

Hello to all QECA members and best wishes for a happy, healthy and rewarding New Year.

## **Settle Down – this is a bit of a read, but important.**

I am writing to you to inform you of several items of news which may affect you, and on one at least, we would like your opinions, if you have any. This is quite a long communication so settle yourself down with a cup of tea/coffee and make yourself comfortable!

## **Firstly, we need to do a few things to help our finances.**

At our recent AGM in October we highlighted the financial state of the Association. At current rates of expenditure we will go into deficit within about 4 years, so we have to stem the flow. The biggest drain on our resources is the combined production and circulation costs of Envoy. We plan to continue production of Envoy as it is extremely popular with the membership. Last year, we asked members if they (you!) would be prepared to download Envoy from our QECA website, but the vast majority wanted to retain their hard copy even though they have access to the website. At our October AGM we proposed that those wishing to continue to receive a hard copy of Envoy, should be asked for a one-off payment (in the first instance) of £5. The members at the AGM supported this recommendation, so in future we will be asking you to pay for your next hard copy of Envoy. Those of you opting to download Envoy from our website will obviously not have to pay. Decisions about subsequent payments for Envoy will be made at future AGMs as finances are reported.

## **Reunion and AGM 2005 – A New Venue**

In October I informed the members attending the AGM that our next meeting (October 15th 2005) would be in the same place (Franklin Wilkins Building). Those of you attending that last reunion will recall that the temperature in our rooms was distinctly chilly. I tried to solve the problem on the day but had a very unhelpful response from the Site Services staff member on duty. I subsequently registered my complaint with the management company (Ecovert) responsible for the building and I am not satisfied with that response either. Consequently I have arranged to move our next reunion and AGM to the main building of the Strand campus of King's College. I will circulate more details of the exact location both on this website and also in the Calling Notice next summer. It is only across the river, so a short walk over Waterloo Bridge from Waterloo, or from Charing Cross or Embankment will get you there. There are several bus routes which are convenient too, so you should find it no more difficult to get there than here in FWB.

## **The end of some Science courses – but a QEC Chemistry reunion.**

At our last AGM I also informed members that several of the science degrees run by QEC and now integrated into KCL, will be closing down in the next year or so. The Chemistry closure has been well documented and publicised in the media. The last B.Sc. students will graduate this coming summer, and our guest speaker in October will be Professor Martin Hughes of the Chemistry department. We hope that former Chemistry students and staff will take this opportunity to have a grand reunion to mark this sad closure. Less well publicised is the closure of several other degrees in 2006. These include Microbiology (including joint honours) and Biological Sciences (including Biology, Bota-

ny, Zoology and joint honours). Other BSc degrees being closed but not of QEC origin, are Environmental Science, Environmental Health, and Immunology. Food Science closed about 13 years ago. You may recall that I suggested (in my last letter to you) that former students in these QEC degree programmes might like to have a grand reunion to mark the closure of these degrees, in October 2006. Subsequently my own department (Life Sciences) has decided to hold such an event in the summer of 2006 around the time of the final graduation. The idea is that the final graduates get a chance to meet some of their forerunners, and that we celebrate rather than mourn the closure of these degrees. I am liaising with the departmental organiser to arrange guest speakers and I will inform you of the details when we have the final programme worked out.

## **A Prize or Bursary to celebrate Science at QEC**

Finally we would like to hear your opinions on a recent suggestion I made both to our new Principal (Professor Rick Trainor) and the QECA committee. This coming summer marks 20 years since QEC was merged with KCL. With the closure of some science degree programmes in the near future, it seemed to me that it might be a good idea to celebrate QEC and its science education and research legacy by inaugurating a named QEC prize or bursary for a student in a basic science subject (i.e. not engineering or medicine for example). The award could be for 'excellence' or 'achievement' or 'improvement' or something else if you have a better suggestion. Science degrees (single and joint honours) originally in QEC, that are still being run by KCL include Biochemistry, Mathematics, Nutrition, Physics (and Astrophysics), and Physiology. Both the Principal and the Committee think this is a good idea. I do because I want the name of QEC to live on as a mark of respect and a thank you to all the staff and students who made it such a great place to learn and to do research.....but what do you think?

You (and I) will be the people who will be asked to make donations to start up this award, and to keep it going. Do you want to keep QEC 'alive' in this way; do you feel your QEC education was of benefit to your subsequent career(s) and life; would you like to repay a little of those assets as a belated 'thank you'; do you think there's a better or more worthwhile way of recognising student endeavour; do you think science subjects and scientists are worth supporting in this way? We all had the benefit of our degree education being free at the point of delivery. Today's students in general have no such benefits so a financial reward for hard work and achievement would be appreciated.

Please let me (or any of the committee) know what you think. If we have a generally positive response we would plan to launch the appeal later this year, the 20th anniversary of QEC's 'demise'.

## **There was a lot here, so please let me have your thoughts...**

If you wish to respond to me, please use email if possible ([ann.p.wood@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:ann.p.wood@kcl.ac.uk)) or write to me at:

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Thank you in advance

Ann