

View from THE BRIDGE



The long hot summer is almost over!! The yearly 'down time' gives a welcome opportunity for many to relax or explore new experiences – either way IPA offers such opportunities through its social, sporting, cultural and professional programmes.

Following the experience of New Zealand in 2006 (IPA Journal April 2007) our young people took part in the International Youth Gathering hosted in Cyprus in July 2007. The venue for IYG 2008 is Australia. This annual event, open to all children and grandchildren of IPA members between 15 and 18 years of age, is always a huge success for those lucky enough to participate. The chaperoned gathering of almost 50 young people from over 20 countries is a recipe for lively cultural, social and educational exchanges that last long after the two week event. The summertime sees the keenly contested playoffs of the 5-A-Side football to represent IPA Ireland at the international competition in Italy each year. The opportunity is offered to every Branch to contest its Regional competition and be in a position to carry the flag for Section Ireland. Branch and Regional competition generates keen rivalry at this time on the golf course. The countrywide contest culminates at the end of August with high scores, good food and valuable prizes.

Professional interests do not fade in the summertime. A colleague visited Ireland from Bavaria (see letters page) and was assisted in his studies through our Police Placement Programme to experience the work and training of An Garda Síochána; the programme is authorised by our Garda authorities and facilitated by serving IPA members. An exchange programme has developed between Ireland and Poland (see this issue) giving serving members and social visitors the opportunity to learn more of that country and its police. The ongoing activities for the benefit of our professional and family interests are too numerous to mention at this point but include such events as hillwalking, boating, inter-Regional visits, activity days and so on. Our web page www.ipaireland.com, Calendar of Events feature and local IPA Notice Board will keep you informed. If you wish to take part or have taken part in an IPA event and wish to comment, please do. Branch AGM's will

take place in September, please attend, your views and opinions can only benefit IPA.

IPA is not the only organisation with the profession/family interests to the fore. On July 24th I was invited to represent IPA at the launch of a new initiative by An Garda Síochána – Resource and Referral Service within An Garda Síochána. In his speech, Commissioner Conroy said "As one of the State's largest employers An Garda Síochána has a responsibility to address work-life balance and to put in place family friendly policies to assist our workforce of dedicated and committed Gardaí and civilian staff. We must do our part in assisting our staff in reconciling work and life issues, re-organising time, priorities and family responsibilities, while at the same time striving for a better standard of living". In acknowledging the work of the research team the Commissioner went on to say "The new Resource and Referral Service for An Garda Síochána, in essence, is a pro-active support mechanism for our staff. The service will provide our staff with direct access to professionally trained childcare solution experts, who in turn can give the necessary advice, support and guidance in planning their childcare needs". The service is being co-ordinated by personnel at HRM Branch, Garda HQ. In recognising the objective of work-life balance within this service IPA supports the initiative and wishes it every success.

tours in friendship
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