

GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY IN IRELAND



SECTION 5

GFS HISTORY IN IRELAND

November 2015



GFS History in Ireland

The history of an organisation is to be cherished and needs to be kept alive. Many decisions, with hard work, went into the planning and setting-up of our Society. A constitution had to be set-up, places had to be found for meetings and money had to be carefully monitored.

The GFS became a respected society, greatly supported by bishops and clergy alike, with families appreciating the Society's influence on girls and young women. Since then, GFS has proudly been a guiding factor in the lives of females of all ages. By appreciating the past we must continue together to ensure a secure future for GFS in Ireland.

I quote Olein Gyles, former Central President of Ireland, who requested: "Please keep GFS strong for the future".

Sylvia Quinn

Central President of Ireland

2015



Boardroom painting by Miss Helen Colville (GFS)

The caption reads:

The Oak Tree is an emblem of strength, security, and shelter. We pray that this Oak House may inspire all those who come in and go out of it, with the spirit of Friendship, Love, and Service.

THE CREATION OF GFS

The Girls' Friendly Society was founded in London in 1875 by an Irishwoman, Mrs (Mary) Elizabeth Townsend, to help lonely girls who came from the country to work in the city. This was the first girls' or women's organisation in the Church of England. It was a society for friendship and recreation in which all girls might share, bound together in a fellowship of Christian love and service. The rapidly spreading movement came quickly to Ireland, Scotland and America in 1877, continuing in quick succession to Australia and other countries worldwide.

Now our Society is alive and serving girls and women in all those countries of the world where our Church is to be found. The motto, purpose and prayer have not changed down the years but one generation after another has found fresh inspiration in them.



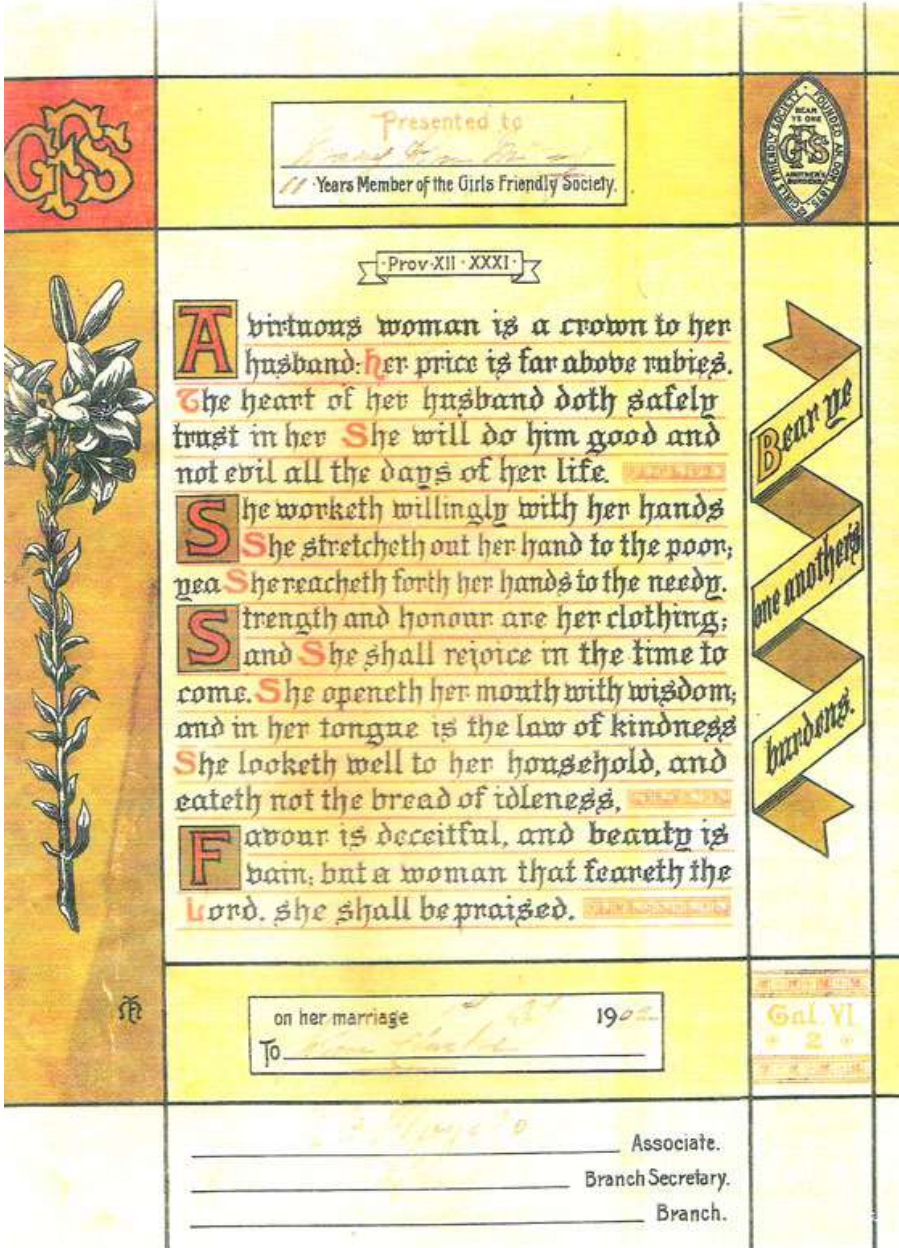
Mrs (Mary) Elizabeth Townsend
(1841-1918)

"The future of the GFS", Mrs Townsend declared at the Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908, "lies with its members throughout the world".



TIMELINE

Date	Event
1877	→ 22 nd February - First meeting in Ireland to make plans to form a GFS in Ireland; venue: The Marine Hotel in Bray, County Wicklow. In attendance: Viscountess Powerscourt (Presiding), Viscountess Monck, The Hon Mrs Greene, Mrs La Touche, Rev'd J G Scott (Rector), Rev'd J A Cross (Hon Sec). Mrs C F Alexander (Hymn Writer) was one of seventeen Working Associates appointed. (Five more were appointed at a later date).
1878	→ First office opened with Miss La Touche as Registrar or Secretary - girls helped to find suitable jobs here.
1880	→ First GFS hostel and recreational centre opened - Molesworth Street, Dublin and later Frederick Street.
1884	→ Queen Victoria became Patron - sent £50. → Ireland gave lead in starting Candidates.
1885	→ Emigration Department opened to help girls going to Canada & USA.
1889	→ Decision made that GFS members can not belong to more than one branch.
1893	→ The Countess Dowager of Meath (the Foundress of GFS in Ireland) elected as an Honary Life Member of the Central Council and Mrs Elizabeth Townsend (the Foundress of the parent society) elected as an Honary Life Member of the Irish Central Council.
1900	→ Queen Victoria visited Dublin and the new GFS Hostel in Rostrevor, County Down named after her as a memorial of her visit.

Date	Event
1902	<p>→ A certificate presented to a GFS member on her marriage in 1902.</p>  <p>Presented to [Name] 11 Years Member of the Girls Friendly Society.</p> <p>Prov. XII - XXXI</p> <p>A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.</p> <p>She worketh willingly with her hands. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor, nea She reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Strength and honour are her clothing; and She shall rejoice in the time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.</p> <p>Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.</p> <p>Bear ye one anothers burdens.</p> <p>on her marriage 1902 To [Name]</p> <p>Associate. Branch Secretary. Branch.</p>



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
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1905


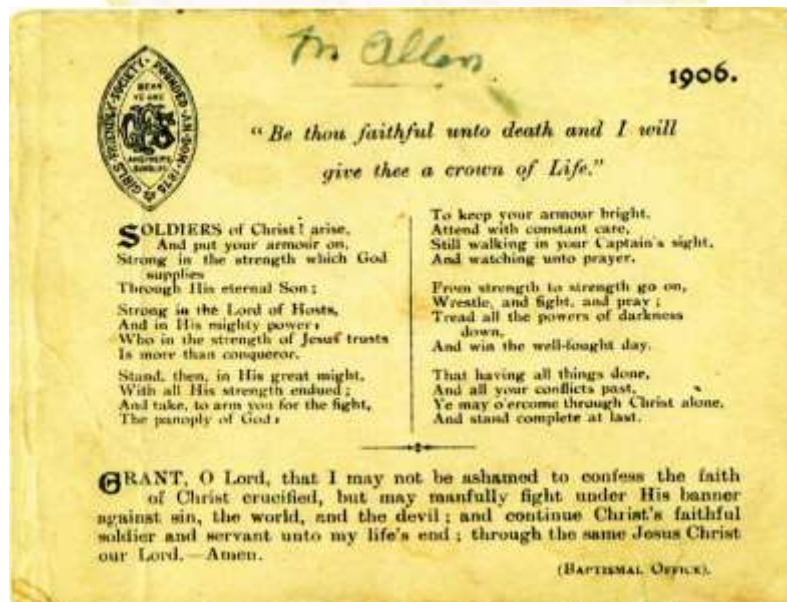
→ First hostel – GFS Lodge – opened in College Street, Belfast.



"The hostel provided safe and inexpensive accommodation for young women working in the city or otherwise away from home. Here four residents pose in the parlour reading, sewing and playing the piano."





G.F.S. Lodge Dining Hall.

Date	Event
1906	<p>→ Front and back view of the card given to Maud Allen (Parish of Donoughmore, County Wicklow) in 1906 when she was 14 years old.</p>  



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
1908	→ Queen Mary became our Patron.
1910	→ Larger hostel opened in Upper Merrion Street, Dublin.
1914	→ Various War work undertaken, Savings Group, Club for War nurses (Q.M.A.A.C.) 'Vigilance' work started. Hospital beds endowed, etc.
1919	→ Victory Fete held in Mansion House, Dublin -£1,000 raised to repair Rostrevor Hostel in County Down.
1927	→ Jubilee year, many celebrations to raise money to buy new GFS House. Money presented at a Pageant using 'Oak leaf' symbols. → Jubilee Banner of St Brigid presented to St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
1928	→ GFS pledge card against 'betting' issued to members; card reads "I promise with God's help not to bet, or help others to do so, while I retain this card".
1929	→ 'Oak House' purchased at 34 St Stephen's Green, Dublin for £4,000.00 and the organisation moved in there in 1930. → GFS had been spreading through the World wherever the Anglican Church was to be found.
1933	→ "The Oak Tree" painting commissioned by GFS is completed by artist Miss Helen Colville (GFS); the painting was later reframed in 1990.
1937	→ Queen Elizabeth ("the Queen Mother") became Patron of GFS.
1944	→ Miss Florence Ross Todd resumes the office of President after a long illness; Council wished Miss Todd to receive the highest honour possible and so is made "President Emeritus" → Committee sanctioned an optional uniform, similar to that worn by GFS in England, consisting of a blue dress, a blue forage cap or alternatively the forage cap, an armlet with monogram and a blue tie.

Date	Event
1947	<p>→ GFS 70th Birthday Celebrations in Dublin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sat 12th July-Rally in the Metropolitan Hall, Dublin. ○ Sun 13th July-Thanksgiving Service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. <p style="text-align: center;">G.F.S. 1877 – 1947</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>
1948	<p>→ Forty-two girls in residence in Oak House; 325 visitors took advantage of vacant beds in the holiday periods.</p>
1949	<p>→ Mrs Exshaw agrees to act as Vigilance Officer and as Head of Sick and Convalescent.</p>
1952	<p>→ Golden-Silver Jubilee Celebrations – a garden party in the zoo, a concert in CMS Hall ending with a thanksgiving service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.</p> <p>→ A rally held in the Grove School in Belfast; a gold and silver cake was cut by the lady mayoress.</p>



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
1953	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Our much loved patron, Queen Mary, dies 24 March; sympathy message sent to the Princess Royal. → Queen Elizabeth II's coronation; GFS sends Northern Ireland delegates: Miss Telford (Connor) Associate with girls Ann Moore and Georgina Proctor.
1954	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Rostrevor Holiday House closed.
1955	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → There was an International Conference on Isle of Wight (England's 80th Birthday) and here the first World Council was formed and 29th Sept - Feast of St Michael and All Angels - set aside as our annual World Day of Prayer. → GFS England's 80th Birthday.
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Second World Council held in Les Diablerets, Switzerland (five Irish delegates attended).
1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → GFS 80th birthday celebrations held in Belfast; 7th – 10th June – afternoon pageant titled 'Friendships Highway' in Wellington Hall. → A festival service in St. Annes Cathedral. → Mrs Ellsworth G Ferriera, official representative from GFS USA, was welcomed for the 80th celebrations. → The following two messages were illuminated and given to Mrs Barry and Mrs Ferriera to take to the World Assembly and to America: <u>To the World Assembly</u> – A greeting from the Girls' Friendly Society in Ireland to the gathering of the World Assembly – Greetings – We feel proud and honoured to be members of this great World Assembly, and although unable to be with you in person we are with you in Spirit – Mizpah. <u>To GFS USA</u> – Greetings and best wishes to the Girls' Friendly Society in the United States of America from the Girls' Friendly Society in Ireland. May our next twenty years be twenty years of progress and friendship in the fellowship of our society.



Date	Event
1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lambeth Conference and also GFS World Wide Conference (three Irish delegates attended). → Mrs Summer Walters, President of GFS USA, and her husband Bishop S Walters visit Ireland.
1959	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Australia. Decision to send GFS Worker to Kenya. This was the World Project until next World Council. Ireland represented in Australia by Ivy Kerr, Kilkenny, Ossory Diocese.
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → An invitation to the GFS President and Secretary to attend the 85th celebrations in Edinburgh, Scotland.
1962	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Ireland (Dublin) Theme 'Peace through Friendship'. World project British Guiana, Mrs Mercy Simms was World Chairperson.
1964	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All Ireland Conference in Tramore, County Waterford; a decision was made to have training week-ends to enable leaders to become All-Ireland Leaders. → GFS handbook updated.
1965	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Kyoto, Japan - Beth Irwin. St Barnabas' Branch, Connor Diocese, our representative. Mrs Tsuji (Japan) was world Chairperson. World Project – Japan.
1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 90th birthday services held in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin and St. Patrick's cathedral, Armagh. → All Ireland training weekend held in Coolnagreina, Greystones - County Wicklow.



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ World Council in Melbourne, Australia. Our representatives were -Naomi McKinley, St Barnabas' Branch, Connor Diocese, and Kathleen Linnegan, Diocesan Secretary, Derry Diocese. World Project – Lesotho.→ Oak House (34 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin) sold with the house's furniture going to Wilson's Hospital School, the Simon Community and to the Salvation Army.→ Purchase of Rathgar House (Bethany Home) in Orwell Road, Rathgar.→ A gift of £10.00 sent to Winchester House (Isle of Man) Holiday Home; some members having stayed at the house in the past.
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ May – World Chairperson and English GFS President Mrs C J Mandleberg addresses Central Council – first time for an English President to do so.→ Opening of the new Oak House in Orwell Road, Rathgar – Mrs Mandleberg present.→ July - A party of Irish GFS, three from each Diocese went to Blacon, Cheshire, for holiday as guests of English GFS
1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ World Council in London, England. Irish delegates: Hilary Johnston, Harmony Branch, Connor Diocese and Jean Lindsay, Kilmore Cathedral Branch. Mrs F. Bain (USA) was appointed World Chairperson.→ New "All Ireland" banner made by Leaders and Helpers from Kilmore Cathedral branch; dedication in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.
1977	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Centenary of GFS in Ireland; broadcast service from Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin – the Primate Archbishop Pike preached.→ Mrs Beth Mayes on "Outlook", a RTV programme.→ Mrs Bain, the GFS World President, is invited to Centenary dinner.→ Opening of GFS Oak House, 36 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin by Archbishop McAdoo.→ Centenary of GFS in Scotland; Jean Lindsay, Kilmore Cathedral branch, attended.



Date	Event
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Centenary of GFS in USA; an inscribed scroll from GFS Ireland to GFS USA. → World Council held in Los Angeles - Mrs Beth Mayes (nee Irwin) appointed World Chairperson. Helen Trimble, Donaghmore Branch, Armagh Diocese Junior Delegate
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → The Eva Hales project in Sierra Leone, Gambia and Liberia. Note: Eva Hales was from Belfast. → New GFS chapel in Christ Church, Leeson Park, Dublin 4 dedicated by The Most Reverend H.R. McAdoo, DD (The Lord Archbishop in Dublin).
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Leaders' Conference in Greystones, Co Wicklow. → Party of girls from Armagh visit Dublin and Glendalough over Easter weekend.
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Coleraine, Northern Ireland. Theme: 'Go Forard with Love'; Peggy Johnston, Sr. Delegate and Gillian Thompson Jr. Delegate. Mrs Iwai of Japan appointed World Chairperson. → Irish GFS Members at Holiday Camp in Wales.
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Leaders Conference held in Greystones, Co. Wicklow.
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council held in Japan. Our representatives were Mrs. Mary Hinchliff, Senior Delegate (Geashill & Killeigh Branch) and Patricia Matthews, Junior Delegate (Meath & Kildare Diocese). Mrs. Dilys Fowler of Wales appointed World Chairperson.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → GFS supported the Owerri Weaving Project in Nigeria.
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All Ireland Conference held in the Theological College, Dublin. Mrs. Dilys Fowler, World President attended.
1987	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Swansea and Bangor, Wales. Our representatives were Mrs. Mary Hinchliff, Senior Delegate and Lorna Beattie, Junior Delegate, Magheralin Branch, Connor Diocese. Mrs. Subuola Thompson of Sierra Leone appointed World Chairperson.



GFS History in Ireland

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1987	→ Camp for 14 – 18 year olds in Llanfairfechan, Wales; Mrs Olein Gyles in charge of the Irish group.
1988	→ All Ireland Training Week-ends in Carrig Eden, Greystones, County Wicklow and The Theological College, Dublin. Ireland published the World Day of Prayer Service.
1989	→ All Ireland Camp in Villiers School, Limerick. Members from England and Wales attended. England also hosted a camp which Irish members attended.
1990	→ World Council in Sierra Leone. Our representatives were Mrs. Olein Gyles, Senior Delegate and Hazel Codd, Junior Delegate, Tullow Branch, Cashel & Ossory Dioceses. Mrs. Joy Parkin of New Zealand appointed World Chairperson
1991	→ All Ireland Camp held in Rathdown School, Dublin. <i>"The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."</i>



This window formerly in the Girls Friendly Society Chapel in Oak House was transferred by the Society to Christ Church Leeson Park in 1989.



Date	Event
1992	→ Live Broadcast of Holy Communion from RTE on Sunday 26 th April. Dean Salmon presided.
1993	→ World Council in Wellington, New Zealand. Our representatives were Mrs. Olein Gyles, Senior Delegate and Alison Burnside, Junior Delegate, Donaghmore Branch, Armagh Diocese. Mrs. Joy Epton from England appointed World Chairperson.
1996	→ World Council in Swanick and London, England. Our representatives were Mrs. Maeve Hannon, Senior Delegate and Tanya Woods, Junior Delegate, Billis Branch, Kilmore Diocese. Mrs. Nobantu Makunga of South Africa appointed World Chairperson.
1998	World Day of Prayer service sheet produced by Ireland.
1999	→ World Council in Port Elizabeth and Umtata, South Africa. Our representatives were Mrs. Maeve Hannon, Senior Delegate and Anne Healy, Junior Delegate, Cloughjordan Branch, Killaloe Diocese. Mrs. June Hillier from Australia appointed World Chairperson.
2000	→ Millennium Services held throughout the country. An All-Ireland Service of Thanksgiving held in St. Patricks Cathedral, Dublin on 7th May.
2001	→ All Ireland Conference for Diocesan Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers in the Theological College – 23rd-25th Feb.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 125th Birthday Celebrations. All Ireland Camp in Kilkenny College from 4th to 7th April. → 9th May 12 GFS members (drawn from across dioceses) visit, by invitation, the President of Ireland, Mrs Mary McAleese at Aras An Uachtarain. → A Service of Celebration was held in St. Patricks Cathedral; 23rd June - Live televised service from RTE. → World Council in Cairns and Townsville, Australia. Our representatives were Mrs Emila Corrigan, Senior Delegate and Suzanne Henry, Junior Delegate, Christ Church branch, Lisburn, Connor Diocese. Mrs Adele Ray, USA appointed World Chairperson.



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ All Ireland Conference for Diocesan Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers in the Theological College – 20th-22nd June.→ All Ireland Training in Emmaus Centre, Swords, 17th -19th October.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ All Ireland Training Day in Castleknock Parish Centre, 20th March.→ All Ireland Camp - Wesley College, Dublin – 15th -18th May.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Rev. Janice Aiton commissioned as All Ireland Chaplain.→ World Council in Pennsylvania, USA. Our representatives were Mrs Emila Corrigan, Senior Delegate and Junior Delegate, Elaine Grothier, Tullow Branch, Cashel & Ossory Dioceses. Ruth Choi, Korea appointed World Chairperson.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Mrs Florence Higgins commissioned as All Ireland President in St. Patrick's Cathedral, County Armagh by the Bishop of Meath & Kildare, The Most Reverend Richard Clarke.→ All Ireland Camp—20th-23rd April Venue– Kilkenny College, Co Kilkenny.→ All Ireland Conference for Diocesan Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers. Venue NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare 16th-18th June.→ Handbook updated.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, London, to mark the 50th Anniversary of The Duke of Edinburgh Awards; Mrs Florence Higgins, Central President and Mrs Pearl Smyton Diocesan President of Clogher Diocese attended.→ Leaders Training Days - Venues: Church Street, Longford - 8th of September Fivemiletown, Co Tyrone - 15th September Portlaoise, Co Laois - 20th October
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ All Ireland Camp,- 27th-30th March - St Columba's College, Dublin.→ World Council in Seoul, South Korea. Mrs Emila Corrigan Commissioned as GFS World Chairperson. Our representatives were Mrs Florence Higgins, Senior Delegate and Ms Isla Poyntz, Kilmore Branch, Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh Diocese Junior Delegate.



Date	Event
2009	→ All Ireland Conference for Diocesan Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers– Venue the D4 Hotel Ballsbridge, Dublin.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All Ireland Camp– 7th – 10th April Kilkenny College, Co Kilkenny. → GFS World Day of Prayer Service, compiled and produced by Rev Janice Aiton, GFS All Ireland Chaplain. → All Ireland Leaders' Training Conference 25-27th June Venue - The Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. → All Ireland Leaders' Final Stage Training - 16th October Venue – Parochial Hall, Kells, Co Meath.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → World Council in Dublin Ireland 24th June—3rd July. World Chairperson Mrs Emila Corrigan; our representatives were, Mrs Florence Higgins, Senior Delegate and Miss Jane Cairns, Magheralin Branch Connor, Down & Dromore Dioceses, Junior Delegate. Mrs Glenys Payne (Wales) appointed World Chairperson. → Leaders Training Days: 3rd September Venue—The Cathedral Hall, Kilmore, Co Cavan 24th September The Parochial Hall, Portlaoise, Co Laois
2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → All Ireland Camp—11th -14th April St Columba's College, Dublin. → Mrs Sylvia Quinn commissioned All Ireland President in the CICE Chapel, Rathmines, Dublin. → All Ireland Conference for Diocesan Presidents, Secretaries & Treasurers 22nd-24th June; Venue The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Braemor Park, Dublin.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → GFS Broadcast Service from RTE TV and Radio - 11th August. Rev Janice Aiton presided. → All Ireland Training Day – 7th September Abbeyleigh. → All Ireland Training Day – 12th September Enniskillen.



GFS History in Ireland

Date	Event
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ All Ireland Camp – 25th – 27th April – Wilson's Hospital School, Multyfarnham, County Westmeath.→ Rev Tanya Woods commissioned as All Ireland Chaplain by Dean Dermot Dunne in Christ Church, Leeson Park, Dublin.→ Sylvia Quinn, Senior Delegate and Michele Armitage, Junior Delegate commissioned by Rev Tanya.→ World Council in Swansea University, Wales from 25th July – 4th August. Mrs Sylvia Quinn Senior Delegate and Ms Michelle Armitage, Cloughjordan Branch, Limerick & Killaloe Dioceses, Junior Delegate attended. Canon Val Gribble (Australia) was commissioned World President.
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ New Past Presidents' Brooches designed and presented.→ Mini-conference for incoming Diocesan Officers; venue GFS Oak House, Upper Leeson Street, Dublin.→ Leader Training Days:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Abbeyleix, Co. Laois – 12th September- Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone – 19th September- Longford, Co. Longford – 3rd September→ Handbook redesigned, updated and launched at Central Council.

For the past: Thank God
For the future: Take courage
For the present: Seek Christ's help
To be a good friend
To stand for purity and truth
To live not for yourself, but for others,
Therein lies the joy of life.

F. Ross Todd, GFS President
For the Diamond Jubilee - 1937