

Annual Conference 2003 returns to the IEE Savoy Place

After last year's foray into the green fields of Surrey, next January's conference returns to its spiritual home at the IEE. The Surrey meeting provided excellent facilities and a relaxed and congenial atmosphere, but delegate attendance was not as high as expected, and so your committee decided to return to London for 2003. The committee wishes to thank all members for their helpful feedback on last year's conference and arrangements and their suggestions for future events. Alternating the venue between London and elsewhere on a two-year cycle is being actively considered.

The theme for the next Annual Conference, to be held on **Wednesday 8 January 2003** at the IEE Savoy Place, London is 'The Future of Engineering'. We are all aware of the increasing pressure on university engineering departments with reducing undergraduate applications, the need to deliver the Government's increased participation targets, department rationalisation and even university mergers, indeed the recent under-funding of the RAE adds to the pressure. Thus the conference seeks to focus on important pointers for improving our future.

The findings of the Roberts Review and the Government's response will have a major impact, and the opening session of the conference should overview these recommendations and their implementation. How do we attract young people into engineering, and having done so, how do we enthuse and educate them? The answers may lie in adopting very different approaches from those traditionally followed. New approaches and new ideas require a rethink all round, and academe, industry and the professional bodies must all work together and form new partnerships for a better future.

All the above aspects will be discussed next January and your attendance is encouraged. The success of the conference depends on your active participation, so please make a note in your diary now. Registration and booking details will be circulated shortly.

**PHEE Annual Conference 2003
Venue: IEE Savoy Place, London.
Date: Wednesday 8 January 2003**

IEE Engineering Education 2003

PHEE members may wish to note that the IEE-sponsored Engineering Education 2003 conference is taking place on 6-7 January at the Southampton Institute Conference Centre. Its main themes are access, retention and standards. Further details are available from IEE Event Services (<http://conferences.iee.org/ee03>).

PHEE Easter Conferences

Regrettably, last Easter's conference, arranged to take place at the University of Hertfordshire, had to be cancelled at the last moment due to insufficient delegate pre-registrations. Although considerable effort was put into marketing the event with two PHEE mailings, IEE advertising and other e-mailings, it failed to attract the necessary threshold numbers to proceed. The organising committee highlighted the following reasons as contributing to its demise:

- Perceived conference fatigue in EEE engineering education with insufficient benefit when the cycle is annual
- Increased pressure on staff and hence less time (and resources) to attend such an event
- Significant consolidation in the sector and hence fewer departments and staff to attend
- Location on the periphery of London, coupled with hotel-only accommodation, may have been unattractive
- Little demand for a Course Leader's conference as similar topics are now covered by other organisations/events.

Towards Easter 2004 - your views are needed.

In view of the above, your committee has decided not to organise an event next Easter but to plan ahead for Easter 2004. To assist, the committee would be interested to know members' views on the attractiveness of such a conference and would welcome your comments. Please write or e-mail the Secretary on any aspects of such an event including future conference themes, venues, format or alternative suggestions for other types of event.

If you have any comments on this issue, or indeed on any other topic, please contact any of the PHEE committee. Committee membership for the current session is:

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| Dr Donard de Cogan (East Anglia) | Prof Emmanuel Ifeachor (Plymouth) |
| Prof David Lidgate (Napier) | Mr Jonathan Ling (IEE) |
| Prof Hugh McCann (UMIST) | Rev Stuart Poole (<i>Treasurer</i>) |
| Prof Ed Powner (Sussex) | Prof John Senior (Hertfordshire) |
| Prof Carson Stewart (Queens Belfast) (<i>Chairman</i>) | Prof Garth Swanson (King's College London) |
| Prof Bernard Weiss (Surrey) | Prof Phil Witting (Glamorgan) |

Dr Ray Thomas (Brighton) (*Secretary*) - email: r.thomas@bton.ac.uk

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