

A strong advocate for the wool industry

Harald Menkens



Former ASWGA President Kevin Dunn presenting Harald Menkens with his Honorary Life Membership Certificate

Harald was born in Bremen, Germany in 1939 and after completing his education in 1957 joined Johann Lange Sohn's Wwe & Co. in Bremen. This company was the oldest established Trading House in Bremen being founded in 1648 importing Wool, Tobacco, Tea, Coffee and Honey.

The company had close connections with Australia through Lempriere's and Michael Lempriere was a Volontaire in the company in the 1950's. The owner of the Company was one of the founder families of BWK in Bremen-Blumenthal. Together with Henry Grunzke (later President of IWTO) he worked in this company until 1961 when they moved to the wool company J. Volkmann & Co.

They sent him as a volontaire to BWK for 3 months to study wool sorting. Then in 1963 and 1964 he went to South Africa and Australia as a Trainee working with Prouvost Lefebvre in South Africa and with Sir James McGregor and Westwools after which he continued on to New Zealand with the firm Francis Willey.

After returning to Bremen in October 1964 he was in charge of selling Tops to clients in South Germany where many spinning plants were situated. To cover all clients he would be away for 3 weeks, sadly there are only 3 spinners still operating in Germany.

In June 1966 Volkmann & Co. were taken over by Lohmann & Co. with their own offices in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and with family ties and in partnership with Lahusen in Argentina and Uruguay.

In 1972 he became a Director of Lohmann & Co. in charge of Top sales. This covered the whole of Europe and required extensive traveling in both Eastern, Western Europe as well as overseas.

Then in 1985 Lohmann & Co. was acquired by the Standard Tobacco Company as their first venture into the wool industry forming the Standard Group. He became the Managing Director for Lohmann & Co. Bremen with a turnover of the equivalent of 100 million Euros. In 1994 the company changed its name to Standard Wool Deutschland GmbH, Bremen. The business expanded with the purchase of other global Wool Companies and in 1996 he became the Managing Director of Standard Wool France and a Board Member of the combing plant Peignage de la Tossee, which had a capacity of 11,000 tons of Top and Noils annually.

From then on becoming responsible for the European Top Making division for both Standard Wool Deutschland and France as well as the Scoured Department of Standard Deutschland, a substantial business within the Group.

In 2004 Standard Commercial made the decision to cease its wool business and Harald became the Liquidator of both companies in France and Germany.

During a career lifetime of 48 years in the global wool business he has seen many companies come and go. He has given outstanding service to the advancement of the wool industry being an enthusiast for wool as a fibre of first choice and has been a very strong supporter of ASWGA over many years looking after our interests in Germany firstly with the prestigious spinner and weaver Joseph Otten and more recently with the renowned German spinner Stoehr.

For the past 13 years he has served as President of the Deutsche Vereinigung des Wollhandels (Wool Federation) and also for 10 years served as Vice President and Director of the German

Wool Research Institute DWI in Aachen. The Institute is associated with the University of Aachen. He is involved with the “Textile Kette”, which is a club of Combers, Spinners, Weavers, Knitters and Retailers in Germany planning strategies for the development and advancement of the German Wool Business.

Harald continues to be a strong advocate for the wool industry believing that all sectors in the chain from grower to retail must work closer and more cooperatively together to promote the excellence of wool to consumers. He has been a loyal friend of ASWGA for many years providing assistance and advice and is highly respected by all those superfine growers who have had the pleasure of working with him in furthering our superfine wool industry.

July 2009
