



DR ALASTAIR RYLATT (FAITD)

BY KEVIN LOHAN

It would be difficult to be a member of AITD for ten or more years and not to know the name Alastair Rylatt.

He was a tireless advocate of the Institute, first joining in the late 1980s. That's right! The 80s. Some of you weren't even born then and Alastair Rylatt was already working to improve our industry by helping to create and build a professional association that offered meaningful professional development to members.

In those days AITD was entirely run by volunteers and we relied on people like Alastair to give up their time for us so that we might take advantage of professional development which was a rare thing in those days. Of course, there are still people giving their time freely and Alastair has been among them. It would be difficult to count the number of times he spoke at networking events and conferences and provided the occasional article for this magazine.

You might not think too much about that but without people like Al (or even 'Big Al', as he was known among friends) we might not even have the AITD today. It was sometimes a struggle to make ends meet for the Association and the opportunity to make a few extra bucks from networking events hosted by the likes of Alastair Rylatt provided the necessary cash to sustain it.

If you've been to an AITD conference over the years then you probably saw him speak. Indeed, he was a keynote speaker at this year's conference not knowing that he had only a short time left to be with us.

Last year Alastair was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer and his treatment was gruelling. He bore those difficulties with grace and good humour. I personally had many laughs with him while he was in pain and difficulty. But that's the sort of person Al was. He had a genetic ability to make you laugh.

Despite beating that initial diagnosis the cancer returned this year and quickly consumed him. He died on 15 August 2015.

Since I first met Alastair in the 1980s he displayed a rare passion for helping people learn and grow. He was completely committed to his profession and when he spoke about learning it was always from deep within.

He ran many workshops as well as his conference addresses both here and to international audiences. As a result, his list of friendly contacts reads like an international phone book.

His audiences were too small and he was so committed to sharing his love of learning that he tried reaching more people by writing. In 1995 he and I published a book together - *Creating Training Miracles*. The title spoke directly to his goals as an educator. This, his first attempt at publishing, won the Business Book of the Year for the Asia Pacific Region. No mean feat for a first offering.

Alastair went on to write more books including *Learning Unlimited*, *Winning the Knowledge Game* and *Navigating the Frenzied World of Work* but his complete list of publications spans more than two pages.

I emphasise this point because what only perhaps his closest friends knew is that Al struggled with dyslexia. He wrote three books and many other articles and papers while having trouble reading and writing.

That alone is worthy of some regard but there's more.

Last year Alastair finally accomplished what many only dream of. He was awarded a PhD.

He liked to be known afterwards as Dr. Alastair Rylatt and why the hell not? He worked really hard to get that PhD!

Alastair is survived by his wife Elaine. The two of them squeezed everything they could from life and especially enjoyed the outdoors with a love for hiking, camping and cycling. Together they completed a 600km ride from Germany to Denmark.

Alastair will be sorely missed by many as a mentor, educator, role model, and inspiration.

He'll be missed by me as a great friend.