

# MONELEC ALUMNI NEWS

Newsletter of the Society of Monash Electrical Engineering Alumni  
Department of Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering, Monash University

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## From the President

I became the President of SMEEA (again) in 1999 and managed to see through the 2000 AGM and dinner. **Kishor Dabke** had been the driving force of the Society since its inception and after many years of carrying the burden almost single-handedly and trying very hard to find someone else to take over the reins it seemed only right that he should be given relief. Soon after the 2000 AGM I had the opportunity to work for Monash in Malaysia. My wife and I then spent all of 2001 and 2002 there and no SMEEA activities happened during those years. On our return to Melbourne we sold our old home in Mount Waverley and put a deposit on a townhouse. Temporarily we then used our holiday house on the Mornington Peninsula as a place of residence, thinking the townhouse would be ready in mid 2003 as it said in the contract. Instead it was not ready until late in 2004 and I just found it too difficult to organize SMEEA activities from a distance. Anyway, we now have our townhouse and I'm better placed to be involved with SMEEA. Hence the long-awaited arrival of this newsletter and the prospect of a dinner in June.

Setting up the BE program in electrical and computer systems engineering at Monash University Malaysia (which is in Kuala Lumpur) has been a very interesting and fulfilling experience for me. **Robin Alfredson** (from Mechanical Engineering) had set up the programs in mechanical engineering and mechatronics, starting in 1998 and has achieved miracles in his time there. (He left at the end of 2003 to return to Clayton.) **Clive Berger** taught the first year electrical subject to mechanical and mechatronics students in 1999. When I arrived in 2001 about 25 students were about to embark on the second year of electrical and computer systems engineering. In my two years I saw the second year run twice and the third year run once.

The classes are much smaller than the corresponding ones at Clayton and it was possible to get to know the names of most students taking my subjects. The physical facilities are very good, with fully equipped lecture theatres and teaching rooms and well-designed laboratories with good quality equipment. The biggest challenge has been to find suitable academic staff and to keep them there for a reasonable length of time. Fortunately the Faculty was able to attract **Serge Demidenko** to be the Professor of Electrical and Computer

Systems Engineering at the KL campus and he now has a staff of about ten academics.

I saw quite a few Malaysian alumni (graduates from the Clayton campus over the years) during my time in Malaysia. I was even recognized by a graduate in a shopping mall and by another on a tennis court near where we lived. I arranged an evening for Clayton graduates from the department during 2003. I picked a date to coincide with a visit from **Kishor Dabke** and we had an excellent time.

The Monash operation in KL is going quite well. Most students want to spend at least a year on the Clayton campus, so many do this in their third or fourth year or both.

My wife and I certainly found Malaysia to be a friendly and interesting place and we enjoyed our time there very much. Don't believe all you read in the Australian newspapers about Malaysia!

The AGM and Annual Dinner for SMEEA are planned for Wednesday evening 29<sup>th</sup> June. There is a separate notice attached to this newsletter about this event. Please make every effort to be there!

Bill Brown

## From the Head of Department

On the 6th September last, I was asked by the Dean to take over as Head of Department, following the sudden resignation of Greg Egan from that position. I have been on a steep learning curve since then, and am very grateful to Bill for taking on SMEEA. I must also thank the staff of the department for their support during this time.

These are times of change and stress in Australian Universities, with rising student/staff ratios, and increasing competition for grant funds. Our "new" Vice-Chancellor, Richard Larkins, is placing a strong emphasis on research performance, and we as a department need to improve our performance in that area. Meanwhile the Federal government is introducing an ever increasing level of supervision of teaching.

As the list of staff shows (below), we have been recruiting new staff at all levels as older staff reach retirement age, and this process is expected to continue. Arthur Lowery joined us from VPI, a company that developed his work on computer simulation of optical fibre communication systems. Jean Armstrong had previously spent time at Monash, and has returned via Latrobe. All these

new appointments have brought new areas of research and injected new ideas into our teaching. A new BE course, with 6cp units, began in first year this year, and plans to revise the subsequent years are well advanced. The larger units should allow us to reduce the number of pre-requisites, and facilitate the increasing number of students commencing at mid-year. These come directly, as well as transferring from overseas campuses and coming on exchange from co-operating universities. I look forward to seeing you at the dinner, and sharing more of the department news then.

David Morgan

### Academic Staff 2005

The Department is still quite large. Below is a listing of the current academic staff together with their areas of interest. Hopefully you will recognize quite a few names.

#### Head of Department

Professor David Morgan (Biomedical engineering)

#### Other Professors

Greg Egan (Telecommunications)

Ray Jarvis (Robotics)

*Arthur Lowery (Simulation, communications, photonics)*

#### Readers

John Bennett (Propagation)

Le Nguyen Binh (Optical communications)

Khee Pang (Video coding)

#### Associate Professors

Hamid Abachi (Microprocessor systems)

*Jean Armstrong (Telecommunications)*

Ian Brown (Biomedical engineering)

Grahame Holmes (Power electronics)

Lindsay Kleeman (Computer systems)

Kim Ng (Electronics)

Andy Russell (Computer Systems)

David Suter (Computer Systems)

#### Senior Lecturers

Greg Cambrell (Fields)

Francesco Crusca (Control)

Tadeusz Czaszejko (Power)

Stewart Jenvey (Communications)

*Nemai Karmakar (Microwave circuits and antennas)*

Robin Lisner (Power electronics)

Brian Lithgow (Signal processing)

Ming Liu (Control systems)

Nallasamy Mani (Computer systems)

*Malin Premaratne (Communications systems)*

*Ahmet Sekercioglu (Communications networks)*

Ahmad Zahedi (Power, renewable energy)

*Jingxin Zhang (Control and signal processing)*

#### Lecturers

*Tsun Yue Ho (Signal processing)*

Ian Kaminskyj (Pattern recognition)

Andrew Price (Computer systems)

Ros Rimington (Management)

John Zakis (Electronics)

*The staff listed in italics have joined the Department in recent years.*

### Retired Staff

The following academic staff are retired. A number of them still haunt the place: Clive Berger, Bill Bonwick, Bill Brown, Ed Cherry, Kishor Dabke, Lucian Gruner, Barrie Harding, Don Keogh, Bob Morrison, Malcolm Reid, Fred Symons, Paul Voumard and Peter Wallace.

### The Doug Lampard Prize

The Prize is awarded annually for the best PhD work completed in that year in the Department.

The prizewinners in recent years have been:

2000 **Trevor Allen**, for his thesis entitled 'Effect of eccentric contractions on the mechanical properties of skeletal muscle'. His supervisors were **David Morgan** and **Uwe Proske** (of Physiology).

2001 **Raj Tissainayagam**, for his thesis entitled 'Visual Tracking: Development, Performance Evaluation and Motion Model Switching'. His supervisor was **David Suter**.

2002 **Nidhal Abdulaziz**, for her thesis entitled 'Digital watermarking and data hiding in multimedia'. Her supervisor was **Khee Pang**.

2003 **Brendan McGrath**, for his thesis entitled 'Topologically independent modulation of multilevel inverters'. His supervisor was **Grahame Holmes**.

The Prize includes an inscribed medal and a cheque for \$1,000. The Prize is funded from donations by alumni. If you would like to contribute please contact Bill Brown. Donations are tax deductible.

### Death of Nigel Aylott

Nigel Aylott, one of the greatest students this Department has ever seen, was tragically killed in America last year whilst taking part in an adventure competition. Nigel completed his BE in 1988 with first class honours (and his BSc in 1987, also with first class honours). He then joined Telstra Research and completed his PhD in 1995 in the Department. After 15 years with Telstra Nigel resigned to take up adventure activities on a full time basis. He was a full-on person who did everything with guts and determination. He will be sadly missed.



Nigel in adventure gear