

Dr Brian Mercer and the Invention of Polymeric Geogrids



Dr Brian Mercer OBE (1927 – 1998)
Portrait painting by Salvador Dali

Did you know....

- Geogrids were invented by Dr Brian Mercer, who patented the Netlon process of extruding molten plastic into grids, rather than weaving polymer fibres, in the 1950s.
- Brian Mercer won the Royal Academy of Engineering's MacRobert Award for Innovation in 1984. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society the same year
- As an advocate for innovation, research and development, Dr Mercer bequeathed a large sum of money to the Royal Society in his will. With this funding, they established the Brian Mercer Awards for Innovation in 2001.
- Mercer had his portrait painted by surrealist artist Salvador Dali. The portrait shows him as a saint-like figure dressed in a white robe.

"Brian Mercer combined within one man a strong scientific approach with an exceptional imaginative and creative mind."

Royal Society Biographical Memoir

Industry recognitions



5 Queens Awards
to Industry



MacRobert Award
for Innovation
1984



"The Innovation that
Revolutionised
Civil Engineering"
2018

The Telegraph

"11th place in Best of
British Technology"

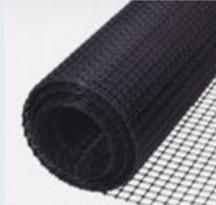


Top 100 Great British
Innovations

Industry Milestones



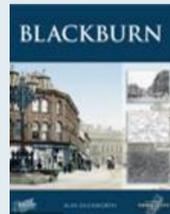
1959
Netlon Ltd was founded
by Dr Brian Mercer OBE



1978
The original biaxial
geogrid was invented



1980
First uniaxial geogrid
created and first
reinforced soil structure



1982
First geogrid manufacturing
plant established in
Blackburn, UK



2007
Tensar TriAx geogrid
was launched



2021
Tensar InterAx geogrid
was launched

Milestone Projects



Railway in Silkestone Quarry
Yorkshire UK

Tensar geogrids were first trialled in 1980, to build a temporary retaining wall supporting a railway at Newmarket Silkestone Colliery, Yorkshire.

World's **First** Polymer Geogrid Structure



Port Stanley Airport
Falkland Island

Royal Engineers were the first to trust and use polymeric geogrids, with one of their first applications in the Falkland Islands in 1982.

World's **First** Polymer Geogrid in Airport Construction



Dubai Fujairah Freeway
United Arab Emirates

The Fujairah Freeway connects Dubai in the west, to Al Fujairah on the east coast. The project was Tensar's tallest structure at 60m tall.

Tensar's **Tallest** Geogrid Wall & amongst the world's highest reinforced soil retaining walls

[Click here to read more about Dr Brian Mercer and the Invention of Polymeric Geogrids in our ISSMGE Time Capsule 2022](#)

Tensar®