



Hugh Howatson one of Polymer Materials Department "elder statesmen" retired at the end of December. An ever popular colleague of all members of the department he will be sorely missed.

Hugh came to Wood Lane in the 1950's having gained a BSc in Chemistry (1953) and Plastics Technology (1959) from the Northern Polytechnic. At the college he was contemporary of a number of other well-known faces at Wood Lane, including "Johnnie" Walker and Ted Morrison of Polymers and John Porter of Analytical Services. Hugh was involved in a great many different projects over the years in a department whose name changed from Rubber and Plastics, to Polymers to Polymer Materials. Hugh's versatility was referred to in Stefan Verne's speech at his retirement presentation.... in particular Stefan mentioned that Hugh had, on one occasion, made a battery charger when no suitable commercial model was available.

Hugh was a great source of help to all newcomers to the Department over many years, both in the technical and personal sense. His tales of events, personalities, projects (both successful and unsuccessful) and of Wood Lane in general were numerous, and often very entertaining.

Before embarking on a scientific career, Hugh served in the RAF as a warrant officer during the Second World War. He spent most of his time flying in bombers from bases in the Middle East. As with his stories of Wood Lane life, Hugh's accounts of service life were often amusing and instructive to many of us younger members of the department who have never experienced service life, let alone war.

Reference has already been made to Hugh's versatility in the laboratory. His skills were not confined to work, however, Hugh is a highly skilled woodworker and photographer (a combination which gives an indication of the spread of his abilities). His interest in photography was reflected in his retirement present.... a professional standard tripod and head for his camera.

The Polymer Materials Department, and indeed BREL, has lost a good man with the retirement of Hugh Howatson. I am certain all will concur in wishing him every success and happiness in his retirement.