The Quest for COMFORT

1997 The opening pages of the CIBSE Centenary book

From cover: Illuminated Painting: Solid Comforts (Flemish), c1513. A blazing fire, the gleam of candlelight and the thought of dinner - part of Man's quest for comfort. Medieval Pageant, B Holme, 1987, p76.
The Quest for Comfort

A selective pictorial history of the early days of building services to mark the Centenary of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers 1897-1997
The Quest for COMFORT

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British Institution, Heating and Ventilating Engineers.

The quarterly meeting of the Institution of Heating and Ventilating Engineers was held Tuesday, October 17, at the Holborn Restaurant, London.

The first event of the convention was a meeting of the Council which took place at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. At 4 o'clock the members met in general session.

Various topics were discussed, and the following resolutions were proposed in that a good many of the members of the Council were in attendance.

Mr. W. R. Maguire, member of the Council, in the last of the meeting, made a strong appeal for the acceptance of the resolutions. He pointed out that the resolutions were made after careful consideration, and that they would be of great benefit to the Institution.

Mr. Mason, member of the Council, seconded the motion, and spoke in favor of the resolutions. He said that the Institution had done much work in the past, and that it was time that the members should take a more active part in its work.

Mr. Potterton, member of the Council, also spoke in favor of the resolutions, and said that they would do much good.

Mr. Mayhew, member of the Council, said that the Institution had been in existence for over thirty years, and that it was time that it should do more work.

The resolutions were adopted by acclamation.

The first paper read was by Mr. W. R. Maguire, T.D., of Dublin, Ireland, who made some interesting remarks on ventilation, and described the steam injection low pressure low water heating and ventilation system.

Mr. Potterton said that the Institution should do more work in the future, and that they should take a more active part in the work of the Institution.

The meeting adjourned at 10 o'clock, after a most enjoyable and instructive evening.

Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers

The responsibilities of the Institution are of two kinds. There is the duty to ensure the development of the industry in readiness for anticipated future needs; and there is the duty of any professional body to speak on matters of public concern.

Of Ships and Ships and Sealing Wax, N F Billington (HIVE Presidential Address), 1970.

CIBSE was formed by the grant of a Royal Charter (1970). This enabled the Institution of Heating and Ventilating Engineers (founded 1897) to amalgamate with the Illuminating Engineering Society (founded 1903) to create an Institution which embraces the whole of building engineering services.

The objectives of CIBSE, set out in its Charter, are the promotion of the art, science and practice of building services engineering for the benefit of all and the advancement of education and research in building services engineering.

8. The First HIVE Summer Meeting, Shearbridge, 1899. President Walter Jones. CIBSE Archives.
Early Beginnings

Edmund William Mayner is regarded as “Father of the Institution of Heating & Ventilating Engineers”. He was probably the first member and the first practising heating engineer to join. In 1896, J. Kemsley, Secretary of the Institute of Sanitary Engineers, proposed that a society be formed to foster the heating and ventilating trades. Mayner was at that time a Member of Council of the Institute and appears to have been largely responsible for setting up the IHVE. He never occupied the Presidential Chair, preferring to hold the post of Chairman of an Executive Committee. It is almost certain that he recruited Walter Jones, D M Nesbit, W R Marquise, Louis F Pearson (later Sir), and George Crispin, all of whom came to the Chair after John Grundy, the first President.

The original prospectus of the Institution dated December 1897 was sent out by the Secretary, Lawwe Harris, from offices at 29 Ludgate Hill. It lamented the state of the science of heating and ventilating in this country, comparing it unfavourably with the recognition afforded it by the Americans and Canadians noting that on this side of the water “to the public the science of Heating is almost unknown, and Ventilation exists largely in the imagination.” This was the first serious attempt to organise the profession.

John Grundy came from City Road, London. He was a boiler manufacturer of some eminence (like many early members). The objectives set at this time were “to promote the intellectual welfare of its members by periodical meetings, to read, consider, and discuss papers or problems on Heating, Ventilating or other kindred subjects, and to take such measures to extend, develop or safeguard the interests of these important trades, as may be considered desirable or expedient.”
Let There Be Light

The Illuminating Engineering Society was founded in 1909 by a small enthusiastic group consisting of lighting engineers, architects, electrical and gas engineers. The credit for the formation of the Society must go to Leon Gaster, a consulting engineer, who arranged an informal meeting at which he said, “In advocating the formation of such a Society we have no desire to do more than provide a common platform where all those interested in illumination may be able to express their views in a free and informal manner, and membership of such a Society cannot, at the present time, be regarded as any claim to professional distinction. We naturally hope that in time to come when the subject of illumination has been thrashed out in detail to a far greater extent than at present, ‘expert illuminating engineers’ will have a professional existence…”
History of the Association.

Deer Miss Moran,

Hereewith are my recollections of early history.

In the year 1899 my firm was approached by Mr. Harris as to whether a member of our firm would join an Association of Engineers of which Mr. Grundy, Senior, was President.

We turned it down as an enquiry we found the main mover was a Company Promoter.

Later on in 1899 when a circular was received inviting to inaugural meeting of acting Engineers at Kings Hall, Holborn Restaurant and circular was signed by the late Edward Taylor, I then arranged to attend and did so on return journey from Luton where we had a contract on and where I had attended a Masonic Function.

On entering the Hall I saw about fifty people standing about in small groups and were struck with the deadly silence. Louis Pearson and Sir Louis now I come forward and said he was glad to see someone he knew.

Always inclined to be merry I walked round to the groups told them my name and asked theirs and got them to fraternize and in ten minutes or so there was a buzz of conversation like a Corn Exchange.

Edward Taylor Secretary Pro tem read the notice calling the meeting and asked for name of Chairman for the day.

I mentioned that Walter Jones of blessed memory another friend of mine was the oldest man in the trade and he was for it, he was a splendid Chairman and was elected President for 1899, had it not been for him Sir Louis Pearson, John Palmer, Edward Taylor and a few others I could mention who paid out the original Promoter there would not be the flourishing Institution there to day.

A Banquet had been arranged and after the loyal toast had been honoured Walter Jones said. 'Well Gentlemen we have had a very harmonious business meeting and I trust some-one will favour us with a song there was a long silence and an Engineer sitting next to me said: 'You look as if you could sing a good song.' I said well I am not exactly bursting to sing but I have a roll of songs downstairs.

Then I was for it and as no-one else could be prevailed on to hold forth I had to render the three chorus songs:

The Longshoreman.
Three for Jack.
The Powder Monkey.

They all joined in merrily and with the aid of dear old John Palmer's fey recital a splendid evening was spent and the Powder Monkey Chorus of soon we'll be in London Town proved a fact.

My Certificate is dated the 28th of February 1899.

The first Summer Meeting at Stourbridge was a great success and I was able to present a photograph of members taken that day to the Institution and I trust the London Elite has not destroyed it.

Early Days of the IIBSE. As recounted in a letter dated 12 July 1943 by George Crispin (President 1905) to Miss Jesse Moran, IIBSE Acting Secretary, 1941/5. CIBSE Archives.
I can recall many Summer Meetings apart from mine as President in 1905 and three of them stand out in my memory:

First: - The Dublin Meeting with our revered friend Macquarie as President.

The Second & Third the Council asked me to arrange. The Second owing to illness of President Simpson I arranged at Windsor with the steamer Queen of England taking us up river with dinner at the Crown at Cookham. I had asked that Messrs Pearson & Jones should act with me, they did we met there previously & had a good dinner, they told me to get on with it and I did.

The Third Summer Meeting I arranged with White Hart Headquarters was lunch at Staines, tea at Hampton Court and evening finish at the France-British Exhibition.

The above Summer Meeting was arranged the second year of Mr. W.M. Hadens Presidency as it was felt not to be fair he should have second expense as President.

During my year as President I arranged Council Meeting the first evening and supper and a Masonic Reception Committee of four brethren and their wives was a great help to me,

I consider the annual gatherings of Past Presidents has proved a great service to the Institution.

I was glad when they approved of my proposal for a reception committee at Summer Meetings and instanced that two Engineers who I had chummed up to at Summer meetings told me they felt quite out of it knowing no one there and that they had decided not to attend meetings again, but after being introduced by me to other members everything was merry and bright.

Having reached my 80th year and travelled the world I have proved:

'Tis the human touch in this world that counts
The touch of your hand and mine
That means far more to the ailing heart
Than shelter or bread or wine
For shelter is gone when the night is over
And bread last only a day
But the grasp of the hand and the sound of the voice
Sing on in the soul, always

I could with thankfulness recount of many friendships formed,
many alas broken by death and of men like my dear friend and brother Sam Naylor who so many times have seconded my efforts on the Presidents Sitting Day in telling him and the Lady President how much we loved and appreciated them.

Good men lives are a blessing to us and their death an inspiration to us.

We are Ships that pass in the night but for goodness sake let us signal to others as did the Night Watchman of old - All is Well.

In conclusion I will say to all members as I did in my Presidential address in 1905:

Do what you can be what you are
Shine like a glow-worm if you cannot be a Star
Work like a pulley if you cannot be a Crane
Be a wheel greaser if you cannot drive the train.

With all and to all good wishes to each member of the Institution hoping that the War will soon end so that enjoyable Summer Re-union Meetings may gladden many Hearts.

Yours faithfully.

[Signature]

George Croxton
Past-President 1905 & 6.