



Mr Wilton Crawford (back left) of main sponsors Michelin Tyre PLC and his wife Selena (front left) who were guests of honour at the Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards in the Tullyglass House Hotel are seen here with Ballymena Chamber of Commerce & Industry President Mr Raymond Ruck and his wife Susan, Mayor of Ballymena Cllr Hubert Nicholl and his wife May and North Antrim MP Ian Paisley (back right), Chamber of Commerce Business Development Manager Chris Wales (2nd from left, back) and committee member Alison Moore (front right).

## 2011 BUSINESS AWARDS GALA EVENING

400 guests attended the Gala evening for the 2011 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards in Tullyglass House Hotel on Thursday 20th October. The awards are organised annually by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The compere for the evening was Gene Fitzpatrick and after welcoming everyone he invited Chamber President Raymond Ruck to speak.

Raymond said "On behalf of Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here tonight

to celebrate our 9th Business Excellence Awards.

We are particularly proud that after 9 years of running these events we can still bring 400 business people together. We believe that this is testimony to the outlook that the Business Community have for the future.

We are all still very much aware the past few years have resulted in a much more challenging economic environment with many Business sectors significantly impacted.

This has been a key focus for the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and we have been particularly busy on this front in past several weeks. At the end of September we worked along with our Business support partners to organise a very successful 'Impact North East' series of events aimed at boosting jobs in the local economy and two weeks ago we had a lunch engagement with President Mary McAleese and local Business Leaders.

Tonight is another opportunity to build on these initiatives by celebrating the success of the Ballymena Borough Business Community focusing on the huge contribution to the Northern Ireland economy made by local Businesses and to highlight the commitment made by individuals.

As a Chamber we see this as an excellent event to promote Ballymena to the rest of Northern Ireland as a great place to live, work and do business.

I would like to thank all our sponsors, especially our major sponsor Michelin. Tonight we have with us Wilton Crawford, Plant Director for the Ballymena site. Michelin and Michelin's Business Support organisation Michelin Development have played a vital role in supporting local Businesses and we greatly appreciate their sponsorship of the Awards this year. To our individual category sponsors, many of whom return year on year to support the Awards, we really are grateful for your support.

Last but not least, I'd like to personally thank Chris Wales Chamber Business Development Manager and Alison Moore Past President of the Chamber. Events like this don't just happen and it takes a huge amount of effort to get everyone here tonight.

To conclude I offer my congratulations to all the finalists and I hope you all enjoy your evening. Thank you".

Wilton Crawford was then invited to say a few words. He said "It gives me great pleasure, as Plant Manager of Michelin Ballymena, to be here this evening representing Michelin, as the main sponsor of the 2011 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards.

I attended the Awards night for the first time last year and was very impressed by the entire event; it has and continues to be a huge success, and credit for this goes to the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Ballymena Borough Council for its excellent organisation. I am sure you will all agree the event has become of significant importance in the business and social calendar.

Its success is quite simple; the Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards provide a unique opportunity, to celebrate and highlight the abundance of talent and expertise which is present in the Borough. Such qualities as innovation, customer service, business excellence; these are all assets which will have been demonstrated by the winners in the different award categories as they have progressed through the stages of the judging process.

Undoubtedly, these qualities are all vital elements in today's business environment and their value cannot be underestimated. Competitive advantage within each of our business sectors can be the key to winning future business and customers.

This said we cannot be complacent or rest on past achievements; we need to safeguard the progress achieved, plan for the future with optimism so that when the economic climate improves, the business is ready to take advantage of the opportunities available.

In conclusion, I wish all the finalists good luck in their respective categories and hope that all the organisations, large or small, represented here this evening will have another successful year in business".

Mayor Hubert Nicholl was the final speaker before dinner saying that he was delighted to be at this prestigious event. He said "This is the largest and one of the most important events in the Ballymena business calendar. The Council has been involved with the awards since they began and we are delighted once again to be sponsoring the Commitment to Ballymena award. These awards demonstrate the excellent businesses we have in the Borough. I congratulate the Chamber on organising the awards and wish all the finalists good luck".

After an excellent dinner Gene Fitzpatrick entertained everyone and this was followed by the highlight of the evening, the presentation of the awards. The evening concluded with dancing to the Bizz.

During the evening a raffle was held with the proceeds going to the NI Hospice. The business people of Ballymena once again demonstrated their generosity with £3557 being raised for this very worthwhile charity. Thank you to everyone who contributed and to the following businesses who donated prizes for the raffle:

- NI Hospice
- Michelin Tyre PLC
- firmus energy
- Tullyglass House Hotel
- Barr's Butchers
- Galgorm Resort & Spa
- Alexander Bonar & Co Ltd
- Millside Restaurant (Gracehill)



Mr Ronnie Morton of category sponsors First Trust Bank presents the Customer Service Award - Retail Sector (Independent Retailer) to L-R, Lynn O'Hagan, Laura McManus, Marie Smyth and Jenny Watt of Castle Couture.



John Kieley of category sponsors Autoline Insurance Group presents the Customer Service Award Retail Sector (Multiple Retailer) to Ashley Rodgers of Game.



Neil Patton (left) of category sponsors The Patton Group presents the Best Eating Establishment Award to Stella Grant and Eugene McKeever of the Adair Arms Hotel.



Neil Holland of category sponsors firmus energy presents the Best Small Eatery/Coffee Shop Award to Aideen Dunlop and Roisin O'Neill of Nobel Cafe.



Paul Muir of category sponsors Riada Resourcing presents the Customer Service Award - Service Sector to Tracey Morris, Carol Wilson and Roberta Simpson of Northern Bank.



David Robinson (centre) of category sponsors Robinson Services presents the Customer Service Award - Hospitality Sector, to Daryl Stevenson, Stephanie Gray, Ann McGarry and Patrick McGarry of Milside Restaurant, Gracehill.



Catriona McBride (left) of category supporters JTI presents the Best Premises Award to Jonathan Wylie and Rosalind Lowry of The Braid.



Pamela McLean (left) of category sponsors Moore Concrete Products Ltd presents the Best Business Website Award to Eileen McCann of Rutledge Recruitment & Training.



Thomas McKillen of category sponsors McKillens Footwear presents the Excellence in Customer Service Award to Rita Gibson, Christine Butler, Heather Gillespie and Louise McIntyre of Ballymena Tourist Information Centre.



Trevor Barr (left) of category sponsors Barr's Butchers & Deli presents the Customer Service Award - Convenience Store - to John Reid of Spar, Ahoghill.



Graham Lapsley of category sponsors Northern Bank Ltd presents the Right Place to Work Award to Julian Dalrymple (left) and Courtney McGall of the Sitting Room Hairdressing.



Alderman PJ McAvo presents the Most Promising New Business Award on behalf of category sponsors Into Business Magazine to Timothy Montgomery (left) and William Woodburn of Montgomerys.



Wilton Crawford of sponsors Michelin Tyre PLC presents the Best Small Business Award to Maire McCann (left) and Lorna Ewart of joint winners Nobel Cafe.



Mr Wilton Crawford (right) of sponsors Michelin Tyre PLC presents the Best Small Business Award to Clifford and Donna Martin of joint winners Martin Engineering Supplies.



Lorraine Rock of category sponsors the Wright Group presents the Export Business of the Year Award to Fearghas Quinn of Fearghas Quinn Hears & Limousines.



Trevor Neilands (left) of category sponsors Northern Regional College presents the Environment Award to Liam McEvoy of the Patton Group.



Gren Armstrong (left) of category sponsors Invest Northern Ireland presents the Innovation Award to Eileen Selfridge and Paul McLaughlin of the Wild Duck, Portlengone.



Stefanie Smyth of category sponsors Grafton Recruitment presents the Employee of the Year award to Steve Morris of the Patton Group.



Louise McCollum of category sponsors Diamond Recruitment presents the Involvement in the Community Award to James, Patricia and Sarah Perry of the Ahoghill Traders Association.



Terry Robb (centre) of category sponsors Ulster Bank presents the Business Growth Award to Gordon (left) and Kieran McAtamney of K&G McAtamney Wholesale Meats.



Mayor of Ballymena Cllr Hubert Nicholl presents the Commitment to Ballymena Award to Norman McBurney of McBurney Transport at the Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards in the Tullyglass House Hotel.

# BALLYMENA BOROUGH BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2011

## Customer Service Award Retail Sector (Independent Retailer)

Sponsor – First Trust Bank

Winner: **Castle Couture**  
Finalists: Gloonan Gallery  
Marion Woodburn Jewellery  
Waveney Eye Care (NI) Ltd



## Customer Service Award Service Sector

Sponsor – Riada Resourcing

Winner: **Northern Bank**  
Finalists: Fenaghy Veterinary Clinic, The Electric Chair  
Simon Houston Hairdressing



## Customer Service Award Retail Sector (Multiple Retailer)

Sponsor – Autoline Insurance Group

Winner: **Game**  
Finalists: Debenhams  
The Perfume Shop



## Customer Service Award Hospitality Sector

Sponsor – Robinson Services

Winner: **Millside Restaurant (Gracehill)**  
Finalists: Adair Arms Hotel, Caffe Nero



## Best Eating Establishment Award

Sponsor – The Patton Group

Winner: **Adair Arms Hotel**  
Finalists: Millside Restaurant  
(Gracehill), Montgomerys



## Business Premises Award

Supported by JTI

Winner: **The Braid**  
Finalists: Galgorm Resort and Spa  
The Electric Chair



## Best Small Eatery/Coffee Shop Award

Sponsor – firmus energy

Winner: **Nobel Café**  
Finalists: Caffe Nero, Ground Espresso Bar



## Best Business Website Award

Sponsor – Moore Concrete Products Ltd

Winner: **Rutledge Recruitment and Training**  
Finalists: McKinneys Chartered Valuation Surveyors & Estate Agents, Quad-X, Localbridesni.com



**Excellence in Customer Service Award Management**

Sponsor – McKillens Footwear

Winner:

**Tourist Information Centre**

Finalists: Ulster Bank, Woodsides Pharmacy  
Grafton Recruitment



**Environment Award**

Sponsor – Northern Regional College

Winner: **The Patton Group**

Finalist: Ecos Centre



**Innovation Award**

Sponsor – Invest Northern Ireland

Winner: **The Wild Duck Inn**

Finalists: K & G McAtamney, onus (NI) Ltd



**Customer Service Award Convenience Store**

Sponsor – Barr's Butcher & Deli

Winner: **Spar/Texaco Ahoghill**

Finalists: Spar Cullybackey  
Spar Doury Road, James McNeill Grocery Ltd/Vivoxtra



**Involvement in the Community Award**

Sponsor – Diamond Recruitment

Winner: **Ahoghill Traders Association**

Finalists: Ballymena Business Centre  
Ballymena Retailers Against Crime  
James McNeill Grocery Ltd/Vivoxtra



**Right Place to Work Award**

Sponsor – Northern Bank Ltd



Winner: **The Sitting Room**

Finalist: Autoline Insurance Group

**Employee of the Year Award**

Sponsor – Grafton Recruitment

Winner: **Steve Morris**

Finalist: John O'Brien



**Most Promising New Business Award**

Sponsor – Into Business Magazine

Winner: **Montgomerys**

Finalists: Moore Biosystems Ltd, K & G McAtamney  
Wholesale Meats, Ballyprint.com



**Business Growth Award**

Sponsor – Ulster Bank

Winner: **K & G McAtamney Wholesale Meats**

Finalists: Barrs Deli, Leaf Designs



**Best Small Business Award**

Sponsor – Michelin Tyre PLC



Winners: **Nobel Café & Martin Engineering Supplies Ltd**

Finalist: Leaf Designs

**Commitment to Ballymena**

Sponsor – Ballymena Borough Council

Winner: **Norman McBurney**



**Export Business of the Year Award**

Sponsor – The Wright Group

Winner: **Fearghas Quinn**

**Hearse & Limousines**

Finalist: Martin Engineering Supplies Ltd



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# CORPORATE LUNCH WITH ROI PRESIDENT MARY McALEESE



Republic of Ireland President Mary McAleese was the guest speaker at a corporate lunch in the Adair Arms Hotel in Ballymena on Thursday 6th October. The event was hosted by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry and sponsored by Power NI, the new name for NIE Energy.

**Chamber President Raymond Ruck welcomed President McAleese to Ballymena.** He said "When we were organising this lunch and talking to our members about it, it became apparent that many members of Chamber had been guests of the President in Dublin and I am delighted that Chamber can return, in a small way, your hospitality.

Ballymena is widely renowned as the premier shopping town in Northern Ireland with its great mix of independents and multiple stores. However it is often overlooked that the Borough also has a vibrant and successful industrial and agricultural base. It is Chamber's role not only to promote and lobby on behalf of these businesses but also to promote the Borough as well. Chamber is also very grateful to Power NI for their generous sponsorship of today's lunch."

President McAleese thanked everyone for the warm and generous welcome. She said

"I am delighted to join you here today for lunch. It is good to be among some familiar faces and to get the chance to make some new acquaintances. My thanks to Roy Bonar for his very kind invitation to visit the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and congratulations to each one of you for the many ways in which you have given leadership to the business and civil life of Ballymena.

The past, for Ballymena like so many parts of Northern Ireland was a troubled and troubling place. But this is now a time of transformation, a time when we have seen the North's citizens come out from under the clouds caused by division into the light of good neighbourliness and partnership. Peace and political stability have taken hold and they have radically altered the present and the future.

Through all the capriciousness of the Troubles you had to give leadership and bring hope so that today's thriving and energetic

town is a credit to your hard work, determination and innovation. You did the work because you care deeply about this place, its people, its prospects and its potential. You took your individual strengths and pooled them through this Chamber so that together you would be a forceful centre of advocacy for Ballymena as a dynamic business and commercial centre and a regional hub.

You fostered a balance between local, family run businesses and those driven by investment from outside. Through the voluntary partnership between private businesses and the local Authority - the Business Improvement District - you invested in the strengths and the character of the town so that its very uniqueness would enhance its credentials as a modern city.

Among the dreadfully wasteful vanities of our messed up history is a statistic I inherited on becoming President - that the land border within the EU with the least commerce across was the land border on this island. I do not need to tell business people how regrettable that fact was but looked at from a different perspective and in a new context of peace we can see it as indicating work to be done and benefits to be gained. Henry Ford's words are so true for all of us in this moment, especially those called to exercise leadership 'Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, Working together is Success.' In the current difficult economic climate it makes real sense to transform North/South economic collaboration into the momentum that will encourage prosperous sustainable economies for future generations on both sides of the border.

The two administrations are working together, as never before to ensure greater economic co-operation with the shared goals of economic recovery and the creation of jobs, North and South. Already that cooperation has produced and is producing real dividends and as we are only at the start we can be sure there is even better to come.

But this is work that is not generated by computers. It is the work of human beings, shaking hands, building relationships, establishing trust, exploring possible synergies and so I thank you for committing to that work and encourage you to persevere with building the structures and the relationships that are needed to underpin both the peace and prosperity. I hope that a generation is coming that will know only both and will know to whom it owes thanks for the great Godsend that is peace on your streets and a decent job to go to.

Thank you all again for that lovely welcome and I wish you every success as you continue with your important work”.

Ballymena Mayor Hubert Nicholl thanked President McAleese for visiting Ballymena. He said that in her fourteen years in office she had been an inspiration. He wished her well when she retires from office in a few weeks time, saying that her successor “had a big pair of shoes to fill”.

Chamber President Raymond Ruck then presented President McAleese with a painting of Slemish by local artist Nigel Allison.

Alan Egner, Business Sales and Marketing Manager for Power NI said the local energy supplier is delighted to be sponsoring this prestigious event.

“We have a long association with Ballymena Chamber and are very pleased to be able to support them in this way. As we have recently changed name from NIE Energy to Power NI, this high profile lunch offers an excellent opportunity for us to promote our new name and to reassure our many customers in the area that we’re the same company and the same people, with the same customer focus – just with a new name.

As the largest energy supplier to the local SME sector, supplying over 30,000 businesses, we are as dedicated as ever to helping our customers save energy and money.”

With an unrivalled history and heritage in this part of the world we are very proud of our local roots and of the fact that our Contact Centres and Head office are all based locally in Ballymena, Belfast and Omagh”.

The Chamber would also like to thank the Adair Arms Hotel for all their assistance. Chris Wales, Chamber’s Business Development Manager said “There was a lot of preparatory work for this visit and I found the Adair to be very helpful and professional in all my dealings with them. The food and the service today could not be faulted – everyone I have spoken to has been very complimentary of the hotel. I would also like to thank Roy Bonar who was an excellent Master of Ceremonies”.



L-R Susan Ruck, Alison Moore, Mayor Hubert Nicholl, Audrey Wales, Chamber President Raymond Ruck, ROI President Mary McAleese, Alan Egner and Stephen McCully (Both Power NI), Anne Donaghy, Deputy Mayor Robin Cherry and Mary Lawn.



Members of the Chamber Management Committee meet ROI President Mary McAleese



Chamber President Raymond Ruck addressing the lunch



Master of Ceremonies Roy Bonar



Mayor Hubert Nicholl addressing the lunch



Chamber President Raymond Ruck presents a gift to ROI President Mary McAleese