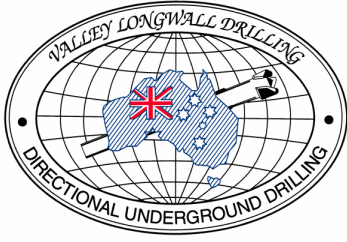


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COAL MINING
OPERATORS'
GEOTECHNOLOGY
COLLOQUIUM

TRIBUTE TO
DR ALAN JAMES HARGRAVES

15 February 2001

Convened by

Illawarra Branch of The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy



in association with

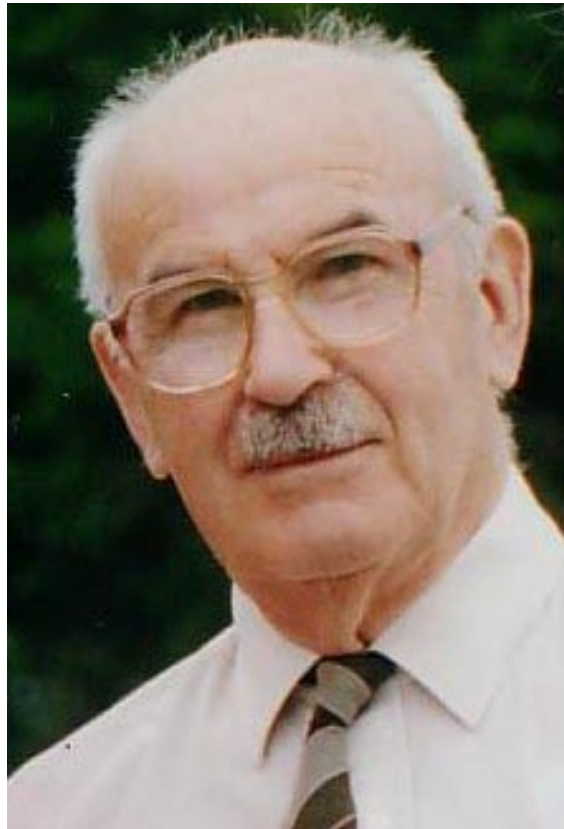
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GEOTECHNOLOGY COLLOQUIUM**

TRIBUTE TO DR ALAN JAMES HARGRAVES



UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG, NSW

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FOREWORD

Four Aussies (Ross Seedsman, Ken Mills, Rod Doyle and Russell Frith), drinking late into the night in a bar in West Virginia, conceded that an Australian Geotechnical Conference - one to rival the one they were attending - was a worthy goal. On the one hand it would be exceedingly difficult to compete with such a successful array of geotechnical professionals, while on the other hand, no matter what the field of endeavour, Australians are always up to the challenge. It was also heartily agreed that it would be fitting to honour one of our own geotechnical founding fathers – Dr. Alan James Hargraves.

As successful Australian mines continue to improve production levels, to reduce costs and to improve general safety conditions, greater emphasis will be placed on all facets of geotechnical knowledge. This Colloquium is directed towards this end. Alan was very active in gas and outburst research; topics on gas and outburst are discussed at this Colloquium.

Almost all the papers presented at this Colloquium are invited papers and represent a cross-section of the coal industry in the States of Queensland and New South Wales. We are extremely grateful to the authors who accepted the invitation to contribute papers and present them at the Colloquium.

The Colloquium has been generously supported by the following organizations:

- STRATA ENGINEERING (Australia) Pty Ltd
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The AusIMM Illawarra Branch is extremely grateful to all for their support. The success of the Colloquium is also in no small part due to the personal commitment of a number of individuals who have worked so hard behind the scenes. Special thanks are due to session chairpersons, mine visit organizers, Maureen Prince, the University of Wollongong staff – especially Leonie McIntyre, Patricia Cooney and Stuart Chambers and finally the Organising Committee.

Ernest Baafi
University of Wollongong

PREFACE

After a long break I met up with Dr Hargraves once again. At this meeting I passed onto him a bottle of Black Label Johnny Walker. He also had a gift for me - a job! I have that instruction pinned to my wall at work, it says 'Prepare a Summary of the Metalliferous Ore Bodies in the Shoalhaven River Valley.' This may seem rather an inappropriate task for a Coal Geologist, but Alan and I explored the Shoalhaven together examining ore deposits and the wonderful Australian bush. He suggested that it would be a fitting way to remember my late father, also a keen explorer. This simple act of Alan's reflects the man, while he was compassionate about others he was always thinking to further knowledge and understanding. At this meeting I raised the topic of this Geotechnological Colloquium and with typical modesty he suggested that it was Con Martin who should get the credit for recognising the need to establish a Rock Mechanics and Strata Control Department in the BHP mines. But recognising the need and setting out to achieve that task are two different feats in their own right.

Upon reflection, my experience of Alan highlights a quite, private, humble and reserved man. While working for him I learned little of his family life, but observed his intense passion for all aspects of mining, especially prospecting for gold and precious gemstones. Throughout his working life and into his retirement he was dedicated to the role of developing 'Rock Mechanics and Gas'. He was also committed to: the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, the University of Wollongong and all that furthered coal mining knowledge. At our meeting I finally learned that Alan was devoted to his late wife and family. In short Alan is a doyen in his field.

Today's Colloquium honours Dr Alan James Hargraves for his pioneering role in both gas and geotechnics in the Australian Coal Mining Industry. But it also serves a secondary purpose and that is to encourage us all to continue with the example Alan has set us. Alan's passion for mining, his humble focus on making mining safer and his constant focus and drive, urge us all to 'pass the baton' onto a new generation. If we accept that baton it will ensure that safe mining conditions are an eminent focus in all of our professional lives. I trust that we will continue with Alan's pursuit of technical and safety education.

Rod Doyle
Geologist, Anglo Coal