

Spotlight

on the 1983 Mining School

by C. L. Workmann Davies *

Underground transport and communication in collieries was the theme selected for the 1983 mining school conducted by The South African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. The response from the industry was so good that three separate schools of one week each were arranged, and a total of 222 delegates attended. The first two schools were held at the University of the Witwatersrand between 17th and 28th January, and the third school was held at the University of Pretoria from 31st January to 4th February.

Venue

Universities were chosen as venues because they provide a learning environment. Each of the universities concerned has a Department of Mining Engineering, and many of the lecturers and delegates at the schools were graduates of those universities. The school gave them an opportunity to update themselves on the activities of their *Alma Materes*, and gave the remaining delegates the sort of contact that helps to promote an interchange between that university and industry.

Objective and Scope

The objective of the school was to provide up-to-date knowledge for effective decision-making in the fields of underground transport and communication in collieries. It was aimed primarily at planning methods. Lecturers dealt with alternative methods for the transportation of coal, material, and men, together with communication systems between the underground working places and the surface. The lectures also dealt with factors influencing the choice of specific methods and with details of some techniques.

Case studies were presented to give the delegates the opportunity of applying the knowledge gained at the school.

Some thirty companies participated in a special exhibition of equipment appropriate to the theme of the school that was arranged specifically for the delegates. The exhibition was held at Frankenwald, home of the Materials Handling Research Group of the University of the Witwatersrand.

The school was intended to be of benefit to senior, middle, and technical management, particularly those involved in planning or controlling underground methods of transportation and communication.

Opening and Closing

Professor A. N. Brown of the Department of Mining Engineering, University of Pretoria, and also President of the SAIMM, made the opening address at each of the

three schools. Mr G. C. Thompson of Gencor undertook the introductory lecture to set the scene for the schools.

Mr R. Chadwick of Rand Mines made the closing address for the first school. Mr B. Leach of Sasol was due to give the closing address for the second school but, because of changes to the timetable, he was not able to do so. Dr H. Wagner gave the closing address for the second school, and Mr B. Alberts of Iscor closed the third school.

Technical Programme

The technical content of the school comprised 38 papers addressing 7 aspects as follows:

- the transportation of coal from the face to the collecting point
- the transportation of coal from section to shaft and storage
- inclined and vertical shaft systems
- pneumatic and hydraulic transportation of coal
- systems for the transportation of men, material, and equipment
- communication in collieries
- combinations of systems.

Comprehensive sets of notes were sent to delegates in good time to allow them the opportunity of thorough preparation. The delegates who took advantage of this provided stimulation to the school by the questions that they asked. Extra sets of these notes can be purchased from the SAIMM, which does not intend publishing a Monograph on the lectures and proceedings.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday morning, and Thursday morning were set aside for the presentation of the papers, and Wednesday afternoon saw the delegates setting off to their specialized exhibition at Frankenwald. Thursday afternoon and Friday morning were devoted to three case studies dealing with mining situations involving thick seams, thin seams, and longwalling. The school ended with a closing address at midday on Friday.

Social Activities

As in the past, a cocktail party was arranged on the Monday evening of each school to allow delegates to become acquainted away from the pace and concentration of the lectures. For the first two schools, the party was held at the Chamber of Mines' Sports Club and, for the third school, at the delegates' hotel in Pretoria.

In keeping with tradition, a school dinner was enjoyed on the Thursday evening, and the Chamber of Mines' Sports Club and the hotel proved to be fine venues.

Conclusion

The school was a success and met with a very favour-

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able response. The response by companies for the exhibition was superb. It was gratifying that delegates came from the industry itself, as well as from customers of the industry and suppliers to the industry.

Thanks are due to all the persons who contributed to

the lecture notes, to those who printed and compiled the notes and arranged the school, to the lecturers, and to the universities. Senior members of the industry also made valuable contributions and are thanked accordingly.

Development of Mineral Resources

The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy and The Department of Mineral Resources, Government of Thailand, with the cooperation of the Thai Mining Association and Chulalongkorn University, is to hold an international conference entitled 'Role of Government in Mineral Resources Development' in Bangkok from 5th to 8th December, 1983.

Some twenty-four papers (to be distributed to registrants in November, 1983) that will discuss the ways in which Governments act in relation to the development of mineral resources, will review the effects of governmental decisions on the working of the minerals industry, and will present case histories of State assistance in the minerals field will be submitted for discussion.

Major contributions by senior members of the public and private sectors of the minerals industry worldwide are being sought by the Organizing Committee, but further offers of papers will be welcomed. Intending authors should send abstracts (300-400 words, in English) of their proposed papers to the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy not later than 15th June, 1983. Completed manuscripts of papers accepted for presentation at the conference will be required not later than 1st September, 1983.

All enquiries in relation to the conference should be made to The Secretary, The Institution of Mining and Metallurgy, 44 Portland Place, London W1N 4BR, England (telephone 01-580 3802; telex 261410 IMM G).

Electronics in Mining

A symposium entitled 'Electronics in Mining', organized by The South African Institute of Electrical Engineers, is to be held in Randburg, South Africa, from 18th to 20th September, 1984.

The South African Institute of Electrical Engineers celebrates its 75th Anniversary in 1984. Over those 75 years the growth in electrical engineering has often been associated with growth in the mining industry. It is fitting that an event recognizing this should be held during the celebration year.

However, this symposium also looks to the future. Its purpose is to provide a forum for discussion of the successes and failures of the early eighties and the future application of electronics, including computer technology, to the South African mining industry.

Although papers of an academic nature will be welcomed, there will be a bias towards papers covering applications proven elsewhere but relevant to the South African environment.

The dates chosen coincide with the next Electra Mining Exhibition; it is hoped to encourage those visiting the

country for the exhibition to submit papers.

The following topics will be discussed:

1. Electronic Engineering Methods – those peculiar to mines, particularly mines in Southern Africa, and highlighting the uniqueness of the Southern African environment.
2. Communications – Voice and Data, Radio, Relay Systems, Signalling.
3. Seismology – Rockbursts, Predictions, Remote Sensing.
4. Search and Rescue.
5. Safety – Gas Detection, Fire Detection, Plant Safety.
6. Instrumentation – Monitoring Control.
7. Administration – Logistics, Energy Management, Security.
8. Control.

Enquiries should be directed to The South African Institute of Electrical Engineers, P.O. Box 61019, Marshalltown, 2107, South Africa.