

# CEAG Context Firmengeschichte

## Quelle

It is not known who made this film, although it was probably commissioned by CEAG to promote its products. The CEAG factory in Barnsley has been going since before the First World War. It was originally, from 1906, a German company, Concordia Electric Aktiengesellschaft (AG). Like all German companies it was taken over by the Government at the outbreak of the First World War. However, British miners had much to thank German engineering for. Just before the outbreak of war, in 1912, the British Government offered a prize for the best design for an electric safety lamp for miners, prompted by a mining disaster – probably that at Cadeby Colliery in July of 1912 when 88 lives were lost after an explosion. A German engineer won the prize for his „Ceag“ or „Cage“ lamp.

Outwardly, the electric Cage lamp resembled the old safety lamp, but the resemblance ended there. The Cage lamp was safe where gasses had collected; it produced twice as much light as the safety lamp; its storage battery provided enough electrical energy to last sixteen hours, or two shifts; and it was tough enough to withstand rough treatment. Examples of these lamps, and others, can be found in Durham Mining Museum.

After the end of the war the Company was taken over by Mr Plummer – seen in the film holding up a lamp – who, prior to 1914 was the Yorkshire agent for imported electric lamps. Mr Plummer subsequently became President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Mayor. CEAG Lighting's first incandescent lamps were made for its miner's safety lamps in 1922, under the registered trade name „LUMAX“. Originally called the CEAG Miners' Supply Company, this became simply CEAG Limited in 1926. At the time this film was made, in the early 1930s, it had a workforce of about 600, rising to 800 during the Second World War.

In 1935 the old factory that can be seen in the film burnt down, and was replaced by a new four storey factory in 1936, the same year that Mr Plummer was made Mayor of Barnsley. This factory, on Queens Road, is due to be demolished in 2009. At the time of writing there are plans to donate one of the two giant lamp statues, which are perched on top, to the proposed new Barnsley Museum which, it is hoped, will be based in the lower floors of the Town Hall – although this is subject to a successful bid for funding.

May Youle, who had just started working at the factory when it burned down, has talked about the poor working conditions in the factory. The flux used in soldering all the small connections would splash onto the hands, causing sores, and was difficult to wash off. Breaks would only be for 5 minutes – a woman stood outside the toilet to time how long was spent in there! – and during the war they had to work weekends.

After World War Two it expanded into other products, such as auto car parts, which it exported as far afield as Peru and Turkey. The company passed on to Mr Plummer's son, and in the 1960s and 70s it made parts for the General Post Office (GPO) and emergency lighting for hospitals and other public buildings. An unsuccessful move into making tumble dryers was a sign of the company in decline. In 1981 it was acquired by the company sales director and has branched out into many areas: railway signal lamps; train lamps; long life lamps; marine lamps; low voltage incandescent lamps; and lamps for the Ministry of Defence and NATO.

The company moved to its present new site in March 2006. This building still stands in Barnsley town centre (although it is due to make way for a multi-storey car park). It has now (April 2008) come full circle and is distributing products from its former owners, the German CEAG — not to be confused

with Consilience Energy Advisory Group Ltd (CEAG), a consultancy group on global energy.

(With special thanks to Mac Caldcleugh of CEAG)

## References

A short history of the company, with some photographs, is held at the YFA.

[CEAG](#)

[Durham Mining Museum](#)

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