

Foreword

Writing this preamble to the PHEE Newsletter for the first time as your new Chairman, I realise that we face a period of uncertainty that brings with it new challenges. Next year sees the start of the variable fees regime and the conflicting priorities of making up for a long period of under-funding of our discipline while attracting sufficient students for our departments to be viable.

In seeking to promote and represent PHEE members within the wider education and engineering community, I am happy to report that following the discussions on UK-SPEC and output standards at last January's annual conference, the committee subsequently prepared a critique of these proposals and submitted them to the IEE accreditation committee. The paper was accepted and hopefully its content will have some influence on future developments in this area both within the IEE and IIE.

RAE2008 may well be the subject of more attention by PHEE members than any other. Following last summer's HEFCE invitation for nominations to membership of RAE2008 panel, I can report that I was appointed to the UoA 24 (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) sub-panel. Subsequently, at the suggestion of the Sub-Panel Chair, Professor Steve Williamson of Manchester University, PHEE arranged a special seminar in order to brief members on the latest thinking and deal with questions and concerns. Through the good offices of Jane Black, a member of our committee, and courtesy of the IEE, this event was held at Savoy Place. I am sure that our January 2006 conference will provide another timely opportunity for further information and discussion following the end of the consultation period on the published draft criteria. With the deadlines looming (most less than two years away), I am sure you will want to exchange intelligence with colleagues at the PHEE Conference. Finally, the EPC 2005 Annual Congress was held at Brighton this year and considered to be a great success. The local convener was our own Secretary contributing to the continued strong relationship between PHEE and EPC.

Over the next year we would like to enlarge membership of the Committee to get more involvement from a wider cross-section of our community and to stimulate discussion. While I appreciate that everyone is extremely busy and that academic life in our current climate can be hectic, please contact Ray Thomas or myself if you want to become involved in any capacity whatsoever. The present committee is keen to bring in new blood and to ensure a vibrant committee and succession for its officers. The concept of a 'corresponding member' from each institution has been raised in the past but not implemented. We hope to progress this in the coming session.

Our finances are reasonably healthy; our current balance is close to the target of one year's running costs identified in last year's newsletter. I close by thanking you for your continued involvement over the past twelve months and again highlighting the excellent support we have received from the IEE in providing the facilities necessary for the running of our Annual Conference. This is the major Event in our calendar and I hope to see you all in January. I wish you every success in the 2005/6 academic session and look forward to receiving your comments and suggestions.

Roger Pollard (Chairman)

<p style="text-align: center;">PHEE Annual Conference 2006 Venue: IEE Savoy Place, London. Date: Wednesday 11 January 2006</p>

Annual Conference 2006

Three major topics have been identified for the next Annual Conference, to be held on **Wednesday 11 January 2006** at the IEE, Savoy Place, London.

The first session will focus on RAE2008 as we seek to build upon the July briefing seminar reported above. Speakers will include the UoA 24 chairman Prof Steve Williamson and there will be ample opportunity for discussion, questions and answers.

The decision to merge the IEE and the IIE and form a new institution - IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology) will provide the focus of presentations and debate for the second session. This proposal has created much interest and comment in recent months and with the decision made but some uncertainty as to how the new institution will affect us, conference discussion should prove a lively affair.

For the final session, it seems timely to take a wider view of output standards and consider the future of the MEng and the influences of the Bologna debate. While this is an issue that has largely been ignored by UK academics, and perhaps more so by politicians, its influence may be about to have major impact on our degree courses.

As ever the success of the conference depends on your active participation, so please make a note in your diary now. Registration and booking details have been sent separately.

PHEE Website: www.phee.org

The PHEE website is being updated and we are pleased to report that we have now obtained the above domain address. Please look out for the new site going live. Amongst other useful data, you will find the latest conference information and booking details. Comments on the design and usefulness of the website are always welcome.

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

Dr Donard de Cogan (East Anglia)	Prof Brian Culshaw (Strathclyde)
Prof Emmanuel Ifeakor (Plymouth)	Mr Jonathan Ling (IIE)
Prof Hugh McCann (UMIST)	Dr Dik Morling (Westminster)
Rev Stuart Poole (<i>Treasurer</i>)	Prof Ed Powner (Sussex)
Prof John Senior (Hertfordshire)	Ms Jane Black / Mr Dan Canty (IEE)
Prof Roger Pollard FRENG (Leeds) (<i>Chairman</i>)	
Prof Phil Witting/Prof Bob Williams (Glamorgan)	
Dr Ray Thomas (Brighton) (<i>Secretary</i>) - email: r.thomas@bton.ac.uk	

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