



An Taisce

The National Trust for Ireland

Annual Report 2012





Contents



A winning entry in the Green-Schools poster competition (© Green-Schools)



Dundalk Institute of Technology raise their Green Flag, November 2012

FRONT COVER PHOTOS
Clockwise from top left: One of the winning entries in the Green-Schools poster competition (© Green-Schools); An Taisce Green Communities visit to Julianstown Community Garden, County Meath. This style of planting is used where grassland is planted for potatoes, (© Robert Moss); Glasheen Boys National School held a walk to school day as part of Cork's Mix Your Mode initiative, (© Green-Schools); Shannon sunset, (© Michael John O'Mahony)

DESIGNER
Allister O'Brien
EDITOR
James Nix, with thanks to Camilla Tunney, Judy Osborne, James Leahy and the team at the Environmental Education Unit.
PRINTER
Anglo Printers

3 **President's Report**
Professor John Sweeney

4 **Chairman's Report**
John Harnett

5 **Honorary Secretary's Report**
James Leahy

6 **Treasurer's Report**
Stephen Ryan

7 **Built Environment Office**
Ian Lumley

10 **The Built Environment Committee**

10 **Environmental Education Unit**
Patricia Oliver

13 **Natural Environment Office**
Róisín Kearney

16 **Natural Environment Committee**
Dr Declan Murphy

17 **Properties**
Mairead Mehigan and John Harnett

18 **Monuments & Antiquities**
Dr Mark Clinton

19 **The Role of Local Associations**
Alan Moran

21-27 **Local Association Reports**
21 **Carlow Local Association** Alan Price
21 **Cork Local Association** Kevin Connolly
21 **Donegal Local Association** Noel Foley
22 **Dublin City Local Association** Claire Gogarty
22 **Dun Laoghaire Local Association** Mairead Mehigan
23 **Kilkenny Local Association** Dr Declan Murphy
24 **Kerry Local Association** Catherine McMullin
25 **South County Dublin Local Association** Sylvia Dockeray
26 **Westmeath Local Association** Jack O'Sullivan
27 **Wexford Local Association** Tim Ryan

28 **Officers of the Council/Board of Management**

President's Report

Professor John Sweeney



ONE of the most pleasant duties I had this year was to represent An Taisce at a Centennial Memorial Service and the unveiling of a plaque to Octavia Hill on the floor of Westminster Abbey, a lady to whom An Taisce, and indeed all National Trust Organisations, are most indebted. After several campaigns against the privatisation of common land and its closure to ordinary people, Octavia decided that a new approach was required, one which enabled land to be held in perpetuity for the general public. Together with two other similarly visionary individuals, Octavia Hill founded the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty in 1895. Like its Irish offshoot which emerged following World War II, its core purpose was 'looking after special places for ever for everyone'. It's a lovely mission statement which strikes a chord in all of us who cherish our rich built and natural environmental endowments.

In a lavish ceremony, almost 1,000 people entered the historic church through a guard of honour provided by National Trust volunteers. The service was conducted by the Dean of Westminster with organ music in from Bach, Mendelssohn and Elgar. The Lord Mayor of Westminster was received by the Director General of the National Trust, Dame Fiona Reynolds while the Chairman of the National Trust, Simon Jenkins, read some of Octavia's writings. One could not help but notice the contrast between the status and goodwill shown towards the National Trust, with its 4 million members and 67,000 volunteers, by both the establishment and general community, and the relative absence of the same for our own organisation in Ireland.

But while I left Westminster Abbey with a mixture of admiration and jealousy, I was greatly heartened by the continuing ability of our own National Trust to punch above its weight and resist the continuing onslaught from those who seek to disparage the organisation for their own purposes.

The past year has seen the Foundation for Environmental Education hold their General Assembly in Ireland. Some 80 delegates from 59 countries attended - partly to learn how to run an exemplary Green Schools programme. The year has seen the Clean Coasts, Green Homes and Blue Flag programmes continue to grow in prestige, together with several other schemes administered by the superb Education Unit. Back at HQ, the year has seen positive contributions to saving historic properties such as Aldborough House. Powerful statements on bad planning practices, fish discards, CAP reform, property taxes, the Climate Change Bill and several other topics were all carried in the national press, exerting pressure on the political canvass. A steady flow of educational publications continues to issue from the Natural Environment Office. The 13 properties held in trust by the organisation continue to be looked after as best as finances allow. The scrutiny of over a thousand planning applications by local branches and the Built Environment/Planning Office continues to throw up evidence of lessons not learned.



A successful FEE General Assembly was held in June in Dublin with more than 80 participants from 59 countries attending



Alborough House (© Kevin Duff)

We make no apology that those who make bad decisions on the built or natural environment have to be held to account. Without An Taisce's involvement the withdrawal of the Foreshore Licence for exploratory drilling in Dublin Bay would not have happened. Had an Taisce been listened to earlier, Ireland would also not have been subjected to the fines for deficient septic tank €1.5M (and €12,000 per day recurring) and environmental impact assessment legislation.

Yet while the role of An Taisce is not often acknowledged by many people in Ireland, the resilience of the organisation is to be admired. The year has seen a continued recovery from the dark days of late 2011. New vigour is apparent in several key appointments and the age profile of the committees and Council is slowly improving. It was sad to note the passing on of giants like Éamon de Buitléar and Kevin B Nowlan in early 2013. Both, I am sure, would be heartened to know that the values they stood for are still being pursued by a new generation in Tailors' Hall and in the various branches of An Taisce across Ireland. •

Chairman's Report

John Harnett



AS I write my report to you I realise that I have been Chair for 15 months. The movement of time – or the perception of time passing quickly - seems to happen at an accelerated rate when you are trying to get systems and structures in place. Now is a good time to take stock of how far along the road we are to achieving the goals described early last year.

In February 2012 my priorities were appointing a Director of Operations to provide for the efficient day-to-day running of An Taisce, ensuring that the financial position of An Taisce was on a positive course, and encouraging, communicating and working with Local Associations.

As you are no doubt all aware by now from his media appearances, James Nix was appointed Director of Policy & Operations in January 2013. This has led to a more structured operation of the organisation internally, while also providing a public spokesperson for us who hails from rural Ireland – Clare.

"We have much to learn from the jewel in our crown – the Education Unit of An Taisce."

There can be no doubt that our financial position is much improved with a surplus of 127,000 approximately before the write-off of the loan regarding Tailors' Hall Events Ltd is taken into account. This is not to say that we can be complacent going forward. We have a budget for 2013 and we must abide by it. Part of our financial prudence this year was to cease the hiring of Tailors' Hall as a venue due to sustained losses. This decision was taken by Council at my urging and was necessary to safeguard the future of An Taisce.

I believe that communication with, and activity within, our Local Associations has improved significantly. Dedicating time to Local Associations during Council plays an important role in this. Nevertheless, I spend a lot of time thinking about our Local Associations and the age profile of our members. Many people have remarked to me over the last months that we need a new cohort of young and driven members to achieve the environmental aims of An Taisce in the years to come.

I believe the best way forward is for Local Associations to focus on delivering nature walks, accompanied by competent individuals who can identify and explain the birds, plants, fish, trees and other wildlife we see as we step through our countryside, along our roads and streets, and in our parks. Nature is everywhere, sometimes neglected and unloved, banished to an untared edge of a car park. But nature is still there, protecting us, nourishing us, helping us to thrive and live, sometimes despite our actions that affect it harshly. A further option is to enhance the experience by asking an expert in local history to join the walk.

If we are to give An Taisce broader appeal, I believe that we must focus not only on what has been built by man but we must emphasise, and focus even stronger, our attention on the Natural Environment – hence my call for guided walks.

And continuing to focus on our natural environment, can I suggest to members and friends to avoid using neonictinoids in their gardens this year, in particular the pesticides linked to the decline of pollinators – imidacloprid, clothianidin and TMX. These neonictinoids are strongly linked through numerous research papers to the decline of pollinators including bumble bees, honey bees, butterflies, moths, hover-flies and other pollinators. (It is sad to see that on 15 March this year Ireland voted in the European Council against banning the use of these chemicals – but the issue is set to return, underlining our need to stay with it.)

I must also say that we have much to learn from the jewel in our crown – the Education Unit of An Taisce, which runs Green Schools, Clean Coasts, Blue Flags, Green Communities, Green Campus and other education programmes. Our education programmes have been exceptionally successful in getting individuals and groups to embrace key environmental messages. If we can transfer even an element of this skill base to our Local Associations then we will change things dramatically.

These are exciting times, with a host of very dedicated staff and volunteers that I am privileged to work with, that continue to make this organisation strong, vibrant and fearless.

See you out walking. •



Vital for food production, bee populations are coming under ever more pressure

Honorary Secretary's Report

James Leahy



LAST year's report detailed efforts to address the decline in An Taisce's membership, reform the membership systems, and tidy up the data in the database. These efforts were worthwhile, as the number of members in good standing increased by 60% in 2012.

In 2012 further work was done to:

- Set up emails that automatically forward up-to-date membership lists to local associations on the first of each month.
- Contact the local associations and update the lists of national and local association committees.
- Review and rationalise all @antaisce.org emails.
- Resume the practice of refunding 50% of membership subscriptions from new members to local associations.
- Redesign the forms and leaflets which are sent to members, including the application form, advertisement, properties list and local associations list.

Most of the administration and membership work has been carried out by volunteers. A special thanks should go to the interns: James Madden, Jane Pollock, Zoe Baker, Camilla Tunney, Tomás Bradley, Dave Whittle, Rebekah Lyons, Sarah Bethel, Dina Ryan, Feilim O'Connor, Matthew O'Connor; to the volunteers: John Harte and David Ryan, as well as the staff, board, council and local association committees.

Current projects for 2013 include:

- A new layout and graphic design for the website. Information will be simplified and arranged in four main sub-sites. There will be one for each of An Taisce's three main units: The Environmental Education Unit, An Taisce Advocacy, and National Trust for Ireland Properties. The main homepage site for An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland will then hold general information brought together by area and by theme. Much better use will be made of photos, maps and videos.
- A new online membership system will be set up using the www.CiviCRM.org system which is tailor-made for membership based non-governmental-organisations. It will allow members to login and update their membership details. Currently, most new An Taisce members are joining online. The new system should allow us to raise donations and membership using the internet and social media. Of course we won't forget existing members who will still be able to correspond by post.
- Continue to organise An Taisce's archives in Tailors' Hall and make our wealth of past publications more accessible to our members. A Dublin-based volunteer with basis computing skills would be welcome to help with this. •





Treasurer's Report

Stephen Ryan



THE theme of the Treasurer's report to Members for 2012 is consolidation – consolidation of our financial position, consolidation of our core activities and consolidation of our financial reporting for the year.

After the financial difficulties of 2011 I am in the happy position of being able to say that 2012 was a relatively boring financial year in An Taisce. Within the Advocacy unit, the three salaried staff together with the interns worked efficiently and were very frugal in their expenditure. It is a pleasure to be able to report a net surplus in the Advocacy and Properties units for the year of €38,642 as against a deficit of €15,830 in 2011. Income for the year was €284,693, with almost 50% of this coming from members. We were very grateful to receive two sizeable bequests totalling €38,681 which helped ease worries during the year. While being very conservative in our ambitions in 2012, we have consolidated our financial position and can begin to lift our heads up and plan some strategic initiatives for 2013.

"The theme of the 2012 Treasurer's Report is consolidation."

Regrettably the event management enterprise operated through Tailors Hall Events Ltd. (THEL) was not the success we had hoped for and after 18 months of a disappointing financial outturn, the Board and Council could not justify further draining the An Taisce resources and the decision was made to cease these activities. The operating loss for the 12 months was €29,556 bringing accumulated losses in THEL to €111,148 at that point. The Board of An Taisce took the view that THEL was unlikely to be in a position to repay the loan due to An Taisce within the foreseeable future and therefore have written the balance down by €91,624. For 2013 An Taisce will consolidate its efforts by focusing on its core Advocacy, Properties and Education units.



Balanced budget. (© adamsmith.org)

The Education Unit recorded a surplus of €128,580 in 2012 while managing 9 programmes, among them the very popular Green Schools and Clean Coasts. The total amount of funds which The Education Unit administered for those nine programmes was €3,485,442.

The 2012 accounts show the consolidated financial position of the Advocacy, Properties and Education Units and THEL. This is a departure from previous years. Reviewing the presentation of accounts in prior years, combined with the upcoming implementation of the Charities Act, the Board took the view that the accounts should offer greater information regarding the various activities within An Taisce. Accordingly this year we are disclosing more data on the respective units.

One of the challenges of such an approach is that the units plus the subsidiary are different business models. It is my hope that we have overcome that challenge with the set of accounts that will be laid before the AGM. Please note that in furtherance of our obligation to provide members with accounts in advance of the AGM we are offering a choice of delivery method to you. The full set of accounts is available to download at http://www.antaisce.org/2012Accounts. Any member who requires a set of the accounts in paper format posted out to them may contact the office at (01) 454 1786 giving their details and we will send them out.

The biggest challenge in preparing these accounts was in devising and agreeing a format which reflected that the Advocacy unit is relatively free to spend the funds it raises from members and external sources in pursuit of its governing mandate, whereas the funds received by the Education Unit are predominantly ring-fenced for specific programmes, are given to it with very strong binding conditions attached, and are not available to be used by either other programmes within the Education Unit or for broader Advocacy.

I would like to thank the bookkeepers for Advocacy/ Properties at the start of 2012, Caroline Mullett, and commencing in 2013, Ronan Murnaghan, for their hard work. In addition, particular thanks are due to Dawn Parkinson who served as bookkeeper for all three entities during the year and continues with the Education Unit. Her work in relation to Advocacy/ Properties and THEL is very much appreciated by me.

For personal and selfish reasons I will not be seeking re-election this year and would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support I have had from the Board of An Taisce. They are a great bunch of people who it has been a pleasure to work alongside and I can assure you that the fire that drives their commitment to the goals of An Taisce burns passionately. •

Built Environment Office

Ian Lumley



IN its submissions, key areas of focus for the Built Environment Unit include:

- Fostering healthy more socially cohesive and better connected communities
- Supporting local cooperative action in the transition to a low carbon future including food production, energy conservation and renewable energy, cycling and outdoor recreation.
- Protecting the irreplaceable asset value of the natural and cultural endowment

A major positive achievement for the last year has been the development of cycling routes on which An Taisce is receiving an increasing number of consultation requests both at pre-planning and at formal application stage. The Greenway created on the redundant Westport to Achill railway line has set a national example. The enhancement of school and commuter routes and the development of a national network using redundant railway lines, for example will have enormous multiple benefits – for health, recreation and the environment. A national strategy is required to ensure that investment resources are directed optimally and potential conflicts with bio-diversity are reconciled in route selection and design.

Energy

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has endorsed the finding of climate scientists that 80% of existing known fossil fuel reserves need to be kept in the ground to avert the tipping point of irreversible global warming.

Instead, the global fossil fuel industry is pushing environmental boundaries in seeking new sources. Ireland is now facing attention from international exploration companies seeking to open up the Shannon and Erne basins to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and the seas to deep oil and gas drilling. Much of the media attention has focused on proposed exploration off Dalkey - on which An Taisce took successful legal challenge in 2012 - with little media attention being given to areas of active new exploration on the Cork and Antrim coasts. While local environmental risks are of immediate concern to nearby communities, the real argument is much broader, and global: from a climate point of view, there is simply no justification for any further fossil fuel exploration.

The scale of decarbonisation of energy required is an immense challenge. Within a short number of years Ireland has been successful in increasing wind energy fourfold from 2005 levels to an installed capacity of over 2000MW to bring to 15% the amount of electricity generation by renewables. There is still a long way to meet the 2020 target of 40%. Better distribution is needed, including new transmission routes and interconnectivity to the UK. On top of this is whether Ireland becomes fully linked into a fully integrated EU grid in which power is exchanged – or if it simply becomes a provider of wind-generated electricity for the UK market.

Ireland, including its offshore territory, has major potential for renewable energy generation. This equally requires consideration and mitigation of environmental impacts for local communities most affected, including the current proposals for major wind energy export turbines in the midlands.

Meanwhile, the subsidy of inefficient and high carbon producing 3 peat power stations in the midlands continues. As Andrew Jackson told the UCC law conference in November 2012, the combined subsidy given for peat stations, at €40,600,000, is more than 100 times greater than the amount of money provided to all environmental NGOs in Ireland, €370,000 in 2012 – a sum which in turn is split between 32 different organisations.

"While local environmental risks are of immediate concern to nearby communities, the real argument is much broader – and global: from a climate point of view, there is simply no justification for any further exploration."

Despite this, Bord na Móna is proposing to extend the permitted operating period of the Edenderry power station beyond 2015, with a progressive increase in biomass burning from unspecified sources, including imported material, like palm kernels, which are already being combusted on the site. No carbon audits or analysis of the wider environmental consequences have been conducted.

A national programme on a scale of the rural electrification scheme of the 1950s is needed to make Irish houses more energy efficient through insulation and more carbon-efficient heating sources, eliminating the use of peat, coal and oil in home heating. Incentive schemes provided by Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland over the last few years have played their part in getting the market up on its feet but are not equal to the overall challenge. A full national scheme requires a special retrofit for low income households facing fuel poverty, instead of the current annual subsidy for inefficient use of fossil fuel. For households generally, a pay-as-you-save or bond scheme is required by which the householder would repay for works over a 10 - 15 year period while seeing the immediate benefit of annual energy cost reductions.



Proposed Liberty Hall redevelopment, granted permission by Dublin City Council but turned down by An Bord Pleanála on appeal from An Taisce and others

Instead, however, limited financial recourses are being expended on additional motorway dual carriageway development on which the major part of current government 'stimulus' package is being spent including the N17 / N18 Gort - Tuam proposal and an over-scaled N25 four-lane road south of New Ross.

Ill-considered spending decisions now will incur a severe cost in future years. April 2012 saw the publication of "State of the Nation", a report which focused on the cost of wayward development on the one hand and the relative performance of Ireland's councils on the other. In documenting how An Taisce has reduced the size of impaired loans (such as those transferred to NAMA) by at least €500m, the report received widespread coverage in the press, and after correcting for a spreadsheet glitch, continued to be the subject of print-media articles, including feature pieces in the *Irish Times* and *Village* magazine. Depending on resources, the publication of a further edition will be examined for April 2014.

50th anniversary of 1963 Planning Act

The year 2013 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1963 Planning Act which brought comprehensive regulation to development in modern Ireland. Yet it has left a legacy of car-based housing, both rural and urban, with poor access to schools and services, and urban centres declining because of pandering to out of town retail developers. The result is unquantified cost burdens in providing water and waste water facilities, as well as transport and services, particularly transport and services for older people.

Public perception of planning is marked by the conclusion of the 2012 Mahon Tribunal report: "corruption in Irish political life was both endemic and systemic" during the period under investigation. The tribunal's recommendation for a planning regulator to deal with land zoning is not being pursued with any real political vigour or sense of urgency.

Boom-time Ireland zoned enough land to accommodate nearly double the national population. Now dezoning is dominating the local authority development plan process. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government - whose regulatory failure caused of much of the problem is the first place - is now actively intervening in dezoning (such as Quin, Co Clare, for example), and to address ghost estates.

An Taisce continues to make constructive recommendations and critical submissions on development plans and individual planning applications. The extent to which local authorities disregard both their own development plans and national policy remains startling and reflected in continued planning appeals, with a very high proportion of local authority decisions overturned by An Bord Pleanála.

Update on planning and other consent applcations

Overall, the current number of planning applications is a fraction of the boom years. At the same time, a number of unwelcome trends are apparent. Planning applications for fast-food outlets and betting shops are extremely widespread, at the expense of a good variety of shops and services in towns and villages. One-off houses now dominate new applications in most counties with repeat applications in cases of previous (or multiple) refusals by both councils and An Bord Pleanála bedevilling the system.

"Despite the obvious retail decline of Ireland's town centres, permission for car-based retail with free parking continues to be granted to their detriment."

Major Dairy Plants In scale and environmental impact, the most significant planning applications of the last year were



Edenderry power station

for two international-scale powder milk processing plants, one for Glanbia at Waterford Port, and a 7-fold increase in capacity at Mallow for Dairygold, the latter under appeal by An Taisce and local residents. These are based on the State-supported dairy industry target of increasing milk yield by 50%, a target which has been put in place without assessing the impact on climate, land-use and slurry output. At the same time there is a new wave of applications for increased animal housing and slurry storage capacity.

Declining urban centres and car based retail The effect of undermining of historic Irish urban centres has been recognised with new tax incentives proposed for the refurbishment of older buildings in Limerick and Waterford as part of a pilot programme. Despite the obvious retail decline of Irish urban centres, permissions for car-based retail with free parking still continue, with An Taisce having taken appeals in Kildare and Navan and making submissions on other locations.

School transport planning It is welcome that major new schools are currently going through the planning process. Regrettably, Department of Transport and National Transport Authority guidance on reducing car use in school travel are not being followed in most cases by the professional consultants lodging applications.

Developments affecting National Monuments Local authorities are still not addressing the recommendations of the Department of Arts Heritage and Gaeltacht on applications affecting the setting of monuments. This is shown by two recent cases affecting the Boyne Valley World Heritage Site in Meath and Terryglass Castle in Co Tipperary.

Port Development The Department of Transport published a new policy on ports in March 2013 endorsing port expansion to serve cruise liners and energy projects. A major application for expansion for Galway port, primarily to accommodate cruise liners, is imminent. The State ports of Cork, Dublin and Shannon / Foynes are all preparing expansion proposals.

Quarries Applications with remedial Environmental Impact Statements and Natura Impact Statements are currently being lodged with An Bord Pleanála. These reveal the extent of non-complaint development which has occurred. Most cases are likely to result in consents from An Bord Pleanála with enforcement then passed back to the same local authorities, which presided over such multiple enforcement failures in the first place.

"The Mater hospital proposal would have been a 'dominant, visually, incongruous structure' with 'a profound negative impact on the appearance and visual amenity of the city skyline' of Dublin"

Significant An Bord Pleanála decisions An Bord Pleanála continues its mainly consistent role in upholding local authority development plans and national policy. This is obvious regarding building height and architectural heritage impact in Dublin, with refusals for an over-scaled paediatric hospital on the Mater site, a Liberty Hall 50% higher than the existing structure, and proposals to place additional floors on Canada House on St Stephens Green. The words of An Bord Pleanála on its February 2012 decision regarding the Mater plan are worth recalling: it would be a "dominant, visually, incongruous structure and would have a profound negative impact on the appearance and visual amenity of the city skyline".

A further major decision was the refusal of an artificial ski slope outside Dundalk. On the other hand, in granting permission for Phase 1 of the huge China trading hub outside Athlone, the appeals board followed the recommendation of its inspector that consideration of the sustainability of the project was outside its remit.

Dereliction and building abandonment

Dereliction and abandonment of buildings is a growing problem. Legislation protecting architectural heritage is proving ineffective in cases where planning permissions are not proceeding, and buildings are left inadequately secured, often with administrators or liquidators involved. Cases affecting sites of national importance include Aldborough house in Dublin, Whitfield Court in Co Waterford and Carriglass Manor, Co Longford. In the case of empty Protected Structures involving NAMA loans, the principle of releasing maintenance funding has been established in cases such as the former La Touche Hotel in Greystones. Limerick City Council has also taken an important initiative in taking ownership of the major city block encompassing the failed Opera Centre retail development.

An Taisce has released a photographic-based national database on Buildings at Risk, an inventory that is being augmented on an ongoing basis. More than 50 buildings in Limerick City are highlighted. Waterford, Dublin and Carrick-on-Suir are also well captured. Entries for all other city and county councils have been made, and this inventory is growing as images come in from members of An Taisce and the wider public. You are invited to submit additional entries through An Taisce's facebook page. •

The Built Environment Committee

THE Built Environment Committee met regularly through 2012, typically over lunch at Council meetings but, on some occasions, prior to the start of Council.

The Committee and its members have worked hard alongside the Built Environment Office, particularly regarding cycleway proposals, port development, housing and rural development.

In 2013 it was decided to hold stand-alone meetings of the committee with the lunchtime of council meetings retained for informal discussion. This approach is proving successful and March / April 2013 have seen the committee devote significant time to preparing a submission for the government-established Committee for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA). •

Environmental Education Unit

Patricia Oliver



Showcasing success

Anyone working with international partners in the past few years will have been familiar with the reaction of sympathetic looks and worried enquiries as to how things are going in Ireland. This is touching but it can be frustrating when you can point to success on many fronts.

So 2012 seemed like the perfect time to showcase Ireland's excellent performance to the other members of FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education), the international organisation with members in 65 countries worldwide which owns the International Blue Flag for Beaches; Green Schools (known internationally as Eco-Schools) as well as Green Key and other hugely successful environmental programmes.

"Suffice it to say we were successful and in June 2012 were able to welcome representatives from 59 countries throughout Europe, the Americas, China and Japan as well as South Africa and New Zealand."

Every two years FEE holds a General Assembly for all its members and the fact that 2012 was also the 25th anniversary of the Blue Flag meant that there would be some competition among countries to host the event. An Taisce, the Irish member of FEE, has hosted international meetings of Blue Flag and Eco-Schools in the past but never the larger General Assembly.

Suffice to say we were successful and in June 2012 were able to welcome representatives from 59 countries throughout Europe, the Americas, China and Japan as well as South Africa and New Zealand. As Ireland was one of the very early members of FEE which started in Europe, we greeted many old friends from the UK, Germany, France, Spain, Greece and Cyprus, the Netherlands and Scandinavia.



Students from Presentation Secondary School in Cork at the 2012 Green Flag Awards

The event was held over four days and the plan was to begin with a celebration of the Blue Flag Anniversary at Portmarnock which was flying the flag for Dublin Bay. Elaborate preparations were made with local community groups and the local authority for a big event on the beach but as the day drew nearer met weather forecasts sparked a last minute change from the beach to the Portmarnock Links Hotel where several hundred delegates and representatives of all local



Some of our youngest Green-Schools students being planting the Green-Schools Woodland

coastal authorities joined An Taisce President Professor John Sweeney and Chairman John Harnett in welcoming Minister for the Environment Phil Hogan to present the largest number of Blue Flags to Irish Beaches ever achieved. A special invitation to Northern Ireland Environment Minister Alex Attwood highlighted cross border collaboration. To claim it was the wettest day of the year would not be to exaggerate but that did not dim the enthusiasm of the visitors.

It was the beginning of a memorable general assembly which demonstrated Ireland's world class environmental education programmes and in the case of Green Campus, showed An Taisce's ability to be the innovator and best practice model for other countries. This has been demonstrated with a subsequent invitation from FEE Japan to join them on a tour of Japanese Local Authorities to "tell the story of Irish Green Schools" and a week-long visit from civil servants and teachers from Mongolia to see how we deliver the programme.

Amid all the plaudits, the Education Unit staff came in for extraordinary praise. All staff worked to deliver outstanding results and I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Assistant Dr. Michael-John O'Mahony, our Business Manager Dawn Parkinson and all 53 Education Unit staff for their outstanding work. I know they will agree with me that very special thanks are due to Annabel FitzGerald, our Coastal Programmes Manager, who undertook the planning and co-ordination of the whole event. Its success was definitely down to her ability to micro manage while at the same time bring everybody along with her. This is a view shared by the members of the Education Committee: Margaret Sweeney, Vice Chairperson, Norman Campion, Bernard Ryan, Kathleen Vandenberghe, Valerie Bond, Eileen Collins, Alison Carter and Jeanne Meldon under the Chairmanship of Charles Stanley Smith. Their commitment to An Taisce's Education Unit is invaluable.

Our Partners

The Environmental Education Unit operated 9 international and national programmes in 2012 in partnership with a number of Government Departments & Agencies (Department of Transport, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, Environmental Protection Agency, National Transport Authority, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Foreign Affairs), funding agencies and development companies (South & East Cork Area Development), commercial sponsors (Repak, Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland, The Wrigley Company, HSBC) and, of course, all Local Authorities.

National Spring Clean (www.nationalspringclean.org)

The use of online registration by volunteers for National Spring Clean certainly makes life easier and speeds up delivery of clean-up kits. The percentage of people registering online increased again in 2012 and this looks set to continue in 2013. There was still lots of work for volunteers, however, who came in to man the phones and while the number of registrations dipped slightly from the high of the previous year, over half a million people took part in more than five thousand events nationwide. Model and Clean Coast Ambassador Sarah McGovern brought glamour and publicity to many events around the country while working with local authorities and community groups.

Green-Schools & Green-Schools Travel (www.greenschoolsireland.org)

Participation in the Green-Schools programme has now reached a phenomenal 89% of all schools in the country, both Primary and Secondary. The roll out of the Biodiversity theme nationally led to enthusiastic responses from teachers and pupils in 2012 some claiming it is their favourite theme of all. The invitation from Japan was a wonderful opportunity for Birgit O'Driscoll, our Green Schools Officer in Cork, to show her skills as an Ambassador and she was warmly received by our Japanese colleagues.

Delegates to the FEE General Assembly were hugely interested in a presentation made by Michael Aherne from the National Transport Authority on Ireland's Smarter Travel Programmes. Of particular interest, of course, was the Irish Green Schools Travel programme which is considered an international best practice model and which is achieving double digit growth in sustainable travel modes to school.



Volunteers Spring into action for a clean up of the River Dodder during the National Spring Clean Campaign 2012



Pupils from Scoil Santain and St. Dominic's National School, Tallaght took part in massive clean up of St. Dominic's Parish, Tallaght

Green Campus & Eco-Centres (www.greencampuisireland.org)

Dundalk IT was awarded a Green Campus flag in 2012 joining UCC and GMIT Castlebar in flying this prestigious flag for environmental excellence. This is one of the fastest growing programmes within the education unit since UCC won the first Green Campus Flag in 2010. The programme demands a huge commitment to achieve Green Flag status.

The Green Flag has also been adapted for eco-centres. The first centre to be awarded the flag was the Lifetime Lab, Cork in 2010 and 2012 saw them joined by Fota Wildlife Park and Delphi adventure Centre, Mayo. Other centres on the way towards the flag include Gurtbrack Organic Centre, Kerry; and Tanagh Outdoor Education Centre, Monaghan.

Blue Flag & Clean Coasts Programme (www.beachawards.ie; www.cleancoastproject.org)

The 25th anniversary of the international Blue Flag was celebrated in Dublin by delegates from all over the world who saw Minister Phil Hogan T.D. award 84 Irish beaches and 3 marinas, the highest number ever achieved in Ireland.

Delegates also heard about the Clean Coasts programme which operates in Ireland, N. Ireland and Wales with 55 Green Coast Awards and over 200 Coastcare Groups in 2012 in Ireland. June saw the third year of the Coca Cola Clean Coasts Week with a highlight being the even more successful Clean Coast Photography Competition with a staggering 2100 entries.

Green-Home (www.greenhome.ie)

A new development in the Green Home programme in 2011 was the registration of Tidy Towns groups and this continued in 2012. These joined the 20,000 households already participating in the programme which is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency and facilitates and acknowledges sustainable behaviour in the home.

The Green Home programme was replicated in 2012 as a 'Best Practice' example of how to deliver behaviour change via Tidy Northern Ireland under the Eco-Home Northern Ireland banner.

Green Communities (www.greencommunitiesproject.org

The Green Communities Programme was initially funded by a grant from the European Regional Development Fund Interreg 4A Ireland Wales Programme. This Interreg funding ended in September 2011 but because of its success the Environmental Education Unit continued to support it in 2012. The programme works with volunteer community groups in Ireland to actively enhance local biodiversity while also minimising the carbon footprint of group activities.

Greening Communities

In essence the Irish Greening Communities programme aims are twofold; firstly enhance coordination and collaboration between the public, private, non-governmental and voluntary sector organisations in the area of environmental sustainability in Ireland; and secondly provide support and help to empower individuals, communities, businesses and institutions to adopt more environmentally sustainable habits and behaviours, in the most economically efficient manner possible. In short a synchronous top-down, bottom up approach. •

Further Information is available on the programme websites, as well as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr.

Natural Environment Office

Róisín Kearney





Hen harrier (© Shay Connolly)

OVER the last year, there have been a number of people who have been part of the Natural Environment Team, and whose contributions have been invaluable. Camilla Keane first joined An Taisce in 2008, completing an internship in that year, before becoming a staff member in 2009. From 2011 Camilla was the Natural Environment Officer and in November 2012 she took up a position with the policy team of the UK eNGO PlantLife. We thank Camilla for her four years of sterling work with An Taisce, and we hope our UK links will pay dividends in collaboration projects in the not-to-distance future!

Andrew Jackson filled the post of Natural Environment Officer from early 2013, and in his short time, has made a number of important contributions to the office's output. Currently, the Natural Environment Team is made up of Andrew Jackson and Róisín Kearney, the Natural Environment Research and Casework Intern.

In 2012 Camilla took care of natural environment policy issues and consultations, advocacy work, projects and communications. Róisín, who joined the team in July 2012, dealt with the casework, including forestry and aquaculture licensing, input to relevant planning applications, and other alerts of site specific issues. Thanks are also due Barry Walsh and especially Stephen Hyland, two interns that worked with the Natural Environment Office in early 2012.

Nature's Way

A new 'Nature's Way' booklet was produced at the end of 2012. The booklet, entitled "Invasive Species" looked at the threat posed to Ireland by invasive species and addresses some of the challenges associated with them. Topics covered in the booklet include: how they got here, ecological and economic impacts, established threats and potential threats. The booklets were kindly funded by the National Parks and

Wildlife Service (NPWS). Early 2012 saw the publication of Wonder of Peatlands, which examines the origins of peat, the species that have made the bogs their home, and threats from extraction, among many other areas. There are now four booklets in the series – the two mentioned above, together with Pollinators in Ireland, and Biodiversity and Ecosystems. Digital versions of all four are available on: http://www.antaisce.ie/naturalenvironment/NaturalEnvironment/NaturesWayBooklets.aspx

Consultations & Publications

An Taisce complied a detailed response to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG) draft "A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland". An Taisce's submission highlighted the unsustainable developments carried out during the construction boom of the Celtic Tiger with development underpinned by a flawed economic growth based model disregarding resource consumption, climate emissions and debt accumulation. There was also a significant lack of protection for Ireland's most internationally significant habitats. An Taisce called for a revised strategy with legally binding targets and timetables in biodiversity enhancement, sustainable land use, resource consumption, trade and differing categories of emissions. What we really need is meaningful actions and targets with implementation dates.

An Taisce made a submission to the DoECLG paper entitled "Reform of the Water Sector in Ireland". An Taisce welcomed the restructuring of the current system of water maintenance programmes for the 34 city and county councils currently in charge water management. An Taisce submitted that the current system of fragmented administrative arrangements for water management of the State's aquatic resources needs this overhaul. It is felt that a new system should have an integrated, cooperative, and streamlined approach to water management and must be operated at river basin district (RBD) level and co-ordinated at national level by Irish Water. It is vitally important that there is a regional and local management level for the implementation of the national guidelines of Irish Water. This can be most easily orchestrated by having high level management at the national level, but delivered at RBD level, with RBD offices in each RBD as is required in the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

"There are now four booklets in the series- Biodiversity & Ecosystems, Pollinators in Ireland, the Wonder of Peatlands and Invasive Species."

An Taisce composed a very comprehensive submission in response to the consultation on the Marine Institute document entitled "Our Ocean Wealth: Towards an Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland". An Taisce's submission emphasised key areas for Ireland to become a key global leader in terms of marine governance. The submission stressed the importance of moving away from the idea of the "ocean economy" as a short term economic driver and proportion of national GDP. More focus needs to be given to the environmental and social benefits which can be gained from our oceans rather than short-term economic growth. Unfortunately, the resulting document, "Our Ocean Wealth", follows "Food Harvest 2020" (and the 2010 Port Development consultation) in revealing a combined failure on the part of many politicians and senior public servants to address the limits of resource consumption and emissions on a finite planet.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine released a stakeholder consultation on the "The Environmental Analysis of Scenarios – Food Harvest 2020". An Taisce sent a submission in July 2012 and called for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out (noting the requirements of Articles 2 and 3 of Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment). Also, the adoption by the State of an 'industry-developed strategy which sets out its vision for the future of the sector' requires assessment under the Habitats Directive. Pursuant to this Directive, Government cannot implement Food Harvest 2020 unless subjected to formal screening in accordance with the Habitats Directive.

"Perhaps the most high-profile submission was made in response to Bord Iascaigh Mhara's application for a 456-hectare salmon farm in Galway Bay ... sea lice can severely impact salmon migrating from rivers of the bay."

An Taisce also made a very comprehensive submission to the COFORD Council for Forest Research and Development consultation document entitled "Identifying Land Availability for Afforestation and Examining Constraints and Incentives to Achieving Afforestation Goals". Several recommendations were given in our submission, including the need to choose appropriate sites for afforestation to ensure that a plantation positively benefits both the environment and the economy. A standardised training and qualification system for foresters was also recommended in our submission, as well as greater emphasis on alternative approaches and opportunities for afforestation including planting forestry strips instead of large, isolated plantations and the use of mixed species stands as opposed to monospecific coniferous stands.

Case Work

Last year we actively pursued improvements in Irish forest management and regulation, responding to afforestation licences referred to us, appealing consents that are likely to damage sensitive habitats and species or degrade water quality, and we completed a comprehensive review of the Irish forestry licencing system.

In our role as a statutory consultee under Environmental Impact Assessment (Amendment) Regulations An Taisce is referred hundreds of private afforestation applications from the Forest Service each year. We responded to 215 applications in 2012 and appealed 2. Our submissions often request ecological surveys to be carried out, especially in areas which support protected habitats both within and

outside of designated SACs and SPAs. Within Natura 2000 sites we have pushed for Appropriate Assessments under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive on afforestation applications in order to correctly screen for adverse impacts. In addition, we raise water quality concerns and often request increased aquatic buffers, reduced fertiliser application, or a change in the tree species to be planted.

Other areas where we have been particularly active includes commenting on proposed developments where they are likely to impact on protected habitats and species and / or water quality, including very many upland wind farm developments. Direct conflict with the EU Habitat and Bird Directives is unfortunately often a feature of applications, as well as a failure to meet Ireland's responsibilities to conserve Biodiversity as a signatory of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Many of the wind farm applications were located in designated areas such as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, and (proposed) Natural Heritage Areas. In addition, An Taisce's submissions relate to peat stability, peatland loss and degradation, impacts on water quality as well as disturbance and loss of habitat and prey for bird species such as the protected Hen Harrier. An Taisce commented on four Environmental Impact Statements (EIAs) which accompanied the applications. These included applications in Limerick, Cork and two in Kerry.

An Taisce continues to be referred aquaculture licences and several submissions were made in 2012 regarding aquaculture licences in Killary Harbour, Kinsale, Bantry Bay, Castlemaine Harbour and Galway Bay. Many of the aquaculture proposals were within Special Protections Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive for the protection of birds of conservation concern and An Taisce's focus was on the impact of seed harvesting, displacement and disturbance on the birds which use the bays in question. Other concerns included the impact on water quality and the use of an invasive species, the Pacific Oyster for aquaculture purposes. Perhaps the most high profile submission was made in response to Bord Iascaigh Mhara's (BIMs) application for a 456-hectare salmon farm in Galway Bay. In our submission, we highlighted the likely impact of the water quality of the bay and the impact on wild salmon and sea trout as sea lice emanating from the farm can severely impact on salmon migrating from the rivers of the bay.

"Government cannot implement Food Harvest 2020 unless it is subjected to formal screening in accordance with the Habitats Directive."

Irish Environmental Network

The Natural Environment Office has been active with the Environmental Pillar Marine Working Group, inputting to consultations, attending meetings and helping to organise them. The knowledge shared in the Marine Group has also been very beneficial to An Taisce in our statutory consultee role, where we are referred aquaculture licences.



Pacific oyster half shell (© sea-ex.com)

The Launch of "The role of wetlands for flood attenuation"

The research project on the role of wetlands for flood attenuation as part of catchment based flood management was printed and launched in March of 2012. The Natural Environment Office secured the funding from the Community Foundation of Ireland to carry out this report which was finished at the end of 2011.

Killaha West Management Plan

The Natural Environment Office received grant from the Heritage Council under the Heritage Management Grant Scheme in 2012 to carry out a survey of An Taisce's property in Killaha West, Kerry to produce a management plan. The property consists of 3.4 hectares of mixed native oak woodland, grassland and river shoreline and lies alongside the Kenmare River Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and within an area zoned as Prime Special Amenity in the Kerry County Development Plan. The management plan includes a habitat map as well as measures and actions required to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's habitats and species. The flora and habitat surveys were undertaken by Camilla Keane. Lesser Horseshoe Bats were found to use the farmhouse building on the property as a roosting site. A bat assessment report produced by Conor Kelleher of Aardwolf Wildlife Surveys includes recommendations for the species.

An Taisce is often contacted by members of the public in relation to environmentally damaging activities and unauthorised works. We continue to offer advice and where necessary get involved in writing a submission or letter. When contacted by non-members we encourage them to join and feedback has been very positive with many kind words received on the work of the unit over 2012.•

Natural Environment Committee

Dr Declan Murphy





Degradation of protected bogland is continuing – shown above at Monivea bog, Co Galway (© FIE aerial survey)

NEC members are mainly enthusiasts without specialist qualification, but fortunately some are very knowledgeable enthusiasts! Our role is to act as a link between the general membership and the specialist staff in the NE office, to generate discussion both within the committee and in the wider organization on topics that are controversial, complex or important – and they are generally a mix of all three! A recent example was an afternoon public symposium organised by the committee on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). A large audience debated the Teagasc research project into cis-genic GM potatoes, and the rapidly evolving science of genetic modification – transgenic and cis-genic. Within our committee we have had extensive discussions on issues such as ash dieback disease, the environmental implications of CAP and Harvest 2020, fracking and many others. The meetings are lively!

Previously, in 2011, we made a detailed submission to the Rio+20 world conference, and in early 2013 we responded to the EU request for input into the 'follow-up' to Rio+20 in addressing the development of specific actions and measures. We contributed to the debate on national topics such as degradation of bogs, and aquaculture policy, as well as international issues like climate change and biodiversity loss.

Meetings are generally held prior to council meetings which take place on the second Saturday (of Sept, Oct, Dec, Feb and Apr) at 10.00 a.m., which is inconveniently early for some members but allows council members to attend both meetings on the one day. Also, council has developed a pattern of holding an afternoon public symposium (after the council meeting) on a topic of environmental general interest, and which would add value to making the trip to Tailors Hall. We plan to explore the possibilities of teleconferencing or group Skype calls for NEC meetings in the future, and also to create an internet-based discussion group.

"We contributed to the debate on national topics such as bog degradation."

This year we were most fortunate to recruit a new honorary secretary, Yuuki Blakeney, who has an environmental masters degree from Kyoto University (as well as an undergraduate degree from TCD). She contributed hugely to the work of the committee and NE office but is now commencing a full-time research position in forestry in UCD. We wish her the best of luck in her exciting new role, but unfortunately it may not be practical for her to continue as our honorary secretary. We welcome new members to our committee, and the only requirement is to be a member of An Taisce – and an enthusiast if possible! •

Properties

Mairead Mehigan and John Harnett

AN important report was completed in 2012 on the recently-acquired Kerry property, a small 1800s two-story house 5km from Kenmare. The study revealed that the house has become a happy home for quite a number of bats, a protected species. Under the direction of the Chair, Spring 2013 has seen scoping work begin on the feasibility of a project where the public would gain the opportunity to view the activities of the bats remotely (by video camera, for example), while at the same time making sure that the necessary interventions can take place in order to protect the structure itself: ultimately the bats rely on the house itself for their long-term future. It's a tricky challenge, but a very engaging one!

Work continues apace on the restoration of the Boyne canal navigation system. Little more need be said here; the very solid progress of this project is well covered thanks to an in-depth article by James Leahy in the magazine.

Very encouraging news can also be reported regarding the Browne-Clayton monument in Carrigbyrne, County Wexford. Stretching to almost 30 metres in height, the monument consists of a Corinthian column on a square pedestal base. (It was built in commemoration of Sir Ralph Abercrombie who fought against Napoleon in the Egyptian battles in 1801.) Collaboration between An Taisce and Wexford County Council has been put on a renewed footing with meetings in late 2012 and early 2013, and we look forward to reporting on resulting developments here next year.

Gort Weigh House was subject to a number of minor repairs in 2012 but, to safeguard its future, a long-term function needs to be found for this structure. With this in mind, Andrew Jackson and James Nix are working on an initiative to bring forward a business plan for Gort. Could it be a seasonal tourist office, a flower stall, or a bike-hire venue? We should be closer to answering these questions by the end of 2013.

The properties Committee met throughout 2012, typically on the morning before Council meetings to discuss the matters above – and much more - under the chairmanship of Mairead Mehigan.

The committee would like to take this opportunity to thank John Ducie for his work on properties and regarding the THEL venture. John continues with An Taisce, liaising with the International National Trust Organisation and Europa Nostra on the Trust's behalf. On properties, however, his work concluded in late 2012 when THEL ceased to take further bookings for weddings / civil ceremonies. John's work is enormously appreciated and we pass on our good wishes: John is currently completing the accreditation course to become a Fáilte Ireland National Tourist Guide and Manager. •



Monuments & Antiquities

Dr Mark Clinton

IN the Annual Report of 2011/2012 it was stated that an official response from the Commissioner's office of An Garda Síochána was awaited in relation to the destruction of two Early Medieval ringforts in one day by the one individual at Knockacareigh, Kilmurry in County Cork. The committee had engaged in a prolonged correspondence with An Garda Síochána over a two year period urging the prosecution of the perpetrator. On the 30th of November 2012 the Commissioner's office notified us of the successful prosecution of the individual concerned.

On the 20th of February 2013 the Private Secretary to Mr. Jimmy Deenihan T.D., Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, acknowledged our complaint regarding the structural damage of two souterrains in counties Meath and Louth. A full investigation and response has been promised. Souterrains are subterranean refuges and/or storage facilities of late 1st Millennium/ Early 2nd Millennium A.D. date. The souterrain at Bective in County Meath was first recorded in 1849 by Sir William Wilde, father of Oscar, in his highly regarded publication 'The Boyne and the Blackwater'. The souterrain at Donaghmore in County Louth is unique in that it is the only example of the monument-type to have been granted full National Monument (Number 526) status in the country.

An active watching brief has been maintained by Ruadhan McEoin, committee member, on the Moore Street 1916 monument complex. The imminent 100th Anniversary of the rebellion can only be viewed as a positive pressure on the government to resolve the issue in a satisfactory manner. Developments are expected in the short term. Similarly the committee has made various attempts to seek clarification on the proposed development of a port at Bremore/Gormanstown on the Dublin/Meath border. The threat to two neighbouring Passage Tomb cemeteries of Neolithic date is of paramount concern. Morphologically these tombs had to have been built by the ancestors of the builders of Newgrange and the Boyne Valley tombs. Their national and international importance is thus indisputable. We have recently received a copy of the new National Ports Policy from the Maritime Transport Division of the Department of Transport,Tourism and Sport. Environmental and Foreshore issues are addressed in an aspirational manner. According to the document uncertainties exist at European level with regard to the interpretation and application of the Birds and Habitats Directives in respect of port development. There is no mention, however, of coastal and foreshore sites of archaeological and/or historical importance. It is nonetheless reported that the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government is continuing to work on the development of new legislation 'that will seek to modernise the foreshore consent regime and will inter alia seek to minimise the duplication of processes' as previously practiced. While the imminent new legislation will, apparently, address many environmental concerns there are as yet no specific commitments to unreservedly protect and preserve in situ the coastal and foreshore elements of our unique and irreplaceable archaeological and historical heritage.



Moore Street buildings (© Kevin Duff)

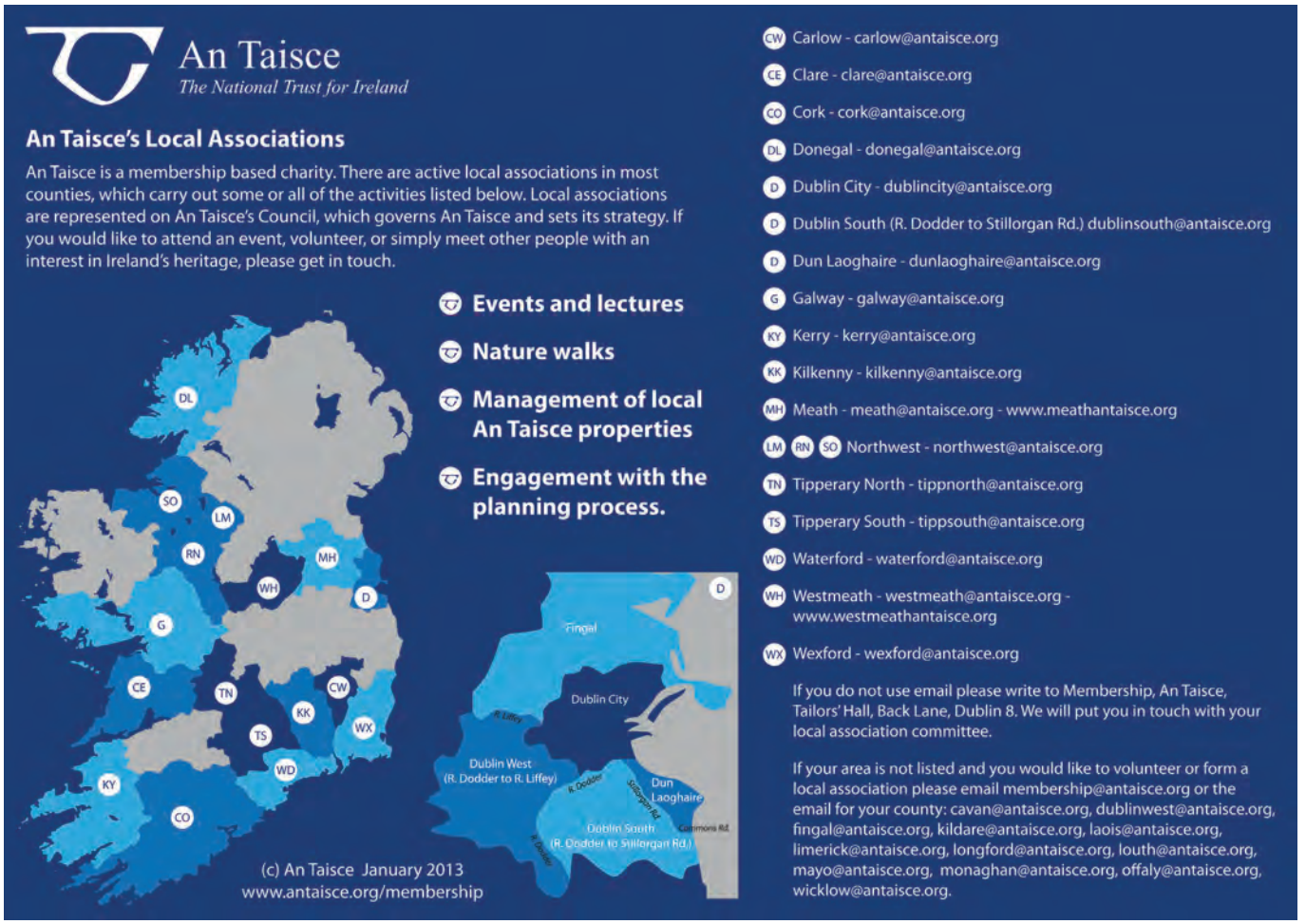


Concrete plinth on Dame Street (© Kevin Duff)

A request for access to information under Directive 2003/4/EC was made on the 7th of March to Dublin City Council in relation to the construction of a concrete plinth at the Cork Hill-Castle Street junction in Dublin City Centre. We have sought details relating to the archaeological resolution of the works – in particular 'architectural designs indicating foundation depths, method statement used for the obvious archaeological issues that were likely to arise, and details regarding both appropriately qualified supervision that may have taken place, as well as any finds that were discovered'. The site of the plinth is located within the recognised boundaries of both Viking and Angevin Dublin. Any neglect in respect of the archaeological dimensions relating to the construction of the plinth would therefore be of serious concern. •

The Role of Local Associations

Alan Moran



AN Taisce has encouraged members to set up local groups since its foundation. Local associations fulfil a range of important functions in securing environmental and heritage protection. At present there are 17 An Taisce local associations, organised mostly on a county basis.

Local associations are autonomous, with few formalities required. They decide for themselves what they want to do, and any funds raised are retained for local use. The activities undertaken are varied, and depend largely on the degree of involvement by local members, their interests and priorities.

Local associations provide a forum for members to network with each other and with other local groups on matters of interest, from wild bird conservation to buildings at risk. Many local associations organise tours and lectures.

Some undertake work on planning matters, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on their resources. This may range from simply liaising with the national Planning Unit, to commenting on specific applications, to making submissions on local authority development plans.

Existing members are invited to renew each spring, and working with head office, the secretary of the local association plays an important role. Members are invited to renew on the first of January each year. New members who join between August and December receive membership for the following calendar year in addition that the remainder of the current year.

Each local association nominates a representative to the Council of An Taisce: this gives local associations a role in the governance of An Taisce, and helps ensure the organisation stays in touch with and responsive to local issues.

To illustrate the variety of what local associations achieve, here is a small selection of examples.

Donegal: maintains a garden owned by the town council in Letterkenny, produces a scenic calendar which sells 5,000 copies annually, and runs an exhibition of local crafts. Funds raised are used for purposes like the current schools Wildlife Project in which children record birds seen in their locality. The association is currently carrying out a pilot survey of vacant buildings (factories, office blocks) to see how they could be used instead of falling derelict.

Kerry: organised a photography competition to make the public more aware of the types of buildings which blend into, and enhance, the scenic landscapes of Kerry. Sponsorship was obtained from both public and private sources. A large number of entries were received, with good local media coverage, and the exhibition travelled to libraries around the county. After the competition, there was a noticeable improvement in the house designs being submitted for planning permission: traditional architectural features became more common and local architects responded by producing better house plans.

Meath: has had a long-standing involvement in the preservation and restoration of the Boyne Navigation, a 19-mile waterway owned by An Taisce. Since 1990 the association have run an awards programme (the Ellison Awards) for significant contributions to the environment in Co Meath.

North Tipperary: lobbied the Council to reduce the excessive use of harmful chemical herbicides on roadsides and other public places. Arising from this, An Taisce's Natural Environment Officer then wrote to all City and County Councils urging them to use less damaging maintenance methods, as Stuttgart has done for example.

Westmeath: has run a sustained campaign for the preservation of the historic Market House, Castlepollard.

Wexford: have been monitoring planning applications for sensitive locations such as Bannow Bay. At the 1798 Lacken Hill historic site, local residents were supported to prevent a damaging development and, as a result, the council put a preservation order on the site. Plans for an unsympathetic modernisation of the protected Trinity Hospital in New Ross were opposed and the hospital was instead renovated appropriately. Wexford association also operates a trust which cares for the Browne Clayton monument, jointly owned by An Taisce.

Like many voluntary organisations, our members support the organisation by being subscribers but not all are able to get more actively involved. But it can be rewarding to keep in touch with your local association and participate to the degree that works for you.

And if you feel you could help in setting up a local association where one does not exist at present, please contact An Taisce at membership@antaisce.org. •



Carlow Association

Alan Price

THE Carlow Association has not been formally active for the Year 2012. A number of key officers in Carlow passed away in 2011 and the small number of active members only met on an adhoc basis in 2012. The Association's representative to National Council continued to attend meetings in Dublin. Local planning applications are being monitored but in the last year, and leaving quarries aside, there has been little development of a controversial nature taking place. Through the Environmental Pillar, local An Taisce members sit on Carlow County Council's Environmental Strategic Policy Committee, Rural Transport Committee, Carlow County Development Partnership, and the Community and Voluntary Forum. Membership is currently being reviewed and lapsed members are being asked to rejoin the Association. Email circulation lists and text messaging systems are being put in place to improve communication between our local members. An AGM has been called for April and the key officer roles will be filled again in 2013. •

Cork Association

Kevin Connolly

A RE-ESTABLISHED Cork association met for the first time in mid November 2012, following on from a successful initiatory meeting held last October in Cork City. The October meeting was convened by An Taisce chairman John Harnett with a view to providing a forum for interested parties to discuss environmental issues affecting the city and county with experts from Tailors' hall, namely, Gavin Daly from the built environment committee, and Camilla Keane, the Natural Environment Officer at the time. Both gave very informative presentations.

At the follow-up meeting in November it was agreed that the best way to proceed was through an informal members network, rather than an association committee structure. We agreed too to concentrate on Cork City-related matters, though not wholly excluding wider county issues, as in many cases they are inextricably linked. To this end, in February 2013, a submission was made to the Cork County Development Plan Review calling on the planners to do more to ensure that the county develops in a more sustainable and balanced manner. Our key point is that the Cork Metropolitan area, with the city at its core, drive development while rural areas need to see far less unsustainable one-off house building – which only acts to diffuse development, leading to a loss of energy on a number of levels.

The Cork association is still in its nascent stages, but the aim is for the network to strengthen over the coming months. We are already looking at visits, with trips Spike Island and Lough Hyne in our sights. •

Donegal Association

Noel Foley

DONEGAL Association AGM 2012: This was held in Letterkenny in May 2012. Our guest speaker was Patricia Oliver. This branch has great admiration for the work done by the Education Unit of An Taisce under Patricia's guidance.

Key Items of Concern in 2012 include:

- **Litter thrown from cars**: how can our message be made effective to stop this shameful behaviour? We cannot blame children; they are not in charge of the cars, so it must be adults.
- **Deer:** The population of red deer continues to increase and spread throughout the county, destroying gardens, young woodlands and cattle feeding troughs. We have received reports that the tramping of four deer on Gola Island has caused a very significant decrease in the population of corncrakes there.
- **The continuing spread of invasive alien species:** This applies in particular to Rhododenron ponticum, Jananese knotweed and Himalayan balsam and the threats they pose to many ecosystems. They continue to spread but there is not any effective action or strategy at official local or national level.

Fund raising

This consists of the sale of An Taisce (Donegal Association) calendar and the Christmas Craft Fair. Both are successful. Sincere thanks are due in particular to Ethna Diver for her work on the calendar and to Una Cronin who organised the Craft Fair in which all the committee are involved.

Annual Outing

Our annual outing in September was a boat trip up Lough Swilly from Rathmullan to Malin Head. Charlie Gallagher, a committee member, imparted his detailed knowledge of the lough to us. This included the site from which the Donegal Earls O'Neill and O'Donnel set sail in the 17th century, the graveyards of many famous ships that sank in the lough, the towns and forts on either side as well as the coast of Inch Island.

P.J Corry R.I.P

Our Association and the wider county of Donegal were shocked and saddened by the sudden and untimely death last June of P.J. Corry our then treasurer. It is a consolation that P.J's death was a peaceful one. Our sincere sympathy to his wife and daughter and to his extended family. •



Boat marooned in a cave on Lough Swilly (© Anne McGowan)

Dublin City Association

Claire Gogarty

LAST year, 2012, was a period of renewal for Dublin City Association. Officers were appointed at a well-attended AGM in Drimnagh Castle, and the higher level of engagement has carried right through to 2013.

This year the AGM was held in mid-March in the Little Museum in St Stephen's Green - a fascinating place to visit – where a new Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were appointed.

We have just had our first meeting since the AGM, which went very well, with a good variety of people getting involved. We started with a talk from the National Spring Clean office, which was very interesting. At times, there can be too little interconnection between local associations and the work of the Educational Unit of An Taisce, which is a shame, and it is great to play a part in redressing that!

We then spoke about some of the matters that had brought each of us to the meeting, which was really rather interesting, as it showed an equal variety with the number of people in the room! Everything from a 1940s apartment block (with a management committee that wants to 'beautify' it by removing unique railings to put in Georgian-style ones), to monitoring what is going on in some of our local areas in Dublin. We also discussed some of the matters that are currently of concern across Dublin as a whole.

Our new committee is very interested in addressing the key planning issues facing Dublin at the moment, but we do need some education as we don't have too much experience.

"The Little Museum in St Stephen's Green is a fascinating place to visit."

So we will be talking to Ian Lumley and the others from the national office and looking at some of the big cases they have taken in the last year (Grangegorman, the Children's Hospital etc.) and more of the smaller ones. We will invite others who have specific skills (re Development Plan etc.) to talk to us about them as well. Our plan is to get the Dublin City Association active again on planning applications. •

Dun Laoghaire Association

Mairead Mehigan

THE Dun Laoghaire Association is very fortunate to have an active group of committed members. We have three committees:

(1) Trees, events and natural environment
(2) Booterstown Nature Reserve
(3) Planning

The Committees meet frequently and the Executive Committee meets monthly or when necessary. Our AGM is held every May.

During the year our Association made a submission against Providence Resources in relation to its proposal for an offshore oil exploration licence close to Dalkey Island. We have to thank our Chairman Mr. John Harnett, Vice Chair Ms. Attracta Ui Bhroin, Mr. Fergal McLoughlin, former An Taisce Board member, together with their legal team for challenging the foreshore licence issued to Providence Resources. This

decision is important not just for Dublin Bay but for all applications in Irish coastal waters.

Our planning committee meets twice monthly. We monitor weekly planning lists, with an active focus on proposals affecting protected structures, and currently we are:

- drawing up a list of additional buildings for consideration as candidate protected structures
- engaging community groups against Providence Resources on environmental ground
- preparing a list in relation to the number of derelict sites across the county, and
- cataloguing all conservation reports which have been submitted to us as part of planning applications with a view to handing them over to the National Architectural Archive.

The committee for Trees, Events and Natural Environment meets regularly. Although development has decreased in our area in recent years, we find trees are increasingly being felled and fewer are being planted, particularly in urban areas.

Huge areas of open urban civic space would benefit from tree planting and would green-up and soften hard architectural lines. Urban greening, trees and appropriate high quality landscaping are all key inter-related issues.

In 2013 we are celebrating 40 years here in Dun Laoghaire. I would particularly like to thank our founder members, in whose footsteps we feel privileged to follow. Marking the anniversary, we have a very interesting calendar of events for 2013:

March 4th Rathfarnham Castle Demesne – A designed landscape through time and space: an illustrated talk by **Rebecca Jeffares**. This was a very well attended event.

March 9th Dr Jack Durand Commemorative Tree: as part of National Tree Week, the Tree Council of Ireland and An Taisce Dun Laoghaire planted a tree in Cabinteely Park to celebrate the life of one of our dear friend and member, Dr Jack Durand.

April 21st Booterstown Nature Reserve clean-up: gather at Booterstown Dart station at 2pm

May 8th AGM at St Patrick's Hall, Monkstown, 8pm: Zoe Devlin will speak about her book *Wild Flowers of Ireland*

July 16th Outing to Russborough and visit to June Blake's garden near Blessington

August 18th Booterstown Nature Reserve – a celebration of the 40th Anniversary of An Taisce Dun Laoghaire during Heritage Week: meet at 2. 30pm at the viewing point on Trimleston Ave

September 22nd Meet at Rathfarnham Castle forecourt: a tour of historic Castle grounds led by Ms. Rebecca Jeffares, 2pm to 4.30pm

October 13th Booterstown Nature Reserve: foreshore clean-up; meet 2.30pm at Dart station

December 6th Christmas Lunch to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of An Taisce Dun Laoghaire

Booterstown Nature Reserve is one of An Taisce's properties and has an active management advisory committee. Chaired by Veronica Heywood, the committee meets four times a year (or more frequently if necessary). Currently, we're organising the erection of an information sign showing some of the birds that visit the reserve. Bird-watching sessions are ongoing with an enthusiastic attendance thanks to Mr. Sean Hogan.

"Our thanks to John Harnett, Attracta Ui Bhroin and Fergal McLoughlin, together with their legal team for challenging the foreshore licence."

During the year we lost two wonderful and knowledgeable members, Dr. Jack Durand and Mr. Maurice Bryan. Our sympathies to their families and friends: we will miss them.

Our Committee includes Mairead Mehigan, the Chair and Sarah O'Connor, Hon Secretary/ Hon Treasurer. Alison Carter and Avril Larmour head up the Trees, Events and Natural Environment committee while Veronica Heywood is the Chair of the Booterstown Nature Reserve committee. Margaret McGahon, Rebecca Jeffares and Yuuki Blakeney are committee members. We are also grateful to the many ordinary members that attend committee meetings. •

Kilkenny Association

Dr Declan Murphy

KILKENNY Association is a relatively small group but we have an active and enthusiastic committee and like to think that we punch above our weight! We hold a few public meetings each year, and had two outstanding illustrated talks over the past twelve months. One was an account of the latest archaeological findings in the city by Matt Seaver, an eminent archaeologist now based in Drogheda and son of a former chair of our Association. Also outstanding was an illustrated talk by Shem Caulfield on the vernacular wrought iron farm gates of county Kilkenny.

Despite being well attended and attracting varied audiences we have had limited success in converting event attendees into new membership applications. We are fortunate to have the loyalty of many longstanding and valued members, but recognize the need to recruit new blood to revitalize the organization both locally and nationally.

Our committee meets monthly and is represented on a number of local statutory bodies, including Leader, the Kilkenny Heritage Forum and the County Development Board. We enjoy close relations with other heritage and environmental organisations, especially Kilkenny Archaeological Society, IWT and BirdWatch. We made a major submission on the local borough and county council development plans 2014-20. We joined with the city mayor in organising a large public

meeting to discuss the future of St. Mary's Church and graveyard in the city centre. It is a 13th century church that was recently purchased by the borough council. There are plans for it to become a museum, and the magnificent tombs in the graveyard are being restored. We made a submission on a proposed new pedestrian bridge over the River Nore that will improve the permeability for pedestrians and cyclists within the city centre. We continue to oppose the planned Central Access Scheme (CAS) for the city that is scheduled to commence construction in 2014. We believe that the proposed ring road should take priority over the planned obtrusive bridge and the linking roads of the CAS through the heart of the old walled city.

We are delighted that the An Taisce national AGM will be held in Kilkenny in June 2013. Ten years ago in 2003 we held a very successful 'Envirovisions' conference in conjunction with the AGM in Kilkenny Castle. This year the meeting will be held in the Heritage Council headquarters, the historic former Bishops Palace beside St. Canice's Cathedral, and members are assured of a céad míle fáilte! •

"In June 2013 the An Taisce national AGM will be held in Kilkenny and members are assured of a céad míle fáilte!"

Kerry Association

Catherine McMullin



Killaha West

OUR main work is monitoring planning applications and public works projects referred to us by Kerry County Council (KCC). We are glad to see that, despite the recession, modern sewage treatment plants are being planned for some of the smaller towns and villages. In the private sector, there have been a considerable number of planning applications for alternative energy projects, mainly wind farms but also wood chip combined heat/power plants. Recently, KCC adopted a

'Sustainable Energy Strategy' for the county, which can be seen on their website. We made a lengthy submission to it, some of which is included in the final document.

Local Area Plans covering various parts of the county were reviewed during the year and submissions were made on a number of them. In addition, many of our members made individual submissions, concentrating on their own area, and we are very glad for their involvement as it provides valuable local knowledge.

We are represented on a number of Committees, including the Economic Planning and Development SPC of KCC, the Lough Leane Working Group, the Community and Voluntary Forum and Killarney National Park Liaison Committee. These are all very informative and give us an opportunity to put forward An Taisce's views on environmental matters.

During Heritage Week 2012, we arranged an 'Open Day' for the public to visit An Taisce's property at Killaha, near Kenmare. Camilla Keane very kindly acted as guide and gave us a comprehensive account of the various habitats on the site. There was considerable interest in the open day and we hope to hold it again soon.

"There was considerable interest in the open day at Killaha West and we hope to hold it again soon."

Our main fund-raising activity is a 'Flag Day' in Tralee. We get a very good response from the public and many stop to ask us more about our activities and how they can join.

We hold our meetings at 8.00 pm on the first Thursday of the month at Maeve O'Donnell's house, 16 Denny St., Tralee. All members are welcome to attend. •

South County Dublin Association

Sylvia Dockeray

OUR Association runs a regular programme of events starting with a monthly lecture series between February and May, an Annual outing in May and a Garden Party in June. Following a break for the summer our Annual General Meeting occurs in November, with a Christmas Party and musical entertainment in early December.

The main Committee meets monthly with reports from our two sub-committees, Planning and Environment.

The Planning Committee meets monthly and members monitor the parts of both Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co Co and South County Dublin Applications that falls within the local association area.

During the year planning applications sent for comment as a prescribed body were 22 from Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, and 34 from South Dublin, while a further 46 files were considered, divided 39 to 7 for the respective Councils. The bullet points below describe our planning work, with the figures for DLRCC and SDCC set out in that order:

- submissions / detailed replies lodged on planning applications: 5, 8
- comments lodged: 10, 27
- appeals lodged: 0, 2
- observations on appeals or referrals by others: 7, 7
- new enforcement: 0, 1
- ongoing enforcement: 2, 5

The committee has appreciated the information provided by the planners in both DLRCC and SDCC. Other main issues of the year included houses and other developments in the Dublin Mountain area, masts on Three Rock Mountain, Ticknock Retirement village; and the problem of planning enforcement in South Dublin County. We are very grateful to the committee members under the chairmanship of Andrew Parkes for their time energy and commitment.

Ken Mawhinney chairs our Environmental group who created an exhibition for display "What's in a Name?" which was displayed over four months in a window in Stillorgan Shopping centre with many favourable reviews. Currently, the potential use of Marley Park as a resource to advance environmental awareness and understanding, while exploring its own rich cultural heritage, is being researched.

"We were fortunate enough to have the best weather of the poor summer for our garden party."

Eileen Collins always delights us with a varied Lecture programme with good attendances of 40 to 60. This year's topics were local history, marine archaeology and the water birds of Dublin.

In May we visited Fancroft, an 18th century flour mill, and Angela Jupe gardens on the Tipperary border followed by lunch in Birr and a tour of the town. A visit to Gloster House, an 18th century Grand house undergoing restoration, completed a very rewarding itinerary.

The Garden Party was held in our Chairperson's home (Kilgobbin House and gardens) when we were fortunate to have the best weather of the poor summer to enhance the strawberry tea!

Christmas music was again held in the Church of Ireland in Kilternan with entertainment by the Ballinteer Male Voice Choir, Ann Walsh, harpist, and John Cresswell, raconteur, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Parish Hall.

At our AGM in November a full committee was elected with Dr Sylvia Dockeray remaining as Chairperson. •

Westmeath Association

Jack O'Sullivan

TWENTY-TWELVE was a year in which the Westmeath Association survived in difficult economic circumstances, but we nevertheless held four events and continued our working relationship with Westmeath County Council. We also continued to raise awareness of heritage and wildlife, and to make observations on planning applications.

We were very honoured in that our Treasurer and principal event organiser, John Harnett was elected as National Chair of An Taisce. In addition to his duties of National Chair, John has continued to play an active role in our local Association.

In mid-April, the Westmeath Association made a detailed submission to Westmeath County Council regarding the new County Development Plan. The draft made recommendations on a wide range of issues including the need for greater emphasis on sustainability, improved public transport, reduction of car use, greatly improved telecommunications (the lack of adequate broadband is a serious problem in rural Westmeath), excessive zoning of land for housing and commercial development, unfinished housing estates, better protection for historic buildings, the need for a biodiversity plan, improved protection for threatened habitats, energy conservation and the reduction of waste.

On Saturday 30 June, members enjoyed an excursion by boat around Lough Derravaragh, with a walk to the top of Knockeyon Hill and a picnic in the grounds of Streamstown House. During the walk, we explored the ancient holy well dedicated to St Fechin, and discovered part of the foundations and two gables of a long forgotten early Christian church, the location of which had been removed from the ordinance survey maps, and which had last been described in the seventeenth century. This well and the nearby church were important places of pilgrimage in medieval times.

On Sunday 05 August, an excursion to historic Kells and Headfort House was led by Dr. Peter Harbison, an internationally acknowledged specialist on Irish high crosses and early Christian Ireland. Members were able to see the famous Kells high crosses and the eleventh century stone-roofed St. Columba's House, a small early Christian oratory. The excursion continued with a visit to the celebrated Georgian House at Headfort which is now a private school, to which we were invited by the Headmaster, Mr. Dermot Dix. The interior of this house contains a magnificent suite of six staterooms designed by the renowned architect Robert Adam, one of the few major commissions of his which have survived [in Ireland].

On Thursday 04 October, members of the Association met at Tullynally Castle to hear an illustrated talk by architect Margaret Quinlan on the restoration of the historic Main Guard in Clonmel, which won a heritage award for best practice in conservation.

Our well attended AGM on Saturday 20 October in Tullynally Castle was followed by a lecture by Ian Lumley entitled "From Bogs to Buildings – Issues for the Future in County Westmeath". During our AGM, one of the items discussed at length was the unauthorised large-scale peat extraction near Coole, County Westmeath, which has long been a subject of concern to the Westmeath Association of An Taisce and to local residents. It was agreed that we would continue our efforts to have this exploitation halted and the damaged peat lands restored to their full ecological potential.



Industrially exploited bog adjacent to River Inny

Ian Lumley gave an illustrated talk (followed by a lively discussion), covering the wide range of national and international issues which are the focus of An Taisce's work. He spoke about climate disruption, including the fact that Ireland has the world's tenth largest ecological footprint, worse than many other countries; and that 75% of fish species in Irish waters are being harvested beyond safe biological limits.

Under the Birds and Habitats Directives, almost every indicator of ecological status is "bad" in Ireland's case. For example, one of our most familiar birds, the Curlew, has suffered an 85% decline in Ireland. Ian pointed out that our current model of agriculture is unsustainable, depending on massive importation of animal feeds, and very high use of fertilisers; and this industry is also a very high generator of greenhouse gases.

Describing the recent proposal by a consortium named "Element Power" to build a huge number of extremely tall wind turbines in five midland counties (including Westmeath) to export electricity to Britain, Ian pointed out that Britain will get all the benefits, while the people of Ireland will get all the adverse environmental impacts.

While Ireland generates one of the highest amount of waste per capita in Europe, almost no recycling is carried out in Ireland nearly all recyclable materials are exported for processing. Even though there has been a drop in



Old Sligo Cavan railway line



River Inny near Coolnagun

construction, our use of quarried stone is six times the European per capita average, and we use almost no recycled materials in buildings.

Ian also referred to the number of historic buildings in Ireland being abandoned and falling into dereliction, including Carriglass in County Longford; and he said that it was very important to ensure that these buildings should be protected. He said that there was huge potential for An Taisce local associations to get involved at local level, to work with other local community organisations, and grassroots, promote locally produced food, community woodlands, allotment projects, cycling, and low-impact tourism. He referred to the Transition Towns Movement which is now growing worldwide and he suggested there should be more links between An Taisce Green Schools and other work by An Taisce. He referred to the Cooperative Movement begun by Horace Plunkett in early 20 century Ireland, and said this was a model that should be revived. He described the converging systems failures of economy, climate, food and energy, but ended on a hopeful note observing that there are many positive actions which we can take.

"The large-scale unauthorised peat extraction near Coole, Co Westmeath has long been a subject of concern."

The Westmeath Association wishes to record its thanks to Ian Lumley for his talk; and our thanks are also due to Thomas Pakenham who chairs our meetings; to Thomas and Valerie Pakenham for inviting us to hold our meetings in Tullynally Castle; and to Aidan Walsh for organising the events in 2012. •

Wexford Association

Tim Ryan

THE Local Association Committee met once a month without fail throughout the year and a wide range of subjects were covered. Mostly these related to planning applications that had been passed to us by the County Council and by Urban District Councils.

We were able to shape some of these decisions and had success also with an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that prevented one outrageous application from getting permission.

Our influence on the County Council through having members serving on strategic planning committees bore some fruit in the year when the Council produced a policy statement on biodiversity after years of advocacy on our part.

We ran one outing which was a great success with our party being shown around the monastic remains at Inistioge and other ecclesiastical structures before proceeding into the gardens of Woodstock for a guided tour of the amazing arboreal collection (the avenue of monkey puzzle trees and the sequoias were very impressive).

One of our members, Brian Rickwood, has been working steadily away in Council at Head Office helping to make the organisation more effective, efficient and focussed.

Another of our members, Malcom Robertson, has continued the cooperative work (An Taisce and Wexford County Council) with Wexford Monument Trust and has helped to implement a clean-up at the Browne Clayton Monument.

Our Annual Dinner was held a couple of weeks ago (followed a week later by our AGM), and was addressed by the Chairman John Harnett who gave us all hope for the future but who warned us to start planning for that future. The dinner raised a modest sum for the coffers in raffle money and this will help to pay for invited speakers and hall rentals during the year ahead for a couple of public events that we intend to hold. •

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL\BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

PRESIDENT
Professor John Sweeney

CHAIRS
Attracta Uí Bhroin (Acting Chair from 10/12/2011 to 11/2/2012)
John Harnett (from 11/02/2012)

VICE CHAIR
Attracta Uí Bhroin (from 1/10/2011)

SECRETARIES
James Nix (to 14/4/2012)
James Leahy (from 14/4/2012)

TREASURERS
Darren Connolly (to 14/4/2012)
Henry O'Reilly (from 14/4/2012)
Stephen Ryan (from 30/6/2012)

EDUCATION CHAIR
Charles Stanley-Smith

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR
Declan Murphy

PROPERTIES CHAIR
Mairead Mehigan

STRATEGY CHAIR
Brian Rickwood

COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR
Charles Stanley-Smith

NON-BOARD OFFICER/S

MONUMENTS & ANTIQUITIES
Dr Mark Clinton

REPRESENTATIVES ON EUROPEAN / INTERNATIONAL BODIES

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU
Frank Corcoran

INTERNATIONAL NATIONAL TRUSTS ORGANISATION & EUROPA NOSTRA
John Ducie

COUNCIL: LOCAL ASSOCIATION DELEGATES

Walter Ball	Meath
Mide Gerrard	Tipperary North
Ann Gibbons	Kilkenny
Derrick Hambleton	Galway
John Harnett	Westmeath
Kevin Hurley	Cork
Roy H W Johnston	Dublin City
George Kavanagh	Waterford
Anne McGowan	Donegal
Catherine McMullin	Kerry
Mairead Mehigan	Dun Laoghaire
Maire Mhic Giobuin	Dublin South (River Dodder to Stillorgan Road)
Alan Moran	Northwest
Alan Price	Carlow
Brian Rickwood	Wexford
Anny Wise	Clare

COUNCIL: NATIONALLY ELECTED MEMBERS

Justin Byrne	Elected 2011	Dublin West (River Dodder to River Liffey)
Dr. Mark Clinton	Elected 2012	Fingal
Eileen Collins	Elected 2010	Dublin South (River Dodder to Stillorgan Rd.)
Kevin Connolly	Elected 2012	Cork
Eric Conroy	Elected 2010	Dublin City
Frank Corcoran	Elected 2011	Wicklow
Gerry Crilly	Elected 2010	Louth
Gavin Daly	Elected 2011	Dublin City
Bernard Goggin	Elected 2012	Kerry
James Leahy	Elected 2011	Dublin City
Declan Murphy	Elected 2010	Kilkenny
Eanna Ni Lamhna	Past President	Dublin City
James Nix	Elected 2011 (resigned Jan 2013)	Dublin City
Jack O'Sullivan	Elected 2012	Westmeath
Judy Osborne	Elected 2011	Wicklow
Charles Stanley-Smith	Elected 2010	Tipperary North
John Sweeney	President	Kildare
Kathleen Vandenberghe	Elected 2010	Tipperary North

COUNCIL: CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Claire Gogarty	Dublin City
Eamonn Moore	Carlow
Bernard Ryan	Dublin City
Stephen Ryan	Dun Laoghaire
Attracta Uí Bhroin	Dublin West (River Dodder to River Liffey)
Jeff Young	Louth

An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland