

SR MARY (continued from Front Page)

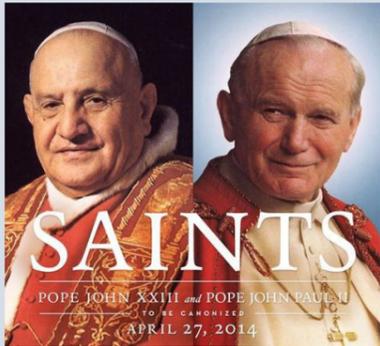
The *Céad Míle Fáilte* at the entrance to the Irish Centre was certainly re-echoed as I reached the third storey of the building where the Chaplaincy was located.

Bhí mé i measc Cairde. (I was among friends.) Here was an enthusiastic, energetic and committed staff where soon I was to experience the great care, support and valued friendship which they provided across the whole of London.

Soon I realized that I needed a good pair of walking shoes and an A to Z in my hand! I was greatly touched by the hospitality, faith and *fáilte* that awaited us from the people we visited.

I was also surprised with the number of people who enjoyed speaking the *cúpla focail Gaeilge*, (few words of Irish).

I am delighted to be afforded this opportunity to do such valuable and meaningful work. I conclude with the words of the song, "If I can help somebody as I pass along, then my living shall not be in vain".



TWO NEW SAINTS

On 27 April, Divine Mercy Sunday, in a canonisation ceremony in the Vatican, Pope Francis will declare Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II to be saints. "Good Pope John" was pontiff 1958-63 and is probably best known for convening the Second Vatican Council. "John Paul the Great", who served as pope 1978-2005, visited Ireland in September 1979 with over two million people in attendance at his various Masses during the three-day visit.

Recipe for Irish Fruit Soda Bread

by Brigid McIntyre, ICSeniors Volunteer

What better way to celebrate St Patrick's Day than with a freshly baked loaf!

400g plain flour
1tsp salt
1tsp sugar
1tsp bread soda
100g raisins
375ml buttermilk



Mix all dry ingredients, add raisins, and then pour in the buttermilk.
Mix to form a dough. Roll into round shape.
Cook in oven at 170 degrees for 30 minutes.

P.S. In case you don't know—buttermilk can be bought in supermarkets in cartons, usually found beside the cartons of cream.

THANK YOU from the Irish Chaplaincy to our Anonymous contributors

In the Gospel for Ash Wednesday we heard, "If you give something to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift remains really secret. Your Father, who sees what is kept secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6) *Blessings to all!*

City Bridge Trust
The City of London Corporation's Charity



Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

Registered Charity Number 280742



Irish Chaplaincy SENIORS

Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

Spring 2014



by Sr Mary Richardson, Irish Chaplaincy Seniors Volunteer

In September 2013 I retired from teaching after enjoying forty years of a challenging career in Ireland. A period of Sabbatical to reflect on the next stage of my life's journey and upskill in some way was on offer to me but at the time this had no great appeal.

Then, *is maith is cuimhin liom* (it's well I remember) the 28 December 2013 article in the Irish Times by Mark Hennessy entitled 'Chaplaincy reaches out to help the ageing London Irish'. "It's about laughing and crying with people, helping when you can", said Paul Raymond, manager of the Irish Chaplaincy Seniors project.

The article haunted me for days. I felt inspired, challenged and motivated. This was the answer to my prayer and I now knew what I wanted to do for the next few months. The harvest was certainly great and volunteers were needed to provide an effective outreach to the Irish community. Without hesitation I contacted Paul at the Irish Chaplaincy and volunteered my help in whatever area he felt I could make a contribution. I had read on the web the Chaplaincy worked with the vulnerable Irish, especially the elderly, prisoners, and Travellers. So with the support and blessing of my Marist Community and a home away from home living with my sister and her family in London, I set out on my journey to hit the streets of London! What a daunting task since I did not know my way around and had no knowledge of the services available to people.

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"Bhí mé i measc Cairde"

(I was among Friends)
- Sister Mary

HAPPY SAINT PATRICK'S DAY



If you would like to join us in the London parade on Sunday 16 March call 020 7482 3274 and we will let you know where to meet

STAFFORD REMEMBERS: The Huxter Shop

by Stafford Cunningham, Assistant Project Manager, ICSeniors



When walking around Waterford recently, seeing all the supermarkets, it brought me back to the days of the Huxter Shop as we fondly called it. This was the shop that sold everything from a 'needle to an anchor'. In my time the shop was usually in the front room of the house. The owners would peer behind half net curtains to check who was coming in. They all had their own style of serving, were very independent, no self-service or cash register used – just pulled out the wooden drawer to take and exchange money. Every street corner had one or more shops with their own specialist like the offal shop. There were at least 18 Huxter Shops in the town, all full of character and they were the heart of the community – talk a lot and told your nothing. Sadly, none of them survive today.

At the shop whatever you needed was handed to you over the marble counter by the lady who wore a blue house coat. When we went into the street, Maura, a friend of my grandparents, would give us a 1p to spend in Kathleen's shop; she watched us all – a bit like a crime watch! Kathleen was the first to open in the mornings and get all the gossip from people coming in off shift so she would be up to date with news from everyone.

There was always the luxury sweet, and bars of chocolate kept in a mahogany framed case with glass on top – no chance of robbing them! Then there was the glass boxes of Jacob's biscuits on a stand that when you lifted the lid up it was sharp enough to cut your hand off. The weighing scale bowl weighed everything from loose spuds to sweets from jars. There was no health and hygiene or 'out of date' worries in those days. During the month of May the statue of Our Lady would be displayed on the Milky Mints box in the window for the night procession. In the summer everything was covered in brown paper to shield from the sun.

In the street was the baker selling the Waterford blaas. At the draper's shop Bab always found the right size; she kept everything in plastic bags from the floor to the ceiling and would just use a long pole reaching up for your jumper. Then there was the gentleman standing at the apple market selling windmills out of the brown suitcase. In the summer he would move to the top of the promenade in Tramore to sell buckets and spades – still wearing his shirt, tie and cap.

Some shops had fancy names such as the Mayfair. When we needed a gift to visit somebody in hospital we were able to get a fruit basket made up covered in tinfoil. I have great respect for those shops, and remember Shelia always saying "Ta-ta!" when we left. The quality of service and all of this helped me learn the skills of customer service and the packing of groceries.

We were always sent down when mum needed tick. Mum would go down later to pay. The ledger would be brought out from under the counter. We usually had a red cash book and at the end of the year she would get a bit of a dividend. When we needed extra pocket money we would always say mum would be down later. The ladies were wise to us and knew this trick. They all made a living and they were there a lifetime. It was here that the town confessions were 'heard and shared' – leaning over the counter. As we say a 'yard counter' was sometimes better than an acre of field some days!!!

What are your memories of Ireland?

On Mother Kelly's Doorstep!

by Anne Harding, ICSeniors Volunteer

"*Most of us grew up at Danny's Feet*", Ronnie Corbett said at the unveiling of the Blue Plaque at Brinsworth House, Twickenham, London, September 2013. As a cabaret star Danny La Rue enjoyed great success with his singing and drag impersonations. As a female impersonator he replaced the tradition of mockery with glitter and elegance. He was an important figure who broke the mould and made the unacceptable, acceptable.

Danny always greeted his audience with "*Wotcha, mates!*" growling in a very unladylike voice as he took to the stage and making it clear from the outset that what the audience saw was definitely not a woman. "A comic in a frock" was how he preferred to refer to his trade.

Born **Daniel Patrick Carroll** in Cork in 1927, Danny was the youngest of five children. After the premature death of his father, the Carroll family moved to Soho, London and the young Danny's love of theatre grew as he watched acts from the many surrounding theatres on his doorstep.

When their home was bombed in the Blitz, the family moved to the Devon countryside outside Exeter. Leaving school at 15, Danny's first job was as a window dresser, and at the same time he acted in amateur dramatics. He joined the Royal Navy serving in the Far East where he took part in regular shows for the troops.

On being demobbed, Danny Carroll moved to London where he joined a drama group. He became one of a chorus of men dressed as women in a touring all-male revue, followed by appearances in similar shows featuring ex-servicemen. He filled in time between acting work by washing dishes at Lyons Corner House in Coventry Street. It was at this time his agent changed his name to Danny La Rue.

As Danny began to take London by storm costumes became more and more lavish. People flocked to his club which he ran for eight years. Everyone from Princess Margaret to the young Liza Minnelli, Ronnie Corbett and Roy Hudd visited, and Danny delighted in entertaining them after the show. His fame was spreading far beyond the confines of the club as he landed starring roles in TV specials and West End Musicals. He then took his act to the seaside and continued his success — this was the breakthrough Danny was waiting for. He was a huge public favourite with superstar status. He was happiest interacting with the audience.

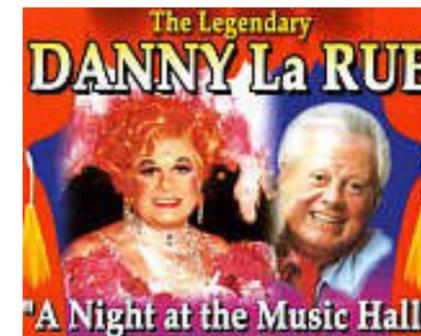
In his act La Rue parodied personalities old and new from Nell Gwyn to Cher, and one of his most popular new characters was Lady Cynthia Grope — all seen as irresistible fun, in the true tradition of British music hall, littered with innuendo, double meanings and everything thrown in for good measure; "No one ever found it obscene". He recorded his signature tune, *On Mother Kelly's Doorstep*, for release as a single in 1968, which reached No 33 in the charts.

In 1969 Danny was named the Variety Club of Great Britain's Showbusiness Personality of the Year. He performed in the 1969, 1972 and 1978 Royal Variety Performances and starred in the film *Our Miss Fred* (1972) as an actor fleeing Nazi-occupied France by dressing in women's clothes. At his peak, in the 1970s, La Rue was earning the equivalent of £2million a year, had four homes, a Rolls-Royce and an entourage of 60.

In 2006, he suffered a mild stroke but returned to the stage within months. La Rue lived for many years with his manager, Jack Hanson, who died in 1979.

Danny died in 2009 at the age of 81 at his home in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, having been appointed OBE in 2002 in recognition of the money he raised for Aids charities.

When Danny La Rue started his career as a female impersonator, drag acts were an area of show business traditionally regarded as seedy and suspect, but he successfully elevated his performance to an art form.



Tell us if you know of any monuments or memorials in London with interesting connection to Ireland or Irish people.