

THE
Irish PostThe voice of the Irish
in Britain since 1970

Failed by Ireland

SURVIVORS of Ireland's brutal Magdalene Laundries have received a formal apology for the State's failure of them from the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins.

Some 200 survivors were at the President's Dublin residence for a special two-day reception held in their honour last week, when the apology was made.

Many more will have by now received the message in the towns and countries across Ireland, and further afield, which they call home.

A large number of these women are based here in Britain, where they created new lives for themselves away from the horrors of their time spent under the rule of the religious orders which operated the Magdalene Laundries – where they were forced to carry out unpaid labour and where many were physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

Many years may have passed since then, but their memories will no doubt be a constant reminder of those dark days within their lives.

Hopefully the apology will bring them some comfort.

But it is only a starting point.

There is much the Irish state must now do to ensure these women are given the support they need – be it emotional, financial, in healthcare or otherwise – to secure a safe, healthy and sound future.

A night to
remember

SOME of Ireland's greatest musicians came together to bring one incredible night of music to the INEC Killarney this month.

From musical legends Chris De Burgh and Phil Coulter, to rock favourites The Coronas and Country artist Cliona Hagan there was no shortage of stars at the inaugural Irish Post Music Awards.

There an excited crowd watched on as a host of award-winners were honoured, and ten artists performed, on a remarkable night highlighting the best of Irish music across generations and genres last week.

It truly was a night like no other, so thanks to everyone who helped make it happen.

And, of course, huge congratulations to all our worthy award winners!

Irish must speak up on Brexit

BREXIT presents one of the greatest challenges ever to the specific identity and livelihoods of the Irish community in Britain.

In the event of a hard Brexit, they will suffer a double whammy, in that the old industrial areas where many Irish live, are set to be the hardest hit in terms of livelihood damage, compounded by doubts surrounding the security of residence for families who have lived here for decades.

There is need for the Irish community to become more vocal and proactive in campaigning for a soft Brexit or no Brexit, and to have a clearly identifiable forum to defend the rights of Irish citizens.

There is a need to analyse the pressure points in the British political system which is most amenable to alter mindsets in favour of a soft Brexit and avoid a Celtic Windrush in a hostile environment.

First thoughts relate to influencing the Labour party to get off the fence and back a customs union.

Votes should be traded against assurances protecting the long-term economic security of the Irish community, irrespective of traditional party allegiances.

Conservative politicians courageously opting for a soft Brexit should get full support from the Irish community in their constituencies.

Those opting for a hard Brexit should feel the heat of Irish dissent.

We also look to prominent Irish personalities in Britain speaking out in favour of a Brexit that does not discriminate disproportionately against the weaker sections of the Irish community.

I look forward to a new organisation being formed by some brave soul that can address these issues.

Joseph Mullen
Eastbourne
(formerly Ballina, Co. Mayo)

EU exit has silver
lining for dogs

I WONDER if there might be a silver lining to the dark clouds of Brexit hovering over the island of Ireland?

Maybe not for us humans, but perhaps for the dogs that suffer so horribly in Ireland's greyhound industry: Doped to make them run faster or slow them down, dumped or killed when their racing days are done, and still frowned upon as potential pets due to the negative

perception of their use in live hare coursing and the feeding of live bait to them to enhance performance.

Eighty-five percent of greyhounds used on UK tracks come from Ireland, and bitches are routinely sent to Ireland from Britain for breeding purposes.

But the free movement of greyhounds between our two countries could be subject to severe restrictions once Brexit kicks in.

Export markets beyond the British one are practically non-existent, apart from the shady movements of dogs to rogue jurisdictions where they meet an even worse end... such as being boiled alive for the South Chinese meat markets or hanged with barbed wire at the end of their brief careers in Spain.

Those markets are so notorious that even the most ruthless Irish operators recoil from entrusting their dogs to them.

So, while sharing the widespread fears about the impact of Brexit on our economy, I welcome any development that will help to close down this cruel industry.

Its demise would be a blessing to man's best friend.

Never again would we hear of these docile, affectionate dogs turning up in shallow graves across the country, or staggering around disorientated after being doped to the eyeballs.

And the industry's passing would sound the death knell for hare coursing. Those gentle creatures that grace our natural environment would at last be able to run free.

No longer would net men snatch them from their humble grassy homes in the countryside. Gone would be the spectacle of cheering "sportspeople" huddled in fields or on racecourses... to watch hares being baited, mauled, or flung skyward like broken dolls.

Brexit might well prove to be the saviour of both the

Irish greyhound and the iconic Irish Hare. If so, it will be living proof of the old adage that God never closes one door but he opens another.

John Fitzgerald

Campaign for the Abolition
of Cruel Sports

Lack of coverage for
McGuinness tome

THE first printing of 4,000 copies of the book *Martin McGuinness - The Man I Knew*, published by Mercier Press, has sold out less than two months after its launch, and a further edition is in preparation.

It is a compilation of comments by twenty seven statesmen/stateswomen, legislators, diplomats, civil servants and others from both sides of the Atlantic, of the Irish Sea, of the border and from various political, social and denominational backgrounds, who got to know the man who had been in the public eye for forty-five interesting years. Yet no newspaper nor journal in Ireland or Britain deigned to review the book.

It is as if both islands are constrained by a totalitarian censorship.

Or as if the professional commentariat is scared to comment. Or as if potential readers were denied the right to choose their reading matter.

Over many years voters chose McGuinness as their elected spokesman.

He didn't just threaten to stand for election (a la Fintan O'Toole) but actually stood and triumphed.

And when he stood for the Irish Presidency, unlike candidates from the larger 26 county parties, he did not forfeit his deposit.

The book was compiled by Jude Collins, a former university lecturer and experienced author, who runs a regular blog.

Donal Kennedy
London

Need for RTÉ radio on LW252
remains strong

Re To close down an accessible and proven LW channel is dangerously short-sighted', *Irish Post*, June 2

THANK YOU for highlighting the LW252 issue.

I recently changed my car and now have a mod con radio which does not receive longwave. It has brought home to me how disappointing it must be, especially for elderly Irish radio listeners, who would be without only for the long wave.

Thankfully I can still listen to RTÉ radio on my computer but this is not an option for many.

I think many people will subscribe to your newspaper if you campaign for important things like this.

Breffni O'Brien
Manchester

I AM an avid listener to RTÉ radio on LW252. I am 76 years old and have been listening to this station for the past 35 years.

I have a lot of friends here in Manchester who, like me, love that station. I also have a lot of friends who are Folk music fans who, unlike me, are not Irish but love the programmes.

I have noticed that the transmission output has been lowered a lot over the past year. I find this very frustrating. Keeping this service going is still relatively cheap in this day and age. So the financial aspect of shutting it down is not valid. I have tried using the Internet radio but that gets too much interference. I want to use a cheap portable radio where I can use it in the home, the garden or out and about.

Patrick Hoswell
Manchester



I AM writing with reference to the proposed closure of RTÉ services on the LW252 channel.

There are a great many Irish people in Britain who still listen on this channel. Many do not have computers so it is impossible to access by this means.

Many do not know the first thing about operating a computer, and emphatically have no interest in purchasing one or learning to use it.

My husband listens regularly, every day, as do many others. The closure of this service would cut them off completely from obtaining news from home. It would also deprive them of listening to cultural programmes.

I am computer literate, as I use computers in the course of my work and was given free training. I was born in Manchester but brought up with all the Irish values and culture.

My mother took me to dance classes and language classes when I was a child. I was even taught how to do Irish baking recipes. My father's family were also Irish descent.

There is still a need for RTÉ on the LW252 frequency.

Barbara Aherne
Irish Community Care,
Manchester

POETRY CORNER

My Sweet Island Home

Nestled in Cork harbour,
steadfast and serene,
Few could e'er imagine the
trials that you've seen.
Throughout all the ages of
your speckled history,
Oh, Spike Island, so full of
mystery.

Time goes by, seasons die,
but no matter where I roam,

Cradle of my childhood, you
are my sweet island home.
Scholars saints and
convicts were no strangers
to your shore,
Monks found peace and
refuge to worship and adore.
Some got retribution in
grim captivity
Oh, you saw the light and
shade in humanity.

Time goes by seasons die
but no matter where I roam
Cradle of my childhood, you
are my sweet island home

Mo ghrá thú Inis Pice, mo
ghrá thú astór,
If I could only turn back time,
I'd be there once more.
We hold on to the
memories, they are
cherished in our heart,
Of those days so wild and

free, in our little world apart.

Time goes by, seasons die,
but no matter where I roam,
Cradle of my childhood,
You were my sweet island
home.
Golden days, carefree
ways, we had time and
space to roam.
Cradle of my childhood, you
were my sweet island home.

By Marion Rose Horgan