

# Newsletter

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## 25th ARCOM Conference

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### Exclusive interview with Saleem Akram

Director of Construction Innovation and Development, CIOB



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## Thank you Dave!

# ARCOM Newsletter

## 24th ARCOM CONFERENCE

ARCOM annual conferences have a reputation for welcoming atmospheres, challenging debates and stimulating social programmes, and the 24th conference in Cardiff was no exception! There is something about ARCOM conferences that separates them from many other similar events. Despite there being around 160 delegates (the largest

ARCOM conference to date), we are pleased to report that it retained its cosiness and relaxed atmosphere, whilst providing an outstanding forum for discussion and debate around contemporary construction management research issues.

So what was so special about ARCOM 24? First of all, Cardiff lived up to its reputation as a welcoming capital city and a fitting venue for the pre-eminent construction management research conference. With tower cranes looming large over the city's skyline, and exemplar architectural

modernity at every turn, the conference itself found accommodation in the brand new ATRium building. This is the home of the University of Glamorgan's School of Creative & Cultural Industries, and a building which epitomises this new wave. But as if this was not enough, the building stands opposite to another of Cardiff's historic landmarks, the CAMRA award winning pub "The Vulcan Hotel", which incidentally became a "second home" to many conference discussions! The Welsh weather didn't disappoint either! Heavy rain and winds were pounding the

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**ATRium, the main facility for the 24th ARCOM conference**



## Editor's Letter

ARCOM is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009 so without any doubt this will be a historical period for our association. Not least because we live in very interesting and difficult times.

The world's economies are under severe stress and the construction industry is no exception. Castles that were built in the clouds during the era of aberrant effervescence are falling prey to reality with frivolous bingeing turning into a truly global hangover. Yet this is precisely the

time when management research in general and the construction management community in particular must raise voices of reason and challenge established business orthodoxies if they are to survive. Perhaps this is even a matter that will receive greater attention at the forthcoming conference.

And there is our newsletter that has been given a face-lift, though that has nothing to do with the economy. Dr Vian Ahmed, who ran it for so many years, is keen to get involved in

other aspects of her professional life and that simply meant someone else had to take the Editorship over. Thanks Vian for your efforts over the years. I really hope the future for the ARCOM newsletter will be bright and fruitful.

*Dr Milan  
Radavljjevic*



## Highlights

- > Professor Li Shirong, President of CIOB, to address audience at the 25th ARCOM Conference in Nottingham (page 2)
- > Exclusive interview with Saleem Akram, Director Construction Innovation and Development, CIOB (page 10)

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**Albert Hall Conference Centre: The Great Hall - main facility for the 25th ARCOM conference**



“We have invited an array of high-profile speakers who will include the incoming president of the CIOB, Professor Li Shirong”



**Albert Hall Conference Centre in Nottingham**

## ARCOM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

In 2009 ARCOM celebrates its 25th anniversary. The first conference was held at Southbank in 1984, where the keynote speakers included Sir Michael Latham! Since then we have grown and developed to become the pre-eminent forum for those researching management issues in the construction sector, and an established fixture on the annual conference calendar. In 2008 over 160 delegates attended the conference in Cardiff, of which around a third were from overseas institutions.

Many leading construction management researchers will have attended and presented papers at our annual conference over the years and will have benefited from the lively debate and welcoming atmosphere with which we have become renowned. As we move into our 25<sup>th</sup> year in 2009, we intend to reflect on our evolution and achievements since our inception, and also to look forward to the challenges that confront us and the new directions that we might take in addressing them. As such we have planned a very special event to celebrate this milestone in our development.

The conference will be held at the magnificent Albert Hall, Nottingham, from the

7th - 9th September 2009. Completed around the end of the 19th Century, this listed building in the centre of Nottingham is now a leading concert and events venue and provides a spectacular environment for our 25th conference. Nottingham itself is a large, cosmopolitan city, conveniently located in the heart of England. Nottingham is famous around the world for many things, such as the legend of Robin Hood, its lace making industry and its world-class sporting heritage. The city contains many fine historic buildings including the 15<sup>th</sup> century St Mary's Church and world-renowned 'Olde Trip to Jerusalem' at the foot of Castle Rock. Dating from 1189, this is reputedly the oldest pub in England!

We have invited an array of high-profile speakers who will include the incoming president of the CIOB, Pro-

fessor Li Shirong, the Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department for Communities and Local Government, Professor Michael Kelly and ARCOM's Honorary Life President Professor David Langford. We have also invited previous ARCOM chairs, and those connected with ARCOM and its development over the years to join us in the celebrations. In addition ARCOM, in association with Nottingham Trent University, will be hosting an industry-focused breakfast session where practitioners will engage with our research community and the papers that they present. Our conference reception will be held at the historic Nottingham Castle. As usual there will be a range of cash prizes for the best papers courtesy of our sponsors and the usual mix of debates and plenary sessions.

It promises to be quite an

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**Professor David Boyd (Immediate Past Chair, left) hands over the reigns to Professor Andrew Dainty (Current ARCOM Chair) at the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual ARCOM Conference, Cardiff, 2008.**





## IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ARCOM



Professor David Langford

**Professor  
David Langford  
Honorary Life  
President**

In an age of celebrity and sound bites, in an age when people in academia are self promoting, in an age when reality of action is lost; Dave has always had substance. We know Dave in many ways as external examiner, as author, as supervisor, as referee; whatever Dave has done he has exuded humanity, with a passion for intellectual excellence but with a sense of irreverence and a sense of fun. Dave is always willing to help, always developing people, and fostering the community

I think this arises from Dave's background which started at the hard end of practice as a junior site engineer in the 60's. There you have to learn that the world is problematic: unknowable and plans about to run awry and as such how important it is to work with people to sort events out rather than to arrogantly command. Coming into academia then, there is a tendency to work with the world in the same way; to be a social creature to work with people. Whether it was his formative years at Brunel under Syd Urie where new long term friendships were set up and new ways of seeing the world established or in Bath where this experience was

consolidated and made the academic expression of construction management. Remember at the time, the conventional wisdom saw CM as a technical subject that yielded to scientific analyses and computation. Dave was at the forefront of creating a human relations view of construction bringing the human perspective from management literature and empirical research. Such early paper titles as Langford (1981), A History and Development of Direct Labour Organisations, Municipal Building management Vol 3 (Sept) pp14-21; or Langford (1986) No Magic Answer, Building technology and Management Vol 25, No 6 (Aug) pp 19-22; reveal a lot.

Dave was an avid academic traveller, ever since he worked in the US as a young engineer; since then though the more exotic the better whether Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Botswana, South Africa, or Indonesia. He wanted to experience the variety of problems and pleasures of the world whilst always being willing to share his experience to help the world. Mentions of Trinidad bring to mind great conferences where the quality of the papers was balanced by what did happen in the bar or on the

beach. Maybe making Glasgow his home and getting to grips with a new culture

Dave's involvement in ARCOM has been equally comprehensive. Serving his time on the committee and travelling from the greater north was a challenge that Dave enjoyed and managed to combine with all his loves: cricket, discussion, jazz and bon viveuring. He served the association's conferences on several occasions as after dinner speaker and keynote speaker with a refined and cutting humour that drew people in to his world of humanity and friendly intellectuals. Dave's experience of refereeing papers was valuable in delivering the high standards that the conference is renowned for today. Dave also organised and managed the only shared bid and project that ARCOM undertook to the EPSRC: Network of Construction Creativity Clubs. A part from continuously working with SMEs with the objective to investigate how they drove innovation, the coordination of eight academics in different institutions in different parts of the country was a project in itself worthy of recognition.

Dave's energy is immense and his commitment to the



Professor David Langford receives the Honorary Life Presidency from Professor David Boyd.

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## IN RECOGNITION OF OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ARCOM



**Professor David Langford among his ARCOM friends.**

community seems unstoppable. Most recently this has been shown with his presence on the RAE panel, supporting construction management's corner by recognising the credibility of its complex work.

Dave will always be welcome in our ARCOM community, but we need to also go to him; he has so much to offer. As part of this the ARCOM committee held its meeting in Glasgow in order

to honour Dave's years of outstanding contribution. It was also fitting to elevate Dave to be Honorary Life President so that we can use his skills and intellect most effectively. The ARCOM committee enjoyed his and Vicky's hospitality in Glasgow where the Honorary Life Presidency was presented to Dave. We also felt it important to foster his humanity based view of the world by instigating the David Langford Prize for the

best conference paper with a socially aware theme; this he personally administered reviewing 24 papers to select a winner. As the Jedi would say 'may the Dave be with you'!

*Professor David Boyd, Immediate Past Chair on behalf of ARCOM*

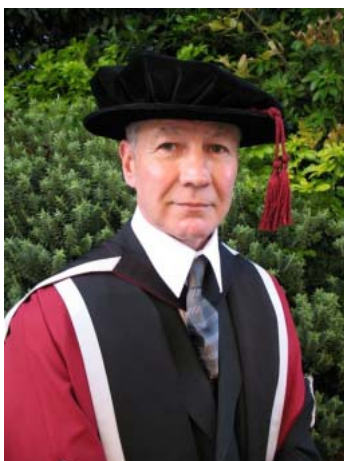
**"The degree is awarded in recognition of published work"**

## CONGRATULATIONS TO PROFESSOR ALAN GRIFFITH

**Alan Griffith** has received the first ever higher doctorate awarded by Sheffield Hallam University - Doctor of Science (DSc). The degree is awarded in recognition of published work constituting a sustained, substantial and original contribution to knowledge in the field of construction management. In Alan's case this marks twenty years of funded post doctoral research and, more importantly, dissemination of that research, whilst at Heriot-Watt University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Sheffield Hallam University. Alan, Professor of Building and Construction Management in the Division of Built Environment at Sheffield Hallam, will be

well known to many ARCOM newsletter readers, researchers and academics alike. Over the years, Alan's research has been published extensively and widely. He has authored/co-authored thirteen commercially published academic and research-based textbooks and over one hundred and fifty refereed journal papers, international conference papers and professional journal articles. His research papers have been highlighted within the profession by national and international awards including: the CIOB 'Ian Murray Leslie' Award in recognition of excellence in research and communication within the construction industry,

which he has received on no less than six occasions; the CIOB Hong Kong Building Essay Award; and the highly prestigious 2003-04 CIOB premier 'Research and Innovation Award' and 'CIOB Medal' reflecting research funded by EPSRC. In addition, he has been awarded the CIOB Silver Medal, the CIOB Scottish Member's Award and CGLI Silver medal for his academic achievements within construction management. Alan who was granted his higher doctorate in September 2006 is pictured at graduation in November 2007. Congratulations on the DSc - a first for Sheffield Hallam University and an outstanding achievement for Alan.



**Professor Alan Griffith.**

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ANDREW KING

Andrew has been awarded a PhD for his work on *'Enhancing the Effectiveness of Design and Build Tendering'*. The work was supervised by Professor Alan Griffith, Sheffield Hallam University, and Dr Andrew Knight, Nottingham Trent University. An abstract of the work is presented below.

Billions of pounds are invested in the UK construction industry each year. Providing clients with value for money is important and begins with understanding what is important to the various individuals, often with different and competing needs, collectively referred to as 'the client'. Design and Build is a range of procurement routes believed to effectively transition client value owing to its integrative nature, although the tender process is complex and there is a lack of practical guidance for practitioners.

The aim of this research is to critically evaluate Design and Build Tendering in the UK construction industry using a modified grounded theory methodology and mixed-method approach. The research draws attention to the importance of transitioning client value through the wider supply chain by focusing on main

contractor-subcontractor tender processes, in addition to the client-main contractor tender process. A number of important themes emerged during the analysis. Developed forms of Design and Build were found to be incredibly popular and are being used owing to a number of factors including risk transfer. Cli-

**"Client-main contractor tender processes were mapped and several areas of best practice were articulated."**

ent-main contractor tender processes were mapped and several areas of best practice were articulated. Alternatives and menu pricing emerged as being important as they allow contractors to add value in developed forms of Design and Build. In addition, a Value Management (VM)-based tender evaluation process was developed which more closely relates the client's value system to the selection of the main contractor.

The study of main contractor-subcontractor tender processes and contractor-centric Supply Chain Management (SCM) was carried

out using a case study. The thesis argues for the use of contractor-centric SCM to enhance the effectiveness of Design and Build tendering. It was found that such an approach should be underpinned by healthy relationships. The properties found to be necessary to cultivate and maintain these relationships include trust, communication, collaboration, commitment, integrity and honesty, concern for each other's interests, recognition and incentives, and transferability. Similarly, a number of important findings relating to the actual tender processes emerged as being incredibly important in ensuring the significant amounts of UK construction investment are funnelled effectively through the main contractor-subcontractor level of the supply chain including 'secondary sendouts', sub-

contractor intellectual property rights, unsolicited tenders, lack of consolidated expenditure, inefficient subcontract order processing, simple selection criteria, client-subcontractor tender coalitions, time constraints and shared culture.

This research represents a unique synthesis of Design and Build tendering, VM and SCM. It adds considerably to knowledge in the field by focusing on the different levels of the supply chain. It draws on a number of new findings to make the case for contractor-centric SCM. The number of recommendations which are made for Design and Build tendering strategy, at both the client-main contractor and main contractor-subcontractor level of the supply chain, will collectively help enhance the effectiveness of

Andrew King, PhD



## WOLVERHAMPTON DOCTORAL WORKSHOP

The doctoral workshop at the University of Wolverhampton was held on the 5 March 2008. It attracted practitioners and researchers from several universities working in the field of Project Management and Construction. Professor David Proverbs welcomed delegates to the workshop and outlined the issues surrounding the theory of project management. David also posed the question to attendees of whether the discipline was sufficiently and rigorously developed. Reference was made to other social science disciplines where much debate had resulted in the formulation of a wider choice of research methodologies. This set the scene for the presentation of research and discussion of project management theory in construction.

The first presenter, Divine A hadzie from the University of Wolverhampton, was able to focus on relevant issues by observations from the literature on the extent of theory development in project management research. Divine had identified that project management lags far behind other disciplines, and evidence suggests that the research base tends to be practitioner led rather than the testing or development of theories through academia. Moreover, it was considered that the con-

struction sector and construction management research, in particular, has a major influence on the theory development of project management research.

A more practical focus of research was presented by Withana Gamage from Loughborough University who covered a research approach to investigate the relationship between waste generation and procurement systems. The research addressed the rationale of the theory and research as part of the development of a framework for procurement waste minimisation. Withana covered the definitions of theory and the links between theory and research, together with the importance of understanding the role of theory in selecting a research approach to facilitate research design and data collection techniques.

A welcomed guest speaker at the workshop was Professor Rodney Turner, the editor of the International Journal of Project Management (IJPM). Rodney was able to share his extensive knowledge by looking at the nine schools and theory of project management.

Further identification of theoretical issues was provided by Kumudu Swarnadhipathi from Birming-



Delegates at the Wolverhampton Doctoral Workshop

ham City University. Kumudu's paper was based on the relationship between the theory, methodology and construction practice in research into business performance of medium-sized contractors. She was able to highlight the underlying philosophy of research design, and how the relationship at the different stages of research can effectively lead to theory building. Kumudu concluded that any theoretical output in a practical sense must have meaning and be capable itself of improving practice.

Rexford Assasi Oppong, from the University of Liverpool, then presented his research on the Habitus theory in the search for a responsive green urban architecture in Ghana. Rexford stressed that this had become an important area of concern in African countries, and much overlooked, as no more garden

**"This set the scene for the presentation of research and discussion of project management theory in construction."**



Withana Gamage, Loughborough University

**(cont.) WOLVERHAMPTON DOCTORAL WORKSHOP**



**Rodney Turner, Editor, IJPM**



**Kumudu Swaranadhithi, Birmingham City University**



**Rexford Assasie Oppong, University of Liverpool**



**Professor Stuart Green, University of Reading**

cities were being built. He identified that a mixed methods research design paradigm was the most suitable for research based on social theory. His research was able to conclude that a better understanding is required of conflicts and contradictions to support green urban architecture of African living. Moreover, the application of Habitus theory was seen as a major step forward in helping establish design models for the formulation of policy for sustainable architecture in sub-Saharan Africa.

Following the morning presentations, a networking and discussion session took place over lunch where delegates were able to discuss the theory concept in addition to providing the opportunity for speakers to expand in more detail on their individual research and progress.

After lunch, Professor Stuart Green from the University of Reading provided a stimulating presentation addressing the 'theory and practice in project management - beyond the dichotomy'. Stuart was able to highlight several issues and invited researchers to challenge the current situation in a bid to move forward

theory development in project management research.

Following Stuart's presentation, Nelson Okehilem provided some interesting research developments involving the 'grounded theory approach towards affordable housing quality in the UK'. Nelson outlined the problems and constraints in this sector of construction and the difficulty in achieving affordable quality homes. His work included a mixed-methods approach with Delphi techniques and grounded theory being the main features of the research. The deduction of theories as part of the analysis was expected to provide an indication of the impact factors on affordability and quality. The focus of work was aimed at the development of a quality benchmark model, built on a theoretical framework of impacts, and the assessment of relevant construction toolkits, key performance indicators and benchmark models.

Peter Tate, from the University of Bolton, provided details of his doctoral work based on looking at project management

through complex mathematical modelling. Peter introduced the concept of fractals and described them as dynamic systems operating in complex planes which produce both chaotic and random outputs. He explained that feedback loops are used to control chaos and interference in project management practice, but emphasised that project management theory needs further development to produce reasoned management processes. His literature review covered current project management theory, including quantum and chaos theory, and cybernetics to provide a model of reference. Peter's presented the initial concepts of the approach and the foundation of his doctoral studies.

The last presenter of the afternoon session was Sukulpat Khumpaisal from Liverpool John Moores University. Sukulpat outlined his work on the application of the analytical network process in real estate de-

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**Nelson Okehilem, University of Wolverhampton**



## WOLVERHAMPTON DOCTORAL WORKSHOP (cont.)

velopment risk assessment. The focus of his research was to provide support for estate developers in decision-making and in dealing with risk in the management of projects. The research was based on a multi-criteria approach using analytical network process (ANP) theory. A case study was highlighted of a combined residential and commercial project in the city centre of Liverpool. This was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of

the ANP model, and its usefulness for developers in risk assessment of real estate development schemes.

Following the afternoon presentations, a debating session took place where researchers and practitioners were able to raise issues and specific details of researchers' work. Both keynote speakers, Professor Rodney Turner and Professor Stuart Green, were able to give their ex-

pert views on the research work presented and gave valuable advice to doctoral candidates on advancing theory of project management research.

A copy of the workshop proceedings can be obtained from the ARCOM website, [www.arcom.ac.uk](http://www.arcom.ac.uk).

Paul Stephenson  
(*ARCOM workshop convenor*)

**"theory and practice in project management - beyond the dichotomy"**

## 24th ARCOM CONFERENCE (cont.)

shores of Cardiff bay with astounding force, but this merely provided us with a golden opportunity to check all the leaks in the roof of the Welsh Assembly (thankfully all fixed!), the stunning venue for our conference reception. The conference dinner was held in another of Cardiff's landmark buildings – the Millennium Stadium – where we were entertained by a full male voice choir!

And the quality of the intellectual aspects of the conference didn't disappoint either. Yet again ARCOM

delegates presented a broad cross-section of research which traversed all of its branches and specialisms. In total 118 papers were presented from authors from the UK, Australia, Denmark, Ghana, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Turkey, South Africa, Sweden and the USA. A quick glimpse through the proceedings reveals just how much is going on, how diverse the research is and even more importantly-how much of this needs further

attention. The papers are available for download on the ARCOM website.

The committee would like to thank all of those who made ARCOM 24 such a memorable occasion, particularly to the University of Glamorgan conference team led by Rob Matthews, and Chris Carter, the Conference Secretary, who provided the glue which bound the organisational effort together. If this experience is anything to go by, then ARCOM 25 promises to be quite an event!

*ARCOM Committee*



**Peter Tate, University of Bolton**



**Sukulpat Khumpaisal, Liverpool John Moores University**



**ARCOM 24: Wonderful entertainment with a pinch of tradition.**



**ARCOM 24: Welsh Assembly attracted a lot of interest from the delegates.**

## SALFORD DOCTORAL WORKSHOP

The joint doctoral workshop between ARCOM and Construct IT was held in the Think Lab at the University of Salford on 14 March 2008. Professor Farzad Khosrowshahi, director of Construct IT outlined the work of the organisation and its strong links with the research community and, in particular, ARCOM. The work of researchers in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) was of great interest to Construct IT and its members, particularly where researchers' findings had practical significance in relation to the business areas of construction.

The first presentation was from Nan Liu, a PhD student working under the supervision of Professor Kagioglou at the University of Salford. Nan's research was based on the development of a framework to analyze user requirements for project extranets. While the technology is well established and implemented world-wide, Nan was able to identify barriers and the gap that exist between a system's provision and a user's requirements. Following an assessment of the development of extranets and the management of users' requirements, Nan outlined his research methodology and some provisional findings which in-

cluded differences in availability of the technology and issues of usability, compatibility and functionality.

Norzamni Salleh from the University of Salford then gave her presentation on spatial data infrastructure in Brunei. While Norzamni had only recently started her doctoral research, she was able to give background details to the research and a discussion of the literature. This included spatial data and spatial data infrastructures and her intention to develop a data sharing partnership model which would support the sharing and maintenance of spatial data within Brunei.

Raj Kapur Shah, a third year doctoral student from the University of Teesside, was able to give a detailed account of his work into the development of a simulation and 4D visualisation model for earthwork operations in road projects. Raj outlined his research methodology which included survey data collection and analysis, the development of a working prototype and the use of a case study for validation and optimisation of the system. Several benefits were identified from the system which included assistance to project managers and planners in improved communication and decision making, and the simulation and visualisation

of progress for cut and fill soil mass, together with a cost profiles.

Following Raj was Eugene Loh, a doctoral candidate also from the University of Teesside. Eugene's work was focused on the integration of 3D with an environmental assessment trade-off tool (EATT). This incorporated environmental impact assessment, life cycle assessment and life cycle cost assessment with the trade-off output resulting in a building information model (BIM). Eugene provided details of the 3D-EATT process flow chart for the outline design, together with details of the trade-off algorithm. Examples were provided of the work to-date showing the multi-dimensional representations of a building. Eugene's work is aimed at achieving a hybrid assessment for the outline design process through the integrated use of BIM technology with EATT. It is anticipated that this will provide an opportunity for closing the gap of non-visual assessment tools currently available in the market.

Dauda Dan-Agabe, a PhD student from the University of Reading was the next to present his research. Dauda's research was aimed at addressing the potential benefits of RAD/GPS integration with a fo-



**Professor Farzad Khosrowshahi, Director of Construct IT**



**Nan Liu, University of Salford**



**Norzamni Salleh, University of Salford**



**Raj Kapur Shah, Teesside University**

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MR SALEEM AKRAM, CIOB

**Dear Mr Saleem Akram, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you. In relation to this and to uncover the mystery behind your title, could you please describe in a bit more detail your role in the CIOB?**

My background is in civil engineering and construction management. I am a graduate civil engineer and have an MSc in Construction Management. Prior to moving to the United Kingdom in 1998, I worked on major hydro & thermal power projects of national importance in Pakistan where I successfully completed several multi-million pound and multi-disciplinary projects. I

am a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Association for Project Management, Association of Cost Engineers, and fellow of the Institution of Engineers and Chartered Institute of Building.

I am currently Director of Construction Innovation and Development at the CIOB responsible for Innovation and Research, Management Practices in Construction, Health and Safety and the Faculties of Architecture and Surveying, Building Control and Conservation. I am responsible for The Construction Manager of the Year Awards, The International Innovation and Research Awards and a suite of

scholarships. I also manage European Affairs and Recognition of Qualifications, in UK, European Union and rest of the world.

In 2002, I initiated proposals for the establishment of a state of the art and world class Building Management Simulation Centre in the UK. It is now becoming a reality and the facility is being set up in Coventry, Warwickshire. The project partners are BMSC (Netherlands), CIOB, Coventry University Enterprises (CUE), Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the Learning Skills Council (LSC). The planned opening for the centre is in the last quarter of 2009.

Over the last ten years, in parallel with the Latham and Egan reports and the initiatives flowing from them, I have been keen to develop links between the civil engineering and building disciplines. I have worked closely with other professional bodies, organisations, practitioners and academics, to promote the science and best practice of built environment, raise awareness and increase recognition.

**Do you think that CIOB is sufficiently embedded in the construction management research community and do you see some room for improvement?**

The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) will have been developing excellence and promoting the importance of the built environment for 175

## Will's Column



The habit of double-blind refereeing (reviewing) of academic papers has evolved over the years and is quite common in academic journals. The idea is that when an author submits a paper, the editor makes sure the au-

thor's name and address are not evident, then chooses other experts in the field to review it and provide a critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the research and of the way in which the paper is written. It is the basis of scientific quality control, and is also used in reviewing research grant applications, especially when public money is involved. As an editor myself I am very dependent on the referees' advice when deciding the fate of a paper. But the fate of a paper is my decision, not the referees', and sometimes I don't follow their advice, which can confuse authors and referees.

One interesting thing that frequently happens is that authors refer to their own previous work and thereby reveal their identity to the referees. Sometimes, a conscientious referee will then contact me and ask what to do because they have noticed the authors' identity. My attitude is always the same. It does not matter too much. If authors choose to reveal their identity to referees, they are either not worried about the lack of anonymity, or too naive to realise what they are doing. The key point is that many referees would recognise the writing of someone who was well-known. So the invention of blind refereeing was obviously not to protect well-known people. It was for the benefit of less well-known people. It means the judgement of the referee is solely based on the merits of the paper. An unknown research student who submits a paper will have it reviewed by people who cannot guess whether the author is a student or a professor, so junior academics are the ones who benefit the most from blind refereeing.

Of course, referees often think they know who wrote the paper, and they often guess wrong. I have often sent to famous professors comments from encouraging referees who say that with practice and in time, they might be able to get their work up to scratch!

Authors who reveal their identity are either already so well-known that it does not really matter, or they are too naive to realise that blind refereeing requires that they don't reveal their identity. Either way, the conclusion is that the paper can still be refereed by the referee to whom we have sent it.



Mr Saleem Akram, CIOB Director of Construction Innovation and Development

## SALFORD DOCTORAL WORKSHOP (cont.)



**Eugene Loh, University of Teesside**



**Douda Dan-Asabe, University of Reading**



**Sas Mihindu, University of Salford**



**Ammar Al-Bazi, University of Teesside**

focus on construction. In his introduction to the research he was able to draw parallels with the use of the technology in the manufacturing industry and R&D applications in construction. His intention is the development of an R&D/GPS framework for construction communication management. Examples were given of how the technology could be utilised through the materials' supply chain based on a unified codification system, the building of a database and the integration of scheduling software.

The next research presentation was from Sas Mihindu who was nearing the completion of his doctoral work. Sas' work at the University of Salford was concerned with the development of a knowledge management framework for scientific communities. A simplified view of the framework was provided which brought together issues related to communities, information on the scientific communication life cycle and the knowledge management life cycle. This resulted in an environment for supporting collaborative knowledge creation in order to facilitate collaborative working. Sas had reached the stage of evaluating his developed model and its suitability assessment be-

fore completing the write-up of his PhD thesis.

Ammar Al-bazi from the University of Salford was another researcher nearing the completion of his work. Ammar's research was based on the development of an intelligent manufacturing management simulation model for the precast concrete industry. The research was aimed at improving the performance of precast concrete manufacture through the development and testing of an evolutionary meta-heuristic simulation model. Ammar outlined the system framework, the techniques used and the step by step simulation modelling work. A practical example was introduced through a case study involving precast manhole sections and the modelling process in their manufacture. The development simulation model was seen as a means of providing more efficient and effective manufacture in the future.

As a light relief to researchers presenting their work, Sabri Abouden from the University of Salford gave a presentation, not on ICT, but on his experiences of going through the viva voce process, having recently successfully defended his research and secured his PhD degree.

Sabri was able to outline the preparation work that was needed prior to the viva. This included speaking to people who had been through the process, having a strategy meeting with your advisor, and having a thesis defence structure in place. The preparation of a presentation for use at the start of the viva was also recommended. Important issues were also highlighted such as focusing and listening to the questions asked, and giving straight forward answers. Being prepared to address controversial aspects of your work was also considered crucial. It was also stressed that you should maintain and reinforce the outcomes and contributions achieved from your research.

The final presentation of the day was given by Abdou Karim Jallow from Loughborough University. Abdou's research was concerned with the state-of-the-art and future trends in requirements information management. The research was aimed at reducing operational costs and time, in addition to increasing productivity and quality through improved requirements information management. The main objective of the work was the development and validation of a prototype framework using



## SALFORD DOCTORAL WORKSHOP (cont.)

case studies. Abdou was able to discuss his research methods and the modelling work to be carried out prior to prototyping. Abdou concluded that current requirements management is traditionally an ad-hoc process which is often time consuming and expensive with a distinct lack of interoperability between systems. His prototype development framework was seen as a means of addressing these issues.

Following the presentations there was a long and intense discussion session, with researchers engaging in much debate and critical evaluation of each other's work. Clearly, there was much learnt from the workshop, which will hopefully be of benefit to the researchers in successfully completing their doctoral studies.

Research papers were not prepared for this workshop. Copies of the researchers' presentations can be accessed from the Construct IT website, [www.construct-it.org.uk](http://www.construct-it.org.uk).

*Paul Stephenson  
ARCOM workshop convenor*

## USEFUL RESOURCES

**Bookboon** (free e-books in PDF format—various topics)  
<http://bookboon.com/>

**Index to Theses** (listing of theses in Great Britain and Ireland since 1716)  
<http://www.theses.com/>

**Equation Sheet** (a searchable database of equations, constants, symbols and units)  
<http://www.equationsheet.com/>



Sabri Abouden, University of Salford



Abdou Karim Jallow, Loughborough University



Delegates in discussion.

## ARCOM COMMITTEE 2008-09

### CHAIRMAN

Professor Andrew Dainty  
[a.r.j.dainty@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:a.r.j.dainty@lboro.ac.uk)

### VICE-CHAIRMAN

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[c.o.egbu@salford.ac.uk](mailto:c.o.egbu@salford.ac.uk)

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Professor David Boyd  
[David.Boyd@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:David.Boyd@bcu.ac.uk)

### TREASURER

Dr Simon Smith  
[simon.smith@ed.ac.uk](mailto:simon.smith@ed.ac.uk)

### SECRETARY

Dr Paul Chan  
[paul.chan@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:paul.chan@northumbria.ac.uk)

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Mr Noel Painting  
[n.j.painting@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:n.j.painting@brighton.ac.uk)

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dr Milan Radosavljevic  
[m.radosavljevic@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.radosavljevic@reading.ac.uk)

### WORKSHOP CONVENOR

Professor Paul Stephenson  
[p.stephenson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:p.stephenson@shu.ac.uk)

### ARCOM CM ABSTRACTS and WEBMASTER

Professor Will Hughes  
[w.p.hughes@reading.ac.uk](mailto:w.p.hughes@reading.ac.uk)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr Vian Ahmed  
[v.ahmed@salford.ac.uk](mailto:v.ahmed@salford.ac.uk)

Dr Francis Edum-fotwe  
[f.t.edum-fotwe@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:f.t.edum-fotwe@lboro.ac.uk)

Professor Chris Fortune  
[c.j.fortune@salford.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.fortune@salford.ac.uk)

Dr Chris Gorse  
[c.gorse@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:c.gorse@leedsmet.ac.uk)

Professor David Greenwood  
[david.greenwood@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:david.greenwood@northumbria.ac.uk)

Dr Stephen Gruneberg  
[s.gruneberg@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:s.gruneberg@westminster.ac.uk)

Professor David Proverbs  
[d.proverbs@wlw.ac.uk](mailto:d.proverbs@wlw.ac.uk)

Dr Ani Raiden  
[aniraiden@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:aniraiden@ntu.ac.uk)

Dr Andy Ross  
[a.d.ross@jmu.ac.uk](mailto:a.d.ross@jmu.ac.uk)

Dr Sam Wamuziri  
[s.wamuziri@napier.ac.uk](mailto:s.wamuziri@napier.ac.uk)

### HONORARY LIFE PRESIDENT

Professor David Langford ([David.Langford@gcal.ac.uk](mailto:David.Langford@gcal.ac.uk))

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH MR SALEEM AKRAM, CIOB (cont.)

years in 2009. With over 42,000 members, the CIOB is the international voice of the building professional, representing an unequalled body of knowledge concerning the management of the total building process.

CIOB members are skilled managers and professionals with a common commitment to achieving and maintaining the highest possible standards. Chartered Member status, represented by the designations MCI OB and FCIOB, is recognised internationally as the mark of a true professional in the construction industry. With its increasing international membership and growing profile in the UK, the CIOB is making a hugely influential contribution to one of the world's most important industries.

The CIOB has been involved in construction management since as early as the 1960's and is the only institute that focuses specifically on the discipline of construction management in the UK and internationally.

However, there is always room for improvement, and this will inevitably involve strengthening the links between academia and industry so that we close this gap. CIOB provides the forum and the language for industry and academia to discuss research and innovation in the industry through our Innovation and Research Panel and specialist Faculties. We will always strive to improve and look for gaps in this knowledge.

**The construction sector has been badly affected by the current economic downturn forcing many companies to rethink their strategies and strive for improvements in every aspect of their work. It seems logical that they would tap into a vast knowledge base the research community has to offer, although historically this has never happened on a large scale. As a result, do you think professional bodies with their wide access to the membership should act as a catalyst for knowledge transfer?**

Absolutely and this is something that the CIOB feel extremely strongly about. It is

**“My team are working hard to ensure that CIOB and ARCOM work more closely together.”**

the perfect time for companies to make themselves more competitive. They no longer have a choice to innovate, they have to, or else they may not be around in 10 years time.

I feel confident that even in this volatile and unpredictable situation due to the financial crisis, there are some meaningful opportunities for the UK construction industry. New building materials and construction techniques are being

developed that could provide more cost-efficient methods of building. Climate change, greenhouse-gas emissions and other environmental issues are now of great importance to the whole construction industry. The provision of solutions to these problems represents opportunities for the construction industry. There are also opportunities for UK contractors to expand their overseas work.

It appears that there are also promising long-term opportunities in the education, health and utility sectors. Urban regeneration is a high-profile government policy and provides an opportunity for contractors to work on mixed-use schemes, often with long-term construction and facilities maintenance contracts.

**Perhaps this could well be achieved through closer collaboration between CIOB and ARCOM. How do you envisage collaboration between these two well respected institutions?**

My team are working hard to ensure that CIOB and ARCOM work more closely together. The CIOB have worked with ARCOM for many years but are strengthening these links in 2009 and beyond.

ARCOM have a representative on the CIOB's Innovation and Research panel whose vision is to celebrate innovation and research by bringing it to the forefront of the construction industry's attention and as such explore opportunities and facilitate I&R by bringing

stakeholders together. The Panel also take an active part in identifying and setting the research agenda.

The CIOB are also supporting ARCOM's annual conference in September 2009. Professor Li Shirong (President CIOB from June 2009) will be representing CIOB at the conference and also providing a keynote speech.

For the first time-in June 2009-CIOB in conjunction with ARCOM will be running a design management workshop at Englemere in A Scot. The event will be attended by both academia and industry. CIOB hope to run similar events in the future.

**And finally, what are the key areas that the CIOB will address in the coming years?**

The CIOB's mission is to create a modern, progressive, and responsible construction industry, able to meet the economic, environmental and social challenges faced in the 21st century.

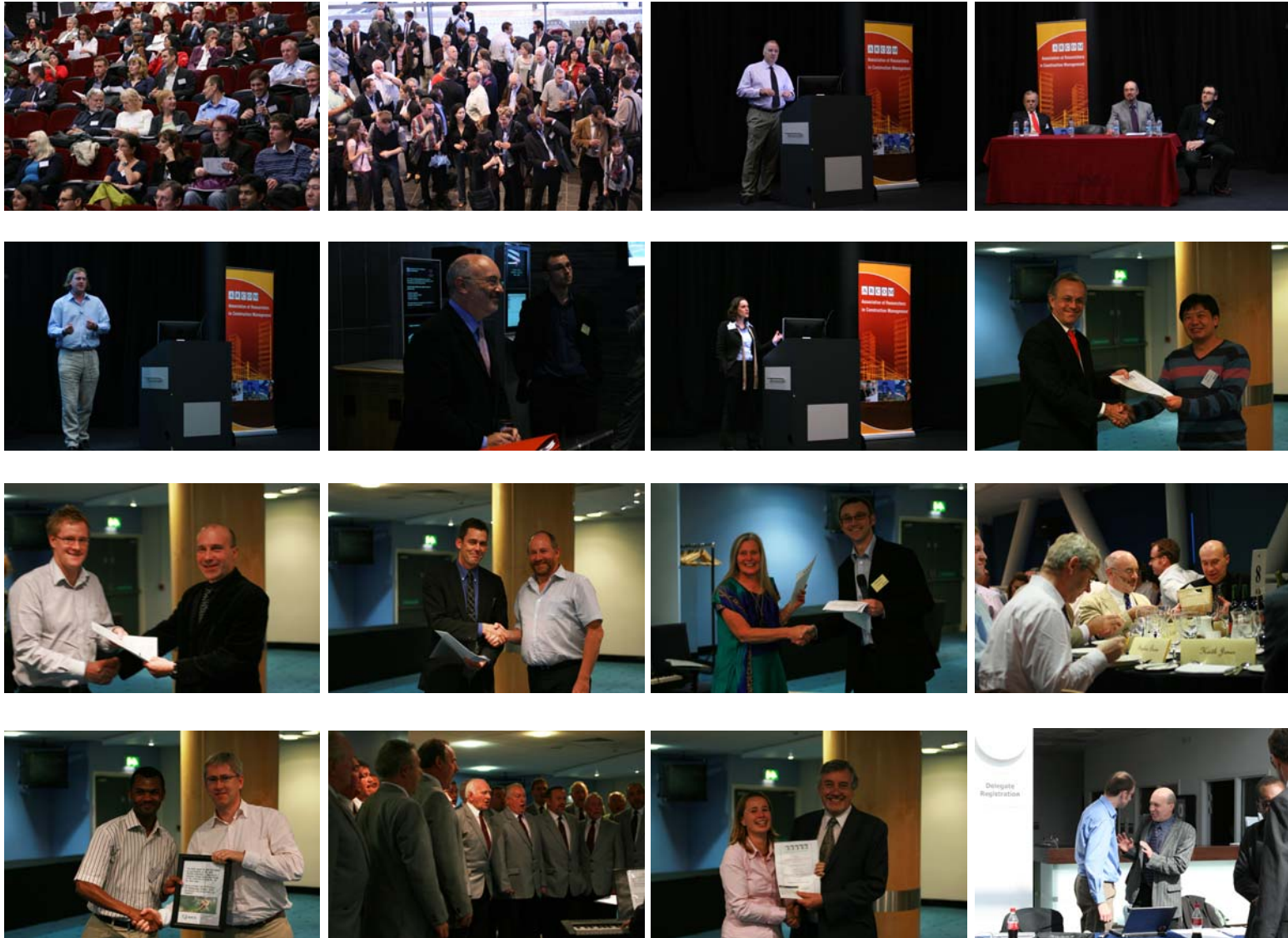
The CIOB will be exploring over the coming years the issues surrounding Design management and Building Information Modelling, time management and sustainability.

Growth areas for the future include the UK, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and China.

**Dear Mr Akram, thank you very much for your time.**

*Interviewed on behalf of ARCOM by Dr Milan Radosavjevic, March 2009*

## Highlights from the 24th ARCOM Conference in Cardiff



## ARCOM CELEBRATES 25 YEARS (cont.)

event!

We would like to extend a warm invitation to all readers of the ARCOM Newsletter, to ARCOM members past and present and to those who are yet to attend an ARCOM conference to join us in celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

For enquiries and further information about ARCOM please visit our website ([www.arcom.ac.uk](http://www.arcom.ac.uk)).

We look forward to welcoming you to Nottingham!

*Professor Andrew Dainty - ARCOM Chair*

[\*\(a.r.j.dainty@lboro.ac.uk\)\*](mailto:a.r.j.dainty@lboro.ac.uk)



**ARCOM 2009: Albert Hall Conference Centre Nottingham**

# Join ARCOM

The Association of Researchers in Construction Management brings together all those interested in construction management research. Its aim is to further the advancement of knowledge in all aspects of management in construction by supporting education, dissemination and research. Our newsletter keeps members in touch with the latest news from members and the highly acclaimed annual conference brings together researchers from all over the world. Various research workshops provide a means to develop specific subject themes as well as general research methodology. Our publications form a very useful resource for all researchers in this field.

These activities help to encourage excellence in the research of our members. We are very proud of our tradition of focusing upon researchers rather than institutions. Our members include research students, lecturers, professors, consultants and other practitioners. Although we are primarily a UK association, we welcome members from all over the world. Membership of ARCOM is an excellent way of keeping in touch with the latest developments in construction management research. It provides opportunities for contact between researchers in similar fields and between researchers and practitioners. Members pay an annual membership fee, currently set at £20 (or £5 for registered PhD students). The activities of ARCOM are co-ordinated and managed by a committee, which is elected annually by the members. If you wish to join ARCOM, please complete the form below and send it, with a cheque for the relevant amount payable to ARCOM, to the membership secretary:

Noel Painting,  
University of Brighton,  
School of Environment and Technology,  
Cockcroft Building,  
Lewes Road,  
Brighton, BN2 4GJ,  
UK.  
E-mail: n.j.painting@brighton.ac.uk.

I wish to join ARCOM from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009 till the year ending 30 April 2010. I enclose a cheque for £20 (or student rate of £5)

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