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ABMEC appoints new Vice President: Paul Freeman, Komatsu Mining Corp Group



The President-elect of ABMEC (Association for British Mining Expertise), Paul Freeman, has a long and varied career centred on longwall coal operations, with mine manager qualifications in both the UK and South Africa. His impressive practical experience is embellished by research for a doctorate at Cardiff University's Strata Mechanics department.

After working for the National Coal Board and Anglo American, in the UK and South Africa respectively, Paul spent four years in Cardiff gaining MSc and PhD qualifications. Since then he has worked for Joy Global (its predecessor and successor companies), with an early highlight being his appointment as project manager in 1999 for the first three "Western" longwalls installed in China.

Paul describes his period on the Shendong Coalfields (the Daliuta, Huojitu and Bulianta mines) in the Gobi Desert of Shaanxi Province as the highlight of his career (with the initial longwall achieving 8 million tonnes in the first year of production). This stint was followed by his appointment as Joy's General Manager for China. After a period as International Sales Manager, based in the UK, he was appointed Eurasia Sales Director and then went back to China in 2013 as Strategic Systems Sales Director.

Joy appointed Paul as Global Sales Director of its Longwall Systems division in November 2016, and he retained that role following Komatsu's acquisition of the company in 2017.

Despite this heady career, Paul describes his favourite job as "enjoying the camaraderie of the men as he supervised the queue for the cage at the end of a shift". In an interview with International Longwall News in 2003, he did add, however, that they "shook me warmly by the throat in the dash to get up the pit". His least favourite job was cleaning rear leg pockets of a set of 4 leg shields at Cynheidre Colliery in South Wales in the late 1980s.

As can be expected from someone of Paul's experience, his anecdotes are multitude in number. They include the time he nearly blew himself up driving a short cross-cut in a South African coal mine, and seeing (and hearing) a methane explosion in his safety lamp while exploring old workings in the UK.

Paul anticipates bigger, and ever more powerful, shearers and AFCs, and expects to be part of the effort in delivering fully-automated remotely-operated longwalls. This will involve a major increase in the quality of data flowing to the surface on the status of the underground machines.

Paul travels extensively with his job; he has a desire to pack rugby boots and a bicycle, to enjoy two of his favourite pastimes, but as the saying goes, "if you want something doing, ask a busy man" and he will take over the presidency of ABMEC in May 2020. He will succeed Patrick Brian, CEO of Trolex who has steered the Association during his tenure to fit a modern-day organisation.

458 words

For the record

CURRENT POSITIONS

Nov 2016 – present	Global Sales Director, Longwall, Komatsu Mining Corp Group
May 2019 – present	President-elect of ABMEC; taking up the position in May 2020 Paul's aspirations for the Association include growing its membership, promoting the influence of British mining equipment companies around the world and offering added value by collaboration with like-minded people and organisations.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

1988 – present	Komatsu (Previously Dowty, Meco, Longwall International and Joy)
Aug 2013 – Oct 2016	Strategic Systems Sales Director — China
Jul 2011 – Aug 2013	Sales and Marketing Director — Eurasia
Oct 2006 – Jul 2011	Longwall Business Manager — China
Mar 2003 – Oct 2006	International Sales Manager (UK based)
Jan 2000 – Mar 2003	General Manager — China
Apr 1997 – Jan 2000	Group Mining Engineer
1999 - 2000	Project Manager (three longwalls in China)
Sep 1992 – Apr 1997	Export Sales Manager* (Central Europe)
May 1991 – Sep 1992	Regional Sales Manager (Meco International)
Oct 1988 – May 1991	Export Sales Engineer# (US, Australia, RSA)
	* Longwall International (established Meco Polska in Poland)
	# Dowty Mining
Jan 1982 – Dec 1983	Anglo American Corp Mine Captain (New Largo, Arnot and Kriel Collieries)
Sep 1974 – Dec 1981	National Coal Board Deputy, Overman, Undermanager (Newdigate, Birch Coppice and Snowdown Collieries)

EDUCATION

1974 – 1978	Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham
1984 - 1988	Cardiff University (Research on Strata Control)
1977	Higher National Diploma in Mining Engineering
1979	Mine Managers Certificate (UK)
1981	Chartered Engineer
1982	Mine Managers Certificate (South Africa)
1987	Master of Science (MSc; Strata Mechanics)
1989	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD; Strata Mechanics)

CONTACT DETAILS

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PRESS ENQUIRIES

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