

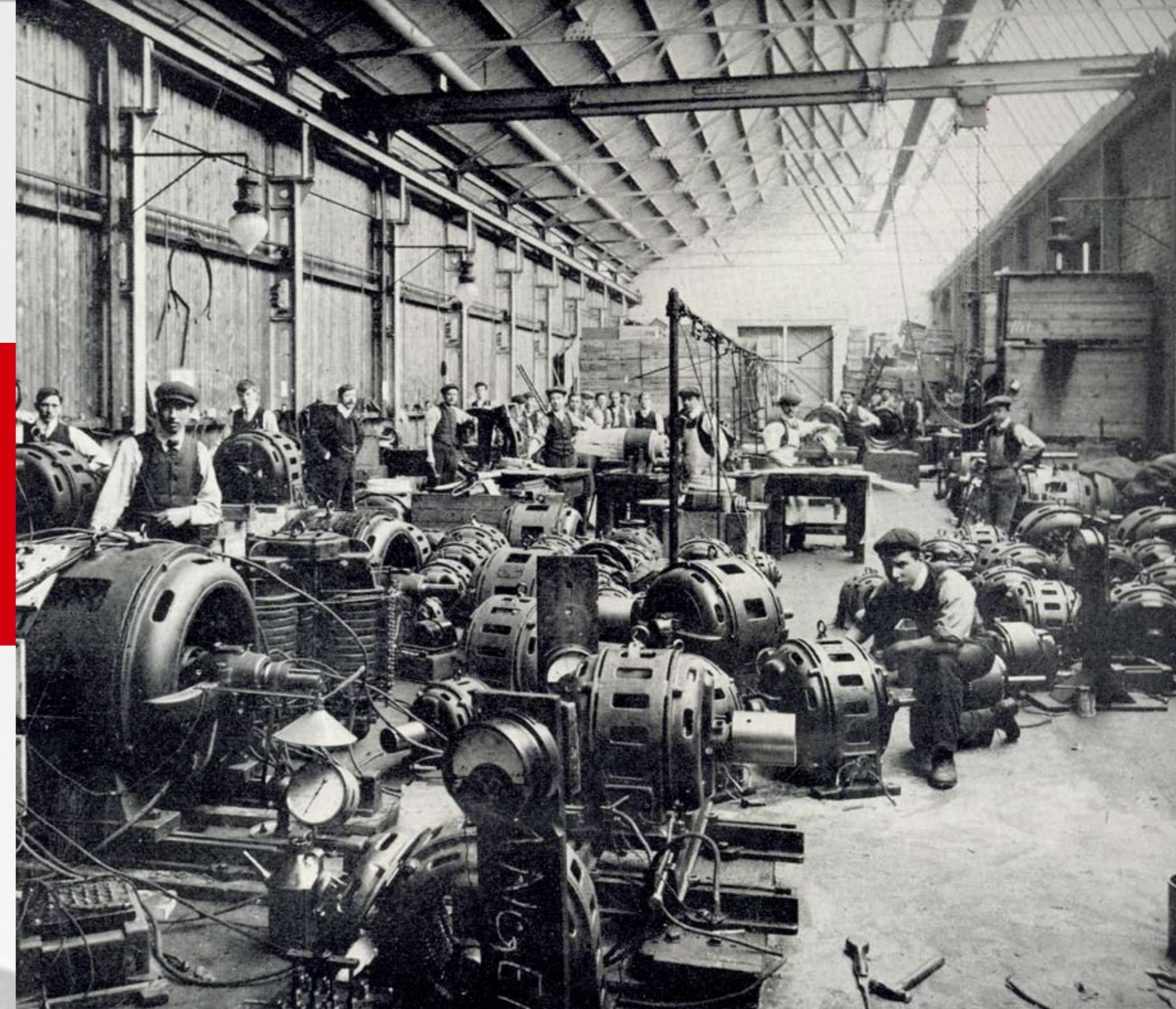
PEOPLE

The first thing that struck me when I joined the company was that it was a very close knit family firm almost like joining a family. There was an awful lot of brothers and sisters working there, people had married other peoples' sisters and it was very closely linked and most of the people there had been there for a long time. And for me coming in as an outsider, they made me very welcome, don't get me wrong, they were very friendly, but you did have this sort of slight feeling of being an interloper on someone else's family party. But slowly that changed over the years.

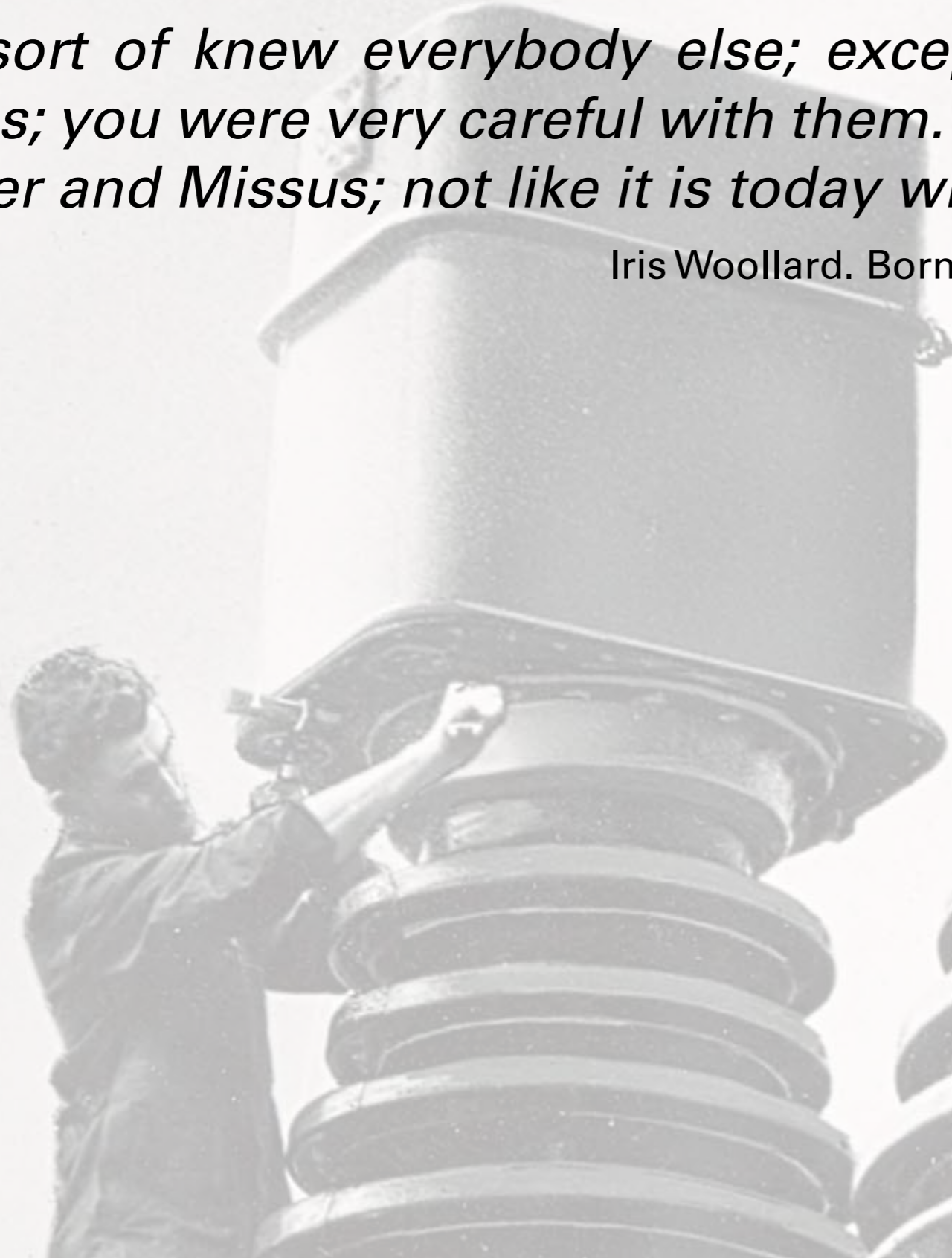
Michael Lewis. Born 1940, at HSPT 1963 – 2003

Everybody sort of knew everybody else; except, of course the upper bosses; you were very careful with them. There was no – it was all Mister and Missus; not like it is today with first names.

Iris Woollard. Born 1919, at HSPT 1935-1952



interior of the works at Blackhorse Lane 1909



Most of the employees lived nearby. The company was an important local employer and many started as apprentices when they left school at 15. Apprentices would learn 'on the job' as well as attending evening classes at Walthamstow College.

Things were a lot different in those days especially for people like myself who left school with no qualifications. Factories just needed workers, you weren't going to be unemployed and redundancy wasn't a word that anyone knew in the sixties.

John Brown. Born 1947, at HSPT 1963-2003

The range of skills that the people had within the company, well it was endless – plumbing skills, bending copper, braising skills, paper skills, pressed board skills, woodworking skills, metalworking skills, platers, welders, painters, trimmers, blasters – coil winders

Barry Mingay. Born 1944, at HSPT 1959-2003

I started there as a filing clerk, working three and a half hours a day. Then I went on to progress-chasing, and then – about six years before it closed down – I was promoted to buyer. So that was quite a big step – from filing clerk to buyer – so what was nice about Hawker Siddeley is that you could get on; and, being a woman in engineering, you could still get on if you wanted to.

Josie Reynolds. Born 1947, at HSPT 1989-2003

It was a job for life... There was very much the ethos of a family, there was an ethos of the family if you wanted to be part of that family.

Hazel Dawson. Born 1945, at HSPT 1969-1971

