

ELT



Ireland bulletin

IN THIS EDITION

How I moved from ELT to EAP and what I learned along the way

by Stephen Bruce (Page 4)

Thoughts on digital re-entry

by Mary Shepherd (Page 5)

Being your own DoS

by Rob McComish (Page 7)

Film-making as student-centred learning environment

by Vanja Fazinic (Page 8)

Creative projects in the language classroom

by Colete Godkin (Page 11)

Stepping Away From the Mirror: Effective Approaches to Reflective Practice

by Conor O'Reilly (Page 14)

ELT Burnout and what to do about it

by Stephen Cloak (Page 15)

Getting EAQUALS: A brief "How to"

by Nadine Early (Page 17)

When going through Delta ... keep going

by Damian Cunniffe (Page 19)

The Delta exam rollercoaster

by James Duggan (Page 21)

Teaching pronunciation in a brain-friendly way and how to cater for different learning preferences

by Darek Bukowski (Page 23)

We all make mistakes!

by John Ryan (Page 26)

Chunk it up in the ESL classroom!

by Touria Jouilla (Page 28)

No. 2

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ELT Ireland features (Pages 1-3)

Welcome to our Second Bulletin

by Dr. Lou McLaughlin

The Secrets of Membership by James Gaffney

Social Media Numbers by Joanne Mitten

Treasuring ELT Ireland by Liliana O'Reilly

Acknowledgements by Editor, Peter Lahiff

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Welcome to our second ELT Ireland Bulletin!

by Dr. Lou McLaughlin (President of ELT Ireland)

ELT Ireland has had a very busy year during 2015. Since we distributed ELTIB at our first annual conference, we have hosted an array of events. We continued with our ELTed (Education & Development) events in Galway where we were hosted by Atlantic Language. As always, for those of you who were not able to make the trip west, the recordings of these sessions are available to view on the ELT Ireland website www.elt-ireland.com We also continued with our support for the Digital ELT conference which was held in Dublin in November 2015. We also continue with our Article Writing Forum events which provide the opportunity to work on articles for inclusion in the ELTIB or elsewhere. This year, in 2016, we are going to extend this further and expand into the Article Reading & Writing Forum.

In response to a request from managers for a forum to meet, network, share ideas and provide support, we introduced regular Manager Meet-ups for all of those involved in the management side of ELT. Building on this interest from managers led to ELT Ireland joining forces with LAMSIG (Leadership & Management Special Interest Group) from IATEFL to organise a joint conference in Dublin at the beginning of October 2015. Attendees were both local and from the UK, with plenary speakers George Pickering and Fiona Thomas. The feedback from managers at the event was overwhelmingly positive.

On the back of our management focused conference, we forged ahead with providing a further platform of support for managers and experienced ELT professionals in Ireland. As this goes to print, ELT Ireland are currently finalising a closed group which will work together on the IH London online Diploma in Academic Management. This is an ideal option for those experienced teachers on staff not be interested in completing a DELTA or who have a DELTA but need more management experience. It will provide the opportunity to work together towards validating and consolidating knowledge with a recognised qualification in a supportive and flexible environment.

ELT Ireland took part in the IATEFL Annual Conference as attendees of Associates' Day in Manchester, April 2015. Both Lou McLaughlin (President) and Joanne Mitten (Communications Officer, ELT Ireland) were in attendance. We provided a poster presentation on our association, spoke about our events since the foundation of ELT Ireland and also distributed some ELTIBs which were very well received.

Perhaps our most exciting event has been the 2nd annual conference which took place in DCU on 20th & 21st of February, 2016. The theme this year was "Quality for all in ELT: from young learners to adults". We welcomed expert plenary speakers from home and abroad, Sue Palmer, Dr Harry Kuchah and Marie Delaney. Our conference attendees thoroughly enjoyed the two-day conference and felt that the standard of talks was extremely high, with something for everyone.

This year has also seen some committee member changes. We would like to extend our thanks to those committee members who stood down during the year, Daniel Zuchowski (Newsletter editor) and Jane Seely (Treasurer). We are delighted to welcome James Gaffney (Membership Officer & Newsletter editor), Liliana O'Reilly (Treasurer) and Louise Guyett (Publications Officer) to the ELT Ireland committee.

As President of ELT Ireland, it continues to be a privilege to work with such dedicated fellow committee members. It is a delight to watch our membership increase, currently standing at 236, as this affords me the opportunity to connect with even more outstanding ELT professionals throughout the 32 counties.



The Committee (l to r);
Joanne Mitten, Peter
Lahiff, Lou McLaughlin,
Liliana O'Reilly, James
Gaffney.

Pic by ELT Ireland

ELT Ireland's Social Media Numbers

by Joanne Mitten (ELT Ireland Communications Officer)

Here at ELT Ireland, we have been building our social media presence for two years now, and we're delighted to see so many people engaging with us online. One of our most popular online activities is our #ELTChinwag that takes place on Twitter every two weeks. This is a great opportunity to chat with like-minded professionals on a wide range of topics such as various methodologies, technology in lessons and classroom management. We usually have 10-12 participants in each chinwag, and we share the transcript on Storify so links and suggestions are easily accessed after each chat.

We share and retweet upcoming webinars and events that we think our followers might find useful and if you want to see what ELT Ireland has planned, it's all there on Facebook and Twitter!

Twitter: We currently have 1767 followers. We have an average of 12 new followers per week and we've gained 432 followers since our previous AGM in May 2015.

ELTChinwag is run bi-weekly and involves 10-12 participants each time. Topics are sourced from active teachers and managers and we often poll users to see what they'd like to chat about next.

Facebook: We currently have 2631 likes, gaining 442 likes since the AGM in May 2015. Average of 12 new likes per week.



Social media summaries from ELT Ireland are available on Storify

Pic by ELT Ireland

Treasuring for ELT Ireland

by Liliana O'Reilly (ELT Ireland Treasurer)

As treasurer of ELT Ireland I use my organisational skills and attention to detail to look after the financial administration of the organisation. The financial health of any company is a team effort, so I am in very close contact with the other committee members when it comes to anything related to money, invoicing, receipts, and financial transactions and decisions.

I took over from the previous treasurer at the end of 2015 and since then I have been issuing membership invoices and receipts (working closely with James), recording the in and out payments, keeping in contact with Lou regarding our accounts and different procedures related to money lodgements and fees paid through PayPal, and filing all the financial documentation received from the other committee members. It has already been pretty busy due to the upcoming ELT annual conference.

I usually spend an hour or two a week updating our financial information and sending confirmation e-mails when necessary. In addition to that, I periodically keep in contact with the other committee members regarding different decisions that we have to make as part of the same team.

As I'm only at the beginning of this experience, I am looking forward to getting into the more detailed finances of the organisation pretty soon.

In comparison with other committee members, due to the nature of my job, I am very often not able to attend all the face-to-face meetings organised by ELT Ireland. The treasurer position is quite flexible as I can work remotely and contact other committee members through when necessary. We are all very well connected in that regard and we communicate mainly by e-mail when decisions need to be made within a matter of days.

What I love about this volunteering position is the opportunity to be involved in ELT events and be part of a team who work towards putting Ireland on the ELT world map. I also like meeting other ELT practitioners who are experts in different areas and whom I have so much to learn from.

The Secrets of Membership

by **James Gaffney** (ELT Ireland Membership Secretary)

I think I first came across ELT Ireland's website back at the start of 2014. "A network of English language teaching professionals," it stated. I was intrigued. I had worked in the ELT sector in Ireland for about 5 years, as a teacher and director of studies, and found that the presence of such a network to be lacking in the sector. I sent them an email to investigate further, went along to their first event, ELTed Dublin in April 2014, and was very impressed with what I saw. I have been an active member since then.

For me, one of the best things about ELT Ireland is its collaborative nature. Owing to the fact that many of the English Language Teaching organisations in Ireland operate in the private sector, it's natural that some institutions might have been reluctant to share what they do and how they do it with their competitors. Over the years that ELT Ireland has developed, through its conferences, meet-ups, and online discussions, it has shown that collaboration is a much better way of improving quality in teaching and education management standards rather than guarded isolation.

I was approached by the committee recently to see if I would consider putting myself forward for election as the Membership Secretary. While this is an added responsibility, I was delighted to do so. I believe strongly in what ELT Ireland are doing. Through cooperation, the sharing of best practice, and the meeting of minds that takes place at its events, both online and in person, ELT Ireland will only continue to raise improve quality and raise standards in classrooms across the country.

Of course, any professional network is only as strong as the sum of its members. Whether it's the ELT Ireland Jobs Board, the Manager Meetups, the ELT Chinwags on Twitter, the Article Writing Forums or the multi-annual ELTed events and the Annual Conference – these can only flourish with the active participation of its members. For example, the more members we have, the more likely schools will be able to successfully recruit via the Jobs Board; the more members we have, the greater the diversity of backgrounds and experiences will be present at our conferences and networking events. If you have benefited from our activities – please don't keep it a secret!

As Membership Secretary, my role involves recruiting new members, and retaining current ones. We have recently started a new initiative, where newly-qualified teachers – those within one year of qualifying – may join the organisation for a reduced membership 50% membership fee, as we feel that joining our network would be a great boost at the start of a career in ELT.

I believe in what they do. I that there is a strong place for ELT Ireland in the sector to ensure quality and the sharing of best practice. The more active, motivated members we have, the more we can all benefit.

ELT Ireland Bulletin - Acknowledgements

by **Peter Lahiff** (ELT Ireland Events Coordinator & Bulletin Editor)

The process of putting the ELT Ireland Bulletin each year involves a lot of people. There are the contributors and everyone who comes along to the Article Writing Forums to bounce ideas around and help to inspire them. Then there are the reviewers who look over every article and make suggestions on where they need a tweak or a bit polish. This year we were ably assisted by Oriol Solé, Louise Guyett and Lou McLaughlin. The articles then go back to the writers and any revisions are made before they different pieces are formatted and laid out here along with the pictures and other details. When it is finally ready for the printer it goes to Mark at CSM Print whose advice and professionalism has been a great help in getting out a good quality produce. When it goes back from the printer it is distributed to the members and a single copy is lodge in the National Library under our ISSN number. Thanks to everyone who has been involved and the best of luck to Louise Guyett who is taking over as Editor of the Bulletin next year.