

Barry Dodd Memorial Service
20 July 2018
GSM Tribute

On behalf of the GSM Group, as Barry's oldest friend, I have been asked to give a short history of the company.

Back in 1974, Barry with a partner founded a company to make aluminium name plates and labels. Initial thoughts were to manufacture for the arts industry thus the naming of the company Gallery Saint Marks or as better known now, GSM.

The company's first premises were problematic. Located on the second floor above a shop their machinery sent plaster falling from the ceiling below which prompted the move to the Thirsk site, still the home of GSM Graphic Arts today.

Barry's partner retired in 1988 allowing him to take full control of the company. Much of the foundation for success of GSM stems from early 90s when Barry took on Andrew Hall as General Manager at Thirsk – Andrew becoming the anchor and mentor he needed to start to build the company into what it is today.

The Thirsk factory swiftly developed further. The acquisition of Thews in Gateshead, adding to the rapid expansion of GSM Graphic Arts.

Since 1993 onwards more companies have been added. Primographic of Brecon which was later to be merged with another purchase, British Industrial Graphics, to become GSM Automotive. In 1996 Barry acquired the metalwork fabrication facility of Farnell Electronics Industries to create GSM Valtech Industries.

Alongside these developments the companies which are now forming GSM Barcoding were brought into the Group.

It was not all business. Surprises came his way.

In 1999 for the GSM Graphic Arts 25th anniversary, the staff were asked how they would like to celebrate. A day at Thirsk races was agreed which they organised. Barry told his mother in the USA about what was happening in one of his regular phone calls. The conversation went along the lines of “ I would like to come – oh don't bother its only a works do”. Unbeknown to Barry his mother plotted with Frances to attend. On the day Barry was asked to go to the company marquee to check arrangements only to have one of the biggest and most pleasant surprises being met by his mother. A great weekend followed.

Throughout his life Barry always showed concern for staff welfare, both in and outside of the workplace. He listened to them, always showed concern for the individual, encouraging the staff to share their ideas and to value their contributions to the company. These best practice management and pastoral skills were a significant factor in developing the people who run GSM.

While the financial investment came from Barry, he empowered his staff often saying “It's your train set to play with, keep it on the tracks and going forward”.

Some train set he and the staff have developed. Now with locations throughout the world - the Global Service and Manufacturing company, GSM.

George Wilder