

President - IESF (British Section)
Dr Jean Venables CBE FREng

Presidential Report for the year 2018 – Dr Jean Venables

This report briefly summarises the events held under the auspices of IESF British Section in 2018. More detail is available in the Newsletters produced during the year (Issues 25 and 26). Collective attendances at all the events were more than 550.

The **AGM and President's Lecture** in January were held at the Royal Academy of Engineering in London. As a Fellow of the Academy, I was pleased to introduce Prince Philip House to IESF for the first time it had been used for an IESF event. We were a 'full house' with over 100 attending the meeting and 94 for dinner. We thanked outgoing President Andrew Graham for his interesting and enjoyable year as our 2017 President, followed by my Presidential Address. In Newsletter editor Paul Gerrard's words, I sought to "draw her (my) many strands of activity together, in professional and public life, and then examine them to see where they would lead in 2018." I also felt it was appropriate to highlight the many anniversaries and milestones to come in 2018 for the ICE (200 years) and WFEO (50 years) amongst others, plus the Government having declared 2018 as The Year of Engineering. And we laid down a marker for 2019, when IESF celebrates our 100-year Anniversary in 2019.

Monday 19th March saw us at the RAF Club for a **Lecture on Current and Recent Tunnelling Projects in France, by Lucy Rew**, Directeur des Etudes Tunnel for consulting firm EGIS, Chairman of the ICE Europe Regional Committee, ICE representative for France and – since her lecture – newly elected to ICE Council. Lucy impressed all 75 of us with her fascinating insight into the technical and related challenges of tunnelling in a densely populated area east of Paris.

On April 17th, we enjoyed the Army & Navy Club in Pall Mall for a **Lecture on Good water management depends on liberté, égalité, and fraternité** given by **Innes Thomson**, my successor as Chief Executive of the Association of Drainage Authorities. Innes worked in France for 10 years and gave the 40 of us attending a different perspective on the joys and challenges of working in France as a Briton rather than a Breton.

As many members are aware I have a passion for the work of the RNLI, as a member of both their Technical Committee and the RNLI Council. So the **Spring Voyage** over the late May Bank Holiday weekend was **to Poole in Dorset**, staying at RNLI, and including visits to RNLI Training Facility and Lifeboat manufacturing facility, plus other local visits. I am delighted that so many of the 48 Voyageurs were very impressed with the work of the RNLI. By all accounts, a great time was had by all.

Our **Summer Dinner** at the Royal Yacht Club, London in mid-June was the usual convivial affair for the 60 of us able to attend, and we were blessed with good weather enabling a leisurely start on the terrace.

I was then delighted to be able to arrange, at fairly short notice, our **Partners' and Amis Visit** to be to the First Women photographic exhibition at RCA Battersea in late July, where 19 of us enjoyed an introductory talk by Anita Corbin, the photographer of the 100 women who have been the first to do ... whatever it is they have done. An extended tour of the exhibition was followed by an excellent lunch.

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Presidential Report for the year 2018 *continued* – Dr Jean Venables

Our **Voyage to Dinan and surrounding area in North Brittany** was held from the 5th to 9th of September. Visits to the Rance valley, to St Jacut de la Mer, where IESF member Clare Emberson is the elected Maire, and visits in and around Dinan kept us busy and interested for the whole time. It was disappointing that troubles with hotel bookings meant more than half the party had to move hotels mid-way through the visit, but everyone was very understanding. Much more positive was the opportunity to showcase Clare's role in French public life, with her three talks over the weekend giving us insights to the role of the Maire, the skills and experience that being an engineer gives her for the role, and the challenges presented to her and her colleagues by a wholesale revision of the structures of French local government being driven through by President Macron. Our warm and profuse thanks go from all 47 Voyageurs to Clare and her husband Roger for not only Clare's talks and both of them showing us round their community, but also for their extensive help in arranging the whole Voyage and for their hospitality to Roger and me on our recce.

Our **October Lecture was on *Antarctica, Oceanographic Research and Climate Change*** and given by our son **Dr Hugh Venables**, a senior oceanographer at the British Antarctic Survey. It was our first opportunity to hear Hugh 'in lecture mode' to complement our many informal discussions at home about his work. Hugh's obvious enthusiasm for his work, its wide-ranging nature, the opportunities it gives him for his ornithology hobby, and the importance of the results of his and other BAS work to our understanding of climate change all contributed to a memorable evening for those attending (the largest attendance of the year at 104), not just for Roger and me.

In November, I was delighted to make another link to my own work with a **Technical Visit to HR Wallingford** in Oxfordshire, where I was until recently a Non-Executive Director. Talks from CEO Bruce Tomlinson, Chairman Sue Sharland, and by senior engineer/researcher Dr Daniele Longo, together with visits to the Froude Modelling Hall and to the Ship Simulator gave the 38 attendees a very good introduction perspective on the wide range of skills and projects undertaken by HRW.

Lastly, yesterday evening (as I write this), we concluded the year with **attendance at and an Informal supper for 36 after the ICE-RICS Carol Service in St Margaret's Westminster**, which has rounded off what I hope has been an interesting, wide-ranging and enjoyable year of activities for our Society.

Finally, I would like to thank very much all those who have attended these events and made the work of arranging them very worthwhile. I also want to thank all those involved in those arrangements, and the officers of IESF UK, as well as the ICE staff supporting us in a range of ways.

Jean Venables
11 December 2018