

## Chair's Report for 2009 - 2010

This report covers the year from the AGM in March 2009 to February 2010, corresponding 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 and refreshments available to us and to Peter Burgess, Navin Mishra and Guoxun Qi for their help with meeting organisation. During this period, the Group held nine meetings; not meeting in July, August and December.

We have been fortunate, as in previous years, to have a wide range of topics and speakers at our meetings over the year:

- In March 2009, following the AGM, Paul McMahon, from the Office of Rail Regulation gave a presentation on *"The Periodic review 2008: context, decisions and implications"*;
- In April, Professor Peter White from the University of Westminster talked about the *"The local bus industry - current economic issues and future prospects"*;
- In May, David Starkie of Economics Plus spoke on *"The airport industry in a competitive environment: a UK perspective"*;
- In June, the topic was the *"London Overground concession: standards, ticketing and structure"* by Peter Field and Carole Smales of London Rail;
- In September, we heard from Adrian Gault, chief economist from the Committee on Climate Change, on *"Meeting transport's carbon challenges"*;
- In October, John Segal of MVA Consultancy presented on *"Developing a high speed rail strategy for the UK"*;
- November's talk was from Allan Provins of *eftec* on *"Valuing transport's impact on the natural landscape"*;
- In January, Dr Richard Batley from ITS at the University of Leeds spoke on *"Methods for valuing the reliability of travel across different modes"*;
- And finally, the February talk was from Jonathan Pugh, Head of Rail Regulation and Standards, Strategy and Investment, Transport Scotland, speaking on *"Devolution: lessons learned and opportunities for Scotland's railways"*.

Average attendance at meetings over this period was 26, slightly higher than the last two years which had averages of 22 in 2008/09 and 25 in 2007/08. The number of attendees

ranged from 14 to 46. Just under one fifth of attendees were guests, the proportion of guests rising for the more popular and topical meetings as would be expected.

## **Seminar**

In March 2009 we ran a very successful half-day seminar on "*Transport – lifeblood of every city*", attended by 70 participants. Whilst we have not organised another seminar during this year, it is the retiring committee's wish to organise one for early 2011 if the new committee agrees, and to continue this on a biennial basis in the future.

## **Publications**

The Transport Economists' Group Journal continued to be published during 2009/10 under the able editorship of Peter Gordon. Three issues have been published during the course of the year, reporting the monthly talks and discussions, and also containing a number of book reviews. A further edition of the Journal was produced in Spring this year reporting on the March 2009 seminar and this was distributed to all members plus attendees of the seminar.

The latest issue of the Journal was published in full colour which has allowed us to incorporate more graphics from speakers' presentations into each report. We believe this has improved the quality of the Journal; the financial implications are discussed in the report of the Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

A benefit of membership is the continued distribution of Adobe 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 has continued to strengthen financially. This means we have the reserves needed for continued colour printing of the journal and for a regular 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), plus members without portfolio Peter Burgess, Jeremy Drew, Tom Worsley and Gerard Whelan.

During the course of this year, Laurie Baker acted as Chair of the Committee on a *pro tem* basis until September 2009 when I took on the role of Chair and he became Vice-Chair. Laurie was Chair of the TEG Committee from 2007 and I would like to express my thanks to him for all his efforts over this period.

Kevin Cheung and Tom Cohen stood down from the Committee during 2009/10 and I thank them for their advice and support.

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

It is clear that there is a valuable continuing role for the Transport Economists' Group. The meetings bring together members to exchange views and developments on a variety of topics across the transport economics field with well-informed and lively discussions.

*Julie Mills*

*Chair*

*24<sup>th</sup> March 2010*