

ICI -- Dr. M.W. Goldblatt of Imperial Chemical Industries

I have just received the articles from Stephen Berger by MWG in 1950-1958. These are very good scientific writings on industrial carcinogens, including asbestos, and they also have words of caution in the interpretation and use of so-called "maximum allowable concentrations" (also called threshold limit values, or TLVs, in the USA). These writings are in addition to MWG's excellent chapter in the book edited by ERA Merewether, Industrial Hygiene and Medicine (1956).

It appears from these papers that MWG left full-time employment at ICI in 1957 or 1958, and it remains to be learned if he was retained on a consulting or part-time basis after that. In any case, his 1958 article published in 1958 in Br. Med. Bull., is immediately followed by one by two ICI authors writing about carcinogens in the dye industry, so it's safe to say ICI read that one.

We are indebted to UK industrial hygienist Robin Howie, who tracked down someone who noted that MWG had worked at ICI and written the chapter in Merewether's book. Steve Berger was then able to scan the Index Medicus for other works by this author. R. Howie is continuing to locate names and addresses of former ICI industrial hygienists and physicians, at least one of whom retired just two years ago and is still practicing medicine in Britain.

In addition to this, I am expecting to receive additional documents this week on ICI's early efforts to avoid using asbestos in the 1960s in Britain. There were major media reports there starting in November 1965, on the results of Newhouse & Thompson's epidemiology report demonstrating mesothelioma from occupational, household, and neighborhood exposure to asbestos. Publicized dockers' strikes over handling asbestos followed in 1967 in the UK. ICI's move away from asbestos is recorded in the files of Turner & Newall, which have been thoroughly examined by business professor Geoffrey Tweedale who mailed the documents to me.

to Chris
Mauriello

from Barry Castleman

Chris
Mauriello
From Barry C.
(HPP)

ICI (Imperial Chemical Industries)

ICI's former physician employee who now does consulting is Dr. Alexander Munn. He lives at The Cottage, Crown Lane, Benson, Oxfordshire OX9 6LP, and my associate Robin Howie is going to look up his phone number for us, too.

A most interesting discovery of Robin's was obtained in his inquiries, namely that the authors of a chapter on carcinogens in a 1956 text was written by an ICI physician, MW Goldblatt and his relative Judith Goldblatt. The chapter is in a book edited by none other than ERA Merewether, medical inspector of factories and famous author of things asbestos, and the chapter is thorough in its review of the literature. Included is a 1951 case described at length from US authors Stoll, Bass, and Angrist, of an insulator who developed both asbestosis and lung cancer after "only 6 years of covering pipes with asbestos" (217). Another case from Italy is described, where a 40-year-old man was autopsied and found to have extensive asbestosis after having been an insulator for 22 years (218). The Goldblatts conclude that "we may for practical purposes regard asbestos or a derivative of asbestos as a probable co-carcinogen..." (224)

We are attempting to nail down Goldblatt's employment at ICI when this was written, and R Howie has found a reference to him in 1955 in the Br. J. Ind. Med. as a company doc with ICI. We will also check for author identification in Vol. 1 of Merewether's text (this chapter is in Vol. 3, the last), which is unavailable today but will be examined later this week.

Inquiries are also being made about occupational health and safety officials at ICI, living or dead, from the 1960s.