

## Norsemen invade Cashel

A thirty strong party of Danish Norsemen descended on Cashel for the week of 28<sup>th</sup> June. Unlike their Viking predecessors, they came with peaceful intentions from the towns of Holmegaard and Naestved. The group are members of the Friends of Europe. Like Cashel, their town represents Denmark to the European Union Charter of Rural Communities. Cashel will see their return on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011, accompanied by 270 delegates from across Europe, when it hosts the Charter of Rural Communities annual meeting.



The Danes received a warm welcome at a civic reception led by Mayor Michael Browne in Cashel Town Council Offices. They received tours of Cashel Community School, John the Baptist National School and Spafield Family Resource Centre. The occasion then took them on a plunder-free visit of the Rock of Cashel and a heritage tour of the town, led by Joanne Hughes. Lawrence's Bar laid on a special evening of traditional music.



During their week long stay in Ireland, the group travelled extensively throughout the country. They visited Ailwee Cave and the Cliffs of Moher in County Clare, experienced the mountainous scenery of the Comeraghs and Knockmealdowns, lunching in the retreat village of Mountmellery. The programme took the Danes to Blackrock Castle and Cork City, after which they went as far as Bonane Heritage Park and West Cork in the southwest and Waterford to the southeast. Their visit to the Viking town of Waterford completed the Danes' tour of Ireland when seven of the party took part in the Spraoi Parade. The Danes adorned the event in which this year's parade took the theme of 'Flights of Fantasy'. They dressed as led people, accompanying the led balloon and Victorian carnival people with the giant human cannon.



Text by Niall Gregory and photo by Erik Torm