



Working for Safety on the Road for 50 Years

## REPORT OF THE AIRSO CHAIR FOR 2015

This time last year, we were looking forward to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and a range of events and initiatives designed to mark this important milestone. We had no idea that those things would happen without someone who made such an immense contribution that it was hard to imagine AIRSO without him. Few people have contributed as much to our organisation as Robert (Bob) Jackson. He was the driving force behind what has become our annual “flagship” event, the National Blue Light Users Conference. He was also a stalwart of the council of management, and chair of the Road Safety Group, working hard behind the scenes to ensure that AIRSO was well-run, spent its limited money wisely, and remained an influential and respected contributor to road safety discussions. He was experienced, knowledgeable and hugely respected in the wider field. On a personal level, he was someone on whom I could always rely for honest, intelligent advice, delivered in plain language. Throughout 2015, there has been a void where Bob should have been. Our thoughts throughout the year have very much been with his family and close friends, but there is no doubt that AIRSO is a different place without him. Bob’s contribution to AIRSO will be marked through the introduction of an annual award in his name, to be presented at the National Blue Light Users Conference.

A 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary initiative which was particularly close to my heart was the Sean Morley Memorial Award. This opportunity for recognition of student projects with a road safety theme was launched in the Spring of 2015. In October, five shortlisted finalists presented their work to a panel of judges and an invited audience which included close members of Sean’s family. I was overwhelmed by the quality of the work, and genuinely moved to see how much our event meant to Sean’s family. The judging panel gave very generously of their time and expertise and I should like to place on record my gratitude to them. The award was covered extensively in the local press in Coventry and Warwickshire, thanks to the work of Sean’s mum, Kerry. I hope our efforts to secure quality entries and willing volunteer judges are similarly successful this coming year.

We held a number of member events during 2015, including the anniversary lunch in Leicestershire, the tour of BSI in Hertfordshire, and meetings and seminars in each of the constituent countries of Great Britain. It is fair to say that attendances have been poor. We all know that the last few years have not been easy for the road safety profession, with members finding themselves under increasing pressure at work. The council of management is keen to understand what other factors might influence attendance, and what more could be done to ensure the organisation continues to meet members’ needs. To this end, we will be undertaking a consultation over the course of the year, which you can expect to hear more about in due course.

The turning of a year is always a time to reflect on what has been achieved, what has changed, and what the coming year might bring. The council of management will look slightly different by the end of today, with Mike Lovelock retiring from council after many years of quiet hard work, and new members coming in. I hope they are excited about the opportunity ahead, but realistic about the challenge, as we steer the organisation through one of its biggest changes in many years.

As you will know, Graham has decided to retire from his role as Secretary. I couldn’t list all of the things Graham does (and has done) on behalf of AIRSO, but they include ensuring the effective day to day running of the organisation, planning the events, manning the office, and overseeing the administration of membership services. Managing the transition will undoubtedly involve some challenges, and we ask that members support us as we seek to understand what arrangements will be best for the organisation, and put them in place.

I am sure members will share my gratitude to Graham for his hard work and dedication over such a long period of time. We will be very sorry to see him go, but at the same time, we must look forward with optimism to what AIRSO can achieve in 2016, even as we accept that the organisation will face some major changes.

I should like to conclude by saying what a privilege it has been to chair the organisation in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The council of management takes its responsibility to ensure the good governance of the organisation very seriously. We believe passionately that AIRSO has a role to play in promoting road safety, and will continue to work hard on your behalf during 2016, to see that role fulfilled.

Dr Lucy Rackliff FAIRSO  
AIRSO Chairman 2015