

Knife attacker 'will live with mother on release'

A SCHIZOPHRENIC, sentenced to nine years in prison for attempting to murder a teenager who was camping with friends, will be released after three years on condition he lives with his mother.

His mother, Margaret Corbett, told the Central Criminal Court that she hopes she can cope with his release and that her son will take his medication while under her supervision.

Michael Corbett, 28, had six years of his term suspended as he was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia at the time of the attack, which occurred at the Hell Fire Club in the Dublin mountains on June 27, 2016.

Mr Justice Michael White had

By **Natasha Reid**

told the court how Corbett could become delusional again if he stopped taking his medication or returned to alcohol or drugs.

Father-of-one Corbett, of Woodbine Close in Raheny, north Dublin, was living rough at the time of the incident, and befriended three teens around a campfire before the attack. He then went with the 17-year-old victim to collect firewood.

Corbett grabbed him from behind and slashed his throat with a knife three times before the victim pushed him away.

The teenager fell to the ground and Corbett then

stabbed him in the chest.

The knife broke, leaving the blade embedded in his chest. Corbett then picked up a log and hit the teenager on top of his head with it. The other two friends then came to intervene. One of them, a young woman, was first on the scene, where Corbett punched her to the face. The third teenager was also assaulted.

Judge White previously praised the young man's two friends for coming to his aid only to be assaulted themselves. Last month, he imposed a sentence of nine years, with six suspended on specific conditions, and he finalised the term yesterday.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Rich slices of history on our own doorstep

AND so we have already reached the month of August. I call it the 'quiet month' – a time of peace during which the country takes a breather. It is also a time of flight when many people take off to discover the cultural riches of other lands.

This summer we are relishing in the cultural wonders and natural beauty of our own land. Being a history teacher, my wife knows of many hidden treasures that, despite being on our doorstep, are either ignored or unknown to many. One such gem is the Irish National Heritage Park in Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford.

For years, Mrs Dooley has taken school tours to this impressive cultural jewel. She often discussed it with me, but we never had a chance to visit it as a family. That all changed last week.

Opened in 1987, the Irish National Heritage Park is the site of a stunning tour through our collective history. We were in the wonderful position of needing neither a guide nor a video presentation, for we had our very own history expert in Mrs Dooley.

Our boys are now old enough to appreciate just what was on offer, and their mother tantalised them with historical tidbits that made the whole thing sparkle.

Beginning with a Stone Age campsite, you are led through megalithic tombs, Bronze Age graves, medieval ringforts and an early Christian monastery. You see how our ancestors hunted, cooked, built and worshipped. And, as if that weren't enough, there are exact replicas of a crannóg, a Viking boatyard and a Norman castle.

They say you need at least two hours for your visit, but you could easily spend a full day exploring. There is nothing in the least bit gimmicky or artificial about any of the sites. Each has been designed in light of our archaeological and historical understanding of the respective periods.

Mrs Dooley was in her element teaching us all about the great portal tomb of the Megalithic period. Our boys were enthralled by our ancestors' beliefs regarding the cosmos and their eternal destiny. Only our youngest was more intrigued by the fake remnants of skulls and bones than by his mother's insights.

That such a wondrous place has

eluded me for so long is simply astonishing.

As I say, we travel around the globe to see the sights and wonders, when all the while we have easy access to a place like this. If, in other words, you want to understand who we are, this is the location for you.

History is not just about significant events, battles and revolutions. It has much more to do with the changing character of a people. If you really wish to understand a country, you should look first at its art, architecture and its ways of worship.

To look at those huts and tombs, stone circles and ringforts, is not merely to look at interesting artefacts. It is to see how people understood themselves in relation to the natural world, their neighbours and to God. It is to see how they interpreted the human condition.

As the wildness of the Stone Age gave way to the Bronze Age, and then to the early Medieval Period, we see a people not only struggling to survive, but also to settle. Their dwellings become less primitive and temporary, less 'natural' and more rooted. Wood is replaced by stone and, what was once purely functional, becomes something beautiful.

THE Irish monasteries of the early Christian era were not only artistic wonders, but places which rooted our forebears to earth and sky, to the heavens and beyond. The way we built and dwelled showed that we were no longer solely concerned with mere survival. The religious iconography and architectural craftsmanship revealed a longing for something much more lasting and meaningful.

At the end of our tour, we encountered an archaeological dig on the site of the remains of the first Norman fortification in Ireland. As we were chatting to one of the archaeologists, shards of bone and a tooth were unearthed. They were more than 800 years old.

That is something our boys shall never forget. For them to witness their story unfold before their eyes was the treat of a lifetime. To come to know who you are by standing amid the remains of those who shaped the world in their own image is not only to touch the past, but to make it your own.

And what a worthy way to enliven the quiet month.

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