



# BIAS BULLETIN

The Newsletter of Brent Irish Advisory Service

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London NW6 6NY  
Telephone 01-624 9991 anytime

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01-624 9991

## London Borough of Brent

### Racial Equality Year

#### Anti Racist Action

One of the founding aims of Brent Irish Advisory Service, formed six years ago to seek full equality for the borough's large Irish community, is "to work for the elimination of racial discrimination and disadvantage within a multi-racial and multi-cultural society".

In the Racial Equality year, the organisation intends to highlight this aim by intensifying its own efforts, through its functions and services, to increase awareness about the divisive and harmful effects of racism.

BRENT for EQUAL OPPORTUNITY



BRENT Council's race relations sub-committee meeting at Brent Town Hall

approved an application by Brent Irish Advisory Service for additional resources to carry out its work. Since its formation six years ago the demands placed upon the organisation have far outstripped its resources.

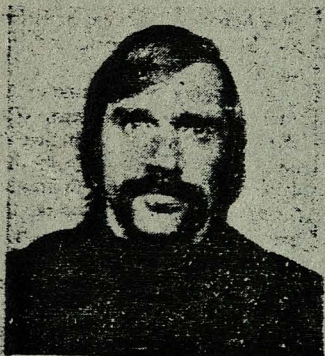
## Joining in fight against racism

The project is funded through the Brent's Urban Programme with the object of improving the position of the borough's large Irish community. Most of its work is undertaken by a team of voluntary workers with a variety of interests and skills, together with a full-time community organiser and a management committee.

### Brent Irish

A new group, Brent Irish Against Racism, has been set up to support the aims and objectives of the anti-racist campaign and to co-ordinate a local action programme which will only succeed with maximum participation.

## housing worker



Jim Smith.

BRITAIN'S first-ever Irish community housing worker, who started work at the office of Brent Irish Advisory Service.

Brent Council's housing committee agreed to fund the post in view of the evidence of disproportionate housing need among members of the large Irish community in the borough, especially among the thousands of single migrant workers.

Jim's main duties are to liaise with Brent's Irish community and to provide information and advice on housing-rights, benefits and opportunities. He will also assist in the development of self-help initiatives and undertake further research into the Irish community's housing needs.

IN A report on the present housing situation, Irish community housing worker Jim Smith says that many local Irish people are disadvantaged in the housing field. He was speaking at the inaugural meeting of a new housing group set up by Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) in Kilburn.

"A higher proportion of Irish people in the Brent area live in privately-rented accommodation and in hostels for the single homeless, than any other ethnic group, yet this Irish dimension is often ignored", he said.

"Most of the homeless people helped by BIAS come through our network of voluntary workers, and in many cases were people who would not otherwise have approached the local council. As a voluntary organisation rooted in the Irish community, we are in a strong position to reach those not reached by other agencies".



The meeting, which was chaired by BIAS vice-chair Tim Hartnett, from Listowel, Co. Kerry, gave a special welcome to Noel Magee of Brent Housing Aid Centre and heard a report on the present housing situation from Jim Smith, the Irish Community Housing Worker recently appointed by BIAS.

## Brent Irish advisory service

Brent Irish Advisory Service was established in 1978 and aims to promote the social and cultural welfare of Irish people and to improve their position in society through equality of opportunity.

We operate an Information Centre, which deals with telephone calls, letters, and drop-in callers, and also provides follow-up advice and welfare.

We offer information and advice on peoples' rights in Britain and Ireland, including housing, employment, education, legal and pensions, and on Irish cultural activities and classes, including an Ghaeilge, Irish dancing, traditional music, Gaelic games, and Irish Studies.

## BIAS

BRENT IRISH ADVISORY SERVICE

Community Development Agency  
- BIAS INFORMATION CENTRE -  
76 Salusbury Road, Kilburn  
London NW6 6NY  
Telephone 01-624 9991 anytime

### PEOPLE SAY ...

*the Irish in Britain don't want to integrate.*

It depends on what is meant by integration. If we ask the Irish to give up their cultural traditions, their language, dances, music and games, we are asking much more than the British who settled overseas were prepared to give up. If, by integration, we mean equal opportunities in education, jobs and housing and in making a positive contribution to society, this is certainly what the Irish do want, and are finding it harder to achieve because of racial discrimination and prejudice.

*Define integration not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.*





# Homelessness, racism, jobs top problems

**HOMELESSNESS**, unemployment and institutional racism are the major social problems of the local Irish community today, it was stated at the annual general meeting of Brent Irish Advisory Service.

Outgoing chairman, Louth-born Kevin McCarthy, gave a summary of important developments within the organisation, which was established in 1978 to improve the position of Irish people in the Brent area, and which provides information and advice on such matters as housing, jobs, education, social security and pensions.

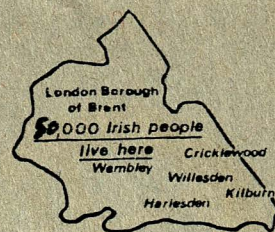
"This is the first annual meeting to be held at the BIAS offices, as to date we have operated under restricted conditions in short-life premises, and have had to tolerate disruptions while aiming to secure over a long period a suitable premises," said Mr McCarthy.

"Our new housing worker, Jim Smith, takes his appointment shortly, and everyone is looking forward to the opportunities in the housing field created by such an appointment. We hope to set up a new housing group which will identify and respond to the special needs of the older single migrant worker."

The members of the management committee elected at the meeting are Mr Colum Moloney (Longford), of Keslake Road, Queens Park, chair; Ms Margaret Gallagher (Mayo), of Harvist Road, Queens Park, secretary; Mr Michael O'Callanain (Antrim), of Claremont Road, Queens Park, assistant secretary; Mr Eamon Reidy (Limerick), treasurer; Mrs Catherine Coleman (Waterford), Ms Marie Dalton (Dublin), and Mr Tim Hartnett (Kerry), committee members.

The new chairman, Colum Moloney, is a native of Co Longford in the mid-west of Ireland, and a son of former Town Sergeant Joe Moloney, the first Labour councillor for Longford Town. He has over 20 years' involvement in the local trade union and labour movement, and is a former chairman of the Cricklewold and Willesden branches of the Union of Communication Workers.

Formerly a Brent councillor for the Harlesden ward, Colum intends to continue the work of his predecessors as chair of BIAS during his term of office. "My special interests are the housing needs of the single elderly Irish, and I hope to work with the present management committee and staff as a team to achieve our objectives."



The organisation currently employs two full-time staff — community organiser/development worker Donal Mac Craith of Esmond Road, Kilburn, and community housing worker Jim Smith of Chamberlayne Road, Kensal Rise.

BIAS moved its offices to 76 Salusbury Road, near Queens Park Station, where its telephone is 624 9991.



## Elderly neglected

THE statutory social services, voluntary organisations, and Irish community associations have failed to understand and respond to the growing needs of the elderly, many of whom are badly housed and socially isolated.

This was the undelying theme of an Irish community symposium on "The Ageing Irish in Britain's Inner Cities" which took place

in Birmingham. The attendance included representatives of community organisations,

Donal Mac Craith, of Brent Irish Advisory Service in Kilburn, said that although many pensioners were active, able to organise and help each other, there was a

significant number who were isolated, unorganised and in need of support. He said that their needs included housing of various kinds, day care facilities, and assistance with returning to live in Ireland.

He said that there were two ways in which the Irish community could improve matters for the elderly. One was by forming groups to run projects; the other was by campaigning at local government level for the improvement of existing services and the provision of new resources.

At the symposium, believed to be the first of its kind, the formation of a new pressure group for the Irish elderly in Britain was proposed. Many speakers said that in inner city areas like Brent, Camden and Westminster, their needs were being ignored.

## BIAS loses real friend

Waterford-born Mrs Catherine Coleman, of William Dunbar House, Albert Road, Carlton Vale, died

following a short illness at St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, Paddington.

Mrs Coleman, who was born in 1906, grew up on a small farm at Dun Hill, Ballymote, near Dunmore East in Co. Waterford, on the south-east coast of Ireland. She first came to London in 1928 to rejoin John Coleman from Waterford City, then living in Paddington, whom she had met near her home in Ireland and whom she married four years later.

When interviewed some years ago, she recounted: "In the thirties things were really bad here. You'd go after a room or a job and they'd say 'Don't take Irish.' I got into Jo Lyons as a nippy (waitress). You had to be nippy and all. The Irish girls helped each other out. You'd let them share your room until they got on their feet."

In 1971, after her retirement, Mrs. Coleman and her husband were rehoused in what was then the newly developing housing estate of South Kilburn. She immediately became involved in local community activities, especially in the tenants' association and later, when the Carlton Centre was opened, she founded the Carlton Over-60's Club for whom she ran a unique food co-operative.

In 1977 she became a founder member of the Brent Irish Steering Committee, which in the following year became the nucleus of Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) and she continued to be an active member of its management committee until her death. Her own experiences on first coming to London, some 50 years before then, had impressed on her the great value of such a service for the local Irish community.

At one time, she summed up her own feelings like this: "I've been here 50 years and I've never had anything for nothing from this country and I've put a lot into it. Attitudes against the Irish are not gone, but we're more confident now. I think we fight our battles over here better than in 1930."

Two years ago, when BIAS was awarded an Irish Post community award, Mrs Coleman attended the special dinner and reception at one of London's prestige hotels to proudly receive the award — a treasured work of art by one of Ireland's top craftsmen — on behalf of the organisation and its members.

Today's bright, comfortable pensioners' lounge at the Carlton Community Centre is the culmination of many years' hard work by Mrs Coleman, and other Carlton residents like the late Bill Cullen with whom she worked. Both of them will be remembered for their unceasing efforts on behalf of their fellow residents in one of Brent's largest housing estates.

Brent Irish Advisory Service

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**01-624 9991**