

the Gazette

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FOR PENSIONERS OF IMPERIAL TOBACCO



YVETTE'S LONG AND MEMORABLE CAREER

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Reunion is a
testament to
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Diamond couple
celebrate their
60th
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Elaine was set
up for life by
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Imperial's five-year strategy is yielding further improvements, with financial performance on track to deliver in line with predictions for the year.

STRATEGY CARRIES ON DRIVING PERFORMANCE



IMPERIAL BRANDS



Stefan Bomhard

THE IMPLEMENTATION of Imperial Brands' five-year strategy is driving further improvements in operational and financial performance.

In a trading update ahead of the release of its full year results on 14 November, the Group reported it is on track to deliver in line with full year guidance and announced a further £1.1 billion share buyback for the 2023/24 financial year.

Market share growth

CEO Stefan Bomhard said: "The update demonstrates that focused investment in the company's priority combustible markets is expected to deliver a further modest gain in the aggregate share in the top-five markets at full year.

"This will complete three consecutive years of improved market share performance following several years of decline with the US, Spain and Australia expected to show market share growth, more than offsetting

Three consecutive years of improved market share

declines in Germany and the UK."

Momentum is also building behind next generation product (NGP) net revenue growth across all categories – vape, heated tobacco and oral nicotine. This has accelerated in the second half of the year, driven by strong growth in Europe. Imperial Brands has also announced a further buyback of up to £1.1 billion of shares in the period before the end of September 2024, which represents almost 8% of its share capital.

This commitment forms part of an ongoing, multi-year buyback programme

Continuing to engage with government

◆ IN OCTOBER the Government launched a public consultation on ways to reduce youth vaping while ensuring that adults who want to quit smoking are supported to switch to vapes.

As part of the eight-week process, views are also being sought on a proposal to make it an offence for anyone born in 2009 or later to be sold tobacco products.

Imperial Brands responded: "We understand the Government's desire for new tobacco control measures because of the health risks associated with smoking. But, like any prohibition, the proposal to ban the legal sale of cigarettes over time threatens significant unintended consequences.

"On vaping, we will continue to engage with the Government to create effective policies which prevent youth access and build trust in the category as a potentially less risky alternative for existing adult smokers."

that will deliver a material reduction in the capital base over time, which, together with its progressive dividend policy, will provide an ongoing source of shareholder returns.

Full year results were released after the Gazette had gone to print but they can be viewed at: www.imperialbrandsplc.com

IMPAC is a pensioners' organisation which has been supporting Imperial Pension Fund members for over 30 years.

Website: www.impac.org.uk

IMPAC members' helpline:

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

For membership queries

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

New members welcome

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



Diary dates

- ◆ The second **Player's reunion** of the year will be held on Wednesday December 13 from 3.30pm at The Stage pub, Wollaton Street, Nottingham NG1 5FE. Contact Dave Clay.
- ◆ The **Player's Garage and Motor Vehicle Repair reunion** will be held on Monday December 4 from 3.30pm onwards at the Bell Inn, Nottingham. Contact Phil Bradley or Dave Lowe for more information.

Have you got a contribution?

We welcome letters, reminiscences, photographs and suggestions for articles in The Gazette. Please contact the editorial team – details are on the back page.

TOM IS THE LATEST TO JOIN THE PENSION TRUSTEE BOARD

TOM LUKIC, representing Dalriada Trustees Limited, has been appointed as an independent Employer Nominated Trustee on the Imperial Tobacco Pension Trustee Board, replacing David Fripp.

Tom is a Director of Dalriada and a fully accredited professional pension trustee. He acts as the Dalriada representative across a range of trustee boards and has experience in managing schemes with assets up to £20 billion.

Broad range of schemes

His current trustee portfolio includes roles as co-trustee, chair of trustees and sole trustee appointments across a broad range of schemes and a diverse mix of sponsoring employers, ranging from small owner managed businesses through to large global and fully listed groups.

"I am delighted to have been appointed to the Imperial Tobacco Pension Trustee Board," said Tom.

"I believe my skills and experience, gained across a number of different schemes, are very relevant to the Fund. I am really looking forward to working with



Tom Lukic

Proud to join the team

my new colleagues and the wider adviser group going forward.

"I'm aware of the long history and heritage of Imperial Brands and am proud to be given the opportunity to join the team."

Tom also chairs the Dalriada Board and

is the Board sponsor on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Sub-committee. Prior to joining Dalriada, he was a Pensions Covenant Advisory partner with Ernst & Young LLP working across the Midlands and South West.

Dalriada provides professional pension trusteeship services as well as wider pensions management and governance services.

Extensive experience

Established in 2003, the business now works with over 200 pension schemes, serviced by a team of around 50 fully accredited pension scheme trustees with extensive experience across the various areas of pensions scheme management and operations.

"It is recognised as best practice for occupational pension schemes to have a professional trustee on the Board," said Helen Clatworthy, Trustee Board Chair.

"I am delighted to welcome Tom and would also like to express my thanks to David Fripp." **G**

More Pension Fund members marking their centenaries

CONGRATULATIONS to the following Fund members who are celebrating their 100th birthdays:

◆ **Lily Blythe**, widow of Ross Foods pensioner, Raymond, who died in 2011. He worked for the company for 11 years from 1965 to 1976.

◆ **WD & HO Wills pensioner Frederick Wilkes**, who worked for the company for almost 40 years, from 1941 until 1980.

◆ **Smedley-HP Foods pensioner Lorice Fenton**, known as Rene, who worked for the company for nine years from 1973 until 1982.

◆ **Dorothy Wilkinson**, widow of Ross Foods pensioner Roy, who died in 2003. He worked for the company from 1955 until 1971.

◆ **Kathleen George**, whose husband KM George died in 1979. He worked for WD & HO Wills from 1934 until his retirement in 1976.

◆ **John Player & Sons pensioner Laura Wines**, who worked for the company from 1971 until 1983.

◆ **Lucie Keene**, widow of John, who died in 2019. He worked for WD & HO Wills from 1970 to 1985.

◆ **Molly Young**, widow of Player's pensioner Charles, who worked for the company between 1939 and 1980. He died in 1989.

Contact us by email or phone



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

As a result, if possible, please continue to make contact by email or phone in the first instance.

The service to members remains unaffected and postal correspondence will still be dealt with in a timely manner.

"While email or telephone is our preferred method of communication, 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 (pictured).

"This is so 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,
Winterstoke Road,
Bristol BS3 9GY

Wet weather and the risk of a major storm did not deter more than 75 pensioners from attending the annual **Group Head Office** reunion, held for the third time at Knowle Golf Club in Bristol.

FORMER COLLEAGUES CATCH UP

IT'S WONDERFUL to see former colleagues catching up and the fact that people travel great distances to attend is testament to friendships that have stood the test of time," said former Pensions Manager **Mike Paige**, who organises the get together.

Charles Timoney travelled the furthest to attend, coming via Eurostar from his home just outside Paris. Charles joined GHO as a patent attorney in 1979 but was made redundant three years later when the department was restructured.

His French wife Inès, who was also made redundant from her job elsewhere in Bristol in the same week, persuaded him that it was a great opportunity to move to France 'just for a year'.

The couple have lived in the Paris area ever since and Charles is now a French Citizen. Soon after moving he passed law exams in France and continued to practice patent law.

Book of the Week

Charles brought his experiences living abroad to life in a series of books including *Pardon my French: Unleash Your Inner Gaul* and *A Certain Je Ne Sais Quoi*. The last to be published, *An Englishman Abroad*, told the story of a real life bet Charles made with French neighbours to travel the River Seine in a rowing boat he had lovingly built.

The book, published by Penguin, became a Radio 4 Book of the Week and was also a book club choice for friend and former colleague **Ian Poole's** wife, Carrie. Ian was one of the Imperial colleagues to attend Charles

and Inès' wedding in France in 1981 as they worked together in the legal department.

"Carrie also knew Charles as she was a law student with Imperial for nine months during her training," said Ian, who told Charles about the GHO reunion and encouraged him to attend this year's event.

Ian, who lives with Carrie in Churchill, North Somerset, left Imperial in 1987, to continue his career as an insurance solicitor. He joined private practice before setting up his own firm and continued to work for Imperial on its insurance claims until 2016.

For many years Ian has been active in amateur golf, including supporting the development of local junior golf with Somerset Golf Union, and is County President and County Junior Organiser.

"It's been lovely to catch up with Charles after many years, as well as seeing many other former colleagues here today," he added.

Sport – this time skiing – has also played a big part in reunion attendee David Herron's life as he met his future wife when they were involved in a skiing accident in Zell-am-Seen in Austria. It was a serendipitous move as the couple married a few months after meeting and have recently celebrated their 34th wedding anniversary.

David, who travelled from his home in Maidenhead to attend his first GHO reunion, joined the company after completing a Chemistry PhD and worked in Research

& Development/Product Development between 1982 and 1990. After leaving Imperial he completed an MBA and subsequently spent his career in the market research industry, heading up the Insight and Analytics functions at several major agencies, including TNS (now Kantar), Ipsos Mori and KPMG.

After retirement, David has pursued his interests in home brewing, playing saxophone and amateur astronomy, while continuing to play cricket for Berkshire Seniors and to watch his beloved Coventry City from the stands. "I re-established contact with

some of my ex-colleagues a few years back and have been attending their annual Christmas lunch get togethers ever since," he said.

Pensioner **John Allen** attended the reunion for the first time in several years, this time with his new wife **Penny**. The couple, who first met many years ago when Penny's first husband sang in the choir at St Mary Redcliffe with John, reconnected through the church community after their respective spouses had died. The iconic church in central Bristol became the venue for John and Penny's wedding two years ago.

Everyone was valued

John joined Imperial in 1953 aged 16 as a door boy and recalled his nervousness about one of his early responsibilities, which was to look after the fire in the senior executives' offices. "The first time I had to do this I dropped coal onto the pink carpet in Sir Robert Sinclair's office because I was shaking, so I was expecting a big telling off," John reminisced.

But, rather than admonishing him, Sir Robert kept a look out while John cleared up the mess so that he wouldn't get into trouble with either of the chief porters for being clumsy. "His approach taught me a lot and sent the message that everyone was valued," said John.

During his long career at Imperial John had many roles including in the stores – a job he loved as he was able to meet people across the business. He later moved to roles at John Player's Western Depot and was Depot Manager when he retired in 1985.

Mike Paige thanked Knowle Golf Club for helping to make the event such a success and giving them all such a warm welcome. His thanks were also extended to Imperial Brands: "The company has changed unrecognisably since many of us were there," he said, "But it's a testament to the value it still places on its previous employees that it continues to support this event." **G**

"...testament to friendships that have stood the test of time."

Seeing double...

Identical twins **Julie Rhodes** (left) and **Lynn Smith**, who worked together initially in the legal department, continue to confuse some reunion attendees who find it hard to tell them apart.

"We dress in a similar way and have even been known to inadvertently send the same birthday and Christmas cards," said Lynn.

Julie added: "I recently attended Lynn's youngest daughter's wedding and many guests were offering me congratulations, mistaking me for the Mother of the Bride!"

The duo recalled that when they returned to Imperial after a break of some years raising their young families, they both worked part time, but different hours. The office receptionist thought they were one person who used to go home to change at lunch time.





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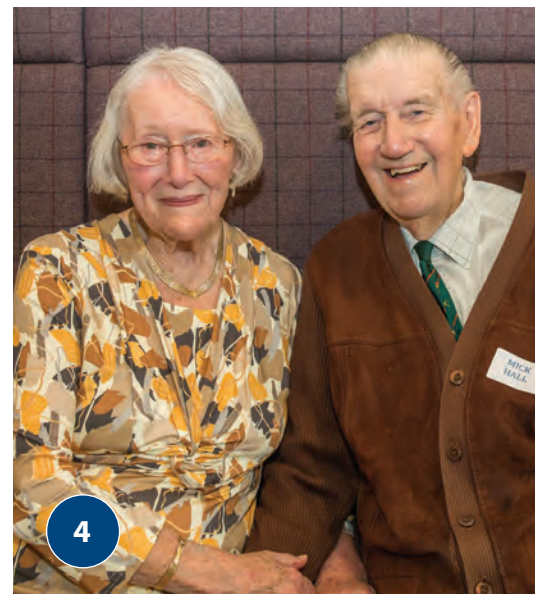


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- 1 From left, Pam Bugler and Jenny Mustoe, who worked together on the Additives Guidance Panel, with Marilyn Giles, who worked as PA to Board Director Stuart Painter.
- 2 Imperial pensioner John Allen and wife Penny.
- 3 Reunion organiser Mike Paige.
- 4 Mick Hall, a regular face at the GHO reunions with his wife and fellow pensioner Pat, was pleased to see former colleague Shirley Hobbs (previously Davis) as both have celebrated their 90th birthdays recently. "We laughed about being the oldest attendees here," he said.
- 5 Catching up (from left): John Sadd, John Britton, Roger Kempton and Iain Holland, who all worked in the Research Department.
- 6 Charles Timoney, who travelled from France to attend the reunion, catches up with friend and former colleague Ian Poole.
- 7 Steve Wedlock (left), who worked in Group Technical Services between 1968 and 1981, shared pictures from his time with the company with Tim Hinton, who worked in the Catering Department between 1973 and 1984.
- 8 First time attendee David Herron (right) chats with former colleagues Dave Binham (left) and Brian Chard.



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Yvette Stapleton's career included working in the Civil Service, Imperial and City of Bath College, as well as running her own business

IMPERIAL CAREER WAS A 'FEATHER IN HER CAP' FOR YVONNE

Yvette Stapleton has many fond memories of her 17-year career with Imperial Tobacco in Bristol. From meeting her husband through a work colleague, to competing in the Golden Boot competition and making lifelong friends, she is grateful for the many opportunities that came her way.



B

ORN IN Malmesbury, Wiltshire, Yvette Stapleton left school in 1971 at the age of 16 to join the Civil Service as a Clerical Officer awarding sickness and maternity

benefit claims.

"I had to sign the Official Secrets Act, which I am still bound to, and was advised not to declare my occupation on my passport," said Yvette, who lives in Kingswood, Bristol, with her husband, Mike.

"There were certain countries that I was not allowed to travel to, such as the USSR, and I had to get special permission to travel to Spain in the days of General Franco."

After spending two years in the Civil Service, Yvette was looking for a change and joined Imperial Tobacco in 1972, working in the Tobacco Intelligence Department (TID), which later became the Commercial and Marketing Intelligence Department (CMID).

Morning Prayers

"Imperial had an excellent reputation, and it was considered a feather in your cap if you were employed by the company," said Yvette. "My parents were extremely proud of me when my application was successful."

The most junior member of the TID section would inspect all the morning papers and cut out any tobacco advertisements, display them and take them to senior manager Edwin Wood's office in time for the daily management meeting, known as 'Morning Prayers'.

The team also calculated the market share of all the manufacturers' tobacco, cigarette and cigar brands and kept records of all packaging to check for any copyright infringements.

Through her work friend Claire Wallis, Yvette met her husband, Mike, at the Old Georgian's football club in Whitehall, Bristol.

"Claire introduced me to her group of friends, which she had known through a youth club, and Mike was one of them," explained Yvette.

"We married in 1979 and celebrated our 44th wedding anniversary in July."

After working in the CMID for several years,

"Whoever won the Golden Boot... could be challenged by another department."



▲ Skiing and travel are among the pastimes Yvette and husband Mike enjoy in retirement

Yvette applied for a maternity leave vacancy role in the Sales and Marketing Department supporting the sales team by supplying promotional material and any administration support they required. When this came to an

end, she was placed on Account 200, set up for people facing redundancy, and worked in different departments at the Sales Office in Hartcliffe. "Initially I was placed as the most junior member of the team and was responsible for filing," said Yvette.

"I couldn't quite understand why the letter M had such a large pocket but, on inspection, I found that the previous person had filed anything addressed as Messrs under M! I quite enjoyed sorting it out."

Hanson takeover

The Supervisor of this section arranged for Yvette to be trained as a Sales Officer, but she was only in this department for a limited time because she was successful in her application to return to CMID, working for Roger Ettery.

During this time Imperial was subject to a takeover by Hanson and Yvette was in the

continued on next page

◀ Yvette enjoys reading when she has time in between walking her dog and taking granddaughter Amelia to and from school



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position of being made redundant and placed back on Account 200. She worked in various departments within the Head Office until gaining a position in Public Relations.

"I enjoyed my time in the PR Department," said Yvette. "I was responsible for hosting visitors to Imperial Tobacco, organising factory visits and quite often actually leading the tour of the factory.

"I also answered telephone and letter enquiries from the general public on anything from old, archived advertisements to the safety of cigarettes."

Yvette was an avid team player and remembers taking part in the company's Golden Boot Competition.

"I believe the inter-department competition started in Head Office," explains Yvette. "Whoever won the Golden Boot, which was a real football boot sprayed gold, could be challenged by another department which would choose the next activity.

"The challenges were very varied from Call My Bluff and skittles, to football, snooker, netball and swimming.

"I particularly remember a jigsaw competition between Head Office and Player's in Nottingham as I was a member of the Bristol team. Both teams had the same jigsaw and a time limit to complete as much of the puzzle as possible, with photographers at each site taking recording progress.

"It was clear from the photographs that when the time was up the Imperial Head Office team had completed far more of the jigsaw than the Nottingham team. I really enjoyed the friendly rivalry."

Get out!

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, many major companies in Bristol were subject to bomb threats by the IRA, which resulted in the Head Office in Lombard Street being evacuated on a regular basis.

"I recall one time I was on the top floor making coffee for my colleagues when the alarm sounded," remembers Yvette.

"This happened so frequently that we were very blasé about the situation, until the double doors to the canteen burst open



▲ Members of Group Technical Services and the Legal Department who took part in a fancy-dress netball match as part of the inter-departmental Golden Boot competition. Standing (from left) are: Val Brown, Ian Poole, (two unknowns), Alan Slapper, Charles Timoney, Dave Treasure, Jackie Methuen, Barry Channon, Anne Shaw, Lewis ?, (unknown), Dave Hudson and (unknown). Front (from left): Helen Cole, (four unknowns), Dave Payne, Dave Bolton and Paul Owen. Do you recognise any of the unknown faces? Please let us know (contact details on the back page).

and a gentleman shouted: 'Get out! It's for real this time.' I remember picking up the tray of coffees, climbing up a ladder, down a flight of stairs, through a flat and someone's bedroom where there was a man very ill in bed, before arriving in Lombard Street where I was finally able to distribute the coffees to my colleagues."

Yvette was made redundant in 1989, which opened up exciting opportunities for her. She signed with an agency and did temp work for six months, recognising that, as she had worked for one employer for 17 years, she needed to demonstrate that she could adapt to other working environments.

"I thoroughly enjoyed this time and, when my six months ended, I applied to be a Personal Assistant to the Managing Director of a company of town planners and architects," she said.

"One of my duties was to write and produce the company's quarterly magazine which was sent to all its clients. One issue

even reached the Prince of Wales.

"The company had branches in Bristol, Southampton, Northampton and Maidstone and I would travel to these locations to interview new employees. I was fortunate that I worked for a very talented Town Planner and enjoyed producing his applications and appeals on planning decisions."

In 1992 Yvette and Mike's daughter Adele was born and she continued working part-time but also started her own cleaning company. This led to her training as a NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) Assessor and Internal Verifier and she was also invited to train as an External Verifier.

She delivered NVQs in the workplace, assessing and verifying all levels of Management NVQs, Customer Service, Business, Law and Administration, Cleaning and even Glass Blowing, before working for City of Bath College, managing a team of Assessors.

Travelling and skiing

"This work was challenging because, as a team, we worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Yvette, who retired from the role in 2011 at the age of 56.

"But I loved it, particularly working with the candidates who had worked so hard to improve their skills and progress."

In retirement Yvette and Mike enjoy travelling and skiing and are very involved with their seven-year-old granddaughter Amelia, taking her and picking her up from school and looking after her during the school holidays.

They are also kept busy walking their Jack Russell Maltese Terrier cross dog and play skittles in a friendly league during the winter months. **G**

◀ Yvette has been married to Mike for 44 years, having met him through a work friend while at Imperial



PAIR MET ON THE DANCE FLOOR

John and Thelma Powell are celebrating their platinum wedding anniversary after meeting as teenagers at a Wills dance on East Street, Bedminster, in 1949.

AT THE time they met, Thelma was 18 and worked in an office in Bristol, while John was 19 and carrying out National Service in the Navy.

“Thelma attended the dance with a friend of hers and I happened to be the only gentleman in uniform,” said John, who had a 64-year association with Imperial.

“We met on the dance floor and spent the whole evening dancing together. I knew early on that I was going to marry her because I felt so comfortable around her.”

The couple married in 1953 at St Oswald’s Church, Bedminster Down, and went on to have three children, three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. They have lived in Bristol all their lives and celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary with a meal for 15 members of their family.

John’s career with Wills started in 1945, aged 14, in the cutting room of the No. 4 factory on Raleigh Road. He was called up for National Service in 1948, serving on HMS Vanguard before being demobbed and returning to the company in 1951, when he was offered the chance to join its fire brigade.

“It was a part time responsibility which



▶ Platinum pair: John and Thelma celebrate 70 years

I shared with 11 other employees,” said John, who lives with Thelma in Lower Knowle. “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 the 1960s John was working in the unusually named offal and returns department where tobacco sweepings – on which high duty had already been paid – were collected, weighed and returned to the bonded warehouse where

the appropriate amount of duty was reimbursed.

When the No. 4 factory closed in 1985, John left the company and set up Trust Security Services with fellow colleagues Peter Knight and the late David Webb and provided security services to Imperial until he finally retired in 2009 at the age of 78.

In retirement John and Thelma have enjoyed cruising around the world together and continue to enjoy travelling with one another today.

When asked what the key to a long and happy marriage is, John said: “Never go to bed on an argument.” **G**

Frank’s letters led to 60 years of happy marriage

TEENAGE SWEETHEARTS Margaret and Frank Miles are celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary.

The couple, who met at a family wedding, marked the occasion at the Rolls Royce Social Club in Hucknall, Nottingham, surrounded by their family and friends.

“I was 17 and Frank was 18 when we met at my cousin’s wedding in Hertfordshire in 1958,” said Margaret. “He later told me that he knew he was going to marry me the first time we met.

“At the time I was working as an Accounts Clerk at a motor company in Glasgow and Frank was an Engineer living in Stotfold, but we wrote to each other for over a year. It was his lovely letters that did the trick!”

The couple married in 1963 at Chryston Parish Church in Margaret’s home village near Glasgow and had three children, Karen, Cameron and Craig.

Frank joined WD & HO Wills as an Engineer at the factory on Alexandra Parade in Glasgow in 1974. When the factory closed in 1983, he transferred to Player’s in Nottingham, relocating the family to the city. Margaret joined the company the same year,



working in the accounts department. Frank helped to run the Player’s football team during his time in Nottingham, in which Cameron, who also worked for Imperial, was the goalkeeper. Both completed 22 years’ service with the company, Frank retiring in 1996 and Margaret in 2005.

“The best thing about working for Imperial was the people,” added Margaret. “We made so many wonderful friends.”

The couple, who have five grandchildren and two great grandchildren, requested no anniversary gifts but instead collected donations for Our Dementia Choir, based in Nottingham. The choir is made up of people living with dementia, a cause close to their hearts as Margaret’s mother and maternal

aunt suffered from the illness.

Since retiring, Margaret and Frank have embarked on a round-the-world trip, but are now content visiting places around the UK. Frank is a keen gardener and Margaret enjoys spending a lot of time with great grandchildren Arlow and Edie, often collecting them from school.



ELAINE'S DELIGHT AT WORKING FOR IMPERIAL



Elaine Blaney has enjoyed a varied career but never forgot her time spent working at the WD & HO Wills factory on Alexandra Parade in Glasgow and the friends she made there.

▲ The Wills factory at Alexandra Parade produced Embassy brands including Embassy, Lambert and Butler and Capstan. It has since been converted into offices

AFTER COMPLETING her fifth year at Glasgow High School for girls, Elaine was accepted to train as a primary school teacher

but wanted to jump straight into working for a company which would value her and provide progression opportunities.

"University didn't appeal to me, and I was delighted to be one of only two to be taken on in the newly created 'pool' from hundreds of applicants," she said.

"Wills was a prominent employer in the area and the positions were extremely sought after."

Great bunch of people

Elaine moved through different parts of the business including sales, personnel, dispatch, cost accounts and payroll before taking a permanent position in the cigar office working with the production accounts team.

"I worked with a great bunch of people and loved the flexi-time office hours as well as learning all the different processes: mostly banging away on a desktop calculator," said Elaine, 63.

"Apart from the monthly accounts we

▼ Set up for life: Elaine (pictured below aged 17) has never forgotten the start that Wills gave her



would audit the records of all the bookings on the factory floor; submit declarations to HM Customs and Excise; and provide the paperwork and seals for the huge lorries leaving the dispatch bay.

"On the last day of the month, we also had to do a full stock take to reconcile everything held on the factory

floor, including the making, packing and dispatch room. If that fell on the late shift, we would have to work until after 10pm but Wills provided food for us and paid us double time."

Elaine was part of the Wills charity committee and enjoyed organising events like dances and raffles to raise money for chosen causes.

"One of the charities was a home for children with special needs and we were invited to visit," she explains.

"We took lots of donated toys with us and it was wonderful to see the generosity of everyone in the factory and the joy it bought to the children. I will never forget that day."


Elaine liked working for a large British company with factories, depots and offices all over the UK, enjoying feeling that she was part of something bigger. And it was seeing where the tobacco that supplied the factory came from – places like Java, Sumatra, Connecticut and Nicaragua – that made her want to explore the world.

Lived overseas

"I took redundancy after six years with Wills, probably one of the first to do so at Alexandra Parade," said Elaine. "I then became a flight attendant for the next 23 years, working 10 of those for a Middle Eastern royal family and, later, a private owner on VIP jets."

Elaine, right, married an airline captain and lived overseas before returning to Scotland in 2006. She is now semi-retired and sells new-build homes in the Highlands.

"When I visit Glasgow and pass the old cigarette and office building, I feel so much nostalgia," added Elaine.

"I will never forget my time at Wills: it set me up for life. I have never worked anywhere else with such a great camaraderie." 



Chris was a sportsman and author

Chris Stone, former Group Technical Services Project Administrator, has died aged 81.

Born in 1942, he was christened John Christopher but was known as Chris and lived all his life in Clevedon, North Somerset.

He left school aged 15 and worked in Bristol docks for three months before joining CWS (Co-operative Wholesale Society) as a drapery assistant, quickly moving to the accounts department.

Chris met his wife, Hazel, on Clevedon beach in 1959 and the couple married in 1966.

Largest capital building project

Hazel worked in Imperial's Tobacco Intelligence Department in Bedminster for 10 years from 1962 and, in 1965, Chris wrote to the company inquiring if there were any vacancies.

His application was successful, and he started in the Engineers' General Office before joining House Management and later Group Technical Services. He worked as a Budget Administrator on the building of the Berkshire Brewery for Courage, which was the largest capital building project in the UK at the time. Project Zenith was next, but the move to a new head office never happened

and Chris left Imperial in 1982 to work for the BBC as Regional Contracts Manager. "He quickly gelled with production teams and contributors alike and collected a great team around him," said Hazel. "Chris loved his work, and every day was a different challenge."

He retired in 2001 and the couple visited countries far and wide including Cuba, Brazil, Argentina, Patagonia, Norway, Vietnam and New Zealand.

Never ones to sit still, Chris and Hazel enjoyed walking on Exmoor, regularly visiting Lynton, and joined the Exmoor Society – Bristol Group, where Chris became chairman from 2005-2010. He also joined the Civic Society and helped look after the clean-up of Clevedon.

Chris had a life-long love of table tennis which started at Imperial where the company team played in the Bristol League. He was proud to be made Captain and then President of Portishead Table Tennis Club, where he donated a cup to be won each year by the most improved young player. In retirement he also joined Somerset Cricket Club and often went with his grandsons Will and Nick.

His love of sport led him to publish his first book in 2004. *Clevedon's Sporting Heroes*



celebrates the lives of 50 sports men and women connected to the town, including several world champions. He then wrote *Pubs of Clevedon* for the Civic Society and, most recently, co-wrote *Doris Hatt Revolutionary Artist*, which included an exhibition of her work at The Museum of Somerset in Taunton in 2019.

"We have received hundreds of cards, letters and emails from friends and former colleagues, all talking about how much they liked and admired Chris," said Hazel. "He had a full and happy life and was one of life's true gentlemen. We all miss him terribly."

Chris is survived by Hazel, children Sarah and Robin and grandchildren Beth, Will, Oli and Nick.

The deaths are reported, as at 30 September 2023, of the following retired employees:

HEAD OFFICE AND ITL

Brian John Frederick Britton, 95;
Gerald Keith Finch, 85;
John Harold Foulkes, 81;
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We offer our sincere condolences to the family and friends of our former colleagues.



BACK FOR REUNION

▲ REUNITED: Player's engineers get together with friend and former colleague Dave Walker at The Southbank Bar in Nottingham



TRIP BACK to Nottingham from his adoptive home in Perth, Australia, was the perfect opportunity for former Player's Engineer

Dave Walker to catch-up with many of his former colleagues.

Dave joined the Engineers' Department at No. 4 Factory on Radford Road in 1981 after being made redundant from the Royal Ordnance Factory in the city.

A few years later engineers from the factory were encouraged to transfer to the new Horizon Factory to work on a new generation of high-speed cigarette making and packing machines.

"I stayed put at this stage as I preferred to be on the maintenance side rather than running the machines," said Dave.

"But eventually the Radford Factory closed, and I transferred to Horizon becoming part of the general engineering maintenance crew."

When the high-speed machines were running at full capacity a new department was set up for the maintenance and overhaul of parts for these machines. Dave transferred to this department, where he remained until he emigrated to Perth in 1994.

New build houses

Dave first went to Australia to be best man for his brother's wedding and, having had a taste of the lifestyle – and weather – decided to apply to emigrate with his family. He has now lived in Perth for nearly 30 years and has worked in number of different roles, starting with a mining engineering company before changing career to be a bus driver for 11 years.

Dave then started building maintenance on new build houses, which he continued until he retired in 2017. He now spends his time keeping fit

playing badminton and going to the gym.

"Each time I have been back to the UK I have always caught up with my daughter Emma and grandchildren Charlie and Jack as well as other family and friends, including those from Player's," said Dave.

"The last time I was due to go back was just as Covid-19 hit so everything got cancelled. During this time my mother passed away aged 96 so I was unable to go back for her funeral.

"As a result, this year was the first opportunity I have had to visit everyone and lay Mum's ashes to rest in the family grave in West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire.

"It was great to see so many of the friends I made in both the Radford and Horizon factories at the get together, which was organised by my old friend Dave Clay. Working at Player's was like being in one big happy family: everyone was very supportive of each other." G



▲ Dave (centre) with foreman Harvey Gamble (left) and Mick Mitchell shortly before he emigrated to Australia in 1994

Dave enjoying the Australian sunshine in his adoptive home



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