

BICC Wood Lane News and gossip - 2022

After the interim Reunion last October, we reverted to a more normal May event for 2022, and 37 people came along on the 27th of the month to enjoy catching up with former colleagues. The Bull was again the venue and, as usual, the staff, under the leadership of William and Eric, looked after us nicely and provided a well-received buffet.

Given that it is now 35 years since the closure of Wood Lane, and a significant number of regulars are into their 80s, it is hardly surprising that the number of health-related apologies was high. Also, very sadly, we especially remembered another five who are no longer with us:

- **Dennis O'Sullivan** He worked for Jerry Counsell in the Physics Department in the late 60s/early 70s, before moving to Erith at a time when there was much work on Stop Joint Failures & DC cables. He died in October 2021.
- **Molly Nalon**, who joined Wood Lane in 1954, worked throughout her career in Diffraction and Microscopy. She is shown below at the time of her retirement. Her husband Gene pre-deceased her (see Newsletter from 2020). She died in November 2020 at the age of 96. The registration suggests that she died in the area where she and Gene lived for many years, i.e. Lymington. There is more about Molly on the Wood Lane website – see: <http://woodlanebicc.co.uk/docs/Molly%20Nalon.pdf>



- **Bruce Keen** After working for Hawker Siddeley, Bruce joined what was then the Instrumentation and Control Department at Wood Lane in the 1960s. By the time of closure he held the post of Director of Engineering. After 1987 he remained with BICC, working from Prescot, and having a second home in the area. He and his wife retired back to Surrey, where he died in early February. He was 83.

- **Guy de Hollain** died just after Christmas 2021, at his home in Uccle. At the time of closure Guy was Head of Radiation Department, and he subsequently came to a number of reunions, most recently in 2012 when he was already suffering from Parkinson's disease. The photo shows him with his wife Dominique.



- **John Taylor** As well as his professional exploits for BICC, lastly as a Section Leader in Optical Transmission Department, and his lifelong love of rowing, many will recall John as the young man in the photograph of the engraved window that adorned the entrance to the McFadzean Laboratory. John's final working years were with BSI at Chiswick. He died in late March, aged 85.



Perhaps not unexpectedly, none of our overseas contingent managed to attend, but **Yvonne Ferrier** and **Guy Secrett** both hope to come to UK later in the summer - all being well. If they do come over they will let former colleagues know. **Valerie and Roger Carroll** nearly made it from Belgium, but it could not quite be coordinated with a long-planned trip to the International 7-a-side rugby at Twickenham that weekend. It was nevertheless good to know that they are OK.

On the subject of rugby, **Alex Ranicar** told of the recent publication of a biographical book about his uncle, who played for England in the mid-1930s. Entitled "*The Flying Prince*" it not only tells of his uncle's sporting exploits, but highlights the way the family survived after escaping from the 1917 revolution in Russia. See <https://www.hachette.co.uk/titles/hugh-godwin-2/the-flying-prince-alexander-obolensky/9781529372892/> . Alex never emulated his uncle, but still manages a reasonable game of squash.

Another who still plays sport regularly is **Dennis Cooper**, for whom 5 sets of tennis is not unusual. He and **Sue Hurst** recently entered into a civil partnership, which was nice to know given their long relationship.

Back to the subject of books, where **Diana Connelly** is getting towards the end of her mission to publish all those written by her late husband Dave. The most recent is "Double Take". The latest list is at <https://tinyurl.com/dicbooks>

There was nobody present who had never before been to a reunion, but it was very good to see **Dennis Nash** who had last joined us in 2006. After working at Wood Lane from the mid-1950s, he went to Leigh and then left BICC to join Westinghouse. The final 15 or so years of his working life was to run, with his wife, a highly regarded children's home in Cheshire. He now enjoys retirement.

There were one or two who had experienced some form of Covid, but unhappily **Barry Mitchell** contracted the virus immediately before the reunion and had to stay clear. We hope it was only a mild dose and that he is back up and running.

The easing of restrictions on travel allowed some of our former colleagues to get away. **Anne Huybrechts** was at a wedding in France, and **Jon Ballard** was walking in Spain. Just as far away, but not on holiday, was **Anne Buchanan** on the Isle of Arran where she will be for the foreseeable future helping to look after her mother. She tells us that the remoteness requires a massive change of habits and behaviour, as well as getting to know the local people. She has joined a walking group for which her first outing spoke of "a relentless incline".

Peter Walton was another unable to attend – in his case due to an appointment for an eye injection. He wasn't looking forward to it, but we hope it all went well. Peter kindly still maintains the Wood Lane website at <http://woodlanebicc.co.uk/> . Other apologies included one from **Eve Taylor**, who had broken her back, and from **Malcolm Ward** who is suffering with his balance. We wish them, and all others having problems, the very best with the hope of rapid improvements.

As always thanks go to those of you who try to maintain contact with other former Wood Laners. **Brian McCarthy** told us that **Graham Taylor**, whose mobility has decreased in recent times, has just moved down to Devon where some extra help and care will assist him. **Maria and John Vernon** updated us with respect to **David Goff** who, despite his stroke last year, managed to celebrate his recent 90th birthday with a family gathering. Monica, with supporting care, has been looking after him at home, but he did recently suffer another fall. We have asked that best wishes be passed across to both Graham and David.

Finally, to tax your memory, here are some photos of Wood Lane's sporting activities in earlier years. They show:

- Top left: Chemistry Department's 6-a-side cricket team (early 70s?)
- Top right: A hockey festival from 1965, in what looks like typical British weather
- Bottom left: Badminton on the 5th floor of McFadzean (Date unknown)
- Bottom right: The Ladies 5-a-side football team (1970s?)



Many other photos can be found on the Wood Lane website.

Many thanks again to everyone who attended and to all who keep in touch. It is much appreciated.

Mike Hagger
12 June 2022

Attached: List of attendees and apologies

Attendees

Andrew Ainger
Clive Carroll
John Childs
Diwakar Choudhari
Diana Connolly
Dennis Cooper
Bill Dawson
Bee & Bob Girkin
Barbara and Denis Groombridge
Mike Hagger
Shirley and Richard Hammond
Mark Hamlin
Roger Hazelden
Sue Hurst
Peter Jennings
Lesley Kiss (formerly Mulhall)
Barry Lambert
Charles Lergie
Brian McCarthy
Dennis Nash
Sasha O'Bow Hove
Bob Price
Alex Ranicar
Peter Revell
Daniel Tan
Carol and Brian Tilbury
Maria and John Vernon
Jan and Peter Walters
Chris and Helen White
Chris Willson

Apologies

Maureen Ayres
Jon Ballard
Steve Bishopp
Anne Buchanan
Annette Burgess
Valerie & Roger Carroll
Tess and Stuart Castle
Rob Corne
Sarah Cowper
Alan Fenwick
Yvonne Ferrier
Marion and Ian Fordham
Steve Frost
Monica and David Goff
Richard Grigsby
Alan Hopkins
Ann Huybrechts
Mike Kendle
Geoffrey Layzell-Ward
Janet Matheve
Les Miles
Barry Mitchell

Elizabeth Ness
Valerie and Ray Pinner
Andy Platt
Bryan and Pam Pledger
Michael Poole
Peter Raw
Annette Robinson (née Mattock)
Guy Secrett
Viv Semmens
David Sevant
Rod Seville
Glynn Stainthorpe
Eleanor Tarbox
Eve Taylor
Graham Taylor
Nick Thearle
Peter Walton
Malcolm Ward
Terry Watkins
Charles Williams
Rob Weller