

We're in for a cracker

Clontarf leads the charge on an eggs-traordinary bank holiday

By Éamon Donoghue

YOU'D better be battle ready – because the Vikings have landed.

More than 40,000 spectators are expected to descend on Dublin this weekend for the Battle Of Clontarf millennial re-enactment.

The event, which marks the death of High King Brian Ború, will take place in St Anne's Park today and tomorrow.

The four battle re-enactments will last between 45 minutes and one hour, and they will take place at 1pm and 4pm on both days.

Elsewhere, Dublin Zoo is hosting an Easter 'Egg-Stravaganza' tomorrow and Monday. Visitors will be treated to a host of activities, including an Easter treasure trail, and plenty of fun for all the family. The activities will start at 11am and will continue until 4pm.

Outside the capital, meanwhile, the world's first shark conservation programme will take place in Bray, Co. Wicklow, tomorrow.

The public can get up close and personal to this 'magnificent and often misunderstood species' at the Sea Life Centre's Shark Reef Encounter experience. There are

Huge event in the racing calendar

also a host of Easter egg hunts and activities planned around the country, with one organised for Castlecomer Park, Kilkenny as well as the National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford.

Cadbury's Easter egg trail will take place in Dublin's Merrion Square tomorrow from 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm.

For those who fancy a more relaxing Easter Bank Holiday weekend however, Carton House is offering a number of packages, including the 'Kids Share Free' deal.

But if horseracing is your thing, Fairyhouse Racecourse is the place to be tomorrow when the Easter Festival kicks off.

The highlight of tomorrow's family fun day is the prestigious Grade 1 Powers Gold Cup while Easter Monday sees the Irish Grand National, one of the most iconic events in the Irish calendar, as well as the Carton House Most Stylish Lady Competition.

But there will be plenty of other activities at the Co. Meath venue to keep the whole family happy, including children's entertainment and music.

If you're heading West this weekend, the third annual Galway Food Festival kicks off for foodies with a taste for the best of local ingredients such as Connemara Spring Lamb, as well as locally caught trout and salmon.

And if rugby fans are in that neck of the woods today, they can swing by the Sportsground to see Con-



Let battle commence: Participants gear up for the fight



Chef: Anthony Byrne cooks a Viking meal

DART WON'T RUN

THE organiser of the Battle Of Clontarf Festival criticised Irish Rail for carrying out line works over the same weekend.

The Dart won't be running between Connolly and Malahide tomorrow, and Collette Gill – the chairwoman of the festival committee – is dismayed at the decision.

'I find it very hard to believe that they would cancel the Dart on a Bank Holiday weekend anyway but the fact that the Battle of Clontarf festival is on, is even more reason to reschedule,' she said. However a spokesman for Irish Rail said that the 'works have been planned for some time'.

Dublin Bus will accept all rail tickets on the 130 route, while Dublin City Council will operate shuttle buses between Connolly Station and St Anne's Park.

A council spokesman said: 'It's going to be a fantastic festival... I don't think anybody should be deterred by the fact there's no Dart on Sunday.'



In the shade: Sam Hetherington, 2, with a Viking shield

nacht take on Munster in the Rabo Pro 12 at 6.15pm.

Then, tucked away in the beautiful surroundings of Loughrea, Co. Galway, the Slieve Aughty Centre has organised two great Easter events to suit children and grownups alike.

Children can enjoy a full-day or half day of pony camp, where they will get lots of great experience learning to ride and care for ponies. Activities include trekking, les-

sons, pony games, grooming, leading, bareback riding, vaulting and stable management. A full day from 10am to 5pm costs €50.

In nearby Mayo, the Westport Easter Walking Festival is a guided walking weekend led by Gerry Greensmyth of Croagh Patrick Walking Tours.

One walk will be a mountain trail with a 700m climb, while the other will be a flat trek of up to 16km.

For those in a lazier mood though, the hugely popular musical comedy Grease is back at the Cork Opera House today and tomorrow. Shows take place at 2.30pm and 8pm while tickets range from €20 to €30.

Also in the 'rebel city', the Firkin Crane has organised a number of shows over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, which are certain to appeal to young and old alike.

Old Father Story is the first of

many events which will see the father of stories doing what he does best: telling tales, dressing up, face-painting and going on treasure hunts.

Families can expect 45 minutes of fun, light-hearted performance and storytelling. Prices vary from €4 to €5 for the different performances. For more information, check out firkincrane.ie.

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Landmark Ukraine peace deal on brink of collapse

UKRAINE'S breakthrough peace agreement appeared close to collapse last night as armed pro-Russian separatists repeatedly refused to recognise its terms.

The separatist leaders ridiculed the deal, which was agreed upon by the US, Russia, Ukraine and the European Union in Geneva.

Branding Ukraine's Western-backed interim government 'illegal', they insisted that they would not comply with its terms unless they were granted further concessions and guarantees.

They also announced that their forces would continue their occupation of state buildings in at least ten eastern cities and towns – and could seize even more.

The armed pro-Moscow leaders warned

By David Williams

that they would not back down until the pro-European protesters left their camps in the capital Kiev's Maidan Square.

Their threats prompted the interim government in Kiev to warn that 'more concrete actions' would be taken if pro-Russian separatists did not meet the terms of the accord.

Foreign minister Andriy Deshchychytsia said: 'Hopefully, those people are ready to leave the buildings and surrender their weapons. But if this does not start in a few days, then I think after Easter there will more concrete actions.'

Diplomats have expressed concerns that

enacting the agreement on the ground will prove difficult because of the deep mistrust between the pro-Russian groups and the interim government in Kiev.

In an attempt to calm tensions, acting president Oleksander Turchinov and prime minister Arseniy Yatseniuk called for national unity in a joint televised address.

They promised to support constitutional change, decentralising power to local councils and giving them control over their official language – a key demand of Russian speakers.

However a statement from the separatists in the industrial city of Donetsk summed up the defiance of pro-Moscow elements, declaring: 'We cannot accept the values of

the Kiev junta, we have our heroic past, we are the Russian bear which is waking up.

'Everything will stay peaceful and orderly. The only problem is if the Kiev junta want war.'

Separatist leader Denis Pushilin pointed out that Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov 'did not sign anything' on the behalf of the separatists – 'he signed on behalf of the Russian Federation,' Mr Pushilin said.

And in the city of Sloviansk, one of the armed separatists occupying the police headquarters said: 'We are not leaving the building, regardless of what statements are made, because we know what the real situation is in the country and we will not leave until our commander tells us to.'