

Speech given by Colin Mackie on the retiral of Ian Scott

President, Douglas, ladies and gentlemen:

In my speech at my own retiral dinner here two years ago I recalled the local association AGM, of 1991, but tonight I want to take you back further than that.

A considerable number of you, those who have become active in the EIS over the last ten years or so, may well not have appreciated the immense contribution which Ian Scott has made to the work of this local association and to the EIS as a whole or the exact duration of that contribution.

I want to take you back, in fact, to the early to mid 1980s. The EIS was a different kind of organization in these far off days. For one thing it was dominated-certainly at least here in Perth and Kinross by Headteachers, mostly primary Headteachers. A quick glance at the list of office-bearers from that time on our website is instructive. This needed to change if the institute as a whole, but the local association in particular, was to more adequately represent the views and the experiences of class teachers at a time in which the Government of Scotland, represented by the then Secretary of State, Michael Forsyth, had embarked on what many saw as a radical but seriously misguided programme of educational reform and reorganization.

But it was also a local association in crisis. The first attempt to change the leadership of the local association had involved the election of a new secretary. This person was elected at an LA AGM as the result of a large contingent from the individual's school turning up at the meeting and voting him into office. Things were done differently in those days!

Sadly, the new secretary was more successful in getting himself elected than he was to turn out to be as secretary.

The next year or two were years of turmoil and confusion, of crisis meetings of a bewildering number of changes amongst the office-bearers of the LA although, eventually, some degree of order and stability was to be restored and, what one would describe as the 'old guard' re-asserted itself, it was obvious that the local association desperately needed an injection of new blood. A new generation was required to meet the challenges of the times.

Ian belonged to that new generation, but more than that, he was the first of that generation to take on the responsibilities of leading the local association at a time of extraordinary change and challenge.

He became vice-president in particularly difficult circumstances when the LA president-herself another Headteacher- was forced to resign in, shall we just say, 'unfortunate circumstances'. He served as vice-president to the new president, the late and sadly missed, Eleanor Howie, and in 1987 he succeeded as president.

Over the next decade Ian's contribution to changing the local association was huge. First as president, then as press secretary, but, above all, as a man of very considerable intelligence, sharp acumen and penetrating insight, his wisdom was invaluable in cutting through the peripheries of any problem or any issue and focussing on the essentials.

His talents were recognised outside the local association. At that time, as many but not necessarily all will well recall, we operated within the then Tayside region and negotiations with the education authority were the responsibility of Tayside regional executive of the EIS. Ian was elected as president of the regional executive in 1989 and served as a member of the key

joint negotiating committee in Dundee.

At national level Ian was encouraged by that legendary figure and mentor to those of us who made up that new generation within the local association, the late Alex Munro, Headteacher of RDM. Ian was elected to the national council of the EIS in 1987. He served on that body for ten years, from 1987 until 1997, in tandem, first with Alex Munro, then with Katherine Awlson, and finally, from 1993 with myself. As the senior of our two council members Ian helped me enormously in my efforts to find my way around and to understand the arcane operation and procedures of the institute at national level.

Within council, Ian served as a long-time member of the law and tenure committee which dealt with the cases of individual EIS members in difficulties of different kinds.

In 1996 his work for the institute was recognised with the award of the fellowship of the EIS in 1996 Perth and Kinross became, once again, a unitary authority, with the demise of Tayside region, and assumed full responsibility for education. The role and the remit of the local association changed dramatically. We were now charged with the task of negotiating on the full range of educational matters with the new council and the new director, Bob McKay.

There is no doubt that Ian would have been a key member of our negotiating team had he remained in the employment of the local authority. Unfortunately for the local association- whether for him personally I shall leave to him to comment- changes in the curriculum and changes, in particular, at Blairgowrie High School, where he had worked as principal teacher of classics, led to his early retirement.

Ian continued to work however, at Butterstone school, near Meigle, and then at Kilgraston school. Nor was he -by any means- retired from active participation in the work of the Local

Association. Ian continued to be a member of the local association executive committee. He served as benevolent fund correspondent and then as the webmaster of the newly established LA website.

He continued to apply his vast experience and his incisive insight into the issues affecting the local association, particularly in those matters which involved our internal organization and financial issues. The support which he consistently provided during my own period as secretary was invaluable.

Despite the fact that by the nature of his changed employment status Ian was not involved any longer with the direct experience of negotiation locally he continued to be deeply interested in these matters and a source of sage advice and the wisdom of experience. In considering issues of the internal organization of the local association itself Ian was someone to whom one turned instinctively for counsel, and one knew that the response would be utterly honest and delivered with authority and with precision. Ian has now decided that the time has come for him to leave the stage. That is the local association's loss. But I am confident that he will retain his interest. As witnessed tonight, 'old soldiers' do not entirely 'fade away'!

I know that I speak for everyone here in thanking Ian most profoundly for his very long years of active service to the EIS and in wishing him all health and happiness in the future.

Can I ask you to join me in raising your glasses to- Ian Scott.