

Bob's remembering again!

My dad worked at Carbide in South Charleston for most of his career - beginning in Research, continuing through Vinylite X, Dynel and finally in Pollution Control. Sandwiched in between was a roughly three year assignment starting in 1959 in Fawley, England, near Southampton, where UCC was just starting to build a unit which would produce ethylene glycol (we call it Prestone) out of ethylene transferred from the huge Esso refinery next door.

Our family moved to England, where my sister attended the equivalent of high school. I continued college in the States (politely called the Colonies, I came to know...) and lived with the family in the summers. (That Esso refinery was Bob Jr's first "real" employment - doing electrical relay coordination and a small bit of fractional distillation initial testing for a new chemical processing unit.)

One day the town council visited the plant then under construction and told Dad that the road leading to the plant needed a name, so they could properly include it in emergency logs, etc. Dad suggested "Charleston Road," and was surprised that the council accepted it eagerly. Later he thought they must have thought he meant something to do with Prince Charles... Charleston Newspapers' Sol Padlibsky featured the story one day under the headline "Charleston Road, Chaps."

The name stuck, and signs were duly erected. The road and the name are there today (2020).

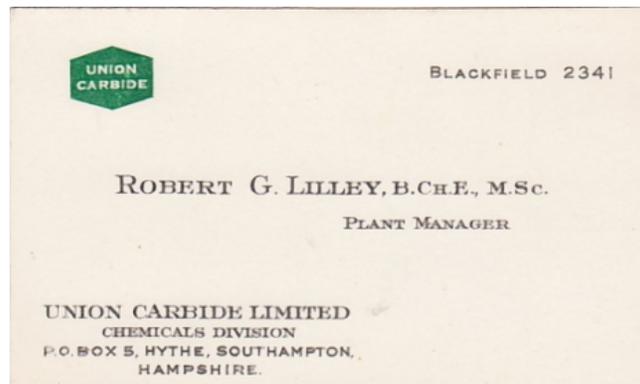


The plant construction progressed; following are pictures Dad took of the "UCC Fawley Works". All seemed to be going well until the actual start-up, when it was discovered that the large compressors required for some part of the process were a bit noisy. Okay, *quite* a bit noisy -- for anyone within a "country mile" as one fellow described it one day during lunch at a local pub. (I forget whether I owned up to being related to "UCC people" at the time...)

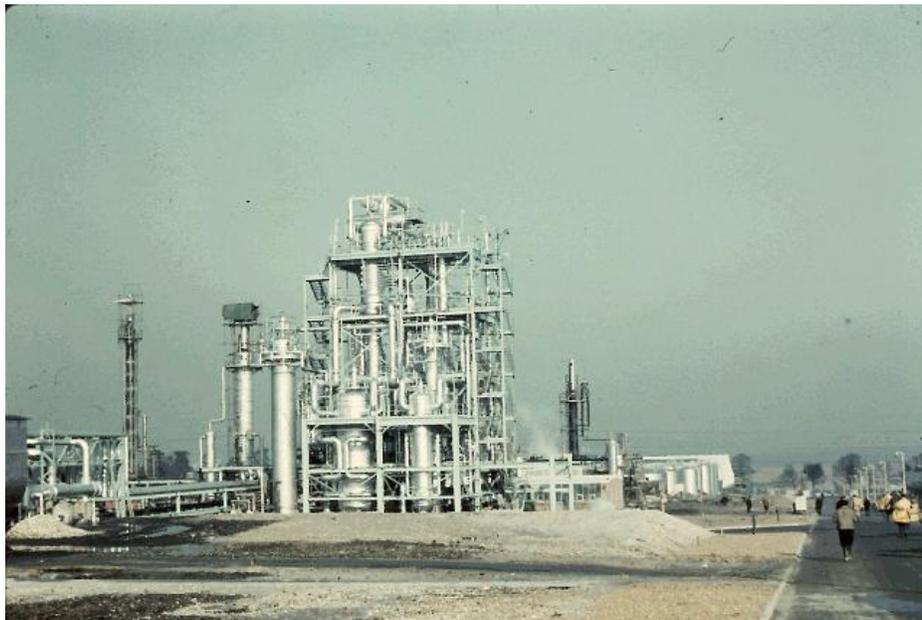
My family returned to the South Charleston and UCC. Ellen and I visited England several times on combined business and pleasure, and I was delighted to find that, some thirty years later, the entire chemical complex at Fawley-Hythe-Southampton had been named the "Charleston Works"!

Now, that's a bit of a legacy! In visits to England, I came to believe that if a name persists that long, it will likely last a thousand years!

Thanks, Carbide - my Dad was able to make a good life for his family with UCC support.



Three views of the Fawley Works in about 1960





I inherited this picture, shows the finished the UCC Fawley Works in 1960-ish. It is an excellent technology photo, almost a portrait. The Southampton Water is in the background, where oil barges offload raw materials right into the continuous refining process at the Esso site, off to the right. This equipment is still visible (probably modified now) on Google Maps.



Finally, here's a street-level view from Charleston Road today (2020), thanks to Google Maps. This was the office building Dad had built for the plant. It appears to have been cared for, and that feels good.



Yep, that's Dad in 1962 at the front door!