

1948-1989 : Alumnus contacts with KCL

It is over six decades since I graduated from KCL and in that period I have had great variety of contacts with KCL & KCL alumni. This section covers the years up to my retirement from working life.

Saturday 14 January 1950

This was when my first personal contact after graduation took place. My Uncle, Rev. Arthur Millns AKC was one of the two clergy who officiated at my wedding to Sheila Joan Mason. My father played the organ so it was more than usual a family occasion. The ceremony took place at Holy Trinity Church (which was formerly known as The Harrow Mission), Latimer Road. Our marriage certificate described the Church as *Holy Trinity, Notting Hill (for St. Helen's destroyed)*. We moved into three rooms in the Vicarage, next door to the Church, on our return from our honeymoon in Minehead. We have just celebrated our Diamond Wedding Anniversary.

1960s

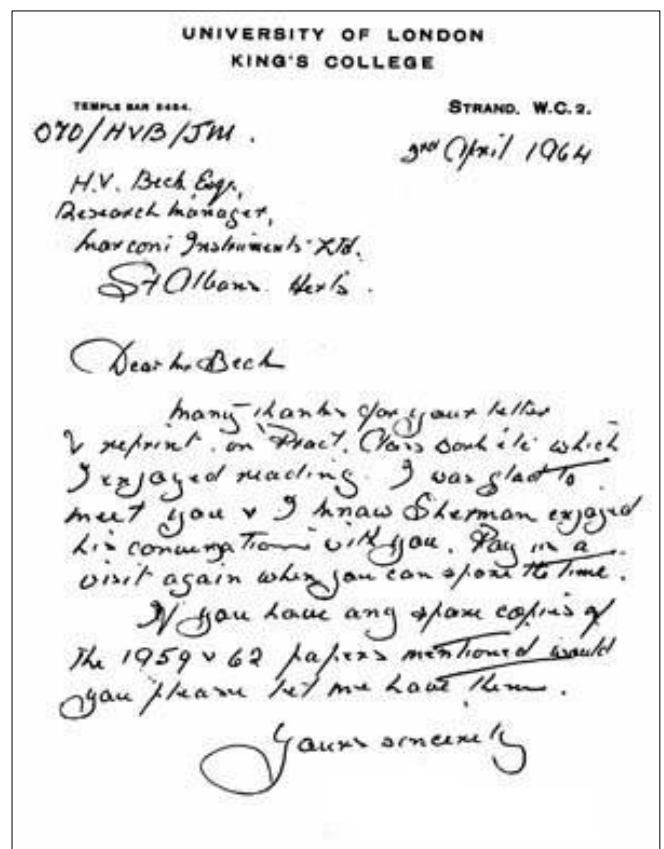
From 1961, at the end of my time at the Cavendish Laboratory and while I was at Marconi Instruments, I frequently met James Greig, William Siemens Professor of Electronic & Electrical Engineering at KCL, on IEE Committees at Savoy Place. These contacts were further enhanced by travelling with him on the BedPan line to our respective homes - he got out at Radlett and I went on to Harpenden. He was also on the Governing Body of Hatfield Polytechnic. In a KCL (150 year?) History he was remembered for his qualities of integrity and friendliness and for the constant help and encouragement he gave to all alike.

Part of my brief as Research Manager of Marconi Instruments was to maintain contact with Universities. On that basis, in March 1964 I visited my old Physics Department at KCL and had an interesting discussion with a Dr. Sherman, a Lecturer and a Dr. Chapman, a Senior Lecturer. In particular we exchanged views about Practical Classes and I afterwards sent a copy of my paper on Practical Class Work at the Cavendish Laboratory. I received an acknowledgement from Dr. Chapman, asking for reprints of other papers and inviting me to visit again. Alas I never followed up the invitation.

My association with Professor James Greig continued and indeed became somewhat closer during what a manager at Marconi Instruments called my wilderness period. We met on IEE events, I visited him on occasion at KCL and he invited me to lunch with him at the Atheneum. We got on well and I certainly experienced myself his friendliness and encouragement.

1970s

Around 1976, John (J.M.) Illston, Reader in Civil Engineering at KCL, joined Hatfield Polytechnic and headed up its Civil Engineering Department, which was on the main Hatfield site. I was based at the Centre for Management Studies at Birklands, St. Albans.



I have forgotten how we met but before the Illstons had moved into the area we invited them to tea. I think they had wondered about Harpenden and as I lived there and was a Councillor they wanted some information from me.

The Illstons moved into Harpenden and not long afterwards invited us one Sunday morning to coffee or drinks. There was one other guest present - J.T. Combridge, who had been KCL Registrar since 1947. I do not remember a personal encounter with John Combridge while I was an undergraduate but he had a quite a 'presence' in the College - he had come to KCL from Cambridge in 1922 to do postgraduate Maths, became a Lecturer then changed and worked his way up the Administration side of KCL. We exchanged the very few memories I then had of the old days. He retired in 1982.

John Illston progressed very rapidly upwards in Hatfield Polytechnic and became its Director.

1980s

I had a great deal to do with John Illston in this decade.

At my request I retired from Hatfield Polytechnic on my 65th birthday in September 1989. Soon afterwards I started fairly regular attendance at KCL events as well as contacts with alumni and a few students.

Harold Beck
November 2011