



Haringey Irish Community Centre Ltd.

72 STROUD GREEN ROAD, LONDON N4 272-7594/9230

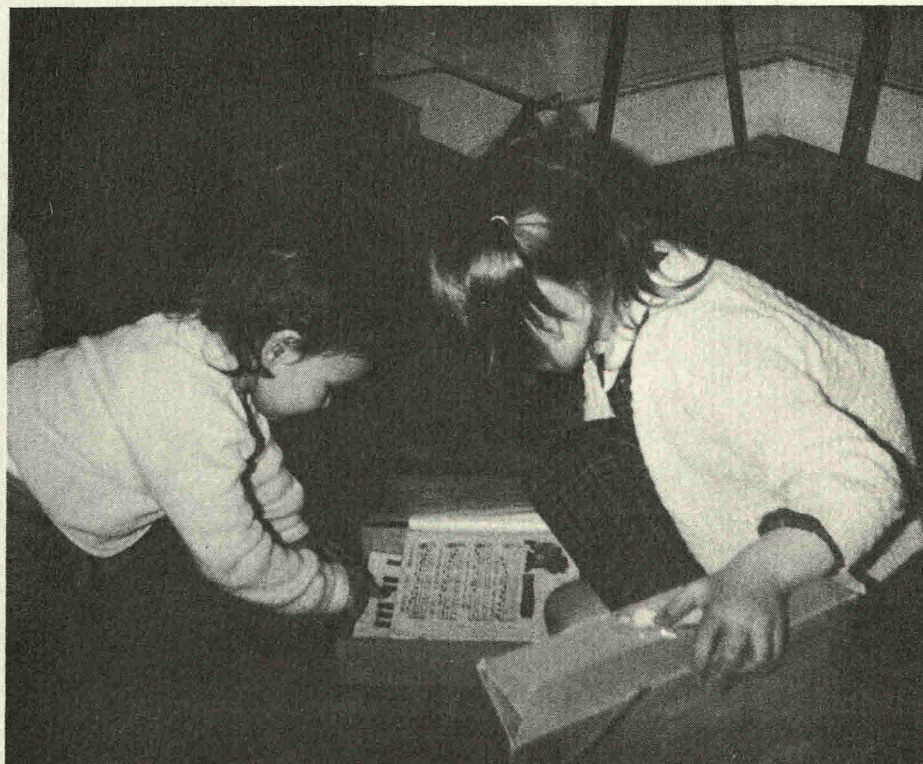
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January 1986
to
December 1986.



OUR COMMUNITY.



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REPORT
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REPORT

HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS.

CHAIRMAN. Bill Aulsberry.

SECRETARY. Pat Ross.

TREASURER. Damien Fallon.

WELFARE PROJECT.

CO-ORDINATOR/SOCIAL WORKER. Sister Joan Kane.

SOCIAL WORKER. Marian Moore.

ADMINISTRATOR. Sharon Whitehead.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

72 STROUD GREEN ROAD, FINSBURY PARK, LONDON N.4. 3ER.

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HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

INTRODUCTION.

As I write this introduction another year has passed with it has come the inevitable increased demand on our Welfare Centre's throughout the country.

Let me say immediately the position of our Centre's are not helped by the sensation seeking headlines and reporting in a certain Irish national newspaper seeking to imply "the streets of London are paved with gold". They never were and never will be but Centre's such as ours are reaping the harvest of such irresponsible reporting as are other Centre's throughout the country.

I said last year by the time this report was distributed the Centre would have a new Management Committee. This Meeting duly took place and I had the honour and privilege to be elected as Chairman. I believe our Centre is unique because of the wide range and different interests represented on our Management Committee.

Some time ago a certain amount of fear was voiced that control of the Centre would be taken away completely from the Haringey Irish Association Executive Committee. This has been unfounded and the Haringey Irish Association Executive are well and truly represented on the Management Committee of the Centre.

It is to the founding organisation, the Haringey Irish Association I would first of all want to thank.

It seems such a long time ago now since the Haringey Irish Association acquired the property from Haringey Council, but in reality its only about five years. Since that time the Executive of the Haringey Irish Association have discharged their duties admirably. Each successive Executive have always ensured the Community Care Centre was well managed and the most vulnerable members of our Community were well cared for. To each and every Member of these Executives I say a million thanks.

Last year I said "due to demand expansion of the project is essential". This thankfully we have been able to achieve. Our staff now consists of two Social Workers, Sister Joan Kane and Marian Moore and a full time Administrator Sharon Whitehead.

Sister Joan has been with the project from the beginning and it is very much thanks to her drive, dedication, devotion, and energy that our Centre is one of the best in the country.

Our "New" Social Worker is Marian Moore, well known in Social Services in Haringey. Welcome to the Community Care Centre Marian I am positive you will enjoy working for our Community and long may you stay with us.

Welcome back also to Sharon Whitehead, our Administrator after her maternity leave, and congratulations on the birth of a healthy baby boy, Stephen, to you and Dave.

During Sharon's absence we had the excellent services of Anne Carrig. Thank you Anne for your dedication to our project during your time with us.

Our staff are constantly in the 'Front Line' in their 'War' to represent our Community and to them I say we thank and salute you for all your dedication and commitment.

In 1979 the Haringey Irish Association was the only elected body in the Borough able to represent the views of the Irish Community. Since then however several other Irish organisations have been formed. Notable amongst these are the Haringey Irish Cultural and Community Centre and the soon to be realised Irish Liaison Unit being set up by Haringey Council.

Whilst wishing to be associated with all other Irish groups in Haringey we believe all groups are autonomous in their own right. When set up the Irish Liaison Unit will have specialist workers in the areas of Housing, Social Services, Education and Community Affairs. It is the indication of the commitment of organisations such as ourselves and the Haringey Irish Association that the voice of the Irish Community are now being well and truly represented.

Once again I have left till last our position on funding.

The commitment in 1986 by Haringey Council to fund all voluntary organisations in Haringey previously funded by the Greater London Council was to say the least a life saver for us. For this funding, for zero rating on the property and for providing the premises for our Centre in the first place I wish to place on record our sincere thanks to them.

I have deliberately left till last our thanks to the Irish Government and their 'Dion' Sub-Committee in particular. 'Dion' are by now very well aware of the work and commitment of the Workers of our Centre, and it is solely through the increased funding from 'Dion' we have been able to employ our second Social Worker. It has always been a pleasure to welcome 'Dion' to our Centre and I would to place on record our very sincere thanks once again for having seen fit to recommend increased funding this year to our Centre.

To 'Dion' and its Members, to the Irish Government and its Members, and to Haringey Council and also its Members we say many, many thanks for funding our Centre and we say to you we seriously rely on your continued support and increase of funding for even more expansion of our Centre.

Let us also not forget all the volunteers who give their time to the Centre. To them all we say your work may not always be noticed but through your help and assistance you not only ease the burden on our Workers but you also help to improve the daily life of our clients, many many thanks.

As usual throughout this year the regular get togethers for all users of our Centre have been held, thanks once again to our Workers and volunteers.

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In conclusion I would once again want to thank all our Workers, our volunteers, our funding sources, and last but no means least our Management Committee who have shown by their dedication and commitment their intention to bring to reality what was once a dream for some of the more vulnerable members of our Community.

Bill Aulsberry.

(Hon. Chairman).

HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

SOCIAL WORK REPORT.

The Irish Community in Haringey and neighbouring Boroughs of Islington and Hackney can on basic analysis be divided into (1) the settled group (2) those newly arrived from Ireland. Even what we refer to as 'settled' many came here with the intention of returning to their homeland.

The first group can be subdivided into those born in Ireland and their children who were born here. The newly arrived come from the whole of Ireland includes families and single people. Our work involves contact with people from all parts of Haringey Borough, the neighbouring Boroughs and beyond them.

The Welfare needs being picked up are very varied, one of the most common being accomodation as we had 450 enquiries for it. The majority of the sixteen to thirty-five group which numbered 387 were newly arrived and were looking for a place to stay.

The issue of housing has got to be addressed as a priority for our Community and resources which are targetted elsewhere put into it.

Employment, Job Creation and Training are the other most urgent areas which need resources targetted.

We give an ambulance service to the Community conscious always that the source of the need is what demands to be tackled. We have a number with courage enough to ask for change so that the System does not totally destroy.

Because of the greater resources being made available to our Community in Haringey I find many reasons for new hope. There is great energy within the Community albeit fairly latent to a large extent. It needs a channel and with more consciousness and awareness of getting together on issues we have made headway and can only grow to greater strength.

Creating awareness and consciousness of the causes which are unjust takes more time and energy and above all a committment. Many people unfortunately need their energy to survive. The basic need of all is adequate housing and work to allow a human being to develop to full potential. People need sufficient money not only to have an adequate diet and clothing but some social life for good mental health, living on Welfare Benefits means one has barely enough to live on. The pressure of living in many cases has caused the breakdown in family life. The causes of these inadequacies is mainly legislation which denies the civil rights of the poorest.

Lack of choice contributes greatly to keeping people in their poverty. We hope to enable people to gain more skills and confidence which equips them for greater choice.

Let us now focus in more detail on groupings within our Community, each individual of course has his/her own specific need but some factors are general.

New Arrivals.

Coming into a multicultural environment of a large city is traumatic and demands many skills to cope. The adjustments for a confident secure person will be made without a lot of problems.

Most people we meet have been unemployed for a long time so they lack confidence, are often depressed so have greater difficulty in coming to terms with a new situation. Some come with a hope that the situation couldn't be worse than at home, others with unrealistic expectations and the majority whom we don't have contact come with skills and start a new life.

What we are dealing with is a crisis situation because most come when they have no money or cannot get to grips with the System. One aspect of coming into a multicultural Community is that one looks at one's identity and again people cope as I see it in three ways; group one denies their Irishness change their accent and submerge into the host culture feeling their culture is something to be ashamed of, group two of which I think most people fit recognise that they are different and have something positive to offer, can mix with all groups as they see themselves equal, and group three who can survive only in a ghetto and cannot mix telling themselves that they are better.

Legislation that puts pressure on people and instilling fear to declare their Irishness is the Prevention of Terrorism Act where 6246 were detained between 1974 - 1986 only 186 were charged. It prevents free discussion on issues relating to Ireland and people fear being associated with Irish issues would make them suspect.

The majority of people coming here gave unemployment as the reason for emigrating. The amount of employment available for unskilled people is negligible. For people with a skill work is available so they can get employment but housing is the major problem. The work place is far more competitive than in Ireland and expectations of employers higher. For example many feel that they can get a job on the buildings, with a surplus of labour the employers in many cases are exploiting by taking out people to work for a day, working them until they are exhausted, if they cannot come the next day there is no problem for the employer as there are always plenty more to choose from. New people coming should be advised to work where health and safety are safeguarded.

A number need benefit to get established because of lack of finance on arrival, these needed help to get their payments as there is no unified policy with offices.

Most often the problem is that the person seeking a payment has insufficient or no evidence of identity.

In the past year despite much publicity about bringing evidence of identity we had a big increase in demand to obtain birth certificates for newly arrived people and get their identity accepted.

The reality of living in a large city like London cannot be comprehended in advance so contact with agencies on arrival is important unless the person is sure of being able to go it alone.

The message still has not reached all parts of Ireland to come prepared. Emigration is not the solution to problems in Ireland so we hope that greater effort will be made to find employment for the greatest asset a Country can have, its Youth, which is its future.

Lack of accomodation and housing is the greatest cause of hardship for people coming to London for example four people can be expected to share one room paying from £35-£50 each. One house we know has twenty-one people staying at £35 each so again the real figures of those who are homeless are far in excess of those recorded.

I give an example of one family who left Ireland because the father was made redundant a few years previously and remained unemployed, they came with three children all under twelve. They could only get housed in bed and breakfast accomodation and they were fortunate to get one room for the whole family. Mr A could not get work so slipped further into depression, attempted suicide and was hospitalised. Mrs A decided to get better accomodation so went to the private sector for a solution, she got a flat and moved with her family. It was after a week here that we were called in to help by a local parish, Mrs A was in a very upset state as she and her children had been threatened by other residents in the house who were using drugs. We managed to get her temporary accomodation and the last we heard was that a local authority had agreed to house them.

Homeless.

'Homelessness can be prevented - all that is needed is the political and social will to make the necessary resources available'quote from Lord Scarman in this International year of Shelter for the homeless. The fact that there is a crisis of housing in London and while official figures give 30,000 families accepted as homeless in 1986 there are thousands more people sleeping rough or in inadequate accomodation.

If all the single people who are homeless registered for housing the official figures would be nearer the truth. We advise people to register but most see it as a fruitless exercise.

People we have contact with live in bed and breakfast accomodation which for families is seen as temporary, but now length of stay is increasing to over twelve months.

The solution seems obvious that by building more homes unemployment could be reduced and the cost to keep a person in their own home is much less than in overcrowded hotels with no amenities for children or cooking facilities. The resources are available, but not targetted for housing.

Many we see are women and men who sleep rough or in derelict houses without basic amenities of life. They use our facilities to drop in get a cup of tea, listen to music or just to get warm. A progression in confidence is evident as people who once got a cup of tea and then disappeared now stay to chat, read the paper and some have progressed to lending a hand. We have been able to provide a permanent address, a supportive environment to reclaim life skills. For some we have successfully got their independent bedsit and helped resettle them by negotiating grants to furnish it and helping to budget.

Thanks to our local Community we are kept supplied in clothing to offer a welcome change and boost to morale.

Parties at Christmas and St. Patricks Day were well attended, there was no shortage of talent to give a song, play a tune or do a few steps. A great sense of belonging has developed and its good to see people relaxed and enjoy themselves.

One on going problem is that of alcoholism some succeed in getting treatment and coming to terms with the problem, often though the drink is the only solace to drown out the pain for a time. All would prefer if life was different we can only improve the quality of life until other means can be taken to tackle the underlying problem. Often psychiatric, a broken relationship, feeling of rejection and uselessness due to unemployment etc. There is great need for specialist treatment units to meet the demand.

We are involved with Cara in their endeavour to provide housing for some who are homeless and rootless. The results of their research shows how disadvantaged the Irish are in housing. The need is so great it can only be overcome by decisions at Government level. To meet immediate need direct access nightshelters and hostels could alleviate some suffering and make the living environment more humane. Lack of housing is the reason there are so many homeless, many blame the people for the predicament they are in. Housing is a moral issue. Decent physical accomodation is a basic need not a luxury, a right, not a concession. Poor housing conditions affect dignity, health, morale, self confidence and self perception.

The Elderly.

We have regular contact with seventy five men and women over sixty years of age. Because of lack of transport we are limited in the service we can give this group. We have regular 'get-togethers' on a monthly basis, many who are mobile call in more regularly.

We offer help with Welfare Benefits and other problems that arise but above all we offer support and a chance to socialise. Most suffer from isolation and loneliness as many have a partner who has died.

Many still cherish the hope to visit their homeland before they die, most have given up the idea of going back to stay. We welcome the fact that our local Council is making funds available through our Social Services for ethnic minority people to take a holiday in their homeland. We intend that our pensioners get their opportunity to avail of this facility.

We still have not fully negotiated the setting up of a luncheon club and the problem of transport remains an obstacle to getting people out on a more regular basis.

Due to a grant from Social Services our pensioners were joined with families on an outing to a show in the West End followed by a tour of the city to see the Christmas lights. This was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. The outing was facilitated by volunteers who helped in a visit to a cafe for a cup of tea and gave a helping hand to those not too steady on their feet.

A full Christmas dinner was enjoyed by up to forty pensioners. Each got a present to show that our Community have not forgotten their elderly members.

We hope in the future to expand our facilities to the over sixty members of the Community and with the Cultural Centre due to open in September we will have a further resource available.

We have a number of housebound members who need contact in their homes and hope to be able to enable those who wish to have a better service.

We have some concern about getting statutory services available to those in this age group who need help, most area offices do respond positively to our referrals but others need some urging.

Travelling Community.

This section of our Community have a great need because of the lack of facilities and also they are targets of prejudice and lack of understanding.

The majority of families have been in Britain for years and their children were born here. An increasing number are newly arrived from Ireland like the rest of the population they felt the necessity to emigrate.

We help families negotiate Welfare Benefits, obtain their birth certificates, attendance at court, support them with child care and provide food and clothing when necessary. A number of families come to our Centre, but most contact is made with families on sites official and unofficial

An early January count in the Borough put the number of families at eighty, children under sixteen numbered two hundred and eighty two and of this number one hundred and four were under four.

As part of the Travellers Support Group we have successfully got some permanent sites set up. At present there is one phase of a permanent site completed and officially opened in December, this is the type of place we would wish all families to be placed. A second phase of this scheme will shortly open. Here twelve families will have basic facilities of electricity, water and washing, which are denied most. Two other official sites have water and electricity and a third is getting these. Realistically we can never even hope to provide sites to meet the demand, but we hope with the lead given by Haringey, other Boroughs will meet their statutory obligation. Many other Boroughs also have Support Groups to campaign for rights.

As with all parts of our Community we have a firm commitment to see that their needs are met as far as it is realistically possible. Haringey Council and the Catholic Church in the person of Bishop Harvey need congratulations for their stand with those most in need and making courageous decisions.

We hope to have all the services involved with the Travelling Community. This is the only group within our Community with which I work that my credibility was called into question. In one incidence involving the civil rights of this group we could instantly call on support from the Council, our Embassy, the local Church, Irish Chaplaincy and the National Council of Civil Liberty and this support is greatly appreciated.

In a world of surplus the deprivation suffered by some sections must surely be an indictment on society and as more people become aware of injustice there is hope of the imbalance being righted.

Women and Young Children.

As our contact with the Community ranges from birth to death, we often have cause for celebration as new members get born. The range of service involves getting grants for mother and baby, these unfortunately have been reduced, supporting and visiting women in hospital and later with child care.

During the past year we have met a number of girls newly arrived from Ireland who came here to have their babies. They need help getting housed, Welfare Benefits and support. Other young mothers are a great help supporting and advising the newcomer.

Example:- B is a young woman with a baby who was living in private rented accommodation, she needs a lot of support as she has a nervous disposition, we successfully got her housed, helped her set up the flat and with the pressure of living in cramped, inadequate accommodation gone B and her child are very happy.

With a number of young children we have always to be alert and get the local Social Services to provide more support in order to make their environment safe.

One child C has both parents who have a problem with alcohol at times. We supported her, only a year old through a precarious period and got the local Social Services to offer child minding facilities to the parents. They live in a fifteenth floor flat and the father had ill health. C now is a happy child and developing well.

Many women we help and support through difficult stages in their married life or problems with their teenage children. Most women need a better self image.

We support the efforts and have attended Conferences on Womens Issues. The greatest hope for the future is that women will take their place in society and make an impact on decision making.

At Christmas time was had a party attended by forty children and parents at which Santa Claus gave each a present. Thanks to the generosity of St. Vincent de Paul Society a further fifty children got presents mainly children of Travelling families who would have had no toys except for this.

Community Involvement.

The local Irish Community is involved with the Centre with the Management Committee drawn from a wide range of people bringing their own individual contribution as well as their professional expertise.

Celebrations at Christmas, St. Patrick's Day and the ongoing group work could not take place without local involvement. Some contribute with their time doing necessary repairs to the building, others cook Irish bread a great favourite with the pensioners, clothing and furniture are in constant supply and a dedicated group make sure a Christmas dinner is supplied, cooked and served.

Contributions of money, food, drink and presents have been received from parishes, pubs, St. Vincent de Paul Society and many individuals.

Many volunteers give their time to escorting, talking with and spending time with the elderly.

Irish Social Workers in local Authority teams give invaluable support. We liaise with all the statutory bodies in Haringey and other relevant Authorities, we have built up a good working relationship with groups and agencies in the area.

Donations and contributions from local sources make the cold days of winter more bearable for those who are homeless as we can supply soup and bread to them as they get warm.

The cultural side is not neglected as music, dance and song is supplied from people in that field, most notably this year 'Irish Mist' entertained the pensioners at the Christmas party. School children too contribute with carol singing and Irish dancing.

The basement of the building has been a great resource with easy access which we hope to use more in the future. Our new worker has the brief to organise volunteers so we can look forward to a lot more involvement by our Community.

Thanks to all who support and enable us to do our work.

General Areas.

Together with other Welfare Centres we have had meetings with D.H.S.S. to try and facilitate a fairer deal for Irish people in their offices. The lack of unified policy and problem of individual interpretation of guidelines causes a lot of concern and takes up much time of workers. An anti Irish bias or prejudice from individuals has constantly to be challenged.

Help with budgetting, payment of gas and electricity bill and making money stretch needs constant attention.

I would draw your attention to the back page where we list some areas of need. Bereavement, terminal illness, marriage breakdown or difficulties, alcoholism, personal and family problems were all areas for counselling and support where we shared the suffering of the Community.

Birthdays, new births and celebrations helped us share the joy and bring a balance into life.

Campaigns on housing, making people aware of entitlements etc are on going problems that need constant attention.

Conclusion.

People through the door from 1983/1984 where it stood at 695 has increased through to 5786 for 1986 so I have no doubt that we are meeting a need in our Community. I am happy that our staffing in late March will include a second Social Worker as expansion in staffing is over due. To enable more development we will need a Community Worker even to cope with present demand.

During the year my co-worker Sharon Whitehead had maternity leave and her job of Administrator was taken over by Anne Carrig. To both of them I say thanks for their efforts.

The problem of not being able to collect furniture was overcome this year by getting roof bars for the car, thanks to all who have helped furniture removal and delivery. Demand nearly always exceeds supply. The car is a great enabler to visit a home or hospital at short notice. This facility is provided by the Ursuline Order in Ireland to them we all say thanks.

To the Leader and Members of Haringey Council we appreciate your endeavours and contribution to our Community.

To our Management Committee, especially our Chair Bill Aulsberry, Fr. Bobby Gilmore and the Irish Chaplaincy team we say thanks and wish you much success in your untiring work for and with the Irish Community.

We work to get justice in a society full of injustices keeping a realistic picture in mind that we can improve the quality of life for some, while supporting, advising, counselling and advocating on behalf of others.

Lack of choice contributes greatly to keeping people in their poverty. We hope by enabling people to gain more skills they will then be equipped for greater choice.

We know as workers that we have a caring Community behind us that we can rely on to enable us to provide a service.

Through 'Dion' Committee the people at home contribute to the welfare here and to the Committee and people we are indebted.

Sister Joan Kane. O.S.U.

HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

SIMPLE ANALYSIS OF WORK.

JANUARY 1986 - DECEMBER 1986.

People through the door.	5786
Correspondence on behalf of clients. (D.H.S.S., Housing etc).	678
Telephone calls on behalf of clients. (D.H.S.S. Housing etc).	1725
Domiciliary visits.	189
Hospital visits.	29
Attendance at funerals.	1
Birth certificates.	103
First aid/health problems.	112
Accommodation.	450
Rent/rate rebates.	31
Consumer advice.	103
Emotional	134
Depression.	89
Alcoholism.	64
Financial advocacy.	426
Employment.	189
Material aid. (tea, clothing, furniture & food)	2464
Collection of furniture & clothing.	128
Local Authority Social Services Case Conferences attended.	13
Court cases.	1
Arranging appointments with doctors and hospital.	
Escorting to doctor and hospital.	
Counselling - marital problems, bereavement and personal problems.	
New people through the door.	509
People carried forward from 1985.	378
People in Total.	887

AGE GROUPS.

<u>15yrs and less.</u>	<u>16/25</u>	<u>26/35</u>	<u>36/45</u>	<u>46/60</u>	<u>60 and over.</u>
198	194	193	139	88	75

HARINGEY IRISH COMMUNITY CARE CENTRE LIMITED.

SIMPLE ANALYSIS OF WORK.

JANUARY 1986 - DECEMBER 1986.

Antrim.	3
Armagh.	13
Carlow.	10
Cavan.	8
Clare.	11
Cork.	52
Derry.	2
Donegal.	11
Down.	14
Dublin.	88
Fermanagh.	3
Galway.	112
Kerry.	12
Kildare.	7
Kilkenny.	13
Laois.	3
Leitrim.	6
Limerick.	20
Longford.	8
Louth.	5
Mayo.	18
Meath.	2
Monaghan.	6
Offaly.	10
Roscommon.	12
Sligo.	10
Tipperary.	21
Tyrone.	9
Waterford.	12
Westmeath.	4
Wexford.	15
Wicklow.	3
Irish County Unknown.	84
2nd Generation Irish.	190

Other Countries of Origin.

Africa.	5
Canada.	1
Cyprus.	3
England.	42
France.	2
India.	12
Jersey.	2
New Zealand.	1
Scotland.	22
Wales.	1