

Branch Events

There is plenty going on around the country, whether in the form of CPD presentations, site visits or social events.

Central Scotland

Over 30 Women in Property members and guests enjoyed a luxurious Diamonds Evening in the showroom of wholesale jewellers Macintyres. It was fizz and nibbles all round, while beautiful and decadent jewellery was admired and tried on. A lucky few raffle prize winners were able to take a piece home.

Midlands

“Wolverhampton - One great city of opportunity” was the theme of a presentation hosted jointly with the CIOB. Stephen Catchpole, Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Development Company gave an overview of all the current and planned developments in Wolverhampton and the opportunities that lie within the city.

Members and guests gathered at Needham and James’ offices to hear about the vision of Wolverhampton Development Company (WDC), with 30,000 new jobs planned by 2031.



North East Satellite

65 guests were welcomed for an informative presentation by William Dawson of the Bank of England agency for the North East. Despite the bad news it relayed, the response to the presentation on the current economic situation was so positive, Mr. Dawson has agreed to come back to do a second presentation.

Solent Satellite

The new Solent Satellite Branch was launched in true nautical style aboard MV Princess Caroline at Ocean Village Marina, Southampton. Over 40 women climbed aboard for grog and victuals (drinks and canapés), hosted by new Satellite branch Chairman Louise James of Coffin Mew and Vice Chairman Michele Curran of Interserve.

South Wales Satellite

The South Wales satellite has been granted full branch status by the National Steering Group, taking effect from 1st March 2009 having participated in the Student Awards programme this year.

South West

During 2008 the South West Branch organised a series of sell-out site visits to showcase some of Bristol’s biggest developments, which were entitled “The Changing Face of ...”. These have included trips to an Academy School, Urban Splash’s Lake Shore residential development and the stylish new foyer development at Colston Hall. Members and guests enjoyed a very interesting tour of HDG Mansur’s £255 million Finzels Reach development at the former Courage Brewery site in central Bristol, which is being turned into a new city quarter for Bristol comprising 399 apartments, 400,000sq ft of offices and 87,000sq ft of shops and leisure facilities.



Thames Valley Satellite

Following a champagne reception sponsored by AKS Ward, guests were entertained at lunch at le Manoir aux Quat’ Saisons at the launch of the Thames Valley satellite by Sandi Rhys Jones who spoke with enthusiasm on the need for women to demonstrate visibility and entrepreneurship in order to achieve success. Guests were later given a tour of Raymond Blanc’s famous kitchens.



Yorkshire and North East

Nabarro LLP Solicitors hosted a seminar given by Creative Sheffield. Peter Thompson gave an enlightening presentation which focussed on how the city centre has developed over the last decade and the exciting plans for its future regeneration.

Aiming High

Nicola Barclay, former Chairman of Central Scotland branch, has left Macfarlane Homes to set up her own company, nb:land, a land development consultancy specialising in the facilitation of land acquisition and disposal throughout Scotland.

Carol Bell of Robinson Low Francis LLP and Chairman of the South East branch won the Property category in the Women in the City Awards. Judges looked for exemplars who excel within their chosen profession and, at the same time, champion the progress of women and make a real difference.



Sonja MacGregor has been appointed as regional Business Development Manager for CLS Ltd, for the North of England and Scotland. CLS are providers of defective title insurance solutions.

Laura Spencer has joined Paragon Management, the specialist fit out and refurbishment contractor, as New Business Manager based in London.

Mission Statement

The Association of Women in Property seeks to enhance the profile of women in the still male dominated construction and property sector, both by providing a dynamic forum for women in these professions and by encouraging and developing newcomers.

For further information on the Association contact Fiona Alfred, Executive Director on 0207 603 4746 or email f.alfred@btinternet.com

www.wipnet.org

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news

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Chairman’s column

by Maria Francké

It’s ten months into my year as Chairman and I could never have predicted what an incredible, turbulent, challenging year this would be.

Many of our members have never experienced the kind of trauma in the property markets and the wider economy with which we are now faced. Fortunately some of us did go through the downturn of the early 1990s and others still remember the difficult markets of the early 1980s, so our corporate memory retains some of the lessons of previous property market corrections. However, we are all now acutely aware that the global crisis in the availability and price of credit and the fragility of the entire banking system are unparalleled in modern times.

In this climate, I am absolutely certain that our Association is more valuable to our members now than it has ever been. Many branches across the UK are seeing their members being let go. If this is happening to you, please be aware of the ways in which Women in Property can help. We have an extensive database, people who share our commitment to supporting each other. We have already had instances of members finding

new positions through their contacts within the Association, which is tremendously gratifying for all concerned.

The importance of networking and professional development is more pertinent now than ever. Make the most of the excellent events run by your branch, both for honing professional skills through CPD and the networking opportunities they provide. And remember the free mentoring sessions that are being organised across the country, where you could meet someone who will make a real difference to you in the months ahead.

Combined, these opportunities for development represent a pretty powerful package for members. Now is the time to make sure you’re up to speed with the market, to help gain professional know-how and business contacts. As we welcome in a new year, maximising every opportunity is critical and it makes good business sense, in readiness for the upturn even if that may be some time coming.



Maria Francké
Chairman of Women in Property and
Head of Planning and Development
Drivers Jonas, Scotland

Cover girls



On 5th December, Building Magazine ran a feature celebrating the fact that five of the industry’s biggest bodies are now headed by women. As the Association’s Chairman, Maria Francké was invited to take part alongside her chosen rising star, Sarah Hopkins who was a national finalist in the 2007 National Student Awards and is now in her final year at Kingston University. If you missed the feature you can find it at www.wipnet.org.

How to stay positive in the current market

Fiona Westwood is a business development and training consultant who has led seminars for Women in Property.



It is difficult to remain positive in the current market when so much of what is happening is beyond our direct control. Morale may well be at a low ebb over the coming months with people worrying about their jobs, pensions and income streams.

Women in Property in the UAE

Members from the UK are joining together in the UAE to form an international satellite with events in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Initial soundings are favourable and it is hoped that we will be sending out a newsflash heralding a UAE launch with a Dubai event in the New Year. This coincides with a recent visit by Caroline Kingsley to the Big Five exhibition as a member of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Overseas Trade Mission and Cathy Stewart's role at Woods Bagot expanding to cover the Middle East.

The good news for women in the industry is, that despite the disparity between the numbers of men and women in the Middle East's construction and property industry, companies are beginning to address this. For further details regarding international membership please contact Lara Farey on lara.farey@ntlworld.com.

New web for WiP

You will no doubt be glad to hear that the Women in Property website will soon take on a new lease of life. At the time this newsletter goes to print, three teams of web designers will be pitching their ideas to the Marketing Committee. Turn around will be swift, the successful team being tasked with meeting a go live date in March 2009.

Here are a number of practical ways to stay positive in 2009:

- 1 Leaders and managers must communicate openly about what the business is doing and what it plans to do.
- 2 Every aspect of the business must be looked at – finances, suppliers, pricing etcetera to reduce operational costs without damaging service quality.
- 3 Introduce projects to improve working methods, so that people feel they are learning rather than becoming stale and de-motivated.
- 4 Keep in regular contact with clients by offering a 'free property health check'. Whenever possible, go out to see them.
- 5 Do more pro-bono work to help young professionals, in particular, develop their skills.
- 6 Continue to build multi-discipline contacts, offering referrals and talking to them about new ways to help clients.

These are some suggestions based on the new revised edition of Fiona's book, 'Accelerated Best Practice – implementing success in professional firms' out in paperback at £24.99. WiP members can

purchase specially discounted copies at £15 each including post and packing. Simply email Fiona at: faw@westwood-associates.com and she will send them by return.

Reaching them while they're young

Inspiring girls and young women to consider a career in property and construction is a motivating experience, as many members have found. Across the country, WiP volunteers are attending school workshops and careers talks. Two larger scale events held recently include the O2 Roadshow, run by the South East branch and a major careers event in Leeds, attended by the Yorkshire and North East branch.

The O2 Roadshow

Following the success of a similar event in November 2007, the South East branch of WiP took 120 students from Lilian Baylis Technology School, a mixed comprehensive in Lambeth, to the recently opened Matter nightclub at the O2 arena.

The programme included a technical tour followed by a brainstorming session where students were placed in groups and tasked by the nightclub owners to produce documents to support the design, planning and costing of a fit out project of their VIP area.

Jon Wilson, a teacher from the school, said, "Alhaji was just one of a great many students who came to see me to say how much they enjoyed Wednesday's activities. It was great that students with a wide variety of interests and expertise, including design, accounts, planning, presentation and management were able to find an opportunity to show off and develop these skills."

Leeds Careers Fair

The Yorkshire and North East branch were invited to take a stand at the November careers fair organised by igen/Leeds Careers at the Royal Armouries. Armed with high viz vests, hard hats and the inevitable pink wellies, volunteers fielded questions from 28 Yorkshire schools and nearly 2,500 students over the two days.

A number of school careers advisers have requested follow-up visits to their schools



over the next twelve months. Importantly, links are now being established with career advisory departments through our leaflet "Jobs for the Girls" and other careers information given in the goody bags sponsored by many different organisations including Drivers Jonas, the former English Partnerships, Pinsent Masons and Heath Lambert.



Reaching across Europe and beyond

In June 2008 Maria Francké was invited to represent WiP at the Colliers EMEA Conference in Copenhagen. Inspired by this and by the fact that WiP has only reached out to a fraction of our potential as an association, we hope to expand our membership across Europe. Though we serve a market of several thousand property professionals across the UK, we are now looking to expand our influence into Europe and to foster new working relationships with similar women's networking groups.

In December Woods Bagot hosted a reception for Christine Wolff MD Europe of URS Deutschland GmbH and a leading member of our German counterpart, Immofrauen, which wishes to establish links with WiP. International Membership of Women in Property is our next objective.

Awards 2009 underway

With the success of two years of National Student Awards behind us, plans are well underway for the 2009 Awards. We look forward to returning to those universities who have nominated students in the past as well as those who are joining the programme for the first time in particular those with courses in Architecture, Engineering and Project Management disciplines. It won't be long before the first students go before their regional judging panels, followed by regional award ceremonies in the spring and early summer. For further information on the National Student Awards, visit www.wipnet.org.

