

Irish Welfare Bureau

Hammersmith - London

It's hard to find. Our Premises consist of a small pre-fab building in the car park behind St. Augustine's Church. We are open Monday to Friday - 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Our personnel at the moment consists of Fr. Jim Kiely, O.S.A., Sr. Carmel, Kay Mazur, Anne Nolan, Pat Daly.

HOW WE BEGAN.

Many Irish people left their homes in the 50's and 60's. They were hard times in Ireland. Work was hard to get and there was a lot of unemployment. Things were better in post war Britain. Many young Irish people left home in search of work in England. It was a new world for them. A big change from rural Ireland. It was hard to adapt to a new culture in strange surroundings. The Church in Ireland became aware of their problems and they sent Priests from Ireland to help the new immigrants. These priests set out to meet their fellow Country people on the Building sites, Motorways, Hotels, Dance Halls, Pubs or wherever the Irish 'settled'.

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM.

Many of those who came across the sea finished up in the Hammersmith and Fulham area. They looked to the Catholic Church for understanding and help. At the request of the

Irish Bishops two Augustinian Priests, Fr. Michael Leahy and Fr. Finbarr Fogarty were appointed in 1967 by the Augustinian Provincial in Ireland. Fr. Leahy was replaced shortly afterwards by Fr. Brian Lawlor.

WHERE WE STARTED.

In the beginning we had our Headquarters in the basement of the Priory curtesy of the local Augustinian Community. As time went on, the Priest in charge became aware of the need for a social worker. Sr. Alice Mooney, Irish Sister of Charity, became part of the team in 1971. She was replaced by Sr. Jane Francis a year later. Nan Magill, Chris Willison, Kay Mazur all volunteered their services during this period. The pre-fab building was completed in February 1972.

WHAT WE DO.

Two social workers are on duty in the Bureau on Mondays to Fridays. Last year we had over 6,000 callers. We give advice regarding Housing, Accommodation, Employment and Social Services. On-going supportive help is given to many individuals and families in their own homes or in frequent visits to the Bureau. Even though our title is 'Irish Welfare' our Bureau is open to anyone who calls. If we can help - we will.

AUSTIN HOUSE HOSTEL

In recent years there has been a new influx of Irish Immigrants to London. Accommodation in this City is very hard to get and very expensive. We have a short-stay Hostel in Hammersmith Grove. The aim of our Hostel

is to provide a home from home where young men can meet and make friends and then move on to independent living. The first Warden at the Hostel was Sr. Rosario, a Presentation Sister from Cork. She was replaced by Sr. Nancy O'Sullivan, a Sister of Mercy, from Kerry. At present, Anne Nolan from Tralee is the Warden.

FINANCES.

Our work was first recognised by the local Council in 1972 when they gave a grant towards the cost of our pre-fab building. Each year the Council gives a small grant towards the running costs. We also get a small grant from the Irish Government. But these grants scarcely pay the staff wages. Therefore we depend on our fund-raising efforts, for the day to day costs of the Bureau. In so doing we try to create an awareness in the local Community of its responsibilities to the less materially well off.

FR. BRIAN LAWLOR.

We were sorry to lose Fr. Brian early this year. For 18 years he worked ceaselessly and unselfishly in this area. In recent years he had become the best known Irish Priest in London. We wish him well in his new appointment.

55 JULIAN PALACE Rd, W6

Dear Friend,

Our Bazaar takes place on Sat. Nov. 22. It is our big fund raising event of the year. We depend on you to make it a success. In the past, Fr. Saulon asked people to bring GROCERIES on one Sunday, Cosmetics on another and bottles on a third Sunday. This year, we ask you to bring whatever you wish to donate, next Sunday Nov. 16. There will be a basket for your gifts - outside the church.

I will speak about our work and make an Appeal at all 16 Masses in St. Augustines on next Sunday. The collectors will be present as you leave the church and will accept any offering - you would like to give to the Bureau.

I would like to thank you and all our HELPERS for your loyal and faithful support in the past. I look forward to meeting you at our Welcome Dance on Friday Night or at the Bazaar on Nov. 22, greetings from Sr. Connel and Kay.

With every good wish, - A