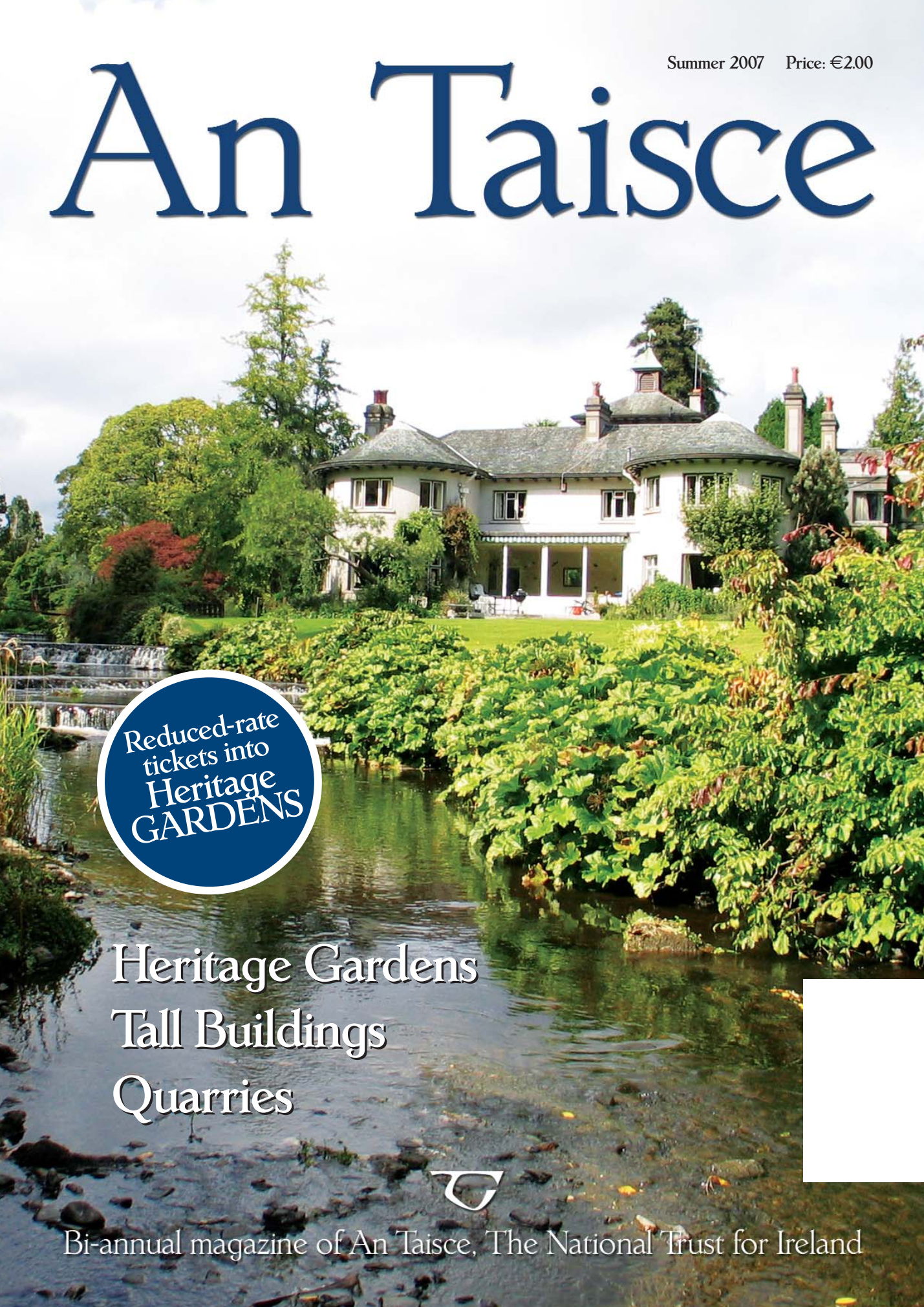
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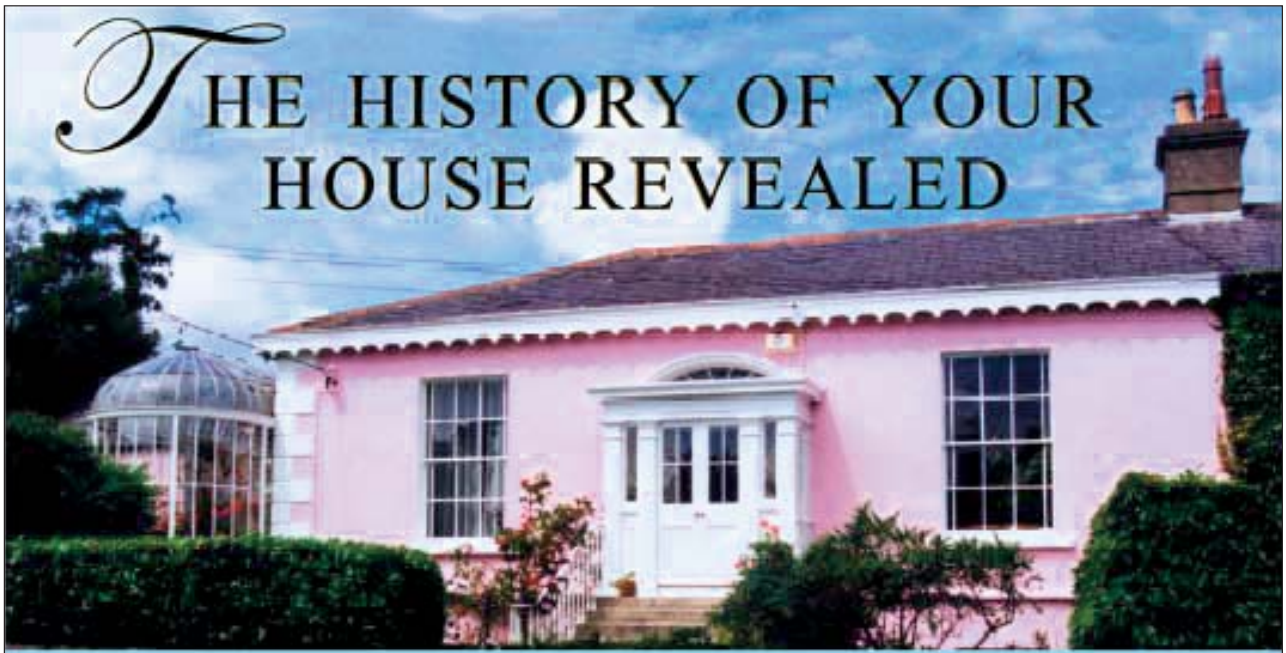


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EDITORIAL

JUDY OSBORNE

Whichever government is now in power, and whoever is now Minister for the Environment, we can be sure that the next decade will be quite different from the last. The pace of development has been frantic. The housing and commercial stock has doubled and unfortunately little of it is appropriate for the 21st century with inevitable global warming and high energy and resource costs. Leisure facilities have also multiplied. Hotels, Spas and golf courses have sought to take advantage of new found wealth and the beautiful settings provided by the Irish landscape – and ofcourse all requiring enormous supplies of sand, stone and cement. These are the issues covered in this magazine, together with interesting contributions on these topics from experts in Northern Ireland.

All this building activity has put great strain on An Taisce, who, like national and local government, has had to gear up to meet the challenge set out in our constitution *to promote the conservation, renewal and permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation, of land and buildings and other artefacts of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, technical or other relevant interest and, as far as practical, of nature and biodiversity.*

As Lloyd Praeger, our founder, said nearly 60 years ago, "these things of beauty or of human interest need protection against dilapidation, against injury, whether caused by carelessness, ignorance or ruthlessness, against sequestration for private ends, and in recent times often against the action of public bodies".

Whatever the government the problems seem to stay the same so we must be ready to respond. Hopefully many readers will make the trip to Galway on Saturday 23rd June for the AGM where everyone will have the chance to participate in preparing for the next big push towards more sustainable development.

AN TAISCE MAGAZINE SUMMER 2007

CONTENTS

4 **QUARRIES.** Just how bad is it? A report by Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer of An Taisce, on the planning status of quarries.

7 **ICF AND AN TAISCE WORK TOGETHER FOR BETTER QUARRIES.** By Liam Smyth from the Irish Concrete Federation.

9 **QUARRIES AND WATER.** By An Taisce Natural Heritage Officer, Anja Murray.

10 **OUR NATURE WITH AGGREGATES.** An article on the restoration of quarries by Laverne Bell, Biodiversity Officer, Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland.

12 **GARDENS AND PARKLAND.** An article on the impact of development on heritage sites around Ireland, by Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer An Taisce.

15 **PROTECTION OF HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS IN NORTHERN IRELAND.** By Terence Reeves-Smyth, Dept. of Environment Nothern Ireland.

24 **GREEN – SCHOOLS.** Travel programme and Education Department News.

22 **LOCAL ASSOCIATION NEWS.**

26 **AN TAISCE MEMBER** John Ducie is elected President of European Heritage Organisation.

27 **TALL BUILDINGS.** An Article by Kevin Duff, An Taisce Planning Officer for Dublin City.

29 **CLIMATE CHANGE AND TALL BUILDINGS.** By Sue Roaf

Front Cover: Mount Usher, Ashford, County Wicklow
A protected, private Country House and the Robinsonian style gardens, which are open to the public with concessionary rates for An Taisce members
Photo by Peter Sweetman. See page 20



Quarry on coastal SAC near Sneem, County Kerry

Quarries. JUST HOW BAD IS IT?

REPORT BY **IAN LUMLEY**



IAN LUMLEY

Well run and properly sited quarries or sandpits are of some importance to the local and national economy but they are by their nature, irreversible as they lead to the complete destruction of a site and they have a considerable impact on their surroundings .

The aim should be to minimise adverse effects on the environment and the local community but there are serious problems in achieving this aim.

Quarries are the single most problematic source of legal complaint by An Taisce to local authorities. The volume of complaints and the ineffective action taken in a number of counties, particularly Monaghan, Galway, Westmeath, Cork and Mayo highlight what is a national failure of environmental enforcement and the extent to which planning legislation is being subverted by systemic condition compliance breach and tolerance of unauthorised development.

THE LAW AND ENFORCEMENT

Quarries come under the control of the Planning Acts in the same way as buildings thus all quarries in existence at the date of the Local Government (Planning & Development Act) 1963 were deemed to have legal status. Only new quarries or extensions of an existing pre-1964 quarry unit require planning permission and in practice, massive unauthorised development was permitted to occur over ensuing decades (despite the ruling in the case of Kildare County Council versus Goode when the Supreme Court found that if a pre-64 quarry was left unworked for 5 years or more it lost its legal status and would need planning permission to recommence work.)

New legislation, introduced with the Planning and Development Act 2000, was to provide a proper national framework for the regulation of the quarry industry . Generally each site operator, including those purporting to be operating from before 1963, must now register. The next phase of the process is now proceeding and the local authority may attach conditions to the registration or may require the quarry operator to lodge a planning application and Environmental Impact Statements.

Such is the concern of local residents that almost all significant quarry applications are appealed to An Bord Pleanala.

Over the last two years An Taisce appealed local authority decisions to An Bord Pleanala for major new quarry developments in Co Tipperary and Co Leitrim, and for the extension of the Roadstone quarry at Blessington. These were then overturned by An Bord

Pleanala, however, given the political pressures to accommodate construction, the Board grants the overwhelming majority of planning permissions.

The conditions governing the operation of quarries are effectively determined by An Bord Pleanala but unfortunately planning permission conditions are simply not taken seriously by the industry. Nor has the Department of the Environment provided specific extra staff or budget to local authorities to deal with their new responsibilities and most are systemically deficient.

CONUNDRUMS

Despite the best efforts of An Taisce to lobby, the Department of Justice and the Garda have failed to introduce appropriate measures, restricting the licensing and permits for explosives and quarry sites to those which have legal and planning permission status. The result is that all across the country, the local Garda are actually granting permits and providing security for explosives to be delivered onto unauthorised or non-compliant sites.

Furthermore, most of the Environmental Impact Statements for inter-regional road schemes contain the assurance that any quarries used would have planning permission status but there is no clear vetting procedure in place. In the case of the N6 Kinnegad-Kilbeggan dual carriageway, its construction by contractors Ascon during 2005 and 2006, was characterised by large-scale use of unauthorised quarries and a general inefficiency and tardiness by Meath County Council in taking action.

Monaghan County Council continues to purchase from a major unauthorised quarry which their own planning department has ruled to be unauthorised in a Section 5 judgement

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEW REGULATIONS AND LICENSING

The nature and extent of unauthorised development condition breaches and unauthorised dumping which has occurred must undermine all confidence that the quarry industry in Ireland is being subject to appropriate regulation and environmental monitoring. Both, the immediate and long term costs of the operation of the industry including the condition of rural roads affected are not being faced up to. The following are preliminary recommendations:

› Guidelines for new and extended quarries need to address nature conservation, archaeological and architectural heritage and landscape designations and residential amenity. This should indicate appropriate and inappropriate locations for quarries

› A national registration and enforcement authority, given the failure of local authorities to exercise the responsibilities given to them;

› A permit system similar to that of the C2 held by building contractors and the imposition of an environmental levy on the operation of quarries to cover the funding for a national permit and enforcement inspectorate;

› The regular and at least quarterly inspection of all quarry sites to ensure authorised status and condition compliance;

› The issuing of a tax compliance form to quarry operators, confirming quarry and condition compliance, with a valid, up to date C2 being required to supply material to licensed hauliers; supply Public contracts and secure explosives licenses or permits;

› Ongoing development levies to reflect the real cost of upgrading , repair and maintenance impact on road haul routes

› A range of initiatives, should be introduced including rehabilitation cases, such as those being undertaken by the industry's counterpart in Northern Ireland to show that the end life of a quarry can achieve a positive impact. This is an area in particular, where An Taisce has offered involvement with partnership opportunities in appropriate locations.

ACTION!

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines on Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004,) seek to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the environment to achieve more sustainable aggregates development and restoration schemes,

The Guidelines cover every aspect of good management in quarries including screening, upgrading of local roads, restoration. An Taisce members concerned about local quarries should familiarise themselves with these guidelines (www.environ.ie) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines "Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non-Scheduled Minerals" (www.epa.ie)

Where aggregates are identified, submissions to draft County Development Plans should propose objectives in the Plan to protect residential amenities and landscape, the prevention of pollution and the safeguarding of aquifers and groundwater.

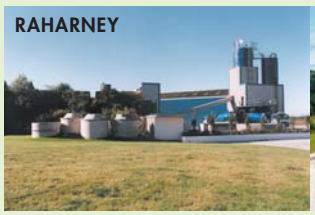


A quarry in Co. Monaghan

ICF Environmental Award Winners

In 1998, an Environmental Awards Competition was established to recognize outstanding commitment to environmental management and sustainable development. The following sites have received awards since then.

1998







1999









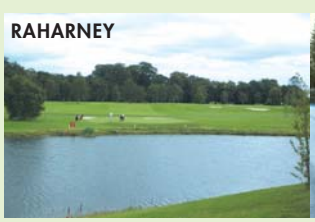
2001







2002











2004







2005







ICF and An Taisce work together for better quarries

25% OF DEMAND FOR AGGREGATES IS MET FROM UNAUTHORISED QUARRIES. BY LIAM SMYTH, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT MANAGER ICF.

The Irish Concrete Federation has been consulted by Government since the Federation's formation in 1994 and has played a key role in the development of Section 261, the Quarry Planning Guidelines of 2004 and the EPA Environmental Management Guidelines for the Extractive Industry of 2006. The Federation is also the only privately funded organisation to develop an Archaeological Code of Practice in association with the Department of the Environment which requires the employment of a full time archaeologist to protect the National Heritage.

However, the final wording of Section 261 was not as we would have wished and the potential dangers therein have now come to pass. Section 261 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, has been a disaster for many reasons. To begin with, approximately 1,400 validated registrations were received, instead of the estimated 400 bona fide site registrations expected by the ICF. As it is, ICF members only account for around 260 of the registered sites, despite accounting for 75% of production by volume and value; this means that the vast majority of registrations either were unauthorised operators or speculative opportunists seeking to achieve backdoor entry into this key industry. Nationally, the bona fides of most pre 63 sites have not been checked or challenged by planning authorities, nor will they be by An Bord Pleanala, effectively authorising 1,000 extra sites than could reasonable have been expected. It remains to be seen what conditions and effort will be used to control these "new" sites, each of them a far more serious threat to the environment than the largest professionally managed quarry.

Enforcement for the most part has been put on hold for the duration of the Registration process, leading to a situation where many "new" sites have begun or expanded production to ever larger volumes without investigation or action by the planning authorities. The planning system has been undermined and the rights of legitimate industry have been diluted and devalued.

The national demand for aggregates in 2006 was upwards of 150m tonnes, circa 33 tonnes per capita per annum and more than 4 times the EU average. This gives the reader a flavour of the pressure on the legitimate industry to provide vast volumes of essential raw materials and the need for the public, and society in general, to sustain and support professional, legitimate industry by providing access to the required resources through workable planning permissions. Currently, approximately 25% of demand is being sought from unauthorised sources; this is unacceptable both to the public and to the ICF.

The ICF is working hard to improve the standard of applications for extractive developments through better Environmental Impact Statements and better consultation with the public and prescribed bodies. Work is ongoing with a number of bodies, including the Heritage Council and the Geological survey Ireland (GSI), to produce agreed templates for reporting which should, in turn, lead to better informed and more robust decisions by planning authorities.

> "We welcome the openness and positive contributions of An Taisce to our work"

We welcome the openness and positive contributions of An Taisce to our work throughout 2006 and hope to build further on this mutually beneficial relationship. Let's be clear on one thing. There is no contradiction or difficulty in the professional, legitimate extractive industry working closely with environmental NGOs. Society's needs for aggregates must be met in a balanced, controlled and responsible manner. Both industry and NGOs must play their parts in achieving this.

Liam Smyth is also Vice-Chairman of European Aggregate Producers Association (UEPG) Environment Committee and Chair of the UEPG Task Force on Biodiversity.



Medieval enclosures conserved in Kildare



Visual mitigation of working quarry. Offally

Case Studies from An Taisce files



View of the rapidly extending extraction area at Clontibburt, County Monaghan.

1. TOONAGH, COUNTY CLARE

The Ryan Brothers' quarry at Toonagh, northwest of Ennis, was a relatively medium-sized quarry operating in 1964, within a small area. Subsequently acquired by Roadstone, it is now operating an area of 64Ha. Yet, examination of Land Registry has shown that the major part of its operating area was only acquired progressively during the 1970's, 80's and 90's, so that there is clearly no legal or planning permission basis to the massive extension beyond the pre-1964 area which occurred. The case, combined with the inaction of the local authority, is typical of many of the larger quarries across the country. Since the operator of a blatantly unauthorised quarry has been using a bogus 'pre-1964' claim to justify an unauthorised development.

2. CLONTIBBURT, COUNTY MONAGHAN

The earliest evidence of an operation of a quarry by John McQuaid at Clontibburt, Co Monaghan, was of a relatively small-scale operation, in 1967. Major land acquisition during the 1980's and particularly in the 1990's, resulted in a significant extension and intensification into a large-scale quarry operation through the early 2000's. In 2005, An Taisce sought a Section 5 reference under the Planning & Development Act, 2000, to establish whether the original or extended portion of the development was exempted development by reason of being able to demonstrate pre-1964 status. Neither Monaghan County Council nor the applicant were able to produce any evidence of pre-1964 status of any, let alone the entirety of the site, and issued a formal determination in May, 2005, that the entirety of the site was not exempted development was therefore, unauthorised. Notwithstanding this, the NRA and Monaghan County Council is continuing to buy what now amounts to half a million tonnes of material under a contract between Monaghan County Council, the National Roads Authority and Gamma, for the construction of the N2, Castleblayney-Clontibbret Road.

3. STRIPE, COUNTY MAYO

The largest single bogus 1964 quarry is the 180 acre site registered by Frank Harrington Ltd at Stripe to the west of Knock airport in County Mayo. There was an area of small-scale quarrying extraction at the east of the site, near the public road, pre-1964, but most of the land unit which comprises the current quarry area was acquired during the 1970's, 80's and 90's, as has been established through Land Registry research, including a huge area of extraction used for the construction of Knock airport. Such was the enthusiasm for the construction of the construction of this major State-funded project that nobody had any concern at the legal and planning permission status of the site. Since then, it has been massively and continuously intensified and an area indicated on the Public Sites & Monuments Registered Map as containing a wedge tomb, reference number ???, is now entirely destroyed by quarrying. Through quarrying extraction, massive crushing machines have now been installed on the site without planning permission basis.



Stripe, County Mayo. No planning permission on this 180 acre site which includes a wedge tomb listed on the public sites and monuments Register



A quarry in Co.Offally

Does quarrying affect water quality?

REPORT BY **ANJA MURRAY**

The Water Framework Directive now puts obligations on Ireland to prevent any deterioration of water quality, and to reach at least 'good status' for all water by 2015. All activities that impact water quality are to be included in this more holistic approach to the aquatic environment. As water quality and water dependant habitats are frequently impacted greatly by quarrying activities, An Taisce are pressing to include aquatic impacts from quarrying within this framework of action.



Anja Murray

GROUNDWATER AND AQUIFERS

Groundwater is often negatively impacted in large scale quarrying activities. Pollution arising from the quarry itself, such as dust or other contaminants can enter exposed ground water. Topsoil, glacial material, sand and gravel deposits often act as a filter for water entering aquifers. When these layers are removed, the filtering capacity is also removed, making the groundwater more susceptible to pollutants. This is of particular relevance where this ground water is subsequently used as a source of drinking water.

Excavation to a depth lower than the top of the ground water table will often result in an overall lowering of the water table, which can cause wells in the vicinity to dry up and the flow from groundwater to springs and rivers reduced.

One such incident was reported in the national media in April from a major quarry operation near Monasterevin in County Kildare. Wells in the locality have lowered and supplies to local homes affected due to huge quantities of water being pumped out from a near-

by quarry. Attention was not drawn to this lowering of the water table by environmental or water monitoring, but by complaints from affected local residents.

RIVERS AND LAKES

Discharges from quarrying often go straight in to the nearest stream or river, with untold consequence for aquatic life within. Fine particles of soil or rock dust and other sediment from quarrying operations, while they may seem inoffensive, cause great damage to aquatic life once in a stream or river. Suspended sediment clouds the water reducing light availability for organisms in the river bed, and when settled on the river or lake bed, will cover the river or lake bottom with a layer of sediment, making it impossible, for example, for invertebrates to feed or fish to spawn where they may otherwise do so.

An Taisce are pressing to include aquatic impacts from quarrying within this framework of action

Serious and ongoing concerns exist about damage to the River Nore Natura 2000 nature conservation site from a large quarry near Freshford in Kilkenny, beside the River Nore. Overall water quality may be seriously degraded, and the many rare freshwater animals that live in this river damaged, including populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The pearl mussel is rare species facing extinction throughout its range, for which Ireland is the last remaining stronghold in Europe.

An illegal quarry has been in operation on the banks of the River Boyne near Dunmoe for several years, with sediment runoff damaging aquatic life in the River Boyne, a protected River. Media coverage and Local Authority pressure have not yet succeeded in closing down this illegal operation.

In regulated operations, settlement lagoons are often used to settle out such sediment from water pumped out of the quarry bottom. However this pumped out water can become contaminated from, for example, oil pollution leaked from machinery in the quarry, again contaminating the aquatic environment.

WATER DEPENDANT HABITATS

Wetland habitats such as fens and marshes can be drastically impacted by a even a slight lowering of the water table. Many of these are small wetland areas where impacts go un-noticed until it is too late, when species have become locally extinct.

Many of these impacts can be prevented by careful planning and sensitive location of quarries, and by implementation of appropriately designed controls and sensible sighting of silt traps, buffer zones, and prevention of groundwater exposure and contamination. It is however, not possible to implement any form of control when a huge proportion of quarries currently operating in this country are either illegal or unregulated.



Lafarge Cement's proposals for the re-use of the old Magheramorne Works and Quarry site 22 miles north of Belfast as submitted for planning permission last May. The 153 hectare site is planned to be Ireland's foremost eco-friendly development, including a 450 dwelling One Planet Living harbour village, a world cycling centre for mountain bikers, an All-Ireland diving centre, international film and television studios, ecological areas and a heritage railway centre. For more details go to www.magworks.info.

Our Nature with Aggregates

QUARRY OWNERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND INCREASE ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

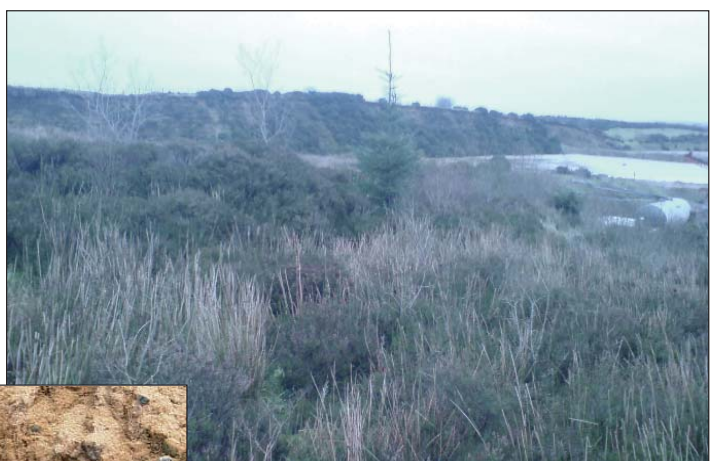
REPORT BY **LAVERNE BELL**



Laverne Bell

Biodiversity management is good business practice, making a real commitment to sustainable development in an industry that produces around 24 million tonnes of aggregates per year. As land managers, the industry has significant control over biodiversity and in Northern Ireland the sector is already taking numerous steps to reduce negative impacts and increase action for biodiversity.

The Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) is taking a lead role in promoting biodiversity and geodiversity action plans. A wide range of organisations and individuals are engaged to ensure nationally and locally important species and habitats are conserved and enhanced. QPANI member companies are getting involved in projects, integrating biodiversity into their environmental management systems and restorations plans. The greatest scope for achieving long term benefits and making positive contributions to government biodiversity targets is through site restoration. Past extraction sites have resulted in the development of some excellent wildlife habitats, either through planned restoration or through being left to natural processes alone. Future restoration of aggregate sites should be visionary, allowing planners, operating companies and nature conservation organisations to act together to achieve habitat creation on as large a scale as possible, integrating the needs of wildlife and people to maximise benefits for both. Local landscape character and physical conditions will play an important part in the design of the scheme.



Area of reclaimed land a Draperstown Pit returned to heathland through natural regeneration. Vegetation cover comprises of sphagnum mosses, heather, bilberry and cotton grasses. Management advice has been taken to control the colonisation of birch and spruce on the habitat.



Sand martins are attracted to quarries and sand pits where stockpiled faces provide suitable nesting habitat.

AGGREGATE WORKINGS PROVIDE IDEAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR HABITAT CREATION

Progressive restoration and landscaping is continually being achieved at Creagh Concrete Products Ltd sand pit, Draperstown, Co. Londonderry. The landscape is characterised by a mosaic of acid grasslands and upland heathland dominated by common heather. This habitat has been declining in Northern Ireland, partly through reclamation to pastures, but also through overgrazing resulting to loss of heather cover. Areas of moorland and heathland are being recreated through natural regeneration and exposed vertical banks of sand are used by breeding sand martins in March through to September making the site valuable for wildlife in the interim. Bare and sparsely vegetated ground is host to specialist early pioneer species of plants, invertebrates and birds. Other species noted by the Pit Manager includes the Irish Hare (an all-Ireland Biodiversity Action Plan Species) which occurs on a range of habitats including the moorland frequenting the sand pit. Such species will benefit from the habitat restoration plans.

For more information please refer to our website: www.qpani.org

Footnote

Laverne Bell joined the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI) in 2005 as their Biodiversity/ Geodiversity Officer. Her work takes a lead role in promoting, facilitating and delivering biodiversity by developing a Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plan for

Parklands and GARDENS

DEVELOPMENT FUELLED BY HOTEL AND TOURISM ACCOMMODATION TAX SCHEMES IS CURRENTLY AFFECTING SOME OF IRELAND'S MOST SENSITIVE COUNTRY HOUSE LANDSCAPES AND GARDENS

REPORT BY **IAN LUMLEY**

For much of the 20th century, the story of the Irish country house and estate was one of neglect and decay. Now the remaining properties are lucrative property development opportunities. This is because estates are means of developing large amounts of housing on unzoned land where permission would not otherwise be achievable without dressing it up as a tourism and golf resort.

Over the last few years, the tax incentive scheme has affected at least 30 significant country house and landscapes. These are now at various stages of development, including Dunboyne Castle, Co Meath; Carriglass Manor, Co Longford; Farnham, Co Cavan; and New Forest, Co Westmeath.

At a positive level, the new county estate projects are providing high quality tourist accommodation in the





midlands, or in counties like Leitrim, Roscommon and Cavan, where this was seriously lacking. The future of important country houses is being secured for hotel use, with an ancillary benefit of good public access to gardens and parklands and opportunity to appreciate interiors. In many cases, high quality work has been done in the restoration of historic walled gardens and landscaping and planting . The architectural and design quality of some of the new developments such as the Radisson Hotel in the Farnham estate in Cavan and associated new housing is very good. The increasing marketing of country house estates as spa and relaxation as well as golf resorts is highlighting their important role in health and outdoor recreation.

The standard of refurbishment of country houses for hotel use is now generally very good. The restoration of Carton House is exemplary, as is the re-roofing of the fire-gutted shell of Kileen Castle in Co Meath. The regret is that the integrity of the landscape setting of both locations is ruined by the design and location of golf courses and new housing.

It is not sufficiently recognised that the settings of the major Irish country houses are major works of landscape art and design, using the pictorial and compositional principles that applied during the mid-18th century and mid-19th century. A landscape setting of a country house is an integral part of its importance and value. Regrettably, some of the major and indeed most internationally significant Irish country house landscapes have been irrevocably damaged by the inappropriately located golf courses.

EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION

Each Party undertakes:
a) to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
b) to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of the specific measures set out in Article 6;
c) to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies mentioned in paragraph b) above;
d) to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.'

INTERNTIONAL OBLIGATIONS

The major weakness under Irish planning law and policy is that there is no specific protection for historic gardens and demesnes reflecting Ireland's international obligation under the Council of Europe European Landscape Convention.

Fingal Co Co has dealt with this by designating a number of the more important demesnes as Architectural Conservation Areas under architectural heritage protection legislation in the Planning and Development Act

Ardgillan Castle (photos by John Ducie)



Powerscourt. View across golf course to front of house

2000, but this practice has not been followed by other local authorities. Without implementing this Convention, it is difficult to argue against golf courses and other inappropriate developments.

An Bord Pleanala has never refused permission for putting a golf course in a country house parkland and only three cases for hotels were ever refused.

› While an application for a major hotel at Powerscourt, Co Wicklow was refused, the development was built on the basis of an earlier permission.

› The hotel element of the scheme for Whitfield, Co Waterford was refused, allowing a less intrusive scheme to de submitted.

› Also refused was a hotel at Borrmount on the River Slayney in Co Wexford.

› In a number of cases, An Bord Pleanala has substantially reduced the number of housing units affecting walled gardens or historic demesnes, such as the Island in Waterford City and Kilronan Castle in Co Roscommon.

› It was regrettable that permission was granted by An Bord Pleanala for the extension at Luttrelstown Castle, notwithstanding the appeal from both the Department of the Environment, as well as An Taisce.

AN TAISCE'S CONTRIBUTION

An Taisce monitors planning applications on a national basis and has the advice of an expert Historic Gardens Committee which meets regularly. Recognising that An Bord Pleanala has never refused the principle of turning a country house landscape into a golf resort, the approach taken by An Taisce has been a tactical one of damage limitation and minimising the impact on the immediate landscape setting of the main house, as was achieved in one of the most recent decisions at Kinsealy, the Haughey residence in Dublin Fingal.

In the case of Lough Rynn, Co Leitrim, there has been wholesale breach of planning permission conditions with regard to ecology and removal and destruction of lake land and wetland areas. In this instance, An Taisce made a legal complaint to the European Commission and action is being taken by the Commission against Ireland.

It is essential that the Landscape Convention is implemented and An Taisce's Landscape and Gardens Committee lobbies for this wherever possible.

The Inventory of Historic Gardens & Designed Landscapes

This database includes over 6,000 records of historic gardens and designed landscapes in an on-line searchable inventory. Each Site was identified using the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1833-46) maps and is compared with current aerial photography to assess the level of survival and change. The maps and aerial photographs are included with each entry, together with a survey of features and general notes. The website also has an interesting short history of the development of gardens in Ireland, from the Anglo-Norman demesnes which are particular to Ireland, through the flourish of garden design in the 18th and 19th centuries, to modern day developments.The stated objective of this survey is to begin a process of understanding of the extent of Ireland's historic gardens and designed landscape. See www.buildingsofireland.ie

DOES YOUR DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTAIN SUITABLE SAFEGUARDS FOR GARDENS?

The statutory Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Section 3.3.2) state that *Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) legislation may be used to protect 'designed landscapes where these contain groups of structures as in, for example, urban parks, the former demesne of country houses and groupings of archaeological or industrial remains...'.*

So, for example the Meath County Development Plan states that *'the Planning Authority recognises the landscape and historical importance of traditional and historic gardens, demesnes and parks within Meath and that they are often the important setting of a Protected Structure.'*

'It is a policy of the council to co-operate with the Department of the Environment and other interested parties to facilitate the protection, promotion and enhancement of heritage gardens and parks in the county and will support public awareness, enjoyment of and access to these sites.'

The Plan specifically states that *'Development proposals on sites in the vicinity of an Architectural Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can clearly be demonstrated that the development will not materially affect the character or the integrity of the Area.'*



Heywood Garden, County Laois. (photo by John Ducie)

The Meath Plan also promises *'to assess the surviving demesnes within Meath and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural, while allowing for appropriate re-use.'*

Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens in Northern Ireland

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PARKS, GARDENS AND DEMESNES. BY TERENCE REEVES-SMYTH



Terence Reeves-Smyth

It is now over fifteen years since a planning policy was put in place in Northern Ireland to give protection to historic parks and gardens of special historic interest. Inevitably, there have been teething problems, and many refinements are still needed, but the policy has to-date been an undoubted success. Not only has it helped to safeguard the specific qualities, character and integrity of these sites against inappropriate development, but it has helped focus attention on this highly valued part of our heritage.

The establishment of what is officially known as the 'Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes' in Northern Ireland, followed the example already set in England, Wales and Scotland, where similar registers had been created in the 1980s. These had been set up in response to the increasing pressure of rural development which emerged during the 1970s, particularly in southern England. Golf course development in particular was proving a major threat and many particularly fine examples of landscape parks - Rococo, Brownian, Picturesque, Gardenesque and other forms, were being irretrievably destroyed to accommodate the little white ball.

An important milestone, not just in Great Britain, but throughout Europe, came in 1981 with the Florence Charter, agreed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). It emphasised the pressing need for each nation to identify, list and protect their best historic parks and gardens. A few years later a register of historic parks and gardens was started in England (empowered by the National Heritage Act of 1983), followed by Scotland in 1988.



Mount Stewart gardens and Lake , photo by Terence Reeves-Smyth

Although inclusion of sites on these registers brought no additional statutory controls, it ensured that impacts on historic garden and designed landscapes were included as a material consideration in determining planning proposals.

In Northern Ireland the first move to protect historic parks and gardens came in 1993 with the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland. This was followed in 1999 with the publication of Planning Policy Statement 6, which specifies that historic parks and gardens included on a register should be a material consideration in the determination of planning. Its policy statement is quite explicit:

'The Department will not normally permit development which would lead to the loss of, or cause harm to, the character, principal components or setting of parks, gardens and demesnes of special historic interest'.

The role of compiling this register and advising the planners belongs to Built Heritage (Environment and Heritage Service, DOENI) in Belfast. They are fortunate in possessing a systematic scholarly database of over 700 sites known as the 'Heritage Gardens Inventory', compiled in 1989-92 by Belinda Jupp On the basis of set criteria, over 150 of these sites have been carefully selected from this archive to be included on the register. These are included in local government plans as they are published, while both the full register and the inventory are published on the EHS website (www.ehsni.gov.uk). Work is currently underway reviewing the register and expanding entry texts for printed publication..

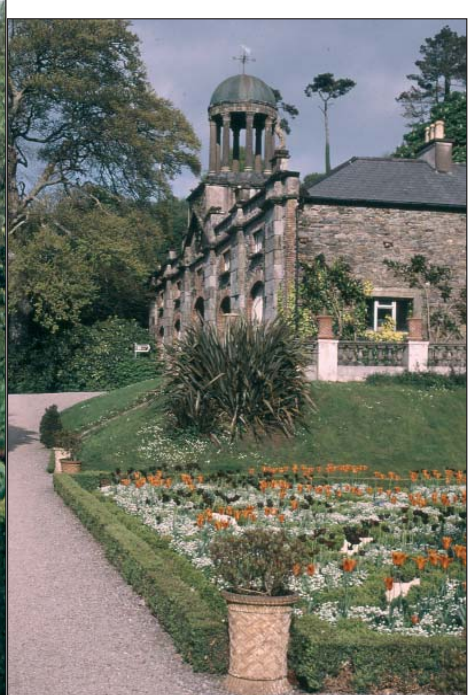
> The Department of Agriculture has included a 'Parkland' component in its Countryside Management Scheme, with over 140 owners in Northern Ireland taking advantage of its generous provisions,

Planning policy can protect the physical attributes of a site, but it is more difficult to safeguard the trees, though in recent years Planning Service have been applying blanket Tree Preservation Orders to sites on the register. To encourage owners to maintain and where necessary replant their parkland trees, clumps and screens, the Department of Agriculture, with advice from Built Heritage, has included a 'Parkland' component in its Countryside Management Scheme. This has proved enormously successful with over 140 owners having now taken advantage of its generous provisions, thus ensuring that historic parklands will remain a striking and attractive feature of Ulster's countryside for years to come.

TERENCE REEVES-SMYTH is an architectural historian and archaeologist with Built Heritage: Environment and Heritage Service (DOENI). He lectures widely and has published many articles and books on gardens, architecture and archaeology.

Rowallane & Bantry Gardens. photos by Terence Reeves-Smyth





An Taisce's contribution to conserving Ireland's garden heritage

BY JOHN DUCIE. CHAIRMAN, HERITAGE GARDENS & DESIGNED LANDSCAPES COMMITTEE

An Taisce has a proud history of working for the conservation of Irelands Heritage Gardens and Designed landscapes stretching back to the early 1970's and beyond. The Heritage Gardens and Designed Landscapes Committee monitors developments as well as undertaking education and awareness raising projects. Notable early achievements are the International Council On Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) lists of heritage gardens and the compilation and publication of the "Census Catalogue of Trees and Shrubs Cultivated in Ireland" through a bursary organised by An Taisce in the 1980's and funded by The Heritage Trust. This work was carried out by Dr Mary Forrest of UCD a current member of the committee. The committee has always been aware that the raising of public knowledge of this part of Ireland's heritage was the key to its protection and conservation. To this end it has organised exhibitions of images of Irish gardens and public lecture tours as well as pressing for protection under planning law. As a result of the work of the committee The Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Scheme was set up with Bord Failte granting £5 million for the restoration of 26 heritage gardens now open to the public. The Committee was also instrumental along with the Heritage Council and others in getting the National Inventory Architectural History to carry out the National Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Strong links are also being developed in Europe and on 9th November 2007 a major public seminar will be held at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin to highlight the need for public policy initiatives to protect the rapidly diminishing stock of reasonably intact designed landscapes from inappropriate development.



Temple of the winds

Preliminary notice
9th November 2007

A major public seminar will be held at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin. Further information will be available from An Taisce HQ (01 454 1786) nearer the time.

Members of the Heritage Gardens and Designed Landscapes Committee meet monthly at the Botany Building Trinity College Dublin.

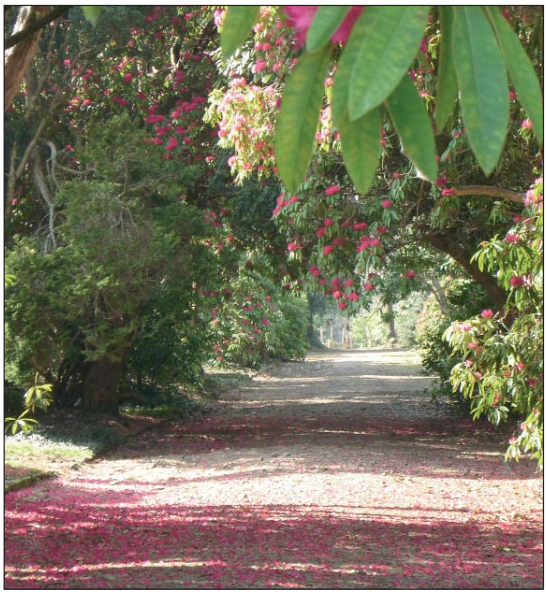
Chair: John Ducie, (Horticulturist, Landscape Designer, Garden Historian). Vice Chair: Kevin Mulligan (An Taisce Meath, Architectural Historian), Secretary: Anne Carter, (Ulster Museum, Northern Ireland Heritage Gardens Committee). Members: Mary Davies (Irish Garden Magazine and RIA), Dr. Mary Forrest, (Lecturer UCD, Horticulturist), Rebecca Jeffers (Consultant on Heritage Gardens) Terence Reeve- Smith, (Garden and Architectural Historian, DoE NI), Donough Cahill (IGS Deputy Director), Desmond Fitzgerald (Knight of Glin. Art Historian, Landscape Historian), Dr. David Jeffery, (Prof, Emeritus Botany. TCD) Ian Lumley, Heritage Officer, An Taisce

ACTION!

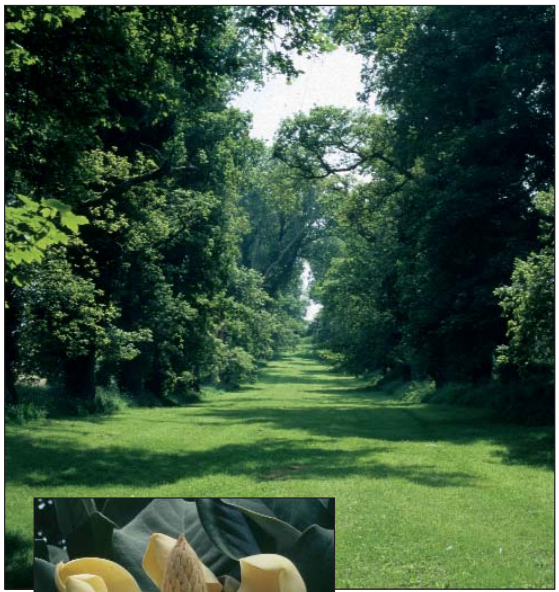
Environmentally Friendly Gardening.
Water Conservation.

An interesting and helpful 4 page leaflet on how to make a difference, issued by ENFO and the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland.

Available from ENFO by post *See back page*



Arboreum rhododendrons in the broadwalk at Kilmacurragh, planted by Janet Acton in the 1860s.





The oak avenue at Kilmacurragh – the finest oak avenue in Ireland.

Kilmacurragh. Wicklow's Botanic Garden

A HERITAGE GARDEN REBORN, BY PHILIP QUESTED. KILMACURRAGH GUIDE.

Thomas and Janet Acton, with the help and guidance of Dr David Moore, curator of the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin, began a fabulous collection of trees and flowering shrubs here in the 1850s. Today the National Botanic Gardens is has begun a new phase of unique and exciting plant collecting. We have a heritage garden with an important collection of Chinese, Himalayan and temperate South American plants. A century ago Kilmacurragh was considered the finest private collection in Ireland.

The house dates from the 1690s, built by Thomas Acton, whose father had been granted the land by Cromwell, in the Queen Anne style. It is an early example of an Irish house that was not built as a defensive structure. An early 18th century landscape park was planted around it – an oak avenue and a yew walk remain - and a deerpark established outside that. Unfortunately the house is currently in ruins.

Thomas Acton (1826-1908) and his sister Janet (1824-1906) were both keen and well-travelled horticulturalists. At this time the world was opening up - plant-hunters were able to explore new territory, and send rare and exciting seeds back to the Botanic Gardens at Kew, Edinburgh and Glasnevin, and also to commercial nurseries. Plants discovered or introduced by Sir Joseph Hooker, Augustine Henry, William Lobb and Ernest 'Chinese' Wilson are well represented in Kilmacurragh. Many of these plants, especially calcifuges, were raised in Glasnevin but planted here, so today we are maintaining a historic link.

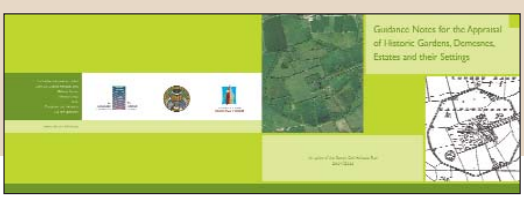
Head gardener Seamus O'Brien has been on several plant-collecting expeditions to China and our new planting scheme includes many of his introductions and re-introductions, but they are laid out in phyto-geographic areas, with, for example, Chinese plants all in the same part of the garden, instead of arranging the plants in family groups.

Kilmacurragh Arboretum, Co Wicklow. Free guided walks take place every day at 12 and 3pm until November. Tel. 0404 48844. See www.botanicgardens.ie

BOOKS

Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesnes, Estates and their Settings. Cork County Heritage Unit, 2007. This beautifully illustrated publication from Cork Heritage Office provides guidelines on how to identify and assess a heritage garden or landscape, how to assess a development proposal and what appropriate mitigation and management measures might be proposed. This will be a useful tool for members wishing to protect gardens in their own areas.

Cork County Council Heritage Unit. Millview House, Victoria Cross, Cork. Tel 021 481 8000 www.corkcoco.ie/heritage



The Walled Gardens of Donegal

THE WALLED GARDEN PROJECT INITIATED IN DONEGAL IN 2003 BY THE LOCAL AN TAISCE ASSOCIATION IS NOW ALMOST COMPLETED. THE AIM WAS TO REVIEW THE HISTORY OF THIS PART OF OUR HERITAGE, TO VISIT GARDENS AND DISCUSS THEIR PRESERVATION.

REPORT BY **MAY MCCLINTOCK**

In the Victorian era it was estimated that Donegal had 300 walled gardens, which evolved in the eighteenth century with the arrival of landlords and the building of the 'big house'. The gardens were mainly utilitarian and located out of sight of the owners, keeping services and servants out view. In many instances the Big House is gone although one can still locate the walled garden in the midst of thick undergrowth. According to historical records wide axial paths and several subsidiary ones quartered square or rectangular gardens. The outer paths were flanked by herbaceous perennials and backed by espalier fruit trees. On the south facing walls peaches and apricots were grown, apples and pears on east and west and morello cherries on the north-facing wall. Even though the walls are now crumbling it is possible to find many varieties of fruit trees and flowers no longer available in garden centres. Grisellini and box hedges once a feature, have grown to the height of the deciduous trees that were planted outside the walls as shelterbelts. The remains of the glass houses and the machinery used to heat them are now broken and covered in rust.

Many of these estates have passed into State ownership. We arrived just in time to see the remains of the gardens at Lough Eske Castle and Rockhill Demesne, Letterkenny, now owned by Coillte. Both gardens are being demolished. At Gartan the Donegal VEC bulldozed the big house into the nearby lake. Camlin Castle at Ballyshanna was razed to the ground by the ESB to provide space for the dams at Cathleen Falls, but the water never reached as far as the Castle and the walled garden, still in tact, is now used by the owner as a pasture for young bulls.

Many of the walled gardens we found at Church of Ireland Rectories are now in private ownership and mainly well maintained. There are still beautifully tended gardens in Donegal and a delight to visit. It is interesting to note that the owners are members of An Taisce who gave us a warm welcome. Twenty garden owners have now got together and formed a Donegal Garden Trail.

May McClintock, Current chairwoman on the Donegal local Association and member since the 1970.

BOOKS



Terrace Garden, formed in the 1850's by Pierce Butler Head Gardener. Circular Seat and Conservatory were by Turner, In the Restoration both are replaced exactly at a cost in excess of E250,000. Photo from Lawrence Collection..



The sunken Winter Gardens of 4 panels was designed by Charles McDonald in 1860-1865 and will be restored exactly as original. Photo from Lawrence Collection..

The Story of Woodstock in Inistioge: the families, the Fortunes and the fate of a great Kilkenny Estate and it's Restored Gardens
By Ton Whyte. 352 pages, with 15 pages of colour photos, 75 b&w photos; E21.99 plus p&p. To be launched 30th.September 2007.

This book tells the story of the Tighe family, particularly of their legacy at Woodstock, Co.Kilkenny. The Tighe dynasty was founded by Richard Tighe who came to Dublin from Leicestershire in 1640, and his great grandson, William (1710-1766) built the fine Rossanagh mansion in Wicklow in 1743-4. William, the son, became Master of the Rossanagh estate in 1788, but left there three years later to take over at Woodstock. In 1793 he made a most advantageous marriage to Marianne Gahan whose vast inheritance restored the fortunes of Woodstock. It was during this time that the Arboretum was planted. After Woodstock passed to Edward Tighe (1862-1917) the family suffered many tragedies causing them to leave in 1912. Edward was murdered in London in 1917, and the house remained vacant until it was burned by the IRA in 1922. For the next 80 years there was vast deterioration of the gardens. Since 1999, Kilkenny County Council and Bord Failte with 75% EU funding, are returning the Gardens to their former glory. To date 3 million Euros has been spent.
Enquiries & sales: whytetom@eircom.net Tel 01 282 0747.

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Donation to Management Costs

THE OLD COURTHOUSE
Howth, Co Dublin
Near the Dart Station opposite the harbour
Open all year round by appointment
Admission Free, except on special occasions

THE TAILORS GUILDHALL
Back Lane, Dublin 8
Office Hours (9:30am to 5pm)
The National Headquarters of An Taisce
Open all year by appointment
Admission Free

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct, An Taisce accepts no liability for errors or omissions. Please check opening dates and times before visiting the properties and remember to take your membership card..

Join An Taisce and get reduced entrance fees to heritage properties

NO OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANISATION IN IRELAND CAN OFFER ITS MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY OF NOT ONLY REDUCED ENTRANCE FEES TO HERITAGE IN IRELAND BUT ALSO TO HERITAGE PROPERTIES HELD BY OTHER NATIONAL TRUSTS AROUND THE WORLD THROUGH THE 'RECIPROCAL RIGHTS AND CONCESSION CARD SCHEME'. IN ADDITION, THE SCHEME ENABLE MEMBERS TO GET INVOLVED IN THE MANY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES WHICH NATIONAL TRUSTS HOST.

The aim of reciprocal rights is to enable members to act as ambassadors for An Taisce, to engage with the large heritage conservation family in the cross pollination of ideas and environmental management, and to return enriched by their experience with new ideas for Ireland.

The global network of National Trusts includes over 120 countries, with an estimated membership of 20 million people. Whilst each Trust is structured on the same three pillars - that is "heritage ownership and management, environmental education and advocacy" - each country takes a different emphasis to achieve the goals to conserve national heritage for their respective peoples.

One of the issues that combines these three pillars and plays to the strengths of this National Trust global network, is sustainable tourism. The global network has a vast number of properties, which attract large numbers of visitors each year. They are tactile examples of our unique and shared heritage, creating a source of education and providing references for sustainable development.

Members need a signed, annual and numbered membership card. As many countries do not a have a family membership system like An Taisce, each card may, in many instances, only admit one person. The card will entitle members to concession on entrance fees, often free entrance, as well as admission to other activities organised by the trust e.g. teddy-bears picnic, lectures etc.

An Taisce also has agreements with National Trusts around the world including the National Trust for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the Netherlands, Italy, Slovakia, Malta, Zimbabwe and Australia and other members of ENNHO, the European Network of National Heritage Organisations.

Further information about membership is on the web site antaisce.org or ring 01 454 1786

Membership Form

About An Taisce...

An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland, is a heritage and environmental group set up in 1948 to promote and monitor heritage protection. It articulates public concerns on quality of life issues, notably in the planning and development arena, and holds property in trust for the people of Ireland.

An Taisce's aims include:

To educate, inform and lead public opinion, and advocate and influence environmental policy, at European, national and local levels. An Taisce's aims are delivered through environmental education programmes in schools; participation in local and strategic planning, management of its gifted properties, and by responding to public concerns.

Benefits of An Taisce membership include:

- Bi-annual magazine for members
- Full-time staff to provide advice and information
- A channel for your environmental/heritage concerns
- Lectures, talks and slide-shows at venues around the country, with our local associations
- Trips to sites of heritage and cultural interest, with our local associations
- Workshops and conferences
- Access to An Taisce trust properties
- Reciprocal access to national trust properties in 33 countries around the world.

Become a member of An Taisce

You can join An Taisce through your Local Association or through Head Office or through the website. Contact the office on (01) 454 1786 or go to www.antaisce.org.

Application form for Individual/Family Membership:

Name: _____

Additional family members' name(s):
(please include date of birth if under 18)

_____

Address: _____

_____

Tel: _____ E-mail: _____

I enclose a cheque/postal order* made payable to An Taisce for individual/family membership (delete as appropriate).

€35.00 for individual _____
€45.00 for family _____
€12.00 for retired/unwaged _____
€7.00 for student _____
Donation to An Taisce environmental fund _____
Total _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Please return to:
An Taisce, The Tailors' Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8.
*If you would prefer to pay by credit card, please phone An Taisce office on (01) 454 1786 or visit the website (www.antaisce.org).

Give a gift of An Taisce membership in 2007

AN TAISCE MEMBER ELECTED PRESIDENT OF EUROPEAN HERITAGE ORGANISATION

John Ducie, former vice-chairman of An Taisce and current Council Member was elected to be President of the European Network of National Heritage Organisations (ENNHO). The General Assembly took place at the European Exchange Programme, held in Swords, County Dublin in October 2006 attended by 37 organisations from 17 countries.

This comes at a particularly exciting time due to the European Commission recognising the important role of cultural heritage in European integration, and the establishment of structures at a world level by National Trusts in response to the threat of climate change and globalisation.

John now explains what ENNHO is about and his role as President.



John Ducie

WHAT IS ENNHO?

ENNHO established in 1999 is an independent, not-for-profit network of European Heritage Organisations dedicated to the conservation and access to cultural and natural heritage. The network currently consists of 62 organisations from 27 European countries. These include, National Trusts, other NGO heritage organisations and state heritage agencies

WHY IS ENNHO IMPORTANT?

ENNHO was established to support permanent mutual exchange, education and partnership building between heritage conservation organisations in European countries. Its primary focus is practical exchange of information and expertise in order to strengthen each member's ability to conserve Europe's cultural and natural heritage. As a network, it is also concerned with advocacy and awareness rising at European level on behalf of all heritages.

HOW DOES ENNHO WORK?

Since the establishment of ENNHO, it has held seven European Exchange Programmes (EEP) in different countries, each adopting a particular theme. The objectives are to bring together the experiences of its members as conservation practitioners, property managers and organisational specialists.

For example; at the EEP held in Ireland in 2006,

'Sustainable Development: Reconciling Heritage Conservation with Prosperity'. The conclusions * provide the basis of a future declaration on sustainable development and heritage conservation - an issue at the heart of Europe's sustainability debate.

The delegates participated in specialised workshops on a wide range of heritage categories, each of which lead to recommendations for better conservation both in Irish and European terms. Delegates visited a number of heritage sites both in the Republic and the North as practical illustrations for their workshops.

The members also debated and adopted The Dublin Declaration for the harnessing of Cultural and Natural Heritage to Further Understanding and Collaboration Between Peoples. This will hopefully be of help to the hosts of the next EEP in Greece, which will attract delegates from across the Mediterranean confict zones.

ENNHO also organises ongoing education and awareness projects such as the recent ECHo Project which looked at the future of the country house in the 21st century. New projects are currently under discussion in other heritage areas.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS ENNHO PRESIDENT?

As president I am responsible and through me An Taisce, along with the secretary-general, based in Bratislava, Slovakia, for the day-to-day management of the network. Effectively I will be the public face of the organisation and represent it at European level e.g. to the Council of Europe and European Commission. Other engagements include visiting Sofia at the request of the Bulgarian Heritage Foundation, to help launch a fully fledged National Trust. Another tasks include involvement in the establishment of the European Chapter of the International National Trusts Organisation (INTO) and the development of the INTO constitution.

* Conclusions from the EEP in Ireland and The Dublin Declaration can be downloaded from the ENNHO website: www.ennho.org

John Ducie is chairman of the Heritage Gardens & Designed Landscapes Committee and has been a member of An Taisce since 1979. He has served on the council for the past ten years and has participated in many An Taisce committees He has been involved in many other conservation and environmental organisations.



The photo is of two more of our Burren Committee members – who are doing a grand job at coping with the hazel shrub!

THE CLARE ASSOCIATION

For many years now, the committee have been trying to think of ways in which a more positive viewpoint on An Taisce can be developed. It appears that, no matter what we might do, the impressions of the press and the general public are still similar to the developers and the politically motivated.

But, in fact, we have been more successful than normal this year, but, surprisingly enough, some of the support we experienced was in reaction to the negative reactions of others

We have, for years, been trying to run information evenings that have nothing to do with planning. In these meetings we explain some of the good things that An Taisce does. Last August, we held one during "Heritage Week" on "bats" and the overall impression we developed through doing this was very good indeed. We actually got press coverage with no mention of planning!

Secondly, we have for some time been supporting the "Green Flag Ceremonies" at local schools as well as at one regional meeting. To begin with there was either a lukewarm reaction and in one case our representative was ignored, but in others, where we were asked to give a talk, things worked out much better. This talk was designed for the children and we told them all about the different flags An Taisce is involved with and what they were all about. The talk also included the National Spring Clean that fits in so well with the Green Flag projects. Over the past year, apart from the children hearing about all our flags and spring clean, others hearing these talks included a Senator, the Deputy County Mayor, one or two TDs, several county councillors and they were both surprised and impressed. The next time we met they were friendlier and even congratulated us on our work.

We are also trying new things in fact this year we had a FAS work experience student come and help us with our statistics and are in the process of writing on article on some of findings.

There has been a growing support for our local volunteers by all sorts of members of the public and we have every intention of carrying on with this policy.

THE SOUTH KILDARE ASSOCIATION

The South Kildare Association played a leading part in An Bord Pleanala's oral hearing into Kildare County Council's application for confirmation of a Compulsory Purchase Order made by the Council in anticipation of the proposed Inner Relief Road for Athy. The oral hearing also heard the County Council's application for approval under the 1993 Roads Act of its proposed road development.

The Inner Relief Road as mooted by Kildare County Council was to run parallel to the existing main street and was to incorporate a bridge over the River Barrow and a drop lock and bridge on the Grand Canal. The approximately 1 km. long road was planned to cut across one of the finest public squares in the centre of Athy, Emily Square, and in doing so would skirt around the early 18th century Town Hall and the recently refurbished Courthouse.

The Association Chairman, Frank Taaffe, represented An Taisce and the Athy Urban Development Group at the five day hearing, which oddly enough

was held in the Stand House Hotel, The Curragh, approximately 16 miles from Athy. The choice of venue was the subject of a protest by An Taisce's Ian Lumley who claimed that other similar oral hearings throughout the country had been held in what he described as "not on public transport accessible routes".

The Inspector appointed by An Bord Pleanala to hold the enquiry was Mr. Dom Hegarty, a Chartered Town Planner and a Civil Engineer. Mr. Hegarty in his subsequent report recommended the approval of the C.P.O. and allowing the road development to proceed but An Bord Pleanala in a decision which received headline treatment in the Irish Times refused the County Council plan for the Inner Relief Road and at the same time annulled the C.P.O. made by the Council.

Kildare County Council subsequently sought through the High Court a Judicial Review of An Bord Pleanala's decision. This, as far as we are aware, was the first time for a local authority pursued to a conclusion a Judicial Review application in relation to a Planning Appeal Board decision. In any event the High Court refused the relief sought by Kildare County Council. Despite this the County Council continues to maintain its stance on the need for an Inner Relief Road, but in recent weeks it has announced its intention to proceed with an alternative Outer Relief Road.

The campaign against Kildare County Council's Inner Relief Road project has been ongoing for a long time and An Taisce's role in leading the townspeoples opposition to the planned road marks the high point of the local organisation's work in 2006."

SOUTH COUNTY DUBLIN

"The South County Dublin Association of An Taisce continues to be a very active organisation. Like many other branches we run a series of lectures each year, hold summer and Christmas parties and arrange a popular full day coach trip each spring.

In addition in recent years we have mounted a photographic exhibition during Heritage Week. Photographs are taken by members of the committee – all amateurs!- and are usually of topics in our area.

These topics have included "Granite", "Cottages", "Gate lodges", "Significant trees" and "Little Things mean a Lot". It is depressing to note how many subjects captured in these exhibitions have now vanished under new roads or apartment blocks or have disappeared due to natural causes like the lovely old walnut tree beside Marlay House. In an area undergoing astronomic change it is good to preserve a visual record of a more peaceful time.

Following each launch during Heritage Week, these exhibitions have been on display in many libraries in the Dublin area and beyond, sometimes touring for 2 years. Our latest exhibition "Little Things mean a Lot" evoked a very positive response from the public. Also we were very pleased to lend "Significant Trees" to be displayed in the County Hall in Dun Laoghaire during Trees Week this spring.

The theme for this year's exhibition is still under discussion but we are looking forward to exploring our area yet again looking for possible pictures. It is an enjoyable exercise and there are always discoveries to be made."

DONEGAL LOCAL ASSOCIATION

An Taisce North West in association with the Letterkenny Tidy Towns Committee will establish a butterfly garden on the site of the current Failte Ireland office on the outskirts of the town. A local designer and a team of gardeners plan to start work on this garden in June. Butterfly friendly plants will be donated by local members. Failte Ireland and the Tidy Town have given an undertaking to maintain the garden when completed. If this garden is a success An Taisce Donegal hopes to establish similar gardens in the county.

More news form the Donegal association – The current production of the "Treasures of Donegal" calendar is now underway. The committee have written and submitted 12 articles on the work of An Taisce in Donegal. They will appear every week over a 12 week period. The aim is to highlight, to educate and to raise awareness of our activities in the county.

THE NEW NATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

An environmental NGO perspective on a renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy is being prepared by the EENGO , that is the Environmental (Ecological) NGOs , which is a network of national environmental groups, supported by a secretariat, charged with sourcing funding from the DoE in support of its member groups.

An Editorial Committee comprises four people, who are members of EENGO member organizations: Frank Corcoran of An Taisce, Anthony Keane of Gluaiseacht, David Korowicz of Feasta, and Emer O'Siochrú of Feasta. Their role is to guide the development of the recommendations and to ensure that the voices of the EENGO membership are heard. Assisting them is an Editorial Coordinator, Devyn Olson-Sawyer, who coordinates the review process, including the online forum and workshops.

There will several opportunities to contribute to this process. Contact Devyn Olsen-Sawyer, the Editorial Co-ordinator at EENGO.NSP@gmail.com



Donegal Spring flowers in Leterkenny Town Park

Green-Schools, Stars Honoured

An Taisce's first ever awarded Green Schools were honoured on 4th October 2006 in association with Repak's Recycling Week. Cranford NS in Donegal and St. Michael's BNS in Galway City were presented with the Recycling School of the Year award by Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dick Roche, T.D., at a Black Tie Gala Dinner in the Four Seasons Hotel in Ballsbridge, Co. Dublin.

These two schools were the first in Ireland to be awarded the Green Flag by An Taisce in 1998. They have remained in the programme every since and have been awarded renewal flags every two years. In recognition of their outstanding long term commitment to the Green-Schools programme and their efforts in creating a sustainable school environment, particularly in relation to waste reduction, these schools have been selected as the "Repak, in association with An Taisce, Recycling Schools of the year".

Cranford NS in Donegal is a small two teacher school with 34 students. The Green Schools Coordinator Paula Martin together with John McLaughlin the principal and the school community have always focused on the importance of recycling. They recycle all their plastic, paper, cans, batteries, cartridges and stamps along with some clothing and Christmas cards.

St. Michaels BNS, Mervue in Galway is an urban school with 250 pupils and 14 teachers. This school is constantly active in the community and were filmed for an anti-litter video with Galway City Council in 2000. The original Green-Schools Coordinator Brendan O'Dwyer, along with the new coordinator Sarah Farragher and the principal Dan McEnerny lead the way in a school with a litter free policy where recycling habits have formed part of school life.

An Taisce congratulates both schools for their hard work over the last ten years and wish them continued success.



With Pat Oliver and Minister Roche are Suzanne Tinney of Donegal County Council and Brendan O'Dwyer and Sarah Farragher of St Michaels Boys National School in Galway.



An Taisce and Keep Wales Tidy organised a COAST CARE AWARE Seminar. This ph9oto shows breakout sessions in the National Museum Collins Barracks on 2nd march 2007. The well attended day covered marine litter, how to tackle dog fouling, oil spills, jet skis & noise pollution and volunteering.



The community group in the Ring became a Coastcare group under the An Taisce project. Currently there are 52 Coastcare Groups in the southeast of Ireland. They receive a Coastcare grant for clean up equipment, refreshments, tools, by the project. Here we also see Karolina Mazur from the Environment Section of Waterford County Council on the right.



Coiste Maisithe na Rinne is a grassroots community group comprised of all ages from 2 to 99 years who love the outdoors and the natural beauty of the Ring peninsula.
"Besides beach and car park clean ups, the group takes care of flower beds and plants bulbs, trees, and shrubs seasonally. Volunteers are always welcome, and it is a great way to meet new people!"



Green-Schools, Travel Art Competition Awards

Green-Schools, with the support of the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO), hosted an Award Ceremony for the winners of the Travel Art Competition in the Coach House, Dublin Castle on Friday 23rd March from 10am-12.15pm. The Minister for Transport, Mr. Martin Cullen TD, presented the awards at the ceremony which was also attended by An Taisce'S President Ms. Eanna Ni Lamhna. The Travel Art Competition was run as part of the Green-Schools Travel Pilot Programme, which is funded by the DTO. Green-Schools Travel is working with a total of 29 schools in the Greater Dublin Area over a two year period from August 2005-2007. This represents approximately 10,400 children and 545 teachers.

Schools were invited to interpret the positive and negative aspects of 'My Journey to School'. The 8 first prize winners received a new bike and safety gear, and the 8 second prize winners (runners up) received a walking pack, consisting of a backpack, a €50 voucher, a pedometer and a drinking bottle. In addition to these fantastic prizes the sixteen winning entries will be printed and distributed to other Green-Schools to help promote sustainable transport as part of the Travel theme. Mr. Martin Cullen, TD, Minister for Transport stated that; "The Green-Schools Programme encourages pupils to find more sustainable, eco-friendly and healthier ways of travelling to and from school. The particular initiative shown here today is proof of how simple changes can lead to a much healthier lifestyle and greater awareness of the environment. I applaud the pupils' efforts along with the encouragement from their teachers and parents, in helping to make the environment cleaner and healthier".

Ms. Patricia Oliver, Director of An Taisce's Environmental Education Unit, is delighted with the progress of participating schools; "Green-Schools are delighted to have the opportunity to showcase some of the fantastic art work produced by some of our most dedicated and environmentally-friendly schools. Travel is a very timely theme in the Green-Schools programme, as we are facing more traffic and congestion on our roads, as well as rising emissions from vehicles. Green-Schools have an impressive environmental record and we are confident that schools can make significant changes on the journey to school. Working with such committed students, teachers and parents gives me great hope for our future and that of future generations".

Some interesting facts related to school travel include:

› In 2002 42% of primary and secondary pupils were driven to school - that's 329,229 children travelling by car. Only 25% of pupils walked, and 2% cycled.

› There are now a million more vehicles on our roads than there was a decade ago.

› Transport emissions recorded in 2005 have increased by 160% on 1990 levels. (EPA)

› One in five Irish children is overweight and one in twenty is obese (Department of Health 2003). Inactivity in childhood can influence activity patterns in adulthood.

› Walking or cycling to school is a very effective way of increasing physical fitness, which can reduce the chance of heart disease, strokes, diabetes, obesity, cancer and depression in later life.

› The average school journey is within 1km, however this represents the most polluting journey for such a short distance.

PRIZE WINNERS:

Category	Winner	Runner Up
A	› Conor Murphy, Age 6, Caragh NS, Kildare › Helen De Búrcha, Age 7, Scoil Neasain, Baile Harmain	› Lucy Stack, Age 7, St. Laurence's NS, Greystones › Jack Grant, Age 7, St. Joseph's BNS, Terenure
B	› Amy Donnelly, Age 8, St Brigid's GNS, Cabinteely › Sophie Ormonde Cummings, Age 9, St. Joseph's NS, Templerainey, Arklow	› Beth Williams, Age 11, Rathmichael Parish School, Shankill › Ciara Jordan, Age 9, St. Brigid's GNS, Cabinteely
C	› Aisling Nolan, Age 12, Scoil Bhride Naofa, Kildare town › Adam Fitzsimons, Age12 Scoil Maelruan Snr, Tallaght	› Siobhan Woods, Age 12 Scoil Aine › Therese Nic Amrois Age 14 Colaiste Iosagain, Stigh Lorgan
D	› Emer Ni Cheallaigh Age 17 Colaiste Iosagain, Stigh Lorgan › Vicky Dowling Age 18 Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass	› Stephanie Allen Gibb Age 16 Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass › Katie Fennelly Age 16 Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass

Tall Buildings

By Kevin Duff, An Taisce Planning Officer for Dublin City

SUDDENLY, THE PRESSURE IS ON FOR HIGH BUILDINGS IN IRELAND. EVERY MAJOR DEVELOPMENT SITE SEEMS TO SEEK A 'LANDMARK ELEMENT' AS THE NEWLY-CONFIDENT 21ST CENTURY STATE RUSHES TO ASSERT ITSELF ON THE SKYLINE.



The tall building in Ireland has had a chequered history. There is no successful model for designers of new tall buildings to refer to. Therefore we must proceed with caution in reintroducing it, and clearly set out criteria for location, design and sustainability.

Why construct tall buildings?

The tall building can provide a developmental focal point in a flat urban landscape, the modern equivalent of a church spire. Used carefully, it can act as a landmark to navigate the increasingly complex city landscape, and provide views for those who live in and visit the city.

Location, location, location

The key to the siting of high buildings is location. It is widely accepted that the 4-5 storey scale of the



Above: Gnd canal basin 16-st photomontage. The picture shows what a 16-storey building by Shay Cleary architects currently under construction at the Grand Canal Basin, Pearse Street will look like when complete.
Right: Clarion Hotel Limerick.

historic cores of our cities should be protected, and that past mistakes in relation to high building siting should not be repeated. With a policy of limiting height in the inner-city cores, it is considered that there is scope for a limited number of strategically-located taller buildings in adjoining outer areas. However even the odd badly-sited high building can win its way into our affections, as Liberty Hall in Dublin has shown.

The DEGW Dublin Building Height Study

In 2000, the planning authority for Dublin City commissioned this study, in order to assist in determining its tall buildings strategy. The study identified parts of the Docklands as areas that had potential for taller buildings, and also the area around Heuston Station, because of its location beside one of the city's main transport hubs.

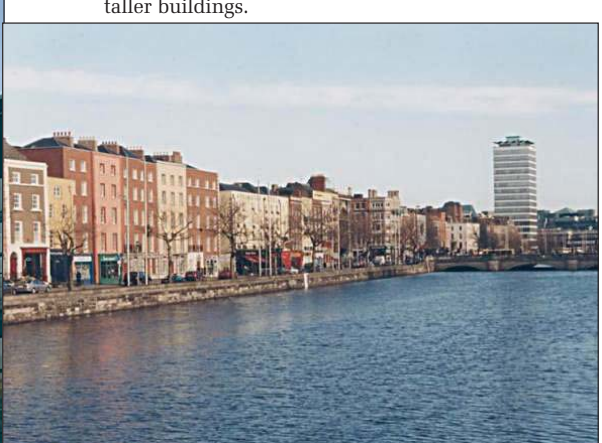
Dublin City Council has incorporated the recommendations of the DEGW Dublin Building Height Study into its current Development Plan, wherein it is stated that "The potential siting of higher building or high intensity clusters within the city will be planned using the principles and criteria enunciated in the study ".

Are high buildings needed to achieve high density?

There is a common belief that, in order to achieve high densities and curb sprawl, we must build tall. This argument is sometimes used by those who are hungry to see high buildings constructed in Ireland. In fact, high rise and high density are two different things. The original Ballymun scheme – with its towers and additional blocks set in open spaces – was high rise but low density.

Paris, at 8-9 storeys, manages 100 people per acre density within its peripherique – i.e. very high density. Amsterdam achieves high density in the form of terraced houses, rather than the apartment blocks one normally associates with this development model. Similarly, 4-storey Georgian Dublin is regarded as a model of sustainable, high-density development.

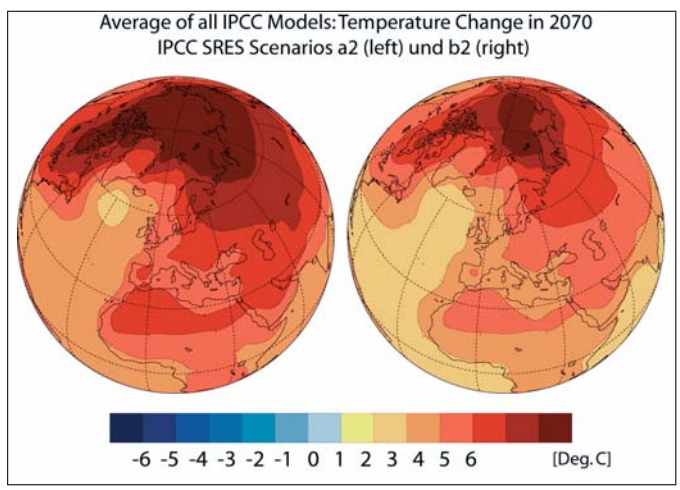
But while building taller doesn't automatically increase density, increasing density does require taller buildings.



"Liberty Hall. Despite its siting in a sensitive location on the Liffey beside the Custom House, it has won a place in the hearts of many Dubliners. The possibility of its redevelopment was aired recently. However its replacement with a taller structure - as mooted by its owners - is unlikely to be permitted in this location."

Tall Buildings & Climate Change

LETS PRETEND YOU ARE CHOOSING A NEW FLAT IN A CITY LOCATION. WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STOREYS THAT THAT BUILDING SHOULD BE IF YOU WANT TO REMAIN COMFORTABLE AND SAFE IN THAT BUILDING OVER TIME ? MY ADVICE TO YOU WOULD BE AS FOLLOWS: SIX. **BY SUE ROAF**



The world is getting warmer and 4th IPCC report published on the 6th April 2007 is much more alarming that the first three

On top of that oil will be really expensive by 2020 because we have now passed the peak of oil production for global supplies The last place in the world you want to be when the lights start going out in an extreme weather event like a violent storm or a heat wave is twenty stories up in a glass tower! I give a wide range of good reasons why we should never build Tall Buildings again in our book on 'Adapting Buildings and Cities for Climate Change' but the bottom line is that the cost of conventional energy will soar over time and glass towers are the most expensive buildings on earth to run with their lifts and the water pumping and the fact that they need much more heating and cooling being stuck up there exposed to the worst of the sun and the wind and the cold

The last place in the world you want to be when the lights start going out in an extreme weather event like a violent storm or a heat wave is twenty stories up in a glass tower!

Who knows what global economies will do in a fossil fuel challenged future, and you certainly cannot run a glass tower on renewable energy. The lights in

cities around the world are going off more commonly every year and you should choose a flat to which you can easily carry a bucket of water to and walk down from comfortably to do your shopping when the power in your neighbourhood does fail. And don't forget that the home should remain tolerably comfortable even in extreme weather when those lights do go out.

It is difficult to understand exactly how different the 21st century will be from the last hundred years but smart money wont go aloft in the future – not least because smart money does not want to live in a 'target building' since 9/11



Sue Roaf

If you were thinking of buying the 'full view' penthouse on the 40th storey of a new tower, with fixed windows and central air conditioning, do your children and your self a favour, think again, because it is likely to be a bad investment in the short, medium and long term too. Play safe, because you will need to in a rapidly changing 21st century.

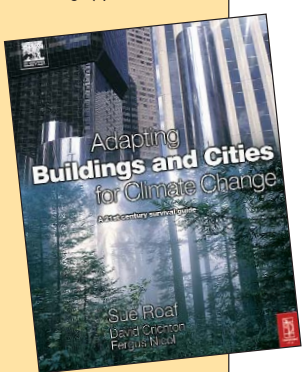
End note. Sue Roaf is currently Visiting Professor Arizona State University in the Departments of Architecture and the Global Institute of Sustainability and at the Open University. She is an author of numerous books and academic papers, an Oxford City Councillor in the UK and works with the Green Consultancy and the Carbon Trust,



Canning Town Tower is a proposed tall eco building by Ken Yeang architect.

BOOKS

ADAPTING BUILDINGS AND CITIES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE. A 21ST CENTURY SURVIVAL GUIDE, BY SUE ROAF.
This book is based on the premise that climate change is going to happen and its impacts on our lives are going to be far worse than generally expected. Sue Roaf (the author of the bestseller 'Ecohouse') this argues that many modern buildings are not only 'unsustainable' in themselves but are also having a catastrophic effect on the global climate. In a unique argument, she illustrates that the only way we can hope to survive the following century in tact is if we not only begin to radically reduce CO2 emissions from our buildings and stop building climatically disastrous building types but also build only the buildings that can survive in the changed climates of the future.



Throughout the book, traditional and modern building types are used to explain the history and impacts of climates past, present and future on buildings. Roaf also makes a list of recommendations based on the two scenarios of what actions should be taken by architects, planners and engineers as well as local and national governments, businesses and ordinary people in ensuring the true sustainable nature of the built environment.

Approved for planning permission in Ireland:
»A 32-storey residential tower near Heuston Station, Dublin, designed by Paul Keogh Architects
»A 32-storey tower at The Point, Dublin , to form part of the Harry Crosbie developed Point Village, with offices, apartments and roof-top bar, designed by Scott Tallon Walker
»A 24-storey building on the former MJ Flood site in Sandyford, Dublin 18

Refused planning permission:
»A 26-storey tower in Donnybrook, Dublin 4, proposed by Denis O'Brien and designed by deBlacam & Meagher architects
»A cluster of high buildings, the tallest being of 53 storeys, on Thomas Street in the Liberties, Dublin 8, proposed by developers Manor Park Homebuilders (planning authority decision appealed)
»A 25-storey building on the Tara Towers hotel site, Dublin 4, proposed by developers Bernard McNamara and Gerry O'Reilly (planning authority decision appealed)

Under construction:
»A 16-storey building by developers Treasury Holdings on the inner Grand Canal Basin, Pearse Street, Dublin 2, designed by Shay Cleary Architects
»A 17-storey residential tower at Eglinton Street , Cork, by developer O'Flynn Construction

Complete:
» A 17-storey hotel on a prominent site facing Shannon Bridge, Limerick

ACTION!

SUGGESTED TEXTS FOR YOUR DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

Where buildings of significant height are proposed, it is important that the following factors will be taken into consideration:

The quality of the overall design

The degree of overshadowing and consequent loss of light caused to surrounding property

The degree of overlooking (particularly of residential property) and consequent loss of privacy

The extent to which there is a disruption to the scale of an existing streetscape or landscape, save in cases where this may be intended for civic design reasons

The extent to which the building detracts from structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance or important landmarks

Any attractive views from significant vantage points that would be obscured or intruded upon by the building

The degree of obtrusion of the skyline, save for those in appropriately planned locations

The scale of the building in relation to surrounding open space, together with the effect of the building on the quality of the space

The avoidance of local, undesirable micro-climates at ground level

Criticisms of High Rise

Voices raised against the skyscraper include that of the architect and urbanist Constantine Doxiades (documented by Peter Blake in Form Follow Fiasco, 1974, page 82): "My greatest crime was the construction of high-rise buildings. The most successful cities of the past were those where people and buildings were in a certain balance with nature. But high-rise buildings work against nature, or, in modern terms, against the environment. High-rise buildings work against man himself, because they isolate him from others, and this isolation is an important factor in the rising crime rate. Children suffer even more because they lose their direct contacts with nature, and with other children. High-rise buildings work against society because they prevent the units of social importance – the family ... the neighborhood, etc. – from functioning as naturally and as normally as before. High-rise buildings work against networks of transportation, communication, and of utilities, since they lead to higher densities, to overloaded roads, to more extensive water supply systems – and, more importantly, because they form vertical networks which create many additional problems – crime being just one of them."

"We are convinced that the age of skyscrapers is at an end. It must now be considered an experimental building typology that has failed. We predict that no new megatowers will be built, and existing ones are destined to be dismantled"James Howard Kunstler and Nikos A. Salingaros



Cork County Hall

The Theory of the Urban Web

In a paper entitled "Theory of the Urban Web " published in the Journal of Urban Design (Volume 3, 1998, pages 53-71), Nikos A. Salingaros outlined structural principles for urban form. The processes that generate the urban web involve nodes, connections, and the principles of hierarchy. Among the theoretical results derived were multiple connectivity – in which a city needs to have alternative connections in order to stay healthy – and the avoidance of over concentration of nodes. When the second pathology occurs, such as in segregated use zoning, and in monofunctional megatowers, it kills the city by creating a mathematical singularity (where one or more quantities become extremely large or infinite). "Without a sufficient density and variety of nodes, functional paths (as opposed to unused ones that are purely decorative) can never form. Here we come up against the segregation and concentration of functions that has destroyed the urban web in our times. There are simply not enough different types of nodes in any homogeneous urban region to form a web".

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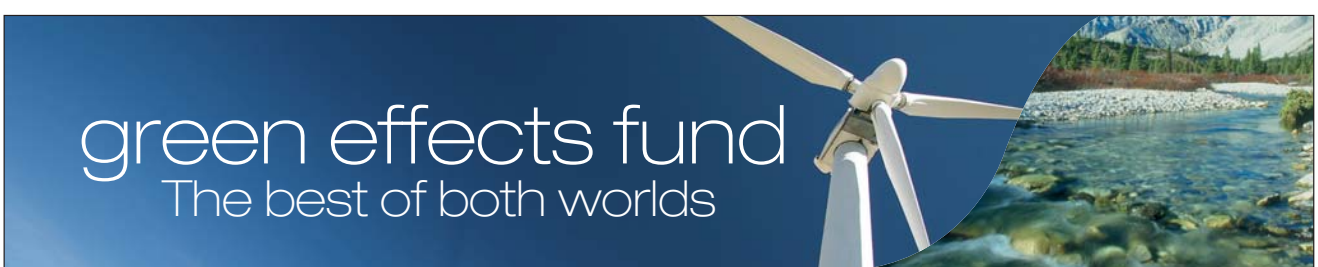
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