

In May 2008 the bi-annual House Manager's Meeting was conducted in Israel. The Irish Section, as is customary, sent a delegation because it is vital that this great international service should remain vibrant and available. The IPA promotes international travel and the extension of Servo Per Amikeco in a world in need of kindness.

House Managers meet in Israel

By David McEllin

IPA houses first became a reality in the early years after the foundation of IPA in 1950. The first house (UHU HAUS) was established in 1960 in Germany, it is situated in woodlands in Westphalia, nearby Gimborn Castle the Educational Centre for IPA, and would be familiar to many IPA members from Ireland who attended seminars there. The purpose of the IPA houses was to provide affordable accommodation for our members and their families internationally. Ireland features prominently with five houses located at strategic locations; it is the envy of many Sections.

Initially the International House Manager's meetings developed as informal gatherings to discuss problems, make rules and bring about improvements in the running of the houses; eventually the PEB recognised the value of this and took the house section under the wing of the International Social Commission, where later the Chairperson was Phyllis Nolan of Ireland.



Meeting in progress



The Irish delegates Dave McEllin, Phyllis Nolan & Denis Dunne



D McEllin at the Wailing Wall

Over the years the IHMMs were held in IPA houses and Police colleges in Britain and Ireland and Western Europe. Now with the involvement of countries like Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Hungary etc the venues are becoming more attractive and so in 2008 Israel was chosen. The Irish delegation survived a difficult journey and sleep deprivation; despite this we resolutely promoted our motion to have greater clarity in the rules to distinguish between 'official' and 'non-official' houses, which was carried. Increased subvention for future meetings from the PEB was also agreed, as was a Spanish motion for

uniformity of booking forms in view of the proliferation of extra countries worldwide now joining the IPA club, so that diversity of languages that this entails would become less problematic for applicants. Administration problems and other mutual difficulties were resolved. The meeting was chaired by Mr Haim Szmulewitz, the Israeli IPA Secretary General. Ms Julianna Papne Vgso, Hungry, 3rd International Vice president also presided.

The Israeli's left no stone unturned in the social programme for the delegates and accompanying friends. Tours were provided to the Church of the Annunciation at Nazareth and to the Sea of Galilee. We passed through Cana where water was turned into wine, a concept that I thought would appeal to the Irish psyche, as we have plenty of the uisce; the formula for the transition being the only problem. Here was the Dead Sea and other places that we learned about in school and had imbedded in the memory. Approaching Jerusalem and the old city was another surprise as to the size, beauty and uniformity of structure and colour, invariably white/cream with the occasional gold or black dome of cathedrals or mosques on the skyline. The biggest cemetery I have ever seen is in a valley within the city with tombs crammed on top of each other on cliffs and hillsides. The reason given for this was that this is the place where the final judgement will take place. It was an incredible experience to walk here where Christ walked. The continuous religious ceremonies on the Via Dolorosa, Holy Sepulchre and church interiors where



Jerusalem



IPA tour at the River Jordan

nuns knelt in prayer, priests hurried with incense on the way of the cross, opening a way through the crowds like the red sea parting. It was an overwhelming and unforgettable experience.

There is no doubt the Israeli IPA pulled out all the stops to make an impression and they succeeded.



Cemetery in Jerusalem

