

Branch Annual Report 2008

Purpose This Annual Report is to record the affairs of the Central Canada Branch of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers for the period from 1st January to 31st December 2008.

Branch Committee – as from the Annual Meeting March 2008

Position	Name	Membership Grade
Chairman	VC Mathur	Fellow
Vice Chair & Prog. Chair@	R Vjih	Fellow
Hon. Sec.	P Apperly	Fellow
Hon. Treasurer	D. Pigott	Fellow
Recruitment & Retention	I. Mansell	Fellow
Historian & Archives	R. Parsons	Fellow
(Web Manager	S.R. Hitner*	Assoc. Member)
Past Chairman	S.C Armstrong	Fellow
USA Northern Rep	Vacant	-
Manitoba Panel Chair	F.E. Stock	Fellow
Ordinary member	T. Ponniah	Assoc. Member

* left Committee but continues to manage website in an advisory capacity.

@ accepted role of Vice Chair Nov., 2008

Branch Events

We continued with the IMechE CCB orchestrated programme collaboration with three other U.K. professional engineering institutions active in Canada. We also received some support from the IEEE in terms of attendance at our events. We broadly followed the London HQ adopted themes of Energy, Transportation, Education and the Environment.

Some of the highlights of the event programme were the lecture and plant tour at Baylis Medical on various issues in Medicine and Engineering; the lecture on aspects of Climate Change in February; the March lecture on energy conservation potential by utilizing landfill gas; the May lecture and plant visit at Goodrich; the September fun-cum-technical event at Richmond Hill

miniature railway; the October lecture on building with renewables; a visit to Comtek composites in Oakville, and the Christmas Dinner lecture on design approaches for making buildings able to withstand hurricanes.

Our portable public address system proved very handy at the IET student awards meeting held over the summer. There was also the collaborative Chinese New Year's banquet with BCS, followed by a lecture on systems audit methodology.

Event attendance

Attendance at the above events varied in the 15 to 40 range. The collaborative effort has worked fairly well, with lessons learned applied to apportionment of meeting costs between the Societies.

Relations with the Institution of Engineering & Technology, British Computer Society and Institution of Civil Engineers

Our joint programme on project management is a major step in fostering good relations with other UK professional institutions. In addition to holding joint lectures we also hold an annual Xmas dinner with IET. We continue the good camaraderie.

Relations with PEO / CCPE

Formal contacts continued during 2008 through Past Chair Stephen Armstrong, who now serves on the Trustee Board, the Institution's governing body.

IMechE Headquarters Support

The Branch has, as usual, been well supported by headquarters staff during the past year. VC Mathur attended the International Strategy Board and the Council Meetings in May, 2008 but was unable to attend the follow-up meetings in Glasgow during October 2008. However, a presentation concerning CCB affairs was forwarded.

The Past Chair Stephen Armstrong attended many of the Trustee Board meetings in the UK during the year. Support from London HQ could not be better.

Professional Reviews

No professional review Interviews were held during 2008. With the new equipment infrastructure that CCB now has at its disposal, remote communication, including video conferencing, is feasible. We have for many years approved applications for membership /professional upgrade

through professional reviews locally by carefully selected interview panel. It is not clear if rules for overseas candidates have been stiffened up, requiring a UK visit or video-conferencing to UK. We have lost one candidate because of difficulties caused in this respect.

We have one candidate wishing to make formal application for joining the Institution during 2009.

Ivor Mansell corresponds with the candidates and tries to point them in the right direction.

Equipment/Infrastructure Update

To make use of upcoming initiatives such as live webcasts and videoconferences with HQ and others, we have after investigation now acquired suitable equipment such as a laptop computer with webcam, etc., as well as a miniature digital audio recorder.

We also acquired during the year a small, portable public address system with wireless microphones. We already had a digital video projector. We are thus now completely equipped to enable Committee meetings to take place with remote attendance by members whose mobility might be affected by distance, bad weather or health, or even when travelling out of the area.

We are also equipped to stage events at locations where no sound system exists.

Web Activities

The CCB has continued to update the web site at www.imeche-ccb.org. The web site and the Internet are used where possible as the preferred method to communicate with members. In line with recent improvements on the UK website, your committee implemented improvements and updates to our own site, bringing us in-line with the UK model. We are very happy with our enhanced online image. E-mail addresses are allocated to individual office-holders and are listed below. These addresses will be transferred from individual to individual as office-holders change. They are:-

branch-chair@imeche-ccb.org
hon-treasurer@imeche-ccb.org

hon-secretary@imeche-ccb.org
website-manager@imeche-ccb.org

Financial situation

The Branch Treasurer's Report summarises the current position, and should be available at the Annual Meeting. Because our lectures have attracted members of other societies this year, not all of whom have cost-sharing agreements with us; we have been somewhat victims of our own success. Our budget, as always is vetted and approved by London, but we are always at the mercy of the fluctuating value of the Canadian Dollar. To help balance our budget, we have designed our programmes to share costs with other UK professional institutions, and also included some on-premises events that do not require us to bear the costs of a hall and catering.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to all members of the Branch Committee for contributing to CCB through their time and talents. I would like to highlight the extra special contributions of the following:-

- Phil Apperly, for his unstinting support. He voluntarily takes on burdens that would faze many of us and always has a no-fuss solution to any difficulty. His acceptance of the position of Hon. Sec. is a great blessing to CCB.
- Ivor Mansell for support in the area of membership retention and general counsel. Many sensitive issues were resolved with his sage guidance and totally unflappable response in crisis situations.
- Ravi Vijn for his acceptance of the role of Vice Chair and for continuing with the duties of Program Chair, and for his several excellent contributions to the development of our Programme Events.
- Des Pigott for staying on top of our finances and providing us with timely and accurate reporting
- Tim Ponniah for his continuing help in many ways. Many events flyers, mailings, etc., would have been quite impossible to issue without his timely and dedicated help. Tim has always been a source of support and brings a highly proactive attitude to the Committee.
- Steve Hitner for continuing to manage our web site even though no longer formally on the Committee.
- Ron Parsons for maintaining our archives. He is reviewing our historical documentation and identifying important documents that will eventually be archived by Phil Apperly. This will protect the history of the branch for future generations.
- The Institution's staff in the UK for keeping us up-to-date and informed. We have received many direct communications from Maria Taylor (International Affairs), Lucy Barling, Penelope Maxfield, and Joanna Fox, Manager, Regional & International Operations (awards and recognition).
- Other acknowledgments ---
 - Frank and Jayne Gosling, for continuing support through the now legendary annual barbeque and for hosting the main Programme Planning Meeting
 - Don Lawson for behind-the-scenes support through his extraordinary counsel and practical guidance

Gift presentations were made to Frank and Jayne Gosling for their hospitality over many years, and to Steve Hitner for his outstanding support of our website. A letter of appreciation was also given to Mark Fuse (former committee member) for his continuing support over domain name registration issues.

Strategic issues

- We seek to continue to provide a broad and interesting programme of events including talks and visits to meet the objectives of I Mech E and members' CPD goals.
- Recruit volunteers to serve on the Branch Executive and ensure sufficient experienced Committee members to form a cadre from which to select Branch Officers
- Be cost effective and operate within the agreed Business Plan.
- Assist members moving to the area and arrange Professional Interviews when requested to do so by the UK.
- Work with HQ on the evolution of the Institution. Provide insight on overseas perception of changes, and constructive criticism of proposed changes to Governance and operations as appropriate.
- Work with PEO, OSPE, IET, ICE, BCS and others to further the aims of the Institution and its members.
- Continue to develop communication means such as Counter-torque, e-mail and the web site to assist in keeping members well informed.
- Develop a strategy to attract younger (below age 55) members to the committee.

Re-branding, Logo changes, etc.

Following the change in the Institution's logo as a result of the recent re-branding initiative, steps are being taken to reflect this change at our Branch level. We have already done so in most respects, but some may have been initially missed: however, this has since been corrected and of course we had not intended to skip this step.

Outstanding Branch Member of the Year Award

A member's name had been forwarded to HQ as a nominee for this award, but despite an acknowledgment from London that the candidate was eminently suitable, the award itself was cancelled for the year because not enough entries had been received. This is a major disappointment for me personally, as this particular individual has rendered immense service to the Branch for a long time.

Americas Forum

We are aware that Prof. David Russell of Penn State U. is the newly appointed Chairman of the Americas Forum. We have not so far had direct contact with him.

VC Mathur, CEng, FIMechE, PEng,
Chairman, Central Canada Branch. Mar. 2009