

Boxing club damaged in estate's third arson raid

A BOXING club in a disadvantaged estate has become the third community facility hit by arsonists in less than a week.

Significant smoke damage was caused to St Saviour's Boxing Club in Ballybeg, Waterford, after it was set on fire early yesterday.

It follows arson attacks that gutted the Ballybeg Youth Resource Centre and caused extensive damage to St Saviour's GAA Club in the early hours of Saturday morning.

Gardaí discovered the fire at the boxing club after 3am when they were on a routine patrol in Ardmore Park, Ballybeg, and heard the alarm.

Firefighters managed to get it under control before it caused too much burn damage. However, the fire caused much smoke

By **Conor Kane**

damage and destroyed a large amount of boxing equipment.

Club president Larry Durand said a custom-built boxing ring, with storage compartments underneath, had been destroyed.

'We haven't been into the club yet because the forensic team want to do their examination so exactly what damage is done, I don't know. But from the door, I can see that the ring is gone,' he said.

Mr Durand said members were 'absolutely devastated' by the attack.

'The history of the club is in there... photographs and club records. If that's gone, it can't be replaced.'

St Saviour's caters for about 60 members, half of them underage,

many of whom are currently training for the county championships. Despite the shock and upset, they were determined to work on, Mr Durand said.

'That's what we have to do. There's after being a few clubs on to me this morning [to help] but I don't know, until we know what's gone... My concern is my members of my club and to get my club back up and running.'

The boxing club also suffered badly in 2009 when it was the victim of another arson attack.

Vandals also attacked the Kilbarry Sports Centre, close to Ballybeg, between 10.30 and 11.30pm on Monday. Gardaí found the exit doors prised open, damage to the internal doors and office, and CCTV cameras ripped from the walls.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Making music is the nearest we can come to perfection

THERE is a time for silence, a time for escaping into the arms of peace. There are, however, other times when we require the beauty of sound. I speak of music, that language which communicates much more than the spoken word.

I was only a boy when I discovered the redemptive powers of music. The kitchen was dimly lit as the old teapot simmered on the stove. My elderly friend liked to savour a 'demitasse' while listening to his old vinyl records.

As we sipped, he placed the needle onto something that changed everything for me. It was the Adagio un poco mosso from Beethoven's Emperor Concerto. The melody was so magnificent and sublime I could not but weep.

In that instant, I realised that in music we hear the voice of the divine. It is the language of love, one that heals, inspires and releases us from the burdens of earthly existence. Of all things that we do, making music is the nearest we come to perfection.

When all seems lost, when life appears hopeless, it is then that music sings to the spirit. It redeems us from loss, pain and loneliness. It is there when we are born, when we die and on so many great occasions in between.

More than mere sound, it says nothing yet expresses everything. Music is what our memories are made of. As we listen, the past comes to life and we dance again with those we have loved.

Whether on the heights or down in the depths, music is our constant companion. It refreshes, restores and renews even when we feel we cannot continue. Without it, our most sacred and intimate moments would be robbed of their true meaning.

A life without music is incomplete. Where there is sadness, it brings joy. Where there is despair, it brings hope and where there is darkness, it gives light.

That is why I was thrilled to learn that the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, in conjunction with the National Concert Hall, is to host a 'nostalgic tea dance' on Friday, February 6, at 3pm for those living with dementia, their carers and family members. The event also marks the reintroduction of the NCH's Health And Harmony outreach project, which aims to bring those with dementia into the concert hall.

If music has the power to heal, if it has the capacity to reach those stranded in the land of shadows, it is because it speaks to something beyond the body. It reaches deep down into the heart, down to the source of all joy. Through harmony

and melody, mind and soul are nourished in accordance with the true laws of life.

The effect on children is profound. When the mayhem peaks, I reach for some soothing piano music. I press 'play' and, as the sweet sounds fill the room, harmony is soon restored.

I have witnessed my children cry to music that could leave no human heart untouched. That they do so is testimony to the fact that it alone can save them from their world of noise. It alone has the power to shape their senses for the good.

I would even go so far as to say that nothing can morally change a person more than music. Indeed, the type of music to which you listen defines the type of person you become. Had I not heard that Beethoven concerto in my friend's kitchen, I doubt I would be who I am today.

From that moment, I saw the world differently. I noticed beauty in things to which I was once indifferent. I also knew that, however unkind life might be, I could always find healing and help simply by pressing a button.

Thanks to Mrs Dooley, a lifelong piano performer, music has a special place in our home. If I often remind her that she is gifted, it is because those who play music enable us to hear the harmony of the heart. They give colour and light to life.

MUSIC: our redemption from isolation, sorrow and strain. And if, at life's end, we select those sounds that will accompany us to the soil, it is because it is the language of a more heavenly sphere. It is a voice from beyond the soil, one that says everything without uttering a single word.

My elderly friend had very little in the way of worldly wealth. Martin lived modestly and without pretension. He was eccentric, a loner and a man who regretted the advance of the modern world.

Yet, in all my travels since his death in 1992, I have rarely met someone so selfless, sincere and kind. Martin gave to everyone without having to be asked, most especially to those without a home. In so many ways, he was the quintessential Good Samaritan, a person who helped without hope of reward.

I possess nothing tangible by which to remember him yet I realise that Martin gave me more than most.

That night, without saying anything, he shared with me the secret to a blessed life. He showed that when music shapes our lives, we cannot go far wrong.

Martin's beautiful life was proof of this as, of course, were the tears he inspired and which came to rest in my demitasse.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

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