

## RANNAFAST WOMAN IN LOS ANGELES » NINETY-FOUR AND HALE AND HEARTY

# 'Gathering' of a different sort in LA

BY SEÁN P. FEENY

While thousands of expats are expected to visit these shores this year, a Dunlewey woman recently decided to bring The Gathering to a relative on the west coast of the United States.

Sally Nic Eachmharcaigh, a teacher at Gairmscoil Mhic Diarmada Arainn Mhór, used her recent mid-term break to fly to Los Angeles to pay a visit to her old friend and relative, 94-year-old Annie Doherty (nee Devenney) in Westchester.

"I first met Annie in 1986 when I lived in Los Angeles. A relative of mine from Annagry passed her number on to me after I had left home and said she was a first cousin of my granny.

"I moved home in 1988, but I have always maintained close contact with Annie as she's such an amazing lady. I also visited her three years ago. She said she will not be travelling to Ireland anymore so I organised that I would go and spend a week with her during my mid-term break.

During the week long trip she went shopping with Annie almost every day.

"She's still a very capable lady at 94," said Sally.

When Annie was 14 years of age she lost both her mother Sile Pheadar Bhig and sister Sarah (21) to TB and moved to Glasgow to live with her older sister Madgie (Diver) and her family in 1933.

While living in Glasgow Annie met her husband, Falcarragh native Eddie Doohan, but only a year and seven months into wedded life, Eddie tragically lost his life when he was



Sally Nic Eachmharcaigh (right) and Kathleen Gillespie caught up with well-known actor and fellow native Gavin Ó Fearraigh in Los Angeles.

hit by a crane bucket on a building site.

Annie would stay in Glasgow for some years, but then moved to New York in 1947. Her remaining sibling Bridget still lives in Glasgow.

It was while she was living there that a priest from County Down, who used to stay in the Devenney household in Rann na Feirste while learning Irish, offered Annie a job in Los Angeles.

And so she left for the West Coast

in 1950 with her future husband, the late Clonmany native Barney Doherty, and has stayed there ever since. She has regularly welcomed family to her home visiting her from West Donegal and Dublin. Annie and Barney had two daughters - Rosemary (who passed away four years ago) and Sheila who lives in Nevada.

### PERFECT IRISH

Sally said: "Despite having left her native Rann na Feirste 80 years ago,



Annie Doherty (nee Devenney), originally from Rann na Feirste, in Los Angeles.

Annie still has perfect Irish and that is all we speak when I am over there.

"Annie loves to have visitors and so we'd chat every night and Annie would tell stories of her childhood back home. While I spent the week with Annie, my friend Kathleen Gillespie who travelled with me, spent a week with her sister Ann Shéimi Boyle from Doire Na Mainsear who has been in LA since 1983."

While they were in LA, Sally and Kathleen also met up for lunch with

another well-known Gaoth Dobhair native, actor Gavin Ó Fearraigh, who is in fact also distantly related to Annie Doherty.

"Gavin's granny, my granny and Annie were all first cousins," Sally laughed.

"We had lunch with Gavin. We were very lucky that the timing was right, Gavin was just back from Hawaii and flying to Las Vegas the next day; it was really lovely to see him," said Sally.

## ACUPUNCTURE AWARENESS WEEK » LAUNCHED BY LETTERKENNY PRACTITIONER

# 'Magical place to practice ancient form of medicine'

BY HARRY WALSH

Letterkenny-based acupuncturist and Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner, Deirdre Murphy formally launched national Acupuncture Awareness Week 2013 on Sunday last.

Deirdre, who has The Shentang Clinic in Letterkenny and Ramelton, was elected last October as National Chairperson of the Acupuncture Foundation Professional Association (AFPA), Ireland's oldest and largest professional register of Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners.

A science graduate of NUI Maynooth and an experienced secondary school teacher, Deirdre moved to Ramelton five years ago.

Speaking to the Donegal News this week, Deirdre said that she has found Donegal to be "a magical place in which to practice this ancient form of medicine which has been embraced by the people of the county.

"My role as Chairperson has added another challenging yet fulfilling dimension to my passion for Chinese Medicine," she said.

Deirdre has a special interest in the treatment of pain and has worked in the Traditional Chinese Medicine Pain Clinic at the Whitting-



Deirdre Murphy, Shentang Acupuncture & Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic. Photo: Donna McBride

ton Hospital in London. She has also undertaken a clinical placement in the Maternity Unit of the Whittington Hospital.

This is the first Acupuncture Awareness Week 2013 initiated by the AFPA and runs from Monday to

Sunday next, March 3.

Throughout the week AFPA members across the country have been engaging in activities to promote and raise awareness of the benefits delivered by traditional acupuncture and TCM.

"The AFPA is committed to the development of traditional acupuncture as a professional, safe and effective form of healthcare treatment.

"In this regard we are continually working with our members to develop and maintain standards for training, clinical practice and continuous professional development to ensure that the patients who receive care from our practitioners can be assured of receiving the highest standards of Traditional acupuncture treatment," she said.

### ENGAGING WITH DEPARTMENT

Last year Deirdre was instrumental in the establishment of the Irish Acupuncture Accreditation Board to consolidate the provision of accredited training programmes in acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in Ireland.

"We are also engaging actively with the Department of Health and Quality & Qualifications Ireland to progress the case for academic validation and statutory regulation of our profession. The value of any healthcare tradition or modality can ultimately only be measured by the benefits it brings to patients with regard to treatment outcomes and improvement in overall health and well-being. It is unfortunate that the significant benefits of acupuncture and

TCM, which are recognised in many countries and by so many people around the World, are not yet as prevalent in Ireland," she said.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a sophisticated and complete medical system of diagnosis and treatments that has evolved over more than 3000 years. It includes acupuncture, herbal medicine, moxibustion (heat), cupping (suction cups), Tuina (massage), dietary therapy, lifestyle advice and therapeutic exercises such as Qi Gong and Tai Chi.

In her own Clinic Deirdre mostly use a selection of acupuncture, herbal medicine, moxibustion, and cupping. With post-graduate training in advanced acupuncture techniques, she can use fewer needles to achieve faster results than with Traditional Chinese acupuncture.

Some of the conditions treated with Chinese Medicine are: skin; gastro-intestinal; gynaecological; respiratory; immunological; psychological; neurological; genitourinary and children's diseases.

"I have seen the benefits of acupuncture and herbal medicine in patients with a broad range of conditions such as sciatica, Crohn's disease, headaches, sinusitis, depression and pregnancy related conditions," she said.