

# Multi-story apartments tell a tale

History is shared for neighbours in Liberties

**Luke Byrne**

**ARTIST** Chris Reid has always loved oral history, so he jumped at the chance to set in bronze the stories he never tires of hearing.

Chris has just completed a project commissioned by Dublin City Council to capture and preserve stories from the Liberties area.

He set out to create a micro-history about Nicholas Street, Ross Road, Bride Street and Bride Road by recording conversations with residents and people associated with the area.

## Demolition

Some of the local flats were earmarked for demolition in the early 1990s but were saved when it was decided they were part of the city's architectural heritage.

Each contributor helped select 20 short texts for use on 20 bronze plaques that have now been attached to buildings in the area.

They offer a quirky and sometimes moving insight into daily life there.

One refers to cooking breakfast and opening the window only to have a passer-by "gawking in".

Another reads: "I never really had a conversation with my



I'd be standing in the kitchen cooking my breakfast. I'd pull up the blinds and open the window to let air in. Next thing you see someone gawking in, waving in and taking snaps. Hello, one says. How are you sir? Good, I says. Would you like a rasher sandwich?

I never really had a conversation with my father. Sometime in the 1960's he caught me mitching from school and gave me an awful hiding. Ripped the clothes off me, lashed me with the belt and punched me in the eyes.



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Chris has also developed a book based on the work called 'Heirlooms & Hand-Me-Downs'.

He said: "You're dealing with people who have known each other for years, sometimes families who have known each other for generations, so you have to be careful when you're quoting people."

"I wanted to get the people involved, so when I was going to cast the final quotes they helped with the editing process."

"I think they enjoyed it. I

enjoyed it and I liked picking out the interesting bits."

Chris recorded scores of interviews with people from the area between 2005 and 2010. His work has meant that local history, which almost certainly would have been forgotten, will be available to future generations.

Every interview he recorded has been saved, and Chris hopes to hand them over to the National Archive.

He said he still receives requests to do interviews which, even the project is over, he carries out.

**Above:** two tourists read one of the bronze oral history plaques in the Liberties area of Dublin. **Right:** three of the snapshots of life captured by artist Chris Reid (left).

SAM BOAL/PHOTOCALL

If you really love something and you have it - then no matter what it is, I think you deserve it. We are only caretakers for the things we have. I am lucky to have this flat. It is all I really have and I really adore it. I think I take care of it the best I can.