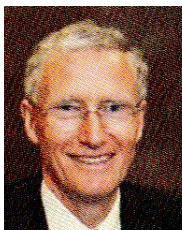




NOTES TO EXPLAIN RE-PACKAGING OF THE INTER-REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN CONWY, N WALES ON 11th/12th JUNE 2015 (dated 9.4.15)

1. In setting up a special Irish Sea 2050 conference account for this year we remain keen to keep alive the original vision, agreed at the ISMF's 2nd annual conference in Glasgow in 2013, for a major rotating inter-regional event that in the expected run of things will go to Dublin next year, then the Isle of Man for 2017 and before returning to Belfast in 2018 to re-start the cycle begun so admirably and ambitiously in 2012.
2. Despite Stuart's feeling it necessary to resign as Chair of ISMF, we have thanked and given credit to Sue Kidd and her ISMF team. But there's no point in pretending that arrangements to 'pass the baton' on to North Wales this year were as timely or helpful as they might have been for such an ambitious rotating inter-regional event. For example the chairmanship was only handed over in late January, nearly 7 months after the last annual conference, and less than 4½ months before this year's.
3. ISMF did not line up a conference Vice-Chair from the Rep. of Ireland last summer, either. We made it clear early that we wanted to 'raise the game' over sponsorship this year, so our successors could start with some of the backing we ourselves would have liked to have had. However, excessive caution and scepticism from the ISMF's secretariat and steering group made this extraordinarily difficult with their consent.
4. Indeed, with the meagre sum of £35 of backing from ISMF left in their account (run by Sefton Council) after last year's conference we felt ourselves put in the unfair position of shouldering all the set-up risks, yet with the ISMF secretariat explicitly suggesting 'drawing a line' as regards even the continued existence of ISMF.
5. While we have left the way open for ISMF to refashion itself into a form that could handle this rotation in a proactive way, perhaps one needs to question the need for any formal set-up. Our feeling is that, granted success this year, the 'handing-on process' might perhaps prove to be just as well done on a voluntary basis. For example, as a transitional mission statement, the new title and logo is offered to help create the focus and goodwill from all sectors in Irish Sea communities.
6. Without prejudging this issue, however, we would like to state that we have no intention to hang onto any conference proceeds beyond the proposed meeting in Dublin in the autumn. Instead (after proper auditing, of course) our expectation is to pass the whole residue on with our best wishes to next year's organiser.



(IS- 2050 Conference Chair)



(IS-2050 Conference Secretary)