

# When I was the President .....

我做會長的日子.....

30週年  
Anniversary

測量師三十年 專業社會邁向前  
30 Years of Surveying Service with Pride,  
For the Community's Betterment We Strive



**Sr Wong Bay**  
Past President (2010-2011)

It is true that sometimes it takes a tragedy to arouse the public's awareness of an issue. The collapse of the subdivided flats at Ma Tau Wai remains a depressing recollection today, yet it was a turning point for building safety and concern for the built environment in Hong Kong – a wakeup call and lesson learned the hard way.

The 451 Ma Tau Wai Road building collapse took place in January 2010. Taking up the President's Jewel for the 2010-2011 term meant shouldering the responsibility of rebuilding public confidence and the professional image of building surveyors after the fire in the backyard was extinguished.

## The Amiable Profession

The unfortunate event pushed us to work harder to enter buildings and apartments to gain better exposure to and help raise an awareness of the importance of building maintenance. Building surveys involve close examinations of buildings and face-to-face dialogue with their owners/occupants. In Cantonese we have a term for this: “入屋” (視察及家訪). In English, it literally means “entering the house” (home visits). Apart from surveying skills, we need communication skills and plenty of human touch. To me, the required attributes of a good building surveyor are diagnostic skills, updated equipment, and an ability to speak and communicate in the languages of all trades. That is why surveying is “the amiable profession”.

I'm proud of the work the HKIS BSD has done over the years to position itself as a collection of doctors and experts in building maintenance and repair. Surveyors who work in the maintenance sector need more respect, especially given the massive building stock present in a highly compact environment such as Hong Kong. Respect is not conferred by simply holding out your hands. It must be earned through one's consistent high quality work.

*Professional surveyors gained their social status over time by contributing their knowledge to society. With continued positive exposure and sensitivity to public and social affairs, I believe we are heading in the right direction. Teamwork is essential. In the maintenance sector we have a saying,*

“三分功夫七分人事,” which means if you have done the work correctly, you will score 30% of the mark, but must complete the other 70%, which is based on human touch, to obtain full satisfaction from providing the service. I take this opportunity to again thank my team of Council members for putting together the “Flat Inspection Guide” and implementing controls over the sale of new flats.

## For Younger Surveyors

“Never stop learning (Continuous Professional Development), and always contribute what you have learnt to the Profession and Society.” This is the only message I can recall from the official admission letter newly-minted professional surveyors got from the Institute congratulating them on their success. After retiring from the Housing Department, I now have more control of my own time. Building on the momentum of the HKIS Presidency, I now work at the University of Hong Kong, which gives me the perfect setting to share my vision for the profession. We must practise lifelong learning and make lifelong contributions to society!

There are voices out there saying we are settled in our comfort zone while the world is everchanging. Our zone is not getting any more comfortable. With the building industry diversifying into many branches such as green building initiatives, BEAM Plus, reviews of current laws, building information modeling, heritage projects, building awards, scholarships, etc., the HKIS needs new blood to support its presence in all these sectors while also balancing the work it is already engaged in to address social issues. More importantly, it needs fresh pairs of eyes to interpret things from new angles, and I appeal to you all to help us stay united and to continue advancing the profession.

Excellence sprouts from every discipline. I congratulate you for already being a part of our brand of excellence and hope that you will carry the good name of the HKIS with you wherever you go. ■

Striving for Excellence in the Surveying Profession,  
never stop learning, and always contribute.

- Wong Bay