1. In May 1978, I chaired the AGM which saw members sensibly approve the motion that the name of the Institute of Fuel be changed to the Institute of Energy, despite strong resistance from the “old guard” members of Council. My period in office coincided with the “Winter of Discontent” and the run-up to the May 1979 election, which saw Mrs Thatcher win and start the process of privatising the energy industries. As President I attended over 10 dinners and fought hard not to put on weight; my predecessor had put on two stones whilst in office.

2. The period of my presidency was an interesting time because, following the name change from the Institute of Fuel to the Institute of Energy in 1978, talks were taking place with similar energy-related bodies with a view to creating a larger, more comprehensive Institute for the energy industry. This was slow work and it was not until 2003 that the EI was formed as a result of this.

3. My presidency covered the period just after the Institute’s focus and name changed from fuel to energy. The wider scope was matched by an expansion in the fundamental science base, which was moving from empirical experiments to computational fluid dynamics. On reflection, I regret that national policy has not kept pace with the Institute’s expertise, and the UK still wastes about half of the energy in fuels by neglecting large scale and domestic scale combined heat and power technology.

4. I was honoured to serve twice as President of the IP and in particular to have secured approval from members for the merger with the InstE to create the present EI which is now the home for individuals and companies involved in all aspects of the energy industry. With the efforts of countless volunteers staffing committees and help from the highly dedicated staff, it is the prime source for unbiased expertise on HSE, shared knowledge, and long learning have never been more important.

5. The InstE encouraged all energy sectors to cooperate with each other and academia to develop expertise and technology from which they and society might benefit. The main focus was on the clean, efficient and economic use of fossil fuels. Emerging technologies and the potential role of renewable energy were also important. Another high priority was cooperation with other institutes to attract young people towards engineering and provide expert guidance on energy to Government. The EI has made significant progress in all these respects. Long may it continue.

6. I was the first President with a background in renewable energy, and the Melchett Medal was awarded to a windpower pioneer in my time. Renewables contribute to mainstream grid connection today, though with continuing confusion about performance and costs. But in various forms renewables will be a permanent feature of the energy scene, and for the future the EI should position itself as the preferred source for impartial fact-based information on this sector.

7. The period of my presidency was a time of considerable change with the privatisation of the coal industry, which impacted on the professional bodies associated with energy. We looked to share or even merge with other professional bodies to secure funding whilst maintaining the professional standards of the Institute, but no synergies could be found. Revenue was sourced from enlarging our conference and exhibition activities. I had great fears that the Institute would disappear altogether but was delighted that actions of later Presidents and the Chief Executive resulted in a continuing professional body with high standards and global presence.

8. My term as President of the IP coincided with the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990. At a very tense Annual Dinner that year, when the military liberation of Kuwait was imminent, the Institute was addressed by the then Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, and the Kuwaiti Minister of Oil. The occasion reminded us all that oil and politics are never very far apart. It is important that the EI, like its predecessors continues to educate our members in the realities of the political forces that will affect the worldwide energy scene.

9. 1992-93 was a defining year for the InstE, largely through the establishment of a Projects and Marketing Committee, which generated substantial revenue and helped establish energy management as an essential and rewarding discipline. The government commissioned very well attended launch seminars. Worthy of note were the Commemorative Centenary dinners, no formal meeting should exceed 30 minutes and indecision was unacceptable. Hence the excellent results.

10. In 1993 the Institute was at a turning point. There was a need for change from focusing on the practice of the use of fossil fuels to reflecting the increased awareness of environmental concerns, including local pollution and climate change. The Institute also needed to modernise its internal procedures to improve its status as an engineering learned society. It is pleasing to see the strong and influential body which has been built on those foundations.

11. The IP’s role in generating and sustaining industry technical standards was a key obsession, as well as providing platforms for industry leaders to present their views on longer term industry issues. A wonderful opportunity to work with many different colleagues and to influence public policy.

12. Over many years, and in many roles as Chair of London Electricity, Deputy Chairman of the Electricity Council and Founding Chairman of the National Grid Group, as well as with construction companies such as 24/7 Electricity and Costain, I have taken a keen interest in the activities of the EI which has played a key role in promoting good engineering practice and the restructuring of the energy industries and markets.

13. As President of the IP, I recall the privilege of chairing the Council of a world-class membership organisation for the oil and gas sector. Training, industry standards and health and safety were all high on the agenda. The EI continues these themes with a wider spectrum of activity around the entire energy business and an increased international outlook. It is a key contributor to the world’s most exciting and dynamic industry.

14. Over the years, the EI in its various incarnations has been providing an immensely important forum for a wide debate on energy issues. The EI can and should play a major and expert role in this continuously crucial public discussion. It also offers a vital shield for the oil and gas community. I wish the EI continuing success.