

employee news

POCHINPOST

winter 2007

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21 Today!

It may be a few years since they came of age, but several Pochin employees have celebrated their 21st during the past year.....21 years with the company that is.

And to recognise their many years of loyal service, the company has rewarded each of them with a gift of their choice.

Melanie Morley, PA to the directors at the Middlewich office selected a diamond eternity ring as her keepsake for the 21 years she has spent at Pochin's, while district manager from Pochin Concrete Pumping, Guy Holford, also took a trip to the jewellers, this time for a Tag Heuer watch. Concrete pump operator, Mick Hawker and surveying director, Mark

Hatton have chosen a selection of gifts, ranging from golf clubs and BBQs to DIY tools.

HR assistant, Sue Whittaker, has yet to select her gift but has also celebrated the momentous anniversary this year.

Melanie Morley commented: "I can't really believe it's been 21 years since I joined the company. Some things have changed over that period but, overall, the important things like the company culture and the friendly atmosphere have stayed the same.

"I've always wanted a diamond eternity ring and it's lovely to think that the company appreciates all the work I have put in over the years."



PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVE CATTELL, SUE WHITTAKER, MARK HATTON, MELANIE MORLEY, ROSS MURRAY AND CLIVE WELLS.

"We sailed through with flying colours again this year."

Quality Counts

With one of the best systems in the construction industry, Pochin is ahead of the game when it comes to quality management. And the fact that we have been ISO accredited since 1992 speaks volumes about how much importance we place on delivering this commitment at all levels throughout the group.

We audit our quality systems internally twice a year, and in October it was time for us to invite the external auditors in to determine, as they must

every three years, whether we are still a shining example of best practice and can be re-accredited to BS ISO 9001 2000.

Explains quality co-ordinator, Gillian Urquhart: "Lloyds Register Quality Assurance spent three days with us trawling through our systems and documentation to ensure that we are maintaining standards and investing in continuous improvement. We have always passed these external assessments in the past and the excellent work and clear commitment across the company meant we sailed through with flying colours again this year."

Since the last external assessment in 2004, contracts managers have begun doing quality audits on site and both construction managers and contracts managers are now involved in a project to assess different sections of the quality manual to help streamline and refine it. Gillian adds: "Passing the re-accreditation assessment is all about being able to demonstrate that our quality systems are watertight. Day to day, however, we have developed a quality management culture at Pochin, which ensures that we are not just ticking boxes but are really putting quality at the heart of our business."

Striking Fun

More than 50 colleagues donned borrowed shoes at a Pochin social event in February. That's because they had all congregated in Warrington for an evening of keenly fought fun at Warrington LA Bowl.

Site staff and concrete pumping colleagues were joined by head office personnel to battle it out in the bowling lanes, with the winning team of Paul Quinn, John Boardman, Jon Pochin, Tony Humphries, Dave Hercocock and Scott Mallinson leaving victorious at the end of the night.

Commented Michelle Saltaire, plant secretary: "It was the first social event to be organised in a while and everyone that joined us had a great time, regardless of whether they were any good at bowling. We are planning more social events in the future so anyone that has a good idea for a night out should contact Katie Entwisle or myself."

Oh Baby!

Three colleagues have taken on a new role recently.... becoming parents for the first time.

Shirley Jones, a shipper in the Bathgate depot of Pochin Concrete Pumping is now the proud mum of baby boy, Jaymie, who was born in May of last year. She is enjoying motherhood and has returned to work on a job share basis.

Meanwhile, business analyst, Bhargav Dave, who works in IT at head office, has become a father for the first time. His wife, Kiran, gave birth to a baby girl on 28th June and the couple has named the baby Nitya, which translates as 'eternity'.

Eddie Bredenhanh (Business Development Manager) and wife Lorraine are proud parents of Isabel Marie, a sister for Charley.

Fundraising Fun

We're a stylish bunch at Pochin's, and to prove it colleagues across the company have ditched their habitual shirt and tie in the name of charity during the past few months.

Back in March, Comic Relief's Red Nose Day gave us the perfect excuse to dress down to raise funds, and in June colleagues were asked to 'get their kit on' in aid of the Wallace & Gromit Children's foundation.

If you still have a couple of must-see outfits that haven't yet made an appearance at work, don't worry, further dress down days are planned for the new year.

And for those who prefer a more energetic approach to fundraising, David Pochin had just the thing – he entered a team from Pochin's in the 'It's a Knockout' tournament which took place at Bentley Motors in Crewe in September. Based on the popular 1970s TV show hosted by Stuart Hall, the event was packed with silly outfits and even sillier games, all in aid of St Luke's (Cheshire) Hospice.

Top Of The Class

There's just no stopping our former chairman! John Woodcock has been made Master of the University thanks to his outstanding contribution to the development of University Science Park and other built developments at Keele.

Working with Pochin's, John played a major role in many developments at Keele University. By 1999 the University, alongside Pochins, had formed a joint venture company known as "Keele Park Developments" to further develop the Science Park at Keele. John Woodcock has been a member of the board of Keele Park Developments since its inception and is now Chairman.



PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PROFESSOR SIR DAVID WEATHERALL (CHANCELLOR), JOHN WOODCOCK AND PROFESSOR JANET FINCH (VICE CHANCELLOR).

Clocking Off

Five colleagues have retired over the past twelve months after collectively clocking up 135 years with Pochin's.

Painter Mick Lovatt joined Pochin's back in December 1973 and retired last year after an impressive 33 years with the company. Mick had been ill for some time before his retirement but it will always be the quality of his workmanship for which he is best remembered.

Mick's 33 year track-record is just pipped at the post by the 35 years' loyal service given by labourer Andy Kehoe, who also retired last year, while fellow labourer, Doug Clowes, who joined the company in 1981, has also recently retired after 25 years with Pochin's.

Coincidentally, Doug retired at the same time as his long-term colleague, foreman joiner, Joe Ladley, with whom he worked for ten years at Rolls Royce before the two men joined Pochin's. Joe had worked for G.Walker and Slater who were involved in the original factory build at the Rolls

Royce site and moved across to Pochin in 1981 after G.Walker and Slater lost the term contract to Pochin's. Since 1994, Joe has been the only Pochin operative permanently based at Rolls Royce and altogether he spent 44 years of his career there.

Finally, joiner, Ken Griffiths, has retired after 16 years with Pochin's. His extraordinary skills have been a real asset to the company and his enjoyment of the job is clear from the projects he was involved with, which also led him to continue working past the usual retirement age.

Commented Ross Murray, construction director: "It is always sad to see familiar faces leave the company but we wish all our recent retirees a happy and relaxing retirement. The many years of loyal service given to Pochin's by all five of these colleagues is much appreciated by the management team and speaks volumes about the culture of our organisation and our ability to retain talent."

The Pochin Pops

You may not know it, but amongst the shirt and tie wearing professionals at Pochin's, we have a couple of would be rock stars in our midst.

Engineering Manager, Ritchie Mellor, is one of four members of The Small Party, a rock band from Skelmersdale. The band has just issued a self-financed debut album, recorded in less than two weeks at Aliensound Studios and their efforts have enjoyed radio airplay across the world, including the UK, USA, Australia and New Zealand. The album is available on CD from the band's website (www.themallparty.com) and as a download from all the major sites including iTunes, Napster and HMV Digital. Following its success, The Small Party are currently writing their second album 'A Cautionary Tale'.

Meanwhile, Paul Quinn, a project manager currently working on the Buckshaw Link project, has gathered quite a following amongst pub goers across the Liverpool, St Helens, Runcorn, Wirral, Warrington and Manchester areas. Playing a variety of guitar-based rock and roll music, Paul also does lots of private functions like weddings and birthday parties.

Comments Paul: "It's a far cry from my day job on a building site but I really love it. There's nothing like the adrenalin rush of getting up to perform and, while I might never get asked to play Wembley, my part time singing career does help me keep my rock star dreams alive."

Making The Grade

We have continued our commitment to developing our people over the past year, helping 16 Pochin's colleagues to gain additional professional qualifications.

After three years of part-time study whilst continuing to do her job as a trainee estimator, Lisa Beaton has recently passed her foundation degree in construction and quantity surveying, with support from Pochin's. The qualification will help Lisa to fast track her career and she has a great future ahead of her with the company.

Training manager Tracey Yoxall has also had a busy year, gaining not one, but two NVQ Level 4 qualifications in Management and in Learning & Development. Geoff Avies has also gained a NVQ Level 4, this time in site management, while plant fitters Mike Rees, Tony Riley and Gordon Acton have all been awarded a NVQ Level 3 in plant fitting.

Amongst our foremen, no less than ten candidates have achieved an ILM (Institute of Leadership & Management) Level 3 qualification. The ten foremen that have successfully gained the award are Carl Williams, Dave Steventon, Stephen Parry, Michael Messenger, Martin Mason, Andrew Heath, JJ Colbert, Keith Eastlake, Neil Franklin and Jason Holmes.

Jon Pochin, contracts director comments: "We are proud to support the learning and development needs of our staff; it's an investment in people and the future of our company, helping to maintain Pochin's reputation for high standards and professionalism."

Training needs are usually identified through the appraisal system but if there is a work-related qualification for which you would like to study, please contact training manager Tracey Yoxall.

Children Trust Pochin To Help Raise Funds

Pochin's is very fortunate to have enjoyed many years of commercial success, and with that success comes a responsibility to play an active role in giving back to the communities in which we operate. What better way to do that than by helping children facing special challenges to experience the adventures of a lifetime?

That's what our donation of £9,603 to The Children's Adventure Farm Trust achieved last year, enabling children with severe physical and learning disabilities to explore an exciting new environment on a holiday, day trip or party visit to the Farm.

Explains business development manager, Eddie Bredenhann: "It all started at the Trust's Gangster & Molls Ball fundraising event when Jane Nicholson, wife of Pochin developments director, Jim Nicholson, pledged to raise £3,000 for the Trust. We took up the challenge with her, and with the help of colleagues across Pochin's managed to provide a total donation of more than £9,600.

"It's a phenomenal achievement and one which both the Trust and the children who benefit from their work appreciate enormously."

Our donation helped the Children's Adventure Farm Trust to welcome more than 3,000 children through their doors during 2006. The secure and exciting environment gives the children the opportunity to play and socialise safely, developing friendships and learning, as well as having fun.

We have received a letter of thanks from the Trust with sound bites from teachers about how beneficial the Adventure Farm has been for their pupils and that thanks needs to be shared with everyone at Pochin's who helped to raise the cash.

If you'd like more information about the Children's Adventure Farm Trust and the work they do, log on to www.childrensventurefarm.org.uk

Pochin's Tenth Charity Golf Day

Pochin's swapped buildings for birdies as it celebrated its tenth annual charity golf day at Carden Park Golf and Country Club. After the 18th, over 160 guests attended a black tie dinner where Colin Parry was presented with a cheque for £7,200 in aid of the Warrington Peace Centre. Over the last ten years, Pochin's has raised over £100,000 for a host of local causes.



Investor In People

In March this year, Pochin (Contractors) Ltd received the prestigious 'Investor in People' status.

The Investor In People (IIP) standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance and enable it to realise its objectives through the management and development of its people. IIP provides a flexible framework to adopt, recognising that organisations use different means to achieve success through its people.

In order to achieve the status, an assessment of our existing management and development procedures and processes was undertaken. In addition, employees were selected at random to undertake short interviews with the assessors in order for them to gain an indepth, thorough, but also very

broad understanding of employee perception and the effectiveness of the processes already in place.

Having carried out the audit in accordance with guidelines provided by IIP, the assessor was satisfied beyond any doubt that Pochin (Contractors) Limited meets the requirements of the IIP standard.

Ross Murray, construction director comments: "This is a formal acknowledgement by an independent third party of the processes for the effective management and development of people that we as a company have in place. We are very pleased to receive this status and acknowledgement."

Obituary

Peter Simpson Davies
– Site Agent

15th May 1944 – 15th April 2007

Peter joined the company on 12th February 1973 at the age of 28 ½, as a section foreman on site at Kronospan in Chirk, not far from where he lived, with his wife Jean.

He had commenced his career in construction as an apprentice joiner in 1959, working with TM Dovils in Glyn Ceiriog, the village where he was born and lived all his life. He attended Wrexham Technical College from 1960 to 1966 where he completed his City & Guilds in Carpentry & Joinery, Building Construction, and FTC in Building Construction Foreman Studies.

A common theme throughout Peter's career with Pochin's was his excellent relationship with clients and architects, and the quality of workmanship he produced due to his practical background, as commented on over the years by many of his managers - Peter Walker, John Woodcock, Arthur Booth, Nick Greenham, Antony Pochin, Jonathan Pochin, Bob Davies and others.

He passes on his love of construction to his two sons, Dewi and Gwyndaf, who have both spent time on Pochin sites over the years. Dewi is now planning to pursue a career in construction.

Peter had his first short bout of illness in 1996, but soon bounced back until 2002 when he again became ill. Not to be beaten, Peter returned to work full time in 2004 when he completed phases one and two of Verity Court for Pochin Developments. During his last bout of illness, he remained in very high spirits and was so looking forward to returning to work. He sadly lost his battle against cancer on 15th April 2007, at home with his family.

Peter will be fondly remembered by all his colleagues at Pochin's, past and present. He was a loyal and hardworking employee, whose goals were to enhance the reputation of a company that values its employees as individuals. He was an asset to Pochin's, as first formally recognised by Arthur Booth as early in his career as 1978. In his later years, one of his priorities was to pass on his experience to the trainees and younger people. Many of today's employees who have benefited from their time spent working with Peter.

We are proud to have known Peter for so long and we all miss his sense of humour and ready smile and sparkle.