

UNITY NEWS

NUAHT NA HAONTACHTA

AUGUST LÚNASA 2023

#TIME4UNITY
#AM LE HAONTAHT



COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND UPCOMING EVENTS

Sinn Féin's Commission on the Future of Ireland is an ambitious and inclusive consultation on the future. The Commission has held six very successful public events to date.

The Commission is very pleased to announce it will host a discussion in the Verbal Arts Centre, Derry on Wednesday 13th September at 7.30pm.

This upcoming event will build upon the themes discussed at our event in

Derry last year 'Celebrating Diversity-Ending Divisions' and on the very diligent reconciliation work that has been undertaken in Derry over many years. The shared future in a united Ireland must be a warm house for everybody. Now is the time to discuss how people feel their identities and culture should be represented, protected and celebrated. Following this, a Commission event will take place at the Ploughing

Championships on Thursday 21st September at 11am. The theme of this event is 'Rural Communities in a New Ireland'. This will be a panel discussion which will focus on how a different constitutional arrangement could benefit rural people and the opportunities a United Ireland could bring. Other events are scheduled to take place later in the year in Waterford and Connemara.

Further information on the Commission and recordings of previous meetings can be found at www.sinnfein.ie/futureofireland

COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

AN COIMISIÚN UM THODHCHAÍ NA hÉIREANN



Upcoming events

Verbal Arts Centre, Derry
Wednesday
13th September
7.30pm

Sinn Féin Marquee Ploughing Championships
Thursday
21st September
11am

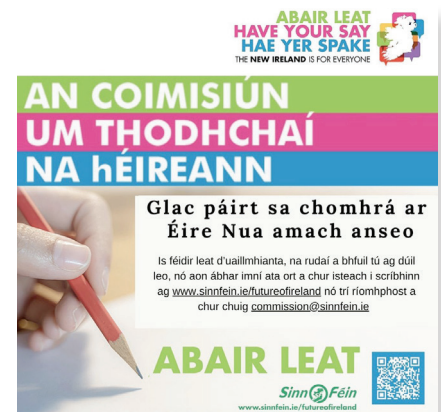
HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE FUTURE OF IRELAND

In addition to the public events the Commission is also accepting written contributions.

Get in touch and have your say on our future. Reach out to your friends, family or groups and organisations in your area and ask them to get in touch.

Tá Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na hÉireann ag Sinn Féin i mbun rannpháirtíocht dhomhain ar an saol atá amach romhainn.

Bí mar chuid de phlé reatha agus plé atá ag fás maidir le hÉirinn nua a thógáil. Is féidir leat ionchur scríofa a chur isteach i nGaeilge nó i mBéarla.



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

A REPUBLIC FOR ALL

- Declan Kearney MLA

The eighth of August past marked the 42nd anniversary of IRA Volunteer Thomas McElwee's death on hunger strike in Long Kesh.

I was proud to join his family, friends and comrades in Bellaghy, County Derry to share some reflections during the dignified, annual wreath laying ceremony at the grave where Thomas is buried alongside his cousin, Francis Hughes, who also died on the hunger strike three months earlier on 12 May 1981.

Like Francis, and the other eight hunger strikers who died in 1981, and Volunteers Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg, who died on hunger strike in England, less than ten years previously, Thomas is an iconic figure within the history of modern republicanism. He died after 62 days on the hunger strike.

Maura Kelly opened proceedings with a beautiful rendition of 'Farewell to Bellaghy'. It's an evocative ballad which Maura sings very well. Every time it's sung I am transported back to the time of the hunger strike: To the protests, and marches in support of the prisoners and their families, and ultimately our attendance at the wakes and funerals for Francis and Thomas. And, how we took in our thousands to the fields of Tamlaghtduff and walked through byres and farmyards to get around the huge military cordons which were set up, in order to attend the burials of both men.

While I thought about my remarks in the preceding days I was very conscious that so much has been said over the decades since Thomas' death, about the context of the hunger strikes in 1980 and 1981, the political conditions which led Thomas to the H-Blocks of Long Kesh, and the political situation that has evolved since then, and the nature of his sacrifice.

As I did so, I reflected on the seanfhocal Gaelige, 'Is ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine...' 'we live in the shelter of each other'. At its essence the phrase means solidarity, community, compassion, and a sense of the collective.

I shared that thought with those who assembled to remember Thomas. During the dark days of the H-Blocks blanket and no-wash protests, the Republican POWs refused to let themselves be confined or repressed by the isolation, brutality and aggression they endured.

Instead the Blanketmen defined themselves by solidarity, community, care for each other, and by collectivism. In the dungeons of the H-Blocks they lived in the shadow of each other.

Thomas McElwee embodied all these values. That's why he volunteered to go on hunger strike, and to sacrifice everything if need be, to change the prison conditions which he and others had forced upon them, and also to defy British attempts to criminalise the national liberation struggle.

I recalled that over the years I have heard members of Thomas' family, friends and prison comrades speak many times about him. He was only 23 years-old when he went on the hunger strike. And yet despite the adversity he faced, he was filled with hopes and aspirations: Ambitious for himself and this community, and for the future. He dreamed of an eventual return to Tamlaghtduff and the happiness that would bring.

Just over ten years following the Hunger Strike the foundations of the current peace process were being laid. I pointed out that during the last 25 years since the Good Friday Agreement was signed, Ireland has been transformed.

Today that change continues to unfold in plain sight. The whole purpose of partition has been stood on its head. The unthinkable has happened; irreversible

demographic and political changes are taking place. There have been historic election results, with the potential of more to come, both north and south.

Irish unity is within touching distance. Of course, some stand in opposition; but while they can block political institutions, they cannot block the tide of history. Everything is possible, but nothing is inevitable. Those who want the greatest change need to stretch themselves farthest and work the hardest.

A potential, bright new future to be shared by all our people is now in view, but only because we stand on the ramparts built by the commitment and dedication of the many who went before; of Thomas and his nine comrades; of activists and supporters; those who opened their doors, campaigned, or stood for election - and when they did so, carried the potential of being killed: All of those who stood up against the odds.

Our commitment must be to securing a future in which the suffering and hurts experienced by so many, and on all sides, during our past history are addressed through forgiveness, reconciliation and healing.

Today the positive legacy of Thomas' sacrifice is all around us. It echoes in the laughter of the children at play in South Derry: Their achievements at school and college: With the widespread use of an Ghaeilge: In the vibrancy of Gaelic games and culture, and the welcome towards those of new cultures who come from other places to make Ireland their home: And, in the irrepresible nature of the equality agenda. Today the language of a new Ireland, and a Republic for all, is Thomas' legacy speaking to us 42 years on. His spirit lives.

A new progressive, inclusive, democratic Ireland is waiting to be created by us all. A Republic of compassion in which we can rely upon each other. A rights-based Republic, which will guarantee reliable public services; care properly for our sick people and deliver good education for our children; and will provide good jobs and fair pay. A 'Republic for All', based on solidarity, care for each other, community, and collective purpose... Is ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.

Today the momentum to build a new progressive, inclusive, democratic Ireland is stronger than ever. A society which is inclusive, and at peace with itself: one to be developed by all the people, and for all the people.

This is a momentous period in our history. We should all take inspiration from the values and legacy of Thomas McElwee; and become involved in the political, economic and social campaigns to make real change happen.

CUIMHNÍONN CÚIGE MUMHAN



REMEMBER THE
HUNGER STRIKERS
I nDÍLCHUIMHNE

2023 NATIONAL
HUNGER STRIKE
PARADE

Sunday 27th August Cork City
Assemble 2pm at Kennedy Quay

Speaker: Leas Uachtarán Shinn Féin Michelle O'Neill MLA



#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



MONAGHAN SINN FÉIN HOLD IRISH UNITY DAY OF ACTION

Sinn Féin members in Co Monaghan participated in a day of action on Saturday 29th July in all five towns in the county. They distributed leaflets and engaged with locals on the need for a Citizens' Assembly to plan for a United Ireland.

All venues attracted lively and constructive debate. Many people support the demand for the Irish government to initiate a Citizens' Assembly to receive expert opinion on all the important issues and plan for Irish Unity.

Matt Carthy TD was present at each event in Carrickmacross, Clones, Ballybay, Monaghan and Castleblayney. Speaking at the event in Ballybay Cllr Pat Treanor said, "The Good Friday Agreement allows for a referendum on constitutional change on this island and its vital that proper and detailed planning for the future is formally initiated through a Citizens' Assembly.

"Partition has failed everyone on this island- it's time to end it.

"We are the first generation to get the opportunity to reimagine a new and United Ireland in a peaceful and democratic way. We believe that following an open, transparent, inclusive and respectful discussion that we can plan a better future for all."

EAGRAÍONN SINN FÉIN MHUINEACHÁIN LÁ GNÍMH MAIDIR LE hAONTACHT na hÉIREANN

Ghlac baill Shinn Féin i gCo Mhuineacháin páirt i lá gnímh ar an Satharn 29 Iúil i ngach ceann de na cúig bhaile sa chontae. Scaip siad bileoga agus rinne siad i dteagmháil le muintir na háite ar an riachtanas le Tionól Saoránach chun pleanáil a dhéanamh le haghaidh Éire Aontaithe.

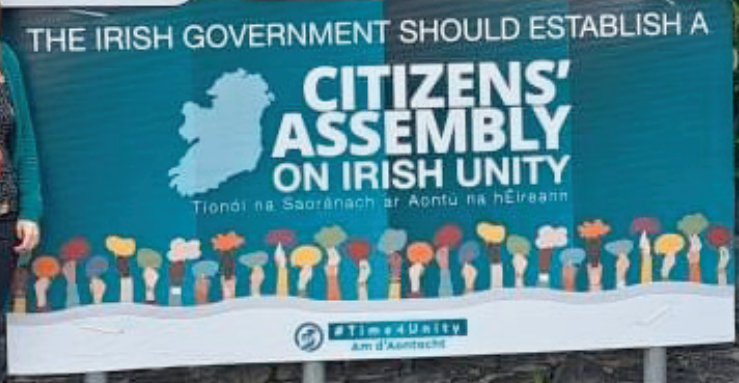
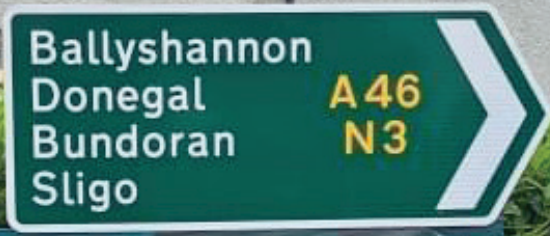
Mheall na hionaid go léir plé bríomhar agus cuiditheach. Tacaíonn go leor daoine leis an éileamh ar rialtas na hÉireann Tionól Saoránach a chur ar bun chun tuairim shaineolach a fháil ar na saincheisteanna tábhachtacha uile agus ar phleananna d'Aontacht na hÉireann. Bhí Matt Carthy TD i láthair ag gach imeacht i gCarraig Mhachaire Rois, Cluain Eois, Béal Átha Beithe, Muineachán agus Baile na Lorgan. Agus é ag labhairt ag an ócáid i mBéal Átha Beithe dúirt an Comhairleoir Pat Treanor,

"Ceadaíonn Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta do reifreann ar athrú bunreacha ar an oileán seo agus is rithábachtach go gcuirfear tús go foirmiúil pleanáil cheart agus mhionsonraithe don todhchaí trí Thionól na Saoránach.

"Tá gach duine ar an oileán seo thíos leis an gcríochdheighilt - tá sé in am deireadh a chur léi.

"Is muidne an chéad ghlúin a fuair an deis Éire nua agus Éire Aontaithe a athshamlú ar bhealach síochánta agus daonlathach. Creidimid, tar éis plé oscailte, trédhearcach, cuimsitheach agus measúil gur féidir linn todhchaí níos fearr a phleanáil do chách."

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



Promoting the Irish Unity message

A united Ireland provides the best foundation for the future development of the nation – this will not just be a better future for those who support unity, it will be a better future for all, irrespective of political persuasion, religion, identity or background. The new Ireland which will come in the

wake of the successful referendum on Irish unity must have respect, inclusivity and citizens' rights at its core. An important step in this process is to let the voices of our citizens be heard in an all-Ireland Citizens' Assembly. The Irish Government should establish an all-Ireland Citizens' Assembly to debate

and discuss our future. All sections of society, including those from a unionist persuasion, should be invited and encouraged to participate. The Citizens' Assembly should be a safe and open place for dialogue and debate. Let's talk about it, let's plan for it, let's build a new Ireland together.



Niagara Falls



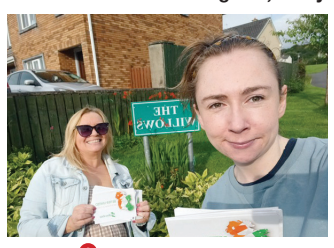
Belfast UI Planning Day



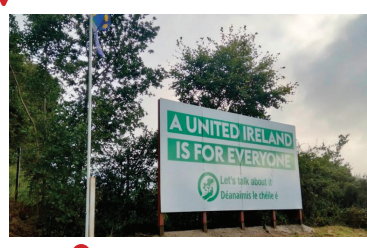
Bogside, Derry



Clontarf convention



Leitrim



Newry



Celtic Match, Aviva Stadium



Whitehall Bay convention



All Ireland Final Day, Croke Park

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht

CRANN NA SAOIRSE - HAVE YOU PLANTED YOURS YET?

Areas are continuing to plant Crann na Saoirse. Some in memory of comrades and others as a reminder of the key importance of Irish Unity to the future freedom and prosperity of the Irish people.

On Thursday 10th August members of the Harvey/ McGlynn/ Connolly/ McHugh Cumann in Castleberg held a 'Crann na Saoirse' planting ceremony in memory of Volunteers Seamus Harvey and Gerard McGlynn to mark their 50th anniversary. Later in the month the Martin McGuinness Cumann planted a 'Crann na Saoirse' in the Bogside as part of the Derry Féile events. These trees will grow tall in a free and united Ireland.

Why not plant your own Crann na Saoirse?

For your clann? Your club? Your community groups? Yourself? Help the environment and bring pleasure to a future generation.



VOICES OF FARMING AND RURAL COMMUNITIES MUST BE HEARD IN UNITY CONVERSATION

- CHRIS MACMANUS MEP

Sinn Féin MEP for the Midlands and North-West, Chris MacManus, has called on all rural and farming representative organisations to engage in the conversation around the reunification of Ireland.

Speaking from the Erris Agricultural Show in Belmullet, County Mayo, MacManus said:

"Brexit has had a profound impact on many sectors, across the island of Ireland. Indeed, as a result of the long trading tradition between Ireland and Britain, the Irish agri-food sector is one of the most exposed to the impacts of Brexit."

"The conversation around the reunification of Ireland is growing, with more and more sectoral interests beginning to engage to ensure their concerns are known and heeded."

"It is my view that one sector that could potentially be the biggest beneficiary of reunification

is the farming and agricultural sector. Along with this, I believe in a new and united Ireland that rural dwellers and farming will benefit from, provided the appropriate governance structures are put in place."

"Therefore I believe it is absolutely crucial for farming representative groups to engage in the conversation to ensure that they maximise the benefits that reunification could have for their sector."



NÍ MÓR ÉISTEACHT LE TUAIRIM FEIRMEOIRÍ AGUS PHOBAL NA TUAITHE SA PHLÉ AR AONTACHT na hÉIREANN

- CHRIS MACMANUS FPE

D'iarr FPE Shinn Féin don Lár Tíre agus don Iarthuaisceart, Chris MacManus, ar gach eagraíocht ionadaíochta tuaithe agus feirmeoireachta páirt a ghlacadh sa chomhrá maidir le athaontú na hÉireann. Agus é ag labhairt ag Seó Talmhaíochta Iorrais i mBéal an Mhuirthead, Co. Mhaigh Eo, dúirt MacManus:

"Bhí tionchar mór ag an mBreiteimeacht ar go leor earnálacha, ar fud na hÉireann. Go cinnte, mar thoradh ar an traidisiún fada trádála idir Éirinn agus an Bhreatain, tá earnáil agraibhia na hÉireann ar cheann de na cinn is mó a mbíonn tionchar ag iarmhairtí ón mBreiteimeacht air."

"Tá an comhrá faoi athaontú na hÉireann ag fás, le níos mó agus níos mó

leasanna earnála ag tosú ag dul i ngleic lena chinntiú go bhfuiltear ag éisteacht leis an ábhar imní atá orthu agus go dtabharfar aird orthu."

"Is é mo thuairim gur earnáil amháin a d'fhéadfadh leas mór a bhaint as an athaontú ná

an earnáil feirmeoireachta agus talmhaíochta. Chomh maith leis seo, creidim in Éirinn nua agus aontaithe a mbainfidh conaitheoirí tuaithe agus feirmeoireachta leas as, ach na struchtúir chúil rialachais a bheith i bhfeidhm."

"Dá bhrí sin creidim go bhfuil sé fíorthábhachtach do ghrúpaí ionadaíochta feirmeoireachta páirt a ghlacadh sa chomhrá lena chinntiú go n-uasmhéadaíonn siad na tairbhí a d'fhéadfadh a bheith ag athaontú dá n-earnáil."

Time 4 Unity Am d'Aontacht

FÉILE AN PHOBAIL

AN OVERVIEW BY GERRY ADAMS

I had the privilege of attending many of the debates and discussions which are a unique and vital part of Féile an Phobail.

I want to touch briefly on the remarks made by Terry O'Sullivan and Jeremy Corbyn at separate events, particularly on the importance of organising civic society. Jeremy, a former leader of the British Labour Party and Terry the General Secretary Emeritus of The Laborers' International Union of North America are wonderful advocates for the imperative of organising social and political movements to bring about deep rooted and positive change.

For all of the differences in their two countries the need to organise people is a common thread in their work. That and a fierce commitment to equality and social justice. And a love for Ireland. We are lucky to have them as allies and friends.

I'm a long time believer in the power of people, properly organised, strategic and strong in their beliefs and values. There are lots of current and historic examples of the changes brought about by such movements in Ireland and other parts of the world. Political change will be more meaningful, deep rooted and advanced if it is led by informed and committed citizens. Shaping a fair society is too important to be left solely to politicians. Of course public representatives have an important role including the delivery of legislative and underpinned guarantees of peoples rights once those rights have been won. But they are unlikely to be won without popular struggle. Progress is dependent on that. Activism is central to this. And activism works.

Jeremy quoted James Connolly to make this point. In an article "The Economic Basis of Politics" Connolly argued 'an effective political force' had to have its origins 'deep down in the daily life of the people, not in the brains of some half dozen gentlemen in parliament.'

For his part Terry O Sullivan told us that the 'labour movement is once again on the rise throughout North America- a new generation of workers



are beginning to understand the power of 'activism'

He, like Jeremy, spoke of the importance of solidarity. 'An injustice to one is an injustice to all'. He said:

'The trade union movement is the single most effective anti-poverty programme ever devised'.

Féile An Phobail is a great example of activism and community empowerment. It is inclusive grassroots democracy in action. On all fronts. Cultural, educational and artistic. The creative arts for the many. And it's enjoyable. Full of hope and colour and vitality.

So activism works. Creating a new Ireland means ending the union with England. There is now a way to do this. Activism is crucial to secure that goal.

James Connolly believed in the reconquest of Ireland by the Irish people. I believe in that too. So did Bobby Sands. Bobby wrote 'The day will dawn when all the people of Ireland will have the desire for Freedom to show. It is then we will see the rising of the moon.'

So there is space for all progressives in the work to shape an empowered movement for a new shared Ireland.

As Jeremy Corbyn said: 'The planning, the preparation, and the consultation needs to take place beforehand so that people know what the choice is. What exactly is the proposition they are voting for? This requires serious and novel engagement. Every available

resource and expertise should be pooled. Citizens Assemblies, local forums and civic consultation should be utilised. That work will be done here in Ireland obviously.'

He went on to explain the role of people in Britain. Terry did the same in relation to North America. That is important. But few of us will have a contribution to make there. Our work is where we live.

And it is clear what we have to do here. Change is underway. Let's be active in shaping and deepening that change. It's time to get involved. It's time to move beyond talking about it. Or leaving it to others. There is a role for everyone. It's time to be an active citizen. It's time for campaigning, organising, for democratic empowerment. Let's do it. Be an activist.

Below is a snapshot of some other events at Féile which were relevant to the Unity debate.



IRELAND'S FUTURE

There was standing room only for the first discussion at Féile which saw Ireland's Future outline their roadmap to a Border Poll 2030. The process of change is now underway which has been recently witnessed in demographic and electoral changes. Panellist Brian Feeney said, "We will need a referendum on a new, all island constitution that is appropriate for modern times and for the future."

HOW TO WIN A REFERENDUM

Essential campaigning lessons for the evolving island-wide reflections were discussed by Colin Harvey & Ailbhe Smyth, a lifelong campaigner for social

Cont'd on page 7

and political change. Ailbhe said, “Reunification creates huge opportunities for us to remake and reshape this island. We would be betraying everyone who shares this island by not making the effort to better people’s lives and to build a brighter future for all.”



Both speakers believed that the EU has a role in explaining clearly and dispassionately what the consequences are for a reunified Ireland as a member state of the European Union.

A document was launched in Europe earlier this year and is available here: pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/408921401/Making_the_Case_for_Irish_Unity_in_the_EU.pdf



IRISH UNITY- WHAT WE KNOW NOW & WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

Leading economist, Seamus McGuinness from the ESRI, talked about



the stark contrasts North and South in living standards, education, health and economic growth. The economic argument for Irish unity is more clear than ever. He said, “Reunification should not be about taking a low productivity north & subsuming it into the Republic. There is no reason why Belfast can’t be as productive as Dublin. The level of duplication of services on this island simply does not make sense. We need to start planning for how services would look in the case of unity, and a citizens assembly is crucial in that process.”

has given English political culture and history a warped sense of itself. Brexit is now quickly unveiling how warped that really is. We need to end the Union for the good of everyone who lives on these islands.”



THE GHOST LIMB

Claire Mitchell, Linda Ervine and Rev. Karen Sethuraman told their stories in Claire’s recent book, *The Ghost Limb: Alternative Protestants and the Spirit of 1798*, stories often excluded from the mainstream narrative. At this event they explored cultural, political and social change amongst northern Protestants and argued that alternative Protestant traditions are thriving and are beginning to find their voice. Claire Mitchell said, “Dissent is not only ok, but makes things interesting. We really are part of one another.”



CAN THE CASE FOR THE UNION BE MADE?

A panel of unionists set out their case for the Union and also considered how this can be achieved in the context of Brexit, unionist fragmentation and the growing arguments for unity. At this event former president of the Ulster Farmers Union & former Seanadóir Ian Marshall said, “Political unionism has damaged the union monumentally. If the union is fit for purpose and is the right call, the union will sell itself.” Writer and political commentator Sarah Creighton also said “There is a serious challenge for unionism going ahead. We cannot just go out and sell the status quo. It has to be more than that.”



THE ROLE OF THE EU IN PLANNING FOR IRISH UNITY

A packed room came together to hear Colin Harvey and Martina Anderson set out the case for why and how the EU should become an advocate for Irish reunification, and support the planning for constitutional change in Ireland.



THE DISUNITED KINGDOM

Jonathan Evershed from Plaid Cymru reflected on how relationships between Britain, Ireland and Europe have been disrupted by the ongoing consequences of Brexit. He considered the significance of movements for reunification and the possibility of a more progressive relationship between these islands. He said, “The Union

MEDIA IN A UNITED IRELAND

Dr Richard Gallagher talked to Amanda Ferguson about the Irish media post-partition & answered questions on what happens to the BBC and what challenges face RTÉ post partition. He also put a focus on how unionists will be represented in this new media landscape.

Féile an Phobail



WELCOMING THE WORLD

GAELS LE CHÉILE IMAGINING A BETTER WAY FOR IRELAND

Irish News Sports Journalist Brendan Crossan recently chaired the 'Gaels Le Chéile' discussion at Féile an Phobail. He wrote this week in the Irish News 'Boot Room' series about the event. See his full article below.

I was honoured to chair a Gaels Le Chéile discussion as part of Féile an Phobail in St Mary's University. It was the second year running, interested observers came to the Falls Road college to learn about Gaels Le Chéile, how it was conceived and what its aims and objectives are. Antrim Gaels Jane Adams and Paddy Cunningham – both of whom came up with the Gael-on-Gael initiative that wants to see the GAA play its part in the national discussion surrounding Irish unity – were on the panel alongside fellow Gaels Le Chéile members: former Tipperary hurler Timmy Hammersley, Kerry native and former Offaly senior football manager Stephen Wallace, O'Donovan Rossa GAC, Belfast chairperson Margaret Flynn and Carrickmore footballer Niamh McElduff. Jarlath Burns, the GAA's next president, was among the audience.

It was an enlightening 60-minutes plus that flew by.

With each passing year, Féile an Phobail becomes an increasingly important platform for authentic, thought-provoking discussion about political, social, economic and cultural life on our island.

It's a far-cry from the foghorn, 'gotcha' journalism that sometimes has a habit of wringing the sound-bites from these Féile discussions and manufacturing controversy out of them.

A lot of the time, this passes for media discourse here. I know this to be true, as I've worked in the local media for 24 years.

It's self-perpetuating and becomes tiresome after a while.

A lot of press officers are their own worst enemy too. They buy into the mock hysteria and, as a consequence, political and civic leaders become sanitised versions of themselves.

The tragedy in all of this is that real debate falls off the cliff.

We rarely hear perspective or reasoned analysis - we just hear the noise.

That's why it's critically important to preserve and expand the democratic space Féile provides each year and not be sucked into the faux outrage of sections of the media.

Since its inception, Gaels Le Chéile has been open to similar ridicule.

Its dissenters argue that GAA members should stick to playing their sports, stay out of the political arena and leave the constitutional issues to the politicians.

But, perhaps the reason why a pressure group like Gaels Le Chéile - if it can be described as such - emerged in the first instance was because of the ongoing failure of mainstream politics here. Why shouldn't GAA members engage in the most important debate of our time?

Why shouldn't they demand more from the political establishment?

One of the objectives of Gaels Le Chéile is to see the establishment of a fully inclusive citizens' assembly.

Why shouldn't citizens of this island – whether



they're GAA members or not – put their heads 'above the parapet' and add their voice to the constitutional discussion, particularly when the British government de-invest in our public services with ravaging effects?

Why should a trade union leader be derided for having the temerity to consider the potential health service benefits in the event of reunification?

Is it not prudent to confer with a health expert like Pat Cullen who walks the understaffed wards of our hospitals and knows the absolute state of them?

And yet the Ulster Unionist Party feels compelled to draft a press release asking for clarification over what Mrs Cullen said at - yes, you guessed it - a Féile discussion event, rather than engaging in the merits of the debate and listening to her expert perspective on how to create a better health service for everybody on the island.

Pat Cullen's contribution to the Féile debate was an act of citizenship. Nothing more, nothing less. We should be encouraging other areas of civic society to find their voice rather than them pressing the opt-out clause because they just might provide the necessary expertise and lateral thinking political parties need to mould a vision

for the future.

Calls for Irish unity has never been more nuanced.

It's too convenient nowadays to categorise the debate in crude ideological, religious terms and painting the south as some kind of hostile state when in fact the sitting government in Leinster House is funding 250 student nurses in the north and, through the £1bn Shared Ireland slush fund, is contributing significantly to improving infrastructure and educational life here.

These are shattering times we're living in as post-Brexit continues to bite hard and the cost-of-living crisis impoverishes people and their communities.

In a few years' time, we might be wondering how on earth the GAA at a central level stayed behind the wire for so long instead of being on the sidelines cajoling, persuading, encouraging and envisioning a better future for this island and having members sit on the citizens assembly so boldly imagined by Gaels Le Chéile.

Indeed, Timmy Hammersley made the very salient point during the discussion that at some point Ulster GAA must grasp the perceived nettle and support the campaign, and other provincial councils would follow.

In an initiative that has its roots in Antrim, where members of both the senior and hurling inter-county panels signed the letter addressed to the sitting Taoiseach of the day, urging discussion on constitutional change, Gaels Le Chéile has now amassed 20,000 signatories.

Earlier this month, Dublin footballer Paddy Small signed the letter.

A day later, Kerry footballer and Aussie Rules ace Stefan Okunbor, who attended the Féile discussion, signed the letter.

Still in its infancy, Gaels Le Chéile has built up significant momentum over the last 12 months. Each signature is an act of citizenship from individuals who are willing to explore a better way, a better version of ourselves.

The foghorns will rage long into the night – but it shouldn't stop creative thinking among us.

Jane Adams and Paddy Cunningham are living proof.

UNITING IRELAND ROUND UP



IRELAND'S FUTURE BUSINESS LUNCH

Ireland's Future has announced former BBC Newsnight presenter Gavin Esler as a keynote speaker at a business lunch later this year. Mr Esler, who presented the BBC 2 flagship news programme for 11 years, will speak at the lunch on November 3rd at the Europa Hotel in Belfast.



A PATHWAY TO A NEW IRELAND- FÉILE DERRY

Professor Colin Harvey discussed 'A Pathway to a New Ireland' at Féile Derry on Friday August 18th at Pilots Row. This was a fantastic engagement with the audience discussing the practical case for positive constitutional change.



SDLP NEW IRELAND COMMISSION

The SDLP's New Ireland Commission will host an event in the Canada Room, Queen University at 6pm on August 23rd to discuss their principles for a new inclusive Ireland. Details of the event attached. The main speaker will be Matthew O'Toole MLA.



'UNITY MUST BE ABOUT INCLUSION & RESPECT'

Fine Gael Minister Simon Harris spoke recently at a Collins Griffith commemoration. He said, "It is a legitimate political aspiration which I passionately believe in to see Ireland reunite. A united Ireland cannot be just about geographic unity, it must be about hearts and minds. It must be about people. It must be about inclusion and respect. You don't unite Ireland by uniting one community and alienating another. You plan a shared island. You work together. So we keep at it – the Collins vision – the freedom to achieve freedom. The stepping stone. The building of relationships, learning about each other and our perspectives and traditions."

IRISH UNITY ACTIVISM

Why not organise a unity themed event in your area?

THINGS YOU CAN DO:

- Incorporate Unity literature into local campaign stalls and political canvasses
- Use the large Unity banner in your area
- Organise a cycle for unity, unity walk, mountain climb day of action etc.
- Promote Unity literature at agricultural shows including the recent Rural communities leaflet

GNÍOMHACHAS AR AONTÚ na hÉIREANN

Cén fáth nach n-eagróidh tú imeacht ar théama na haontachta i do cheantar?

RUDAÍ A THIG LEAT A DHÉANAMH:

- Litríocht faoin Aontacht a bheith mar chuid de stalláí feachtais áitiúla agus i stocaireacht pholaitiúil.
- Úsáid a bhaint as an mbratach mór Aontacht i do cheantar.
- Rothaíocht nó siúlóid nó siúlóid sléibhe nó lá gnímh ar son an hAontachta a eagrú.
- Litríocht maidir le hAontacht a chur chun cinn ag seónna tamhlaíochta lena n-áirítear an bhileog pobail tuaithe is déanaí.

#Time4Unity Am d'Aontacht



AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS OF IRISH UNITY LAUNCHED IN SYDNEY

Sinn Féin Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Matt Carthy TD, and Finance spokesperson, Pearse Doherty TD, are in Australia for an intensive series of engagements in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Brisbane. This follows Mary Lou McDonald's first visit to Australia as Leader of the Opposition last year.

Their trip has involved meeting with government ministers and parliamentarians at Federal and State level, including Foreign Minister Penny Wong, to discuss ongoing change in Ireland, the need for the political institutions to be re-established in the north and to look at how Australia is delivering in key areas such as health, affordable housing and climate change.

They have also met with young Irish people, Irish community organisations and Trade Union leaders and spoke at a number of events hosted by the Irish Australia Chambers of Commerce and European Australian Business Council.

Pearse Doherty delivered a keynote address at the launch of Australia Friends of Irish Unity in Sydney and Matt Carthy addressed the Friends of Ireland group in the Parliament of Victoria.

Speaking about the trip, Matt Carthy said:

"We have travelled to Australia to deepen links between our two countries, to talk about what is happening in Ireland, north and south and also to discuss what is happening in Australia and how they are dealing with challenges such as climate change, health and affordable housing.

"This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, a historic peace accord which has delivered so much change in Ireland. We need to continue to build on that.

"Throughout our trip we have met with young Irish workers. While the Irish economy is strong another generation again looks to the hope of a better life here in Australia. Not because there's no work but because they are prevented from building a good future at home. The housing crisis is at the centre of this great failure. Sinn Féin is working night and day to change things, so they can come home to a new Ireland.

"This is a time for optimism and for hope in Ireland. Change is happening all around us and the last three elections on our island have shown that this demand for change is powerfully shaping a new future. We are witnessing ever growing support for Irish unity and the opportunities for our island and our economy are immense with the right leadership. Support for Irish Unity among the Irish diaspora and the international community is critical and the launch of Australia Friends of Irish Unity is a key part of all of this work."

Australian Labor Party passes motion in support of Irish Unity

Sinn Féin spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, Matt Carthy TD, welcomed the passing of the motion at the Australian Labor Party's national conference supporting the reunification of Ireland.

Mr Carthy said, "I welcome that the Australian Labor Party's delegates have voted resoundingly in favour of a motion supporting the reunification of Ireland at their national conference. The ALP's friendship with and solidarity towards the people of Ireland, reflects the deep bonds between our two nations. Pearse Doherty and I saw evidence of this strengthening relationship during our recent visit to Australia.

"The passing of this motion is a very positive step and reflects the growing interest both nationally and internationally in the benefits that Irish unity will bring to people across the island. Just as international support was crucial in delivering the peace process so too will be crucial in making Irish Unity a success for everyone on this island.

"It is undeniable that there is a growing, vibrant and positive conversation around the need for constitutional change to unlock the potential of communities across Ireland. "The onus is on the Irish government to begin planning for this constitutional change. The time to engage in clear-eyed discussion about a referendum is now. Failure to plan or engage in these discussions helps no-one. The Irish government must act now."

Amendment 170A

SUPPORTING THE REUNIFICATION OF IRELAND

Labor resolves that:

- The partition of Ireland has produced a century of division and conflict that has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives. The time has come to end the injustices of partition and for the right of all the people of Ireland to democratically decide their own future. The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 provides for such a democratic resolution; and
- This National Conference of the ALP calls on the British and Irish governments to honour the terms of the Good Friday Agreement to allow all the people of Ireland to democratically decide their future in the spirit of freedom and justice.

CARRIED



RESOURCE FOR ACTIVISTS

All of the recent articles and significant contributions on the United Ireland theme are available on the Sinn Féin website. Log in to www.sinnfein.ie/irish-unity for all of the news on uniting Ireland.



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