

Cheque honours Irish construction workers

BY **SIOBHAN BREATNACH**

A LONDON construction company has forged a special link with an Irish support group to honour those who helped build Britain over the last few decades.

A cheque for £10,000 was donated to the Aisling Return to Ireland Project at Arlington House in Camden by Jeremy Browne — chairman of J Browne Construction Company Ltd.

The money was donated on behalf of the Seán Browne Memorial Trust which was set-up when Jeremy's father Seán — a native of Meelin in Co. Cork — passed away two years ago.

Seán was a managing director for J Murphy and Sons before setting-up the J Browne Construction Company Ltd in the early 1970s and would have worked with and known many of the Irish men who now find themselves vulnerable, isolated and alone.

His son Jeremy, who was born in

Banteer, Co. Cork, said: "We thought it was pretty appropriate as my father had come over from Ireland to work in Britain and a lot of people now working within the company are Irish.

"There is also the connection with Arlington House as a lot of those men had worked in construction. We thought that was really the link and the work they do there is excellent.

"It's something we'd like to do every year.

The Aisling Return To Ireland Project provides supported holidays and aftercare for long-term Irish emigrants in Britain.

The project was started by workers in the London Irish Centre and Arlington house — the biggest homeless hostel in Europe, which has been home to more Irish men than any other building outside Ireland.

Project co-ordinator Alex McDonnell said: "We began in Arlington House but now we work with people all over London helping them to get

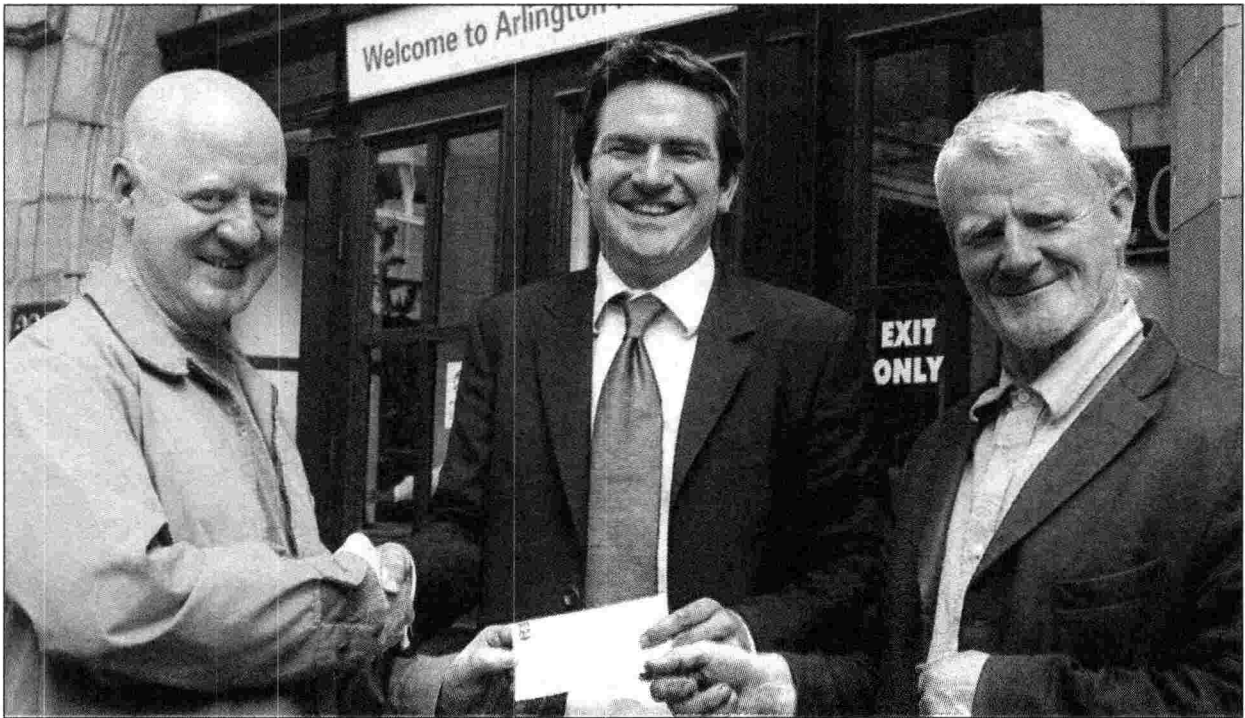
in contact with their homeland and to get in touch with family and friends, these are people who might be isolated or living alone.

"It costs us £200 to £250 to bring someone back to Ireland so 40 to 50 people will benefit from this — it's a major donation for us.

"Many people dream of returning home but often find it difficult to relocate."

Today resident numbers in Arlington House contrast sharply with the 1,200 who lived there when it first opened its doors in 1906.

Last year Arlington celebrated its centenary with a complete refurbishment, which provided the remaining 150 tenants with first class accommodation.



■ **MANY THANKS:** Alex McDonnell (left) of the Aisling Return To Ireland Project accepts the cheque from Jeremy Browne, Chairman of J Browne Construction Company Ltd. Also pictured is Peter who travelled on a recent Aisling trips to Ireland.