

**BICC Wood Lane
Reunion news and gossip - Summer 2012**

If an unsuspecting Martian had dropped into The Bull in Shepherds Bush at lunchtime on 18th May 2012, and found 63 people eating and drinking and reminiscing in a state of some pleasure and happiness, it (we are not sure about the gender of Martians) would not realize that it was almost 25 years to the day that George Moore had addressed his staff to tell them that, after 53 years of distinguished work, Wood Lane was to close. It has often been said that the annual reunion represents a statement of the spirit of the place and not a wailing and gnashing of teeth and, whilst some may still point fingers at the “villains”, the sense of appreciation of friendship and enduring comradeship is far greater than any resentment.

This was this third year that we have returned to our spiritual home, and Robyn, Gary and the team were once again very welcoming. As a consequence we propose to meet there again next year - on **Friday 17th May 2013**.

As the years go by we cannot escape the sadder moments, and in the weeks and days leading to the event we had learned of the deaths of two more of our former colleagues, namely **Frank Walker** and **Christine Verne**. Added to those of **Vivienne Shepherd** and **Len Block**, whose deaths had occurred not long after the 2011 event, it made for a moment of reflection for all absent friends.

The sadness was more than compensated by the extent to which people had come for afar to be there on the day, and special thanks go to those from outside UK. From across the Channel we had **Dominique and Guy de Hollain**, **Mike Denton**, and also **Valerie and Roger Carroll**. From half way around the world we welcomed **Guy Secrett** and, for their first reunion, **Tess and Stuart Castle**. Those of us who hop on a local train or tube to be present will, I am sure, join in offering huge thanks for such sterling efforts.

Many of us have followed the events in Christchurch, NZ, after the earthquakes that started 18 months ago. Happily Stuart and Tess live in a district of the city that has more stable foundations, but their stories of the devastation, and the continuing aftershocks and uncertainties brought home the fragility of our planet. It was good therefore to be part of a happier moment as shown by this photo. Tess had already been to Marks and Spencerand why not!



For **Guy de Hollain** is was more about the fragility of the human body than the earth's crust, and his cheerful and determined approach to the scourge of Parkinson's disease showed how strong we can all be in the face of adversity. We wish him every success in the fight. In this photo he has support from **Peter Walters** and **Albert Pinching**, plus Dominique..... and a glass of red wine!



Mike Denton, seen here with **Ann Huybrechts** and **Nick Thearle** (plus **Sarah Cowper's** hair we think!) had also shrugged off the fact that he is half way through treatment for his prostate cancer, and came over from France. The determination will surely see him recover fully (and maybe with a strand or two of hair back) by the time we assemble again. Very best of luck Mike.



Stuart and Tess were not the only “first timers”. In fact a total of nine people were in that category, and it is good to record our thanks, firstly to **Celia and Norman Waterhouse**. Norman was known to many as a man who involved himself in a variety of the special projects in which Wood Lane participated. One of the greatest of these was the design, engineering and laying the Cook Strait cable between the North and South Islands of New Zealand in the 1960s. This was a huge achievement, and Norman was a fundamental part thereof, spending much time in the Southern Hemisphere. Celia, who left Wood Lane as long ago as 1962, was one of those in Mathematics under Dr Hall, where they made the complex calculations about the laying. Amongst other things, they used the early mainframe Elliott 405 computer which occupied the air conditioned room on the 3rd floor of McFadzean and, maybe anecdotally, blew valves every five minutes!! Those unfamiliar with the Cook Strait project can learn a little from the following websites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HVDC_Inter-Island

<http://www.techhistory.co.nz/Electricity/Cookstcable.htm>

In 1990 an Engineering Heritage plaque (see next photo) was unveiled to commemorate “Cook Strait”, which was the world’s first major sub-sea power cable link.



Two more from the impressive list of “First-timers”, namely **Roy Spencer** (centre) and **Barry Mitchell** (right), are seen in the next photo with **Anne Buchanan**.



Anne was proudly showing her re-grown hair after her successful treatment, and telling us of her recent participation in the London Moonwalk to raise money for breast cancer charities. For more information go to:

http://www.walkthewalkfundraising.org/event/moonwalk_london_2012

In the next photo **Chris Finney**, also a first-timer, seems to have eyes only for the buffet table, whilst whatever **Graham Taylor** was signalling to **Richard Hammond, John Taylor and Peter Revell** only he can say. **Richard Grigsby** remains oblivious to it all as he satisfies the inner man.



Other first-timers were **Roger Hazelden, Charles Williams, Jon Ballard and Gio Lusignani**. Charles and Jon were especially pleased to see Guy Secrett as they had worked with him in the Electrical Department in the late 70s/early 80s. Gio, for those who didn't know him, worked with Dr Mike Tubbs at the end of the Wood Lane era.

There were inevitable apologies due to age, health and holidays. Notable excursionists were **Dennis Cooper and Sue Hurst** (in China), and **Peter Raw** (South Africa). Peter tells us that he has relinquished his occasional weeks of work in Pakistan and decided to retire fully.

Albert Pinching reported that **David Margolis** was now at the St Mary's Convent and Nursing Home in Chiswick where he is being well cared for after his stroke a couple of years ago. He sent his best wishes to everyone and, with typical generosity, a donation towards the event. Our thanks and best wishes go to our former Research Manager. Others receiving care and attention included **Denis Groombridge** having some more treatment, **Gene Nalon**, who finds that his back is more troublesome than he would wish, and **Alan Hopkins** who had a fall and is also, at least temporarily, hors de combat. Best wishes to all of these, and to any others of our circle who are suffering in any way.

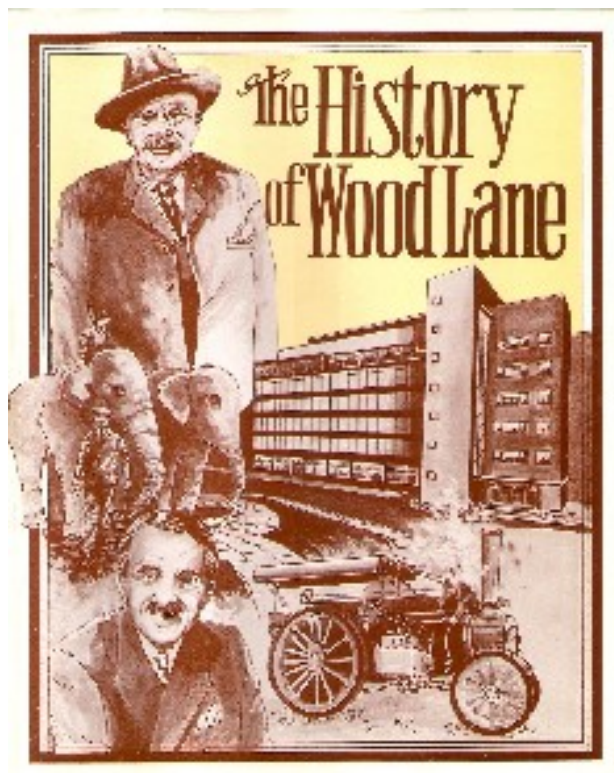
There is never any shortage of smiles at reunions, and who better to demonstrate this than those who were our secretaries and typists, exemplified here by **Shirley Hammond and Lesley Irwine**.



Very cheerful news came from **Tony Martin**, who joined us from his home in Gloucestershire. Both his children (twins) married in the last 12 months, and Tony is on track to be a grandfather by the end of 2012. Hope all goes well. Equally happy news was that the reason **Peter Revell** left early was because he and his wife were off to celebrate their Ruby Wedding Anniversary. Congratulations Peter, and thanks for volunteering to be archivist for the Bush Telegraph.

In the last 12 months a big effort has been made to scan old copies of the Bush Telegraph so that they can be viewed electronically. Special thanks in this respect go to **Michael Pater** and to **Clive Carroll** for their help with the scanning, to **John Vernon** who initially rescued such a large number after Keith Elder died in 2008, and of course to **Peter Walton** for loading them and for maintaining the site. We have been promised a further batch in the near future, so watch out for announcements. If anyone still has old copies of the BT, please let **Mike Hagger** know.

If you haven't visited the Wood Lane website yet please do. <http://www.woodlanebicc.co.uk/>



Amongst the souvenirs that circulated was a copy of "The History of Wood Lane".

Those who were at Wood Lane in the summer of 1984 will recall that it was published to mark the 50th anniversary of the official opening. All staff received a copy. Many of our former colleagues had left by then (and a few not even joined!). For them there is happily a chance to read it on the Wood Lane website. Go to:

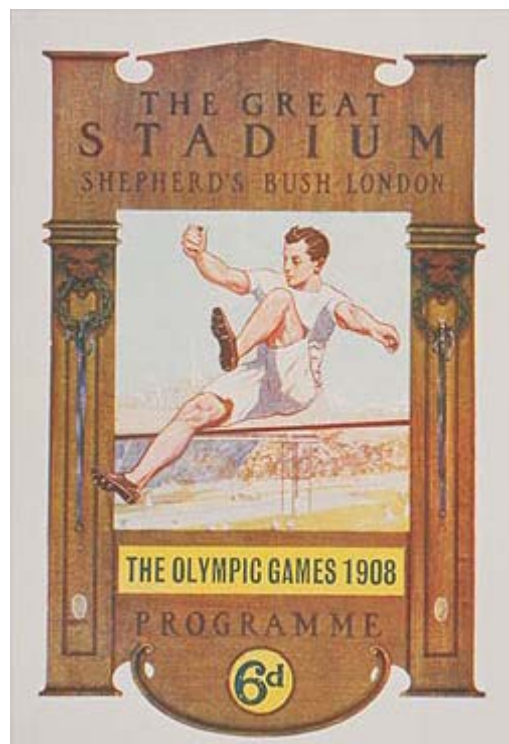
<http://www.woodlanebicc.co.uk/History.htm>

Finally an historical note for this Olympic year. Many of you know that the first time the Olympic Games came to London was in 1908, and the central focus for the event was the old White City Stadium in Wood Lane.

By the 1948 games, White City was less well favoured, and the Empire Stadium, Wembley hosted the main celebrations. Nevertheless our area of West London did host football (at Fulham and Brentford) and Hockey (at Chiswick and at Guinness's sports ground in Park Royal).

Through the years the stadium hosted speedway, greyhound racing, athletics and, in later years, pop concerts. It also had one of the 1966 World Cup football matches in England's qualifying group.

It was demolished in 1985.



We try our best to keep in touch with as many former colleagues as possible, but there are surely more out there. If you are a member of a social networking site, please see who you can trace and encourage them to get in contact so that they can be included in all general messages.

Additionally, and recognising that not everybody has e-mail, if anyone knows a current, or for some a more up-to-date, e-mail address for any of the following people could they please get in touch.

Arthur Boardman
Adrian Cole
Roy Farmer
David Goff
George Hamilton
George Kitchie
Walter Mascarhenas
Annette Mattock
Lincoln Tingle

Please keep the date of the next reunion free. It is:

Friday 17th May 2013

A full list of this year's attendees and apologies is attached.

2012 Reunion – Attendees

Pat Andrews
Maureen Ayres
Alan Bangay
Jon Ballard
Anne Buchanan
Clive Carroll
Valerie and Roger Carroll
Trevor Carter
Tess and Stuart Castle
Sarah Cowper
Dominique & Guy de Hollain
Mike Dennis
Mike Denton
Chris Finney
Steve Frost
Michael Fox
Bob Girkin
Richard Grigsby
Mike Hagger
Shirley and Richard Hammond
Peter Harvey
Roger Hazelden
Peter Huddart
Ann Huybrechts
Lesley Irwine
Peter Jennings
Eileen King
Gio Lusignani
Tony Martin
Brian McCarthy
Barry Mitchell
Sasha O'Bow Hove
Michael Pater
Albert Pinching
Wordy Price
Peter Revell
Guy Secrett
David Sevant
Roy Spencer
Graham Taylor
Eve Taylor
John Taylor
Nick Thearle
Carol and Brian Tilbury
Tony Town
Maria and John Vernon
Jan and Peter Walters
Peter Walton
Malcolm Ward
Celia and Norman Waterhouse
Terry Watkins
Sandra West
Chris White
Charles Williams
Ian Wilson

Apologies

George Bielstein
Dennis Cooper
Rob Corne
Gordon Couch
Bill Dawson
Norman Fairey
Ian Fordham
Andy Fry
Don Fry
Barbara and Denis Groombridge
Jim Hamments
Alan Hopkins
Sue Hurst
Vivien Irish
Murray Irvine
Barry Lambert
Geoffrey Layzell-Ward
David Margolis
Les Miles
Molly and Gene Nalon
Dennis Nash
Elizabeth Ness
Alex Ranicar
Peter Raw
Pedro Perez
Bryan and Pam Pledger
Roger Seebold
Viv Semmens
Glynn Stainthorpe
Eleanor Tarbox
Jerry Turner
Stefan Verne
Dick Weeks