

Issue 15

JULY 2005

FREE

IRISH IN LEEDS

PUBLISHED BY LEEDS IRISH HEALTH AND HOMES



Tony

LEEDS IRISH FILM FESTIVAL



Well, it happened! The first ever festival of Irish films in the city took place at the Hyde Park Cinema in Headingley during the month of May. We had a very successful launch of the event on the afternoon of Monday 9th May in the Village Hotel. Michael Lonergan chair of the Dion Committee came up from the Irish Embassy for the occasion and the young Irish actor from Emmerdale, Liam O'Brien, was the guest of honour. Liam is a very talented and humorous young man who entertained us all during his opening remarks. He hails from Limerick, speaks Irish and refused to accept any fee when he realised the nature of our work. We wish him well in his future career. Several members of the Irish community were there as well as people from the council and the media. A very pleasant young man from Calender News called Tony came and took some footage and interviewed the guests and Ant Hanlon. Jim Mulhern from The Irish World took some stills.

We had excellent publicity from Chris Murphy in the Yorkshire Evening Post on Saturday 7th May and good coverage in the Irish Post in the weeks leading up to the festival. Eddie Mulligan was interviewed on live Radio Leeds by Bob Walmsley on his show on the Thursday before the launch about the festival and we were mentioned on ITV on Monday morning and evening and again on Tuesday evening. We are already in the planning stage for next year's festival and hope that it will prove to be a successful annual event in the calendar of the Irish community not only in Leeds but across Yorkshire. The premiere of "Adam and Paul" was a bit of a coup as the film is only now hitting the box offices across Britain but it is a bit of double edged sword as it has set the standard for future films events in the city. We have had a very positive response to the film festival from almost everyone who attended or heard about the event and the amount of goodwill from everybody was heart warming. All in all the festival was a success and was well received by all those involved in cinema not only in the city but across the county.



Editorial

Hi everyone! Hope that you are all well and prospering. We are still looking for Irish people in Leeds to contribute to the newsletter. I am sure that there are plenty of you out there with stories to tell so why not send them in? This issue has some interesting items about the good work that is going on all over the city. The article on page 14 for example shows the excellent work carried out by the Simon Community. We have a new member of staff and an article by a young man presently working with us who is a direct descendant of Michael Davitt the historical Irish hero. We have poems, recipes, history items and an interview with the larger than life Niall Tobin, actor and raconteur and much much more. I hope you enjoy it.

Kind regards,

Eddie Mulligan,

Editor



Hey there, my name is Caroline Orange. I started working as a trainee Housing Support Worker for LIHH in April this year. I've had various work roles in the past such as bar work/waitressing, office work and IT support. I felt that I wanted to work more with people on a one to one basis so, I was very lucky and, indeed grateful to find myself working for such a grand organisation in the heart of Leeds. I think the folk I meet are authentic and I always take something away from every visit.

A cat dies and goes to Heaven

A cat dies and goes to Heaven. God meets him at the gate and says, 'You've been a good cat all of these years. Anything you desire is yours, all you have to do is ask.' The cat says, 'Well, I lived all my life with a poor family on a farm and had to sleep on hardwood floors.' God says, 'Say no more.' And instantly, a fluffy pillow appears. A few days later, 6 mice are killed in a tragic accident and they go to Heaven. God meets them at the gate with the same offer that He made the cat. The mice said, 'All our lives we've had to run. We've been chased by cats, dogs and even women with brooms. If we could only have a pair of roller skates, we wouldn't have to run anymore.' God says, 'Say no more.' And instantly, each mouse is fitted with a beautiful pair of tiny roller skates.

About a week later, God decides to check and see how the cat is doing. The cat is sound asleep on his new pillow. God gently wakes him and asks, 'How are you doing? Are you happy here?'

The cat yawns and stretches and says, 'Oh, I've never been happier in my life. And those Meals on Wheels you've been sending over are the best!'

Hawthorne Garden Services *planned maintenance and landscaping*

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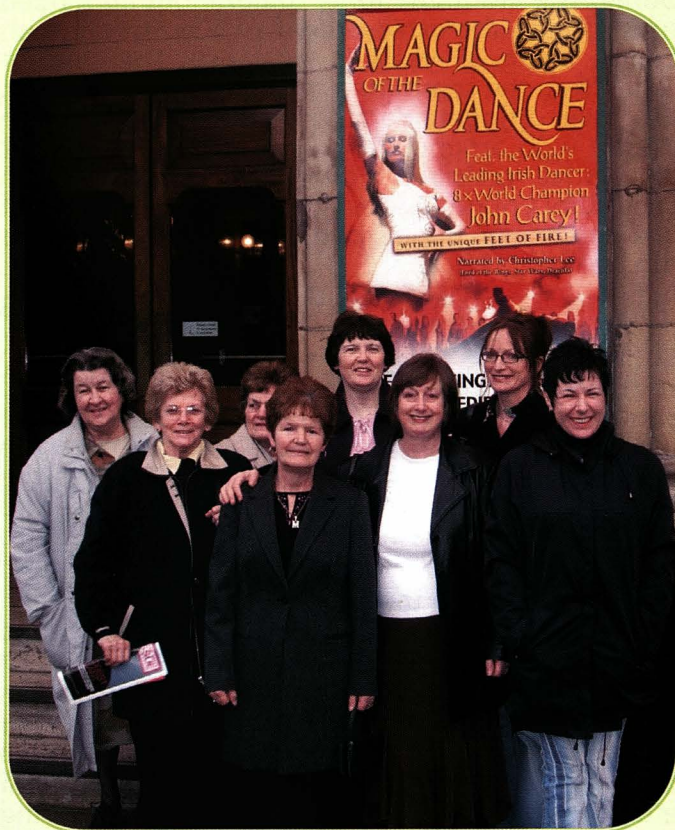
Magic of the dance

The Leeds Irish Women's Group enjoyed an evening at the theatre in April to watch the spectacular Irish dance show "The Magic of the Dance."

The show was a combination of traditional Irish dance, modern tap, some beautiful, soulful singing and a good few laughs thrown in too!

Entwined within the impressive song & dance was an extremely poignant re-telling of the plight of the Irish immigrants during the 1846-1850-potato famine, the emotions & the anguish beautifully captured in the dance.

It was an excellent show & all the cast did a fabulous job, especially lead dancer 7 times world champion Irish dancer John Carey. Watch your back Michael Flatley!



I AM

I am Ancient Ireland, gone now,
but my memory lingers still
in the secret language of rock and hill,
in murmuring streams and dark lakes
and in the hidden heart of mountains.

Look for me in twisted bog oak,
in thick shrouded woods, in the smoke
of turf-fires smouldering in the night-
I am always there.

Hear me in the keening of the wind,
in the sweet ecstasy of bird-song,
in the churning of the wild waves-
I am never silent.

Feel me in the moist and soft caress
of summer rain: the spongy touch
of moss on time-worn stone-
I am eternal.

Taste me in the smoky tang of whiskey,
in the salmon's pink and tender flesh,
in the wild red berries and the ink-black sloe-
I am the flavours of the earth.

Smell me in the acrid scent of peat-smoke,
in the freshness of a new-born baby's
breath;
in the fragrance of the fields in early
summer-
I am the essence of Ireland.

Sometimes my children forget me,
but I remember them always;
in the darkest night I'll guide them,
in their anguish be beside them-
it's my children who have made me who I
am.

Leeds Irish Centre: From there to here in 35 years

During the month of June, celebrations abounded to recognise the achievement of this famous Irish Centre being 35 years in existence. The concept came from the committee of the Irish National club on lower Briggate (affectionately known as the 'Nash') who around 1964-5 recognised a need for alternative premises. Following discussions with Leeds City Council 2 sites were offered, the present one and one on Burley road. And as the saying goes the rest is ...

Building started in 1969 and the official opening was June 8th 1970 with a Mass presided over by Bishop Wheeler. Tetley's brewery donated £120,000 to the development of the Tara suite. In 1972 they contributed another £60,000 for the development of the Davitt Bar. The land had been bought by the Centre in 1971 at a cost of £51,000. This was the realisation of the vision as Tom McLaughlin, centre manager put it. The first purpose built Irish Centre in Britain.

It was a time when there were lots of Irish people in Leeds, with more coming in. Motorways needed building and there was lots of money around to support the income of the centre.

I asked Liam Thompson, the new Chair, what he felt made the Centre special. He felt it was "being all things to all people" and managing the diversity of a unit that can change in need 3 or 4 times during the day. Their expert 'plate-spinning' helps them to make everyone feel important.

Tommy has been the lynch-pin to the Centre's success as has been recognised by so many over the years. He originally came to the Centre as MC in 1970, but then left because of outside work commitments, returning as Centre Manager in 1975. He is always looking for ways to improve things; it was Tommy that identified the opportunity to host weddings in the 1970's, something that remains ever popular. Liam has been associated with the Centre since starting as a barman in the mid-80's. After joining the Tara Suite as a Director, he became a member of the Centre's management committee and is now the first 2nd-generation Irish Chair the Centre has had.

Tommy identifies his happiest moment as seeing the Centre being 'debt-free' in 1977 when the Scottish and Newcastle brewery took over and their injection of £106,000 allowed the Centre to clear outstanding loans.

Liam recognises that the Centre is still a big attraction to the Irish community with many people in their 30's and 40's coming back as their family circumstances often mean they want somewhere friendly and responsive, and where better?

There are currently 1100 members of the Centre with 150 people being signed up last year which ensures a steady clientele.



The Centre has had its share of ups and downs over the years. As Tommy recognised, the 'Troubles' created uncertainty and fear for the community, and drawing parallels to the experiences of the Muslim community at this particular juncture, he recognised how welcoming the people of Yorkshire are to immigrant communities and sees them as very tolerant, which provides hope for all. He vividly recalls sitting outside with the Police one early morning during the 1970's following a coded message suggesting a bomb in the Centre and considering the threat to the endeavours of the community.

Everyone at the Centre recognises the Irish community's greatest assets are its people. Tommy and Liam couldn't name the forces that had and have made the Centre special as there are too many, but paid tribute to the community's spirit and resilience in making this Centre nationally and internationally recognised as a Centre of excellence. They also paid special tribute to the Committee who oversee the work and recognised the relationship as a very positive one where communication is excellent and a sense of purpose strong.

In order to endorse that spirit, as part of the celebrations, 26 members of the Centre took part in a fundraising climb of Croagh Patrick (the Reek), Co. Mayo in June. Raising £5,000 for the Irish Cancer Appeal over a weekend and literally walking their socks off. Members have now raised over £44,000 for a new Cancer Unit at St James' Hospital and have set a target of £65,000 by December 3rd this year.

On September 18th they are holding an 'It's a Knockout' tournament in the Centre's grounds and would like 40 teams of 12 people to take part. Entry is assured by each player raising £20 sponsorship. Tommy and Liam have asked that as many people take this event to heart and make a concerted effort to raise a team and join the fun. For further details contact Tommy McLaughlin on 0113 2480887.

Community development workers for ethnic minorities mental health

The Government have recently announced plans to allocate 8 Community Development Workers in Leeds to work with Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities to improve mental health and well-being.

Statistics highlighted in recent reports such as Inside/Outside by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) show that people from these communities suffer a disproportionately high level of vulnerability when it comes to mental well-being. Research on the Irish community shows that our community can be at risk because of a combination of factors such as isolation and loneliness, a reluctance to talk about things when they are getting bad for you, a lack of family or cultural support, alcohol intake, age, poor housing and physical ill-health.

The Government want to help make a difference by investing in workers who can start to build up links with BME communities and offer some support to individual and groups who are vulnerable to the above conditions to help them build up initiatives which can alleviate the stresses which cause mental ill-health.

There are many great examples in the Irish community of small projects which help keep people socially included, such as the Tuesday Club at the Irish Centre, luncheon clubs, local parish groups, music sessions etc and this may be an opportunity to get those groups properly funded so that they can reach a wider audience if they want to, or indeed, just make them carry on a bit longer.

The workers are expected to be in place by the end of December 2006 as the Primary Care Trusts in Leeds, who allocate the money, need to plan ahead. We look forward to seeing a positive working relationship with the Irish community emerging. For further information you can visit the NIMHE website which is www.nimhe.org.uk and look up Community Development Workers.

Federation of Irish Societies Congress

The weekend of the 17th June saw the 32nd Congress event of the Federation of Irish Societies in London. The Federation is an umbrella organisation providing advice and support to affiliated Irish welfare and cultural organisations and clubs and centres throughout the UK.

Recently the Federation have secured funding to develop into a robust and stable organisation embarking on a capacity-building programme with its affiliates to enable them to access funding, be constitutionally sound and take their part in the development of community engagement initiatives.

- An annual Congress give affiliates an opportunity to:
- Meet up and share good practice and news
- Debate the direction of the Federation over the forthcoming year
- Elect Board members
- Enjoy the craic!

Under the Director, Eithne Rynne, Congress were informed that although there is still much work to do as many Irish organisations find themselves under-resourced, lacking dedicated personnel to take the issues forward and working in an environment where they are the only Irish group in their area, progress was being made with many groups, clubs and centres.

The formal business of Congress was hosted by the Mayor of London's office and held at the Greater London Assembly buildings on Saturday 18th June. A reception was held on the Friday night by the Deputy Mayor Nicky Garner who recognised the contribution of the Irish community to London's past, present and future. A Gala Ball was held in the Camden Irish Centre on Saturday night and guests included Irish Minister of State, Noel Treacy, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Lord Dubs, The Irish Ambassador to Britain, Daithi O'Ceallaigh, TD Paschal Mooney and celebrity Nicky Campbell who was embarking on a sponsored walk of Ireland in aid of the British Association of Fostering and Adoption (BAAF).

Leeds currently has two representatives of the 12 Board members, Ant Hanlon, Director of Leeds Irish Health & Homes who is Treasurer and the newly elected Des Hurley from the Irish Music Project.

International women's day in Leeds

On 9 March an International Womens' Day celebration was held at The Hamara Centre in Beeston, the theme being Women and World Peace. Several different cultures were represented including Jewish, the Irish Travellers community in Leeds, Bangladeshi, Iranian, Irish and others. Eileen and Teresa from Irish Health and Homes put a stall together representing various aspects of Irishness.

We had a selection of Irish books on music, poetry, literature, some Irish music and instruments, religious items, a tricolour and of course Irish soda bread which went down a treat with everybody. It was very friendly atmosphere and lovely to see so many women from the various cultures in Leeds coming together to celebrate under the one roof. Eileen Morris, who comes from Belfast and works at the Vale, gave a very heartfelt talk about her life and experiences, both in a troubled Belfast and here in Leeds.

International Women's Day is held all over the world on 8th March each year and celebrates womanhood in all its forms. Look out for press articles about local events at the beginning of March next year and come along to show solidarity, make a contribution or just to hear the experiences of other women from around the world.



COBH

A mantis towering over the town
in grey silence;
the church a dominating presence
above Cobh Quay;
a narrow strip between cliff and sea,
once bustling and prosperous.
Elegant houses now merge with steep,
damp
winding lanes.

Festooned with bunting, a cruise ship
drawn
by tugs to sea;
smiling passengers wave a joyful
last goodbye.

Watching from wooden decking,
memorabilia
at our backs;
harvest from sister ships, phantoms
of the past.
Edwardian opulence gleaming, screaming
in mahogany and brass.
Nostalgia, cold dread of another time of
smiles,
expectation, hope.

And still the church sits tall, aloof-
a silent sentinel.
Praying hands, of pristine stone,
spearing the heavens.

Deadline looms for victims of abuse in residential schools and homes in Ireland

There has been a lot of publicity over the past few years of the ordeals suffered by many Irish people who were victims of horrific abuse when they were brought up in the mainly religious order based industrial schools and homes in Ireland.

Recent programmes such as 'States of Fear' highlighted what innocent children had to put up with just to ensure their survival in conditions which would shock the most hardened heart even today.

Many of the survivors of these homes are people who we wouldn't even know as they have just got on with their lives; for too many however the experience has seriously jeopardised their chances of a normal life, with feelings of guilt, inadequacy, anger and loss predominating their thoughts.

The government in Ireland has recognised the need for reparation and has set up the Irish Residential Institutions Redress Board in order

to make compensation payments to people who have suffered. This Board has been in operation for a number of years now, but they have recently announced that they have set a deadline for applications as December 2005.

As we know, many members of the community would not come forward because they feel too proud or ashamed to accept help. For some, they would not know where to start to make enquiries about the scheme; and for others it takes an awful long time to bury the hurt and pain suffered and they may not want to uncover these feelings again.

If you require any help in getting in touch with a solicitor, or the Redress Board, then LIHH would be only too happy to help you. We are aware of agencies who are experts in providing help here and would be glad to pass on their details to you or support you in talking to them.

Contact us on 0113 2625614 if you would like any help in dealing with this issue.

Flights of fancy

The planes roared down the runway and drifted up towards the afternoon sun. Carrying bands from Offaly and Cork, the aircraft, heading for Ireland, disappeared into blankets of clouds and thus brought to an end the 2005 Huddersfield Saint Patrick's Day Parade. Thoughts of 2006 and another two Irish bands playing on the streets of Huddersfield, sandwiched between ten colourful themed floats, majorettes, dancers, street entertainers and fancy dress artistes seemed at least a year away!!

But 'The Parade' is an animal that needs to be fed and watered twelve months a year, and with much to be done, the nourishment began. As this was our fifth anniversary, we had booked a Dinner Dance to be held at the Huddersfield Irish Centre on Saturday May 7th. Meetings were hastily arranged, strategies were agreed and our eager supporters snapped up tickets. The six course meal went down a treat and as the Ranchers Showband played into the early hours, followed by DJ Tony Lambe, the floor rocked to the beat of the one hundred and fifty people present.

As the hangovers subsided, our committee looked towards Saturday July 23rd at St Patrick's Club for the Parade's Auction and Dance. At the time of writing, a signed Huddersfield Town football and Giants rugby shirt have been secured. These along with many more goodies will go under the hammer and special guests Peter Mylett and the Frances Cassidy Irish dancers will entertain the crowd.

We take a break during August but return in style to the Irish Centre on September 24th when those fantastic entertainers, the Leeds branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Eireann, promise yet another barnstorming night of traditional Irish music. We will also hold our Annual Grand Draw that evening. Among the twelve prizes last year were a return trip to Ireland for a car and four passengers, a TV/DVD player and a mini CD system. We have already pencilled in a number of themed evenings leading up to Parade 2006. These include a Halloween Night, 'Elvis Idol', a 'Belts of the Celts' gig, a 'Stars in Their Eyes' special and a Parade Eve Concert.

John McLoughlin (Parade Secretary) Tel 01484 315729 www.theparadeonline.org

To been or not to been

This is the first part of an interview Gerry Molumby did with Niall Tobin in June 2005. The second part will be in the next issue.

I have had the privilege of working with Niall Toibin over the past few years. He has come over to 'top the bill' at my 'Celtic Strands' Irish Showcase Concerts. Backstage at St. Joseph's club, Leagrave in Luton Niall enjoys a cup of tea.

He chuckles when he tells you that he is now a 'tea totaler'. Niall is as genuinely warm and friendly 'off stage' as he is 'on stage'.

His name is pronounced "Neel Tobeen", and the conversation gets off to the numerous pronunciations (mostly wrong) and spelling variations of his names that he has had to endure. Born in Co. Cork in 1928 he was one of seven children in an Irish-speaking family. His father was of that generation of Irish nationalists who insisted on speaking in Irish at all times, sometimes to the acute embarrassment of his children. Strangely enough, this habit was not particularly admired in the new Irish Free State of the 1930s: Niall began training that voice as a child in the cathedral choir and the Opera House in Cork. In his teens, he joined a drama society attached to the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League. It was when Niall started acting in amateur plays "determined to be an actor." At first, he entered the Irish Civil Service and in 1953 he joined the Radio Eireann Repertory Company and quit his day job. Here he perfected his craft by playing every conceivable role possible during his 14 years in "the Rep" after which he established a distinguished tenure at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. By then, Niall Toibin was indisputably one of Ireland's greatest actors and was courted by all of the top theatres in the country.

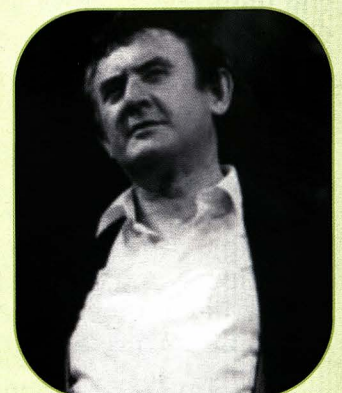
We all remember him most recently as the wise older priest in Ballykissangel or as 'Slipper' in the highly successful Irish RM. His acting career is not confined to TV and numerous films like Ryan's Daughter or Brian Friel's 'Philadelphia Here I Come'. His career in the theatre is equally as distinguished; he toured the world for many years in 'Behan Himself'. - having an uncanny resemblance then to the middle aged Brendan Behan.

His autobiography, aptly titled 'Smile and Be a Villain' is a good trip down the memory lane of his distinguished career. Niall has numerous theatre, TV and film awards to his credit. He helped us to laugh during some difficult times in the 1970/80's. We all brought back our video and cassette tapes from numerous holidays home - boasting that we had the most current Niall Toibin joke to tell, but never could tell them as good as the Master. I took the opportunity of Niall's short visit to Britain to get him to sign my copy of the 'Irish Reciter', which he edited. Here he has selected half a hundred much-loved pieces, ranging from patriotism to pathos, from the gentlest live lyrics to the most rumbustious tongue-in-cheek verses and some 'tricks of the trade'. His recommendation before a performance is "a relaxed stance". The Irish Echo Theatre Reviewer Joseph Hurley summed it up; "The amiable Toibin, who resembles the late Spencer Tracy, is so comfortable with his material and his audience that he lobs his show across with such effortless grace that it's as if he were telling these stories across his dinner table."

Niall is very much his own man and now has the luxury of working only when he wants to. He tries to tour Ireland once a year with his satirical, very witty one man show. He has just completed a very successful run with the two hander play 'The Sunshine Boys' (directed by his daughter) and co-starring his lifelong friend and veteran Irish actor, Des Keogh. He can be heard regularly on www.rte.ie (archive) on various radio plays. Only a few weeks ago he played an ageing Shakespearean actor reminiscing on his life on the stage, I was waiting for the line 'To been or not Tobeen!' Niall spend most of the summer visiting his two daughters who live in the USA and playing 'a lot of golf'. He is also in great demand for cameo parts in major films, his New York accent is perfect!



Niall having signed my copy of 'The Irish Reciter'





Potato Farl

Also known as potato cake or potato bread, this is very much a northern dish. It is an important - indeed essential - constituent of the Ulster Fry, alongside bacon, egg, sausage and perhaps fried soda farl.

The recipe calls for cooked, mashed potatoes. These should be freshly boiled, or, better still, steamed and passed through a food mill, and used warm.

2 lb/ 1 kg/ 2 cups mashed potatoes
4 oz/ 125 g/ 1 cup plain flour
2 tbsp butter
salt

Melt the butter and mix into the potatoes with the salt. Work in the flour quickly but thoroughly and knead lightly. Divide in two and roll out each half on a floured board to form a circle about the size of a large dinner plate. Cut in quarters (farls) and cook for about 3 minutes on each side in a heavy frying pan in a little bacon fat.

Deep Thoughts

1. Can vegetarians eat animal crackers?
2. If a man is in the middle of the forest talking and there is no woman to hear him, is he still wrong?
3. Is there another word for synonym?
4. Where do forest rangers go to get away from it all?
5. What should you do if you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
6. Isn't it scary that doctors call what they do "practice"?
7. Is a shellless turtle homeless or just naked?
8. Do they use a sterile needle for lethal injections?
9. Why did Kamikaze pilots wear helmets?
10. What was the best thing before sliced bread?

Announcements taken from Church Bulletins

- Don't let worry kill you -- let the church help.
- Thursday night - Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- The rosebud on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.
- This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- Tuesday at 4:00 PM there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk will please come early.
- Wednesday, the ladies Liturgy Society will meet. Mrs. Jones will sing, "Put me in My Little Bed" accompanied by the pastor.
- Thursday at 5:00 P.M. there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All wishing to become little mothers, please see the minister in his study.
- This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- The service will close with "Little Drops of Water." One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest of the congregation will join in.

The Davitt connection

I was born and brought up in Manchester. I'm 22 and currently on a break from studying Politics at Leeds University, and working at Leeds Irish Health and Homes. It is strangely fitting finding myself working here after a childhood in England influenced by my Irish heritage. My grandmother, Sheilagh Davitt, made great efforts since I was very young to make me aware of my Irish heritage, particularly the lives of her late husband Michael, and his grandfather Michael Davitt. My grandfather was too modest to talk of the achievements of either himself or his grandfather; however Sheilagh's great pride in both of their work has meant that I am aware of their lives and achievements, and included them in my life, for which I am more than grateful.

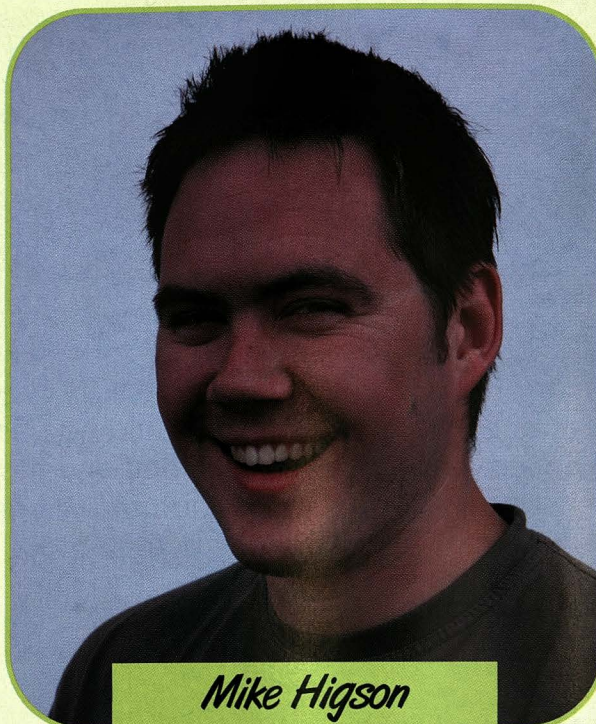
The historical experiences of the Irish, the nationalist movement and Michael Davitt's role in it certainly had an effect on my experience as a person growing up in England. Like many English people of my generation, I did not feel that there was much opportunity for patriotism other than at sporting events. This contrasted sharply with the experiences of my grandparents as immigrants to England, and the struggles of their grandparents in Ireland at the hands of the English in the 1800s. The 'Irish' experience forged a strong national identity through processes which English people cannot innately identify with, having no historical comparison. Being in between these two perspectives is a strange experience which constantly creates conflicts of opinion and challenges me to see issues from more than one viewpoint.

I think that nationalism and patriotism are inherently important in giving someone a sense of where they come from and where they belong. Understanding that the histories of Irish and English people are, although entwined, entirely incomparable, has left me in something of a patriotic void, feeling no definitive allegiance to either country. I have felt neither exclusively Irish nor English; if anything I would say that first and foremost I am a Mancunian. As a child I dreaded the dilemma of being called to play for England in the World Cup and either disappointing my grandmother, or facing an English media backlash for desertion. However in many ways this detachment is a blessing. I feel no constraints or nationalistic burdens upon how I am supposed to behave or think, particularly regarding political issues. I also feel that it allows me to appreciate nationalist attitudes of both countries to an extent which perhaps would be limited by a strong allegiance to either one. And, when discussing the historical or current climate between Ireland and England, I am in a position to relate the views of both sides without being staunchly in one camp or the other.

Growing up in England with Irish family history is significant, especially when that history involves someone as politically active as Michael Davitt. It broadens your mind's perspective and challenges what you read or hear about English political history and even current activity. When studying the Irish nationalist movement at school, for example, the curriculum had a strong British bias. The rights and wrongs of its actions were not discussed, nor were the motives or beliefs underpinning them. We were told what their grievances were, but no attempt to quantify or validate these problems was made; we simply learnt how the British government dealt with them. Knowing of the struggle faced by the Irish through my family made me aware that where you acquire knowledge and whom you acquire it from is often as important as the information itself. Likewise, having a wider perspective, you are more aware that in international current situations such as in Iraq or Israel, there is another side to the argument to that of the British government or even the West as a whole.

The attachment I feel to the Irish nationalist cause when looking back over history is because my political opinions and judgement are in line with the beliefs behind the cause; particularly concerning land ownership, self-determination and self-rule. There have been similar political and economic situations around the world to those faced by Ireland in the time of Michael Davitt's life which I have read of or observed and have held the same opinions regarding redistribution of land, democratic reform and methods to enhance the lives of those who live under repressive regimes. My connection is therefore more through a parallel in beliefs on issues rather than through national pride.

I think it is a rare feat for anyone to earn the admiration and respect of many for their principles and actions. To be held in such esteem a century after your death for them as Michael Davitt will be is phenomenal, and worthy of the appreciation and recognition deserving of a man of his historical significance.



Mike Higson

The wild geese

After the English army invaded Ireland in 1169, the situation became so bad for the Irish, many left. The army pushed off the land those Irish who remained, and rented it to others. In 1608, the recipients in Ulster were mostly Presbyterian Scottish families who were brought to Ireland to cultivate the confiscated land.

The Irish resisted as best they could. It was an unequal fight of a few farmers against many soldiers and mercenaries. In 1691, English forces under William of Orange (a Dutchman) defeated most of the Irish, Scottish and French forces of the Jacobites (From Jacobus, Latin for James) who followed James II of Scotland. The only group that held out was led by Patrick Sarsfield and they were under siege at Limerick. Fourteen thousand armed men of Ireland watched as Patrick Sarsfield signed the Treaty of Limerick, witnessed by the Chief Justice of England (a prerequisite of the treaty made by Sarsfield). The Treaty called for the Irish in the army to:

- lay down their arms and return to their farms
- join the English army
- keep their arms and be provided free passage to France

The treaty provided for those that elected to stay (as well as for all other Irish in Ireland) to be promised security in property, civil, and religious rights. The Irish Army was then organized by units and paraded to a place where they had to choose the English or French standard. Some of the Irish, believing the English administration of their country would abide by the terms of the treaty, marched to the English banner and elected to stay. Ninety three percent, about 13,000 men marched to the French Standard.

The departure of these men, all at one time and probably forever, left an indelible mark on the Irish people. Seamus MacManus in his book, "The Story of the Irish Race", wrote that Erin searched all nature for its most desolate image to remind her of the wailing made in her ears by their last farewell. She called them, Na Geana Faidhaine, "The Wild Geese."

The definition has been broadened to touch the descendants of immigrating Irish if they made a contribution of note to the history of a land other than Ireland. Leaving Ireland proved the right decision for the original Wild Geese; within the year, the English repudiated the treaty and began to confiscate the property, civil, and religious rights of the Irish. This was not restricted to the Catholic Irish; the Presbyterian Irish also were victims.

In 1708, the English landlords raised the rents of the descendants of the Scottish settlers, in Ulster. Often the landlords would put the land out for bids. Families had to bid for the land they had cultivated for generations, often against the family of the dispossessed Irish. In so doing, they made a new Irish enemy, and hardened the old. The bidding process also increased the enmity between the two Celtic groups who called the land home. They faced another round of bids eighteen years later and then again five years later. In 1731 when the dispossessed and the oppressed rebelled, the English troops killed hundreds of thousands by the sword and millions more with the starvation that followed.

This triggered a round of emigration. Rather than live unfree in their own land or face possible death, many Irish men, women, and children left. Others left after realizing that improvements made on their land, resulted in rising rent which was at the whim of the landlord. Arriving in the new colonies many found the English administration in America only slightly less discriminatory than in Ireland.

Hearing this, many Irish chose to follow the Wild Geese to France or elsewhere on the continent. They joined the armies of Austria, France, Russia and Spain hoping to train and gain experience fighting against the English and return to liberate Ireland. Many Irish who remained at home were "transported" to British colonies and their lands confiscated for crimes against the crown ranging from resisting authority, to having the impertinence to own a horse. Many Irish were forced into the British services, some joined to escape the shambles at home with a view to desert on a foreign assignment and begin a new life in a new land. Many forged military careers in the British services.

Christy Ring

Christy Ring December 12, 1920 - March 2, 1979 is regarded as the greatest player of the game of hurling of all time.

Nicholas Christopher Ring was born in Cloyne, County Cork, Ireland in 1920. Ring's first hurling success came when he won a County Junior championship medal with the Cloyne Club in 1939, and later winning a record 11 county senior medals with Glen Rovers. He made his senior début with County Cork in 1939 and shares with John Doyle of Tipperary the distinction of winning eight All-Ireland medals, from 1941 to 1944, 1946 and 1952 to 1954.

Ring won a record 18 Railway Cup medals with Munster between 1942 and 1963, appearing in 22 finals in all. He also won four National Hurling League medals with Cork (1940, 1941, 1948 and 1953). He was top scorer in the game three times (1959, when he became the only player to average over ten points a game), 1961 and 1962, when he shared the honours with Jimmy Doyle of Tipperary.

A film about Ring's life was produced by Gael-Linn in 1964 and Val Dorgan wrote his biography in 1981, both works entitled "Christy Ring". He has also been commemorated by a sculpture of him in Cloyne, the town where he was born, and the "Christy Ring Bridge" over the river Lee in Cork remembers his achievements. One of Cork City's principle GAA stadia, Páirc Uí Rinn, is named in his honour. Ring was also honoured by the Gaelic Athletic Association in 2000 when he was named on the "Hurling Team of the Millennium."

Christy Ring died suddenly at the age of 58 on March 2, 1979.

No doubt he was away ahead of his time. Even in the way he dressed for the game, his shorts had a more modern look about them, even back in the '50s, stockings always pulled up, hurling banded and taped. His feet and wrist work played a major part in the execution of his various skills, the way he could twirl on his feet after connecting on a ball, be it on the ground or in the air still holding his balance and without great arm action, but delicate wrist work that nobody else could master. Normally shots like this would throw you off balance, but he could compensate with his wrist work to put deadly force on the ball. No one could come near the level of skill and commitment he had, players were in awe of him and some just stood back and admired him even during the game.

Everyone recognised he was a genius with a Hurley in this hand. More than twenty five years on, his name is still sacred. A lot of players have come and gone since his passing. New stars have emerged. He once said the best hurlers are yet to come. But unfortunately, another Ring has not appeared yet and we might have to wait for many a long day.



The urban cultural programme

Illuminate is a region-wide initiative, which has emerged out of the 2008 Capital of Culture bidding process, which was ultimately won by Liverpool.

Following on from this process, the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the Millennium Commission and Arts Council England created a £20 million fund which cities were invited to bid into. Nineteen areas across the country have now been awarded funding to deliver high profile cultural programmes. Bradford is leading Yorkshire's 5 hub cities in the project: Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York as major partners.

Illuminate will officially run from October 2005 to October 2006, and will comprise of a programme of exciting cultural events, activities, festivals and public art. Audiences Yorkshire has been working with Project Director Keith Jeffrey and Yorkshire Culture to develop the marketing and audience development plans for the programme, which aims to establish Yorkshire as a region of cultural and creative excellence.

If you would like to get involved or find out more about the Urban Cultural Programme you can contact alison@audiencesyorkshire.org.uk

The African/Irish music project

Soundjata has been working with children in Leeds for several years promoting African music. We are hoping to run a project involving Irish and African music with the intention of making a CD and performing locally. We are therefore looking for Irish musicians/singers between the ages of 8-16 to join in this exciting venture. If you are interested in getting involved contact Shelagh on 07879053671 or Teresa 07799628463

We look forward to hearing from you. (Below are images of succesful Celtic groups not related to the Leeds project.)



Leeds Irish Health and Homes Carers Group Trip

In April of this year, the carers group enjoyed a peaceful night away at the Briary Retreat Centre in Ilkley where they were treated to some delicious home cooking, tranquil walks in the surrounding woods & some good laughs & conversation whilst relaxing in the lounge in the evening. Some of the ladies took a stroll into Ilkley town centre & had a leisurely browse in some of the many lovely shops whilst others treated themselves to tea & scones in the famous Betty's tearoom. What ever they chose to do, all agreed that they had a wonderful, relaxing time.





Margaret Siberry

A parable of our time

I imagine that you have fallen into a disused, dried up well. It is a dark and dangerous place. You feel confused, frightened and very lonely. You don't know what to do and you can't see any way out. That's how Anton Wallich Clifford, the founder of the first Simon Community, described what it must be like to have fallen onto the streets - you've hit rock bottom, there's nowhere else to go and all seems lost. There might be a ladder reaching down into the well, (which for Anton represented statutory services), but you can't get yourself together enough to make it to the top. You might even start to climb the first few rungs but it is too hard and you give up. After a while someone comes along and lets down a rope, telling you to hang on and they will pull you up. (This represents agencies that want to help by inviting people to come to them). You cling on desperately and it

seems as if you might get out of the terrible mess you are in, but the effort is too much and after a while you fall back, feeling worse than ever. You have failed yet again.

Just when all hope is fading, someone comes down into the well and sits beside you. Their presence alongside you begins to make you feel a bit better. They listen to what's been happening to you and ask how you are feeling. Perhaps life is worth bothering about after all. Perhaps you can find a way out, even though you have tried before and it hasn't worked. Perhaps this time, if you have someone alongside you, you'll make it. So, together, you begin the long and difficult climb out of the well. (For Anton, this describes the role of Simon Community workers and volunteers.)

The Value of Outreach Work

Every day we go out onto the streets in Leeds city centre to meet and talk with people. Doing outreach means working with people on their terms, visiting them, rather than expecting them to come to us. In practice outreach often means just having an informal chat with somebody. We believe that this is a vital part of working with damaged individuals on their own terms. It is about encouraging people to talk about their day, about their fears and troubles, about their anger, and about their hopes. In this way, relationships can develop and individuals can make decisions about their direction in life. Through outreach work we attempt to meet the needs of those who cannot or do not want to access other services, those for whom no other provision exists. We are there to make life on the streets more bearable for the individual and to minimise harm where we can. On a practical basis that can mean:

- giving out clothes and blankets (as happens on the weekly soup-run)



- taking somebody for a meal or a cup of tea
- writing a letter to prove somebody's status to enable him/her, for example, to sell the Big Issue or access benefits
- making sure people know what services are available
- accompanying people to the doctor's, to court, to the housing advice centre etc

Outreach work also enables us to have a good knowledge of how people experience homelessness, what kind of issues there are, how people feel about policies applied by the government and statutory services. This information is used to campaign and lobby on behalf of those, whose voices would otherwise remain unheard.

Who's Involved in the Community

Last month we had contact with 119 men and 27 women, and undertook more in-depth work with 50 people, offering emotional and practical support on the streets as well as visiting people in hospital and prison. We also offer resettlement support to people in hostels and in their own accommodation. This is possible not only because of the dedication of the full-time support workers but also because of the commitment of part-time volunteers and others who support us in a variety of ways. At present Leeds Simon Community does not receive any statutory funding but relies on donations from individuals and charitable trusts. We are always in need of funds, blankets, clothing, trainers, tinned food and toiletries. If you can help in any way or if you'd like to join us as a volunteer please contact:-

Margaret on 0113 243 8550

email:

margaret@leedssimoncommunity.freemove.co.uk

or write to Leeds Simon Community, Mill 6, Mabgate Mills, Mabgate, Leeds LS9 7DZ

GAA fixtures in Yorkshire

Yorkshire Junior League Final - July 10
Beeston at 1.00PM. Young Irelands v Bros. Pearse

Yorkshire Under 21's Semi-Final - July 13 at
Scott Hall at 7.45PM. John F. Kennedy's v St. Anthony's

Yorkshire Under 21's Semi-Final - July 14 at
Beeston at 7.45PM St. Benedicts v Bros. Pearse

Yorkshire Under 21's Final - Aug 7 at 1.00PM

Irish Festival Games - Saturday, July 23 -
Under 14's competition

Irish Festival Games - Sunday, July 24 will
include the Yorkshire Under 18's Final - St. Benedicts v St. Anthony's.

Feile Peil Na nOg (Limerick) over the
weekend of July 1 - 3. Yorkshire is sending a
team of our under 14's to play in division 5.
They will be hosted by Pallaskenry GAA and
expect to go one better than last year's
appearance in the final.

Under 14's Club Championship of Britain Final
- St. Benedicts Harps v Glen Rovers (Watford)
in Birmingham at 2.00PM on July 9.

Yorkshire Senior Championship Semi-Finals -
Hugh O'Neill's v Bros. Pearse at 1.00PM, St.
Benedicts v Young Irelands at 2.15PM on
Sept. 4 with the Final on Sept. 18 at 2.30PM
also at Beeston.

Blitz day for under 10's at the Leeds Irish
Centre on July 9 starting at 2.30PM

Blitz day for under 11's at the Leeds Irish
Centre on July 10 starting at 12.30PM

Blitz day for under 14's and under 12's at All
Saints School, Huddersfield on July 16

All four under-age clubs in Yorkshire (St.
Anthony's, Bros. Pearse, John F. Kennedy's
and St. Benedicts) will partake in each of the
above events.

The Yorkshire Senior Board meets on the 1st
monday of each month (8.30PM) and the
Minor Board meets on the last Tuesday of
each month.

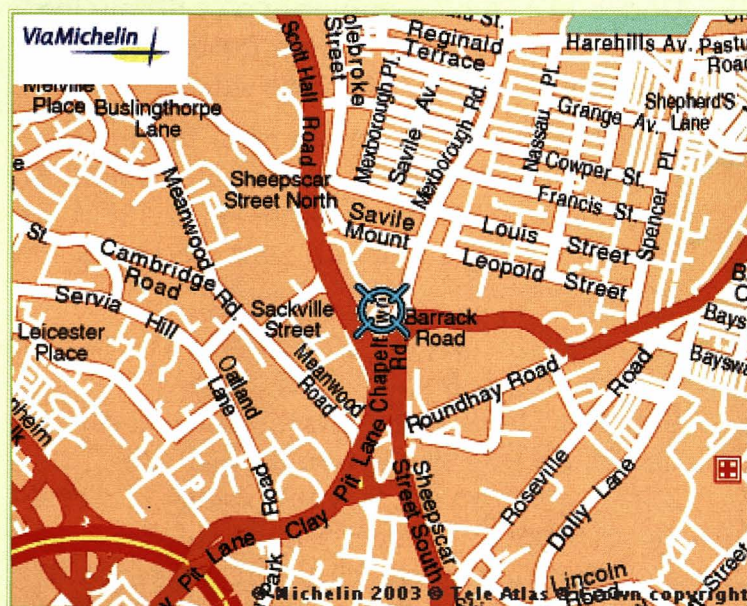
Huddersfield GAA Schools Tournament

Brothers Pearse held a Schools Tournament on the 21st May. After the work of the last year within various schools our club decided to host the very first Huddersfield Schools GAA Tournament. Five schools took part, Honley High, Colne Valley High, All Saints Catholic High (two teams) and Newsome High School. The day was a tremendous success with Honley High running out eventual winners. This team was made up of lads for whom it was their very first game. The quality of football was excellent and the event was well supported. Many thanks goes to all those who helped out on the day. Brothers Pearse intends to make this an annual event.



GAA CONTACTS

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Hugh Ó Neill's Gerry Enright | 07803 745995 |
| St. Anthony's John Kehoe | 0113 2281387 |
| Young Ireland's Jimmy Houghton | 07940 302541 |
| St. Benedict's Liam Ó Hara | 0113 2567627 |
| Bro's Pearse (Huddersfield) Ollie Walsh | 01484 536945 |
| Ladies Gaelic Football Claire Mahoney | 07834 687968 |



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