

Irish Elderly Advice Network

Autumn Newsletter - 2013

London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB

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Registered Charity No: 1115711 Company Reg No: 5642515

Message from the Chairperson, Alice Kennedy

Dear All,

On behalf of the Irish Elderly Advice Network, I would like to welcome you to our Autumn 2013 newsletter. This is the 20th anniversary year of the Irish Elderly Advice Network, and we have been looking back at the history of the organisation, and the impact it has had and continues to have on the lives of older Irish people in and around London and the South East.

Our **Annual General Meeting**, which we very much hope you will attend, will include a look back at the history of the charity, as well as discussions about our future and elections to our Board of Trustees. We will have food and refreshments, plus even some Irish music. There is more information later in this newsletter, and we hope you will come along. **It is on the 4th October at 2pm in the London Irish Centre, Camden. Wheelchair accessible.**

We have had a very busy year, with our work on benefits, pensions, housing and more, as well as the major events we have run, most notably the two trips to Dublin with groups of older Irish people as part of The Gathering. The trips were hugely successful, and were at times very moving for people who had not been home in many, many years, and many of whom had never been to Dublin, their capital city. We were honoured to meet the President of Ireland, the Taoiseach and the Tánaiste, all of whom were welcoming and hospitable to the groups.

The Welfare Rights work has certainly been more challenging this year as the government's reforms, particularly to health related benefits (ESA and DLA), begin to really impact upon people's lives. Advice surgeries are very busy! If you would like help please to contact us.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy this newsletter and please do come to our AGM.

Best wishes,

Alice Kennedy, Chairperson

About Us

The Irish Elderly Advice Network is an independent Registered Charity located at the London Irish Centre (Murray Street Entrance.) We provide Welfare Rights advice and support to older Irish people throughout London, carry out extensive development work supporting and empowering older Irish groups, and do a lot of social and cultural work with older Irish people.

The Board of Trustees

We are run by a very active board of trustees, all of whom are older Irish people and all of whom are democratically elected at our AGM. We hold regular meetings, which are always

interesting, lively and open to all older Irish people. We are as ever thankful to all our board members – past and present – for their great work in keeping the organisation vibrant and in touch with the people we are here to support.

IMPORTANT MEETINGS

Irish Elderly Advice Network, 20th Anniversary AGM

Friday 4th October 2013, 2pm, Presidential Suite, London Irish Centre, 50-52 Camden Sq,
London, NW1 9XB.

We are very pleased to invite you to the 20th anniversary year AGM of the Irish Elderly Advice Network. We will be taking a look at the history of the organisation, as well as getting your input to plan for our future. There will be food and refreshments, a good discussion about issues affecting older Irish people, some guest speakers and even some Irish music! Please do come along – your input and support is needed to ensure we can continue providing for the older Irish community in the UK.

Irish Pensioners Forum of East London, AGM

Thursday 7th November 2013, 1.45pm, Durning Hall, Earlam Grove, Forest Gate, E7 9AB
This is the second AGM of the Irish Pensioners Forum of East London. All are very welcome.

The meeting will be brief and will be followed by the usual cultural social event held at Durning Hall. The last year has been very successful for this new Irish pensioners' group and we're all delighted by how popular the monthly social and other cultural events have been.

Your support would be greatly welcomed at the AGM. For enquiries please contact the Secretary, Maria McCarthy, 0208 531 4578.

The Gathering

As readers will know, 2013 was designated by the Irish Government as the year of '**The Gathering**'. We are delighted to report that the Irish Elderly Advice Network's contribution to '**The Gathering**' came in the form of organising two trips to Dublin. The first group brought 40 older Irish people and the second group brought 20 older Irish people. The second group had a number of very frail older people who were able to come because of the assistance and support we were able to provide. We were delighted that they made the journey and hope it will stay with them as something very special.

These two gathering trips brought our people to the following places of interest; **Aras an Uachtarain**, where they were warmly welcomed by the **President Michael D Higgins** who made a very lovely speech about the nature of emigration and its impact upon our generation. He personally signed a book of poems for each of the visitors. The second group saw a marvellous piece of Irish drama sitting in the Grand Room of Aras an Uachtarain and in the company of the President himself. The members of both groups say that the highlight of their trip was meeting the President and for all of them it was an experience that they never thought possible.



A Picture of Emigration – Irish Elderly Advice Network visit to Dun Laoghaire Pier

They also went to **Dun Laoghaire Pier** as the guests of **The Forgotten Irish Project**, led by Margaret and Margaret Brown. This was a wonderful occasion and a beautiful day where they saw all the sights from Dun Laoghaire Pier and were then treated to a splendid meal at the **National Yacht Club**. Both Margaret and Margaret, of the Forgotten Irish Project, could not have done enough for us. A day in Dun Laoghaire is a day to remember! The group met the **Taoiseach, Enda Kenny**, and the **Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore** at **Government buildings**. Enda Kenny was extremely friendly and humorous with our group who enjoyed meeting him.

The group also took in a cultural evening at the headquarters of **Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann** and following a lovely meal were treated to a wonderful evening. They shared the evening with **Donnacha O Dulaing**, of **RTE Fáilte Isteach**. The group were thrilled to meet Donnacha who conducted and has since broadcast several individual interviews with members of the group, some reminding Donnacha of his early broadcast career, for example, our Chair Alice Kennedy reminded Donnacha that he had interviewed her mother and father for 'Highways and Byways' in 1981. Donnacha also interviewed the director of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, **Labhras O' Murchu**, who spoke of his affection and respect for our generation of Irish emigrants and who earlier in the day had arranged for our group to tour the Dail.

The groups also visited some historic sites connected with the **1916 Easter Rising**, for example, we visited **Kilmainhain Gaol and Glasnevin Cemetery**. At both venues, we heard excellent lectures about 1916 and Ireland's struggle for independence. The groups stayed at Cassidy's hotel in the heart of the city, where the service to us throughout was very good and each morning our group was able to start with a very healthy and generous breakfast.

RTE gave our visits excellent coverage with interviews with the Chair of the Irish Elderly Advice Network, Alice Kennedy, and the Chair of the Irish Pensioner's Forum of East London, John O'Connor, and also with John Farrell from County Cork. Sally Mulready was also interviewed for RTE television and **Good Morning Ireland**, where she discussed the importance of 'The Gathering' for the older Irish community in Britain.

Finally, the trip to **Leopardstown Racecourse** by the second group was a wonderful and unusual experience, again organised by the Forgotten Irish Project. We were taken all around the Leopardstown Course and seen the all important winning enclosure which is set in the most beautiful countryside. We also had lunch there as guests of the Leopardstown Racecourse Authority.

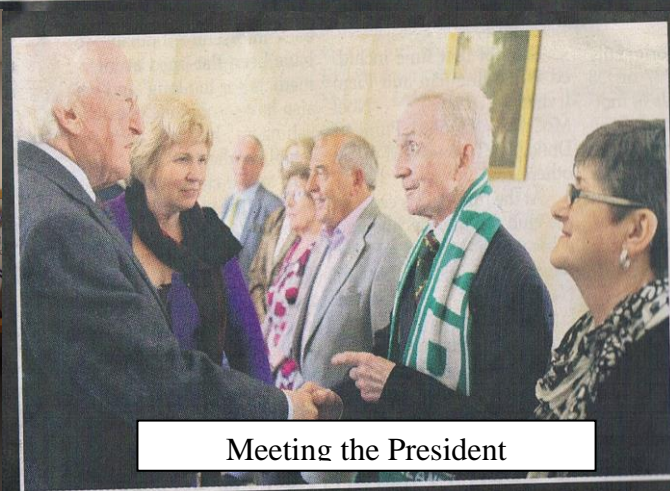
Photographs for the Irish Elderly Advice Network's Ireland trip



Irish Elders with President Michael D Higgins in Aras an Uachtarain



Croke Park dressing room



Meeting the President

Leopardstown Racecourse Christmas Festival

Leopardstown Racecourse is holding a Christmas Festival between the 26th-29th December. The annual festival looks like a wonderful experience and the organisers would love for older Irish visitors from the UK to come along. The festival includes lots of races, entertainment, food and drink and even some entertainment from Mary Black and Finbar Furey. If you would like to go, you can phone them 00353 1 2890500 www.leopardstown.com.



Forgotten Irish lunch at Dun Laoghaire



Mollie Ormonde entertaining people at the Forgotten Irish lunch



John O'Connor (East London), Bert Griffin (former Landlord of Camden's Stags Head pub), and others at Dun Laoghaire



With Tim Pat Coogan at Dun Laoghaire

WELFARE RIGHTS UPDATE

Welfare Rights Advice – all our services are wheelchair accessible

Irish Elderly Advice Network Office: Drop in from 10am to 4pm, or make an appointment in advance by calling 02074280471.

Kilburn Outreach, Wednesday, 10am to 1pm, Mazenod Community Hall, Quex Road, Kilburn, London, NW6 4PS.

East London Outreach, Thursday, 10.30am to 1pm, Durning Hall Community Centre, Earlam Grove, London, E7 9AB

Home Visits: If you cannot travel, we are able to make home visits. Please call 0207 428 0471 to make an appointment for one of our Advice Workers to come and see you.

Housing Service

We offer a housing advice and re-housing service to older Irish people living in dilapidated, insecure or otherwise inappropriate housing. We work with two excellent Housing Associations which provide sheltered housing to people aged 55 and over. In the last 3 years, we have rehoused over 100 people, often from single rooms in shared houses to their own flat for the first time. We are very grateful to Willow Housing and Viridian Housing for their

fantastic work in helping to re-house and support many of the older Irish people we have referred to them.

Housing Policy: As we have so many people now waiting for housing, we have had to adopt a strict policy of taking people off our list who are offered two properties in good condition which they have turned down. Our re-housing service is meant to be for people who are in grave need and so if people are able to turn down two properties, we believe their need is possibly not as great as that of other people.

National Welfare Policy Update

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and the move to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

The government is implementing major reforms to welfare and benefits across Britain. For us, as a welfare rights charity, the most significant and challenging reform is to benefits given to people on the basis of ill health and disability. We have outlined below information we hope you will find helpful in this area.

DLA is being phased out and replaced by Personal Independence Payment.

If you receive DLA and were 65 or over on the 8th April 2013, you will not have to move to the Personal Independence Payment.

The main similarities between DLA and the PIP are:

- PIP is a non-means-tested, non-taxable cash benefit that you can choose how to spend.
- You can claim the benefit whether you are in or out of work.
- PIP has two components (but these have different eligibility criteria to DLA).
- PIP is linked to getting other benefits – almost all of the existing arrangements for DLA (such as the Blue Badge and Carer's Allowance) will continue.
- There are 'special rules' for terminally ill people.

The main differences between DLA and the PIP are:

- PIP has different qualifying rules to DLA.
- PIP is assessed on a totally different set of criteria to DLA – you need to score a certain number of points in relation to **12 everyday activities**.
- You will need to have a medical assessment by an independent health professional to see if you can get PIP – entitlement to DLA was based on the information you or your GP provided, but the government fears that this resulted in overpayments and bogus claims.
- In most cases, the medical assessment will involve a face-to-face consultation.
- The two components of PIP have only two rates of payment, whereas the care component of DLA has three.

- Unlike DLA, all awards of PIP will be reviewed on a regular basis, even if you are permanently disabled, unless you have been awarded the benefit under the terminal illness rules.

What are the **12 everyday activities**? There are two parts, 'Daily Living Activities' and 'Mobility Activities'

Daily Living Activities: Preparing food; Taking nutrition; Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition; Washing and bathing; Managing toilet needs or incontinence; Dressing and undressing; Communicating verbally; Reading; Mixing with other people; Making decisions about money.

Mobility activities: Planning and following a journey; Moving around.

If you are in poor health and are under 65, you may qualify for help. Please contact us and we can help you to apply. The help we give is: ordering the form for you, completing the form on your behalf at an appointment with you, sending the form off and handling any appeals. Please contact us if you think you may qualify for help. Our number is 0207 428 0471.

Pensions Bill

Another of the government's key reforms is to state pensions and pension credit. Below is a summary of the proposals currently being considered by Parliament. We are very grateful to the **National Pensioners Convention** for providing us with this very helpful briefing.

You can join the National Pensioners Convention by emailing info@npcuk.org

- From 6th April 2016 every reaching state pension age with a minimum of 35 years of National Insurance Contributions/credits will receive a state pension of at least £146 per week. (This amount is in today's money, so is likely to be around £150 by 2016)
- The state pension age for men and women is being brought in line with each other
- The state pension age for men and women is scheduled to be 65 by 2018, 66 by 2020 and 67 by 2028.
- The Pensions Bill proposes a review of the state pension age every 5 years
- Savings Credit will be abolished for **new** claimants

Pension Credit

- Pension Credit is a payment made to men and women who are over the *women's* state pension age, (which is currently moving from 62 to 65 by 2018 and so on, as outlined above.)
- Pension Credit is designed to guarantee that every person who is above this age is guaranteed an income of £145.40 (for single people) or £222.05 (for couples) per week.

- It is a ‘top-up’ benefit, and so is paid at different levels to different people depending on their income. For example, if you are a single person with a state pension of £100 per week (and no other income), you will be entitled to £45.40 per week to bring you up to £145.40 per week.
- You can get Pension Credit even if you have savings. The first £10,000 is discounted and for anything over £10,000, your Pension Credit is reduced by £1 for every £500 you have. So for example, if you had savings of £10,500 but no income you would be entitled to £144.40 (instead of £145.40) per week.
- Pension Credit continues to be a hugely under-claimed benefit. We know that approximately 1.8 million pensioners who would qualify for some level of Pension Credit still do not claim. If you think you might be entitled, please call us on 0207 428 0471 and we can help with your claim. If you are not sure whether you will qualify, please call us anyway as there is no harm in trying.

HEALTH AWARENESS

It is important to remember that these are only guidelines but if you feel that you have any of these symptoms, or are just generally unsure, you should make an appointment with your GP or ring the help-lines listed below.

Strokes - The main stroke symptoms can be remembered with the word FAST: Face-Arms-Speech-Time.

- **Face** – the face may have dropped on one side, the person may not be able to smile or their mouth or eye may have drooped
- **Arms** – the person with suspected stroke may not be able to lift one or both arms and keep them there because of arm weakness or numbness
- **Speech** – their speech may be slurred or garbled, or the person may not be able to talk at all despite appearing to be awake
- **Time** – it is time to dial 999 immediately if you see any of these signs or symptoms

The Stroke Helpline and Information Service is there to help with any questions that you may have regarding a stroke. Their number is: **0303 3033 100**

Bowel Cancer: The symptoms of bowel (colorectal) cancer can be:

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood when you go to the toilet
- A change in bowel habit lasting for 3 weeks or more especially to looser or runny toilet
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- A pain or lump in your tummy

If you are worried that you have any of these symptoms please make an appointment with your GP or call the Bowel Cancer UK Information and Support Service: 0800 8 40 35 40

Diabetes: Diabetes occurs when some or all of the glucose stays in the blood instead of being used as energy by the body. The symptoms can be hard to spot but the main symptoms of undiagnosed diabetes can include:

- passing urine more often than usual, especially at night
- increased thirst
- extreme tiredness
- unexplained weight loss
- genital itching or regular episodes of thrush
- slow healing of cuts and wounds
- blurred vision

Diabetes UK is a support service that you can ring should you be concerned that you have the relevant symptoms or just require information. Their number is: 020 7424 1000

Dementia: Dementia is a collection of symptoms that result from brain damage. The main symptoms are:

- memory loss, especially problems with memory for recent events, such as forgetting messages, remembering routes or names, and asking questions repetitively
- increasing difficulties with tasks and activities that require organisation and planning
- becoming confused in unfamiliar environments
- difficulty finding the right words
- difficulty with numbers and/or handling money in shops
- changes in personality and mood
- depression

These symptoms, whilst guidelines, are often very mild at early stages but gradually get worse. If you are worried that you or someone you know may have these symptoms please get in touch with your GP or ring Dementia UK (a charity that can offer support, advice and general information) on: 020 7874 7200

Constitutional Convention

The Irish government has set up an Irish Constitutional Convention to consider whether the 1937 Irish constitution is 'fit for purpose in modern Ireland.' Much of the focus for the Irish community in Britain has been on the possibility of electoral reform. In particular it has focused on the opportunity changes to the constitution may offer in granting the right to vote in the Presidential elections to Irish citizens who live outside Ireland. Others have gone further,

especially the campaign group, VICA (Votes for Irish Citizens Abroad), who want to see Irish people have a vote in Dail elections.

The Irish Elderly Advice Network was honoured to be asked to meet with Tom Arnold, the Chair of the Irish Constitutional Convention. We were represented by a range of older Irish people and Irish Pensioner Groups, including people from Tara Irish Pensioners, the Irish Pensioners Forum of East London, Kilburn Irish Pensioners, Lewisham Irish Pensioners and others. We had a very long discussion with the Chair. In particular we highlighted the historic contribution made by our generation who came here in the 40s and 50s and who through Irish emigrant remittances sent millions of pounds over the years to our families.

The older Irish people at this meeting felt that our generation helped in our way to keep the Irish economy going. The group broadly agreed that votes in at least the Presidential election would be recognition of this and of our long standing dedication and commitment to the welfare of our country.

There was a general consensus at the meeting of 31 older Irish people that a vote in the Presidential election was highly desirable and an aspiration we felt could be achieved. The constitutional convention will continue to meet until the end of the year. Should the convention recommend that we are granted a vote in the Presidential elections it will require a referenda first, so we have much persuading to do of Irish people living at home who have the final say.

MUSIC NEWS!

The London Irish Pensioners Choir (www.irishelders.org.uk) have been singing and performing together since 2005. The choir is supported by the Irish Elderly Advice Network and is based in the London Irish Centre, Camden. To join the Irish Pensioners Choir, simply call Alice Kennedy, Secretary of the Choir, on 0207 209 2584 for information.

Songs of Love and Emigration by the London Irish Pensioners Choir, (£10) please send cash or a cheque made out to the Irish Pensioners Choir, at our office address (see top of newsletter).

After All These Years by **John Courtney**. John, aged 72 and from Wexford Town, is a member of the London Irish Pensioners Choir and has performed for many years singing country songs, Irish songs and folk songs. To buy the album (£10) please send cash or a cheque made out to 'John Courtney' at our office address.

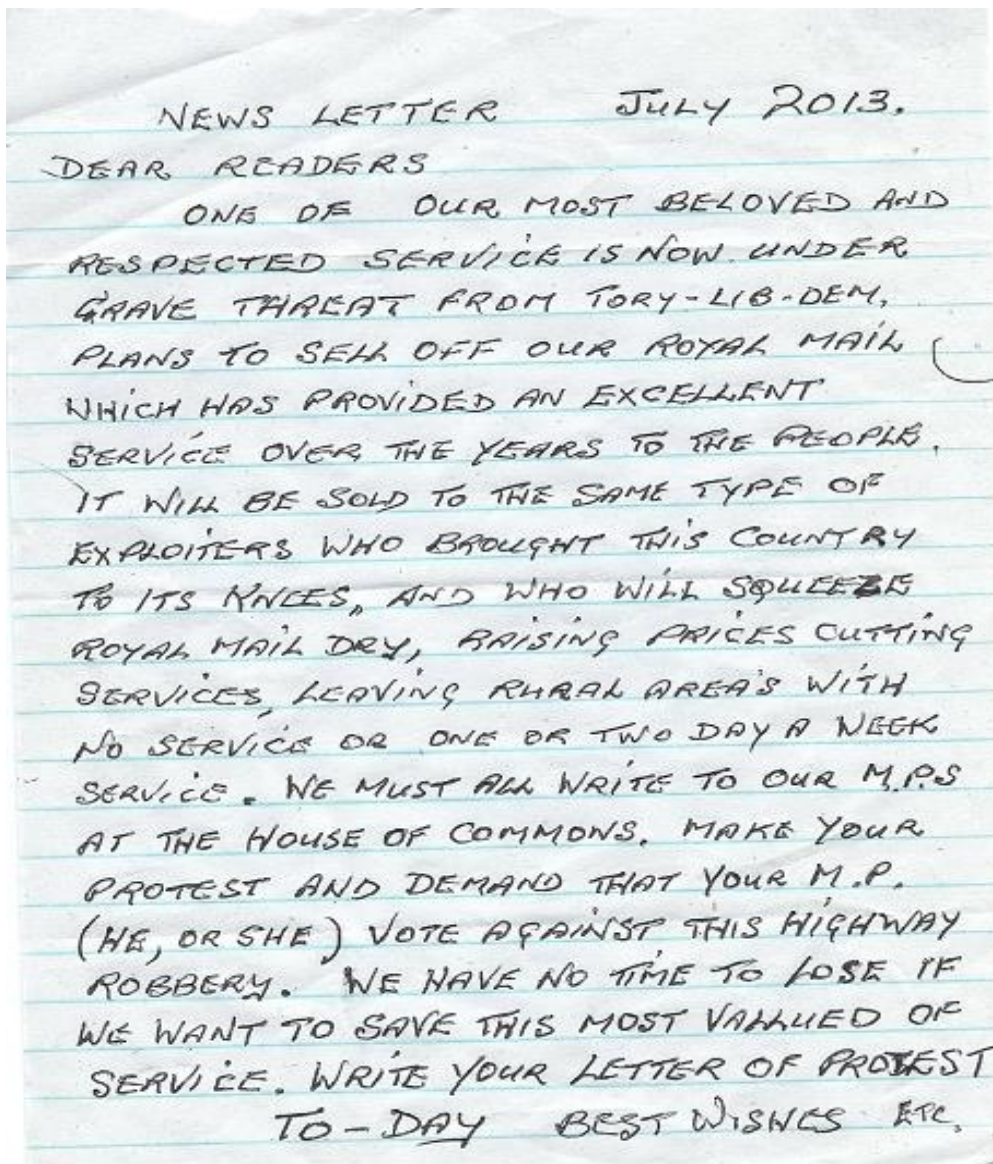
Album by Jerry Hayes. Jerry, aged 81 and from Clonakilty, West Cork, is also a member of the choir, and he has recorded a beautiful album of Irish songs, including some lovely ones from West Cork. To buy the album (£10) please send cash or a cheque made out to 'Jerry Hayes' at our office address

These albums would all make excellent Christmas presents!

Client Awards: In the last year we have helped older Irish people to access over £700,000 in grants and previously unclaimed pensions and benefits. More details in our Annual Report, which will be available at our AGM on 4th October 2013.

“Save The Post Office”

We have been contacted by a number of older people, particularly those who live in more remote parts of the UK, who are concerned about the possible closure of Post Offices. This Note is from one of our long standing Trustees, Andy Higgins.



NEWS LETTER JULY 2013.
DEAR READERS
ONE OF OUR MOST BELOVED AND
RESPECTED SERVICE IS NOW UNDER
GRAVE THREAT FROM TORY-LIB-DEM,
PLANS TO SELL OFF OUR ROYAL MAIL
WHICH HAS PROVIDED AN EXCELLENT
SERVICE OVER THE YEARS TO THE PEOPLE,
IT WILL BE SOLD TO THE SAME TYPE OF
EXPLOITERS WHO BROUGHT THIS COUNTRY
TO ITS KNEES, AND WHO WILL SQUEEZE
ROYAL MAIL DRY, RAISING PRICES CUTTING
SERVICES, LEAVING RURAL AREAS WITH
NO SERVICE OR ONE OR TWO DAY A WEEK
SERVICE. WE MUST ALL WRITE TO OUR M.P.S
AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. MAKE YOUR
PROTEST AND DEMAND THAT YOUR M.P.
(HE, OR SHE) VOTE AGAINST THIS HIGHWAY
ROBBERY. WE HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE IF
WE WANT TO SAVE THIS MOST VALUED OF
SERVICE. WRITE YOUR LETTER OF PROTEST
TO - DAY BEST WISHES ETC.

If you would like to contact your MP about the Post Office campaign, you can write to them at House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA. (If you do not know who your MP is, please contact us with your address and we will be able to tell you.)

Celebrating the achievements of the Irish Elderly Advice Network on our 20th Anniversary – Statement by Sally Mulready

“The Irish Elderly Advice Network was founded in 1993 following a sustained campaign by a small group of elderly Irish women living in Camden, to have the needs of Camden’s very large elderly Irish community recognised. The urgency of addressing the concerns and poor conditions of so many older Irish people in 1993 was demonstrated graphically when the decomposed bodies of 3 elderly Irish men were found in their respective rooms. In one case,

the man had been dead for several months. In the others, one appeared to die of starvation and the other of neglect. It took some time to find any relatives of these men and in the end, just one cousin of one of the deceased men came forward and identified that he was a relative and that the family had come originally from Galway.



Two of the women involved in establishing the Irish Elderly Advice Network are still alive and though in poor health, still maintain a very healthy interest in the work of the Irish Elderly Advice Network.

Margaret Byrne came from Nenagh, County Tipperary and was born in 1924 and came to England in her twenties first to Birmingham and then to London. Margaret worked as a home care person throughout Camden and dedicated her working life to the care of others. Margaret has also ran the Tara Irish Pensioner's Club in Kentish Town for the last 22 years and though forced to move from premises to premises over that period, Margaret persisted and today the Tara Irish Pensioner's Club (where the average age is 82) meet on the 19th Floor of a tower block in Kentish Town, North West London. Margaret is still involved as a Board of Trustee member of the Irish Elderly Advice and regularly provides advice and guidance to younger members on the importance of providing support to very vulnerable elderly Irish people. She helped establish a peer support Good Neighbour Scheme, where older Irish people who are housebound can receive visits from other older Irish people who are more fit and able to get about. These visits are often a lifeline to many elderly Irish people who live alone and where they have children, they have often moved away to the suburbs of London. Margaret is a very gentle, kind person who has made an enormous contribution to the Irish community in Camden and beyond.

Bridie McGowan was born in County Kerry in 1932 and came to London in her twenties. She first worked in the civil service as an administrator but after she married she gave up work and had five children, two of whom were disabled. In 1993, Bridie vigorously lobbied and campaigned to have older Irish people in Camden better recognised by the Council, as an aging community living a very modest means, she gave evidence to a major piece of research commissioned by Camden Council into the social conditions of older Irish people in Camden in 1993. Bridie was particularly vocal about the condition widows of construction workers lived in following the death of their partners in construction site accidents. Bridie was a strong supporter of the Site Safety Construction Campaign undertaken by UCAT, the Construction Trade Union that throughout the 80s and 90s highlighted the very unsafe conditions for construction workers on building sites.

In her early 40s, Bridie McGowan lost her husband on a construction site accident and she was left with 5 children to bring up on her own. She recalls at that time the huge support she received from the Irish community in Camden, including the support she got to ultimately buy the home she was living in. This enabled her to have some security in which to bring up her 5 children.

Bridie is now 81 and is still very actively involved in the Elderly Advice Network and campaigns continuously to raise awareness and understanding of the needs of older Irish people, especially those who live alone. She also is a very strong advocate for the rights of older Irish people living with adult disabled sons and daughters for whom there is very little community support. Bridie, like Margaret, continues to advise the Irish Elderly Advice Network as one of its senior members and as one of four people who founded the Irish Elderly Advice Network.

As Chair of the Irish Elderly Advice Network today, Alice Kennedy has made the following statement in tribute to Margaret and Bridie. “The pioneering work of Margaret and Bridie highlighted the dreadful social conditions of older Irish people living alone with no one to care for them. Their campaign to compel the local Council, Government Departments, the Health Service and, of course, the Department of Foreign Affairs has been hugely successful and the Irish Elderly Advice Network has provided assistance to almost 4,000 older Irish people since 1993 and has raised almost a million pounds every year from benefits, pensions and housing subsidies for older Irish people. Moreover, these Irish women are an inspiration to all of us and I am very proud to be associated with their 20 years of devotion and dedication to improving the conditions and the quality of life of all older Irish people. Our heartfelt thanks to Bridie and Margaret for all they have done.”

We will be making some presentations after our AGM so please do come along and help us to celebrate. The Irish Elderly Advice Network has existed and thrived because of the ongoing support and engagement of the wonderful older Irish community in London, so we hope as many of you as possible will be there at **2pm on the 4th October 2013** to help us take a look back at the work that has been done over the last 20 years.

If you have any photos of older Irish people, or the emigrant experience of coming to Britain over the last 60 years we would be very grateful if you would let us use them as part of an exhibition on the day of the **AGM**. You can either bring them to the office in the next two weeks or bring them on the day. All photos will be returned. Thank you!

Tribute to Seamus Heaney, by Margaret Geiger

“It was sadness that we all learnt of the sad and premature death of Seamus Heaney. He is acknowledged as one the greatest poets of the 20th Century. His prose was also great. Seamus kept the language alive and left an inspirational mark on the world. His contribution to humanity was immense. His poems showed deep reflection and thought and he showed us what it is like to be human.

Upon notification of his death, poems were read in outer Mongolia where fermented mares’ milk (a bit like poteen) was drunk to celebrate his life. His poems were read in Basel. His poems were read in Afganistan and in all quarters of the world. He broke down barriers and also contributed greatly to peace in Northern Ireland. He never forgot his humble beginning and was always happiest amid his own people in Derry.

He had succeeded but took no pride in this because he was humble and totally unaware of his talent. He was described as a giant amongst men. He spoke to the ordinary and extraordinary people but he was always happy with the ordinary people where he was born. He never forgot his humble beginning. He will be greatly missed.”

Funders

Thank you to our funders: the Irish Government’s Emigrant Support Programme, which has awarded us a grant of £92,000. We would not be able to carry out any of our work without their ongoing support, so we are truly grateful to them. The Ireland Fund of Great Britain, who have given us a grant of £10,000. Bridge House, who have also given us and the Choir funding. We would also like to thank all the individual donors who have given so generously to our charity in the last year, and in the last 20 years. Whether it is £5 or £1000, we are truly grateful for your donations and would not be able to carry out our work without your help.

If you would like to make a donation, please send a cheque made payable to Irish Elderly Advice Network at the above address.

And finally... one last reminder about our AGM – 2pm, 4th October 2013 at the London Irish Centre. Followed by food, refreshments, music and a presentation of thanks to people of great significance to the Irish Elderly Advice Network (and possibly some very special guests!) All welcome. Wheelchair accessible.