

Consulting, Civil, Structural, Highway & Transportation Engineers

Founder of GCA's Warwick office retires

A surprise was on the cards for Adrian Mirfin who retired from GCA recently after more than 17 years of service.

Adrian (65), was responsible for setting up the Warwick office back in 1991 and then led the team as an Associate, before becoming Director in 2004.

At a surprise party held at the Lord Leycester Hotel in Warwick, 60 of Adrian's friends, family and colleagues came together to celebrate. Adrian really was the centre of attention as the function room was covered with one hundred balloons adorned with an image of Adrian's face, much to the delight of his young grandchildren!

Adrian was presented with Royal Doulton brandy glasses and liquor to match from

GCA founder Geoffrey Collett. There was also a presentation of a comedy car from the Warwick team, which they said reminded them of Adrian!

Geoffrey Collett gave a speech thanking Adrian for his contribution to the firm and wishing him good luck for the future. He said:

"We are grateful to have received such a significant contribution to our company from Adrian over the years and would like to wish him all the best for his retirement."

After the presentations Adrian gave a



Adrian Mirfin

speech thanking Geoff for his support over the years and wishing the firm and its staff well for the future.

Welcome...

Welcome to the latest edition of Instructure, the regular newsletter from GCA. Despite the challenging economic climate, 2008 has been another very busy and interesting year for us all here.

As you will see over the next few pages, we continue to be involved in a variety of interesting projects across the Midlands.

We were sad to lose Adrian Mirfin from our Warwick branch, who retired this year, but we gave him a great send off with a big party. Harnam Ghatuara has now taken over the reigns at Warwick. We have also boosted our road traffic department with the appointment of Shane Martin.

We continue to invest our time into restoration projects across the region; we have recently been involved with an exciting project at Bewdley Museum in Worcester where we were part of a team creating dynamic new facilities for the visitors of the museum.

There was good news earlier in the year too when we were given the go-ahead

for work on a new joint services centre in South Normanton, Derbyshire. We have been planning this project for three years and are looking forward to work starting on the site.

2008 has also been a significant year for the Warwick office as they have commenced work on the project to rejuvenate the Leamington and Warwick Sikh Temple. GCA is producing the structural designs and will over see all structural elements of the £6 million project.

We have been working alongside the Committee of The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust, connecting the City of Derby with the national canal network which when complete, will create some 40km of waterway and leisure facilities.

This year our AGM took place at a hotel

in Staffordshire, followed by a day out at Drayton Manor Park and Zoo, with more than 50 staff and guests attending.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and that it gives you an insight into the range and scope of our activities over the past 12 months.

In this issue...

Pg 2

- GCA strengthens Warwick team
- Addition to road traffic team

Pg 3

- Chamber of Commerce Business Expo
- Guide to choosing your engineer

Pg 4

- GCA rejuvenate Bewdley Museum
- Work commences on Sikh Temple

GCA strengthens its Warwick team

We are delighted to announce that Harnam Ghatuara will be taking over the running of the Warwick office from Adrian Mirfin with immediate effect.

Harnam joined GCA in 2001 from structural engineering firm, Taylor Boyd and Hancock, where he spent 20 years and progressed to the position of Principal Structural Engineer.

He achieved a Degree in civil engineering at Middlesex University in 1978 and originally trained in ground engineering before moving on to become a graduate

site engineer. He is a member of both the Institution of Civil and Structural Engineers.

In his new role as director, Harnam will be responsible for ensuring that all work produced in the Warwick office is of the highest quality and provides the client with the most cost effective solution. He will also ensure that all designs are sustainable and that the materials used are the best available for the application.

Commenting on Harnam's promotion, director, Nicky Collett said:

"I am delighted that Harnam will be leading the Warwick office. He has a wealth of experience in his field and is well prepared for the challenge. I wish him the best of luck in his new role."



Adrian Mirfin

Addition to Road Traffic Team

GCA's Derby team has been boosted with the appointment of Shane Martin as Road Traffic Engineer.

Shane has an ONC and HNC in Civil Engineering and has also undertaken more specific training, including the highly regarded ROSPA AiP course. Shane has also recently been accepted as a member of the Institute of Highways and Transportation.

In his new role Shane will be responsible for gathering information from accident investigation sites and compiling reports

as well as liaising with the County and District Councils, the Department for Transport, Police and the Highways Agency in relation to road safety issues.

Commenting on Shane's appointment, Nicky Collett, director of GCA said:

"Shane has a wide range of experience in road safety auditing and will make a valuable addition to the team. He will be based in Derby and Leicester and will also be serving our offices in Warwick, Worcester and Stafford."



Shane Martin

Shane added:

"I am delighted to be joining GCA and look forward to developing my road safety auditing skills in such a varied role. Going from public to private sector will be an exciting challenge that I hope both GCA and I will greatly benefit from."

An Evening with Mike Speak



Mike Speak

Around 65 local business people joined Mike Speak at Worcestershire County Cricket Club recently for a chance to get to know Mike and the GCA team.

Guests included Adrian Hutt from Adrian Hutt Architects as well as guests from Worcester City Council and a mixture of building surveyors, quantity surveyors, estate agents, builders, and solicitors.

In a short speech to those in attendance, Mike said: "I have invited you all here today so that we might have the

opportunity to network with the local businesses and to show you the support that GCA has in Worcester and across the Midlands."

Mike then invited founder of GCA, Geoffrey Collett, to say a few words. Geoff said: "We are delighted with the success of our Worcester office under the leadership of Mike. It is important for us all to take every opportunity possible in the current climate and we are delighted with the response to this event, thank you all for coming."

Refreshments were served throughout the evening and there was an extra highlight for Amy of Adrian Hutt Architects as she took home the Champagne in the raffle.

Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust

GCA are working with The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust to restore the former Derby Canal to create a navigable cruising route from the Erewash Canal at Sandiacre to the Trent and Mersey Canal at Swarkestone.

When complete, the formation of 'The Derby Ring' will comprise some 40km of waterway and leisure facilities.

GCA have provided support to the Directors and Management Committee of The Canal Trust for a number of years with the aim of once again connecting the City of Derby to the national canal network.



Chamber of Commerce Business Expo

GCA again took part in the annual Chamber of Commerce Business Expo this year.

The Business Expo allows local businesses to promote themselves and also get to know other businesses and potential new clients. Mike Speak of the Worcester office represented GCA as the only Structural Engineering company, alongside around 60 other stand holders at the event, including Solicitors, IT Consultants and Builders. The event was held at the Worcester Rugby Club and was the most successful to date, with key note speakers, business workshops and seminars in the event programme.

Don't quote me on that...

Director of GCA Leicester, John Illingworth, tells us why the price isn't always right when it comes to choosing your engineers...

"The task of appointing any professional can be a daunting one, particularly when dealing with large infrastructure projects. For this reason, it is easy to see how people end up making crucial mistakes that can potentially be dangerous and/or costly. The number one rule is to remember why you need to appoint them and exactly what they do. That may sound simple, but when the quotes are piling up, many people jump in feet first and plump for the cheapest candidate.

"The main part of a structural engineers role is to provide the design for the project. The other vitally important aspect of the structural engineer's role is the Professional Indemnity Insurance that they provide, just in case anything does go wrong, so that the client can be compensated for any losses.

"To provide engineering input takes time and we all know that time is money, and this is where the majority of costs are incurred. As with any line of work, some structural engineers are faster than others,

but that is generally down to experience, which inevitably will be reflected in the price.

"The other side of the structural engineer's role is to provide advice on the materials used in the construction. A good engineer will select the most appropriate and cost effective materials for a project. Alternatively, an engineer may select a material that, whilst appropriate for the project, is not cost effective for the client but minimises his input, time spent and his own costs.

"When comparing quotes, the client needs to take into account additional costs which may not be included - for example the cost of site visits and disbursements at unmentioned rates.

"The client also needs to be aware that some practices are more experienced in certain areas than others. In this time of recession, engineers will not turn work away, even if it is not their core area of work. Most engineering practices will have their own web pages, which should identify what they believe to be their key specialist areas. Some of these websites are not as well constructed as others, however it is worth bearing in mind that a flashy website

may not necessarily be indicative of the quality of the work produced.

"When selecting your engineer, it may be useful to ask about experience and qualifications. After all, they are effectively applying for a job so you are well within your rights to ask the sort of questions that you may expect to hear in a job interview, even ask for references if you feel it necessary.

"There are two basic grades of engineer; graduate engineers who have a BEng or BSc in civil or structural engineering and the more experienced chartered engineer who has a CEng.

"When you receive your quote, don't immediately focus on the total cost. Take a few moments to break down the figures. It is worth bearing mind that generally the cost of the engineer will account for between 30 - 50% of the total quote.

"The decision of who to appoint as your consulting engineer should be a carefully considered one and should never be made purely dependant on cost. There is a lot of responsibility and liability accredited to the consulting engineer and so choosing the correct candidate is crucial to any project or report carried out."



Work commences on Leamington and Warwick Sikh Temple

During the course of this year, GCA's Warwick office has commenced work on the civil and structural engineering contract for the new Leamington Spa and Warwick Sikh Temple.

GCA have been appointed to produce the structural designs and oversee structural elements of the £6 million development project, which will create a beautiful temple featuring unusual structural designs.

Planning permission on the site, which was previously an old warehouse, was secured before the company was awarded the contract, allowing work on the project to commence immediately.

The four-storey, steel framed, rendered building will feature some unusual design elements, particularly on the exterior. The roof of the Temple will feature various sized domes, the largest in the centre and four smaller domes at each corner. They will be constructed from plastic and painted in traditional gold.

The building will have the capacity to hold approximately 3,000 people with a large main hall and dining hall, and several other rooms. In addition to the temple, the site will also have a community centre built next door.



Project update: Nanteos mansion walled garden

GCA have been carrying out work on a neglected walled garden on a large country estate in the secluded North Paith river valley in Wales.

The historic walled garden is situated to the East of Nanteos Mansion and stables, both grade I listed buildings, and covers an area of 2.4 acres, built partly on a south facing hill slope and shielded by mixed woodland along its south side.

The gardens have been neglected since the 1950's and several sections of the wall had suffered damage and collapse, in some cases down to ground level, and much of the original slate capping had been dislodged or broken up due to invasive vegetation and frost attack.

GCA carried out a structural appraisal of the substantial wall structure, with the primary aim of making it safe and secure. Observations were made by a visual inspection and hand examination of the

stonework. The wall was found to be in moderate to poor state of disrepair. Wind and rain had eroded the mortar joints and allowed vegetation to take hold in crevices in the upper stonework, whilst deep tree roots and Japanese knotweed had penetrated the structure and destabilised the wall at and just below ground level on several sections.

The stabilisation and repair of masonry stone walling is now under way and phase one of the project was completed in early November.

GCA rejuvenate Bewdley Museum

We are helping to breathe new life into Bewdley Museum in Worcester with proposed extensive work to create a new café facility for peckish visitors.

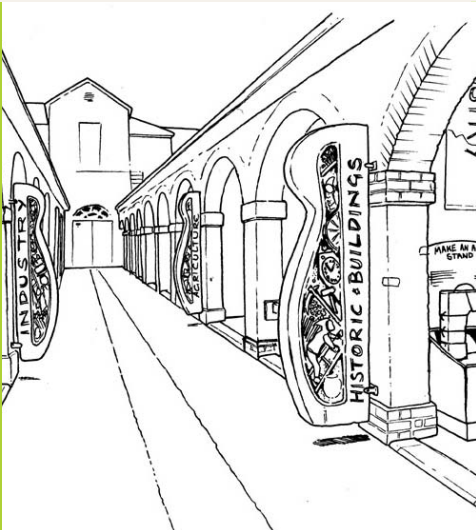
The project also includes re-roofing and boundary wall improvements to create a dynamic new facility at the museum.

Public picnic areas with feature paving should delight outdoor diners, many

of whom will be keen to visit the newly created workshop facilities.

GCA's Project Manager for the improvements Mike Speak said:

"The museum at Bewdley has been a tourist attraction for many years. As a consultancy with a sympathetic feel for the history of Bewdley, we have added exciting new designs and features to enhance visitor pleasure, including extensive high level glazing."



GCA

GCA Derby (HQ)

Babington Lodge
128 Green Lane
Derby DE1 1RY
Tel: 01332 362411
Fax: 01332 290855
info@gca-consulting.com

GCA Stafford

The Moat House
133 Newport Road
Stafford ST16 2EZ
Tel: 01785 224234
Fax: 01785 229664
stafford@gca-consulting.com

GCA Leicester

Imperial House
St. Nicholas Circle
Leicester LE1 4LF
Tel: 01162 424039
Fax: 01162 424047
leicester@gca-consulting.com

GCA Warwick

16-18 Market Place
Warwick
CV34 4SL
Tel: 01926 403978
Fax: 01926 498376
warwick@gca-consulting.com

GCA Worcester

County House
St. Mary's St
Worcester WR1 1HB
Tel: 01905 616605
Fax: 08448 807350
worcester@gca-consulting.com