

IRISH SUPPORT ADVICE CENTRE

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You see things
as they are;
and you ask

“Why?”.

But I dream
things that
never were: and

I ask “Why not?”.

*George Bernard Shaw
Irish Emigre*

Annual Report 1989

The prophetic is a necessary component of any balanced, mature organisation. It always seeks to *explore* beyond the formal limits, to push new frontiers of understanding, to raise new questions, and to challenge the formal structures to be ever on the alert to *respond* to new needs. Without the prophetic, the institutional would become rigid and stale, expending a maximum of energy on its own self-perpetuation. The task of the prophetic is to *challenge* the institutional into new ways of being, of acting, of relating and communicating with humanity. Its task is to criticise any form of systematic domination and to energise people into creative co-responsibility.

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The Irish Welfare Bureau consists of both

- (1) The Irish Support and Advice Centre, based at Fulham Palace Road, and
- (2) Austin House Hostels based at Hammersmith Grove

**IRISH SUPPORT & ADVICE CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT 1989**



**At the core
of the following pages
are people. Our people. Their
successes and failures; their impact
and enthusiasm; their past and their future.**

**The centre continually seeks to be creative and
constructive in its response to each individual.
To accept and to challenge all towards positive attitudes
and attributes that contribute to ourselves and our host
country.**

**It is our hope that you will find some reflection of your-
self in these pages, and that the wider issues and
implications of Irish emigration will be seen, not just
from an island mentality but from the broader
European context.**



SHAPING UP

.....FOR THE FUTURE

AIMS

Maintain our Equal Opportunities Policy by ensuring fair treatment to all.

Liaise and cooperate with Statutory and Voluntary Bodies towards improving our services.

Encourage all towards integration in a European and multicultural society.

Identify and respond to everyone in need - especially of Irish origin.

Be with our own people in their search for a meaning to life.

Stimulate an awareness of the rich cultural heritage of Irish People.

No place to call

Home

Each homeless person represents a tale of misery that statistics can never convey.

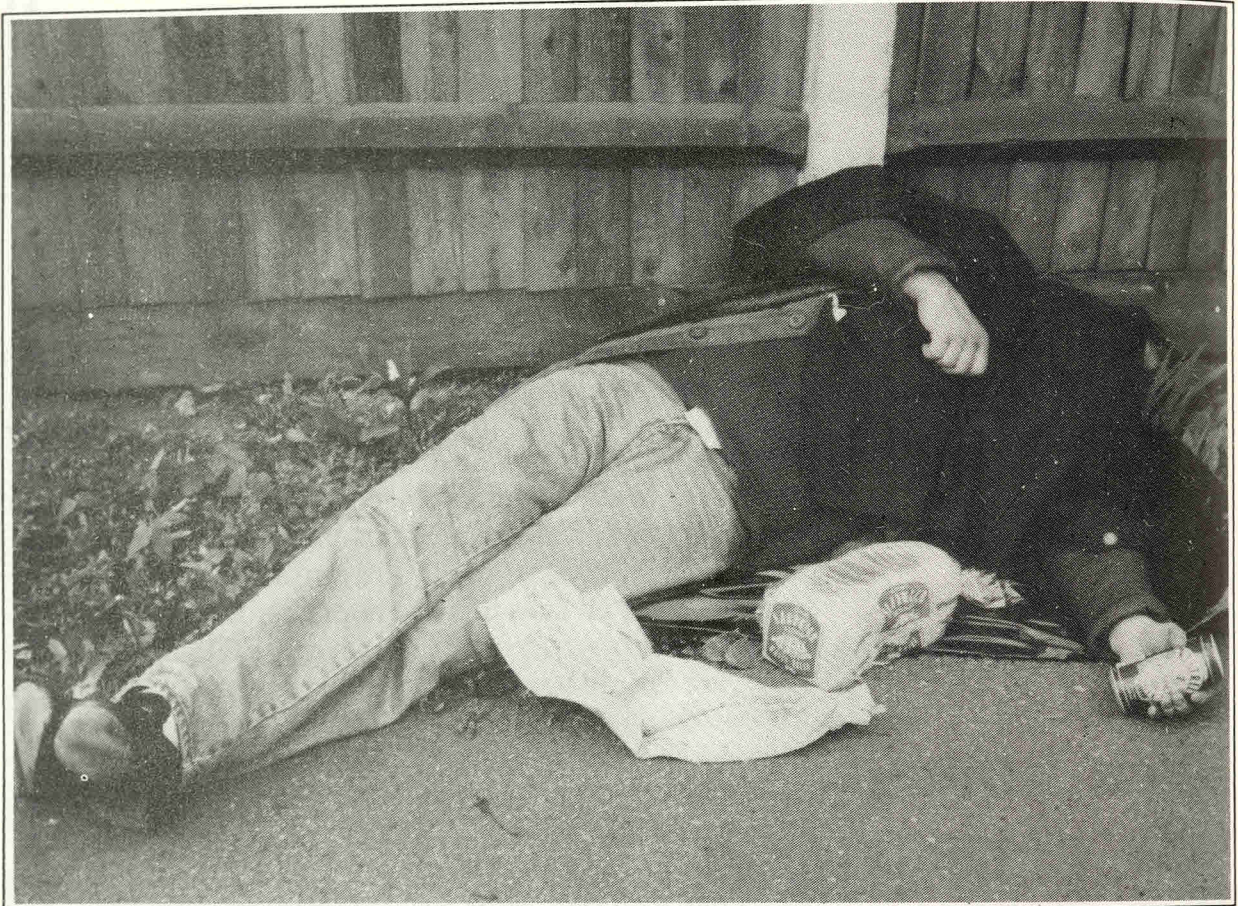
We had over 1,000 enquiries last year for accommodation. Many of that number were young and homeless. Walk along any street of London and you will see the homeless, men and women of all ages huddled in drafty recesses. These are the old homeless, often drunk and deranged, and the young pinched youths who often end up begging and alienated.

The right to home ownership is held sacrosanct in Britain where owner-occupation accounts for 60-70% of dwellings. There's little mention, however, of the right of access to reasonable, affordable accommodation, and as British society becomes more stratified as a result of fiscal and social policies, those operating on the lower levels are increasingly vulnerable to becoming unemployed and, perhaps eventually, homeless.

There are many myths about homelessness, in particular the suggestion that young girls deliberately become pregnant or that families deliberately allow themselves to become homeless in order to get to the top of local authority housing lists. In other words, such people are homeless because of their own irresponsibility. In fact, the majority of single parents with young children who become homeless have experienced marriage or partnership breakdown, while around half of them have previously been in permanent accommodation.

Homelessness is growing most rapidly among young people, especially 16 and 17 year olds.

HOW CAN YOU TELL ME YOU'RE LONELY?



*"So how can you tell me
you're lonely, and
Say for you the sun don't shine?
Let me take you by the hand
And lead you through the streets of London
I'll show you something
That'll make you change your mind."*

Walk along any street of London and you will see the homeless, men and women of all ages huddled in drafty recesses. These are the old homeless, often drunk and deranged, and the young pinched youths who often end up begging and alienated.

There is also some confusion as to what constitutes homelessness, with definitions and action left largely to the discretion of local authorities. For example, an official government study published in 1988 reported that in 1985-1986, housing departments in London boroughs turned down as being technically not homeless 56% of applicants who were squatting, 57% of those in bed and breakfast accommodation, and 68% of those living in hostels.

The fundamental cause of homelessness is the huge gap between low incomes and the cost of housing. The problem is most acute in urban centres, in particular London, but is also being felt in rural areas as daily commuters and people buying holiday or retirement homes push prices well above the means of most locals.

Homelessness is growing most rapidly among young people, especially 16 and 17 year olds who are largely ineligible for income support since the government tends to assume that they will either be in employment or on YTS placements. For many young people unable to find a footing in society by way of a job and a place to live, homelessness is virtual inevitability. There is also an increase in mentally-ill people on the streets,

undoubtedly attributable to a great extent to the move away from long-term institutional care for the mentally-ill towards community care. According to one survey, around 25% of those discharged from psychiatric hospitals had no accommodation to go to.

Although rising mortgage interest rates over the past few years have generated an increasing degree of homelessness among house buyers -- already 10% of homeless households cite inability to keep up with mortgage repayments as the reason for losing their home -- homelessness is a feature mainly of the rented sector. This, in effect, means local authority and housing trust schemes, as private rented accommodation now accounts for only 10% of total housing supply versus more than 90% in 1918.

Among the single homeless is a high proportion of members of ethnic minorities, especially black, Asian and Irish.

Currently, families form some 80-85% of households accepted as homeless in Britain --

around 140,000 a year. The extent of single homelessness is less easy to gauge, but according to a report last year by the National Federation of Housing Associations, up to 3,000 single people are sleeping rough in London, between 4,000-5,000 in bed and breakfast hotels, 11,000-12,000 in hostels, more than 19,000 squatting, 109,000-12,000 in short-life housing and 74,000 living in other people's households as a necessity. Among the single homeless is a high proportion of members of ethnic minorities, especially black, Asian and Irish

While homelessness has been on the increase for some 30 years, the rise has been particularly sharp since 1982, fuelled mainly by the combination of the systematic selling off of council housing stock to local authority tenants and sharp cutbacks in new building. In the mid-1970's, local authorities built well over 100,000 houses a year. Current output is around 15,000 and is set to be cut to 6,000 a year by 1991-92. It seems highly unlikely that any increase in output later in the decade will be enough to close the gap. (Housing Association dwellings are projected to rise from 15,000 a year in 88-89 to 40,000 by the mid-90's)

A comparison between the UK and six other north-west European countries shows that although Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have all reduced capital spending

The UK needs to allocate substantially more funding to house building

on housing as a proportion of gross domestic product during the past two decades, all have consistently spent more on housing than the U.K. In 1987, these six countries spent an

average 4.7% of GDP on housing (Germany and Norway spent 5.1% and 5.2% respectively). While the UK figure was 3.7%. One report points out that if Britain's new building expenditure as a percentage of GDP during the 1980's had been on the same scale as Germany's, more than 600,000 additional houses would have been built.

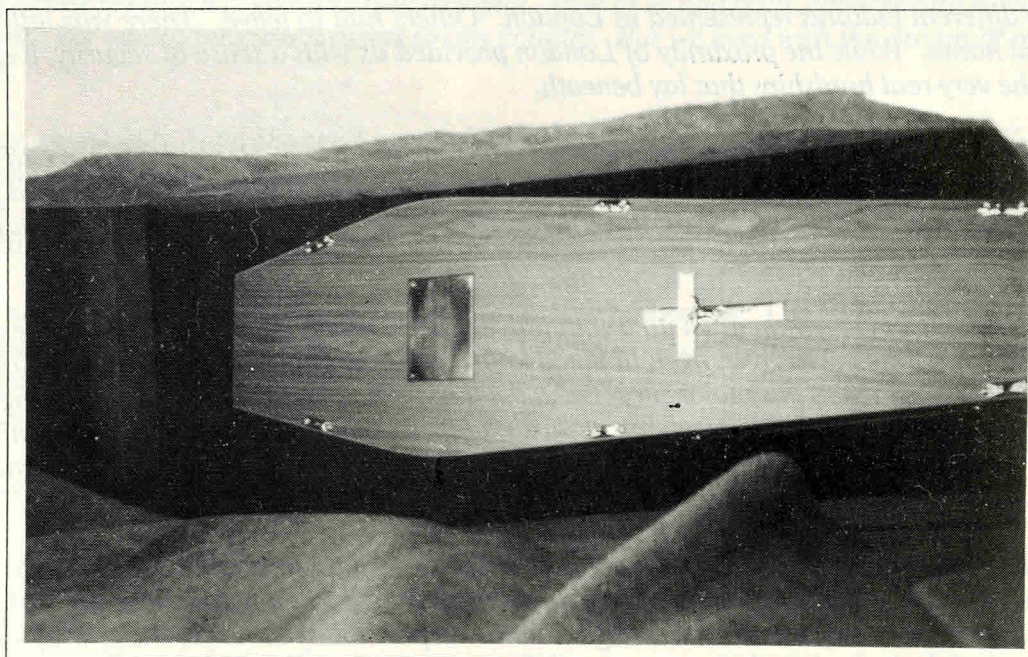
Clearly, to go any way towards combatting homelessness as part of a long term strategy, the UK needs to allocate substantially more funding to house building. But there are also a number of short term

options open to government and local authorities: in May 1988, London boasted some 23,000 vacant council dwellings, of which just over one-sixth were available for letting; empty dwellings in the private sector totalled close to 100,000. Officials in various welfare agencies are pressing for vacant housing, owned not only by local authorities, but also by housing associations and even the private sector, to be made available in order to alleviate this critical problem.

"...the homeless make up a group that is still poorer than the poor; all of us need to help them. We are convinced that a house is much more than a single roof over one's head. The place where a person creates and lives out his or her life also serves to found, in some way, that person's deepest identity and his or her relations with others..."

It's hard to Die and Die Alone

So many Irish immigrants after a life of struggle die alone, rejected, forgotten. A few may have known them by their christian name, that would be all. When they die, the centre is left with the problem of finding out who they really were and then informing their next of kin.

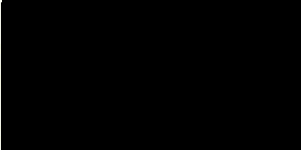


WITHOUT FLOWERS, WITHOUT FRIENDS.

A LETTER TO THE IRISH GOVERNMENT

- WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 2025


 Leinster House
Dublin
IRELAND


4 December 2025

Dear Taoiseach and Members of the Dail

I came to London in 1989, thirty six years ago. I was young, educated and full of energy and enthusiasm. I came in the hope of getting a job, and making some money. It was my ambition to return one day to Ireland and set up a family. Unfortunately, that wasn't to be.

In those days, most of my friends left. Some wanted to go, to experience life abroad amongst the many different cultures represented in London. Others had to leave. There was little or no work at home. While the proximity of London provided us with a sense of security, it also clouded the very real hardships that lay beneath.

 *The availability of affordable rented accommodation was minimal. Hence, many ended up homeless and on the streets. There were some short-term hostels, but these were few and far between. They tried to bandage the initial sufferings of the homeless immigrant, but the hurts felt, ran deep.*

Your predecessors in Government set up a committee called DION. Again, this committee did its best with what little it was given from home. I know that I and my friends felt very let down by the general approach to this major problem at the time. The country at home was losing its youth and energy. London was receiving approximately 35,000 of us each year and, whilst, most of these were doing very well, others were unable to cope. There was also no enticement to return home.

It seemed to me that the Irish Government had at the time little interest in the plight of its emigrants. Morally and in strict justice, one would have thought that it should have. Others claimed, that legally, only the local Borough had the responsibility to house those who were homeless. And the jockeying of whose responsibility it was went on, and on. Meanwhile, many of our people remained homeless and hungry.

Primarily, it seemed to me the responsibility of the Irish Government at the time, to protect its people, whether at home or abroad, whether migrant within the European community or

otherwise. They should have responded much more to ensure that our migrants moved with dignity and ease, and that they were taken care of in a dignified way by the other host European Community Country.

There was without doubt, widespread apathy to involuntary emigration from Ireland, and it was doing incalculable damage to the country. There seemed to be no integrated plan to combat poverty, to create jobs, to redistribute income, so that everyone had a guaranteed basic income and the unemployed be able to participate fully in society. If there was blame, it should have been placed squarely at older feet!

Unfortunately, we had no right to vote in home elections. We had no clout! Thank God that has changed! While other countries permitted their emigres to vote in home elections, our Government consistently refused. This was a mistake.

On top of this, your predecessors did little or nothing to reintegrate some of its emigres who had undoubtedly gained from their experiences of life abroad. This would have bred new life and a broader perspective. In addition, pressure to bear on the Government was disjointed. This was due to the fact that, unlike our compatriots in the United States at the time, we had not as an immigrant community in London, and indeed in Britain, got our act together. While the Asian, Afro-Caribbean and African communities presented a united front respectively, we on the whole, lacked coordination.

Some felt they were the victims of history and struggled to go beyond that point. Others integrated themselves into the life of the London Community and eventually lost contact and interest in home. Meanwhile, the vast majority I would venture to say, took a middle of the road approach, neither to the left or the right, worked hard, had no 'hang-ups', got on well with the host country, and in a word, did not waste time on false problems.

It was a time for much to give and much to gain. Most of us had skills, courage and a willingness to work. We would have been assets to any country. But we lived with the dream of returning home.

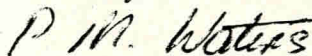
Things, thankfully have changed somewhat. We still have our identity within the European community. We have given so much to forge its reality. We belong to it and, it belongs to us. Our Government in Ireland has learned from the mistakes of the 1980's and 1990's. It took a long time and much suffering was involved.

I am now sixty five years old and looking forward to retirement. I've learned a lot from living with people of different view-points. Mostly I've learned that I belong to the Weltanschauung, the world-view, in which I am constantly enriched, sustained and energised in my own uniqueness.

Thank God, I'm a pensioner. I have free travel, even in Ireland.

And I want to go home!

Yours sincerely



Patrick M Waters

True Stories

Who picks up the Pieces

What would you have done?

What is to be done? Late one night this week, my telephone rang. It was a young acquaintance of my daughters' who had nowhere to sleep. Could she have a bed with us for the night? I said no. Had I taken her in, I knew she would have been with us for months. She has no job, no money. There is a spare bed in the study, and I ought to have said yes. Reader, what would you have done?

Nobody seems to know him

Sunday, the last day of 1989, eleven o'clock in the morning. A young couple arrive. It's cold and wet. They have a small baby. There's another on the way. Five pounds is there financial lot. The baby's crying. They've an address of a distant cousin living in some high-rise Council flats. They went there but found it impossible to locate him. Nobody seems to know him. They need space and a few day's respite. Fortunately, most of the hostel residents are at home for Christmas. This time I have room.

Brendan could take no more

Because of social pressures at home. Brendan and his girlfriend had to go. Understanding of his plight was minimal and uncomfortable. He had tried to remain impartial to the gossip and innuendo. He could take no more. They came to the Centre bewildered and lost. Eventually, we got them a Council flat. Four walls bereft of furniture. We provided them with the basics. Brendan is now very ill. He wants to go home. Fear prevents him. He is HIV positive.

Mary still grieves

Mary arrived in London a couple of months ago. She had some money for a B&B for a few weeks. After two weeks, she got a job. However, her over-riding feelings were of isolation and loneliness. One night, in the throes of a distressful state of loneliness, she went to the local pub and befriended a man who seemed to offer her support and kindness. After four weeks, Mary was pregnant. The man didn't want to know. Her short term solution was to have an abortion. Mary was hurt. She still grieves.

London's bright lights!

John is 16. He came to London to make a fortune. He knows nothing about work. It doesn't run in the family. He boasts that his great-grandfather was the last to work. He epitomises a sub-culture rampant in any city. London won't solve his problem. He is basically unemployable.

A JOB ON THE BUILDINGS

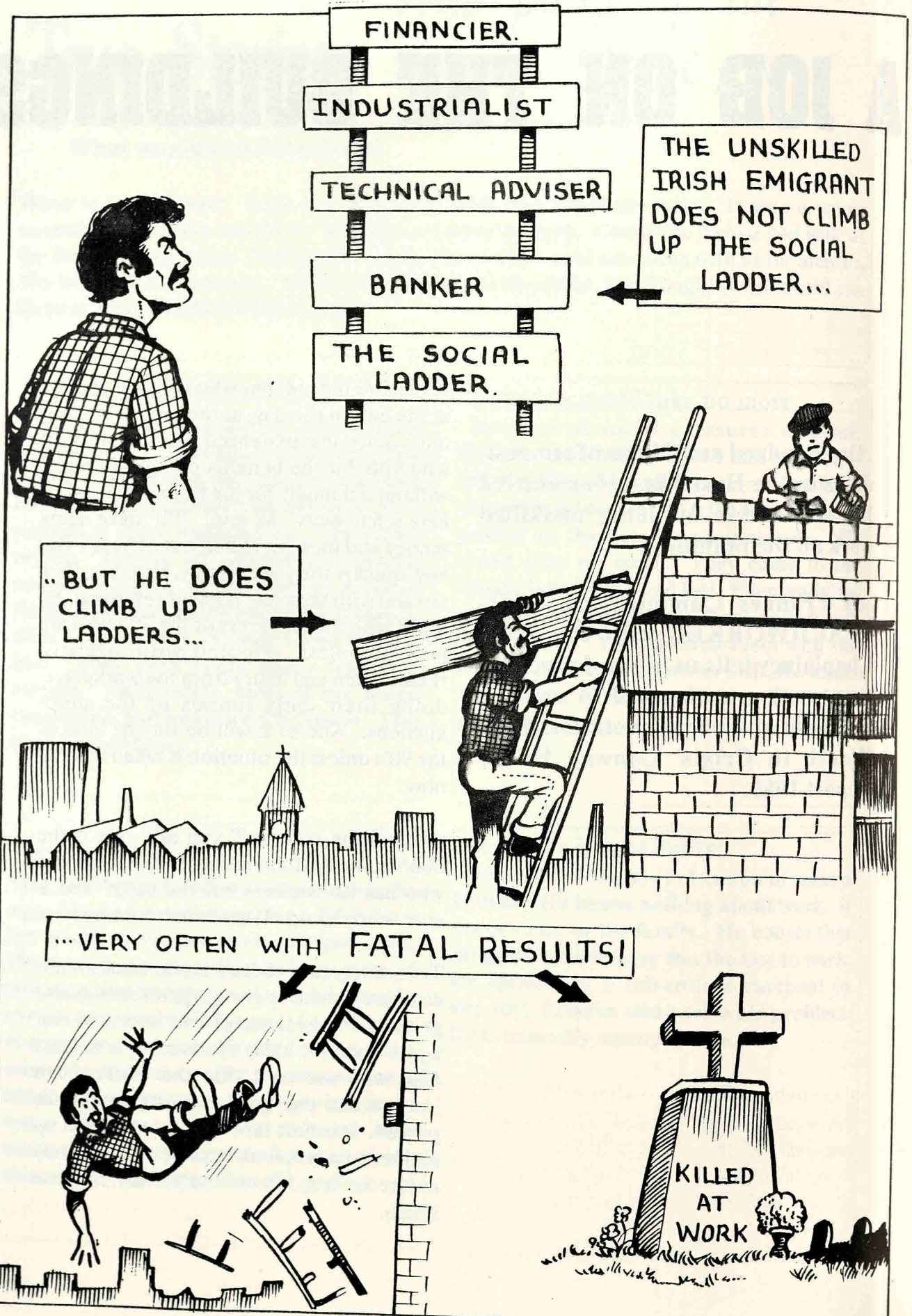
One hundred and fifteen of our residents in the Hostel last year started life in London by doing unskilled work on the buildings.

Sr Frances Cummins, an OUT-REACHWORKER with the Irish Chaplaincy tells us of the dangers of construction work. And in another article we give a long quotation from, 'Youth in Crisis' Conway House Report 1989.

A con job indeed, but who is being conned at the end of the day, at the end of life, but our young inexperienced Irish immigrant who opts for the benefits of 'cash in hand' without a thought for the future. *I'll only be here a few years*, he says, 'I'll make some money and then get to hell out of here'. But how quickly the years slip by, first five, then ten and with them the hope of returning. So it was with the labourers of the 50's who are now homeless, crippled with arthritis, rheumatism and injury from the workplace, doing their daily rounds of the soup-kitchens. And so it will be for the boys of the 90's unless the situation is taken in hand now.

'Who is the conman?' you ask. He is the Subbie, more often than not an Irish Subbie who has his workers 'off the cards' and is ever ready to rip off his fellow countryman.

True, there are indeed some honest sub-contractors who operate organised sites and give a just wage (I am reliably informed that a just wage for a day's labouring is at least £50) who see to it that the workers are insured and that good working conditions prevail. It is time now for these to stand up and be counted, to denounce their cowboy confreres lest we tar them with the one brush.



FINANCIER.

INDUSTRIALIST

TECHNICAL ADVISER

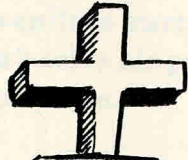
BANKER

THE SOCIAL LADDER.

THE UNSKILLED IRISH EMIGRANT DOES NOT CLIMB UP THE SOCIAL LADDER...

... BUT HE DOES CLIMB UP LADDERS...

... VERY OFTEN WITH FATAL RESULTS!



KILLED AT WORK

Subbies are known to set their price, choose whom they want and ferry them to destinations unknown. They return at 7.00 pm, tired and hungry but with cash in hand - often £25 for a hard day's work.

Wages for labouring vary from £18 a day to £80 with conditions for work varying accordingly. Those worst hit and on the breadline can be those who walk onto sites without contacts and those who line up at the pick-up points; Camden, Cricklewood, Shepherds Bush, Whitechapel etc. at 6.00 am, anxious and ready for work. Subbies are known to set their price, choose whom they want and ferry them to destinations unknown. They return at 7.00 pm, tired and hungry but with cash in hand - often £25 for a hard day's work.

Many contractors favour this Lump System of labour as they retain total control over the worker who will have work tomorrow only if he conforms today. The subbie makes 100% profit on each worker and since they are unofficial workers he can dismiss them at a moment's notice and can abdicate all responsibility for their safety and welfare. This injustice forces these underpaid workers to 'sign on' and draw the dole to supplement their income, a situation that is not only condoned by the subbie who allows him time off to sign but used by him to make further demands on the worker, be it 600 ft high on scaffolding or deep in the trenches.

Can we blame the DSS officials for giving the Irish a hard time when they know that so many are 'doing' the system? But let us lay the blame for this where it rightly belongs - on their employer. Cheques issued by these contractors have been known to bounce and the subbie himself may con-

veniently disappear when the job is done leaving workmen without their wage.

The big increase in Self Employment and bogus Self Employed (casual labour as it is more aptly called) in the 80's has brought with it a lowering of pay, a deterioration in standards and conditions of work and sadly, a huge increase in industrial accidents.

Life as a labourer is indeed precarious and insecure and made even more so by the growing practice among the workers of declaring themselves 'self-employed' and accepting responsibility for their own Tax and Insurance. Some conscientiously pay these, thus ensuring benefits and pension rights but the majority let it slide. In their bid for independence they forfeit all rights and entitlements both on site and beyond; sick benefit, injury pay, out of work pay, wet benefit, protective clothing, holiday pay and pension. 'I can make more money by going it alone,' he says. For a while, perhaps, but all too often, a short lived philosophy.

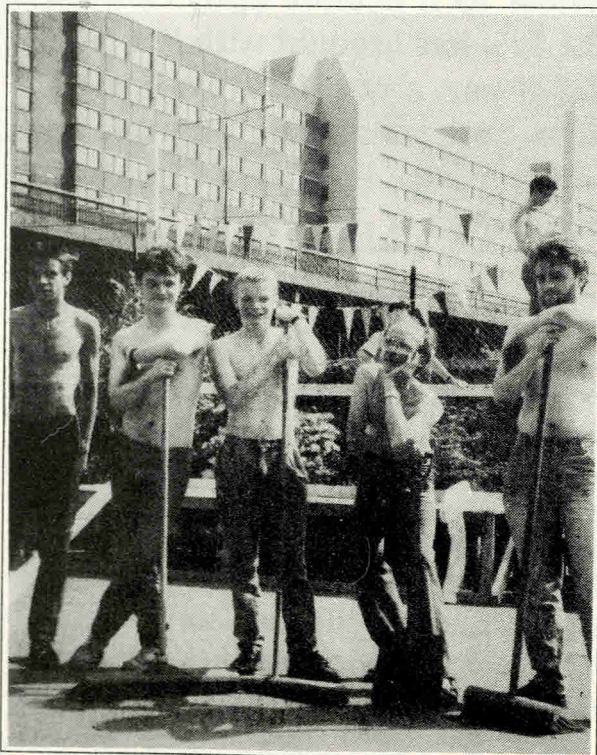
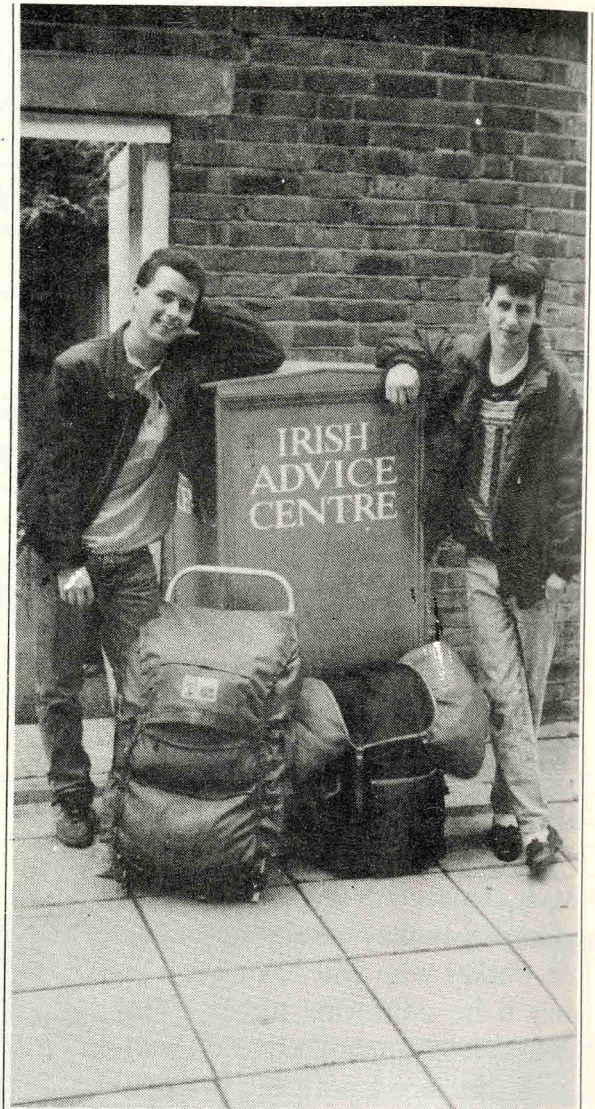
The big increase in Self Employment and bogus Self Employed (casual labour as it is more aptly called) in the 80's has brought with it a lowering of pay, a deterioration in standards and conditions of work and sadly, a huge increase in industrial accidents.

An average of three young men are killed each week on the Buildings and many others die from the long term effects of site work and exposure to chemicals. Last year there were 146 deaths and 22,000 serious injury. Many of these men were Irish, many were uninsured, they did not belong to a Union and were working on unorganised sites with no commitment from the contractor. Safety measures on sites cost money and contractors find it more profitable to

risk the £100 fine than to erect adequate scaffolding, shore up trenches and implement other safety precautions.

They must be made aware too of the transient nature of labouring and the advisability of having their Skills and Trades, not to squander their money but to think of the rainy day

The exploitation of our young people must end and so too must the slip shod methods and lack of accountability from their employers. Tougher measures for dealing with construction bosses must be implemented and steps taken to ensure that all workers be officially employed by the Construction Company or its Sub-contractor unless holding an authentic certificate. The Cowboy Subbie must be named and the whole practice of Lump working fought and eradicated by effective legislation and by People Power. This will have to be a combined effort from all of us interested in the welfare and future of our Irish young people in Britain.



Before leaving Ireland, our young people must be fully informed of the 'behind the scenes' reality of the Construction world and be guided towards the Organised Sites which take health and safety seriously. Hence, they will be 'on the cards', be automatically insured and have a reasonable hope of getting a just wage and a fair deal. Here, a basic wage will be guaranteed and a Bonus Scheme in operation where the hardworking can earn more on Piece Work, conditions will be better and opportunities for on-site training available. They must know how to protect their rights and use their union as at home. They must be made aware too of the transient nature of labouring and the advisability of having their Skills and Trades, not to squander their money but to think of the rainy day, to be ready to lend a helping hand and to train somebody new.

Our sympathies go out to the friends and relatives of those Irish men who have lost their lives on the Buildings in recent weeks:

Dan Flannagan from Wicklow who died when a trench collapsed.

Joe Burke (married with 2 children) crushed when his mechanical digger overturned.

Steve O'Reilly, aged 29, killed at Canary Wharf.

John Fitzpatrick (married with one child) struck a high voltage cable while digging a trench.

Joe Walsh a 29 year old fisherman from Galway died when he fell from a scaffolding as did Joseph Ward aged 45.

AR DHEIS DE GO RAIBH A NANAM.

The Giro - a help or a hindrance?

In Ireland we call it "the Dole". In the wee North it's "the Brew". In London it's known as "the Giro". For the newly arrived immigrant, the Giro is a tremendous support and gives a much needed security. The availability of it gives a person time to search for jobs and do interviews. Most use it prudently, and once employed, sign off the DSS list.

Yet experience also points to the fact that, some remain on the Giro, with psychological consequences of dependency on the welfare system. They eventually lose the zest to seek work and live life fully. Depression and boredom may set in.



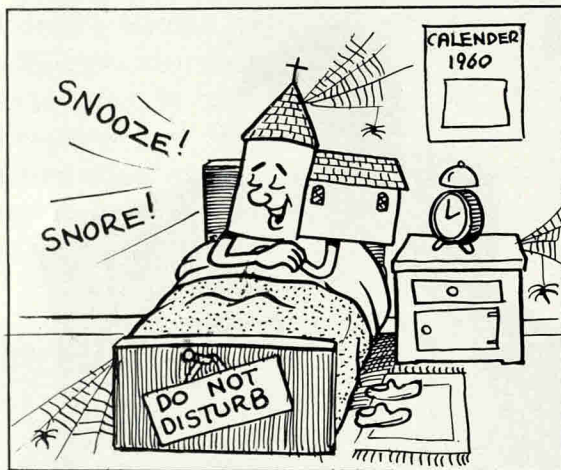
'...some remain on the Giro, with psychological consequences of dependency on the welfare system. They eventually lose the zest to seek work and live life fully.'

'Youth in Crisis'

Conway House Report 1989

Employment Report - David Burke

The building sites of London remain a central focus for young Irish immigrants. For the new-comer however the jobs are just not there. I was speaking to a supervisor from one of the largest contractors in the south-east recently - things have not been this bad for the building industry in a decade and it's not improving. Regular workers are being laid off; even skilled



workers and foremen. Labourers are now two a penny. A couple of months ago a hopeful for a "start" was told to ring back next week, now he is told to leave it for a few weeks. This picture can then be coupled with the insecurity of casual labouring in London. The promise of a job doesn't mean it will be there after your 6 am trek across London.

A twelve hour day can easily become a sixteen hour day with travel (in the back of a van) included. A day's work doesn't mean that you will ever get paid for it; you may not

get picked up tomorrow, you can be fired without repress as there is no contract involved, you may have to work a week in hand or you maybe paid by cheque that nobody will cash. There is also the more obvious exploitation in that a worker may be employed at £23 a day while the subbie may make £45 for each worker employed. Such is the fickleness of the system that many join the human mart of the Cricklewood Broadway daily where the employer calls the price and the terms - after all there are a couple of hundred other workers for the employer to choose from if you don't like his offer.

Brendan from Tallaght is going to make his fortune yet he cannot remember the last time he had to be out of bed before 2 pm. Ger is from the Divis Flats -his whole family is unemployed and he has never personally known anyone who has had a job.

The type of young person we work with tends to be particularly vulnerable. They see London as the quick solution to all their problems - nothing was planned, it sort of just happened and now they are in London. Many are confronting the reality of work for the first time. Brendan from Tallaght is going to make his fortune yet he cannot remember the last time he had to be out of bed before 2 pm. Ger is from the Divis Flats -his whole family is unemployed and he has never personally known anyone who

has had a job. Liam, from Mayo, is an innocent and likeable character. He goes to the Cricklewood Broadway and makes phonecalls about work everyday. He drops jobs as quick as he picks them up - he can really get on your nerves but he is so desperate and dependent. These young men are learning about work, it doesn't come automatically. They are not material for skilled or qualified jobs and other unskilled jobs lack flexibility or a somewhat

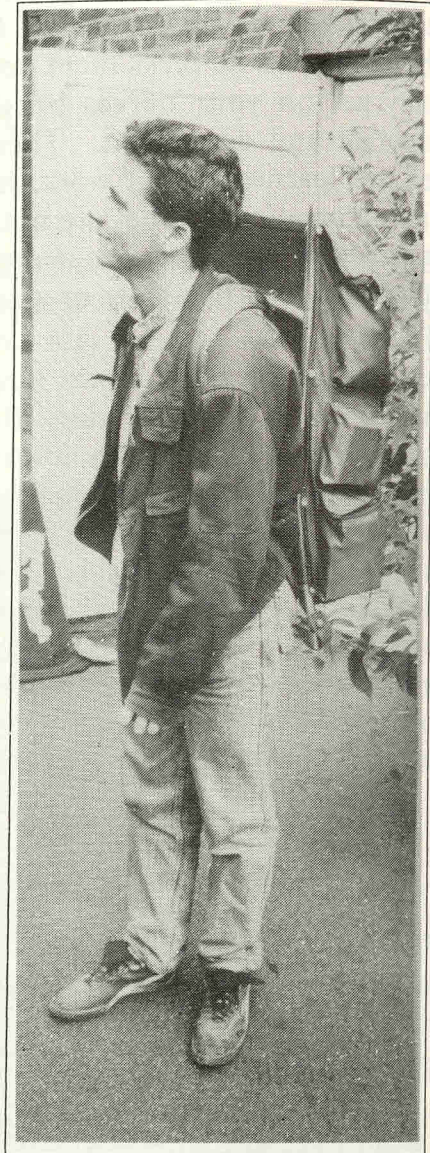
decent wage. Depression, apathy, insecurity, dependency and desperation are symptoms not alleviated by even the securest of employment. A resident was given a contract at £10,500 pa. This was the first contract offered to a resident in five years. He dropped the job within a week and yet we had considered him capable of and suited to the work. Coping with the unintelligible brings its own frustrations.



These young men are learning about work, it doesn't come automatically.



Preparing the food for our Annual Barbeque.



A New Arrival at the Centre wonders about the future.



At Kilburn Youth Festival.

DRINK

DRINK

DRINK



Ninety five percent of the residents in our hostel last year drank alcohol. Many of our clients at the Centre have an alcoholic problem. The pub is the place to go for news, work, people and to cash your cheque.

Shirley Kelly, a freelance journalist from Cork and a young immigrant herself gives her impression of the London situation.

Alcohol abuse is resulting in criminal behaviour by an increasing percentage of the young Irish community in London. A total of over 3,000 arrests for drunk and disorderly behaviour were recorded during 1989 in Willesden, Kilburn and Harlesden - all Irish enclaves, and the vast majority of offenders were Irish immigrants between the ages of 18 and 25. The Irish pubs and clubs in these areas - notably the Mean Fiddler in Harlesden, Nellies in Willesden, Biddy Mulligan's and The National in Kilburn - attract thousands of young Irish immigrants every weekend, and indeed throughout the week. Not surprisingly, the number of drunk and disorderly arrests was particularly high on St Patrick's Day (an increase of 150% over the Saturday night average) and on the occasion of the Irish Festival in Willesden last July (364 arrests in one day).

Figures released recently by the Home Office show that although there has been a decrease of 5% in the total number of Irish

Aimless Wandering Immigrant Dead

I walk with the rest of them up and down
Between Mornington Crescent and Camden Town
Pain in the belly, sore in the head
Aimless wandering immigrant dead.

I dug that hole then filled it in
I'm buried there up to me chin
You can leave me in it, I'll tell no lies
And for the traffic light you can use me eyes.

I sit in caffs and drink black tea
And try to think what's wrong with me
The night is weeping and full of cries
But I can't join in I've got no eyes.

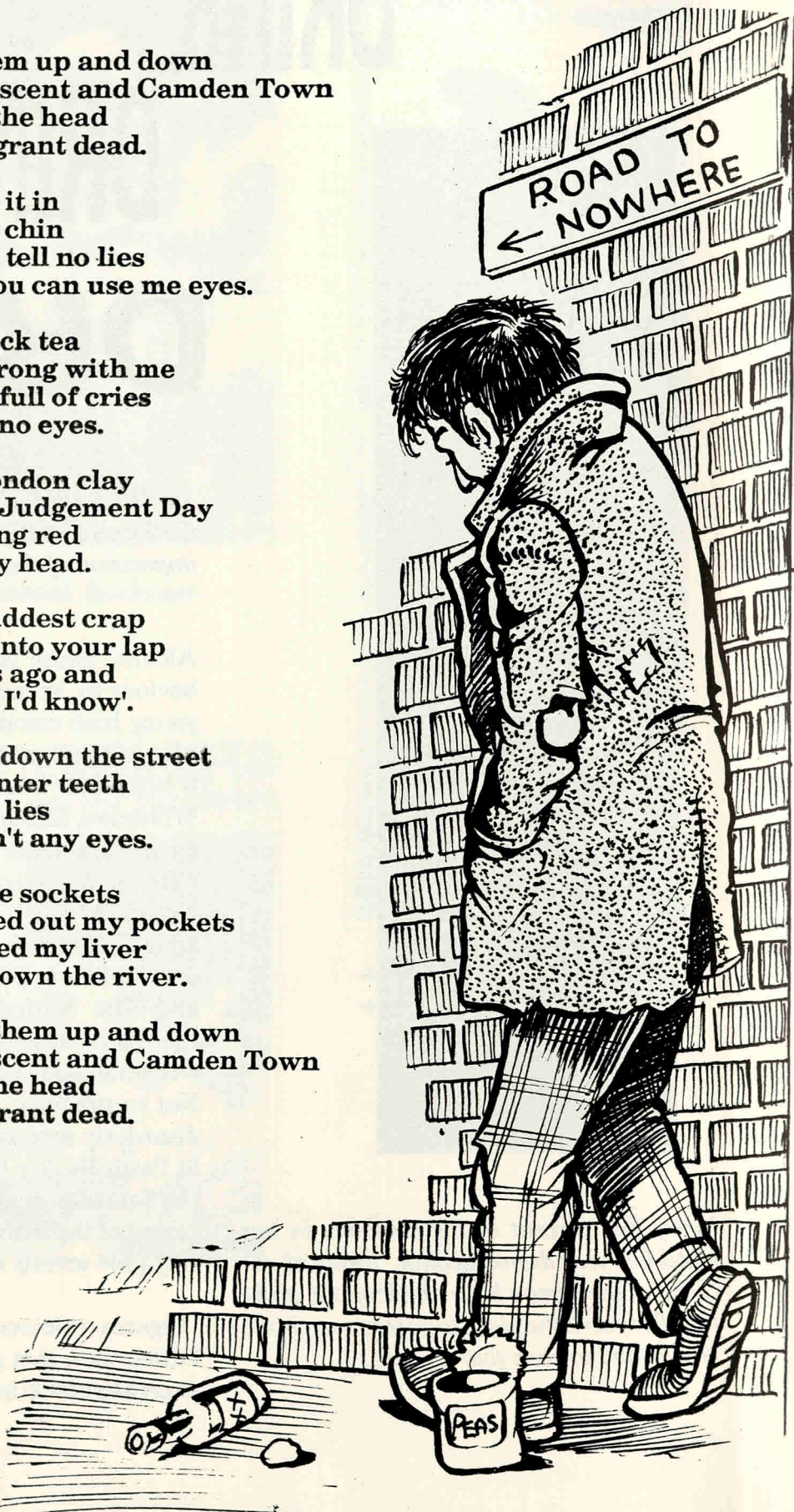
I've left them buried in London clay
They'll stay there now 'til Judgement Day
Flashing green and flashing red
As the City roars above my head.

In the pub you hear the saddest crap
Straight from their souls into your lap
A fella shouts - 'I left years ago and
There's no one there alive I'd know'.

There's a woman walking down the street
With Autumn hair and Winter teeth
I'd like to kiss and tell her lies
But she'd see my face hasn't any eyes.

London tore them from the sockets
Destroyed my mind, emptied out my pockets
The drink has all but ruined my liver
And the Subby's sold me down the river.

So I walk with the rest of them up and down
Between Mornington Crescent and Camden Town
Pain in the belly, sore in the head
Aimless wandering immigrant dead.



people in British prisons over the past three years, figures for those between the ages of 17 and 21 have increased by about 38%. Many of the crimes for which these young people are serving time were committed while under the influence of alcohol.

Of course, alcohol abuse is by no means peculiar to the London Irish youth - the English lager lout, internationally renowned for his drunken hooliganism, has laid that myth to rest - and these figures pertain to a small minority of Irish immigrants. But they are a source of growing concern to emigrant welfare organisations throughout Britain and Ireland.

Of course, alcohol abuse is by no means peculiar to the London Irish youth - the English lager lout, internationally renowned for his drunken hooliganism, has laid that myth to rest.

A survey by Conway House, a hostel run by the Irish Centre in Camden, has sought to unravel the root causes of this and other problems experienced by young Irish immigrants. Over 4,000 newly arrived immigrants were questioned on their initial reactions to London. Common responses were "fast, violent, hostile, a rip-off". Asked what effect London was having on them, typical responses were "depression, loneliness, a need to be stoned, frustration, boredom". The survey concluded that many young Irish immigrants experience considerable culture shock on arrival in London, often exacerbated by difficulties in securing accommodation, employment, and social welfare benefits. Disappointment on discovering that the streets of London are not paved with gold is sometimes

alleviated by the realisation that there is no shortage of good Irish pubs in the city.

The Irish Centre itself has witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of calls coming from probation officers, courts, solicitors, hospitals and social workers seeking assistance with the rehabilitation of Irish youngsters who have been involved in criminal incidents or accidents while drunk. Fr Jim Kiely at the Hammersmith Welfare Bureau, which runs an advice centre and a short-stay hostel for newly arrived Irish immigrants, has first-hand experience of the problem of alcohol abuse amongst young Irish immigrants, and the often far-reaching consequences of this problem. He has witnessed a number of bright and capable young immigrants lose control of their own lives as a result of excessive drinking.

The Conway House survey identified alcohol as a widely used escape valve which helped to alleviate stress, boredom and homesickness and temporarily restored confidence and self-esteem.

One such victim is Michael, an Irish teenager who stayed at the Hammersmith hostel for a short period earlier this year. Michael was a regular visitor to the local pub, particularly at weekends, when he would cash his pay cheque and meet up with his workmates. One Thursday evening, Michael went to the pub and failed to return to the hostel. Initially, Fr Kiely assumed that he was staying with friends, but when he still had not returned by Sunday night, to pick up his work tools and his clothes, he became concerned. After two weeks of anxious searching, he eventually discovered, through the local police station, that Michael was in fact residing at an institute for young offenders. A short time afterwards, he received the following letter:

Number:xxxxxxName: Kelly

H M YOUNG OFFENDERS INSTITUTION

Dear Father Kiely

It's me, Michael. You have probably been wondering where I have been for the past couple of weeks. Well, as you see from the address at the top of this letter, I have made a very major mistake that I am sorry for.

It happened on Thursday night outside the George pub in Hammersmith. I was very drunk, but I still remember what happened. As I recall, this guy who was walking towards me on the pavement about 11 pm bumped into me, provoked me by giving me verbal abuse and shouted racist remarks at me. I tried to ignore him, but he kept it up, so I hit him. I ended up in court next morning and received a month's sentence for common assault.

I would appreciate it if you would bag my personal stuff and I will collect it when I get out. I am sorry, Father, really I am.

Yours sincerely

Michael

Unfortunately, Michael's lot is not likely to improve from his release from prison. His employment prospects have been seriously undermined as a result of his criminal record, and, having lost his place at the hostel, he will probably be too ashamed to seek accommodation there again. Without the support of family and friends, Michael is likely to be drawn into a vicious spiral of poverty and degradation.

Fr Kiely feels that there is a real need for more 'high-care' hostels, which would go beyond providing basic accommodation, to offer advice and counselling on a wide range of problems and to help rehabilitate young people who have gone astray, for whatever reasons.

He also feels that emigrant welfare organisations, both in Britain and Ireland, given the necessary resources, need to take a broader view of emigrant welfare, providing advice on recreation and general quality of life issues as a matter of priority.

There is a real need for more 'high-care' hostels, which would go beyond providing basic accommodation, to offer advice and counselling on a wide range of problems and to help rehabilitate young people who have gone astray, for whatever reasons.

One organisation which is dedicated to the development of alternative recreational opportunities for young Irish immigrants is the Kilburn Irish Youth Action Group

(KIYAG). The Group seeks to combat the loneliness which many newly arrived Irish youth feel when they come to London by offering help, friendship and a place to go where they will be made welcome. KIYAG organises weekly meetings for young Irish people where practical issues such as social welfare, accommodation and employment are discussed, as well as more emotional matters such as homesickness, racism and isolation, in a relaxed and social atmosphere. Occasionally, experts are invited to address meetings on these matters.

The Group also organises regular visits to the theatre, sports activities, and excursions. KIYAG was responsible for the Kilburn Irish Youth Festival, Feile na nOg, last June which, despite a ban on alcohol, attracted over 5,000 youngsters.

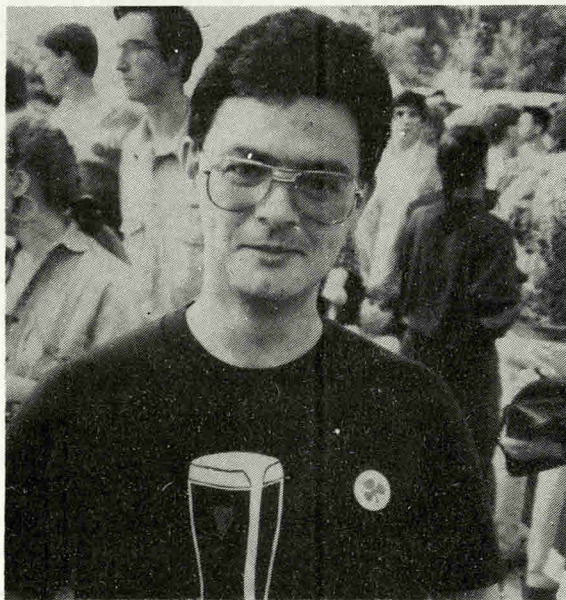
KIYAG's aim is to open up alternatives to the pub culture to which so many Irish people feel confined, rather than to replace it - many of the Group's outings conclude with a visit to the local pub, for a pint of Guinness and a friendly chat. KIYAG's varied programme of activities seeks to broaden members' cultural and recreational horizons by encouraging them to explore unfamiliar areas such as theatre, which would otherwise be dismissed as alien territory.

However, the Group concedes that its efforts, and the efforts of many other emigrant welfare organisations throughout Britain and Ireland, to combat alcohol abuse can have only a very limited impact as long as wider social problems within the Irish community persist.

There is ample evidence of these problems at the New Horizon Centre in London's West End, a day-time drop-in centre for homeless and unemployed young people aged 16-21. The Centre seeks to provide a safe but stimulating environment where

members have the opportunity to establish relationships with other youngsters in similarly dire straits, to learn new skills and to develop their talents through a programme of arts, sports, advice and education. Irish immigrants account for 30% of the 3,500 youngsters who use the Centre annually. For many of these, New Horizon is the first port of call on arrival in London

However, the Group concedes that its efforts, and the efforts of many other emigrant welfare organisations throughout Britain and Ireland, to combat alcohol abuse can have only a very limited impact as long as wider social problems within the Irish community persist.



Social workers at the Centre are keen to develop its recreational and educational programme but find themselves increasingly overwhelmed by more pressing problems.

Many of New Horizon's regular visitors are homeless and leave the centre at the end of the day for a night on the streets. Finding hostel accommodation for these people is

becoming increasingly difficult. Following changes to the social welfare system in 1987, young people are finding it increasingly difficult to secure unemployment benefit. Simultaneously, a number of local authorities, faced with enormous budget deficits, have been forced to cut back on council housing and funding for temporary accommodation (hostels, bed and breakfast, etc). As a result, most London hostels have lengthy waiting lists and the number of young people sleeping rough has increased dramatically. Inevitably, much of New Horizon's time and resources are devoted

to crisis management rather than to long term personal development projects.

A spokesman for the Centre admitted that it is difficult to motivate young people in these circumstances. "As long as unemployment, homelessness or sub-standard living conditions and, of course, chronic homesickness persist, vulnerable young immigrants will continue to seek refuge in the comforting atmosphere of the pub and will use drink as an escape from their troubles rather than venturing into less familiar, but possibly more rewarding, social and cultural territory."



RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That the need for High Care Hostels be recognised and immediate action implemented.
- *That the need for culturally-sensitive professional counsellors be recognised and employed.
- *That constructive use of leisure time be encouraged from Primary level onwards.
- *That Irish emigres avail of the educational facilities and cultural opportunities at their disposal in London.

THE POSITIVE SIDE TO EMIGRATION

Community

Care



Our Community Care Group is made up of young and old volunteers under the supervision of Sr. Carmel, our Social Worker at the Centre. Their role consists in Outreach Work to those in the community with disabilities, especially the old and the isolated.

The latter are encouraged through individual supportive relationships to feel part of the community and free to participate in all its activities.



EDITORIAL

SHAPING UP FOR THE FUTURE

In recent years, emigration has hit Ireland hard. It has lost the cream of the country - its youth. Whilst most of its emigres are capable of succeeding abroad, many struggle greatly to grapple with their new surroundings - and never make it.

This disproportionate amount of the unskilled and vulnerable are the result of bad educational and industrial preparation. Due to the inequality that still exists in the educational system, many from the more vulnerable part of our society fail to receive the adequate preparation necessary. This must stop.

For the Europe of today, Ireland's educational system must provide everyone with a saleable skill and a second language. Hand-in-hand with education, industry must provide apprenticeship for our people. These requests are minimal. Otherwise, many will continue to leave Ireland, believing that emigration is the panacea and remedy to their ills. This disproportionate percentage will arrive in London, many of them completely lost and without hope. They will find little or no

support. A percentage of them need high-care hostels and counselling.

Yet, a new breed of immigrant to London is changing the image of the Irish in its host country. These are the large majority who are well educated and keen to gain experience. They are not hooked on the past and are open to others. They have a lot to give and a lot to receive. They belong to the shaping of Europe and its future. They are positive, creative and hopeful.

However, there is a great need for coordinated leadership within the Irish community in London. Debate and dialogue must take place amongst the many different groups working with our immigrants to further diminish the plight of the more vulnerable and augment the great work already being done by all concerned.

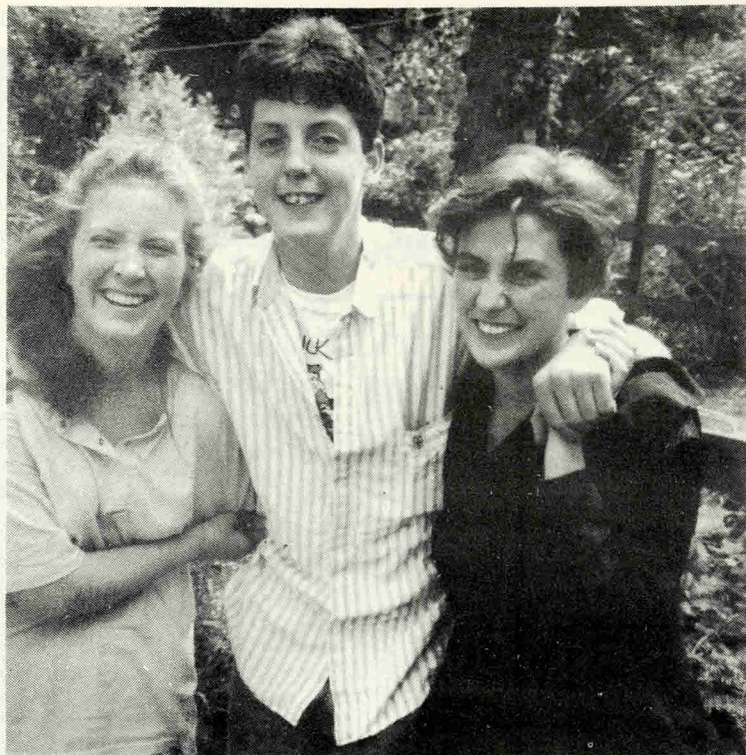
Finally, a means of channelling some of the experience and expertise gained by our immigrants, both in Britain and the Continent, should be found in order to broaden and enhance the economic and socio-cultural parameters of Ireland.

THE POSITIVE SIDE TO EMIGRATION

an opinion

*'...He has a politician's mind
To deal with an ugly world
designed...
And that is why he has been
sent
To travel on the Continent
To bring back the secret of
great arts
To Kerry and remoter parts.
To spread in Naas and
Clonakilty
News of Gigli and R M Rilke.
Our last art emissary whored
And that's one reason we
can't afford
To risk an important man
like you
In the dangerous European
stew.'*

(*'Irish Stew'*, Patrick Kavanagh).



I have been in London for just over four years and during that time have been largely disappointed with my own people. Disappointed that many do not seem to find their years abroad an enriching experience. Disappointed that the many opportunities for furthering oneself in a city like London are largely under-used. Disappointed that the Irish Community is still segmented, lacking cohesion and unity. And finally, disappointed in the attitude that regularly portrays emigration as na-

tional tragedy. But I also have tremendous hope. There can be no doubt that today's immigrants are different in many ways from those who came to London in the 40's and 50's. They have different needs, politics and attitudes about religion and society than those of their predecessors. They are in most cases well educated and open to integration, giving of their cultural attributes and open to receiving from the richly diversified qualities of others.

We are now citizens of Europe. It would be tragic at this moment in history if we doggedly clutched on to a nation concept of ourselves and failed to recognise that a global response is demanded.

In the main, they are middle-of-the-road and hard working. They talk a lot about their jobs and the opportunities available. And unlike their predecessors of previous generations who tended to congregate in places like 'County Kilburn' and Camden Town, these scatter themselves across London. They have a proper perception of the smallness of today's world geographically and of the opportunities of experience and skill which the international scene offers them.

We are now citizens of Europe. It would be tragic at this moment in history if we doggedly clutched on to a nation concept of ourselves and failed to recognise that a global response is demanded. Within twenty years, Europe will have 25 million fewer people. The number of 18 year olds coming on the job market in the larger European

countries has already peaked, but it will not peak in Ireland until the end of the century.

We have the highest number of young people in the European Community looking for places in third-level education. The numbers are increasing yearly. In absolute terms, this represents a significant outlay for a relatively poor country. Scores of British and Continental companies aware of the rich pickings to be had in Ireland, are now running massive press advertising campaigns as well as actively trawling the Irish universities and professions for recruits. Most of the young Irish in London are well educated and successful. To be truthful, this wasn't always the case. But now, the scales are tipping. We are playing an increasingly important role, especially in the professions, both in London and other major cosmopolitan cities of Europe.

It is important that while recognising the validity of the difficult aspects of any emigrant from any country, that we also recognise that most are successful in bridging the difficulties involved. Perhaps as many as 85% to 90% of Irish immigrants in London respond to the challenge of life abroad with confidence

and courage. This is something that should be kept continually before the eyes of the Irish Community as something to be grateful and proud of.

It is both unrealistic and unwise to continually present emigration as something negative - that somehow all Irish immigrants are homeless, deprived and suffering. True some small percentage are, but not the majority.

When we fail to nourish our people with the pride and achievements which is rightly theirs', we fall prey to being swayed hither and tither, like a boat in a storm without a helm. If we continually present our Community with narrow perspectives, some of which are born from aggression and hurts of the past, we will become a disgruntled and embittered immigrant people, unable to return to our true roots in the past, nor our rightful place in the future.

I would like to leave the last words to Brendan Kennelly who has done so much for Irish writing on the international level.

IRISH TALENT IN LONDON



'I look forward with what I hope is an open heart, an open mind, to being a part of the new Europe.

I look forward to the possibility of moving from country to country, city to city, town to town.

I look forward to being in a position in which I can compare different cultures with each other and with my own.

This is essentially what immersion in other cultures does for us - it clarifies the strength and the weakness of our own.'

Brendan Kennelly.

Education

Key to the Future

But to whose door ?

To the rest of the industrial world, with its rapidly declining numbers of teenagers, Ireland's well-educated and job-hungry young are a boon. Astute British Academies are benefitting, too. British Universities Central Council on Admissions, estimates that the numbers from Ireland attending British universities has jumped in two years from 398 to 1,300 with applications for places growing from 1,740 to 7,600. It has also emerged that the numbers of Irish-based students applying to British polytechnics has increased fourfold in the last three years, and further increases are expected.

In general, Ireland's workforce is young, flexible and well educated. Indeed, education is one of our country's biggest assets: we educate twice as many young people, relative to national wealth, as most European countries. We also produce one of the highest proportion of computer-literate graduates in Western Europe.

Much of the present education system is not preparing pupils for the real future which is emerging.

These young people are contributing greatly to the host countries in which they find themselves. Their skills and knowledge are valuable. Their incentives to further themselves, integrating, giving and receiving, provide them with the necessary motivation

to become part of the host community and not an isolated unit.

However, research published recently by the CMRS Education Commission, shows that the better off benefit far more than the poor from the present school system. Efforts to remove this inequality must be regarded as the over-riding priority for educational policy makers. Much of the present education system is not preparing pupils for the real future which is emerging. Many of those who emigrate are young and unskilled, and for them, London can be a centre of misery and exploitation. They end up in badly-paid, low-status jobs without any prospects of furthering themselves.



To equip these immigrants with marketable skills, increase their earning power significantly and help them start in promising careers, a scheme has been launched called the 'Migrant Training Scheme'. It involves partnership between the Irish community and the London Boroughs and is funded by the EC, Irish sponsors and the London Boroughs. It provides training in areas where there are skill shortages, mainly in word processing, office technology and desk top publishing. Next year it is hoped that the Scheme will

be expanded to include courses in tourism, leisure and community communication and social skills training.

However, it must be emphasized that remote preparation should take place at home in Ireland. That young people, especially those who opt out of the educational system before acquiring any basic saleable skill, should be equipped for travelling and living abroad. This task must be met from the very outset, at the primary level. The acquisition of a continental language and basic saleable skill should not be left until it's too late.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That inequality be eliminated from the education system.
- *That all students learn a foreign language and that this should begin at primary level.
- *That all students acquire a basic saleable skill.
- *That Career Guidance foster from primary level onwards, an even stronger awareness of the needs of Europe and the World.

ARD-FHEIS '89

HISTORIC STEP FORWARD FOR LOCAL IRISH COMMUNITY

On October 14 1989, Hammersmith Town Hall was the venue for the first ever consultative conference for Hammersmith and Fulham's Irish community.

Entitled Ard-Fheis 89, the aim of the day was to bring together members of the Irish community and representatives of the statutory and voluntary sectors, to discuss the needs, concerns and aspirations of local Irish people.

More than 250 people attended the day and contributed greatly to the success of the event.

Ard-Fheis 89, boasted an impressive array of speakers including Councillor Mike Goodman (the leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham), Paul Cullen

(Labour Attache of the Irish Embassy in London), Padraic Kenna (Director, Innisfree Housing Association), Carol Wilson (Management Committee member of the Irish Support & Advice Centre), Tom Connor (Director, The Migrant Training Scheme) and Hilda McCafferty, (Hammersmith & Fulham Education Committee).

A wide range of issues were discussed including; employment, housing welfare -rights and education.

During lunch, people had time to visit the stalls, and exhibitions provided by

Council departments and Irish agencies throughout London. In addition, musicians from Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann entertained with a selection of Irish songs and tunes.

A creche was provided throughout the day. It featured a puppeteer who treated children to the adventures of Fionn McChuil.

Ard-Fheis 89 produced some 70 recommendations highlighting ways in which council services used by local Irish people can and must be improved, in line with the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham's declared commitment to equal opportunities.

These recommendations as well as the key note speeches of the day have been brought together in the form of a Conference Report.

Ard-Fheis 89, was an important step forward for Hammersmith & Fulham's Irish community. Given that, Irish people constitute some 15-20% of the local population, it is of the utmost importance that the Ard-Fheis conference becomes an established part of the consultative process between the Irish community and the Council.

The Irish Support & Advice Centre played a crucial role in the success of Ard-Fheis 89. As well as providing the chair to the Conference Steering Group, Sean Reddin, the Irish Support & Advice Centre provided four other members of its staff and management committee, to advise and contribute to the lobbying, planning, and format of the day.

Most of the publicity targeted towards the local Irish community was facilitated by the Irish Sup

port & Advice Centre. Ard-Fheis 89, therefore, was also a testimony to the development of the Irish Support & Advice Centre by scores of people in many different ways, over 20 or so years. Ard-Fheis 89, brought into sharp relief, the pivotal role played by the Irish Support & Advice Centre in relation to the Irish community of Hammersmith & Fulham.

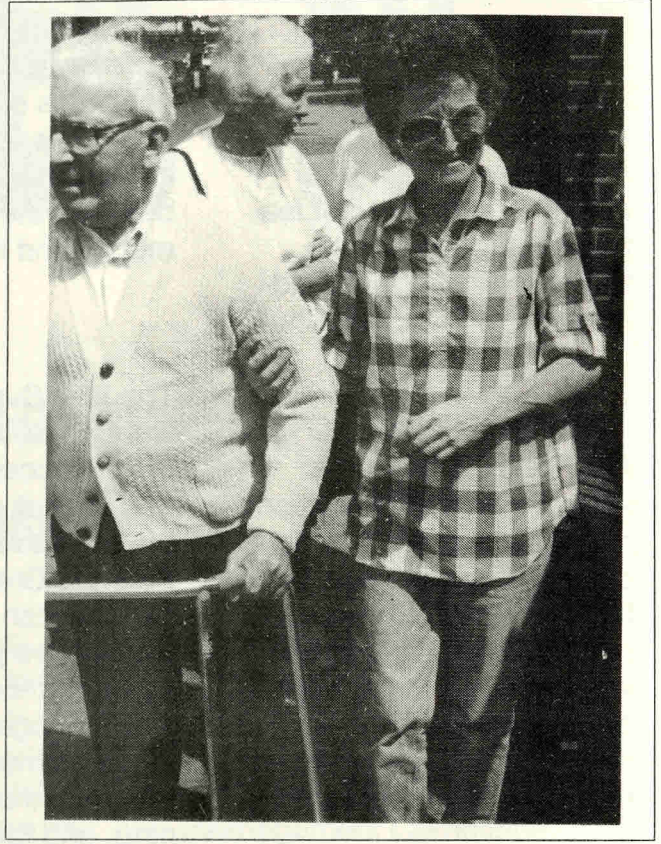
There is insufficient space here to include all the conference recommendations.

We at the Irish Support & Advice Centre have therefore, prioritised four recommendations which must be addressed as a matter of urgency. With these in place it would then be possible to develop an action-plan to realise the full implementation of the recommendations of Ard-Fheis 89, and subsequent conferences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That a multi-functional Irish Community Centre be established.
- *That an Irish Community Consultative Forum, be set up, to monitor and advise on the dimension to council services.
- *That a sufficient budget be identified to enable a bi-ennial consultative conference to be established.
- *That departments at all levels, include the Irish in any monitoring exercises both for workers and clients. Any voluntary sector agencies in receipt of council funding should of course do likewise.

An 'Away Day' with our Community Group



Development Policy 1990

Irish Support & Advice Centre

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Irish Support & Advice Centre, through its equal opportunities monitoring and evaluation procedure has identified a number of areas which require service delivery development and will be seeking to secure adequate resources to ensure this occurs.

THE ELDERLY IRISH

The Centre recognises the immense value of the work undertaken by the Hammersmith & Fulham Irish Pensioners Group, and will endeavour to ensure that group secures adequate financial support.

IRISH WOMEN

The last few years has seen a substantial growth in the numbers of Irish women coming to the centre for advice and help. We recognise however, that there remains a large number of Irish women locally, who are in need of a "culturally-sensitive" and "gender-specific" range of services. Sadly, in too many cases problems encountered by some Irish women could have been minimised by the existence of a pro-active, preventative outreach service. The Centre re-affirms therefore, our commitment to the establishment of a full-time women's outreach post.

IRISH PEOPLE AND MENTAL HEALTH

For many years we have viewed with concern the plight of a section of our community who suffer a variety of mental health problems, occasioned, by the feelings of "culture-shock", loneliness, alienation, alcoholism and stress. We will continue to press for the employment of a part-time professional counsellor.

IRISH HOMELESS

We are proud to have played a crucial role in the establishment of the Broadway Project, a day-centre for the long-term homeless. However, we are concerned that this much needed and long-overdue service is threatened with closure due to lack of resources. We recommend in the strongest language possible that funding agencies respond positively to the request for resources for this service. This is in light of the fact that 95% of the Project's clients are Hammersmith & Fulham residents, 55% are Irish.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The Centre is committed to the establishment of an annual "Job-Fair" for Irish

people in Hammersmith and Fulham. Our research shows a high concentration of employment & training enquiries during the late summer/early autumn period. We would aim therefore, to establish the "Job-Fair" during this period so as to maximise employment and training options for our clientele.

.We intend to network our computer system with the Migrant Training Scheme (MTS). Through networking, we gain access to many employment possibilities for our clients, as well as remaining up to date with changes in the London labour market. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Hammersmith & Fulham Economic Development Unit, for their generous grant of 6,400 for this project.

We are currently involved in discussions surrounding a possible one day seminar on the theme "Irish workers and the London labour market 'skill gap'".

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

.ARD-FHEIS 89 (see report)

We were gratified to have played such an integral role in establishing the first ever consultative conference for Hammersmith & Fulham's Irish community. We request that the Council identify sufficient resources to ensure that the Ard-Fheis consultative conference takes place on a bi-ennial basis. (In this way "Ard-Fheis" will become an established part of the cultural life of the borough.)

Hammersmith & Fulham Irish Consultative Forum

The Centre, in liaison with Irish and other agencies responding to the needs of the Irish community locally, will seek to ensure that Hammersmith & Fulham Ethnic Minorities Department establish an Irish Consultative Forum, to oversee, and advise on policy and service delivery developments in relation to Irish people locally.



DEVELOPMENT POLICY 1990

AUSTIN HOUSE HOSTELS

HOSTEL NO 2

Austin House Hostels which together with the Irish Support & Advice Centre comprise the two halves of the Irish Welfare Bureau, recently opened a new mixed Hostel for young adults. The hostel, would not have become a reality without the generous financial support of the Augustinian Order, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Augustinians for their continued support of the Irish Welfare Bureau.

HOSTEL NO 3

The Irish Welfare Bureau through Austin House Hostels, has been given the go-ahead to develop West London's first hostel for Irish women. This project which will open in approximately 12-18 months, is funded by the Department of Environment's Housing Corporation. We would like to record our thanks to Shepherd's Bush Housing Association in prioritising this scheme, and the recognition they have given to the housing needs of Irish women.

CARA HOSTEL

We would like to congratulate the Cara Irish Homeless Project for the recent opening of their hostel for older Irish men. We look forward to a long and fruitful working relationship with Cara.

SHORT LIFE PROPERTY

We are currently involved in discussion with Shepherd's Bush Housing Association with the intention of developing the site of our 3rd proposed Hostel for short-life housing, until it can be developed as a hostel.

INNISFREE HA/MIGRANT TRAINING SCHEME

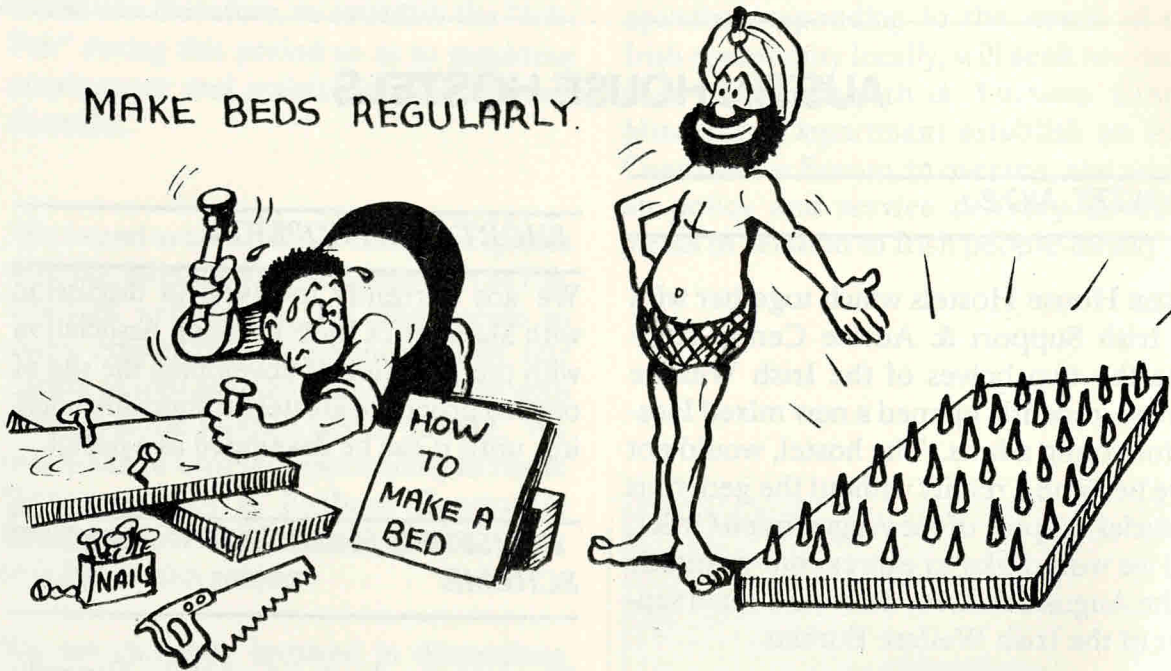
We welcome the decision of the Council's Housing Department to allow Innisfree Housing Association to manage three Housing units. This will provide short-life housing for homeless single Irish people currently training on the Migrant Training Scheme. We look forward to liaising closely with Innisfree HA and the Council's Housing Department to realise this scheme.

PERMANENT MOVE-ON PROVISION

At present we receive one allocation of permanent move-on accommodation from the Council's Housing Department. We recognise that the crisis of homelessness amongst single Irish People requires that we request more permanent move-on accommodation be made available to single Irish People. We will therefore, be approaching the Council and local Housing Associations, for more move-on accommodation.

AUSTIN HOUSE HOSTELS

MAKE BEDS REGULARLY.



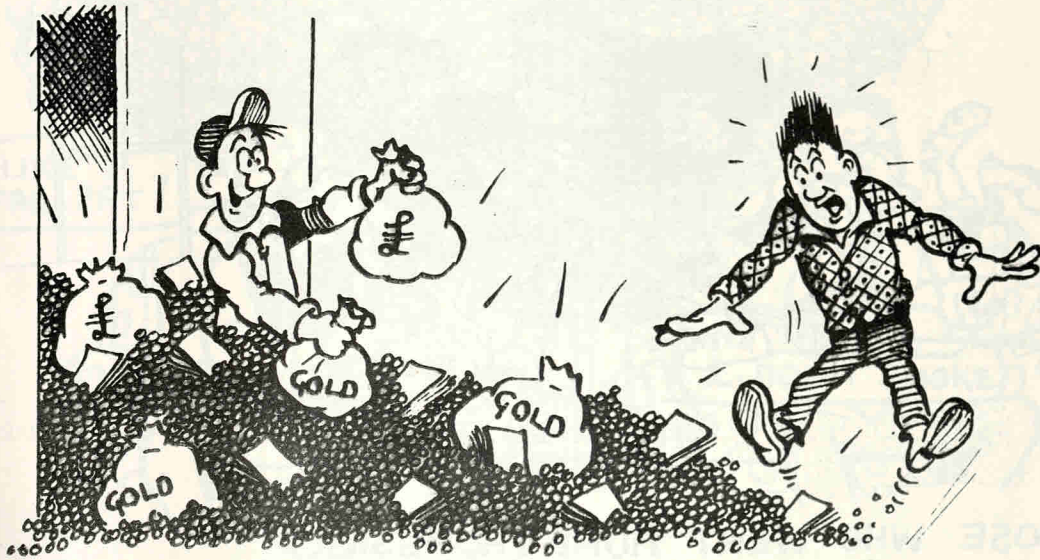
HOW TO BUDGET.



DOING THE WASH-UP



HOW MUCH MONEY HAVE YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU?



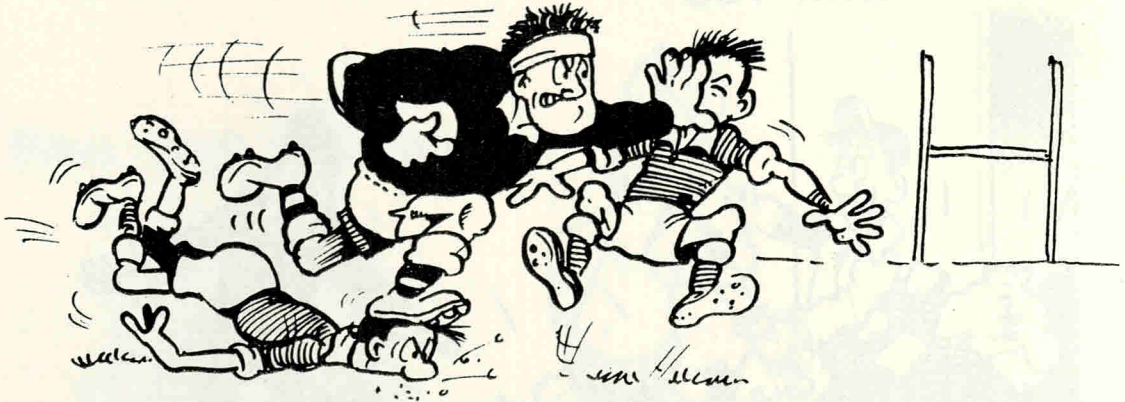
YES, THINGS ARE REALLY GREAT HERE, MUM!.. I'M EARNING £700 PER WEEK!!



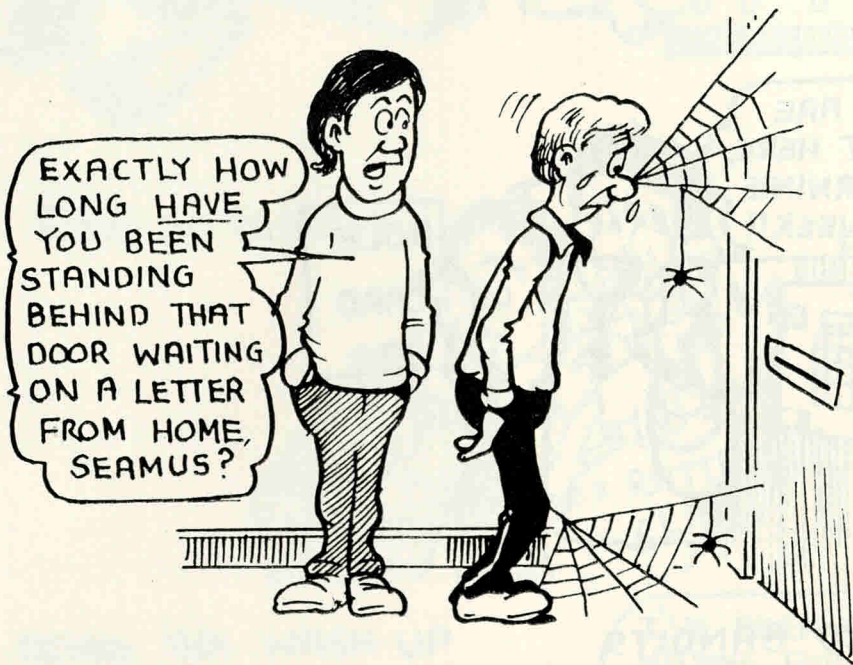
ONE ARMED BANDITS
V.
TWO ARMED BANDITS.



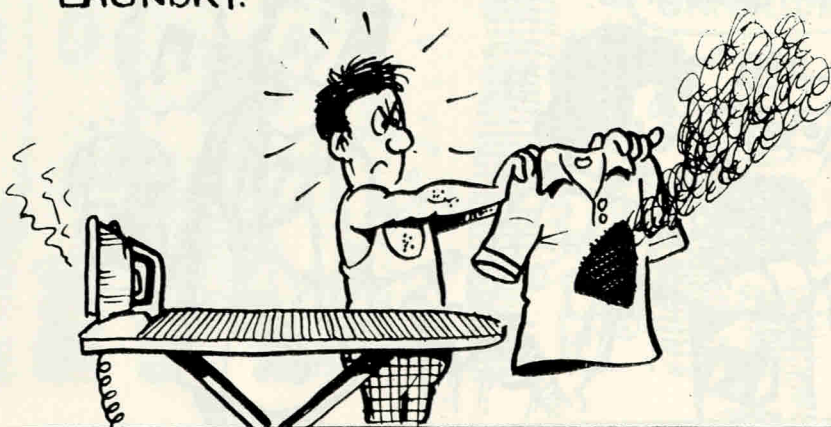
SPORTS + OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.



THOSE WHO WENT HOME (HOMESICK)



LAUNDRY.



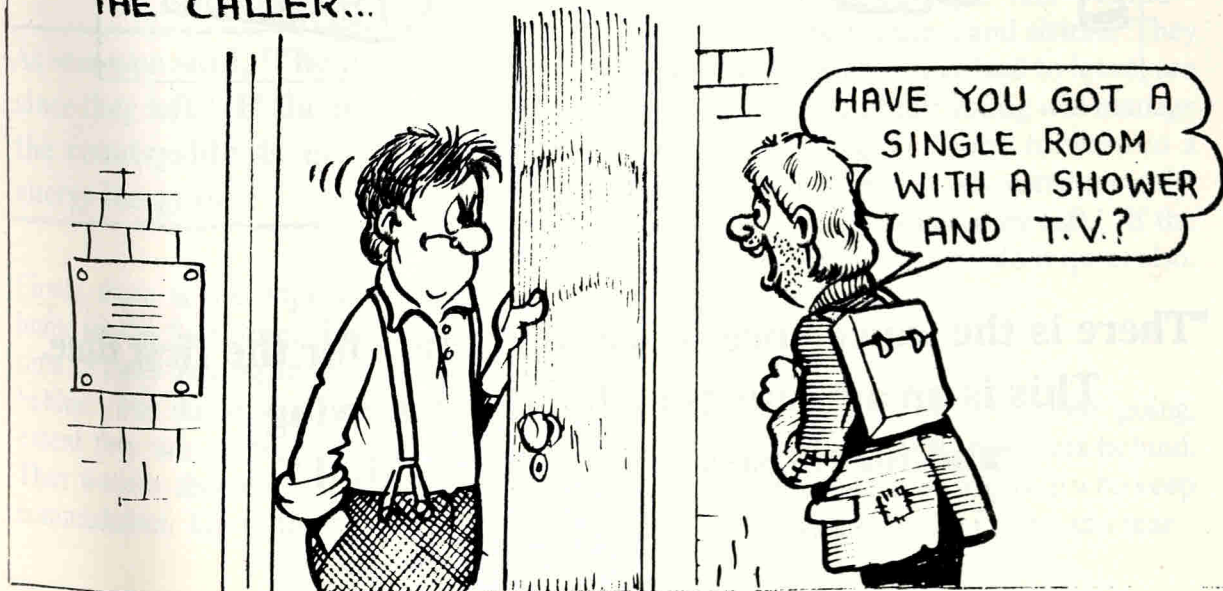
SMOKING IN THE SITTING ROOM



THOSE WHO DRINK V. THOSE WHO DON'T



THE CALLER...



Leaving Home



**"There is the experience of leaving home for the first time.
This is an anxious time for those leaving
and for those who are left behind."**

OUR COUNTRY IS BLEEDING

Meeting so many Irish immigrants at our centre we often wonder what effect this mass exodus of people will have on our own country. Will Ireland be a place to go on holiday and retire?

One wonders!

The country is bleeding badly. Official estimates claim that 213,000 have emigrated in the past nine years. Yet, personnel in the immigrant services would consider this to be a considerable underestimate. By far the biggest drain of people has been from the 15 to 24 year old age group. A breakdown of the 1986 census shows that two-thirds of emigrants come from this group.

The people that leave are the energetic. For the local community and the country, this is a loss of a most precious asset - young people.

The country they move to gains from their energy, skills and expertise. What happens in the emigration process?

As someone said, 'The house is quiet since they left.' If the house is quiet, the countryside is quiet also. The energy has gone

Firstly, there is the experience of leaving home for the first time. This is an anxious time for those leaving and those who are left behind. For those who leave, to a great extent they are going into the unknown. They wonder about finding a job and accommodation. Up to the point of leaving

they had an identity in the community. They were known and loved.

Arriving at a new destination - London or New York - they are isolated in a nobody-zone and have to begin immediately to reinvent an identity and become somebody again. They feel the loss of those left behind and the familiar surroundings. They are shocked by the new environment and have to begin from scratch. This is an anxious and exciting time, learning new cues, trying to find a job, accommodation, meeting new friends, coping with the loss of home. If they have friends at the new destination, all the better. If not, it will be much more difficult.

Secondly, those who are left behind - parents, friends, brothers and sisters. They grieve for those who have had to leave, are anxious about how their young will manage in a strange place, and look forward to a phone call or a letter. As someone said, 'The house is quiet since they left.' If the house is quiet, the countryside is quiet also. The energy has gone.

There can be no doubt but their going, places extra burdens on those left behind. For those who leave are the group who keep the community alive, who marry and rear

families, open businesses and take over leadership, both in the youth clubs and the community. Apart from the sixties when an industrial boom saw 100,000 return home, history has shown that the Irish emigrant, academic or otherwise, seldom returns.

There's a pub in the Kilburn area where it is said that 200,000 of cheques are cashed each week. A lot of Irish people don't have bank accounts for the simple reason they haven't yet accepted that they are in London to stay. They don't register to vote, they don't put money away for a house. Ironically, the further you emigrate the better you adjust. England is so near that many Irish people don't go through the grieving process so necessary for adjustment. They keep thinking they are going to make a fortune and return home one day.

We are losing the cream of our people at an age when they have most to offer...

A most recent Higher Education Authority report indicates that over a quarter of primary degree graduates leave the country within a couple of months of completing their studies, and most go to work in Britain. Some faculties see a massive percentage of their graduates going abroad - half the newly qualified vets and engineers and three quarters or more of all architects.

We are losing the cream of our people at an age when they have most to offer, and, though it may not hurt us now, the country will be hit very hard in about ten years time when Ireland will have to write off a whole generation.

The people that leave are the energetic. For the local community and the country, this is a loss of a most precious asset - young people.



For those who leave are the group who keep the community alive, who marry and rear families, open businesses and take over leadership, both in the youth clubs and the community.



AS SOMEONE SAID "THE HOUSE IS QUIET SINCE THEY LEFT"

Le c eile:neart

A debate needs to take place amongst all groups involved with the Irish Community in London. The over-riding aim should be to have a united approach to the difficulties of our people, especially the recently arrived immigrants and the vulnerable.

Unlike our compatriots in the United States, unlike our Asian, Afro-Caribbean neighbours in London, we haven't yet got our act together. And it's costing us.

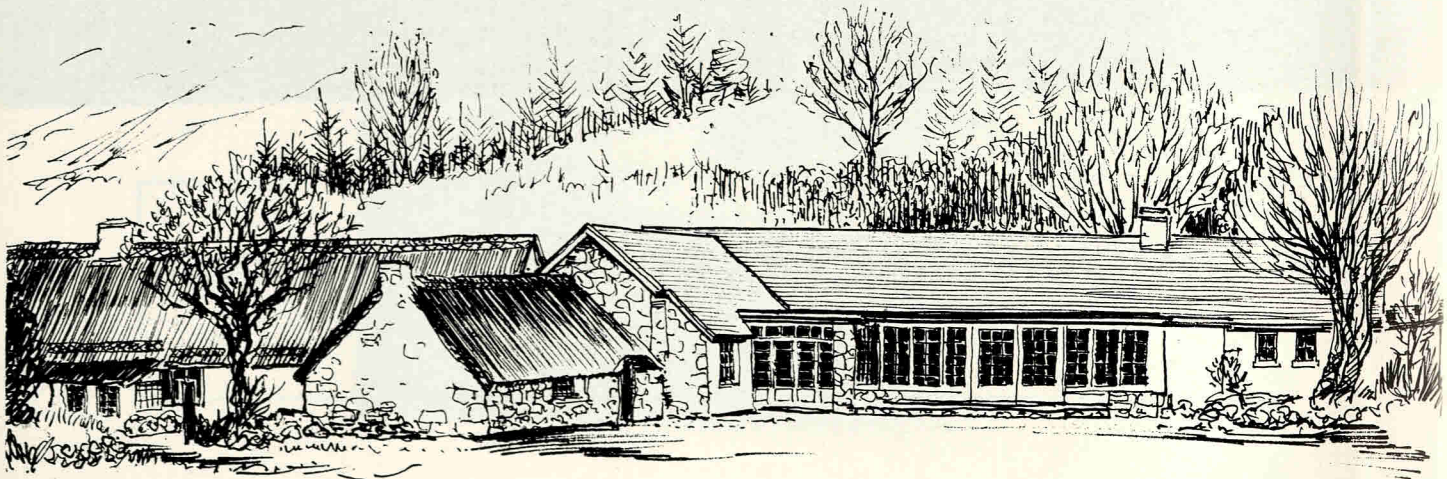
One of the problems is the lack of consensus regarding statistical information. A common approach to the acquisition of statistics is needed. Many groups have done trojan work in researching the plight of the more vulnerable in the Irish Community but, often in isolation. Coordination is needed, sharing resources and pooling experience. There is scope for greater cooperation between agencies. Coordinated plans need to be prepared, maximising existing resources, avoiding duplication and identifying gaps.

This will greatly enhance service delivery and monitoring the quality of provision.

Since we have no elected members to represent the Irish Community, who do we turn to for coordinated leadership - the Embassy, the Federation of Irish Societies.....?

Along with this need for a united and coordinated approach, there is also need for in-training for all personnel working in Irish Centres. Otherwise, the danger is always present of "myopia" -of taking only one view of the Irish Community to the detriment of others.

To prevent this, overall coordination is badly needed. Competition is good. Competition and coordination is better.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That the Irish Government appoint a Minister with responsibility and accountability for immigrants and emigration.
- *That money be allocated to investigate the possibility of Irish immigrants having a vote in future General Elections in Ireland.
- *That a coordinated plan be devised to include the maximising of existing resources and the avoidance of duplication.
- *That training programmes for staff and management on special issues, administrative practices etc be coordinated among Irish agencies.
- *That the Government carry out specific analysis of the possible effects of 1992 on the poor, the marginalised, and the rights of employees at home and abroad.
- *That Irish Agencies develop a networked computer system to ease the transmission of information beneficial to the Irish community.
- *That agreed definitions be used to ensure that all new empirical research undertaken by specific Irish agencies can contribute to existing data.
- *That agreement be sought amongst all agencies aiming to contribute to the development of the Irish community in Britain, to ensure that compatible records are kept, thus allowing trends within the community to be analyzed and responded to.





"We should have a united approach in taking on the difficulties our people experience, especially those with disabilities, the vulnerable, the newly arrived. Cooperation and co-ordination in our work is essential".

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGY

A disproportionate number of young Irish immigrants arrive at our Centre unskilled and unprepared. These would have dropped out of school at an early age and have no work experience. Many of these end up homeless. How can we prevent this continuing to happen?

Accepting the projection that 30,000 will emigrate each year for the next decade and given that the more vulnerable will continue to head for the London area, we must begin now to take a serious look at the reasons for this vulnerability and work towards anticipating and eliminating the difficulties which our immigrants experience in the London area.

Presently, there are three groups emigrating to London. Firstly, graduates who are making a great contribution to professional and business life in Britain. These immigrants are older and also benefit from having had a practice run at emigration during the holiday periods of college years. Yet even these who are well equipped, experience difficulty in adjusting to life in cosmopolitan London and coping with the bereavement involved in leaving behind the familiar scene at home.

Leaving Cert on its own is of little practical benefit in the highly competitive world of work

Secondly, those emigrating with some skill, be it office skills, nursing skills, trade skills etc. These, too, are doing quite well, yet many of them have to accept a standard of accommodation and lifestyle below what they have been accustomed to at home, the more skilled they are, the better their lifestyle is likely to be, eg take-home pay for a girl with basic secretarial skills is £110 a week.

While this is a good wage it is still only minimal subsistence wage in London where accommodation costs £45, food £40, travelling expenses £12, poll tax £8.

Thirdly, and by far the most vulnerable are those who drift to London each year with a school certificate (Inter, Group or Leaving

Cert) but without the necessary social skills, personal skills or practical job skills essential for survival in the new environment. Leaving Cert on its own is of little practical benefit in the highly competitive world of work. It is but a stepping stone towards acquiring skills and qualifications.

Immediate attention must be focused on this young vulnerable category of emigrants who are often the drop-outs of our highly pressurised second level education - 5,000 per year, 25,000 in five years.

Young people today must beware of the pitfalls of their actions.

These unskilled school-leavers are ill prepared for life in the competitive multicultural, multi racial secular society in London. These are the ones most likely to found in low paying exploitive jobs, living in substandard accommodation which breeds its own subculture and undesirable lifestyle. Into this category would also come the many thousands of unskilled workers who drift onto construction sites, accepting its short term benefits but with little security for the future. It is a salutary fact that many of the homeless in London today are Irish immigrants of the 40's and 50's, the unskilled workers of the past.

Young people today must beware of the pitfalls of their actions. Can we, Irish people stand idly by and see history repeat itself, we must equip our young people for the future they are moving into. We must enhance their self-image by equipping them with necessary skills and reducing their dependency on the Welfare System which holds no long term benefit for the future and in a strange environment can be more detrimental than at home.

We need to take a critical look at our second level education, creating an atmosphere within our school system wherein our young people can grow positively and gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. We must equip them with personal skills, social skills and practical job skills. To allow the present situation to continue is tantamount to perpetuating Irish homelessness on the streets of London. Let us implement preventative strategy now.

Businesses and companies also need to be challenged to make their contribution to the future of our country

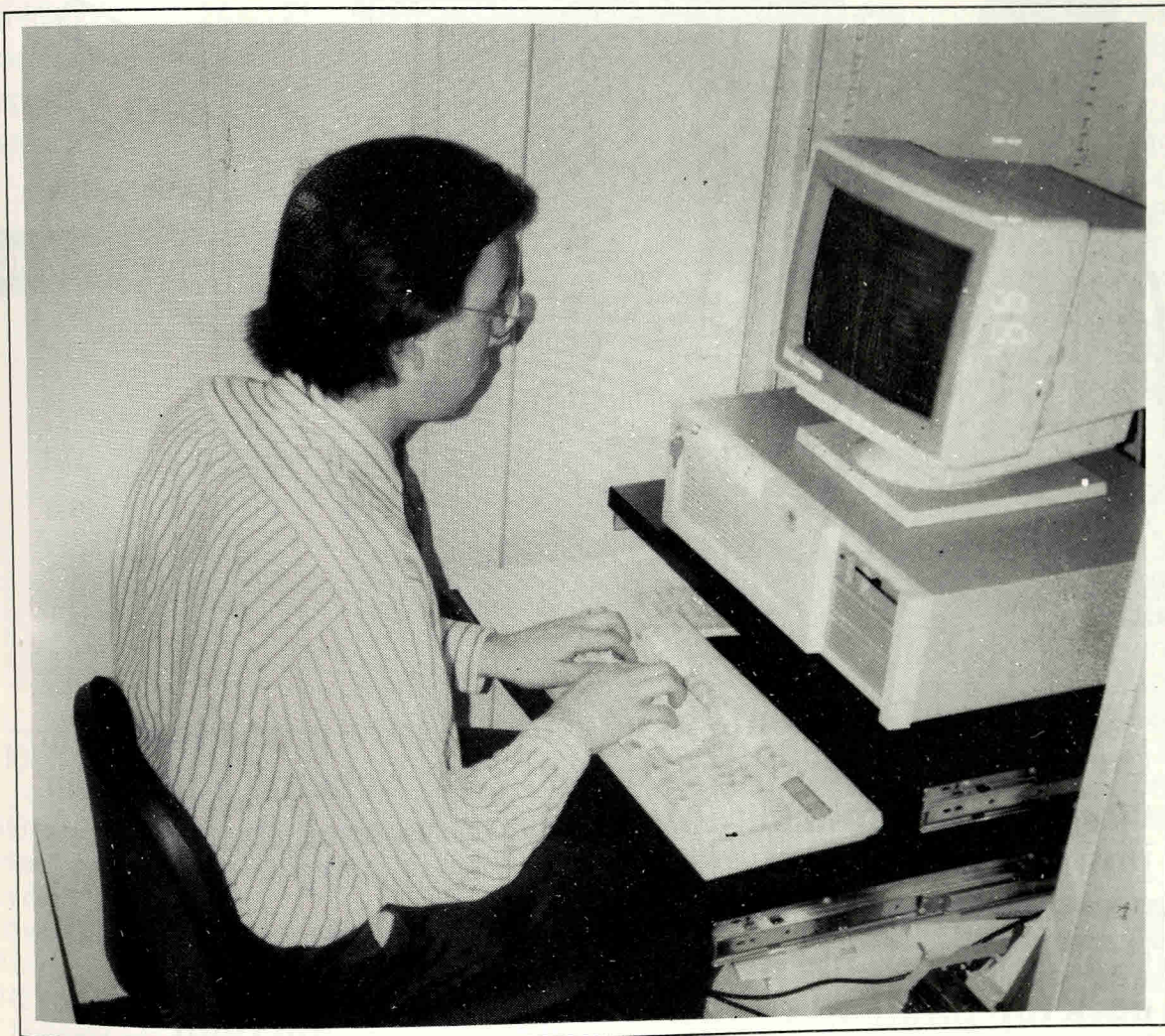
The Government must be challenged towards providing basic essential training for all our young people aged 15 and over who wish to avail of it. Many young male immigrants complain of the non availability of sufficient worthwhile manpower courses, apprentice courses and post Leaving Cert courses (PLC) in schools. This anomaly needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Businesses and companies also need to be challenged to make their contribution to the future of our country, to give the necessary work-experience to our young people. It is regrettable that some of our young people who remain at home risk exploitation re wages and conditions of work. Injustice on the home front must be also addressed.

It goes without saying that we continue to exert pressure re job creation so that less may have to go and that those who have gone may have something to come back to.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That the growing inequality in our Irish Society, the unemployment and the poverty (causes of emigration) continue to be addressed.
- *That continued pressure be exerted re Job Creation and the provision of training for all our young people.
- *That effective liaison be maintained between home and away.
- *That increased funding be allocated to address the needs of children who fall completely out of the present system of education.



Pat preparing our Annual Report



A number of residents at our hostels are participating in the Migrant Training Scheme. This Scheme equips our emigres with marketable skills, increases their earning power significantly and helps them start promising careers. It provides training in areas where there are skill shortages, mainly in word processing, office technology, desk top publishing and in the construction field.

The Migrant Training Scheme involves partnership between the Irish Community and the London Boroughs. It is funded by the EC, Irish sponsors, and the London Boroughs.

TOTAL NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS IN 1989 ... 6420 NEW CASES IN 1989 ... 2004

PROBLEMS PRESENTED

Accommodation	1,021
Advice	420
Birth Certificates	257
Casework and Counselling	158
Clothing/Furniture etc.	1350
Employment	65
Finance	819
People with Disabilities	261
Repatriation	76
Information	1,278
People with HIV/AIDS	21
Cases Carried Forward (ongoing support)	620
Welfare Benefits Advice	910

AGE OF NEW CLIENTS

Age	Total	1989 %
16-18	222	11.08
19-25	821	40.96
26-40	601	29.99
40-49	205	10.23
50+	155	7.74

SEX OF NEW CLIENTS

Male	1,223
Female	781
Families	65

SOURCE OF REFERRALS OF NEW CLIENTS

Clergy	460
D.S.S.	93
Friends/Clients	340
Irish Agencies	80
Irish Chaplaincy Scheme	20
Personal Applications	520
Posters/Leaflets	190
Police/Probation	23
Statutory Services	148
Voluntary Agencies	130

COUNTIES OF ORIGIN OF NEW CLIENTS; JANUARY - DECEMBER

County	Total 1989	%
Antrim	50	2.49
Armagh	9	0.44
Carlow	22	1.09
Cavan	32	1.59
Clare	49	2.4
Cork	211	10.52
Derry	28	1.39
Donegal	45	2.24
Down	18	0.89
Dublin	300	14.97
Fermanagh	10	0.49
Galway	130	6.48
Kerry	64	3.19
Kildare	18	0.87
Kilkenny	19	0.94
Laois	18	0.89
Leitrim	19	0.94
Limerick	140	6.98
Longford	9	0.44
Louth	108	5.38
Mayo	58	2.89
Meath	48	2.39
Monaghan	7	0.34
Offaly	28	1.39
Roscommon	29	1.44
Sligo	21	1.04
Tipperary	80	3.99
Tyrone	40	1.99
Waterford	98	4.89
West Meath	31	1.54
Wexford	28	1.39
Wicklow	29	1.44

OTHER NATIONALITIES

England	110	5.48
Scotland	32	1.59
Wales	5	0.24
Afro-Caribbean	19	0.94
Others	42	2.09

HOSTEL STATISTICS

163 availed of our Hostel Services - of that number all got some form of work eventually. 115 started life in London by doing unskilled work.

20 went home and did not return.

8 were married and had left wife and family at home.

142 were smokers; 33 were asthmatic.

113 did not attend Church.

10 did not take alcohol.

154 were between the age of 16-24.

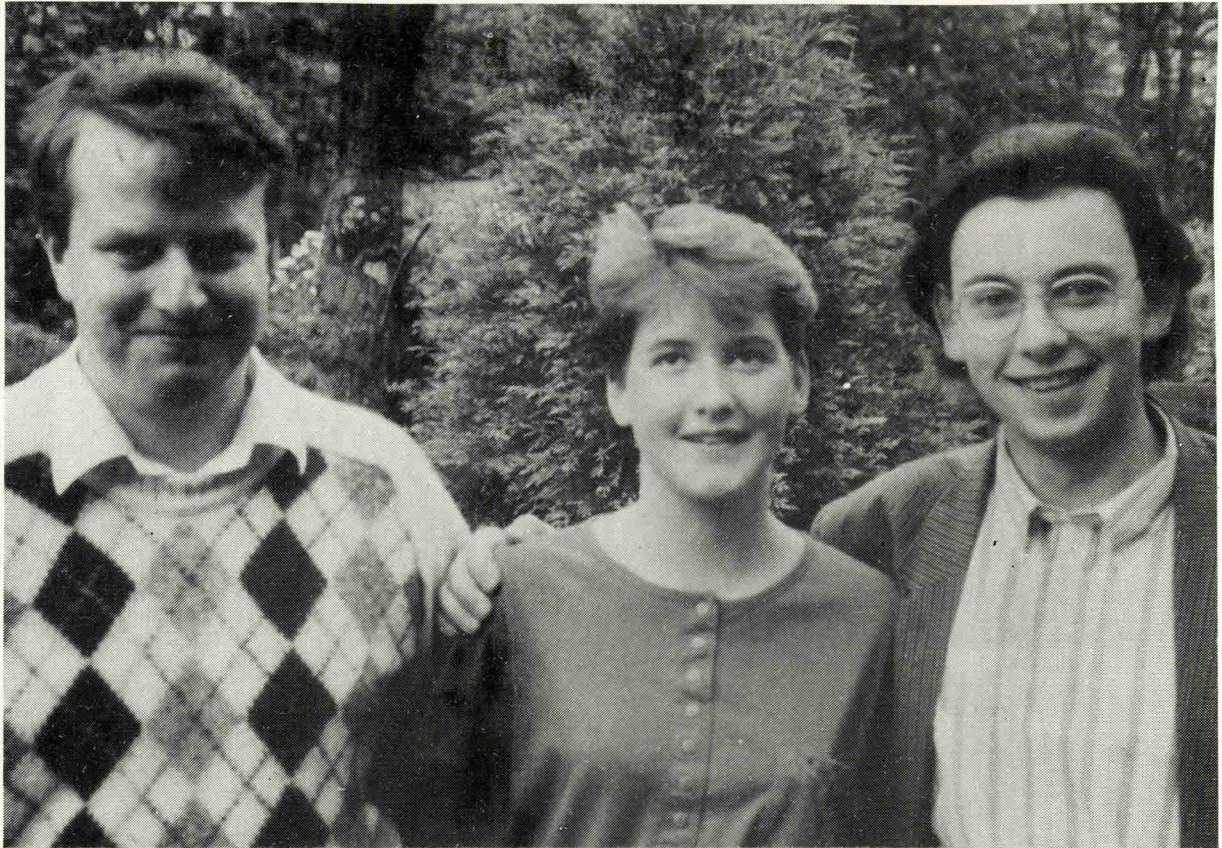
148 used sugar.

150 drank tea. 1 drank water.

12 drank coffee: 163 waited for a letter from home.

38 were born in Britain

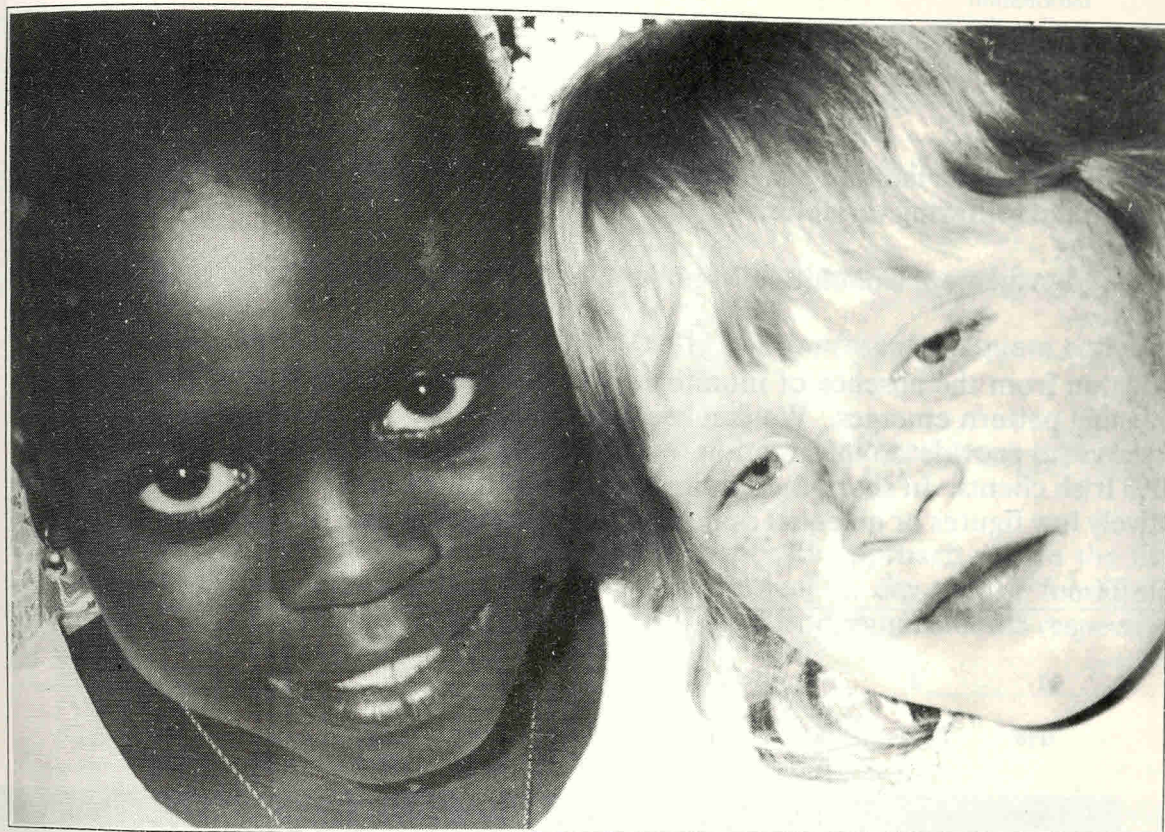
Irish "Immigrants" born in Britain



(L. to R. Bill Keary born in Coventry; Michelle Dooley born in Birmingham and Pat Waters born in London)

38 of our 163 hostels residents were born in Britain. Their parents returned to Ireland in the 70's. Now their sons and daughters are back in Britain in search of a living

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & THE IRISH DIMENSION.



The Irish Support & Advice Centre has been analyzing the equal opportunities monitoring records of a number of voluntary sector agencies locally.

It seems opportune to us, given the much heralded advent of "Care in the Community" to ask how the local voluntary sector is responding to the needs and difficulties experienced by a disproportionately large number of local Irish people.

The survey was based on 56 voluntary sector agencies in Hammersmith and Fulham, who receive what is termed "main-programme" funding (ie grants in excess of £2,000 pa), from the local Council's Community Organisation's Support Committee (COSC).

A number of agencies were excluded from the survey on the basis that they catered for either Black, Irish or other ethnic minority communities. Consequently, their ethnic minority monitoring records would tend to distort the overall picture of the usage of voluntary sector agencies by local Irish people.

How then have the local Voluntary sector agencies in this survey failed? The result is unfortunately somewhat disappointing. As we can observe in table 1, 18% of voluntary sector agencies in the survey provide no information with regard to clients, staff, volunteers or management committee whatsoever. Most did however, provide some information.

Table One

% of voluntary sector Agencies who provide no information at all on the following variables	1% of Irish Clients	2% of Irish Management Committee Members	3% of Irish Full-time Staff	4% of Irish Part-time Staff	5% of Irish Volunteers
18%	38%	68%	72%	84%	93%

Table One shows the number of agencies who provided no equal opportunities monitoring results on the following variables.

Clients, Management Committee Members, Full-Time Staff Part-Time Staff and Volunteers

Moving on from the absence of monitoring, to the actual monitoring of Irish clients, an interesting pattern emerges. We can see from Table Two that in addition to the 38% of agencies who provide no information on Irish Clients, a further 31% have only between 1-10% Irish clients. In short, then more than two-thirds of those agencies sampled either relatively low figures or no equal opportunities monitoring for Irish Clients.

Table Two

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0%	1-5%	6-10%	11-15%	16-20%	21-25%	26-30%	31-35%	36-40%
38%	18%	11%	7%	9%	9%	2%	0%	2%

This table shows the percentage of Irish Clients as a proportion of the total number of clients expressed in percentage form.

At the other end of the spectrum we can see that 26% of agencies have a concentration of Irish clients between 11-25%. Furthermore, 16% and 11% of agencies surveyed had 16-25% and 21-30% Irish Client respectively.

Finally, we at the Irish Support & Advice Centre are concerned that at present there is no gender breakdown for ethnic minority women. It is the agreed policy of the Irish Support and Advice Centre, based on our own equal opportunities monitoring system, that services for Irish women and Irish people with mental health problems be extended. We are aware that less women than men come to us for help and advice. A significant proportion of women clients are older women who suffer disproportionately, depression and poverty. They lack the social network of older Irish men. Now, if as we suspect the vast majority of Irish clients contacting voluntary agencies are men, then the likelihood is that the specific needs and concerns of Irish women maybe overlooked.

It is therefore, of the utmost importance if as a result of our own high standards of equal opportunities monitoring, plus qualitative methods of analysis, we at the Irish Support & Advice Centre identify, necessary, coherent and relative service delivery improvement, then, funding bodies such as COSC respond positively by prioritising such schemes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

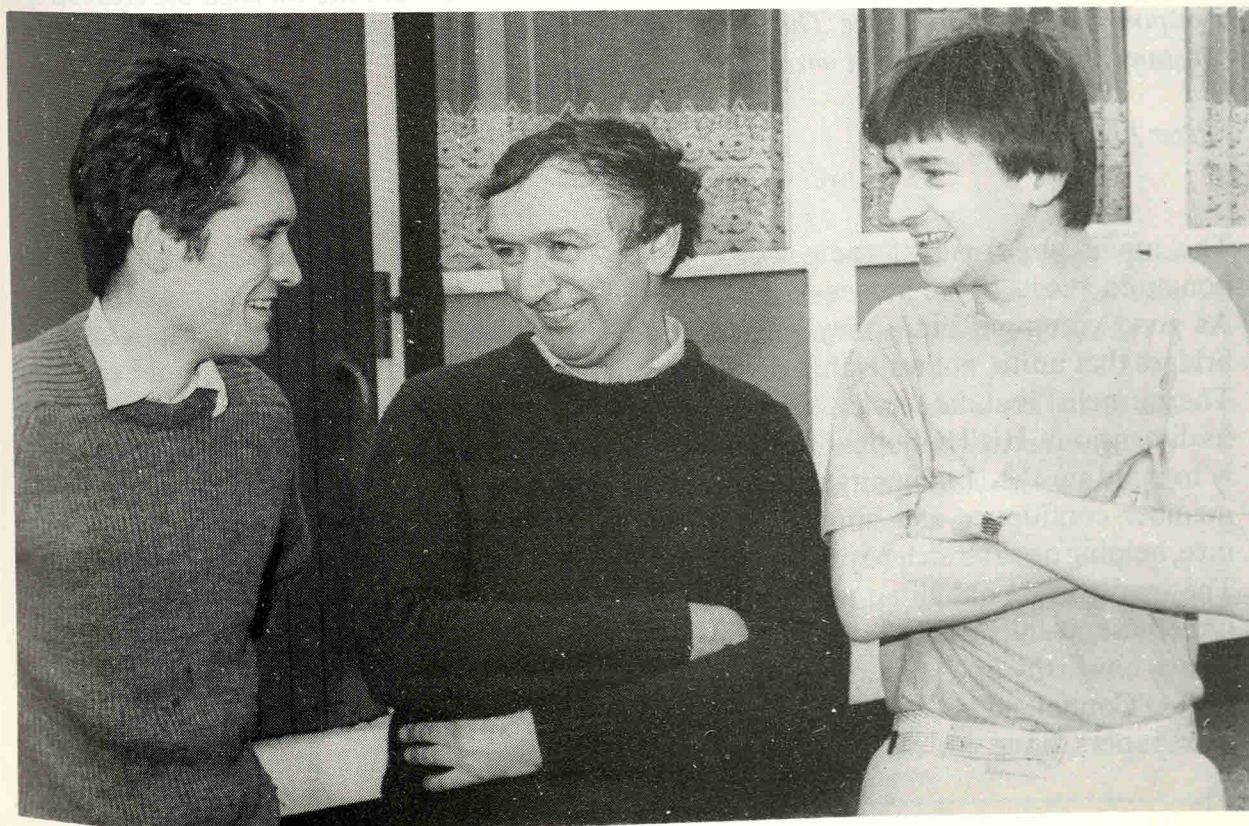
*That COSC respond positively to our proposal for the establishment of a Women's Outreach Post.

*That a gender breakdown be incorporated into all ethnic minority monitoring.

*That Voluntary Sector Agencies who consistently fail to present adequate equal opportunities monitoring records be required to do so.

*That COSC implements the Ard-Fheis 89 conference recommendations appertaining to the Inner Cities Group.

*That the council through COSC, or through a corporate approach secure the funding necessary for the continuation of the Broadway Project (a day centre for long term homeless), 55% and 95% of whose clients are Irish and Borough residents respectively.



NEW BREED OF UK IRISH TO CHANGE IMAGE

A survey which included our Austin House Hostels, had amongst its questions: "Do you feel any anti-Irish racism?" 11 said yes. 189 said no.

In his detailed examination published in

the Irish quarterly review 'STUDIES', Prof James O'Connell argues that the prejudice shown against the Irish in Britain, well into the 20th Century, is now fizzling out.

The following excerpt from a letter written to the Irish Post 27.1.90, has a point.

'Reading the letters' pages of the Irish Post each week, one wonders what sort of a race we really are. Or is it that the letters are selected from those of us with the biggest "chip" on our shoulders?

Week after week we are treated to regular bouts of anti-British garbage, some, sadly, bordering on the paranoid. As an immigrant community, surely it's about time we used the columns of a responsible newspaper, like The Irish Post, to raise more pertinent questions, instead of constantly harping about past wrongs and misdeeds.'

Peter J Dwyer

The media, because of their work, are honoured guests in the homes of millions. As good communicators they must build bridges that unite, not walls that divide.

The journalist is at the service of truth in all its dimensions. His/Her job is fundamentally to build up the community; to give each member confidence and hope for the future, helping us to stretch beyond ourselves. The media must enlighten and inspire us. Otherwise, it falls prey to a subtle subterfuge unworthy of its potential.

Prof O'Connell adds: 'While some popular newspapers have on occasion sought to

resurrect old stereotypes, it seems fair to say overall, that prejudice against Irish individuals as distinct from the Irish as a group, is very rare today.' Yet the continuing tragedy of Northern Ireland is likely to stay for some time, and adversely affect how the Irish are seen, and how the Irish see themselves and the host society.

During the 80's, approximately 200,000 young Irish people, between the ages of 17 and 25, have brought their education and skills to the South East area of Britain. Among the new groups of Irish who have formed societies are the London-Irish

Society, with over a thousand members, the Law Group and the Architects Society. Many of these work in the City of London. One of the major characteristics of these groups is their interest in promoting Ireland, Irish culture, arts and politics

within the broader and increasingly more relevant, European context and 'World-view' (Weltanschauung).

We should be, and are proud of these people and the positive image they project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *That the Media in Britain, build bridges to unite, not walls to divide.
- *That both the Irish and British Governments continue to help the people of Northern Ireland towards a peaceful solution to the problem.
- *That those who have received so much from the educational system in Ireland, would use their expertise, professional knowledge, and especially their highly prized positions, to further the economy, not just of the host Country, but also of Ireland.

QUOTATION

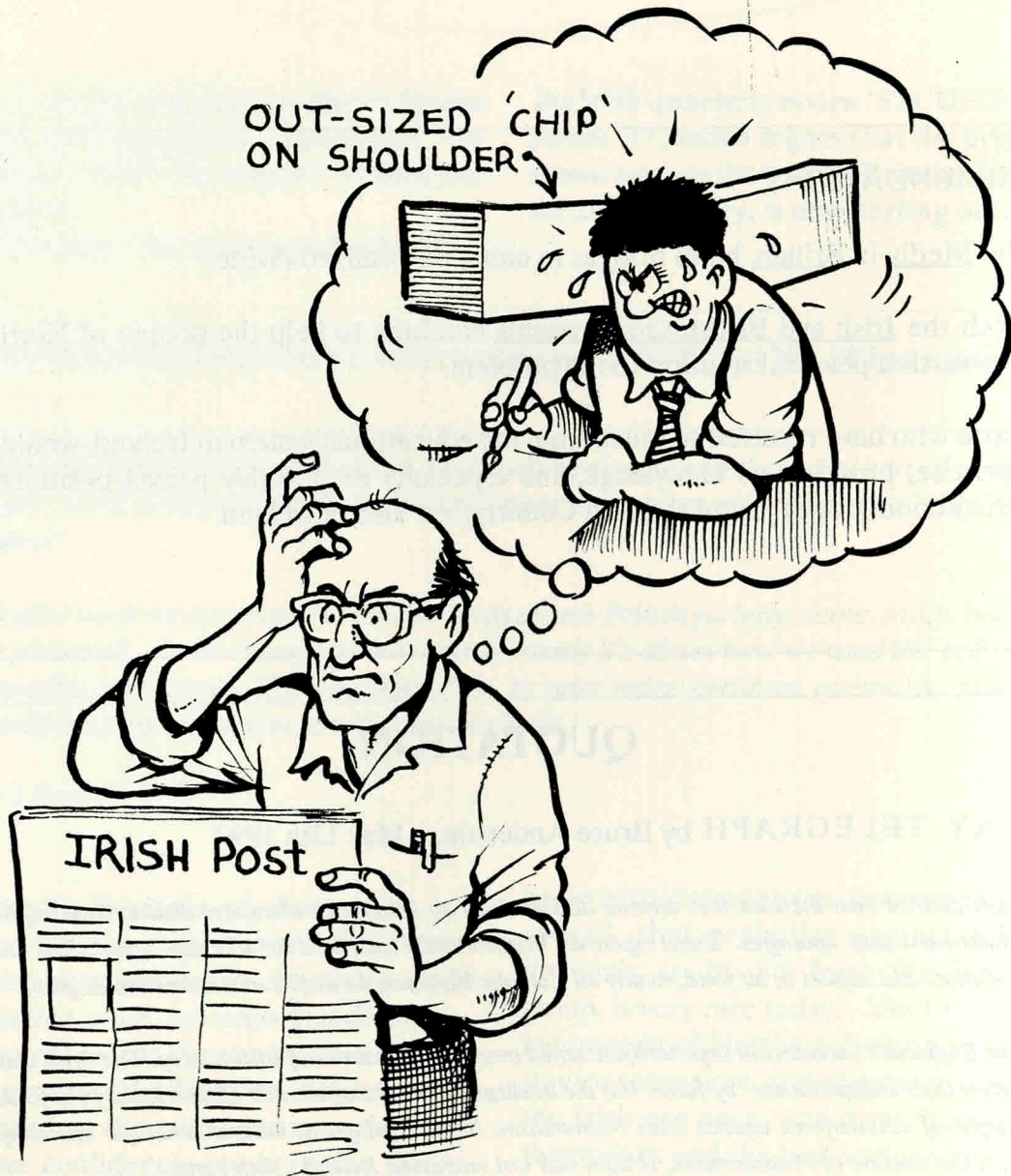
SUNDAY TELEGRAPH by Bruce Anderson. May 13th 1990

The English cannot bear the idea that anyone dislikes them so when they encounter dislike, they respond with bewilderment and apologies. Tread upon an Englishman's toes, and he will say "sorry". The Irish understand that, and exploit it; au fond, nearly all Catholic Irishmen do dislike and resent the English.

They resent England's success and superiority, asserted over many centuries of Irish history. The Irish claim that they won their independence by force. But the intelligent ones are aware that Britain hardly put forth a finger's weight of counterforce against Irish Nationalism. Ireland gained its independence for one simple reason: with the decline of Protestantism, Britain had lost interest in Ireland - both parts.

Anyway what independence? For all the Celtic, Catholic, or cultural dreams of its founding fathers, modern Eire is a provincial backwater, with absolutely no record of success in any human activity except terrorism. To be sure, modern British history has its quota of failures - but not from an Irish perspective. To them, we are Caliban's mirror. They cannot forgive us

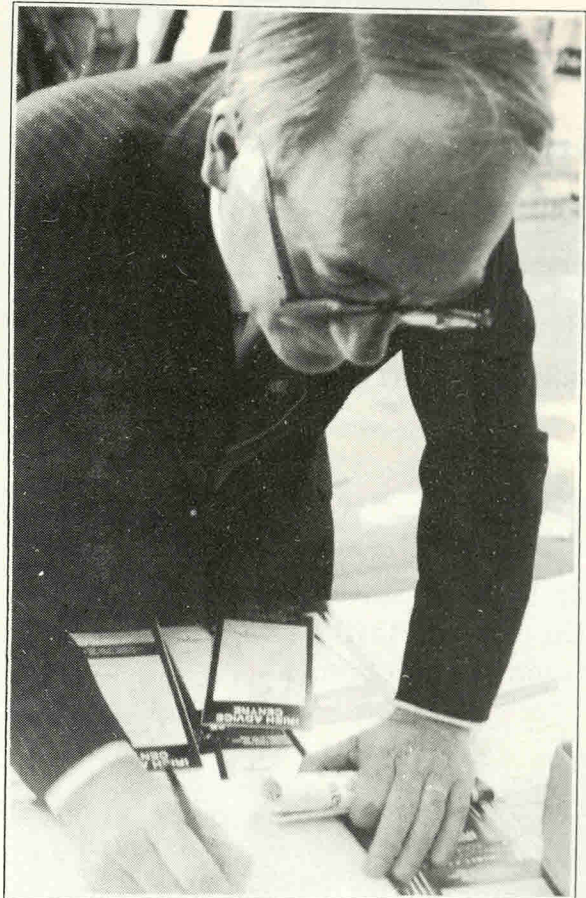
Reading the letters' page of the Irish Post each week one wonders if the letters are selected from those of us with the biggest "chip" on our shoulders!



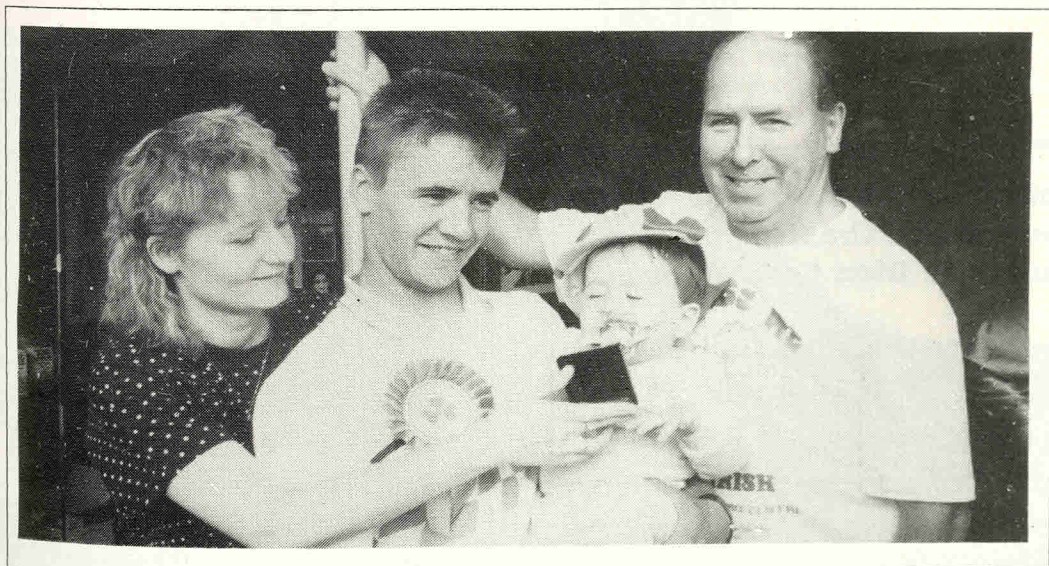
ROUNDWOOD FESTIVAL 1989



Kevin and Pauline Murray model our New T-Shirt



The Irish Ambassador signs the visitors book.



Pat Smyth, our Chairman, with the winner of the Baby Competition.

IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS

INCOME

OPENING BALANCE AT BANK 1/1/88	28,576.33
Hammersmith and Fulham Council	38,610.00
IRISH GOVERNMENT GRANT	35,931.21
INTEREST	2,054.12
JUBILEE SALES & FESTIVALS	1,185.00
	<u>£106,356.66</u>

The Irish Welfare Bureau has its accounts with **Allied Irish Banks Ltd.**, King Street, Hammersmith.

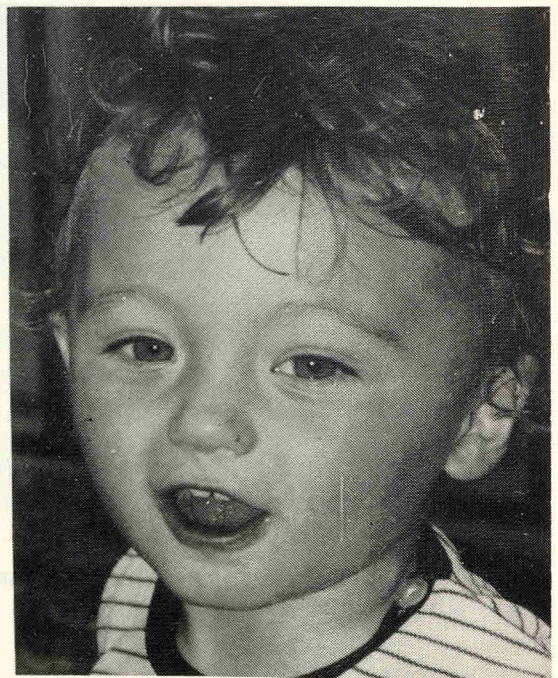
Its Accountants and Auditors are:
Beatty & Company,
724 Holloway Road, N. 19

EXPENDITURE

SALARIES AND WAGES	
Including Tax and NIC	59,074.74
WELFARE AND PROVISIONS	2,226.81
ELECTRICITY	434.80
STAMPS, STATIONERY, PRINTING	1,639.71
PHONES	2,015.69
PETROL AND OIL	424.44
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS	719.40
HOSPITAL VISITS	90.90
INSURANCE - Vehicles and Premises	1,030.11
VEHICLE - Servicing & Tax	758.88
REPATRIATION EXPENSES	1,107.00
OFFICE EQUIPMENT	326.29
AUDITORS	1,178.75
FUNERAL EXPENSES	170.00
RENT	8,700.00
BIRTH CERTIFICATES	347.25
EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION	2,030.00
TRAVEL & CONFERENCE EXPENSES	393.60
SUBSCRIPTIONS & GRATUITIES	795.00
ADVERTISING PUBLICITY	
(inc. money raising events)	6,080.61
GENERAL OFFICE EXPENSES	869.12
PROJECT AND OUTREACH WORKERS AND EXPENSES	1,167.00
INTEREST CHARGED	159.12
SUNDRIES	1,002.03
BALANCE c/d @ 31/03/1990	13,615.41
	<u>£106,356.66</u>

We are funded by Hammersmith and Fulham Council and the Irish Government through the Dion Committee.

Our thanks goes to these funding bodies and to all who helped and supported us during the year.



There is something fundamentally wrong with a society which socialises its young to emigrate.

The way we look at life often spells the difference between - excitement and boredom, beauty and ugliness, apathy and creativity.

We cannot allow people to continue to emigrate without offering them some sort of route home.

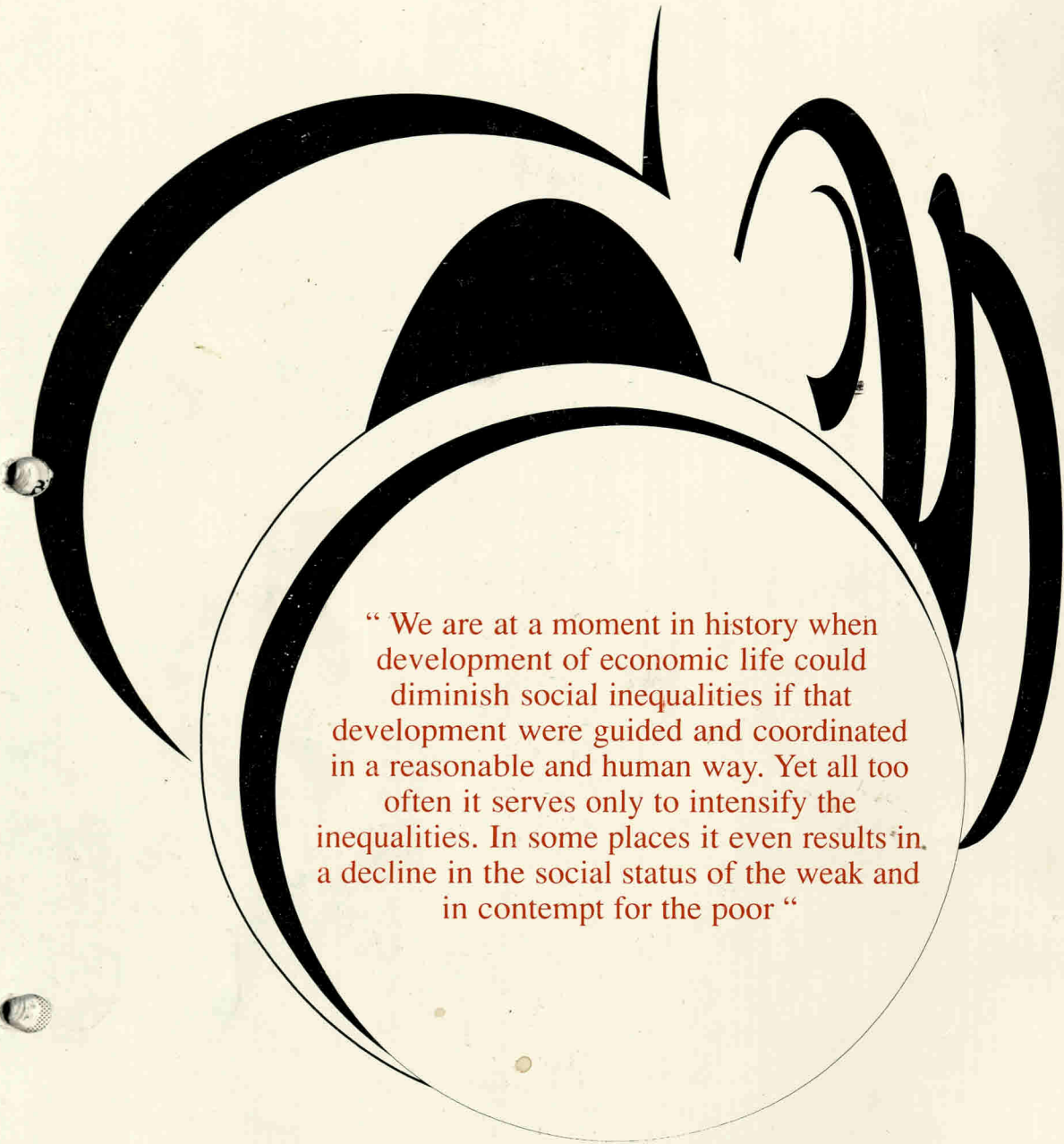
The needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich.

Poll Tax

Whether one earns £70 a week, £70 a day or £70 an hour the payment will be the same within a particular local authority for each individual.

There are no such things as small nations; there are only small minds, and it is the task of education to enlarge them.

" A society must be judged by the care it gives to the weakest and most underprivileged of its members "
Ghandi



“ We are at a moment in history when development of economic life could diminish social inequalities if that development were guided and coordinated in a reasonable and human way. Yet all too often it serves only to intensify the inequalities. In some places it even results in a decline in the social status of the weak and in contempt for the poor “

To every member of Dail Eireann and The House of Commons we say:

THE CHOICE IS YOURS