

Association of Third-level Teachers of German in Ireland**Annual General Meeting****Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick****Saturday 8th October 2011**

In Attendance: Mr. Norbert Arnold (Swiss Embassy), Jürgen Barkhoff (TCD), Sheree Borge (CIT), Anna Bredthauer (UCD), Kristin Brogan (ITT), Deirdre Byrnes (NUIG), Úna Carthy (LyIT), Jean Conacher (UL), Sabine Egger (MIC), Carmel Finnan (MIC), Joachim Fischer (UL), Mary Ann Kenny (ITB), Marieke Krajenbrink (UL), Sabine Krobb (UCD), Florian Krobb (NUIM), H.E. Herr Beat Loeliger (Swiss Embassy), Rachel MagShamhráin (UCC), Gillian Pye (UCD), Hermann Rasche (NUIG), Hans Walter Schmidt-Hannisa (NUIG), Christiane Schönfeld (MIC), Arnd Witte (NUIM)

Apologies: Noel Deeney (DIT), Eimear Kelly (AIT), Karin Fichtinger-Grohe (Austria Embassy), H.E. Dr Walter Hagg (Austrian Embassy), Valerie Heffernan (NUIM), Gisela Holfter (UL) Catriona Leahy (TCD), Moray McGowan (TCD), Rosanna Molloy (WIT), Jeff Morrison (NUIM), Pól O'Dochartaigh (Ulster/AGS), Siobhan O Donovan (UCD)

Minutes AGM 2010

Una distributed copies of the minutes of the 2010 AGM.

Two amendments to the 2010 Minutes were proposed and agreed: Christiane Schönfeld and Sabine Egger's names had been incorrectly listed as UL and should be changed to MIC. The spelling of Christiane's surname was corrected.

Matters Arising

Kristin reported that the website has now been launched in its new bilingual format and she thanked Clive Earls officially for all his work. She also noted that Clive should be asked if he would like to continue as webmaster for the coming year. It was also proposed that he would be named as webmaster in the contact details on the website.

Kristin also noted that in the previous year the Association had used the AGM as an opportunity to collate information about current student numbers in German at third level. It was proposed that this practice be continued and that members should supply information about students according to category (beginners, advanced, German for special purposes/German with business, etc.) The committee will solicit this information via email to the institutionally based contact members.

Announcements

Retirements: Prof Theo Harden (UCD)

New appointments: Prof Anne Fuchs to a chair at St. Andrews; Prof Florian Krobb as Editor of the *Jahrbuch der Raabe Gesellschaft* and *Austrian Studies* and Trustee, MHRA. New DAAD Lektorinnen: Anna Bredthauer (UCD) and Maren Conrad (UCC)

(OeAD Lektorin: Marion Greiner (UCC))

Election of new officers

Kristin Brogan and Úna Carthy stood down as Joint-Chair and Secretary: Una has served one two-year term of office and one supplementary year and Kristin was co-opted in 2007 before being ratified as Joint-Chair in 2008, serving two years until 2010 and re-elected for a further year in 2010. There were no volunteers at the AGM who expressed an interest in joining the committee. It was decided to co-opt two new committee members over the coming weeks and to ratify them at the next AGM.

Gillian Pye formally thanked Kristin and Úna for all their hard work.

Treasurer's report

See attached documentation.

Sheree reported that it has been decided to ring-fence a sum of money each year in order to ensure that future editions of the Jahrbuch can be funded. If sponsorship is obtained and this ring-fenced money is not required for publishing costs, the Association may, on consultation with members, put this money towards another use.

Rachel clarified that travelling expenses had been refunded to her as she had to make a number of journeys related to Jahrbuch editing and committee meetings, for which there were no other sources of funding available.

Secretary's report

Úna reported that she had begun using a practice of blind copying mailshots to protect the identity of Association members.

Yearbook: editors' report

Rachel confirmed that the Jahrbuch may also be guest edited.

The position of the Jahrbuch editor on the committee was clarified as an ex-officio one. It was noted that when Rachel begins to transition out of her current editing duties in 2012, another editor will have to take her place on the committee. This will be ratified at next year's AGM.

Brief reports from associated organisations: AGS and WIGS, IoTs Languages Strategy Network & Business German in Ireland

Gillian suggested that it would be useful to strengthen ties with other organisations with similar interests and that brief reports on their activities at the ATLTGI AGM would help to do this. The current AGS president Pól O'Dochartaigh is also keen to strengthen ties to the ATLTGI and regretted being unable to attend this year's meeting. It was noted that due to heavy political and economic pressure on the sector in the UK, both the AGS and WIGS have been engaged in lobbying on various issues this year. This has meant that they have built up a wealth of useful materials and lines of argument on which the ATLTGI may draw as the Association will most likely have to strengthen its lobby in the Irish context.

It was also noted that Irish postgraduates who are members of the AGS and WIGS may apply for travel bursaries from these organisations.

The next AGS conference will be held in Edinburgh (April 2-4 2012) and there will be an open WiGS conference from 28-30 June 2012 in Dublin (UCD).

Jean Conacher reported that the National Strategy for Languages, written by the RIA Modern Languages Committee, was launched on Wednesday 5th October.

Kristin reported on the *IoTs Languages Strategy Network* which had its bi-annual meeting on the 7th of October 2011 at CIT. The network had been short-listed for the 2011 European Language Award. Due to funding made available by the Swiss Embassy in Dublin the network produced a language flyer for learners and a website: www.languagesinireland.ie. Kristin is always looking for information/documentation/links that can be uploaded onto the website and shared with the wider MFL community.

Kristin also reported on behalf of the Business German in Ireland Group as Gisela Holfter (UL) had sent her apologies. This group had a very successful meeting together with business representatives at the German Embassy in March 2011 (the tenth anniversary of the group). Last year's *Kuratoriumspreis*, which was awarded to the group by the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce in 2010, is used for a competition "Warum Deutsch?" Next year's meeting will take place in NUIG in March. New members are always welcome.

Co-Chairs' report

Gillian and Kristin reported that the committee has been trying to further improve communication with members and has identified contact members in each institution who have agreed to act as a channel of communication between the committee and members.

It was again noted that the Association needs to increase its profile as a lobbying body for the profession. Since the last AGM the Committee wrote to Swansea University in protest at the proposed cuts to Modern Languages and the Committee will continue to engage in similar actions over the coming year.

Motions: Proposed Constitutional Changes

1.1 Proposal to change the name of the association to German Studies in Ireland (GSI)

In response to feedback that the current acronym ATLTGI is difficult to remember and to say, it was proposed that in order to raise the profile of the Association, the name be changed to something shorter, such as 'GSI'. Kristin and Gillian emphasised that this proposal arose from feedback from members and was not intended as disrespectful towards the hard work carried out by previous members. Gillian also noted that the principle of inclusivity reflected in the current name must continue to be regarded as central to the identity of the Association.

Some members agreed with a name change in principle, but expressed reservations about an exact title, including the need to retain the word 'Association' and the position of the term Irish, which should not look like a simple 'add-on'.

Florian Krobb argued that the current name should be retained for three reasons: 1.) because it is an accurate description of what the Association does and is therefore readily recognisable to non-members; 2.) because German Studies is a term that implies a particular academic focus; 3.) because there are already many organisations that include the words "German Studies" in their names.

It was agreed that members be balloted on a possible name change and asked to decide between the following options: German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI), Irish German Studies Association (IGSA), no name change. This will be done by email, with votes returned by post by a specified deadline.

1.2 Proposal to elect a postgraduate representative to the ATLTGI Committee

It was proposed that in order to further the Association's support for postgraduate students of German, the committee should co-opt one postgraduate member. The term of office for such a member would be one year. Eligible candidates are those studying for a higher research degree and registered at an Irish third-level institution. Candidates should self-nominate by email to Gillian Pye by a deadline in early November (email reminder to be sent out and date to be confirmed) and the selection will be made by the committee on the following basis:

- 1.) Seniority - how far advanced are the candidates in their studies? Priority will be given to those further advanced on the basis that those at earlier stages may have a further opportunity to stand.
- 2.) Institutional affiliation – in order to retain the geographical balance and that between IoTs and Universities.

It was clarified that, as committee member, a postgraduate would be able to claim travelling expenses for attendance at committee meetings and the annual conference.

AOB

Proposal to lengthen the annual conference to a two-day event with conference dinner on a Friday evening; this would give more time to vital networking which is not possible in the current format of the annual event.

Date and venue of next conference/AGM

It was confirmed that UCD would host the next annual conference. It was also proposed to hold the conference slightly later in October – perhaps one or two weeks later than in 2011.