

## Chair's Report for 2011

This report covers the calendar year 2011, corresponding to the period covered by the finance report and accounts. This reverts to historical reporting practice and enables the Chair's report to be circulated well in advance of the AGM; it does mean that this year there is some small overlap with last year's 2010-11 Chair's report.

### 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 and refreshments available to us and to William Wingate and Scott Clyne for their help with meeting organisation. During this period, the Group held nine meetings; not meeting in July, August or December.

Our meetings over the year have covered topics across the transport field, with a set of expert speakers:

- In January 2011, Mark Weiner from HS2 Ltd spoke on '*Modelling and appraisal of HS2*';
- The February talk was from Jake Cartmell of the Department for Transport, Andrew Meaney from Oxera and William Wingate of Arup, speaking on '*Revisiting the elasticity-based framework for forecasting rail demand*'.
- In March, following the AGM, Nick Aldworth of Transport for London explained the '*Barclays Cycle Hire Scheme in London*';
- In April, Professor Chris Nash of the Institute of Transport Studies at the University of Leeds spoke on '*EU Rail Policy*';
- In May, we heard from John Dodgson on '*The historical approach to identifying wider economic benefits from major urban rail investments: the Liverpool Overhead Railway*';
- In June, Tim Coombs of Aviation Economics and Peter Hind of RDC Aviation presented on '*Aviation forecasting and Emissions Trading: the prospects for airlines in a carbon-traded world*';
- Our September talk was from Andrew Last of Minnerva, on '*Concessionary Travel*';
- In October, Keith Buchan of the Metropolitan Transport Research Unit presented on '*Lorry Road User Charging*';
- And our last talk of the year, in November, was from Gavin Gaunt of the Department for Transport, on '*DfT Transport Appraisal Methods – Recent Developments*'.

Average attendance at meetings over this period was 30, an increase on recent years, with averages of 25 in 2010/11 and 26 in 2009/10. The HS2 and DfT appraisal methods talks were particularly popular. The number of attendees ranged from 17 to 46 and, overall, one fifth of attendees were guests.

## **Seminar**

As I reported in my 2010-11 report, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2011 the TEG ran a special half-day seminar on '*Transport – the route to recovery?*' examining the interactions between transport and the economy. The seminar was chaired by Professor Roger Vickerman from the University of Kent and the four speakers were Alan Wenban-Smith (Urban & Regional Policy), Bridget Rosewell (Volterra), Dominic Walley (KPMG) and John Swanson (Steer Davies Gleave).

The seminar was attended by 50 participants – somewhat lower than the 70 attendees at the 2009 seminar. However, the seminar was very successful in terms of the quality of discussion: a vigorous level of debate was had during the afternoon, continuing into the tea break and after the formal session had ended.

It is the committee's intention to continue to hold special seminars such as this in the future, in order to cover topics of special interest in greater depth and to take advantage of the financial reserves we have built up.

## **Publications**

The Transport Economists' Group Journal continued to be edited ably by Peter Gordon during 2011, with two issues published reporting the monthly talks and discussions, and an additional edition reporting the seminar. We intend to continue to publish the Journal in full colour so that graphics from speakers' presentations can be incorporated in the write-ups of the talks.

During the year, Dick Dunmore created an electronic archive of TEG Journals from 1986 and placed this on the TEG website, together with an index of all talks over that period. We hope this will provide a valuable resource to members and other researchers. My thanks to Dick for his efforts in putting this together.

Speakers' presentations continue to be distributed to members by email after each meeting 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 finance report, which shows that the Group remains in a strong financial position, despite the financial loss resulting from the March 2011 seminar.

## **Publicity**

The Committee has made steps in 2011 to update the way we publicise the Group and our talks in order to maintain (and, if possible, to increase) membership levels. The main channels used comprise:

- Our website (<http://www.transecongroup.org/>) which is updated each month with details of forthcoming talks;
- Monthly emails to members advising of the next talk and the forward programme;
- A flyer for each talk sent out with the monthly email, intended to be suitable for posting on office notice boards;
- A general TEG flyer which was circulated to university transport departments, to advertise the Group to potential student members;
- A new Twitter account (@TransEconGroup) which is used to alert followers to forthcoming talks.

Members' views on the use of these and any other potential publicity channels would be welcomed.

## **Retiring Committee**

Most of the hard work in running the Transport Economists' Group is carried out by Committee members and so I would like to express my gratitude to all the Committee for all their substantial contributions over the last year. Sincere thanks go to Gregory Marchant (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), Dick Dunmore (Secretary and Webmaster) and Peter Gordon (Editor), plus members without portfolio Jeremy Drew, Tom Worsley, Gerard Whelan and William Wingate.

I would also like to thank Melanie Buchan for her excellent work as our Group Administrator.

Our monthly TEG meetings have continued to provide a forum for economists and others interested in transport to keep up-to-date with new developments in the transport economics field. Our discussions have often been lively and are always well-informed.

The Transport Economists' Group continues to play a valuable role in providing a forum for economists and others interested in transport. Our meetings keep members up-to-date with current developments in transport and new approaches to economics, with expert presentations on a variety of topics. Members' contributions to debates provide for well-informed and lively discussions which we hope will continue.

*Julie Mills*

*Chair*

*29<sup>th</sup> January 2012*