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FESTIVAL FUN: Queen of Puck Fair Siobhan Keane crowns wild mountain goat

PUCKER UP AND KISS THE KING

IT'S Ireland's oldest festival - and a right royal shindig.

Not even England's Prince George or his dad Prince William are a patch on our King Puck - a wild billygoat!

The animal was crowned at the ancient Puck Fair in Killorglin, in the Kingdom of Kerry. But, unlike the heirs to the British throne, our monarch will be dethroned tomorrow - and told to Puck off!

The festival, which always takes place on August 10, 11 and 12, is officially 400 years old this year.

Wackiest

But this year it started a day early, to mark the Year of the Gathering. And just to show they meant business, the organisers were selling Puck Fair passports for a fiver a pop.

As night fell on Friday, the horse-traders, stallholders, buskers and even fortune-tellers arrived. And yesterday, the world's wackiest festival kicked off.

As a bejewelled crown was placed on his head, the 400th King Puck gazed down on his subjects from a 15-foot-high scaffold in the square.

Official Goatcher Frank Joy, who led a posse of men into Macgillycuddy's Reeks to search for the perfect Puck, revealed: "We didn't even have to catch him - he just walked up to us!"

Frank was so impressed by the wild animal's natural pride that he named him after Chelsea football club manager Jose Mourinho

Royal shindig is mighty fun

By GERALDINE COMISKEY

"He's the Special One all right. He's a handsome fellow and there's a certain cockiness about him."

Local publican John Mulvihill, who has taken part in the hunt for Puck down the years, said: "He seems a bit tamer this year. It's as if he's seen people before so he must have come from the lower hills."

Retired local garda Pat Healy roared into town in the ultimate Puckmobile - a monster motorbike with goat-skulls on the headlights, "pinned up for Puck".

Pat even made a sacrifice to the King as his whiskers were chopped off and placed in a time capsule, along with photos and messages from locals.

"It's to be opened 400 years from now. I'm hoping they'll use the DNA from my whiskers to make a clone of me, so I'll be at Puck Fair forever!"

Queen of Puck Fair Siobhan Keane (12), had the 'honour' of crowning the winner this year but yours truly has kissed every King Puck for the past five years!

But while I'm happy to kiss the odd frog in the hope that he'll turn into a prince, I've had enough of puckering up to whiffy old goats - regal or not!