Dear Friends

Welcome to the inaugural Alumni Newsletter, a special edition which profiles some of the remarkable students we have had the pleasure to teach over the last sixty years.

This year we will facilitate the development of an online community of our alumni through UNSW LinkedIn and future plans include initiating a CVEN Alumni Group which will meet in real time at the School, to organise networking and social events. If you are interested in participating in this group please contact our external relations team at cvenerc@unsw.edu.au

While our graduates forge ahead in building successful careers in an astonishing variety of fields, the School too has been busy expanding and growing its own business. In 2009 we had 1173 undergraduate students, 375 postgraduate coursework, and 65 higher degree students enrolled in our programs. These are record numbers, and we welcome the renewed interest in civil and environmental engineering as a dynamic, challenging and socially useful profession, but as you will see from our six decade chart, academic staff numbers have not kept pace with student growth. Using the talents of our postgraduate researchers and fourth year honours students as tutors has helped us manage the increased teaching load, and we are also increasingly utilising the new web-based educational technologies.

Continuing our track record of success in winning Australian Research Council Grants, the School is currently the best performing School in the country’s top performing University. With eight new ARC Discovery grants, 4 new ARC Linkage grants and 2 ARC Infrastructure and Equipment grants awarded for 2010 (totalling $5.2 million), the School is by far the most successful research School of its kind in the country.

We continue to juggle the demands of teaching with a research orientated academic career path. This year we hope to help support young emerging researchers within the School through a new Rupert Vallentine Fellowship Scheme. As many of you will know Professor Rupert Vallentine made an enormous contribution to the formation, direction, ethos and life of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. He was present at the beginning of the School - and the University - in 1949, and retired as UNSW Pro-Vice Chancellor in 1982. For over thirty years Rupert served the School, the Faculty and UNSW as a visionary researcher, educator, strategic thinker and humanitarian. We hope to continue his legacy.

T. David Waite
Professor and Head of School

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History Booklaunch

The History of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering will be launched later in the year in the Spring - celebrating over sixty years of useful work, and the people who participated in this achievement - staff and students alike.

All School alumni are listed in the History and all are invited to the launch. Please register your interest online at http://www.civeng.unsw.edu.au/alumni_industry_relations/alumni/alumni_registration/index.html
Or email: cvenerc@unsw.edu.au

If you have any images of your time at the School please contact the School Historian Dr Mary O’Connell on m.oconnell@unsw.edu.au

www.civeng.unsw.edu.au
Rupert Vallentine Fellowships

In order to maintain and sustain our excellent in cutting edge research the School needs to support emerging talented researchers, in particular those whose work will contribute to the strategic directions of the School, industry and the wider community. To do this the School has established the Rupert Vallentine Fellowship Scheme, named in honour of one of the School's founding academics. The first three Rupert Vallentine fellows are:

Dr Richard Collins. Richard's expertise lies in the area of trace element environmental chemistry. His investigations into the discharge of chemical contaminants (particularly aluminium and iron) from acid sulfate soils – discharges which can have catastrophic environmental effects on Australian estuaries - have highlighted a number of key issues and gaps in current scientific understanding and provided direction to better management practices.

Dr Elhab Hamed’s research interests lie in the developing area of lightweight construction materials, useful for their sustainability and multifunctionality, and in the use of advanced technology and composite materials to repair, preserve and strengthen existing concrete and masonry structures, including heritage buildings.

Dr Wendy Timms, a groundwater specialist, recognises that for Australia to effectively manage this precious but vulnerable resource, far more knowledge of sub-surface water systems is required than is currently available. Wendy leads a research team studying aquifers - underground layers of water-bearing permeable rock or materials such as gravel, sand, silt, or clay.

UNSW Centre for Infrastructure Engineering & Safety

Established in 2007 to undertake advanced research in all aspects of civil engineering infrastructure embodying building structures, bridges, dams, tunnels, roads, pavements and more. CIES involves eminent academic staff with strong international reputations in their respective fields, particularly in structural engineering, geotechnical engineering, engineering mechanics and computational mechanics.

CIES conducts pure and applied research and undertakes commercial activity in collaboration with industry, with our well-resourced computational and large scale testing facilities providing the essential physical resources. CIES researchers enjoyed tremendous results in the most recent ARC funding round - six Discovery Project grants totalling $2.12 million along with two Linkage Project grants – making it one of the University’s most successful Centres in the 2009 round.

The inaugural Director of the Centre, ARC Federation Fellow, Scientia Professor and Professor of Civil Engineering, Mark Bradford has very recently taken up the position of Dean of Engineering at UTS. The new Director of CIES is Professor Stephen Foster.

www.civeng.unsw.edu.au/cies

UNSW Water Research Centre

The School has a 60 year history of leading development of water technology in Australia. Apart from maintaining the largest postgraduate and undergraduate teaching programs in water engineering in Australia, the School remains active in fundamental water research, with practical project-based and theoretical research undertaken using the School’s state of the art Water Quality laboratories and the unique large-scale facilities of the Water Research Laboratory at Manly Vale.

To maintain Australia’s current level of population and economic growth, water and contamination management need innovative solutions in terms of environmental, energy and social considerations. In recognition of the demand for better integrated approaches to water management, in 2007 the School united its longstanding and major water research activities within a single centre, the UNSW Water Research Centre. The new Centre activities are grouped around three dominant research themes: Water Supply, the Coast, and Sustainability.

The Centre is co-directed by Professor Richard Stuezt and Dr Bill Peirson, who are respectively responsible for each node. www.water.unsw.edu.au/site
Civil with Architecture

The innovative BE Civil Engineering with Architecture Program is a four year full Civil Engineering degree with nearly a quarter of its courses completed in the Faculty of Built Environment. Creativity and inventiveness are the key attributes of this program. The degree program was initiated in 2006 by the School’s A/Prof Mario Attard and Dr Zora Vrcelj in collaboration with A/Prof Harry Margalit and Jim Plume from the Faculty of the Built Environment and is proving very successful, both in current student satisfaction and in attracting prospective students. In 2010 the ATAR cut-off was 95.45. The Civil with Architecture program seeks to promote synchronization, mutual esteem between engineers and architects, and an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to training of future civil engineers. Through the course the students will develop and nurture creativity and learn the technical and scientific principles required to design structures. The ultimate aim is to help students become conceptual thinkers, inspired by beautiful creations to build even better ones, to develop an appreciation for beauty with the mathematical ability to challenge the traditional boundaries of structural design. Students graduating from this degree will be well qualified to collaborate with architects and other professionals in the built environment to produce integrated and sustainable design.

New teaching technologies

In late 2009 the School invested in a range of audio-visual equipment in Room 701 designed to significantly increase the flexibility and enhance the quality of our web-based courses. The new system includes a number of new capabilities. A SmartBoard (interactive whiteboard) allows for the live recording of any content written on the board for later retrieval. A video conferencing mode enables external lecturers to present and interact with the students in the room, and a lecture recording facility with two cameras and three ceiling mounted microphones, can record the lecturer - together with any class interaction - as well as any content stream from the SmartBoard, a laptop or PC, or a DVD shown in class. The lecture recording can be broadcast onto UNSW TV, YouTube and/or iTunes, and integrated with the new UNSW BlackBoard (online learning and teaching) system.

MEngSc Coursework Programs

Commonwealth supported

Postgraduate coursework teaching and learning has been one of the core activities and strengths of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering for over fifty years. With 375 students enrolled in 2009 the School continued to be the leading provider of postgraduate engineering education in Australia. Our Master of Engineering Science (MEngSc) educates students to the top level required nationally in eight specialisations:

Civil Engineering,
Environmental Engineering,
Geotechnical Engineering and Engineering Geology,
Groundwater Resources,
Project Management,
Structural Engineering,
Water Resources (includes coastal engineering),
Water, Wastewater and Waste Engineering.

Courses are also available in Transport Engineering and Construction Management. Many courses are run by distance or as short courses and all are currently Commonwealth Supported, (HECS) which means huge savings in tuition fees for eligible students.

Leighton

In 2009, the School began its first year of delivery of a specialized Master of Engineering Science in Project Management specifically designed for Leighton Holdings by the School’s engineering construction and management group led by Professor David Carmichael.

The MEngSc will provide Leighton Holdings staff with technical knowledge such as contracts, cost planning, design management, safety, tendering and estimating as well as developing their professional skills such as leadership and team building, negotiation skills and people management.

The School welcomes further engagement with industry in this exciting and growing sector.
A Brief History of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering

**Founding 40's**

Prime Minister: Ben Chifley (1945-1949)

NSW State Premier: JJ McGirr (1947-1952)

Head Teacher, Civil Engineering, Sydney Technical College, A S (Stan) Hall. (1946 -1951)

The NSW University of Technology was proclaimed by NSW State Parliament on July 1 1949. But even in those days, the engineers were already ahead. Stan Hall's Department of Civil Engineering had enrolled its first nine students in the new BE Civil degree in 1948.

Staff confidence, energy and vision were abundant, the material resources were not. 'It would be fair to say' remarked Crawford Munro, HoS (1951-64) 'that in 1948 the School of Civil Engineering consisted of a table and a chair occupied by Mr Stan Hall.'

**Frontier 50's**

Prime Minister Robert Menzies (1949 – 1966)

HoS: Crawford Munro: 1951-1964

Themes of decade: the Cold War, fear of communism, the post-War boom, white goods mania in the suburbs, scientific hegemony - the innocent use of dangerous chemicals in house, garden and farm. For the School: 'the turmoil of pioneering'. New staff, growing – mainly part-time- student population, expanding visions, building labs from scratch, yet stuck at Ultimo campus.

Grateful students and strong bonds; 'The camaraderie which quickly developed and deepened as the years went by (and the numbers went down!) was something very special and unforgettable.'

Munro declared in 1955: 'Priority must be given to those tasks which are of particular importance to Australian problems and the development of this country, in particular in the field of water supply, utilization and control.'

1954 Stan Hall initiates postgraduate coursework subjects to inform and update practising civil engineers.

1957 NSWUT changes its name to UNSW.

1958 M Tech formally established.

1959 Water Research Laboratory founded at Manly Vale. First director, Rupert Valentie.

**Successful 60's**


Themes of decade: 'The Times They are a-Changin' in Australia, however, Libs still rule. School (and University) experiences baby boomer growth. Part time study gradually on the wane, and no wonder - 'Part-time you worked a full eight hour day, bus to uni, three hours or more of lectures. No uni social life, no private social life, all weekend studying. Part-time students were tough, stoic campaigners in for the seven to twelve year stretch.'

Regular annual Miss Civil Engineering competitions, despite not a female student in sight.

1961 Stan Hall and Ron Woodhead's book Frame Analysis published. 'a monumental contribution to the discipline of structural engineering internationally.'

1966 New School building on Kensington campus opens August 22.

1967 M Tech becomes M Eng Sc.


Stats in a nutshell...

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Social Change 70's

Themes of decade: ‘Give Peace a Chance’ Social change and protest. Engineers – and scientists- become unfashionable, as students choose arts and commerce first. Numbers of civil engineering students plummet over decade. Engineering students ease tensions of declining status by pelting Medicine students each year in annual flour fight. Start wearing flares, and blokes grow beards.
1970 Department of Surveying becomes its own school in 1970.
1971 Department of Civil engineering materials (later geotechnical engineering) founded.
1973 Department of engineering construction and management founded.
1974 Whitlam Government abolishes university tuition fees.
1975 UN International Year of Women and School finally has its first woman graduate: Helen Pearson
1975 UNSW allows electronic calculators to be taken into exams
1976 Bob Warner, Vijay Rangan & Stan Hall publish Reinforced Concrete
1979 Bob Warner & Ken Faulkies publish Prestressed Concrete, ‘the most important and influential Australian books on concrete structures’

On the Outer 80's

Prime Minister: Robert James (Bob) Hawke (1983 – 91)
Themes of decade: The corporatisation of industry, the rise of the new technologies, the first mobile phone call made 1987, the departure of governments from the provision of civil engineering services. For the School: a decade of contraction. No growth in student numbers and a freeze on staff recruitment. Civil engineers become deeply unfashionable. CIVSOC promoted lemon yellow and pale pink School T-Shirts ‘We aimed to change the image of civil engineers from dull dreary yobbos to one of dull colourful yobbos.’
1981 Department of Transport Engineering founded.
1986: School beats Sydney University in the Munro Cup. ‘Not only did we beat them in the rugby, but we got up in the boat race as well, thus carrying on the tradition that we know and love’.
1987 Australian Rainfall and Run off is published, ed Professor David Pilgrim, and mainly written by School staff. ‘the greatest widespread impact on water engineering in Australia of any book authored by Australians.’
1987 Centre for Wastewater Treatment founded.
1989 Hawke Government introduces HECS.

New Beginnings 90's

Themes of decade: the rise and rise of new IT technologies, new interest in environmentalism, civil engineering begins to be seen as part of the solution. For the School: a revival of fortunes- it begins to build a strong and successfully funded research culture, renews connection with industry, and reinvents itself as politically correct.
1991 BE Environmental introduced, at last brings in women students.
1993 School offers MEngSc specialisations by distance.
1996 School changes its name to the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering.
1998 Departments disestablished – School administrated as a single unit

New World 00's

Prime Minister: Kevin Rudd, (2007 -)
Themes of decade: Climate change, mining and housing boom, engineering skills shortages, Barak Obama, global financial crisis, iPods, iPhones, FaceBook and Twitter, and the apology to the Aboriginal people. For the School, the revival in its research success was joined by a mid decade growth spurt in student numbers. In 2005 615 undergraduates, in 2009 there were 1173 . The civil and environmental engineer returns to glamour –and rising UAI’s – renewed as cultural hero.
2007 Centre for Infrastructure Engineering and Safety (CIES).
2007 Civil with Architecture. By 2009 its UAI was 94.15.
2009 CWWT and WRL combine to form UNSW Water Research Centre.
2009 School is best performing School in winning ARC grants in the top performing University.
I still do not know why I chose to study civil engineering. No-one in our family had been to University, and there was really no-one to ask for advice. I sat for two days in Victoria Park, trying to decide between Medicine and Civil Engineering. A person I met, a medical practitioner, was supercilious and spoke disparagingly of the new Institute of Technology. Perhaps that was the reason I decided to do engineering there. The people in Civil Engineering who immediately come to mind from this time are Crawford Munro, Rupert Valentine, and Joe Brettle. I think back very fondly on these people. Crawford was much larger than life. I don’t remember actually learning anything from him but he was inspirational and entertaining.

Immediately after completing my BE degree I commenced research as a post-graduate student at the School. The next couple of years were an interesting and rewarding period of my life. We were starting with very little in the way of equipment and experience. We had to build up the physical research facilities and the laboratories almost from the beginning. In order to set up the structures laboratory we had to design the equipment we needed (such as a prestressing bed) and then build it or get it built. We had to learn about sensitive measuring equipment so that we could order it in. We worked day and night in the laboratory and at our desks. The morale was high and I think we were reasonably successful, mainly because of the enthusiasm and hard work on our part and on the part of people like Joe Brettle and Stan Hall.

My career: The BE was a “launching pad” to a challenging and satisfying engineering career, although I do sometimes wonder how my final year thesis on grouts for prestressed concrete led to the bulk of my career being in hydraulics. But that in some way typifies the variety available in a civil engineering career. One of the most satisfying aspects of my working life to date has been a major ground-breaking study and achievement in understanding cavitation in high-head structures. Add to that the experiences in sediment damage to turbines in the Himalayas, the usefulness of air in high-velocity flows, and getting a handle on transient phenomena in high-energy hydraulics, it all reflects on an enjoyable and varied career – and it is still going on!

Some things from our Uni days don’t fade from memory – with most days being in the early Civil Engineering School building in Broadway, I can still recall the headaches from exposure to the pungent smell of hops from the brewery across the road. I will never forget the survey camps; excursions to the Snowy Mountain Scheme: the roof blowing off the Main Building in a storm; numerous lecturers - Des O’Connor, Geoff Welsh, Peter Balint, Keith Watson, Ralph Hattersley, Rupert Valentine, Ron Woodhead, Stan Hall, Crawford Munro. I most enjoyed passing every year! And the friendship of fellow students, some of which have lasted a lifetime.

My likes at UNSW were the camaraderie of my fellow students, the field work (eg Snowy trip, Yarramundi survey camp) and the social life, while the relative dislike was the hours of lectures each week. I will never forget Professors Jim Antill, David Pilgrim and Ken Faulkes. They were memorable lecturers whose guidance I still remember.

The most rewarding aspects of my career relate to successful management of numerous construction and design projects as well as drafting risk and safety management guidelines used by engineers throughout Australia. The Dams Safety Committee set up and audited the safety standards for the 340 dams in NSW to protect the community from dam failures.

As Executive Engineer of the NSW Dams Safety Committee for over 20 years, I helped set up and audit the safety standards of over 340 dams to protect the community from dam failures. I also helped set up in the TAFE system, and ran, regular training programs for dam operators throughout Australasia.
Robert Care
BE Civil (Hons) '73, PhD'78
Chair and CEO Arup Australasia
Chair, RedR – (Engineering humanitarian relief aid).
Deputy Chair, Australian Construction Industry Forum (Peak body of industry peak bodies).

I actually wanted to be a high school maths teacher but I was advised to study engineering to keep my career options open. Funny how things work out.

What I enjoyed most was the study, the dedication to an end. What I enjoyed least – Soil mechanics and statistics. I remember looking at the final Soil Mechanics paper with a sinking heart… and then seeing the way out. I bamboozled my way through by trotting out my knowledge of finite differences for a flow net calculation, and ended up with a high mark that I am not sure I deserved.

I will never forget, my PhD supervisors Al Kabaila and Ray Lawther, and Ray’s MGTC, Ken Faulkies and Bob Warner, great lecturers and Stan Hall, a benevolent HoS.

Career Highlights to date: The Wandoo B Full Field development – a project Alliance – the first in Australia: leading the forensic recovery team into the Hatfield Rail crash in Britain in 2000: working as Chief Engineer at the National Capital Development Commission – a great organisation: joining the global Arup Group Board and from 2004 leading Arup Australasia during a great period of our development. Upon reflection I was at the School for almost eight years, I learned a lot, and I graduated with two excellent degrees. I enjoyed myself, made many friends including one group that has met annually for the last thirty-something years. A great School, a great reputation, and a lot to be thankful for.

Elizabeth Taylor (nee O’Neill), AO
BE Civil '78

I enjoyed the hands-on engineering such as making concrete, and the survey camp at Richmond. Project based aspects such as the “Footpath Foreman” activity in first year. In this activity each student was required to find a construction site and, with the permission of the foreman, follow and document progress over the six months of term, write a report and give a presentation to the class. I also enjoyed playing cards in the “Blue Room” in later years. I did not enjoy the isolation and lack of support. I was not assertive, and the boys did not speak to me for the first year. Upon reflection I feel that it was an unconscious rather than an active exclusion. UNSW at that time reflected the norm culturally. What perhaps is sad is that universities generally reflect rather than challenge prevailing social norms.

Career Highlights: As a professional engineer: construction and contracts engineering on site around Sydney Harbour. As an academic: in collaboration with wonderful colleagues who are passionate about their area of expertise, integrating curriculum and support for students while extending the boundaries of our understanding of our professionalism. I am privileged to have been a part of the movement that made some shift to greater inclusivity within universities, and a member of groups such as AAEE (Australasian Assoc for Engineering Education) and the Women in Engineering Units who were critical change agencies.

Ian Sinclair
BE Civil (Hons) '82

Career Highlights: To date:

Engineering Manager NSW/ACT for Thiess
Currently managing the tendering of major Infrastructure projects such as the Brisbane’s Clem 7 Tunnel (North South Bypass) and Victorian Desalination Project.

Most enjoyable times were the surveying camp and the construction camp. But I also enjoyed the diverse subjects covered and hands-on work in the concrete, soil and water labs.

Least enjoyable? Systems and pavement engineering.

I remember Vic Summersby and Graham Easton who accompanied us on the construction camp, and Dr Ian Gilbert who showed us the short cuts in Structural Design. And I will never forget the friends I made, and still regularly catch up with.

Most rewarding aspects in my career: According to my wife – “Building Monuments to my Ego” i.e being able to actually deliver major infrastructure icons eg Sydney’s Anzac Bridge and Melbourne’s Western Link with its iconic Urban design/art.

Jeffrey Min-Hsin Chen
PhD’94

Career Highlights: Sembcorp’s core businesses are utilities, environmental and waste management, industrial park development and management and marine. As CEO China, I am responsible for the overall management of Sembcorp’s activities in China, in particular for the water, wastewater, energy and environmental businesses. I have gained not only the necessary knowledge and skill from my years at the School but I have also been able to network with staff and fellow graduates through various functions and events, all useful for my career to date.
Leith Sharp

BE Environmental (Hons) 1996

Currently Visiting Scientist, Harvard School of Public Health

In 1995 Leith Sharp was asked by UNSW to establish one of world’s first green campus programs. Harvard University then recruited Leith in 1999 to become the founding director of Harvard’s Green Campus Initiative (recently renamed the Office for Sustainability). By 2008, under her leadership, Harvard had the largest green campus organization in the world and was a recognized global leader in campus sustainability.

‘My time as one of the first cohort to study Environmental Engineering at UNSW was like living with the volume turned up to 11. Many subsequent improvements were made and I think the School did a great job of continuously refining the program and making the workload more realistic. But for us it was very tough. This bought the 50-60 of us closer together. I have many fond memories of groups of us gathering together to study, share notes, help each solve problems and generally succeed. Many of us in that first generation would not have passed everything without the help of our fellow enviros. For me - I think this was the best thing to come out of the experience - learning the value and importance of collaboration. As a young person this experience was central in shaping my orientation to my professional path. As the complexity and urgency of the global environmental imperative continue to escalate, hopefully more and more of us will discover the central importance of collaboration.’

Sarah Davies

MEngSc (Water & Wastewater) ’04

Water and Habitat Coordinator, International Emergencies Department

Australian Red Cross

As I did my course by distance learning the part I enjoyed the most was the week when we came into uni to do some coursework and met the other students What I enjoyed least was again as a distance learning student being too far away from the library when I’d left another assignment to the last minute! The person I’ve never forgotten is Stephen Moore. I really enjoyed his lectures in waste management.

The Masters I did in the school allowed me to move into development/aid work which had been a long held desire. All the work I’ve done since then overseas in the Pacific, Indonesia and Chad has been rewarding in different ways. My latest assignment is in Haiti to assist in the relief effort there and I’m happy to be able to use my education to contribute to others in a concrete way.

Thomas Baker

BE Civil (Hons 1) & University Medal 2009

Graduate Engineer Leighton Contractors

My time at the School was challenging and enjoyable. Challenging in terms of building new relationships whilst managing work, study and leisure commitments. It was at times a test of patience and commitment to get through some of the less appealing subjects! Despite this, the thorough nature of the course is necessary to gain an understanding of all the different aspects that feed into civil engineering projects. And I enjoyed learning the practical applications of the theory – in particular through the industrial training requirement.

Throughout my second and third year at uni I worked with Jack Hodgson Consultants before receiving a scholarship from Leighton Contractors and I worked with them between my third and fourth year of study. I am currently employed as a Graduate Engineer and I am looking forward to the challenges this job presents.

School Highlight: My honours year. Investigating new and innovative technologies in a field of interest was testing but mainly intriguing. Working closely with an academic, PhD student and technical staff gave me interesting and useful insights into both research and working life in the field of civil engineering.