

# 50 years



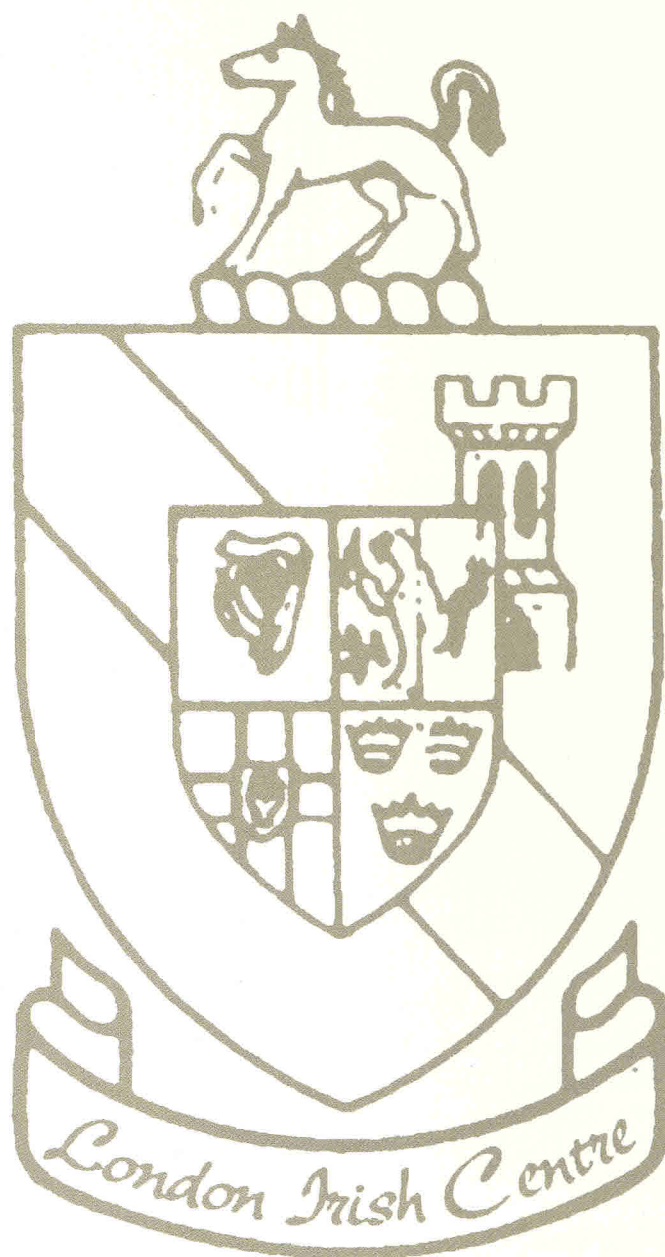
**The London  
Irish Centre**





*We said a sad farewell to Mary Kenny RIP in July 2005.*

*Father Jerry Kivlehan OMI has written a beautiful piece on Mary's life at the centre and we think it only fitting that this booklet is dedicated to Mary in recognition of her enormous contribution to the London Irish Centre for over fifty years.*



**1955 To 2005**

***Cead Mile Failte***

***To our 50th Annual Report & Souvenir Booklet***

# Mary Kenny: RIP

On Friday 15 July 2005 in the stillness of the night, in her 88th year, Mary Kenny passed quietly away from us. Her death marked the end of an era in the life of the London Irish Centre.

Mary worked at the Irish Centre as a volunteer for over fifty years. Her roles were numerous; she was a committee person, a receptionist, seller of tickets, fundraiser, an organiser of bingo and dances. Her fundraising endeavours were not confined to the Irish Centre.

On the Sundays prior to the annual car raffle and festival in Roundwood Park she would coordinate the selling of tickets outside churches and shops in the North London area. Many stories are told about Mary's fundraising enterprises.

Her role in the famous Fr. Jim Butler cycle around Ireland is legendary. On that occasion Mary co-ordinated the roadside and town centre collections from her caravan. This was her first experience of driving a car and caravan through the narrow streets of small towns in rural Ireland.

The extent of the traffic chaos caused by Mary and caravan was considerable. In the end the Irish police devised a system of notifying each town prior to her arrival. That particular fundraising endeavour was key to the survival of the London Irish Centre.

Mary was immensely proud of her Irish identity and could never understand why some Irish people would disown their identity in order to integrate into London life.

She was a founder member of the Roscommon Association, London and an Honorary Life President of the Council of Irish Counties.

Mary had a unique insight into the challenges and difficulties facing newly arrived Irish migrants in London.

For many years after a long working day she went immediately to the Irish Centre and worked in a voluntary capacity as evening receptionist.

Her work often involved finding accommodation and employment for those who had just arrived in London. These were emigrants who travelled by the day boat from Ireland and thus arrived in London in the late evening.

On arriving in London many of them would go to the Irish Centre in Camden, knowing that it was the only Centre open from early morning until late at night.

Mary was asked by a less than diplomatic individual 'why did she not get married' and she responded that she is married to the Irish Centre.

She was passionate about her voluntary work and her care for the Irish immigrant to Britain. She was a bright and intelligent woman with a unique gift of discernment. She knew the two categories of people involved in Irish community organisations.

Almost immediately she could distinguish



between those 'who talked the talk and those who walked the walk'. Mary was a worker who with the minimum of fuss carried our series of voluntary activities with consistency for fifty years.

She was a woman of great practical faith who identified Christ in the face of the homeless immigrant and the unemployed young person. On many occasions I admired her remarkable courage.

A short time before she died a young man who was making a career out of mugging elderly women mugged her. I suggested to her that society should devise some strategies for dealing with such individuals. She responded by saying 'I gave him a good belt of my stick before he ran away'.

Mary insisted on carrying out her voluntary duties right to the very end. The extent of her generosity and commitment to service often annoyed those of a minimalist and restricted mindset.

To those who understood her, she was an inspiration, a great companion, respected by so many people.

The Irish community in London bade their farewell to Mary at a very beautiful, sad and serene funeral liturgy in the Irish Centre on 22 July.

On 23 July Mary's family and friends in the parish of Moore, Co Roscommon painfully welcomed Mary home for the final time. The following day Bishop Cassidy guided her family and friends in a gracious and gentle manner through a very dignified and sensitive funeral liturgy.

On that beautiful Sunday afternoon Mary was laid to rest in her family grave in Kilbegley cemetery.

As we departed the small cemetery we were very aware that we had bade farewell to a true servant of the Irish community and in particular Irish emigrants.

I doubt if we 'will ever see her likes again'.

Jerry Kivlehan OMI.



# Mission Statement

The London Irish Centre Charity Community Services aims to respond to the unmet needs among Irish people for a culturally sensitive and supportive welfare, advice/advocacy and training service which celebrates and promotes Irish culture, and counteracts the negative discrimination Irish people face as an ethnic minority group, especially in terms of their access to employment and mainstream provision.

***The main aim of the Charity is to identify and meet the needs of Irish people in London.***

The London Irish Centre Charity will also cultivate all that is best in Irish art and culture by

- providing at the Centre or elsewhere venues for Irish musicians, dancers, artists and writers to display their talents to as wide an audience as possible
- training the young to be practitioners of Irish art and culture and to appreciate our cultural heritage
- encouraging creativity in the arts so as to add to the body of work already in existence

All of this will be practically reflected in such events as concerts, art exhibitions, fleadhanna ceoil, feiseanna, book launches and poetry reading; by classes in Irish traditional music and dancing and the Gaelic language.

It will also be a vehicle for promoting the social life of the Irish community not only by the events above but by such things as dinners for the county associations

## From the Director

### London Irish Centre Charity 1955 to 2005

For 50 years the London Irish Centre has been providing vital services to help the welfare of the Irish community in the capital.

Established in 1955 the range and scope of its activities has widened over the past half-century and it is now seen as a role model for similar organisations across Britain.

But although its role has expanded its core aim remains the same – to identify and meet the needs of Irish people in London.

This year has been an exciting year with extra funds coming from the Irish Government through DION. The centre's aim is to continue to raise funding for our advice service, project work and to complete our two capital projects.

The Disability Access Project which includes a new lift and a new reception will allow more people to access our community services for advice and our Multi Purpose Daycentre project will expand and increase our services to the elderly.

The setting up of the Irish Abroad Unit was a very positive step on behalf of the Irish Government and we were delighted to welcome Sean Farrell and Sheila Maguire from the unit to the centre.

It was refreshing to see that they took the time to visit the centre and saw our daycentre, spoke to our community welfare staff and could see the Centre's potential for helping more elderly Irish people with capital investment.

The Minister for foreign affairs Mr Dermot Ahern came to the centre in December 2004 and reiterated the Irish Governments commitment to emigration.

We were grateful to receive a cheque for €100,000 towards the cost of developing our Disability Access Project.

### Our Services

Our community welfare service provides a range of in house and outreach services to elderly Irish people. Outreach advice workers are based in Camden, Kilburn and Islington.

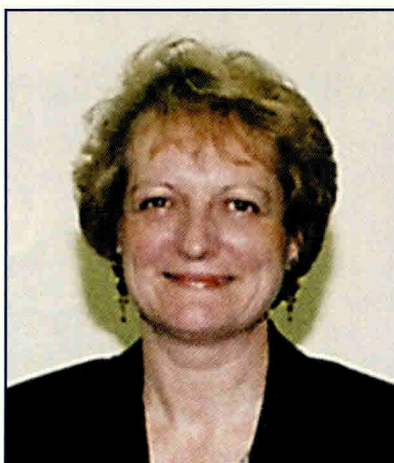
Our Volunteer project offers a befriending service to the elderly and the number of volunteers co-ordinated by this project has increased to 42. The High & Dry club is still going strong and provides a twice-weekly club for persons who refrain from alcohol.

The Healthy Living Project which works in partnership with Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy and Irish Centre Housing, includes the infusion of a health promotion dimension into all the events occurring at the Irish Centre and the LISOS project offers a very sensitive service to victims of institutional abuse.

In addition the London Irish Centre's cultural programme is second-to-none – encompassing Irish Music Classes, Step Dancing, Irish language Classes, Comhaltas, very popular Tea Dances, Various County Association Dinner Dances, Charity balls, Theatre, Poetry events and the Return To Camden Town Festival.

As you look through this booklet it will give you a small insight of some of the excellent work that is carried out daily in the centre. I do hope you enjoy reading about us.

Margaret Murnane





# From the Ambassador

For the last 50 years the London Irish Centre has provided an invaluable service to the people of Ireland. In this period, many Irish families were touched by emigration, with the majority of our emigrants moving here to Britain.

Over the last 50 years, the role of the Irish Centre has evolved and developed in line with the changing needs of the Irish community so that today, the Irish Centre is a bustling busy centre of activity, promoting Irish identity and culture and providing vital services to the vulnerable members of the community.

More than a third of the Irish population in Britain live in the London area and I would like to pay tribute to all those who have, over the past fifty years, given so much of their time and expertise in the London Irish Centre in order to cherish their heritage and promote a love of all things Irish.

In many ways, it is not an exaggeration to say that the Irish Centre and its affiliated organisations, associations and agencies have formed the backbone of the Community here.

Wishing the Board of Trustees, Director, staff and members of the London Irish Centre every happiness and continued success in the future.

Dathí Ó Ceallaigh  
Ambassador



**UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN**  
**PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**

## MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MCALEESE



It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest wishes to the London Irish Centre in 2005 as it celebrates its jubilee year.

I commend the Board of Trustees, the Staff and Volunteers who give so generously of their skills and time to ensure that the London Irish Centre continues to hold a special place in the hearts of the Irish community in Britain.

Tá súil agam go mbeidh bliain taitneamhach agus rathúil agaibh.

A handwritten signature in black ink.

**MARY MCALEESE**  
**PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**



# Fifty years agrowing

**By Fr Paul Byrne (Trustee) London Irish Centre Charity**

I was asked if I would write my reflections on the 50 years of the London Irish Centre. 50 Years! Was it possible that I could have known the Centre for so long?

Possible yes – but 1955 was the year I was taking final degree exams and final vows. I don't remember being too acutely aware of the haemorrhage of people out of Ireland.

We clerical students were sheltered then. But in that decade of the 50's Ireland lost the equivalent of the population of most of Connaught. My fellow graduates had no option but to emigrate.

However it wasn't until after my ordination in '58 that London became a reality to me.

Teaching in Dublin gave us long Summer holidays where we young priests helped in the parishes. I was lucky to spend some of them in the 60's in Quex Road. This was my first close-up sight of emigration and of the work of the Church for emigrants.

The Irish Centre didn't come into my consciousness. But who could forget the sight of all those young Irish people at the fourteen weekend Masses and the joy they got as they picked up their local paper outside the Church?

Then too there were the hot Summer afternoons calling to house after house on the long roads of Kilburn. I learned later the theory of chain migration where family members 'pulled' others over but at the time I just wondered were there any O'Sullivans left in Kerry.

And then there was the football in New Eltham; the county allegiances behind the teams, the plethora of young men to play, St Mary's, the Quex Road team with the now legendary Father Wall OMI who knew every Irish family in north west London and who, though scrupulously exact in everything else, would blithely field 'ringers' like myself.

Again with the naivety of the young I just enjoyed the football and didn't see the long lonely Sundays where for so many the game was a short distraction in the drinking day.

In that decade of the 60's I met those two remarkable priests John Dore and Eamonn Casey and saw at first hand their practical work for emigrants.

John Dore with his savings bank – "ye are wasting money on drink – save up and buy the pub", his emergency funds to construction workers left penniless in a long snowy winter, his Emerald Employment Agency to lure the Irish into better jobs.

Eamonn Casey dynamically transformed Catholic Housing Aid into a national organisation which pioneered housing aid in Britain.

He became chairman of Shelter which changed the face of social housing. It was a treat to be part of the energy flow on those Summer Sunday nights in the common room in Quex Road.

In one of those Summers I was asked to work in the Emerald Employment Agency. This became a prelude to my being appointed as director of the Irish Centre in Birmingham.

Though I was in touch then with the London Centre it wasn't until I came myself to London at the end of '69 to work on housing that I really knew Camden.

My memories? - the size of it compared to our Birmingham place, the buzz and activity,

the constant money worries for the director and committee, the workload of my fellow Oblates and their tiredness – one man I still remember as being grey faced – but their good humour, the music and the craic and the accents from all counties, bacon and cabbage dinners.

By definition the Comhaltas and Feiseanna and dances and festivals were all highly visible. But I soon learned of the unseen work of the Centre.

What became known as the 'welfare', the day-to-day help given to emigrants was often unheard and unseen.

It has been marvellous to see that service develop over the years. It did so in response to need but also by keeping pace with the improvements in the whole voluntary sector.

Carlsberg-like it is probably the best hands-on service to Irish emigrants in the world – and I've seen them as far away as Australia and the US.

That has been helped by better funding. Ah – funding! All the campaigns, all the promises and half promises, all the ears of Ministers, all the letters, all the rhetoric of St Patrick's Day, all the 'live horse and you'll get grass', all the forgotten emigrants.

Over time the partnership with statutory authorities grew and Camden Borough funding, for instance, helped to a great extent.

Now a skilled development officer and new lines of funding continue to help. I think back too to a substantial loan from the Oblates at a critical time when huge interest rates on overdrafts gave glimpses of what it's like to have a money lender snapping at your heels.

● *Continued over the page*





# Fifty years agrowing

Continued

I felt this was faith, hope and charity from the Oblates – faith as a belief that the Centre's people would pull it through; hope they were not throwing good money after bad and charity as practical giving.

The sale of the house across the road was like being left a fortune by a long forgotten rich great-aunt.

Then too Jerry Kivlehan's clever use of the fallow parts of the property bringing in a welcome income (and the buzz and synergy of likeminded Irish agencies). I

took particular pleasure in seeing those I was most with, the Irish Chaplaincy and Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas well housed.

The improved funding has been helped by increased Dion funds which in turn has been fuelled by the findings of the Task Force on Emigration.

I was proud to be part of that body and my knowledge of the Irish Centre helped me to be totally committed to the work because it was there I learned of the needs.

I believe too that the Task Force 'took off' as it were because of one significant TV programme – the Prime Time report before Christmas. It galvanised public opinion.

Providentially Archbishop Michael Neary had asked to see for himself the plight of the elderly in London and on a wet miserable day Brian Boylan brought us around

North London – changing the Archbishop's theoretical concern into a driving compassion which resulted in a renewed Church commitment in Ireland and the successful SIA campaign which gave extra funds.

The Prime Time researcher came to see my newly installed successor Fr Alan Hilliard and myself at Maynooth and with the memory of the Archbishop's visit still fresh we simply pointed him at north London, gave him a list of contacts and the documentary was made.

Another less fanfares catalyst was I believe the 'tidying up' of the constitution of the Centre in April 1997, a brilliant piece of legal draftsmanship so that we now have a management framework which works.

Again on a personal note I remember the crucial AGM at which the change had to be voted on and a last minute no notice delegation by Jerry – will you chair the meeting. Luckily it went well.

Out of it came that the Trustees would manage the Centre and I'm again proud to be one of them – and constantly reminded of the great gift of time and expertise given not only by my fellow trustees but by the thousands of men and women who over the years made this place what it now is - a place to which you could bring anybody and say with pride:

***"This is our Irish Centre"***

## *Friends of the London Irish Centre Charity Ball*

*To be held on*

*Friday 2nd June 2006*

*Harpist & Excellent Entertainment*

*Special Guests and speaker*

*Look out for further details coming soon*



# Federation of Irish Societies

The Federation of Irish Societies congratulates the London Irish Centre on 50 years of service to the Irish community in Britain.

It is a tribute to the vision of its founders and the ability of the organisation to adapt and adjust that it has stood the test of time and continues to grow and flourish in the 21st century.

We are grateful for the support and encouragement given to the Federation of Irish Societies over the last 32 years.

The Federation of Irish Societies (FIS) is a national organisation with over one hundred members and is the largest and most representative Irish umbrella organisation.

FIS has been in existence since 1973. It was initially set up by a small group of individuals working for and on behalf of the Irish community who recognised the need for a forum to provide support and guidance for organisations working with Irish people.

Since then the Federation has grown considerably and has developed from a voluntary body governed by a Management Committee with no paid staff, to an organisation which will soon employ up to 20 staff and has a strong Board of Trustees governing the organisation.

Our success is largely attributable to the work of board members and staff whose strategic vision and representation have procured significant streams of funding.

We are especially thankful to the Irish Government for increases in Dón funding in recent years, but particularly for investing in our five year capacity building project.

This will enable FIS to develop to support and empower our member organisations in realising their potential, develop their capacity and enable them to continue to provide quality services to the Irish community.

It will help the Irish community to engage with other BME partners and mainstream services, explore funding alternatives and encourage partnership working with statutory organisations.

It is envisaged that this work will continue to expand and in association with our representation programme will form the core of FIS work over the next three years.

Our first director Eithne Rynne, has been in post for over a year and in addition to our existing team of staff we have been successful in appointing community development workers and are in the process of recruiting an operations manager and capacity building coordinator to help Eithne manage the expanding organisation.

Our support from Dón allows us to recruit five additional community development workers and to fill the vacant post of health development worker.

Already there have been some significant achievements within this project, where the community development workers have supported organisations to develop better relations with their local statutory body, increased funding and have supported groups through

mediation processes resulting in better understanding and mutual respect between management committees and employees.

However, the project has also given us more detailed information about the depth and range of support needed by our affiliates and this must be addressed urgently.

But we are confident that with the support of our affiliates and our collaborative energy we can all grow in strength to meet the diverse needs of Irish people in Britain.

The London Irish Centre has, in no small way, contributed to our success and we are confident that our interdependence will enable both organisations to thrive and prosper.

## ***Congratulations and thanks!***

Dr Mary Tilki

*Chair*

*Federation of Irish Societies*



## The best of Irish Hospitality in London...



## Call for Special Rates

*if you are attending a function at  
The London Irish Centre*

142-152 Cricklewood Broadway, London, NW2 3ED  
Tel. 020 8452 4175 / Fax. 020 8452 0952  
Email: [crownres@moranhotels.com](mailto:crownres@moranhotels.com)



# Best Wishes to the London Irish Centre from...



## IRISH CENTRE HOUSING

Irish Centre Housing has been working in partnership with the London Irish Centre for over 36 years. We value this partnership which provides added value to much of our work.

With over 450 units of accommodation we provide services to many vulnerable people, including former rough sleepers, people experiencing mental health difficulties, alcohol and drug dependencies, young women and older homeless people.

Each year over 800 people who use our service are supported by a dedicated team of 100 staff and volunteers.

Irish Centre Housing  
1 Holmes Road  
London  
NW5 3AA  
[www.irishcentrehousing.org](http://www.irishcentrehousing.org)

## COMHALTAS

The North London Branch of Comhaltas was formed at The London Irish Centre in Camden Town in 1970 and has been located there ever since.

Irish traditional music lessons were given by the late Tommy Maguire, attracting pupils from all over London; the monthly sessions that were held in the Douglas Hyde lounge are still fondly remembered.

Today the branch is still very vibrant and holds bi-monthly music sessions, as well as singing sessions held by Pat Connolly which take place on the second Wednesday of each month from 8.30pm.

Pat's tremendous knowledge of traditional songs and the background to them makes for an enjoyable evening for both singers and listeners.

The first Comhaltas national office in Britain was opened at the London Irish Centre in 1999 and co-ordinates advice and support, in addition to giving information to young people seeking to develop their skills and knowledge of Irish traditional music, song and dance.

The office is staffed by volunteers from the North London branch and deals with several hundreds enquiries annually.

Our sincere thanks to the trustees, staff and past directors of the Centre who have always been so supportive of our work; we would especially like to thank the new director Margaret Murnane and the bar and banqueting

manager Terry McEneaney for his courtesy in accommodating us for meetings, sessions and workshops.

Jim Myers

## icap

icap is the national counselling and psychotherapy service for the Irish community in Britain, with its head office in London and its West Midlands office in Birmingham.

Since it was established as a charity in 2000, icap has filled a glaring gap in provision of mental health services for people of Irish origin who require culturally sensitive support.

Over 1500 clients have availed of icap's services in that period.

icap provides once a week therapy sessions, group work, supervision and consultancy. There is currently a network of 203 psychotherapists across the UK to cater for the demand.

icap has positively engaged in working relationships and partnership arrangements with Irish community groups and other voluntary and statutory services.

The Irish Healthy Living Centre has been supported heavily by the work of icap. This year saw a therapeutic support group for men established by icap and the IHLC, which provided group counselling for ten men for a period of thirty weeks.

icap representatives have engaged in all aspects of the IHLC, including: providing mental health information at open days; making presentations to other organisations that work with the IHLC; sending representatives to do outreach work with the IHLC co-ordinator and statutory agencies and catering for referrals from partner organisations.

The Chief Executive of icap, Teresa Gallagher states: "icap feels privileged to work in partnership with the London Irish Centre. In all the years of partnership, LIC has never disappointed us in its excellent practice and care of referred clients and their work greatly complements the therapeutic work of icap, giving a very holistic approach to the person".

## Council of Irish Counties Association

The Council of Irish Counties Association was founded in 1955 by a small number of forward looking Irish men and women.

In the early years the aims and objectives were



mainly for social and cultural purposes. However it very soon became apparent that there was a need for welfare amongst our community.

To this end the committee set about organising Dinner Dances, Bacon and Cabbage Suppers and other fund raising activities to help alleviate this distress in those less well placed in our community.

From humble beginnings over the years the Council has developed into a thriving and vibrant organisation earning the respect of Local and Government bodies both here in this Country and in Ireland.

The London Irish Festival and the St. Patrick's Day Parade were the important dates in our calendar. The Festival in the early seventies became the springboard for many of the well known names to-day on the Irish music circuit.

The St. Patrick's Day Parade over the years developed into a most prestigious event, culminating with a concelebrated Mass at Westminster Cathedral attracting numbers of three to four thousand worshippers.

Throughout the years the London Irish Centre has been the focal point for our meetings and functions. We are proud to have been associated with the progress of the building from its beginning to the present day.

We support fully the valuable welfare provided by the staff and the voluntary workers. We congratulate you on reaching your Golden Jubilee and look forward to continuing our support for the sterling work you do for the foreseeable future.

**Written by John Connolly**

**Chairperson of the Council of Irish Counties Association**

### **Aisling Return to Ireland Project**

Aisling Return To Ireland Project was set up in March 1994 when workers from Arlington House homeless hostel in Camden Town and advice workers from the London Irish Centre got together to discuss how we could make a positive input into the lives of our many clients who were homeless, vulnerable and alone, as the old areas of Irish settlement around North-West London were breaking up and employment patterns were breaking down.

According to surveys carried out by Shelter and the Simon Community between 30% and 40% of all homeless people in London were Irish. Arlington House itself was home to around 200 Irish men, many with dependency problems and many who had never been home since they left Ireland.

Many others would have liked to go home but were so caught up in a cycle of shame and pride they could not see a way of doing it. Inspired by the Kerry Emigrant Group we decided to organise supported holidays in Ireland for long-term emigrants.

On the first trip in 1994 we brought 30 people to Co. Kerry. Every year since we have organised at least one trip a year and today we bring 60 people a year on four supported holidays to different parts of Ireland.

Three years ago Aisling received a grant from the Dion committee to fund a coordinator's post and we moved into an office in the London Irish Centre.

This year we also received a grant for an outreach worker from Dion and we are discussing plans for a permanent resettlement home in Ireland for people

who want to return to live.

Aisling, our committee our many volunteers and the hundreds of people we have worked with would like to congratulate the London Irish Centre on it's 50 years of service to the Irish community of London.

### **Camden Elderly Irish Network**

The Camden Elderly Irish Network was established in 1994 to provide support advice and information to Irish Pensioners, and we particularly seek to support isolated and vulnerable elderly Irish people.

We were invited to come to the London Irish Centre in 1999. We are proud of the contribution we have been able to make to the life of the Centre as one of a diverse range of Irish community groups located at the London Irish Centre.

We run a Drop-In Advice Service every Wednesday at the Sacred Heart Church Hall in Quex Road, Kilburn that is open between 11.45am-2.30pm. Pensioners are very welcome to drop in for advice and assistance. We also operate a Drop-In Advice Service at the London Irish Centre (Murray Street) entrance, open between 10am - 4pm. Appointments can also be made.

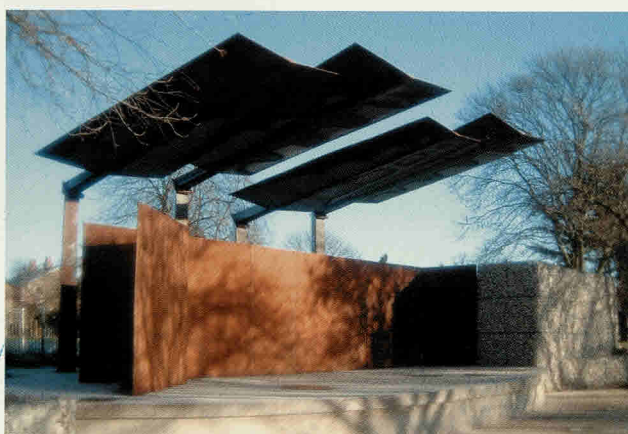
Our aim is to ensure that older Irish people receive a service that enhances and enriches their quality of life and the benefits of our service will be long lasting.

*Management Committee 2005*

### **Brady Mallalieu Architects**

Brady Mallalieu Architects congratulate The London Irish Centre on 50

years of looking after the Irish in London and providing a close network of community groups which we are all very proud of.



### **Fermanagh Association**

Congratulations to the London Irish Centre on the wonderful 50 years of helping, supporting and encouraging the London Irish communities and County Associations to achieve so much, with best wishes and fond memories the Fermanagh Association.

### **Donegal Association**

Congratulations on your Jubilee Commemoration Year. Wishing you every success  
From The Donegal Association (London)



# Best Wishes to the London Irish Centre from...

*continued*

## **Cavan Association**

Extend warmest congratulations to the London Irish Centre. We are privileged to have been closely associated with the Centre during the Oblate Community's terms of office.

Advice, support and hospitality were offered to vulnerable Irish migrants during years of struggle and adversity. We thank the Trustees, Management and Staff, and offer special wishes for success and goodwill in the years ahead.

## **Waterford Association**

The Waterford Association London wishes to extend warmest congratulations to the London Irish Centre in its Golden Jubilee Year.

For the past fifty years the Centre has been the lynchpin of our community.

We are most grateful to the Oblate order for the priests who served in the Centre. We take this opportunity to thank all concerned and may the Welfare work continue into the foreseeable future.

The Waterford Association Golden Jubilee Banquet will take place in the McNamara Banqueting Suite on January 21st 2006.

For more information contact Mary Allen on 020 7267 8100 or Bill Aulsberry on 020 8889 6579

## **Cork Association**

Congratulations to the London Irish Centre on their 50th Anniversary.

Every good luck for the future.

## **Sligo Association**

The Sligo Association wishes to extend warmest congratulations to the London Irish Centre on its Golden Jubilee.

The Sligo Association Golden Jubilee Banquet will take place in the McNamara Hall December 3rd 2005.

For more information contact Kathleen O'Connell on 01895 237289 or Joe Conlon 01895 674900

## **Tipperary Association**

Congratulations to the London Irish Centre on their Golden Jubilee and best wishes for the future from The London Tipperary Association.

## **Offaly Association**

The London Offaly Association would like to convey their best wishes to the London Irish Centre on their 50th Anniversary and wish them continued success for the future.

The Offaly annual dinner and dance will be held at the London Irish Centre on 4th February 2006.

Chairman: Denis Connolly 020 8200 3039

Vice/Chairman: Peter Hynes 078 7621 3091

Treasurer: Maura Eivers 020 8202 2225

## **Clare Association**

The Clare Association London wishes to congratulate the Irish Centre on reaching its Golden Jubilee.

We all owe our sincere gratitude to the Founder members especially late members of our own Association who were in the Forefront from the start. Eternal rest grant to all those people.

For information on our Association contact

Fergal Collins 013 22 154464

Bridie Shaw 020 8807 0836

Pat O'Dea 020 8997 0981

## **Kerry Association London**

Congratulation and continued success to the London Irish Centre Camden on your Jubilee commemorations. New MEMBERS always welcome to join the Kerry Association.

Contact Noel Sullivan Chairman on

079 5653 5351

Or Sheilagh McCarthy Secretary

077 8663 2247

## **Meath Association**

Congratulations and best wishes to the London Irish Centre on your 50th Anniversary. Over the years the Centre has provided wonderful help and assistance to the Irish community and hopefully will continue to do so.

Padraic Lynch

Chair

New members welcome.

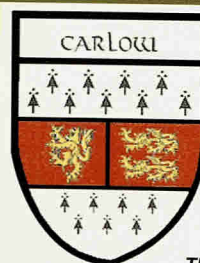
Buffet dance on Fri 25th Nov at St Judes Social Club.

## **The Longford Association in London**

Congratulations and best wishes to the London Irish Charity in reaching its 50th year of excellent Services to the Irish Community in London

## **Leitrim Association - London**

Congratulations and best wishes to the London Irish Centre on your 50th Anniversary.



## **Carlow Association**

*Congratulation to the  
London Irish Centre  
on their Golden Jubilee*

*The Carlow Association meet monthly  
at the London Irish Centre.*

*New Members are always welcome.*

*For more information please contact  
Clare Monahan, Association Secretary on  
020 8573 1864*

*Email: carlowlondon@blueyonder.co.uk*



# 50 years

**Annual  
Report  
2004-05**

**Year**

**Irish**

**The London  
Irish Centre**





# Trustees Report 2004/05

During the past year the London Irish Centre Charity achieved the objectives that it set out in its development plan.

The Trustee's appointed a new Lay Director and reviewed all of the services in the centre. Existing services performed to a high standard.

The centre's services were externally monitored and evaluated during the past year. Once again the Centre demonstrated its ability to deliver a range of efficient services that make a real difference to peoples lives.

Capital investment was recognised as imperative to the centre to extend the centre's services to more Irish people.

The centre exceeded all best value criteria. It demonstrated excellent levels of performance and exceedingly high outcomes.

We are grateful to the Irish Post and Irish World newspapers for highlighting important key issues in the Irish community and to both papers for giving awards to the London Irish Centre Charity for its services to the community.

The trustees deeply appreciate the excellent service given to the Centre by its staff, volunteers and committees. They are grateful to all who support the Centre through grants, fundraising and donations.

## Director's Report 2004/05

Having been a year in post. I would like to congratulate the London Irish Centre Charity on its success, not just last year but over the past 50 years.

I was in the fortunate position to join the Charity when the Irish Government were affirming their commitment to helping Irish emigrants which meant more funds were being targeted through the Irish Abroad Unit and DION to frontline services like ourselves.

Having gone through periods of debt and

uncertainty during the last 50 years, the Centre is now financially sound. However, the continuation of our excellent services, reaching more Elderly Irish people in London and attracting the younger generation to our cultural events depends on accessing new sources of funding and investing capital into the building.

I extend my gratitude to John Twomey the Community Welfare Services Co-ordinator who leads an excellent team of committed staff and to Paul Murphy for his fundraising strategy.

## Co-ordinator's Report 2004/05

The Centre's commitment to community welfare endeavour is cardinal. Our services continue to be very well subscribed.

We measure our client work using proper statistical systems. Our outcomes are therefore stated empirically rather than anecdotally. Last year we met again our target of 4000 one-to-one client interfaces in the form of interviews and visits.

The increased funding commitment of DION to organisations such as ours has grown further this year in line with the recommendations of the Irish Government's Task Force Report on Emigration.

This has enhanced the ability of Irish frontline organisations to recruit and retain staff. It is a most welcome boost to our endeavours. We hosted many key visits to our services. Last December, the Minister For Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern TD, chose our Centre as the site of the launch of a special supplementary DION grant for Irish organisations.

We also received delegations from all political parties at various times during the year. This reflects the increased importance of the issue of emigrant welfare provision in the Irish political spectrum. It also shows the cross party consensus that obtains in regard to improved funding support by the Irish Government.

We were pleased to expand our services this year by launching a new Elders Outreach Service covering the Islington and North Camden areas with its own local premises.

In doing so a stream of service has begun to an area that has historically never had any service whatever despite its very high Irish elders population. The launch is the kind of tangible outcome we are always pleased to achieve.

The Centre's Community Legal Service's Quality Mark for our advice work was fully audited this year. A finding of excellence was made. This was an important milestone for us.

The maintenance of the Mark's very high standards in advice provision is indicative of organisational maturity and consistency.

As ever, my words would never be complete without an expression of sincere thanks and tribute to the Centre's staff whose compassion and purpose drive everything that we do.

## Development Worker

The funding of the Development Worker post by the Association of London Government is a strategically significant undertaking.

Their funding of the development post began in November 2003 and is due to continue for over three years. The nature of the grant acknowledges the wide renown of the London Irish Centre and demand for our services throughout London.



# Centre Funding

## Renewed Funding

*Irish Government, Dion Grant,*

*Irish Government, Dion Grant,*

*Irish Government, Dion Grant,*

*London Borough of Camden,*

*London Borough of Camden & Primary Care Trust,*

*Durkan Ltd.*

*Volunteering England*

*Big Lottery Fund (New Opportunities Fund)*

*Big Lottery Fund (Community Fund)*

*Big Lottery Fund (New Opportunities Fund)*

*Ireland Fund of Great Britain*

*Ireland Fund of Great Britain*

*Benevolent Society of Saint Patrick*

*Association of London Government*

*Heritage Lottery Fund*

*Irish Youth Foundation*

## Funding Promised/Secured

*Bridge House Trust*

*Dion*

## Applications Turned Down:

Dormant Accounts - Ireland

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, SRB Camden

Advice Service.

Kilburn Older Persons Outreach.

Islington Older Persons Outreach.

Co-Ordinator and Administrator.

High and Dry Club and Alcohol Assessment.

Older Persons Outreach, Kilburn Office.

Volunteer Organiser.

Irish Healthy Living Centre Project.

Camden Older Persons Outreach.

Website Development (final grant).

Missing Persons and Volunteer Services

Cultural Services.

Welfare Grants and Disbursements.

Development Worker.

Irish Centre Heritage Project.

Youth Resettlement Project, (part).

Disability Access Capital Project.

Disability Access Capital Project.

# Networks

The Centre is grateful to the various agencies that supported us and our work during past year:

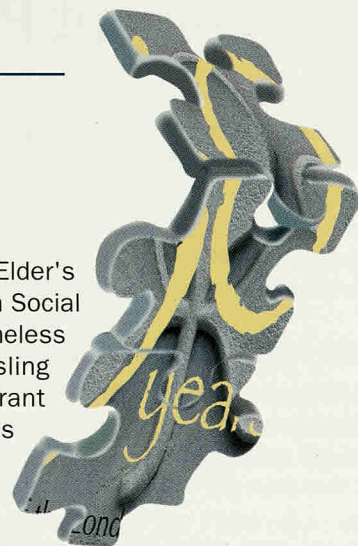
Camden Voluntary Sector Unit, Camden BME Alliance, Irish Centre Housing, Cara Irish Housing Association, An Teach, Innisfree Housing, Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy, Camden Elderly Irish

Network, London Irish Elder's Forum, Kairos, Camden Social Services, Camden Homeless Persons Unit, Aisling Project, Kerry Emigrant Association, Solas Anois, Voluntary Action Camden, Camden Volunteers Bureau, Camden Itec, London

Arts, Quex Road and St. Gabriel's Parishes, Irish Chaplaincy, Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas, Federation of Irish Societies, Irish Travellers Movement and Chaplaincy, Benevolent Society of St. Patrick, Society of St Vincent de Paul, The Passage, Arlington House, Rugby House, Alcohol Recovery Project, Age Concern, Good Neighbourhood Schemes, Camden Central Community Partnership, Kings Cross Furniture Project, The Shaftsbury Resource Centre, Irish Voluntary Agencies.

# Benevolent Society of Saint Patrick

The Centre was proud to be asked by the Benevolent Society of Saint Patrick to administer its grant applications and awards work. This charitable trust donates all its annual income to the relief of poverty according to its trust deed. This is of great use to vulnerable and impoverished Irish people in the Greater London area.





# Performance

At the beginning of each year the Centre sets itself very clear and ambitious performance targets. This enables us to evaluate our service in relation to our targets.

- The London Irish Centre enabled Irish elders to secure benefit entitlements, care and additional pension income in excess of £1.5m.

- The Centre enabled children, families and single parents to obtain in excess of £800,000 in additional benefits and support.

- The Centre's Luncheon Club provided 100 dinners per week for elderly people.

- The Centre's staff dealt with 26,843 advice instances during personal interviews.

Top of the demand for our staff's advice, information and intervention assistance was on Welfare Benefits with 10,955 instances.

Second highest was Housing Advice and assistance to Access Accommodation - 4,489 instances. This service often involves work over hours and days. The Centre has established referral rights with a wide range of housing agencies.

Next was for information on health issues and assistance to access Health and Related Care Services with 3,621 instances.

In 2,683 instances advice on a person's financial circumstances was sought.

A range of family matters, relationship difficulties, were the subject of 1,458 instances requiring assistance.

The Centre's staff dealt with 4,158 social support instances in personal interviews.

A wide range of services are included here: support with a tenancy issue, guidance re counselling options, identification documentation, institutional abuse, accessing care support, repatriation, bereavement and return to Ireland options.

The Centre's staff provided material support in 3,745 instances during personal interviews. The range of services included provision of a shower, emergency clothing, fares and the use of the phone.

In partnership with other charities the Centre provided holidays for over 100 people.

Coach trips to seaside towns and day excursions were arranged for older Irish people involving over 200 people.

The Centre's Outreach Service visited, assessed and arranged for additional care for over 180 housebound persons.

The Volunteers Befriending Project made over 1,500 home visits or accompanying journeys with vulnerable Irish older people.

35 persons per week attend our High & Dry Club.

Over 800 people visited our information on website each week.

The Centre made 32,500 telephone calls on behalf of Service users.

The Centre received and dealt with 17,500 telephone enquiries.

In excess of 3,600 participated in the Return to Camden Festival of traditional Irish Culture

The Centre hosted some of the key cultural and social events in the Irish community.

## Development Plan 2004/05

### PREMISES

The centre is currently following a rolling programme of premises development which is subject to funding.

During 2005 part of the daycentre was upgraded to include a new kitchen. The main future planned premises development will include :

### Multi Purpose Daycentre Capital Project

Upgrade the facilities in the multi purpose daycentre which will include major structural work and will enable the Daycentre luncheon club to open for five days per week as opposed to three.

### The objective of the proposed new development is to:

- Rationalise space
- Improve lighting
- Increase toilet facilities
- Promote more culturally sensitive activities for Elderly Irish People
- Obtain the best use of the multi - purpose Daycentre for Irish people and Irish Groups
- Employ a co-ordinator for our multi purpose daycentre who will manage the activities in the Daycentre, promote our existing services and recognise and develop activities for our Elderly Irish Users

### Disability Access Project

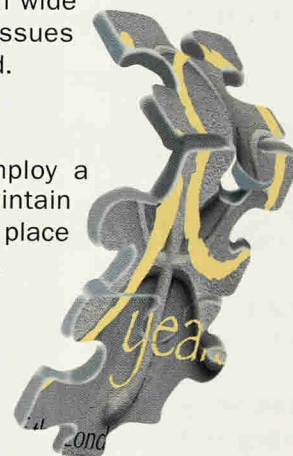
Improve accessibility particularly for people with disabilities, this will include a disability access lift to comply with Disability Access Statutory requirements and allow more users to access our Community Welfare Service.

- To continue to raise funding for our excellent advice service and project work.

- To encourage greater participation of the Irish Community in the formation of policy and decision making at local and London wide levels ensuring that Irish Issues are being properly addressed.

### Cultural Development

- Raise funding to employ a Cultural Coordinator to maintain and improve the centre as a place of excellence in Irish Culture.





# Older Persons Services and Fundraising

We held a 'Stakeholders Conference' about the work of the volunteer befrienders in the Centre on the 17th February 2005.

The theme for 2005 is Year of the Volunteer. The aim of the conference was to contact and inform the public representatives and staff of our Local Authorities, Local Primary Care Trusts, Voluntary Sector agencies, Funding Trusts and other relevant persons about the work, value and effectiveness of our befriending scheme for older and vulnerable Irish people.

The short-term purpose of the conference was to inaugurate the sustainability plan for the project. The long-term objective is to gain practical support for the Volunteer Befriending work of the Centre from some of these stakeholders.

## Citizenship Awareness Raising

Through the work of the development worker a London campaign to get residents to register to vote and to participate in local and national elections was supported with regards to Irish people.

Details of the Voter Registration campaign were forwarded to other Irish groups in the Greater London area. The importance of voter registration was brought to the attention of the Irish press in Britain and some publicity received.

The development workers post is currently funded by the Association of London Government.

The Centre is keenly aware also of the need to have a significant high profile role in political life in Britain in order to influence the direction of funding for services beneficial to the Irish community in Britain.

The conference follow up plan was to print a report of the conference and distribute it widely to the key stakeholder bodies and to business contacts. It is hoped that private businesses or individuals in business will be prepared to make substantial funding contributions for this Volunteer Befriending work.

## Social Advice Service

The London Irish Centre offers a drop-in advice service, staffed by three full-time Social Advice Workers. This service has been offered for 50 years.

Social Advice Workers assist clients with a variety of issues. The majority of clients seek help with Welfare Rights, Housing and Health issues.

These can be presented in a single interview and it is the role of an Advice Worker to decipher the client's most immediate needs.

From experience it has been found, that while a client presents with a query relating to one topic, there are generally underlying issues.

These include drug or alcohol problems, domestic violence and harassment, literacy problems, social isolation, undiagnosed mental and physical health problems and chronic financial situations.

As a long established and respected Advice Service the London Irish Centre has built up strong links with other statutory and voluntary agencies.

These contacts are a very important resource to the Advice Worker as they assist in meeting the needs of presenting clients.

Along with referrals to specific agencies, it continues to be a growing trend for clients to be referred to the London Irish Centre as it is seen as a service that specifically addresses the needs of disadvantaged Irish in London.

## London Irish Survivors Service

This project is now in its fourth year and has continued to expand with in excess of 600 clients. The project was set up to provide advice and support to individual survivors of child abuse whilst in institutional care in Ireland.

Our service helps with issues of the Redress board, the commission to inquire into Child Abuse and the Education Fund. This project facilitates a monthly support group for women survivors. This is the only group of its kind in the UK and the turnout is always large, with women travelling from all over Britain to attend.

The Department of Education and Science has funded this project since January 2001 and has agreed to extend funding to July 2006. The closing date for any new applications to the redress board is

December 2005 and although many clients have now been awarded compensation from the redress board, rather than reducing the caseload many clients have been seeking post-award support.

A report was commissioned by the Federation of Irish Societies on behalf of the Department of Education and Science to make recommendations for the future of this service. This report has not been finalised but the initial findings showed clearly that the London Irish Survivors Service deals with over 47% of the total number of survivors accessing services, with 688 clients compared to an average of 291 across the five existing services in the whole of the UK. We feel confident that in the light of these findings the recommendations will be favourable to the continuation of funding for post-award support.



# Community Welfare Service

*So you can put a face to the name, here are the people that make it all happen*



**Berney Folan -**  
*Camden Elderly Outreach*



**John Twomey**  
*Co-Ordinator*



**Paul Murphy**  
*Development Officer*



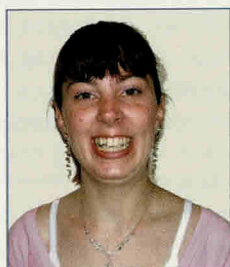
**Jean O'Rourke**  
*Advice Worker*



**Brian Boylan**  
*Islington Elderly Outreach*



**Lesley Ryan**  
*Advice Worker*



**Marcella Doyle**  
*Advice Worker*



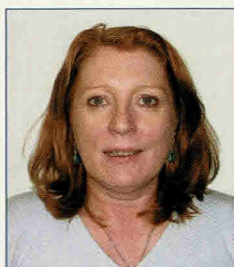
**Maria Connolly**  
*Receptionist*



**Mary Leyne**  
*Volunteer Organiser*



**Marie Aubertin**  
*Survivors Outreach*



**Mary Gleeson**  
*Kilburn Elderly Outreach*



**Vicky Smith**  
*Healthy Living Co-ordinator*



**Greta Flynn**  
*Youth Resettlement*



**Phyllis Morgan**  
*Survivors Outreach*





# Older Persons Outreach *Camden, Islington & Kilburn*

The Older Persons Outreach project incorporates Camden, Islington, Kilburn, Brent and some of Westminster.

The projects aim is to respond to the unmet needs amongst the older Irish people providing on-going support and referral to services in order to enable them to live independently and have a better quality of life.

### The projects Aims are:

To inform older people on services and encourage and support them to take up such services to promote a good quality of life.

- To ensure that appropriate services are provided
- To minimise the risk of isolation and loneliness by encouraging social interaction such as joining Luncheon Clubs and other group activities.
- To link housebound older people with volunteer befrienders.
- To promote and encourage activities which will benefit health and well being.

## How to access the Outreach Services

People can telephone the outreach office or drop-in personally to speak to an adviser.

Referral can also be made personally, or made by a family member, friend, Doctor, Community Nurses, Social Advice Workers.

**Housing** - Assisting and supporting clients with resettlement into better housing e.g. upgraded quality housing, sheltered accommodation, residential care.

**General Health** - whether registered with a Doctor, contacts with other health professionals.

**Income/Benefits check** - advising on benefit entitlements

**Daily Living** - checking the ability of the client to attend to their personal care, meal preparation, shopping, laundry and household chores.

**Social Activities** - provide information and links into social activities. Encourage family contact

The move to a new home is a big life change for the older person who requires support, reassurance and assistance in order to cope with the transition. The resettlement process requires the outreach worker to focus on all the tasks associated with a move in order to make it a less stressful, successful transition.



# Youth Resettlement

The Youth Resettlement project is based in a centre that works with the most vulnerable people in society.

People who often experience difficulties in their lives, due to a wide range of issues relating to such things as mental ill-health, drug and alcohol misuse, domestic violence, homelessness, single parenthood, unemployment and also those with literacy issues.

The Project is specifically aimed at the needs of 18-25 years olds, and operates a "drop in" policy. This ensures an accessible service where users can receive information and advice on matters relating to housing and welfare issues.

Service users benefit from a one-to-one assessment, which initially identifies their needs in order to maximise welfare opportunities.

In some cases, where clients display distress or are in a vulnerable situation, and want to return home to

Ireland, we can fund the cost of a ticket home.

This facility gives enormous assistance to those experiencing difficulties and is available through funding from the Irish Youth Foundation

Over the years the centre has expanded its connections with other service providers and through these connections it has widened the services available to our client group.

For example, those in housing need benefit from our referral rights to hostels and Irish Housing Associations. We can also arrange referrals to counselling, detoxification or rehabilitation centres.

This in turn ensures that those who wish to engage, receive the maximum benefit, leading on to an improvement in their circumstances, and an overall enhancement in the quality of their life and sense of self.



# The Recovery from Despair *By Brian Boylan - Islington Outreach Worker*

A man living in a bedsit - 73 years old. The condition of the bedsit was such that it was hardly habitable.

There were no lights working in the bedsit, thought there was electrical power in the wall sockets.

The toilet cistern was disconnected from the bowl so he could not flush the toilet. He improvised by filling a bucket with water and using that for the purpose of flushing.

His bed was broken and the mattress revealed large strong springs at the points where one would hope for comfort.

He was depressed he did not cook any meals. The gas was disconnected and the central heating was out of order.

He went out each day to a café for one meal and would take home sandwiches. He had an electric kettle for making tea.

He told me that he had lost interest in life. To make himself feel better he used to go to the betting shop because if you had money to make a bet then you were respected to some extent.

He had no television and his radio no longer worked. He had no friends, he never received a visitor and never visited anybody. His contact with Ireland had long since been completely severed.

He didn't drink except an occasional pint. He dressed adequately but his face revealed the pain and loneliness and despair that he felt inside but couldn't express verbally.

On our second meeting I referred to the results of GAA inter-county games from the previous Sunday. He then revealed that he himself had played inter-county football and that he had six senior county championship medals.

Moreover he had represented London in a Junior All-Ireland final played in Croke Park. When I expressed surprise and admiration for his achievement in GAA activities I could see his eyes and face light up.

Since then light has been restored to his flat, the toilet has been repaired, central heating is on, a new bed and mattress has been purchased and he has listened to all the All Ireland games since I got him a second hand radio.

In fact the radio is permanently on the waveband which enables him to listen to RTE. He doesn't change it to any other band.

He himself has started to clean and tidy his flat. He has asked me to dispose of a number of furniture items that had fallen into disrepair.

His mood has changed significantly and he has begun to express interest in reconnecting with the mainstream Irish community.

*This case highlights how individuals who had achieved considerable success in the early stages of their careers can be adversely affected by loneliness and isolation.*

*This man receives generous state benefits and has adequate housing but the loss of a sense of belonging to the Irish community has had a detrimental effect on his personal welfare at every level.*

## Volunteering

Volunteering at the London Irish Centre has gone from strength to strength in the past year.

There are now 43 volunteers, aged from 20 to 73, who give their time and commitment on a weekly basis in a variety of roles.

Some call on older people in their homes, work in the luncheon club, which provides a hot meal 3 days a week, or assist in the High and Dry Club.

Over the past six years the number of vulnerable older people on the organisation's books has grown to over 300 and we are in personal contact with over 1500 Irish older people on an annual basis

We have now extended our programme territorially and have five volunteers visiting older people in their homes. We hope to increase the number over the next few months.

Volunteers are a crucial resource for meeting the identified needs of isolated older Irish people.

The organisation of their freely donated time, skills and commitment, needs the support of a full-

**Volunteers can benefit from our training programme, which includes;**

- Induction training
- First aid
- All risks
- Safety in the Home
- Communication skills
- Healthy Living
- Wheelchair training

*All of these are accredited training course with certificates awarded.*



time Volunteer Organiser. The funding, from Volunteering England, which presently supports the project, ceases in March 2006.

We are currently trying to raise funding for the continuation of this extremely worthwhile project.

*The London Irish Centre appreciates the commitment that the Volunteers show on a daily basis. They enrich the lives of the older people that they are in constant touch with.*



# Outreach Worker case history

## Michael - Aged 63

Michael is elderly, isolated and chronically ill. He presented to us in a distraught state following his impending eviction notice. It quickly became apparent that Michael was extremely vulnerable and in his fragile state would be unable to secure his own accommodation.

Michael showed acute signs of mental health issues. He clearly required a supportive housing environment that would also provide a much needed source of social inclusion.

In conducting a benefits check, it transpired that Michael's Pension had been drastically underpaid for the last year.

Michael with no family or any sources of tangible support had been living in abject poverty. This was certainly a factor in the continuous decline in Michael's mental and physical ill health and was immediately addressed by ourselves.

We negotiated at backdate of 12 months money which yielded a payment of just under £3,000. This was a great boon to Michael.

It enabled him to obtain clothing, footwear and essential toiletries and was paramount in promoting his own dignity and self respect.

In addition, an urgent referral was made to his local housing authority.

In light of Michael's support needs we successfully secured a place on a waiting list for sheltered housing where he would certainly benefit from on site support as well as the many social opportunities afforded to residents.

Michael is now in comfortable and safe temporary accommodation whilst an appropriate local sheltered scheme is sought. He is receiving his full benefit entitlement and in light of his disabilities an application has recently been made for Disability Living Allowance.

## Irish Healthy Living Project

The Irish Ambassador to Britain Mr Daithí O' Ceallaigh officially launched the Irish Healthy Living Project on March 9th 2004.

The project is based at the London Irish Centre and was set up in response to wide spread scientific evidence of extreme poor health amongst the Irish population in London and Britain.

The Big Lottery Fund principally funds the Healthy Living Project.

The project employs one worker who co-ordinates the activities but the project includes partners which allows its' messages to be spread across the Irish community in Camden and the neighbouring boroughs, these partners are:

### 1. Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy (ICAP)

### 2. Irish Centre Housing (ICH)

- In the second year of this project the health sessions given in Camden and the neighbouring boroughs have really taken off.

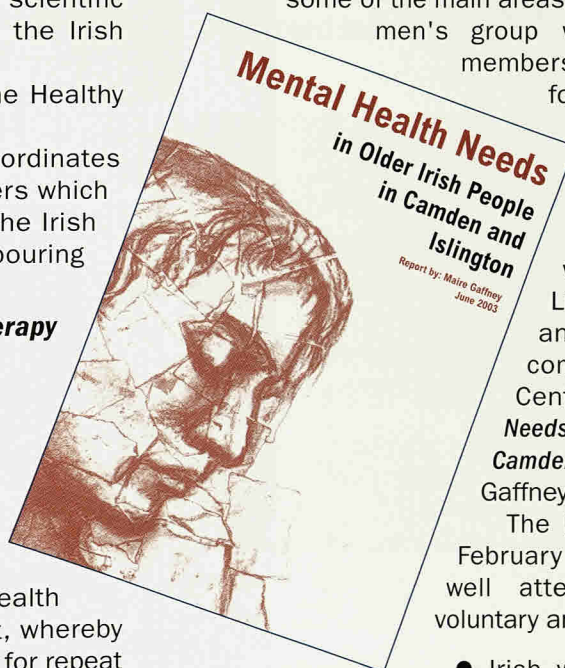
The links formed across the Irish sector as well as the local voluntary and statutory health community have really benefited the project, whereby now many requests are being put in by groups for repeat sessions.

These health sessions include all kinds of health messages such as **talking to your doctor, waterworks-contenance care, high blood pressure health screening, healthy eating, 5-A-Day, stressing out**, etc.

- This year, the healthy living project with its partner Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy (ICAP) have begun to tackle men's health.

The project has set up a special men's group, where the focus is mental health. Two psychotherapists facilitate the sessions weekly.

The group challenges the assumption that men and Irish men in particular do not like to share or speak about or share their feelings. Issues around, emigration, redundancy, loneliness and isolation are some of the main areas concentrated on. The men's group will recruit for new members for a new group to form each year.



- Mental health of Irish people generally, was also tackled when the Healthy Living Project published and launched a report commissioned by the Centre titled **Mental Health Needs of Older Irish People in Camden and Islington** by Maire Gaffney.

The launch took place on February 17th 2005 and was well attended by both the voluntary and statutory sector.

- Irish women are not being forgotten and the project has worked with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) in targeting Irish women in the Kilburn area using the trusts Women's Health Bus.

- Publicity around Irish health continues through two new health leaflets being produced this year on alcohol and smoking.

Also the Irish media in London have helped spread the message with the project continuing to write health articles in the Irish specific newspapers.



# Social Advice Service case histories

## Dermot

Dermot presented to the London Irish Centre with many issues to be addressed. He had recently been offered permanent housing, following years of housing transience.

However, as an elderly gentleman unable to read or write, he fell into serious arrears as his housing benefit claim had been suspended, as he was unable to read the request letters sent to him, which would have ensured its continuance.

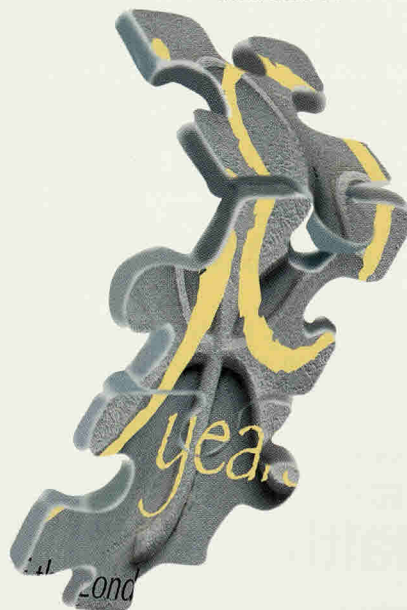
We were able to assist him in providing these documents and advocated his case for the reinstatement of benefit so as to settle the arrears, which would have ultimately lead to eviction.

Dermot was also housed with very few possessions with which to furnish his flat, following years of hostel and temporary accommodation.

We were able to secure funds for him through the Benevolent Society of St Patrick with which to buy the much-needed items for his flat as well as some clothing.

This client is now in a much more secure position and feels more confident about his future.

We will of course continue, thanks to the funding we receive, to help this vulnerable gentleman with welfare issues, so as to avoid any further problems that would have inevitably occurred without such assistance.



## Outreach Worker case history

### Thomas

Thomas is aged 50, suffering from depression and arthritis.

His depression was aggravated by where he was living in an North Kilburn estate, constantly dealing with high volumes of noise, in the form of loud music, gangs hanging around outside his flat, shouting and swearing and general hostility.

Thomas felt besieged and threatened by the behaviour of these groups of youths and wanted to return to Northern Ireland.

Thomas was not born in Northern Ireland, but his parents originally came from Northern Ireland and his family are resident in Northern Ireland.

Thomas was assisted in making a referral for housing in Northern Ireland, filling Assessment Forms and Transfer/Exchange forms, writing a supporting letter and following up, ironing out any problems.

Thomas was offered a one bedroom flat in supported sheltered accommodation in the place of his choice and is very happy living a much quieter peaceful life.

### The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain



#### Caring for our Emigrants

***The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain  
wishes the London Irish Centre  
God's Blessing & every best wish  
for future success as it celebrates  
the happy occasion of its  
50th Anniversary.***

In sending good wishes, the Chaplaincy also expresses its gratitude for the Centre's support and the collaboration and help of all the staff members who work in the agencies under its roof.



# Evening & Weekend use

## ● Men's Group

Organised by The Irish Centre Healthy Living Project in partnership with Emigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy Service.

## ● High & Dry club

For people recovering from alcohol misuse

## ● London Irish Survivors

## ● Women's Group Meetings

## ● Marriage guidance classes

## ● Irish Language Classes

## ● Irish music lessons

## ● Return to Camden Festival Meetings

## ● Irish Dancing Classes

## Multi-Purpose Daycentre

There is a Luncheon Club for Elderly Irish people three days per week – Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It provides older people with the opportunity to meet socially, to take part in group activities and share a meal together.

It is also a gateway to our Elders Learning programme. The programme offers professionally tutored classes (in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College) in:

**Computer skills** – Weekly on Wednesday Afternoons

**Art classes** for elderly Irish

**Fitness classes** for the elderly

**Craft classes** for elderly Irish

The following activities are also provided:

**Reflexology and Massage** for the elderly organised by The Irish Centre Healthy Living Project

**Health sessions** for the elderly (group work and lecture type) organised by The Irish Centre Healthy Living Project

**Seated and other exercise classes** organised by The Irish Centre Healthy Living Project



*Craft classes (left) and Computer Skills classes (below) are just two of the many organised events that take place at the Centre*

*Maeve & Helen who run the Luncheon Club (pictured below left in the newly redeveloped kitchen) have always got a smile for their visitors*



## High & Dry Club

The Centre provides a twice - weekly Club for persons who refrain from alcohol.

The quality of support provided to persons who have completed a time of detoxification and rehabilitation is exceptional.

The club is deeply grateful to Bryan Boylan who runs the club and Cavan County Council and their supporters in Cavan for providing them with a wonderful holiday this year. Bryan received the Irish World award last year for his services to the community.



# The London Irish Centre

50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB

## Community Services

Tel: 020 7916 2222

Fax: 020 7916 2638

• email: [info@irishcentre.org](mailto:info@irishcentre.org)

• [www.irishcentre.org](http://www.irishcentre.org)

## Conference & Banqueting

Tel/Fax: 020 7916 7272

• email: [cb@londonirishcentre.net](mailto:cb@londonirishcentre.net)

• [www.londonirishcentre.net](http://www.londonirishcentre.net)

## Social & Cultural

Tel: 020 7916 7272

• [www.londonirishcentre.net](http://www.londonirishcentre.net)

## London Irish Centre Trustees

Rev. P. Byrne OMI OBE

Mr. J. Higgins KSG

Mr. P. Fitzpatrick

Mr. J. Quinn

Mrs. M. Allen

## Staff Team

M. Murnane	Director
J. Twomey	Co-Ordinator
P. Murphy	Development Officer
M. Leyne	Volunteer Organiser
B. Folan	Elder's Outreach
M. Gleeson	Elder's Outreach
B. Boylan	Elder's Outreach
L. Ryan	Advice Worker
M. Black	Advice Worker
R. Mahon	Advice Worker
G. Flynn	Youth Resettlement
P. Morgan	Survivor's Service
M. Aubertin	Survivor's Service
M. Connolly	Healthy Living Worker
M. Connolly	Administrator
M. Heath	Luncheon Club

## Cultural Programmes

Irish Music:	Karen Ryan
Irish Music:	Kathy Walton
Set Dancing:	Geoff Holland
Step Dancing:	Leora Barrett
Céilí Dancing:	Anton Coyle
Irish Language:	Donal Kelleher
Social Club:	Mary O'Brien
Elder's Tea Dance:	Joanne Donohue
Comhaltas:	Jim Myers
Council of Irish Counties:	John Connolly
Return to Camden Town Festival:	Karen Ryan
	Geoff Holland

## Welfare Committee

J. Coote  
A. Finan  
T. Gallagher  
A. Watson  
F. Thornton  
T. Ganley  
C. Miedziolka  
A. Glover  
M. Lyons

## Volunteers

Mary Kenny	Carmel Murray
Helen Spadaccini	Geraldine Ahmed
Sally McDonald	Helena Bohane
Karen McMorro	Bridget Brennan
Loan Nguyer	Michael Bulfin
Bernadette Nestor	Mary Burke
Vivienne Neylon	Maura Clinton
Edmund O'Brien	Consolata Smyth
Margaret O'Connor	Gina Cavalzani
Darry O'Donnell	Lucy Coogan
Michael O'Keeffe	Charmine Doherty
Jer O'Mahony	Anne Cunningham
Cathy O'Sullivan	Patricia Doherty
Sean O'Tarpaigh	Daniel Donovan
Patrick Roper	Ronan Falsey
Christine Rush	Kim Fontana
Kathy Shephard	Kerrie Gardine
Bridget Timlin	Rosaleen Haddow
Julie Howard	Cathy O'Sullivan
Mary Jordan	Sean O'Tarpaigh
Sean Kennedy	Patrick Roper
Teresa Lynagh	Christine Rush
Maurizio Marmotta	Kathy Sheppard
Caroline Murphy	Bridget Timlin

## Additional Services

Missing Persons:	A. Slavin
Elders Keep-Fit:	C. Nolan
Elder's Art Class:	J. Bennet

## Social and Cultural Committee

T. McAsey	M. Fitzsimons
M. Allen	D. Kelleher
P. Hynes	M. Kenny
P. O'Brien	J. Donohue
M. O'Brien	

## Photographers

Mel McNally  
Stephen Marsh  
Paul Murphy

## Auditors

Allen Tully & Co.  
156 Harcourt Ave  
Sidcup  
Kent DA15 9LW

## Solicitor

Prince Evans  
77 Uxbridge Road  
London W5 5ST

## Bankers

Allied Irish Bank (GB)  
629/635 Holloway Road  
London N19 5SU

Bank of Ireland  
727/729 High Road  
Finchley  
London N12 0BJ

## Organisations Based At The Centre

### Irish Chaplaincy In Britain

Tel: 020 7482 5528

### Irish Commission For Prisoners Overseas

Tel: 020 7482 4148

### Camden Elderly Irish Network

Tel 020 7428 0471

### London Irish Survivors Outreach Service

Tel: 020 7916 7300

### Travellers Chaplaincy

Tel: 020 7482 5525

### Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann

Tel: 020 7916 8727

### icap

Immigrant Counselling and Psychotherapy  
Tel 020 7272 7906

### Federation of Irish Societies

Tel: 020 7916 2725

### Aisling Return To Ireland Project

Tel: 020 7813 1478

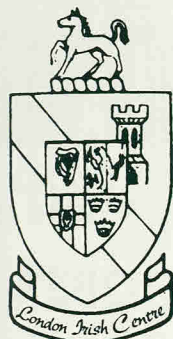


## Annual Accounts 2004/05

	2004/05	2003/04
Fixed Assets	1,796,172	1,832,437
Debtors	149,619	112,342
Cash in Bank	433,189	285,500
Creditors	(192,736)	(91,871)
Net Current		
Assets	390,072	305,971
Total Assets		
less Liabilities	2,186,244	2,138,408



# London Irish Centre - Camden Town



## *Social And Cultural Events Throughout the Year*

### **Irish Language for Intermediate and Advanced Students**

Thursday evenings:

Contact: Donnacha McSweeney  
07985602781

### **Meitheal Cheoil: Various Traditional Irish Music Classes for children & Adults**

Every Monday from 5:00p.m to 9.30 p.m.

Contact: Karen Ryan, 078 1370 0845/ Kathy Walton, 020 76076046  
or email: meitheal@btinternet.com

### **Comhaltas Irish Music**

Singing lessons take place every second Wednesday of  
each month from 8.30 p.m. Please contact Jim for details.

Contact: Jim Myers 72639366 Email: jimmyers@ic24.net

### **Irish Poetry Events**

Contact: Roisin Tierney 02076880237

### **Irish Theatre**

Irish Writers and Actors Group

Contact: John Dunne 020 72260524/ 07713596436  
john@outreech.com www.outreech.com

Praxis Theatre Laboratory

Contact: Sam Dowling 02083330397

### **Northern Lights Speakers Club - Orators are Kings**

Mondays 7-10pm

Ph:07971882546

14/11; 28/11; 12/12  
www.northernlightsspeakers.org.uk

### **Esperanto Club of London**

Every Friday evening

Contact norah.brown@virgin.net Ph: 01277 218498

### **Scottish Dancing**

Contact David Walton 02074858619

### **Very Popular Pensioners' Tea Dance**

Held in the London Irish Centre every second Wednesday  
The tea dance committee arrange outings and a fabulous  
Christmas party, new members are very welcome.

Contact the London Irish Centre on 020 7916 2222 for information  
or membership details.

### **Reunions**

**Nov 18**

### **Killarney Reunion**

(Contact Dan 020 8961 3714)

## **Council of Irish Counties Dinner Dances**

### **November 19**

**Roscommon Dinner Dance**  
(Ann 020 8464 5786)

### **November 26**

**CICA Bazaar**  
(Mary 020 7267 8100/  
Maura 020 8886 3967)

### **November 26**

**Wicklow Dinner Dance**  
(Catherine 020 8800 2480)

### **December 3**

**Sligo Golden Jubilee Dinner Dance**  
(Kathleen 01895 237289)

### **December 10**

**Cork Dinner Dance**  
(John 07789 141044)

### **Jan 21 2006**

**Waterford Dinner Dance**  
(Mary 020 7267 8100)

### **Feb 4 2006**

**Offaly Dinner Dance**  
(Peter 020 8202 2225)

### **March 10 2006**

**CICA Dinner Dance**  
(Mary 020 7267 8100)

### **April 8 2006**

**Cavan Bacon & Cabbage**  
(Maura 020 8886 3967)

## **Dancing Classes**

### **Set Dancing**

Every Tuesday 8:00pm to 10.30 p.m.  
1st Sunday of every month 12:00 to 4.30 p.m.

Contact: Geoff Holland, 020 7607 8396 or email : contact  
geoff@hotmail.com

### **Irish Dancing**

Every Monday 6:00pm

Contact: Leora Barrett on 07966 186 922

### **Ceili Dancing**

Every Sunday 8pm-11.30 Live Music, Everybody  
welcome! Tuition given 8-8.45 p.m.  
Ceili 9 - 11.00 p.m.

Contact: Anton Coyle, 020 7272 5815





# 8<sup>th</sup> Return to Camden Town 2006

FESTIVAL OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE  
10 DAYS OF CONCERTS, CÉILÍS, SET DANCING, WORKSHOPS, SESSIONS AND TALKS

FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup> to SUNDAY 29<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2006



Supported by the London Irish Centre Charity, the UK's flagship traditional Irish music and dancing festival returns to Camden for its eighth year in 2006 on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October - featuring more top musicians, artists and teachers than ever before. For ten action-packed days some of Ireland and Britain's top traditional players and dancers will entertain and teach in a programme of concerts, céilís, workshops, sessions and talks for adults and children at all levels.

Camden Town is recognised in the traditional Irish music community as playing an important role in nurturing the tradition as many immigrants from Ireland came together in the local pubs to practice the traditional music of their homeland - the first time so many regional Irish styles had come together in such a setting.



These days there are still a healthy number of great traditional musicians, music followers, dancers and singers in the City, including a large number of talented younger players from succeeding generations.



Now in its eighth year the Return to Camden Town Festival has gained a high international profile in a short time. The Festival has provided an excellent focus for the



tradition and has sent a clear message to touring traditional Irish artists that London is once again back on the map. It has also served to expose this wonderful tradition to London's wider multicultural population.

One of the great achievements of the Festival throughout its eight-year history is the number of people it has introduced to Irish music, song and dance via the many



workshops and talks given by musicians, dancers and historians.



There's something here for everyone, from true beginners to experienced aficionados. If you're just interested in sitting in, you're welcome at the workshops as a non-participant.



From the outset the Festival has featured céilí dancing and there'll be traditional Irish music sessions at the main venue of the London Irish Centre and at local pubs, where you'll be able to hear and play along with some of the very best musicians. Turn up and enjoy the craic!

If you feel you may be able to help the Festival with organisation or sponsorship, please contact us on [admin@returntocamden.org](mailto:admin@returntocamden.org).



The Organisers would like to thank the 2005 Festival sponsors:



and John Griffin

For the latest information and to see photographs of previous Festivals, log on to  
[www.returntocamden.org](http://www.returntocamden.org)



Fr Tom McNamara (centre) pictured receiving the first arrivals following the opening of the London Irish Centre, Camden in 1955. During the eleven years he was involved in providing hostels, Fr Mac accommodated 12,784 people for as long as they needed the accommodation. The vast majority of them were newly arrived from Ireland.



Below: A group pictured at the unveiling of a portrait of Fr Tom MacNamara on the 4th November 1976 which was presented to the London Irish Centre, Camden. The portrait is on show in the McNamara Hall which was built in his honour.

The portrait was commissioned by the Council of Irish Counties.





# Our world in pictures...

Every day at the London Irish Centre sees many events taking place. Some are history-making and some are more everyday events. Here we have photographs of some of the things that happen and we hope they remind you of the great work that our volunteers and patrons do.



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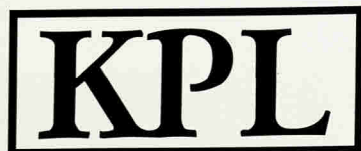
50-52 Camden Square, London NW1 9XB Tel/Fax: 0207 916 7272  
Website: [www.londonirishcentre.net](http://www.londonirishcentre.net) Email: [cb@londonirishcentre.net](mailto:cb@londonirishcentre.net)

*why not experience the warmth of our traditional welcome for yourself!*









## Kilburn Properties Limited

*Michael McCann & John Mullally*

*send best wishes to*

*the London Irish Centre*

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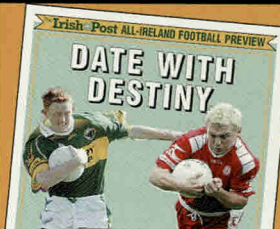
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# So much has happened





## in 50 years...

In the 50 years that has been the growth of the London Irish Centre, there have been many events that have taken place... Here we have photographs from just a small handful - some momentous occasions and others, while more social occasions, important none-the-less.

We hope they bring back some memories for you and you enjoy trying to put names to the faces.





# the IRISH



# WORLD

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[www.irishcentre.org](http://www.irishcentre.org)

LONDON IRISH CENTRE

VOLUNTEERS

2005 - The Year of  
the Volunteer

of the London Irish Centre