

BICC Wood Lane Reunion news and gossip - Summer 2014

80 years on from the opening of Callender's Research Laboratories, and 27 years on from their closure, The Bull pub in the Westfield Centre, just yards from the site, was again the venue for an annual reunion. 51 former employees made the trip, and all agreed that Sarah and her staff did a thoroughly good job looking after us.

The gradual arrival of everyone was not without alarm – literally! With about 50% of people assembled a loud warning noise pierced the pub. We all got ready to evacuate, only to see the staff scurrying towards the lift. After a few moments the doors were opened and **Eileen King** and **Shirley Hammond** emerged triumphant. Next year we must arrange some fireworks as well!



Eileen soon recovered, as shown above. **Celia and Norman Waterhouse** shared the comfy chair with her, and erstwhile metallurgists, **Annette Robinson** and **Peter Raw** gave support.

As the years pass we learn sadly of those who are no longer with us. This time we raised our glasses in memory of six former colleagues - **Bob Lewis** (Metallurgy); **Mike Dennis** (Chemistry); **Derek Berry** and **Hugh Howatson** (both Rubber and Plastics/Polymers); **Peter Graneau** (Instrumentation and Control) and **Ron Tarbox** (Patents and Licencing). All are much missed.

Nobody managed to be with us from our overseas contingent this year, though two came close. **Guy Secrett** will be in UK in a few weeks' time, and hopes to meet up with some of you, and **Rob Corne** and his wife Felicity took an extended holiday in Japan, Europe and Canada before returning to Auckland.

Just a week before the reunion Rob took this “selfie” – outside The Bull. Sorry we missed you Rob, and hope you both had a safe return to New Zealand.



Despite a mix-up with his early-morning train, **Alan Bangay** again came up from Devon. Very recently he unearthed photos from the late 1970s featuring Badminton on the 5th floor, and the retirements of Norman Davis and Sid Adams. Some have names given, some don't. If you would like to help identify some of the faces, please go to the Wood Lane website at:

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

and click on “Pictures”

Thanks as always to **Peter Walton** for maintaining this mine of reminiscences. A few more Bush Telegraphs should be added soon, so do watch out.

One idea that has been floating around for a while relates to the increasing struggle between age and memory. **Mark Hamlin** showed one way to help, wearing a badge showing name, department and years of service. Well done sir – anyone else next time? The next photo shows Mark posing for the camera with (l to r) **Clive Carroll, Bob Price, Bob Girkin** and **Brian Tilbury**.

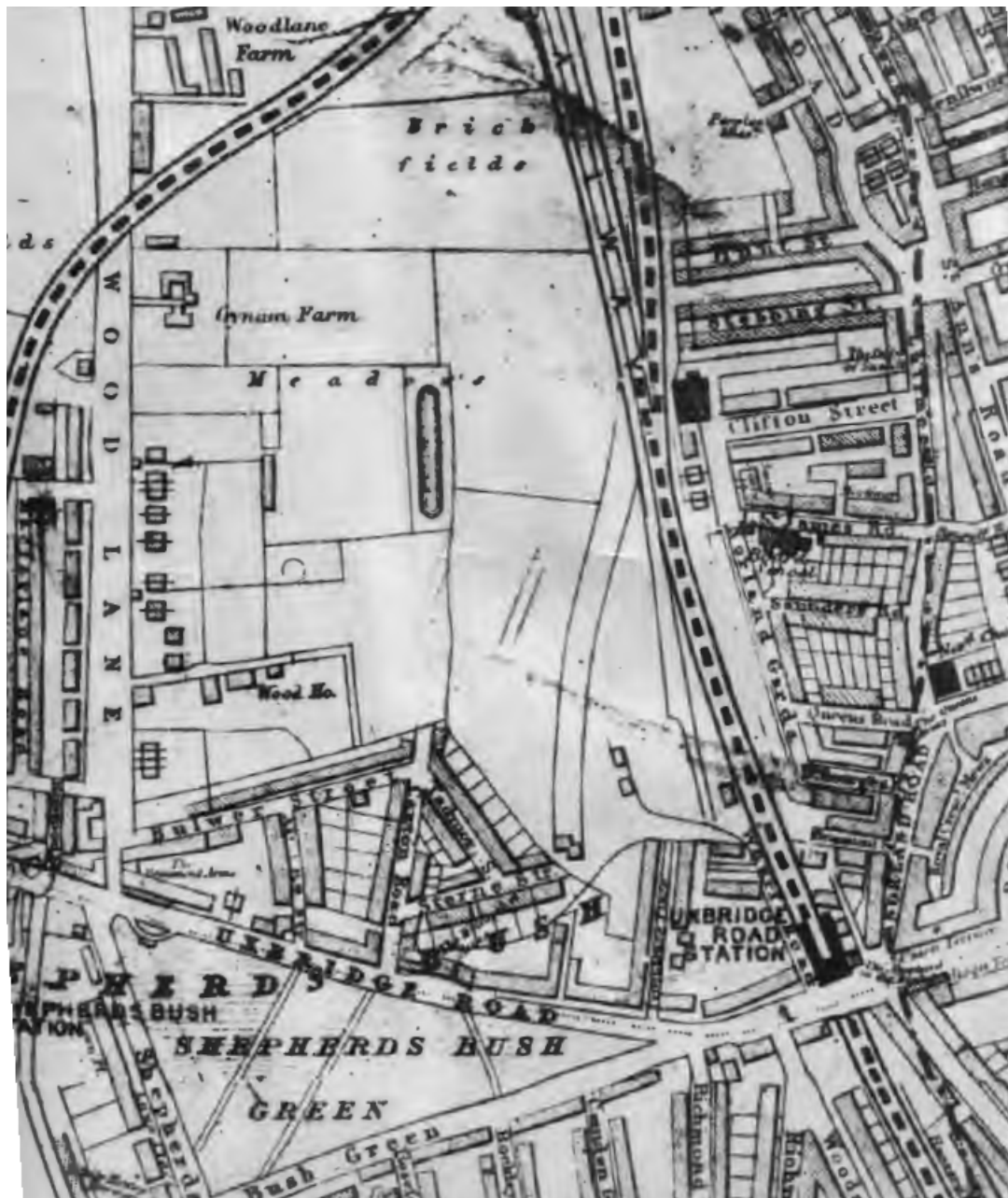


Another consequence of ageing is the approach of full retirement. An apology for absence came from **Dave Green** (Chemistry 1971-87) who, although currently employed as a service engineer for an American medical instrument manufacturer, intends to retire shortly and go to live semi-permanently in his villa on the Greek island of Kefalonia. He was there at the time of the reunion, hoping to meet up with **Derry Moore**. Another apology was from **Andrew Ainger**, who is also a regular visitor to the island. Maybe we should move the reunion venue!

Back to those who joined the fray and, in the next picture, it is clear that the Human Resources Department (Personnel when some of us joined!) needed to exchange notes. Here **Ann Huybrechts**, **Sarah Cowper** and **Anne Buchanan** try to keep **Nick Thearle** amused. OK ladies, keep trying – he is human and is probably some kind of resource!



Four of the other apologies came for hugely variable reasons. **Viv Semmens** was off scuba diving in the Galapagos Islands, **Richard Grigsby** had a freelance contract to take photographs at the Badminton Horse Trials, and **Lesley Irwine** said that the headmaster wouldn't let her off school!. Her real news though was that she is soon to re-marry. Very best of luck Lesley. The fourth was from **Geoffrey Layzell Ward**. He and Patricia have just downsized (but remain very close to the Festiniog Railway!), and some archival bits came to light, including the map in the next picture. It shows Wood Lane on the left-hand side running north-south, with the Hammersmith and City line passing over just where Ariel Way is today. The land that eventually became the power station in the early 1900s, and then the laboratories, and now Westfield, is shown as meadows. The date is not yet established, but must be between 1870 and 1900.



Jan and Peter Walters, who last year had the priority of their son's wedding, joined us again. Late in the proceedings their daughter Helen arrived with our youngest ever attendee – 20 month old Alexa – seen here in an earlier shot. Peter meanwhile met up with **Terry**

Alleyne who, according to our records, last joined us in 1992 in the days when we met in the evenings – may still have been the Duke of Clarence in those days.



Terry's love of sport, especially cricket and rugby, remains to the fore. For the latter he is now Chairman of Hammersmith and Fulham RFC, who finished a very respectable 4th in London North-West 2 this season. This stimulated a good exchange with **Steve Frost**, who looks after 180 rugby "minis" for Richmond, and **Mike Hagger** who continues to give guided tours to visitors of all ages, and from all continents, around Twickenham Stadium. Steve met up with former workmates **David Sevant** (centre) and **Peter Jennings** (right). Peter declined to say if the beer was funded by HM Treasury!!



One subject of conversation concerned the engraved window (Farleigh Window) that was commissioned for the opening of the McFadzean laboratory and graced the foyer. It is said that the window, a major artwork, did not survive the demolition of the building. If this is true, and we know nothing to the contrary, then the main remaining record is the small booklet produced at the time. This has recently been scanned, and all four pages can now be found on the Wood Lane website.



A measure of the spirit of Wood Lane came from the determination of **Sasha O'Bow Hove** to join us. He is one of the few still having a connection with the cable industry, in his case it is with Alcatel-Lucent and their submarine cable business, which in the UK is based on the River Thames in Greenwich. He had been in Chicago, at a meeting relating to a project going from Florida to Ecuador, then flew back overnight, rushed home to sort out a contractor working on the windows of his house – and arrived at The Bull just after the last of the scones, jam and cream had been consumed! Thanks Sasha; very much appreciated.

A full list of this year's attendees and apologies is attached. Many thanks to everyone who attends and keeps in contact – it is appreciated. There may come a time when we turn to the youngsters amongst you to take it on, and keep things going. Volunteers welcomed.

Last year we noted the possible takeover of Balfour Beatty by Siemens. It didn't happen, but the company is again back in the spotlight following a big profits warning and a change at the top. These things don't always just affect other people, so watch out in case of any pension implications.

Appendix – A little light relief.

A hand-written fragment recently came to light. It had been started as a contribution to the Bush Telegraph in 1987, but like all else, the BT folded. Maybe it is just as well, as the text (reproduced below) took rather a heavy swipe at those perceived as responsible for Wood Lane's closure.

Maybe some of those "on the list" are identifiable even at this distance in time.

THE BICCKADO (or The Town of Shitipu)

SYNOPSIS

The Great Bicckado and Lord High Everything, Bi-Gum-Gum, has decreed that the men of Shitipu should compete for the hand in marriage of the three little ugly maids, Ples-Cot, Hers-Bee and Lek-Sum. The only way to prevent this appalling tragedy is to despatch Bi-Gum-Gum and the other offenders "underground". The citizens of Shitipu hire the Very Low Executioner, I-Shud-Koko, to help them. He prepares a "little list" of those who "never would be missed".

Enter I-Shud-Koko, attended by En-Wun, Em-Ar, Tee-For and the rest of the chorus.

Sings:

As someday it may happen that some victims must be found
I've got a little list, I've got a little list
Of industrial offenders who may well be underground
And never would be missed, and never would be missed.

There's the man who shuts laboratories with daring and panache,
His acolytes who relish such an economic slash,
And the CBE who dreams that greater empires will arise
Like Phoenix from the ashes, cornucopia from the skies,
And that bottom-line fanatic the accounting analyst,
I'm sure he'd not be missed, I know he'd not be missed.

Chorus:

He's got 'em on the list, he's got 'em on the list
And they'll none of them be missed, they'll none of them be missed.

Sings:

There's the transfer-estimator who just now is quite contrite,
That deflated optimist – I've got him on the list,
And the architects with buildings that are looking for a site,
They never would be missed, they never would be missed.

There's the boss who tells the EEC that everything's OK.
ESPRIT and BRITE and other jobs go sweetly on their way,
And the man who sits like Solomon and listens to the plea
Of disaffected minions the likes of you and me,
And that PR chap who claims that many jobs will still exist,
I don't think he'd be missed, I'm sure he'd not be missed.

Chorus:

He's got 'em on the list, he's got 'em on the list
And they'll none of them be missed, they'll none of them be missed.

Sings:

And that memorandum-issuer who didn't stop to think
The Willy-Nillyist – I've got him on the list,
With propaganda writers from the pages of The Link
They'd none of 'em be missed, they'd none of 'em be missed.

And those who promise 4% to spend on R & D
But hope to leave the Company by 1993
To do the same to STL or maybe Metal Box
There's such a lot of other places destined for some shocks
That I'd better hurry up and fill the spaces on this list
So none of them are missed, so none of them are missed.

Chorus:

He's finishing his list, he's finishing his list
So none of them are missed, so's none of them are missed.

EXEUNT

With apologies to W S Gilbert

2014 Reunion – Friday 9th May 2014 - Attendees - 51

Terry Alleyne
Alan Bangay
George Bielstein
Anne Buchanan
Clive Carroll
Trevor Carter
Dennis Cooper
Sarah Cowper
Michael Fox
Steve Frost
Bob Girkin
Barbara and Denis Groombridge
Mike Hagger
Mark Hamlin
Ann Huybrechts
Shirley and Richard Hammond
Alan Hopkins
Peter Jennings
Eileen King
Barry Lambert
Brian McCarthy
Barry Mitchell
Sasha O'Bow Hove
Michael Pater
Pedro Perez
Albert Pinching
Andy Platt
Bob Price
Wordy Price
Peter Raw
John Reeves
Peter Revell
Annette Robinson (née Mattock)
David Sevant
Graham Taylor
John Taylor
Nick Thearle
Brian Tilbury
Maria and John Vernon
Jan and Peter Walters
Peter Walton
Malcolm Ward
Celia and Norman Waterhouse
Terry Watkins
Chris White
Ian Wilson

Apologies

Andrew Ainger
Tony Arkell
Maureen Ayres
Jon Ballard
Tony Borer
Valerie and Roger Carroll
Tess and Stuart Castle
Rob Corne
Bill Dawson
Mike Denton
Norman Fairey
Andy Fry
Don Fry
David Goff
Dave Green
Richard Grigsby
Jim Hamments
Roger Hazelden
Sue Hurst
Vivien Irish
Lesley Irwine
Geoffrey Layzell-Ward
Les Miles
Derry Moore
Elizabeth Ness
Michael Poole
Bryan and Pam Pledger
Bob Puckowski
Guy Secrett
Roger Seebold
Viv Semmens
Glynn Stainthorpe
Gerry Tan
Eleanor Tarbox
Eve Taylor
Carol Tilbury
Jerry Turner
Dick Weeks
Sandra West