

I want to introduce myself to you as I am the new Chair of section and will hold the position until June next year. I'm Adrian Southworth and have been an SPE member for over 30 years. Not surprisingly, much has happened over that time, some good and some not so good.

My background is one of broad subsurface engineering coupled with an early stint in drilling. I've held technical leadership positions as well as being a single practitioner. I left my last employer, BP, during 2016 post the oil price fall of 2014 where I was leading efforts in unconventional development and supporting development of graduate engineering talent. I currently run my own business, which focuses on offering engineering services to support gas developments worldwide with a more recent focus on establishing a fugitive gas emissions management offer to the industry.

I'm grateful that many of the existing board members and committee leads are remaining in place and I look forward in working with them in what will be a challenging year. I would also like to recognise Adam Zalewski who will be acting as Chair elect. It is one of my goals to ensure that Adam is fully involved this year so that our initiatives can continue into his chairmanship.

The last SPE year has been one of considerable volatility where we have seen the impact of over supply and curtailment in demand of oil due to the worldwide impact of Covid 19 both of which have contributed to a significant reduction in oil price both early in 2020 and potentially into 2021.

Despite this negative backdrop the section has remained resilient and has had to adjust its behaviour like so many businesses. That resilience was recognised by SPE International in awarding an excellence award to the section. You will see the award logo appearing on the section website, in the SPE Review and in social media communications. My thanks go out to the outgoing Chair Maxim Kotenev for his leadership during these difficult times.

Turning now to the new SPE year. The volatility seen in the first half of 2020 has lessened, nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Like many other organisations, we are becoming much more familiar with communicating via web-enabled systems such as Zoom and Teams. We will be continuing in this manner until the board is assured that running physical events poses little or no danger to participants. As an example, you will be seeing promotional material for the forthcoming Virtual Upstream Finance and Investments Conference scheduled for 11-12 November, which is being organised as a joint event between the London Section and SPE International. There will be more information about this event in the coming weeks so check out the section website www.spe-london.org and watch out for more social media communications. Additionally, the Distinguish Lecture program remains in place, however, presented virtually. There are a number of events across the European Region starting early September and running through into December. The first DL event for the London section is on 27 October so please watch out for how to access this and other DL events as they are SPE-specific and not available through commercial communication platforms.

As I'm embarking on a new SPE chapter I thought it useful to review the comments of the outgoing SPE President on what themes she thought the organisation should address. Her thoughts are in the latest edition of the JPT. Most SPE London members could relate to her comments, however, the one that resonated with me the most was how to strengthen the feedstock of incoming talent to our industry. For me, this is our most pressing and difficult

challenge and we are meeting this by two initiatives that I hope the membership will actively support.

A new committee section has been established, currently titled NetZero, led by Alison Isherwood that will reinvigorate the sections schools out-reach program with a focus on creating an engaging message around industry efforts to reduce carbon dioxide and methane emissions – the so-called Net Zero aspiration voiced by many leaders within the oil and gas industry. Alison and her team will be providing material to share with the membership on this very topical issue in the coming months through the SPE Review, website resources and SM communications.

The section continues to support the Arkwright Engineering Scholarship program for upcoming talented A level students. We have endorsed our second scholar this year and have made a commitment in future years to ensure that there are more candidates from a broader ethnic mix and studying in less fortunate circumstances.

Many of our members also have allegiances with other technical organisations such as IChemE and PESGB. These organisations are experiencing many of the same issues as we are and I would encourage you to share ideas and thoughts about how your partner organisations are coping with the significant changes (and opportunities) the oil and gas industry currently faces. One area I am particularly keen to hear about is skills and knowledge transfer. Attracting new and maintaining existing membership is an issue that each SPE section faces and is particularly prescient at this time. SPE International is offering a number of membership initiatives to reduce the financial burden of membership. To ensure that you get the best value from your subscription go to www.spe.org and look for free webinars, discounts on learning events and subscription offers.

As you are aware the SPE London section is a volunteer-run organisation. I'm proud of the commitment and efforts that many of our volunteers put into running the section. Notwithstanding that we are always pleased to hear from members wishing to contribute to building the section's success. 2020 was a great year and I hope we can make 2021 equally as successful. Please feel free to contact me at spelondon@spemail.org on how the section can remain relevant to the membership.

I look forward to sharing our 2021 SPE London journey together.

Adrian Southworth, SPE London Chair.