

Dr Ernest James Newman BSc EurChem CChem FRSC DMS

(4 September 1932 - 20 June 2013)



E J (Ernie) Newman was born in Essex, not far from West Ham football ground. Hence he supported West Ham all his life! His first job was as a laboratory assistant, in the course of which he studied part-time for the London BSc Special Degree in Chemistry at the South-East Essex Technical College. During this time, he worked first at Allied Bakeries Research Laboratories Ltd and then at Hopkin and Williams Ltd. Ironically, he only narrowly missed being taught by Professor J D R Thomas who, years later, was his immediate predecessor as President of the Analytical Division of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Following National Service (which led to a life-long interest in matters military), he returned to Hopkin and Williams and was soon put in charge of a new laboratory where he met and made an obvious impression on a young lady named Veronica, to whom he was subsequently married for almost fifty five years. Additionally, he lectured at the local technical college and the Sir John Cass College in the City of London where he also studied part-time for his PhD under another Past-President of the Division, Professor David Wilson. Leaving Hopkin and Williams, he continued his academic career as an Analytical Research Fellow in the Applied Geochemistry Research Group in Imperial College, London. This post led to worldwide travel.

Ernie occupied a number of other posts both before and after his Research Fellowship. While with Hopkin and Williams, he was a Section Leader, Deputy Chief Analyst and Chief Chemist. Later, he joined Daniel C Griffith and Co Ltd (assayers, consulting analysts and samplers) as Chief Chemist. Another return to academic pursuits saw him occupying the post of Head of Chemistry at the Forest Lodge School, Havering, for a couple of years.

In 1975, Ernie joined Merck Ltd (then BDH Ltd) in Poole, Dorset, as Deputy Chief Analyst. In 1977 he was promoted to Chief Analyst, in 1983 Quality Assurance Manager and Chief Analyst and finally, in 1989, Research and Development Manager for Analytical Chemistry and Reagents. In 1991, he joined a Quality Management

Consultancy Partnership, Elgar and Associates, as a Partner, later known as Newman Bucknell Associates, specialising in laboratory management and quality systems implementation for NAMAS, and also for BS 5750/ISO 9000, which he had introduced in BDH between 1988 and 1990.

Throughout his career, Ernie maintained a passionate interest in all aspects of his subject and his enthusiasm came to the fore both in his formal teaching and general training activities. Indeed, he was frequently in demand as a lecturer in analytical chemistry, not only at home but also in places such as Tokyo, Hong Kong, Prague, Budapest and Strasbourg etc. and he published numerous academic papers. His commitment to life-long learning was constantly evident and he was never one to pass up an opportunity to learn something new, even when there didn't appear to be enough hours in the day. An example of this being fitting in studying for a DMS - another qualification added to the already impressive list!

Ernie's long association with the Royal Society of Chemistry and, in particular, the Analytical Division (and predecessor organisations), included membership of numerous committees, including chairing the Analytical Methods Committee. He was also actively involved in Group and Region activities and always ready to volunteer his services if it was felt he could be of use. His earlier associations with the RSC included being one of the youngest people to be awarded the Fellowship of the (then) Royal Institute of Chemistry, later the Royal Society of Chemistry. His most notable recognition by the RSC and the pinnacle of his career was his election as President of the Analytical Division in 1992. The highlight of his two year Presidency was the conference in Edinburgh, during which he enhanced another of his life-long interests - malt whisky!

Apart from his RSC activities, Ernie served on BSI Board OC16 (the Board Committee for Quality Policy), the Chemical and Health Council, the Precision of Test Methods Technical Committee and the Reagents Technical Committee (together with membership of the ISO Reagents Committee). He was also a member of the reagents groups of experts of the British and European Pharmacopoeias. He was also awarded the RSC 1991 Award for Industrial Analysis.

Ernie continued to enjoy working well into his seventies and when his health finally prevented him from continuing, he became a tutor on the Expert Patient Programme locally, helping people manage long term illness. He showed a great deal of patience and perseverance working with people and encouraging them. In his later years he also became involved with the University of the Third Age, including studying Philosophy, which he greatly enjoyed.

Thus Ernie pursued teaching and learning all his life and in doing so maintained an impressive depth and range of knowledge (cryptic crosswords no problem!). Moreover, although the final few years of illness took their toll, he was very patient and never complained, with a ready smile that was with him to the end.

Many people will be saddened by the passing of this highly respected man, including those to whom he was a great teacher and mentor. Nevertheless, those same people will rejoice at having known him.

Ernie will be greatly missed by his wife Veronica, daughter Claire, son-in-law Chris, granddaughters Amy, Abigail and Anna, son John and fiancée Tracy, as well as by his many friends.

Dennis Bucknell CChem FRSC, retired, friend and colleague

Acknowledgements and thanks:

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'Tribute to Ernie', read by Chris and Amy at the Service of Thanksgiving, 3 July 2013

Note from Professor J D R Thomas, past-President, Analytical Division, 1990-92