



### The Home of St Patrick Festival: The March Bells

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council.

Across the 17 days of the festival it is intended to thread the story of St. Patrick in Ireland, commencing in the opening weekend (March 3-5) with a focus on pre-Christian Ireland with its myths & legends, the middle weekend (March 10-12) a celebration on spirituality in its widest sense and the climactic weekend (March 16-19) the traditional contemporary celebration of St. Patrick festivities will take place. **The March Bells** will be the festival's leading event and will take place across the entire 17 day cycle of the festival.

All churches that have bells within the borough are invited to briefly ring them at 17.17 (17 minutes past 5) each of the 17 days of the festival. This project (which will be replicated in our partner boroughs of Newry, Mourne & Down) singly encompasses the three counties that were integral to St Patrick's life bringing together different religions, urban and rural life and evoke on a daily basis a joyful symbolism of celebration across the homeland of St. Patrick as a means of promoting local interest in the festival on a daily basis.

**The March Bells** is inspired by St. Patrick's own special bell and is a simple way of bringing our communities of three contrasting counties together. We are as much interested to have involved

the lone church bell in the very rural hinterlands as the Cathedrals of the larger cities and towns. We are also aware that many churches do not have bells or do not ring bells as part of their faith.