

Call for local authorities to unite to save Vernon Mount House

by Eoin English

A NEW voluntary group has called on Cork's local authorities to unite to save an historic house and make it the centrepiece of a massive new super-park.

The Grange Frankfield Partnership said a restored Vernon Mount House at the heart of their proposed new "Southside Park" has the potential to be a

major heritage site, and a cultural and tourist attraction for the region. The partnership, which is made up of residents from the greater Douglas area in Cork city, has invited TDs, senators, city and county officials, and local public representatives to a public meeting next week where their plans will be unveiled.

But a joint approach from both the city and county councils is

essential, they said. The councils will need to agree on a single agency to develop the 'Super Park' in a coordinated and phased manner, and secure funding from central government and philanthropic sources.

The partnership wants the new park to be developed on the slopes of Grange and Frankfield, around the historic Vernon Mount House grounds, and

linked by a new pedestrian bridge over the South Ring Road to the former landfill site which has been redeveloped as an amenity park.

A key element of the plan is the protection and conservation of Vernon Mount House, one of the most important Georgian mansions in the State and listed as one of the world's 100 most endangered historic homes.

It is in a state of dereliction and requires urgent intervention to ensure its survival.

Partnership spokesman Ger Lehane said they will show how the restored house could contribute significantly to the quality, diversity and character of the Southside Park, in addition to maintaining an important link to Cork's past architectural, social and cultural history.

"As the area in question is under the jurisdiction of both the city and the county councils, we really need to have joint planning and design for the combined open space lands to the north and south of the South Ring Road, so that the formation of the Southside Park is accessible to residents in both the city and the county area."

Conservationist and philan-

thropist Richard Wood, a renowned expert on classical Irish houses who played a key role in the restoration of Fota House, has backed the project. He will address the public meeting, detailing the history and heritage of Vernon Mount.

■ The public meeting takes place at the Rochestown Park Hotel next Monday, October 17 at 7.30pm.

Cork council to act on mini ice age predictions

■ Brochures to advise households on how to cope with harsh winter

by Sean O'Riordan

THE possibility that the world may be on the verge of entering a mini ice age is prompting Cork County Council to print advice brochures to help people cope with the possibility of further harsh conditions this winter.

County engineer Noel O'Keeffe confirmed yesterday that the local authority has already prepared a draft leaflet advising householders what to do if another big freeze hits us again in a few months' time.

Scientists have expressed concern that a lack of sunspots and very few solar flares emanating from the sun may be an indication x the world is heading for a mini ice age, last experienced in the mid-17th century. It was reputed to have lasted 70 years.

According to AA Home Insurance, last December, burst pipes led to household claims in Ireland of €173.1 million, while commercial claims amounted to a further €50.6m.

The county council's leaflet will advise householders and flat dwellers on how to reduce the risk of pipes freezing, how to un-thaw them if they do freeze, and how to make temporary repairs if they burst.

It will also advise householders on improving their insulation and on fitting insulating jackets to their

water tanks. Mr O'Keeffe said the local authority is also preparing two other winter advice brochures.

"One will focus on what to do if there is flooding and the other will be on how to cope with icy roads, gritting etc," the county engineer said.

"We will be trying to advise the public on the do's and don'ts with regard to the three main topics. We will put the information up on our website in due course and make the brochures available to anybody who wants them," Mr O'Keeffe said.

He said winters in Cork were not normally severe. However, in the winter of 2009 serious floods occurred in several parts of the county and last year it was hit by a icy conditions which lasted a couple of weeks.

"We have to take on board what scientists are saying about the sun. We're not going to take anything for granted and we're advising the public to do the same. Forewarned is forearmed as they say," Mr O'Keeffe said.

Meanwhile, AA Home Insurance is reminding householders and businesses nationwide to go over their properties with a fine tooth comb and review their level of insurance cover to make sure they are prepared for a potentially harsh winter.

EDITORIAL: 12



Angela English, Ciara Sexton, Melissa Dolan and Celine Fitzgibbon, fifth year students at Loreto Secondary School, Fermoy, Co Cork, have some fun with classmate Hannah Beresford, who is on the Irish team for the World Schools Debating Championships which will take place in South Africa in January.

Picture: Dan Linehan

Cork trio bound for world debating competition

by Niall Murray
Education
Correspondent



MANY teams that compete for world glory are accused of being all talk, but it is a boast rather than a weakness for one group of school students.

Three of the five-strong Irish team bound for the World Schools Debating Championship in South Africa in January hail from Cork.

At the 2011 championship in Dundee, the Irish team lost at the semi-final stage to the eventual winners Singapore.

The team selected to travel to Cape Town at the weekend includes three of that team's members: Rónán O'Connor, a sixth year student at Christian Brothers College in Cork, and

Aodhán Peelo and Paul O'Dwyer, fifth years at Dublin schools Castleknock Community College and St Conleth's College.

They have been joined by two other Cork students, Hannah Beresford — a fifth year at Loreto Secondary School in Fermoy — and Sam Browne, a fourth year at Presentation Brothers College in the city.

The quintet emerged from 18 competitors at national trials at Trinity College Dublin at the weekend, where competitors were given just 15 minutes to prepare speeches on unseen motions. Among the topics up for debate were the questions of whether hunger strikers should be force-fed and whether children should be indoctrinated in religion before they reach the age of 16.



Rónán O'Connor, CBC and Sam Browne, PBC, members of the Irish team for the World Schools Debating Championships. Pictures: Pat Good



"We would traditionally be one of the stronger countries, and we have won the world

championships once, in Singapore in 2002," said Barry Glynn, one of the team's

coaches and a former participant himself.

"We do a lot of practice debates against college students who are very good to give up their time to help out and the team will be meeting most weekends in Dublin between now and January," he said.

Like many previous Irish team members, Mr Glynn went on to become a barrister, but he said there are also benefits for those who do not wish to pursue a career in the legal profession.

"A lot of broadcasters have debating experience from college, such as Marian Finucane and Derek Davis, and comedians like Dara O Briain and Jarlath Regan," he said. "Taking part in activities like debating really stand to students in later life, it's helpful for work in almost any career."

In Saturday's Irish Examiner

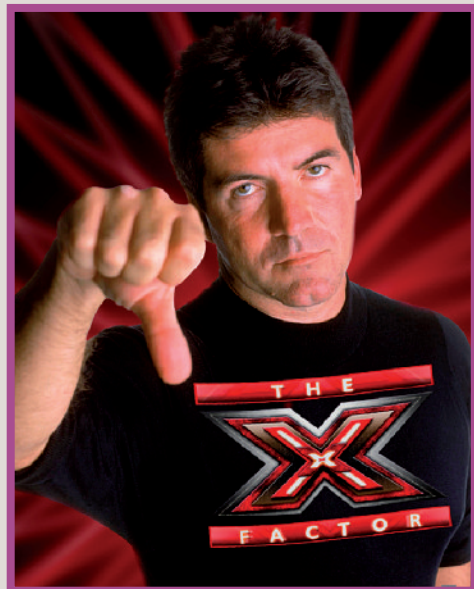
Weekend

Has he still got the X Factor?
With viewing figures falling in the UK and the US, Kieran O'Mahony wonders if Simon Cowell has lost his touch.



WEEKEND
FORUM

I am a murderer - the life and mind of the executioner.



Weekend SPORT

Kieran Shannon talks to top sports psychologist Caroline Currid in the Big Interview.



Property & Interiors

In a bumper 32-page edition we look at a contemporary home in a super accessible location.

Plus in Interiors we show you how to give your tired style a real lift.

Irish Examiner

Gardaí search for machines worth €100k stolen in Cork

by Sean O'Riordan

GARDAÍ are searching for two machines worth a combined €100,000 which were stolen from a compound in Cork city last weekend.

A five tonne JCB 450 mini-excavator and a 06-registered JCB 540-140 teleporter were taken from contractors preparing ground works for the flyover at the Bandon road roundabout.

They were discovered missing after the contractors arrived back on the site last Monday morning.

It is believed that the mini-digger, which had caterpillar tracks, may have been driven from the site and put onto a low sided lorry.

The teleporter may also

before committing the crime. It is entirely possible that the machines have been stashed somewhere prior to moving them out of the country for resale, most probably in Britain.

The two machines were parked up opposite to the entrance to Heiton Buckley's after the construction company ceased work at around 6pm last Friday.

They were discovered missing after the contractors arrived back on the site last Monday morning.

It is believed that the mini-digger, which had caterpillar tracks, may have been driven from the site and put onto a low sided lorry.

have been removed in the same fashion, although gardaí are not certain of this.

Detectives are studying CCTV footage taken in the area to see if it will shed any more light on the thefts.

In the meantime they are appealing for any member of the public who saw the machines moving over the weekend to contact them.

A garda spokesman said: "We would also like to hear from anybody who has seen two machines matching these descriptions stored anywhere to contact us immediately."

Anybody with information is asked to contact Bishopstown garda station at (021) 4541012 or Anglesea Street at (021) 4522000.

Traffic review at Inch beach

by Anne Lucey

KERRY County Council is to review traffic control at Inch beach on the Dingle peninsula, following the death of an American tourist in her fifties who was on the strand when struck by a truck in July.

It is understood the truck involved in the incident had a valid council permit to be on the beach at the time.

Gena Hill, 59, from Kentucky, was one of the organisers of a group of American tourists who were staying in Killarney. The group who included Ms Hill's husband, were setting out on a day

tour of the Dingle peninsula when they stopped at the dramatic location, featured in the film Ryan's Daughter. Ms Hill died at the scene.

A review of safety procedures on Inch beach has been sought by local area councillor Michael O'Shea, following the accident. Mr O'Shea said "preventative measures" were needed.

In a short report by way of response, Kerry County Council said that it was its belief "the tragic events which occurred on Inch Beach during the summer could not have been foreseen or prevented by Kerry County Council."

However, it said that, "notwithstanding that", it was the council's decision to review how traffic was allowed to operate on the beach.

This was to see if any amendments to the current arrangements would be beneficial. It is understood the truck involved in the incident was carrying surfing equipment in a designated area and had a licence to be there. The issue of cars and trucks regularly going on to the strand at Inch, a popular walking area, has been controversial and vehicles are generally banned under bylaws.