

astir

Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland



The better fairer way

ASTI Education
Conference 2009

Interview with David Begg

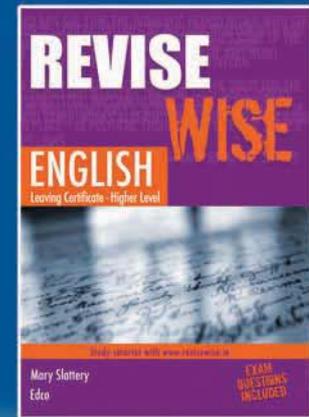
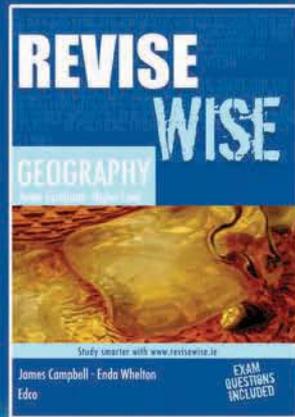
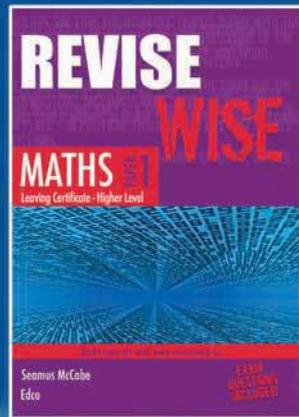
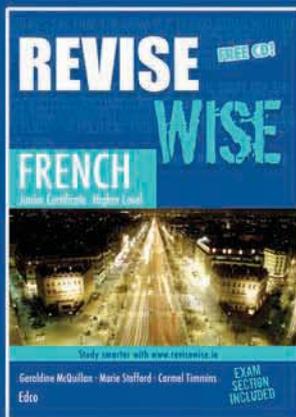
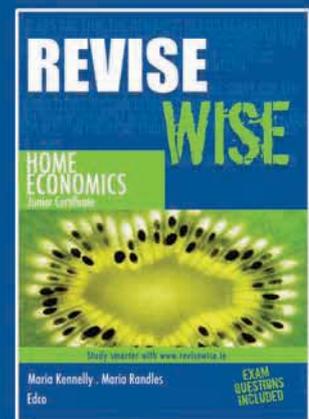
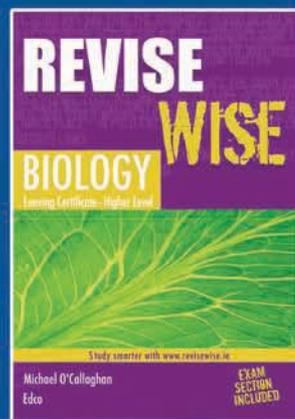
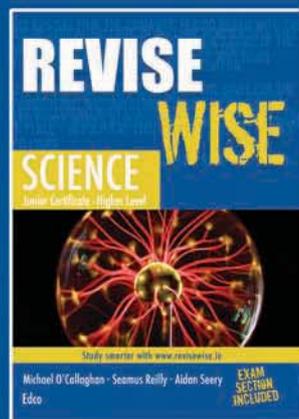
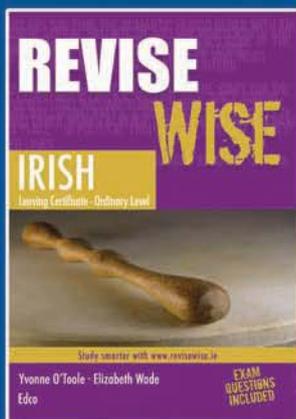
Sustainable schools

REVISE WISE

A range of Revision Guides for Junior & Leaving Cert Students

To request a free inspection copy or to place an order for your class, please contact Edco directly on:

PH: (01) 4500611 FAX: (01) 4500993 EMAIL: info@edco.ie



All €8.95

Why not visit our New Website, www.edco.ie to access lots of news and information on all of our resources.



Edco

Volume 27: Number 5: November 2009
ISSN 0790-6560

astir

Editorial Board

Joe Moran, President;
John White, General Secretary;
Jack Keane, Vice President;
Pat Hurley, Immediate Past President;
Ray St John, Honorary Treasurer;
Jim O'Brien, Standing Committee nominee;
Michael Moriarty, Standing Committee nominee.

Media and Communications Officer:

Gemma Tuffy.

Published on behalf of ASTI by Think Media.

Editorial: Ann-Marie Hardiman, Paul O'Grady.

Design: Tony Byrne, Tom Cullen and Ruth O'Sullivan.

Advertising: Pat Murray.

ASTI,

Thomas MacDonagh House,
Winetavern Street,
Dublin 8.

Tel: 01-604 0160

Fax: 01-671 9280

astir@asti.ie

www.asti.ie

ASTIR is published five times annually by the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland. The opinions expressed in ASTIR are those of individual authors and are not necessarily endorsed by the ASTI. While every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure information published is accurate, the ASTI cannot accept responsibility for articles or advertisements. The ASTI reserves the right to edit all material submitted for publication.

The ASTIR Editorial Board is interested in receiving feedback on ASTIR. Members can email astirfeedback@asti.ie or text 087-9349956.



ASTI in the media

8



Scapegoating public sector workers

10



Teachers, education and the social good

20



Sustainable schools

24



ASTI centenary

Unlikely Radicals

27

Towards equality

29

From the President's desk

5

A time to stand up for ourselves

Sound sense for teachers and students

26

News features

Campaigns update: What's the alternative? 6

ASTI in the media 8

Debunking the myths 9

Curriculum

31

Changes at Junior Cert

Professional matters

32

Your payslip explained

Opinions

Scapegoating public sector workers 10

A view of our economic crisis 12

Frequently asked questions

33

Teaching Council registration for new teachers

News

14

RSTA news

34

Features

Interview with David Begg 18

Teachers, education and the social good 20

Lifelong learning 22

Sustainable schools 24

School initiative

35

TAPPING into potential

Noticeboard

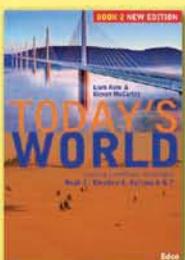
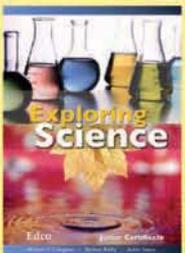
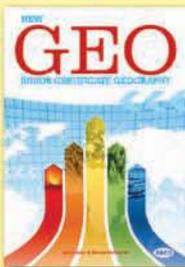
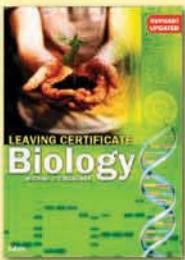
36

Crossword

38

Now Live!...

Register at www.edcoDigital.ie to access a new range of resources which will help you to prepare, plan and deliver stimulating lessons in your classroom, in an easy to access, hassle-free way.



Ireland's leading educational publisher **The Educational Company of Ireland**, is pleased to announce the launch of edcoDigital.ie

edcoDigital.ie offers you a broad range of our Post Primary textbooks online, with a menu of easy to use tools, and will enable you to project the textbook onto a screen or Interactive White Board, facilitating ICT integration and active learning in your classroom.

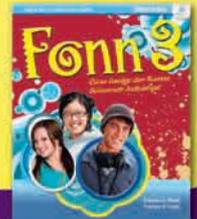
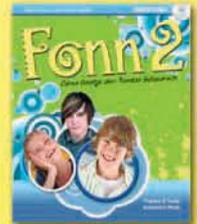
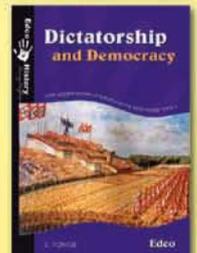
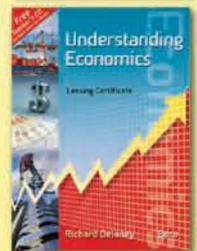
But more than this, based on feedback from hundreds of teachers nationwide, edcoDigital.ie has also developed a range of teacher focused content, resources and exercises to eliminate the pressure on teachers to create the content themselves. All resources are based on the Irish Curriculum and written by many of Ireland's top educational authors.

The edcoDigital.ie platform will also enable you to create and store your own set of personalised resources, if you so wish.

To access Your Online Teacher Centre,

Register Now at

www.edcoDigital.ie



If you have any queries please contact our edcoDigital.ie Support Team at info@edco.ie or (01) 4299219

A time to stand up for ourselves

December budget

The policy proposals being considered in the pre-budget debates in relation to pay cuts and changes to working conditions are grossly unfair to teachers and public service workers. Our campaign, in co-operation with our colleague unions, to be treated fairly and equitably, is vital for our future. The ballot for industrial action was necessary to show that we have the resolve to resist those proposals. Please remain fully engaged in this campaign and united in the face of adversity.

Trade union solidarity

The General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, David Begg, is interviewed in this edition of *ASTIR*. His thoughtful and considered alternative strategy for dealing with the economic and banking crisis should be adopted by Government. The crisis reminds us all of our individual vulnerability in both public and private sector employments. A strong trade union movement is essential to workers' interests.

Renewed Programme for Government

In the midst of difficulties and challenges we welcomed the commitments to education that came in the revised Programme for Government. The removal of the threat in the McCarthy Report to again increase the pupil-teacher ratio is a welcome step back from an educational abyss. ASTI political lobbying was vital in delivering these commitments and our General Secretary, John White, deserves our appreciation in this regard. Of course harsh cutbacks remain, as the loss of 1,000 teachers and the moratorium on posts of responsibility create great day-to-day difficulties in schools.

Teacher union directives

Implementing the union's directives on class size, meetings, and whole school evaluation is sometimes difficult at school level. I visited some of the schools that had had whole school evaluations since the directives and I greatly appreciated their co-operation and courtesy. The collegiality of ASTI members in the school is vital for all members in a challenging environment.

Junior Cert and oral Irish

The NCCA is currently engaged in a major review of the junior cycle. Updates on meetings and documents on this review are available on the

ASTI website – www.asti.ie. It is essential that our members engage in this review and are consulted on all aspects of it. Our assessment policy is one of our core values in education. The current proposal for a Junior Cert oral Irish exam, without an agreed system of external assessment, is in breach of that policy and members should not provide marks for their own pupils in oral examinations.

ASTI centenary



Despite the great difficulties of the year, we have marked our century of service at local and national levels with a well-executed calendar of events. A major highlight was having Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney speak at our recent Education Conference. John Cunningham's book on the ASTI, *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post-Primary Teachers and the ASTI, 1909-2009*, will be launched shortly. The rejuvenation aspects of the centenary year will continue into next year with another new teachers' conference, a principals' and deputy principals' seminar and a branch rejuvenation programme.

Critical times

My final words concern the big issue of this time: the ASTI campaign against the unfair and inequitable budgetary proposals, which is vital to our future. Support our campaign to the best of your ability. Ní neart go cur le chéile.



Joe Moran

ASTI President

What's the alternative?

The ASTI is supporting the ICTU's strategy for economic recovery "There is Still a Better, Fairer Way". The strategy includes remedies which are realistic, but which ensure fairness and equity.

ICTU alternative strategy

Trade unions and their members did not create the economic crisis, yet those who support Government policy refer repeatedly to our 'bloated' public sector and allege that the root cause of the problem is 'runaway' public spending. It reads well in print and even sounds rational on the airwaves. One small problem: it is completely wrong. The crisis in our finances has arisen not because public spending mushroomed overnight. It has arisen because our tax base collapsed. During the boom, the Government began to dismantle the tax base in order to reward the wealthy (48% tax rate ended) and incentivise speculation (property tax breaks). Direct taxation was lowered and the burden shifted to taxes on consumption and transitional taxes such as stamp duty. Today, while the need for public services is growing, the taxation to pay for them has disappeared. Ireland, however, spends less on its public services than almost every other developed country: in 2007 we spent 30.2% of GDP on public services, while the average in the EU 15 was 42.5%.

In France it was 48.2% and in Sweden 49.3%. Even George Bush's US spent more than us – 32%.

Any alternative strategy must make jobs the Government's number one priority and that includes investment in education, retraining and upskilling. Otherwise Ireland will suffer a serious skills deficit in years to come. We also need to reform our social insurance model, in order to make it more responsive to unemployment and more focused on re-skilling.

The way forward

1. Stimulus package

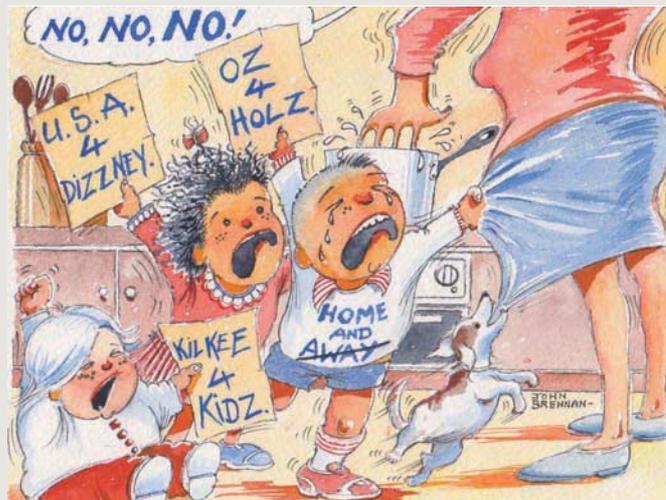
In the short term, a stimulus package that focuses on the country's poor infrastructure – social and physical – would help to tackle the unemployment crisis and restore tax revenue to the exchequer.

The temporary teacher

Struggling every day,
Childcare, mortgage and overdue bills,
Worry, stress and lots of fear,
No unvouched expenses for me.
Never drove a Merc, never got a perk.

Students are angry, frustrated and annoy,
Some parents say just look after my boy,
Media, bias, agendas and more,
Public services cut to shreds, children crying in their beds.
Never drove a Merc, never got a perk.

Bailouts, NAMA and much more,
You've done so much harm to those who care,
But you can retire without a care,
Golden handshakes and no pension levy/tax too.
Never drove a Merc, never got a perk.
Tents, developers, bankers, advisers so smart,
TDs, senators and ministers in all,
They say it will be all right in time,
You sip your tea and we'll sip our wine,
Lavish on Sunday in their profit-salaried beds.
Never drove a Merc, never got a perk.



Ma, Da why can't we go. No holiday this year is so no no.

Ma, Da why can't we go,
No holiday this year is so no no,
Sorry love it's the way things are,
The people who care are the people who pay,
Only the law makers can break the law,
Maybe they'll be justice some day.
Never drove a Merc, never got a perk.

Those who are permanent,
Those who are secure,
Please don't forget the temporary teacher, when you close your door.

2. Reform tax system

Over the medium to longer term, we must reform and rebuild our tax base. An essential demand of Congress is a higher tax rate for those on the highest incomes. A reformed tax system could also include: raising the minimum tax on the wealthy to at least 30%; the abolition of tax breaks, especially those for property and private hospitals; and, a serious clampdown on evasion. We need a sustainable and progressive tax base that is capable of funding the sort of society we must build.

3. Extend the period of adjustment

In order not to bring what is left of our economy to a shuddering halt – and undermine the fabric of our society – we must abandon the Government's proposed schedule for cuts and adjustment.

There is no reason why we cannot extend this to 2017, or 2018, and thereby minimise the money that will be taken out of the economy. It is similar to

extending a loan period over a longer timeframe, to make it more affordable. Indeed, France recently announced that its own 'period of adjustment' is being extended to 2015. This country needs the extra breathing space such an extension would bring. There is no reason why we cannot do so.

Education should be exempt from Budget cuts

In its pre-Budget submission to the Government, the ICTU says that education should be exempt from public expenditure cuts. Congress's submission recommends that the Government:

- does not cut education;
- does not cut social welfare rates; and,
- is judicious on cuts in capital expenditure.



Dolceta

ONLINE CONSUMER EDUCATION



WWW.DOLCETA.EU



Supported by the European Commission

Managed by 

ASTI in the media

ASTI General Secretary John White has been prominent on the radio and in the press recently highlighting teacher quality and voicing opposition to education cutbacks.



'The Last Word', Today FM

On teachers' pensions:

"Teachers are now contributing 14% to their pension, which I would guess is very high even by private sector standards. They pay that for a period of 40 years before they get what you call the defined benefit pension ... it is untrue, and I think it's out there, that teachers never contribute to their pension. They always did. They contributed 6.5%. Now they're contributing 14%."

'News at One', RTÉ 1

On sick leave:

"Second-level teachers take 2.5 days' uncertified sick leave [per annum], which is significantly less than any other group of workers."

On teachers' working time:

"The OECD Report ['Education at a Glance'] stated that Irish second-level teachers stand in front of their pupils, where the real action takes place, significantly more [than the OECD average]."

On the ASTI directive on parent-teacher meetings:

"We are in a situation where the education service is being hit severely. Our members decided that they had to make some minimalist gesture and that is what they are doing."

Irish Times

On teachers' working time (in response to article by Dr Edward Walsh, October 20, 2009):

"It is in the classroom that the real activity of learning takes place and it is against this statistic that teachers should be judged, not on how many meetings they attended.

In addition to classroom teaching, Irish second-level teachers engage in a wide variety of duties, including class preparation, setting and marking homework, subject planning and pastoral care activities, and these are not included in the statistics used by Dr Walsh."

'Today with Pat Kenny', RTÉ Radio One:

On comparisons between teaching in the UK and Ireland:

(John White was responding to Kevin O'Brien, a teacher in the UK who stated that UK teachers work more hours, attend up to 75 faculty meetings per year, and earn a paltry salary.)

"What do our students achieve in comparison to the students in the UK with their, as Kevin says, 75 faculty meetings that he attends, with, as he says, his paltry salary? Our students achieve better standards than the students in the UK."

"The reason for this I think is first of all we still in Ireland manage to attract into teaching high quality graduates and all of the international practice would suggest that it is the quality of the teachers that contributes to the quality of the education."

"The 735 hours that Irish teachers do is standing in front of their pupils teaching them. The 1,300 [in the UK, quoted by Kevin O'Brien] includes the standing in front of the class teaching them and the 75 faculty meetings and so forth. We actually stand in front of our pupils teaching them more than the OECD average. That is where education goes on, where real education takes place."

Irish Times

On teachers' working time (in response to Department of Education and Science statement on teachers' working hours):

"The General Secretary of the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) John White accused the Department of generating 'easy headlines' that did not reflect the reality. He said teachers were unwilling to have their 'work falsely devalued as part of a softening up process for further education cuts.'"

"... Last night Mr White said the reality for Irish second-level teachers is that they were in their classrooms teaching their pupils for significantly longer hours than their OECD counterparts. The [Department of Education and Science] memo acknowledges that the actual teaching time in Ireland is high by international standards."

Debunking the myths

ASTIR examines some of the common misconceptions about Irish teachers and other public sector workers.

Myth: The public sector is overstaffed

Fact: The most recent OECD report on public services, published in 2008, found that Ireland has a relatively small public service given the size of our economy, labour force and population. Public sector employment represents around 14.6% of the total labour force, which is relatively low among OECD countries and is significantly below the level of Norway, Sweden, France, Finland and Belgium. In addition, the report found that Irish public servants are delivering high quality services at a relatively low cost. The report also noted that increased public sector employment in Ireland in areas such as health and education has occurred as a result of Irish public services 'catching up' in recent years from a position of significant under-funding.

A comparison of public sector wage bills in different countries reveals that Ireland is below the average of the EU 15 countries; Ireland spends 10.7% of its GNP on the public sector wage bill compared to the EU 15 average of 11.6%.

The OECD report also stated that Irish public services are, broadly speaking, "on a sound trajectory of modernisation".

Public sector employment represents around 14.6% of the total labour force, which is relatively low among OECD countries, and is significantly below the level of Norway, Sweden, France, Finland and Belgium.

Myth: Teachers get pensions for free

Fact: All teachers contribute to their pension and this was the case even before the recent pension levy for public sector workers was introduced. Contribution rates are either 6.5% or 7% of income, depending on the date of joining. The pension levy – which was introduced unilaterally for public sector workers including teachers in February 2009 – means that as well as paying a contribution rate of 6.5% or 7%, teachers also pay a levy averaging 7% of their income. This means that the vast majority of teachers are paying at least 14% of their income towards their pension.

The vast majority of teachers are paying at least 14% of their income towards their pension.

Myth: Irish second-level teachers work less than their OECD counterparts

Fact: Irish second-level teachers are in their classrooms teaching their pupils for significantly longer hours than their OECD counterparts; 735 hours for Irish second-level teachers as opposed to the OECD average for upper secondary level of 653 and lower secondary level of 709. In addition to classroom teaching, Irish second-level teachers engage in a wide variety of duties including class preparation, setting and marking homework, subject planning and pastoral care activities. Irish schools are also renowned for their participation in extra-curricular activities, which are organised and facilitated by teachers.

Myth: All private sector workers have had their pay cut, but there has been no cut for public sector workers

Fact: The propagation of this myth represents an attempt to create a false divide between private and public sector workers and has the ultimate aim of diminishing public services.

The pension levy introduced in February 2009 resulted in an average 7% reduction in the pay of public sector workers, including teachers. The pension levy did not improve the pensions of public sector workers in any way. Less than two months ago, Professor John Fitzgerald of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) stated that there is no evidence of widespread significant reductions to pay or labour costs in the private sector.

There is no evidence of widespread significant reductions to pay or labour costs in the private sector.

Myth: Second-level teachers won't meet parents

Fact: The ASTI directive to members stipulates that teachers should not participate in the one parent-teacher meeting per term that takes place out of school hours. Apart from this, teachers are meeting their pupils' parents as normal and parent-teacher meetings within school time are proceeding. The directive on parent-teacher meetings was issued alongside two other directives relating to whole school evaluation and school development planning. The three directives aim to help teachers to concentrate on their core teaching activities, given that they must now carry out their work with diminished educational resources as a result of the education cuts.

Scapegoating public sector workers allows wealthy to escape

Kevin McCarthy offers a counter argument to recent attacks on public service workers and their pay and pensions.



Recently, I counted at least ten anti-public service articles in one Sunday publication alone. It seems that the commentary class, many of whom multi-job and have incomes far in excess of any public servant, have ordained that ordinary workers must bear the majority of the burden for the wrongdoings of bankers, speculators and politicians.

In such a climate, any chance of having a rational debate on the issue of public sector pay and conditions is almost nil. No wonder many public sector workers simply keep their heads down. This, however, is no longer good enough. There is a major campaign underway to reduce the wages and working conditions of all workers and ignoring this reality is just not an option. Public sector workers must be proactive, and at every opportunity counteract the myths and misinformation that are being presented about their pay, pensions and working conditions. Above all else they must acquaint themselves with the facts.

One of the most persistent claims in the media is the assertion that public service pay is far above that of the private sector. Various reports from the CSO and ESRI claim that the public sector premium is anywhere between

19% and 45%. To counteract this myth it is important to understand the methodologies used in these reports, as well as the significant differences that exist between the actual jobs carried out by private and public sector workers.

Like with like

In early October, the ESRI released a report that claimed to compare pay for workers in similar occupations in both sectors. In reality it did not make like for like comparisons. By its own admission the ESRI simply matched occupations that it considered similar, and adjusted for factors such as education, experience, etc. When questioned on RTE about which occupation in the private sector was considered comparable to that of a member of the Garda Síochána, one of the report's authors was forced to admit that Gardai were compared to security personnel in the private sector. "Are you talking about security guards?" asked the RTE reporter. "Yea", replied the researcher. "So you are comparing a Garda's work with a security guard in a shopping centre", asked the clearly astonished RTE presenter. This

methodology is clearly inappropriate, as it does not use any form of job evaluation system to differentiate between what people are doing in the real world. Job evaluation systems are universally accepted in every industrial relations tribunal and are the only system of comparison allowed by the European Court of Justice when considering gender pay issues. Similarly, comparing second-level teachers with part-time staff in private and grind schools, who do a totally different job, is failing to compare like with like and renders any conclusions essentially meaningless. Why the ESRI have chosen to ignore the standard methods that allow proper comparisons of the actual jobs done by public and private sector workers is a question that remains unanswered.

In fact, the only independent review that examined and compared public and private sector jobs on a like for like basis was the 2008 benchmarking report, which found that "there is little or no public service premium, if comparison is made with private sector employees in large establishments", which the report notes "accounts for a significant majority of public sector workers". Workers in large organisations (public or private) tend to have greater promotional opportunities, more formalised pay scales, longer service and a greater skills base. More people in the public sector have third-level degrees – 40% compared to just under 20% in the private sector – and 30% of public sector workers are professionals, while the figure for the private sector is just 7%. All of these factors affect pay rates.

Paying for pensions

Worker's pensions, both public and private, have come under sustained attack from those with a neo-liberal agenda. One recent report even suggested that the annual cost of purchasing the equivalent private sector pension for a typical civil servant is 27% of annual salary and 31% for a teacher entitled to retire at 55. Even if we accept these figures as correct (and I seriously question them) we must acquaint ourselves with what is contributed to our pensions. Teachers employed since 1994 pay pension contributions of 6.5%, pension levy of 7.5% and employee PRSI of 6%. When a figure of 10.75% is included for employers' PRSI this gives a total of

30.75%. In short, these reports are essentially saying that the full cost of public sector pensions is being covered by the contributions that are currently being made. This analysis does not take into account the fact that most private sector pensions include an employer's contribution in addition to the employers' PRSI, or that public servants have also had to forgo several pay increases in recognition of the cost of their pensions to their employers. Teachers did not receive a 3% increase (as part of the PCW in 1996) in order to fund the early retirement strands – a scheme which is no longer in operation. Under the second benchmarking review of 2008, public sector workers did not get any pay increase as "a discount of 12% was applied for pension entitlements". Many media commentators also fail to realise that unlike workers in the private sector, public sector workers do not get the additional benefit of the old age pension. This means that the true cost of a public sector pension of €500 per week is really just €70, as like all workers, they would have received the old age pension of €230 anyway based on their PRSI contributions.

Public servants live in the real world and clearly see the enormity of the situation that our country is now faced with. But this situation has not been caused by ordinary workers, private or public, who are now being pitted against each other by a wealthy elite intent on escaping the brunt of the economic crisis. The real debate must be about who can afford to pay – those on low or moderate incomes with the least resources or those who have most and can afford to live on less.

Kevin P. McCarthy

Kevin P. McCarthy teaches at Scoil Phobail Sliabh Luachra, Rathmore, Co. Kerry.

Have your say! ASTIR welcomes contributions from members. Please forward any material for consideration to astir@asti.ie.



Europa Diary and Teacher's Guide 2010-11

TY Coordinators, European Studies teachers, CSPE teachers, Irish-language teachers: order your free Europa Diaries for TY students before **29 January 2010!**

The Europa Diary is a unique resource containing a wealth of information on topics for young people including: the European Union, citizens' rights, health issues, environmental issues and more. It aims to help students make independent and informed choices and become more resourceful European citizens. It can be used as a classroom teaching tool, for independent research or simply as a homework diary.

The diary is produced in 24 languages and is distributed to thousands of schools across the European Union. In Ireland, it is provided free of charge for Transition Year students at the request of their school. Content of the Irish version is reviewed by Léargas for relevance to Irish students and is in both English and *as Gaeilge*. The diary is accompanied by a Teacher's Guide which contains suggested lesson plans, activities and worksheets based on the diary content.

Orders can be placed for the 2010-11 Europa Diary at www.europadiary.eu before **29 January 2010**, or while stocks last. You may also order from Léargas by email, fax or by post before the deadline.

Léargas, 189 Parnell Street, Dublin 1.
Tel: 01 873 1411 Fx: 01 873 1316
diary@leargas.ie

www.leargas.ie/europadiary



Europa Diary. A project funded by the European Commission.

Blessed are we who do not have a mortgage – a view of our economic crisis

Martin McMullan does not believe that we should be trying to go back to the way things were during the boom years.

The economic model in which we operate in this country, which our Government maintains, and which we are taught to obey from the cradle, is unsustainable. The average secondary student would be able to figure that one out. Above all else, it is the motivating factor behind the economic model – to accumulate material wealth and capital, i.e., profit – that makes it glaringly unsustainable. This 'profit at all costs' model motivates economic activity even at the expense of people's lives.

We are being told now by our Government that we all need to make sacrifices to get us back on the road to economic prosperity and the good old times of the Celtic Tiger. I have to disagree. Indeed, I am morally obliged as a human being to disagree. The idea that we all should have to make sacrifices to bring this country around is one I'd be delighted to support even though I did not benefit from the Celtic Tiger or cause the financial crisis. The reason why I will actively resist any attempts to pass a burden of financial hardship onto those who struggle financially to get by from week to week is because I do not share the end goal envisioned by those driving the current 'solutions'.

When we paid for rent, childcare, bills, food and car, we were scraping the bottom of the barrel each month and getting ourselves into debt.

A modest existence

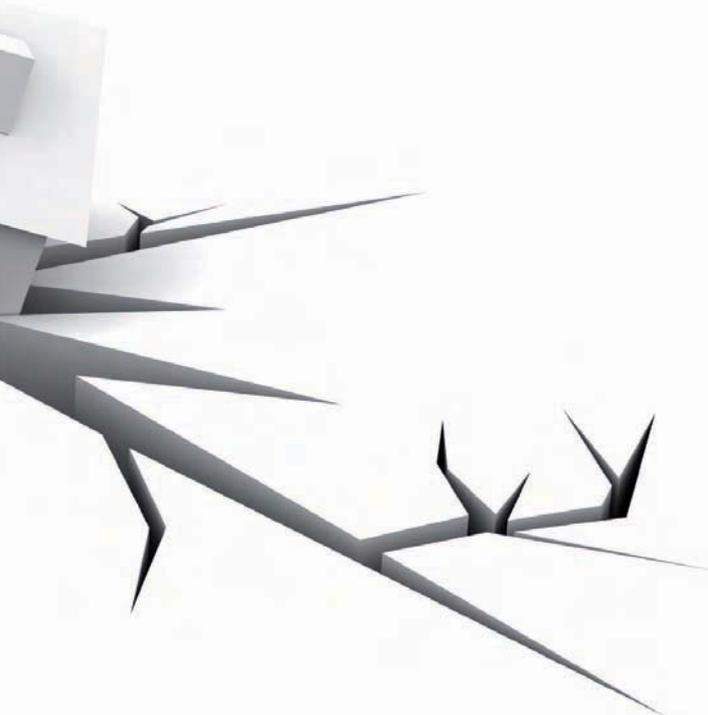
I am a teacher with a 14-month-old son and a working wife. We were living in a two bed apartment on Dublin's northside until the spring of this year, when the toll of the pension levy and the income levy, which affected us both, made it impossible for us financially to live by ourselves. When we paid for rent, childcare, bills, food and car, we were scraping the bottom of the barrel each month and getting ourselves into debt, relying on friends to loan us money just to get by from week to week. Ireland is an expensive country. It must be. Here we were living a modest existence and finding it nigh impossible to make ends meet financially. I wouldn't mind if we could point to expensive foreign holidays, nights out in expensive restaurants and the sort of things that some with 'disposable' income can do, but we were trying to live simply. Not in Ireland though, and especially not Dublin, oh no. So we have moved into a house sharing with another couple, which has



halved our rent expenditure, and we get by a bit better. Savings though, we have none, and all thoughts of mortgage remain simply that, thoughts. We are the lucky ones though. Blessed are we who do not have a mortgage. If we had listened to the 'experts' during the boom, we should have bought something, anything, at a price that would have proved subsequently to be exorbitant. The tales of people now who are defaulting on mortgage payments, even teachers still in employment but on reduced hours and reduced pay, send a shiver down my spine every time I hear their plight. That could have been us; forced into a life of wage slavery to pay a debt fuelled by greedy speculation.

A frightening prospect

Faced with the prospect of more pay cuts, not just this year, but the year after and the year after that, I shudder to think what type of Ireland those who govern expect us to live in. Cutting vital public services such as health and education, not even mentioning the wage cuts of those working in the sector, will drive the wedge of inequality much deeper into Irish society, already marked by those who have much and those who don't. I wouldn't even mind if reduced wages and public services were to be experienced for a short while in preparation for a society based on a new dispensation of social justice and accountability, but it's not. The Government tries to make us swallow these highly inequitable sacrifices with the promise that it will see us back to the good old days of economic prosperity. I wonder about this and I doubt it.



Faced with the prospect of more pay cuts, not just this year, but the year after and the year after that, I shudder to think what type of Ireland those who govern expect us to live in.

To want to go back to living in the economic model responsible for most of the human misery in the world is simply flawed thinking. The practice of maximising profit for shareholders led to a hardening of the traditionally warm Irish spirit to one where time was money and workers and customers were treated as a means by which to make money for shareholders. The money may have flowed, but the traffic jams increased, as did the numbers on the housing list, the prisons filled up, homelessness increased and so did the rate of suicide, not to mention the increased levels of environmental destruction. Money did roll, but the capital driving it remained in the hands of a few and while the individual value of people grew less, we were encouraged to become more and more individualist. Happiness lay in buying more. The more you contributed to the golden arrow of consumerism, the happier you would become. Never mind the accumulation of rubbish and the environmental destruction involved, more was better. Fulfilment lay in protecting our consumer goods and our security lay in financial security. We became a people involved in a competitive struggle for credit and goods.

We need to create conditions where companies with ethical considerations at the heart of their philosophy aren't forced to close.

An alternative

So what is the alternative to this depressing future where the rich tell us we are in recession, they talk about sacrifice and that we are all suffering? It requires nothing short of a revolution, a change of mind, a repentance and a vision of a society where it is easier for people to do good. We need to create conditions where companies with ethical considerations at the heart of their philosophy aren't forced to close. We need to teach solidarity in our schools. Solidarity not only in good times but in bad times as well. We need to educate our children not in the ways of capitalist accumulation, but that it is in sharing that we find our security, not in hoarding. When we share our gifts, talents, time and money, we are guaranteeing our future on this planet as the ethic of giving means no one should go hungry or suffer a lack of life's basic necessities. Rather than looking at our neighbours as economic competitors, we should teach our children to treat their neighbours as themselves, see the potential of humanity in everyone we meet in all corners of the world and embrace our differences, not use them as excuses to divide us. We need to invest more money not in ensuring the profitability of banks but ensuring that goods and services become better and endure to the point where they lift everyone out of poverty. To go back to the unsustainable economic model and pretend it can deliver for all is a dangerous lie.



Martin McMullan

Martin McMullan teaches Irish, history and religion in Beneavin College, Finglas, Dublin.

A History of the School Inspectorate



Pictured at the launch of *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate 1831-2008* by John Coolahan are (from left): Joe Moran, ASTI President; Brigid McManus, Secretary General at the Department of Education; John Coolahan; Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector; Mary Hanafin, Minister for Social and Family Affairs; and, John Hurley, former ASTI President.

A new book tracing the history of Ireland's School Inspectorate was published in September. Written by John Coolahan with Patrick F. O'Donovan, *A History of Ireland's School Inspectorate, 1831-2008* is the first published history on the topic and, through examining its main subject, provides insights into school conditions, curricular implementation and assessment issues, and concepts of education and learning over the period it covers.

Heavily based on original source material, the book locates the work of the Inspectorate within the changing political, social, educational and administrative contexts of Irish society at different stages of its development, and is enriched by interviews with the many inspectors who shed light on the culture of the Irish School Inspectorate.

Chief Inspector to retire



Eamon Stack, Chief Inspector at the Department of Education and Science, announced his intention to retire from his position in October. A teacher and school principal for many years, Mr Stack was appointed Chief Inspector in 1997 and went on to guide the Inspectorate through a period of significant reform, as required under the 1998 Education Act. Speaking to *ASTIR* earlier this year he said he expected the Inspectorate to

continue to evolve and improve over the next number of years, and to develop new models of evaluation, particularly moving towards school self-evaluation.

ASTI influences revised Programme for Government

The ASTI played a crucial role in ensuring that second-level education was not left out of the revised Programme for Government agreed by Fianna Fail and the Green Party in October. The ASTI lobbied key parties to the talks as well as making direct contact with a number of other Fianna Fail and Green Party ministers. ASTI General Secretary John White highlighted the devastating impact of the education cuts on schools. He said that if second-level education was not included in the revised Programme, the Government would be telling 350,000 young people that they are not valued. The revised Programme for Government attempts to address some of the education cuts announced in October 2008 including:

Pupil-teacher ratio: The Programme commits to providing 500 teaching posts between primary and second level over the next three years, starting with the immediate provision of 200 posts. There will be no further increase in the pupil-teacher ratio for the lifetime of the current Government.

Hundreds of ASTI temporary and part-time teachers will benefit from these decisions, which show that even in the throes of a recession the ASTI can defend its members.

Education grants: Grants for Transition Year, the Leaving Cert Applied, the Leaving Cert Vocational Programme, physics, chemistry, home economics, music activities, and the Junior Cert Schools programme are to be re-instated. The revised Programme for Government is available at www.asti.ie.

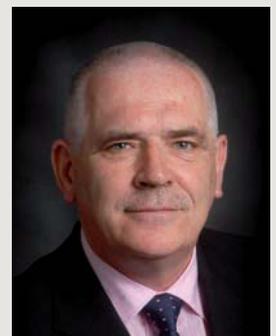
GAA oral history

The GAA is undertaking the largest sporting project in the world in creating an oral record of all aspects of GAA involvement. The Oral History Project will record face-to-face interviews with thousands of people: GAA members and supporters, current and former players, managers, officials and anybody involved in GAA activities from washing jerseys to driving buses and beyond. The Association is inviting secondary schools to take part by using the project as a learning programme for history or Transition Year students. The GAA has developed a Transition Year initiative to fit into the Community Care/Social Outreach module and is encouraging students to record GAA memories and stories of older people in their community. It is a ready-made project with resources and guides available. See www.gaahistory.com for more details.

Death of respected ASTI activist

Longtime ASTI activist and principal at North Monastery CBS in Cork, Paddy Mulcahy, passed away suddenly in September, aged 60. Paddy was heavily involved in the ASTI for many years, serving on Standing Committee and as Chairman of the Cork South Branch. He was also a member of the *ASTIR* Editorial Board.

In the wake of his passing, tributes poured in from colleagues, students and friends for Paddy, a well known community activist. He is survived by his wife, Terry, three sons Thomás, Eoghan and Seamus, and daughter Brid.



Are you entitled to a refund of the Health Levy?

The Health Levy is paid by anyone aged between 16 and 70 who has earnings or income of more than €500 per week or €26,000 annually. Where an employee's weekly pay fluctuates above and below €500, but the annual pay during 2009 is not more than €26,000, the employee may be eligible to claim a refund of the 2% or 4% health contribution.

The Health Levy does not apply to medical card holders, or to people in receipt of a social welfare payment such as a Widow's/Widower's Pension or One-Parent Family payment. If you are in receipt of such a social welfare payment you may be exempt from the Health Levy regardless of how much you earn.

To claim a refund of the Health Levy after year end, December 31, 2009, or to find out if you are eligible for a refund, contact the Department of Social and Family Affairs, PRSI Refunds, Oisín House, Pearse Street, Dublin 2, Tel: 01-673 2586.

Access schemes extended

Two revised schemes to broaden opportunities for access to third-level education were recently launched. The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) initiative, which facilitates access to third level for students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, was previously primarily reserved for students from DEIS schools. The revised scheme recognises that educational disadvantage affects all communities and regions, and is now open to students in all schools.

Under HEAR, participating colleges will allocate a quota of places on a reduced points basis, across all academic areas. Students who secure one of these places will be offered a range of academic and personal supports while at college.

A revised Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) initiative was launched in October of this year to provide an alternative route of access to third level for students with a disability. The 11 participating colleges aim to offer on average 5% of first-year places on a reduced points basis. Application for both schemes is through the CAO.

Funding for schools goes unused

The ASTI is dismayed at reports that almost half of this year's capital allocation for school buildings had gone unused by October. Figures reported last month showed that just €55 of an €41 million capital allocation had been spent on improvement or construction of school buildings. This is despite the fact that there are schools projects ready to begin quickly if given approval, and that many schools have been waiting for years for an upgrade to their inadequate facilities.

Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe acknowledged that not all of the money would be spent this year but said the balance of the funds would be spent in 2010. This conflicts with rules for department budgets whereby only 10% of an annual budget can be carried forward. The ASTI is calling for the full allocation to be spent this year to ensure that schools don't lose out.

Know your Rights



The ASTI held a number of 'Know your Rights' information evenings for non-permanent and part-time teachers around the country during September. Pictured at one meeting held in Cork are: Mairead Ni Dhriscoil; Maire Ni Riordan; and, Mary G. Lynch.

Rail vouchers

Rail travel vouchers are no longer available from ASTI Head Office. The decision to discontinue the rail vouchers was taken because vouchers were no longer cost effective for most journeys.

Rail tickets can be purchased at www.irishrail.ie, where you can often avail of low-cost special offers.

Teacher shortage and casualisation major concerns internationally

Teacher shortage, the increasing casualisation of the teaching profession and the rise in violence against teachers are three major concerns of a new international report on education. Education International, the global union representing 30 million education workers worldwide, compiled the report based on collaboration with its member organisations, including the ASTI. The report recommends immediate action on these key issues, noting that education plays a crucial role in the post-economic crisis regeneration, yet by contrast, education budgets worldwide are being cut. The report found that increasingly teachers are being employed on fixed-term or part-time contracts, and as a consequence face restricted academic freedom and professional autonomy due to their casualised status.

The report recommends immediate action on these key issues, noting that education plays a crucial role in the post-economic crisis regeneration.

The triennial report was presented to the Joint ILO-UNESCO Expert Committee on the Application of the Recommendations on Teachers (CEART), who report to the International Labour Organisation, the International Labour Conference and the UNESCO Executive Board, so that they may take appropriate action and authorise transmission to member states for implementation.

Fermoy pays tribute to the ASTI



To mark the ASTI centenary, Fermoy Town Council recently held a civic reception for the Fermoy Branch of the ASTI. At the reception the Mayor spoke about the origins of the ASTI in Fermoy and the contribution of the Fermoy teachers to the welfare of young people both in Fermoy and other centres throughout Ireland. He said he was very proud to be able to congratulate the Fermoy Branch in this special year of centenary celebration and in particular a past pupil of St Colman's College, and native of Castlelyons, Pat Hurley, on his position as President of the ASTI during the historic year. Among those pictured are: Jim Carney; Mary Ryan, Principal Loreto Fermoy; Tadhg O'Donovan, Mayor of Fermoy; Pat Hurley, ASTI Immediate Past President; Aileen Pyne; Liam O'Mahony, Honorary National Organiser; Mary Lysaght, ASTI Standing Committee; Dermot Coakley, Principal of St Colman's College; Jerry O'Sullivan; Matt Birmingham; Ann O'Sullivan; and, Frank Aird, Fermoy Branch.

NAPD presentation



The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) recently made a presentation to the ASTI to mark its centenary year. Pictured here are ASTI President, Joe Moran (left) and Ciaran McCormack, NAPD President.

NCCA online

Keep up to date about what's going on at the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) through info@ncca, the Council's online magazine. The magazine lets you keep abreast of developments in your subject, find out about initiatives like Project Maths, read about the rebalancing of subjects in the junior cycle, and learn all about the NCCA's plans for consultation on the proposed developments in senior cycle education. info@ncca includes news, features and regular columns concerning these and other curriculum and assessment initiatives. You can subscribe at www.ncca.ie/subscribe or www.ncca.ie/liostail for the Irish edition.

In-service day



Pictured at an ASTI in-service training day on the role of the deputy principal are: Dave Barron and Catherine Moynihan, presenters; Gabrielle Harte and Mary Mullaghy, Eureka Secondary School, Kells; and, Damien Langan, St Joseph's College, Athlone.

Call for anti-racism training for teachers

The Irish Traveler Movement (ITM) has called for anti-racism and intercultural awareness training to form part of initial teacher education. Following research, which found that the majority of teachers have never had any anti-racism training, the ITM is also calling for regular and comprehensive intercultural in-service training and the establishment of an expert body to devise and deliver training in an education context.

The call came at the inaugural Yellow Flag awards, which recognised the work of four schools that participated in a pilot intercultural programme to develop a series of practical steps to bring interculturalism and diversity issues into the whole school programme.

The four schools awarded Yellow Flags were Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School, Co. Kerry; Castaheany Educate Together National School, Dublin; Maria King Presentation Primary School, Limerick; and, St Dominic's Secondary School, Ballyfermot, Dublin.

Mountrath Community School opens its doors

The ASTI would like to wish every success to the students and staff at Mountrath Community School, which opened in September. The brand new school – light filled and spacious – is home to 717 students from three constituent schools: Patrician College, Ballyfin; Brigidine Convent, Mountrath; and, Vocational School, Mountrath, as well as new students from the surrounding primary schools.

It is a tribute to the openness of the staff that they all rowed in and worked with trustees, boards of the schools and parents to make the new school a reality.

ASTI participates in Oireachtas presentation



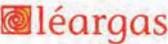
The Post Primary Education Forum (PPEF), of which the ASTI is a member, recently made a presentation on post-primary education to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science. The PPEF argued that the education cuts would have consequences for all of society. From left: Michael Moriarity, IVEA; Clive Byrne, NAPD; Diarmaid de Paor, ASTI; Ciaran Flynn, ACCS; Paul Beddy, National Parents' Council Post Primary; Deirdre Keogh, IVEA; Noel Merrick, JMB; Michael Redmond, JMB; Declan Glynn, TUI; Don Ryan, TUI; and, Jim Moore, National Parents' Council Post Primary. The PPEF presentation is available on the ASTI website (Campaigns).

Changes to classical studies exam

The Department of Education and Science has written to school managements to inform them of changes to the Leaving Cert examination in classical studies in 2011 and thereafter. From 2011, the number of questions students must answer will be reduced from eight to six. These questions will be drawn from four topics – two from each of two topics and one from each of the remaining two topics. Fifty marks will be allocated to each question. The same regulations currently governing choice of topics will continue from 2011 onwards. These are set out in the classical studies syllabus. For more information see Department Circular 0055/2009 on the ASTI website under the education section.

Research Bursary Scheme

The Teaching Council has announced its fourth scheme of research bursaries for teachers. Under the latest scheme, €7,500 of the bursary fund will be reserved for applications from registered teachers, with an additional €25,000 available to persons other than registered teachers whose research is on teaching, learning and assessment. The maximum bursary amount is €5,000. Applications must be made using the online application form found on www.teachingcouncil.ie. The deadline for receipt of applications is Monday, December 14.




Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013

The Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission offers funding for a range of activities for schools, educators and pupils.

These include:

- Comenius School Partnerships:** pupils, students and staff from schools across Europe work together on joint projects. Deadline for applications: 19 February 2010
- Comenius Regio Partnerships:** local and regional authorities with a direct role in school education, schools and other actors in education, working with European partners on topics of mutual interest. Deadline: 19 February 2010
- Comenius In-Service Training:** training for staff involved in school education. Deadlines: 15 January, 30 April, 15 September 2010. Please note that deadlines relate to specific training periods.
- Comenius Assistantships:** encouraging intercultural awareness and language learning. Deadline: 29 January 2010
- Contact Seminars and Preparatory Visits:** opportunities to meet potential project partners and prepare for partnerships.
- Study Visits:** networking opportunities for education and vocational training specialists. Deadlines: 31 March, 15 October 2010. Please note that deadlines relate to specific periods.
- eTwinning:** a simple and straightforward way to forge partnerships and work on projects with other schools in Europe using information and communication technology (ICT).

To find out more about these or any other activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme, please contact us: (01) 873 1411 or education@leargas.ie.

www.leargas.ie







Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education

The Special Education Department of St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology, Europe (ICEP Europe) invite applications to the online Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education.

Commencing: January 18th, 2010
Closing date for applications - November 29th, 2009
Late applications may be accepted

- ★ Accreditation by Dublin City University
- ★ Open to all qualified teachers (primary and post-primary)
- ★ Ease of access regardless of location
- ★ Daily Support from tutors
- ★ Live Online Classroom Sessions
- ★ Flexibility of module choice to meet individual needs
- ★ 24/7 access to materials for busy professionals

This programme is funded by the Special Education Support Service, Teacher Education Section, DES, under the National Development Plan

For further information & application forms contact Admissions Office, St. Patrick's College on (01) 8842025, email admissions.office@spd.dcu.ie or log onto www.spd.dcu.ie Information also available from ICEP Europe at www.icepe.eu



The better way

ASTI Media and Communications Officer Gemma Tuffly talks priorities with ICTU General Secretary David Begg.



On the day of my visit to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) offices in Dublin, preparations for the "largest campaign of advocacy" ever undertaken by Congress are well underway. After almost 13 years of social partnership agreements, which have been credited with playing a key role in Ireland's economic growth, the future of social partnership looks, in the words of ICTU General Secretary David Begg, "rather bleak". Congress can lay claim to many achievements in recent years: improved pay and conditions for workers; extra community/public service resources won through social partnership agreements; increased protections for the most vulnerable workers; and, an increase in trade union membership to a record high of 850,000. But the economic landscape has changed so dramatically that holding on to some of these achievements is a challenge for the trade union movement. Top among Congress's priorities today are preventing job losses, protecting the unemployed and resisting the diminution of public services.

Public sector attacks

A united trade union movement is more important today than ever before, according to David Begg. Those who attack public sector workers

and their unions have as their objective the weakening of the entire trade union movement. "This is a political agenda promoted by people of neo-liberal persuasion because they favour a low level of government involvement in the economy and a low size of the State. Trade unions are strongest in the public sector. So if you want a diminished State, you attack the unions."

Aside from the philosophical argument, Begg stresses that workers must reject attempts to divide the public and private sector for a practical reason: "All of the advocates of cuts to public services are people who do not need to depend on them. It is the people on low to middle incomes that have the greatest need for public services".

Wage cuts

The ICTU has described the pension levy as a "straightforward pay cut", which is both crude and inequitable. David Begg is adamant that any further wage cuts in the public sector would inevitably be used by employers to reduce wages in the private sector. While fiscal correction is necessary, forcing workers to take most of the pain of the adjustment is not the solution: "There is the view that there should be some kind of

competitive devaluation of wages in order to improve competitiveness. Let me explain why this kind of economics is mistaken. Firstly, world trade has collapsed by about 25% in the last two years. So you're not going to get even a dead cat bounce in terms of improvements in your exports by reducing wages. Second, reducing wages reduces domestic demand, which will lead to more unemployment".

Public sector job cuts

Begg doesn't believe that there is a basis for job cuts in the public sector because the demand for public services is greater than the supply. "If you listen to Morning Ireland, about 80% of the discussion is about the lack of public services, so clearly the demand is there. The dilemma is how we fund them". He points out that Ireland has the same percentage of people employed in the public sector as the US and well below that of the EU average, and that we spend a lower proportion of GDP on public services than most other EU countries. "We don't have a big public service, but you wouldn't know that if you were a Martian reading the newspapers." The current deficit in funding for public services exists not because we have been spending too much on them, but because tax revenue has fallen so dramatically. Tax reform, which targets in particular the wealthiest, is vital, says Begg. This has been the view of the ICTU, even during the boom years.

Education cuts

The entire trade union movement must act together to protect education and other public services, according to David Begg. "It's not possible for teachers to protect education on their own. The only way to protect public services from being vandalised in the upcoming Budget is if the entire trade union movement works to get public opinion behind the idea that it is possible to make the economic adjustment needed in a way that protects services which are vital to keeping civil society in place ... That is the challenge and it can only be achieved through collective action, and that is why it would be logical to have social partnership now, though I don't think that will happen."

Importance of education

"It is patently obvious that we have to restructure the economy," says Begg. He believes that planning for labour market needs is fundamental to such a restructuring. "We are not going to return to a situation where 14% of our labour force is involved in construction – so that's one major adjustment." Education policy is vital to any re-orientation of industrial policy, he says. "Teachers must know this more than others, because they are dealing with pupils whose parents worked in declining industries and who are now unemployed and vulnerable."

League tables

"I wouldn't be a fan," says Begg. "Every parent wants the best for their children and I would not criticise parents for this. But if you are to be truly fair in constructing a league table you would have to construct a fairly complex matrix to take account not just of the academic performance of children in a school, but the socio-economic group they come from, the number of children from international backgrounds, the number of children with special needs, and the expectations of their parents. The danger is that, whatever means you use to construct league tables, you are creating conditions where some schools are designated as 'sink schools', which is not good."

Profile

David Begg became General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 2001. For five years prior to that he was Chief Executive of Concern Worldwide. His trade union involvement began in the early 1970s when he was elected to a branch committee of the ESB Officers Association (ESBOA) "because no one else wanted it". He quickly became a union activist and was later appointed Deputy General Secretary and then General Secretary of the ESBOA. He went on to serve as General Secretary of the Postal and Telecommunications Workers' Union and General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union following the merger of the Postal Telecommunications Workers' Union and the Communications Union of Ireland.

David Begg on the books that influenced him

The Great Transformation by Karl Polanyi. "A brilliant book, written in 1944, which was the same year that Friedrich von Hayek wrote *The Road to Serfdom*. For anyone who is interested in why we are at the point we are at today and why there is no such thing as a self-regulating market, Polanyi is the man."

Keir Hardie: A Biography by Caroline Benn. "Keir Hardie was a remarkable person, former leader of the Labour party in Britain."

Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man by Siegfried Sassoon. "This is the first of three volumes. It is a great book for anyone interested in the war or war poetry".

The 20 Years Crisis by Edward H. Carr. "This would give you a very good insight into why liberalism has gone in cycles over the years and you could find a resonance in it to the current situation."

"At a very personal belief level, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis."

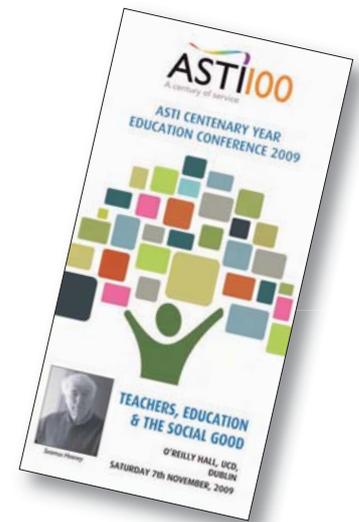
Anthony Trollope's novels "for pleasure".

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions' alternative model for economic recovery "There Still is a Better, Fairer Way" is available at www.getupstandup.ie.



Gemma Tuffy

Gemma Tuffy is ASTI Media and Communications Officer.



Teachers, education and the social good

The theme of this year's ASTI Education Conference was 'Teachers, Education and the Social Good'. Moira Leydon takes a look at what the latest OECD 'Education at a Glance' report has to say about the impact of education on society.

The genie is out of the bottle. For the first time, the OECD has moved from examining the quantitative aspects of education, such as financing and students' scores, to looking at how education contributes to social wellbeing and solidarity. Its 2009 'Education at a Glance' report presents data on how education contributes to such social 'goods' as health, civic engagement and social solidarity.

This is a very important development. It raises the question of how society must better support the work of schools and teachers if it wants desirable social goods. In this sense, it takes the genie out of the bottle and shows that narrow-minded, economically-motivated and individualistic approaches to the work of schools – as reflected in the demand for league tables based on examination results, for example – can never measure the work and worth of schools in their communities.

Schools make a difference...

Education affects people's lives in ways that go far beyond their examination results and subsequent career paths. Irish teachers have long intuitively understood the importance of education for society's wellbeing. The common mission of our second-level schools is to enable the young person to achieve their potential across all domains in an atmosphere of security, trust and continuity. The expression 'values are caught, not taught' captures well how teachers work to create a community in which all students are assisted to grow in maturity, self-confidence and social awareness, as well as in succeeding at learning.

The 2009 OECD report presents strong empirical evidence about the social outcomes of education. Across 21 OECD countries, educational attainment is positively associated with high levels of self-reported health, political interest and engagement, and interpersonal trust, i.e., social solidarity. Moreover, this association generally remains even after adjusting for gender and age. While this association between education and social outcomes weakens somewhat after controlling for household income, statistically speaking, the association remains strong. In other words, schools make a difference.

To the student and society

From a policy perspective, the question is: what are individuals acquiring in school that increases the likelihood of their making healthier lifestyle choices and of having a stronger sense of social awareness and responsibility? What features of the curriculum, teaching styles and school environments are important? The OECD report advances a number of tentative explanations. It suggests that schooling – and the longer an individual stays in school – equips young people with competencies and psychosocial features such as attitudes to society, resilience, attitudes and awareness of risks, and self-confidence, which dispose them to making good lifestyle choices. Apart from the fact that higher levels of education result in individuals having higher incomes and therefore being further removed from the risk of poverty, which is synonymous with poorer health and social marginalisation, the report also suggests that the content of education itself – providing information and understanding of the world and enabling

young people to learn how to learn – is very significant. Moreover, the higher the level of education, the greater the individual's 'stake and status' in society, and the increased likelihood of political interest and civic engagement.

Another important OECD finding is that the effects of education on some social outcomes appear to be more significant at the secondary level of education than at third level. This appears to be the case for self-reported health in particular. This is a hugely important issue for governments in OECD countries for whom health expenditure is steadily rising as a proportion of GDP.

The report shows that narrow-minded, economically-motivated and individualistic approaches to the work of schools – as reflected in the demand for league tables based on examination results, for example – can never measure the work and worth of schools in their communities.

The OECD research provides clear empirical evidence as to the value of education to society as a whole. To teachers, this is a truism! Unfortunately, the current political climate in our country is inimical to this rational viewpoint. The workers who provide the public services, the vast majority of whom work in education, are denigrated daily in the media. Their work is undervalued and criticised. The ASTI is constantly working to

counterbalance this unfair and demoralising public discourse. Teachers are deeply committed to their students and work hard to ensure that student experiences in schools – in the classroom, in one-to-one contact, on the sports field and in music rooms, etc. – equip them with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence to enter the adult world where they will not only survive but thrive and lead productive lives.

The ASTI Education Conference, themed 'Teachers, Education and the Social Good', was held on November 7 in O'Reilly Hall, UCD. Speakers included Dr Seamus Heaney, Nobel Laureate, Susan Hopgood, President Designate, Education International, and Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of the National University of Ireland. A full report is available on the ASTI website – www.asti.ie.



Moira Leydon

Moira Leydon is ASTI Assistant General Secretary: Education and Research.

McSweeney
SPORTS SURFACES

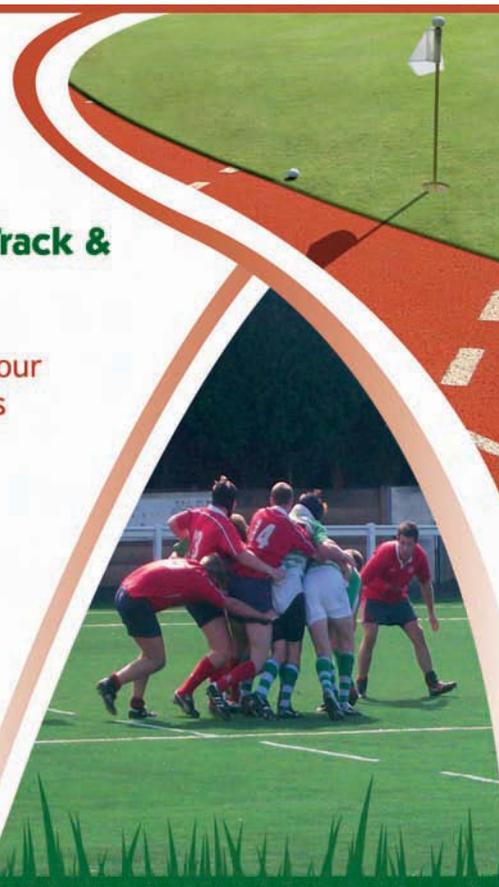
Suppliers of Synthetic Rugby, GAA, Soccer, Track & Golf Surfaces

"This pitch has hugely increased all sporting activity at our school. We now have a safe, year round facility which is suitable for sports and P.E. activity from juniors to sixth class students, I can thoroughly recommend McSweeney Sports Surfaces for their efficiency and professionalism in completing the job"

Donat Leahy Principle Roxboro NS Limerick

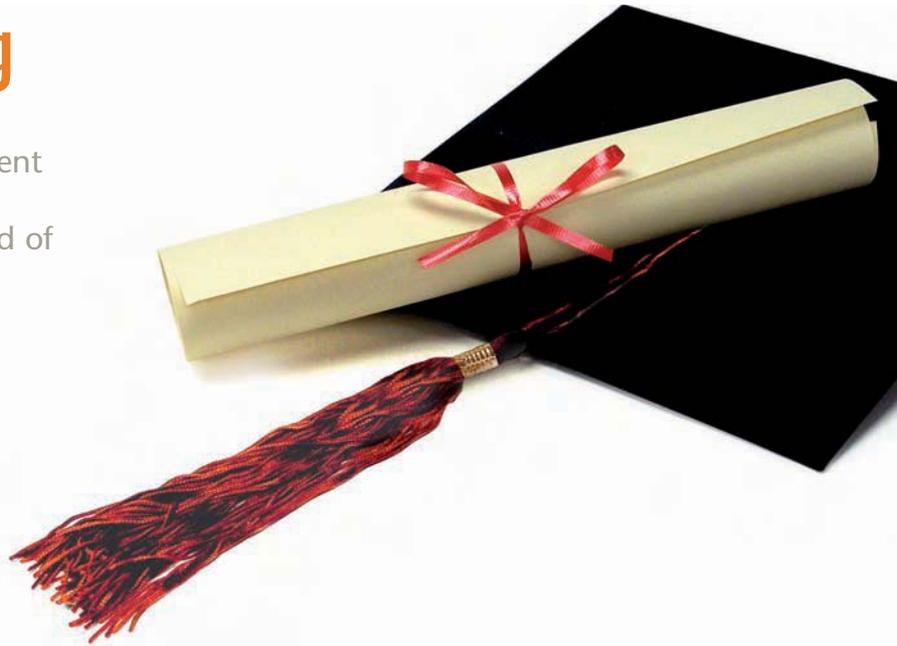
Tel. 061 395786

info@mcsweeneyssportssurfaces.ie
www.mcsweeneyssportssurfaces.ie



Lifelong learning

ASTI Centenary Scholarship Award recipient Frances Hurley gives an account of completing her Masters in Education, and of her research.



In April 2009 John White, General Secretary of the ASTI, informed me that I had been chosen as the recipient of the ASTI Centenary Scholarship, a bursary designed to assist teachers who are undertaking further studies. I made the application while studying for a Masters in Education in University College Cork and I am delighted to have the privilege of being the first beneficiary of this award.

Although combining work and study was challenging at times, I must admit that it was enjoyable to experience student life once again! The lectures, while providing an increased awareness of pupils, also gave participants a broader educational perspective.

New learning opportunities

I decided to apply for the Masters in Education for a number of reasons, but primarily because I am always searching for new learning opportunities, both to develop my own teaching skills and to become more aware of educational developments, nationally and internationally. The two modules I chose to study focused on areas of vital importance for classroom teaching: literacy development and educational disadvantage. The modules highlighted how in our rapidly changing society schools are often over-burdened with the expectations that they can bring about social change by becoming absorbed in a wide spectrum of social problems. Studying these particular areas opened my eyes to the disadvantage that many students, particularly those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, experience throughout their education. This disadvantage frequently results in a disengagement from the education system.

Research

Combined with the above taught modules, I completed a research dissertation on the use of technology in schools, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of teachers who wish to use technology in the classroom. In my experience, most teachers are enthusiastic about and dedicated to using technology in the classroom. Doing this study allowed

me to examine the models of in-service training that are available for teachers in ICT and to research ways in which they can be enhanced. My findings reflect a strong need for practical, subject-specific and differentiated ICT training to ensure that teachers develop the necessary skills and confidence to effectively incorporate ICT for teaching and learning. I felt that undertaking this research dissertation alongside the two taught modules created an excellent balance within the programme.

Rewards

Completing the Masters was a rewarding and worthwhile experience. Although I finished it within one academic year, there is also the option to complete it over a period of five years for those with time restrictions. This makes it more accessible to all teachers. This experience opened my eyes to a wide array of educational matters and concerns, and helped me to gain a better understanding of many broad educational issues.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mr Michael Delargey, for his constant advice and encouragement throughout the year as well as everybody in the Education Department in UCC who were so supportive during the programme. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ASTI for this generous bursary and for their ongoing commitment to helping teachers to engage in continuous professional development.



Frances Hurley

Frances Hurley teaches at Christ the King Secondary School in Cork and recently completed a Masters Degree in Education at University College Cork. Her studies included modules on 'Perspectives on Literacy Development' and 'Educational Disadvantage and Interventions.'

Living room



Your Employee Assistance Service for Teachers is a confidential service for you and those close to you. Our team of trained specialists can provide counselling on a wide range of issues.

The programme is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by freephone or email.

Freephone: 1800 411 057
24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Email: eas@vhics.ie



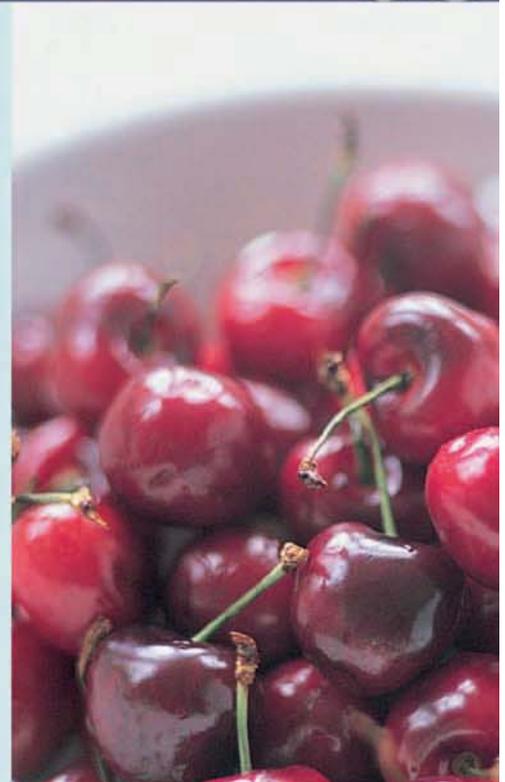
Well-Being with your EAS

09

What is well-being? More than just feeling good, it's the comfort in knowing that you are in good physical, mental and emotional health. That your mind is at ease and that you are maintaining healthy relationships with the people around you and with your community.

Your Employee Assistance Service for Teachers can help you get there. Learn tips for relaxation and stress reduction by contacting one of our trained specialists who can assist you with resources and to help you on your road to well-being. Call or email to get started.

This service was negotiated by the ASTI, TUI and INTO and is funded by the Department of Education and Science.



Employee Assistance Service for Teachers

Sustainable schools

ASTIR looks at efforts towards environmental efficiency in Irish schools.



Worldwide, we have come to recognise that climate change is really happening, that we caused it and that we need to fix it. In Ireland, according to Minister for the Environment John Gormley, a shift in the way we think about climate change is needed to tackle the issue. Schools are ideally placed to play a part in this transformation and in influencing the next generation to bring about this change in thinking. Environmental issues are dealt with in the curriculum and encouragingly, the latest PISA report from the OECD found that students in Ireland scored highest of all countries assessed when it came to awareness of environmental issues. But according to Anna Kavanagh, ASTI member and author of *Green-Schools Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change*, awareness doesn't always translate into action outside the classroom. In fact, research has found that learning about topics like waste and energy does not actually lead to changed behaviour on the ground. The Green Schools programme aims to change this by transferring classroom studies into positive action in the school.

Green Schools

Known internationally as Eco-Schools, and run in Ireland by An Taisce, the Green Schools programme challenges schools to undertake action plans in a variety of areas including waste, energy and water. The whole school community works together to reduce emissions, earning a green

flag for its efforts. Cathy Baxter, Green Schools Manager with An Taisce, says the programme has a real impact on behaviour and attitudes: "If students have been brought up with Green Schools, it becomes second nature to them. Students who were in Green Schools at primary often become the drivers of the programme at second level, even going on to third level and long-term careers".

The biggest challenge in running a Green School, says Anna Kavanagh, is getting whole school involvement. She has been Green Schools Co-ordinator in St Joseph's Secondary School, Co. Westmeath, since 2005 and believes she may have found a solution to this problem. Initially she and her committee of Transition Year students were working very hard but getting nowhere. Last year she decided to try to have the Green Schools policy ratified by the Board of Management as official school policy – one of the first schools in the country to take that route. This has really helped to create buy-in to the programme and ensure that students, staff, management and parents all play their part. While the Green Schools programme is funded by the Department of the Environment, among other corporate sponsors, schools also fund initiatives themselves. Anna would like to see more funding and training available if the scheme is to work properly. She points out that this makes economic sense in the long run, reducing running costs for schools and helping to reduce the carbon credit shortfall Ireland will have to purchase under the Kyoto agreement.



School buildings

Green Schools focuses mainly on low-cost and no-cost measures. For most schools with limited funding this is the only option. Unfortunately, many school buildings are not ideal environments; they are often old or converted buildings, with poor insulation and prefab additions. But, as Cathy Baxter puts it, you can only work with what you are given. Small measures any school can undertake like using draft excluders, closing doors, monitoring temperatures, recycling and turning off appliances can make a significant difference. A number of years ago the Department of Education Planning and Building Unit made the decision to make energy efficiency an integral part of school design. John Dolan, Energy Programme Co-ordinator with the Planning and Building Unit, says that energy efficiency is on the table right from the design stage, and is considered in everything from building orientation to materials to appropriate heating and water systems. For the past 12 years, the Unit has been using an overall approach called Design, Awareness, Research and Technology (DART) to develop sustainability and energy efficiency in schools. As part of this approach, new technologies and design approaches to maximise natural resources and energy efficiency are piloted and evaluated. Once the methods prove themselves beneficial and easily managed, they are rolled out in all new school buildings and extensions. Schools built to DART specifications are more than twice as energy efficient as those built to international best practice. Obviously the scope is more restricted when it comes to existing school buildings, but grant funding is available for insulation upgrades and a new

energy monitoring project for schools is also underway. Part of the funding for this year's Summer Works Scheme will be set aside to carry out specific water conservation projects. Other pilot projects aimed at improving school buildings and energy systems are running around the country with a view to implementation on a national basis, if evaluation proves successful.

If you are interested in finding out more about ways your school can improve its energy efficiency, Green Schools is running seminars around the country this school term where you can find out about the programme and measures you can take. Check out their website – www.greenschoolsireland.org – for details. More about the Department's energy efficiency programme can be found at www.energyeducation.ie, including a recent submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Education and Science, which gives an overview of projects currently in place.

What can you do today?

Make sure lights are off in classrooms that are not being used.
Turn appliances off overnight or when not in use.
Carpool, walk or cycle to work.
Recycle, recycle, recycle – everything from paper to toner cartridges.
Photocopy on both sides of the page.

Sound sense for teachers and students

Teachers must protect their hearing, writes Dr Pat Naughton.



The increasingly stressful nature of teaching has focused attention on the need for teachers to take greater care of their health. Among the health concerns particular to teachers should be care for hearing. A decline in the quality of hearing is common with advancing age, but hearing can also be impaired earlier in one's career if it is not protected. Tinnitus, a sensation of noise within the ears or head not caused by external sound, is one problem that can emerge earlier, often accompanied by some hearing loss. There are many possible causes, including exposure to loud noise. The Irish Tinnitus Association is frequently contacted by teachers who are distressed by tinnitus. They need reassurance to reduce their anxiety, and advice on managing the condition. Although medical advice is often 'learn to live with it', people need to know that many helps and supports are available (see contact details below).

Noise in the classroom

Tinnitus can make concentration difficult, and a noisy classroom can exacerbate the problem, so it follows that teachers should take reasonable precautions against damage to hearing. Studies have found noise levels in some classrooms in EU countries to be as high as 80dB (decibels), a level regarded as harmful.

A classroom without at least occasional noise would be a dull place indeed, and young people's enthusiasm and humour will naturally create noise. Cultivating a reasonably quiet classroom is, however, in our long-term interests. Swedish and German studies have found that noisy classrooms generate stress for pupils and teachers. Many children find it difficult to focus and concentrate in noisy settings. Not surprisingly, this is even more challenging for children who are already hearing-impaired.

Around the world, research has shown that the acoustics of classrooms are in most cases unsuitable for teaching and learning, given the crucial role of oral communication. The lack of soft materials and fabrics in the structure and design of learning areas is a significant problem. Some schools have softened their library spaces with cushions, curtains and fabric hangings. This happens much less often in classrooms, which are often box-like and spartan.

Education for hearing

As well as environmental change, we can be proactive in health education programmes to make students aware of the potential for

damage to hearing inside the classroom and out. Older children and teenagers need to know that regular listening to loud music is likely to leave their hearing impaired, with the additional risk of developing tinnitus. Data from many countries is showing a gradually lower age of incidence of tinnitus and hearing damage. In teaching, we know that the 'don't do that' advice has a limited effect. Appealing to a reasonable middle ground might be more effective. With this in mind, the British Tinnitus Association (BTA) has produced a useful information pack for schools called 'Don't Turn it Off, Turn it Down'.

There's advice for teachers here too. If you are in the 'club' generation, be aware that regular exposure to very high sound levels – in some venues up to 150dB – will very likely damage your hearing in the longer term. If you have to shout to be heard at the venue, it's too loud. Most of us have experienced the temporary buzzing that follows a night in a noisy venue. Repeated often enough, the buzzing can become permanent.

You can find out more about tinnitus and hearing loss, and ways you can get help and support, by contacting the Irish Tinnitus Association, Tel: 01-817 5700 or the Cork Tinnitus Support Service, Tel: 021-450 5944. You can visit the Association's website by following the link on www.deafhear.ie. Helplines are open on Wednesday mornings in Cork and on Thursday mornings in Dublin. The BTA's website at www.tinnitus.org.uk is also a useful resource.

Dr Pat Naughton

Dr Pat Naughton is a teacher at Scoil Barra, Ballincollig, Co. Cork, and Chairperson of the Cork Tinnitus Support Group. He is author of 'The Quest for Quiet – People's Experience of Tinnitus in Ireland', a study funded by the National Disability Authority.

Unlikely Radicals

To mark the ASTI's centenary, *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post Primary Teachers and the ASTI 1909-2009* will be published later this year. The author, John Cunningham, recently gave a lecture hosted by the Irish Labour History Society in the Mansion House in Dublin. Here is what he had to say about the first 25 years of the ASTI's proud history.



Pictured at the ASTI's 75th anniversary celebration in the Mansion House, Dublin, in 1984 are (from left): President Patrick Hillery; Lord Mayor of Dublin, Michael O'Halloran; Henry Collins, ASTI President; and, Louis O'Flaherty, ASTI Vice-President.

The story of the ASTI is a story of thousands of teachers, men and women, who joined together during the past 100 years in branches, conventions, committees and occasionally on picket lines. They did so for various reasons, but these reasons may be distilled into two: to secure decent working conditions; and, to improve Irish education. The story is one of comradeship, sacrifice and commitment. In the year of the ASTI centenary, I want to begin this lecture by looking at the first commemoration of a major milestone, the 25th anniversary in 1934, an event that led the Association to reflect on its achievements to that date.

At the jubilee dinner held at the Metropole on O'Connell Street, the attendance of 110 may not have been enormous, but the eminence of the invited guests was striking. These were all former secondary teachers who identified as former members of the ASTI, and they included Eamon De Valera, who was running the country at the time, Tomás Ó Deirg, Minister for Education, Frank Fahey, Ceann Comhairle, and Frank O'Duffy, Deputy General Secretary at the Department of Education. Evidently, though formed relatively recently, by 1934 the ASTI was very well connected.

A pamphlet published in the anniversary year, entitled 'Security of Tenure' showed that while ASTI members had many reasons for satisfaction, there were some objectives that remained unmet. The statement of the Association's efforts in the pamphlet described teachers' lack of job security as 'the last great grievance'.

A successful start

If job security was 'the last great grievance', the question arises: what were the other grievances that had been addressed and met by 1934? These, in fact, had been set down in an earlier pamphlet, back in 1904, before the ASTI was even in existence, by a predecessor organisation, the Association of Intermediate and University Teachers. As John Coolahan, the previous historian of the ASTI has shown, registration, adequate salaries, security of tenure, and good service pensions were the main concerns. The fact was that in 1909 there was no career

of secondary teaching as such. Schools were private employers, there was no minimum qualification, anybody could be employed as a secondary teacher and experienced people were frequently dismissed when somebody could be found to do the job for a lower salary. There was public funding but it was based on student performance in the Intermediate examinations.

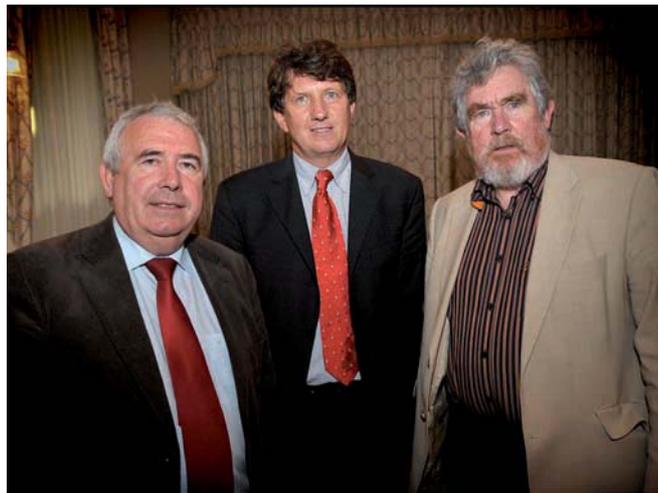
Regarding the demand for registration, there were obviously educational reasons, but teachers saw it also as a way of giving job security. Catholic employers for their part were unenthusiastic because registration would have limited their scope in placing not-yet-qualified young nuns and brothers in teaching positions. Registration was delayed by such opposition, but came into effect during 1918. Significantly, the ASTI was given representation at the first Registration Council, which amounted to recognition for the infant association. State salaries for lay secondary teachers, which were intended to top up the salary paid by the school, were first paid in the 1914/'15 academic year. Suffice to say they were paid through the schools and teachers didn't really get all that much of them at the end of the day. Nevertheless, this represented an advance, and one that could be built on.

Expansion of trade unionism

In those years, during which Home Rule was anticipated, the ASTI and the government had similar objectives in second-level education. While their alliance won benefits for teachers, it wasn't stable in the context of the broader developments in the revolutionary period of Ireland. The ASTI, then as now, represented people of many different viewpoints. There were revolutionary nationalists, notably Thomas MacDonagh, constitutional nationalists and moderate labourists. Significantly, there were many Unionists; about 50% of lay teachers in secondary schools at the time were Protestant (mainly because of the large number of religious employed in the Catholic sector). One factor that galvanised trade unions, especially during the period of labour unrest from 1917, was very high wartime inflation. Workers joined unions, especially the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, they went on strike,



Pictured at the lecture by John Cunningham in the Mansion House, Dublin, are (from left): John Coolahan; Lord Mayor of Dublin, Emer Costello; ASTI General Secretary, John White; and, John Cunningham.



From left: Joe Costello, former ASTI President and Labour TD; John Cunningham; and, Brendan Byrne, President, Irish Labour History Society.

and they won wage increases. Secondary teachers, despite watching their small gains being wiped out by inflation, didn't exactly rush to the barricades, but they did move cautiously towards them. More generally, associations of clerical and professional workers who would have looked down their noses at trade unionism up to this point joined the Irish Trade Union Congress. The ASTI's decision to become part of the trade union movement came late in 1919 and it was taken on the narrowest of margins – a single vote. The question of affiliation came before Convention again in 1927 when, again on the tiniest of margins, it was decided to disaffiliate.

A significant episode of those years was the 1920 strike of secondary teachers in Catholic schools. Middle-class secondary teachers would hardly have considered strike before that point at all, and if they had struck against the Catholic employers they would have lost. But in 1920 they went on strike, and what's more, they won. So how did they shut down convents and colleges where there were only a couple of lay teachers? They did it with the assistance of other trade unionists, especially the financial backing of the INTO. The most significant reason for the ASTI victory in 1920, however, was that the Catholic authorities didn't wish to fight trade unionists at this critical juncture, so they gave in.

Slow but steady progress

Teachers' unions co-operated with Dáil Eireann after its establishment and played a significant part in the deliberations of the Commission on Intermediate Education convened by the Dáil in 1921. Things seemed to move slowly in the early years of the Free State, ministers of course being occupied with other issues including civil war, but advances were made nonetheless. Examinations were reformed and some of their more objectionable features were removed. The status of the Irish language was raised. Significantly, teacher registration and state salaries were retained. A new pension scheme was regarded as inadequate, but it was a pension scheme!

So on bread and butter issues there was good progress by 1934. On other fronts, however, things had stalled somewhat. Teachers wanted a say in post-primary education. But while some niggling minor grievances were corrected by the

State, there was no appetite for what the ASTI wanted. The ASTI had developed a coherent social democratic critique of second-level education and policy, which featured free education for example and local education committees with parent and teacher representation. This was not a policy that recommended itself to the religious managers who had had strong influence over early ministers for education.

From there to here

On the occasion of its 25th anniversary, the ASTI had achieved many of its objectives, but there was a long way to go. While it had a degree of sympathy in high places, its membership was very small, it was run on a shoestring and it had opted to locate itself outside of the trade union movement. It would be quite successful during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s in defending pay and conditions, but its members were largely excluded from influencing policy – either at school level or at national level.

John Cunningham's lecture also ranged over later developments in the ASTI's history – the disputes of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the great expansion of the Association during recent decades. Today the ASTI holds a strong position, with 18,000 members at all levels of the post-primary education system, including policy making. It plays an important role in that education system, which, while not without deficiencies, is a good system by international standards and, in the view of independent economists, is critical in generating the prosperity experienced by many Irish people in the recent past. How did we get from there to here and what might the situation look like today if it had not been for the ASTI and the efforts of its members? Find out in *Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post Primary Teachers and the ASTI 1909 – 2009*.

John Cunningham is a lecturer in history at NUI Galway.

Copies of Unlikely Radicals: Irish Post Primary Teachers and the ASTI 1909 – 2009 will be available from the Cork University Press website in November – www.corkuniversitypress.com.

Towards equality

Carmel Heneghan traces the struggle for equality in teaching over the last 100 years.



As the centenary year draws to a close, I feel it fitting that I endeavour to trace the struggle for equality during that period, having served on the ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee for many years. When the ASTI was founded 100 years ago gender equality was a non-issue. Most women were expected to busy themselves with domestic chores. Few entered the workforce as professionals. Second-level education was the right of the affluent as free education was unheard of. Third-level education was only accessible to the privileged, mainly men. The 1960s heralded radical changes. The advent of free education saw the masses enter second-level education and gave greater job opportunities to female teachers. Nevertheless many obstacles remained. Breaking long-held prejudices was very difficult and old attitudes die hard.

Marriage and maternity

Of course, Ireland was not alone in this culture. According to the late T.J. O'Connell of the INTO, pregnant, primary teachers were obliged to absent themselves from school for two months before confinement, and for one

month afterwards, under the British system here. He deemed the inference that a woman about to become a mother was unfit to be seen in public to be an insult to motherhood on moral, psychological and physiological grounds. The marriage ban was introduced in primary education on October 1, 1933. The reasons stated in a letter from the Secretary of the Department to the INTO in 1932 were that: "The continuance of women teachers on marriage must mean some loss either to the school or to the home" and that "Local irritations or jealousy is accentuated in a district by large incomes in households where the man and wife are both teachers or where a woman teacher is married to a substantial farmer or shop keeper". The INTO regarded the abolition of the ban on July 1, 1958, as one of its greatest victories. Married female teachers were disadvantaged in regard to pensions as a result of the marriage bar, but fortunately the National Women's Council has been liaising with FLAC to investigate their case. They are currently determining which legal route to pursue. The position at second level varied between dioceses, religious orders and schools. Kathleen Ryder, Ballinrobe, was forced to resign from teaching in

1958 as the archbishop of Tuam had banned married women secondary teachers in his diocese. Some married teachers could be employed or let go on a whim depending on the need of a school or diocese. Any teacher who found employment worked for £200 per annum but couldn't qualify for incremental salary. A former esteemed president of the ASTI has often spoken about being sacked, her only crime being marriage. An anecdote by another teacher sums up the attitude. He was highly respected by the religious order until his wife applied for a job in the school. He was then lectured indirectly on the value of parenting in the home. Ironically, when another teacher left that school without giving notice the same order deemed the said woman to be sent by God to them. An extraordinarily providential spin!

Maternity leave was non-existent for secondary teachers. It was quite common for women to return to work within a few days of giving birth. Kathleen Ryder humorously recounts that her second child was born during the Easter holidays; therefore, no class contact hours were lost. In 1961 the ASTI took up the cudgels on Kathleen Ryder's behalf. The battle against the marriage bar was long and tedious; it wasn't just the repealing of an act, it was the long entrenched attitude towards the role of women – the woman's place was in the home. Kathleen has always gratefully acknowledged the support of the ASTI, in particular the late Donal Ó Connaláin, the West Mayo CEC members and Head Office staff, in her pursuit of justice.

A new dawn

A new age dawned thanks to European legislation and the sustained efforts of the ASTI. Equal pay for equal work was a major victory and a famous milestone. The Employment Equality Act, the Equal Status Act and The Unfair Dismissal Act, to name but a few, improved working conditions for all. Members gained the right to security of tenure, given satisfactory service, culminating in the recent CID victory. Benefits such as extended maternity, parental and *force majeure* leave were introduced. Career breaks and job sharing, with the consent of management, became possible. From a student's perspective, some provisions of the Disability Bill and the setting up of the National Disability Authority brought the

requirements of students with special needs into focus. Alarming, the dark clouds of recession and the savage cuts in expenditure have threatened many, if not all, of these advances. Unfortunately, the Irish Government has failed as yet to transpose some European equality legislation into Irish law.

A further important development was the election of women to the high office of President of the ASTI. Each of these women has contributed significantly to the challenges of their terms. It was heartening and inspirational to witness Sylvia Meehan, an ASTI activist for many years, receive a People of the Year Award for championing the cause of the aged. Another step in the promotion of equal treatment was the setting up of the ASTI network for gay and lesbian teachers. It signalled a move towards a more inclusive society.

I wish to pay tribute to the members of the Equal Opportunities Committee. I have been greatly impressed by their dedication and commitment since I joined in 1993. I am particularly indebted to them for their co-operation during my tenure as chairperson. They energised the work immeasurably. I welcome the broadening of the remit from gender to include all nine grounds in response to legislative changes. Special tribute is due to the Assistant General Secretary, Máire Mulcahy, who uses every piece of legislation to challenge unequal treatment. I feel proud to be a member of such a gallant army. *Beir Bua agus Beannacht ar an gCoiste Comhionannais sa toadhcháil.*



Carmel Heneghan

Carmel Heneghan is a member of the ASTI Equal Opportunities Committee.

Munster Examining Board

www.munsterexaminingboard.com

Fully qualified experienced teachers wanted for correcting in all subject areas
 Quality examination papers and corrections at excellent value.
 All papers prepared strictly according to SEC syllabi
 Format and presentation rigidly based on State Examinations.
 Reliability and Dependability - Directors have over 30 years teaching experience
 Quality service with 20 day turnaround time for corrections.

Apply to: **Munster Examining Board**
 139 Bank Place, Mallow, Co. Cork. Phone: 022-22001



Changes at Junior Cert

The latest news on the proposed review of the Junior Certificate, and an update on recent problems with Junior Cert Gaeilge sample papers.

Reform not abolition

The Minister for Education and Science, Batt O'Keeffe, has directed the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to engage in a 'root-and-branch' review of the Junior Certificate curriculum. He has also given a short timeframe in which to conduct this exercise. The Junior Certificate curriculum was introduced in 1989. It is now 20 years old and much has changed in our schools and society in this period. The Minister specifically referred to longitudinal research on 900 young people's experience of the three-year programme carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), which highlighted "significant levels of stress, students pressured by taking 10-14 subjects, and a significant minority experiencing disengagement – especially in second year – and dissatisfaction with their school experience". In fairness, the research also shows that for most young people, their experiences over the three-year programme are positive. In his address to the new NCCA Council in June, Minister O'Keefe said: "Recent public debate on education has been very complimentary about the changes at primary level, but has become increasingly critical of a second-level system which is seen by many as driven by rote learning and examination pressures, rather than the promotion of real understanding and skills. While I realise that this is a gross simplification, it is not unrelated to the overall issue of curriculum overload, the need for greater emphasis on assessment for learning, practical project and portfolio assessment, and the time which is necessary to promote experiential self-directed learning".

The oral examination in Junior Cert Gaeilge is optional. Members are directed not to undertake this optional examination because it is contrary to ASTI policy on assessment.

The ASTI has started the process of consulting widely on the Junior Certificate. Its approach will be reform not abolition. The Junior Cert has many strengths as an educational programme, which should not be dismissed. Change for change's sake is never a good guide for policy. In addition to consulting with the Education Committee and the 70-plus ASTI teachers serving on NCCA committees, the ASTI will meet with the education partners and the TUI in coming months. An 'issues paper' will also be prepared by the ASTI Education Committee and will be available on the ASTI website for member feedback.

Junior Certificate Gaeilge sample papers

ASTI Head Office has received an unprecedented number of calls from teachers of Irish concerning the issue of the sample examination papers for Junior Certificate Gaeilge.

Teachers' anger and concern was certainly justified. Circular 42/07 specified significant changes to the marking scheme for the 2010 Gaeilge examination. Given these changes, teachers had legitimate expectations that sample examination papers would have issued at an early date and changes to the papers would have been flagged in advance. The dropping of the 'Comhrá' section from the sample paper was upsetting for teachers and students who have spent considerable time in recent weeks covering this important part of the syllabus. The ASTI has communicated teachers' concerns to the Chief Examiner for Gaeilge, formally requesting that such concerns be taken into consideration in finalising the examination papers for the 2010 examination. The ASTI also underlined that teachers' disquiet has been aggravated as a result of larger class sizes since September and the overall pressures on schools and students arising from the recent budgets.

ASTI Head Office has received an unprecedented number of calls from teachers of Irish concerning the issue of the sample examination papers for Junior Certificate Gaeilge.

Oral Gaeilge

The State Examinations Commission issued a circular to schools in October to advise of the changes in the 2010 Junior Certificate examination arising from Departmental Circular 42/07, which changed the weighting allocated to the oral and aural examinations. The ASTI is taking this opportunity to remind members that the oral examination in Junior Certificate Gaeilge is optional. Members are directed not to undertake this optional examination because it is contrary to ASTI policy on assessment.

ASTI policy on assessment requires that members do not undertake the assessment of their own students for the awarding of marks in the Certificate examinations.

The ASTI is recommending that teachers communicate concerns directly to the Chief Examiner for Gaeilge by email to orals@examinations.ie. The ASTI has also contacted the Chief Examiner in relation to the many calls it has received from members arising from these changes.

Your payslip explained

A typical payslip explaining usual allowances and deductions.

PAYROLL PERIOD No. / TREIMHSE UIMHIR		DATES OF PAYROLL PERIOD / TREIMHSE DATAI		DATE OF ISSUE DATA	
200944		06-OCT-09 19-OCT-09		22-OCT-09	
P.P.S. No. / UIMHIR P.S.P.		PAYROLL No. / UIMHIR PHAROLLA		NAME / AINM	
1234567T		123456		JOE BLOGGS	
1 GROSS PAY DETAILS / TUAIRISC MEID IOMLAIN		AMOUNT / MEID		2 DEDUCTIONS / ASBHAINTE	
BASIC PAY		0.00		AOISLIUNTAS - GROUP (Your pension contribution)	
H. DIP		0.00		1.5% SP & CH - GROS (Spouses and Childrens Scheme)	
DEGREE ALLCE		0.00		PEN RELATED DEDN (Pension levy)	
				EMPLOYEES PRSI (Your PRSI contribution)	
				INCOME LEVY (Income levy introduced last year)	
				P.A.Y.E (Your PAYE contribution)	
				TEACHING COUNCIL RE (Teaching Council registration fee)	
TOTAL GROSS PAY / MEID IOMLAIN		0.00		TOTAL DEDUCTIONS / ASBHAINTE IOMLAIN	
				0.00	
3 PRSI / ASPC CLASS/BIODH		4 TAX CREDIT / MHEASANNA CANACH		5 CUT-OFF POINT / ITIRPHOINTE AN RATA CHRIGDEANMACH	
A1		0.00		0.00	
WEEKS / SEACHTAIN		TAX CODE / CODU CAIN		TAXABLE GROSS / OLLMEID INCHANACH	
2		A		0.00	
TAX BASIS / MODH CAIN		6 NET PAY / MEID GLAN			
0		€		0.00	
7 YEAR TO DATE TOTALS / IOMLAIN BLIAIN GO DATA					
GROSS PAY / MEID IOMLAIN		TAX CREDITS / CREIDMHEASANNA CANACH		CUT-OFF POINT / SCOTPHOINTE AN RATA CHRIGDEANMACH	
0.00		0.00		0.00	
		TAX / CAIN		PENSION AND/OR AVC / PINSEAN AGUS/NO AVC	
		0.00		0.00	
		PR.S.I. / A.S.P.C.			
		0.00			

1. Gross pay details

All teachers are paid fortnightly on every second Thursday.

Basic pay

For teachers on the incremental scale or those with regular part-time contracts, this figure will refer to a proportion of your yearly salary, based on a two-week pay period. For teachers who are paid on a pro-rata basis, this will reflect the number of hours you worked during the two-week pay period. You will be paid at a basic hourly rate for these hours.

Allowances

Allowances paid in respect of posts of responsibility and special duties, degree allowances, teaching in the Gaeltacht, etc., are detailed here.

2. Deductions

Deductions including PAYE tax, income levy and PRSI (including health levy) are detailed here. Payments for your pension contribution are also included, along with other at-source deductions such as: additional voluntary contributions to pension; certain savings schemes; certain insurance schemes, including salary protection; credit union deductions; Teaching Council registration fee; and, ASTI subscription.

3. PRSI class

All employees, whether full-time or part-time, are liable for PRSI. All teachers employed since 1995 are Class A PRSI contributors. Class A is the normal rate at which PRSI is paid.

4. Tax credit

This refers to the total tax credit you are entitled to for this payroll period, including your PAYE credit, individual tax credit and other credits based on your individual circumstances. Notice of your tax credits is sent to you at the beginning of each year by the Revenue Commissioners.

Check www.revenue.ie for more details of tax credits or to see what you can claim.

5. Cut-off point

Cut-off point refers to the point at which you pay the higher rate of tax. The standard PAYE rate is 20% plus the income levy. You are taxed at this rate on earnings up to your cut-off point. After that, earnings are taxed at the higher rate of 41% plus income levy. The figure here indicates the cut-off point for this particular pay period.

6. Net pay

This figure indicates how much is actually paid into your bank account after tax, PRSI and other deductions.

7. Year to date totals

Year to date totals let you know how much you have earned, paid or been credited to date in this tax year. The tax year runs from January 1 to December 31.



Teaching Council registration for new teachers

ASTIR clarifies issues around Teaching Council registration.

Registration for new teachers

The Teaching Council is the professional body for teaching in Ireland, established in 2006 to promote teaching as a profession at primary and post-primary levels, to promote the professional development of teachers, and to regulate standards in the profession.

Once Section 30 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001, comes into effect, only teachers included on the Register can be employed in recognised schools and paid from State monies. According to the Department of Education and Science, this will happen in this school year.

Registration

Teachers who wish to register for the first time must complete an application form, detailing qualifications and teaching experience. This includes a Garda vetting form and Certification of Fitness to Teach. You will have to include transcripts of results from each year of your degree course, your birth certificate or passport, and the relevant fee.

In order to qualify for registration, you must have a degree obtained following a course of at least three years' full-time study (or its equivalent) carrying at least 180 European Credit Transfer System credits. The degree must comply with the minimum requirements as published by the Teaching Council. You must also have a qualification in post-primary teacher education, including at least 100 hours of personal experience of directly teaching at least one approved subject. More information on qualifications is available on the Teaching Council website – www.teachingcouncil.ie.

Applicants who were awarded qualifications in Ireland, who are not new graduates, and who wish to begin or return to teaching after a prolonged period of absence (e.g., a career break) may apply to the Teaching Council for registration through this process. All such applications will be assessed on an individual basis.

Recent graduates

Teaching Council representatives visit colleges and universities before examinations and talk to PGDE students about registration. They distribute Student Consent Forms, Garda Vetting Forms, and Certification of Fitness to Teach Forms. If you received and returned these forms, your results will have

been forwarded to the Teaching Council and you will have received a personalised application form for registration.

Newly graduated teachers are granted conditional registration until they have completed the required post-qualification employment. There are minimum criteria, which must be satisfied before teaching is recognised. Once this period has been completed, the applicant can have their experience certified by the school and the Teaching Council will update the teacher's registration status from 'Conditional' to 'Full'. (See www.teachingcouncil.ie/registration_information/default.asp?NCID=484)

Qualification from outside Ireland

If you qualified outside of Ireland and you wish to teach in a recognised school in Ireland, you must apply for the assessment of your qualifications prior to being granted registration. All such applications will be assessed on an individual basis. In accordance with an EU Directive, persons who are recognised for the purposes of teaching in one EU Member State are entitled to have those qualifications recognised in all other Member States, subject to conditions.

If your registration is refused

The Review of Decision process is the internal review mechanism that the Teaching Council offers to applicants when registration has been refused or when registration conditions have been imposed.

Applicants are offered the option of requesting a Review of Decision by the Council's Registration Committee Review Group and also have the right of appeal to the High Court. The applicant will also be given the opportunity to include any additional evidence of qualifications and provide a written submission.

In cases where registration is being refused on the grounds of evidence of character, the applicant can also request an oral hearing.

Any request for a Review of Decision to the Registration Committee Review Group must be made, in writing, stating the grounds on which the review is being sought, within 21 days of receipt of the decision from the relevant applications panel/Registration Officer.

For more information, visit www.teachingcouncil.ie.

RSTA news

News from RSTA branches around the country

North East wonderland: an account of a North Eastern RSTA Branch event by Art Agnew

As we left the Hill of Faughart going north, our guide, RSTA member Eamon O' hUallacháin said: "For the next few hundred metres this road demarcates five boundaries; on our left the townland of Carrickbroad, the Parish of Dromintee, the County of Armagh, the Province of Ulster, and Northern Ireland itself. On our right the townland of Carrickaneena, the Parish of Faughart, the County of Louth, the Province of Ulster, all in the Republic of Ireland. Not only are we crossing five boundaries, but a few miles north is the Black Pig's Dyke, an ancient gateway to Ulster and just south of us we crossed out of the Pale when we left Dundalk". This is just a flavour of a stimulating adventure that the North Eastern Branch of the RSTA, with guests from Dublin and Belfast, enjoyed on a beautiful sunny Thursday, September 10. All 60 of us headed north by coach with Castletown Mount, the birthplace of Setanta, on our left. We followed the road across Castletown Bridge – Ath na gCarbad (ford of the chariots) – the road taken by Queen Maeve and her army.

On Faughart Hill Eamon showed us the Shrine of St Brigid, the burial place of Edward Bruce and the campsite of the Williamite army in 1690. We moved to South Armagh, to Moyry Castle in the Gap of the North where Aodh O' Neill engaged Lord Mountjoy and denied the English entry into Ulster in 1600. Next

was the magnificent Ring of Gullion, a 60-million-year-old volcanic crater with its storied villages of Dromintee, Forkhill and Mullaghbane. In our imaginations we climbed Sliabh Gullion with Yeats and Maud Gonne. After lunch in the Carrickdale Hotel we visited the Dolmen at Proleek with its massive 50 tonne capstone. On to Cooley, the Táin Trail and the Long Woman's Grave – Lug Bhan Fhada – a legendary Spanish Lady lured to Cooley with the prospect of lands and riches only to be tragically disappointed. Down the mountain to Omeath and the sparkling Carlingford Lough with Warrenpoint and Rostrevor on the Down shore. Eamon traced the Danish influences – Carlingford, Greenore and other place names. In the capital of the region, the medieval town of Carlingford, we stopped and were given a choice; visit King John's Castle, he of Robin Hood fame, or partake in a fringe event. Most followed Eamon to the Castle but the weaker willed, having made a cursory visit to the Tholsel, sidled into PJ's for a beverage. A few songs were sung on the way back to Dundalk and all dispersed in great good humour. Unfortunately, some RSTA members were disappointed because we were overbooked and couldn't take them. South Armagh/North Louth will be revisited, as there is at least as much again to be seen and heard. There's every chance that Eamon will guide us. Go raibh maith agat arís a Eamon, bhí an turas sin tharr barr.

Mayo Branch to hold next meeting in the Museum of Country Life

The next meeting of the Mayo Branch of the RSTA will take place in the Museum of Country Life, Turlough, at 2.00pm on Thursday November 19. Members are reminded to bring their cameras, as Pat Walsh will provide some introductory tips on how to best use your camera. This meeting will be followed by a guided tour of the house and galleries.

All members of the Mayo Branch are invited to attend, as are all retired secondary teachers. New members are always welcome. For further information, please contact RSTA-Mayo Branch Secretary Carmel Heneghan, Tel: 087-225 8978, or Chairperson Denis O'Boyle, Tel: 087-221 0881.

At the last meeting of the Mayo Branch, held in September, the guest speaker was John Higgins, Chief Executive Officer of the Retirement Planning Council of Ireland. John gave an enlightening presentation and provided a wealth of information and advice on a range of issues related



At a presentation from the Mayo RSTA Branch to John Higgins, in appreciation of his visit (from left): Carmel Heneghan, Secretary; Bernie Johnstone, Treasurer; John Higgins, CEO, Retirement Planning Council of Ireland; and, Denis O Boyle, Chairman.

to retirement, including: the many opportunities that exist for an enjoyable active retirement; healthy lifestyle; social welfare entitlements; taxation; and, investment.

Dublin Branch forthcoming events

November: Speaker from the Chester Beatty Library

December: Christmas lunch

January: Denise Gill on gardening

February: Megan Fleming on the moulding of an arboretum

March: Mary O'Callaghan on 'Experiencing Inner Bliss through Meditation'

April: Lecture on selected paintings in the Hugh Lane Gallery

May: AGM of the RSTA in ASTI House, Winetavern Street

June: To be arranged

The Dublin Branch of the RSTA meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the Teachers' Centre, Parnell Square.

Keep up to date

Check the RSTA website for forthcoming events and Christmas celebrations – www.rsta-ireland.com.

Christmas celebrations

ASTI President Joe Moran and the officers of the ASTI invite you to the annual Christmas buffet/coffee morning in ASTI House on Tuesday December 15, from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

RSVP Eileen Kelly, Tel: 01-298 6951, before December 10.

TAPping into potential

With the recent extension of the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) programme to all schools, we look at one of the access offices and its involvement in CBS Westland Row.



The Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) offers alternative access to third-level education for students who meet certain criteria. Until this school year, it was only open to students in DEIS schools, but from September the programme was extended to all schools. HEAR access offices operate in colleges and institutes of technology around the country providing guidance and support to schools and students. The Trinity Access Programme (TAP) is Trinity College Dublin's access office and works with a number of schools in Dublin to provide programmes that encourage students to stay in school and to consider proceeding to third level. TAP works as a continuum, supporting students at primary and second levels and continuing to support them after they enter third level. Since its establishment in 1993, the programme has worked with nearly 300 graduates.

College-going culture

Kathleen O'Toole, Programmes Manager with TAP, says the intent is to ignite an interest in education and create a college-going culture in schools and communities where there might not be such a tradition. Many of the students that TAP works with have not experienced a traditional trajectory in education and often come from low income backgrounds. TAP works to provide realistic opportunities and entry routes to third level for these students.

In the first instance they do this through outreach guidance programmes, which familiarise students with third level. Students can then either apply to college through the HEAR programme or can choose to attend an access course, run by TAP, which allows them the opportunity of an alternative route for entry to Trinity College.

The programme is thriving, with academic retention above the national average and 75% of TAP graduates in employment. Many graduates even return to their schools and communities as TAP ambassadors, showcasing what can be achieved through continuing in education.

Kathleen, who was a second-level teacher until she joined TAP, says a

college-going culture has a positive impact on teachers' morale and influences their teaching. The programme has more tangible benefits for schools too, helping them to stay on par in terms of resources and professional development, and working with teachers to enhance the educational and teaching experience.

The school's perspective

One of the schools TAP works with is CBS Westland Row in Dublin, where geography and English teacher Paul Flynn acts as the TAP liaison officer, helping to plan and organise activities, giving guidance and choosing students to participate in the programmes. According to Paul, the programme has had a huge impact on the school and the students: "Having access to the programme sets expectations immediately when students start first year. They realise that the school is linked to a college and that helps to set a mindset that if they work hard, they could go to college. Many students who otherwise might not have had the opportunity to go to third level have gone on to do really well, studying anything from medicine to business to philosophy. We are very supportive in the school, and TAP continues that level of support at third level, which helps students to acclimatise to college and to stick with it".

Funding – which comes from a combination of public and private sources – is a concern for TAP at the moment, at a time when applicant numbers are growing. Paul believes that if the programme was resourced properly it could do very good work bridging the gap, not only between second and third level, but also the economic gap: "A lot of our students come from working class backgrounds and third level isn't a given, where otherwise it might be. Because of TAP, students begin to think of continued education, not as the exception, but as the rule". Kathleen says: "TAP understands that times are tough, but this is not the time to reduce funding for education and support programmes. The dividends and pay offs are enormous to the individual, community and society at large".

Ethical consumerism

As part of its Global Solidarity series, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) has produced a guide to ethical consumerism for trade unions. For more information, contact ICTU, Tel: 01-889 7704.

Project Forest

Project Forest is a Transition Year initiative by the Tree Council of Ireland to teach students about trees, woods and forests, and to encourage the appreciation of wood as a material. Four modules cover biology, geography, wood and culture, and each comprises two weeks, including a field trip. For more information, visit www.projectforest.ie.

Learning from the Holocaust

The Holocaust Education Trust of Ireland (HETI) runs a five-day programme, 'Learning from the Holocaust', which includes a study trip to Krakow. The Trust would also like to highlight a course at the International School in Jerusalem, which is specifically tailored for Irish teachers, as well as their 'Teaching the Holocaust' course run in August. For more information on any of these programmes, Tel: 01-669 0593, Email: info@hetireland.org, or visit www.hetireland.org.

Oxfam Unwrapped

Oxfam *Unwrapped* gifts, like a cow or schoolbooks, go to a family or community in a developing country. When you buy your *Unwrapped* gift you receive a gift card, which you can send to friends or family.

New gifts for 2009 include Sports kit for kids, Sunflowers, Care for a goat, Supergranny, Fish pond, Village grain bank and the chance to Champion a Fair Trade craftsperson.

Unwrapped gifts can be purchased online, in your local Oxfam shop, by post and by phone (1850 304055). Check out the website – www.oxfamireland.org – or visit Oxfam Ireland stores to find out more.



Design a space station

Space Florida, an organisation set up to strengthen Florida's position as the global leader in aerospace research, investment, exploration and commerce, is seeking to work with Irish second-level students to design a space settlement centre. The group would like teachers interested in co-ordinating a group of students to contact Tony Gannon at tgannon@spaceflorida.gov.

Science ambassadors

In the past two years, thousands of students across Europe have had the chance to engage in hands-on experiments and talks with science experts through Xperimania. The Xperimania Ambassadors visit schools and conduct workshops with students. If you would like to find out more, visit: www.xperimania.net.

Research help wanted



A doctoral researcher at the University of Limerick is conducting a study on multiculturalism in Irish secondary schools. She is looking for schools to take part in the research. If you are interested, Email: Joanna.baumgart@ul.ie.

Inside Education

Inside Education is a dedicated radio programme for education news and stories broadcast on 103.2 Dublin City FM. The programme offers an Irish perspective on news and stories from the world of education. It is broadcast every Sunday evening from 7.30pm to 8.00pm on 103.2 FM in the Dublin area. Live streaming is available around the world at www.dublincityfm.ie. Podcasts of past programmes can be downloaded from www.insideed.com. You can Email the programme with comments and suggestions at insideeducation@dublincityfm.ie.

Young environmentalists

Registration for The ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards 2010 is open until November 27. Open to young people between 12 and 18, the awards recognise groups of young people who carry out action projects under a number of environmental themes. ECO-UNESCO also provides a number of programmes and services, including youth leader and teacher training programmes, peer education programmes, environmental workshops, and education resources. Visit www.econunesco.ie for more information.

Fulbright Awards

The Fulbright Commission is currently accepting applications from Irish students, academics and professionals for its 2010/2011 Fulbright Awards. These awards are for postgraduate study and/or research at recognised colleges and academic institutions in the US. The closing date is December 4. Visit www.fulbright.ie for more information.

Separated Teachers' Support Group

The Annual General Meeting of the INTO Separated Teachers' Support Group will take place at 8.00pm on Saturday, November 21, in Club na Muinteoiri, Parnell Square, Dublin. Separated, divorced, widowed, or lone parent teachers from the ASTI are welcome to attend. For more information, contact Chairperson Maura Killackey, Tel: 0505-21694/087-123 3456, or Secretary Noreen Carroll, Tel: 01-289 6405/087-298 8502.

Research on workplace bullying

ASTI member, Genevieve Murray, a PhD student at Trinity College Dublin, is currently undertaking a research study on workplace bullying in the post-primary sector of the education system.

Genevieve is seeking the participation of teachers in this research, and will be forwarding questionnaires to principal and deputy principal members of the NAPD, requesting them to forward them to staff. She is asking teachers who have been involved in or witnessed workplace bullying to participate in this important study. Email gmbmurray@gmail.com for more information.

The Book of Kells makes a comeback!

Boyne Valley's new schools art competition gives one secondary school the chance to win a limited edition Book of Kells, worth €20,000. For further information, please contact Deirdre Hynds or Jane Morgan, Tel: 01-665 1950/087-986 9523, Email: deirdre.hynds@direction.jwt.ie, or jane.morgan@direction.jwt.ie, or log on to www.boynevalleyhoneyart.com.

Childline

Childline received 650,000 communications from children last year. The listening service operated by the ISPC can be contacted 24/7 on 1800 66 66 66, by texting 'talk' to 50101, or by logging on to www.childline.ie.



**CHURCH OF IRELAND
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

Master of Arts in Education

The Church of Ireland College of Education, in collaboration with the University of Northampton, will offer a Master of Arts in Education from January 2010, focusing on Learning Support and Special Educational Needs. This course is open to graduates of the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning Support and Special Educational Needs or equivalent.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates, who will be short-listed for interview on the basis of information supplied in their application forms.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from:

The Church of Ireland College of Education,
96 Upper Rathmines Road, Dublin 6.
Email: info@cice.ie
Telephone: (01) 497 0033
Fax: (01) 497 1932
or can be downloaded at www.cice.ie

Completed application forms should be returned to the above address, clearly marked M A (Education) Application.

The closing date for receipt of applications is Friday, 27th November 2009.

Mammy says....

To raise funds for education bursaries for lone parents, a compilation of words of wisdom, *My Mother Always Used to Say*, is to be published by Currach Press in time for Christmas. The book contains contributions from a diverse range of well-known people, including Bill Clinton, Alex Ferguson, Maeve Binchy and Brigitte Bardot. Compiled by Valerie Bowe, a community worker with the Henrietta Adult & Community Education Service, funds raised will go to the Kitty Whittle Fund, administered by Lourdes Youth and Community Services.

CLASSIFIEDS

HOMELINK HOME EXCHANGE SERVING THE HOME EXCHANGE COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD

Swap your main residence or holiday home!

15,000 verifiable listings worldwide

· Over 55 years in business

· Most experienced exchange organisation
Personal service

Lively members discussion area

Online application

Your home live on our website within 24hrs.

Tel: 01 - 8462598 Email: info@homelink.ie

Visit our website at www.homelink.ie

CONSUMER RELATIONS EXECUTIVE

The Boyne Valley Honey Company is recruiting a Consumer Relations Executive. The successful candidate will organise and deliver presentations on the Boyne Valley Honey Book of Kells National Art Competition to school groups and clubs. This part-time role would suit an independent, pro-active, and confident person. Applicants please send your application letter and curriculum vitae to Gillian Hennessy at: Boyne Valley Honey Company, Mell, Drogheda, Co. Louth. Boyne Valley is an equal opportunities employer.

GUIDES REQUIRED

FOR WALKING HOLIDAY COMPANY

FOR SUMMER 2010.

Excellent communication skills and an understanding of group dynamics are important. An interest in Irish history and culture as well as a love for nature and the outdoors is essential. French or German languages an added advantage. For further details please contact:- www.southwestwalksireland.com; Email: swwi@iol.ie; Tel: 066-7128733.

INTERVAC

FOUNDED BY TEACHERS

The Original Home Exchange Holiday Organisation
apply at www.intervac.ie

Home exchange offers you an inexpensive and unique way to travel the world. Intervac started home exchange in the early 50s and offers its members a multi-language, real-time database of over 20,000 home exchange listings.

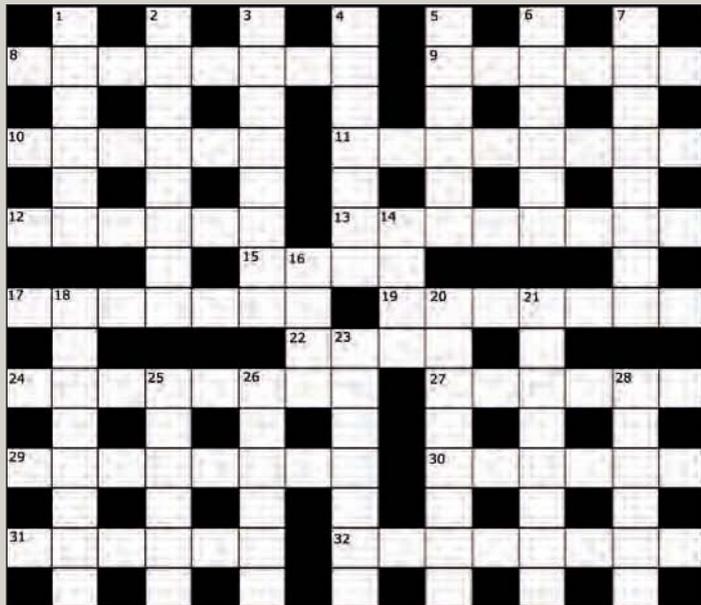
Intervac History: www.home-exchange.org/50years
Info: 041-9837969 or fkelly@intervac.ie



ASTIR CROSSWORD NO. 0905

€200 prize for the first fully correct answer drawn from the entries.

Sponsored by ASTI Credit Union



The winner will receive €200

courtesy of the ASTI Credit Union.

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. 0905, Think Media, The Malthouse, 537 NCR, Dublin 1.**

To arrive by: **Friday, December 4, 2009.**

ACROSS

- 8 across & 23 down:
She would be fine in torn jeans! (8,7)
- 9 Could attack 26 down (6)
- 10 PR voting involves reaching these (6)
- 11 It may be fit for a queen! (8)
- 12 Go late and be smooth and even (6)
- 13 Outraced the teacher! (8)
- 15 Fully aware informally (4)
- 17 A ratable Canadian province (7)
- 19 Could Philly cheese contain these Chinese fruits? (7)
- 22 Sebastien Chabal departed from these sharks earlier this year (4)
- 24 As opposed to patrician in ancient Rome (8)
- 27 Lightweight wool fabric (6)
- 29 Sid throws turps into confusion (8)
- 30 All bad in this narrative poem? (6)
- 31 Random using could be deep in thought (6)
- 32 Furry Australian marsupials (8)

DOWN

- 1 Feed us and remove the cause of tension (6)
- 2 While in it I ate to start off (8)
- 3 So hot off the branch (8)
- 4 Belt rid of a small amount (7)
- 5 Queen Elizabeth's form of transport at Royal Ascot (6)
- 6 A maths mix-up could give you a respiratory disease! (6)
- 7 Emer is to cause fatigue (8)
- 14 See 25 down
- 16 Responsible for US public space programme (1.1.1.1.)
- 18 An island in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (8)
- 20 Okay, bore me with this annual publication (8)
- 21 Kick in the pants! (3,5)
- 23 See 8 across
- 25 down and 14 down:
She could be a liberal bod! (6,4)
- 26 Criticise 9 across (6)
- 28 "Do not all ... fly At the mere touch of cold philosophy?" Keats (6)

Solution to ASTIR crossword No. 904

Across

- 1. Gratified
- 9. Hebrew
- 10. Absences
- 11. Cramps
- 12. An Bord
- 14. ESRI
- 15. Reeks
- 16. Endear
- 18. Snip Nua
- 21. Genteel
- 24. Caveat
- 26. Norma
- 30. Mind
- 31. Easing
- 32. Ordeal
- 33. Restored
- 34. Earned
- 35. Beanstalk

Down

- 2. Rubens
- 3. Tremor
- 4. Facade
- 5. Easiest
- 6. Bear in
- 7. Premiere
- 8. Swiss roll
- 11. Crete
- 13. Rein
- 17. Psychoses
- 19. Invaders
- 20. Until
- 22. NAMA
- 23. Endorse
- 25. Amazed
- 27. Reason
- 28. Assort
- 29. Unreal

Congratulations to the winner of Crossword No. 0904:
Stephen Digby, Our Lady's Bower, Retreat Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, Athlone Branch member.



ASTI CREDIT UNION LIMITED



Here to help CU through the recession

ASTI Credit Union is specifically designed to cater for your needs as a teacher

- We offer a unique range of services and products on a not for profit basis that will help you manage your financial needs and objectives
- ASTI Credit Union is about teachers helping teachers this is so important in the current recessionary environment
- The combination of 25 years experience and understanding of our members needs ensures that we deliver to you the services that you want
- Many teachers are feeling the impact of the pension levy, spouses that have lost their jobs, increases in educational costs for their children, and so on. Many teachers are worried about what the future holds
- There are some positive steps that you can take to help you through these difficult times...



WORK OUT A BUDGET

- ✓ Take into account that your income should determine your budget
- ✓ A budget will help you to prioritise your spending
- ✓ A budget will help you to prioritise your debt
- ✓ If you are having difficulties repaying debts, contact your creditors and talk to them about restructuring

BE IN CONTROL

- ✓ Take control of your spending
- ✓ Do not use credit cards
- ✓ Plan when you will need access to credit
- ✓ Borrow sensibly and ensure that the rate you borrow at is competitive

BE PRUDENT & SAVE

- ✓ Try to save a little every fortnight
- ✓ Join the Credit Union

MAKE A DECISION THAT WILL HELP YOU FOR YEARS TO COME, CALL NOW AND JOIN

Wellington House, 25 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2 t: 1850 44 31 31 e: info@asticu.ie
www.asticu.ie

ASTI Credit Union Limited is regulated by the Financial Regulator

**“I SAVED OVER €550
BY SWITCHING MY
CAR, HOME AND
HEALTH INSURANCE
TO CORNMARKET!”**

Sinéad Moore, ASTI member, Dublin

CALL US NOW TO SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN SAVE!



Car

Dublin **01 408 4040**

Cork **021 455 3335**

Galway **091 562 727**



Home

Dublin **01 408 4040**

Cork **021 455 3335**

Galway **091 562 727**



Health

Lo Call **1890 252 140**

Subject to entry criteria, terms and conditions may apply. For details on cover please refer to the relevant policy schedule/guide. Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd. is regulated by the Financial Regulator. A member of the Irish Life & Permanent Group. Irish Life & Permanent plc is regulated by the Financial Regulator. Telephone calls may be recorded for quality control purposes.



cornmarket
group financial services ltd