



# DALKEY - Deilginis ‘Thorn Island’ COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Irish Heritage Town

*First Published April 1974*

**NEWSLETTER No 417 (Volume 18)**

**Mártha (March 2012)**

**March:** *Originally first month of the Roman calendar. Named for Mars the Roman god of war, crops and vegetation.*

**Guimid la shona aoibhinn diar mathracha  
ar a la specisialta  
Happy Mother's Day 18th March**

*Flower:  
Daffodil*



**Beannachtaí na Feile Padraig oraibh go léir  
Happy St. Patrick's Day - 17th March**



**DRAMATIC WINTER SUN OVER KILLINEY BAY AS SEEN FROM WHITE ROCK**

*Barry Moore, Photogenic, Dalkey*

Your Area Representative is.....

Telephone: ..... E-Mail:.....



## SUMMARY OF THE DCC FEBRUARY 2012 MEETING



The February Monthly meeting was held in OLH on Monday 6th February 2012 at the earlier time of 7:30pm. DCC Chairman Dr. Susan McDonnell had to leave at 8pm as she had been invited to take part in the audience on the RTE Frontline program to speak on the application for the Foreshore Licence by Providence Resources.

**Matters arising:** The Public meeting that was arranged by DCC in association with the DBG and held on 24th January was very well attended with many left outside. The outcome of it was to lobby for more time to enable the public to make an informed decision about the application and to demand a Public Enquiry from Minister Hogan.

The Dalkey Garda station will close at the end of March 2012. Dalkey will retain their two community Gardaí. All paperwork that must be witnessed by a Garda will have to be processed in Dun Laoghaire station after the closure.

The next meeting will be Monday 5th March 2012



## DALKEY CASTLE & HERITAGE CENTRE REPORT



Numbers were up in 2011, from 25,839 to 28,518.

David McWilliams has joined the board to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Howard Kilroy. Tim Carey, Heritage Officer, has replaced Richard Shakespeare.

We continue to receive valuable support from Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co for operating the facility.

**Events:** We are continuing our series for the local community on our literary heritage. (Last year we worked on Flann O'Brien). This year we are concentrating on James Joyce's 'Dubliners'.

This is his collection of short stories and is the designated text for 'the one city one book' in Dublin for April. As before, we are having readings with actors and some speakers to illuminate the text. 'Dubliners in Dalkey' continues on Tuesday nights at 7.30pm, on March 6th & 20th & April 17th.

**Admission is free but advance booking is essential**

or you may not get in. Call in or email [maeve@dalkeycastle.com](mailto:maeve@dalkeycastle.com) to book (Check website)

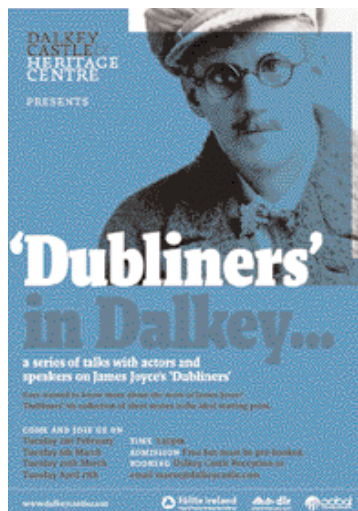
Due to the success of Meet the Writers show funded by Fáilte Ireland, we are introducing Lunchtime Readings/Theatre from mid May to end of June on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. (Lunch deals available in local restaurants before and after performances).

We will have a Maeve Binchy week; Hugh Leonard week; James Joyce week; Flann O'Brien week etc. More details later. Admission €10 to include Free Guided Literary Walk afterwards in Dalkey.

**Long threatening comes at last!**

At long last we have secured substantial funding from Fáilte Ireland to carry out some refurbishment works in the entrance of the Castle and on the information systems in the Heritage Centre for visitors. This was a great shot in the arm at the start of the year. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co are our partners in the venture which we greatly appreciate.

It is business as usual otherwise with the schools programme fully booked out until Easter and French and Italian school groups coming in April as new business to us.



**Dalkey Castle & Heritage Centre** is open for visitors with Living History Guided Tours from 10.00am Mon-Fri and 11.00am Sat Sun until 5.00pm, (Closed on Tuesdays). Check in advance to avoid tours being full due to group bookings.

**Classes continue with:**

**Pilates:** on Mondays in Heritage Centre: three classes at 6.15pm, 7.15pm and 8.15pm.  
Contact Lizanne Barry 087 8572408

**Zumba Fitness classes:** continue in Dalkey Town Hall on Wednesdays: at 7pm & 8pm  
Contact Lukasz: 085 216 33 04; Email:info@zumbagalaxy.com

**Yoga Classes** Thursdays 6.15-7.45 & 8.00- 9.30pm Contact: Sorcha 087 9475220 or Beverley 086 8581299.

**Dalkey Players** will stage Hugh Leonard's Comedies 'Scorpions' from March 7th -10th.

**St Patricks Dramatic Society** stage 'We'll always have Paris' by Jill Hyem from 28th -31st March, both at 8.00pm in Dalkey Town Hall.

Tel 01 2858366, Email info@dalkeycastle.com Website: [www.dalkeycastle.com](http://www.dalkeycastle.com) Dalkey Castle & Heritage Centre is part funded by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Co, Dept SP (Pobal) FÁS

❖ **DALKEY ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY GAMES CHESS COMPETITION** ❖

Congratulations to the Dalkey U16's Chess Team. They recently won the Dublin final of the Community Games Competition.

They put in an extremely strong performance and won 15 out of 15 games. We wish them every success for the Leinster qualifying round coming up in March.

The event was also attended by the Dalkey Under12's team; Jim O'Reilly (Dalkey School Project), Adam Kelly (St Patricks) and Harry Wall, Ralph Swords, Gareth Hughes and Cillian O'Donnell (Harold Boy's). It was a very long day of chess for the boys, with the young chess players still battling it out at 10pm! They performed really well, gaining 7 out of 15 points. Although they did not get through to the Leinster games, we look forward to seeing them turn out for Dalkey again next year.

All the Dalkey boys enjoyed the experience and there was a great atmosphere of enthusiastic participation and camaraderie. Both teams were a credit to Dalkey.

Thank you to Brigid Fagan (chess team manager) for organising this.

The Dalkey  
Under 16's chess team  
who won the Dublin  
Community Games  
were:

(L to R)

Harry Swords,  
Ross McCann,  
Conor O'Donnell  
(Capt), Tom Wall,  
(Back)

Rory Ellard  
(vice-Capt.),  
Ferdia Fagan.



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This month of March sees a dramatic increase in both day length and temperature, coaxing plants out of dormancy. .... Our new growing season is here. Every one of our oncoming days is picking up precious speed so All Our Dalkey Gardens are exploding into life and gearing themselves up to make the very most of our spring and early summer. We really feel excited in anticipation of the pleasures and delights of our oncoming months. .... So, it's time to get busy, to sow seeds, such as cucumbers, tomatoes, courgettes, baby carrots and so on. Sweet peas are a must for some - (Matucana, rich maroon and purple is noted for its exceptionally strong fragrance). You can start lettuces, rocket, chillies (jalapeno which is mild and almost impossible to buy in a shop), and marjoram, which is now often called oregano, it's Italian name, and parsley on your windowsill, indoors. Broad beans and peas can be sown directly into the ground as the soil begins to warm up.



*Majoram*

I love the way our vegetables and fruits are in season for a particular time and that's it: ..... When they're gone, they're gone ..... so lets make the most of their special presence.

*"We love March ..... A snowdrop pushing through frozen ground is all very well, but it is not a patch on seas of smiling narcissi. The peppery scent of a Sarcococca is divine but lacks bite when compared to a hill of hellebores. Not for much longer do we have to rely on small miracles, for March is the beginning of floral super - abundance".*



*Flowering from early spring, the tiny, brilliantly-coloured saxifragas are jewel-like in appearance. In fact, the name 'saxifraga' means 'breaker of rocks' in Latin). Rock Breakers!*

**WORDS BY JAMES ALEXANDER - SINCLAIR**

Spring bulbs, early flowering shrubs and small alpine are right now bursting into flower. .... You know some of our first plants to flower are our alpine jewels. These tiny saxifragas were once believed to have the ability to break through rocks because they grow in the tiniest cracks.

*"To see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour"*

**(WILLIAM BLAKE, AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE)**

## **MIGHT DO / MAYBE MARCH JOBS**

Buds burst open as sap moves up through the branches and once this growth begins, the plant is committing to producing new shoots. So by pruning now, you can direct the energy into useful growth.

1. Spring bulbs such as snowdrops and daffodils can be moved as they go out of flower and divided to increase the clumps.
2. Make sure to water all plants in pots as pots can truly dry out during this month of March. .... Sometimes too, the worst damage done by slugs and snails can be right now - when plants are in tight bud.
3. It is important to try and carry out weed control before our weeds take on a surge of growth.
4. Groundcover plants that have become untidy, or have spread beyond their boundaries, can be cut back during this period before growth begins.
5. If the lower branches of trees have begun to shade neighbouring plants, they might be pruned in order to give a clean trunk and to allow light to reach lower growing plants. Ivy on trees and at the bases of hedges should be cut back before it gains another summers growth. The best way is simply to chop it all out at the base with a spade.
6. Try and wrap up the pruning of your roses right now, or A.S.A.P. or flowering will be delayed.



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Begin by taking out any dead or diseased material and anything that's rubbing onto another stem. You can give your roses the best start now, by feeding them with a specialist rose fertiliser. They're heavy feeders so it's a good idea to make a note in your calendar to feed them again in midsummer when they're developing their second flush of flowers.

7. Show off bamboo - if you've got a bamboo with coloured stems, why not show it off to its best advantage? Simply cut off the lower leaves on each stem to reveal the coloured canes beneath. Let's all enjoy the emerging glory of our new foliage!



## MARCH 2012 GARDEN EVENTS



### SOUTH COUNTY DUBLIN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**March 14th** A.G.M. and talk by Peter Cuthbert on "*Uses of Colour in Planting*", followed by a light supper.

### FOXROCK & DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

**March 27th** Averil Milligan, Head Gardener, Rowallane Garden, will talk on '*Nature's Beauty in Spring*'



## MARCH 2012 LOCAL HISTORY TALKS



**Thurs. March 1st - 8.15pm** Ms. Catherine de Courcy will present her lecture '*History of Dublin Zoo*' to the Mount Merrion Historical Soc. in the Mt. Merrion Community Centre, North Ave, Mount Merrion, Admission €4.

**Tues. March 6th - 8.30pm** Eamon de Butleir will present his lecture '*Recording Wicklow Wildlife*' to the Kilmacanogue Hist. Soc. in the Glenview Hotel, Glen of the Down, Delgany. Admission €3.

**Wed. March 7th - 8pm** Tim Foley will present his lecture '*Glencullen House*' to the Rathmichael Historical Soc. in the Burton Hall, Rathmichael N.S. Stonebridge Road, (Dublin Road end), Shankill.

**Thurs. March 8th - 8pm** Aidan O'Sullivan will speak on '*Hurling in Ancient Ireland*' to the Kilmacud-Stillorgan Local Hist. Soc. in the Function Room, Glenalbyn, Stillorgan. Admission €3.

**At 8.30pm** Rob Goodbody will present his lecture '*Shankill Evictions in the 1860's*' to the Enniskerry Hist. Soc. in the Powerscourt Arms Hotel, Enniskerry Village - Admission €3.

**Mon. March 12th - 8pm** James Scannell will present his lecture '*Dublin Firefighters & the Easter 1941 Belfast Blitz*' to the Dundrum & District Hist. Soc. in Dom Marmion House, Sandyford Rd, Dundrum.

**Tues. March 13th - 8pm** John Grenham will speak to the Genealogical Society of Ireland on 'Some Sources for Family History Research in the Dublin City Archives' in Dun Laoghaire College of Further Education, Cumberland Street, Dun Laoghaire - all welcome, contribution €3.

**Wed. March 14th - 6.30pm** Ed Coghlan will present his lecture '*R.M.S. Titanic: The True Story*' to the Old Dublin Society in the Conference Room of Dublin City Library and Archive, 138-144 Pearse Street, Dublin 2. All welcome - Admission free.

**At 8pm** Pat Sweeney will present his lecture '*The real story of the "Kerlogue"*' to the Killiney-Ballybrack Hist. Soc. in The Graduate Lounge (Upstairs), Rochestown Ave, Killiney. Admission €3 /Students / Unwaged €2.

**Thurs. March 15th - 8pm** Ms. Joan Sharkey will present her lecture '*The Guinness Family*' to the Bray Cualann Hist. Soc. in the Bray Chamber of Commerce House, 10 Prince of Wales Tce., Quinsboro Rd., Bray. All welcome - Admission €4.

**At 8pm** Paddy O'Sullivan will present his lecture '*The East India Company in Kinsale*' to the Maritime Institute of Irl. in the Stella Maris Seafarers Club, Beresford Place, Dublin 1. All welcome - voluntary donation at the door.

**Tues. March 20th - 8pm** Padraig Laffan will present his lecture '*Dublin Bay and the Kish Light*' to the Foxrock Local Hist. Club in Foxrock Parish Centre, rere R.C. Church, Foxrock. Admission €4.

**Wed. March 21st - 8pm.** Cormac Lowth will present his lecture '*An Odyssey of Oddities Around Dublin*' to the Dun Laoghaire Borough Hist. Soc. in the Kingston Hotel, Adelaide St., Dun Laoghaire.



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Our younger pupils enjoyed a visit from members of the HSE Ambulance Service, linking into the theme of “People Who Help Us” which they have been studying recently. An ambulance, car and motorbike from the Cornelscourt base arrived with flashing lights and loud sirens sounding. The three paramedics patiently showed the children their



*Ambulance*

vehicles and all the equipment that they manage to pack inside them. The motorcycle was especially popular with the boys, one of whom wondered how the paramedic managed to transport his patients on the back of the bike! Everyone had a chance to sit in the ambulance and to lie down on the stretcher as well as to climb into the cab and sound the siren. Some children had a print out of their heart rate made and others had their blood oxygen levels checked - all appeared to be quite normal. We are most grateful to Richie Shannon and his crew for spending time with the children in what was a fun and informative visit.

For the fourth year in a row our Form VI exhibited at the BT Young Scientist Primary Science Fair in the RDS in early January. This year they displayed their project on “Acids and Bases”, and were delighted with the interest shown by the public and judges in their work. The children, under the supervision of our science teacher, Ms Jeanne Prendergast, took turns on their stand and really enjoyed explaining all about their research and demonstrating various experiments and were thrilled to receive their award at the end of the day.



*Young Scientist Competition*



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*Our Maritime Series, in memory of Dr. John de Courcy Ireland, continues*

To Drill for Oil? OR Dive with the Dolphins?... judging by last month's two packed meetings in Dalkey Town Hall and in Dun Laoghaire, whatever your opinions are, it can be concluded that the controversial application for a foreshore licence by Providence Resources in the Kish Bank Basin is by no means straightforward.

On both occasions the exploration company declined to attend the meetings as they preferred to discuss the venture with smaller groups in their Donnybrook headquarters.

The application to carry out exploratory drills (up to 30m) for oil and gas, in an area that at its closest point is a mere 6kms offshore to Dalkey Island (Special Protection Area) has without doubt exercised minds primarily on the 'prospect's' proximity to a populated urban coastline.

It was the virtually unanimous consensus at the meetings to call for a public inquiry dealing with the community's core concerns, notably the possibility of an oil spill impacting on the environment, on wildlife (incl. some EU protected species) and fishing grounds. If the exploratory licence is granted, including seismic survey activity (and thereafter?) in Killiney Bay, the question was could fishing grounds co-exist without much disruption?

In addition there was the issue of who is primarily responsible for oil spill clean-up costs. There was also the concern over how the applicant's public consultation process was conducted, the lack of adequate information and timescale provided for receipt of submissions. Other main concerns were the impact on Dalkey as a Heritage Town and tourism in such a scenic location.

Equally important, however, was to address the possible economic benefits to Ireland Inc., particularly in view of the recession with high levels of unemployment and consequent impact on society. Yet, there appeared to be confusion over the tax profit regime and to what direct benefit would go to the state and the Irish people.

From a Dalkey perspective the 'prospect' could be seen as a microcosm of what is on-going nationwide...wind farms (even on the Kish Bank), gas-fracking, water-quality issues etc. Are we as a people and government equipped to tackle such issues of paramount national interest while weighing up both the potential benefits and disadvantages over the medium and long-term?

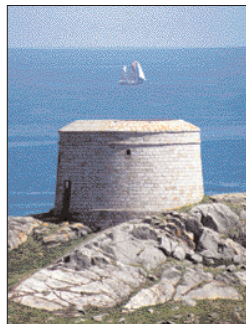
How do we really value the future of Dublin Bay as an amenity unique among European capitals and where sustainable eco-tourism could be developed much further as part of our 'green' image.

Should either natural resource be found to be commercially viable, it is understood the oil would be transferred directly to a tanker using a special combined mooring system and shipped to Milford Haven or Rotterdam as distinct to Whitegate Refinery in Cork Harbour. As for gas it is believed a pipeline could come ashore in Dublin Port or Loughshinny near Malahide.

N.B. In response to calls for a public inquiry by Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore and others to Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan, Mr. Hogan stated in reply to Dáil questions "given the nature of the application, the fact that it is the subject of a public consultation process, and that the decision and related documentation, including the submissions received under the public consultation process, will be published on my Department's website ([www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)), I do not consider that a public inquiry is necessary".

*Further information at: [www.providenceresources.com/dalkeyisland.aspx](http://www.providenceresources.com/dalkeyisland.aspx)*

**Jehan Ashmore**



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French wines are considered to be the finest in the world. France is regarded as the premier wine making country and is said to produce eight billion bottles of wine per year. In June last year I got a wonderful opportunity to holiday in Provence which is located in the southeast of France. Provence is widely known for its Rose wines, however, more recently its red wines are growing ever more popular.

It may not come as a surprise to any readers that one of my favourite past times is to taste wine so that was first on the list! We headed out to Chateau de Berne, a huge wine estate boasting 110 hectares and producing almost 500,000 bottles of wine per year. We headed straight to 'La Cave' for some wine tasting. Chateau de Berne produces dry oaked and unoaked Rose wines, full bodied rich white wines and full bodied spicy reds. Their Cuvee Rouge 2009 won two Gold medals in the Paris Concours General 2010 and Brussels International Wine Challenge 2010. This wine is full of dark berry fruit finishing with hints of spice. A wine I would recommend to readers. It was a great wine experience. This Chateau attracts 20,000 people per year so maybe you will be one of them this year?



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**EAMON WALSHÉ – 45 YEARS IN THE MOTOR INDUSTRY**



Bulloch Harbour is on the agenda for improvement in 2012.

The Tidy Towns are working in conjunction with the boat owners and residents to tidy up the verges, and replacing the signs and the seats. We have made contact with someone in Dublin Port and Docks (who are in charge of Bulloch) and he is very supportive.

Work on replacing the signage in Dalkey to something more suitable for a Heritage town is also in progress. We have been promised funds from DLRCC but again progress is slow.

How many people have stopped you to ask "Where is the sea?" or similar, well hopefully this Summer Dalkey will have a beautiful new map strategically placed in the town. If anyone has any interest in sponsoring it or has any attraction they would like mentioned... please get in touch at [tidy@dalkeytidytowns.com](mailto:tidy@dalkeytidytowns.com).

We have a contingency of paint which was donated by Dulux under their community improvement schemes to paint the bandstand in Dillon's Park.

Spring is coming, planting will start in earnest and next month Dalkey will be bursting back to life again. Next month we will have details of the annual National Spring Clean.

Volunteers are meeting for a coffee morning to plan for the season...everyone is welcome.

Meet outside **Select Stores at 10.30 a.m. on the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Saturday of February** and in **Dillon's Park at 10.30 a.m on the 2nd Thursday**.

**REMEMBER IF YOU SEE LITTER.....PICK IT UP!**

**Blaithín O'Brien**



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## PLANNING APPLICATIONS - Weeks 1-5 1/1/2012 to 27/1/2012

*The material in the Planning Section of the Newsletter is based entirely on data taken from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's website. If you are concerned about a particular item it is strongly recommended that you examine the relevant file in the Council's offices.*

**Reg. Ref:** D12B/0010

**Date:** 13-Jan-2012

**Applicant Name & Location:** Emer Wilson, Bradda, 1, Monte Vella, Barnhill Road, Dalkey.

**Proposal:** Permission is sought for the proposed works consisting of the demolition of existing single storey dining room, kitchen, bathroom and shed and the construction of a single storey extension comprising of bedroom, bathroom, dressing room, utility room, kitchen and dining room to rear and side of existing house of 90 sq.m. with a pitched roof to match existing and 4 no. 1200x900 new roof lights and ancillary site works.

**Reg. Ref:** D12B/0014

**Date:** 23-Jan-2012

**Applicant Name & Location:** David and Maria Bourke, 1, Ardburgh Close, Ardburgh Road, Dalkey.

**Proposal:** Permission for development which shall consist of the following minor revisions to the existing permission D11B/0353: (1) Addition of new glazed door to new small balcony (900MM X 2600MM) on south west corner on first floor, (2) Widening of kitchen window by 300mm.

**Reg. Ref:** D12B/0021

**Date:** 26-Jan-2012

**Applicant Name & Location:** Clodagh Lowry and John Quinn, 38, Castlepark Road, Sandycove.

**Proposal:** Permission for development which will consist of; 1) Demolition of the existing extension to the rear of the single storey detached dwelling. 2) Construction of a new two-storey extension to the rear, a new bay window and single storey extension to the front elevation. 3) Conversion of the attic to habitable space, including the removal of the existing hipped roof and replacement with a new half hipped roof profile. 4) New roof lights to the front and side elevations. 5) New dormer windows to the front and rear elevations.

## PLANNING DECISIONS Wks 1-5 1/1/2012 to 27/1/2012

**Reg. Ref:** D11A/0513

**Decision:** Grant Permission

**Date:** 9-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Niamh Caffrey, Saint Marys, Ardeevin Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

**Proposal:** Permission is sought for demolition of an existing side garage and store; part reduction in rear garden levels; relocation and alterations to existing vehicular entrance, the construction of a new two storey extension to side elevation; construction of a single storey rear extension and extension of the existing rear return at ground and first floor levels and general alterations / additions.

**Reg. Ref:** D07A/0479/E

**Decision:** Grant Ext. of Duration of Perm..

**Date:** 18-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Brian McManus, Lands adjoining Shelmalier, Sorrento Road, Victoria Rd., Glenageary.

**Proposal:** Permission sought for development consisting of a two storey house over basement level garage at main location. Application Type: Extension of Duration of Permission.

**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0529

**Decision:** Grant Permission

**Date:** 16-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Guy and Louise McDonnell, 8, Barnhill Avenue, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

**Proposal:** Permission sought to widen existing entrance and for a single storey kitchen and living room extension to rear.

**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0549

**Decision:** Withdraw the Application

**Date:** 17-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Richard & Corrinna Moore, Prince Patrick House, Knocknacree Road, Dalkey.

**Proposal:** Planning permission is sought for the partial demolition of the ground and first floor of the south rear extension of the house (total floor area - 31.5 sq.m.) and the renovation / refurbishment of the remaining portion of the return at Prince Patrick House. It is also proposed that the roof of the building proposed for demolition is removed prior to submission of the application to facilitate ongoing remedial works as part of the overall refurbishment.

**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0539

**Decision:** Refuse Permission for Retention

**Date:** 27-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Castlepark Residence Management Ltd. Castlepark Gardens Residence, Castlepark Road, Dalkey, Co Dublin (former Mackeys garden centre site)

**Proposal:** Retention permission is sought for development which consists of the retention of an automated vehicular entrance gate (6.150m wide x 1.9m high) positioned between 2 No. pedestrian access gates and piers at the development access at Castlepark Road and relief from planning conditioning No. 4 of An Bord Pleanala planning permission PL06D.224130 (Reg. Ref.:D06A/1808). **Application Type:** Permission for Retention



**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0551

**Decision:** Grant Permission

**Date:** 02-Feb-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Aidan O'Meara, Atlanta, 37, Coliemore Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

**Proposal:** Permission is sought for (a) two-storey extension of area 48 sq.m at the rear of the house with 32 sq.m roof deck and 8 sq.m top floor balcony; (b) shed of area 8 sq.m on part of the site of the existing garage (area 18sq.m) which is to be demolished; (c) ancillary works including reconstruction of existing external steps to rear of house.

**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0553

**Decision:** Grant Permission

**Date:** 2-Feb-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Kevin Nowlan and Kirsty Foynes, 26, Castlepark Road, Sandycove.

**Proposal:** Permission is sought for alterations and extensions to existing house comprising internal modifications, relocation of front door, new bay window to the front of house, part demolition of existing single storey extension and garage to the rear and side of house. The erection of a two storey extension to the side of the house and a single storey extension to the rear together with widening of existing vehicular entrance and all associated site works.

**Reg. Ref.** D11A/0590

**Decision:** Withdraw the Application

**Date:** 1-Feb-2012

**Applicant & Location:** Tom and Helen Dunphy, 5, Barnhill Avenue, Dalkey

**Proposal:** Permission is sought for demolition of side garage and shed and construction of two storey extension to side with rooflight including two storey extension to rear (with single storey element with rooflight) and single storey extension to front including front porch, side windows to side extension, widen vehicular access, solar panels to rear and associated internal alterations.

**Reg. Ref.** D12B/0014

**Decision:** Declare Application Invalid

**Date:** 30-Jan-2012

**Applicant & Location:** David and Maria Bourke, 1, Ardburgh Close, Ardburgh Road, Dalkey.

**Proposal:** Permission for development which shall consist of the following minor revisions to the existing permission D11B/0353: (1) Addition of new glazed door to new small balcony (900MM X 2600MM) on south west corner on first floor, (2) Widening of kitchen window by 300mm.

## APPEALS NOTIFIED by An Bord Pleanala Wks 1-5 1/1/2012 to 27/01/2012

None for Dalkey area

## APPEALS Decisions of An Bord Pleanala Wks 1-5 1/1/2012 to 27/01/2012

**Reg. Ref:** D10A/0614

**Appeal Decision:** Grant Permission

**Appeal Decided:** 12-Jan-2012

**Council's Decision:** Grant Permission. **Location:** Glencairn Apartments, Harbour Road, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

**Proposed Development:** Permission is sought for development for the following; a) relocation of existing vehicular entrance on Harbour Road, b) general refurbishment and upgrade of hard and soft landscaping including provision of 7 no. additional car parking spaces, c) upgrading works to elevations including a rendered plaster finish (also some window replacement), d) provision of 3 no. new apartments in a new third floor level (with roof top plant room over) at existing apartment building. **Applicant:** Glencairn Flat Management Ltd.



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A few years ago the Parks Department dug out some of the lower floor of the quarry to create three ponds. A very welcome addition to the hills where the only other water is what gathers in small pools in the rocks which quickly dry up during a warm spell. Water is great for attracting a wide variety of wildlife from amphibians to insects which themselves attract feeding birds and bats.

Last summer we saw a beautiful blue iridescent dragonfly darting around one of the pools which were surrounded at the time by a display of wild flowers. Cornflowers, poppies and oxeye daisies and many other native and garden escapees formed a colourful blanket over the quarry floor. Digging up the quarry might have disturbed old seeds but I did suspect that it may not have been the hand of nature but the hand of a well intentioned wild gardener. I was told recently that a pair of Mallard ducks were the latest arrival to the ponds, probably not a great place for them to breed but it'll be there for them if they want a quick paddle. A few years ago a little group of mallards used frequent the cliffs near White Rock. There they used perch on the remains of a semicircular wall below the Dart line. Unusual enough to see ducks perched on the top of a wall but sometimes they'd be joined on the wall by a perching raven whose dark form towering over them might have been slightly intimidating for them. I was told a raven, probably one of Dalkey's nesting birds or their offspring, hangs around the base of the East Pier where it mingles among the pigeons. As the pigeons are being thrown food the raven subtly turns around to grab one, quietly devouring it among the feeding clamour.

I usually look for the first new leaves on a particular Horse Chestnut on the Vico Road where it's mild location must help it produce the earliest growth. Except this year the first new Horse Chestnut leaves I saw had already appeared on another tree. In November.

The leaves were only on one of its lower branches but they were big healthy looking leaves. This bright green sprig among the bare grey woods was one of many unnaturally unseasonal occurrences reported this winter. Although the leaves were looking a bit tatty by late January they were still alive and by then there were leaves appearing on some Sycamore trees as well.



*Horse Chestnut leaves in November!*

We often hear them before we see them, honking calls coming out of the south eastern sky. This particular occasion it was 5.00pm on a cold mid January evening with the little light from the grey day fading into the blustery cloud. What we were hearing then saw coming out of the gloom was a little group of Brent geese, probably not much more than twenty, flying in the classic v shape. Their rapid wingbeats made a whooshing sound as they passed overhead.

When geese are on the ground they are known collectively as a gaggle but when they're flying in a group it's called a skien. This little skien had flown across Killiney Bay then came over Dalkey hill before dropping down and heading across Dublin Bay. They were heading back to Sandymount Strand or to Bull Island where they would meet up with many more geese all settling down for the night. Like many wild creatures they gather together at night applying the old adage that there's safety in numbers. If a fox is creeping up on them five hundred geese are far more likely to see it than one single bird no matter how alert it is.

Brent geese travel farther than any other species of goose to get from their wintering grounds in the UK and Ireland to their breeding ground in high Arctic Canada, a distance of over 3,000kms but that doesn't happen till April and our little group this evening were only on their daily commute. They'd flown down along the coast to farmland and grassland on the BirdWatch reserve in Kilcoole or Newcastle in the morning, spent the day feeding and were now returning in the last minutes of daylight.

When Brent Geese first arrive in the autumn they will feed on *Zostera* inter-tidal eel-grass and when that gets scarce they will feed on grass in parks and playing fields around Dublin. During the last couple of winters there have been good numbers of Brent feeding in the playing fields in Blackrock College. Later in the winter and early spring they will start flying down to Wicklow every day for undisturbed feeding. In

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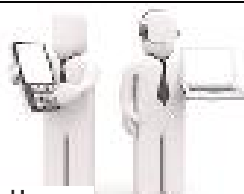
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the evening they return, usually along the coast as well but if there's strong winds blowing from the west or northwest they'll fly into the shelter of the hill and soar up above it, gaining altitude before gradually descending.

We noted the time we'd seen our little group flying over and the following evening with similar winds blowing we made sure we were outside at the same time. It was a bit raw and cold but we soon forgot about that when from almost the same direction as the previous evening a similar sized group suddenly soared above the trees. But this time they were followed by two more arrowhead shaped skienst, about 100 birds in each of these groups. Then we heard another group passing by on the far side of the house. They had all disappeared into the gloom within seconds.

By mid to late March the birds numbers will be peaking and as the days get longer the birds often set off back to Dublin while it's still bright. Colimore Harbour or Dillons Park is a good spot to see them pass by and at this time of year you might get a thousand birds flying past.

I know I've often mentioned it before and for a few months every year it's a daily occurrence but I always find it a thrilling sight. Maybe it's the flying v shape that seems to give them such a sense of purpose as if they're on a pre determined flight path and when they do eventually set off for the far north, flying to Iceland then later over the vast area of Greenland I hope their flight goes as surely.

I've heard quite a few people last year recounting little tragedies when neighbours or busy gardeners had cut hedges only to expose nests with baby birds in them still too young to fly. There's very little chance of these birds surviving, either the parents will desert the nest or predators will get the eggs or the young birds.

If there are birds nesting in dense hedges you probably won't know they're going to be very careful that nobody sees them or their nest so, if you can, check out the hedge before cutting. Looking up from ground level is a good way of seeing the nest against the sky and you might save a little family.

It's never too late to put up a nest box and if any birds have failed in their early attempts to nest they might be glad of the home that you provide.

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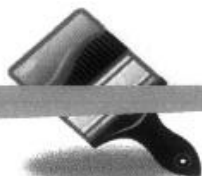
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We had a lovely time preparing for and performing our Christmas plays. Now we are back to school for the new year of 2012, ready for a new year of fun and learning.

**St.. Blaise's Day** – Friday the 3rd of February was St. Blaise's Day. St. Blaise was very loyal to God and was a healer. When St. Blaise was dying, the people of his town were worried because nobody would be able to heal them. But St. Blaise gave them a prayer that would make them better. We still use that prayer to this day. On St.

Blaise's Day Mrs. Shanahan visited all of the classrooms in the school. She brought around two long, white candles that had been blessed with holy water. In turn, we went up to her and she crossed the candles in front of our throats and said a prayer. This is called the "Blessing of the Throats".



*First Class*

**Grace Cagney**

**Catholic Schools' Week** – 30th of January to the 3rd of February was Catholic Schools' Week 2012. The theme was "Christ's living body active in our world". We had a lovely prayer service for the whole school on Monday. As part of Catholic Schools week 4th class held a prayer service for their grandparents on February 1st (St. Bridget's Day) to celebrate all the help grandparents give us. This has happened in Loreto

for the last couple of years. Lots of grandparents turned up for the prayer service and there were cups of tea for all the grandparents afterwards. It was a great day!

**Zara Carthy**

**Choir** – Last Thursday people from 4th, 5th and 6th class auditioned for The Arklow Choir. In addition to our Junior and Senior Choirs we have created The Arklow Choir group. We are preparing for the upcoming

Arklow Music Festival in March. There are sixty girls in the Arklow Choir and they are all very excited about learning new songs and representing the school.

**Keara Curtain**

**Mary Ward Week** – Last week was Mary Ward week, the founder of the Loreto Order. In her honour we had a prayer service on Monday 23rd January. Fourth class performed a play for us about her life. We also tried to remember her values in our everyday lives - Justice, Truth, Joy, Freedom and Sincerity

**Victoria O'Keeffe**



*Fifth Class*

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## ARE YOU SEEING COMFORTABLY?



### *Interview with Paul Gill of Paul Gill Opticians, Dalkey.*

Five things you may not know about Paul Gill

1. He was born in Donnybrook, lives in Sandycove, and walks or cycles to work.
2. He has two daughters and two sons, and is a grandfather.
3. His son Jamie works in the business.
4. He sails. He used to have a catamaran that he sailed around Westport, Waterford, West Cork, Belfast Lough and Blessington.
5. He plays indoor football in Bray.

### **What's new in eyewear?**

You can now get lenses designed to cope with looking from paperwork to a computer screen and back again, contact lenses with a UV filter built in, and stainless steel frames so pliable you can sit on them.

Some of our Oakley sunglasses come with three different lenses than clip in and out of the frame - there's a dark lens for intensely bright conditions, a sodium yellow lens that enhances sunset conditions and improves contrast, and a third lens for normal daylight conditions.

Contact lenses are fantastic now, I think people have been daunted over the years by misinformation. People have misgivings about discomfort, hygiene, solutions, chemicals, infections, but the one-day disposables are really so good, I think that almost anyone these days is potentially a contact lens wearer. It just takes about a week to get used to them. A lot of suppliers give us trial sets of lenses so that people can try them out against what they already have, and we find that people are delighted with them.

In terms of style, retro is fashionable just now, and the American brand Oliver Peoples has the kind of shapes your uncle might have worn 60 years ago, but made with the finesse of today.

### **What do you think of 'ready readers'?**

Ready readers are OK, we do stock them, but if you combine wearing them with bypassing regular eye tests, you might go unaware of conditions the eye test is designed to pick up, such as glaucoma, cataract and macular degeneration.

Surgery for cataracts is on the increase. People are living longer, and the number of people having cataract surgery is just ridiculous. Then there's macular degeneration, a problem in which diet, genetics, and smoking may all play a part. For every customer over 40, the eye test we do includes a risk analysis for macular degeneration.

What are your top tips for eye health?

My number one tip is to appreciate it. People take vision as a given, but it isn't. Loss of vision is a very traumatic thing.

Second, wear the right product for the right environment. We offer solutions for all sorts of situations. People can say I'm only trying to sell them more things, but I genuinely think people should be taking advantage of the technologies that could be helping them.

And third, have an eye test every two years.

*Paul Gill was talking to Marion Hancock. A longer version of this interview appears on [www.ilovedalkey.com](http://www.ilovedalkey.com)*



*Chairman of DBG, Jason McChesney  
with Paul Gill of  
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

### **Re: COASTAL DEFENCES AT WHITEROCK AND KILLINEY BEACHES**

I enjoy your very informative newsletter and particularly the articles on maritime Dalkey. However, what has been done on Whiterock and Killiney beaches in the name of coastal defences needs to be questioned.

I have attached some photos of the rocks left on Whiterock and Killiney beaches in the name of coastal protection. In most places where such barriers are put on beaches the rocks are caged.

This is the case on sections between Greystones to Kilcoole. Astonishingly in this prime amenity area, the rocks — supposedly protection barriers — were left uncaged and they have now spread over both beaches leaving an appalling mess. It is now difficult to move between Whiterock and Killiney beaches even at low tide.

Perhaps the skillful JCB operator can revisit the scene. It would be nice if those responsible were asked to at least cage the rocks so that no further damage is done.

**CON BUSHE** – *Barnhill Park*



---

### **UNAUTHORISED TREE FELLING AT DILLON'S PARK, COLIEMORE RD.**



On Monday 9th January 2012 a landscape student on a works placement with the Parks Department, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council visited Dillon Park, Coliemore Road, Dalkey. She noticed that a number of trees were cut down in the park.

It was difficult to navigate footpaths as no attempt was made to clear up the debris. Following a second query from Dalkey Community Council regarding the matter, an officer from the Parks Department visited the site on Tuesday 17th January to find that a significant

number of mature trees had been wantonly cut down in the park. Additional trees had been felled in addition to those noticed by the student earlier in the week. The Gardaí were alerted and visited the site.

While trees in the Council's charge are occasionally vandalised, this level of destruction is very unusual and it must be emphasised that the work was not undertaken by the Parks Department.

The matter remains a mystery as the trees were obviously cut down over a number of days.

Arrangements are in place to have the debris removed and a programme of replacement planting will be undertaken in the park.

If any resident has information that can help to solve the mystery and identify the perpetrator(s), we would be most grateful.

**Rory O'Sullivan,**  
**Parks Department,**  
**Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council,**  
**Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin**



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Cian Meghen and Matthew Bardon in 4th Class are busy organising the Greenwave Project in school as part of our Discover Primary Science and Mathematics entry for 2012. The boys are monitoring daily temperature, rainfall and wind measurements, as well as informing other classes of various species to look out for. The Greenwave Project maps the onset of spring across Ireland and Europe by observing selected species and noting their appearance and changes over time. Children in all classes will be looking out for the Horse Chestnut, Ash, and Hawthorn trees, as well as primroses, swallows and frog spawn. Photos will be uploaded onto the

Greenwave website where they can be viewed by all! Check out [www.greenwave.ie](http://www.greenwave.ie) for a photo of our fabulous Horse Chestnut tree - 100 years old this year!

Our school is bursting with young authors after completion of the 'Write a Book' competition! Books were entered in English and Irish and the standard was fantastic.

We will be celebrating Engineers Week 2012 from 27th February - 4th March. The boys will participate in engineering activities and we are very excited about a visit from Diarmuid Fanning's Dad to talk to the boys about the exciting world of engineering.

Táimid ag súil go mór le Seachtain na Gaeilge, 5ú-17ú Márta. Beidh comórtas ealaíne ar siúl agus beidh seanfhocail iontach le feiceáil timpeall na scoile! Beidh ranganna ag teacht le chéile le haghaidh tráth na gceist freisin. Cé a bhuafaidh i mbliana? Beidh le feiceáil!



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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



Womens World Day of Prayer in St. Stephen's Church, Killiney @ 11am Fri. 2 Mar  
 National Tree Week 2012 Sun.4-Sat.10 Mar  
 Daffodil Day - Coffee Morning in OLH from 10am- 12.30pm Sat.10 Mar  
 St. Patrick's Day Sat.17 Mar  
 Nat. Daffodil Day - Irish Cancer Soc. Fri. 23 Mar  
 Summer time begins- clock goes forward Sun. 25 Mar

Cuppa for Kitui, OLH (10am-1pm) Sun. 25 Mar  
 St. Patrick's Dramatic Society "*We'll always have Paris*" in Dalkey Town Hall at 8pm Weds. 28-Sat. 31 Mar  
 Sorting of April Newsletter in OLH (1-2pm) Thurs. 29 Mar  
 DARA Art Exhibition in OLH from 10am-5pm Sat.31 Mar-Sun.1 Apr  
 DCC April Monthly Meeting Mon. 2 Apr

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Karate** sessions for all age groups 6.00-9.00pm Tues. & Thurs. Wayne Deegan 086 857 2546

**Dalkey Players** The Carry Hall Killiney from 7.30-10.30pm Tuesdays & Thursdays. Contact Caroline Hickey 086-8092850 or check [www.dalkeyplayers.ie](http://www.dalkeyplayers.ie) for details.

**St. Patrick's Dramatic Society** Dalkey Northover Hall at 8pm Mondays & Thursdays  
 Contact Deirdre 087-9566460 or check [www.stpatsdramsoc.com](http://www.stpatsdramsoc.com) for further information.

**The Irish Vintage Radio and Sound Society** meets monthly in Dalkey. Call 086-8391839

**Cuala Set Dancing Classes** : Every Sunday from 8-10pm. €6 per night. All welcome.

The Dalkey Dashers will commence training for the **Dalkey Community Games** Wed. 28th March at 7pm. Training takes place every Wed. from 7pm - 8pm in the Loreto Dalkey school hockey pitches. Everyone between 6 years & 14 living in the Dalkey area are welcome.

**Dalkey Daffodil Day** - in aid of Irish Cancer Society. Come and join Rosemary, & friends in Our Lady's Hall on Saturday 10th March from 10am-12.30pm. Have a coffee & a chat & bring a friend. There will also be a raffle.

**National Tree Week** 4th - 10th March, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Parks and Landscape Services Section are in the process of organising events throughout the county for Tree Week. Check [www.dlrco.ie](http://www.dlrco.ie) for further information.

### DALKEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING RATES

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 Wed. & Friday. 10am - 5pm. Telephone 285 5277

**LAST DAY** for Articles for next 2 issues: **APRIL 2012: 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2012; MAY 2012: 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2012**

ALL ARTICLES STRICTLY TO: The Editor, c/o Post Box, Our Lady's Hall, Castle Street, Dalkey

NOTE: All Advertising Enquiries to: Ms. Helena Feely, Advertising Manager, 47, Dalkey Park, Dalkey.  
 Phone: 01-2858025. (Office hours Mon- Fri.).

All other queries etc. should be addressed to: The Secretary, c/o Our Lady's Hall, Castle St. Dalkey

**EDITORIAL POLICY** — The Editorial Staff reserve the right to edit and/or emend articles submitted to the Newsletter. The views and comments published within the Newsletter are not necessarily the views shared or condoned by Dalkey Community Council Limited.

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## *Oh! How Television (and Radio) has changed over the years . . .*

*Saorsat (which is designed to deliver digital television to those who cannot receive it with an aerial) has started test transmissions. The equipment needed to receive the service is more expensive than conventional satellite systems available at the moment. There is "talk" in the industry that RTE might subsidise the cost for those who cannot afford it (it is estimated that app 2% of the population will not be able to receive Saorview via an aerial). The test transmissions are to cover the ROI only, but already many people on the other side of the Irish Sea claim that they can receive it with a slightly larger dish.*

*Ian Macdonald,  
Maxtec Systems*



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## SCHOOL IN NEW ZEALAND

Going to school in New Zealand is extremely different to going to school in Ireland or the U.K.. For one thing, the system is longer and children start school at age five rather than age four. Primary is followed by Intermediate which is then followed by College. You go to Primary for New Entrants, then Years 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. Intermediate is for two years, 7 and 8. College is the last school before university and has five years. Year 9 to Year 13 is optional.

I go to Macleans College in Howick, forty minutes east of Auckland on the North Island. I'm in Year 10, about to move to Year 11. My school is very typical of New Zealand schools with wide open spaces and open plan classrooms. There are no concrete playgrounds; instead, we have a huge main field and several other fields nearby. The main field is used at breaks for all kinds of things. Mainly, it is used by boys with holes in their socks, playing rugby! Macleans is set in a reserve, looking out to the Hauraki Gulf and Waiheke Island. On a clear day, you can see Cormomandel Peninsula behind Waiheke. Most of the classrooms face towards the sea so that we can always see the ocean.

Like a lot of schools, Maclean works on a house system. There are eight houses, each named after a famous Kiwi (New Zealander). Mansfield, Batten, Rutherford, Kupe (pronounced Koo-pay), Hillary, Te Kanawa, Snell and Upham. Each house has different colours and mascots. For example, my house, Upham, is light blue and our mascot is a lion. Our P.E. uniform is in our house colours. There is extremely fierce rivalry between the houses and all eight have special talents. Snell was named after Peter Snell, who set world records in running and they always win sporting events. Te Kanawa was named after Dame Kiri Te Kanawa who is a famous opera singer and, surprise, surprise, TK normally win the house choir competition. House mascots usually relate to the house in some way.



Unlike Ireland, school children in New Zealand eat outside all year round. Schools don't have halls or canteens. Most kids will bring their own lunch and then sit outside on the various benches and seats, even in winter. If there are no seats free, then the ground is always available. Tuckshops provide snacks like packets of chips (crisps), lollies and ice blocks in summer. It's normally a race to the benches at lunch time and the seniors get first pick, seeing as they are

the oldest and there is usually more of them than there are of us. When they are off school for exam leave, the juniors get the run of the place.

School in New Zealand is great fun and a big change from grey, dull school grounds and boring classrooms all encircled with railings. Classes are taught hands on and P.E. is always held outside. I love school because of the friendly, homely atmosphere Macleans works hard to create and the fact that I know each school day will be extremely different from the last.

**Alix McKee (Dixon) Age 15**

*(Granddaughter of Josie & Ken Dixon, Dalkey)*



## DALKEY SCHOOLS' CHESS COMPETITION 2011



This inaugural chess competition was held on Sunday December 4th in the Harold Boys' School on Patrick's Street. The event was run in conjunction with the Dalkey Business Group and our local schools. This was a non-profit making event with the aim of promoting chess, to enable children to represent their school and keep it all local.

Thank you to Harold Boys' NS for hosting the event. Their hall was a perfect venue and very convenient. Thank you to Eurospar for sponsoring runner-up prizes. Thank you to all the parents who were involved, chess teachers and Ivan Baburin our adjudicator.

Thanks to all the supporters who gathered in the hall, dodging the showers and waiting to enjoy the rest of the activities in Dalkey on the day. We were also visited by Megan Hound, the Dalkey Dog about town.

Congratulations to Castlepark school who won triumphantly on the day. Harold Boys' NS came in second place and runners up St. Patrick's NS and Dalkey School Project put up a good show against these experienced teams. Concentration was intense and energy was high in the room and it is certain that all the players enjoyed the afternoon.

There was talk of the possibility of a new chess club in Dalkey....so here's hoping this is a start with lots more to come!

St Patrick's ????????????????



### A BOOK TO READ

Dun Laoghaire Borough Historical Society Journal 2012, No.21  
published by Dun Laoghaire Borough Historical Society.

Some of the articles featured in this publication include -

'U-Boat in Dun Laoghaire Harbour' by S. Kenna

'Dun Laoghaire Golf Club' by Caoimhin Kenna

'The Kingstown / Dun Laoghaire Railway Station, 1837 to 2011' by Anna Scudds

'Dun Laoghaire in the Civil War' by John Waefer

'The Browetts in Kingstown' by Alan Browett

'Dun Laoghaire Carnegie Library Centenary, 1912 - 2012' by Brian Smith

'Dun Laoghaire - Prelude to the Emergency' by James Scannell

'What the Hempels Did Next' by Mary Grogan

Copies of this excellent journal, €6, are available from several outlets in Dun Laoghaire, at meetings of the Society when it meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. in the Kingston Hotel, Adelaide Street, Dun Laoghaire, or by phone from 2806213.



Just back from Malta after a heavenly holiday. I didn't know anything about Malta when I booked with The Travel Department last July. It was an exercise in escapism from Christmas. The Maltese archipelago lies in the Mediterranean and consists of three islands, viz. Malta, Gozo and Comino. We left Killiney at 3.45 a.m. It was raining cats and dogs and arrived in Malta four and a half hours later into glorious sunshine. We were transferred to our hotel at St. Julian's. A very attractive venue looking out at the Mediterranean. A lovely port of buildings made of limestone with lots of building cranes everywhere - similar to Ireland a few years ago. Unfortunately, the limestone quarries are almost empty. This is money from grants from Europe.

Maltese history is very similar to ours except they suffered two World Wars and had families wiped out. When they were under British Rule, they were not allowed to speak their own language. Their minimum salary is only €1,000 per month. If they refuse employment, their Dole is stopped immediately. The people are very friendly and obviously the Wars have effected their personalities. They are a quiet and gentle race and they like wearing dark clothes. On Christmas Eve we went on a tour of the Three Cities. We drove past Cospicua to Vittoriosa where we walked through narrow streets shaded by buildings and churches and then to Senglea where we enjoyed the views around the Grand Harbour all sunshine and showers of rain. Actually, there are approximately 365 churches in Malta. Nearly all are Catholic. There is one Mosque. We had a very good Christmas dinner after evening Mass at our own hotel. I also went to Midnight Mass to hear their choir. It was simply lovely but not a patch on Dalkey! On Christmas morning we had a divine breakfast and a walk around the Harbour again and Mass at 11 a.m. This was in Latin and I so enjoyed it. It was just like old times. We had a formal lunch with crackers and music and amazing food - but no stuffing in the turkey! In the evening we played Gin Rummy and Bridge. The Gin Rummy was very exciting. I would swop it for Bridge. On St. Stephen's Day we had a full day trip to Gozo, a sister island of Malta. Twenty minutes on a ferry and we were there. Gozo was beautiful and green. We visited the Azure Window at Dwejra, the Citadel in Victoria and the Bay Xlendi and free time for shopping. There was beautiful knitwear and lace making products. Five of us bought woollen jackets and we all had lunch together. By now we all knew each other. Forty two of us in total. On Day Five we went to view the Barracka Gardens and then to St. John's Co-Cathedral adorned in niches that date back to the Knights of Malta. The most exciting thing was there two Caravaggio paintings, The Beheading of St. John the Baptist and St. Jerome. I really felt overwhelmed by these and the beautiful Flemish tapestries. On the last day was a trip to Mdina, the central part of Malta, through the narrow streets of Mdina, the Silent City. Malta is the sort of place of place you can wander around safely and I had a great time.

**Blathnaid McGinty**



✦ St John's Co-Cathedral Valletta ✦