

THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION

(A Civic Society affiliated to the Civic Trust for Wales)

President: Rhodri Morgan AM

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NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS – JANUARY 2011

Welcome. A Happy New Year to you all. This is the second of our two-monthly newsletter. We had good feedback for our first edition. Please continue to tell us whether we are fulfilling a useful purpose in producing it.

Christmas. Over 400 residents attended the lighting of the Christmas Trees in Radyr and Morganstown. We were entertained by the choirs of both our Primary Schools and by the City of Cardiff Brass Band. A BBQ was run by the Association and mulled wine proved to be very popular. For the first time ever, the shops got involved, by decorating their windows and providing refreshments for their customers. We are confident that this event will prove to be a very popular one in the Radyr and Morganstown Calendar.

Traders Forum. One of the spin-offs from the Christmas project was the start of a "Traders Forum" for the Station Road shops. Due in no small part to the efforts of Judith Mancuso of Ener-Chi, a couple of meetings were held towards the end of last year. Now that we have started the ball rolling it is hoped that there will be regular meetings of the "Traders Forum" so that we can work together on important issues and plan ahead for the Xmas event of 2011.

Young People. Two years ago the Association adopted the goal of "Giving young people a voice and helping them do something about it." Since then a lot has changed. There are many groups working with young people in our village and we have been working with others to connect these groups together. This has helped develop some Village Plan projects and Festival events with young people. We plan on giving some regular updates and special items for the Radyr Chain on our activities. And don't forget the Association's 'Garry Newbould Award' which recognises young people who demonstrate leadership and commitment in enhancing our community life. This is awarded at our AGM in April. If you know someone who should get the award, please get in touch.

Refuse collection. We seem to have got back to normal with refuse collection. What happened over the snowy Christmas period puzzled everyone. First there were no collections, then some, then we were told we would have collections last week as normal only to find many properties only had a green bin or a black bin collection but not both. It was very strange, seemed totally random and was nothing to do with the normal Health and Safety excuse as there was no reason why one bin could be collected from a property but not the other. As usual, we were given no explanation. We were then told on the Cardiff website that there were catch up collections all over the City, however, we were told by our County Councillor that there were none planned for R&M and we would have normal collections on a Wednesday. Most people took everything in but without notice it appears there was a black bin collection in the sidings on the Sunday. Green bags and bins were left everywhere. Our 'green leafy suburb' (so some people describe us) looked a mess.

All ratepayers expect and deserve a better service than we received. We never want to hear again that there are catch up collections planned all over the City but not in our area.

What can we expect in the future? Who knows, but surely refuse collection must be one of the most basic services we pay for with our Council Tax and should be a major priority for the County Council to sort out. If we don't get a collection people expect to be given a reason and not just told to wait for next week.

R&M Website. Mentioning rubbish leads us to point out that the website did contain as much topical information regarding the problems with snow (including rubbish collection times) that could be found. Clearly a lot of people did not refer to it, and a high proportion of R&M residents do have access at home. Should we have widespread difficulty in future, do check on the website to see what it says; it is the quickest and best way we have of passing on information to everyone. A soapbox thread has been set up on the website (www.radyr.org.uk) for any feedback you may have on how the site operated this time and how it could be improved. Please add your comments.

From Small Acorns... When you travel abroad, around Britain or just through our city, and you see something that inspires you, do you ever think 'That would be a great thing to have where I live'? Do you then you forget all about it ...silly idea, who would organise that! A few years ago, when Parc Radyr was first built, I sat with friends looking out across the playground to the tennis courts thinking this is a natural amphitheatre. I think at the time I expressed what a fabulous spot for an open air summer concert. In fact I may have expressed that view a few times on return visits....sorry friends! Well I knew nothing about concerts, bands, how to go about the organisation so I just mused on the thought.

Now there is an organisation, to which you belong, which has a mountain of knowledge about organising anything! When I sat at the Association Festival Meeting, as the school representative for the Fun Run, there was a request for ideas to involve the young people of the community in events and I piped up my dream. That was two years ago and last year, blessed with the sun shine, we had a fantastic lazy spring day full of quality music from our local school, and community bands. The Association found a way to bring all this to the community with limited costs and heaps of enthusiasm. The Open Air Concert will take place again on 14th May this year and year on year we hope it will get bigger and better.

So, if you see anything happening on your travels ask yourself 'Could I achieve that where I live?' and then remember that the I is not an I but a WE and there is a huge amount of support and skill in the community which can make anything possible. Ideas are the hard bit the rest can be made to happen!

Losing out. Well, we did not win the BT's 'Race to Infinity'. We think the eventual response rate for R&M was around 20%, which is not bad. You can look on the website (www.racetoinfinity.bt.com) for the details of the winners and note the comment "Winning exchanges and those exchanges which have had 75% registered will be sent more details in January". It looks like we did not even get close.

So are we going to lose out again? We are hugely concerned about the library and the 'Community Plot' (CP). There was a plan to move the library to the CP but eventually it was agreed to build a new library on the current Park Road site instead. However we understand that no planning application has actually been submitted and that funding has now become an issue. We fear we will have no new library, no CP, and will have lost the matching funding. We sincerely hope we are wrong.

Festival Arts. In these cold winter days it's hard to believe that the sun will ever return, but some hardy souls are busy preparing the most adventurous May Festival to date and booking the sunshine. The Festival will run from Saturday 30th April to Sunday 14th May. As well as the usual events of Parades, Maypole dancing and quizzes there will be a 60's style cabaret at the Golf Club. We are also organising one of our most adventurous professional Arts programmes. Sunday 8th May will see the chamber choir, Cantemus, in a programme spanning four centuries and two continents, while Fluellen will open their new production of Chekov's funniest comedy, Uncle Vanya, on Wednesday 4th May. Other events are less well advanced, but a lunch time music concert and a literary evening are being negotiated. The Festival brochure will go to press in February and will be distributed via the April edition of The Chain as usual.

Downton Abbey. Many will have been gripped by the ITV series Downton Abbey. Downton Abbey was filmed at Highclere Castle near Hungerford in Berkshire, the home of the Earl and Countess of Caernarvon. (Their ancestor, the fifth Earl, was Howard Carter's patron on his excavations in the valley of the Kings.) Highclere itself is one of the finest Victorian houses in the UK with a fine collection of pictures and has beautiful gardens and grounds designed by "Capability" Brown. The History Society have been successful in booking a visit to Highclere on Thursday 7th July. They are booking the largest coach possible for this event as they are sure it will be popular. If there are any spaces left after the members have booked non-members will be welcome to join the event. For more details please phone Allan Cook on 2084 3176.

Next meeting. A reminder that our next meeting, on 14th February 2011, will be the first in the new format of a significant speaker and minimum Association business. We will be welcoming Dr Chris Partridge (Cardiff Tidy Towns Officer), who will be talking about 'Keeping R&M Tidy'. Put the date in your diary now. And, please let us know if you have ideas of topics you would like covered in future.

Contacts. If you would like to comment on any aspect of this Newsletter or require further information, then either email the Secretary, Nick Hawkins, at rma@radyr.org.uk or ring the Chairman, Cyril Williams, on 029 2084 250.