

Plaque Unveiled In Honour Of ‘Father Of Electricity’

April 12, 2016



Frances Ross with the plaque honouring her great-grandfather

A PLAQUE to commemorate the birthplace of one of Britain’s greatest inventors has been installed in Liverpool.

Sebastian De Ferranti – acclaimed as the father of the modern electricity production and distribution system – was born at The Havelock Building at 130 Bold Street, on 9 April, 1864.



Today, Tuesday 12 April, family members gathered to see the plaque installed at the premises where the story of how the modern world would come to be powered began.

The son of a Belgian-born photographer, whose successful studio was based at the Bold Street premises, Sebastian came to understand the importance of strong lighting in photography and the advantage that electricity would have brought to his father's work.

By the age of 13 he discussed with his father plans for the arc lamps necessary and the generator required to work them. These plans would ultimately lead him to becoming "The Man Who Lit London", creating one of the largest companies in pre-war Britain and forcing America to dump Thomas Edison's DC system in favour of AC.

Within three years of lodging the patent for his famous alternator, in 1882, he was appointed chief engineer of the London Electric Supply Corporation and at the age of just 24 helped establish the world's first High voltage AC power station at Deptford with the ability to create a then unimaginable 10,000 volts.

A giant of the Victorian age Sebastian, who as a child could often be found at Lime Street station transfixed by the steam trains, revolutionised the world with the power source we take for granted today.

The plaque, which has been commissioned by Liverpool BID Company – which is currently [overseeing another heritage project on Bold Street at The Lyceum](#), is to be erected in attendance with several members of Sebastian's family including his great-granddaughter Frances Ross.

Frances, who has been devising a new website – www.sebastiandeferranti.co.uk – to celebrate the genius of her acclaimed ancestor, said: “He particularly wanted to help relieve the drudgery of life for women in the home and saw that electricity would be able to do this.

“By producing strong AC electricity in a few huge power stations, distributing it through a national grid and transforming it to a weak current suitable for the home, it would be possible to have cheap electricity for all. This is much the same system as is still in use all over the world today.

“His amazing story began in Bold Street and we are delighted to see this plaque installed to honour his memory and achievements.”

