

THE GREAT ISLAND COMMUNITY NEWS

June 29, 2006

Volume 9 No. 12

Price .60c

3 Coolamber Close, Cobh. Ph/Fax: 021 4812320. DEADLINE 6pm Sun.

e-mail: gicn@eircom.net URL: <http://homepage.eircom.net/~greatisle>

Copyright of Great Island News ©

SAVE OUR SUMMER ISLE OF EDEN!

Since Minister Michael McDowell announced that Spike Island is earmarked to become Ireland's first super prison people on Great Island have banded together to try to preserve this unique historic island.

Junior Chamber Cobh have formed a group to promote Spike as an international heritage centre similar to Alcatraz in San Francisco, Michael Martin of Titanic Trail fame is also supporting the cause and has been researching the feasibility of developing the island as a major tourist centre.

Dympna Collins from East Hill had an opportunity to see Alcatraz for herself and has put her thoughts about the similarities between the two islands on paper. She certainly gives us food for thought about this lovely isle.

"On a recent visit to San Francisco, I was having a meal at The Sea Lion Restaurant at Pier 39. Directly opposite was the Ferry Terminal for Alcatraz. I noted the long queues of people along the pier, as fast as the boat pulled out another came alongside to ferry the people across to Alcatraz.

This procedure was continuous and we were informed that it went on all day and there were night trips as well. It was also advisable to book in advance as people came there from all over the world.

I have been giving much thought to this amazing money making venture since I came back home. We have here in Cork Harbour something far more historical - Spike Island, referred to by Canon Sheehan as "a sunny island, a summer isle of Eden."

In 620 St. Carthage of Lismore came to Spike where he founded a monastery. The Vikings destroyed it and under the reign of Cromwell and also under the reign of William & Mary it was used as a place of detention for so called convicts. Later it was used as an internment camp for the Irish Volunteers. The British Army left Spike in 1938 and the Irish Flag was unfurled there with the Irish Army stationed there. In recent times it became a prison for young offenders, now it is empty.

It is high time we started working on what we have to offer and making use of our natural amenities. The boat trip across to Spike would show Cobh with its superb settings, sitting "leaning her back up against the hills and the tips of her toes in the ocean" and St. Colman's Cathedral in central position, guarding the town.

Wake up everybody! Have you signed your name to preserve Spike Island as a visitor centre and a place of great historical importance!"

Petitions can be signed in most local outlets. Let's try a little bit of people power, a visitor centre such as this would help restore our flagging economy her in Cobh.

Mary O'Connor