

Activity of Member

The British Geotechnical Association

Brief History of the Association:

The British Geotechnical Association has a long history, formally stretching back to 1949. However, before that time enthusiasm for geotechnical engineering as a new branch of civil engineering was increasing. Leonard Cooling was the only British representative to attend the First International Conference on Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering (organised by the ISSMFE) in 1936, but by the Second International Conference in 1948, the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) has formed a British National Committee to coordinate sending delegates and papers to the conference. Following the conference, when it had been decided to set up national sections, the British National Committee of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering was inaugurated in 1949.

Following the formation of the International Society for Rock Mechanics in 1962, it was agreed to enlarge the scope of the British National Committee, and hence in 1963 the committee became the British Geotechnical Society (BGS), with the society affiliated to both international societies. The British Geotechnical Association (BGA), as it is now known, was formed later, in 2000 following the merger of the BGS and the Ground Board of the ICE. So, taking into account its past history, the BGA will be celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2009.

Role of the Association:

The object of the Association is the advancement of public education in the subject of soil and rock mechanics and engineering geology and in their application. As the Ground Board of the ICE, the BGA also fulfils the organisation's role as a learned society, including:

- the publication of papers, guides, reports and briefing sheets
- running events and competitions
- awarding prizes
- managing collaborative research projects
- organising prestigious lectures
- responding to public consultation papers



2007 Fleming Award Winners - Amsterdam Metro Team

Activities:

The BGA organises numerous events every year, from its popular evening speaker and discussion meetings to an Annual Conference for the membership. Recent diverse topics of discussion have included: rock tunnel and cavern construction in New York, climate change and geotechnics, numerical modelling and maintenance of ageing earthworks. The association also organises the internationally renowned Rankine Lecture, which this year was delivered by Andrew Charles on the topic of "the engineering behaviour of fill - the use, misuse and disuse of case studies." In addition to this prestigious event, the membership has also enjoyed our annual international touring lecture series, this year delivered by Professor Carlo Viggiani of the University of Napoli Federico II.



The BGA organises and awards a number of prizes every year, including the Cooling Prize for Young Geotechnical Engineers. This paper writing and presentation competition also helps to select delegates for the European Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference, to which the BGA sends two representatives every year. Other prizes include the BGA Prize award for published work and the Fleming Award (pictured above) for excellence in design and construction in honour of Ken Fleming. The BGA also sponsors a number of conferences, including the recent and highly successful 2nd BGA International Conference on Foundations, which was held in Dundee in June this year. The conference included over 150 papers from 40 countries, providing an international perspective of the latest advances in foundation engineering in research, design and practice. The topics covered included piles, excavations, and offshore foundations, ground behaviour and improvement, shallow foundations and slopes.



Delegates at the European Young Geotechnical Engineers Conference in 2007

Reported by Ms. Fleur Loveridge