

# HISTELEC NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH WESTERN ELECTRICITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Web Site : [www.swehs.co.uk](http://www.swehs.co.uk)

No. 2

JUNE 1996

## NEW CHAIRMAN

At the AGM in March, John Haynes took over as Chairman and gives the following message:- "Following my election as your Chairman, I am fully aware that I follow in illustrious footsteps. Our Society would not exist but for the foresight of Peter Lamb, who has been saving documents, books and artefacts from destruction over a period of 20 years or more. This was in the era of "if its old, its junk". The rescued items were stored at SWEB's Feeder Road Depot in various buildings until a few years ago, when Peter was the prime-mover in forming the Society. He managed to obtain possession of the Cairns Road Store, Redland, Bristol and his enthusiasm has rubbed off on the rest of us.

Now the Society is "up and running", I feel it will be relatively easy to keep it moving forward. I am pleased that Peter will be still very much involved as our Secretary. To him and our supporting team of committee members, I record my grateful thanks.

*John Haynes*

## NEW OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

### MAIN COMMITTEE

*CHAIRMAN* : John Haynes

*V-CHAIRMAN*: David Hutton

*SECRETARY*: Peter Lamb

*TREASURER* : Clive Goodman

*MEMBERS* : Chris Buck  
John Redgrove,  
Mike Williams

### SOUTH SUB-COMMITTEE

*CHAIRMAN* : Barrie Phillips

*MEMBERS* : Roger Christy,  
Ted Luscombe,  
Mike Wreford

## RULES APPROVED AT AGM

At last we have an approved set of Rules, we hope to be letting you have a copy very soon.

## MUSEUM COLLECTION

We are fast running out of space at Cairns Road, Redland and are hoping to gain additional accommodation at some time. The smart labelling of the appliances is now complete, we have to label the technical artefacts. Some job! Members still meet there on the first Thursday of every month from 10.00am to 12.30pm. Anyone is welcome, including the subsequent visit to the nearby Cambridge Arms for lunch. Come even if it's only for a social get-together.



Here is a view of the Museum at Cairns Road, Redland, Bristol taken by Peter Bulley. This is a first for us in scanning in a photograph, hope you like the idea. Similarly the advert on page 3.

## **ATLANTA EXHIBITION**

Copies of twelve historical photographs from the Archive have been sent to Atlanta, Georgia, USA for an exhibition. Peter Lamb was approached by an American Glen Kundert, working in Public Relations both in London and at Aztec West. He appeared quite impressed with the old photographs. Our photographs were copied by a photographic friend of Peter's.

## **OLD FILMS UNEARTHED**

Following the exposure of our archives on BBC2 Timewatch programme "The Quiet Revolution" in October 1995, we have been approached by the South West Film & Television Archive based at Plymouth to store our films with them for safe keeping. They are supported by the Television Stations in the South West. At the time of the approach, we did not have any films in our possession. We have since acquired a total of sixteen old 16mm films from both Head Office and Sowton. One such film, "Power Comes to Widecombe", will be shown at our October meeting. We do intend to deposit our films with the Film Archive and they will give us video copies in return. Also we have recently acquired a 16mm projector.

## **COLDHARBOUR MILL VISIT**

Twenty-five members sorted out warps from wefts and slivers from slubbers at a fascinating visit to Coldharbour Mill on Sunday 5th May. The visit started with a good lunch at the Old Cottage Inn before driving the short distance to Uffculme to visit the working wool museum.

The Mill was established in 1797 on the banks of the River Culm by Thomas Fox and used the river as a source of power. As the Mill developed, two 25 hp beam engines were installed to supplement the water power, one in 1865 and one in 1890. In 1910 a new powerful steam engine replaced the existing steam plant and worked with the water-wheel until the mill closed in 1981. The Mill was then taken over by a Trust and after 6 months restoration work the Mill was opened to the public as a working wool museum. The visit started with a tour the restored steam engines, various workshops and a Retort House, where gas was made to supply the local village. The Science Museum in London have given the Mill a Beam Engine to restore and install in the engine house.

The conducted tour of the interior of the Mill was most interesting with every stage of the production of wool cloth being explained to everyone's satisfaction. The wool is stretched and twisted over four stages, extending its length by 3,920 times! The operation of each machine was demonstrated and we all realised how little we knew about the production of such a basic commodity as cloth.

Finally, the weaving of the cloth was demonstrated. Did you know that there is a Devon Tartan? Operating the various machines was a dangerous job, as broken threads would be repaired without stopping the machines to save time. Guards around machines were hardly heard of in those days. However, the Fox's were considered to be good employers as they would not take on children, who were under 8 years of age!

The tour concluded with a visit to the New World Tapestry. To date 10 of the 24 panels (lift by 4ft) have been completed, which tells the story of the colonisation of North America. When finished the tapestry will be the largest in the world. The afternoon concluded with a cream tea in the Mill restaurant. If you couldn't make it, then the Mill is well worth a visit. Now, do the wefts go across or along, do slivers come before slubbers — ?

**David Hutton.**

## **MEMBERS NEWS**

George Eveleigh of Bristol. He is 94 and started his working life with BCED. You may recall that he has been interviewed with a tape recorder by John Redgrave and John Ashton in order to record anecdotes from the past. They have transposed his words into print in what can only be described as a booklet of 7,000 words. There will be more about this in the next issue. Can you suggest other older people, who we ought to interview about their fascinating past?

Charles Orton SWEB's first Chief Accountant is a member. It would be good to hear his tales from the past?

Charles Isherwood has joined and will be at the November meeting at Bristol.

**TELL US WHAT YOU ARE DOING  
AND WE WILL PRINT IT!**

## HEAD OFFICE LIBRARY

The Head Office library is being disbanded and we have secured many interesting books for our Archive Library.

One little booklet found is a "potted" history of the Supply Industry written in 1948 by the then newly formed British Electricity Authority. We will publish some excerpts in the future.

## WAR-TIME ADVERT FOUND

During John Haynes researches for his talk on the Cornwall Electric Power Company, the advert below came to light. It was placed in the West Briton on 13<sup>th</sup> November 1941.

**HITLER HATES YOU HAVING BREAKFAST IN THE KITCHEN**

Why? Because he knows that if you do, you needn't have the electric fire on in the dining-room. And if you don't have that fire on you're saving precious Electricity that can go to the factories to make some more nails for his coffin. Why not have breakfast in the kitchen and use only one fire. It saves heat, it saves work, it is nice and comfy and your food is piping hot. Other ways to save: Only boil enough water in kettle for immediate need. Don't wash under hot running tap. Be sparing with bath water. Come to the Kitchen Front Club meetings for more economy hints.

Issued by  
**S.W.S. ELECTRICITY**  
SHROPSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY. Central Office: MUCKLOW HILL, HALESOWEN  
In support of the National Fuel Economy Campaign

The caption reads "HITLER HATES YOU HAVING BREAKFAST IN THE KITCHEN"

The purpose of the advert was to encourage electricity saving by using only one room in the house i.e. the kitchen.

## CURRENT RETIREMENTS

With so many people retiring, so we read in the SWEBLife, there should be many members with friends in such a situation, who may be interested in joining in our many activities. Do not forget, we are the only group covering the whole length and breadth of SWEB territory.

If you have a friend and/or colleague retiring, please encourage them to join. Give them one of our publicity leaflets or ask us to send them one.

## SIX MONTHS PROGRAMME

1996

**SAT. 6<sup>th</sup> JULY (2.00pm)**

**SCIENCE MUSEUM, WROUGHTON**

Joint with Retired. Prof. Engineers' Club  
Meet at Sally Pussey Pub at 12.00 before near Motorway M4 junction no. 16

**SAT. 7<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER (2.00pm)**

**DEVONPORT DOCKYARD MUSEUM**

Visit The Old South Yard, Museum and Frigate Complex. Meet at The Lounge Pub 12.00 before

**SAT. 26<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER (2.00pm) EXETER**

**SOWTON MEETING 2.00pm** Talk "The First Supplies in the South West" by Peter Lamb then film "Power Comes to Widecombe" Beforehand in pub

**TUES. 26<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER (7.30pm)**

**BRISTOL FEEDER ROAD MEETING**

"Comedy Films" by John Dike from the old Group Engineer's Dinners in 1960's. This will be big nostalgia evening. All past participants are invited.

**SAT. 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY '97 (12.15pm)**

**ANNUAL WINTER LUNCHEON** at the White Hart, Exeter (guest speaker Jim Moir, SWEB PRO) preceded by a conducted tour of Exeter Cathedral.

## NEXT EDITION

It is the intention to produce this newsletter every two or three months, depending upon material available. Please send information or letters to Peter Lamb at 35 Station Road, Backwell, Bristol BS19 3NH or telephone him on 01275 463160