Gazette

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FOR PENSIONERS OF IMPERIAL TOBACCO





Engineers John Towlson, 82, and Lenny Hall, 84, were the Player's pensioners' reunion's oldest attendees. They are pictured enjoying a drink with former garage worker Dave Coxon

STAGE IS SET FOR PLAYER'S REUNION



Fundraising: former regional distribution centre employee Linda Drohan (left) and Kim Najdan, who worked in the office, collecting donations from fellow Player's colleagues Baz Rogers, Bob Stirland and Cliff Grainger.



CHARITABLE DONATION and exceptional turnout were among the highlights at the second Player's pensioners' reunion of the year, held at

The Stage pub in Nottingham.

Around 120 pensioners attended the event, which continues to be promoted through an online Facebook group.

"Numbers were even higher than they were in the summer, which surpassed my expectations, especially given all the uncertainties we've had," said organiser Dave Clay, who was delighted with the turnout.

Biannual event

The group enjoyed catching up over a buffet and, once again, clubbed together to raise money for charity.

"We try to do our bit for different charities and this time we raised £236 for Macmillan Cancer Support," added Dave,

who worked as an engineering mechanic at Player's for 37 years and has now been organising the Nottingham-based biannual event for a decade. "Thanks again to Linda Drohan and Kim Naidan, who kindly did the rounds with the collection boxes for donations."

The group's first reunion of 2022 will be held on Wednesday June 22 at the same venue. For further information, see page 10. **G**

Walking group programme gets off to a good start



Player's walking group, The Harry's, kicked off the new year with a six-mile walk in Nottingham. Starting at Riverside Farm pub, the group, which is co-ordinated by Dave Clay and made up of former engineers, trekked around Lenton and Trent Bridge before passing Nottingham Forest's city ground. It marked the first of the group's fortnightly walks, which have been running for 15 years.

G COMPANY

REWARD FOR FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

MPERIAL HAS again been given an 'A' score by global environmental non-profit charity CDP for its efforts to counter climate change as well as being recognised as a supplier engagement leader.

It is the third successive year the company has secured a place on CDP's climate change A-list and been named on the supplier engagement leaderboard.

Imperial is one of only 200 companies to receive the top A-list ranking, out of almost 12,000 that were scored, highlighting the company's leadership status in environmental transparency and action.

The business has been recognised for its actions to cut emissions, mitigate climate risks and transition to a lower-carbon economy, based on the data reported through CDP's 2021 climate change questionnaire.

Gold standard

The annual environmental disclosure and scoring process is acknowledged as the gold standard of corporate environmental transparency with CDP scoring companies based on a methodology covering disclosure, awareness, management and leadership.

Companies responding to the full version of the CDP climate change questionnaire also receive a supplier engagement rating



2021

(SER), with the companies with the best SER highlighted as supplier engagement leaders – which this year are the top 8 per cent companies to have made disclosures.

Tony Dunnage, Imperial's global ESG director, said: "We are pleased to once again be recognised by CDP and we remain unrelenting in our focus on climate, in line with our commitment to reach net-zero global emissions by 2040."

Top employer for the fifth time

◆ IMPERIAL BRANDS has been recognised as a Top Employer in a total of 13 countries in 2022, showcasing the company's dedication to building and maintaining excellent working conditions for its people.

Eleven of the certifications have been earned across the European region, meaning that Imperial is a 'Top Employer Europe' for the fifth year running. Imperial's chief people and culture officer, Alison Clarke, said: "I am delighted that Imperial has been recognised as a Top Employer for another year.

"Imperial Brands is a great place to work, grow and develop, and it's particularly pleasing that – in these challenging times when we can't always congregate in the way we would like – our people have shown real resilience and embraced new ways of engaging to create an even better place to work."

The Top Employers Institute programme

certifies organisations based on the participation and results of its Best Practices Survey. The survey covers a comprehensive range of topics including people strategy, work environment, talent acquisition, learning, wellbeing and diversity and inclusion.

Top Employers Institute CEO, David Plink, said: "Imperial Brands has continued to show that it prioritises maintaining excellent people practices in the workplace.

"It continues to meet the challenges of the changing world of work while working tirelessly to make a positive impact on the lives of its workforce. We are pleased to celebrate and applaud the organisations that have been certified as Top Employers in their respective countries this year."

Among the 13 Imperial market operations to have been individually recognised are: United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Spain, France and Morocco.



♠ Imperial's 2021 annual report is available to view at www. imperialbrandsplc.com

Entitled Set Up For Success, it is the first annual report since the company set out its new strategy and outlines the progress it is making to transform the business.

Pensions to receive increase following rise in RPI

THE RISE in the Retail Prices Index for the 12 months to December 2021 – the basis of the pension increase from April 2022 – was 7.55%.

As a result, pensions for those who joined the Fund prior to April 2002 (and their dependants), will be increased by 7.55% with effect from 01 April 2022. This increase will not be applied to any GMP (Guaranteed Minimum Pension) element of your pension.

For pensioners who joined the Fund on or after 01 April 2002 (and their dependants), the Rules of the Fund provide for pensions to increase by 5% or the rise in the RPI for the 12 months to the preceding December, whichever is lower. The increase for these pension payments will therefore be capped at 5%. Again, this increase will not be applied to any GMP element of your pension.

Any GMP element of your pension receives increases in line with statutory requirements until GMP age (60 for women and 65 for men). From GMP age, the Fund is not required to increase any GMP in payment built up prior to 06 April 1988. Any GMP built up after this date increases in payment in line with the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), subject to a maximum of 3% per annum. This year the increase due on any GMP in payment which built up after 06 April 1988 will be capped at 3%.

Pensioners eligible for the annual pension increase will receive a letter towards the end of April 2022 confirming this year's increase and the revised amount payable. As usual the letters will show the amount of any GMP included in your pension. Payslips will also be issued at the end of April.

Mary's fond memories of Glasgow's Wills factory



Mary Rolink

◆ I worked as a cigar packer at the Wills factory in Glasgow for over 20 years.

I've loved the smell of cigars since I was 14, when I visited Lourdes in France with St Vincent's – a school for deaf children in Tollcross, Glasgow. I was at the school from the age of four and it was run by Daughters of Charity nuns.

It was thanks to my friend Ann Campbell, who also worked at the factory, that I got the role at Wills in 1969 when I was 27. I had eight jobs prior to joining, including sewing as a mantle finisher, working in city chambers in the baker's icing department and in another factory, making chairs.

I was on the same machine for the duration of my career at Wills.

The money was good and I made friends with many of the staff, including Jean Wallace who I'm still in touch with now at the age of 79.

The Christmas parties at Wills were also a highlight



Mary (left) and her colleague Nancy Robertson with snooker player Stephen Hendry at the Wills Glasgow factory in 1989, shown right

and I'll never forget meeting professional Scottish snooker player Stephen Hendry during his visit to the factory in 1989. Nancy Robertson and I were fortunate enough to have our photo taken with him!

Some fond memories of Wills in Glasgow.

Mary Rolink



Progress in book project

♦ It is with sorrow that I read of the passing of Valerie Smart in the November 2021 issue of the Gazette.

I played tennis, hockey and cricket for Imperial for many years and enjoyed all the sports. Valerie was my tennis partner when we played against other clubs. We did not always win but it was always good fun.

I met lots of great people playing sports for the company

but, sadly, we lost touch over time.

My thoughts are with Valerie's family. She was a lovely person and I have many fond recollections of her. Thank you for the memories, Val; they will stay with me forever.

Pam Eaves

If, like Pam, you have a memory or anecdote about your time with the company or some news you may like to share, please

contact the Gazette team (details on the back page).

Tennis partner recollected

♠ I've received another excellent response following my request for information about St Anne's Board Mill and the source of cigarette papers, which was published in the November issue of the Gazette.

In addition, others have been in touch with information about the Imperial story and I have now collected a wealth of photographs and written material.

I have begun sifting through it all so I can start putting pen to paper for my book. However, I'm aware that I've only scratched the surface of the countless files held by the Bristol Records Office – the repository of substantial amounts of Wills and Imperial records – and I plan to remedy this deficiency soon.

While I have no firm programme for book production yet, excellent progress has been made already and this is thanks in large part to Imperial pensioners.

Simon Birch



Timothy Hogg is hoping to hear from someone who might be interested in providing a home for any or all of his late father's collection of Player's memorabilia, gathered over 31 years



Player's memorabilia seeks a home

 I came across some old Player's items belonging to my father, John Hogg, while sorting through his belongings.

He died last year and worked at Player's for 31 years, retiring as a mechanic in the motor vehicle repair section in 1985.

There is an eclectic mix of

memorabilia including a small number of John Player Special cigarette card and picture albums, photographs of JPS racing cars, some signed photos (including by Colin Chapman, who founded the sports car company Lotus Cars), an unused book of matches with the JPS

car pictured winning the Italian Grand Prix in 1973, an Ogden's photo album and more.

I would be glad to hear from anyone who may have a specific interest in them.

Timothy Hogg





Peter's lasting gratitude for skills and experience gained at St Anne's

◆ I came across a letter [below] sent to me by former personnel department manager Adrian Catron in 1978, confirming my appointment as an estimator in building work at St Anne's Board Mill, Bristol, and it reminded me how grateful I feel to have worked for the company and for the opportunities it led to.

I worked at St Anne's until the closure of the Mill in 1980 when I applied for a position as a cleaner at Imperial Tobacco's office in Lombard Street, Bedminster.

I was interviewed and accepted for the

job but, again, I sadly saw the closure of the office and the end of my career with the company.

Although my hopes to grow as a young person with Imperial did not materialise, the experience and skills I gained working at the company furthered my career and I went on to hold a senior position for 27 years.

Peter Cleeves



- Last moments of the chimney at St Anne's Board Mill following its closure in 1980 Peter's letter of appointment as an estimator
- Mr. P. J. Cleeves 70 Leaholme Gardens Court Meadows Estate Whitchurch 30th November 1978. Bristol BS14 OLJ. Dear Mr. Cleeves, Further to our letter of the 17th May 1978 we have received a most satisfactory report on the manner in which you have carried out your duties during your probationary period and your appointment is, therefore, confirmed. With best wishes, Adrian Catum

Pensions team update

The pensions team continues to work flexibly, splitting their time between office and home working.

Service to members remains unaffected but, if possible, the team should be contacted by email or phone, but postal correspondence will also be dealt with in a timely manner.

"It is important to remember that if your bank or address details have changed, we will need to receive the new information in writing, accompanied by your signature," said pensions manager Jan Killick.

'That way we can ensure the alteration is genuine and no mistakes are made."

Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund, PO Box 3242, Bristol BS3 9GY pension.enquiries@uk.imptob.com

0117 953 0000



James Gunn, 96, who joined John Player & Sons in 1950, is a descendant of Henry Overton Wills II and the last in a long line of family members to work for the company. Looking back at his family's history, he reveals more about the Wills-Gunn connection that stretches back to the 1850s.

LAST OF THE FAMILY TO WORK FOR IMPERIAL

N 1851 my great grandfather, the Rev. Henry Mayo Gunn, married Isabella Wills, daughter of Henry Overton Wills II, who was one of the

two brothers who co-founded WD & HO Wills in 1830.

"They had met in Andover, Hampshire, where my great-grandfather was a Congregational minister and the Overton family was in his congregation. Both families were dissenters of the Church of England and appointed and paid their own ministers - a major issue in those times.

The couple had three sons, my grandfather Henry Wills Gunn, Ernest and Hamilton - who all went on to join Wills and one daughter.

Wills was a go-ahead business and among the first to use mechanical cutting machines and airtight tins for export. In 1885/6 it was also first to use the Bonsack cigarette making machine and its trade rocketed to 50 per cent of the market from the five per cent it previously commanded.

At this time the company was being run by WD Wills' son, William Henry, and HO Wills II's three sons. Their increased market presence made it necessary for them to increase their management team. There were seven sons from HO Wills II's second family to choose from but they did not want to dilute their ownership so they offered jobs to their three Gunn first cousins.

Henry Wills Gunn

The first offer was to the youngest, Hamilton who did not then have a steady job, and the second was to Ernest, an ebullient character who was editor of the St James's Gazette in

The third and eldest brother, my grandfather, Henry Wills Gunn was intelligent and had qualified as an accountant under Mr Price (later of Price Waterhouse). In 1880 he was made a partner of Boustreds, trading in the far east and, a year later, he married Lilias Sommerville. Together, they had my father, Henry Sommerville Gunn, who was born in Penang in 1882 and eventually ended up on the Imperial Tobacco Company board.

In 1883 my grandfather contracted a disease and was invalided home and unable to work for the next 14 years. By 1897 he



A Isabella Wills, who married James Gunn's great grandfather Rev. Henry Mayo Gunn in 1851, beginning the Wills-Gunn family connection

had recovered his health and, fortunately, had kept his marbles.

He was taken on by Wills where he proved his commercial skills and became secretary of the company around the time of the Tobacco War when James Buchanan 'Buck' Duke, who had sewn up the American market with price cutting and buying up failing competitors, tried to take over the UK market by the same means.

A dozen UK manufacturers responded by joining together as the Imperial Tobacco Company (of Great Britain and Ireland) Limited, giving discounts to loyal traders

and taking the battle to America when Frederick Wills and Ernest Gunn went over to buy up an American competitor.

After a year's battle, a truce was called and an agreement reached for American Tobacco to stay in the USA, Imperial to remain in the UK, and for British American Tobacco (BAT) to be jointly set up with the export trades of both. The ownership was to be two-thirds American and one third Imperial, with headquarters in the UK.

My grandfather was appointed secretary of the new enlarged company where he remained until 1911. He was also appointed



The boardroom portrait of Henry Wills Gunn, given to James following the

"I joined Player's... in 1950 when Imperial was at its most powerful. In my 32 years' service I saw huge changes from the connection with lung cancer and the market moving to tipped and

Isabella Wills 1830-1905 Rev Henry Mayo Gunn 1817-1886 **How James Gunn** is descended Henry Wills Gunn -- Lilias Sommerville from his great-1853-1943 1857-1937 grandmother Isabella Wills Hanson takeover in 1986 Aileen Wise 1893-1976 Henry Sommerville Gunn 1882-1966 James is the last of five generations of his family to have worked for Wills, starting as a management trainee and working his King Size cigarettes." way up to distribution manager before his James Gunn retirement in 1983

as director in 1906, deputy chairman in 1919 and retired in 1928.

Of his two brothers, Hamilton died soon after joining, and Ernest became a senior manager looking after public relations. Ernest's son Inghram became the head of Wills and a member of the executive committee, and his son Donald was briefly in the company. Hamilton's son Ronald was also a manager in head office.

Major skill in management

My father, apart from brief war service which included Passchendaele - he was 34 when he joined up in 1916 – ran the prices department whose purpose was to encourage competition between the 12 branches without being ruinous. He joined Wills in 1919 and seems to have been a quietly efficient manager, who helped maintain the company's strong market share. He was made a director on retirement.

My mother said that his motto was 'never do today what you can get someone else to do tomorrow'. This may sound lazy, but delegation is a major skill in management and appropriate in a company defending

a major market share, if not suited in an up and coming one. It means that decisions are not made in a hurry and helps identify the people who can get things done.

When he retired the board said they would take one of his sons, sight unseen, and being the youngest the lot fell on me. When they saw me, they sent me to the Player's branch, by then equal in size to Wills, which was wise as I was away from any family influence and left to make my own way.

I joined Player's as a management trainee in 1950 when Imperial was at its most powerful with 70 per cent of the market. It also owned Gallahers because of a coupon war in the 1930s, and 30 per cent of BAT. In my 32 years' service I saw huge changes from the connection with lung cancer and the market moving to tipped and King Size cigarettes.

The Monopolies Commission required the sale of Gallahers and the end of trade bonuses, so Imperial had once again to fight for its survival. The extension into other trades, such as brewing, was only moderately successful and not as profitable as tobacco although the highly successful launch of the two coupon brands, Wills

Embassy and Player's No. 6, restored our market share, but the company also needed modernisation to avoid takeover.

The last two remaining branches, Wills and Player's, were merged, with head office cutting out many senior management jobs. I was distribution manager at the time and while I survived the amalgamation, I caught a disease on a holiday in Egypt and was given early retirement in 1983.

Worldwide business

Like my grandfather, I recovered, and in 1986 when Hanson took the company over, I was given his boardroom portrait, which I was told was 'family property' and not part of the takeover. I was also involved in the formation of IMPAC.

Now, 39 years later, no cigarettes are made in the UK, the tobacco market appears to be in steady decline, but Imperial battles on manfully as a worldwide business. In particular, the pension fund is company supported and remarkably well run, and I am happily able to live on my pension, which has kept up with inflation. Now that is really good management!"



Liz Brimmell moved from Devon to join Wills in Bristol when she was 19 with hopes to broaden her horizons – and her decision did not disappoint. Starting as a general secretary and retiring as brand group controller for Embassy and Regal, she enjoyed every aspect of her 37-year career with the company which equipped her with the skills she has since used in other aspects of her life, many involving her local community.



IZ BRIMMELL, who has lived in the medieval village of Hinton Blewett, Somerset, since 1993, grew up in Ottery St Mary in East Devon where she went to the local

grammar school.

After being severely ill with glandular fever for almost a year in her late teens, she completed a secretarial course and began working for a small legal firm in Exeter. Keen to get involved in something bigger, she applied to both Wills in Bristol and Player's in Nottingham in the hope of securing a job as a secretary.

"I had heard of both companies as my parents smoked Embassy cigarettes, which were very popular between the 1960s and 80s," said Liz, 75, who has owned seven Labradors since her thirties, including Lulu, her yellow Labrador, who she adopted from the charity Labrador Rescue in 2017.

Coming north of the tree line

"Wills invited me for an interview and, much to my delight, took me on as part of the summer intake in 1966.

"It felt as though I was coming north of the tree line coming from Devon, but I soon settled into city life in Bristol and the company provided opportunities for me to make really good career progress."

Liz, who married in 1967, started in the Personnel department including working for John Smith and John Game, who were involved in establishing equal pay, which the company introduced in 1968.

"It was an exciting time and a pleasure to be involved in something that encouraged more women into the workplace," added Liz.

She went on to work for training manager Jimmy Philips and his assistant Nick Ponsford, before being appointed secretary to the general marketing manager Peter Middleton in 1972, initially based in East Street before relocating to the new Hartcliffe office in 1974.

"Peter was great to work for and I marvelled at how much he dictated. Thankfully, I wrote



Liz enjoys tending her garden



"It was a... pleasure to be

involved in something that

encouraged more women

into the workplace."

in short-hand though still managed to fill multiple one-inch-thick notebooks with his dictations," she said.

Liz's administrative skills were put to the test in 1976 when she was promoted as Embassy catalogue administrator at the Embassy Voucher Exchange based at the

No. 8 factory on Upton Road. She took over from Helga Hincks, who she has remained friends with, and oversaw the production of one million catalogues generated by the

company each year. Working under manager John Farrow and with designer-photographer Rik de Stroumillo and Howard Grey in purchasing, it was the first – but not last – time Liz's career would take her overseas.

"The role was very busy, but satisfying, ranging from item selection, copywriting and proof reading to design approval, artistic checks and print approvals," said Liz, who travelled to the printers based near Frankfurt, Germany, to sign off numerous catalogue print proofs.

"It was incredible and hard to believe that between proofing runs there was the opportunity to take a trip on a ferry going down the Rhine with Rik and Howard. I felt very lucky."

As the Embassy catalogue began to change its look and got smaller, Liz became increasingly involved in marketing, including organising the competitions run on the back of Embassy coupons. Following a move

back to Hartcliffe to support the marketing team including some JPS branded products; Liz was tasked with co-ordinating a trip for Embassy competition winners to the 1984 Olympics

in Los Angeles, California.

"I organised passports, visas and plane tickets for 50 winners, plus their partners, for the trip, which as well as the Olympics also included visits to Disneyland, Waikiki beach in Hawaii, Pearl Harbour and San Francisco as part of the prize," said Liz.

"It was a huge job, but my hard work was rewarded as I got to accompany brand managers Gerry Murray and Stuart Nicholson on the fortnight-long tour. The experience was quite extraordinary and a real career highlight." Liz's administrative skills were

continued on next page

continued from page 9

tested again just two years later, when another competition saw her organise 300 winners, plus partners, to fly to Miami for a Caribbean cruise on the P&O Sea Princess.

"Technology wasn't what it is now, and I had to physically travel to London for visas and to Newport in Wales for passports for some 600 people," she recalls. "The challenge was enormous and taught me how to be very logistically and structurally minded."

Brand group responsibilities

Following the takeover of Imperial by Hanson in 1986, its restructuring of the company and subsequent downsizing of the workforce, Liz was one of only eight of the previous 70 to remain in the marketing team. Her brand group responsibilities became more connected with Embassy coupon fulfilment and customer service and she became brand group controller for Embassy and Regal.

This involved sales force liaison, production of point-of-sale material, monitoring a multi-million-pound national advertising budget and catalogue production, as well as overseeing the company handling coupon redemption and item despatch.

She remained in this role until she retired in 2003 when the ban on tobacco advertising came in. When her marriage ended in 1990, Liz bought a stone-built cowshed in Hinton Blewett and oversaw its conversion into the



Liz, with brand managers Gerry Murray and Stuart Nicholson, soaking up the sun in Waikiki Beach, Hawaii, one of the destinations visited by Embassy competition winners as part of the 1984 Olympics trip to Los Angeles

home she still lives in today.

"I always wanted to take on a project and this beautiful building, which dates from around 1850 and has half a farmyard and an old vegetable garden, was it," said Liz, who has been actively involved in community life since moving into the barn in 1993.

"I oversaw much of the conversion and would often stop to see how it was progressing on my journey to work. I really connected with the village, which inspired me to engage in lots of its activities, from running a local history group for nearly two decades to becoming a parish councillor when I retired." Liz, who enjoys tending her garden, yoga and regular walks with Lulu, was also chair of the parish council from 2005 until 2019 and has chaired the village hall committee for 20 years, recently securing funding for a new kitchen and putting together the history of the 19th century building.

In addition, Liz is kept busy as editor of the local Cam Valley Wildlife Group newsletter and as secretary of Impac, both of which she has been doing for the last decade. She hopes to visit her cousins in Nova Scotia, in Canada, later in the year.

"In the final years at Imperial we were a very close-knit group consisting of marketing and purchasing, and the friendships have continued," said Liz, who keeps in touch with John Dunn, Tina Wills, Mark Hill and Barry Turner from the team as well as Helga. It was Helga who persuaded Liz to apply for a role on Cheddar Parish Council, where she worked from 2005 until 2011 and qualified as a parish clerk.

"I enjoyed all my working life. The company was very forward thinking – it even had its own bonus scheme when I joined, which not many did in that day and age – and was excellent to work for.

"I am grateful for the opportunities it provided to develop my administrative and organisational skills, which inspired the confidence to take on other roles in retirement."

DIARY DATES

The following events are planned to take place, subject to COVID-19 restrictions:

- The Player's biannual reunion the group's first event of 2022 will be held on Wednesday June 22 from 3.30pm at The Stage pub, Wollaton Street, Nottingham NG1 5FE. Contact Dave Clay.
- The Player's garage and motor vehicle repair reunion is set to be held on Monday December 05 from 3.30pm onwards at the Bell Inn, Nottingham. Contact Phil Bradley or Dave Lowe for more information.
- The date for the 2022 Group head office pensioners' reunion has not yet been set but is likely to take place at Knowle Golf Club in October. Further details to follow in the July issue of the Gazette. Contact Mike Paige.

CLUB NEWS

Newcastle

Sinclair Staff and Pensioner Group

Organiser: William Lynn.

There are currently no plans in place to get together but it is hoped meetings can start again soon. Organiser William Lynn said: "COVID put a stop to our gatherings but, with restrictions lifting, I'd be delighted to hear from any pensioners who would like to meet up."

Bristol

Wills Staff Pensioners Association

Secretary: Ruth Bwye

The final meeting of the Bristol Staff Pensioners' Association will take place on Wednesday, April 13. See article on page 11.

IMPAC

An organisation for all Imperial Pension Fund members Website: www.impac.org.uk

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The National Council has planned for an annual general meeting to be held on Thursday 05 May at 2.15pm at the

Nottingham Mechanics lecture rooms, Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. A full programme of autumn open meetings will be scheduled in Bristol, Nottingham, Glasgow and Stirling. Members in Liverpool and Ipswich will also be contacted during the summer, with a view to adding these two locations to the schedule.

IMPAC members' helpline:

email: helpline@impac.org.uk or write to IMPAC, PO Box 10486, Oxton, Southwell NG24 9NL.

For membership queries

IMPAC membership agency (to update membership details only): email: impac@dmb.org. uk; phone: 01438 840247 or write to: IMPAC c/o DMB, 18a Reynards Road, Welwyn, Herts AL6 9TP.

New members welcome

Any Imperial pensioner who would like to join IMPAC please contact the helpline or apply online at: www.impac.org.uk. Membership is free for the first 12 months.



A From left, former ITL key account specialist Howard Lilley his wife Lynda, ex-national account executive David Headlam, Maureen Yeo, Andrea Headlam, Christine Oram, former national accounts operations manager Eddie Oram and ITL key accounts specialist Colin Yeo enjoy getting together at Thurlestone



From left, Eddie and Christine Oram, Colin and Maureen Yeo, David and Andrea Headlam and Howard and Lynda Lilley

NAM GROUPS MEET

National account managers and colleagues took advantage of reduced COVID-19 restrictions as two different groups got together to reminisce about their time with the company.



AVID HEADLAM, Howard Lilley, Eddie Oram and Colin Yeo, who all worked for Imperial's national accounts team in Bristol covering

different areas, met with their wives at the Thurlestone Hotel in Devon for the first time in two and a half years.

"We had been meeting annually for over 20 years, but COVID interrupted the sequence," said David, who organised the event. He started his career with Wills as a commercial trainee in 1968, retiring as a national account executive in 2000. "A visit to the same hotel was featured in the July 2008 issue of the Gazette. Obviously, we haven't changed a scrap since then!"

In Stratford upon Avon, ITL national account managers gathered for lunch at the Blue Boar pub in Alcester where they have been meeting for the last eight years.

Former national accounts manager Graham Hall, who organises the annual event, said: "It was the first time we'd been able to meet in two years and although numbers were slightly down, we all had a fantastic time."

Graham worked for the company for almost four decades after joining Player's as a merchandising rep in 1967. He is also a classic car enthusiast and has owned a 1974 Mercedes 230/4 saloon, a 1979 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow II and a 2001 Mercedes SL320 limited edition.

"Two highlights in my career were my appointment as area sales manager for Player's for the North of Scotland in 1982 and my appointment as key account manager for Imperial in 1984," he added. "Both were challenging but very enjoyable and, in both cases, I got to work with a great team of managers."



A Catching up over lunch: standing (from left) former pensions manager Mike Paige and national account managers Julian Banks, George Byas and Mike Sanders. Seated (from left) Cheralyn Nelson, event organiser Graham Hall and Diane Sanders

Lunch organiser steps down

Colin Martin is stepping down from his role as organiser of the Scottish pensioners' lunch.

For personal reasons, he is unable to continue to organise the Christmas event but is hopeful someone may come forward to take on organising a similar event in the future. "I would like to thank all pensioners who have supported our lunches over the past 13 years," said Colin, former head of the Glasgow distribution office.

"It was a most enjoyable event, where we had the opportunity to meet with our retired colleagues that perhaps we had not seen for several years. If anyone is prepared to take on the organising of a similar event then please do not hesitate in contacting me for any information that would be of assistance."

Group winds up

The Bristol Staff Pensioners'
Association, which has been in existence since the 1970s, has seen a decline in membership over the years with numbers reducing to such an extent that the committee has, regrettably, taken the decision to wind-up at the end of this year's session. It follows that there will be no more annual reunions.

Secretary Ruth Bwye, who has been organising the meetings for the last 20 years, said: "The group has been well supported by the company as well as ex-staff members but, as they say, all good things come to an end. It is sad and not a decision which has been taken lightly, though some of us hope to meet up again in the future."

As announced in January, the Trustees of the Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund have made the decision to purchase a bulk annuity policy

with an insurance company as part of a programme to review and mitigate risks. The Gazette asks pensions manager Jan Killick what this means for Fund members:

RISK-REDUCING **ANNUITY POLICY**

Why purchase a bulk annuity policy?

A bulk annuity policy is an established mechanism used for improving security for members of defined benefit pension schemes. It is an insurance policy purchased by pension scheme trustees to remove the risks associated with defined benefit pension schemes, such as interest rate rises, increases in life expectancy and underperformance of investments.

How does it work?

• The Trustees have transferred a proportion of its assets to the insurer who, in return, has taken on responsibility for providing a secure income stream that matches part of the monthly pension payments to members. The insurer makes regular monthly payments to the Fund and the Trustees use these payments to cover pension payments.

Who is the policy with?

A: The policy is with Standard Life (part of Phoenix Group), one of the UK's largest annuity providers with over 13 million policyholders. The decision was made by the Trustees, with the support of the company, after taking specialist advice and receiving a number of competitive quotations. The policy will be held as an asset of the Fund by the Trustees.

Why did the Trustees make this decision?

• The Trustees have been carefully monitoring the funding position of the Fund over the last few years, which is greatly improved. They have also been monitoring the price of insuring a portion of the Fund's benefits as a means of managing risk and preparing for a bulk annuity transaction. Due to competitive pricing terms, the Trustees decided that

the time was right for the Fund to purchase a bulk annuity policy to reduce the level of risk and improve the long-term security of pension benefits for our members.

What effect does the decision have on members of the Fund?

The bulk annuity has no effect on the nature or value of members' benefits. It does not, for example, affect the rate of pension increases paid by the Fund. The Pension Fund Office will continue to administer benefits in the usual way so you will not notice any change in the way we communicate with you, pay your pension or who you should contact if you require any information on your benefits.

Is there any risk to future payments from Standard Life?

Standard Life is authorised by the **Prudential Regulation Authority** (PRA) and regulated by both the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the PRA. The bulk annuity policy is also covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, which provides us with 100% compensation in the very unlikely event that Standard Life is unable to meet its promises to us as a policyholder.

"...the funding position of the Fund over the last few years... is greatly improved."

Does Standard Life now have access to my personal details?

To make the agreed payments to the Fund, Standard Life requires certain information about our members. However, the data shared with Standard Life was anonymised so Standard Life would not be able to

identify individual members by name. It will not share your data with anyone within its organisation or any third parties for marketing or any other purposes that would breach your confidentiality.

More information about the personal details it holds and how it will use this data can be found at https://www. thephoenixgroup.com/site-services/ privacy G

If you have any further questions, please email pension.enquiries@ uk.imptob.com or write to The Pensions Manager, Imperial **Tobacco Pension Trustees Limited,** PO Box 3242, Winterstoke Road, Bristol BS3 9GY.



Perfect gentleman who was a beacon in troubled times

John Smith, former secretary to the Imperial Group board, has died, aged 84.

Born in India, he moved to England as a small child, growing up predominantly in Shropshire. At 18 he completed two year's National Service with the Royal Artillery before studying Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Balliol College, Oxford.

After graduating, he travelled throughout America on a scholarship set up to fund eight Balliol students each year to tour the country to expand their horizons and further Anglo-American relations.

When he returned in 1961, John applied for a management traineeship with Imperial and was offered a position at Wills in Bristol.

Challenging role

His first position was departmental manager at the No. 3 factory in Raleigh Road and, soon after, he moved to Newcastle to become assistant factory manager at No. 11 factory.

When John moved back to Bristol in 1967, he was faced with the challenging role of organisation development; a tough job which included shifting management salaries from being based on age and length of service to being determined by job worth and personal performance.

His next role was industrial relations manager during the run-up to the

government's controversial Industrial Relations Act of 1979, which was vigorously opposed by the Trade Unions.

The next few years saw John appointed to the Wills board as personnel director, followed by a stint at Harvard Business School until he was promoted to secretary to the Group board.

In the early 1980s he was tasked with reducing the size and scope of the London and Bristol based head office and fought to keep the registration department open.

Following the Hanson takeover in 1986 John turned down the offer of full-time employment but the company agreed he could stay on until everyone in the head office had found a job. After this, he decided to join his brotherin-law's business on a small farm in Wales raising antibodies in sheep for diagnostic and therapeutic uses in human and animal health. The firm's first commercial sale was to the US army in Bosnia for treating soldiers bitten by the common European viper.

"John was exhausted by the Hanson takeover and was the very last person to leave the building at Hyde Park Corner," said Nickola, his wife of 56 years. "He was determined not to return to full time employment, and this enabled us, while we were still relatively young, to travel quite extensively to countries only just emerging on the tourist map like



Laos, Vietnam and Uzbekistan. As we aged, we preferred a bit more comfort but still enjoyed exploring other countries' art and culture. As John was a dedicated sun worshipper, we also squeezed in a regular two weeks in a hired villa on the island of Naxos, Greece."

Perfect gentleman

In retirement, John was honorary secretary of local charity Combers Trust, dedicated to those in need and the elderly living alone.

Former pensions manager Mike Paige added: "John was the perfect gentleman who revelled in his time as a management trainee in various factories, where he knew almost everyone's name and background and gained the respect of all who met him.

"He was the beacon to which we all turned in our troubled times and his words of encouragement – and his humour – were always greatly appreciated."

John is survived by Nickola, sons Mark and Paul and three grandchildren.



St Anne's Board Mill pensioner Peter de Snoo has died aged 86. Born in Liverpool, Peter's first job was in the research laboratory for Bibby's Soap, where he met his wife, Joan. He enjoyed his work but was encouraged to further his studies and graduated from Durham University in 1963 with a degree in chemistry and physics.

Peter then joined Reed International Paper Company as a graduate trainee and, later that year, moved to Cassino, near Rome, Italy, to teach the locals how to run one of the company's newly

From managing director to mentor

opened cardboard mills.

He returned to the UK in 1965, working as technical manager for the London Paper Mill in Kent before moving to Alex Cowan in Scotland as a production manager.

In 1973 he moved to High Wycombe to become production manager for GH Hedley Mill – a subsidiary of St Anne's Board Mill which manufactured cardboard for food packaging – and was appointed production director two years' later.

In 1977 he became managing director, responsible for the overall management of the company, a job he greatly enjoyed and one he held until the factory closed in 1982.

A keen sailor, Peter then decided to build his own marina with 75 mooring

berths near Truro, Cornwall. Unfortunately, after a lengthy battle with the local council over the lease, he had to sell it back to them.

Looking for a new challenge, he became a consultant to Business Mentors South West, joined the South West Investment Group as a business angel and later, in 2005, with the Prince's Trust. He also started a business manufacturing a seed-sowing implement in 2003, which he sold to his business partner in 2008.

That same year he set up a mentor program to support people with disabilities starting their own businesses in Cornwall. Mentors' Den, named after the television programme Dragons Den, has helped dozens of entrepreneurs successfully

start up their own companies and expanded to help people all over the country.

Peter also went on to support various charities and started his own focused on equine therapy, using horses to help clients with a variety of mental health conditions. His charity successfully helped many in Cornwall and latterly secured funding from the National Lottery to continue its work.

He also enjoyed playing golf, was interested in steam locomotives and trained as a bell ringer, having rung the bells in Truro Cathedral and in many local churches, including for his son lan's wedding.

Peter is survived by Joan, son lan, daughter Lynn and three granddaughters Mari, Ella and Grace. Former area manager for Sterling Poultry Products, Donald (Don) Goulsbra has died, aged 99.

Born in Scrivelsby, Lincolnshire, Don left school aged 15 and joined Sterling Poultry Products in Woodhall Spa. Sterling was a private company set up by GG Belfield and specialised in breeding chickens in a bid to produce *Britain's Best Birds*, which was its slogan. Woodhall was one of about 15 hatcheries around the country which collected fertile eggs and hatched them in huge electric incubators and then sold the day-old chicks.

Service with the RAF

Don re-joined the company after service with the RAF during the Second World War and quickly became manager of a sub-branch in East Bridgford, Nottingham. It was here Don met and married Elaine and their children Gillian and Rodney were born.

At the end of 1951 Don was asked if he wanted to become

Area manager, sailor and golfer who taught yoga



manager of a new branch opening in Prestbury, Cheshire.

"It was quite a daunting prospect for a young man with a young wife and two young children to move to an area he didn't know and to start a business with no customers and suppliers," said his son Rod.

"The branch did well due to Dad's hard work and leadership and was so successful another sub-branch was opened at Bentham, Yorkshire."

Sterling was taken over by Ross Group in May 1961 and was later rebranded as Ross Poultry before Ross was subsequently taken over by Imperial Tobacco in September 1969 and further rebranded as Imperial Foods.

At this time Don was area

manager covering Cumberland, Cheshire, North Wales and the Isle of Man, based at Prestbury.

Early retirement

"The powers that be then decided the Prestbury hatchery was not needed and shut it down, despite Dad trying to convince them it was a mistake," added Rod. "Dad was offered the manager's job at Worcester but was happily settled in Prestbury so, in 1973, decided to take early retirement.

"Ironically a few months later it was realised that Prestbury was a useful branch, and it was investigated whether it could be re-opened but, by then, all the equipment had been sold." Needing some form of income, Don, who was a keen practitioner

of yoga, retrained as a yoga teacher. He also did some part time work in Rod's removal business. Out of work Don was a keen golfer and a very competent dinghy sailor. He was heavily involved with the local church and was one of the UK's longest-serving parish councillors, having over 50 years in the role.

"Sadly, Dad's health deteriorated, and he spent the last few years in a nursing home," said Rod. "Even then things never changed, and the manager says he was always wandering about and when she asked him what he was doing he said: I've got to turn the eggs."

Don is survived by Elaine, Gillian, Rod, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Head of IT, keen sportsman and voluntary worker



Brian Thatcher, former head of IT in the group management services (GMS) department and a keen sportsman, has died, aged 79.

Brian, who was born in Oxford, moved to Bristol when he

was six and attended Cotham Grammar School. He suffered from asthma from an early age and in his teens was advised to take up sports during time spent at the thermal baths at Le Mont Dor in the Auvergne Mountains in France, which is famous for relieving respiratory illness. He was soon representing his school in athletics, becoming the county triple iump champion.

Brian's sporting pursuits continued when he joined Imperial in 1959 as a junior in the legal department. It was

here he met his wife, Kay, who was also a junior in the department.

"I would always be the one to stay on late waiting for the solicitors to sign their letters while Brian made his excuses and went off to football or cricket practice, a tennis match or other sporting activity," said Kay, who was married to Brian for 55 years.

"Somehow, he won me over and we married in 1966 then had our son, Nick."

Computers at this time were in their infancy and Brian, who also played rugby for Imperial for nearly 20 years serving both as captain and club chairman, was offered the opportunity to take an IT aptitude test. He successfully passed and his career in the IT department at GMS took off

He progressed from computer programmer to head of IT, a role he held when he retired in 1986. He then went on

to work for NatWest Insurance Services, also becoming its head of IT.

In retirement, Brian, who was diagnosed with dementia in 2018, volunteered for many organisations. He was a trustee of the Bristol Benevolent Institution (BBI), a charity supporting the elderly, and a governor at Wansdyke Primary School in Whitchurch, Bristol, where he and Kay also supported children with their reading. In addition, he was chairman of the Imperial Athletic Club and vice chairman at Knowle Golf Club, which he was a member of for 49 years, as well as chairman of its Greens Committee.

"His other love was golf, and he won several trophies, getting his handicap into single figures," added Kay.

Brian is survived by Kay, Nick and the many friends he made during his years with GMS.

Death of five pensioners who were also centenarians



Hubert Watmough



Joseph McDermott

Five of the Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund's oldest members have died after passing their centenary milestone.

Edith Hucker, who worked for WD & HO Wills for almost 30 years, from 1949 until 1978, has died at the age of 103, while Hubert Watmough who worked in the fish industry at Ross Foods, has died aged 102.

Stationed in Iraq

Hubert left school in 1933 aged 14 to work for Grimsby fish merchant Robert Chapman and, with the exception of the war years when he was stationed in Iraq with the RAF, he spent his whole working life in the fish trade. Chapman's was bought by the Ross Group in 1958, which was later taken over by Imperial Foods.

Hubert was initially employed as a fish salesman and later ran the department handling frozen-



The deaths are reported, as at 31 January 2022, of the following retired employees:

HEAD OFFICE AND ITL

Lucinda Haque, 82; John Douglas Smith, 84; Keith Edward Smith, 77; Brian Stuart Thatcher, 79; Arthur James Turner, 81.

WD & HO WILLS

John Arthur Apsey, 90; Barry Barclay Bailey, 76; Jacqueline Elizabeth Barrington, 90; Doreen Margaret Grace Belcher, 91; Catherine Patricia Burns, 95; Anthony Samuel Ernest Butler, 82; June Lilian Butler, 90: Eileen Margaret Cains, 86; Kenneth Gale Chisholm, 85; Reginald William Cleaver, 95; David Cottiss, 77; Marcia Elizabeth Critchley, 78; Dorothy Davey, 91; John Davis, 86; Brian Gallagher, 75; Edith Millicent Gill, 93; Gerald William Gillard, 92; Sylvia Joan Girling, 84; Keith William Green, 73; Lawrence Thomas Hadrill, 96; Lyn Christopher Hall, 75; Jean Mary Havercroft, 91; Francis Orr Hemphill, 87; Helen Henderson, 78; John Colin Hooper, 88: Edith Eleanor Hucker, 103; Rosemary Hughes, 66; Adam Hunter, 83; Eileen Joy Jones, 90; Raymond Richard Kelly, 92; Iris Elizabeth Lawrence, 97; Christina Reynolds MacDonald, 92: Vera Joan Macken, 94; Arthur Cyril Magrath, 92; Charles William Herbert Marsh, 93; David Alexander McCracken, 74; Elizabeth Campbell McGuire, 85; Denis McGurk, 73; Robert White McLean, 88;

John Royston Frederick Monday, 93; William George Morgan, 91; Maurice Naylor, 84; Peggy Elizabeth Netcott, 86; Maurice Payne, 88; Jeannie Madden Richardson, 85; Malcolm Stanley Salter, 76; Edward James Smith, 85; Thomas Roy Surplus, 74; Anthony Roland Thompson, 86; Helen Christine Trigg, 76; Joan Lilian Vernoum, 91; William Brian Walton, 74; Doris Watson, 97; Jean Ellen Wiltshire, 80; Sheila Mary Withers, 90; Shirley Annie Worlock, 86; Mervyn Arthur Wring, 86.

JOHN PLAYER & SONS

Denise Bailey, 70; Graham Bennett, 82; Tony Thomas Bradley, 81; Raymond Peter Brealey, 86; Alan Camplin, 71; Brenda Elizabeth Mary Chadwick, 86; Harold Clayton, 88; Edward Craig, 76; John Henry Cunningham, 80; Marion Bonar Currie, 83; Adelina De-Rosa, 83; John Anthony Feasby, 97; Isabella Glen, 87; Joan Harrison, 93; Russell William John Hudson, 94; Stewart Arnold Isham, 89; Ina Jones, 94; Wilfred Kelsey, 91; Joan Noreen Lennard, 83; Dorothey Lockwood, 96; Catherine Lynaghan, 71; Dennis Marriott, 73; Joseph William McDermott, 100; Margaret Thomson Millar, 91; Ivy Parr, 99; Roger Peat, 74; John Pellatt, 79; Derrick Ashton Richardson, 91; Nigel Granville Roberts, 75; Alexander Michael Rodger, 84; Norman George Seddon, 80; Catherine Selby, 80; Elizabeth Shaw, 91;

Veronica Mary Sheldon, 86; Freda Somers, 79; Pamela Mary Teague, 80; Yvonne Corine Thomas, 74; James Willis, 84.

OGDEN'S

Ronald Henry Bee, 91; Joan Dempsey, 89; Joan Lilian Kynaston, 94; Joseph Francis Ruddock, 80; Irene Shipley, 100; Vera Elsie Warren, 96.

FINLAY & CO

Doris Jean Keeping, 93.

LOWFIELD DISTRIBUTION

John Albert Galasso, 75; Marion McDowell, 73.

RI7I A

Muriel Walden, 91; Alice Woodridge, 84.

ROBERT FLETCHER & SON

Wilfred Edward Oldham, 101.

SINCLAIR COLLIS

Margaret Wilson Gordon, 85; Ivy Sayers, 80; Derek Thomas Steele, 66; Keith Cavendish Wagstaff, 81.

ST ANNE'S BOARD MILL

Michael Richard Davis, 69; Peter John Laurence de Snoo, 86; Raymond Albert Hewitt, 95; Bernard Walter Kingdon, 89; Roger John Mavin, 75; Maurice Andrew Pugsley, 83; Frances George Skuse, 87; Leonard Gwylin Wilson, 89.

IMPERIAL FOODS LIMITED HEAD OFFICE

Samuel Bartholomew, 96; Stephen Charles Carter, 66; Ada Rose Gidney, 90; Donald Moorhead Goulsbra, 99; Keith Leslie Jenkins, 69; Peter Metcalf, 86; Marion Murray, 88; David Leonard Trott, 90; George William Tudor, 84; Barrie Weed, 84.

GOLDEN WONDER

Constance McCulloch, 69; Bryan Morgan, 66; Mary Marjorie Rose, 95; Mary Webster, 83; Brian Wilson, 77.

ROSS FOODS

Derek Brown, 74;
Michael Carswell, 71;
Ina Patricia Chevis, 87;
Sheila Elsie Condon, 93;
Andrew Graeme Foster, 67;
David William Gaskin, 71;
Barbara May Grigorjew, 92;
Allen Reginald Johnson, 77;
David Andrew Lamberton, 89;
Manjit Kaur Rayit, 75;
Philip Sidney Simmonds, 68;
Paul Ernest Small, 76;
James Ferguson Burns Spence, 86;
Hubert Arthur Watmough, 102.

SEVEN SEAS

Terence Ward, 74.

SMEDLEY-HP FOODS

David George Bibby, 73; Colin Alfred Coulson, 79; George John Le Riche, 97; Roy James Lewis, 73; David George Walker, 79; Ivy Margaret Wright, 96.

WELCOME BREAK

Grace Kemp, 93.

YOUNG'S SEAFOODS

lain Douglas Fletcher Croall, 92; Victor Ernest Twynam, 85.

We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of our former colleagues.

Correction: Smedley-HP Foods pensioner John Eddy Neeld's middle name was mistakenly spelled Eddie in the November issue of the Gazette. We apologise for the error.

at-sea fish, working out of Ross House on Grimsby fish docks.

Hubert, who lived in Humberston, North East Lincolnshire, retired in 1982. He is survived by daughter Anne, stepdaughter Maureen and granddaughters Jenny and Kate. Robert Fletcher pensioner Wilfred Oldham has died aged 101. He joined the company, which manufactured cigarette papers, in 1948 and completed 33 years' service before retiring in 1981.

Irene Shipley, who joined the Ogden's factory at Boundary Lane in Liverpool in 1939 and worked there for 41 years until her retirement in 1980, has died aged 100.

Nottingham Forest

Golf and football enthusiast Joseph McDermott, who worked for John Player & Sons for 42 years, has also died shortly after celebrating his 100th birthday.

He swapped a potential footballing career at Nottingham Forest Football Club to join the company in 1939 and retired in 1981.

His wife Beryl, who died in 2012, also worked for the company for 41 years.



A The Player's garage and MVR team enjoying their first reunion in two years

FIRST REUNION AFTER **TWO YEAR PAUSE**



ENSIONERS AT the annual Player's garage and motor vehicle repair reunion enjoyed an evening catching up with former colleagues at

the group's 16th get-together.

Joining the group at the Bell Inn, Nottingham, were former drivers Bill Leam and Pete Fisher, who left Player's in the early and mid-1980s, respectively.

"We were delighted to welcome back Bill and Pete, who had not attended for many years," said Phil Bradley, who coorganises the event with Dave Lowe.

Welcome back: after many years, the group were delighted to see Bill Leam (left) and Pete Fisher at the event

"Dave was unable to make the reunion but was contacted by Bob Cutts, a previous manager in the garage, who sent his best wishes and hopes to attend a future event."

Convivial evening

Phil, who gave a short speech and thanked attendees for their continued support, was contacted by Fred Slack, 88, who worked





in the garage office. He added: "Fred's not able to get out these days, though keeps up with the reunions and other news through the Gazette. A convivial evening was enjoyed by 30 of us - not a bad turnout considering the garage closed in 1990!" (G

Pete Fisher (left), who last attended the reunion 10 years ago, catches up with former colleagues Colin Wardle, Jeff Frith, Dave Gee, Pete Cottingham and Dave Bee

RPI increase

The rise in the Retail Prices Index for the last 12 months to December 2021 – the basis of the pension increase from 01 April 2022 – was 7.55 per cent. Details on page 3.

The Gazette is published by the Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund. For pension information, please call the pensions office on 0117 953 0000. Please send all future items for publication in the Gazette to:

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