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Research in the United Kingdom

The present IABSE STRUCTURES booklet devoted to Structures in Great Britain gives an excellent opportunity to present two important Government Research Establishments in the United Kingdom.

The following information is published with the kind permission of the Editor of the

Directory of Building Research Information and Development Organisations

The 4th edition of this directory, published in 1979, presents information on slightly over six hundred Institutes in fifty-two countries and may be ordered at CIB, P.O. Box 20704, Weena 704, NL-3001 JA Rotterdam, the Netherlands.

Building Research Establishment – BRE

Building Research Station
Bucknalls Land, Garston
Watford, Herts WD2 7JR

A Government research establishment within the Department of the Environment. Established 1972, by the amalgamation of the Building Research Station (founded 1921), the Fire Research Station (founded 1946) and the Forest Products Research Laboratory (founded 1927). The Establishment is financed very largely through the annual Parliamentary Vote of Funds for the Department of the Environment; about 10% of the total funds represent work paid for by the construction industry.

Bodies

Building Research Establishment Advisory Committee
Building Research Establishment Scottish Advisory Committee

Research committees:

- Architectural Design
- Building Operations & Economics
- Environmental Design & Engineering
- Fire
- Ground & Structures
- Materials
- Planning
- Timber.

Staff

Total approximately 1,250, of whom approximately one half are support staff (finance, typing, workshops, building labour).

Structure

BRE is one of three research establishments in the Directorate General of Research in the Department of the Environment. Its day-to-day management is carried out, under the Director and Deputy Director, by six Assistant Directors, each responsible for a department of BRE and together forming the Management Committee. Below the Assistant Directors, the work is carried out in Divisions, as outlined below:

- Engineering: Geotechnics, Structural Design, Structural Properties;
- Environment: Building Services and Energy, Design, Environmental Design, Mechanical Engineering;
- Materials and Construction: Building Process, Construction Economics, Inorganic Materials, Organic Materials;
- Fire Research Station: Building and Structures, Fire Special Studies, Fire Statistics, Fire Protection;
- Princes Risborough Laboratory: Components, Protection, Timber Technology;
- Communications and Services: Administrative Services, Advisory Services, Application Services, Industrial Services, Research Services.

Field of work

BRE research ranges over all aspects of building and much of civil engineering (exceptions are roads and waterways) and stems from Government's fourfold interest in the construction industry – the improvement of the environment, value for money, scientific backing for regulations, and resource requirements of the industry. The aim of the Engineering Department is to provide national principles and methods of analysis that will help engineers design structures on the ground and on the sea bed that will be safe, serviceable and economic.

The Materials and Construction Department is concerned with the performance of building materials in use and in the development of new materials, with the use of industrial waste in the building industry, and with the economic use of resources – capital, materials and especially labour – in new buildings and in the maintenance of existing ones.

The Environment Department covers the design, performance and use of buildings; the environment within and around buildings and the human needs associated with it; and the energy implications of and the installations needed for this environment.

The Fire Research Station carries out research into fire prevention, fire detection, fire fighting, and provision for escape from fires, all with a view to establishing economic levels of performance.

Whilst the Princes Risborough Laboratory is still concerned with the properties, performance and preservative treatment of timber and timber-based materials, it is also working on a wide range of lightweight components for buildings and on the structural use of timber.

Of the Divisions that report to the Deputy Director, the Urban Planning Division carries out research to provide planners with information against which to assess urban and regional plans, and is also concerned with housing strategy: Overseas Division acts as the link between BRE research and the needs of developing countries; and the Scottish Laboratory research programme is particularly concerned with those aspects of building that are affected by Scottish climate and practice.

The Communications and Services Department provides the necessary financial, personnel, library, computer and instrument services, as well as supporting the application of research results with specialist marketing and other skills.

Publications

- Numerous papers are published in professional or scientific journals; many of these are reprinted by the Station as Current Papers and each paper is circulated free of charge to the most appropriate audience for the particular paper.
- The Station also publishes a quarterly journal BRE News which carries accounts of recent developments at the Station, trends in research and summaries of new publications.
- Annually, the Station publishes its Research Programme and a directory of all publications available.

Priced Publications are issued through Her Majesty's Stationery Office and include:

- BRE Digests which are published monthly and usually deal with problems where the Station has acquired a considerable body of knowledge
- An annual report
- Various books on specialist subjects.

Transport and Road Research Laboratory – TRRL

Crowthorne
Berkshire RG11 6AU

A Government research establishment within the Department of the Environment. Established 1933. Financed very largely through the annual Parliamentary Vote of Funds for the Department of the Environment; about 6% of the total funds represent work paid for by the Ministry of Overseas Development.

Bodies

TRRL Advisory Committee
TRRL Advisory Committee on Highway Engineering
TRRL Advisory Committee on Traffic and Safety
TRRL Advisory Committee on Transport.

Staff

Approximately 1,050.

Field of work

The Laboratory provides technical and scientific advice and information to help in formulating, developing and implementing government policies relating to roads and transport, including their interaction with urban and regional planning.

These aims are achieved mainly by carrying out research and related activities in highway engineering, traffic engineering and safety and in more general transport subjects.

The work in highway engineering deals with the planning, design, construction and maintenance of roads and highway structures, particularly bridges and tunnels. Work in traffic and safety is concerned with the safe, efficient and convenient movement of people and goods, including the layout of roads and transport networks, the control of traffic flow, the study of road accidents and methods of reducing their frequency and severity.

The Laboratory works closely with local authorities, consultants, contractors and industry. There is also an Overseas Unit engaged on work sponsored by the Ministry of Overseas Development.

Publications

The Laboratory publishes its own series of research reports and numerous papers are published in professional and scientific journals.

Priced publications, which include the Annual Report, are issued through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London.