

# ACCA IRELAND PRESIDENT'S BALL 2009

This year's President's Ball saw ACCA members gather in the historic surroundings of the Mansion House's Round Room



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**One of the highlights of the ACCA calendar, the President's Ball is an opportunity for the current President to celebrate his or her time in office and for ACCA members to gather in a social context. Against the backdrop of the current economic turmoil, this year's Ball was also an occasion to evaluate the road ahead both for the country and the accounting profession in particular. On Friday 13 February, some 200 ACCA members and guests gathered in the Mansion House's Round Room for a memorable and enjoyable night.**

#### Distinguished

ACCA Ireland President, Brendan Foster hosted the Ball. With a business career that includes the founding of Foster McAteer in 1995 and merger with Grant Thornton in 2008, Foster also enjoys a distinguished record of service with ACCA. A former president of the Leinster Student Network, he served as chairman of the ACCA Ireland Practitioners' Network and on numerous technical committees including CCAB-I.

Welcoming guests who included ACCA International President, Richard Aitken-Davies, and ACCA International Deputy President, Brendan Murtagh, Foster spoke of the highlights of his term as President, including a reception for new FCCAs in September and the graduation of 285 ACCA students in October. The pride they took in their global qualification pointed, he said, to the recognition of ACCA as 'a complete qualification, with a broad-based syllabus.' Foster also highlighted the CPD programme as crucial to supporting members. 'I would encourage you to use all the training and networking opportunities provided by ACCA, and the experienced team at Leeson Park will be happy to assist and support you,' he said. Sponsors of the evening were Ulster Bank, and David Pierce FCCA addressed the audience on its behalf. Acknowledging that the banking crisis was not far from people's minds, Pierce said it was important that individual scandals did not cloud overall judgements and that the vast majority of people working throughout

the Irish banking sector were honest and honourable people.

#### Education

Guest speaker of the evening Paul Rellis, managing director, Microsoft Ireland, accented the positive in his speech. Highlighting education as the great driver of change he pointed, specifically, to the introduction of free education by Donagh O'Malley in the 1960s as laying the foundation of the Celtic Tiger economy of the 1990s.

Rellis said the rapid change in pace in the economy presented an opportunity to re-think our value system and to focus on innovation. Life-long learning must be part of this and he noted this was a concept already at the core of the ACCA, and one which other industries and professions needed to match. This year's nominated charity at the President's Ball was the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and guests raised more than €4,400 on the night. Entertainment was provided by John Lowe and the Heartbeats.

01 (Left to right) Brendan Foster, ACCA Ireland President; Paul Rellis, MD of Microsoft Ireland; and Richard Aitken-Davies, ACCA International President



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02 (Left to right) Brendan Foster, ACCA Ireland President and Paul Rellis, MD of Microsoft Ireland 03 (Left to right) Catherine Neitan; Brian Neitan; Louise Carey; and Luke Brockie 04 (Left to right) Marion and Denis McCarthy; Paula McGrath; and Neil Anderson 05 (Left to right) Sam Shepperd and Priscilla Shire 06 (Left to right) Jan and Dave O'Donoghue; and Vivienne and Des Hanrahan 07 (Left to right) Linda Maher; Alan Maher; Mark Redmond; and Elaine Hanley 08 (Left to right) Paul Rellis, MD of Microsoft Ireland; Brendan Foster, ACCA Ireland President; and David Pierce, representing sponsors Ulster Bank