



PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 2nd June 2009

Spirit of St. Jarlath returns to Tuam after 1500 years

- Tuam's second annual St. Jarlath's Day Family Festival to be held on Saturday 6th June 2009
- Celebrating Tuam's heritage and its new diversity
- Activities for children, promotions in local shops

After a hugely successful inaugural festival in 2008, Tuam is again preparing to celebrate its founder on the feast of St Jarlath on Saturday 6th June. Set to become an annual event, the festival celebrates the town's history and foundation, attributed to St. Jarlath in the 6th Century, with street pageants, music, children's activities, dance and offers from local retailers.

Local business owner and Energise Tuam Committee Member, Mary Kilgarriff, says the festival was a huge success last year, "promoting local history and heritage, and getting people onto the streets for a day of entertainment with a fantastic community atmosphere. We're expanding the festival a little bit this year with more activities for children, showcasing local culture, local talent, and local foods."

Jarlath was renowned not only for his piety, but for his interest in community and his love for all the people of Connacht, where he travelled for many years before the fateful day when the wheel of his chariot broke near Cloonfush, just outside modern day Tuam, and where he founded his monastery. The town that bears his broken wheel as its symbol would be unrecognisable to Jarlath today, but no doubt he would embrace the new diversity of people and cultures which our recent prosperity has brought to Tuam. "The festival is really about promoting community spirit," says David Buckley, Chair of the Energise Tuam Committee behind the festival, "and that means celebrating local heritage with everyone in the community, whether they themselves come from Tuam or from distant shores."

The festival kicks off at the Mill Museum near Chapel Lane at 2.00pm, with a parade and street pageant moving from the museum to the ruins of Temple Jarlath near the town centre. The festival is organised by Energise Tuam in association with Earwig Arts group, and supported by community partners and the local church. For further information on the initiative, please contact Mr. David Buckley (086 8260350 / energise_tuam@gmail.com) or Mr. Alan McGrath (Tel: **087 2520182** / Email: alanocean@eircom.net.) at Energise Tuam.

About Energise Tuam:

Energise Tuam was established in 2007 by a group of local business people and community representatives to promote the positive elements of living and working in Tuam. Through a series of summer and winter festivals, cultural events, schools projects and family days in the town, the group has been working to promote a sense of pride and community spirit amongst Tuam residents – old and new – and to build interest in sustainable economic and social development for the town. Details from Mr. David Buckley (086 8260350 / energise_tuam@gmail.com), or visit www.energisetuam.com.