

# UK News

Their Lordships showed plenty of flippin' ability to inflict a rare defeat of the Government, not to mention their Right Honourable colleagues from the Opposition, in Westminster recently.



**Lord Morris of Manchester gets in some quick practice before commencement of proceedings outside the Houses of Parliament.**

**Picture below: the Honourable members rushing towards the finish line.**

## The pies have it

MPs and members of the House of Lords became Parliamentary pancake flippers on Shrove Tuesday when they competed in a Parliamentary Pancake Race in aid of Rehab UK.

They celebrated Shrove Tuesday by donning tall chefs hats and traditional whites and tossing pancakes in the air as they raced 50 yards to the finish line.

The thirteen energetic competitors who competed in the relay race were divided into three teams: the House of Lords, the Labour Party and the Opposition (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats).

The Hon. Umpire, George Wilson, CBE, chairman of Rehab UK, had the onerous task of ensuring fair play and good behaviour and that the rules under which the event is run were strictly observed.

These include the exact number of times the pancake should be tossed dur-

ing each run and to the minimum height of three feet on each occasion. Following a closely fought race, the House of Lords team emerged victorious.

The other real winner on the day was Rehab UK. This year's Parliamentary Pancake Race raised over £15,000 for the organisation which, through its centres, provides much needed training and support to people with brain injuries.

*The Teams:* **House of Lords:** Lord

Morris of Manchester; Baroness Scott; Baroness Billingham, and Baroness Andrews.

**Labour:** Adrian Bailey MP (West Bromwich); Anne Begg MP (Aberdeen South); Steve McCabe (Hall Green, Birmingham); Paul Goggins MP (Wythenshawe, Manchester); Brian Iddon MP (Bolton SE)

**The Opposition:** David Amess MP (Conservative – Southend West); John Baron MP (Conservative – Billericay, Essex); Angela Browning MP (Conservative – Tiverton and Honiton); Vincent Cable MP (Liberal Democrat – Twickenham)



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Rehab Scotland has gained Momentum with the launch of the organisation's new name and branding.



Ian Welsh, chief executive of Momentum; Dougie Taylor, manager of Energiser; Norrie McLeod, Energiser client; Councillor Craig Robertson and Bill Butler MSP.

# New Momentum

Rehab Scotland has changed its name to Momentum.

Frank McAveety MSP, Deputy Minister for Health and Community Care joined staff to launch the new name at an event in the Tannahill Centre, Paisley.

The new name, which follows extensive research among clients, staff and external stakeholders, is designed to better represent the work of the organisation, which works in partnership to assist more than 1,000 disabled and excluded people across Scotland every year to identify and achieve their goals.

This research showed that although the Rehab Group name is a highly successful brand, the Rehab Scotland name was open to misinterpretation among various agencies which perceived the organisation to be providers of alcohol and drugs

services. Said Momentum chief executive Ian Welsh: "Our new name, Momentum, has been selected to reflect both our organisational ambitions and the achievements of our clients as they move forwards in their lives. It signifies moving forward with energy and purpose, which is what we work with our clients to do.

"While our name changes, our work remains the same – working in partnership throughout Scotland to build equal futures for disabled and excluded people. Changing our name to Momentum is part of that ongoing drive to ensure that we are operating as a best value organisation delivering modern, coherent services which meet the needs of our clients, funders and all other relevant stakeholders."

Frank McAveety MSP, Deputy Minister for Health and Community

Care, spoke of how a not-for-profit organisation could contribute to the Executive's developing health and social inclusion agenda.

He said: "The last year has been one of positive change and development for Momentum with a raft of new policies in place, the launch of its Clients' Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, a new management development programme, development of new service areas and increased partnership working with local authorities and health boards across Scotland.

"Its track record demonstrates a commitment to rebuilding lives and linking the strategic objectives of the Scottish Executive to real practical services delivering social inclusion in the work-place and the community."

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**A major new TBG Learning initiative is assisting some of Britain's most disadvantaged youngsters to make the breakthrough into the workforce**



**Students give TBG Learning's Life Skills - Entry to Employment initiative the thumbs up at its south London centre.**

# Gaining a foothold

TBG Learning has launched a major expansion of its successful Life Skills - Entry to Employment initiative, which is helping some of Britain's most disadvantaged youngsters to make the breakthrough into the workforce.

Pioneered at its centres in Essex, the programme is particularly aimed at 16 to 19 year olds who have left school with few, if any, qualifications or those for whom English is not their first language.

Now it has been extended to TBG Learning's largest centre in South London as a means of assisting more teenagers to raise their basic skills and to prepare for work or further formal learning.

"Although we already help hundreds of people each year through our Life Skills

initiatives, the results have been so rewarding for the learners and so encouraging for us that we just have to help still more," said Martin Dunford, chief executive of TBG Learning.

An integral part of the programme is to develop each participant's personal skills in areas like problem solving, interview techniques and teamwork, as well as boosting self-confidence. It also builds on the learners' individual interests and aptitudes, providing a strong platform from which they can gain a new foothold on life.

The huge impact of the programme has already been demonstrated at TBG Essex by 50 young people – some who'd left the education system without adequate literacy and numeracy skills and all of whom

had failed to find employment or move on to further education. At the end of their Life Skills programme, 79% of the learners achieved a positive outcome - 36% had been helped into further education, 29% had gone into Foundation Modern Apprenticeships and 14% had gone into a job with qualifications to NVQ standards.

Among those who benefited was a young man who was thought to have had learning difficulties until his course instructor discovered he was dyslexic. With help to overcome this, he went on to gain a Level 1 NVQ in horse care with the army. A young woman who left school with no exam passes is now happily working as a nursery nurse having achieved an NVQ in childcare through the course.

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**People with mental health difficulties and disabilities often face problems when they wish to break out of their routines and move forward in their lives. A new service, launched by Momentum in Glasgow is working to change this pattern.**

When Norrie MacLeod, now 59, began to experience mental health difficulties in 1996, he was working as a taxi driver in Glasgow.

In his 35 year career, he had done a variety of jobs, spending two years in the Merchant Navy, then 30 travelling Britain as a truck driver. By 1988, Norrie had traded in the truck for a taxi, enabling him to work closer to home, but nine years later, his health began to suffer as family problems took their toll.

He explained: “Two of my daughters developed serious drug habits. The worry about their health and the health of my grandchildren was enormous. It got to the stage where I couldn’t think about anything else.

“The pressure got too much. I was going out to work in the taxi then parking it, and sitting staring into space, not even trying to get hires. Eventually a friend dragged me along to the GP, who referred me on to a psychiatrist. By this stage I wanted to kill myself. My mind was constantly racing. I didn’t know



## **‘I’m getting my life back’**

what was wrong with me but I couldn’t take it any more.”

The psychiatrist diagnosed depression. Norrie gave up his job as a taxi driver, feeling unable to cope, and became increasingly introverted. “My marriage broke up as a result of my illness and from then on I lived alone. I would spend maybe three or four days in the

house without talking to anyone. Some days I didn’t even get out of bed. My main interest was my grandchildren, but this made me more anxious, because I was very worried about them because of their mothers’ drug problems.” Yet this year, Norrie began attending a programme, which he says has got him “back on track for the first time in a long

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time” - Momentum’s Energiser programme, a new service which assists unemployed people in Yoker, West Glasgow with an illness, disability or addiction to take the first step towards social inclusion.

The programme was first launched by Momentum in Drumchapel in 1999, where it has already benefited 185 clients.

Norrie was one of Energiser Yoker’s first clients and since joining the programme, he is feeling positive and is looking forward to the future with more hope than he’s had since 1995. Over the last two months he has worked as part of a small group of Energiser clients,

addressing such issues as team building, confidence-building, communication and problem-solving as well as health management.

Exploring his interests, trying new activities such as a community art project and learning coping skills are all opening up possibilities that he had never considered before.

“I feel like I’m getting my life back again,” said Norrie. “I’m meeting new people and trying new things after not having done anything new for years. I can feel myself opening up. When you’re sitting around the house all the time you get very set in one way of thinking. Here though, you’re encour-

*“I feel like I’m getting my life back again.  
“I’m meeting new people and trying new things after not having done anything new for years. I can feel myself opening up.”*

**Norrie MacLeod, left: He has been working as part of a small group of Energiser clients, addressing such issues as team building and problem-solving.**

aged to look at different points of view, have debates, try new things. It’s about getting excited about life again.”

The Energiser programme has also put Norrie in touch with a local family support group where he can receive support to cope with his daughters’ addiction problems. Looking to the future, Norrie is interested in assisting others to overcome their challenges in the same way that he is learning to.

“I don’t want to go back to the way I was before and I want to let others know about the alternatives to sitting at home that are out there. The hardest part is making the first step to leave the house and sign up for a course or approach someone about making a change in your life.”

Dougie Taylor, manager of Rehab Scotland’s Energiser programme said: “Energiser is designed to provide the motivation and confidence to help people such as Norrie to move forward with purpose. In the two months that Norrie has been at Energiser he has taken the first few steps on the ladder towards a more productive, enjoyable life.”



**Former NTDI Wexford service user, Tom Long takes a look at the programmes provided by the organisation in the town's Swan Centre.**

The Swan Centre, based at The Faythe in Wexford was officially opened in July 2000. A state of the art, purpose built complex on a site which originally was a motor garage and workshop. In fact it was from this Peugeot Main Dealer that I purchased my first motor car in 1973.

A few of my friends have also worked as qualified motor mechanics, or served their motor apprenticeship there. So this piece of real estate has a history of people learning new skills down the years.

It was in the autumn of 1998 when I began my Computer Distance Learning Course, which was just in its infancy. The Swan Centre was just an embryo at that time so the monthly tutorial meetings were held in a local hotel. Meeting other students is always an experience, but the tutors make it very easy, no matter what the disability. The emphasis is on providing an individually tailored



## Swan Centre in full flight

self-management skills programme that allows the student meet their educational goals. Many, myself included, would have arrived at a training centre similar to this without ever having sat in front of a computer or used a typewriter in their lives. Ms Brona O'Donnell, area manager at The Swan Centre, explained: "Here it's ability, not disability that counts and

everyone is entitled to equal access to learning and education programmes. Many students will have experienced some degree of marginalization so enrolling in the Swan Centre is often a new beginning, a whole new concept.

"The Distance Learning programme developed by NTDI and the other courses available here at The Swan Centre



**Pictured above: Brona O'Donnell, area manager, Swan Training Services and Marie O'Connor.**

**Pictured left: Back row (left to right) Margaret Murphy, Eileen Morris, Helena Baker, Marie O'Connor. Front row (left to right) Dolores Pericho, Brona O'Donnell, Michelle McClean.**

have opened the doors to accessible technology and have provided the work tools needed to succeed in an economy fuelled by technology.”

Courses on offer at the centre include *Pathways*, which is the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and Business Administration Programme. *NewStart*, a vocational skills training course which enables students to access past employment or plan new career paths.

The Distance Learning course, *Chalk to Keyboard*, enables those students who have previously been unable to take up employment training because of mobility issues. They can now complete hi-tech courses leading to employment in the burgeoning computer industry.

A tutor visits once a month to give one-to-one tuition while regular tutorial sessions are held to bring students together for further support and educational input. I found this invaluable as students can exchange their findings and helpful tips.

The Swan Centre has established a solid reputation for providing quality services within the community and among the educational and business sectors.

Partnerships have been forged in the educational sector with Waterford Institute of Technology and Access 2000 (Department of Education) among others. These partnerships allow for training integration and a progression route for students of the Swan Training Services.

Ms O'Donnell added: “We look forward to expanding and building on these links - to facilitate equal access to both the life long learning culture and employment opportunities.”

This will be an exciting year in the area of the arts for the Swan Centre. The Art Reach Programme is being delivered at the centre, which will enable students to experience a variety of artistic mediums: pottery, water colours, batik, stained glass etc.

The programme involves a range of workshops facilitated by professionals specialising in various art forms.

The end result will be an exhibition of the students' works, mainstream artists, and work from local agencies. This exhibition is scheduled as a fringe event during Wexford Opera Festival 2003.

**Fiona Brennan, RT Instructor, writes on the aims and activities of the Foundation Rehabilitative Training Programme, *Directions*, at NTDI Hollyhill in Cork city.**

Art, music, drama, health and fitness classes and craft work activities are just some of what goes on as part of the Foundation Rehabilitative Training Programme, *Directions*, at NTDI Hollyhill in Cork city. An amalgamation of the Training Opportunities (TOPs) and the Skills Foundation programmes, this exciting venture is going from strength to strength, presently catering for 36 service users with four full time instructors.

The programme focuses on areas of personal, social and work-related skills through class groups and individual work enabling trainees to progress towards greater levels of independence. Karen Henley, Toufik Messabih, Fiona Brennan and Doug McNamara form the immediate team responsible for the day to day running of the programme, as well as assisting in co-ordinating the programme with assistant manager Padraig Healy. Other members of the team include: rehabilitation officer, Maura Keane; regional psychologist; Gillian Clancy; and the part time instructors Elinor Rivers (Art); Liam Doherty (Drama); and Paul Seymour (Music).

Along with the day to day classwork experiences, individual trainees have demonstrated the value of the recreational modules over the last number of months. Drama has helped individuals build self-confidence and self-belief and groups have performed in front of large public audiences in Limerick, Kerry, and



## The right Directions

Cork. Indeed, trainees staged a special performance for President McAleese during her visit to the centre last year. She witnessed the achievements of trainees and was presented with a piece of bog oak worked upon during the programme. Recently some trainees on the *Directions* programme, along with others from vocational programmes, exhibited work in the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, as part of the national *Art Reach* project.

The RT team recognises the value of travelling out into the community as part of the whole learning experience.

Trainees are encouraged to organise night-time leisure outings and activities have included a night out at the Curraheen Greyhound Track (where more money was lost than won we've been told), and a trip to the cinema and a meal afterwards in a city centre restaurant. Trainees are assisted through the whole organisational process from beginning to end and the finer details never forgotten regarding individual travel arrangements, meeting points, etc. Why, booking the restaurant is the easy part! The whole purpose of such initia-



Pictured left: Denis Cowley and Stephen McCarthy from NTDI Hollyhill presenting President Mary McAleese with a piece of bog oak during her recent visit to the centre. Also pictured is area manager, Noel Shannon.

Below: A group from NTDI Hollyhill at the official opening of the Art reach Exhibition at the Crawford Art Gallery.

unlike a vocational orientated programme, finding full time employment is not the ultimate *be all and end all*. Positive achievements are sought and monitored through the health and social gain aspect of the programme. Therefore, the process by which people apply to NTDI means the organisation can look to a wider group of potential clients who may seek such a programme to give them the start they need in life.

As we look to the future, everyone at NTDI Hollyhill is aware that innovation and imagination are the keys to providing the ultimate service. So all on *Directions* look forward to April and



tives is that a trainee will not only enjoy these social events, but will see the possibility of organising social outings for themselves outside of NTDI. The programme also utilises community projects, such as Simon, St. Vincent de Paul, etc., by inviting speakers to come in and meet with trainees.

In order to run the programme as

smoothly as possible, a very high level of camaraderie and communication is necessary within the whole team. Thirty-six individuals with various levels of need is a large group to cater for and all instructors are dedicated to encouraging each trainee to gain as much as possible in different areas of their lives. What is unique about such a programme is that

*Poetry Day* with invited guest Gabriel Fitzmaurice, poet and the Healthy Living Week planned for May. Then, we will probably be found balancing the yin and the yang with tai chi classes, attempting a good aim during archery training or taking a *long* walk around the Muckross Peninsula, Killarney!

**A Rehab fundraising scheme for elderly exiles has received fulsome ministerial praise.**

A Rehab fundraising scheme has been hailed by a Government Minister as “payback time” for scores of elderly exiles whose hard-earned cash helped to fund Ireland’s economic miracle.

Launching the Mayo Rehab ‘Friends of the Coventry Elderly’ campaign, Minister for Rural, Community and Gaeltacht Affairs Eamon Ó Cuív highlighted the huge debt that Ireland owes its exiles, particularly those who travelled to Britain.

He said these emigrants had helped to lay the foundation for the Celtic Tiger by sending home a staggering stg£2 billion during the period 1975 to 1995. “These people helped us in our time of need, surely we must help them now,” he said.

According to Minister Ó Cuív, the Irish community in England is the only emigrant group whose health is worse in their host country than in their country of origin. Nowhere is this more evident than in Coventry, which has, with the exception of London, the highest number of Irish born residents anywhere in England.



# Our debt to our exiles

Mayo Rehab’s ‘Friends of the Coventry Elderly’ fundraising campaign aims to raise money for ‘Teach na hEireann’, Rehab UK’s Irish Elders Centre, which provides much-needed support and services to the Irish community in Coventry.

According to Monica Whitehurst, project manager at the centre, the vast majority of Irish emigrants in Coventry are elderly, lonely and isolated. A recent study conducted in the city found that a

third of all Irish people in Coventry are pensioners, 15% of the Irish community are living with long-term illness and 50% of Irish households have no car. What is more, of all the elderly living in the city, 25% are Irish.

Since its launch in October 2000, Teach na hEireann has been used extensively by Irish emigrants in the city. Over 200 elderly Irish emigrants regularly visit the ‘drop-in’ centre, which is currently open twice a week. Here they can



At the launch of the Rehab Coventry Irish Elders project held in the Welcome Inn Hotel, Castlebar were: Picture right, l-r: Kevin Bourke, Mayo Rehab, Monica Whitehurst, Manager, Rehab Irish Elders Resource Centre in Coventry, Minister Ó Cuív, Ellen Stagg, Mayo Emigrant Liaison Committee and Mary Murphy, Westport, Chairperson Mayo Rehab.

Picture below: Mike Stagg, Ballycastle, Kevin Bourke, Joe Kennedy, Chairman, Knock Airport, Minister Ó Cuív and Liam Ruane.

to Ireland. A nurse attends the centre regularly to hold a surgery for service users.

The Irish Ambassador to the UK, Daithí Ó Ceallaigh, was clearly impressed by the friendly and relaxed atmosphere when he visited Teach na hEireann last year. He paid tribute to the staff and supporters of the centre. "There is such a lovely atmosphere among the folk here, and it is a great credit to the people who run and support it," the Ambassador declared.

It is hoped that the money raised by the fundraising campaign will enable the centre to recruit an Outreach worker, ensuring that many more vulnerable and isolated Irish immigrants in the city will be able to benefit from Teach na hEireann's services.

**Further information on the 'Friends of the Coventry Elderly' fundraising campaign is available from Kevin Bourke, Rehab Foundation, tel: 087 243 9748.**



read the papers, socialise and reminisce, as well as participate in a range of activities including arts and crafts, computer training, music lessons, and health and

fitness. Information is also available at the centre on everything from benefit and housing entitlements, to training and education, and advice on returning home