

IHE Southern Branch Seminar 2011 - Wednesday 7 September
Ashburton Hall, Queen Elizabeth 11 Centre, Winchester

It is the duty of the Professional Institutions to support their members, set an example and offer good advice.

The Southern Branch of IHE has always subscribed to these values and the Winchester Annual Seminar this year was no exception.

Following government guidelines we set out to offer our value for money seminar at an even lower cost.....and succeeded!



Our move from the traditional Guildhall venue to HCC's Ashburton Hall was instrumental in our cost savings and we are grateful to our President Steve Spender and the staff members at HCC for its procurement. The event achieved its consistent high standard at our lowest ever fee of £45 per head.

Turning to the event titled 'Highway Engineers – Promoting Safer Roads' this was the third in a series which has previously covered topical maintenance issues with 'Highway Engineers – Investing in the Asset' in 2010 which followed 'Bottoms up to the Highway Engineer' in 2009 where we set out to provide an insight into what a highway consists of in terms of construction and performance.

The day opened under the morning Chairmanship of Steve Spender with Paul Watters, Head of Public Affairs at the AA. His Keynote speech focussed on the Golden Triangle which explains the link between 'The Car, the Driver/Rider and the Road.' In summation he advised that the car and its development has improved dramatically due to EuroNCAP standards whilst Drivers and Riders are being offered improved education and Roads have been designed to reduce accidents. For example the Hindhead Tunnel scheme alone is estimated to save 221,000 accidents over the previous A3 layout but at the same time authorities are reducing intervention levels for maintenance which will require us as engineers to think up smarter solutions.

Following Paul, Dr John Fletcher of TRL gave us an enlightening introduction to MAAP (Micro computer Accident Analysis Package), its early development and progress to today's version which is iMAAP that can be purchased in Windows format and is web enabled for use by highway engineers requiring the latest updated traffic accident data for use in scheme design and improvements. An excellent use of today's modern technology.

Next on was Adam Bunce from Portsmouth City explaining the merits of the 20mph 'blanket' speed limit order on the City side roads. This is the first of its kind in the UK and has been a neat and successful answer to speed on the Portsea Island where 190,000 people live on just 42km of land. The scheme has so far led to a 21% reduction in collisions and 22% reduction in casualties with a migration towards more sustainable transport by the populous at large. An impressive scheme surely to be considered by others responsible for highways in densely populated urban areas.



He was followed by Duncan Knox from Surrey CC who heads up the Road Safety Team for the County. He gave an excellent delivery on their partnership with Surrey Police which has developed a countywide scheme called Drive SMART. This is a £1m budgeted scheme to address anti social driving behaviour. It has embraced novel approaches such as the employment of school children acting as mobile speed camera operators outside their respective schools and then being allowed to interrogate the offending drivers stopped for speeding – perhaps the ultimate humiliation for the guilty! This would seem to be a 'SMART' solution to a national problem which has enabled the County to meet all their accident reduction targets to date.

The education theme was continued by Lyn Morris of srsCULTURE a partnership 'cradle to grave' approach to the subject set up between her and our Branch sponsor Nick Stilwell of Stilwell Road Safety Ltd. The CULTURE title is translated into 'ContinUous LifeTime Sustainable Road Safety Education' and provides a comprehensive web based package aimed primarily at schools and can be embraced into the school curriculum by way of a School Development Plan. For a joining fee of £365 this must be good value for any school and the partnership are to be congratulated on this novel and ready to use tool.



After a light buffet lunch break the afternoon session continued under the chairmanship of our Branch Secretary Tony Suter. Tony has been the architect of this year's seminar as the topic is dear to his heart since his background as a former Surrey Police Traffic Officer followed by traffic management and design since retirement he has been dedicated to the business of safe roads. He is to be congratulated on the excellent design and formatting of this event.

Turning to the 'on road' application of the business, Lee Shepherd of AGD Systems Ltd gave a detailed explanation of RADAR and its current application in simple, reliable, low maintenance signs and signals. By using this equipment, passive signs can now be installed without the laying of costly loops and traffic signals can be remotely adjusted to suit all working conditions from a monitoring control centre.

Continuing the theme of passive signing, Andy Pledge was next up to give us an overview of the 'Passive Safety UK Guidelines for Specification and Use of Passively Safe Street Furniture on the UK Road Network. Andy has been a leading light in passive safety and is currently MD of UK Roads, a company set up purely to promote the merits of this type of safety which he illustrated with video clips of products under test.

The 'Law' came next in this year's package and was delivered succinctly by Ian Jeffrey of Sussex Police. Ian is their Traffic Management Officer and a friend of S Branch IHE having delivered previously at a branch meeting. The topic was the 'Corporate Manslaughter & Corporate Homicide Act' which has its application for us engineers in the 'Road Death Investigation Manual'. This may have been a 'wake up' call for many in the audience as no one in the profession is exempt from its implications especially senior managers who may well be caught up in the web of negligence if attention to detail has not been paid during design and maintenance of their highways. Ian's examples and case study were to say the least blood curdling!

Last on the stage was Phil Cook who ably stood in for Steve Procter from TMS Consultancy, Steve being unavoidably absent. TMS undertake Road Safety Audits and these still being very much with us in the current climate, Phil described the challenges facing RSA's and the conflicts which potentially arise between a judge's ruling and an engineer's requirements. Not always an easy decision! He advised that trained and certificated auditors will be required on all TERN highways later this year, a requirement for the Highways Agency and its Contractors but since this is an EU requirement will the UK comply.....watch this space!

The day ended with a summary and thanks from our Branch Chairman, Chris Stark.

A successful 20th Seminar for the Branch!

Chris Bowley
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Branch Recruitment Officer