



ICPO NEWS

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ICPO

It is estimated that at any one time there are in excess of 1,200 Irish people in prison overseas. Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) has contact with Irish people in prisons in more than twenty five countries, the majority of whom are in the UK, with many more detained throughout the US, Australia, Europe, South and Central America and Asia.

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO) was established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985 in response to serious concerns regarding the number of Irish men and women in UK prisons. These deeply held concerns related to their trials and subsequent imprisonment.

In recent years ICPO has been able to offer a more comprehensive service to prisoners and to expand our existing services to prisoners' families. ICPO works for all Irish prisoners wherever they are. It makes no distinction in terms of religious faith, the nature of the prison conviction, or of a prisoner's status.

The objectives of the ICPO are to:

- Identify and respond to the needs of Irish prisoners abroad and their families;
- Research and provide relevant information to prisoners on issues such as deportation, repatriation and transfer;
- Focus public attention on issues affecting Irish prisoners (ill-treatment, racist abuse, etc);
- Engage in practical work in aid of justice and human rights for Irish migrants, refugees and prisoners at an international level;
- Visit Irish prisoners abroad where possible both in the UK and elsewhere.

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Contents

ICPO Volunteers	3
Returning to Live in Ireland while on licence	4
Repatriation Update	5
The First Step Act 2018	6
Family Matters	8
Listowel Winning Entries	10
Acknowledgements	13
Sports Shorts	14
Traveller Equality Programme	16
Your Letters	18
Poetry Corner	20
Smidín Gaeilge	21
Challenge Yourself	22
Ian's Himalayan Trip	24

Greetings from all in the ICPO,

In this edition of the newsletter we have informative articles about licence transfers, repatriation and a recent piece of US legislation called The First Step Act. There is also a lovely piece written by ICPO Administrator, Bernie Martin, detailing the history of volunteerism within ICPO and the important roles each one of them play in enhancing the level of support we can provide you. Indeed, it is an overdue acknowledgement of their commitment, competence and generosity of spirit in supporting ICPO and its work with Irish people imprisoned overseas.

I was very interested to read the excellent article sent in by SD in Australia where he details what life is like in an Australian prison. Hopefully, it will inspire more of you to share your experiences as these stories are always read with great interest.

Inside we also announce the winners of the Listowel Writers' Week competitions. The standard of entry was exceptionally high and our warmest congratulations go to the successful entrants and to all who submitted articles, poems etc. Please keep them coming!

My thanks as always to our regular contributors - Caitriona Ní Bhaoil, author of Smidín Gaeilge, Ian Hanna for his popular sports supplement and Leslie Alcock for the Family Page. Lastly, I wish to thank the ICPO staff and volunteers (in particular Eileen Boyle) for their hard work in putting this newsletter together.

If there are things you would like to see more of in the newsletter or you would like to send us an article, book review, short story, etc., please get in touch.

Brian Hanley,
ICPO Coordinator

Cover Photo by Maureen Warren.

Hook Lighthouse is one of the oldest lighthouses in the World; marking the entrance to Waterford Harbour at the mouth of the Three Sisters river system for over 800 years.



ICPO Volunteers

The ICPO was established by the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1985 in response to serious concerns regarding the number of Irish men and women in UK prisons. The political situation at the time meant that many Irish people in the UK were arrested and put in prison without charge; they needed support as did their families at home who faced the often impossible task of locating loved ones in prisons throughout England. In the intervening 35 years, ICPO has supported thousands of Irish people in prison overseas and their families.

ICPO provides many services to prisoners: information and support, newsletters, and the penfriend service to name but a few. Families are invited to a Family Day twice each year and receive information on planning a prison visit and ways they can support a family member while in prison.

With all of these supports and the number of clients involved the staff alone could not provide these services but through the years ICPO has been lucky to have a committed team of volunteers that selflessly give their talents and precious time supporting the work of ICPO.

There are volunteers from Irish welfare and pastoral workers in faraway places who visit clients in prison on a regular basis when there is nobody else to do it.

There are volunteers who work on the missions and upon contact from ICPO agree to visit an Irish person who might be several hours from their place of residence and away from the reach of an embassy or consulate.

There is a volunteer sister in the USA who visits prisoners on a regular basis, driving long distances and providing much needed support to prisoners who will be in prison for many years.

There are volunteers who visit prisoners in the UK in places that are out of reach for the London office.

Because of our volunteer visitors ICPO can support Irish prisoners worldwide, often providing contact and much needed support in countries where prison conditions are sub-standard and often people can be further isolated by language barriers.

There are volunteer penfriends, 67 at present, who write regularly to prisoners, who probably do not know the impact their letter writing makes in a prisoners life. There is Sr. Agnes who worked for many years as a prison chaplain now retired but who still writes letters to some of her old friends.

There are family members who volunteer to speak at family days and ICPO conferences. We know how difficult this must be for them but their testimony is invaluable to other family members who are experiencing trauma and heartbreak with the news that a loved one is facing time in prison.

There are volunteers in the Maynooth and London offices who look after databases, newsletters, Family Information Days and a host of other things that keeps the ICPO wheel turning. Volunteers who look after the everyday tasks, particularly Sr Moira in London who recently won the Irish in Britain Volunteer Award and our own volunteers in Maynooth, Joan and Eileen and Sr Anne who each have given 15 years of service to ICPO clients.

Our volunteers have been instrumental in providing new ways for ICPO to reach out to clients and their families.

The lives of thousands of clients have been made richer because of the selfless contribution of our volunteers. ICPO could not function without them and we are indebted to them all.

YOU are a  piece
of the *puzzle*
in someone else's life.
You may NEVER
KNOW where you fit,
but *others* will fill
the holes in their lives with
PIECES of YOU

Returning to live in Ireland while on licence

Prisoners in England and Wales almost invariably spend time on licence following their release from custody. For Irish prisoners whose family or permanent home is in Ireland, having to spend months or years on licence in a country they may have little or no connection to can be a difficult prospect.

Under Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 08/2015 - *Permanent resettlement outside England and Wales of offenders subject to post-release supervision* - Irish prisoners in England and Wales can apply to move back to Ireland when they are released on licence if they meet certain conditions. These are set out in PSI 08/2015¹ as follows:

1. Do you have close family or residential ties in Ireland, including, but not limited to, any compassionate reasons? If the answer is no, your application will be refused.
2. Is your index offence connected to or potentially connected to Ireland (for example, fraud involving companies set up in Ireland)? If the answer is yes, your application will be refused.

If your application is still viable at this stage your Probation Officer will consider a third question:

3. Would resettlement in Ireland undermine the protection of the public, increase the risk of reoffending and/or undermine rehabilitation? If the answer is yes, your application will be refused.

If you wish to return to live in Ireland while on licence you should inform your *Offender Manager* of your desire to do so well in advance of your release date to allow adequate time for your request to be considered. You can log your request on the *Complaints & Request* form (or 'app'). If you know who your outside Probation Officer is, it may also be helpful to put your request in writing to them.

Your Probation Officer will assess whether you meet the criteria. If you do, your request has to be authorised by the Head of the National Probation

Service (NPS) local delivery unit (determinate sentences) or the Public Protection Casework Section (indeterminate sentences).

Once approved by the relevant authorities in England or Wales, the International Desk of the Probation Service in Ireland will be contacted to begin the process of arranging your post release supervision in Ireland. The Probation Service in Ireland will consider your application and will undertake a visit to your address in Ireland to complete a Home Circumstances Report (HCR), which is an assessment of your family/residential situation. If they are satisfied that they can safely manage your supervision, the Probation Service in Ireland will consent to your transfer and the specific arrangements of your resettlement in Ireland will be agreed between both Probation Services.

You will be asked to enter into an agreement with the Probation Services involved in your resettlement (Irish Probation Service and the relevant UK Probation office) to confirm you agree to engage in post-release supervision in Ireland. Each case is different so the exact arrangements of your supervision (frequency, form of contact, etc.) will be developed by the Irish Probation Service.

You are required to comply with the terms of your licence while in Ireland; if you do not, the Irish authorities can inform the relevant Probation Service and you risk being recalled to prison in England or Wales.

If you are approved for resettlement in Ireland while on licence you should expect to spend some time in England or Wales on licence before being allowed to move to Ireland so that your risk of reoffending can be assessed. It is only in exceptional circumstances that a prisoner may be allowed to move to Ireland immediately following their release from custody.

The number of people being granted permission to move from England or Wales to Ireland while on licence each year is low in relation to the number of queries the ICPO receives on this issue. Please

contact the ICPO if you have questions or would like further assistance on this issue.

Northern Ireland

Irish prisoners in Northern Ireland may also apply to move to the Republic of Ireland while on licence. The process is similar to that outlined above except that your request will be dealt with by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) and approval is provided by the Northern Ireland Office.

If you are seeking to move back to Northern Ireland from England or Wales while on licence you can apply under PSI 08/2015, as this also provides for transfers between UK jurisdictions. You will be required to meet similar criteria to that outlined above but the process and arrangements for your supervision will differ significantly. This information can be found in PSI 08/2015.

Ciara Kirrane
Casework, Information and Policy Officer

¹ Although PSI 08/2015 expired on 1 February 2017 it remains in force until replaced.

Repatriation Update

For many Irish prisoners overseas, repatriation - the process of transferring to an Irish prison to serve the remainder of a sentence - has been unattainable for a number of years. Some of those awaiting a decision on their application applied as long as 7 years ago; others have come to the end of their sentence before their application progressed far enough to be accepted or rejected. This has been very frustrating for Irish prisoners overseas and their families.

While the rate of progress is still far from what the ICPO would expect, there are some signs to be hopeful. The Minister for Justice recently made a number of statements on the matter in response to questions the ICPO had asked. Minister Flanagan stated that at present there are 30 applications being dealt with by the Irish Prison Service. (IPS) Legal advice has been given by the Chief State Solicitors Office (CSSO) on 17 of these applications. Providing the advice is not that further clarification is required from the sentencing State, these applications are reaching their final stages and a decision should be made on the applications in the near future. The remaining applications are still being considered by the CSSO. The Minister further stated that since January 2018 he has refused 3 applications and approved 1 application.

The ICPO wrote to the Minister in June about the outstanding legislation. The Minister's office advised that the legislation is currently being drafted and the hope is to bring it before the Houses of the Oireachtas (Parliament) in the autumn. The legislation only affects a very small number of ICPO clients applying for repatriation - those serving determinate sentences in the UK. If you are serving a determinate sentence and wish to be repatriated, you should still apply. However please be aware that even though it may appear that your application is progressing - for example your family in Ireland may be interviewed by the Probation Service - it is unlikely that your application can be approved without the required legislative change.

Finally, we received an update on the progress of individual applications from the IPS in July and have written to each of you with the information provided by IPS on your application. If you have applied for repatriation and did not receive a letter from ICPO please contact us.

We will continue to call for the legislation to be introduced without delay and for prisoners' applications to be processed in a timely manner.

Ciara Kirrane
Caseworker, Information and Policy Officer

The First Step Act 2018

The Act to provide for programs to help reduce the risk that prisoners will recidivate upon release from prison, and for other purposes better known as the First Step Act or (FSA) was signed into law by the President of the United States in December 2018. The FSA aims to reform the US federal prison system by reducing rates of re-offending and making changes to some aspects of sentencing.

The FSA only applies to Federal prisoners which account for less than 10% (approximately 181,000) of the 2.1 million people in prison in the United States. However, while a relatively small percentage of the total prison population in the US, the number of Federal prisons has increased by 700% since 1980. If you are a State prisoner, the reforms contained in the FSA will not affect you.

While many of the provisions of the FSA apply to all Federal prisoners, some will not apply in the same way or at all depending on your immigration status or the type of offence you have been convicted of. The following is a general overview of the Act and further information is provided on the Bureau of Prisons website (First Step Act - Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.bop.gov/inmates/fsa/faq.jsp>). We can send you a hard copy of this and other general information. However, we cannot provide legal advice and would encourage you to contact your attorney if you have specific questions about how the Act affects you.

Some of the main provisions in the FSA are as follows:

Good Time Credits

The FSA changes the way good conduct time credits that prisoners can earn are calculated. Under the amendments made by the FSA, prisoners that qualify will be eligible to earn up to 54 days of good conduct time (often referred to as 'good time') for each year of sentence imposed by the court rather than for each year served. This change means earlier release for some prisoners. However not all Federal prisoners with good disciplinary records will benefit from the

changes. Prisoners convicted of a federal offence committed before November 1, 1987 will not benefit.

Earned Time Credits

Under the FSA, many federal prisoners can earn time credits by completing rehabilitative programming and engaging in "productive activities." Prisoners can earn up to 15 days of credit for every 30 days of programming or productive activities depending on their risk level. Earned time credits do not reduce the length of a person's sentence but they can be exchanged by some prisoners for an earlier move into a halfway house, home confinement, or supervised release. Prisoners can only qualify for these credits if they were convicted of a U.S. (federal) Code offence and were not convicted of a disqualifying offence. Disqualifying offences generally include but are not limited to those of a violent or sexual nature, terrorist offences, human trafficking and certain fraud and drug offences.

Prisoners will only receive time credits for participation in programmes and activities directly assigned to them and these can include faith based programmes. Prisoners who complete programmes and who are high-risk or on the list of those not eligible to receive earned time credits are eligible for other incentives. They include increased phone and email time and longer visit time.

If you have an immigration detainer, you may still complete programmes and earn time credits, but you will NOT be eligible to redeem those earned time credits for additional time in a halfway house, home confinement, or supervised release at the end of your sentence but you can benefit in the ways outlined above. However, certain offenses related to illegal entry are ineligible to earn time credits.

Placing Prisoners Nearer Home

The FSA provides that prisoners shall be placed within 500 driving miles of their homes, whenever possible, as long as there is bed space and taking into account security factors and the

prisoner's medical needs. Furthermore, the Act requires that a person be moved even closer to their family if an appropriate facility becomes available. The Bureau of Prisons (BoP) already had a policy in place to locate prisoners nearer to their family but this is now confirmed in law. This provision benefits US citizens and resident prisoners rather than those whose homes are not in the US. However, it is nonetheless welcome that the US legislators recognise the benefits for prisoners and families of prisoners being closer to home.

Second Chance Act Home Confinement Program

Under the FSA a prisoner can apply to serve the remainder of their sentence in home confinement under the Second Chance Act Home Confinement Pilot programme if they meet the eligibility criteria as an elderly offender:

- They must be at least 60 years old.
- They must have served at least two-thirds of their total prison sentence.

Prisoners must satisfy other criteria including not having been convicted of a violent or sexual offence or be considered to be at risk of committing further offences on release. The programme is available at

all federal prisons and terminally ill prisoners can also avail of the programme irrespective of age.

To qualify as an eligible terminally ill prisoner, a doctor approved by the Bureau of Prisons must determine that the prisoner is in need of care at a nursing home, intermediate care facility, or assisted living facility or diagnosed with a terminal illness.

Sentencing Reform

The FSA also makes a number of changes to federal sentencing law, including reducing the mandatory minimum sentences for certain drug offences. It also permits courts to sentence people convicted of low-level, nonviolent drug offences to a term of imprisonment that is less than the applicable mandatory minimum.

The FSA should be regarded as a 'first step' towards a fairer system for all prisoners in the US. As the American Civil Liberties Union noted the FSA is a "modest, but important move toward meaningful criminal justice reform. But the system will not truly be reformed until every person receives a fair and just sentencing regardless of when they were sentenced."

Life Without Parole (LWOP)

In 2018, there were 53,290 people serving sentences of life without parole (LWOP) in the United States.¹ All US States with the exception of Alaska (which has a 99 year sentence) allow for LWOP and the numbers of people serving LWOP increased by 59% between 2003 and 2016.

However, while LWOP was often seen as a 'humane alternative to the death penalty' as the Jesuit Review notes, LWOP has 'essentially the same result: slow aging behind bars and death in prison'. Pope Francis has called LWOP 'a hidden death penalty'.² LWOP prisoners will die in prison without hope of release irrespective of what efforts they have made to rehabilitate. The only way that an LWOP prisoner can get out of prison is to have his or her sentence commuted but in most states this occurs rarely.

However, the tide is gradually turning on LWOP and bills are currently before the state legislature in

Vermont, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts to either replace the LWOP sentence with a 25 years to life sentence or provide a meaningful parole hearing after a certain period.

Massachusetts

13% of prisoners (almost 1,100 people) in Massachusetts prisons are serving LWOP sentences. However, two bills before the Massachusetts legislature will if passed, offer the opportunity for a meaningful parole hearing after 25 years to prisoners serving LWOP. The proposed legislation will apply to those currently imprisoned as well as new prisoners. Rep. Jay Livingstone who proposed one of the Bills explained his reasons for doing so: 'No one decades later is the same person they were decades earlier, and the idea that the State would just be writing off those people where they would be locking them up so they would never get out just struck me as wrong.'

¹ Statistics from the Sentencing Project, a United States NGO working for a fair and effective U.S. criminal justice system

² *Pope Francis blast life sentences as 'hidden death penalty.'* Guardian, 23 Oct. 2014.

FAMILY MATTERS

*This section is for families who have a loved one in prison.
Do you have useful information that may be helpful to other families?
Have you a question you would like to see answered on this page in the future?
If so, please contact Leslie Alcock, Casework and Family Support Officer,
ICPO Maynooth. Email: leslie.alcock@iecon.ie or call on +353-1-505-3110.*

In the last issue, we highlighted the impact imprisonment can have on families paying particular attention to children. In this issue, we will explore ways to maintain contact with a child or loved one while in prison with the help of a parent/family member at home.

Having a loved one in prison overseas is challenging on families and these challenges are particularly tough for those with children, especially if they are finding the separation very difficult. Maintaining family relationships while in prison can have a significant positive impact on the well-being of a prisoner and their family. Where appropriate, maintaining contact is important not only to help someone in prison and their family to cope with the current situation but it also helps ease the transition when a person is released from prison and trying to resettle back in their home and in the community. Whether you are the parent at home or the parent in prison, it is also important to keep talking to and listening to your child and where possible and appropriate be honest with them about the situation. Again, where possible incorporate a routine in relation to maintaining contact. It is important to be consistent and set clear expectations. For instance; if regular visits are not possible given the distance and expense, make sure you help your child understand this and encourage other methods of regular communication such as phone calls and letters.

Visits

Visits can be hugely beneficial to children as it can provide a child with an opportunity to initially come to terms with having a parent in prison. It can also help a child to understand where their parent is and that they are safe. A visit can also provide an opportunity for you, the imprisoned parent to show that you love and care for your child. Some prisons have family friendly visiting areas where there are toys, you can play with your child. We would recommend that the parent at home visit the prison before bringing their child to visit for the first time. This way, the parent at home can help their child

prepare for what to expect in relation to facilities available, security procedures, length of visit and that doors will be locked behind them.

The end of a visit can be especially difficult for both parents and children, especially if the visit was short. Making a plan to talk on the phone, to write or where possible a plan for another visit will help the child and the parent in prison to cope with saying goodbye and give them something to look forward to. It is also very important to check in with a child after a visit. Children will react differently and it is good to reassure them that feelings of sadness, frustration or possibly anger are ok. Some children might decide that they don't want to visit their parent in prison and it is not advisable to force a child to visit.

Nevertheless, it is important to talk to them and explore with them the reasons why they don't want to visit their parent in prison and ensure they are aware they can change their mind.

Writing Letters

Writing letters or sending cards with short notes regularly is another great way of maintaining contact with your child. If you, the imprisoned parent have more than one child, write to each of them individually. This is a great way of providing affection, praise and encouragement to your child. It is an effective way to tell your child on a regular basis that you love them and that you miss them. It's also a great way of showing an interest in their lives as you can ask plenty of questions about their hobbies and interests. Where possible, you can learn about the hobby or interest and share interesting tips or alternatively ask your child to essentially teach you all about a topic that interests them. You can also share some of your interests and teach your child about them. You can also ask your child to send you reports from schools or certificates they may have received and it gives you an opportunity to praise your child and feel more connected as you know how they are doing. Most gifts are not allowed in prison, but if your child makes

something for you in school, you could ask them to take a photo of it and send it to you.

Alternatively, you could watch an age appropriate TV show or read a book together and discuss it in your letters or during phone calls. Find out what books your child might like to read and see if it is in the library in the prison. If it is not, perhaps a family member or the ICPO could send it to you. If you or your child likes drawing, you could also send each other drawings. You could draw an outline of a picture and ask your child to colour it in. Drawing may also be a good alternative for someone with literacy issues. If you do have difficulties with literacy, perhaps you could ask someone you trust in the prison or a chaplain or counsellor to help you correspond with your child.

Being consistent and maintaining a routine are important ways to help a child to feel secure. Receiving and sending letters/notes regularly will help provide a sense of security for them. It is better to write a short note regularly than a long letter sporadically. It is important to remember to send cards or letters on birthdays and for other important events. It is essential that the parent at home encourage and help the child to write and respond to their parent in prison too. Incorporating time for writing to their parent in prison into the child's routine will help the child maintain a good relationship with their parent and help them feel secure which will in turn benefit the child's wellbeing and self-esteem as whole.

Phone calls

Understandably, phone calls can be expensive when calling from overseas but when it is possible, regular phone calls are another effective way of maintaining contact with your child while in prison. If you, the imprisoned parent can call regularly, it would be helpful to plan the phone calls on a certain day(s) of the week for instance, plan to call every Sunday evening. This helps with the child's routine and it also gives them

something to look forward to. This may not always be possible depending on the prison, the child's age, the cost and the time difference. Regular contact helps the parent in prison get involved in the "everyday things" like how they are getting on in school or if they are eating their dinner and behaving themselves at home and in school. It also gives you opportunities to praise your child for doing something well like helping a family member or if they got good results on a test. This regular praise and encouragement reinforces a child's sense of self and self-worth and confidence.

Sometimes the parent in prison finds it difficult to find things to talk about on the phone and depending on the age of the child, the child might find a lot of questions intrusive (teen), or the child is simply too young to have a meaningful conversation on the phone. In these instances, it is ok if the conversation is short but it is good for the child to hear your voice and to hear you say you love them. Sometimes the child might be reluctant to talk about their life as they fear it might upset the parent in prison. If this is the case, it is good to tell them it is ok to talk about their life outside prison and ask them questions about their life.

References:

-Prisoners Abroad - <https://www.prisonersabroad.org.uk/what-about-the-children>. - Prisoners Abroad - <https://www.prisonersabroad.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=70cb0d6b-133e-4a4f-957c-eacbf9cb6ac6>. -New Jersey Department of Corrections -<https://www.state.nj.us/corrections/pdf/OTS/InmateFamilyResources/WhatAboutMe.pdf>
-The National Prisoners' Families -<https://www.prisonersfamilies.org/telling-the-children/>
- Action for Prisoners' Families - https://app.pelorous.com/public/cms/209/432/570/2195/The_Outsiders_Telling_the_children.pdf?realName=Kip7I9.pdf?v

We would like to invite you to our

Family Information Day on Wednesday 16th October, 2019

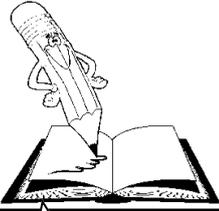
from 10 am to 3 pm

in the Aisling Hotel, Dublin.



The aim of our Family Information Day is to provide you with support as well as a chance to meet other families who have a relative in prison overseas.

If you are interested or have a family member who might be interested in attending, please call Leslie on 01-5053110 or email her on leslie.alcock@iecon.ie.

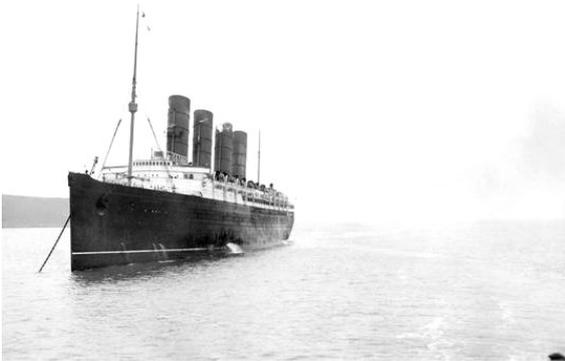


Winner of Listowel Writers' Week Competition 2019

WINNER: Short Story
Writing in Prisons Overseas

The Visitors

Eugene's eyes were filled with salt and rain. He'd set out on his journey with so much hope and aspiration. He believed. It was a journey of hope that thousands had made before him. As he stood at the prow of the ship, surf crashing against the bow and splashing him again and again with brine, his heart was full of anticipation for the new life he had set sail towards.



They arrived in Liverpool early one Thursday morning. Rounded up and herded like cattle through a series of gates, the checking and double-checking of paperwork seemed to take forever. Eugene didn't have a passport. He'd been assured that he didn't need one. Not to come to England. The country whose military had occupied his for years, whose government had ruled, held an open invitation for them here. They were welcome.

There were hundreds arriving on this vessel but for him, only one other mattered. Cecile, his young bride. They'd met in Kingstown, at least that's what it was called way back when. He was 21, she was only 16. They had married in a hurry when they'd found out that she was with child. She couldn't wear white. Then they'd left: both her parents and his clawing together a couple of hundred English pounds to help them on their way. To avoid blushes. Scandal hushed.

Eugene's sister, Vera, had moved to England three years before and was working now in an engineering firm in Digbeth, Birmingham. She'd found a place to live in somewhere called Small Heath, so that's where

they were headed, hoping with all hope that their sudden arrival, unexpected and unannounced would be OK. Two hours. Queueing and waiting. Hard faces of countless uniformed officials, mirthless and stern, eyed all of them suspiciously, glaring at the hundreds who waited patiently to be admitted. They were welcome.

Corralled and kettled, like cattle at a market, they were eventually herded towards the train. The rain hadn't abated and they were queueing again. This time they would part with some of their precious paper. Young Queen smiling, beguiling. Two singles to Birmingham New Street. Change at Crewe. They hadn't a clue where they were going but at least they were on their way.



Eugene and Cecile missed their connection at Crewe. They'd missed Crewe altogether! Tired. Exhausted from the stress and emotions and the toil of travelling to a new country, they had taken their two small suitcases, packed with all their precious belongings, to a crowded second class carriage where, lucky to find a bench, they had cuddled up together to keep warm. There, aided by the swaying and the hypnotic clinkety-clack of the train on the track, sleep had come upon them in waves. It was a peaceful, happy sleep. They'd made it. Here they were, dreaming dreams of a new start. A new life. In England. They were welcome.

The railway guard was brash and rude. He'd woken them, roughly shaking Eugene out of his slumber.

'Tickets'. Disorientated and out of sorts, Eugene fished the two tickets from his waistcoat pocket. 'These are for Birmingham', the guard said gruffly. 'This train's going to London'. He wouldn't listen, claiming that he gets all sorts of people trying to fare-dodge. He wouldn't listen to Eugene when he tried to explain that they'd missed the Crewe stop, although he had no idea where Crewe was. The guard didn't listen to 'their sort'. They were going to Euston Station and Eugene would have to pay the extra fare and a fine for 'travelling without a valid permit'. More of their precious pounds. Young Queen, smiling, beguiling. Was she smirking at them now?

They arrived at Euston at around 6:15pm. It'd been a long day so far and their travels weren't done yet. Having arrived in a city where they hadn't expected to be, they were alone. They had no idea where they were or where they were going. Eugene recognised a man from the train. He'd arrived in Liverpool on the same boat and seemed to know where he was going. When asked, he suggested that they head to Kilburn, Shepherd's Bush or Brixton, names of places which meant nothing to Eugene and his young bride. He approached the information desk but the man in the uniform scanned him with beady eyes, taking in his rustic clothing and the small brown leather suitcase in his hand in one pass. A scowl on his face now as Eugene approached. 'No', the uniform responded with a growl when Eugene asked for assistance. 'I didn't get that'. The uniform turned to a companion, standing eight or ten feet away, 'I've got another one of them lot here Bill', he called 'can't understand a bloody word out of any of them!'

An hour later, Eugene and Cecile were on the streets of London. They were on their way to Hammersmith, on the advice of a kindly older lady who they encountered on the station concourse. She had intervened when Bill and the other uniform had threatened to call the transport police, as their conversation with the new arrivals became, at first, heated, then openly aggressive and confrontational, with raised voices from the officials and bewilderment from Eugene. No matter how hard he tried, he failed in his efforts to get through to the two men in his heavy accent and the men made no effort to understand. The lady had helped them with some advice about where to go to find lodgings for the night and how the underground rail system worked, She was kind and patient and understanding of their plight. They were welcome.

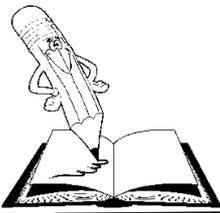
They'd heard of Hammersmith, one of the few places in London they had ever heard of, with its famous dance hall, the Palais, so their spirits were lifted a little as they made their journey underground. At Hammersmith station they emerged into the dank evening air. It was raining. They hadn't packed overcoats in their small cases so they had turned up the collars of the jackets they wore and pushed on through the crowded London streets. These streets were not paved with gold, as the old song suggested. They were filled with what appeared to be angry people, who seemed to rush and push and hustle, uncaring and uninterested in anyone else who might wander into their path. But they had each other and that was all that mattered. They were on Kelmescott Road now. The lady, back at Euston, had smiled when she told them that they might be able to find a bed for the night here. The street was lined with tenement houses, many of them displaying 'B&B' signs and the young couple's spirits were lifted again. Their long journey was almost at an end, for today at least. They needed sleep and a meal and time to plan how they were going to get to Birmingham. Their English money was precious but depleted. They needed to be careful with their money but for today. Journey's end. They approached one of the buildings, seductively offering sanctuary from the cold and wet London sky.

On enquiring after a bed for the night, the first door was rudely slammed in their faces. No apology. No 'I'm sorry, we're full'. No 'Try number 25 up the road'. Nothing. The next. Then the next. Then the next. Eugene hardly got the question out. He didn't understand. They had money. They could pay. It was Cecile who noticed the sign in the window of one of the buildings. Then another. And another.

No Blacks
No Irish
No Dogs

They were everywhere. Hateful signs of discrimination and exclusion, placed in bay windows like emblems of Empire. Eugene and Cecile reeled from the onslaught of conflicting emotions. Why had the lady sent them here? Had she known? Had she deliberately sent them. Knowing that they would be rejected? Refused entry? Left on the street in an uncaring city, full of uncaring people who treated immigrants, even those from their former Imperial colonies, like dogs? They were welcome.

Story continued overleaf



Winner of Listowel Writers' Week

Back home, the English names might be changing as Kingstown becomes Dún Laoghaire. Sackville Street named now after O'Connell. But they, the Irish, just like the thousands of Jamaicans and Trinidadians and those from St. Kitts and Nevis and other islands to the west, were visitors here. Their country, just like the others, had once been enslaved by a hateful empire. Their promise, just like the others, already broken. Like the rail carriage they had occupied on their long journey from Liverpool, they too would be considered 'second class'.

Always
Fáilte

TD, UK

 **WINNER: Poetry**
Writing in Prisons Overseas

Broken in Darkness

In the darkness with negativity
It feeds my fury and my rage
Then a beam of light shines upon me
The brightness helps me turn the page.
The darkness then fades away
Thoughts become less grim
Though, I still hear my demons calling me
As the darkness creeps back in
But the brightness is too powerful for the darkness
of today
Yes, this is true.
As I remember we are all broken
That's how we let the bright light shine on through.

Paul Brophy, USA

Ian's Himalayan Trip - Please see back page

almost touch them. I was tired, cold and suffering from altitude sickness, despite taking the anti-altitude sickness tablets and plenty of water. When we arrived at basecamp there was a real sense of achievement! The atmosphere in the basecamp was electric even though we were not allowed to mix with the professional Everest expeditions which were preparing to climb in a few weeks.

Day 9 20 April 2019. Yet another pre-dawn start for a 10 hour trek as some of the group set out to climb Kala Patthar, -20C, headlamps glowing we set off in the dark on a steep tough trail hoping to reach the peak in a few hours to get to see some of the best views of Mt Everest. Thank God for carrying plenty of water; the key to enduring the altitude is to constantly drink. About half way up I had trouble sipping the water out of the water bladder in my rucksack. What was happening? I need this water, then I realised that the water was frozen and couldn't flow through the mouth tube. On reaching the top, cloud dominated resulting in no views of Everest. It was a long walk to where we were staying that night!

After this it was a more or less retracing the trek up from Lukla but what was remarkable was the speed we could walk at as soon as we were descending. It took us eight days to get to basecamp from Lukla but only five days for the return journey. Our trip of a lifetime was brought into the starkness of mountaineering at high altitude when a few weeks later in May two Irish climbers, Seamus Lawless and Kevin Hayes died on Mt Everest. May their souls Rest in Peace.

My trek to basecamp Mt Everest was challenging at times but was the accomplishment of a boyhood dream. It brought me to the backyard of the world famous Sherpas, allowed me to experience their faith in Buddhism and follow in some of the footsteps of Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay who became the first climbers confirmed to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

In conclusion I wish to acknowledge the support of a niece who encouraged me to undertake this trip. Without her support I would not have done it.

Ian Hanna

London Volunteer Wins Award

Initiated by the Irish in Britain organisation and in only the second year of the Annual Volunteer Awards, the winner of Irish in Britain's Individual Volunteer Award was our very own, Sister Moira Keane. Moira, a native of Galway, is a Mercy religious sister who has spent sixty years working with people on the margins of society. Her work over many years, in particular her twelve years as a prison Chaplain brought her in contact with the ICPO, where she has been a volunteer since 2012.



She generously gives her time to ICPO, assisting with prison visits, advice, advocacy, suicide attempt prevention, pastoral care as well as providing much needed support for distressed family members. Her commitment to Irish prisoners over many decades and in a variety of roles was most deserving of this wonderful award. We can think of no-one more fitting to receive this acknowledgement.

ICPO Chair Bishop Kirby retires



Chair of the ICPO and its parent body, the Council for Emigrants (IECE) since 2012, Bishop John Kirby recently retired from his role after seven years of invaluable service and support to this organisation's work.

Nothing was ever too much trouble when it came to ICPO and having visited a number of Irish prisoners overseas in his time as Chair, was Unfailingly generous in offering whatever support, advice and encouragement he could. He cared deeply about the welfare of our clients as well as the staff and volunteers who carry out ICPO's work. On behalf of all at ICPO we thank him and wish him well in his retirement.

IECE/ICPO Board member Fr. Paul Byrne, OMI, remembered

Fr. Paul (1932-2018) led a busy and effective life of service to people in need which was anchored in his dedication to daily prayer and Eucharist and his hope-filled missionary vision. It was also a life nourished by many wonderful friends, a rich and varied social life and the evident joy he got from playing golf with friends, good conversation, song, good food and wine. He loved life and lived it to the full.

Fr Paul's work in voluntary housing in Birmingham and London transformed the sector. He was awarded an OBE for his inspirational leadership and work on behalf of those without a home.

Again, as Director of the IECE/ICPO, he quickly set about addressing the exclusion and isolation felt by



many Irish emigrants. In 1998, he commissioned a report on the issues which, in turn, led to a government Policy Task Force on emigration, the recommendations of which were accepted by the Irish Government. The result was a major increase in funding for Irish emigrant services overseas, an acknowledgement of the outstanding service given by Church agencies to

Irish migrants around the world and the formation of a dedicated unit within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Fr Paul made a significant contribution to the work of ICPO over many years and his kindness, generosity of spirit and humility will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by all who knew him.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.



Sports Shorts

with Ian Hanna

Ah! Autumn has arrived and with it all the excitement of the All Ireland Football and Hurling finals. Add into the mix how will Ireland fare in their European championship qualifying group? Stir in the rugby World Cup in Japan during September and October followed by the Six Nations in spring. Top up with whether Katie Taylor will retain her four World titles. Bring to the boil and may the games begin!

BOXING

01 June 2019 seems ages ago but Katie Taylor held true to her promise by defeating Delfine Persoon she added the WBC title to her collection. She is now the undisputed world champion as she made it a clean sweep of lightweight belts. Since turning professional in November 2016 her record is 14 fights, 14 wins and 4 world titles. She is an inspirational figure for all of us and shows that natural ability allied to hard work and dedication is a serious winning combination.

Harrington who won two Open championships back-to-back in 2007 and 2008. His success, like Katie's, is down to ability and dedication and learning to deal with setbacks. In 2016 he lost a four shot lead going into the final day of the US Open.

GAA

The drive for five senior All Ireland football titles in a row is alive but only just! In their bid to be the first county to achieve this, Dublin was lucky to earn a draw in injury time in an enthralling and pulsating All Ireland football final. Playing with 14 men for most of the game after a player was sent off Dublin was severely tested by a skillful and hungry Kerry team most of whom were playing in their first senior final. Dublin led for most of the game until the last quarter when Kerry scored an unanswered 1-3 until a late late Dublin point saved their day. Then in the dying moments Dublin missed a difficult free ensuring a much anticipated replay.



Shane Lowry



Sam Maguire - still waiting

GOLF

We must pay homage to Shane Lowry from Offaly when in July he won the British Open at Royal Portrush by a whopping 6 shots. This tournament is the most senior of the four major golf championships, and some might say the most prestigious. At the end of round 2 he shared the lead but for rounds 3 and 4 he was the outright leader. In round 3 he set a course record of 63 shots. He became the second player from the Republic of Ireland to win a major after Padraig

Congrats to Tipperary in winning the All-Ireland Hurling final on a score line of 3-25 to 0-20 against Kilkenny. The key moment in the game was just before half time when Kilkenny's Richie Hogan was sent off for a dangerous tackle. At half time Tipp led by a point 1-9 to 0-11 but in the second half Tipp powered on to an easy win. This is the Premier



Autumn 2019

County's 28th title and many punters reckon that this final was unexpected as the Cats are still rebuilding while Tipp needed time to adapt to a new management team. This was the fifth decider between these counties since 2009 when the Tipp victory halted Kilkenny's drive for a three-in-a-row.

RUGBY

The World Cup looms ahead of us over the next few months and how the Irish bubble of unprecedented glory has become more realistic since the disappointing showing at the Six Nations last spring. From being title holders and achieving a Grand Slam, Ireland's rugby fortunes took a battering and they finished third. This disguised a number of problems including poor finishing, sloppy ball retention, sticking to a one dimensional game plan and an overreliance on certain players. We kick off our group on 22 September v Scotland, 28 September v Japan, 03 October v Russia, 12 October v Samoa and a quarter final on 19 October against New Zealand or South Africa. I think we will win our group and play South Africa, as runners up in their group, and once again Ireland will fail to make it past the quarter finals in any of the World Cups.

SOCCER

COYBIG! Come on you Bhoys in Green. Ireland sit on top of European Qualifying Group D with an impressive 11 points out of a possible 15. We beat Gibraltar home and away, Georgia at home, drew with Denmark away and recently drew with Switzerland at home. We received a massive boost when Denmark could only draw with Georgia away, in effect dropping 2 points. If we can pick up all 3 points on offer by beating Georgia away, qualification is well within our grasp. Our remaining matches this autumn are; 05 September v Switzerland home, 12 October v Georgia away, 15 October v Switzerland away and 18 November v Denmark home. The first two teams automatically qualify for the finals. We are capable of a top two finish but we need to score more goals and if we score first, be able to eke out a 1-0 win. Mick McCarthy in his second spell as national team manager has improved the morale and confidence of

the team while allowing them to play their natural game within an attacking formation. I hope to see more of Matt Doherty, the Irish fullback with Wolves, who made 38 appearances for Wolves last season, secure a regular start for Ireland. To date he has only five international caps.

On a winning note Irishman Caoimhin Kelleher has his first medal in professional football. The goalkeeper was part of Liverpool's 23-man winning squad for the Champions League final against Tottenham in Madrid. He has yet to play a senior game for Liverpool and he is the first Irish player to win the European Cup without earning a cap for the Republic of Ireland senior team. A real Roy of the Rovers story if ever there was!



Caoimhín Kelleher

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Conor McGregor has kept a low profile since his submission to Khabib Nurmagomedov in October last year. He was well beaten and he has since announced his retirement from the sport in March. However, his trainer, John Kavanagh recently said that Conor has rediscovered his love for the cage and expects him to fight again before the end of this year.

If anyone wants some training programmes let me know and I will send them out to you.

Traveller Equality Project

Ellena Costelloe, Project Officer—Traveller Equality Project, Irish Chaplaincy



A Traveller's Home

by Conn Mac Gabhann

Illustrations by Niamh Merc



We Are Travellers

by Joe Cotrell-Boyce



The Fight

by Conn Mac Gabhann,

Illustrations by Niamh Merc

The Traveller Equality Project (TEP) is a project of the Irish Chaplaincy and works closely alongside ICPO London. Irish Travellers and Gypsies in England and Wales still often face high levels of discrimination and prejudice, have poorer access to health, education and housing in comparison to the general population and are generally negatively portrayed in the media. It is often said that discrimination against this group is the "last acceptable form of racism". Unfortunately, this discrimination spills over into the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales and TEP works to challenge and combat this by promoting equality, change and awareness. We also aim to promote effective education to community members in prison so they are empowered to advocate for themselves and their wider community.

In 2011, the Irish Chaplaincy commissioned a piece of research titled 'Voices Unheard' in response to the needs of the Travelling community as identified by two of the Chaplaincy's projects running at the time. The Travellers' Project which worked with the Travelling community in Britain consistently highlighted the profound and systemic marginalisation of the Traveller community and noted with grave concern the increasingly high levels of imprisonment amongst this community. The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas, (ICPO), through its work across the prison estate, recorded high levels of discrimination, distress, self-harm and isolation experienced by Irish Traveller prisoners as a result of prejudice and the community's cultural distinctiveness.

The report highlighted that prisons had failed to formulate or implement measures to ensure equality of opportunity for the needs of Gypsy or Irish Traveller prisoners. Racist treatment towards Irish Travellers was regularly reported, more than half of Irish Travellers in prison were identified as needing basic educational interventions, there were large numbers of Traveller prisoners suffering poor mental health and the rates of suicide amongst the community were much higher than that of the general prison population.

As a result of the findings in Voices Unheard HMPPS now monitor the number of Gypsies and Irish Travellers in prisons in England and Wales. This ethnic code is known in the prison system as 'W3' - Irish Traveller/Gypsy. Any person wishing to be registered under this ethnic code can request to do so at any point during their sentence by putting in an application to Equalities.

The idea is, if a prison knows the true number of residents identifying as Irish Traveller or Gypsy they should be providing culturally relevant, targeted support. Such as, but not limited to, regular groups, distributing Gypsy/Traveller magazines, providing specialised resources to tackle literacy issues, training and employing Traveller 'Listeners' to support people in crisis and identifying a Traveller or Gypsy representative.

What does TEP do now?

- We regularly visit prisons across England and Wales to support Gypsy, Roma, Traveller groups.
- We attend events run by prisons in the month of June which is now known as Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month (GRTHM).
- We encourage members of the Traveller and Gypsy community to register their ethnicity and 'be counted' in their prison. We support prisons to create an environment of trust for new prisoners so that they feel comfortable to identify themselves.
- We provide resources such as magazines, posters, DVDs and books to individuals and prison Libraries, Chaplaincies and Equalities departments .
- We produce our own newsletter 'Travellers in Prison News' which we mail out four times a year. It is a newsletter for the voices of Travellers in prison and we welcome contributions. We like to fill it with positive, good news stories!
- We help prison staff to facilitate regular Gypsy and Traveller groups and appoint members of the community as dedicated GRT representatives in their prison by identifying people willing to help
- We highlight the specific needs of Travellers and Gypsies in prison and promote good practice; for example the need for a member of the Traveller or Gypsy community to be a Samaritan trained Listener', as often Travellers and Gypsies feel members of their own community will understand them better.
- We offer one to one support to members of the Traveller or Gypsy community with issues such as keeping family ties and signposting to local support services

Resettlement Project

Voices Unheard also highlighted the failures by prisons to provide suitable pre-release advice and support to Irish Travellers which would make them less likely to reoffend.

We have recently launched a new pilot project: **Travelling Forward**, a resettlement project for Travellers in selected London prisons. The project aims to help engage Travellers in prison in education and training whilst serving their sentence to help them into employment on release. We are making links with employers who are willing to help Travellers released from prison into work. A complete 'through the gate' service will be provided by our new Resettlement caseworker, Fiona Mullen, and there will be signposting to other services where needed. The aim is ultimately to support Traveller men into a meaningful, independent life away from prison.

Good work is happening now!

Shannon Trust is an organisation that support prisoners to learn to read. They do this by training those who can read to teach those who can't. As the scheme is peer led, members of the Traveller and Gypsy community in prison have often found it one of the easiest ways to learn to read and write. It can be taught by another Traveller who can read and it doesn't require a traditional classroom environment. TEP have also produced some early reader story books to help anyone learning to read. They are suitable for adults and based on culturally appropriate themes.

On the Road is a podcast broadcast on National Prison Radio for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) communities. It is a fantastic programme with voices from the GRT community as well as organisations working with the community and more... It's well worth a listen!

Get in touch

If you would like any of our resources or any more information on any of the issues raised, you can get in touch at:

Traveller Equality Project
PO BOX 75693
London
NW1W 7ZT



Your Letters



Darwin

Unfortunately, my current 'home' is Darwin Correctional Centre. Darwin is the most northerly city in Australia; it is also Australia's hottest city with average daily temperatures of 35 degrees celsius all year round due to its proximity to the equator, so it is hot, very hot! This gives it a tropical climate which means it only has two seasons which are the dry season from April to September which gives average temperatures of 32°C and no rain or clouds to be seen for 5 months. October to March is the wet season with temperatures of 38°C and regular days of 100% humidity. The wet season also brings regular rain and thunder storms which is a welcome relief from the heat.

Monsoons and cyclones are part of Darwin life during the wet season. The city got totally destroyed in 1974 from Cyclone Tracey and has since been rebuilt to a modern but small city of roughly 150,000 people. I experienced Cyclone Marcus here St. Patrick's Day 2018. It was a very powerful storm and caused extensive damage in the Darwin area. We got locked in our cells for two days due to it and it's fair to say it was my worst Paddy's day ever!

The prison complex was built in 2014, it is roughly 30km from the city centre and is situated in The Bush (Australian term for rural area). Sir David Attenborough could actually record a show with all the wildlife I see on a regular basis here. There are many bird species such as cockatoos, kookaburras, plovers, burdekin ducks, magpie geese, brolga and finches. There are dangerous snakes here such as The king brown snake, taipan snake and the whip snake which are among the most venomous snakes in Australia. Just last week a fellow inmate woke up to a Whip snake sliding across his chest. He is an Australian man who has become a good mate of mine in here and it turns out his girlfriend is from Cork for the record. I'm a Meath man. I also see non venomous pythons, geckos and iguanas.

There is a capacity for roughly 1,100 prisoners, that includes the women's section which houses 100 prisoners. The men are housed in 5 sections which are 'Sector 5' - this is for high and medium rated

prisoners (security ratings). Sector 6 is a mixture of medium and low security rated prisoners. Sector 11 is just outside the prison walls and is for open security rated prisoners and 'EBU' is controlled behaviour unit for the mentally challenged prisoners who are a danger to themselves and others.

The population is 85% Aboriginal and the prison is set up to cater for the majority. Numeracy and literacy levels are quite low among the aboriginal men and there are many courses available to them, in fact, my current job here is as a tutor teaching basic english and maths, teaching alongside me is the only other Irish prisoner who hails from Waterford. We work 3 hours a day, 3-5 days a week and get paid \$60 a week plus extra coffee and fruit. It is the most lucrative job inside the jail as we also get to spend a few hours a day in air-conditioned rooms as none of the cells have air conditioners, they only have fans. Previously I worked in the woodwork section for a year making items such as kid's tables and chairs and souvenir boomerangs.



Remand prisoners are mixed with sentenced prisoners in Sectors 5 and 6. I spent 10 months on remand in Sector 5, there are 5 blocks, each split into two wings divided by a wall and the Officer's office which serves both wings. There are 38 inmates on each wing with 8 single cells and 15 double cells. Each cell has an ensuite toilet and shower. The shower is set for 2 showers a day per prisoner and 4 flushes per day. Sector 5 days are very boring unless you have a job. The guards open the cells at 8.30am and you stand outside your cell for the first muster of the day. You then have an hour to clean your cell

or hand in request forms or mail to the officers. At 9.30 am you stand by your cell again for hygiene inspection, by 10am all cells are checked and are locked up, we then get yard time from 10.30am to 12pm. At 12 we muster up again for a head count and we collect our 2 sandwiches and portion of fruit for lunch.

After lunch the other wing gets yard time and we just sit around playing cards and drinking tea until 4pm. At 4pm we muster up at our cells again and collect our dinner which comes in take-away containers along with a breakfast bag for the morning. The breakfast bag contains 2 slices of bread, a small bag of oats, 4 tea bags and a small container of powdered milk. There are no kettles in Sector 5 so tea is made using the hot tap. Dinners are OK but a bit small. We get bangers and mash, curries, salads, pasta dishes, rump steak most Saturdays and either roast chicken or beef every Sunday.

After we collect our items, we muster up again outside our cells and by 5pm we are locked up until the next morning. Our TV is more like a computer monitor with a small key pad instead of a remote control. It picks up approximately 20 TV channels and 15 radio stations. I only had that boring routine for about 10 weeks and then I got employed at woodwork which meant I was away from the block 8.30am - 3pm, Monday to Friday. A few weeks after I got sentenced I got moved to Sector 6. I reluctantly left Sector 5 because I had got used to my routine and had my own single cell for 6 months.

I am now into my 6th month in Sector 6 and I would hate to go back to 5, the difference is immense. I live in a unit with just 11 other men. We have a living/ kitchen area with a large flat screen TV, microwave oven, toaster and kettle. We have unlimited showers, there are bedrooms, not cells. Our bedrooms are never

locked. There is a large caged balcony out the back and a veranda at the front with mounted picnic tables which overlooks the whole sector. There is a 400 meter path going the whole way round. There are many grass areas and a full size basketball court. In the centre there is a building which houses two pool tables and vending machines for snacks. The centre is open from 8am to 6pm and all prisoners are free to mingle with each other. There is more of a community feel rather than a prison feel.

After we collect our dinners at 6pm, we muster up for our final count of the day and the officers then lock the front door of our unit. We are free to move around our unit. My evening is usually that I watch the 6pm news while eating my dinner, then have a shave, then out to the balcony for a game of cards until 8.30pm followed by a movie, then sleep. I wake-up at 6.45 am, have breakfast, take a shower and clean my room. After muster at 8am I head to the phone and ring family or friends back home. After that I head to my job as a tutor. I work 9am - 10am then have coffee break until 10.30am. We then work until 11am and I then head back to the sector where I work out for an hour. At 12pm we muster up for lunch. By 1pm I'm fed, showered and back to work from 1-2pm, followed by coffee 2pm - 2.30pm and back to the sector at 3pm where I usually have a jog for about 30 minutes. We can do our 'shopping' once a week using a computerised kiosk which is accessed using an eye scanner. My buys usually are soups, noodles, coffee, full cream powdered milk, tuna, extra cereals and hygiene products such as shampoo and deodorants. I acknowledge I have it easier than many of my fellow Irishmen around the world but lads, always remember 'your current situation is not your final destination'. I am a first time offender with 3 years left on my sentence
Peace out!

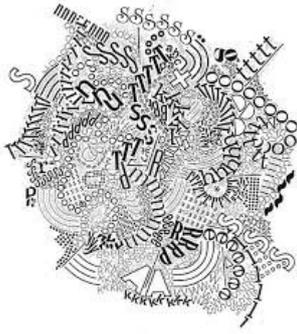
SD, Australia

ICPO Penfriend Scheme

The aim of the scheme is to enable Irish people in prison abroad to keep in touch with everyday life in Ireland. It can also help with any loneliness and isolation that you might be experiencing.

If you do not already have a penfriend and would like to maintain a friendly correspondence with one of our volunteers, please contact us.

Poetry Corner



The Celtic Revival

In memory, there are lessons and the past should be secure,
For all that we remember our minds could end up poor,
For such important heralds, their names will spring to mind,
Like Gregory, Yeats and Sigerson, our President Douglas Hyde.

In certainty there was interest, a storm for every port,
When the lady she decided to revive this speech in Gort,
With stories and traditions from Bardic sacred source,
Our language was alive again, a topic for discourse.

The Tossler

They say that she has won
But I know I have not lost
It's the way the can lands
When you get the toss.

Unable to participate
Behind steel and stone
I stand by myself
One tosser, alone.

But don't you go thinking that
The right person won
Because I have not fought yet
Nor have I run.

This time will be different
You will all get to see
When this tosser stands tall
And then he walks free.

MM, US

And what of William Butler Yeats, a champion for the past
Whose eyes are not deflected by the industrial flag half mast,
A founder of the Abbey, a theatre in Irish style,
A renaissance that we waited for, we waited quite a while.

The lockout and the rising emphatic in denial,
Our culture is a way of life, from a parent to a child.
We mastered all the hurdles, climbed over every wall,
Our literature is no longer English; it is Gaelic a nation's call.

Prisoner's Dad

What's Your Story

Every face has a story
Every heart has some pain
Every day/night presents a challenge
'nothing ventured, nothing gained.'

Do we care about their story
Hidden behind those facial masks
Or the heart that now is breaking
Do we care enough to ask?

If you would like to share your story
I will listen with love and respect
Then as I go to my heavenly future
Your name and story
I'll not forget... 'who can open the doors of his
face?' (Job41:14KJV)

DM, Canada



Smídín Gaeilge

Ceisteanna - Questions

An bhfuil tú?

Are you - *On vwill*

Tá mé

I am
Taw may

Níl mé

I am not
Neel may

Ar chuala tú?

Did you hear - *Air hoola too*

Chuala mé

I heard
Hoola may

Níor chuala mé

I didn't hear
Near hoola may

An ndéanann tú?

Do you (do) - *On nyen-in too*

Déanaim

I do
Denim

Ní dhéanaim

I don't
Ni yay-nim

An dtéann tú?

Do you go? - *An day-in too*

Téim

I go
Tay-m

Ní théim

I don't go
Ni hay-im

An bhfaigheann tú?

Do you get - *On vie-in too*

Faighim

I get
Fie-im

Ní fhaighim

I don't get
Nee eye-im

An raibh tú?

Were you - *On rev too*

Bhí mé

I was
Vee may

Ní raibh mé

I wasn't
Nee rev may

Ar ith tú?

Did you eat? *Air i-h too*

D'ith mé

I eat
D'ih may

Níor ith mé

I didn't eat
Near i-h may

Conas tá tú?

How are you?
Cunas taw too

Cathain?

When?
Ca-hin

Ar mhaith leat?

Would you like?
Air wah lat

An raibh tú?

Were you?
On rev too

An bhfuil cead agam?

Can (may) I?
On will cyad agum

Cá bhfuil?

Where?
Caw will

An bhfaca tú?

Did you see?
On vaka too



challenge yourself!

Can you work out the Occupation	
This person keeps track of a company's money	_ C _ O _ _ T _ _ T
This person is also called a dee-jay and may provide commentary on sports, music and other topics	A N _ O _ N _ E _
A person who creates work by drawing, painting or sculpting	_ R _ I _ T
Someone who teaches people how to play sport	C _ A C _
He grows crops and raises animals	_ A R _ _ R
Studies the trends and creates clothes, shoes etc	_ A _ _ I _ N D _ _ I G _ _ R
An expert in medicines and their side effects	P _ A _ _ A C _ _ T
This person expresses himself with his body using rhythm and sound. Usually works in musical shows.	_ A N _ E _

Word Puzzle Pictures

1 graVity	2 TU SING NE	3 ⇒ aid aid aid	4 gifiren
5 symphon	6 aged aged aged	7 FUSS 0	8 JUS 144 TICE
9 EGSG GESG SEGG GGSE	10 Ground feet feet feet feet feet feet	11 5	12 M MEAL M E E A A L MEAL L

challenge yourself!

Autumn

Acorns

Back to School

Blustery

Bonfire

Chestnuts

Chilly

Corn

Crisp

Deciduous

Fall

Frost

T T N B S Y K N G P B C B O S
 A R R E A E A Q H X H R L C H
 O C E W E C P Z O E H E U T O
 C O W B O W K T S I X D S O R
 N R M R M P O T E I A I T B T
 I N N A S E N L O M N P E E E
 A S E I I U V W L S B S R R R
 R Y R K T Z T O H A C E Y E D
 P C W S A J E R N A H H R H A
 B O N F I R E C S X R N O C Y
 S U O U D I C E D E K V V O S
 Y L L I H C E R F H V O E E L
 F R O S T K C A T S Y A H S W
 D L T X C M L C S T U N E Z T
 L C F B L L I S W F A Y D L A

Halloween

Harvest

Haystack

Leaves

Maize

November

Nuts

October

Raincoat

Rake

Scarecrow

September

Shorter

Days

Spider

Web

Sudoku

1			7	8	3		
5	2			9	8	7	
		3					5
	3			7	2		8
		9			6		
2		8	3			9	
3					5		
	6	5	4			2	7
		7	6	5			3

Each Sudoku grid has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces.

Brain Teasers

A man who lives on the tenth floor takes the elevator down to the ground floor every morning and goes to work.

In the evening, when he comes back; on a rainy day, or if there are other people in the elevator, he goes to his floor directly. Otherwise, he goes to the seventh floor and walks up three flights of stairs to his apartment.

Can you explain why?



Answers

Word Puzzle Pictures: 1. Centre of gravity. 2. Sing in tune. 3. First aid. 4. Fire engine. 5. Unfinished symphony. 6. Middle aged. 7. Fuss over nothing. 8. Gross injustice. 9. Scrambled eggs. 10. Six feet underground. 11. High five. 12. Square meal.
Occupations: 1. Accountant. 2. Announcer. 3. Artist. 4. Coach. 5. Farmer. 6. Fashion Designer. 7. Pharmacist. 8. Dancer.
Brain Teaser: The man is of short stature and can't reach the top buttons of the elevator but if it's raining and he has his umbrella he can reach or ask other people if they are there.

Ian's Himalayan Trip

In April 2019 I, a caseworker with ICPO based in Maynooth, set out with some friends as part of a larger group on a thirteen day trekking itinerary to reach Mt Everest basecamp (5,364m/17,598ft) and climb Kala Patthar (5,550m/18,209ft), a free standing Himalayan peak not far from the basecamp. Everest is considerably higher at 8.848m/29,030ft.

The 140km round trek started after we landed at Lukla airport (2845m/9333ft) which is one of the most dangerous airports in the world, due to its challenging operating conditions in terms of terrain weather and infrastructure.

Day 2 13 April 2019. We arrived at Namche Bazaar, the last large town on route and last chance to buy clothing or equipment. We saw for the first time Everest, Lhotse, Ama Dablam and other peaks.

The trek was truly breath-taking as it meandered through forest and flower-filled meadows at lower level, crossing swaying rope bridges over rivers and deep chasms, and as it ascended encountering glaciers, huge boulder fields, glacial moraines and spectacular mountainous panoramas throughout. The trail took us through Sherpa villages, bazaars and to Buddhist monasteries. Some people call the route 'the steps to heaven'. We stayed in tea-rooms which provided food, some heat and basic accommodation. You would be surprised how much heat a stove can produce with dried yak dung as the only source of fuel. Very soon 6-9 hours trekking every day was starting to take its toll and breathing became laboured while back and leg muscles ached. But slowly my body was getting used to the ever increasing altitude and thinner air. The following day was



acclimatisation day as we learned how to walk slowly at even higher altitude. I found to my cost that trying to walk a short distance at a normal pace up a slope left me exhausted, drained of energy and nauseous. Also in the evenings the dry biting cold winds coming off the glaciers was a foretaste of what was to come.

Day 8 19 April 2019. We made a final push to basecamp, a long 9 hour trek through the Kumbu glacier with steep descents and climbs. Gone were the day time temperatures of 25C in the lower regions replaced by freezing at mid-afternoon and some snow showers. The air was pristine and when the clouds lifted the mountains were so close I felt I could



Namche Bazaar

Continued on Page 12

