

# Ireland's history comes alive

Jackie Clarke Collection opens permanently to the public next Tuesday in Ballina

THE opening of the Jackie Clarke Collection in Ballina next Tuesday, April 2, heralds a new era for Irish history.

The Ballina man's priceless collection of historical Irish material is now housed in a purpose designed facility on Pearse Street in his hometown, allowing the public access to 400 years of history in a unique experience that reveals the story of our nation in first-hand accounts.

This represents the realisation of the life-long dream of the late Jackie, a man who lovingly and expertly compiled this vast collection for the people of Ballina and those who wish to visit to enjoy it.

Thanks to the generosity of his widow, Mrs. Ann Clarke, Jackie's collection has been permanently housed in Ballina's former Provincial Bank building. The new exhibition centre is the result of a €5 million project developed by Mayo County Council in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland and with the support of the National Spatial Strategy Gateways and Hubs ERDF funding (2002-2020).

Likely to generate a huge boost to north Mayo's tourism industry, the completed facility will also become a centre of academic excellence, attracting international scholars to view this collection, which has come to be regarded as one

of the leading collections of Irish historical material in the world.

Visitors will not be disappointed; the manner in which the incredible collection has been permanently displayed is a true revelation.

Award-winning Irish exhibition design company Martello Media led the design of the facility, working closely with the collection's director, Ms. Sinead McCoolle, and a design team to interpret, theme and present Jackie's phenomenal collection, comprised of over 100,000 items, in an accessible manner that will appeal to young and old alike.

## Elements

The Jackie Clarke Collection is comprised of three elements - the exhibition centre, the repository and the adjoining walled heritage garden.

The exhibition space showcases, on an interchangeable basis, the stand-out items in Jackie's collection, such as the original 1916 Proclamation of Independence and the tricolour cockade taken from the hat of Irish hero Wolfe Tone by his captors in 1798, as well as many incredible documents that offer a first-hand account of some of the most significant periods and characters throughout the last four centuries of Irish history.

The artefacts are displayed in a way that allows people to have the same intimate access to them that Jackie himself had. This is achieved through the use of very high quality interactive touch-screens and open storage devices set in a welcoming and relaxed setting.

Visitors can watch audiovisual presentations about Jackie himself and the significance of his collecting. Different rooms throughout the building highlight the various aspects of his collection, including maps, newspapers, prints, posters and Jackie's library.

In addition, the use of new media is extensive throughout the collection, as evidenced in the incorporation of touch screen technology and interpretive film footage. This adds a fun element to the exhibits that helps to draw the visitors in to explore and investigate the collection with the added bonus of discovering some unique information about themselves.

The Memory Pod is a particularly innovative feature of the exhibition centre that provides visitors with the opportunity of recording their own memories and creating short digital films.

The adjoining walled heritage garden has been beautifully and sympathetically



An exterior view of the Jackie Clarke Collection's home at the former Provincial Bank building on Pearse Street in Ballina.

restored to offer a quiet place where visitors can contemplate Jackie's collection as well as Ireland's unique botanical and agricultural heritage. It is hoped that the building and garden will become a focus for community-oriented events into the future.

The Jackie Clarke Collection will be officially opened by An Taoiseach Enda Kenny at a future date. As of next Tuesday (April 2), it will be open to the public on a full-time basis between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. from Tuesday to Saturday, and admission is free. School and group tours are welcome. For booking or more information, telephone (096) 73508 or visit the website www.clarkecollection.ie.



Visitors to the Jackie Clarke Collection can use this memory pod to record their own memories and create short digital films.

## Charge dismissed as doctor's permission not given for sample

A DRIVER who crashed into a lamppost and tested positively for being over the legal alcohol limit when he had a blood sample taken in the hospital had a charge of drink driving against him dismissed because the taking of the sample had not been authorised by a doctor in the hospital, as is required under new legislation.

Castlebar District Court was told that Gregory Warde, The Square, Claremorris, was trapped in his vehicle when gardai arrived on the scene on April 2, 2012, at Clare, Claremorris, having received a report of a single vehicle traffic accident.

A pedestrian had reported the accident at 1 a.m. and when gardai arrived at the scene at 1.10 a.m., the defendant was trapped in his vehicle and sitting in the driver's seat with blood coming from his mouth.

He said at the time he had been drinking but then claimed he was not driving as he attempted to get out of the vehicle but was unable to do

so because he was trapped.

The emergency services were called and the defendant was cut from the vehicle and taken to Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar.

Garda John Murray said he went to the hospital where he spoke to the matron in charge and requested permission to interview the defendant for suspected drink driving.

A doctor from Westdoc was called and after informing the defendant of his rights and making the demand for him to provide a blood or urine sample, the defendant provided a sample at 3.05 a.m. which revealed a concentration of 219 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

However, Mr. Evan O'Dwyer, solicitor for the defendant, said that under new legislation in the 2012 Act, which replaced the 2010 Act, the only person authorised to allow a sample to be taken from a person in hospital was a doctor who could deem the person fit enough to be able to provide a sample.

In this case it was the ma-

tron in charge who had given permission for the defendant to be interviewed but no permission had been given by a doctor for a sample to be taken.

In dismissing the case, Judge Mary Devins agreed with the defence that the law was very clear on the point in question and clearly stated permission must be given by a doctor, while she also felt there might be a problem with proving the time of driving as the pedestrian who had made the call may not have been in a position to tell how long the defendant had been in his vehicle before the gardai arrived.

The person who reported the accident had declined to come forward with a statement, and while his mobile phone had indicated the time he had reported the accident to the garda station in Claremorris, there was a question over the period of time that had elapsed since the arrest and the taking of a sample, which must be within the required three hours.

## Animal rights groups urge boycott of circus live animal acts

ANIMAL Defenders International (ADI) and Animal Rights Action Network (ARAN) are calling on local residents to vote no to animal cruelty with their feet and not visit Duffy's Circus when it performs in Claremorris today (Tuesday) and in Ballina tomorrow (Wednesday) and Thursday.

Jan Creamer, chief executive of Animal Defenders International, said: "Animals with travelling circuses are on the road for almost the entire year.

"That means they have to endure constant transportation and live in rudimentary, temporary accommodation.

"Worse are the horrific abuses during training that Animal Defenders International has exposed behind the scenes in circuses, not just in Ireland but all over the world. We urge people to visit circuses with human only acts - those acts have a choice."

The suffering endured by animals in circuses is well documented and scientifically established, say ADI and ARAN.

Given the constant travel and their temporary nature, circuses cannot provide animals with adequate facilities to keep them physically or psychologically healthy. Welfare is always compromised.

## Anger over ghost estates property tax

MAYO Fianna Fáil Deputy Dara Calleary has called on the government to explain why it is forcing property taxes on homeowners in at least 57 ghost estates across the county.

Homeowners in these estates were rightly exempt from the household charge last year, but the government has now said they are eligible to pay property taxes. Just five estates are deemed exempt.

He said: "It was only right that all of these unfinished estates across Mayo were exempt from the household charge last year. Many of the residents are young families who paid way over the odds for what is now a seriously devalued home. They are deep in negative equity, struggling to pay their mortgages and living in unfinished surround-

ings, with no end in sight. And now Fine Gael plans to hit them with new taxes on their homes.

"The government has tried to justify this by claiming that many of these unfinished estates have miraculously been completed and fixed over the past year. This will come as a surprise to the people living in dozens of estates across Mayo that are still clearly unfinished. These people are ordinary families who were abandoned by developers and are now stuck without the amenities and services they paid for.

"This latest twist in what was already a deeply unfair plan is causing great distress and confusion in these estates in Mayo and in hundreds of others across the country. These people have a right to an explanation."

## Foxford is policed by Ballina Garda Station - Minister

THE Foxford garda sub-district is to be amalgamated into the Ballina district, it has been revealed.

Justice Minister Alan Shatter announced the policing service in the east Mayo town will be augmented on a 24-hour basis by personnel assigned to Ballina Garda Station.

In response to a parliamentary question by Mayo Fine Gael Deputy Michelle Mulherin, he confirmed the Swinford and Claremorris district are being amalgamated into the new enlarged district of Claremorris. This amalgamation will be implemented during 2013.

Minister Shatter also drew the Mayo TD's attention to the

garda commissioner's policing plan for 2013, which sets out details for the closure of 100 garda stations throughout the county.

A total of 96 of these stations have been closed so far this year and the remaining four will be closed in the coming months.

"While the policing plans for 2014 and 2015 have not yet been prepared, I understand, from discussions with the garda commissioner, that the current consolidation process will be largely completed by the end of this year and it seems unlikely at this point in time that there will be any further station closures in 2014 and 2015," he added.

## Radiator among items flung from apartment window

FURNITURE and a radiator were among the items thrown out the window of a Castlebar apartment, the local court has heard.

The incident involving Jason Conroy, with an address at 7 McGoldrick's Apartment, Rush Street, Castlebar, occurred at 1.50 a.m. on January 8 last. Gardai attended at Rush Street where they found him shouting and roaring a top floor apartment.

Conroy threw out furniture, a stand-alone radiator and a plaque onto the street. He also armed himself with a knife and threatened to stab any guard that would approach him.

The garda response unit came to the scene and Conroy was located in another apartment. He was forcibly overpowered and arrested. The knife was in his possession.

Conroy was previously before the court for theft at Ketterick's Butchers and O'Malley's veterinary last October.

Solicitor Mr. Tom Walsh said there was a history where the defendant found himself in trouble as a result of alcohol abuse and drug addiction. His previous convictions went back to 2004.

He came to Mayo and underwent very successful treatment. However, things broke down three months ago and he stopped taking his medication for depression and psychosis and attending aftercare meetings.

The 34-year-old was in custody since January and is receiving medical treatment in Castlebar prison.

Judge Mary Devins sentenced Conroy to a total of six months in prison, backdated to January 8 when he went into custody.

## Irish Rail announce extra Mayo service to Dublin

AN extra train service has been introduced every Friday evening on the Dublin-Westport route, following a successful trial on St. Patrick's weekend.

Mayo residents going home for the weekend will ben-

efit from the extension of the 5.10 p.m. Heuston to Athlone service onwards to Westport, serving all stations between Athlone and Westport.

Customers travelling from Dublin to Westport will now have the choice of five services

on Fridays - 7.35 a.m., 12.45, 2.45, 5.10 and 6.15 p.m.

As well as giving customers more choice, the new service will relieve pressure on the 8.15 Heuston to Westport service on Fridays, which has seen heavy demand in recent

weeks.

This is the latest improvement to be introduced on the route, which also saw an extra daily service introduced in January from Westport to Dublin at 9.45 a.m. each weekday.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Boost for 16 Erris students

SIXTEEN students from Erris will be awarded scholarships this year under the re-vamped Corrib Natural Gas Third-Level Scholarship scheme, which has been extended for another two years.

Details of the programme were announced by the chairman of the independent board, Seán Staunton. The new programme will see the number of scholarships increase from 10 to 16, while the grant on offer reduces from €4,000 to €2,000 per student per year of study.

A further innovation this year relates to the themed essay competition, which will be a supervised event and will take place in the Gateway Leisureplex on Saturday, April 6.

This is the seventh year of the scholarship programme, which is funded by the Corrib Gas Partners. To date, 61 scholarships have been awarded to students attending the four second level colleges in the area - Our Lady's Secondary School, Belmullet, Gaelcholáiste Chomáin, Ros Dumhach, St. Brendan's College, Belmullet, and St. Patrick's College, Lacken Cross.

The applications forms for the 2013/2014 scholarship programme have been distributed to the participating colleges and are also available at the Corrib Gas office in Belmullet. The phone number is (097) 27100.

### Volunteers sought

ENABLE Ireland urgently requires volunteers to work in a variety of settings to include social outings, buddy system, in-home and centre-based support.

To become involved in some interesting opportunities, please contact Fiona Madigan, volunteer co-ordinator, on (094) 9060234, (087) 2163971 or email fmadigan@enableireland.ie.

### Man interfered with car

A CAR parked at Thomas Street in Castlebar was interfered with in the early hours of the morning, the local court has heard.

Two men were reported interfering with the car at 3.55 a.m. on February 15 last and were identified walking away to gardai.

Asked what he was doing, defendant David Fennell, who has an address at Apartment 2, over the Golden Sea, Castlebar, said he was going to the pub.

Superintendent J.J. Keane explained how the door had been forced and under the steering the starter had been pulled out and damaged. The second person ran away and escaped and was never identified.

Fennell, 25, originally from Dublin, moved to Mayo six years ago. He had four previous convictions in Dublin but hadn't come to the attention of the guards in Mayo.

Judge Mary Devins adjourned the matter until June 5 for a probation report to be prepared on Fennell.

### IWA seeks support

EVERY year, many women raise money for their favourite charity by participating in the Flora women's mini-marathon.

This year, the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) are hoping that ladies from Mayo will select IWA as their charity of choice and join the local mini-marathon team to raise funds for the services the association provides to people with physical disabilities living in Mayo.




Mayo Cancer Support Association Ltd.

# Something to Sing About

in association with

Mayo Cancer Support Rock Rose House

present an evening of song, fun, food and fashion

on Friday 5th April 2013 at 7.30 p.m.

in Breaffy Events Arena

Raffle for fabulous prizes

Tickets €20 each (Tables of 12 for €220)