

# Cyclist death toll has doubled on our roads

THE number of cyclists killed on Irish roads doubled in the first half of this year compared to the same period in 2016.

A mid-year review published by the Road Safety Authority and the Gardai showed that between January and June 30, 2017, ten cyclists lost their lives on roads, a 100% jump from the first half of last year.

Garda Assistant Commissioner Michael Finn, speaking yesterday at the review launch, urged both motorists and cyclists to have more consideration for each other when on the road.

'It can be a congested space out there,' Mr Finn said. 'We're encouraging people to get out on the road and to cycle to

By Lisa O'Donnell

work to reduce the traffic volumes, but it's a shared space.

'We want both the cyclists and the motorists to share that space safely so we have less fatalities on the road.'

Transport Minister Shane Ross described the statistics on cyclist fatalities as 'very worrying' and something that his department is going to address as 'a matter of urgency'.

However, the overall number of road fatalities decreased - with 77 people losing their lives in 72 collisions in the first half of this year, compared to 87 in the same period in 2016.

Mr Ross said that it was a 'bittersweet' day, as while the overall death toll has decreased, the figures were still 'completely and utterly unacceptable'.

The Transport Minister recently revealed plans to introduce legislation to automatically ban motorists caught driving over the legal alcohol limit and to name and shame those who are disqualified for driving under the influence.

Speaking yesterday, he said: 'My primary objective in this Transport portfolio is to reduce the death numbers. We're absolutely determined to do this, and if it means more legislation, we'll do it.'

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Our creations will still speak long after we have departed

**I**PASSED this way once, a long time ago. The place looked different then and you were not here. I passed this way but nothing remains of me now - nothing except the wall I built.

Yes, that wall you are leaning against - I built that with my own hands. I picked the stones myself and, over the course of a week, I slowly constructed a wall that would survive the test of time. That it still stands shows that I built it well.

You lean against it, sit on it as you are waiting for the bus or for your friends. But why do you never think of me? I know it is only a wall, but it is what remains of me - my monument.

Remains: the world is full of them. The chairs we sit in, the houses we inhabit, the street itself - they all cry out to be heard, for they all have something to say.

Through them, the dead live on and speak to us from the place of the living.

I passed this way once and left something behind. To you it is just a wall, or a tree or the road you walk along to work.

To me, it is my life's work - my legacy here on earth.

You stroll along the road admiring the streetscape. For you, it is simply a means to an end - that of getting to work.

But I laboured here on these very stones, pouring my life and soul into the concrete beneath your feet.

The high trees that serve as natural shade were once small shrubs which I held in the palm of my hand.

Tenderly, I took each one and planted it deep down in the soil. They took root and now they stand as testimony to my dreams.

I passed this way once but you were not born. I know that because I once lived in your house. You live there now and I am forgotten but I am not dead.

Remember John Ruskin: 'The greatest glory of a building is not in its stone or in its gold', but in that deep sense of 'mysterious sympathy' we 'feel in walls that have long been washed by passing waves of humanity'.

You may try to erase me with

paint, with plaster and new décor, but I shall not be moved. For I am one of those waves that has left an indelible imprint on these walls.

The chair you sit on, the floor you stand upon, the cup you drink from, the book you read - all these were made by human hands.

They are the work of imagination and the product of inspiration. And even now, so many years since they were imagined and made, they still bear the spirit of those who laboured on them.

You thought only art has the power to let ghosts speak, that it alone permits the dead to communicate beyond the grave.

But doesn't everything speak to us like music or painting or poetry?

There is nothing that has been created by human hands that stays silent.

I passed this way once and something of me still remains, still speaks to those who are prepared to listen. Look closely at the old gate by the end of the lane. It is all rusted and disused, but once it was the entrance to my home.

**Y**OU call things 'derelict' and ruined by age, and yet they all have a story to tell. No matter how abandoned or neglected, they are traces of who I used to be.

They are reminders of a time before yours, a time through which I walked and left these fading footprints.

I am no longer visible, but from what remains of me you can tell my story and connect with my spirit. The lawyers and historians call it 'evidence'. But you have the power to simply look, listen and learn.

As you walk this way, remember that I laid the brick beneath your feet. As you admire the sun smiling through the trees, remember that they are a testimony to my love and care. As you sit here, let me tell you my story.

I passed this way once, a long time ago. I passed this way but you were not here, for that was my time to live, love, walk and work. Now, it is your time, but, someday, you and I will be just the same.

Someday, as they pass, you too shall whisper: 'Please remember me.'

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