

London Lunches Q1 2014



Another year lies ahead and we trust one that will continue to see fortunes gradually improving in the economy.

If January's lunch was anything to go by that was certainly the case. Having settled into a simple format of inviting the main contracting companies to chat about trends and concerns, we are as a conscientious employer, delighted to get encouraging signs of the market that we will be dealing with over the course of the next six to twelve months.

February was a return to the usual format of inviting a range of interesting people from a variety of disciplines. We are currently working with Sunny Bika at Laxcon who has proved to be a breath of fresh air with a very collaborative approach and desire to safeguard his sub-contractors; and we've had a similarly pleasurable experience working with Andy de Bertodano at Leconfield who simplifies the whole process, telling me what he wants, allowing me to improve it, agreeing a price and paying promptly.

This was the first time I had met Fouad Qeblawi from 1508, although I had known of them for some time and met quite a few of the team already it was good to discuss the challenges and the lessons learnt from doing such a successful job of building up the company.

March's lunch coincided with a bright day so we were able to take advantage of the lovely balcony and views over London, added to which was the delight at seeing John Shayer again who last came to lunch when we were using Just St James. Similarly I hadn't seen Cris Silvano for what seems like years, but he too appears to have been going from strength to strength.

The encouraging economic climate was further confirmed by Donald Martin and Rob Cole who are both working on one of Regents Park's sumptuous mansions and so I hope that being well placed to help them will see us working together on this project at some stage.

Other notable guests this month were Freddy Van Zevenbergen who is both a very talented designer and extremely entertaining; Oliver Laws whom we have not yet worked with shared his experiences of restoring the buildings of Kabul; Alex Sharratt, who I had not met before but we did have the pleasure of working with the practise on the award winning staging for the Royal Society of Arts and Jeremy Blake who as an expert in sustainable buildings has offered his for design support for our new workshops which look great. Thank you to each of our guests for helping make the first quarter so enjoyable.

So with 2014 already into its second quarter the year has started well and looks like continuing that way for the foreseeable future, a view that has been confirmed by the first three lunches.

January

- Ben Colgate Grangewood
- Shaun Frampton Walter Lilly
- Robert Barclay CC Construction
- Michael Houlding Boldfort
- Angus Gibson Symm
- Darren Size Sizebreed
- Martin Tidd Primus Build
- Grahame Roberts ISG

February

- Fouad Qeblawi 1508
- Andy Langridge Chelsea Construction
- Sunny Bika Laxcon
- Andy de Bertadano Leconfield
- Charles Clark Leconfield
- Alex Tart Smallwood Architects
- Alasdair Donnachie Primus Build

March

- Jeremy Blake Purcell
- Cris Silvano CC Construction
- Guy Oliver Oliver Laws
- John Shayer 800 Group
- Rob Cole Cole Management
- Alex Sharratt Matthew Lloyd
- Freddy Van Zevenbergen Lamber & Browne
- Donald Martin Phoenix Prime