



Collective **inspiration**

Questions and Answers session

Volunteers Conference Weekend
Saturday 25th / Sunday 26th April 2009

Panel:

Chris Earnshaw, *IET President*

Alan Watts, *Chair, Membership and Professional Development Board*

Dolores Byrne, *IET Trustee*

Sam McLaughlin, *Chair, Young Professionals Board*

Gary Wu, *Director, Global Operations*

As the IET is going global, is it possible to see in the future a 'non-UK' President?

Chris Earnshaw - The first question to ask is 'is it important?' and the answer is yes it is important that at some point the IET does have a President from outside the UK. I think the role of the President is to be an ambassador for the organisation, it needs to have an international profile and I found in my first 6 months of my presidency that the role has taken me around the world and there's absolutely no reason why that role can't be based from anywhere in the world. I think it's about choosing the right person for the job and it is something that the Trustees have discussed because we have recognised that there are some practical issues, not least that right now the way we operate is that the President is also the Chairman of the Board of Trustees that meets monthly in London and so there are a few practical issues which we'll have to resolve in order that it is practical and possible for a president to come from anywhere in the world

Alan Watts – Backing up what Chris has said, the only other thing is the institution's policy of having presidents who have not retired from their day job - that's a very active policy and going back to what Chris said, it does make it logistically more difficult for somebody to be a very senior figure in industry doing the normal 6 days a week and doing all the millions of things that Chris has done, but in principal the Trustees are very firmly in favour of that.

Conference Chair – You say that in principle you're in favour, Mr President, you mentioned something about things that would need to be done - are there things actually happening to ensure that this is possible?

Chris Earnshaw – Yes, a couple of things are happening. There's an ongoing discussion about what the practical arrangements would be for Chairing the Trustees and we believe there's an answer – we have two Deputy Presidents so assuming they weren't also from outside the UK there are ways of handling it. The other thing is to make sure, given Presidents are normally Deputy Presidents, that the pool of people that we think may be potential Deputy Presidents are enriched with names from around the world. We're open to ideas and there's a process that goes on to build up that pool of names.

Sam McLaughlin – Do you have a time frame in which if you haven't had a non-UK President you'd be disappointed?

Chris Earnshaw – I think if we're still having this conversation in 5 years time – even if we haven't had one in 5 years time but it's looking like there's one pretty imminent on the horizon. The lead up with Presidents being Deputy Presidents for 2 years is typically 3 years. I'll be here in your seat asking the question in 5 years time 'why is the President still from the UK?'

If the IET has 150,000 members, is the fact that 50,000 attended Local Network events in 2008 good news?

Chris Earnshaw – Not particularly, I wasn't trying to present it as good news and I wasn't suggesting any form of complacency, perhaps I put it up as more of a challenge. If we've got 150,000 members, even if they're all members and only visit once, that's only 1 in 3 people, and actually we all know it will be the same members making repeat engagements. So what that tells me is that, unfortunately only a small number of our members are still involved in our events but more than that, these events are open events and we want them to reach out to a much broader audience, that's the whole point of these events, they're not just membership events. So our ambition has to be a much bigger number. We want to see, through our Local Networks, engagement with 100's of 1,000's of people in my view.

Sam McLaughlin – I'd be happy to see 50,000 Young Professionals at events next year.

Conference Chair – So the 50,000 we have here – what target would you have?

Chris Earnshaw – Would I put a hard number on it? I think with a 5 year aspiration, we shouldn't be afraid to double that. We're not talking about 2% or 3% per annum. We've got a very ambitious goal of reaching out to the world of engineering including those that are interested in engineering and technology and what it contributes to society and that's a very large potential audience. As time goes on, we'll be doing virtual things as well as physical things so I think you've got to look at it in the round but I would expect physical events are not going to go out of fashion for all the reasons that Alex (Taylor) said this morning – they're valuable opportunities for networking and so I think we should be setting our goals very high.

Michelle Richmond – I think we can be more ambitious than the 50,000. If we're reaching out to non-members and this is a record of our members, if every member was encouraged to bring 10 non-members along to a Local Network event then we should be very ambitious and looking to actually at least double that number. I think if you keep that in mind and the personal VIP invite to your Local Network of a non-member we should be seeing a lot more coming through.

How are the changes in the IET effectively going to be communicated to the LN's? Releasing emails and articles doesn't do this.

Sam McLaughlin – Let's see a show of hands – who understands the changes? Ok, that's the majority of people who can take those changes back.

Comment from the floor – That's not good enough.

Chris Earnshaw – The strategy programme itself needs a strong communication plan as part of it. When we've started to consolidate the strategy, there's an awful lot more work to do and I think we agree in making sure that all the people who do need to be engaged, are engaged with. I think from your feedback, although there's a lot of stuff on the web, it's not always easy to find without some very strong signposting. I think we have to look at how we might improve the signposting of the information. Certainly when this event concludes we do need to make sure that everybody here has ready access to the content and that when you get back to base and want to access these slides, it's easy to find – you don't have to do 50 clicks through the web site and I think we should commit to doing that with some strong pointers. They ought to be on the member's side of the web so that it's private to our volunteer community at this stage but I think I see there being a strong communications programmes to follow this through.

Comments from the floor – not using a microphone, therefore unrecorded.

Gary Wu – Once we have set up the Regional Boards this definitely will help to improve the communication.

Chris Earnshaw – To pick up on Sam's point, I do think it is important. I do hear it said, as you've just said, that we send a lot of stuff to the Secretary of the Local Network and depending on the secretaries mode of operation it may or may not reach even the wider

committee let alone the local members. I personally think that the Chairman of the Local Network should take it upon themselves to be a proactive leader of that Local Network and that is one of the things that I would ask of you who've got leadership roles in the Local Network - be proactive. We need your active engagement, passion and leadership of this at a local level. If you're not part of a Local Network but you're part of a technical community, we need you to enthuse this – as we heard this morning the most convincing sales and marketing is on a one-to-one basis, it's not on the basis of an email message. If I could ask you all to think about your role, and how you can help communicate this, it'd be very helpful.

Comment from the floor – I think one of the best things you could do is have people come to each committee, somebody to actually come and tell the committee directly from the organisation. There's nothing like face-to-face communication for convincing people.

Chris Earnshaw – That's a good idea and in fact we have done that on various projects over the last few years.

Michelle Richmond – For the Local Network Support Project, we did actually do the physical communication in regional groups and I hope that the Swindon area actually saw somebody. But I'd like to reiterate Gary's point – when the Regional Boards are set up, there'll be a more regional focus. Now it's fine going round the Local Networks in the UK because we've got staff in Stevenage. Going to visit the Local Networks in North America, in Canada, for example, becomes problematic – there's only so much the staff in Stevenage can do so we do have to rely on getting communications out there in other ways but it is a balancing act.

Are we looking for quality or quantity in a membership drive?

Chris Earnshaw – I don't think it's just about quantity. This isn't just finding a way of having some headline numbers. As you heard this morning, and as the Trustees have discussed frequently, it's much more valuable for us to have an engaged member than a non-engaged member – is one engaged members worth two non-engaged members? Well, it's not quite that simple, but our focus has to be connecting with people who want to be part of this community and who can play some role – the role could be from giving up many hours every week to quite a small contribution but at least it's a small contribution - they're not completely passive. I think we have to be able to engage people at all sorts of levels. The vision is that this is a relationship – we're not selling commodity products – we're creating a relationship for life and we want people to stay with us throughout various stages of their career including phases where they may not be able to be quite as engaged – maybe their very busy with personal or business issues, but connected at some level so that later on in their career they're able to get more involved so it will evolve throughout their professional life. So, 'stickiness' if I can use the marketing term is really important to us. Building a quality relationship with our members is what I think the game is.

Sam McLaughlin – From a Young Professional point of view, I would definitely lean towards the quality because over the next few years as we build these networks one of the things we really want to focus on is getting 10 – 15 students in every university all around the world to provide that one-to-one relationship. This should ensure that the quantity should flow in after the quality. If we really focus on getting the quality sorted out, the next phase will follow.

Alan Watts – It's interesting whenever you try to look at the practicalities of it. What you've got to say is we're going to need both and whenever you try and run something like that - just think of the skills of this organisation – 150,000 members, 500 staff, £50m a year turnover, when you come down to it then you have to pick some metrics and measure them and the obvious one is the headline number of members and the flow – how many we lose every year, how many we almost lose and manage to get back again and how many new ones come in. There is a danger that we will focus on the headline figure which is the quantity so there are other metrics behind that I think we need to look at a little bit more carefully - active membership is one, and there will be others, so the answer is both quality and quantity but there's quite a lot of detail behind it all as to how we measure it, because if you can't measure something then you can't actually fix it. There's more work to be done here and going back to yesterday's discussion about all the governance changes, the fact that our boards are now working in a one team approach and are looking at their own budgets they're now seeing a lot of these metrics, and will be able to choose which metrics we want to see. It'll takes us a

while to get it right, but we've now pushed a lot of these decisions one level down and then with the move out to the regional boards I think we'll be able to get a handle on number and we'll be able to control what we're doing and do it right.

Conference Chair - Is this linked in with the levels of membership because there's a question here about offering perhaps a new level of membership – senior membership – for those engineers who have continued to develop their professional expertise and experience that would not meet the requirements for fellow – is that something tied in with looking at quality issues around this?

Alan Watts – This is a very interesting and quite contentious area and it was one of the agenda items on the first meeting of our board meeting on Friday. The suggestion has been made that there are a considerable body of members who are for various reasons perhaps never going to go on to be fellows, and no goal for members in between being a Member and a Fellow. We took a first look at this at the board on Friday and decided that we can see a number of areas where we need a bit more detail on this, a bit more work done, some market research and then we'll look at it again. So that particular one is actually in the process of being looked at but I personally wouldn't like to say at this stage whether or not we will go ahead with it.

Conference Chair – Can I pressure you a bit there because quite properly you said that you're looking at it? What's your time frame for coming back with some proposals?

Alan Watts - I think the time frame in terms of doing the research is about 3 months, when we'll look at it again and either say no we're not going to do this or we'll say actually yes we think we should and in which case there'll be a lot more detail and I'm unclear in my own mind if we do decide to do this, and the BoT agree, does it require changes to the bye-laws? It does, I'm told, so there may be a mechanistic delay in there so I would imagine as a minimum probably a year after that.

Conference Chair - But the whole 'shall we go down this route or not' will be around 3 or 4 months as a result of market research...?

Alan Watts – That's correct

Conference Chair – So we've got some clear short term achievements on that, thank you very much indeed.

***Edwin Morton, Ottawa Local Network* – The conversation about metrics... I'm not looking for a lengthy answer, but I'm sitting in my committee meetings in Ottawa, attending some of our sessions, what mechanism would I use to collect metrics and how would I get these back to you? What would be the tools available to us?**

Michelle Richmond – If it comes down to the actual metrics for Local Networks – have you had a good event, have you had good attendance, has an event been successful – especially with the Events in a Box where we actually want to know whether we've got the formula right, then I know that Alex Taylor is gathering in metrics. The actual particular mechanism by which you need to submit them, I'm afraid Alex would need to answer that.

Alex Taylor – The simple answer is speak to your Regional Coordinator – she can help with the logistics. The very basic metrics that we gather from every single Local Network are the number of people that attend and the split between member and non-members.

***Edwin Morton, Ottawa Local Network* – I was referring to the comments made 5 minutes ago by Alan Watts about the collection of metrics...**

Alan Watts – The metrics I was referring to were, if you like, at the managerial level. What we first of all have to decide is what it is that we believe we want to measure and then we have to see how we're going to get at that information so it's a little way off before it comes to the point of saying to people like you, this is exactly what we want to measure A lot of it will actually be gathered through data that the staff already have on the database, so I'm hoping

that we'll be able to get most of what we need without putting any more burden on people in the Local Networks, but I don't know yet.

Edwin Morton, Ottawa Local Network – That was where I was coming from, another layer of work on volunteers...

Sam McLaughlin – Just taking Alan's point about the burden on the Local Networks. In my mind what would be better is if the people that actually attended the event in some way provided the metrics. I spoke to Alison (Hardy) yesterday about ways in which we can have events from the IET actually peer reviewed in some way. Some sort of online process that people can go through and comment. Certainly from a Young Professional's perspective where you've got people trying to set up and invigorate new people to come and engage with the IET - how good would it be to be able to go online, look through past events and you've actually got reviews from people that have gone to the event and said 'yes this is wonderful', another couple might say 'this is no good', so you're not wasting your time running an event that doesn't meet the purpose that you think it's going to meet.

Ben Pape, BETNET – We've had a lot of changes but I've noticed that on the agenda here there's no real mention of TPN's. We know there are 39 of them and I think we would say in BETNET we've been waiting impatiently for the review process to be completed. I noticed that the Director responsible for TPN's isn't here today so perhaps it's not a completely fair question but can anybody give us an update on what's happening with the TPN review and when we can expect some conclusions?

Chris Earnshaw – It isn't a TPN review in isolation, the strategy is looking in the round and one of the reasons that you probably perceive it as not having delivered results as we perhaps would have said 6 months ago is we did put some of it back in the melting pot in order that we didn't just have a TPN strategy in isolation. So maybe I can turn to Dolores to just talk us through the next steps on that Knowledge Management structure and maybe just mention the themes and the different sectors.

Dolores Byrne – To follow the lead that Chris has given me, you're right, TPN's were flagged up as an issue but so were LN's, so was fee structure in Nigeria, so we had to stand back and say look, what is the totality of our offering? We've got young people either not joining or disappearing shortly after they join. We've got to stand back and look at the whole thing and say what is our overall offering to members, how are we pricing it, how are we delivering it and so on, and clearly TPN's is a fundamental part of that offering but we have to look at the bigger picture first and then identify what offerings are appropriate to the various parts of the overall membership. So the TPN's are in there, in the mix.

Chris Earnshaw – To answer your question specifically, proposals for the restructuring of our activities and I don't mean organisation restructuring, but strategic structure, will be put to the Trustees at their July meeting. So now some of these high level principles are being translated in to more action focused strategies and that work Sarah (Jenkins) is sharing with the consultation group so there is still an opportunity to influence that thinking through those that are part of that consultation group. Every TPN Chairman, of which you're one Ben, should be able to do that if not directly through your representative on that group.

Dolores Byrne – So just to come back to one of the slides that Sarah put up, there are 10 projects that are under way and helping to develop the strategy – one of them was 'communities' and that is clearly the project that the TPN's fall in to.

Question from the floor – My question is about professional registration. You mentioned that a lot of people are not actually pursuing it. I believe that the main reason is because people do not see the value outside of the IET – there is no perceived value outside of the IET and I guess one way of achieving this would be lobbying the companies and saying we want you to put an emphasis on your employees to get themselves registered or when you recruit people for a certain post, ask for CEng, ask for IEng – none of that is happening. Do you have any plans to improve the take up of professional registration?

Chris Earnshaw – I'm going to say yes and hand you over to Michelle because actually, as you've highlighted, our relationship with employers and the employer's perception is an important part of squaring that circle. So Michelle...

Michelle Richmond – When I first came in to work for the IET I was absolutely passionate about professional registration – it's one of the reasons I took the job here. To put it in context, over the years we've been looking at the EC^{UK} figures for CEng, IEng and EngTech. There has been a very gentle decline in CEng, an absolutely dramatic decline in IEng and EngTech is slowly rising so you've got a pattern. That's setting the context of where we are.

From a very practical point of view, what is the IET doing about encouraging professional registration? For the ten years that I've been working as a volunteer for the institution before becoming staff we knew that, in order to raise the profile of registration, industry should be demanding that their top engineers are registered. We know that the resource pool for good engineers in the UK is quite small but change is afoot and I have been absolutely thrilled by some of the things that have been happening in the last 9 months.

First of all, the Armed Forces – we've been working a long time with them because they go through a very vigorous process to move up through the ranks and we want to be able to recognise that, so we actually say 'right, armed forces in the UK, you do a terrific job there, we recognise that and we know you make sure your engineers are competent and then we give them a professional peer review'. So on top of the armed forces wanting to engage with us in that way, the RAF have just been talking to us because they've identified 75 posts where, because of the public scrutiny of their fleets airworthiness, they now want to have an external benchmark and they want those posts filled with people who have been assessed and peer assessed externally. Now I never thought that this would happen in my lifetime – that is heartening. And then on top of that, BAE Systems have just now made all their Chief Engineers that are signing off all the big typhoons, the important bits, they have now made it a prerequisite that those engineers are Chartered and anybody aspiring to move in to those roles should be CEng. Now these are very small examples but I am seeing the movement, it's just the tip of the iceberg. Ok – if you're working in SME in the UK they're going to be wanting engineers and they're perhaps not going to be making those sorts of demands but if we start to see that general shift it's really, really good news. The registration team are going out and starting to work with Selex, IBM, etc, and again we're recognising the formation of their engineers and being able to make the routes to registration streamlined. There is definitely in the last 18 months a shift in perception of the value of registration – slow but it's actually moving and it makes me very excited.

Sam McLaughlin – That's really good news to hear that. When we had the Young Professionals session on Friday, a point that came out was that we should be encouraging members to do it for themselves regardless of what perceived value there is in industry. It is a validation of how competent you are so as good as you might think you are, unless you've actually got that peer review validation, you can't be sure.

***Comment from the floor* – I accept that Sam and I totally agree with you that you need that validation of peer review but it doesn't give you anything else outside of the institution.**

Sam McLaughlin – The point I was coming to was what Michelle's team is doing is fantastic in getting that but, as members, we can actually drive it internally as well so why not help that process that Michelle's doing - driving it as a membership body - we get as many people as possible going through that process for their own benefit and then the community benefit magnifies.

Gary Wu – There is also another piece of work going on called the Corporate Partners project which is looking at what kind of offering, what kind of proposition we can provide for these partners and one of the challenges for the big corporations is functional competence development for staff and how to improve staff retention so this is where the competence framework along with the skills set can be brought in so that's something we're looking in to and we'll build in to the corporate Partners offering.

Chris Earnshaw – I just wanted to add to what Michelle was saying about ‘green shoots’ if I can use that expression of a change of sentiment because we have been saying some of these things for a long time and the sentiment doesn’t seem to have changed. Michelle’s talked about signals we’re getting back from industry and engagement there. I think it’s very significant as well that last month the select committee which reported on engineering to the government on the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) made very specific recommendations that a.) Government should ensure senior engineers were professionally registered, b.) Government should ensure that on its critical programmes its suppliers are using competent professionally registered workforce and c.) Government should ensure that these competencies are brought to bear on the development of policy at an early stage, not just at the stage of implementation. That is very much now in the frame. Now that’s only a select committee report, it doesn’t mandate the UK government to do this, but we know from our discussions with the government Chief Scientist with whom we have a very good relationship now, much better than we’ve had at any time I can remember, that we’ve finally got their attention so I’m reasonably confident – it won’t change overnight - it is only a select committee report but I think there is a change afoot in the public sector as well.

Comment from the floor – just a closing point about the global nature of the institution, it’s very much a UK centric organisation; you have to start with the UK before growing out but do not forget that as well.

Keith Parr, Benelux - I would like the view of the panel and perhaps from people in the hall whether making registration renewable rather than once for life would have any impact in the market perception of the value of registration. I know that my registration is more than 30 years old and I’m wondering just how much value that really has if you ever looked at it critically.

Michelle Richmond – I know other countries such as New Zealand have now brought in mandatory revalidation of your qualifications every 5 years through the continuous professional development that you’ve done. This is a perennial debate that goes on – obviously we’ve got over 75,000 members registered with EC^{UK} and we’re only one engineering institution. The practicalities and cost of revalidation at this stage – renewing your qualification or proving that you’ve kept yourself competent - would be a logistical nightmare. It regularly goes round as a debate at EC^{UK} and then they park it so people like yourself Keith and like myself effectively having been out of engineering for two and a half years – would I really be able to keep my CEng, would I show my competence in that level? It’s an ongoing debate and I’m sure that EC^{UK} will revisit it probably in another 2 years time. That’s where we stand currently with the qualifications.

Grant Smith, Peterborough and Huntingdon LN – You mentioned a small decline in chartership applications. My understanding is that the requirements for obtaining chartership changed in 2000 and for graduates around 2001/02. 2001 was basically the last year that you could obtain chartership with a BEng qualification. Thereafter people obtaining chartership needed to have an MEng. On my particular course probably 10% of the student population did an MEng. We then had that period of what further learning was required to supplement your BEng and in my eyes, it’s still really never been clarified, how the BEng graduates gain chartership.

Michelle Richmond – You’re absolutely right, there has been confusion. EC^{UK} Spec is actually quite clear in the fact that it’s competence to master’s level - it does not mean you have to have a master’s degree. It’s the exemplifying route through and if you approached us for registration with an accredited MEng, you get a tick in the box and immediately move on. However the EC^{UK} Spec is to master’s level so therefore it’s being able to prove your competencies under project work or the R&D work that you’ve done that will rise up to M level learning and that can be quite deep and specialist. For example, if you’ve just done a piece of work on some heavy radar theoretical stuff, that would actually show you had competence to M level. Now because there’s been a lack of clarity on this further learning, there is a guide being brought out to make it absolutely clear what this further learning can be – it could be straight academic learning, a project or small technical report that shows your depth to M level learning – so we understand this confusion, it’s been running for some time and Mike (Bridgefoot) and his team will be producing this guide to help unpick and make this clear.

Grant Smith, Peterborough and Huntingdon Local Network – It's good that we're getting the clarification because it's sorely needed and young engineers that I've spoken to are of the impression that basically they've got a BEng and that's the end of their aspirations to getting chartership. The second point on the aspect of BEng/MEng is that the cost of obtaining any university qualification is spiralling and students walking out of university with terrific amounts of debt are simply making an economic choice that it's not worth doing an MEng because having an MEng isn't reflected in their starting salary and they're not getting a step-up salary scale when they're gaining chartership which the MEng facilitated so the economic drivers aren't there because of the way their education is funded.

Sam McLaughlin – From a global perspective - the MEng in the UK - how does that translate to a BEng somewhere else? We need to do a better marketing campaign to make that clear. Obviously the message of exactly what those requirements are in the UK isn't crystal clear and it's certainly a lot foggier in other parts of the world.

Xen Christodoulou, London Local Network – I think we need to distinguish between professional registration, continuing professional development and competency management. The question comes on the competency management – I come from a Safety Systems background where I know a number of institutions and companies are seeking competency schemes to actually support them in managing the competency of their personnel. Has there been any thinking about the institution providing templates and support for such licensed schemes for specific industries maybe with the support of the TPN's?

Michelle Richmond – Within our Career Manager tool which is a benefit to all members, we actually hold the competencies for EC^{UK} specifications at all levels including the new ICT Technician. We have other competence frameworks on there too so we have the tool within the Institution to put competencies on so engineers could do that. Because we've been focused very much on registration, it is not something we've decided to exploit commercially at the moment but within the institution we have a framework and a tool for doing that. We've also got some safety critical competencies on there so the answer is we haven't done it yet, we have the tool available and we'd probably have to make it a commercial proposition with a particular employer or sector but it's not an area we've had the energy or the time to address at the moment.

Paul Hulbert, Switzerland Local Network - Looking at the IET's web presence, I'm sure that both technically and socially it's going to get much better – are we looking at possibilities of how we might get revenue from it? I really feel that the last discussion we just had about the relevance of registration - in Europe it has much less meaning. If we had a really good web presence and it's all open, what's the point of being a member, if it's not open you pay a lot – I'm really thinking that we should be swapping the money that we're getting from membership and focus on revenue from the web.

Chris Earnshaw – We've asked for some work to be done to look at the information and the value that should be on the open access site, freely available to all, part of our charitable mission, and a way of drawing people in and then where we should draw the line so that only members can access, part of the value of their membership. At the moment we've draw the line very much in favour of giving everything to the outside world and I think the view is that, as we add content now, we need to make sure that more of the content requires, at minimum, registration (in the sense of knowing who we're talking to) and for the higher levels it's available to membership - I think we have to be a little bit careful that we operate within our charitable remits in doing all that but nevertheless, we can re-draw the balance.

In terms of monetizing information, for example, pay per view, I'll take advice from someone on the stage...?

Dolores Byrne – The online offering and access project is one of the ten projects that make up part of the overall strategy. I'm not clear that we are actually addressing how we could make money out of it at this point.

Paul Hulbert - I really am thinking that sponsorship and even advertisements might be a way in which we could avoid having to close down content for non-members and attracting new members by the fact that we'd be able to have a lower membership rate.

Chris Earnshaw – The point about advertising is an interesting one. We do a very limited amount of advertising at the moment on the web site – we need to review whether there's an opportunity there.

Dolores Byrne – We'll certainly take it on board – it may not be something that we can address within the current timescales but we'll certainly keep it on the list.

Mark van Wijk, South Africa Local Network – What concerns me is that we're trying to recruit new members but in some countries the education level is not the same as the UK. I strongly feel that back in South Africa, for instance, if you have a BTec, you can become a professional engineer – are we willing to accommodate them as professionals in the UK whereby in South Africa our health and safety and environment issues are really lacking. So my main concern is are we willing to adjust or drop our standards to accommodate them? Or do we maintain our same level of standards?

Chris Earnshaw - I don't think we're in the game of dropping our standards just to draw people in from other parts of the world. I think it's an important part of our strategy to work towards a global standard and certainly we'd like other nations to rise to that standard and I think that has to be our approach. Whilst we might adjust our products and services and even our pricing to suit local markets I don't believe that we will trade down on our quality standards, our professional standards or our ethical standards.

Michelle Richmond – For a start, if we suddenly said to all our existing MIET's you only need a City & Guilds, we'd be lynched! So no, we're not dropping standards if we're to keep the added value on MIET.

Sam McLaughlin – Should we, as part of our charitable remit, be assisting other countries in raising their own standards?

Chris Earnshaw – Standards in the broadest sense I guess - education as well as professional qualifications. A very interesting paper that Council has produced recently has started to look at what the IET might feasibly do in the developing world and the sort of partners we might work with. We know we can't spread our resources thinly so if we try and solve the problems of the developing nations then we're just going to sink so we have to be quite selective and maybe it does come down to finding the right partners. We've got a lot of engineering professionalism and access to information; they might have much better infrastructure on the ground in those countries.

Gary Wu – Chris mentioned the Council paper – my first impression is that it's a fantastic paper. We're taking a look at the strategic focus and understanding the financial restrictions and taking them in to consideration. We're looking for a new way of engaging a wide community outside of the UK and one of the things which we've been looking at from the strategy programme is that when we go outside the UK, most of our engagement work will be done through the partnerships and that has been well addressed by that paper. Some of the work we are doing at the moment – we have been working with China Association of Science and Technology and China Mechanical Engineering Association. They are looking to establish an indigenous professional registration system which they are looking for us to give them some expertise and advice.

What is the IET strategy on promoting and supporting women engineers?

Chris Earnshaw – We don't seek to apply some sort of bias, we really are an equal opportunities organisation. That said, we do work and support a number of programmes which relate to women in engineering – we award every year a high accolade in the form of the Young Women Engineer of the Year. It's a UK award but it's a way of motivating, particularly at the technician and graduate level, excellence in engineering amongst women.

And equally importantly we work with a number of organisations that are working in the field such as WISE.

Dolores Byrne – I would agree with Chris' opening remark – we don't take promoting women engineers as a top line. The top line is promoting and supporting engineers. Stemming from that there are some issues with helping women engineers equally there are some issues with people in Nigeria so it's not singled out as a particular focus. The IET supports WISE and WES – I myself was on the national committee of WISE for 6 years. We support bursaries alongside scholarships and prizes, we host the Daphne Jackson lecture here every year so there are lots of initiatives in that area. My personal ambition over the next year or so is to encourage women members to actually up their membership. We have many talented women in the IET who are at Member grade and clearly have the achievements to be Fellows. Infact at the last count there were less than 100 women Fellows in the IET out of 150,000 membership which is something I think could be improved upon.

***Richard Spalding, Chairman of the Satellite TPN/Armed Forces Liaison Committee* – I'm a Chartered Engineer but I'm a Chartered Manager and I have to demonstrate every single year that I've done some continuing professional development. I know that may take a little bit of staff resource to check the evidence but actually the onus should be much more as Sam suggested on the individuals wishing to do continuing professional development, especially those that are registered.**

Michelle Richmond – Part of signing up to be a registered engineer is that not only at your professional registration interview do you actually have your action plan which is a one point in time you are obliged to keep up your CPD. As we are licensed by EC^{UK} we actually have to check that our members are keeping up their CPD and we do that by yearly tracker survey to find out how people are doing. Now that's down to the individual how they do it – we have Career Manager which you can use for all of your life to do that, but you are obliged as a registered engineer to keep your CPD up and we do it via a tracker survey – we don't enforce it any more than that.

***Richard Spalding* – Do we know whether all 75,000 registered engineers are actively doing CPD?**

Michelle Richmond – We do it on a sample basis, we couldn't go round every 75,000 and actually check personally. We just have to do it via a survey mechanism and do a sample to be licensed by EC^{UK}

***Savvas Savvides, Cyprus Local Network* – Do we do anything as an Institution to expand in the development of standards that will help the global strategy that we have – I'm talking about the wiring regulations for instance. It's a standard that people have been working to for a long time and it is known world-wide. We could expand in other areas, especially in new technologies – do we have any plans to expand in that area?**

Chris Earnshaw - This has been a topic which keeps coming up because I would like to think the answer should be yes. It is obviously a way of using our influence and also potentially a source of revenue as well. I think the sad fact is we haven't yet found an area where we've been able to do that but in my view, we'd still be very interested in the opportunities – maybe we need more input and a bit more creative thinking. So if you've got particular ideas of where you see opportunities, please let us know. It would have to be fairly 'green field' – I don't think we'd want to go head to head with another standards body that was already credible in that space. There is one that's been discussed within the whole green technology space – sustainable technologies - whether there are standards there that can be established. Even in that sector, there's lots of other people already active so it's not obvious where we would place our bet but I think we'd be interested to know your ideas. If you see those opportunities, by all means flag them.

***Mohammad Zubair, Pakistan Local Network* – We are all aware of the fact that the recession and the after effects that it is bringing to the countries and the industrial sector. What is the role of the IET as far as the students, the graduates, which are coming out into the industry and looking for jobs and internships and what is the IET's**

role in building a bridge and forging good collaboration between industry and the universities?

Chris Earnshaw – I'd like to think that it brings in to even sharper relief some of the products and services that already support our younger members and just demonstrates that it can help them in their career. I don't think we have anything that is particularly new to deal with the issue of the recession but Career Manager can help people manage their career in the early stages, there are some great initiatives going on in some universities, Imperial College, London for instance, where we're helping connect students with industry, making them aware of job opportunities. So I think it should be a time in which we need to put more effort in to engaging with the universities but probably developing our existing products rather than some brand new initiatives.

Sam McLaughlin – I won't say brand new initiatives but they're ones that aren't widely known. A lot of young professional groups around the world have done different things that actually support exactly what you're talking about – in Australia in the past we've run mentoring programmes with first to fourth year students that have an industry project that brings them together. Then there's the next phase – mentoring between penultimate year students, working with industry people as well, which provides that link. There's a lot of different activities that go on that address exactly what you're talking about and I put the challenge to the YP's in the room that what we really need is those YPs thinking about the sort of things that they would want, putting forward proposals and putting them in to plan where they're not just helping themselves but they're potentially helping all IET members or Young Professionals in that particular region. We need to focus on gathering all those ideas so that they're easy to use for sections to set up and provide those services locally. I don't think it's something that we can do centrally, it's got to be from the people on the ground.

Alan Watts – The only comment I would make is that we have a network – use it. I know many people do and that can't be simply to get a better understanding of where jobs are or where opportunities are but also to find somebody older than yourself who will act as a mentor, not necessarily in a hugely direct basis, sometimes a more standing back basis and just giving you a few tips – 'have you considered taking your skills and moving in to that other industry' – and just giving you a few nudges. So the network's there, basically use it!