As Managing Director of Acoustical Control Engineers Limited (ACE), a family company with 16 personnel, specialising in providing ‘guaranteed solutions to your noise and vibration problems’, I get involved in a very wide range of interesting and challenging acoustic problems. I am also a Director of Belair Research Limited (BRL), for which I spend most of my time on consultancy work. BRL specialises in acoustic consultancy (rather than ACE’s engineering work).

I joined ACE after graduating in 1984, although I had worked on site during holidays installing noise and vibration control schemes for several years before this. Over 25 years with ACE and BRL I have been involved in many different projects, reflecting the diverse range of clients, fields and applications that we get involved in.

These include:

- Air conditioning for Wimbledon’s Centre Court commentary boxes, establishing a base line noise criterion for No. 1 Court, treating the radio interview room and various other projects
- Supplying the attenuators at the base of the Millennium Dome’s yellow legs, which project through the structure
- Supplying and adjusting vibration isolators at the Pan Chau subway in Taiwan
- Plant attenuation at The Mailbox (Birmingham)
- Assessing the noise level aboard a client’s private Boeing 737
- Assessing plant vibration in the ‘Gherkin’ (Swiss Re building)
- Designing and providing very high performance acoustic enclosures for ventilation fans to a National Grid cable tunnel into London with 40 tonne acoustic enclosures supported in 10m diameter shafts
- Louvres for the County Hall hotel conversion beside the London Eye
- Defending a kennels against a noise abatement notice in Court, which involved developing the acoustic unit of ‘woofs per minute’ as a tool for explaining the acoustics to the Magistrates (the dogs won and were awarded costs)
- Reducing noise from the turbines at the Cruachan (Loch Awe) hydro-electric power station / electricity storage reservoir
- Noise at work analysis for the Irish Navy, aboard their patrol vessels.

I became chartered in 2001 through the Institute of Acoustics, who were extremely helpful throughout the registration process. On a personal basis Chartered Engineer status confirms that I have reached a certain level of professional competence and adds credibility to my role as an expert (acoustical) engineer when providing evidence or arguing a more contentious point. The chartering system also highlights engineering as a professional role involving work at a senior level, helping to dispel the myth that engineering is all about spanners and overalls (my main tools are my laptop, sound level meter, ears and brain).

As an employer, I can see the benefits of professional qualifications and encourage all my staff to identify areas for their own development.

Richard Collman BSc CEng MIOA Tech IOSH
Managing Director of Acoustical Control Engineers Limited.
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