

This document charts the history of the Fund's first 100 years showing the type of help and support that has been provided to beneficiaries over the past ten decades.

100 years ago, the vast majority of women and children were completely dependent on the man of the household being the readwinner which didn't always relieve "the daily struggle... o feed their families without being forced to pawn their own oots..."* . The devastating loss of so many men in WW1 left uge numbers of women in desperate circumstances and bliged to find work. It was poverty and need of this nature

rom 'Round About A Pound A Week' by Maud Pember Reeves,





The signatures of the First Trustee Board (Committee of Management), nine days after it was established as a company

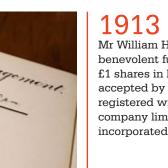
The Engineering & Mining Exhibition

at Olympia gave a gift of £50, requesting it be used for engineering charities. The IMechE's Council proposed it should be used to form the nucleus of a benevolent fund for the benefit of the Institution's members. This idea, however, met with little or no support and the money was handed over to the Benevolent Fund of the Institution of Civil Engineers, which had been established some 42 years earlier,

ablished 1913 - the year we were established.



The benevolent fund idea was revisited when Mr H A Humphrey gave £25 to the IMechE's Council to use at its discretion to relieve "some case of hardship". This time the Council accepted the money but it is not known how it was spent.



Mr William H Allen offered to start a benevolent fund with a gift of one thousand 1 shares in his firm. This offer was gratefully accepted by the Council and the Fund was registered with the Board of Trade as a company limited by guarantee. It was legally incorporated on 9 September 1913.

In the two years since the Benevolent Fund

was established, around 20 beneficiaries

had been helped, mostly with single grants

monthly awards of £1 or £2, albeit on a time-

limited basis. Of the 20 cases, there was an

early example of a repeat application, as

receiving a four-month extension to their

month period.

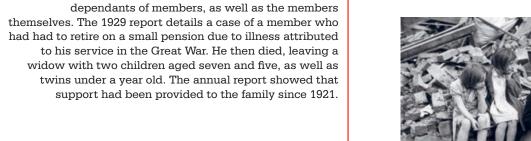
'Case number 5' became 'Case number 16'

initial award of £2 per month for another six-

ranging from £10 - £25. Others were receiving



The 1929 Annual Report was the first to include details of assistance such as "...a small monthly allowance to a member 72 years old, unemployed, who had spent all his savings..."; and "a member crippled with rheumatism and unable to work had received grants totalling £200 since 1924". Reference is later made to that member being supported by the Fund in a 'Home for Incurables' once his condition became chronic, the Fund meeting maintenance fees and the "occasional provision of small comforts". It has always been the intention of the Fund to assist



those early grants were used.

What is striking is that the provision of support from the outset included a range of lump sum payments, The review of the year refers to educational regular and secondary applications that we recognise as features of our grant-making process assistance for children providing results which

From 1920, ongoing monthly payments were also introduced. There has always been discretion as to how help can be provided, and that remains a

continuing strength of the Fund. The organisation has consistently been meticulous in recording how funds were received, invested and 1938, and there is reference to members in British distributed, but there is very little detail as to how



£7,000 by Dr H S Hele-Shaw £1,000 by Sir Horace Boot £100 by Sir Robert Hadfield Bequests like this remain very Members, both in the UK and across

> the world, were asked to covenant donations, the minimum being 10/6. The Royal Mint of India donated a guinea!

THE INCORPORATED BENEVOLENT FUND THE INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEER 'have been extremely satisfactory to the STORET'S GATE, ST. DAMES'S PARK, LONDON, S.W. Committee, and have naturally afforded great happiness to the mothers'. Bear Continues to ARMSTEAD The number of people helped had risen to 57, with a The Mist Hyderson Decem India a total of £2,341 being awarded in grants. Y COVENANT with the Committee of Management of the International support was being provided by roed Benevilent Fund, that for a period of Seven years Columbia, New Zealand, the West Indies and und "Lift One guinea

The Fund recently received this letter

My father...left school at 14 and worked in

arrived for £50.00! This was the lifeline which

Eng. after which he had a career in university

lecturing, the Atomic Energy at Harwell and

Winfrith, consultancy in desalination for the

U.N. and Reader in MechEng at Heriot-Watt,

Edinburgh. This would not have been possible

without the generosity of The Benevolent Fund

I mentioned! It enabled my father to carry

on to a 1st Class Honours degree in Mech.

grateful for, 66 years later:

Dear Ms Broadhead

father in 1947.

of the IMechE.

Thank you again

The 1946 Annual Report provides a valuable social insight into how those involved with the Fund viewed their position: "...In time of total war, when there is work available for every brain and hand capable of ndertaking it, that fruitful form of distress – inability to find employment - can hardly be said to exist However, much distress still remains, and the means available for meeting it can usually provide only for partial alleviation, seldom for

anything approaching complete relief...

'No part of the work of the Committee can be

garded as more important than another. But the

relief of the need of the aged, who, after a lifetime

of service to engineering, find themselves in very

reduced and often really straitened circumstances, at a

time of life when a certain comfort should be their lot,

is one that must always evoke particular sympathy..."

The first legacies to the

important to the fund.

Benevolent Fund were received:

of a frustrating situation in that, whilst the Fund had been able to increase the number of grants made, it was "...regrettable to record that the help given by the Benevolent Fund had not been able to effect as much relief as could have been hoped. [as] in many cases public assistance is reduced or withdrawn when private assistance is rendered Thereign again a state of affairs which is to be deplored and

The Fund has always had a principle of no replacing government funding, a challenge telling us of a 'lifeline' that the writer is still which is still being faced today.

which it is to be hoped will not continue much

over the responsibilities of the State...

longer. In effect it means that the Fund has to take

father to carry on a degre

In 1946 the Management Committee complained

Thank you for your letter...thanking me for [the] gift of £1,000 to the Benevolent Fund of the IMechE. My mother wished to donate this in gratitude for the help shown to her & my

a factory alongside his father & brothers. At the end of the war, the whole staff at Miles Aircraft was made redundant. He decided to take formal training - doing a degree course by correspondence, supplemented with evening classes at Northampton Polytechnical College in London. This was when he was married & had a baby of 5 months (me). There was a Single Person Local Authority Grant & I remember my mother telling me that after the rent & the bills one week, they realised world's first nuclear power station to that they would be £5 in in the red. At this deliver power on a industrial scale point the cheque from the Benevolent Fund

The annual number

For the first time there is recognition that the simple number of cases is not a true measure of assistance as "..in most cases wives and children also benefit from the grants, so that in reality help covered about 200 persons". Measuring the exact number of people assisted remains problematic.

The minimum

By the early 1960s, beneficiary cases were being

went on sale

The Fund was registered as a

charity on 14 December 1962.

Benevolent Fund subscription' rose to £1, from 10/6. This was the first rise in the Fund's 48-year history. (Both amounts are equivalent to around £20 in 2013).

Reports from and a more direct 'tone or

At the Fund's 50 year

The Benevolent Fu

anniversary, the Jubilee

to raise more money.

Appeal took place in order

considered and decided upon as an integral part of Management Committee meetings. The majority of Concorde transported cases detail a health difficulty which had detrimentally passengers between affected household finances. Very often, support was 1976 and 2003 needed to pay debts. For example: "....£75 during the next six months and payment of overdraft... and "Payment of outstanding debts amounting to £37.16s.2d". This trend in support continued



Empty supermarket

transport strike in 1979

shelves during the

Royal Patron endorsed so positively by agreeing

with us.

beneficiaries who

esponsible for heating

lls. A winter warmth

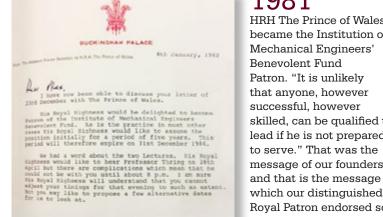
to become associated

Aim and Purpose of the Fund enevolent Fund assists members and past members of the for or all graces, together with their wives, widows, child for dependants who have suffered misfortune and are I RECORD WAY, WITHOUTH, LONDON, MICH.

Annual

the 70s often used cartoons

authorised by the Committee to those of our beneficiaries The Benevolent Fund of the IMechE



A special winter grant was

that anyone, however successful, however skilled, can be qualified to lead if he is not prepared to serve." That was the message of our founders and that is the message which our distinguished

> 1948, had been a member. Once alerted, the Fund approved urgent action to support the cost of the work, and thereafter introduced a monthly grant. New requests for assistance were

received at a rate of two per week throughout the year. High interest rates, falling house prices, inflation and rising costs were all factors which added to the problems of those with limited capital and low incomes.

We often have problems reaching potential

particularly once the member has died. For

example, a 93-year old widow was found to

be living alone in a house with very old and

unsafe wiring that she could not afford to

repair. When she had a small electrical fire

in her home, a helping neighbour noticed a

showing that her husband, who had died in

framed Institution certificate, dated 1933,

beneficiaries, especially dependants,

3,000 grants were early stages of their careers, administered, roviding £317,000 in support. During generation of beneficiaries, a 1991-1993, grant change which prompted the

During the course

of the year, over

Expenditure on grants was £131.969 for 153 beneficiary families. alone in a house with very old and unsafe wiring that she could not

During the late 1990s, the Fund started

to review itself as an organisation, and

implemented changes to ensure that it was

better placed to meet future demands, which

included reducing Trustee numbers from 23

Greater numbers of younger

people were applying. As

they often also had children

to support, and were in the

their needs were different

from those of the previous

expenditure rose Fund to accordingly adapt the

by 40%. range of support available.

to 13, and becoming co-located with the

Institution at Birdcage Walk.



A 93-year old widow was livin

'My ...duties with the then BenFund ...leave particularly happy memories... It was a great privilege to be a part of it all. As 90 all too swiftly approaches one realises the paramount importance of the friendly, reliable, caring human contact that our

A broadening of support

increased from £5 to £10.

was introduced,



addressing non-financial needs. These included employment coaching, debt advice, counselling and legal support, which laid the foundation for the type of 'holistic' Benevolent Fund that exists today. The voluntary contributions

Celebrating our 90th anniversary.

IMechE Support Network can provide..."

Bill Howard, volunteer



New services, such as grants for disadvantaged undergraduates, were introduced

was rebranded as 'Support Network' new visual identity

The Benevolent Fund

and came within the

News, PE magazine, and

PE online, in order to reach

Support Network's Annual

Review for 2012 demonstrates

that members' stories are key to

communicating the impact of the

work of the organisation. These

parallel promotion in Institution

stories are also told through a

of the Institution.

to meet emerging

picture © The Henry Ford Collection