



# Irish in greenwich

Autumn 2000

Volume 3 Issue 7

## Moving Forward in 2000!

The Irish in Greenwich organisation is seeking new paths. There have been previous attempts to fork out and branch into new service provision for the Irish community in Greenwich. Unfortunately and through no fault of the organisation these have been fairly limited and sporadic. However, we have now secured funding from the Irish Government (Díon), for a full-time Advice & Advocacy service which will commence in October. The Outreach pilot project has been in existence since April this year and has over fifty people on its' books. Hopefully, we will have continued funding for the next couple of years' to allow the service to build on its' successful first year. The new weekly Irish Elder's Luncheon Club has begun at the Glyndon Community Centre on Monday's at 12.30pm and the first day was attended by fifty-six people.

This year has also seen a change of Co-ordinator within the Organisation. The Organisation thanks the previous Co-ordinator for sustaining the excellent service provision over the previous eighteen months. The Irish in Greenwich has not forgotten its' roots! This year we are organising an Irish festival at Blackheath Halls called 'The Irish in You'. The theme of the Festival is to promote Irish literature with Irish dance and music. Incorporated into the Festival will be musicians & comedians from other ethnic groups, there will also be a multi-cultural flavour to food and there will also be Caribbean dancing.

This years' Annual General Meeting was attended by over fifty members of the Irish in Greenwich. The Rt. Hon. John McDonnell MP was the key note speaker followed by Maire Gaffney from the Federation of Irish Societies. Other developments that we hope will flourish is our status to become a charity. We anticipate that this will be accomplished within the next few weeks. This will allow the organisation to apply to major funding Trusts and also to save a few pounds elsewhere that can be spent on other needs. Here's to us!!

### FREE LEGAL ADVICE

By Appointment only!  
Every Tuesday  
6.30 – 9.00pm

at  
24 - 24A GREENS END,  
WOOLWICH,

**HOUSING, FAMILY, BENEFITS, WELFARE,  
EMPLOYMENT ETC**

**Free of charge!**

PHONE FOR APPOINTMENT  
020-8854-4466/0465

### *Irish in Greenwich*

24 –24a Greens End  
Woolwich, SE18 6JY  
TEL: 020 8854 4466/0465  
FAX: 020 8854 2992  
Email:-[irishipp@nascr.net](mailto:irishipp@nascr.net)

#### Membership

The Irish in Greenwich Organisation is a non-profit Voluntary Organisation funded by Greenwich Council. The Irish Government funds a F.T advice worker based at the office. No funds from the Council Grant are available for the cost of the Newsletter or cultural events. The Organisation believe that members feedback through questionnaires and talks dictates that both services continue to be provided. The Organisation relies on the subscriptions of it's members (and support from the business community) for the newsletter.

**Your continued support for the Organisations  
work is gratefully acknowledged.  
New Members are most welcome!**

This Newsletter is Published by the Irish in Greenwich. Copyright of each article remains with the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Irish in Greenwich Organisation. The Organisation can't accept responsibility for advertising service, replying is taken at respondents own risk. Thanks to all those who helped in the presentation/distribution of the newsletter. Contact Becky Farrell at the office for any information relating to the newsletter *slán go foil*.

**Contents.....**

**Moving Forward / News & Events / Outreach & Befriending  
Advice & Advocacy / Irish In You Festival / Census 2001 /  
AGM 2000 / Items for Attention / Adverts**

# Outreach & Befriending

## The Irish Elder Community

### **Why Outreach?**

This year has seen the inception of the Irish in Greenwich's Outreach service. The service has one worker and its' main tasks are to get to elderly Irish people who are in need of assistance and to identify and access those elderly people into services that are appropriate to their needs.

### **What will it accomplish?**

The Irish in Greenwich has been lobbying on behalf of Irish people in Greenwich for a number of years. It has recognised that there are some Irish elderly people who are not doing so well within the community. However, there has been very little statistical information on how many and what are the presenting problems of this group. We hope that the first years' Outreach service will act as a research barometer and get the Council to take notice of the needs of Irish Elderly, particularly those who have fallen through the safety net of housing and health.

### **What has been done so far?**

The service has been running for six months. We are currently in the process of producing a report that will be sent to heads of Social Services and Health., as well as other relevant authorities and organisations. Copies will be sent upon request to members. Here are some of the findings:

- 50 clients have accessed the service. Resulting in approximately 305 hours of contact work.
- The oldest client is 96. The youngest is 55. The average age is 64.
- Approximately 60% suffer from physical problems ranging from - Strokes to heart disease and Arthritis to cancer.
- Approximately 25% suffer from mental illness due to depression: Factors in this category range from : Loneliness due to losing a loved one, isolation through having little social network
- There is approximately 45% suffering from both physical and mental health problems.

What is apparent are the effects of the general ageing process. When a client becomes physically unwell and is not getting adequate treatment they will begin to suffer from being in a depressed condition. Some clients are using alcohol as a coping mechanism, whereby this in itself creates a whole new set of problems particularly if there is a dependency on it.

### **Befriending an elderly person in need.**

The outreach service is keen to start a befriending scheme for its' elderly client group. We are looking for people who have a little time on their hands to assist with day to day activities such as shopping or just having a chat. We offer a service that is sensitive to the needs of Irish people.

*If you are interested in befriending  
an elderly Irish person in need  
please contact the Irish in Greenwich.*

# Advice & Advocacy

The Irish in Greenwich now have an Advice & Advocacy worker in post. The new service will begin on October 2nd 2000.

The service will give Advice on:

**Welfare Benefits**  
**Housing**  
**Debt**  
**Pensions**  
**Harassment**  
**Employment**  
**Returning to Ireland**

The service will also assist anyone who is in need of using tribunal's or may require help with action in the courts.

Anyone wishing to use the service can either telephone and make an appointment or visit the Irish in Greenwich's premises and providing there is a time slot the worker will see you as soon as possible. (This may mean having to wait for a period of time).

The Advice service will also operate a surgery on Monday afternoon at the weekly Luncheon Club in the Glyndon Centre.

## **IRISH IN GREENWICH ELDER PERSONS LUNCHEON CLUB**

From September 25th The Irish in Greenwich are running a weekly Luncheon Club at the Glyndon Centre. The club will cost 50p per lunch. You will be able to get a tea, coffee and a basic hot meal. There will be a Bingo session and a Raffle with prizes. It runs from 12.30pm – 3.30pm. Transport is provided from the premises of the Irish in Greenwich in Powis Street. If you would like transport to and from the club please telephone as there are only 14 places on the mini-bus.

At the first lunch session fifty-six people attended. In fact this was a bit more than we anticipated. This puts the club in a higher category need for Irish Elderly people. Therefore, we hope, through word of mouth and further publicity we could expect the numbers to rise dramatically over the coming months. If the need arises we may be able to increase the Luncheon club by a further session a week.

The Irish in Greenwich are hoping the club will develop into a community day care operation enabling people to get out of their homes and eat at least one good hot meal a day. We believe that the club could sow the seeds of future development of an Irish Community Care Centre offering a space where all Irish people could meet socially and be able to get assistance with benefits that will assist in attaining a better quality of life.

# *News & Events Update*

## Events

A members survey/questionnaire was sent out in January 2000. The information has now been collated and is available upon request.

International Women's Festival (IWF) during March 2000 was very successful for all the community groups within the Borough of Greenwich. The Irish in Greenwich supported two Irish events; The Celtic Women's Recital and Charlton Celts Camogie Club Open Day. Both were extremely successful. The Celtic Recital also performed at the Grand Finale of International Women's Festival called "Sister Act" which was a sell out. Funding is now available from Greenwich Council for IWF 2001. Application packs can be obtained from the Women's Equality Unit but be quick as the deadline is Friday 10th November 2000!!! For more information contact the Women's Equality Unit on:- 020 8921 5815.

The Irish in Greenwich Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on Monday 18th September 2000. The turnout was good and everyone was impressed with the Guest Speakers; John McDonnell MP and Mairé Gaffney from FIS. The Organisation and the Management Committee and staff would like to thank all those who continually support the Organisations work and attend events.

A new Irish Luncheon Club was launched by the Irish in Greenwich on Monday 25th September 2000 at Glyndon Community Centre, hosted by the Organisation Outreach Worker Anne Ryan. The event attracted over 55 elderly people from the Irish community and was a huge success. A special thank you goes to Jimmy Doyle, Mary Twomey, John Parker and all volunteers including Mary, Anne and everyone who provided support.

The Irish in Greenwich Education & Cultural Subcommittee for the past year having been working very hard to showcase an Irish - Multicultural Festival in October 2000 as part of the Millennium Festivities. The Festival will run for one day only on **Saturday 21st October** and will be held at **Blackheath Concert Halls**. Contact the office for further information. To book tickets for the evening contact Blackheath Concert Halls on **020 8463 0100**.

## Greenwich Credit Union

### **Signing Up to Support the Credit Union**

With the help and support of volunteers from across Greenwich, including many members of the Irish in Greenwich Organisation, the **Greenwich Waterfront Credit Union Project** is well on its way to meeting its target of being open by the end of the year. The project is now asking for help in signing up support for the Credit Union. As a requirement of getting the Credit Union registered, the project has to show local interest and support for the Credit Union. With a target of 700 people, the project is hoping that members of the Irish in Greenwich will help them demonstrate that local people want a Credit Union. To be eligible to join the new Credit Union you must live or work or volunteer (which includes membership of the Irish in Greenwich Organisation).

To show your support we are asking people to fill in one of our Freepost Reply Cards with your name and address. Anyone who signs up will be invited to our launch party and will be sent an application pack when we open - the "sign up" cards do not bind you in anyway to join and are simply an express of your support and interest.

Leaflets with the reply cards are available from the Credit Union Office and the Irish in Greenwich Office. If you would like to be sent a few leaflets please contact Louise at the Credit Union Office and I will send them to you. Thank you to all those readers who have already signed up and a special thanks to our everyone who has already signed up their family, friends and neighbours!

### Contact

**Louise Winterburn**  
**Credit Union Office, Forum @ Greenwich**  
**Trafalgar Road, Greenwich SE10**  
**Tel: 020 8269 4888**



# IRISH IN GREENWICH

## AGM 2000

### The changing face of the Irish population in Greenwich

The following are extracts from a speech given at this year's Annual General Meeting of the Irish in Greenwich by Maire Gaffney – Development Officer for the Federation of Irish Societies.

'Irish born population of Greenwich as of 1991 census is 2.77% of the total population. Taking account of Irish descent this figure rises to 8.31% using a multiple of three recommended in a recent CRE (Commission for Racial Equality) report. This amounts to a population figure of approximately 17,500. By contrast the Indian/ Asian population numbered 7107 in 1991.

Looking at lower social classes the community of Greenwich is polarised. 52% of Irish born are in manual labour jobs, compared to 38% of other white people. In the lowest social class, people with the worst paid, most insecure manual jobs there are 12% Irish born. This compares to 6% white, 7% Black Caribbean and 3% Indian. Therefore Irish people are twice as likely to be in the lowest social class as other white people in the borough and four times as likely as Indian birth and descent.

In 1991 Irish born male rate of unemployment for the over 25 age group was 20%. This is compared to a non Irish rate of 13% and a Black Caribbean rate of 22%. This means that Irish men over 25 were more than twice as likely to be unemployed as any other white person in the borough.

Health is another major issue for the Irish community. 17% of the Irish born population has a Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI) in 1991 compared to 13% generally. 27% of Irish households, more than 1 in 4 were affected by LLTI.

Irish are over represented in homeless populations. They are also over represented amongst some street drinking populations. Alcohol is a difficult subject in the Irish community as it tends to be linked to some stereotypical attitudes to the community. Research shows that Irish are no more likely to be drinkers than the rest of the population, in fact, the Irish are more likely to be total abstainers. Alcohol is sometimes seen as a weakness in the Irish community, despite indications that alcohol is a coping mechanism for those under stress.

Irish advice and support agencies find that the majority of their work concerns benefits and housing problems. Benefits which are particularly problematic are Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance. Irish people often have particular problems communicating with people in authority, they have poor knowledge of systems and procedures and poor knowledge of their rights. Along with a reluctance to be seen as burdensome, this can easily lead to low access levels of benefits and services.

These figures give a rough picture of a community with a large elderly population. Many living alone, a large group with long-term health problems and disabilities. A disproportionate amount of disadvantaged people, uncertain employment prospects and less access to home ownership'.

**If any one wishes to respond to this article or would like to contribute to the newsletter please write in to the Irish in Greenwich and we will print your response in the next newsletter.**

# Items for Attention

## COMMUNITY LISTINGS

### 9th – 15th October 2000 Deaf Awareness Week

Various events throughout the Borough, with activities throughout the week, for the deaf community helping to raise awareness within the Borough. Contact Debbie Fryer on 0208 921 5818 or Marylin Henderson on 020 8921 5136; minicom 020 8921 5690

### 11th October 2000 Greenwich Women's Centre's "Looking After Me"

A programme of workshops around Mental Health:- Positive Parenting and empowerment. Workshops run from 10.00am – 8.00pm. Sign Language Interpreter available all day. At Greenwich Women's Centre, 45 Hare Street, Woolwich SE18. Tel/Minicom:- 020 8317 4141.

### 2nd – 31st October 2000 Black History Month.

A series of events throughout the month including an Exhibition from the Multi-faith Forum; Firedance; 'Women Only' Swimming; The Voice of Mauritius Sega Night; Storytelling with TUUP; Africans in Film; Multi-Cultural Fun Day; Literary & Cultural Evening; Diwali Workshops; Imaging the black Family & lots more. *For further information about Black History Month 2000 contact Marketing & Events Hotline 020 8317 8687.*

### 21st October 2000 Irish in Greenwich Festival

At Blackheath Concert Halls titled "The Irish In You" a multi-cultural Irish Festival. A series of events taking place in two sessions. The morning 10.00– 4.00pm Children's Activities; Adults Workshops and Authors Literary Readings. Also Asian, Irish and Caribbean Food available.

The evening 7.00pm – 2.00am with a line up of Comedy; The Popes & Hothouse Flowers ending with a disco to the early hours of the morning. For a programme or further information contact the office or to book tickets contact Blackheath Concert Halls Box Office on 020 8463 0100.

### 27th October – 12th Nov 2000 Lewisham Irish Community Centre Festival.

A series of events throughout the period including **Potato Chutes**: a dialogue on contemporary 'Irish Diaspora' Open Thurs – Sun 12 – 6.00pm; **Samhain Swing**:- a one night Contemporary Irish Arts Event in the Apt Gallery on Saturday 11th Nov, 7.30 – midnight. For further details contact Ann Lawlor on 020 8691 5534 or the Lewisham Irish Centre on 8695 6264.

### 21st November 2000 Women's Equality Unit

International Women's Festival Planning Meeting takes place on the 21st November 2000 at Greenwich Council Information Centre, 151 Powis Street 10.15 – 12.30pm. All voluntary groups who are interested in taking part are welcome to attend.

#### Every Monday

**Older Persons 50p Luncheon Club** at the Glydon Community Centre from 12.30 – 4.00pm. For further details contact the Outreach Service at the Irish in Greenwich Office.

**Tin Whistle Classes** at West Greenwich House. Suitable for beginners and intermediate level.

#### Every Tuesday

**Free Legal Advice Surgery** takes place every Tuesday evening from 7.00pm onwards by appointment only. To make an appointment please contact the Irish in Greenwich Office.

#### Every Sunday

Charlton Celts Camogie Club train every Sunday from 1.00pm onwards at Hornfair Park, Charlton. New players and supporters welcome. For further details contact Anna Cullen on 020 8854 – 0236 or the Irish in Greenwich Office.

## FIND A FRIEND

Feeling isolated or lonely? Want to join a group, meet someone & share interests, get in touch with like-minded people, get new members for your group?

The Irish in Greenwich will advertise for you in it's newsletter free of charge and pass on correspondence using box numbers. Names and addresses will remain private and confidential and will not be given out. The organisation cannot take responsibility for problems or matters arising from adverts and recommend that you should take all the necessary precautions when meeting someone.

### ADVERTISEMENT

Irish man from Dublin 35 years old, Blues singer seeks pleasant female 25 – 35 years for music, gigs, cinema, eating in & out. Contact **BOX NO: 06.**

Woman, 30 years seeks man for evenings out and the theatre. Must have good sense of humour. Contact **BOX NO:14.**

Second generation Woman, thirty something, musical & fun loving looking for attractive male 25 years plus with something different to offer. Contact **BOX NO:12**

Irish man looking for other Irish people for company. Men or women. Contact **BOX NO:13**

Irish woman in middle 50's, quiet and reserved seeks man in late 40's to late 50's with no hang ups for going out to theatre, cinema and the coast.

Contact **BOX NO:15.**

## HELP REQUIRED

### Can you sign language?

The organisation are seeking a sign language interpreter to spare a few hours throughout the year during it's events to ensure we meet the needs of our community.

*If interested please contact Becky at the office.*

**The Management Committee & Staff would like to thank all our Volunteers & supporters who have contributed immensely to the growth of the Organisation.**

# *The Irish in Greenwich*

*presents*

## **The Irish in You**

*A one day Irish/multicultural festival*

Come and enjoy a series of events throughout the day and evening exploring Irish and multicultural identity. Among those appearing will be some of the most celebrated contemporary writers, comedians and musicians.

### **Highlights include:**

**HOTHOUSE FLOWERS; THE POPES; FELIX DEXTER;  
MALCOLM HARDY; DIL; DERMOT BOLGER; CHRISTINE KINEALY;  
BRIDGET O'CONNOR; IRISH DANCING / MUSIC; SALSA VIDA;  
CARIBBEAN / AFRICAN DANCE WORKSHOPS; STALLS;  
IRISH, ASIAN & CARIBBEAN FOOD  
& MUCH MORE.**

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 21st  
BLACKHEATH HALLS**

*For more details telephone Irish in Greenwich 020 8854 4466  
For tickets contact Blackheath Concert Halls Box Office 020 8463 0100*

## **CENSUS 2001**

For the first time the Irish will be considered a separate category in the coming Census 2001 (April). This is essentially good news for the Irish community. Amongst other matters it will give us the opportunity to participate in, at local and national level, a debate on service level agreements to groups who are considered to be of 'Ethnic origin'. That is those people born outside of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland or those that are of Irish decent inclusive of second and third generation.

For years' frontline Irish service agencies have been up against a backdrop of underfunding. In real terms Irish organisations have hardly seen any growth in monies given out by local and national Governments.

The Census will give us almost the exact population figures of Irish who are residing in the UK. There will be a specific question on whether you are Irish born or of Irish cultural background. There are some sub questions on Irish and mixed cultural background.

The Federation of Irish Societies have produced a paper on how best to answer these questions. If you need more information call **020 7916 2733**. The leaflet is also being distribute by the Southwark Irish Pensioners Group.

## *Irish in Greenwich Tin Whistle Classes*

**Every Monday**  
at  
West Greenwich House  
Greenwich High Street  
Greenwich

Suitable for  
Beginners & Intermediate Level

**Children 6.30pm – 7.00pm (£3.50)**  
**Adults 7.00pm – 8.00pm (£5.00)**  
For further information please contact  
the Irish in Greenwich Office



**SRC Greenwich**  
24 – 24a Greens End, Woolwich SE18 6JY  
Tel 020 8854 2266

Offers Information Advice & Training; Assists organisations with Policies and Procedures; Business Planning, Fund Raising, Community Care Service Delivery and helps with the management of people, time and money.

SRC exists to promote and encourage high quality social care services.

# iaas

Integrated Asian Advice Service  
24 – 24a Greens End, Woolwich, London SE18 6JY

**Advice & Information Service to  
the Indian Sub-continent community  
in the following areas:**

**Welfare Rights,  
Housing,  
Immigration & Nationality  
Matrimonial  
Employment Matters**

These services are provided in the main Indian sub-continent languages spoken in the Borough. These services are free and confidential and available at the offices of the project at the following times:

**Opening times**

**Tuesday – Friday**

**10.00am – 1.00pm.**

If you would like to make an appointment  
contact the office on 020 8316 0416

## **Majorie Hawkins Irish School of Dance**

At the  
**Woolwich Catholic Club**

**Every Tuesday  
6.30pm – 9.00pm**

**Beginners & all ages  
welcome!**

**For further details contact  
Majorie Hawkins on 020 8858 3973**