

Report of the Honorary President 2006-2007

The constitution of the Association is a document that is talked about on a very regular basis and consistently year on year both the membership and the executive propose changes to advance the association forward and to adapt to changing environments. This is something that I feel the association has done and is currently doing in a very positive way. There are however a number of sections within the document that were inserted at the formation of the Association in 1990 and which form the corner stone of the Association and have to this date remained unchanged. One of those is the restriction on any one person holding the same position of more than three years without a break of at least one year. This is a position that I found myself in this year, however not through re-election, but more through performing one of the roles of the Immediate Past President, a role that here to now none of my predecessors had been required to perform. Three years as President requires a commitment and dedication that is both highly rewarding but also requires a commitment that over three years consumes significant amounts of time. The last twelve months for me proved challenging for a number of reasons, one being a lack of available time to give the commitment that I would personally have wanted to commit had I been standing for the position. Another challenge that detracted from my ability to perform my duties was an issue that I referred to in my first presidential report for the 2002/03 season. To quote directly from that report, "However what took me by surprise was the range of issues that arose through what I would classify as inappropriate actions taken by people who had no interests in the implications of their action other than to ensure the issues benefited them. This deeply disappointed me during the year as it severely compromised the IUAA on a number of occasions." It is with disappointment that I feel the necessity to refer back to this, but regrettably the selfish actions of a few can erode the selfless actions of many.

The AGM saw the creation of the new position of Registrar. This post was created in response to the changing face of third level education and the creation of non CAO/CAS courses within many third level colleges, many of which the executive felt should be eligible to compete in association championships. The old CAO/CAS requirement was replaced with new requirements, modelled on the new CUSAI requirements, which in turn were created with significant association involvement as the association had one member sitting on the CUSAI subcommittee that compiled the criteria. The responsibility of the Registrar was to ensure the eligibility of athletes within our championships. The post proved very effective and was one of a number of changes designed to give clearer job descriptions and definition to the various executive positions. The other significant change was to the two vice president positions, with one being focused on National development and the other on International development. Both positions proved effective, but will become significantly more effective as integration and evolution with the AAI progresses.

Integration with the AAI has been progressing. The most significant event to take place that provided a noticeable forum for the athletes was the hosting of a Celtic cross country in conjunction with the ISAA. The event was largely organised by an AAI Regional Development Officer and received financial assistance from the AAI. The success of this event resulted from the open mindedness of both the ISAA and the IUAA and the concerted drive of the AAI RDO. It is hoped that this event can be continued, however the rotating nature of this event does require the same interest and

resource from the corresponding NGBs in the UK. An invitation to next years' event has already been received and stands out as an excellent indicator for the future success of this event.

Progress behind the scenes has been slow. The Association has continued to have a representative on the AAI board who has worked closely with the AAI Board members to identify and contribute to the strategic objectives of the AAI. An outline submission has been made to the AAI, to be incorporated into the overall development of the AAI, inclusive of this Association. The AAI has also co-opted an executive member on to one of its review boards, a positive step in the integration process. Throughout the year the AAI Board invited each sub-committee to make a presentation to the board. This opportunity was used to present what is currently being done and the objectives for the future and how they integrate with both the ISAA and the AAI. The interest among AAI board members was strong and genuine, and the presentation was very well received. Over the next twelve months it is hoped that a number of steps will be taken that will result in progress being felt by the athletes and member clubs within the association.

On a more sombre note, Michael Hillery, Honorary President of the Association 1993-1997, passed away during the summer, after a long illness. Michael was one of the founding members of the Association in 1990 and served on the executive through to 2005, when he stepped aside due to ill health. His contribution to the Association over the years was tireless. Cyril White (Hon. President 1990-1993) laid a wreath on behalf of the Association. Michael was also President of ULAC.

Association championships don't happened without the tireless work of host colleges and officials. The host colleges, yet again, delivered championships that any association could be proud of. On behalf of the executive I extend our thanks for all the hard work and commitment that ensured successful championships. I would also like to thank Brian Foley for his continued support and expertise in developing and maintaining the IUAA internet and software technology. The two T&F championships say the introduction of a tiered structure, so as to provide opportunities for the smaller colleges to compete against each other. Although take up was small, it is envisaged that the event will grow over a two to three year period.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues on the executive and hope to continue working with them in the future.

Yours in sport

Stephen Lipson
Honorary President 2006-2007