

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS' HALL: INSIDE A PIECE OF HISTORY

ICAEW was established by Royal Charter in 1880, but it wasn't until 10 years later that work started on the building of our historical headquarters – Chartered Accountants' Hall – in the City of London.

THE BUILDING

Designed in the Italian Renaissance style by eminent Victorian architect John Belcher RA, it was not without controversy as it was a considerable move away from the traditional Victorian style of the day. It cost £32,000 to build and took three years to finish. When the building was opened in 1893, ICAEW had just 1,700 members!

ECONOMIA

Throughout the building in its stained-glass windows, paintings and artwork, you'll see the depiction of the figure of *Economia* – the lady of ICAEW. *Economia* signifies good management. She wears a wreath of olive branches on her head to symbolise peace and a set of scales above her head represents justice. She carries a rod to signify authority, dividers to reflect accurate measurement and the ship's rudder in the foreground represents the symbol of guidance. A more modern interpretation of this coat of arms today forms the ICAEW logo.

MAIN RECEPTION ROOM

Without doubt the most striking room in Chartered Accountants' Hall. It was originally used as the Council Chamber and is based on early Renaissance church designs.

It has a large domed and highly decorated ceiling as well as two large murals, by British artist George Murray. One of these murals shows the *Triumph of Law*. A bearded figure representing Time places a crown on the head of the figure of Justice who in turn holds a set of scales to symbolise justice. Another figure of Justice is seen slaying the figure of Anarchy using a flaming sword. The backdrop of each mural is an image of the room itself which adds to the grandeur of this room.

Below the dome, four beautiful images depict the key qualities of our profession – Wisdom, Truth, Prudence and Justice. There are also the coats of arms of London, Liverpool, Sheffield and Manchester, the four cities whose associations of accountants first formed ICAEW.

In 1988 a team from London's National Gallery was called in to restore the artwork and murals back to their former glory. Their task was to remove the accumulation of dirt and grime that had gathered over the years mainly from cigar and cigarette smoke!

THE MEMBERS' ROOM

Originally designed as the library, it is said to have been Belcher's favourite room. Without doubt, its most

distinguishing feature is the wooden bridge that spans the width of the room. It is a replica of the Rialto bridge in Venice, where Belcher was living when he designed the building. It is the only example of an indoor bridge anywhere in the UK!

COUNCIL CHAMBER

This is the main meeting room for the Council, who serve as ICAEW's supreme governing body and are responsible for the 'management of the affairs and business of ICAEW' and agree the overall strategy and budget. It is also where any disciplinary hearings take place. However, if you had been a student at any time until the 1930s, this is where you would have sat your exams! Its heritage as an exam hall is marked on the outside of the building with an engraving of a student and teacher.





1 Drawings showing plan of Chartered Accountants' Hall Image reproduced from Peter Boys' book 'Chartered Accountants' Hall: The first 100 years'.

2 Section of the external architecture with shield of Economia.

3 From the Main Reception Room: the Triumph of Law mural showing the figure of Time crowning Justice.

4 The large dome in the Main Reception Room.

5 Members Room showing part of the indoor bridge.

OUR TIME CAPSULE

A foundation stone inside the main entrance at Moorgate Place hides the ICAEW time capsule. It contains newspapers and coins of the day, a list of members and a copy of ICAEW's charter and bye-laws.

HONOURING OUR PRESIDENTS, MEMBERS AND ROYALTY

You'll see our early members and presidents commemorated throughout the building in paintings, marble statues and plaques. Many of our early presidents went on to form today's global Big Four firms including: Arthur Cooper (1883–84), William Welch Deloitte (1888–89), Edwin Waterhouse (1892–94), Ernest Cooper (1899–1901) and William Barclay Peat (1906–08).

A marble plaque and dedication book commemorate ICAEW members who sadly lost their lives in the World Wars, while the Kings and Queens that have reigned since ICAEW began in 1880 are remembered in statues and paintings.

THE GREAT HALL

This is part of the new concrete extension that was designed by Sir William Whitfield and built in the 1960s and opened by the Queen Mother in May 1970. It is built with strong vertical lines and a rough bumpy finish in a style called 'elephant trunking' because it was first used in the elephant house at London Zoo! It also has

the largest unsupported concrete ceiling anywhere in the UK and was even given an award by the Institute of Concrete!

A colourful three-piece tapestry by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi depicts some of the innovations of the modern world – a jet engine, a micro chip and a television. Paolozzi is perhaps more famous for the mosaic designs in London's Tottenham Court Road underground station and for the statue of Sir Isaac Newton which stands outside the British library.

THE LIBRARY

Our award-winning information centre holds the largest collection in the world of UK accounting and tax information as well as one of the world's finest collections of early works on accounting and book-keeping. This includes a first edition of Luca Pacioli's *Summa de arithmetica*, the earliest book on book-keeping published in 1494. Pacioli was an Italian monk who collaborated with and taught mathematics to individuals including Leonardo da Vinci. His importance to our profession sees him represented in several of the main sculptures found on the outside of the building.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Just type in 'chartered accountants hall architecture' into the search bar of ICAEW's website at icaew.com. Alternatively, email the library team at library@icaew.com