

# CIPS COURSE

## 22nd-28th JUNE 2008

**For the first time the Certified International Property Specialist Course (CIPS) was held in Ireland. The programme is run in conjunction with the National Association of Realtors (NAR) and under the umbrella of the International Consortium of Real Estate Associations (ICREA). 30 students attended the course including 11 from Ireland. Some students travelled from as far away as Hawaii, California, Texas and North and South Carolina. Three of the Irish participants give us a personal account of their experiences during the week long intensive course.**

**Roger M Berkeley** FIAVI, MIREF, BSc. (Hons)

It was wonderful to see that so many diverse professionals from around the globe had come to Trinity College, Dublin, for this course. It really puts Ireland on the map in the real estate world. The course commenced with a reception at the IAVI on Sunday evening and ran from Monday at 8.30am sharp through to Saturday evening at TCD.

On the first day we were somewhat overwhelmed by the volume of manuals that we had to get through. However with the interactive and fast paced teaching style of the instructors, the time flew as we soon became intensely absorbed in the programme.

As the world is tending towards globalisation, or a single market environment, we were made very aware of the various cultural, religious and ethical influences as well as the influence of customs on business transactions in different countries and continents e.g. the Middle East, Africa, China, the Americas, Japan, Asia/Pacific (or Pacific Rim countries) and Europe.

What may be considered professional behaviour at home may not be so abroad, e.g. the lack of importance given to punctuality and the offence taken at leg-crossing in the Emirates! We heard real life stories from raw experience of how deals were clinched by having an understanding of these customs.

We were advised about the professional teams that we need around us to do business abroad e.g. a Feng-shui expert in China would be as important a part of our property team as a structural



*Roger Berkeley (second from right) at the dinner with some of his fellow students from around the world.*

surveyor would be at home. The importance of numerology in China also cannot be underestimated e.g. the number 8 is considered lucky - the Beijing Olympics commenced on the 8/8/08!

We learned the methodology for interpreting statistical data and trends of a country, to assess why we would do business in a particular country, and the importance of knowing about Trade Agreements that exist between countries. The standard of infrastructure, demographic trends, local regulatory issues and currency exchange rates must also be examined to assess market potential in a particular country or continent. Incredible statistics on China's massive infrastructural development strategies were included.

Initially I was daunted by the mathematical content of the Investment & Financial Analysis module. However, I was soon to be taken on a mathematical journey that was made much simpler by the intense but relaxed teaching style of the tutors. Upon compiling a specific investment client profile, we calculated monthly loan repayments, having regard for the effects of various taxes on investments as they related to various countries. These figures alter depending on whether we are advising a resident or non resident of that particular country or continent.

Role-plays during the course were fun and very informative. The days ended with an exam which sometimes went on until well into the evening!

Early in the week, we were divided into lunchtime working groups and allocated a continent on which to make a presentation of our choice to the class on the final day of the course. Our group chose the topic, "The Feasibility of Optimising Roof Space of Large Commercial Buildings in Europe"- amazing ideas ensued!!!

I found that the quality of teaching was exemplary; Aida's teaching from her own experience on the significance of cultural differences in the Emirates was compelling. Marcus' thorough knowledge and enthusiasm particularly in the financial module made it all seem so simple and do-able. Cormac taught from a wealth of practical experience giving very useful tips from some of his own referrals, and referred us to many useful websites on the subjects covered.

One afternoon was devoted to the Transnational Referral System and the integrity of ICREA. This should leave no one in any doubt about the advantages of being associated with such

a diverse and high quality organisation that is truly effective for us to refer business internationally.

The course ended with a memorable dinner at the IAVI where more friendships were forged.

I felt I was taken on an intensive educational trip around the world with new friends!

## “Without relationships there is no business”

**Edward Carey** FIAVI, IAVI President

The third week in June of this year was truly an international week for IAVI. Coupled with an almost week long round of ICREA meetings held in our headquarters in 38 Merrion Sq, a week long CIPS (Certified International Property Specialist) course was held in Trinity College, Dublin. I was privileged to attend this course myself.

This course, which is run by the National Association of Realtors is the first time this course was held in Ireland. Given the current downturn in the property market, opportunities to generate new revenue streams are most welcome. Irish involvement in international property transactions has been a relatively recent phenomenon, with traditionally a small number of agents having dealt with a small number of niche markets.

More recently, an explosion of interest, easy availability of credit, and, generally, a global property boom has brought a vast number of new entrants into the international property agency business. Within Ireland, this is an unregulated business, and a host of well versed problems have occurred (coupled, obviously with many properly educated & professional firms).

International transactions have been a function of the estate agency profession for many years. Through the IAVI's link with NAR and ICREA, the opportunity for the hosting of this course became available. The international aspect of the course, and the importance of the CIPS designation became clear when we saw the list of attendees, and country of residence of the foreign attendees – USA, Hawaii, Bermuda & Italy. These students, who were all existing agents working full time in their practices were here to learn & gain the designation, at a substantially greater cost to them than ourselves.

We were most fortunate to have three superb tutors in Aida Turbow, Marcus Wally & our own Cormac Meehan. The course was as diverse as it was educational; enjoyable as it was challenging. I, given my proximity to Dublin, had visions of commuting for the week, but it quickly became apparent that, given the workload, this would not be an option. In addition to the course work, the class was divided into four groups and each group was set the task of completing a business plan for a given geographical location. Our group was most fortunate to contain Bill Madigan of Shee & Hawe in Tipperary, whose research into sustainable & renewal fuels was invaluable.

International property transactions do not merely happen. The agent's role is central, and much work & effort will be required.

In addition to the challenges facing us in the current economic environment, there are an increasing number of agents seeking our existing customer's attention to sell their product. The customers need to know who they are dealing with, and quite simply, from the agent's point of view, he needs to know that the person he is dealing with and referring his customer to, is backed by a recognisable designation. At least if I and my referring agent have not met, I can be secure in the knowledge that the agent is a member of a professional organisation, and suitably qualified to handle the referral.

The cultural diversity, intellectual ability and years of practical experience of the three tutors, together with the motivated class with different cultural and practice areas made this a truly memorable experience. The mantra from the tutors was 'how can we help you to make more money form the referral processes'.



*Edward Carey (centre) receives his CIPS certificate from Marcus Wally and Aida Turbow;*

It is only when one gets a snapshot of the opportunities in existence does a hunger for more develop. These transactions cannot occur without the agents' expertise. Each of us has the ability to sniff out a transaction, but if that transaction needs to go global, the foundation the CIPS designation provides us with is essential. It certainly opened my eyes to the significant potential of international business and the importance of a professional network. Without reservation I would recommend the course to IAVI members.

**Noreen O'Sullivan** of OSN Property Consultants Ltd.

Property professionals from all over the world gathered in Dublin to complete this excellent course and I must say it was tough going but well worth it. We all got on well and hopefully we will all meet and work together through CIPS. My view of and approach to, selling or buying property or green energy is now completely different. Opportunities and resources for global investment are better than ever before. International real estate



*Noreen O'Sullivan and Marcus Wally.*

is a specialised practice that requires initiative, skill, and appreciation for working and networking with people and professionals from different cultures and countries all over the world. Access to timely, up to date and reliable information is also a most important tool; this information can be accessed through various excellent websites.

The instructors for this course left no stone unturned, our own Cormac Meehan, of Sean Meehan & Co, from Bundoran in County Donegal. Aida Turbow, formally from Argentina and Marcus Wally from Florida all highly qualified CIPS Lecturers were excellent and I would recommend anyone involved in the foreign markets to take this course and acquire the cutting edge needed to-day. Also of great assistance to us were Valerie Bourke from the IAVI and Heidi Henning of NAR who were in charge of the everyday running of the course.

Clients and Investors expect real estate professionals to have high quality professional contacts in foreign markets and this is what this course has provided me with. Just to give you a flavour of the course here are some details.

The course started each morning at 8.30 and finished each evening at approximately 5.30pm. The markets we covered each day varied from the world to local markets: **"Globalisation"** which is the movement by countries, companies, organisations and people towards a single market environment. We also worked on the **"Americas"** this large area consists of North, Central, South America and the Caribbean. These markets vary from highly developed and wealthy to undeveloped and impoverished. This was so interesting and varied. The other areas we covered were the **Asian / Pacific markets (Pacific Rim)** consisting of 11 key nations including; for example, China, Japan, Australia. This area is so dynamic as an economic bloc it is unlike the European Union or the North America market in that, the region is tied together and influenced by several economic factors rather than political forces. The next area was The **Middle East/ Africa**, understanding different views and political and economic conditions in these countries helps real estate professionals make

good choices about investment and build stronger international working relationships. Another area we covered was how a real estate agent must have a solid understanding of the six steps in preparing for an international transaction. This was excellent information as it dealt with client profile, necessary conversions, (Marcus we won't forget C-A-T) investment objectives, determining purchase motivation, assembling a team of international professionals and determining what the market has to sell.

At the end of each day we had a multiple-choice exam on what was covered that day (including Saturday). Groups were picked at random to do a project based on the course. On our team were 3 Irish and 3 Americans, and our topic was "Miscanthus" a green energy grass which can be used for pellets for domestic heating or to produce ethanol which can replace petrol or diesel. We based our corporation in Bermuda and operated from Chile, a decision arrived at from research conducted during the taught phase of the course. On Saturday afternoon all projects were presented and judged by a panel of outside business personnel and the winners were announced at an excellent gala dinner that night, held at the IAVI headquarters in Merrion Square. Standards were very high and our team won. We all received our CIPS certificates and are currently working towards the CIPS designation. We now join an exclusive network of 2,500 CIPS members in 50 countries and we can market our companies in "Who's Who in International Real Estate". A recent study revealed that agents who earn the CIPS designation earn more than twice as much as those who do not have the designation. Anyone looking to invest anywhere in the world should make sure to use a qualified CIPS agent as we have the knowledge and the professional international contacts to operate successfully in the global market. If you require any information email me on [info@osnproperty.com](mailto:info@osnproperty.com) or contact any one of our CIPS agents from the course. I recommend this course 100%. ■



*Down to serious study – some of the students attending the course.*