

# BRAY PEOPLE



New survey pushes case for cameras

## Half of Bray residents hit by crime

JAN VAN EMBDEN

Bray

CLOSE TO half the people of Bray have felt the impact of crime in the recent past, it emerged this week.

And an overwhelming majority of the public believe that the town has a significant crime problem, according to the shock findings of a newly completed study.

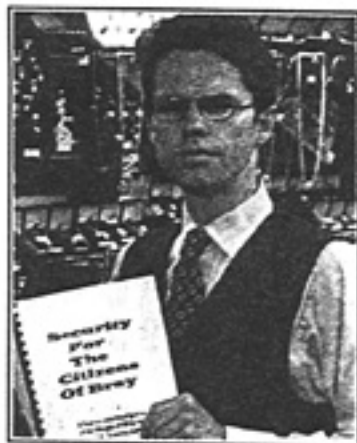
Compiled by local traders in support of the case for the introduction of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) security cameras to Bray, a total of 354 people were questioned for the survey.

Asked if they had experienced any form of crime in Bray over the past couple of years, almost half (43%) replied that they had. Burglary was cited as the most common crime experienced by victims, followed by car theft, vandalism, handbag snatching and bank robbery.

Respondents reported mugging as the most frequent crime against the person, followed by assault, syringe robbery and stabbing. No less than five of those surveyed said they had been stabbed in Bray.

While 47% of respondents felt the crime problem in Bray was 'fairly bad,' almost as many again (43%) described local crime as 'serious.' Only 9% felt local crime levels were 'minor.'

Three out of every four (75%) people surveyed had friends or relatives



■ Eoin Costello

who had experienced crime.

A massive majority (90%) agreed that CCTV cameras would help to reduce crime and vandalism and make local streets safer, while an equal number supported their introduction.

Asked who should control any new CCTV system in Bray, 70% said the Gardaí, 13% the local council and 17% a private security company. Queried about who should fund a new system, 58% said the government, 18% the council, 9% local traders and 16% a combination of these.

Bray Businesswatch Secretary Eoin Costello, who designed the survey in conjunction with Trinity College Economics Professor John Bristow, said that Justice Minister John O'Donoghue would now have to 'sit up and take notice of

the very vocal public demand for CCTV cameras in Bray which had been shown up by the survey.

'He will have to push Bray up the priority list of towns waiting for CCTV funding. In the meantime we will continue to argue Bray's case in conjunction with local public representatives, the UDC,

tourism interests, the Chamber of commerce and community groups. Our aim is to build up strong cross-community support for this demand,' he added.

The study, which was carried out by students of Colaiste Raithin, bears out the findings of a Bray People survey of 50 local traders last month which found that over half of them had been the target of crime at least once over the previous year.

According to Mr. Costello, Bray has a huge amount to offer from a business and tourism point of view, but its appeal was being hampered by the crime problem in the town. The CCTV system was essential to help stop this. None of this was a negative reflection on Bray Gardaí, who were doing their best with very limited resources.

## ON THE TOWN



■ Having a good time on Valentine's night in Katie Gallagher's, Bray Seafront, were (from left) Bray girls Christina Robinson, Gemma White and Julie Gunning.

## President's first visit to Wicklow

PRESIDENT Mary McAleese will pay her first official visit to Wicklow when she formally opens a two-day women's seminar in the county next week.

The first lady will join a roster of leading women speakers at the event, which takes place at the Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in Glencree on Thursday and Friday next, February 26 and 27.

The American Ambassador to Ireland, Jean Kennedy-Smith and the British Ambassador, Veronica Sutherland will be amongst a panel of speakers which will also include Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Corrigan-Maguire, Focus Point Director Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy, and the journalist Nell McCafferty.

The two-day seminar is being held on the theme 'From Rebellion to Reconciliation, The Women of 1798 and 1998', and will commence with an official opening by President Mary McAleese at 2.00pm on Thursday, February 26.

The opening address to the seminar will be delivered by the President, while the closing address on Friday, February 27, is to be delivered by the British Ambassador to Ireland, Veronica Sutherland.

Meanwhile, the local Centre for Peace and Reconciliation brought Republican youth face to face with their unionist counterparts during a two-day seminar at Glencree last weekend.

45 members of Sinn Féin's youth wing held workshops and meetings with a contingent of their unionist and Protestant counterparts at the centre last Saturday and Sunday. Amongst those in attendance was a member of the Ulster Unionist Party and two Protestant clergymen from Northern Ireland.

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