

iCONTACT

for pensioners of the Reckitt Benckiser (formerly Reckitt & Colman) Pension Fund

No. 62, April 2015

In this issue



The enlightened start of our R&D heritage

The £100m CSE project now under way at Dansom Lane continues a 175 year old R&D history on the site. See P4.



Was there a special WWI Brasso line?

The Centenary recollections of WWI revealed many unknown stories like the rusty special canister stamped "Reckitt and Sons/1917" See P3.

"In a free enterprise the community is not just another stakeholder in the business, but is in fact the very purpose of its existence."

Talking of heritage here's a quote from a philanthropic industrialist for RB pensioners to discuss when they get together. See P6.

COMPANIONSHIP AND ENTERPRISE



More pictures in Digital Supplement

The companionship RBPA members enjoyed in their workplaces is recaptured in stories in *Contact* and at the regional get-togethers. Now the spirit of enterprise that drove our founding family businesses forward over the past couple of centuries is reflected, as these pictures show, in Northern Region's latest meeting.

The venue was the refurbished barge *Syntan*, moored alongside Beverley Beck. As the decor in the above picture indicates, its cargo had been mainly animal hides but it represents the waterborne transport that helped build the national supply and delivery network of both raw materials and finished products for the Reckitt and Colman countries.

Twenty pensioners, including one or two new faces, enjoyed an interesting talk by Ian Campbell, the chairman of the Beverley Barge Preservation Society, on the history of the barge and its restoration.

RE-ELECTIONS

The three members of the RB Pensioners' Association Committee due for re-election this year, chairman David Saltmarsh, vice-chairman Tony Swell and pensioner trustee Kevin O'Berg, are expected to confirm their willingness to continue at this month's committee meeting.

As provided for in the RBPA Constitution, nominations for membership of the committee can be made on nomination forms obtainable from: The Secretary, Reckitt Benckiser Pensioners' Association, c/o Pensions Department, Reckitt Benckiser plc, Dansom Lane, Hull HU8 7DS, to arrive before the end of July.

INNOVATION WILL CONTINUE TO SHINE

R&D Director **Neale Harrison**, who heads the CSE project, is also a Pension Fund Trustee and will provide a regular update for *Contact* readers.

Neale's first report appears with our special centre pages summary of the 19th century start of Reckitt's R&D history.

In preparing this we learned that, although details have yet to be released, part of the CSE plan involves moving the Heritage Centre from

the old FRI building to the Shine site, below, on the corner of Dansom Lane. The Knowledge and Innovation Park (Contact No.25, January 2003) is an appropriate home for our precious memories.



Get together

DIARY DATES 2015

Forthcoming get-togethers:

HIGH WYCOMBE

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Wednesday, October 14, 2015

12pm, Brewers Fayre, Loudwater,
High Wycombe

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Venue: tbc

Contact Paul Gilliam

Tel: 01494 562843

DERBY

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

10.30am, Bryers Heritage Farm,
Markeaton Lane,
Markeaton Village, Derby

LEICESTER

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

11.30am, The Oadby Owl,
Glen Road, Oadby, Leicester

Contact Brian Bradley

Tel: 01526 321575

for Leicester and Derby

NORWICH

Tuesday, April 14, 2015

Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

10.30am at the White Horse,
Trowse

Contact Ken Herbert

01379 852854

HULL

Wednesdays, April 22, May 27
and June 24

11am at The Goodfellowship

Cottingham Road, Hull

Contact Phil Shearsmith

Tel: 07858 137178

alloa@alloa.karoo.co.uk

Details of other meetings (such as Southern Region's revived programme for Chiswick) will be announced on the website news page when dates fall between our press dates.



Varying levels of attendance at the first gatherings of the year but a full programme in the diary, left (with more to come), indicates continuing and growing interest in recapturing the community of the workplace.

Northern Region takes the lead in innovation with the watery event pictured on our front page and the picture above relieving your editor of the need to write a headline. We will not attempt to explain the meaning or relevance of this heading – the fact that the venue was the recently opened East Riding Theatre in Beverley explains all.

No particular dramatics from the 20 or so members taking to the boards who, as well as enjoying coffee and cakes, were treated to a tour around the theatre and tales of its use as a location in the new 'Dad's Army' film.

Illness hits Eastern

Eastern Region, traditionally first off the mark in January, saw attendance down (mainly due to illness) to 19 with regulars like Dick Smithson and his wife, Neville Starling, Alistair Stewart and Geoff Maerr unable to attend. Organiser Ken Herbert is seeking a greater response from his 700 members at the homely White Horse in Trowse.

Northern Region found the seaside as agreeable as ever with its return to Café Chocolat in Hornsea (above right) for their second meeting of the year. Twelve members, including some new

faces, enjoyed an hour of coffee and reminiscences.



More get-together pictures are in the iContact Digital Supplement of the online version at:

www.icontactnewsletter.co.uk

This gives us more room than we can afford on the printed pages and also acts as a noticeboard for events which occur after we have printed, such as the Hull production areas pensioners' Christmas party as published on the website, below.

PRODUCTION PLANNING IN RETROSPECT



The Contact presses were rolling when the seasonal gathering of Hull production areas' pensioners was held at the Minerva Hotel for the usual "in our day" reminiscences

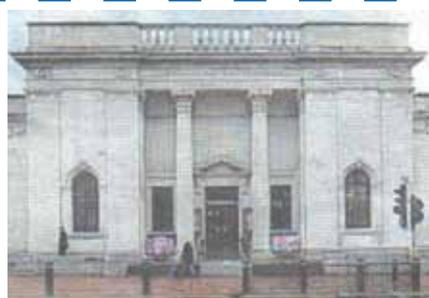
It was **honey** with **peas** and **mustard**



RBPA committee member Brian Bradley was given this photograph when, in his role as Pensioner Visitor, he called on Pensioner's widow Mrs Louisa Mucklin in Spalding.

The picture came out when reminscences entered "Do you remember?" territory. Louisa's late husband Roy was honey department supervisor at Farrows, Peterborough before moving to work in the honey department at Colmans in Norwich.

The photo was taken in Colman's grounds and Roy is first on the left in the back row. So, in addition to who recognises who in the picture, it will also be interesting to know more about the product that brought a sweet touch to what, in product terms, were already colourful workplaces.



The Ferens Art Gallery in Hull city centre, one of the main examples of the philanthropic Reckitt heritage (the University is another), is having a £3.9m refurbishment as it lines up for a strong possibility of hosting the Turner Prize during the UK City of Culture 2017 celebrations.

No structural changes to the iconic building, above, are planned but it is 20 years since it was extensively refurbished and the Tate and other leading galleries loaning artworks need to be assured that valuable works are secure and protected.

Two years ago *Contact* (No.52, August 2013) reported the £1.6m purchase by the Ferens of the rare Renaissance painting *Christ between Saints Paul and Peter* (dated c.1320) with £856,000 coming from the gallery's Ferens Endowment Fund. This fund is a trust ring-fenced for the purchase of artworks and established in 1924 by the gallery's founder Thomas Robinson Ferens, a Reckitts director and close associate of Sir James Reckitt.

When Prime Minister David Cameron announced £1.5m in government cash for the Ferens refurbishment it was seen as an incentive towards hosting the Turner prize in 2017, but the Tate Gallery will have the final say with strict measures to be met.

HULL HAD A CANISTER WORKS, BUT DID IT MAKE THESE?

Ferens Art Gallery, pictured left, hosted the exhibition *When War Hit Home: Hull and the First World War* and amongst the 240 objects that featured was a very fragile gas mask, right, which had been in store for years.

York Archaeological Trust prepared the mask for display which revealed the stamp "Reckitt & Sons/1917" on the base of the metal canister.

Contact's WWI issue last August (No.60) recalled some of the company's tremendous humanitarian war effort; but this is the first indication of possible manufacturing support, which would probably have been secret anyway. Canisters were being made for the metal polishes and, quietly later, petrol too.

The gas mask type is a 'small box respirator'. These were first issued in 1916 and were more effective than earlier gas masks, which could be as simple as a cotton pad soaked in bicarbonate of soda.

This particular small box respirator was issued to Captain Godfrey Park of Hedon, who served in the Hull Pals. He received the Distinguished Service Order in 1918 for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. Under heavy shell fire he was wounded twice but led his men to restore the front line.

In 1911, the census shows that he was aged 16, training as a law



Brasso was launched in 1905 and John Wilson's Canister Works was bought in 1907.

student and living at Ivy House in Hedon with his father Robert Alan, who was a solicitor, mother Eleanor, and sisters Margaret Eleanor (aged 23) and Dorothy Kathleen (aged 18).

Godfrey's medal card from the First World War shows that he was serving in the 10th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment, from 1915 as a 2nd Lieutenant, and then became Captain. He served in Egypt with the Hull Pals (of which the 10th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment was part).

Many Reckitt people lived in Hedon (and still do) but there is no evidence of any Park family connection with the company. Some older residents have memories of the big house on The Green but do not know what happened to the family who lived there.

Some of our readers might have recollections of grandparents' stories of life on the gas mask line.



On plan and on budget

by Neale Harrison

I am pleased to report that the design and build of the new Centre of Scientific Excellence is on plan and on budget.

The past few months have been like the 'swan on a river' analogy – no drama and little visibility of anything special happening but lots of activity going on below the waterline!

We have now appointed the architects, project manager, structural teams, legal and transport planning teams.

The final piece of the jigsaw will be the appointment of the interior designers by the end of March.

The early designs look great and will truly put Hull on the map for being the place to work in the Healthcare R&D sector.

Many boreholes drilled

There has also been a lot of activity getting to understand the site and the structure and quality of the land we intend to build on – many boreholes have been drilled. This has revealed no issues which could have delayed or increased the cost of the project.

We are still working closely with the Planning Committee of the Hull City Council and will meet with them again shortly to share our latest thoughts prior to our formal submission for planning permission in the Summer.

Today there is little sign of the building appearing but in the months ahead employees will really start seeing physical progress – exciting times for us all on the Hull Site!

Footnote; The Centre for Scientific Excellence will complement RB's other major R&D centres in Germany, Italy, India, Thailand and USA, as well as the network of small local development teams in 28 countries around the world

The announcement of the new £100m Dansom Lane Centre of Scientific Excellence reported in our last issue (No.61, December, 2014) emphasised that R&D facilities in Hull are a significant part of RB's heritage and history. The company said its goal was to build a modern state of the art facility whilst recognising the importance of linking with the heritage of the site.

So *Contact* has been looking at that heritage and linking the picture we published of the new centre (the brightly lit windows indicating the new buildings), above, with the original factory.

We can record that improved lighting was the first technical advance 175 years ago. Then about 25 starch packing girls were allowed one candle each when working after dark, until experiments with reflectors showed the whole room could be lit with two candles.

Whilst indicating the primitive conditions which Isaac Reckitt inherited with the Hull business he took over in 1840 (he was also rearing pigs alongside) the key feature of this enlightening development is that it was an initiative by his son Frederic, pictured right, the company's first chemist.

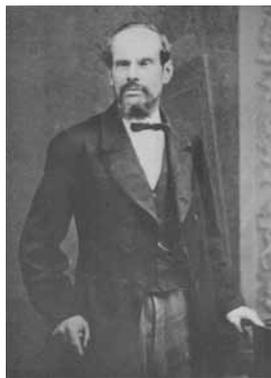
Total family effort

This is illustrative of a total family effort that drove the business from processing and production, through research and development to sales and marketing on an international scale.

Sustained by his Quaker beliefs Isaac was the driving force, sons Charles, George, Francis and James, the "men on the road", learning at first hand the realities and opportunities of the marketplace, and Isaac's wife Ann the rock on which they could all rely.

Starch made from wheat flour was the basic product and the business had a shaky start with sales through agents in the Hull area generating enough income to start paying off the money borrowed to start the business, but most profits going in agent's commissions.

Frederic Isaac, the second son, was a weakly child but had an inventive mind and was described as a real help to his father when, at the age of 18, he was in at the start of the business with the oldest brother Charles, then 21, away in Newcastle as an apprentice.



George, the third son, then 18 gave up an apprenticeship in Essex in 1843 to join the struggling family business and, despite his parents objections that he was too young to be taking up such work, started travelling "to introduce our Patent Starch."

As recorded in Basil Reckitt's book *The History of James Reckitt & Sons Limited*, the 19th century history is almost entirely dependent on family correspondence between sons on the road and parents at home in Hull. Although Frederic lived at home and was responsible for product and manufacturing development, there is virtually no detail of his work.

The first "new line" invented by Frederic was "Dietetic Arrowroot" in 1848, made from Farina (potato flour) as an invalid drink. It was never very successful, although quantities were sold over the next few years.

Making the business soluble

But Soluble Starch, as the family called it, was what George saw as the key product and when the business hit its lowest ebb in 1845, a sales analysis showed Soluble had been the most profitable line in 1844. So the decision was made to concentrate on Soluble as something different from everybody else and for which a better price could be obtained

Responding to George, who had suffered an embarrassing failure of

A BRIGHT START 175 YEARS AGO

...and was highly fashionable 80 years later

a customer demonstration of the Arrowroot substitute in 1847, Isaac wrote: "I had intended writing to thee this this morning but have been obliged to devote two hours or nearly so to the trial of about 20 of Frederic's experiments, intended to get at rest the question of Crystallised Sago and Patent Wheaten Starch.

"I consider him to have fully succeeded in Wheaten Starch and think that we can fully come up to anything that has been made: he has far exceeded anything before produced in Crystallised Sago, has produced a sample equal to Soluble and has produced a beautiful article of splendid colour, half Sago and half Sol(uble); altogether the results of his experiments appear satisfactory."

The R&D heritage of Reckitts had been established.

The Great Exhibition

When the business embarked on advertising in 1850 one of the most spectacular commercial events of the 19th century, The Great Exhibition in the specially built Crystal Palace, saw the firm displaying "Patent Wheaten Starch, white and blue (an invention of Frederic's the year before), Patent Soluble Starch from potato flour, Patent Sago Starch and Wheaten Starch Powder for use in perfumery and confectionery."

The Patent Soluble Starch received an award for superiority.

Starch remained the staple product through most of the 1850s until sales of Laundry Blue and Black Lead introduced earlier in the decade, began to rival it.

Other products investigated but not pursued included a by-product from yeast, cheaply available from brewers, for which Isaac apparently had a patent and mustard. Colmans, interestingly, were major competitors on starch.

One which did go ahead was the building of a big new biscuit works (50 varieties listed) in 1857 which was not successful and, perhaps fortunately, was destroyed by fire in 1863.

Little is known of Frederic's activity in these years. When Isaac died at the age of 70 in 1862 Frederic, still living at home, was provided for in the Will but the business was left equally to George, Francis and James.

By 1894 when the first external chemist was recruited, Frederic had virtually retired.



One reason for the sketchy 19th century history is that record keeping in a business concentrating on sales and manufacturing was poor. Isaac wrote in 1885: "I think it will be necessary to have more clerky assistance, our books are greatly in arrear, no posting having been done for months."

The economic prosperity towards the end of the century led to the formation of a company able to attract investment for growth (Reckitt and Sons Ltd, 1888) and the emergence of the philanthropy of welfare of the workpeople.

The growing number of stakeholders needed more information and the pioneering *Reckitt Works Magazine* (1907) helped meet the workplace need.

The picture of Kingston Works Laboratory pictured on our front page appeared in the house journal in July 1910 and shows (left to right)

G.H.Spilman, H.A.Scruton, C.W.Rodmell and R.J.Whitaker. The Chemical Staff at Dansom Lane at that time numbered six all told, the other two members being C.H.Hardy (Chief Chemist, later a Director of Reckitt and Sons Ltd.) and B.T.Priestman (later a Director of Reckitt and Sons Ltd., Reckitt and Colman Ltd., and Reckitt Holdings Ltd.)

The picture, above, also taken in July 1910 appeared in the Summer 1958 issue of *Ours* and shows the combined chemical staffs of Kingston works and Morley Street works; namely, standing (l to r): F.Taylor, B.T.Priestman, G.H. Spilman, H.A.Scruton, C.W.Rodmell, R.J.Whitaker, M.N.Harrison. Sitting: T.Dodds, A.W.Wilson, C.H.Hardy, H.Leaf.

Straw boaters were universally popular at the time as shown in the photograph, left, of girls leaving the Dansom Lane factory with the Subscription Mill, later Brasso Works, in the background.

Ten of the eleven men in the chemical staff photograph had boaters, but C.W. Rodmell apparently did not. So the photogapher lent him his to give the picture "complete harmony."



FULL OF VIRTUE SAY OUR PENSIONERS

RB pensioners certainly endorse the company's "virtuous growth" programme which produced a 2014 turnover up 4% to £8.8 billion and profits rising by 15% to £1.7 bn.

The growth revealed in the year end results published in February had already produced the virtue of a £25m boost to the Pension Fund and our members who hold shares in the company saw them rise 185p to a record £57.75, with a final dividend of 79p to come, taking the full year total to £139p.

Chief Executive Rakesh Kapoor said: "Three years ago we set ourselves a clear strategy to become a leader in Consumer Health and Hygiene. During this time we have simplified the organisation, enhanced our investment and focus on Powerbrands and Powermarkets, whilst expanding operating margins via our virtuous growth model.

"We have sharpened the core business through both consumer health acquisitions and rationalisation of certain non-core parts of the portfolio.

Strong year in ENA & RUMEA

"In 2014, challenging market conditions persisted, we had a strong year, particularly in ENA and RUMEA where our operational changes and improved go-to-market initiatives have delivered significant improvement.

"We further sharpened our portfolio focus with the acquisition of K-Y, the demerger of Indivior and the disposal of Footwear.

"Our virtuous growth model delivered very strong profit growth and margin expansion during the year from a combination of gross margin expansion and cost saving initiatives, some of which were non-recurring in nature.

"In true RB spirit of outperformance we need to sharpen our organisational agility and efficiency. I am therefore announcing our new "Supercharge" project focused on:

- ▶ Creating a simpler, more agile organisation
- ▶ Reducing cost and driving efficiencies

This will make RB a leaner, faster and more coordinated business. The 2014 step up in operating margin, which our Supercharge project should make sustainable.

Philanthropic business to a T

In our Colonial past the "G&T (gin and tonic) at sundown" was the accepted lubricant of the end of work discussion and review. Now there is a case for G&T with RB&T as the subject for discussion amongst RBPA members, especially those who have worked overseas, with the subject T being the Indian industrial giant, the Tata Group.

The philanthropic industrialist who is quoted on our front page is Jamsetji Tata, pictured below, who founded his business in 1868 and was thus a contemporary of Isaac Reckitt.



Both, it is clear, were driven by strong humanitarian principles. Tata (540,000 employees in 100 countries) is bigger than RB (37,000 in 60) and is best known here as a steelmaker (Corus) and motor manufacturer (Jaguar Land Rover) but also has Tata Global Beverages and Tata Chemicals. The beverages include Tetley Tea, the first international brand takeover in 2000.

The Tata founders bequeathed most of their personal wealth to the many trusts they created for the greater good of India and its people. Today, the Tata trusts control 66 per cent of the shares of Tata Sons, the holding Tata company. Go to www.tata.com.

Recreation Ground lodge under demolition threat



When we wrote last year (Contact No 59, April 2014) about Hull City Council Planning Committee's acceptance of consultants' suggestions for street names on the former Reckitts Recreation Ground (one being Reckitt Crescent despite the proximity of James Reckitt Avenue) the Lodge House, above, was to be retained.

Some time later there were two fires in the unoccupied house and developers Barratt Homes put in an application to demolish it.

The application though was turned down by the Planning Committee and as yet Barratt have not lodged an appeal. They've put some scaffolding up on the lodge as it was falling down.

Councillor Adam Williams, who represents Drypool supported the rejection of the appeal and took the above picture late last year.

Barratt want to build four more houses on the Lodge site but, at the time of going to press, they had not appealed against the committee decision and several members are known to favour preservation of what is seen as a heritage building.

Even better business at 7th in Global 100

In its first appearance in the Global 100 Index, an annual listing of the 100 most sustainable corporations, RB has been ranked seventh. That makes it the highest of the 11 UK companies entered.

"The Global 100 represent the corporate trailblazers who are forging new ways to make more with less. While RB performed well across all twelve indicators, the success of its sustainability strategy is clearly evidenced by the high scores achieved for energy, carbon, water and waste productivities," said Toby Heaps, CEO of Corporate Knights, the index compiler.

RB was also the top-scoring household products company in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. As a result, it has been included in RobecoSAM's 2015 Sustainability Yearbook and has received the Industry Leader, Gold Class distinction.

All the letters here have, like many of the words in this issue, been received by e-mail. You may, as many readers have, send us your e-mail address so we can advise you of publication dates and items on the news page at www.icontactnewsletter.co.uk. We do not publish e-mail addresses if you ask us not to. The company and the Pensions Department do not keep or pass on e-mail addresses and, in the long established tradition of a very personal service, an e-mail link with your pensioner visitor is strictly confidential.

Reckitts did win a football cup – then somebody pinched it

From Alan Hodgson ajh2050@yahoo.co.uk

As Huddersfield Town football historian (and ex R&C employee at Batley), I was doing research on long ago matches when I came across an intriguing story from 1912 that I thought might be of interest.

It concerns when Reckitt's AFC won the *Hull Times* Charity Cup, the subsequent theft of the trophy from the firm's Social Club, and (shades of 1966 and Pickles the dog) its recovery from a field some two weeks later.

The story is a little long, but if you wish to use it perhaps it could be split into two or three instalments? I'm afraid I don't have any pictures to go with it however, but maybe the company archivist could help out?

Six years ago Alan took us back 100 years with an article on Reckitts' exploits in THE cup, the FA one (Contact No.45, October 2009). We don't have a picture of the charity cup, but with our on-line issue we have no need for instalments. So you can read the full story, and Reckitt Magazine 1912 comments in this issue's Digital Supplement.

Social networking

From Sue Mead doomead@live.co.uk

When you included my message about Alan Bloxham in last August's issue of *Contact*, I heard from several old friends, both in Chiswick and Hull and we have been emailing ever since, remembering the good old days.

I understand from Zena Clarke that the first Chiswick staff get together was organised by Peter Moores last year. Rita Bull and I now plan to attend the next one.

It's that workplace companionship we refer to on our front page but if you have a smartphone or tablet it's called social networking. Still can't beat the face to face (get-together)!

"Unable to deliver" responses are a benefit we get from the "It's live" e-mail we send when the newsletter is printed and the digital version

goes on line. Where the reason is not clear we advise Pensions Department, especially when it is an overseas reader. This is why we received the following from our regular Oz correspondent Trevor Schofield:

"Wow what a relief, thought I had been banned from cyber space.

The following was my distraction!!" What Trevor had done (as others readers have on occasion) was change his e-mail address without telling us. So pratu@southernphone is now pratu4@bigpond.com and that distraction was his accompanying We was *brung up proper* – a commentary we know will amuse RBPA members.

So, taking another advantage of our bonus space, it is reproduced in the Digital Supplement.



From Jeremy Wilcock J.Wilcock@hull.ac.uk

December's *Contact* was another great issue – but can I just clarify that I had no involvement with the Industrial Division.

High Wycombe's College of Technology and Art (now a University) had a programme in Export Marketing. R&C's Export Division knew about it, and used to recruit their graduate trainees from there. I was fortunate enough to be one of them.

But it was still nice to meet Paul Gilliam, an R&C colleague from the Industrial Division, at Hull University.

Though we never knew each other at the time, it was amazing how many affectionate tales we were able to swap about the kindly Chiswick directors who then ran the company.



Colman's Detectives at work in Norwich

Colman's Detectives is a group of volunteers and students finding out more about the part that Colmans and its workers played in the First World War. The community research project by Norwich's Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART), which took over the famous Mustard Shop (pictured above) in 2009, has received £37,700 from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The year-long project is also supported by Norfolk Record Office, Norfolk Library and Information Service, The Forum and Unilever Archives.

Visit www.mustardshopnorwich.co.uk for more information. The shop and HEART staged the 200 year history of Colmans display which closed at the city's Bridewell Museum last month.

It will be interesting to see what information the Colman's Detectives discover additional to that found in the Carrow Works Magazines. The Digital Supplement in iContact's April 2014 issue (No.59) reproduced much of the Colman's WWI story from a 1924 works magazine.

TRANSATLANTIC LIVE BROADCAST OF CHISWICK PENSIONER'S FUNERAL



Chiswick pensioner Doris Sands, whose death at the age of 93 we report below, was a long-standing member and for many years organiser of the Chiswick Pensioners' Club. The club was formed in 1973 when production at "The Cherry" was being phased out and a considerable number of employees were made redundant.

Doris died before Christmas, after our December issue had been printed, but thanks to our digital technology we were able to put a note on the news page of the *iContact* website.

Technology also enhanced Doris's funeral. In what may be a first for one of our members, the service at Mortlake was broadcast live (webcast) so family and friends, notably relatives in Canada, who were unable to attend could share the occasion.

In addition to the inset photograph of Doris, top right, we also went back to a 2003 *Contact* for the picture showing Sandra (standing) with members at a Cherry Club meeting.

Workplace encounters often led to lifetime partnerships, in the fullest sense, at Reckitts and Colmans. A classic example was Norwich's **Ray**

We regret to record the deaths of the following Reckitt Benckiser pensioners:

NORTHERN REGION

(Hull, unless otherwise stated)

Gail Spafford, aged 62 years, 11 years' service; **Norah Strickland** (89), 14; **June Dusher** (83), 12; **Ruth Kirk** (79), 16; **Eileen Wilmot** (92), 31; **Elizabeth Barker** (87), 17; **Evelyn Hogarth** (98), 28; **Carol Stephenson** (69), 11; **Alan Leadley** (87), 29; **George Barker** (89), 47; **David Lloyd Williams** (77), 18; **Raymond Palmer** (91), 38; **David Crimlisk** (83), 9; **Geoffrey Finney** (81), 15; **Peter Brown** (87), 8; **Frederick McIntosh** (86), 33; **Percy Watson** (99), 17; **Edward Sutton** (84), 26; **Ian Sutherland** (74), 18; **Mary Ablett** (81), 12, *Shoecare*; **Peter Johnson** (78), 27, *Shoecare*; **Sidney Hold** (85), 30, *Director, Household Division*; **Colin Westley** (76), 25. **Derby** - **Linda Patterson** (68), 13.



Gray, famed for his hand-carved walking sticks, who died just three days before his wife **Vera** (*Contact No 57, August 2013*).

In this issue we have Hull's **George Barker** (89) who died in late November followed by his 87-year old wife **Elizabeth** in early January. Both are well remembered by many after George took over as Steward of the Works Recreation Club.

The very same

The last name in our December issue, **John Jephcott**, Industrial Division director who had died at the age of 69, brought a quick e-mail from Geoff Pilsbury asking if this was the **Greg Jephcott** he had worked with at Hull.

It was and Geoff, former sales and export director at Household Division, wrote back: "I worked with

Greg Jephcott at Reckitt house. We were very close when we worked together but lost touch after we were posted overseas. Greg gave me my first break into management at Reckitts and resulted in my eventual career in Africa and South America with the group. Good memories of our days working under Peter Miles and the gang."

Sad to see the death of centenarian **Agnes Johnson** in this issue's Eastern Region list. She worked at Farrows in Peterborough and we reported her 100th in our last issue

We would be particularly interested to have readers' memories of **George and Elizabeth Barker** and their work; plus any others listed, including Northern Region's two long-serving Hull executives **Sidney Hold** and **Peter Johnson**.

Group Dist, Harlow - **Horace Faithfull** (86), 17.

Group servs, Aldridge - **Norman Bott** (88), 20.

Lloyds of Batley - **Kathleen Ivinson** (69), 13; **John Smith** (97), 17; **Robert Marshall** (76), 28.

Colours, Bletchley - **Jean Andrews** (74), 3.

Colours, Backbarrow - **Kenneth Thompson** (92), 18.

Industrial Div. - **Nazir Ahmed** (70), 7.

EASTERN REGION

(Norwich, unless otherwise stated)

Josephine Lenton (99), 30; **Michael Borrett** (74), 12; **Stanley Halliday** (73), 27; **Edward Seaman** (79), 18; **Roy Roebuck** (70), 9; **Agnes Johnson** (100), 31; **Ralph Rose**

(78), 12; **William Goddard** (78), 27; **Allan Crisp** (90), 7; **Arthur Purser** (82), 5; **Edward Armstrong** (75), 21; **George Cowan** (90), 33; **Victor Hipperson** (88), 15.

SOUTHERN REGION

(Chiswick, unless otherwise stated)

Doris Sands (93), 13; **Helen Buchan** (97), 17; **Edward Burman** (81), 21; **Dennis Robinson** (87), 1, *Director*.

HQ, Hull - **Sandra Thompson** (63), 6.

HQ, Cricklewood - **Jean Lovell** (82), 20.

FAG, Wealdstone - **William Walford** (90), 24.

Nottingham (Boots Health) - **Brian Summerfield** (69), 4.

Leisure Division, Enfield - **Dudley Stephenson** (86), 21.

RECKITTS (HULL) UP FOR T' CUP

Yes, really, THAT cup!



An interesting discussion after the next round of FA Cup matches could be how Reckitts got on - although you'll be going back nearly 100 years for the earliest games.

them out at the first hurdle, whilst in 1927/28 they v thrashed 7-0 at home by Broughton Rangers, again at first stage.

"The fol only to los

by
Alan Hodgson
(ex-Batley)

RECKITT'S WIN THE HULL TIMES CHARITY CUP!

Early in the evening of 25 April 1912 hundreds of spectators began to arrive at Hull City's Anlaby Road ground where Reckitt's AFC were to meet Cleethorpes Town in the Hull Times Charity Cup final.

The entrance fee was three-pence although a seat in the 'best' West Stand cost sixpence. However, the scheduled 5.45pm kick-off was slightly delayed owing to the fact that the Cleethorpes contingent had been stranded at New Holland and a special boat had to be arranged to ferry the team across the river!

Many Reckitt's employees were in attendance and, as they waited patiently for the match to start, "They beguiled the time with trumpet-blowing and in other ways which crowds on the football field delight to resort to."

Reckitt's AFC treasurer and trainer, Mr Shepherd, said one or two of his regular players were out injured, but that they hoped to give a good account of themselves against 'the Meggies' who were, after all, the current trophy holders.

The works team were very much the underdogs, and as *The Hull Daily Mail* commented: "It is quite possible the skill of Cleethorpes and their combination will be a revelation in this district, and if Reckitt's mean to lift the Cup they will have to go straight for goal and leave the finessing to Cleethorpes."

In the event the Reckitt's XI were to put in a fine performance in an exciting game that got underway just after 6pm. They lined up as follows: Spavin; Whitelock, Bell H; Irwin, Vasey (captain), Ranby; Leaf, Sutton, Trumper, Thistleton and Lang. Mr T Robinson (ERCFA) refereed with Mr Coverdale (Hull) and Mr Backhouse (Grimsby) his linesmen.

Thistleton arrives late in work clothes

Just before the delayed start Reckitt's inside-left Thistleton turned up still in his work clothes, and quickly got changed as his skipper Vasey lost the toss.

The 'Starchmen' thus initially defended the railway end and, encouraged by "much enthusiastic bell-ringing and trumpet-blowing" soon got to grips with the game. They were temporarily quietened though when Cleethorpes had the ball in the net direct from a free-kick, but the 'goal' was ruled out as the referee had given an indirect free-kick only! Town briefly protested but the decision stood. Then, after a "puzzling overhead kick" from Irwin, Trumper seized on the rebound to put Reckitt's ahead. An end-to-end first half thus ended with the Starchmen holding a slender advantage.

After the break Cleethorpes came out strongly, and soon "Spavin measured his length in saving a piper." Town also rattled a post and then, as pressure mounted, Bell handled in the area to concede a penalty. Grant took

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DIGITAL SUPPLEMENT

Above is a clip from the story by Alan Hodgson about Reckitt's FA Cup ventures as published in Contact No.45, October 2009. On this page, left, we have the Charity Cup story from Alan's latest letter (see P7) together with quotes from Reckitt's Magazine of June 1917.

the spot-kick, and "gave Spavin no earthly chance, putting the ball in with force enough to send it through the net."

With the game finely balanced at 1-1 and time running out, a late Reckitt's attack then resulted in Thistleton, the man who almost missed the game, forcing the ball home 10 minutes from time to "a pandemonium of applause." Cleethorpes tried to level matters again but were kept at bay by some last ditch defending as the final whistle blew.

At the end of a truly sporting contest "Each club gave a cheer for the other at the close." Reckitt's AFC thus became only the second club from the Yorkshire side of the Humber to lift the trophy since its inception back in 1897.

Supporters too pleased to speak

After the match their officials were "too pleased to speak" and their supporters were "naturally much delighted". A telegram stating "Hearty congratulations to Reckitt's" was also received from local MP the Right Hon. T R Ferens.

The game was seen by around 1,500 spectators who paid £23 in total receipts. On 24 May the Reckitt's AFC members then held a 'Continental Smoking Concert'* at the firm's Social Hall in Dansom Lane, to commemorate their triumph. Mr Philip B Reckitt, JP, presented Mr Shepherd with "a handsome flower stand" to mark his years of good work with the football team, and he responded that "No club had a harder working committee, or a more loyal set of players."

Canister Works Sketch Party

Finally, "A capital entertainment which included a laughable sketch, 'The Dumb Bell Charade', by the Canister Works Sketch Party, was arranged. The artistes for this humorous sketch were Miss Lily Weatherill, Miss Jennie Partridge, Miss Elizabeth Paton, Mr R Johnson and Mr Peter Miller. Other contributors were Mrs B L Strachan, Miss Elsie Todd, Mr Harold Coates, Mr Allan Spilman and Mr Ripley Nunn. Mr H W Glover was the accompanist.

The *Hull Times* Charity Cup, a massive silver trophy, was on view during the evening. The cup, along with the medals, will be presented at a smoking concert to be arranged after the club's annual meeting."

* A 'smoking concert' in those days was usually an all-male social occasion at which men could smoke and discuss sport or politics etc, whilst watching live entertainment, without offending their good ladies!

continued on P10

THEFT from DANSOM LANE!

continued from P9

Having won the Hull Times Charity Cup by beating Cleethorpes Town 2-1 at Hull City's Anlaby Road ground on 25 April 1912, the trophy was proudly displayed in a glass case by Reckitt's AFC at the firm's Social Club in Dansom Lane.

On 28 May when the Club closed at 11pm it was locked away as usual in a cupboard there, but the following morning it was discovered that an overnight break-in had taken place. The premises had been ransacked and, along with a set of crystallate billiard balls, the cup had been stolen. Its ebony pedestal though had been left behind by the thieves.

The police were called in and quickly discovered that entry had been easily gained via the 'drain side' of the building, after climbing a modest wall and crossing a darkened yard. The worry was that perhaps young boys were responsible, and they may have thrown the trophy into "the Old Harbour or other convenient waters."

Footballer "throwing ball in" statuette

The engraved Cup itself (worth about £30) was described as being 18 inches tall, silver, and some seven inches across at the top and at the base. On the lid was a statuette of a footballer 'throwing the ball in', and it also bore an enamel Hull Coat of Arms and a small enamel representation of Queen Victoria. At the sides were two curved handles.

The crime reminded local soccer followers that back in 1895 the FA Cup itself had been stolen from a jeweller's shop window in Birmingham and never recovered. Was the Reckitt's trophy to meet a similar fate and presumably be melted down for its silver value?

Then on 5 June an anonymous postcard was received by the *Hull Times* saying that the Cup had been left in certain premises by the Market Place. A cup was indeed found there by detectives, but it was "a poor apology indeed" for the real one and obviously a hoax.

Bright red billiard ball clue

However, just five days later a breakthrough was made by two young brothers named Thomas and James Hilyard who lived in Dalton Street. They had been playing in a field near Sutton Drain when they found a bright red billiard ball which they took home. Their father alerted the police who went to investigate the scene and after 30 minutes of digging discovered 19 more billiard balls - along with three pieces of the missing Cup!

The pieces were taken to Wincolmllee Police Station where the Reckitt's AFC secretary identified them. The silver stand had been severed at the narrowest part and the body doubled together, whilst the statuette had been

cut from the lid and was never found.

It was thought the thief or thieves had buried the items intending to come back for them when the hue and cry had died down. Its recovery was conveyed at once to the Directors and word soon spread throughout Reckitt's of the good news.

Despite its battered state it was hoped to restore it to its former glory. For the rest, "The police believed it to be the work of hooligans, and it is thought that one who may have had something to do with it is already undergoing imprisonment."

We have reproduced the story from Alan Hodgson's letter in full, partly in recognition of his efforts but also because it is plainly based on newspaper reports it provides an intriguing glimpse of our works and local communities a century ago.

The newspaper coverage was so extensive and detailed that employees knew exactly what was going on and the company's own works magazine needed to add little more than, often lighthearted, commentary.

The *Reckitts' Magazine* report on the celebratory Smoking Concert, for example, said: "The Cup itself was present (guarded by detectives disguised as programme-distributors and refreshment-tray carriers); the speeches savoured strongly of the winter pastime; a presentation was made to the chairman of the club as a memento of the winning of the Cup; and a humourist gave selections during the evening's entertainment (and, of course, in *Reckitts' Magazine* the terms "football" and humour" are synonymous). In fact, the only things that prevented the evening from a football point of view were the absence of the medals (which will have to be presented on a future occasion), and a cinematograph entertainment depicting scenes in the Hull Charity Cup Final. (A hint for next year?)"

Here's how the 1912 magazine reported the theft:

The Return of the Cup.

[The Hull Charity Cup (valued at £30), which our football team won in April, was stolen from the Men's Social Club on the night of May 28th, a few days after a Concert to celebrate the winning of the Cup had been held. It was found in a battered condition in a field about a fortnight later.]

Certainly echoes of a different era. TV has replaced "cinematograph entertainment", but who now can imagine seeing home side supporters greeting a cup victory in dumbfounded silence!



The sun shone - but there was no 'All hands on deck'

We thought we might get a group picture of the Beverley get-together with the barge venue as a background, but although the sun shone it was cold outside and it was warmer drinking mugs of tea below decks. As that's the former cargo hold there's no windows as the pictures on P1 and 11 show. The blue painted barge *Sun*, behind *Syntan* in the picture (left) has a glazed superstructure and is being considered for a river cruise get-together - which will depend on day and date as a qualified Bargemaster is required.

In making a further selection of photographs from the get-togethers the new venues made it important to feature surroundings as well as faces – so here are more from The Minerva, the East Riding Theatre, Hornsea and Syntan.



WE WAS BRUNG UP PROPER !!

*And wasn't it great!!!!
says
Trevor Schofield*

“And we never had a whole Mars bar until 1993”!!!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL MY FRIENDS

WHO WERE BORN IN THE 1930's, 40's, 50's, 60's and 70's

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank Sherry while they carried us and lived in houses made of asbestos...

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese, bread and dripping, raw egg products, loads of bacon and processed meat, tuna from a can, and didn't get tested for diabetes or cervical cancer.

Then after that trauma, our baby cots were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets or shoes, not to mention, the risks we took hitchhiking.

As children, we would ride in cars with no seat belts or air bags.

We drank water from the garden hose and NOT from a bottle..

Take away food was limited to fish and chips, no pizza shops, McDonalds, KFC, Subway or Nandos.

Even though all the shops closed at 6.00pm and didn't open on a Sunday, somehow we didn't starve to death!

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died from this.

We could collect old drink bottles and cash them in at the corner store and buy Toffees, Gobstoppers and Bubble Gum.

We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter, milk from the cow, and drank soft drinks with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because...

WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day. And we were OK.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of old prams and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes.

We built tree houses and dens and played in river beds with matchbox cars.

Continued...

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo, Wii, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 999 channels on SKY, no video/dvd films, or colour TV, no mobile phones, no personal

computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.....WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no Lawsuits from these accidents.

Only girls had pierced ears!

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross Buns at Easter time....

We were given air guns and catapults for our 10th birthdays, We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just yelled for them!

Mum didn't have to go to work to help dad make ends meet because we didn't need to keep up with the Jones's!

Not everyone made the rugby/football/cricket/netball team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!! Getting into the team was based on MERIT.

Our teachers used to hit us with canes and gym shoes and throw the blackboard rubber at us if they thought we weren't concentrating ...

We can string sentences together and spell and have proper conversations because of a good, solid three R's education.

Our parents would tell us to ask a stranger to help us cross the road.

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

Our parents didn't invent stupid names for their kids like 'Kiora' and 'Blade' and 'Ridge' and 'Vanilla'

We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL !

And YOU are one of them!

CONGRATULATIONS!

We had the luck to grow up as kids.

PS -The big type is because my eyes are not too good at my age anymore.

**YOU
are one
of them**