



**An Taisce**

*The National Trust for Ireland*

**An Taisce Newsletter**

**Volume 5 Issue 5**

**Aug 2013**

INDEX OF EZINES SINCE NOV 2012

# Welcome to An Taisce's August 2013 ezine

Please share widely! We have improved printing from Netscape or Internet Explorer Browsers but it is over 40 pages long - so please print it double sided or 2 pages per sheet.

We have also provided a magnify facility for some images - if a + symbol appears when you roll over an image - click on it and it will magnify.

## Full articles

### Westmeath Association - An afternoon with birds of prey

An Taisce Westmeath Association

HERITAGE WEEK

1:30 p.m., Saturday, 24 August 2013

An Afternoon with Birds of Prey

Castlepollard, Co Westmeath

Wildlife expert Rosie Campbell ([www.animalmagic.ie](http://www.animalmagic.ie)) will explain

about our birds of prey in Ireland. Hold a bird of prey in your hand. Stare a barn owl in the eye !

Tea and cakes afterwards.

Enquiries and reservations for this event are essential, as there is only a limited number of places, and should be made with John Harnett, telephone 086 23 23 727 or by email at [chair@antaisce.org](mailto:chair@antaisce.org) Further details available from John Harnett.

Cost of the outing: Members of An Taisce € 10.00; non-members € 15.00 (Non members who join An Taisce on the day go free!)

**All welcome**

Don't forget our next events:



September 2013 Organic Farm walk near Castlepollard (date to be advised)

September 2013 Bat walk (date and location to be advised)

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## Clare Local Association - Heritage Week - Bat Meeting

Our sixth Annual Bat Meeting for children on Wednesday 21st August starts at 7.15 at The Inn Dromoland and ending up with a **Bat Walk** in the castle grounds. All children welcome with parents.



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## Meath Local Association - Heritage Week - Picnic and canal walk

The Meath Association of An Taisce have organised a picnic and canal walk at the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre/Oldbridge Estate for Heritage



### ***Boyne Navigation & Newgrange***

Week on Saturday 24th August. The agenda is as follows:

1:00 Picnic on front lawn of the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre  
pm (Oldbridge House), where we will have a sign set up on a fold up  
table so you know where to meet us.

Please be advised that participants must provide their own picnic and  
picnic accessories.

2:00 Opportunity to view Living History Cavalry and black powder musket  
pm firing demos organised by the OPW or view House and gardens

3:00 John Ducie who is a qualified Failte Ireland National Tour Guide and  
pm has carried out an in-depth study of the Boyne Valley and its cultural  
and natural heritage will give a guided tour of the Boyne Canal. We  
will start at the Sealock where we can view the extensive restorative  
work the Boyne Navigation Branch of IWAI have carried out on behalf  
of An Taisce. We will then head towards the Obelisk Bridge and  
Oldbridge Upper Lock and then return along the same route to Battle  
of the Boyne Visitor Centre Car Park. Please note house, gardens  
and restaurant close at 5 pm.

The event is free

Comfortable walking footwear is advised and hopefully it will be a lovely sunny day. As not all our members are on our email list please could you inform other members of this event or any friends or relatives who would be interested in coming along. If you require further details please contact me at 086 6060770 or by email.

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## **Wexford Local association - Invasive Species Seminar**



Wexford Local association have organised an Invasive Species Seminar

8pm, Thursday 19 September

Riverbank House Hotel, Wexford

**Speakers:** Dr Joe Caffrey, Senior Research Scientist, Inland Fisheries, Ireland (Aquatic) plus one other person to

talk on Terrestrial.

All are welcome! Come and learn about the situation and what the laws are regarding Invasive Species.

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## Update from An Taisce Advocacy & Properties

To complement the 63 staff at An Taisce's Education Unit, An Taisce Advocacy & Properties, has – and this is in large part thanks to your generosity – been able to bring its complement of paid staff to five.



**James Nix**

January saw Andrew Jackson, Natural Environment Officer, and James Nix, Director of Policy & Operations, join Ian Lumley, Built Environment and Heritage Officer. Growing that number to four, Tomás Bradley started on May 23 as Planning and Environment Policy Officer working under Ian's direction. And thanks to funding from the European Cycling Federation, and in partnership with Cyclist.ie, Damien O Tuama started on 10 July as Cycling Co-ordinator.

Damien's funding is short term (just 9 months) but he is working hard on proposals to extend it. Hundreds of thousands of bikes are sold in Ireland each year and imagine if just a tiny fraction of their cost price was donated to boost commuting cycling!

But that's only part of the picture. In Patricia Cunningham, Julia Lubbock, David Garvey and Emma Devlin we now have four fully-fledged jobbridge interns. From forestry applications to peatland protection, and from CAP reform to biofuels, all are working hard.

Outside of Jobbridge, we have been blessed with excellent interns and volunteers. Ciara O'Hara has done sterling work over the summer (renewable energy, Bloom in the Park, sustainable sourcing etc), and we are sad that she's leaving us soon to return to college. We must also thank Laurie O'Keeffe (who worked on cycling and Heritage Week activities) and James Conway. Over the summer James worked on An Taisce's properties, from updating grazing agreements, to linking with local volunteers, right down to making sure the fences with neighbouring landowners are in good shape.

We all miss Camilla Tunney, whose excellent work through the spring and early summer, was rewarded not so much by An Taisce but by an organisation in the UK that does work very similar to the Education Unit's Green Schools and Green Communities programmes.

We are very grateful too to Dave Whittle: his ongoing work on Buildings at Risk we hope to develop with a crowd-funding pitch on [www.indigogo.com](http://www.indigogo.com). Are you interested in donating to help save historic structures? If so, email us!!

We are excited about David Garvey and Jack Murphy's work on agriculture. Directed by new volunteer Sinead Moran, who hails from an organic farm in Mayo, An Taisce will set out how CAP reform can translate into a better future for farm families and diversity in nature.

Louisa McDonnell stepped forward to develop An Taisce's presence in the media, old and new. Already she is deep into work on Buildings at Risk while James Nix is busy hatching a plan to inveigle her into doing more as Judy takes some very well-earned time-out! Which brings me to an enormous thanks: Judy Osborne – what can we say? Her dedication and insight will be very sorely missed as she travels a little over the coming year. We wish her well for the time away, only worrying that we may not be able to keep pace with her new-found dedication and stronger insight on return!

We have also been very fortunate in that long-standing Donegal member, Louis McGee, has joined An Taisce under the Tús programme. With extensive experience working on historic properties in London and New York, Louis' expertise is invaluable. Learning from Louis, you know he has worked on 100 Tailors Halls!

Already, Louis has re-configured shelving on the top floor to enable a much better filing system for hardcopy planning material. He has also re-hung the emergency doors in the lower hall which were not always closing reliably. His latest work is in the Wolfe Tone room. There he uncovered past frailties (woodworm, a touch of water ingress, etc ), all now remedied. His latest work is laying carpet tiles from Interface Flooring, which we think will very much complement the sky blue walls, the paint for which was supplied by Farrow & Ball. Stand by for the next Ezine with full images of the Wolfe Tone room as you have never seen it before!

To new volunteers I haven't expressly thanked here, I promise I will make it up for it in the next ezine : ) But before I go a big ongoing thanks to Dave Ryan on membership. And at the risk of getting into trouble with the rest of the Board, a quick word of thanks to Chairman John Harnett, Hon. Sec. James Leahy and Charles Stanley Smith, Public Affairs. James produced the new designs you see on the website, Charles implemented them, and amid a thousand other things, John applied the whip in a most gentle fashion to ensure this – and the 1,000 other things got done. Now, lest I need to go into hiding, the Vice Chair, the Treasurer, Committee Chairs and all other Board

members I can assure you have been working very hard too, and who, on your behalf I extend a heartfelt thanks.

James Nix, director of Policy and Operations

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## Fish Farms & Lice - An Taisce Press Release

### Marine Institutes defence of Aran fish farm now in shreds An Taisce

Marine Institute study has been panned by Canadian, Norwegian and Scottish scientists

University of Toronto analysis shows the Marine Institutes 2013 study is scarcely worth the paper it is written on



*Atlantic Salmon by Jonathon Bliss*

Earlier this year the Marine Institute produced a study which sought to downplay the role of sea lice in compromising salmon populations, particularly the survival of wild salmon.

However, according to a newly-released paper from the University of Torontos Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, at least three fundamental errors compromise the Marine Institute report.

- First, data differences from year to year were not treated appropriately.
- Second, averages regarding the survival of fish were used incorrectly,
- and third, the Marine Institute study contains grave mistakes in measuring control and treatment groups, leading to wide inaccuracies.

Owing to these flaws, the Marine Institute " **incorrectly lead the reader to a conclusion that sea lice play a minor, perhaps even negligible, role in salmon survival**", says the University of Toronto paper.

While the Marine Institute suggests that "lice cause 1 per cent of mortality in Atlantic salmon", the correct estimate is actually a one-third loss of overall adult recruitment.

Led by the University of Toronto, with scientists from leading institutes across Canada, Norway and Scotland, the paper is published in the Journal of Fish Diseases. With this study, Scotlands equivalent to the Marine Institute the Scottish Oceans Institute at St Andrews has shown a research publication of its Irish counterpart to be without foundation.

An Taisce notes that as authoritative scientific voices have weighed into the debate regarding fish farming, the plans for a giant 1,130-acre caged-fish installation between the Aran Islands and Clare, along with similar proposals elsewhere along the coast, appear increasingly ill-advised.

It is disappointing to see that the Marine Institute has been completely discredited but that is unfortunately the sad reality, the The National Trust for Ireland concluded.

In publishing articles which don't stand up to scientific scrutiny, the Marine Institute has raised serious question marks over the scientific credibility of its own research, as well as making very questionable use of taxpayers' funds.

The revelations about its research can only strengthen the argument that the Marine Institute is propping up Bord Iascaigh Mhara's (BIM) controversial plans for these vast and intensive fish farms off the coast.

Sea lice have proven difficult to control on farms, especially large farms, because it is difficult to treat all fish simultaneously. Such fish farms are linked to mass fatal infestations of wild salmon and trout in countries such as Ireland, Scotland, Norway and Canada. With the Marine Institute study now shown to be essentially a wrong-headed attempt to mask the risks posed by sea lice harboured in great numbers within such farms it now needs to be withdrawn in full.

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## **An Taisces High Court JR action secures successful quashing of Westmeath consent.**

An Taisces legal challenge to a consent granted by Westmeath County Council for a residential development on the lands of Charlestown Stud was brought to a successful conclusion this morning, when lawyers acting for both sides confirmed to the President of the High Court, Mr Justice Kearns, that the Council had agreed to the quashing of the consent and that the matter was to revert to the Council to make a new decision.

An Taisce was granted leave to Judicially Review the County Councils decision on May 3<sup>rd</sup> arguing the Council had failed to notify An Taisce as observers on the planning application of the decision in line with the timeframes stipulated in legislation, and had thus compromised the ability to appeal the Councils decision to An Bord Pleanála. However, An Taisce had also highlighted that by contrast there was no delay in notifying the applicant who was notified the day after the grant of permission was made.

James Nix, Policy Director of An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland, welcomed the decision commenting:

An Taisces decision to pursue this matter in the courts was based on the importance of upholding the integrity of the planning process, which is supported by legislation which stipulates specific steps and timeframes to allow for fair involvement of concerned parties in the decision making process. There were also multiple issues of concern to us with this application and consent, including that the development in question is adjacent to a proposed Natural Heritage Area. The approach taken by Westmeath County Council in this particular application compromised our ability to appeal the Councils decision, and in so doing compromised the planning process and breached the legislative requirements underlying it. Our legal action sought to not only over turn this particular consent, but also to uphold the principle and importance of adhering to legislative framework for the planning processes for all other applications, observers and applicants. We do however welcome the decision of Westmeath to concede this matter and avoid costly litigation.

I would also like to thank An Taisce's staff, volunteers and of course our legal team, Mr. James Devlin, S.C., Mr John Kenny, B.L. and Marilyn McNicholas & Co. Solicitors without whom today's successful outcome would not have happened.

An Taisce Press Release - June 19th 2013

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## **Still fighting to protect Kilkenny**

### **Proposed road will destroy Kilkennys unique tourism product An Taisce**

#### **Grossly compromising the citys Medieval Mile would see tourist businesses hardest hit**

Kilkennys reputation as one of Irelands premier destinations for history lovers will lie in tatters if a new road is built through the citys medieval quarter, according to An Taisce The National Trust for Ireland.

Its simply not possible to maintain an attractive environment for tourists and at the same time construct a busy road that would cut key historic attractions off from each another, according to James Nix, Policy Director for An Taisce.

Hosting 215,000 visitors each year, Kilkenny accounts for one third of all tourist trips in the south east. If the road scheme proceeds very substantial financial inflows from tourism revenue in Kilkenny will be thrown in jeopardy, according to An Taisce.

Kilkennys Medieval Mile stretches from Kilkenny Castle to St Canices Cathedral. The Medieval Mile was officially launched in 2012 with a €5.5m investment plan announced by Minister Hogan. All stakeholders, including Failte Ireland, are agreed that the Medieval Mile is vital to Kilkenny as a world class tourism destination.

However, the proposed road would sever the Medieval Mile and the result would grossly compromise Kilkennys unique tourist product. Businesses that rely and thrive on tourism to Kilkenny would be hardest hit, with follow-on consequences for employment.

There is a clear alternative here, An Taisce points out. More than 4,500 people have signed a petition some online, others with their personal signature - calling for funds to be diverted away from the plan to build a road through the centre of Kilkenny and dedicated instead to the completion of the citys ring road.

Completing the Kilkenny ring will actually take traffic out of the city centre, in marked contrast to the plan current being progressed, which will simply burden the core of this historic city with more vehicles.

All forward-thinking cities have stopped building new or wider roads through their cores, notes An Taisce, with the Trust adding that the emphasis now is on more accessible and relaxed movement for people walking, cycling and taking public transport. The progressive solution here sees a percentage of private car use migrated to more sustainable modes over the coming years, instead of miss-spending taxpayers money on a project that could only further embed car-dependence. In turn, this miss-spending would then need even further taxpayers money to undo it in the medium and long term.

Kilkenny businesses must also look to their vital interests, as must all interested in maintaining employment in the tourist sector: these all point to building the ring road, not a road through Kilkennys heart.

There is a window of opportunity left to avoid chronic miss-spending here, says An Taisce. Once the counter-productive nature of the road through the centre is realised and acknowledged, money can be transferred to the ring road without difficulty.

Kilkenny has an opportunity to learn from Dublin, and avoid mistakes made in the capital. In the 1970s and 1980s misconceived road proposals in Dublin saw the widening of roads adjacent to St Patricks and Christchurch cathedrals. Now there is a realisation that these roads need to be narrowed. Kilkenny can avoid repeating errors of the past.

An Taisce Press Release - July 29th 2013

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# Where is the Planning Regulator?

## Taxpayers hit for €500,000 as Department of the Environment drags its heels on Planning Regulator

More than €500,000 and 25 months have been wasted as the Department of the Environment drags its heels on the only measure that can restore credibility to the planning system, namely, the appointment of an independent regulator with full investigative powers.

That's according to An Taisce, which said today that the ongoing failure to seize this clear and simple solution has resulted in a chronic litany of waste costing taxpayers in excess of €500,000 and a series of reports issued over two years that have been shown not to be worth the paper they are written on.

The recommendation of the Chair of the Planning Tribunal, Mr Justice Mahon, advising government to appoint an independent planning regulator is crystal clear, An Taisce said, asking what is the Department waiting for?

An Taisce's statement follows the unprecedented development late last week in which High Court partly quashed the Internal Planning Review published by the Department of the Environment in June 2012.

The Internal Planning Review, which has become known as the Whitewash Report for its casual dismissal of complaints against 6 local authorities without ever properly investigating any of them, now needs to be withdrawn in full, according to An Taisce.

The Department's 2012 internal review doesn't have a shred of credibility left, said An Taisce Policy Director James Nix; and its withdrawal is the logical first step here, he added.

Summarising what has occurred to date, Mr Nix said: in 2011 the Department rejected the option of proper investigation in favour of a hopelessly shallow in-house exercise. The result was a report with no credibility issued in mid 2012. The Department then retained an external consultant (Mr Henk van der Kamp) in late 2012 to undertake further study but with no more investigation than the original internal review. And with just as little credibility behind it, the van der Kamp report must now also be withdrawn.

"Again and again it is taxpayers that have to pay for this sad and sorry waste of time and public money", said Mr Nix, detailing the bill:

€325,000 approx. bill faced by taxpayers after the State lost the Convia case (see note 1)

€150,000 approx. bill for writing the compromised 2012 internal review

€25,000 approx. bill for the van der Kamp report, which like the 2012 internal review is now not worth the paper it's written on

The above yields a total cost of €500,000 and this omits the time of civil servants which had no involvement in the discredited internal review but have since been drawn in.

According to Nix of An Taisce, the era of half measures and soothing, half-hearted investigations must give way to an independent properly-resourced planning regulator without delay. The planning regulator must have full investigative powers including the capacity to compel witness and gain the discovery of documents. Until the regulator is in place the litany of waste will continue while the credibility of what is a very important Department risks further decline. Even in the short term, an independent planning regulator will be much more cost-effective.

Concluding An Taisces James Nix said: we desperately need a planning system in which the public can have confidence, something the Department cannot achieve with internal investigations, or external examinations which clearly fall short before they even begin. The Department got itself into this mess, but can also get itself out: withdrawing its discredited reports and establishing an independent planning regulator are the logical next steps.

An Taisce Press Release - June 19th 2013

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## **The Limerick 2030 plan (L2030).**

The L2030 plan is a very welcome document - perhaps the most comprehensive city plan produced since the 1700s and ground-breaking in so many respects. An Taisce endorsed two submissions, that of Ms Luciana Campos and Mr Brian Leddin. A number of points were emphasised as follows:.

### **Re-planning vehicle movement**

L2030 notes that it is ripe to re-consider the multi-lane one-way system known as "the orbital" and it proceeds along the basis that the orbital will be dismantled (e.g. P86 "removing one-way traffic where possible, but especially on Henry St and Lower Mallow St"). An Taisce strongly endorses this, noting, as L2030 does, that multi-lane one-way systems discourage walking, cycling and public transport by encouraging / facilitating faster vehicle movement. Vehicles move faster as they 'compete' with other traffic moving in the same direction on neighbouring lanes. Additionally, multi-lane one way systems harm cycling by causing far longer journeys. The work on re-planning vehicle transport movement in the city needs to begin as soon as possible.

### **Arthur's Quay area**

Second, the outline vision for the re-planned Arthur's Quay area can be much improved.

There are two key reasons why Arthur's Quay Park fails to work well currently; first, because service entrances and parking access points from the neighbouring roads face out towards the park. Hence, the space lacks vitality and "eyes on the street". Second, aside from the tourist office, there are no active buildings on the Shannon River side of the road. As the Park and the tourist office are really the only reasons to cross the road, the road acts as a corridor of severance, not as a street to cross.

The remedy here is to have active buildings on the River Shannon side (north / eastern) side of the road. This is achieved in the Campos plan for the Arthur's Quay area (Campos, Luciana, "Sustainable Limerick: Positive Perception through Green Conception" (2009); see also reference above). On the other hand, in its drawings for the Arthur's Quay area, L2030 would repeat the mistake of the past in not positioning busy buildings on the River side.

The Campos plan actively facilitates movement over and back; interaction between commercial, residential and civic buildings is promoted as is engagement with the public spaces. In essence the Campos plan sees a new street much closer in form and function to Patrick St in Cork or Eyre Sq in Galway - rather than a road with all the buildings on one side what reads as somewhat residual green space on the other.

The Campos plan for the Arthur's Quay area would also mean there is no need to demolish the award-winning tourist office - the solution here is take the road around the northern side of the tourist office and turn it southward to create a crossroads at Ellen St / Patrick St.

To re-cap, all-day activity on both sides of the street is vital and must occur. The key need is to encourage pedestrian crossings of the road, integrate the public spaces, foster interaction from one side to the other, and calm the road, something the Campos solution achieves.

### **Holding a Culture Night each month**

This idea is Brian Leddin's. From St Mary's Cathedral to No 2 Pery Sq, from the old Cleeves toffee factory to the carved faces on the door posts of Cecil St, Limerick has so many undiscovered gems. One concept is to pick one venue or tour per month, starting in Jan 2014 and open it to the public with guided tours from say 4pm. The 3rd Fri of every month is suggested to avoid clashes with Bank Holidays etc. (Clearly the date could be moved.) By giving advance notice of the building and details about it, visitors will plan ahead to book their stay in Limerick for that weekend.

### **National Museum Limerick - Science, Communications and Transport**

Again, as Brian Leddin points out, Ireland has no National Science Museum, and this is something that could be considered, especially so given Limerick and the Midwest's industrial heritage. He notes that it does not need to be of large scale to draw children and adults alike, and would put Limerick firmly on the national map. Ireland also

has no communications museum. What better place to display how desktops, laptops and mobile phones have developed over the years, not to mention documenting the technology behind trans-Atlantic sailing ship and how mail was carried abroad, the steam ships that came after them, telegrams, and land line phones. Again, Ireland has no proper transport museum but vintage trains and buses are cramped in crowded sheds, spread between various locations (including Dublin and Kerry): there is no better place to bring them together than Limerick.

A great deal of attention is given in the document to image. Image is conveyed first and foremost by Irish residents. There can be no better way to have visitors from all over Ireland flocking to Limerick with a National Museum in the city focused on science, communications and transport. That will spread the word and pay dividends near and far.

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## The Habitats Directive in Ireland

**The Habitats Directive in Ireland and how it has aided An Taisce's campaign to protect the Environment.  
An article by Dave Whittle, currently working in the Planning Unit at HQ**

The Habitats Directive is one of the two major European Union directives (the other being the Birds Directive) in relation to wildlife and nature conservation. Adopted in 1992, it forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy.

The Directive aims to protect approximately 220 habitat types and 1,000 species throughout the European Union, all of which are listed in the Directive's Annexes. Annex I sets out habitats to be protected, Annex II sets out species requiring protection through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), while Annex IV species are in need of strict protection and are to be protected wherever they are found, either within or outside an SAC.

The overall objective of the Directive is the maintenance or restoration of *favourable conservation status* of all habitat types and species of *community interest*.

In reality, what all this means for Ireland is that we are required to establish Special Areas of Conservation to protect 60 different habitats and 25 species (in Annex I and II) and to give strict protection to a number of other species without necessarily establishing an SAC.

Habitats which are of recognised priority in Ireland and which we have a particular duty to protect include: raised bogs, blanket bogs, stable sand dunes, limestone pavement, turloughs and machair (a unique form of coastal grassland found only in Ireland and parts of Scotland).

Species requiring SACs (Annex II species) include otters, salmon and the freshwater pearl mussel, considered by some to be Irelands most endangered species, while species in need of strict protection (Annex IV species) include dolphins and the Natterjack Toad, Irelands only toad species who has through some quirk of nature established himself in isolated pockets in County Kerry, many miles from its Continental cousins.

## **The Reality**

An examination of how seriously Ireland has taken its obligations under the habitats directive is a sobering experience. We are all aware that Ireland is facing huge fines for allowing turf cutting to continue in raised bog SACs. In fact, we have already lost half of our peatlands to turf cutting, both industrial and traditional. However, the destruction of our peatlands is not the only environmental issue facing Ireland, not by a long shot. What follows is an examination of three cases where County Councils have given planning permission to developments which were in outright breach of the Habitats Directive, and how An Taisce is trying to rely on the very same directive in order to halt these developments.

## **Lough Rynn Rowing Centre**

Lough Rynn in County Leitrim forms part of a nationally important lake system. Together with neighbouring Lough Errew, it contains a number of important Annex I habitats, such as lake shore woodlands and wetlands. Annex IV bat and otter species are also present, as are bird species protected under the Birds Directive, including whooper swans and Greenland white fronted geese.

Despite its great ecological value, the planning history of the site is one of continuous environmental destruction.

During the height of the Celtic Tiger, much of the ecological value of Lough Errew was destroyed due to unauthorised infilling of the lake shore in order to make way for a new Temple to the Glory of Economic Growth: a 9 hole golf course and gated residential development.

In 2006, and following a subsequent expansion of the golf course, the European Court of Justice found against Ireland in Case C518-04 due to the absence of a bats survey which was part of a post development consent condition which was not complied with. Not only did the Court articulate its displeasure at the fact that such a survey was never carried out, it ruled that a bat survey should have been done at application stage, not subsequently.

Despite this very recent condemnation by the European Union, Leitrim County Council gave permission in 2012 for the development of an international rowing centre in neighbouring Lough Rynn. No attempt was made to quantify the impact (which will be significant) of the development on wet woodland habitat, bats, otters, whooper

swans and Greenland white fronted geese, all of which are protected under the Habitats and Birds directives and which are found on the site.

An Taisce took this case to An Bord Pleanála, but the Board stated that it was unable to rule on the matter.

It is not all bad news however. The Habitats Regulations SI 47 of 2011, which transposes the Habitats Directive into Irish law, gives An Taisce (and others) very clear grounds for opposing the development. For example, Article 27(4)(b) provides that Public Authorities outside Special Protection Areas:

*in the exercise of their functions, insofar as the requirements of the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive are relevant to those functions, shall, outside those areas, strive to avoid pollution or deterioration of habitats*

More importantly, Article 27(9) empowers the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs to request a public authority to provide him with information regarding its compliance with the Regulations, either generally or in relation to a specific case. It also empowers him to request a public authority to take such steps as the Minister considers are necessary to ensure compliance with or enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives.

An Taisce has recently written to the Minister for Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht Affairs to request him to exercise this right and are currently awaiting his response.

## **Williamstown Turloughs SAC**

Turloughs are a unique type of seasonal lake, found nowhere else on earth apart from limestone areas of Ireland. They support a unique variety of plant and animal life. Due to their rarity and uniqueness to Ireland, there is an obligation on all of us to protect them from destruction. The reality however is that turloughs are being damaged at an alarming rate, with over a third having already been drained for agricultural purposes and many more drained each year.

Williamstown Turloughs SAC in County Galway is composed of a number of turloughs and contains a diverse range of flora and fauna including otters, lapwings, snipe, whooper swans, common reed and common club rush. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has stated that Williamstown Turloughs represent the 11<sup>th</sup> most important turlough site in terms of ecological value in Ireland (and therefore the world) and as such is of International importance requiring strict conservation measures.

In reality, the site faces a range of pressures. Drainage works are causing serious ecological damage. Also of particular concern is a concrete casting works site adjoining the SAC. An Bord Pleanála ruled in 2009 that this activity must cease as the development is *prejudicial to the natural heritage of the area* and is likely to cause *pollution* to the site.

Despite this ruling, the works have not ceased, four years later. After unsatisfactory contact with Galway County Council, An Taisce is once again relying on the Habitats Directive to ensure the site is adequately protected. We have requested the Minister to exercise his rights under the directive to *request a public authority to take such*

*steps as the Minister considers are necessary to ensure compliance with or enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives. We are awaiting a response.*

## **Donore Caravan Park**

Westmeath County Council gave planning permission for a caravan park of 40 pitches in 1995 on the shores of Lough Derravaragh in an area of particular natural beauty. Since then however over 120 caravans have been placed on the site, damaging the visual amenity of the area and putting the lake at serious risk of pollution.

The Council issued an enforcement notice to the operator in 2009 and stated that all extra caravans must be removed before the end of February 2009. However, the operator failed to comply with these conditions and the unauthorised, environmentally damaging activity continues.

Once again, An Taisce has turned to the Habitats Directive in order to reach a solution, and has written to the Minister to request that he intervene under Article 27(9)(a) and Article 27(9)(b) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 497 of 2011 (which gives effect to the Habitats Directive in Ireland).

## **Conclusion**

What can be concluded from the above cases about how the Habitats Directive is implemented in Ireland? On paper at least, the Directive places an obligation on the State to protect our most important habitats and species.

The reality however is often very different. Time and time again we see County Councils give planning permission for developments which are clearly contrary to the goals of the Directive. Often, the Council will justify these developments on the basis of an Environmental Impact Statement or Assessment did not signify any major adverse ecological impacts. However, more often than not these EIAs are little more than empty paper exercises, and either wilfully or accidentally (through lack of expertise on the part of those carrying them out) fail to quantify the likely impacts of a development on the environment.

When the relevant Councils or planning authorities fail to implement environmental criteria set out in the Habitats Directive (as they all too often do) it is left to private individuals or NGOs such as An Taisce to seek implementation either by An Bord Pleanála, the Minister or the Courts. This can be a drawn out and costly process, which in turn puts many people and pressure groups off. Clearly there is a serious issue regarding the effective implementation of the Habitats Directive in Ireland.

# The philosophy of Planning

## The philosophy of Planning - Gavin Daly, Chairman Built Environment Committee

Recent rulings in favour of a woman who had built a house by Lough Dan in Wicklow has inspired a number of articles discussing the whole raison d'être of planning rules and regulations.

Gavin Daly, An Taisce's Built Environment Committee Chairman, contributed his thoughts on the subject at [irelandafternama.wordpress.com](https://irelandafternama.wordpress.com) <https://irelandafternama.wordpress.com/2013/08/09/a-new-vision-for-irish-planning/> and it is reprinted below.

The President of the Irish Planning Institute, Mary Crowley, also wrote on the subject in the Irish Examiner on 8th August and the article can be seen here: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/analysis/planning-serves-community-not-individual-239204.html>

### A New Vision for Irish Planning, by Gavin Daly in irelandafternama

At the recent AESOP/ACSP conference in University College Dublin, which brought together 1,200 planning academics and scholars from all over the world, Minister Jan O'Sullivan announced her intention to shortly bring forward a new planning policy statement setting out a new vision for the Irish planning system.

After the past few years of fire fighting, whereby the Government was desperately attempting to reign in the excesses of the Celtic tiger era and impose some control on the often reckless conduct of planning authorities, there is no doubt that such a vision is now sorely needed so that we can begin to effectively plan for the future. Earlier posts on this blog pointed to the current period of crisis as an opportunity for rethinking accepted ideas, policies and practices in relation to future planning and development in Ireland.

According to Minister O'Sullivan *if the public doesn't understand how the planning system works, why certain things are permitted and certain other things aren't, then your planning system isn't doing its job.* It is true to say that other than a vague comprehension of the legacy costs of bad planning, the public appreciation of what purpose planning serves in society has hit rock bottom, mired as it is in a perception of corruption, cronyism and ineptitude. This has not been helped by the complete failure of both the professional institutes and academia to effectively communicate a cogent mission and rationale for planning.

Planning is, at least in the public mind, typically reduced to development control i.e. planning applications. This is demonstrated by each and every time surveys are published showing a drop in the number of planning applications, which are inevitably accompanied by a chorus of calls for a reduction in public planners. This narrow technocratic interpretation (such as that conveyed in the BBC documentary The Planners) is something to which many public planners have grown both resigned and accustomed to. To be fair, this state of affairs has also been created in no small part by a deep cultural antipathy to planning in Ireland and an unfettered attitude to private property rights.

In a famous [1973](#) critique of planning, Aaron Wildavsky mused if planning is everything, maybe it's nothing and there is more than a modicum of truth in this observation. In recent years the planning system has been lumbered with an ever more complex range of regulatory functions. Planners have had to come to grips with a whole host of new skills as well as grappling with the novel challenges brought about by the recession, most of which they plainly have no training for. A review of any county or city development plan will quickly show that planning is now the vanguard for an ever growing and diverse range of complex agendas such as housing policy, nature protection, flood risk management, vacant housing, renewable energy production, water quality protection, retail impact assessment, town centre management, economic development, climate change mitigation, landscape protection, heritage, infrastructure delivery etc.

Planning has now become so large and complex that the public planner cannot encompass its dimensions. As a result, county and city development plans are largely obscure and voluminous documents extending to hundreds of pages with vague policies often wrapped up in impenetrable jargon and mutually exclusive policy goals. Planners now find themselves at the nexus of so many contentious and contested policy debates and it is little wonder that the profession has retreated to the high moral ground of blaming politicians and sought cover in the banality of development control. I do not argue that mediating competing economic, social and environmental agendas should not be a core function of planning into the future. However, we must be aware that extending planning to cover so much merely serves to obfuscate what it is precisely that planning is attempting to achieve. A cynical critique would indeed conclude that maybe that is indeed nothing.

Of course, collapsing the purpose of planning down to a core agenda is a process fraught with danger. This was well demonstrated by England's recently published [National Planning Framework \(NPF\)](#). The function of the new NPF is ostensibly to simplify the planning code. However, the real rationale is clearly the perennial Tory neoliberal agenda of planning retrenchment and foreclosing all but a narrow debate around the economic growth agenda and boosting housing supply.

If there is one thing that any new planning vision for Ireland should definitely not be about is economic growth. This may appear a rather taboo notion in an environment where the consensus demands that every public policy is compelled to fully justify itself on the basis of the economy. However, it is readily obvious with even a cursory analysis that it is not within the gift of planning to grow the economy. Including growth as a core goal of planning tends towards overproduction (e.g. housing, zoning etc.); heightens competitive pressures between regions favouring larger urban centres; and systematically excludes qualitative social and ecological considerations which must be at the heart of planning thinking. Indeed the origins of planning were in mitigating the crisis conditions brought about by rapid economic growth.

In order to avoid mission creep and reassert the relevance of planning for the daunting challenges of the coming 21<sup>st</sup> Century we must therefore firmly place the horse back at the front of the cart. Rebuilding public trust in the battered image of the planning system compels us to create a new mission for planning which is realistic, relevant

and serves to build a shared public understanding of its value. This must first start with an explicit recognition that planning involves making choices - *planning is politics*.

Any future vision for Irish planning must therefore return to the welfare state origins upon which modern planning was founded, rooted in concepts of social and spatial justice. This requires an explicit move away from the depoliticised, entrepreneurial growth agenda aimed at boosting supply side activities such as housing and infrastructure provision. A new vision for planning must be centred upon the public goods and services for which the spatial distribution is within the remit of the State to achieve. The delivery of public services requires certain infrastructure networks including, for example, transport, waste, energy and communications infrastructure as well as facilities and services related to health, education, culture and recreation all of which require an integrated approach to settlement planning. A simple mission for this new planning vision could be: *To ensure that a certain socially agreed and necessary base level of services that people need are provided when and where that need occurs.*

In many ways the disconnect between public service delivery on the one hand and the spatial distribution of population on the other sums up the failures of the Irish planning system over the past few decades. This was laid starkly evident with, for example, the debacle in west Dublin where little consideration was given to the fact that a rapid increase in new housing would soon yield a requirement for new schools. Equally, in many rural areas, the collapse of the Celtic tiger artifice and the accompanying severe programme of public service retrenchment has left many communities without necessary services. In many cases these are areas where a massive ad hoc proliferation of scattered housing was permitted necessitating many people to travel large distances to access services and employment opportunities, or to live without.

In Germany, for example, the overarching aim in the development of the spatial structure of the national territory is to establish equivalent living conditions in all parts of the country. The Iceland 2020 strategy, which was forged after the economic collapse of the state, similarly puts the welfare and quality of life of its citizens at the centre of its national planning policy. In effect, a policy of equivalent living conditions would primarily benefit peripheral regions, since there are usually greater structural weaknesses and imbalances in these regions. Equivalency, however, does not mean that all regions must have identical infrastructure or that the income of all people must be the same everywhere, which is neither practicable nor reasonable. Regional equivalence of living conditions means that as many citizens as possible are able to participate equally in development of society. To approach equality of opportunity it is necessary to ensure certain minimum standards with respect to access to and the availability of services of public interest, to options for earning a living, to infrastructure and environmental qualities.

Placing social security and the equality of citizens to the fore of the agenda for a new planning vision would require a fundamental rethink of how we plan and provide a compelling rationale for promoting public acceptance as to why we plan. Upholding this principle at a time when public resources are limited could help inform a, heretofore absent, rational national dialogue on settlement planning. Importantly, it could also help close the

gaping lacuna which has been the achilles heel of the Irish planning system for decades the dichotomy between planning policy decisions made by local authorities and the opportunity costs to society associated with those decisions. The model underpinning the Local Property Tax, for example, comprises numerous spatially derived variables including relative distance to services and amenities. Therefore, in theory, the more households with good accessibility to local services, the greater the return to the local authority to maintain those services, thus creating a virtuous circle.

Such a vision should not be alien to Jan OSullivan who is after all a Labour Party minister. However, in an era of consensus-seeking where planning has become a depoliticised, stage-managed process which attempts to please everyone through win-win-win policy solutions, I have no doubt that when published the new vision will be the usual fuzzy policy muddle of irreconcilable policy goals which superficially offers something to everyone but achieves very little.

*Gavin Daly*

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## **Planning and Development of Large-Scale, Rail Focussed Areas in Dublin.**

The National Transport Authority, in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the four Dublin local authorities, has published the report “ Planning and Development of Large-Scale, Rail Focussed Areas in Dublin”.

The purpose of the report is to assess the issues impacting on the development of strategic areas adjacent to key public transport corridors, including in particular the emerging pressures to develop these areas on a low density basis, and to propose potential solutions to enable the viable development of these areas over the longer term.

For more information see <http://www.nationaltransport.ie/category/news/>

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## **The Fracking debate**

The debate about fracking in England and Ireland continues. A recent article from the Guardian Newspaper is worth a look.

As a result Britain's energy future, an issue fraught with complexity, is presented as a mere binary choice by Zoe Williams.



This can be seen here <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/15/tory-labour-energy-policy-winning-votes>

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## Reminder

Please forward articles, reports and general ideas for the eZine to [ezine@antaisce.org](mailto:ezine@antaisce.org)

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## European award for raising awareness on Cultural Heritage

**The Hague/Lisbon, 22 July 2013** - The renowned Italian writer Claudio Magris is the very first winner of the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage, instituted by the leading European heritage organisation, **Europa Nostra**, its representation in Portugal, **Centro Nacional de Cultura**, and **Clube Português de Imprensa**, on the occasion of **Europa Nostras 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in 2013**.

Magris is the author of impressive literary works which speak about the roots of our European identity and also stress the need to preserve Europe's tangible and intangible heritage. Claudio Magris' understanding of Europe as a place of dialogue and cultural exchange is perceptible in his masterpiece on the Danube and throughout the

whole of his rich literary opus, stated Guilherme dOliveira Martins, President of the jury, during the today's announcement of the winner of the Helena Vaz da Silva Award. The prize, awarded for the first time this year, will be presented to Claudio Magris at a special ceremony on 21 October in Lisbon.

Reacting to the news, the Italian writer said: I wish to express my deepest gratitude for this great and generous European recognition, which is absolutely unexpected and comes from a country that has always been present in my imagination and my interests.

The fact that Magris hails from Trieste, a city and seaport in the North-East of Italy, has enabled him to communicate - through his many novels and essays - about the importance of the Mediterranean with regard to Central Europe. He is fully aware of the deep and creative relationship between the North and the South, as reflected in literature, art, traditions and customs, and also in Europe's quest for a culture of peace, stressed the jury.

The prize will be conferred to Claudio Magris on 21 October at a special ceremony at the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the hometown of the late Helena Vaz da Silva (1939-2002). The European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage is named after the renowned Portuguese journalist, writer, cultural activist and politician in memory and recognition of her exceptional contribution to the promotion of cultural heritage and European ideals. It is presented annually to a European citizen, whose career has been distinguished by activities that disseminate, defend and promote Europe's cultural heritage, in particular through literary works, news reports, articles, chronicles, photographs, documentary features, films and radio and/or television programmes.

Claudio Magris (1939) scholar, publicist and writer, a graduate of the Turin University, who also holds a European Chair at the Collège de France and is honorary professor of the Copenhagen University has dedicated his life to promoting Europe's cultural heritage. His books have contributed to the literary knowledge of European culture and also to the creation of the cultural concept of *Mitteleuropa*. Professor of German literature and translator, Magris is also a regular contributor to the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. He has written various books of essays and fiction, including *Habsburg Myth in Modern Austrian Literature*, *Behind Words*, *Microcosm* (which won the Strega Prize in 1997) and *La Storia non è Finita*.

In 2004 Claudio Magris received the Prince of Asturias Literature Award for his most iconic book, *Danube*, a novel classified under the category of travel literature already translated and published in many languages, to start with in Portugal.

A European jury comprised of eminent experts in the fields of culture, heritage and communication met on 21 June in Lisbon to consider the nominations. The jury consisted of seven members: from Belgium, **Piet Jaspert**, Board Member of Europa Nostra; from Portugal, **Guilherme dOliveira Martins**, President of the Centro Nacional de Cultura, **João David Nunes**, Member of the Clube Português de Imprensa and **Francisco Pinto Balsemão**, Chairman of the media group Impresa Publishing; from Spain, **José-María Ballester**, former Director of Cultural

Heritage at the Council of Europe and Chairman of one of the juries for the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards; from Serbia, **Irina Subotić**, Vice-president of Europa Nostra; and from Italy, **Antonio Foscari Widmann Rezzonico**, professor and architectural historian.

When deciding on the winner, the jury especially took into consideration the European dimension of the work of each nominated candidate within the wider humanistic and also universal spirit of the Helena Vaz da Silva European Award for Raising Public Awareness on Cultural Heritage. In addition, appreciating the exemplary, effective and continuous communication efforts of the Hungarian **Olivér Kovács**, for the mobilisation of citizens in favour of heritage in Hungary, and of the Turkish reporter **Özgen Acar**, for the international fight against illegal trafficking of heritage treasures from Turkey, the jury decided to grant them a special mention.

**Nominations for the 2014 Award can be submitted until 31 December 2013 by the organisations promoting the Award, namely Europa Nostra, the Centro Nacional de Cultura and the Clube Portugues de Imprensa.**

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## **An overview of EU environment policy targets and objectives**

**European Union legislation has established more than 130 separate environmental targets and objectives to be met between 2010 and 2050.**



**Together, these can provide useful milestones supporting Europe's transition towards a green economy, according to a report published by the European Environment Agency (EEA).**

**This report shows that while we have been successful in agreeing a wide range of policies to protect the environment, implementing these policies remains a challenge. We are making some progress towards the EU aim of creating a green economy, but we need to keep the pressure on up to 2020 and beyond.**

Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director

The green economy has emerged as a priority in policy debate in recent years. But what does the concept mean in practice and how can one measure progress towards this strategic goal? A new EEA report, [Towards a green economy in Europe](#), provides some answers. It does so through a comprehensive overview of environmental

targets and objectives established by EU legislation for the period 2010-2050 and by providing examples of analysis of progress towards achieving them.

Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director, said: This report shows that while we have been successful in agreeing a wide range of policies to protect the environment, implementing these policies remains a challenge. We are making some progress towards the EU aim of creating a green economy, but we need to keep the pressure on up to 2020 and beyond.

The report identifies 63 legally binding targets and 68 non-binding objectives set out in EU policy covering the period 2010-2050. Of the 63 legally-binding targets, 62 have their deadlines in 2020 or before. Most of the current targets and objectives can be seen as interim steps towards a transition to a green economy, because in most cases eradicating the problems will require longer-term efforts beyond 2020.

The green economy is an economic model which aims to increase prosperity by using resources efficiently as well as maintaining the resilience of the natural systems that sustain societies. With its 'Environmental indicator report 2012', the EEA undertook its first analysis of Europe's progress in the transition towards a green economy, using indicators to assess resource efficiency and to address ecosystem resilience. The findings show a mixed performance, although they suggest that Europe has made more progress in improving resource efficiency than preserving ecosystem resilience.

The new overview is useful as a comprehensive basis for reviewing progress in the past, and for considering the prospects for meeting future environmental policy objectives and targets.

### **Progress towards environmental targets in Europe**

- The EU has a non-binding objective to cut energy use to levels 20 % below business-as-usual projections by 2020. Although this implies that consumption must be a little lower than the level in the mid-1990s, the trend since then has moved upwards. So it appears likely that achieving the 2020 objectives will require stronger policy implementation and possibly additional policy impulses.
- Alongside policies to mitigate climate change, the EU has several policies to help Member States adapt. The European Commission encourages all Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies. By mid-2013, 16 States had achieved this.
- Regarding air pollution, the EU has generally made good progress towards its 2010 emissions targets set by the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution. Meeting 2020 targets will require continued efforts. Only in the case of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is there an obvious need to accelerate abatement efforts significantly. Modelling also suggests that achieving the targets is technically feasible for all pollutants except PM2.5.
- Waste generated per capita should be in absolute decline by 2020, according to another non-binding objective. Waste generation shows a trend which, when extrapolated, suggests that the EU would narrowly miss its 2020 target. The trend is certainly ambiguous, however, with the decline in waste generation since

2007 giving some cause for encouragement.

- Member States also have another waste-related objective, specifying that landfilling of waste should be near zero by 2020. An extrapolation of the trend points to a decline from 179 kg per capita in 2011 to 114 kg per capita in 2020, so achieving the target for near-zero landfill appears to require a radical change in waste management practices.

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## Which uses more electricity: the iPhone in your pocket, or the refrigerator humming in your kitchen?

The average iPhone, according to calculations by Mark Mills , (the CEO of the Digital Power Group,) uses about 361 kW-h a year once the wireless connections, data usage and battery charging are tallied up. And the iPhone — even the latest iteration — doesn't even keep your beer cold.



*A server room at a data center.*

You can see the arguments here: <http://science.time.com/2013/08/14/power-drain-the-digital-cloud-is-using-more-energy-than-you-think/#ixzz2cV2zWRb0>

*Y.C VIA GETTY IMAGES*

This sounds interesting doesn't it? **But be careful**. There are other views too, which **debunk** this theory.

You should also look at this link. <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2013/08/19/2492841/coal-industry-myth-internet-an-energy-hog/>

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## Welcome to Eating Better's first newsletter

See here a newsletter from a new Eating Better (for a fair green future) UK coalition focussed on "demonstrating that eating less and better meat is fairer, greener and healthier for people and the planet"

If you check out the website <http://www.eating-better.org/> you get a sense of UK parliamentary and general debates on sustainable food consumption.



## **Welcome to Eating Better's first newsletter**

Since our launch on 1 July we've received tremendous encouragement. The alliance now has the support of over 30 national organisations, with Greenpeace, LEAF, Oxfam, Progressio and Slow Food UK all adding their backing since our launch.

Our mission to demonstrate that eating less and better meat is fairer, greener and healthier for people and the planet has struck a chord with many: *"Great new campaign"*, *"Excellent basic principles"*, *"This organisation has the potential to raise consumer awareness to a new level never seen before"* and *"Welcome to the world's most important conversation!"* are just some of the messages we've received.

Adding his message of support, Tristram Stewart, food waste campaigner and founder of *Feeding the 5000* and *The Pig Idea* says:

*Eating Better brings us an alliance of organisations seeking to entice us to fill our stomachs without costing the earth, by boldly addressing the issues including those often considered too unpalatable to conquer, such as eating less meat.*

## **Eating Better welcomes new healthy sustainable diet advice**

The Sustainable Consumption report of the Green Food Project was published by Defra on Monday 29 July. The guidelines, which are in line with Eating Better's approach, include advice to:

- Moderate your meat consumption and enjoy more peas, beans, nuts and other sources of protein
- Eat more plant based foods, including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- Value your food. Ask about where it comes from and how it is produced. Don't waste it.

Eating Better has welcomed the guidelines and has now written to Defra's Food and Farming Minister David Heath, to request that he takes action to implement the report's conclusions and works across government to agree and adopt the principles by the end of the year. [Read our full article here](#)

## **New School Food Plan**

The new [School Food Plan](#) has been generally well received, yet it does little to address sustainability says Kremlin Wickramasinghe of the Department of Public Health at University of Oxford in his blog for *The Conversation*, that we have reproduced on the Eating Better website [here](#).

As a result, Kremlin has also been contacted by Henry Dumbleby (one of the two authors of the plan) asking for recommendations. Eating Better is supporting Kremlin by coordinating ideas and potential recommendations from

supporters of Eating Better.

### **Feeding nine billion: how much extra food do we need to produce?**

Experts regularly argue that, in order to feed the anticipated world population of nine billion in 2050, food production must increase by 60%-70% or more. And on the basis of these figures we are told that further intensification of agricultural production is essential. Guest contributor, Peter Stevenson of Compassion in World Farming asks are these figures accurate and do we really need to produce so much extra food?

Halving the amount of cereals used in animal feed, halving food losses and waste and reducing the food intake of those who overconsume would, he calculates, make available enough food for all. Read Peters article for Eating Better [here](#).

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## **Welcome to Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee**

The **Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee** was established in 1980 to prepare and publish an inventory of parks, gardens and demesnes of historic importance within Northern Ireland. Membership was subsequently expanded to broaden the expertise and to bring the committee into contact with other organisations concerned with the management and conservation of our plant and garden heritage.



### **2013 CONFERENCE - 11th, 12th & 13th Octobe**

<http://www.nihgc.org/resources/pdf/20130625-NIHGC-2013.pdf>

register at <http://www.nihgc.org/tickets/>

**ACCOMODATION:** A small number of rooms are held (on a first come basis) at the Clandeboye Lodge Hotel (ph 028 9185 2500) for those wishing to book **DIRECT by PHONE ONLY** with the hotel - please identify yourself as attending the NIHGC Conference.

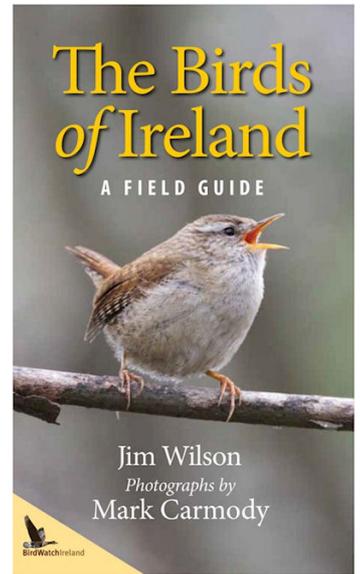
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# The Birds of Ireland - A Field Guide

Text by Jim Wilson Photographs by Mark Carmody

Following the success of *Ireland's Garden Birds*, wildlife expert Jim has teamed up with wildlife photographer Mark for a collaborative work that is in a different mould from their previous publications, *Freshwater Birds of Ireland* and *Shorebirds of Ireland*.

This is the first photographic identification guide to the birds of Ireland. With up to fifteen images per species, the birds are shown in various plumages and from different angles to highlight important features, making it easier to identify birds you are likely to encounter when out birdwatching or simply looking at birds in your garden. All information is specific to Ireland and will help both beginners and the more experienced. A thorough Getting Started section covers the must-haves of birdwatching notebook, binoculars, telescope while also outlining the main features of identification, and how to get the best photographs. *The Birds of Ireland* really is a guide with a difference.



***The Birds of Ireland A Field Guide* with text by Jim Wilson and photographs by Mark Carmody is published by The Collins Press, price €14.99. It is available in all good bookshops and online from [www.collinspress.ie](http://www.collinspress.ie)**

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## eZines for Smartphones & Tablets, eBooks and Printing the eZine

It is estimated that very soon there will be as many viewings of webpages using Smartphones and Tablets as the

conventional PC/Laptop and that Smartphones and Tablets will become dominant by 2014.

Recent eZines have been designed to work well on all three, PC, Tablet and Smartphone and are now produced using *"HTML 5 and a Responsive CSS layout"*.

There have been some major changes to webrowsers in recent times and we strongly suggest that you get as new a version of your favourite browser as you can - This does not work well in some earlier browsers - but life is too short to make up for their inadequacies. Please use a recent version.

This allows for different layouts to be used depending on the width of the device - it should 'collapse' to one column on narrow devices and it should be such that you get the 'whole item - text and images' in that column, without having to scroll left/right.

The font-sizes and images are automatically readjusted for the width. You will notice on smaller devices and smartphones that the layout is different in Portrait and Landscape mode - but all the articles are there in both.

In this issue to improve things, we introduce navigation at the article level, with links going to the previous and next article as well as to the index at the top. (This has also been retro-actively introduced to some of the previous eZines).

This has been tested and some Android devices and simulated on iPhones & iPads, but we would like feedback as to how they behave on these. [ezine@antaisce.org](mailto:ezine@antaisce.org)

Some members have indicated that they like to print the eZine - (resource usage? - paper, ink etc) but you cannot take your laptop into the bath - so we have added pagebreaks so that it should print more tidily - however this only works in Internet Explorer and Netscape, probably works on Safari & Opera but for reasons only known to them does not work on Chrome.

We have also created the February Edition (and will soon create this edition) as an eBook - links to all eZines are here <http://www.antaisce.ie/Publications/eZines.aspx>. The links to the eBook versions are right at the bottom of the page - Again they work on Android devices and we would also like feedback on those from iPhone & iPad users.

The eZine is hosted on our website and although we send it to you as an email, we encourage you to link off to the website version as soon as you can, because very few email applications handle anything other than very basic webpages. If you have got this far and are still in your email ..... please link to the webversion!

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## **Contact Us**

Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback on content, format, etc. of this newsletter, and if there are any topics in particular that you'd like to see covered, we'll do our best to get them in.

You are being sent these eZines because you are a member of An Taisce - should you no longer wish to be sent these, please email

[membership@antaisce.org](mailto:membership@antaisce.org)

Sincerely,

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Your views are important to An Taisce. Please don't hesitate to send us any feedback

Preserving our built and natural heritage for future generations