

St Patrick's Irish Club

50th Anniversary
Celebration Week

1963 - 2013

Official
Programme



Congratulations to
St Patrick's Irish Club
Leamington Spa

On your 50th Anniversary
1963 - 2013

Long may our relationship continue and
here's to the next 50 years!!

Céad Míle Fáilte

May I wish on behalf of myself and the committee a warm welcome to all our distinguished visitors and friends as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary.

In November 1963 several Irish families who emigrated to England came together and opened the St Patrick's Irish Club as a place to keep our Irish culture and Heritage alive. In those days times were tough for the Irish community but the safe haven, which soon became popularly known as '*The Hoot*', kept our spirits and community together.

In 1993 we took the decision to demolish the old '*Hoot*' and reopened the new club in 1994. Bad luck struck though as the Good Friday Floods of '98 hit us hard. We were 4ft under with dark and murky water running through the club. The Irish Spirit once again came through.....we recovered and as the Phoenix rose from the ashes, St Patrick's Club rose from the floods a better club.

And so here we are in 2013, celebrating our 50th Anniversary year on the very same site that was established on the banks of the River Leam all those years ago.....

Now, as in the '60s, we are still providing a home from home for our community, although with a slightly more cosmopolitan feel, and are looking forward to the challenges that lay ahead over the next 50 years.....!



***Brian Thurlow
Chairman***

Celebration Week

Sat 12th Oct

Bible Code Sundays - Band

Doors open at 7.30pm – Open to all – Free

Live Band – lively traditional Irish folk and contemporary rock music

Sun 13th Oct

Children's Day

Doors open at 12.00pm – Open to all – Free

Magician, Face Painting, Games, Art Competition, Music

Mon 14th Oct

Phil O'Neill Darts Competition

Doors open at 7.00pm – Open to all – £2.00 entry fee

All entry money given out as Cash Prizes - Big Darts Competition

Tue 15th Oct

25" Card Drive

Doors open at 7.00pm – Open to all – £5.00 entry fee

All entry money paid out as Cash Prizes – Minimum payout £200

Big card competition with clubs from around county joining us

Wed 16th Oct

The Irish Rambling House Show

Show starts at 7.30pm – £7.00 entry fee

Large collective of Irish traditional musicians, singers, dancers and storytellers

Thu 17th Oct

The Shadow of the Glen & Cabaret Evening

Doors open at 7.00pm – Ticket Only – Free

One-act play written by Irish playwright J.M. Synge

Following the act a reading by Mary MacDonald and cabaret evening

Local artists and music by members of Coventry Comhaltas

Fri 18th Oct

The Shadow of the Glen & Cabaret Evening

Doors open at 7.00pm – Ticket Only – Free

One-act play written by Irish playwright J.M. Synge

Following the act a reading by Mary MacDonald and cabaret evening

Local artists and music by members of Coventry Comhaltas

Sat 19th Oct

Mass & Dinner

- 11am Opening of Irish memorabilia & photos at Leam Art Gallery
- 12pm Mass at St Peter's Church (Dormer Place)
- 2pm Lunch upstairs for invited guests and committee
- 2pm Buffet downstairs with traditional Irish Music & dancing
- 8.30pm Top show band Pat Jordan and Finians Rainbow

Sun 20th Oct

Parade Day

- 10.30am Meet at Club
- 11.00am Parade starts
- Stops along way with Irish dancing & music
- Followed by Irish music (Mel Paul & Mary Lacey) and dancing at the club



*The Bible Code Sundays
return to the club on Sat 12th*



*The Shadow of the Glen
One-act Irish play - first time at the club*



*The Irish Rambling House Show
will be a fantastic spectacle of
Irish traditional music, singers,
dancing & storytellers*

Sat 19th Oct - Menu

Starter

*Country Vegetable Soup
with
Soda Bread*

Main

*Hot Sirloin Wexford Beef
or
Slices of Hot Cavan Ham
with selection of
Salads, Roast Potatoes
& New Potatoes*

Dessert

*Apple Tart
with
Cream*

Irish Coffee

Speakers

*Following the celebration meal a selection of our distinguished
guests will be invited downstairs to take part in our
official after dinner speeches*

Officers & Committee



President

Michael McGarvey

Officers

Brian Thurlow, *Chairman* George Coombes, *Joint Secretary*
Paul Walsh, *Treasurer* Christine Beard, *Joint Secretary*
Sean Hogan, *Entertainment Secretary*

Committee

Jon Ayres Ann Hiddlestone Marie Matts
Bill Brooks Aidan Kelly Kieran McGerty
Billy Desay Sue Long Tommy O'Connor
Sarah Desay Michael Lucy

Trustees

Timmy O'Connor Ann Hiddlestone Patrick Murphy

Bar Manager

Matthew Brown

The Emerald Gem by the River Leam



by Brendan Farrell

Before I retired from The Irish Post, my work as a photo-journalist took me all over this country, visiting a great many Irish clubs. Always there was a *'Cead Mile Failte'* but there were some venues which left a lasting impression and one such club is St Patrick's in Leamington Spa.

I first visited St Patrick's Club in 1970, shortly after The Irish Post was launched. Back then the club, known as *'The Hoot'*, was a single story building with a somewhat weather-beaten exterior.



'The Hoot'

They say you should never judge a book by its cover and that certainly applied to St Patrick's. The huge welcome I received on that very first visit is still as special today as it was 43 years ago.

Committee members such as Chairman Brian Thurlow, President and former Steward Michael McGarvey and his late wife Mary, Patrick Murphy, long standing committee members Sean Hogan & Ann Hiddlestone and many more have become personal friends. In 1993 I was delighted when told that plans were in hand to build a brand new club on the site of the old *'Hoot'*.

That transition from old to new did not go as smoothly as planned, but numerous obstacles were successfully addressed and managed by committee folk, including Brian Thurlow, Michael McGarvey and Patrick Murphy.

One of my many highlights included covering the official opening of the new club in 1994. My contacts enabled me to ask the then Irish Ambassador Joseph Small to cut the green ribbon on that great day. Later the Ambassador told me that in all his travels he had never been to a more homely place than St Patrick's.



Since 1994 many visitors to the club have been hugely impressed by the modern facilities; the homely bar, the atmospheric function room, excellent kitchen, and the first-floor Kennedy Lounge with its ornate Celtic ceiling design - dedicated to the memory of that late and great club stalwart, Tom Kennedy.

The club is also unique as its site sits on the bank of the river Leam which flows through this Spa town. I don't know of any other Irish club in this country which shares such a picturesque setting.

Sometimes being next to a river has its disadvantages though... such as in 1998 when, what became known as '*The Good Friday Floods*', brought near disaster to St Patrick's. Dark muddy water cascaded into the club's ground cellar, bar, function room, kitchen and car park. I came down to photograph the damage, where water over a metre high caused extensive damage to the then only four-year old club premises.

A huge team effort, from club committee, members and friends saw the club re-open for business within 14 weeks – that's dedication for you!



The Good Friday Floods of '98

One of the many more recent success stories at St. Patrick's was establishing the weekly Tuesday Luncheon Club for senior citizens. This club is run by Christine Beard and her band of volunteers.

Members enjoy a wide range of weekly activities, bingo, music, song, dance, warm food and drink!



How the club looks today

There are also holiday trips to local and Irish beauty spots several times each year. In addition, exchange trips take place between other senior citizen clubs in various parts of the country. Visitors to St Patrick's always remark on the wonderful hospitality on offer. Many are impressed by the club's outdoor smoking area, complete with weather-proof electronic blinds, heating and lights....usually operated with great skill by Brian Thurlow!

St Patrick's Club is also well known for its many charity fund raising events - the nearby Myton Hospice for instance receives regular donations from the club's members.

Fifty years of hard work by the committee, plus the loyalty and support of members, will be celebrated in style during the club's Golden Jubilee celebrations which takes place from 12th October to 20th October 2013. The full list of activities are printed elsewhere in this brochure, but I must



Just one of the many images to be on display at the Leamington Art Gallery

mention at the nearby Art Gallery and Museum there is the month-long 'Over There to Over Here' photographic and cultural exhibition which runs from October 12th for four weeks.

The Harp Irish Kitchen will also be installed in the bar/lounge area of the club during the week-long event celebrations.



So what does the future hold for St. Patrick's?

Manager Matthew Brown (*pictured left*) is one of the youngest ever managers of an Irish Club - his friendly manner is attracting more and more young folk to enjoy the club's facilities.

Dance teacher, Tommy Connolly, has a dedicated following each week at his Children's Irish Dance classes, and Irish traditional music and culture forms the backbone of the Leamington Spa branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann - under the capable tutoring of Carmel and John Burke. As long as these great Irish traditions are upheld and supported, the future looks bright.

And finally, from a financial point of view, for a club which is so 'green', the accounts books for the past 50 years have never been in the 'red' thanks to astute management skills from Brian Thurlow and his fellow committee members. Not many clubs in this country, Irish or otherwise, can live with that proud statement.

I may have retired from The Irish Post, but I'll still be joining in the celebrations! Here's wishing you all a wonderful Golden Jubilee and continued success for the future.

And don't forget it is a great place to hire for any occasion....!!

Brendan Farrell

*In loving memory of
Bob & Nelly Harris*



On behalf of the Committee we would like to thank
the following organisations & people who have supported and
assisted with our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

*Marston's Beer Company
Guinness
Magners
Britvic*

Vicki Slade (Senior Curator, Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum)

Peter Mohan (Irish Harp Kitchen)

Tom O'Connor, Gus and Mary MacDonald (The Shadow of the Glen)

Tommy Connolly, John and Carmel Burke (Dancing and Music)

James Brash (Cabaret Evening)

Brendan Farrell, Mick McGarvey

John Harris

and everyone else who has helped

**St Patrick's Irish Club
Riverside Walk, Adelaide Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5AH
01926 420265**