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astir

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland

1909

W. S. Cooney

Presidents of the ASTI

1910
P. J. Kennedy

1911
P. J. Kennedy

1912
W. Johnston

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G. A. Watson

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G. A. Watson

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W. J. Williams

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G. A. Watson

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T. J. Burke

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L. Murray

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B. Gillespie

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M. Kinsella
A. Rutledge

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J. H. Kane

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T. P. Waller

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A. J. Mulligan

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J. J. Murphy

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G. P. Duggan

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J. H. Kane

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T. O'Beirne

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T. O'Beirne

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T. O'Donoghue

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C. L. Dillon

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G. P. Daly

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J. H. Kane

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F. Kennedy

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T. P. Waller

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T. J. Boylan

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T. O'Donoghue

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C. L. Dillon

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C. L. Dillon

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T. Walsh

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D. Buckley

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O. P. Ward

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O. P. Ward

1949
W.G. Kirkpatrick

1950
S. Ó Mathúna

1951
D. Ó Conalláin

1952
T. C. Coppinger

1953
W. Meyler

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P. J. O'Reilly

1955
G. Ó Maoilmhichil

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P. J. Hardiman

1957
L. Comerford

1958
N. Kelleher

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C. L. Dillon
J. Wilson

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T. Murphy

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P. S. Gillman

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G. Lyons

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D. Ó Mhurchú

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P. Finnegan

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D. Buckley

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J. A. Brommell

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J. A. Brommell

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H. Duffy

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M. Sheedy

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T. O'Dea

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P. Ó Riordáin

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K. Meehan

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P. Purcell

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L. Hogan

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J. A. Sheehy

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M. MacCormack

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D. Nolan

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D. Nolan

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M. MacCarthy

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D. Barry

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T. Boland

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M. Walsh

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R. Kennedy

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H. Collins

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L. O'Flaherty

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J. White

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D. Quish

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K. O'Sullivan

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E. O'Allmhurain

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J. Costello

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W. Ruane

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J. Whyte

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M. Dowling Maher

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S. Higgins

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T. Francis

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J. Mulcahy

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J. Hurley

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M. Corely

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B. O'Sullivan

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D. McCluskey

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C. Fitzpatrick

2002
P. J. Sheehy

2003
P. Cahill

2004
S. Hall

2005
S. Parsons

2006
M. Freeley

2007
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2008
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2009

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The future of education

Past Presidents' reflections

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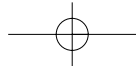
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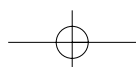
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Fáilte ar ais ar thosach an bhliain nua agus tá súil agam gur bhain sibh uile taithneamh as an Nollaig. Is é seo bliain speisialta do mhuintir an ASTI agus sinn ag ceiliúradh ár gcéad.

Is féidir linn a bheith bródúil as an méid atá bainte amach ag an ASTI i rith an tréimhse sin. Ó thosach beag, tá thart ar 18,000 baill inár gcumann ag an bpointe seo – clochmhíle tábhachtach dár gceárdchumann.

The ASTI has always been to the forefront in protecting teachers' rights, pay and working conditions. Many battles have been fought over the years by the ASTI to improve teachers' pay and conditions. These have included:

- the achievement of an incremental salary scale for secondary teachers in 1946;
- a redeployment scheme for teachers, which was first introduced in 1982; and,
- the ASTI was to the forefront in ensuring the fair and speedy implementation of the part-time and fixed-term workers' legislation, which led to substantial improvements in the pay and conditions of part-time and non-permanent teachers.

Protecting education

The ASTI and its members have now spent 100 years campaigning for an improved education system. While a lot has been achieved, today we again find ourselves in the middle of a campaign to protect our pupils' education from the horrendous cuts announced in Budget 2009. ASTI members all over the country have been fighting and continue to fight for the future of the children and young people in their care. This campaign will continue until the Budget education cuts are reversed.

Teachers know best what is required in a good education system. They understand the needs of their schools and the needs of individual pupils. When it comes to public investment in education, we all want value for money. Ireland has an appalling record for investment in education relative to the country's economic wealth. Under-funding and under-resourcing our schools does not represent value for money, it simply puts our pupils' futures and the future economic and social wellbeing of the country in jeopardy.

Quality education for all

Second-level teachers have played a key role in the development of Ireland's education system. While we can be proud of the high

performance of our schools and students, as affirmed by the OECD PISA studies, we recognise the importance of offering a holistic education to all of our young people. Despite pressures from a wide range of sources, second-level teachers and the ASTI have continued to champion holistic education. The ASTI enters its second century at a time when holistic education is crucial, not only to the development of the individuals in our classrooms but to the country's future economic and social development. Increasingly, employers state that what a person knows is of much less importance than characteristics such as how they can learn and adapt, how flexible and creative they are, how they interact with others, and how they cope with change. Of equal importance to Ireland, and indeed the rest of the world, are the social skills that we seek to nurture in our schools. In an era marked by issues such as globalisation and climate change, characteristics such as tolerance, social responsibility and compassion are of paramount importance.

Táim cinnte go mbeidh tuilleadh le bheith bródúil as nuair a shroichimid an dara chéad. Níl amhras orm ach go leanfaidh an ASTI mar fórsa éifeachtach in oideachas na tíre seo.

Pat Hurley



Pat Hurley

ASTI President

Budget cuts target most vulnerable students



Pictures from the December 6 demonstration against budget cuts to education. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ASTI President, Pat Hurley, pictured with Bernadine O'Sullivan (left) and Sheila Parsons (right); PJ Sheehy and Ray St. John, ASTI Honorary Treasurer, prepare the stage for speeches; and, Over 50,000 people participated in the march against education cuts.

Twenty-eight thousand second-level students miss school each day, a loss of 13 school days per year. The report on School Attendance Data 2003/04 – 2005/06, published by the National Educational Welfare Board, describes school absenteeism in Ireland as "unacceptably high". The report states that "school absenteeism is a complex matter requiring sustained investment in a range of supports for children, families and schools and in the area of education provision".

Budget cuts

Responding to the report, ASTI General Secretary John White said that the education cuts announced in Budget 2009 attack the children and young people most at risk of absenteeism and drop out: "The cuts announced as part of Budget 2009 included the abolition of grants for Traveller education and for programmes such as the Junior Certificate Schools Programme and the Leaving Cert Applied, which encourage many students to continue to attend school. A number of second-level schools will now

lose their home school liaison teachers; these teachers play a vital role in encouraging and supporting school attendance. In addition, schools with newcomer pupils will see a reduction in the number of English language support teachers. The Budget decision to increase the pupil-teacher ratio will impact on all pupils, but will have a disproportionately negative impact on those pupils who are vulnerable to absenteeism and school drop out".

John White added that school attendance has a significant impact on the future life chances of young people. "Regular attendance at school is the number one factor determining student achievement and school completion. The education service must be resourced in a way that supports all of our children and young people."

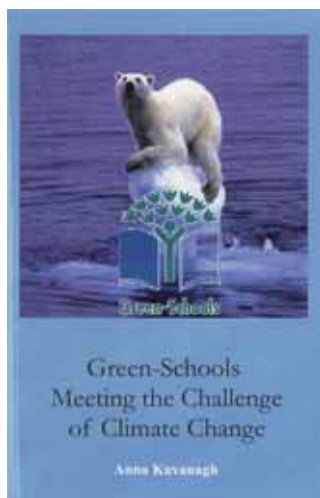
The latest OECD study, 'Education at a Glance 2008', shows Ireland coming 27th out of 29 OECD countries when it comes to the proportion of economic wealth invested in each second-level student. Only two OECD countries – Greece and the Slovak Republic – invest a lower proportion. "The education cuts announced in the Budget must be seen in the context of our appalling record for the funding of our education service," said John White.

For more information on the effects of the Budget 2009 cutbacks on education visit www.asti.ie.

School attendance data: main findings at second level

- Over 55,000 students miss school each day, consisting of 27,000 primary and 28,000 second-level students. This is a loss of 12 school days per student per year in primary school and 13 school days in second-level school.
- About 17% of second-level students (one in six) are absent for 20 days or more during the school year. This is more than 55,000 students.
- At second level, non-attendance is strongly linked to high ratings for socio-economic disadvantage, with high rates of drop out in junior and senior cycle, and poorer performance in the Junior Certificate Examination.

Green-Schools



A new book, *Green-Schools: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change*, written by ASTI member Anna Kavanagh, was launched in October. The book is a practical guide to dealing with the challenges of climate change in schools and argues for 'Green-Schools' as an established programme that could be used to great effect to meet these challenges. The author explores the evidence of global warming all around us and calls on all concerned to take the necessary steps towards making education for sustainable development a reality in Irish

schools, to empower the students of today to build a more sustainable world now and in the future.

Anna Kavanagh teaches English, history and geography in St Joseph's Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Rochfortbridge, Co. Westmeath. She also holds masters' in ecology and theology. The school has been awarded two Green Flags since she became Green-Schools Co-ordinator three years ago. *Green-Schools: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change* is Anna's first book, and can be purchased online at www.choicepublishing.ie.

Convention 2009 golf

ASTI Convention 2009 will be held in Killarney from April 14 to 16. A number of activities have been organised around the event. For details, see the booking form leaflet included with this edition of ASTIR. Golf has been booked for Mahony's Point, Killarney from 8.30am on Tuesday, April 14, at a cost of €50 per person. To book a place, contact John O'Donovan, Tel: 086-8509046, or Email: sjsb@ireland.com.

Diploma in educational leadership

A total of 160 teachers started their 'Tóraíocht' – a formal journey of learning about leadership – in September. This is a new opportunity for teachers to gain a postgraduate diploma in educational leadership offered by Leadership Development for Schools (LDS) in partnership with NUI, Maynooth. Tóraíocht was planned in consultation with the unions, management bodies, professional associations and the Teaching Council, and aims to support teachers in developing their leadership capabilities. According to the organisers, the response from teachers has been fantastic, with over 240 educators applying for places. Eilis Humphreys, Assistant National Co-ordinator with LDS, says: "It is very encouraging to see that so many teachers want to enhance their learning in relation to their current work or in preparation for senior leadership positions".

For further information, visit www.lds21.ie (Tóraíocht) or www.nuim.ie.

ASTI member's world record attempt



Ryan Corcoran (centre) with Pat Keating, Principal of CBC Monkstown (left) and Marty Mahon, Cornmarket Financial Service (right). Photograph by Denis English.

As you read this, ASTI member Ryan Corcoran, along with a crew of 13 others, is attempting to break the world record for rowing across the Atlantic Ocean. The crew, including five Irish rowers, left from Gran Canaria on December 31, 2008, and is hoping to beat the current record, which stands at 33 days, seven hours and 30 minutes.

Ryan teaches at CBC Monkstown in Dublin and received sponsorship for the attempt from Cornmarket Financial Services. For more information on the expedition visit www.bigoceanrow.com or www.oceanrowevents.com

Report affirms ASTI's campaign for improvements in teaching and learning of maths

In December, the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) highlighted the critical importance of mathematics for our economy and the need for a focused and long-term approach to improve the quality and numbers of our national mathematical achievements.

Several policy proposals aimed at increasing the level of national mathematical achievement were made by the EGFSN. Among these was the provision of professional development for maths teachers, the development of a more interactive, imaginative approach to teaching maths, the development of a more coherent progression of maths learning, and incentivising higher level maths.

Responding to the report, ASTI President Pat Hurley said that second-level teachers share the view of the EGFSN that maths is a fundamental requirement for the development of Ireland's knowledge economy. He said that the ASTI has previously highlighted the importance of improving maths education in Ireland, and has pressed for the proper

resourcing and speedy implementation of Project Maths in our schools. "Project Maths will only succeed if it is properly resourced and mainstreamed as soon as possible. In particular, the ASTI is anxious that the dimension of Project Maths which seeks to develop a more coherent progression from primary level maths to second level be well supported, which is highlighted again in this report."

The Expert Group points out that effective teaching and learning of maths requires interactive and imaginative classroom teaching. Large classes militate against this. Mr Hurley continued: "The ASTI has campaigned for smaller maths classes and last year achieved a commitment in the Programme for Government to prioritise the reduction of class size in maths. Unfortunately, this commitment has not been honoured. Many of our students are in maths classes with 25 or even 30 other students. The recent cuts announced in Budget 2009 will result in even larger class sizes in subjects such as maths".

News

Global Campaign for Education



At a meeting for the Irish Coalition for Global Campaign for Education in ASTI Head Office in December are (from left): Ken McHue, Sport Against Racism in Ireland; Joanne Rea, Oxfam Ireland; Moira Leydon, ASTI Assistant General Secretary; Stellan Hermansson, ICTU Global Solidarity Project; Ruth Coleman, Sight Savers Ireland; Nick Grisewood, consultant SCREAM – International Campaign for the Elimination of Child Labour; Jane O'Hanlon, Education Officer, Poetry Ireland; Martina Hallinan, SUAS; and, Lizzie Noone, Concern.

Global Campaign for Education (GCE), of which ASTI is a member, is a movement to end the worldwide crisis in education. Each year, GCE holds a global action week to raise awareness of education issues worldwide. The

theme of this year's event, to be held from April 20–26, is 'The Big Read', and the focus will be on youth and adult literacy and lifelong learning. GCE is producing a special book of short stories written by remarkable people about how education changes the world as we know it. Individuals are asked to read one of the stories that interests them and to add their name at the back of the book to a statement asking their government to provide the necessary finances and political commitments to make sure that everyone is able to read and write. Hundreds of people will add their names before posting this back page to the Government during GCE's Action Week. GCE is encouraging schools and local groups to take part in one of three ways:

- inviting politicians and policy makers to a gathering where there will be a reading of the book, and then handing over the book and the list of collected signatures;
- adding local stories from celebrities, or those who are missing or have missed out on an education, to the book, appending a list of supporters, and sending them to key politicians and/or policy makers; and,
- students and learners can also use the book to write their own stories, or to re-write the endings of the stories in the book, and deliver these and the list of supporters to education officials.

For more information on GCE or the Action Week, visit www.campaignforeducation.org.

Research on sexual orientation issues

A report exploring how issues of sexual orientation are recognised and addressed in second-level schools was recently launched. The study was carried out by NUI Maynooth on behalf of the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), and was funded by the Department of Education. Staff from 18 schools participated in the study, which found that many teachers would like guidance and support in addressing homophobic bullying and in dealing with their own discomfort around homosexuality and related issues.

Many of those surveyed reported a general level of tolerance of homophobia in educational institutions, alongside a prevalence of targeted bullying of gay and lesbian students, and of those considered to be so. A number of teachers said they felt ill equipped to address the issues of sexual orientation as they related to the school context, while most

teachers noted a lack of clarity in the school's general approach to dealing with sexual orientation issues.

Sandra Gowran, Director of Education Policy for GLEN, speaking at the launch of the report, said: "The research is an important step forward in making second-level schools safe and inclusive learning environments for lesbian, gay and bisexual students ... especially because of the support for the research from all the main education partners, and the launch and seminar today, which provides an important forum to develop practical and agreed ways forward".

The Department of Education and Science is working with GLEN on the publication of guidance for school principals to assist them in addressing issues around sexual orientation in their schools. A guidance brochure was launched by GLEN at ASTI Convention last March. This brochure is available to download at www.glen.ie/education/teaching.html.

Teaching Council registration

There are more than 63,000 teachers included on the Register of Teachers. To retain registered teacher status, registration must be renewed annually. Each year, a reminder notice and renewal form will issue to all registered teachers at their last notified correspondence address in advance of their renewal date.

For those teachers whose renewal date was March 28, 2008, the final opportunity to renew registration was December 15, 2008. Any teacher who did not apply for renewal before that date will have their name removed from the register, in accordance with Section 34 of The Teaching Council Act, 2001.

If you neglected to renew and have been removed from the register, you may apply to be re-included on the register at any time. You will, however, be required to undergo the full application process, which may involve the submission of transcripts and a process of Garda vetting.

Teachers whose registration renewal date is between April and December 2008 have been issued with registration renewal forms. If they wish to maintain their registration with the Teaching Council, they are reminded to complete and return the renewal form as soon as possible. If you no longer wish to maintain your registration with the Teaching Council and wish to voluntarily withdraw your name from the Register of Teachers you are asked to complete the relevant section and return it to the Teaching Council.

In relation to the final dates for renewal for teachers with renewal dates between March and November, the deadlines are as follows:

- renewal date between April and September: deadline for renewal is December 31;
- renewal date in October: deadline for renewal is end of January;
- renewal date in November: deadline for renewal is end of February; and,
- renewal date in December: deadline for renewal is end of March.

See www.teachingcouncil.ie for further information.

ASTI retirement course

Due to demand, a third 'Planning for Successful Retirement' professional development seminar has been scheduled. The two-day seminar will run on March 10 and 26 in ASTI Head Office. The course is targeted at teachers considering retirement and those who have recently retired. Course objectives include:

- identifying strategies for dealing with changes in relationships, money, time and identity;
 - providing advice on effective management of pensions, taxation and investments; and,
 - raising awareness in relation to maintaining physical and mental health.
- Areas to be addressed will include relationships in the home, health, budgeting, learning opportunities, making a will, making the most of time, social welfare, and supports for active retirement.

Rights commissioner ruling

A rights commissioner has ruled in favour of a member whose post of responsibility allowance in respect of a co-ordinator's post was arbitrarily withdrawn from her by the Department of Education and Science when her school closed and she was redeployed to another school that did not offer the programmes for which the post was established.

The rights commissioner decided that current 'redeployment arrangements' did not exclude those posts (programme co-ordinator's posts) from its terms, that the ASTI's complaint was well founded, and that the claimant is properly due payment of the Special Duties Teacher's Allowance, and is entitled to compensation of €3,000.

The decision's significance is a reminder of an employer's obligation to notify employees of withdrawal of payments. More especially, the rights commissioner's decision is testament to the strength of the redeployment arrangements to protect members' salaries and allowances in cases of involuntary redeployment.

Investment in education vital for a healthy population

A comprehensive review has highlighted the strong link that exists between education level and health. 'Health Impacts of Education: A Review', published by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland, identified associations between low education levels and an increased risk of lung cancer, stroke, cardiovascular disease and infectious diseases. According to the review, improving educational outcomes among the most disadvantaged groups has the potential to make a positive impact on health inequalities. The report found that targeting literacy and early school leaving is a particularly effective way in which education policy can improve health.

Speaking on the findings, IPH Chief Executive Dr Jane Wilde said: "Our goal is to create equality and fairness for all members of society; we need to invest at the earliest possible age and funding needs to be channelled particularly to those who are most vulnerable". She continued: "Given the strong links between education and health, it is important that policies in these areas are not looked at in isolation. Instead, a systematic and co-ordinated approach should be taken by the relevant government departments".

Science Week 2008



Cathy Foley, Discover Science and Engineering, with the winners of the Science Week essay competition: Sean Burke; Bobby Tang; Jayne Groarke; and, Nicola Walsh.

Science Week 2008 ran from November 9-16 and saw over 100,000 people attend events for students, parents and teachers around the country. The aim of the week is to promote the relevance of science, engineering and technology in everyday lives and to demonstrate the importance of these disciplines to the future development of Irish society and the economy.

As well as free lectures, science and technology fairs, and science exhibitions, the week included an essay competition for second-level students on the theme of 'Science – Shaping Our World'. Organisers say that they received a phenomenal number of entries of an exceptionally high standard.

First prize went to Sean Burke, Moyle Park College, Clondalkin, Dublin (Senior Cycle) and Jayne Groarke, Scoil Mhuire, Wellington Road, Cork (Junior Cycle). The runners-up were Bobby Tang, Royal Belfast Academical Institution, Belfast (Senior Cycle) and Nicola Walsh, Mount Anville Secondary School, Dublin (Junior Cycle).

You can read the winning essays at www.scienceweek.ie.

Survey on youth attitudes to science

A survey conducted across 27 EU countries has shown that young Irish people recognise the benefits of innovation in science and technology but are not engaged by the subjects.

More than 1,000 Irish people aged 15-25 were interviewed as part of the Eurobarometer survey and findings revealed that 88% of young Irish people think science and technology make lives healthier, easier and more comfortable, and 61% think that they could help to eliminate global poverty and hunger. However, almost three-quarters said that science classes at school are not appealing enough and less than one-third of those polled are considering studying biology, medicine or engineering, while only one-fifth are considering studying natural sciences.

RSTA news

RSTA Christmas buffet/coffee morning

Thank you to ASTI President, Pat Hurley, the officers of the ASTI, and all who were involved in the successful get together in ASTI House on December 17. It is one of the social highlights of the year!

Medical cards

Despite what you may have heard from various politicians, the medical card issue has not been settled. Your RSTA, with the retired sections of the TUI and the INTO, are continuing to campaign for the automatic right to a medical card at the age of 70 years. We must continue to lobby our public representatives from all parties, but particularly members of Fianna Fáil and the Green Party. They must be made aware of how strongly we feel on this issue. Branch secretaries have been sent material that may be of help to you when you lobby. This was a brutal and cowardly budget, attacking as it did the most vulnerable sections of society. The protest must continue.

Marie Doyle, RSTA President.

Message from the Treasurer

The RSTA's financial year ended in December. Are you paid up for 2008? For a membership application, contact Sarah Scott, 3 Portmarnock Grove, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin, Tel: 086 402 7684.

Website

If you would like your branch events posted on the RSTA website, please get in touch with the National Secretary, Tel: 01 298 6951. The web address is www.rsta-ireland.com.

BRANCH SECRETARIES

Cork: Ms Geraldine Murphy, Lioniel, Ashboro, Shanakiel, Cork, Tel: 021 439 6782.
 Dublin: Ms Maureen O'Connor, 89 Castleknock Elms, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Tel: 01 822 7597/086 877 5754.
 Galway: Ms Maura Stephens, 101 Seacrest, Barna Road, Galway, Tel: 091 590 254.
 Kerry: Ms Ann Cox, The Bungalow, River Side, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Tel: 066 712 5452.
 Kilkenny: Ms Kay Sheedy, Kin-Ross, Waterford Road, Kilkenny, Tel: 056 772 2271/087 245 4380.
 Limerick: Sr Marie Hayes, 3 Racefield, Gouldavoher, Limerick, Tel: 061 303403.

RSTA EGM reminder

The EGM will be held in the South Court Hotel, Raheen, Limerick, at 2.00pm on Wednesday February 4, 2009. The meeting is open to all members of the RSTA. Each branch is advised to send two voting members to the meeting. Any member who does not have a copy of the draft rules should get in touch with Eileen Kelly, National Secretary, Tel: 01-298 6951.

Visit to Stormont



Members of the RSTA and NASUWT (retired) at their recent visit to Stormont.

Mayo: Ms Carmel Heneghan, Iona, Shrule, Co. Galway, Tel: 093 31273.
 North East: Mr Michael McMahon, Deerrolam, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, Tel: 042 966 1097.
 Wexford: Ms Kathleen Gartland, Tomnallosset, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Tel: 053-9233691.
 Wicklow: Ms Aveen Kilduff, 49 Herbert Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Tel: 01 276 0616/087 664 1466.
 Kildare: Mrs Phil Dunning, 7 Jiggin's Town Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, Tel: 086 123 6404.
 Sligo: Ms Maire T Finan, Dun Clíodhna, Strandhill Road, Sligo, Tel: 071 916 2185.

Early Retirement Scheme

One of the decisions in the Budget in October 2008 was to suspend the Early Retirement Scheme for teachers. The ASTI is considering litigation in relation to this decision based on

Senior Counsel's advice. Members who decided against applying for early retirement under Strand 3 at the end of the school year 2007/2008 based on the assurance of circular letter 0102/2007 that they could apply for early retirement at the end of the school year 2008/2009 should immediately contact ASTI Head Office.

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Education for the future



In a time of social change and economic uncertainty, JOHN WHITE looks at how teachers and the education system can best serve the students of tomorrow.

Meaning, curiosity, economic well-being

It is a truism to say that schooling and education are not synonymous. One difference is that education should be lifelong, whereas schooling is time-bound. Second-level schooling, therefore, should have long-term and short-term goals. Firstly, schooling should foster a sense of engagement with knowledge and a curiosity about the world, which will be lifelong. Secondly, schooling should contribute to our economic well-being, whereby our population can reach a standard of living that allows for opportunities to lead a full life. Thus, it is important that we should not see education for human meaning and education for economic well-being as either/or choices.

We in Ireland, with our history of poverty, unemployment and emigration, know that human well-being requires a reasonable standard of living underpinned by good employment, and so education for economic and technological success is vital. All of the recent empirical research on subjective well-being supports the view that below a certain financial threshold, life can become a dispiriting struggle to survive. Equally, a sense of engagement with meaning and curiosity in its broadest sense is also central to human well-being. A broad and balanced education will serve both purposes and, indeed, both are complementary – the one serving and supporting the other.

Raw market and education

What are the consequences for our schools arising from such a broad philosophical framework? Firstly, an education system that seeks narrowly to serve the market, with models of success based on league tables of

academic achievement, and which grinds knowledge using narrow bite-sized self-contained components, is not what human well-being needs. Secondly, insofar as a school tries to meet the full range of diverse aptitudes and abilities, including special educational needs, then such a school should be deemed a successful school. A broad and balanced education, with targeted interventions within a broad framework, is perhaps the optimal model. All of those involved in education have a responsibility to shift the public discourse from regarding as 'top schools' those who do well in league tables of university feeder schools, to regarding those schools that meet the needs of a diversity of abilities in their students, as the best schools.

Writing this article even six months ago would have involved an entirely different context: then the triumphant march of the market was sweeping all before it. All aspects of human activity could be fitted into its model: individual demands trumped broader social concerns; and, confident assertions that "information age customisation" in education would supplant "industrial era standardisation" were the norm. However, the economic shocks of recent months suggest a more balanced view, which recognises the developments in technology and globalisation and realises that a due balance must be kept between the social function of education and individual demands. The distaste that teachers demonstrate in relation to the ongoing media campaign for the publication of league tables of school examination results arises from the strongly held beliefs that such tables contravene the core value of respect for each student irrespective of their academic aptitude. We should aim for equal respect for the human dignity of all pupils, together with a thrust towards excellence in all spheres.

Teachers

One of the determinants of improvements in education will be the quality of our teachers and their enthusiastic commitment and involvement in their work. Maintaining commitment and enthusiasm over a period of 40

years of a teaching career requires opportunities for self-reflection and, indeed, self-evaluation. This means structured continuing professional development with the chance to experience out-of-classroom activities. This could consist, depending on circumstances and subject areas, of activities such as industry placement, secondment for a short period to curriculum support services or Education Centres, secondment to the inspectorate, study leave, structured sabbatical opportunities, etc. Such a process of out-of-school activities and return to school has the capacity to enrich both the school and the out-of-school agencies. Self-reflection and self-evaluation are at the root of all good professional practice. Furthermore, our teachers have nothing to fear and much to gain from the kind of critical friend external review, which is supportive and challenging in a positive way.

Classroom of the future

In the recent past, education was for the few: in the knowledge society it is for all. As the change from manufacturing industries to ideas-based industries gains pace, so also will there be a shift in emphasis in education. The traditional classroom, with pupils seated in serried rows for most of the day, is not suitable for all pupils. Practical out-of-school activities such as horticulture and workshop-based activities should be fostered, where appropriate, to meet pupils' needs. Engagement with such endeavours as the Young Social Innovators and participation in games, choirs and debates will assume an increasingly important role. Teachers will continue to teach subject matter, but in a world of extraordinary uncertainty and change, learning to learn and critical thinking will be central. Such generic skills, including communication and social skills, digital competence, initiative-taking and creativity, will have an overarching importance and will have to be consciously embedded in all subjects and activities. Of course, teachers have always tried to encourage higher order skills, but in the future the system will have to give clear support for such an approach. The classroom of the future will allow for more personalised learning

through the use of individualised software packages. The current computer/pupil ratio of 1:8 needs improvement. Under the NCTE development plan, this moves to 1:5. The improvement of broadband speed is also essential. Paradoxically, critical thinking and an awareness of solidly based knowledge as opposed to assertion is becoming even more important given the free flow of information on the internet. More interactive learning as suggested by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs should be encouraged. Of course, this is predicated on smaller classes, which requires that Ireland at least meets the OECD average for expenditure on second-level education. For example, we all recognise that scientific literacy becomes more important each day, but without the assistance of laboratory technicians, our science teachers struggle to allow for the full range of hands-on experimental activity, including trial and error, so fundamental in science.

In conclusion, as recently stated in the Washington Declaration of the G20 countries in relation to the global financial crisis, this is the time to invest in education. Just as in the last generation, Irish second-level education met the challenges of EU membership and free second-level education, so also will this generation successfully meet the current challenge if we are given the resources to do so.



John White

ASTI General Secretary

The value of teaching in a time of crisis

PATRICIA WROE asks: Why does value matter in education?



We perceive some things as precious because they are rare and are the result of a craft brought to a level of skill that takes our breath away. We value as precious the experiences we have in common, but which are unique to each of us – the cherishing and love of a parent, the support of a sister or brother, the shared joy of experiencing happiness with another person. Those of us fortunate to have had such experiences realise how privileged we are to know close, intimate, intangible moments that make our world rich.

We also value the knowledge we have built over millennia and we universally recognise that to progress in the future, we have to make it possible for us to develop new knowledge and to make it accessible to all citizens.

Our shared experiences and knowledge don't stop being valuable because of changed economic circumstances.

In times of risk and national crisis, good strategists do not dismantle tried and tested routes to security and survival.

It is not stretching a point to say that education is of strategic importance to this country – never more so as we face into a global economic crisis of as yet unmeasured proportions.

The case for investment in education

The business argument for investing in education reinforces its strategic importance. Every business group in the country has called for investment in education to be made a priority. This, they argue, positions our economy to respond with new skills and greater agility when the upturn comes, as it inevitably will. In fact, recovery comes quicker because an educated workforce brings competitive benefits to indigenous businesses and acts as a magnet for foreign direct investment.

Investing in education also has a strong societal case: educated people are mentally and physically healthier, more independent and less reliant on welfare supports.

A time of rapidly changing economic circumstances is no time for Minister O'Keefe or the Government to return education to a place it left behind

years ago. To create greater economic opportunity urgently requires greater development of maths and science, not less. We face the challenge of a growing digital divide in our society. The Government's promised €252m National Development Plan investment in information and communications technology (ICT) to rectify this has not materialised, while last August the ICT support for schools was disbanded.

The Government's recent budget cuts strike right at the heart of its commitment to greater social cohesion – it ignores the fact that five and 10 years ago there was no mainstreaming of students with special needs. Nor were there tens of thousands of newcomer students. We were not attempting to hold in school – through the Junior Schools' Programme, the LCA and the LCVP – students who would normally have left the education system. This is despite overwhelming evidence that early school leavers in developed society have a higher likelihood of ending up in prison, costing the state many multiples of the educational investment forgone.

Protecting the future

Cutting investment in education now reduces the opportunities available for many thousands of students, when the economy picks up. Successful modern economies don't prosper by limiting educational opportunity for their young. Instead, the goal must be set of educational opportunity for all young people: an educational opportunity that has new emphases and even higher standards than delivered before. But sadly Government, in its recent actions, sees education as a cost – not an investment! And by taking such a view it has cut off educational opportunity from the most vulnerable.

Today's progressive employers support both investment in education and maintaining it as a priority. Today's employers value the opportunity students have at school to develop the qualities of being a team player, to gain understanding of the local community political system, to develop good communication and interpersonal skills, and to innovate – as well as experiencing a wide and stretching curriculum.

The cost of cuts

Our economy, our societal well-being, and our jobs, depend on government maintaining a strong commitment to and priority for education. Yet in Ireland today, 20% of our children currently live in what we define as poverty. This is reflected by investment in education being for years at the lowest of the OECD countries. Despite this underinvestment, the standard of Irish education has performed well in OECD international comparisons. And OECD has reassured Irish parents of the consistently high standard of delivery across the country. But how does Irish education achieve these good results with such low levels of investment? The answer is the quality of teachers. And this is all the more commendable when taken against the backdrop of poor quality, inadequate or non-existent facilities, and other critical modern day educational supports. Cutting investment in an already under-funded educational system facing many challenges makes it impossible for us to match the investment that other countries make in their education systems. When the level of funding of Irish education is already at the lowest end of OECD countries, cutting critical investment makes neither economic nor social sense. It is shortsighted and a poor call.

Fighting back

This poor call has provoked the Post Primary Education Forum, the alliance of parent representatives, the two second-level teaching unions and the three management bodies, which was formed over a year ago, into action.

All parties to the Forum are in it for the long haul ahead of the forthcoming elections to work to highlight the shortsightedness of government policy, and to work together to get it reversed. When hit by a once-in-a-lifetime global crisis, it is not the time to abandon education as a priority. This is where governments are expected to provide leadership. At a time when unemployment is rife, when the calls on social welfare will increase, government is required to hold its nerve and maintain priority in critical investment areas like education. This is a vote of confidence for the future of every child and adolescent as coming citizens, and it is a vote that Government makes because we all aspire to cherish fully all our children.



Patricia Wroe

ASTI Immediate Past-President



School of Education UCD

Applications are now invited for the newly devised Structured PhD School of Education UCD

The degree of Structured Ph.D is awarded following the successful completion of a programme of advanced education and training, and original research in a chosen area of specialism.

Conducted over a full or part-time basis, the course aims to:

1. Equip students with an appropriate range of research skills required for thematic investigation in their chosen field of enquiry.
2. Engage students in critical reflection of issues related to theory, policy and practice at all levels of education
3. Prepare leaders in education to engage in challenges that derive from working in an increasingly complex and globalised society.
 - Consisting of a credit and modular based structure that involves the completion of 270 credits, the course provides a balance between taught components in advanced research and skills training and policy/praxis in education with the completion of original doctoral research.
 - Course work normally takes place over three periods in each academic year: Halloween; Mid-term February and May. In addition students work with an appointed supervisor on their chosen topic of research.
 - Taught components aim to enrich student's thinking in areas broadly related to their research that normally includes at least two of the following: Public policy and education; Social justice, inclusion and diversity in education; Deliberative practice; Historical perspectives; Curriculum design in higher education, Problem based learning, Advanced research skills training
 - Applicants will normally have professional experience and hold a high honours in a relevant bachelor degree (or equivalent) or a high honours in an appropriate master's degree (or equivalent). Final acceptance on the programme will be subject to the recommendation of the Ph.D board of studies.

For further information please contact:

Alice.byrne@ucd.ie Phone: 7167965 or www.ucd.ie/education/graduateprogrammes/researchprogrammes/phdstructuredphdineducation.

Closing date of application: April 1st 2009



School of Education UCD

Applications are now invited for the Master in Education (M.Ed) School of Education UCD

- The Master of Education programme is a 90-credit taught modular degree programme delivered over **two-years** on a **part-time basis**.
- Applicants will normally hold an **honours degree at undergraduate level** (or equivalent) from a recognised higher education institution. In addition, applicants must have relevant professional experience.
- Lectures/seminar take place on the university campus from 5.00 – 7.00 Monday to Thursday. Reading weeks coincide with school mid term breaks. Course content covers three areas: professional development in a chosen field of specialisation (Leadership, Digital learning, Development Education, Learning difficulties, Childhood and youth studies, Science education and Teaching English at 2nd level), Educational sciences and research skills training; school based study/minor thesis.
- Students attend lectures (normally no more than two evenings per week) for two semesters in year one i.e. (September to early December and January to April)

In year two students have the option of either:

- attending lectures for semester one and completing a 15-000 - 20,000 word thesis during semester two to be submitted in early June
- or
- attending lectures for semester one and two and completing a 6000 word school based study to be submitted in early June.

For further details and the application form please contact the course administrator: Lorraine.heffernan@ucd.ie; phone 7167968 Or www.ucd.ie/education/postgraduateprogrammes

Progression to PhD studies transfer from master level studies

A programme of structured credit based progression from master to doctoral level studies has been developed within the School of Education. Please contact the programme administrator alice.byrne@ucd.ie

A system based on trust

With consistently high OECD PISA results, ASTIR asks: How do the Finns do it? Olavi Arra from Finland gives his view.



Pictured at the ASTI Education Conference 2008 (from left): Rory O'Donnell, Director, NESCI; Pat Hurley, ASTI President; Olavi Arra, National Education Union, Finland; and, John White, ASTI General Secretary.

Finland has consistently achieved top results in OECD PISA studies of educational attainment. Those attending ASTI's Education Conference in November heard Olavi Arra of the National Education Union, Finland, discuss the education system in Finland and give his opinion on the reasons behind Finland's educational success.

Mr Arra told the conference that the news that Finland was a top performer in academic tests came as a surprise to many, who were at a loss to explain the reasons behind the results. Mr Arra attributes the country's success to a number of factors, particularly the trust that Finnish society places on schools and teachers; the high standard of teacher education; and, teachers' freedom to act independently. "There is a serious focus on achieving equality in education, and education and schooling are valued by everyone. Teachers are respected and the authorities trust them as professionals", he said.

Mr Arra began his address to the conference by giving an introduction to the school system in Finland, where students start school at age seven and stay in basic education for nine years. The first six years of this education are mainly given by class teachers and the final three years are mainly given by subject teachers. Following this, about half of students go on to vocational education and about half go on to general secondary education.

The Finnish evaluation system is aimed at developing the school system rather than the examination of students. National tests are arranged in certain subjects in certain years and schools are elected by sample to participate. The results are analysed to give a picture of the whole country and the education system is monitored in this way. The results are not published as there is a broad consensus in Finnish society that league tables do not develop the school system in a positive way.

Trusting the teachers

National school inspections were abolished in the 1980s. According to Mr Arra, Finnish society trusts education providers and recognises that teachers are professionals with a high standard of education. All primary and secondary school teachers have masters degrees and it is forbidden for schools to hire a teacher without proper qualifications for longer than six months. Teachers are given the freedom to act independently in their work. For instance, Finland has a national framework curriculum only; the curriculum itself is based on this framework but defined locally by the providers of education or in schools, and is thereby tailored to local circumstances.

Finnish society is quite small and, according to Mr Arra, this allows for all educational reforms to be planned in consultation. Parents have a chance to participate in developing local curricula. The teachers union participates in all of the working groups on curriculum and there is also natural co-operation within the local authority education departments, and local teachers and teachers' unions.

Nobody's perfect

Of course, no system is perfect, and the Finnish system faces many challenges for the future. Mr Arra told the Conference that despite Finland's success, teachers have not seen any benefit in their wages or in funding for education. Finland invests a significantly higher proportion of its GDP on education than Ireland (6% compared to 4.6%; the average proportion of GDP invested in education across the OECD is 5.8%). However, there is huge competition for resources in the public sector, and other sectors are now demanding more money, using the argument that education is doing well so there is no need to invest there. Other problems experienced in Finland include large class sizes and difficulties in special needs provision. Finland's pupil-teacher ratio is better than Ireland's but behind the other Nordic countries. Like Ireland, Finland has a policy of integrating students with special needs into mainstream classes. While there is a particular emphasis on special needs education with back-up from social welfare services, very often budgetary constraints can be brought to bear on this. For instance, according to Mr Arra, it can happen that a student with special needs who should have an assistant in class is not allocated one due to funding. Helsinki, among other Finnish cities, operates a practice called 'positive discrimination', where schools that do not have the same needs give a certain amount from their budget for schools who are more in need of special support.

Education has always been important to Finnish people, who recognise its importance in creating possibilities and improving lives. The PISA results have endorsed the work that teachers do and enhanced Finnish society's respect for the teaching profession, affording greater freedom to continue to make good progress.

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Join in the celebrations!

The ASTI has planned a wide range of events to mark the Association's centenary, so come along and celebrate the achievements of your union.

Branch celebrations

Branches are encouraged to hold a celebratory event to mark the ASTI's 100th anniversary in 2009. Branches can avail, if necessary, of a grant towards the cost of the event from the ASTI Central Fund. For more information on all ASTI centenary events, visit www.asti.ie.

January

ASTI centenary calendar

A calendar celebrating the work and contributions of second-level teachers and the ASTI has been distributed to all 17,000 members.

ASTIR

Throughout 2009, *ASTIR* will document stories of teachers and teaching experiences over the years and will also look at the future of second-level teaching and education.

January 24 – CEC meeting, College of Commerce, Cork

The genesis of the ASTI can be traced back to a meeting held in the College of Commerce in Cork on March 17, 1909. To celebrate this, the 180-member ASTI Central Executive Council will hold its first meeting of 2009 in the College of Commerce in Cork.

January 24 – Civic reception

In order to highlight the role of Cork teachers in the ASTI's foundation, the Lord Mayor of Cork is holding a civic reception in City Hall.

March

Centenary Gala Dinner

The ASTI will hold a Centenary Gala Dinner in the Mansion House, Dublin, the location of the Association's foundational meeting. The event will be attended by members from every ASTI branch, by past-Presidents and by a number of special guests representing the broader education community. The President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, will also attend.

Short film on the ASTI's history

A short film on the ASTI and its history will be shown at the Gala Dinner. The film will be available later for viewing on the ASTI website.



ASTI100
A century of service

ASTI CENTENARY SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

In celebration of its centenary year, the ASTI has inaugurated an annual scholarship for ASTI members to assist them in undertaking further third-level studies.

The annual scholarship of €4,000 will be awarded to an ASTI member, with preference given to members who do not hold any other scholarships or financial awards for study. This scholarship will be known as the ASTI Members' Scholarship.

Who can apply?

Any ASTI member who is currently in service, or who is on paid study leave.

What can I apply for?

The annual ASTI Members' Scholarship scheme will provide an annual scholarship of €4,000 to one member. €3,000 will be given at the commencement of the course of study (upon confirmation of receipt of a place on a course of study), and the remaining €1,000 upon the member's receipt of accreditation for their completed course of study.

Can I apply for the scholarship if my course is part-time?

Yes. The scholarship is to assist an ASTI member to undertake further third-level education on a full-time or part-time basis.

I am currently undertaking further studies, can I still apply?

Yes, you are entitled to apply.

April

April 6 – Golf Classic

The ASTI Centenary Fourball will take place in picturesque Glassan Golf Club, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, on April 6. Each ASTI branch and guests from the broader education community will be invited to enter a team to participate in this celebratory event, which will be held on the first Monday of the Easter break.

April 15 – Centenary reception



A centenary reception will be held for 450 delegates and guests from the broader education community at ASTI Annual Convention 2009 in Killarney.

May

Launch of ASTI Scholarship

This Annual Centenary Scholarship will be awarded to an ASTI member to pursue educational or trade union studies.

September

Launch of *The History of the ASTI*

The History of the ASTI by Dr John Cunningham provides a social and historical account of the ASTI's role in the development of second-level education and the teaching profession in Ireland. It demonstrates the remarkable contribution that second-level teachers have made to the lives of millions of young people and to social, political and economic progress in Ireland.

The book, which will be launched in September, will be of interest to teachers, trade unionists, and students of education and history, among others.

Photographs from the archives

The ASTI will be publishing a series of historical photographs from the archives.

October

Young Teachers' Centenary Conference

As the population of Ireland increases, there will be a need for many new teachers. This conference will allow their voices to be heard.

November

Education Conference

The ASTI will host an Education Conference attended by 200 ASTI members and educationalists with an international keynote speaker.



Does my course of study have to be at postgraduate level?

No, the scheme is to assist ASTI members to undertake further study in their chosen field.

What are the criteria for a successful application?

Applications will be determined by a scholarship selection committee comprised of the ASTI Officers. The criteria for selection will include:

- relevance of proposed course to the professional lives of teachers and second-level education;
- potential for study to inform the ongoing policy agenda and work of the ASTI; and,
- potential for research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

When do I have to apply?

The closing date for applications is Friday, February 27, 2009.

How do I apply?

Application forms for the scholarship are available for download from the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.

Do I have to provide the ASTI with a copy of my research if I am successful?

No. You are required to provide an abstract of your work of not less than 500 words for consideration for publication by the ASTI.



The celluloid classroom

ASTIR takes a look at some of the more memorable representations of teachers in film.

With those under 20 years of age representing the largest proportion of the cinema-going public, the number of films featuring school settings is not surprising. What is surprising, given that fact, is the number of films that choose to view those settings from the teacher's perspective. Over the years, these portrayals of teachers on film have offered an ideal setting to examine questions of equity and social justice, albeit a view often layered thick with Hollywood sentimentalism and predictability. Many follow a similar narrative arc and their protagonists play broadly similar roles – the dedicated teacher, keen to inspire but engaged in a battle of wills with either disinterested students or an insensitive system. These films, however, for all their unrealistic heroism and predictability, plant a very positive view in the public imagination, one that defines teachers as hard working, caring and committed, as protectors of learning and culture, and as having the power to bring about change.

Goodbye Mr Chips (1939)

As early as 1939, teachers were making their way into the world of film with the fondly remembered *Goodbye Mr Chips*. The film, based on a novel by James Hilton, details the life and career of Mr Chipping, an initially stuffy English prep school teacher who overcomes early difficulties to learn to understand and connect with his students. He goes on to develop a rapport with generations of students, acknowledging later in the film that in fact his students have become his family: "I heard you saying it was a pity I never had any children. But you're wrong. I have. Thousands of them. Thousands of them... and all boys".

To Sir with Love (1967)

Set in 1960s East End London, *To Sir with Love* portrays the clash between idealism and reality encountered by new teacher Mark Thackeray (Sidney Poitier). Reluctantly entering the classroom for the first time with ambitions not of being a teacher but of getting a suitable engineering position, Thackeray initially experiences disruptive behaviour – albeit behaviour of a very restrained sort when viewed through modern eyes. Warned by colleagues who have long since given up on the students that the only solution is a "good hiding", Sir instead decides to treat "the devil incarnates" as adults and to teach them mutual respect. By this method he earns their respect and that of his colleagues. The film spawned a sequel, which moved the setting to inner city Chicago 31 years later.

Stand and Deliver (1988)

One of a number of films about teachers based on real life events, *Stand and Deliver* portrays an East LA teacher's attempts to prepare his class of underachievers for an advanced calculus placement test. Facing opposition from the school board – a familiar opponent for many teachers on film – Jaime Escalante ignored racial stereotypes, identified the potential in his class and, using sensitivity and firmness, developed a very successful maths programme in the school. The film launched Escalante, who claims that the underdog story is 90% truth and 10% drama, as a celebrity at the time of its release. Ironically, however, this led to the end of his employment at the school and the decline of the maths programme there.

Dead Poets Society (1989)

Probably one of the most memorable films about teaching in recent years, *Dead Poets Society* certainly features the most famous line of dialogue uttered by a teacher on film: "Carpe diem, seize the day. Make your lives extraordinary!" Robin Williams plays John Keating, an impassioned teacher at a private boys' school in 1950s New England. As disillusioned by the methods of his colleagues as they are wary of his, he sets about teaching his 'boys' in a new way. Quoting Whitman and Thoreau, he urges them to





think for themselves and to experience literature rather than learn by rote. In so doing he establishes for himself a godlike status within the class and ignites the students' interest in poetry and literature, so much so that a group of adolescent boys form a society based around reading poetry – possibly the most unrealistic event in all teacher films!

Mr Holland's Opus (1995)

Like *Dead Poets Society* and a number of other teacher films, *Mr Holland's Opus* focuses on the importance of passion in teaching. Coupled with this, the film highlights another theme common in films about teaching: the teacher's own need to learn. Richard Dreyfus plays Mr Holland, a frustrated composer who reluctantly turns to teaching in the mistaken belief that it will give him free time to compose. Like Poitier's 'Sir', he harbours other career aims and comes to teaching only out of necessity, but like 'Sir' before him, he is won over by the profession. His students excel under his instruction to play with feeling and to learn to love music. The portrayal is notable for its depiction of the teacher as a real person, who is at times unlikable and unnecessarily harsh. Starting out eager to create a remarkable piece of music, instead he finds his calling in sharing music with his students and instilling his passion in them.

Dangerous Minds (1995)

Released in the same year as *Mr Holland's Opus*, *Dangerous Minds* is another film that features music prominently, both in its soundtrack, and in teacher Louanne Johnson's use of Bob Dylan lyrics to establish a connection with her students. Michelle Pfeiffer plays the teacher who is not looking for glory but is striving to save her students' lives and to give them hope through learning.

Twelve years later, *Freedom Writers* (2007), a film with much in common with *Dangerous Minds* was released. The true story of a white teacher, played by Hillary Swank, trying to make a difference in a school of black, Latino and Asian students, is based on the book by Erin Grunwell and her students. Like *Dangerous Minds*, the film portrays the dedicated teacher's struggles as she starts out in teaching and encounters uninterested and contemptuous students sceptical of her presence in their world. But unlike other films in this genre, which often pay little attention to the students outside of their combined dysfunction, this film includes the voices and stories of the students by voiceover.



“O captain, my captain...”

Who was your most inspirational second-level teacher? ASTIR asks some well known Irish people about the teachers who inspired them.

Shane Filan Westlife



I went to Summerhill, a large boys' school in Sligo. I suppose you could say that all the teachers had some kind of influence on me. But David McEvoy, the music teacher, stands out as the teacher who inspired me the most. He was the one who encouraged me to get involved in musicals and drama. I suppose he saw that it was something I would be good at, and then I began to know myself that it was something I

really enjoyed and was good at. He gave me more confidence.

I had parts in a few school productions. I played a girl called Jessie in *Annie Get Your Gun*. I was the artful dodger in *Oliver Twist* and I played Kenickie in *Greece*. All the time my interest in the music was developing. I was lucky to be able to go to a great local school. Kian and Mark [from Westlife] went there too. But Westlife didn't come about until after I had left school.

Joan Burton Labour TD



I had quite a few inspirational teachers but one in particular was Miss Mary Leigh, who taught English in Stanhope Street Sisters of Charity in Dublin. Miss Leigh was originally a primary school teacher and became a secondary teacher when the school expanded to do the Leaving Cert. At that time there were a number of schools in Dublin called Secondary Top schools. They weren't fully recognised but did the Leaving Cert. I was in

about the third class to do Leaving Cert in the school, though it had always been taught to junior level. When free secondary education was introduced the school converted to a full secondary school.

Miss Leigh was a lovely teacher. English was my favourite subject, along with history, and Miss Leigh really had a fantastic ability to teach it. She was elderly and had met many great poets and authors, WB Yeats among them. She particularly liked poetry and was very good at teaching it. I have carried the poems she taught us with me through my life. She also favoured short and sharp essays, which was very good training for politics! I used to meet her on and off after I left school and I called to see her after I became a Minister. I know she has a lot of nephews and nieces who were very proud of her. She really was a wonderful teacher.

Mary Kennedy Television presenter and former second-level teacher



I went to Colaiste Bride, Clondalkin, in Dublin, and I had the same teacher for Irish English and French until my Inter Cert, as it was then, and for Irish and English after that. Her name was Joan Redmond and she was originally from Tarbert, Co. Kerry.

When you are that age you are not really in awe of teachers, you're more likely to be wondering what you can get away with, but Mrs Redmond must have had an inspirational effect on me because when I went to college, I chose to study Irish, English and French – the subjects she had taught me.

She was very unassuming and of the traditional schoolteacher type. She put great store in education and instilled the value of education in her students. She was a little scary for the first few years, but after the junior years she became more relaxed and I really got to know and love her. That probably had an impact on the way I worked when I later became a teacher.

She sent a few of us to the Gaeltacht in fifth year – it wasn't the formal Gaeltacht course and we didn't have classes, but she knew of a house that would take us in. That certainly set in stone my interest in Irish. I fell in love with the whole area, the culture, the sport and the ethos, and that has stayed and endured in me through my life.

Mrs Redmond later became a colleague of mine when I went back to teach at Colaiste Bride. She was great fun and very gentle and caring.

Gemma Doorley
Actress on RTÉ's *Fair City*



I went to Loreto College, Stephens Green in Dublin, and had an English teacher called Miss Horan. She was wonderful because I always had an interest in acting and whenever we were doing plays she would have us act them out and we would really get into the scenes. It really brought it to life and made Shakespeare much more interesting! I don't know if other students found it as good as I did though, because I was already involved in acting and drama. When it came to sixth year and filling out the CAO form, that class made me think I could actually turn it from a hobby to a career.

Brigid McManus
Secretary General at the Department of Education and Science



I went to Manor House School in Raheny where there were a lot of great teachers, but I suppose it was the attitude of the school itself that had the greatest influence on me, and the principal, Sr Margaret. I'm not sure I would have seen Sr Margaret as

an influence at the time, but looking back she definitely had an effect. The school had strong expectations of the students and what we would achieve, which at the time, the early 70s, was unusual for a girls' school. The school had the view that students wouldn't just have a job for a few years before getting married; they expected us to go on to different things. There was a strong emphasis on science and maths, but also on broader education and things like music, drama and sport. I was on the student council, which was set up at a time when most schools wouldn't have had student councils. We were encouraged to participate in the students' union. That is a tribute to all the teachers, who were very encouraging. Mrs Allen, who taught me science and chemistry, was one particularly inspiring teacher. She had been a research chemist in industry before she came to teaching and she used to tell us wonderful stories about the excitement of science. My passion was always more for history and English so it's a testament to her that she could inspire me to like science. She was very different in her attitude; she managed to make science really exciting and gave us the sense that it was about more than just exams.

Sean Moncrieff
Author and presenter of *Moncrieff on Newstalk 106-108fm*



Two teachers spring to mind, both of whom taught me at Garbally College in Ballinasloe. The first was my English teacher Michael Lally, who was genuinely excited by the written word and (significantly for me) first put the notion in my head that I might be able to write for a living.

The second was Joseph Cassidy, who at the time was a priest and who went on to become Archbishop of Tuam (now retired). Joe Cassidy was President of Garbally, but also directed the school plays: something at which he was genuinely talented. I suspect that if

he hadn't taken the dog collar, he might have pursued a career in theatre. I appeared in a couple of plays under his direction, which introduced me to the incomparable buzz of showbiz. Given those two formative influences, it's unsurprising where I ended up.

Caroline Casey
CEO of *Kanchi*



I am one of those people who do not have 'favourites', 'bests' or 'the mosts'. I reckon I am just too curious, enjoy too many things or, probably most likely, am too worried that I might miss out on something! For me it is the mix of things that is often more powerful, and in school I was exposed to an extraordinary array of characters and personalities. Some I liked, some I didn't and frankly some of them petrified me. However, what I certainly learnt at an early age was that 'one size does not fit all'. To be inspired is a very subjective and personal thing; it can change with time or be moulded by life stage or experience. When I was in school, the teachers who inspired me the most were those who were passionate about their



subjects, who did not just teach but encouraged us to learn. I remember we had a history teacher, Sister Hutchison, who just made the subject come off the page. She was strict but had a great sense of warmth and humour that made you feel that you were being included in a conversation about history rather than just being taught from a textbook. Those teachers that we still talk about were those who seemed to be able to strike that fine balance between control and discipline and humour and humanness.

What I learnt at school was that I would get out of life what I put into it. I discovered that, like it or not, life can be many things. Life can be difficult as hell, it can be fabulously surprising, and it can be unfair. As a result I learned the following: that stretching yourself and taking a risk is worth it, that we all can't be great or good at everything, that having friends is possibly one of the greatest things in life, and that being able to laugh at yourself, stand up for yourself and be understood is about as good as it gets. Teachers are such an important part of that. They are not just the people who stand at the top of the class and drill figures and passages into our heads. They are people who have a profound impact on how we see ourselves and learn these lessons. The best teachers are those who seem to understand that. To me, they were the ones who seemed to know when to see the person under the student. They were the ones who had impeccable timing and knew how and when to encourage, or pull the hard line. They were those who recognised the diversity and difference in their classes. They were those who presented themselves as a real person, a person you wanted to be. That had little to do with how they dressed, or how they sounded; it was the teacher who just seemed happy and confident in their own skin.

Claire Byrne

Co-presenter of *The Breakfast Show* on *Newstalk 106-108fm*



I had always wanted to become a journalist and my ambition was to work in broadcast media, but at the tender age of 13 I really had no idea how to go about accomplishing my mission. That was until I met and began being taught by Mary Holden at the Brigidine Convent in Mountrath, Co. Laois.

I remember feeling quite daunted when I heard that Mrs Holden would be taking our English and Irish classes – she had a reputation for being pretty strict – but in retrospect it was the best thing that could have

happened to me. Quite apart from nurturing my love of reading, she also allowed me to believe that I could become a journalist and she set to work on helping me straight away.

Stage one in her plan of action was to get me involved in debating competitions, both in English and Irish; so many students have passed through her classes who have learned not to be frightened of public speaking and to have the confidence to embrace the challenge of addressing a crowd. Secondly, Mrs Holden encouraged me to start writing to the editors of newspapers, in an attempt to get my letters printed. I still have those treasured letters, which appeared in the *Sunday Tribune* and *Irish Times*. The third step she took was to organise a work experience placement for me with the local paper when I was 14. The paper published a couple of my articles and I was well on my way.

Who knows whether I would have fulfilled my youthful ambition if it weren't for Mary Holden, but what I can say is that her timely intervention led to me developing a confidence in my ability that set me on the right path, and for that I will be forever grateful.

Dr Garret FitzGerald

Former Taoiseach and Chancellor of the National University of Ireland



The secondary teacher who most influenced me was Fr Matty Bodkin, brother of Thomas Bodkin who left Ireland in the mid 1930s to become the Barber Institute Professor in Birmingham. The subject was history, towards which I had always had an inclination, which was greatly encouraged by his teaching. As a result, history became my preferred subject at UCD where I combined it with French and Spanish for my BA. I've never since lost my interest in history – mainly early medieval European history and Irish history of the 20th century. My European medieval history books fill many rows of a bookshelf in my bedroom, which also houses two shelves of Penguin detective stories of the 1950s and 1960s. These have the great merit of small size, fitting, when necessary, into a jacket pocket for re-reading every decade or so, when travelling.

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Like mother like daughter...

ASTIR spoke to two mothers and daughters who chose teaching as a career, about the different experiences of each generation, and their hopes for the future of teaching.

Margaret O'Neill teaches science, maths and biology in Our Lady of Lourdes Secondary School, New Ross. Her mother, Sadie Copeland, is a retired teacher who taught Latin and maths in Salerno Secondary School, Galway. Her husband and son are also teachers. Una Byrne teaches maths and Spanish at Scoil Mhuire, Longford, where her mother, Anne Byrne, taught the same subjects.

Deciding to teach

Margaret O'Neill comes from a long line of teachers – her mother, grandparents and great grandfather were all teachers – but, she says, this didn't necessarily encourage her to become a teacher. "It meant I was used to teaching in the background, but it was not so much an encouragement as I was familiar with the idea of it." Una Byrne got her first taste of the classroom before she even started school when her mother would bring her along to sit in on classes she was teaching. "I suppose it meant I knew what I was getting into. I probably started to hone my teaching skills from about the age of four. Teaching was never something that I had to do; I was encouraged to do whatever I wanted, but I went into teaching and I still love it."

For Sadie and Anne, on the other hand, there was little choice but to teach. "When you were in college in the early 1940s you hadn't much choice as a girl," says Sadie. "Teaching was very hard work but I loved the stimulus and learning things properly so that I could teach them properly." Following a few short teaching jobs, Anne went to England when she finished college. She intended to become a chartered accountant but found that there was a dearth of teachers during the war so instead she returned to teaching. Later she went to the US, where she worked in the accounts offices of the *Reader's Digest* Education Department, and discovered that teaching had been the better choice for her. "I got to experience the difference between office work and teaching work. When I was teaching I always said we were like snails; we carried our jobs on our back no matter where we went. In the office you left the work at the door. I preferred teaching but you had to keep on your toes and keep abreast of the times."

Una agrees that one benefit of a career in teaching is that it keeps you up to date and means you never stop learning: "It keeps you young. You are dealing with young people all the time; you have to know what is going on, and how they're thinking". Una and her mother also agree that the impact of teaching has not changed: "You have an influence on every child in the classroom", Una says. Anne agrees: "I had a pupil who was dyslexic and she came to me privately to help her. To get a Christmas card from that child saying 'you changed my life' gives more satisfaction than anything". Times have not changed so much; at the end of the year, Una's Leaving Cert class bought her a card and present: "It's lovely when they do that. You don't become a teacher for thanks but it's lovely to get it".



Una and Anne Byrne.

Changing times, changing people

The biggest change in teaching, according to all four women, is in the students. Sadie says of her experience: "I was teaching from the 60s to 1987. Generally speaking, there weren't any discipline problems. You'd have the odd bit of a problem, but not generally. Teachers now have to work very hard because the children seem to be harder, and that makes life difficult; if you can't discipline your class, you can't teach anything". Though she says it's not extraordinarily different today, Margaret believes: "Students are more worldly wise and more familiar, not as innocent. They're probably not as respectful overall but individual children can be well behaved".

Margaret notes that changes in the curriculum over the years have been beneficial for students, if not necessarily for teachers. "Way back it would have been very much about the 'three R's' and would have concentrated on detailed mathematics. Now it's more user-friendly. Whether that means it's easier to teach is another story!" Una observes a change in teaching methodologies and emphasis from her own time in school: "In some cases, subjects would be a lot more hands-on and more practical. I recently found my own Inter Cert Spanish paper. My Leaving Cert students would have a heart attack if I gave it to them! It was about different things in my time; the focus was on writing and translation, rather than speaking". She has seen many changes during her career, but is particularly impressed by Transition Year: "I think Transition Year is wonderful for schools. I don't think it's for everybody but it is great for a lot of students. Some of our Transition Years meet my mum in the daycare centre on Wednesdays and to have the confidence to take part in that is great. They are learning a whole set of skills that we didn't have the chance to learn".



Accentuating the positive

The four women agree that the broadening of education has been a positive development. According to Una, however, there are also drawbacks, such as the time required to get courses covered, exacerbated by the "rat race" for points.

She remembers a time before the pressure for points began and regrets that today the students' focus is often on learning for marks rather than learning to learn. "There was none of this bad behaviour that means you can't allow any leeway in the classroom and that was enjoyable. Now it's much stricter and some of the students don't like anything they think is wasting time or won't gain them points." Her mother notices a difference too: "The race to succeed wasn't so pronounced in my day and the press wasn't harassing the students as soon as it comes up to Leaving Cert, putting extra pressure on them". Her attitude to her Inter Cert, she remembers, was far more relaxed and her main incentive was to do well for her teacher.

Respect for the teacher

There was a time when the teacher, the priest and the doctor were the most highly regarded members of Irish society. But, says Anne, times have changed. "In society, teachers have gone way down. I think that is to do with salary, because people are judged more on what they earn than on what they do." She recalls this happening a lot earlier in England: "When I was teaching in England, you never told anybody you were a teacher. As soon as you said that people would shy away from you because a lot of people didn't like teachers. In Ireland at that time the teacher was up high in the echelons of respect".

"I had a pupil who was dyslexic and she came to me privately to help her. To get a Christmas card from that child saying 'you changed my life' gives more satisfaction than anything".

Despite this, respect for teachers within the classroom has not changed. Una believes: "If you earn it, you will always have it". Of society's view, however, she agrees with her mother: "All anybody ever says to you is 'sure you don't work at all, you never work a full day, and you have three months holiday in the summer. People say you're only as good as your last set of results, but you might have a set of students who have achieved brilliantly by passing their exams. So long as kids can honestly say to you I did my best, that's what matters. It's the respect from society that teachers don't have but you do have the respect among the majority of students. And that's where the satisfaction is".

Looking to the future, Una is concerned that achieving a quality generation of teachers to follow her own might prove difficult: "An awful lot of students don't like the idea of going into second-level teaching. They know themselves that it's tough handling some of them. I hope that any teacher who has a chance would encourage students to go into teaching. You need good people in there to make sure that quality teachers are there for the next generation". To this next generation, Una offers this advice: "Get involved in your union and your subject associations because then you can keep informed about what's going on and you can make a difference".



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Meet the Presidents

A group of distinguished ASTI past-Presidents share their experiences of teaching and trade unionism through the years.



Delegates at Convention 1960.



KEVIN MEEHAN, ASTI President 1972/'73, looks back on 50 years of union involvement, including a number of significant periods in the ASTI's history.

When the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland celebrated its Golden Jubilee Dinner in October 1959, I was privileged, as a young teacher, to be there and feel a sense of reassurance. The late '50s was an era of limited job opportunities and low pay, especially for secondary teachers. The stark realities of those days were only alleviated with the assistance of helpful senior colleagues and the advice given by the Association, which I joined in my first year. Little did I realise that it would figure so largely in my future career.

Ryan Tribunal

As a member of the Wicklow Branch, I served at various levels before being elected as a member of the Central Executive Committee. Around this time the government had established the Ryan Tribunal (1967), with the mandate of getting a common salary scale for all teachers. Political expediency meant that the government accepted these findings. This in turn militated against the legitimate claim of secondary teachers for a better salary, with the result that members voted overwhelmingly to reject these findings and threatened strike action for February 1, 1969.

An action committee of five members, of which I was one, was elected at Convention in November 1968 to facilitate the flow of information to the membership at large and to prepare for the eventuality of a strike. As a member of this committee, I found myself participating in the forefront of the action before, during and after the strike, which lasted from February 1 to 24, 1969. The eventual outcome did not fully address all the issues, which continued to bedevil the Association for many years.

Presidential year

During that year I was elected Trustee of the Association, and was subsequently elected President in 1972. This was both a great honour and a unique experience for me. This happened to be the first year in the history of the Association where the President was granted a sabbatical year to fulfil the duties of the office. Prior to this the occupier of the office had to exercise this role in conjunction with a normal teaching load. During this period, with the assistance of the Standing Committee, I negotiated the purchase of the Association's own office at 13 Highfield Road.

It was in 1972 that the first two community schools were launched in Tallaght and Blanchardstown, with two ASTI members as principals. However, it was some time later before the actual management structure and other issues were resolved. As President I was asked to liaise with both teaching staffs. Around this time the Open University invited me to represent the ASTI point of view on community schools in a documentary. At that time there was not exactly a meeting of minds between the Association and the Department concerning these schools. Ironically, within a decade I was a founder member of staff of one such school.

Other significant events

The Association had affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in 1969 and the membership benefited from the first national wage agreement in 1970 and in subsequent years. With the support of a number of unions, including the Teachers Union of Ireland, I was elected as the first ASTI member to the Executive Council of the ICTU in 1973. There I had the privilege to serve with the late Rory Roberts, General Secretary, and the late Jim Larkin Jnr.

In my Presidential address in 1973, I called for the establishment of a Teaching Council, which I felt would benefit our members and the teaching profession in general. The Minister for Education responded by setting up a planning committee to report on the functions of such a Council, on which I represented the ASTI. The report of this committee was welcomed by the teacher unions, but there was no political will to implement it. It is good to note that today it is finally a reality.

As President I also had the privilege, with the late Máire MacDonagh, General Secretary, of being granted a private meeting with President de Valera. He spoke to me about his own personal experiences as a teacher and what the difficulties were for lay secondary teachers generally. In particular, he referred to the obvious need then of an association to assist teachers and of his own personal participation, with Thomas MacDonagh and others, in its formation. It was apparent from his animated expression that he felt both a justification and a pride in his contribution to that formation.

In celebrating the centenary, it is good to reflect on those who founded the Association and nourished it during its formative years.



Gala celebration for Máire MacDonagh's retirement.



MARGARET WALSH,
ASTI President 1982/'83, looks
back at some of the key issues
for the ASTI during the 1980s.

The protest march held outside the Dáil on Wednesday, October 26 last brought vividly to mind the 1980s and I was back again in an era of demonstrations, placards and public speeches, a time that defined the years I spent on Standing Committee and my term of office as President in 1982-'83. Although disputes inevitably characterise the history of all trade unions, for the ASTI the decade from the late 1970s to the late 1980s reflected the national economic situation and were years of unremitting difficulty and unrest.

Déjà vu

This current re-emergence of the issue of pupil-teacher ratio/class size is but one reminder of the seamless nature of the work of the ASTI and its officers. Issues such as the governance and management of schools, curricular provisions, remuneration and conditions of employment form a constant thread in the world of education, surfacing with a greater intensity from time to time, this year being one such occasion. Indeed, the nature and substance of the disputes surrounding these issues seem to have led gradually, if inexorably, to a process that provided the formal legislative framework and level of public accountability associated with the education system today.

Memory, of course, can be highly selective, but looking back on the time I spent on Standing Committee and my year as President, many of these issues seem to have featured significantly, three in particular dominating the 1980s.

Redundancy

The one that engaged me in a particular way was that of redundancy and redeployment, not an issue familiar to current union members. Emerging in the early 1970s, the issue gathered momentum towards the end of the decade with a number of proposed school closures, including in my local branch. Through the work of a committee established for the purpose, and the decision of a special Convention, policy was drafted to respond to the very serious problems raised. Attempts to resolve the issue were protracted and difficult, involving both the managerial authorities and the Department of Education. However, the ultimate achievement of a redeployment scheme for secondary teachers was a fine achievement for the ASTI and fulfilled a major aspiration of the founders of our union.

Curriculum

Although not a key issue during my term of office, curriculum was another area of contention in the 1980s. Proposals to remove responsibility for this area from the Department of Education to an independent agency, and subsequent proposals with regard to the junior cycle, proved to be very controversial. Aggravated by the concurrent dispute relating to education cutbacks and pay, it remained a significant and contentious factor throughout most of the decade, resolved ultimately through a change of government.

Pay and conditions

As is the case today, the overriding issue of the decade was pay and conditions of employment, combined with cutbacks in the provision for schools. In the year I was President, a gap of nine months separated the end of a bitter pay dispute and the commencement, by the new government, of a programme of education cutbacks. The announcement of increased school transport charges on Christmas Eve 1982 ushered in a series of initiatives reminiscent of those announced in October last, giving rise to my sense of déjà vu. Allied to these was a subsequent refusal to pay an arbitration award, all of which made the decade of the 1980s, with its strikes and national protests, an incredibly fraught and difficult one for the ASTI.

Celebrations

My year of office, however, was not one of total doom and gloom! There were significant administrative developments for the ASTI itself. The number of staff increased to coincide with the move of Head Office from Rathgar to Baggot Street. The formal opening of the new office was performed by the then Minister for Education, Gerard Brady TD, who holds the distinction of having been Minister for only 18 days. The spring of 1983 witnessed the appointment of Kieran Mulvey to succeed the late Máire MacDonagh who, as General Secretary, had guided the union for 25 years from 1958 to 1983. The gala dinner held in her honour was both a historic and a truly memorable evening for the ASTI. Looking back over the decades underlines not only the achievements of our union, but its capacity to meet challenges, overcome difficulties, and to flourish and grow as it moves into its second century.



1995 ASTI demonstration.



TOMMY FRANCIS,
ASTI President 1995/'96,
recalls his initial union
involvement and his
experiences of teaching
during the 1960s and 1970s.

I first became aware of the ASTI during a HDip lecture in May 1964. An tAthair Ó Catháin SJ asked if we would be kind enough to listen to an important message from Dan Buckley and Cathal O'Gara. They told us that their association was in dispute with the Department of Education in an effort to improve teachers' pay and conditions. The union had decided to boycott the State examinations and the Department was trying to recruit supervisors and examiners from among the HDip students and others to make sure that the examinations went ahead. They asked us to support the teachers union.

Union solidarity

When they left, Fr Ó Catháin spoke about the importance of workers' rights and trade union solidarity, and urged us to become involved in whichever union operated in our schools. After the lecture Hugh Dorrian and I went to the ASTI office, where we met the then General Secretary, Máire MacDonagh, and the two men who had addressed us. They seemed a bit surprised when we asked for a form to send to the Department explaining that we were supporting the ASTI. Ms MacDonagh typed a letter, which we signed and sent off. I don't know what effect it had on Marlborough St, but it certainly changed our lives, as it began a very long association with the ASTI. Although the exams went ahead, the incident played a large part in strengthening teachers' resolve. In fact, 1964 was the year the ASTI became a trade union.

Teaching experiences

My first school was the CBS in Plás Mhuire above Parnell Square. There were two, and sometimes three, classes in the one room, seated back to back. I was lucky that the other teacher in that room was Eamonn Doyle, who knew the pupils and their parents seed, breed and generation. He used to say that you should always pay attention to pupils who had a bit of difficulty with books. He had noticed that they invariably did very well when they left school. This was long before there was any talk of the seven levels of intelligence.

There was only one ASTI branch in Dublin then and it met in a hall on Abbey Street. There was always a big crowd, and speakers ranged from the well informed, to the opinionated and articulate, and those who became both of those things as the night wore on and visits to the Plough grew more frequent!

In 1967 I was offered a job in Cloughaneely and joined the Donegal Branch. The 1970s saw a great growth in numbers and new schools, particularly community and comprehensives. There were four community and comprehensive schools in the Gaeltacht of West Donegal so it was decided to establish the *Iar Thuaisceart Thir Chonail* branch of the ASTI. From the start it was vibrant and very well attended, as it still is.

Two of the most exciting, though serious, events during this time were the three-week strike in 1969 and the threatened strike that was called off in 1971. During the strike in 1969 many teachers went to England to seek work, and in February 1971 I had prepared to go again before hearing on the way that the strike had been called off.

During my time as President I met with teachers and representatives from Northern Ireland, and one significant event that occurred during that time was the first ASTI meeting to be held outside the Republic, in Limavady. The thing that I remember most about my involvement in the ASTI is the people I have met. The ASTI was not all discussions and arguments. There were great nights and great people. Impromptu social occasions are really the things that hold a voluntary organisation together. It is time for the ASTI to reorganise and place more emphasis on the school. Time and travel do not allow people to participate at branches, and meetings with only five or six members present cannot be said to be representative. I have no doubt that it will evolve in time.

The ASTI will continue to thrive because of us or in spite of us, and in another hundred years will still be helping to build Ireland.



John Hurley addresses a PWC briefing meeting.



JOHN HURLEY,
ASTI President 1997/'98,
reflects on his union
involvement and the people
who have influenced him
during his teaching career.

I was fortunate to spend practically all of my teaching career in Crescent College Comprehensive, Limerick. One of the things that struck me when I joined the staff was the 'taking care of each other' philosophy that permeated the staffroom. There was always someone to help you no matter what problem arose. The problem that you thought was unique in your classroom became utterly manageable when an older colleague reassured: 'been there, done that'. While I have heard it said with some authority that taking care of each other is the essence of Jesuit educational philosophy, I am convinced it is most definitely the bedrock of trade unionism. While some of my ASTI friends might raise an eyebrow at my juxtaposition of Jesuit philosophy and trade unionism, my experience in Crescent makes me comfortable with it.

People not policies

My interest in the ASTI was initially influenced by people more than policies. David Barry and Michael Noonan were very influential figures in the Crescent staffroom. I recall a row in the early years over posts of responsibility, when the staff took on the board of management and successfully ensured that the conditions available in the old Crescent would continue in the new school. Those early battles had a huge bonding effect on the staff, an effect that has survived up to the present day. Crescent members were always active in the Limerick South Branch of the ASTI. Former President David Barry was Branch Chairman in the early years; Michael McMahon was an influential Standing Committee member; Pat O'Connell was Treasurer for a number of years; and, Ellis Casey is

currently a CEC member. In fact, there has been an unbroken CEC representation from Crescent since the 1960s. During this time, Willie Lawlor and Tony McKernan also served on Standing Committee, in the position currently filled by Ger O'Donoghue.

I remember a branch meeting in the early years when David was a highly esteemed president of the ASTI. Minister Wilson had awarded a significant pay increase and David and Kieran Mulvey had made me guarantee that I would deliver the Limerick vote. Supportive speeches were made early in the meeting, and I came in towards the end to 'hoover' up a few undecideds. Mike Noonan, who was now active locally in Fine Gael, stood up at the end and said that 20% of nothing is still nothing! For the next five minutes he spoke passionately about an imaginary teacher, mother of four with an alcoholic unemployed husband for whom this award was useless. 'Great for those of us with two fat cheques coming in', said Mike. By the time he was finished 'she' now had six children, the roof of the house was falling in and the Kleenex were being passed around. The pay rise was sent back from whence it came. The language Kieran used when I told him what happened is best left to the imagination.

Presidential experiences

Limerick South was once again honoured when Kathleen O'Sullivan became President. She had been a tireless Branch worker and Standing Committee member, and was a highly respected President of the ASTI. Having worked on both David's and Kathleen's Presidential campaigns, it was inevitable that their contributions would be instrumental in convincing me to get further involved in the ASTI. After spending some time on Standing Committee, I was elected President in 1997. It was a hectic time – PCW, posts of responsibility, Teaching Council, whole school evaluation, viewing of scripts, BOMS in comprehensive schools, etc. I was particularly fortunate in the calibre and friendship of the people with whom I came in close contact – Charlie Lennon, John White, Minister Micheál Martin, and Eamon Stack. I believe that history will very favourably record their individual contributions to Irish education.

I got involved in the ASTI because I was influenced locally by the commitment of particular people and I admired the principle of teachers taking care of each other. Nowhere was this more obvious to me than in the commitment and passion of former Treasurer Michael Ward. Not a man to court public acclaim, he was for years always available to help members with pension difficulties, classroom difficulties, bereavements, hardship, sickness, etc. Many times ASTI members said to me that their lives/jobs would have been intolerable were it not for the support Michael gave them. No doubt policies are hugely important to the ASTI, but people are equally important. We have been fortunate in the ASTI to still attract members of calibre and commitment, from school stewards to presidents, who are prepared to give of their time to the union. Long may this last. I consider myself honoured and privileged to have encountered them as colleagues and friends.



ASTI strike in 2000.

BERNADINE O'SULLIVAN,
ASTI President 1999/2000,
gives her view of the impact
of public service pay deals,
particularly on pension
entitlements.

On October 15, 2008, my daughter, a teacher, demonstrated outside the Dáil against the budget cuts, which included the raising of the pupil-teacher ratio and the reduction in language and other supports. In 1985 she had participated from her buggy in the Teachers United march in support of a pay award that was being withheld by the government of the day. Union involvement cannot start early enough! Surprisingly, it was a minister for education in Thatcher's government who said that strong teachers' unions are not just good for teachers, but also for education. Why do some people become more active than others in their trade union? In my own case as a teacher in the post-primary section of a special school in the 1970s, I was a member of the INTO for three years as it was the only union in the school. However, it was a period of huge curricular change and I was aware of the in-service courses provided by the ASTI, who served teachers when the Department of Education in-service was in its infancy. Therefore, I recruited staff members to the ASTI and we are members of the Dublin North West Branch.

First PCW agreement

From involvement at branch level, attendance at Annual Convention and election to Standing Committee in 1992, I learned the necessity to read documents and agreements very carefully and to know how these could affect the long-term interests of teaching as a profession. Therefore, I was involved in getting the first PCW Agreement in 1997, which was rejected by our members as it had dismantled our promotion structures and increases to serving members were not passed on to our retired members.

Following demonstrations outside the Dáil, the agreement was renegotiated. However, our members gave up 3% in lieu of an early retirement scheme, which was recently disbanded in the October 15 Budget. As Chair of the ASTI Pensions Committee, I am concerned that the issue of breaking pension parity is revisited in the current green paper on pensions.

Benchmarking

In 1999 it was an honour to be elected President of the ASTI, to represent our 17,000 members. It was not an uneventful term! By that autumn, after intense lobbying, over 1,000 new posts were created at second level. This was a great achievement for the ASTI. Earlier that year the three teacher unions had lodged a pay claim, but the government refused to pay a 3% early settlers award until the unions signed up to a new pay deal, which was a new way of paying public service pay and pensions whereby a discount could be applied for pension entitlements, hours worked and holidays. This was to replace the traditional pay review. The first Benchmarking award in 2002 seemed generous but teachers had not had a pay review since 1992, and for the first time all public servants were reviewed simultaneously, making the exercise seem costly.

The ASTI's reservations regarding Benchmarking proved correct in January 2008 when the Second Benchmarking Report was published and over 300,000 serving and up to 100,000 retired public servants did not get any increase whatsoever. A discount of up to 12% was applied because of our pension entitlements. In effect, public servants got a pay cut and their pensions are now costing them up to 12% more! The general public, politicians and economists seem unaware of these facts. The brief of the Benchmarking Body was "to constrain public service pay and pensions" and this has been accomplished. It is widely acknowledged that the award to teachers under Benchmarking 2002 was influenced by the industrial action taken by the ASTI and the 12,000-member demonstration in Molesworth Street in 2000.

The concept of productivity in teaching is very hard to measure and recent wage agreements and Benchmarking have used a quantitative rather than a qualitative approach. Learning is a process, not a product. Our teachers have willingly given of their time and energy in sport, drama, musicals, school services and clubs, yet this is not valued.

Protection of jobs, conditions of work and pensions are the essence of any trade union. In this our centenary year, it is worthwhile to remember that strong teacher unions are good for both education and teachers.



Teachers United 1985.



MICHAEL FREELEY,
ASTI President 2006/'07,
recalls a community campaign
to save his school.

Having completed a BComm (1971) and HDip Ed (1972) at UCD, I worked in New York during the summer of 1972. I considered staying in the United States for a few years but I was encouraged by my parents to come home and take up a secure pensionable job. I returned home on August 31, and commenced teaching at St Louis Convent, Balla on September 1. I have never regretted the decision to take up the position and I have always found teaching at second level to be fulfilling and challenging. In 1972 St Louis Convent was an all-girls school made up of boarders and day pupils. Approximately two-thirds of the staff were lay teachers.

Threat of closure

On February 18, 1975, the Mother General of the St Louis Order called an extraordinary general meeting of the lay staff to inform us of their decision to close the school in June 1978. This dramatic announcement came as a great shock to teachers and also to parents and students of the catchment area. We were informed that this closure decision was in line with the Department of Education's rationalisation plan for the region. We had 14 lay teachers, all ASTI members, and I was the school steward. The local community, assisted by the teaching staff, mobilised an effective campaign to purchase the school buildings and surrounding lands so as to ensure a second-level co-educational school for the catchment area. I was privileged to be a member of an enthusiastic and energetic local committee. We held numerous meetings with the St Louis Order and the Department of Education.

Our first fundraising venture yielded much of the money needed to buy the school and 15 acres of land. In September 1976, boys were enrolled for the first time in the newly named Balla Secondary School. The school, supported by the local community and sanctioned by the Department of Education, went on to provide a high quality education for the students of the area. Presently the school, with its proud tradition of academic, sporting and cultural achievements, is living testament to all who supported the project back in the mid 1970s.

During my year as President I was delighted to be of some assistance to ASTI members at Seamount College, Kinvara, Co. Galway, where the trustees announced their shock decision to close a vibrant, viable and successful school. Thankfully, like Balla, Kinvara has secured its survival with the guarantee of a second-level school. In future we must ensure that there is full consultation with the education partners when a school's future and teachers' jobs are at risk.

Other memories

Some of my best memories since I started teaching come from my involvement with extra curricular activities, particularly Gaelic games. Many people underestimate the enjoyment and rewards attached to students' involvement in sport, music, drama and other activities. Students remember those events long after they have forgotten what happened in the classroom. One of my most memorable days occurred when our teaching staff travelled by train to Dublin on December 5, 1985. There we joined up with our sister unions at a mass rally in Croke Park. Our united determination, commitment and resolve to achieve the implementation of an arbitrator's pay award boosted the morale of our profession.

Finally, I agree with William Ellery Channing when he said: "It is a greater work to educate a child, in the true and larger sense of the word, than to rule a State".

Rath Dé oraibh go léir.

This series of articles by past Presidents of the ASTI will continue in the next edition of ASTIR.

Frequently asked questions

Suspension of the early retirement strands

What options for retirement are available now that the government has suspended the early retirement strands?

The following options are available to teachers who are considering retirement:

Compulsory retirement

The compulsory retirement age for teachers who commenced teaching before April 1, 2004, and whose service is not interrupted for a period greater than 26 weeks, is 65. Such a teacher, if a member of the superannuation scheme, would receive a pension based on the number of years he/she was a member of the scheme, e.g., a teacher aged 65 on a salary of €60,000, who was a member of the superannuation scheme for 40 years, would receive a pension of 40 eightieths of salary, i.e., €30,000, and a tax-free lump sum of €90,000.

For those teachers who entered the system after April 1, 2004, the present compulsory retirement age of 65 has been removed, enabling them to remain working after 65 should they so wish, subject to suitability and health requirements.

Optional retirement at age 60

A teacher who is a member of the superannuation scheme and who commenced teaching before April 1, 2004, may opt to retire on pension at age 60 or at any time thereafter. Such a teacher would receive a pension based on the number of years he/she was a member of the superannuation scheme, e.g., a teacher aged 60 on a salary of €60,000, who was a member of the superannuation scheme for 38 years, would get a pension of 38 eightieths of salary, i.e., €28,500, and a tax-free lump sum of €85,500.

Optional retirement at age 55

A teacher who has reached the age of 55 and has 35 years of pensionable service may apply to retire on pension. In calculating the 35 years, a teacher with a pre-service training period of three years is credited with one year for the purpose of calculating the required 35 years, and a teacher with four years or more of pre-service training is credited with two years.

Cost neutral retirement option

In April 2005 the Department issued circular 10/2005, which allows teachers to retire with pension at age 50 (if in service before April 1, 2005) or at age 55 (if they entered service on or after April 1, 2004). This option is defined by the Department as 'cost neutral', i.e., a penalty/adjustment is applied to the pension and lump sum, which is based on the age of the retiring teacher.

Retirement on grounds of ill health

A disability pension is payable to a teacher who is a member of the superannuation scheme who retires (with not less than five years pensionable service) due to an infirmity that means the teacher is not capable of performing his/her duties, and which is likely to be permanent. The continued payment of a disability pension to a teacher who is under the age of 50 is, however, subject to a review from time to time. In calculating the pension and lump sum, the actual pensionable service of a teacher retiring on disability pension may be increased by an amount of added service that will not normally exceed six and two-thirds years.

How do I retire?

As a teacher's contract is with his/her school, formal notification of intention to retire should be given to the school at least three months prior to retirement. Application for pension benefit should be made to the Department of Education and Science and early application, three months prior to the intended retirement date, helps to ensure prompt payment of pension and lump sum. All application forms are available from the Department of Education and Science.

The ASTI has received Senior Counsel's opinion that teachers could challenge the legality of the suspension of the Early Retirement Scheme without notice and will, guided by Counsel's opinion, take whatever legal action is necessary. See future editions of *Nuacht* and *ASTIR*, and p.10 of this *ASTIR*, for developments on this issue.

Fermoy Branch

Chairperson: Jerry O'Sullivan
 Secretary: Frank Aird
 Treasurer: Tony Flynn
 Equality Officer: Ann O'Sullivan

Meetings

Meetings are generally held once a month except during December. They are usually held in Fermoy at 4.30pm.

History

The Fermoy Branch has a link with the foundation of the ASTI. Teachers from St Colman's College were among the founding members of the Association. Thomas MacDonagh, who taught in St Colman's (1903-1908), was involved in the setting up of the union, and P.J. Kennedy, who also taught in St Colman's, was the union's first president. Joe Whyte, another ASTI president (1992-1993) also taught in St Colman's, and our current President, Pat Hurley, is a past pupil of St Colman's. St Colman's also played host to the launch of the ASTI's brochure of centenary events in October, 2008.

Activities

The main activity is updating members in relation to union matters. Every effort is made to answer members' queries. Retirement functions are held every third or fourth year. Recently we held a retirement function that honoured ten retirees and was attended by 40 others.



Pictured at a recent Fermoy Branch function are: back row (from left): Matt Bermingham, CEC; Ann O'Sullivan, CEC; Frank Aird, Branch Secretary; Margaret Bermingham; and, Tony Flynn, Branch Treasurer. Front row (from left): John White, ASTI General Secretary; Jerry O'Sullivan, Branch Chairperson; Pat Hurley, ASTI President; Ray St John, ASTI Honorary Treasurer; and, Michael Barry, Standing Committee.

Schools in the Branch

Loreto Convent, Fermoy
 St Colman's College, Fermoy
 Presentation Convent, Mitchelstown
 CBS Mitchelstown
 Blackwater Community College, Lismore

Tribute to Aidan Harte

Loreto College Cavan

Our school had only opened a few days in September when we heard the sad news of the death of our dear friend and colleague, Aidan Harte.

Aidan was born in Cootehill and attended primary school there. He then went as a boarder to St Patrick's College in Cavan. During this time his family moved back to their native Carrigallen in Co. Leitrim. Having completed his Leaving Certificate, Aidan joined the ACC Bank in Dublin and attended UCD at night, studying for a BA in English and History. He then did his HDip Ed and thus began a long and fruitful teaching career. He taught in a number of places during his early teaching career, including Terenure, Kilmaleck, Uganda and Ballyshannon, before securing a position in Loreto College, Cavan in 1970.

Aidan loved to read and hear of the successes of former students of Loreto, Cavan. He maintained that a teacher's job was to open students' minds to new ideas and new concepts and to help them to develop a sense of self worth and self motivation. He believed that the capacity to be creative, analytical and critical were the main qualities necessary for coping with any life situation. He did not wholly approve of the points system, which, he maintained, only encouraged rote learning. He lamented universities becoming more vocationally oriented at the expense of intellectual discourse. During discussions about this he always quoted from Milton's *Lycidas*: "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed".

Students regarded Aidan as something of a father figure. He chatted to all. He saw in them that same sense of devilment and rebelliousness he had himself. He encouraged his students to be independent and confident, and true to themselves and their values. He was often heard saying: "Girls, 'To thine own self be true'".

Former students have their own memories and stories to tell of Aidan. One tells of her experience, as a first year, attending the then annual Christmas Debate between teachers

and students, which was always chaired by Aidan. She was enthralled by the whole occasion. She vividly recalled that at a particularly fractious moment when things were getting out of control, Aidan stood up to bring a certain calm to the proceedings. "Order! Order!" – Aidan's voice boomed throughout the Concert Hall.

Aidan was a proud Carrigallen man. He was an officer in the local GAA Club and a member of the Cornmill Theatre Group, with whom he both acted and produced. His most memorable acting role was playing Martin Claffey in Brian McMahon's *The Honeyspike*. For nearly 25 years, Aidan was also the local correspondent for *The Leitrim Observer*.

He was diagnosed with throat cancer the year before his retirement. He recovered from this but the cancer returned about 18 months ago. During his illness he kept his readers informed on how he was doing in his weekly notes in *The Leitrim Observer*. They shared his joy when the news was good, but were saddened by the return of the cancer and his gradual weakening. It was obvious that things were reaching their inevitable conclusion when, poignantly, at the end of July he quoted lines from Dylan Thomas: "Do not go gently into that good night, rage, rage against the dying of the light". Aidan's consolation during his final months was that he was lovingly cared for by his devoted family, who looked after his every need. Many of his friends and colleagues visited him during this time and found him to be upbeat but resigned, and as entertaining as ever.

Aidan's removal and funeral were attended by many people, all of whom had fond memories of him. His friends from St Patrick's College remember his humanity and warmth, which lifted their spirits during those drab boarding school days of the fifties; his students remember his inspiration and encouragement; the people of Carrigallen, among whom he lived all of his adult life, remember his community spirit and kindness. Aidan is survived by his sister Maura, brothers Alphie and Charlie, nieces Corina, Saran and Shauna, and nephews Padraig, Ciaran, Niall, Justin, Kevin, Dermot, Connie, Brian, Rory and Shane.

'Suaimhneas siorrai dá anam uasal'

Written on behalf of staff in Loreto College Cavan, by Killian McGuinness.

Noticeboard

Show for students of Irish

'Fibín Teoranta', the National Children's Drama and Puppetry Company, is undertaking another national tour. 'An Cearrbhach McCába Et Fiche Bliain ag Fás' will be the company's 11th production and is aimed at secondary school students, with a focus on elements of the Leaving Cert Irish curriculum. Information cards about the tour have been sent to all schools. For more information see www.fibin.com.



New initiative for teachers of English as an additional language

The Second Level Support Service (SLSS) is planning a number of seminars to provide support to teachers of English as an additional language in their work to promote the successful integration and participation of newcomer students in mainstream classes. The seminars are being designed to be of practical use, focusing for example on teaching and learning strategies and on the use of the Assessment Kit for Post-primary Schools, which is due to be published shortly. Two rounds of 24 seminars will be delivered in the second term of this school year in regional education centres. The first round of seminars will be delivered in January and early February, with the second round planned for the latter half of February and March. The number of teachers to be invited from any one school has been determined on the basis of whole-time teacher equivalents allocated to schools for language support. Substitution cover will be provided for those attending the seminars.

The suite of resources for teaching English as an additional language designed by Integrate Ireland Language Teaching and Training is now accessible at www.ncca.ie.

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Separated Teacher Support Group

The INTO Separated Teacher Support Group is meeting on Saturday January 24 at 11.00am in the Grand Hotel, Malahide, Co. Dublin. New members and ASTI members are welcome. The group is also holding a 20th Anniversary Dinner Dance that evening at 8.00pm in the Grand Hotel. Past members are welcome. Further information is available from Chairperson, Maura Killackey, Tel: 0505-21674/087-1233456, or Secretary, Christina Henry, Tel: 01-8481405/087-6201153.

Get Real

'Get Real' is an interactive film series, supported by practical educational materials, that examines how the internet is transforming the experience of adolescent socialisation. The 'Get Real' programme uses web-based technology to engage students aged 15-18 in exploring themes such as online decorum, cyber-bullying, anonymity, disclosure and consequences. The programme consists of a three-part drama series that schools can receive on DVD along with resource material for teachers.

If your school is interested in participating in the programme, contact Orla Dunne, Tel: 01-8786108, or Email: info@teamtheatre.ie. Please note that there is a cost involved and the programme is limited to the first 80 schools that apply.

HTAI newsletter

The History Teachers Association of Ireland (HTAI) publishes a newsletter twice a year and will be expanding the publication in the near future. The newsletter is available to all members of the HTAI and welcomes contributions from members. Contact Liz Russell at liz.history@gmail.com for more details.



Reflections in a Tar-Barrel

Former teacher Jack Harte has recently published his second novel, *Reflections in a Tar-Barrel*. The novel is set in the 1970s and follows an Irish man's travels from the west of Ireland through Paris and Lourdes. It is available from Scotus Press. Visit www.scotuspress.com for more information.



Computers and learning conference

The Computer Education Society of Ireland is holding a National Conference in Tallaght on February 13 and 14. The conference will address ICT and learning through a series of presentations and workshops. 'Blogging for Learning', 'ICT Co-ordinating' and 'Virtual School Twinning' are some of the topics to be addressed. See www.cesi.ie for further details.

The new teacher

Mary-Elaine Tynan teaches English, French and CSPE in Holy Faith Secondary School, Clontarf. She worked in publishing in Australia and in a school in Africa prior to completing her PGDE and starting work as a teacher in Holy Faith last September.

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

After I graduated I moved to Australia and worked in the magazine publishing industry for seven years. I was responsible for researching, launching and driving new publications. It was really exciting work and I loved it.

I also did some part-time teaching work but it always had to be my second priority. When I turned 30 I decided to fulfil a long-term dream to work in Africa. I accepted a position in an NGO school in Tanzania, The School of St Jude. The school educates very bright children who can't afford to go to school. My job was to help with fundraising and marketing, but it was the type of school where everybody does everything so I ended up also being an English teacher.

I enjoyed teaching so much that when I came home two years later, I decided to do a Post Graduate Degree in Education (PGDE) so that I could train properly and work in Ireland. I haven't given up the idea of going back to Africa eventually though.

How did your previous experience help you in your teaching work?

My previous experience definitely helped in my PGDE year. I had made business presentations, researched and written documents, and managed staff. Doing the PGDE wasn't as intimidating as it would have been before. It also helped me with certain aspects of teaching. Initially, it was an advantage to look slightly older than most PGDE students, as students thought I was a more experienced teacher. I think overall, having worked successfully in a professional capacity, I had a certain amount of confidence. Having said that, there are certain skills that can only be learned in the classroom.

Teaching in Africa is utterly different to teaching in Ireland. In Africa an education is a privilege, whereas in Ireland it's a right. Teachers in government schools in Tanzania are never guaranteed that they will be paid and may be faced with 50 or 100 students, most of whom won't have a book or a pencil.

What would a typical working week be like for you?

Before I was a teacher, I would never have imagined how much work there is involved; I thought all the work was the actual teaching. If only! I now realise that teaching is like being a TV or radio presenter – all the work is in the research beforehand and the follow-up afterwards. For every class, I



have to work out what I will teach, how am I going to teach it, and how I will know if they have learned what I wanted them to learn. I have to constantly assess myself, to work out whether a lesson or teaching strategy was successful, and if not, how to make it better. But I think that is making me a better teacher. The preparation work will diminish as I become more experienced but regardless of that I will always need to adjust my classes to suit the group.

What aspects of your job do you particularly enjoy?

I love being in the classroom, especially when I teach a lesson that works. Seeing the light in a student's eye is fantastic. I was teaching French verbs recently and a student who had been having difficulty suddenly got really excited and said: "Miss, Miss, I get it, I finally understand it now – thanks!" That made it all worthwhile for me!

I also love teaching CSPE. I am a very vocal citizen, especially with regard to human rights and conservation, having lived in Africa where basic human rights are not being met, and in both Africa and Australia where water is in great shortage. I am very heartened that there is a subject on the curriculum that forces students and teachers to think about how we can make a difference, as individuals and as a community.

How do you feel about the recent budget cuts to education?

I find the budget cuts frighteningly short-sighted. We live in a country that is allegedly trying to create a knowledge economy and yet we are depriving our future workers and leaders of the opportunity to get that knowledge.

The most dangerous part of these cuts is that the average citizen doesn't understand what they will actually mean. They don't realise that when the curriculum changes or we need to update our teaching skills, there will be no budget for us to do so, and the students will suffer as a result. The increase in class size could mean dramatic reduction in the variety of subjects offered to students. That's just the tip of the iceberg!

My concern is that by the time people realise the impact of this budget, the damage will be done. It's critical that we translate the budget into meaningful language and communicate it to teachers and students so that we can all work together to fight these cuts.

To read more about Mary-Elaine's work in Africa visit: <http://mary-elaine.blogspot.com/>.

Crossword

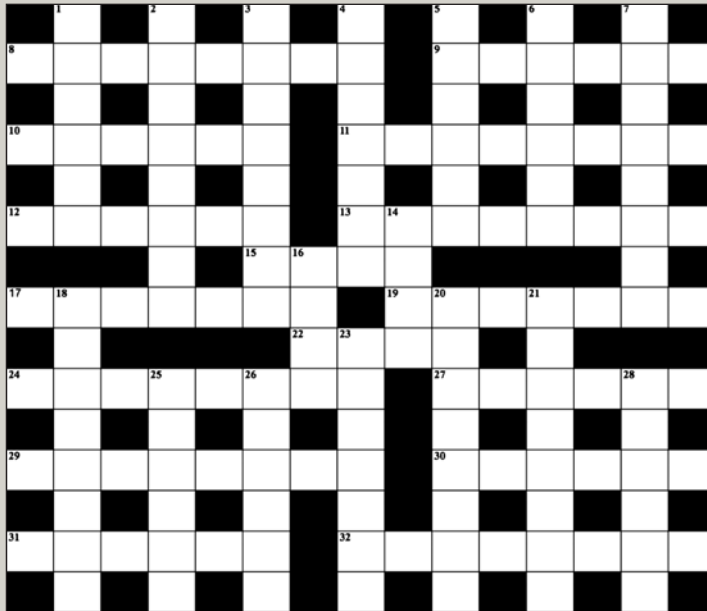


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If you wish to keep your copy of *ASTIR* intact you may send a photocopy of the crossword. One entry only per member.

Name

School

Address

ASTI Branch

Entries to: **Astir Crossword No. 0901, Think Media,
The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.**
To arrive by: **Friday, February 13, 2009.**

CLUES ACROSS

- 8 Spanish soup served cold (8)
- 9 First secretary of the ASTI (6)
- 10 Could be mountains or fish (8)
- 11 Your Branch holds them! (8)
- 12 Search illicitly for this spice or vegetable (6)
- 13 Your Branch could mention a candidate for President (8)
- 15 Could be American country and western singer (4)
- 17 The ASTI's first publication was known as The ... (7)
- 19 USA gain for these lizards (7)
- 22 Loot an implement (4)
- 24 " 'tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all", he wrote (8)
- 27 A widespread rift without direction (6)
- 29 This famous statesman was a founding member of the ASTI (2,6)
- 30 "Salus populi, suprema est lex" (the safety of the people is the highest law), he wrote (6)
- 31 Vat tests will certify in an official capacity (6)
- 32 Outdo nation with a gift (8)

DOWN

- 1 His rag is loud and flashy (6)
- 2 An informal diamond (8)
- 3 Pain in the back, thighs or hips could be this (8)
- 4 A group of teachers in this College in 1908 set about organising an association of teachers (7)
- 5 Sr came with a loud piercing cry (6)
- 6 A national flag displayed on ships or aircraft (6)
- 7 Calvary (8)
- 14 This state has backed the winning White House candidate since 1964 (4)
- 16 There's a lot between soprano and tenor (4)
- 18 A treetop for the Mikado (8)
- 20 Gazing briefly (8)
- 21 ASTI crop of fruits (8)
- 23 Drawn so to be advancing (7)
- 25 " The the dawn, the darker the night" (Longfellow) (6)
- 26 Columbo, Morse, Frost, all examples! (6)
- 28 ASTI founded here in 1908 (6)

Solution to ASTIR crossword No. 0805

Across	Down
1. Dignity at work	2. Illegal
10. Illicit	3. NCCA
11. Denarii	4. Titian
12. Logo	5. Andrew
13. Tales	6. Wine
15. Idol	7. Reredos
17. Now	8. Mill Ward Brown
19. Allied	9. Killing the pig
21. Damson	14. Lothian
22. Lychees	16. Bells
23. Docile	18. Gasps
25. Sprout	20. Dye
27. Ram	21. DES
29. Ruin	24. Chianti
30. Kenya	26. Obelisk
31. Mere	27. Revere
34. Winsome	28. Myopic
35. Puccini	32. Nosh
36. Michael Cheika	33. NCTE

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 0805:
**Pat O'Brien, Midleton CBS,
Bawnard West, Midleton, Co. Cork, RSTA member.**



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