

Chair's Report for 2007 - 2008

This report covers the year from the AGM in March 2007, which corresponds to the tenure of your retiring committee.

Monthly Meetings

All our meetings have been held in the Arup Headquarters in Fitzroy Street, London. We are very grateful to Arup for making a room available to us and to Peter Burgess and Navin Mishra for their help with meeting organisation. During this period, the Group held nine meetings; not meeting in July, August and December.

As in previous years, we have tried to expand the range of topics and speakers.

Our talk after the last AGM in March 2007 was on "*Building Better Transport, a critical overview of Scottish Transport Strategy*" by Dr Iain Docherty from University of Glasgow. In April we had a discussion about "*Railfreight in Europe: liberalisation or dirigisme?*" given by Alan Bennett and Francesco Dionori from Steer Davies Gleave.

May's topic, rarely covered by the TEG, was on "*The measurement and estimation of agglomeration economies*" by Dr Daniel Graham from Imperial College London, whilst in June we returned to a rail topic but from a different angle: "*The impact of technology on ticketing and rail pricing*" by Alec McTavish, the Director of Policy and Regulation at ATOC.

After the summer break, in September, we had a presentation on the link between shipping and land infrastructure: "*Supply and demand in the deep sea container industry and its impact on GB transport infrastructure*" by Mike Garratt of MDS Transmodal.

Following our look at walking in January 2005, we heard from Andy Cope of Sustrans in October on "*Developing an economic appraisal framework for walking, cycling schemes*".

The last meeting of 2007 saw the first of three talks on an air topic. In November we heard Chris Tarry talk about "*Any winners? The possible and likely impacts of Open Skies*" and in January 2008 Dr Nigel Dennis of the University of Westminster discussed "*Developments in airline Pricing and Yield Management*". The final air-related talk in February, by David Thompson and David Hart of Department for Transport, was on "*Competition, regulation and investment in airport capacity – issues in the UK*".

Average attendance at meetings over this period was 25. The number of attendees ranged from 17 to 43. Just under a quarter of attendees were guest, the proportion of guests rising for the more popular and topical meetings as would be expected.

Seminar

Last March we ran a very successful seminar, which attracted around 50 participants. Whilst we have not organised another seminar for this March, it is the retiring committee's wish to organise one later this year if the new committee agrees.

By making this an annual (or slightly less frequent) event our standing in the profession will be improved and our Group become more widely known.

Publications

The Journal continued to be published under the able editorship of Peter Gordon. There has been a period of consolidation of the Journal but it is hoped that the new Committee will continue to look at ways of further improving the quality of production bearing in mind the need to keep costs to an acceptable level.

Adobe Acrobat "pdf" versions of presentations are now distributed to members by email on a regular basis and we are grateful to our speakers for allowing us to distribute their presentations in this manner.

Membership and Finance

Our Treasurer and Membership Secretary will be making a separate report, which shows that the Group continues to be in strong financial position and we have the reserves needed to consider longer term developments such as an annual seminar.

Retiring Committee

I would like to thank all the Committee for all their hard work over the last year. My sincere thanks go to Dick Dunmore (Secretary and Webmaster) Gregory Marchant (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Peter Gordon (Editor) and Tom Cohen (Publicity), Francesca Medda and our newest member Jeremy Drew. Francesca has indicated that she wishes to stand down from the Committee due to the pressure of a very heavy workload. I am glad that all other members of the committee have indicated their willingness to stand again.

I would also like to thank Rebecca Graham for her excellent work as our only paid assistant in administering the Group.

With the committee's support, the past year has seen steady improvement with a varied programme of talks. The Group continues to have learned and lively discussions at the talks and, I hope, enabled the exchange of ideas and developments between practitioners and researchers in the field.

Laurie Baker
Chair
26th March 2008