

News Release
21 October 2009

Chief Executive celebrates tenth anniversary

Ten very eventful years were celebrated by English UK at a special event last week.

The reception and dinner was officially held to mark the decade in which Tony Millns has been chief executive of the organisation. But much of the evening's conversations were about how the organisation has been completely transformed during that time.

When Mr Millns took the job, it was as chief executive of ARELS, an organisation representing private language schools only.

Since then he has initiated and overseen a merger with BASELT, which represented state sector institutions, and encouraged the new organisation to grow. As of this week, it has 435 members, of which 338 are private and 97 state sector. At the time of the 2004 merger there were 320.

"Creating an organisation to represent the whole industry was the obvious thing to do, and we can see how well that's working today. But it has taken a lot of hard work by the English UK staff, board members and our chairs," said Mr Millns.

There had, he added, been pressing financial and organisational reasons to bring the two organisations together – quite apart from the benefits of creating a unified lobbying body.

Past chairs recalled the changes during a dinner held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club in London after a reception for board members and close associates.

Sue Bromby, former co-chair of English UK, said the initial idea of merging the two organisations had come when Arels's Tony Millns and Baselt's Nicole de Lalouviere, found themselves on a trip together in Beijing.

"She rushed back and told us about it. She was excited about the name, and we could all see the sense of an organisation which could unite us to campaign," she said.

Sue Edwards, current chair, thanked Mr Millns for his dedicated work over the years. She talked about the changes brought about by English UK and described the difference it has made to be able to lobby the Government as a unified organisation.

One result of this had been to ensure officials and ministers understood the impact their early points-based visa proposals would have had on the industry and were persuaded to modify the system to something much more acceptable.

Meanwhile, Timothy Blake, former Arels chair, recalled the interview panel which had seen the candidates for the chief executive's job. "I said, before we start the discussions let's have everyone write their preferred name on a bit of paper and pass it up to me," he said. "Every single one of them said Tony Millns. That cut the discussion short."

* Former chairs who attended the dinner included Timothy Blake of the London School of English (former chair, ARELS); Richard Day of English in Chester (former chair, ARELS), Charles Harrison, the English Language Centre Brighton and Hove (former chair, ARELS)

Sue Bromby of the University of Salford and Mike Wills, then of the Salisbury School of English (joint chairs, English UK) Sue Edwards, of Kaplan Aspect, Bournemouth, current chair of English UK; Sarah Schechter, Anglia Ruskin University and current vice-chair of English UK.

Board members included Jane Dancaster of Wimbledon School of English, Judy Loren of Excel English, Caroline Hugo of St Edmund's College, Stuart Higgins of Saint Michael's College; Graham Simpson of the Oxford English Centre, Michael Cornes of Study Group and Kate Cadwgan-Evans of Warwickshire College.

Also present were Annie Wright and Mark Rendell, deputy chief executives of English UK.

Guests at the reception included David Lepper MP, chair of the all-party Commons group on English language teaching; Jeremy Oppenheim, Charlotte Taylor and Mark Walmsley of UKBA; Michael Carrier of the British Council; Dominic Scott, Chief Executive of UKCISA; Mike Milanovic, Chief Executive of Cambridge ESOL; Huan Japes and Jenny Pugsley of Trinity College London; Sue Hindley, chair of Study UK and Elizabeth McLaren of Accreditation UK.

Notes to Editors

1. English UK is the world's leading language teaching association, with 435 accredited centres in membership. It covers university and further education college language departments, international study centres in independent schools, educational trusts and charities, and private sector colleges. English UK is a UK registered charity.
2. More than 500,000 students every year choose to learn English in Britain, an estimated 43% of all students who travel abroad to study English. They contribute about £1.5 billion to the UK economy in course fees, accommodation and general spending. Many students go on from English language courses to UK degrees or professional qualifications. There are long-term affinity benefits to Britain as well since many students go on to be opinion-leaders and senior figures in their own countries.
3. For more information, please contact Tony Millns (Chief Executive of English UK) on +44 (0)20 7608 7960.

English UK Ltd
219 St John Street
London
EC1V 4LY

w: www.englishuk.com
e: info@englishuk.com