

IBP Regional Journalism Awards Launch 'A resounding success'

The Manchester launch of IBPs inaugural regional journalism awards scheme was judged 'a resounding success' by participants and sponsors alike.

Held at the truly spectacular venue of The Lowry Galleries at Salford Quays on Thursday, October 27, the awards ceremony, hosted by popular Manchester television and music personality, Tony Wilson, proved an impressive showcase for regional journalism in the North West and provided a valuable complementary event to the IBP National Journalism Awards Scheme to be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in London's Park Lane on Thursday, November 24.

The awards, made for high quality journalism on issues primarily affecting the North West region, comprised four categories: **best** regional article in a national newspaper; regional article in a national business magazine; article in a regional newspaper or business magazine and articles in property supplements.

The award for best regional article in a national newspaper was won by Helen Carter of The Guardian for her article on the regeneration of East Lancashire.

The award for the best article in a Regional Newspaper/Business Magazine was won by Paul Unger, freelance journalist, for his 'Regeneration Game' column in North West Business Insider magazine. In this category Larry Neild of the Liverpool Daily Post was highly commended for his article in the Post on the vision for the Baltic Triangle area of the city.

David Hayward won the award for Best Article in a National Business Magazine Writing in Construction News, for his article on the refurbishment of Manchester's Rylands Library. Heather Grieg-Smith of Property Week was also highly commended in this category for her article on regional super casinos.

David Quinn of Estates Gazette won the award for a series of articles in a Property Supplement for his Manchester Up-date covering topical issues in the Manchester property market.

In this category Jill Burdett of the Manchester Evening News was also highly commended for her regular 'Homes Supplement'.

The awards were judged by a top quality regional panel comprising:

- Carol Ainscow, Chairman of Artisan Holdings
- Rupert Goddard, Associate Director of Aedas Architects
- Mike Homer, Development Director of AMEC
- Elliot Lewis-Ward, Area Manager for English Partnerships
- Stuart Lyell, Project Director at Allied London Properties
- Andrew Shaw, Head of Agency at CB Richard Ellis
- Robert Shaw, Chief Executive Castlewood Developments
- Andrew Stokes, Chief Executive of Marketing Manchester and Tony Wilson of Granada TV

Commenting on the judging and the quality of entries, **Carol Ainscow** said: "Our regional media give commercial organisations in the North West a voice to try to attract further investment into our region. We are delighted to be involved in an initiative like this and to have the opportunity to recognise the excellent work the media do to inform the public of work on the built environment. The quality of entries was excellent."

At the conclusion of the awards ceremony, IBP CEO, **Gerald Bowey**, said: "A great deal of hard work went into launching our inaugural regional awards scheme and I wish to express my warmest thanks to participants, judges, sponsors and FD Thames staff for their local knowledge and regional contacts which helped to make this event such a success and pave the way for a bigger and better awards scheme in 2006."



A group shot of the winners & commendations from left:

Jill Burdett (Manchester Evening News)
Larry Neild (Liverpool Daily Post)
Paul Unger (Freelance)
Heather Greig-Smith (Property Week)
Host: Tony Wilson, David Quinn (Estates Gazette)
Helen Carter (The Guardian)
David Hayward (Construction News)

Continued high quality of journalism impresses judges

Entries for the 2005 National Journalism Awards Scheme have easily maintained the very high quality that is the hallmark of these prestigious awards and which makes winning them such a valuable addition to successful journalists' career CVs.

The awards will be presented at the National Journalism Awards Presentation Dinner to be held at the Four Seasons Hotel in London's Park Lane on Thursday, November 24.

The Guest of Honour will be Luke Johnson, Chairman of Channel 4 Television Corporation and the host will be Peter Murray, Past President of IBP, Chairman of Wordsearch and a former Editor of Building Design.

Judges, meeting at The Building Centre, Store Street, on Monday, October 17, repeatedly referred to continued high standards of

journalism, imaginative writing and the wide variety of subject matter covered, showcasing design, construction and property journalism at its very best.

In the Architectural Journalist category they welcomed "a bumper crop of quality journalism" while in the new category of Architectural Critic of the Year they encountered writing "as intelligent as it was intelligible" and rare balance and insight in writing on a vast range of topical issues.

Writing of such standards marked the Construction Journalist of the Year category as to make it extremely difficult to select a winner. Meanwhile in the News Reporter of the Year category a new innovation was identified - the first reported use of the Freedom of Information internet website.

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Conversely in the Feature Writer of the Year category it was astute political sensitivity in dealing with difficult subjects that stood out.

The Business/Financial category was marked by evidence of good old-fashioned 'scoops' while in the Commercial Property Writer category the best of the submissions clearly demonstrated the very high quality of the UK property press.

The emphasis in the Housing Journalist category was on strong visual presentation while in the Residential Property writer sector strong headlines and powerful intros dominated.

In the key category of Young Journalist of the Year the judges praised the "energy, drive and enthusiasm" demonstrated by the entries and issued a tongue in cheek warning to established construction writers

to "start looking over their shoulders" at the new competition snapping at their heels.

In the Weekly Magazine category, the judges quite simply recorded that all the entries were of excellent quality, once again making it difficult to select an overall winner. As for the non-weekly magazine category phrases like "beautifully designed and written, "a truly terrific product" characterised the judges' comments.

It was particularly gratifying to see, in the IBP Journalist of the Year category the judges' manifest pleasure of what was placed before them, finding the entries demonstrating building and property journalism in Britain at its very best.

All of which should make for an exciting evening on November 24!

Transport Crisis Looms say experts

The title of the parliamentary seminar included a strategically placed question mark - 'Transport in Crisis?' - but the consensus among the transport experts, politicians and journalists present seemed to be that if transport throughout Britain was not already in crisis then it soon would be if urgent action were not taken.

The seminar, held at the House of Commons, sponsored by the All-Party Parliamentary Built Environment Group and organised by the International Building Press, was attended by a wide range of representatives from local authorities, trade and professional bodies, individual contractors and transport companies, politicians and the construction and transport media.

The morning session, held in Committee Room 10 and chaired by Lord Howie of Troon and Michael Clapham M.P., featured a top-quality team of transport experts - David Sterry, Chairman of the Transport Group of the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA); Keith Miller, Director of Major Projects for the Highways Agency; Chris Welsh, Head of Campaigns at the Freight Transport Association; Joe Weiss, Strategic Transportation Director at the Corporation of London and Debbie Hewitt, Director at RAC Rescue.

The panel of journalists questioning them comprised Paul Finch, Editor, Architectural Review; Aaron Morby, Editor of Construction News; Denise Chevin, Editor of Building and Antony Oliver, Editor of New Civil Engineer, all representing the principal journals reporting on the construction, development and servicing of transport systems throughout Britain.

Gerald Bowey, Chief Executive Officer of IBP, kicked off the debate when he recalled that a year ago IBP members had been told by the then Transport Minister, Tony McNulty, that it was not a question of whether the key Cross Rail project across London would be built but when and how. Since then no measurable progress had been made and this was indicative of the transport problems facing London.

This opening set the tone for the wide-ranging and lively debate that characterised the morning session. The experts clearly felt that there was a serious lack of long term planning of national and regional transport systems by both central and local government and the key transport agencies; that funding provision was ill directed and targeted; that better management of existing systems was needed including greater use of state of the art technology and that transport policy needed to be 'de-politicised' and taken out of the Treasury's current accounts.

The journalists probed them on how systems could best be improved and over the intensive two-hour debate, a six-point policy package emerged for future Government action:

1. A long-term strategy for the improvement and development of national transport systems on roads, rails and in the air, needed to be put in place as soon as possible;
2. Government funding should be better-directed and targeted towards priority projects both nationally and regionally and greater access should be permitted for companies and agencies for funding from the money markets;
3. The construction industry and key transport agencies should develop a stronger and more effective voice to get their messages over to Government and their advisers;
4. There should be much more 'blue skies thinking' and the development of new transport innovations to meet the transport challenges of the future;
5. Better management of existing transport systems was needed to maximise the facilities already in place, including the much wider use of up to date technology, and
6. Urgent progress was needed on key projects such as Cross Rail in London instead of interminable studies and inquiries, which effectively stifled development.

Two key quotes, from the many dozens made by the experts and journalists taking part in the morning session; One from Paul Finch: "What we are looking at is the systemic failure of Government policy over a long period of time." and from Joe Weiss: "Nowhere in the Labour Party Manifesto for the last election can I find the 'T' word (for transport!). If Paul Finch's remark seemed glaringly self-evident, Joe Weiss's was quite revelatory.

After lunch on the Terrace in the House of Commons, sponsored by Lord Howie, permitting valuable networking opportunities for delegates with experts and journalists, the afternoon session - 'The political perspective' - was held in the Grand Committee Room, which acts almost as a reserve Parliamentary Chamber.

In the perverse way that events can sometimes work, a crucial Parliamentary Debate on Railtrack had been suddenly scheduled for the afternoon of the seminar and this meant that the formidable Gwyneth Dunwoody, Chair of the Commons Select Committee on Transport, was unable to take her expected place on the M.P.s panel. Since the Conservatives had earlier declined a place on the panel, it was left to Dr. John Pugh, M.P. the Liberal Democrats spokesman on Transport, to hold the political fort - a task he performed with both charm and skill and to the general acclaim of delegates present.

Question Masters for the afternoon session were: Dick Murray, Transport Correspondent of the London Evening Standard; Giles Barrie, Editor of Property Week, Ty Byrd, Editor, Transport Professional and Clive Branson, Editor, Commercial Property Register. Chairmen were Bill Olnier M.P., Deputy Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Built Environment Group and Lord Davies of Coity.

John Pugh said the Government's instinct when dealing with transport policy was to hold a policy review to get themselves off the hook of taking key decisions. But urgent problems of traffic congestion, environmental pollution and health and safety affecting existing transport systems were looming and need equally urgent attention.

He said two principal solutions were 'on the table' - we could either try to build our way out of our problems or we could seek ways further to maximise our use of existing transport capacity. Either way, he warned, transport projects were 'slow burn' and, in the face of demands for spending on schools, hospitals and housing, could all too easily be put on the back slow burner.

During the debate it emerged that Regional Transport Boards, about which very little had been heard since their inception, were up and running, at least in some regions and Ian Dowling of CECA expressed concern that further delays in improving transport infrastructure could result from their operation.

Once again key quotes stood out from the cut and thrust of the debate: from Dr. Pugh on the problems of traffic congestion: "The evidence is that people are happy to move from car to tram but not so happy to move between car and bus so in the North West local authorities are busy trying to make their buses look like trams!".

From Ty Byrd on the general political attitude to transport policy: "I detect a total lack of political will on the part of Government."

In summary the two sessions of the seminar demonstrated clearly that transport in Britain in 2005 and beyond was facing a crisis and that urgent solutions needed to be found. To apply Gerald Bowey's opening remarks on delays to Cross Rail in London to the wider problems of transport in Britain in the future: "It is not whether there is going to be a crisis in transport - it is when, and how we try to overcome it."

Even after a fascinating and lively exchange of views that took place on October 24 in the Houses of Parliament, it is far from easy to see where the much-needed solutions are going to come from.