

In Memoriam Dr. Colin Oates 28/07/1950 – 24/01/2016



It is with great sadness that EPE Association has to announce the death of our colleague and friend Dr. Colin Oates.

Dr Colin Oates was a Senior Specialist at GE GRID based in Stafford, England (GE GRID was until recently ALSTOM GRID POWER ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS LIMITED). He had “expert” status within the ALSTOM system which recognised his technical expertise and was classified at the highest level as a Senior Fellow. He was also a Honorary Associate Professor at Nottingham University. He was an expert in Systems Control and applied his expertise to the design of Power Grid Systems such as High voltage DC Transmission. His most recent work was mainly on development of Voltage Source Converter (VSC) systems for Power Transmission. He was the author or a joint author of over 30 papers on electronics and power electronics and has filed over twenty patents.

Colin was also a committed and enthusiastic supporter of the EPE Association, having served on the ISC since 2003, on the Executive Council since 2009, as co-chair of the Joint Chapter on Wind Energy and T&D, together with Jean-Luc Thomas, since 2012 and as Co-Chairman for EPE’11 in Birmingham.

He was also a lifelong enthusiast for Traditional Folk Music, walking and outdoor pursuits, as well as a loving father, and is survived by Jane, Doug, and Jackie Oates, (now Worth), with Rosalind Worth, (the latest addition to his family). He was looking forward to being a grandfather, and knew about the arrival of his first grand-daughter but sadly was too ill to meet her.

In his early life he was an enthusiastic Morris Dancer and while studying for his PhD danced in areas of Manchester with his team that very few other people would have dared to enter. He played a number of musical instruments and will be remembered for performing in local Stafford (UK) pubs on Folk Music evenings.

He was also Treasurer of the Stafford District (UK) Arts Council from 2002 to 2007 and a member of the council for more than 15 years.

He will be greatly missed by his colleagues at GE Grid and previous colleagues who knew him and valued his work and good fellowship. He will also be missed by his colleagues in the European Power Electronics Association (EPE) and for the work he did contributing to EPE conferences where he served on organising committees and refereed papers and chaired lecture sessions. In addition he gave many insightful technical papers at many of the EPE Conferences. He will greatly missed by us all.

Many of the people who knew him will wish that they had, had more time to share his company and good humor and were glad to call him friend.

He was born in Beverley, Yorkshire, UK in 1950. He received his BSc degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Hertfordshire University, Hatfield, UK, in 1973, his M.Sc. degree from Manchester University (University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology or UMIST), in 1975 and his PhD degree from UMIST, in 1981.

He started his working life as an apprentice and junior engineer for British Aerospace at Hatfield, UK in 1969 and left in 1974 to go to UMIST. After completing his PhD he joined ALSTOM Grid, Stafford, UK, in 1981 as a Senior Development Engineer. In 1987 he became Group Head of the Power Electronics Group within the ALSTOM Research and Technology Centre (ART), Stafford. In 2007 he transferred to ALSTOM Power Electronics Systems to develop VSC systems for Power Transmission.

He had been suffering from a troublesome cough since November 2015, which developed into flu and then pneumonia in January 2016, and sadly antibiotics begun in January and ultimately other treatment to address difficulties with lungs, kidneys and heart, did not prove able to prevent deterioration.

Those that knew him are shocked by his early departure as we are sure he had much yet to contribute to the world of Power Electronics.

Our thoughts are with his family at this most difficult time. We think of them and offer to them our most sincere condolences.