



A View from the Chairperson.

Dear Association Members,

Summer has arrived at last and it is time once again for the RRA Annual Front Garden Awards, a highlight of the RRA events calendar. Fabulous front gardens are one of the area's most distinguishing characteristics and the awards aim to recognise the efforts made by property owners to maintain them.

The Awards Committee are currently hard at work shortlisting gardens in 10 very varied categories, ranging from best Bin Accommodation in Front Garden, best Container Display in Front Garden to the Dixon Cup awarded to best Front Garden. The awards in each category are sponsored by the local business community and the RRA Committee are very grateful for their generous support.

Prize winners will be notified and invited to the prize giving ceremony which will take place at the close of the Rathgar Horticultural Society Flower Show on Saturday 7th July in Christ Church Rathgar. The Flower Show is another highlight event for the gardening community all over Dublin and if you haven't been before do take the opportunity to pop along and enjoy the displays and home baking stalls. Go to our website www://rathgarresidentsassociation.ie/ for more information on both events.

The new committee elected at our AGM in March continues to work hard on behalf of the residents. Priority work areas for the year will be, to continue to monitor planning applications, always with the aim of preserving the character and amenity of the historic suburb of Rathgar. We are also monitoring and responding to various recent DCC led transport initiatives with the aim of preserving connectivity for commuters while maintaining the balance of interests between commuters and residents. We are in the

early stages of establishing an umbrella group of residents' associations in surrounding areas and hope that this group will be able to engage effectively with TDs and DCC to improve public transport along South West commuter corridors.

At our AGM in March we said goodbye to Colman McMahon, outgoing chairperson and to Declan Dunne. We thank them for their time and commitment.

Your new committee: Sue Millar, chair, Peter Doyle, treasurer, Philip O'Reilly, planning, John Mc Carthy, environment, Paddy Marron, Katie Ryan, Marie O'Reilly and Mary Brennan. Your current Road Reps continue to connect with residents on a road by road basis and we thank them for their continuing support. More information and contact details on our website.

Finally, I urge you to get involved with RRA, it is time to renew the Association and its activities and we need help with that. Please encourage neighbours who are not members to join -it is easy to do via our website. Do get in touch with ideas for events or to highlight any concerns you might have either at:

info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie or PO Box 9574, Dublin 6

Best wishes

Sue Millar

oooooooooooooooo

Environment:

John McCarthy

Footpaths and road conditions.

The same old problems still persist. Road surfaces are potholed, resembling a war zones. Is it any wonder that local garages spend so much time replacing car suspensions and tyres? Every speed ramp appears to be crumbling. I am amazed that these conditions are not attended to as it must be taking a severe toll on Dublin City Councils own vehicles. Is there an internal report mechanism where by Dublin City drivers can report these road conditions up the line and have such matters attended to?

General Tidiness.

Walking around the area it is not difficult to see the lack of maintenance, many streets are not cleaned, parks and open areas are in need of attention. When I raise such matters with DCC I am been told that the Council do not have the resources to carry out these jobs.

Where have the many charges that we all pay gone? We all pay property tax, road tax, parking charges. Can it be the case that central government have

reduced their grants to local authorities by the amount of those locally raised taxes? A clear break down on the finances of DCC would be most welcome. A very simple statement of income and expenditure would be also welcomed. If such a statement exists **please Dublin City Council and Dublin City councillors show it to us.!**

Tree study of the area.

There some very fine specimen trees in the area. I believe it would be a very interesting/useful exercise if a survey of such trees could be carried out. How do we go about this? Is there anyone in the area with such knowledge and interest in recording the variety and number of trees of special interest in Rathgar. **It would be wonderful to get a group of people together to carry out such an exercise.**

Dog fouling, graffiti

These problems still persist. Where there are instances of such nuisance I urge you to report these occurrences to Dublin City Council at the following- e-mail address southeast@dublincity.ie

Neighbourhood Watch

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme I am involved in, is working out well. I would urge all members to set up such a scheme in your own locality. Contact our local Garda station and ask to speak with the community garda unit in the station. Garda Andy Dunne or Garda Martin O’Connell at (01) 6666735 Rathmines Garda station.

The organisational structure of the Garda in our area is: Terenure is the district headquarters and Rathmines is a sub district

ooooooooOOOoooooooo

Planning Report June 2018 Philip O Reilly

At this time, An Bord Pleanala is exceptionally busy. It has recently been given increased powers and responsibilities. As well there are increased number of appeals, arising from the increasing level of development activity in the economy. As a result, many appeals are running over time including no 1 Upper Rathmines, for a six storey development of apartments and commercial offices.

A large development at no 15 Maxwell Road on the corner with York Road replacing

the small house presently on the site met with strong opposition from many parties. The application was refused by the Local Authority and to date has not been appealed.

A refusal by the Local Authority for three houses in the back garden of no 10 Grosvenor Road after a request for additional information was appealed to An Bord Pleanala by the applicant. Local residents made submissions and the Association supported them.

Concerns were raised about a proposed extension at no 36 Rathgar Avenue, a most unique protected structure looking down Kenilworth Sq., and the oldest house on the Avenue.

The case of a large news development to the rear of no 173 Rathgar Road is still ongoing with further submissions required to be made during the period and a result is expected soon.

The Association was successful in respect of observations made in respect of a large dormer to the rear of 11 York Road which would have been totally out of place for the character of the area and would set an undesirable precedent. It was directed to be omitted by way of condition. Communications were received from neighbours thanking us for our submissions.

The Association decided to appeal a permission granted to O’Brien’s wine shop in the village over proposals for a more modern shop front. It was considered that while the existing shop front was not the original Victorian shop front, it would not be to the benefit of the character of the village to allow a further loss of the more traditional type of shop fronts, regardless of age.

Having previously made submissions in respect of the developments at O’Sheas of Clonskeagh (close to the Dodder greenway), we submitted comments on a new proposal for a 4 and 5 storey guest house in two separate linked blocks including a basement beside the Dodder. Dublin City Council recently refused permission for the application.

DCC decided to grant of permission for a house in the immediate vicinity of Dartry House (a protected structure) although there was little in the way of change to a previous refusal by them. The Association appealed the decision to An Bord Pleanala.

A proposal for off street parking at no 81 Rathgar Road was commented on to the Local Authority on the grounds of the requirement for improved design of the components of the scheme.

Obituary

The Committee of the Association note with regret the recent deaths of Gertie McCabe and Bob Murphy.

Gertie was a stalwart member of the Committee for many years.
and

Bob was a faithful and enthusiastic Road Rep in St Kevins Park.

Our sympathy is extended to their families. May they rest in peace

Some Notes and Comments

2018 AGM

The AGM of the Association took place on Tuesday 13th March- in St Patrick's Hall. There was an attendance of c60 members. In a short presentation a local resident set out his problem with a next door multiple letting and the difficulty of finding a satisfactory remedy

After the formal business of the meeting was concluded, local politicians were present for a question and answer session.

The RRA Annual Garden Competition and Dixon Cup 2018

As in previous years' competitions, as well as the prime category of Best Garden, there will be a series of a further categories.

The winners will be announced and prize giving take place at the annual Rathgar Horticultural Society show on the 7 July 2018.

Dodder Action Group

Keep abreast of their stalwart work in maintaining this wonderful amenity in our area. Better still join the group and give your support.

For more information on this group go to www.dodderaction.com

Book Reviews: Some recent publications of interest

The Rivers of Dublin

Clair L Sweeney, revised by Gerard O'Connell and Michael Curtis Irish Academic Press €24.99

The original, published in 1991, was a labour of love by Clair Sweeney who worked in

Dublin City Council's engineering department. All your favourite (and perhaps less favourite for some in the case of the Swan) local rivers and watercourses are there: the Dodder, the Poddle, the Little Dargle and the Swan.

Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way-a guide to its historic treasures.

Neil Jackman The Collins press €17.99

This tourist route has been enormously successful. This particular guide covers sites stretching from Kinsale in Cork to Malin Head in Donegal.

The 100 sites are described with photographs. There are grid references, opening hours, entry fees, ferry times etc.

If you are heading that way this Summer put it in your bag.

Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Lectures and Talks.

63 Merrion Square

Lecture: September 3 7.30pm

Music, dancing and country house culture in mid-nineteenth century Ireland

Dr Karol Mullaney-Dignam

The Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society Lecture Series

Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society was founded in 1996 and incorporates Harold's Cross, Leeson Street and Milltown. Talks and other events are regularly held in Rathmines Town Hall (Rathmines College)

Series of monthly meetings resumes in Autumn

Information: Rathmineshistoricalsociety.com or
rathmineshistoricalsociety.ie

Projects in the background which could impact on members of the Association and on which your Association is maintaining a vigilant eye:

The cycle quiet way: This is a proposal, originated by Cllr Paddy Smyth, to create a cycleway from Herbert Park to Kimmage. This would have an impact in our area and adjoining areas and result in some road closures to through traffic as well as street parking. (**stop press:** This would appear to be shelved at least for the moment)

Rerouting of buses from College Green: This would impact on all buses that serve Rathgar to the city centre and add to journey time.

The Dodder cycleway. The proposal to construct a fast way for cyclists along the Dodder and its parks hasn't gone away! South Dublin County Council have declared their route but Dublin City Council have not!

Herzog Park: Slow progress has been made on the refurbishment of the local park because of contractor difficulties. The major work has still to be done in 2019/20.

Marianella Public Park: The new Marianella Public Park (fronting Orwell Road) has been handed over to Dublin City Council. We look forward to this new facility for the people of Rathgar.

Rathgar Village: It good to see that some of the vacant shops have reopened. There are a number of important and prominent premises still vacant. We hope life will return to them soon.



Long ago: Picnic time at Orwell weir

ROCHES PHARMACY



Open until 7.30pm
Sundays 11am to 1.30pm

Prescriptions
Medical Requisites
Cosmetics

163/5 Rathmines Road Upper, Dublin 6

Telephone 4972693 Fax 4972406

One for Sorrow, Two for Joy-Garden Terrorists or Simply Misunderstood

Mark McDowell

As I looked out my bedroom window this morning, I was greeted by the sight of an adult magpie feeding a juvenile on the roof of a house across the lane from us. The juvenile was calling and fluttering its wings and the adult was responding to the signals. It was quite a tender scene at odds with the raucous screeching and frequently violent carry on we tend to associate with the species.

There are certainly a lot of magpies about at the moment, with many recently fledged juveniles swelling the already sizeable population. The juveniles are easy to spot. As well as being smaller than the adult birds, most strikingly, they lack the long tail feathers. So, it is easy to think that you are looking at a bird that has had a narrow escape from a cat when you see a recently fledged magpie flapping awkwardly from one tree to another with its stumpy bottom. The tail feathers do grow in quite quickly however and the youngsters soon lose their comical appearance.

The swollen population doesn't last too long with only 22% of fledglings surviving their first year, according to studies in Britain.

A quick search on the computer reveals that magpies are the eighth most widespread bird in the country. This is pretty impressive, seeing as they have only arrived here relatively recently. According to an interesting article by Dick Warner in The Examiner in 2011, a small flock of them arrived in Wexford in 1676 presumably from Britain where they seem to have always been resident.

There is much of interest in the species in terms of characteristics to which we can relate; pairs are monogamous in the breeding season and often remain together from one season to the next.

Various tests have shown them to be amongst the most intelligent bird species and as intelligent as some of the great apes; when it comes to casual reasoning and self-recognition in mirrors. They have complex social relationships and clearly exhibit grief.

All over Europe and further afield folklore ascribes them magical powers either as bringers of good luck in Korea and China or bad luck in England, harbingers of death in Scotland, thievery in eastern and northern Europe, but nowhere are they ignored.

There has been a general belief that they affect the populations of other garden birds particularly our song birds as they will raid nests when they can. Exhaustive tests in Britain however have failed to find any impact on overall song bird populations as a result of magpie predation, they are just not the baddies many people think they are.

Song bird populations are affected by lack of food and a lack of nesting places most of all, which are ultimately governed by human practices.

While it can be hard to like them maybe we should look on them a little more kindly. They are just small creatures living their complicated lives in a very harsh world.

ooooooooOOoooooooo

The Schools' Collection

The folklore of Ireland as recorded in 1937/38 by Irish National School children

Sean Áth, Ráth Fearnáin – The Old Ford of Rathfarnham across the River Dodder

During the years 1912-13 when the main drainage schemes were being rapidly pushed forward, many ancient places and pass-ways and hidden rivers were revealed.

When the main drainage was being laid from Rathfarnham village by the late Mr D Clarke Contractor an interesting piece of ancient history was laid bare.

"I was coming home from school - walking along the road from Rathfarnham to Terenure, and when near the Bridge (called the Big Bridge) across the River Dodder (Dadhaor) (?) I was asked by one of the workmen if I should like to see something that had been hidden for hundreds of years. On my signifying yes I went across a wall into a field on the immediate side of main road on upper side of the river. An excavation under the main road had been made. This was 23 feet (twenty-three feet) beneath the present tram way lines to take the drainage pipes under the road. The opening ran straight under the road and out on piece of ground where now stand the small cottages under the great wall of the Bridge. Men were in the excavation using hammer and chisel. Great blocks of hard basalt were visible with gravel in between which was itself as hard as rock. Some of the upper surface of the basalt rocks was cleared and a worn surface exposed. A suggestion was made that this was the action in former times of water. Further chiselling revealed that the blocks of stone were the "stepping stones" across the River in ancient times. The stones showed no signs of being accidentally placed there. They formed a pass-way about 9 feet (nine feet) in width and came from bank on North side of River. Many stones weighed tons and all had the worn grooves and surfaces running North and South while the River flows West to East. Very probably the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes not to mention the escaping O'Neill and O'Donnell used this "ford" - some

into Dublin and other vice versa. It is well to note that the present Rathfarnham Castle stood on an eminence and still stands - dominating this long disused ancient Áth or "Ford". interesting thing in conjunction with this "ford" and Castle is that in several of the windows in the Castle can still be seen the blocks of sandstone set into the sides of same with the marks of sharpening of arrow heads indicating the utility of a sharpening stone in the most convenient place in times of trouble and danger from the "wild Irish" ...".

ooooooooOOOoooooooo

THE RUIN ON MOUNT PELIER

The Neighbourhood of Dublin. It's Topography, Antiquities and Historical Associations. Weston St John Joyce, M.H.Gill & Son. First Published 1912

Making our way over the gorse and heather up the slopes of the hill from Mount Pelier House, we at length come into view of the old ruin on the top — an interesting and conspicuous object from afar but proving a most unprepossessing structure on closer acquaintance. It is variously known to the Dublin folk as the Hell Fire Club House, the Haunted House, and the Shooting Lodge, although it really possesses no valid claim to any of these designations, it having been built, apparently as a mere freak, for use as an occasional summer residence, by the Right Honourable William Conolly of Castletown, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, about the year 1725, shortly after he purchased the Duke of Wharton's estate in this neighbourhood. Up to that date, there had stood from remote times upon the summit of the hill, a large cairn similar to those on the tops of some of the adjacent mountains, consisting of a kind of rude wall or circumvallation of large flat stones set edgewise, within which a great quantity of smaller stones were collected into a heap. In the centre was a large monolith, 9 feet high, 6 feet wide, and 3 feet thick, and a similar stone about 5 or 6 feet high stood about sixty yards to the south-west. Nearly all these relics of a prehistoric age were utilised in building the house, which, it will be observed, is constructed of very rough and irregular materials, ill calculated to remain long in good repair. The building contained two large apartments and a hall on the upper floor, underneath which was the kitchen, where the jambs of the great fire-place may still be seen, a servants' hall, and a small room at each end under a lean-to roof. The hall door was reached by a lofty flight of steps, which with most of the other cut stone work, was taken away and used in the building of Mount Pelier House lower down the hill. In front was a semi-circular courtyard, enclosed by a low stone wall and entered by a gate. Shortly after the house was built, the slated roof was blown off one night in a tremendous storm — by the agency of the devil it was popularly believed, on account of the sacrilegious conduct of the builder in desecrating the old cairn. But Squire Conolly was not a man to be easily beaten, and so he set to work and built a massive arched roof of stones keyed together as in a bridge, and of such impregnable

strength that it has effectually withstood the efforts of wind or devil — whichever it was — from that day to this. This roof is perhaps the best built portion of the whole structure, consisting of flat stones set edgewise and the irregularities then filled in with gravel and mortar until brought to a uniform surface. With regard to one of the names which seems to have taken the fancy of the public, it is to be observed that while the Hell Fire Club may have held some of its meetings in this house, it is tolerably certain that it was never one of the regular meeting-places of that mysterious and iniquitous body, the ordinary rendezvous of which was the Eagle Tavern, on Cork Hill. The windows all face the north, evidently for the sake of the view, which must have been one of the chief attractions in selecting such a site. Standing in front of the building and looking eastward, one sees in succession Kilmashogue, the Three Rock and Two Rock Mountains, Tibbradden, the dense woods of Glendoo, and then Cruagh and Killakee Mountains, due south lies Kippure, with the infant tributaries of the Dodder

ooooooooOOOoooooooo

From *Links* of the past March 1997

Ecumenical gesture

During the programme of extensive repair /refurbishment being carried out over several months in the Church of the Three Patrons, it has been difficult to free up the Church for weekend masses.

On two weeks in November, the Church had to remain shut and Reverend Mary Hunter generously offered them the facilities of Christ Church Rathgar (either Church or lecture Hall depending on the hour) for Mass to be celebrated. It was a welcome gesture which was gratefully accepted by Fr Patrick Dowling. As the crowds came out on a dark winter's evening, one realised again what a central and commanding position Christ Church has as it overlooks the village of Rathgar.

ooooooooOOOoooooooo

Living in Rathgar: Some further Memories: Brookfield Tennis Club

Tennis is one of the oldest sports. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Persians played somewhat similar games. Brookfield Tennis Club is not as old as that but was founded in 1905/6. Nothing is known of the early history of the Club except that it had grounds on Fortfield Terrace. It moved from there when the site was sold for building purposes.

Five courts were laid in early 1928 and the subscription at that time for a senior member was one pound ten shillings!

Physically the club did not change from circa 1935 to 1975 when the grounds were redesigned and the old and long serving pavilion was demolished and work commenced on the new building in early 1976.

The primary resource of any tennis club obviously is its courts. In previous times virtually all tennis was played on grass. The grass courts required a lot of maintenance and wet weather cancelled play. Grounds men had a difficult task maintaining grass courts and the lines were tedious to mark. Nets in previous times were made of cord and had to be taken in at night. Brookfield replaced the grass courts in 1981 with Tennisquick, a type of porous concrete. This enabled the Club to remain open all year round and brought a new lease of life to Brookfield. Floodlighting was added and after 10 years of extensive use it was decided to install Omnicourt Pro as did most other tennis clubs. Now in 2018 Brookfield has six omnipro, floodlit courts, a large pavilion and a bar for its some 500 members. Taidgh Lambe who is well known in tennis circles is their Director of Tennis. Brookfield Tennis Club has come a long way from its original home in Fortfield Terrace but it is a journey that has brought much success and many happy memories to the members of this illustrious club.

Roger White

ooooooooOOOoooooooo

Ice Houses and Weather Conditions in Dublin 1700-1900.

Dublin had its share of harsh Winters over that period of 200 years when ice houses were the only source of refrigeration. If the ice house was well packed, the ice could last through the following summer. Ice was gathered from lakes and streams. In 1891 the ice works in the Dublin Mountains, at the Feather Beds, obtained its stock from the freezing waters around the site maintaining its stock and supplies until early March. Across Dublin and County the remains of the ice houses can still be seen. Some fine examples are at the Massey Estate at Kilakee. The door of the ice house is reached by descending into a small well in front of the entrance.

Inside the passage and chamber are lined with yellow bricks. Ice was drawn from the water reservoir below which also supplied water to the Massey residence. In Bushy Park the ice house was located along the Dodder near Springfield Road and was built into a sloping bank. The chamber was of brick construction. Ice was carried from the nearby lake to stock the building in the early 19th century. Unfortunately, the structure was demolished in 1982 by an explosion caused by intruders who hacked through an iron gate which closed the passage.

In 1709 the City Assembly Rolls record that rivers lakes and the sea froze nine feet in depth “Birds in their nests froze and men died in their thousands”. There were hard and prolonged frosts in 1708/9, 1715, 1728/9 and 1739/40. The Liffey froze over in 1766. In Georgian times snow was welcomed and the rarity of heavy falls caused great excitement. The snowfall of 1745 was recorded when a man fell into a ditch in Milltown and was smothered by the snow. In 1786 three feet of snow fell on the 1st January. The 19th century began with milder winters though in 1820 the weather was so severe that naturally frozen cream was served daily for weeks in Ballitore, Co. Kildare. In 1845 the River Liffey froze downstream as far as Kingsbridge and ten years later there was skating on the canals. In 1867 temperatures fell to 5 degrees Fahrenheit (-15C) in the Phoenix Park.

The Winter of 1890/91 was particularly cold. There were heavy snows in 1831. The snow storms of 1853 caused the “Queen Victoria” to sink off Howth Head with a loss of 55 lives on 14th of February.



The Dodder at Orwell weir 1881

Support your local shops

Shop locally whenever you can. This will keep our local shops in business and retain the character of Rathgar as a living community

Predictive text: Writing a letter can be a tortuous task these days!

Patsy McGarry in a recent piece in the Irish Times summed up the frustration of dealing with this annoying feature of modern day letter writing by computer.

“Truly overcoming its stubborn insistence that it alone is correct, not the idiot typing, can mean deeply frustrating delays of such length it may seem a lifetime passes before you send it. Certainly, lifetimes are cut short as heart rates soar alarmingly. It should carry a health warning. There is no exaggeration in claiming that were James Joyce to have written *Ulysses* using predictive text it still would not be completed today and its title would be *Useless*. Maybe this is why there have so many announcements in recent years of the death of the inventor of predictive text. There have been such reports in 2010, 2014, 2015 as well as two, last year. These reports have given rise to much witty temptation. Such as “his funfair will be hello on Sundial (His funeral will be held on Sunday) And “restaurant in peace”, “our sins rest in condo lenses” (our sincerest condolences) “that pour soup, may hen rest in piece” (that poor soul may he rest in peace).

However, a favourite comes from the Ulster Fry satirical website. Allegedly reporting the death of predictive text inventor “Brian Sturgeon, also known as Brain Surgeon died “after a shirt I’ll nest and will be sourly mist” (after a short illness and will be sorely missed) Founder of Microsoft (one of the main culprits) Bill Gates tweeted “Brain was once of the Finish mines of his germination, sum one how made tack knoll or key more axe cess able to the horde in any man in the sheep”

(Brian was one of the finest minds of his generation, someone who made technology more accessible to the world and the man in the street)”.

Oh for the fountain pen!

Donovans

Traditional Family Butchers
107 Rathgar Road

Phone 4925997

**Over 40 years of serving the People of Rathgar
and surrounding areas**

**With prime quality Beef, Lamb, Pork, Bacon and
Free Range Chicken**

Winner of all Ireland White Pudding Competition.

Suppliers to Hotels and Restaurants

Can’t call in? We deliver!