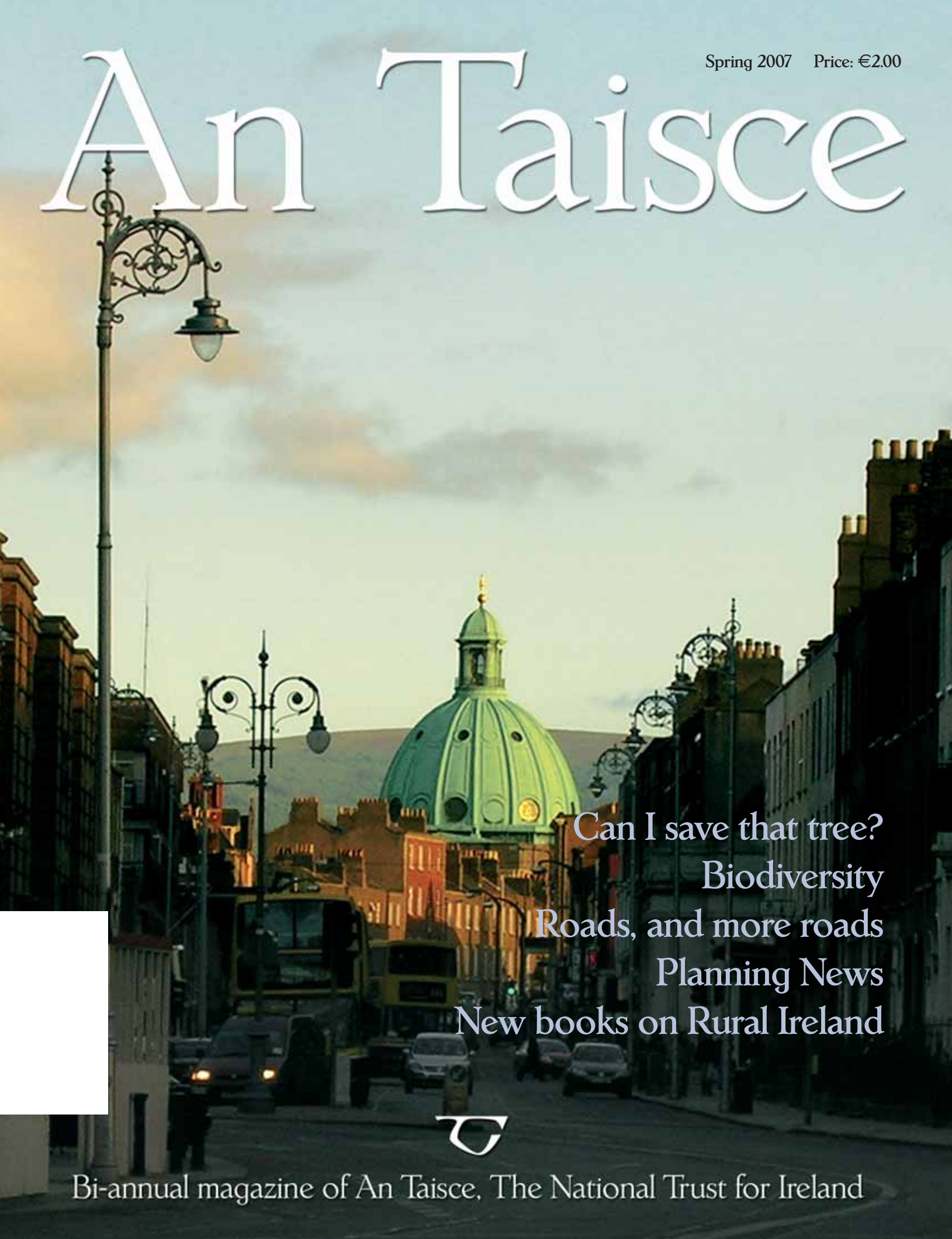
Spring 2007 Price: €2.00

An Taisce



Can I save that tree?
Biodiversity
Roads, and more roads
Planning News
New books on Rural Ireland

Bi-annual magazine of An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland

COFORD
NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR FOREST RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT
AN CHOMHAIRLE NÁISIÚNTA UM THAIGHDE AGUS FORBAIRT FORAOISE

NDP COFORD's activities are funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000-2006

COFORD plans, develops, co-ordinates and monitors research programmes in all sectors in the forest industry

www.coford.ie



Visit www.coford.ie to:

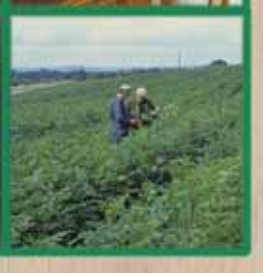
- study details of COFORD-funded research
- download or order publications
- subscribe to the free monthly e-newsletter
- find out about forthcoming events











COFORD, Arena House, Arena Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18
Tel: 01-2130725, Fax: 01-2130611,
Email: info@coford.ie



Respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity is one of the themes of Comhar's Principles for Sustainable Development.

The principle arising from this theme is *"The diversity of wildlife, habitats and species should be maintained and improved".*

The Principles can be downloaded at
www.comhar-nsdp.ie

CONTACT DETAILS
COMHAR Sustainable Development Council
17 St Andrew Street, Dublin 2
Telephone: (01) 888 3990
Lo-call: 1890 200 327
Fax: (01) 888 3999
E-mail: comhar@environ.ie
Website: comhar-nsdp.ie

An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

MAIN OFFICE
The Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8
Main switch board 01 454 1786
Fax: 01 453 3255
Website: www.antaisce.org

ADMINISTRATION
Ailish Greene Office Manager
01 707 7070 admin@antaisce.org
Lorraine Morley, Administrative Assistant
01 454 1786 (main switch board)
coord@antaisce.org

HERITAGE & PLANNING OFFICE
Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer
heritage@antaisce.org
Marina Mitrovic, Planning Assistant
01 7077062
marina.mitrovic@antaisce.org
Sarah Gillespie, Planning Administrator
01 707 7075 adminplan@antaisce.org

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICE
Anja Murray,
Natural Environment Officer
01 707 7063 anja.murray@antaisce.org

AN TAISCE EDUCATION UNIT
Unit 5a Swift's Alley, Dublin 8
Main switchboard 01 400 2202
Fax 01 400 2285
Patricia Oliver (Project Manager)
046 95 46089 trisholiver@iol.ie

Anti-litter League
Pat Oliver (Project Manager)
046 95 46089 trisholiver@iol.ie

Green Schools
Jane Helps (Project Manager)
Michael John O'Mahony
(Project Development)
Project Officers: Cathy Joyce, Liam
Condon and David O'Leary
01 400 2222 greenschools@antaisce.org
projectadmin@antaisce.org
www.greenschoolsireland.org

National Spring Clean
Lisa Fitzgerald (Project Manager)
01 400 2220 nsc@antaisce.org
Clare Lyons (Project Officer)
01 400 2219 nsc1@antaisce.org
www.nationalspringclean.org

Blue Flag
Oonagh Duggan (Project Manager)
01 400 2210 blueflag@antaisce.org

Clean Coasts Programme
(Green Coast Award)
Aidan Gray (Development Officer)
046 948 1710 gcawards@eircom.net

LEAF (Learning about Forests)
Michael John O'Mahony (Project Manager)
01 400 2222 leaf@antaisce.org

Young Reporters for the Environment
01 400 2222 yre@antaisce.org

Magazine design by: **Pablo Lloréns**

EDITORIAL

JUDY OSBORNE

Finally another magazine is ready. (sorry for the delay!) I notice that there is nothing much in this edition apparently about global warming whilst all around the national press are, at last, full of it. Yet in fact all of An Taisce's work is about climate change and sustainable development too. The planning issues involved in the building of new roads and uncontrolled urban sprawl, clearly outlined in Ian Lumley's notes on pages 20 – 24, are closely related to issues of global warming. Sprawling communities are extremely wasteful of limited resources and this pattern of development has led to Ireland being the most car dependent society, which will surely become a major issue as we struggle to cut emissions.

Another main feature in this edition is the importance of biodiversity. Why does it matter? What are we doing about it in Ireland and what are we doing about it in An Taisce? Hopefully the contributions in the magazine will help to link the global and local aspects for you.

Finally I would like to draw to your attention the book reviews - particularly the sequence around the theme of Rural Ireland and the Environmental Movement. Here is a description of half a dozen theses that pick up on different angles. What I pick up from them all is a need to do better! Hopefully An Taisce will continue to rise to the challenge.

AN TAISCE MAGAZINE SPRING 2007

CONTENTS

4 **LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS.** News from some of An Taisce's groups around the country.

8 **KEEP IRELAND OPEN.** News from Roger Garland, Ireland's first Green Party TD.

9 **TREES.** Notes on what rules exist to protect trees from the developer.

10 **THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE FITZSIMONS WOOD IN SANDYFORD.** By Coillin MacLochlainn

12 **NATURA 2000.** The cornerstone of European nature conservation policy.

13 **AN TAISCE'S RESPONSE TO THE PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY IN THE PLANNING PROCESS.**

14 **POLLARDSTOWN FEN AND THE KILDARE BY-PASS.** What's the story? Is it all about a snail?

17 **NATURE'S CALENDAR.** By Paul Whelan.

18 **HISTORIC STONE PAVING.** lack of expertise in maintenance threatens Dublin's historic granite paving, by Kevin Duff.

20 **ROADS.** A collection of items by our planning officer Ian Lumley and An Taisce's submission regarding the proposed ring road around Galway.

Front Cover: View South along Candem Street. Dublin. Looking towards the Dome of Rathmine's Church. PHOTO by Kevin Duff.



From right: Ken Mawhinney, Joy Mawhinney (members of the environment committee) Marian Keyes (librarian), David and Veronica Rowe, at the opening of the exhibition at Deans Grange Library August 2006 Heritage Week.

SOUTH COUNTY DUBLIN ASSOCIATION

Little things mean a lot. News from South County Dublin

The local committee covers both south County Dublin and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County council, including high-density urban environments as well as more rural areas. High rise development is an issue of intense debate whilst land zoned for protection in the Dublin mountains is coming under increasing pressure for development along with pressure for infill development (see the piece on Fitzsimons wood page 10.) An active planning committee made a substantial contribution to the planning process last year and saw An Bord Pleanala reverse council decisions to grant planning permission for a 17 story block beside 2 story suburban houses and for a spa resort on the mountain ridge surrounding the city.

Alongside this fire-fighting action Veronica Rowe, chairperson of the environment committee, helped organize a photographic exhibition, which may help awaken heritage interest in the area. 'Little things mean a lot" featured some of the frequently unnoticed pillar-boxes, pumps, gates etc in the South County Dublin area.

It is often these little things that give depth and interest to our environment. Despite the changes and urbanization of our area there are still some things that remind us of our rural heritage and a more leisurely pace of life. The old pumps remind us of times when people walked to the pumps with their buckets before there was piped water with taps. Likewise there are many old hand forged gates and railings still surviving which were made by blacksmiths with hammers and anvils working in forges

The exhibition is currently touring libraries in the county whilst earlier exhibitions have been purchased by the county council Heritage officer for the archives.

DONEGAL ASSOCIATION

The Donegal Association of An Taisce was set up in 1966 at around the time that the National Park was being planned for the county. 6500 acres at Crocknafaragh were transferred to An Taisce by the Irish Land Commission in 1968 and officially opened by Minister Neil Blaney TD who became a life long member.

The policies of the local association are based on the view that a high quality environment is central to the achievement of a sustained and successful economy and high quality of life, that prevention is better than cure, that partnership and dialogue are better than conflict.

In Letterkenny we have submitted proposals on the scattered growth of the town with business premises on the outskirts and little activity on the main street. Villages like Ardara, Raphoe and Ramelton have been designated as heritage villages and towns but are gradually loosing their status. The organisation's range of interests also extends from the natural heritage of land, air, water, animal and plant life to the man made heritage of buildings and gardens. The Association has been surveying walled gardens in the county, noting those that are now used for storing silage bales as well as those that are beautifully tended or being restored.

Meanwhile members are involved in many arts and crafts projects, spinning and painting and showcasing their work at fund raising fairs and in the wonderful calendar that the Donegal Association produces every year.



Donegal Bluestacks



Donegal Glenveagh Castle



Donegal Inishtrahull Island



Donegal Spring flowers in Leterkenny Town Park



GAVIN HARTE.
Over the past year Gavin Harte, Director of An Taisce, made a big impression on our organisation and we will miss his skills, his enthusiasm, commitment to our cause and kindliness. We wish him well in the future and look forward to the series he will be hosting in March for RTE carrying out an 'energy makeover' on six families and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint

Foot notes to Valerie Bond's history, An Taisce – The first fifty years.

Those of you that bought copies of Valerie's excellent history of An Taisce might like to note the following additions:
The first chairperson of An Taisce's Trees Committee was Patricia Kilroy, whose name was inadvertently omitted from the list on page 237. In the section on fund raising (page 129), it was of course Carmel Kelly who organized the recitals by Barry Douglas and Hakon Hagegard, in addition to many other events.

MEATH ASSOCIATION



Meath, which has more designated heritage towns than any other county in Ireland, is being extensively developed for housing by a combination of pressures from Dublin and a County Council that actively encourages the influx of new residents and housing. An Taisce's volunteer planning officers here have an immense workload but in considering proposed development follow three broad principles:

1. To stop premature development ahead of local area plans
2. To oppose development where there is not sufficient existing infrastructure such as sewage
3. To stop the importation into heritage towns of alien and inappropriate schemes such as large blocks of flats. For example in the past few months for example, there has been a proposed development of shops in the centre of town opposite the castle, a proposal to build 36 houses in the grounds of one of the four 18th century houses at Slane Crossroads, and the Court House Heritage Centre in Kells, have all been refused after appeals from Meath An Taisce.

The organisation has a membership of about 250. When one adds in odd members from Belfast to Kilkenny and interested parties this makes for a mailing list of 300. Not to be undertaken lightly when very few use e-mail on a regular basis. Invitations and the calendar of events for the year are posted to all our members. The events officer, Christopher Gray, keeps the programme full of occasions from March to December with as much variety as possible. This year members and guests will be staying on Rathlin Island, Co.Antrim, visiting great houses in Co.Monaghan, having an Edwardian themed picnic on the Hill of Tara and visiting the brand new splendid Municipal Art Gallery in Drogheda, amongst other venues. A full programme is available on request.

THE CLARE ASSOCIATION

The Clare Association has had a busy and high profile year. Our records show that in 2003 we had 401 referrals, 2004 we had 643 and last year in 2005 there were 852. This year look like yet another increase.

Our planning got a great deal of negative coverage both locally and nationally but we are soldiering on and now insisting that any article should include our viewpoint.

It has not been all "planning", we have three new members on the Association committee, as well as new members in general but noticed that we were still loosing old ones due to membership payment mix-ups.



Clare Association Committee. Left-Right: Oliver Moylan, Anny Wise, Peter Wise, Paul Butler, Colm O'Brien.

The land on the Burren was fully debated at our AGM and Head Office was fortunate enough to get funding from Vodofone to assist in the Burren Management Plan. We are keen to move ahead but are being held up on technicalities on repairing our dry stonewalls and hope to get it corrected by spring when we can start again.

We took part in Heritage Week and with a meeting on bats. This was a great success and we plan to do it again next year – hoping for better weather for the bat walk in Dromoland Castle, which was a wash out this year.

To try and improve our "Public Image" we tried to do more positive things such a stand at the Clare Biodiversity Day, representing An Taisce at Green Flag Ceremonies in Clare, (we managed three this year) but we are still having problems getting the press to mention An Taisce with regard to anything but planning !

AN TAISCE!

In accordance with section Clause 11b of our Constitution, we are taking this opportunity to announce the

An Taisce AGM in Galway
on Saturday June 25th 2007

Notice of any motion proposed to be made at a General Meeting shall be delivered to the Honorary Secretary of the Company thirty clear days before the meeting at which the motion is to be proposed and shall be circulated with the notice convening the meeting. Such notice shall be signed by the proposer and one seconder, being Members of the Company, and no motion shall be entertained by a general meeting unless notice thereof has been given as aforesaid. Further announcements will be circulated to members in due cause

PHILIP MULLALLY AN APPRECIATION

The focus of Philip Mullally's life was the community in all its forms, from local to global. In his many roles, as engineer, businessman, adviser, academic, campaigner and conservationist, he put before all else the sustainable development of the community and the fair and efficient application of its resources to serve all its members.

It was a community issue which brought Philip into An Taisce in the early 70s: the perceived threat to residents of the Cork Harbour area of a massive zinc smelter virtually on their doorsteps. That threat abated, he turned his attention to other key policy issues affecting the community and the environment. His campaigning Chairmanship of the Cork Association of An Taisce led to his election to the office of National Chairman of the organisation in 1975.

Always a man of practical achievement, Philip lost no time in spearheading a strategy involving Irish business leaders to eliminate the massive deficit which overhung An Taisce at the time: the creation of the Heritage Trust brought about the desired result by 1979. The publication of the report "Energy in Question" in that same year confirmed that An Taisce was indeed an organisation in vigorous health.

At the 2006 AGM of An Taisce, Philip received the unanimous endorsement of attending members to serve another term as a member of Council. Sadly, however, he never had the opportunity to continue his long and loyal service to the Trust. An Taisce and his local community in Glounthaune, Co. Cork, are terribly diminished by his passing. It is a comfort that some things remain to inspire us: the record of his achievements, the example of his leadership and the memory of his friendship.



KILKENNY ASSOCIATION



L – R Declan Murphy Chairman, Melosina Lenox-Conyngham,Ttreasurer and a frequent contributor to Miscellany on RTE Radio, Coilin O'Drisceoil, secretary and an archaeologist of note.

The Kilkenny Association is relatively small but very active. Membership in the county has changed little from about 80 over the past 10 years, despite some strenuous efforts to increase out numbers. However there is an enthusiastic and experienced committee of twelve and meetings are held monthly. The committee includes a professional archaeologist and architect, and all members of the committee bring a diversity of experience and knowledge to our meetings. We welcome members to attend our committee meetings as observers, and generally strive to operate in as open and transparent a manner as possible. We aim to hold about three or four public meetings annually, which are very well publicised thanks to our links with the local media. Speakers and topics have included a fascinating talk on planning and public health, the eco-village in Tipperary and the champion Trees of Ireland. We have an annual Christmas lunch in a local restaurant, and an occasional field excursion. We held a special general meeting to prepare and make detailed submissions within the past year to the Kilkenny City Local areas plan and the County and city Development plan 2008 now in preparation. We respond to many general enquiries for advice and help, but it is disappointing how few of these convert to new membership for an Taisce. We appealed two local authority decisions (both with important archaeological aspects) to An Bord Pleananal during the past year through the offices of An Taisce HQ and Ian Lumley, and both appeals were successful. These were reported extensively in the local media, and create an impression of An Taisce being an adversarial organization rather than as a protector of our heritage. However we feel that our views are contributing to a gradual change of attitude and strengthening of the hand of planners and the executive as well as raising awareness in the generals public of the heritage issues that we champion.

LOCAL ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

CARLOW
Chair: **Annie Parker-Byrne,**

CLARE
Chair: **Oliver Moylan,**
Ennis, Co Clare
Membership Sec/Burren committee:
Daman M Wise,
Shannon, Co Clare
Secretary/Planning: **Anny Wise,**
Shannon, Co Clare
anny.wise@iol.ie
Treasurer: **Paul Butler,**
Killaloe, Co Clare
paul.butler@ul.ie

CORK
Planning: **Kevin Hurley,**
Doughlan, Co Cork
kevjhurley@eircom.net

DONEGAL
May McClintock, Chair
New Mills, Letterkenny, Co Donegal
John Keeve, Vice-Chair
Manorcunningham, Co Donegal
Una Cronin, Secretary/planning committee
Ramelton, Co Donegal
una.cronin@lyit.ie

DUBLIN CITY
Kevin Duff, Planning Officer
kevindplanning@gmail.com

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Mairead Mehigan, Chair
Monkstown, Co Dublin
mehigan@indigo.ie
Gene Feighery, Vice-Chair
Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
Grainne Dempsey, Secretary
Glenageary, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
John O'Sullivan, Treasurer/planning
Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
Veronica Heywood, Environment
Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
heywood59@hotmail.com

SOUTH COUNTY DUBLIN
Mary Judge, Chair
Sandyford, Dublin 18
marygrahamjudge@eircom.net
Andrew Parkes, Vice-Chair
Dundrum, Dublin 14
Sue Pedlow, Secretary
Sandyford, Dublin 18
suepedlow@eircom.net
Jim Cleary, Treasurer
Delgany, Co Wicklow
Andrew Parkes, Planning
Dundrum, Dublin 14
Veronica Rowe, Environment
Sandyford, Dublin 18
Eileen Collins, Membership
Churchtown, Dublin 14

GALWAY
Derrick Hambleton, Chair
Kingston, Co Galway
derrickhambleton@ireland.com

KERRY
Kate Carmody, Chair
Asdee, Co Kerry
cait@eircom.net
Mattie Cronin, Vice-Chair
Killarney, Co Kerry
Maeve O'Donnell, Secretary
Tralee, Co Kerry
wellspring@eircom.net
James O'Carroll, Treasurer
Tralee, Co Kerry
jamesocarroll36@hotmail.com
Catherine McMullin, Planning
Killorglin, Co Kerry
catherinemcmul@eircom.net

NORTH KILDARE
Sean English, Chair/Secretary
Naas, Co Kildare
sean202@gofree.indigo.ie
Brian Mc Cabe, Vice-Chair
Johnstown, Co Kildare
brian_mccabe@entemp.ie
Liz Butler, Treasurer
Naas, Co Kildare

SOUTH KILDARE
Frank Taaffe, Chair
Athy, Co Kildare
fbtaaffe@indigo.ie
Eamon Kane, Vice-Chair
Castledermot, Co Kildare
Miriam Mc Alinney, Secretary
Athy, Co Kildare
miriammcalinney@eircom.net
Jens Peisler, Treasurer
Athy, Co Kildare
Seamus Taaffe, Planning
Athy, Co Kildare
staaffe@indigo.ie

KILKENNY
Declan Murphy, Chair
murphykk@iol.ie
Peter Seaver, Vice-Chair
peterseaver@kilkennypeople.ie
Coilin O'Drisceoil,
Secretary/Environment
codrisceoil@ireland.com
Ann Gibbons, Delegate to Council
Kilree House, Kilkenny, Co Kilkenny

LIMERICK
Daniel K Sullivan, Chair
daniel_sullivan@ireland.com
Daphne Henderson, Vice-Chair
Kilaloe, Co Clare
daphned@eircom.net
Vivienne McKechnie, Secretary
Lemonfield, Co.Limerick
Rachel O'Grady, Treasurer
Askeaton, Co Limerick
Michael Barry, Planning
Catherinest, Co Limerick
michael.barry@ul.ie

MEATH
Colin Anderson, Chair
Kells, Co Meath
canderson@iol.ie
Christopher Gray, Vice- Chair
Trim
higginsbrook@eircom.net
Jean Carr, Secretary
Skreen, Tara
jeanvcarr@eircom.net
Doyne Nicholson, Treasurer
Navan, Co Meath
Brian Taylor, Planning
Slane
bridi@eircom.net
Dr Michael Gunn,
Natural Environment
Mornington, Co Meath
gunnml@gofree.indigo.ie

NORTH TIPPERARY
Paddy Mackey, Chair
Nenagh, Co Tipperary
colhenmp@eircom.net

SLIGO
Nicholas Prins, Planning
Standhill, Co Sligo
Peter Osborne,
Green Schools Rep
Standhill, Co Sligo

WATERFORD
George Kavanagh, Chair
Ferrybank, Waterford
info@sionhillhouse.com
Alan Lynch, Vice-Chair
Tramore, Co Waterford
tessalan@eircom.net
Des Griffen, Secretary
Newtown, Co Waterford
eamonn.ogriofa@welfare.ie
Mary Higgins, Treasurer
Tramore, Co Waterford
Finola Cronin,
Membership Secretary
Waterford
fcronin@dobbynmccoy.com

WESTMEATH
Chair, **Jack O'Sullivan**
Castlepollard, Co Westmeath
jackosullivan@eircom.net

WEXFORD
Senan O'Reilly, Chair
Wexford
market@utvinternet.com
Adrian Wisdom, Vice-Chair
Castlebridge, Co Wexford
Catherine O'Connor, Secretary
Duncannon, Co Wexford
catherineoconnor@eircom.net
Joe Fonde, Treasurer
Coolree, Co Wexford
Malcolm Robertson, Planning
Enniscorthy, Co Wexford

Conservation Mapping of Burren Limestone Pavement, Co Clare



Anja Murray

REPORT BY **ANJA MURRAY**

MULLAGHMORE LIMESTONE PAVEMENT, THE BURREN

An Taisce's property in Mullaghmore, Co. Clare, is located in the heart of the Burren. The Burren is the largest area of Limestone 'karst' landscape in Western Europe, making up a extraordinarily stunning landscape. The region hosts a spectacular array of unusual and rare plants, including some of Mediterranean and alpine origin, and no less than 22 native species of orchid. Much of the flora and fauna are specially adapted to this harsh environment and the traditional management practices. The region is exceptionally rich in archaeological features, with abumdant megalithic tombs and ringforts dating back some 6000 years.

The An Taisce owned property is within the 'East Burren Complex' Natura 2000 site (Special Area of Conservation). The site is mostly limestone pavement (a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive), with hazel scrub and woodlands, a small lough, and a rare fen habitat.

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

In spring 2006 we carried out an ecological site survey with GPS (Global Positioning System) mapping of the lands, with the generous support of the Vodafone and Conservation Volunteers Ireland Nature Fund. Features and habitats in the site were mapped and assessed, such as the extent of the fen, the area of hazel scrub and woods, areas of species rich grassland threatened by scrub encroachment, and traditional dry-stone walls. Specific ecological and botanical conservation needs have now been identified and actions are in train to preserve the rich biodiversity of these lands.

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Traditional agriculture in the Burren involves the grazing by cattle of the limestone uplands during the winter months, a practice specific to this region and believed to be thousands of years old. The extent and survival of the much celebrated flora is quite dependant on this practice, as the small and agile traditional breeds of cattle would graze at tougher grasses which otherwise out-compete the flowering herbs, whilst doing so only in winter and thus not trampling plants during their flowering season. Changes in agricultural practices in recent decades in the Burren have wrought many threats on the ecological balance of the region, with hazel scrub now encroaching large tracts of land in marginal areas at the expense of unique species rich meadows.

Some of the increasingly rare flowering plants among the rock outcrops in the An Taisce site are threatened by lack of grazing. In these areas the hazel was also found to be encroaching, which in time would shade out the meadow flora and result in a loss of some rarer plants. Grazing by 'Galloway' cattle has now been formally arranged for the site, which it is expected will help curb further expansion of hazel scrub and maintain the special botanical gems that are found.



Limestone pavement on the Burren.

The right to ROAM

AND OTHER NEWS FROM ROGER GARLAND OF KEEP IRELAND OPEN

In the past year one of the most significant developments for our campaign to keep Ireland open was the findings of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution when reviewing Access to the Land. It stated that Freedom to Roam could be dealt with by legislation rather than a constitutional amendment which had been the Government's position hitherto. Unfortunately they then opined that they didn't see any need for such legislation, even if limited to rough grazing land. This was, of course, beyond their brief.

Meanwhile a resolution supporting Freedom to Roam over rough grazing land was passed by an overwhelming majority at last year's Green Party Convention. We have little doubt that we will receive the support of the other small parties and most of the independents. Labour are next on the list for lobbying.

Else where, the mapping of areas of rough grazing has now been completed in England and Wales and has resulted in 4m acres(16,000 sq km) being open to the general public and in Scotland there is now freedom to roam everywhere except through gardens and so forth.



Roger beside sign at Tully Church, Carrickmines, Co Dublin newly erected by the Dun Laoghaire /Rathdown Council.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY BILL VOTED DOWN

In December 2004 the Green Party introduced a bill making mandatory the listing of rights of way by local authorities. While it was supported by all the opposition parties, it was duly voted down by the Government parties. Although I would have to say that the support from Fine Gael was tactical rather than ideological.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST BARBED WIRE FENCING

Following the success of our petition to the European Parliament on the proliferation of barbed-wire fencing in upland areas, the EU Commission has commenced proceedings against Ireland.

A NEW COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL, COMHAIRLE NA TUAITHE

This body was set up by Minister Eamon O'Cuiv three years ago with the aim of solving the stand-off over access between landowners/farmers and recreational users. Comhairle na Tuaithe is a broadly-based group comprising farm organisations, user groups and tourism interests. From the beginning CnaT has been hampered by the narrow parameters set by the Minister which excluded consideration of legislative change to give walkers and others seeking recreation in the countryside legal rights of access while at the same time ruling out "payment direct or indirect to landowners". The Minister's ploy was to appeal to the good nature of farmers and persuade them to make walking routes available on a voluntary basis. This voluntary approach has not worked in the past as opening walkways on the basis of waymarked ways has always been subject to the whims of the IFA or individual farmers who can withdraw their consent without notice and without having to give a reason. All carrot and no stick! The IFA's attitude throughout has been one of arrogance and the ruthless pursuit of their narrow sectional interest. The other farm organisations are somewhat more conciliatory. The IFA demanded payment for access of 5,000 euro per kilometre (or 5 euro per step!) plus 1000 euro per farmer. This proposal was, rejected by the Minister. Naturally walkers won't pay a cent either. The IFA have now walked out of CnaT. Following pressure from KIO the Minister has now agreed to set up an "Expert Group" to look at the legal situation on the issues of rights of way and the right to roam. It is to report by 30 April 2007. Clearly this is going to be an election issue.

THE WAY FORWARD – AN URBAN/RURAL ALLIANCE?

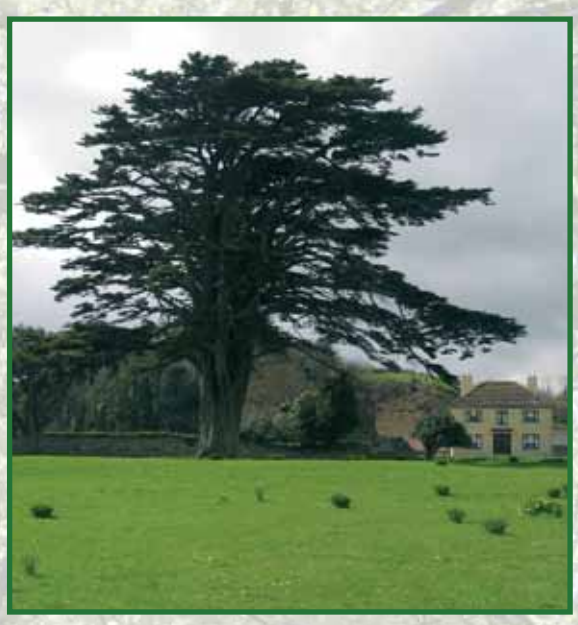
An exciting new vista could be opening up for rural Ireland with the cross affiliation between Irish Rural Link and Keep Ireland Open and now a similarly close link between Keep Ireland Open and An Taisce . This would replace the so-called urban/rural divide. For far too long the farm organisations have arrogated to themselves the right to speak out for the entire rural community, whereas the reality is that they represent only the interests of their members whose numbers are a small and dwindling. This cosy cartel has been challenged by Irish Rural Link who are requesting some small part of the huge subsidies being paid to farmers should go to other rural interest groups who have much more potential to provided a much-needed boost to the rural economy.

The need for such an Alliance is undoubted. Both An Taisce and KIO have felt the heat of mobs incited by the farm organisations to break-up meetings, intimidate speakers etc. They have "packed" local authorities with landowners who quite blatantly use their votes to further their interests at the expense of the rest of the electorate by facilitating the blight of one-off housing and by refusing to use their powers to list public rights of way. I had occasion recently when addressing a Strategic Policy Committee meeting of the Tipperary North Council to remind a succession of speakers that they shouldn't just speak up for the landowning class but should consider the interests of other citizens.

Can I STOP them cutting down that tree?

THE OFFICES OF AN TAISCE RECEIVE MANY ENQUIRIES ABOUT WHAT CAN BE DONE WHEN A FAVOURITE OLD TREE IS BEING CUT. UNFORTUNATELY THE ANSWER IS OFTEN NOTHING. BUT HERE WE GO OVER SOME OF THE ISSUES.

Trees are afforded some protection under the Forestry Act 1946. Under this Act, it is illegal to uproot or cut down any tree over 10 years of age without completing a Felling Notice and submitting it to the local Garda Síochana Station not less than 21 days or more than 2 years before the commencement of the tree felling. A Prohibition Order is normally served, following which the trees are inspected by the Forest Service and a Limited Felling Licence may be granted, which can include environmental and replanting conditions. Ecological considerations are not generally taken into account unless the site is designated for conservation.



Q. Are there any exceptions to the ten year ruler?

A. Yes. Many. Including

- Any hazel, apple, plum, damson, pear or cherry tree grown for the value of its fruit
- A tree standing within 40m (100ft) of a building
- Trees in a borough or urban district
- A tree certified by the local authority as dangerous to road traffic on account of age or condition or being felled under Section 70 of the Roads Act 1993.
- A tree uprooted or cut down by direction of the Minister responsible because it is a danger or obstruction to telegraph or telephone wires
- A tree cut down by a local authority in connection with road construction etc.

Q. Can particular trees be protected?

A. Yes. Local authorities can establish Tree Preservation Orders. A tree with a TPO cannot be lopped, topped or felled without planning permission but in practice this is not used widely except in Wicklow and even here the Planning Authority may ultimately grant planning permission to fell.

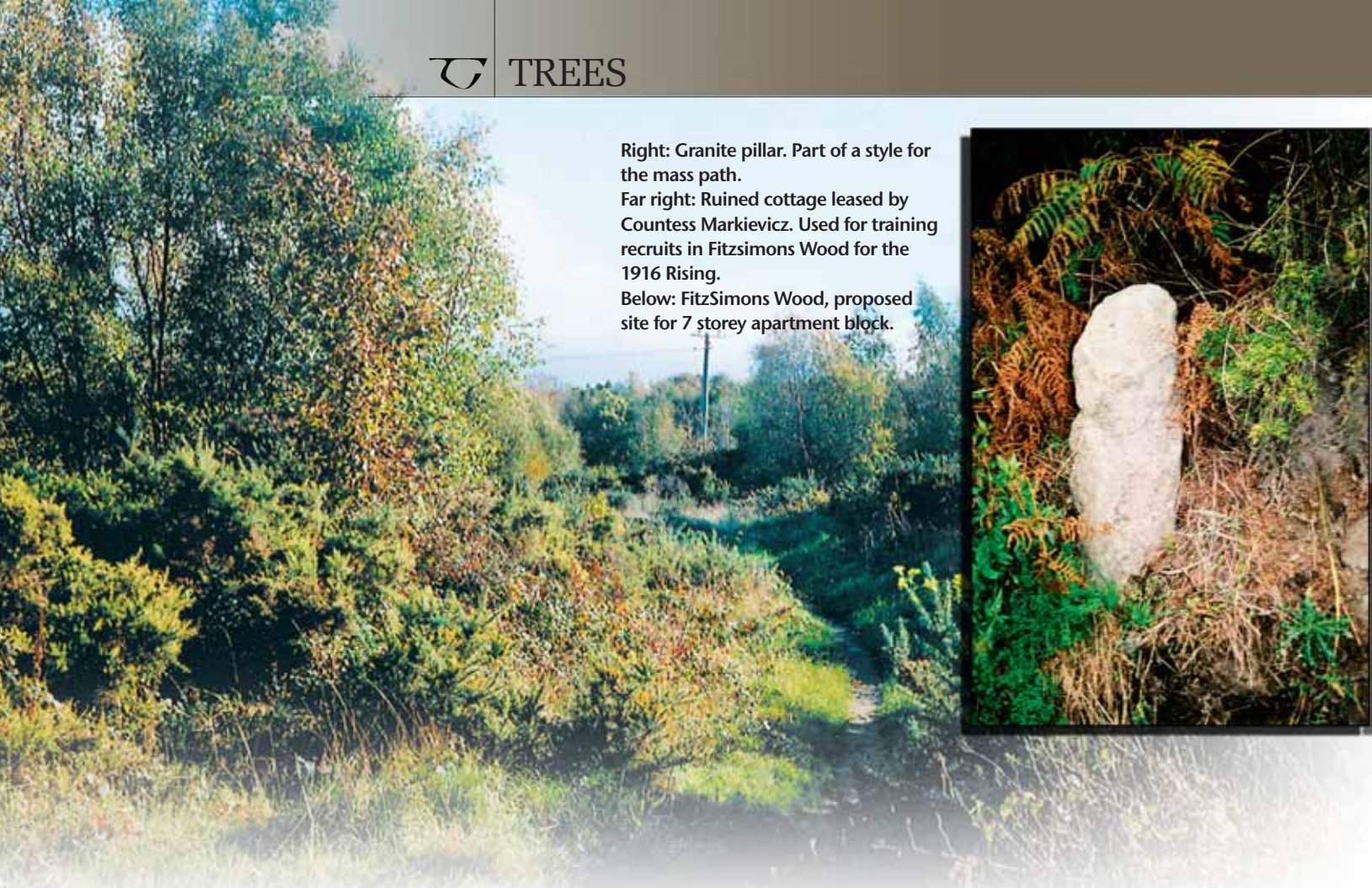
Q. What if the tree is in a designated area?

A. NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS form the basis of the system protecting Irish natural habitats under The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 however only a few habitat types have been assessed and granted full statutory protection. Most woodland NHA's are still proposed NHAs). A range of activities in NHA's including felling trees must be notified to the Minister but even so permission may be granted "where the Minister is satisfied that the carrying out of the works are necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, which interest may be of a social or economic nature."

The act does strengthen provisions prohibiting cutting hedgerows during the critical bird nesting period 1st march to 31st August except for reasons of public health or safety.

The legal basis for selecting and designating SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION is the European Union Habitats Directive. Planning authorities are obliged to consider the impact of development on designated sites on the wildlife and habitats present, and are supposed to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in this regard.

The FLORAL PROTECTION ORDER 1999 lists rare plant species protected under the Wildlife Act, 1976. This protection applies wherever the plants are found and is not confined to sites designated for nature conservation. If a botanist could find a listed plant then the Wildlife (Amendment) Act requires that a license be sought to interfere with it. (section 22) If it is moved/damaged it is an offence under the Floral Protection Order.



Right: Granite pillar. Part of a style for the mass path.
Far right: Ruined cottage leased by Countess Markievicz. Used for training recruits in Fitzsimons Wood for the 1916 Rising.
Below: FitzSimons Wood, proposed site for 7 storey apartment block.

Sandyford locals SAVE WOODLAND from housing development



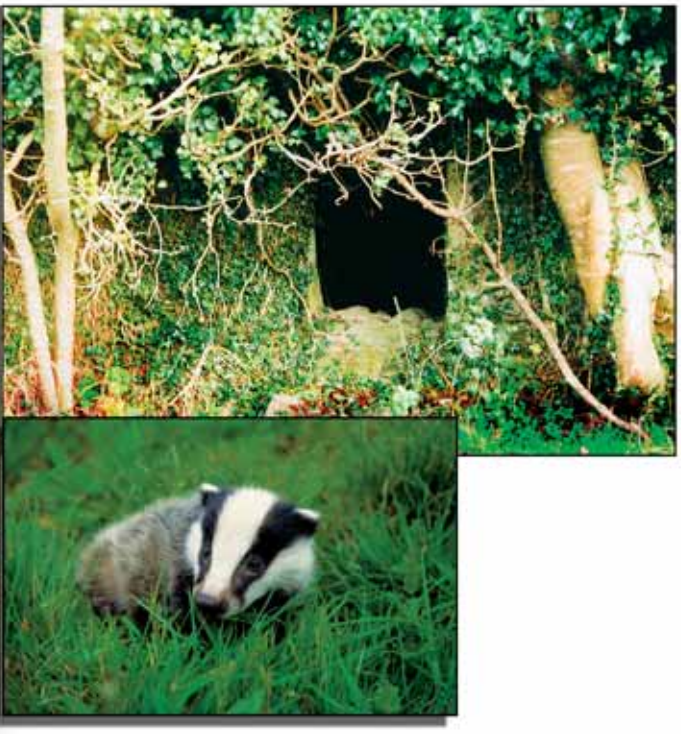
Cóilín MacLochlainn

REPORT BY **COILLIN MACLOCHLAINN**

Public opinion does not often turn the tide against the best-laid plans of county managers. But when 410 objections were received during the council's public consultation, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown councillors rejected a scheme for 63 houses and 70 apartments on the Blackglen Road, Sandyford, beside FitzSimons Wood, a candidate NHA – the last undeveloped green space in Sandyford.

Objectors – including local An Taisce members, Sandyford Environmental Protection & Road Safety Group, residents' associations, wildlife groups and Olivia Mitchell TD – submitted that the proposed development would have encircled a small woodland (5ha) with housing, intensifying human pressures such as dumping, illegal timber extraction and vandalism, endangering the wood, one of two surviving naturally-regenerating birchwoods in Dublin.

Furthermore, the NHA is part of a network of sites that will safeguard the future of Ireland's fauna and flora in the event of widespread losses in unprotected areas. Encircling one of these intrinsically valuable sites is a surefire way of compromising its future, and objectors claimed the development would cut off the wildlife corridor from Ticknock Mountain to the wood and threaten protected species including badgers and newts. The badgers would continue to have access to 12ha of suitable habitat, the consultants for the council said, but Tom Hayden and Rory Harrington, authors of 'Exploring Irish Mammals,' write that Irish badger territories "vary in size from about 60 to 200ha"!



The campaign to protect FitzSimons Wood was a long one, and is not over yet. Five years ago, the council rezoned the meadow beside the wood from open space/amenity to residential, with a view to providing housing.

A judicial review of the rezoning was taken in 2004, without success, and it seemed all was lost. However, when a development is proposed for council-owned land, under Part 8 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 no planning permission is required but a majority of councillors must approve the proposal. Thanks to the diligence of the local people, 15 councillors were convinced to support the FitzSimons Wood campaign, and only seven favoured housing.

Sandyford and neighbouring Leopardstown, Stepaside and Carrickmines have seen unprecedented development and most of the area is now under concrete. Dubliners who hold fond memories of blackberry-picking in this once-idyllic pastoral retreat are feeling hard done by, while thousands of new residents are looking for somewhere green and restful in their adopted neighbourhood.

There are alternatives. The council could enforce the social and affordable obligation in the many new housing projects they are sanctioning, or rezone a greenfield site west of FitzSimons Wood to accommodate the housing proposal without affecting the woodland.

Meanwhile, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown parks department is working with local residents and conservation groups on a management plan for the wood. It is proposed to provide paths, nature trails, picnic seating, gates and interpretative boards and to plant some additional trees and shrubs. The scheme will be part-financed by the Forest Service through the NeighbourWood Scheme.

The aim is to create a unique wildlife park with public access on the city's edge. FitzSimons Wood can provide a model for other councils to follow where valuable habitat for wildlife exists in towns and villages.

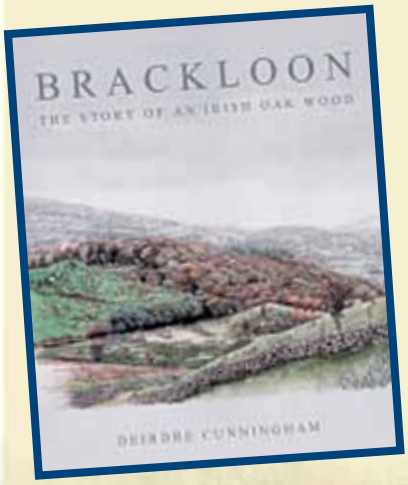
BRACKLOON – STORY OF AN IRISH OAKWOOD

by Deirdre Cunningham

COFORD, 2005.
148PP.
ISBN 1 902696 39 5

Brackloon Wood, not far from Westport, Co Mayo, is a surviving remnant of Ireland's original wooded landscape. A small (74ha) woodland, it has been researched in depth to provide a template for managing native habitats sustainably.

COFORD (National Council for Forest Research & Development) commissioned forester Deirdre Cunningham to write this book – beautifully illustrated with paintings of birds, mammals and plants by Westport-based architect Vincent Coleman. She records how the woodland has changed over time, first with clearances by Neolithic colonists 5,000 years, followed by cycles of abandonment, regrowth and fresh clearances over succeeding millennia. Iron Age settlements had a major impact, while iron works and charcoal production in the 17-18th centuries almost obliterated the wood. A variety of archaeological features survive. The species lists reveal this to be a particularly good site for Pine Marten, and that Wood Warbler has bred.

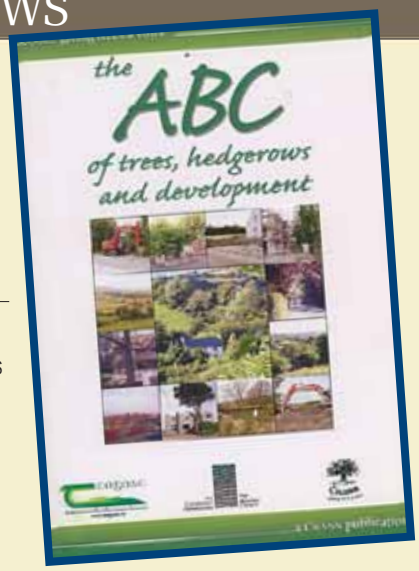


THE ABC OF TREES, HEDGEROWS AND DEVELOPMENT

by Janice Fuller

CRANN, 2005. 36 PAGES.
ISBN 0 9549293 1-4
WWW.CRANN.IE

This useful little booklet discusses the value of trees and their place in the law before going on to 'what trees like and don't like' as well a section on how to protect trees. In the final chapter there are lists of relevant organizations with their websites (including An Taisce of course) together with names and phone numbers of the local Teagasc



Forest advisors.

The introduction by Duncan Stewart reminds us of Bill Vaughan's famous quote "Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them" but adds that this book will aid people to appreciate the value and importance of trees and hedgerows, and integrate them into new developments.

CHAMPION TREES. A SELECTION OF IRELAND'S GREAT TREES

by the Tree Council of Ireland

2005
51 PAGES.
ISBN 095191 47 9 0
TREES@TREECOUNCIL.IE

The Tree Council of Ireland and the Irish Tree Society jointly initiated the Tree Register of Ireland project in 1999 with the aim of compiling a data base of trees throughout Ireland. Some 7500 trees have been recorded and measured and the booklet lists 1200 of these, giving a flavour of the diversity, size and beauty of one of our most precious and fragile pieces of heritage. Each county has been allocated at least one page and the trees are arranged according to their girths. The tallest native tree in Ireland is the ash on Marlfield Farm in Clonmel, Co.Tipperary. The oldest tree is probably one of the yews in Bunclody, Glencormac, Donerailе or St.Patrick's College Maynooth, estimated at between 700 -1200 years old!



BIODIVERSITY - OUR LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM

Natura 2000 - The cornerstones of European nature conservation policy. By Anja Murray.

BIODIVERSITY, shortened from 'Biological Diversity', is the term given to the entire web of life on earth. The term includes all components of life on earth, from microscopic mites to ancient trees. Biodiversity includes the diversity of individuals within a species, diversity of species within an ecosystem or habitat, and the diversity of ecosystems and habitats. Biodiversity is a key aspect of our heritage and has major social, economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic importance.

Ecosystems provide a variety of vital functions. The bogs which blanket our mountain tops, for example, act like giant sponges to absorb rainwater and release it slowly, thus reducing the incidence and severity of flood events in Irish towns and cities. Ecosystems breakdown wastes and recycle nutrients; filter our air and water; buffer against flooding in river basins and coastal areas; maintain soil fertility; and of course provide natural resources. In short, Biodiversity is our life support system, sustaining the natural environment upon which we depend. In Ireland, as across the globe, biodiversity is under severe pressure. Current rates of extinction of plants and animals exceed that experienced when dinosaurs disappeared.

Biodiversity loss is caused by a wide range of activities, including habitat damage and destruction; through the pollution of water, air, and soil; through intensive agriculture and industrial forestry practices; and through bad planning.

What does the loss of Biodiversity mean to us?

In Ireland 95 bird species are threatened or in serious decline. 120 plant species are endangered. Ireland's longest living animal, the freshwater pearl mussel, is facing extinction throughout its range in Irish rivers. Many types of fish are now scarce and population viability poor. Such reductions in biodiversity in Ireland have serious economic and social consequences.

So what can we do about it?

Ireland agreed with the other EU Heads of State in 2001 to "halt" the decline of biodiversity by 2010. If we are to fulfill our commitment to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010, we need concerted action on both local and national levels. The cornerstones of these efforts are the European Habitats and Birds Directives. Under these we have designated a network of nature conservation sites, known as Natura 2000 sites. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs). The directives provide a mechanism for the protection of these sites, for mediating potential conflicts between humans and nature, and for socioeconomic development in and around these sires. Upholding these directives is of the utmost importance in achieving long term sustainable development. Investments in nature are investments in the wellbeing of people and future generations.



Digging in Broadhaven Bay in preparation for the Corrib Gas Pipeline

In Ireland 95 bird species are threatened or in serious decline. 120 plant species are endangered. Ireland's longest living animal, the freshwater pearl mussel, is facing extinction.

How is Ireland faring in these efforts?

Ireland has come a long way since in the past decade, with most Natura 2000 sites designated and much work done. However two recent prosecutions from the European Court of Justice are critical of Ireland's efforts to protect our most endangered natural habitats and species. Ireland has been found to lack comprehensive monitoring programmes for certain protected species such as otters, bats, and cetaceans (sea mammals such as dolphins, whales, and porpoises). This is now being addressed. Ireland has also been found in breach of the law for failing to carry out species impact studies systematically before approving building projects. One such case sited was the granting of permission to develop a hotel on the Lough Rynn estate despite negative impacts on bat populations which were not addressed. The construction of Ennis bypass and the Corrib gas pipeline in Broadhaven Bay were also cited as examples of Ireland's failure to address appreciable risks of disturbing the breeding sites of protected species.

By satisfying these court judgments Ireland now has the opportunity to complete our work in the conservation of these rare natural attributes and move positively towards our commitments to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. Failure to do so will expose Ireland to the risk of substantial fines.

Biodiversity at a crossroads – which way will Ireland go?

We now face a choice – to improve our record on biodiversity conservation through political will and financial support for Natura 2000, or watch over accelerating decline of a unique national treasure – Ireland's natural heritage. The only way Ireland is going to make real progress towards the 2010 target to halt the loss of biodiversity is to make sure that that the pillars of the objective, the Birds and Habitats Directives, are fully implemented and upheld. Ireland still has some progress to make in this regard, and greater political will is needed if we are to fulfill the commitments we have made.



Gorumna Bay

BIODIVERSITY - AN TAISCE'S PLANNING OFFICE HELPS PROTECT IRELAND'S SACS

The haphazard handling by local authorities of planning applications affecting sites, species or areas protected under the Habitats and Birds Directive, is putting Ireland in breach of EU Treaty obligations. By Ian Lumley

LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE no in-house ecologists or relevant expertise to properly vet and examine planning applications. This means that the serious input on nature conservation is left to be addressed by the circulation of the relevant applications for comment by the three Prescribed Bodies, namely, the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, the Heritage Council and An Taisce. The involvement of DoEHLG is extremely uneven and the Heritage Council has virtually abandoned its planning function. This leaves a huge resource and cost burden on An Taisce in appealing so many local authority decisions to An Bord Pleanala, primarily on the basis that the determination did not comply with EU law. Those who raise concerns about biodiversity continue to be vilified by politicians both at national and local level and accused of caring only about swans or snails and not people, or wanting to turn the country into a safari park.

> "Those who raise concerns about biodiversity continue to be vilified by politicians and accused of caring only about swans or snails and not people".

Four major cases over 2006 in Co Galway where An Bord Pleanala overturned consents after appeals by An Taisce on nature conservation, highlight the failure of Irish local authorities to properly assess Habitats Directive impacts at application stage,

* Goruma island, Lettermullen, This was a massive industrial installation on a rocky, uninhabited Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated island.

* A 110Kv/38Kv power line across Connemara with a transformer station at Camus Eighter affecting the Connemara Bog Complex SAC;

* A six turbine wind farm on a wet heath plateau at Lealetter, Moycullen;

* A cable ferry across Lough Corrib, SAC.

In all these cases, the Bord Pleanala ruled that the information provided by the applicants with regard to habitat protection was inadequate and the applications were refused on grounds of SAC or Priority Habitat grounds.

The county with the largest number of cases where local decisions were overturned after An Taisce appeals on Habitats Directive grounds was Donegal with six. These were :

* A housing scheme at Cashelard near Ballyshannon on grounds of pollution risk to an SAC,

* Two developments affecting the freshwater pearl mussel in the River Eske,

* Three separate applications for caravan parks in the Downing's area, which had been granted by Donegal Co. Co on the basis of a Section 140 motion overturning planners advise and refused by the Board on grounds of adverse impact on rare and protected Machair grassland and sand dunes.

* The Board also ruled during 2006 that the major realignment carried out to the Portnoo Golf Club in 2005, was not exempted development following an An Taisce Section 5 reference to establish the legal status of the work adjacent to an SAC designated shoreline. .

The other major nature conservation cases arising from An Taisce appeals over 2006 were four applications affecting Lough Key Co. Roscommon all overturned by An Bord Pleanala . All across the county An Bord Pleanala decisions on An Taisce appeals have shown a systemic failure of local authorities to assess SAC impacts particularly for one off housing on river and lakeshore areas adjoining SACs

These and a number of decisions in 2005 such as the refusal of an hotel in a woodland at Nymphsfied Cong Co. Mayo show that An Bord Pleanala is now properly addressing the obligations of the Habitats Directive, at least in relation to planning applications. The acknowledgment of An Bord Pleanala's positive role in making landmark planning appeal decisions must be tempered by its uncritical consent role in processing and approving National Development Plan road projects with substandard evaluation under the Environmental Impact Assessment headings, revealing an inconsistent attitude in comparison to the way it treats appeals on planning applications.

ACTION!

Get Active on International Day for Biodiversity 2007

This year we plan to make a major public impact about biodiversity, to coincide with 'International Day for Biological Diversity' on 22 May 2007. An Taisce are working closely with other Environmental groups to roll out a programme of events all around the country, highlighting different aspects of biodiversity. The events will range from small local walks with nature experts looking at specific habitats, from coastal wetlands to mountain woodlands, to biodiversity in Tidy Towns. The whole programme will run as part of the National Biodiversity Awareness campaign 'Notice Nature', launched recently by the Department of the Environment. One of our main objectives is to enable people to become active citizens for biodiversity. For more details on events in your area, see the events section under www.antaisce.org

Water levels in Pollardstown Fen are falling

IS THIS BECAUSE OF THE KILDARE BY-PASS?

The proposal for a by-pass for Kildare first appeared over 25 years but, following a complaint to the EU, the completion of the road was delayed for several years with the road finally opening in 2003.

The delay and costs of over euro22 million due to that complaint became a cause celebre for the pro-development lobby, triggering a push towards the new Infrastructure Bill. Even 6 years later in 2004 Senator Martin Mansergh wrote in the Irish Times:

"There was the ridiculous delay to the N7 bypass at Kildare because of a supposedly threatened species of snail. I am deeply suspicious of an expertise that cannot be verified. Common sense and experience tells us that snails are virtually ineradicable, and the minuscule risk of a marginal change in the biodiversity of this particular species is surely a tolerable one."

But Catherine O'Donnell, the author of a study of the road project, believes that 'to suggest that a small snail and it alone was the reason for environmentalists' objections was an attempt to trivialise the issue and to ridicule the views of those opposed to the plans in an effort to gain public support for the road as originally designed'.

Although the original plans for the road did not interfere with the Curragh aquifer, later modifications in design involved cutting into the aquiver. It was reported by the Office of PublicWorks that the EIS and supporting documentation on groundwater and ecological impacts were inadequate making predictions unreliable. It would be unacceptable to drain large volumes of water from the Curragh Aquifer, as this would have a serious impact on the groundwater that sustains Pollardstown Fen. This would upset the delicate balance which enabled the Pollardstown fen to support species not found elsewhere in Europe.

WHY IS POLLARDSTOWN FEN IMPORTANT?

The constant inflow of calcium-rich water to Pollardstown did not allow acid-peat to develop and the fen, therefore, has remained unchanged for thousands of years. Today, it represents an example of ancient landscape. Its undisturbed, slow development has allowed its unique ecology to develop and its many exceptional habitats and rare species of flora and fauna to survive, including, but not exclusively, the particular species of snail.

The national and international biodiversity significance of Pollardstown Fen is also reflected in its inclusion in protective legislation and conventions. The fen has been given the following designations : Statutory Nature Reserve/ Natural Heritage Area/ Special Area of Conservation/ Ramsar site No. 474 designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance/ Designated by the Council of Europe as a Biogenetic Reserve.

Having observed the unwillingness of the Minister to take these concerns on board An Taisce wrote to the Commission in 1998 complaining that 'The Environmental Impact Assessment prepared for this development did not properly assess the impact on the aquifer of this de-watering and was inadequate in considering the problems involved in mitigating proposals'. Pollardstown Fen is not listed in the seven pages of locations that would be subject to impact from any of the routes.

The following years saw considerable changes to the engineering proposals including placing an impermeable liner along the section of the road in the cutting. The lining was to be supplemented by a layer of impermeable



Photos with thanks to Evelyn Moorkens and Brendan Myers



boulder-clay which according to the National Roads Authority would guarantee the long-term effectiveness of the approach. Following negotiations with the Commission, Mr Noel Dempsey, granted clearance for the tendering process to go ahead in 2000,

SO HOW IS THAT SNAIL?

Today water levels in the fen are dropping. The work of the monitoring committee is ongoing until 2008. A Report on the effect of the construction of Kildare Bypass on Pollardstown Fen is due to be published this year.

Watch this space!



The Kildare By-Pass and Pollardstown Fen

The project gives a chronological account of this controversy including valuable information on developing european policy to protect biodiversity through the implementation of european directives. The report considers possible causes for the defficiencies and how not to deal with a project!

http://friendsoftheirishenvironment.net/pdf/kildare.pdf

by Catherine O'Donnell January 2006

noticenature

take action on biodiversity loss

THE NEW GOVERNMENT BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

An Taisce has warned that Ireland will not meet the EU deadline of 2010 to halt the loss of native wildlife unless it takes immediate steps to stop damaging practices being permitted by State agencies. We welcomed the launch of the "Notice Nature" awareness campaign to protect native wildlife species, but said "concerted action" would have to be taken if the deadline was to be met. Minister for the Environment Dick Roche said the new campaign was an important part of the Government's effort to meet the EU goal. As detailed in yesterday's Irish Times, the campaign will target sectors such as farming, construction and tourism to ensure that wildlife and the environment are protected. The campaign's website, www.noticenature.ie, gives practical tips on how to protect wildlife and ecosystems.

The future of at least 150 species of native Irish wildlife is under threat, including the red squirrel, the barn owl, the natterjack toad and nine species of bat. Anja Murray, our natural environment officer, welcomed the plans to create greater awareness, but said the protection of biodiversity would have to be tackled sector by sector.

She said enormous damage was being done to coastal habitats because aquaculture licences were being handed out with little or no assessment. Similarly, wetland habitats were being filled with construction waste because the authorities were granting waste licences without fully assessing the danger, she claimed. Anja says there has been widespread, unregulated removal of hedgerows in the interests of construction and farming. Although the State's biodiversity plan had a target of 30 per cent broadleaf planting, this had no legal basis and was not being enforced, she added.

(adapted from Alison Healy's piece in the Irish Times 17 January 2007)



Friends of the Irish Environment (FIE) standing outside the launch of the Biodiversity Awareness launch to draw attention to the lack of diversity in Ireland's forestry plans.

An Taisce

Tailors' Hall

At the heart of Dublin for over 300 years

The Tailors' Hall is the perfect wedding venue that moves through the phases of the day into the evening and into the small hours of the morning.



- Heritage Garden with exceptional planted backdrop and stunning doorcase for unique photos
- Reception Hall
- Sublime banqueting hall with a capacity of 100 people
- The Crypt with its intimate bar-like atmosphere

For details, visit our website: www.tailorshall.org

The OldBuilders Company

LIME PLASTERING

Building Contractors

www.oldbuilders.com

Restoration & Conservation Specialists

Hemp Lime Eco Building with Timber Frame

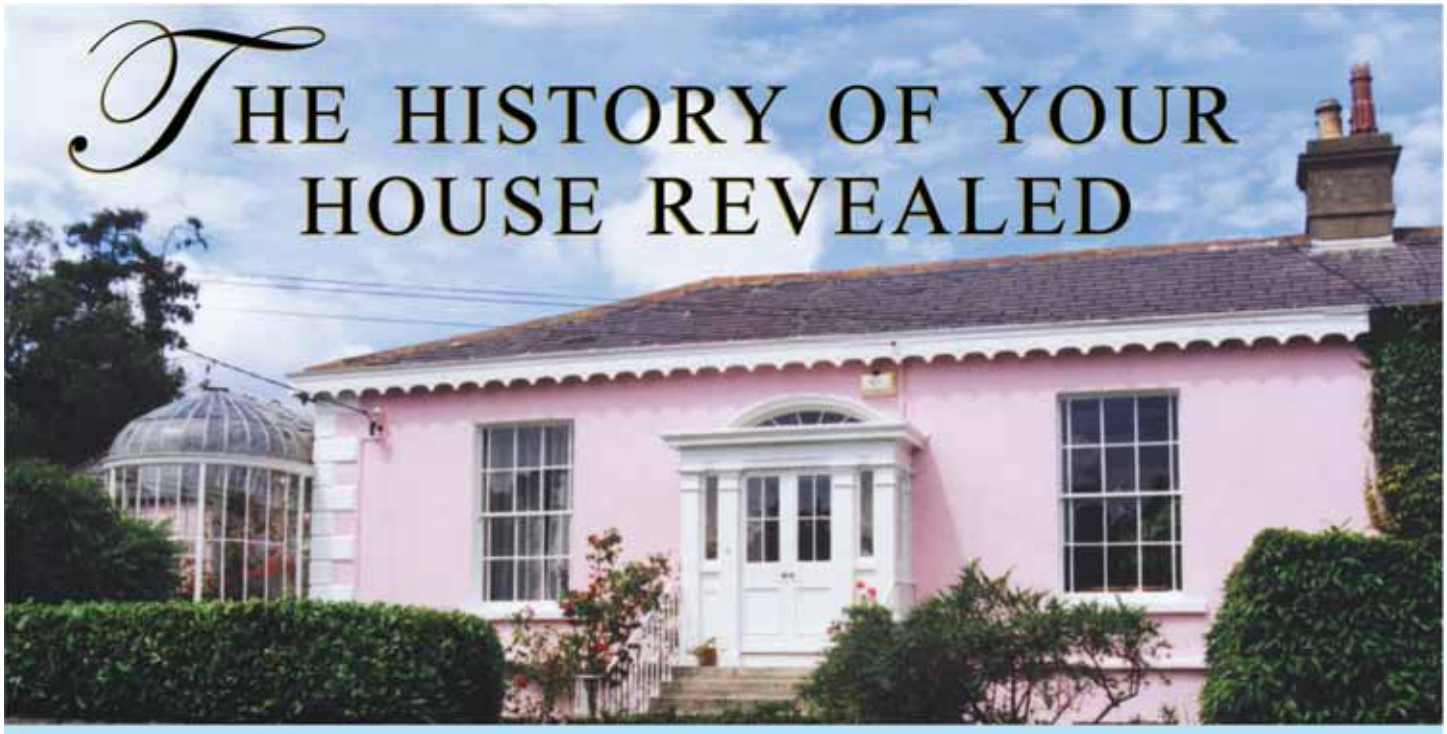
info@oldbuilders.com

Tel: 086 8236451

With Special Skills In Lime Mortar Plastering, Rubble Stone Walls, Sash Windows, Doors, Carpentry, Slate Roofing, Lead Work, Cast Iron Guttering & other Conservation Skills

Eco Friendly Hemp Applications, New Build Timber Frame With Hemp & Lime Construction or Clay Block for Insulation & energy savings. The ultimate in sustainable building

THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE REVEALED



A Unique Gift

Professionally researched, written and presented, an Eneclann house history is an ideal present for birthdays, weddings or Christmas.

Tax Relief

A house history is also a valuable resource when seeking planning permission for a listed building, tax relief under Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, or a local authority conservation grant.

If you would like more information please phone us at: 01 671 0338, or e-mail info@eneclann.ie

ENECLANN

Unit 1, Trinity College Enterprise Centre, Pearse Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 01-6710338 Fax: 01-6710281
e-mail: info@eneclann.ie
www.eneclann.ie



Nature's CALENDAR

THE SYNCHRONISATION OF NATURAL EVENTS. REPORT BY **PAUL WHELAN**

A fundamental concept in ecology is that all living things are linked in some way. Green plants convert sunlight energy to food; animals eat plants; animals eat each other. From this unavoidable and fundamental link in nature the whole web of being has unfolded. This term 'unfolded' lies at the essence of phenology. Phenology is the study of the synchronization of all the processes in the living world. As this dynamic unfolding develops in complexity over time, synchronization grows in importance. Bird's eggs hatch each year when the food for the species is available; hatch too early or too late and the little creatures in the nest never experience the freedom of flight. Synchronization implies time; nature's time keeper is the climate. First frost, first germination, first budding, first flowers, first bees, building of nests, hatching of eggs, arrival of migratory flocks, all depend on the climate.

Climate has its own beat and we, as products of Nature's Calendar, must follow. Some years Spring is early; but perhaps a bit dry, or milder than we expect. Generally nature can cope with this variation. There may be a beneficial abundance for us one year and paucity the next. We verbalise the effect of nature's synchronization with phrases such as 'it's a good year for birds' or 'there is no growth yet'. Nature adapts; too many ladybirds one year, the greenfly's nightmare; too many greenflies, a gardener's nightmare.

And now we have the possibility of climate change. Our 'Temperate' Climate will be replaced by 'Unknown' Climate. Nature's calendar will march to a new beat.

Some plants and animals adhere more tightly to nature's calendar than others; these are the species we should watch. Bumble bees set out on their foraging flight earlier than other insects (mechanical engineers calculate they should not be able to fly at all). On cold spring mornings they go through warming up exercises, flexing their flight muscles for 10 minutes until their body temperature reaches about 25OC. Then off they go into the cold dawn air looking for spring's first nectar. This used to occur in February or as late as March when I was a child. Last year I had bumble bees foraging in my garden on January 1st.

Observations of migratory birds over the last 20 years show that they are arriving up to 10 days earlier. I first saw a Hummingbird Hawk moth in June 1984 in the gardens of Muckross House. It was a rare event. Someone would write a letter to the Irish Times if they saw one back then. This year I have counted 26 in my handkerchief sized garden. Convolvulus Hawk moths and Clouded Yellow butterflies have been other unusual garden visitors. But for me this has been the year of the Hummingbird Hawk moth. How early will I see one next year? Will an early one indicate that they have over wintered in Ireland for the first time?

Paul Whelan is a consultant biologist and freelance writer. In 2006 he created Ireland's first and only dynamic Nature's Calendar website.

ACTION!

Become an overnight phrenologist! Go to www.biology.ie , register (its free) and enter your observations. You can immediately see everyone else's observations – and that's what makes the site really interesting and important. Now that it is February, look out for the bumble bee in your area. Perhaps you will have to cut your grass this month; jot down the date and enter it in the site map of Ireland. Visit the site just once a month with a new observation; all observations go towards setting a base line for future generations to calculate the rate of climate change.



Hummingbird Hawkmoth feeding on Valarian. ***(Photo: Paul Whelan 2006)***

Historic Stone



Kevin Duff

OUR CITY AND TOWN-CENTRES RETAIN VALUABLE HISTORIC PAVING AND OTHER STREET-DETAILS - BUT EXPERTISE IS REQUIRED IN THEIR REPAIR AND CONSERVATION

REPORT BY **KEVIN DUFF**

Like a stone wall, stone paving has a visual and structural logic. Dublin's stone paving was cut and laid to a very high standard, and requires a high degree of care and expertise in its alteration and repair.

A considerable quantity of historic stone paving survives in Dublin city centre, particularly in the north and south Georgian cores, in the area around St. Patrick's and Christchurch Cathedrals, and at Dublin Castle.

While these paved areas are listed for protection in the Development Plan, no system has yet been put in place to ensure that works to them are carried out in accordance with best practice principles. While Dublin City Council has accepted the need for provision of such a system, resources have yet to be allocated for this.



While major new paving works in Dublin such as O'Connell Street are generally executed to a high standard, the city's historic granite paving has suffered from a lack of adequate expertise in its repair and alteration work.



Historic stone paving at Thomas Street , Dublin 8, neatly flush-pointed in whitish mortar, allowing the quality of the stonework to dominate.



The medieval slips of Kilkenny feature aged limestone steps and paving.

Paving

"Stone paving is virtually indestructible, and will, if not abused, last indefinitely. Pavements can only look their best when clean, and in the past it was the custom of the householder or shop owner to clean their own stretch of footpath."

"Various regions in Ireland produce different types of stone, and the use of local stone in particular areas not only shows off the natural products of that area but also generates employment. Many areas have good local stone, such as Kilkenny and Carlow which have excellent limestones, Dublin and Wicklow have their granite, while Kerry has a beautiful pink sandstone."

From Department of the envronmentHeritage & Local Government Conservation Guidelines series - Paving and Street Furniture

"Historic street furniture and monuments can enrich our streetscapes, reinforcing local identity through historical association and local distinctiveness."

From The English Heritage Guidelines. Streets for All.

Poor quality raised cement re-pointing in progress to significant surviving historic pavement, Temple Bar, Dublin, September 2006. The DoEHLG Conservation Guidelines recommend flush pointing for stone paving.



A characteristic 19th century Cork street-detail, exhibiting a high level of craftsmanship and quality.





Recent work at Castle Street, Dublin 2, illustrates two common problems: raised pointing and loss of coursing and bonding integrity through fussy diagonal cutting of flagstones.

Major motorway schemes continue despite dire warnings

An Taisce has actively participated in the assessment of major inter-regional motorway and dual carriageway schemes, proposed under the National Development Plan,(NDP) 1999-2006, by making submissions and attending oral hearings.

These have been put forward in individual sections of varying lengths determined by contract management and phasing. However each scheme is required to come under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive. This requires that adequate data be provided under a range of headings, that alternatives are considered, that mitigation measures are proposed and that the direct and indirect effects are also evaluated and mitigated, including downstream and off site impacts.

In practice, both Environmental Impact Statements and An Bord Pleanala Oral Hearings into road schemes are prepared and carried out in systemic disregard of the EIA Directive. The level of plans and specifications for road schemes are little more than preliminary drawings for a full scheme to be worked up by a contractor after consent. Direct and indirect impacts, including downstream impacts on traffic generation, are systemically ignored, such as for the Ballinasloe-Galway dual carriageway. While the Oral Hearings are conducted by part-time consultants for An Bord Pleanala who are employed the on basis of their professional qualifications, mainly membership of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland, in practice, a number inspectors at road hearings have exhibited no obvious knowledge of the EIA Directive and actively dismissed or curtailed the legitimate raising of issues under the Directive. This includes such fundamental concerns as mitigation of climate change, road-generated urban sprawl and downstream traffic generation on urban centres.

All of the inter-Regional road schemes between Dublin and Galway, Limerick, Cork, Kilkenny and Waterford; the completion of the M1, the M3 from Clonee to Co Cavan, past the Hill of Tara, and the major part of the N11 past Gorey; and have been approved by An Bord Pleanala, and are at various stages of contract preparation or active construction.

However, the traffic generation and development patterns which these new roads are accelerating show that their strategic objective is failing. The prime justification for the NDP roads schemes is to reduce inter-regional travel times for business, services and movement of goods; and to enhance access to industrial centres, ports and airports and reduce peripherality. In practice, the new roads are acting as corridors and catchments for longer distance commuting into counties like Laois and urban sprawl with resulting downstream traffic generation in the main urban centres. This is ultimately defeating the strategic objective on which the road schemes are based. More seriously, it is leading to a dispersed suburbanised USA-type car-based society, with all the associated consequences of inefficient land use, unsustainable Greenhouse gas and emission-generation, social segregation and unhealthiness and obesity.

The real problem is that the road schemes are allowed to become the new arteries for car-based sprawl, while at the same time, the positive policies contained in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines on community-based and public transport-accessible development are not happening.

THE CITYWEST CONVENTION CENTRE PROPOSAL, DUBLIN SOUTH COUNTY

One of the most complex cases which An Taisce has been involved in recent years is that of the Citywest Convention Centre, where the major portion of a large uncompleted structure has remained in place without planning permission for the last three years. Two successive planning applications have been refused following appeals by An Taisce, on grounds of inadequate public transport accessibility and contravention of the Strategic and subsequently Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. However, both Appeal Refusals are still the subject of ongoing Judicial Review proceedings to the High Court from Jim Mansfield of HSS. An Taisce is participating as notice party in these proceedings to argue that the original An Bord Pleanala refusals should be upheld. Complaint has also made the European Commission because of the manner in which repeat applications and Judicial Review proceedings are being used in Ireland to pre-empt Enforcement Action on unauthorised development.

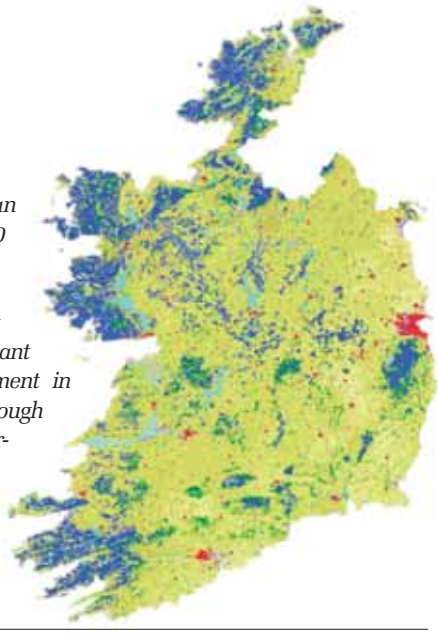


GRAVEL FROM UNAUTHORISED QUARRIES USED FOR NATIONAL ROADS

Current demand in Ireland for sand, gravel and rock extraction is unprecedented and on a per capita basis, one of the highest in the world. The biggest single user is the part EU funded National Roads Authority projects for motorways and dual carriageways identified in the last National Development Plan. These have all been subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and were approved with conditions or mitigation measures attached, requiring that the extracted material be taken only from legal and planning-permission-compliant quarries.

In practice, this condition is being systemically disregarded with a pass-the-buck attitude being taken by all parties involved. There is a massive

URBAN SPRAWL: IRELAND SETS WORST EXAMPLE AT EUROPEAN LEVEL



EVIDENCE OF IRELAND'S record is reflected in reports and data emerging from the Copenhagen-based EU European Environment Agency. The most recent publicly available transport data shows that Ireland has had the fastest increase in transport-generated Greenhouse gases at 132% over 1990 levels, the highest in any EU country. At the same time, on a per capita level, the Irish population is generating the greatest transport demand in Europe, both by road and aviation. At an international level, these trends show that Ireland is moving further and further away from the EU average to US levels of resource consumption, Greenhouse gas generation and ecological footprint.

Another EEA Report published before the end of 2006 has added to the ongoing concern at the impact of urban sprawl in Ireland through the combination of chaotically-planned, car-dependent low density housing estates around the larger urban centres and commuter satellites and of road-front ribbon development strips of "one off " housing.. This is showing up graphically in the Corine Satellite monitoring database maintained by the EEA. It again confirms the pace at which Ireland is embracing the US model of car-based urban sprawl with inefficient land use and resource consumption and the loss of traditional distinctions between town, village and countryside.

Footnote:

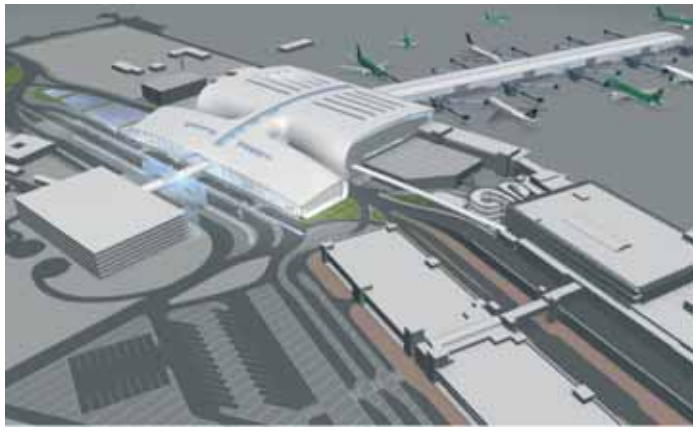
"Urban sprawl – Europe's ignored environmental challenge." EEA Briefing 4/2006, prepared by the EEA and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). The report contains case studies from seven cities across Europe illustrating both good and bad approaches to urban planning over the past 50 years.

The EEA is based in Copenhagen. The Agency aims to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy makers and the public.

www.europa.eu

New terminal planned for Dublin airport

The biggest planning appeal case in which An Taisce has been involved over the last year, was for a new northern parallel runway at Dublin Airport, which included representation at a 12-day Oral Hearing. The object of the application, in conjunction with another parallel application for a new terminal and a series of other developments, is to increase passenger capacity from 19 million per annum in 2006 to 30 million by 2015.





Unathorised quarry in Bangor, Erris, Co.Mayo

use of unauthorised quarry sources such as the current Kibeggan/Kinnegad to Athlone dual carriageway. The means that development is occurring without ecological or archaeological monitoring or mitigation, substandard rural roads are being subject to damaging HGV use and water pollution risks caused. When a case is brought to the attention of the relevant local authority, effective action is only taken on an erratic basis, leaving unauthorised quarries to operate for months, often to the point of their exhaustion or end-life. Both the contractors responsible and the NRA repeatedly state that it is a local authority matter.

The net result is a subversion of the credibility of the planning system, highlighting simply in more graphic form, large-scale failure of planning enforcement in Ireland.

The major issue raised by An Taisce at the Oral Hearing was the non-strategic and piecemeal manner in which Dublin Airport was being developed without properly addressing traffic generation and congestion and mitigation of climate change. Individual applications were being determined in isolation without an overall strategy. The Dublin Airport Master Plan, which had been approved by Fingal County Council in 2006, as a Local Area Plan, under the Planning & Development Act, 2000, was identified as being particularly deficient. Most strikingly, the Strategic Environmental Assessment required under EU Directive to be attached to the Plan, failed entirely even to mention, let alone mitigate, climate change emissions from increased aviation, the operation of the airport and land-based transport generation; thus rendering it legally null as well as professionally negligent.

The Oral Hearing proved an extremely unsatisfactory forum for raising these issues with time constraints being imposed by the Bord Pleanala Inspector Pauline Fitzpatrick disallowing questioning of witnesses for Fingal County Council and the Dublin Airport Authority on climate impacts and EU Directive compliance.

To The Secretary
An Bord Pleanala
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

January 2007

AN TAISCE'S SUBMISSION ON THE PROPOSED N6 GALWAY CITY OUTER BY-PASS. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Dear Sir,

An Taisce's Galway Association members have noted that, in accordance with the EU Directives on Environmental Impact Assessment, An Bord Pleanala must ascertain whether the information supplied by the developer on the proposed scheme is in compliance with the requirements of the EIA Directive and in particular with Section 5.3 which states that the information shall include at least:

* a description of the project comprising information on the site, design and size of the project,
* a description of the measures envisaged in order to avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy significant adverse effects,
* the data required to identify and assess the main effects which the project is likely to have on the environment,
* an outline of the main alternatives studied by the developer and an indication of the main reasons for his choice, taking into account the environmental effects

Having satisfied itself that the information supplied is in compliance, the Board is then, prior to granting a consent, required to perform an assessment according to Article 3 which states that the environmental impact assessment shall identify, describe and assess the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors: human beings, fauna and flora; soil, water, air, climate and the landscape; material assets and the cultural heritage; the interaction between the factors mentioned above

In the performance of our statutory prescribed function An Taisce wish to draw the attention of the Board to a number of areas in which the EIS, submitted to justify this development, fails to provide adequate information to enable the Board to make this decision.

Part of the chosen N6 GCOBP route would pass through 13 designated Natura 2000 sites some of which are "Priority", by raising an embankment through Ballindooly Lough, cutting beside Coolagh Fen (with its network of habitats of European Community interest and value), destroying important Limestone pavement at Coolagh/Ballindooly. The road would cross over the river Corrib through wetland habitat at Kentfield which lies within the Lough Corrib cSAC, going on to divide upland bog at Bolybeg and would be likely to dramatically affect ecosystems and damage biodiversity in all these.

This road scheme should only be pursued if it can be demonstrated that it is the right solution for the specific problem in question and will not damage delicate natural environments, protected structures, buildings or, destroy archaeology.

It should only be selected after all other options (such as lorry routing, speed reduction measures and investment in public transport) have been fully considered. It should not be approved if it leads to traffic growth or longer journeys, or undermine the availability and use of public transport by making road transport more attractive. It should also not reduce the opportunity to walk and cycle by, for example, creating an intimidating environment for pedestrians and cyclists or severing existing routes.

Decisions on new roads should not be taken in isolation. They should facilitate appropriate land use policies and not encourage sprawl. They should be justified in terms of any claimed economic benefits and the effect of the proposed road scheme on the local economy should be scrutinised carefully through a full and transparent Economic Impact Report;

Road schemes should be introduced alongside measures designed to manage the expected demand for car use, to prevent any gains from the new road being eroded by new traffic. New roads should not generate additional development pressures on the surrounding countryside, and should not being constructed to deprive other, more worthwhile transport initiatives, of scarce resources;

An Taisce believes that in Ireland it is probable, as with recent schemes, that much of the expenditure on roads will generate more traffic in a vicious cycle of unsustainability (M50). In this case, if any new road is built, it should be built to the highest standards with appropriate use of tunneling, careful landscaping, low (or ideally, no) lighting, quiet road surfacing and minimal use of visually intrusive signing and flyovers. It should be noted that An Taisce members in Galway are, not ordinarily against the building of new roads or bypasses where these can be shown to benefit communities. However, we believe their role should be very limited, and they should be an option of last resort.

Yours faithfully, Derrick Hambleton. Chairman. An Taisce - Galway Association



ON THE MOVE

THE GREEN SCHOOLS TRAVEL PROGRAMME, BY **JANE HACKETT,** AN TAISCE EDUCATION OFFICER

he Green-Schools Travel Pilot Programme, which is funded by the Dublin Transportation Office, is now in its second year and already schools are delivering some great results. The aim of the pilot is reduce the number of car trips made by parents, staff and students to and from school by promoting sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport, carpooling etc); improve safety on the school journey; improve health; broaden education and contribute to sustainable development. Yes it a tough quest but Green-Schools are more than capable of it!

There are now a total of 31 schools participating in the pilot all of which are located in the Greater Dublin Area. The second set of schools (16 in total) joined the pilot programme in September 06. To introduce the new schools to the Travel pilot Green-Schools held a number of Travel workshops in October 06 to highlight the issues relating to sustainable travel and to introduce a range of initiatives to Green-Schools co-ordinators. The workshops were a great success and they proved an opportune time for participating schools to network and discuss the problems/solutions associated with sustainable travel.

The pilot programme's success is being measured both quantitatively and qualitatively through the use of surveys, questionnaires and direct action. The quantitative results collated to date have indicated a 7% increase in the number of children who walked or cycled to school during the period from March – June 2006. That's a fantastic achievement in a three month period! It is hoped that schools can sustain this progress throughout the next school term and build on this success next spring.

This result could only have been achieved through the dedication and support of Green-School Co-ordinators who tirelessly promote the health and environmental benefits of walking and cycling to school. Participating schools which are seeing the best results have found that initiatives such as Walk On Wednesday (WOW) are key to motivating students to use alternative modes of travel to school. Schools which are located in rural areas can also do their bit, and many have focused on promoting Park n Stride (just like Park n Ride but using your feet instead) and carpooling as real alternatives to individual car trips.

Green-Schools is confident that participating schools will build on the success they have achieved to date. The challenge for the next term is to ensure that schools continue to promote actions and initiatives for sustainable travel even during the winter months. Green-Schools are running a competition based on sustainable travel to school and it is hoped that winning entries will capture the essence of safe, healthy and fun journeys to school.

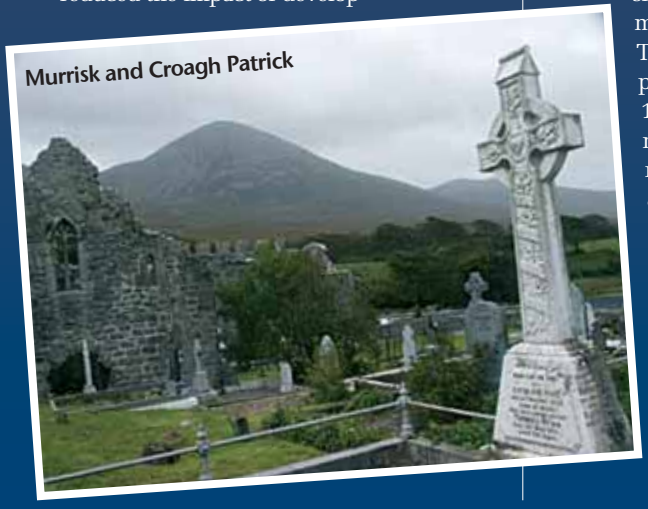
Green-Schools



AN TAISCE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PLANNING PROCESS

All too often, particularly in local media, An Taisce is portrayed negatively an "objector" as seeking to stop a significant development. The opposite is very often the case. Many An Taisce submission's are not based on a black and white grant or refuse argument, but a more sophisticated one in seeking to improve design quality and mitigate adverse impact on heritage and landscape. A number of An Bord Pleanala Decisions made on An Taisce appeals in 2006, reflect the constructive approach taken by An Taisce. The most significant was the development at Kinsealy, the former residence of Charles Haughey in Fingal, Co Dublin, where An Bord Pleanala amended the golf course layout for a tourism development to better protect the landscape setting around the main house and lake. In the case of a number of other appeals, where mitigation of impact was sought rather than refusal, An Bord Pleanala significantly reduced the scale of development proposed. This included the tourism housing development on Waterford island, where 52 housing units were remitted, as well as other parts of the development; a scheme for Courtown Demesne, Kilcock, Co Kildare, where a nursing home, 2 storey houses and 4 commercial units were remitted; a scheme at Kilronan Castle in Co Roscommon, where the units in the walled garden were omitted, a scheme in Athenry Co Galway where the impact on the medieval town wall was mitigated, and for hotel and apartment development at Murrisk, Co Mayo, where, in the course of the appeal, An Bord Pleanala sought and secured amendments which significantly reduced the impact of development in this sensitive location at the foot of Croagh Patrick.

All of these decisions were a vindication of the use of the planning process in putting forward arguments as to how a development can be made more sustainable and adverse impacts mitigated.


Murrisk and Croagh Patrick

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FAILS TO CONFRONT ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

This plan was negotiated by the social partners without the participation of or even consultation with the Environmental stakeholder sector. The exclusion of the environmental movement from the social partnership negotiations is contrary to the 1992 Rio Declaration on Sustainable Development.

The NDP is based on outmoded 20th century thinking which does not address the challenges of the 21st century, namely climate change and oil and natural gas depletion. There are no clear targets for reducing greenhouse gases. The only specific provision is for €270 million for carbon credits trading in order to meet Kyoto target. There is no contingency for future supply difficulties or cost increases for oil and natural gas.

The NDP fails to provide any meaningful strategy to address or reduce Ireland's climate changing greenhouse gas generation, which has the highest national increase in transport-generated greenhouse gas emissions in Europe at over 132 %, more than ten times the Kyoto limit of 13% over 1990 levels.

The transport provisions of the NDP are simply a reiteration of the investment proposed in 2006 in Transport 21. While public transport investment has quadrupled to 12.95 billion, as there is still more money at 17.6 billion put into roads, on top of road schemes already carried out, the result will be the continuing creation of congestion and urban sprawl while economic growth continues and major social and economic disruption with future fossil fuel supply depletion.

While the NDP seeks to implement the National Spatial Strategy, in distributing development to the eight Gateways and



across the regions, there is no proposal to change the current failed planning system, which is achieving more and more unsustainable urban sprawl, car-dependence, congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

The NDP has not been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as required by the EU SEA Directive based on flawed legal advice and against the advice of the EPA.

KERRY REZONINGS

In 1948 An Taisce founder Robert Lloyd Praeger highlighted the threat to the protection of the public interest in planning and amenity protection by the "sequestration for private ends" and the inadequate attention given to " the prevention of disfigurement of the towns and country-side by injudicious building "

Neither the Flood Tribunal, nor the fact that Irish suburban sprawl is drawing international attention, have had any impact on the politics of rezoning in Ireland. The recommendation in the 2004 All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution report on Private Property regarding rezoning, remain ignored.

The January 2007 vote by Kerry councillors for a number rezoning in the Killarney area, ignoring strong warnings by management, are among the worst ever to have occurred in Ireland. The most problematic were the votes to zone lands for a "storage depot" in Aghadoe which overlooks the lakes of Killarney and 16 acre parcel of land between Kilcummin village and Killarney isolated from any town and village, for low to medium density housing. The latter reflects a new trend for "one off" housing estates scattered across the countryside, already a marked feature of the Faha area near Killarney.

Unless there is real public participation in the planning process, and concerned individuals and organisation are able to exert a stronger voice than those with vested interests, then the Irish planning system will continue the way it is.

Conserving Ireland's Maritime Heritage



Up: **Currach pen, Dooagh. Achill, Co Mayo**
(Photo: Darina Tully)
Far Left: **Dalkey Island, CO Dublin,**
(Photo: Aidan O Sullivan)
Left: **Trawlers, Arthurstown, CO Wexford,**
(Photo: Darina Tully)

MARITIME HERITAGE UNDER PRESSURE FROM A RANGE OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES. THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND WILL BE DIMINISHED IF COASTAL AND MARINE HERITAGE IS LOST OR DAMAGED IRREPARABLY.

Coastal and marine heritage is of high value to Ireland by providing a number of services. Our coasts and seas are used for transport, industries like fishing, and aquaculture, tourism, and recreation. Natural habitats such as mud flats, salt marshes and sand dune systems, also provide coastal protection and help filter polluted waters.

However this heritage is under pressure from a range of human activities such as inappropriate development, urban sprawl, changes in traditional activities, pollution and litter. Climate changes and changes in sea level and coastlines exacerbate this.

Reduction in the quality and quantity of coastal and marine heritage impacts negatively on those communities who depends on coastal resources, and may impact on the national economy in the long term. The quality of life for people in Ireland will be diminished if coastal and marine heritage is lost or damaged irreparably. It is necessary, therefore, to provide for its protection and enhancement, if only for our own long-term benefit.

The Heritage Council has recently launched a policy paper on marine and coastal heritage, based on several years' research and consultation. The previous Marine and Coastal committee held a number of seminars, in June 2002, November 2004, and May 2005, the results from which were incorporated in this document, along with the outcomes of projects undertaken during this period e,g, Review of best practice in ICZM, Bibliomara, Coastal and Marine Resource Directory. Valuable contributions were made by organisations including the Martin Ryan Institute, the Marine Institute and the Geological Survey of Ireland.

The Heritage Council is calling for an integrated and strategic approach to the management of our coastal areas which places heritage at the core. This strategy should include a comprehensive review of relevant policies and measures currently in place, a management framework for environmental protection and management, and a campaign to raise awareness of maritime heritage.

Specific recommendations are made on aspects of heritage including seascapes, biodiversity, water quality, climate changes, offshore activities, fisheries and cultured species, underwater archaeology, built heritage, traditional boats, islands and recreation. In particular the Council calls for

» Clear guidance and advice for new development in coastal areas
» Protection for coastal landscapes and the promotion of sustainable tourism
» Specific and identifiable budgets for managing water quality as part of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive
» Off-shore and coastal biodiversity protection plans
» A national plan for erosion and flood management to account for the likely effects from climate change
» Clear guideline for assessing and granting permission for off-shore energy production
» Improved conservation plans, clear guidelines and better recording of data of fish stocks to address serious over-exploitation
» Improved management plans for aquaculture enterprises or fish farms to reduce ecological damage and improve the visual impact on the landscape and seascape
» Greater awareness of Ireland's maritime heritage which includes coastlines, the seas, plants, fish and animals, coastal villages, towns and cities, rich fishing traditions, customs and folklore, recreation and tourism

If you would like to receive a copy, please contact the Heritage Council at 056 7770777 It can be down loaded from the web site at www.heritagecouncil.ie

The Council is very grateful to Rick Boelens, committee member for collating and editing the document

BUSINESS DRIVERS FOR LOW CARBON BUILDING SOLUTIONS

Sustainability presents building services professionals with a new business opportunity as well as taking a role in solving the practical problem of climate change. The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) recognises that the industry has a crucial part to play in promoting sustainable buildings and aims to provide its members with the knowledge and training needed to meet the demand.

TM38: RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES FOR BUILDINGS

This is CIBSE's Technical Memorandum on renewable and low carbon energy technologies which can be integrated into buildings or developments. Aimed at planning authorities and developers who are seeking to set or meet local planning requirements, TM38 will also be useful to clients, architects and designers who are considering low carbon solutions for their buildings.

Identifying the most appropriate low or zero carbon (LZC) energy solutions for buildings and/or developments based on users' requirements, it provides invaluable advice to be used at the early stages of a project. A simple-to-use software tool has been developed to complement the guide, allowing users to enter basic information on the proposed building/development, and to give a relative importance to various factors such as cost-effectiveness carbon saving potential.

LOW CARBON CONSULTANTS REGISTER

The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers' (CIBSE's) register of Low Carbon Consultants celebrated its official launch on 1st September 2006 and has been going from strength to strength since then. The aim behind the scheme was to create a register of professionals who can design and operate more energy efficient buildings. With low carbon and energy efficient issues constantly making headlines and the business case for energy efficiency now firmly established, the register has become extremely relevant.

SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

CIBSE is preparing for the launch of its first guide on sustainability, with help from Faber Maunsell, aiming to raise awareness of the issue among building services engineers.

Sustainable development is about enabling all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. Climate change is the most high profile and urgent sustainability issue. However, sustainability covers a wide range of issues many which are either exacerbated by climate change or are contributing towards it, for example; flood risks, water shortages, household waste and a decline in wildlife habitats. The guide includes information on sustainable engineering solutions, specific technologies and a database of engineering good practice.

CIBSE is an international information network and professional body which aims to improve building services and combat climate change. The Institution offers advice, information, skill development and recognition to members, as well as being dedicated to the development of better buildings.

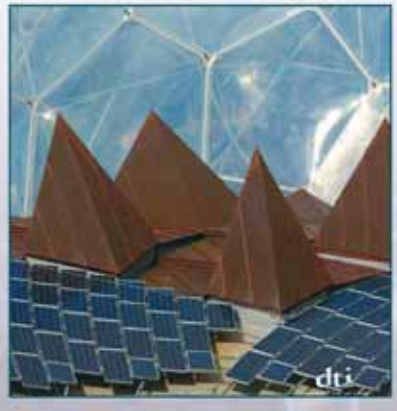
For more information on CIBSE publications or training courses please visit **www.cibse.org**

CIBSE
Engineering a sustainable built environment

TM38: Renewable Energy Sources for Buildings

CIBSE's Technical Memorandum on renewable and low carbon energy technologies provides information and advice on how they can be successfully integrated into buildings or developments.
Aimed at planning authorities and developers who are seeking to meet local planning requirements, TM38 will also be useful to clients, architects and designers who are considering low carbon solutions for their buildings.

TM38: Renewable energy sources for buildings costs £24 (plus P&P) for CIBSE members and £48 (plus P&P) for non-members from The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers. _222 Balham High Road,_Balham,_London SW12 9BS Tel +44 (0)20 8675 5211 and can be ordered online at www.cibse.org/publications.



Rural Ireland.

Book Reviews by Judy Osborne



Judy Osborne

A number of books and reports have been published recently, outlining and analysing rural Ireland and the development of an Irish environmental movement within the context of a modernising society. Each of the books describes a lack of political leadership, complacency, stasis, conflict, failure etc. There is also a range of proposals for reform. Let us hope that An Taisce can rise to this challenge and work with other groups for positive change.

THE BLAME GAME,
BY BRENDAN FLYNN.
IRISH ACADEMIC PRESS, 2007
278PP, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY AND INDEX
JUSTICE IN CONTROVERSY SERIES.
ISBN 0 7165 33510

The Blame Game by Brendan Flynn from the Environmental Change Institute, NUI Galway, will be an interesting read for our members and others who want to see change in the status quo in Irish environmental politics.

Initially, examples are given to illustrate the complacency in Ireland regarding the state of the environment. A range of statistics are presented and discussed in a European context. Flynn concludes that 'not too bad' is not good enough.

Chapter 2 gives an historical account of the Irish experience of environmental policies and politics and notes in particular the adversarial and aggressive style, which gives lip service to consultation and regularly ends up with the courts full of struggles between small environmental organisations and commercial developers or the State. There has been utter failure to develop a forum. The evolution of environmental policy has not been strategic. It is reactionary and merely firefights in response to European Directives, the only critical force driving change. However, weaknesses in our institutions and the political culture are at the heart of the problems.

The third chapter offers a more detailed critique of institutional arrangements and notes the deterioration of enforcement and the recent EU Court of justice rulings (see also page 12). Many examples are given, including how the implementation of the Habitats Directive quickly got bogged down by the difficulty of designating sites in the face of property rights. Flynn also discusses the failure to take the opportunity to use instruments such as carbon taxes. He notes that environmental NGOs have frequently relied on publicising 'threats' to our well being (which brings us into the contested science of risk analysis) and suggests more use should be made of creating a vision.



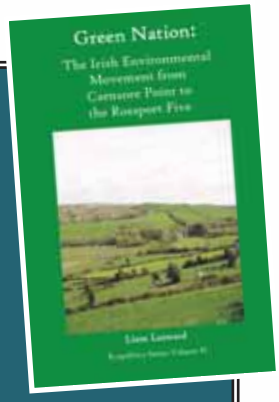
In his discussion of the state of environmental NGOs (such as An Taisce) Flynn notes that campaigns are frequently strong locally but weak nationally, where as real political power is concentrated and always wins as we have seen, whereby laws are just changed to meet the needs of more powerful elites. Whilst acknowledging and outlining the poor funding of Irish NGOs, he states that the environmental movement needs to build a strong institutional base so that we may negotiate equally with other social and economic lobby groups such as the IFA and IBEC.

Throughout the book, Flynn argues for ecological modernism and a more strategic, proactive approach to environmentalism, focusing on water, biodiversity and soil. Amongst other proposals it is suggested that the EPA be more proactive with clear regulatory independence yet much more than just a licensing body, that we should have Environmental and Planning Courts as in Australia and New Zealand and a Ministerial post for implementation and enforcement.

The book reads easily and is exceptionally well referenced with detailed notes at the end of each chapter with a very extensive bibliography. A couple of small mistakes I spotted did not invalidate the thesis and I would suggest it could well provide a starting point for many an interesting debate in meetings of our local Associations and National Council.

GREEN NATION: THE IRISH ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT FROM CARNSORE POINT TO THE ROSSPOINT FIVE.

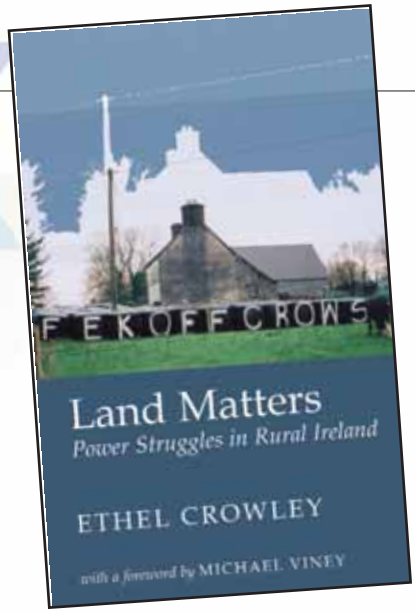
BY LIAM LEONARD. GREENHOUSE/CHOICE PUBLISHING 2006. 280PP INDEX
ECOPOLITICS SERIES VOL II. ISBN 1 905 451 11 3
WWW.CHOICEPUBLISHING.IE/BOOKSTORE



Green Nation by Liam Leonard, also from NUI Galway, looks at the environmental movement through a different lens. In this sociological study Leonard examines eight community based campaigns over the past 30 years, including the campaign against mining in Croagh Patrick, incineration in Cork, development on Mullaghmore and roads at the Glen of the Downs and through Tara. Leonard posits the theory that these community responses are formulated from a populist rural sentiment or territorial sense of place that has been mobilized as Ireland has undergone a dramatic transformation from a primarily agrarian society to that of a modern economy "obsessed by rapid growth and development".

The early chapters outlining the theory are academic. The language is challenging, however, the perspective it offers is rewarding. The conclusions in the final chapter outline beneficial outcomes of earlier campaigns including increased civic awareness of environmental health and heritage issues, benefiting mainstream politics through the rise of the Green Party and the establishment of the EPA. The author draws attention to the dichotomy between institutional initiatives aimed at sustaining economically driven growth and cultural responses to the risks created by such policies, making the "heavy handed attempts to impose infrastructural projects on the Irish communities hard to understand".

PS:There are inevitably many references to An Taisce's involvement in many of these campaigns.



LAND MATTERS. POWER STRUGGLES IN RURAL IRELAND,
BY ETHEL CROWLEY.
LILLIPUT PRESS 2006.
232PP NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX
ISBN 1 84351 801 2

Ethel Crowley's book **Land Matters** is yet another angle on rural development and the impact of change brought about by globalization and the new green capitalism introduced through Europe's Common Agricultural Programme (CAP). As Michael Viney says in his introduction "her close study of the Rural Enterprise Protection Scheme (REPS) is enriched by many kitchen conversations and by interviews that explore the mysterious territory between EU principles and Irish practice.

Though the style is quite different from the previous books reviewed above, this too uses much of the language of the sociologist/geographer. The introduction explains Pierre Bordeaux's Constructionist Approach to analysis. 'There is no ultimate truth because every social actor who contributes to the debate ultimately makes specific claims for particular reasons. Social life can be seen as one big negotiation process and power struggles arise because of these competing sets of claims about reality. There are contrasting rural visions. Furthermore, what people are doing only makes sense when we describe it in terms of the structures and institutions in which the activity is undertaken.' Of course this can lead to 'pessimism that social reproduction and stasis is far more likely than change' or, as Flynn describes in his book, the Blame Game reviewed above, the weakness of Irish institutions creates complacency, reinforces existing power relationships resistant to change and conflict.

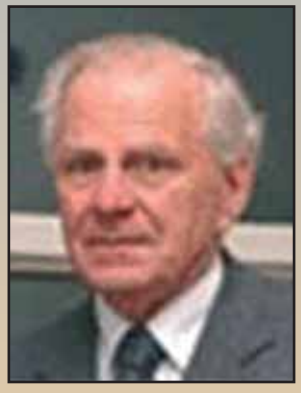
> power struggles arise because of competing sets of claims about reality.

This book does not seek to propose reform but does describe how the more pressure that is exerted by global economic and cultural forces, the more people may yearn for their local identity. Crowley also talks about landscape and heritage, rural housing, organic farming and LETS. The book aims to provide

» an explanation of the crucial ideas that shape and drive EU and Irish rural policy
» an outline of the main policy decisions and their social impacts
» the most important inputs of local individuals and groups (including An Taisce about which she says "Disgruntled TDs and councillors use An Taisce as a scapegoat to distract the general public from the unavoidable fact that the more negative aspects of economic wealth must be controlled and fairly distributed over Ireland's besieged landscape)
» an examination of West Cork and its attempts to surf the waves of globalization.

RURAL IRELAND 2025. FORESIGHT PERSPECTIVES
BY LIAM DOWNEY
ET AL. MAYNOOTH NUI & TEAGASC. 2005

This report is an academic/government report prepared by a team of writers specializing in the agri-food industry, the forestry and marine sectors, and rural economy in general. It is framed around a fore-sighting process which is a technique designed to illuminate the potential for multiple futures and will be interesting for many of our readers for the emphasis that is placed on the need to prioritise environmental issues. Although published in 2005, I have included it here as it parallels many of the themes addressed by the previous books, not only the high level of importance attached to environmental issues but also to poor leadership, the weakness in institutional structures, the competences of rural 'managers', and the need to implement agreed policy.



Foresight Perspectives looks at the current situation and 'do nothing' scenarios. Downey outlines a situation wherein 25% of the population is employed in agriculture and the building industry where contraction is expected, high levels of subsidies for agriculture will not continue and rising oil costs and limits on global warming emissions will also impact (although the impact of global warming itself is not discussed and may also be critical). He posits the view that in the future "Ireland will have essentially left agriculture and multinationals will have left Ireland". Meanwhile, Ireland's rural landscapes are being reshaped by changes in agriculture and the interface between urban and rural settlements are being subjected to unprecedented pressure leading to pressure on water resources and loss in water quality, deterioration of air quality, threats to biodiversity, undermining soil quality and difficulties in dealing with agrarian waste in areas of intensification.

Downey also slips in a notion dear to my own heart - that resources must be committed to conflict resolution, or the issues of balancing economic, social and environmental interests will be an impediment to growth. Conflict is a matter well covered in 'The Blame Game', 'Green Nation' and 'Land Matters', as described above.

One possible vision for Ireland is of an economy where the service sector will be the predominant driver of growth concentrated in urban areas, the manufacturing and exporting sector will still be important but with local trading companies in rural areas. Old economy enterprises can be upgraded but agriculture, forestry and marine are making an important contribution. In particular, there could be a vibrant BIO-ECONOMY with a sizable number of companies engaged in the balanced exploitation of natural resources in food, marine, forestry and the environment, leading to a more sustainable tourism industry.

There are many opportunities here. Irish farms tend to be small, therefore they are more in keeping with society's con-

RESEARCH ON THE DEMANDS FOR 'RURAL HOUSING' IN COUNTY CLARE (2002 – 2004) USING PRIMARY DATA FROM LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS OF AN TAISCE,

BY ANNY WISE. AVAILABLE ON THE AN TAISCE WEB SITE AND IN NUI GALWAY LIBRARY.

In this interesting piece of research we see some of the realities of a changing geography on the West coast of Ireland in County Clare.

Every day more applications for planning cross the desks at An Taisce Head Office and local associations. These very applications are also the vital primary research data used during a Master Degree in Rural Development at NUI Galway. Using 238 applications of 'rural housing' in County Clare (2002 – 2004), the opportunity was taken to discover the reality of the controversial subject of one-off development within the Irish countryside and the extent to which this should be allowed to interfere with heritage in Ireland.

Only the reasons for seeking permission to build a single dwelling in the countryside are discussed, and the heritage issues were not covered as yet.



An example of new housing in County Clare and Map of area cover by dissertation

A number of questions were posed on the sources and destinations of the new residents, the demand made for, or attractions of, rural housing, the profiles of the applicant and their commuting patterns.

Discussion is based on the findings of whether the increases in population were due to migration, how the public policy restrictions affected the demand made by the public, what the employment and commuting patterns were (if any) and the role of developers.

Many of the demands were expected, but there were a number of results that were a cause for concern if the present system is to be sustainable.

cern about industrialization of food production.

Ireland's livestock industry is grass-based, therefore perceived as wholesome and safe.

There is indeed a scientific reality to the value of our green image. But there are difficulties too. Inadequate provision of infrastructure to link people and business to centres of economic growth will inhibit the emergence of this vision. Degradation of rural and coastal landscapes is also most worrying, especially spread of one off rural holiday homes. The lack of knowledge base will need to be remedied and, most importantly, there is a failure to create institutional structures and governance systems with commitment of resources and capabilities.

> In the future "Ireland will have essentially left agriculture and multinationals will have left Ireland".

The vision inherent in this report is that 'knowledge' is the key to reconciling Europe's twin goals of competitiveness and sustainability. A number of initiatives are proposed.

1. Develop stronger government leadership by the establishment of a rural policy implementation group, which may raise environment issues to a pre-eminent position. There is a need to critically assess existing structures. The rhetoric of stated policy must be followed through with well-defined operational programmes to implement agreed policy. Procedures such as setting targets and performance indicators should be developed.

2. Develop an adequately funded Regional Innovation and Research System to support development of knowledge based rural economy.

3. Provide education and training to raise resource capabilities of rural business and rural populations generally. A key determinant of regional institutional capacity is the competencies of managers and their adaptability.

The report is full of facts and maps and makes for interesting reading. It is also interesting as an example of the 'Foresight Process' and Liam Downey is closely involved with the DIT based organisation 'The Futures Academy' headed by John Ratcliffe (www.dit.ie/futuresacademy). Readers may also like to look for 'Imagineering Ireland Future Scenarios for 2030', The Futures Academy, 2005.

An Taisce

Readers interested in these matters may also like to see the An Taisce document, Countryside Recreation Strategy. This was prepared in response to calls for submissions from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Although the An Taisce strategy is wide ranging, the initial request related to issues raised by farming communities regarding access to land and rights of way. As yet there have been no statements from the Department.
See the new An Taisce website www.antaisce.org

ENVIRONMENT IN FOCUS 2006

This is the third national report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designed to evaluate progress in meeting our legal obligations and outline key challenges remaining in the transport, industry, energy, agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors.

60 indicators are presented in the report. covering air, water waste, land-cover and biodiversity and 16 new indicators addressing areas of growing concern such as greenhouse gases and climate change, land use and transport.

Each indicator in the Report is accompanied by a brief comment, representing the actions required on that particular topic. In addition, at the end of each section, the key challenges for that sector have been outlined.

A hardcopy version of the Report, can be ordered from the Publications Office, McCumiskey House, Richview, Dublin 14 Tel. 01-2680100 and it is available to download from www.epa.ie go to 'our environment'.

FEASTA

A very interesting paper written last August by Richard Douthwaite and Emer Ó Siochrú for CORI, "The Economic Challenge of Sustainability", gives an overview of Feasta's ideas about economic growth, money systems, peak oil, and the need for a land value tax and for citizen carbon quotas.

It can be read on Feasta's website www.feasta.org

Feasta aims to identify the characteristics (economic, cultural and environmental) of a truly sustainable society, articulate how the necessary transition can be effected and promote the implementation of the measures required for this purpose.

FISHERIES PROTECTION GUIDELINES REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF FISHERIES HABITAT DURING CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT WORKS AT RIVER SITES,

by Donal Murphy

EASTERN REGIONAL
FISHERIES BOARD, 2006? 9PP.
INFO@FISHINGIRELAND.IE

This document was drawn to my attention when investigating a proposal to culvert a river to facilitate a large road around a housing estate in Co.Wicklow. It usefully lays out the responsibility of the Fisheries Board to conserve all freshwater fisheries and the legal protection given to fishery habitats under EU legislation.

The guidance notes aim to identify the likely impact on fisheries habitat in the course of construction and development work and to outline practical measures for the avoidance and mitigation of damage, including the banning of instream work between October and May.

THE NEW AN TAISCE WEB SITE

Sometimes it feels like technology changes so fast. Such is the way with Websites and Internet technology. New and innovative ways of exchanging information are coming along everyday.

An Taisce built its first Web site in (2001), at that time a Web site was much more like a book. Changing the information on it was difficult and cumbersome and orphan required somebody with experts skills. The idea of allowing the content of a site to evolve over time was a technology that had not yet emerged when we built our first site. Our new web site is very different, it is based on principle of a content management system. This type of site allows for a much more fluid and dynamic updating and sharing of information.

And so it is with the new an Taisce web site just launched. We have commissioned a completely new site framework based on a Content Management System (CMS) that will allow individual members to collaborate together on specific projects, over the Internet. The new site will allow An Taisce local association to set up their own local fully functioning web site, where they can carry local news, events, campaigns or just about anything they like to reflect what is happening locally, in each area. Training will be offered to any local associations wishing to set up their own site. Just contact us here at Tailors Hall Telephone 01 4541786

Hopefully one of the stimulating features we can create in the news site will be the creation of "Team Spaces". Team space will allow individuals throughout the country to work together as a team through the Internet. So for example, if An Taisce wishes to develop a policy or gather comments on a particular issue or campaign, but the individuals with the expertise are scattered around the country, the new Web site will provide a work environment in which this team can come together and share ideas, documents and files..

So watch this space and please do contact us if you would like to find out more.



HEALTH IMPACTS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT,

a review by Teresa Lavin et al. Institute of Public Health

2006. 30PP
ISBN 9542316-6-X

This is a summary document highlighting the many pathways through which the built environment may influence health. Thus in the section on design and maintenance it refers to the many reports that deal with how the design of hospitals may have an impact on patient outcomes, on staff performance and on safety. Good school design has been linked to educational attainment and many reports are referenced. Even the return of prominent, attractive staircases may encourage people to exercise with resulting health benefits and these reports are also referenced.

Topics range from indoor air pollution, temperature and humidity, to noise, light and safety. The chapter on public spaces lists over 30 reports relevant to the topic and issues around the consequences of inequality run throughout the paper.



A NATIONAL SOILS **DATABASE**

A national baseline database of soil geochemistry has been established by Teagasc at Johnston Castle. It includes maps of well-known elements like potassium, phosphorous and magnesium, as well as less- known elements like gallium, tungsten and vanadium.

This study also looked at the microbial populations of soils and could be used as a database on which future studies on the effects of issues such as global warming can be measured. In addition, this study has developed a National Soil Archive, comprising both soil samples and a nucleic acids archive, each of which represent a valuable resource for future soils research in Ireland.

"This database will be very beneficial to the EU Sewage Sludge Directive for soils. In the case of mercury, copper, zinc and lead, elevated levels were attributed to a varying combination of natural and anthropogenic effects including mining, industrial, land use and urban effects, while elevated levels of nickel and cadmium were predominantly related to underlying soil parent material."

"The National Soil Database will provide a starting point of reference in underpinning Ireland's response to European Directives. While the implementation of agricultural and environmental legislation is critical in achieving the sustainable management of soil, the benefits of disseminating the findings to a wide audience, and of generally raising awareness among stakeholders, such as land users, cannot be over emphasised," she adds.

The research was co-funded by Teagasc and the Environmental Protection Agency and information can be found on www.teagasc.ie

POLICY STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO NATIONAL ROADS

by the National Roads Authority

MAY 2006
WWW.NRA.IE

Fred Barry, the NRA chief Executive states in his forward that it is "incumbent on us to ensure that these roads will continue to serve their intended purpose of providing a safe efficient national transport network". The aim of the policy statement is to inform developers and decision makers of the principals guiding the authority's approach. The statement recommends the provision of services and rest areas every 50km. It also reiterates policy that:

1. new access points should not be permitted except where the speed limit is above 50 kph and that roadside development be controlled.
2. Development Plans should promote retail development where it is accessible by public transport and there should be a presumption against large centres adjacent to national roads and motorways.

The statement refers to article 29 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 which enable the NRA to make submissions to the planning authority in respect of planning applications to ensure that the property development doesn't contravene this policy. It states that the NRA will object to applications that would have unacceptable consequences for the capacity, operation, efficiency and safety of national roads or which relate to the location on the inter urban national roads, even where "this approach has implications for certain land owners". The NRA may look for conditions seeking the costs of appropriate upgrades to be met by the developer.

(NB An Taisce welcomes this statement and looks forward to seeing the NRA fulfilling this function.)

POWERDOWN

Rising energy prices and the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions bring us to a point where we need to completely rethink where our energy comes from and how we use it. We are entering a whole new era of "energy descent" but if we act decisively now this could lead to a healthier and more ethical way of life that values efficiency, community and sustainability.

The Cultivate centre has identified an opportunity to further sustainability using Oil Peak and Climate Change as a catalyst for change. Both these issues are receiving widespread media attention at the present time. This project will facilitate dialogue, action and learning within our communities by creating and delivering an education programme called the Powerdown Community Toolkit.

For information on the Cultivate's 'Powerdown' events, courses and toolkit see www.cultivate.ie or visit Cultivate - Sustainable Living & Learning Centre Essex Street West, Temple Bar, Dublin 8 Tel: 01 6745773 Tuesday 17th to Sunday 22nd April 2007 The Sustainable Living Festival _

Convergence, as it's name suggests, brings people together to share ideas and to explore the latest approaches to sustainable living. For this festival the focus will be on the issues of Peak Oil and Climate Change, and what communities can do to prepare themselves for the emerging energy crisis. With film screenings, lectures, workshops, conferences and celebrations Convergence is both inspiring and perhaps most importantly, great fun!

THE STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE ACT. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS 2006.

Our last magazine dealt in some depth with the Strategic Infrastructure Bill, which was passed through the Dail and enacted last year with little change. These are the regulations that implement the Act and amend earlier regulations that deal with Environmental Impact Assessment.

'SUSTAINABILITY'. IRELAND'S NEW MAGAZINE DEALING WITH ALL ISSUES PERTAINING TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability magazine has been borne out of the grave concerns shared by many of its contributors that we need to prepare for the impending chaos which the world will face as a result of resource depletion and permanent climate change. Produced on recycled or FSC certified paper with a heavy duty durable board cover, Sustainability is intended to be both a summary of where we are at in Ireland at the present time, and something of a signpost for ways in which we might successfully continue the project which we call 'civilisation'.



Our emphasis will be on hard information, practical solutions and good solid advice on how we, as individuals and collectively as a society, can get to grips with the serious environmental problems facing us and to help improve the outcome for future generations. Part of that strategy will entail maintaining a keen sense of humour in the face of adversity!

The first issue will be available from March 2007. Cover price is €5.00

Sustainability magazine will be on sale from a number of dedicated retail outlets and also can be obtained by post (6.00 inclusive of postage). Corrig, Sandyhill, Westport.Co. Mayo Tel. 098 26281
www.sustainability.ie
e-mail: info@sustasinability.ie

Leave a living LEGACY

The one thing that remains constant across all our lives is our environment. Since 1946 An Taisce has been to the fore in protecting Ireland's natural and built environment. From one generation to the next, protecting our environment is something that we must do now, for the future.

Would you consider leaving a gift in your will?
Planned giving or making a bequest or legacy is the most effective way to contribute to protecting the future for generations to come. There are a number of options that you can consider when leaving a gift to An Taisce.

Your gift could take any of the following forms:
A RESIDUAL BEQUEST: after making provisions for your family and friends, the balance of your belongings (legally referred to as your 'estate') is donated to An Taisce.
A PERCENTAGE OF YOUR ESTATE: where a specific percentage of your estate is left to An Taisce.
A PECUNIARY BEQUEST: where a specific sum of money is donated.
A SPECIFIC GIFT BEQUEST: referring to any non-cash items such as shares, property, jewellery, artwork, or other valuables, which can be given to An Taisce.
A LIFE INSURANCE/ASSURANCE POLICY.
A TRUST.





An Taisce is launching this legacy programme in the hope that you too can see the need for planned giving now. So that we can protect the future now.

This newsletter contains a copy of our full legacy brochure. If you have any questions or require further clarification please contact us in Tailors' Hall @ 01 707 7071 or email info@antaisce.org

Thank you. Together we can leave our children a living planet.

An Taisce

Tailor's Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8. - Tel: 01 454 1786. Fax: 01 453 3255.
Email: info@antaisce.org - Web: www.antaisce.org