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A quick review of the IRSE NEWS over last year or so shows how much work the IRSE has done to serve the breadth of its membership, including the increasingly large proportion living or working outside of the UK. The many articles about projects and practices around the world reflects the global nature of our industry and those in it.

In many ways the IRSE is a self help organisation as so much of the valuable knowledge it tries to propagate is generated by our own members through the papers and discussions that happen at local meetings and events. The challenge is communicating that knowledge more widely. The recent experiments with webcasts of the London meetings and the availability of more resources online will certainly help make that knowledge more accessible to all our members, regardless of location. It is also good to see the flow of information is not just one way. The excellent Australasian website is great example of what can be done. As someone based in Singapore, with limited access to the rich program of IRSE events taking place in Europe or even in Australia, these initiatives are particularly welcome.

They are also timely because the number of railway professionals in the region is increasing, as investment in rail across Asia continues to grow. Unsurprisingly China is grabbing all the headlines with its phenomenal progress in building new high speed lines and metros. What may not be so obvious is how much of that growth is being delivered by local expertise and how internationally recognised safety assurance standards and practices are becoming more widely understood and adopted. Malaysia already has large double tracking program underway and has ambitions for a much expanded metro system. Hong Kong and Singapore are also investing heavily in upgrades and extensions to their already advanced metro systems, particularly with Computer Based Train Control. Many of these systems will be driverless, even completely unattended.

With so much expertise based in the region, the IRSE has a lot to offer the industry. This year's International Convention in Singapore and Malaysia will be a great showcase for that.

Charles Page

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