



Olive Drage joined Wood Lane in early 1957 after working for six years as a senior analyst in the Crookes Laboratories and a brief spell with the Toni Cosmetics Division of Gillette Industries. It was a rather dramatic change from hair styling to cables products. She overcame the trauma, however, and went on to build for herself a considerable reputation as an analyst who knew a great deal about the materials used throughout the BICC Group. Her previous graduate training in science, followed by her success in the examination for the Fellowship of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, meant that she was seldom at a loss to find a scientific explanation for a chemical problem; whether it involved staining of copper or failure of a cable insulation. She examined water from Balfour Beatty bore holes in the desert, cast a critical eye over contaminated ex-gasworks land in Hereford and had her dreams interrupted by visions of 400kV stop joints for a considerable period.

In the later period of her service Olive was a Section Leader in the Chemistry Department which became Analytical Services. She kept a broad approach to her work, contributing to BSI Committees on rubber and high purity copper and particularly in the organisation of the Chilterns and Middlesex sections of the Royal Society of Chemistry. She encouraged younger scientific staff to consider membership of the RSC and sponsored members on training programmes in the factories.

Olive will be missed by her colleagues at Wood Lane and also by the factory Technical Managers who used to ask for her advice on frequent occasions. She did admit that she was occasionally caught out or lost for an immediate answer to a problem. One instance was the occasion when a colleague from the Communications Department strolled in and casually asked if she knew what effect hydrogen had on glass !

We wish her a long and happy retirement with her husband Bill and hope she has more time for her other interests, which include gardening and visiting historic sites in romantic places.

A.R. Lane.

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George Kitchen