

Editorial

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Where is the engineering industry headed? This is the type of question often considered in an editorial, with elaboration on why the various articles are relevant in a future context. Instead the question lingering on my mind is what are the skills we as professionals need in the changing field of engineering?

Articles in this issue of the journal capture many of the skills that are becoming increasingly necessary. The importance of clear communication between technical and non-technical stakeholders, as comes up in ‘You’ve got to have a bit of nous really – competence management for UK heritage railways’ (Baughan *et al.*, 2026), is fundamental to helping us as technical professionals support the greater public. Our ability to listen, learn, and effectively support connect with non-STEM skills where we are not as well trained as prior generations; but at the same time the article gives an interesting example of how technical information remains the core of our practice.

The importance of learning from different sources is expanded upon in the ‘Load capacity and failure analysis of alternative repair materials for fibrous plaster wads’ (Dams *et al.*, 2026). This article makes me think about how the best engineering is hidden from most people’s knowledge, and the humble nature of our profession. While at the same time the complex process of breaking down a complex problem and how we can gain confidence in our evaluation and decisions. Our work, while not obvious to most, matters in ways that people do not realized.

This is thrown into some interesting contrast in the newer world of AI, where ‘CV and GAN-based reconstruction of environmental art style in historical districts’ (Wang, 2026) looks at how computer visions and artificial intelligence methods could be used as heritage reconstruction aid. What are the best ways to use new technology, where jumps in innovation occur before we have the opportunity to learn from our mistakes.

And learning from our past has always educated us in how to find safe ways to plan. For this reason ‘Flexural enhancement of natural

stone beams with prefabricated prestressed CFRP-reinforced stone plates’ (Hu *et al.*, 2026) fits in this group of articles, as a reminder of the type of detailed study typical in our field.

The contrasting ideas in these articles, taken together, gives good food for thought on what we do, how we test new ideas, how we innovate on old techniques, and how we communicate with the public. All of these themes are unchanging, even if the same cannot be said of the people, problems, technology, or methodology.

If you are interested in writing for Engineering History and Heritage please get in touch.

The journal also warmly invites submissions from those working in industry: <https://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/journal/jenhh/call-practitionerindustry-papers>.

Thank you to all our authors, reviewers, and Editorial Board members who have contributed in 2026.

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