

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

SICKENED W



by Ian Begley

IN CAHERCIVEEN,
CO. KERRY

THE picturesque town of Caherciveen would seem to be the perfect spot in which to self-isolate. Located on the Ring of Kerry, the town and its environs has often been described as tranquil paradise, offering some of the world's most spectacular scenery.

But in mid-March, the community was plunged into a state of turmoil after it was decided to house 105 asylum seekers at the former Skellig Star Hotel.

A total of 24 of its residents have now contracted the virus, including a seven-year-old girl and three members of staff.

There are now just over 70 guests left, some of whom are still sharing rooms with non-family members, and some 30 residents have now been moved to other centres nationwide.

Residents from the town fear they were also exposed to the virus in the days before the new arrivals had to quarantine inside their accommodation.

They now want to know why the asylum seekers weren't tested before they arrived and are urging the Government to transfer them to a larger facility where they can safely isolate.

On Thursday, around 30 locals staged a silent protest through the town, carrying signs that expressed their solidarity and frustration, such as 'Cahersiveen says yes to asylum seekers' and 'Dept of Justice; admit you got this wrong'.

As they marched past the Skellig Star Hotel, the asylum seekers hung signs, made from sheets and pillowcases, out of their windows that read: 'This place is fully infected - Move us out' and 'Our children's lives before profit. We matter too'.

Lisa O'Shea, of the Fáilte Caherciveen group, said the last thing they want the public to think is that they're against the asylum seekers.

'The vast majority of the town greatly welcomes these people who came looking for a new beginning,' she said.

'Our problem is that the Department of Justice isn't overseeing this facility and instead have delegated the responsibility to a private company.

'A third of all direct provision Covid-19 cases in the country are now in Caherciveen. The Government are calling this hotel a dedicated direct provision centre, yet it is completely unsuitable.'

The 56-bed premises is being run by Paul Collins, of Remcoll Capital, and was opened as a

Asylum seekers appeal for help after Covid-19 outbreak in direct provision centre in Kerry hotel

direct provision centre on March 18 without public consultation.

The Mail contacted a representative for Mr Collins for comment but no response had been received by last night.

Locals were told this was a pandemic emergency measure due to overcrowding in Dublin.

It was believed that Caherciveen would be a safe location for the asylum seekers to stay during the

health crisis. Less than a month after arriving, four inhabitants tested positive for Covid-19 before being transported to a more appropriate setting in Cork.

All occupants at the former hotel were tested for Covid-19 several weeks ago. However, two more cases were confirmed on Tuesday and Wednesday - bringing the total to 24.

The increase in infections has prompted calls for the HSE to re-test the asylum seekers. However, the Irish Daily Mail has learned it has no intention of doing so.

'At this stage there are no plans nationally or locally to repeat universal testing in any residential centre,' a representative of Cork Kerry Community Healthcare said in an email seen by the Mail.

'HSE Public Health Dept continues to monitor the situation and to advise the Dept of Justice, management, staff and residents in the centre on the control of infection,' the email said.

Jack Fitzpatrick, chair of the Caherciveen Community and Business Alliance, said the decision to turn the Skellig Star Hotel into a direct provision centre came unexpectedly to the entire community.

'A meeting was set up on March 16 with the owner of the hotel and members of the business alliance. Paul Collins had told us that the contract had already been signed with the Department of Justice,

but even though they went about it in the wrong way we accepted the decision due to the scale of this pandemic.

'We intended on doing our best to welcome these people, assuming they would have been tested before they came [here],' he said.

Mr Fitzpatrick, who owns The Market House shop in the town, said his first concerns came when he heard that a packed bus from Dublin arrived at the hotel on March 18.

'There was no social distancing, even though some of the asylum seekers came from a hotel in the

capital where there had been confirmed cases of the virus.

'About a month later, there was a rumour around the town that four residents were tested positive. We approached the owner who told us out straight that this was unfortunately the case.

'This means that these people had been going around the town putting the community at risk without their knowledge.'

The businessman sympathises with those still in the hotel.

'There isn't even a kettle in the bedrooms. We are now delivering supplies to help them get by.



Can't isolate: Azwar and Safra Fuard with their daughter Mariyam, age three

THE KHANYE FAMILY

FOR more than six weeks, Thando Khanye and his wife have been living in constant fear that their six-month-old son will become the next victim of Covid-19.

Originally from Zimbabwe, the family arrived in Caherciveen believing they would finally have enough room to self-isolate.

But according to Mr Khanye, the conditions at The Skellig Star Hotel make it impossible to avoid contracting the virus.

'I'm sick with worry every minute of the day,' he said.

'My wife, who suffers from postnatal depression, is in a constant flood of tears and just

WE FEEL

can't understand why we're being treated like this.

'We feel more like animals in cages and are begging to be put anywhere that will allow us to self-isolate safely.'

The family were moved from a direct provision centre in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, in March along with more than 100 other asylum seekers from around the country.

Although they have a room by themselves, Mr Khanye says he has to be in close proximity with the other residents whenever he collects food from downstairs.

THE WORRY



THE FUARD FAMILY

FOR MY DAUGHTER, I CANNOT STAY SILENT

THREE-year-old Mariyam Fuard could only look on in wonder as silent protesters marched past her window, smiling and waving at her.

She couldn't have understood why they were there, but for her parents the demonstrators gave them a much-needed glimmer of hope.

On March 19, the family of three from Sri Lanka arrived in the picturesque Kerry town of Caherciveen after living in a direct provision centre in Dublin for more than a year.

But Azwar Fuard and his wife Safra's hopes of safely isolating were dashed as soon as the first case of Covid-19 broke out at The Skellig Star Hotel.

'There's no logical explanation why we were put here,' he told the Irish Daily Mail.

'The people who were brought to Caherciveen came from numerous hotels and centres around the country, including some very high-risk ones in Dublin.

'Anyone who has been to

this hotel will know that it's totally unsuitable to house people during a pandemic.

'There are now 24 cases of this virus and even still there are some residents sleeping in the same room with non-family members.

'You can't avoid being in close contact with other people, especially when you go downstairs to collect your dinner.

'Only yesterday, my good friend was tested positive for Covid-19 and I'm certain there will be more cases if they don't move us out of here.'

Mr Fuard, who was working in a field marketing company before the crisis, said his main priority now is to look after his wife and daughter.

'We're sickened with worry, but I will not stay silent until the entire country knows how we're being treated. We're not looking for special treatment or to be placed in some luxurious hotel,' he said. 'We just want to be moved to a larger facility where it is actually possible to self-isolate.'

'The first night they came, we brought pizzas and ice-cream just to let them feel welcome. But the property they're in isn't fit for purpose. Are they going to wait for everyone to get sick before they are moved to a safer site?'

Kerry TD Danny Healy Rae told the Mail that he's demanding a full investigation into the matter.

'The whole situation was managed appallingly. To send more than 100 asylum seekers from one part of the country to the next without even testing them is beyond stupid,' he said.

'I'm blaming the Department of

Justice, who have completely flouted the Government's guidelines. These poor people haven't a chance of staying safe, especially the ones who are sleeping in bedrooms with non-family members.

'Someone needs to be held accountable because God knows what the full consequences of this decision will be.'

A Department of Justice spokesman said that non-family members sharing a room in direct provision centres are considered to be a household during the coronavirus crisis.

'As part of our response to the

Covid-19 pandemic we have secured new accommodation providing over 850 bed spaces and, in consultation with the HSE, relocated over 600 residents to support social distancing in centres and cocooning measures for the most vulnerable.

'[A total of] 299 of the 850 new beds are being used for off-site self-isolation facilities in four hotels in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Dundalk.

'In off-site self-isolation facilities all residents have their own bedroom and an en-suite bathroom.

'The rest of our residents are in

either single-occupancy rooms, living with family in larger family rooms, or are living in own-door accommodation,' the spokesman said.

'Any decisions regarding the movement of our residents to other accommodation during this pandemic have been made in the context of prioritising the best interests of our residents, and in full consultation with the HSE National Social Inclusion Team.

THE spokesman added: 'As advice from Government and the HSE has evolved over the course of the pandemic, our approach has also evolved and we endeavoured to respond quickly to changing circumstances.'

Another Department spokesman confirmed that anyone who had contracted Covid-19 at the former hotel has been transferred to an offsite self-isolation facility, where they will be cared for until the HSE considers that they can safely return. To protect the privacy of residents we do not confirm specific locations or premises.

'The advice for remaining residents in the Skellig... centre to quarantine is public health advice, provided by public health authorities. The HSE, which we work closely with, are monitoring the situation... in Caherciveen.'

ian.begley@dailyemail.ie

Centres see 165% rise in virus cases

AN infectious disease specialist at Cork University Hospital has said widespread Covid-19 testing of residents in direct provision centres is needed as nine clusters and 164 positive cases are confirmed in these settings.

Dr Eamonn Faller said there has been a 165% increase over the last five days in cases confirmed in direct provision centres, which are home to 7,000 people.

He expressed concern about people living in tightly congregated settings with no capacity to socially distance.

Dr Faller told RTÉ's Morning Ireland that any spread of the virus in direct provision centres is a huge wider public health risk and will lead to active community spread.

He said to flatten the curve we must lower the density of people living in these centres.

LIKE CAGED ANIMALS

'More than 20 people have already contracted this virus, including a seven-year-old child.

'I suffer from bronchitis and am at a big risk while I'm here. I'm so scared of dying and leaving my six-month-old son and wife behind in these horrendous conditions.

'We were all tested two weeks ago, but since then more people have been infected, so no one can know for sure if they have it or not.

'I'm afraid to let my son crawl around on the floor because I'm worried the room was not disinfected before we arrived.'

The worried father is now urging the Government to take control of the situation.

'We feel like we're being punished rather than actually helped,' he continued.

'We're human beings and all have potential and big hopes for the future. When we were in Carrick-on-Shannon my wife travelled for three hours to Dublin every day to study in UCD, but since coming here her depression is getting worse.

'I'm begging the Government to listen to us because in a matter of weeks every one of us could be infected.'



Fear: Thando with baby son



by Ian Begley

IT is on Molesworth Street in Dublin city centre that the gravity of the homelessness crisis in lockdown truly comes into focus.

The easing of restrictions can't come quickly enough for everyone on the island, but for the capital's rough sleepers, who have spent up to eight weeks without access to the most basic of amenities, it can mean the very basics – finally getting a shower and even a change of clothes.

Here, a woman with special needs sat alone on the ground, cradling herself outside the closed Buswells Hotel, just across from the Dáil.

A considerate passer-by alerted Inner City Helping Homeless (ICHH) about her plight and within minutes volunteers were at her side with a reassuring smile and a cup of tea.

They stayed with the 55-year-old until she revealed she had run away from her home in Crumlin.

'Thankfully, she's allowing us to drop her home, but it's frightening to think that someone as vulnerable as her was about to spend the night on the streets,' said outreach supporter Pádraig Drummond.

'You never know what you're going to encounter on a night out, and cases like this just prove that everything is not as good as the Government are making it out.'

He has been volunteering with ICHH for the past five years, after he himself was homeless in 2015.

He said: 'I was living in a house with my partner, but after we split up I couldn't afford to pay the rent and spent the next 18 months trying to find accommodation that would accept the Housing Assistance Payment. It was an incredibly difficult time in my life, but Inner City Helping Homeless were there for me until I landed on my feet.'

'Since then, I've been volunteering for them because I know first-hand how much of a difference they actually make.'

DESPITE the number of people in emergency accommodation having dropped to below 10,000, the volunteers at ICHH see no cause for celebration.

Every night, the non-government-funded charity's workers travel north and south of the capital in vans packed with basic essentials, such as food, water, hygiene kits and clothes.

On an average evening, its members help between 80 and 100 people in need, who are finding their situation harder than ever to endure.

Last Monday from 9pm, the Irish Daily Mail accompanied a small team from ICHH to get a first-hand perspective of how the homeless are coping during the Covid-19 pandemic.

As the volunteers were preparing for another night on the road, from their office on Amiens Street, outreach volunteer Maria Roche said the crisis is having a detrimental effect on the mental health of rough sleepers.

'They feel totally abandoned and many haven't had a shower or a change of clothes in two months,' she explained.

'Their dignity has been stripped since the start of this pandemic, and if it wasn't for homeless services helping them each night, their needs would go completely unnoticed. Many won't go into a hostel because they'll be sharing a room with up to four people, making it impossible to keep a two-metre distance.'

'Before the crisis, these people

How Covid has made life for our homeless even more intolerable

could go into a McDonald's or a pub and use their toilet facilities, but since they're all closed they have nowhere to go

'Several weeks ago, there was one man who even refused to take food from us because he didn't want to have to go to the bathroom outside.'

'They can't even use their mobiles

to access homeless services anymore because they have nowhere to charge them.

'And since the vast majority of payphones in the city are broken, they're completely cut off from support.'

Once the two vans were loaded, Ms Roche and three other volunteers put on their personal

protective equipment (much of it donated by UFC fighter Conor McGregor) and began their essential journey.

The first stop by the southside crew was Cumberland Street, where they offered a homeless man a hot cup of tea and a sandwich before doing the same for another man outside the former Anglo Irish

Bank building near St Stephen's Green. Before the pandemic, ICHH had seen a reduction of about 30 people on the streets, but the temporary release of more than 300 prisoners has put an added strain on homelessness services.

'It's not a surprise to see so many people choosing to sleep rough because they don't have a chance

'SAFER ON STREETS THAN IN A HOSTEL'

DESPITE his declining health, Jerry Wall, who's in his 50s, and his faithful dog Sally have been living in a tent off the Alfie Byrne Road in north Dublin for more than a year.

Well out of sight from pedestrians, the Darndale father-of-two has made his small patch of land as comfortable and homelike as possible. Nestled against several trees and bushes, Mr Wall's tent opens up to a gazebo which provides additional shelter for his basic essentials.

A metal oil drum full of burning logs crackles against the backdrop of a battery-powered radio as the hardened Dubliner begins

JERRY WALL

to speak about his heartbreaking situation. 'I was living in a bedsit flat for about 13 years, but when the banks took the place over, I was handed an eviction letter,' he said.

'I've been homeless now for about four years, but there's no way in the world I would go to a hostel.'

'I don't like them at all because it can be very dangerous sharing a room with drug addicts. My health is not the best either, but I'm well enough to stick up for myself.'

'I also feel much safer here during this pandemic than I would in a cramped environment with dozens of other people around.'

Mr Wall, who suffers from chronic respiratory problems, is also recovering from tuberculosis, a disease which once killed hundreds of people a year in Ireland.

'I was diagnosed with TB two years ago and put on medication for nine months, but my lungs are still scarred, and I find it very difficult to walk even a short distance,' he said.

'If I contracted Covid-19, I wouldn't stand a chance, which is why I'm happy to be away from everyone.'



DISABLED WOMAN FOUND SHIVERING

AT the end of Molesworth Street in Dublin city centre, a vulnerable woman with special needs was getting ready to spend the night sleeping rough as temperatures plummeted to 2C.

Sitting alone and confused last Monday night, the woman, believed to be in her mid-50s, was visibly shaking with the cold as members of Inner City Helping Homeless came to her aid.

The volunteers handed her a cup of tea as they tried to gauge how she ended up in such a distressing situation.

And even though they had many other areas of south Dublin left to cover, they spent more than 30 minutes with the woman until a team from the Dublin Simon Community arrived on the scene.

It was hoped that the charity could provide the woman with a bed for the night, but the best it could do was offer her a sleeping bag.

It also recommended calling the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive, but the ICHH group deemed it would not be appropriate for a vulnerable individual to sleep in a hostel with drug addicts.

Soon after the Dublin Simon Community left, additional volunteers linked to the ICHH, who are trained to deal with vulnerable people, arrived to offer support.

Eventually, it was established that the woman ran away from her home in south Dublin where she lived with her elderly mother and brother.

With her consent, the woman agreed to get into an ICHH vehicle where she was transported safely back to her home.

'It was such a relief to see that this vulnerable member of our society did not have to spend the night on the street or in a hostel,' said volunteer Pádraig Drummond.

'It's hard to imagine that a woman with special needs had to fend for herself during a time when we're all supposed to look out for one another.'

'But even if she didn't have a home to go back to, we would have made sure that she had a bed for the night one way or another.'

'They feel totally abandoned': Maria Roche helping the homeless on the streets of Dublin

to social distance in hostels,' said Mr Drummond. 'Even if families have rooms by themselves, they still have to share the canteens and bathroom facilities with other people.'

'You just don't know what you're going to see when you're out on the road each night.'

'All these rough sleepers are

living through extremely difficult circumstances, which is why it's so important to show them as much kindness and support as possible.'

Later during the night, I met up with a crew of volunteers who were helping the homeless on the northside of the city.

One man they visited near the Malahide Road had been living in

his car since he lost his job at the start of the pandemic. After he was provided with food and water, the man from Romania revealed that he had been working on a construction site until he was let go. 'I can't afford to live anywhere now because I'm not being paid,' he told us.

'My mother in Romania is very sick so the only thing I want to do now is to visit her. I'm more worried about her than I am for myself, but the only way I can keep safe and away from everyone now is to live in my car,' he added.

The ICHH volunteers spent the remainder of the night and the early hours of the next morning visiting and searching for more people without a roof over their heads.

Last month, more than 1,000 beds were created as emergency accommodation to assist the homeless in Dublin, according to a report from Dublin City Council.

That accommodation, which includes 400 bedrooms in eight hotels, were created in order for rough sleepers and those without a home to effectively be able to self-isolate, or cocoon. Some 470 sin-

gle-occupancy beds have also been made available in the homeless hostel system.

THE number of recorded cases of Covid-19 among homeless people is also lower than in other cohorts of society, with no deaths having been reported.

However, according to ICHH CEO Anthony Flynn, this is because the vast majority of homeless people aren't being tested.

'I know for a fact that we haven't seen a high breakout because homeless people aren't being tested enough,' he said.

'All the hostels and B&Bs on Gardiner Street are full of homeless people sharing communal kitchens, which certainly puts them at a greater risk of catching this infection.'

'The thousand extra bed spaces that we were told about don't seem to be making a dent in what we're seeing on the ground.'

'There were hundreds of prisoners released over the past couple of weeks, which is putting an extra

demand on the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive.

'This is the reason why we haven't seen a significant reduction in the number of homeless people since the start of this crisis,' he added.

Last month, Dublin City Council revealed that homeless figures have fallen below 10,000 people.

The figures from the Department of Housing show a decrease in the month of March, of 241 people to a total of 9,907.

The breakdown shows there were 3,355 children and 6,552 adults without a place to call home when Ireland went into lockdown.

Welcoming the drop, Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy said: 'We continue to work every day with local authorities and NGOs to ensure the safety of those in emergency accommodation during the current pandemic.'

'Despite the current challenges, work is taking place across the country to move people into homes. We continue to add capacity to the system where needed to allow for isolation and social distancing and are working closely with the HSE.'

ian.begley@daily mail.ie



Desperate: Jerry Wall warms himself with a metal drum of oil

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Blowing off the



by Ian Begley

NEVER was it imagined that a small flats complex in inner-city Dublin could be turned into a world-famous sensation. In 20 years from now, the residents of Canon Mooney Gardens, Ringsend will still be talking about how their tight-knit community became a beacon of positivity during the worst pandemic in living history.

For more than a month now, the complex's 300 residents have lifted each other's spirits by holding charity bingo events, sing-songs, games and many other

'I couldn't believe how famous our bingo game got'

activities while still maintaining social distancing.

The flats are now a sight to behold, with bunting and tri-coloured flags hanging everywhere, with messages that read 'Up the Flats', 'Thank You, Frontline Workers' and 'Love, Hope and Courage'.

In the pleasant warmth of yesterday afternoon, the residents took part in another series of activities to get them through the crisis.

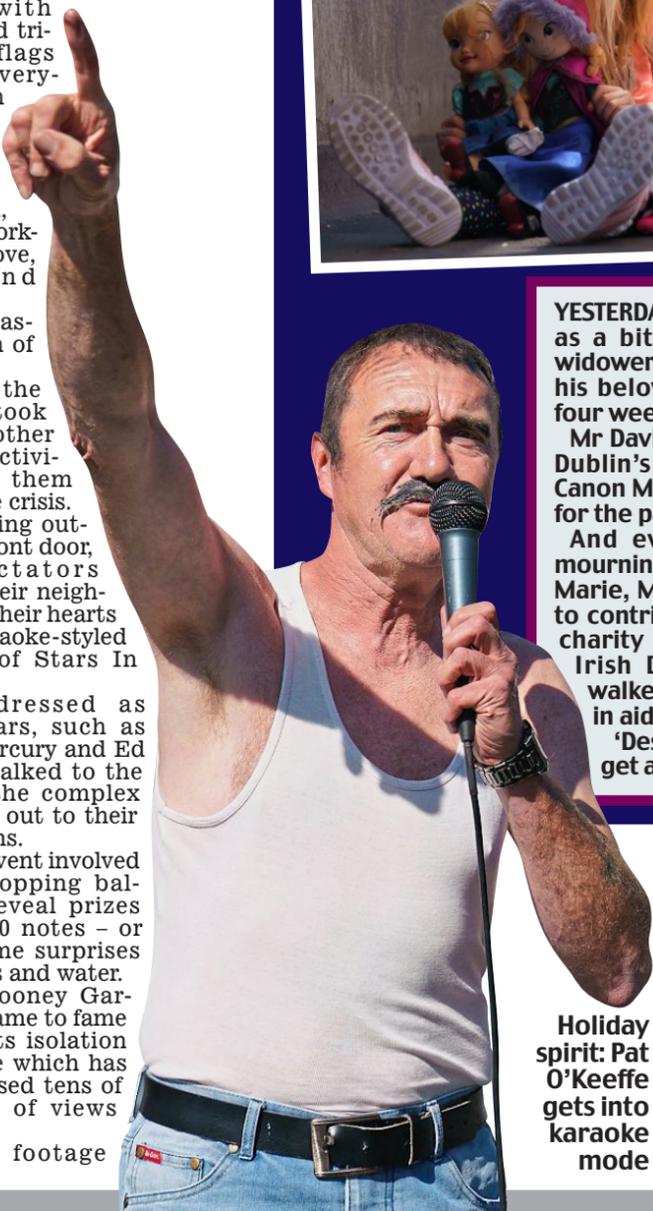
While sitting outside their front door, the spectators watched their neighbours sing their hearts out in a karaoke-styled rendition of Stars In Your Eyes.

Locals dressed as famous stars, such as Freddie Mercury and Ed Sheeran, walked to the centre of the complex and rocked out to their cheering fans.

Another event involved children popping balloons to reveal prizes such as €50 notes – or less welcome surprises like teabags and water.

Canon Mooney Gardens first came to fame following its isolation bingo game which has since amassed tens of thousands of views online.

Amusing footage



Holiday spirit: Pat O'Keeffe gets into karaoke mode

Flat out... Locals in Ringsend complex put on a show of strength for charity



Community spirit: Frank Davis, right, doing laps on crutches and locals, above, applaud the outdoor festivities

FRANK DAVIS

YESTERDAY'S fun and games came as a bittersweet occasion for widower Frank Davis, 69, who lost his beloved wife to cancer just four weeks ago.

Mr Davis, who is originally from Dublin's north side, has called Canon Mooney Gardens his home for the past 40 years.

And even though he is still mourning the sad loss of his wife, Marie, Mr Davis was determined to contribute to his community's charity events. Speaking to the Irish Daily Mail, he said he walked 75 laps around the flats in aid of Pieta House.

'Despite needing crutches to get around, I really wanted to

get involved and help my neighbours raise money for such an important cause,' he said.

'In total, I've done about 75 laps around the complex over the course of four days. I wish my wife could have been here to see me because I know she would have been very proud.'

Mr Davis, who will turn 70 next week, said once the pandemic is over, he will be giving Marie the send-off she deserves.

'When she died, we were restricted to only a handful of people in the church. It wasn't a proper funeral, but we'll make up for it in a few weeks hopefully,' Mr Davis vowed.

featured a bingo caller perched on a wall facing the flats with a speaker system, calling out numbers while the players stood on their balconies checking off their cards.

The community was also lauded for raising €20,000 for mental health charity Pieta House.

The idea to hold the weekly activities was the brainchild of resident Michael Larkin.

Speaking to the Irish Daily Mail, he said after the bingo game went viral across the world, the com-

munity kept coming up with new ways to lift each other's spirits.

'I just couldn't believe how famous our bingo game got,' Mr Larkin laughed.

'One of the girls here recorded it on her phone and it just blew up overnight.'

'I knew we struck big when I got a phone call from my brother in Australia who wanted to know what I was doing on his telly.'

'It even got across to America and is still continuing to get even more hits across the world.' And

only last week, the south-inner city neighbourhood went viral again after they showed off their dance moves to Danish pop singer Whigfield's Saturday Night.

The residents blared the tune while standing two metres apart on marked spots to take part in the dance routine.

Children and adults alike could be seen joining in on the fun, both down on the ground and from their balconies up above.

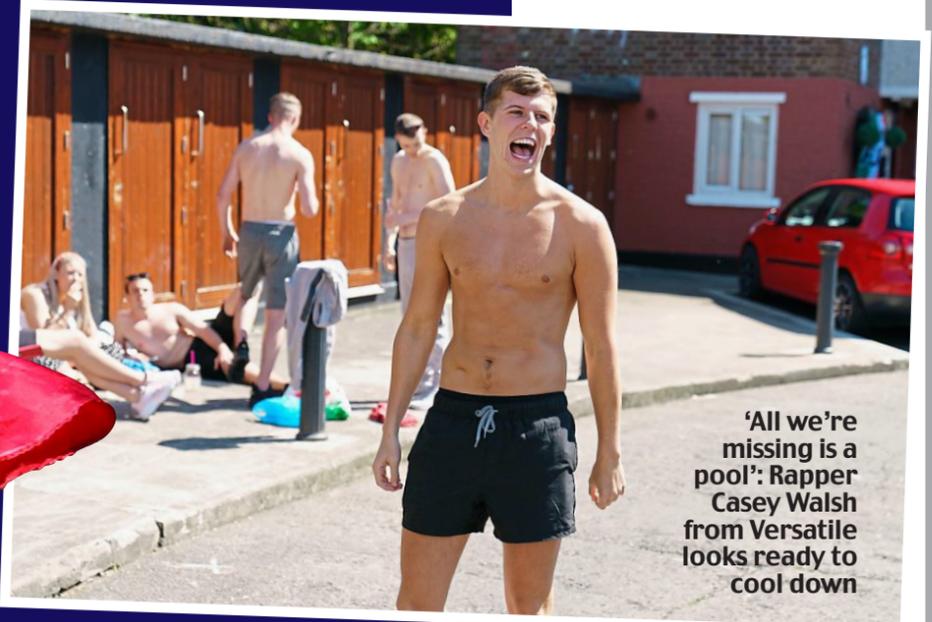
'It took a whole lot of planning, but I'm delighted how that dance



pandemic blues



Caped crooner: Macky Weafer doing his best Elvis Presley impression for Stars In Their Eyes



'All we're missing is a pool': Rapper Casey Walsh from Versatile looks ready to cool down



SEÁN McCABE

AGED only 11, Seán McCabe is now known as 'The King of Ringsend' after raising over €900 for charity.

The passionate Liverpool supporter has been at the forefront of bringing bundles of joy and positivity to his community of Canon Mooney Gardens.

As part of an initiative to raise funds for Pieta House, Seán walked 28 laps around the flats complex for a total of four days.

The community-driven challenge involved 30 people who reached the equivalent of Mount Everest by either walking or climbing stairs.

Seán said: 'It was raining very heavily one of the days, but I wouldn't come back inside until I finished.'

'I just wanted to help my neighbours and am really grateful for all the support I've been getting.'

But Seán has also provided entertainment by busking amidst his cheering neighbours.

'I dressed up as Mo Salah and sang You'll Never Walk Alone a few days ago and today I'm going to dress up as Ed Sheeran, dye my hair orange and sing Thinking Out Loud. I'm having a great time doing it and the past few weeks have been loads of fun.'

community events have really lifted our spirits.

'Many families in Ringsend have been left badly affected by mental health and suicide in recent years, which is why I'm sure so many people are getting involved.'

'I've lived here most of my life and have never seen anything like this before,' he said.

Resident Carmel Roche, 83, also said that she's never been prouder of her locality.

'I grew up in Ringsend and thought I had seen everything, but this is something else altogether,' she said.

'You don't realise how precious your freedom is until you lose it, but my neighbours and family here are making these few weeks an absolute joy.'

Grandfather Pat O'Keeffe said his two grandchildren are observ-

'The grandkids are having the time of their lives'

ing the Government's restrictions by playing outside their front door.

'They have all their dolls lined up across the balcony and are making the most of the restrictions in their own little way.'

'They're having the time of their lives with all the music and entertainment; it almost feels like they're on their holidays.'

Even Ringsend's most famous resident, Casey Walsh, from Irish rap group Versatile, said he was 'blown away' by it all.

The 22-year-old told the Mail that Canon Mooney Gardens has become more like a holiday destination in Santa Ponsa.

'Everything about it is just lethal - all we're missing is a pool in the middle of the flats,' he said.

'The pandemic isn't getting us down at all even though we've had all our shows postponed until next year.'

'I was meant to be performing with Snoop Dog last month, which is something I was really looking forward to. But at least I have plenty of more time to work on my music.'

news@daily mail.ie

routine worked out,' continued Mr Larkin.

'We even got the attention of Whigfield, who thought what we were doing was just fantastic.'

'But we made sure that keeping our distance from one another was paramount. There are a lot of elderly people who live in Canon Mooney Gardens and the last thing we would want is to put them at risk.'

The Ringsend locals also took part in a mammoth challenge of climbing the equivalent of Mount

Everest to raise money for Pieta House.

Dublin man Keith O'Brien embarked on the challenge of climbing to the top of O'Rahilly house in Ringsend 880 times to reach his goal of 29,029 feet, the

height of the world's tallest mountain, Mount Everest, by May 21.

Beginning with Keith alone, the campaign had grown to involve 30 people, all of whom had set their own personal climbing challenges, some aiming at the 29,029 feet

mark like Keith, others looking to complete the climb 25 or 30 times.

Altogether, the community is said to have raised about €20,000.

Pat McGuinness, 62, told the Irish Daily Mail that seeing his community come together in recent weeks makes the pandemic a lot easier to bear.

'My wife and I have 13 grandkids and it's been really tough not being able to see them,' he said.

'It's definitely taken a toll on our mental health, but these

'You don't realise how precious your freedom is until you lose it'