

### **A view from the Chairman.**

**John McCarthy**

As I write this piece in early January, I'm pleased to say that so far this Winter has been reasonably benign. This certainly helps to hasten us to lengthening days and raises our hopes for an early Spring. On that hopeful note, let us turn to some issues of concern to all of us.

### **Local property Tax.**

This tax is based on the saleable valuation of the property without any upper limit. The tax due may bear no relationship to the circumstances of the householder. Currently, house prices in Rathgar are increasing rapidly and consequently our liabilities from 2017 onwards will get a major hike. Something must be done, such as tying house values to 2014 valuations or 2014 valuations with adjustment for consumer price index. All of us must put pressure on TDs, councillors and politicians to implement a fairer and affordable property tax.

### **Local Services.**

We must continue to look for more and better local services. I believe that what we are getting is a long way short of what is needed. Taking a walk through our area, one notes that the state of roads, footpaths and local parks leaves a lot to be desired. Pot-holed roads, broken pavements, blocked gullies, graffiti, a build-up of leaves or debris should be reported to Dublin City Council. In fairness to them the more serious issues will be dealt with promptly; especially if there is potential for personal injuries.

### **Swan River/Rathmines-Pembroke Drainage system.**

The change over of responsibility from DCC to Irish Water (Bord Uisce) to survey and propose a new drainage system, seems to have been lost in the confusion of what Bord Uisce has become. We continue to have serious threats from flooding in Rathmines, Kenilworth Square and Grosvenor Road/Place. Gullies and street drains that are inadequately serviced and

maintained, bring high risk of street flooding. This has the potential to damage property as well as creating serious inconvenience.

Report any issues to Dublin City Council on phone 01 222 2222, or E-Mail [customerservices@dublincity.ie](mailto:customerservices@dublincity.ie)

There are also very good reporting facilities on the Dublin City website, [www.dublincity.ie](http://www.dublincity.ie).

### **Think of your neighbours.**

This is the time of year where we all have to look out for each other. Please ensure that all our neighbours, particularly our older ones, remain safe and secure.

A prosperous 2015 to all.

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**Environment:**

John McCarthy

### **Village Improvement Plan.**

Through Summer last and into Autumn, DCC continued work on preparing a Village Plan for Rathgar. Consultations with the Association, the Business Association and the general public took place. These consultations were concluded with a final workshop in Rathgar Tennis Club where a "wish list" was drawn up and priorities established. What came through as a major priority, was the pressing need for a controlled pedestrian crossing from The Bijou to the 108. Other changes sought were improvements to road surfaces, cycling safety, improved street furniture, lighting etc. The plan for improvement will be over a 3 year period –resources permitting.

At the end of this period it is hoped that Rathgar Village will be a more pleasant place; a place that will increase our sense of community. The finalised plan is expected in early 2015

Information is also available at

[dublincity.ie/YOURCOUNCIL/LOCALAREASERVICES/SOUTHEASTAREA/SOUTHEASTAREA/Pages/RathgarVillageImprovementPlan.aspx](http://dublincity.ie/YOURCOUNCIL/LOCALAREASERVICES/SOUTHEASTAREA/SOUTHEASTAREA/Pages/RathgarVillageImprovementPlan.aspx)

## **Dilapidated state of Rathgar Parks.**

A meeting was organised by the RRA in late November, with Officials from DCC South East Division and officials from the Parks Section. A tour took place of three parks in the area -Herzog Park(in the village), Orwell Park and Dartry Park on the Dodder. These parks are much used and enjoyed by residents of the area. Unfortunately apart from grass cutting in the growing season, there is no maintenance or improvement.. The sad evidence was lack of weed cutting, ivy choking trees, graffiti, rusting gates and railings, pathways deep in mud, lack of litter bins, entrance bollards broken or askew and no sign of leaf collection. There was a serious risk of injury in Orwell Park where the river bank has collapsed more than 12 months ago. There was evidence of antisocial behaviour and extreme littering in Herzog Park. As these parks are a major community facility, it was pointed out that they must also feature in any Village Improvement Plan. Lists of dilapidations were supplied to officials and a programme of improvement work is awaited.

## **Herzog Park-its potential**

*Unmarked by any signpost, it is situated 100/150 metres behind the AIB bank in Rathgar. With a great need to have an open public space in Rathgar Village, its potential is not being realized. This is not surprising since its current state is one of neglect. The Association is currently urging the DCC to invest some resources in this park and maximise its potential as an amenity for Rathgar village. Currently the tennis club and bowling club are housed in this park. With a little planning and attention the green and wooded spaces available, can become an amenity for the enjoyment of all. With some seating, park benches and tables, a lovely quiet corner can be created for all to enjoy.*

## **Meeting with Local Councillors.**

The Committee of the Association met local councillors in early December. Councillors Frehill, O'Connell, McGinley and Costello attended. Councillor O'Callaghan sent apologies. A wide range of local issues were discussed and councillors were asked to take these on board as part of their agendas. Issues put forward were village improvements, pedestrian facilities, hazards for cyclists, hazards

from cyclists, the state of parks in the area, problems with drainage and flooding, poor street cleaning and leaf collection in the area and the lack of disabled parking in the centre of the village.

It was also pointed out to councillors whose parties or political groupings may be involved in the formation of the next government (sometime in 2016?) that they must bear in mind the serious concerns of residents over the rapid escalation in property prices and its affect on LPT.

## **Real time information at Rathgar bus stops.**

Dublin Bus have informed the Association that a real time information panel at the bus stops in Rathgar village will be provided from the next tranche of funding for this project.

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## **Some Notes and Comments**

### **AGM of the Association.**

The 2015 AGM of the Association will place in late March next. The exact date will be advised to members later.

### **Annual Garden Competition.**

The annual garden competition has now been expanded to include up to ten categories. The prize winners in the summer 2014 competition were

1. *Best kept garden hedge* Donal + Joan O'Sullivan Villiers Road
2. *Best accommodation for bin in garden setting* Hilda + Dermot McEvoy Garville Avenue
3. *Garden with balance between hard surface and green surface* Frank Gleeson Brighton Road
4. *Garden in bloom* Kieran Flynn Orwell Park
5. *Low maintenance garden but aesthetically pleasing as a garden* Ina Shaffrey Orwell Park

6. *Specimen Tree in a front Garden*      Clare + Colin O'Mahony  
Highfield Road
7. *Best small front garden*      Richard Kennedy      Dartry Park
8. *Best large front garden*      Liz + Martin Walsh      Rostrevor Road
9. *Best flower pot/window box/container display*      Bea + Jim Menton  
Oaklands Drive
10. *Best lawn*      Jacques Noel      Bushy Park Road
11. *Overall best garden (Dixon Cup)*      Dorothy Gray      Highfield Road

The Association would like to thank the following generous sponsors  
Supervalu Supermarkets, Aussie BBQ, The Flower Bowl, Kanum Thai  
Noodle Bar, Lernihan O'Neill, Solicitors, Thomas Collins – Hair  
Studio, Tesco Express, Roche's Chemist, Lawlor's Butcher, Fothergills  
Connolly's Fish Company and Kuts & Kurls

The prizes for the RRA Garden Competition were awarded at the Rathgar  
Horticultural Show in Christ Church, Rathgar on **Saturday 12 July**.  
**The Association encourages all members to exert their best efforts for  
the 2015 competition.**

### **A Walking Guide to Rathgar**

The Association in conjunction with Dublin City Council are currently  
preparing a walking guide to the area which hopefully will provide some  
physical exercise mixed with a little bit of the area's history, architecture  
and literary associations. The guide should be ready by late Spring.

### **Computer Training**

For 6 weeks in November and December, the RRA in conjunction with  
Stratford College transition year students ran another successful computer  
training course. Place are always limited by the number of student tutors.  
This year the number of participants was eleven  
This is the fourth successful year of this course.

The RRA is very appreciative of the involvement of the teachers and  
students who give freely of their time

### **Christmas at Rathgar.**

The start of of the Christmas Season was marked with the switching on of  
lights on the wreaths which adorned the shops in the village. This was  
followed by lighting up of the Christmas tree at Christchurch and the  
arrival of Santa Claus complete with reindeer and sleigh. Seasonal food  
was provided by local shops. Both young and old enjoyed the occasion  
immensely.

### **Good news for Rathgar: Support your local shops**

It is good to see the vacant shops on Orwell Road with tenants again.  
Keep shopping locally and keep our village a vibrant place.

### **Rathgar Retirement**

The Reverend Mary Hunter of Christchurch, Rathgar retired at the end of  
September last after 25 years. The Reverend Hunter was very much part of  
the local community and we wish her well in her retirement.

### **The Walk and Talk programme of City walks continues.**

Contact DCC 2222148 (between 9-5pm),  
email at [letswalkandtalk@dublincity.ie](mailto:letswalkandtalk@dublincity.ie)  
Address:: Community Development Section, Dublin City Council, Block 4,  
Floor 1, Dublin 8.  
[www.letswalkandtalk.ie](http://www.letswalkandtalk.ie)

### **Passport for Leisure**

Dublin City Council operates a discount card scheme specifically tailored to the  
leisure and recreational needs of persons over fifty five. The scheme entitles  
members to avail of a range of special discounts from: free access and use of  
DCC's sport, leisure and recreational facilities and to a large range of specific  
discounts from the business sector.

Contact DCC: Tel 8450090

Email: [info@passportforleisure](mailto:info@passportforleisure)

Community Development Section: DCC, Block 1. Dublin 8

[www.passportforleisure.ie](http://www.passportforleisure.ie)

### **The Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society**

A new programme of talks commences in late January. They take place in  
Rathmines Town Hall at 8 PM on the following dates:

29<sup>th</sup> January, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 30<sup>th</sup> April and 28<sup>th</sup> May

Topics to be covered include

**The 1914-1919 War Memorial Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines**  
**The Building of Rathmines & Rathgar Catholic Churches**  
**Electricity – Ireland's Invisible Power**  
**Mount Jerome - A Protestant Cemetery**  
**The Theatre Royal**

Information: [Rathmineshistoricalsociety.com](http://Rathmineshistoricalsociety.com) or  
email: [rathmineshistoricalsociety.ie](mailto:rathmineshistoricalsociety.ie)

### **Rathmines and Terenure Libraries**

There is always a lot going on in your local library, so keep a watching eye.

There are reading groups in both our local libraries.

**Rathmines** 4973539 Two groups: Group I meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 3pm and Group II meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7pm. Shakespeare Reading Group - reads scenes from Shakespeare aloud followed by a viewing of relevant video clips and some guided discussion. You can just listen and watch as well. This group meets on the second Monday of every month from 6:15pm.

**Terenure** 4907035 Two groups: Group I meets on the first Monday of each month, 7pm; Group II meets on the first Wednesday at, 7pm  
For those interested in Trace Your Ancestors, then the Dublin City Archive and Library Reading Room is the place to be.

### **Dodder Action Group.**

This group of individuals seeks to protect improve and promote the heritage, ecology and recreational value of the Dodder.

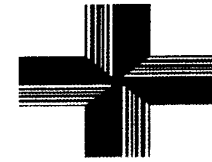
To this end they seek to encourage a network of individuals/groups to raise awareness, make representation and organise events always balancing the differing interests of those who use the Dodder.

Their programme for the coming year

Dodder Ecology Day	7 <sup>th</sup> March
Dodder Walk/Run	28 <sup>th</sup> March
Dodder Day Clean Up	18 <sup>th</sup> April

Public meetings on proposed Dodder Greenway.

**Look out for local publicity on these events**



# **Rathgar Late Night Pharmacy**

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**Email: [rathgarpharmacy@yahoo.com](mailto:rathgarpharmacy@yahoo.com)**

**[www.rathgarpharmacy.com](http://www.rathgarpharmacy.com)**

## Garden Birds in Rathgar in Winter.

Malcolm Taylor.

As you read this we are in the middle of the December / February period, when the comings and goings in our gardens increase. This increased activity is mainly due to birds coming down from hills and woods in search of food, together with the appearance of Winter visitors from overseas. I am a member of BirdWatch Ireland and have for a number of years taken part in their annual Bird Survey, and have been amazed at the variety of birds that have visited my garden in Rathgar.

My best year was three years ago, when 33 varieties of birds visited my garden over the three month winter period, but the average number is about 28. Over the years I have introduced berry producing shrubs and a variety of feeders, and ten years ago I built a small pond. These have given me a bird friendly garden with great results.

1. Berry eating birds arriving in the garden are blackbirds, mistle and song thrushes, along with migrant redwings and fieldfare. The mistle thrush is a territorial bird and stands guard over my rowan tree to repel invaders. The highlight for me was 13 waxwing landing on this tree six years ago and devouring the berries. These are rare visitors from Scandinavia, and I was one of only eight surveyors in Ireland to record this event. I also have cotoneaster and holly bushes.

2. I have a number of bird feeders which each in their own way attract different varieties of birds. I have had to squirrel proof them as they were being raided by grey squirrels. Apart from the usual peanut feeder, I have one with niger seed and another which dispenses sunflower seeds. The visitors to the former includes goldfinch, redpoll, siskin, greenfinch, and the colourful bullfinch. The sunflower feeder attracts blue tits, coal tits, and great tits. I also have a transparent feeder which I attach to the kitchen window, where my robins feed and give great delight to my visiting grandchildren. An excellent provider of feeders and bird food is the pet shop in Windy Arbour.

3. The pond, apart from providing drinking water, also acts as a birdbath. It also gets the odd visit from a heron and a pair of grey wagtails up from the Dodder. One year a pair of mallard were frequent visitors.

4. Because I have a few apple trees, I store fruit during the Winter, and these provide welcome food during snow and frost for the blackbirds, redwing, fieldfare and blackcaps.

5. Food scraps attract dunnock, robins, woodpigeon, collared doves, feral pigeons along with the perennial scavengers - magpies, jackdaws, hooded crows, rooks and herring gulls from their roost in Rathgar House.

6. Other visitors include the noisy but furtive wren, the odd starling and goldcrest, long tailed tits and a sparrow hawk who parks himself on the top of the bird table awaiting a tasty morsel. A couple of years ago there was the remarkable sight of a buzzard gliding over the garden.

Changes over the years have seen the departure of the house sparrow and a serious reduction in the number of greenfinch. The main reason for the latter has been put down to disease from bird feeders, underlining the importance of keeping them clean.

I hope the above gives you an insight into a bit of nature on our doorsteps.

### A Missing Swan

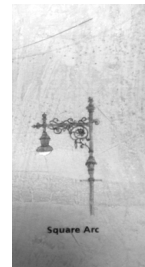
For a number of years two swans were ever present above the weir at Rathfarnham Bridge. Early last year they separated with one above the weir and one below. Then after a month or two one disappeared altogether.

Does anyone know what happened?

Information to [info@rathgarresidentsassociation](mailto:info@rathgarresidentsassociation) or Box 9574 Dublin 6

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## Street lamps of Dublin City



Today, throughout Dublin there are over 32,000 lamps of different types lighting the city. These standards are intermingled and representative of every era since 1825. The older lamps are easy to spot with their heavy ornate decoration. Lamp standards are generally prefabricated in at least two sections, base and head. Accidents and subsequently transplants can happen, often causing different base/head combinations, and many recent heads often cap bases of different eras.

### Early Street Lighting in Dublin

A form of private street lighting began in Dublin as early as 1616, when the Candlelight Law was passed,





"compelling every fifth house to display a light within prescribed hours of the night for the guidance of street users". By 1697, public lighting was for the first time undertaken in certain sections of the city by contract. Candle lighting gradually gave way to oil lighting after this time.

### Gas Street Lighting

The first piped-gas lamp appeared in Dublin in 1825, and gas was used up to 1957, although it was overtaken by electric light in its later years. In 1866, the three major gas companies then lighting the city were amalgamated to become the Alliance and Consumers Gas Company..It was then lighting the city as far as Kilmainham, Fairview and Rathmines.

### Electric Street Lighting

The opening of the Pigeon House generating station in 1903, extended electric lighting to almost all major streets in the city centre, including Rathmines.

With the introduction of their electric lighting scheme in 1903, the Rathmines Urban District Council erected a selection of lamp standards to suit the lighting requirements of the street in question.



The older lamp standards are of two general sizes, ranging from the larger type, approximately 9m high, found on the main routes out of the city to the smaller type, approximately 4.5m high appearing on the less important routes and residential areas. Antique standards are described in terms of base and neck and height.

With street lighting came many designs of lamps. Many were given romantic names:- Sugar Stick Lamp, Sugar Stick Lamp Ross&Walpole, Horsemans Row Lamp, Bodega Lamp, Meter Pattern Lamp with Curved Swan Neck.

As well some were more prosaic:- A Percy Place Pillar Lamp, A City Arc Lamp, 17' Lamp Hammond Lane, Rathmines UDC lamp



All were inspired with an eye to the decorative arts

Thankfully many areas of the city, including Rathgar, have retained some of these wonderful pieces of street furniture. Watch out as you walk around!

To see a selection of designs, make a visit to Merrion Square Park where 25 different lamps will bring you back to old times or maybe a walk down memory lane for some.

You can also see a collection of photographs if you go to

[www.streetsofdublin.com/publicart/old-lamp-posts-in-merrion/](http://www.streetsofdublin.com/publicart/old-lamp-posts-in-merrion/)

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Disenchantment

By Mark McDowell ([busheslane@yahoo.ie](mailto:busheslane@yahoo.ie))

When I was a child living on Merrion Road, a corner of the front garden was taken up by a sycamore, surrounded by a plant with round leaves about 6 inches in diameter on stems about 4 inches tall. I don't recall any flowers but we used to play with the leaves.

It was not until many years later that I learned the plant's name, Winter Heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*), it was in flower and was pointed out to me both for its insect food value ( it flowers from November to March), and for its lovely scent, vanilla is my nose's opinion!

These days I notice it growing on the bank of the Dodder. The flower stands above the leaf and is a cluster of pinkish-white heads. On still mornings hollows along the river bank can be filled with the sweet scent. It is almost the only wildflower blooming at the moment, and until this afternoon I used to look forward to its arrival, now I'm not so sure.

I thought I was familiar with most of the invasive alien plant species which threaten our native wildlife and I have written about some of them here before, Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam for instance, so I was surprised and disappointed when a quick internet search for Winter

Heliotrope produced pages about this plant... as a noxious invasive. It has much in common with the dreaded knotweed it turns out. Introduced from overseas, in this case the Mediterranean or North Africa, as a garden ornamental, only male plants were brought in and all the plants in Ireland and Britain remain male to this day, (the knotweed is all females, maybe they should get together), so no seed is produced, but it is equipped, like the knotweed, with rhizomes, a kind of underground rooty stem that spreads out and pops up as a new plant. Unlike the knotweed however, it remains in leaf all year and so forms a light-blocking blanket above the soil, inhibiting the growth of native plant species, leading one botanist to refer to it as the “greatest, single, alien plant threat to wildlife habitats in Ireland”.

Having to view one of my favourite plants as a problem, will be difficult. At least it has its redeeming features and the bees like it. It has been planted close to beehives as a food source. The name had intrigued me since I first heard it so I looked it up: A heliotrope is a plant whose leaves and flowers turn to follow the sun, and after the sun goes down they turn back to be in the right position for the sunrise, from the Greek helios (the sun) and trepein (to turn).

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**Planning in Rathgar** Summer/Autumn 2014 Philip O’Reilly

Planning issues continue apace and there has been a steady stream of applications and results with a significant degree of success in our achieving our planning objectives for the area.

The St Louis nuns in Rathmines got permission to demolish no 1 Grosvenor Road so that they could build a bigger residential unit to accommodate the increasing number of members now in retirement. The Association had no input in regard of this.

A proposal to build two houses in the entrance to no 125 Rathgar Road and to alter the access to no 125 via Auburn Villas was refused by the local authority. While the refusal of the building of the two houses was not appealed, the alteration of the access to no 125 was.

This was refused by An Bord Pleanala.

Inappropriate developments at no 97A and 99A Rathgar Road, having been refused by the Local Authority were not appealed to An Bord Pleanala by the 1<sup>st</sup> party.

A development at 21 Highfield Road warranted our comment to the Local Authority and the Local Authority in seeking to have the development altered by way of additional information concurred with many of our observations. The permission for the modified scheme was not appealed.

A development at 13 Rostrevor Terrace also warranted comment. The Local Authority, in granting permission required that the main aspect that we objected to, was omitted from the development.

After complaints from the local residents, an application to retain an illegal development at no 46 Kenilworth Sq. was appealed to An Bord Pleanala after refusal by the Local Authority. Comments were made against the retention of this development by the Association and a decision is awaited.

Observations were submitted in respect of different developments on Upper Rathmines Road, all protected structures. Some modifications were incorporated in the developments and matters did not progress to appeal.

A development for a large extension, off-street parking and other aspects at no 53 Garville Ave, was submitted and the Association made comment in respect of the extension and the off street parking. The Local Authority again concurred with our concerns and conditioned a significant modification of the extension and required that the off-street parking be omitted.

By far the biggest development during this time was a proposal to demolish a detached Victorian house at 6 Leinster Road West. Permission was granted for the demolition of Denmark Hill by the Local Authority. The Association appealed this decision and sought the assistance of An Taisce and public representatives with the objective of saving this landmark house. In December, disregarding the recommendations of its own inspector, An Bord Pleanala refused permission for the demolition of this house.

At the request of An Taisce, the Association during the Summer, submitted comments in respect the ESB proposals for Fitzwilliam St.

In more recent times we have commented on developments at the rear of 27/29 Orwell Road (Washerwoman's Lane) to provide surface car parking to facilitate the Supervalu development (previously Superquinn) which was previously granted permission some 6 years ago. In January 2015 this application for car parking was refused

Finally we responded to requests for assistance in respect of non-compliant developments at Terenure Road East.

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From *Links of the past:*

*October 1993*

**Rathgar Festival**

**Wednesday October 13<sup>th</sup> to Monday October 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Wed. 13<sup>th</sup> : *The strange case of the Reverend Augustus Carrion LLD*  
A talk by Dr Mary Lyons, Historian and RTE presenter**

**Thurs 14<sup>th</sup> *Musical memories and Musings of Yesteryear*  
Presented by Ringsend Variety Group.**

**Fri 15<sup>th</sup> *Light Instrumental Music*  
Presented by Students of The High School**

***Musical Medley, Choral and Instrumental*  
Presented by Rathgar National School**

**Mon 18<sup>th</sup> *Poetry, Recitation and Music*  
Featuring: Ulick O'Conneor, Kate Lucy, Terry Cosgrave,  
Mary Lyons and Minnie Clancy**

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