and Bob Girkin  
Barbara and Denis Groombridge  
Mike Hagger  
Shirley and Richard Hammond  
Alan Hopkins  
Sue Hurst  
Peter Jennings  
Brian McCarthy  
Sandra McCormack  
Barry Mitchell  
Lesley Mulhall (formerly Irwine)  
Sasha O'Bow Hove  
Anne and Pedro Perez  
Albert Pinching  
Ray Pinner  
Andy Platt  
Bob Price  
Peter Raw  
Peter Revell  
Annette Robinson (née Mattock)  
Guy Secrett  
David Sevant  
Eve Taylor  
Graham Taylor  
John Taylor  
Nick Thearle  
Carol and Brian Tilbury  
Stefan Verne  
Maria and John Vernon  
Jan and Peter Walters  
Peter Walton  
Malcolm Ward  
Terry Watkins  
Chris White

## Apologies

Andrew Ainger  
Terry Alleyne  
Bob Brown  
Annette Burgess  
Tess and Stuart Castle  
Rob Corne  
Norman Fairey  
Yvonne Ferrier  
Chris Finney  
Ian Fordham  
Steve Frost  
Andy Fry  
Don Fry  
Dave Green  
Ann Huybrechts  
Mike Key  
Barry Lambert  
Edwin Lightstone  
Janet Matheve  
Michael Pater  
Michael Poole  
Bryan and Pam Pledger  
David Power (Physics)  
Roger Seebold  
Viv Semmens  
Glynn Stainthorpe  
David Stirling  
Eleanor Tarbox  
Jerry Turner  
Celia Waterhouse  
Dick Weeks