

NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER • NEWS LETTER

To Be or Not To Be – TRAINED AS A HOME INSPECTOR – that is the question!

After a well attended and highly successful Annual Conference and AGM held at Crick, Northants, on May 11th, meetings on particular topics of interest are planned – watch the website for further information.

In the light of eager anticipation of many younger members and countered by the grave reservations of others, a series of debates is planned on the subject of the Home Inspection Report deliberately aimed to provoke maximum interaction of members and participants and to provide 2-3 hours CPD.

Whether you welcome or reject becoming a Home Inspector, a special invitation is extended to all members and other independent surveyors, plus small firms of commercial and residential surveyors, for debate in this all important subject which will radically affect the future of the surveying profession.

INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

Andrew Holmans BSc MRICS	AJH & Associates	HEATHFIELD
Andrew Mills FRICS	Andrew Mills & Company Ltd	SETTLE
Nigel Aubrey BSc (Est Man) FRICS	Nigel L. Aubrey Chartered Surveyor	SWANSEA
John Burley BSc MRICS	Briggs Burley	YORK
I. H. Mann FRICS FAAV	John Coad & Son	HELSTON
Richard Glanville FRICS	Richard Glanville FRICS	EXETER
Bill Haarer FRICS IRRV		
Iain Biddlestone MRICS and Mark Beskeen MRICS	Haarer Goss	EXETER
Jason Williams MRICS and Michael Rees MRICS	Mallard (Wales) Ltd	LLANELLI
Clive J Morley FCIQB FRICS and Michael Owen FRICS	Owen Stratton Ltd	STEVENAGE
Catherine Brassington MRICS	Property Pod	RINGWOOD
Robert Maclachlan BSc FRICS IRRV	R M A Chartered Surveyors	YORK
Mike Redfern FRICS	Redfern Associates Limited	TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Christopher Green FRICS	Robson Walsh (Wessex) Chartered Surveyors	FORDINGBRIDGE
Robert Cohen FRICS	RSC Chartered Surveyors	STOCKPORT
Marcus Godwin BSc FRICS and John Hambly BSc MRICS	Scott Godwin Associates	LONDON SW19
Simon Hanton FRICS		
Victor Alonge MRICS		
Adrian Wimbleton FRICS		
Peter Roberts FRICS and Martin Walburn MRICS	Willmotts Chartered Surveyors	LONDON W6

WANTED:

CHARTERED SURVEYOR

- preferably sole practitioner - to promote membership of ISA to other like-minded Firms. Good communicating skills, enthusiasm for the profession and an interest in developing ISA are important. Professional training will be given. For further details, terms of remuneration and an application form, call Ingrid on

01837 871700

... and finally ... OVERHEARD AT THE AGM ...

“I can still enjoy sex at 67 - I live at 68, so it’s no distance ...”

- and -

“First you forget names, then you forget faces. Next, you forget to pull your zip up and finally you forget to pull it down ...”

- and -

“It’s been said that Home Inspectors will be able to name their salary -

I’m going to call mine Fred!”

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Newsletter



A U T U M N B R I E F I N G

Membership Benefits - Don't miss out

Members of ISA now have direct access not only to all channels of iSurv but also to the BCIS service ‘Rebuild on Line’ which provides up-to-date data for the rebuild costs of domestic property and a neat bit of software which provides a print-out to place in the file or to send to the client. What is more, there is no extra charge - it’s included in your subscription.

You can find out more by visiting www.surveyorsweb.co.uk and logging on to the Members’ Only section.

www.surveyorsweb.co.uk

Roger Wilkey, executive team member and ISA’s internet adviser, continues to improve our website and has introduced a password-operated Members Only ‘secure’ section as a direct means of access to the special benefits which we now offer. You will have been sent the password and access code if your subscription is up-to-date. Guard it carefully and confidentially. Because membership of ISA now offers substantial benefits, the code will change at the end of the subscription year and fresh details will be provided on renewal.

On the other hand, if you have not heard of ‘iSurv’ or ‘Rebuild on Line’, are not particularly interested and think that ISA Council is ‘wasting its time’, let us know - we need input from members and all positive and negative criticism is helpful.

iSurv has recently been improved and upgraded with a direct link to the full on-line version of Red Book, which should improve speed of access. A new RICS Guidance note has been added to the Valuation channel: ‘Building Surveys’ and ‘Inspection of Commercial and Industrial Property’. Bases and purposes of valuation have also been updated and there is additional commentary on ‘Existing Use Value’.

For those who still remain unconvinced about the substantial benefit of iSurv, why not go to the ISA members’ secure site and download a copy of the iSurv manual which provides a “nuts and bolts” guide to the information system

Spreading the word

ISA needs to develop and expand its member base with independent, like-minded Chartered Surveyors. Nevertheless this needs to be a pro-active approach. For the first time, to assist with membership recruitment, ISA Council is seeking about 10 surveyor-members who will participate at ISA’s expense in a training/promotion workshop with the legendary Tom Edge (probably at Leicester University). Recompense for introducing new members who are accepted for membership will be on the basis of a generous commission (see Page 4 for details).

HSV TEMPLATE AND RICS COPYRIGHT LICENCE

Members will be aware that the HSV format has been updated and that practitioners are required to use the revised format from 1st August 2005. ISA has negotiated a special deal with Andrew Dyke for the new updated HSV template and details have already been circulated. Members interested should contact Andrew Dyke directly as advised previously (see website for contact details).

RICS COPYRIGHT LICENCE

Further to our e-mail of 28th September, we have had further negotiations with RICS Books and, if we receive sufficient support from members, we will be able to offer (including admin fees) a corporate licence under the banner of ISA at £95 per office (assuming 50 participants) or £90 per office (if 100 member firms to participate. We would be able to improve the licence cost to £80 per office if 200 offices participate! Members of ISA need to be aware that we no affiliation to Andrew Dyke and we have to repeat that the proposed deal with RICS Books is merely for the copyright licence to use the HSV format. Members who have produced their own format or who use software from other suppliers (e.g. ‘Report Writer’) do not have to purchase Andrew Dyke’s software to benefit from the ISA offer. If you have not yet responded but wish to participate, please reply by e-mail to: mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk or by post to ISA Broadbury, Okehampton, Devon, EX20 4NH - please indicate how many offices you would wish to licence (i.e. how many licences required).

Independent Surveyors Association

October 2005

Your Letters



ISA Leaflets: Willy Dunscombe complains: "May I comment that, as a lively example of one man in sixteen, I find the colours of the leaflets exceedingly dismal. I know that this is a comment on me, and not on the leaflets but, as the problem of what is called "red/green colour blindness" affects so many males, you may feel it preferable in future to have colour proposals vetted by "one of us". (The Germans arranged for such "colour blind" bomb-aimers to be used in the war since, to them, all of the camouflaged buildings stood out as clear rectangular blocks on the ground - a perfect target!)"

Editor's comment: The first edition of the leaflet has now been fully distributed. We have 'taken on board' various constructive criticisms and Council is revising them in the light of members' comments. We never gave a thought to 'colour blindness' - thanks, Willy, for drawing attention to this issue.

A member warns: Name and address withheld: "Do you ever seek advice from the RICS? One of our members did. Not only was the advice wrong, but the RICS then took disciplinary action against him. In spite of the fact that the RICS never denied that their advisor, who is himself a Chartered Surveyor and is still employed by the RICS, gave the wrong advice by telephone, the Professional conduct Panel found our member "guilty" and, effectively, threw the book at him. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED - you should not trust any advice that is provided by the RICS unless it is in writing - you should be so lucky!"

PI & iSurv: Glyn Woodward says: " This is just a short note to thank you for all your hard work in setting up the ISA professional indemnity insurance scheme which I have recently joined. The extra time involved in completing the more detailed proposal form was well worthwhile as I have made a 17% saving on my last year's premium and hope that other members will benefit from similar savings.

The iSurv subscription that you have managed to secure and include within our membership fee is also a major coup and I am sure will be of great benefit to members once they have a chance to navigate around the site and find the wealth of information that is now freely available to them - in particular the Red Book. This, combined with the benefits that we already receive from our membership such as the networking facility, superb value CPD events and a wealth of available technical expertise highlights the value of our membership subscription, particularly when it is compared with the £480-odd paid to the RICS.

I am certainly doing all I can to encourage more surveyors to join our association and hope that other members will continue to do so."

Editor's comment: Oh shucks!

Stop the Rot: Jeremy Hackett of Schofields: "Now that we have all enjoyed our summer breaks - and of course the cricket - it is back to business, so herewith Bulletin No. 30. Please circulate as usual to colleagues, and ex-colleagues who may not otherwise see it, and should any of you be so minded but have not already contributed, we still have to clear the costs of Counsel and Solicitor, so our Treasurer, Edward Reeves, 12 Lupus Street, London SW1V 3DZ, would be pleased to receive any further cheques payable to 'The RICS Stop the Rot Fund' - just another 28 contributions of £25 being required to balance the books."

Editor's comment: Although Jeremy Hackett is not a member of ISA, he is an elected member of RICS Governing Council - His Bulletin No. 30 raises some important points and is reproduced in full on the ISA website as a discussion document.

RICS MEMBERS ACCOUNTS RULES – Minimising your risks

Martin Ramsey of Chartered Accountants Grant Thornton, advises

All businesses should identify potential risks and take steps to minimise their potential impact. As part of this, compliance with the rules of your professional body should be given as much thought as any other risk to your business.

In my dealings with Members of the RICS I have been surprised by the way that many Members feel resentment at being required to comply with the rules governing the management of client money. It is clear that the Rules pose a considerable administrative and hence cost burden to their businesses. However, in return, Members of the Institution gain a high level of professional credibility and trust from the general public, which I believe should be protected.

Below are certain steps that you can take to help ensure that your annual Accountants' Report is clean, and to reduce the risk of issues being identified should your firm be selected for a 'spot check'.

The first thing I would like to suggest may seem a little simplistic and that is **to read the Rules**. I am amazed by the number of partners, proprietors, bookkeepers and accountants that I meet who have clearly not read the rules in detail. The rules relating to Members' accounts actually only span 16 pages and are relatively easily digestible.

Secondly, if you tick the box on your Annual Return to say that you do not hold client money you should think first to be sure that this is the case. There are several common pitfalls:

Payments on account from your clients can qualify as client money and potentially should be retained in a client account. The rule of thumb is that if they are invoiced and non refundable, then the money can be retained in the office account. Whereas if you are asking for amounts in advance of an invoice being raised or the amount is refundable, then a client account should be used

You should avoid receiving **mixed receipts** i.e. a combination of your fee and amounts to be paid on to a third party. Any such amounts should be banked in a client account in the first instance.

Any accounts operated where you are a **joint signatory** with your client should be operated within the rules and will then not qualify as client money. This means putting an agreement in writing with your client which states that the money held in this account is not client money and is not covered by the Clients' Money Protection Scheme.

For those firms that do hold client money I have compiled five of the most common breaches of the Members Accounts Rules, but also picking out breaches that are relatively easily rectifiable.

- i Reconciliations must be prepared for all client bank accounts and client ledgers at least once every calendar month. Most practices reconcile their main client account but often have other less significant accounts containing tenants deposits, legacy balances, sinking funds etc which are overlooked.
- ii All clients for whom client money is to be held should be informed of the details of the client account to be used. If you operate one general client account this may be added to your standard terms of business letter, otherwise a tailored letter will be required.
- iii All client monies must be banked in your client account. Even if you receive one pound of client money along with one hundred pounds of your firms fees, you should first bank the amount in your client account and then transfer out your own funds.
- iv The Rules stipulate who may be a signatory to a client account. Practices often add their bookkeeper, secretary or accountant to the mandate incorrectly. Only **Members, partners** or **directors** of the firm, or **employed qualified accountants** may become signatories without the specific authorisation of the RICS.
- v Finally the Rules do not allow bank charges to be debited from a general client account. You should agree with your bank that any charges are debited directly to your office account - you can then charge these back to the appropriate clients assuming that they are in funds.

I hope these few tips will be of assistance to you in your compliance with the Rules of your governing body - and don't forget to take an hour to have a read of the Rules!

Martin Ramsey in a senior manager at Grant Thornton and one of their sector champions for the surveying profession.