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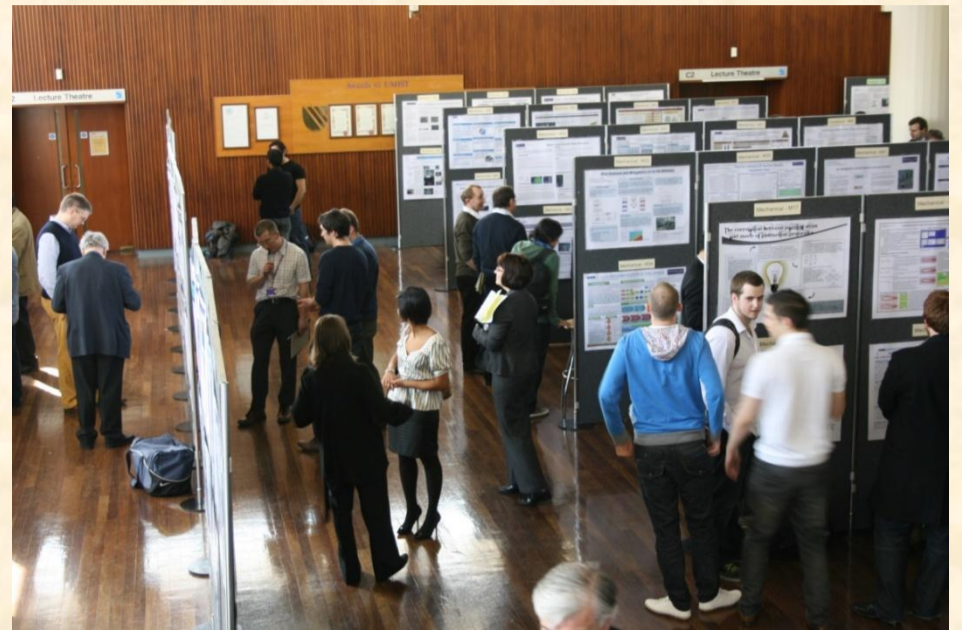
Poster Day 2011

Dr Mark Cotton, Senior Lecturer and Individual Undergraduate Project Coordinator, reports on the School Annual Poster Day.

The third annual School-wide 'Poster Day' was held in the Renold Building 'C' floor concourse on Wednesday of Week 8, 23rd March 2011. The full-day event was attended by all 3rd Year students (with the exception of those away on visiting student schemes) and those 4th Year students who had themselves been away in 2009/10. There were 88 Mechanical Engineering posters, 66 Aerospace Engineering, and 113 Civil Engineering projects, giving an impressive show of over 260 individual projects.

The posters show a broad range of investigative topics supervised by over 70 academic staff in the School. In addition to the project students and academic staff, students from other years and other disciplines and visitors from industry visited the display.

The Individual Project forms an important element of all the School's BEng. and MEng. programmes. It is undertaken between September and May and is rated at 20 credits (10% of the total is for an Initial Report submitted on the last day before the Christmas vacation, 10% for the poster, and the remaining 80% for a Final Report which is due following the Easter vacation). Each student has a project supervisor, and the poster and Final Report are assessed by the supervisor and a second marker.



A view of the display and visitors

The Poster Day takes the form of concurrent 15 minute slots during which the project student presents an A1 poster to his or her supervisor and second marker. Informal discussions take place throughout the day and the event provides a valuable opportunity to 'showcase' the work of the School. The standard of the posters was generally excellent, both in terms of content and presentation.

Highpoints of the day were a buffet lunch and a late afternoon drinks reception and prize-giving. There are two prizes per programme area which consist of High Street Shopping Vouchers (to the values of £120 and £80) and a certificate to record the award of the prize. The prizes were presented by the Head of School, Professor Peter Stansby, and this year's winners were as follows:

Mechanical Engineering

- 1st Prize: Wasim Sarwar
- 2nd Prize: William Manns

Aerospace Engineering

- 1st Prize: Cindy Valreau
- 2nd Prize: Milkis Lutchmun

Civil Engineering

- 1st Prize: Oliver Gibson
- 2nd Prize: Vineet Abraham

The School is grateful to all those who took part – the considerable enthusiasm in evidence, together with the organisational skills of the Admin Office staff and Mr Tom Lawton's Herculean efforts in printing and laminating the posters, made the day a great success. The 2011 posters will shortly go on display in the School.



A student presentation to two academic staff

2010 ICE Annual Graduate Awards

Edward Dablin, MEng graduate in Civil Engineering in 2009, was Highly Commended in the 2010 ICE Annual Graduate Awards. He is now a Graduate Structural Engineer at AECOM and describes his personal experience on winning the award.

Applying to be Graduate of the Year resulted in me receiving fantastic recognition, being quizzed by a panel of 15 industry leaders, meeting the President of the ICE, receiving a prize cheque and also meeting many other like minded graduates. I would like to share with you my experience.

New Civil Engineer (NCE) is the weekly magazine of the Institution of Civil Engineers and they run the NCE Graduate of the Year Award, a very prestigious award for young graduates in the industry. The Awards honour six graduates, who this year fended off stiff competition from 120 other graduates. They even found themselves on the desk of more than 80,000 Civil Engineers as a cover story to the magazine.

One of those graduates was me, achieving Highly Commended. I went to Manchester University, read a MEng in Civil Engineering, was involved with the Student Society, had a couple of fulfilling summer placements, took a graduate job as a bridge Engineer at AECOM and applied at the end of my first year of work. It all happened so fast and the whole process was a fantastic experience.

On the recommendation of a colleague who entered in 2009, I was persuaded to enter. All I had to do was to fill in and submit an application. I was guaranteed by AECOM that I could go to the awards ceremony where I could meet similar graduates in the industry at the magnificent ICE headquarters (having never been before) and possibly even win something. How hard could the application form be?

One of the questions on the application form I had to answer was: *Imagine you are advising government on infrastructure spend that can deliver accountable medium and long term economic and social benefits given recent public sector spending cuts. Recommend and justify specific construction sectors and projects in no more than 600 words.*

OK, well that's something that University hadn't quite prepared me for and I found it an enjoyable challenge. However, I wasn't to be thrown back, University had put me in good stead to answer the other questions on why I should be Graduate of the Year. I found the experiences I had, from designing an environmentally controlled gym to running the School's Careers Fair as Secretary of the Civil & Construction Society, proved to be invaluable. My academic achievement of a 1st class degree and four awards from the University helped me stand out from other applicants.

I had a month to wait until I received a phone call at work late one day in November asking *what I was doing in two weeks time*. Nothing. *Can you guess why I'm asking this question?* I wouldn't hazard to guess. *Well congratulations, you are part of the final six and you have two weeks to prepare for an interrogation from a 15-strong panel of industry leaders.*

As you can imagine, the interview was very daunting. I had to conduct a 15 minute presentation on why I should be Graduate of the Year with a question and answer session at the end. However, I prepared well and I felt that I gave an honest account of myself. The panel were very encouraging, and whilst they asked pressing questions about my achievements and my ideas, they weren't trying to catch me out.

The Awards Lunch was a great experience, giving me a chance to go to the Institution HQ in a more relaxed situation, knowing I had already won a prize to be presented by NCE editor Anthony Oliver and ITV newsreader Mary Nightingale. The Lunch was attended by 170 people and I had the chance to meet various professionals from different backgrounds, including senior directors, fresh faced graduates and the President of the ICE!

I am very pleased with the result although I didn't win. I know that I put my utmost into it and can celebrate being Highly Commended. The winner, Stuart Ross from Arup, was certainly deserving, having written an academic paper on the structural properties of the human eye and having over 20 awards in his 5 year spell at Dundee University!

Coming from Manchester, Civil Engineering graduates have a good opportunity to impress others. The course is very challenging but there are plenty of opportunities to get involved with the student societies to supplement studies. I would urge any Manchester graduates to apply, not just to win an award, but to attend the awards ceremony which is a fantastic experience in itself.

You can read more about me and the other graduates in the online edition of the NCE article: <http://bit.ly/hJ8AA5>.



Edward (left) at the ICE Graduate Awards Ceremony