

# Getting on



## MISSION STATEMENT:

"We believe that old age should be honoured unconditionally, that it should

- defend itself,
- retain its rights,
- subordinate itself to no one and
- rule its own domain to the last breath."

Autumn 2005

The Newsletter of the IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE - a national voluntary organisation

## Use it or Lose it - retaining your mental faculties...

Professor Ian Robertson of Trinity College Dublin states that "the human brain of all ages is plastic, that is it is shaped by what you do, what you learn and what you think" He points out that there is strong evidence to suggest that the degree to which you retain your mental faculties depends on the following behavioural factors:-

- 1 Doing aerobic exercise
- 2 Experiencing regular mental stimulation
- 3 Learning something new
- 4 Reducing levels of stress
- 5 Staying socially active
- 6 Improving your dietary habits
- 7 Thinking Young

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## EDITORIAL

Autumn 2005

The National Economic and Social Council in its Report "The Developmental Welfare State" (No. 113 - May 2005) suggests that Ireland's strong economic performance is a new context within which to seek major improvements in social protection. "Progress in reinventing and repositioning Ireland's social policies and Welfare State will require the same determination and some of the same processes that improved the country's economic policies over the last two decades"

Addressing the current position of older people the Council says "the challenge of ensuring that people in their retirement experience Irish society as an attractive, supportive and secure place in which to live requires some form of regular authoritative and comprehensive review of evolving needs of older people and of the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the social protection extended to them through

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**"The whole point of living is to do something worthwhile."** Dr. T. K. Whitaker

## GOOD ADVICE!

*In a recent interview the distinguished public servant Dr. T K Whitaker said "The whole point of living is to do something worthwhile. When I retired from the public sector that was the end of one period and a whole new world was available to me." He went on to say "The last 25 years have been full of interest. I would say to people 'Don't ever stereotype yourself as being old'."*

*Dr. Whitaker is currently writing for the Salmon Commission on the dangers facing wild salmon and he says that the other sign of life in him is that he remarried three months ago.*



## EUROPEAN AGENDA

In public debate across Europe following the European Treaty Referendum it became clear that any vision of the future of Europe needs to build on a clear view of citizens needs and expectations and that national debate cannot be steered from Brussels.

As a member of the General Council of the European Federation of Older People and as a member of the more recently established European Older Peoples Platform, the Irish Association of Older People since its inception has been engaged in dialogue and debate promoting a modern view of ageing from an Irish perspective.

Both the Federation and Platform have consultative status within the European Commission and Parliament and they form part of a third and fourth age Intergroup. This Intergroup is currently addressing issues including pension provision, research on ageing, needs of ageing migrants, abuse of older people and memory training as an effective tool against mental decline. The Federation and Platform also participate in bi-annual meetings of the Commission and Social Platform. Through membership of the Federation and Platform the Association is in a position on an ongoing basis to offer an Irish perspective and influence policy in the interest of the membership and the wider community of older people.

Recently one of our directors, *Ms. Mary Horkan\**, who has extensive experience within the Council of Europe, the Commission, and within European Non-Governmental Agencies, represented the Association at General Council Meetings of AGE and the **European Federation of Older People**.

*Mary is a founder member of the IAOP, and has lectured on social policy and social gerontology for many years at UCD. Mary has researched and published on quality of life issues, including "Older People Living Alone", "The Role of Television in the Lives of Older People", Elder Abuse and "Urban Safety and Security". Several of her research studies have been collaborative European projects.*



## UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE

*To mark the U.N. International Day of Older Persons, An Tanaiste and Minister for Health and Children invited a representative group to a Conference in Farmleigh House entitled "Keeping the Person at Home through Homecare Supports". The Conference was opened by the Minister of State with responsibility for Older Persons, Mr. Sean Power. An Tanaiste then arrived and remained for the presentation of modules of care packages. Minister Harney listened to the subsequent discussion, chaired by Bob Carroll of N.C.A.O.P., and brought the Conference to a close with an address in which she responded to a number of issues raised in the course of discussion.*



*Examples of Home Care Grants, intended for older people who, without access to additional home support services, would be at risk of placement in institutional care and enabling them to purchase services that eliminate or delay the need for institutional care but complement rather than replace Health Board services, were presented at the Conference. These grants are available both to older people living in the community and to older people who are leaving hospital to enable discharge and return to their own home.*

*These grants are in operation in the former Northern Area (Dublin) Health Board and the former East Coast Area Health Board.*

*Examples of Home Care Grant Services in the Cavan Monaghan Area and the Choice Programme operating in Sligo/Leitrim Area were also presented.*

*This Conference provided those attending with a great deal of information, afforded an opportunity to network and engage in discussion. There was general agreement that this was a most constructive way to celebrate this U.N. designated day.*

## EDITORIAL *Continued*

services and income supports of every type."

It suggests that The National Disability Strategy might become a headline example in some respects as to how planning and provision for older people might be developed; tailoring attention to the individual. This Strategy builds on existing policy, on legislation including equality legislation and on the policy of mainstreaming service provision within the State Agencies that provide services to citizens generally.

The National Economic and Social Council considers that in regard to the provision of services for older people there is a need (a) to identify where and how service systems need to change (b) for the development by key government departments of sectoral plans and (c) for the provision of tailored statements to individuals of services which they will receive.

The Council states that in order to ensure implementation and evaluation a review of institutional arrangements will be necessary. It considers also that services could be better anticipated and would more effectively come on stream by drawing up a National Plan in co-operation with the Community and Voluntary Sector, commercial interests and older people's families.

The National Economic and Social Forum is also addressing The Older Person Agenda. Its Project Team on Care for Older People undertook extensive consultation with a wide variety of individuals and organizations, received one hundred and forty submissions and organised a Plenary Session for individuals and representative groups. It is now finalising its Report on issues including the legal dimension of community care, co-ordinated approaches, delivering change and enhancing quality of care and quality of life.

The Inter-Departmental Committee (Departments of Social and Family Affairs, Health and Children, and Department of An Taoiseach) is also due to report to government on a variety of issues including the financing of long-term care.

Presumably the conclusions drawn by these three Agencies will be co-ordinated in to a programme which will be implemented within a National Plan for Older People as an integral part of our aim to create "a world class set of institutions and policies in the social sphere". Given our current unprecedented national wealth the resourcing of this Plan should not pose a problem.

## IRISH EMIGRANTS

***An Irish Abroad unit to co-ordinate the provision of assistance to emigrants and to work with other government departments and voluntary agencies has been established in the Department of Foreign Affairs.***

*There are an estimated 1.2 million Irish born living abroad and a substantial proportion are living out journey's end in foreign lands. Given the fact that every person born on this island has an entitlement by birthright to be part of the Irish Nation we all have an obligation to help them maintain links with home.*

***Christmas can be a particularly lonely time for emigrants and a card or letter to friends abroad particularly senior citizens is greatly appreciated.***

***If you know of an Irish person living abroad, DO send them a Christmas card this year!***

## Use it or Lose it.....

Pick up a book or magazine, go for a walk, see a movie or visit a friend or relative -- and reduce your risk for developing Alzheimer's Disease. Reading and engaging in other leisure activities may reduce the risk or delay onset of clinical manifestations of dementia, according to a study published in *Neurology*, the scientific journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

High education and occupational attainments have previously been associated with reduced risk of AD. This study, conducted by investigators at Columbia University in New York, demonstrates the benefits of leisure activities as an independent factor in reducing the risk of dementia among people of any education or occupational level.

Also recommended: crosswords, word searches, strategy games!

## SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP 2003-2005...

a commitment to improve the level of (Social Welfare) payments to reach a target level of 200 euro by 2007

**Sustaining Progress**, the national agreement covering the period 2003-2005 was negotiated against the background of the National Economic and Social Council Strategy Report "An Investment in Quality and Services, Inclusion and Enterprise". This Report focused on what at that time was considered necessary to make the economy (i) competitive in a changing world (ii) environmentally sustainable (iii) efficient through finding and implementing appropriate markets and regulatory regimes in different areas, and (iv) socially acceptable.

When launching the negotiations in October 2002, the Taoiseach drew attention to the prevailing economic uncertainties (presumably the effects of the 9/11 events in the United States) and stated that Partners to the

Agreement would have to jointly take hard decisions "on what ones immediate priorities should be and on these priorities that will need to be delivered in a more favourable economic climate".



The commitment in Sustaining Progress to benchmark social welfare pensions over a 5-10 year period at 34% of average industrial earnings and to improve the level of payments to reach a target level of 200 euro by 2007 was a significant and very welcome development from the point of view of older people.

Also the inclusion of Older People as a target group in the Care Initiatives, one of ten Special Initiatives to be progressed during the lifetime of the Agreement, was a recognition of the needs of the most vulnerable section of this Group. The Care Initiative aimed at (i) identifying the various care requirements (ii) exploring the potential of differentiated models of care (iii) identifying and addressing manpower and physical infrastructure issues and (iv) identifying options for the medium and long term funding of care provision.

The Review of the Years Ahead commissioned by N.C.A.O.P. had already identified care needs in significant detail and currently the position is being reviewed and updated by the National Economic and Social Forum. In regard to differentiated models of care, a number of Pilot Projects have been undertaken and in some areas person centred care packages are in place. Options for funding of medium and long term care are clearly set out in the Mercer Report and it is understood that Recommendations of the Interdepartmental Committee currently studying this Report, are imminent. The resolution of issues around the provision of manpower and physical infrastructure, as many seeking care services will be aware, are proving more intractable.

### ...A NEW SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Fears expressed prior to negotiations on the current Social Partnership Agreement in regard to an economic downturn thankfully did not become a reality.

In its most recent Report, The Developmental Welfare State, the National Economic and Social Council draws attention to Ireland's strong economic performance, which it suggests provides a new context within which to seek major improvements in social protection. The Council considers that progress in reinventing and repositioning Ireland's social policies and Welfare State will require the same determination and some of the same processes that improved the country's economic policies over the last two decades.

negotiations...  
producing an  
agreement  
balancing economic  
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needs of citizens

Given the fact that in the event of agreement between the Social Partners on a successor to Sustaining Progress the Council's Report will form the background for discussions; the Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Cowen, having stated that the Government has a responsibility to ensure that the benefits of our economic performance permeates society as a whole and the recent acknowledgement by the Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mr. Seamus Brennan, that we need to confront the fact that the rising tide of economic progress in Ireland has not lifted all boats, a climate of opinion appears to be developing within which there is an acceptance that strong economic performance and improved social protection can be made to support each other; that it is possible to provide quality health and social care and at the same time continue to successfully manage the economy.

From their record to date it is evident that Stakeholders in National Partnership Negotiations are capable of producing an agreement balancing economic success with the social and economic needs of citizens. Having regard to the very healthy state of our finances at present the achievement of a "world class set of institutions and policies in the social sphere" is a realistic objective which would support the philosophy that in the final analysis "man is still the measure of all things".

# Do I Qualify for.....



## NATIONAL FUEL SCHEME

**Among the categories which qualify for the above Scheme are:**

- Old Age (Contributory or Non-Contributory) Pension
- Retirement Pension
- Widow's or Widower's (Contributory) Pension
- Widow's or Widower's (Non-Contributory) Pension
- Invalidity Pension
- Pre-Retirement Allowance
- Long-term Unemployment Assistance
- Disability Allowance
- Farm Assist
- Disabled Person's Rehabilitative Allowance

**or**

If you are getting a pension/benefit or equivalent payment from a country covered by EC Regulations or a country with which Ireland has a Bilateral Social Security Agreement and you are resident in Ireland and satisfy the conditions below:

- Aged 66 or over, *or*
- Under age 66 and getting an Invalidity Pension/Benefit (for over 12 months) or a Widow's / Widower's Pension or an equivalent payment from another country,

**or**

- If you are taking part in an employment or educational scheme and are entitled to keep your secondary benefits, *and*
- You live alone *or* only with
- A dependent spouse/partner and /or dependent children *or*
- A person who gives you full time care and attention if you are disabled or semi-invalided

**or you are**

- A person getting short-term Unemployment Assistance *or*
- Another person getting one of the payments listed who would also be eligible for Fuel Allowance in their own right

**and**

- You and the other members of your household are unable to provide for your heating needs.
- To fulfil this condition your household must satisfy a means test.

**Copies of the application form - NFS1 - are available from your local Social Welfare Office.**

## GP VISIT CARD

Older people who have not yet reached the age of seventy may be eligible for a GP Visit Card.

A GP Visit Card could enable you and your family to visit your doctor Free of Charge.

This scheme is means tested

Find out if you and your family qualify, and apply at your local Health Centre or Health Office

**For more information Freephone 1800 242 630 Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm or visit [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie).**

## FOOTWEAR

The IASBH Footwear and Calliper Centre has extended its services to provide orthopaedic supports. The Centre offers a wide range of fashionable orthopaedic footwear for adults and children. The supports that it provides are available in a range of colours and are made to measure by a fully trained Orthotist. They are comfortable, will help with knee, ankle and leg pains and they are completely discreet so they can be used in any regular shoes.

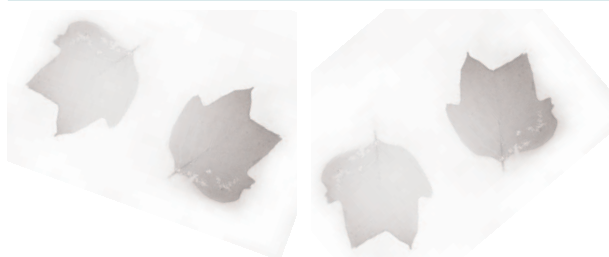
### Contact Details:

IASBH Footwear & Calliper Centre Ltd.,  
National Resource Centre,  
Old Nangor Road,  
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

**Tel: 01 457 2326**

**Fax: 01 405 6056**

**Email: [footwear@iasbah.ie](mailto:footwear@iasbah.ie)**



# Things to Do

## >>>>> *Places to Go*

### ART WORKSHOPS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

A new programme to provide opportunities for older people to engage with modern and contemporary art is currently being held in the IMMA.

Tel: 01 6129912

Email: [lisa.moran@imma.ie](mailto:lisa.moran@imma.ie).

### NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND

Northern Nocturnes

- Nightscapes in the Age of Rembrandt
- Open from October to 11 December
- Millennium Wing
- Concessions  4
- Audio tour included in admission

Tel: Ticket line 6633513.

### OFF-SEASON HOLIDAY BREAKS

There are a variety of excellent holiday packages available during the off season. Some examples:

#### **Quality Resort and Leisure Centre Killarney**

4 nights break from  149pps

Golden Holiday Breaks from  159pps

Website: [www.qualityhotelkillarney.com](http://www.qualityhotelkillarney.com)

#### **Castlecourt Hotel Westport**

mid-week for the four months of Winter season

2 nights B&B for two people

December and January  99

February  119

March  139

Website: [www.castlecourthotel.ie](http://www.castlecourthotel.ie).

#### **Clonmacnoise and West Offaly Railway**

A fully guided Rail Tour aboard the Clonmacnoise and West Offaly Railway special rates for groups

- must be pre-booked

Telephone 090 9674450

#### **Quality Hotels and Leisure Centre Youghal**

Reservations: 1850 605 705

Website: [www.qualityyoughalhotel.com](http://www.qualityyoughalhotel.com)

### ESCORTED TOURS

**Marathon Coach Tours** provide Escorted Tours for Groups and Independent travel. Tours include: Day Tours, Weekends Away, Midweek Breaks, Bank Holiday Weekends and Christmas Cabarets. For more information, call Liza -

Tel: (01) 4755010

Website: [www.marathon-travel.ie](http://www.marathon-travel.ie)

## IMPROVED WHEELCHAIR ACCESS TO TRAINS

**Stations:** All stations have access to one platform. Some have access to both platforms. Where a station has access to only one platform most services use this platform. For operational reasons, some services have to use the other platform so advance notice will assist us in making arrangements on your behalf.

Most mainline stations have portable ramps and some have wheelchairs to assist people with walking difficulties to transfer to and from trains. Most mainline and suburban and all DART stations have PA announcements for those who have a visual impairment, giving information about the next train to arrive at the platform. Tactile tiles have been put in place in some stations to assist the visually impaired.

All new lifts are being equipped with Braille Coded Buttons and feature a talking lift mechanism for the visually impaired. Real Time Passenger Information Displays are being introduced in the DART stations and a programme has been developed to introduce induction loops at booking offices for the hearing impaired. We are working with Eircom to ensure that all new phones are looped to assist the hearing impaired and that lowered phones will be provided for wheelchair users.

**Trains:** Mainline and Suburban trains require a ramp to permit boarding from the platform to the carriages. A special portable ramp is used for this purpose. These are currently available at all terminal points and major junctions and are being made available at other smaller stations.

DART trains can be accessed directly from platforms and the trains have wide doors and a large vestibule area to accommodate wheelchairs. At some stations there is a gap between the platform and the carriage. This may create difficulty for the mobility and visually impaired and assistance may be required.

With regard to on-train facilities, we provide a dedicated space in the dining car of each train specifically designated for the mobility impaired. The dining car was chosen because there is a dining car on all InterCity trains, there is always a staff presence, refreshments are available and a telephone is also provided nearby. All dining cars in the fleet have been modified to provide wheelchair access and accommodation.

[www.iarnrodeireann.ie](http://www.iarnrodeireann.ie)

Have you had a positive or negative experience as a wheelchair user travelling by train? Tell us your story!

## SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENTS

The Federation of Active Retirement Associations and The National Association of Widows in Ireland have both registered complaints in relation to the single room supplement being charged at most hotels.

Having regard to the fact that one in four of the population now live alone, the practice of single room supplement is now out of date and the Association supports the views expressed by the Federation and the Association of Widows.

It is generally acknowledged that older people are major customers in the off-season and, given that a high proportion prefer single room accommodation, it is unreasonable to penalise them.

## HOSPITAL PARKING CHARGES

The Irish Patients Association recently called for the establishment of a national policy on parking charges at public hospitals. In a recent survey carried out by the Association it was found that there is a wide divergence in these charges.

The Association points out that patients without patient appointments are being penalised because of the failure of hospitals to introduce an individual appointment time as a result of which you might park your car in the hospital at nine in the morning and not be seen until one o'clock. In these circumstances patients should not be penalised through parking charges due to delays in delivering appointments on time.

We support this view.

## DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PERSONS

HSE providing health and social services to people of Dublin city, north of Liffey and County Fingal Congratulations on their Directory of Services for Older Persons clearly setting out services available and contact numbers.

Copies available from former Northern Area Health Board,  
Swords Business Campus  
Balheary Road,  
Swords, Co. Dublin.  
Tel: 01 8131800  
Email: nahb@erha.ie

## TOP 10 TIPS HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR MEDICATION

1. Read the label carefully and get complete instructions from your pharmacist on how to take your prescription(s).
2. Take the medicine exactly as your doctor and pharmacist have told you and be sure to ask your pharmacist if you have any concerns about the medication you have been prescribed.
3. Make sure each of your doctors - if you have more than one - and your pharmacist, know all the prescription and non-prescription medications you are taking. Ensure they are aware of all allergies, side effects and other changes in your condition.
4. Make sure you are very clear on how to take the medication and understand any precautions for the use of your prescription i.e. - what not to take with it.
5. Have your pharmacist make a schedule of all the medications you are taking and at what times to take them everyday. Ask your pharmacist to assist with managing the proper sequence of administering your prescriptions.
6. Use one pharmacy for all of your prescriptions. This way it's easier for the pharmacist to track what you are taking.
7. Don't take over-the-counter medications when you are taking prescription medicines without consulting your pharmacist.
8. Take your medication for the prescribed duration period- no more, no less than what has been prescribed.
9. Never take someone else's medicine or share your prescriptions.
10. Check the expiration dates on all your medications and take all old or unused prescriptions back to your pharmacist for safe disposal.



**There's no thrill in easy sailing  
When the skies are clear and blue  
There's no joy in merely doing things  
Which any one can do.  
But there is some satisfaction  
There is mighty sweet to take,  
When you reach a destination  
That you thought you'd never make.**  
*Spirella*

**I'm no financial adviser, so I can't tell  
you how to double your money.  
But I can tell you how to double your  
troubles. It's easy:  
Brood on them!**  
*Anonymous*

Please contact us with your reactions to the issues of importance to you raised in this newsletter, or any other matter of importance to you.

## THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

Room B15  
University College  
Earlsfort Terrace  
Dublin 2

Tel/Fax: 01 4750013  
Tel: 01 4750071  
Email: [iaop@oceanfree.net](mailto:iaop@oceanfree.net)  
Website: [www.olderpeople.ie](http://www.olderpeople.ie)

## THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

SOME REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN:

The Irish Association of Older People is a national voluntary and membership based organisation of older citizens.

The main objectives of the Association are:

- to serve as the direct voice of older people;
- to campaign on their behalf;
- to serve as an information centre;
- to provide a forum for them to act as a social force;
- to afford an opportunity for debate and action

The Association networks with local, national and issue driven groups, and actively participates in transnational projects within the European Union, to help formulate policies and best practice for the betterment of older people.

The Association is administered on a voluntary basis.

Membership is open to all and the annual subscription is €10. Associate membership is also available for groups.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I would like to join THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE and I enclose the annual membership fee of €10.00

Associate membership available for groups - please contact us for more information.

Name (block letters please):

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

Signature:

Please detach and send, along with a cheque/ bank draft in the amount of €10.00, to:  
The Irish Association of Older People, Room B15, University College, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2.

