



Brampton Bryan Hall, near Leintwardine, in South Shropshire. Graham's team was responsible for all the electrical services for this Georgian mansion



Graham, standing left, with team outside one of the old miners' cottages in Priorslee Village in 1975, one of the first projects he was awarded by Telford Development Corporation

'Watt' an achievement

The boss of a Shropshire electrical firm who has provided power to some of the region's most prominent buildings is celebrating six decades in the profession by launching his own website.

Graham Leddington, who owns and runs his eponymous company, Leddington Electrical in Oakengates, has played a major role in lighting up buildings such as Hereford Cathedral and several National Trust buildings, including Attingham Park.

Now Graham is looking to the future by having a website built – which is due to go live at the beginning of the new year – and embracing other technological advances in society.

"We feel the website will assist us in communicating more widely with existing clients, and, potentially new ones too, especially through the channels of social media," says Graham. "Another growth area is likely to be electric vehicle charging, so we have gone through the rigours of special training, coupled with formal recognised qualifications, to become 'accredited and approved' installers."

This is all a far cry from the industry in August 1961, which is when Graham started work as an indentured apprentice electrician with the MEB.

"During the 1960s, all qualified electricians had to come through the MEB's apprenticeship scheme," remembers Graham.

"Having completed the full term of my apprenticeship, I continued at the MEB for another five years, in order to gain a lot more experience in a qualified role.

"However, ever since I was 16 years old, my proclaimed goal was always to start working for myself and to create a sustainable business so, with the unstinting support and love of my wife Pam, I became a sole trader in December 1972."

This new chapter in Graham's career path coincided with the growth of Telford New Town. As he admits, he was in the right place at the right time.

Having been identified as an approved



Graham Leddington in his office



One of Leddington Electrical's senior engineers putting the final touches to the crystal chandelier in the drawing room at Attingham Park after the firm had re-fitted it

contractor with the industry body, NICEIC, Leddington Electrical could tender for works being issued by Telford Development Corporation and other local authorities.

"The projects we won in the beginning were relatively small, mainly because I only employed a couple of people," explains Graham.

"Over the next few years we started to employ more electricians, and importantly, take on apprentices. Frequently, we were the nominated contractors for new developments across Telford's ever-

expanding industrial estates and by 1980 we were employing around 20 people, including several more apprentices."

Graham was keen though to explore new markets by using the skills he learnt at the MEB. He therefore set about building relationships with organisations controlling the type of buildings where these special skills were essential.

These organisations included the likes of the National Trust, Diocese of Lichfield, English Heritage, the Churches Conservation Trust, Diocese of Hereford, Landed Estates and other conservation-related organisations.

"This conscious decision proved to be a very good move for the company," explains Graham. "The majority of these well-known institutions, which we have been proud to serve for well over three decades, are to this day still valued clients.

"As a company, we really get great satisfaction working in buildings of national and international importance. In addition, our engineers are mindful and very proud to be involved in works that will survive their own long careers.

"The range of buildings we have been privileged to work on are too numerous to fully list, but include in excess of 20 National Trust properties, many churches and cathedrals, Much Wenlock Guildhall and a substantial number of privately-owned large country estates."

So, what does Graham believe is the secret of his success and longevity in a sector where new technologies and regulations are always surfacing?

"In the 48 years of the company's history, we have tried very hard to keep up with the industry's developments.

"We believe passionately in training and offering opportunity to the next generation. So much so, that over the years, we have trained over 50 apprentices.

"Although there has been a degree of uncertainty in this country over the last three years, together with some pessimism in certain quarters, it is not a view we share.

"We believe in a positive future, a view I had almost 60 years ago as a 16-year-old apprentice, embarking on a future career in this ever-developing industry – and my optimistic view has never changed nor dwindled."