

Annual Report 2009

by Peter Stanford, Director

In these tough economic times, it is a pleasure to be able to introduce this upbeat annual report for 2009. Most academic studies of public attitudes towards 'good causes' highlight the difficulty of raising funds at any stage in the economic cycle. When potential donors are feeling the squeeze, however, it gets harder still, and often pressing issues such as prison reform and the rehabilitation of offenders are given a lower priority by those who still have funding to give as against other causes. The figures contained in this report reflect these straitened times. The trust has seen over 2009 a considerable fall (almost 100 per cent) in the number of individual donations (of up to £1000) we have managed to attract. However, thanks to the good stewardship of our trustee body, we have been able to focus our energies on making good that shortfall by attracting new funds from trusts and other grant-giving bodies. This figure has grown by almost 150 per cent over our performance in 2008. Taken in conjunction with a steep rise in donations made to cover the cost of our annual Longford Lecture by those attending, it has enabled the Trust in these accounts to report a substantial growth in income received for 2009.

(I should, at this point, add a note about my use of dates. In previous years, as has been pointed out to me by one wise donor, I have not always tailored my remarks in this introduction to the annual report strictly to the calendar year covered by the accounts, but have also included events before and after that period. This year, I hope I have made good that error. When I speak of 2009, I mean our January to December accounting period.)

To continue the theme of offering greater clarity and guidance around the Trust's financial management, I would also like in this introduction to set out the trustees' policy on reserves. There are three factors I would like to explain.

The first is that, from the inception of the Longford Lecture and Prize in 2002, up to 2008, the Independent newspaper was the most generous and supportive sponsor any charity could hope for. As well as promoting the event in its pages and placing its marketing and organisational expertise at our disposal, the Independent paid 50 per cent of the total costs of the lecture and prize each year - £10,000. In

2009, however, while the paper continued to act as our media sponsor, and once again to support the lecture and prize in every other way, its own financial position did not permit it to make any such payment. (The £10,000 shown in these accounts as coming from the Independent was in fact their donation to cover the costs of the 2008 Lecture, held in November 2008.)

The trustees, aware that sponsorship is not always easy to find, had always aimed to maintain sufficient money in our reserves to allow the lecture and prize to continue should our existing sponsor withdraw. Though the Independent did not completely pull out in 2009 (and indeed has subsequently, under new management, made plain its hope to revert to our original arrangement for 2010), we have had to draw on our reserves in 2009 to cover the cost of staging the lecture and prize. A constant aim throughout the year under scrutiny, therefore, has been to build up these reserves to ensure the medium and long-term survival of the lecture and prize in what is an uncertain market for attracting sponsors.

The second fact dictating our reserves' policy concerns our Longford Scholarships' scheme. When the trust agrees, after careful consideration and having taken the advice of an expert panel of independent advisors, to offer financial support to a young ex-prisoner to continue his or her rehabilitation by studying for a degree, we are often accepting a three or four year commitment. All scholars have to satisfy the trustees that they are making good progress at the end of each academic year for their scholarship to be renewed, but when that is the case, our aim is to maintain our level of support throughout their studies. Therefore, we hold in our reserves sufficient funds at any time to cover all our commitments to individual scholars should they continue with their studies through to finals.

And finally, in regard of the funds held for our Patrick Pakenham Awards, the vast majority of these monies were raised in 2005-2006, immediately following the death of the barrister, Patrick Pakenham, son of Lord Longford. They came from his friends and admirers. It was made clear to them at the time, by Mr Pakenham's widow, Countess Dominique de Borchgrave, that any monies they gave would not be spent at once, but rather used over a number of years to support a handful of young ex-prisoners who specifically wanted to go forward to

study Law. We currently have six Patrick Pakenham Scholars going through Law degrees.

2009 was, in other ways too, another highly successful year for the Trust. Our annual lecture, delivered by Sir Hugh Orde, former Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, now President of ACPO (the Association of Chief Police Officers) was a triumph. A large audience gathered in Church House on December 2 to hear Sir Hugh describe for the first time in any detail his work in tackling historic murder investigations that had been started but left incomplete during the Troubles. As a way of tackling past injustices and promoting rehabilitation by helping address grievances that stood in the way of better inter-communal and police-community relations in the north of Ireland, Sir Hugh commended this on-going initiative to his audience. Immediately prior to the lecture, the 2009 Longford Prize was awarded to the campaigning organisation Inquest, in the words of the judges, 'for its remarkable perseverance, personal commitment and courage in an area too often under-investigated by the public authorities, and especially for its support for the families of those who have taken their own lives while in the care of the state'.

2009 also saw gathering momentum in our Scholarships' programme. Some 70 per cent of those who have received our support via this programme are either still studying or have gone on to be awarded degrees and re-enter the workplace, in stark contrast to official figures which show that 70 per cent of those released from prison end up behind bars again within two years.

Numbers are growing on the Longford Scholarships' programme and applications now come from prisoners and ex-prisoners all over the country. Thanks to the support of the Monument Trust, we have been able to appoint for a three-year period a part-time Scholarships' Manager, Magdalen Evans, to lead and develop the scheme including the mentoring provision we make for each scholar. The Rank Foundation renewed its three-year commitment to helping us fund the monies we give to individual scholars, and also found additional resources to enable us to improve our promotional materials and our website so as to cast our net as wide as possible and so reach every student who could potentially benefit from what we have on offer.

The Longford Trust remains indebted to David Sanderson and Caroline Twiston-Davies at Rank, and to Mark Woodruff at Monument, for their unceasing support and encouragement in this regard.

I would also like to pay tribute to the hard work of my colleagues Jill Dale, who organises the annual Longford Lecture, and Magdalen Evans on scholarships and so much more. Our trustees have, as before, continued to remain keenly aware of the best interests of the Trust, involving themselves, asking challenging questions, drawing in new supporters, and, in some cases, acting as mentors to our scholars.

Without them – and in particular our chair, Kevin Pakenham – the Trust would not be in such good shape.

Thank you too to all who have supported the Longford Trust this year. Special thanks must go to the trustees of the late Lord Parmoor, who included us in the distribution of funds from the Violet and Milo Cripps Charitable Trust; to Lord Archer, Nat and Hannah Billington (for their on-going work on updating our website), Bridgewater Associates, Shirley Conran, Harriet Cullen, Jefferies International and the Jessie Spencer Trust.

And a final word of thanks to the distinguished diplomat, writer and founding patron of the Longford Trust, Sir Nicholas Henderson, who died in 2009.

Peter Stanford
Director