

# **FORTY YEARS OF ENGINEERING STRUCTURES, MECHANICS AND CONSTRUCTION RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO**

**Mircea Z. Cohn and Donald E. Grierson**

*Civil Engineering Department, University of Waterloo, Canada*

*“In order that they may live and bring forth life, generations must continue to meet, and the teaching assume the form of a human link, awakening and activating our bond with our Father. The spark that leaps from him who teaches to him who learns rekindles a spark of that fire which lifted the mountain of revelation to the very heart of heaven...”*  
(Buber, 1956).

Initial planning for the formation of the Solid Mechanics Division (SMD) at the University of Waterloo began in 1966, and it was implemented into a formal entity following the award of a National Research Council of Canada Development Grant in 1968. Upon the departure and retirement of many of its initial members over the next thirty years, SMD was reconstituted in the mid-1990s as the Structures Mechanics & Construction Division (SMCD) to reflect the changing research interests of its more recent and new members. The collective research work of both SMD and SMCD has resulted in many publications and valuable contributions to the progress of engineering structures, mechanics and construction. This paper presents a 40-year historical perspective through to 2006 of this activity at the University of Waterloo.

## **1. Introduction**

In the early 1960s, the University of Waterloo was only a few years old and its Faculty of Engineering was just about to produce its first graduates. D.T. Wright, the founding dean and subsequently the University's third president, brought to the Faculty a number of promising scholars from around the world, and thus opened the prospects of vigorous progress in its innovative cooperative programs in engineering.

The Civil and Mechanical Engineering Departments acquired at the time a group of young faculty members eager to realize their academic potential and widen their research horizons. Under the leadership of A.N. Sherbourne, the next Dean of Engineering, new ways for enhancing existing capabilities of the two departments were explored. Their parallel or intersecting areas of activity in Mathematics, Theoretical and Experimental Mechanics, Soil Mechanics, Structural and Machine Analysis and Design, Material Science and Technology, etc., suggested that considerable benefits could be expected from closer cooperation and coordination of activities for groups with similar interests in the two departments.

Dean Sherbourne advanced the concept of bringing the above disciplines under a broad umbrella organism, that came to be known as the SOLID MECHANICS DIVISION (SMD), and initiated efforts to define its goals, structure and mode of operation, as well as means of formalizing its creation.

This paper describes the beginning, growth and maturing of SMD, as well as that of its successor, the STRUCTURES MECHANICS and CONSTRUCTION DIVISION (SMCD). The presentation gives a brief historical overview of these entities, offers a permanent record of results of their activities, examines the causes of related successes and failures, and draws some possible lessons from the first four decades of this academic experience.

## **2. Solid Mechanics Division (SMD)**

### ***2.1. Beginnings***

Prompted by Dean Sherbourne, a group of UW faculty decided to formalize the voluntary cooperation of members in the Civil and Mechanical Engineering Departments into a research unit, the Solid Mechanics Division (SMD). Its goal was to establish a centre of excellence in solid mechanics at the University of Waterloo (UW) by enriching the existing research and teaching programs. While the main emphasis was placed on the human factor (i.e., attracting outstanding visiting professors, research fellows and graduate students), serious consideration was also given to modernizing laboratory facilities and expanding the working environment and supporting staff.

Implementation of these general objectives was detailed in an application to the National Research Council (NRC) for a major negotiated grant to UW, aiming at the creation and development of SMD. In April 1968, NRC announced the three-year award of Grant D-10 in the amount of \$600,000. The funds were to be expended in installments of \$100,000, \$200,000 and \$300,000 in each year of the award term. It was the understanding of the grant applicants and of the Dean of Engineering that, whereas Grant D-10 was to help establish SMD as a centre of excellence, by the very nature of the grant UW was committed to ensuring its continuing existence and development through appropriate support and funding at the end of the award term.

Thus, SMD was brought to life in the spring of 1968 by a decision of the University Board of Governors and the generous NRC award of Development Grant D-10. One of the first tasks of the SMD steering group was to establish an administrative structure that could implement the stated objectives under the terms of Grant D-10. After considering to offer the chair to a distinguished foreign academic, the group ultimately decided to nominate, and the Faculty of Engineering appointed, M. Z. Cohn to fill that position for three years.

The founding SMD membership included Professors S. T. Ariaratnam, D. J. Burns, R. Green, N. C. Lind, J. T. Pindera, H. B. Poorooshab, A. N. Sherbourne, T. H. Topper, and the founding SMD Chair, M. Z. Cohn. Other members that joined SMD soon thereafter and over the next few years were Professors E. F. P. Burnett, R. Dubey, G. M. L. Gladwell, D. E. Grierson, K. Huseyin, H. H. E. Leipholz, G. M. McNeice, T. P. Prasad, J. Roorda, R. M. Schuster and J. C. Thompson. It is of interest to note that the initial and early SMD membership was comprised of individuals from several different departments of the faculty of engineering, including Civil, Mechanical and Systems Engineering.

The SMD founding group and chairman agreed on a few basic operational principles:

- Minimal administration and formalism;
- Expectation of performance from key members with authority and responsibility;
- Clarity of objectives for efficient implementation.

The SMD operation was to be ensured by the following elements:

- Executive Committee, responsible for planning, funding and deciding on all activities;
- Publication Committee, in charge of policy matters for production of SMD publications;
- Area Representatives, responsible for initiating and overseeing activities in each area of concern (i.e., structures, computer analysis and design, geotechnical, mechanics, experimental mechanics, etc);
- Task Officers, responsible for three SMD major tasks: Publications, Seminars and Library.

Main operational features were the complete decision transparency of its working committees and total initiative and authority of each task officer. Monthly SMD meetings - not exceeding one hour - were planned and rigorously held in order to keep members informed in a timely manner on all matters of general concern.

D. E. Grierson was appointed as Publications Officer, a capacity in which he served throughout the life of SMD. Over the years he was assisted by a dedicated production staff. A special contribution was brought by D. Bartholomew of UW Graphic Services who designed the SM Studies jackets and all publication formats. His response to our exigencies produced the SM Logo shown in Figure 1, that soon became our well-recognized and proud emblem on all SMD printed output.



**Figure 1.** SM Logo

Bi-monthly SMD Seminars, initiated and regularly held on Mondays at 3:30-5:00 p.m., became a permanent entry in our calendars. SMD staff ensured the conservation and growth of library collections that included our own publications series, as well as solid mechanics volumes and journals donated by members.

## **2.2 Growth**

SMD vision and ambitious program became apparent with the number and variety of its printed and verbal expressions. The main evidence of success in its activities was the body of SM publications that began to be produced within a short time, including the SM Studies Series, SM Papers/Report Series, SM Special Publications and the SM Archives Journal.

### *2.2.1. SM Studies Series*

This, probably the most important and widely known of SMD products, is a collection of publications intended to record major contributions by the SMD at UW in Applied Mathematics, Solid Mechanics, Structural Analysis and Synthesis, Experimental Mechanics, and Philosophy of Design. The SM Studies Series makes available works of academic merit which, because of their content or volume, may not be published by scientific journals or as independent books. These include proceedings of seminars and symposia, monographs, research studies and significant doctoral dissertations. (The jacket cover for the first SM Study is shown in Figure 2).

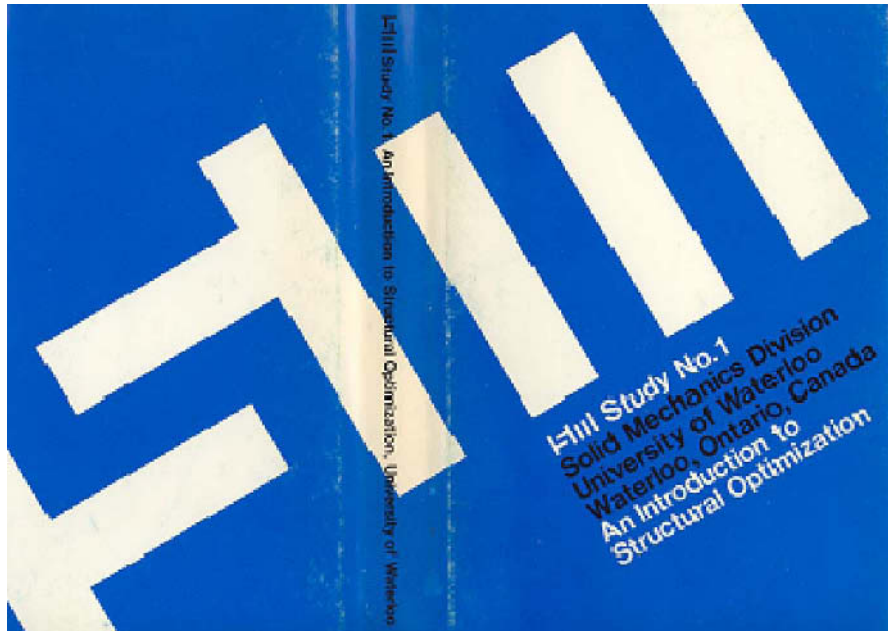
The SM Studies Series was conceived in order to confer a character of permanence to valuable work initiated and completed by SM members and their associates, work that might otherwise be lost or forgotten. The series was published under the direction of an Editorial Committee consisting of S.T. Ariaratnam, M.Z. Cohn, H.E. Leipholz, N.C. Lind, J.T. Pindera and A.N. Sherbourne, with the cooperation of a group of external Consulting Editors of international reputation.

Members of the Editorial Committee led their colleagues by example, by making repeated contributions to the Study Series and other SMD publications in their areas of expertise as follows:

S.T. Ariaratnam: Dynamics, Stochastic Processes, Continuum Mechanics  
M. Z Cohn: Structural Plasticity and Optimization, Concrete Structures  
N.C. Lind: Reliability, Codified Design and Risk Analysis  
H.E. Leipholz: Stability and Mechanics of Continua  
J. T. Pindera: Experimental Mechanics  
A. N. Sherbourne: Steel Structures, Shell Analysis and Design

Other SMD members at the time also made contributions to the various SMD publications in their areas of expertise as follows:

E. F. P. Burnett: Building Sciences  
D. J. Burns: Engineering Mechanics  
R. Dubey: Mechanics of Materials  
G. M. L. Gladwell: Applied Mathematics  
R. Green: Bridge Engineering  
D. E. Grierson: Structural Optimization  
K. Huseyin: Stability  
G. M. McNeice: Finite Element Analysis  
H. B. Poorooshab: Soil Mechanics  
T. P. Prasad: Applied Mathematics  
J. Roorda: Structural Stability  
R. M. Schuster: Cold-Formed Steel  
J. C. Thompson: Experimental Mechanics  
T. H. Topper: Materials Engineering



**Figure 2.** SM Study No. 1

Among the numerous Consulting Editors and friends of SMD and its publications, we remember the names of E. F. Masur (University of Illinois at Chicago), N. J. Hoff (Stanford University), C. P. Siess (University of Illinois), Ch. Massonnet (University of Liège), and M.R. Horne (Manchester University).

As the SM Studies Series became widely recognized, foreign scholars found it a congenial medium for disseminating results of their work and began organizing and publishing conference proceedings using SMD and UW Press facilities (e.g. see Appendix 1: Studies 12, 15, 16 and 17).

The reputation of SMD and its SM Studies Series may be attributed to its:

- Broad range and depth of areas covered;
- Quality of contributors and their contributions;
- Balance between theory and practice of engineering, classical and modern views, and fundamental and applied research;
- Innovative and outstanding doctoral dissertations (e.g., see Appendix 1: Studies 2 and 4).

It is worth mentioning that the graphic excellence of the SM Studies Series has been a major factor in its broad recognition, due in no small measure to the striking jacket design sporting the SM Logo in different colours for each volume. As listed in Appendix 1, eighteen volumes were published in this series between 1969 and 1988. (The jacket covers for two representative SM Studies are shown in Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** SM Studies 9 and 14

### 2.2.2. SM Papers, Reports and Notes Series

A second series of publications was the *white-cover* SM Reports/Papers Series, intended to ensure rapid dissemination, reaction and comment on papers prior to formal publication in refereed technical and scientific journals. As listed in Appendix 2, this series ran for 199 issues from 1969 to 1985. The series was initially called SM Reports, but its name was changed to SM Papers beginning with issue 101 in order to better reflect the nature of its contents. (The front cover of the first issue in the series is shown in Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** SM Report/Paper No. 1

The *blue-cover* SM Technical Notes/Reports Series was devoted to materials that deserved preserving for specialized study, but which, because of the type of information or volume, would not be normally published in standard periodicals. As listed in Appendix 3, this series ran for 31 issues between 1971 and 1980, and includes texts presented at various congresses, documents with extensive numerical or experimental data, and computer programs. The series was initially called SM Technical Notes, but its name was changed to SM Reports beginning with issue 15 in order to better reflect the nature of its contents. (Part of the front cover of the first issue in the series is shown in Figure 5)



Figure 5. SM Technical Note/Report No. 1

Solid Mechanics Archives		Volume 1, No. 1, 1976
<b>S. K. Srinivasan</b>	Stochastic models for fatigue failure of materials	3
<b>C. E. Massonnet</b>	Forty years of research on beam-columns in steel	27
Solid Mechanics Archives		Volume 14, Nos. 3 & 4, 1989
<b>H. H. E. Leipholz</b>	Obituary: 1919 – 1988	129
<b>N. Sri Namachchivaya</b>	Instability theorem based on the nature of the boundary behaviour for one-dimensional diffusion	131
<b>S. A. Soliman and R. N. Dubey</b>	On stiffness matrices in finite element analysis of isotropic elastic Solids	143
<b>S. T. Ariaratnam and Ashwini Kumar</b>	On eigenmodal deformations in incompressible elastic solids under dead loads	149
<b>P. Labossiere and K. W. Neale</b>	On a parametric failure theory for fibre-reinforced composite Laminae	157
<b>T. Lekszycki and Z. Mroz</b>	Variational principles in analysis and synthesis of elastic systems with damping	181
<b>Tian-quan Yun</b>	Dynamic instability of axisymmetric dimpled shallow spherical Shells	203
<b>L. Librescu and N. K. Chandiramani</b>	Recent results concerning the stability of viscoelastic shear deformable plates under compressive edge loading	215

Figure 6. Contents of First and Last Issues of SM Archives Journal

### 2.2.3. *Solid Mechanics Archives*

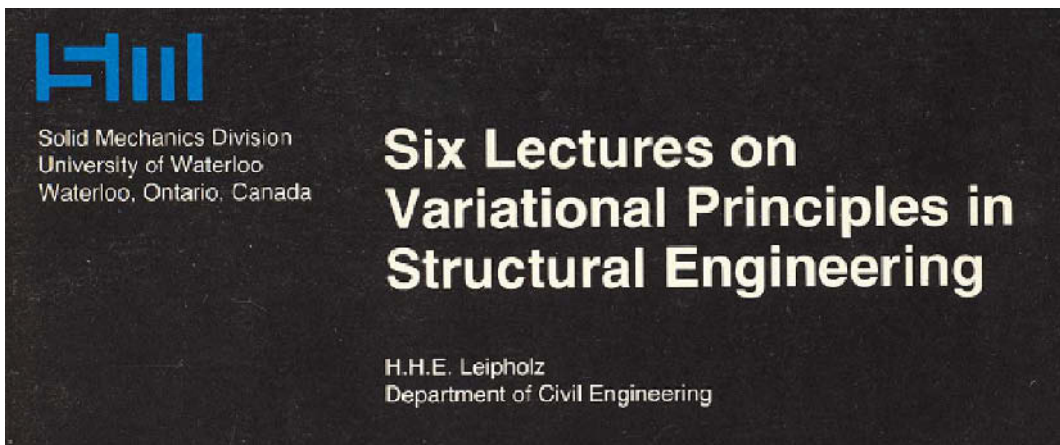
In 1976, SMD initiated and directed the publication of SM Archives, a quarterly International Journal, dedicated to original contributions to solid mechanics. It was printed with the cooperation of Noordhoff International Publishing, The Netherlands, and Oxford University Press, U.K. The Journal was under the direction of internal and external editorial boards, and appeared in 14 volumes until 1989. (The Contents for the first and last journal issues are shown in Figure 6).

### 2.2.4. *SM Special Publications*

Over the years a number of volumes were occasionally published outside the range of the regular SM series. These somewhat randomly-produced texts are of two distinct types:

- Lectures Sets given at UW by SMD members or visiting guests;
- Textbooks, Manuals, and Conference Proceedings sponsored by external agencies.

Some of these texts were organized and edited by SMD members, but produced by commercial publishers. A heterogeneous collection, the SM Special Publications cover a wide spectrum of interests within recognized SMD areas of expertise, while addressing an audience reflective of the international sponsoring organizations. A partial listing of the Special Publications is given in Appendices 4 and 5. (The partial front cover of a representative SM Special Publication is shown in Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Representative SM Lecture Set

### 2.3. *Maturity*

Processes of learning and sharing technical knowledge constituted the permanent focus of SMD activities, not only through the printed medium, but also by direct personal interaction of Division associates and visitors. Such interaction found its expression in various seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia, as well as lectures by invited guests on topics within the stated SMD mission.

A systematic listing of all SMD live-events is rather difficult to achieve because of the variety of venues (Waterloo or elsewhere), sponsorships (SMD, other, combined), publishers (UW or other), and orientation (research or teaching). A sample of the major events with SMD involvement is given in Appendix 6. The publication activities for these events have been surveyed in the preceding section. We now turn our attention to communication events of either research or teaching orientation.



*2.3.1. Research-oriented Events*

From the late 1960s to the early 1980s a number of topics in solid mechanics captured the interest of investigators around the world. At the time SMD was a centre of exciting developments in structural plasticity and optimization, reliability and codification, and stability and experimental mechanics. Interaction of SMD faculty, associates, students and friends allowed the planning and organizing at Waterloo of some notable international meetings on these topics. Images of the delegate participation at three such events are shown in Figures 8, 9 and 10.



**Figure 8.** NATO ASI- *Engineering Plasticity by Mathematical Programming*, Waterloo 1977



**Figure 9.** International Symposium-*Nonlinear Design of Concrete Structures*, Waterloo 1979



**Figure 10.** Int'l Symposium-*Nonlinearity and Continuity in Prestressed Concrete*, Waterloo 1983

The first SMD meeting was the *Colloquium on Limit Design for Structural Concrete*, September 6-8, 1967. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the theory and practical design application of three methods of Limit Design under debate by the joint ASCE-ACI Committee 428. The premises and feasibility of the three (European, American and Canadian) approaches were each discussed for one full day, with the basic principles presented by their authors during the morning sessions. Three representative structure examples, fully worked out by the Waterloo group of faculty and graduate students, were presented in the afternoon sessions. The latter results are summarized in the first issue of the SM Paper/Report Series (Cohn et al, 1969). The 1967 meeting was the beginning of an intense activity of live-events, whose contents and output is reflected by the Special Publications reviewed in the preceding section (see Appendix 6).

### 2.3.2. Teaching-oriented Events

The extent of advanced teaching by SMD and visiting faculty members may be assessed from the related printed documents listed in Appendix 4. While these lecture sets were mainly addressed to graduate audiences, SMD was equally interested in enhancing the overall quality of undergraduate teaching of solid mechanics at UW, consistent with its basic mandate. In this regard, during the 1969 summer semester SMD organized a weekly seminar cycle designed to stimulate undergraduate teaching excellence so that it would match our high graduate programs standards. Some of the problems and dilemmas identified but unsolved were mainly consequences of the distinctive features of UW's engineering education, particularly the cooperative work-study program and the related academic calendar. Also of concern were the handling of the general knowledge explosion, new directions of study, and their accommodation within the curricula of standard four-year study programs. A fresh outlook on the design of undergraduate teaching seemed unavoidable if the following topics were to be properly addressed:

- Role of solid mechanics in CE and ME curricula;
- Nature of SM teaching output (engineers or engineering scientists );

- Optimal teaching techniques (lecturing, problem solving, laboratory work, projects, TV sessions, etc.);
- Optimal mix of various areas of study (mathematics, physics, computer techniques, theoretical and applied mechanics, etc.)
- Objective teaching evaluation (“delivery” or “retention” models ).

Specific questions pertaining to objectives, major topics, minimal ingredients, significance and optimal instructional media for each individual course were explored. Some of the major flaws identified in solid mechanics courses were: coverage of basic statics, insufficient laboratory work, poor understanding of physical problems and role of modelling, inefficient tutorials and insufficient engineering project work. Furthermore, it was strongly felt that lack of coordination of CE and ME offerings was manifest in unnecessary repetitions, omissions or redundancy, along with unsuitable textbooks and inadequate lecture-tutorial coordination.

A comprehensive discussion of the above problems took place in the framework of 12 weekly seminars during the 1969 summer term. Each seminar was devoted to one course presentation and full debate by faculty members and students with a view to:

- Establishing quality standards for the teaching process;
- Developing lecture notes, laboratory manuals, problem sets and other teaching aids tailored to the specific needs of UW students and their cooperative programs;
- Developing and completing within a few years an integrated set of *SM Textbooks* that encapsulated UW needs and standards, to be known as the SM Text Series.

The 1969 summer term SM Teaching Seminars were well prepared, attended and debated and generated productive discussion by the participants. Regrettably, the perseverance and long-term motivation required for bringing this major project to fruition were lost with time and the concept of a complete, modern SM Text Series, unified in format and educational perspective, failed to materialize. However, a lonely sample of the potential of this ambitious project saw the light of day in 1972 (Cohn 1972), and remains a prototype of what might have been the outcome of staying on course with our initial vision. (The partial jacket cover for the sole publication in the SM Text Series is shown in Figure 11).

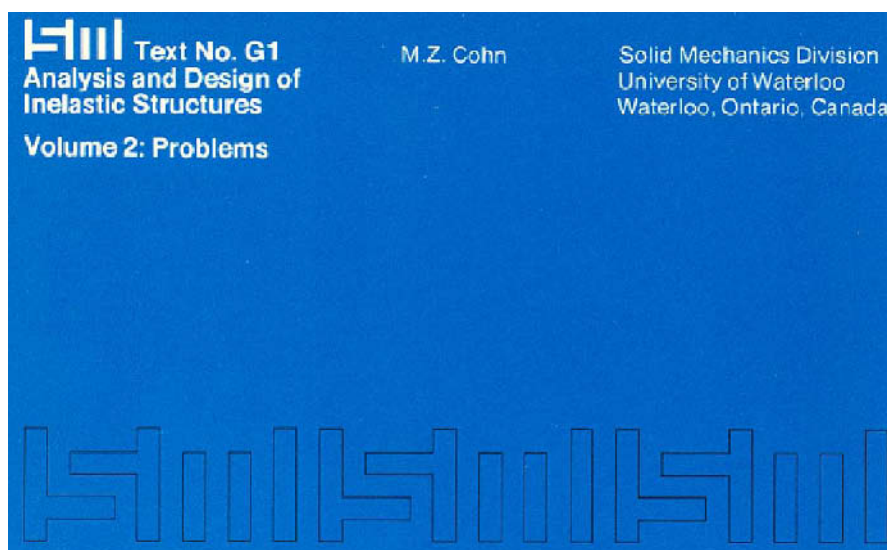


Figure 11. SM Text No. G1

### *2.3.3. Visiting Scholars*

The maturing of SMD is convincingly illustrated by its wide recognition by scholars from all continents and their interest in visiting UW for cooperative projects with our faculty and students. As it would be difficult to list all our distinguished guests and to identify the centres of learning with which SMD has established and developed most productive contacts over the years, we mention below only some of the most prominent guests.

Among many others, SMD was honoured to host such eminent personalities as W. Prager (University of San Diego), A. L. L. Baker (Imperial College, London), F. Levi (University of Torino), C. Menn (ETH, Zurich), J. Muller (Paris, France), G. Maier (Politecnico, Milano), F. Moses (Case Western University), Z. Mroz (Technical Research Institute, Warsaw), N. Khachaturian (University of Illinois at Urbana), and L. A. Schmit (UCLA).

### *2.3.4. Late Years*

Three years after its promising beginnings and depletion of the funds awarded through NRC Grant D-10, the SMD autonomy started to be eroded; the promised continuing financial support by UW administration, implied by the negotiated grant, did not materialize; CE and ME departments favoured the parochial management of their traditional territories; SMD involvement in the planning and delivery of undergraduate programs was grossly misunderstood.

A 1972 UW Senate decision put an end to the formal existence of SMD. Its ongoing activities were to be carried out through departmental channels, with a small stipend granted from the CE department budget. SMD chairmanship was reassigned to H. E. Leipholz, who served from 1972 to 1979, when he assumed a senior position in the university administration. With the era of major initiatives and innovations being over, Leipholz must be credited for having maintained some of the activities and original SMD ways.

As a sign of the emerging hard times, SMD members volunteered to make individual financial contributions in order to sustain on a limited scale the planned projects and events. With SMD turning from a living organism to a surviving name and a bright memory, it became the task of G. M. L. Gladwell in 1979 to serve as the chair of the once proud and independent research group.

## **3. Critical Remarks**

### ***3.1. Successes***

Statistical data regarding SMD activities can only give a limited view of its successes. Yet, it is noteworthy that in just the first three years of existence its printed output amounted to six SM Studies, one hundred SM Papers and fourteen SM Reports. During the same period it organized four major symposia and lecture series, and established a bi-weekly seminar series as a permanent forum for scholarly presentation and discussion. These accomplishments were multiplied within the next two decades of rather fragile survival, as shown by Appendices 1 to 6.

Beyond statistical facts, major successes must be credited to A.N. Sherbourne's initiative of integrating individual strengths into a cross-departmental focused entity, and to SMD's founding members for shaping it so that the division could represent more than the sum of its individual components. Indeed, in a short time span, the collective formal unit that embodied the members' confidence, dedication and pride produced a noticeable rise in the level and dissemination of research results.

The principal SMD achievement consisted of living up to an uncompromising commitment to excellence, marked by a constant promotion of new young talent, individual growth, group development and international cooperation. The SMD reputation can be measured by the calibre of people associated with the wide range and high quality of its activities.

These were distinctive not only in substance, but also in a style expressed by the graphic standards and formats of its publications, as well as by the sense of occasion, attention to detail and meticulous organization of conferences. Not to be forgotten are the musical themes used as inspirational motifs, calls to order for working sessions or relaxing interludes.

What were the means that made possible the above successes? The essential factor was the rich reservoir of individual talent. But existing potential might not have materialized without the financial support of NRC Grant D-10. This award confirmed the viability of the SMD visionary program, energized its members and stimulated their creativity. Although relatively modest even by 1970s standards, the award funds were sufficient for initiating a large number of projects in a short time. However, we believe that, even with proper funding, SMD program could not have been implemented had it not been animated by the concepts of personal autonomy and responsibility, along with collective involvement and transparent leadership.

The establishment of the SMD Centre in 1972 in the E-4 (Pollock) Building had a very positive impact on the efficiency of its operation. Conceived, designed and furnished with active SMD participation, the Centre provided adequate space for SM faculty and graduate students, secretariat offices, library, lounge and a fully equipped seminar room. These facilities ensured precious proximity and improved the interaction among faculty, students and staff, as well as with laboratories and computer rooms.

### **3.2. Failures**

Successes and failures can be assessed by comparison to either adopted or desirable objectives. By the first criterion SMD has to be characterized as an overall success, because it delivered on 100% of all contracted obligations.

By the second criterion, the projected self-imposed development and production of the SM Text Series, following the summer 1969 teaching seminars (see 2.3.2), ended as a serious failure. Completion of this project might have represented a unique contribution to the teaching of solid mechanics at the University of Waterloo. Ironically, while this initiative gave a constructive response to the often heard criticism that faculty members were more interested in research than teaching, it probably generated a political malaise responsible for the negative attitudes of Civil and Mechanical Engineering Departments toward SMD and its future. SMD efforts were aimed at reviewing the curricula, rationalizing inter-departmental programs and improving their implementation, *without* involvement in, or change to existing administrative structures. Sadly, departments misread our intentions, fearing an encroachment of their jurisdiction, power, and decision-making authority.

Beside the above, the critical SMD failure was an existential one. Although decisions on its fate were beyond the will and power of our group, a more outspoken response could have been given when SMD formal status was questioned and finally revoked. The UW renegeing on the initial commitment to sustain its hard won centre of excellence brought disbelief, consternation, and eventual resignation to SMD membership.

It is fair to note that the political winds changed considerably during the short period of time since SMD inception: whereas the dominant orientation in the late 60's was toward fundamental research and outward-looking, the early 1970s saw a switch to applied, nationally profitable research and development. UW followed the trend of chasing funding opportunities by downsizing long-term pursuits in favour of reaching tangible material benefits in the shortest possible time. It was in this climate that extensive debates took place on research policies related to basic vs. mission-oriented development, federal vs. provincial jurisdictions, the role of research in university vs. government labs, or industry. UW's position may be inferred from the words of its Academic Vice-President at the time (Petch 1973):

There are three areas in which debate is still hot, with little indication that agreement will soon be reached: funding university research, organization of government research and stimulation of innovation in industry. (p.40)

Basic research has been one of the chief targets of those critical of the government's policy, or lack of policy, on scientific matters. In moments of passion, some critics have suggested that Canada should divert all financial support to applied research and development and phase-out basic research. (p.36).

The demands for more mission-oriented basic research, applied research and development, arise because of a wide-spread feeling that Canada must utilize science and technology more in striving to achieve national goals, coupled with a new understanding that benefits do not necessarily flow automatically from free basic research, but require a conscious effort at application. (p.38).

### **3.3. Lessons**

SMD was a memorable episode in the UW Faculty of Engineering: great talent and work pre-existed its creation and subsisted its demise. But its early years energized and brought out the best of existing potential and raised it to a level of high academic distinction and achievement. Not only did SMD live up to its commitments, but it amply exceeded the expectations of its founding members and caused our university to be recognized as a real force in the world of solid mechanics.

While we started this survey with the intention of factually recording the SM activities over approximately the last forty years, we may be excused if the intended writing objectivity has suffered occasionally: some of the old passion for SMD ideals could not be entirely eliminated while undertaking this memory trip.

Perhaps we may also be indulged in a little literary flight of fancy by viewing the SMD story as a real academic saga with not a few rather dramatic ingredients: indeed, on a close look, the evolving process of creation, development, stagnation and renewal are quite obvious. However, the less obvious conflicts of authority between an old departmental structure and a superimposed (perceived) rival new entity, jealousy and personality clashes, tradition versus innovation, loyalty and deception, growth, decay and redemption, all major themes of the classic drama are, or may be assumed, as part of this narrative. And so might have been pain, dissatisfaction, disappointment, and resistance to change, which are seldom absent at transitions from old to new.

Yet, in spite of all the ups and downs, a dominant leit-motif is discernible throughout the entire SMD project: fostering learning and inspiring human interaction between the old and the young, regardless of contingent circumstances. Whether funded adequately or not at all, the commitment to excellence was, and apparently will remain, the leading motivation of the UW group of scholars active in the fields of structures, mechanics and construction.

## **4. Structures, Mechanics and Construction Division (SMCD)**

### ***4.1. An Ongoing Commitment***

G. M. L. Gladwell served as chair of SMD from 1979 to 1992. A thirteen year period over which, despite the noted difficulties, the membership continued to act as a loosely-knit research group; collaborating on research projects, coordinating seminars, pooling resources to support visitors, and participating in the hiring of new faculty. The group has maintained an ongoing commitment to research and its related activities through to the present day. D. E. Grierson served as chair from 1992 to 2002, while G. W. Brodland continues as chair to 2006 and beyond.

Upon the departure and retirement of nearly all of its initial and early members over almost 30 years since its inception, SMD was renamed in the mid-1990s as the Structures, Mechanics and Construction Division (SMCD) to reflect the changing research interests of its more recent and new members. Professors Brodland, W.-C. Xie and M. A. Polak joined SMD/SMCD during the late 1980s and early 1990's; M. Pandey, K. Soudki, T. Hegazy and L. Xu joined in the mid-1990s; J. Straube, J. West and S. Potapenko joined in the late 1990s and early 2000s; while S. Narasimhan and S. Walbridge became new members as of May 1, 2006.

### ***4.2. SMCD Member Research Interests***

The present-day membership of SMCD consists of individuals from the Department of Civil Engineering. A brief sketch of each member's research interests is given in the following.

G. Wayne Brodland: advanced computational models for tissue and cell mechanics; unique instrumentation and software for data collection and analysis; and development of a unified theory of embryo mechanics.

Wei-Chau Xie: structural dynamics and random vibration, reliability and safety analysis of engineering systems, dynamic stability of structures, nonlinear dynamics and stochastic mechanics, localization in randomly disordered engineering structures, vibration design of residential floor systems using cold-formed steel joists, and seismic analysis and design of engineering structures.

Marianna Polak: punching-shear strengthening techniques for RC slab-column connections, development of constitutive models and nonlinear finite element formulations, non-destructive evaluation of structural members, high-density polyethylene pipes installed by trenchless technology, and interdisciplinary research on characterization of polymeric materials

Mahesh Pandey: risk-based decision support systems for infrastructure management, time-dependent reliability analysis models, risk-based dynamic health monitoring systems, socio-economic cost-benefit analysis for sustainable development, and probabilistic load and strength models.

Khaled Soudki: rehabilitation of corroded reinforced concrete beams with FRP, shear strengthening slab-column connections using FRP, durability of structural members strengthened by FRP sheets, experimental and analytical evaluation of the bond strength of reinforcement in FRP-wrapped concrete beams, and fatigue behaviour of corroded concrete beams strengthened with FRP sheets.

Tarek Hegazy: management of infrastructure networks, decision support for project scheduling and control, time and cost and resource optimization, artificial intelligence applications in construction, and internet-based collaboration in design and construction.

Lei Xu: performance-based building seismic analysis and design, advanced analysis and design for structures under abnormal loading, lightweight steel framed residential building design, analysis and design of cold-formed steel structures, stability analysis, design and optimization of steel framed structures, and floor vibration analysis and design.

John Straube: building enclosure design, moisture physics, and whole-building performance.

Jeffrey West: behaviour of precast structures, durability of precast and post-tensioned concrete structures, use of stainless steel reinforcement, development of high performance self-consolidating concrete, and use of carbon fibre reinforced polymer materials for strengthening of existing structures.

Stanislav Potapenko: modeling the mechanical behaviour of advanced materials, singular integral equations, potential methods in elasticity, mechanics of rubber-like solids, mechanics of thin-walled structures, composite materials, and fluid mechanics

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Scott Walbridge: small- and large-scale testing of structural elements, stability of structural systems, fatigue analysis of welded structures, fatigue assessment of bridges, probabilistic methods to model deterioration processes, and probabilistic design criteria for structures.

## 5. Conclusion

Trying to draw some lessons from life or academic experience may prove a rather subjective undertaking as it depends not only on objective factors, but, to a large extent, on such personally-chosen criteria as *survival* and *progress*. In collective endeavors these requirements are dominant at both individual and group levels. We assume for simplification that if the requirements are satisfied for the group, they are implicitly satisfied for the individual. Also assumed is that in an academic group individual members have the necessary intellectual strength and motivation for pursuit of higher learning.

The above observations follow from the analysis of SMD experience, and their general validity should be viewed with caution. However, it seems fair to believe that they are quite apt when considering the future of SMCD.

Group *survival* is influenced by external factors (time, prevailing policies, university orientation, funding sources, etc.), but is critically determined by subjective factors; in addition to its make-up and prerequisite academic strength, a group's existence largely hinges on:

- Strong motivation (conviction that the group adds up to more than its summed parts)
- Clear, realistic objectives
- Firm, properly focused leadership
- Internal cohesion (positive interaction at the operational level)
- Group resilience (will to survive) and adaptability
- Steadfastness in pursuit of objectives

Group *progress* requires unanimous understanding and consistent work on programs and cannot be achieved without:

- Translation of general vision into specific goals



- Choice of correct priorities
- Efficient planning and monitoring of results
- Preservation and promotion of talent (by ensuring true bond and member collegiality)
- Reduction of administrative tasks to minimum necessary

In brief, our main lesson is that group survival and progress are paramount considerations arising out of SMD history. While survival is to a large extent dependent on external factors, progress is mostly an internal product, the essence of which appears to be *making a difference*. Given their essential ingredients, both survival and progress may be achieved with a high probability if membership bond thrives under a far-reaching leadership guided by ambitious, yet realistic goals.

One cannot but hope that, in the spirit of this paper's motto (Buber, 1956), the torch passed from SMD to SMCD will continue to rekindle the sparks of discovery for generations to come.

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189. "Computer-Automated Synthesis of Building Frameworks", by Donald E. Grierson and Gordon E. Cameron (February 1984)
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31. "Khacian's New Linear Programming Algorithm" by Richard J. Caron (August 1980)

### **APPENDIX 4: SM Lecture/Seminar Series**

#### **Six Lectures on Stability of Elastic Systems**

H.H.E. Leipholz  
1971



**Theory of Codified Structural Design**

N.C. Lind

A set of invited lectures, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland  
June 5-15, 1972

**Mathematical Models of Inelastic Material Behaviour**

Z. Mroz

Institute of Fundamental Technical Research, Warsaw, Poland  
1973

**Stochastic Point Processes**

S.K. Srinivasan

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, India  
1973

**Design in Cold Formed Steel**

R.M. Schuster (Editor)

1974

**Newmark's Numerical Method**

N.C. Lind

1975

**Six Lectures on Variational Principles in Structural Engineering**

H.H.E. Leipholtz

1978

**Buckling of Elastic Structures**

J. Roorda

1980

**A Brief Course on the Theory of Buckling**

L.M. Kachanov

University of Delaware

H.H.E. Leipholtz (Editor)

1981

**Buckling of Thin-Walled Rods**

L.M. Kachanov

Boston University, Boston, Ma.

H.H.E. Leipholtz (Editor)

1983

***APPENDIX 5: SM Texts, Manuals, Proceedings, and Other Publications***

**SM Text No. G1**

Analysis and Design of Inelastic Structures

Volume 2: Problems, 1972

M. Z. Cohn

**Cold Formed Steel Design Manual**

R.M. Schuster and N.C. Lind

1975

**Fracture 1977**

Proceedings, 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Fracture

Waterloo, Ont., June 1977

D. M. R. Taplin (Editor)

**Engineering Plasticity by Mathematical Programming**

Proceedings, NATO Advanced Study Institute

Waterloo, Ont., August 2-12, 1977

M.Z. Cohn, G. Maier and D.E. Grierson (Editors)

Pergamon Press, New York, Toronto, 1979

**B. M. Fraeijs de Veubeke Memorial Volume: Selected Papers**

SM Archives Special Publication

M. Geradin (Editor)  
1980

**STRUPL 1: User's Manual**

M.Z. Cohn, F. Erbatur and A. Franchi  
1982

**Micromechanisms of Plasticity and Fracture**

M.H. Lewis, Warwick University, England and  
D.M.R. Taplin, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (Editors)  
University of Waterloo Press, Waterloo, Ont., 1983

**Nonlinearity and Continuity in Prestressed Concrete**

Preliminary Publication (4 Volumes), International Symposium  
ACI, ASCE, CEB, CPCI, CSCE, FIP, IABSE, PCI, SMD  
Waterloo, Ont., July 4-6, 1983  
M.Z. Cohn (Editor)

**Contact Mechanics and Wear of Rail and Wheel Systems**

Proceedings, First International Symposium  
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C., July 6-9, 1982  
J. Kalousek, R.V. Dukkipati and G.M.L. Gladwell (Editors)  
University of Waterloo Press, 1983

**Partial Prestressing: From Theory to Practice**

Proceedings, NATO Advanced Research Workshop (2 Volumes)  
Paris, France, June 18-22, 1984  
M.Z. Cohn (Editor)  
Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1986

**Contact Mechanics and Wear of Rail and Wheel Systems**

Proceedings, Second International Symposium  
University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I., July 8-11, 1986  
G.M.L. Gladwell, H. Ghonem and J. Kalousek (Editors)  
University of Waterloo Press, 1987

***APPENDIX 6: SM Workshops, Conferences, and Symposia \****

**Colloquium on Limit Design for Structural Concrete**

ACI, ASCE, SMD Colloquium (see Appendix 2, No.1)  
September 6-8, 1967

**Computer-Aided Engineering**

SMD Symposium (see Appendix 1, No.5)  
May 11-13, 1971

**Applications of Solid Mechanics**

SMD Symposium (see Appendix 1, No 7)  
June 26, 27, 1972

**Experimental Mechanics in Research and Development**

International Symposium (see Appendix 1, No.9)  
June 12-14, 1972

**Stochastic Problems in Mechanics**

International Symposium (see Appendix 1, No.10)  
September 24-26, 1973

**Mechanics in Engineering**

First ASCE, EMD Specialty Conference (see Appendix 1, No.11)  
May 26-28, 1976

**Fracture 1977**

Fourth International Conference (see Appendix 5, No.3)  
June 1977

**Continuum Models of Discrete Systems (CMDS 2)**

Second International Symposium (see Appendix 1, No.12)  
June 28-July 2, 1977

**Engineering Plasticity by Mathematical Programming**

NATO Advanced Study Institute (see Appendix 5, No.4)  
August 2-12, 1977

**Nonlinear Design of Concrete Structures**

ASCE, ACI, CEB, CSCE International Symposium (see Appendix 1, No.14)  
August 7-9, 1979

**Continuum Models of Discrete Systems (CMDS 3)\***

Third International Symposium, Freudenstadt, Germany (see Appendix 1, No.15)  
June 24-30, 1979

**Fuel-Air Explosions \***

International Conference, Montreal, Que. (see Appendix 1, No.16)  
November 4-6, 1981

**New Problems in Mechanics of Continua \***

Third Polish-Swedish Symposium, Jablonna, Poland (see Appendix 1, No.17)  
May 10-14, 1982

**Contact Mechanics and Wear of Rail and Wheel Systems (I) \***

International Symposium, Vancouver, B.C. (see Appendix 5, No.9)  
July 6-9, 1982

**Nonlinearity and Continuity in Prestressed Concrete**

ACI, ASCE, CEB, CPCI, CSCE, FIP, IABSE, PCI, SMD  
International Symposium (see Appendix 5, No.8)  
July 4-6, 1983

**Partial Prestressing: From Theory to Practice \***

NATO Advanced Research Workshop, Paris, France (see Appendix 5, No.10)  
June 18-22, 1984

**Contact Mechanics and Wear of Rail and Wheel Systems (II) \***

International Symposium, Kingston, R.I. (see Appendix 5, No.11)  
July 8-11, 1986

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Cohn M.Z. (1972) *Analysis and Design of Inelastic Structures*, SM Text G1, Vol. 2, 521 pp.

Cohn M.Z., Burnett E.F., Grierson D.E., Dutt O., Francis R., Parameswar H.C. and Talwar S. (1969) "Application of Limit Design to Reinforced Concrete Structures", SM Report (Paper) No. 1, 56 pp.

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\* NOTE: Listed conferences were held at Waterloo, or had editorial/publishing SMD involvement when star-marked \*.