



# Surveying

news



Stephen Liu

## Message from the President

On 29 June 2001, I attended a cocktail reception for the Mentorship scheme organized by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University for the surveying course students. There were about 300 mentors and students attending the reception and the scheme was highly appreciated by the students. I congratulate the Hong Kong Polytechnic University for their commitment to surveying education and the promotion of partnership spirit between the Institute and the academic sector.

I hope that more members will participate in this type of meaningful event and to enroll as mentors to our surveying students.

Members and practitioners have criticised that the average standard of university graduates is getting lower and lower in recent years. However, the universities are holding a different view that the professional training and guidance for new graduates are not enough nor well structured. Both has its own right as they are looking from a different perspective.

The universities are faced with the uncertainty on the quality of secondary school students and the restraints on education funding. The employers are faced with the fierce fee competition and marketing pressure that their attention and resources to the training of young surveyors are reduced. The Institute would like to see more young people qualifying as professional surveyors and to strengthen the image and influence of surveyors in the community. If more of our members were willing to act as mentors to the young student members, it would definitely help in improving the quality of our younger members.

## POSSIBILITY OF ACCEPTING MEMBERS FROM THE MAINLAND

As more members are exploring into the Mainland market for business opportunities, the Institute is also making more frequent contacts and closer liaisons with the Mainland government departments and professional institutes in promoting the surveying practices in the Mainland.

To further enhance our image and influence in the Mainland, we may have to permit and provide opportunities for Mainland students and professionals to become members of the Institute. I understand that there may be concerns from some members in the opening up of the membership to non-Hong

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## EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Surveying encourages article queries and submissions. Article submissions should include both hard (printed) copy and a diskette in Word format. Contributions should reach the Hon. Editor at the office of the Institute before the 10th of each month.

## Information & Contents

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## Advertising

All advertisements and small ads are welcome. SURVEYING is reaching over 5,500 readers. For detailed information and advertising rates, please contact Ms Margaret Yung of the Secretariat office at 2526 3679.

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Kong residents from the Mainland. However, we have to look beyond to the future prospects especially when China gets access into WTO later this year, as it would open a huge market of job opportunities for surveyors. If we do not start doing something now, we may lose our opportunity for such a huge market!

The universities have taken the first step in organizing surveying courses for students and professionals in the Mainland to enroll. The Institute should work together with these universities to expand our memberships there.

## VISIT BY THE SHANGHAI SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING SERVICE CENTRE (上海市科技諮詢服務中心)

A delegation from the Shanghai Science & Technology Consulting Service Centre visited HKIS on 18 June 2001.



## HONG KONG HOUSING SOCIETY'S "QUALITY FIELD PRACTICES" VIDEO SERIES

The Hong Kong Housing Society visited the Institute on 14 June 2001. Mr. Nicholas Yeung, the Director (Projects), and his colleagues made a presentation of their "Quality Field Practices" video series to the General Council.




The Hong Kong Housing Society, with the support from the Hong Kong Construction Association and the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union, will produce a video series on "Quality Field Practices". Their objective is to set a benchmark of good and proper workmanship for all field practices so that all participating contractors and supervisors can have a common understanding of the expected standard. It is also their aim to promote and enhance the quality of building industry through the video series.

The Housing Society has committed considerable resources towards their belief and aims to make the video series covering a wide scope of over 30 different trades and the shooting

of each field practice that needs elaborated study and discussions. At present, they have finished four series, namely "reinforcement fixing", "spatterdash" "joinery" and "timber doors". It is understood that their other series will be progressively available within the next twelve months.

As building technology evolves with time, so should the enhancement of field practices. The Housing Society's quality mission and their commitment to the "Quality Field Practices" video series is undoubtedly a proactive step towards enhancing best practices in the building industry, and I urge members of the Institute to share such mission and aim.

The Housing Society has agreed to provide the completed videos free of charge to interested members of our Institute. Details can be found in the coloured flyer enclosed with this issue of our newsletter. 

## CORRECTION

A few printing errors have been spotted in the article "Putonghua - A brief review (II)", in the June 2001 issue of Surveying. Readers are advised of the following corrections. We apologise to readers for the errors.

- Para (vii) - First line. Pin yin for '期' should be 'qī' not 'qí'. Also, 'nián' for '年'.
- Para (vii) (b) - Last line. Pin yin for '經常' should be 'jīng cháng'.
- Para (viii) - Last but one line. '必須' should be 'bì xū'.
- Para (x) - Last line. '新加坡' should be 'Xīn jiā pō'.

## News from the Divisions

# Building Surveying Division

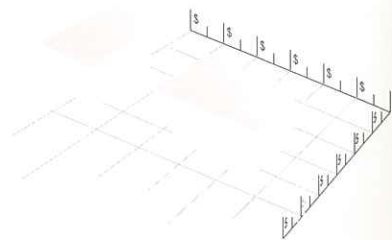


Mr. Kenneth Yun presenting a souvenir to the representative of ICI paint factory

The divisional council had organised 2 CPD visits. There was a site visit to the ICI paint factory in Guangzhou on 9 June, and a site visit to the Integer Project at Tamar Site, Admiralty, will take place on 4 August.

The BS Conference 2001, to be held on 20 October 2001, is in good progress. This year's conference theme is "Managing Social and Cultural Changes - Challenges and Opportunities". Exciting and innovative topics are being arranged. These may include a wide variety of topics covering challenges in the legal, health care, education, elderly care and facilities management arena. Members are welcomed to further suggest topics that would interest the BS Conference Organising Committee, headed by our Divisional Council Chairman, Mr. Richard Cheung. Please remember to mark your diary for the BS Conference. 





# GENERAL PRACTICE DIVISION

Tony Tse, Chairman

## ASSESSMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE (“APC”) REVIEW WORKING GROUP - INTERIM REPORT

As reported earlier and in accordance with the GP Council's decision, an Interim Report was submitted by the Working Group, which was discussed by the GP Council at its meeting on 21 June 2001. The Council endorsed the works and recommendations. Listed below are some of the measures recommended and where appropriate these measures would be implemented in the coming October assessment:-

(1) In determining the result of the written assessment, the overall performance of the candidate should be assessed.

(2) For those candidates who are assessed “failed” by an assessor in respect of the written assessment, the answers would be reviewed by 2 other assessors simultaneously to confirm if a “failed” result is agreeable.

(3) To maintain valuation as a compulsory question, but in setting up the question, its depth and degree of complexity should have regard to the general experience of the candidates and also the time set for answering the questions. A moderating panel will be set up to ensure the questions are “suitable” for the candidates.

(i) Amongst the 3 panel members appointed to assess the candidates' performance in the oral assessment, at least one of the assessors should come from the expertise area as claimed by the candidate.

Apart from the above, three sub-committees would also be formed by the Review Group and their respective functions are as follows:-

### SUB-COMMITTEE 1

This sub-committee will identify in a more comprehensive manner the expectation of the industry and the Institute for a newly qualified GP Surveyor. A survey of the employers and other relevant parties may be conducted.

### SUB-COMMITTEE 2

This sub-committee will investigate whether the existing area of training, and the minimum period required, etc., is still appropriate; and it will review the existing APC Rules and Guides.

### SUB-COMMITTEE 3

This sub-committee will investigate more ways to enhance the quality of the APC candidates. This includes the possibility of introducing a continuous assessment approach whereby a structured programme would be introduced. The training structure may establish a series of milestones over the training period that would need to be achieved by each APC candidate.

It is expected that the sub-committees will complete the assignments and submit reports for the GP Council's consideration in about 6 months. Members who have comments and suggestions are welcomed to contact either the council members or members of the APC Review Group. The contact details of the Review Group members are as follows:-

## APC REVIEW GROUP MEMBERS

Name	Organization	Tel. No.	Fax. No.
1. Mr. Tsang, Rock(Convenor)	Lanbase Surveyors Ltd	2301 1869	2739 1913
1. Mr. Chan, Charles	Chesterton Petty Ltd	2846 9511	2840 0600
3. Mr. Chiu Kam Kuen	DTZ Debenham Tie Leung Ltd	2507 0602	2530 1502
4. Ms. Chiang, Sophia	Lands Dept	2231 3377	2527 6595
5. Mr. Faulkner, David	Insignia Brooke (HK) Ltd	2879 1188	2827 8118
6. Ms. Hastings, B.	University of Hong Kong	2859 2809	2559 9457
7. Mr. Hui, Quincy	Urban Renewal Authority	2588 2103	2827 0176
8. Mr. Lam Ka Fai, Francis	MTRC	2993 2424	2993 7742
9. Mr. Lau Chun Kong	Jones Lang LaSalle	2846 5544	2968 0078
10. Mr. Mak Yiu Man, Daniel	FPD Savills	2842 4493	2530 0756
11. Mr. Poon, Lawrence	City University of HK	2788 9754	2788 9716
12. Mr. Price, Mike	Swire Properties Ltd	2535 1441	2560 0619
13. Mr. Siu, Wilson	Rating & Valuation Dept	2150 8808	2152 0148
14. Mr. Tam Shiu Hong	Dudley Surveyors Ltd	2525 0375	2877 0378
15. Mr. Tsang, C. L., Edwin	C L Tsang & Partners	2573 9555	2834 6779
16. Mr. Wan, David(Junior Organization)	Jones Lang LaSalle	2846 5541	2918 0135
17. Mr. Wan, Tony(Junior Organization)	Jones Lang LaSalle	2846 5518	2968 0078
18. Mr. Wong, K. C., Andrew	HK Polytechnic University	2766 5829	2764 5131
19. Mr. Young, Samuel	FPD Savills	2842 4578	2530 0756
20. Mr. Yuen, Danny	HK Housing Authority	2794 5665	2794 5743

## MEETING WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

As reported last month, Council members of the GP Division met the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation, Mr. Kenneth Pang and the senior staff of the Department on 15 June 2001. Although the meeting was very informal, Council members had been able to exchange views with the Department on the following topics:-

- (i) Availability of rental comparables
- (ii) Inspection of rateable values
- (iii) Other information provided by RVD
- (iv) Research on property supply and demand
- (v) Role of GP Surveyors in relation to RVD

Mr. Pang and his senior staff explained to the Council members the problems being faced by the Department and agreed to follow up with matters relating to the disclosure of rental information in resolving disputes of rateable values. A CPD event relating to rating issues would also be organized. Moreover, it was also agreed that we should keep in contact on a regular basis.

Members who have comments and suggestions that they would like the Council to forward to the Rating and Valuation Department for discussion and consideration are welcome to contact either the Chairman of GPD, Mr. Tony Tse (Tel No.: 2835 6626) or Vice Chairman of GPD, Mr. K. L. Leung (Tel No.: 2908 8819). ☐



# LAND SURVEYING DIVISION

## FIG COMMISSION 7 AND CADASTRE 2014

Reported by Conrad Tang, HKIS Delegate to Commission 7 of FIG

Internationally there is a trend of cadastral reform. In the Hong Kong context, it is a force to reform land registration and the survey and mapping system. In developed countries, established cadastral systems with well-defined processes provide security of private land ownership and underpin the free trading of land. The current technological progress, social and economic changes, globalization, and the increasing interconnection of business relations with their legal and environmental consequences have put a strain on the existing systems. Reforms of cadastral systems are seen around the world.

FIG Commission 7, Cadastre and Land Management, has well noticed

the phenomenon. The annual commission meeting and the international conference of 'Reforming and Benchmarking the Cadastre: Measuring the Success' was held in Gavle, Sweden, between 12-16 June 2001. The study of the trend has resulted in a FIG publication Cadastre 2014. The document Cadastre 2014 is available on the web-site <http://www.swisstopo.ch/fig-wg71/cad2014.htm>.

The next FIG meeting will be the XXII International Congress in Washington, D.C., 19-26 April, 2002. The deadline for submitting the abstract of paper is 21 August, 2001. Please seek more information from the web-site [www.fig2002.com](http://www.fig2002.com).

## 廣州交流參觀團

林力山先生報導

廣州是廣東省的省會，也是中國的南大門，有著二千年的悠久歷史。土地測量組承蒙廣東省測繪學會協助，在五月十七日至五月十九日舉辦了一次廣州交流參觀團，反應非常踴躍，總共吸引了五十九位來自不同組別的會員參與。澳門測繪代表也有派員出席，盛況空前。廣東省測繪學會將是次活動定名為“粵、港、澳測量師學術交流聯誼會”。

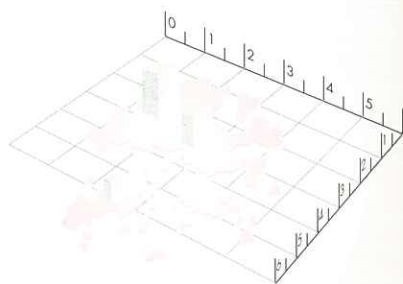
### 五月十七日上午 - 粵、港、澳三方午餐見面會

我們一行五十九人於上午十一時多便到達了在廣州下榻的酒店，位於中山紀念堂側的廣東大廈，並隨即在酒店的餐廳，由廣東省測繪學會秘書長周啟文先生主持，舉行午餐見面會。粵、港、澳三方分別致詞，首先由廣東省測繪學會理事長王衛民先生致歡迎詞，廣東省有關部門亦有領導前來講話，其中包括廣東省國土資源廳副廳長張新民先生及廣東省科學技術協會副主席吳仰偉先生。跟著，我方土地測量組主席黃仲衡先生，及澳門地圖繪制廳廳長譚光文先生致感謝詞，感謝粵方的熱烈接待，深感榮幸。三方互相交換紀念品後，共進午餐。



### 五月十七日下午 - 參觀廣州市城市規劃局

午餐後，由兩位廣東省測繪學會副秘書長，張書欣先生及張泰文先生帶領前往廣州市城市規劃局參觀。首先由廣州市城市規劃局局長施紅平先生，以親切的廣州話歡迎港、澳代表的到來，並簡介廣州市城市規劃局的職能。廣州市城市規劃局是廣州市政府主管城市規劃的行政職能部門，按建設現代化國際大都市的要求，編制城市總體規劃、分區規劃和控制詳細規劃，並加強法制建設和行政執法檢查監督，強化規劃管理及城市勘察測繪行業管理，依法規範其市場行為。



## 城市規劃

接著，施紅平局長的同事詳細報告了廣州總體發展的深化規劃戰略。原來廣州在近十年間（1989-1999），全市總人口由平均 770 萬人急劇增至 905 萬人，國民生產總值絕對值年均也增長了 21.8%，特別是中心城區的高速發展，引致了土地、環境與交通運輸設施的需求急劇擴展。可想而知，廣州的規劃任務是殊不簡單。

對廣州城市土地利用與基礎設施之發展，他們邀請了全國的專家研究怎樣支援城市的持續發展。對目標定位、規模容量、空間佈局、產業發展、交通網絡以及生態建設等方面均提出了思路和對策，並達成了共識，當中包括：

1. 城市空間結構應從單中心向多中心轉變，採取“北控、南拓、西聯、東移”的發展戰略。使廣州從傳統的“雲山珠水”的傳統格局躍升為具有“山、城、田、海”特色的大山大海自然格局。
2. 要優先發展公共交通，重視城市軌道交通建設，強化區域道路與軌道雙快交通體系。
3. 必須加強生態環境的保護與建設，重視北部山區、南部珠江口地區的生態維護以及城市組團間綠化隔離帶的建設，把廣州建設成為山水型生態城市。通過構築區域的“一環兩楔”、建立市域的“三縱四橫”、打通都會區的“生態廊道”，建立城市多層次、多功能、立體化、網路式的生態結構。

他們亦表示廣州是以“繁榮、高效、舒適”為城市發展的目標，在未來 20 年內人口規模將有較大幅度增長。規劃至 2020 年廣州市域總人口控制在 1200 萬人以內。城鎮總人口 830 萬人，其中都會區 600 萬人，花都、從化、南沙、增城片區中心鎮總人口 120 萬，其他建制鎮 110 萬人。

## 交通設施

跟著，施紅平局長的另一同事講解了廣州城市交通建設方案。廣州城市交通規劃的基本原則是：系統性與綜合性相結合，交通運輸與土地利用、生態環境協調，通過交通引導並支援城市空間形態的拓展，加強廣州與周邊地區的聯繫，強化中心城市的影响與地位，並具有前瞻性和適當超前估計。其中最為重要的是都會區以“雙快系統”為基礎的交通模式。為了城市交通建設，會進行了一定程度的拆遷。至於“雙快”交通體系是：

1. 建基於高快速道路的交通系統，如外環路，內環快速路，內外環路七條放射線等。
2. 快速軌道線服務系統，如廣州地鐵線，機場快線等。

### 五月十七日晚上 - 觀賞廣東省老幹部活動中心舞協藝術團表演



晚餐後，由身兼廣東省老幹部活動中心舞協藝術團理事之周啟文秘書長特意安排了一個極盡視聽之娛的文藝晚會供港、

澳代表觀賞。廣東省老幹部活動中心舞協藝術團成立的宗旨是：開展體育舞蹈活動，增強老人身心健康，促進精神文明建設。舞協藝術團的成員來自退休幹部，年齡最大是 81 歲，最小的也有 50 歲。



他們的表現非常精彩，掌聲此起彼落，活力可與年輕人作比較。其中以國際舞、健身舞及老年服裝模特兒表現最令我們津津樂道，完全貫徹了“老有所學、老有所教、老有所為”的思想。我們的前會長梁守肫先生更作了以下的對聯，贈予以示感謝。

山明水秀，地利人和，天垂萬戶福。  
北控東移，西聯南拓，中踞五羊城。

### 五月十八日上午 - 參觀廣東省國土資源信息中心、廣州市國土房管局、廣州市房地產交易中心

#### 廣東省國土資源信息中心

早餐後，前往廣東省國土資源信息中心參觀，由該中心主任曾元武先生接待。廣東省國土資源信息中心的前身是原廣東省國土廳航測大隊。他們表示廣東省國土資源信息中心現在的業務範圍包括：負責本省基礎測繪、地理空間資料的獲取、處理、更新、開發與分發；承擔土地資源和礦產資源利用情況、變化趨勢的動態監測；負責建立、管理省級基礎地理空間資料庫與土地礦產資源資料資料庫；實施“保護耕地”的基本國策等。

他們展示了不同種類的基礎測繪產品及地理資訊系統（GIS）之開發應用，其中包括數位元高程模型〔DEM〕、數位元專題地圖（土地利用）、地鐵盾構施工地表形變監測和耕地保護資訊子系統等。





## 廣州市國土房管局

接著，便前往廣州市國土房管局參觀極具歷史價值的地契檔案，其中包括清朝乾隆至民國期間之地籍紀錄及房屋契約。1921年至今廣州市的房地產產權登記及土地登記檔案亦有完整保存。他們便展示



了一張1930年代的地籍圖，地界址清楚準確顯示，真不禁讚歎我國的測繪技術，早在七八十年前已經很精準了。不談不知，早期我國的土地面積單位是稱做“市井”。另外，跟香港不同，廣州市政府對土地業權是完全保證的。

## 廣州市房地產交易中心

其後我們便來到廣州市房地產交易中心參觀。廣州市房地產交易中心的職能包括辦理二手房屋交易、房地產拍賣審批、土地使用權交易、招標拍賣土地、提供仲介服務〔如發放儲存交易資訊、提供服務場地等〕。他們現在之對外服務專案有諮詢、查冊、閱案、複印及縮微檔案機讀。

廣州市房地產之交易當然亦要繳納交易稅，其中包括印花稅、交易管理費及增值稅。

## 五月十八日下午 - 參觀廣州地鐵線

午餐後，我們步行前往廣州地鐵二號線施工點之一，中山紀念堂工地參觀，廣州地鐵總公司派員實地介紹了施工的特點。及後，周啟文秘書長、張書欣副秘書長更加安排搭乘運作中之地鐵一號線，讓我們一嘗廣州人民經二十年策劃和奮鬥，所建成之心血結晶。

## 五月十八日晚上 - 夜遊珠江

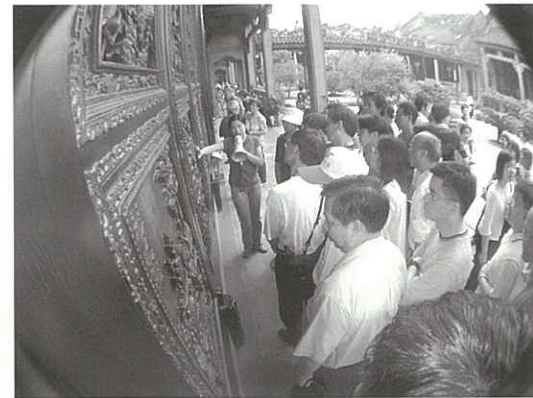
晚餐後，沒有在當天返港的團友自費乘船夜遊珠江，來自不同組別的團員一同喝酒、唱歌和閒談時事局勢，達到互相交流的目標和建立更進一步的友誼。

## 五月十九日全日 - 廣州市一日遊

廣東省測繪學會和當地旅行社特意安排了廣州市一日遊給港、澳代表，讓我們參觀廣州市容及名勝古跡。其中最令我們樂而忘返的景點包括二沙島、雲台花園、陳家祠、黃埔軍校舊址。

## 陳家祠

陳家祠是全國重點文物保護單位，佔地1.5萬平方米，院的東邊有1.7萬多平方米的綠化廣場，被譽為我國南方藝術建築之珠。該祠集廣東民間建築裝飾藝術於一體，全院的門、屏、牆、欄、屋脊等處處均配上精美的各式木雕、石雕、磚雕、灰塑、陶塑、銅塑等藝術品。正中“聚賢堂”的石灣陶塑瓦脊，是我國藝術陶塑之冠；正門和中座的巨屏、神龕花罩，更是木雕中罕見的輝煌巨制。



## 黃埔軍校舊址

黃埔軍校舊址位於黃埔區長洲鎮，是孫中山在中國共產黨和蘇聯的幫助下為培養軍事幹部而創辦，初名為陸軍軍官學校。軍校舊址於抗戰時被炸，1964年復原。在校史陳列室裏，陳列著周恩來當時率東征軍剿陳炯明叛軍的照片、校長蔣介石的照片，以及其他文件實物。1988年1月，國務院決定並公佈將黃埔軍校舊址列為全國重點文物保護單位，廣州市愛國主義教育基地。

## 總結

是次廣州交流參觀團，每位參加者都深深實地體會了這個新舊合璧、中國有數的歷史文化名城。另外，廣東省測繪學會秘書長周啟文先生全程帶領我們到各處參觀，無微不至。受訪的單位，都熱烈歡迎我們，並介紹了廣州最近期城市與測繪的發展。受到如此厚待，我們謹代表香港測量師學會再向廣東省測繪學會致萬二分感激及謝意。☞



# QUANTITY SURVEYING DIVISION

Nelson Cheng, Chairman

## NEW STANDARD METHOD OF MEASUREMENT

After years of hard effort, the final draft of the New Standard Method of Measurement (SMM) has been completed. It is expected the new release will be formally published in a few months time. There will be a trial period of one year to receive comments from the Industry and thereafter, the publication will be updated periodically to take into account changing pricing practice and construction technology. Special thanks to Mr. Ken Goodbourn who has put in a lot of effort in compiling this new SMM.

## THE ICEC WORLD CONGRESS 2002 AND PAQS BOARD MEETING IN MELBOURNE

Subsequent to this year's International Conference in Beijing, next year's event will be the ICEC World Congress to be held in Melbourne between 15-17 April 2001 at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne Hotel. The PAQS annual board meeting will be held there at the same time.

The theme of the Congress is "Environmental & Economic Sustainability - Cost Engineering Down Under". The Congress is designed to attract the leading cost management professionals from around Australia and the world, including cost engineers, cost estimators, project managers, planners, schedulers, value engineers, project controllers, quantity surveyors and educators.

## PAQS 2003 CONGRESS

The Building Surveyors Institute of Japan has agreed to host the 2003 PAQS Congress in Tokyo.

## MAINLAND CHINA VISIT

Our immediate past chairman, Mr. T. T. Cheung together with Dr. Anita Liu and Mr. George Nip representing the HKIS, visited the Shanghai Construction Cost Administration Department (上海市建設工程定額管理總站) and the Shanghai Tendering Office (上海市建設工程招投標管理辦公室) on 5 July. We were advised that an updated version of

the standard price book would be released by the end of the year. Basically, the concept is to adopt more market price instead of pre-determined standard price. This is a big change for the tendering pricing system in China and the Bills of Quantities will establish a more acceptable status. The Tendering Office has also issued an updated practice guide for tendering in Shanghai in April. The guide is available for sale at the Tendering Office.

The team also visited Professor Chen Jianguo of the Tongji University. In collaboration with the University of Hong Kong, the Tongji University is planning to organize a new undergraduate course on cost engineering on top of their MSc course on Real Estate Development and Quantity Surveying. The HKIS QSD will be organising seminars and courses jointly with the Tongji University in the coming future.

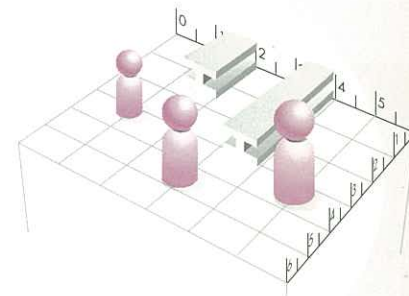
The QSD is planning to visit Xian in September 2001. We will be participating in a technical seminar organised by the CECA during the visit. Our delegation will be giving a few technical papers regarding our QS practice and the market pricing system to the Chinese representatives. The aim is to introduce our system to the Western Provinces so as to establish our status amongst them. We hope we would be playing a role in the Development of the Western Provinces.

## CPD

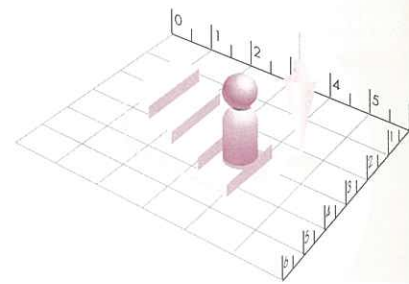
Upcoming CPD events:

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 14 July 2001   | APC Doctor   |
| 25 July 2001   | E-Tendering  |
| 18 August 2001 | Site Visit to the International Financial Center (Hong Kong Station Development) |

Members please mark your diary. ☞







## JUNIOR ORGANIZATION

### A CHALLENGING AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE

Ivan Ng


The advent of the 21st century has created a lot of new challenges and problems for us to cope with. These new challenges and problems appear to be even more complicated and insurmountable. With the achievement in our career path and professional advancement, we will inevitably become a leader of a team, a department or even an association or a society. Do we have sufficient knowledge and skills to be a "leader" in that group?

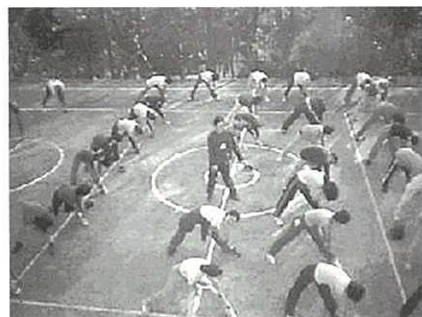
I myself had participated in a leadership training course as one of the participants in 1999 and as one of the organizers in 2000. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the course. Unlike other leadership training courses available in Hong Kong, the Leadership Training Course ("LTC"), which is organized by the non-profit making Leadership Training Association, emphasizes on experiential learning. It is designed to equip you with the practical skills through interactive and experiential learning comprising of various lectures and camps.

LTC is organized each year, usually from October to December. What are so-called "lectures" are indeed lectures through the practical exercises and funny games, which you have probably not tried or seen

before. The titles of the lectures in last year's LTC included "Communication", "Creativity", "Motivation and Life Goal", "Negotiation", "Team Building" and "Mission Impossible", which gave the participants different opportunities to apply what they had learnt from their schools and jobs into the exercises and games, and to review what was correct and to explore ways for further improvement after the exercise.

Besides obtaining the practical experience through training, most importantly of all, was the making of new friends from other circles of life. After the training course, I made a lot of new friends.

Apart from our heavy daily workload and the participation of CPD events as part of our continuous professional training, LTC may be a consideration for you. If you have an interest in obtaining further information on the course, you may visit the website at [www.lta.org.hk](http://www.lta.org.hk). 



Exercising before breakfast during camping



Participants working out for a game for a tower construction

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WHO WERE ELECTED AS HKIS MEMBERS ON 14 JUNE 2001

### FELLOWS (6)

#### GP DIVISION

LAU TAK, FRANCIS

#### QS DIVISION

CHAN SIU HONG, HONBY

CHEUNG SAI ON

JAMIESON, BRETT KERR

LAI YUK FAI, STEPHEN

RIDING, STEPHEN JAMES

### ASSOCIATES (31)

#### BS DIVISION

CHAN KWOK KEUNG, WILLIAM

CHUNG CHI KIN, LEO

HO LIZA YINLY

IP IOK MENG

LUK WAI KEE

WING TAI WAI

YUNG SIU LUN

#### GP DIVISION

CHAN LIT HUNG

CHAN SIU LING

CHENG KA MAN, DANIEL

CHIU KA CHUN

CHIU YAN YAN

DAVIES, WILLIAM JOHN

HO LOK CHIU

KWAN KA WAI

LAM HIU MING

LAM KWAN

LAU CHI KIN

LAU WAI TING

LEE CHI PING

LO TSZ HO

MCLEAN, JAMES EDWARD OLIVER

TAM SIU KEE

TSOI WAI

YEUNG YUEN YUEN

YIP MO CHING, JESSICA

#### LS DIVISION

KONG YUEN HAN

MA KA CHUN

#### QS DIVISION

CHENG HUNG TAT

LEE KA MAN

LUI HON KEI

### RESIGNATIONS (9)

BALDWIN, JULIE M.

BLISS, ANDREW PHILIP

CHEANG HOI FUNG

HAMER, CHRISTOPHER MARK

HO KAM PING

LAU HON CHEONG

SO WAI POON, JOHN

TSANG KWONG SUM, ROBERT

WEST, RICHARD MILNS ROSS

### OBITUARY

Mr. Stephen Edward BAKER, FHKIS, General Practice Division, member since 1992, passed away on 22 May 2001.





# CHARIOTS OF FIRE

## AT 59, MR. NICHOLAS BROOKE HAS NOT LET UP HIS PACE IN MARATHONS AND HIS CAREER

*Jim Yip, AHKIS, MRICS, JO Editorial Board Representative*

Two and a half hours into the race, jubilant smiles at the starting line were long gone, battling against the sweltering heat and leg cramps, hordes of the casual marathon runners were soldiering on with grimaces on their faces. Heading against this slow-moving crowd, a few racers were cruising down on the return leg of the course. Amid the frontrunners, Mr. Brooke was dashing towards the finishing line at the Shamshuipo Stadium.

Mr. Brooke finished the race just under the 3-hour mark - an awesome record for a man in his late fifties. Ethiopian, Dube Jilo, the winner for this year's Hong Kong Marathon, finished in 2 hours, 23 minutes and 21 seconds. Mr. Brooke's personal best record was not too far off. He achieved 2 hours and 37 minutes in the Chicago Marathon ten years ago. He once beat the invincible Gurkhas in the Trailwalker, a feat he is still very proud of today.

One of his best running stories relates to the annual run, which started from Stanley at 4 am and finished at the border with each runner plotting his own route. Mr. Brooke was making good progress over Lead Mine Pass when he came across a group of Gurkhas on night exercise. Believing him to be an officer infiltrator they proceeded to capture him and only let him go many hours later. Needless to say, Mr. Brooke lost the race, but as he laughingly explains anyone running in the middle of the night in a pair of shorts and running shoes deserves to be arrested!

Having a penchant for sports, Mr. Brooke is famous for beginning his day by jogging along Bowen Road at 5 a.m. Tall and athletic, his body exudes an impeccable fitness. His colleagues used to joke that he walked down the office corridor at bullet speed.

Mr. Brooke is now a consultant with Insignia Brooke, after his firm, Brooke International, merged with the listed US property advisory group Insignia at the end of last year.

"We have long recognized the need for a strong international partner to complement our local capabilities in the expanding and maturing markets of Asia Pacific," Mr. Brooke says. "The acquisition by Insignia significantly strengthens our reputation and standing in the region."



Mr. Brooke is now busy at expanding his asset management team as he sees this as a high growth area spurred by China's imminent accession to WTO and the rising trend of sub-contracting out of property services by the multi-national companies. "This is an opportunity of a life time," he says.

Last year saw Hong Kong's first and successful listing of a government-owned corporation - Mass Transit Railway Corporation - in which it helped the government coffers to raise almost \$10bn. Mr. Brooke had a share of this glory as his firm acted as the property valuer for MTRC. "Over 60 million sq.ft. of gross floor area under our valuation, this was probably one of the largest valuation assignments ever carried out in Hong Kong," says Mr. Brooke.

### YORKSHIRE PUDDING

Mr. Brooke was born in Leeds, Yorkshire. He studied Estate Management at the University of London where he met Maggie, his wife. "Maggie was one year junior than me at the college. She was one of the few girls in the class of 100 students. She was also a swimmer for the national Olympic team," Mr. Brooke says. "It was a bit of a fight for her."

After graduation, he landed a coveted job as a land agent with Cluttons, one of the largest rural surveying practices in the UK. He looked after the portfolios of the Crown and Church Commissioner, which owned many farmland and castles throughout the country.

His first year salary was only £400 a year in 1964. "I was heavily indebted then," he jokes. He was chartered as a Professional Associate of The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 1966.

He subsequently became an equity partner in Cluttons and opened three offices for them, one of which was in his home county - Yorkshire. "It was quite a natural move as Yorkshire, also known as God's Own County, has the most number of castles (and pubs), in England," he says.

Yorkshiremen are well known for their adventurous spirits. Captain James Cook, the explorer who discovered Australia, was one of their folks. Throughout Mr. Brooke's professional property career - already a successful run for 40 years and in three continents, he is not short of tales of surprises, twists and turns. He is a man that likes big challenges.

His mug in the office, is engraved with a Yorkshire motto "Ear all, see all, say nowt. Eat all, sup all, pay nowt, and if tha does owt for nowt, do it for the thissen." ("Nowt" being nothing, "owt" being anything, "tha" being you, "thissen" being yourself.)

Mr. Brooke has made Captain James Cook proud.

### THE LONDON BIG SPENDER

In the mid-seventies, Mr. Brooke attracted the estate agents and property owners in London like honey to flies. As an investment adviser to Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, and other ruling families in the Middle East, Mr. Brooke led the first big wave of the oil-rich Arabs money pouring into the London property market.

Dubai first found oil in 1966. Due to the oil crisis in the mid-seventies, oil prices rocketed and oil countries were awash with money. They came to Europe to acquire hotels and prestigious properties. London was their most favourite city for investment. The UK property market's distinctive characteristic of trophy and historically important properties was particularly attractive to this band of foreign investors.

"Every weekend we were on a big shopping spree in Paris and London. With a large entourage, we went by the Sheikh's private jet," remembers Mr. Brooke. "The London property owners saw us coming a mile off and immediately raised their prices."

The property mantra "Location, Location and Location" was strictly observed. They mainly focused their purchases in the Kensington and Mayfair areas.

Mr. Brooke noted the return of Arab money to the London market this year, following the recent surge in oil prices. The Berkerley Square in Mayfair was just sold to a Middle-East investor for £345m in May. "Last time they overpaid, this time they are more savvy," Mr. Brooke says.

An event on one afternoon in the summer of 1972 proved an important milestone for Mr. Brooke's life. That afternoon the Cluttons London office received an unexpected guest. Dressed in an immaculate dishdasha and chequered headdress, an Arab asked to buy a property in London but the receptionist didn't understand him. Mr. Brooke, just on his way back to the office from a client meeting, stopped and offered help. It was discovered that the Arab was a Sheikh and the son of the Ruler of Dubai. In 1973, Mr. Brooke was then lured to work as a property adviser for the ruling family in Dubai.

Mr. Brooke worked in the Middle East for six years. Being one of the few English-speaking expatriates working in the Middle East then, he was also sometimes involved in negotiations with foreign parties on behalf of the host government. Because of his involvement in landing and air right negotiations, he came to know Cathay Pacific and the Swire brothers. In 1980, he was hired to come to Hong Kong and work for Swire Properties Limited as the General Manager of the Development and Valuation Department.

### A SWIFT SWIRL

At Swire, Mr. Brooke played a major role in the development of the company's flagship developments of Taikoo Shing, City Plaza and Pacific Place.

Comprising over 12,000 residential units, Taikoo Shing was the first large-scale quality private residential development in Hong Kong. It was also the first private estate providing plenty of amenity facilities within the estate. Taikoo Shing has been very popular amongst the middle-class families. Today, it is still one of the most popular private estates in Hong Kong.

"It was not that successful when we first sold the project off-plan in the early 1980s," Mr. Brooke recalls. "Because of a stock market crash following the notorious tumble of Margaret Thatcher at Tiananmen Square in 1982, a lot of buyers who had signed the sales agreements walked away from the contracts despite having already paid a deposit of 30% - 40% of the sales price."

In 1983, Mr. Brooke and his development team were instructed by the Swire brothers in London to bid for the commercial site at Admiralty in 1983 and their remit was to make sure that they got it as Swire wished to underline their confidence in the future of Hong Kong. "The atmosphere in the City Hall for the sale of Phase 1 of the site was very somber indeed, it was proceeding at a snail's pace," Mr Brooke says. "At \$1 million for each bid, it took 2.5 hours to move the bidding from \$400mn to \$705mn - the price at which we were eventually successful. However, one year later when the Phase 2 was offered for sale, sentiment was much improved and the auction was finished within 5 minutes with the price at \$1bn."

The 6.5-acre commercial site was developed into one of the landmark developments in Hong Kong - The Pacific Place - comprising over 5 million sq.ft. of office, retail, residential and hotel floor areas. Mr. Brooke mentioned one remarkable achievement of this development. "Because of a very clever design plan, and using the different road levels between Queensway and Supreme Court Road, we successfully gained an additional 500,000 sq.ft. of retail floor area and this was not accountable for plot ratio purposes."

Mr. Brooke's avuncular style and self-effacing demeanor camouflages a fiercely competitive figure. In less than 4 years with Swire, Mr. Brooke became Deputy Managing Director. In 1988, he left and set up his eponymously named property advisory company. "I always like new challenges and in 1989 after some substantial experience with a big developer, I clearly saw a much bigger need for a one-stop property consultancy in Hong Kong which could serve clients' interests from an





## MEDIATION-SOME BASIC PRINCIPLES

John B Molloy, LLB(Hons), BSc(Hons), FHKIS, FRICS, FInstCES, MCI Arb, RPS(QS)  
Managing Director, James R Knowles (Hong Kong) Limited

end user and investor's point of view," he says.

### THE PROPERTY ANGEL

"Nick has been a stalwart of the property industry for many years, and carries with him immense respect and professionalism in the property business. He has made tremendous contributions to the property profession, as well as to the community in his work with government and other agencies," says Mr. Peter Churchouse, a property mogul and Managing Director of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter

Land auction in recent years has lost its luster, not because of the reduced number of land lots offered by the Government, but because of a tightened set of bidding rules, which reduces any possible dramas in the auction hall.

Thanks to two fall-outs in the land auctions in the mid-90s that prompted the Government to look into the loopholes in the existing bidding rules, two working groups both led by Mr. Brooke were set up and their suggestions were subsequently adopted. Mr. Brooke is the man that shaped the land auction in the modern era.

Nick Brooke is a member of the Town Planning Board and Vice Chairman of the Metro Committee and also a past member of the Housing Authority for eight years. Distancing himself from the possible conflicts of interests, Mr. Brooke's firm does not take any assignments for planning application cases.

In 1999, Mr. Brooke was awarded the Bronze Bauhinia Star by the Chief Executive of SAR for his dedicated public service in Hong Kong, and in particular, his valuable contribution to the work of the Housing Authority. Mr. Brooke is also a Justice of Peace.

"I think the work for the Housing Authority was very meaningful for me," he says. "Over the past years I had visited the "cage" houses in the old areas and the cramped dwellings in the public housing estate. I must say the housing problems in Hong Kong are increasing, not decreasing."

He thinks the society has a pressing need to tackle the urban renewal issues. "Our housing stock is aging fast. Before they become an urban eyesore, we need to roll out measures to maintain these buildings and also improve the living standard for the residents there," he says.

Mr. Brooke believes "renewal" is not a right word to describe the process. He prefers the word "rejuvenation". "Instead of completely knocking down the old buildings and moving out the residents to the New Territories, we could, through a careful pre-planning process and provision of attractive incentives, rebuild the communities and preserve

our heritage," he proposes.

Last year, Mr. Brooke joined the Hong Kong Asian Games Bid Committee to prepare a bid for hosting the 2006 Asian Games in Hong Kong. As a keen sports fan, he was disappointed that Hong Kong subsequently lost the bid. "It would have been a great chance for us to promote sports to the general public in a far more efficient manner," he says.

Mr. Brooke was a founder member on the formation of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors in 1984 and he was the past chairman of the RICS Hong Kong Branch.

"He is a dedicated man," best summed up by the Managing Director of Swire Properties, Keith Kerr, who had just returned from a mountain-climbing trip in Himalayas with his legs injured.

### EPILOGUE

The meeting with Mr. Brooke conjured up the time I worked for him many years ago. My first assignment was to write a speech for him. When I got my first draft back, which I had worked on over the weekend, it hardly resembled my original version. Possibly the only thing that remained intact was the date entry.

He was a genial and emollient boss. When I encountered difficulty in work, he would always say to me "yan mun deea t' best yan can". This really cheered me up and I found the drive to work even harder.

These days I am still keen to read Mr. Brooke's articles in the papers. Though the faint-hearted readers might not easily understand his writing style, his argument is always sharp and trenchant.

Writing weekly in the South China Morning Post, he is probably one of most prolific property writers in town. "I can write 1,000 words in an hour straight out of my head if I am focused into it," Mr. Brooke says.

He also is a regular figure on our TV screens, commentating on auction results and the state and health of the property market. Saturnine and granite-jawed, in his typical basso profundo voice, he conveys a degree of common sense and practicality whilst others around him are either full of hype or telling us that the world is about to come to an end.

Mr. Brooke is a man of letters. Whenever he meets any new acquaintance at a cocktail or conference, he would write a follow-up letter to them on the following day. Of course, he doesn't forget old friends. Not long ago I received an e-mail from him: "I did read your article and thought it was a good piece of analysis; so do not be deterred."

He simply knows when to lend his support. ■

Mediation now seems firmly accepted in Hong Kong as the first stage of dispute resolution proceedings. Provisions for mediation are contained in the Government, KCRC and MTRC forms of contract, and also the soon to be issued new HKIS/HKIA private form.

Further, whilst mediation has for the last ten years been popular in civil engineering disputes, it is being used more and more for building disputes as well.

So it seemed an appropriate time to set down some basic principles regarding mediation so that surveyors will be prepared when they become involved in disputes that are referred to mediation.

### WHAT IS MEDIATION?

Mediation is defined in the Government Mediation Rules as being:

**A confidential, voluntary, non-binding and private dispute resolutions process in which a neutral person (the mediator) helps the parties to reach a negotiated settlement.**

Mediation is therefore a negotiation process where the negotiations are conducted in a structured manner, and where the negotiations are assisted by a neutral third party. It combines the flexibility of negotiation with the discipline of formal dispute resolution process.

It is described in many books as being a process, which extends the negotiation process when negotiations between the parties have broken down. However, in Hong Kong, mediation is often the first (and only) chance for the parties to sit down and talk about the dispute.

This is, in my opinion, one of the most significant advantages of mediation. In the Government, KCRC and (to a lesser extent) MTRC contracts, when a dispute arises it is discussed and argued between the Contract Administrator (the Engineer, Architect or Surveyor), who may be private consultants, and the Contractor. If the dispute cannot be resolved between them the Contractor will request a decision of the Contract Administrator under the appropriate clause in the contract. The decision will be given, and if the Contractor or the Employer does not accept the decision then traditionally the matter will be referred to arbitration.

Once referred to arbitration, with solicitors appointed on either side, the parties generally move further apart with their positions being continually being reinforced until the arbitrator, what may be years later, makes his award.

In all of this traditional procedure there is no real opportunity for the Employer and the Contractor to sit down and discuss the dispute themselves without the Contract Administrator present, and attempt to resolve the differences.

This is where mediation comes in and which is why mediation is so successful. Very often neither the Contractor nor the Employer will fully agree with the Contract Administrator's decision, and mediation gives them the opportunity to explore the dispute together.

The definition confirms two other important features of mediation.

Firstly, it is confidential. This is often of great importance to the parties who do not wish either the dispute or the negotiations regarding its settlement to become known to others.

Secondly, it is voluntary, or at least in the Government forms of contract it is. I consider this most important because mediation relies on both parties entering into the negotiations with open minds and a wish to settle the dispute. This is why I do not consider that the mandatory mediation provisions in the KCRC and MTRC contracts are really a good idea. There seems to me little point in forcing the parties to mediate if they don't want to - it is like putting a clause in a contract that the parties must agree something. You can never force two parties to agree anything and similarly you can never force two parties to mediate successfully if one (or both) don't want to.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEDIATION AND NORMAL NEGOTIATIONS

- Mediation employs a neutral third party, the mediator. He takes an active role to bring parties together by looking for and concentrating on areas of common ground rather than differences.
- The mediator can assist in the communications. Very often parties to a dispute may be at the stage when they will not speak to each



other. The mediator can fulfil this role by being a diplomat who moves between the parties passing on their thoughts and positions.


- The mediator can act as a sounding board for the parties to make their arguments. The mediator will generally be a senior professional respected by both parties. It can help both parties if he gives general opinion (in private sessions) on their position. Some mediators consider that giving opinions is not a good idea because it can compromise impartiality. However, I have found it is not only useful to do so in construction disputes but that the parties want and expect the mediator to give impartial opinion on their respective positions.
- Mediation has rules, which is essential to make the process work and avoid abuses.

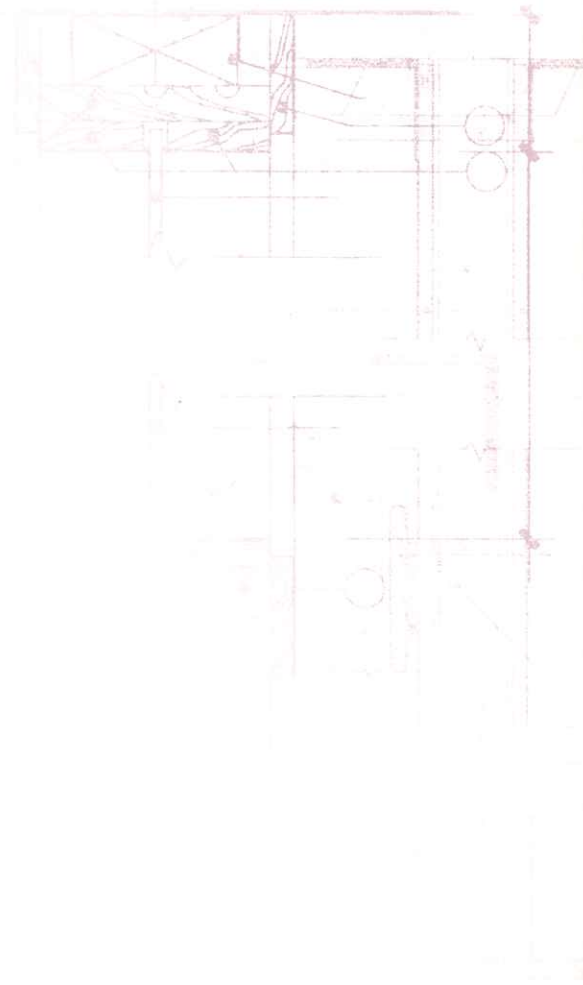
### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION OR LITIGATION

- Mediation is not binding; it can be concluded without any agreement being reached or anything binding the parties. Both litigation and arbitration produce a binding result. Mediation only produces a binding agreement if parties agree a settlement that they are both happy with.
- The third party, i.e. the mediator, is neutral and not a decision-maker. Unlike an arbitrator or a judge, a mediator does not make a decision, publish an award or make a judgment. The mediator is the facilitator of a settlement, but it is the parties themselves that make the settlement, not the mediator.
- The mediator has freedom to communicate with the parties in dispute alone or together. He can therefore find out the parties' true wishes and desires and their bottom lines for settlement. It is for this reason that a mediator should never be asked to make a decision by way of a written report and why he is expressly not permitted to act as arbitrator in subsequent proceedings should the mediation fail.
- There is complete flexibility as to how the dispute is resolved and what is included within the settlement. Unlike arbitration, where only the dispute referred is within the arbitrator's jurisdiction, the parties can bring in any matter they wish to use as a means to achieve settlement.
- Mediation focuses on parties' interests instead of only establishing their contractual rights. It therefore looks at getting a settlement of a dispute; not a decision on it.
- The costs of the mediator are split and the parties bear their own costs. There is therefore 'no winner takes all' approach.

### WHY USE MEDIATION

- Mediation provides a chance for the parties to discuss the dispute, very often the first and only chance.
- Relative to arbitration the costs of mediation are very small, and it is far quicker than arbitration, taking at most, months rather than years.
- It can produce a 'win-win' situation with the perfect settlement being one neither party likes but both can accept.
- The parties stay in control in mediation. If no settlement is possible they can walk away.
- Mediation is very flexible; it encourages creativity in a settlement.
- Mediation is non-adversarial, thus maintaining relationships.

The above sets out a strong case for mediation, and in my opinion and experience this is rightly so. I would always advise a client to try mediation before arbitration. It is cheap, quick and can often produce a settlement that both parties can live with to save the time and expense of arbitration. In fact, my experience would suggest that very few mediations fail leaving the parties no choice but to carry on to arbitration. So give mediation a try - it works. 



## PC/OP/CC

Brian E. Rawling, Brian E. Rawling & Associates



Many contracts in Hong Kong link the achievement of practical completion under the contract to obtaining an occupation permit (OP) from the Building Authority or a certificate of compliance (CC) from the Lands Department. This is inherently wrong as different authorities are involved in obtaining the OP and CC to those involved in determining when a building has been completed to the standard of practical completion. Therefore, anyone drafting a contract to include reference to an OP or CC should consider the different authorities involved and the respective obligations established by the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123).

### PRACTICAL COMPLETION

For practical completion, it is the architect under the main building contract who has to be satisfied that the building has "been substantially completed and shall have satisfactorily passed any tests that may be prescribed by the Contract, and/or any Named Sub-Contract, to be carried out before Practical Completion" (i.e. clause 15(1) of the Swire Standard Form of Building Contract for use in Hong Kong). Clause 15(1) of the HKIS Standard Form of Building Contract (May 1979 Revision) has a similar provision without the requirement for tests. The work, which has to be substantially completed, is usually defined as the Works, or a Section thereof, and it should have been constructed in accordance with the Contract.

### OCCUPATION PERMIT

For the OP, it is the Building Authority that has to be satisfied that the building (or a part thereof if a temporary occupation permit (TOP) is being sought) has been constructed in accordance with the Buildings Ordinance (Cap. 123). Obtaining an OP also involves several other authorities such as the Fire Department, the Water Services Department, and the Drainage Services Department, to name just three. The main contractor and subcontractors therefore not only have to satisfy the Building Authority and Authorized Person that the building has been satisfactorily constructed and completed to OP standard as, before that can be done, other authorities have to be dealt with and satisfied that parts of the building, e.g. fire services, plumbing and drainage, have also been satisfactorily installed, completed and tested.

The works, which have to be completed, are those parts of the building for which an application for an OP is being made and those works should have been constructed to comply with Cap. 123. In addition, there must be a set of drawings and plans prepared by the Authorized Person, which are approved by both the Building Authority and the Fire Department. This approval is necessary before the Form 516 for the fire services inspection can be issued.

When he is satisfied that the building complies with Cap. 123 and the approved drawings and plans, the Registered Building Contractor has

to submit, to the Authorized Person, a completed and signed Form BA13 to signify that the building has been constructed in accordance with Cap. 123, the drawings and plans approved by the Building Authority and the Fire Department, and has been completed to the standard required for an OP.

The Authorized Person then endorses the Form BA13 if he is satisfied that the building has been constructed in accordance with Cap. 123, the approved drawings and plans and has been completed to OP standard. It is then the Authorized Person who is finally responsible, in accordance with Hong Kong law, for obtaining an OP, it is the Fire Department who decides if the building complies with fire regulations (similarly, the Water and Drainage Services departments decide on compliance for plumbing and drainage) and the Building Authority decides if the OP can be issued and, if not, what work has to be done before it can be issued.

Hence, it is clear that the authorities concerned with obtaining an OP are different to the authorities concerned with practical completion.

### CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Similarly, where a developer has to apply for a CC before a development can be sold or used (irrespective of the OP having been obtained), then, again, it is a different authority, usually the Lands Department, that has to be satisfied with the status of construction work.



# ARBITRATION OR ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION? - AN ACCOUNTANT'S PERSPECTIVE

Robert Purser, Managing Director, Baker Tilley (Hong Kong)



In my last article, I gave my opinion as to the general economic climate and future implications to Hong Kong's construction industry sector. Subsequently, a leading Hong Kong contractor announced a 49% decline in turnover from FY2000, and stated that this was predominately due to a fall in new work opportunities and a deferral of current projects. Recent government forecasts of the GDP have declined substantially in the last six months. In January of this year, the GDP was forecast to increase by 10% during 2001, by May the government revised its forecast to 4% and again, lowered expectations during June to 3%. Let's hope that the industry as a whole manages the change to be in a position to benefit from the economy when it improves.

One of the changes that the industry faces is the manner in which disputes are resolved. Following international initiatives, particularly in the United Kingdom and Australia, Hong Kong is now faced with a decision of how and whether legislation needs to be changed to take account of changing international practices.

Bill Kennedy of High-Point Rendel has provided some thought provoking opinion to these alternatives, which is printed below:

"How many times have we heard that outturn costs have exceeded the original budget, even where tender costs have been below expectations? One reason has been the adversarial upbringing of all the players within the Construction Industry. We are disputes-orientated and this has led to a whole industry in itself, focused on how to administer contracts to either effectively avoid disputes or, where that has proved impossible, to deal with those resultant disputes in a manner calculated to achieve the goals of the parties. By the very nature of their opposite aspirations, the parties are now set on a divergent course. A sensible settlement for both parties has now become remote.

Arbitration was born out of a need to resolve disputes more effectively. However, in recent years it has become at least as expensive and time-consuming as litigation. In the UK, the Woolf Report has led to swathing reforms in the legal system aimed at speeding up matters. Judges now manage proceedings and have an eye on cost and time. Arbitration in the UK has had some help with the Arbitration Act 1996, but in Hong Kong we still appear to be beset with the old unattractive time and cost problems. Hence, the increase in the number of disillusioned parties and the growth of alternative forms of dispute resolution such as adjudication and mediation.

If we are to make arbitration an effective dispute resolution forum again, we need more proactive and robust arbitrators who are prepared, if necessary, to take an inquisitorial role and to do what is necessary to assist the parties to resolve their dispute. This also requires legislation; a different mind set and structured training. It requires an understanding of the process but it does not require submission to that process. Instead it requires arbitrators, mindful of the time and cost of proceedings and with the ability to manage those aspects accordingly.

In the UK, the Latham Report led to the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, which has caused a sea change in the disputes resolution process. Adjudication has catapulted to the fore and with robust support from the Courts, is proving a fast and effective way of resolving problems. It may be rough justice but it is quicker and cheaper than its alternatives and is helping cash flow within the Industry.

Similar legislation is now long overdue in Hong Kong. It may be that non-binding mediation is more appropriate here than adjudication but realistic alternatives and improvements to arbitration procedures are

## OP - TIMING

Obviously, for every development, the Authorized Person has to obtain an OP before the building can be occupied but in the building contract there is no need to link this requirement to practical completion. An OP can be obtained at a date relatively earlier than the date on which practical completion is achieved as finishes and passenger lifts (to name just two items) do not have to be completed to obtain an OP but they would have to be completed, and the lifts successfully tested, to achieve practical completion.

The main contractor, and certain specialist subcontractors, has obligations under Cap. 123 regarding compliance with building regulations. Under Clause 4 of both the HKIS and the Swire Standard Forms of Contract, the main contractor is obliged to carry out the works in accordance with building regulations (BERA consider that this part of Clause 4 is unnecessary as contractors have this obligation at law in any case). Further, contractual provisions relating to the OP are, therefore, unnecessary as the obligations are already defined in the Buildings Ordinance and exist at law.

Why should a contract refer to obtaining an OP at all when participation in the OP process and compliance with the Buildings Ordinance is part of the contractor's obligations at law? The answer is (or should be) timing. A developer may wish to obtain an OP at an early stage so that whilst the main contractor completes finishings and non-essential building services (for OP purposes) in one part of the building, the developer's tenants can commence their fitting out works in another part of the same building and vice versa.

Further, in a residential development, sale and purchase agreements may have provisions relating to the OP being obtained by a certain

date. In such circumstances, a developer will want his building contract to reflect the provisions in the sale and purchase agreements.

## SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION

What is the meaning of "substantially completed" as referred to in Clause 15(1) of the HKIS and Swire Standard Forms?

One of the tests for substantial completion is that the building should be suitable for its intended purpose. That would obviously include obtaining an OP, as, without such permit, the building is not suitable for its intended purpose as it cannot be occupied.

Therefore, where the standard form of contract requires the building to be "substantially completed" before an architect issues the practical completion certificate, it is obvious that the obligation would also include the Registered Building Contractor's issue of a valid Form BA13 and participation in obtaining the fire services certificate (Form 172) and the OP.

## OP AND LAD'S

The recovery of liquidated and ascertained damages should not be linked to the OP as it is not wholly the contractor's responsibility to obtain the OP. The Authorized Person has to prepare and submit to the Building Authority plans and drawings to obtain the Building Authority's approval thereof and then he has to monitor the progress of construction and decide when to issue the Form BA13 to the Building Authority. This process can cause delay to the date when the OP can be obtained. Therefore, if liquidated and ascertained damages were linked obtaining to the OP, they would become void if it can be shown that delay in obtaining the OP was caused by anyone other than the main contractor. The main contractor, as the Registered Building

Contractor, is responsible for issuing a valid Form BA13, but the issue of the Form BA13 may be delayed because of amendments made by the Authorized Person to previously approved drawings so that the final approved drawings depict what is built.

Although the foregoing refers solely to the Form BA13, the same applies to other submissions which have to be made by either the Authorised Person, the Registered Building Contractor or a specialist subcontractor; e.g.:-

Form 501 - for fire service;

Form FX172 - for ventilation;

Form H - for plumbing;

Form 5 - for lifts.

## OP AND GENERAL DAMAGES

Swire Properties Limited deal with the OP procedures by including an item in the Preliminaries Bill which sets out separate obligations for the main contractor divorced from his performance obligations under the conditions of contract.

The preliminaries item refers to the OP procedures, which the main contractor has to participate in and ends with the issue of a valid Form BA13.91.

Not only are these obligations additional to the main contractor's performance obligations under the conditions of contract, but general damages for delay are also linked with the separate obligations in the event that the main contractor fails to comply therewith.

For further information please contact [bera@netvigator.com](mailto:bera@netvigator.com) 



urgently needed. The recommendations of our own Henry Tang Report appear to be heading in the right direction but what is being done to implement these recommendations and when can we expect some positive impact on our industry?"

As mentioned in my first article, I would be delighted to hear your opinions and observations. As with any opinion that I may have, there will usually be an equally valid counter opinion - I'm always happy to debate it. ■



Bill Kennedy is a Director and General Manager of High-Point Rendel, Hong Kong

Feature

Feature

## THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY

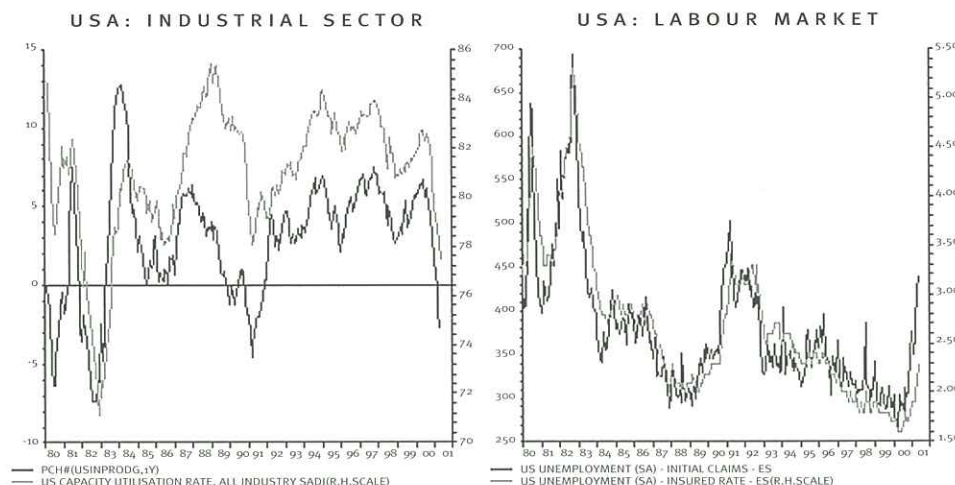
Peter Reichenbach  
Chief Investment Officer, Gottardo Asset Management (HK) Ltd.



The world economy is continuing to decelerate, but a number of recent developments seem to point to a turnaround. While the possibility of an economic recovery appears more and more widely accepted, it is nevertheless clear that such a pick-up is unlikely to be either synchronised or, at least in its initial stage, enjoyed by all sectors of the economy. The first country expected to emerge from the slowdown is the United States, as its leaders have adopted as rapidly as possible the provisions necessary to offset economic weakness, in both monetary and fiscal terms.

Other territories, such as Euroland, which has reacted slowly and hesitatingly to the worsening economic situation, and Japan, struggling with its infamous structural problems, are unlikely to experience a turnaround before the end of the year.

The slowdown in the US economy, which began at the end of the first half of 2000 (refer to graph 1) with all the negative issues being factored into both the industrial sector and the labour market. However, it seems to be waning and should bottom out in the third quarter of this year. In the first three months of 2001, GDP grew by 1.3% (year-on-year) compared to the 1% growth in the previous quarter. The main factors lifting up the economy were personal consumption and public spending; however, even housing and capital goods investment made positive contributions. Conversely, inventory reductions took their toll on growth to the tune of 1/2 of a percentage point. The slowdown in the economy is likely to continue throughout the quarter underway due to the weakness in corporate investment, depressed by the low rate of capacity utilisation (with IT spending hit particularly hard), as



Graph 1

Source: DATASTREAM

well as a slowdown in personal consumption and exports. In the second half of the year, we should see a pick-up fuelled by expansionary monetary policy and tax relief; the latter slated to come into effect in the third quarter. First and foremost, these measures should provide solid support for personal consumption, which has entered a critical phase due to worsening conditions in the labour market. In effect, tax relief and a reduction in financial burdens should increase disposable income, while stabilisation in financial markets is likely to sustain consumer confidence. In addition, the decline in uncertainty and improvement in earnings prospects should be advantageous for capital goods investment, which is expected to continue to benefit from favourable mortgage refinancing conditions.

Fears that the euro zone would become embroiled in the slowdown underway worldwide have proved to be correct: a noteworthy deceleration in productive activity has in fact been confirmed by a number of statistics. In particular, data concerning GDP trends in major countries during the first quarter show slower growth than was forecasted. The phenomenon appears to be broad-based; however, among all the members of the European Monetary Union, there are substantial differences, and, given its strong trading links with the rest of the world, bearing the brunt of the current trend is the German economy. The slowdown should continue in the second half of 2001: both the index calculated by the German IFO economics institute and leading indicators for the entire euro zone is pointing downwards (refer to graph 2). Further aggravating the situation is the trend in inflation: in effect, the inflation rate in the euro zone, calculated on the basis of consumer prices, is around 3%, thus well above the European Central Bank's 2% target level. It should be pointed out that a fair amount of this inflation is due to energy products and a soft euro in the currency markets. Although the inflationary dynamic is expected to flatten, monetary authorities now seem reticent to ease the monetary reins and the 25 basis-point reduction in the cost of money enacted on 15 May is not enough to bring relief to the economy. For this reason, it is very unlikely that the euro zone will expect recovery this year.

For Japan, 2001 may turn out to be a very difficult year. Indeed, developments underway worldwide are aggravating an already stifling domestic economy. The jobless rate (4.8% in April) which remains at historically high levels, continues to depress consumer confidence, and stagnation in disposable income are putting a brake on consumer spending. On its side, capital goods investment has been penalised by both the worsening business climate as well as the trend in industrial production (-2.9% in March). Finally, exports are suffering due to the slowdown in the world economy and the yen's recent upward trend is not a favourable one for companies in the sector. This quarter, the economy is benefiting from the fiscal stimulus package passed by the government in November of last year, but its effects are likely to be fleeting. Making the situation even more critical is the fact that the country cannot call on traditional economic policy instruments: with the adoption of a zero-interest-rate policy, the Bank of Japan has now exhausted its arsenal while, given the high level of government debt, the possibility of increasing public spending or enacting tax relief is very limited. Under these circumstances, hopes for a turnaround now rest on reforms promised by the new Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, whose appointment brought with it a wave of optimism. Indeed, the structural reforms and, in particular, the solution to the bad loan problem in the banking constitute sine qua non conditions for the definitive recovery of the Japanese economy.

### INTEREST RATES AND FOREX

In the second quarter, almost all yield curves in the major bond markets steepened, as the expansionary bias adopted by major central banks increased market confidence about the world economic outlook.

In the United States, the period under review was characterised by mixed movements. On one hand, short-term yields continued their downward trend in line with the additional monetary easing by the Federal Reserve. In effect, in the past months, the US Central Bank cut interest rates three times, thus lowering federal funds rates from 5% to 3.75%. Furthermore, also lending support to short-term maturities





were the statements made by Alan Greenspan, who did not rule out additional cuts, should further signals of a slowdown in the US economy appear. On the other hand, the expansionary bias adopted by the Federal Reserve fuelled hopes for an imminent economic recovery, which made the medium and long end of the yield curve shift upward, and the spread between ten-year and two-year yields increase from 74 to 123 basis points. As a result, the yield curve normalised almost completely: while the three-month to one-year segment appears horizontal, the slope of the rest of the curve increased. Even the differential between corporate and Treasury bonds, which declined to 79 basis points, seems to confirm the increased confidence reigning among investors about the growth prospects of the US economy.

In the euro zone, the downward shift of the yield curve, which started in the last few months of 2000, stopped. Except for very short-term rates, which remained at end-March levels, the rest of the yield curve shifted upward, especially its long-term segment. Thus, while the three-month to two-year segment appears inverted, the rest of the curve steepened, as attests the increase in the spread between 10-year and 2-year government bonds, which rose from 56 to 86 basis points. It should be noted that, confronted with a sharp slowdown in the economy, the European Central Bank followed the footsteps of other monetary authorities, and reduced interest rates by 25 basis points. However, recent developments in inflation seem to rule out the possibility of an aggressive interest-rate cut in the coming months, as the main objective of the European Central Bank is to maintain price stability.

Unlike what happened in major international markets, the three-month to ten-year segment of the Japanese yield curve shifted down slightly.

As a result of the new monetary policy adopted by the Bank of Japan on 19 March 2000, very short-term yields are now close to zero. The medium to long term segment of the curve shifted downward as a result of the note-issuing authority's commitment to maintain the new monetary stance until consumer prices have stabilised, which will require a relatively long period of time. On the other hand, the establishment of a more reform-oriented government fuelled some optimism about the Japanese economic outlook, in the long-term in particular, which explains the moderate rise in over-ten-year maturities. The yield curve steepened slightly, as attests the differential between two and ten year rates, which rose from 111 to 120 basis points.

On the currency market, the Japanese Yen benefited in particular from the appointment of Junichiro Koizumi as the Prime Minister. The election of Junichiro Koizumi should finally enable Japan to adopt the necessary reforms to re-launch its economy. The weakness that is affecting the euro since the beginning of May in particular is mainly attributable to the economic slowdown underway in the Old Continent and to the unpopularity of the monetary policy of the European Central Bank. In effect, not only was the 25-basis-point rate cut considered insufficient, but also caused significant perplexity: it is enough to think that the day preceding such reduction, a number of Council members pointed out that, considering the increase in inflationary pressures, an easing of the monetary reins would be inappropriate. The incoherence of the European Central Bank, as opposed to the strong authority of the US Federal Reserve, penalised the euro against major currencies.

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# Flying High AND SWINGING LOW

WITH A BIG GAME IN 7 YEARS' TIME, BEIJING HAS A LOT TO PLAY WITH BETWEEN NOW AND THEN, WHEREAS HONG KONG IS IN A DROUGHT OF ITS PLAYERS



Jim Yip, AHKIS, MRICS, Senior Research Analyst, Asia Financial (Securities) Ltd.

As the bid for the 2008 Olympic Games - the Holy Grail for 1.3bn people - was won and the initial spurt of euphoria has subsided, Beijing, the new host city, will come under close scrutiny over the next seven years and it will be tested as to whether it can pull all its stops to deliver its promise - "New Beijing, Great Olympics". Will we see an Olympic Games, its first appearance in the world's most populous nation that will eclipse the last Sydney game, which was hailed as "the best ever games in Olympic history" by the outgoing president of the International Olympics Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch?

## A NEW BEIJING

But first Beijing has an uphill battle to climb, as the city is notorious for its bad smog, traffic snarls and sandstorms. The city will embark on a spending of US\$23bn, the most expensive budget ever for any host city, on new infrastructures and environmental clear-ups. As a point of reference, Paris only proposed a US\$2bn capital spending on infrastructure improvements for its bid.

By 2008, Beijing's landscape will be greatly transformed and rewarded with 5 new metro lines, one of which will link the



airport to the city center, over 200km new roads, 14 new wastewater treatment plants and one 1,215-ha Olympic Park (or what the city officials call as the Olympic Green), which is on the northern outskirts of the city, and on the axis with some of Beijing's notable landmarks such as the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.

Inside the giant Olympic Green, there will be a 80-ha Olympic Village and 14 sports venues, including the 80,000-seater National Stadium

where the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games will be held.

To combat the air pollution, besides imposing a stricter emission standard and use of clean natural gas by most of the buses and taxis by 2007, Beijing will restructure its key industries and move out over 200 industrial enterprises from the downtown area. It is hoped that through these measures the emission level will be reduced by 60%.

After the Games in the summer of 2008, Beijing will not only be left with an Olympic legacy, the third city in Asia after Tokyo and Seoul, but also awarded with better infrastructure, much improved traffic and cleaner air.

## HONG KONG DEVELOPERS IN THE OLYMPIC "GOLD RUSH"

Amid this spate of massive spending and development, it will bring a boom to the construction industry as well as to the homeowners and developers in the Capital. Hong Kong developers with substantial investments in Beijing will be poised to reap a medal from the Olympic "Gold Rush". For example, Cheung Kong and Hutchison Whampoa's Oriental Plaza, a gigantic 6 million-sq-ft.-complex in Wangfujing, which comprises eight Grade-A office towers, two blocks of serviced apartments, a commercial podium and an 875 room five-star hotel, has experienced an increase in take-up activities. New World China Land, another developer engaged in a large city core redevelopment project and currently launching its Taihua serviced apartments for sale in Chongwen District, has reported better sales results as shrewd investors rush in to capitalize on the perceived property boom spurred up by a potential large influx of foreign professionals chasing the lucrative Olympic contracts in the city.



## THE CROWN JEWEL IN THE OLYMPIC PARK

Local developers will invariably get most of the limelight. With a land bank of gross floor area of over 10 million sq.ft. in the future Olympic Park, Beijing North Star leads in the race for Olympic glory. By 2008, the area around Olympic Park will be well served by road and rail connecting to the city center. Given the City's massive investment in this area and its Olympic heritage, it will become one of the most prime locations in Beijing.

Beijing North Star, which made its name as a developer when it built the Asian Games Village in 1990, will have a chance to replicate their feat for the 2008 Olympic Games. On its land bank in the Olympic Park, they already have a plan to build a convention and exhibition center, gross floor area of 300,000 sq.m., which will be used as a sports venue during the Games, an Athletes Village, gross floor area of 470,000 sq.m., which will be sold as luxury apartments after the Games, and a 500m-high office building called Beijing World Trade Center. The landmark office development, gross floor area of 300,000 sq.m., will become the tallest building in China upon its completion.

Given the huge investment sum involved in this grand project, on our recent company visit, Beijing North Star has indicated that they would seek foreign joint venture partners to participate in the development. We envisage that there will be a flurry of interest for this project from our Hong Kong developers.

## HIGHER, FASTER, STRONGER

The 2008 Olympic Games will present immense opportunities for Beijing and to a larger extent, the whole country. It will serve as an important impetus to propel the nation's both economic and social developments at a far more dazzling speed. Its potential impact has been likened to the late reformer Deng Xiaoping's southern expedition in 1992, which has since jumpstarted the economic reform.

## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Hong Kong's property market remains in an anemic state, as developers are still indulging in an orgy of repricing. Transaction activities in recent months have shown a pick-up as compared to the January and February sales figures. But this phenomenon, in our view, is not the direct result of the six consecutive rate cuts, which have yet to filter through the market. Instead, the rebound was triggered by the more aggressive sales plans offered by the developers. Attractive incentive packages that we have not seen in the market place before are offered to buyers, such as the mortgage rate at minus 3% of the prime rate throughout the loan term and a 3-year payment grace period for the 25% housing loan.

### No. of S & P from January 2001

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
4,645	4,961	11,412	7,853	7,351	7,503

Source: Land Registry

Developers' sales still dominate the sales market, absorbing most of the purchasing powers. Sales in the primary market in the first half of this year went up by 33% while in the secondary market it fell by 3% over the same period. Where is the rate cut effect?

The secondary market continues to be on the sideline and sales activity is insipid in this sector. The effect of which does not bode well for the overall health of the property sector as home demand from the trade-up owners is stifled.

In the second half of this year, we estimate there will be around 13,000 new units for presale from developers. Most of the size ranges for these new projects is around 500 - 700 sq.ft., targeting mainly for the first-time buyers. Very likely, the secondary homeowners and the property market will brace themselves for another wild ride.

### Comparison of Sales Activities between the Primary and Secondary Market

	Primary market			Secondary market		
	1H 2001	1H 2000	%	1H 2001	1H 2000	%
No. of S & P	8,816	6,637	33%	19,142	19,818	-3%
Value(\$mn)	26,114	23,769	10%	38,088	49,890	-24%
Average transaction (\$mn)	2.96	3.58	-17%	1.99	2.52	-21%

Source: Centaline Agency

## MARKET WRECKED BY A BAD HOUSING POLICY?

We have been vehemently opposing the ill-conceived housing policy, which we think is the recipe for the continued demise in the property market. However, for the first time we admit we have been shortsighted and have failed to note the full picture, particularly on the development across our border.

We think, that even if the Government gave in and immediately revamped the housing policy to the extent as the market demands, i.e. scrap the HOS policy and end the selling of public flats to sitting tenants, it would not make a large impact on our housing demand and home prices.

The recent news of a residential development site in Shenzhen offered to Hong Kong developers has made for very interesting reading. The 290-ha site, almost the same size of Shatin district, has a development parameter of gross floor area of over 2 million sq.m. The site is to be valued at HK\$5bn, at an A.V. of \$2,500 p.s.m. The current sales price for mass residential in Shenzhen is at around HK\$6,000 - 8,000 p.s.m. The development profit margin for this site seems at a more healthy level than in Hong Kong.

No doubt more than twenty Hong Kong developers have expressed interests for the development right of this site. The rate of response is even more enthusiastic than for the MTRC's Tseung Kwun O station development.

## THE THREAT FROM SHENZHEN

The number of Hong Kong residents buying properties in Shenzhen and Pearl River Delta is on the rise. Last year it was estimated that 10,000 - 14,000 properties in China were bought by Hong Kong residents, about 60% of which were in the Shenzhen area. In the first half of this year, the number was 4,500 - 5,000. If we compare this number with the figure in our primary sales market, it is almost equivalent to 50% of the total number of new units sold in Hong Kong. How many of the Hong Kong buyers have shunned Hong Kong properties and have gone for Shenzhen properties, whose prices are still 50% lower than those in the Yuen Long area?

The exodus of Hong Kong buyers from the Hong Kong market, in our view, will undermine home demand and prolong the property market malaise. With the growing number of Hong Kong people working and living in the Pearl River Delta area, coupled with the improvement in our cross-border infrastructure link, we think such trend will only accelerate and be more prevalent in the coming years. Sadly, similar to the case of HSBC and the decision of other Hong Kong companies'

to move their back-up offices to the mainland, we could do nothing to stop this tidal wave.

## OUR VISIONS - THE PERPETUAL DOOM?

Are we spelling the perpetual doom for Hong Kong property? The writing is on the wall when we begin to see a raft of companies moving back to the Mainland, and Hong Kong companies seeking a listing in the China bourses instead of the Hong Kong stock market.

Actually this might be good news to those secondary homeowners who are battered with negative equities and slumping market liquidities. At least, in keeping their existing homes, they could still afford to buy a second one in Shenzhen, with a larger living space and which is only a half an hour away from Hong Kong.

What is our advice? For developers, they must pay attention to what we call this as a "migration towards inland" trend and its implication to the property market. We should be wiser this time, as we have already paid a hefty price in 1997.

For the Hong Kong Government, it is in the best interests of Hong Kong to hasten the pace for a stronger economic tie between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta region, which is the most prosperous region in China. The combined population of the two regions will have a population over 30 million people. For 1999, the GDP for the Pearl River Delta region was approximately at HK\$607bn whereas the figure for Hong Kong was HK\$810bn. A larger market place will be created upon combination of the two economies, big enough to fence off the competition from Shanghai.

If you have any comments, please email to Jim Yip at [jim@aisl.com.hk](mailto:jim@aisl.com.hk)





# SURVEYOR'S SURF

Stephen Chung, Zeppelin Real Estate Analysis Limited



Last year, the author had read about a start-up company involved in developing a technique that could "convey" smells (or fragrances if you like) via the computer and internet. Don't laugh, it's true and it was reported in a reputable newspaper. Don't ask how this was to be done or on what scientific principle it was based either. This year the author read again that this same start-up had run out of capital and thus the project was to be shelved. What a pity, we could have sampled a restaurant dish over the internet before we spend the time taking the trip there, thus reducing the chance for disappointment. On the other hand, it may be a blessing as well. Wonder what those intentional virus-senders would do if they could email nasty smells all over the world. Boy, even the thought of that stinks already.

In any event, we do not have to worry about that for now as you surf through these interesting, useful, informational or enlightening websites below:

a) <http://www.nlc.gov.cn>

This is the website of the **National Library of China** and contains a good description of its library content and huge databases. While on-line electronic material seems limited for the time being, it is a useful reference for finding applicable data and information for either academic or business purposes. It comes in both English and Chinese.

b) <http://www.chinainow.com>

This is a commercial website and it focuses on the travel, city life, and living etc. of several of the **largest cities in China** including Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou etc. For instance, you may obtain information on air tickets, tour packages, restaurants, city aspects, housing accommodation, and even schooling. Overall, this site may be a useful source for those who travel to Mainland China regularly.

c) <http://www.tdctrade.com/>

As some of you probably know already, this is the **Hong Kong Trade Development Council's website**. As its aim is to facilitate trade and business, it is a very good comprehensive source for obtaining data,

information and contacts on a variety of industries, businesses, and countries / regions, either directly or indirectly i.e. via website links. You may list your company there too though some form of subscription may apply.

d) <http://nar.realtor.com/home.htm>

This is the **National Association of Realtors' (NAR)** website. While being a predominantly NAR-member oriented service, it does contain some rough indicators and data on the USA housing market. It also offers links to other potentially useful publications. This site is useful for gauging the overall real estate market sentiment in the States.

e) [http://corp.bankofamerica.com/portal/portal/pres\\_template/display.jsp?path=fr/fr\\_home/content.xml](http://corp.bankofamerica.com/portal/portal/pres_template/display.jsp?path=fr/fr_home/content.xml)

Please excuse us for the cumbersome long URL yet this displays the econometric analyses done by the **Bank of America** direct thus saving some time having to click around through its homepage. Collectively, the analyses range from being USA-focused to more globally orientated. It also offers periodically updated economic indicators for various countries and economies. It is a good source for obtaining some macro data.

f) <http://www.infogoal.com/dmc/dmcdwh.htm>

This contains a useful list of links to websites and companies involved in **data mining**, warehouse, and decision support resources. You may also search for companies and consultants by various classifications, although it relates mostly to USA-based operations. It also features links to other website resources.

g) <http://www.geonomicsinc.com/>

This is a commercial company and it is involved in the development and production of desktop mapping solutions to assist in making strategic business decisions. One of its business products (or applications) involves a combination of USA retail data with geographical information including those on shopping plazas and

malls. Hence, retailers and retail real estate developers can have a better grasp of their respective markets in terms of demand, supply, allocation and competition. The site is useful for experiencing the combined power and capability of data and web techniques, and there are a few sample downloads or demos.

Are you a fan of the cartoon script 'Dilbert'? If so, and in case you don't know it yet, it also has an "official" website at <http://www.dilbert.com!> Not only do you get to view some cartoons (all the while pretending to be at work, if you like), there is also a "panic" button just in case your boss or superior happens to come by (your work cubicle). Fear not, for a WORD-like dummy letter OR an EXCEL-like spreadsheet would appear on your screen when you press the panic button. A word of caution though - your boss may be reading this too! ☹

## GPD APC FINAL ASSESSMENT 2001

Application forms for the Final Assessment are available for collection from the HKIS office, Suite 801, Jardine House, 1 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong, and must be returned to the Institute no later than **5:00 pm, Friday, 31 August 2001**.

The Written Assessment, Autumn 2001 of the APC Final Assessment in the General Practice Division will take place in early October 2001. The Final Report should be submitted in November. You will be informed of the exact date of submission in due course.

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