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For latest information about IRSE events, news and how to become a member, visit [www.irse.org](http://www.irse.org). We welcome all those who are interested or involved in the fields of railway control systems, communications, data management or systems engineering.

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Lord Bingham, who died in 2010, was an eminent British judge who served as Master of the Rolls, Lord Chief Justice and as Senior Law Lord. He wrote at length during his life, producing many memorable quotations. One of them was "A profession's most valuable asset is its collective reputation and the confidence which that inspires". It was originally said in relation to the behaviour of an individual member of a professional institution and the need to take disciplinary action against that individual in order to protect the reputation of the profession. He went on to say "... the reputation of the profession is more important than the fortunes of any individual member. Membership of the profession brings many benefits, but that is part of the price".

It is very rare for the IRSE to need to apply disciplinary sanctions to its members, although it has done on a few occasions. Sanctions are, of course, applied occasionally to IRSE Licence holders (who may or may not be IRSE members as well). But in writing this 'News View' I do not want to focus on the negative side, but on the positive aspects of our collective professional reputation.

The IRSE as an organisation has a responsibility to maintain and grow its reputation as a body that is committed to high standards of professional conduct. We want railway companies, suppliers and the general public to have confidence that we are playing our part in ensuring railways are safe, and that we will do all we can to ensure that IRSE members undertake their work responsibly. Over the past few months I have met with senior engineers and managers in a number of companies, and without exception I have encountered goodwill towards the IRSE. In a number of cases they have made suggestions about more that the Institution could do to help them and the industry.

Our collective reputation is, of course, heavily dependent upon you, as members of the IRSE, acting responsibly and professionally, in accordance with our Code of Professional Conduct (which you can find on the **About** page of the IRSE website). Please keep this in mind as you go about your daily work. Your individual professional reputation is one of your most important assets. The IRSE's most valuable asset is most certainly its collective reputation, and you have a role in sustaining it.

**Francis How, Chief Executive**



Front cover: This issue's lead article looks at the importance of track worker safety and the role of the lookout, both today and in the past. Here a lookout acknowledges the driver of a passing train as maintenance is carried out at Thornton, in the Hunter region, New South Wales, Australia. Photo Jeanette Aitken.

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