



The dates for the 2011 Traffic Signal Symposium are the 21st and 22nd September and there is a new venue at Warwick University.

Of course the date of the 2010 JCT Traffic Signal Symposium was set a year in advance so no-one could possibly have imagined just how significant the timing would be. Barely four weeks before a new government was to announce the results of a comprehensive spending review which by all accounts had the public sector firmly in its sights, one might have expected this annual gathering of traffic signal engineers to be in a somewhat downbeat mood. Quite the contrary – it was business as usual, a comforting blend of professional excellence and intensive networking.

When the symposium started in 1996, it was a way to bring traffic signal practitioners and manufacturers together and to maintain a sense of community amongst signals engineers. The concept was to offer an affordable conference that is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of experience and through that to encourage the exchange of both knowledge and experience. The programme is central to the event's success and this year it was very comprehensive with fewer commercial contributions than we've seen in recent years – a sign perhaps of a strong focus on the need to find efficiencies.

The sessions ranged from the highly technical, theoretical even – Mike Maher from the Institute of Transport Studies in Leeds presented on 'Optimising signal timings for fixed-time control using the cross-entropy method' – to the more wide ranging.

Perhaps the most thought provoking of these was from Professor Margaret Bell, always a popular figure at the symposium. The subject was climate change and the role that signal control might play in the future in delivering government policy of a 80% reduction over 1990 levels for

carbon dioxide emissions by 2050.

The presentation provided an overview of the main issues relating to the environmental impact of traffic and the need to radically reduce traffic in our networks. Margaret was quite clear that she hadn't come with all the answers. What she was doing, she said was offering a basis for discussion. 'Without a mind-set change in the way we manage traffic and our transport networks to bring about more sustainable travel, the chances of delivering government policy by 2050 are unlikely to be achieved.' Signal control engineers, she said, will need to be more proactive in seeking ways to manage traffic and trip making across all transport networks and seek to facilitate multi modal travel and provide real-time information.

The scope of Margaret's paper was very wide ranging and detailed, and the challenge that it set to traffic engineers was huge. Interested parties were invited to join the discussion and if you would like to keep in touch or contribute Margaret's email address is margaret.bell@newcastle.ac.uk.

The subject of procurement was tackled by Gafoor Din who explained how it was done by Warwickshire County Council. He was accompanied on the platform by Matthew Robertson, Senior Category Specialist in the mobile telecoms sector for Buying Solutions, an executive agency of the Cabinet Office and part of the Efficiency and Reform Group. He explained that Buying Solutions is the national procurement partner for all UK public services and talked about a new framework agreement for Traffic Management Technology (TMT) which is being developed. The extent of the TMT turns out to be surprisingly comprehensive. It covers: Intelligent Traffic Management Solutions; Traffic Signals and

Business as usual at JCT

Professional excellence and intensive networking confirm the symposium's place in the signals engineer's calendar.

Ramp Metering; Vehicle Monitoring Systems; Environmental Monitoring Systems; Electronic and Interactive Message Signs; Maintenance Traffic Management Infrastructure; Urban Traffic Control; Traffic Management Consultancy; Street Furniture and Roadside infrastructure; Car Parking and Access Equipment.

Matthew Robertson said that Buying Solutions works with public sector colleagues to combine the benefits of specialist knowledge, procurement expertise and aggregated demand. 'The aim is to deliver solutions that are fit for purpose and deliver savings in price, process and resource. With this in mind, we would welcome your involvement and input on specific procurement issues and the overall direction of the procurement strategy.'

Plenty of food for thought there – you can find out more by visiting the Buying Solutions website at www.buyingsolutions.gov.uk

Two papers had been shortlisted for the Brian Simmonite Award. This was the first year of the award which was established in memory of Brian, who died in 2009. There was a very worthy winner, Richard Butler of GMUTC for his innovative work with complex interstage design and intelligent phase delays. The judges were very happy to make the award and all agreed that Brian would most certainly have approved. (You can find Richard's paper on page 397).

The runners up were Chris Greenwood and Gavin Coupe from Atkins for a paper describing a scrambled crossing scheme which has been implemented at Oxford Circus in London. (For more information see TEC Vol 51 No 6 p223)

But there were other winners too, with prizes sponsored by JSTSM. They were Mark Roxburgh for questioning standard practices. Mark's

presentation was on the validation of give-way parameters used in modelling partially signalised roundabouts. Donal Hodgins from Kildare County Council gave the most entertaining presentation – he was talking about Virtual Bus Lanes and demonstrated how even small urban centres can benefit from intelligent transport systems.

Bruce Slattery of Halcrow was deemed to have given the most controversial presentation – Speed amelioration using traffic signals and ITS.

Graham Muspratt of Clearview picked up the Technology Prize. Graham was discussing the use of magnetometer sensors with wireless communications for SCOOT detection and described extensive trials that have been carried by Transport for London which concluded that the magnetometer performed ‘very well and showed a close match with the performance of the loop detector’. He said that following initial trials with TfL, a further site for full

one-off deployment of the magnetometer system is being identified and additional trial sites are also in the process of being specified for live deployment of the system.

And last, but certainly not least, John Nightingale was awarded a thoroughly deserved prize for his energy on the platform. I hope he had a good holiday after the symposium closed – he certainly would have needed it.

The JCT team would like to remind everyone that the quality of the event relies on the submission of papers and presentations from working signal engineers and/or manufacturers. So if you have some experience that would be of interest to this community then please get in touch – they would love to hear from you.

And now is certainly the time to be thinking ahead to the Brian Simonite Award 2011. The award is worth £1,000 to the deserving winner and the deadline for papers is 28th February 2011.



The flight competition at the gala dinner, sponsored by Westcotec, was hotly competed with the trophy once again making its way to Sheffield.

Below - one of the event's most regular visitors. He seemed very reluctant to leave.



Pushing the boundaries

S-Paramics users meet to discuss advanced and innovative uses for microsimulation.

Just over 130 delegates booked in to the annual S-Paramics User Group and Conference in Birmingham in September. They came from national and local authorities, from transport related consultancies and from universities. They were expecting the conference to provoke thought and discussion on advanced and innovative uses for microsimulation and were certainly not disappointed.

Warwickshire County, working with JMP, showed the extent of the models they use in planning control and in major transport scheme bids. Their innovative business initiative, collaborating with developers to manage and maintain the simulation models for shared use, was showing positive results for all stakeholders. Steven Wood of SIAS continued the theme of using S-Paramics for major scheme bids with a presentation on the use of S-Paramics with public transport assignment, microscopic departure time choice, and variable demand management with DIADEM. Christy O’Sullivan of ILTP in Ireland then showed how S-

Paramics had been used in consultations to design land use zoning and transport infrastructure in Adamstown, a new town near Dublin. To round up the focus on modelling for the day, Emily Seaman of SIAS described a model of Junction 15 of the M25 which is being used to look at junction layout changes including Active Traffic Management systems. The main point of interest was in the clustering methodology used to find the different demand scenarios inherent in

the observed data, and that these were not necessarily a simple day of the week choice as might have been assumed before.

In support of large models, the audience saw a live demo from Simon Box of Southampton University of how to create the skeleton of an S-Paramics model from OS data. They were also shown by JMP how to merge OS data and census data to automate the process of initial trip matrix estimation. To complete the picture on data collection Mark Pleydell



You can find the conference papers at www.sias.com/usergroup