

# Goals, objectives and strategies of the IRTEUK

It is a great pleasure for me to be in New Zealand and to have the opportunity of presenting these thoughts to you. They are mostly by Alan Shroud our Chief Executive to whom I am indebted and who I know is disappointed that he is unable to present them to you in person. First though I welcome this opportunity to bring you personally the very best wishes from our President, Lord Strathcarron, our Council, the Permanent Staff and our Members in the United Kingdom.

## ***Setting the Scene***

As a start I think it is necessary to spend just a short time setting the scene, because despite all that you may have heard about de-regulation in the UK, the reality is that for many institutions and similar organisations the reverse has occurred.

We are governed quite properly, by company Law, but the laws are becoming more complex, the timescales for carrying out certain procedures are short and the fines for non-compliance are stringent and readily applied.

## ***Charity***

The Institute is a registered charity and therefore is governed by charity law. These laws have recently been revised together with various accounting procedures that relate to them. Whilst some of the regulations were introduced to combat the growing number of illegal "Tin rattlers" they have, nevertheless, been applied to educational charities such as ours. Any changes we wish to make to our Memorandum and Articles of Association have to be approved by the Charity Commissioners. As a result we have been obliged to set up a trading company to act on behalf of the Institute and then periodically we transfer the money back to the Institute. From the 1<sup>st</sup> July we have had to satisfy another new requirement and that is the imposition of a centralised accounting system on all our UK centres.

But there is more, apart from the rules and regulations emanating from the European Union and from Westminster affecting everything from the bendiness of a cucumber to the build standard of our vehicles, there- has been a "National transport debate" the results of which appear to be that we shall have to pay more for road access and the environmental consequences of operating. We also have the two main political parties vying for the favours of the electorate by changing and adapting our education and training schemes.

## ***Engineering Council***

Nor does it stop there. As a nominated body of the Engineering Council we are also subject to their rules and regulations and to their approval for many of the things we do and the qualifications we wish to award.

With so many "Big brothers" breathing down our necks you may wonder how we operate at all and I must confess that sometimes we wonder that too. But in fact we are flourishing as never before and our mood is very optimistic.

## ***Education and Training***

We can meet and deal with the challenges imposed by the various regulations and the changes that have occurred in the field of vocational education and training are in many ways an advantage to us, in that, they are designed to meet the needs of each particular industry. The National Vocational Qualification structure is simple - just Levels one to five, approximating very roughly to Higher National Certificate at level 3, Higher National Diploma at level 4 and a degree at level 5.

NVQ's are based upon the assessment of competence with the appropriate amount of underpinning knowledge and understanding, measured against a set of standards prepared by the industry for the industry.

We believe that the Engineering Council will relate the NVQs at levels 3, 4 and 5 to registration as Engineering Technicians, Incorporated Engineers and Chartered Engineers respectively and we are working hard to achieve this by being involved in every way and at every level of the negotiations that are under way.

Incidentally the Engineering Council has changed as a result of a protracted and sometimes difficult unification process. We are one of thirty nine nominated bodies and thirteenth in size - no mean achievement when we are counted amongst the very large chartered institutions.

The new Engineering Council is being very pro-active and enabling the engineering Profession to speak to government and others with a single voice and thereby have more say in shaping the future. We are pleased to be at the heart of this activity.

The strategy has worked well and has provided the added benefit of identifying more clearly the resources that are used in our many other activities.

These other activities are the ones that provide the remainder of our income and enable us to carry through the educational and technical projects that are such a part of our existence as an Institute, and it is important to use our funds effectively to advance the Institute's aims.

### **Telford Conference and Display**

Foremost amongst these activities is our annual conference and display held at Telford in Shropshire. This year we welcomed Steven Norris our Minister of Transport who provided the keynote address. We also hold a Scottish National Lecture and Display each year in Glasgow and that too is growing rapidly.

The Conference and exhibition at Telford is now the most important in the industry's calendar and recently attracted some 7,500 visitors and delegates. The strategy we have adopted with these events has been to keep them growing and to keep improving the facilities for both exhibitors and the visitors. In that respect we have been the victims of our own success, in that we have really outgrown Telford and we only have two other venues in the country large enough for us, and one of those is not available. Needless to say we are working on this problem.

### **Conference**

It was my pleasant task to close the conference and briefly review the contributions from the various speakers and I would like to comment upon some of these now. The theme of the conference was "Feel good about the future" and we had 14 speakers who contributed to aspects of the theme and confirmed the optimism that is abroad, despite a 1996 vehicle market that is none too buoyant.

Richard Owen the managing Director of Dennis Eagle provided the manufacturers' viewpoint and told us how they were achieving great success with their approach of manufacturing products for niche markets, so much so that they are now firmly looking for exports in the refuse and specialist vehicle, coach, bus and fire engine fields, with excellent well engineered products.

Steven Norris provided the key-note speech and this was the first time that a government minister had addressed us. It was clear that he had a good understanding of our industry. He emphasised the need for balance between road building and the environment and saw only two types of road being constructed in the near future. One to relieve pressures through by-passes and the other the spine road to feed industrial areas. He was conscious that traffic congestion was a problem and he was examining various ways of combating it, but to us, it appeared as though we could expect to have to pay more through either tolls or other means.

John Hartshorne the Logistics Director for the Whitbread Beer Company told us about the development of flat management structures in the modern company and the way that transport engineers in particular need to adapt to fit in to this organisation. He recommended that as well as the technical skills which were a pre-requisite, we had to acquire some of the behavioural and creative skills as well. He left us with the advice that as engineers, we have a great deal to contribute, but that we should "Get out of the workshop and join in with the running of the business"

Ray Lee, the Director of the Motor Industry Training Standards Council made a plea for more time to allow the many NVQ and other initiatives to operate and settle down into sensible practical patterns. His theme was "Leave things alone and stop tinkering". He suggested that the IRTE through the medium of its journal has a great opportunity to extend the intellectual awareness of engineers and he was pleased to see that we were developing it. Also on the training front we had John Twinning from Guildford Educational Services who provided some training philosophy and left us with 7 principles amongst which were:

1. Don't buck the market
2. Keep it simple
3. Develop the full potential
4. Have fun whilst you are doing it

and above all, remember that learning never stops.

For the second day we concentrated upon the tachograph and the environment, with speakers from Volvo Truck and TVI which is a management buy-out of Veeder Root, in the persons of Roland Gillebeert and Neil Key. Both emphasised how "Old hat" the existing tachograph was and how there were possibilities for driver smart cards, greater volumes of workshop management and operational information in a much simpler electronic format than the waxed disc. There was considerable emphasis on how to achieve security of the information and the need to ensure fair competition. They did warn that whilst the technology was available the legal bandwagon was moving at a much slower pace and it could be some years before the European Union and individual governments took full advantage of the possibilities. This latter point was highlighted by Peter Dean from the Freight and Haulage Division of the Department of Transport whilst explaining to us, how the machinations of the European Commission operate.

with the times we have updated many things, including our head office administrative building, Transport Engineer, documents, publications and even our membership certificate. The structure of the professional staff has been changed from the 1st July and details will be published shortly for those of you who need to know. More changes will follow, but to help us decide what they should be, we undertook a survey of our members asking a wide range of questions and getting a satisfactory statistical sample of about 5%.

Analysis of the results is nearly complete and we shall be pleased to let you have a copy of these and the summary of findings and recommendations.

Tony Gunner as Honorary Secretary was in charge of the survey and he is in the audience. The Institute owes him a great deal, not just for this work, but also for his many contributions over the longer term. He hands on his Honorary Secretary's role to John Taylor in November. John was a past chairman and vice president of the Institute.

To give you a flavour of what we found in the survey you may be interested in the following, The main reason for members joining the Institute was the benefit it gave, of access to technical information, followed by shared knowledge, the receipt of Transport Engineer, and the recognisable qualifications membership provided. Then lower down the list, centre activities.

Some 52% of members also belong to other Institutions and some 85% of the membership are currently in employment, the remainder being either retired, 10.5% or redundant, 4.5%. Significant is the fact that members are looking after over 2 million cars and just over 50% of them had no responsibility for vehicles of 3.5 tonnes gvm and over.

### **Conclusion**

There are many more findings, but I would like to bring my talk to a close with two of the most satisfactory statistics which resulted.

First the perception held by industry of the Institute. This showed that 76% rated us in the good to excellent category, but second and better still was the perception through the eyes of members, where 91% rated the Institute good or excellent. A very gratifying result indeed, but we shall not be complacent, we shall investigate what upset that remaining small proportion of respondents and learn from them and try to do better in future.

Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen I have spoken of our goals, objectives and our strategies and I do hope that in doing so, I have given you, your members in New Zealand and others in your audience an insight into the Institute in the United Kingdom and the work that we are doing.

I repeat what a pleasure it is to be here with you, supporting your conference which I have had great pleasure in declaring open.

A.Stroud and E.Farley, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1996

Ken Peak, a consultant indicated how global positioning was enabling vehicles to be tracked and located accurately such that routing and avoidance of congestion are real possibilities.

Pager Twiney the Environmental Director for the Paver Group told us about the re-cycling of products and how by the year 2015 they expect only 5% of their product residues to go to landfill sites whilst the bulk will all be re-cycled into new product. It was important that work on this concept is started at the design stage and as a group they were well advanced with this approach.

Peter Newport from Ellis and Everard chemical transporters, emphasised the importance of high quality for the training of personnel, when it comes to environmentally sensitive products, hazardous goods, and he suggested that there was a need for improved legislation in this field, but that at the same time one had to bear in mind the implication of costs on the product itself

Paul MacDonald from the Department of the Environment section ETSU (Energy Technology Support Unit) launched the joint IRTE/DOE, Fuel Consumption code which has been so ably produced by an Institute working party under the chairmanship of Andrew Davis. Paul stressed the needs for fuel economy, the value of training and the obvious but elusive fact, that saving fuel also saves money.

One of the highlights of the conference was a presentation from Dr. David Bellamy, that internationally well known botanist, writer and broadcaster. One of the things that impressed the audience was that he took a balanced rather than an extreme view and whilst appearing by courtesy of Rockwell Collins (UK) Limited, he provided the opinion that the most appropriate mode of transport for the requirement should be the one to use, with which few of us would disagree. He stressed the importance of having the right statistics available and how important it is to achieve lower noxious emission standards. He was certainly thought provoking and whilst it was difficult to report good news, the transport industry should find means of doing so. He thought much of the work being done by the vehicle manufacturers to reduce harmful exhaust emissions were steps in the right direction.

All in all everyone agreed that under the guidance of Mark Longhurst the conference chairman, it had been a great success and hopefully everyone would continue to "Feel good."

### ***Continuing Professional Development***

I have spoken already about our vocational education initiatives and should also mention our recent publication which is a superb manual covering all aspects of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), a topic which is high on the agenda throughout industry and the professions in the UK.

### ***Technical***

But what about our objectives in the technical field? We intend to continue to produce more guides and codes of practice to follow on from those which we have published already, such as the Braking Compatibility of combinations, and here we are indebted to IRTENZ for your help with our work on braking. Also there is the code on electronic systems and the guides to tipper stability and fuel consumption to which I have already referred. We do have concerns about vehicle exhaust emissions, spurious spare parts and the impact of modern technology both on and off the vehicle.

Our Workshop Standards Handbook is being updated and will become a Manual of management best practices and a major review of our involvement with VMRS is just getting underway. These activities together with a heavy workload considering and commenting upon draft legislation is in danger of creating an overload. However, it is the sort of load that we are pleased to bear since it shows the level of involvement and the status that the Institute has within the industry and certain parts of our government structure.

The UK Construction and Use Regulations were varied in March 1994 to permit vehicle combinations to run at 44 tonnes gvm (gross vehicle mass) on restricted operations. That in effect means that the weight can only be operated if the journey is a joint modal one and part of it is by rail. Any vehicle operated at this gross mass must comply with all the relevant brake performance criteria. Tractor units must have at least 3 axles and the outfit 6 and conform to the axle spacing requirements in the regulations. These state that the distance between the unit front to rear axle centres must not be less than 4.9 metres with the distance between the tractor rear axle and the trailer rear axle being at least 8.0 metres. All non steering axles must have twin tyres. The suspension of the vehicle should be road friendly, by which it is generally meant that it should be air suspension when the maximum individual axle load is limited to 10,500 kilogrammes. Without such suspension the axle weight is limited to 8,500 kgs. On the administration side the journey must be fully documented with detail of the railhead to which the load is going to or coming from and details of the parties involved given. If coming from a railhead then the date and time of loading has to be included.

### ***The Institute***

We are conscious that with changes that have occurred in the industry, members are now much more heavily committed to their work and less able to give time to attend meetings or help with research projects. Also we are aware that there is a shift in the cultural attitude in some areas towards the traditional institute's activities. Knowing that we must keep up

## **Modern Apprenticeships**

Linked closely to the NVQ system is a new apprenticeship scheme introduced by government. This is called the "Modern apprenticeship scheme", it is primarily aimed at trainees at the age of 16 undertaking 3 years of work and study to complete an apprenticeship which in our industry will be somewhat broader and deeper than NVQ level 3.

We welcomed the concept and have set up our own membership programme to match it. With a very attractive membership package at student (Modern apprentice) level we have managed to interest many manufacturers and training providers to put apprentices into the scheme or to indicate that they will do so at the start of the next academic year.

Whilst there will be drop-outs from the training and whilst not all the apprentices will join our scheme the potential is there for a large influx of student members and sound continuity for the Institute. It is believed that eventually some 3,500 apprentices may be admitted to our industry each year, and whilst we are quietly pleased with an average age of Institute members at 44, there is no doubt that a significant increase in the number of younger members would be welcome.

Students successfully completing apprentice training will automatically qualify for membership in the new class of "Engineering Technician" (TechIRTE) where hopefully in two or three years they will gain the experience for transfer to Associate Member and registration with the Engineering Council as an Engineering Technician.

From this emerges the objective of sustaining these apprentices in membership in years to come. The success of the scheme has been aided greatly by a strategy we adopted a few years ago and some of you will have noticed the effect in various things we have done. Whilst the Institute's roots are in the heavy vehicle end of the industry our members look after all types of vehicles from motor cycles to army tanks and much other mechanical equipment in between. So we have been spreading the word about our interest in the light vehicle end of the industry and in speeches, documents and publications we have tried to mention cars as often as lorries. The strategy has succeeded in that the largest number of modern apprentices to come from one manufacturer so far, has come from BMW. Incidentally the whole bus and coach industry have also undertaken to enter their apprentices into our scheme.

## **Membership**

Another perhaps light hearted objective we seek, relates to achieving a membership level of 20,000 by the year 2000. We might well do it or even better it, but rest assured that it will never be at the expense of lowering our standards.

Other objectives relating to membership are the maintenance and enhancement of the services we provide and the expansion, where possible, of the membership overseas.

With the former we have had a number of successes and are continuing to search for ways to help our members, whether it is by easier and cheaper ways to pay subscriptions, free or reduced price publications or codes of practice or by subsidising Transport Engineer to ensure that the quality of the publication is maintained and satisfies the needs of members. To that end and because of the strategy about Light vehicles to which I have referred, we are currently considering the inclusion in Transport Engineer of a special supplement on light vehicles. Additionally we shall be producing a full colour newsletter written specifically for and sent only to, modern apprentices.

Our efforts in promoting membership overseas have been less successful. The traditions of professional institutions are well established in some commonwealth countries and we are extremely pleased that our links with IRTNZ and centres in Australia and South Africa are worthwhile and strong.

Others are less strong and some are affected by Local circumstances or by our own regulated existence. For example, sadly we had to close the Hong Kong centre, not because of 1997, but because it was a joint centre with the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), which is not a charity. We are not allowed to mix charitable money with non charitable money in one account and as the centre was not prepared to operate two separate accounts we were obliged to stop supporting them.

In Europe and elsewhere in the World, the institution culture is either not as strong or does not exist. We have two centres in Germany, but these were set up to cater for the large number of members we have in the armed services there. Although in these centres we have a few UK citizens working in the German economy, our efforts to attract German and other European nationals have not been successful so far.

Nevertheless we have recently updated our 5 year corporate plan and strengthened our objectives in this regard.

## **Finance**

As I am sure many of you will have realised most of the things I have mentioned cost money and our financial strategy has worked well and is continuing to work well for us.

What we have done for the past 7 years is to determine each year the income needed to maintain just those resources required to support the whole of the membership function and that amount has in turn determined our subscription levels.