

# 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY TOAST TO THE SOCIETY

Bob Norman

Good gentles all, it has been put to me  
By Allan Bluett, Keeper of the Scrolls  
That in my imminent senility,  
With creaky voice and verbiage inarticulate,  
I should sing praise for dedicated men,  
And half a century of their endeavours.

So let the praise begin! Look back to times  
When PSC was just a “sometime thing”,  
As Porgy spake of Bess in Gershwin's song,  
And as our pioneers the nettle grasped,  
Their main concern was: “How would things perform?”  
Would relaxation, creep and plastic flow  
Combine to nullify our best intentions?  
And so technology of early years  
Was focussed on prestressing as applied  
To structures of familiar shape and form.  
Thus was indeed a firm foundation laid  
From which we then could journey to the stars.  
And on that journey, new demands arose.  
Those whom we served sought many other things -  
Not only strength and durability,  
Our work must be an object of delight.  
In London's own St Paul's, 'tis writ of Wren:  
“If ye would seek his monuments, look round!”  
There is an age-old law : Man's finest works  
Can never be achieved with ugliness,  
And buildings that uplift our very souls  
Are better fitted to achieve their ends.  
Thus in our quest for this enlightenment,

Beware purveyors of the bottom line,  
So mark with caution economic things.  
Out there, the high-flown pundits push their line  
That all is well if skills we concentrate  
On knowing how and where the money's spent,  
And that our clients know when it's all gone.  
But in the long run, don't we stand or fall  
By good design? Aye, this is where we score-  
And systems ill-conceived can choke invention.  
So as we turn attention to the means,  
Let's not forget the end – a builded work  
That serves us well, and in good cost and time,  
And in so doing, graces our surrounds.

So ends my homily. Now it remains  
To pay my tributes to you all, my friends.  
'Tis easy to identify the kings  
And other barons of technology,  
But unsung heroes served us o'er the years,  
Like builders, concrete workers, labourers,  
Who in their tasks, do dedicate themselves  
As people who must finally become  
The *raison d'etre* of our enterprise.  
For in this life must be some grand design  
Where each of us must have a part to play  
To do the best to render unto things  
And people, some small goodness overall  
That leaves them better for our passing by.

So let's arise and quaff a heartfelt toast  
To half a century of great works done -  
They've shown the way for many more to come.