

Welcome to the Summer Edition of our regular update on the work of the Inverness Architectural Association (IAA).

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News

Student Award

Jim Alexander and IAA President, Calum Maclean visited Scott Sutherland School of Architecture on 6th June to assess the work of the Degree Students and select a winner of the IAA Student Award.

The work, as ever, was thought provoking however in the end there was one stand out project and congratulations go to this years winner, Scott Doig, for his project for a nursing home in Aberdeen.

Recruitment

We would like to thank all those who have come forward with offers of assistance over the past few weeks, following our recent mailing.

If you would like any further information please contact me at; c.maclean@thomasmunro.co.uk

November CPD

Plans are underway for our November CPD event.
This will be a full day event taking place on Friday the 11th November.

Our new RIAS President, Sholto Humphries, will be coming along to say a few words and talk to members formally and informally about the mood of the profession and issue of concern to IAA members.

Details will follow but mark it in your diary now!

Raasay Trip

The IAA intend to hold our September meeting in the West, combining it with a quick social and a tour of the award winning Raasay Hall, by Dualchas.

We would like to invite members in Skye and the West to come along for the event.

Tuesday 13th September 2011.
Ferry Departs from Sconser at 1300 hrs returning 1700 hrs
(£5.65 for foot passengers)

To help us organise catering and transport on Raasay please email us if you would like to come along.

c.maclean@thomasmunro.co.uk

Debate

There are 250 architects in the IAA area and there are as many views on what the IAA represents and what it should be doing! Through many various visits to RIAS headquarters to perform my duties, I come across a wide range of views from our colleagues in different chapters.

To some, the membership of the RIAS / IAA is a badge that presents an image to clients of professionalism and quality of service that sets us apart from others. The way that architects conduct themselves when dealing with highly complex projects, financed by others. Composure and objectivity are the desired characteristics then.

But Architecture (with a capital A) is, of course, also about design. For some of our members this is what sets us apart from planners, technicians engineers, etc. Nobody else can do what we do, we should therefore focus on promoting the value of good design to clients. Imagination and passion being the order of the day.

Another view is that the RIAS / IAA represents technical expertise, providing clients with access to specialist knowledge and experience which they are unable to gain elsewhere. Carbon reduction is pushing the technology of building fabric to new performance standards and potentially greater risk of failure. Our existing buildings need to be handled with great care and attention to detail. We need to take control of the process and protect our clients and the environment from the consequences of poor advice and construction through greater regulation.

Related to this, is a view that the RIAS / IAA should provide technical back up and business support, through CPD and accreditation schemes, to enable practices to maintain and develop their expertise.

There is demand for a more commercial approach. The RIAS / IAA should be marketing the profession aggressively, drumming up business and putting the squeeze on our competitors.

For others, the RIAS / IAA should be lobbying national and local government to promote architects and architecture. This of course this also depends on your view of what architects and architecture are about! See above.

The RIAS / IAA also performs a collegiate / social role. Providing a support network to practitioners, an opportunity to share experiences, reflect on the changing nature of the profession and a mechanism to let off some steam.

Unfortunately, like the nature of design itself, some of these competing views cannot be fully reconciled. We could leave it at that and just pursue the particular approach that suits ourselves as individuals (and regrettably this is what many are choosing) but whatever your point of view this approach can only diminish the particular characteristic you value.

The only way to protect the aspects of the profession that are important to you, whatever they maybe, is by demonstrating to the outside world that there is a substantial body of peers, that also recognise and espouse the same values. Somewhere a thread needs to be found which can tie these competing views together into a coherent vision for our profession.

Through the development of our CPD programme, IAA Awards and engagement with the local authority, the IAA provides an opportunity to address some of these competing demands at a local level. Our views feed directly into the policies and activities of the RIAS at a national level.

Everyone is welcome to get involved and in doing so, you will ensure that the aspects of the profession that are important to you are maintained and developed in the future.

Our new President Sholto Humphries will be attending the IAA CPD event in November and would like to hear the views of IAA members.

Send your views to me at;
c.maclean@thomasmunro.co.uk

IAA Council for 2011

President

Calum Maclean (Thomas Munro & Co, Inverness)

Vice President

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Shane Rodgers (CM Design, Nairn)

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Website & News

Peter Mcilhenny (LDN Architects, Forres)

RIAS – Practice Board

Scott Donald (Kierney Donald Partnership, Fort William)

RIAS – Environment, Planning committee

Amanda Macritchie (Bracewell Stirling Architects, Inverness)

RIAS – Membership, Education & Awards

Jim Alexander