

Obituary

Gunnar M. Idorn



Gunnar M. Idorn in his garden surrounded by rhododendron plants he collected from all over the world. (Photo: Per Freiesleben Hansen)

Civilingeniør, dr. techn. Gunnar M. Idorn

January 24, 1920–February 26, 2006

Gunnar Idorn passed away. To the last he was busy with his many activities.

During half a century Gunnar Idorn influenced the international research and development in the field of concrete technology. In 1960 he established “Betonforskningslaboratoriet” (BFL, Concrete Research laboratory) in Karlstrup, Denmark, and soon it played a significant role in the international concrete research. Many in the field of cement and concrete research from

abroad visited and worked at BFL; and several Danish concrete researchers started their career here. This was a time the privileged recollect for their professional and collegial qualities.

In 1967 Gunnar Idorn defended his higher doctoral thesis “Durability of Concrete Structures in Denmark”. That is a comprehensive description and assessment of Danish concrete constructions durability. Based on his work as port engineer in the beginning of the 1950s he developed an examination methodology including an elaborate preliminary inspection of structures, detailed analysis of selected structures, macroscopical examination of concrete samples, and microscopical examination of thin sections. This methodology, and especially the thin section examination, was important in the understanding of durability related problems and for the establishment of Danish research in this field internationally.

After 1976, when the BFL was closed and the activities moved to Aalborg, Gunnar Idorn worked as independent consultant, particularly involved in international projects and litigations related to durability of concrete. Eventually he established G. M. Idorn Consult A/S that during the years grew to 10 persons and with a large portfolio of international projects. As was the case with BFL this firm became an extremely inspiring place of work, too.

As a human and professional Gunnar Idorn was a harmonic person of exceptionally integrity. He was creative, inspiring and attentive. Gunnar Idorn possessed an ability to deal with the detail as well as the whole, and this from a technical in addition to the political perspective. He was very conscious about the need for development of lesser affluent geographic areas, and the need for means of saving resources. In Denmark Gunnar Idorn was continuously working for the improvement in the conditions for concrete research in Denmark.

Gunnar Idorn participated actively in international committees and research councils, including ACI of which he was honorary member, EIRMA and CEMBUREAU. In 1974 he initiated a series of conferences on alkali silica reactions and was still actively participating at the 12th Conference in 2004 in the People’s Republic of China. Here he contributed the opening speech on application of chaos theory in concrete research.

Gunnar Idorn was active in the resistance movement during the occupation of Denmark in the 2nd World War, towards the

end of which he was incarcerated by the German occupation force. During the war Gunnar Idorn met his wife, Gitte, and they were married after the liberation of Denmark. In addition to Gitte, Gunnar leaves behind their two children and three grand children. The family life was always important to Gunnar, and it is beyond any doubts that Gitte's competent house keeping was the background for Gunnar's energy and time he devoted to concrete research. In addition he had the time to work in the

garden tending his rhododendrons, vacations with the family and sketching, of which we all have seen many when they appeared as the Christmas card of the year.

Hardly any who has known Gunnar Idorn, can have avoided to be positively affected by him. Gunnar continues to be with all of us who had the privilege to work with him.