



From the Chairman's Desk

We were recently contacted by a journalist from RTÉ who is interested in developing what sounds like a very sweet and poignant documentary. With so many of us (including myself) having family and friends who were forced to emigrate, either in this most recent wave of emigration, in the 80's or in the decades beforehand, staying in contact with loved ones abroad is a feature of our daily lives. For those who are away, maintaining their link with family and friends and all that is going on at home is of huge importance. Here is some additional information on the planned project that may be of interest to some of our readers:

Missing You

Our relationships, family, friends, the ones we love and care about, is what defines who we are. They are our tribe. What happens when you can't physically be with them? When there is an ocean between you? We still stay connected!

Video calling has allowed us to literally see into each other's world. We can still sit down at the kitchen table have a cup of tea with our families, albeit the kitchen tables are in different parts of the world. We can read our children or grandchildren bedtime stories, before we've even had breakfast - all through the confines of a computer screen. A new RTÉ 1 documentary series is looking for enthusiastic contributors with a story to tell.

Missing You will be comprised of video phone-calls from Irish emigrants to their loved ones at home. Thanks to modern technology, families and friends can still maintain close ties and intimate relationships in spite of great distances between them. But how does it feel to share big events and life-changing moments over a video link, rather than face-to-face? **We are looking for honest, genuine people, young and old, who have left these shores, recently or not so recently - for love, for life, to follow a dream.** We want to follow people embarking on new chapters, or bringing old ones to a close.

If this sounds like something you or someone you know may be interested in, please contact Karen Moran in RTE on: **Tel:** 00353 1 208 2319 **Mobile:** 00353 86 3258942. Via email: missingyou@rte.ie or karen.moran@rte.ie

You can also find additional information on what the programme makers hope to achieve by searching via the video link at: <https://vimeo.com/132932140>

It might be worth a look! Thankfully modern technology has made it much easier for families to keep in touch. However, not everyone is computer savvy! Here at Safe Home, we are keenly aware that people still like to hold on to some traditional modes of communication. Our Newsletter 'winging' its way across the Irish sea by post is something that we know is keenly awaited each month.

All the very best for now, **Dr. Jerry Cowley** – Chairman, Safe Home.

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Safe Home office hours:

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Are you living in London or New York and have memorabilia relating to the 1916 Rising?

On 19th March, 2016, Digital Repository of Ireland will hold a public memorabilia 'collection day' in London to enable members of the public in Britain to share their personal objects (such as letters, diaries, photographs and ephemera) as well as family stories related to 1916, and to have this material digitised by experts, free of charge.

The digitised material will then be preserved and displayed within Inspiring Ireland 1916, a series of online exhibitions that form part of the multimedia, multiple award-winning website Inspiring Ireland. (<http://www.inspiring-ireland.ie/>) Created in partnership with Ireland's national cultural institutions and public broadcaster, these new exhibitions use fascinating objects from public and private collections, together with expert interpretation, to tell the stories of people whose lives were changed by the events of Easter Week and paint a vivid picture of the events and legacy of 1916 that have inspired Ireland.

Inspiring Ireland is built on the preservation infrastructure of the Digital Repository of Ireland (<http://www.dri.ie/>) which means that digital objects are preserved for long-term access and discovery, ensuring Ireland's digital cultural heritage is available to people worldwide for posterity. The collection day is part of the Irish Government's 1916 Centenary Programme and is being organised in partnership with the Embassy of Ireland and Irish in Britain (IIB), the leading network for Irish community organisations and Irish individuals in Britain.

To participate in the London collection day, please complete the pre-appointment object registration form online at <http://tinyurl.com/h2qwtva> or contact Irish in Britain (Tel. 020 7697 4081) for registration forms.

In New York, the 1916 Collection Day will be held in Glucksman Ireland House, 1 Washington Mews, New York, NY 10003 on **17th April 2016**.

Once gathered, the original material may be deposited in the Archives of Irish America, Bobst Library, New York University where it can be preserved and made available to scholars. **To participate in the New York collection day, please complete the pre-appointment object registration form here: <https://dri-inspiring-ireland-1916.typeform.com/to/kaO9gs>. You will be contacted to schedule an appointment.**

For further information, contact: Caroline McGee, Digital Repository of Ireland, email: c.mcgee@ria.ie OR Anne Solari, Glucksman Ireland House NYU, email: anne.solari@nyu.edu

Voting rights for Irish emigrants

Minister for Diaspora Affairs Jimmy Deenihan told the first Global Irish Civic Forum at Dublin Castle last June that the Government was considering extending voting rights to Irish emigrants for three years after they leave the country without holding a referendum on the issue.

We will have to watch this space!

With 'Election fever' in full swing here over the past number of weeks, we had a number of calls from Irish emigrants wondering if there was any up-date to report on their right to vote from abroad.

No is the answer!

Under existing electoral legislation, Irish citizens are entitled to vote for 18 months after they leave the country, **if they intend to return to live in Ireland within that timeframe.**

I have moved home to Ireland from the USA. Can the contributions that I have made while working abroad be taken into consideration in the Irish welfare system?

Social Security Bi-lateral Agreement between Ireland and USA: This Agreement covers you if you have been subject to the social security laws of both Ireland and the USA. Self employed contributors are covered by the Agreement and it also extends to dependents and survivors; E.G Widows/Widowers or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pensions.

How does this benefit me? You may qualify for social welfare payments based on a combined Irish and U.S.A. contribution record if you do not have enough contributions on either record alone.

What payments are covered under this Agreement?

The **Irish** payments covered under the Agreement are:

- State Pension (Contributory) (payable at age 66),
 - Widow's, Widower's or Surviving Civil Partner's (Contributory) Pension,
 - Guardian's Payment (Contributory),
 - Invalidity Pension,
- and**
- Bereavement Grant.

The **U.S.A.** payments covered are those available under the Federal OASDI (Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) Programme, in particular those relating to:

- Retirement Pension,
 - Survivors Benefits,
 - Disability Benefit,
- and**
- Family Benefits for dependants of retired or disabled workers.

Can I claim any other benefits?

If you live in Ireland and receive either an Irish **or** the United States social welfare pension, you **may** qualify for free benefits under the Irish social security system subject to the usual conditions:

- Household Benefits Package (Electricity/Gas Allowance, Free Television Licence)
- Fuel Allowance,
- Free Travel.

Where can I get more information?

- If you are residing in Ireland and wish to claim or enquire about an Irish entitlement under the Agreement you may contact your local Social Welfare Office or: For **pensions/pension schemes, contact:** Department of Social Protection, Social Welfare Services, College Road, Sligo. **Tel:** + 353 71 9157100 (from overseas)

- If you are residing in the U.S.A - contact your local U.S. Social Security Office.

- If you are residing in Ireland and wish to claim a U.S. payment covered by the Agreement you should contact: U.S. Embassy Dublin, Federal Benefits Unit, 42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Telephone: (01) 6688777

Email: fbu.dublin@ssa.gov

If I leave the UK, how will this affect my current benefits?

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

There are 2 types of ESA - income-related or contribution-based. You can get both of these for 4 weeks if you go abroad.

Going abroad for more than 4 weeks but less than a year: Tell your local Jobcentre Plus if you're going abroad for more than 4 weeks. You can carry on getting contribution-based ESA for up to 26 weeks if you're going abroad for medical treatment for yourself or your child. It doesn't matter which country you go to.

Going abroad for more than a year: You can get contribution-based ESA in the EEA or Switzerland if you're eligible and if you've paid enough National Insurance contributions.

For help and advice on ESA, contact the International Pension Centre: Telephone: (0)191 218 7117

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB)

If you're getting Industrial Injuries Benefit for work-related accidents and illnesses, you can still get this in an EEA country. Contact the office dealing with your benefit if you're still in the UK, or the International Pension Centre if you're living abroad. **Help and advice on IIDB:** International Pension Centre: Telephone: +44 (0)191 218 7650

Benefits for carers and people with disabilities

Going abroad temporarily: You can claim the following benefits if you're going abroad for up to 13 weeks (or 26 weeks if it's for medical treatment):

Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment

You can carry on claiming Carer's Allowance if you take up to 4 weeks holiday out of a 26-week period.

You will need to let the office that deals with your benefit know that you'll be away.

Going abroad permanently to another EEA country or Switzerland

You may get Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Attendance Allowance or Carer's Allowance as appropriate if you or a family member are eligible **and**:

- work in the UK or pay National Insurance in the UK because of work
- have paid enough National Insurance to qualify for contribution-based benefits
- are getting State Pension, Industrial Injuries Benefit, contribution-based ESA or bereavement benefits

If you're already living in another EEA country or Switzerland you don't need to have claimed in the UK before you go. But you must be habitually resident in the EEA country or Switzerland **and** have a genuine link with the UK social security system, eg you've lived or worked in the UK

It is important to contact the exportability team dealing with your current benefit before you move abroad or claim from abroad.