An Taisce

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Annual Report 1999–2000

Report Of The Chairman

Michael Smith recaps a year of consolidation and consensus, of challenges, successes and defeats.

My First Year

It has been my privilege to chair An Taisce for the last year, a year that I believe has been one of consolidating consensus. An Taisce has a dauntingly-wide remit, a large Council and 27 associations. Internal politics are an always entertaining factor but we agree on the extent of the problems confronting our environment and on our agenda to tackle them. There is an emerging consensus in the organisation that we are a broad church which can, in dealing with these, comprehend both radicals and pragmatists. This is reflected in the complexion of An Taisce's officers and its Management Committee. I am happy to report that the organisation is working well together and productivity is high.

My vision of An Taisce is comprehensivist – we embrace all concerned citizens, all counties and all environmental issues. Our enormous agenda, to paraphrase our founder, Robert Lloyd Praeger is for "all the people of Ireland". We are not elitist, pessimistic or meek.

I hope that there is a growing perception among the public that An Taisce is not "other people". Membership is for anyone who cares about good planning, community development, the environment and our heritage.

My own priorities have been to centre An Taisce and its goals in the political firmament; and to increase our membership and our funding.

Our Committees

An Taisce is attempting to distinguish its operations between Environment and Organisation. This is reflected in the interim operation of our committees and in the motions changing the Articles of Association which will be considered at the A.G.M.

Environment

Monitoring of Planning and Development – We have had a number of significant planning and appeal successes. An Bord Pleanala's approach now seems in general to be more environmental than most local authorities'.

We obtained a refusal for the Burren Visitors Centre which recognised for the first time the precautionary principle – when in doubt about long-term effects of a development you must consider the worst-case 'scenario'. The Bord refused George's Quay and Spencer Dock – at 6m sq ft of high-rise the largest development in the history of the state. These refusals vindicate An Taisce's pre-emptive policy against premature high-rise in Dublin, first announced nearly four years ago. We obtained a refusal for the out-of-town, car-dependent Kill Shopping Centre.

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On a negative note the appeal by An Taisce against a golf course and hotel development at Doonbeg, County Clare, one of the West coast's most intact dune systems was unsuccessful and work has begun on the destruction of Carton Demesne near Maynooth.

We made observations to local authorities on approximately 1500 schemes and appealed approximately 50 schemes, countrywide at national and local level.

Committees
The Economic Committee produced a report on the National Development Plan; and the Transport and Waste Committees are beginning to find legs. Members with expertise in these areas are encouraged to get involved. Our built environment committee had their most active year since their formation out of the former Environment Executive five years ago.

Built Environment Committee (Chaired by Frank Corcoran, assisted by Ian Lumley)
This committee produced a large number of policies included on the following: the new comprehensive Planning Bill which promotes sustainability but imposes a fee for making planning submissions to local authorities, the National Monuments Acts, the new Architectural Heritage Act, the National Spatial Strategy, the National Heritage Plan, the Density guidelines and high-rise in Dublin. It instituted sub-committees on Heritage Gardens and Design Landscapes, and One-off Development in the Countryside. A report and strategy on the difficult and controversial issue of "bungalow blitz" will be published towards the end of 2000.

Natural Environment Committee (Co-ordinated by Tony Lowes)
The joint NGO Natura 2000 initiative funded by the Heritage Council Wildlife Grants 1999 was completed with the publication of 234 additional sites recommended for designation as SACs or SPAs. An inter-Non-Governmental-Organisation (NGO) grouping including An Taisce supported the Heritage Council's call for a revision of the 1996 Strategic Forestry Plan which calls for 80%/20% conifers/deciduous. The spiralling increase in aquaculture (fishfarm) applications permitted by new legislation continued. As a result of the An Taisce complaint to the European Commission, the Kildare By Pass was redesigned with a "plastic wrap" intended to protect the aquifer, Pollardstown Fen, and the supply of water to the Grand Canal. The seaside tax incentive scheme, which An Taisce had opposed almost alone was widely recognised as discredited, though the same mistake is now being made in the Upper Shannon (Longford, Roscommon, Leitrim, parts of Sligo and Cavan). April 1999 saw the publication of an Oil Spill booklet covering oil spill contingency plans and treatment of wild sea birds.

Organisation
Reports from the Organisation Committees are contained herein. The Projects Committee contributed its greatest ever sum to the general running of An Taisce in 1999. The Properties Committee moved to a general stance of inalienability for our thirteen properties and had a great success in obtaining the transfer from the English National Trust of Kanturk Castle. Several new projects and several new properties are the subject of continuing discussion.

We will launch a major website initiative in the coming months. Eventually this will boast an interactive survey of fifty towns countrywide. We are currently reinvigorating the Fundraising Committee and have asked some of our employees to devote a proportion of their time to fundraising. We may shortly appoint professional fundraisers. Any members with expertise in fundraising (and of course any donations (c/o Tailors Hall, Back Lane; Dublin 8)) would be immensely welcome.

Administration and Staff

I'm pleased to welcome Shirley Clerkin as Co-ordinator and Ian Lumley as Heritage Officer and John O'Sullivan back as Planning Officer. Shirley joins us from the Irish Wildlife Trust where she was Campaigns Manager. Ian comes from the Dublin Civic Trust and was formerly with the Spitalfields Trust in London. Though we have only a small number of staff, their calibre and dedication is incomparable. We should not forget Shirley's predecessor, Sadhbh O'Neill who successfully streamlined much of our administration and Valerie Bond who retired as Administrator after thirty years of patience, good humour and prudence and who continued to serve the organisation in a voluntary capacity for much of the year.



Ian Lumley, Shirley Clerkin and Michael Smith

As usual our finances are the major impediment to greater effectiveness. To this end we have applied to the Department of the Environment for up to five new employees. We expect to have a decision on this matter within two months.

Public Relations

Carton LeVert offered their services as design and communications consultants to An Taisce. Not only have they generously offered their services free of charge, they have also effected a welcome, radical change in our general presentation. This includes our publications, including a revived Newsletter which we will produce quarterly, our properties signage and our general publications including membership applications forms etc.

Constitutional Reform

For the last year the organisation has been operating according to new progressive constitutional structures. These, I think, enshrine principles of openness, accountability, democracy and subsidiarity. They also distinguish the organisation committees from the policy committees.

It is now proposed that the A.G.M should adopt these motions as a formal part of the constitution of An Taisce – as part of its Articles of Association. Three strategies animate the constitutional reforms:

1) All committees and all chairpersons of those committees should be elected and none should be self-perpetuating. Debate is healthy. Competition for office affords an opportunity for reflection on our approach. Committees should not continue en masse year to year. Otherwise committees get stagnant, moribund or unrepresentative. If An Taisce is to be a force for rightfulness its own structure must be beyond reproach.

2) There are differences of approach in An Taisce – between those of a more activist typically locally preoccupied disposition and those of a more academic, conservative disposition. Those differences are reconcilable within a broad church like An Taisce.

3) Policy should be prime – we're nothing if we're the best organised body in the country if we're not organised to an important end and that end should be production and implementation of environmental policy. For too long energies in that direction have been thwarted in An Taisce.

The motions are designed to enhance the roles of the Council and the chairperson.

People should be on committees because of the value of their expertise or their representativeness – in short because of the value of their vote, not because they have always been there.

Members of Council

Members of Council are expected either to represent (and report back to) associations in Policy Committee or an Organisation Committee. There will be a substantially changed Council following this year's A.G.M. I hope that after the A.G.M. every association will be properly represented. I also hope that a number of new members representing are as where we are in the process of forming associations will be elected to Council. Every association should be represented. We are currently instigating new associations in Leitrim, Offaly, Monaghan, Roscommon, South Dublin, Trinity College and Wicklow. In the course of the year we revived the Clare and Limerick Associations. By any count this is an impressive rate of development.

I hope that all of our associations will function according to the objects of An Taisce. Regrettably the West Cork Association does not in general deal in writing with planning applications and has incurred a number of unaccounted debts. The officers propose to seek the reformation of this association.

The A.G.M. and Council Meeting

I, and all the other officers, will be subjecting ourselves to re-election on the 9th September. I hope that every one of them, who comprise a balanced and dynamic team will be re-elected but it is important that we should listen to the views of Council and our membership – and so subject ourselves to annual re-election.

I believe that the success of An Taisce should be quantified. In seeking re-election I ask to be assessed across a range of "indicators" – membership levels, finance, policy output, planning applications dealt with, public perception of the organisation, our relations with government, our success in achieving an environmental agenda and so on. I would hope too to spread this ethos within the organisation generally. If re-elected I would seek to place the whole organisation on a more methodical and accountable footing.

Come along to the A.G.M. on September 9th. An Taisce is all its members. Let's hear your voice.

Notice Of The 51st Annual General Meeting

to be held on Saturday, 9th September 2000 at the Tailors Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8, at 11.00 a.m.

Agenda

1. President's welcome
2. Minutes of the 50th Annual General Meeting
3. Adoption of Annual Report
4. Adoption of Statement of Accounts
5. Election of members of Council
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Chairman's Statement
8. Motions from Associations
9. Any other business

The AGM will be followed at 3.30pm by the first meeting of the incoming council of An Taisce, 2000–2001.

In connection with Item 6 of the above Agenda, the rotation of the members of the Council is governed by Articles 33 and 34 of the Articles of Association of the Trust. These read as follows:

"**33** At each Annual General Meeting one-fifth of the elected members of the Council for the time being with the exception of the President and the immediate past President, or if their number is not a multiple of five then the number nearest one-fifth, shall retire from office. An elected member of the Council who retires in accordance with the provisions of this article shall not be eligible for re-election unless he be chairman of the Council, Honorary Secretary of the Company or Honorary Treasurer of the Company until the Annual General Meeting next following.

34 The elected members of the Council to retire in every year shall be those who have been the longest in office since their last election, but as between persons who became members of Council on the same day, those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot. In the notice calling each Annual General Meeting the Council shall state the names of the elected members who fall to retire and the names of those whom the Council proposes for election to the resulting vacancies, but it shall be the power of any member of the company to propose for election any other member or members, not exceeding two in number, apart from those proposed by the Council, provided that written notice of intention to propose the names of such persons is delivered by the proposer to the Honorary Secretary of the Company at least two weeks before the date of the meeting and provided also that the said written notice from the proposer contains the name and address of the seconder and that the person, or persons, so proposed for election shall declare in the said written notice his or her willingness to serve and attend Council meetings. In default of election of a new member of Council by the members at a General meeting, the Council shall at its next following meeting co-opt a member to fill the vacancy."

In accordance with the Articles of Association the following members retire and are not eligible for re-election: Ms E.Donnelly, Ms.A.Gibbons, Mr.D.Hambleton, Mr.J. James, Mr. J.James, Mr. J.Joyce, Mr.P.Osborne, Mr.J.O'Sullivan, Mr.B.Scanlon, Ms. M.Sweeney, Prof.E.Colleran.

In accordance with the Articles of Association the following members retire but are eligible for re-election: Ms.C.O'Connor, Mr.G.Crilly, Mr. P.Geoghegan, Ms.E.Collins, Ms.C.Gogarty, Mr.B.Ryan, Mr.J.Ducie, Mr.L.Bourke, Mr.N.Campion, Ms.S.Dillon, Mr.B.Goggin, Ms.C.McMullin, Mr.D.Nolan, Mr.J.Cleary.

Mr.I.Lumley has been disqualified from council after taking up the position of Heritage Officer with An Taisce.

Mr.J.Keogh resigned from council in June 2000.

The names of those nominated for election to Council will be announced at the Annual General Meeting. If a ballot is necessary the names of the successful candidates will be published in the Irish Times, Irish Independent and the Examiner within ten days from the date of the Annual General Meeting.

Proposed Changes to the Articles of Association

These changes shall take effect upon the approval being granted by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment and each and every motion hereunder shall be so read

Change "Chairman" to "Chairperson" throughout; change "he" to "he/she"; change "his" to "his/ her" throughout.

Proposed by Mr. John Ducie
Seconded by Ms Mide Gerrard

Delete Articles 45 to Article 47 inclusive. Substitute "Management Committee" for "Executive Committee" in Article 48.

Insert before GENERAL MEETINGS as 8. (and adjust subsequent numbering accordingly):

Officers
The roles of the officers shall be as set out below, explicated from time to time by the Council.

President
The role of the President within An Taisce is honorary. The President shall in general chair General Meetings. He/she shall represent the long-term interest of An Taisce. The President is entitled to attend meetings of, and participate in discussions in, any committee of An Taisce.

Chairperson
The Chairperson shall be elected annually, shall act as chief executive of An Taisce, shall usually chair General Meetings of the Council and shall exercise the functions of the Council between Council Meetings in consultation with his/her fellow officers.

Vice-Chairperson
The Vice-Chairperson shall be elected annually by the Council. The Vice-Chairperson shall deputise for the chairperson in his/her absence for such tasks as the chairperson expressly delegates.

Honorary Secretary
The Honorary Secretary shall be elected annually by the Council, and shall be responsible for the following: carrying out such functions as are required of a company secretary under statute, including submitting Annual Returns; acting as secretary to the Council, including organising General Meetings, co-ordinating reports from committees, sub-committees, associations and An Taisce appointees to other bodies for presentation to the Council in advance of General Meetings; disseminating information to associations; and receiving regular reports and financial information from Associations. The Honorary Secretary shall be aided in these duties by the administrative employees.

Honorary Treasurer
The Honorary Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Council, and shall be responsible to the Council for the following: all of the financial duties of An Taisce including ensuring that accounts are audited annually and presented, with the Auditor's report, to the Annual General Meeting; exercising control over the financial records and accounts; and reporting regularly to the Council. The Honorary Treasurer shall be aided in these duties by the administrative employees.

Committees
There shall be four types of committee in An Taisce: Policy committees, Organisation Committees, Co-ordinating Committees (the Environment Committee and the Management Committee) and Local Association Committees. All of these committees are responsible to Council.

Environment Committee
The National Environment Committee shall comprise the Chairperson of the Council, the Vice Chairperson of the Council and the chairpersons of each of the active Policy Committees that deals primarily with the environment. It shall receive reports and/or minutes from each of the active Policy Committees. It shall ensure that the primary concern of An Taisce is policy-formulation and policy-publicisation, that the Policy Committees run efficiently and that policy is co-ordinated.

Policy Committees
The Policy Committees shall formulate policy for ratification by the Council and publicise that policy. Every attempt shall be made to ensure that policy is developed pro-actively. However, pending ratification of any policy, the Policy Committees may make statements in consultation with the Chairperson of the Council. A chairperson and vice-chairperson for each Policy Committee shall be nominated annually by the Chairperson of the Council in consultation with that Policy Committee for the approval of the Council. Each Policy Committee shall meet at least quarterly. Subject to these rules, each Policy Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure. Any member of the Council may belong to any Policy Committee and may attend any meeting of any Policy Committee. Policy Committees include: Natural Environment (including Agriculture and Forestry); Built Environment; Commerce and Industry; Waste; Transport; and Sustainable Development and International.

The Management Committee shall take office at the second Council meeting following each Annual General Meeting. It shall usually meet once every calendar month and in any event not less than once every two months. It shall comprise the elected officers of An Taisce, a delegate appointed annually by each of the active Organisation Committees, the chairperson of the Environment Committee and four members elected annually by the Council. Other persons active within An Taisce, including especially those responsible for any project employee, may be invited to attend Management Committee meetings. The Management Committee shall advise the Council and the Chairperson of the Council in the exercise of their functions and ensure co-ordination between Organisation committees. It shall consider reports and/or minutes from all active Organisation Committees, the Environment Committee and Local Association Committees and make proposals to Council to improve institutional efficiency. It shall report in detail to each meeting of the Council.

Organisation Committees
Pending a more detailed explication of its role by the Council, each established Organisation Committee shall continue to exercise the powers heretofore exercised by it.
A chairperson and vice-chairperson for each Organisation Committee shall be nominated annually by the Chairperson of the Council in consultation with that Organisation Committee for the approval of the Council. Each Organisation Committee shall meet at least quarterly. Subject to these rules, each Organisation Committee shall establish its own rules of procedure. Any member of the Council may belong to any Organisation Committee and may, with the agreement of the Chairperson of any Organisation Committee, attend any meeting of any committee.

Organisation Committee.
Organisation Committees are: Fundraising and Finance; Properties; Projects; and Tailors Hall. Liaison between the national committees within the organisation is to be encouraged. A report from each national committee within the organisation shall be produced before each meeting of the Council and shall be circulated to members of the Council and to each national committee. The report shall outline the activities of the committee. Reports and minutes from the Environment Committee shall be made available to the Management Committee and reports and minutes from the Management Committee shall be made available to the Environment Committee.

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Honorary Secretary's Report

For The Year 1999 And To Date

The year has been marked by much change, split as it was between two Chairmen. There have been movements in staff, changes in basic planning law, in local association personnel, in our policy, in the organisation's structures, and most of all changes in the public's perception and appreciation of An Taisce's role in Irish society.

The management committee in its old form met formally in February, April and September, of 1999; and in its new form in November when members elected by Council took their seats for the first time. In 2000 management's role became primarily that of advisor to Council and its chairperson and it was increasingly representative of Council.

The 50th A.G.M. of the Organisation was held on 25th of September 1999. The new structures for the organisation were formally proposed at this meeting.

The Council of An Taisce met in February, May, September and on 6th November 1999. In 2000 Council has had two further meetings.

At the September Council meeting the Chairman Philip Geoghegan indicated his wish to step down as Chair, the Council in accepting his wish, thanked him for his work during the past two years. Michael Smith was elected Chairman. Having been challenged by Gerry Crilly of the Louth Association, John Ducie was elected Vice Chair, and Mide Gerrard was elected, for a second year as Hon. Sec. having been challenged by Elizabeth Donnelly formerly of the Environment Education Unit. Michael McClintock remained Hon. Treasurer.

Norman Campion stepped down as vice chair at this meeting, but remained, as it were in harness, taking on the guidance of the Properties' Committee and the forthcoming National Consultation Day. The Properties committee noted with regret the decision of Geraldine Walsh its long time Chair to stand down, and thanked her for her work on properties and especially for her negotiation of the transfer of Kanturk Castle from the National Trust to An Taisce.

The National Consultation Day for members and friends was held in Dublin Castle on 30th October 1999. This helped develop firm ties with the National Trust of Northern Ireland, and built on solid foundations for friendship and cooperation between the two sister organisations. The Kanturk Castle Day in August 2000 consolidated this, President Mary MacAleese graciously presiding over the proceedings.

Staff

During the year it became clear that Valerie Bond our Secretary Administrator since 1986 wished to retire. We are very grateful to Valerie who stayed in office until the end of 1999, and having kept a tight ship, handed on the administration to Sadhbh O'Neill. Sadhbh became our new Co-ordinator and stayed with us from January 2000 to June. She quickly found her feet in the new job, upgraded the computer system , helping to improve communication within and without the organisation, producing a new newsletter for membership which highlighted developments in the work of An Taisce. We wish her much happiness with her new baby. Since the 17th July we have a new Co-ordinator, Shirley Clerkin, who brings with her a special interest knowledge and interest in wildlife having worked with the IWT.

Planning Staff

Two appointments were made during the year: John O'Sullivan as senior planner for Dublin and the Eastern region, and Ms. Angela Dullaghan as assistant planner. In 2000 Ian Lumley was appointed as Heritage officer. In the context of the above appointments, I would like to thank the members of the 3 Appointments Boards convened during the year, who worked hard to make the interviews rewarding for both the participants and the board members, and who gave voluntary time generously.

Association Matters

The public perception of An Taisce as a leader among Non Governmental Organisations has been amply demonstrated by the development of new Associations in Clare, Limerick and Sligo. Other associations are being instituted. Associations made partnerships and coalitions with other organisations to develop policy, carry out initiatives and apply for project finance. Local associations produced newsletters and sent reports to council. Some associations reported regularly, though the responce has been patchy, among the bright stars were Donegal, Louth, Kerry, and the Dublin City Association. The West Cork Association has been referred to in the Chairman's report.

Structures

Council ratified the new committee structures, at the Council meeting of 22nd May 1999. These must now be incorporated into the Articles of Association of the organisation and will be so presented at the coming AGM.

The new committee structure has, as was hoped, drawn the organisation more closely together, and laid down foundations for clear planning in finance, policy formation and publicity. Information flow improved with reports from committees available to all Council members.The Hon. Treasurer advised us, when fundraising, to promote tax concessions for companies. This advice helped us to secure funding from Shell for the publication of The Oil Spill Booklet in April 1999. Local associations are encouraged to fundraise both for local purposes and for the National Organisation.

The Hon Secretary had the honour to represent An Taisce on a number of occasions: as An Taisce's nominee to the Rural Development Forum held in Nenagh and as an elected member of The Woodlands of Ireland steering committee.

All representatives and committees are specified in detail in the Annual Report.

The work of An Taisce is dependent on its volunteers, its duties are unrelenting especially in the context of rapid change. It is vital that they should receive maximum encouragement and support.

Report Of The Tailors Hall Committee

During the year the Tailors Hall Committee had several meetings with Tommy O'Shaughnessy of the OPW. These were also attended by our architect, John Redmill. Priorities were established for the work to be undertaken in the Hall by the OPW's builders. Top of the list was the replacement of rotten windows in the Lower Hall and this work has now been completed. A much needed wooden floor has been laid in the front hall.

It had long been the ambition of the Tailors Hall Committee to carry out these two jobs but our financial situation did not allow us to undertake this work.

Other maintenance work has also been undertaken and the entire Hall (including the offices on the top floor) has been painted in colours chosen by An Taisce.

Tailors Hall continues to provide offices for An Taisce and also to house the Environmental Education Unit.

Consuelo O'Connor,
Chairwoman, Tailors Hall Committee.

An Taisce Entrusted with the Future of Kanturk Castle

On July 14th 2000 The National Trust handed over Kanturk Castle to An Taisce to hold in trust for the people of Ireland. This significant event was marked by an enjoyable and symbolic ceremony.



President Mary McAleese with her husband Martin, An Taisce President– Prof. David Jeffery, Prof. Ronnie Buchanan and friends at Kanturk Castle. Photograph: Pádraig O'Flannabhra

On 14th July 2000 President Mary McAleese presided at a formal ceremony at which the National Trust handed over Kanturk Castle to An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland – to hold in trust for the people of Ireland.

Kanturk Castle is an important part of the heritage of the people of Kanturk, Co. Cork, and of the McCarthy Clan. Built in 1609, it was never completed and eventually was acquired by the Perceval family. It remained in an unfinished condition for several centuries and was donated one hundred years ago to the National Trust for Places of Historical Interest or National Beauty, which had been established in 1895.

Kanturk became the seventh property to come into the ownership of the National Trust, and the first in Ireland. The National Trust now owns and opens to the public many historical houses, gardens and industrial buildings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also owns substantial areas of coast and countryside to protect them for all time. Kanturk was the only property the conservation charity owned in what was to become the Republic of Ireland.



Members of the public enjoying a visit to Kanturk Castle.

An Taisce – The National Trust for Ireland – was established in 1946 (An Taisce means a safe keeping place).

In the 1950s the National Trust invited An Taisce to manage Kanturk Castle on its behalf. Subsequently An Taisce entered into an agreement with the Office of Public Works, which undertook to care for and maintain the site together with the adjacent land purchased by An Taisce to enhance the castle. This guardianship arrangement still continues with Duchas, the successor of the OPW.

The Management of Kanturk Castle is an excellent example of partnership between the two National Trusts, Duchas and the Kanturk Community Council, which had the castle floodlighting installed.

The ceremony consisted of the handing over of a large symbolic 'Key' by the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Region of the National Trust, Professor Ronald Buchanan, to President McAleese who accepted it on behalf of the people of Ireland. She praised the work of An Taisce and Duchas and then passed the 'Key' to Dr. David Jeffrey. He affirmed An Taisce's acceptance of Kanturk Castle to hold in trust for the people.

An Taisce Properties

Norman Campion reports on the events of the past year.

An Taisce tends to hide its light under a bushel when it comes to its properties, but certainly not when it came to celebrating the hand over of Kanturk Castle to An Taisce by the National Trust, a major event with approximately 400 present. It was a great community event. Partnership with Duchas and the community ensures the future care and interest in the Castle, which is in superb condition.

Booterstown Nature Reserve is another example of partnership, this with Birdwatch Ireland and others. It is under the watchful eye of our Dun Laoghaire Association. An international working holiday organised by the National Trust was held again this year to improve access and included participants from as far away as Japan. New signage has also been erected.

The Weigh-house at Gort, Co. Galway, is being maintained by Galway Association – do look at it when in the area – it is used as a Tourist Information point.

Another example of partnership is the role of An Taisce in the restoration of Drimnagh Castle over the years.

Howth Courthouse continues to be a community asset and ably managed by Rosalie Andrews.

Tailors Hall – The dedicated efforts of the Tailor Hall Committee over many years have given An Taisce a property to be proud of. They have taken it from a wrecked building to a superb example of the last of the guildhalls of Dublin.

Boyne Canal – We are co-operating with Meath County Council in the development of a walking route using the towpath as part of it. It is included in the Boyne Valley Integrated Development Plan. Meath Association have overseen An Taisce's interests in the Boyne Navigation, which was given to An Taisce by the Spicer family. We donated part of the land for the Newgrange Centre to Duchas some years ago.

Many of our less obvious wild places include such place as part of the Burren, Mongon Bog, Co. Offaly and the mountain area adjacent to Glenveagh National Park, we even have some islands in Mulroy Bay, watched over by Donegal Association (see list of properties).

Norman Campion
Chairman, Properties Group

Liaison with the National Trust

The continuing development of the relationship with the National Trust manifested itself with numerous contracts during the year. A combined meeting with the Northern Ireland and Welsh Regions of the National Trust and the National Trust for Scotland was held in Bangor, Co. Down in October. Various areas of mutual interest, mainly wild places were highlighted.

An Taisce was represented at the National Trust Annual General Meeting event held at the Waterfront Centre, Belfast in 1999.

A special word of appreciation to Ian McQuistan who has retired as Regional Director N.I. and Ron Buchanan who steps down as Chairman in August 2000. Both have done much to foster our relationship and have offered to assist An Taisce in their private capacities from time to time.

They both were awarded the O.B.E. for their services to the environment.

National Consultation Days

Two open consultation days were held in 1999 and provided much useful guidance to the National Council.

Mallow was the venue for the March day and Dublin Castle for October's discussions.

The latter was chaired by Prof. R. Buchanan of the National Trust and was addressed by the Minister of the Environment on the role of the importance of An Taisce's contribution in protecting Ireland's environment.

Other speakers included Mary Hanna from the Heritage Council; Professor Emer Colleran, Professor Frank Convery, Professor David Jeffrey, Mr. Michael Smith and Mr. John Ducie spoke on behalf of An Taisce. Mr. Norman Campion, outgoing Vice Chairman, organised the event.



New signage at Booterstown Marsh

Properties held by An Taisce in trust for the people of Ireland

The Boyne Canal

The Boyne Navigation (disused for many years) runs for 19 miles between Navan and Drogheda.

Booterstown Marsh

A salt water/fresh water marsh in south Co. Dublin; important for plant and bird life. Habitat of the protected species Puccinellia fasciculata (Borrer's Salt Marsh Grass).

Crocnafarragh

Co. Donegal 6500 acres of rough mountain country; leased to the OPW and incorporated in the Glenveagh National Park.

"The Crane"

A cut limestone weigh house situated in the Market Place, Gort, County Galway.

Town Garden and Bird Sanctuary

Wellington Place/Morehampton Road, Dublin 4

Burren

County Clare, 38 acres, to be kept in its present natural unspoilt state as an area of botanical and general scientific interest.

Kanturk Castle

County Cork; in the care of Duchas

Mongan Bog

Near Clonmacnoise, County Offaly. One of the last remaining midland raised bogs; of international ecological interest.

Oweninny Bog

A scientifically important iron-flush area near Bellacorick in north-west Mayo.

The Old Courthouse, Howth

Leased from Dublin Corporation and restored for community use.

The Tailors Hall

Early 18th century guildhall, leased from Dublin Corporation. An Taisce's headquarters since 1984.

The Gull Islands

Five small islands in Mulroy Bay, County Donegal.

Rough Island

6 acre island in Mulroy Bay, County Donegal

Environmental Education Unit Projects

A Report on the events and changes of the past year.

Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe (FEEE)
An Taisce is the Irish member of FEEE and co-ordinates the three FEEE campaigns in Ireland; The European Blue Flag Award for Beaches and Marinas; Young Reporters for the Environment and the Green-Schools Campaign.

European Blue Flag Campaign
In 1999 An Taisce co-ordinated the campaign in Ireland for the seventh year with 77 Blue Flags being awarded to beaches, and 4 Blue Flags to marinas. Meetings were held during the year with Local Authority personnel to discuss new Blue Flag criteria which came into effect in 2000. The special Blue Flag for Boat Owners was also launched in Ireland for 1999. The Blue Flag Campaign was funded by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

Young Reporters for the Environment
During May 2000, an Irish YRE student attended a Young Reporters mission near Lisbon, Portugal. The title of the mission was "Sustainable development. A strategy for the future" and incorporated waste management, water supply and alternative energies. ABAE in Portugal funded day-to-day living expenses, while An Taisce covered the cost of the flight to Lisbon with support from the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

Three Irish articles were submitted by An Taisce for consideration for the YRE award. Awards were presented in each of the five categories – cities, water, coastline, waste and agriculture. There were numerous entries from all participating countries. An article entitled "Incineration – a better way of waste disposal" from Newtown school, Waterford was chosen as the winner in the "waste" category. The author of the article, Miss Kate Godhino, won a digital camera for her school.

A new, eyecatching flyer has been produced to advertise YRE. This was sent to all the secondary schools in the country before the end of the school year. So far there has been a very good response to the flyer, with many schools interested in getting involved with the programme for 2000/2001. The programme is no longer only being offered to Transition year students, but has been extended to include all senior cycle students.

With greater I.T. facilities in schools and increasing familiarity with the World Wide Web among students and teachers, An Taisce expects strong growth in this programme over the next few years.

Green-Schools
The Green-Schools campaign continues to go from strength to strength. All Local Authorities with the exception of Cork are now participating. There are now nearly 800 schools registered for the programme across the country. That's almost 20% of all Irish schools, primary and second level. During the 1999/2000 academic year 29 Green-Schools teacher training seminars were held. These seminars introduce the programme to new schools and provide a support network for schools already involved. An Taisce also hosted a Local Authority Training Day, for Environment Officers working with the Green-Schools. All the Green-Schools are currently working on the Litter and Waste and Waste Minimisation and Recovery themes. An Taisce have been working in conjunction with the Tidy Britain Group and the Irish Energy Centre to produce the next theme book Energy. An Taisce's Green-Schools Evaluation Committee met twice during the 1999/2000 school year and there are now forty-five schools that have been awarded the European Green-Flag a recognised symbol of environmental endeavour. Minister or Education, Dr. Michael Woods presented the Green-Flag to twenty-two schools from around the country at an award ceremony hosted by An Taisce at Tailors Hall. A student member of the Green-Schools Committee at Our Lady of Victories Boys National School, Ballymun, Declan McKeown attended the Millennium International Children's Conference on the Environment in Eastbourne, with funding support from the Department of Environment and Local Government. Green-Schools is co-ordinated in twenty countries and in Ireland it is as a partnership between An Taisce and Irish Local Authorities with funding from Coca-Cola.

National Spring Clean
August 1999 saw the beginning of work on the second National Spring Clean, which was held in April 2000. The campaign was a huge success, and exceeded all targets. Almost 200,000 volunteers participated in over 2,000 clean ups across the country, with 1/5th of all schools and 1/3rd of all Tidy Town associations taking part).

Clean ups were carried out in all counties and there was 8,900 tonnes of litter collected.

Press coverage was phenomenal. The increase in coverage on television and local radio and press served to boost interest in the campaign.

The campaign was launched on the 3rd of April in Dublin Castle by the Minister of the Environment and Local Government, Mr. Noel Dempsey. Highlights of the month included a litter sweep lead by the General Commanding Officer across the Curragh, Co. Kildare; a huge clean up along 120km of scenic walkway through the Bluestack Mountains, Co. Donegal and a large community clean up of a Birdwatch-owned wood in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

Tidy Britain Group, who are celebrating their 10th successful year of the campaign, were on hand again this year to offer expert advice and support. National Spring Clean was funded by the Department of the Environment and Local Government; Coca-Cola; The Wrigley Company and McDonalds.

Clare Litter Challenge
Following the success of the IBAL (Irish Business Against Litter) / An Taisce Waterford Litter Challenge between April 1997 and July 1998, a new challenge was issued to Clare County Council in Febuary 2000 to achieve "litter-free" status by September 2001, with a substantial monetary prize on offer. An Taisce has been adjudicator of Clare's litter status. A survey was carried out in May 2000 to set a baseline of the litter situation in the county. It is envisaged that litter-free status can be achieved by the September 2001 deadline with motivation, dedication, and co-operation of all partners involved.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the Education Unit staff, Carla Ward, Nessa O'Connor, Lisa Cassidy and Colin Lawton for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year. A thank you also to our Blue Flag beach inspectors, Green-Schools evaluators and litter monitors. A special thanks to Adele O'Connor for her work on surveys and also to the Head Office staff, Bernadette Smith and Valerie Bond. We are fortunate in having staff and volunteers of such high calibre. The achievements of the Education Unit would not be possible without the support of our sponsors to whom we express our grateful thanks.

Patricia Oliver

Director
An Taisce Environmental Education Unit

Annual Report For 1999

Officers and other members of the Management Advisory Committee 1999–2000

Mr. Michael Smith	Chairman
Ms. Mide Gerrard	Honorary Secretary
Mr. Michael McClintock	Honorary Treasurer
Mr. John Ducie	Vice-Chairman
Mr. Norman Campion	Chairman, properties Committee
Mr. Frank Corcoran	Chairman, BEC
Mr. Roger Garland	Council representative
Mr. Tony Lowes	Chairman, NEC
Mr. Bernard Ryan	Tailors Hall Committee representative
Mr. Charles Stanley-Smith	Council representative
Ms. Margaret Sweeney	Chairwoman, Projects Committee
Ms. Valerin Yeaton	Council representative

Committees and Working Groups

Environment Committee	Mr. Michael Smith, Chairman
Built Environment Committee	Mr. Frank Corcoran, Chairman
Natural Environment Committee	Mr. Tony Lowes, Co-ordinator
Economic Committee	Mr. Michael Smith, Acting Chairman
Properties and Reserves Committee	Mr. Norman Campion, Chairman
Projects Committee	Ms. Margaret Sweeney, Chairwoman
Transport Committee	Mr. John O'Sullivan (Dublin), Chairman
Heritage Gardens and designed landscapes	Mr. John Ducie, Chairman
Fundraising Committee	Michael Smith, Chairman
Tailors Hall Committee	Ms. Consuelo O'Connor, Chairwoman
Governors of Tailors Hall	Dr. Kevin B.Nowlan, Dr. Emer Colleran, Dr. Frank Hegarty, Ms Consuelo O'Connor, Ms. Patricia Oliver, Mr. Patrick Shaffrey.

Representatives on National and International Bodies

Mr. Philip Geoghegan	Comhar – The National Sustainable Development Partnership
Ms. Jeanne Meldon	National Environment & Social Forum (representing environmental interests, nominated by An Taisce)
Prof. David Jeffrey	EPA Advisory Committee on Genetically Modified Organisms Regulations
Prof. F. Convery	Dept. of Touriam, sport & Recreation Pilot "Tourism and the Environment" Committee
Mr. David Rowe	Wicklow Uplands Council
Mr. Peter Pearson	Dept. of the Environment Local Urban & Rural Development Operational Programme Advisory panel
Ms. Patricia Oliver	Irish Woodland Trust
Mr. Liam Bourke	Tree Council of Ireland
Ms Consuelo O'Connor	Alfred Beit Foundation
Ms Grania Weir	Craggaunowen project
Mr. Jack O'Sullivan	Irish Sea Forum
Ms. Consuelo O'Connor	Europa Nostra/IBI
Ms. Geraldine Walsh	European Environmental Bureau
Ms. Margaret Sweeney	EEB Agriculture Woking Group
Mr. Derry O'Connell	EEB Urban problems Working group
Dr. Emer Colleran	EEB Biotechnology Working group
Ms. Geraldine Walsh	European partners for the Environment
Ms. Patricia Oliver	Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe
National Non-governmental organisation membership	European Union for Coastal Conservation
National non-governmental organisation membership	World Conservation Union/IUCN

Other members of Council

Mr. Liam Bourke
Ms Maeve Breen
Ms. Alison Carter
Mr. Jim Cleary
Dr. Emer Colleran
Ms. Eileen Collins
Prof. Frank Convery
Mr. Gerald Crilly
Dr. Sara Dillon
Ms. Elizabeth Donnelly
Mr. Jarlath Fallon
Ms. Mary Gallagher McBride
Mr. Philip Geoghegan
Ms. Ann Gibbons
Ms. Claire Gogarty
Mr. Bernard Goggin
Mr. Derrick Hambleton
Mr. William Hodnett
Mr. Liam Irwin
Mr. John Jame
Mr. Jim Joyce
Mr. John Keogh
Mr. Ian Lumley
Mr. Ruadhan MacEoin
Mr. Patrick Mackey
Dr. Catherine McMullin
Dr. Damien Nolan
Ms. Consuelo O'Connor
Ms. Maeve O'Donnell
Ms. Patricia Oliver
Mr. Peter Osborne
Mr. Jack O'Sullivan
Mr. Jackie O'Sullivan
Mr. Michael O'Sullivan
Mr. Nicholas Prins
Mr. David Rowe
Ms. Paula Russell
Mr. Bill Scanlan
Ms. Anne Wilkinson

An Taisce Associations exist in the following areas:

Carlow
Clare
Cork
West Cork
North West Donegal
South West Donegal
Dublin City
Dun Laoghaire
South County Dublin
South West Dublin
Fingal
Galway
Kerry
Kildare
Kilkenny
Louth
Meath
North Tipperary
South Tipperary
Waterford
Wexford

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Financial Report

For the year ended 31 December 1999

1999 Accounts

The accounts for 1999 show, in round figures, an operating deficit of IR£ 12,000. In last year's report, I said we were budgeting for an annual deficit of IR£ 50,000 in the absence of any additional sources of funds. To be sure that I am not misunderstood, that larger figure is still the annual operating deficit. The result for 1999 is as good as it is, if a deficit can be described as good, only because the projects generated more than budget and because we did not have the full complement of planning staff for the year.

I am not going to deal with the accounts, line by line, because it bores most people, and because they are essentially on budget and unremarkable. I pick out two points for particular comment, both on the income side.

As already mentioned, the project contribution has come in above budget, and our thanks should again be expressed to all those who work so hard in the management and administration of the projects.

The details on these pages are a summary of the accounts of An Taisce. A full set of accounts can be obtained from Tailors Hall.

Statement of Income

For year ended 31st December 1999

Income	1999	1998
	IR£	IR£
Total income	109,867	92,819

Statement of income
for the year ended 31st December 1999

Income	1999	1998
	IR£	IR£
Membership	58,075	59,465
Dividends received	2,653	1,739
Tax refund	301	–
Donations, legacies and miscellaneous reciepts	11,434	12,430
Deposit interest	1,374	–
Project management	35,711	16,565
Corporate contributions	–	2,500
Publications	319	116
Total operating income	**109,867**	**92,819**

The income from members' subscriptions shows a depressing fall over the last two years. When the annual renewal information pack was sent out, we enclosed with it a membership application form and asked you all to enroll a new member. The response has been disappointing. Could I plead again to everyone to enroll at least one more member. By simple arithmetic, a doubling of our membership would solve the annual deficit.

Fundraising
I am glad to report that there is a newly formed fundraising committee and new ideas are being pursued. Please do not let that news stop the membership drive I asked for in the previous paragraph.

The Future and The Euro
Like every other organisation, we have to decide when to change all our accounting to euros. As we prepare accounts to 31 December, then I think it most likely that we shall change after 31 December 2001. All our present subscription rates are in pounds, and I think have not changed for some time. I am recommending to Council that these should be increased. If an increase in your subscription is approved, and also expressed in euros, please do not cry "foul" then, or accuse us of adding to inflationary trends.

People
Acknowledging those who do so much for little or nothing should be a standard paragraph in the annual report. Without so much effort which is not financially rewarded, the accounts would make very depressing reading. Thank you to everyone who contributes.

Thank you also to Valerie Bond, whose many years work have already been properly acknowledged by Council. Valerie has continued to help and support me on bookkeeping and accounts matters, for which I am particularly grateful.

Apology
Finally, I regret that I shall not be at the AGM to answer questions, but my holiday was booked before this date was settled.

Michael McClintock, Hon. Treasurer

Statement of Expenditure

For year ended 31st December 1999

Operating expenditure	1999 IR£	1998 IR£
Planning	39,091	25,807
Salaries, wages & pensions	28,404	26,780
Printing and stationery	10,293	8,047
Postage and telephone	7,926	6,916
Repairs and maintenance	3,640	1,298
Audit and accountancy	4,233	3,751
Legal costs	(1,000)	–
Bank interests & charges	1,132	1,248
Subscriptions	780	546
Computer costs	605	895
Light and heat	3,485	2,230
Insurance	6,750	6,889
Advertising & public relations	903	–
Miscellaneous	3,793	2,961
Depreciation	3,185	2,986
Costs of planning appeals	480	730
Travel	–	1,176
Fundraising and finance	–	178
Built Environment Group	274	13
Natural Env Group	(17)	825
Property/ reserves Group	(2,093)	–
Association Costs	6,262	3,427
Membership Development	417	502
EEB expenses	(525)	–
Total operating expenditure	**118,018**	**97,205**
Operating (deficit) before Tailors Hall (deficit) Surplus	(8,151)	(4,386)
Tailors Hall net (deficit)/surplus	(3,627)	6,653
Operating (deficit)/surplus for year	**(11,778)**	**2,267**

Balance Sheet

For year ended 31st December 1999

	1999 IR£	1998 IR£
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	3,415	5,200
Financial assets		
Investments	20,228	20,228
	23,643	25,428
Current assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	33,844	22,658
Project bank accounts	50,945	132,793
Prize bonds	105	105
Post office savings certs	3,000	–
Receivable and prepaid expenditure	7,765	50,565
	95,659	206,121
Current liabilities		
Bank overdraft	86	14,157
Payables & accrued expenditure	6,938	11,653
Project funds held	50,945	132,793
Amounts due to Castlehyde fund	325	325
	58,294	158,928
Net current assets	37,365	47,193
Total assets less current liabilities	61,008	72,621
Assets held for Castlehyde fund	24,400	23,411
	85,408	96,032
Capital employed		
General fund surplus	61,008	72,621
Deferred credit	24,400	23,411
	85,408	96,032

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Members of the Council
Members of Council are expected either to represent (and report back to) associations in an active way or to join a committee at national level – either a Policy Committee or an Organisation Committee.

An Taisce Employees
Employees shall be responsible to the Chairperson of the Council, report to the Council and carry out the tasks delegated to them by national committees or (where so agreed) Associations. Where reasonable, with adequate notice and where agreed with the Chairperson of the Council, employees of An Taisce may be asked by any chairperson to attend a national committee meeting. There shall be a personnel standing committee consisting of the Chairperson of the Council and a representative of the Management Committee and a representative of the Environment Committee. The personnel appointment standing committee shall select in each case an appointment panel which shall include at least one other member of the Council who shall have due regard to any expressed views of the Council and also the expertise in the selection process as appropriate.

Appeals
Council shall appoint an official to liaise with local associations over the taking of appeals to, and withdrawal of, appeals from An Bord Pleanala. In the event of a dispute, the matter shall be resolved in consultation with the local association by a committee comprising the Chairperson of the Council, the chairperson of the Policy Committee whose remit most obviously extends to the application in question and the chairperson of the National Environment Committee (or alternates elected by the committees to which these chairpersons are responsible) which shall be in a position to make decisions at very short notice".

Proposed by Mr. Michael Smith
Seconded by Mr. John Ducie

Insert after Article 23 "No Member may be appointed a proxy for more than one person at any meeting".

Proposed by Ms Mide Gerrard
Seconded by Mr. John Ducie

Insert after 41. (b) as 41. (c) (and adjust subsequent lettering accordingly): "Where possible without prejudice to the operation of these articles of association,[An Taisce subscribes to the principle of subsidiarity with regard to its] local associations".

Proposed by Mr. John Ducie
Seconded by Mr. Norman Campion

Insert at end of Article 42: "The Council may draw up a Declaration of Adherence to the Objects of An Taisce and/or a Code of Conduct for members, new members, association committee members and/or new association committee members". Members may be expelled by the Chairperson of the Council for any substantive breach of such Declaration of Adherence to the Objects of An Taisce or Code of Conduct. Any such expulsion shall be subject to review by the Council.

Proposed by Mr. John Ducie
Seconded by Mr. Michael Smith

Nomination procedures for election of members of council
Any member of An Taisce may nominate for election to the Council not more than two other members, provided that he/she gives written notice to the Secretary at least two weeks before the Annual General Meeting and includes therein the names and addresses of the seconder and nominee, and also includes a statement by the nominee of his/her willingness to act and attend Council meetings.

Note: Nominations for Council must be submitted by 25 August 2000.

Resolutions at Annual General Meetings
In accordance with the Articles of Association approved at an Extraordinary General Meeting in 1993, notice of any motion proposed to be made at the Annual General Meeting should be submitted to the Honorary Secretary thirty clear days in advance of the meeting. Motions should be signed by the proposer and seconder, both of whom must be members of the Trust.

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Staff for 1999

Secretary/Administrator	Valerie Bond
Membership Secretary	Bernadette Smith
Planning Officer	John O'Sullivan
Planning Officer	Stephen McDermott
Assistant Planner	Angela Dullaghan
Project Staff:	
Blue Flag Manager	Ann Wilkinson Carla Ward
National Spring Clean Manager	Carla Ward Lisa Cassidy
Green Schools Manager	Elizabeth Donnelly Nessa O'Connor

Staff for 2000

Co-ordinator	Sadhbh O'Neill (to June) Shirley Clerkin (from July)
Membership Secretary	Bernadette Smith
Planning Officer	John O'Sullivan
Heritage Officer	Ian Lumley
Acting Planner	Angela Dullaghan
Project Staff:	
Blue Flag Manager National Spring	Carla Ward
Clean Manager	Lisa Cassidy
Green Schools Manager	Nessa O'Connor

An Taisce – The National Trust For Ireland
Tailors Hall,
Back Lane,
Dublin 8.
Tel: 01 – 454 1786
Fax: 01 – 453 3255
Email: info@antaisce.org

An Taisce – Education Unit
Blue Flag / Green Schools Tel: 01 454 1819
National Spring Clean / Fax: 01 454 1802
Email: education@antaisce.org

Web site: www.antaisce.org

To book Tailors Hall for functions (other than An Taisce events), contact:
Dublin Castle Conference Centre
Tel: 01 679 3713
Fax: 01 679 6433

An Taisce Membership Form

I/we wish to join An Taisce in the category ticked below:

- ☐ Individual (£20)
- ☐ Family (£25)
- ☐ Retired (£7)
- ☐ Unwaged (£7)
- ☐ Student (£7)
- ☐ Associated groups (£30)
- ☐ Corporate (from £100)

Name _____

Address _____

_____

I enclose cheque/postal order/cash for £ _____ to cover one year's subscription OR I would like to pay by direct debit; please send me the appropriate form.

Please return completed forms to the Membership Secretary, An Taisce, Tailors Hall, Back Lane, Dublin 8.