

The Oxfordshire Construction Training Group

Spring 2016

infocus

infocus Issue No 6

Welcome to the Spring edition of your OCTG 'infocus' Newsletter.

We report on the Group's AGM, held on 11 April, and then elsewhere in this edition you will be transported to the Tower of London, to an award-winning Italian restaurant and to a new £10m facility for an Oxford College.

And there's more! The regular columns include news of significant changes at the CITB plus a round-up of OCTG news in Group Matters.

Enjoy the read!

Runner Tom smashes charity target

Tom Heasley, a Trainee Quantity Surveyor with Kingerlee Limited, not only succeeded in running the London Marathon in April but also smashed his target by raising a fabulous £3,000 for Helen and Douglas House, an Oxford hospice for children and young adults.

Tom ran the marathon as part of the Helen and Douglas House team - his employers' chosen Charity of the Year - and reached the finishing line, tired but exhilarated, in a time of 4 hours 26 minutes.

His ambition was to raise £2,000 for the charity. But, at the time of going to press, more than £2,800 had been collected and further cash donations were set to take the figure to £3,000.



Changes at the top

Paul Ravenhill, Managing Director of S Hutchins & Green Limited, has taken on the OCTG Chairmanship as of the annual general meeting held in early April. Paul,

a Founder Member of the Group, succeeds Tim Fenn, who led our organisation for two years. In addition, Chris Kimber-Nickelson - a Director at Benfield & Loxley (Builders) Limited - was appointed Vice-Chairman to work alongside existing No 2 John Bennett.

Oxford born and bred, Paul Ravenhill graduated from the University of Surrey in Building & Construction Technology and has been a Member of the Chartered Institute of Building for 46 years. In addition, he has been the past Oxford President of the National Federation of Building Trades Employees, and the Southern Region President of the Building Confederation, which included being appointed Head of the Technical and Contracts Committee. Furthermore, he chaired the Committee concentrating on the National Working Rule Agreement and was also the past Chairman of the local Training Group from 1988 to '89. The building company of which Paul is proudly MD mainly works with a wide range of private clients and employs some 16 dedicated multi-disciplined staff.

Chris Kimber-Nickelson joined Benfield & Loxley in 2015 with responsibility for delivering certain projects while also helping the business to develop and overseeing training. He trained as a QS after university and joined the Oxford practice of Sworn King & Partners (now Baqus) before moving on to Northcroft. Prior to joining Benfield & Loxley he was Head of Development

for property company MEPC. Chris has a strong track record in education, healthcare and commercial projects for both public and private sector clients and has, on occasion, lectured at Oxford Brookes University for the Estate Management students. He strongly believes that people are the most valuable asset to a building company and everyone in the industry is responsible for ensuring that they create an environment in which people can succeed, enjoy work and look forward to the challenges and opportunities that present themselves. Chris is also member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.



As for the AGM, and prior to the election of the Management Committee, Group Training Officer David Holbrook brought the Membership up to date with the Group's activities during the previous quarter, including the meeting of CITB targets, plans for future training needs, apprentice training and general workforce development issues.

Treasurer John Roper gave the meeting a full financial appraisal of the year to 31 December 2015. The Group, though a 'not for profit' organisation, realised a small surplus to be reinvested into further training initiatives. In addition, the Group again received a £25,000 bursary from CITB which was to subsidise Members' training needs. Preferred Training Providers also gave an update on trends within the industry and relevant legislation. City of Oxford and Warwickshire Colleges provided an insight into apprentice uptake across the industry.



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Changes at CITB

CITB is changing in order to become more cost-effective and relevant to industry. It currently returns around 84% of the funds received from the industry levy. The target is now 90% which will be achieved through efficiency savings as well as a focus on commissioning training, rather than direct provision.

In the past, some employers have found it difficult to take full advantage of CITB services because they can be slow and hard to access. Moving forward, there will be considerable investment in a new digital platform, so that employers can interact with CITB using online facilities. As a result of these changes, some roles will be phased out and by the end of 2018, CITB's total headcount will be reduced by around 30%. Some front line services have already been reviewed. There have been a large number of field based roles with many different titles including Company Development Adviser, Construction Careers Adviser and

Strategic Partnership Adviser. These have now been replaced by a single new role: CITB Advisor. This role will be focused on a 'one to many' approach rather than face to face visits with each employer. This effectively means working with Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), training groups, federations and training providers to increase awareness of CITB across a wider section of the industry. The CITB Advisor who will be working with the OCTG will be announced shortly. These changes are seen as necessary to reshape and improve CITB so that by the end of 2018, the service will be much more cost effective and in tune with what the industry and its employers want and need. The Apprenticeship side of CITB for now remains unaffected, whilst work carries on to understand what the impact of the 2017 Government Apprenticeship Levy will be. Only employers with a PAYE bill in excess of £3m pa will have to pay this Levy and consultation is currently on-going with affected employers.



Martin Hall, CITB Company Development Adviser – Oxfordshire & West Berkshire. Tel : 07919 174822



Kingerlee takes on major study centre project



Group Founder Member Kingerlee Limited has recently commenced works on a £10m scheme to re-develop the old Masonic building at 333 Banbury Road, Oxford on behalf of D'Overbroeks College. The new Sixth Form Study Centre and Performing Arts Buildings will be constructed to allow the College occupation for the 2017/18 academic year. Demolition of the existing buildings has already taken place and sub-structures works commenced in March. Kingerlee is working alongside its local Design and Build partners TSH Architects, Price and Myers Structural Engineers and Services Consultant Qoda. Located on a site with numerous Tree Preservation Orders and a challenging access, the new bespoke building utilises a piled foundation solution and structural steel/composite frame to accommodate the fast track programme.

The design was developed around the clients' drive for useable and practical teaching space and includes laboratories, offices and teaching rooms, along with the new two-storey Hall incorporating kitchens, offices, open spaces and retractable auditorium seating. The fenestration to the front elevation provides a modern and refreshing image with glazing, composite cladding, pre-cast concrete and high quality brickwork.

A thousand years of history updated by conservation specialists

Ward and Co (Building Conservation) Ltd recently completed a challenging project for the Historic Royal Palaces to re-house the famous ravens at the Tower of London.



Tradition holds that the presence of the ravens at the Tower will protect the Monarchy - and that should the ravens be lost the Crown will fall and Britain with it.

The work involved the construction of a brand new set of aviaries for the ravens. The previous aviaries had been erected following bomb damage during the last war and were in need of substantial repair and re-interpretation. In order to deliver the project, the JCT Constructing Excellence form of contract was chosen under which teamwork is integral to the project and financial risk is shared.

The architects design was developed by Ward & Co. in partnership with the steel fabricator N H Ricketts, the components were manufactured off site, and after the ground works were complete the new aviaries were installed and then fitted out.

The design chosen by the architects was modern and functional. This allows for greater engagement by the visiting public in the life of the ravens as well as making the work of caring for the ravens more efficient for the Yeoman Warders.

The work was demanding in terms of its location and the, naturally, high expectations of the client in terms of both quality and delivery. In detail, the enclosed spaces for the ravens are covered in mesh and are designed with transparent sliding doors at the rear that allow the birds to wander in and out around the fortress. Perpendicular oak boards and slats are used to divide the cages and create areas where the birds can sleep at night.



Photograph Acknowledgements: Photos from HRP by Richard Lea-Hair and © Historic Royal Palaces Pictures taken at ToL courtesy of © Historic Royal Palaces

Maylarch strikes gold again

Maylarch Environmental Limited has once again received the ARCA Gold Training Award.

This award highlights Asbestos Removal contractors who have, over the past 12 months, trained at least eight individuals (operatives and/or supervisors) achieving a collective score of 92.5% or above.

For Maylarch, this is true recognition of the commitment towards training and the achievement of individuals receiving that training. Equally pleasing for Maylarch, the company now has its first Asbestos Removal

Operative Apprentice. Peter Beach is following the Specialist Apprenticeship Programme delivered by TICA - ACAD. A combination of weeklong training blocks and on-site training is proving to be a positive experience with lots of opportunities to develop new skills and meet apprentices from other organisations.

And, last but by no means least, Maylarch has successfully renewed its HSE Asbestos Removal Licence through the HSE Asbestos

licensing unit. Evidence of staff training and development, along with competency levels, was a key part of the renewal process.



Group Matters ...

- CITB Annual Targets were formalised and agreed at the turn of the year, and we have made excellent progress in achieving/exceeding those for Quarter 1. All the usual headings include Apprentice Training, plus Specialist Trades, CDA support, Construction Ambassadors' promotional activity, Careers events, Group Training Officer one-to-one meetings with Member companies and Training Days organised.
- The CITB's annual £25K Training Group bursary continues to be well-utilised, having achieved significant booking levels already, with just over £16K being allocated up to and including June. All the now common H&S and First Aid topics have been covered, thus being translated into nearly 200 training days so far, spanning some 18 Member companies.
- As a natural follow-on from the success last year's "At the Cutting Edge of JCT Contracts" Course, mid February saw the introduction and delivery of "Getting to Grips with New Engineering Contract 3 (NEC3)" one-day course, which was ably presented by the Coventry-based Construction Study Centre. 13 delegates from across the membership attended, comprising 3 Member companies.
- Plans are in place to deliver a one-day introductory course on BIM (Building Information Modelling) – set for Tuesday 21 June, at The Oxford Thames Four Pillars Hotel, Sandford-on-Thames. Although there is definite interest from Members, this is a 15-place course, so it may well be opened-up to our counterparts in the Thames Valley to maximise the cost/head benefits. SECBE (South East Centre for the Built Environment, Reading) will be our delivery partner.
- Assistance and guidance given to a major civil engineering contractor in Surrey, with a view to establishing its own Independent Training Group in the County.
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) remains unwaveringly committed to finalising the EcoBuilder L2 (Certificate) & L3 (Certificate & Diploma) Qualifications and getting them into the market place identified. Plans also afoot to meet with the CITB at senior level, along with Highbury College, Portsmouth, in order to promote the benefits and map out a strategy for a timely launch. The development of a suite of supporting learning materials is still high on our agenda.
- Oxford College of First Aid continues to make good progress with its range of accredited First Aid courses. The welcome balance of a healthy geographical spread across the County is proving logistically beneficial to interested parties.
- Harris Safety Solutions Limited, Lechlade, has strived to become a useful part of our delivery partnering process and successfully staged a range of Member-dedicated H&S Awareness and Manual Handling courses across the membership. Coincidentally, they also enjoy close practical working relationships with some in the context of H&S Consultancy/Risk Assessment assignments, which is proving highly beneficial.
- There are significant changes steadily taking place throughout the CITB, particularly at Company Development Adviser level, which will undoubtedly affect the way we all work together (please see Martin Hall's 'column' on page 2). The Group will certainly do its best to support this transition and be available to guide Members as they see fit, once everything begins to gather momentum, especially between now and the end of June.
- The first-ever Regional Group Training Officers' meetings were staged in mid January, being hosted by two respective Member companies in Barking (Essex) and Bristol. This allowed an invaluable opportunity to share best practice with other GTOs and learn from one another. As a result, it is hoped that such a forum will become regular on a biannual basis in order to gain full benefit from such relationships and local initiatives.
- Simon Ward was appointed our new main contact for all National Construction College business towards the end of last year. Although based at Kings Norton, SW Birmingham, he is committed to providing the Group with the support needed in both the efficient and cost-effective facilitation of key staff development interventions, especially NVQ related qualifications.
- Trade Assessments Limited, Alresford, Hampshire, has been instrumental in providing reliable guidance on an OSAT approach to achieving a range of practical NVQs encompassing Roofing, Heritage and a selection of other specialist trades, which included the prospect of accessing of possible funding streams via the Skills Funding Agency.
- CITB Structured and Flexible Funds remain in place and are openly available to the Group and Member companies (exclusively for SMEs and micro companies) to apply for and take full advantage of in the context of innovation and 'out of the ordinary' staff development schemes. The Group's Chairman attended an initial promotional Briefing in December to enable a greater understanding of the criteria and a series of phased Bid deadlines, which initially opened on 19 April; applications for the Fund must now be submitted by 16 May, although there will be others throughout the year. Further details may be obtained from our Group Training Officer.
- Quarterly Group General Meetings are planned for 6 July (4 'til 6), 28 September (8.30 'til 10.30) and 7 December (4 'til 6), at the Oxford Thames Four Pillars Hotel. The next Regional (Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Sussex, and Oxfordshire) CITB In-Scope Employer Forum is set for 21 September (9 'til 1), to be held in Basingstoke; in addition, there are plans afoot for an interim meeting in order to acquaint everyone with 'what has changed within the CITB' and further clarification on the new Apprenticeship Levy.



Gimme, Gimme, Gimme a great team for a tight deadline!

Dancing Queens and Super Troupers may have been surplus to requirements on this occasion, but the award-winning Mamma Mia Restaurant in the Summertown suburb of Oxford most definitely needed a company capable of hitting all the right notes shortly before one of their busiest times of the year.

The Name of the Game was to completely refurbish the hugely popular eatery in just one working week with owner Jon Ellse determined not to disappoint diners by remaining closed for any longer than 10 days maximum in the run up to Christmas.

Enter OCTG Members Stuart Barr CDR, who not only embraced the challenging timeline but also came up with their own little Yuletide musical by having six Painters Painting, five Workmen

Singing (sometimes), four Tilers Laying, three Sparkies Wiring, two Plumbers Plumbing and a Great Site Ma-a-na-ger!

With Chris Ellis and his team working around the clock, the restaurant was completely revitalised, inside and out. And it was all done bang on time without compromising standards or attention to detail. No wonder Jon Ellse was delighted with the results. And the restaurateur extraordinaire had one more reason to be thrilled on re-opening day when he learned that both his Oxford Mamma Mias (in Summertown and Jericho) had just been voted 'The Best Italian Restaurant(s) in the South of England' by the National Food Awards.

So, The Winner Takes It All - or, in this case, winners: Mamma Mia and Stuart Barr CDR!



STUART BARR
CONSTRUCTION • DESIGN • RENOVATION



Vanderbilt enjoy that winning feeling

Vanderbilt Homes Limited prides itself on "going the extra mile" for customers - and now those customers have responded by going an extra mile for the Beaconsfield-based company.

Church View, Vanderbilt's scheme in Tongham, Surrey, was awarded 'Best New Homes Development' at the 2015 Surrey Property Awards. And what makes the

award even more special is that it was voted for by the public, not a panel of judges. "It's a wonderful feeling to know that the effort we put into creating outstanding homes is being recognised and testament to the hard work of all the team here at Vanderbilt Homes," says the understandably delighted OCTG Member Company. "We look forward to defending our title next year."



Is travel time working time?

The law

The Working Time Directive defines 'working time' using threefold criteria as: 'any period during which the worker is:

- working
- at the employer's disposal
- carrying out his activity or duties, in accordance with national laws and/or practice.

In contrast, a 'rest period' is defined by the Directive as 'any period which is not working time'. This legislation was incorporated into UK law through the implementation of the Working Time Regulations.

In June 2015, the Advocate General gave the view that travelling workers who have no fixed or habitual workplace should be able to count the time spent travelling from home to the first customer and from the last customer back to their homes as 'working time' under the Directive. This ruling only applies to mobile workers, a concept that the European Court of

Justice (ECJ) defined as those who have no fixed place of work. It does not apply to office workers and their usual commute to and from home.

So what does this mean in practice for employers?

The implications of this are that in the case of the travel time of mobile workers, this will now need to be accounted for when calculating their weekly working time. This is significant as under the Regulations the maximum working week is restricted to an average 48 hours, with a rest period of 11 consecutive hours required for each 24-hour period. While these restrictions may be lawfully circumvented through an opt-out agreement, this arrangement would still necessitate consent from the relevant employee.

Additionally, while the ruling was concerned with working time rather than remuneration, it is inevitable that there would be a degree of overlap between the two. While the European Court of Justice held the view that employers are free to determine the pay for travel time between employees' homes and customers, the decision may well trigger claims from mobile workers seeking payment for their travel periods. In such a case, the key consideration will be the specific provisions set out in their contract of employment. In the

wake of the ruling, employers may now want to consider the following actions:

- identifying which employees the ruling is likely to apply to (if any)
- confirming whether any such workers would exceed the 48-hour weekly work limit and, if so, whether opt-outs have been and/or could be negotiated
- reviewing the payment provisions in employees' contracts
- considering amendments to the allocation procedure for worker's appointments so that their first and last assignments are in close proximity to their homes and/or
- putting in place monitoring arrangements to ensure that affected employees only utilise their travel time for the purposes of their employment.



If you have any questions or would like any advice, please contact Dan Jenkins on 01722 325 833 or dan.jenkins@hjsolutions.co.uk