



WORLD RECORD: The organisers of the Cork 2005 Céilí Mór co-ordinating the largest ever Irish dance.

Dancing to a world record

DEDICATION — that's what you need to be a record breaker!

And Cork people showed it in spades to make the latest edition of the *Guinness Book Of Records*, which came out last Friday.

The organisers of the European capital of Culture Céilí Mor made the book by co-ordinating the largest ever Irish dance routine in the world, which took place on South Mall, Grand Parade and Parnell Place in Cork city last September.

The 7,664 Cork dancers smashed the previous record of 6,971, set in Dublin, Ohio, USA.

The Cork achievement — led by Michael Flatley, who attended the six minute and 30 second dance of the *Siege of Ennis* — was monitored and recorded by Guinness World Records staff.

By **MARIA ROLSTON**



It has taken until now for the accomplishment to be recorded in super-shiny print, in the new edition of the world records book.

The Guinness World Records is universally recognised as the leading authority on record-breaking achievements.

More than 65,000 record breaking claims are processed by the organisation every year and 40,000 world records are currently stored on the company's database. But only a lucky 3,000 record achievements make it into the book.

It is therefore no mean feat to see the Cork Céilí listed alongside the largest simultaneous whoopee-cushion sit, the largest gathering of people dressed as goril-

las and the largest pillow fight ever to take place, mentioned in the Mass Participation section of this year's tome.

Co-organiser of the Céilí Mor, Barry Cogan, said the Irish dancing record-breaking challenge was city manger Joe Gavin's idea.

"He put the proposal to the city council and drove it forward. It was a fantastic idea for Cork's year as European Capital of Culture and we are so proud to have broken the record," said Mr Cogan.

The Céilí organisers claim that in fact over 8,000 dancers took part in the dancing event. But only registered dancers were acknowledged as having participated.

"It was magic to see the full length of South

Mall alight with people dancing in unison."

Mr Cogan revealed that the Ohio dancers set out to reclaim their title as world record holders this summer but no news regarding their achievement has yet been received.

The Céilí dancers are not the first group of Cork people to have set or broken Guinness World Records.

In 1954, Cork hurling fans helped set the record for the largest crowd to attend a hurling match, for the game between Cork and Wexford at Croke Park.

The world's deepest underwater rescue ever also took place 240 km off the south-east coast of Cork, on August 29, 1973, when Roger R. Chapman and Roger Mallinson were rescued from the *Pisces III*, in which they were trapped for 76 hours when it sank to a depth of 480 metres.

The highest combined score in an All-Ireland Gaelic Football final was also achieved in 1973 when Cork beat Galway by 3-17 to 2-13. The highest combined score in an All-Ireland Hurling final is 64 points, achieved at Croke Park in 1970 when Cork beat Wexford 6-21 to 5-10.

The greatest number of consecutive straight-arm lifts of two half-hundred weights was achieved by Con Griffin, at Rylane, Co Cork, Ireland on April 6, 2001 when he completed 35 lifts in a row while lying on his back.

And finally, the tallest busy lizzie grown here was that belonging to V. and M. Clifford of Mayfield, Cork, which reached a height of 2.8metres in 1994.

Other Irish record breakers include U2, who top the list as the highest earning music artists in the world.



ROBERT O'SHEA

WHAT has Bertie Ahern got in common with a Jewish cowboy?

Absolutely nothing.

That's not a joke, just a depressing fact.

In the past seven days it has emerged that our Chieftan was given £8,000 for a speaking engagement in Manchester when he was Minister for Finance in 1993.

Unbelievable! Not that he accepted the money when it was not ethically proper for him to do so, but that 25 people would fork out £330 each to listen to him.

Who on earth would pay to hear Bertie Ahern speak?

OK, sometimes he does say funny things that make you spit out your corn flakes, like: "I'm one of the last socialists left in Irish politics," but more often than not, like most politicians, he is a mouthpiece of spin. Who can blame him though, because that's what we, the puppet people, want to hear. As Kinky Friedman once said: "You come to see what you want to see; you come to see, but you never come to know."

Who is Kinky Friedman? None other than the aforementioned Jewish cowboy.

Kinky is a former singer-songwriter, best-selling mystery-crime author who is now running for governor in Texas. CBS News in the States describe him "with a mouth like a sailor, a wardrobe like Johnny Cash, and a cigar like Churchill".

Kinky first came to prominence with his band the Texas Jewboys when touring America in the 1970s, with his brand of country- and-western music, annoying audiences with a series of satirical songs with titles like *They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore* and *Get Your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed*. In the '80s, after the band broke up, Kinky reinvented himself as a novelist and numbers Bill Clinton among one of his biggest fans.

But don't go thinking Kinky is a joke candidate in the mould of Screaming Lord Sutch or Dana; Kinky's the real deal.

When Texans go to the polls on November 6 there is a good chance Kinky might get into office. Republican candidate Rick Perry, the incumbent, leads the polls on 31% but Kinky has been chasing since his campaign began and is now at a high of 23%.

His election ("If I win, the first thing I'll do is demand a recount," he says) would not be a first for American

politics, what with wrestler Jesse Ventura taking a surprise 1998 victory as a third-party candidate in the Minnesota governor's race.

"Why the hell not?" is Kinky's campaign slogan and he says he wants to "bring some entertainment value to politics and a little truth — if we can."

Kinky's personal philosophy is to treat adults like children and children like adults. When he saw a kid in the crowd at a fundraiser last year he said: "The Kinkster never likes to say 'f**k' in front of a c-h-i-l-d." Texas Monthly Editor Evan Smith has said: "He speaks his mind. He is proud to be politically incorrect. He offends people almost as a matter of chemicals in his body. He can't help himself."

Texas is the heartland of Bush's America, but Kinky says he is not worried about a heavily Christian state accepting a Jewish candidate. (He's a little worried though by a joke he used to make about Baptists: that they don't keep them underwater long enough.)

Kinky does have concrete policy ideals.

He supports more investment in harnessing Texas' alternative fuel resources such as wind and biodiesel instead of oil (or "dinosaur wine" as Kinky calls it).

On gay marriage: "I believe they have the right to be just as miserable as the rest of us!"

On abortion: "I'm not pro-life, and I'm not pro-choice. I'm pro-football."

In one way, it's our fault/credit that Kinky got involved in politics. He likes to tell the story of performing with his band in a Donegal bar. After the set was over, a local pulled him aside. "You're not really a musician," he said. "You're a politician."

Recently, while on the campaign trail, eating breakfast, a waitress passed Kinky a note handwritten on the back of the bill, telling the candidate that she — and the Republicans she knew — were planning to vote for him.

"This is what's going to win the election right here," Friedman said as he got up, taking the note with him. "Rick Perry is a nice guy, but he doesn't know the waitress's name. I know the waitress's name — and I might even ask for her phone number."

Kinky and Bertie: their first name ends in the same syllable, but that's about it.