

Beware of sex-crazed stags!



Stay well away from deer in the rutting season.

No, I'm not referring to hoards of people out on hen and stag outings, this is a warning to motorists that we are in the rutting season for deer.

From now until early November, sex-driven stags will be rampaging across public roads in pursuit of their love interest. Also, crossing the highways and byways will be galloping females and younger and older stags ousted by dominant males. The Red Deer Society advises drivers to be vigilant and warns people to stay well away if they do experience an encounter as, at this time of year, stags can be very aggressive and have been known to attack people and dogs.

A good move on parking?

Traders and motorists in Waterford city will be keeping a close eye on Limerick during the coming months after metropolitan councillors on Shannonside formally passed plans for free parking in the city in a bid to boost flagging trade.

At a meeting last week, following a motion by Fine Gael's Councillor Maria Byrne, the elected representatives voted unanimously to have the first 30 minutes of on-street parking for free and for loading bays to be converted into parking spaces after 12 noon each day.

The local authority will also seek to introduce park and ride facilities on the outskirts of the city after such a plan worked well during a recent city centre arts festival.

Council official, Eugene Griffin, told the representatives that various ideas were being explored but he was concerned about the financing of the free parking plan.



Finbar Furey - getting rid of a brass rat gave him a good idea!

Finbar Furey and the brass rat

Finbar Furey was on holiday in Morocco recently and visited a very dusty and ancient shop that sold antiques and local arts and crafts.

He didn't see anything that really caught his attention until, just as he was about to leave the shop, he noticed a bronze sculpture of a rat.

Finbar doesn't particularly like rats but there was something about the sculpture that drew him to it.

"How much," asked Finbar of the proprietor.

"Oh, I am sorry sir but I cannot sell you the brass rat, it is not for you," answered the flustered proprietor.

Finbar insisted that he buy the brass rat and, eventually, against the advice and pleadings of the owner, he succeeded.

On the way back to his hotel, Finbar thought he heard a rustling on the back seat of his rented car and, when he turned around, he saw at least half a dozen live rats running around the sculpture. By the time he got to the hotel, there were several hundred rats crawling around the car.

"There was only one thing for it," thought Finbar, "head for the river and drown the feckers." Over the two miles or so journey to the river, rats streamed out of every building and jumped on the car until the vehicle was nothing more than a moving mountain of rats.

Finbar didn't flinch and, having checked that his exit was clear, he drove the car straight into the river where all the rats perished. "Phew," he said to himself as he dried himself off in the warm sun.

The next day he returned to the antique shop and, when the proprietor saw him, he cried out: "Please sir, do not be angry with me, I tried to tell you not to buy the brass rat."

"Not to worry, pal, I'm not mad at you at all," said Finbar cheerfully, "I only came back to see if you had, by any chance, any brass sculptures of bodhráns and pairs of spoons.²

PS: Apologies to anybody who doesn't get it, it's mainly a musician's joke.

The fragrance of well being

You know how it was always the custom to take fresh flowers and plants to people who were ill?

Well, as it turns out, the people who began that custom thousands of years ago knew more than was previously thought. New scientific research has just been published that suggests certain smells can heal wounds by activating olfactory receptors in people's skin.

Humans have about 350 olfactory receptors in the nose and previous studies have shown they also exist in sperm, in the prostate, in kidneys and in our intestine.

But now, for the first time, olfactory receptors have been found in keratinocytes which are cells that form the outermost layer

of the skin.

Sandalwood is a popular ingredient in perfumes and incense sticks and, in tests, Dr Hans Hatt of the Ruhr-University Bochum in Germany found that the smell of sandalwood caused changes in cell activity that could facilitate the healing of skin wounds.

We also know that certain smells can trigger the brain to recall long ago situations but that is a different matter. Without doubt, there is much we know and so much more we don't know.