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Similar Challenges Face New Zealand and the United Kingdom

During his recent lecture in London, John Gardiner (Deputy Chief Executive of IPENZ) highlighted the similarity between the social and economic issues facing both NZ and the UK. Issues such as the continuity of electricity supply, effective public transportation, shortages of key technical skills, modernisation of the health service, environmental concerns, stressed pension schemes and the insolvency of national railways seem to strike a common theme.

Taking the broader view, it appears that the real challenges facing the modern Western world are more about getting the traditional things right, such as core infrastructure and public services – rather than perfecting the next high tech novelty. The demise of Concorde symbolises the end of an era where technical perfection and engineering beauty could outweigh simple practicality & cost effectiveness.

And yet there is much room for optimism. The engineering profession holds the answer to many of the above challenges (though we may struggle a bit on the pensions issue !), and is uniquely positioned to play a fundamental role in shaping our society and economy.

Recent Events

Annual Summer BBQ and Funday

Once again we were privileged to enjoy the fine setting of the Henley Rowing Club grounds on the banks of the River Thames for our annual BBQ last August. The turnout of around thirty five people was an increase on the previous year and the atmosphere had a really positive buzz about it. Don't miss out next year ... why not mark your diaries in advance for Sunday 15th August 2004!

Special thanks to Ian for arranging fantastic meats from the local butcher, and also to his wife Melissa for co-ordinating salads and desserts. Thanks to Graham for arranging the great selection of Kiwi and local beers, wines and soft drinks – with plenty of ice to keep them all cool. Thanks also to all those who manned barbecues and helped out on the day.

Committee Meeting held September 2003

A committee meeting was held on 3rd September at Foster Wheelers' Offices. Topics covered included:

- Agreement of Notes of Meeting from the June 2003 AGM, prior to sending to IPENZ Wellington
- Impact of changes to IPENZ funding of branches as it affects IPENZ UK
- Future activities including John Gardiners' visit, proposed technical talks & site visits
- Planning for the pre-xmas soiree, which we are hosting this year (details below)
- Administration - membership database update, and renewal of Public Liability Insurance

Visit from John Gardiner, IPENZ Deputy Chief Executive Officer

As mentioned above, we had the pleasure of welcoming John Gardiner during his recent visit to the UK on IPENZ business. Our thanks go to him for the very interesting and informative lecture

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he gave at the Southern Cross pub in London. As well as the lecture, there was ample time for the thirty attendees to socialise and ask a range of questions. John touched on a number of issues, which I have endeavoured to summarise:

New Zealand Economy: current strong growth is heavily weighted in the building sector, although the indication is that the fundamentals are sound for sustained future growth.

The proposed sale of National Bank to ANZ has been considered a risk issue by the Govt., and the sale put on hold to ensure that the HQ and clearing systems of this major bank remain in NZ.

Current Technical Issues: As mentioned above, electricity supply and transportation have become major technical and political issues. The recent Tranzrail insolvency has parallels with the controversial Railtrack debacle in the UK.

Building quality is a major focus area with weather tightness of buildings and the John Scarry Report (investigating the calibre of structural design) influencing policy makers. These have culminated in a new building law currently before parliament, which would increase future building costs.

Engineering: There is a significant shortage of engineers in NZ, and a recruitment flyer for Haynes was handed out!. There is also a plan to tempt back engineers working in non engineering sectors.

The commercial climate is resulting in widescale amalgamation of consultancy firms and a number of offshore companies buying up NZ consultancies. Beca Carter remains the largest NZ owned firm.

In general, the profile of the profession is increasing as recognition that engineers have a major role in solving social and economic issues.

IPENZ & CPEng: IPENZ has a NZD\$5.5M grant to promote science, engineering and technology careers. There will be a growth in IPENZ staff to cover facilitation and promotion roles. As a result of this growth, IPENZ is now exploring options for new office premises.

By 31st December, all NZ Registered Engineers need to apply to join the CPEng register as the registered engineer qualification ceases to exist on that date. The CPEng qualification is open to all suitably qualified persons, not exclusively to IPENZ members. There is therefore a fine balance to be struck between promoting the CPEng qualification and maintaining (and growing) the membership base of IPENZ.

Forthcoming Events

Your committee has been busy arranging some interesting events over the coming winter months...

Pre-Christmas Technical Talk Hosted by IEAust

We have been kindly invited by IEAust to join them for a technical talk they have organised with Dr Phil Morgan of TRL Limited. The talk is titled "A Novel Approach to the Acoustic Characterisation of Porous Road Surfaces" and will explore the application of emerging technology to reduce road noise. If you are as mystified as I am, then this promises to be a very enlightening talk!

Date: Friday 21st November, 2003

Time: 18:30 for light refreshments for a 19:15 start

Location: Ove Arup Offices, Fitzroy Room, 8 Fitzroy St, London W1P 6BQ

Cost: £5 per person

Please return the reply slips, including appropriate monies, by 15th November.

Christmas Soiree

This year we have the pleasure of inviting our Australian friends to join us for the pre Christmas soiree. We will be hosting this great event in the Penthouse of New Zealand House. The evening is a tremendous amount of fun with good food and a lovely selection of wines, and of course we always look to try and balance - if not exceed - the numbers of our IEAust colleagues!

Date: Friday 5th December 2003
Location: Penthouse, New Zealand House, Haymarket, London
Time: 7.00pm – 10.00pm
Cost: £16.00 per person

Please arrange your party and reply promptly using the attached reply slip (by 25th November at the latest) to help ensure that the Committee can make all proper provisions to welcome you to a successful evening.

Combined Technical Talk 2004

Subject: West Rail, Hong Kong: Design and Construction

It is the IPENZ turn to host the combined IPENZ/IEAust Technical Talk. Due to the work and social pressures leading up to Christmas, the committee decided that it would be preferable to hold the Technical Talk in the New Year rather than cram it in before the end of 2003.

We are fortunate to have a very interesting speaker, Mr Jonathan Gammon, FIPENZ, and Director of Geotechnical Services at Mouchel Parkman who will provide an overview of the design and construction of West Rail for the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation. This new addition to the urban railway network in Hong Kong is about 30km long. For almost half its length it runs underground, with the remainder elevated on viaducts. Drawing on his experience as Geotechnical Manager during preliminary and detailed design, and as Geotechnical Resident Engineer during construction, Jonathan will focus on the Tsuen Wan section where reclamation was required prior to construction of the underground station and approach tunnels.

Date: Wednesday, 11th February, 2004
Location: London – address details to be published when finalised nearer the time
Time: 7.00pm for 7.30 pm
Cost: £5 per person

A light buffet meal and drinks will be served at the talk. Please write or email the Hon Secretary to register your interest, so that location details can be forwarded in the new year.

Other UK Association News

Articles for the Newsletter

As always contributions to the newsletter would be very much appreciated. If you have any news for us, events etc. that you would like us to tell people about in the newsletter please e-mail or fax them to the Hon. Secretary. Feel free to write about the projects you are working on, any differences in British practice compared with NZ, or how you resolved any particular difficulties encountered.

The honorary secretary is currently editor at large of this fine publication, following in the noble tradition set by Malcolm Davidson. However, the plan (hope!) is that a keen volunteer will takeover the editorship. Please contact the hon secretary for further details of this opportunity.

Website

We are fortunate to have a great IPENZ UK Association Website <http://www.ipenz.org.uk>. This is a reminder that membership information and details of upcoming events are regularly updated and available over the internet.

To allow more efficient communication in future, could all members who have not already done so please register their email address with the IPENZ UK Yahoo Groups Email List (on the website). This will enable improved information flow in the future and the ability to send out event reminders etc to members more spontaneously and cheaply than by post.

News From New Zealand

A selection of news and current events from back home - and of course the Rugby World Cup:

Rugby – the eight teams left in the knockout phase of Rugby World Cup 2003 are preparing for the weekend's quarter finals in Melbourne and Brisbane. The full breakdown of the quarter final 'line ups' is as follows:

Quarter Final 1: New Zealand v South Africa quarter final 1 between Pool D winner New Zealand and Pool C runner up South Africa at the Telstra Dome in Melbourne on Sat 8th Nov.

Quarter Final 2: Australia v Scotland: quarter final 2 between Pool A winner Australia and Pool B runner up Scotland at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on Saturday 8 November.

Quarter Final 3: France v Ireland: quarter final 3 between Pool B winner France and Pool A runner up Ireland at the telstra Dome on Sunday 9 November.

Quarter Final 4: England v Wales:

quarter final 4 at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane between Pool C winner England and Pool D runner up Wales on Sunday 9 November.

US nuclear ships issue- there will be no olive branch offered to the US over the contentious nuclear ships issue, according to Prime Minister Helen Clark even though the National Party have called on the Govt. to invite a US warship to visit NZ waters.

Free trade deal with Thailand – a free trade deal is likely to be signed with Thailand following Helen Clarks' meeting with the Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in Bangkok recently. This could prove the start of an enlarged Pacific free trade area, which could be of great benefit to NZ.

PM and Ministers salaries - Prime Minister Helen Clark's salary will increase \$60,900 in an overhaul of politicians' pay announced today. The boost, effective from November 1, takes Ms Clark's basic salary to \$305,000 before tax. MPs are getting an across the board pay rise to bring them in line with the wages being paid to public servants

Changes to National Party Leader – in a further parallel with the UK, there have been changes to the NZ National Party leadership (read Conservative Party in the UK). Bill English has been dumped as leader of the National Party and replaced with the former Reserve Bank Governor, Don Brash.

Bottled Water – and now something we have all long suspected - millions of dollars are being wasted as the hype over bottled water sweeps the country. Sales in New Zealand are valued at \$58 million but an analysis conducted for The Aucklander newspaper by Hill Laboratories reveals ordinary tap water is every bit as good as bottled water.

Nurses strike - Oamaru Hospital Nurses decided today to go back to mediation after Otago District Health Board (ODHB) indicated today more money may be available to pay them. The nurses took strike action yesterday and on Tuesday after deciding a 1.9 per cent pay increase offer by their employer Waitaki District Health Services was inadequate. The nurses want pay parity with other South Island nurses.

Dates for Your Diary

IEAust Technical Talk

Joint IPENZ/IEAust pre-xmas Soiree

Joint Technical Talk (IPENZ speaker)

Site visit and pub lunch

Annual BBQ and fun day

Friday, 21st November 2003

Friday, 5th December 2003

Wednesday 11th February, 2004

April/May 2004 (details to follow)

Sunday, 15th August 2004

Web site for IPENZ UK Association

<http://www.ipenz.org.uk>