

Touchpaper

THE WALTHAM ABBEY NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS EDITION

December 1995

ISSUE 16

EDITORIAL

I apologise for the fact that this issue is a little late and also rather slim! Lateness is due to pressure of other work and slimness due to the paucity of articles.

Response to the Reunion was, once again, overwhelming but response to the re-registration exercise has been somewhat disappointing. More about that later!

When this newsletter was started I had no idea how much support it would get and how many of you would be interested. It is still growing with another 15 registrations since the last issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy Christmas with the hope for a prosperous and happy New Year in 1996 and thank you all for your support in this past year.

Norman Paul
Editor

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TOUCH

It's the same the whole world over!

...Please note change of address. In moving to the Fire Research Station I thought to escape the traumas of relocation - no such luck!

The FRS was relocated to the main Building Research Establishment site in Garston (only 10 miles away). That was in September '94 and we are still awaiting for the last of our facilities to come on stream. In particular a state of the art environmentally friendly office building due to be started this autumn.

John Rowley

It's a small world ...

..thanks for keeping me In Touch. I have a little tale to tell:

During this year one of the speakers at Probus I, Northampton, was the chaplain of Kimbolton Public School. That is subject should be 'Fireworks' came as a surprise to me until I learnt that Kimbolton Fireworks is a leading manufacturer and has been commissioned for many major displays in this country. In the early days the Dean of Kimbolton had given permission for some unused buildings to be used for experimentation and there was a later expansion programme with the erection of new buildings.

A letter was received from one Dr Jeacocke, HO, to say that Kimbolton had not been licensed for this work. He was invited to inspect the factory and they were able to prove that they had obtained permits some years earlier.

Dr Jeacocke was interested in the project and was able to tell them where they could acquire suitable buildings that were about to be demolished. At was at this point I was convinced that this was the Jim Jeacocke, formerly of RGPF WA!

Vic Clifford

..Thanks for prodding me out of my geriatric torpor! I always intend to enjoy reunions but usually run out of the steam necessary to get there. What's more I could never resist enhancing such occasions with liberal infusions of gin - then, how do I drive home?

However this year I hope to see you all again.

Jack Powling

...Many thanks for the September issue although I was shocked and saddened to read of Tony Davis's passing. I got to know him well when he arrived at WA because he worked for the Combustion Section on Hoppit Island where I spent my first 12 years. He was so modest and unassuming, much more than a chemist, but reluctant to talk about politics and social affairs but really so knowledgeable and ready to get off his backside and help when he could. I sorry I won't make the reunion this year due to a long standing family commitment on that day. I look forward to seeing you in 1996.

Ron Smith

...sorry I can't make the reunion this year as my arthritis means I can't stand or walk very much. Nevertheless I manage to keep busy as I have been asked by publishers to write two 'archive' books that will be illustrated with my own photographs. The first of these is on Harlow and is now being printed and the second will be published very soon.

So, as you see I have been quite busy.

Best Regards to everyone

'Gudge' Taylor

A Begging Letter

As an avid collector of cigarette cards I would welcome hearing from anybody who has such items that they do not want. Please get in touch with me direct on - 01959 514490 at work or on 01992 573422 at home.

Ted O'Day

We will be pleased to include any such 'advertisements' from readers. Ed.

DEADLINE DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

Mid February '96

write

fax 01959 516023

or

phone 01959 515632

BYTES

Anecdotal ..

Colin Lawson's note about Donald Hodge reminded me of sundry anecdotes that keep his memory in mind.

One was the story that I was told about Donald on a visit to Porton where he was remembered as the "Man who brought London Bridge to it's feet" Those who recall the story can pass it on to others in the privacy of the bar at the next reunion! Donald always used to claim that he was the only sane person in ERDE, having a certificate to prove it. However he did have odd quirks of behaviour, one of which was carrying on a conversation he was having with you when you last parted. This was significantly brought home to me on one holiday in Yorkshire. Alison and I were sitting outside a pub having an afternoon drink when up the road came Donald and Marjorie. Recognition was instantaneous, but the Hodges did not break step. As he swung past Donald continued our last argument with the telling phrase "What is more, Simkins, you do not know anything about ballistics!"

Reverting back to an earlier article - I was the miscreant responsible for seducing Dave Salter to put chessmen on Alan Owen's bubble car. I still maintain that it was not such a heinous crime that Alan had to report it to the WD Police. If Alan had spoken to any of the other organic chemists around he would have known that acetone was not the best solvent to use on a Perspex hood! Bob Simkins.

Although the facts of Bob's 'crime' were known to many this is the first public admission of it. Fortunately, the statute of limitation means that no legal proceedings will be forthcoming. Ed.

A BOOK FOR CHRISTMAS ?

You may have come across pictorial record books in the published series: "Britain in Old Photographs." Well! You may be interested to hear that the latest is "Waltham Abbey." The pictorial record is arranged according to subject:

- The Town
- The Church
- Inns & Shops
- Personalities
- Waltham at War
- The RGPF
- Out & About

If anyone is interested in obtaining a copy of this latest publication please contact:

Mr Ron Gray
61 Monkswood Avenue
Waltham Abbey

tel: 01992 712343

The book contains many fascinating old photographs of Waltham Abbey, many of which have not been published before.

The cost of the book is £7.99 and Ron Gray will be able to advise on local outlets. (ordering by post will probably cost extra for post & packing)

For those of you interested this book is highly recommended.

We've used up all the articles this year and desperately need another batch to get next year's issues off to a flying start.

Suggestion for a New Year Resolution ?

1995 REUNION REPORT

Another year and another very successful Reunion. Despite a number of last minute cancellations the final number (180) was around the same as last year, albeit with some new faces and some old friends missing.

A number of people started the day off with morning visits to both North and South Sites and we thank Bryan Howard and Steve Chaddock for arranging these. The main feedback from these visits was a somewhat surprised and sad feeling at the drastic changes that have taken place; especially on the North Site.

A pleasant surprise at the Reunion this year was one of our antipodean members - Peter Pearce. It really was a remarkable effort to come from such a distance to attend the reunion! Actually, Peter was over here on business but managed to arrange his visit to coincide with the reunion. He told me that he recognised most faces if not the names and by the end of the afternoon he was pretty well 'talked out'.

We also had the pleasure of his company the following week at Fort Halstead with some very serious discussions at one of the local hostelrys.

Peter sends his best wishes to everybody and especially those who did not manage to attend.

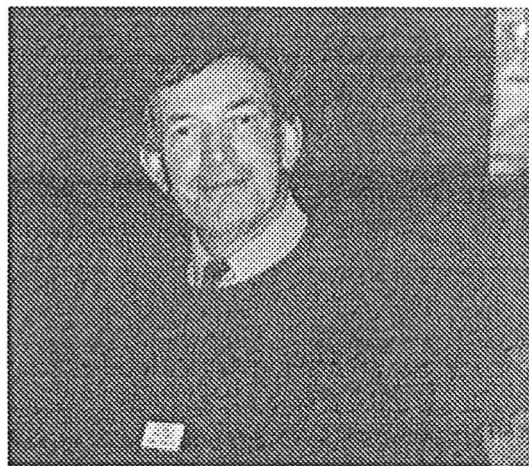
Many people commented on the improved catering this year which although more expensive than past years' appeared to be much appreciated. The old adage holds true - "You get what you pay for". Having pegged the cost at £5 from the outset the balance of funds has now diminished markedly. We have sufficient to pay the deposit for the hall hire for next year and that's it..

Yes! We intend to hold another reunion in '96, probably on 18th October, but that date has yet to be confirmed. The cost will definitely have to increase, however, we do not expect it too much higher (probably £6) although this will depend on any price increases by the Town hall and the caterers.

During the afternoon we were given a talk on the future of the North Site by David Stanners who has sat on the Steering Committee and is one of the trustees of the proposed museum.

He gave us details of the current situation and an indication of resources for funding. He would very much like our members to participate with views and advice in the development of the North Site and intends to keep in close touch with us through Touchpaper. One of the things he is very keen on is the 'oral history' and he persuaded a number of our members at the reunion to undertake some training as interviewees (quite a bit of arm twisting went on!).

It was a good day. Let's hope they continue.



THIS PHOTOGRAPH DOESN'T SHOW EVERYBODY AND A FULL LIST OF ATTENDEES IS GIVEN ON THE NEXT PAGE

1995 REUNION ATTENDANCE LIST

Len Abbott	Iain Carmichael	Chris Evans	Harry Little	George Savill
Laura Abbott		Janet Evans		
John Alexander	Steve Chaddock	Roy Fisher	Glyn Lock	Peggy Sharp
Christine Alexander			Beryl Lock	
Sue Alexander	Win Clark	Ron Fletcher	Vera Lodge	Alan Short
Charlotte Alexander				Marjorie Short
Yvonne Allen	Barbara Coe	Roy Ford	Dave Manners	Dave Sims
			Ann Manners	Brenda Sims
Geoff Allen	Edna Cole	Terry Foulsham	Denis Mansell	Bert Skinner
			Jean Mansell	
Bernie Argent	Geoff Colley	Pam Garrod	John McDougall	Malcolm Stewart
David Ashen	Pam Colley	Tom George	Julia McGuchan	Audrey Taylor
		Joy George		
Roy Atkins	Bob Cook	Ron Gooding	Malcolm McLaren	Mary Tingle
Ron Ayerst	Ernie Cooke	Brian Hammant	Dick Morrell	Bob Torry
			Deborah Morrell	
Michael Bagley	Sheila Cooke	Alf Hardisty	Dave Mullenger	Ron Treadgold
Eric Baker	Leslie Cooper	Pauline Hardisty	Derek Needham	Harry Turner
			Christine Needham	
Allan Ball	Ron Craik	Peter Hart	Ted O'Day	Val Valentine
Sue Barringer	Cecil Cullingford	Eileen Henshaw	Phyllis Oddy	John Vernon
Ken Bascombe	Tony Cunliffe	Dave Hewkin	Gordon Orr	Julie Wackett
Les Bates	Doreen Darby	Ron Holt	Suzanne Orr	Dennis Warren
		Jan Holt		
Cyril Beck	Ron Darby	Peter Honey	Dick Pace	Kath Weatherstone
Steve Bell	Robert Dean	Geoff Hooper	Bernie Parker	George Whitbread
Doreen Bird	Dave Debenham	Bryan Howard	Norman Paul	John Whitley
Norman Blay	Alan Dentry	Bernie Howes	Peter Pearce	Tony Whittaker
		Mathew Howes		
Dan Bone	Marjorie Dentry	Liz Howes	Sid Pegrum	John Williams
				Enid Williams
Jim Brent	Peggy Denty	Diane Howse	Leslie Phillips	Geoff Williams
	Reg Denty			
Gordon Bromberger	Dicky Doe	Rita Hugill	Avis Pollard	Margaret Williams
	Doris Doe			
Bob Brown	Gladys Eckworth	Martin Ives	Jack Powling	Stan Wills
			Vera Powling	
Margaret Brown	Harry Edwards	Jim Jeacocke	Phil Pye	Arthur Witham
	Daphne Edwards	Peggy Jeacocke		Gladys Witham
Paul Bunyan	Peter Eickhoff	Gwen Jones	Alan Read	John Wright
Jim Burgess	Dennis Eldridge	Dave Keil	Jean Richards	June Wright
	Irene Eldridge			Maurice Nicholson
Frances Burgess	Norman Elliott	Eric Kendrew	Bob Richards	
	Joyce Elliott			
Arthur Cadman	Brenda Elsom	Tony Kosecki	Brian Rider	
Pauline Callaghan	Mike Evans	Sylvia Krelle	Terry Rider	
Ron Campbell	Davina Evans	Dave Lee	Dave Salter	
Celia Campbell		Margaret Lee		

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT MUSEUM

The EFD Museum Officer, Kate Carver, has written to elicit our help and support in the projects they are organising.

The first of these is a project to collect Oral History reminiscencies from former employees. Kate Carver is also a member of the Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills Steering Committee which seeks to establish a major museum on the old North Site. Those of you at the reunion will also have heard about this from David Stanners who is one of the Site trustees.

Secondly, the EFD Museum is organising a Community History Exhibition at the Waltham Abbey Museum from 12th April to 12th May 1996 with the theme of 'Things of Value'.

We have been invited to take part in this exhibition and to document the history of the Establishment through; photographs, written accounts, maps, books, documents etc.

If any of you are interested in participating in this project please contact me. If there is sufficient interest we shall set up a committee of local people to co-ordinate our contribution. I would be grateful for any volunteers for this committee.

Any historical exhibition of the Waltham Abbey community must contain a significant element of the Establishment which has played such an important part of the history of Waltham Abbey.

I know that we have a wealth of information and potential exhibits compiled by Malcolm McLaren and this needs to be supplemented by additional material from us the past workers.

A successful exhibition will stand us in good stead for the intended Site Museum and may well help to get this venture off to a flying start.

Norman Paul

THE TOUCH PAPER REGISTER

A FULL REGISTER WAS INCLUDED WITH THE LAST ISSUE

AT THAT TIME WE DID ASK YOU ALL TO
RETURN A RE-REGISTRATION FORM

THIS WAS TO ENSURE THAT OUR INFORMATION WAS
ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE AND ALSO SHOWED THAT
YOU WERE STILL INTERESTED IN RECEIVING TOUCHPAPER

MANY OF YOU HAVE DONE SO AND TO YOU - MANY THANKS

MANY OF YOU HAVE NOT YET RESPONDED
AND WE ASK THAT YOU DO SO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU WE CAN ONLY
ASSUME THAT EITHER YOU HAVE NOT NOTIFIED
YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR THAT YOU
ARE NOT REALLY INTERESTED

BE WARNED!

FUTURE ISSUES WILL ONLY BE SENT TO
THOSE WHO HAVE REGISTERED

IF YOUR NAME IS NOT ON THE LIST OVERLEAF
THEN YOU ARE NOT REGISTERED

SORRY TO HAVE TO TAKE THIS STEP BUT IT SEEMS THAT
MANY COPIES ARE JUST GOING OUT INTO A VACUUM

HERE'S THE DEAL:

The Editor will continue to compile, print, sort,
staple and post Touchpaper to you in return for
some indication that you are really out there and interested!

CURRENT LIST OF RE-REGISTERED MEMBERS

Len Abbott	Vic Clifford	Victor Girvan	George McFarlane	Bert Skinner
John Alexander	Barbara Coe	Peter Golding	Elsa McFarlane	Margaret Smith
Sue Alexander	Bill Coe	John Gooding	Julia McGuchan	Jim Smith
Yvonne Allen	Eamon Colclough	Ron Gooding	Malcolm McLaren	Ron Smith
Geoff Allen	Edna Cole	Martin Gough	Penny McManamon	Colin Smith
Ron Allen	Geoff. Colley	Mrs E L Green	Gwen Mead	Roy Speller
John Anderson	Pam Colley	Bob Greenfield	Charles Meek	Pearl Speller
Jane Anderson	Paul Collins	Audrey Greenfield	Ross Millar	David Stanners
Bernie Argent	Bob Cook	Les Grindrod	Dick Morrell	John Stennett
David Ashen	Ernie Cooke	Jean Haigh	Dave Mullenger	Roy Stenson
Roy Atkins	Sheila Cooke	Brian Hammant	Derek Needham	Richard Stevens
Ron Ayerst	Janet Cooke	Alf Hardisty	Alice Negus	Malcolm Stewart
Greville Bagg	Leslie Cooper	Pauline Hardisty	Muriel Nicholls	Wendy Stewart
Michael Bagley	Maisie Corthine	Graham Harris	Ted O'Day	Arthur Stokoe
Colin Bailey	Bill Corthine	Peter Hart	Phyllis Oddy	Peter Stone
Eric Baker	Ron Craik	Mike Healey	Gordon Orr	Beryl Surridge
Allan Ball	Ken Crisp	→ Eileen Henshaw	Suzanne Orr	John Surridge
Arthur Bannock	Cecil Cullingford	Syd Hewitson	Alan Owen	'Gudge' Taylor
Tony Barratt	Tony Cunliffe	Dave Hewkin	Louie Owen	Audrey Taylor
Beryl Barratt	Bert Daniel	Joan Hills	Dick Pace	Aubrey Thomas
Sue Barringer	Doreen Darby	Donald Hodge	Jean Paddock	Mary Tingle
Ken Bascombe	Ron Darby	John Holloway	Dennis Panting	Peter Tingle
Les Bates	Helen Davies	Val Holloway	Audrey Parker	Dave Tod
'Maxie' Bear	Dawn Davis	Ron Holt	Bernie Parker	Bob Torry
Cyril Beck	Sandra Day	Peter Honey	Stella Parsons	Ron Treadgold
Steve Bell	Wendy Day	Geoff Hooper	Norman Paul	Harry Turner
Barbara Bell	Robert Dean	Bryan Howard	Dennis Pavely	Val Valentine
Stan Bennett	Dave Debenham	Bernie Howes	Peter Pearce	Peter Vandersluijs
Rose Bennett	Dick Dedman	Liz Howes	Ken Peck	John Vernon
Doreen Bird	Alan Dentry	Diane Howse	Sid Pegrum	Cecil Wackett
Norman Blay	Marjorie Dentry	Alan Hudd	Bill Pember	Julie Wackett
Grace Blows	Peggy Denty	Rita Hugill	Leslie Phillips	John Ward
Cliff Blunt	Les Dingle	Steve Hutchings	→ Avis Pollard	Bill Warren
Peter Bourn	Dicky Doe	Martin Ives	Cyril Povey	Dennis Warren
Jim Brent	Edna Donaldson	Jim Jeacocke	Jean Povey	Suzanne Warry
Frank Broadbear	Ray East	Vera Jones	Jack Powling	Dick Watkins
Gordon Bromberger	Gladys Eckworth	Alan Jones	Phil Pye	Kath Weatherston
Bob Brown	Harry Edwards	Gwen Jones	Audrey Quickenden	Nancy Webb
Margaret Brown	Peter Eickhoff	Dave Keil	Bob Rainbird	George Whitbread
Paul Bunyan	Dennis Eldridge	Jill Kemp	Ron Rapley	John Whitley
Jim Burgess	Norman Elliott	Eric Kendrew	Rita Rapley	Tony Whittaker
Frances Burgess	Dave Endicott	Tony Kinloch	Alan Read	John Williams
Richard Burlend	Charles Erwood	Frank Kirby	→ Dot Revill	Geoff Williams
Paul Burnham	Mike Evans	Tony Kosecki	Jean Richards	Terry Williams
Tom Burton	Davina Evans	Sylvia Krelle	Bob Richards	Margaret Williams
Lynn Burton	Nigel Evans	Ken Lawrence	Brian Rider	Stan Wills
Arthur Cadman	Chris Evans	Colin Lawson	Terry Rider	Harry Wilson
Pauline Callaghan	Dick Evans	Dave Lee	John Rowley	Doreen Wilson
Ron Campbell	Valerie Evans	Harry Little	Sue Salisbury	Arthur Witham
Iain Carmichael	John Evans	John Llewelyn	Nigel Salisbury	Derrick Wren
Andy Carter	Doug Eve	Glyn Lock	Dave Salter	Beryl Wren
Dave Catton	Roy Fisher	Vera Lodge	George Savill	John Wright
Steve Chaddock	Ron Fletcher	Roy Love	John Scrivener	John C Wright
Joe Chance	Roy Ford	Bill Makinson	Sheila Senior	June Wright
Vera Chaplin	Keith Fowler	Dave Manners	Peggy Sharp	
Mary Chaplin	Adrian Francis	Denis Mansell	Steve Shaw	
Win Clark	Pam Garrod	Fred Mansfield	Alan Short	
Allen Clarke	Tom George	Betty Matthews	Bob Simkins	
Andy Clayton	Joyce Girvan	John McDougall	Dave Sims	