

THE LUCK OF THE IRISH

As the colour green comes rolling into town with the imminent worldwide celebration of St. Patrick's Day, what better expat group to review this month than Amsterdam Irish? **Heather Tucker** spoke with the group's founder, Michael Connors, to find out more.

Q. Can you tell me a little bit about how the group got started?

On a not so exciting St. Patrick's day last year, I decided that I would like to know more Irish people in Amsterdam. I noticed that a couple of people were waiting for an Irish meetup group on meetup.com, so I registered and Amsterdam Irish was born.

"YOU CAN'T BEAT THE IRISH FOR HAVING A GOOD TIME."

Q. How often and where do you meet?

We try to meet for drinks at least every month in one of the local Irish pubs, but we also have had a range of other meetups (museums, restaurants and concerts for example).

Q. Typically, who are your members, and are they all Irish?

In general, our members are Irish expats, but that is really all they have in common. Everyone is welcome regardless of age, outlook or taste. We also have members



Getting in touch with Amsterdam Irish, along with many other groups (both expatriate and general), can be arranged on the Meetup Groups website at www.meetup.com.

who are not Irish. Basically, anyone up for a bit of craic is welcome.

Q. Does it cost anything to join?

No, and this is unlikely to change.

Q. What has been your most exciting and/or successful event since you have started?

I cannot answer this one as everyone probably has a different opinion. Indeed, we get different people turning up for different types of events. I myself enjoy the quiet pints we have had in O'Reillys Amsterdam. (This bar is on Paleisstraat 102 – 105, www.oreillys.com/amsterdam/index.htm)

Q. Is your membership increasing or decreasing?

Membership is currently increasing weekly.

Q. If someone wants to join Amsterdam Irish, how would they get in touch?

We can be found via our website: www.amsterdamirish.net. Click on 'meetups'. There is also a new forum which has recently been added to the site.

FACT

According to Ireland's Emigrant Advice Network (EAN), statistics on how many Irish-born individuals live in Europe are difficult to find. However, they do report that according to statistics compiled for the Harvey Report in the 1990s, 4,040 Irish people were living in the Netherlands, with 10,000 in neighbouring Belgium and 16,000 in Germany.

You can also check out another Irish club in Amsterdam called the Paddyish Club of Amsterdam via their yahoo group page at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/paddyish/>.