

the Gazette

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FOR PENSIONERS OF IMPERIAL TOBACCO



issues

This month marks 33 years and 100 issues of The Gazette. As well as the usual mix of pensioners' news and views, there is a special feature on pages 12 and 13 tracing the development of the magazine from its black and white beginnings in April 1989.

MICK MAKES IT TO BASE CAMP



AFTER SEVERAL false starts, Mick Miller has successfully completed a trek to Everest base camp in Nepal, raising more than £1,000 for

charity. The organised trip was cancelled four times due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Mick also sustained a ruptured Achilles tendon, putting his ambition to complete the gruelling trek in jeopardy.

"There is no doubt that it was the hardest 10 days of my life," said Mick, who worked as a sales rep for Imperial from 1992 until 2017, covering areas such as West Yorkshire, County Durham and Lancashire.

"We were lucky with the weather and the trail was quiet as it was one of the first organised treks after COVID.

"There were 18 in our group and all of us made it to base camp – a first for our

▲ On top of the world: Mick at Everest base camp – 5,364 metres above sea level

► Mick Miller (right) with a Sherpa and fellow walker Alan who, at 80, was an inspiration during the 10-day trek

guide – despite the altitude sickness and headaches, which made it as much a mental battle as a physical one."

Personal journey

Mick kept fit over the two years he was waiting to go on the trip but each time it was cancelled he lost a bit of motivation and had to pick himself up again.

"It was a very personal journey for me," said Mick, who previously trekked the Great Wall of China in 2019.

"My father, Sidney, died from Alzheimer's disease – the most common cause of dementia – in 2014, and my mother, Betty, also passed away last year, so I was doing it for them."

The route Mick took is a well-worn one: flying from Kathmandu in a small aircraft to Lukla – reportedly the most dangerous airport in the world – and trekking through various villages, staying in traditional tea houses which provide basic but comfortable accommodation.

In total he raised £1,100 for the Alzheimer's Society, in addition to the £1,500 he raised on his Great Wall trek,

Mick Miller braves a rope bridge during his epic Himalayan trip to Everest base camp



and £100 for the Intensive Care Society, which is dedicated to delivering the highest quality of critical care to patients.

Additional clothing

"Although I spent a lot of time on the treadmill running and walking, I definitely didn't do enough hill climbing with a 5kg backpack on," added Mick, who lives in Sherburn-in-Elmet, near York, and has three children Jack, Emily and George.

"The weather can change very quickly so you need to carry additional clothing as well as two to three litres of water.

"We all had good days and bad days and the views were incredible. When I got to the top, I felt elated – like if I can climb Everest, I can do anything I put my mind to. But I also knew I was done, so I have hung up my trekking poles.

"Life is all about making memories and I'll never forget this one." **G**



Memories of fun and games at Wills

◆ I wanted to share these photos from the 1970s of some of the family fun and charity days organised by Wills in Bristol.

The company arranged several of these events each year, which involved different departments competing against each other in different sports. They were great fun.

I started in the shipping office in Bedminster in 1974, straight from school, and was promoted to the despatch office – one of the first departments to be moved to Hartcliffe.

It's A Knockout

The picture of a group walking on planks shows the Hartcliffe team (Tony Webster, Margaret Murphy, myself and Cyril Sutor) taking part in an It's A Knockout competition for which we won a prize.

I also won a prize when competing in a five aside football contest with others from the Bedminster shipping office. Another is of myself and Margaret at a charity day playing a drinking with straws game with



Bristol City FC players Tom Ritchie and Paul Cheesley.

I had my first child in 1982 then returned to work part-time in the accounts department at head office before leaving in 1988.

The photos evoke such happy memories of my time at Wills, where I also met my best friend, Kay Knight, over 45 years ago. Perhaps there are others who will also have fond recollections of the company-organised events.

Beverley Hawkins (née Carter)









▲ Beverley and Margaret taking on Bristol City FC players in a drinking with straws challenge

▲ Plank walking in an It's A Knockout competition

▲ Winners: The Hartcliffe team claim their prize after taking part in an It's A Knockout competition organised by the company in the 1970s.



IN THIS SPECIAL 100TH ISSUE

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Interim results show that Imperial is on course to provide the capabilities and culture that will support its strategy and deliver sustainable growth in shareholder value.

GAINING MOMENTUM BEHIND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Stefan Bomhard

IMPERIAL BRANDS' interim results for the six months ended 31 March 2022 show that the company is making good progress in delivering its strategic objectives and is on track to deliver full year results in line with guidance.

During the first half of the year, Imperial stabilised its core combustible business, increasing total market share in the five priority markets (UK, USA, Australia, Germany and Spain), which account for around 70 per cent of its operating profit, while maintaining its pricing.

Orderly transfer

Its more focused approach to its broader portfolio of markets is also delivering stronger performance from regions such as Africa. In April, the company delivered on its earlier commitment to exit Russia (see below), with the orderly transfer of its business to local investors.

Successful consumer trials in next generation products (NGP) underpin the

rollout of Pulze and iD heated tobacco products to further European markets and, in the USA, it is extending its refreshed blu marketing proposition.

The company has also started a pilot in France for an all-new vapour device – the first new NGP product from its redesigned innovation pipeline.

Chief executive Stefan Bomhard said: "We are

now 18 months into our five-year strategy to build a more sustainable company, capable of consistent growth.

"Our strategy is being supported

"Our strategy is being supported by a comprehensive culture change programme..."

by a comprehensive culture change programme, designed to embed more consumer-centric, collaborative and future-focused ways of working, across every level of the organisation.

"Our focus for the remainder of 2022 will be to invest further in our five priority markets and begin the roll-out of our NGP strategy.

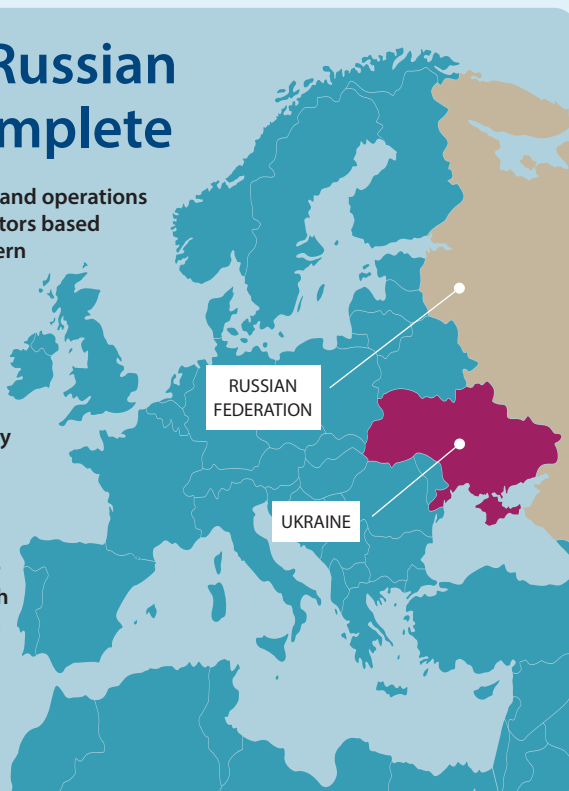
"While these are uncertain times, as we move into 2023, we will have in place the capabilities and culture necessary to support the next phase of our strategy and deliver sustainable growth in shareholder value." **G**

Transfer of Russian business complete

◆ IMPERIAL'S RUSSIAN assets and operations have been transferred to investors based in the country as a going concern in the wake of the war with Ukraine.

The company employed 1,000 people in Russia in its sales and marketing operations and factory in Volgograd and continued to pay their salaries until the exit was concluded.

Meanwhile, Imperial is continuing to support its 600 Ukrainian colleagues and their families, including helping with transport and accommodation to enable them to escape the areas most heavily affected by war, and resettlement assistance for those who have left Ukraine.



Climate leader



◆ THE SECOND Financial Times list of Europe's Climate Leaders shows that Imperial Brands is again among the companies that have achieved the greatest reduction in core greenhouse gas emissions – this time between 2015 and 2020. Tackling climate change is one of eight key focus areas of Imperial's refreshed ESG (environmental, social and governance) strategy, which can be read on the company's new-look website: <https://www.imperialbrandsplc.com/>

New faces on the Trustee Board

Lisa Hall and
Tony Dunnage



◆ TWO NEW company nominated trustees have been appointed to the Imperial Tobacco Pension Trustee Board.

Tony Dunnage and Lisa Hall have replaced Darren Lees and Nicky Welby, who have both stepped down from the role.

Tony joined Imperial Brands in July 2021 as global ESG (environmental, social and governance) director after more than 30 years at Unilever, where he held a number of different roles and gained a wide range of experience.

"I am delighted to have joined the trustee team and hope that my broad business experience and deep knowledge of ESG

matters will prove valuable," said Tony.

"I am looking forward to being a part of the wider Imperial organisation and, as a lifelong learner, this is a great opportunity for me to learn and grow."

Strategic transformation

Lisa joined Imperial last October as head of IT for enabling functions and is working on delivering several strategic transformation programmes across the finance, people & culture, strategy, corporate affairs and legal departments.

She began her career at Ernst and Young before working at brewing company

SABMiller, where she was head of business intelligence, and latterly with Coca-Cola Europacific Partners in various IT leadership roles.

Lisa is very much looking forward to working alongside the other trustees, advisors and administrators and sees her new role as a great opportunity, which holds significant responsibility.

"I am committed to ensuring that the Fund is the best it can be for its members to get the most out of life after Imperial," she said.

Employee nominated trustee, Sam Miller, has left the business and the nomination process to select a replacement is underway.

Don't forget there's a helping hand available

Increased financial strain mounting from the cost of living crisis means that some people may find themselves needing an extra helping hand, which the Tobacco Trade Benevolent Fund (TTBF) can provide.

The charity offers financial support and assistance to applicants, or their partners, who previously worked in the tobacco trade for a minimum period and meet certain financial criteria.

Depending on an individual's circumstances, the TTBF can offer regular relief payments, paid on a quarterly basis, or a one-off annual maintenance grant to help towards household items, including TV licences and other larger expenses.

"With Covid restrictions now lifted, our field welfare officers (FWOs) are back visiting individuals to assess their financial

needs and support them with their claims, including any state benefits they are entitled to but not currently claiming," said Jennifer Stringer, who works at the charity.

"A lot of our beneficiaries look forward to visits from our FWOs who provide a friendly ear to listen to any problems or concerns and see how we can assist with their financial wellbeing, which is especially important during these tough times with soaring energy bills."

Anyone needing help should contact Jennifer Stringer or Johanna Jennings at: Tobacco Trade Benevolent Fund, Forum Court, Office 2FF, Saphir House, 5 Jubilee Way, Faversham, Kent ME13 8GD. Tel: 020 8663 3050. Email: info@tobaccocharity.org. uk. For more information about the charity and to download an application form: visit www.tobaccocharity.org.uk

RUTH'S RARE TALENT FOR ORGANISING

Ruth Bwye has committed much of her life to ensuring that everything runs smoothly. Starting her career as a clerk at Wills, she was encouraged to apply for a secretarial position and continued to hone her organisational talents during her 33-years with the company – also serving as secretary of the Wills Staff Pensioners' Association for over two decades. With a passion for singing, Ruth has travelled the world with The Silver Ring Choir of Bath, of which she has been a member for over 50 years – also receiving a Mayor's Citizen's award for her long-term contributions as secretary to the group.

B

RISTOL-BORN RUTH, who describes herself as a 'Bristol person through and through', went to Fairfield Grammar School, gaining O levels, before attending the

College of Commerce for a year. Here, she gained the shorthand/typing, bookkeeping and other office skills that would put her in good stead when applying for her first job with the company.

"WD & HO Wills was well-known as a good employer and was also only about a ten minutes' walk away from my home," said Ruth, who joined in 1954.

Ruled with a rod of iron

"I was offered a job as a clerk in what can be described as a 'clearing' department known as CDC (Customers' Dissection Cards). Each customer had a card on which was written – in pen and ink! – every tobacco product they had purchased.

"We were ruled with a rod of iron by the section head and I remember attending classes run by R.C. (Dickie) Weeks and later Bob Cuff, which enabled us to keep up our shorthand speeds."

After 18 months, Ruth transferred to the advertising department, where she continued to use her shorthand skills. When the department was re-organised in 1958, she then joined the newly formed sales promotion section (later known as Special Events), working with manager Ken Cottell and Peter Middleton.

"It was the start of an amazing few years of being involved in the growth of our promotions," said Ruth, who assisted with the organisation of company events such as the Round the Island Yacht Race in the Isle of Wight, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone and the World Snooker Championships at the Crucible in Sheffield.

"We were one of the first to promote tennis in Bristol and were involved with promotions at the All-England Show Jumping at Hickstead, plus dancing competitions at the various Mecca Ballrooms culminating with the Embassy Ball at the Royal Albert Hall – the list goes on. I was fortunate enough



Time for a cuppa: Ruth is a collector of tea sets



to work away at most of these events – an experience which came in useful for later years."

Ruth's skill for organising did not go unnoticed when she was head-hunted to become secretary to personnel manager Dan

"I enjoyed my job and was lucky to work with some genuinely nice people."

Skene-Smith and office methods manager John Goodchap in 1968 and moved to the personnel department.

"Their secretary, Joyce Bartlett, was to become secretary to chairman, John Pile, and I was encouraged to apply for the vacancy," explained Ruth, whose new role included taking on the role of secretary to the Staff Council, under the chairmanship of the personnel director, Roger Reynolds, and to the Factory Central Council chaired by production director, Peter Smith.

Shorthand skills

"Bearing in mind that I had never in my life taken minutes, my shorthand skills came to the forefront.

"Incidentally, when word processors were first introduced into the company there were just two of them – one went to the typing pool and the other to me – and what a difference that made to producing minutes. I can recall one time, pre-word processors, when I had to re-type thirteen pages of a document because an alteration had been made to the first page which put the rest out of sync – I was not amused!"

Ruth's role extended to include

work for John Game who, with John Smith, was responsible for overseeing the introduction of the grading for management and staff. She subsequently worked for Robin Ellison and Jimmy Phillips, before ending her career in the human resources department in 1987 as office administrator and secretary to the Human Resources director, John Game.

During her busy career, which also included a spell as a correspondent for the Wills Magazine, Ruth made time for her hobby, singing, which she first got into thanks to her school music teacher, John Richards, who accepted her into the school's senior choir.

"I am the first to admit that I do not have a great voice," said Ruth.

"But what John did for music at our school was amazing – from having no music we had senior and junior choirs, orchestras and gave a concert in the Colston Hall every year. He was an inspiration and his words: 'it is not just

continued on next page





◀ Ruth, front row, far left, performing with the Silver Ring Choir of Bath

▶ With the Mayor of Bath's Citizen of the Year award, 2018

which was postponed last year.

Ruth's dedication to secretarial work has also continued during her retirement through her role as secretary to the Wills Staff Pensioners' Association, which began in 2002.

"At my very first meeting I was unexpectedly handed the chore of taking the minutes and it all started from there," said Ruth. "Back then, people attending the annual reunion were invited to hand in a self-addressed envelope which would be used to send out details of meetings. But, if you were not at that meeting, you did not get the information. It was following this that I put all details on the computer and printed envelopes and programmes – much easier."

Recent decision

The mailing list of attendees reduced over the years from more than 200 to less than 40 and, after Covid, numbers went down again to about 12. This resulted in a recent decision by the group to disband, though Ruth is planning to organise a lunch in September for anyone interested in coming along for a catch up.

Reflecting on her time with the company, Ruth, who is close friends with former colleagues Christine and Barry Turner, added: "I always liked to be busy, and I was certainly that! I enjoyed my job and was lucky to work with some genuinely nice people. One memory which will always stay with me is shaking hands with Princess Margaret when she visited Hartcliffe – she had lovely eyes." 

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a voice which makes a choir, will always stick with me."

On leaving school, Ruth carried on singing as a member of the Bristol Youth Choir until she was 27. She then joined the Bristol Phoenix Choir before moving on to The Silver Ring Choir of Bath, putting the skills she was honing at Wills into practice by acting as secretary for both groups. After almost 50 years, she is still secretary of the Bath-based mixed voice choir, which is one of the city's longest-established choral groups.

"Friends persuaded me to apply for The Silver Ring Choir of Bath and after an audition I was accepted in 1968. What a decision that was," said Ruth who lives in Redland with Chica and Pepe, her two rescue dogs from Spain.

"The choir was top in its field under the baton of their founder-conductor, Kelvin Thomas, MBE, and my first performance was taking part in the Welsh National Eisteddfod.

We won our class singing in Welsh – which we learned by heart.

"We have performed all over the world and my experience in organising promotions and events at Wills has certainly come in handy for all the tours I've been involved in coordinating. Apart from the British Isles, we have been to the USA and Canada, France, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Hungary, Singapore and New Zealand."

In 2018, Ruth was awarded the Mayor of Bath's Citizen of the Year award for her 'outstanding' contribution to the choir over the years. Following Covid restrictions, work is now being undertaken to rebuild the choir's repertoire and singers in preparation for its 70th birthday concert



End of an era as pensioners' association calls it a day

The Wills Staff Pensioners' Association has closed after almost 50 years of meetings. Members of the club met at the Bristol Indoor Bowls Centre, South Liberty Lane, Ashton, Bristol, for the last time in April.

The association has seen a decline in membership over the years with numbers at its monthly meetings and annual reunion reducing to such an extent that the committee took the decision to close at the end of this year's session.

Secretary Ruth Bwyne, who has been organising the meetings between October and April for the last 20 years, said: "The group has been well supported by the company as well as ex-staff members over the years but, as they say, all good things come to an end.

"It is sad and not a decision which has been taken lightly. Some of us hope to continue to meet up again in the future."





Shane Warne waves to the crowd during an Ashes test match at The Oval cricket ground in London

Wills pensioner, **Barry Turner**, remembers when a young Shane Warne, already a remarkable bowler, played for Imperial's cricket team.

LEGEND PLAYED FOR IMPERIAL

FOLLOWING THE DEATH of Australian cricketing legend Shane Warne at the age of just 52, one pensioner got in touch to recall his memories of the cricketer when he played for Imperial.

Barry Turner, who joined the accounts department at Wills, Bristol, in 1961 and retired from his role in cigarette marketing 33 years later, played cricket for Imperial for three years and remembers a 19-year-old Shane coming to the club.

"Each year the company invited two young Australian cricketers to join Imperial for a year, housing them in the flat above our Pavilion and paying them a small amount for doing ground staff work," said Barry, who moved to the accounts section of the advertising department in 1966, before transferring to tobacco and cigar marketing three years later and working in various roles under Graham Heywood.

"One of them played for us, the other for Knowle Cricket Club – obviously Shane played for us! Even then he was a terrific bowler."

Shane came to Bristol after his career with St Kilda Football Club playing Aussie Rules football was crushed and his friend Rick Gough, who played for St Kilda's Cricket Club, asked if he would accompany him for a stint of cricket in the city. He did just that and, before long, was playing cricket for Imperial's first team.

Barry, who met his wife, Christine, at Wills and has been happily married for 48 years, recalls one occasion when he was in the nets training with Shane and others: "We were bowling at one of Imperial's finest

batmen whose name now escapes me, when Shane said to me: "Which part of his body would you like me to hit?" I said something like "his right shoulder" – and he did just that!

"He was also great at batting and Imperial enjoyed a couple of good seasons with him. I only played one match with him in the second XI before we reverted to our rightful positions, Shane in the firsts and me in the thirds!

"It was, of course, a privilege, to have met and known such a fantastic cricketer."

DIARY DATES

- ◆ The 2022 **Group head office pensioners' reunion** will take place on Thursday 13 October at Knowle Golf Club, Bristol. Mike Paige will send invitations nearer the date. Mike can be contacted by phone .
- ◆ 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 **Player's biannual reunion** – the group's second event of 2022 – will be held on Wednesday December 7 from 3.30pm at The Stage pub, Wollaton Street, Nottingham NG1 5FE. Contact Dave Clay.

IMPAC

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

FUTURE MEETING DATES

The National Council has suspended the National Roadshow programme for 2022. As a result, the planned autumn open meetings in Bristol, Glasgow and Stirling, including the development of additional venues, have also been postponed for the foreseeable future.

However, the following open meeting will continue to take place:

Midlands: Tuesday 20 September at 10.00am at the Wollaton Park Community Association, Harrow Road, Nottingham, NG8 1FG.



IMPAC members' helpline:

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

For membership queries

IMPAC membership agency (to update membership details only): email: impact@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.impact.org.uk. Membership is free for the first 12 months.



DRIVEN BY PASSION TO SAVE VIADUCT

The Grade II listed Bennerley Viaduct, which connects Ilkeston in Derbyshire with Awsworth in Nottinghamshire, is the longest wrought iron railway bridge in the country. The Iron Giant, as it is known, was largely forgotten after it closed in 1967 – until recently. It has now re-opened to the public thanks to a community-driven initiative and the support of Player’s pensioner and railway enthusiast **Paul Miller**, who has been instrumental in the campaign to save it.

▲ Paul Miller; inset a young Paul with his father, Joseph Miller

▼ Historic Bennerley Viaduct

PAUL MILLER’S earliest memory of the viaduct, which was built in 1877 by the Great Northern Railway Company, was when he was three and he watched his father, Joseph, get off a train in view of it.

It sparked his life-long passion for railways, which has included him co-authoring books such as *Railway Tales: Ilkeston and District in the Age of Steam* for the Ilkeston and District Local History Society, for which he is chairman.

“As a child I would stand at the side of the viaduct trainspotting,” said Paul, who joined Player’s in 1977 as a maintenance fitter and spent the last 10 years of his career working in the Horizon Powerhouse until he retired in 2002.

“It combines two of my passions – Victorian history and railways – and is a beautiful and unique example of Victorian engineering using wrought iron to provide flexibility for the structure, while allowing it to retain its integrity over the marsh land on which it was built. It’s one of just two wrought iron structures left in the UK, the other is in Devon.

“After it closed, it was not maintained and, because it was made from wrought iron, couldn’t be cut down and was too

expensive to blow up. And, so, it became the viaduct that time forgot.”

This changed in recent years when a community group of viaduct enthusiasts – The Friends of Bennerley Viaduct (FoBV) – got together with hopes to restore the structure as part of an Access to Heritage project and transform it into a key walking and cycling route linking the two counties.

“I was approached by the group because of my involvement with the local history society and specialism in railways,” said Paul.

From strength-to-strength

“An instrumental part of our campaign is communication; talking to people and getting them interested in the project. I remember being at Tesco during a mobile exhibition and we had such a gathering of people that we inadvertently blocked the entrance to the store!”

The FoBV, which works in partnership with owners, Railway Paths Limited, went from strength-to-strength, receiving charitable status in 2019.

But what put the group firmly on the map was getting the viaduct onto the 2020 World Monuments Fund Watch list as one of 25 sites that have great historical significance and are considered at risk,



invaluable and worth keeping. "A friend from the FoBV community engagement team saw an article about the World Monument Fund in the newspaper and called me to say he was thinking of making an application to it," explained Paul, 75.

"I was fully on board but didn't really expect anything to come of it. Then, I had another call from him, saying: 'Paul, they said yes!'

"To say we were surprised was an understatement and our viaduct, which has stood across the Erewash River for 145 years, was put on the list with the likes of the Notre-Dame Cathedral of Paris, the Alexan Palace in Egypt and the Chojjin Lama Temple in Mongolia. We were delighted and funding started pouring in for the project from lots of organisations."

Featured on TV

Paul's involvement in the group has seen him at the helm of driving both local and national interest and support for the campaign, representing FoBV in several talks and interviews, including when the viaduct was featured on BBC News Nottingham and on UK TV documentary series *The Architecture the Railways Built*, presented by Tim Dunn.

"The first episode of the programme aired was on the Bennerley Viaduct," said Paul, who was also a member of the Player's railway club, which organised steam engines to take employees all over the country and was supported by Paul's manager, Gareth Davis, who later went on to become Imperial's chief executive officer.

"I was told by the presenter that viewer ratings spiked when I came on to provide



Bennerley Viaduct then...

my input. When I asked: 'Why?', he said: 'It's down to your pure passion and enthusiasm.'

"FoBV is a massive project and, while my involvement has been more in the public eye, there are a lot of people working behind the scenes, some 24-7."

Following critical repair work, including constructing a new western ramp and installing a new deck, the FoBV reached its goal of reopening the viaduct to the public earlier this year. Since then, it has become a popular walking spot for people from all over the country and is also open for tours.

Paul has been a member of the Ilkeston and District Local History Society for 15 years having been encouraged to join by



...and now

fellow Player's employee Danny Corns, who died in 2020.

"Danny, our former president, was a marvellous man and knew everything there was to know about Ilkeston's past," Paul recalls.

"After persuading me to go along to one meeting, I became a member and I've now been its chairman for the last six years. I feel very proud of the society, which is built on local heritage, industry and architecture as well as the histories of its people, and has grown to a 146-strong membership."

You can find out more about the viaduct at: www.bennerleyviaduct.org.uk.

Horizon walking group among the first at Bennerley

A group of seven former Horizon Factory Powerhouse colleagues were among those to take advantage of the recently re-opened Bennerley Viaduct as a walking and cycling trail.

The ex-Player's Nottingham employees are members of the Thursday walking group and have been trekking together for 18 years. Former Powerhouse controller Raymond (Ray) Dring, who spent 35 years with the company, set up the group when he retired.

"I was concerned about the workmates we lost contact with when they retired so, when my turn came, I asked around to see if other retirees would be interested in joining a walking group," said Ray, who joined Player's in 1974 after spending 10 years as

a contracting electrician working across the UK.

"It was a way to keep fit and keep in touch. My wife Linda and I were already keen walkers and we quickly coalesced into a permanent group out for an enjoyable day's walking, mainly in the Derbyshire Peak District.

"We used to do 8-to-12-mile walks in all weathers – except dangerously high winds – and would take all day to complete them, with time taken for photography, natural history and industrial archaeology, but we always finished at a tea shop."

In 2015, when illness put a stop to Ray's regular walking activities, the group was kept going by Dave Harvey and others from Player's. Together with wives and friends, the



Thursday walking group members from the Horizon Powerhouse: L-r, Bill Duncan, Steve Souter, Ray Dring, Geoff Brown, John Riddell, Mick Stredder and Dave Harvey

walking group now has 15 members. "Numbers have ebbed and flowed over the years, but the core has always been the Powerhouse lads," said Ray, who, after serving his probationary period at the Radford factory, went

to the Horizon factory as an electrician working in the Powerhouse before he was later promoted as controller.

"I now occasionally walk with the group and enjoyed our recent trek across the viaduct."

Throughout the ups and downs of recent decades – including wars, financial crises and global pandemics – The Imperial Pensioners' Gazette has informed and, we hope, entertained its readers.



STILL INFORMING AFTER THIRTY YEARS

IT IS 33 years since the first issue of the Imperial Pensioners Gazette was produced. In that time a lot has changed, but the purpose of the Gazette remains the same – to keep Imperial pensioners in touch with each other and updated with company news. Launched in April 1989, two years after the last ITL News was published, the first issue

was warmly received. The lead story covered the changes to pensions benefits, which included a 10 per cent increase in widows' pensions, increases in death in service lump sum payments and improvements to ill health retirement pensions. It also featured a comment, setting out its ethos, which said:

“ It is just three years since Imperial was taken over by Hanson and it is evident that, despite many fears and misgivings, the spirit of the old company lives on.

The pension fund has continued to flourish in the new era and, as you can read on this page, benefits continue to improve.

The company is giving its full support to our new publication, recognising that a multitude of former employees – many of whom spent their entire working lives with one firm – still cherish the unity and comradeship of those Imperial days.

The success of Imperial Gazette will depend on the readers, because contributed items will provide the bulk of the contents.

So we hope people will not feel shy about getting in touch, particularly those living beyond the Bristol area, in which there is by far the largest concentration of pensioners. We want the news to be nationwide.

Inside, we highlight the activities of pensioner groups throughout the country; through them and the new medium of Imperial Gazette no one need feel forgotten.



Over the years the design of the publication has been revised to keep it relevant and up to date. There have been six different masthead designs, but the biggest changes came in December 2001, when the Gazette was published in colour for the first

time and, most recently, when the format changed to A4 in March 2020. This new format allows the number of pages to be adjusted as needed to accommodate all of the news received from former employees.

Letters remain the lifeblood of the Gazette,

although fewer are now received through the post and more via email, and the desire to represent pensioners from all the different Imperial companies still rings true.

Please do continue to get in touch. Contact details can be found on the back page.

Some key Gazette headlines over the years:

Issue 05, September 1990:
Launch of the Imperial Retired Benefit Scheme linking pensions to the RPI (Retail Prices Index)

Issue 23, September 1996:
Imperial breaks ties with Hanson and becomes Imperial Tobacco Group PLC

Issue 28, May 1998:
New lease of life for former Wills Newcastle factory as luxury flats

Issue 33, February 2000:
Record number of voters elect Fund representatives

Issue 34, July 2000:
Former Franklyn Davey building in Raleigh Road, Bedminster, becomes The Tobacco Factory theatre

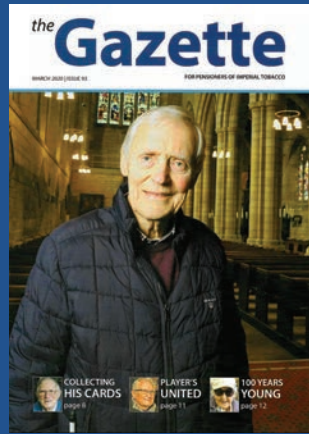
Issue 53, November 2006:
End of an era as Ogdens in Liverpool set to close

Issue 64, July 2010:
Fund's oldest member dies aged 107

Issue 79, July 2015:
Fire devastates former Player's factory in Nottingham

Issue 81, March 2016:
Imperial renamed Imperial Brands PLC

Issue 82, July 2016:
Horizon factory closes ending Imperial's cigarette manufacturing in the UK



The UK goes into national lockdown in an attempt to control the Covid-19 pandemic

Russian Parliament legislates to allow Vladimir Putin to hold the office of President for life

Bill Gates steps down from board of Microsoft to focus on philanthropic activities

European Union bans the sale of cosmetics that have been tested on animals

Pope Francis is elected as the new pope

The heaviest March snowfall for more than 50 years hits the north of England

MAR 2020



MAR 2013

Changing face of The Gazette



NOV 2007

The Queen officially opened Eurostar's new St Pancras terminal and the £5.8bn Channel Tunnel rail link

A devastating cyclone hit Bangladesh killing around 5,000 people

Full rollout of UK digital terrestrial television switchover began

DEC 2001



Former president of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milosevic charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Kosovo

Space Shuttle Discovery completed the first docking with the International Space Station

The Midland Metro tram service in the West Midlands is opened

MAY 1999



APRIL 1989

Tragedy struck at the Hillsborough Football Stadium in Sheffield when 96 people were crushed to death and 766 injured during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest

Pro-democracy students took over Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China

The world wide web was first launched in the public domain by computer scientist Tim Berners-Lee

The People's Republic of China joins the World Trade Organisation

The Leaning Tower of Pisa reopens after being closed for 11 years for strengthening work

Three months after 9/11, Time Magazine named New York mayor Rudy Giuliani 'Person of the Year' for his leadership after the terrorist attacks



Player's pensioners have been returning to a more normal existence after two years of restrictions. Events have included a Spanish walking holiday and the first reunion of 2022:

Walkers old and new enjoy Spanish sunshine

Player's walking group, The Harry's, made it overseas for their first walking holiday in two years and enjoyed soaking up the Spanish sunshine in Benidorm.

"It's been an annual destination for us since 2007," explained Dave Clay, who coordinates the group, which, due to Covid restrictions, last visited the coastal resort in 2019. "This was our 14th walking trip abroad – myself, Bob Stirland and Dave Coxon have made it to every one so far – and we all stayed at the Hotel Calypso."

Joining the group of former engineers on the trip for the first time was former driver Phil Bradley, who helps to organise the annual Player's garage and motor vehicle repair reunion.

"It was a great experience with good laughs and banter," he said. "I was ready for a holiday by the time I got home! A big thank you to Dave, who did a fantastic job of organising activities for us all with military precision!"



PLAYER'S SUMMMER MEET-UP

BEAUTIFUL WEATHER and having a care for others set the scene for the first Player's pensioners' reunion of the year, as a group of

150 gathered at the Stage pub in Nottingham.

The event, which is promoted through online Facebook Group, Imperial Tobacco... Past and Present, provided the

opportunity for pensioners to catch up, enjoy a buffet and do their bit for charity, this time collecting for mental health charity MIND.

"Lots of people of all ages seem to be suffering with their mental health at the moment," said former engineering mechanic Dave Clay, who has been organising the event since 2012 and worked for Player's for 37 years. "So, we

decided to club together and donate to MIND, which is fantastic as it supports those who are struggling with mental health troubles and makes sure no one has to face them alone."

At 86, photographer Paul Bloomer, who worked in the public relations department from 1963 to 1980, was the oldest attendee at the event, which raised £320 for the charity. **G**



◀ In front of the camera rather than behind it: photographer Paul Bloomer, 86, (centre) with ex Radford and Horizon factory boiler men (from left) Dave Harvey, Allan Brough, Mick Shredder and Bill Duncan

▶ Former office colleagues Alison Martin (left) and Karen Hanson collecting donations



Focus on charitable tobacco merchant whose fortune funded city's public library

The Mitchell Library, Glasgow

◆ Just over a year after I read an article in the Glasgow Times about the city's Mitchell Library, another story has emerged in the same newspaper this time focusing on the visionary behind it – Stephen Mitchell – which I thought might be of interest to Gazette readers.

In the article, Stephen is described as “the man who provided the beating heart of Glasgow”. In many ways, I suppose he was, and it all stemmed from his connections to tobacco.

Born in Linlithgow, he was educated in the town's grammar school before being apprenticed to a tobacco merchant for four years. In 1809 he joined the family firm, Stephen Mitchell & Sons, started by his grandfather in 1723.

Foundation stone

After taking over the company from his father in 1820, Stephen moved the family business to Glasgow and became one of the city's most successful tobacco merchants amassing a considerable fortune – much of which he pledged for the establishment and maintenance of a large public library “to be known as The Mitchell Library” and so it came to be.

In 1907, following the merger of Stephen Mitchell & Sons with WD & HO Wills in 1901, the foundation stone was laid for the library



Victoria Katyng Angsulee

on North Street, where it still stands today as a hub of reference for the city.

I worked at the former Wills tobacco factory at Alexandra Parade and thoroughly enjoyed my 24 years there. For anyone planning to visit

Glasgow, the Mitchell Library is worth a visit.

Ian Livingstone

Reconnection with former colleague, thanks to Gazette



◆ I was pleased to spot a photo of my former colleague, Mike Sanders, left, in the last issue of the Gazette.

We both worked as sales reps for Imperial Tobacco Imports and got promoted through the ranks to sales trainers then managers at about the same time.

Mike moved to Baldock in Hertfordshire when he was

promoted, which is where I came from. He later became the regional sales manager for North London.

I became regional sales manager for the Midlands and we always travelled together for the managers' meetings at the head office in Andover, Hampshire.

I last saw him, by chance, 25 years ago when we both happened to be staying in the same hotel in Majorca, Spain, on a golfing holiday

with different groups of friends. Thanks to the Gazette, I have now contacted him again and will continue to keep in touch. Mike now lives in Cheshire and I live in Bedfordshire.

I enjoyed nine years with Imperial until 1981, when I left to start my own business, retiring in my late fifties.

Peter Godden

John Smith's wonderful sense of humour recalled

◆ I have just read the obituary concerning John Smith, far right, and wanted to express my sincere condolences to his wife Nickola and his family, who are in my thoughts.

I worked as a rep for Wills for 25 years and had quite a lot of contact with John, particularly from 1975 to the time of the Hanson takeover.

His sense of humour was wonderful,

always such great company. But the main reason for writing was to say how encouraging he was. When my first wife Celia died very suddenly in 1979, he wrote me a letter which I still have.

I recall meeting up with John and Nickola at the TTTA banquet at the Connaught Rooms in London in 1975 when John was the guest of honour and it fell to me to make the first

speech. We had such a laugh about it.

Francis Boreham



As the nation celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, one pensioner shares his discoveries of occasions marking both Her Majesty's – and Imperial's – times past.

ALBUM TELLS STORY OF A ROYAL VISIT



IN 1985 former security officer John Powell discovered a photograph album recording a visit by the then Princess Elizabeth to the Wills No. 1 factory on East Street, Bedminster in 1950.

The images capture the Princess's tour of the factory, from its offices and canteen(s) to the workrooms where the tobacco leaf was stemmed, conditioned and manufactured, and were uncovered by John while he was providing relief security services at the Ashton estate – home to the former No. 3, 4 and 8 factories.

At the time, he had just set up his own company Trust Security Services, with colleagues Peter Knight and David Webb who are both now deceased, which was contracted by Imperial to look after the buildings.

Elaborate album

"I came across the album when the No. 3, 4 and 8 factories at Ashton closed and production relocated to Hartcliffe," said John.

"As with any move, bits and pieces were left behind intended for the skip, including this large, elaborate album marking the then Princess's visit. I didn't like to see it thrown away, so I saved it and took it home."

John joined WD & HO Wills in the cutting room of the No. 4 factory on Raleigh Road in 1945, at the age of 14, before holding roles in the company's fire brigade and offal and



Discovery: John Powell with the photo album recording Princess Elizabeth's visit

returned goods department. He was later contracted to provide security services for Imperial when its head office transferred to the old No. 8 factory on Upton Road before retiring in 2009 after a 64-year association with the company – the longest known working relationship with Imperial.

John has kept the album in pristine condition at his home in Lower Knowle, where he lives with his wife Thelma, and recalls the monarch's visit to the No. 1 factory at East Street as being a special moment for the company.

"It was the talk of the factories and there was lots of hype, excitement and preparation around the event," he said.

"I was 19 and working in the primary department of the No. 4 factory at Ashton so went about my usual cleaning, sweeping and running errand duties that day, but the album will always serve as a reminder of this special moment for Imperial."

John's second find – some black and white slides of a fleet of charabancs (early open-topped motor coaches) filled with people outside the No. 3 factory on Raleigh Road – led him to another revelation when he realised they looked familiar.

Company memorabilia

"I found the slides in a drawer and thought they might be of interest to someone so had them printed," said John, who has been married to Thelma for 69 years. It was then that I realised I had seen them somewhere before."

It turns out the images were from an article in Wills Works Magazine, volume 1, issue 1, printed a century ago. The magazine, containing a catalogue of news items relating to all divisions of Imperial during 1922, forms part of John's large collection of company memorabilia which he has amassed over the years and, like the album of Princess Elizabeth's visit to the



Princess Elizabeth in the cigarette packing room of the No. 1 factory, Bristol



In the hand stemming room



- ▲ Printed 100 years ago: Wills Works, volume 1, issue 1
- No. 3 factory Gold Flake packing and stripping department colleagues on their annual charabanc outing in 1922
- All aboard for Weston-super-Mare
- ▲ Left, setting off from Upton Road; right, the same view decades later



No. 1 factory, was another item he salvaged from the skip.

The article, which depicts a day trip organised by the company for over 300 employees to Wells Cathedral, The Cliff Hotel in Cheddar, and the Old Pier at Weston-super-Mare, reads: 'Considerable excitement was evidenced at Raleigh Road on Saturday, September 2nd, when a fleet of ten Bristol Tramway Company's charabanc drew up outside No. 3 on occasion of the Gold Flake Packing and Stripping Departments Annual Outing.'



Trips and dances

"Imperial was always very generous and known to look after its employees," said John, who left Wills for a brief spell to carry out National service in the Navy and returned after being demobbed in 1951, which is when he joined its fire brigade, also working in security.

"The company arranged lots of activities and excursions for its staff such as departmental trips and dances at the recreation hall in East Street, Bedminster, which is where I met Thelma.

"When I was called up as a conscript, it also matched the difference in my pay while I was away. Later, I attended a few of the company-arranged pub trips with the fire brigade to Weston-super-Mare – the same sort of thing, I suppose, as the charabancs outing that took place 100 years ago! It is particularly fitting to include the images in the 100th issue of the Gazette." 



Do you remember the Queen's visit to the Wills No. 1 factory or have a memory you would like to share with the Gazette? Please send any submissions in writing to: The Editor, James Reed PR, Archway Office, Barley Wood Stables, Long Lane, Wrington BS40 5SA or via email to: gazette@jamesreedpr.co.uk

Former tank commander and supply manager with love of ballroom dancing

Former Imperial supply manager Roy Howes has died aged 94.

Born in Bristol and educated at Clifton College, he joined WD and HO Wills in 1945, where he met his future wife Betty, who worked as a shorthand typist for the company.

Roy was called up for National Service in the same year and was posted, after training, to the Tank Regiment at Catterick in North Yorkshire. He was then appointed tank commander of a Churchill tank in Germany where he was engaged on internal security in the British zone in Berlin.

On rejoining civilian life, Roy resumed his career with Wills, becoming manager of the supply department of the now Imperial Group, based at Mark Lane in Bristol, before moving to the Lombard Street office.

He married Betty in 1951 and the couple had two children, Pat and Christopher.

In 1976, after the children left



home, Roy and Betty moved to Backwell, North Somerset, where Roy remained until his death.

Roy completed his Imperial career in 1981 at the age of 54 and was soon sought after for various projects, including research into the restoration of the SS Great Britain, in particular looking at Brunel's papers at Greenwich Naval Museum, which fulfilled his lifelong love of naval history.

Roy spent many years involved in The Scout Association,

establishing two troops in Nailsea, North Somerset, in the 1960s, and followed his father's footsteps into freemasonry, joining Canynges Lodge in Bristol in 1959.

He was elected master of Canynges Lodge in 1976 and, within a short period of time, was appointed as provincial secretary. He held this demanding role for 11 years before being promoted to the rank of deputy provincial grand master.

"His duties as deputy included visiting all of the lodges in Bristol on a regular basis," said his daughter Pat. "Over his six years in office he was given honorary membership in over 30 Bristol lodges, a token of their esteem and respect. His 60 years in freemasonry was marked with a presentation in 2019 and he was much loved and respected by all the brethren who met him."

In 1996 Roy and Betty faced the tragic loss of their son,

Christopher, while working clearing mines for the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), in Cambodia. Roy, together with MAG, tirelessly pursued the Foreign Office and Metropolitan Police to discover what had happened.

Private audience

In 2000, Roy, Betty and Pat were received in a private audience with HRH Queen Elizabeth to receive the Queen's Gallantry Medal posthumously awarded to Christopher, but it was not until 2008 that three former Khmer Rouge members were jailed for 20 years for his murder.

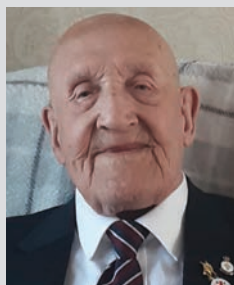
Roy and Betty shared a love of ballroom dancing as well as a deep faith, worshipping regularly at St Andrew's church in Backwell. The couple also enjoyed lots of caravan holidays with family and friends, trips to Nova Scotia to visit Betty's family, and latterly cruises, until Betty's death in 2007.

Cancer survivor saw wartime service in Burma

Great-great grandfather and Golden Wonder pensioner George Price has died aged 100.

He was born in Widnes, Lancashire, and, following the death of his father, left school aged 12 to work on a relative's farm. Two years later he joined Imperial Chemical Industries' (ICI) Muspratt works in the town before volunteering to join the RAF in 1939 aged 18.

He was posted to Linton-on-Ouse in North Yorkshire and was promoted to corporal, training new recruits. In 1941 he volunteered for active service overseas and was posted to Burma where he was promoted to sergeant with the



2958 Spitfire squadron, guarding the airfields. He was awarded the Burma Star and the 1939-1945 Star military campaign medals.

George returned to ICI in 1946 and later worked in the same industry for Bush Boake Allen where he met Josephine McCarthy, who was working in the labs. The couple married in 1951 and enjoyed 67 years together until Josephine died in 2018.

He then moved to metal merchants McKechnie Bros before joining Golden Wonder in 1969 as a storeman. He retired in 1983 due to ill health and was successfully treated for throat cancer.

George is survived by his five children, 14 grandchildren – including twin girls and triplet boys – 20 great grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.



John Todd

Tireless charity fundraiser and volunteer

Player's pensioner and charity campaigner John Todd has died at the age of 87.

Born in 1934, he attended Long Eaton Grammar School in Derbyshire, leaving in 1949 and becoming a clerk for a Nottinghamshire accountancy

firm. At the age of 18 John completed three years' National Service in the RAF as an air radar mechanic.

In 1955 he started his long career with Player's, joining as a clerk in the wages office before moving to the sales

force team in 1959. He enjoyed a variety of sales roles before being appointed assistant to the Imperial sales force manager, the position he retired from in 1986.

"Dad always talked fondly of his career and was grateful for

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

HEAD OFFICE AND ITL

Gillian Chapman, 66;
Ian Arthur Deane, 88;
Royston Howes, 94;
Andrew Mathieson Macleod, 76;
Peter Joseph Phillips, 93;
Florence Alice Rice, 87;
Bryan Hugh Scott, 83;
Nora Stone, 96.

WD & HO WILLS

Florence Elsie Abrahams, 90;
Elizabeth McLaren Allan, 93;
Dorothy Helen Bales, 96;
Daisy Ball, 88;
Keith Richard Joseph Bartlett, 84;
Robert Bates, 87;
Leonard James Birks, 96;
Brian Jack Blacklock, 88;
Joyce Bracey, 84;
Frederick Brooks, 94;
Leslie Richard Browning, 80;
Leonard William Buck, 72;
Emily Beatrice Butler, 97;
Alexander Joseph Campbell, 91;
William Henry Chamberlain, 90;
Olive Elizabeth Chomutow, 96;
James Collins, 77;
Peter Lionel Corey, 84;
Robin Stephen Day, 79;
Peter Macdonald Drake, 86;
William Anthony Fensome, 80;
Kenneth William Grist, 89;
Joan Winifred Gwyther, 94;
Merrice John Hamblin, 87;
John Joseph Harris, 85;
Riaz Hawa, 67;
Ethel May Herbert, 91;
Barbara Grace Higgs, 88;
Lillian Hildrew, 99;
Edna Lilah James, 96;
Elizabeth Mary Jones, 91;
June Margaret Lafferty, 92;
June Katharine Little, 90;
Florence Tully Lonsdale, 91;
Carmen Rena Lord, 88;
Margaret Lowery, 77;
John Henry Mills, 82;
Julie Nesbitt, 71;

Bernadette Jean Noble, 63;
Brenda Jean Ogden, 89;
Agnes Mullen O'Neill, 92;
James Owens, 57;
Henry Percival Parsons, 88;
Malcolm Pickering, 86;
William John Ringland Quinton, 79;
James McIntosh Radcliffe, 95;
Walter Taylor Rankin, 84;
Lorna Reed, 80;
Helena Maria Richmond, 92;
Emily Mary Rowsell, 90;
Louis Albert Summers Savory, 93;
Thelma Joyce Slapper, 84;
Maurice Smith, 71;
Agnes Spence, 71;
Sheila Stenner, 83;
Muriel Stephens, 87;
Rose-Marie Patricia Stephenson, 82;
Janette Brodie Stewart, 72;
John Swan, 72;
Peter Daniel Thomas, 77;
Alastair David Towns, 63;
William Sommerville Wagstaff, 92.

JOHN PLAYER & SONS

Brenda Mary Baker, 89;
Irene Edith Ball, 81;
Patricia Anne Barnard, 70;
Steven Redford Butler, 68;
Doris Clarke, 87;
Robert Wilfred Clifford, 67;
Anthony Brian Cooper, 85;
George Fiddes, 80;
Janet Ann Firmstone, 75;
Veronica Foster (Sr), 84;
Donald McKay Galbraith, 82;
Margaret Ann Gray, 81;
Beverley Anne Jackson, 60;
Eric Johnson, 89;
John Brian Kerry, 87;
Elizabeth Daniel Levey, 86;
Edna May Maher, 90;
Philip Gordon McTaggart, 74;
Freda Michalek, 89;
Pansy Munro, 99;
Thomas John Murphy, 86;
Anna Nelli, 83;
Gwendoline Alexandra Osborne, 93;
Augustas Reid, 87;
Thomas Charles Rooney, 79;

Peggy Winifred Rowe, 96;
Standford Scott, 97;
Anthony Michael Shaw, 85;
Margaret Farnan Shaw, 86;
David Max Shreeve, 86;
Ivan Spencer, 71;
Robin Stevenson, 78;
Enid Ioltha Styles, 92;
John Todd, 87;
Janice Sonia Unwin, 77;
Molly Wade, 74.

OGDEN'S

Alan Donnahey, 93;
Irene Anne Duffy, 70.

FINLAY & CO

Doreen Ivy Harrison, 92;
Joseph Marney, 93;
Valerie Ann Young, 82.

LOWFIELD DISTRIBUTION

Ian Michael Ferguson, 71;
Alfred Charles Richardson, 80;
Derrick Whateley, 73.

RIZLA

John Robert Etheridge, 82;
Maisie Sheppard, 88.

SINCLAIR COLLIS

Patricia Bennett, 86;
Veronica Devlin, 62;
Kathleen Kirby, 86;
Catherine McAllister, 84;
Peter David Nixon, 85;
Brian Roberts, 86;
Ivan Stafford, 79;
Mae Webster, 87.

ST ANNE'S BOARD MILL

Clive Wilfred Baker, 86;
Gordon Ernest Parsley, 92;
Richard Geoffrey Portch, 78;
Terence Wilfred Reed, 91;
Gordon Thomas Stafford, 97;
Leonard James Staveley, 94;
Richard Joseph Wynne, 82.

IMPERIAL FOODS LIMITED HEAD OFFICE

Christina Ann O'Rourke, 88;
Elizabeth Rigby, 90;

Doreen Rosemary Webb, 85;
Roger William Wiltshire, 77.

CROWN NOODLE

Pamela Lorraine Llewellyn, 70.

GOLDEN WONDER

Dorothy Joan Curtis, 73;
George Macintosh, 82;
Alan Frederick Patch, 86;
George Price, 100;
Margaret Edith Woodward, 75;
Janette Young, 79.

ROSS FOODS

Norman Andrews, 88;
Anthony Bird, 77;
Michael Davies, 85;
Harry Grayson, 77;
George Lowthorpe, 82;
Ernest Harry Mason, 95;
James Robert McIntosh, 81;
Barbara McTavish, 86;
David Edward Mourton, 71;
Robert Rodgers, 69;
John Edward Sweetland, 84;
Kevin Paul Wainwright, 71.

SMEDLEY-HP FOODS

Raymond Spencer Adams, 93;
Sylvia Aminu, 86;
Bernard Michael Farrell, 86;
David Eddy Griggs, 76;
Marion Moffat, 89;
Francis Dennis Nuttall, 84;
Teresa Josephine Ryan, 60.

WELCOME BREAK

Joan Balme, 89.

YOUNG'S SEAFOODS

George Thompson, 73.

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

the opportunities he was given," said his son, Steve.

"He always enjoyed working with like-minded people and said he was one of life's lucky people as there were very few days when he woke up and dreaded the thought of going to work."

In retirement, John dedicated himself to his growing family

and his hobbies of gardening, walking and volunteering.

He and his wife Dorothy, who lived in the Worcestershire village of Areley Kings for 47 years before moving to Droitwich Spa in 2021, helped to raise over £4 million for the Acorns Children's Hospice Trust, which provides care and support to life limited children

and their families in the West Midlands.

Fundraising

The couple were instrumental in establishing a hospice in Worcester in 2004, initially as fundraisers but later training as befrienders and spending time weekly reading, talking and playing with the children. John

also regularly made presentations and gave talks to various groups and organisations. The couple continued their involvement with the charity until 2018, after dedicating 26 years to fundraising and volunteering.

John is survived by Dorothy, sons Steve, Adrian and Mike, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

As the Gazette reaches its 100th issue, we acknowledge some of the Fund's oldest members who are marking their own 100th milestone.

MILESTONE FOR CIGAR FACTORY FOREMAN

LEONARD (LEN) TOZER is celebrating his 100th birthday with a family meal and get-together with friends and neighbours.

The former WD & HO Wills cigar factory foreman began his career with the company



in 1938 working in the warehouse of the No. 3 factory on Raleigh Road, Ashton, as a junior cigar machine mechanic.

Len met his wife, Eileen, at a dance three years later before discovering she too worked at Wills in the stripping room of the No. 4 factory. The couple, who celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in 2015, married in 1945 when Len was a flight lieutenant in the RAF. He volunteered as a pilot during the war,

flying Halifax Bombers.


Len was in the RAF for six years, having sailed on the Queen Mary to America and then travelling on to Canada where he learned to fly. He returned to the company in 1946 and later joined the RAF Reserves for five years.

Len went on to work in various departments before retiring as foreman of the packing and primary departments at the No. 2 cigar factory in 1980 after 42 years with the company.

Bristol Arrows

In retirement Len and Eileen, who died in 2018, enjoyed many motoring trips and holidays to Europe as well as spending time with their three children, John, Janice and Anne, eight grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren.

"It's amazing that I've been retired for as long as I worked," said Len, who lives in Bishopsworth, Bristol. He spent three months of his career in Glasgow helping to set up the cigar factory at the Alexandra Parade site in Dennistoun and was also a keen bowls player for the Bristol Arrows in Redland – Bristol's oldest bowling club.

"Sadly, Eileen isn't here for the birthday celebrations, but we were very lucky to have enjoyed each other's company for so many years." 



Len and Eileen Tozer pictured in 2015 celebrating their 70 years together



Also marking their 100th birthdays are:

Phyllis Cartledge, who worked at Player's from 1967 until 1979.

Florence Sands, widow of Player's pensioner Cyril, who died in 1990. He worked for the company from 1969 until 1984.

Josephine Hendrick, whose late husband Robert worked for Robert Fletcher and Sons from 1965 to 1986. He died in 2002.

Helen O'Dowd, widow of Player's pensioner Michael, who worked for the company between 1948 and 1973 and died in 2008.

In writing, please

◆ THE PENSIONS team is continuing to work flexibly, splitting their time between office and home working. Service to members remains unaffected but, if possible, please make contact by email or phone. 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."

✉ pension.enquiries@uk.imptob.com

☎ 0117 953 0000

Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund,
PO Box 3242, Bristol BS3 9GY

The Gazette is published by the Imperial Tobacco Pension Fund. For pension information, please call the pensions office on 0117 953 0000.

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