

## Birthday tributes to Mary Allen (90)



Warm birthday tributes have been sent to Waterford native Mary Allen – a stalwart of the Irish community in London.

Mary (née Aulsberry), a native of Kilmeaden and resident in Camden, London celebrates her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday this Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Mary emigrated to the UK in 1948. Arriving in England on 5th May, she began work on 6th May and worked until she was 75.

She had travelled to England with a family from Oldcourt, Kilotteran to look after their child in their home in Somerset. She then moved to London and worked in hotels.

In 1950 she married Billy (originally from Dunhill) who worked in many jobs including on the railways, in the aircraft industry and for an optical company.

Mary has been a key community worker for the Irish since she arrived in London in 1948 and is one of the few people who have been an active part of the London Irish Centre since it was founded in 1954.

In 2014, Mary was awarded the Presidential Distinguished Service Award under the category 'Irish Community Support' by President Michael D Higgins at a special ceremony at Áras an Uachtaráin.

In addition to her dedicated work for the London Irish Centre, Mary has also supported the Irish community through her work as a member and officer of both the Waterford Association and the overall Council of Irish Counties Association in London.

Both organisations, with Mary's support, have raised thousands of pounds over the years to help vulnerable Irish people and others in need.

Mary is currently living in 'social isolation' due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a birthday party which had been planned to mark her milestone has been cancelled.

However, the Council of Irish County Associations (C.I.C.A) London paid tribute to Mary and extended their warm wishes on her special occasion.

John Giltenan, current Hon Secretary of C.I.C.A London, said: "Mary has been a great community worker here in London for over 70 years and has been involved with our organisation where she has held the positions of Hon Secretary and Chairperson. Mary performed the duties of Secretary of the London Festival from 1979 which was successfully held in Roundwood Park in London and raised great funds for charity and the Irish community. Her involvement in the London Irish Centre extends for many years, being a member of the Admin Committee, before continuing on to serve as Trustee in the London Irish Centre and an active member of the Irish Centre Lunch Club & Day Centre."

An avid reader of The Munster Express, Mary loves to keep up to date with local happenings and enjoys travelling back to Waterford.