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HISTELEC News

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH WESTERN ELECTRICITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Web Site : www.swehs.co.uk

No. 40

DECEMBER 2008

ANOTHER YEAR OVER - PHEW!

I do hope that someone managed to find some sunshine this year. I went on two holidays in mainland Europe and it rained for both, so I do feel deprived.

SWEHS NEXT HOLIDAY

Plans are afoot to organise the next weekend away in 2010, following the success of the time we spent at Portsmouth in April this year. The Committee have decided that we will be going to the Midlands with visits to both Warwick Castle and the Black Country Museum, including a trip in a Canal Barge. Optional tours will include the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and Severn Valley Railway. The date has been decided to be weekend 16th-19th April 2010. Details will be sent out in the New Year.

EGM & FILM FESTIVAL

On the 22nd November a short EGM was held within the Film Festival at Taunton. This was to achieve a slight restructuring of the Society by removing the South Sub-Committee and enlarging the Main Committee. The Film Festival was a great success, if you didn't make it and want see what you missed - see review by Roger Neck.

POWER CUTS RECEDE

It would appear that the present financial crisis has brought an unexpected bonus. Sad to say, many large factories in the UK are either closing or reducing production output to the benefit of the Country's power needs during the coming Winter period. Black-outs were expected but, with a new normal peak demand forecast of 500MW lower than previous forecasts, there is less likely to be any problems.

However still the barrage continues from Europe's power companies that the Government isn't doing enough to encourage them to build new stations, particularly with the present lack of credit availability. EON have put on hold the building of the coal-fired power station at Kingsnorth, the first since Drax in 1974, and wind farms and carbon capture & storage schemes have also been put on hold dashing the Governments renewable targets.

Even with this doom and gloom, the Government publish another report by Lord Turner head of the Committee on Climate Change with still more targets, but still there is no action on building new power stations!!

GREEN ENERGY

The Times reported from a Populus Survey in August that 85% of "green" consumers believe that the energy suppliers are profiteering. Since it said that there are only 350,000 customers in Britain on green energy tariffs anyway, it does appear that it is not very popular. Marks & Spencers have recently put up notices in the shops of their intention to obtain all the power from green sources within 5 years. Yeo Valley Dairies have also made similar public statements. These green consumers pay more for their electricity, but what guarantee have they that they are getting value for money?

CARBON CAPTURE

The first power station using carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology has opened in Germany at Spremberg. The process is designed to separate carbon dioxide from other chemicals and bury it deep in disused gas fields. It captures 10 tonnes of CO₂ each hour for storage in an old gas field. This could herald a new surge of interest in coal.

EXETER'S ELECTRICITY

Dick Passmore has completed his small book on the Haven Road Generating Station at Exeter. It is called "Power To The City - The History of the Exeter Electric Light & Power Station" and runs to 128 pages. It includes as an introduction the early electricity demonstrations and Henry Massingham's involvement in establishing the first public supply there. It certainly is a good and interesting read and SWEHS gets considerable mention, since we have given Dick lots of assistance, not only when he visited the Archive, but afterwards in the proof stage.

The book costs £7.50 + £1.00 pp and is available from him - Dick Passmore at Little Silver Cottage, Little Silver Lane, Exeter EX2 8XZ Tel : 01392 832405.

MICROCHIP 50

Wow, it is in our lifetime! On 12th September 1958 Jack Kilby demonstrated at Texas Instruments how a circuit could be miniaturised by housing all its components on a piece of germanium semi-conductor allowing all these parts to work together without manual connections. This small device, an integrated circuit or microchip, measuring 11.5 millimetres revolutionised the electronics industry.

CERN COLLIDER

Everyone must have read about this mammoth machine, but how many of us really understand it and consider it worth the fantastic costs involved? The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world's largest particle accelerator and is situated beneath the foothills of the Jura Mountains at CERN – the European Organisation for Nuclear Research - near Geneva. It is situated in a network of tunnels as long as the Circle Line in London 17 miles in circumference and involves 10,000 scientists and engineers from 85 countries. The project was started in 1994 with 20 countries as members of CERN, who have contributed the vast sum of £3.5billion.

The machine is described as “an atom smasher”, which drives streams of protons in opposite directions in the tunnels at enormous speeds near the speed of light to collide to create the conditions in the Universe of the so-called Big-Bang. Many of well-known scientists from Newton, Maxwell through to Einstein have pondered on the theories involved culminating in Professor Peter Higgs of Edinburgh University, whose name has been given to the elusive particle known as the Higgs Boson. You may have gathered that it is all about pushing back the boundaries of science.

Since the initial “blast-off” in September has been a total failure, what benefits are likely to be derived from this project? It is said that there are many scientific spin-offs, the World Wide Web being one of them, which was invented at CERN, so watch this space for further reports on this vast project.

END OF AVO PRODUCTION

Model 8 AVO meter, marketed at £600, ceased production in June 2008, which is sad. If you were an electrical engineer working in the UK in the decades from the 1950s to 1980s, there was one thing you coveted more than anything else – your own Model 8 AVO meter. You would have had to order it from Megger, however, as AVO International changed its name to Megger in 2003, because the Megger brand is much better known outside the UK than the name AVO. The instruments were made at the factory in Dover since 1962.

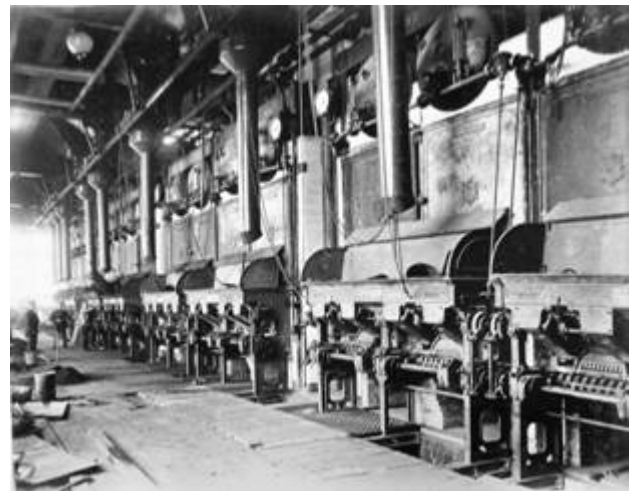
The end of production of the AVO Model 8 is certainly an end of an era with old technology making way for something more modern and more reliable. That, of course, is digital technology. Many will miss the swinging pointer. Megger have found an answer to this in the digital successors to the AVO meter. They have included a digitally generated arc display which closely matches that of an analogue pointer. There is obviously much to gain, not least higher sensitivity, more functions, ease of reading and, of course, much better value for money. As in so many areas of technology, there is no argument - digital is better all-round.

The original AVO meter was undoubtedly the world's first professional multimeter! A Post Office engineer Donald Macadie took his ideas to the Automatic Coil Winder and Electrical Equipment Company, where it was translated into reality. The first AVO – so named because it could measure Amps, Volts and Ohms – was put on

sale in 1923. The AVO meter went through many developments. In 1933 the Universal model was introduced that added AC measurements, and in 1936 the Model 7 was introduced with its exceptional 1,000 ohm per volt DC sensitivity. The Model 7 included both a fuse and an overload trip. The Model 8 was launched in 1952 and was designed to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding electronics industry offering a sensitivity of 20,000 ohms per volt on DC ranges. It was exceptionally successful producing million multi-meters in 1966. In October 1972 saw the launch of the AVO Model 8 Mk V, which outwardly was very similar to the early versions, but internally was a completely different instrument. It had a new centre-pole movement that was designed to be robust. The really big change, however, was the replacement of the previously hand-wired components with printed circuit boards. *Info submitted John Perkin*

BRISTOL TRAMWAYS

With the web site having a goodly portion devoted to Electric Trams, we have been disappointed over the years by the dearth of photographic material of the power station plant. Peter Davey, who is a popular speaker on the topic, has plenty of photographs of Bristol Trams, their Depots and lineage throughout the streets of Bristol and of course the external picture of the Counterslip Power Station (the second station, the first being at Beaconsfield Road, St. George), but nothing of the generating plant etc.



Bristol Tramways Power Station Boiler Room 1900

So one day in late October, two intrepid researchers, Marcus Palmen and Peter Lamb, went forth in search of something positive. They first visited the Bristol University Reserve Collection of Books in a large warehouse at Brislington. They spent 1 ½ hours looking through the journals of The Electricians and Electrical Reviews from 1900 for five years (the Power Station was commissioned in December 1900), and never found any write-up or pictures, which was very frustrating. However an afternoon visit to Bristol Record Office revealed a large photograph album of the “Progress of Building Works”. Fortunately the “progress” went as far as the completion including superb internal photos of the plant and boiler room. Marcus was allowed to take-away 25 photographs captured with his digital camera by kind permission of the BRO. Two are shown here.



Bristol Tramways Power Station Dynamos 1900

CONCORDE VISIT

The 'flight' was fully booked for our trip on Concorde GBOAF on 24th September. We were presented with our boarding passes but, en route to the aircraft, we were first given a short tour of the Filton site and a brief history of aircraft production there.

The first aircraft to be produced at Filton was made in a Tramway Shed by the British and Colonial Aircraft Company (later to become the Bristol Aeroplane Company) in 1910. This company was founded by Sir George White, who owned Bristol Tramways. Its first successful aircraft was the Bristol Boxkite, a replica of which can be seen in Bristol Museum. Many other well known aircraft were produced on the site including Bristol Bulldog, Blenheim and Beaufighter. Post WW2, the company produced the Brabazon and Britannia amongst numerous other products before its collaboration with Aérospatiale to design and build Concorde. Apart from aircraft, of course, aero-engines were also made at Filton by Bristol Engine Company (later to become Bristol Siddeley and then be bought by Rolls Royce).

However, the purpose of the visit was to see Concorde, alias Speedbird Alpha Foxtrot. The first impression on entering the cabin is how restricted the space is. The seating for 100 passengers was all one class and arranged in rows of four seats, two on each side of a centre aisle. The headroom in the centre is just 6 feet and much less by the windows, despite fairly restricted overhead lockers. The leather covered seats were very comfortable. The lack of what are now usually accepted facilities such as in flight entertainment and reclining seats was made up for by a high standard of customer service with excellent food and wine included in the ticket price. The meals were served on Wedgwood crockery with silver cutlery. Anyway, with a flight time from London to New York of only about 3½ hours, and free champagne as an anaesthetic, the space restriction would not have been too much of a problem. Even so, for some of the super rich clientele, the problem would be easily overcome by booking 2 seats to ensure space and privacy!

We were able to visit the flight deck and see the array of controls and instruments surrounding the pilot and co-pilot. Although clearly 'state of the art' when she was in service, they do have a distinctly dated appearance now. Unusually, Concorde also had a flight engineer on board who sat at right angles to the direction of travel behind the pilots' seats. As might be expected, he was faced with an equally daunting array of dials and switches. One of the flight engineer's main tasks was to adjust the trim of the aircraft in flight by redistributing the fuel between tanks. This was necessary because the centre of pressure shifts as the aircraft goes supersonic and would cause it to be unstable without any adjustment.

There are numerous fascinating effects involved in supersonic travel, one of which is the increase in length of the aircraft due to heating caused by friction from the air. The increase in length was as much as 1 foot and, because of this, the carpets in the gangway were secured only at one end. To demonstrate the effect of expansion, on its last supersonic flight, the flight engineer put his cap in between the main cabin bulkhead and his control panel, present when flying at mach 2. It was left there on landing and is there today, firmly wedged in place.

Outside, the aircraft is equally impressive. Compared with a modern 'jumbo jet', of course, it is quite small but is extremely elegant. The thin delta wings and narrow fuselage give its characteristic dart shape. The delta wing design resulted in a need for a 'nose up' attitude for takeoff and landing and necessitated the development of the droop nose to improve the pilots' visibility when undertaking these manoeuvres.

The 4 Olympus engines powering the aircraft were originally designed to power the Vulcan bomber but were specially adapted for use in Concorde. The maximum speed attainable had to be limited so as to keep the maximum in flight temperature of the fuselage to about 157 °C, otherwise it would have been necessary to use special alloys in the hull construction. The list of innovations and invention necessary to bring the Concorde project to fruition is truly impressive. There isn't space here to deal with any real technical detail but, for anyone interested, a quick search of the web will produce a wealth of information.

Concorde has a special place in the affections of most, especially those of us who have lived in the Bristol area during the time she was designed, built and tested. She is an example of how a design developed for good engineering reasons can produce something which might equally well have been similarly designed simply for aesthetic reasons. She was never an economic success, and, although one could wish that she was still in service, the reality is that she is now well and truly part of history. I hope the money will be found to preserve her properly undercover at Filton for future generations to admire.

Many thanks to David Hutton for making the arrangements for this excellent visit – if you weren't able to join us this time, it's well worth keeping an eye open for a future opportunity. *David Peacock*

FARADAY TALK REVIEW

On Saturday 25th October some 26 members and their guests met at Cairns Road, after lunch at the Eastfield Inn, to hear a talk by Dr Peter Ford on the "Life of Michael Faraday".

The Speaker, Dr Peter Ford, used to teach physics at the University of Witwatersrand and in more recent years taught in the Physics Department of the University of Bath, from which he retired in 2007. He does a lot of outreach work with schools encouraging students to take an interest in science. His 'Liquid Nitrogen Show' is well known in the region. In the last three years he has been involved with the schools' education programme for the Royal Institution in London. He was awarded an MBE for 'services to higher education and science' in the 2008 Queen's New Year Honours List.

Dr Ford began his talk with a brief history of the Royal Institution of which Michael Faraday became a prominent member and continued with the following summary of Michael Faraday's life.

Michael Faraday was born in 1791 the third of four children; his father was a blacksmith who suffered poor health and died while Faraday was a teenager, leaving his mother to raise the family. Little is known of his early years; he was a member of the Sandemanian Church, an offshoot of Protestantism, which was a great influence.

After a very basic education Faraday was apprenticed to a bookbinder giving him access to a large number of books which helped to stimulate his mind. He became interested in science and joined a group of young men who formed the City Philosophical Society. A customer of his employer gave him tickets to Sir Humphrey Davy's lectures at the Royal Institution and Faraday came to the notice of Sir Humphrey Davy.

Faraday's apprenticeship ended in October 1812 which coincided with an accident in which Sir Humphrey Davy was temporarily blinded by an explosion. This led to him employing Faraday as his temporary assistant and, following a disciplinary problem with another member of the Royal Institution's staff, Faraday was made his personal assistant. In 1821 Faraday was appointed superintendent of the laboratory and in the same year he married Sarah Barnard who was a member of the Sandemanian sect and their marriage was successful and happy. Faraday was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1824 and became the first holder of the Fullerian Professorship of Chemistry at the Royal Institution in 1833.

Faraday worked with Sir Humphrey Davy on many aspects of chemistry and physics including the liquefaction of gases and he succeeded in liquefying several common gases including sulphur dioxide, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen chloride, carbon dioxide and several others. Dr Ford performed several eye-catching experiments showing the properties of gases and liquids including their huge difference in volume.

Although Faraday made many advances in chemistry and physics it is his work on electromagnetic induction for which he is best remembered. He followed up the discovery by Oersted that an electric current passing through a wire could deflect a compass needle nearby and proved that magnetism and electricity could produce motion. He reasoned that, as in his opinion nature was symmetrical, magnetism and motion should produce electricity and eventually he proved his point. In the process he discovered the principle of the transformer and the dynamo, the basics of the electricity supply industry. Although he had discovered a cheap way to produce electricity he was too busy with other research to pursue it and it was left to others to develop it.

Dr Ford showed some experiments on electromagnetic induction and followed this with a demonstration of the effects of temperature on electrical equipment. This included a demonstration that a battery cooled to the temperature of liquid nitrogen ceased to operate whilst metals would conduct much better under the same conditions. This was demonstrated by an electromagnet which could throw a copper ring a couple of feet with the ring at room temperature but with the ring cooled by liquid nitrogen the distance increased to six feet.

Dr Ford noted in conclusion that because of his religious convictions Michael Faraday refused any honours and on his death in 1867 was buried at Highgate Cemetery in London with a simple ceremony.

A question and answer session followed. Peter Lamb gave the vote of thanks to Dr Ford for a fascinating talk delivered in the style of Michael Faraday. Thanks to Chris and Anne Buck who provided the coffee and biscuits.

John Gale

NEW JAPANESE POWER SOURCE?

The Japanese have an energy problem and exhausted fish stocks, so Kyushu University have come up with a bright idea, which they call off-shore "eco-rigs", which are floating platforms capable of harnessing both the wind and the sun and generating 300 megawatt hours of power. Each platform would compose of two hexagonal concrete rafts with 24 wind turbines mounted on each and joined together by a huge net spread between them. The net would support 200,000 voltaic cells feeding colossal banks of underwater LED's designed to attract seaweed, which absorbs carbon dioxide and feeds fish and plankton.

LUDLOW PLANT

A £30M experimental plant has been built by Greenfinch in Ludlow to generate electricity. It is an anaerobic digester designed to turn left-over food into electricity. The idea is to turn food waste into fertiliser and biogas, which is then burnt to produce electricity. If the Government sponsored scheme is successful, each town would have one of these. Unlike the previous versions of these they do not need farm slurry to provide moisture for the process and therefore there is no foul smells associated with it and may be more acceptable by the public at large (a big topic in the Archers recently).

ELECTRICITY HISTORY FILM FESTIVAL

A group of thirty members and guests gathered in eager anticipation of what was to come, at WPD Training Centre, Taunton on Saturday 22nd November, to spend a day enjoying nostalgic memories of the 'SWEB' we all knew and loved. We certainly were not disappointed!

From the early black and white 'flickering' pictures of 'The Devon County Show' in 1948 through to the 'glorious technicolor' of the 1990 privatisation updates 'All Together Now'. By the end of the day we knew the difference between a cooker 'solid' & radiant hotplate and what saucepans to purchase for use on a brand new fangled Electric Cooker!

We were treated to the fascination of 'Faraday's Dream' & the 'Story of Ferranti'. Add to all this 'The SWEB Helicopter Project 1964', 'The Electrification of The Scillies 1986 & 1989', 'The Case for Nuclear Power', 'The Cross Channel Link' and many others and you really had a full and varied programme to appreciate.

However the 'icing on the cake' which everyone enjoyed was just a taster from John Dike's vast film library, which included such titles as 'Open Plan', a wonderful trip back to the early Avonbank Office days, when I have to say the shot of Geoff Hooper sneaking up the outside staircase due to his late arrival in the morning brought back memories of when I had to resort to that method of entry on the 'odd occasion' when I was slightly late in the mornings! We also were treated to John's unique brand of humour with 'The Great Supply Failure' and 'The Power Game'.

The film of the first shareholders AGM held at Torquay, after privatisation, showing Roy Spriggs at the rostrum demanding that SWEB should always remain in British ownership also caused some wry smiles around the room and the case for nuclear power in 1980 when we were warned that we could 'run out' of energy supplies in 20 years, if action was not taken, certainly struck some 'familiar chords' in the room!

As usual, with such a gathering, it was great to reminisce and spend time together over the excellent lunch at 'The Merry Monk', so well organised as usual, by Peter Lamb. We must thank Marcus Palmen for his superb efforts in putting the show together, which although taking four hours to watch on the day, must have taken so much more time in researching and producing the final article.

Thanks also to those, who over the years, have worked so hard collecting and cataloguing all the various donations of Cine film, Videos & DVD's to have them finally produced in DVD format. Add to all this the fact that we also held an E.G.M. to bring in the rule changes on the make up of the committee, it was a very productive day!

Finally I am delighted to report to the members that our Secretary has at last forgiven Roger Clouter for not visiting the Electricity Museum in Madeira when we were all there a few years back, this was evidenced by Roger Clouter requesting and being given an application form to join our esteemed Society!

Thanks to everyone involved for a wonderful day.

Roger Neck

HMS BIRNBECK

Member David Knock from Weston-super-Mare is writing a book about the wartime activities associated with Birnbeck Pier, an island adjacent to the Royal Pier Hotel, where we had our last Annual Luncheon. His book is to be called "H.M.S. BIRNBECK - an island at war".

This account is not intended to be a definitive work on the Armed Services activities on Birnbeck Pier during W.W.2. This has already been well documented in the book "The Secret War, 1939 - 1945" by Gerald Pawle. This excellent and entertaining book, which gives a blow-by-blow account of the trials and tribulations of the development of various weapons and equipment by the Department of Miscellaneous Weapons Development (D.M.W.D.), more commonly known as the Department of Wheezes and Dodges, gives the reader a superb overview of all this department's operations.

His story is more about the contributions and back-up provided by a local engineering company, namely Messrs Crowe and Green, heating and general engineers. Owner Mr. Dick Crowe ran this company, which was located on the corner of Alfred Street and Baker Street. He and his employees maintained a small fleet of vessels connected with H.M.S. Birnbeck, and also assisted with some of the larger engineering projects connected with development of various weapons and associated works. The work was carried out under arduous and sometimes dangerous conditions, with no doubt constant pressure to meet deadlines. Among the many devices developed by the "Wheezes and Dodges" were the following two.

The Great Panjandrum: This was a large cage roller propelled by rockets fixed to the rim (rather like a giant Catherine Wheel), it was fitted with chains and was intended to run up a beach exploding any mines and clearing any obstacles. It was not very satisfactory due to the difficulty in keeping it on a straight course.

The Hedgehog - this was a Spigot Mortar which was designed to throw a pattern of small bombs ahead of a ship. These would then sink, hopefully damaging the submarine which the ship was pursuing. It was a great success in that it enabled the ship to fire its missiles while still in sonar contact with the submarine and therefore gave the submarine captain little time to take evasive action. The hedgehog was adopted by the Royal Navy.

That they achieved most of their goals is a lasting, and proud tribute to them all. It shows that the local people of Weston made a valuable contribution to the war effort, and also the part played by Birnbeck Pier. We wish David well with his endeavour.

NEED A HEARING AID?

On a tour of a power plant by engineers, a deaf engineer didn't hear the question, which was "What is the unit of power equal to one joule per second called?" The deaf man shouted out "What?" and the guide answered "Correct, sir".

NORTH CYPRUS HOLIDAY

Kyrenia and Bellapais Monastery

During a holiday in Cyprus this year, Paul and Margaret Hulbert went on a coach trip to North Cyprus.

We drove to one of the checkpoints in Nicosia. It took about 30 minutes to go through the Greek Cypriot post, the UN border zone and the Turkish Cypriot control checks. Strictly no photos - we didn't want to cause an international incident! Once we were clear we headed to the northern city of Kyrenia. We caught sight of the abandoned Nicosia airport in the UN zone. Our guide pointed out some of the abandoned buildings with bullet marks from 1974. The countryside was punctuated by blocks of flats built for refugees or settlers from Anatolia, Turkey. The population has changed - many of the original Turkish Cypriots left the island, and the mainland settlers came bringing a different, more conservative culture.

Kyrenia is a bustling city with an impressive castle, but as it was so hot we went down to the harbour. The harbour nestles below the Besparmak Mountains (Pentadactylos in Greek - both meaning "Five Fingers") and is a lively place with bars, restaurants, shops and various boat trips. We were pestered by restaurateurs. We told one of them that we only had an hour to look around, so another piped up "Only an hour? You could have a drink, that will only take 5 minutes!"

Some of the main shopping street was modern, but most was quaint - in a UK 1950's time warp. The car parks revealed some typical Turkish touches with both taxis and dolmuses - shared taxis using cars with 3 rows of seats. The local bus service appeared to be mini buses. Whilst we were there it was obviously time for prayers as the muezzin's call was resounding out over a PA system.

We then were driven the few miles to the pretty village of Bellapais (Beylerbeyi) the setting of Lawrence Durrell's book "Bitter Lemons of Cyprus" where we had lunch in the "Tree of Idleness" restaurant (the phrase is taken from the book, and the tree itself is just outside). After we visited the ruins of the 14th century Bellapais Abbey, one of the few Gothic buildings in Cyprus. This stunningly beautiful abbey is on the edge of a cliff and has wonderful views out to Kyrenia and the coast.

To take a holiday in North Cyprus, one has to fly to Turkey then on to Ercan airport. There are no direct flights due to the division of the Island. Since 2003 people have been allowed unrestricted access from the south to the north, but you have to present your passport and fill in a detailed form. However car hire companies don't let you take their cars into North Cyprus.

In Nicosia itself there are a couple of pedestrian crossings, the latest one to be opened in a blaze of publicity is Ledra Street. When we were in Cyprus about 7 years ago we visited Nicosia and looked over into the "other side" from a wooden viewing platform which was guarded by a bored young Cypriot soldier who was quite happy to have his photo taken with visitors. It was quite

surreal looking across at old shops abandoned in the border zone.

It was interesting to compare this to the Berlin Wall. When Paul went through the Wall in the early 70s it was altogether more serious - machine guns and the Death Strip minefield. But Cyprus is just as effectively cut in half. Whether Cyprus will ever be re-unified is still being debated, but negotiations are in progress.

The depth of the division is emphasised by the choice of flags. Admittedly we were there during the anniversary of the Turkish invasion, but in the south Cyprus's own flag is a rare sight - the Greek flag is the norm. The longer the division exists, the worse the communication problems become. Only the people who were children before 1974 speak each other's languages - although educated separately, the kids still played with each other and learned each other's languages in the street.

In contrast ordinary Germans were always convinced that theirs was one country. There was no language barrier, and there was the will for reunification. The question is whether the people of Cyprus really want to join up again, or whether they will be content with the present awkward arrangements. *Paul and Margaret Hulbert*

BATH POWER STATION

In our December 2007 issue, we showed a picture of the demolition of Dorchester premises, which of course had included the old power station. Recently we have acquired an interesting perspective of Bath Power Station in its heyday taken from across the then Old Bridge, i.e. before it was renamed Churchill Bridge.



NEW SMALL TURBINE

A new wind turbine (QR5) designed in South Wales which looks more like a weather vane with three curved bars mounted on a spindle has caught the eye of German utility, RWE. They have agreed to invest £6M in the production of these turbines suitable for small businesses. The Welsh firm is called Quiet Revolution, which has developed this turbine, which it is said is suitable for an urban environment and capable of supplying about 3 or four houses. The QR5 is unlike other propeller shaped turbines with three vertical blades in the shape of triple helix. The intention is make a few hundred next year and then grow to a thousand a year.

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

In 1975 the 'A' station was closed for generation after 42 years. Action was taken to preserve the building as part of our national heritage. The 'A' Station, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, including a beautiful Art Deco control room with its Italian marble turbine hall, polished parquet flooring and wrought iron staircases, finally convinced the Secretary of State to award the building a listed Grade II status, ensuring that it could not be demolished or changed without Government consent.

At long last a suitable developer has been found and it is Treasury Holdings UK with the M. D. being Rob Tincknell, son of our member, Bill Tincknell. Through their associate company, Real Estate Opportunities (REO) they intend to pursue a £4billion development of the 38acre site. A new building alongside consisting of a 300 metre chimney with apartments inside and an Eco-Dome. All in all it should house 7,000 people with considerable commercial and retail redevelopment on the ground floor. The REO are keen that the development should be completely sustainable with a zero carbon footprint. A new biofuel energy plant will be housed in the basement with exhaust water vapour using the old power station chimneys.

The redevelopment will take eight years and we have been offered a conducted tour of the station and site.

PASSING OUT

Member Bill Harris has passed away and unfortunately we were unaware of it. He was a keen member and even though he lived at Penarth, he regularly attended our meetings. He was a qualified consulting engineer and had been called in to advise after the Lynmouth Flood Disaster in 1952, for which he wrote a number of papers. He was always very keen on the development of the renewable power industry, particularly water power of course and regularly submitted reports to our newsletter following his attendance at various conferences. His reports and keenness will be sadly missed.

MEMBERS NEWS

Peter Collard - has had a triple heart bypass operation in November and is making good progress after so much hassle in hospital waiting for the operation.

Bill Tincknell – has had a slight heart attack and is repairing slowly.

Harry Cardy – failed to reach Cairns Road in October due to putting diesel fuel in his car. Fortunately he realised his mistake in time and was able to get the AA to tow his car to a garage without ruining the engine – phew!

Marcus Palmen – has had a bad bout of gout – in both legs. It may have been caused by overindulgence on holiday. However he is much better now.

Basil Stockbridge – What do you say to guy who turns up for lunch after Cairns Road meeting without any money? Of course you buy his lunch for him!!

John Haynes - sang with the Cheddar Male Choir at the Albert Hall in October.

Alan Kitley – In response to a request for member's news, Alan sent a weather report from Singapore – "Thunder & Lighting in afternoon being also warm and sunny"!! He was on his way to Australia. We are global!

WORRIED ABOUT SPELLING?

Well try this :-

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod auclalty uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The indircible and phnmaoneal pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aocrcdnig to a rscarheech sudty at Cmabirgde Uinervtisy, it deson't mtttaer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm.

Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh? Yaeh and I awlyas thought slpeling was so ipmorantt.

Submitted by Balsi Stcokbrdige

(This reminds me to thank John Gale for always checking the newsletters – he may have a problem here).

CREDIT CRUNCH IN JAPAN?

Following the problems in the sub-prime lending market in America and the run on Northern Rock in the UK, uncertainty has now hit Japan :-

1. Origami Bank has folded.
2. Sumo Bank has gone belly up.
3. Bonsai Bank announced plans to cut some of its branches.
4. Karaoke Bank is up for sale and is likely go for a song.
5. Shares in Kamikaze Bank were suspended after they nose-dived.
6. Five hundred staff at the Karate Bank got the chop.
7. Something fishy is going on at Sushi Bank and it is feared that staff may get a raw deal.

Submitted by John Haynes

FOR YOUR DIARIES – a Reminder

Sat.24th Jan. 2009 ANNUAL LUNCHEON

Will be held at the Gipsy Hill Hotel, Exeter. Speaker will be John Draisey, Devon County Archivist.

Sat. 21st Mar. AGM AT TAUNTON + "The Story of the Eddystone Lighthouse" Talk by David Hole

at WPD Training Centre at 2.00pm. Lunch beforehand at 12.00pm at the Merry Monk Inn.

Thur. 14th May NOTE : Change of Date to weekday VISIT TO POWDERHAM CASTLE near Exeter

Meet for coffee at circa 10.30am. Tour of Castle at 11.30am for 1 ½ hr. Lunch in the Orangery Restaurant at 1.15pm. Further individual visits after lunch.

Thur. 18th Jun VISIT LACOCK VILLAGE AND ABBEY – including Fox Talbot Museum

Arrive at Lacock at 11.00am to explore the village followed by lunch at the George Inn at 12.15pm. Meeting at visitor centre at 2.00pm to visit Abbey and Museum. Afternoon tea at the Stables Tea Rooms.

NEXT EDITION

This newsletter is produced every four months. Please send information, articles, photographs or letters to :- Peter Lamb 35 Station Rd, Backwell, Bristol BS48 3NH or telephone on 01275 463160 or e-mail him on lambpandv@btinternet.com