



# So long, adieu, auf wiedersehen, goodbye

I am informed, undoubtedly reliably, that this will be the last column that I will write as your president. While you may be delighted at the news, I admit to feeling quite sorrowful about it. A sign of the impending end of a thoroughly enjoyable 18 months of privileged position; most of which you have already heard about through the pages of this journal if not, indeed, via this column. It is probably a good moment, though, to take a stroll, euphemistically, through the memories, and to look at what has been achieved, or not, during that period.

I followed Steve Jackson, of course, into the presidential role. Steve's attention to and involvement with the detail of so much of the institution and its committees was almost legendary. Pretty much my first comment on being installed was that I would be but a pale imitation if I tried to model my role on Steve. I was going for something completely different. I was going to be a more 'partying' president; with a purpose, of course, to promote and uplift the profile of our institution. That was in December 2009.

## Spring awakening

In January, I went to Paris for a conference on the future of surveying in Europe. It was very worthwhile, if a little lonely as I was the only native English speaker there. February brought a small and intimate dinner at ICE for senior representatives of Construction Industry Council member organisations, at which HMG's chief construction adviser Paul Morrell presented his ideas of the way forward. His talk (only) of carbon-efficient housing caused me to bring infrastructure and health and safety into the conversation – to his apparent annoyance. I daresay the name of our institution is well-scored into his memory banks! Less contentiously, I wined and dined at the House of Lords (Association of Building Engineers' prize giving), and the Guildhall (a Chartered Institute of Building dinner).

With the arrival of March came XCES, at Sandown Park, and the privilege of hosting a dinner for many of our members and their guests. Our after dinner speaker was the legendary Tommy Docherty. What a revelation it was to meet him. The reality of his temperate manner and gentlemanly conduct could not have been further from his popular hell-raising image.

About the same time, I led an institution delegation to engage with RICS on the matter of its proposal to introduce a 'chartered civil engineering surveyor' designation. Our early discussions meant that legal action was avoided, and we continue, 12 months on, to develop meaningful dialogue about a way forward which can be beneficial to both organisations.

With the coming of April, and an early Easter, I was off to Hong Kong, travelling on Easter Sunday and Monday. Suffice to say that a very full five days ensued, with joint events with the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, a captains of industry lunch and the ICES Hong Kong AGM and prestigious dinner. Then it was on to Sydney for the FIG congress where a further week of incessant conferencing, dinners and receptions kept me out of trouble and on my toes, and gave the opportunity to elevate recognition of ICES.

## Summer of friends

June brought one of the low points of my presidency, as I attended the funeral of our friend Harry Glennie, a past president and, for a while, our CEO as he lost his fight against cancer.

July brought a number of receptions, including one at the House of Commons, and the annual prize giving event at the Survey School in Worcester. It also saw Monique Dyer, wife of the president of the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors, arrive for a long weekend with my wife, Norma, and me in Somerset. As an example of the peripheral benefits of being a president, that surely is the best – forging real friendships with people who you have met via the presidential duties.



*Pictured top: Ken Hall bids farewell to his role as president. The XCES dinner; one of the institution highlights of last year. Ken chats to ICES fellow John McCondie at the XCES dinner.*

*Pictured top: Ken joins ICES fellow and SURCO director Rory Stanbridge on board the SS Great Britain. The captain's table. Ken and his wife Norma join one of the boat's permanent passengers.*



### Autumn and a second spring

Then came September. A trip to Ireland to visit Dublin Institute of Technology and the Society of Chartered Surveyors. Later in the month, I had the great privilege of hosting our institution dinner aboard SS Great Britain. It was a great evening, without question, and requests for a repeat are still being regularly received!

An invitation to attend the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists' annual dinner necessitated a visit to the Channel Islands in October, and in December I had the honour of joining with the presidents of RICS and ICE, and the chairmen and CEOs of the Construction Industry Council, the Engineering Council, and the Chartered Society of Designers to read the lessons at the annual ICE/RICS carol service in Westminster.

And so it was suddenly this year! A trip to Belfast to attend a meeting of the Construction Industry Group for Northern Ireland was followed, a week later, by attendance at, and a presentation to, a seminar at Derby University. The same week saw me at the Banqueting House in Whitehall.

With February came three functions; lunch at the House of Lords, involvement with an evening lecture on the subject of High Speed 2 and, at the invitation of ICE president Peter Hansford, participation as one of the hosting party at the Engineers Ireland presidential address at ICE.

Unnoticed, the AGM season crept upon us, bringing with it a trip to Stirling, attendance at Scottish Geomatics in Glasgow, a return to Dublin, and joining our ICES South East members at Canary Wharf. There is more yet to come – some of which is exciting stuff – but I'll leave the telling of that to others in the future.

### One day in your life

So, as I step aside for Jason Smith to take the lead, I offer thanks to all those people, both within our own institution and far beyond, who have helped to make my period as your president such an uplifting, pleasant and rewarding time. I must name two; Norma, my wife, without whose patience I could not have done the job, and our CEO, Bill Pryke, for making the president's role smooth and trouble-free.

Finally, I leave you with these thoughts. Our institution is not the institution it was even just a year or two ago. It is very noticeable to me, from the position of president, that we have stepped up a gear. We are genuinely well-respected; no longer, perhaps, the Cinderella of the professional bodies. Not, dare I say, living in the shadow of RICS. We are now seen as the chartered body of choice for surveyors working in civil engineering. That is how we must continue to present ourselves, boldly and proudly!

And if ever members wanted to know why they should get involved with our committees at regional level, or Council of Management, I hope that this resume of a year and a bit in the life of this president will help answer their question. It has taken much of my time, for I've not mentioned our own institution meetings, article writing and presentation preparation. The (before my time) privilege of travelling first-class disappeared due to the current economic situation; and yet the people I have met around the world, places I have been, achievements which I have contributed to, have made the experience an outstanding, fulfilling and fun packed time. Involvement does have its rewards.

*Ken Hall*

PS: I must pass on my congratulations to chair of the ICES Geospatial Engineering Practices Committee and South East region, Eric Zeeven, for completing the London Marathon in a terrific time of 03:06:02. A tremendous achievement for Eric. who runs to raise funds

## Our industry.

The work is tough. The hours are long. But what you do changes how people live and work. At the end of a job you can stand back and admire that solid testament to your skill and effort. And soon after people will begin to use what you have made: to work in, to drive on, to play in, to make a home where they will live out their lives.

## Our cause.

A home. Somewhere which is your place. Perhaps it will contain a family, your possessions, your history, your life. But not everyone has one of these places. Many hundreds of people in the UK today are sleeping rough on the streets, while hundreds of thousands more are living in temporary accommodation. So what more fitting cause could there be for our industry than homelessness?

## Our charity.

CRASH is a practical charity, harnessing the skills, products and goodwill of the building industry to improve hostels, day centres, night shelters, training centres and move-on accommodation, for frontline homelessness agencies who work directly with homeless people. Our patron companies and suppliers demonstrate the construction industry's commitment to a society built on the firmest of foundations – helping our fellow man.

## You.

We are only able to continue this vital work through the generosity of our supporters. If your firm is interested in becoming a CRASH patron company or supplier, you can find out more by phoning us on 020 8742 0717 or visiting our website: [www.crash.org.uk](http://www.crash.org.uk) Thank you.

CRASH is a UK registered charity (no. 1054107) and operates throughout the UK.

