

# Local towns to host St. Patrick's Day parades

## Gardai advise on campaign

The people of the county and surrounding areas will have plenty of choice when it comes to St Patrick's Day parades this year! Along with the more established venues, Ballintubber will hold its first ever St Patrick's Day parade this year.

Meanwhile the Cloonfad parade will start at 3 pm from The Dunmore Road and will return back to the village. There will be loads of floats and entertainment and everyone is welcome on the day.

In Boyle the parade will start at 3.30 pm. All floats are to assemble at Carty's Garage at 3 pm sharp. There are valuable prizes in a number of categories. There will also be a shop window competition.

The Ballaghaderreen parade this year will have as its theme 'Monumental Moments 1810 to 2010' and will start on the Sligo Road at 2 pm. There will be prizes awarded to the best float in a number of categories and there will also be a window display competition.

The Glenamaddy St Patrick's Day parade will get underway at 1 pm at the Community Centre and floats are asked to gather by 12.30 pm at

the latest. There will be a lot of entertainment and fun for all the family – so the message is come early.

Elphin St Patrick's Day parade will start at 3 pm sharp. Entry for floats is free and all are welcome.

Meanwhile local Gardai have advised the public of their approach to the holiday period.

Over the St. Patrick's Day period 2009, 379 incidents of driving while



intoxicated were recorded, along with 2,706 incidents of speeding, 213 incidents of non-use of seatbelt and 320 incidents of driving while holding a mobile phone.

From 8th March to 14th March 2010 An Garda Síochána will take part in a European Safety Enforcement Campaign aimed at truck drivers. Offences such as speed-

ing, vehicle standards (inclusive of trailers), driver's hours, dangerous loading and document offences will be targeted.

On the weekend of the 12th and 13th March 2010 a National operation involving the Gardai and Enforcement Officers from the Office of the Taxi Regulator will take place. The aim of the operation is to ensure maximum supervision of the taxi industry. Offences related to Small Public Service Vehicles (Taxis) will be targeted; this will include offences related to the vehicles and the drivers.

From the 16th March to the 18th March 2010 a Drink Driving Enforcement Operation called Operation Surround will take place. The operation will involve the Traffic Corps and local district resources. During each night of the operation a major town or centre in each Division will be selected for intense Garda attention. Mandatory Alcohol Testing (MAT) checkpoints will be set up for the purpose of monitoring drink driving behaviour.

Drivers are reminded to always wear their seatbelts even on short journeys and to ensure that all passengers, adults and children, use the seatbelts provided and when required child car seats must be used.



Elaine Noone serves up a treat to Labour leader Eamonn Gilmore and Labour Cllr. John Kelly and proprietor of Supervalu, Castlereagh Anthony Cahill on Friday. Pic: Mick McCormack.

## Kelly not convinced the worst is over

Government claims that unemployment figures are levelling off will be cold comfort to the record 436,956 people unemployed. The live register figures published this week show an increase of over 84,500 since this time last year, according to Labour councillor John Kelly.

"This must cast doubt on Fianna Fail claims that we are over the worst of the downturn. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Government has no plan to get us out of this grim situation. What is particularly disturbing is the fact that so many young people are out of work, with one third of the labour force, between the age of 20 and 24, now unemployed.

"Unlike Fianna Fáil and the Greens, Labour actually has a strategy which will create jobs and will create sustainable economic activity. We believe that we need a new National Development Plan, which will provide funding for shovel-

ready projects in areas like health, education and transport.

"Our enterprise agencies should be properly funded so that they can support growth in jobs in the knowledge economy. More places in training and education should be made available so that when the economy does begin to recover, we have the required national skill-set to take advantage.

"Labour has consistently called for the creation of a special €1.150 billion fund to get people back to work. Such a fund would deliver enterprise supports, including PRSI scheme for new jobs; an additional 60,000 training and work experience places and the fast-tracking of labour intensive capital projects. There is no silver bullet to solve this dreadful problem, but we do need a plan urgently and this Government simply does not have one," concluded Cllr. Kelly.

## First-ever St Patrick's Day parade in Ballintubber

History will be made in Ballintubber this St. Patrick's Day when the people of this picturesque tidy town village will bring it to life as they have done so many times before. Ballintubber has a long and successful tradition in hosting successful festivals and this one will be no different.

Over the years Ballintubber has been the venue for many great days going back to the times when they held the 'fair day' and the Eileen Óg festival. In more recent years there's been the Aintree Grand National Fundraiser and no sooner will St Patrick's Day be finished when they will be working on the Aintree day again for April 2010.

When asked how the idea was arrived at, the chairperson of the Ballintubber Development Association, Frank O'Toole said, "At a recent meeting to organise this year's Aintree Grand National Day, which will be held on April 10th, a suggestion was made that maybe we should also consider a fun day for St Patrick's Day. The idea gathered momentum at the meeting and it was then agreed to hold an open meeting for the community, to enable us to judge the interest. The meeting was held and all agreed it would be good for the village and great for the community as a whole to have something we could all enjoy, a committee was formed and now we are looking forward to our first St Patrick's Parade and fun day, albeit a little anxious as with everything new

there is bound to be a learning curve, but with the experience we have of running other successful days in the village we are sure this will be the same.

"I can only talk from my own experience, but over the years most St Patrick's Days we wake up in the morning and say 'what will we do today?' It tends to be a day when families all go somewhere for the day, particularly if you have small children. For the past number of years we have always gone to a local parade and it has been great, but once the parade is over all that is left to do in most cases is to drown the shamrock, and although there's nothing wrong with drowning the shamrock, I've drowned a few myself, we just felt it would be good to add on a few other things for after the parade."

Asked if organisers are expecting a large crowd, Frank answered, "That is the million dollar question. As this is the first time it is impossible to know, weather in this country also plays an important role, however we do believe that we will get a good crowd, when one considers our location being half way between Castlereagh and Roscommon and numerous neighbouring villages who I am sure will come and join in the fun it should be a great day. Obviously the village will be sectioned off from traffic and parking but we have made alternative arrangements on the edge of the village at all

ends for parking etc, so we don't anticipate any problems.

"The parade will start with the Castlereagh Brass Band at 1 pm sharp. Organisers also have a host of activities lined up for the afternoon, commencing with a children's entertainer who is putting on a magic show and puppet show in the old schoolhouse at 2 pm. There will also be a car boot

sale, barbeque, potato cakes, a horse shoeing demonstration, bouncing castles, a tug of war and other on street activities.

For those interested in the GAA club matches, they will be screened in one of the local pubs whilst Cheltenham races will be screened in the other pub, the formal festivities will close with a céili between 5 pm to 7

pm, in the old schoolhouse.

The fun won't end there as Kenny's Bar are putting on a St. Patrick's night dance and Garvey's Bar will also have some entertainment. The committee are still taking entrants for floats up until Monday, so if you wish to put a float in the parade or wish to avail of the car boot sale telephone Frank on (087) 908 1329.



Members of the organising committee of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Ballintubber. Back row (left to right): Patsy McCahill, Richard Thompson, Ray Banfield, Frank O'Toole. Front row (left to right): Ann Battle, Theresa Cooney, Dympna Lambert, Eileen Feely, Margaret Cuniffe. Missing from photo are Mike Holland, Pat Garvey and Mike Ryan.