

AND FINALLY

The politically correct Christmas

On the 12th day of the Eurocentrically imposed midwinter festival, my Significant Other in a consenting adult, monogamous relationship gave to me: TWELVE males reclaiming their inner warrior through ritual drumming, ELEVEN pipers piping (plus the 18-member pit orchestra made up of members in good standing of the Musicians Equity Union as called for in their union contract even though they will not be asked to play a note), TEN melanin deprived testosterone-poisoned scions of the patriarchal ruling class system leaping, NINE persons engaged in rhythmic self-expression, EIGHT economically disadvantaged female persons stealing milk products from enslaved Bovine-Americans, SEVEN endangered swans swimming on federally protected wetlands, SIX enslaved Fowl-Americans producing stolen non-human animal products, FIVE golden symbols of culturally sanctioned enforced domestic incarceration, (NOTE: after members of the Animal Liberation Front threatened to throw red paint at my computer, the calling birds, French hens and partridge have been reintroduced to their native habitat. To avoid further Animal-American enslavement, the remaining gift package has been revised.) FOUR hours of recorded whale songs THREE deconstructionist poets TWO Sierra Club calendars printed on recycled processed tree carcasses and ... ONE Spotted Owl activist chained to an old-growth pear tree. Merry Christmas Happy Chanukah. Good Kwanzaa. Blessed Yule. Happy Holidays! (unless otherwise prohibited by law)*

*Unless, of course, you are suffering from Seasonally Affected Disorder (SAD). If this be the case, please substitute this gratuitous call for celebration with suggestion that you have a thoroughly adequate day.



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NEWSLETTER
Christmas 2006



IT'S SILVERSTONE
ISA CONFERENCE 16th MAY 2007



The **International Media Suite** at Silverstone has been reserved for next year's conference, covering a range of topics to suit all tastes and providing good quality CPD with a technical theme.

The cost for the day's 7 ½ hours LLL (CPD) has been held at £95 plus VAT and includes a sit-down buffet lunch.

Make a note for your diary - **Wednesday 16th May** - programme to be issued early in the New Year.

Electrical Installations: Who do you recommend?



Surveyors, Estate Agents and others have been accused of 'elitism' by directing clients to an electrician who is specifically NICEIC-registered, rather than a member of one of the other trade bodies.

Colin Brodie of Paladin Electrical Services has complained to the *Independent Surveyors Association* that ... "there seems to be a great number of misguided individuals who believe that the only organisations that oversee electrical installation work are the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) and the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA).

In fact, there are a number of different organisations that operate 'competent person' schemes in England and Wales, including: BSI, NAPIT and ELECSA. Each of these organisations has to operate to the British Standard for electrical installation work, namely BS7671, as amended.

It would be even more professionally correct for a surveyor to stipulate that a 'Periodic Inspection Report' is issued in the format of BS7671, rather than merely 'an inspection'. This would ensure that the correct assessment is made, rather than just a visual inspection.

ISA has taken up the matter with BSI, and Bill Allen, manager for the Electrical Installers Scheme operated by the British Standards Institute, says ... "I can assure you that the BSI procedures for Kitemark Licensees under the Electrical Installers Scheme are at least as strict as those of the NICEIC, as we have the reputation of the Kitemark as a world wide symbol of quality to protect.

All Kitemark Licensees under this scheme undergo a rigorous initial inspection to gain the Kitemark, and continuing surveillance assessment at a minimum of once per annum to ensure that the required standard of work is being maintained.

The BSI scheme is one of the 5 schemes authorised by the DCLG (formerly ODPM) to allow their members to self certify their work under Part P of the Building Regulations, and I have enclosed two 'government' circulars sent out to local authorities which you will note advise them against the practice of restricting electrical work tendering to members of the NICEIC.....

I would therefore hope that you would be in a position to advise all of your members against the practice of restricting work to those who are NICEIC members."

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 2007 subscription is due - capped at last year's figure of £70.

Just remember we are a members' organisation, operated for the mutual benefit of members on a not-for-profit basis.

Prompt payment of subs is always appreciated, this year even more so with the new Standing Order scheme. It helps us to help you and takes away some of the 'administrative headache' of running the organisation which then allows us more time to concentrate on achieving member-benefits.

SILVERSTONE 2007

Don't forget Silverstone on Wednesday 16th May

- Our annual conference is hugely subsidised by the time and effort given voluntarily by ISA Council Members and represents superb value to those who take a day out of the office.



ISA is delighted to welcome the following New Members who have joined since October 2006

Ben MacIntyre MRICS of Ben MacIntyre Associates Ltd BRACKLEY

Johnathan Peck BSc(Hons) MRICS of Colin White Associates EDENBRIDGE

IN BRIEF:

Referrals

Council Member, Tom Littler, e-mailed mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk to say ...

“Unusually, I have had phone calls from local clients asking for recommendations of Surveyors in Birmingham and Gloucester today.

Rather than simply referring them to the ISA website, I took their details, interrogated the ISA site myself, and rang them back with the details.

Hopefully other members are doing the same, ie. Going that little bit further, for the benefit of all Independent Surveyors.

Perhaps a reminder of how we can all help each other through referrals could be included as an item on the next newsletter”

Editor’s comment: This is really what being a member of ISA is about - promoting independent surveyors to the general public, providing a service and assisting a colleague. Remember also that a referral today often brings in reciprocal business tomorrow.

Estate Agents sell home details to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA)

Members may have seen the *Mail on Sunday’s* article (3 Dec, 2006) notifying the deal between VAO and Rightmove.co.uk. The *Mail* reports that information from the website, which is used by about 8,000 independent estate agents to advertise property, is to be integrated into the new £40m database which will be used by the VOA in the re-valuation for Council Tax.

Rightmove is owned, inter alia by Countrywide, Connells, Halifax Estate Agencies and Royal Sun Alliance.

Although the information on the website is publicly available for downloading and can include photographs, floor plans and property descriptions, home-owners are said to be shocked by details of their homes being sold to the government.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.nationwide.co.uk/hpi/Default.asp?calculate=true> is an on line calculator to find out how the value of a property has changed.

<http://www.advicenow.org.uk/> gives useful free advice on many legal matters.

http://www.royalmail.com/portal/rm/postcodefinder;jsessionid=11KKAVZ0BF4PUFB21GDEQEQUHRAYUQ2K?catId=400145&pageId=pcaf_pc_search&_requestId=3964&gear=postcode will enable you to find a postcode for any address in the UK.

<http://www.getmapping.com> will provide a location plan or aerial view or geographical co-ordinates to enhance a report - and it’s free of charge.



Building Surveys - Do YOU follow the Guidelines?

David Hamilton, ISA’s Director of Standards, recommends members who carry out Building Surveys to download from **isurv** (free of charge to ISA members) the RICS Code of Practice ‘Building Surveys of Residential Property’.

The Guidance Note, published in March 2004, makes three important points: firstly, that it is not meant to be prescriptive, but the surveyor should appreciate the benefit of following a methodical approach; secondly, that when an allegation of professional negligence is made against a surveyor, the Court is likely to take account of any relevant guidance notes published by RICS in deciding whether the surveyor has acted with reasonable competence or not; thirdly, that an RICS member conforming to the practice notes recommended, ought to have at least a partial defence to an allegation of negligence.

David Hamilton comments *“Those of us who regularly advise on negligence claims against surveyors often find that liability would have been reduced or eliminated completely if the Code of Practice had been followed”*.

It could be a useful document to review as 2007 is approached.

BCIS - ‘Rebuild Online’ 2007

All ISA-network surveyors will be aware that BCIS has declined to renew the IST corporate subscription to ‘Rebuild Online’ which means that members will be unable to access the site after 31 December 2006.

We have been able to put together a special deal with BCIS who will offer registered ISA members a discount of £40 from the 2007 single-user rate, making it £150 per office, but access will no longer be available directly via IST.

If you wish to take up the offer, e-mail your request to Ingrid at mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk who will confirm to BCIS that you are part of the scheme and they will then invoice you directly.

From the New Year, for intermittent users of the ‘Rebuild’ cost tables, we may also be able to offer a library-loan facility of the BCIS hard copy.

EPCs by DEAs

Whilst benefits of training as a Home Inspector look less commercially exciting since Yvette Cooper's bombshell last July, the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), which some would argue as being the essence of what lies behind the introduction of HIPs, is here to stay.

Undoubtedly there are opportunities for 'Domestic Energy Assessors' (DEAs). Indeed, any practitioner carrying out surveys at any level, needs seriously to consider becoming accredited.

When the HCR was scrapped as a mandatory part of a Home Information Pack, the word put about was that only those qualified by the HI route would be approved to carry out EPCs. Nevertheless, this proves not to be the case, and anyone who achieves accreditation as a DEA will be able to produce EPCs.

ISA is investigating a special training programme for members via Elmhurst Energy Systems Ltd of Coventry, but cannot arrange a training package at an economic cost until the actual qualifications have been announced by the government.

Dr Gavin Dunn, the Training and Accreditation Manager for Elmhurst, has confirmed to IST that a group deal should become available on better terms than by most other training providers. He says "...Elmhurst Energy Systems Ltd will be launching ready for the June EPC start date the Accreditation Scheme (Licensing body) required to enable DEA/Hi qualified surveyors to produce the EPCs as described in Elmhurst's recent press release. Elmhurst will also be launching DEA and RdSAP training packages in January so that significant numbers will be ready to produce the EPC in June, although the actual qualifications are still not finalised, but three awarding bodies- ABBE, City and Guilds and NAEA are entering the market. This makes it extremely difficult to detail what the required training is and hence the subsequent costs but unlike other training bodies we will not be selling training courses for a qualification that does not yet exist- to take such an approach can only lead to poor value for the customer. However I can tell you that we are looking at ways to fast-track 'existing practitioners' (EP), such as your chartered surveyors, through this process and will include options for both self-study (distance learning) and face to face training. We do know that Assessment will include an examination of background knowledge, as well as, assessment of five EPC surveys in order to complete the qualification and get licensed etc. Elmhurst will also hope to be able to grant credit towards the cost and evidence requirements of the DEA qualification for those candidates who have already completed some training. Currently we believe that the costs are likely to start in the range of £450 to £650 +VAT for existing practitioners, assuming qualifications actually get approved as currently proposed. We would certainly be willing to discuss tailoring a package to your specific needs, including white-labelling and group rates as required."

Before IST arranges venues (Leicester; Newport (Gwent); Exeter and Woking) – we need indications of numbers. If you are interested in training leading to accreditation, please e-mail Ingrid at mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk stating your preferred venue, **by 15th January 07.**

Want to get mucky?

IST is planning a 'hands-on' day at Mike Wye's premises near Shebbear, Devon, to learn about:

- history of materials
- stone and rubble walls
- preparing walls for re-pointing
- rendering; plastering (on solid and lath backgrounds)
- limewash
- repair of cob
- scatterdashing

Good quality CPD (about 6 ½ hours): **Numbers limited to 16.**

COST - £70 (inc VAT) – will include a pub lunch.

Mostly of value to SW practitioners but all are welcome.

E-mail Ingrid at mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk if you are interested.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFER FROM IST

Need an upgrade on your moisture meter?

GE Protimeter is set to raise prices by 10% from early January 2007.

There are several good deals about at present, but IST has negotiated two 'specials' for members:

Protimeter MMS moisture meter kit - top-of-range (diagnostic), which includes the pin-type and non-invasive systems; a thermo-hygrometer (to give accurate relative humidity measurement) and hygrostick, deep wall probes, surface temp. sensor and case, we have arranged a one-off special deal of £444 + VAT including delivery (RRP £545 exc VAT).

Protimeter Surveymaster SM kit for £250 + VAT (inc. delivery) (RRP £317 exc VAT):

- two operation modes to distinguish surface from sub-surface moisture (by radio frequency)
- colour coding 'dry'; 'borderline'; 'damp';
- digital display
- deep-wall probes

Orders to Ingrid by e-mail to mail@surveyorsweb.co.uk on a first-come first-served basis, **until 31st December** while stocks are available.