



Longford Branch Alzheimer Society – caring for people with dementia



Photograph shows P. J. Quinn presenting a cheque to Jo Canning Chairperson, B. Dunne, Co-ordinator and Marie McMullen, Administrator from a recent fundraising event that P.J. undertook for the Alzheimer Society Longford branch.

The Longford Branch of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland was founded in 1994 to work for and on behalf of people with dementia and their carers, to ensure they have necessary supports and services to enable them to maximise quality of life, respecting the needs, rights, and dignity of the individual. Our aim therefore within the Longford area is the provision of dementia specific care and carers supports.

Our services include a Home Care Service with trained home care workers who care for people with Alzheimer's disease at home. This care is person centered which means that it is tailored to meet the needs of the individual.

We provide a Day Care Service which consists of a full day in a local nursing home and it gives essential respite to those families caring for their loved one at home. Transport is provided to and from the day care. This runs from Monday to Friday. A Day Care Service also runs on a Saturday 9.30 to 4.00.

We also provide a Respite Service where the person

with dementia will go for one weeks respite to a local nursing home which gives the main carer a complete break from caring for their loved one. This respite is essential for both the client and the main carer.

We also provide Family Training Days for families who are striving to come to terms with this illness. The information and knowledge about this illness gained from these training days is invaluable to family members. Presently we are hoping to restart our Carers Support Group in a new format to better meet the needs of carers who are trying to cope with this illness.

The Society operates a National Helpline No Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm. Here you can talk to someone who understands, get information and find out about services and supports that are available to someone who is caring for a loved one with dementia. The Helpline number is 1800 341 341 or you may go online at www.alzheimer.ie

Anybody who wishes to avail of the above services may contact Breda or Marie at 043 3348402 / 3347221 or 086 3802183 or Samantha at 086 6078584.



Pictured are Cathedral Circle Committee: Back row: Jackie Hughes, Joe Rooney, Rose Wyse, Joan Kiernan. Front Row: Michael McCreanor, Jerry Fallon and Angela Greer

Stay in to win

The Cathedral Silver Circle

Like all the other consequences of the Cathedral Fire on Christmas morning the Cathedral Circle draw team had all their paraphernalia lost in the fire because for the past number of years it was stored there, including the draw drum that had been used since the draw was launched in 1962 by the late Fr. Francis McGowan, Adm. and the circle committee.

The draw drum was becoming somewhat of an antique that was rolled each Monday evening by Micheál McCreanor having taking part in 2,390 draws over the past forty seven years, not to mention outside draws when it was borrowed by other town organisations. Substantially built of softwood by a local carpenter, it had no renovation except painting and a set of new castors.

Also lost were the record books for the past ten years that recorded each week's takings from the circle promoter including the names of deceased promoters, Mrs. Brennan who collected from her neighbours around Harbour Row for years and Margaret O'Connor who collected on the Main Street around Provider's corner for decades. Also John Joe Reilly's, he was a constant promoter until he retired from business on No1 Main Street.

On the 4th of January 2010 the draw was held in a new venue and as usual the promoters continued to deliver the weekly contributions collected from our constant patrons. Prizes were won as far away as Carrigallen in Co. Leitrim due to our roving promoter Rose Anne Reilly who meets patrons at various bingo sessions.

Promoter Jerry Fallon has gone from strength to strength in his weekly door to door collection mainly in Teffia Park and the surrounding areas and at the Monday night Dog Track meetings.

Angela Greer carried out her daily collection both in the Post Office and in Hazelwood shopping centre and many of her weekly patrons were very lucky. Angela also arranged for a special *Cathedral Fire Restoration* collection with the permission of the Davis family in the Hazewood Shopping Centre one Saturday last spring. That was a huge success. A few of us went along to help and not alone got a cash contribution from the passing shoppers, but some promised that later they would arrange to hold a collection in their own area for the cause. One shopper told us in great detail about seeing great architecture on the continent when she was given a trip of a life time by her daughter on the Orient Express Train.

To all the promoters for their constant attention selling lines, either over the counter or otherwise, thank you. And to all the other passing supporters who take the time to make their contribution each week a special *Go raibh míle maith agaibh!*



Cemetery Sunday – one of the most solemn days of the year as we remember our deceased relatives and friends.

Remembering our deceased

Cemetery Sunday is a very special day in August which seems to be growing in popularity with each passing year. Popularity doesn't seem to be the correct word and yet, in a peculiar way, it does fit. Whilst November still remains the traditional month for remembering our deceased family and friends, that Sunday at the end of autumn seems to be a perfect time for the entire community to gather in Ballymacormack for the blessing of the graves.

During the days and long evenings leading up to the Sunday, the graveyard becomes a hive of activity with weeding,

planting, watering and cleaning of the various plots. Though a quiet and restful spot, it's seldom empty. It's always a spot for a knowing nod or a supportive chat.

On the day itself, Ballymacormack heaves with visitors from all over the land and beyond. For many families, the occasion is second only to Christmas for a family get-together.

Flowers are placed on the graves, prayers said and memories shared. It's encouraging to see so many young people stand with a quiet dignity at the graves of grandparents but heartbreaking when it's

at the grave of another young person who, maybe died tragically.

I dreaded my own first Cemetery Sunday because I simply didn't know what to expect. I was still raw and vulnerable. But seeing so many present, who had obviously been through similar experiences was a welcome and unexpected comfort.

Cemetery Sunday is a day that really shows the positive power of the community, something which is, thank God, alive and well in Longford. Of course, it can be a sad day but at the same time it's a very special day.