

# RST Newsletter

Rathfeigh • Skryne • Tara



DIGITAL VERSION FOR DURATION OF CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC

SATURDAY 11<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2020

ISSUE NO. 2



Full moon over Skryne Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 2019

*Taken by Terry Foley*

## Congratulations



*James (Jack) Conroy and Siobhan Daly who got married in Kilkenny March 16<sup>th</sup> 2020*

## Memories by Eoin Hickey

Elizabeth Hickey lived in Skryne Castle for over fifty years up to her death in 1999, probably longer than any of her Norman predecessors.

Despite the cold of the house she was happy there, taken up with her writing, family and many visitors and a love of animals. She wrote an article, when Sean Fox on the Hill gave up doing groceries, called No More Sausages about the dogs of the parish which was re-published in RST a few years ago.

Mrs Hickey, our mother had a great fondness for animals, particularly for cats and dogs. She always had about ten cats, mostly kept outside but some favourites were allowed inside, She bred, successfully for many years, pedigree Cairn Terriers, a very old breed, originally working dogs in the highlands of Scotland.

**Cairn Terriers** are fearless, intelligent, assertive, hardy and very active, many of her relations and friends had one of her breed, usually called Tara.

Our mother taught for many years in Dunshaughlin, English and History. She loved to have her young neighbours and pupils visit the Castle.

A special treat for young girls was the Dress Up Box. This was a large wooden antique trunk, home to fine clothes. The trunk was big enough for several children to hide in during a game of hide-and-seek, it was a fine piece of furniture, standing on the large landing at the very top of the Castle.

Views from up there are quite spectacular, that's why Skryne Castle was built at this site in the first place. From the front windows you could see the Hill of Skryne and across the fields to the Hill of Tara, where on a good Day you could see the sun reflecting off the tops of the parked cars.

From the south facing windows could be seen all of the Ross Road. Skryne School and the Chapel and graveyard where a local family, who had emigrated, lost a son and brought him home to be buried in Skryne. The boy's father said to our mother 'I know, Mrs Hickey, that you will be able to keep an eye on him from the Castle when we are all gone away'.

Further around to the left can be seen Oberstown and on a clear day Rathfeigh and on a very clear day the field divisions on the Mourne Mountains.

The trunk, or the dress up box, consisted mostly of 19th century dressing up clothes including long dresses, shawls, hats, scarfs and some 20th century costumes.

Our mother had been a costume designer as a young woman in Dublin in the 1930s. We have some newspaper reviews of exhibitions she held in Dublin hotels.

One place our mother worked in was the Gate Theatre where Wilfred Bramble of Steptoe and Son and a very young Orson Welles had worked along with Michael MacLiammoir and Hilton Edwards.

The dress up box was full of old, period surprises and mysteries and very well remembered by my sister Netta who often led the dress-ups.

The trunk came from Scotland when our mother's mother died in 1948 and had belonged, in turn, to our mother's grandmother..

The Cairn terriers were divils for straying, it was in their nature to tear off across the fields sometimes taking hours to bring back. On one occasion, two of them, Poppy and Jenny, went

missing with no sign for several days. Emergency declared! Notices were put up in local shops, pubs and the post office.

After a couple of days the telephone rang, it was two young sisters from across the river, the dogs had turned up in their garden. Mary O' Growney at the post office had shown the girls the notice.

The dogs were collected by a very excited Elizabeth Hickey and an invitation to the Castle was extended to the two girls who duly arrived and were shown around, including the views from top of the Castle, and then, yes!, they were introduced to the Dress Up Trunk.

The two girls became very good friends with our mother for many years after.

That was several decades ago. The two girls finished their growing up in Skryne and went their way.

Today one is a teacher and lives locally the other works in Dublin.

Question for RST readers: where were the dogs found?

Answer in next RST

## Notices

*Congratulations to  
Allen & Emer Carty on  
the birth of their  
daughter Saoirse  
Grace*

*A&J Print are open for  
business, this may be  
of particular interest to  
students who need to  
have their projects  
printed up*

*A big thank you to the pupils in Rathfeigh National  
School who have been sending in lovely letters and  
pictures to our residents in Hillview Nursing Home.  
Obviously with no visitors they are feeling a bit lonely.  
And the letters are really cheering them up.*

## Tribute to Joan Gallagher by Tom O'Neill,

20 years ago last month I was in hospital and as part of my recovery I did a Rehab programme in Heart House on Eccles Street Dublin.

I travelled on the 101 bus from Balbriggan with my then guide dog Bruce a Curley coat retriever crossed Labrador. I was eased into the programme by going twice a week and over the six weeks it built up that I was going 4 days a week.

As happens the lady Ann who ran the programme asked what happens to a guide dog when he retires and I said as I have done many times that we owners pick a family member or a friend or they will find a home for him through the center in cork. Have you somebody for Bruce? No says I and on it went until one day some months later Ann and her mother came to meet Bruce in Balbriggan because the conversation between Ann and I was I think my mother would love that dog as she is about to retire herself from been a post woman.

That visit began a 20 year friendship that sadly this week came to an end as Joan passed away in tara Co Meath in her home just before her 83 birthday



I am very sad because I could not attend this funeral but here are some of the things Joan did with Bruce She drove a Ford Fiesta when she came that day and declared that was not suitable for a dog of Bruce's quality so she changed the car for a small post van. She put foam all around the sides and on the floor for his comfort. When he became older she made a step that he could use to get into the back of the van.

I was on the phone to her one day and she said hold on a minute. She came back to me and said I just moved the old sleeping bag that was on the lawn for Bruce into where the sun is now as it had moved.

They went from Tara to Knock Mayo every year and she stopped along the way and they had a pick nick and a toilet break

She went to 11.30 am mass each Sunday but travelled early so that she could put the van under a

special tree near the church in case while she was in church the sun came out and the van got too hot for Bruce

In the first year she had Bruce she opened up her beautiful gardens for all to see and charged a little in to do a fundraiser for guide dogs. Everybody got a cup of tea and a bun as well

She introduced me to Nick Palmer who is now a board member of Irish guide dogs for the blind for 9 years. Her introductions continued and she introduced me to Mary O'Growney of Tara P.O. who from that year on until the post office closed ran a xmas and Easter raffle in the p.o. Marys son David and others ran some wonderful tractor runs for us in Tara and Skerne Co Meath all because a retired guide dog came to live in the area.

So while sadness is there today there is also a lot of wonderful memories and friendships that will go on for ever

Around the time Bruce retired in 2001 I shared the following piece of poetry with Joan and I would now like to share it with you all. Rest in peace Joan and have more fun meeting Bruce again

### THOUGHTS OF AN OLD GUIDE DOG

Slowing down and slowing up, I am ten this spring, long since a pup. For eight good years we have being together my master and I, out in all weather, in sunshine and showers in snow and in fog, a sight so familiar a man and his dog. I have taken him on buses and coaches and trains it gets us there quicker my master explains, I have taken him to hospital's theaters and pubs we have visited friends and quite a few clubs.

We have done lots of walking which is what I like best, but I have noticed quite lately, I do need a rest for now it would seem that I am not very well and what is the reason I just cannot tell.

The vets done unspeakable things to my rear, all for my good for what I can here I wanted to bite him but master said "STAY" and what he says goes, for I always obey.

Now theres rice egg and milk all mixed up in my dish and every so often a nice piece of fish. I think I am improveing, there's less of a pain and I have been out walking with master again but I can't figure out that strange look on his face as if one of us two is going someplace, "you are a good boy" he say's and you have a big heart I reckon he is thinking we will soon have to part, I give him a paw which he takes in his hand and he gives me a look which we both understand.

## The Night Sky by Tony Canavan

Date: April 2020

The planet **Venus** dominates the evening sky throughout April and can be seen high in the western sky. Venus is very bright as it has the same phases as the moon and at this time it is a growing crescent and very bright. Very close to Venus and clearly visible to the naked eye is the **Pleiades Star Cluster** also known as the Seven Sisters and is beautiful through binoculars and telescope.

Stars begin to appear at twilight in order of their magnitude. Because we are in full moon phase it is more difficult to see some of the less luminous stars particularly in the east at twilight.

**Sirius** begins to appear to the south, the brightest star in the sky and as twilight progresses, between Sirius and Venus, two stars start to appear **Aldebaran** (nearest to Venus) and **Betelgeuse**, further away in the same direction and parallel to the horizon. The latter is a red giant in the last stages of its life. It has expanded to the size of Jupiter's orbit of the earth. There are two possibilities for its final performance. It will either go supernova or will collapse and become a black hole. The former is most likely, exploding into the cosmos and seeding the universe with light and heavy elements from hydrogen all the way through to iron. From this debris scattered into the cosmos, together with the key ingredient of gravity, stars and planets and eventually life forms will spring. In this way, every second, a thousand suns are born in the cosmos.

Directly overhead is **Pollux** and **Castor**, the heavenly twins, in the constellation of Gemini and overhead, but more to the northwest, is **Capella**. Capella is the alpha star of the constellation Auriga, the Charioteer. It is a double star (actually two suns rotating around one another at very close range.) It is only 43 light years away (light travels at three hundred thousand kilometres a second).

As night falls, look back to Betelgeuse and directly below it are three bright stars in a row, marking the belt of Orion, the warrior. And just below that is the **Orion Nebula**, probably one of the most important nebulas to astronomers, as it is, effectively, a star nursery where thousands of stars and accompanying planets are being born. It is quite stunning when viewed through a telescope.

If you take a line from Sirius up to Castor and Pollux you will pass **Procyon**, in Canis Minor, and is the night skies eight brightest star at a distance of only 11.5 light years. It has a smaller companion star close by.

In the east, even with the strong moonlight you can clearly see the star **Arcturus** rising, in the constellation of Bootes. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> brightest star in the sky.

A line from the moon to overhead meets the Big Dipper (the Plough) in the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear. And if you follow the line of the last two stars of the bowl (handle and bowl), going north, you will see **Polaris**, the North Celestial Pole. This star neither rises nor sets but remains stationary and everything else rotates around the heavens. Its elevation above the horizon closely equals the navigator's latitude. The position of the North Celestial Pole will change over a 26,000 year precession (like the wobble on the top of a spinning top) as the earth moves through the cosmos. In 2105 the earth's North Celestial Pole will start to move away from Polaris.

April 15<sup>th</sup> The moon will be in its last quarter and just before dawn will slide past Jupiter (by far the brightest), Saturn and Mars. Best viewed about 530 am.

April 25<sup>th</sup> after sunset the crescent moon (only 7% sunlit) lies to the right of the star cluster Hyades with its prominent star Aldebaran, marking the head of the bull in the constellation Taurus. So you will have a crescent moon, Pleiades, Venus blazing about 12 degrees above the moon and Hyades (open star cluster). Should make a stunning photograph.

Enjoy.

## Wildlife



*Hoof Fungus*

*One of our readers came across this beautiful specimen recently*



*The Deer were here*

*The same person also noticed these deer tracks*





# Stay At Home Bird Watching Challenge Poster



NOTE: Measurements from tip of beak to end of tail



Photos by Mark Carmody from 'The Birds of Ireland: A Field Guide'

Produced by BirdWatch Ireland Cork Branch - [www.birdwatchcork.com](http://www.birdwatchcork.com)



Send message





*Peacock Butterfly  
spotted in Skryne  
garden Monday  
April 6<sup>th</sup>*

## Hope by Anne Frehill

Every year when the first day of May arrived my mother arranged a May altar. I remember, as a child, that it was one of those days which I marked on the wall calendar with a red pen. The others being Christmas, Easter, Nollaig na mBan and my birthday.

A special linen cloth, strictly reserved for the purpose, covered a small side table. This was placed at the landing window which served as a natural form of backlighting. A much-treasured statue of the Blessed

Virgin Mary took pride of place, adorned in blue and white robes, standing on a globe having crushed the serpent, and with a crown of twelve stars on her head. In Secondary school, I discovered that the twelve stars represented the twelve patriarchs of the tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles.

We surrounded Our Lady with all the wildflowers which we could find. Jam jars filled with primroses, cowslips, bluebells and in the centre Mother`s best cut glass vase containing early blooms from her well-tended garden. Pansies and lilacs are what I recall but there were others which made an appearance depending on the vagaries of the weather. Finally, at each side of the table two blessed candles in brass holders stood proudly. These were light only in the evenings when there was always someone at home to keep an eye on them.

For all of us from farming families, we saw the May altar as serving three purposes. (1) it was a way to pay homage to the Virgin Mary (2) it heralded the start of Summer (3) it was perceived as a means to ensure that family, livestock and crops would be protected in the months to follow.

Many years later, as a student at UCD I learned from the late Professor Kevin Danaher (Dept. Of Irish Folklore) that some rituals associated with the month of May go back to a pre-Christian era. For example, placing Mayflowers at windows, thresholds and wells, was a way to appease the fairies, while celebrating the Goddess of Summer and new beginnings. However, from Christian times the emphasis changed to veneration of the Virgin Mary, all though in several parts of the country, Christian and pre-Christian rituals are inextricably linked.

Now, in this extraordinary year 2020 when the Coronavirus stalks the land, I find myself reverting to an old ritual. A May altar has appeared early in our home. I set it up two weeks ago in response to this terrible crisis which some call a war and others call Armageddon. Regardless of how one chooses to view this pandemic, my little altar serves as a portal between the seen and the unseen, between the sacred and the secular. Here, as I go about my daily chores I can pause for a few moments, offering my thoughts and prayers for all those fighting for their lives as well as those fighting for the lives of others.

## Easter Update from Skryne National School by Martin Kennedy

The last few weeks have been a very strange and unusual experience for us all. The new reality for most of us has brought many changes to our daily lives and routines. Working from home brings many challenges. It can be very difficult to get that "quiet" space so that you can concentrate to get your work done. It may be that you don't really have a great broadband service to allow you more easily access the work you need/want to stay in to touch with. There may not be sufficient devices in your household to give you the time online that you need/desire. There are all the chores that need to be done in any household. You may have missed celebrating a birthday or special occasion with family and friends. Add in to the mix that you also have to "share" more regularly than we are accustomed to and it can all just seem a little unfair. Sometimes life throws a great big spanner in the works. This is such a time. Just remember that we are all in this together. Life is not being more unfair to you than to anyone else. Some of us will have to bear a little more pain than others, for instance, it may be that someone close to us passes away during this period. The restrictions necessarily imposed on us by the authorities may prevent us from attending services and from grieving and/or sympathising in the normal way. Unfortunately, nothing is normal at the moment and we do what we do in order to speed up the day when normality returns to our lives. It is a fight worth fighting and a sacrifice worth making. Our eternal gratitude must go out to the many people who are working so selflessly to make sure that essential services are maintained and that no person is left to feel alone during this time. It may just be that we have eventually come to realise that we live in a society not an economy. Let's all hope that if there is one enduring lesson to be learnt when we are on the other side of the hill, that it is that one. The goodness, generosity and thoughtfulness of so many people, young and old, has been wonderful to witness. We are seeing the best side of many people at this time. Long may it endure. "Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na ndaoine" proclaims the old Irish seanfhocail. Never was it more true. Those shrewd old heads were blessed with a canny wisdom. They also knew the true meaning of society and community.

Through it all there have been some shining beacons of hope and resilience. On tonight's news I see a story of a man of 101 years of age who is heading home having beaten the virus. Real hope. Our hearts are lifted when we see people singing from balconies, delivering food and medicines to the elderly or joining in bouts of applause for frontline workers. We all need hope and assurances that things will get better - and they will.

Shortly I expect an announcement that schools will not be reopening for the foreseeable future. Too much has been gained in terms of flattening the curve to risk a backward step now. If that is the case rest assured that we will continue to support your child's learning at home in whatever way we can. I want to acknowledge publicly the mighty efforts being made by the teachers to ensure that we are providing a steady stream of content for children to engage with. Likewise I want to congratulate

all the children of Sc. Cholmcille who have engaged so well with their daily tasks. Thank you for sending in your work to your teachers. We have received some great examples of artwork, history and nature projects and some weird science experiments. Keep it up. You are all such wonderful children and we do miss you terribly. Nothing beats the energy of the classroom and the "buzz" that you bring to our school. Maybe we will all appreciate it a little more when we do return. In the interim, keep up your great work, be nice to everybody around you, smile and keep going. We will get there.

If there is anything you would like to suggest to us then please email to "[skryne.n.s@gmail.com](mailto:skryne.n.s@gmail.com)", or else email your class teacher directly. Remember though that just like in class, teachers cannot answer every question. We do love to hear from you.



**This picture is of a hand drawn sign posted in her porch door by an elderly woman on the morning of her 88th birthday last Tuesday. She had just been in hospital for some regular tests. She is "cocooning" and living alone. She had no drawing paper so used an old paper bag and a red pen she found in the house. I thought it was a super effort from a lady who can't see very well as she also suffers from macular degeneration. It brought a tear to my eye anyway. That old lady is my mother and I missed terribly not being able to hug her on her birthday. Nothing ever beats a hug from from your mam! We are all experiencing some degree of pain and loss. It varies from household to household but we all share in it. Make the most of your Easter weekend. At least there is no shortage of chocolate. Fan slán. Mr. K**

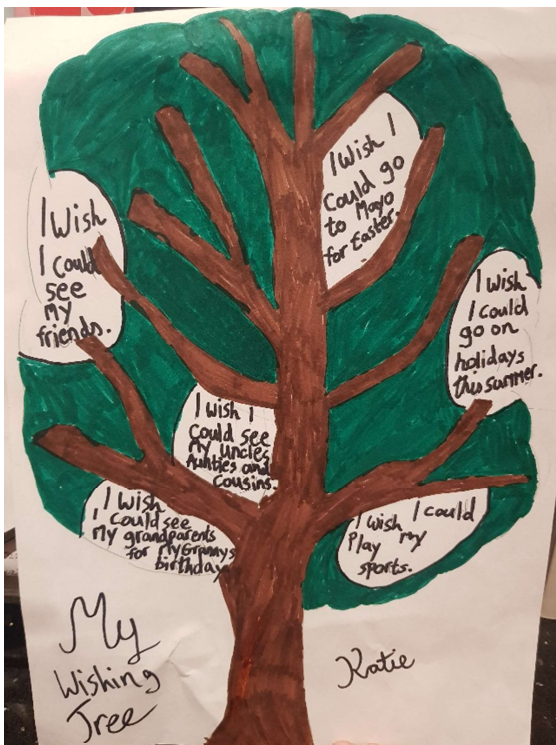
The Following photos are examples of projects that some of the Skryne students sent in to Martin Kennedy



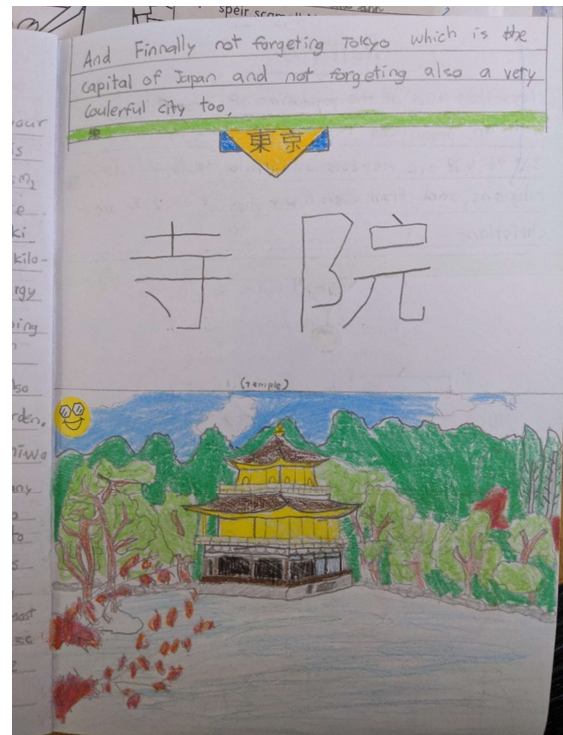
Ellen made this amazing volcano. Now there is no baking soda left in the house.



Tadhg produced some Ogham stone writing. He has run out of pencils!



Katie wishing to be in Mayo for Easter.  
Great Wish Tree



Ronan has found out a lot about Japan. No Olympics this year.



Tom & James are designing a new uniform for Sc. Cholmcille.

## Baking / Cookery

*Róisín King, age 10, sent in the following recipe to us*

### PIZZA PASTA BAKE

serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS:

250g fusilli pasta.  
200g chorizo.  
4 cloves of garlic.  
1 red pepper.  
200g passata.  
1 tbsp of red pesto.  
1 tbsp of oregano.  
1 tbsp of basil.  
200g of grated cheddar cheese.

You will need a pot and an ovenproof dish.

#### METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 180c or gas mark 4. Cook pasta according to the packet.
2. While the pasta is cooking, crush garlic, chop the pepper into cubes and slice the chorizo.

3. When the pasta is cooked, drain it and put back in the pot. Add the red pepper, chorizo and garlic to the pot and mix.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Pour in the passata and red pesto with the dried herbs and give a mix.
6. Put in the ovenproof dish, top with the cheese. Place on bottom shelf of the oven, and cook for 40 minutes.

6. Let cool. Eat. And enjoy!!!!!



*Róisín also sent in the following photo to prove she could make it*





## *We received the following recipe from another reader*

### Gluten Free Fibre Oat Bread

11 oz GF Porridge Oats  
2 oz Self raising GF Rice Flour  
2 Teasp GF Breadsoda (Sieved )  
2 Tablespoons seed mix , pumpkin , sunflower etc  
Fist full chopped Walnuts  
1 teaspoon brown sugar or few sultanas  
500g Pot Natural Yogurt  
1 Egg.

Mix ingredients together &

Bake in lined loaf tin in hot oven 170 to 180 degrees ( depending on your oven) for 30 min , then bake for a further 30 min at 150 degrees.

## Rathfeigh National School

### **School Closure**

March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020 will live long in the memory – the day the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced that schools were to close due to the escalating coronavirus pandemic. The news was met with a mixture of shock and excitement by the children in Rathfeigh. The excitement amongst the children waned somewhat when they were told that they would have to complete a list of homework while the school was closed! At home-time the mood around the school was surreal, to say the least, as we waved goodbye to the children not knowing when we would see them again!

As a staff we decided it was important that the children continue with school work while the school was closed. After examining the many forms of Distance Learning available we decided to use “Edmodo” which was new to all of us. “Edmodo” allows us, as teachers, to upload a variety of school work with instructions on a daily basis for the children. The children complete their work at home and can upload their completed work for the teacher to correct. It’s great to be able to communicate with the children while they’re not at school. The children have been very adaptable to this new form of learning and we are delighted that they are getting on with their lives and school work in these challenging and unprecedented times. We hope to see all the children fit and healthy back in school before too long!

### **Board of Management**

In these times of change our latest Board of Management meeting was set up using “Zoom” by the chairperson Máire Kennedy. This was a historic occasion as it was the first time in the history of the school that a Board meeting was held online. Máire welcomed and thanked all the members that will be on the Board for the next four years – Conor Mc Carron, Bernard Keogan, Mary Gallagher, Clare Geraghty, Brigid Kieran, Jackie Vaughan and Seamus Tansley.

### **Enrolment**

Our Enrolment Week was held in February. It was great to meet new parents/guardians who will be starting their children in Rathfeigh in September. March and April is a time when parents visit schools before they make a final decision about where they will send their children in September. As the school is now closed I

would encourage parents/guardians to e-mail the school if they would like an Enrolment form to be sent to them or if they would like to find out more information about the school. The principal, Mr Tansley, would be delighted to answer any question you might have about the school. For more information please e-mail the school at [snrathfaiche1@eircom.net](mailto:snrathfaiche1@eircom.net) (Website: [rathfeighns.org](http://rathfeighns.org)).

We hope everyone in the Rathfeigh and Skryne community stays safe and healthy in these challenging times.

**“If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere” (Seamus Heaney).**

## COVID 19 Community Support Group and Club Together

As you are aware Skryne GFC joined forces with the Active First Responders a few weeks back to form the local COVID 19 Community Support volunteer group to help local people most in need however we can in these restricted times. Since then the GAA has partnered with SuperValu and Centra to help keep the most vulnerable of us to keep well stocked up with essentials to get through these difficult times. As part of this “Club Together” initiative Skryne GFC have partnered with Supervalu Johnstown who will contact the COVID 19 Community Support group to assist with the delivery of groceries to the more vulnerable in our parish. This will be a drop and go service to ensure all physical distancing guidelines set out by the HSE will be adhered to all times.

I hope you will agree this could be a great help to the more isolated in the parish so please spread this message out to all your local contacts that may require the service or may know someone who does. The service will be up and running in the coming week with details advertised on all Skryne GFC social media platforms.

Thanks again and mind yourselves!

COVID 19 Community Support group

Cormac Grendon 0879409677

Ross Philips 0879798822

Des Manning 0860584116.

Stephen Naughton 0872225572;

Niall Muldoon 0852091801;

Sean O Regan 0868145169

Christy O Connor 086 2854057

Declan Smyth 087-2504983

A.F.R. (9 am - 6pm) 0868853713.

Please contact any of us for further information or assistance.

## Message from Swans of Oberstown

Swans of Oberstown would like to inform our customers that we are doing our best to keep the shop open and are taking advice from the government and the HSE on how best to do so.

Customer safety is of paramount importance to us all and we kindly request the same in return for all our staff. Please maintain the new social distancing etiquette and follow all HSE guidelines.

The Swan family would like to thank all our customers for your continued support. Rest assured we will strive to keep the shelves well stocked with all the essentials, together with lots of goodies to help us through these challenging times. As well as offering somewhere safe to shop we are also doing deliveries where possible. At the moment we are open from 8am-8pm. Stay safe.

## Condolences

We express our sincere sympathy to the families of:

Kieran O'Flynn, Rathfeigh on the death of his mother, Maryanne

Breda Reilly, Collierstown on the death of her sister, Cathy

## Roadside Clean up

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the recent roadside cleanup. New roads cleaned this year were from Fox's pub to Maher's cross , Skryne gallops to old Lismullen, Old Ross cross to Ross cross and also Painstown Hill.

Unfortunately there have been two dumpings of builders waste since the cleanup which have also been removed by the Council. Anyone who would like to join our Whats app group please contact Brigid on 0863314487.

## Motoring Queries

I would be willing to offer any advice to readers regarding their vehicles. With garages closed readers may have queries regarding issues that they are worried about.

Ron Chawke  
Ron Chawke Motors  
086-1717159  
[ronchawkemotors@gmail.com](mailto:ronchawkemotors@gmail.com)

## Gardening

*Michelle sent in these photos of Baby Cora who is a Botanist in the making!*



## Contacts

Do you have family or friends living abroad who would like to receive the RST?

Perhaps you could send us their contact details and we will add them to our mailing list

Please send all articles to [jimconroy747@gmail.com](mailto:jimconroy747@gmail.com)