

# The Wire

Founded in 1793

Issue 3 2006

## Ormiston wires up the art world

The company is understandably better known for wire than it is for works of art. But in March 2005, an impressive new sculpture was unveiled that wouldn't have been possible without the expertise of Ormiston Wire.

'Bleigiessen', by artist Thomas Heatherwick can be seen in the central atrium of the headquarters of the medical research charity the Wellcome Trust in Euston Road, London.

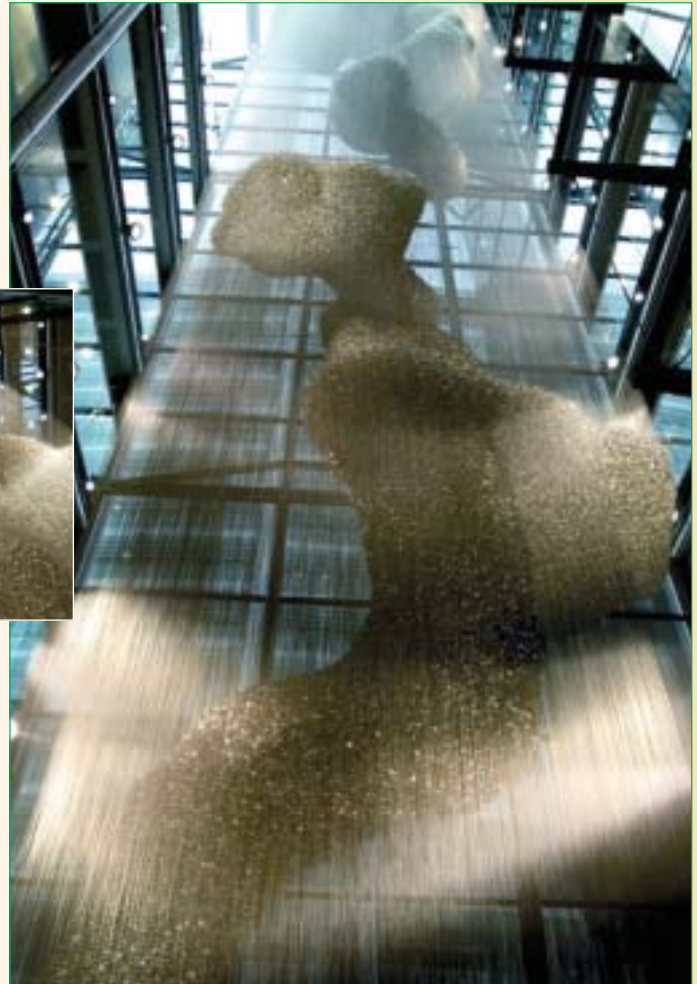
The 29-metre high installation is made up of 142,000 glass spheres suspended on 840 kilometres of stainless steel wire, to give the effect of a frozen waterfall.

It took more than four months to string, hang and secure the wires, which are kept taut by nearly 27,000 springs. Ormiston has been making and supplying these wires – known as microcables – for more than 60 years. They can be as slim as 0.22 millimetres in diameter.

'Microcables are ideal for suspension. They are really miniature stainless steel ropes, rather than individual wires,' managing director Mark Ormiston explains.

Ormiston Wire was also able to help artist Suki Chan display her work 'Flight' at the Withington Hospital in Manchester in April 2005. Chan wanted to suspend 300 origami birds from the ceiling at the hospital's main entrance.

Once again Ormiston Wire supplied the microcables she needed to create the impression of a flock of birds in flight.



Photograph: Steve Speller

\*Bleigiessen is a German word, which means 'lead guessing'. It's taken from a traditional New Year folk practice in which lead is melted and poured into cold water. Fortune tellers then use the shape it forms when it solidifies to predict the future.

## How web use cuts waste

As well as attracting up to 50 new customers every month, Ormiston Wire's website is helping to look after the environment too.

'Over the last 18 months we've dramatically cut down the amount of catalogues and leaflets we send out because now people

download our price lists from the website,' Mark explains.

Part of the company's policy is that nothing that can be recycled is thrown out. Everything – from office materials such as paper and used ink cartridges to the plastic cups from the coffee machine – is collected for

recycling.

This means that it takes a long time to fill the 14-cubic yard skip that all the company's waste goes into.

'In the past 12 months, I'd say it's been emptied less than five times,' says Mark.

● To find out more go to [www.ormiston-wire.co.uk](http://www.ormiston-wire.co.uk)



The firm was given the Queen's Award for Enterprise for its environmental achievements in 2002.

# Saving the environment saves money

In keeping with the company's environmentally friendly policies, a key part of the new office design is an energy efficient lighting system.

Sensors on the ceiling detect movement in the office, so that if there's nobody in the room, the lights go out.

They automatically switch on again as soon as someone walks in.

'A lot of businesses are getting caught with rising energy costs,' says Mark.

'Because we are forward thinking, we have our solar panels, our wind turbine and we don't waste electricity.'

According to Mark, the company's energy costs are substantially less than those of a comparable business of a similar size.

Ormiston Wire hopes to reduce

energy costs even further by participating in a trial run by the British Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturers Association (BEAMA).

BEAMA has received funding from the Department for Trade and Industry for the metering and monitoring of embedded domestic generation.

In simple terms, this means assessing how much surplus energy the solar panels and wind turbine at Ormiston Wire generate.

Unlike conventional power sources, the amount of energy produced by solar panels is not fixed. If it's a sunny day for example, the panels may



**Inverters which convert the DC output from the wind turbine and solar panels into a usable AC power supply**

generate more than will be used.

Any excess not used by the company spills over into the power grid. This is then available for use in nearby properties, with no payment to Ormiston Wire.

At the end of the trial, BEAMA hopes to recommend an improved system for companies with renewable energy sources to be paid for any excess that they export.

## New machine cuts production time

Ormiston Wire uses procedures and production methods that date back many years. However, the company has always believed in upgrading equipment to improve the services they can offer their customers.

That is why Mark recently invested £25,000 in a new high-speed braider, which can produce braids as small as one millimetre in diameter. The 16-bobbin Wardwell Rapid Braider arrived in December 2004 from

Connecticut in the USA.

The machine has cut production time and can be run at night without an operator.



**High speed: The braider in action**



**Efficient: The braider works through the night without the need for an operator**

## Find out more Online!

For more information on everything in this newsletter and to download past issues, go to [www.ormiston-wire.co.uk](http://www.ormiston-wire.co.uk)

# Ormiston

takes to the **high seas**



**Around the world: Ormiston Wire was delighted to be involved with Gipsy Moth almost 50 years after she first set sail**

In September 2005, the famous Gipsy Moth IV yacht set off around the world again, with a little help from Ormiston Wire.

Back in 1960, Ormiston Wire supplied the wire for the rigging of the original yacht. In 1966 Sir Frances Chichester then went on to circumnavigate the globe.

In early 2005, the British Sailing Academy (BSA) decided to refurbish the yacht in preparation for a 22-month voyage, where the crew is made up of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ormiston Wire is a highly-respected manufacturer in the marine trade.

So the BSA knew exactly who to call on to help restore Gipsy Moth IV to her former glory.

Ormiston provided the wire for the running rigging. The staff are closely following the yacht's progress on her voyage, which will cover 30,000 nautical miles.



## Lending a hand in the operating theatre

Ormiston Wire is working towards the new Environmental Approval ISO 14001: 2004. Its sister company Midland Wire Cordage was recently awarded the approval and Ormiston Wire expects to receive it soon. The company also holds the Quality Standard ISO 13485:2003 for the manufacture and supply of flexible stainless steel surgical bone saws and stainless steel suture wire.

Bone saws are only one and a half millimetres thick. They're strong enough to cut through bone, but surprisingly they're not sharp.



'This is important because you don't want them to cut through a surgeon's gloves,' says Mark Ormiston. Surgical bone saws are used

mostly for operations on joints, so if you know anybody who has had a hip replacement, Ormiston Wire probably had a hand in making their operation a success.

● For more information on our quality systems go to <http://www.ormiston-wire.co.uk/quality/index.cfm>

### Getting the hang of it



Ormiston's superclamps and microcables are the best hanging systems in the business and are recommended by lighting manufacturers.

# Bright future for young recruit

The staff at Ormiston Wire were greatly saddened by the death of the company's oldest employee Arthur Casey in late 2004.

Arthur worked for the company as a cleaner for almost a quarter of a century. He finally retired aged 96, and passed away just six weeks later.

He was sad to leave, but he was slowing down and I think he realised the time had come to leave,' says Mark Ormiston.

'Just before he died he said two things to his son. One was to be sure to turn the potatoes on his allotment.

'The second was to make sure to get a new broom for Ormiston's.'



Arthur may be gone, but Mark's policy of employing staff of all ages still holds strong.

'We employ people from all age groups and all racial and cultural backgrounds,' says Mark. 'It's a policy we've always had.'

His latest recruit is 18-year-old Martin Allen, seen above, who works as a dispatch clerk.

'He was only 16 when he

started and he's learnt a lot already,' says Mark. 'We hope he'll continue to develop. We like to help young people get started and train them up to be professional at what they do.'

Martin hopes that like so many other employees, he will stay with Ormiston Wire for many years to come. 'Or at least until I win the lotto,' he jokes.

# New look office is a hit with staff

The wellbeing of his 11 employees is one of Mark Ormiston's top priorities.

'As a company we feel that working conditions have to be good for the staff,' he says.

To that end, the company's administrative area has been transformed from five small offices into an open-plan workspace

Over the course of six months, new carpets were laid, the toilets were refurbished and the whole area was painted.

'We're carrying on with our Queen's Award for sustainable development, which we won in 2002,' says Mark.

'Business is not just about



working people hard and making money,' he says. 'We believe that if you invest in your staff and give them decent money and decent facilities, they will stay with you.'

The proof of his words is in the photographs of staff past and

present that decorate the walls of the office.

Many served the company for 40 years or longer.

'I think this shows that we must be doing something right,' says Mark.

This newsletter is printed on paper made with fibre from environmentally managed forests.