

An Cumann
Staire Lucht
Saothar
na hÉireann



Museum & Archives

Beggars Bush, Haddington Road, Dublin 4, Ireland.

Irish
Labour
History
Society

President's Address

ILHS AGM Saturday September 5th, 2020.

Colleagues it is seventeen months since we gathered in the Forsa-SIPTU offices in Roxborough Road, Limerick for the 2019 AGM and for events connected with the Centenary of the Limerick Soviet, Liam Cahill's address on that subject and the presentation of copies of the Soviet's money donated via Barry Desmond and accepted by Mike McNamara. A well-attended event with faces one might not often see at a Dublin based AGM, it was good to see non ILHS members turn out to listen to Liam's thought provoking lecture which did the society proud on such a special occasion for Limerick labour folk and shortly thereafter Liam launched the Centenary edition of *Forgotten Revolution-The Limerick Soviet 1919*.

Much has happened since then with word of the 'new flu' being registered by the WHO as a pandemic; the subsequent loss of life, the devastation of economies as well as the millions of people worldwide who are laid off; made redundant and those who work in areas of our economies for employers who do not have sick leave schemes, poor or no child-care systems and all the faults that have been highlighted worldwide of underfunded health and welfare systems; prevarication by governments and ministers and the greed and price escalation of contractors and vendors supplying personal protective equipment, much of which is not fit for purpose.

After Easter last year, the sub-committee on the proposed 2020 European Conference of the ILHS's work gathered pace and by March 5th, 2020 we were on the cusp of finalising the agenda for that conference when work stopped. The work of the committee continued, and we had members contributing to the ICTU conferences held in Belfast, Cork, Galway and the DCTU Conference in Liberty Hall. Many ILHS members were speakers at these events and others attended as delegates and we had stalls at all save the Cork event which to our chagrin was timetabled to compete with our Autumn conference on October 16th, despite the fact that the date of the ILHS Conference was well known. That event hosted on the Friday in Forsa HQ and on the Saturday in Beggars Bush dealt with 60 years of the ICTU 1959-2019, with Patricia King giving the keynote speech and speakers including Patricia McKeown, Gerry Murphy, current President of Congress, Alison Millar, Anne Speed, Peter Bunting, Seamus Dooley, Eoin Ronayne, John King and Peter Nolan on aspects of public and private sector employment in both jurisdictions. The Seamus Dooley-Peter Bunting aspect of the Conference was quite candid and revelatory in relation to content. On the Friday evening ILHS member Dr Mike Mechem's biographical book on William Walker was launched.

Committee Work

The committee met twice in February (delayed due to the General Election) and July and a lot of good work done as well as the co-option of three new members to the committee Micheal Mac Donncha; Betty Tyrrell Collard; Mary Muldowney consequent on the resignations of James Curry, and Leah Dowdall. Two new committee members will be elected at today's AGM Bill McCamley and Donal

Denham, and Shay Cody will be elected as President of the Society. I wish them all well in their ongoing endeavours on behalf of the society, at the same time work is continuing to progress in increasing the regional/gender/youth involvement from Ulster: Connacht and Munster in the Society.

Saothar 45 was delivered during the lockdown our compliments to CRM Design & Print for delivering during the lockdown and thank you to Mary McAuliffe and Leann Lane the editors of this volume. Ed Penrose and Francis Devine produced a pdf and hard copy of the 30th anniversary newsletter of our premises at Beggars Bush. The committee approved a publication for late 2022 to celebrate 50 years of the ILHS, *Labour & Class in Irish History- Essays to Celebrate 50 years of the ILHS 1973-2022* and joint editors John Cunningham; Francis Devine and Sonja Tiernan have been agreed by the ILHS committee.

In the light of the author's decision to have the Rosie Hackett SILH published elsewhere, a new SILH No 16 has been sourced emphasising solidarity between Irish and UK trade unionists during the 1913 Dublin Lockout and the Miners' Strike 1984-5 and the subject of SILH 17 should be identified for publication for 2022-23. Mike Shuker and Francis Devine are finishing work on SILH 16 *'To Make a Universe of Love, Not a Universe of Hate'* -Leicestershire Labour and the Dublin Lock Out, 1913-1914. Patricia King and Frances O'Grady (ICTU/BTUC) are contributing an introduction to the pamphlet. The following events follow from discussions in May 2019, following last year's AGM on Saothar/Publications/Conference 2020 under the following headings: *Saothar* - the appointment of a General Editor, and a return to 3 editors one of whom should be a trade union based committee member, work has begun on scoping guest editors for Saothar 50, seeking a sponsor for an online version of an updated Saothar index, and seeing if the proceedings of the coming international conference could be published as a special edition of Saothar.

Other Committee work

- ◆ A decision was taken on fiscal prudence in spending for the next 12-18 months due to the financial charge on having to reprint Saothar 44 due to a major editorial error.
- ◆ Work to scope the supplier for the digital images of the ICA sample minute book to be completed (outstanding since 2017)
- ◆ Work for the Autumn Conferences of 2019/2020 (both completed)
- ◆ Need to recruit new blood to the committee asap and some contingency planning needed for the medium term (being achieved)
- ◆ Someone to take on the role of liaison with the Trades Councils (Pat Bolger accepted this role and himself and I met with the ICTU Trades Council Group in January 2020.

- ◆ Work needs to proceed on recruiting someone to take on the role of President of the Society from AGM 2020 (Completed in mid-2020)
- ◆ Work needs to be done on International membership which has dwindled and international contacts – Ed and I have worked on the former with some success and in the last while Mike Meham and Steve Coyle have taken over as ILHS contacts in England and Scotland respectively. Work is ongoing on securing a contact for North America via Pat Bolger.
- ◆ Finally, Fionnuala Richardson the Vice President took on the role of being the contact person for available accommodation for the now deferred 2020 Conference. In this regard it may be necessary to scale back the expectation of financial support for the Conference given the ongoing layoffs and redundancies of trade union members during the pandemic.

Recently Dr Mike Meham took on the position of representing the ILHS on the Executive Committee of the Society for the Study of Labour History in England, an honour for him and the society, Mike confers on this matter frequently.

Looking Back to 2014.

When I agreed to take on the role of President of the Society for a second time, I advised Ed Penrose that I intended to do it totally differently to my previous term in office. I took up my position following Brendan Byrne's retirement as President in June 2014 after many years of distinguished service. I can say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working with such committed committee members, ordinary ILHS members and others in the wider labour and trade union sphere, fellow officers, and advocates in kindred organisations. I also thought it important to have fixed dates for the two main events in our calendar and thus we settled on the week before Easter for our AGM and publication /collection of Saothar the Journal of the ILHS and the week before the October bank holiday weekend so people could put those dates in their new/electronic diaries come each new year.

Early on we decided to deal with the Dublin centric nature of the society a valid complaint made on a few occasions by members and I have enjoyed in my role as President and Principal of Umiskin Press travelling to Cork, Limerick, Derry, Belfast, Bray, Enniskillen, Wexford, Glasgow. Another issue which I think the society has tackled has been getting varied speakers to our events without forgetting that we owe an audience to our own members from time to time. We have had several links/events with the Labour Party/ Forsa/SIPTU/UNITE the Union but have endeavoured to get members of other political parties into membership and active within the society. We encouraged a 'New Beginnings' process to lower the age level of the committee and society and while the work was fruitful, and some young people came on board they did not attend regularly but is an area worth persevering with. It may very well be that with remote meetings gaining in prominence and a wish explored by the July meeting of the society to co-opt 3 members taking gender and age into account from areas such as Cork, Galway and Northern Ireland into committee membership perhaps attending mainly virtually but committing to attend some ILHS events yearly in person.

Before leaving this subject, I believe in the coming year a small group needs to be constituted to map out those who are studying labour history and kindred topics at third and further level along with identifying their supervisors & tutors so that we can become more ambitious as we approach the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the society in 2023 in charting new areas of labour history and aspects of Irish Labour History at home and particu-

larly abroad. There are many new Irish academics who have gone abroad to begin their careers and getting tenure -let us stay in touch and invite them to be part of the ILHS diaspora and contribute to the debate.

At the AGM in 2014 were members of the Corish family presenting papers from his estate to do with the Wexford Lockout of 1911, also present were 3 Labour Party heavyweights John Horgan, Tony Brown, and Flor O'Mahony -on the topic of 'Remembering Frank Cluskey' from which spawned the Umiskin Press book *Cluskey the Conscience of Labour* and afterwards a lecture in the tercentenary of the Dublin City Council series -Lord Mayors of Dublin: *Frank Cluskey :A Man of Principle*, subsequently re-edited at the Bray Trades Council.

In 2015 we saw the creation of *Labour History News* edited by James Curry and Adrian Grant which was published till May 2018 when it was discontinued for two reasons: the cost and the poor distribution record of the publication, with significant number of copies not being distributed. The committee has since had two 4-page event-based publications of the Corish event in Wexford (Nov 2018) and the 30th anniversary of the opening of Beggars Bush (June 2020) sent out on pdfs with a limited hard copy print run. In this regard can I ask members to advise the Secretary of their updated email address and contact details. Following conservation advice two ICA uniforms were brought to the UK by Ed Penrose for full conservation and returned in time for the 1916 centenary commemorations in 2016.

2016 saw a plethora of publications and events, following the President of Ireland's address at the 2015 Autumn Conference of the ILHS he returned on Easter Tuesday 29 March 2016 as part of the James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army State Commemoration. The President gave the keynote speech in Liberty Hall to a packed audience, and this essay *A Celebration of James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army* was published in Saothar 41 which was launched by SIPTU General Secretary, Joe O' Flynn on May 12th 2016, the centenary of Connolly's execution by crown forces and was launched subsequently in Belfast and Glasgow, though funds did not exist for an American launch to complete the Connolly circle. Saothar 41 was guest edited by Francis Devine, Sarah-Anne Buckley and Brian Hanley which was a quality publication and which in my view has not received the critical acclaim which its publication and content deserved.

2016 also saw the Society launch SILH 15 & 16 in the names of Paul Ennis on: *Peter Ennis The man who kept Liberty Hall* sponsored by SIPTU and launched on Mayday and Rayner Lysaght's study: *From the GPO to the Winter Palace -How a workers revolution was lost and how a workers revolution was won*, sponsored by UNITE the union and launched on July 12th 2016.

In 2017, I concluded an ILHS meeting with a piece of good news. Brendan Howlin (then Labour Party leader) had forwarded on correspondence received from Minister Heather Humphreys, Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht advising the Society that a funding allocation of €7000 had been awarded towards the conservation work undertaken on uniforms by the Society. Along with a previous donation this brought in €8000 in total with the final cost to the society of €10,000.2017 also saw the publication of one of the society's most prestigious publications edited by John B Smethurst (deceased) and Francis Devine: *Historical Directory of Trade Unions in Ireland* co-sponsored by the ICTU;IMPACT and UNISON this hard and paperback publication is now a collector's item and Francis continues to update trade union changes via the pages of Saothar.

In 2018, the AGM was attended by then Lord Mayor of Dublin and President of the DCTU respectively Micheal Mac Donncha and Pat Bolger where the Lord Mayor's award presented to the DCTU was presented to the ILHS

following the AGM. Some committee members attended the GPO lecture events based on R. M. Fox's *Rebel Irish-women* arranged by ILHS committee member James Curry and part sponsored by the ILHS, at which Pdraig Yeates presented a paper on Madam Markievicz.

In 2019 Dr Mike Mecham joined the Executive Committee of the Society for the Study of Labour History, (UK) where he represents the ILHS a signal honour for Mike and the Society, on which committee he update the SSLH committee of labour history happenings, events and publications in Ireland. President of Ireland Michael D Higgins re-elected emphatically for a second term agreed to become sole patron of the Society as well following the passing of an emergency motion by Ed Penrose and amended by Noirin Greene on a point of clarification.

2020 Recent Deposits.

We received a couple of new deposits last week -a large deposit from the family of the late Donal Foley - (Man Bites Dog -IT) courtesy of Pdraic Yeates and from a relation of Dermot Doolan, Michael Doolan, papers relating to a man called Alfie Watters of the Automobile Association courtesy of Brendan Byrne -contacts and word of mouth still work quite well but also getting back to people expeditiously helps rather than dragging things out as we have often done.

John (Citizen) Kane Limerick and myself have been in conversation with Michael Pattison re items from his brother Seamus's career as a public representative and we are hoping to have that in the premises before the AGM, many thanks to Mags Murphy for this introduction and contact details. We also received a further deposit from John Horne, the associates of Roy Johnston, Shay Cody, Jack McGinley, Umiskin Press, as well as significant material from the constituents of FORSA much of which deposits can be seen on the shelving opposite the Conference Room on the upper level of the premises contributed to by FORSA We continue to receive material from the ASTI.

Unfinished Business/work in progress

- ◆ Renewing the heating postponed because of the cost over-run on Saothar 44
- ◆ Creation of a more user-friendly website and increased use of social media with suitably agreed policies governing their uses and the creation of a specific website for the International Conference.
- ◆ Creating a cadre of employer led companies and state and semi-state organisations willing to co-sponsor education initiatives, publications, and events.
- ◆ Boosting the number of trade unions advertising in Saothar and Saothar 50.
- ◆ A return to co-operation in the swapping with like-minded labour history publications, nationally and internationally, so that the ILHS Library has a broader selection of items for researchers.
- ◆ Encouraging trades councils and trade unions to become more involved in our events, perhaps having one designated trade union event per annum in their own premises might foster increased awareness of the Society.
- ◆ Having initiatives with primary and secondary schools, and in co-operation with their trade unions particularly in Dublin to visit the premises and see their heritage; the library; banners and other artifacts – perhaps through an ILHS liaison officer.

AGM Talks

- 2015 Dr. Ann Mathews: *The Separation Women- Marriage & the British Army from the Crimea to WW1.*
- 2016 Pdraig Yeates: *Another View of the Rising.*
- 2017 Emerging Voices of Irish Labour History: Luke Dineen: *The Derry Lockout 1924*
- * Elaine Sugrue and Gerard Madden apologised in advance of the event.
- 2018 Dr Mike Mecham: *William Walker Revisited: A Tribute to John W Boyle.*
- 2019 Liam Cahill: *The Limerick Soviet: Remembered and Re-evaluated*
- 2020 Francis Devine *Irish Communists Remembered* (deferred)

Special Events

- May 2014 With DDC SIPTU James Curry on Rosie Hackett, Connolly Room, Liberty Hall.
- 21 October 2014 ILHS Member Jack O' Connor spoke on the Centenary of the founding of the Irish Neutrality League an event organised by PANA Connolly Room, Liberty Hall.
- 23 October 2014 With DDC SIPTU Emmet O'Connor on *How International was Larkinism?* Connolly Room, Liberty Hall
- 8 November 2014 Barry Desmond -The Labour Party in Limerick & Charles Callan on John Ryan & the Limerick OHPTU, 1908 at the inaugural conference of the Limerick Labour History Conference, at the Mechanics Institute. A donation of Saothar volumes were given to colleagues here.
- November 2015 CWU William Norton House NCR Francis Devine *'History of the Postal Workers'*
- December 2015 Linen Hall Library Belfast Theresa Moriarty The Linen Workers and Mary Galway *'Our lives should not be sweated'*: Belfast women workers 1910-1915' preceded by presentation of volumes of Saothar to the Linen Hall Library as well and a historic visit to the Crown Bar afterwards.
- 12 May 2016 ILHS-SIPTU launch of Saothar 41; at a well-attended event hosted by SIPTU in the Connolly Room/Cois Life Bar at which Stefan Braun one of the co-authors (along with Stefan Berger)of an international media review piece in Saothar 41 on *:International Socialist Responses to the Easter Rising in Ireland in 1916.* whose visit was paid for by sponsors PES.
- 2016 Labour Party-PES 1916 Symposium included ILHS member speakers Tanaiste and Labour Party Leader Joan Burton T.D. Jack O'Connor G.P. SIPTU; Aodhan O'Riordan T.D.; Pdraig Yeates with one of the sessions being chaired by Vice President Fionnuala Richardson.
- May 2017 A conference exploring *'Labour and Nationalism'* in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales took place at the University of Huddersfield. The conference was organised by the Society for the Study of Labour History, with the support of the ILHS, the

- Scottish Labour History Society and Llafur: The Welsh People's History Society. ILHS members, Emmet O'Connor, James Curry, Adrian Grant, and D.R. O'Connor Lysaght spoke on *various aspects of Irish labour and nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries*. John Feeley and Eddie Soye also attended.
- 28-9 July 2017 Sligo, Ballaghadrreen, and Gurteen: society members John Feely; Pdraig Yeates and Jack O'Connor took part and helped organise the *Markievicz & Partridge Remembrance event*. A couple of weeks earlier an event was held in Ballaghaderreen Cemetery to visit William Partridge's grave. Members of the Dublin-based Clé Club laid a wreath at Partridge's grave with music from piper Noel Pocock and after lunch visited the local Douglas Hyde Centre in Portahard, Co Roscommon where former SIPTU President Des Geraghty delivered the William Partridge Commemorative Lecture followed by an evening of song. Clé Club cathaoirleach Des Geraghty recalled how his late brother, Hugh Geraghty, who died in 2007, had written a biography of William Partridge. "Hugh has established that William Partridge was indeed a most significant figure of Irish Labour, clearly deserving of much greater recognition than he has received in the last 100 years,". The Society co-organised an event as part of the Dublin Festival of History. A very well-attended seminar took place in Pearse Street Library, with several speakers, including Vice President Fionnuala Richardson and Pat Bolger on the theme of *Ireland and the Russian Revolution*
- October 2017 An event was held in Bray, in association with the Bray & District Trades Council to mark the centenary of the foundation of the Trades Council. Several ILHS members featured in the mixed ILHS/Bray TC programme. Emmet O'Connor spoke at the UTOPIA: DYSTOPIA event hosted by the TCD Long Room Hub on *the Irish Left and Soviet Russia 1917-1943*
- November 2017 President and Honorary President Jack McGinley and Francis Devine were among the speakers at the invite of the Ard Mheara, Micheal Mac Donncha on the *Anti-Conscription Campaign -100 Years on*.
- 22 January 2018 Wexford County Library *Remembering Brendan Corish* with papers/speeches from Richard & Helen Corish; Barry Desmond; Tony Brown; Niall Green; Brendan Halligan; Brendan Howlin T.D.; Jack McGinley; Fionnuala Richardson
- and the President of Wexford T.C. A paper from Honorary President, Francis Devine was not read due to time issues.
- January 2019 Gresham Hotel in association with the Labour Party, on *the Centenary of The Democratic Programme* Speakers Charles Callan; Rayner Lysaght; Emmet O'Connor; Jack O'Connor; Alex White; Brendan Howlin T.D. Mags Murphy attended a meeting with the ILHS to plan and facilitate this event.
- Recent Autumn Conferences**
- 1 November 2014 Beggars Bush *We serve neither King nor Kaiser*.
Speakers: Pdraig Yeates; Theresa Moriarty; John Cunningham; John Horne; Brendan Byrne; James Curry; Catriona Crowe; Brian Hanley & Peter Rigney.
- 9th-11th October 2015 Liberty Hall in conjunction with DDC & Equality Committee SIPTU Labour in 1915 on the cusp of the Revolutionary Year
Keynote Speaker President Michael D Higgins.
- The Society was deeply honoured that the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, accepted our invitation to provide the opening address to the conference, on the theme of: *'After the Lockout- The Options for the Poor.'* which received welcome funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht under the Co-operation with Northern Ireland funding scheme which allowed two colleagues from UNISON, a mother and daughter to attend our events.
Among the speakers were: Dan O'Neill (YWN); Rodney Rice; Pdraig Yeates; Seamus Dooley; (Hedge School); Theresa Moriarty; James Curry; Francis Devine; Nell Regan; Catriona Crowe; Joe Mooney; Chris McGimpsey; Brian Hughes; Mary Mc Auliffe; Fionnuala Walsh; & Emmet O'Connor.
- 22nd October 2016 ILHS Beggars Bush *Leaving 1916 and Entering 1917*
Speakers: Charles Callan- Peadar Macken 1878-1916; Michael Halpenny – Jacknives & Buckskins in Frongoch Camp; Sarah-Anne Buckley Child Welfare & childhood in 1917; Paul Ennis on SILH 14; Rayner Lysaght on SILH 15; Pdraig Yeates The ITUC & Labour Party Archive; Hugo McGuinness- Street Fighting Men East Walls resistance to the British Army Donal Fallon on Richard O'Carroll.
- 21st October 2017 ILHS Beggars Bush *Seán O'Casey, Ireland & The Russian Revolution*. Christopher Murray spoke on 'O'Casey's Union Men as described in his writings', Martin Maguire on 'Protestant, Republicans and Revolutionaries in the time of Sean O'Casey', Manus O'Riordan speaking on 'O'Casey and O'Riordans on the 1956 Hungarian Uprising'. Paul O'Brien spoke on 'O'Casey and the Soviet Union', Helena Sheehan discussed 'Irish Communists at the International Lenin School', and Emmet O'Connor spoke on 'The Irish left and Soviet Russia, 1917-1943'. Conference was followed by the launch of "*When Ireland went Red*" *The Soviet Experiment 1918 - 1923*, a new publication by Brian Kenny co-sponsored by the ILHS; Umiskin Press and ILHS trustee Pat Bolger.
- October 2018 MAC Belfast: *Centenary of William Walker 1870-1918*
Speakers Mike Mecham; Emmet O'Connor; Myrtle Hill; Sean Byers; Chris McGimpsey; Owen Reidy; Declan Kearney; Joe Bowers; Patricia McKeown; Alison Millar; Francis Devine.

October 2019 Forsa HQ Nerney's Court/ILHS Beggars Bush: *60 Years of the ICTU 1959-2019*

Speakers: Patricia King; Pat Bolger; Francis Devine; Jack O'Connor; Gerry Murphy, Alison Millar, John King, Peter Nolan, Patricia McKeown, Peter Bunting, Eoin Ronayne; Seamus Dooley.

17th October 2020 ILHS Beggars Bush

Remembering the 1920's

Speakers: Peter Rigney on The Munitions Strike 1920-1; Francis Devine The Vehicle Permits Dispute & (virtually) Margaret Ward on Constance Markievicz as Minister for Labour.

Hugh Geraghty Memorial Lecture 2015 21 October Cle Club ' *Went on to Organise' Centenary of murder of Joe Hill: Francis Devine*

2017 Cle Club ' *Railway Workers in Ireland post WW1*': Peter Rigney

2018 Mayfest Cle Club: ' *Jim Connell -Composer of the Red Flag* ' Francis Devine

2019 Mayfest Cle Club ' *The Belfast Engineering Strike* ' -Padraig Yeates.

2020 Mayfest Cle Club (deferred) ' *The Life of Dan Murphy in Public Service* ' -Tom Geraghty

Book Launches.

September 2014 ILHS Beggars Bush

Barry Mc Loughlin: *Fighting for Republican Spain*

December 2017 Teachers Club

Dr Connal Parr: *Inventing the Myth: Political Passions & the Ulster Protestant Imagination.*

October 2018 MAC Belfast Sean Byers & Francis

Devine: *William Walker Centenary Essays*

October 2019 FORSA Nerney's Court

Dr Mike Meham: *William Walker: Social Activist & Belfast Labourist 1870-1918*

Finally I want to thank all who worked very hard for the society over the last 6 and a half years, in particular the officers, Ross Higgins as business editor of Saothar, the staff at CRM Design and Print, producers of Saothar; SILH and the Newsletter; our successive editors; our solicitors; auditors; trustees; individual and corporate membership and kindred organisations; government departments who provided funding and advice; colleagues on the decade of centenaries committee and in particular the two senior officers of ICTU Patricia King and Owen Reidy who in the last three years have given great aid to the society as well as conference space at ICTU BDC's and NIC-ICTU events.

I would also like to pay tribute to SIPTU; FORSA; UNISON; UNITE; INTO; ASTI & NIPSA and their officers and the trades councils who are currently in benefit members for their cooperation and support.

It is always invidious to single out certain people, however I do so because Seamus Moriarty covered Ed Penrose's absence at last year's conference due to a family bereavement; Ed Soye does considerable photographic work for the society; Fionnuala Richardson has contributed greatly as Secretary; International Secretary; and more recently as Vice President particularly in my absence and is our link to the Peoples College.

Ed Penrose and Kevin Murphy do an incredible amount of work very quietly on behalf of the Society. They are the quiet and sometimes forgotten men of the group however between meetings and events they are the glue that holds the Society together. Ed's role as premises manager deserves recognition on its own and I hope Francis Devine's motion re a core of volunteers trained to aid Ed in the running of the premises going forward in his golden years will give him and his family

some respite after the pandemic.

I want to pay tribute to those active Honorary Presidents Francis Devine with whom I have travelled all over the island of Ireland; England and Scotland over the last decade and to his wife Ann Riordan, his knowledge of his subject is awesome and his list of contacts amazing as well as his musical work with the MUI; Howth Singing Circle and the launch of his latest CD with Steve Byrne and friends -an ownerless corner of the earth.

Teresa Moriarty and Emmet O'Connor for their continuing scholarship and energy; and Barry Desmond and his wife Stella for the enormous donations of records; memorabilia; and particularly aged photographs with legends from one of Irelands greatest photographic institutions -Ross-they are a great treasure for the ILHS and Ed will be displaying some of them in rotation in the coming months and years. I also want to pay tribute to my wife Helen; for her ongoing technological assistance; ceding much space to labour history records and publications at home; and her advice on grammar; what goes on via twitter and other technological pods; casts; links etc.

I want finally to thank the man who introduced me to the Society a long time ago, John P Swift, now a retired trade union official, still researching and shortly to publish a short biography on Brendan Scott. John is known for his biography on his father published by Gill & Macmillan after whom today's award is named.

He also brought to publication his father's memoir *Told in Toberona (2008)* and in 2012, *Striking A Chord A Trade Union History of Musicians in Ireland* both published by Watchword. I thank John for his support of the Society and his regular contribution to labour history via *Sound Post the newsletter of the Musicians Union of Ireland*, now part of SIPTU.

So as the late comedian Bob Hope used to say - 'thanks for the memories', I will continue to remain in membership and have given commitments to both Shay and Ed re publications; events; accessions in the library and the International Conference whether in 2021 or 2022.

Slán agus b'oir bua,

go dtí an ocaid oiriunach arís.

Dr Kieran Jack McGinley

President ILHS 5 September 2020.