

Ireland, the Isle of Man, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, this week, as part of the 27th International Pan Celtic Festival.

The festival began this Tuesday and will run to Saturday, April 6.

The wide-ranging programme of 35 separate events provides a comprehensive insight into all aspects of Celtic Culture and Heritage.

Events include: singing - individual, group and choral - music and dancing competitions; set dancing workshops; golf and camogie competitions; storytelling and poetry recital; art and photography exhibitions; video displays and indoor and outdoor entertainment.

Training

THE three-day annual conference of the Irish Institute of Training and Development begins, this Thursday, at the Fitzpatrick's Bunratty Shamrock Hotel.

Scheme now sought for 'weekend fathers'

SHANNON Town Commission have called for a pilot scheme to meet the accommodation needs of separated and divorced "weekend fathers" who share responsibility for their children.

Cllr Patricia McCarthy, calling for a debate to be initiated with Clare County Council and Shannon Development, said that the needs of separated fathers who share the responsibility for their children for part of the week should be recognised by housing authorities.

Separated fathers, said Cllr McCarthy, are not finding it easy to get accommodation because technically they are single people with the exception of the weekends.

ment now puts Ennis in a commanding position in its search for new industry. The lack of a suitable site or of an advance factory unit had been cited by both the IDA and Shannon Development as the main reason why Ennis had not been successful in attracting new industry in the past" Mr Waters said.

Ennis Chamber of Commerce also called on potential investors to support the development by participating in the MMI Stockbrokers BES fund to which applications may be made before 5pm on April 5.

Dumping

CONCERN has been expressed at the recent dumping of fuel in connection with emergency landings of aircraft at Shannon.

Cathaoirleach Peter Flannigan said he was concerned with the dumping of fuel and asked that the Commission be briefed on the procedures and distance of dumping aircraft fuel during emergencies.

NEW threats to Shannon: warning on agreement

SHANNONTOWN

By RON KIRWAN

SHANNON Airport faces two new "fly away" threats: an "open-skies" situation is looming in a US-Ireland bilateral air agreement review, later this year.

There is also the threat of an Aeroflot re-think on Shannon, in the air.

The warnings come from local Dail deputy Tony Killeen.

Both situations, he says, could have serious consequences for jobs in Shannon and the economy of the Mid-West region.

The Clare deputy and Fianna Fail spokesman for tourism has already warned the Government and aviation interests that "you cannot have it both ways, with doors open at Dublin, but doors being shut in the face of new air services for Shannon".

Deputy Killeen said that the Department of Transport was keeping plans for a new air agreement under cover, "but while an official Department strategy document accepts that new open skies arrangements will put an end to the equal share-out of US flights between Dublin and Shannon, the Government won't hear of open skies for Shannon when a new service to New York is on offer".

The future of the East-West air hub at Shannon - a major recommendation of the Shannon Task Force

report - is now in danger, he warns, "because Minister Alan Dukes pulled back from granting rights to a new New York service involving a number of East European airlines and a new operation with a plane permanently based at Shannon".

The former Shannon Status chairman has revealed that a package put to the Department of Transport involves:

- A new Shannon-based operation - with a new European made aircraft - operating a New York service every second day;

- Feed-in of East European passengers from at least two sources;

- Permission to offer 50 seats per flight to non-East European passengers, to help build up the hub venture, and

- A guarantee that the Shannon-New York fares would not undercut the Aer Lingus daily service fares.

Deputy Killeen said: "Minister Dukes went off to Moscow on the Friday before St Patrick's Day for high-level talks with the Russian aviation Minister, but Russian expectations that he would announce the new service from Shannon were dashed.

"This has now prompted another re-think at Shannon, which not only threatens the hub concept but also flights like those to Chicago and Washington DC which continue to land at Shannon, even though the new long-range planes mean that they don't have to," Deputy Killeen said.

He added that while competition on Transatlantic routes from Shannon was being fobbed-off, the reverse was the case for Dublin, "even though the Minister stated otherwise as recently as March 12".

In a reply to a Dail question from Deputy Killeen regarding the possibility of revised arrangements for US flights, Minister Dukes said that, in the course of his reply, "there are no plans at present for Ireland to seek discussions with the US with a view to revising the terms of the Ireland-US bilateral air services agreement."

Deputy Killeen has since revealed that "a 31-page 'Statement of Strategy' official document from the Transport Minister's own Department not only fixes an end of 1997 deadline for a review of the 1993 bilateral deal - which laid down

that Shannon would have to get one-for-one flights with Dublin - but also accepts that the new open-skies talks between the EU and the USA will mean that the one-for-one condition favouring Shannon will have to be dismantled".

Said the Clare Deputy: "It is accepted that Minister Dukes is a new man in the job and commands a very elaborate and complicated portfolio, but it is difficult to believe that a Minister of his calibre and intelligence was not aware of his own Department's objectives.

"Either the Minister is mis-informed, or he is out of touch with what's is going on in his own Department".

have been able to produce this brochure which is targeted at the domestic market and we intend to use it to tempt more Irish people to holiday in the Shannon Region," said Kevin O'Loughlin of Shannon Development.

The range on offer includes leisure and activity breaks such as walking, angling, bird-watching and golf, orienteering, rock-climbing, canoeing or horse riding, scuba diving, cruising, abseiling, cycling and mediaeval banqueting.

Take a break in an 18th century house in Nenagh, with free nature walks through the wildlife sanctuary, free boating and fly fishing for only £36 per person for two nights bed and breakfast.

For the more adventurous, enjoy a multi-activity break in Kilfinane where orienteering, rock climbing and abseiling are the main attractions - for as little as £40 per person sharing, including two nights bed and breakfast and one dinner.

Buffet

INDEPENDENT General Election candidate Aidan Ryan is holding a fundraising buffet dance and disco this Saturday night at the Clare Inn Hotel. Commencing at 9pm, the night will also feature traditional music and a bar extension. Tickets are priced at £10. Telephone 362315 for further information and booking.

Election

ICA National President, Bridin Twist, is expected to be the sole candidate at this Sunday's Labour Party General Election selection convention in Clare.

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