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Imaging water ingress into concrete using electrical resistance tomography

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31 **Abstract**

32

33 This paper investigates the feasibility of imaging the movement of water into partially saturated concrete using  
34 electrical resistance tomography (ERT). With this technique, the spatial distribution of electrical resistance  
35 within the concrete sample was acquired from 4-point electrical measurements obtained on its surface. As the  
36 ingress of water influences the electrical properties of the concrete, it is shown that ERT can assist in monitoring  
37 and visualising water movement within concrete. To this end, the *difference-imaging* technique was used to  
38 obtain a qualitative representation of moisture distribution within concrete during the initial 20-hour absorption.  
39 It is shown that the technique also enables the influence of surface damage to be studied.

40

41 **Keywords** Electrical methods, tomography, imaging, water ingress.

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## 61 **1 Introduction**

62 Concrete in the near surface region plays a key role in the long-term durability of reinforced concrete structures  
63 [1, 2]. It provides the only protective barrier to the steel reinforcement from the ingress of water, and water  
64 containing deleterious ionic species such as chlorides, which may, eventually, initiate corrosion [3–5]. The  
65 quality of concrete cover depends largely on the porous nature of the concrete in this region which is determined  
66 largely by the interconnectivity of the capillary pore network within the cementitious binder. Furthermore,  
67 during the lifetime of a structure, surface damage may occur due to numerous factors, including restrained  
68 shrinkage [6, 7], freeze-thaw [8, 9], alkali-silica reaction [10] and in-service loading [11, 12], which all may  
69 negate the role of the concrete cover as the protective barrier to the steel. In this context, being able to monitor,  
70 quantify and visualise the response of concrete in the cover region to the external environment could be of  
71 considerable benefit in the development and design of durable concretes.

72 A variety of investigative techniques have now been developed to study the permeation properties of  
73 concrete in the surface region, with some being no longer confined to laboratory studies and used in real  
74 structures. The performance of these investigative techniques are well-documented and can be found in various  
75 state-of-the-art reports (see, for example, [13]). Given the importance of cover-zone concrete, this topic still  
76 remains the subject of research and development and new techniques are currently being developed to provide  
77 an improvement over existing technologies. One such emerging technology is electrical impedance tomography  
78 (EIT) which has been extensively used in medical, geophysical and industrial process fields. Karhunen et al  
79 [14] were amongst the first to employ this investigative technique to detect conductive/non-conductive objects  
80 embedded inside cylindrical concrete specimens. It was noted that electrical resistance tomography (ERT)  
81 could be further developed as a means of assessing the extent of corrosion of embedded reinforcement in  
82 concrete; for this specific application, Zhang et al [15] proposed the use of high-frequency electrical  
83 measurements to alleviate the likelihood presence of micro-cracking surrounding the reinforcement. The use of  
84 ERT has also been investigated as a means of tracking one- and two-dimensional moisture movement within  
85 cement-paste prisms [16], with the reconstructed images shown to be in a good agreement with those obtained  
86 from neutron radiographic measurements. Building upon this work, Smyl et al [17] used a three-dimensional  
87 ERT system to obtain the movement of moisture in cylindrical mortars with both artificial and real discrete  
88 cracks. Apart from studying moisture movement in cement-based materials, ERT has also been used for crack  
89 detection [see, for example, 18–20] and obtaining the distribution of resistivity within the cover-zone [21].

90 The work in this paper builds upon previous studies on monitoring the response of the concrete cover-zone  
 91 to a cyclic wetting and drying regime [22–24]. An ERT system is developed to allow imaging of water ingress  
 92 into concrete and preliminary findings are presented to show the temporal response of a concrete cylinder  
 93 containing surface damage to wetting action.

94

## 95 **2 Electrical Resistance Tomography (ERT)**

96 ERT is a non-invasive imaging technique whereby the distribution of the electrical conductivity within an object  
 97 is estimated from surface measurements along the boundary of the object. This image reconstruction process is  
 98 referred to as the inverse analysis and requires a forward model. A brief review is provided below.

99

### 100 **2.1 Forward model**

101 The governing partial differential equation to describe the relation between the electrical field in a 3D domain,  
 102  $\Omega$ , and the resulting potential,  $u$ , on the boundary is given in [25], which can be written,

$$103 \quad \nabla \cdot \sigma(x) \nabla u(x) = 0, \quad x \in \Omega \quad (1)$$

104 This equation has an infinite number of solutions and requires boundary information. If  $S$  is the surface where  
 105 electrodes is located, the current flux flowing to/from the  $l_{th}$  electrode is [26]

$$106 \quad I_l = \int_{E_l} \sigma \frac{\partial u(x)}{\partial \bar{n}} dS, \quad S \in \cup_{l=1}^L E_L \quad (2)$$

107 and the current density between the electrodes is zero [26], viz,

$$108 \quad \sigma \frac{\partial u(x)}{\partial \bar{n}} = 0, \quad \partial\Omega \setminus \cup_{l=1}^L E_L \quad (3)$$

109 In these equations,  $\partial\Omega$  is domain boundary,  $\sigma$  is the electrical conductivity,  $u$  is the electrical potential,  $\bar{n}$  is the  
 110 outward unit normal vector, and  $E_l$  is  $l_{th}$  electrode. The value of potential on the  $l_{th}$  electrode,  $V_l$ , is equal to the  
 111 sum of the potential on the boundary area which is in contact with the electrode,  $u$ , and the potential drop  
 112 resulting from the contact impedance,  $z_l$  [26],

$$113 \quad V_l = u(x) + z_l \sigma \frac{\partial u(x)}{\partial \bar{n}}, \quad x \in E_L, l = 1, \dots, L \quad (4)$$

114 It has been shown that these equations have a unique solution when the current conservation law is fulfilled,

$$115 \quad \sum_{l=1}^L I_l = 0 \quad (5)$$

116 and the ground is equal to the sum of boundary potentials,

$$117 \quad \sum_{l=1}^L V_l = 0 \quad (6)$$

118 By discretizing the 3D domain into small elements, Equations (1) to (6) can be solved numerically in the form  
 119 of a linear equation, as given by [25]

$$120 \quad \begin{bmatrix} A_c & A_e \\ A_e^T & A_d \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} u_n \\ V_l \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ I_l \end{bmatrix} \quad (7)$$

121 where  $A$  is the global admittance matrix,  $u_n$  is the nodal potential distribution,  $V_l$  and  $I_l$  are, respectively, the  
 122 boundary electrode potentials and currents. The local admittance matrix is then given by,

$$123 \quad A_c(i, j) = \int_{\Omega} \sigma \nabla \phi_i \cdot \nabla \phi_j d\Omega + \sum_{l=1}^L \frac{1}{z_l} \int_{E_l} \phi_i \phi_j dS \quad (8)$$

124 where  $\phi_i$  and  $\phi_j$  are the element shape functions and  $i, j = 1, \dots, n$ . The first term considers the electrical field  
 125 in each element, while the second term considers the contribution of contact impedance underneath the  
 126 electrodes which forms the other two compartments of the  $A$  matrix [25],

$$127 \quad A_e(i, j) = \frac{1}{(z_l)_j} \int_{E_l} \phi_i dS \quad (9)$$

$$128 \quad A_d(i, l) = \begin{cases} |E_l| z_l^{-1} & \text{for } i = l \\ 0 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad (10)$$

129 where  $|E_l|$  denotes the surface area of  $l^{\text{th}}$  electrode.

130

## 131 2.2 Inverse analysis

132 The purpose of an inverse analysis, or image reconstruction, is to obtain the conductivity distribution,  $\sigma$ , within  
 133 the medium from surface potential measurements,  $V$ . It is a highly ill-posed problem, implying that, from a  
 134 given set of data, there are many possible solutions and they are sensitive to measurement noise. The most  
 135 commonly used image reconstruction algorithms are *difference-imaging* and *absolute-imaging* [27]. In the  
 136 *difference-imaging* method, the temporal change in response is reconstructed based on the difference between  
 137 two sets of data, with the first serving as the reference. This imaging technique is more tolerant to measurement  
 138 noise and experiment errors such as and variations in electrode dimension and position. However, this  
 139 technique can only provide qualitative reconstruction. *Absolute-imaging*, on the other hand, can provide a  
 140 quantitative reconstruction, but is more expensive computationally and more sensitive to experiment errors.  
 141 While *absolute-imaging* requires only one set of measurement data, it also needs an estimate of the value of  
 142 contact impedance and the precise position of the electrodes.

143 Numerous inverse analysis algorithms have been developed and one of the most commonly used algorithms  
 144 is the one-step linear Gauss-Newton method [27]. In this approach, the relation between boundary  
 145 measurements,  $V_m$ , and internal conductivity,  $\sigma$ , is given by

146 
$$V_m = J\sigma + n \quad (11)$$

147 where  $J$  is the Jacobian matrix and  $n$  is the measurement noise (uncorrelated white Gaussian) [27]. The  
 148 Jacobian matrix can be computed numerically based on the type and number of elements in the finite element  
 149 model, current injection patterns and electrode models. Adler and Guardo [27] demonstrated that by employing  
 150 the regularized linear inverse analysis, it is possible to relate the potential measurements  $V_m$  to a reconstructed  
 151 image,  $\hat{\sigma}$ , and solve them in one-step analysis

152 
$$\hat{\sigma} = (J^T W J + \lambda^2 R)^{-1} J^T W V_m \quad (12)$$

153 where  $W = (\sigma_n^2 \Sigma_n)^{-1}$ ,  $R = (\sigma_x^2 \Sigma_x)^{-1}$ , and  $\lambda$  is the regularized hyperparameter ( $= \sigma_n / \sigma_x$ ), with  $\sigma_n$  representing  
 154 the average amplitude of measurement noise and  $\sigma_x$  representing the *a priori* amplitude of conductivity change.

155

### 156 **3 Experimental Programme**

#### 157 **3.1 Measurement system**

158 The measurement system used in the current work comprises four main components: an Agilent 4263B LCR  
 159 meter; an HP 34970A multiplexing switch control unit incorporating three 34901A modules; a desktop  
 160 computer (PC) and a sample test cell containing a 16-electrode array (see Figs. 1 and 2). Communication with  
 161 the measurement and multiplexing instruments was established across a GPIB system, which was accessed by  
 162 the PC via an Agilent 82357A USB/GPIB interface using Keysight IO Library Suite software.

163 In order to manage the overall running of the measurement system, a fully automated data acquisition and  
 164 control system was developed using LabView. This system facilitates the injection of current and subsequent  
 165 potential measurements at repeated time interval, allowing virtually continuous monitoring of  
 166 processes/variations in the material under test. In the present study, both injection and measurement protocols  
 167 were set following the adjacent pattern [28], which was chosen for its simplicity. One measurement cycle  
 168 typically involved 16 current injections and 13 potential readings for each current injection, thereby resulting in  
 169 a total of 208 readings. Each measurement cycle took approximately 35 seconds to complete. To facilitate ERT  
 170 measurements, the 4263B LCR meter was used in 4-point mode, with the current generated at the input  
 171 terminals by a constant voltage of 350mV rms operating at a frequency of 1kHz, and with the potential  
 172 monitored separately at the sense terminals. It provided an output value of resistance computed automatically  
 173 from the injected current and measured potential.

174 The test cell was a 5mm thick cylindrical PVC mould, with an internal diameter of 154mm and a height of  
175 150mm (see Fig. 3(a)). The mould was glued to a square 5mm thick PVC base-plate of edge length of 180mm.  
176 At the mid height of the mould, 16 equally spaced 2mm-diameter stainless steel pins (Grade 316) were inserted  
177 through the vertical wall of the mould to an inner penetration depth of 5mm, with each pin protruded 8mm from  
178 the external surface to facilitate alligator clip connection. This cell, hereafter referred to as the water cell, was  
179 used to perform two trial tests described in more detail in Section 3.4. The same cell was then used to monitor  
180 moisture ingress in concrete, but with a 60mm diameter PVC pipe added to the centre of the base-plate, in order  
181 to form a centre hole into the sample (discussed below), referred hereafter to as the concrete cell.

182

### 183 **3.2 Materials and sample preparation**

184 The mix proportions used in the experimental program are presented in Table 1. The mix had a water/cement  
185 (w/c) ratio of 0.7 and used CEM I 52.5N cement clinker to EN197-1 [29] as the binder. The oxide composition  
186 of the cement is presented in Table 2. A graded crushed granite coarse aggregate ( $\leq 10\text{mm}$ ), fine aggregate  
187 ( $< 4\text{mm}$ ) and tap water were used. The coarse and fine aggregates were thoroughly washed prior to use to  
188 remove any silt and clay, and conditioned to a saturated, surface-dry state. A hollow cylinder (i.e. the PVC pipe  
189 noted above) was cast into the mould shown in Fig. 3(b), together with three 100mm cubes for compressive  
190 strength tests.

191 During fabrication, fine aggregate, cement, and water were initially mixed in a 10-litre Hobart planetary  
192 mixer for 2 min. The coarse aggregate was then added into the mixing bowl and mixed manually for a further 5  
193 min. The fresh concrete was then cast into the PVC mould and compacted on a vibrating table. Immediately  
194 after compacting, the top surface of the specimen was covered with plastic sheeting to prevent evaporation. The  
195 plastic sheeting was removed after 24h and the specimen was then submerged in water in a controlled laboratory  
196 environment ( $20\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ ) for a further 27 days; after this time, the inner PVC pipe was removed and the top and  
197 bottom surfaces were then sealed with two coats of an epoxy-based paint to facilitate one dimensional drying  
198 and wetting. The specimen was then left in the laboratory ( $55\pm 5\%$  RH) for 3 months, in order to allow the  
199 specimen to dry naturally from the centre hole. It was noticed that part of the internal wall of the centre hole  
200 sustained a certain degree of surface damage during the PVC-tube removal process, as indicated by the rather  
201 rough and uneven surface (see Fig. 3(c)) observed primarily between electrode positions 2 and 5 (see Fig. 1).



202 In order to obtain an indication of the extent of the damage, Fig. 4 presents the resistivity of the concrete,  $\rho$   
203 ( $\Omega\text{m}$ ), for each electrode pair after the specimen being left in the laboratory environment for 3 months. The  
204 resistivity was obtained from the measured electrical resistance of the concrete,  $R$  ( $\Omega$ ), and a calibration factor  
205 which was first determined by electrical measurements on solutions of known resistivity placed within the test-  
206 cell shown in Fig. 3(a) prior to casting. As surface defects could be expected to alter the drying processes, this  
207 would have the effect of changing the level of pore saturation and thereby altering the resistivity of the concrete  
208 in this region. Considering Fig. 4, it is evident that the average resistivity values between electrodes 1 and 6 are  
209 approximately 25% higher than those of the remaining part of the specimen, indicating that the concrete in that  
210 region is in a drier state than the remaining part of the specimen.

211

### 212 3.3 Wetting protocol and testing regime

213 The wetting process was started by filling the centre hole of the specimen by tap water ( $\approx 170 \Omega\text{m}$ ). The water  
214 had been stored in a sealed plastic container and placed next to the specimen to ensure that the influence of  
215 temperature during testing was minimal. Electrical measurements were undertaken every 40-sec interval during  
216 the initial one hour after wetting; afterwards, measurements were taken continuously on a 5-min cycle until 20-  
217 hrs.

218

### 219 3.4 Data processing and image reconstruction

220 The image reconstruction was carried out using the open-source EIT image reconstruction software EIDORS  
221 Version 3.8 [30, 31]. Initially, in order to verify and demonstrate the applicability of the measurement system  
222 and data processing procedures, two series of trial tests were firstly carried out using the test cell shown in Fig.  
223 3(a), with tap water ( $\approx 170 \Omega\text{m}$ ) being used as the background medium. The first series of tests investigated the  
224 basic feature of the system in detecting an object placed in the medium at varied positions; for this purpose, a  
225 48mm PVC pipe was placed in two different locations (in front of electrodes 1 and 9). The second series of  
226 tests was carried out using PVC pipes of different diameters (48mm, 64mm and 88mm) placed centrally in the  
227 test cell, which was carried out to simulate the radial, outward movement of water in the main experiment and  
228 discussed below.

229 To perform an ERT analysis, the basic 2D circular model template – the ‘mk\_common\_model’ – was used,  
230 employing 1,600 first-order triangular elements and complete electrode model (2 nodes per electrodes); no

231 attempt was made to model the actual geometry of the pins used in the current study. An inverse analysis was  
232 then performed using the basic ‘inv\_solve’ function, with the option being set to the *difference-imaging*.  
233 Default parameters were used, including the 1<sup>st</sup> order for the forward calculation and matrix computation, the  
234 basic GN one-step difference solver with Laplace prior [27] and a default hyperparameter value of 0.03. The  
235 measured values obtained from the water (without any object) was used as the reference data for subsequent  
236 image reconstruction.

237 In the present study, the resistance values obtained from the measurements described in Section 3.1 were fed  
238 directly into the software in the place of raw potential measurement data. This is to accommodate the fact that  
239 the injected current is produced by a fixed voltage source and therefore will vary with differing material  
240 conductivity properties. In this instance, the computed resistance values can be considered as a scaled replica of  
241 the potential values which would be obtained from by a system employing a constant current source.

242 For the analysis of the main experiment (the hollow cylindrical specimen), it was considered appropriate to  
243 treat the specimen as a two-dimensional object, provided that there was only one layer of electrodes in the test  
244 cell. The same analysis parameters to those employed in the trial analysis were used, with the data obtained just  
245 prior to wetting being used as the reference data for image reconstruction analysis. In the present study, no  
246 attempts were made to explicitly model the core and to extract the influence of the initial moisture gradient  
247 resulting from the 3-month period of drying.

248

## 249 **4 Results and discussion**

### 250 **4.1 Water cell**

251 Figure 5(a) compares the reconstructed images and the actual position of the 48-mm diameter PVC pipe which  
252 was placed in front of electrode 1 and 9, respectively. It is evident that the actual position of the PVC pipe,  
253 which is indicated by a dashed line, is represented by a region of high resistivity (dark red and red), surrounded  
254 by a less-resistive region (yellow) and a weak development of slightly conductive zone (cyan) – an artefact  
255 feature called ringing/overshoot [32]. Another weak development of smeared artefact could also be seen near  
256 the boundary, as indicated by the region of a less-resistive region (yellow) in front of either electrodes 16, 1 and  
257 2 or electrodes 8, 9 and 10. Despite the development of these artefacts in the background, a reasonable accuracy  
258 is indicated.

259 Figure 5(b) presents the results of further verification for detecting a PVC pipe of different diameters placed  
260 centrally within the test cell, with the actual size of the pipe indicated with a dashed circle. Considering that the

261 boundary of the region of high resistivity (red) representing the actual size of the pipe (as shown previously in  
262 Fig. 5(a)), it is evident from this Figure that the adopted technique, whilst the sensitivity at the centre can be  
263 expected at the lowest [33, 34], is still capable of detecting the change in pipe diameter. Again, reasonable  
264 accuracy is indicated, although the technique tends to overestimate the size of the smallest pipe (48mm) and  
265 underestimate the size of the largest pipe (88mm). It is also evident that the resistance along the boundary  
266 region decreases, particularly when the 88mm PVC pipe is used. This is again a 'ringing' reconstruction artefact  
267 and represents the limitation of the current system, provided that the same water was used as the background  
268 medium.

269

## 270 4.2 Concrete cell

### 271 4.2.1 General electrical response

272 The electrical response of the concrete is firstly presented to assist interpretation the results obtained from the  
273 tomography measurements. The change in *normalised* resistivity over the initial 20-hr period of absorption is  
274 presented in Fig. 6, with only data from two adjacent pairs of electrodes being plotted for illustrative purposes.  
275 The normalised resistance is defined as the ratio  $R_t/R_0$ , where  $R_t$  is the resistance at time,  $t$ , and  $R_0$  is the  
276 resistance just before the water being poured into the centre hole. For clarity, the values obtained from the right-  
277 half side of the specimen are presented in Fig. 6(a), whereas those obtained from the left-half side are presented  
278 in Fig. 6(b).

279 It is evident from these Figures that as water is absorbed into the concrete, normalised resistivity values  
280 display a general decrease with time, with the concrete close to the inner surface defect (between electrodes 2  
281 and 6) undergoing more significant reductions. Consider, for example, readings obtained from electrodes 4-5 in  
282 which  $N_t$  remains constant until about 1 hour; at 4-hrs,  $N_t$  has reduced to 0.9; 0.75 at 8-hrs; 0.62 at 12-hrs; ~0.55  
283 at 16-hrs; and ~0.5 at 20-hrs. Electrodes 8-9, on the other hand, display a detectable increase in resistance  
284 before decreasing to the initial value before wetting at about 3.5-hrs; at 8-hrs,  $N_t$  has decreased to 0.9; 0.8 at 12-  
285 hrs; ~0.7 at 16-hrs and ~0.68 at 20-hrs. Similarly, electrodes 9-10 display a slight increase in resistance (up to  
286 3%) before decreasing to the initial value before wetting at ~5.5-hrs; at 8-hrs, however,  $N_t$  has only decreased to  
287 0.95; 0.87 at 12-hrs; ~0.8 at 16-hrs; and 0.72 at 20-hrs. The increase in resistance noted above could be due to  
288 the fact that as the water moves into the partially saturated concrete, it *pushes* air into the pore system thereby  
289 causing a transitory increase in resistance [35, 36].

290

291 *4.2.2 Tomography results*

292 Figure 7 displays the spatial distribution of electrical resistance within the hollow concrete cylinder over the 20-  
293 hrs after gauging, with all images reconstructed based upon the reference image which was processed from the  
294 measurements just prior to wetting. For illustrative purpose, the actual diameter of the hole (60mm) is indicated  
295 by a dotted circle, with two other dashed circles added to indicate a depth of 10mm and 20mm from the exposed  
296 (internal) working surface. It is evident from this Figure that the water in the central cavity is represented with a  
297 region of low resistivity (blue).

298  
299 As the water permeates through the concrete, a traceable decrease in resistivity should follow the water front  
300 and the reconstructed images over time would, therefore, depict a blue area of low resistivity gradually  
301 expanding outwards. Examination of the images presented in Figure 7 reveals that although not that obvious,  
302 there is a general progressive enlargement of the blue region with time, particularly over the initial 4-hrs  
303 absorption. The enlargement in diameter implies that the bulk resistivity of the concrete within the surface zone  
304 (i.e., ~20mm from the exposed surface) must be higher than the resistivity of the tap water ( $\approx 170 \Omega\text{m}$ ). Given  
305 that the bulk resistivity of the concrete measured from the outer circumferential surface is within the range 53–  
306 88  $\Omega\text{m}$  (see Fig. 4), which is lower than the tap water, this would indicate the presence of a moisture gradient  
307 through the concrete. This occurred as the PVC mould was left in place over the entire period of drying prior to  
308 the absorption test. This feature is well-documented and has been observed in the cover-zone of concrete when  
309 subjected to drying [22, 23, 35, 36]. The slight enlargement in diameter over the initial 4-hrs is not entirely  
310 unexpected as the ingress is primarily driven by the moisture gradient.

311  
312 The influence of drying on water ingress can also be seen from the initial wetting period. During the initial 10-  
313 min absorption, for example, it is evident from Fig. 7 that the centre region increases in size at a faster rate than  
314 the remainder of the test period which reflects the influence of capillary suction forces resulting from the  
315 extended period of drying. The enlargement is more prominent along the directions indicated by arrows due to  
316 the presence of the damage to the internal wall of the core region, indicating the preferential movement of water  
317 into the inner damaged surface region.

318  
319 With reference to Fig. 7, it is apparent that the progressive enlargement of the core region is also accompanied  
320 by a gradual increase in resistance along the sample boundary, as evidenced by the slight yellow tint which then

321 gradually turns to darker yellow. This increase in resistance may be a measurement artefact (ringing effect),  
322 provided that the normalized resistance displayed an overall decrease in values, although as discussed in section  
323 4.2.1 above, the yellow tint ring may correspond to the slight increase in resistance resulting from the air being  
324 pushed into the pore system during the initial few hours of wetting (see Fig. 6(b)). Other supporting evidence  
325 from the measurement artefact can be obtained from Fig. 5(b) highlighting that the 'ringing' effect becomes  
326 more pronounced as the pipe diameter increases.

327

328 Finally, it is interesting to note from Fig. 7 that the increase in resistance between electrodes 2 and 6 appears to  
329 cease after approximately 8-hrs absorption. This would, once again, reflect the preferential movement of water  
330 into the inner damaged surface region, causing an increase in the degree of pore saturation and thereby  
331 decreasing the bulk resistance of the concrete (see the reconstructed images at the remainder of the test period).  
332 At 12-hrs, it is evident that the concrete between electrodes 2 and 5 was, indeed, less resistive than the  
333 remaining part of the concrete, as indicated by the white and light blue contours. At 20-hrs, it is apparent that  
334 this region has increased in size, extending further in the counter-clockwise direction to electrode 16 and in the  
335 clockwise direction to electrode 7, which all in agreement with the relatively lower resistance values obtained  
336 from direct 4-pt measurements (see Fig. 6). It is observed that another less-resistive region begins to form  
337 between electrodes 11 and 12 toward the end of the test period.

338

### 339 **5. Concluding remarks**

340 A semi-automated ERT system has been developed that allows automatic current injection and resulting  
341 potential measurements at specific time intervals, with image reconstruction being manually performed using  
342 the open-source EIT software EIDORS. As an initial study, the system was used to monitor the ingress of water  
343 in a hollow cylindrical specimen experiencing surface damage. The reconstructed images obtained from the  
344 system were compared with data obtained from direct 4-pt measurements, in order to provide supporting  
345 information. The following general conclusions can be drawn from the work presented:

346 1. It has been shown that the system was capable of providing a reasonable visual representation of non-  
347 conductive objects of different diameters placed at varying locations within a cylindrical cell, with tap  
348 water being used as the background medium.

349 2. The system developed is shown to be able to provide the spatial distribution of moisture within  
350 concrete. The results indicate that the wetting-front moves more rapidly into the concrete during the

351 initial period of wetting, with the rate of ingress varying according to the quality of the exposed  
352 surface.

353 3. The results indicate that there was a preferential movement of water into the damaged inner surface  
354 region, thereby causing a moisture gradient to develop in the concrete.

355

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**Captions for Tables**

- Table 1** Concrete mix used in experimental program
- Table 2** Oxide analysis of cement

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**Table 1** Concrete mix used in experimental program

w/c	CEM I kg/m <sup>3</sup>	Coarse kg/m <sup>3</sup>	Fine kg/m <sup>3</sup>	F <sub>28</sub> MPa
0.7	244	1184	789	21.3

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Note: F<sub>28</sub> is the 28-day compressive strength measured from 100mm cubes

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**Table 2:** Oxide analysis of cement

By weight %	CEM I
SiO <sub>2</sub>	19.67
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	4.84
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	3.17
CaO	62.58
MgO	2.22
K <sub>2</sub> O	0.55
Na <sub>2</sub> O	0.17

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**Captions for Figures**

- Fig. 1** Schematic diagram of the measurement system.
- Fig. 2** Hardware for the EIT measurements and test specimen.
- Fig. 3** Test cell (a) without and (b) with the centre pipe; and (c) close-up on the inner circumferential surface of the test specimen after demoulding. Rough and uneven surface texture was evident primarily between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> electrodes.
- Fig. 4** Resistivity variation along the outer circumferential surface after 3-month drying in the laboratory environment ( $20\pm 2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ,  $55\pm 5\%$  RH).
- Fig. 5** Reconstructed images of difference sizes of PVC pipe placed at different positions in the test cell: (a) a 48-mm PVC pipe positioned in front of electrode 1 and 9; (b) a 48-mm, 64-mm and 88-mm pipe positioned at the centre of the cell. The actual position of the PVC pipe is denoted with a dashed line. The colour bar is provided, with dark red representing a significant relative increase in resistance, white representing no relative change, and dark blue representing a significant relative decrease in resistance.
- Fig. 6** Normalized resistance during the initial 20-hours, with measurements taken from two adjacent pairs of electrodes along the outer circumferential surface: (a) data obtained from the right-half side of the specimen (between pins 1 and 9, in clockwise direction); and (b) data from the other half of the specimen.
- Fig. 7** Reconstructed images during absorption. These images show the preferential movement of water into the damaged inner surface region.

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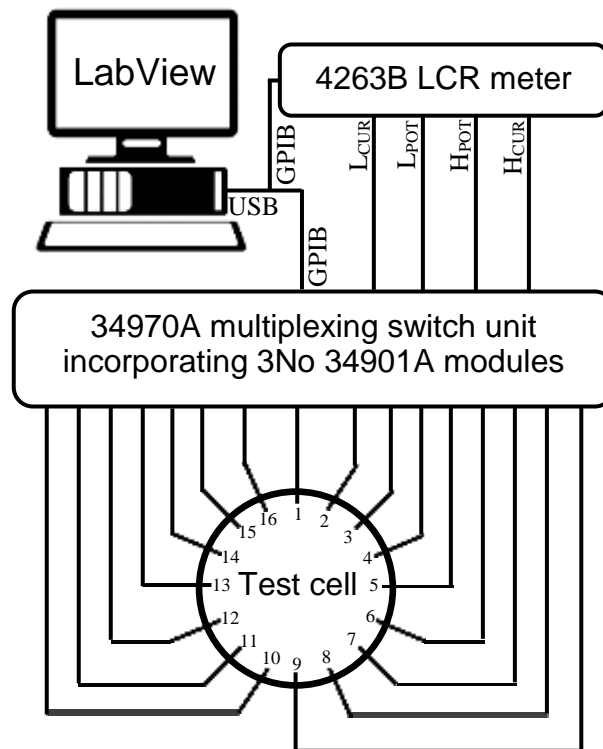
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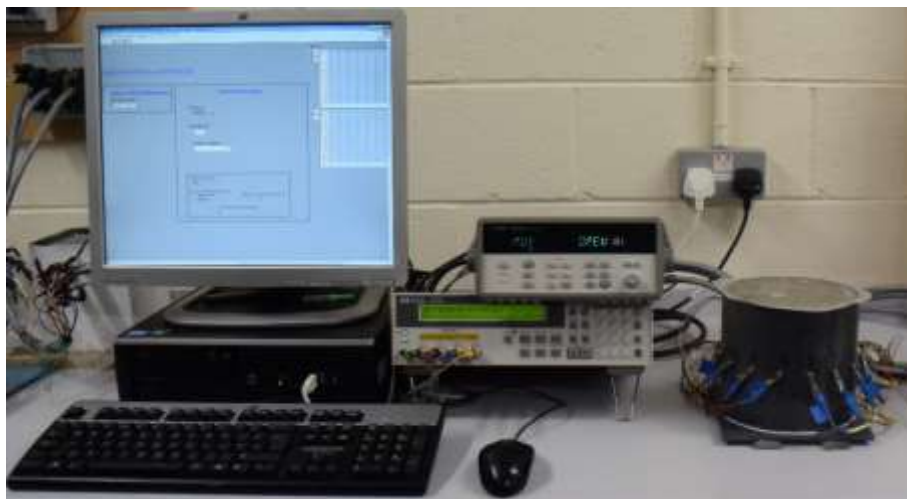


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**Fig. 1** Schematic diagram of the measurement system.

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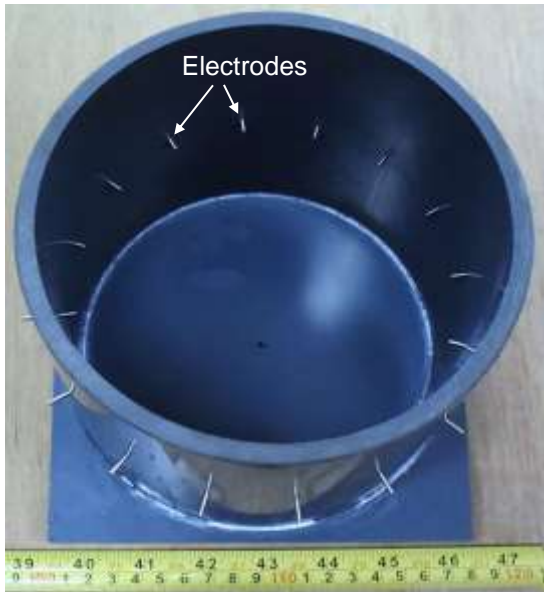
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**Fig. 2** Hardware for the EIT measurements and test specimen.

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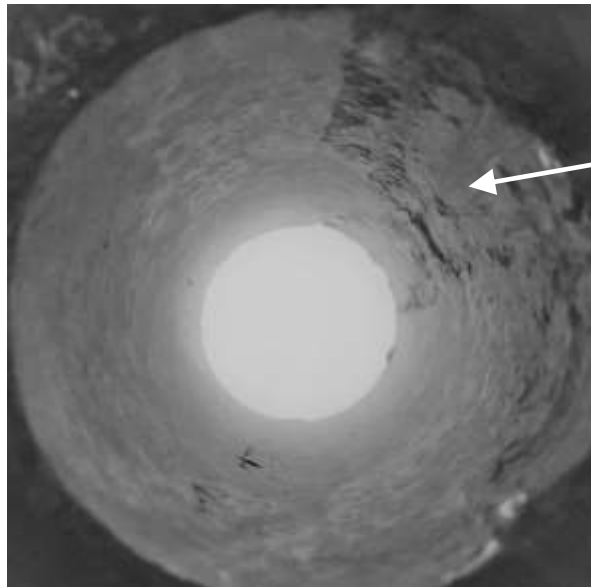
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(a)



(b)



Rough/uneven  
surface texture on  
inside surface of  
cylinder

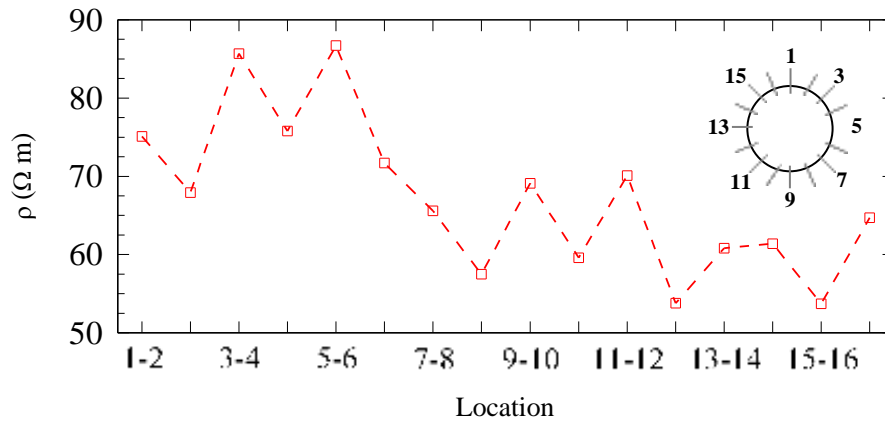
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(c)

562 **Fig. 3** Test cell (a) without and (b) with the centre pipe; and (c) close-up on the inner circumferential surface of  
563 the test specimen after demoulding. Rough and uneven surface texture was evident primarily between 2<sup>nd</sup> and  
564 5<sup>th</sup> electrodes.

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567 **Fig. 4** Resistivity variation along the outer circumferential surface after 3-month drying in the laboratory  
 568 environment ( $20 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ ,  $55 \pm 5\%$  RH).

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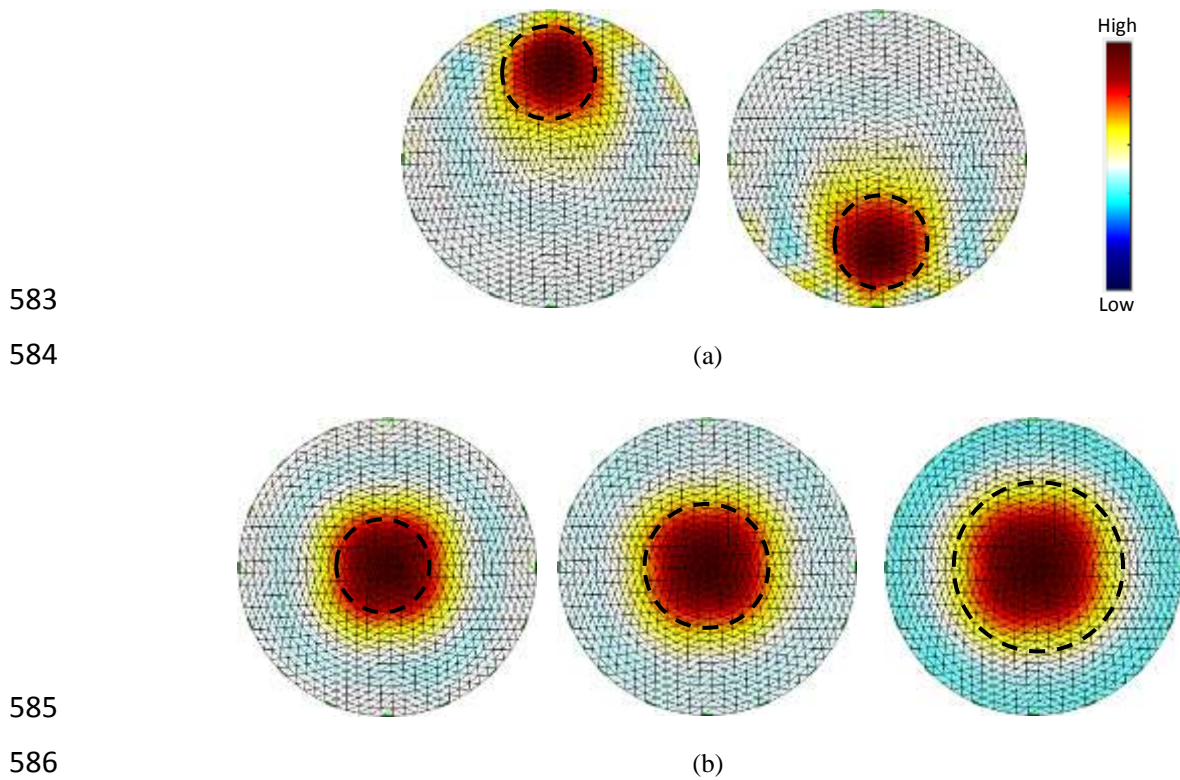
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587 **Fig. 5** Reconstructed images of difference sizes of PVC pipe placed at different positions in the test cell: (a) a  
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591 change, and dark blue representing a significant relative decrease in resistance.

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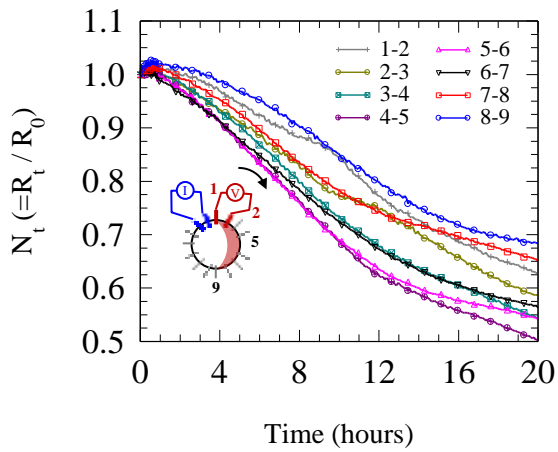
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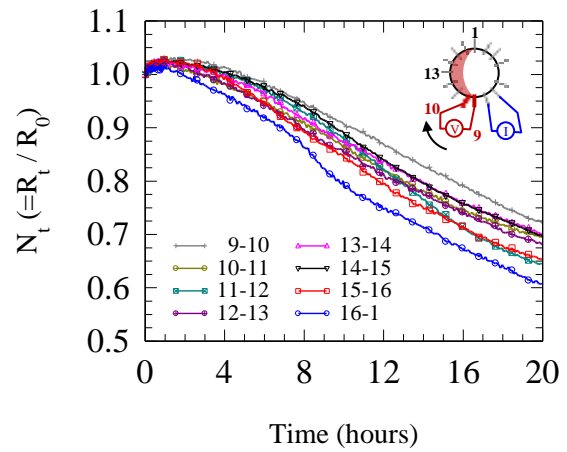
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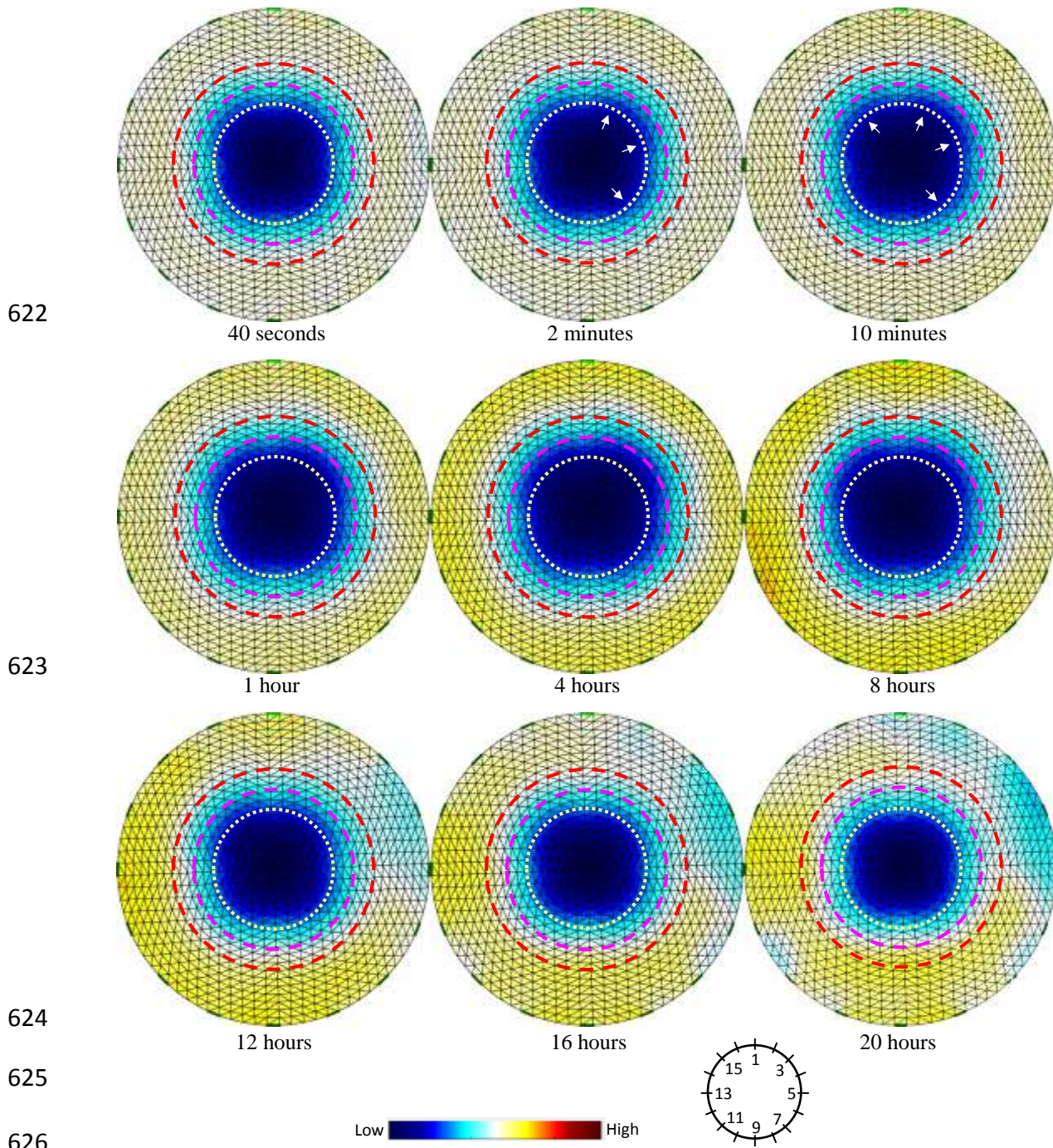


(a)



(b)

**Fig. 6** Normalized resistance during the initial 20-hours, with measurements taken from two adjacent pairs of electrodes along the outer circumferential surface: (a) data obtained from the right-half side of the specimen (between pins 1 and 9, in clockwise direction); and (b) data from the other half of the specimen.



627 **Fig. 7** Reconstructed images during absorption. These images show the preferential movement of water into the  
628 damaged inner surface region.