

# Preface

I was delighted when Butterworth-Heinemann asked me to edit a new edition of *Mechanical Engineer's Reference Book*. Upon looking at its predecessor, it was clear that it had served the community well, but a major update was required. The book clearly needed to take account of modern methods and systems.

The philosophy behind the book is that it will provide a qualified engineer with sufficient information so that he or she can identify the basic principles of a subject and be directed to further reading if required. There is a blurred line between this set of information and a more detailed set from which design decisions are made. One of my most important tasks has been to define this distinction, so that the aims of the book are met and its weight is minimized! I hope I have been able to do this so that the information is neither cursory nor complex.

Any book of this size will inevitably contain errors, but I hope these will be minimal. I will be pleased to receive any information from readers so that the book can be improved.

To see this book in print is a considerable personal achievement, but I could not have done this without the help of others. First, I would like to thank all the authors for their tremendous hard work. It is a major task to prepare information for a book of this type, and they have all done a magnificent job. At Butterworth-Heinemann, Duncan Enright and Deena Burgess have been a great help, and Dal Koshal of the University of Brighton provided considerable support. At the University of Central Lancashire, Gill Cooke and Sue Wright ensured that the administration ran smoothly.

I hope you find the book useful.

*Ted Smith  
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