

IRISH POST

COMMUNITY

AWARDS 1981

THIS IS the sixth year of The Irish Post's Community Awards. Their purpose is to highlight and applaud achievement by Irish people and organisations in Britain.

As is our custom, we announce the awards in our issue which coincides with St. Patrick's Day.

The awards are essentially an exercise in celebration — in reminding ourselves of our achievements both individually and as a community in this country.

The awards were conceived by The Irish Post and in previous years were generously sponsored by Allied Irish Banks. This year AIB are not directly involved.

Over the years too, we have availed of the awards to display excellence in Irish art.

This year's awards are, for the first time, in stone — the work of young Dublin craftsman Michael Jackson.

As in the past, the ten awards will be presented by the Irish Ambassador to Britain, Dr. Eamon Kennedy. The occasion will be a dinner in London in late April.

Brent Irish Advisory Service

The Brent Irish Advisory Service was started in 1978 for the purpose of providing a wide range of practical and cultural support to what is the largest Irish community in any borough in Britain. It has gone on to achieve much of what it set itself.

The founders of BIAS were, in the main, young people — some of them graduates from Irish universities. The organisation is now providing an information and advisory service, organising cultural events and publishing useful booklets and information sheets.

In the latter area, special mention must be made of its Irish in Britain Directory—a 72-page booklet which provides addresses and telephone numbers for all Irish organisations in Britain, as well as useful information on housing, education, employment, grants, the rights of EEC citizens, the health service, pensions, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and an extensive list of other useful contacts and services.

Since 1979, BIAS has had one of its founding members, Dubliner Donal McGrath, as a full-time official. This has been possible because of a grant from Brent Council and a much smaller (£12500) grant from the Department of Labour in Dublin. By having a full-time officer, BIAS has been able to engage

in a wide range of community development which couldn't possibly be done on a part-time, voluntary basis. These activities have included housing, legal advice, assistance in areas of welfare pensions, social security, employment, health, education and civil liberties.

Coinciding with all of this practical work, BIAS has always been conscious of the necessity to promote Irish culture. It assists a wide range of groups and organisations, helping to co-ordinate activities and, when needs be, staging events itself. Last year BIAS carried out a survey of the state of Irish art and culture in Britain, with a view to being in a position to make practical suggestions for further growth in these areas.

While catering essentially for the Brent area, BIAS is now contributing to culture and social activities in many other parts of London. Last year, for example, BIAS assisted, contacted or worked with 95 other organisations and services in the London area. These ranged from community, housing, political and educational organisations in Brent to folk groups, Irish dancing schools and a multiplicity of Irish educational, sporting and community groups.

The truth is that our community could do with BIAS-type organisations all over the country — dealing with the practical day-to-day issues and problems and, at the same time, promoting and co-ordinating worthy cultural and educational activities.

Brent Irish advisory service

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To all members, volunteers, friends and supporters

PLEASE COME AND CELEBRATE WITH US ON FRIDAY NEXT 26 MARCH 1982 AT THE
CARLTON CENTRE, GRANVILLE ROAD, KILBURN, LONDON NW6 5RA (01-624 4551)

FROM 7 TO 11 P.M. - Licensed Bar - Food - Traditional Entertainment