

Vet's £10million care centre is a dream come true



■ **CROWD PLEASERS:** Galway band The Saw Doctors.

A HOST of well-known faces were among hundreds at the launch of a new Irish-owned veterinary centre in Surrey.

Acclaimed Irish folk band The Saw Doctors, radio DJ Chris Evans, and master of mimicry Alistair McGowan were among vets and pet-owners from Britain and Ireland who braved the rain last Sunday to celebrate the opening of Fitzpatrick Referrals.

The state-of-the-art centre, in Easingham near Godalming, has a dedicated veterinary team led by Laois-native Noel Fitzpatrick who is the pioneer of prosthetic implants for animals and is renowned in veterinary circles worldwide.

The Irishman has created Europe's most advanced neuro-orthopaedic centre for dogs and cats and has spent a ground-breaking £10million to create the facility in the heart of the Surrey countryside.

Launching the centre,

BY ELAINE SHERIDAN

Chris Evans — whose dog Enzo was one of the centre's first patients — described Fitzpatrick as "one of history's great pioneers".

Outlining his vision for the centre, Fitzpatrick told the 1,000-strong crowd of well-wishers that he hopes this latest move marks a giant leap forward in realising his dream that the same high level of care and compassion is shown for animals as much as people.

He said: "I built it, they came, it rained but we did not care because the life and the love that was there meant everything to us and our dream. "That's what medicine should be all about — hugging and healing."

"Today is not about me. I have just lit the match. The fire is yet to come."

Fitzpatrick Referrals boasts



■ **ANIMAL LOVERS:** DJ Chris Evans with pioneering veterinary surgeon Noel Fitzpatrick.

being the only veterinary hospital in the whole of Europe to have installed a closed-field MRI scanner, which can provide ultra-clear images of bone, spine, brain and soft tissue to enable fast and accurate diagnosis of

problems such as slipped discs as well as potentially life-threatening conditions such as tumours.

For further information visit the centre's website www.fitzpatrickreferrals.com or call 01483 423 761.

Cavan priest honoured

A CAVAN priest who left Ireland 50 years ago to devote his life to helping the needy, elderly, deprived and unemployed has received a special honour for his work.

Father Michael Conaty from Ballyhaise received an MBE in 1998 and has now become the first person to receive a Lord Mayor's Award at Mansion House in Jesmond, Newcastle.

The 75-year-old priest arrived in Durham in 1958 to work in the mining communities and took over at the St Anthony of Padua RC Church, in Walker, Newcastle in 1973, where he has been ever since.

Prince Charles and Princess Diana visited the community centre at the church in Newcastle in 1982.

Newcastle's Lord Mayor Councillor David Wood said: "I and the Lady Mayoress have known Father Conaty for many years and have seen how his work has helped those living in Walker and the rest of the city."

Father Conaty has been involved in setting up and operating a training firm, an open learning centre to help local people find work, a daycare centre for children, a youth centre, and a day and domiciliary care centre for elderly people.

The avid Newcastle United supporter and a keen golfer said: "I am receiving the award on behalf of the people of the East End of the city."

"They have been my support and joy for past 45 years, 35 years in Walk-

Wigan death

POLICE ARE searching for the family of a man who was found dead in Manchester this month.

Officers believe the 54-year-old, identified as John Maurizi, may have a son called Michael who now lives in Ireland.

Ambulance workers were called to a house in Melrose Avenue, in Leigh, Wigan on the afternoon of Tuesday, August 26 and found Mr Maurizi collapsed.

Police then attended the scene and pronounced him dead.

There are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the death but police are urging the public to help them trace his next of kin.

Anyone with information about the man is asked to call Wigan Police Station on 0161 8725050.

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