

# The British Group of IABSE colloquium on liability at Cambridge in 1985

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THE BRITISH GROUP OF IABSE COLLOQUIUM ON LIABILITY  
AT CAMBRIDGE IN 1985

The 196 pages of Proceedings have been published by, and can be purchased from, the British Group. They include contributions relating to the situation in many countries.

The colloquium on Liability (in the construction industry) organised by the British Group of the International Association for Bridge & Structural Engineering was held at Pembroke College, Cambridge in July 1984.

These colloquia, known as the Henderson Colloquia after Dr. William Henderson whose idea they were, have become an institution. They provide an opportunity for invited participants, typically about twenty to thirty in number, to discuss a subject of mutual interest. The proceedings are private. They normally take two and a half days and members live in the college where the meetings are held.

In this case 26 people took part in the meetings, structured around 22 papers taken as read, and briefly introduced by their authors or, in the case of 3 papers whose authors could not be present, by proxies. Those present were consulting engineers, contractors, clients, insurers and lawyers.

The subject is one about which many people in the construction industry feel strongly and the discussions were lively. They are included here in the form of notes made during the proceedings, amplified from a tape recording. As is the way of notes, they are laconic and a mixture of direct and indirect speech without benefit of quotation marks.

There are three things which seem particularly noteworthy. Firstly the Danes seem to have found solutions to the problems worrying the rest of us. Secondly, each profession sees solutions lying in the others' domains. Thirdly, a lack of understanding by those outside the industry of what goes on in it, what is possible. The tolerance shown to barristers who must lose an average half of their cases or to doctors who must in the end lose all their patients is not extended to designers and builders. "Fools build houses for wise men to live in" used to refer to those who commissioned houses as fools. If it is used at all nowadays it is probably the contractors who are being referred to.

The Proceedings include Papers presented by the following:

Introduction	B. P. Wex, Freeman Fox & Partners
Liabilities in the construction industry	J. Uff, Barrister and Consulting Engineer
Liability	W. H. Arch, Structural Engineer
FIDIC's view of design liability	N. G. Bunni, T. J. O'Connor Associates
A lawyer's view on design liability	P. J. Taylor, Partner, Berrymans, Solicitors
A client's view of design liability	W.R. Varley, Scottish Development Department
Liability for supervision of building Structures	F. G. Coffin, Ove Arup & Partners

Liability in relation to the supervision of civil engineering works	A. C. Wallace, Partner, Crouch and Hogg.
Liability by association - the 'knock-on' effect	A. C. E. Sandberg, Messrs. Sandberg
Construction Liability - a contractor's view	A. Cockshaw, Fairclough Civil Engineering
A client's view of construction liability	G. L. Powell, Haslemere Estates plc
Engineers liability in law	A. S. Safier, Armand Safier and Partners
Construction liability - from the point of view of a lawyer working for a contractor	G. D. Gibson, John Laing plc
Professional liability in Japan	Y. Tahara, Japan Bridge & Structure Institute Japan Construction Consultants Association
Liability in Islamic countries	J. Beechley, Clifford-Turner
Some liability aspects of steelwork design and construction	J. Durkee, Consulting Structural Engineer, USA
Liability for technical consultants: Denmark	J. Hansen Attorney-at-Law, Denmark
Liability in the French construction industry - towards a turnkey approach	G. L. McIlwaine, Spie-Batignolles, France
Innovation and liability	D. Lee, G. Maunsell & Partners
Liability and quality assurance	D. W. Quinion, Tarmac Construction Limited
Ways of preventing failure	K. Sriskandan, Department of Transport
Claims against consulting engineers	P. L. Liddell, Sun Alliance Insurance Group
Insurance aspects of construction liability	J. P. Germond, Civil Engineering & Insurance Risk Consultant