



HISTORY OF THE IRISH-AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC SOCIETY

The Irish View

Presentation by Mr. Michael Gilmore



Mr. Jimmy Sheehan

The initial idea for the Irish-American Orthopaedic Society (IAOS) evolved from a discussion between the late Dr. Jim Devlin, an orthopaedic surgeon in Midland, Michigan, and Mr. James Sheehan, an orthopaedic surgeon in Cappagh Hospital in Dublin.

Dr. Devlin had visited Mr. Sheehan to study knee arthroplasty in the 1970s and spent a number of days at Cappagh Hospital.

It was then that an idea flourished between the two surgeons to have an organisation which would encompass both sides of the Atlantic – helping to develop friendships between orthopaedic surgeons in Ireland and in North America, as well facilitate the placement of Irish orthopaedic residents in prestigious orthopaedic training centres throughout the United States.



The plans were finalised during a visit of Mr. Sheehan to Midland when he was invited there to lecture. The first official meeting was held in Killarney, May 16-20, 1979.

At that stage a very generous sponsorship, which has been a feature of our meetings, was granted by Howmedica (and in their various incarnations since then).

The American visitors were presented with a gift of a paperweight supplied by Howmedica. And Mr. Sheehan, himself, sponsored the commemorative coin for each attendee and also the silver Irish-American commemorative presidential medallion which was made by Brereton, a Dublin firm of silversmiths.



At first, an informal, inaugural meeting was held on a Saturday, February 25, 1978 in the hallway outside of a large Texas auditorium where there were no chairs. The meeting was strictly somber and, understandably, very short!

It was decided that there would be meetings every two years in Ireland and in the sixth year, the meeting would be held in the United States.

The first “official” IAOS meeting for members was held in 1979 in Killarney, Ireland with Dr. James Devlin as President (IAOS President, 1979-1981).

IAOS Presidents

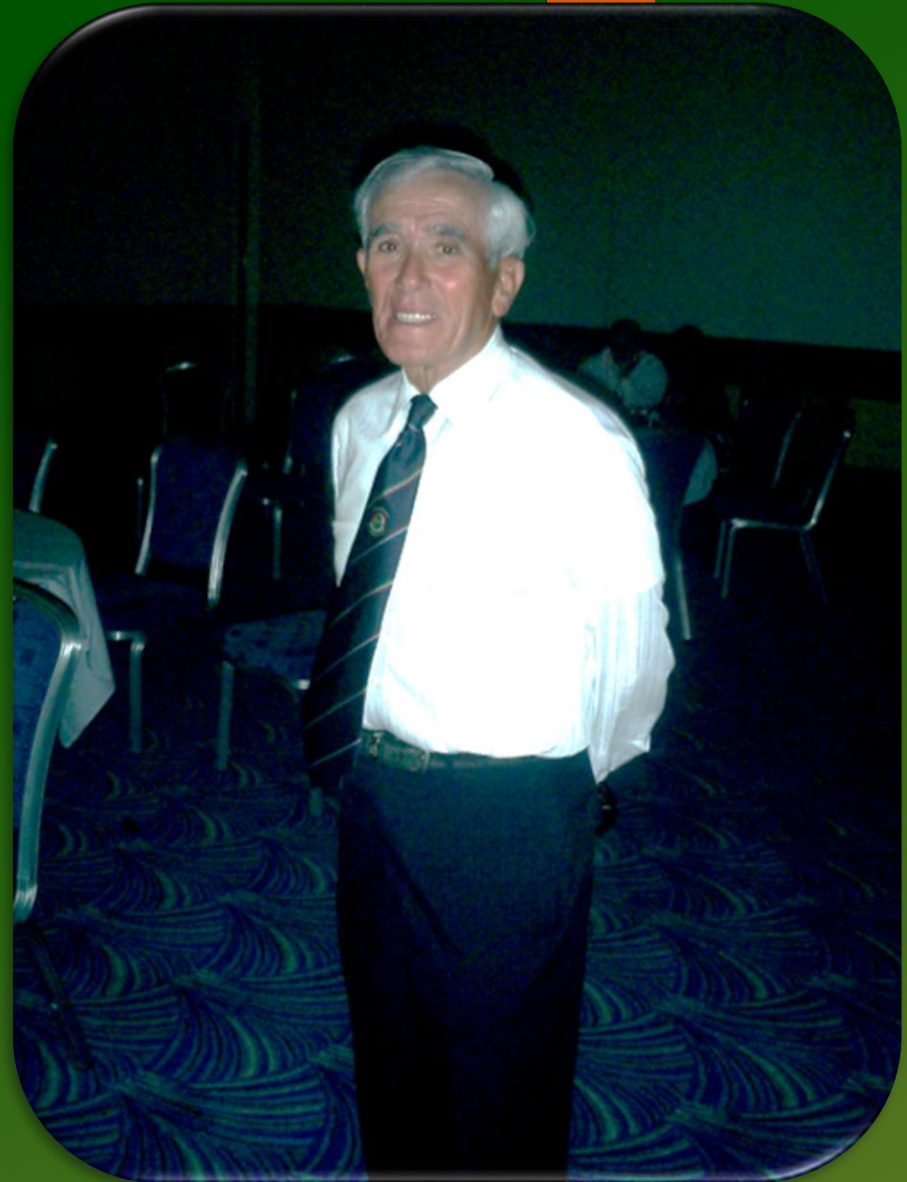
1979	Dr. James Devlin	<i>Killarney</i>
1981	Mr. Michael Browne	
1983	Mr. Richard Kilfoyle	
1985	Mr. John Boyd Dunlop	<i>Galway</i>
1987	Dr. Joseph Flynn	<i>Sligo</i>
1989	Mr. Jimmy Sheehan	<i>Chicago</i>
1991	Dr. Howard Sweeney	<i>Dublin/Belfast</i>
1993	Dr. Robert McLaughlin	<i>Killarney (Pan Celtic)</i>
1995	Mr. Michael Moloney	<i>Virginia</i>
1997	Dr. Leo Quinn	<i>Adare</i>
1999	Dr. Pat Carolan	<i>Mount Juliet</i>
2001	Mr. Richard O'Connell	<i>San Diego</i>
2003	Dr. Bob Kane	<i>Galway</i>
2005	Mr. Michael Gilmore	<i>Cork</i>
2007	Dr. Bruce Baker	<i>Sullivan's Island, South Carolina</i>
2009	Dr. Colleen Fay	<i>The Heritage</i>
2011	Dr. John Knight	<i>Galway</i>
2013	Mr. Bill Quinlan	<i>Galway</i>
2015	Dr. Eddie McDevitt	<i>Westport (MAC) 2016</i>
2017	Dr. Don O'Malley	<i>Westport (MAC) 2018</i>
2019	Mr. Derek Bennett	<i>Cape Cod</i>




Dr. Michael Browne President, 1981

The 1981 IAOS President was Dr. Michael Browne from Stanford, Connecticut.

He was a man who was exceptionally proud of, and extremely passionate about, his Irish heritage. He was also one of the co-founders of the IAOS.





Galway, 1985

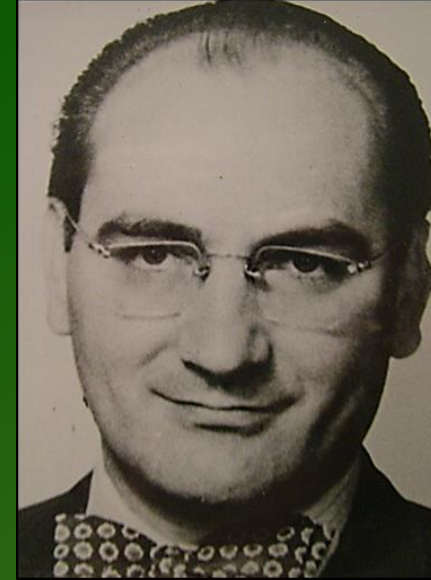
Mr. John Boyd Dunlop

President

Mr. John Boyd Dunlop was the IAOS president during the 1985 Galway meeting.

He was the grandson of the Edinburgh veterinary surgeon who had patented the pneumatic tyre before moving to Belfast and then to Dublin, where Boyd Dunlop was born. He worked at Dr. Steeven's Hospital in Dublin, which is now the headquarters of the HSE in the Dublin region.

Galway, 1985



I had joined the society when I came back from Edinburgh in 1983 at the insistence of my good friend, Mr. Fred Kenny, and in 1985 the IAOS had a very enjoyable meeting in Galway. It was hosted by the four surgeons who were then working in Galway –Albert Wilson, Joe Kelly, Roman Gorczak, and me. We hosted 100 delegates and at least 100 significant others for the scientific meeting and for the entertainment. Each of the four of us escorted 50 of the two hundred attendees for an evening's entertainment at various venues throughout the city.

Sunrise over Galway Bay



University College, Galway

National University of Ireland - Galway,
on a bright, Spring morning.





Sligo, 1987 Dr. Joseph Flynn President

During the 1987 Sligo meeting, the IAOS President was
Dr. Joseph Flynn from Orlando, Florida, USA.

Sligo, 1987



The meeting was run jointly by Mr. Fintan Shannon and Mr. Brendan Healy, and was held at St. Angela's Training College in Sligo.

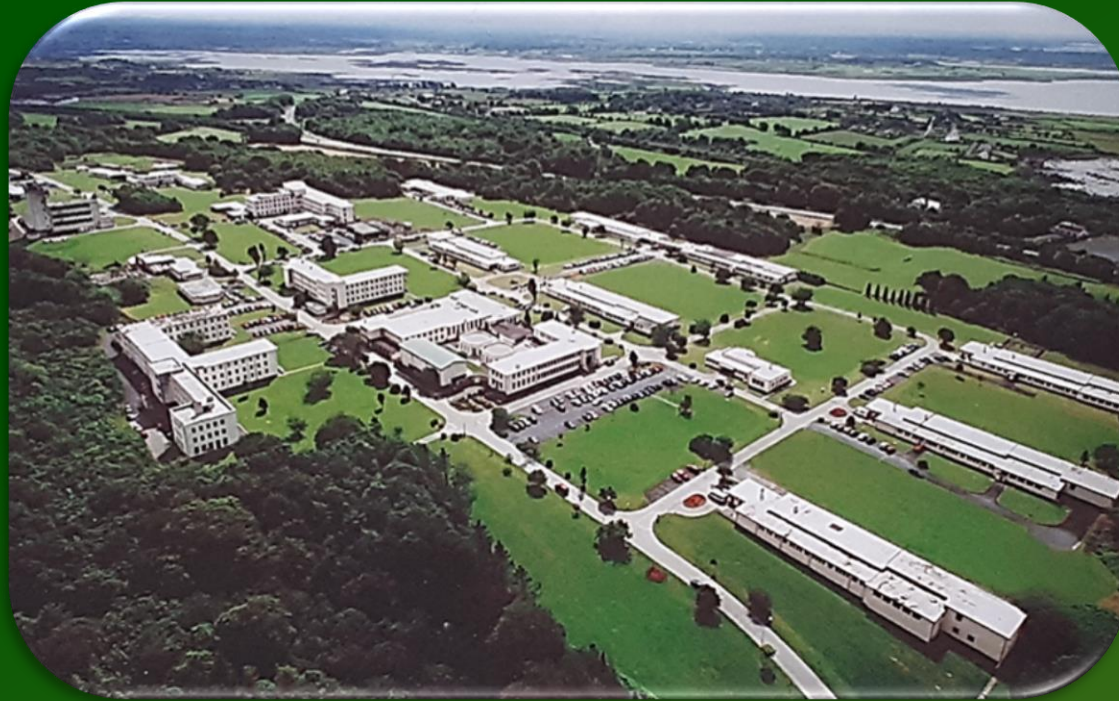
Ben Bulbin



Lough Gill



Merlin Park Hospital



Of note: Only in 1978-79 had the orthopaedic unit opened in Sligo, having previously been run from Galway, and the orthopaedic services of the West and Northwest were run from Galway's Merlin Park Hospital. They obviously were not able to cater fully to the orthopaedic requirements of the total West and Northwest Health Boards.



Chicago, 1989

Mr. Jimmy Sheehan

President

In 1989, the President was Mr. Jimmy Sheehan from St. Vincent's Hospital in Dublin and Cappagh Hospital. The meeting was held in Chicago, hosted by Dr. Howard Sweeney. This was an excellent meeting and, indeed, because so few Irish were travelling on that occasion, we were each organised to stay with a host American family.

Chicago, 1989

What did impress me at that time when I finally linked up with my American host at the Chicago meeting ... was the length of day in which the orthopaedic surgeons in the United States actually worked. There were ward rounds in the morning, theatre sessions, clinics in the afternoon to accommodate school children and workers, and clinics again in the evening, with barely any down time.

The golf on that particular occasion was to be held at Medinah Country Club, later famous for its Ryder Cup involvement. But, due to a prior commitment – indeed it could be said that this was a command performance – I had to go to a performance by Daniel Barenboim, a lunch-time concert, which was indeed most enjoyable.



Howard and Kathleen Sweeney

Dublin & Belfast, 1991

Dr. Howard Sweeney

President

The 1991 meeting, held in Dublin and Belfast, rotated among three or four hospitals. Dr. Howard Sweeney was the current IAOS President, and Mr. Jimmy Sheehan and other Dublin surgeons played host.

We all took a coach trip to Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast for the scientific meeting and clinical presentations that had been arranged.

From my own recollection, I am fairly confident that Mr. James Nixon from Northern Ireland either delivered the lecture in Trinity College at the dinner or, if not, said the “Grace before meals” in Latin.



Killarney, 1993


Dr. Robert McLaughlin

President

In 1993, the President was Dr. Robert McLaughlin from Virginia, USA, and the meeting was held in Killarney, Ireland as part of a Pan-Celtic meeting.

Killarney, 1993





Virginia, 1995

Mr. Michael Moloney

President



In 1995, the president was Mr. Michael Moloney from Limerick and Croom Hospital. The meeting was held in Virginia, USA.

Unfortunately we were unable to attend that particular meeting, but we returned later to tour with our very good American friends, Bill and Janice Johnston and Paul and Libby Fitzgerald.

Indeed the beauty of the Irish-American Orthopaedic Society is the long-term friendships formed with fantastic people.



Adare, 1997

Dr. Leo Quinn

President

In 1997, the President was Dr. Leo Quinn from Boca Raton, Florida. The meeting was held in Adare, Co. Limerick and hosted by Mr. Michael Moloney, who worked in the area.

My one recollection and memory from that event was of Oliver Reed, a very famous actor who also enjoyed his “wee drop” – I am unsure as to who needed more support – Oliver Reed at the bar or Mr. Moloney in attempting to give his welcome address at the banquet that evening!

Adare, 1997



Mount Juliet, 1999

Dr. Pat Carolan

President

In 1999, the IAOS President was Dr. Pat Carolan from Connecticut, USA, who had very strong connections to Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

The meeting was hosted in Mount Juliet in Kilkenny by Mr. Tadhg O'Sullivan from Waterford. This, again, was an excellent meeting and well attended by both Irish and American surgeons.

For those of you who play golf, Mount Juliet is a golf “mecca” and is due to hold one of the Ryder Cup outings in the not too distant future.



Mount Juliet, 1999





San Diego, 2001

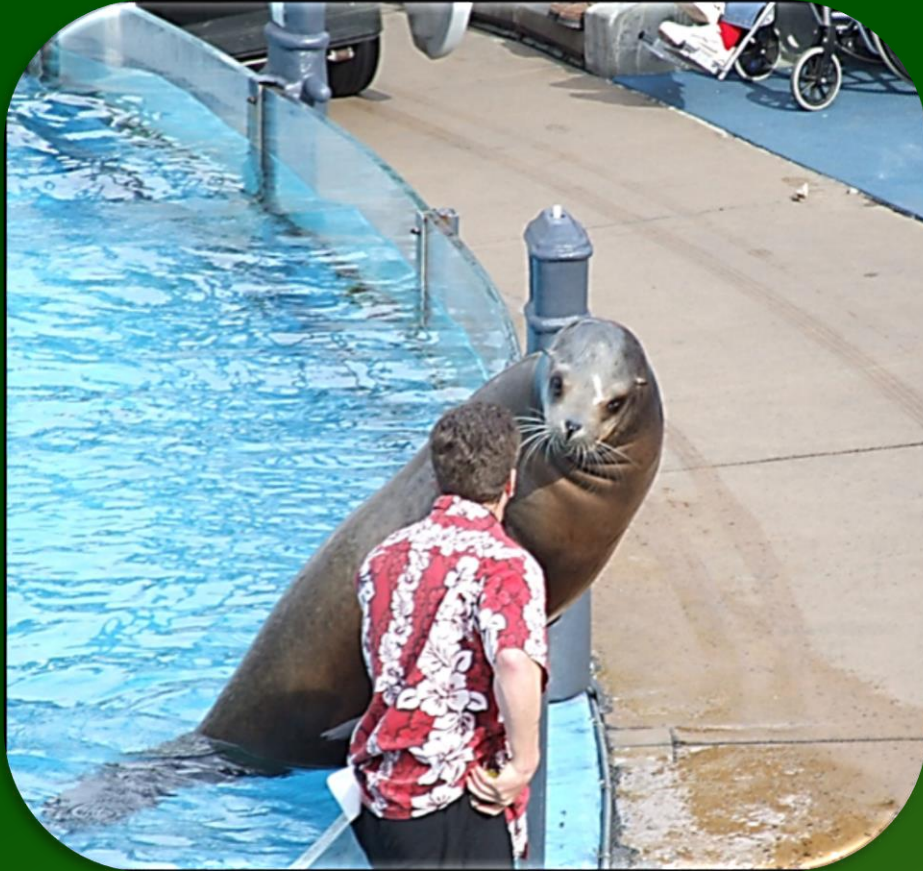
Mr. Richard O'Connell

President

In 2001, the President was Mr. Richard O'Connell from Wexford. The meeting was to be held in San Diego, but due to the unfortunate intervention of the 9/11 atrocity, this meeting had to be postponed because of travel restrictions.

A large, non-refundable deposit had been paid to the hotel venue in Coronado Island, so a somewhat poorly attended meeting had to be run before the end of April 2002, or else forfeit the deposit.

Those of us who did attend enjoyed the meeting and were very well looked after by Dr. Pat Carolan.



San Diego, 2002

“You talkin’ to me?”

Those who attended the San Diego meeting in 2002, thoroughly enjoyed the sites and activities.

Galway, 2003

Dr. Bob Kane

President

In 2003, the president was Dr. Bob Kane from New York, USA, and this meeting was again held in Galway where it was extremely well attended.

The social side of the meeting was also very much enjoyed, and on Friday night more than 100 guests attended a banquet in Cloonacauneen Castle.

On that occasion, during a business meeting, a candidate for the presidency was selected ... in his absence.



Cloonacauneen Castle





Cork, 2005

Mr. Michael Gilmore

President

In May 2005, I was on a golf holiday in Arona, Northern Italy and I received a phone call from Dr. Bob Kane asking if I would be prepared to take on the duty of the IAOS presidency? I was very happy indeed to do so.

The 2005 meeting was held in Cork in September and organised from Limerick by Mr. Michael Moloney.

The Cork surgeons attendance was low, even though the meeting was held in their vicinity and a free invitation to dinner was made to all the local surgeons.



During my term as president I set out to try to increase the membership among orthopaedic surgeons on the island of Ireland, North and South. I wrote to each surgeon individually, setting out the aims of the society and its roots, trying to debunk the feeling widely held in Northern Ireland that we were funding Noraid. This task was made none the easier by the very anti-British historical lecture which had been delivered at every meeting by the late Dr. Michael Browne (IAOS President 1981-1983).

Following executive meeting discussions, I took on the task, with trepidation, of trying to appease Dr. Browne, advising him that we hoped to institute a Michael Browne lectureship to be delivered by a local historical figure at each meeting, but to no avail. He resigned his membership which was most regrettable in that he was a founding member of the society.


While I wrote to all of the surgeons in Northern Ireland as well as in the Republic, the only reply I had from Northern Ireland was from a retired surgeon who wished me luck, but no orthopaedic surgeon from Northern Ireland has as yet signed up to become a member of the society. This is rather unfortunate given that the Irish Orthopaedic Association is a 32 county association and is very well attended also by the Northern orthopaedic surgeons.



Also during my time as president I addressed the Irish Orthopaedic Association meeting at the Lyrath Estate in Kilkenny regarding the falling membership of IAOS. I pointed out that many of the people in the room had benefited from an Irish-American Orthopaedic Society bursary or sponsorship to the American Academy annual meeting. However, very few reciprocated by joining up as members.

Initially, a bursary of approximately \$15,000 was awarded to one candidate per year to help defray his or her expenses while doing a fellowship in the United States. This was obviously welcomed by the successful candidate but was not viewed perhaps in the same light by those who had applied and had not been successful. Indeed, in my own unit in Merlin Park Hospital in Galway there were two people who had applied and one had been successful but the other not. The unsuccessful candidate still holds a grudge, which is rather unfortunate.

Because of the fact that it was not possible to sponsor more than one person for a fellowship on account of the cost, it was decided that any senior registrar at fourth-year level attending the American Academy meeting would be sponsored for their full expenses. This applied to all fourth-year SPRs on the island of Ireland, North and South, but again very little reciprocation from the point of view of those seeking full-time membership.



Presently each fourth-year registrar who attends the meeting can apply to the Irish-American Orthopaedic Society for some help in defraying expenses following attendance at the meeting. Also, because of the deteriorating state of the presidential ribbon, it was decided to commission a new silver presidential chain of office with the original medallion presented by Mr. Sheehan as the main focus on this.

I took over as President at the Cork meeting in 2005, and the next meeting was held in Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, where I had the privilege of wearing the new Presidential chain of office, commissioned to replace the ageing green ribbon.

At that stage also, the Emeritus medallion, conceived by Mr. Richard O'Connell, was launched, and has been given to each past president ever since.

Cork, 2005



Cork, 2005



Cork



Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, 2007

Dr. Bruce Baker President

In 2007, the President was Dr. Bruce Baker from Syracuse, New York, USA, and this meeting was held at Sullivan's Island, North Carolina, a resort which had been totally devastated only a few years previously by hurricanes.

It was an excellent meeting, enjoyed by all who attended.



Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, 2007



Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, 2007



Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, 2007



Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, 2007





The Heritage, 2009

Dr. Colleen Fay

President

In 2009, the IAOS President was Dr. Colleen Fay and the meeting on this occasion was held at The Heritage in Killenard, Co. Laois, in combination with the Irish Orthopaedic Association meeting.

This indeed was a sign of things to come. On our own, we found it was not possible to hold regular IAOS meetings.



The Heritage, 2009



The Heritage, 2009

The Heritage, 2009



The Heritage, 2009



Galway, 2011, 2013

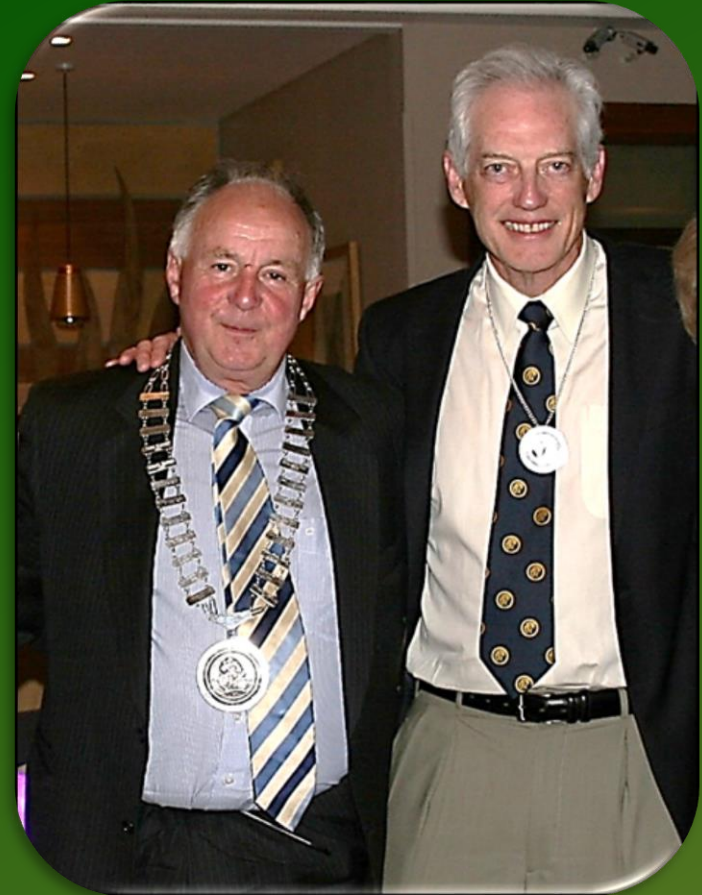
Presidents

Dr. John Knight and Mr. Bill Quinlan

The 2011 meeting was held in Galway and Dr. John Knight from Walnut Creek, California was the President. I hosted it.

Only 25 attendees turned up – quality not quantity. At that stage, we felt that we had no choice but to run joint meetings with the Irish Orthopaedic Association, with encouragement from both Mr. Paddy Kenny and Mr. Bill Quinlan, who were both heavily involved in the association.

The next meeting in 2013, was again held in Galway in conjunction with the Irish Orthopaedic Association. USA attendance was low.



Galway, 2013



Galway, 2013



Sunset over Galway Bay



Las Vegas, 2015 Dr. Eddie McDevitt taking over the Presidency from Mr. Bill Quinlan

The 2015 meeting was held in Las Vegas, as part of the annual AAOS conference.





Westport, 2016

Dr. Eddie McDevitt

President

In 2016, the IAOS decided to tie up with the Mayo Arthroplasty Conference (MAC) being run by our incumbent president, Mr. Derek Bennett, so our meetings in 2016 and 2018 were held in conjunction with the MAC meetings in Westport.

Dr. Eddie McDevitt was IAOS President at our first 2016 Westport meeting.



Westport, 2018 Dr. Don O'Malley President

Again, in conjunction with the Mayo Arthroplasty Conference (MAC), the IAOS held a Friday meeting in April of 2018 with Dr. Don O'Malley as IAOS President.

Westport





Cape Cod, 2019

Mr. Derek Bennett

President

The most recent meeting was held in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with Mr. Derek Bennett as IAOS President. This most enjoyable and informative meeting was hosted by Dr. Don O'Malley and was well-attended by American surgeons, though Irish surgeons' attendance was low.



IRISH-AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC SOCIETY

Help the IAOS to Grow!

It has been difficult to pinpoint exactly why there has been a decline in IAOS membership, but it seems to not just be confined to our Society, but indeed to many societies. There are very few of the younger generation joining, unless their membership is seen to have tremendous benefit to them. Indeed it is even noted that the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) has seen a substantial drop in membership.

Each and every one of us, as IAOS members, should try to reach out to younger orthopaedic surgeons and explain the benefits of belonging to such a fine organization. It is by building positive relationships with medical colleagues across the Atlantic, that our Society celebrates our rich Irish heritage while expanding orthopaedic knowledge, fostering goodwill and cooperation, and bettering the lives of those we reach.