



The Safe-Home Programme

St. Brendan's Village,
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Co. Mayo

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From the Chairman's Desk

Greetings,

They say that a picture is worth 1000 words.

This was brought home to me vividly when I recalled the controversial front page photo of a dead Syrian child washed up on a Turkish beach. Whatever about the ethics of publishing such a photo the sight of a well dressed child dead on the beach shocked any complacency that the world might have about the Syrian migrant crisis. Parents were shocked as it brought home the undeniable truth. Little Aylan Kurdi lay face down on a beach and tugged at the heart strings of every parent who could easily share the heartbreak.

The response was heartening and life affirming as even our small Irish navy played a major role in rescuing thousands of refugees from the totally unseaworthy small craft which easily capsized with tragic consequences for the occupants. The LE Eithne was just one of three Irish navy vessels partaking in this vital search and rescue mission which involved many nations. The 69 crew under Commander O'Donnell all played their part. They were from all over Ireland. One other crew was a Mayoman. Chief Petty Officer Ruairí DeBarra was originally from Castlebar. He literally ran the ship as he was the main man in ensuring all engineering and hotel needs were catered for. This would usually be for his 68 crew members, but now he had to do it for thousands of people. He played a pivotal role in rescuing a total of more than 3,400 migrants including almost 170 children as they fled from the war torn zone.

True heroes are scarce but they do exist. When we come across heroism we should applaud and recognise it especially when it is one of our own.

As Christmas approaches we look back over the last year and look forward to a new one. Some will have lost close family and friends and their loss will be felt particularly at this time of good cheer. But life goes on and time heals all.

From all of us at Safe Home we wish you every good cheer and blessing and hope your Christmas will be peaceful and joyful and your new year even better than the year before.

So long for now,

Dr Jerry Cowley - Chairman

Do you still wish to receive our Newsletter?

We are currently reviewing and up-dating our mailing lists for the monthly newsletter. There is a considerable cost involved in the production and postage each month so we want to ensure that it gets sent out to people who are genuinely interested in receiving it.

I'm sure you will appreciate that it would be very difficult for us to contact all of the current recipients directly (approx 1000 people/agencies etc).

We are therefore asking anyone who wishes to receive the newsletter on an on-going basis to contact us to confirm this.

If we don't hear from you by **25th January 2016**, we will assume that you no longer wish to receive a copy. We will phase out circulation to anyone who hasn't contacted us by then.

Important Notes!

1. All active Safe Home housing applicants will continue to receive the newsletter
2. In early 2016, it is our intention to develop a separate quarterly e-bulletin to circulate to all Irish Welfare & Advice Agencies/Funding bodies etc. in early 2016. We will provide more information on this over the coming months.
3. The newsletter is available online at the end of each month via:
www.safehomeireland.com

This piece also featured in our November issue. **For those who have already been in touch with us in relation to this – Thank you!** There is no need for you to contact us again - your wishes will already have been noted!

As always, Safe Home welcomes any comments or feedback that people may have about the newsletter, so please do feel free to contact us.

Help is out there – Irish Welfare & Advice Centres

In a recent interview on RTE Radio 1, a mother from Co. Cork spoke movingly about the trauma faced by her family when her young son was viciously assaulted while on a working visa in Australia. She had high praise for the **Irish Australian Welfare Bureau in Sydney** who offered invaluable help and support during this very anxious time.

The **Irish Immigration Pastoral Center in San Francisco** was another welfare agency that featured prominently during the past year. Following the collapse of a balcony in Berkley, resulting in the tragic loss of young lives and life changing injuries for the survivors, the 'hands on' assistance given by staff and volunteers at the Center was of great comfort to families.

Sometimes, people are not aware that such excellent frontline support services exist. If you are an Irish citizen away from home or have friends and family abroad who run into difficulties, there is help out there.

Many of the welfare services are funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Emigrant Support Programme.

Details of organisations can be found via: **www.dfa.ie/global-irish/**

Or contact, DFA: **Tel: 01 4082000 /00353 14082000**

Applying for your Irish Birth Cert

Apply by post to:

Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon, Ireland

Request an Application form by phone:

Tel: +353 90 663 2900 (select option 2 after recorded message)

Locall: 1890 25 20 76 (Ireland only)

Request application form via email: gro@groireland.ie

Or contact us here at Safe Home and we can post an application form out from here

Ordering online: www.certificates.ie

Certificates of birth, adoption, stillbirth, marriage, civil partnership or death can be ordered online via this official Health Service Executive website (using a secure payment facility). Queries in relation to certificate orders that have been placed can be emailed to: **certificates@hse.ie**.

PLEASE NOTE - If the life event has not been registered, do not apply online as it will not be available. **The price of a standard certificate is €20** (plus postage).

The EU parking permit is issued on behalf of the Department of Transport by the Disabled Drivers Association (DDAI). There is an administration charge of €35 per parking card and the card is valid for two years. The following information is required when requesting an application form from the DDAI: Name, Address, Contact Tel number, Date of Birth and Nature of disability

Applications must include 1 passport photo and be signed by a Doctor. **Note!** If a first time applicant, the photo must be verified and stamped by a Garda.

If you already have a UK/EU disability badge, this can be used in Ireland up until the expiry date on your card.

Contact the Disabled Drivers Association in Ireland:

By Post: Parking Card Section, Disabled Drivers Association, Ballindine, Claremorris, Co Mayo

Telephone: 094 936 4054 (IRE) +353 949 364054 or 01 6600323

Email: parkingcard@ddai.ie

Marking the 1916 Rising

A national flag is being delivered to every primary school in the country as part of initiatives to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

Over the past number of months and up until March 2016, members of the Defence Forces will distribute a handmade Tricolour and a copy of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic to more than 3,000 national schools. The presentation at each location involves members of the Defence Forces (Army, Navy and Air Corps) who will raise the flag and read the Proclamation to pupils and teachers.

They will also give background information on the symbolism of the Tricolour and the etiquette attached to its display and storage.

Some interesting facts: The Irish flag was inspired by the French tricolour flag and was designed by Waterford man, Thomas Francis Meagher in 1848. It became the National flag following the 1916 rising.

The significance of each of the coolers were as follows;

The green was to represent the Irish Catholic tradition on the island

The orange was to represent the protestant tradition

The white was to represent peace between the two sides and their coming together under one flag.

Certain rules should be observed around our national flag which include not allowing the flag to touch the ground; it should not be written on; it should fly above all flags and if flown at night, it should always be floodlit.

As part of the programme of events, pupils in all schools will be invited to write a new proclamation to reflect the hopes and aspirations of their generation. They will also be encouraged to research their own family history back 100 years and see what their ancestors were doing around the time of the Rising. The initiative will culminate with a dedicated Proclamation Day in all schools on 15 March next year.

Housing Opportunity – Co. Mayo



This Housing Association in **Tooreen, Co. Mayo** (close to Ballyhaunis and near to Knock Airport) has a two bedroom house available.

This scheme is set in a small rural village so the property is most likely to suit people who can drive or those with family in the area.

Preference will be given to people originally from Co. Mayo or with strong family links there.

Please contact the Safe Home office for more information.

Christmas time & New Year are often times to reflect on loved ones, home, times past and the future. We would like to thank **Colette in Cyprus**, for sending us in this lovely short story.

A HOUSE, A HOME

I was standing today in the old garage, as I do every morning looking over at Sofia's front door just across the road from where the pigeons I feed greedily devour seed. The door of her Cyprus style home is big and wooden; its windows are fronted by grills and its dark brown lacquer has been sun-eaten into various shades of its former self. On either side it is protected by thick walls of salmon pink. It's a lived-in home whose floors are set with decorative tiles in typical geometric patterns of black, white and maroon often found in old Nicosia houses. Near the entrance her caged birds sing contentedly and a knock is answered by her dog Hahrah (happiness) barking to enquire who has disturbed her peace. It is in direct contrast to where I stand.

I give myself a few moments each day from the hectic rush that involves a lot of work for animal welfare, to pause and take stock of a very familiar scene. Opposite Sofia's home is a lovely old house slowly falling into genteel decline, resembling an elderly dowager who has been hit by hard times but still trying to keep up appearances. It was obviously the home of a well off family. It has been broken into several times and small things stolen. The thieves left a mess behind them in the kitchen, cupboards wrecked, objects thrown around. A homeless migrant also made that kitchen his temporary home. The owner is dead and why the marvellous plot of land has not been sold, I don't know. It is one of many fine old houses that in my own home-less state I wish I could call mine.

It's my blessing that it remains unsold, what is left of a once lovely garden still bewitches me. It is full of fruit trees and I poach some of its lemons from time to time. The figs I can't reach because an old wreck of a rusting Ford car is an obstacle and so is a wild cat that has placed her offspring under it. So the figs ripen, burst open to reveal deep pink flesh and then fall, wasted. In spring it is a vision of wild green beauty, now in the scorching heat the tall grasses wave delicate, dried out golden heads that catch the sunlight. There is another, smaller house in the garden and I came to the conclusion it was probably the original home as it is built of mud and straw bricks and is now dangerously, crumbling old. The skeletal heads of rams still adorn the front door to ward off the evil eye. The newer house was probably a dowry home for the daughter of the family, which was, and in some cases still is, the custom here.

As one who writes I wonder what the story is of the lives of those who once must have felt proud to own it. It hurts me sometimes to see houses un-lived in, dying by inches as time and weather take their toll. They reflect, perhaps, the way I see myself. I loved that old poem *An Old Woman of the Roads. O, to have a little house!* I don't live on the roads but the sentiment is one deeply shared with the old girl as I enter my 72nd year in rented accommodation.

True to the End

80 year old Joe Quinlivan launched his book, *True to the End*, on Saturday 14th of November in his native county Clare.

In the book, Joe has written about his recollections of Ireland in the 1940's and early part of the 1950's. It also tells the story of emigration in the 1950s/60's and how the Irish lived and worked in Britain down through the decades.

It sounds like a very interesting read!

Copies can be purchased by contacting Joe directly;

Email: joe.quinlivan@yahoo.co.uk

Tel: 01324 623 730 (UK) 0044 1324 623 730 (from IRE)

Christmas Holidays: The Safe Home office will be closed on 23rd Dec and will re-open on Mon 4th Jan 2016.

**Nollaig Shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise
daoibh go léir.**



As always if you wish to contact us:

Tel: 098 36036 **Fax:** 098 36037

Tel: 00353 9836036 **Fax:** 00353 98 36037 (UK)

Tel: 0113539836036 **Fax:** 0113539836037 (USA)

Email: info@safehomeireland.com

In writing to: The Safe-Home Programme, St Brendan's Village, Mulranny, Co Mayo, Ireland.

Dr. Cowley, Karen, Mary Ann, Brenda & Noreen

The Safe Home Programme is supported by the Emigrant Support Programme via:



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EACHTRACHA AGUS TRÁDÁLA NA HÉIREANN
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF IRELAND