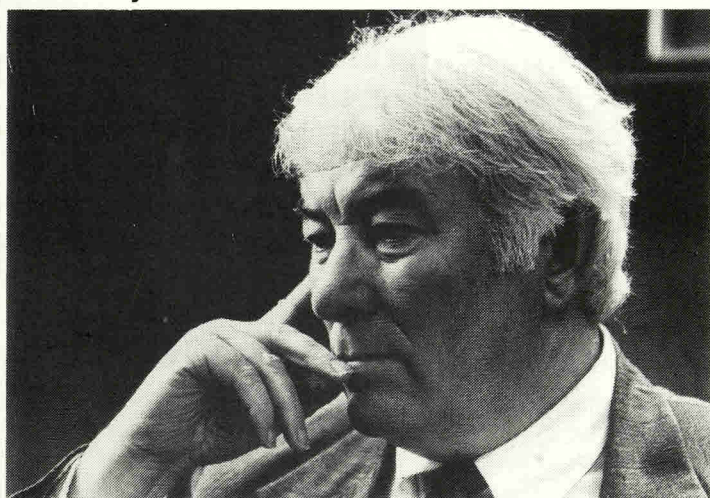


AGIY - INFO

Issue 38
February 1995

Field of Vision - a literary celebration.

The Action Group for Irish Youth which was founded in 1984 is presenting a Gala Evening with some of Ireland's literary greats on St. Patrick's Day to mark the start of our eleventh year in existence.



Seamus Heaney, Patron of AGIY, who will be reading from his work on St. Patrick's Night.

A formidable line up has been arranged for the event and includes AGIY's Patron Seamus Heaney, Edna O'Brien reading from "House of Splendid Isolation," acclaimed poet Tom Paulin, Marie Heaney reading from "Over Nine Waves" retellings of the ancient Irish myths and legends, author, journalist and screen playwright Ronan Bennett, and author and playwright Emma Donoghue.

After the readings there will be traditional music and a late bar.

The event will be held at the Union Chapel, Compton Terrace, N1, nearest tube Highbury & Islington, commencing at 8pm.

Tickets are £8 and £5 concessions and are available from Union Chapel Box Office, 071 226 1686 and from Jackson's Lane, 081 341 4421 subject to a booking fee for credit card bookings.

The event is jointly sponsored by Bank of Ireland and The Irish Post.

Diary Dates

February 7 - Irish community reps. meet with CRE

February 16 - LIYF meeting on Travellers

March 17 - AGIY Gala Evening, Union Chapel

March 23 - AGIY/FIS/ALA conference

New appointment at AGIY

AGIY are pleased to announce the appointment of Kathleen Egan to the post of Policy and Information Manager as from 20 February 1995.

Kathleen has been working with CARA for the past three years and prior to that worked with homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation in Camden.

She has a particular interest in working towards improving and changing social policy and it's impact on the Irish community.

Kathleen's most recent published work was "Monitoring of Irish applicants for housing - a survey of London boroughs."



Kathleen Egan, AGIY's new Policy and Information Manager

The Criminal Justice Act and the Irish Community

At the December meeting of the London Irish Youth Forum Andrew Puddephat, General Secretary of Liberty, addressed the meeting on the likely effects of the Criminal Justice Act which came into effect on 4 November 1994.

There are two main areas of the new act - **Criminal Justice and Public Order**.

Criminal Justice - the principal points are

- * the abolition of the right of silence
- * 2 new powers of stop & search
 - on suspicion of an impending terrorist act (with the Irish still the "suspect community" despite the ceasefire this could have serious implications) the police will be able to mount 28 day general stop & search operations affecting individuals and vehicles
 - in anticipation of violence in general
- * a new offence of going equipped to carry out a terrorist offence which could cover a wide range of household items including coffee jars as has been the case in Ireland
- * new powers affecting bail which effectively introduce preventative detention

- * powers to take DNA samples for all recordable offences

Public Order

- * a new offence of aggravated trespass
- * power to ban meetings if they are perceived as "trespassory assemblies" and/or they cause disruption to the public
- * raves will be controlled and prevented by power to stop and arrest and by the power to declare exclusion zones for raves
- * squatters can now be evicted by local authority directive after 24 hours notice and with the evidence of high numbers of Irish homelessness and the increasing numbers of young Irish moving to squats this could have disproportionate effects on young Irish people

Travellers are possibly the group most adversely affected by the new Act.

- * The Caravan Sites Act of 1968 has been repealed by the Act and with it the obligation on local authorities to provide sites for Travellers and Gypsies.
- * The Act also gives discretionary powers to bypass court proceedings on evictions and Travellers can be driven off

sites by police and local authorities.

Combined these measures have been seen by Travellers as a blatant attack on their lifestyle and culture forcing them off the road and into houses; some have referred to "ethnic cleansing" of Travellers and Gypsies the real intent of this legislation

However the powers given to local authorities are discretionary and need not apply if the authorities pass a self-denying ordinance saying that they will not implement the new powers. Liberty suggest that groups and individuals should lobby their authorities to pass these ordinances and remove one of the threats against Travellers contained in the Act.

At the end of January 1995 there was some positive news when Kent County Council agreed to continue providing sites for Travellers and Gypsies despite the new legislation.

Liberty are producing a Guide to the Criminal Justice Act (further details from *Liberty, 21 Tabard St., SE1 4LA, tel. 071 403 3888.*) They organise the Public Order Monitoring Project and are organising a National Petition against the act to be presented to the next government. Also being organised by Liberty is a Human Rights Convention in London on 15-17 June 1995.

Developing the Local Authority Response

AGIY with the Federation of Irish Societies (FIS) and the Association of London Authorities (ALA) are organising a conference on 23 March 1995 to develop local authorities' response to the findings of the AGIY/FIS commissioned CES report

"Developing a Community Response: The Service Needs of the Irish Community."

This morning conference is for members of local authorities, local authority officers (service managers, policy managers, equalities officers, directors), Health Authority staff, London wide and national policy making and development bodies, and Irish community organisations.

It's purpose is to consider the findings and recommendations of the most up to date report on the service needs of the Irish community, as well as how local authorities and related agencies can respond to it's findings in practical ways.

There will presentations on the report and workshops focusing on *Housing, Social Services, Health, Equalities, and Domestic Violence*.

Toby Harris, Chair of the ALA will open the conference and speakers include

- * **Herman Ouseley**, Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality
- * **Gurbux Singh**, Chief Executive of Haringey Council
- * **Lisa Murphy**, Director, AGIY and
- * **Sr Joan Kane**, Chair, Community Care Committee, FIS.

This conference will explore how local authorities and related groups can take practical steps to address Irish concerns in the areas of service delivery, equitable access to resources, homelessness provision, community care planning, and health strategies.

The conference is to be held at the ALA from 10.00am to 1.00pm on 23 March 1995.

CRE Meeting

Irish community representatives are meeting with Herman Ouseley, Chair of the CRE and his senior colleagues at the CRE on 7 February.

The representatives will impress upon the CRE the need to publicise much more widely their decision to have an **Irish category in ethnic monitoring and to discuss Census 2001**.

Other areas to be covered include

- * Health service monitoring,
- * the CRE research study and
- * complainant aid network in the Irish community.

Irish Homelessness

In the Irish Times of 29/12/94 the London Letter talked about the extent of Irish homelessness in London. The report quoted Crisis as saying that at least a third of the people they help are Irish "a higher percentage from any other ethnic group." Another survey of homeless people in Kensington and Chelsea also revealed a large percentage of Irish people sleeping rough with the majority suffering from alcohol and mental health problems.

Homeless Network in a report published in 1994 demonstrated that in 1993 the Irish, at 15% of total users, were the largest single ethnic group using Severe Weather Shelters.

These are all worrying figures which show the need for Irish agencies to continue their work with the homeless and to continue to lobby policy makers, councils and government.

AGIY Training

There are still some places left on training days in February and March 1995.

The courses are:

- * **28/02/95 Working with Travellers** - aims to promote good practice in working with Travellers and will look at stereotypes and myths around Travellers and Gypsies, the History and Origins of Travellers, at Travellers ethnicity, at contemporary issues, at culture and lifestyle and will provide a framework for working with Travellers.
- * **7/03/95 Equal Opportunitites** - looking at the concept and practice of equal opportunities and examining what we mean by EOPs, the development of policies, the preparation of action plans and strategies for implementation.
- * **24/03/95 Community Care, an Irish Dimension** - promoting the need for Community Care Plans to include an Irish dimension this course will provide an understanding of Irish emigration, of the Irish experience in Britain, of Irish need, of Irish ethnicity and it's place in the equalities framework, and guidelines for good practice in delivering Community Care.

Fees: **LIYF Members £30 Voluntary Sector Agencies £45 Statutory Bodies £60**

To book a place complete the form below and return to Martin Tucker, AGIY, 356 Holloway Road, N7 6PA enclosing a cheque payable to AGIY

I wish to book a place(s) on the course

Name.....
Organisation.....
Address.....

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London Irish Youth Forum

The next meeting of the forum will be on

Thursday 16 February 1995

in the LVSC, 356 Holloway Road, N7

at 2.30pm.

Topic

Travellers

Speakers

Angie Birtill

London Irish Womens Centre

on local authority services to Travellers

and

Shirley Regan

**TRADE, on training initiatives
with Travellers**

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