A luncheon talk titled, “Land Administration: Challenges for Professionals and Laymen Alike,” was successfully held on 21 February 2014 with more than 100 participants at the World Trade Centre Club Hong Kong. This was the second in a series of six luncheon talks organised as part of the activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the HKIS.

The GPD was greatly honoured to have the presence of Ms Bernadette Linn, JP., Director of Lands, as the speaker at this surveyors’ luncheon. In her speech, Ms Linn highlighted the challenges encountered by the Lands Department concerning land administration issues and effective communication to the general public.

Ms Linn also commented on the Pilot Scheme for Arbitration on Land Premium proposed during the Chief Executive’s recent Policy Address. It is a new government initiative intended to facilitate early agreements on land premiums, so as to speed up the development process and housing supply.

Arbitration on land premium involves a lot of complicated issues. Ms Linn briefed the attendees on the feasibility of introducing an arbitration mechanism and the various comments made to the proposed scheme from the public.

Ms Linn mentioned that the framework is currently being worked out and intended to announce its details in the middle of this year. Its contents include whether the scheme would be voluntary or mandatory, the threshold of a premium for which a dispute should go to arbitration, the number and selection of arbitrators, etc. On top of that, Ms Linn encouraged surveyors to provide more professional opinions on this subject.

At the end of the luncheon, we had a harmonic and enthusiastic Q&A session to express our views on the land administration policy to Ms Linn. Attendees appreciated this kind of lively interaction and communication between the government and the HKIS.
A tram party was organised on 17 February 2014 as one of the activities for celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the HKIS.

A total of 45 members including the President, Sr Simon Kwok, Vice President Sr Edward Au and Honorary Secretary, Sr Thomas Ho, joined in the two-hour event which began at 7.00 pm from Whitty Street Tram Depot in Western District, Hong Kong.

The cold and unsettled weather in the past few days gave way to a fine and warm evening, which was most suitable for experiencing a ride on a vintage open-top “Ding-Ding” tram. Senior and young members took in the sights of Hong Kong on two antique trams and enjoyed a 360-degree panoramic view along the route from Sheung Wan to Causeway Bay and then all the way back to Whitty Street.

It was a unique and memorable experience for everyone, and as you can see from the photos all members had a very enjoyable time.
What Francis said

I am honoured to have the opportunity to ‘wrap up’ my thought about the Institute after I left the post in late 2000.

Over the past 13 years, I constantly received feedback on the streamlined process initiated by the administrative office and effect of decisions made during my tenure. I heard appreciation from some past presidents that meetings were conducted in an amicable, effective, and smooth manner.

I recall that thorny issues that popped up then were no less than in recent years. For example, at that time, the government was setting up a ‘housing managers registration’ system. There were constant dialogues with the then-Housing Bureau on the HKIS involvement. On the accommodation aspect, the Institute’s lease at Prince’s Building was coming to the end. Consideration was being given to seek alternative premises or purchase accommodation on an “one-off” basis. The Institute eventually decided to rent an office nearby. Also, we helped to secure a ten-year tenancy for the “Professional Learning Centre” at the LDC site, The Centre.

My presidency was a few years after the change of sovereignty. Frequent contacts with the Mainland counter-parts were made. I had ample opportunities to give talks to universities and elaborated on the Institute’s mission to the relevant bureau/departments.

Some past presidents may agree that the monthly message was not easy to write, given our various work commitments and time constraints. However, I did enjoy writing essays at the back page of Surveyors Times on topics I liked (e.g. Chinese poems, Putonghua pronunciation, playing around with words, rationing certificates, used bus/train tickets, travel stories, etc.).

HKIS has been successful in taking a leading role in the Hong Kong property market. Our efforts and contributions are well-respected by the general public. The Institute maintains high professional standards as various divisions work together smoothly. There is, however, always room for improvement. Promotion of the surveyor’s role to the general public is a never-ending task. We need to give constructive advice on consultation documents and maintain various standards. We should be open-minded and forward-looking. I also hope that new-comers will gain more knowledge and skills from their predecessors and be aware of the importance of upholding ethics, be considerate, modest, and be responsible professionals who are prepared to serve.

Biography of Francis Ng BBS, FHKIS, FRICS, RSP (GP)

Francis joined the then-Crown Lands & Survey Office (now the Lands Department) as a Student Estate Surveyor in December 1971. He qualified as a professional surveyor in mid-1973. He remained working with the Lands Department until 2009, when he got retired as the Deputy Director/Specialist.

Presently, he is an Adjunct Professor at the City University of Hong Kong and also works as the Principal Consultant in Lawson David & Sung Surveyors Ltd.

For information, Francis was the President of the HKIS from 1999 to 2000. He was Chairman of the General Practice Division from 2009 to 2013.
Interview with The Hon. P.C. Lau (劉炳章) LegCo Member.

The President, Sr Francis Ng, as Chairman of a Morning Session, presented a souvenir to Mr. Luo Zhan Sheung, Deputy Chief Construction Committee, Hunan Province.

The guest of honour Dr Cheng Hon-kwan receives a souvenir from the President, Sr Francis Ng.

HKIS President, Sr Francis Ng (3rd from right) and GPD Chairman Sr Tony Tse (2nd from right) presenting a souvenir and HKIS publications to Madam Wu Sai Zhen of Shanghai Real Estate Appraisers Association.

From right to left: Sr Francis Ng, President, Sr Stephen Liu, Senior Vice President, Sr Tony Tse, GPD Chairman and Sr Richard Cheung, BSD Chairman, at a briefing during the Education and Careers Expo 2000.