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We wish all our readers a very Happy Christmas

Irish Christmas Traditions

An article provided by [The Information about Ireland Site](#)

Ireland, like most countries, has a number of Christmas traditions that are all of its own. Many of these customs have their root in the time when the Gaelic culture and religion of the country were being suppressed and it is perhaps because of that they have survived into modern times.

The Candle in the Window

The placing of a lighted candle in the window of a house on Christmas Eve is still practised today. It has a number of purposes but primarily it was a symbol of welcome to Mary and Joseph as they travelled looking for shelter.

The candle also indicated a safe place for priests to perform Mass as during Penal Times this was not allowed.

A further element of the tradition is that the candle should be lit by the youngest member of the household and only be extinguished by a girl bearing the name 'Mary'.

The Laden Table

After evening meal on Christmas eve the kitchen table was again set and on it were placed a loaf of bread filled with caraway seeds and raisins, a pitcher of milk and a large lit candle. The door to the house was left unlatched so that Mary and Joseph, or any wandering traveller, could avail of the welcome.

The Wren Boy Procession

During Penal Times there was once a plot in a village against the local soldiers. They were surrounded and were about to be ambushed when a group of wrens pecked on their drums and awakened the soldiers. The plot failed and the wren became known as 'The Devil's bird'.

On St. Stephens day a procession takes place where a pole with a holly bush is carried from house to house and families dress up in old clothes



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and with blackened faces. In olden times an actual wren would be killed and placed on top of the pole.

This custom has to a large degree disappeared but the tradition of visiting from house to house on St. Stephens Day has survived and is very much part of Christmas.

Decorations:

The placing of a ring of holly on doors originated in Ireland as holly was one of the main plants that flourished at Christmas time and which gave the poor ample means with which to decorate their dwellings.

All decorations are traditionally taken down on Little Christmas (January 6th.) and it is considered to be bad luck to take them down beforehand.

Traditional Gaelic Salutation

The Gaelic greeting for 'Merry Christmas' is: 'Nollaig Shona Duit'...which is pronounced as 'null-ig hun-a dit'.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

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Birds

By Tom Harmon

When the Red, Red Robin comes bobbin along, there will be no more sobbing when he comes bob bobbing. This cheerful little bird with his red waistcoat and red and brown overcoat is a bird for all seasons and the gardeners friend. He defends his territory against all comers.

Of course Christmas is one of his best times, when his photo is on a good many cards, You could say he goes public, and that's without a "selfie" in this modern age, and not alone that, his figure decorates cakes as a symbol of the season. So he is an "all round man" in the bird world.

After him we can say that that the Goldfinch takes the stage with his colourful face, red and white beak and muffler and back shawl. He also goes public at a price - 68 cent stamps. Goldfinches can be seen in gardens in pairs, also in groups called "a charm". He and his friends love the seeds of the thistle. He also has a nice song, which ended him up in a cage, very sad for a lovely little bird. Now, thanks to a new law, the trapping of birds has been prohibited.

We have another little visitor to our gardens, a little brown coated bird known as the "Dunnock" or Hedge Sparrow as I have heard him called by older people. "The Budarua" or "shy little one", not like cheeky House Sparrows. For some unknown reason their numbers have fallen, which may be to do with modern buildings as their abode was in the eaves of the old thatched houses. It would be sad to see another bird species disappear in spite of all their noisy chattering.

Another species to disappear is the Great Auk. This was a flightless bird, with short stubby wings and this made them land-bound, and easy prey. They were called the penguins of the Northern Hemisphere.



The so-called clown of the seabirds is the Puffin, with his colourful beak in which he can carry large amounts of fish. They build nests in holes in cliffs, and away from predators and spend their winter in colonies in cliffs close to the sea.

"The North Wind doth blow and we shall have snow, and what will the Dormouse do then, poor thing, he will roll up into a ball and make himself small and sleep until spring". We always called the Dormouse a "Grass Mouse". They make their nests in tall grasses at the corner of the garden, very well hidden with lots of seeds to see them over the winter months. They semi hibernate and look bigger than house mice.

The hedgehog finds his abode for the Winter under a pile of dry leaves, usually left by the gardener who knows he has his little friend in his garden. This little animal eats a lot of insects and slugs. When nature tells him the temperature is dropping, he rolls up into a ball, his heart beat slows down and is in hibernation. His only enemy is the weather, if the temperature rises before the winter is quite over he could be tempted to come out, and this would not be good. But generally speaking Hedgie is a survivor.



Annual Garden Fete, September 7th

By Rita Conroy

The weatherman had promised us a fine day and he kept his word. The sun shone, the gardens looked great and the scene was set for a fantastic Garden Fete. The hard work involved was well worth while and we were rewarded with a huge €19,000 profit, with all of this to be used to further enhance the care and comfort of our residents and clients.

We thank Elaine Flanagan, Director of Nursing and Mary O'Reilly, Nursing Admin for their great preparatory work. A special thanks to our stallholders and their helpers for their invaluable contribution. Volunteers turned out in force, serving teas, coffees and buns. They did a great job and we thank them.

Our gratitude to Sean Keating, Aidan Traynor and their helpers in setting up the stalls and being so generous with their time. All those who helped on the Friday and Saturday prior to the event – see you same place, same time next year.

A special mention must go to our Bumper Raffle and our appreciation to all of those who donated prizes. It went spectacularly well.

If you donated bottles, books, bric-a-brac, plants etc. etc. we thank you.

We mustn't forget our faithful supporters who come year after year, many thanks.

And also, the appeal for sunshine worked. Same again next year please.





Leopardstown Park Hospital Golf Society

By Katriona O'Keeffe



Our Golf Society has continued to be active this year under the Captaincy of Angela Carrick. We have been lucky with sunny weather for our outings in interesting golf venues, chosen by Angela.

Results so far for 2014:

Druid's Glen: 1st April Winner: Donal O'Keeffe 2nd: Katriona O'Keeffe 3rd: Ann Morgan

Donabate: 14th April Winner: Oonagh Ennis 2nd: Johnny Morgan 3rd: Ed Bradbury

The Grange: 20th June Winner: Katriona O'Keeffe Cat 1: Frances Kehoe Cat 2: Angela Carrick

Woodbrook: 22nd Sept. CAPTAIN'S DAY

Winner: Donal O'Keeffe Cat 1: 1st: Frank McNally 2nd: Oonagh Ennis 3rd: Ada Bradbury

Cat 2: 1st Liam Kehoe 2nd: Katriona O'Keeffe 3rd: Angela Carrick

Anyone interested in getting more information about this Golf Society is welcome to contact Katriona O'Keeffe (EX OTD in LPH) at 01 2887993

Darts Competition

By John Downes



Darts is my game and I play for The Gallops Leopardstown in the Dun Laoghaire Borough and District League.

After 6 weeks of competition between 16 players I emerged victorious from the final on the 2nd September. I won the tense final in the last leg to triumph 5-4 and collected the winner's trophy and cheque!

All the practice is now paying off. Will return next year to defend the trophy and now looking forward to a strong run in the BIG one in January! Until then it is back to the team format now with my club. A big thank you to everyone in the Clevis for their support.

A Welcome to a New Arrival



Peyton Jane was born on November 1st – a great great granddaughter for Tom and Jo Franks. Congratulations to all.

Frankie Hennel's Corner

Dear Readers,

Hope you are keeping well. It seems as if it might be a bad winter.

Joke

A lorry driver backs into a car and badly damaged it; the driver returned and found a note which read.

"I've just backed my lorry into your car and smashed it up, there is a big crowd gathered and they are all watching me writing this note, they think I'm leaving you my name and address."



The Quiz

1. How many Oscars did *Gone with the Wind* receive?
2. True or false: Steven Spielberg once directed TV series *Columbo*.
3. How many *Ghost Busters* were there?

*Cheers for now,
Frankie*

21st June 2014 - Staverton Airport at Gloucester

By Ted Jones

I became aware of Project Propeller by a friend who had seen the details on the internet. 'Project Propeller is an annual event for World War 2 aircrew, to which they are flown by private pilots who volunteer their time and aircraft for the day. For veterans, this is a welcome opportunity to take to the skies again, and to meet old comrades, whilst for pilots it is an opportunity to meet that rare individual, the "old, bold aviator". Some pilots have been flying the same veterans for many years establishing firm friendships in the process.'

My son contacted Graham Cowie who sent us all the details and after some discussion it was decided that a certain Bryan Sheane from Newcastle Flying Club in Co. Wicklow was willing to take me on the 21st June to Staverton at no cost to me.

I travelled to Newcastle for a flight in his aircraft on the 17th June. The aircraft is a VANS R.V.7. two seater, 160 hp engine which cruises at 144 knots (170 miles per hour). The flight was most enjoyable as it was a lovely aircraft to fly.

On Saturday the 21st June, which was a lovely day, we left at around 10.00am and 59 minutes later arrived at Gloucester. We were delayed about 12 minutes as we had to circle Ledbury as we were No. 14 to land.

Flying the aircraft was fantastic with the Malvern Hills and the city of Worcester not too far away. We came in to land and found a place to park and were then taken by car to the big gathering - 106 aircraft - 160 Veterans.

I was able to meet some Catalina and Sunderland ex aircrew, but none from my 210 Squadron. We had lunch and then listened to a talk by Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork. Then it was time to leave, so we walked out to try to find our aircraft, which was difficult as we had no real idea where we had parked it. After some time we found it and we were soon airborne, flying due south for about 15 miles to Nailsworth where I was born. Then, back



across the River Severn - South Wales - Newcastle. A great flight.

I telephoned Graham Cowie to thank him for the trip and he said he would send me details of the get-together in 2015. Many thanks also to Bryan for inviting me to travel with him in his aircraft, and allowing me to fly it part of the time.

"Graham Cowie, one of the organisers of Project Propeller, commented as follows:

"I have been a volunteer pilot for numerous years, and had a regular group of 4 veterans, one of whom has now sadly "left the circuit". I was happy to take on the job of airside co-ordination, as I was convinced that there were a large number of veterans who had never heard of the Project.

The opportunity to speak to veterans via telephone following their registration, and to hear the stories of their wartime service was a tremendous experience. There were some sad moments, but the "press on" spirit of these amazing men shone through. I spoke to a veteran who had towed gliders on D-Day, at Arnhem and on Operation Varsity, had lunches with a Spitfire Photo Reconnaissance Pilot and a Lancaster Pilot who flew on the disastrous



Nuremburg and Maily-le-Camp raids – amazingly there are 5 of his crew still surviving.

Being able to effect an introduction between two veterans who had not seen each other for nearly 70 years was a particular highlight for me.

The event couldn't take place without the tremendous efforts of my colleagues on the

Project Propellor team, and without the pilots who volunteer their time and aircraft for the day. The appetite of the GA community to become involved and give the veterans a day to remember was as consistent as it was impressive. We could not have had a more hospitable host than Darren Lewington and his team at Gloucester Airport, and it's clear why they were declared the Best General Aviation Airport for 2013.

RAF Association says Thanks for Help with Garden Party

By Lorraine and Pete McWilliams

In recent years, Leopardstown Park Hospital has very generously allowed the RAF Association (Republic of Ireland Branch) to hold its annual fundraising garden party in the grounds. It is a privilege for which the Branch is exceedingly grateful and does not take for granted. We are extremely grateful to CEO Nick Kelly and Director of Nursing, Elaine Flanagan, for their support. We are especially grateful to all the staff who help us on the day. We have invariably received unstinting and cheerful help from kitchen staff, porters, carers and administrative staff.

In 2014, our main contact throughout the



Mary O'Grady accepting the certificate of gratitude from RAFA members Don Wallace, Pete McWilliams, Jim Kelly and Geoffrey Medcalf.

planning of the party was Mary O'Grady. Mary was terrific at answering all our questions and keeping us informed. With this in mind, RAFA member Don Wallace presented Mary with a certificate of gratitude to all the staff. The RAFA presentation party included the Branch President, Vice President, Chairman and Assistant Welfare Officer. They are also volunteer helpers at LPH and frequently attend the Wednesday evening socials.

Condolences



Our sympathy to the family and friends of the following :-

Richard Cooke	Maureen Reihill
Anthony Hennessy	Marie Murray
Terence Kavanagh	John Sinnott
Margaret Huet	

Coming Events

Date & Time	Event/Venue
Sunday 28th Dec '14 3.00pm	Jomac Variety Show Hospital Concert Hall
Wednesday 7th Jan '15 6.00-8.00pm	Weekly Wednesday Social with musical entertainment from Eleanor McEvoy and family. Glencairn Day Centre

Richard McEvoy (A Clevis Resident)

By Noirin Scully

Little did I realise what a lovely surprise I was going to get when I met Richard. What was the surprise? Read on and you'll find out.

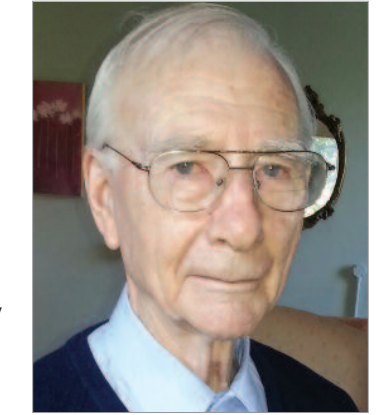
Rita and I had an appointment to meet Richard at the Clevis with a view to finding out all about his life for an article for Liana. We met in the comfortable sitting room where Liz, the Manager of the Clevis, had kindly provided us with refreshments.

Richard was tall and thin with a lovely smile. We settled in, Rita and I with notebooks at the ready as we listened to Richard's story unfold. Born in the North side of Dublin, Richard, the eldest of six children, lived all of his life on that side of the city. He went to school in St Patrick's in Drumcondra and left when he was

fourteen and went to work in the Central Telegraph Office in the GPO.

Now this is where the surprise comes in because I remembered that my husband, Michael, also a Northsider had also worked in the Central

Telegraph Office. Although Michael sadly passed on nearly fourteen years ago, he would had he lived, been about the same age as Richard. So I asked Richard did he remember a Michael Scully and I was



Caption Richard McEvoy

staggered at his response. He literally didn't answer me for about half a minute and his face was a study in astonishment. It turned out that not only did he know Michael well but they were very good friends. We were both very emotional as Richard spoke about his memories of that time. These included month long paid holidays in the Tourmakeady Gaeltacht with Michael from whom he learned 'Moonlight in Mayo' which Michael sang beautifully.

Richard recalled that as a 'Boy Manager', delivering telegrams was his principal task and one at which he was no good because he couldn't find addresses. He would wander the streets of the city asking people if they knew where a



certain place was. On returning to the office he would be met by an infuriated inspector asking how it took six hours to deliver a few telegrams. Finally it was decided to move Richard to indoor duties which were more suitable to his talents.

After a year as a messenger, he sat the exam for Post Office Clerk and achieved third place.

At the same time in 1941, a friend, who knew Richard was a fluent Irish speaker, asked him to join An Realt, an Irish speaking group. Richard had many competing interests but decided to give it a try. It was fortunate he did because it was here that he met his future wife, Nellie Smee, RIP, who Richard described as always bright and smiling.

Richard obtained a BA UCD degree in Philosophy and Economics under the new

regulations. By retirement, Richard had attained the position of Principal Officer and in retirement he devoted his time and talents to painting which had been his passion since the age of fourteen. A selection of paintings may be viewed at www.richardemcevoy.net. Richard served for many years as Hon. Secretary and later as President of the Dublin Painting & Sketching Club where he still exhibits annually. As Hon Secretary he had the unenviable task of creating the membership database on computer from miscellaneous paper records.

Richard's wife, Ellen (Nellie) passed away in January 2010 and now, in his eighties, Richard is a resident in the Clevis. His daughters Marion and Eleanor and his son Kieran visit regularly and when we asked Richard if his new circumstances suited him he replied "I have never been more content."

A Tale of the Dunkirk Evacuation

By Michael Doyle

Capt Tom gathered his men. They had been sheltering in the Dunkirk dunes from German bombers. A defeated army, they had been retreating for weeks. The German artillery was relentless and the Luftwaffe bombed and strafed them without mercy.

Where is the RAF, everyone grumbled. Nobody knew, but they had been ordered to leave the relative shelter of the dunes and assemble on the beach. They were going to be rescued.

Tom led his reluctant men down towards the water's edge. He could sense their fear. The beach was so exposed. He was almost rigid with fear himself.

He could see the flotilla of small boats approaching. He organised his men to wade out in a line until the sea was chest high. The water was freezing. Trying to keep their weapons dry was almost impossible.

An ancient smack chugged towards them. The

engine made strange croaking sounds. It was already crowded with bedraggled soldiers. The crew hauled more troops on board. Tom was pleased when all his unit had clambered aboard but wondered how they were ever going to get to Dover.



British troops evacuating Dunkirk's beaches

There was a sudden explosion as a Royal Navy destroyer blew up nearby after being hit by a bomb. The air was full of smoke and debris.

Tom and his men were glad when the fishing boat skipper finally shouted that they could take no more passengers and the boat turned in a broad sweep and headed out to sea.

A shell whistled overhead. Everybody instinctively ducked as it landed terrifyingly close by. They were drenched by the resulting water spout. The fishing smack chugged out to sea and Tom could feel the relief as they moved away from the mayhem on the beach.

They must have been about 300 yards out when they came across the dog. He was swimming out to sea and looked terrified as the overladen fishing boat chugged past him. About 50 yards past the dog the skipper gave an order and the boat, unable to reverse, turned in a wide arc and headed back towards the dog. There was tension in the boat.

Heading back towards Dunkirk for a bloody dog! Nobody said a word. It must be true, Tom thought. The English really love their animals.

The dog was hauled aboard. He looked like a sort of German Shepherd and collapsed, exhausted, on the deck. The soldiers crowded around. He seemed to enjoy the attention and even managed to wag his tail. Someone fetched an old piece of sacking and placed it around the animal.

Tom felt the presence of the dog reminded the men of home and safety. It meant everyone was even more conscious of the terror around them.

He saw dive bombers approaching and ordered the men to take shelter. The trouble was that there was no shelter. Men just crouched and relied on their helmets for protection.

The Stukas screamed down on the flotilla of boats and launched their bombs. The noise was tremendous as the escorting Royal Navy destroyers tried to drive the Stukas off with concentrated anti-aircraft fire.

One near-miss caused the fishing boat to rock violently and a lot of the men thought they were going to sink. Tom could sense the men relax as the fishing boat made steady progress towards Dover.

Even the dog seemed to perk up. He lapped water from a tin hat and chewed on a crust of bread someone found.

They finally reached Dover harbour. In the organised confusion all the men were happy. They had made it. Some of the wounded were in a bad way but at least they would get hospital care now.

Tom made sure his men were safely ashore. Then, as he stepped off the gangway, he felt something brush past him. It was the dog, which fled without a backward glance and disappeared into the crowds along the quayside. Tom's instinct was to call him, but realised he did not know the dog's name. He never saw the animal again.

Some of his men were badly wounded and his priority was to bring them to first aid stations.

Tom survived the war and was a very good rugby player with Bristol for years afterwards. He became its popular club president and was later awarded an MBE for services to rugby. He never told his family about the rescue of the dog but strangely told me the tale. I was related to him by marriage and this story of kindness in the midst of war delighted me.

At his funeral in Bristol his son Timothy proudly displayed his father's Dunkirk medal. He found it under Tom's bed. For his own reasons Tom had never worn it in public.

By kind permission of Michael Doyle, The Irish Times

Two Limericks

By John Crisp

He's a skeleton wrapped up in wrinkles
But his good eye now and then twinkles
He can still take a jar
And while up at the bar
Lots of salt on his wrinkles he sprinkles

Whisky and lemon they say
Keeps influenza at bay
So what you must do
At the first atishoo
Is head for the bar straight away



Paddy O'Rourke (Clevis Resident)

By Noirin and Rita

The Clevis was again the scene for our next visit the purpose of which was to meet Patrick Joseph O'Rourke, always known as Paddy. Born and brought up in Morgan Cottages, Charlemont Street in Dublin Paddy had eight brothers and sisters.

Paddy told us about his father who was musical and as a young man he joined a band where he learned to read and play music.

After the end of the War of Independence in 1921 the National Army was formed and in 1923 it was decided to establish an Army Band. Col. Fritz Brase, an experienced Director of Music and conductor of army bands in Germany was asked to take up the position of Director of the newly formed Band. Paddy's dad joined the army and because he had some expertise, he transferred to the Army Band where he played the tuba.

After Paddy left school he worked as a messenger boy in Hayes Conyngham and Robinson, Chemists, and after some time he obtained employment in a timber merchants where he served his time as a wood cutter.

About this time Paddy and a friend used to visit a hospice for terminally ill women situated on the Pigeon House Road, Ringsend. Every Sunday the two boys used to cycle there to do voluntary work and it was here that Paddy met a young priest called Father Lar Redmond who was the hospice chaplain. In later years, Father Lar was to feature largely in Paddy's life.

He recalled one evening when with some pals they met a friend who they had not seen for some time because he had joined the RAF. When asked if he liked being in the RAF the friend replied that of course he did because they got cake every day! Now this was unheard of in Paddy's house as cake was reserved for very special occasions such as Christmas or birthdays so there and then Paddy and one of his pals decided to join up

so the following Friday they took the train to Belfast and enrolled in the RAF. They journeyed to the U.K. and after a period of training he took a six week driving course.



Paddy O'Rourke

Paddy then was told he was being shipped out to Hong Kong but was disembarked in Ceylon, (now Sri Lanka) where he remained in a camp for two and a half years. Paddy told us that he had a fantastic time and if he had decided to stay there for good he could have had a wonderful life but he found that the pull of home was very strong and he missed his mother. So after a further two and a half years some of which he spent in Singapore and Malaysia he returned to Ireland.

Now aged 24 Paddy wanted to drive buses but had to wait for another year because the stipulated age was 25. He tried to get in touch with his old friend Father Lar, but he had left the hospice and nobody knew where he had gone. Then a letter arrived for Paddy and the envelope showed that this letter had followed Paddy around all the various camps where he was stationed abroad before finally arriving back in Ireland. Father Lar was now working in Mourne Road Parish in Drimnagh.

Paddy lost no time in contacting Father Lar and he got involved in helping to produce the parish newsletter. Father Lar was trying to raise funds to help build a club for young people which would be known as the John Bosco Club. He got members of the sodality (a lay society for devotional and charitable purposes) to support his scheme and with everyone's help the club was built and it still exists to this day.

Having achieved his ambition to become a

bus driver, Paddy married his girlfriend Cis and they had two children. With secure employment, life was good, but then tragedy struck. Within a short space of time Paddy's mother, his friend Fr. Redmond and finally his beloved wife died. A black time indeed in Paddy's life.

Paddy was fortunate in having some good friends who rallied around but it took time for his heartbreak to become bearable. The wife of one of his friends helped with his children but Paddy decided the time had come to leave

his job driving the buses as the hours were difficult because of having to work at weekends. He was lucky enough to secure employment with the South of Ireland Asphalt Company where he worked for thirty years.

Now Paddy has joined the residents of the Clevis and you don't have to ask if he is enjoying his life, his contentment is plain to see. His son and daughter, Bernard and Patricia are regular visitors and phone Paddy daily.

A chance in a million

By Rita Conroy

Alicia, Máire's daughter called in to the Book Stall on the day before the Garden Fete. She was quite astounded by the hospital and its glorious gardens and wooded surrounds and told me she would bring her mother to the Fete the following day as she would be thrilled to see it. At this point she was not aware of her Mom's association with the hospital. I met them both on the day of the Fete and was more than surprised to learn that Alicia's Mom had already been here, albeit a long time ago. We three arranged to meet for coffee in the near future and it was then that this charming lady gave me her story.

Here it is –

In September of this year I visited Leopardstown Park Hospital for their Annual Garden Fete.

When I arrived at the hospital I realised that it was 60 years since I had been employed there. In June 1956 I qualified as a Chartered Physiotherapist and while waiting to secure a permanent position I did locum work while staff were on holidays and this included a fortnight at Leopardstown Park Hospital. I travelled out every day on the old Harcourt Street railway as far as Foxrock Station and walked to the hospital, which I thought was in the country!

At that time the patients were mainly veterans of WW1 and WW2. I enjoyed helping with their



Maire Madigan

rehabilitation. The only slight problem I had while there was lunch time. I was taken to the Senior Staff Dining Room by the Lady Almoner (the forerunner of the modern Social Worker) where the atmosphere was very formal. We all stood when Matron arrived and Grace was said before the meal began. Any talk in the room was soft and gentle and I was terrified I might drop some cutlery or spill some food thus drawing attention to myself. Luckily I managed not to commit any faux pas while there, but to this day I still remember my fear !

Finally, my two weeks ended, I left the hospital to travel to Cork City where the last of the frightening polio epidemics was raging. I worked in the Orthopaedic Hospital helping to rehabilitate polio patients.

By Máire Madigan (nee Hayden)
MCSP MISCP

Operation Market Garden 70th Anniversary. Forgotten heroes?

By Dave Pasley

On 17th September 1944, former Leopardstown Park Hospital resident, Johnny Wetherall co-piloted a Horsa glider from RAF Broadwell in Oxfordshire to a field in the Netherlands just outside a little village called Wolfheze. He was not alone. Over 1,300 glider



Landing Zone 'S' where Johnny and the rest of his Squadron landed their gliders

pilots in over 650 gliders would bring in troops and equipment to the area over three days as part of Operation Market; the largest Airborne operation ever undertaken. In total over 10,000 men of the British 1st Airborne Division would be brought in by glider or parachute onto these fields, some 14 kilometres away from the town of Arnhem. Their objective: capture the bridge at Arnhem. Meanwhile the US 101st and 82nd Airborne divisions would capture bridges further to the south. The



The bridge at Arnhem, today named John Frost Bridge after the commanding officer of 2nd Parachute Battalion

capture of these bridges would allow the tanks and troops of XXX Corps to travel from the Belgian-Dutch border and reach Arnhem three to four days later, thus completing Operation Garden. Ultimately, this would bypass the German's Siegfried Line and give a clear path for Allied forces to invade Germany. If successful the War could be over by Christmas 1944. However, it was not to be.

Resistance in the Arnhem area was greatly underestimated, while the speed at which XXX Corps could reach Arnhem was greatly overestimated. The lightly armed airborne troops were pitted against stiff German resistance, including the heavy armour of the 9th SS Panzer division. After nine days the British troops had no choice but to withdraw across the Rhine. Out of the 10,000 men that went to Arnhem only about one fifth made it back. The rest were either killed, like Johnny's first pilot Henry Charles "Spud" Taylor, or taken prisoner, like Johnny himself.

During and after the battle the people of Arnhem and the Netherlands suffered greatly, through destruction of their homes, being evicted from their town and from a famine which ensued. Yet, they have always viewed the defeated 1st Airborne Division as their liberators and held them in the highest regard. In that spirit, every year since the Battle, commemorations have been held in Arnhem and the surrounding areas. In its 70th year it was no different. Thousands of British, Polish, Dutch and other nationalities descended on the area to join in these commemorations. I had the privilege of being one of them.

The programme for the commemorations stretched over the course of two weeks but the main concentration of these was on the weekend of the 19th to 21st September. These included parachute jumps on the same drop zones used 70 years before, displays of authentically restored vehicles and reenactors dressed in faithfully tailored kit and that famous maroon beret associated with the soldiers of the British Airborne. But while many of these events were happening, more subtle yet more meaningful services were being carried out to commemorate the fallen, such as that of the Glider Pilot Regiment at the Oosterbeek War Memorial.



Reenactors with a Jeep and a 6 Pounder anti-tank gun. Johnny carried similar in his glider along with other equipment and two troops



Left: the gutted Hartenstein Hotel in Oosterbeek after the battle of Arnhem. This building acted as a headquarters for the 1st Airborne division during the battle. Right: the same building is now home to the Airborne Museum.

A gap in these events allowed me to walk around parts Arnhem and Oosterbeek where much of the fighting had taken place, and in the company of my family and some very knowledgeable folks. There they were able to point out the modern, non-descript buildings which stood on fields where the 1st Airborne had dug-in to repel enemy advances, or which had replaced older buildings destroyed by armour, artillery or air raids. In many of the older buildings that did survive, the marks of war were still visible, through repaired brick work and bullet and shrapnel damage preserved on the exteriors of the locals' homes. In the little wooded areas between houses, depressions in the ground could be seen from where slit trenches had been dug and on the side of footpaths little wooden crosses had been left to mark to spot where a man had died. To see these signs of battle and hear the stories was almost beyond belief when walking through the leafy and tranquil suburban areas of this friendly little part of the world. Yet the evidence is still there.

All of these events were building up to the key event on the programme; the Airborne Service

in the Arnhem-Oosterbeek War Cemetery. Here the few remaining veterans of this battle were joined by relatives, locals, veterans of other times and those who simply came to show their respect. It was full to capacity with many having to be content to stand outside, behind the perimeter of trees which sheltered this special place. In marched the dozens of standard bearers and the service commenced to the sound of the many singing "I Vow to Thee, My Country." As has been tradition since the service was first held in 1945, Dutch school children are each assigned one of the 1,600 headstones and during the service lay flowers at its base. This year there was a slight difference. In addition to schoolchildren, people who had done this in their youth, one from each year that the service had been held, had the honour of repeating this task. They were also joined by school children from Britain and from Poland. When instructed, the children raised the flowers in the air before placing them at the headstones. As one veteran put it, "if you don't shed a tear at that moment, you never will." Following the service there was time to wander around the headstones and there was time to visit the resting place of Henry Charles Taylor to leave a card and some flowers.



Left: Stationsweg 6 and 8 after the battle. Centre: Stationsweg 8 today. Right: signs of battle damage in the brickwork of Stationsweg 8



Crosses left on the side of a street to mark the spot where a soldier by the name of Patrick Cassidy was killed in action



Just of the few 1,800 graves in Oosterbeek war cemetery.



Standard bearers get into position at the service.



Some of the older school children awaiting the signal to place flowers at their assigned grave.

Later that day a second service for the Glider Pilot Regiment was carried out in the little village of Wolfheze near the Glider Landing Zones. It was an opportunity for the people of the village to once again thank the men of the regiment and for those of the regiment to thank the Dutch people for their perpetual friendship and hospitality. Sadly only around a dozen veterans were there from a regiment that had around 2,500 in its ranks during its relatively short history.

This little service was to be the last part of the trip save one last task; a walk out to the landing zone where Johnny Wetherall and his first pilot Spud had landed their Glider 70 years ago. It could have been any field in any country. Thick with grass and surrounded by trees; not much different to 1944. But to me it was something special and something to be remembered.

On my return home I was a little disappointed to see that the commemorations had received such little media coverage. Little more than a

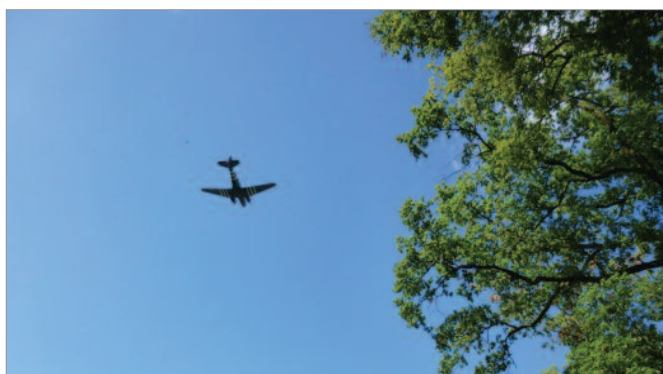
paragraph from the BBC or The Times. But does this apathy in the media and dwindling numbers of veterans mean that the heroes of Market Garden will be forgotten? The lingering signs of battle in the buildings and landscape of Arnhem would suggest otherwise.

More than 1,000 schoolchildren holding flowers over veterans' graves would suggest otherwise. The fact that some visitors who I was talking to had booked their accommodation for next year, before even checking out of their hotels this year, would suggest otherwise... In fact, I have been browsing myself.

Lest we forget.



The headstone of Spud Taylor.



A Dakota was one of a number of aircraft to fly over as part of the Sunday service. This type of aircraft was among those used for towing gliders and dropping paratroopers during Operation Market Garden.

World War 1 Veterans Ecumenical Service 29th June 2014

By Sabina Purcell

The World War 1 Veterans project is a voluntary web based project to list Ireland's World War 1 Veterans which to date has 32,000 names on www.worldwar1veterans.com. This is an Island of Ireland project and the names are from every county in Ireland. The names come from research but also names have been submitted from relatives, friends or neighbours who live not just in Ireland but also in the UK, America, Australia, India, New Zealand, Europe and Canada.

As part of the project, we organised a World War 1 Veterans Ecumenical remembrance Service on Sunday 29th June 2014 in St. Laurence's Church which is on the Upper Kilmacud Road which is a stone's throw from Leopardstown Park Hospital.

There was an attendance of 800 people at the service. Our very special guests were the residents, staff and supporters of Leopardstown Park Hospital and we were delighted and honoured to see them in the two front rows of the Church. Many of those attending (who

came from all over Ireland including Belfast, Donegal, Cork, Clare, Kerry, Tyrone and Mayo) lost no time meeting the residents and exchanging stories of their experiences.

The service included music by St. Georges Brass Band. The Royal Dublin

Fusiliers paraded their flag to "It's a long way to Tipperary". The hospital residents were spotted singing along to this very familiar song. Brendan Mc Quile sang "Beautiful Dreamer" and this much loved lullaby was very much enjoyed by everyone.

Members of the public were asked to bring a flower of their choice to the service to honour and remember a World War 1 Veteran and those who were killed in the War. Bouquets of flowers were placed on a table to honour their memory. By sitting in the front rows of the church the residents had the best view of the beautiful array and they could enjoy the lovely aroma that filled the church.

The service included the participation of the local school children from Mount Anville Primary School and St. Laurence's National School. The girls came dressed as nurses to acknowledge the role of women. The boys brought a wooden horse to honour the role of horses in World War 1.

The main part of the service involved relatives of Ireland's World War 1 veterans relating the moving stories of their relatives' participation in World War 1 and the service concluded as the candles were extinguished

We were delighted to extend a cead mile failte to our guests from Leopardstown Park Hospital which cared for many World War 1 Veterans. The presence of the residents, staff and volunteers of the hospital made the service truly memorable for all. We extend our gratitude to all who attended.

Photographs by Ian Farrelly



To Moan or not to Moan...

By Dr Joseph Yazbeck

When it comes to moaning, it is hard to get it right. One could say that no amount is ever appropriate. One school of thought runs that whenever we are about to say something negative about anything, we should push ourselves to say something positive instead!

There is a kind of moaning that is soul destroying for everyone concerned. This is the persistent habit saying 'poor me', seeing ourselves as passive victims, making ourselves out to be more hard done by than we are not taking responsibility for what happens to us.

Even if some of that applies, allowing ourselves to dwell on and frequently talk about what is wrong in our life means we run the risk of filling our minds with such stuff to the exclusion of more positive and uplifting things.

Such an attitude can instil a 'glass half empty' habit and prevent us from directing our attention to what is working and how we can either fix or accept what's not.

But does this mean we should avoid talking to friends unless we are feeling upbeat? Lets face it, life does not always go well, and sometimes there are a lot of negative things to report.

It would be worrying if someone felt unable to share feelings of frustration or obliged to mention only the good things that were happening to them. I for one want to know how my friends are genuinely doing, not just hear that they are OK when in fact they are going through a rough patch.

There is also something therapeutic about having a bit of a mutual moan....'mutual' being the operative word here, unless one party is going through an exceptional crisis. And having a moan does not necessarily mean that we are not doing anything about whatever may be bothering us.

But as moaning can have negative consequences and overload our relationships, we should be careful not to overdo it. Perhaps what we need is some kind of inner monitor that lights up and warns us when we are about to exceed our limit.



Veterans Report

By Geoffrey Medcalf, Veterans Support Group, Leopardstown Park Hospital

The Annual Garden Fete was held in the grounds of the hospital on Sunday September 7th. A lovely sunny day. The event was very well supported.

The Annual Battle of Britain Service was held in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday September 21st. On the same day a Remembrance Service for World War 1 victims was held in Deansgrange Cemetery, where a number of former residents are buried.

We remember all of those who have passed away since our last report.

We were all shocked to learn of the sudden death of Rory O'Neill, son of Joan and Paddy, on the 30th of September. May he rest in peace.

Richard (Dick) Cooke passed away after a long illness. His funeral took place in Taney Church on Saturday 23rd August.

Margaret Huet, aged 97, a long time hospital resident passed away on the 13th October. Her funeral service was held in the hospital chapel.

We send our sincere condolences to the families of the above.

The Wednesday Social Evening takes place between 5.30 and 7 pm each week. The residents love to see new faces. How about it !

The Coffee Dock is open every Wednesday and Saturday between 2 and 4 pm. Come and meet your friends for a cuppa and a chat.

We were sorry to learn that Jean Turvey, our Hon. Treasurer has had to step down, for personal reasons. Thank you for the excellent work you carried out for our group. We wish you well in the future.



The Royal Air Forces Association – Republic of Ireland Branch

By Lorraine and Pete McWilliams

Greetings to all Liana readers from all your friends at the Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA)!

The Republic of Ireland Branch of RAFA is a registered charity which provides friendship, help and support to members and veterans of the Royal Air Force (RAF) and their families. The Branch was founded in 1947 and received its official certification in 1948. Our Branch currently has approximately 280 members. The Association is funded entirely by our members and supporters' donations. We do not receive any government funding.

The RAFA has enjoyed a long relationship with Leopardstown Park Hospital. Over the years, many RAF veterans have been fortunate enough to be residents at LPH. Several RAFA members are currently volunteer helpers – including Geoffrey Medcalf, Jim Kelly, Alan Harrisson and Pete and Lorraine McWilliams. We hold our annual fundraising Garden Party at LPH and we are very grateful to all the staff for their support.

There were once many RAF stations across the island of Ireland and many men and women served with the RAF (and its forerunners, the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service). Indeed, from 1917 to 1922, there was an RAF Training Station at Tallaght in Dublin and the attached photo shows some of the Women's RAF (WRAF) stationed there. From 1923, the Urney Chocolates factory was located on the old aerodrome.

We are delighted and honoured that our membership includes a number of World War 2 veterans – many now nonagenarians. They are very active members of the Association and they continue to be some of the liveliest and entertaining participants at our monthly gatherings. Many will remember when RAFA used to meet in Earlsfort Terrace. Later we moved to shared accommodation in Crosthwaite Terrace in Dun Laoghaire. Sadly we no longer have our own premises, but we still meet

regularly. You would be very welcome to join us. Please telephone us on 087 181 7075 for details.

We hold a Battle of Britain memorial service in St Patrick's

Cathedral on the Sunday nearest the anniversary of the start of the battle on 15 September 1940. In November each year, we also attend the Remembrance Sunday service at St Patrick's Cathedral.

We hold an annual fundraising dinner soon after the anniversary of the Battle of Britain. In recent years, we have enjoyed the company of the British Ambassador Dominick Chilcott, Mrs Jane Chilcott, Brigadier-General Paul Fry (GOC of the Irish Air Corps) and Mrs Gillian Fry as our guests of honour.

We organise talks, outings and events throughout the year. In 2014, we have visited RAF Valley in Anglesey, the National Arboretum in Arlewas in Staffordshire and the aircraft museum at RAF Cosford near Wolverhampton. We also had a stand at the Bray Air Show. Three times per year, we distribute a members' newsletter letter called 'The Gen Sheet'. "Gen" is RAF slang for general information such as orders, news, gossip, rumours and so on. There are two conferences each year – one in UK and one at another European location. This year, 17 members of the Republic of Ireland Branch travelled to the European Conference in Benidorm.

If you would like to join us, we'd love to have you as a member! We offer two types of membership, *Ordinary* and *Associate*. Ordinary membership is available to serving and ex-serving RAF personnel. Associate membership is available to all. You can become an Associate Member even if you have never served in any arm of any country's armed forces. We welcome anyone who would like to support us and our aims and objectives. Please telephone us on 087.1817075 to request an application form.



Photo courtesy of South Dublin Libraries
www.southdublinlibraries.ie



Some of our nonagenarian members (Don Mooney, Jack Simpson and Geoffrey Medcalf) at this year's Battle of Britain Service

Photos show members enjoying this year's Conference in Benidorm. A great time was had by all.

Remembrance Sunday 2014

On Sunday, 9 November 2014, the annual remembrance service was held at **St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin**. The President was represented at the service by his Aide-de-Camp, Colonel Brendan McAndrew. The service was also attended by Tánaiste Joan Burton, the British and US Ambassadors and representatives of the Defence Forces, as well as veterans and relatives of those who fought in World War I.

St Patrick's Cathedral has held a remembrance service each year since 1919. This year, wreaths were laid at the Tree of Remembrance by the Tánaiste and Geoffrey Medcalf, MBE, National Vice-President of the Royal British Legion.

In London, Dan Mulhall, the Irish Ambassador to Great Britain, laid a wreath at London's Cenotaph Remembrance ceremony. It was the first time that an Irish Ambassador had participated in the commemoration since 1948. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Charlie Flanagan, said the event marked one of many important centenaries in Ireland and Britain's shared history.

"One hundred years on from the start of the First World War, a war that claimed more Irish lives than any other war, I welcome the invitation for Ireland to take part in this annual wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph to commemorate all those who died," he said.

"Our participation in this solemn occasion will be an opportunity to reflect on and remember the thousands of men from the island of Ireland who, for many different reasons, left their homes and families to fight in the First World War and never returned."

At Leopardstown Park Hospital, Rev. John Tanner and Fr. Jerry Moore conducted a remembrance service. War veterans and family members were present. John Crisp spoke the exhortation clearly and passionately. Rev. Tanner referred to Pastor Niemöller's words:

"First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—Because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out— Because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

