



Federation of Piling Specialists *Winter 2014*

Diversity and Inclusion

Construction is not without its critics, and whilst most of the charges levelled at it are without – pardon the pun – foundation, there is still a long way to go in changing some of the perceptions that exist. Construction as a whole is acting to become more inclusive and the ‘boys club’ image of old is thankfully fading, but there is still much to be achieved. The FPS is playing its part in this and is pleased to celebrate the first female graduate of its Apprenticeship Scheme, as well as welcoming another who is starting this year. It’s a small step but a step in the right direction and if we all share an objective of making our own business more inclusive then we can together build a sector that is appropriately representative of wider society.

I Want to Work in Construction!

Although the construction sector is commended for being an important driver of the UK economy, these days, as a career, it doesn’t exactly appeal to the young. This is bad news, as it could leave construction facing a skills and labour shortage in the medium to long term, which is worrying. In fact the skills gap facing construction and infrastructure sectors in the next five years is variously reported as between 600,000 and 750,000 individuals, with a recent report from the UK Commission on Employment and Skills suggesting that employers “hold the key” to its solution. It is, however, encouraging to note that the FPS Apprenticeship Scheme is attracting 10-12 candidates a year. Individual member companies such as Bachy and BAM Ritchies are doing their bit too, having both run ‘Plant Yard Open Days’ that allow local school children to see first-hand what construction is about and inspire a few to look further into career options. The FPS is encouraging members to run a ‘Plant Yard Day’, week commencing 2nd March 2015, and those which wish to take part should contact the FPS for more information. Education is key, so let’s teach our young people about the many careers available in construction and make sure there’s someone to employ in the future!

Engineers Without Borders

As you know the FPS, as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, has partnered with humanitarian organisation Engineers Without Borders-UK (EWB-UK), and is looking to sponsor a number of Professional Placements on their 2015 programme. A recent Open Day, held jointly by the FPS and EWB-UK, attracted 10 potential volunteers from member companies all keen to discover more about this exciting opportunity. Potential candidates were taken through a number of exercises to discover their attitudes and understanding of International Development, as well as allowing them to learn more about EWB and its objectives. The FPS has committed £20,000 towards funding between 3 and 4 placements of 3 months duration and we will be following up on the progress of successful volunteers over the coming months.

Crossrail Conference

Few projects have demanded more from the specialist foundation contractor than Crossrail, with almost all techniques having been utilised at some stage, in challenging locations and ground conditions. With most foundation solutions now in service, it is appropriate to look back and understand what lessons can be learned locally and understood on a wider basis. A one-day conference has therefore been organised for November 2015 and will be hosted jointly by Crossrail and the FPS, with the objective of focusing on the knowledge gained during the installation of deep foundation elements and other special foundation techniques. Against this backdrop the FPS is calling for papers on issues arising and solutions found, to be shared with the wider foundations sector. Topics must be informative and original and address an aspect of work on the Crossrail project in a problem-solution style format, and with the aim of engaging with attendee for lively and educational debate. For more information contact the FPS.

BIM

Just a little BIM update – the FPS is presently working with rig manufacturers to develop a library of BIM rig models. We’re also nearing completion of 5 guidance documents to support members understanding and developing a BIM implementation strategy and these will be available shortly. Mark Pennington is Chair of the FPS Technical Committee and is leading on BIM. Should you have any BIM questions or queries contact him directly on 07817 962272.

And finally...

...a big welcome goes out to Premier Concrete Pumping (PCP) the latest Associate Member of the FPS. PCP will be supporting the FPS in the creation of new guidance on concrete pumping.