

# ARCOM

ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCHERS IN **CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT**

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# Welcome by ARCOM Chair



As I take over as ARCOM's 15th chair, in the association's 29th year, I feel ever so slightly humbled at the history this diverse group of enthusiastic people has created in nearly three decades. We've come a long way. From its Scottish birth in 1984 at a break-out meeting at a conference at Heriot-Watt University I feel proud to bring us back to Edinburgh.

Our relatively humble origins quickly grew and expanded to the extent that our main event, the annual conference, often sees well nearly 150 high-quality papers from delegates from over 20 countries. As chair of the ARCOM committee I need to ensure this impetus is not lost as we enter our fourth decade. My job is on the one hand easy – I don't have to re-package this organisation as it has been very ably led by a succession of high profile past chairs, most recently Professor Charles Egbu from University of Salford. But it's also a challenge in that I must maintain the level of these efforts, curating the academic themes and working towards maintaining effective and sustainable strategies.

Themes have changed. At my first involvement with ARCOM, at Professor Will Hughes' conference in Reading in 1998, subjects tended to be hard and objective. We now see an increasing proportion of softer and more subjective themes, focussing primarily on people. Our field seems to be slowly realising that the human resource is the most important in order to sustain the many international construction industries.

While ARCOM keeps its UK origins, at the same time it grows even more international. We have, though the stewardship of our Director of International Liaison, collaborative agreements with over seven international organisations like ourselves.

Old initiatives, such as the very successful ARCOM Doctoral Workshops are now joined by new ventures. As well as our increasing international connections we now have the ARCOM Roadshows, the ARCOM Travel Grant Scheme and the ARCOM International Mentorship Scheme. Even newer ideas such as the ARCOM Seminar Series are in the pipeline.

These initiatives are not created and managed by the chair. They are formed and developed by a highly professional committee, as well as many volunteers from around the world. The enthusiasm and dedication these people show in order to further the cause of construction management education & research is extraordinary, and it will be my pleasure and honour to serve as their – your – chair over the next 24 months.

*Dr Simon Smith  
Edinburgh, UK*

*".....I need to ensure this impetus is not lost as we enter our fourth decade."*

## Editor letter....



Welcome to this issue of ARCOM Newsletter!

This issue is dedicated to the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Edinburgh, featuring the Chair's welcome and personal note, the Langford's lecture and debate, best paper awards and the recipients of Travel Grant Scheme. I wish to thank all contributors in this issue!!

ARCOM has published newsletters from its early years. Some of them were compiled before popular use of digital media. They have been scanned and uploaded on the website to provide a central archive for future use. I would encourage you to view, and hope you might find them useful and enjoyable to read. I would welcome any comments, and am awaiting for your contributions to the newsletter.

Please get in touch, by sending e-mail to [R.Soetanto@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:R.Soetanto@lboro.ac.uk)!!

*Dr Robby Soetanto*

## The Chair note on the conference.....



The 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual ARCOM showpiece event returned to Scotland and Edinburgh amidst fabulous surroundings and wonderful weather. The general feeling amongst the delegates and organisers was one of success and an example of what a good academic conference should be all about: challenging debate, insightful dissemination and warm socialising.

Scotland is where ARCOM was born, as a proposal at a conference at Heriot-Watt University in 1984 and has been the host country for the ARCOM conference on two previous occasions – in Glasgow in 2000 and Edinburgh/Heriot-Watt University in 2004. This year we were in the heart of the Scottish Capital, Our Dynamic Earth being the venue, situated next to the Queen's Park, Holyrood Palace, Scottish Parliament Building and the dramatic Salisbury Crags. Such a location is tempting and certainly spectacular but runs the risk of over-shadowing the true aim of a conference, that of academic debate. As organiser I feared many delegates would be tempted away by all that Edinburgh has to offer but, to my lasting satisfaction, this proved not to be the case. Sessions were well attended, often with standing room only.

ARCOM conferences have increased in popularity over the years to the extent that this year we saw more

than 330 abstracts submitted. As organisers, the committee are committed to academic quality rather than quantity and so there was a great challenge in whittling this initial interest down to a manageable number of papers. In the end 134 papers, with authors from a total of 20 countries, were accepted for inclusion through the efforts of a Scientific Committee of over 50. These papers focussed on the traditional ARCOM themes that have been seen for many years such as cost and financial management, construction design and technology and procurement. But our field moves on – some themes, such as sustainability and safety management, have developed in to substantial portfolios while this year we saw the introduction of new themes on disaster management, offsite construction and BIM. Individual topics were wonderfully diverse: from Bowen's investigation of corruption in construction; Bigg's review of the problem of drugs & alcohol; Chan's intriguing perspective on what time in construction really means to Furber's study of community relationships in small scale Ghanaian projects. As hinted above, delegates professionally consumed these disseminations and, as many ARCOM veterans noted, the breadth of questions indicated a level of interest and debate not often seen at academic conferences.

*"... what a good academic conference should be all about: challenging debate, insightful dissemination and warm socialising."*

In recent years the ARCOM conference has seen an expansion from the traditional paper presentations to including debate on important topical issues. This year under the stewardship of Dr Paul Chan a unified theme of Impact & Legacy ran through the showpiece conference sessions – Langford Lecture; Keynote Addresses and Academic & Industrial debates. Paul's

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report appears later in this newsletter, recounting how legacy and impact are two associated and vital themes for the development of construction over the next decades.



The ARCOM social aspects are traditionally very important to many delegates and are, I suspect, the reason why we see so many return year after year. In my proceedings editorial I implored our delegates to “engage in debate, make new friends, renew old acquaintances, advance and further our field and have a good time doing so”. I think we managed the latter throughout the conference – from the coffee break to the formal dinner the aim is always to allow everyone to interact and enjoy themselves. The Monday night social was held at the main conference venue, starting by taking in Our Dynamic Earth’s geological and natural history exhibits. The warm weather led to the Iceberg Room being most popular! Drinks and food were enjoyed in the company of the Eliot Murray Trio jazz band; Lewis Barlow close-up magician and viewings of the venue’s ‘Dome Shows’ on Charles Darwin and Extreme Weather.

The conference dinner was a more formal affair in the historical surroundings of the University of Edinburgh’s Old College and Playfair Library. Guests arrived after their bus tour of Edinburgh’s Old & New Towns and entered the quad to the gloriously Scottish welcome from a Lone Piper, 15 year-old William



Connington. The dinner itself followed a non-traditional theme with a storytelling by Edinburgh Storyteller (and songmaster) David Campbell. Most guests were surprised to find themselves singing aloud within minutes of taking their seats! Our dinner saw the traditional awards ceremony, with prizes now numbering nine including the new, inaugural best reviewer award. Prizes are listed later in this newsletter in the report from Prize Committee Convenor Dr Ani Raiden.



As conference organiser I found myself enjoying tremendously the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. My only regret is that likely seen by all such organisers: not being able to follow up the papers that I had read during the proceedings editing to see many of the wonderful presentations. But this is a small matter – the conference is there for the delegates, not the organiser, and I think it’s fair to say most had a quite memorable three days. We therefore hope to see them all again at next year’s 29<sup>th</sup> conference in Reading, England, from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

*Dr Simon Smith  
Edinburgh, UK*



# “Legacies and Impacts”

## The Langford Lecture and ARCOM Debate



The Langford Lecture was first introduced at the ARCOM 2011 Conference in Bristol. The purpose is to commemorate the work of the late Professor Dave Langford, Lifetime President of ARCOM. Those who know Dave well remember him as a passionate advocate for social justice in every aspect of work in the construction industry. He was also keen to see the development of early-career researchers, especially doctoral students. The theme for this year's Langford Lecture, and the Debate that followed, is "Legacies and Impacts". The choice of this theme was inspired by contemporary interest in the legacies of high-profile construction projects such as the London 2012 Olympics Development, as well as increasing accountability of impacts in the assessment of research.

The Langford Lecture was delivered by Aletha Holborough this year. Aletha is a third year Ph.D. student at Westminster Business School. For her research, Aletha is exploring the impacts of the Olympics Development on the socio-economic development of the local boroughs in the East End of London. Specifically, she investigates the lived experiences of Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) youths as they make their transition from education to employment. Although the London Olympics have largely been successful – and the fact that the Olympics Development was delivered on time, within budget and without a fatality was acknowledged – Aletha reported a mixed picture in terms of vocational education and training (VET) and local employment in the East End of London. Some youths saw the high profile development as a source of inspiration and hope for improving their socio-economic status; others noted a sense of inaccessibility

to the opportunities London 2012 had to offer. This led Aletha to pose the question as to how legacies of large development projects in the public domain can be established, and for whom.

Following Aletha's Langford Lecture, Don Ward (Chief Executive of ConstructingExcellence) delivered a keynote presentation. Providing a contrasting view, Don argued that the UK construction industry has seen tremendous improvements over the last twenty years, in terms of productivity (time and cost savings) and health and safety performance. Don conceded that more needs to be done and offered an opportunity for academic researchers to get involved in providing rigorous and robust analysis of the industry's performance. Don also reminded the audience of the long-term nature of legacies and impacts, and that the success of London 2012 is, in many respects, a result of a legacy of major projects that have gone before (e.g. Channel Tunnel, Heathrow Terminal 5 etc.).

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The ARCOM debate took place after Aletha's and Don's talk. They were joined by Professor Allyson Pollock (Professor of Public Health Research and Policy at Queen Mary, University of London), Jo Twine (Director and Founder of Perducta Limited), and Gordon Banks (MP, Labour Party). Professor Pollock stressed that legacies take time to unfold. Speaking about the experiences of public healthcare in the UK, Allyson stated that political decisions made decades ago to open up public services to competition and increasing privatisation are now coming home to roost in terms of higher costs to taxpayers and users, decreased access and excessive profits and rates of return. The abolition of the NHS in its present form from April next year is one consequence. She called for research into financing models, and made the case for government control



over redistribution and surpluses. Allyson considered the construction management community to be well placed in undertaking robust analysis on PFI/PPP contracts.

Don agreed that greater transparency in terms of financing models would be a very good thing, but cautioned about commercial sensitivities surrounding disclosure. He suggested that a mature conversation between politicians, civil servants and the industry is required about "profit" – which must be understood and not treated as a dirty word. He also noted that transparency must be made across the board, and not simply targeted at construction companies. Jo Twine maintained that what mattered most was that modern and better facilities are provided for the end-users, whatever the financing model may be. Jo has extensive experience in orchestrating creative partnerships between the public sector and private sector to provide for school buildings and children services. She remarked that improvements have been made to the built environment and private financing has had an important role to play, a point reiterated by Gordon Banks. Nevertheless, Jo agreed that it is important to ensure that the private sector adds value in the process of delivering PFI/PPP programmes, and that the experiences and access of end-users to



public services should be of paramount concern.

The panellists discussed the impacts of increasing private sector involvement in public service provision through the PFI/PPP mechanism. Proponents noted how PFI/PPP has brought continuity of work for the construction industry and provided the much-needed physical infrastructure. Jo, Don and Gordon also commented that the improvements made by the construction industry over the last twenty years should not be dismissed, and that the successes of recent projects (e.g. Olympics Development) demonstrates the realisation of the legacy of projects that went on before. Both sides agreed that the true benefits of increasing marketisation of public services required rigorous evaluation of the consequences of policy decisions to end-users. Of course, academic researchers have a crucial role to play in asking the often-difficult questions that surround the legacies and impacts of policy decisions. Allyson stressed that researchers must ensure that these questions continue to be asked and that any analysis must avoid shifting with the winds of political change. Aletha concluded the panel debate by asking researchers to think about future generations when framing their research problems.

*Summarised by Dr Paul W Chan  
The University of Manchester*



## Best Paper Awards



I was honoured to be able to present the annual prize giving ceremony at the 28<sup>th</sup> annual ARCOM conference at the University of Edinburgh's Old College and Playfair Library. This is an important recognition of the hard work the delegates have put into conducting much interesting research and developing the papers that publish those efforts.

We had 35 papers nominated through the peer review process for eight prizes available (as below). All submitted papers are peer reviewed by two members of the scientific committee, and through this process they have an opportunity to nominate papers for consideration by the ARCOM committee, who select the prize winners. Of the eight prizes available, some are specific and some broader in scope. All nominations are carefully read and re-read in light of the following criteria that the ARCOM committee use to select the winning contributions:

- Problem identification/ background to subject
- Aims and objectives
- Research methodology
- Research findings
- Conclusions
- Clarity of structure/ presentation
- Novelty/ innovation
- Originality of authorship

In decision-making, using this criterion, we employ both quantitative measures and qualitative judgement. The decisions are often very difficult; we make choices between good papers.

ARCOM has a number of commemorative awards we give annually on surveying/project management (Paul Townsend Commemorative Award), innovation (Rod Howes Commemorative Award) and social impact/significance (David Langford Commemorative Award). These awards all enjoy a £250 financial reward together with the certificate that honours the award. The past members of our community ARCOM commemorates each made a significant contribution to the field.

Paul Townsend was a strong supporter of ARCOM and an industry representative on the ARCOM committee for many years. He became an academic at

Sheffield Hallam later in his career. The ARCOM award was instituted to celebrate his contribution following his untimely death.

Rob Howes is one of the founders of ARCOM and our first chairman, a charming and eloquent man, who was one of the key members in our community for many years.

David Langford, ARCOM's Honorary Life President, sadly passed away 2010. He led many of the ARCOM's activities especially in the 1980s and 1990s.

The professional institutions and publishers associated with ARCOM also award prizes at the conference. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) gave prizes for the Best International paper and Innovation and Sustainability this year. RICS also awarded a sustainability prize. Wiley Blackwell awarded a Best Technical Paper prize, where a Taylor and Francis Award was for best theoretically informed contribution to the conference.

Winners for the prizes this year were:

### The 'Rod Howes' Commemorative Award

Jonathan Gosling, Denis Towill and Mohamed Naim - *"Learning how to eat an elephant: implementing supply chain management principles"*

The reviewers commended Gosling *et al.* on their well written paper and clearly articulated research problem. Very robust case was made for their research by way of a critical analysis of supply chain initiatives from 2002 to present, building on established principles and learning approaches, and using a case study to refine supply chain management framework.



### The 'Paul Townsend' Commemorative Award

Ashokkumar Subbiah - *"Investigation of factors that influence the success of construction planning of 2012 Olympic Stadium: an ethnographic study"*

Subbiah's paper was praised for an innovative methodology on a seminal project together with some important and relevant findings.

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**The ‘David Langford’ Commemorative Award**

Herbert Biggs and Amy R Williamson - *“Safety impacts of alcohol and other drugs in construction: development of an industry policy and cultural change management program”*

Biggs and Williamson's paper was commended for their relatively large scale research, which has potential for far reaching consequences in Australia and internationally.

**The CIOB Award for the Best International Paper**

Beatriz Manzoni, Peter Morris and Hedley Smyth - *“Managing the performing paradox in architectural competitions”*

Manzoni *et al's* paper was found to be very well written with an insightful analysis of the research findings and explicit identification of implications for construction management.



**The CRI Innovation and Sustainability Award**

Timothy Lees and Martin Sexton - *“The domestication of low and zero carbon technologies in new housing in the UK”*

Lees and Sexton's paper provided an engaging read where the research findings were presented using interesting quotations from the research participants.



**The RICS Sustainability Award**

Dennis O’Keefe, D. S. Thomson and A. R. J. Dainty - *“Beyond Scoring: advancing a new approach to the design evaluation of NHS buildings”*

The reviewers of O’Keefe *et al's* paper found the paper “first-rate; important and somewhat radical”, with an underlying message that if interpretive methods help us to make sense of the world in our research, then they ought to be helpful in making sense of the problems to which construction projects are an answer. Brilliant work way ahead of its time!

**The Wiley-Blackwell Best Technical Paper**

Mumtaz Patel, Fred Sherratt and Peter Farrell - *“Exploring human error through the safety talk of utilities distribution operatives”*

Patel *et al's* work was commended on its relevance to the industry and the strength of the research methodology employed. The qualitative research presented was well executed and nicely written.



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### The Taylor and Francis Award for best theoretically informed contribution

Paul Chan - *"Constructing a sense of time in project time overruns: implications of a Bergsonian view of time in construction"*

Chan was praised for his engagement with an adventurous topic and putting into focus why people are important in construction: the conceptual basis of time is key to how individuals connect with society.

Congratulations!

*Dr Ani Raiden  
Nottingham Trent University*



## Best Reviewer Award

One of the most important aspects of any academic conference is the reviewing. The ARCOM conference in particular has managed to increase its quality over the past few years and this is in part down to the quality of the review process - not only in terms of constructive & helpful reviews, but also, for a conference where the timescales are so tight to take a paper through three separate stages, the speed of review is crucial.

So this year, to recognise the very good efforts of the enlarged scientific committee, we decided to have an inaugural "Best Reviewer Award". For the papers themselves, the average time for review - taken from our fabulously sophisticated conference management system - is 10.5 days - very impressive. The worst this year was 38 days; the best was... an incredible 54 minutes.



The winner of the Best Reviewer Award, with very helpful and detailed reviews and an average time for review of 1 day, was Professor Martin Loosemore, University of New South Wales. While Martin's reviews were done very quickly, they were also helpful, to the point, constructive and understanding of the authors' intentions.

*Dr Simon Smith  
University of Edinburgh*

## New committee member: Dr Fred Sherratt



Fred currently works as a lecturer in construction at the University of Bolton. She is also a Chartered Builder and Chartered Building Engineer, with over ten years experience of working on construction sites as a planner and section manager. Her research speciality is site safety, taken from a practical perspective, and Fred recently completed her PhD which employed a social constructionist approach to safety research. Fred is currently the CIOB NW Novus centre chair, and is also an examiner in health, safety and the environment for the experienced practitioner route to membership for the CIOB. Research projects and ideas are always in the pipeline, always with a practical focus, and Fred hopes to further develop ARCOM's links to industry to ensure construction management research is always enhancing and maintaining its real-world purpose.

## The recipients of ARCOM Travel Grant Scheme

In 2012, ARCOM has established Travel Grant Scheme (TGS) to support developmental and collaborative academic work involving its members. It awarded several grants for attending the conference in 2012. Two recipients share their experiences here.....



**G**reetings from Sweden!

The ARCOM conference in Edinburgh was a great opportunity to meet colleagues within the field of Construction Management - to make new acquaintances, but also to meet up with old

friends. I felt that the presentations I attended during the conference gave me an excellent opportunity to learn more about what is currently on-going in other universities and within the field of CM.

I started my PhD in 2010 at Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden, as a part of a research project exploring how the life cycle perspective is considered and managed in decision making processes regarding refurbishment of buildings. In the last year, I have studied how political directives on energy efficiency in buildings are managed within public construction client organisations, using an interpretative approach. The paper I presented at the ARCOM conference concerned the actors involved in the process of translating such directives into organisational practices and strategies; who are they, how and why are they involved in the meaning making process of energy directives? With this research I wish to explore the roles and practices needed in the construction sector to meet the demands on implementing energy policies which require a long-term perspective on management of our building stock. I really appreciated the feedback and tips I received after my presentation on how to continue to develop the paper. This feedback on my work, hearing about others research and research methods as well as all the inspiring meetings with colleagues from all over the world were the reasons and benefits for me to participate in the conference.

I would therefore like to, again, thank this year's organising committee for an inspiring and interesting conference. I look forward to the next ARCOM conference!

*Kjerstin Ludvig  
Chalmers University of Technology*



**T**he ARCOM conference in Edinburgh was my first appearance at an ARCOM event. I found it to be a very pleasant experience! With me I brought a paper based on a tunnelling project that I had investigated at the first stage of my PhD studies.

In ten pages I managed to formulate a few insights from that study, regarding formal and informal control through different modes of communication. The aspect of trust between actors I also touched upon. Actually, this study awoke my interest in what happens during very early phases when planning infrastructure, but that is a story for another day and the next ARCOM conference.

Currently, I am investigating a major railway project in its planning and early design phase. I am especially interested in how the client and numerous consultants collaborate and coordinate their work to avoid budget and deadline overruns. Not only with regards to their own work but also with respect to the, yet to be appointed, (detailed designs) consultants and contractors. Hopefully I will be able to tell you about this during my next ARCOM presentation.

Returning to this year's conference: It is not easy to prepare a ten minute presentation when I easily could have talked for an hour. It is even more challenging when you are the last presenter of the last session, on the last day. Then add the fact that it was my first solo performance as a presenter at a conference. I was not paralysed with fear, but I would not be telling the truth if I said I was not nervous. However, I think that my presentation went fine and afterwards our session had two panels consisting of all presenters. I appreciated that the moderator steered the discussion to specific themes rather than questions about individual papers, this made the exchange of ideas more interesting. I suspect that this made the audience more alert after three hectic days of presentations!

Although I would have liked an opportunity to discuss my paper with others after my presentation, instead having to leave for the airport after snatching a quick lunch, I did have several good chats and an enjoyable conference!

*Therese Eriksson  
Chalmers University of Technology*

## 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in the City of Reading Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> – Wed 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013

### Highlights!!

- The venue is historical Reading Town Hall situated in the very centre of Reading, a large University Town approximately 40 miles west of London.
- The Town Hall is no longer an administrative building, but has undergone extensive refitting and refurbishment as a conference venue. It is also the home of the Museum of Reading.
- Keynote Speakers are confirmed as :
  - ⇒ Professor Alistair Gibb, ECI Royal Academy of Engineering Professor of Complex Project Management, Loughborough University.
  - ⇒ Lawrence Waterman OBE, Senior Partner at Park Health and Safety Services, Head of Health and Safety for the Olympic Delivery Authority and Head of Health and Safety for the London Legacy Development Corporation.
  - ⇒ Peter Hansford, Chief Construction Adviser to UK Government, Executive Director of The Nichols Group and past-President (2010-2011) of the Institution of Civil Engineers.
- The annual ARCOM Debate will focus on Prospects and Precariousness of working in the construction industry. Set in the context of a very successful London games, a slow creep out of the recession, and the apparent appetite for embracing new technologies (for example BIM).
- Debate Speakers are currently Dr Tyrone Pitsis (Newcastle University Business School); Dr Elena Navarro-Astor (Universidad Politécnica de Valencia) as well as our Keynote Speakers. More speakers are yet to confirm.
- The 2013 Langford Lecture (set up in 2011 in memory of Professor David Langford, former Honorary President of ARCOM) is to be delivered by Emmanuel Aboayge-Nimo (Nottingham Trent University).
- 155 papers have been provisionally accepted and after further reviewing the final number is likely to be 125 for inclusion in the proceedings and for presentation over the three days.
- Papers have been reviewed by a sixty-four strong Scientific Committee (including 21 members of the ARCOM Committee) coming from nine countries.
- Eight Paper Prizes are to be awarded, each attracting a monetary prize of £250.
- The Conference Dinner will be in the Concert Hall of Reading Town Hall. The Town Hall was built in various phases in the 18th and 19th centuries and the current form dates from 1875, designed by Alfred Waterhouse (Natural History Museum, London)

For enquiries and information please contact:

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