



## Chair's Report for 2008 - 2009

This report covers the year from the AGM in March 2008, 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 Navin Mishra and Peter Burgess for their help with organising the meetings. 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 2008 was on "*New thinking on investment appraisal – the case of Crossrail*" by Rana Roy from Transport for London. In April we had a rare discussion about the important issue of maintenance of the road network "*Financial optimization of road maintenance in London?*" given by Duro Basic from TfL.

May's topic was on "*NATA Refresh*" by Gavin Gaunt and Paul O'Sullivan from Department for Transport, whilst in June we heard about "*The High Level Output Specification and Network Modelling Framework*" from Tom Worsley and Preetum Domah of the DfT.

After the summer break, in September, we had a presentation from John Swanson of Steer Davies Gleave on "*System Dynamics*". In October, Stephen Glaister of the RAC Foundation spoke about "*Roads and Reality: a High Level Output Specification*" that we could compare with June's talk in relation to railways. The last meeting of 2008 had a talk by Nick Fenton of the Highways Agency on the "*Design and economic evaluation of Active Traffic Management*".

The New Year saw a talk about "*Container port development in China*" by Jamie Simpson of GHK in January and "*The financial case for railway electrification*" by Chris Stokes, which saw a lively debate.

Average attendance at meetings over this period was 22. The number of attendees ranged from 15 to 26. Under a quarter of attendees were guests, the proportion of guests rising for the more popular and topical meetings as would be expected.

### Seminar

On March 6<sup>th</sup> we held a very successful seminar at One Great George Street (ICE headquarters), entitled "*Transport – lifeblood of every city?*", which attracted 70 participants. There were four stimulating speakers chaired by Professor Peter Mackie with a lively discussion. I thank Julie Mills, Tom Worsley and Gregory Marchant for organising the excellent seminar.

## **Publications**

The Journal continued to be published under the able editorship of Peter Gordon and the Journal has had some re-design to improve the product. The reports of talks include the discussion that follows the presentation, which forms an important part of our meetings. The addition of book reviews has provided further improvements to the Journal.

A benefit of membership is the continued distribution of Acrobat pdf versions of presentations 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 thank all Committee members for all their hard work over the last year. My sincere thanks go to Dick Dunmore (Secretary and Web Master), Gregory Marchant (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Peter Gordon (Editor) and Tom Cohen (Publicity), Jeremy Drew and our members elected for the first time last year: Peter Burgess, Kevin Cheung, Julie Mills, and Tom Worsley. I am glad that all 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*  
*12<sup>th</sup> March 2009*