

# the Gazette

JULY 2021 | ISSUE 97

FOR PENSIONERS OF IMPERIAL TOBACCO

## SPORTS FANATIC AND MARATHON MAN

Page 8



**CONSUMER FOCUS**  
350 GOALS  
page 4



**100TH BIRTHDAYS**  
page 11



**PACK STORIES**  
page 16



Jo Freer liked nothing more than to support her Golden Wonder colleagues as much as possible, a role in which she excelled during her 13 years in the company's personnel department.

## JO JUST LOVED TO HELP PEOPLE AT WORK

**J**O FREER was well known for always going the extra mile to help and support people and this was one of the reasons she excelled in her chosen career in human resources.

Following her death earlier this year aged 82, her husband, Graham Cooper-Selley, who met Jo while working at Golden Wonder in the early 1980s, found a number of old photographs that document her time with the company.

Jo joined Golden Wonder in 1972 as



The Golden Wonder head office sports and social committee in the 1970s: back row (from left) Mark Rose, Jo Freer, Eric Turner and Reg Gillman. Centre: Rosie Baraugh, Sue Whitbread and Enid Woolnough. Front: Carol Begg, Anne Ironside, Brian Booth and Anna McAvoy

personal assistant to the personnel officer, based at the company's head office in Market Harborough, Leicestershire. Her love of supporting people in their working lives meant, on his retirement, she was the natural successor for the personnel officer role.

"My mother was thrilled to work at Golden Wonder for more than a decade and was completely devoted to the company," said her daughter Angeline.

"She enjoyed nothing more than giving people support and making them happy in their working lives." This support extended

to when employees left the company and she always ensured everyone had a good send off.

### It's A Knockout competition

She was also elected to the Golden Wonder head office sports and social club committee, organising many dinners and dances enjoyed by colleagues and representing the company at events. Golden Wonder was one of the largest employers in the Kettering area and sponsored many local events, including the Market Harborough carnival and the It's A Knockout competition afterward at Symington's Recreation Ground, where Jo often presented the awards on behalf of the company.

Graham was employed in the engineering department, also based at the head office, as an assistant to the building manager from 1980 to 1984. It was here he met Jo



Dorothy Wilson (seated), secretary to finance director Chris Sturme (pictured), receiving a good send off on her retirement in 1979, organised by Jo Freer (left). Also pictured (from left): Liz Emerton, Anne Robert and Cathy Martin



Jo Freer with Golden Wonder mascot Poppa Crispin





and the couple married in 1988.

A merger of the head office functions of Golden Wonder and HP Foods led to a change in Jo's role and she took the decision to leave the company in 1985. She went on to further her career in human resources at Harting Electronics in Northampton, adding responsibility for health and safety to her remit. The qualifications she gained in health and safety management resulted in three trips to the Houses of Parliament to

receive her certification.

In 1999 Jo and Graham retired to Cyprus and enjoyed 20 years in the sun before returning to Market Harborough in 2019. Jo died in January 2021 and is survived by Graham, son Anthony, daughter Angeline, step-daughter Donna and four grandchildren.

"Jo will always be remembered for her cheerfulness, caring attitude and friendly nature," said Graham. **G**

**The Golden Wonder It's A Knockout team:** back row (from left) Ashley Ponter (transport), Steve Bishop (systems), Phil Cox (programming), Bob Jacobs (computers), Alicia Neal (computers), team manager Jo Freer (personnel) and Stu Palmer (visitor). Front row: Mary Cotter (distribution), mascot Poppa Crispin, Sue Rhodes (distribution), Nicki Palmer (accounts) and Nina Muggleton (accounts)

## Spotlight on small pensions

Pensions manager, **Jan Killick**, explains that dependants receiving small pensions are being contacted with an option to take a one-off payment.

In recent months, the Trustees have contacted dependants (widows/widowers) who are paid small pensions – those valued at £30,000 or less – and offered them an option to exchange their regular pension payments for a one-off taxable lump sum. Eligible pensioners with small pensions will be contacted later in the year to offer them this option too.

**Please note that you will only hear from us if you are eligible to receive this offer.** Unfortunately, the Pension Fund Office (PFO) cannot deal with individual requests from pensioners in advance of this offer, so please do not contact us if you think you may be eligible.

This offer is not a scam. The Trustees and the PFO are working with Willis Towers Watson (WTW) on this exercise. WTW is operating a helpline to deal with queries from dependants and pensioners and the

telephone number will be in the offer letter. It is not providing financial advice but will be able to explain the offer and answer any questions raised.

Eligible members may choose to accept this offer or not (although for pensioners with pensions valued between £10,000 and £30,000, their eligibility will depend on the value of other pensions they have).

If a member decides not to accept, then they don't need to do anything – their pension will continue to be paid each month as normal. If a member chooses to accept, they will need to return a decision form (enclosed with the offer) to WTW. On payment of the lump sum, future pension payments will cease.



Against a background of improved NGP performance and higher operating profit, Imperial remains on track to meet its full year expectations.

# SOLID FIRST HALF RESULTS DELIVERED



**I**MPERIAL BRANDS has reported its interim results for the six months ended 31 March 2021, which show a solid first half of the year and that

the Group is on track to deliver full year results in line with guidance.

Overall revenue was up by 3.5 per cent, driven by tobacco growth of 3.2 per cent and NGP growth of 16 per cent, while Group operating profit was up 8.1 per cent, driven by a reduction in NGP losses and higher distribution profit.

## Sustainable profit

Chief executive Stefan Bomhard said: "We have made a good start in implementing our new strategy to transform Imperial

and remain on track to meet full year expectations. In tobacco, we have put in place a clear market prioritisation to increase focus on our best opportunities for sustainable

**"...our aim is to create a successful NGP business that meets consumer needs."**

profit delivery and have begun to stabilise the performance across our top five priority markets.

"Our NGP performance has improved, albeit against a weak comparator period, and our aim is to create a successful NGP business that meets consumer needs and, over time, can make a meaningful contribution to harm reduction. We have started to change our

culture and ways of working and I have now assembled my new executive team with key external hires, who have the necessary skills and expertise to complement Imperial's

existing tobacco experience. This has significantly strengthened the capabilities we need to support the successful delivery of the new strategy.

"All of this has been achieved against the background of the ongoing global pandemic and I would like to thank employees throughout the business for their hard work and willingness to embrace change."

The interim results can be viewed in full at [www.imperialbrandspc.com](http://www.imperialbrandspc.com) and the scheduled date for the announcement of the full year results is November 16. **G**

## Consumer focus boosted by new executive committee appointment



**OUTSTANDING EXPERIENCE:**  
Andy Dasgupta joins Imperial as chief consumer officer

◆ **FORMER PEPSICO and Fonterra executive Andy Dasgupta has joined Imperial's executive committee as chief consumer officer.**

This newly created role, reporting to chief executive Stefan Bomhard, reinforces the importance of consumer centricity to the company's new strategy and five-year plan and will ensure all key decisions are grounded in consumer insights and data.

Stefan said: "Andy has outstanding consumer, brand and innovation experience, having held senior roles in significant international companies such as PepsiCo, GlaxoSmithKline and Fonterra.

"He will lead our focus on consumers by ensuring we have the right marketing, brand and portfolio management capabilities to support both our tobacco and NGP businesses. He will also oversee the company's drive to

bring a far more coordinated approach to how we collect and use consumer insights and data and be accountable for a new innovation programme to ensure we have a pipeline of combustible and NGP products."

Andy added: "Imperial is a company with great potential, and I am delighted to be joining at a time when Stefan and the team are implementing an exciting strategy that will rejuvenate the business and unlock value for our stakeholders."



● Following the announcement of Lukas Paravicini's appointment as chief financial officer in the March issue of the Gazette, he joined the Board in May, earlier than expected, succeeding Oliver Tant.



With a track record of delivering consistently exceptional results as executive vice president of sales, **Kim Reed** is the new president and CEO of ITG Brands.

## Kim takes helm of Imperial's US operation



◆ **KIM REED** has been appointed president and CEO of ITG Brands, Imperial Brands' US operation. She will oversee all US employees and operations and takes over from Oliver Kutz, who becomes cluster general manager central Europe and Ukraine for Imperial Brands.

Kim has served as a member of the ITG Brands leadership team for two years as executive vice president of sales and will report to Dominic Brisby, division director Americas, Africa, Asia, Australasia for Imperial Brands.

### Sales transformation strategy

During her tenure she has consistently delivered exceptional results, including establishing ITG Brands as a market leader in sales of factory manufactured cigarettes and mass market cigars.

Notably, she designed and oversaw a comprehensive sales transformation strategy

that encompassed ITG Brands' largest ever external recruitment for field sales while prioritising a diverse and inclusive culture.

"Kim has expertly led the largest sales transformation in ITG Brands history and is the perfect steward for the continued success of Imperial's largest market," said Dominic.

Prior to joining ITG Brands, Kim led several large sales organisations for major consumer brands including the Kellogg Company and the Pepsi Bottling Group.

"I am honoured to accept the role of president and CEO of ITG Brands," said Kim. "I want to thank Oliver for his leadership and his partnership in creating such a fantastic and talented team."

"I am excited to engage across all aspects of the business and build on our existing momentum to further accelerate growth." **G**

## Imperial keeps its A-list climate change position and joins elite greenhouse gas reducers

◆ **IMPERIAL BRANDS** has been recognised as a 2021 Climate Leader by the Financial Times (FT) in its first ranking of actions taken by European businesses.

The FT's listing identifies the 300 companies across the continent that achieved the highest reduction in core greenhouse gas emissions between 2014 and 2019.

Stefan Bomhard, chief executive of Imperial Brands, said: "We are pleased to be

highlighted by the FT for our efforts to reduce our impact on the climate. There's more we need to achieve to

Imperial is committed to further reducing its carbon footprint. By 2030, from a base year of 2017, the

targets have been approved and validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

### Climate change

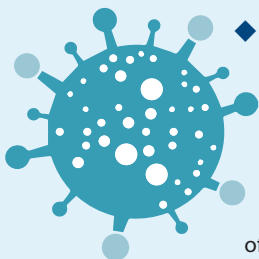
The announcement follows the news in late 2020 that the Group maintained its position on the CDP's (Carbon Disclosure Project's) A List for climate change. CDP's annual environmental disclosure and scoring process recognises corporate leaders in climate transparency and action.

"...we're heading in the right direction."

address this critical issue, but the recognition we've received demonstrates that we're heading in the right direction."

business will cut its own greenhouse emissions by 25 per cent and emissions in its supply chain by 20 per cent. The company's carbon

## How the pensions team is working with the pandemic



◆ **WITH THE** roll-out of the UK's vaccination programme and the gradual relaxation of restrictions, Imperial is preparing to reopen its Bristol office in July subject to any further Government advice. There will be a flexible return to office working with most employees, including the pensions team, splitting their time between office and home working.

The pensions team is fully set up for home working, so service to members will remain unaffected.

If possible, pensioners should contact the team 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."

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BS3 9GY

✉ [pension.enquiries@uk.imptob.com](mailto:pension.enquiries@uk.imptob.com)

☎ 0117 953 0000

# Author's plea for employees' experiences as background for next wartime novel

The cover of one of Lizzie Lane's novels set in and around the Bristol area

◆ My sister Janet Martin, who began work at Raleigh Road straight from school back in the seventies and returned after having children, passed me her copy of the Gazette which we both agreed would help with my current project.

I'm a well-established bestselling author of over 50 books, most set in and around the Bristol area during WW2 and have been in the top thirty bestselling paperbacks on a number of occasions.

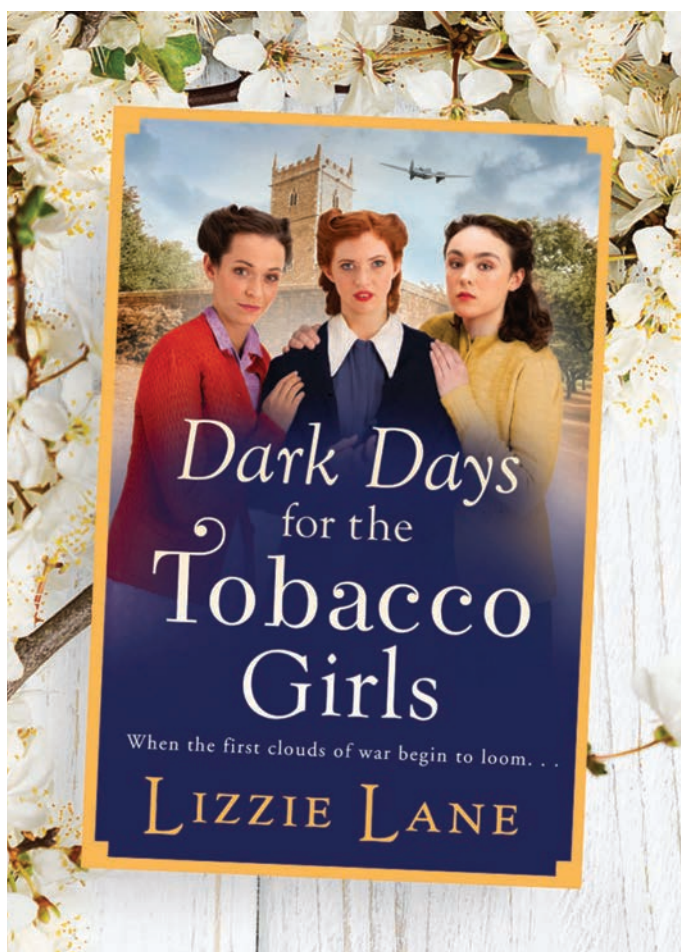
My late sister-in-law worked at No. 1 factory, my father was a tobacco house foreman in the bonded warehouses on the Cumberland Basin and my late husband's cousin was Joe Pound, a well-known and liked production manager in Swindon. For a time, I myself worked as PA to the chief medical officer of Imperial Tobacco in East Street. He was also commander of St John Ambulance.

I lived in Bedminster and every year looked on enviously as the many school leavers in my street made their way home in their green overalls (except for those who had been taken on by E S & A Robinson, the paper bag company, who wore blue).

I have been contracted to write a series of six books about a group of girls working at the factory in the war years. The first, *The Tobacco Girls*, entered the top 100 on Amazon. The second, *Dark Days for the Tobacco Girls* came out in June.

I would dearly love to hear the experiences of any of those wartime employees, even some anecdotes from their children as alas, time is marching on. Yes, there's some information online, but nothing is as informative or intriguing as those that were there at the time. I would point out that it's not about the tobacco factory as such, but a fictional novel about three girls who worked there set against the momentous background of WW2. I do so want to get as much authentic material as possible.

If anyone is interested in sharing what they know of working in the factory during those turbulent years, please contact me either by email or seeking me out by typing in LIZZIE LANE on social media.



## All the faces in GMS photo now identified

◆ The article featuring Reis Braganza in the March Gazette was very interesting and like him, I'm looking forward to the time when he and I, plus the other 20-odd attendees at The Star can meet up again for lunch.

I'm sure one of the topics we will discuss is the featured black and white photograph of the GMS systems team. I can fill in one of the blanks – that is the name of Adrian (Conrad) Baldwin. Given my ever-expanding list of former employee names, I can also add that Keith Britten's surname is spelt Britton and John Brooks-Bank is actually John Brooksbank (no hyphen).

Mike Paige



**NOW UPDATED:** the GMS systems team in the 1970s. Standing (from left) Mike Downing, Adrian (Conrad) Baldwin, Keith Britton, Alan Ford and Dave Andrews. Seated (from left) John Brooksbank, Caroline Pinder and Reis Braganza



# Clearout brings the chance to own a slice of Wills history and some collectable memorabilia



Ken Bennett

◆ My mother has been clearing out some of my late father's paperwork and we have come across a number of Wills documents that may be of interest to Gazette readers.

There is a history of WD & HO Wills produced to celebrate 200 years (1786 to 1986), a Tobacco Workers' Union history from 1834 to 1984, two Wills magazines from August 1937 and January 1954 and a box with two packs of commemorative Wills playing cards.

My father, Ken Bennett, joined WD & HO Wills in 1951 as a factory worker, first job sweeping up in the No. 4 factory in Ashton, Bristol. In 1954 he carried out his National Service in the Royal Navy and left two years later as a trained engineering mechanic, returning to Wills as a cigar machine mechanic. He retired in 1986.

In the 1970s and 1980s he was a branch secretary and an executive member of the Tobacco Workers Union. He

visited Russia with the Union in 1980 and, a year later, became a magistrate having been put forward by Wills.

Outside of work he played rugby for Imperial and, once his playing days were over, became a referee.

If anyone would like the items, I would be happy to send them on.

**Simon Bennett**

## Warm tribute to an inspirational engineer who set high standards



◆ I was very sorry to see the death of Thomas Tomlinson listed in the March issue of the Gazette. He was a senior engineering manager at Player's from 1970 until 1986 and worked on the automation of the Horizon factory.

Tom was a great inspiration to me in the early days of my engineering career at John Player & Sons and I will remember him for supporting, encouraging and guiding me for many years. He always impressed that it was possible to achieve anything at the company and to work hard and set high targets.

I know many others will have had exactly the same experience and will also be sad at his passing. He was an inspiration to all, always full of energy and drive.



Paul Bloomer

Automation: senior engineering manager Tom Tomlinson worked at the Horizon factory in the 1970s and '80s

## Can you help historian by providing information about the country's surviving tobacco buildings?



◆ I am a local historian living in Bristol and am carrying out research to write a book telling the story of the development of the city's tobacco industry over the past 200 years.

There is little published on this subject and not very much on display in the M Shed museum, but it is a fascinating tale which deserves to be told.

I am interested to hear from anyone who worked for Imperial in Bristol, particularly around the

time that the Hartcliffe site was developed.

The book will be structured around those surviving buildings which relate to the tobacco industry, such as the Tobacco Factory, Wills Memorial Tower, Wills East Street building and the Hartcliffe office, now Lakeshore (pictured).

I will also be assessing the impact of the tobacco industry on the development of Bristol and all contributions, stories and

photographs are very welcome and will be fully acknowledged.

I am also interested in producing a comprehensive list of all surviving tobacco buildings in the UK – so any help in this area would also be much appreciated.

**Simon Birch**



Bristolian through and through: Roy Jacobs was born and brought up in south Bristol, near to the site of Imperial's Hartcliffe factory

# ROY'S MARATHON CAREER IN FINANCE

Following a traineeship with Imperial, football enthusiast and marathon runner, **Roy Jacobs**, has managed to combine his love of sports with a varied career in finance and accountancy.





R

OY JACOBS was born and raised in South Bristol, about a mile from the site of Imperial's Hartcliffe factory. He attended Withywood school and, after completing

A levels, decided to pursue a career in accountancy in industry, combining studies and practical experience.

In September 1977, he was offered a trainee accountancy position with WD & HO Wills at Hartcliffe where two of his three sisters worked – Diane in the sales office and Yvonne in the factory – as well as two aunts and three cousins.

"I had other similar job offers but made one of the best decisions of my life in choosing Wills," said Roy, 62, who lives in Whitchurch, South Bristol.

"I joined on an initial three-year training scheme combining day release at Bristol Polytechnic (now the University of the West of England) with job rotation in all the financial departments such as cost accounts, financial accounts and internal audit."

After three years, Roy was placed in a role in cost accounts and, in 1982, after five years of studying, qualified as a cost and management accountant – now known as a chartered management accountant.

### Imperial Tobacco International

He continued to progress through various staff roles in the accounting departments before moving out of finance to become export administration manager with Imperial Tobacco International (ITIL), still based at Hartcliffe.

"Following the Hanson acquisition in 1986, it was decided to relocate ITIL in Nottingham to be alongside the export warehouse," said Roy. "Hardly any of the Bristol staff wanted to relocate, myself included, so I was temporarily out of a role."

Fortunately, Roy's next opportunity arose quickly. Imperial Tobacco was broken down



into smaller, autonomous divisions and he was appointed financial controller of the sales and marketing division, headed by Peter Middleton. He was responsible for recruiting

"I... made one of the best decisions of my life in choosing Wills."

some finance staff and setting up the various stand-alone accounting systems, reporting to the central finance team.

By 1990, Roy had moved to a central group reporting role as a management accountant, working initially with Helen Clatworthy and latterly Mike Tudor. This group role, based in Upton Road in Southville, gave him the opportunity to visit other company locations and build some good working relationships with the finance teams there.

Following the demerger from Hanson in 1996, more organisational changes followed and, by 2000, Roy was part of a small group finance team reporting to Alison Cooper, who later became Imperial Group chief executive officer.

After the acquisitions of other tobacco companies including Reemtsma, Altadis and Van Nelle Tabak, group roles changed rapidly and he made frequent trips to Hamburg, Paris and Madrid, helping to integrate the financial activities of these companies into the enlarged Imperial Group. He also worked on the implementation of a standard financial reporting system across the whole group and had the opportunity to visit finance teams in Australia and most of the company's European locations.

In 2006, Roy became management accountant for the central support functions, reporting to, and working closely with, Ray

Moorcroft. "Our role was to understand, challenge and control central overhead costs and this involved working closely with functional directors, management and staff based mainly in head office, but also budget holders in Hamburg, Paris and Madrid," said Roy.

"This was a particularly rewarding time, building trust and helping non-financial colleagues understand and control their costs."

Roy is a sports fanatic and played local league football for 15 years from the age of 17 as well as in an Imperial five-a-side football team with lifelong friends Martin Haines, Bob Evans and Stuart Roberts for about 20 years, until he was 48.

### Raising money for a great cause

Along with some Imperial colleagues, he took up running in the late 1980s and entered half marathons and 10-kilometre events in Bristol, Bath, Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare before hanging up his running shoes in 2009 aged 50.

"My personal highlight was running the London Marathon in 1998," said Roy. "The official sponsor was the Parkinson's Disease Society and my father had only recently passed away, having suffered from this cruel illness for 15 years, so fate inspired me to enter and raise money for this great cause."

In 2013, at the age of 54, Roy was given the opportunity to take early retirement and has since continued to be very active, visiting the gym three times a week (Covid restrictions permitting). He is also a season ticket holder at Bristol City FC, Bristol Bears rugby and Gloucestershire cricket club and has attended many live sporting events, including tennis at Wimbledon, cricket at Lords, rugby at



**Personal highlight: Roy ran the London Marathon in 1998, having taken up running in the late 1980s**

*continued on next page*

continued from page 9

Twickenham and Euro 2016 football in Lyon, France.

Roy is a volunteer reader at a local primary school, which was governed by former colleague Brian Thatcher when he started in 2014, and helps supervise swimming lessons and school trips as well as invigilating SATS exams.

As a dog lover, he joined a dog hosting company when he retired, looking after pets in his home as an alternative to them staying in kennels. He did this for about five years and, even though it was a paid role, he donated the income to the RSPCA.

### Local community support

"I stopped in 2017 when my own sporting interests started to clash with hosting dates, but I have since looked after dogs privately for friends," said Roy.

"I am also a regular poll clerk and, since the pandemic, have joined my local community support group, helping with volunteer shopping, raising money for school home learning devices and also registered to help at my local vaccine centre."

When he retired Roy bought a static caravan in Weymouth and has spent many days exploring the Jurassic coast. He also enjoys travelling overseas and destinations have included cruises to New Zealand, the Baltics and the Mediterranean, holidays in Canada and Iceland and city breaks to Copenhagen, Stockholm, Rome and Budapest.




Roy has visited Dubai on many occasions

In addition, he has visited the UAE (Abu Dhabi and Dubai) on many occasions, as his sister Diane and her husband have been living and working there, and is a member of a holiday vacation club, which provides him with plenty of opportunities to travel.

"I have made many friendships and met many talented and inspirational colleagues

during my career and consider myself fortunate to have worked for such a great company," said Roy.

"I meet regularly with a group of former Imperial colleagues who have also retired in the last few years, and we have celebrated special birthdays in places like Berlin and my own 60th birthday in Benidorm." 

## IMPAC

An organisation for all Imperial Pension Fund members

Website: [www.impact.org.uk](http://www.impact.org.uk)



### FUTURE MEETING DATES

The National Council is unable to schedule any meeting dates for 2021 at this time due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 restrictions and the availability of venues. Council members are meeting in September and will be discussing the possibility of reinstating the meeting programme early in the new year. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause members.

### IMPAC members' helpline:

email: [helpline@impact.org.uk](mailto: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@dmf.org.uk](mailto:impact@dmf.org.uk); phone: 01438 840247 or write to: IMPAC c/o DMF, 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](http://www.impact.org.uk). Membership is free for the first 12 months.

## DIARY DATES

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

- The **Player's garage and motor vehicle repair reunion** is set to be held on Monday December 6 from the new time of **3.30pm onwards** at the Bell Inn, Nottingham. Contact Phil Bradley or Dave Lowe for more information closer to the date.
- Plans are in place for a **reunion for Player's pensioners** on Wednesday July 28 from 3.30pm at The Stage pub in Nottingham, as well as a Christmas one, set to be held on Wednesday December 15 at either The Stage pub or Parliament bar in Nottingham. Contact Janet Stanley or Dave Clay for details.
- The **annual Scottish pensioners' lunch** is set to take place at 12.30pm for 1pm on Wednesday December 15 at the Whitevale Bowling Club, 253 Whitehill Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow. Tickets are £14 each and all pensioners are welcome to attend. Please send cheques, made payable to C Martin, along with any special dietary requirements and the name, address and telephone number of the person booking the tickets to: Colin Martin.

● Given the ongoing uncertainty at the time of going to print surrounding COVID-19 and the restrictions that need to be followed, it is with deep regret that Mike Paige has decided to suspend this year's **Group head office reunion**. He remains hopeful that 2022 will see the event taking place once again and more details will follow. Contact Mike Paige.



## War veteran George Price is among those celebrating their centenaries



### Marking their 100th birthdays:

- **Muriel Irene Kuhn**, widow of Imperial Foods pensioner **Leonard**, who died in 2001. He worked for the company from 1961 until 1980.
- **Renie Mabel Morris**, widow of pensioner **Mr R Morris**. He worked for Ross Foods from 1961 until 1975 and died in 1977.
- **William Robinson**, widower of Golden Wonder pensioner **Georgina**, who worked for the company between 1973 and 1983 and died in 1996.
- **Irene Shipley**, who worked at Ogden's from 1939 until 1980.



George, left, joined the RAF in 1939. After a spell training new recruits in north Yorkshire, he served in Burma from 1941 and was promoted to sergeant with a Spitfire squadron, guarding the airfields. Right: George's campaign decorations include the Burma Star



## Great-great-grandfather who volunteered for the RAF in WW2

F

ORMER GOLDEN Wonder storeman George Price is celebrating his 100th birthday.

The great-great-grandfather 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.

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 68 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 has five children, 14 grand-

children – including twin girls and triplet boys – 20 great grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

George still enjoys the odd tippie and watching rugby and football and celebrated his centenary with his family and friends, within COVID-19 restrictions. **G**

George retired from Golden Wonder in 1983



## Club news latest

It is hoped that monthly meetings of the **Wills Staff Pensioners Association** will restart from October, subject to COVID-19 restrictions. Once the situation becomes clearer, members will receive a letter with an update from club secretary Ruth Bwye

According to organiser William Lynn, there are currently no plans in place for the **Sinclair Staff and Pensioner**

**Group** to meet due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Readers have been sending in their pictures and memories as a result of our request for information about the mystery photographs printed in the March 2021 issue of *The Gazette*.

# LIGHT IS SHED ON PHOTO PUZZLES

**T**HE JOHN PLAYER & Sons photographs featured on the back page of the March 2021 Gazette have generated a fantastic response from a number of former employees who have been in contact with information and memories.

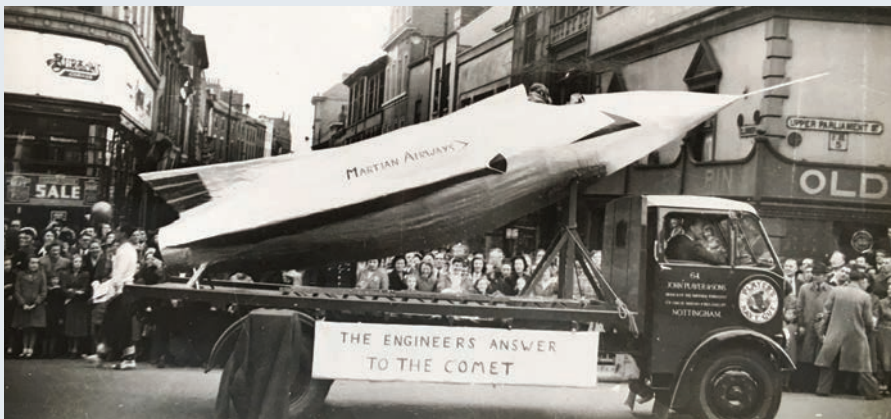
Referring to the visit to the No. 3 factory by the cast of *Dad's Army*, Phil Ledger confirmed that the machine in the foreground of the photograph is an AMF Legg RC4 tobacco cutting machine and was, he thinks, the first RC4 in the world.

"I was technical assistant to Roy Springthorpe, the mechanical engineering manager at the time and was involved in the commissioning and evaluation of this machine," said Phil, who joined Player's in 1965 as an apprentice mechanical engineer.

"As I remember, that day was the first that we ran product through the machine; hence the interest being shown in the photo.

"AMF Legg was exhibiting at the World Tobacco Fair at the same time and, although they had an RC4 on their stand, they couldn't claim to have one installed and running in a tobacco factory. They were very pleased when we were able to send a photo to the exhibition not only of the machine running but with the cast of *Dad's Army* in attendance!"

This photograph, taken at the end of Clumber Street in Nottingham, was sent in by Leni Cooper, who said: "Going on the standard of dress, I suspect this was probably around the late 1940s or 50s."



Phil progressed from technical assistant to mechanical engineering manager for making and packing at Nottingham. In 1996, after 31 years with Player's, he joined cigarette packing machinery manufacturer Focke GmbH to run its UK sales and after sales office. He spent the next 18 years selling machines to UK tobacco companies, including Imperial, before retiring in 2014.

## Many photographs left around

The man in the white coat on the right-hand side of the same photograph has been identified by Graham Whitehead as Jim Walsh, who was the senior technician in the research and development department based in the No. 4 factory at the time.

Phil Bradley, who worked at the Player's Leenside garage, sent in this photograph from a 1983 edition of *Player's Post*, which shows the John Player & Sons sign on the roof of the No. 3 factory

Leni Cooper used to work in customer relations, next to the Player's Post office, and confirmed that there were many

Former engineer Chris B Jackson sent in the two photographs below of Player's vehicles: an engineer's van at Radford No. 4 factory (below) and a 1960s Player's fire brigade van, manufactured by Commer





photographs left around for the taking after the office was vacated. "I really like the photograph (see page 13 opposite) photographer Paul Bloomer took which was used as a caption competition in Player's Post," said Leni. "It was taken on the same day that the Dad's Army cast visited the factory and shows factory manager Laurie Elliott with his 'look alike' Arthur Lowe."

Paul Bloomer added: "I remember the Dad's Army cast visit well. I took the photograph of Arthur Lowe sitting at Laurie Elliott's desk, assuming command like his television character. It was a good, fun day for the cast and No. 3 factory employees."

### John Player and Sons sign

Graham Whitehead also identified the photograph of the repair work being carried out on the John Player and Sons sign was from the cooling towers on the roof of the No. 3 factory in Churchfield Lane. This was seconded by former factory engineer apprentice Chris J Jackson who remembers all the individual letters being brought into the engineer's department to be refurbished before being refitted.

"The group photograph is the retirement of a No. 3 factory packing section leader whose Christian name was Doug," said Chris, who is Midlands regional chairman of IMPAC. He is surrounded by colleagues and the man in the white coat was Bill Else – making and packing manager at the factory. I would guess the date is approximately mid-1970s."

Jenny Lowery, who worked in the factory and is pictured third from left on the third row from the front, added: "I remember the picture being taken of Douglas Berry, after 42 years' service at the No. 3 factory.



No. 3 factory manager, Laurie Elliott, with his 'look alike' Arthur Lowe. Paul Bloomer took the photograph, which was used for a caption competition in Player's Post; he recalled a good, fun day for the Dad's Army cast and No. 3 factory employees


I still have a copy of the photograph and remember many of the faces in it."

Bernard Hall also recognised his late wife Jane, who is pictured second from left in the bottom of the same photograph. She and Bernard both joined the No. 1 factory in 1966 aged 15 – Jane in the packing room and Bernard in the making room. Jane moved across to the No. 3 factory when the No.1 factory closed and worked for Player's for 12 years before leaving to have the

couple's daughter, Marie.

Bernard left the company in 1969 to go into engineering, only to reapply to the Horizon factory almost 30 years later.

"I applied in 1996 but the job was put on hold," said Bernard, who was married to Jane for 38 years. She died in 2008 aged 58.

"I was then contacted four years later and got the job, working nights until I retired in 2013 aged 62, which meant I started and finished my career with the company." 

## Mystery poster: what was it for and who are the people featured in it?



Chris B Jackson – not to be confused with Chris J Jackson, who also worked in the engineers department – joined Player's in 1973 as an engineer's apprentice at the No. 4 factory on Radford Road.

He recently bought three copies of this 'If it moves, maintain it' poster at auction but does not know why the posters – which measure approximately 6 feet by 4 feet – were produced.

"I also don't recognise any of the faces in the photographs and am hoping that other pensioners may be able to provide me with the information," said Chris, who worked for the company for 34 years, retiring as an engineer at the Horizon factory in 2007.

The posters provide information about the mechanical engineering section of the engineers department as well as the motor vehicle repair service.

# Former Ross Fish managing director who went on to rear game birds in Lincolnshire

Former Ross Fish managing director, David Dukes, has died aged 88.

David grew up in Hull and attended the local grammar school before joining a firm of chartered accountants in 1948. He worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Leeds as a chartered accountant, Rothwell in Lincolnshire as a farm accountant and Fisons as a senior internal auditor before joining Ross Group in 1961.

Here his first job was to help merge Jeff Field Limited and Ross Group (Hull) Ltd. In 1965, he moved to Grimsby and became personal assistant to the MD of Ross Fish, Bill Ashby. Two years



later Bill became MD of Ross Foods and David became its financial director.

The Ross Group was acquired by Imperial Tobacco in 1969 and,

the following year, David was involved in Smedley's Frozen Foods being integrated with Ross Foods and also became Ross Foods company secretary.

In 1985 he became MD of Ross Fish – a position he held until he left the company four years later.

## Career as a game keeper

David then became a consultant in the food industry and also chairman of the Barton Corn Exchange Club and president of his local Conservative Association. In addition, he was an original member of the Article Numbering Committee, which introduced bar codes into the UK.

After retiring his passion for the great outdoors led to a new career as a game keeper. He rented 1,000 acres of land in North Lincolnshire, where he reared pheasants, partridges and ducks and ran a shooting syndicate until 2018.

David's father taught him to shoot when he was 10 and it was a lifelong hobby. He was also a keen rugby player but hung his boots up when he joined Ross and became a referee to avoid injury: a pastime he enjoyed until the age of 58.

David is survived by his wife Valerie, children, Tony, Robert and Helen, and two granddaughters Catherine and Victoria.

## Mechanic who played first violin

Player's pensioner John Hogg has died, aged 90.

He grew up in Nottingham and followed his father, Stanley, in working for Boots before joining Player's in 1954. His first role was to pipe music into the Radford Road factory under an initiative called Music While you Work, before moving to the motor vehicle repair section as a mechanic. He retired in 1985.

John married Betty in 1952 and the couple had two children, Timothy and Elaine. In his younger days he was a member of Eastwood & District Motor Club and enjoyed rally driving as an amateur in the family car. He had a maintenance pit in the garage and used to undertake some quite adventurous repairs on the family cars.

He also played first violin for what was then the Nottingham Harmonic Society orchestra and often played in the orchestra that supported The Carlton Operatic Society.

"I remember as a young boy attending dress rehearsals where my dad was playing his violin and I got to see shows like Annie Get Your Gun and Oklahoma," said Timothy.

"I know that he used to attend a workers summer school for musicians, paid for by Player's, and he loved classical music."

John was an avid caravaner and the family enjoyed many holidays together in Devon, Cornwall, Scarborough and Scotland. In retirement John and Betty also enjoyed going on cruises.



"My parents celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2002, a year before my mother passed away and I know my father was lonely after that loss," added Timothy. "He hated staying in and attended coffee mornings and lunches organised by Kindred Spirits, a group for older lonely people."

John is survived by Timothy and Elaine, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

## Tony said he enjoyed every day of his working life

Anthony (Tony) Wild, who worked for John Player & Sons all his working life, has died aged 77.

He joined the company in 1959, aged 16, straight from school as an engineering apprentice and was one of the first engineers when the Horizon factory was being built. He was also the youngest employee, at the time, to be made foreman.

Tony's mother, Doris, father, Alan, and aunt all worked at Player's and his wife, Wendy,

also worked there for a few years in the mid to late 1960s as secretary to chief accountant Gordon Walker.

Tony took early retirement at the age of 56, after 40 years with the company, ending as a senior engineer. "Tony and I met when we were 16 and 15 respectively and were happily married for 56 years," said Wendy. "He was a true petrol head and enjoyed restoring many sports cars including Austin Healeys, MGs and Triumphs.

"I remember him saying that he enjoyed every day of his working life: who can say that today? Player's was a wonderful place to work and gave us all good friends and a good living."

In recent years Tony suffered from Alzheimer's disease and was latterly in a care home near his family home in Nottingham.

He is survived by Wendy, daughter Helena, son-in-law Harvey, and grandsons Jack and Nick.

## Michael Smedley

At the time of going to press, the death was reported of former Smedley's managing director, Michael Smedley, 91. A full obituary will appear in the November issue of the Gazette.



The deaths are reported, as at 31 May 2021, of the following retired employees:

#### HEAD OFFICE AND ITL

Mary Flook, 92;  
Pamela Margaret Jennifer Horwood, 87;  
Brenda Lilian Preece, 96;  
Keith Barry Stanford, 75;  
Susan Jayne Townsend, 70;  
Rita Elizabeth Viret, 88.

#### WD & HO WILLS

Leonard Trevor Barrett, 91;  
Kenneth Bates, 80;  
Olive Eileen Clark, 101;  
Pamela Mary Copp, 89;  
Doris Rosina Darling, 90;  
Stephen Feeney, 95;  
Patricia Fryer, 86;  
Joan Goodman, 97;  
Jillian Ann Grant, 68;  
John Charles Guppy, 93;  
Maurice Hardwell, 88;  
William Thomas Harris, 99;  
Michael Hendry, 80;  
Roy James Hinchliffe, 94;  
Joyce Hodges, 76;  
Pauline June Holly, 86;  
Audrey Agnes Howell, 91;  
Ruth Howell, 89;  
George Francis Humphreys, 90;  
Deryck Alan Killcross, 86;  
David Leslie, 86;  
Aileen Victoria Lloyd, 74;  
David Brian Marshall, 84;  
Donald Richard Mawditt, 89;  
Thomas McAnenay, 76;  
Sylvia Alice Moss, 92;  
Mohamed Iqbal Mukadam, 71;  
Margaret Noble, 86;  
Anthony Norton Oakley, 87;  
Graham Oliver Parsons, 90;  
Primrose Honor Patricia Perkins, 93;  
Norman James Porter, 86;  
Boyd Alister Reid, 89;  
Peter Graham Riches, 74;  
Victoria Margaret Rigby, 74;  
Albert Rintoul, 93;

Kathleen Robinson, 87;  
Marguerite Doreen Rowles, 95;  
John Maurice Ryan, 85;  
Robert Simm, 91;  
Raymond Alfred Smith, 83;  
Margaret Spokes, 89;  
Edward Stephenson, 89;  
Maureen Teresa Talbot, 67;  
Edwin Charles Thomas, 87;  
Joyce Tyley, 100;  
Marion Vest, 90;  
Michael Noel Watts, 78;  
Rosina Violet Welsford, 96;  
Myra Whyte, 68;  
Jean Phyllis Wilson, 89;  
Brian John Young, 91.

#### JOHN PLAYER & SONS

Sheila Sylvia Arrand, 91;  
David Arris, 72;  
Raymond Bainbridge, 90;  
Andrew Flockhart Black, 89;  
Stephen Clark, 86;  
Adrian Riley Clarke, 78;  
Florence Mildred Coates, 89;  
Brenda Cooper, 79;  
John Adrian Gardner, 78;  
Beryl Melita Gooden, 85;  
Barrie Montague Hawtin, 88;  
Maurice Hill, 95;  
John Arthur Hogg, 90;  
Roy Leatherland, 90;  
Harry Burrridge Ledger, 90;  
Ivory James Longley, 75;  
Nelta Iona Morgan-Lowe, 64;  
Margaret Nathan, 83;  
Elizabeth Edith Neeser, 85;  
Barbara Newton, 82;  
Caarac Joseph O'Neill, 81;  
Brian Parker, 84;  
John Trevor Parrington, 87;  
May Theresa Paton, 89;  
Carol Mavis Rogers, 79;  
Richard Michael Scothorn, 78;  
John Edward Short, 85;  
Wilfred Smith, 89;  
Helga Gertrude Soar, 93;  
Kathleen Mary Stewart, 75;  
Jean Lilian Sweeney, 67;  
Barrie Swift, 74;

Albert Edward Swinscoe, 89;  
Beryl Madeline Warner, 86;  
Anthony Allan Wild, 77.

#### OGDEN'S

Thomas Carr, 92;  
Catherine Dennett, 89;  
Norah Fisher, 92;  
Charles Francis Gardiner, 83;  
John Gough, 73;  
Anthony Haydock, 79;  
Betty Marshall, 88;  
Karen Margaret Sass, 61.

#### BONDS DELIVERY SERVICE

Michael Arthur Roy Ealson, 73;  
George Alexander Kerr, 91.

#### LOWFIELD DISTRIBUTION

Derek Arthur Bradley, 86;  
Brian Marson, 74;  
Margaret Mary Rimmer, 85.

#### RIZLA

Jeffrey Brian Michael Bee, 84;  
Janet Patricia Granfield, 74.

#### ROBERT FLETCHER & SON

Robert Slater, 81.

#### SINCLAIR COLLIS

Robert David Eastwood, 84;  
Martha Elizabeth Murray, 82;  
Andrew Charles Oliver, 79;  
David Albert Plumley, 70;  
Alfred Tomlinson, 96.

#### ST ANNE'S BOARD MILL

Frank Edward Baker, 83;  
Michael Roland Garland, 78;  
Nova Rose Mary Gilbert, 78;  
Roland Horace Jones, 86;  
Graham Keith Knight, 86;  
Donald Vincent Lovell, 96;  
Reginald Parsons, 87;  
Kazys Rinkevicius, 97;  
Alfred Edwin Williams, 92.

#### IMPERIAL FOODS LIMITED HEAD OFFICE

John Anthony Bucknall, 83;  
Gavin Cran Grant Findlay, 79;

Anthony Arthur Green, 79;  
John Herbert Hazelby, 94;  
Diane Metcalfe, 79;  
Marjorie Emily Nobbs, 91;  
Alan Waterworth, 74.

#### CHIPMUNK

Mary Mildred Weckermann, 87;  
Eileen Mary Widdows, 94.

#### GOLDEN WONDER

Peter Robert Batters, 73;  
Edward Callaghan, 74;  
John Hart, 78.

#### ROSS FOODS

Maureen Elizabeth Bartlett, 75;  
Joan Kathleen Charlton, 91;  
Barry William Codd, 78;  
David Laurence Dukes, 88;  
Ian Goodwin, 78;  
Eric Gunn, 85;  
Terence Paul Hartley, 85;  
Joseph Hattle, 87;  
Paul Henry Konradsen, 74;  
Alexander Angus McKillop, 86;  
Annie Cameron Scott, 81;  
Colin Joseph Smith, 78;  
Sidney Tomlin, 87;  
Patricia Margaret Wright, 79.

#### SMEDLEY-HP FOODS

Peter Michael Clibbens, 86;  
Derek Cocks, 86;  
Roy George Dixon, 84;  
Melvyn Thurston Lincoln, 81;  
Joyce Millard, 91;  
Irene Parkinson, 94;  
Rema Petrie, 89;  
Audrey Shield, 82.

#### YOUNG'S SEAFOODS

Terence Francis Montgomery, 80.

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

## Derbyshire gallery named after Player's pensioner

A new gallery in Ilkeston's Erewash Museum in Derbyshire has been named in memory of Player's pensioner Dennis (Danny) Corns.

Danny, who died last year aged 84 (Gazette issue 93, March 2020), worked as an engineer at the Player's Radford factory in Nottingham for 16 years, retiring in 1988.

He was a respected historian and a key figure in setting up and

running the Ilkeston and District History Society. He became the undisputed expert on Ilkeston's past and wrote many articles and books and was often in demand as a speaker or for radio and television interviews.

Danny was especially knowledgeable about industrial history, having completed his apprenticeship at Stanton Ironworks, and knew a great deal



about other industries such as coal and lace. The new gallery at

the museum showcases some of his Stanton collection plus other artefacts about Erewash's wider industrial heritage and includes never-before-seen photos, an interactive tablet and large wall display.

Funding was provided by the Ilkeston and District History Society, which also worked alongside the museum team to bring the exhibition together.

# MITCHELL LIBRARY PICTURE STRIKES A CHORD

Imperial memorabilia collector, **John Powell**, has followed up on a letter about Glasgow company, **Stephen Mitchell & Co.**



D & HO Wills pensioner John Powell has a huge range of Imperial memorabilia collected during his 64-year

association with the company.

He got in contact with *The Gazette* after reading the letter in the March issue about the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, as he has two Prize Crop packs from the tobacco manufacturer the building is named after.

"You don't hear much about Stephen Mitchell & Co," said John, who lives in Lower Knowle, Bristol, with his wife Thelma.

"It merged with Wills in 1901 and I believe the Prize Crop packs date back to the early 1900s."



Part of John's huge collection of packs



John's Prize Crop packs likely date back to the early 1900s, when Mitchell's merged with Wills

John's interest in cigarette packs began while he was working in the unusually named offal and return goods section of the No. 8 factory, Upton Road, in the 1960s.

The company had a policy of accepting any returned tobacco packs from retailers – occasionally extremely old ones – and crediting them with the value. "The tobacco from the cigarettes was recycled if it could be but the packets were thrown away, so I started saving a few of the more interesting ones," said John.

"My favourite is the Capstan Navy Cut as I really like the design and I think the most unusual are the Four Aces pack of five and the pre-war Woodbine Red Label.

"When vending machines were introduced in the late 1940s, they didn't give change so the pack sizes were adapted to fit the cost – hence the 18 cigarettes for a shilling Gold Flake packs."

John has filled each empty Wills and Player's pack in his 100-strong collection with polystyrene and created individual stands to keep them upright. They are

displayed in a cabinet in his office at his home. He joined Wills in April 1945, aged 14, in the cutting room of the No. 4 factory on Raleigh Road before seeing national service in the Navy. He met Thelma at a Wills dance while on leave and returned to the company when he demobbed in 1951, joining its fire brigade.

"This was a part-time responsibility I shared with 11 other employees," said John, who has the longest known working relationship with Imperial Tobacco.

"Each Imperial site had its own brigade, as did many other manufacturing companies in Bristol at the time.

"Another element of the job was to provide security at night when the building was empty and crowd control to prevent accidents on the stairs as people left work."

By 1960 John was combining his part-time security role with working at the offal and returned goods department but, as the factories closed, transferring production to Hartcliffe, he was left looking after empty buildings.

As a result, in 1985, along with colleagues Peter Knight and David Webb, who have both died, he offered to take redundancy and the friends set up Trust Security Services.

"Imperial needed someone to watch

the Raleigh Road estate, so we decided to use our knowledge and quote for the job," said John.

"We were

delighted to be successful and looked after the factory for 10 years. Then, when Imperial's head office transferred to the old No. 8 factory on Upton Road, we undertook security duties there for a further 12 years."

In 2009 John finally decided it was time to retire and he was presented with a crystal whisky decanter and glasses by former chief executive Gareth Davis at a surprise retirement party held in his honour at Imperial's Bristol head office.

"It was a wonderful send off," he said. "I really couldn't have wished for more."

John and Thelma have been married for 67 years and have three sons, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren. **G**

"...I started saving a few of the more interesting ones."

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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