



In this Issue

- Spring has arrived!1
- The Arts and Crafts Corner1
- A Knitting Club for Residents and Clients2
- Dublin City Flora Fun Run.....2
- A Profile of Gerard McEntee – Assistant Director of Nursing3
- Movie Group3
- A Talk on Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia3
- Veterans Corner4
- Cats Corner.....4
- A Visit with Mrs Enid Oldham5
- My First Visit to Leopardstown Park Hospital.....5
- The Oldham Family6
- Milestones7
- Frankie Hennell’s Corner7
- Appreciation7
- Terry Parr and his Pipes.....8
- The Importance of Compassion and Humour in Medicine9
- Sister Margaret Mary Coffee Morning9
- Footsteps10
- Poetry Corner10
- Award to be presented to Kitty Ledden – Clevis Resident11
- Gallery11

Spring has arrived!



The above photo was submitted by Johnnie Wetherall, a regular contributor. He took this on St. David's Day (March 1st) whilst walking with his wife Audrey in the grounds on their 57th wedding anniversary.

The Arts and Crafts Corner

By *Noirín Scully & Rita Conroy*

On a damp Tuesday morning we visited the coffee dock at the hospital where the weekly art session was taking place under the watchful eye of Vera Doyle. Ten residents were totally absorbed in drawing and painting using water colours, oils or pastels. The styles and subjects totally reflected their individuality, some going for flowers, country scenes or a still life. A selection of their work is displayed on the wall and we were most impressed at how good they were.

these paintings and they made a calendar for the New Year, which they had no problem in selling, as they proved to be very popular. This was an effective way of raising funds for their art supplies which can be expensive.



Vera told us that she selected a number of

Congratulations to all involved.



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A Knitting Club for Residents and Clients

Those of us termed “senior citizens” or “golden oldies” or whatever, have achieved many valuable and useful skills during a lifetime. Skills that we enjoyed when younger, but sometimes skills that are no longer within our ability.

There was a time when learning to knit was a skill we all acquired at an early age. Some of us were taught by our mothers and for others it was a subject taught at school which is where I struggled unsuccessfully to produce a pair of socks. Once you could “turn the heel” of a sock, you were judged to be a knitter but alas, I never in my life managed to achieve this goal.

My mother was a great knitter and never worried about knitting socks so I learned from her and sporadically through the years I went through a knitting frenzy. Although some of the garments I produced were very strange indeed, others turned out successfully.

The art of knitting goes back nearly a thousand years. Knitting was very popular in the early part of the 20th century but as the importation of cheap knitwear increased it was no longer

economical and the skill lapsed. In recent years however it has risen again in popularity, even before the demise of the Celtic Tiger. Knitting is seen as an expression of individuality etc, a way of improving creativity and the rhythm of the clicking needles brings a certain amount of relaxation which is very desirable in these stressful times.

It is worth stating that some of the well known film stars are enthusiasts as filming can mean many hours of waiting around and so outcome the needles and at least they can feel that they are being productive. I also remember an airline pilot telling me that when they were being trained for long-haul flights, they were advised to learn to knit because it prevented the pilot falling asleep which is not a good idea.

Now knitting circles are springing up here and there as women see an opportunity of again “doing something useful” and at the same time enjoying a social couple of hours with fellow knitters. So, how about it? It is up to you. Have a chat with Vera who will have a selection of wools, needles, patterns etc. for you to choose from. Knit something for yourself or some items for charity and

Volunteers Needed

The knitting club will need the help of volunteers to act in a supervisory capacity. Some knowledge of knitting is desirable. The hours would be as stated in the notice above.

Please contact Ger Lee.
Phone No. 2160551.
Internal Ext: 207

Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to the following for their contributions of wool and materials for our club.

SHAW'S DEPARTMENT
STORE, Dun Laoghaire.

join the ever-increasing number of knitters who enjoy a sociable get together every Tuesday morning. We aim to have the first meeting of the Club on Tuesday April 28th.

Calling all who enjoy knitting or crocheting

Join our Knitting Club each Tuesday Morning in the Coffee Dock 10.45am to 11.45am

Enquires to: Ger Lee Phone No. 216 0551 Internal Ext. 207



Dublin City Flora Fun Run

Pictured here are Elaine, Elma, Anna and Jane who are competing in the Dublin City Flora Fun Run. They are seeking financial sponsorship to purchase resources to help enhance the health and wellbeing of all the residents and patients at Leopardstown Park Hospital.

We wish you success.

A Profile of Gerard McEntee – Assistant Director of Nursing

By Noirín Scully & Rita Conroy



Having recently arrived back in Ireland from Birmingham with his family, Gerard has settled in to life in Leopardstown and the responsible position of Assistant Director of Nursing.

Born in Monaghan, Gerard moved up to Belfast where he was educated, went to college and graduated in Psychiatric (RPN) and General (RGN) Nursing. After qualifying Gerard spent two years nursing in Purdysburn Hospital (psychiatry) and also in the Windsor Unit which is connected to Belfast City Hospital. Following that he worked in the busy surgical unit of that hospital. Moving to London in 1987 Gerard worked in the trauma general surgical unit. Additionally he worked in the intensive care unit and stroke rehabilitation units. A move to Solihull, Birmingham in 1990 followed where Gerard took up a position in the East

Birmingham Hospital, a large general hospital. He worked in surgery and also in the community where he cared mostly for patients over the age of 65. During his time in England Gerard gained BSc Nursing and a Post Grad Dip in Health at the University of Birmingham.

Sheila, Gerard's wife, is from Dublin and they met when they were both nursing in Belfast. During their time in the UK, Gerard and Sheila often spoke of their wish to return to Ireland at some time. In 2008, Sheila came here on a fact finding mission and saw the advertisement regarding the position of assistant director of nursing and lost no time in passing the information to Gerard and the rest, as they say, is history. They have a thirteen year old son, Liam Thomas, who attends Newpark Comprehensive School. He has also settled quite happily in Ireland. A close family, Gerard spoke of his love for Sheila and Liam Thomas and how important their happiness is to him.

We asked Gerard what he considers a priority in his new position. He responded that the most important objective would be in getting to know all the residents and to be aware of their needs. He spoke of the importance of person-centred care and the necessity of providing services that meet the needs of the individuals rather than those of the hospital [where resources permit].

Movie Group

By Larry Butler



Please join us for our movie group every Monday in various sun rooms around the hospital. Watch out for posters!

ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME!

He feels that staff are in a privileged position to be able to improve the health and well-being of the residents and clients who attend day care and that each one who works in the hospital should remind themselves of this every day. The importance of the services we provide can never be underestimated nor undervalued.

Gerard thanked us for the very pleasant interview and acknowledged the positive work all at Liana do.

We enjoyed talking to Gerard and wish him well.

A Talk on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia

By Aoife Morrin, Student Social Worker

An information session will be held in early April in the concert hall in the hospital at a date to be confirmed. The talk will be given by the Alzheimer's Society on the subject of dementia and Alzheimer's disease and will be of interest to relatives of patients, staff and carers. The venue will be Leopardstown Park Hospital concert hall. Notices will be

posted throughout the hospital when the date has been confirmed.

Should you wish to attend, please contact:

Aoife Morrin, Student Social Worker

Tel: 01 2160565

Veterans Corner



were presented by the President of the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland) Major General The O Moroche CB, MBE.

A Memorial Service took place in the hospital Chapel on Tuesday 11th November at which John Crisp, ex N. Irish Horse laid a wreath in memory of the fallen.

We welcome two new patients, Stewart Fleming and Jim Redmond both ex RAF veterans of the 1939/45 War. We hope they have settled into their new home in the Clevis.

Ex RAF patients of the hospital and Clevis might like to know that your Association in the Republic of Ireland raised over €10,000 for the Benevolent Fund. These funds are used to help ex-servicemen and women and their dependents in the Republic of Ireland who have fallen on hard times. So thank you to all who help in our annual appeal.

We all look forward to Spring and Summer and the opportunity to get out and about after what has been a long and cold Winter.

It may seem a little strange to refer to events which took place in December 2008 but we have not had the opportunity to report on these events as they took place after the Christmas edition of Liana.

We had the Band Concert on Tuesday 9th December given by the Army No. 1 Band which was as usual a most enjoyable afternoon.

The Annual Gift Giving to the ex-service patients took place on Thursday 18th December and was organised by Aileen Kerr and Joan O'Neill. The gifts

The Advocacy Group

By Aoife Morrin, Student Social Worker

The residents' Advocacy group has highlighted the fact that privacy throughout the Nightingale wards is an issue at present. They would appreciate it if staff, residents and visitors would refrain from entering the ward when curtains are drawn in order to respect the privacy of the residents. Your co-operation will be much appreciated.

Cats Corner

Cat lover Nancy Crisp, daughter of John Crisp, resident in the Clevis Welfare Home, sent us photos and a short item about a pair of pretty cats.



Millie



Mungo

Mungo and Millie

By Nancy Crisp

Mungo and Millie are Maine Coon cats which originate from Maine in the United States. They belong to friends of mine who live in Dunmore East, Co. Waterford. Up to this they have always had Persian cats, but this is the first time I have ever come across the Maine Coon breed and they are stunning.

Unfortunately you cannot see Mungo's magnificent tail in the photo but I think he still looks gorgeous.

A Visit with Mrs Enid Oldham

By Noírin Scully & Rita Conroy

Joan O'Neill, (retired Director of Nursing) has been visiting Mrs Enid Oldham, resident in St John's Nursing Home on the Merrion Road. When she heard her fascinating connection with our hospital during the 1930's, which Enid had already written down, Joan thought it would be an interesting article for LIANA and she contacted us. We decided to visit Enid and had a very enjoyable and informative visit with this lively 97 year old who can recall events of 70 years ago with ease. We are delighted to feature this account of her visits to our hospital during the 1930's.



My First Visit to Leopardstown Park Hospital

By Enid Oldham



Glasshouses in hospital grounds

It was in February 1934 that I first visited Leopardstown Park. Hugh, the son of Dr. Ralph Oldham who had been appointed to the hospital in 1933, invited three of us to his home for lunch one Sunday.

We travelled by train on the old Harcourt Street line and Hugh met us at Stillorgan Station. This was new ground for me, and as we entered the Hospital gates, we turned right along what I was told was called the back drive. I realised that this was quite different from what we would expect to find in an establishment labelled "hospital". I remember seeing one gate lodge and passing a side turning leading to what I was told was the garage. (This building, now the old mortuary, is still there).

Eventually we arrived at the Oldham home – an Army hut. Inside there was an unexpected amount of space – three bedrooms, dining room, drawing room, bathroom, kitchen – and tucked in some corner, a little room belonging to May, the maid. Each room was small, but comfortable, through lacking in many respects compared with today's standards.

I met Dr & Mrs Oldham, and also Zanco, a very dignified chow. He adored his mistress, was friendly with his master and Hugh, but just tolerated me obviously because I was an accepted guest. Like many chows he was very independent, and went off for a walk by himself.

After lunch the four young folk went for a walk in the grounds. We saw the walled gardens, the tennis courts, the "big house", where Matron and the Sisters lived, and another army hut occupied by the Shires family. Mr Shires was employed in some non-medical capacity. Small groups of the patients who wore a blue uniform, passed by. We greeted them, but did not enter into conversation. Finally, we completed the tour walking along the front drive, and looking across at Leopardstown racecourse.

That was the first of many visits, mostly just on my own. I met some of the sisters and on occasions we played tennis with them. I got to know the Shires family, and eventually was invited to Matrons tea-party on some visits.

Sadly, Zanco got ill as a result of finding some poisoned meat. He died on a day when I was there. Shortly afterwards Mrs Oldham acquired another chow whose pedigree name was, I think, Changuinola, but he was known as Chuff. From the beginning he accepted me as part of the family and his whole demeanour towards human beings was more friendly and less remote than is usual with chows.

After Hugh and I became engaged, the men became less formal in manner. At one stage we both belonged to a Dramatic Society, and it was decided to give a performance of a sort of pantomime to the men. It had been written by one of our members and we had already presented it in support of a few good causes. The men in blue assembled in their recreation hut. At first they were rather quiet and subdued, but when the chorus came on and they saw their doctor's son, his girlfriend and several others prancing about as dusky men and maidens, wearing skirts made of raffia mats, coffee-coloured T shirts and tights, they really let themselves go, and the whole event was a great success.

There was very little change during the three years I visited there. On the morning that Hugh and I were married, the men made a guard of honour in the drive and Hugh and his best man set off for the church.

Shortly afterwards Dr. Oldham was transferred to London and my contact with Leopardstown Park came to an end.

The Oldham Family

By Enid Oldham

In 1933, Dr Ralph Oldham was established in Leopardstown Park Hospital. He had been born in India in 1880 where his father worked with the Indian Civil Service. He was educated in England and then went to Cambridge to study for the ordained ministry. However, as he subsequently decided that he would prefer to be a flying buttress and support to the church from the outside, he transferred to Trinity College, Dublin to enter Medical School. During his time there he was attached to Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital.

After qualifying his first post was at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Blackpool, after which he worked in private practice in Sutton, Surrey. However being a man who did not enjoy small talk, and was not sympathetic to comfortably off patients

who wanted to be told they were much more ill than they really were, he gave up and took a job as Medical Officer to an archaeological dig in the Sudan.

This led up to the 1st World War at the outset of which he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. When the war was over he transferred to the Ministry of Pensions. For a time he was in Cork, then in Leeds, after which he was sent to Dublin to the Blackrock Hospital. By 1933, when I met the family, he was established at Leopardstown Park.

Before the 1939 war started he had been transferred to London. Also he had taken a six-week crash course in artificial limb fitting at Roehampton (coming out with top marks as was his usual form!). Leading up to the war his section of the Ministry of Pensions was transferred to Blackpool, and within a



Dr. Oldham and the Ford Humber called 'Hetty'

short time he became a patient in the Royal Victoria Hospital and died there. He had not liked Blackpool when there as a young doctor and felt it ironic that he should have returned to the hospital as a patient.

His last words to me, as I was under instruction, giving him oxygen were "The man is too old; let us get him out of here". He was just 59 years of age. Not an easy person, but I was very fond of him.



Enid's husband Hugh and father-in-law Dr. Oldham with Zanchi



Enid with her father-in-law

Milestones

By Amanda Cameron

We start with some good news congratulating the following staff and welcoming their new babies:

- Janice Samcuya and her baby boy
- Smitha Thomas and her baby girl
- Dr Jennifer Fitzpatrick and her baby girl

We hope sleepless nights are few and far between.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish our valued members of staff our heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery.

- Teresa Wright
- Maureen Flynn
- Margaret Hegarty

Retirement wishes go to the following.

We will miss you, girls!

- Frankie Cruise
- Maeve Rogers

Our condolences to the families and friends of clients who passed away recently.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Thomas Keane | Charles Kiernan |
| Sheila Cameron | Sheila Kellagher |
| Eithne Keating | Elizabeth Liddy |
| John O'Malley | Mary Tobin |

Our sincere sympathy to Nessa Flanagan and her family on the recent death of her beloved father (Peadar)

We are all looking forward to the upcoming wedding of Susan Hogan, (the smiling face at reception) to Tony Clarke on May 6th. Ladies, get the hats ready!



Frankie Hennell's Corner



Hello readers

I hope you are all keeping well. It was sad to hear about the recent death of John O'Malley. May he rest in peace.

It was also sad to see Mafe Ocampo leave. She is a great nurse and a great singer! We wish her all the best in her new role.

Good luck and cheerio for now.

Frankie (& May)

Appreciation

By Ger Lee – Patient Services



I would like to add my sincere thanks to the most helpful and obliging members of the Catering Department. A number of events are run all year round and particularly in the lead up to Christmas and the Catering staff were always more than helpful for each and everyone. No matter what the occasion, visiting groups, coffee mornings, band concerts, meetings etc., delicious food is always provided.

A big thank you to all in the Catering department

Question Time

1. What is the title of the first successful sound movie picture made in 1927 and starring Al Jolson?
2. How many dimes made up an American dollar?
3. What boxing weight class falls between bantam weight and lightweight?

The Answers to the Quiz in the last issue...

1. Ice figure skating
2. In the heart and lungs
3. Bobsleigh or tobogganing

Terry Parr and his Pipes

By Tom Harmon

These pipes were for smoking, - not bagpipes and as one joker said "Thank God for that"!

Terry was a small man in stature, about over five feet something and lived a conservative life, and was always immaculately clean with three showers daily being the order of the day. He even ironed his overalls, so you can imagine what his no. 1 uniform was like, always covered in clear plastic and hung in a kind of hanger-press and everything had to be just so. Everything in his locker was laid out by numbers. No fumbling and messing there like the rest of us. He lived a very clean and orderly life. Out of earshot he was referred to as the last wife of Henry VIII, (Catherine Parr). He would not be too pleased for a nickname of that sort. Of course we had characters in the mess who were no respecters of a person's feelings. But he did enjoy a joke, but it had to be clean and of course some of the Navy jokes were anything but clean. Blue was the colour.

He collected briar pipes, clay pipes, German ones with coloured tassels and lids on them, mostly from Bavaria, lovely to look at but I doubt if it was every smoked. I had to get two briar pipes for him which were made by Kapp and Petersen of Dublin. One had a straight shank and the other had the bendy type, both had two silver ferrules on them and if I can recall the price, £5.00 which was quite a sum in those days. Even then the smoking habit didn't come cheap! What about the tobacco to put in them? Well, there was plug type, walnut, Clarke's Perfect, Butlers. These had to be cut into fine strips and rubbed by hand before putting them into the pipe and it gave

out a strong aroma which could be smelt a long way off. Sometimes you could tell the owner by the special brand he used. Then there was the ready rubbed kind which used to come in tins. The Navy issued long pound tins, but the NAAFI's were flat. The Navy's were called Tickler Tins because T G Tickler was the company that made them and the contents would tickle your throat. I must get back to Terry and his pipes.

So as you can see between pipe, tobacco of every kind and cigarettes, our mess could be quite a stuffy place and not too healthy and then there was one chap who used snuff which I thought a very messy habit and more about that later.

Now to our sleeping arrangements, and where Terry's smoking habit came into play. He slept on a top bunk and below him was a little petty officer gunnery instructor named Tom Deeley who was as different from Terry as chalk from cheese and who was a non smoker but he liked his beer. Terry always had a few puffs on his pipe before going to the land of nod. Our Tom hated the smell of tobacco so he decided to play a trick on Terry. Under Terry's pillow were two pipes so he got a spot of furnace fuel oil from one of the petty officer mechanical engineers and shreds of paper which he put in the bowl of each covered with fine tobacco packed down and he waited. But nothing happened that night as he dropped off to sleep so we had to wait for the next night when Tom's plan achieved success.

Well I will try to describe what happened. Out comes the big box of matches, one was struck and the layer of tobacco lit and then whoosh as the



furnace fuel oil lit and there was a flash of flame and back smoke and Terry jumped out of the bunk and ran for the sink blustering and fuming, "if I catch the swine who did this". Of course he never did as it was in most people's interest that smoking in bed stopped. Even if it was only five minutes, everyone hated it because that area of the sleeping quarters stank. So it was one up to Tom Deeley who by then was fast asleep and never uttered a word, but gave an odd wink in other quarters. Terry could never find out how the oil got into the bowls of his pipes. It was obvious it came from the Engine Room staff but who? Of course the jokers could not let things be with sly digs due for a boiler clean and water wash now Terry. But to tell the truth he took it all in good part. But he had quite a job cleaning his pipes and it was a pity because I think they were his pride and joy. Ever after he would go to the door that led out to the focastle and have his few puffs out there but if the ship was sailing into the wind the smoke sometimes would blow back into the mess. Phew!

The Importance of Compassion and Humour in Medicine

By Dr Joseph Yazbeck

Compassion, joy, love and humor are essential to build healthy and peaceful societies.

As we all explore the health of human society, with the same tender, thoughtful compassion I have explored individual patients, I find the 'patient' in critical condition, needing the global universal attention! We must practice compassion and generosity at all times as love and humor are capable of irresistibly transforming our health services for the better. It is not always about power and position, it is effectively about the patients we care for.

So how does seduction work? The strongest transforming mechanism I know is to give people the opportunity to help others who suffer. Over time, people feel a powerful sense that drives them to make helping part of their life. Add learning about problems and solutions and you're primed for creative leadership.

Throughout history the love strategy has been practiced by women, often invisibly. Now greed and power have

infected our culture, it is becoming harder for the love strategy to prevail in healthcare. We need love and fun as a context; the very stage on which we act out the dramas of life, health and death.

It is often claimed that humor is a desirable characteristic of teaching and learning. Justifications for the use of humor include the promotion of understanding, holding the attention of students, managing disruptive behavior, creating a positive attitude to the subject matter, and reducing anxiety. Empirical studies of the connections between humor and learning are reviewed. These indicate that humor, provided it is not used to excess, can increase attention and interest and help to illustrate and reinforce what is being taught. It is suggested that the presentation of humorous material involves skills which can be learnt through practice and that staff development programmes should provide opportunities for academics to acquire such skills.

If we allow our strategic love & humor to remain a therapy, we are



implying that there are times it is not necessary. However if we commit to growing love & humor as the context, we are called to continually create an atmosphere of joy and laughter.

As soon as we see the health value of a context that is joyous and funny with the patient, we can decide to contribute to a context of love and fun every day. This makes our communities healthier, and helps to build a peaceful and loving society. This single decision and the connections which are sparked by it can bring sweet meaning to anyone's life daily.

Sister Margaret Mary Coffee Morning

By Noirín Scully & Rita Conroy

With Easter peeping over the horizon our thoughts turn once again to our annual coffee morning / cake sale commemorating Sister Margaret Mary who inaugurated this tradition.

It has always been a thoroughly enjoyable and sociable morning and its continuing success is in no small measure due to the wonderful efforts of our catering department who spare no effort to produce the mouth-watering array of cakes both to sell and to sample with your cuppa.

We also have a small but dedicated band of volunteers who work extremely

hard in selling cakes, taking money (€4 for coffee or tea and a scone or perhaps a slice of fruit cake) and selling raffle tickets. But we need more helpers on the day itself and also to bring us some of your delicious baking for us to sell. Contact Rita at 280 7398.

**So, remember the date:
21st April, from 9.15 to
11.15am in the concert hall
of the hospital. Please
come and bring a friend
(or two!)**



Footsteps

By Don Cameron



It was while walking by the sea that the idea came to me. I have often found that having the water rippling beside me helps in the formation of ideas, or maybe it's just coincidental. A friend said that it had to do with our make-up of over 97% water, and he might have something there. Whatever the reason, a stroll along the beach, with the bubbling water a constant companion, has always been a place for reflection, imagination and quiet. And, of course, relaxation.

Some time ago, on a beautiful spring morning, I was walking on Sandymount Strand when the idea floated into my mind, just like a wave top coming ashore. It is one of my favourite places in Dublin to go 'and be alone' with my thoughts, such is the openness and calm that can be found there in the early morning. As I walked slowly along the sandy beach towards Ringsend, I gazed over to Howth and the almost mirror-still water beyond that stretched to the horizon. How often had other people looked out at this scene from where I was now standing, I thought, and let the idea slip away like the spray from a breaking wave?

And then it came to me.

People had been coming here for years, since time immemorial no doubt, and gazed out over the very scene that was mine to behold. For just in front of me

was a line of footsteps in the sand, an image that had not changed since the first person left similar marks so very long ago. The French have a saying for this 'Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose' which translates as 'the more things change, the more they stay the same.' That seemed about right to me as I watched a wave rush in and cover the footsteps in its gurgling embrace, removing them so completely as to leave no sign of their short existence.

As the water receded, smoothing the sand into a new canvas awaiting its next mark, I remembered that James Joyce had a fondness for this place and included it in his most famous book, *Ulysses*. In chapter three, the young hero, Stephen Dedalus, walks along the strand and wonders about imagination, thought and sensation. The feel of the words is meant, in Joyce's hand, to be fluid, hence the setting by the sea, where all things move from birth to death and, finally, renewal. This transience can lead to something permanent, and it is this cycle of renewal that really got a hold of me as I stepped quietly into the cold waters. I immediately left a mark which was just as quickly erased. The thought that there are things that just could not be changed had a strange, comforting feeling. Joyce understood this better than most and allowed Stephen ask the question 'Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount Strand?' It was not something that I could answer, but I liked the idea that he and all of us who walk on the strand had 'our moment.' We all had left a mark, but as to whether it will last until eternity, well, that is for others to say. In the meantime, I keep walking on the strand beside quiet water, not so much in the hope of seeing Stephen Dedalus, but in anticipation of its soothing power and timeless, dreamy rhythm.

Poetry Corner

Home Sweet Home

By Tony Foster (RIP)

I've damp that is rising
And rot down below,
There's woodworm all over the
house,
In the garden there's weeds
And flood-water reeds
And somewhere I'm sure there's a
mouse.

I've bats in the belfry
And ants in my pants,
In the garden a grimy old gnome.
The roof sprung a leak
At the end of last week
But I love it, this place I call home.

I feel I can't leave it,
I can't get away.
The car's in the garage broken
down,
Please put a few grand
In the palm of my hand –
Quick! – before it all falls down.

A Limerick

By John Crisp

The squirrels of Leopardstown Park
have always been game for a lark
but their trick, the most weird,
hiding nuts in the beard
of a gardener whose name
we'll keep dark

Award to be presented to Kitty Ledden – Clevis Resident

By *Noirín Scully & Rita Conroy*

Age Action Ireland will award Kitty Ledden their annual Human Rights trophy on May 1st for her contribution to society – in this instance her part as an organiser in the Women’s Laundry Workers Strike of 1945 that won paid holidays for her union members. This victory led on to these holiday payments for all women employed in the State.

This is a little bit of the story:

In 1945, the laundry workers, worn out by all the overtime worked during the war, voted for strike action to be taken. The Federated Union of Employers (known as IBEC today) dug their heels in. The women took to the picket line and made their voices heard. More importantly, they hit the bosses where it hurts most - in their pockets. Working class organisations lined up on the side of the strikers, the ruling class backed their own side. Not only did government and employers come to the aid of the laundry owners, the Catholic bishops rowed in as well.

The striking women were horrified to learn that institution laundries (those

run by Catholic nuns) were taking on contracts previously held by commercial laundries. There was a fear that the strike would lead nowhere if this scabbing continued and the work was still being done. However they stuck with their union and stayed on strike.

With solidarity from many other unions and vast support from the general public, the scent of victory was in the air by October. The FUE backed down and indicated a willingness to reconsider their position. Letters of praise and of thanks poured in to the IWWU head office.

On October 30th, an agreement was enacted between the FUE and the



IWWU. It laid down that ‘all women workers employed in laundries operated by members of the Federation shall receive a fortnight’s holidays, with pay, in the year 1946’.

Another step was taken for women’s rights, through solidarity, direct action and a refusal to back down. The laundresses won a historic struggle, and we all enjoy the benefits of that struggle today.

Gallery

Farewell and every good wish to Mafe Ocampo



Gallery

Christmas at Leopardstown Park Hospital



Santa arrives at Leopardstown Park Hospital



Santa and friends under the tree



Girl Guides from Kilternan entertaining residents with carols and bell ringing



Christmas at the Coffee Dock

Johnnie Wetherall celebrating his birthday



Thanks to John Maher and Ger Lee for their help with the photographs and providing information.

Frances Kearns celebrating her very special day – her 100th birthday

