



CIB NEWS ARTICLE

International Council for Research and Innovation
in Building and Construction

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CIB Member Section



David Anthony LANGFORD MSc., MPhil., FCIOB

(6 May 1950 – 26 May 2010)

Obituary – CIB W065/W055

Dave was born in Nottingham, England, a city with a famous social tradition. His father was a miner and his grandfather, a founding member of the National Union of Mineworkers. Dave developed life long support for Nottingham Forest FC and, even more importantly, a passion for people and their fair and just treatment.

In 1964, the family moved to Essex and, on leaving school at 16, Dave embarked on a career in Construction – gaining an ONC, an HND, an MSc from Aston in 1976 and an MPhil in 1980. While studying for the HND at Bristol Polytechnic, Dave became deputy president of the students' union and, most importantly, met Vicky – they were married in 1973. Dave gained much varied experience working on construction projects, including civil engineering works, as a site manager; he loved the humour of the workers and their striving through harsh conditions, big fried breakfasts and Friday afternoon sojourns.

Dave joined the Department of Building Technology at Brunel University in 1975. During his 12 years at Brunel, Dave was instrumental in developing the MSc in Construction Management and an MSc in Project Management. With colleagues, he won several large grants from the Science and Engineering Research Council and, in addition to teaching, supervised many undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and several PhDs.

However, politics and financial cuts intervened in the 1980s and Dave, with two colleagues, transferred to the University of Bath in 1987. His complement of work continued apace and the group soon launched the first MSc in Construction Management by distance learning.

In 1991, Dave was recruited by Strathclyde University to the Barr Chair of Construction Management in the Department of Civil Engineering, a fitting recognition of



his contributions and achievements. Despite some difficulties in acclimatising to the cultural shift, Dave's work progressed apace. Structural changes at Strathclyde saw Dave move to the Department of Architecture in 2003, and then to Glasgow Caledonian University in 2005.

Tragically, Dave's career at Glasgow Caledonian was blighted at the end of 2006 while he was on holiday in Europe, by the sudden onset of a debilitating illness, which was not diagnosed for over a year to be a rare form of transverse myelitis. Despite extensive sessions of hospital-based treatment, the illness progressively deprived Dave of the use of his legs and he was forced to take early retirement due to ill health.

Dave's association with CIB began in the early 1980s with attendance at the W065 symposium in Dublin. His first CIB papers appeared at the W065 international symposium at the University of Waterloo, Canada in 1984. As the symposium spanned a weekend, the location afforded a trip to Toronto (to admire the 'huge swans' on the boating lake, a visit to Canada Wonderland to meet Yogi Bear and enjoy the waterslide, as well as a trip to Wasaga Beach for canoeing, a picnic lunch and to meet the Mounties. Of course, no trip to Waterloo would be complete without a compulsory visit to the 'longest bar in the world'.

Further attendance at CIB events followed, such as the Congress in Washington DC in 1986, followed by a side-trip to New York after shipping the voluminous and weighty proceedings back to the UK. True to form, Dave found a superb Italian restaurant on Staten Island, run by a charming man who told of his recent escape from Columbia, but violin cases were not in evidence. Unfortunately, the rice at the Chinese Restaurant in Greenwich village was not great – giving Dave a bout of food poisoning, the onset of which occurred just after an interesting walk around Central Park, just outside one of the best hotels in the city – typical good fortune!

Dave continued to be an ardent attendee and participant at CIB events – particularly those of W065. His written and oral contributions are well-known and vastly appreciated. In 1987 he participated in the W055 conference in London and the joint W055/W065 Conference in Sydney in 1980, enjoying the sights and swimming at Bondi Beach, the ferry to Manley and a weekend in the Blue Mountains – fortunately avoiding staying at the 'saloon' in Katoomba. However, a drive to Botany Bay, late one stormy, grey afternoon was extremely effective in conjuring images of that place's history.

The 1993 W065 symposium on Trinidad proved the great success everyone thought it would be. Precautionary preparations were undertaken with care through a few days on Tobago to acclimatise in order to be ready for the conference itself. A great variety of

papers and presentations, colourful company, incredible hospitality and calypsos on cricket proved exceptionally popular – rather more so than sunburn, sandflies and 'shark and bake'! A high point of recall must be helping to push Professor Desmond Imbert's "car" to bump-start it!!

In 1996, following participation at W092 conference in Durban, where jazz bars seem rather elusive, Dave organised and chaired the W065 conference in Glasgow – the re-invigorated and restored city of culture. Memories of the conference resound with Ranko Bon's pronouncement on data requirements; haggis, and horseshoes. A golf trip to Ross Priory, showed how lovely are the shores of Loch Lomond, to be a fitting final resting place for our dear colleague.

Dave's further contribution to CIB, and elsewhere, are far too numerous to detail – and, with the focus remaining on W065, contributions extended into W092, W055 W096, W112 and way beyond; he remained a stalwart contributor at triennial congresses – including the most recent at Salford in May 2010 where he gave a most memorable and insightful input at the researchers' forum. He also hosted an evening celebration of his recent 60th Birthday, at which he was joined by many friends from around the world.

His passing gives us all a sense of great loss – of his intellect, his always positive contribution, his care and human perspective, and his sense of good fun and 'life for living'. He passed away peacefully while in Crete for a conference at which he was to give a keynote – doing what he loved and what we love him for. Our heartfelt sympathy is offered to his wife, Vicky, his daughter, Nadine, and his mother. Dave, we continue to appreciate and celebrate your life.

Obituary by Richard Fellows