



## **A view from the Chairman**

I was recently chosen as Chairman of the Association at the first meeting of the recently elected Committee. I would like to pay tribute to the outgoing committee who did so much work to make your Association an effective voice for the residents of Rathgar. In particular I would like to pay an especial thanks to John Mc Sweeney, my predecessor, for all his many years as both chairman –on a number of occasions -and an active committee member. I am pleased that he is remaining on the Committee.

There will once again be an active programme in the coming year with local planning matters, traffic, parking and antisocial behaviour and other environment issues engaging the members of your Committee. Regular meetings will be arranged with the local gardai and with executives from Dublin City Council as well as our local councillors in an endeavour to make our area a better and safer place to live.

The Association with the support of DCC, will, in the next number of weeks be publicising the commencement of our study of Rathgar to provide a direction for the future and inviting all who have interest in the area to submit their views. Members of the Association will receive a special communication asking for their ideas.

The RRA is a voluntary organisation. Its work is both varied and interesting. If you feel you would like to help please contact any member of the Committee.

Paddy Marron

## **Planning , planning and more planning**

Planning is always in the front line when it comes to the major activities and battles of the Association and the last few months have been no exception.

The front has seen a number major battles opening up in recent times with a good number of smaller skirmishes together with some forays in other directions.

While we awaited the successful outcome of 108 Rathgar Road which had been with An Bord Pleanala for some six months, we supported the residents of Sundbury Gardens in their battle against a development at no 8A. We also came in behind a resident in the Oakland's Crescent in his campaign to stop a two storey development proceeding there. These are still with An Bord Pleanala.

During the year a whole new battle front opened up again for us on Orwell Park in the grounds of Dartry House and while a separate application for the conversion of the main house into 7 apartments was not opposed by us, the development in the grounds, for a complex of apartments for the second time in as many years was opposed all the way to Bord Pleanala where it is currently awaits adjudication.

Meanwhile, a proposal for the demolition of 1A Palmerston Park, having eventually been granted permission by Dublin City Council was appealed to An Bord Pleanala.

Local residents sought our support regarding a development for an unacceptable extension at 70 Grosvenor Road which when granted, was appealed by the association.

We were also asked by local residents to take action on a slightly modified proposal of a previously refused application by the local authority earlier in the year and re-submitted for 63 Highfield Road. This, having been granted this time has been appealed by the association.

A further development in the former back garden of 63 Highfield Road at Templemore Ave. has been opposed by the local residents there and is being watched closely.

A renewed application for a development at 1 Cowper Road where the association was successful in an appeal some 18 months ago has had an objection submitted to Dublin City Council.

Having previously opposed a development in the grounds of 47 Rathgar Road some two years ago and having since been successful in having the house listed for protection, we objected to and subsequently appealed a grant of permission for a three storey detached and very modern structure in the grounds of this house fronting on to Grosvenor Road. This has only recently gone in so a decision is not expected until the summer.

During the period there were the usual complaints lodged with the enforcement office in respect of suspect or illegal developments.

Towards the end of last year it was decided to canvass elected representatives in respect of the serious deficiencies in current planning legislation and calling for specific and definitive actions to be taken with a view to getting legislation changed. Such concerns related to planning enforcement, exempted development and the principle of planning by retention. To-date no Dail representative has responded and the two responses received from Dublin City Councillors do not make for encouraging reading.

## RRA Members Issues

Issues are raised by members with the Committee on a regular basis, many of these relate to planning questions and/or concerns but we also receive requests for help on numerous other matters. In each future edition of Link we will report on some of the matters that have been raised and the status of resolution. Following are some examples of recent issues:

- Concern was expressed by many members over the lack of pedestrian lights in Rathgar Village on the crossings between Comans and the 108 public houses and between the 108 and the Gourmet Shop. The matter was raised with the TD's and Councillors at the public meeting organised by the RRA in April 2007 and has been followed up with Dublin City Council (DCC). We are pleased to report that pedestrian lights are now installed on the Comans/108 crossing, this means 3 of the 4 crossings have pedestrian lights. We still believe the crossing between the 108 and Gourmet Shop is dangerous and should have pedestrian lights. *We would be interested in comments from members.*
- Traffic and parking issues were once again raised with representatives of the DCC traffic department at a meeting in March. Concerns were also aired about the potential traffic and parking problems when Superquinn opens in Rathgar. DCC undertook to discuss this with Superquinn.
- Removal of post boxes – members notified us of the removal of 3 post boxes from, Brighton Square, The National School Rathgar Avenue and Wesley Road/Rathgar Road junction (outside the closed Post Office). We contacted An Post and were advised that the requirement is that a post box should be available within 1 kilometre and that certain low yield post boxes were being removed. We suggested that if the number of post boxes was to be reduced then a post box in the Rathgar Village area where many residents visit daily would be logical. An Post agreed and have now put it back at the Wesley Road/Rathgar junction. Mary Freehill organised a meeting attended by local residents RRA Committee members and An Post to discuss in detail residents concerns relating to the availability of post boxes and the plans of An Post.
- 'Dog poo' - several residents have expressed concern at the state of the pavements, despite many signs indicating the penalty for not clearing up after dogs these do not seem to be a deterrent. We raised this issue with DCC and the apparent lack of any dog wardens in the area.
- Graffiti – virtually every wall, post box and street lamp in Rathgar has some level of graffiti, this is raised by the RRA regularly with the Garda but the amount of graffiti keeps increasing.

We would welcome your views and or ideas on any of the above.

# Comments and Advice from the local Community Garda:

## Personal/ Property Security

- Keep a record number of all property such as tv, radios, cameras, bicycles etc. This helps Gardai when they locate stolen property to restore it to its owners. Mark your property by imprinting your initials and date of birth on each item or use an indelible pen for this purpose depending on the item.
- Photograph other valuable items of property such as jewellery, paintings and silverware.
- Tell a trusted neighbour if you are going to be away from your home for any length of time. Make sure somebody has a key to your home and inform the Gardai of your key holder so we can contact them if necessary. It is very helpful if, while you are away, a neighbour can call into your home and collect your post, as bundles of letters in your hall way is a clear indication to potential burglars that the house is vacant

Make it as difficult for the thief to get into your home by doing the following:

- Install 5-lever mortice locks on all exit doors
- Install window locks on all accessible windows.
- Fit a side gate.
- Fit a security light with passive infra-red detectors.
- Have a burglar alarm installed and keep it turned on at all times even when you are at home during dark evenings.
- Keep garden tools locked away.
- Do not have your names on your wheelie bins as this as this can be valuable information to burglars.

## Vandalism/Graffiti.

In relation to this area a new initiative has been launched by South Dublin County Council which hopes to clean up our streets. In relation to private property (perhaps graffiti on your walls) you first have to sign a waiver form to allow the Council to remove the graffiti. These forms are available from your local Community Garda. In relation to graffiti on public property the Council just need to be made aware of its location and they will remove it.

**Don't hesitate to call the Gardai anytime, day or night, if you become aware any unusual or suspicious behaviour. If you can write down the description of the person(s) and/or registration(s) involved it would be a great help.**

## **From Links of the past.**

### **Rathgar Road Names, No1 : *Windmill Road***

What is now Orwell Road is, with its continuation in Rathgar Avenue, our oldest thoroughfare, originally linking the nunnery of St Mary de Hogges with its farm and its mill on the Dodder. It had no special name when houses were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century :in the 1830's the residents gave their address as "Garville" and in the 1840's and 1850's as "Rathgar".By 1860, however, the name Windmill Road was adopted, the windmill being that which powered the pump to drain the quarry where our new park is being developed. The name did not last long. In 1864 the name Orwell Road was substituted at the same time that building commenced on the new road of Orwell Park. Why Orwell?. I don't know, but there is probably a link with the town and river of that name in Suffolk, England.

-Fred Dixon

Link: February 1983

## **Rathgar Wake Up**    By Mark McDowell(March 2008)

When you leave for work in the morning be aware, these are precious moments, your last few moments of freedom before the daily grind really takes over. Put away the ear phones, turn off the radio, open the window, this is the real world. It may seem to be dull and man-made but that is only if you can't see what's around you.

People are the interlopers here, other creatures have been here for thousands of years and they're still here, getting on with their lives. All about us wonderful changes are occurring, the same changes that inspired the building of New Grange, and many of us don't seem to notice or care. Spring has arrived with frosty nights and sunny days, the earth is awakening.

Wildlife and nature are not just on the telly or far away, there's plenty to see here. Already the sticky buds of the horse-chestnuts are fattening to the point of bursting, the branches on the sallys are turning a vibrant orange, crocuses and snowdrops are in flower and the daffodils are well up promising a sweet scented Easter. That sun has already brought out butterflies and bumblebees from their winter hideaways. There is a lot to take in.

How many different types of bird do you see as you head for work? It's not too difficult to spot ten, (two types of gull, three types of crow, a blackbird, a robin, a pigeon, a sparrow and a duck, that's ten), fifteen would be quite common.

A flock of Brent geese from Greenland or further afield flies over the village at around 8.45 a.m. these days, have you noticed them, quite large, black and white, necks outstretched flying quite low in strict V formations gabbling loudly as they pass. They'll be around for the next month or so then they'll head north for the brief Arctic summer, but they choose here for their winter.

Other birds come into our gardens and lives for the winter, redwings and fieldfares are thrushes from mainland Europe that sometimes come in large numbers if there's a cold snap on the continent. In March more species will start to arrive. Listen out for one of our most common Warbler, the Chiffchaff, its song? Chiff-chaff, chiff-chaff ad infinitum.

Less than five inches long it will be returning from North Africa to nest in Rathgar.

The point of all this is that we are surrounded by other forms of life whose presence fills the spaces around us with colour and sound and reality and also structure. We are in danger of letting a distance develop between us and them and losing a basic understanding of the rhythm of the planet, for what? So that we can listen to the wisdom of breakfast time Dee Jays? Take back your morning freedom and hear what is truly important, the natural sound of our lives.

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## Walking From Rathgar

Exercise is essential for good health and it's well-known that walking is the best form of exercise. Residents of Rathgar are blessed with a huge variety of wonderful walks on our doorstep, ranging in difficulty from pleasant strolls around the neighbourhood to challenging hillwalks just a short drive away in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains.

Close by, you have the delights of Bushy Park in Terenure and historic St Enda's and Marlay Park in Rathfarnham. A walk along the Dodder from Milltown Bridge, in either direction, is also a pleasure on a fine day.

Not far away are the Phoenix Park, Corkagh Park in Clondalkin and Cabinteely Park, all with excellent walks and points of interest. There are magnificent sea views on the walk from Killiney Hill car park across to the cliffs above Dalkey Quarry. There is also a fine sea walk from Strand Road in Sandymount to the Pigeon House in Ringsend, passing through a nature park. From the Pigeon House you can continue out along the South Wall to the Poolbeg Lighthouse in the middle of Dublin Bay.

If you prefer to breathe some mountain air but don't want a steep climb, I recommend the gentle and scenic ascent of Djouce mountain near Enniskerry and the Great Sugarloaf near Bray. Both summits reward the effort involved with first-class views over the surrounding countryside. Good walking boots are required for these two walks.

If you really catch the walking bug, then you have splendid mountain walks in Wicklow to look forward to, centering on Glendalough and Glenmalure. Ordnance Survey Ireland have an excellent series of maps to guide you, whatever route you decide upon.

Perhaps one day you might even emulate the legendary botanist and walker H.C. Hart who, 100 years ago, was wagered 50 guineas that he couldn't walk from Terenure to the summit of Lugnaquilla in South Wicklow (Leinster's highest mountain) *and back* in less than 24 hours. He took up the challenge and won the bet with 10 minutes to spare.

If you would like to join a walking club, contact the Mountaineering Council of Ireland, tel 6251115 or see [HTTP//www.mountaineering.ie](http://www.mountaineering.ie).

To use an old walking motto: get out – and stay out!

Martin Joyce  
RRA Committee  
Editor, Walking World Ireland magazine



## What's on

During Autumn , Winter and Spring each year there is a range of interesting lectures and meetings held at various venues. Many of these are free of charge or for a very small charge. Rathgar, as a city suburb, is convenient to many of these venues. So take the bus, walk or cycle to some of the following. Details are available by phoning or visiting the website of the organisation involved

**Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society**, Rathmines Town Hall,  
Monthly meetings with lectures on topics of local interest.

**Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland** Merrion Square,  
lectures on historical and archaeological topics.

**National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street:** lectures on History and Archaeology.  
**National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks:** The Decorative Arts

**National Gallery of Ireland**, Merrion Square: Art and Artists, Architecture.

**Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland:** lectures held on Horticultural topics at Wesley House Leeson Park, Dublin 6

**Botanic Gardens:**Weekly /Fortnightly: Gardens, flowers and related topics.

**Chester Beatty Library:**Dublin Castle Islamic art and Eastern performing arts

**Hugh Lane Gallery:** Parnell Square: Art Appreciation, Adult Drawing courses and Sunday at Noon concert series.

**Dublin City Library:** Pearse Street Archive material including the Irish Times archive back to 1859