

Annual Winchester Seminar - 13th May 2009

Yet again we have seen another hugely successful annual seminar organised by the Southern Branch Committee. This was the 18th Annual seminar with the theme of the day being *"Bottoms up to the Highway Engineer"*. As the title describes the seminar went through the complete road construction process from its conception through to the finished surface and was aimed at all degrees of technical knowledge from the person new to this type of work to the more experienced individual looking at new and innovative methods and products.



The day which was a triumphant success began with the arrival of over 100 delegates from all over the South East to The Guildhall in Winchester. For several years now the Southern Branch has been fortunate to have held its annual seminar at this magnificent venue, a great setting for the day. There was a total of 9 guest speakers throughout the day each covering one aspect of road construction. The day began with a presentation on Excavation and Compaction: Plant, Methods, Materials and Controls and how prior to any works taking place it is essential to carry out Ground investigation works. The presentations continued with Sustainable Drainage Systems that are primarily used in the subgrade material and also the use and

design of Modular Geocellular Tanks which are being used in car parks and small residential housing estates. It is hoped that eventually they will be used on more trafficked roads.

Delegates were then led through sub base materials and the use of type 1 and 2 materials and how they are graded for the size of aggregate as well as Asphalt reinforcement materials such as Grid Seal that can be used beneath either the surface or binder course to eliminate or reduce cracking of the road taking place.

Other presentations included Design of Highway Maintenance using recycled materials following the deteriorations of the road. It looked at the design of new surface courses which use 100% recycled materials. This is becoming more relevant as everyone in the highways industry is expected to now use recycled materials wherever possible. Bond coats whilst surfacing was also discussed in one of the afternoon presentations. During this presentation the difference between bond and tack coats was explained, as was how and when it should be applied and in what quantities depending on the type of surface that is being laid. Where possible machine applying the bond coat, rather than spraying by hand, should be carried out as this will give a better overall coverage.



The day's seminar concluded with a presentation on Surface Treatments which includes Surface dressing and Micro surfacing, which are both cost effective treatments and can also prolong the life of a road by several years. High friction surfacing is used in areas where a good skid resistance is required and Retexturing is a fast and less invasive treatment compared with others and also requires not regulating for waterproofing to be carried out.

All of the presentations were extremely informative giving information on new methods and projects that could be used in the construction and maintenance of a road. The whole day was extremely worthwhile and delegate feedback showed that it was either 'excellent' or 'good' value for money which is what we set out to achieve. Members can download a complete set of the presentations from this years *"Bottom Up to the Highway Engineer"* from the branch website, but they should contact the Branch secretary to obtain the access password.

As ever, the Branch Committee are acutely aware of the valuable contribution given by our Speakers all of whom give up their time to support our event. To them our grateful thanks. The committee will shortly begin planning next year's seminar which will be advertised on the Southern branch website.