

THE COUNCIL OF THE IRISH CENTRE

51/52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

For the year
ending
31st Dec 1972

In the past year the Irish Centre has continued to fulfil its functions in providing social amenities and helping in the social welfare field among the Irish community in London. While the year has not been crowned with any brilliant successes, the Centre has succeeded in stabilising its position financially and this is largely due to the loyal support given by the ordinary members, the everyday people who patronise the place, the various societies who have given us their support, the careful and painstaking day to day management of finances, and the many generous people who, by their work and skills, have contributed to keeping our expenses low.

So far none of the National Collection taken up in Ireland has been received by the Irish Centre, but there will be a refund of the cost incurred in the renovation of the Girls' Hostel. There is also a verbal understanding that if a satisfactory lease for the adjoining property can be negotiated, the price of the property will be forwarded from the Collection. At present we are at the difficult task of negotiating with British Rail to accomplish this. It is also proving a difficult task to find out just how far the Camden Borough Council is prepared to go in assisting us in this venture by way of grants. 7B D

The air conditioning installed in the Douglas Hyde Lounge and the John F. Kennedy Hall at a total cost of £23,151, has worked satisfactorily for the past year, during the summer and the winter. Granted there has been an increase in our light and heating account, but the overall advantage we think is worthwhile. We have had no complaints from our neighbours regarding noise from the Irish Centre.

Relations with all our neighbours are very good. The local Tenants' Associations continue to use the Centre as a meeting place and are welcome to our facilities.

I. SUMMARY OF WELFARE REPORT

For a detailed analysis of the work done by the Welfare Office during the year, please consult current Welfare Report. We see from this that the Welfare Department have had almost the same number of cases as the previous year, 1,557 as against 1,630. While the majority of these people coming to the Welfare Office are ordinary boys and girls who, given a chance, can make the grade in life, we regret to say that there seems to be an increase in the numbers who sometimes, through no fault of their own, will not make a success of life. These people deserve our help and consideration as much as those who will make a go of things. We have also noticed there has been a large increase in the number of problem marriage cases that have come to the office in the past year, and the number of families, many of them from Northern Ireland.

Dr. Morton continues to give us his unfailing attention and guidance and now he has been joined by Mr. J. Bradley. We appreciate very much the assistance they both give to the Welfare Office.

II. HOSTELS.

As you see from our finance report, there has been an increase of over £2,000 in returns under the heading "Hostel Accommodation". This reflects:-

- 1) The crying need there is in London for hostel accommodation.
- 2) There has been an increased demand on hostel accommodation.
- 3) The Girls' Hostel has been completely renovated during the year. The renovation and redecoration has been done by

Mr. Luke Kennedy and we would like to express our sincere thanks for the way in which he co-operated with the Centre authorities in carrying out the work. At no time was the Hostel completely closed, and he did a highly satisfactory job. The Hostel is proving very attractive and comfortable for the occupants. Sr. Thecla has been appointed Matron, and we wish her every success.

4) The Boys' Hostel continues to give us headaches due largely to its age and the difficulty in maintaining it. This problem will never be satisfactorily solved until we succeed in realising our ambition to build proper accommodation for our boys.

III. IRISH CENTRE CLUB.

The Irish Centre Club Committee continued to be the mainstay of the Centre. This devoted group of voluntary workers have continued during the past year to demonstrate their loyal support by running the Bingo and various other functions in the Centre. Under the supervision of Fr. Sheridan, the Irish Centres' music sessions in the Douglas Hyde Lounge continue to attract old and young in increasing numbers. This year the Comhaltas organised a Junior Fleadh Cheoil. This was the first organised in the Centre, and we can see it becoming one of the major events of the year.

This year our membership system has been reorganised. Members who wish to pay the full subscription for the whole year continue to do so, but those who wish to pay an entrance fee every time they come to the Centre are at liberty to do so.

IV. FINANCE.

The accounts show our liabilities have decreased by £9,391 to £62,550, while our fixed assets have increased by £4,029 to £143,185.

It should be pointed out that Fixed Assets represent Capital Expenditure to date less depreciation, and bear no relation to the aggregate current market value of our properties.

In reviewing the reliability of our sources of revenue, it will be noted that the total received during the year from covenants, collections and donations exceeded the overall deficit by £14,102.

<u>Covenants</u>	<i>together with the surplus amount to</i>	
Arthur Guinness & Co.	£850	
M.J.Gleeson & Co.	£125	
Mrs. E. Dooley J.P.	£ 17	
		<u>£992</u>

Boroughs

The following Boroughs gave donations:-

Camden	£2,500	
Islington	£ 100	
Kensington	£ 100	
Barnet	£ 25	
		<u>£2,725</u>

Individual Donations

Abbey Homsteads Ltd	£1,250	
His Eminence Cardinal Heenan	1,000	
Anonymous	900	
Cavan Assoc.	200	
Per Chaplains-Summerhill	140	
Per Clare Assoc.	100	
Irish Tourist Board	100	
Monaghan Assoc.	100	
Roscommon Assoc.	100	
Leitrim Reunion	88	
Fermanagh Assoc.	50	
Meath Assoc.	50	
St. Patrick's Day Bankers	340	
Anon. & Sums under £50 ^{orders}	339	
		<u>£4,767</u>

Appeals and Royal Albert Hall Concert

£1,610.

Our thanks to our Auditors, Messrs. C.F. Burton & Co., represented by Mr. T. Brennan. To Mr. P.J. Keegan, our Honorary Accountant, for his unremitting toil and care. Week after week. Mr. Keegan calls in to check, advise and warn about undesirable trends. His knowledge and fidelity have been a tremendous asset to the Centre.

We are grateful to the many County Associations who contributed to the Centre during the year, particularly Cavan, Clare, Monaghan, Roscommon, Leitrim, Fermanagh, Meath, Limerick and Armagh.

Appreciation.

Our sincere thanks are due to the members of the social committee and to the many people who helped voluntarily - with the painting and redecoration of the premises; with the public bar in the Douglas Hyde Lounge; with cementing and waterproofing the Cellar; with supplying and fitting the catwalk with approach stairs around the air conditioning unit on the roof; with the Christmas Bazaar and Summer Fair; with the checking and repairing of the electrical system in the Boys' Hostel. To the unknown, who on holiday, painted and repaired the boundary wall. To the Council of Irish Counties; the various other associations, organisations and individuals who contributed to making our past year reasonably successful; to one and all we express our grateful thanks and appreciation.

To all the staff and our new managers, Mr. & Mrs. M. Lahiffe, we wish every success, and hope that they remain happy in their work.

Rev T. McCole & Fr. Sheridan

1. Submitting a copy of - Centre & Boring C.
is amount required.