

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 of SMEEA

I've just returned from a two-week sailing adventure on the Queensland coast. I crewed from Gladstone to the Whitsundays with a brother-in-law and another crew member. What an experience! As we sailed through the night towards Mackay through dozens of big ships waiting to load coal from Hay point I reflected on the benefits of GPS and all the other instruments and communications facilities on the yacht and gave thanks for the thousands of electrical engineers who have made this kind of sailing so much safer.

This issue of the Newsletter is made up mostly of brief biographies from a number of graduates, from the 60s to the 90s. Their stories are typical of what so many of our graduates have accomplished. For those of us who have taught over the years it is very gratifying to learn of these kinds of achievements.

The **Douglas Lampard Prize** is usually presented each year for the best PhD thesis completed in the previous year. For 2005 the Prize Committee (which includes Roslyn Lampard) has decided not to make an award. After a series of bumper years it was surprising to find that 2005 was so lean. However, there are quite a few theses in the pipeline and we are hoping for an award from the 2006 crop. The Prize has been awarded twelve times so far, beginning with **Rick Alexander (BE 82)**, who completed his PhD in 1990.

The AGM and Annual Dinner for SMEEA is planned for Wednesday evening 5th July. Our guest speaker will be **Paul Kirton (BE 72, PhD 80)** who will talk about his experiences with Telstra Research over almost thirty years. Given the imminent breakup of the Labs this will be quite a nostalgic trip. There is a separate notice about this event including a tear-off slip for you to complete. Hope to see you at the dinner!

Bill Brown

From the Head of the Department

First let me record my thanks to Bill Brown for continuing with SMEEA. Our alumni are important to us, but it is easy for them to slip down the list when more urgent matters dominate.

During this semester, in conjunction with SMEEA, we have had a series of talks from practicing engineers on what life as an engineer is really like. We find that many of our students have little idea about the day to day activities of an engineer. We have had good crowds for speakers from the Wilson transformer group and from Vision Systems, with plans for

speakers from NEC and Bosch. If any of you would be willing to be a part of this please let me know.

The good news from faculty is that we have absorbed the former Caulfield intake into Clayton while markedly increasing the quality of our intake as measured by the median ENTER score. This has come through instituting a number of new degrees including a BE Mechatronics, largely due to Andy Russell, and a BE/Bachelor of Biomedical Science combined degree course. Preferences for all computer related courses are still weak but we have held our numbers into second year steady over the last couple of years while continuing to grow post-graduate numbers.

Last year saw the retirement of **John Zakis, Khee Pang** and **Greg Cambrell**. They have been long term members of the department and have made great contributions over the years. Khee and Greg are continuing to do so despite having officially retired. We are about to advertise for more staff to make up for their departures, continuing the process of renewal of academic staff.

Currently under construction is a new transformer testing laboratory, funded by the University, the state government through an STI grant and a number of local power companies as sponsors of the Centre for Power Transformers, headed by Valery Davydov.

I look forward to seeing you at the dinner so we can share more news.

David Morgan

From the 60s

Garth Jacoby (BE 65) cut his teeth at the PMG (now Telstra) Research Labs. He completed an MBA at Melbourne University in 1972 with a thesis entitled 'Control of R&D in Technology Organizations'. In 1973 he moved as a technical expert to a small team in the PMG which produced "Telecom 2000", a document which played a big part in transforming the PMG into a customer-focused forward-looking business. He moved to Finance in 1981 and eventually became Telecom's Finance Controller. He was intimately involved with moving the budget-driven PMG Government Department through many changes into Telstra, a competitive profit-oriented public company. Upon the start of telecom competition in 1990 he moved to Marketing to head the Telstra Pricing team. He retired in 1999 but took up consulting for overseas Telcos going through deregulation. His golf handicap went out from 8 on retirement as Telstra's stock price dropped the day after!!!!

From the 70s

Ross Gawler (BE 71, PhD 79) worked at the SEC Victoria for 15 years and EDS Australia for 5 years in transmission and generation planning, electricity market consulting and IT business development. At EDS Australia in 1993 he founded a consulting practice in electricity market analysis during the privatisation of Victoria's electricity assets. Since 1998 he has been a director of McLennan Magasanik Associates where he continues his work in electricity market analysis. His main professional contributions have been on using creative engineering and economic analysis to identify unnecessary investments and to accurately predict wholesale electricity prices. His advice has created the opportunity to avoid billions of dollars of wasted capital investment.

Allen Conduit (BE 75) obtained a PhD in fibre optic communications from Southampton University in 1982. He has extensive experience in the development of technology businesses. As one of the first Australians to identify the potential of fibre optic technologies he has played a prominent role in developing and promoting these technologies in Australasia. In 1983 he founded Fibernet Pty Ltd a major supplier to the regional telecommunications carriers. In 1996 Fibernet and its joint venture companies were sold to the US AMP Corporation, which retained him as Director, Engineering & Technology until 1999. In 2000, he became the first CEO of Redfern Optical Components Pty Ltd based in Sydney and involved in the development of advanced Bragg grating filters. At the same time he was a Director of Techstream Pty Ltd and associated companies and helped transition the group into Whise Acoustics Ltd, a pooled development fund specializing in acoustic technologies. In 2003 Allen became the CEO of Ceramic Fuel Cells, one of the largest research and development investments in Australia and a world leader in solid oxide fuel cells for efficient electricity generation. Ceramic Fuel Cells was floated on the ASX in July 2004. He resigned from full time employment at the end of 2004 and is currently on a sabbatical and studying for a Master of Commercial law at Monash University City Chambers. Upon completion of these studies he intends to apply his accumulated experiences in business-creation, management and law to Directorship positions and in this way contribute further to the stimulus of growth and maximizing return on investment in technology businesses.

From the 80s

Peter Cass (BE 81) moved around in the early years to gain experience. He spent time with Norman Disney and Young on electrical and lift consulting engineering, Honeywell on projects and sales of building control systems, Kuttner Collins on electrical consulting to health and education projects and David Price and Associates on electrical and instrumentation consulting to the petrochemical industry. He then worked for Kone Elevators as a Sales Engineer for 11 years. Kone are based in Finland and supply escalators and lifts to the building industry. While there he was involved in the

introduction of the Machine Room Less (MRL) Elevator to Australia. He is now the Services Engineering Manager with Rider Hunt, a quantity surveying firm in Melbourne and is responsible for the cost management for electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, communications and fire services on major commercial building projects.

Chris Leckie (BE 87) completed a PhD in Computer Science at Monash in 1995. He has been at the University of Melbourne since 2000, where he has been researching on network intrusion detection as a Senior Lecturer in Computer Science and Software Engineering. In 2005 he won the Kelvin Medal for teaching in Engineering and has been collaborating with a local company (Intelliguard IT) to commercialize some of his recent research. Prior to 2000 he was a researcher in the AI group at Telstra Research Laboratories.

From the 90s

The following three were in their final year BE in 1995. They have remained close friends in spite of geographical separation.

Stephen Handley enrolled in a Master of Science in Music Engineering at the University of Miami Florida in the USA. He paid course fees by donning an Akubra and entertaining patrons of the Outback Steakhouse with tails of crocodiles and sharks and ended up marrying the head bar tender. After graduating from Miami he embarked on a series of jobs working for companies with interests in the emerging digital media industry. (TI, SonicBlue (Rio) and Portalplayer). After 3 jobs in 4 years he now works for Microsoft leading a team responsible for deployment and certification of digital media technologies, including the PlaysForSure program. Keep your eye out in your local Harvey Norman, Dick Smith or JB Hi-Fi in the July time frame.

Chris Millar began his career with Fuji Xerox in Melbourne, within the IT department, a distinct step away from the engineering degree he'd just completed. After holding a number of roles, he moved on to become the Victorian State Administrator. In 2000, keen to get experience living and working abroad, he moved to London and joined Granada Television within their IT Department. After surviving a merger in 03/04 he became the London Technical Manager for ITV. Chris' responsibilities now revolve around the management of staff, systems and projects across a number of sites in the UK.

David Martin worked for BHP Steel (now Bluescope) for five years in project and operational roles before joining Nylex's Engineering Department at its Mentone facility. He was promoted to Plant Manager of Nylex's production facility in Sale before joining his current employer, Marand Precision Engineering in January 2004. He is now based in Moorabbin and has progressed to the role of General Manager of Marand's rail division after gaining experience in Marand's automotive and aerospace operations. He is one subject away from completing an MBA and is married with one child and another due any day now.