

## MAGNIFICENT WOMEN:

# Caroline Haslett



**Dame Caroline Haslett**, champion of women in engineering, was the founder of the Electrical Association for Women, first Secretary of WES and the first woman to serve on the British Electricity Authority.

*17 August 1895 – 4 January 1957*

### Engineering training and WES

Haslett decided after school on a business career, and began as a junior clerk at the Cochran Boiler Company in London. She was interested in engineering and had been taught how to use tools by her father, a railway fitter. Haslett soon worked her way up to managing the London office, and also trained in the works on practical boiler design.

In 1918, she answered an advertisement for a 'Lady with some experience in engineering works as organizing secretary for a women's engineering society.' This was the Women's Engineering Society, founded for women working in all areas of engineering. Haslett would go on to be the guiding influence of the Society, editing the Journal and becoming President in 1941. She also co-founded the Electrical Association for Women, an organisation formed to reduce the drudgery of women's everyday lives by encouraging the use of electricity in the home.

### Public service and recognition

Haslett was an expert administrator and charismatic speaker, and soon became the voice for women in engineering in the UK and worldwide. Her work would inspire many women to go into engineering and business, and improve the lives of others in the home. She also advised the Government on planning in the Second World War.

From 1946-1954 Haslett was the only woman member of the Council of the British Institute of Management and in 1953-1954 was Chairman of the British Electrical Development Association, the first time a woman had been appointed to that office. She was the only woman member of the

British Electricity

Authority from 1947-1956 - a popular appointment in view of the importance of domestic electrical development. Haslett was also the first Chairman of the British Federation of Business and Professional Women and the first British President of the International Federation.

In recognition of her work, Caroline Haslett was awarded a CBE in 1932 and a DBE in 1947.

Dame Caroline saw engineering not only as a career path for women but as a means for making all women's lives better and easier.

### Further information

- [www.engineering-timelines.com/who/haslett\\_c/haslettCaroline.asp](http://www.engineering-timelines.com/who/haslett_c/haslettCaroline.asp)
- [www.theiet.org/resources/library/archives/biographies/haslett.cfm](http://www.theiet.org/resources/library/archives/biographies/haslett.cfm)
- [www.theiet.org/resources/library/archives/exhibition/women/index.cfm](http://www.theiet.org/resources/library/archives/exhibition/women/index.cfm)

### Domestic drudgery

Caroline Haslett knew how hard domestic work could be. She said that it "seemed a waste of time ... The kitchen stove burnt coal which had to be brought in buckets ... and so the work of the house went on: sweeping, scrubbing, polishing and dusting, all done by hand". One of the slogans of the Electrical Association for Women was 'Emancipation From Drudgery'.

