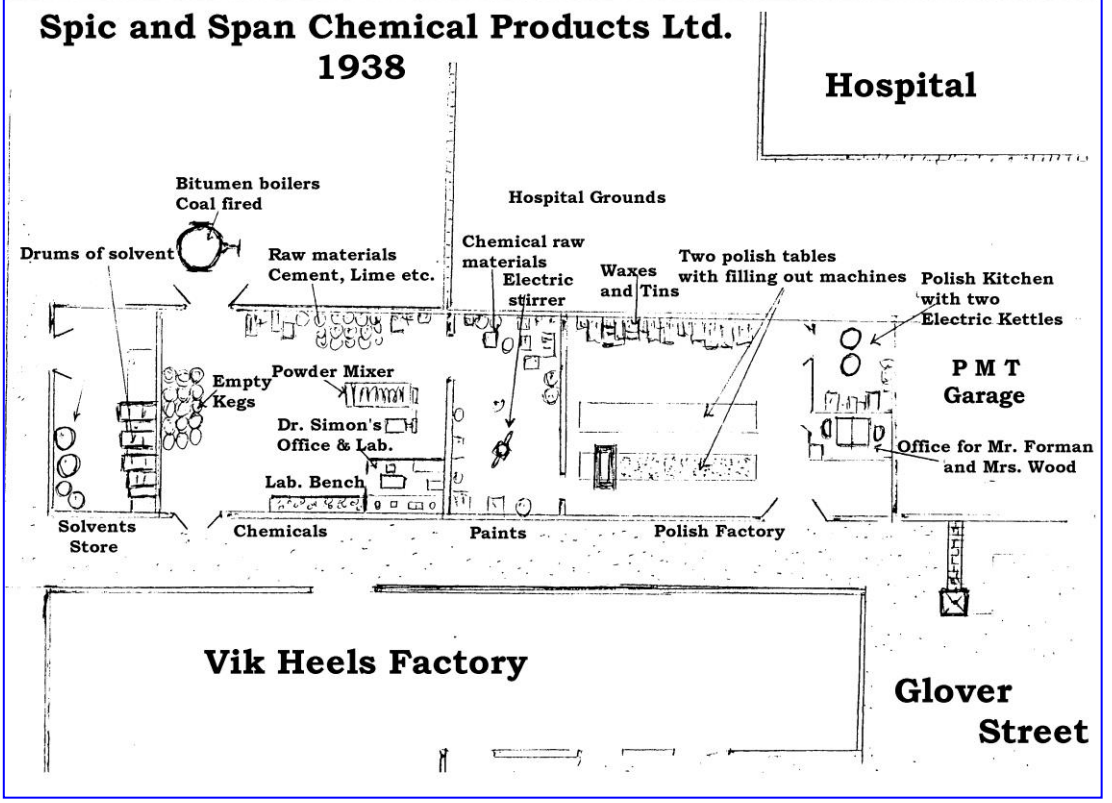
Cyril Lawton

(Chemist, Evode)

16 February 1938 ------ 28 February 1986

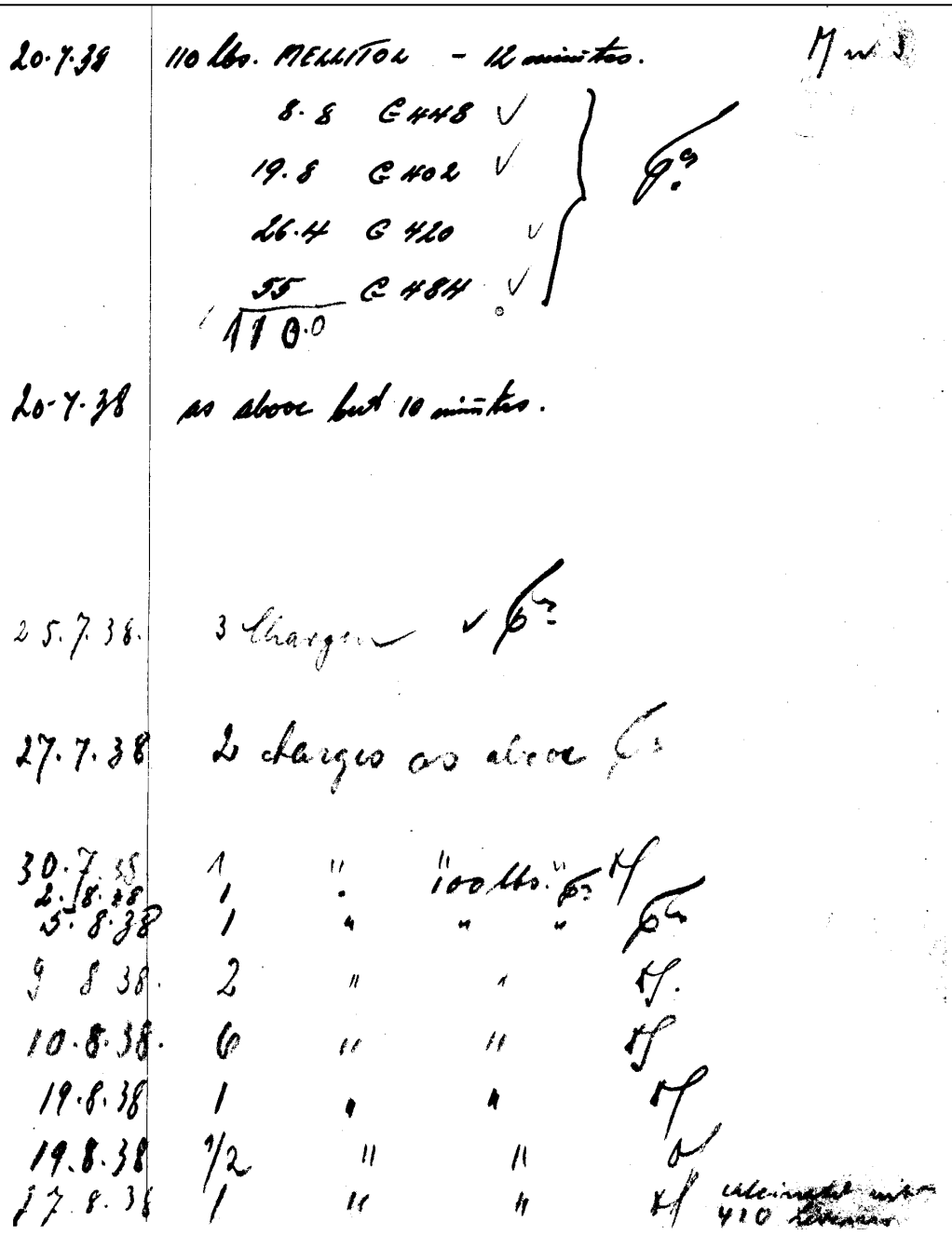
On a rainy morning in February 1938 1 walked down Glover Street to attend my interview with Dr. Simon for employment with SPIC and SPAN SHOE POLISHES Ltd.



I remember vividly the dilapidated appearance of the factory with the sagging roof and broken windows. I stepped through the double doors into the factory and saw for the first time polish being filled out into hundreds of tins on a long table and I shall always remember the smell of the warm Turpentine and polish. I then met Mr. Forman and was later introduced to Dr. Simon whose English was very limited and most of the discussion was therefore with Mr. Forman. When later I told my parents that I had been offered a job at SPIC and SPAN Shoe Polishes their reaction was typical of many people in Stafford - "never heard of them!' -. I reported to Dr. Simon a week later and as I recall, the factory was laid out as above right.

During the first few months most of my time was spent with Dr. Simon working in the Laboratory'. His office/Laboratory contained a desk, a bookcase, which he had brought over from Germany, and a wooden bench. A gas supply had been provided and this was connected to a 'Bunsen Burner' and a gas ring. The other laboratory equipment consisted of a set of weighing scales (second hand from a local chemist), a few Woolworths saucepans and test tubes, beakers, thermometers etc. The most valuable item of equipment was a set of German Hydrometers (which he had also brought with him) and no one but himself used these until he was sure they were in 'safe hands". The procedure he followed was to write his formulations in a laboratory note book using code numbers for each raw material. A typical example is shown **{see page 5}** for 110 lbs of 'Dove' Mellitol and G448 was Portland Cement, G402 was Lime and G420 and G484 were different grades of Diatomaceous Earths. As soon as any raw materials were received at the factory Dr. Simon or Mr. Forman would rush out and obliterate with paint the chemical name and substitute the G Number (code number). Dr. Simon was very insistent that his formulations were kept secret and that Mr. Forman and I always referred to the raw material code numbers. This was not always easy, especially if you were manufacturing something with G400 in it. Then you went to the cold water tap and took what you wanted! When we later took on factory workers it became nearly impossible much to Dr. Simon's great annoyance to get them to refer to G448 and not Portland Cement was difficult.

Mellitol formulation taken from Dr. Simon's notebook



Never the less, as I was Dr. Simon's assistant and manufacturing his coded formulations, my own formulations were also written in code and I can still remember quite a few - G55 was White Spirits, G86 was Xylene, G388 was Chlorinated Rubber etc.

Even when I returned from the Air Force in 1947, and for some years afterwards, I continued to use Dr. Simon's raw materials code and it was only when Mr. E. Peak arrived that we reverted to the chemical names of raw materials. In 1938 my work was mainly concerned with producing Dr. Simon's formulations using raw materials which we could still obtain from Germany. However, it became increasingly difficult to obtain these and with the possibility of there being hostilities with Germany we urgently started to examine alternative English raw materials. Many experimental formulations were produced and Dr. Simon was a hard but fair taskmaster. He was a perfectionist and his aim was always to produce the highest quality which the very young Cyril Lawton sometimes failed to appreciate'. So, he rightfully received an admonishment from the Doctor. There were no such things as electric stirrers and all samples were mixed for 5 minutes by hand (and this meant 5 minutes - not 4!).

I think I started work at 7.45am, and often worked until 7.00pm or later, manufacturing Dr. Simon's formulations as well as producing samples for customers. With Dr. Simon now travelling more and more to see customers, we started to receive trial orders for paints and chemicals and within a short space of time a second hand 'Gardener' Powder Mixer and a 200 gallon Road Tar Boiler had arrived in the factory. These were followed by a High Speed Electric Stirrer for the manufacture of paints and other products. I recall, that one of my additional tasks was to get the fire lit under the Road Tar Boiler as soon as I arrived in the morning.

Mr. Forman and Dr. Simon had loaded the boiler the previous afternoon with Bitumen and if Cyril Lawton had remembered to light it when he came in, the temperature should have been up to 200^{O}C by mid morning. The fire was then put out and by 2.00pm the bitumen had-cooled to 150^{O}C and we would stir in the 'White Spirits (sorry G55) and this would have produced 200 gallons of 'Dove' Black 505. On one occasion I forgot to light the boiler and decided I would accelerate the heating process with a gallon of white spirits and rags soaked in polish. When Dr. Simon arrived, a mushroom

cloud of black smoke was rising from the back of the factory and after rushing to find out what it was all about found, that his brand new bitumen boiler was completely hidden by flames and a very shocked and blackened Cyril was frantically trying to put the fire out with a bucket of water. I do not recall now what the Doctor said to me over this incident, but I can guess. As we progressed through 1939 the range of products were increasing and a man had now been employed to produce the "Mellitol" and "Portite". Until our first workman arrived it was Dr. Simon and Mr. Forman who produced everything in the factory. They wore white coats with towels wrapped round their heads working away over the powder mixer in a choking cloud of cement and lime dust making "Mellitol" **{see page 5}**. With the outbreak of war the formulations which Dr. Simon had developed for fire proofing wood, paints that could be used to aid blackouts, began to create interest and generate orders. Many of these products were now being made under my supervision (we had now employed another workman) and I was also now producing samples of all our products. The fireproofing paints and solutions were ideal for demonstrating how effective they were and we used to dip bundles of cheap linen - handkerchiefs? in the clear impregnating solution, which when dried out, would not burn. My own party piece was to hand out boxes of matches which I had treated and these would refuse to ignite! Dr. Simon decided that his new house in St. Johns Road should have the loft fire proofed and I was nominated to carry this out. which I did using a stirrup pump to spray on the solution. Unfortunately I was somewhat over enthusiastic and the impregnation solution started to come through the ceiling much to the annoyance of Mrs. Simon. Next morning the Dr. had a few choice remarks to make concerning my workmanship. The year 1940 brought many changes to the company which I have detailed in the 1932 to 1963 history. My own life underwent a dramatic change. In February 1943 1 joined the Royal Air Force. After a period of training I was posted to 18 Squadron to fly in Douglas Bostons as an air gunner. After 52 bomber operations over Italy and France I was sent to Egypt and became a Warrant Officer Instructor until the end of the war. Even before the end of hostilities, the armed forces had organised an education scheme to provide university degree courses for those overseas servicemen who were

able to attend at nominated large cities. Fortunately I was stationed in Alexandria which became a teaching centre and I was able to sit a chemistry degree course until I was released from the Air Force. I returned to Evode in March 1947 and as there was no organised laboratory, Dr. Simon made this my first priority. He also arranged for me to continue my chemistry degree course on a day release scheme and later I attended a Paint and Varnish Technologists course in Birmingham.

In 1953 1 became a Senior Paints Chemist and in 1966 was appointed Technical Manager of the Paints Division. Over this period of time I developed a number of new products for the Paints Division and was instrumental in acquiring a Patent for a composition known as 'Bitugel'.

PATENT SPECIFICATION

NO DRAWINGS

Inventors: CYRIL VICTOR LAWTON and ERIC ATHUR DULIGAL

850,393

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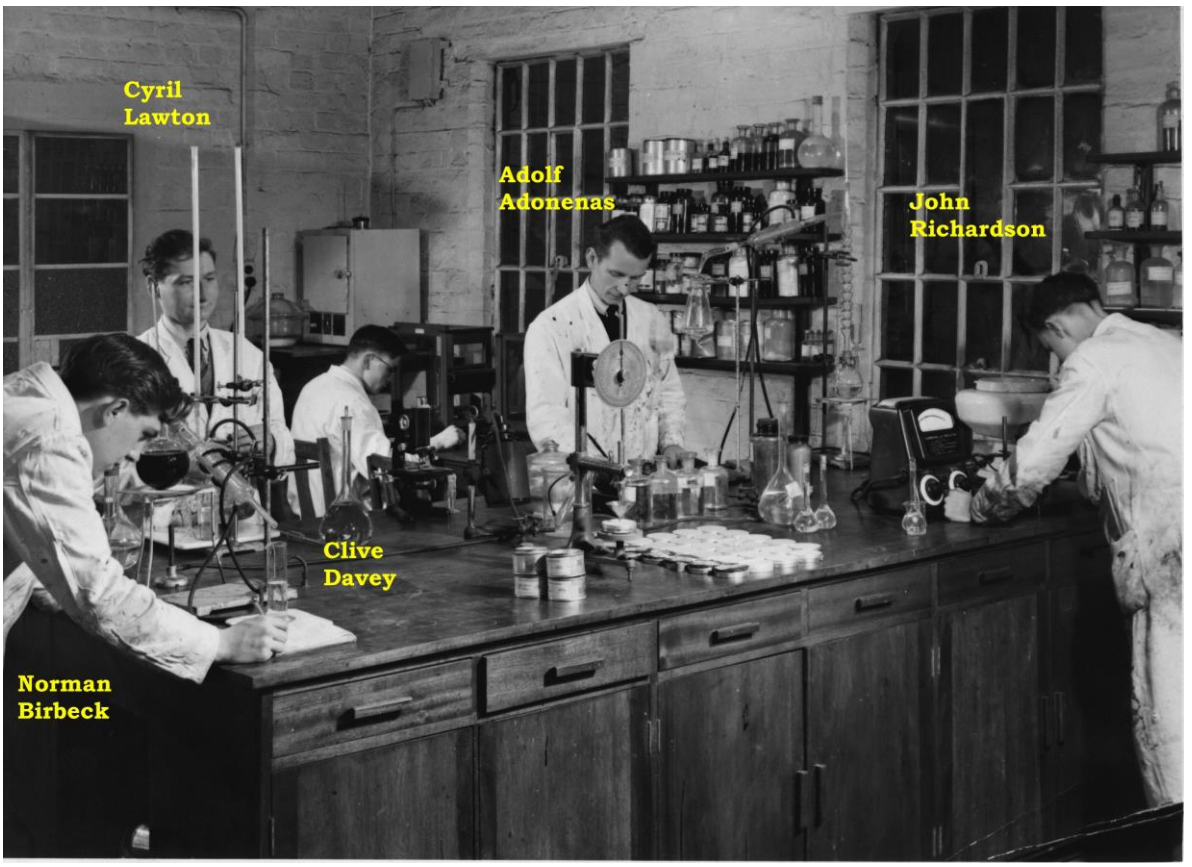
International Classification: —**C09d.**

Following the take over of Allweather Paints in 1968 1 was then transferred to the Building Chemicals Laboratory to work on Roof Water-proofing Systems.

During 1972 the Oil & Colour Chemists Association awarded me an Associate ship of the "Association in the Technology of Surface Coatings". This award was in recognition of the work I had carried out in producing two products which had been patented and also the numerous technical papers that had been published in my name as a Chemist in the Paints Division. In 1975 1 transferred to the Sealants Laboratory and became a Senior Development Chemist being responsible for developing many sealants, such as the Acrylics, Double Glazing and Oil based products etc. which are still being manufactured today (1990).



Evode Laboratories
Glover Street, 1954

During the last few years at Evode I was responsible for a considerable amount of reformulation work on the Furniglas Range of Varnishes and I developed a number of new products which were introduced into the 'Woodcare' range. In particular "Allweather" Varnish which was one of the first new 'breathable' varnishes to be marketed and is still currently being manufactured. I retired in 1986 at the age of 62 having spent all my working life in the challenging field of developing new products.

It has been a rewarding career and in my retirement I am completing my last project for the company which is the History of Evode Ltd which I have called "The First Thirty Years".