

KCLEA Report of President to AGM 5 December 2024

I have been associated with KCLEA for many years – in was Hon Treasurer in the 1980s and was President about 10 years ago at a time of some despair as the Division of Engineering was being wound up. Since then, we have seen the School of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging Science rise and bloom at Guys / St. Thomas's and the Department of Engineering be reformed and occupy the amazing Quad labs at the Strand.

I Was approached at the Annual lunch Just over a year ago to see if I would again serve on the committee – I decided that this would be the last effort of what has been over 50 years associated and running parts of “ Learned Societies” .

Thus I came with a new set of eyes to see where KCLEA should be going – and in September wrote a paper outlining what I thought KCLEA should be doing - with a great focus on Serving its members, and put forward a professional and business like plan and structure which would be a way forward... and so I was put forward and was pleased to accept the role of your President

Report on the year

Sadly, the first step in this venture were not very auspicious -

Despite the incredible efforts of Bobby Dixit, the Events officer, the Annual lecture did not materialise – the problem of accessing a suitable room on the day that our selected speaker was available and then things changing defeated him, me and the Alumni Office.

However, the Annual lunch was held on the 8 June 2024 which was attended by over 50 KCLEA Members, with Guests and selected students of KCLES . We were honoured to welcome Prof Chris Lorenz the newly appointed Head of Department of Engineering

Sadly, Bobby has medical domestic and work issues which means that he is unable to be Events officer for at least another year.

The Future

The plan that the committee accepted was based on four main portfolios to deliver to the members in a professional and business-like way. Much of this has been started over the past 9 months

Communications

This is telling KCLEA members what was happening within KCLEA , of other members and in Kings. You will have seen the first fruits of this in a newsletter which will appear five times a year and alongside the appearances of the Bulletin. Mike Clode its Editor is always looking for contributions – snippets of news and articles to show what KCLEA members are doing. Sadly, as Bobby Dixit was also running our social media and LinkedIn operation – activities in the area have flagged, but you will see that the website has been updated in content – if not in look. Many thanks to John Thompson our webmaster and Hon Treasurer – and a few others.

Events

These are opportunities to network in person as well as to hear what is happening in our ever-changing world of Engineering. The starting plan has Three events a year.

In the Autumn term something with the theme of “Find out about Kings” – this gives us the opportunity to get into teaching spaces and see and touch the work in research and teaching.

This November we will be in the Quad labs – as so many members would like a tour, and then hear briefly from Prof Chris Lorenz the new Head of Department of Engineering, and Prof Kawal Rhode the Director of Education in the School of Biomedical Engineering and Imaging Science talk about their challenges and success, and then mingle with Staff, KCLES students to just give a feeling for how Kings Engineering across the three campuses is changing the world.

The Spring lecture is so much part of our recent tradition – where Kings Engineers and Kings Engineering show to a wider Audience of its achievements. In 2025 we will be at the London Institute of Health Engineering (LIHE) at St Thomas’s to hear how its support for entrepreneurship is making it a significant hub in the UK MedTech industry.

And the traditional Annual lunch will now be on the Kings Official Birthday 14th June 2025 in the 8th Floor suite at Bush House. We welcome KCLEA members and their guests to an opportunity to network, meeting old friends and find new ones – the start of the two-course buffet lunch will be signalled after the RAF flypast – we are right under the flightpath of the RAF salute to the King.

Learning from Last year – we are planning the events so that they can be announced at the start of the academic year – and using some cunning in ensuring that the rooms cannot be reallocated by the college.

We are also looking at other events – but we need active members to define and produce them - like a Recent graduate networking or those a few years after their PhD.

Activities

KCLEA sees itself as the enabler and coordinator of KCLEA members doing activities with the students and also supporting staff in research and teaching.

This is particularly important to me as I was the President of KCLES when this was started – but it is so important that the many industries in which KCLEA Members work (some more obviously Engineering than others) can contribute to the next generation of Engineers and what Engineers are doing for the wellbeing of the world. Over the Summer I had meetings with both KCLES and some staff to outline and decide what can be supported by KCLEA -

We are very short of members to give up an evening or so to come and chat with and be questioned by the students – or to provide inputs to research.

I hope that this will grow into KCLEA being more able support our newest members – recent graduates as they try to become established in the myriad of Industries where KCLEA members work (and a few more).

Membership

With the cooperation of the Alumni Office, I conducted analysis on our members – if the aims of KCLEA are to serve its members we ought to know something about them.

The Alumni office can contact about 2000 KCLEA members – that puts us at about the same size as the 31st out of 39 Institutions associated with the Engineering Council

Using graduation year as a measure the quartiles of the distribution lie at 1994, 2008 and 2016.

So roughly half KCLEA members on the AO list are under 35 years old.... This is renewing our efforts to get more “new blood” into the committee , so that it represents our members.

The split of courses studied is more difficult – as about 180 including me, are just described as “Engineering”, but the majority are Electrical/ Electronic say 850 with Mechanical say 450 then 4 groups each with say 180 each “Engineering”, Computing . Biomedical Engineering , new Engineering +Management and finally Civils with 130.

There is more work to be done matching these to age bands and where members are ... and developing dashboards which are helpful to KCLEA the AO and KCLA – here “the Engineers” are leading the Alumni groups of Kings. I have had very useful conversations with KCLA on Common issues and how we can support and promote each other,

Keith Newton -one of our longest serving members has provided a set of potential KCLEA members from LinkedIn – I have already used this to contact some members we had “lost” – and KCLEA will be continuing to recruit members. – it would be very good to think that we were in contact with more of the 6000 members who we know have been in touch with Kings since they graduated. We aim to be able to respond to members in a more personal way.

We of course are working within the requirements of GDPR and are working to develop multiple consents with The Alumni Office KCLA and others. – it would be nice have a CRM system as we need to hold more than Name/ degree subject/ year of Graduation – with things like job title and LinkedIn URL – so we can get more networking – and identify those who have skills needed to run KCLEA and or whose background and career path would be inspiring to Students.

The future is in your hands.

Although I have started these activities , KCLEA cannot continue the work without more help,

There is a proposed structure with Executives (who will form the KCLEA committee in the future) each with their portfolio implemented by themselves aided by a small team of Leaders each looking at say Social media, Producing an Event, liaising with BMEIS, or contacting a group of members, and of course volunteers to help with Activities with students.

Please look at the web pages for how you can help –For many roles "We just need an hour or so of your time not every week" . -and if you are interested there are more detailed ideas as to what the roles can be – but it is up to you to make what you can do.... just one evening with students will make a difference – but if you can do more – that is what we would like!!

All of this is changing the way that KCLEA will be operating – I will be speaking about this more at the AGM – and I hope that many will attend our virtual AGM on Zoom -

The first step on this is to revise our Rules / Constitution to reflect that things have changed :- KCLA no longer has branches so KCLEA will be going alone with its own aims – the Courses Departments Schools and Faculties have all changed since 2009, and a practical point that we cannot be wound up if there is not enough interest!!

These are very sensible points, but KCLEA requires your questioning and agreement – as a preliminary to building a new constitution (and probably status of KCLEA) over the coming years.

Current officers

As has been a continuing theme through this report, KCLEA needs its members to help run it, and none of what has achieved this year would have been possible without the support of the Officers of the committee – Can I just thank the two most recent past Presidents Liz Beckmann and David Blacoe for the conversations which shaped the early parts of my review of KCLEA

Many of them are standing for next year – but are very keen to take a lesser role as Members (who are younger than they are) come in to take over the running of KCLEA in the next years.

We have two very notable retirements – I and the committee thank them for their long and distinguished service to KCLEA

Graham Raven who led us through the closure of the Division of Engineering – and the lobbying that Kings Engineering should continue. He also has been a long serving member on KCLA serving all the alumni of Kings.

Chris Bowden who has been our loyal Hon sec organising and minuting our meetings for more years that many can remember - he is standing down but will be a KCLEA Vice President.

I am pleased to announce that Stylli Charalampous who is the Senior Programme Manager Further and Higher Education at the Royal Academy of Engineering has agreed to be put forward to be your new Hon sec/ COO.

It has been a year in which things are changing – and I hope that the pace will increase in the next year to take KCLEA as a lively Association into the second half of the 21st Century....

Peter Weitzel President KCLEA

9 September 2024

