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| **Les Nichol Award Lecture****Practical solutions to real world geotechnical problems through research industry partnership****Dr Gurmel Ghataora****Synopsis:**Whilst blue skies research is essential in exploring new ideas, it is arguably more important to solve real world problems through applied research. In the geotechnical engineering industry, we face many challenges which need addressing in the short term. It is considered that industry / academia collaboration is essential in addressing these challenges. Over the last thirty years I have researched diverse range of topics covering geotechnical aspects of roads and railways, ground improvement, trench backfill and the use of waste materials in civil engineering. Successful collaboration between industry and academia is demonstrated through selected projects on trench backfill, soil erosion, soil stabilisation, steel slag and railway subgrade erosion. It is shown that at times, solutions have been adopted by industry immediately and in other instances, even when the collaboration was successful in delivering the desired output, findings of the research were not taken up by industry for various commercial reasons. It is also demonstrated that sometimes findings of research in one area may help to solve problems in other areas highlighting that teams with wide portfolio may be distinctly beneficial.**About the Speaker:** |  |

Dr Gurmel S Ghataora started his career in geotechnical engineering as soils laboratory technician with R M Douglas Construction in Birmingham in 1972 and progressed his academic studies with degrees of BEng Tech and PhD from the University of Wales. After his studies he returned to R M Douglas Construction, which later became Douglas Technical Services Ltd, (DTS), in 1982 as a geotechnical engineer with responsibility for upgrading all tests on soils, ensuring that all the equipment and procedures complied with relevant standards and that the technicians undertaking the tests were suitably trained. During his time at DTS he worked as a geotechnical and materials engineer for R M Douglas and was seconded to Arup. In 1986 he joined Arup as a geotechnical engineer. He worked in the team investigating abandoned limestone mine workings in the Midlands and developing rockpaste and other materials for backfilling unstable workings. In 1990 he joined the University of Birmingham as a lecturer in the Department of Civil Engineering. He lectured on the masters programme in Foundation Engineering, which was later split into two streams – Geotechnical Engineering and Geotechnical Engineering and Management. He was director of the Foundation Engineering programme from 1994 to 2000. He lectured on various geotechnical engineering topics at masters and undergraduate levels. He was head of admissions for all postgraduate taught programmes from 2001 to 2021.He has supervised 60 research students at MPhil and PhD level.He was principal and co-investigator on numerous research projects funded by industry and government organisations both in the UK and Overseas. He has a wide research portfolio that includes geotechnics and materials used in rural roads and railway track improvement of marginal soils for road construction (using lime, cement, snake oils, fibres and slag) trench backfill and erosion of soils (surface and internal). Most of the roads related project were based in the sub-Sharan region of Africa.Dr Ghataora has published over 150 refereed journal and conference papers. Two papers won the prestigious awards in the ICE journal - Magazine of Concrete Research in 2016 and 2017. He has also published numerous research reports. He has co-authored five books. Since retiring in February 2021, he has been active in supporting research projects in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Birmingham where he is an Hon Senior Research Fellow. He is director of Geo G Ltd. providing research support and training.**This season’s lectures...***Monday 1st November 2021*CIRIA Guide on Natural Slopes, Adrian Koe, Atkins*Monday 6th December 2021*MGS Early Career Award Competition*Monday 10th January 2022*Mining and the Railway, Neal Rushton, Network Rail*Monday 7th February 2022*Global Landslide Hazard Mapping for the World Bank, Peter Redshaw, Bx*Monday 7th March 2021*John Mitchell Award Lecture*Monday 4th April 2021*Rankine Lecture, Prof. Stephan Jefferis *Monday 9th May 2021*Annual General Meeting & Environmental LectureEastern Quarry and UN SDGs, Anna Morley, Arup**Meeting Details for 4th October 2021:**[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3Ameeting_NGI4NGQyNWItZTdkYy00OTE2LTgzYTUtNGY3ZTZiZjk1MzEx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22:%224ae48b41-0137-4599-8661-fc641fe77bea%22,%22Oid%22:%2274454327-b7fa-432b-bf31-04aab7c1f9dd%22%7d) Join from a video system Dial: teams@vmr.arup.com Video Conference ID: 125 374 644 0#Join by phone (audio only) +44 20 3321 5205  United Kingdom, London Phone Conference ID: 897 513 886# [Local numbers](https://dialin.teams.microsoft.com/643dcf32-68b1-48c0-af36-6d6ce6093805?id=897513886) | [Alternate VC dialing instructions](https://eurpexed101.arup.com/teams/?conf=1253746440&ivr=teams&d=vmr.arup.com&ip=149.126.107.218&test=test_call&w) |