An Taisce

THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR IRELAND

ANNUAL REPORT 2005/2006

Words from the President



EANNA NI LAMHNA

I have spent some time over the past few months walking along some of the way-marked paths of Ireland. Great advances have now been made laying out these paths, signposting them and, even more importantly, connecting one up with another. It is now possible to walk along the Wicklow Way to Clonegal in Carlow and from thence via the South Leinster Way to Carrick on Suir and from there to Bere Island in West Cork via the East Munster Way, the Blackwater Way and the Beara Way. There are also independent walks along the Barrow, the Grand Canal, around Sligo and Leitrim, around the Slieve Bloom Mountains – to mention but a few.

If you want see beautiful Irish scenery while we still have it, get out and go on these walks. Many of them are far from motorways, coastal development and urban sprawl and bring the walker along areas that could never be reached by car. The sight of the rolling hills of Carlow at Easter time with the hedgerows ablaze with yellow gorse and the white flowers of the blackthorn reminded me of why I had taken on the job of president. As Cromwell said as he looked over Drogheda from the top of Tullyesker Hill in 1649 "this surely is a land worth fighting for".

Mind you, not everyone feels the same way at all. I met very few people out walking along these ways, and those I did meet were holiday-makers from France or Germany. So I then walked on, looking at the countryside through their eyes and mentally comparing it with what they might be familiar with at home. No pylons marching across the landscape here I thought happily, comparing it with landscapes I had seen in Germany. Lovely, lovely birdsong from the hedges and woodland edges and it not even dawn. (What must the birdsong be like here at 6am when it was still so brilliant at 2pm?) In fact one Frenchman I met was recording the birdsong on his mobile phone – I didn't even know mobile phones could do that.

And then it happened. I rounded a corner where the walk had a vehicular exit to the road and there just among the trees was a collection of household equipment – a washing machine, a cooker and a spin dryer. Someone had gone to the trouble of loading the car, driving up here and dumping the stuff. Carlow Amenity Centre takes all this, it had to be in a car or van to get here, why couldn't the owner go the extra mile. The other amazing thing I noticed was the amount of discarded plastic water bottles along the way – presumably dropped by walkers who had come out to walk along and enjoy the scenery. I had quite a bagful by the time I got back.

So who owns the scenery? We moan – and rightly so – when our water is polluted, or our views are permanently destroyed by ill-sited development. But everyone who throws litter, passes litter they could pick up, allows others to do this without as much as giving them a filthy look are conspiring in however small a way with this. The April Spring Clean initiative is a way of showing that as an organisation we are very concerned about the appearance of the environment and this is a very successful operation each year. Ireland's countryside is cleanest just after this has been completed. So take my advice – get out there and walk the Waymarked Ways of Ireland – particularly in early summer – and enjoy Ireland at its best. You can get whatever information you need from www.walkireland.ie so no excuses.

An edited summary of two months of Eanna's diary this year.

April 2006

Visited primary schools in Naul, Dun Laoghaire, Rathmines and Ballybrack and Marian College Secondary school to talk about environmental issues.
Raised green flags in Greystones and Curtlestown, Enniskerry.
Launched Co. Monaghan's heritage plan, in Castleblayney to a general audience.
Spoke to Galway Science Teachers on the impact of us all on the Irish environment.
Part of a panel on RTE Tom Mc Gurk morning show (standing in for Pat Kenny Show) from Dundalk
Spoke on Radio na Gaeltacht on Water quality and on TG 4 TV on bird flu
Addressed the AGM of the Waterford Branch
Addressed the all Ireland Birdwatch Conference in Wicklow

March 2006

Attended the Celtic Trust two day meeting in Drogheda and hosted the dinner on the Thursday night.
Judged all Ireland photo environmental competition for Sustainable Energy Ireland
Attended EPA Genetically Modified Organisms advisory Board meeting to advise on Potato licence in Meath
Spoke to Castleknock gardening club on environmental matters
Raised a green flag in Stabannon school in Co Louth
Spoke for Seachtain na Gaeilge in Inchicore on bogs and lakes to local group.
Addressed Trinity College green society.
On Vincent Browne evening programme, speaking about St. Patrick's day customs.
Addressed book festival in Craigenamanagh
Spoke in Irish in Natural History museum for Seactain na Gaelige
Visited national schools in Damdale, Rathgar and Rathmichael.
Presented a collection of non-biting midges to Natural History museum on behalf of UCD.
Awarded posters for Tree day and met Taoiseach in Farmleigh during launch of tree week.

The Chairman's *Report*


FRANK CORCORAN

The last twelve months have been of great importance in the development of An Taisce to meet the environmental challenges of the new century. The most significant move in this regard has been the adoption by Council of a new strategy for increasing the organisational and functional efficiency of the organisation. Central to this strategy has been the appointment of an Executive Director, Gavin Harte.

Since taking up his position, Gavin has facilitated meetings of the Council and Board of Management of An Taisce with a view to clarifying the priorities and key issues for the organisation. This process has led to the identification of eight areas requiring immediate action: education, built environment, natural environment, properties, administration, communications, membership and fund-raising. Committees are being formed to ensure that each of these areas is covered effectively. I would hope that our Annual General Meeting this year will be an opportunity for active members of An Taisce to "come on board" at least one of these committees and to deploy their own particular skills and enthusiasm in the service of environmental protection.

I am hoping to use our AGM in Kilkenny to enlist the support of concerned individuals and organisations in campaigns directed to the implementation of safe and sustainable environmental policies

Members will be aware that, as Chairperson, I have a particular interest and commitment to keeping our country free of the many forms of pollution with which it is regularly threatened, whether this comes about through illegal or reckless waste disposal, unsuitable forms of energy production or contamination of food produce. I am hoping to use our AGM in Kilkenny this June to draw serious attention to these threats to our environment and to enlist the support of concerned individuals and organisations, many of whom may have had no previous connection with An Taisce, in campaigns of public awareness directed to the early implementation of safe and sustainable environmental policies.

There is an island of some four million people, which is nuclear-free, unlike its large neighbour, and whose citizens aspire to rely on non-incineration and non-mass landfill in their management of waste, and who also aspire to be a GM-free zone. This country is a world-class food producer and its tourist numbers are rising steadily, based on its clean, green image.

No – we are not talking about Ireland, but New Zealand. However, it could be Ireland, if we look after the fundamentals.

Fortunately, we are still nuclear-free (and An Taisce, for its part, played a key role in bringing about this situation through its 1979 report "Energy in Question"). Our citizens do aspire to have the best international practice in relation to waste management through non-reliance on landfill and incinerators. However, the decision-making has been taken out of their hands. Regions in Ireland (Monaghan, Clare, Fermanagh and Roscommon recently) are declaring themselves to be GM-free zones. Others are following their example.

I am eager that we use the occasion of our AGM to expand on the theme of marketing Ireland as a clean, green and pleasant land for both food production and tourism, with particular emphasis on clean water (rivers, lakes and groundwater) and soils and on safe and wholesome food. I am therefore proposing to frame the central activity of our AGM (which takes place on the morning and afternoon of Saturday 17th June 2006) with conference sessions over the weekend which will be devoted to: genetically-modified organisms (Friday 16th June), marketing of Ireland as a clean food producer (evening of Saturday 17th June) and improvement of water quality (Sunday 18th June).

Because of the necessary concentration on implementation of our new organisational strategy, this year's AGM, including afternoon working groups devoted to the key functional areas, will be of exceptional importance. Attendance at the full AGM is therefore urged. To facilitate this, sessions of the weekend conference, which members wish to attend, will be specifically scheduled so as not to clash with the AGM.

I know that the coming year will be no less challenging for An Taisce than the last twelve months. Already, major issues such as the continuity of energy supply are asserting themselves. However, with the support of our membership and armed with a clear strategy and the energy of a new Executive Director to animate the organisation, I am confident that An Taisce will be capable of dealing with these challenges.

The Secretary's *Report*


JUDY OSBORNE

The past 12 months have been exciting and challenging for the secretary in equal measure. The year will be remembered first of all by the appointment of director, in fulfilment of the vision for An Taisce expressed in our new constitution that put into place in 2003. This appointment was in itself a demanding process requiring the Board of Management to develop clear criteria as to what was required. I believe the effort paid of handsomely as Gavin Harte has hit the ground running.

The Board at work

The primary function of the Board of Management is to create a strategy for the efficient running of An Taisce and we are now well into the process. Work has been hampered by our failure to fill vacancies on the Board and a number of newly defined departments are still without form or facilitators at the time of writing. Hopefully new people will emerge to fill the vacuum and strengthen the Board to support Gavin in his work. We particularly miss Norman Campion looking after Local Associations. There is a vacancy for the role of Facilitator of the Membership Committee and there is no annual report from this section.

The Board meets monthly and communicates regularly between times

Meetings of the Council

Council members have met 5 times since the last AGM and I think it would be fair to say that the meetings would have been increasingly rewarding for members. There has been a great exchange of experience between representatives from local associations and other nationally elected members.

One meeting was reserved solely for the first phase of developing our strategy. Council members present at that meeting gained a clear understanding of the structure of the organisation and were able to contribute valuable insights into the process. The overriding issue was 'communications' both to and from HQ, local associations and members. It is hard to understand why this is so difficult in an electronic age but there you

go! I believe it is a common experience for membership organisations but we continue to strive to deal with this under the competent guidance of Charles Stanley Smith who is now chairing the communications group.

Staff matters

There have been a number of changes in staff over the year. Martin Shiels has moved on to develop his career in the legal profession and the position of Office Manager taken up by Ailish Greene who also has great experience in campaigning in West Wicklow. Lorraine remains as our Admin Assistant, dealing primarily with membership matters and bookings at Tailors Hall (as well as being at the end of the phone when people first call). No doubt many of you will have spoken to Lorraine. Anja Murray remains as our Natural Environment Officer doing great work on her projects and with a range of other environmental organisations. Ian Lumley remains as our national treasure, the Heritage Officer. Anyone who has dealt with Ian can only marvel at the range and depth of his understanding and experience, not to mention his dedication to the cause of sustaining Ireland's heritage. We miss Deirdre Joyce from the planning unit. Deirdre moved on to work with the Green Party but we have not filled this post yet until future funding is more secure. Siobhan McManus replaced Marcus Gilhawley as our capable planning assistant and Sarah Gillespie remains as Administrative Assistant in the Planning Unit, faithfully supporting planning staff and all working in appalling conditions at the top of Tailors' Hall. Indeed cracks in the ceiling have prompted a hard look at our offices and a review of our use of Tailors Hall is currently in hand. The Education Unit has moved into new offices in Swift Row which has freed up some space but more changes are inevitable next year.

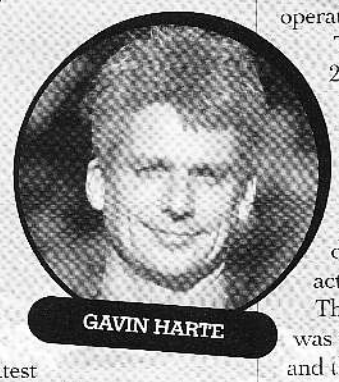
David Owen, Kevin Duff, Kevin Kelleher and Peter Sweetman are regular volunteers with HQ, all offering invaluable support to the organisation. We appreciate their contribution beyond measure.

Editing the magazine

Finally I would like to report on my work as editor of the magazine – not necessarily a duty of the secretary but something I became involved in earlier. Having been a professional librarian in an earlier life, the magazine has been a natural development for me. Librarians collect, organise and disseminate information – so too does the magazine I hope. Copies are sent to all members but we also distribute to every branch library in the country and to a range of other institutions on an ad hoc basis. The magazine is also on sale through major branches of Easons and sales are gradually increasing. Since 2004 I have been working with Colin McLoughlin who had actually revived the magazine after a gap of some years. Coilin's contribution has been enormous – writing, editing and designing but he is now busy on other projects. As you can see from this summer's edition we now have a new designer and we will probably experiment for a while until things settle down again.

I have hugely enjoyed my work with An Taisce. It is a cause I can believe in and I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with so many people that I admire from all over the country. But I must remind you that I only agreed to accept the role of secretary on a minimal and temporary basis. We have to encourage new people to get involved and pick up the baton on a national level and I can really recommend the experience. Once the strategy is completed and the new working structure fully operational with support from the Board members, the job will not be so onerous. Do consider it and contact me if you would like to talk about what is involved.

The Directors *Report*


GAVIN HARTE

In the first week of my new job, Valerie Bond launched her book 'An Taisce-The First Fifty Years'. While reading it I was struck by the chapters entitled – Our Members, Our Greatest Asset. The first line of the chapter read: "How did An Taisce achieve as much as it did with such limited resources? The answer lies in the calibre and enthusiasm of its members, and the help of others who recognised the validity of the organisation's aims and supported them". Through my previous work (of which most has been spent with various community and cooperative groups) I have come to understand the real truth in this statement.

I am joining An Taisce with little or no history of the organisation but I bring perhaps, a fresh perceptive and understanding. Coming as I do, halfway through a year, I have spent much of my time observing the systems of governance and administration and endeavouring to understand the organisation and how it works.

My motivation to join with An Taisce is rooted in the belief that Ireland urgently needs a strong voice for sustainable development and environmental protection. The history and tradition of An Taisce places it to the fore of environmental organisations in Ireland. However the last ten years have not been easy and Ireland has experienced unprecedented growth and economic activity. This rapid growth has brought many problems and has had a dramatic effect on our natural and built environment. An Taisce has been at the frontline of this change and has been working valiantly to mitigate and control this run away expansion.

In order to adapt to the rapid changes in Irish society, An Taisce now needs to change. Recognising this fact, the Board in their first instruction to me, asked for the creation of a strategic plan to streamline the organisation and to initiate more efficient methods of operation and control.

This process kicked off at the January 2006 Council meeting and has been ongoing since then. At this Council meeting, members were asked to carry out a SWOT analysis of the organisation and helped to define the organisation into eight operational departments were all activities and actions of An Taisce could find a home.

The next step in this strategic process was to map each department with staff, and then to try to define the individual areas of activity and work that are carried out in each department. This exercise proved very useful in setting the remit and activities of the whole organization. In parallel with this mapping exercise the Board of Management agreed that a member of the



Board should sit on each department. This would allow decisions relevant to each department to be carried out that a departmental level and when the Board meet for their monthly meeting in effect the whole organisation would meet. This decision allows for a more devolved management structure within the organization, allowing for subsidiarity, whereby decisions can be made by the lowest competent authority.

The creation and set up of voluntary departmental management committees has been slower than anticipated but a clear objective has now been set and I am hopeful that a positive outcome can be reached in filling in these committees as soon as possible.

Staff resources now exist in most departments, bar communication and properties. This access to full-time staff allows for the day today work of each department to be carried out in a professional manner. It is this unique combination of professional staff working alongside a voluntary executive committee that brings real democracy to the organisation. The next step for each committee was the creation of a departmental work programme. This processes involves the setting priorities, in partnership with staff, and then assigning available resources to each task producing an operational budget for the work agreed.

At our AGM is my hope to present an outline of each departments work programme and its budget to you, the membership, for support and agreement. With your approval, these 8 departmental work programmes will then provide the organisation with a clear strategy and budget for the coming year and set the agenda for the organisation going forward.

As I pointed out earlier, it is the calibre and enthusiasm of our membership that makes An Taisce the vigorous organisation that it is. By strategically improving the structures of decision-making and administration, An Taisce will rise to the challenge of defending Ireland's built and natural heritage for generations to come. For me it is a privilege and honour to be involved in this process and I look forward to working with you all into the future.

My work in the new departments

Fund-raising was identified as the "first priority, above all others" in the earlier Council strategy. For this reason I began a close working relationship with our fundraising manager Nial O'Sullivan to set out a comprehensive plan to raise over 500,000 euro in the next 5 years. Core to this will be our legacy programme that we hope to launch at our AGM in June.

Administration is another very important department identified in the strategy plan. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all of the staff here at Tailors' Hall and in Swift's Alley (the new home for the Education Unit). The work environment in An Taisce can be difficult to say the least, and poor old Tailors' Hall was never supposed to house was such a paper heavy organisation. As part of our strategy, administration has been identified as a vital element of the operation that requires urgent improvement.

2006 has also seen a reinvigorated Properties Committee come into play. Tailors' Hall has been identified as An Taisce's priority property and plans are now underway to develop a strategic plan of our beautiful home. A very positive first step in this process has been the use of Tailors' Hall as a location for the period film "Becoming Jane" which was shot here in April.

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Tailors' Hall is just one of 13 properties held by An Taisce and the Properties Committee hope to raise profile of all these properties, setting in place management plans so that they can be protected and enhanced for future generations. Over the last few months and into the future I intend to visit all An Taisce properties so as to better understand these valuable resources that we hold.

The Built Environment Department continues to carry out invaluable work on behalf of the organisation in the area of planning and planning enforcement. As part of our strategic plan to strengthen and support this trojan work, we have initiated a number of exploratory meetings with organisations such as the Irish Concrete Federation and the new environmental unit of Fáilte Ireland.

I have spoken at a number of conferences over the last few months including Energy, part sponsored by An Taisce I also presented a paper on "Ecological Solutions to Waste Management" at a conference in Downings, Donegal in April.

In preparing the strategy document I initiated two feedback workshops with both staff and council members in an attempt to gain greater insight as to how the organisation operates. It became clear during both these workshops that both internal and external communications were of significant importance to the future direction of an inclusive and effective An Taisce. The new Communications Committee has initiated a plan to develop an exciting new website that hopefully will facilitate greatly improved communications between the different branches of the organisation. The website will also allow each local association to have its own website in place to cover issues that are of local interest. Updating these local sites will then become the responsibility of each association, and so reflect the aspirations and needs of each association within a national network.

Membership and local associations are the lifeblood of An Taisce. Developing strong and vibrant local associations is key to a successful national organisation thus our structure now includes the creation of a new membership and local associations committee. Attracting new people and ideas into the organisation is key to a vibrant An Taisce. It is the involvement of voluntary and committed people that will once again present An Taisce as the much-needed voice that will protect the natural and built environment of Ireland. I have had a series of meetings with local associations throughout the country and this will continue as a major priority over the coming year. If local associations could inform me of special events or general meetings in advance then I could coincide my visits around these events.

Finally we have our Natural Environment Committee. In developing a strategy programme for this department we have identified biodiversity as the most important issue facing Irelands natural environment at this time.

Over the few short months that I have been working with An Taisce it has become clear to me that we are in fact a very broad church. The glue that holds us together is a deep love and respect for our shared heritage and culture. A strong and vibrant national organisation such as An Taisce is key to protecting this treasure - let us work together to realise it.

The Natural Environment Committee *Report*


ANJA MURRAY

Biodiversity

The Heritage Council funded project run by An Taisce to develop a Joint ENGO Biodiversity Strategy has been successfully completed. A series of meetings were held throughout the year between Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations working towards the conservation of biological diversity.

The meetings have been building capacity among NGOs, and have resulted in the development of a co-operative approach in relation to biodiversity conservation.

Strategies for effective participation have been developed and we have developed a 'ENGO Joint Biodiversity Strategy' setting out objectives and actions for the Network.

Objectives include collaborating on education and awareness raising on the concept of biodiversity; promoting the creation of Local Authority Biodiversity Officers and the development and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans; prioritising actions of the National Biodiversity Plan that we feel would have the most effect; encouraging compliance with Habitats Directive and appropriate management of Natura 2000 sites; and ensuring that there will be no cross contamination of wild or domestic species in Ireland by genetically modified material. Each of the objectives is accompanied by realistic and achievable actions and targets, providing the basis for ongoing collaboration between groups as the 'Network for Action on Biodiversity'.

As a follow up from this project we have secured funding from the Heritage Council to coordinate ENGO input to the next National Biodiversity Plan, due in 2007.

We met with Minister Roche (that is An Taisce, Coastwatch, Birdwatch Ireland, IPCC, & Irish Wildlife Trust) in November about a range of Nature Conservation and biodiversity issues. We managed to agree specific action in some areas, but failed to get a satisfactory response on others. Follow up meetings were held with senior National Parks and Wildlife Service staff and with the Biodiversity Unit of Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government.

We have been involved in the development of the Biodiversity Forum, to be held under the auspices of Combar - the National Sustainable Development Partnership. The Biodiversity Forum will have three representatives of the Network for Action on Biodiversity, namely Karin Dubsky of Coastwatch Ireland, Sarah Fields of the Irish Wildlife Trust, and Anja Murray from An Taisce.

An Taisce partook in the development of the Irish Strategy for Plant Conservation.

We made submissions to the Monaghan, Waterford, and Fingal Heritage Plans

Forestry

Monitoring of private applications for pre-planting approval of new afforestation is ongoing under our statutory prescribed status. We have assessed hundreds of applications over the past year, submitting comments where there are significant potential landscape impacts, likely adverse impacts on designated nature conservation sites, water quality issues (especially protected waterways & aquatic species), and / or lack of compliance with forestry guidelines (e.g. no or inadequate broadleaf component, areas for biodiversity enhancement, etc). We have appealed a decision to grant approval for a coniferous pulp wood plantation adjacent to Clara Bog Special Area of Conservation without an EIA.

An Taisce also made a submission to the current Review of the Forestry Acts, highlighting the need to amend the current replanting requirement (which causes much conifer reforestation in inappropriate locations damaging landscape, water, and natural habitats); incorporation of the Forest Service Guidelines to a legal basis; felling license penalties; and review of section 12 of the 1988 Forestry Act.

In addition An Taisce is on the Woodlands of Ireland Steering committee, the on the Coillte 'regional social and environmental panel' for Wicklow and Dublin, and has an input to the IFCI, which has seen little significant progress in relation to the development of the Irish Forestry Standard for Certification.

Marine Biodiversity

We continue to monitor, log, and make submissions on Aquaculture License applications in Special Areas of Conservation, highlighting the need for Environmental Impact Assessments where likely adverse impacts on species and habitats for which the site is protected are likely. We also assess and submit comments on finfish aquaculture Environmental Impact Statement's where necessary. We made a presentation to the 'Public Participation and the Environment' Conference in European Parliament Buildings (Coastwatch Ireland and EEB) on 'Shellfish Culture, Nature Conservation, and Public Participation'. Other issues we have been dealing with include the abolition of the Regional Fisheries Boards, and dredging native oyster beds in designated Nature Conservation Areas.

Water

We have been actively working towards the full implementation of the Water Framework Directive in Ireland, and are involved within the Sustainable Water Network (SWAN) towards the participation in the directive. An Taisce representatives have been nominated for four of the seven 'River Basin District Advisory Councils' being established around the country by Local Authorities.

Waste Licencing

Comprehensive submissions were made to the EPA regarding two Waste Licence Applications for landfills, both of which have been refused planning permission by An Bord Pleanala on environmental considerations, yet granted a waste licence by our Environmental Protection Agency.

One is a Waste Facility at Calf Field, Co. Kildare which is to contain 25.4 Ha of landfill and is located adjacent to and within the flood plain of the River Boyne (Special Area of Conservation) and beside the Grand Canal (Natural Heritage Area). The proximity of the site to the River Boyne SAC and the presence of many surface water channels and groundwater onsite are directly linked to the waters of the Boyne creates conditions for high possibility of contamination of the waters of the River Boyne from leachate and runoff from the facility. An Bord Pleanala cited "significant adverse effect on the conservation

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped in Tailors' Hall garden. Caitriona Cunningham, Pavel Jelensky, Mary McSweeney, Lenka Krausova, Barbara Young, Senan Gardner, Frank Jesper and Mary Harney



and protection of the River Boyne, Special Area of Conservation, would be prejudicial to public health and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area" yet the EPA granted a Waste Licence.

We also objected to the EPA about an application for a Landfill in Meenaboll, Co. Donegal, proposed for an upland Peatland area which drains in to several riverine Special Areas of Conservation, where permission was refused by ABP yet granted by the EPA.

Agriculture

We made a submission to REPS 4 that is currently being drawn up by the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. Our submission included recommendations towards improving environmental education of REPS planners and participants in order to fulfil meaningful environmental and biodiversity standards and targeting funds for this; specifications for native tree planting within REPS; recommendation towards the conservation of high nature value farmland which is currently facing increased abandonment; and detailed suggestions towards the implementation of proper monitoring and evaluation of the environmental and biodiversity benefits of REPS.

GMO's

An Taisce made a submission to Department of Agriculture Working Group for 'National Strategy for Best practice of co-existence of GM crops with conventional and organic farming'. We have also made a submission to the licence application for GMO potatoes to the EPA, raising serious concerns about granting such a licence before Ireland's co-existence strategy is finalised and agreed; about the inadequacy of the Environmental Risk Assessment carried out for the application; and lack of compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and recommendations of the IUCN (the World Conservation Union).

European Environmental Bureau

The Natural Environment Section of An Taisce are active in the EEB Biodiversity Working Group, and have completed an assessment of Biodiversity in Strategic Environmental Assessment in Ireland. The Natural Environment Officer has attended two meeting of the Working Group in Brussels, where important up to date information was acquired and strategies formulated. Costs of attendance are met by the EEB.

Wildlife Garden

We have been working with an enthusiastic volunteer (Caitriona Cunningham) to establish a Wildlife Garden in An Taisce's courtyard which will be a showcase for Wildlife Gardening to all visitors to Tailors' Hall including the thousands of Green Schools groups who visit each year.

Habitat Protection Issues

Environmental Impact Statements are regularly referred to us that often involve damage or destruction to protected habitats or species, and require input and monitoring from the Natural Environment Office. Habitat protection alerts also come in from members and the wider public on a regular basis where assistance is given in tackling serious issues in many instances.

Anja Murray is An Taisce's Natural Heritage Officer
Mide Gerard is Chair of the National Environment Committee

Fundraising Activity Report

Members Support



As a result of fundraising efforts since July members have pledge over 120,000 to support the work of An Taisce. We would like to take this opportunity again to thank members who have done so.

A number of meetings with individuals have taken place seeking their support for projects. Others will be contacted on an ongoing basis.

Legacies

A legacy brochure has been prepared and at the time of writing was nearing final draft with a view to going to print imminently. If the experience of the National Trust in the UK is anything to go by, we are confident that members and friends of An Taisce will choose to include An Taisce in their wills.

Trusts

Applications were made to a number of Irish and UK based trusts and foundations in the first 3 months of 2006. No decisions had been made as to whether we were successful at the time of writing. Others have also been identified for future applications.

Corporate

Applications to companies for funding from their grants schemes were made in March 2006. A construction/development company made a donation of 10,000 in December 2005.

Options for Donors

At the time of writing, work had been started on 4 specific funds to which donors to An Taisce could support. These are in the areas of Planning, Conservation, Education and Built Heritage. People have different interests and we are hoping to provide a greater choice for potential donors in the future.

Membership

Work has been undertaken to encourage lapsed members to rejoin by sending them a personalised letter and an update on An Taisce activities. This is still at the early stages but results are encouraging.

Report on An Taisce's prescribed functions



Over the last year, An Taisce has faced increased political and media attacks on its role in seeking EU Directive and national policy compliance in protecting biodiversity, landscape, architectural and archaeological heritage. Recently this has concentrated on submissions and appeals on inappropriate development in historic city and town centres such as Kilkenny and Cahir; peripheral shopping threatening town centre retail, hotel development and unauthorised sewerage polluting caravan parks. This been orche-

strated by vested interests who, very often, control local media. Indeed, a number of articles in the newspapers of the Independent Group also reflect this trend and what has effectively become a national spectator sport, 'An Taisce Bashing'.

An Taisce has not been able to communicate with any effectiveness in the media the fact that submissions made by it at planning application stage to local authorities are simply recommendations for compliance with relevant local and national policies. Any appeals taken to An Bord Pleanala arise only where there is a demonstrable failure to have regard for such policies, or the protection of public safety and public health. Indeed, the majority of appeals in relation to one-off rural houses and consequent refusals by An Bord Pleanala have been taken on public health and drinking water, ground water and surface water contamination grounds.

The stated objectives of the planning system - to ensure delivery of sustainable land use and transport, heritage protection and other government policy - contrasts with the reality of its implementation at local level where nothing is allowed to conflict with local vested interests. The fact is that contemporary Ireland is in a period of sprawling development. Planning at local level is determined by largely under-resourced local authorities under enormous political, management and vested interest pressure to uncritically accommodate development in all categories including one-off housing, retail and other development. Short-term gains and vested local interest are nearly always allowed to prevail over EU Directives on Environmental Impact Assessment, water and habitats, the strategic long-term, the common good and, more explicitly, national planning and sustainability policy.

While Government can then say that there is an independent review procedure through recourse to An Bord Pleanala, and a range of independent prescribed bodies, this of course occurs only if an individual, local community or environmental group, An Taisce or another prescribed body, appeals.

What is remarkable is that when an appeal is lodged against a development (based on failure to comply with a particular Government policy), or a refusal decision is then made by An Bord Pleanala (on the basis of that policy), the local political or media attack is on the individual or organisation that took the appeal, not on the Government policy or the idea of protecting public health or public safety. The level of pressure is mounting on individuals and organisations who take appeals not to do so or to withdraw appeals.

Intimidation against anyone raising concern is rife on all categories of development in rural areas, including wind farms, and now increasingly in urban areas.

Assessment of Individual Planning Applications & Taking of An Bord Pleanala Appeals

In terms of direct impact, An Taisce's most effective intervention in environmental and heritage protection in Ireland is through the exercise of its prescribed status as was intended when the legislation was passed in 1963. The political and media perceptions that An Taisce has had to face is that it occupies some sort of privileged position that it is then using to impose an environmental policy of its own concoction, bearing no relation to development needs or the concerns of "real" people. The opposite is in fact the case. It would be pointless to make submissions on developments on the basis of a particular individual policy of an individual environmental NGO. All submissions and appeals to An Bord Pleanala are taken on the basis of the requirements to which local authorities and An Bord Pleanala are legally obliged to have regard in making decisions. That is European law, national law and Guidelines, local authority development policy and public health and public safety regulations. In comparison to the other state sector and state funded prescribed bodies, the efficiency and input of An Taisce on the planning system is enormous. From the Dublin office alone, (for those local authority referrals not sent to local associations or representatives), over 3,000 submissions are made annually of which approximately 250 are appealed to An Bord Pleanala.



Irish Oak in Hazel Wood on limestone pavement. Photo by Peter Sweetman

Of these, over 85% result in the local authority decision being overturned, the most standard grounds being breach of national policy, breach of the local authority's own Development Plan or breach of public health and public safety regulations.

Experience has shown that outside the Dublin planning authority areas, the making of a submission to a local authority has little impact on the actual Decision or attached Conditions. This is because in a significant number of authority areas, planning applications, both large and small, are already decided by pre-application meetings, telephone calls, or other undocumented communications between the applicant, managers and local councillors. The lodging of the application itself is merely a formality. Even when the professional planners recommend refusal, that recommendation will be overturned. A number of the Fisheries Boards have had some effect in improving conditions with regard to water quality protection and both An Taisce and the Department of the Environment have had success in improving conditions with regard to archaeology and architectural heritage protection but in general, most local authorities use standard 'cut and paste' conditions which they are reluctant to alter whether they are for urban or rural applications.

An appeal is taken by An Taisce to An Bord Pleanala only in cases where examination of the application document and the Planner's Report made on the Decision does not satisfactorily establish that the Decision has complied with the range of considerations to which the planning authority is required to have regard under the Act, including public health and public safety. It is significant to note that outside the Greater Dublin Area, the majority of appeals taken by An Taisce are on public health and public safety grounds. Within the Greater Dublin Area, the majority of appeals would relate to heritage protection and compliance with the Land Use and Transport provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, in particular concerning curtailment of car-based congestion generating sprawl. None of the many national and local critics of An Taisce's role in the planning process have ever chosen to examine, let alone address this fact. This is overwhelmingly transparent from the reading and analysis of An Bord Pleanala refusals, which are nearly always written with admirable conciseness.

In addition to strategic planning and monitoring applications and consents, A Taisce has been directing increasing resources into investigation and complaints on enforcement. While there is often a focus on



Σ Harrington quarry in Stripe Co.Mayo. 165 hectares. No planning permission.

unauthorised development, the real issue the level of non-compliance of conditions including occupancy, landscaping, wastewater control and environmental protection conditions in particular. Two of the most problematic areas of non-compliant development are unauthorised soil deposition, (particularly on wetlands) and quarrying. While Section 261 of the Planning and Development act 2000 is now in force regarding the registration of quarries, there is no indication that Irish Local authorities have the competence to enforce the complex environmental protection conditions that will be attached to all registered quarries. Local authorities have a conflict of interest in enforcement, as they are major purchasers from unauthorised sites.

Analysis of Decisions by An Bord Pleanala that overturn Local Authority Decisions. An Taisce Appeals since 2005

While An Bord Pleanala may be criticised as a rubber stamp agency for the National Development Plan, road schemes, incinerators and other politically sensitive infrastructural projects, its role in relation to determining appeals on private sector applications has been largely positive in the large numbers of inappropriate developments refused or improved.

The impact of An Taisce in appealing local authority decisions, subsequently ruled by An Bord Pleanala to contravene European, national or local policy, may be summarised under the following headings or issues:

» Development affecting European Sites, namely, SACs and SPAs.

The major Thornton landfill proposal on the Kildare/Meath border near the Boyne Valley, SAC

•ESB Power Line and Substation development in Connemara Bog SAC

•Land based fish farm at Goruma island, south-west Connemara

•Single house applications affecting the Lough Oughter, SAC and SPA, Co. Cavan

•Alterations to Doonbeg Golf course – a significant decision by An Bord Pleanala in giving consideration to habitat protection and integrity.

•Houses affecting Lough Eske and River Eske – a focus of particular concern because of status of River Eske as freshwater pearl mussel habitat.

» Priority Habitats

2 separate applications Coillte/major 'eco tourism' development proposed by Coillte/Newfoundland consortium on Lough Key, Co. Roscommon (third application not determined)

•Separate hotel and housing proposals in rare limestone woodland area north of Ashford Castle, Co. Mayo

•Three separate caravan park retentions affecting Machair Priority Habitat, Downings, Co. Donegal

» Major Developments Contravening Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and DTO Land Use and Transportation Policy

4 separate hotel/conference centre/housing complex and private hospital (latter separate application) at Palmerstown Demesne, Co. Meath

•Hotel, retail and service centre at Goffs, Kill, Co. Kildare

•Business park at Kilpeddar, Co. Wicklow

•Housing development at Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath, on grounds of prematurity

» Development affecting significant Historic Town Centres

Repeat application for over-scaled hotel on inner harbour of Kinsale (note – a third application remains undetermined)

•6 separate permissions for demolition of buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas – 2 in Carrick-on-Suir, 1 in Cashel, 1 in Monaghan, 1 in Rathangan and one in Ardee, Co. Louth.

» Development affecting Monuments or Archaeological Sites

Wedding banqueting centre affecting one of the finest medieval tower houses in the West, Turin Castle, Kilmaine, Co. Mayo

•A significant number of rural houses affecting archaeological monuments particularly in counties Cavan and Longford.

•Wind energy proposal on lakeshore ridge line above Lough Derg, St Patrick's Pilgrimage, Co. Donegal

» Development on Coastal or Elevated Sites in West Cork, particularly Bantry and the Glengarrif area

A significant series of proposals were refused in this area on overlapping grounds of adverse water quality and scenic impact, including a holiday village at Cabbaghvockee, near Castletownbere.

In addition to the particular focus on West Cork, other problematic coastal developments have been refused, including a holiday village contravening the Green Belt protection provision between Dungarvan and Clonea, Co. Waterford.

» Developments affecting Shoreline of Lough Ree and Shannon Callows

A significant number of developments in counties Roscommon, Longford and Westmeath.

Development in Co. Mayo affecting lakeshore and watercourse areas. The number of Mayo County Council decisions overturned by An Bord Pleanala on water quality and public health impact is very significant.

» Development Affecting Historic Houses and Demesnes

Significant reduction of development impact at Waterford Island.

» Quarries

Large-scale quarries on elevated site near Manor Hamilton, Co. Leitrim, and Fethard, Co. Tipperary.

•Concrete processing works at Leaha, Creggs, and northeast Galway. An Bord Pleanala overturned the local authority to allow retention and expansion of unauthorised concrete casting works on drainage, road safety and location grounds.

•Extension of Roadstone Sand and Gravel Extraction at Deerpark, Co. Wicklow.

An Taisce was the only appellant in this major quarry expansion near the growing small town of Blessington and Glending archaeological complex and directly beside the areas of large-scale unauthorised dumping on Roadstone's land. The appeal decision was a landmark one of the comprehensive nature of the grounds with regard to protection of amenity of Blessington/Glending water quality, Glending archaeological complex, deficient quality of information in the Environmental Impact Statement and failure to address the status of illegal dumping adjacent to the application site.

» Sludge Lagoon near River Suck in Co. Roscommon

This was an overturning of a decision by

Roscommon County Council to retain permission for an exceptionally sub-standard and problematically located sewerage lagoon, which was receiving material from Roscommon County Council itself.

» Nursing Homes in Unserviced Rural Locations

There is an increasing trend for meeting nursing home location need in random development in rural locations without any consideration of public transport accessibility or walkable access to services for residents, staff, carers and family visitors, many of whom would be elderly. This is replicating the approach to random, road front housing. Indeed, many of the nursing homes are just poorly designed, giant bungalows, crammed onto a cramped site with tarmacadam for staff and visitor car parking and little concern or regard to amenity space or aspect. Where such applications in sensitive water catchments have been referred to An Taisce, appeals have been taken to An Bord Pleanala, resulting in refusals on water pollution grounds as well as inappropriate location outside a service centre, including locations in counties Kildare, Donegal and Mayo.

Analysis of Decisions by An Bord Pleanala Upholding Local Authority Decisions Against An Taisce Appeals

There are a significant number of cases where An Bord Pleanala has upheld local authority permissions against An Taisce appeals.

» Tourism and Leisure Development of Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow.

An Taisce's appeal was based on national road capacity concerns raised by the NRA who failed to appeal and the DTO Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area, with the DTO also failing to appeal. An Bord Pleanala gave permission leaving the fundamental issue on the appeal, namely traffic generation, to be resolved by internal post-consent agreement between the developer and County Council through 'Mobility Strategy'

» 50 year 50ha Quinn Quarry in Swanlinbar, Co. Cavan

The main argument raised by An Taisce in this case was that one bad decision should not lead to another. The location of the Quinn cement factory was permitted by An Bord Pleanala without addressing its long-term limestone supply, which is provided on site in the other Irish cement quarries. In this case, the proposed extraction to allow the continued operation of the cement plant was via a 12km haul road, running around Slieverusson to an idyllic rural valley of the salmonoid Swanlinbar River, flowing into Lough Erne and Northern Ireland. The other proposal will be closer to a massive open cast mine, than a quarry.

» Indaver, Cork Harbour & Boyne Valley Incinerators

While the Inspector's Report recommended refusal in both cases, on location impact or location selection grounds, An Bord Pleanala considered that national policy to favour incineration overrode this.

» Lime Kiln at Ryan's Quarry (part of CRH Group) North of Ennis, Co. Clare

The issue raised in this appeal was that the proposal for a cement kiln represents a significant intensification of a large-scale unauthorised development, namely a massive quarry operation, which did not have the legitimate pre-1963 status that it claimed. An Bord Pleanala ignored the issue that the development would result in intensification of unauthorised development, ruling that the status of the expanding quarry on the site, including the expansion required to serve the kiln development, would be resolved by Section 261 Quarry Registration.

» Second Standish Sawmill Application, Leap, Co. Offaly

An Bord Pleanala granted permission for a second application which was little different to the first retention application, which had been refused. This decision sends out the worst possible signal that major unauthorised development is tolerable and that all an applicant has to do to get away with unauthorised development, is to ignore enforcement compliance and keep re-lodging applications.

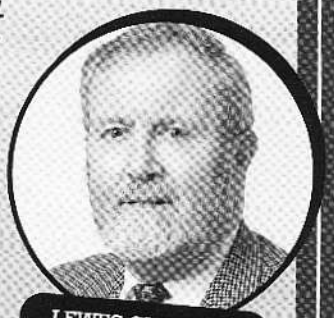
» Conflicting An Bord Pleanala and EPA Decisions on Landfills

In early 2006, the EPA for the first time refused a local authority landfill project - the Waterford County Council Waste Licence application for Garrynagree, Co. Waterford. A 'Consent' had already been issued by An Bord Pleanala however the EPA's refusal was on the single and emphatic ground that the proposal would have an adverse impact on one of the rare surviving habitats of the freshwater pearl mussel. The proposed license determination to refuse has not been objected to by Waterford County Council, so the decision now stands.

Meanwhile, An Bord Pleanala has refused the Donegal County Council landfill at Meenaboll, immediately to the south east of the Glenveagh National Park on a range of grounds, including adverse impact on watercourses. This is the first time this has happened since it got the function of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 to determine applications for local authority landfills with EIS. However, at the same time and contrary to the position it has operated at Garrynagree, the EPA has issued a proposed License determination in relation to Meenaboll which is now being objected to by An Taisce.

What these cases show above else is the sub-standard quality of landfill site evaluation in Ireland. Landfills are best located in areas with good clay soils and away from water courses. However, these areas also have the best agricultural land and likely articulate local objectors. For this reason, all too often, landfill proposals are put forward in semi-upland forestry or wetland areas where local objectors will be further away or less articulate.

Property Management Committee *Report*



LEWES CLOHESSY

Properties – General:

In line with the new strategic structure which divides An Taisce into eight areas of operation, property management is now organised into two committees – the full Property Management Committee which meets twice yearly to identify key tasks and priorities and a Working Committee which meets monthly and seeks to discharge these tasks in accordance with the set priorities.

To facilitate the management of An Taisce's portfolio of thirteen properties, a priority system based on the "tripod" process (collaborative involvement of managers, users and specialists in the running of properties) is being updated. Generally speaking, actively-managed An Taisce properties such as Tailors' Hall, Boyne Canal, Howth Courthouse and Booterstown Marsh would be considered to be in the Priority One category while potentially important (but unmanaged) properties such as Mongan Bog and Rough Island (for which latter property an improvement grant of 22,000 has recently been awarded) have been identified as future high priorities.

The preparation of a future budget for property management will be undertaken within the framework of the priority system. Such a budget will, of course, remain largely notional if new sources of support funding for properties are not identified.

Tailors' Hall

As the national headquarters of An Taisce and as a property with significant revenue-earning potential, Tailors' Hall is at present the subject of particular attention in relation to the development of a management strategy. The Protected Structure status of the property, apart from any consideration of insurance and licensing requirements, requires that all uses of the Hall are appropriate, safe and well-managed.

An effective future operational strategy will aim to maximise the rental income from Tailors' Hall while ensuring that essential refurbishment and maintenance is carried out on this unique property to a standard which will allow us to be genuinely proud of this "showcase" for An Taisce. It is evident that optimum results could be achieved by appointing a dedicated professional manager to administer all aspects of the Hall's commercial activities. Such an appointment, which it may be possible to integrate into an overall Property Manager role, would, until revenues grew sufficiently, be dependent on the availability of adequate initial funding.

The fine work carried out on the garden of the property by Monica Muller and a team of volunteers by Anja Murray is much appreciated and is part of the necessary process of enhancing Tailors' Hall as a property with visual and commercial appeal.

An early indication of the revenue potential of Tailors' Hall has been the renting (on the initiative of our Executive Director, Gavin Harte) of the property to the film company shooting the Jane Austin story "About Jane". This was a particularly useful rental which has resulted in all of the public areas of the Hall being painted (with highest-quality conservation paints) to An Taisce's precise colour specifications.

Celtic National Trust Forum

It was An Taisce's turn in 2006 to host this valuable gathering of National Trust representatives from the Celtic nations (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland). The gathering, which included field trips to the Boyne Canal property and to monuments in the Boyne Valley as well as a business and information exchange session, took place on 30 and 31 March.

It is important for An Taisce, as the National Trust for Ireland, to maintain continuing contacts with fellow National Trusts, particularly in relation to properties and environmental education. The possible development of an enhanced advocacy role for other trusts is a further issue which appears likely to grow in importance in the next few years.

For the first time, the Forum was attended by a senior representative of the European Network of National Heritage Organisations (ENNHO).

European Network of National Heritage Organisations:

The 2006 gathering of this prestigious European grouping will take place in Ireland from 5 to 11 October. John Ducie (An Taisce Council member and former Chairperson of the Property Management Committee) is the Irish representative on the Board of ENNHO and he and David Owen have been working on the programming and funding of the event and have already received generous support from the Heritage Council, Fáilte Ireland and Fingal County Council.

The theme of this year's event is "Sustainable Development – Reconciling Heritage and Development" and the heritage areas covered by Irish and international speakers in the programme are: Industrial and Military Heritage; Country Houses and Landscapes; Cultural Landscape and Vernacular Architecture; Maritime and Coastal Heritage and Urban Heritage.

The venue for the gathering will be the Emmaus Centre Conference Rooms near Swords, Co. Dublin. Volunteers are urgently required for registration, delegate liaison, site visit control and general support. If interested, please let Gavin Harte, Executive Director, An Taisce, have your name as soon as possible.

Proposed Heritage Trust

A meeting was held between An Taisce officers and the initiator of the proposed new Irish Heritage Trust (IHT), Sir David Davies, to exchange points of view and to explore possibilities of collaboration with the new body, which has received Government support and for which financial provision has been made in the most recent Budget.

While the initial priority of the IHT is the safeguarding of historic houses, An Taisce stressed the importance of strongly featuring the natural environment in any list of heritage properties to receive financial support through the new Trust. Sir David Davies undertook to incorporate natural sites and habitats into the properties targeted for protection.

Pending clarification of the governance and structure of the new Trust, Lewis Clohessy has been requested to represent An Taisce in contacts with the new body. Once these issues have been clarified, An Taisce will review its own role and its relationship with the IHT in the heritage properties context.

Education Unit On the Move *Report*


PATRICIA OLIVER

Staff of An Taisce's Education Unit greeted the move to new offices in August 2005 with huge relief and great celebration. While everyone loved the Tailors' Hall, it had really become impossible for the Unit to function in the confined space. The Unit had been housed in the Wolfe Tone Room and while it was a fairly tight squeeze with a staff of four, when the number grew to eight, it became impossible.

Finding new offices was not an easy task. The first requirement was to be within easy walking (and carrying) distance of Tailors' Hall where all of the Unit's seminars, conferences and award ceremonies are held. Almost everything close by was too big and too expensive, or within budget but far too small. It took almost two years to find what we were looking for – a 2000 square foot ground floor retail space, with planning permission for offices, in Swift's Alley, just off Francis Street and five minutes walk to Tailors' Hall.

Green Schools

While the fitting out of the new offices was taking place, an exciting new project emerged within the Green Schools programme that brought our staff numbers up by another three, so our move was absolutely timely. The new project was Transport and it is a theme, which we had wanted to tackle but we simply didn't have the resources to take on. However, the Dublin Transportation Office had successfully carried out a pilot project with schools over the last two years and wanted to expand it. They saw Green Schools as a potential partner and negotiations began which ended with our signing a two-year contract to pilot the "Safe Routes to School" programme to thirty schools in the Greater Dublin Area. Our Green Schools Transport Team now comprises three new staff members who joined the Unit towards the end of 2005. We will be pulling out all the stops to make this a success. Welcome to Anthony Purcell, Jane Hackett and Arlene Finn.



Raising a green flag with President Mary McAlese

As this was going on, the Green Schools core staff were struggling to keep up with the continued growth of the programme. By the end of 2005, the number of registered schools had risen from 48% of all Irish schools to 56% and the number of green flags flying around the country really began to make an impact. New themes we would like to take on are Healthy Living and Biodiversity – but again it will be a question of resources. Well done to Jane Helps, Green Schools Manager, Michael-John O'Mahoney Green Schools Development Manager and Cathy Joyce, Liam Condon and David O'Leary.

National Spring Clean brought out over 267,000 people to clean-up events during April 2005 and many even continued well into May. The emphasis on recycling has paid off and groups have confirmed that they are totally focused on segregating the waste collected. The backbone of the programme is, of course, Tidy Towns groups, residents associations and schools, with our own Green Schools playing a huge part. As the numbers grow and as sensitivity to the litter issue increases, it is obvious that many people, who might never have undertaken a clean-up before, are joining in. Congratulations to Lisa Fitzgerald, National Spring Clean Manager.

The Blue Flag for Beaches and Marinas Campaign had a very successful awards ceremony in Malahide in June generously hosted by Fingal County Council. Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government Dick Roche and President of An Taisce Eanna Ni Lamhna, presented 82 Blue Flags to coastal Local Authorities, the highest number ever achieved in Ireland. The record number of Blue Flags awarded by the International Blue Flag Jury was 78 for Irish beaches and 4 for Irish marinas. This was out of a total of 90 beach and 4 marina applications and represented an increase of 5 flags over 2004. The investment by the Government in wastewater treatment plants is paying off for big cities, with Blue Flags being awarded to Dollymount, in Dublin City, and Silverstrand in Galway City. Well done to Oonagh Duggan, Blue Flag Manager.

Clean Coasts

This Interreg funded programme carried out in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy had a very successful year. The number of Coastcare groups grew and the first Green Coast Awards were presented at a ceremony in Sandycove, generously hosted by Dunlaoire/Rathdown County Council. The Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government Mr. Batt O'Keeffe and Mr. Frank Corcoran, Chairman of An Taisce presented the awards which are for coastal areas where local communities work closely with Local Authorities in caring for the coast. Congratulations to Aidan Gray, Clean Coast Manager.

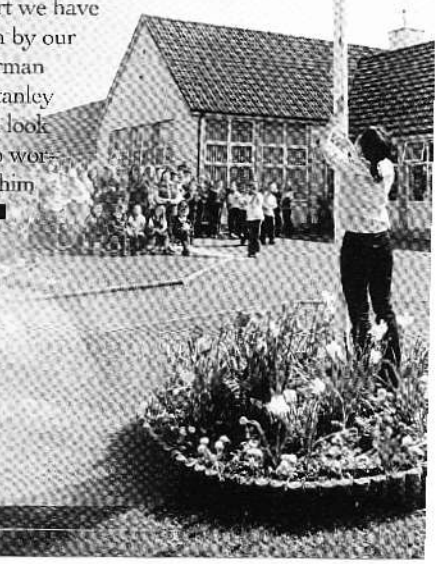
Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) again commissioned An Taisce to carry out monitoring of towns and cities throughout Ireland for the All-Ireland Anti-Litter League. It was felt that the league had been very successful in highlighting litter problems and IBAL extended the monitoring to 50 towns and 5 cities in 2005. The Unit carried out three surveys and IBAL achieved significant media coverage during the year when it announced the results. While initially a bad result can upset local people, the effect can later trigger a concerted effort to address the problem with many towns making rapid growth up the cleanliness table. Well done to Adele O'Connor and all of our IBAL assessors.

LEAF (Learning About Forests) and YRE (Young Reporters for the Environment)

Both of these are excellent programmes but pressure of other work within the Unit meant that we did not focus on them in 2005. We really need to secure extra resources to give these programmes the staff time they require.

In the Education Unit we have been working with Coca Cola and The Wrigley Company Ltd., to research and carry out measures designed to find long-term solutions to the litter problem. Their support over many years of the Green Schools and National Spring Clean campaigns has been crucial. The support of Repak, Johnston and Johnston, TV3 and Vodafone in National Spring Clean is also gratefully acknowledged. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has also given us huge support with the Blue Flag Awards, National Spring Clean and the IBAL Anti-Litter League. All Local Authorities throughout the country have been totally supportive with all of our programmes. Our new Green Schools Transport partners the DTO have been extraordinarily helpful in getting us started on the transport theme. We were delighted in 2004 to add Greenstar as new lead sponsors to the Green Schools programme. Their support continued in 2005 not only with very valuable funding but also with advice and support in the preparation of a Business Plan and also in funding our legal costs in relation to our new offices. We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all of them for their support.

On my own behalf, I want to say a very sincere "thank you" to the staff of the Education Unit who surpassed themselves in 2005. I would also wish to acknowledge the continued support of the members of the Education Committee. Our new Chairman Lewis Clohessy who had just settled into the role was headhunted away from us to take over the role of Chairman of An Taisce's Properties Committee. We were sorry to see him go but appreciate the support we have been given by our new Chairman Charles Stanley Smith and look forward to working with him in 2006. ■



Personnel for 2005/2006

Officers of the Council 2005 –2006

- **Eanna Ni Lamhna (President)**
- **Frank Corcoran (Chairman)**
- **Peter Hennessy (Vice-Chairman)**
- **Charles Stanley-Smith**
  (Acting Hon Secretary to October 2005)
- **Judy Osborne**
  (Hon Secretary from October 2005)
- **Anne Russell**
  (Hon Treasurer til January 2006)

Local Association delegates to council

Eamon Moore	Carlow
Oliver Moylan	Clare
Dagmar O'Riain-Raedal	Cork
Ann McGowan	Donegal North W.
Kevin Duff	Dublin City
Eileen Collins	Dublin South Co.
Mairead Mehigan	Dun Laoghaire
Derrick Hambleton	Galway
Catherine McMullin	Kerry
John Colgan	Kildare North
Frank Taaffe	Kildare South
Brian Hamilton	Kilkenny
Ann Gibbons	Kilkenny
Vivienne McKechnie	Limerick
Ed Wheeler	Meath
Mide Gerrard	Tipperary North
Peter Hennessy	Tipperary South
George Kavanagh	Waterford
Sean McCarthy	Wexford

Nationally elected members

Richard Auler
Norman Campion (resigned Nov 05)
Lewis Clohessy
Frank Corcoran
Gerry Crilly
John Ducie
Bob Galvin
Bernard Goggin
Philip Mullally
Monica Muller
Eanna Ni Lamhna
Anna O'Malley Dunlop
Judy Osborne
Jack O'Sullivan
John O'Sullivan (resigned October 05)
Anne Russell co-opted (resigned January 06)
Bernard Ryan
Charles Stanley- Smith (co-opted)
Kathleen Vandenberghe
David Wilde (resigned Nov 05)

Board of Management 2005/06

Chairman
Frank Corcoran
Vice Chair
Peter Hennessy
Hon. Secretary
Judy Osborne
Hon. Treasurer
Anne Russell (resigned January 2006)
Built Environment Committee Chair
Monica Muller (resigned April 2006)
Natural Environment Committee Chair
Mide Gerrard
Properties Committee Chair
Lewes Clohessy
Education Unit/Communications Committee Chair
Charles Stanley-Smith

Membership Committee	**vacant**
Fund Raising Committee	**vacant**
Administrative Committee	**vacant**

Tailors Hall subcommittee
Tracey Pickerill

Non-board sub-committees

- Heritage Gardens
  and Landscapes subcommittee
  John Ducie
- Waste subcommittee
  Jack O'Sullivan

Representatives on national and international bodies

- EPA Advisory Committee on GMO Regulations
  Eanna Ni Lamhna
- Wicklow Uplands Council
  Philip Geoghegan
- Irish Sea Forum
  Jack O'Sullivan
- European Environmental Bureau
  Frank Corcoran
- Building Regulations Advisory Board
  Ian Lumley
- EENHO
  John Ducie