

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Preparing for the worst

A new organisation hopes to get surveyors into disaster-prone zones before a crisis occurs. **Virginia Matthews** reports

Graduates looking for a career in the built environment already have a plethora of opportunities to work abroad in sophisticated markets as diverse as Japan, Europe or the US.

While there is big money to be made working for a cash-rich global hotel speculator with its sights on the Middle East, or a builder with new waterfront apartments on the Mediterranean in mind, an increasing number of surveyors are looking to the voluntary sector so they can help in the developing world.

For the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors,

THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI PROMPTED IMMEDIATE OFFERS OF HELP FROM SURVEYORS

disaster management in vulnerable countries is climbing up the priority list fast.

The Indian Ocean tsunami on Boxing Day 2004 prompted immediate offers of help from surveyors in the affected region. Many others wanted to get involved, but the volunteer base was at the time uncoordinated.

As a result the RICS launched its Major Disaster Management Commission or MDMC, to meet the need for more building professionals in areas prone to natural disasters.

Karen Gardham, deputy director of the MDMC, is helping spearhead BuildAction, an initiative for volunteers

which takes a lasting approach to reconstruction in countries where hurricanes, tornadoes or floods are relatively common.

Aimed at bringing together industry and humanitarian expertise, the initiative, which is being discussed at the MIPIM property exhibition in Cannes this month, wants professionals brought in before disasters hit.

"The earthquake which hit California in 2003 killed two and injured 40," says Gardham. "Compare that with the similarly intense earthquake which hit Iran just four days later. That killed 40,000 people because of the poor quality of buildings over there."

Although donations pour in from the West when disaster strikes, the example of the Boxing Day tsunami showed there was a lack of professional input in post-disaster reconstruction, says Gardham.

"After the tsunami, the charities involved had so much money that they engaged in activities such as large-scale house building, that were outside their usual mandate, so the work was poorly handled," she says.

RICS's aim is that much of the work would be undertaken by teams of volunteers from different building specialisms, would focus on humanitarian relief in a disaster-recovery area and long-term reconstruction work.

Beyond the initial concerns of disaster management and the need to find shelter for thousands of displaced people, surveyors can also offer concrete help to minimise the impact



Water world: the aftermath of the floods in Bolivia earlier this year, where MapAction's surveying skills proved invaluable AFP/GETTY IMAGES

of future disasters. By assessing overall structural stability, they help to increase the long-term resilience of buildings.

"The skills we'd need would be those of generic surveying, rather than coping with the aftermath

of disaster, but we would, of course, provide training in the basics of humanitarian practice," says Gardham.

The skills required would, she says, include crisis planning, assessing damage, dealing with land tenure issues and mapping local rental markets for displaced people, as well as overall project management.

The RICS Commission, which has already canvassed some of the major international surveying firms on the initiative, is confident that its new approach to disaster management will prove a great lure for some of the industry's top talent.

Says Gardham: "Secondments to this type of work could prove highly desirable in terms of recruitment and retention, as well as providing training and development for many professional staff. Early interest from firms has illustrated a widespread commitment to social responsibility in the industry."

'I've visited 10 countries in the last two months'

Barry Cox, 29, is associate director and head of business space at DTZ Thailand

Having grown up on a dairy farm, I had always had an interest in rural property, and after leaving school at 18, I went to work for a rural surveying practice in Yeovil, Somerset, before beginning my BSc in rural resource management at Reading University.

After completing my Masters course - a one-year, "fast track" MSc conversion course in commercial real estate - I needed experience in commercial office buildings in London and joined DTZ.

Having worked there for five years, I embarked last year on a three-year, full-time secondment to the firm's Bangkok office, where my role is to advise international corporate clients looking to acquire offices or industrial

accommodation in Thailand. I also advise clients on real estate opportunities in the emerging markets of Vietnam and Cambodia, a key part of my role being to assess how DTZ can best assist them in acquiring, rationalising or disposing of surplus space.

While this can be great fun, it is also a big challenge - the property markets in developing countries are often much less developed and transparent than in the UK and most things take far longer to complete than they would back home.

Some of my current projects include advising Cambodia's largest telecommunications company on a 10-year real estate strategy, representing an American client building a bespoke, 300,000 sq ft IT manufacturing facility in Vietnam and working with a Singapore-based investor looking to purchase a Bangkok office block.



It is often said that property is a people business and having worked in the field for some years, I've come to realise that the entire basis of the property industry rests on forging good personal relationships.

It is very easy to become entrenched in your daily job, but working in surveying has given me the chance to explore another continent, understand many different markets and visit 10 different countries in just the last two months.

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL CAREERS

Making movies, designing golf courses... surveyors crop up in surprising places, says **Anne Giacomantonio**

'We use our skills in avenues such as the film industry'



Simon Barnes (above), 60, is managing director of Plowman Craven

I try to look at chartered surveying and geometric surveying in a slightly different way. We use our measuring skills in different ways, in interesting avenues such as the movie industry and animation, forensics and 3D models. We were one of the first surveying companies to adopt the technology and it's really only come about in the last three or four years.

One of the issues for a scene of a crime is to gather enough accurate reliable data, with integrity, quickly. This enables the police to leave the scene knowing they have got all they need. What we do is like an instant model. For situations such as the Diana enquiry we can take



our equipment there and take measurements very quickly.

We got our work in the film industry through our forensic work. One of our clients saw us using the technology and said this could be interesting to use in films.

There will always be a place for measuring bridges and roads and fields but for the general public it doesn't hold the same interest as James Bond.

It's all measurements. It doesn't matter to us if we are measuring the

head of Daniel Craig (pictured above), the peaks and troughs in his face or a field. It's all a matter of scale.

It's very difficult to budget forensic work for obvious reasons but I think it will grow. What we are doing is migrating the technology, skills, 3D animation and "wow" factor that we are doing in the film work into the roads and railways. Projects get held up from misunderstandings with drawings, so if it can all be seen together in a 3D picture that can help prevent any delays.

'In surveying terms, we survey the chattels of the land'

James Lewis (right), 36, is a director at Bamfords auctioneers and valuers

We started Bamfords in 2002 and now we are in the top 15 in the country. In surveying terms we survey the chattels of the land. We probably process about 1,500 lots a week.

I have appeared on the BBC TV shows *Flag It!* and *Cash in the Attic*. At first I said, no sorry, I can't think of anything worse than appearing on TV, no thank you. About two weeks later I was made redundant. I wrote back and said, actually do you mind if I just come for a chat? They had a screening day, I was terrified. They picked three of us out 100. It's about making the contributor relax. They have got to be seen to be enjoying it other wise there is no point. It's also not being too stuffy about things.

The most special experience I had was going on the radio in Derby and talking about a rare 1936 Rupert Bear annual that had made £3,500. An elderly lady rang in live on air to say she had one and was it worth anything. She had taken it out of its box in 1936, looked at it, put it back and never looked at it since. I told her it would certainly make £5,000. She started to cry and said I could have it!

She came to the showroom and decided to sell it. I was the auctioneer and she sat in the second row. Half way through the bidding she started to cry.



Eventually it went for £7,200. The guy who bought it, in the middle of the auction he came over to the lady after seeing her reaction, and gave her a big

hug. There was a round of applause. That for me is the best. There are lots of things that have made £100,000 but that's a special one.

'It's a fantastic landmark and everyone can identify it'



Richard Baldwin (right), 49, is a managing partner at Davis Langdon, Europe

I was the project partner on the refurbishment of the Royal Festival Hall at the South Bank Centre in London. It finished last summer.

The Queen came along to reopen it and sat in the very same box as she did when it was opened all those years ago with her parents.

It was a great project and great to be involved in something your parents used to go along to. It's a fantastic landmark and everybody can identify it. I was in Sydney last week at our international board meeting, and we were all marvelling at the Sydney Opera House. On the tour they mentioned the Royal Festival Hall (pictured above). It's quite



weird, suddenly you are all those miles away and they are talking about a project that you worked on.

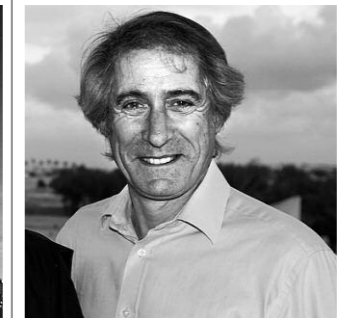
I am currently working on the Pinnacle. It will be the tallest building in the City. I can say I am

working on the tallest building in the City but the tallest building in London, which our firm is also working on, is the Shard.

We are currently doing the demolition work. The Pinnacle's nick name is the helter skelter, the reason being is that it has a twisting form to it. It's going to be an amazing icon. The plan is called the central London cluster. A kind of cluster of tall buildings and the pinnacle is going to be the one at the centre.

We are working on the proposed new extension to the Tate Modern. Tate 2. We are right in the early feasibility stages of planning. Likewise with the British Museum North West development project. It's a brand new gallery and lab space for the Museum. There are big things on the horizon.

'I get to play the first round on the courses I work on'



Richard Wax (left), 64, is a chartered surveyor specialising in the golf industry

I have been specialising in golf for about 25 years. I have visited over 1,000 potential sites, 30 of which I have built. I would say I have been from the Caribbean to India and then from Finland to South Africa. I am at the top end of the industry. It's not just a matter of taking on any

old golf course. We are looking at building golf courses which will be around for the next 100 years.

I don't spend a massive amount of time on site but I go back frequently, about once a month. I would say projects are a five-year involvement. At present I am focused on The Legend, a new course on a 50,000-acre safari resort north of Johannesburg, and Caesarea, a complete rebuild of the only 18-hole course in Israel. Both are due to open in spring 2009.

I am advising on every aspect of the golf development, from the real estate to the hotel and clubhouse. It's way beyond the golf. It really is a complete consulting.

I get to play the first round on the course that I work on. I hold a number of course records. That is a great pleasure. I had a wonderful year at The Grove, in North London as the golf course was playable a year before the hotel was open. Three years after it opened we had Tiger Woods (pictured left) winning the American Express World Golf Championships. That was amazing and the course was so young to host a world event. That was a special year.

Every year I go to the professional golf association in Florida and test the latest equipment and see all the latest GPS gadgets. It's way beyond surveying.

In surveying you are your own referee, the same way as in golf you are your own referee.



SAVING LIVES IN BOLIVIA

Late in January, a team from MapAction - billed as "the most experienced emergency mapping organisation in the world" - was deployed to Bolivia in response to the country's severe floods.

Working with a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team, MapAction volunteers had, by early February, mapped the locations of over 9,000 people whose homes had been displaced by flood water and needed urgent help. In all, more than 240,000 people are believed to have been affected since the government declared a state of emergency.

A non-governmental organisation with bases in the UK, Germany and the Caribbean, MapAction harnesses geographical information systems (GIS) to pinpoint up-to-date information on natural disasters. Its rapid response to floods or fires, with volunteers being dispatched within hours, can, it believes, "make a crucial difference in delivering humanitarian aid to the right place".

Combined with satellite location systems, GIS technology allows highly trained volunteers - many of them professional surveyors, geographers and scientists - to produce data,

images and detailed maps of unfamiliar terrain for use by relief agencies on the ground.

Between emergency missions, MapAction, which has partnerships with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UK's Department for International Development, also delivers training in GIS to disaster management agencies around the world, helping to build sophisticated mapping skills in the most vulnerable countries.

Its volunteer base, who are on hand 365 days a year, have all received extensive training in disaster response.