

IABSE – WORKING COMMISSION 7

SUSTAINABLE ENGINEERING

MINUTES OF MEETING

MALTA, MARCH 20, 2001

1. Present: R. Silman (Chairman), R. Halsall, J. Kanda, A. Pickett, A. Sarja, T. Steffen, C.J. Walsh, K. West.
Excused: A. Chakrabarti, Z. Cywinski, P. Maydl, J. Vanegas
Not Heard from: G. Forrest-Brown
2. Two members of the WC have resigned: K. Ödeen (Sweden) citing lack of time and L. Finzi (Italy) citing reasons of health.
3. New members K. West and C. Walsh were introduced. (*At the TC session following our meeting of the WC, A. Pickett, C. Walsh and K. West were formally elected to the first, of a possible two, four-year terms.*)
4. The minutes from the previous annual meeting of WC 7 in Lucerne, September 2000, were approved.
5. Forthcoming conferences were announced: (? Indicates possible venues, not definite yet).
 - Melbourne, September 2002, Symposium and Annual Meetings
 - ? Greece, May 2003, Symposium (theme: Earthquake Resistance; co-sponsored with fib) and Annual Meetings
 - ? Antwerp, September 2003, Conference or possible Symposium and Annual Meetings if Greece does not work out (Theme: High Speed Transportation Systems and Structures)
 - ? Shanghai, September 2004, Symposium and Annual Meetings
 - For other IABSE sponsored or co-sponsored conferences, I refer you to the website: www.iabse.ethz.ch
6. K. West volunteered to be the WC7 representative for the 2001 Outstanding Paper Award Committee. This committee reads all of the papers in the four issues of *SEI* and selects the best one. All work performed by correspondence.

7. The themes of the Melbourne Symposium were discussed and the sentiment of WC7 was conveyed to R. Halsall that in the call for papers in the Preliminary Invitation, it might not seem apparent that the three main themes -- Innovation, Sustainability and Information Technology -- were to be addressed in the various program categories. R. Halsall, member of the Scientific Committee for Melbourne, promised to address the issue. (*We are pleased to report that the SC for Melbourne decided to devote one Plenary Session each to the three main themes after hearing the concerns of the WC's.*)
8. P. Mayld's e-mail message to R. Silman was distributed to members and a major discussion point was how to be able to include members who could not attend the annual meeting of the WC in person in the live discussion. R. Silman brought this to the attention of the TC as well. Video-conferencing still seems to be a phenomenon of the future because of the required hardware (very costly to rent and most OC's would not have funding to allow each WC this equipment) and the requirement for a special high speed data line from the conference venue. But we thought that audio tele-conferencing via a simple conference call with a speaker phone could be achieved; of course the long-distance telephone charge for each line connected for a relatively long duration (at least one hour, and perhaps up to four hours if the entire meeting were included!) might prove to be a substantial cost, but much less expensive than travel costs. Would some member of the WC care to investigate this possibility for our next meeting(s)? If so, please contact R. Silman.
9. It is the strong wish of the President of IABSE, K. Ostenfeld, and the TC that all of the WC's begin to produce more tangible, useful work. To that end, all feel that a revival of the series called Structural Engineering Documents (SED) be investigated. These are hard cover monographs on specific topics (the last two have dealt with vibrations in structures and reliability with a forth-coming one on bridge bearings), of between 50 to 100 pages. Members of the WC expressed interest, particularly C. Walsh, in producing an SED, specific topic to be determined. One incentive to write such a document might be free distribution to all 5000 IABSE members – a gigantic initial circulation.
10. The BASAAR for presentation in Malta tomorrow was discussed. We are doing a joint presentation with WC 6, Information Technology, on how I.T. can be used to further the aims of Sustainable Structural Engineering. A 45-minute joint session was held with members of WC 6 during which the BASAAR was planned. (*A short report on the actual BASAAR: Most members whom I spoke to agreed that it was successful. We established a sustainable venue by opening the door to the terrace, moving the chairs outdoors, [after shutting off the air conditioning and lights in the room] and using a large-format paper flip chart. There were always between 20-25 people in attendance. Weather was beautiful, discussion never flagged, interest was keen. We may not have answered too many questions, but certainly many were asked. We fulfilled the purpose of the BASAAR – everyone in the audience was involved. Members of the two WC's did a fine job.*)

11. Status of the two exiting WC 7 projects.

- a. Database of “sustainable” sites that are useful to structural engineers. We have had six contributions, most of which are suitable for instantaneous reference use by structural engineers. The WC discussed how we can best make these available to our colleagues at large. Our conclusion was to post them, virtually as is on the WC 7 website of IABSE and then publicize as best we can that information is available in that location. (See discussion below in point 13. of WC7 website.) It is not too late for further contributions or for updates of present contributions. Keep them coming,
- b. Articles for a regular column in SEI. We have agreed to contribute articles to build up a “bank” of material such that we could publish a contribution in each and every issue of *SEI*, on a regular basis. A single page of text in *SEI*, without illustrations, contains 1200 words. Contributions were to be no more than one page, shorter if possible. Articles should not be philosophical generalizations, but specific suggestions on how teachers, researchers, practitioners, decision-makers could implement specific principles of sustainability. One suggestion at a time, one idea at a time, is one battle at a time; eventually we will win “the war” that way. A. Charabarti agreed to serve as editor, but thus far he has received contributions from only two members. It is my feeling that we cannot unleash this endeavor until we have at least four finished and acceptable articles with at least two more in the works. Members in attendance were very enthusiastic. We did not set any deadlines however (our last deadline of January 15, 2001 has already passed some 10 weeks ago). If we mean to do this, please send your articles in WORD format to A. Chakrabati with a copy to R. Silman before June 30, 2001. (*I spoke with IABSE’s new chairman of the Publications Committee, Simon Bailey, and he is very enthusiastic about the project and promises to give us the space. Remember however that SEI is a peer-reviewed journal and your articles must meet their high standards – they reject more than 50% of submissions. Simply writing an article is not a guarantee that it will be published; it must be of high quality. All they have promised WC7 is a regular reserved space.*)

12. As the newest WC in IABSE, our membership is still in formation. At present we number 13 (see list at end of minutes). We had been up to 15, but as I mentioned in point 2., two members have resigned. We are allowed up to 18. There is no hurry to fill vacancies. We want vibrant, active members, not just names on a list. We should try to keep a good balance among members. Here’s where we are lacking:

- a. Gender balance – we have no women. Let’s get some.
- b. Developing countries – Their problems of sustainability may be the most serious in years to come. It is an area where IABSE can really do some good.
- c. Geographical distribution – we have no members from Africa, South America, Australia, Middle East.

Please send in suggestions.

13. WC 7 website – We have no effective website at present. If one looks us up on the IABSE home page, all you see is a list of members and our mission statement. R. Silman has promised to inquire as to how we might easily and quickly develop a viable website. What help will we receive from HQ in Zurich? It is not the job of WC 6, Information Technology, to create or maintain websites. Such task should be performed by a service agency or a member on staff of IABSE.
14. New Projects. No new projects were raised, other than production of an SED. R. Silman encouraged all members to submit ideas as they think of them.
15. Next meeting. Since Melbourne is 18 months away, members voted to have an Annual Meeting of the WC in March 2002 at a venue to be determined. R. Silman mentioned that the TC meets at that time, usually in Zurich and this could be an excellent opportunity to connect the two meeting and gain some support from IABSE to provide us with a meeting space. (*At the meeting of the TC subsequent to our WC meeting, it was decided that the TC would meet twice before Melbourne. In Sept. 2001 we will tie our meeting to the workshop in Stuttgart, with the TC meeting occurring on Saturday, Sept. 8, 2001. If we wished a WC meeting coincident with that, it could be on the Friday before or the Sunday after this. The second meeting of the TC is scheduled for Monday, April 8, 2002 in New York. [I jokingly suggested coming to N.Y. and all members jumped at the idea, claiming that airfares are less expensive to N.Y. than within Europe. I am going to investigate package airline/hotel deals with several US carriers.] We could have a WC meeting on Saturday or Sunday, April 6 or 7, 2002 in NY.*) Do either of these venues interest you? I would greatly appreciate having a volunteer to carry out investigation of tele-conferencing, point 8. above, for it might be extremely useful for this proposed Annual Meeting.
16. All agreed to try to keep momentum going.

Submitted by,

Robert Silman, Chairman, WC 7

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