Editorial

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The issue you have with you is the last one to be published as a hard copy, with the journal moving to online-only publication in 2019 with an annual compendium of papers printed at the end of the year. This is due to the changing needs of readers and looking towards a more sustainable future. The move to online-only publication is a further part of the wider trends among practice and scientific journals and allows authors to use more complex formats to present their ideas and innovation. It also creates a more flexible and immediate environment for interaction between authors and their readers, strengthening the impact of scientific articles that is so highly desired nowadays. It is not only a realisation of efficiency but also of active trends to create communities of learners at every professional level.

The articles themselves showcase the current spectrum of projects and initiatives in engineering heritage, which gradually strengthen its focus and voice to communities (from a very wide European one) and monumental infrastructure that witnessed major historic events, to structures that require the more ‘private’ attention of the professional engineer. It is also significant that the majority of authors are professional consultants rather than just academics, a message that is constantly strengthened by this journal in order to bridge the knowledge that is available across the engineering sector and beyond.

In the first article of this issue, Bell (2018) reflects on the influences of civil engineers in the current European Year of Cultural Heritage. A key theme of the initiative is to identify “the common underlay of values on which traditions become appreciated and resonate sufficiently with new generations to see a rewarding career worth pursuing” (Bell, 2018; p. 140). The effective integration of modern technologies and education are among the pursuits that make civil engineering part of this context, and the author has a few questions to open the debate further in the profession and academia.

The scale of interrogation on the safety of heritage structures focuses on the particular conditions in Canada in the paper by Morrison and Hamre (2018). The ever-changing nature of engineering structures is correctly identified and framed in their compliance with buildings regulations, in particular fire safety. A design process that addresses regulations in a meaningful way for designers is outlined and its application to the New Brunswick Legislative Building shows the complexity of the process. As with all experiences in fire safety, a lot can be learned by practitioners through the continuous review of case studies.

The improvement of a World War II sea wall in St Aubin’s Bay, Jersey, as discussed in the paper by Hold and Armstrong (2018), attempts to keep the appreciation of infrastructure that was created

during an event of major historical impact for an entire country. A comprehensive study was necessary to understand the floods in the area and their impact on the sea wall. The study used advanced simulation techniques that enabled an equally sophisticated intervention and maintenance programme.

The last two papers deal with particular details on the refurbishment of early modern bridges. Lazarus (2018) outlines the repair of the C19 cast-iron parapet of Blackfriars Road Bridge in London, UK – an element that is not always strictly considered to have engineering challenges, yet significantly it controls the character of those bridges and usually constitutes a small structure in its own terms. Securing the connections and replacing castings that matched the properties and aesthetics of the original fabric were dealt with effectively using engineering skills.

Other relevant engineering aspects in the maintenance of early steel bridges are explored, such as making corrosion protection for wrought-iron bridges more effective, as Gent *et al.* (2018) discuss in the last paper of the issue. The use of linseed oil shows promising results that can reduce costs of application and lead-in times.

As a concluding thought, this snapshot of current engineering trends in heritage, in their almost broad spectrum, together with the change in the publication format of this journal and its impact enhancement, could prompt a reflection on the future trends in engineering heritage. A few living architects (Norman Forster, Richard Rogers) have already had buildings of theirs dating 40 years listed in the UK. The status recognises the seminal role of these buildings in the development of our modern built environment, so could we think of future heritage that is being created now and may need to be protected during our own life times?

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