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Bealtaine
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May: *Possibly named for Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love or from the Latin verb meaning 'to open' or the Greek word meaning 'the opening'. Greeks called the season of Spring 'the opening'.*

Flower: Hawthorne & Lily of the Valley

Dalkey Community Council Annual Collection

The Community Council Annual collection takes place this month. Without your help the Community Council could not bring the Newsletter, Christmas Tree and many other activities to the town. Please return the brown envelope with your contribution to your Road Rep. or to the post box in Our Lady's Hall.

The April meeting of DCC met on Monday 3rd April at 8pm in OLH.

The Chairperson opened the meeting and warmly welcomed two new members for the St. Begnet's Villas area -Virginia Butler and Marion Finlay.

Correspondence: Among items received was a letter of complaint about the behaviour of certain individuals on White Rock. This was a follow up from the AGM and the Community Council will take up this matter with DLRCoCo and the Gardai. DCC will also investigate the disrepair of the DART station brought that has been highlighted by a resident on Ardeevin Road.

Tidy Towns: Last year TT had won an award from the Tidy Towns Competition and this was presented to the rep for the HC -see TT report inside.

Heritage: The HC will be meeting the new County Manager and Finance Officer to discuss works and improvements for the Centre. The "Living History" has been a huge success over the past eight weeks. The members of DCC sanctioned a grant of €5,000 towards the graveyard restoration project.

Sports: The registration for the team events in the Community Games was 31st March. The hockey, hurling and Gaelic football will be represented this year. The athletics training is continuing every Wednesday night at Loreto.

Neighbour Watch: The AGM for the "F" District took place on Tuesday 4th April and a short summary is given in this issue.

Planning: Castlepark School: ABP will not grant DCC the aural hearing re the development for 81 apartments. It will probably be another few months before there will be further news on this application.

AOB: The road sign at the end of Castlepark Road is very shabby and should have been removed or repainted a long time ago. DCC will follow this up with DLRCC. As there was no further business the meeting ended.

Chairman's Report 2005 - A.G.M.

This past year's activities were dominated at the beginning by the decision to form the Community Council into a Company Limited by Guarantee, mainly to protect the interests of its members in today's every increasing litigious society. .

We met with our solicitor who specialized in company law, who advised us on the potential problems that might arise as a voluntary organisation. I have to pay tribute to our Treasurer, Pat Egan, who was- responsible for drafting the Articles, changing our original constitution into the Articles of Association of a Company Limited by Guarantee without losing the ethos of the Community Council. This draft was then amended further following the Executive's discussion of it and revision of some of the clauses. This was presented to all the members to study and was then discussed at length at an Extraordinary General Meeting devoted to its examination. To reflect the comments and observations of the members, a further draft was agreed by the Executive and presented to our solicitor for his opinion.

We have incorporated some changes to the election of the Executive to provide continuity of membership and to prevent the necessity of more than half of the Executive leaving office every two years as had occurred in previous years. Under the new rules three members resign or come to the end of their term each year, to be replaced by three new members; this will hopefully ensure a more efficient Executive. As you will appreciate, there was a huge amount of work involved to bring about these changes and I should like to thank all the members of the Executive who were involved, especially Pat Egan, who put in Trojan work writing and amending all the drafts to bring about the final draft of the Articles and then liaising with the Companies Office. We ultimately became Dalkey Community Council, a Company limited by Guarantee in October 2005.

Another change this year has been the appointment of a new editor of the newsletter following the resignation of Colleen Hogan; she and her family had been associated with the Community Council for many years and Colleen had been the editor for more than ten years. We appreciate all the work she has done for the community for such a considerable length of time. We were, therefore, very fortunate to have Gerard Coakley to take over from Colleen. He has many years experience in the publishing world and already you can see he has brought his expertise to the recent editions of the newsletter. He has become editor at a particularly difficult time, as there have been many changes with our printers which has not eased his job, however, the feedback from our readers about our "new-look" newsletter has been very positive.

It is becoming obvious that with the changes in the production of the newsletter, the increased volume of work with the planning committee and number of meetings involved with the various committees plus frequent contacts with the general public that the Community Council needs to have its own dedicated office space to operate from to enable it to serve the community more efficiently. We therefore hope to find some such facilities in the town and would appreciate any information about possible premises.

As in previous years, we have been in contact with various departments of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown .County Council.

In September, the Traffic Department who were undertaking a review of the new parking by-laws, asked us to send a submission to reflect your concerns and opinions following the introduction of the 'pay and display' parking scheme to Dalkey. From your correspondence and comments to your road representatives, it would appear that enforcement and cost are the main issues with the majority of Dalkey residents amongst other more local problems. Another traffic related issue was the No 8 bus, which we were glad to see re-instated, albeit, with a rather limited service. It is felt that a more frequent service would be more beneficial to the majority of its passengers; your comments will be appreciated.

We have had considerable contact with the Community department, namely Margaret Kenny and Chris Eurlong

we have had considerable contact with the Community department, namely Margaret Kelly and Chris Furlong who have given us great support during the year.

One of our major functions, the Lighting of the Christmas Tree, would not be so successful without their cooperation. Indeed, this event now involves many groups in Dalkey and is a truly community event. I think our members can be proud to know that the Community Council began this annual occasion many years ago. We continue to work with the Parks department; we are especially grateful to Tom Byrnes, Liam Murphy and the team in Loughlinstown who always manage to transform Castle St during the summer months as well as maintaining the parks and green spaces around Dalkey, we certainly appreciate their efforts.

The Tidy Towns committee was very successful last year, working with the Parks department and other departments of the County Council to improve our town. There is often a thankless task when the perennial problem of litter needs to be addressed. Littering and dumping is widespread and it is up to us, as a community to tackle this problem as much of it is produced by us; we seem to have lost a lot of our former civic pride. However, I shall let June report the successes and problems of the Tidy Towns Committee.

We have ongoing contact with our County Councilors liaising with them about various problems related to Dalkey; we will be continuing to work with them and the various agencies and departments to further our work to improve our community for all its residents.

Finally, I should like to thank all of you who are road representatives or representatives for local organisations for your interest and commitment to the Community Council; your work and dedication continues to enhance the community spirit of our town for the benefit of all.

Dr Susan McDonnell- March 2006 (Chairman, Dalkey Community Council)

My Garden - Philippa Thomas

Our garden is becoming, even more "green". Isn't it so true, those famous words: 'forty shades of green'? Some of us, I feel, live for 'this' time of the year. So, now seize the day, and grab the moment!

This morning, I couldn't but notice, some super ferns, with their most elegant fronds, unfurling. I, never tire of this spectacle. Here in Dalkey, we seem to have an amazing variety of ferns, especially on Killiney Hill Woods and by our coastal walks.

My most valued plant, presently, is our melianthus Major (shrub, give it 2 yrs, to mature). Perhaps it is 'The King' of foliage. It is incredible with its huge, almost frilly, blue-grey leaves that it's like a piece of sculpture in the garden and, into the bargain, it is evergreen.

Other priceless beauties, are the bamboo family, (Phyllostachys). We have a purple and black variety, growing in containers. Bamboos are fantastic plants. They give truly, amazing value all year round. We use a tougher variety, to create a screen effect and it provides a lovely, rattley, jungley sound, on a windy day. I have removed all its lower leaves, in order to enjoy its colourful, bare canes.

Another 'wow', is Acacia Longifolia, The Sydney Golden Wattle (15 feet, in, 10 yrs). We're growing it, as a smallish, sturdy, ornamental tree. Its leaves are somewhat similar to those of the bamboo. It produces long clusters of golden yellow flowers in early spring. Really you can prune its branches to maintain whatever shape, you like.

Most of us are dying to get going with our containers and hanging baskets. I love the simple use of the same plant in several baskets. Our hanging baskets are in use throughout the year. So, basically, I, just top them up, with some new, fresh, decent potting mix and some general fertilizer. I heard someone recently say that they place tea bags in the bottom of their basket before adding compost as these make

an excellent fertilizer and retain water. Last winter, we had some interesting trailing ivies and the perennial, white namesia, (which seems to have over-wintered). So, now, I will cut it back (namesia) add a few, new freshly grown namesias and, like last year, some ornamental Marjoram, (it has limey green, aromatic foliage). I think the secret of the container planting is to create a similar 'en masse effect' .I'm inclined to stay away from variegated leaves, in hanging baskets.

Having written all this, the list is endless of container planting and really, 'The World's Your Oyster!'

Nature Corner - Summer Visitors MR

I saw my first swallow on the 2nd April over Killiney Bay. It was during that spell of very cold northerly winds that made this Spring such a cold one and as is often the case when the winds blow from the north the Bay around the Vico Road has its own warm sun drenched mini climate. There weren't going

North the Bay around the Vico Road has its own warm, sun-drenched, mild climate. There weren't going to be any insects in the cold air on the exposed side of the hill but probably lots around there for a hungry swallow.

Once it was thought Swallows hibernated underwater during the winter before emerging again in the Spring. In late summer or early autumn the birds were seen swooping low over the water and soon after they were gone, not to be seen till the following year when they reappeared.

Of course what the Swallows were doing in late summer was gathering in large groups before migrating, often at lake side reed beds catching insects or actually scooping up water to drink as they skimmed the water's surface.

We might think it ridiculous now that a couple of hundred years ago people believed swallows could survive a winter underwater but the thought that these little birds were about to fly to southern Africa and then return next year to the same spot would have been equally unbelievable to them.

But that's what they do, flying across Europe, crossing the Mediterranean, down past the vast Sahara desert to spend the winter in the warm insect filled air of southern Africa with lions, elephants and zebras as neighbours then doing the same trip in reverse the following spring. Being totally dependent on insects caught in the air, which are missing from our colder climes in the winter, they have to follow the food south in Autumn, returning north in the Spring. Coming here in the summer also gives them much more daylight in which to find food for their young. Swallows will rear two broods (families) during the summer and have been known to have three broods in long warm summers. There are seventy-five types of swallows found worldwide but our summer visitor is known as the Barn Swallow because of its habit of traditionally nesting on rafters in barns where it can fly in or out at will. The Barn Swallow is also found in the United States and Asia. They can be found nesting in outhouses and ruined buildings as well and a few years ago it was in a derelict roofless room of an old house in Galway, where a family of swallows had nested on a roof beam, that I was lucky enough to witness a family of young swallows taking their first flight. With much chattering the young birds took to the air circling and swooping before perching on another beam calling to their parents all the time. Apart that is from one young bird which was still clinging on to the outside of the nest as if it lacked that little bit of confidence to launch itself into its first flight. One of the parents decided to speed up matters, flew over and gave the young bird a gentle but firm push, launching it into the air where its instinct kicked in, its wings spread and it was flying instantly, hesitantly at first but with confidence growing by the second. After fledgling young swallows will be fed for four days as they perch on rafters or telegraph wires after which the parents will encourage them to take food on the wing flying after the parents or flying out to meet them. After a week they'll be catching their own food.

One of the latest migrant birds to arrive is the Swift, again often seen over the Vico Road and sometimes nesting in the Heritage Centre in Dalkey where they often fly around in noisy little groups late on warm summer evenings. They usually arrive in early May and are gone by mid August being totally dependent on high flying insects. These birds, apart from when they are on the nest, spend all their lives in the air and their legs are so far back on their body if they are forced to the ground, which may happen during thunderstorms, it is very difficult if not impossible for them to take off again. They take brief snatches of sleep while they are in flight and have been picked up on radar many hundreds of feet up in the night sky.

Thousands of years ago they would have been exclusively cliff dwellers but as with many birds they have evolved to become almost totally dependent on human habitats and many of the crevices under roofs of buildings they may have nested in before are being filled in or insulated and very few new buildings being constructed have suitable niches for them to nest in. With their high pitched shrieks, often in towns and cities on warm summer nights, they are to me, along with the Cuckoo, one of the most evocative sounds of summer.

I heard my first Blackcaps singing in early April. These birds are often known as 'Northern Nightingales' because of their exuberant melodic song. Increasingly common at garden feeders in the wintertime (they love apples) research has shown that the birds we have in winter are probably birds that will return to breed in Eastern Europe in the summer to be replaced by our breeding Blackcaps which will be returning from migration in southern Europe or Africa. Due to milder winters in Britain and Ireland and provision of food in gardens these wintering blackcaps have changed their migration journeys cutting down the distance they have to travel and any dangers they face on the way. They also get back earlier to their breeding grounds ensuring they get a good territory to nest in. They have done very well in Dalkey in recent years with seven or eight different male birds singing from dense cover on Dalkey and Killiney Hills.

Dalkey Mozartfest 2006

Dalkey joined in the worldwide celebrations of Mozart's 250th anniversary on Saturday 25th March in St. Patrick's Church with the DALKEYMOZARTFEST 2006. The Inspired by Mozart audience were treated to a historical, musical journey from Each to Verdi. The concert was stylishly compered by RTE Prime Time's Mark Little. Our musical journey began with Dalkey's own John Dowland which was fittingly performed by Dalkey tenor, Karl Scully, whose sublimely lyrical voice resonated throughout the church. Stunning mezzo soprano, Alison Dunne graced us with arias from Mozart, Eizet and Gluck. Cellist and brain-child behind the DALKEYMOZARTFEST2006 Tara-Lee Eyme swept the stage with Haydn and Each. The Kurdanza String Quartet delivered youthful and polished performances of Mozart's legendary string quartets. Pianist, Mary McCague's accompaniment was both scintillating and sensitive throughout the evening. Duets were a strong feature of the second half after a fantastic raffle and wine reception during the interval. Alison's and Karl's voices blended perfectly in Donizetti and in Verdi's legendary "Brindisi" they toasted the audience for coming out in such strong numbers to support the first DALKEYMOZARTFESTT2006 concert, of which we hope to see more of in 2006! It was very encouraging to see so many local businesses supporting the arts in Dalkey.

MAMI Music Artists Management Ireland are delighted to announce that Karl Scully has just joined The legendary Irish Tenors along with Finbar Wright and Anthony Keams. Karl, with The Irish Tenors will be undertaking two coast to coast American tours this year and recording a nine part television series for RTE next month. Karl has just returned from his performances in The Wexford Opera Festival Young Artists Programme.

For further information or bookings for Karl Scully or MAMI please contact 087-6096736 or musicartistsmanagementireland@gmail.com

Place Names and Walls.....Andrew O'Rourke

Walking through the Back Meadow (on Killiney Hill) last week a fellow-walker told me he had never heard this name before or any of the other place names on the Hill which were familiar to us -local kids - sixty and more years ago.

I agreed to write a note on these names and others may wish to add their recollections. Walking from the car park (at the top of the Burma Road) to the Obelisk, one passes through what we called the Back Meadow and then the Church Wood. The hillside to the left of the car part and up Dalkey Hill was then the Burnt Wood for obvious reasons. It had been an old wood (it appears on the 1860's Ordnance Survey Map); when it burned I do not know but it was replanted from the 1950s on and is now a mature wood again. Over to the left through the meadow, through the old granite gate pillars and down towards the Vico is (or was!) the Primrose Wood and on the other side of the walk to the right -the only intact stretch of wall remaining on the hill -is the Back Wood, beneath the cliffs of Killiney Hill.

Theses old names, I imagine, were those used by the former owners of Killiney Hill, the Warrens of Killiney Castle. "The Back Meadow" would be the obvious name for the part of their park outside their back door. (For some of us, before we get the lawnmower going, a similar name might be appropriate!) The Primrose Wood was, in fact, full of primroses sixty years ago. In the meantime it has become a wilderness of brambles and ivy and two well-made pathways leading down to the Vico Road have become submerged and forgotten. The gates where these paths opened onto the Vico Road are still there -one beside the entrance to Mount Eagle, the other where the fine granite wall a bit further down the Vico Road descends to road level. However, walkers on Vico Road will have noticed that another old pathway, long buried, has reopened, leading up through the Primrose Wood -old granite steps and all. And remarkably, beside this steep pathway, where ivy and brambles have been pushed aside, the primroses have reappeared.

Some other places on the quarry side of Dalkey Hill have less romantic names -the Forge Yard; the Machine; the Firm Bank. These recall the time when up to 800 men worked the quarries. (They went on strike in 1826 because the employers wanted "to curtail our small pittances which we often find too small to support ourselves and family in this dear neighbourhood" (Dalkey a 'dear' place?))

A final word about walls -the "walls about these hills" built to give employment to the poor after the famine of 1741. They were mostly still in good condition until the end of the War. One ran from Dalkey Avenue, near the Castle gates to the top of Dalkey Hill and down the southeast side to the Vico Road, with a fine set of steps alongside in the steeper places. Remnants of the original walls can be seen here and there (on the Green Walk, for example) but many have been reduced in height and stabilised with concrete copings.

I must admit that the free-range kids of the area started the process of dismantlement of the walls. A seven or eight foot wall at the top of the Burma Road, which enclosed the Back Meadow and the rest of the original private demesne, was a challenge -a few stones dislodged at first, climbing over; then a growing gap to climb through, now a roadway into the car-park.

The old names, the walls, the forgotten paths and wells and (minor) mine shafts are now perhaps matters for historians and archaeologists -but knowledge of them can enhance the enjoyment of what is a truly wonderful public amenity.

Dalkey Community Council 26th Annual Garden Competition

This competition is open to everyone in the Community Council area. There are several prizes including four Perpetual Cups. In addition to nomination for the "Surprise" Garden section there are the following categories.

Best Overall Garden -

Best Display - window boxes, hanging baskets, flower troughs and pots

Best Communal - Garden/Open Space

Best Front Garden - visible from the road

Judging this year will take place on Wednesday, 28th June and entries should be submitted not later than Friday 16th June 2006 on the form below and placed in the box in Our Lady's Hall (presentation of prizes will take place on Friday 15th September)

Garden Competition Entry Form

I/we wish to enter for please tick box(es)

, Overall Garden

, Display-window boxes, hanging baskets etc

, Front Garden - visible from the road

, Communal Garden/Open Space

Dalkey Tidy Towns - April 2006 - AGM report

'Dalkey Delights' and 'Dalkey Cleans up in National Survey'. These were the headlines in local newspapers following a recent ibal survey (Irish Business Against Waste). Even the Irish Times and RTE radio news gave us a mention. In January we sent photographs of litter black spots to the County Manager and several depts. in the CC which resulted in a huge improvement in road cleaning during February. This must have been when ibal made their inspection. Unfortunately this state of affairs did not last but proves that it can be done.

Next Tuesday 11th April we are having another clean up at the Ramparts. This picnic area, which was derelict, should be ready for use in a few weeks. .

We are currently on the case of the public car park behind Eurospar; the shabby library; the worn out litterbins; the graffiti and dumping along the railway line, etc. etc. Yes we are very busy on behalf of Dalkey. We are disappointed with the results of interesting our school children in environmental projects but will persevere.

Do you remember last year when I announced that we had won an award from the Tidy Towns Competition? We said we would donate any prize winnings towards renovating the ancient Dalkey Graveyard. Tonight with great pleasure I hand over a cheque for €500 to the Heritage Centre for the Graveyard Fund with our best wishes.

Thank you. June Barnett

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