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QM FORMER STAFF ASSOCIATION

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Hon Treasurer and Social Secretary
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April 2015

Dear Member

I would like to be able to start the newsletter with happy events sent in by you but as these are not forthcoming, I have to report the loss of two of our members – John Reeve and Eric Booth. You will remember that John was the College Accountant. A donation was sent to Cancer Research at the request of John's wife. Eric was a Design Engineer and a donation has been sent to Brittle Bone Disease Research at the request of his daughter.

I was unable to attend the College Pre-retirement course in February, but am including a précis of the report made by our Publicity officer, Cedric Gilson, who gave a presentation, in an attempt to recruit more members for the Association.

Cedric said that the course went well. There were no external speakers but QM staff delivering the event seemed to appreciate the presence of members of the FSA committee. The 'audience' numbered only five but they were interested in the presentation. They may only have been within two years of retirement and not on the point of leaving so it is impossible to estimate when, or if, they will become members. One of those present asked why we information about the Association was not put in leavers' payslips and it was explained that despite attempts to do this, data protection etc meant it was not possible. Subsequently it was learned that physical payslips are no longer issued; staff need to download them individually in digital form from the QM intranet.

Notice boards for publicity purposes are no longer available throughout the College as their function has been superseded by electronic bulletins. However, a couple of places within HR and Security were found where posters were displayed. Cedric was also informed that we could include snippets about FSA in the various e-bulletins that are produced and he will continue to do this in the hope of keeping our presence apparent. It is pleasing to note that the FSA is currently receiving much improved cooperation from College employees with regard to publicity.

BERYL PAINE WRITES: Two years ago one of the suggestions I received for an outing was a tour of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden but my attempts to arrange this were unsuccessful. However, I have tried again and have made a booking for Wednesday 18th May, visiting back stage and front of house, commencing 1.30 pm. Back stage includes an introduction to the colourful history of the Royal Opera house and a look at aspects of current productions. As this is a fully working theatre, each tour is a unique experience and may include opportunities to see the Royal Ballet in class or the magnificent back stage technology in operation.

After the tour, which takes one/one and a half hours, we will take a short walk to the Kingsway Hall Hotel for afternoon tea. The staff there have looked after us very well for our last two Christmas lunches and I am sure we can look forward to a very enjoyable meal. The cost of the tour and afternoon tea is a subsidised sum of £18 per person. Please complete the reply slip and return to me, together with remittance, as soon as possible, but to reach me no later than 24th April.

The nearest underground stations are Covent Garden and Holborn, but I understand there are a lot of stairs to climb at the former.

Plans for an outing in June are still "in the air" but in July I hope to arrange a river trip from Westminster to Hampton Court as these trips always seem to be popular. I have to admit it is difficult finding new places to visit that are easy to get to now that the cost of coaches is prohibitive. Please remember that I am always open for suggestions of shows you may like to see. How about "Gypsy", in which Imelda Staunton received rave notices before the show moved to the Savoy? Also, I have just received news that "Sinatra, the man and his music" will be at the Palladium for a short period from 10th July to 10th October.

This will be an extraordinary multi-media concert for Frank's centenary year, using rare footage of the legend himself, a 24-piece orchestra and spectacular live dancing. There will be a Wednesday matinée performance at 3 pm and if I book by early May (for mid-September) I can get seats for £29.50 (usually £59.50). Please return the reply slip as soon as possible but no later than 30th April if you would like tickets. No payment is required at this stage but returning the reply slip will constitute a firm booking and I will contact you to confirm if tickets are available.

Beryl

BERYL RYAN WRITES: "Made in Dagenham, the musical", Adelphi Theatre, Strand, Wednesday 18th March 2015: Seventeen members and guests went to see this musical of the film, the story about the Ford Dagenham factory female machinists who made car seat upholstery in lousy working conditions and whose pay was a fraction of men's wages. Refusing to accept this any longer, they decided to take strike action. In the 60s this was a strike, which they say paved the way to equal pay. The Labour Party were in government and the Harold Wilson sketches were really very funny, but it did portray him as a bit of a buffoon and I feel he would probably have been "turning in his grave"! There was rather an excessive amount of swearing, especially during the first half, which was not easily acceptable to some of our party, but was probably an accurate representation of a 1968 factory setting. Overall it was a really 'feel good' show with plenty of laughs. We had very good seats in the stalls and most of those present enjoyed this visit to the theatre.

Beryl

Yours sincerely



Sheila Fenn
Hon Secretary

