

# THE IRISH IN BIRMINGHAM...

Birmingham Irish Community Forum Ltd Newsletter

Issue No. 8 - Spring/Summer 2000

## NEW TEAM AT IRISH BUSINESS GROUP

Tracy Cassidy-Adams and Angela O'Brien have recently been appointed by the Irish Business Group and are very excited about taking the membership of the Group forward and offering a wide range of services to help companies, both large and small.



Tracy Cassidy-Adams

Tracy has been appointed as the Business Development Manager on behalf of the Irish Business Group and has an Irish background with her parents hailing from Mayo and Derry.

Having worked in the financial sector for the past 26 years, Tracy has a successful record of achieving results. Working as a City Centre Manager in Birmingham for Portman Building Society and latterly as a Mortgage Executive with Bank of Ireland Mortgages.

Angela has been appointed as Administration Assistant for the Irish Business Group and also hails from an Irish background with her parents coming from Mayo and Cork. Angela also has a financial services background having worked for Lloyds - TSB for a number of years as a Customer Services Representative.

The Irish Business Group has adopted a business type approach to meet its goal and objectives of becoming a



Angela O'Brien

leading exponent of Irish business interests and embracing the larger business sectors in general.

Membership is key to the success of the Irish Business Group. Therefore to attract as many members as possible the Irish Business Group is offering membership FREE OF CHARGE!

There is a growing respect for Irish Businesses. This may partly be due to the success of the "Irish Tiger" economy. In any event it is a strength, which can and should be nurtured. There are many large businesses in the Midlands area being run by influential Irish business people. Having these as members brings a great deal of credibility to the Irish Business Group as well as offering possible business opportunities to other members.

At the Irish Business Group our mission is to be pro-active in providing the platform from which Irish businesses can network with one another taking full advantage of business opportunities both from internal membership and external organisations.

Tracy Adams  
Business Group Development Manager

## IRISH HERITAGE GROUP

Who were the people who came before you?

Find out what kind of Birmingham or West Midlands they came to in the 50's and 60's and the century before that. How did they cope with the sudden change from a different country and likely from countryside to city? Has their part and your part in building a great city been overlooked? Find out how it can be unearthed and appreciated.

The Irish Heritage Group welcomes everybody with an interest in or curiosity about Irish Heritage in Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Open meetings on:

**Monday 12th June 2000 at 6pm**  
**Monday 14th August 2000 at 6pm**  
**Monday 9th October at 6pm**

All meetings take place at Cara House, Birchall St, Digbeth (behind the Irish Centre).

All generations are welcome! Find out what part the Irish played in the 19th and 20th Century in Birmingham. Now is the time to search, and preserve for future generations anything relating to those periods. A photographic Exhibition of Ireland and the Irish in the West Midlands is planned so come along and be a part of it.

Do you know which is the only church in Birmingham with a gaelic inscription on it?

What was the Birmingham and West Midlands connection to the founder of the Land League, Michael Davitt?

Want to know the answers- write down details of the open meetings given above, so that you can come and find out about your heritage.

Michael Walsh  
Heritage Group

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## THE IRISH IN BIRMINGHAM WORDS OF WISDOM

### SHORT STORY THE CHILDREN OF LIR

*Continued from the last issue:*

Then Fionnuala who had turned into a swan said to her stepmother, "O Wicked woman, a doom will come upon you worse than the doom that you have put upon us. And if you would win any pity in your hour of doom please tell us when our doom may end."

Aoife replied "The doom will end when a king from the North weds a queen from the South; when a druid with a shaven head comes over the seas; when you hear the sound of a little bell that rings for prayers".

The swans then spread their wings and flew away. They sang very sorrowful songs on their way.

When their father the king found out what had happened to his beautiful children he ran to the lake and called them to him. He hugged them all and said, "I cannot give you back your shapes until the doom that is laid on you is ended, but please come back to my house and live there."

Aoife answered, "We cannot return there as the shadow of Aoife is still on the threshold." Her father replied, "The woman that did this to you has lost all her beauty and has become a demon of the air, she must now wander desolate to the end of time. Please come home with me."

Conn answered that they must live as wild swans as that is what they now are.

*To be continued in the Summer Issue.*

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### SAVOURY BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

Layers of bread and butter with caramelised onions and mature cheddar. Serves 4

2 Spanish onions, peeled and thinly sliced in rings  
2 tbsp oil  
Softened butter  
6 slices fresh white bread  
100g / 4oz mature cheddar, grated  
300ml / ¼ pt beef stock  
Fresh chives for garnish

Fry onions in oil until caramelised, reserving some for garnish. Butter 4 ramekin dishes (fireproof dishes). Cut out 12 circles of bread to fit the dishes. Butter the bread and layer in the dishes with onion and cheese in between, making three layers of bread in each. Finish with extra cheese. Pour over stock and bake at Gas 4, 350F, 180C for 30 minutes. Serve garnished with onion rings and chives.

"Spread love everywhere you go; first of all in your own house. Give love to your children, to your wife or husband, to a next door neighbour...Let no one ever come to you without leaving better or happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness; kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile; kindness in your warm greeting".

*Mother Teresa*

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### OLD SNOW HILL

*By Patrick McGrath*

Under the clock on the station  
Sweethearts were happy to meet;  
The scene was of great animation  
And the tramping of hundreds of feet.

I arrived as a poor boy from Ireland,  
Like many young men of my age,  
For I'd heard in my neighbouring island  
I might get a job and a wage.

The magnificent engine stood hissing  
By the lovers with hands intertwined,  
But I wasn't there for the kissing,  
I'd work and a lodging to find.

I gazed all around me in wonder  
As I stepped off the Birmingham train;  
The roar of the engines like thunder  
Assailed me again and again.

I gazed at the grand station master  
Resplendent in top-hat and suit;  
I marvelled at stone-work and plaster  
And the shop with baskets of fruit.

Ushered by scurrying porters  
And stewards in chocolate and cream,  
Came parents with small sons and daughters  
Enveloped in billowing steam

High in the roof top flew pigeons;  
On the platform were big bags of mail;  
And folk of all creeds and religions  
Flocked to this temple of rail.

I'll never forget Snow Hill Station,  
The sounds and the sights and the smell.  
Birmingham's own celebration  
of Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The above poem was written by Patrick McGrath a native of Co Waterford. His new book of poems will be on sale in early May. A treasure of touching poems - not to be missed! The new book includes a poem dedicated to the forthcoming visit of President Mary McAleese in June. You can contact him on (0121) 777 1031

## **L.E.A.P. (LEARNING, EMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION)**

L.E.A.P. is the new project being run by Caroline Carr and Catherine Bell. The purpose of the project initially will be to assist and support unemployed members of the community to access current provision and where current provision is not suitable to assist in the development of provision that meets the needs of the community.

Working with other bodies such as Irish Welfare and Birmingham Irish Business Group we would aim to offer support to those who have perhaps not been as fortunate in life as they had hoped.

Research has indicated that in particular, Irish women are under represented in terms of the economic life in Birmingham and the project is particularly interested in increasing their involvement within the Irish community.

The project can offer advice and guidance to individual clients on all aspects of education, employment and training.

There are many groups in Birmingham who offer support and services to the Irish community in Birmingham and it may well be that we can assist them in accessing training or finding support to enable them to improve their services.

Capacity Building for Irish community groups and Irish voluntary organisations will form a major aspect of the project's activities and anybody representing such a group is welcome to contact the project for further information. We are also enthusiastic to hear ideas from groups on what we can do for them.

One of our objectives is to ensure that the needs of the Irish community are placed on a wider agenda both with other voluntary agencies and statutory bodies. The community will also be supported in establishing their own strategies for development.

Caroline and Catherine can be contacted on (0121) 622 1168.

## **NEW VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR**

Hello, my name is David Bradshaw, I have just started working for the Irish Welfare and Information Centre as a Volunteer Co-ordinator. As well as developing and supporting our current volunteers / opportunities, I will be developing a befriending service for isolated / vulnerable Irish elders.

Hopefully, I will be reporting on our plans and developments in future issues. However, should anyone wish to discuss our plans for the befriending service or would like to become involved as a volunteer, I would be happy to discuss the matter further. I can be contacted on (0121) 604 6222.

## **THE IRISH IN BIRMINGHAM MOTHER OF ALL HOOLIES**

This years Birmingham St Patrick's Day Parade has once again been hailed a great success. More people than ever joined in to celebrate the feast day of Irelands national saint. The official police estimate for the Parades attendance was a whopping 75,000 happy smiling souls.

The celebrations this year kicked off with the Irish market which started in New St and moved to the Emerald Village on the day of the Parade.

Excellent weather heralded the morning of the Parade. Many Parade goers turned up in short sleeves to take advantage of the unseasonably warm conditions. This year the Parade took off from Camp Hill, then did a loop of Digbeth before finally finishing at St Anne's. The route was lined with tricolour waving spectators who heartily cheered the marchers and floats.

After the Parade was over the crowd let their hair down and enjoyed music and dancing in the streets. The Parade's success is primarily down to the efforts of Birmingham's dynamic Irish community

## **SEMINAR ON IRISH TRAVELLERS**

A very well attended seminar on Irish Travellers was held in the Irish Centre on Tuesday 11th April with a speaker from BIAS Travellers Project giving the keynote address. The seminar was a joint venture by the Irish Community Project, Irish Welfare and the Irish Forum.

## **SEMINAR ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE IRISH**

Professor Marcellino Smyth led the discussion on this seminar held in the Irish Centre on Friday 14th April. It was a joint initiative between the Irish Mental Health Forum and the Irish Forum. An excellent attendance from both professional and service users resulted in valuable and stimulating discussions.

## **ALL PARTY GROUP ON THE IRISH IN BRITAIN**

This is a large all party group of MP's who meet regularly in the House of Commons to discuss issues around the Irish in Britain. We have been asked to arrange their next meeting in Birmingham. The meeting will hopefully be held sometime in July so look out for posters and publicity about it.

## **Words of Wisdom**

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift, that's why they call it the present.

# THE IRISH IN BIRMINGHAM

## IRISH PRAYER

*'Abhaile"*

Think of my trees as your jacket,  
My rich fertile soil as your shoes,  
And my hills as your hat of warm lamb's wool,  
Hand-made with love for your use.  
Think of my sky as your rooftop,  
My rolling seas as your floor.  
Then wherever you roam, think of Ireland  
And come home to your mother once more.

## SEANFHOCAL (OLD IRISH PROVERB)

Is fánach an áit a bhaighfá gliomach  
(It's a lonely place you'll find a lobster)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

There will be a **32 County Association Dance** on Saturday June 3rd at the Irish Centre in aid of President McAleese's visit. Tickets are £3 and available from the Irish Centre and the Irish Forum office.

**South Birmingham Branch of Comhaltas** will be hosting this years **Great Britain Fleadh Ceol** over the weekend of the 24th and 25th June. It will be held at the Clarendon Suites in Edgbaston. Competitors from all across Britain will take part in competitions ranging from singing to tin whistle to accordion playing. Winners will go forward to the compete in the All Ireland Fleadh Ceol to be held in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford at the end of August. Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy the music and the craic. There will be a ceili/session/sing-a-long on the evening of the 24th of June - something for everyone to enjoy.

**GAA for Africa 2000** will be held on Sunday July 9th at Pairc na hÉireann, there will be music from the Birmingham Irish Pipes & Drums, Mark Taggart and Perfect Strangers with a disco by Patrick O'Brien. The final of the Womens Provincial Gaelic Football Tournament will be played. There will also be childrens races and more fun for all the family.

The Irish Forum's **Annual General Meeting** will take place on Thursday October 12th 2000. Guest speakers will include Dr. Carl Chinn.

The **Wolverhampton Feis** will be held on 11th and 12th November 2000 at St. Thomas More School, Willenhall. Any further information can be obtained on (024) 7654 5091.

## WATCH THIS SPACE

**Small Grants Workshops (National Lottery).** We have had two very successful workshops where practical advice and assistance is given on how to get a £5,000 grant for your organisation. Some of our affiliated organisations have been successful in getting grants. If you would like us to run another workshop, please contact the Forum Office on (0121) 622 4102.

Would you like to **set up an Irish Group**, perhaps a County Association. If your part of Ireland is not represented on our County Associations we can help you and help support new and existing groups.

**Irish Language Classes** are available at:

Monday - The Irish Centre - 622 2314

Wednesday - SS Mary & John - 373 0263

Thursday - Worcester College - (01905) 725543

Friday - Mount Carmel, Redditch - (01527) 591248.

**Mass is celebrated in Irish** on the second Sunday of each month at 5pm at SS. Mary and John, Gravelly Hill North, Erdington.

**A Taste of Auld Ireland** are a new Mail Order Gift Company set up to offer the Irish communities across the UK and Europe genuine Irish made goods by either catalogue or the internet. Contact John McGhee on (01902) 562051.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to the **Birmingham Irish Soccer Club** who won the Charity Cup in North Birmingham Division One. The team won all of their games on the way to the cup except for one match which was a draw. Paddy Kelly, captain, said that he was very proud of all the lads and thanked John Tighe of the Spotted Dog (Alcester Street) for all of his support.

The Irish Forum would like to congratulate Katriona Larkin on her forthcoming wedding to Kevin Donnelly of Hall Green. They are getting married on June 17th in Katriona's home of Waterford. We wish them both the best of luck for the future.

Congratulations again to Katriona Larkin on her new appointment as Project Co-ordinator for the Irish Forum. She will officially take up her post on July 6th.