

A clean sweep for Trim

Anti-litter group hails Co. Meath town but slates Dublin and Cork

By **Sandra Mallon**

WITH the largest Anglo-Norman Castle in Ireland, it was the perfect place to film the Oscar-winning movie, *Braveheart*.

So it is no wonder Trim, Co. Meath has been crowned as this year's cleanest town, according to the latest survey by the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) group.

Parts of Dublin and Cork on the other hand are the dirtiest in the country, says the anti-litter watchdog.

The worst areas in the capital are those around Dublin Airport, Tallaght, the north inner city and the city centre, while Knocknaheeny in Cork city has also been named and shamed as a litter blackspot.

But IBAL and heritage lobbyist An Taisce, who conducted the surveys, praised the 'hard work' of the Co. Meath residents and said the town's 'approach routes were particularly well presented'.

Dr Tom Cavanagh, IBAL chairman, said the areas named as the dirtiest were a 'major letdown'.

Dr Cavanagh said: 'We're not seeing any real progress in the capital.

The city centre is clean, but move outside it and you quickly encounter accumulations of litter and general untidiness.'

He added: 'We need to ask why Dublin, Cork and Limerick are not as clean as their European equivalents when Galway, Waterford and all of Ireland's large provincial towns now clearly are?'

However, 38 towns out of 53 surveyed were rated as effectively

litter free, despite what IBAL said was a tightening of local authority resources.

It is the first time Trim, which has been litter free since 2005, has won the IBAL Litter League title.

The historic town is also a regular contender for the State-run Tidy Towns competition, which it won in 1972 and 1984. It shared the title in 1974, with Ballyconnell, Co.

Cavan. The town is reputed to have

been founded by St Patrick, who left it in the care of St Loman. It became an important settlement in the Middle Ages, when King John's Castle was built in the 12th century.

Trim, along with Killarney – which topped the table last year – Cavan, Youghal, Fermoy, Castlebar, Ballina, Monaghan and Dundalk all received a sustained excellence award for being litter free five years in a row.

Trim town manager Brian Murphy said it was a 'fantastic result'

38 towns out of 53 in Ireland are 'effectively litter free'

for the town and its people.

Some 5million was borrowed by the council in 2006 to upgrade the streetscape and pavements. Mr Murphy said this investment, along with increased budgets for street cleaning, had paid off.

However, the Dublin City Business Improvement District claimed IBAL had presented 'misleading and untrue information' on the state of Dublin city centre. The

business body said the results were 'deeply misleading' and jeopardised tourism revenue and jobs in the city at 'an already vulnerable time'.

Chief executive Richard Guiney said a tourist considering visiting the city could be misled into believing that Dublin was 'dirty' when it was not the case.

Mr Guiney said: 'The majority of Dublin's main tourist areas are recorded as clean.

'While there are areas outside the Business Improvement District area which are regarded as unclean, we note again that these are mainly in private or residential areas, for example basements which cleaning organisations cannot access.

Mr Cavanagh said the advancements made in degradable chewing gum are a 'potentially critical milestone in urban litter prevention'.

Last November, food scientists at University College Cork developed a gum made from wheat that would break down and disappear within days of being discarded.

Mr Cavanagh said: 'It's one that needs to be accelerated by a favourable tax policy, be it a tax exemption on the degradable product, or a higher tax on conventional gum.'

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THE BEST ... AND THE WORST



Iconic: Trim by name and nature

FIVE TIDIEST

- 1 Trim, Meath
- 2 Swords, Dublin
- 3 Killarney, Kerry
- 4 Cavan town
- 5 Dún Laoghaire, Dublin

FIVE DIRTIEST

1. North inner-city Dublin
2. Knocknaheeny, Cork
3. Tipperary town
4. Dublin city
5. Letterkenny, Donegal

