

Spring 2026 Vol 23 Issue 1

THE SURVIVOR

Irish Polio News



The Cliffs of Moher in spring near Doolin, Co. Clare

Photo by Gabriela Roberts.

Handy Emergency & Helpline Numbers

Pull out this page and stick to your fridge door, or somewhere easy to find.

ALONE – if you have concerns about your own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of an older person you know.

Call: 0818 222 024.

Web: www.alone.ie

SENIORLINE – Senior Help Line is a confidential listening service for older people by trained older volunteers from 10am to 10pm every day of the year, including Christmas Day.

Call: free on 1800 804 591.

Web: www.thirdageireland.ie/seniorline/contact

THRESHOLD – this charity provides a wide range of information and advice on renting, housing and problems with landlords. If you need to talk directly to an advisor call the national free phone helpline 1800 454 454 Mon to Fri 9am to 9pm. **Web:** www.threshold.ie

POLIO SURVIVORS IRELAND – for general concerns or if you cannot access important medical or social services, you can call us on 01 889 89 20.

Web: www.polio.ie

FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY IRELAND – their Friendly Call service offers regular phone calls to older adults who may feel isolated or lonely. **Call:** 01 873 1855.

Web: www.friendsoftheelderly.ie

PIETA - free support for people who self-harm, are thinking about suicide, or people bereaved by suicide. **Call:** 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444.

Open 24/7. **Web:** www.pieta.ie/

SAMARITANS - provides confidential, non-judgmental emotional support to people struggling to cope, feeling lonely, or in distress. **Call:** 116 123. Open 24/7.

Web: www.samaritans.org/

AGE ACTION CARE & REPAIR -

run by dedicated Maintenance Teams, and or Garda-vetted volunteer teams. Working from Dublin, Cork and Galway, Maintenance Teams travel anywhere in Ireland if their work can prevent you going into hospital, or speed up a hospital discharge plan. Our volunteers complete DIY work only in Dublin, Cork and Galway. **Dublin Call:** 01 475 6989.

Cork Call: 021 206 7399.

Galway Call: 091 527 831.

Web: www.ageaction.ie/get-help/care-and-repair

WOMEN'S AID - offers confidential and non-judgemental support to women subjected to domestic abuse, including coercive control and stalking. Includes emotional, physical, sexual or economic abuse by a current or former partner.

Call: 1800 341 900. Open 24/7.

Web: www.womensaid.ie/get-help/support-services/

DORAS - offers support for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers in Ireland, specialising in advocacy, legal information, and victim support. For migrant support, **Call:** 083 0391819.

Lines are open every day from 8am to 10pm.

Web: www.doras.org/contact

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General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) To facilitate your membership with us, Polio Survivors Ireland will process personal and, if applicable, especially if you use any of our services, possibly sensitive information relating to you both digitally and in manual format for the duration of your membership. **You have the right to access this information at any time by calling 01 889 8920 or emailing info@polio.ie.** This information will be destroyed if, or when, your membership of the organisation ceases.

FROM THE CHAIR

After a very wet and cold winter, it's great to see the clocks going forward and to have "a grand stretch in the evenings". Hopefully it means we will enjoy a sunny and pleasant summer.

And as that season approaches, we are also planning and looking forward to our Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year it will take place on Tuesday, July 7th in the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. There are further details and information on attending and registering for the Conference and AGM with this edition. I hope that a large number of members will be able to join us for the Conference across the Shannon.

At the AGM we will be electing a new Board and as a number of Board members, including myself will be stepping down, we will have a number of vacancies. Membership of the Board is a great opportunity to learn more about the different facets of our activities, to contribute ideas and

to support the governance of the organisation. I would encourage any member who is curious about the role or interested in standing for the Board to contact me or another Board member to find out what's involved. Members will receive information on nomination requirements and dates, as we get closer to the AGM.

As the old saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved and, in that context, our telephone support service is an important lifeline for many members. I want to acknowledge the significant contribution of all our telephone service volunteers. We now have more members requesting the service, and therefore we need to recruit more volunteers, so at the last Board meeting, we decided to widen the criteria for volunteers. In addition to polio survivors, we will now also accept volunteer applications from family members or close friends of polio survivors. So, if any members/supporters are interested or know someone who might be interested in volunteering for the telephone service, please contact Nuala McLaughlin, Volunteer Officer.

Last month, our Vice Chairperson, Pat Ryan and our Advocacy & Policy Officer, Siobhan Banville, represented us at an event to support polio survivors in Northern Ireland, which was held in the Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast. The event, which was organised by the British Polio Fellowship, sought to raise awareness of the long-term effects of polio and to highlight how the lack of neurology funding impacts the daily life of polio survivors in the North. It was a good opportunity to share information and network with colleagues. We look forward to continued cooperation and engagement to ensure the needs of polio survivors across the island of Ireland are raised and addressed. I hope you enjoy reading this latest edition of "The Survivor" and look forward to meeting with you at the Conference in July.

James Doorley

Chairperson.

*Do you have an
URGENT NEED?*

*Talk
to us*



*We are
here
to help*

*Contact Kerrie in the office at
01 889 89 20 or by email sic@polio.ie*

*Contact Ciara in the office at
01 889 89 20 or by email asic@polio.ie*

**ADVICE • INFORMATION
SUPPORT • ADVOCACY
A LISTENING EAR**

Confidentiality Assured

*Are you
making a will?*

Please consider leaving a Legacy to Polio Survivors Ireland in your will. Leaving a gift to the charity in your Will can help us greatly to continue providing support to polio survivors. You can alternatively request donations to the charity in lieu of flowers.

.....
Contact Alan Raftery at
01 872 7120 or email
legal@holohanlaw.ie
and Alan will explain everything you
need to know to draft your will.

HOLOHAN | LANE
LLP SOLICITORS

MINUTES AGM 2025

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF POLIO SURVIVORS IRELAND, CLG

Wednesday 24th September, 2025 in the Green Isle Hotel, Dublin 22

The Chair, Macrina Clancy, opened the meeting, welcoming the members present in person and those attending via Zoom. She declared that the required quorum of 20 members present or by proxy was met.

APOLOGIES: Board Directors Frank Mitchell and Paul Dunne

MINUTES OF LAST YEAR'S AGM

It was noted that the minutes of the 2024 AGM were sent to members in advance of the meeting and were proposed and seconded.

MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising were raised.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair then delivered her report on 2024. Macrina noted that the organisation had a loss of €2,539. Highlights of 2024 included taking part in the launch of a report by GSK to the government, entitled, The Value of Adult Vaccination in Ireland, where Macrina spoke of having polio and the impact of this had on her life. In October, we were invited to the

Leinster House AV room by Senator Mary Seery-Kennedy. Presentations were made to TDs and Senators by Dr. Deirdre Murray, physiotherapist, who has done research on polio, Advocacy & Policy Officer, Siobhan Banville, and members Johnny O'Sullivan and John Dolan, highlighting the issues faced by polio survivors.

Macrina reported that we gained 47 new members, with a total membership of 972 in 2024. We also gained 5 new polio registrants, with a total of 558 registrants since the launching of the register in 2017. Every year new people to join us, having been struck with PPS or Late Effects of Polio in later life.

It was noted that 28 people went through active member volunteer training, including two board members.

We submitted the B9 form to the Company's Registration Office, seeking to increase the capacity of members to 1,500 and we also submitted the G1 form regarding changes to our constitution as voted on at our 2023 AGM.



Macrina reported that our new CEO, Nicola Fogarty commenced her post in July 2025. 2024 staff changes included Megan, Kathy, and Gill leaving, while Kerrie Donegan and Ciara Power both returned from maternity leave. Elizabeth Derwin, Siobhan Banville, and Aline Gomez joined in 2024. Also, several interns and transition year students helped in the office, as well as member volunteers, helping ensure that younger people from Ireland and abroad continue to learn about polio.

STRATEGIC PLAN ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Nicola Fogarty gave an overview of the 2024 Strategic Plan achievements, acknowledging the work from the board and staff, volunteers and members. Nicola highlighted the work undertaken under the five Strategic Priorities, noting that the staff are mainly part-time and that the figures show that the total number of people benefitting from the organisation is 1,271. Our APO,

Ciara Power and later, Siobhan Banville, worked to raise the profile of polio survivors and call for changes to national policy, health services and state benefits. Our MEOs, Nuala McLaughlin and Órna Maddock, provided support to Social Support Groups (SSGs), ran Area Meetings and had individual member contact on an ongoing basis.

Our Service & Information Coordinators provided 70 survivors with aids and appliances, including wheelchairs, orthotics, customised footwear, and mobility scooters. 60 survivors were provided with therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody, and counselling. 32 survivors and their carers were provided with respite breaks. 267 survivors were provided with winter heating grants of up to €125.

Additionally, 232 members attended meetings of our 18 social support groups. 241 polio survivors were supported on a one-to-one basis with information and advice and individual advocacy. 38 members were supported by the Telephone Support Service and 78 members attended our annual conference.

COMPANY SECRETARY'S REPORT

Fintan Foy presented what would be his final report as Company Secretary, noting that from a governance perspective, the company and its officers have all made returns required to the regulatory authorities, in particular the Charity Regulator.

The company officers and directors have, as far as we are aware, complied with all necessary statutory provisions.

It was a particularly busy year, and the board had 11 meetings in 2024.

In addition, there were 11 meetings of the board subcommittees. They are Service Quality and Safety, Governance and Compliance, Audit and Finance, and the Board Nominations Committee.

In accordance with the Constitution, Macrina Clancy, Miriam Kavanagh, and Fintan Foy are stepping down from the board at this year's AGM, having completed their six years, that is the term of office. Charlie Smith stepped down from the board earlier in 2025, and Pat McGillon stepped down in September.

The elected directors for the year ahead, therefore, are Frank Mitchell, Pat Ryan, and Zaynab Salman. Board-nominated directors are James Dorley and the following require ratification of the board, as they joined the board since the last

AGM. They are Vera Keatings, Janet Cunningham and Paul Dunne.

Fintan concluded his last report as Company Secretary, acknowledging the support of the staff and our previous CEO, Fran Brennan, while wishing Nicola Fogarty well in her role as CEO. He also acknowledged Macrina Clancy and Pat McGillon for their support throughout the six years.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Miriam Kavanagh, delivered her report, indicating that the 2024 financials are very similar to 2023, with a slight increase in income.

Total Income €619,491, which was a 3% increase from 2023. We continued to be in receipt of the Pobal grant last year, of €100,058. Total Expenditure was €622,030, a 3% increase from 2023. The Treasurer noted a good cash balance at the end of the year of €134,955. A total loss of €2,539 is recorded, which was €5,695 in 2023.

The Treasurer reminded members that our biggest funder is the HSE, to the tune of just under €400,000. Pobal is our next largest funder, and Miriam drew attention to the combination of other grants and the fundraising, which are critical to supplement the income that comes from the HSE.



Pat McGillon



Macrina Clancy

The biggest expenditure is admin staff costs, which she noted was good value for money, considering the work undertaken. Other large costs are the provision of equipment, aids and appliances to members, and services such as OT and Physio.

Miriam referred to Resolution 2, with the Board recommending the appointment of Whelan Dowling & Associates as the Auditors for 2025. A query was posed by Peter Barron, on the cost for a Bookkeeper, additional to the cost of an Administration Officer. On addressing the query, the Treasurer concluded her report.

The Chair then took the resolutions.

RESOLUTION 1: Approval of the 2024 Financial Statements was proposed by John Dempsey and seconded by John Dolan. A vote was called among the members present in the room and online, who had not submitted a proxy vote in the post. The resolution was passed by 187 votes in favour, 0 abstentions and 3 votes against.

RESOLUTION 2: To appoint Whelan Dowling & Associates as Auditors for

2025 was proposed and seconded, being passed by 183 in favour, 0 abstentions and 0 votes against.

RESOLUTION 3: To ratify the appointment of the board-nominated directors was passed by 178 for Vera Keatings, 180 for Janet Cunningham and 175 for Paul Dunne.

As there were five vacancies and five people who came forward for election, all candidates were therefore deemed elected: Susan Dowling, Anne Burns, Máire Ní Chorca, Abayomi Ogunsanya and Boakai Abu Nyehn.

As it was the Chair's last AGM, she noted what an honour it has been to be the chair of Polio Survivors Ireland, fully supported by the board members and by the staff.

A query arose from Paul McEvoy on the number of board members, which the Chair answered was twelve, according to our Constitution and in line with governance required by the Charity Regulator. The Chair outlined the work undertaken by board members, on a voluntary basis being responsible for financial and corporate governance, policies and procedures, etc.

The meeting was then declared closed by the Chair.



At Shearwater Hotel, Marina Point, Townparks, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, H53 F5P9

We are coming west this year! We are delighted to announce our 2026 Conference and AGM will be held in the Shearwater Hotel, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway on Tuesday 7 July. We look forward to meeting members in the Shearwater Hotel, a venue used frequently by the IWA, with an excellent accessibility reputation.

For those of you who are interested in staying over, you can contact the hotel's reservations directly on 090 96 30 511.

Please quote booking reference **594780** to get one of Polio Survivors Ireland's reserved rooms.

The bedroom rate is €129.00 single and €149.00 per double/twin.

There are a limited number of accessible rooms on Monday night, so don't delay if you wish to stay.

LOCATION

The hotel is located just off the M6 motorway (Exit 14, follow signs for Ballinasloe, hotel is on the right). It is 15 minutes from Athlone and 35 minutes from Galway City and roughly 90 minutes from Dublin by car.

DIRECTIONS FROM GALWAY

- Follow R336 and Bothar na dTreabh to N6 for 15 min (7.3 km)
- Follow M6 to R355 in Galway. Take exit 15 from M6 for 29 min (51.0 km)
- Take R446 and R348 to R446 in Ballinasloe for 6 min (3.4 km)

DIRECTIONS FROM DUBLIN

- Follow R148 and N4 to M4 in South Dublin for 23 min (16.1 km)
- Continue on M4. Drive from M6 to Roscommon. Take exit 14 from M6 for 1 hr 14 min (129 km)
- Take R357 to R446 in Ballinasloe for 6 min (4.1 km)

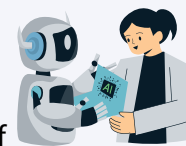
BUS & TRAIN

There are various bus and train options from Galway or Dublin.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence is software that helps us with a wide range of tasks through technology.



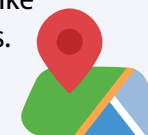
Think of AI as a very fast assistant that's always ready for you.

- Ask questions
- Help write emails and letters
- Summarise long information
- Translate texts

Did you know you already use AI everyday?

AI is nothing new or scary, in fact, you already use it in your daily life! Artificial intelligence is built into everyday technology, like phones and computers.

- Navigation apps like Google Maps
- Autocorrect on messages and texts
- Fraud detections for banks
- Online shopping recommendations



How AI can help people with disabilities

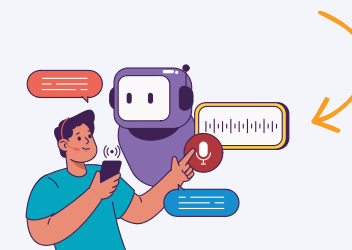
People with disabilities can make use of AI for their benefit.

Mobility Issues

- AI can read texts out loud
- Voice commands can send texts
- Voice controls for lights, thermostats, and TV

Daily Planning

- Set medication reminders
- Plan your daily routines
- Create shopping lists
- Generate quick and easy recipes
- Online shopping recommendations
- Estimate travel times



Things AI cannot do AI can help people with disabilities in many ways, but it's not perfect. That's why it's important to understand its limits and use it safely.

AI overviews in Google searches aren't always correct



AI shouldn't have your personal details

AI is not a medical professional
AI can't feel emotions like empathy

Double check important information on official websites

Avoid sharing passwords and banking details



For medical concerns contact your GP
Find a listening ear or call a helpline

Survivor Spotlight

We started this new segment on social media, to mark International Women's Day on 8th March, celebrating the courage, strength and dedication of our active members. If you'd like to become an active member, please contact Nuala McLaughlin. To share your story you can contact Emma Clarke Conway, 01 8898920.



Susan Dowling is a polio survivor who has learned not only how to survive, but also how to thrive. Susan has overcome obstacles to become an inspiration who motivates other polio survivors.

Susan had planned to remain in her career as an occupational therapist until retirement, but her polio didn't allow it.

"It was difficult; I was at a crossroads. I was forced to step down. I wanted something to fill the gap I was feeling, and volunteering did that for me."

She decided that volunteering for the Citizens Advice Bureau in the UK was her next step. Her doctor had suggested putting her skills and experience to use and contributing to the lives of others, so although riddled with uncertainty, she took a leap of faith. Susan's following years were driven by fulfilling volunteer work in the Citizens' Information Centre in Ireland after moving from the UK.

One day, in Beaumont Hospital, Susan met a lady on a scooter who was a polio survivor as well. Susan complained to the lady about there being no social support groups for polio survivors in Kilkenny, to which the lady responded, "Why don't you start one?" And that's exactly what Susan did. She founded Polio Survivors Ireland's Kilkenny Social Support Group in 2008. "I would encourage anybody to volunteer. It gives you a real sense of purpose. Don't ever feel like you have nothing to offer; everybody has some talent in one area or another. Come forward, try new things."

Her transition from being a full-time OT to a volunteer wasn't easy at first. It began as a challenge, but her courage and determination didn't falter. Susan Dowling's story is inspiring to all of us.

Anne Burns is a proud member of Polio Survivors Ireland, having served on the board and various committees over the years. She brings years of experience and knowledge of the organisation to her. Anne is an example of resilience and endurance for the community.

Anne contracted polio in 1953, at only seventeen months old. She recalls the most difficult part of her illness being the isolation. Her journey towards recovery has been extensive. Through long hospital stays and various physical treatments, Anne has battled continuously, coping with every obstacle that has been thrown her way. Anne spent a long time in hospitals, but she doesn't recall much about those hospital stays because she was so young.

Of her time in St. Mary's Hospital in Baldoyle, she says, "I remember being absolutely terrified in the therapy pool there, and to this day, have no love for pools of any kind." Anne was discharged in 1958 with a full calliper for her right leg. At the age of twelve, she had surgery on her right foot, allowing her to wear shoes instead of specialised boots.

In the late 1990's, Anne found herself struggling once more with issues she thought were in the past.

Susan and Anne continue to give their time for the benefit of others, including recently rejoining the Board of Polio Survivors Ireland.

The fatigue and muscle weakness of Post-Polio Syndrome led to her retirement as a civil servant in the early 2000's. Anne began volunteering for Polio Survivors Ireland soon after. "I volunteered because I saw the need. People were struggling to continue working. I saw that. There was nothing to support survivors. PSI was forward-thinking." Anne dedicated her time, skills, and effort to help strengthen the organisation and received the Jim Costello Polio Hero Award in 2023.



She says, "follow your aspirations. Determination is of value."

Anne is a strong advocate for polio awareness. She believes, "vaccines have been the prevention and protection from future epidemics. We need to advocate strongly with young people."

A Guide to Healthy Eating:

by Leah O'Reilly, with editing by Gabriela Roberts



Healthy eating is the key to maintaining strength, energy, and overall well-being, especially as we age. For polio survivors, good nutrition can help support muscle function and improve joint health. By choosing nutrient-dense foods and following a balanced diet, you can support mobility and quality of life. Here are some healthy eating tips you might not know:

- **Protein is essential:**

Protein is essential for muscular density and strength. Some examples of protein-rich foods are animal-based meats, eggs, lentils, and Greek yoghurt.

- **Healthy fats for energy:**

Healthy fats are important for your brain health and energy levels. Some examples of foods containing healthy fats are avocados, salmon, olive oil, nuts and seeds.

- **Fibre aids digestion:**

Fibre is necessary for gut health. It supports digestion and increases good bacteria. Examples of foods containing fibre are whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables.

- **Calcium is key:**

Calcium is key to maintaining healthy and strong bones. Some examples of foods rich in calcium are dairy products, spinach and oranges.

- **Vitamin D:**

Vitamin D is crucial for maintaining a healthy bone structure and immune system. Some examples of foods containing vitamin D are fish, cheese and cereals.

- **Hydration is non-negotiable:**

Drinking plenty of water is vital. It helps regulate body temperature, lubricate joints, support muscle and nerve function, and maintain overall health and well-being.

Healthy meal ideas:

Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, smoothies with Greek yoghurt, and oatmeal with nuts and fruit.

Lunch: Grilled chicken with potatoes and vegetables, lentil soup with blended vegetables, and tuna salad.

Dinner: Baked salmon with asparagus and mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables and turkey burgers.

Snacks: Apple slices with peanut butter, carrot sticks, nuts.

Spring is for Bird Watching

By Gabriela Roberts

Bird watching is a wonderful way to experience the beauty of nature during the spring and summer months. One of the best parts about bird watching is that it can easily be enjoyed from the comfort of your own home. Therefore it is suitable for someone with limited mobility.

This relaxing hobby offers many benefits. Bird watching can help reduce stress, improve mood, encourage time in natural light, and ease feelings of loneliness. You might need a family member or friend to help with initial set up.

How to get started:

1. Place a comfortable chair near a window, balcony, or sunroom.
2. You may install a bird feeder outside or place bird food nearby to attract birds.
3. If you have them, use binoculars or a camera to get a closer look from a distance.
4. Sit back, relax, and enjoy watching the birds!

Bird watching can become even more rewarding if you keep track of the birds you see. You might write your sightings in a notebook, sketch the birds, or take photos to look back on later.

Over time, you may begin to recognise different species and notice their unique colours, songs, and behaviours.

During this time of year, many beautiful birds can be spotted. Keep an eye out for robins, starlings, swallows, and wrens as they become more active in the warmer months.



Ode to the Young at Heart

William T. Ahern



Look at me and you will see that I am old
 each line etched on my face, is a story told.
 My body is slow to function, my strength just saps away
 It sometimes seems difficult, just to make it through each day.

This picture is just a falsehood, this is not the real me
 in my eyes you'll find, a wild spirit waiting to be free.
 For in my mind I am young, a lad of twenty- three
 life has just started and is unexplored territory.

In my imagination I roll back the years
 where I find love and laughter and just a few tears.
 Each new day I treasure, there is never time enough
 to do those things that need doing, that fill life's overflowing cup.

So here's to long liveability and to the road as yet untrod
 we will march along to our own time, until we meet our God
 We must keep on marching until we reach our goal
 live our years with no fears and keep our spirits whole.

Answers:

- 11. A comb.
- 12. A book.
- 13. A hole.
- 14. A map.
- 15. An echo.
- 16. The letter "E."
- 17. Fire.
- 18. A river.
- 19. The word 'ton.'
- 20. Short.

Dedicated to two swans that flew over the Green Road

A Glimpse of Love



By Bridget Quigley O'Brien

The lovers floated above my head
 And startled me with their chatter
 majestic in their white gowns
 that put the clouds to shame
 like the swiftness of the wind
 they came and went
 with their words blowing in my ears
 suspended by some magic thread that
 carried them to a lover's nest
 that lay beyond another land that
 I can only dream of

They left me to stand and stare
 With a tear frozen in the air
 Oh joy it would be to share
 wings that would wrap and hold me there
 like lovers everywhere this love
 was not to share with hearts like me
 lost in despair for love has flown
 on a set of wings
 leaving me!!

Riddles PART 2 - Collated by Leah O'Reilly

11. What has many teeth but can't bite?
12. What has words but never speaks?
13. The more you take away, the bigger I get. What am I?
14. I have cities, but no houses. I have mountains, but no trees. I have water, but no fish. What am I?
15. I speak without a mouth and hear without ears. I have no body, but I come alive with wind. What am I?
16. You see me once in June, twice in November, but not at all in May. What am I?
17. I am not alive, but I grow. I don't have lungs, but I need air. What am I?
18. What can run but never walks, has a bed but never sleeps, has a mouth but never talks?
19. Forward I'm heavy, backward I'm not. What am I?
20. What 5-letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?



Polio In Ancient Egypt

By Gabriela Roberts

Polio reached its peak in the 20th century, terrorising the whole world. Vaccination has been both protective and preventative, bringing the virus close to total eradication. Although we tend to think of polio as a relatively recent disease, expert palaeopathologists and Egyptologists have traced it back to approximately 3,500 years ago in Ancient Egypt.

Pictorial and palaeopathological sources have been central to this discovery. Palaeopathology is the study of disease in ancient remains, like mummies. There are two frequently cited pieces of evidence. The first is a pictorial source called The Stele of Roma, the Doorkeeper. This 18th-dynasty painted limestone stele depicts a man with a withered leg and a deformed foot, holding himself up with a staff.

Another well-studied palaeopathological source is the mummy of Pharaoh Siptah, housed in the National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation in Cairo. X-ray examinations revealed a shorter right leg and atrophy of the soft tissues.



Whether these features are the result of polio or cerebral palsy is still debated, but experts like anatomist and Egyptologist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith argued for polio. He reasoned that the asymmetrical limb wasting and deformity matched the standard pattern of polio, which often affects one limb after normal early development, whereas cerebral palsy is congenital and usually affects motor control more symmetrically from birth.

Together, these sources provide some of the earliest possible evidence that polio existed in the ancient world.



BPF Stormont Event By Siobhan Banville



We were delighted to be invited to attend an event in Stormont, by the British Polio Fellowship, who were presenting to members of the legislative assembly on the issues faced by polio survivors in Northern Ireland. Board member, Pat Ryan and our Advocacy & Policy Officer Siobhan Banville attended, giving us the following overview of this event.

Highlights:

- ▶ Really interesting research underway (by Hannah Brown, PhD Researcher in Medical History) to record and document the stories of polio survivors in Northern Ireland - demonstrating the importance of gathering oral histories.
- ▶ Impactful personal account from polio survivor Rev. Gabrielle Farquhar, who recounted her admissions in Cherry Orchard and Clontarf Orthopaedic Hospital and how polio has affected her throughout her life.
- ▶ Overview and promotion of BPF's Optimal Clinical Pathway (by Frances Quinn, BPF Trustee) - highlighting



the importance of coordinated, multidisciplinary care for polio survivors throughout the UK.

- ▶ Presentations from Northern Ireland Neurological Charities Alliance (NiNCA) and Community Rehabilitation Alliance Northern Ireland, both calling for increased funding and improved access to neurological and rehabilitation services in Northern Ireland.

Impression:

It was insightful to learn about polio survivors' experiences and access to services within the UK and NI, but also disheartening that they are experiencing similar issues to our own members in Ireland in terms of inadequate and inconsistent access to care.



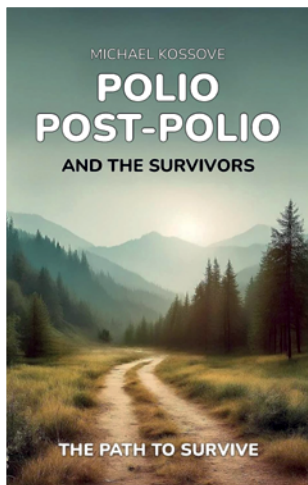
Polio, Post-Polio and the Survivors – the path to survive *by Michael Kossove*

BOOK REVIEW – by Tony O'Connor

The author is a disabled polio survivor, who is Professor Emeritus and adjunct Professor of Microbiology at Touro University, School of Health Sciences, New York; certified as a specialist in Public Health and Medical Laboratory Microbiology by the National Registry of Microbiology and the American Society for Clinical Pathology. He is also an international Polio Educator/Lecturer/Zoom Pundit who has researched Polio and Post Polio Syndrome for more than 40 years.

This book is unique in that it combines the experiences of a disabled polio survivor, who is also an eminent respected medical scientist, to give a great insight into the history of Polio, the polio epidemic in the 1940's through 1960's, the medical sciences to deal effectively with the virus, the development of the vaccine, the discovery, development and treatment of post-polio victims, in later life, and the importance of fellowship and community among polio survivors/warriors! The 243 pages in the book offer the reader a knowledgeable non-technical insight into the polio virus; many survivor's questions are dealt with, and addressed. Strongly recommended for all polio survivors/medics/students.

You can purchase this online on Amazon, for approximately €13 (+P&P), or ask your local library to get a copy for you.



PAST TIMES

The Royal College of Physicians Ireland are planning to create a permanent medical museum in their No. 6 Kildare Street building in Dublin. This museum will be open to the public and will not only tell the history of medical practice and innovation in Ireland, but also the experiences of those who underwent medical treatment. We feel these stories of those who received treatment are just as important to the history of medicine.



In 2024 Cherry Orchard Hospital donated the iron lung that was used by Jim Costello, one of Ireland's most well-

known polio survivors. RCPI plans to feature this iron lung, and Jim's story, in the new museum. This exhibit will share the stories of people who lived with polio, along with other stories of those who received treatment for a variety of reasons.

We are looking for people with lived experience of polio who might be interested in donating or loaning objects for this exhibit. We are also looking for individuals who would be willing to share their stories and lived experience of polio, or other conditions, here in Ireland. If you, or someone you know, are interested in sharing objects or stories, please contact Harriet Wheelock, at the RCPI Heritage Centre. Harrietwheelock@rcpi.ie or call 01 6698817.



SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS

BRAY CHRISTMAS PARTY



Bray Social Support Group enjoyed their Christmas lunch at the Parkview Hotel, Newtownmountkennedy. Compliments to the kitchen and waiting staff, and a special thanks to the Order of Malta for all their help on the day.

LOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

Louth Social Support Group members at their Christmas Get Together, in the Fairways Hotel, Dundalk. A lovely time was had by all.



MAYO SSG CHRISTMAS PARTY



Pictured are members of the Mayo Social Support Group, at their Christmas Get-Together, in The Plaza, Westport on the 12th December last. They had a wonderful time.

SWORDS CHRISTMAS PARTY

Members of the Dublin Swords Social Support Group had a lovely Christmas Get Together recently in Kettles.



DUBLIN SOUTH WEST CHRISTMAS PARTY



Members of our Dublin South West Social Support Group enjoying their Christmas Get together recently.

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS



SWORDS WILLS PRESENTATION

Pictured are members of the Dublin Swords Social Support Group meeting on Thursday 26th February. The group welcomed Holohan Lane's Alan Raftery, who gave a presentation on the subject of Wills. Convenor, Jim Connolly noted that it was a first-class presentation. Everyone enjoyed it and found it to be very clear and informative. Feedback was very complimentary.

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS



The Cork Social Support Group held their Christmas party on Sunday 30th November at the International Airport Hotel. It was a wet afternoon, but it didn't dampen the spirits of all who attended.

We were warmly welcomed by our stalwart Convenor, Evelyn Wainwright. And how delighted we were to learn that Evelyn was the recipient of the annual Jim Costello Polio Hero Award. She was given a rousing round of applause and no one is more deserving of the accolade, a beautiful piece of engraved glass. Evelyn is, and has been for more years than I care to remember, the guiding light of our group.

We all then enjoyed a four course dinner, with choices of Hake or the more traditional Turkey. The staff, as always, were friendly and helpful. There were crackers galore with festive hats soon donned and then Jim, our steadfast D.J., got the music going. We had Christmas songs and a great

CORK CHRISTMAS PARTY



burst of Abba with many joining in a singsong. It was heartening to see so much sheer enjoyment around us. There was a raffle with prizes for almost everyone, with lots of sweets and mince pies.

Evelyn now thanked all those who helped out on the day, and then introduced Máire Ní Chorcóra, who has just become a member of the Board. She is from Cork and we're delighted to have a local on the Board. Máire gave us some information about the recent AGM. We have a new CEO and also a new Chairperson and there are five polio survivors on the present board. Máire will be a strong voice for polio survivors, not only in Cork, but nationally, and we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavour.

Alas, good things must come to an end and all too soon it was time to take our leave. Best wishes for Christmas were exchanged and we all promised to meet up again at our next get together. Our thanks to Evelyn for organising what was an enjoyable occasion and to all those who helped out on the day.

By Joan and Vincent McDonnell

SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS



On Saturday 28th March the Cork Group held their Spring Get Together in the Carrigaline Court Hotel. There was a good turn out as usual with just a few apologies. It was a beautiful sunny day, a bit on the chilly side, but that didn't dampen our enthusiasm at meeting up again and there was plenty of chat and banter.

We had a very pleasant lunch, served as usual by kind and friendly staff. Then Evelyn welcomed us and gave us various bits of information about the upcoming annual conference. As this year marks the seventieth year since the outbreak of polio in Cork in 1956, she informed us that plans were afoot to have an event to mark that terrible outbreak. More information will follow in due course.

Evelyn introduced us to three very important men, members of Cork fire brigade, Chris, Liam and Matt. With the aid of a slide show, they gave us numerous tips on how to stay safe from fire and what precautions to take

CORK SPRING MEET

in the event of a fire. They explained how the simplest of mistakes can cause a fire and that one should always be vigilant. They advised to fit smoke alarms, check them regularly and also check the expiry date. We also got leaflets dealing with fire safety and a fridge magnet on which one can write their postcode. This is very important as the fire brigade and indeed other emergency services use the postcode to find the correct address. Everyone should have their postcode written down by the phone just in case.

The talk was very sobering but essential and we want to thank the firemen for giving up their time to come to speak to us. In fact while they were with us, they got called out to an emergency and we should appreciate their diligence as they are on call twenty four hours keeping us safe.

There was more time now for mingling and chat and we wound up looking forward to our next meeting in June. All too soon it was time for us to head for home. But we'd enjoyed a lovely afternoon, organised by Evelyn with her usual expertise. Long may she continue to work her magic. So, our thanks to Evelyn and to Geraldine and Finbarr for helping out, and to our photographer, Jim. And to Chris and Liam and Matt for their endeavours to keep us all safe.

By Joan and Vincent McDonnell

DUBLIN NORTH CITY CHRISTMAS PARTY



We had a really great Christmas party, lots to eat and plenty of spot prizes. The Coolquay Lodge staff were so attentive and we thank them for making our day so good. We had a birthday boy, Jimmy, although shy in admitting his age, we celebrated with lots of cake.

A big thank you to Eddie: his son has been so generous to our group by buying a round of drinks for all the party. It is so nice to have such good friends.

DUBLIN NORTH CITY ACTIVE RETIREMENT TALK

Dublin North City recently welcomed Maura McAuliffe, from Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) to their meeting. The gist of the discussion was that as we grow old, we are not by any means alone.

Maura highlighted that the local ARI groups meet weekly. The cost to members is very inexpensive, €15 euro per year plus a few euro (about €3) from each member for the weekly rent. The groups arrange weekends away (at least one or two per year) in Ireland. There are various activities that Polio Survivors Ireland members could take part in at the weekly meetings, like board games, or cards, or knitting, or art activities.

There are more active activities that the group get involved in, like walks or tennis, but very few of our members could participate in these. The group



members also arrange group lunches and meals. These activities also depend on how active/resourceful the local ARI group is. It is imagined that most groups are fairly active as this is the prime reason why they come together. Overall the talk by Maura was very informative.

By Dublin North City Member

NOTICE BOARD

Health Care: A Lifeline Beyond the Waiting Lists



By Leah O'Reilly

With hospital waiting lists in Ireland continuing to grow, many people are left facing long delays before they can access essential surgeries and treatments. For some, this has meant looking for other ways to receive care more quickly, including using treatment abroad.

The EU Cross Border Healthcare Directive allows patients from EU countries to get treatment abroad in other EU countries. If a treatment is available in Ireland but the wait is too long, patients can go abroad for their treatment with the help of the EU Cross Border Healthcare Directive. To do this, patients need to apply through the HSE and have the right referral and paperwork. This way, people can get care faster while still being part of Ireland's public healthcare system.

Healthcare Abroad is one organisation that helps people with this process. They guide patients through the steps, like choosing a hospital, understanding the forms, and organising travel.

Their support makes getting care abroad easier and less stressful.

Paul Byrne, Chief Operating Officer of Healthcare Abroad, says: "We want patients to feel supported and informed, so they can make the best choice for their health and wellbeing."

Thanks to the EU Cross Border Directive, hundreds of Irish patients have already been able to receive care more quickly. For many, this has meant a better quality of life and less stress about long waiting times.

With waiting lists still growing, it's helpful to know that there are safe and reliable options available. Exploring what's out there—both at home and in other EU countries—can help people get the care they need sooner, while still staying connected to Ireland's healthcare system.

DUBLIN NORTH CITY Westport Trip

Our annual trip to the Clew Bay Hotel, Westport went well. Some new faces joined us this year, which was a big asset to our singing, including a new musician with a guitar. The weather was perfect for our trip to Knock, it was cold, but dry. Candles were lit and holy water obtained.

There is a lovely cafe in the town which offered really good food, so we had lots of time for laughter and chat. The staff at the Clew Bay Hotel were so welcoming. The food was amazing, well worth making it your business to visit, if passing. Thanks to all those who specifically helped in making the trip successful.

One of the new couples who came, likened the trip to being away with family. Some had been in the same hospital as children with the same doctors.

We look forward to our next trip before the year end.

Members of Dublin North City

These trips are organised, on a voluntary basis by one of our members, separate to normal SSG Activity.



Survivor Sweepstakes Winter Draw Results

The Winter Survivor Sweepstakes Draw took place on Thursday 5th February in our Coleraine House office. With €1,000 to be won, we held the draw quite late to ensure all Christmas post was in the hat.

The four numbers drawn were 1, 6, 10 and 11.

No-one matched four numbers on this occasion.

As the €1,000 hadn't been won in 2025, we put all entries back into the 'hat' and picked out one winner of the €1,000 prize.

The winner is... James Leonard - Congratulations!

It was wonderful news on a very wet week to break this news to of our member, James, who was thrilled.

We also ran our €50 lucky dip and the winners were Michael John Ahern, Tom O'Mahony and James Kinahan (who kindly donated his winnings). We are very grateful to all our entrants for their support. This draw continues to be an important source of fundraising income for us.

You can check this link for Match 4 proof:

<https://www.randomresult.com/ticket.php?t=4068160GLUKY6R4NL>

You can check this link for the €1,000 prize:

<https://www.randomresult.com/ticket.php?t=4068161K8F86K7HRJ>

You can check these two for the €50 lucky dip winners: <https://www.randomresult.com/ticket.php?t=4068162M6BSJTN7EX>

The draw was witnessed by Fabiola Vieira, Administrative Assistant, Irish Wildlife Trust, Coleraine House

Our next draw is with this issue.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

St. Francis Credit Union Donation



Pictured (l to r) are Gabriela Roberts, Intern and Emma Clarke Conway, Operations Manager with a donation of €100 received from St Francis Credit Union in Clare, with thanks to our member, Olawale Lamina. We are very grateful to St Francis' CU for their support.

Your Membership Renewal

Did you renew your membership this year? Polio Survivors Ireland relies on subscriptions to help us bridge funding gaps, which ensures the organisation can continue to provide services.

Renew your membership at www.polio.ie or by sending €10 in the post. You can cut out the form below and return it using the reply envelope with the magazine.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

If you have any issues, please call us on 01 889 8920.



FUNDRAISING NEWS

Survivor Sweepstakes Spring 2026 Members Draw



Pay €5 for 1 row, or €10 for 3 rows
€1,000 Prize - if 4 numbers are matched
PLUS 3 chances to win €50

Our Spring draw gives YOU the opportunity to win cash and raise vital funds for polio survivors. Thank you for your support so far. *We are very grateful to members who are able to support us again.*

We are enclosing **two** entry envelopes in case you wish to ask family or friends to enter. There is however, no obligation.

Pick 4 numbers from 1 to 25 inclusive

Cost €5 for 1 row, or €10 for 3 rows to be placed in draw envelope

Make sure you pick 4 different numbers in each row.

2	4	9	24
1	16	18	25
2	5	10	11

You can request more envelopes if you wish to increase your chances!

Please return entries by Friday June 12th

– and make sure to provide a phone number (or address), so we can contact you if you win.

We will endeavour to run the draw and announce the winners at the AGM.

Permit granted by:
Supt., Jonathan O'Brien,
Bridewell Garda Station.

Match 4 numbers to win €1,000 plus 3 Lucky Dips of €50

All funds raised go directly to supporting polio survivors. If you are interested in additional entry envelopes to sell, please contact Emma at 01 8898920. **Please note: there is no obligation to enter, but if you are able to do so, we wish you the best of luck!**

Terms & Conditions on page 31

R.I.P. Polio Survivors Ireland was saddened to hear of the passing of these members recently:

William P. Conway, Patrick Corcoran, Christopher Derwin, Helen Jordan, George Patterson, Tess Redmond, Maurice Reid, Ina Trant, Michael White, Joseph Moylan, Bruno Matteazzi.

We acknowledge the contribution these members have made to the work of Polio Survivors Ireland – our thoughts are with their family and friends.

Are you a member of a Credit Union?

Sometimes members nominate us to receive donations from their local Credit Union.



If you are a member of a CU, and willing to submit a letter seeking support, please contact us on 01 889 8920.

We will send you a letter to sign and send in.

YOUR FEEDBACK- Your opinion counts! Polio Survivors Ireland is your charity, your support organisation, your service and we are always eager to hear your ideas on how we can improve our services and supports and our organisation! You don't have to wait until a conference or meeting to feedback information, opinion, or tell us about your experiences that might help us to help you. Feel free to contact Nicola Fogarty at ceo@polio.ie or on 01 889 89 20.

If you have any suggestions or contributions to make to the Survivor Magazine, please contact Emma on cdo@polio.ie or call the office. It is your magazine and we want to hear from you.

Survivor Sweepstakes **TERMS & CONDITIONS:**

Subject to change. Name and phone or email must be included or prize is redrawn. Where a number is repeated on a row, or a number entered outside 1 – 25, then next consecutive number will be entered. Numbers drawn using www.randomresult.com – winning numbers can be checked each draw by using an assigned ticket number, to be advertised on www.polio.ie and in The Survivor magazine. Judges' decision is final.

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WILLS

Please remember Polio Survivors Ireland in your Will, or request donations to Polio Survivors Ireland in lieu of flowers. Be assured all bequests and donations will be put to good use. Thank You

MISSION STATEMENT

We address the diverse needs of polio survivors - advocating for them, educating healthcare professionals, and providing a comprehensive range of person-centred services and supports.



For Polio Survivors By Polio Survivors since 1993

DISCLAIMER: While every care is taken to ensure accuracy, neither the Editor nor the Board can accept liability. The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily their views or the views of the charity. Neither the charity, nor the Editor, endorses any product or service mentioned in 'THE SURVIVOR'.

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