

Irish in
Greenwich project



TEL: 01-855 7191 EXT 30

OR 01-317 1435 (DIRECT LINE)



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS 87/88

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PETER QUIN

HARRY HAYWARD



115-128 Powis Street, Woolwich, London SE18

Ph. 01-855 7191 Ext. 30

DIRECT LINE: 317 1435

May 1987.

A Chara,

Welcome to another edition of An Nuachtan, the Irish in Greenwich Project newsletter. This is our first newsletter since we held our Annual General Meeting on 11th March and quite a lot has happened since.

The A.G.M. was most successful with thirteen Management Committee members being elected and already they have organised working parties to deal with a variety of issues including: WELFARE, SOCIAL EVENTS; WOMENS ISSUES; SOUND ARCHIVES and most important - a working party to investigate the possibility of securing an IRISH CENTRE for the Irish community here in Greenwich. These working parties are open to anyone who is interested in becoming involved in these issues so do give us a ring if you would like to join.

In the past couple of months our affiliated groups - the Pensioners and Womens' Groups have blossomed with the Pensioners organising numerous events in the near future and the Womens' Group now meeting regularly in West Greenwich House. There is information about both these groups inside. A very successful Film night was held for women in conjunction with the Opportunities for Women Festival in Greenwich in May and it was good to see new women coming along.

As you will see inside, a variety of events have been planned for the summer some of which we have never seen in SE London such as an event especially for young people which will see the Doonicans performing (a new group not unlike The Pogues) on 4th July in Thames Poly, Woolwich and the formation of Irish music classes in Charlton. The Pensioners are taking a trip to Hastings on 29th July and are having a Jumble Sale in Charlton House on 1st August.

We are still continuing our traditional folk sessions in The Spanish Galleon, Greenwich thanks to the help of Don Dirrane the landlord and to all our musicians who come along regularly. We are all waiting in anticipation for the next session on 4th June as the Project is taking on Lewisham I.B.R.G. in a QUIZ with Pat Bond from The Four Provinces Bookshop asking the questions.

In addition to the events planned by the Project you may have noticed a series of Irish events organised by Greenwich Leisure Services as part of Greenwich Festival such as the Granuaile event on 30th May and Edna O'Brien who will be in Trafalgar Tavern on 8th June. It is good to see that the Council are making some efforts to provide a service for the thousands of Irish people in the Borough of Greenwich.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative and we would also like to hear your comments about the contents. We are also looking for new material eg. poetry, songs, stories, help with the crossword.

Yours for now,

Is mise le meas,

Eamonn Doherty

Eamonn Doherty,
Secretary.

LOVE SLEEPS

In an old Irish graveyard
covered over with moss,
Knelt a sad grey haired mother,
Clearing leaves from a cross.
In loving memory of our only son
Who died at the age of twenty-one.
A bunch of violets she laid on the stone
As she whispered gently
"I'll be seeing you soon".
Now a weary old man kneels by the stone
And he cries to the Heavens above
"Don't leave me alone".

DREAMS OF DONEGAL

Deep, within
this yearning heart
there stays, a view.
A memory,
of a place
that I once knew.

A landscape,
windswept, wild,
misted and cold.
Betraying, a texture
solid and bold.

A gentle greenness
too,
Belies the rich
and hearty hue.
Displayed,
amidst the contour
of the hills
around the splendour
of the glens,
flowering, with fern,
as an after glow,
from a subtle
auburn.

A warm, contained
within a complete
array,
of seasons,
colours,
tastes and smells.
Each, neatly placed
in my recall,
in my dreams
of Donegal.

- 'The Ould Sod'

A Bunch of Thyme

Come all you maidens young and fair,
All you that are blooming in your prime.
Oh always beware
And keep your garden fair.
Let no man steal away your thyme.

Chorus

For thyme it is a precious thing
And thyme brings all things to my mind.
Oh thyme with all its labours
Along with all its joys,
Thyme brings all things to my mind.

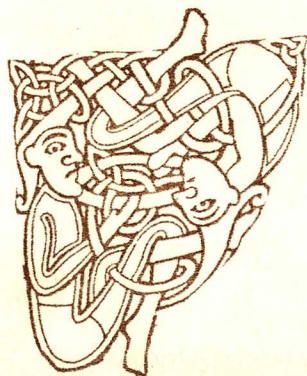
Oh once I had a bunch of thyme,
I thought it never would decay,
But on came a lusty sailor
Who chanced to pass that way.
He stole my bunch of thyme away.

The sailor gave to me a rose
A rose that never will decay.
He gave it to me
To keep me well minded
Of when he stole my thyme away.

So come all you maidens young and fair,
Oh you that are blooming in your prime,
Oh always beware
And keep your garden fair.
Let no man steal away your thyme.

Chorus

Irish Ways and Irish Laws



Once upon a time there was
Irish ways and Irish laws,
Villages of Irish blood
Waking to the morning,
Waking to the morning.

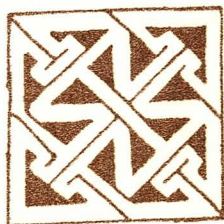
Then the Vikings came around,
Turned us up and turned us down,
Started building boats and towns.
They tried to change our living,
They tried to change our living.

Cromwell and his soldiers came,
Started centuries of shame,
But they could not make us turn.
We are a river flowing,
We're a river flowing.

Again, again the soldiers came,
Burnt our houses, stole our grain,
Shot the farmers in their fields,
Working for a living,
Working for a living.

Eight hundred years we have been down.
The secret of the water sound
Has kept the spirit of a man
Above the pain descending,
Above the pain descending.

Today the struggle carries on.
I wonder will I live so long
To see the gates being opened up
To a people and their freedom,
A people and their freedom.



CELTIC IRELAND

The Celtic peoples are thought to have arrived in Ireland in and around the 1st Century B.C.. They brought with them the knowledge of Iron working and soon overcame the native bronze age peoples. The Celts were a European people with a distinct language and art forms who spread from central Europe to cover most of Europe.

Celtic Ireland was divided into small political units known as 'Tuatha' each of which had their own ruler or chieftan and usually there would be several 'Tuatha' under the influence of a provincial King or 'Ri'. The rulers were elected by 'Derbfine' who were the most important families of the tribe and they would then select a ruler usually from the sons, uncles, grandsons and nephews of the existing ruler. The successor or 'Tanist' was elected during the lifetime of the King to avoid dispute after his death. Women were occasionally elected to the position of Chieftan an examples such as Maeve of Connaught showed that women could hold powerful positions as often women rulers would lead their armies into battle and even fight along side them. However although women had greater rights and status in Celtic Ireland than after the Norman influence the society was still dominated by men.

The Chieftans did not own the land they ruled over as the land was the common property of the tribe the Chieftan along with the Derbfine made decisions about the crops, pasture etc. and led the warriors in battle. If wars were unsuccessful or the crops failed the Chieftan was often deposed and replaced. At the inauguration of a Chieftan a type of marriage ceremony took place, the Chieftan was married to the tribal lands.

Cattle were the main form of wealth and prestige in Irish society, though some oats were grown and fishing occurred. Cattle raiding was often a cause of dispute between neighbouring tribes and the great Irish epic the 'Tain' recounts the events leading up to a cattle raid and its outcome.



TARA, A ROYAL CELTIC SITE.

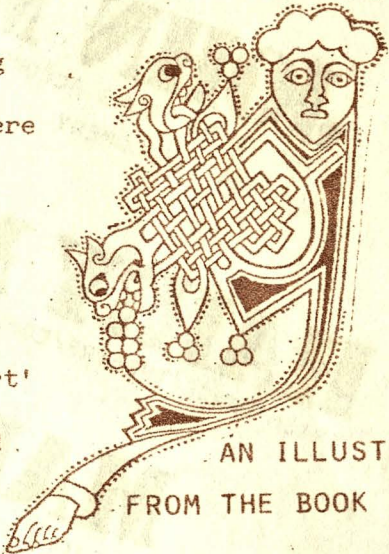
The Irish had its own legal system which was administered by a group of travelling judges or lawyers called Brehons. The Brehons settled disputes between individuals and tribes according to Irish laws, which was a mixture of customs and recent accepted judgements, they usually imposed fines rather than imposing punishments. Fines were usually in the form of cattle. The Irish were appalled by the hangings and mutilations imposed by the Normans which seemed both barbarous and pointless.

Another aspect of Irish life was the travelling Poet or Bard, who travelled from settlement to settlement singing and reciting ballads and poems composed to commemorate battles and events. They were both respected and feared by the people - they could compose the most vicious satire, and poets were also attributed with mystical powers and could be seen as a remnant of the Druid class. The poets clashed with the Celtic Church on more than one occasion.

Christianity came to Ireland in the 4th Century probable through contact with the Christian Romans in Britain. Most Irish people are aware of the legends of how St. Patrick converted the Irish to Christianity, however there is evidence of Christian missionaries in Ireland prior to the arrival of St. Patrick and many of the stories and tales told of St. Patrick do not have any historical foundations.

What we do know is that by the 5th Century Christianity was the dominant religion. With the decline of the Roman Empire at this time, the Church in Ireland became isolated and developed its own forms; it was a monastic Church with numerous small monasteries usually allied to a particular 'Tuatha'. The monasteries usually had a library, a hostel for travellers and an infirmary for the sick. The monks first brought writing to Ireland, although a form of stone writing 'Ogham' predates Christianity. The monks wrote in both Latin and Irish and produced a distinct artform 'Manuscript Illumination'. They wrote on chalked calf skin or sheep skin known as vellum, and using compounds of copper, holly and other natural products made inks of nine different colours. The art form they produced was a distinctly Celtic form with interlocking spirals and animals. The Book of Kells is perhaps the best surviving example of this form of art.

The Celtic Church adapted itself to existing Celtic culture, the Church allowed divorce both initiated by men or by women. There were no less than fourteen different basis upon which women could seek divorce including defamation. Divorce was granted by Brehon laws and recognised by the Church. Many of the Christian Monuments and places of pilgrimage are on the sites of pagan Celtic worship. Some of the Priests of the Church were married; this where the name 'MacTaggart' comes from (son of the Priest). Until the synod of Whitby the Celtic Church celebrated Easter on a different date from the Roman Church.



AN ILLUSTRATION
FROM THE BOOK OF KELLS.

The Celtic Church was a missionary Church and all of Scotland and most of England were converted to Christianity by the Irish Monks as well as a large part of Europe. The monks founded monasteries as far away as Kiev in Russia as well as in Northern Italy on the doorstep of the Church in Rome.

It is due largely to these monks that we have so much written information about Ireland at this time, Irish is one of the earliest written languages in Europe and at a time when Europe was in the Dark Ages - Ireland was in its Golden Age, a land of saints and scholars.

Unfortunately due to lack of space in this issue we haven't been able to print an excellent article by Eamonn Doherty on 'The Role Of The Church in Irish Education'

But it will appear in the next issue.

Special thanks to Eamonn for making the crossword!

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 22. Synge | 19. Pie |
| 21. S.A.S. | 17. Koran |
| 20. Erse | 16. Isles |
| 19. POW | 15. Wheels |
| 18. Eurovision | 13. Rome |
| 15. Whisky | 8. Haughey |
| 14. Bard | 7. Leopardstown |
| 12. Gardai | 6. Hurricane |
| 11. Kern | 5. Ode |
| 10. Trio | 3. Blarney Stone |
| 9. Strabane | 2. Rotten |
| 4. Youghal | |
| 1. Tribe. | |

ACROSS: DOWN:

ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD

THE DOONICANS
AN IRISH PUNK/FOLK GROUP NOT UNLIKE 'THE POGUES'

JOHN MALLONEY
'THE ANGRY YOUNG ACCORDIONIST' A MIXTURE OF MUSICAL ABILITY AND
ALTERNATIVE COMEDY.

HARRY MARYS
IRISH DANCE/THEATRE/COMEDY GROUP - HAVE TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED.

MARK WALE
UNIQUE LOCAL SINGER, WITH AN INIMITABLE STYLE.

**THAMES POLY
WOOLWICH.
SAT. 4th JULY**

LATE BAR

TICKETS : £2.00

£1.50 (CONCESSIONS)

FUNDED BY GREENWICH ENTERTAINMENTS

IRISH CULTURAL PACKAGE OPEN MEETING 7.30pm 22nd JUNE CLOCKHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Project is to hold an open meeting inviting everyone to come along to discuss the possibility of forming an Irish Cultural Package which would consist of local Irish performers getting together as a group to perform in schools, community centres, Church Halls etc. Once the group is formed they could meet regularly to rehearse with the view to creating a number of productions ie. Irish Life - Song & Dance; The Uprising (words, music, song, and dance) and many others. All welcome to come along and join in. The meeting will be held in THE CLOCKHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE, WOOLWICH SE18

VISIT TO THE THATCH PUB, HIGHBURY

The Social Sub-Committee are planning a trip to the Thatch Pub on a Sunday sometime in the near future to taste their famed Sunday lunch and to hear their even more famed music sessions. If you are interested give the office a ring or contact the Social Secretary Moira Heneghan at 305 1190.

Irish in Greenwich

Present:

Irish film night.

Art treasures of Ireland.

& a speaker on

The Heritage of Ireland.

& Musicians.

Charlton House.
Friday 19th June.

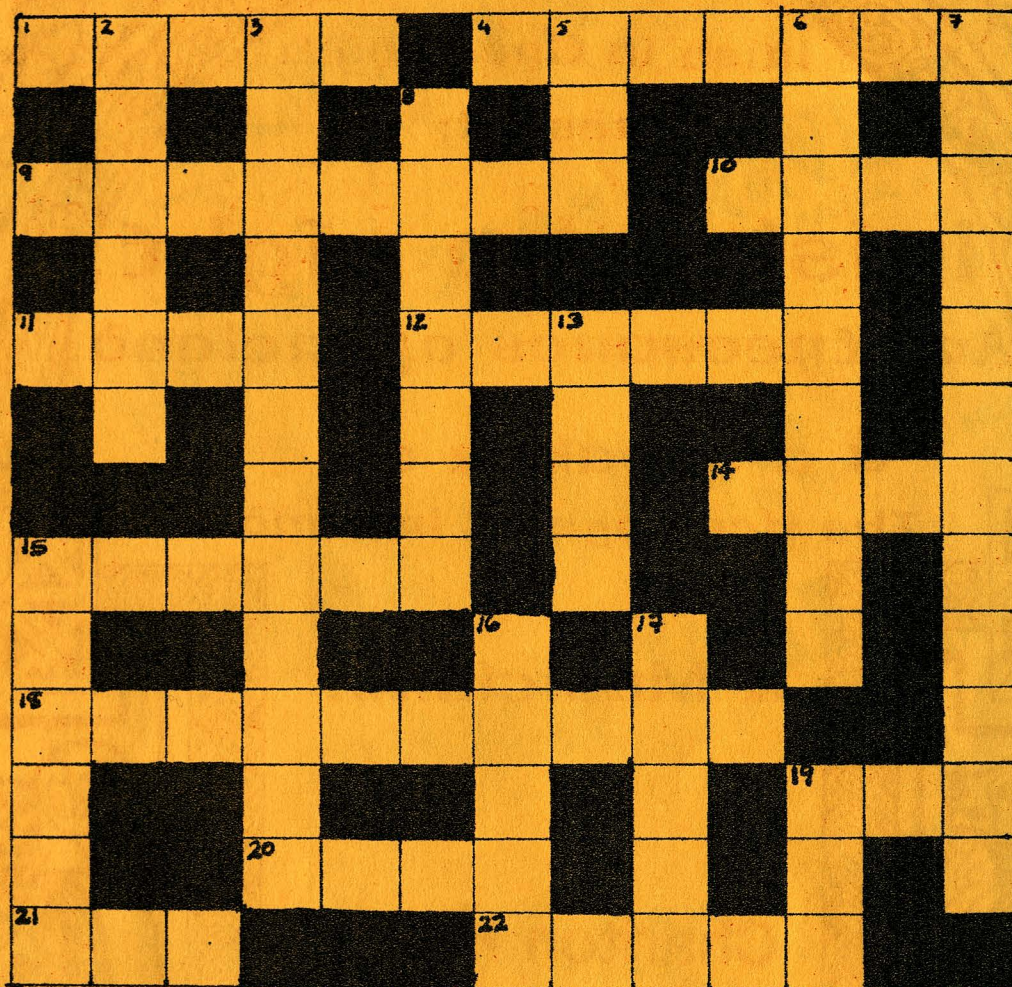
8:00 pm.



Adm. 5 Op

CROSSWORD

By: Eamonn Doherty.



clues

ACROSS:

1. Clan (5)
4. Harbour Town in Co. Cork (7).
9. Border Town in Co. Tyrone (8)
10. Treesome (4)
11. Foot Soldier in medieval Ireland (4)
12. Irish policemen (6)
14. Celtic songster (4)
15. Distilled Scottish drink (6)
18. Johnny Logan won this twice (10)
19. Prisoner of War (3)
20. Old name for Gaelic (4)
21. British Army undercover unit (3)
22. Irish playwright and author (5)

DOWN:

2. Decaying
3. Where to get the gift of the gab! (7,5)
5. Lyrical poem (3)
6. Nickname of Alex Higgins (9)
7. Irish Racecourse (12)
8. Surname of a Taoiseach (7)
13. City on the Tiber (4)
15. Circular aids to locomotion (6)
16. Small islands (5)
17. The Holy Book of Islam (5)
19. A Baked Dish (3)

ANSWERS : To be found on another page. - Look for it !

London Irish Festival Roundwood Park

Sunday 5th July

THE IRISH IN GREENWICH PROJECT

HAS ORGANISED TWO COACHES TO VISIT THE
FESTIVAL IN ROUNDWOOD PARK THIS YEAR.

THE BUSES WILL LEAVE AT 10.00AM FROM

OUTSIDE SAINSBURY'S SUPERMARKET IN WOOLWICH

AND

ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GREENWICH.

BOTH COACHES WILL LEAVE ROUNDWOOD PARK AT

8.00PM

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THOSE INTERESTED IN TRAVELLING WITH
BOOK BEFOREHAND AS THERE ARE ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF SEATS
AVAILABLE - SO BOOK EARLY AND DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!

EACH TICKET : £ 2.00 PER ADULT

£ .50 PER CHILD

ENTRANCE INTO THE PARK IS FREE FOR PENSIONERS AND CHILDREN

ADULTS ENTRANCE FEE: £3.00.

BOOK NOW BY RINGING THE OFFICE AT 317 1435 OR

MOIRA HENEGHAN AT 305 1190

come along to a

QUIZ evening

on

Thursday 4th June
8:00pm (sharp)

?

IRISH IN GREENWICH
project

?

Vs

?

???????????



I.B.R.G.

(LEWISHAM BRANCH)

IRISH IN BRITAIN REPRESENTATION GROUP

?

followed by a



Traditional



Irish folk session.

(musicians welcome)

The  Spanish Galleon

48, CHURCH STREET,
GREENWICH, LONDON SE10 1

AT CHARLTON HOUSE, CHARLTON VILLAGE SE 7

ON SATURDAY 1ST AUGUST AT 2.00PM

JUMBLE SALE

FOOD

CLOTHES

SODA
BREAD

RECORDS

BOOKS

TAPES

TEA

COFFEE

GAMES

—COME
FOR
CHAT

CAKES

BRIC
-A-
BRAC

Irish
Pensioners
Association

SUMMER TRIP TO HASTINGS

Wednesday 29th July

MEMBERS: £3.00

LUNCH AVAILABLE FOR £2.50

NON MEMBERS £4.00

COACH WILL LEAVE WOOLWICH AT 9.00AM AND WILL LEAVE HASTINGS

AT 5.30PM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT SECRETARY:

MOLLY FANNON OR RING THE OFFICE AT 317 1435.

Greenwich Irish Womens' Group

IT IS VERY GOOD TO REPORT THAT THE GREENWICH IRISH WOMENS' GROUP IS NOW MEETING REGULARLY ON THE :

2ND JUNE
16TH JUNE

FIRST AND THIRD TUESDAY
OF THE MONTH
IN WEST GREENWICH HOUSE
141 GREENWICH HIGH ROAD
AT 7.30PM

21ST JULY
7TH JULY

SO FAR IT IS A GROUP OF YOUNG WOMEN WHO GET TOGETHER TO DISCUSS A VARIETY OF ISSUES INCLUDING: THE CHURCH; MUSIC; CULTURE; ABORTION; CONTRACEPTION; SEXUALITY; HISTORY AND LOTS MORE.

WE WILL BE PLANNING OUR PROGRAMME FOR THE SUMMER AT THE NEXT MEETING ON 2ND JUNE WHICH WILL INCLUDE VISITS TO OTHER IRISH CENTRES, PUBS, CONCERTS, FILMS, PLAYS ETC. SO DO COME ALONG AND JOIN IN THE FUN!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT SARAH 317 1435.

AS PART OF GREENWICH FESTIVAL

EDNA O'BRIEN

READS: 'THE COUNTRY GIRLS'

THE EPILOGUE



WHEN THE COUNTRY GIRLS WAS PUBLISHED IN 1960, KINGSLEY AMIS WROTE "IT WINS MY PERSONAL FIRST NOVEL PRIZE OF THE YEAR". EDNA O'BRIEN HAS NOW WRITTEN AN EPILOGUE TO THE NOVEL UPDATING THIS FAMOUS TRILOGY.


THE NOVEL IS AS YET UNPUBLISHED AND, IN A RARE OPPORTUNITY, EDNA O'BRIEN READS FROM THIS NOVEL AND GIVES US A PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CHARACTERS OF THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.

THIS WILL BE INTRODUCED BY HELEN HEALY FROM THE GREENWICH IRISH WOMENS' GROUP.

TRAFALGAR TAVERN, PARK ROW, GREENWICH SE 10.
TELEPHONE: 858 2507

TICKETS: £2.50 (CONCESSIONS £1.50)

FROM GREENWICH FESTIVAL BOX OFFICE 317 8687.



a meeting is to be held
to establish

IRISH MUSIC CLASSES

if you are interested in learning
or improving:

CONCERTINA, FIDDLE,
FLUTE,
ACCORDION
BANJO, TIN WHISTLE,

**CHARLTON HOUSE,
CHARLTON ROAD,
CHARLTON, SE 7**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE IRISH IN GREENWICH
PROJECT: 317 1435 OR 855 7191 EXT 30

3RD. JUNE,

7:00 PM

PEOPLE DO MEET

Some thirty years or more ago we were visiting the Dingle peninsula - County Kerry. My companion was my son nearing his eleventh birthday and we were touring, by cycle the south western counties of Cork and Kerry. Our intended destination was the most western promontory of the peninsula. We were going towards the almost legendary land of the Blasket Islands: (shades of 'Twenty Years A'Growing' by Maurice O'Sullivan).

Our tour began from the Cobh of Cork. On route we were taking refreshments and happened to make the acquaintance of a fellow tourist who, learning from our conversation, our objective, gave me the name of "Eileen Bealban" who was renowned for her Gaelic speaking Guesthouse which was situated just beyond Ballyferriter, near the seaside town of Swerwick. That name reminds us of the marauding sea travels of the Norse Vikings for here they landed in those very far away centuries of long ago, and made a settlement.

Eventually we arrived in Ballyferriter, there to learn that the route to the Guesthouse was by no means easy to follow, there being no macadam roadway as such. The way was along and over grassy banks with no signposts, just the continuing bohoreens of sound springy turf. We just hoped that we'd meet someone to assure us to our goal. It was late afternoon and the sun was beginning to disappear behind the hills and it was then our prayer was answered, here was a man leading his cow. We hastened to him exchanged greetings and explained our quest. Meeting this man was an exquisite experience. He possessed a most beautiful voice. Yes, he could help us; there were two ways, and on reflecting, he expressed why we should not go one particular way - the shorter, because of the hazard of an incoming ocean tide. So, thus the other way, though not so much longer, but safe. Yes, he knew "Eileen" and her Guesthouse.

And here comes the reason I tell this tale. For I thanked him for his courtesy and concern for our well being and added that I hoped we might have the pleasure of meeting again. He replied "Well, it is many years ago - about this very spot, another gentleman enquired of me the way as you have done, and he also expressed the hope that we'd meet again." And our friend continued "...and we have a saying in the Gaelic (here he spoke in the old Irish tongue) which I will translate to you. It is 'That the mountains never meet - but people do.' We bid each other goodnight. Our stay at the Guesthouse in this Gaeltacht area has left a memory that will never fade.

Here then is why I retell this simple story. It is that in this historic Borough of Greenwich has been founded the 'Irish in Greenwich Project' and one of it's good works has been the help given to the setting up of the 'Irish Pensioners Association'. The members meet in Charlton House, Charlton Village every first and third Wednesday afternoon from 2.00pm - 4.30pm. It is a social occasion primarily, preceded by a brief recital of organisational matter by the officers such as the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, the progress of any planned events, the dealing with questions and anything of concern to the pensioner members; discussions on any ideas which may be brought up. Then for the rest of the afternoon we have music, refreshments, games such as Bingo, raffles and anything that will ensure a pleasant and happy coming together.

Finally - to recall again our Kindly Man in remote Kerry: 'The mountains never meet - but people do' for I must tell you how he illustrated the truth in the old Gaelic saying. He said "Yes, that gentleman who so long ago, so many years ago who had enquired his way and to whom I had conveyed our ancient Gaelic truth then. It so happened with the passing of nearly twenty years, he and I did meet again - in Tralee!"

Note: Tralee isn't that distance away - but way back in time it would mean a long trapes over the Brandon mountain, through the Connor Pass aver and down the road which leads to Tralee - the other side of the earth!

- PETER QUIN, Chairperson (IPA)



Irish Pensioners Association

We meet every FIRST and Third

WEDNESDAY 2.00 - 4.30pm

in CHARLTON HOUSE,
Charlton SE 7

join now and enjoy: ceilis, music, food,
games, trips, outings, theatre, films.

Contact Secretary: Molly Fannon

or Phone: The Irish in Greenwich

Project 317 1435

USEFUL ADDRESSES

CARA

13-15 Tollington Way N.7 Tel: 263 3159

GREEN INK BOOKSHOP

8 Archway Mall N.19 Tel: 263 4748

LONDON IRISH WOMEN'S CENTRE

59 Stoke Newington Church Street. N.16 Tel: 249 7138

CAMDEN IRISH CENTRE

Murray Street. N.W.1 Tel: 485 0051/2

IRISH IN BRITAIN HISTORY GROUP

76 Salisbury Road. N.W.6 6NY Tel: 624 7438

IRISH VIDEO PROJECT

c/o West London Media Workshop, 118 Talbot Road W.11

CELTIC COMMUNITY CRAFTS

72 Keslake Rise, Kilburn N.W.6 Tel: 960 9166

FOUR PROVINCES BOOKSHOP

244-246 Gray's Inn Road W.C.1 Tel: 833 3022

ISLINGTON TRAVELLERS SUPPORT GROUP

c/o Irish in Islington, Caxton House,
129 St. Johns Way N.19 Tel:

LONDON-ARMAGH GROUP

52-54 Featherstone Road E.C.1

ILEA TEACHERS FOR TRAVELLERS

Ilderton School, Varcoe Road S.E.16 Tel: 237 1174

IRISH DEFENCE (Magazine)

c/o D. O'Brien, 12 Links Road N.W.10

IRISH IN GREENWICH PROJECT

c/o G.C.R.E. 115-123 Powis St, Woolwich S.E.18 Tel: 855 7191
Direct line: 317 1435

LEWISHAM IRISH IN BRITAIN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP, (I.B.R.G.)

FLAT 3, 10 ROCHDALE WAY, IDONIA STREET, SE8 4LY TEL: 692 8653

GREENWICH IRISH PENSIONERS ASSOCIATION (I.P.A.)

PETER QUIN, 51, WHINYATES RD, SE9 TEL: 319 1804.