Loughborough University

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Research Repository by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

The granting of a royal charter: an anachronism or a major development for ergonomics and human factors?

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

http://ergonomics.uq.edu.au/iea/proceedings/Index.html

PUBLISHER

International Ergonomics Association

VERSION

VoR (Version of Record)

PUBLISHER STATEMENT

This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Haslam, Roger. 2019. “The Granting of a Royal Charter: An Anachronism or a Major Development for Ergonomics and Human Factors?”. figshare. https://hdl.handle.net/2134/19139.

The granting of a Royal Charter: an anachronism or a major development for ergonomics and human factors?

Roger Haslam[a]

[a]*Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors,*
Elms Court, Elms Grove, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 1RG, UK

1. Background

Ergonomics and human factors (EHF) has come a long way since the discipline and profession first started to become organised and coalesce with the forming of the Ergonomics Research Society in the UK in 1949, the Human Factors Society of America in 1957 and the founding of the International Ergonomics Association in 1959. Various authors have mapped this history, for example Edholm and Murrell (1973), Waterson and Sell (2006), Waterson and Eason (2009), Waterson (2011) in the UK; Chapanis (1999), Meister (1995, 1996, 1999) in USA, and IEA (2006) and Waterson et al (2012) for the IEA.

In the UK, the Ergonomics Society, latterly the Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors, has long harboured the desire to become Chartered, putting it in the same position as other long established, respected professions, for example accountants, architects, civil engineers, electrical engineers, nurses, veterinary surgeons, to name but a few.

It has been a long journey but in May 2014, we received the news that at a meeting of the Privy Council held at Buckingham Palace, Her Majesty The Queen had approved an Order granting a Charter to the Institute (Privy Council, 2014). In pursuit of this goal, much work had to be done lobbying government departments whose support would be crucial to the success of the petition. The Institute also needed to ensure there would be no objection from cognate societies with whom our interests intersect. It was also a mammoth task to prepare the Charter and Byelaws, the governance documents under which the Chartered Institute would operate and which the Privy Council and Charity Commission needed to approve.

2. The nature of Chartership

So what actually is a Royal Charter? Chartership is a historic form of incorporation, i.e. establishing an organisation as a legal entity, the earliest being granted to Cambridge and Oxford Universities in the 13th century. The Privy Council explain:

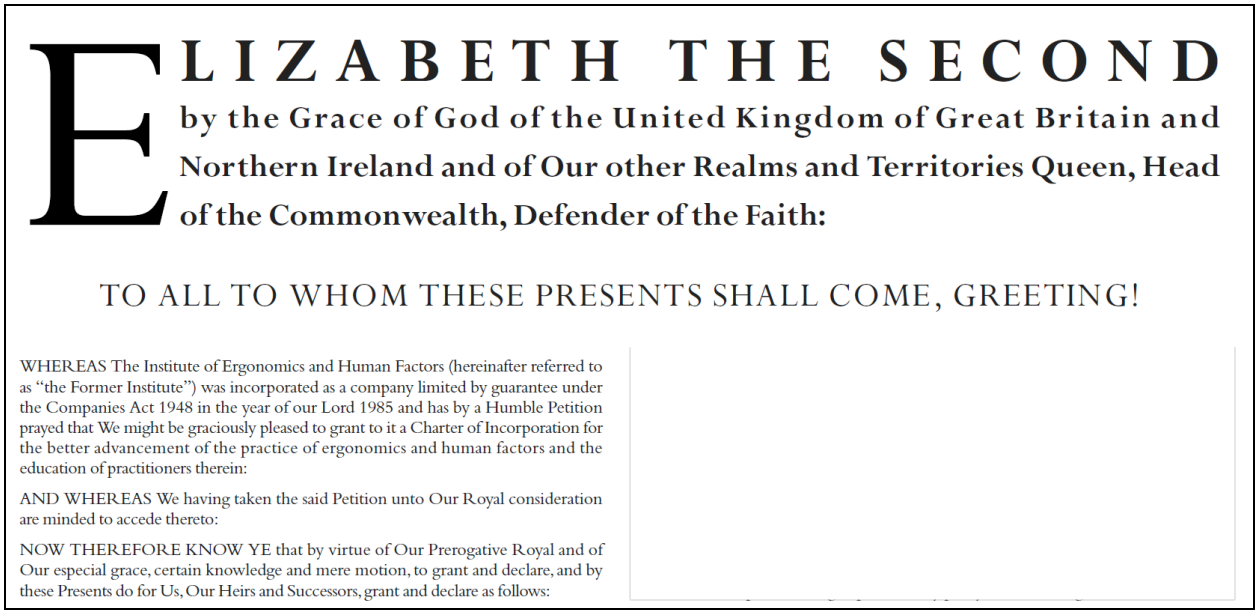
"*…the grant of new Charters is rare. New grants of Royal Charters are these days reserved for eminent professional bodies or charities which have a solid record of achievement and are financially sound. In the case of professional bodies they should represent a field of activity which is unique and not covered by other professional bodies. At least 75% of the corporate members should be qualified to first degree level standard. Finally, both in the case of charities and professional bodies, incorporation by Charter should be in the public interest.*"

Chartership is very much an early 'English' convention, reflected in the language in which the Charter is worded, figure 1. For the Institute, however, it is endorsement from high authority of our collective importance and professionalism. With this, the Institute joins other previously Chartered cognate bodies including the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (granted 1920), British Psychological Society (1965), British Computer Society (1984), Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (2002) and British Occupational Hygiene Society (2012).

3. The international benefit

Although the implied royal benevolence, the petition process and the charter language may appear to some to be an anachronism, the recognition conferred on EHF in the UK through the Institute becoming Chartered should also be of significant international benefit. It is argued that this development in the UK forms a

beneficial plank in developing the 'value proposition' for EHF, argued for by Dul et al (2012). This conference presentation places the award of the Royal Charter in historical context, discusses what it means for EHF and how it sits with Dul et al's strategic actions for developing the discipline and profession internationally.



ELIZABETH THE SECOND

by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith:

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, GREETING!

WHEREAS The Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors (hereinafter referred to as "the Former Institute") was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Act 1948 in the year of our Lord 1985 and has by a Humble Petition prayed that We might be graciously pleased to grant to it a Charter of Incorporation for the better advancement of the practice of ergonomics and human factors and the education of practitioners therein:

AND WHEREAS We having taken the said Petition unto Our Royal consideration are minded to accede thereto:

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that by virtue of Our Prerogative Royal and of Our especial grace, certain knowledge and mere motion, to grant and declare, and by these Presents do for Us, Our Heirs and Successors, grant and declare as follows:

Figure 1. Preamble of Royal Charter granted to the Institute

References

Chapanis A, 1999. The Chapanis Chronicles – 50 years of human factors, research, education and design. Santa Barbara, CA: Aegean.

Dul J, Bruder R, Buckle P, Carayon P, Falzon P, Marras W S, Wilson J R and van der Doelen B, 2012, A strategy for human factors/ergonomics: developing the discipline and profession, Ergonomics, 55:4, 377-395.

Edholm O G and Murrell K F H, 1973, The ergonomics research society: a history 1949–1970. London: Taylor and Francis.

International Ergonomics Association, 2006, IEA 50th Anniversary Booklet. Available at: www.iea.cc.

Meister D, 1995, Human Factors-- The early years. Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 478-480.

Meister D, 1996, History and Characteristics of Human Factors Research. Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting, 541-545.

Meister D, 1999. The history of human factors and ergonomics. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Privy Council, 2014, Orders approved at the Privy Council held by the Queen at Buckingham Palace on 27th May 2014. http://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/orders-in-council-27-may-2014.pdf (pages 1 and 11).

Waterson P and Sell R, 2006, Recurrent themes and developments in the history of the Ergonomics Society. Ergonomics, 49, 743-799.

Waterson P E and Eason K D, 2009, '1966 and all that': trends and developments in UK ergonomics during the 1960's. Ergonomics, 52, 1323-1341.

Waterson P, 2011, World War II and other historical influences on the formation of the Ergonomics Research Society. Ergonomics, 54, 1111-1129.

Waterson P E, Falzon P and Barcellini F, 2012, The recent history of the IEA: looking backwards and looking forwards. Work, 41, 5033-5036.