

## BICC Wood Lane News and gossip - Summer 2020

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 was 33 years to the day since the announcement of the closure of Wood Lane. Sadly, due to the lockdown brought about by the Coronavirus outbreak, there was no reunion at The Bull. Nevertheless it did not prevent a large number of people coming together in spirit and, at 1pm, raising a glass firstly to absent friends, and then to ourselves and the spirit of Wood Lane. Exactly how many took part, including those who for one reason or another had to do so at another time of the day, is unknown, but was at least close to 50. An analysis of every one who made contact over the period from the original announcement of the date, through its confirmation, cancellation and then “raise a glass” messages, shows a figure of around 80. They are listed in the annex. Thanks to you all; apologies if I missed somebody.

Within the category of Absent Friends, we remembered **Mike Squelch**, who died in late 2019, and also two whose passing had not been known at previous reunions, namely **Gene Nalon** (died 2017) and **Ray Slaughter** (died 2013).

Mike joined as a teenager in 1961, and spent his time in the Rubber and Plastics, later Polymers, Department. He was also a keen and valued member of the Social Club, being its Vice-Chairman for some years. He excelled at badminton, which he played at a high level, and was a member of the Wood Lane team that won promotion in the Hammersmith League in 1965. The photo below was famously printed “inside out” in the Bush Telegraph, but here it is in correct format – Mike is on the right in the front row. Who can name the other seven?



Ray was a long-time section leader in the Physics Department, before moving to Optical Transmission. He was an author of many learned papers – “The History of Wood Lane” lists at least ten from 1962 onwards. The photo below is thought to come from a Pensioners’ lunch some years after closure.



Eugenio Benjamino Nalon was Italian by birth, and known to us all as Gene. For many years he was the gardener, but “went indoors” for the final part of his time at Wood Lane, becoming the lab steward in the Polymers Department. In 1964 he had married Molly who, as many remember, worked in the Diffraction and Microscopy Department. The photo shows them together in about 2007.



Sadly there was a notification a few days' later that **Dr Wordsworth (Wordy) Price** had died from a heart condition on the morning of Saturday 16 May. He was 89. Wordy was born in Trinidad, and educated in Jamaica. He came to UK in the late 50s and worked initially for the ERA at Leatherhead, before his time at Wood Lane in the 60s with BDR. He then went to the University of the South Bank as a lecturer. He and his wife Sheila lived latterly in Oxshott, Surrey. He joined us many times at the reunion, most recently in 2017.

Turning to more cheerful matters, two of our number would have had a problem with a real reunion, as the date clashed with 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. Congratulations on reaching this milestone go to **Bill Dawson** and **Denis Groombridge**. Denis's day clashed exactly with ours; Bill's was a couple of days earlier.

Our non-UK colleagues did their best to participate despite the challenge of the time zones. **Alan Arnold** and **Rob Corne** in New Zealand, **Guy Secrett** in Australia, and **Mike Key** in Canada were all thinking of us. Mike had the biggest problem with a local time of 6am, so deferred his glass until later. Guy said that if things improve sufficiently he may get to UK later in the year, and Rob told of how well the country had done to restrain the virus, but that *"For now I am no longer on holiday in paradise, I'm a prisoner here."* As in UK, Rob fears for the economic impact, the more so in that he can take his pension in just over 2 years' time. We had also had a message from **Alan Fenwick**, who has joined us from Canada on recent occasions. He is in the middle of treatment for prostate cancer, and is targeting a good outcome in order to join us again in future. Good luck Alan. **Valerie and Roger Carroll** in Belgium also joined, being under a less challenging clock. Thanks all for being in touch.

Whilst there were a couple of suggestions to use Skype or Zoom for our 1pm raising of glasses, there was uncertainty as to how many could or would participate that way. Views would be welcomed in case we need to repeat the process another time. The two photos below happily show examples of what you might have seen under such a procedure.



**Helen and Chris White** seem to be enjoying healthy glassfuls, and **Malcolm Ward** obviously has some in reserve. Malcolm is sitting on an actual Wood Lane stool wearing his lab coat and holding an engraved Met. Lab. tankard, for services 1968 to 1971. His timing was perfect!



A major disruption due to the virus has been cancellation of holidays. **Viv Semmens** should have been in Namibia, and **John Reeves** in Spain. Happily **Anne Buchanan** just reached UK before the lockdown after her trip to Vietnam. 14 days quarantine followed before she could go to Scotland to be with her mother.

Others of you devote much time to caring for family members, or maintaining a watchful eye somewhere. **Eleanor Tarbox** wrote to say that her brother was rushed to hospital in early April with a twisted bowel, and was fit enough to have the operation after 2 weeks. He is now in a care home, which happily is virus-free. **Maria and John Vernon** have been in regular touch with **David Goff** who had been in hospital but could not return home because Monica had broken her collar bone in a fall. David therefore went to a nearby care home. However he is now back in hospital again, for the second time with respiratory problems. Monica is now better, arm sling gone, and is hoping to have him home again but is uncertain when. **Brian Tilbury** remains in some contact with **George Kitchie** who has been having support at home, and both **Andy Platt** and **John Flegg** are restricted in activity whilst caring at home. To all who are having difficulty – we are thinking of you, and to all those giving such kind support – thank you.

**Diana Connolly** said that she finally got around to publishing one of Dave's last books - "The Falstaff Principle" in both Kindle and Paperback. Anyone short of reading matter can access via

Kindle: [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Falstaff-Principle-David-Connolly-ebook/dp/B085VWZHJW/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?keywords=falstaff&qid=1584536454&s=digital-text&sr=1-2](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Falstaff-Principle-David-Connolly-ebook/dp/B085VWZHJW/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=falstaff&qid=1584536454&s=digital-text&sr=1-2)

Paperback: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/david-connolly/the-falstaff-principle/paperback/product-24349075.html>

Some other brief snippets of news include **Rod Seville's** move to Edinburgh, **Michael Poole's** continuing voluntary work for Citizen's Advice Bureau and **Glynn Stainthorpe's** retirement.

**Peter Walton** continues to maintain the Wood Lane website, for which all our thanks are due. You can find it at <http://www.woodlanebiccc.co.uk/>. Amongst many other things, it does provide an access point for long-forgotten colleagues. Recently there was an enquiry as to the whereabouts of **Dr P K Dhar** who in 1987 was listed as in the Electronic Development Department. The enquirer was **Pravin Panchal** who described Dr Dhar as his mentor. If anyone has any news please let Peter or me know.

Many thanks again to everyone who has kept in touch during such difficult times. It is much appreciated. As soon as a proper reunion is feasible, I will consult as to what we should do. Until then please keep safe and well.

**Mike Hagger**  
**19 May 2020**

## Participants and Correspondents

Andrew Ainger  
Alan Arnold  
Jon Ballard  
Tony Blythe  
Anne Buchanan  
Tess and Stuart Castle  
Valerie & Roger Carroll  
Clive Carroll  
John Childs  
Diwakar Choudhari  
Diana Connolly  
Dennis Cooper  
Rob Corne  
Sarah Cowper  
Bill Dawson  
Olive Drage  
Alan Fenwick  
John Flegg  
Marion and Ian Fordham  
Steve Frost  
B & Bob Girkin  
Richard Grigsby  
Barbara and Denis Groombridge  
Mike Hagger  
Shirley and Richard Hammond  
Mark Hamlin  
Roger Hazelden  
Alan Hopkins  
Sue Hurst  
Ann Huybrechts  
Peter Jennings  
Tony Jordan  
Pauline Kelly  
Mike Kendle  
Mike Key  
Barry Lambert  
Charles Largie  
Eddie Lightstone  
Janet Matheve  
Brian McCarthy  
Les Miles  
Barry Mitchell  
Lesley Mulhall (formerly Irwine)  
Elizabeth Ness  
Sasha O'Bow Hove  
Albert Pinching  
Ray Pinner  
Andy Platt  
Michael Poole  
Bob Price  
Alex Ranicar  
Peter Raw  
John Reeves  
Peter Revell

Annette Robinson (née Mattock)  
Guy Secrett  
Viv Semmens  
David Sevant  
Rod Seville  
Glynn Stainthorpe  
Eleanor Tarbox  
Graham Taylor  
Carol and Brian Tilbury  
Nick Thearle  
Maria and John Vernon  
Jan and Peter Walters  
Peter Walton  
Malcolm Ward  
Terry Watkins  
Sandra West  
Helen and Chris White  
Charles Williams