

Obituary for Dr. Rob Berry (1971 - 2020)



It is with great sadness that we report the death of our much loved and respected colleague and friend Dr Rob Berry after suffering a long battle with cancer. He will be remembered by the bulk materials handling industry for his great expertise in powder flowability and by his friends and colleagues for his kindness, patience and humour.

Rob worked as a Consultant and Researcher at the University of Greenwich, in the Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling Technology, since graduating from the Wolfson Centre as a Doctor of Philosophy in 2001. His studies centred around his passion of Powder Flowability and he was involved in numerous cutting edge research projects which culminated in his taking a leading role in three milestone research projects undertaken at the Centre:

2003–06: Development of the Brookfield Powder Flowability Tester (PFT) now in use by over 400 companies around the world.

2010–13: Development of the Virtual Powder Blending Laboratory Toolkit, used by manufacturers of powder formulations to ensure their products flow efficiently without hold up or stoppage.

2017 – current: Virtual Formulation Laboratory for Prediction and Optimisation of the Manufacturability of Advanced Solids Based Formulations, which will extend the capability of powder formulators to make sure new formulations process efficiently through blending, handling and tableting.

During his time at the Wolfson Centre Rob successfully supervised 15 PhD students through to graduation, presented at hundreds of conferences and seminars world-wide, taught on the series of Wolfson Centre short courses and within the University Engineering programmes. He won an array of awards for his work, most notably the IMechE prize for Innovation in Bulk Materials Handling, in 2012.

He also made major contributions to large numbers of plant development projects. His work was embodied in the Drax Ecostore £200m project for coal-to-biomass conversion, and he made a major contribution to the Lynemouth coal-to biomass conversion as well as a myriad of less visible projects.

Rob first came to our attention when as an undergraduate project student in our labs, he managed to initiate a pipeline blow-out covering the whole facility in plastic pellets! From this inauspicious start, we saw Rob grow over 3 decades with us, to be a dominant member of our profession. His

legacy of technological advancement will live on long after his passing, in many plant design and troubleshooting projects that are yet to be conceived, and also in the skills of his ex-PhD students now working in the field.

In his private life, his passion for vintage cars and making working models took up his time, when he wasn't spending it with his wife and children.

Rob was a much loved, as well as highly respected, member of the Wolfson 'family' and will be greatly missed by us all.

Prepared by Prof. Mike Bradley,
The Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling Technology,
The University of Greenwich.