

## **Golden Meet of Freshman batch of 1957**

While the general trend all over is to have reunions of graduating year, ours was a Reunion, commemorating 50 years of our joining BHU - at our age, we didn't want to take chances waiting another four years:-). The event was unique and perhaps created a record or two.

The November 2007 Golden Reunion Meet, which we had at BHU, was of the batch which joined the erstwhile college of Mining and Metallurgy, now IT BHU, in the year 1957 and passed out in 1961. The batches were supposed to be at least 40 each in the two Disciplines and another 10 in Fuel Technology. Out of the 64 who could be networked, 24 could finally make it to the meet, mostly with their spouses/family.

The objectives of the reunion were to meet with each other with families, visit the alma mater to pay our respects to the founding fathers of the great University, recapitulate the memories of the years spent together fifty years back, meet the present day faculty and students to share our career and life experiences.

Though BHU itself was about 3 decades old when we joined in 1957, it was just a decade since independence. Young aspirants for a career in the field of minerals had come from remote rural habitats and cosmopolitan city settings alike, all on the merits of their Intermediate exam results. It was indeed a true cross section of the country as a whole, spanning several States, languages, religious, social and cultural backgrounds. With no Television, computers or mobiles, the company of the batch-mates was all pervading in college and hostel premises, sports grounds and even in train journeys or practical training in industrial units. Common goals, shared ambitions and the uncertainties of the future created indelible bonds and as we found during the reunion, have remained in tact till now. Reason enough to exchange all that transpired during the interregnum of five long and eventful decades for an independent country in its formative years.

Possibly the seeds of the accomplishments in later years were sown in those years in the University or perhaps each brought them along to the campus to be nurtured and synergised in the fertile grounds of the Alma mater. Our batch not only excelled in Academics, but also prided in having half a dozen University Captains in sports and also making a mark in social and cultural activities of the University. Thanks to all that we learnt from our esteemed faculty, imbibed from peers and ingested from seniors already in the Industry, the batch mates, by and large, made their marks in the respective career paths they pursued, both here in India and abroad. A few chose to be acclaimed Academicians and Research Scholars; a few others rose to occupy senior positions in Industries, both in the Public and private Sectors. A couple of us set up their own Industries and many others served in various positions in Govt. Departments or other Technical Institutions.

Such being their common moorings and career progressions, the desire to come home to roost was indeed very strong.

Ever since the reunion meet was contemplated, the batch received unstinted support right from the Vice Chancellor, Chairman and other office bearers of Alumni Cell, The Director IT, Heads of the two Departments of Mining and Metallurgy, Wardens of the Hostel Dhanrajgiri (which used to be solely for the Minmetians during our time), and all the faculty members and students with whom we interacted. Head of the Department of Publications and Publicity ensured good coverage of the event in the local press and T.V. Network. All in all, the reunion activities, spread over three days, were highly nostalgic and satisfying in every respect.

The reunion meet started in the Dhanrajgiri Hostel Premises, with all the batch mates wearing navy blue Tees (specially made for the occasion with our MinMet logo), singing welcome songs, reviving past memories, exchanging anecdotes, making speeches and remembrances . The Hostel Wardens not only made all arrangements for the get together, but also treated us for a sumptuous Lunch, the cooks of the good old Messes taking so much interest in serving the best of dishes. The same evening, we had a leisurely Boat Ride on the Ganges and witnessed the spectacular Ganga Arti.

The second day morning was devoted for worship right from Rudrabhishek at dawn in Birla Mandir inside the campus, till mid-day Poojas in the sacred Kashi Vishwanath Temple, not forgetting all time favourite Sankatmochan, who always had come to our good stead during every examination.

In the afternoon, the batch had a memorable interactive meeting and evening tea with the Proctor, Director I.T. Faculty from the two Depts and a few final year students. All the batch mates and their families together with the faculty and students paid their respects to Mahamana through floral tributes. During the meeting a representative cross section of the 57-61 batch shared their career long experiences in the academic, service, industrial and entrepreneurial fields. They gratefully recapitulated how the University had laid such solid foundations in shaping their careers. What they had gained during their stay in the University and what they owe to be repaid now was the strong undercurrent of the deliberations. The senior University Staff members present gave an account of the activities of the different Depts at the present and efforts being made to keep in touch and interact with the Alumni.

The forenoon of the last day of the meet was spent visiting our weekend haunt Sarnath, only this time it was by hired buses, instead of bicycles. The three day event culminated with a gala evening at Hotel Taj Ganges where again, the batch mates and their spouses sang, shared anecdotes and dined together.

The parting wish on every one's lips and mind was God willing; we will meet again in 2011 to celebrate the 50th year of our graduation. Till then the photographs and video clips of the event, all displayed on the common web-site <http://reunion61.googlepages.com> and interactive postings therein will keep us company and concretize plans how best to serve the alma mater - after all reunions are about going back and giving back .

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