Passing on the CHAIN OF OFFICE

Immediate past president of The Diecasting Society reflects on his presidential tenure.

Dear colleagues in the foundry industry and members of The Diecasting Society, it is my pleasure to pass on my chain of office to John Swift of Alucast. It has been quite an interesting journey since taking over the presidency of the DCS back in April 2019, at the Williams F1 Museum when I took over from John Paterson. Some quite big shoes to fill, and I must say a big thankyou to John for his help in the handover and continuing support to the DCS now that he has retired. His golf tournament in Barlaston has become a popular DCS fixture.

The start of my presidency was a challenge, as we had a major conference in Solihull that October, which proved extremely popular, and we did plan to hold this event again. We also had a great day with some apprentices taking part in paintball and axe throwing, but then the Covid pandemic hit and the world changed dramatically. We had to cancel many events, technical visits, the next conference and start running meetings in the new digital Zoom conference world.

The two years through Covid were challenging, and we did manage some visits when lockdown restrictions were eased, a notable visit was the Loughborough Bell Foundry, when for the first time in many months we could actually meet as people rather than computer screen images!

In this time I also manged to work on some historical investments that were proving difficult to release and amalgamate into our current funds. They were set up and signed by long gone DCS representatives, such that the financial institutions would not believe us that we wanted, and were legally entitled, to draw them down. Patience, stubbornness and tenacity paid off and the funds were eventually released, such that I can say the DCS is financially secure and has a rosy future.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the president of the DCS, despite the pandemic and subsequent global events affecting so many activities, plans and our industry sector. However, there were achievements such as the golf tournaments, new website, some technical visits, social events, increased membership numbers and, as I mentioned earlier, getting the investments moved under our control.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my friends in the DCS council, so many names to list, but you know who you all are, along with the secretariat at ICME, Lynn Postle at *Foundry Trade Journal*, Annie Gough, anyone I have missed, and of course – you the membership – either individual or corporate.

I plan to wind down and retire mid next year, but will still maintain my involvement with the DCS, if you let me – it has been part of my life for nearly twenty years. I find it hard to just switch off and walk away from the foundry industry, which I started in when I was a 16-year-old apprentice at GKN.

The DCS is in good hands with John Swift, and I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous future, in both your personal and business lives.

Best regards
Stuart Gregory

New President for The Diecasting Society

The Diecasting Society has elected a new president. On 1st November 2023, John Swift, group managing director of Alucast Limited took over from Stuart Gregory, Petrofer UK, who has been president for several years.

John Swift has been a longstanding supporter of the society, having been on council for many years.

He has over 25 years of foundry industry experience, having begun his career at Barton Aluminium before spending fifteen years at BSK Aluminium as technical director. He moved on to senior roles at Triplex and Bridge Aluminium prior to working at Alucast Limited, where he is now managing director. He is highly skilled in foundry design, development and manufacturing techniques and has a proven track record of successfully managing foundry operations. He is well respected in the industry and is looking forward to his term as president of The Diecasting Society.

The Diecasting Society would like to thank immediate past president Stuart Gregory for all his diligent work for the society and his ongoing support.

Read more about John Swift in the next issue of DCS News.

Join the Diecasting Society

Membership is open to both individuals and companies who have an interest in the manufacture of die cast metal products. That interest might be as a foundry or a supplier to a foundry.

Each member receives the *Diecasting Society Newsletter*, and reduced rate attendance at all the Society events, both technical and social. Annual membership is £45.00 for an individual member and £235.00 for companies (which includes four reduced rate places for named employees at the company). The cost for a student or trainee is just £8.50.

To start enjoying the benefits of membership email: dcs@icme.org.uk or visit www.dcsoc.org.uk

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

Please refer to the website for updated event details.

DCS Website

The DCS website has been updated. DCS members are invited to submit entries to the website, news items etc. to populate it by emailing: dcs@icme.org.uk

DCS visit to Anson Engine Museum

The Diecasting Society visited Anson Engine Museum on 26th September, writes Annie Gough who provides an insight into the history of the museum and some of the exhibits.

Hidden away off the beaten track in the small Cheshire town of Poynton, the museum is situated on the site of the old Anson Colliery which was owned by the fourth Lord Vernon. The collieries closed in the 1930s and the land was bought for a museum to be created. The subsequent museum is the result of years of work by Les Cawley and Geoff Challinor who began collecting and showing stationary engines for a hobby. When the number and size of engines they collected increased, they decided to start the museum. A charitable trust was formed and work began on the first building in 1986.

The museum houses over 250 stationary engines, the largest in Europe – steam, gas, oil, diesel and more.

One of the largest exhibits and the largest running steam engine in Cheshire is a 1903 S S Stott of Haslingden horizontal cross-compound condensing mill engine, which used to power a cotton wadding mill in Hazel Grove.

The largest size built Crossley Brothers atmospheric-free piston engine, rated at 3hp (2237 kW), built in 1877 in Manchester was used to drive a winch and crane jib for barge unloading.

A recent acquisition is an 1892 Hornsby-Akroyd engine, serial number 101. This engine played an important role in the compression ignition controversy; indeed, at one time it was urged that we should all stop calling these engines 'diesels' but call them 'Akroyds'.

Dr Rudolph Diesel would eventually produce a working 'economical heat motor'. Diesel took out his first patent in 1892 and gave his engine his own name and found worldwide fame and reaped huge financial rewards. The museum displays the 1897 Mirrlees diesel engine, the third production diesel engine in the world.

James Worthington, My Work Wear and Duncan Haley, Petrofer

Hornsby Akroyd oil engine

Herbert Akroyd Stuart was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, in 1864. His father took over the Bletchley Iron Works in Buckinghamshire. With an engineering background, he was involved in experimental work whilst at Finsbury Technical College. The first engines built at the Bletchley Foundry were of poor quality, so he turned to the firm of Richard Hornsby of Grantham. Their first successful compression ignition engine produced was given the serial number 101 and was installed at the Fenny Stratford Waterworks in July 1892. They powered the first oil-engined tractors and locomotives in 1896. A Hornsby-Akroyd engine powered the first chain (caterpillar) tractor in 1905, supplied the power to illuminate the Statue of Liberty and for Marconi's landmark radio transmission across the Atlantic Ocean.

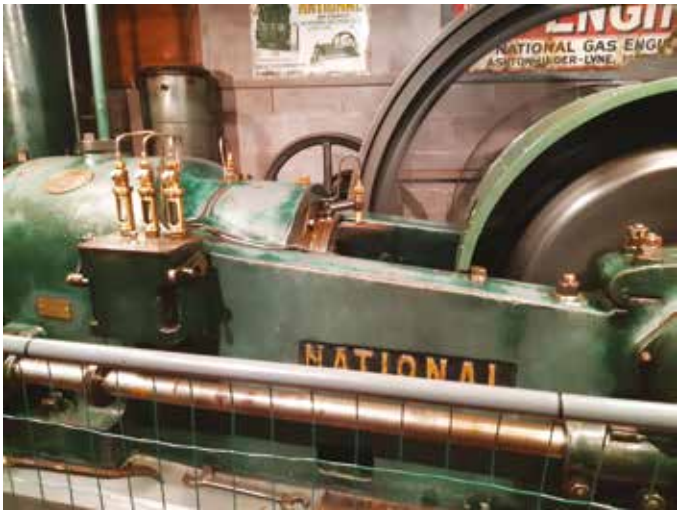
National oil engine

In 1889, The National Gas and Oil Engine Company Ltd, was founded by Mr H N Bickerton and ventured into the realms of horizontal gas engine manufacture. He took over a works in Wellington Road, formerly occupied by Isaac Watt Boulton for building locomotives. Export trade commenced in 1894, when the first gas engine went to France. The engines were designed originally to run on town's gas and a later development was the gas producer plant using anthracite, coke and waste fuels such as wood, cotton seed etc.

In addition to the engines, the museum also highlights the industrial history of Poynton. There is a large model of the town from 1900, taking five thousand volunteer hours to create.

Anson Engine Museum is a registered charity, no government or public funding, volunteers run it on enthusiasm. It's a real gem.

"Everything great in science and art is simple. What can be less complicated than the greatest discoveries of humanity – gravitation, the compass, the printing press, the steam engine and the electric telegraph?" Jules Verne



National oil engine

Apprentices Tegan Thula and Charlie Thomas of Alucast with Simon Hanson, HCM Engineering