

## **Prague October 2023: The IET / MFI Annual General Meeting.**

### **Introduction:**

The MFI was founded some decades ago to support the work of the then IEE but comply with German legal requirements. It is a useful complement to the direct work of the IET. For many years it has held a well-attended annual meeting in an interesting location, mostly but not always in Germany. For example, meetings have been held in Strasbourg and Salzburg. This year the meeting was held in Prague in cooperation with the Czech IET LN. The location was part of a plan to re-establish contact with national IET LNs and bring the MFI back to its original function as an IET extension, with the long-term intention of dissolving into an IET German LN. At present the German IET LN has a committee but this is more theoretical than real. All practical work normally carried out by a LN is carried out by the MFI in Germany.

### **Overview:**

We can report that the weekend was an overall success. It allowed the following:

- (i) The MFI's annual meeting, a mandatory event under German law.
- (ii) Two interesting technical lectures (see below)
- (iii) Two tours of the old town of Prague.
- (iv) Reinforced contact with the IET in the form of the Czech LN.

### **(i) MFI AGM:**

On Saturday morning 28<sup>th</sup> October 2023 the MFI committee held an in-person meeting, the first since last year's AGM in Nuremberg. Up to this point, all the meetings in 2023 had been held on-line because of the regional spread of the committee members in Germany. Nevertheless, these online meetings were held regularly, counting around 10 during the year.

The MFI AGM proper began at 2:00 P.M. Copies of the report including the committee's review of the previous 12 months and the financial statement are available on request.

Voting for discharging the committee and acceptance of the reports was carried without refusals or rejections.

Elections for the committee were due as they are held every two years. This year, an attempt was made to replace the chairman, vice chairman and treasurer who are all over 75. The hope was that new, younger members would volunteer but this did not happen. Under German law the three positions remain occupied by the previously elected members.

The hoped-for contact to other European based IET members was sadly missing. It has proved very difficult to recruit younger IET members as there appears to be no active way they can be made aware of events. It appears to us that the passive tools provided by the IET for advertising events are ineffective. We suggest simplifying the way the tools are used so that they are more similar to accepted standards for creating content. In addition, there has to be a more proactive approach to member contact by the IET, ideally by creating a direct channel to members similar to the emailing system we have for contacting the contact base we already have.

## **(ii) Presentations:**

Following the MFI AGM the technical lectures were held. The speakers introduced us to two ongoing projects in the civil engineering field but of course also involving planning and management skills.

The key presentation was by former ICE France Chair Lucy Rew. Her presentation was about the TELT (Tunnel Euralpin Lyon Turin) part of the new Lyon – Turin rail line. When finished the tunnel will at 57.5km long be the longest in the world, see

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turin-Lyon\\_high-speed\\_railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turin-Lyon_high-speed_railway)

The second presentation was by Patricia Vergne-Rochès on the Viaduc du Garabit, a cast-iron railway viaduct in the French Massif Central designed by Gustave Eiffel in 1884, which paved the way for his commission to build his famous tower in Paris in 1889.

Both presentations were well prepared, very professional and held the interest of the audience. Each was followed by questions about particular aspects of the projects.



## **(iii) Social Events:**

After the lectures we adjourned to the hotel bar, followed by a Czech dinner during which we were treated to traditional music by local musicians.



A guided tour on the Sunday morning was fascinating. The local tour guide was well versed in the history of the city and pointed out many buildings of historical and architectural interest.

Prague shares perhaps, with Budapest and Lisbon, the added fascination of being a city with hills. After lunch, Mike Wrigley who is an active MFI member and lives in Prague gave further insights into the city. To test our fitness and provide another view of the city, his tour took us up to the Castle.



**Conclusion:**

As indicated, the weekend event was an overall success.

We feel it is necessary to point out that the turnout for the lectures was disappointing. From the IET Local Network in the Czech Republic only three people attended the lectures. These people did not attend the evening social event which surely would have been greatly enjoyed. In addition, it would have provided the opportunity for an exchange of ideas between the two local networks and simply “getting to know each other”.

Furthermore, there were no new participants resulting from IET contacts neither nationally nor internationally.

**Acknowledgements:**

Mike Wrigley deserves a special mention for pulling many strings which contributed to the success of the weekend. The Hotel Golf Prague provided a good meeting room in which the technical aspects were in good order, something which is unfortunately not always the case. The MFI / IET Germany committee members deserve to be commended for the weeks of preparation for the event, for establishing and maintaining contact with members of the IET Czech Republic and with the IET in the UK. The financial support from the IET-UK was much appreciated. It helped to relieve somewhat the financial burden which the members of the MFI will have to bear.

Report written by: Chairman and Vice-Chairman, MFI. December 2023