



Special points of interest:

- **FAS is holding its "Radon Gas Remediation & Prevention Training Course" at Jury's Hotel, Ballsbridge, Dublin from 17th to 19th September, 2001. The course was developed in conjunction with Roscommon County Council and the C.I.F. The fee for attending is £450 and details can be obtained directly from FAS at (01) 6070618.**

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National Building Control Conference 2001 Rescheduled for October

The Irish Building Control Institute in association with the Department of the Environment and Local Government is pleased to announce that the fourth annual conference on building control will take place this year in Letterkenny on the 11th and 12th October. The theme of the conference is **"Building Control in the new Millennium: The Challenge of Change and Innovation"**.

The conference, which had to be cancelled earlier in the year due to the Foot and Mouth crisis, will present an opportunity for those involved

in building control throughout the state to gain a better understanding of the building control system and how it can meet the challenge of changes in standards, materials and the expectations of consumers.

The conference will be held over two days in the Holiday Inn, Letterkenny. Lunch and refreshments will be provided on both days, with the conference dinner on Thursday evening. A trade exhibition will also be held in conjunction with the conference.

Day 1 will address developments in national

legislation, the change to European standards and energy conservation.

Day 2 will include presentations on sustainable construction, the needs of people with disabilities and the role of the National Standards Association of Ireland and the Irish Agrément Board in assessing new products, materials and systems.

A distinguished panel of speakers will address the conference:

Michael McCarthy is Principal Officer in the Construction Section of

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Membership Subscriptions for 2001

It appears that some IBCI members did not receive a letter reminding them to pay their subscription for 2001. The subscription is a nominal sum, just £15, but helps to fund the day to day activi-

ties of the IBCI. Our thanks to those of you who have already paid.

To those that have not yet forwarded their payment, the Council are asking you to do so as soon

as possible. To facilitate this, a stamped and pre-addressed envelope is enclosed with this edition. Members are asked to enclose their payment when returning the members survey form. **(See page 3)**

National Building Control Conference 2001 Rescheduled for October

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the Department of the Environment and Local Government and a member of the Building Regulations Advisory Body.

Joe Twomey is a Building Surveyor and head of the Irish delegation to the EU Standing Committee on Construction. He is also a member of NSAI - Construction Industry Standing Committee (CISC). He is an expert on the Technical Guidance Documents and Building Control in general.

Patrick Minogue is an inspector in the Construction Section of the Department of Environment and Local Government. He is an expert on Part L and Part M.

Dr Phil Cornish is Head of Building Control Division, Development Department, Scottish Executive.

Gerry Kinsella is Access Officer with Comhairle, formerly the National Rehabilitation Board.

Dr Willie Crowe is Manager of the Irish Agrément Board.

David McCullough is the Principal Building Control Surveyor with Hartlepool Borough Council. He is a former lecturer in fire studies and statutory control of buildings, at the University of Teeside.

Trevor Martin is a past president of the UK Institute of Building Control. Until recently he worked with Belfast City Council Building Control and now works in the private sector.

The cost of attending the conference is £250 (£240 for IBCI members). Booking forms are attached to the conference brochure that has

been circulated to IBCI members. A separate form should be filled out for each participant and the booking form may be photocopied as required. Booking forms should be returned to:

**Irish Building Control Institute
P.O. Box 3667,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4.**

For further information contact:
Fineen O'Driscoll, Conference Director.

**Tel: (071) 56695
Fax: (071) 41118
Email: ibcireland@hotmail.com**

The conference is the main forum for Building Control in Ireland and all IBCI members and Building Control staff should attend.

Poor attention being paid to Part M by designers of new dwellings

IBCI members around the country report that dwelling designers appear to be paying little attention to the requirements of Part M.

Checks of commencement notices submitted during the first half of the year for dwellings where planning permission was applied for in 2001 are finding that a large majority have not taken account of the guidance given in the technical guidance document. Indications are that as much as 80% of dwelling designs checked did not make provi-

sions for level access at the main entrance to the dwelling or accessible WC compartments at entry level.

Despite all the debate and information campaigns held over the last year, it appears many designers are still unaware that dwellings are now included in the Part M net.

In some cases the people preparing drawings say they are ignoring the requirements at the request of their clients. Many owners, it seems, cannot be persuaded to drop their

desire for steps up to the front door. They are also reported to question the need for the larger accessible WCs on grounds that they don't know anybody who uses a wheelchair.

Designers need to be reminded of their obligation to design in accordance with the requirements of the building regulations. If better levels of compliance are to be achieved quickly, building control staff need to deal with these problems now while the requirements are still relatively new.

Will “Better Local Government” mean worse building control ?

With the recent introduction of the “Better Local Government” initiatives, many of our local authority based members are securing promotion in the rounds of interviews being held around the country. While we heartily congratulate our colleagues on their success, it appears that for many, furthering their career means taking up new posts outside the building control section. The question on the lips of many is will “Better Local Government” mean worse building control?

Reassignment of building control staff to other areas of local authority work will inevitably result in a loss of hard won expertise in the building control section. In other cases promoted persons remaining in building control are being assigned additional unrelated duties, thereby diluting the effectiveness of the section.

This trend is affecting both technical and administrative staff, but is a particular problem in the many rural local authorities that have few technical people in the build-

ing control section to begin with; sometimes only one individual. Without a structured career path within the local authority building control section, technical staff have no choice but to move out of the field if they are to improve their lot.

If this important area of local authority work is not to suffer, “Better Local Government” must be used as an opportunity to strengthen building control staff numbers rather than deplete them.

Consortium of European Building Control

The spring meeting of the Consortium of European Building Control was held in Edinburgh on 14th and 15th May. The meeting, hosted by the Scottish Executive and held in their offices at Victoria Quay, was formally opened by Sarah Boyak, MSP, Minister for Transport and Planning.

The CEBC is a forum for de-

bating issues affecting building control throughout Europe. At present, thirteen nations are represented at the consortium, with others expressing an interest to join. Irish interests are represented by the IBCI.

The meeting concentrated on new developments in legislation and work practices in each of the member countries.

Much time was given to discussions concerning the move to performance based regulations and the harmonisation of standards throughout the European Union. The hosts presented a paper on Building Control in Scotland.

The autumn meeting will be held in Paris and will deal with the impact of the growth in Fire Safety Engineering.

IBCI Membership Survey

During a meeting at the end of last year, the IBCI Council discussed how the Institute could better serve the interests of the members. During the course of the discussion it became obvious that in order to do that, we first needed to obtain more information about the people that make up our membership.

The members are drawn from a wide variety of disciplines, employments and experience. To ensure that the service given is relevant to the largest number of members, we must determine what their needs are.

To this end, it was decided to circulate a questionnaire to all

members asking for details of their qualifications, employment, experience, etc. The forms are being circulated to members along with this copy of the IBCI News. We would ask for your cooperation in helping us determine the profile of our membership by taking a few moments to fill in the form and return it in the envelope provided.

Reminder

Have you paid your subscription for 2001?

If you haven't, why not enclose it along with your completed membership survey form and return it in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope provided.

On site....

Providing adequate ventilation is an extremely important issue in the construction of modern dwellings. The use of tightly sealed double glazed windows and doors can lead to problems such as mould growth associated with condensation and stagnant air inside the dwelling. If these problems are to be avoided, in addition to adequate heating, the volume of air in the dwelling needs to be regularly changed.

For habitable rooms and utility rooms, TGD F: Ventilation recommends:

- Rapid ventilation via the opening section of a window, or similar, equivalent to 1/20th of the floor area, and
- Background ventilation via a vent opening having an area of 6500mm².

Many builders are now choosing to use window vents to provide the background ventilation. While using slotted window vents is a legitimate way to achieve the requirement, it should be remem-

bered that a single vent may not provide sufficient area on its own.

For structural reasons, window vents are usually situated in the top cross member of the opening section. The length of the vent is therefore determined by the width of the opening section. With many opening sashes designed to be about 500mm wide, the maximum vent area achievable is in the region of 4500mm². If such a vent is used, builders will either need to satisfy themselves that the lesser area is adequate for the room in question or provide additional ventilation.

Another ventilation related topic worth mentioning here is the mechanical ventilation of internal rooms such as bathrooms, shower rooms, wc's and small kitchen areas.

The recommendations for internal sanitary accommodation are that they be fitted with an extract fan running at a rate of 15 litres per second which continues to operate for 15 minutes after the room is vacated. In many

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ibcireland@hotmail.com

cases, building control inspections find that suitable fans are fitted, but do not operate for the required 15 minute overrun.

For an internal kitchen, intermittent mechanical extract ventilation should run at a rate of 60 litres per second or, if by means of a cooker hood, at 30 litres per second.

As stated at the outset, adequate ventilation is essential to ensure that modern dwellings perform satisfactorily in use. Building control officers should help limit the potential problems by keeping an eye open for proper ventilation.