



## ...and the Sun Shone on the Blue Flag Beaches

The summer of 2010 saw the Blue Flag beaches of Ireland in their best light – sunlight.. And as well as the usual swimming and surfing many other activities also took place on the strands. In Wexford the county council joined forces with Buí Bolg street theatre group to deliver an excellent series of education workshops featuring the cheeky puppet character of the fox that lives in a wheelie bin and is taught by the friendly litter warden about the importance of caring for our environment.

Port Beach in Co Louth held a Sea Safari scouring the beaches under the supervision of Sarah Varian from Marine Dimensions and finding all sorts of wildlife including mermaids purses, razor clams and much more. Activities were also held on Greystones beach aimed at families and included guided Beach Hunts and show and tell sessions.

To encourage best practice in this kind of environmental education a working group has been set up to produce a practical guide which will be available before the 2011 season. And to support more of

this kind of activity and to raise awareness among young people about the Blue Flag programme, An Taisce's education unit has launched a Blue Flag certificate for schools. The first was awarded earlier in the summer to Kilmuckridge Vocational College, Wexford for their work on Morriscastle Beach. Hopefully the sun will shine as much in 2011 as it did in 2010 and the Blue Flag beaches will go from strength to strength.

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Images above show Blue Flag raising at Port Beach and some of the environmental activities taking place in 2010

### TD Lobby to Stop Climate Chaos

The government plans to pass a climate change law soon even though today it was announced that this has been delayed. This will place statutory multi-annual targets on all government departments to play their part to address climate change by reducing carbon emissions in Irish society. Stop Climate Chaos (of which An Taisce is a member) is on the cusp of getting a majority of Dail TD's to sign up to support a strong climate change law. Stop Climate Chaos want to lobby mainly rural TD's who have not yet signed. An Taisce Members are very well placed to contact their local TD to lobby them to support this pending law. Please play your part to tackle climate change by [contacting your local TD](#) who has not signed. Or even better write a personal letter.

### Of Vikings, Silver and Skulls

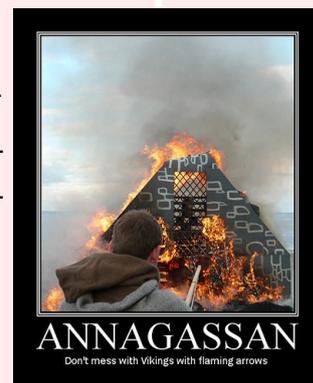
An Taisce would like to commend our colleague Dr Mark Clinton (chair of the antiquities committee) for the remarkable discovery recently of real evidence of Vikings at Annagassan, Co.Louth. The folklore of Annagassan is rich in references to the Vikings and Mark has just completed a very intensive and fruitful three week archaeological dig at a site in the Wee County village. To huge local enthusiasm, Mark has become something of a hero as folklore has now become

### Breakfast with Eddie

Our Energy Breakfast with broadcaster Eddie Hobbs is on Thursday October 14<sup>th</sup> at 8am in the Guinness Storehouse. Eddie recently published a book on the topic of energy (called 'Energise') and is currently in pre production on a television series on the same subject. Coupling this with his inimitable style and enthusiasm, this promises to be a very entertaining morning! Both Eddie and Guinness Storehouse have generously waived their fees for the event, so our costs are minimal, with all proceeds going to funding An Taisce. Tickets are €100 each or €800 (half price for members) for a table of ten. The tickets includes full breakfast, parking and a Guinness Storehouse tour (to be used at your leisure). To book, email [Lorraine](#)

fact regarding the Vikings and Annagassan and it is believed that this discovery will reap great rewards for a community removed from mainstream economic Ireland, though naturally the development of the possibilities will require the sensitivities that AnT espouses. A most magnificent part of this discovery is that it was not part of a new infrastructural project dig though

but rather as a result of Mark's hunch about an archaeological green field site and was funded by the local Leader rural development fund. Follow this link to an [inter-view](#) given by Mark to local radio LMFM at the latter end of the very intensive dig, which revealed such riches as silver ingots, cobbled pavements, and even a skull.



# 10 Messages for 2010



2010 International Year of Biodiversity

Agency



Coasts are shaped by basic geology, the constant movement of the tides and currents, extremes of weather and crucially, millennia of human activity

Every month the European Environment Agency (EEA) is issuing a "message for 2010", which will highlight one theme per month until the tenth meeting of the conference of the parties (COP) to the United Nations convention on Biological diversity (CBD). Each message provides a short assessment focusing on a specific ecosystem or issue related to biodiversity in Europe. A summary of September's message is below; follow the link to see the full message.

## Coastal Ecosystems

As an interface between land and sea, European coastlines provide a vital resource for wildlife but also for the economy and human health and well-being. These habitats are under multiple pressures including habitat loss,

pollution and over-exploitation of fish stocks. Two thirds of coastal habitat types and more than half of coastal species have unfavourable conservation status. Integrated and ecosystem-based approaches provide the foundation for sustainable management of coastal

ecosystems.

To read more [click here](#)

The message was written by Marcus Zisenis (ECNC, ETC/BD), with contributions from andrus Meiner (EEA), Dominique Richard (MNHN, ETC/BD), Sophie Condé and Jerome Bailly-Maitre (MNHN, ETC/BD) and others.

*"As an individual, he was a robust and strong character, and his firm opinion and direct manner was always agenda motivated, with no quest for personal glory, although this may not always have been appreciated, those that knew him respected him all the more for the sincerity of such a stance."*



Pale bellied Brent courtesy of RSPB

## Steven Devaney RIP

Last August 31st, the sad death of one of Ireland's most prolific environmental campaigners occurred. A qualified barrister and architect, unlike many of his contemporaries who pursued financial rewards in recent years, Stephen Devaney instead pursued a life where his reward was the legacy of the massive difference he made to many environmental issues. Devaney's lack of a high public profile was in inverse proportion to his unrelenting work and his success in advancing the proper implementation of the E.U. Directives'

A member of An Taisce's Council and central to the National Monuments and Antiquities Committee, only in the last few months, Devaney helped secure a major victory with regards to the proposed Broomport, where the state was about to fast track development at an area noted for its Neolithic tombs with no appropriate planning, and without due reference to EU legislation.

Other successes achieved included the Woodstown Viking site in Waterford where the road was happily rerouted; drafting the successful appeal signed off by Senator and presidential candidate David Norris that saved a house associated with the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan; identifying the key legal points that won the primary Carrickmines Castle case, as well much work on the controversial Kilsallaghan prison scheme in north county Dublin. Aside from antiquities, there was massive work in relation to his area of Monkstown and Dun Laoghaire, which would be a disservice to try and detail here, however suffice to say up until his sudden illness he was very busy working on the unnecessary wide scale rezonings that are currently being adopted in Dun Laoghaire.

Yet these successes were not accidental, as Devaney relentlessly worked on the legal aspects of schemes, and was very much at the forefront of bringing European environmental law into the Irish domain; in particular Devaney was frequently ahead of the posse in terms of understanding the value of EU Directives such as the SEIA, when few others had even heard about it.

Aged only 62, Devaney lived to witness vindication as to his core belief that many recent 'developments' across the country recently were anything but development in terms of actual sustainability. He leaves behind his partner and fellow worker, Shirley O'Brien, who took much care of him particularly in his last days, but moreover has left a great legacy in terms of the knowledge that he contributed to key Irish environmental matters. We say goodbye to a true, tireless, staunch protector of the Irish environment and to a deeply spiritual and brilliant mind.

## Birds, Biodiversity and Obama

The end of August saw another successful heritage week in which An Taisce played its part. A fabulous day was had at Bootertown marsh in Dunlaoghaire when Declan Doogue took an large enthusiastic group round the reserve to see the early returning waders that will be a feature of the wetland for the winter. He also took the group over the railway to see the new spit of land that is being formed next to the reserve. This is being colonised by pioneer species and is truly fascinating. Why not pay a visit to **Boosterstown on 24<sup>th</sup> October** when a winter bird walk has been organised by the county council, Birdwatch Ireland, AnT and the Friends of Boosterstown. The walk will provide members of the public with an opportunity to view wading birds and wildfowl, including the Light-bellied Brent Goose which returns to Ireland each year after spending the summer in its breeding grounds in the East Canadian High Arctic region. **The walk begins at 11am from Boosterstown Dart. The walk is free. Parking is €2 at the Dart station.**

Fifty or more people also had a really enjoyable walk through Will Warham's farm in Wexford. Will is an active local association member and farms with great sensitivity carrying out management to improve the biodiversity and allow people to get close to the wildlife including erecting a new bird hide with great views. Tailors' Hall also opened for heritage week and crowds of people took the fascinating guided tour including the link between AnT's headquarters and the American president (come on a tour to find out more!)

## Trains, Planes and Automobiles by James Nix of Planbetter an initiative of An Taisce, FoE, FIE and Feasta

Lamenting scientific studies which show aviation is particularly damaging is a pointless exercise; we need to improve overland alternatives to air travel where possible, writes James Nix. Michael O'Leary doesn't acknowledge climate change, and earlier this month likened climate science to the detritus of bulls. The billions of tonnes of carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels don't affect climate he claims, arguing that scientists "have nearly always been wrong". But even Mr O'Leary would have to acknowledge that his views on science are somewhat selective: he's quite happy to believe that a fully loaded aircraft sent down a runway at high speed will take off. The science Mr O'Leary dislikes is what sits uneasily with his business model.

Mr O'Leary's remarks come at the same time as new research showing that aviation is much more damaging than previously thought. A [Recent article](#) examines the impact of different transport modes on the atmosphere over time. When viewed over a short timeframe - five years - flying can be almost 50 times more damaging than overland travel. Lengthen the time horizon and the impact of aviation reduces relative to other transport modes. But as the key imperative is to get emissions down quickly, and try and stall further large-scale melting at the poles and other 'tipping points', the need to reduce aviation quickly is clear.

As an island nation the research raises important questions for us. How can tourism adapt as environmental charging discourages the most polluting transport modes? What improvements can be made to overland links to better serve Ireland?

From 2012 aviation will no longer be exempt from the EU emissions trading scheme.. Raising the price of flights will press the travel market to find alternatives.

The Dublin to London air route is among the busiest in Europe. Intercity travel time by air is about four hours, depending on route, check-in arrangements and onward travel decisions.

Ferry and train won't compete directly on travel time but there are feasible options which can be made more attractive. Currently a ferry leaves Dublin Port at 8.50pm and arrives in Holyhead around

midnight. Travelling Dublin to London my own practice is to take this evening ferry, stay overnight in Holyhead and travel onward using the early morning train, reaching central London (Euston station) just after 9.30am. Overnight is a generous term to apply to five hours of sleep in Holyhead but it compares to getting up for a red-eye flight. Moreover the train's great for a nap.

The return rail/sail journey I tend to treat as a working day with no laptop restrictions on train or ferry : London 9.10am - Dublin 5.30pm. In the short term a simple improvement to the existing rail/sail service would see the evening ferry from Dublin arrive at Holyhead for 11pm rather than midnight, giving a little more shuteye to the traveller. In the longer term new ferries would be designed and built to accommodate sleeper train. Trains, as well as cars, trucks and buses, are already catered for by the Rodby-Puttgarden ferry, carrying trains between Copenhagen and Hamburg across the Baltic.

Working together, train and ferry operators could deliver a Dublin/London service leaving each city daily at 9pm to reach the opposite destination by 8am the following day. Investment will be required by the ferry and port companies but if the growing patronage of the channel tunnel and sleeper buses and trains across the continent is a marker, that investment will be returned.

Mr O'Leary has a point when he criticises governments for promising to use environmental taxes to reduce pollution, but then failing to do so. In Ireland's case there is a clear solution for our busiest air route but investment is needed.

Governments also need to communicate more clearly the key reason for environmental taxation: this is the first in history a time a generation will knowingly leave behind a climate in flux – and one that been left in this shaky state by human action and inaction. Tax measures that reduce pollution will lessen impacts future generations. While corporate culture grows unabated, we still expect governments to guide their actions with the full weight of science. Profiting on some dividends of scientific endeavour, only to poo-poo other elements that might affect such profits, will no doubt be something Mr O'Leary continues to do in his humorous way for some time to come.

## What's On, What's New?



Ireland is at a critical moment. You can help turn this crisis into a positive turning point. **Claiming our Future** is a unique event. It offers a chance for people, trade unions, community organisations, environmental groups and other civil society organisations to not just talk about a better way – but to take new inspiring steps. It aims to foster a unity across civil society and to power a progressive movement to reshape Ireland's recovery and claim our social values. Claiming our Future will launch and mould that movement for an equal, sustainable and thriving Ireland. Already, individuals, communities and progressive groups from every corner of Ireland have begun to get involved.

**It's time to turn the despair and frustration into positive and decisive action for real change.**

For more information and to register – please go to <http://claimingourfuture.ie>

If you want to help locally, please contact your County convenor at the email address on the website [http://www.claimingourfuture.ie/?page\\_id=64](http://www.claimingourfuture.ie/?page_id=64)



### Wicklow Traditional Skills Day

Fancy trying your hand at a little shuttle knitting, some pottery, turning on a pole-lathe, watching a thatcher in action, or getting lime plastered? Wicklow heritage office is running a FREE one day Traditional Skills Day on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October from 11am to 4pm in the courtyard of Wicklow's Historic Gaol, in Wicklow Town.** Traditional Building, rural and household skills are very much part of our heritage. Such skills generally involve the use of locally available materials to produce practical, attractive, eco-friendly products which perfectly respond to their local environment. The skills day will be a mix of demonstrations, talks and displays and will include child friendly activities and workshops.

### Rural Ireland Roadshow

A series of special public discussions are being held around the country over the next month or so. The primary goal of the public meetings are to highlight rural communities and their needs, and to strive for greater social awareness of rural Ireland

and to achieve greater legislative priority for rural areas in Leinster House and at EU level. In attendance will be local Oireachtas members and prominent figures from local business and community/voluntary sectors, local authority members and officials etc. Questions and comments from the audiences will be welcome and tea and coffee will be provided.

Thursday Oct 7<sup>th</sup>: Sligo Town, Co. Sligo (Clarion Hotel)

- Thursday Oct 14<sup>th</sup>: Navan, Co. Meath (Ardboyne Hotel)

- Thursday Oct 28<sup>th</sup>: Killarney, Co. Kerry (Malton Hotel)

- Thursday Nov 4<sup>th</sup>: Gorey, Co. Wexford (Amber Springs Hotel)

- Thursday Nov 11<sup>th</sup>: Tullamore, Co. Offaly (Tullamore Court Hotel)

This event is part of a European-wide initiative to highlight the challenges faced by rural communities. (Weblink: [www.rural-energy.eu](http://www.rural-energy.eu))

### and a little reminder for Christmas!

**100% wool, stitched by Avoca Weavers with a beautiful quote from our founder Robert Lloyd Praeger, this blanket at €49 would make a lovely present for anyone. Email [admin@antaisce.org](mailto:admin@antaisce.org)**



## Planning for a Better Future

### Zoning – The Good, The Bad and The ...?

Many of our members are faced with the drafting of County Development Plans, and are familiar with the issues and pressures of over-zoning for development. It is easy to forget when focused on trying to reverse such decisions and oppose further over-zoning, that zoning can also be used, proactively, to create a positive environmental impact. For example: in the new South Dublin County Development Plan, An Taisce members working with local community groups, the Lucan Planning Council and The Liffey Valley Park Alliance, (LVPA); of which An Taisce is a part - drafted motions to introduce a new zoning type to the plan – specifically for the Liffey Valley lands in the County. This has higher protection than the 'High Amenity' which is how these lands were previously zoned and which as defined in SDCC gives little protection. The amount of lands also zoned with this new 'Liffey Valley Zone' was also extended, and some associated policies in the plan were also updated. Following engagement by the groups with local Councillors these motions were proposed and, despite strong opposition from management in the Council, significant support was won in the chamber, the motions passed, and the plan changed. It has been welcomed as the most significant step in the protection of the Valley since the declaration of the Special Amenity Area Order – which unfortunately is defined in too narrow and short dimensions to afford any real protection to the Liffey Valley landscape and biodiversity.

An Taisce has a project initiative 'This Place Matters' which assists communities in addressing the challenges presented by CDPs – contact [Abby](#) for further info. Early engagement in the re-drafting of the plans is even more critical now – with the new legislative considerations such as Strategic Environmental Appraisal and also to facilitate engagement with and briefing of Councillors on the issues you wish to address. Please make sure to keep us posted of similar experiences so we can share these ideas.

### Important precedent on 'EIA Post-Construction' from An Bord Pleanála.

An Taisce was delighted with a recent decision by The Board in relation to a quarry in Nurney Demesne - which we appealed. The application depended on development that had no Environmental Impact Assessment, but which should have been subject to EIA under the European EIA

Directive.

The Board stated in their decision that they were effectively 'precluded' from granting permission to the development given the requirements of the EIA Directive and the clarification on the matter of post-construction EIA consent from the European Court of Justice (ECJ). And they quoted directly from the European judgement. Click [here](#) for a link to the Board's decision. This important precedent was used in An Taisce's submission on the latest Shell E & P Ireland Ltd application for the onshore portion of the Corrib Gas Pipeline – where An Taisce contends a similar issue exists. [Update on our submission to the latest Shell Corrib Gas Pipeline application:](#)

- The Oral Hearing re-convened in August to address the revised routing of the pipe under Sruwaddacon Bay – as requested of the applicant by An Bord Pleanála.
- In brief, An Taisce holds that An Bord Pleanála is precluded from granting permission legally to the current Corrib Onshore Gas Pipeline application given the requirements of the EIA, Birds, and Habitats Directives.
- Among many other basic planning and conformance considerations, which could also justify a refusal, which An Taisce raised; and which will continue to be addressed during the remaining elements of the hearing, a number of considerations of the Habitats Directive were highlighted. All of these points were without prejudice to the over-riding argument on the matter of the legal definition of the concept 'site-integrity' - which has been referred by the Supreme Court of Ireland to the ECJ for interpretation after a landmark case brought by lifetime member of AnT - Peter Sweetman. An Taisce argues that An Bord Pleanála cannot *reasonably* determine the application has not an impact on 'site integrity' under Article 6 of the directive - as the Supreme Court of Ireland has conceded that they need clarification on the meaning of this matter from the ECJ. We also argued that greater protection is afforded to the Natura 2000 sites under the Birds Directive given their proposed designation as pSPA's.
- An Taisce has issue with the purported strategic importance of the Corrib Gas Field and its infrastructure. We contend the

arguments presented about its purported contribution to our energy security are not justified - not limited to consideration of how the Gas market operates and the contracts pertaining to the field.

- The current application pertains to the transport of the offshore gas to the refinery, many of the ongoing issues arise and indeed the whole process has been damaged by Shell's insistence on the pipeline making a landfall at Glengad. This has resulted in an unjustifiable restriction in the alternatives considered for connecting the gas field to the terminal. Given the matters An Taisce raised re. the planning history of the site, and the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the routes to the terminal from Glengad - the Corrib Gas Pipeline initiative could be considered to constitute the single most salutary lesson on why not to engage in project-splitting and splicing. The entirety of the proposed infrastructure from well head, pipeline, terminal and onward connection to Galway should have been planned and assessed as one application, and properly co-ordinated together with all the consequential plans, permits and licences needed to ensure management of environmental impacts, safe operation, and emergency response - to the hazard this proposal presents.

It is interesting to note the Irish Government contends that the project will be required to done to the highest environmental standards. However it was learned in the hearing from one of Shell's own consultants - that in the UK the pipeline would be treated as a SEVESO application ( major accident hazard ). The matter of Ireland's transposition EU directives, and the matter of the direct and indirect effects of allowing the pipeline are therefore factors the Board also has to consider, according to An Taisce. The Oral Hearing is expected to conclude week ending 1<sup>st</sup> October.



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**Preserving our built and natural  
heritage for future generations**

**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.**

**Sincerely,**

**Jeff Young, Hon Secretary, An Taisce**

**and Abby McSherry, Local Associations Officer**

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

Please remember  
to pass this news-  
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