

IRISH ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Professor Pauline Murphy
President Irish Association

Review of 2004 – 2009

During these years, I was Vice President and Chair Person Northern Committee 2004 – 2006 and subsequently President of the Association and Chair Person of the Council. (The council agreed under amended constitution presented by John Neil, Vice President at the AGM post annual conference in Belfast, November 2007, has 15 members at least 5 of whom must be from each of the 2 constituencies, north and south.)

The Irish Association has developed effectively during the past 4 years, especially in the northern part of the island of Ireland. I placed emphasis on creating and organising events, mainly in Belfast, which prioritised social, economic and political (not party political) issues and discussions and continued the search for dialogue and reconciliation. I included southern speakers at conferences and seminars, 22 in all, and encouraged attendance of southern members. The 2 annual conferences held in the North in 2005 and 2007 were very successful as were the seminars, panel meetings and other gatherings.

We can build on the success of the Annual Conference 2007, in Belfast, at which President Mary McAleese delivered an inspiring overview of current major change: devolution in Northern Ireland with elected representatives taking forward the peace process. Despite recent paramilitary activity, the current credit crunch, economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland and the challenges of globalisation, the search for dialogue and reconciliation grows stronger.

We are now faced with a challenge to continuously transform and sustain the dynamism to continually recreate platforms and processes to enable new forms of relationships to emerge in Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland.

During the past seven decades, the Irish Association has made a real contribution to the growth of tolerance, reconciliation, mutual trust and human rights;

This record of seminars, interactive dialogues and conferences indicates our capacity to sustain and develop this contribution.

Conferences and Seminars

The following list gives a summary of the events, all of which were very well attended and some of which resulted in networking with academics, business people, politicians and NGO groups.

Northern Committee Programme 2005/2006 Vice President; Professor Pauline Murphy 2004

- Paper presented by **Dr Tom Frawley Ombudsman Review of Public Administration in Northern Ireland**, followed by lively discussion.; also attended by southerners December 2004
Linenhall Library, Belfast
- **Irish Association Annual Conference Religion and Conflict in Armagh**, organised by the northern committee

2005

- **Conference; Belfast – An Inclusive City? Exploring Issues of Racism and Diversity. February 2005**
Queen's University, Belfast
Speakers from Belfast, Dublin (IBEC and ICTU), Edinburgh City Council, and Zimbabwe Solidarity Campaign. The conference was introduced by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Tom Eakin. Other speakers included Equality Commission, Institute of Directors, Northern Ireland and NICEM and Head of Research, School of Education, QUB.
- Presentation from **Paul Jordan, Community Relations Council** to the Irish Association, Northern Committee April 2005
- **Institute of Governance, Queen's University Belfast 2005**
Presentation from One Small Step Director, **Trevor Ringland** and **launch of Irish Association Report Exploring Issues of Racism and Diversity**

Annual Conference 2005: Imagining Ireland in 2020

October 14/15th 2005

Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast

Speakers from Belfast, Derry, Dublin and Dundalk including **Dr Garret FitzGerald, Professor John FitzGerald, Dr Michael Mansergh, Professor Joyce O'Connor, Professor Paul Bew, Dr Goretti Horgan, Professor Marie Smyth, Dr Jim Dougal.**

The US Consulate provided reception in Ardnalvalley House before the conference dinner and the Consul was the after dinner speaker.

- **Seminar on Democracy in Ireland: Leave it to the Young**

14th May 2005 Linenhall Library, Belfast

Presentation from **Dr Robin Wilson**, Democratic Dialogue and panel of representatives of all Northern Ireland political parties followed by a question and answer session and discussion.

- Paper presented by **Martina Purdy** on her latest book publication, followed by discussion on the political persons featured and the political system. 2005

- **St Patrick's Day Luncheon**

17th March 2005

Malone Lodge Hotel, Belfast

Speaker: **Dr Colm McGivern**, Director British Council, Northern Ireland

- **AGM 2005, Northern Committee**

Ulster Reform Club, Belfast

Guest Speaker: **Professor Enda McDonagh, Maynooth University**

Programme 2006-2009

President; Professor Pauline Murphy

2006

- **Seminar on Identity**
Linenhall Library, Belfast

Speakers included **Bairbre de Brún Sinn Fein MEP, Senator Derek J McDowell Dublin, Dr Duncan Morrow, Director Community Relations Council (CRC) and Nelson McCausland, DUP MLA.**
- **St Patrick's Day Luncheon**
17th March 2006
Malone Lodge Hotel, Belfast
Speaker: **Roisin McDonagh**, Director Arts Council, Northern Ireland
- **Conference**
29th April 2006 Queen's University Belfast
Towards an All-Ireland Economy: The Business Approaches and the Political Obstacles
Speakers included **Professor John Bradley ESRI, Dr Michael Smyth, University of Ulster, Victor Hewitt Director ERINI, Liam Nellis CE Inter Trade Ireland, and a panel of politicians from all NI political parties: Sean Fulton SDLP, Mitchell McLaughlin Sinn Fein, Dr Esmond Burnie UP, George Dawson DUP and Sean Neeson Alliance Party.**
- **Christmas event 2006.**
Ulster Reform Club, Belfast

Speaker: **Professor Richard English**, Queen's University Belfast
Launch of his recent publication
- **Dinner with 6 Irish Association Presidents, Northern Ireland 2006 – Brian Garrett, 1986-1988, Professor Paul Bew, 1991-1993, Professor Bernard Cullen, 1995-1997, Dr. Dennis Kennedy, 1999-2000, Mr. Paul McErlean, 2002-2004, Professor Pauline Murphy, 2006-2009.**
Ramada Hotel, Belfast
- **Irish Association Annual Conference in Dublin**, organised by the Southern committee
Mount Herbert Hotel, Dublin
- **The British/Irish Association Conference**
Cambridge, September 2006

2007 Irish Association Council Programmes

- **Conference - A Shared future for Education: Lessons to be Learned Seminar on Education in Northern Ireland – March 3rd 2007**
Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast

Keynote speakers **Professor Sir George Bain, ex vice chancellor, Queen's University Belfast and Professor Tom Collins NUI, Maynooth.**

Other speakers included **Mark Langhammer, Bishop Donal McKeown, Chairman NI Commission for Catholic Education** and executives from Integrated Education and Irish speaking schools.

A panel of representatives from all political parties in Northern Ireland continued the discussion.

- **St Patrick's Day Luncheon**
17th March 2007 Malone Lodge Hotel, Belfast
Speaker: **Patricia Lewsley, Children's' Commissioner**
- **Seminar on New Direction for Unionism? 2007**
Linenhall Library, Belfast
Keynote Speaker, Professor Lord Paul Bew. Very interesting discussion with Reverend Brian Kennaway, Trevor Ringland, Roy Garland, Eamon Hanna, SDLP

Annual Conference, 2007

- **Cross Border People: Northerners in the South, Southerners in the North**
9/10th November 2007 Ramada Hotel, Belfast

President Mary McAleese opened with a major enlightening speech. Very distinguished speakers including **Professor Brendan O'Leary, Lauder Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania, USA, Bishop Ken Clark, Denis Rooney, International Fund for Ireland, Caitriona Ruane, Northern Ireland Minister for Education, Canon Brian Smeaton, Michael Farrell, Human Rights, Dr Paul Burgess, University College Cork**

The **US Consulate** provided an excellent reception at Ardnalvalley House before the conference dinner

The after dinner speaker, writer **Jennifer Johnston**, gave a very interesting talk on her island of Ireland experience.

2008

Seminars on Progress? In Governance in Northern Ireland

Stormont Long Gallery, April 2008

- Seminar on Programme for Sharing in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Presentations from a **panel of MLAs representing all 6 political parties**, followed by question and answer session and discussion.

Stormont Long Gallery, December 2008

- Representatives from **all 6 political parties**, MLA's (including 2 Ministers) followed by discussion and question and answer session.

This was more indicative of progress in addressing issues of sharing than the April Seminar.

Networking was encouraged by inviting the political representatives to join participants for pre-event supper. This was very successful.

- **Professor Pauline Murphy, Irish Association President convened a meeting in Buswells Hotel April 5th 2008, Dublin** to discuss regeneration of southern interest and activities.
- **2008 Christmas event**
Ulster Reform Club, Belfast
Speaker: **Tony Kennedy**, Co-operation Ireland.
- **The British/Irish Association Conference September 2008**
Oxford. The President attended

2009

- **12 February 2009 Visit to President Mary McAleese Áras an Uachtaráin, Dublin by 15 council members of the Irish Association from North and South**
- **2nd April 2009 AGM Newman House Dublin**
- **2nd April 2009 Seminar, Newman House Dublin**
Jointly organised with IBIS: on North South Relations after the Boom: the Impact after Credit Crunch on Mutual Relations and Understanding
Chairperson: Professor Pauline Murphy

Keynote speakers: **Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson, MP, MLA, Junior Minister OFMDFM and Dr. Martin Mansergh, TD, Minister of State Dail Eireann**
Respondents: **Dr John Bradley and Dr. Michael Smyth, University of Ulster**

- **20th April 2009 Presentation of Certificate of Honorary Membership to Dr Daisaku Ikeda, Japanese peacemaker, educator and philosopher**

Professor Pauline Murphy

April 2009