

BlueBox Newsletter

Technical briefing for property professionals

Issue 41 April 2016

The BlueBox partners Residential Roadshow 2016

The BlueBox partners Residential Roadshow is just a few weeks away—have you booked your place yet? Can you afford not to be there?

What's in this issue:

- Roadshow preview
- New requirements for consumer units.

As with previous conferences we've always tried to strike a balance between covering new and developing topics with technical matters that will be useful in your daily work. In this newsletter, we have included a preview of some of the topics to be discussed on the day. But first, the event details:



When: Thursday 5th May, Milton Keynes
Where: National Energy Services, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8NA.

A healthy 25 minute walk from the railway station through a country park in the new town famed for its concrete cows. Join us at the HQ of SAVA and still have enough time to get home and vote.



When: Thursday 12th May, Brighouse
Where: Holiday Inn, Clifton Village Brighouse, West Yorkshire HD6 4HW

This location may not as inspiring as the others but at least it is the 'right' side of Pennines (depending on your point of view of course).



When: Thursday 19th May, Swindon
Where: National Self Build & Renovation Centre, Lydiard Fields, Swindon, SN5 8UB.

We are so pleased to be back at the Self build centre. Just a short drive from the M4 you can keep up-to-date with new technologies and products in the only permanent exhibition of its type in the country (but only during the refreshment breaks of course).

New Surveyor Comparable Tool from 'Rightmove' for SMEs

BlueBox *partners* has obtained a unique agreement with the country's leading property portal, 'Rightmove'. 'Rightmove Plus' has now been improved through the development of the **Surveyor Comparable Tool (SCT)** so that finding comparable information is much easier. The **SCT** combines access to the Land Registry data with 'Birds eye' and 'Street view' all in the same place and much more efficiently. In line with RICS requirements, the reports now provide an audit trail for complete transparency. For more info, please email info@blueboxpartners.com

We are now able to offer a subscription service combined with 'pay-as-you-click' access to archived property sales data at a price that is unbeatable anywhere else. We can offer Rightmove Plus (which includes the **Surveyor Comparable Tool**, access to the Rightmove AVM, and Rental comparables) at £70 plus VAT a month, which includes 20 free clicks for the **Surveyor Comparable tool**. This offer is only available through BlueBox *partners* to small/medium sized firms and sole practitioners. We think this a "must have" for any valuer undertaking residential valuations. Please contact Chris Rispin on 01454 329933.

Conference preview

The agenda for this year's roadshow includes the following sessions:

- **Buy to Let and the private rented sector - Challenge or Ongoing Opportunity?** David Hitches
- **Leasehold Enfranchisement, leasehold issues and the valuation of residential property.** James Wilson
- **Business Succession, some thoughts and guidance.** Jeanette Spriggs.
- **Standard phrases and condition reports – still searching for the Holy Grail.** Phil Parnham, BlueBox partners.
- **Recording what you see – new developments in site notes.** Alan Appleby and Phil Parnham, BlueBox partners
- **Building regulation changes.** Larry Russen

As a taster, we thought we would give an insight into just two of the sessions.

Recording what you see – new developments in site notes.



Question: What links this air crash in 1935 with the work we do everyday?

Answer: It led to the development of the first aviation checklist and variations of which are used in many other professional settings.

Atul Gwande (*'Checklist Manifesto'*) and Mathew Sayed (*'Black box thinking'*) have investigated the historical development of checklists and considered how they can be applied to a wide variety of sectors outside the aviation industry. Although residential practitioners have always used a variety of 'checklists' in their site notes, research into the topic is sparse. Phil and Alan will look at what makes a good checklist and how these principles can improve sites notes for HomeBuyer Reports and Building Surveys. BlueBox's updated and improved site notes will be made available to all delegates. The session will also look at how 'tablet' technology can contribute to 'paperless' inspections.

Business Succession: some thoughts and guidance.



Did you know nearly 50% of people registered with the Valuer Registration Scheme are over the age of 50? What does this mean for a residential sector that is benefitting from increased levels of instruction but facing unprecedented recruitment shortages?

Jeanette will present the results of her exclusive research into succession planning in the residential sector and outline some of the options for owners of small to medium sized practices as well as sole traders.

Conference free stuff

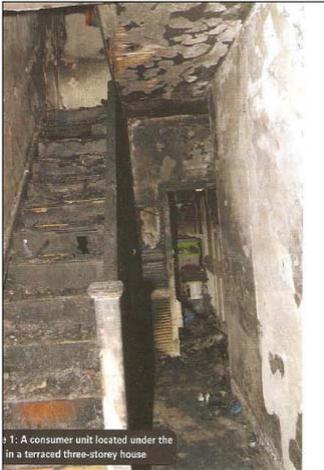
If you've been to one of our Roadshows before, you'll know we always try and provide some useful resources to help you in your daily work. This year, our partners SAVA are sponsoring the conference and will be providing a memory stick that will include:

- Copies of all the Roadshow presentations;
- Recently published BlueBox and SAVA newsletters, articles and other papers;
- Useful publications from a wide variety of organisations including Planning and Building Control organisations, trade associations and competent person schemes.

Don't be a stranger, book your place now. This can be done through the NES/SAVA website
Click on this [link](#) or phone 01908 442240 to book your place. Booking Conditions apply,
see Booking Form for more details

New non-combustible enclosure requirement for consumer units

Just when you think you've got your head around the main provisions of the wiring regulations, they go and change them again. In their magazine 'Wiring Matters', the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) reported on the changed requirement for consumer units that came into force on 1st January 2016.



This fire started in a plastic consumer unit in an understairs cupboard

Following reports from fire investigators of increasing numbers of fires involving moulded thermoplastic enclosure consumer units, Amendment No. 3 to BS 7671:2008 (IET Wiring Regulations Seventeenth Edition) included a new regulation requiring consumer units in domestic premises to have a non-combustible enclosure. Two options are given:

- *The consumer unit should be manufactured from non-combustible material (usually metal), or*
- *be enclosed in a cabinet or enclosure constructed of non-combustible materials.*

Although Amendment no.3 was published in July 2015, the industry had six months to get ready for the change. The actual cause of the fires were usually poor connections resulting in over heated terminals but once the plastic unit caught fire, it quickly spread.

What we should we do? Keep calm and watch YouTube!

Unless an electrical installation was installed after January 2016 it is unlikely the consumer unit will comply with the amendment. So is this an urgent problem? Should we be condemning the system and allocating a CR3 just because it has a plastic unit? The answer, as always, is that it depends!

An insight into how electricians approach this assessment can be gained by watching a 30 minute video of an IET discussion forum filmed at last year's ELEX show in Harrogate. A panel of experts discussed the implications of this particular change. It seems as long as there are no other faults or concerns with the installation, most commentators suggested it would not be unsafe but 'an improvement would be recommended'. You can watch this video by clicking on this [link](#).

But we are not electricians so we must be cautious. You may want to consider the following:

- Ask to see evidence of a recent inspection or test (say within the last year or two). If there is no evidence, allocate a CR3 (further investigation);
- Even if there is adequate evidence of a recent test or inspection, the system has plastic consumer with RCD circuits and you can see no other faults (in other words it appears satisfactory), tell your client the consumer unit may have to be upgraded when the electrical system is next altered/repaired.

What do you think? As always, send your comments to info@blueboxpartners.com

Contact

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