

advance of winter and high fuel prices

# the cost



**PRESSURE AT THE PUMPS:** Petrol prices are rising by the week and motorists are feeling the strain.

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*It's now costing an average €50 to fill your car. People are driving less and are buying less when they stop for petrol. What they would have spent in the shop before is now being taken up in purchasing the same amount of petrol.*

Like petrol, diesel prices have also gone through the roof.

At the Esso Service Station on the Cork Road in Skibbereen, diesel cost €1.049 a litre last Thursday, compared with 93 cents a litre in January.

This means that for the average driver, the cost of filling a 60 litre tank has risen from €55.80 to €62.94.

The IRHA has met the Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen, and has urgently requested him to reduce the amount of excise duty currently paid on petrol and diesel.

Current excise rates stand at 44.2 cents per litre of petrol and 36.8 cents per litre of diesel.

According to the IRHA, the average haulier is spending 110 cents per litre of petrol.

This means that in real terms, in order to fill a 1,000 litre tank, it costs €1100, but included in this figure is €367 in excise duty and €231 in VAT.

“It's crazy, 53%-55% of what's being paid is going to the Government,” says Mr Quinn.

“Hardly a day goes by when some

manufacturing company closes down because they can't afford transport costs,” he says.

“If the exporting industry is not supported, exporters will be forced to re-locate to cheaper economies, seriously damaging the economy.”

However, it would appear that any solution to the fuel crisis will not be forthcoming in the short-term.

“The Minister for Finance has agreed to examine proposals put forward (by the IRHA), in the context of preparations for the forthcoming Budget,” said a spokesman for the Department of Finance.

However, according to the spokesman, reducing excise taxes to help with current price pressures is “not the magic solution that some might think.” This is because reduced tax revenues from motor fuels would have to be compensated for elsewhere.

“Ireland's current excise rates remain well below those of our main EU trading partners, particularly our nearest neighbour the UK, where prices are around 20% higher,” said the spokesman.

## How costs have increased

PETROL/diesel prices (per litre) around Cork.

**1. Esso Service Station, Cork Rd, Skibbereen.**  
Petrol: Today: €1.06.9; January 2005: €0.93.  
Diesel: Today: €1.04.9; January 2005: €0.90.

**2. Texaco, Glanmire Village.**  
Petrol: Today: €1.09.9; January 2005: €0.87.9.  
Diesel: Today: €1.07.9; January 2005: €0.91.9.

**3. Casey's Londis Top Shop, Bantry.**  
Petrol: Today: €1.07.9; January 2005: €0.88.9.  
Diesel: Today: €1.06.9; January 2005: €0.89.9.

**4. O'Reilly's Garage, Blackpool.**  
Petrol: Today: €1.09.9; January 2005: €0.88.9.  
Diesel: Today: €1.06.9; January 2005: €0.91.9.

**5. King's Maxol Filling Station, Mitchelstown.**  
Petrol: Today: €1.10.9; January 2005: €1.03.9.  
Diesel: Today: €1.09.9; January 2005: €1.03.9.

## O'Shea on Monday



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### Life and times of Eamon De Valera

WITH the 30th anniversary of Eamon De Valera's passing today, the publication of some of his more private papers has been permitted. I have had unlimited access to these documents and have made exciting discoveries. I present the updated findings in chronological order:

**1882:** De Valera born on October 14 in New York city to an Irish mother and a Spanish father, a German uncle, two Paraguayan aunts and six Persian cats.

**1885:** Sent to live with his mother's family in Bruree, Limerick, where he spends an idyllic childhood. Evidence of his future popularity shown in the impromptu dances he arranges at various crossroads in the area.

Having taken the pledge at an early age, he allows no drink. This leads to one local to say of him: “He couldn't organise a piss-up in Bruree.”

**1894:** Attends CBS in Charleville and must walk seven miles to and from school barefoot every day. A good six miles was carpeted.

**1904:** Graduates from National University in Dublin, after which he teaches mathematics.

**1913:** Thinking he is attending a maths seminar, Dev accidentally joins the Irish Volunteers at a rally. His suspicions he isn't at a trigonometry lecture arise when he is handed an assault rifle and some khaki slacks.

**1916:** Having risen through the ranks of the Republican movement, he is one of the leaders of the Easter Rising. He is the last commander to surrender, stating, “shoot me if you will, but arrange for my men.” This backfires when the British started shooting at him but Dev ducks behind a fruit stall and sends a messenger with the urgent dispatch: “Arrange for me goddamnit and shoot my men.”

**1917:** Released from prison and elected president of Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers, the political and military groups that co-ordinate the struggle to cast off British rule and enforce strict non-movement of the upper body during Irish dancing sets.

**1918:** Rearrested and sent to prison in England. While in Lincoln Jail, he is elected to British Parliament, but refuses to take his seat in the House of Commons, because, well, he is living in a cell.

**1919:** The IRB plot to spring him from jail. They send a cake with a master key for the prison in it, pretending it is from his mother. He writes in a letter home to his wife: “As for the escape plan, there is no hope, I am under armed guard day and night. Mother did send me a cake the other day with a key in it. I couldn't believe it; she knows how much I hate key.”

Later in the year he makes a dramatic escape from Lincoln Jail with the help of Liam Neeson and Aidan Quinn while dressed as an old biddy.

Ireland is unsafe for the newly-elected president of the first Dáil; he heads to the US as a stowaway and travels

*De Valera died 30 years ago today.*

*Here, Robert O'Shea takes a tongue-in-cheek look at what he asserts to be previously unseen papers that shed new light on the great man*

around for a year and a half to ‘break’ America.

**1921:** War of Independence is raging on his return but Dev agrees a truce with British Prime Minister Lloyd-George. He sends six men to negotiate terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty and “plenipotentiary” enters every Leaving Cert history student's lexicon for its one and only occasion.

**1922:** Civil War. Dev gets uppity about the wording of the Treaty and ceding of most of Ulster to the British; former freedom fighters split into anti- and pro-Treaty camps. One of the most appalling periods of Irish history follows with brother fighting brother, and the Paraguayan aunts barely on speaking terms.

**1926:** Resigns as president of Sinn Féin (We Ourselves) and forms a new party, Fianna Fáil (Brown Envelopes).

**1931:** Founds the *Irish Press*, which is his own personal newspaper that he holds complete control over for the next 40 years, from editorial censorship to stopping people in the street, commandeering their copy and finishing the crossword.

**1937:** As Taoiseach, he crafts a new constitution reflecting his Catholic moral beliefs and declares Ireland a sovereign state.

**1939:** As six years of war begin in Europe, Dev announces Ireland will remain neutral, although “neutral on the British side” as some historians will later say, while hoping the Germans win on penalties. Enters into verbal jousts with Churchill during the war years, which are eventually settled with an arm-wrestling contest in 1946, with Dev winning two to zip.

**1939-59:** In and out of government over these 20 years, during which time he oversees the stability of the Irish State as a nation of high unemployment and emigration.

**1959-73:** Serves two terms as president as he slowly goes around the bend.

**1975:** The 92-year-old is assassinated by pro-Treaty forces at his nursing home near Dublin.

● **To learn more about the life and loves and truth of Ireland's greatest statesman, visit your library.**