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Obituary

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Jonathan G M Wood 1940–2020

Jonathan was a specialist on the forensic investigation of structural and materials failures, and on the development of remedial measures and enhanced specifications for steel and concrete bridges, tunnels and buildings. The results of many of these investigations were published and some have formed the basis of revised guidance to industry as well as enhanced specifications for major projects like the Humber Bridge and the Channel Tunnel. He was a keynote speaker at UK and International Forensic Conferences and published numerous technical papers.

With a BSc from Durham University, a PhD from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, he started his career with Flint&Neil. He was very much involved in the investigation into the collapse of two steel box girder bridges, Milford Haven in Wales and West Gate in Melbourne, at both of which there were fatalities. The subsequent programme led by Dr Tony Flint supported the development of the Interim Design and Workmanship Rules and ultimately BS5400 Part 3.

He left to join Mott MacDonald and when leading their Special Services in the 1980s was engaged in worldwide investigations and remedial work on deteriorating bridges, tunnels, offices, hospitals and other buildings.

In 1992 he founded Structural Studies and Design Ltd, a specialist consulting engineering practice and carried out investigations, development of remedial options, and expert witness work on bridges, concrete quality and testing, tunnel construction damage, facade reconstruction and, notably, the investigation of Pipers Row Car Park collapse in 1997 for HSE. He also advised on remedial works to Alkali Aggregate Reaction in dams, bridges and buildings.

Research experience included being RAEng Visiting Professor in the Principles of Engineering Design at Aston University and carrying out numerous joint projects with Universities over a period of 40 years. He was a Fellow of the ICE and of IStructE and the author of numerous papers which can be found on this website: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jonathan_Wood18

Jonathan was active in the work of the IABSE as a member of the UK Executive committee, Convenor of the Henderson Symposium in Cambridge in 2008, and a member of the International Forensic Engineering Panel. He was also a member of numerous other organisations and groups, providing valuable input and clear thinking to improve the science of forensic engineering. Indeed, he was a pioneer in the discipline and widely recognised for his contributions.

From an early age he had an eclectic range of cars including several vintage Lancia Lambdas and an Austin 7 1929 Chummy painted a vivid canary yellow. Jonathan loved his Lambda and took over the task of the Amici della Lambda (an English group of Lambda enthusiasts) to travel to Turin on several rallies.

He started, and kept going for seventeen years, a monthly lunch for an eclectic group of friends at local pubs. He was described as a polymath who embraced life and all its opportunities with boundless enthusiasm. His death has left a big gap in the lives of a very large circle of friends and his family. He leaves his wife Suzie and their three children. Jonathan will be remembered by his structural and civil engineering colleagues for his insight, his skills, his enthusiasm and his ability to solve problems. A true engineer.