



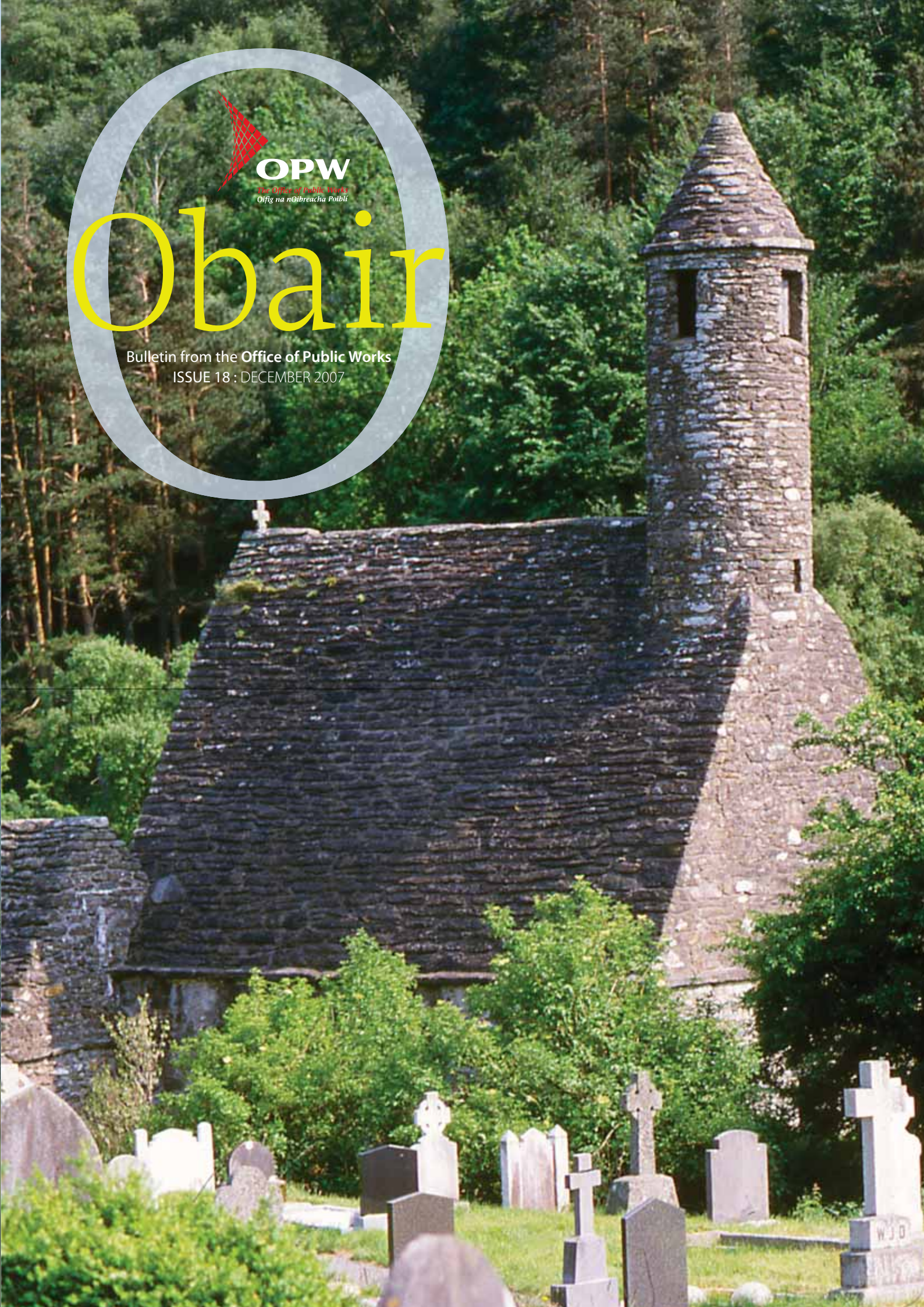
OPW

The Office of Public Works
Offis na nOibreacha Poblí

Obair

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WELCOME TO ISSUE 18 OF OBAIR MAGAZINE

In this edition we highlight some more of the projects that the OPW has been working on during the second half of 2007.

We feature interesting articles on Wildlife in the JFK Arboretum in County Wexford and on a recent lecture series in the Glendalough Visitor Centre. The winter equinox at Lough Crew is described by Clare Tuffy and Ken Moore brings us details of an elegant OPW book on War Graves in Ireland. We have a number of articles in relation to decentralisation, including the first OPW move to Claremorris, County Mayo and the laying of the foundation stone for our new HQ in Trim, County Meath.

Also in this edition are details of the new FAI HQ in Abbotstown, accessibility improvements made in Aras an Uachtarán, how Enda Mulvihill of IT Unit got himself a new cloak and how two double agents from America came and made off with a bunch of OPW secrets!

As always, contributions are welcome from any staff who have something they wish to bring to the attention of their colleagues. It is through your contributions that the magazine can continue.

Raé Kearns has contributed significantly to the production of the last number of Obair magazines. He is now moving sections to Property Maintenance so we thank him for his contribution and wish him well in his new post.

We hope you enjoy this latest edition of your Obair magazine. Keep the articles coming.

George Moir, Kevin Kennedy, Raé Kearns

Obair Editorial Team

ACCESS PROGRAMME AT ARAS AN UACHTARÁIN



An Accessibility Audit of Aras an Uachtaráin was carried out in 2004. The audit covered all areas of the house and gardens that are accessible to visitors and the President's Secretariat. The audit highlighted particular areas of concern.

In consultation with the Secretariat an Access Action Plan was drawn up and upgrading works were prioritised and bundled into three main projects. A list of items to be dealt with during routine maintenance were also identified.



Phase A of the Access Programme was the provision of an accessible entrance to the Hyde Room, the provision of an accessible toilet and upgrading egress from the room. A discrete but generous side entrance was deemed acceptable by the Conservation Officer. Overhanging branches of established trees and undergrowth was removed by the Áras an Uachtaráin gardeners, and a semi-derelict outhouse was restored as a gardener's toilet.

Phase B was the provision of external ramps and handrails for the existing terrace steps to allow equal access to the President's summer garden parties. The two lower ramps were set into the grass verge, beside the existing steps and the two upper ramps cantilever over the side steps of the south portico and into the existing grass verge. The ramps have solid Wicklow granite upstands and are paved with Wicklow granite.

An original landscape drawing by Decimus Burton showed continuous planting of shrubs between the house and the terrace. This has now been restored by John McCullen.

Tactile corduroy paving was installed at the top and bottom of the steps to the terraces. The new handrails span between the new paving, so that the historic fabric is not touched. There was a 150mm step from the French doors on to the south portico. After much agonising the simplest solution with the least impact on the historic fabric was to raise a section of the existing granite paving to form a platform and a pair of ramps to each side.

Throughout the handrails and supports have been kept to a minimum to reduce their visual impact. A very clear, concise statement was produced by Aisling Ní Bhriain, the project conservation advisor, setting out the very delicate balance between the conservation principles of reversibility, minimum intervention and ease of its identification; while at the same time aiming to honour the principles of universal accessibility, namely; equal, integrated and independent access, use and egress.

Phase C was the Accessibility Upgrade of the East Wing at Áras an Uachtaráin. The main elements of this project were the provision of an evacuation lift to serve four floors; new toilet facilities and making the East Wing reception and visitor centre fully accessible. The location of the lift beside the Raymond McGrath circular staircase, was selected following consideration of a number of different locations. The East Wing had been substantially rebuilt by Raymond McGrath in the 1950's, so alterations would have no impact on the historic fabric. However the selected location required that the kitchen serving the state dining room was re-configured and refurbished.

The original brief from the President in November 2001 for the Visitor Centre project, was to "develop a spacious, bright, easily accessible centre."

A broad range of accessibility elements have been incorporated into the project to provide ease of access for all. Accessibility has been carefully balanced with sensitivities and respect for the historic fabric of the building. The **Entrance Forecourt** has been designed to optimise the natural light to a north facing façade, that was previously perceived as dark and grey. The paving is Wicklow granite, the white painted rendered walls, which match the existing walls, have low level lighting for winter evenings. The ramps and steps are generous and are designed to meet Part M of the Building Regulations.

The most radical changes have been made in the **Reception Area**, where the first floor and dividing walls have been removed to reveal a double height space with five high level circular windows that were inserted during the reconstruction in the 1950s. This volume replicates the original 18th century pavilion to the hunting lodge. The main accessibility features include: a level threshold from the forecourt to the reception; accessible intercom, with larger easy push concave call button and red and green LED for people with hearing impairments and Braille; automatic sliding doors and a fully accessible

reception desk [on both sides] with an induction loop. The corridors have adequate opening width of doors and leading leaf of double doors to allow ease of access for wheelchair users. D shaped lever handles, pull handles and push plates have been selected for easy use. There is adequate colour contrast between walls and doors, and walls and floors for the visually impaired.

The **Visitors Toilets** have: Vanity unit and wash hand basins at two heights for adults and children. Urinals at two heights for adults and children. Ironmongery selected for ease of use. The **Wheelchair Accessible Toilets** are designed beyond the requirements of Part M. Additional elements include a shelf for personal belongings; an alarm system, connected back to the reception desk: Visual and audible indication of fire alarm activation and colour contrast between sanitary fittings and background. The **Lift** is an evacuation lift, suitable for use, in the event of fire alarm activation. The lift size is larger than the standard wheelchair accessible lift to maximise on the space available and to allow space for a motorised wheelchair and carer to use the lift together. It has a fold down seat in the lift car for the ambulant disabled. The lift buttons have raised tactile letters and an audio announcement indicating that the doors are opening, stating the floor level, the direction of travel and that the doors are closing. An induction loop is provided for communication with hearing aid users.

The stairs in Reception and to the Kitchen have permanent colour contrast strips incorporated into all steps with contrasting colour on top and bottom steps and continuous handrail provided on one side.

Minimal works have been completed in the Exhibition Area of the Visitor Centre to ensure accessibility but to prevent the un-doing of works during the fit – out for the exhibition. The access to the exhibition area and through the sequence of rooms has been improved by the elimination of

steps in exhibition area with introduction of two ramps. The new Portland Stone floor (which was a requirement of the Conservation Architect), gives a bright, uniform floor finish.

The environmental conditions are improved by damp-proofing the garden basement wall and the provision of under-floor heating.

On 26th September 2007 the President invited guests, representing a range of disabilities and minorities to a reception to highlight the Universal Accessibility Programme at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Remarks by President McAleese at the reception:

“Dia dhibh go léir, agus cead míle fáilte romhaibh. Good afternoon, everybody. Martin and I are delighted to welcome you all this afternoon to highlight the progress of the latest stage of the universal access project at Áras an Uachtaráin, by which we ensure that the Áras, home of all of Ireland’s Presidents since the inception of the State, is truly accessible to all of Ireland’s citizens.

This afternoon’s reception celebrates the completion of the latest phase of this programme of hard work and planning, which resulted in the building works, renovation and numerous accessibility sub-projects from which I hope that all the people of Ireland - irrespective of disability - will benefit for years to come. It is now almost ten years since my family and I first moved into the Áras. We know how very lucky we are to live in a house with so colourful a history and a house that is so much a part of the story of our country. It is a beautiful building but like so many old and elegant buildings it was not built with too much thought about those who might have difficulty navigating its narrow corridors and warren of rooms or getting up its many steps and stairs.

Today we see the home of Ireland’s President as a place where every visitor must feel welcome. Ours is a hard won republic of equals and this house above all places



President McAleese and Doctor McAleese



Invited guests to Aras An Uachtaráin

should resonate with a built-in sensitivity to those who have special requirements to ensure that they feel fully welcomed. In making the necessary changes we have been deeply mindful of the heritage and history of the house but we have also been deeply mindful of the rightful needs of our citizens. The OPW has done a brilliant job of marrying accessibility and history. There is more to be done, I am sure, but in the end what we will have is not some token bolt-on or afterthought but a mainstreamed insistence of access every bit as mainstreamed as considerations like health and safety.

Thank you to the NDA for the hugely important advice and assistance you have given us throughout this project. I am delighted to welcome also, representatives of the five other national disability umbrella advocacy bodies who are also members of the National Disability Strategy Stakeholders' Monitoring Group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach. This ongoing dialogue with these organisations will ensure that the results of our combined efforts are exactly as they should be.

The Áras is a phenomenally busy environment and yet the OPW has managed the execution of very substantial building works, in a predominantly eighteenth century building, while we continued business as usual. That is a telling testament to the skill and organisational abilities of all those persons involved and I say to them a very big thank you – in particular to the team from Architectural Services in the OPW – to Angela Rolfe, Kevin McKenna, Kate Quinn and Amy Jennings. From the OPW's project management services side, Jack Brennan provided invaluable support, as did Robert Guihen from the Furniture Branch, while of course the project depended upon sponsorship at the highest level in that organisation, for which we thank the Chairman of the OPW, Sean Benton, as well as Commissioners David Byers and Clare McGrath."

Angela Rolfe
Architectural Services

GLENDALOUGH VISITORS CENTRE



Glendalough

The old saints and scholars got an airing this summer in Glendalough Visitor Centre but so too did the slaves, stone masons and shipwrights of early medieval Ireland. They were all under examination in Lectures for the Curious, a series of 5 lectures dedicated to the exploration of the practical realities of this fascinating and frequently underestimated period in Irish history.

Early medieval Ireland, the period roughly from the 6th to the end of the 12th century, enjoys a really good press, peopled as it is in our imaginations by saints on hilltops, monks in towers and Vikings more or less over for an extended Stag Night! Well, those who attended Lectures for the Curious know that early medieval Ireland was far more exciting than that.

For the second year running some of the foremost experts in the history and archaeology of this period have delivered hugely entertaining, enthusiastic and informative lectures, all of which, not surprisingly, have been very well attended.

In the first lecture, *Irish Brehon Law: What price Saints, Scholars and Slaves?*, Prof. Fergus Kelly, Director of the School of Celtic Studies, D.I.A.S., explained some of the principles underlying Irish Brehon law which were thus the formulation of concepts fundamental to early Irish society. While certainly no alien notion of Equality insinuates itself into Brehon law there nonetheless remains the profound concept of a Social Contract, where each privilege carries its own responsibility. Certainly, life for many may still have been “nasty, brutish and short” to quote Hobbes (Thomas, not Eddie), but Irish society was at least governed by a sense of reciprocity between the ruled and those who ruled them throughout almost all levels of society.

Mr. Brian Lalor, in *The Irish Round Tower: Melodrama, Myth and Mortar*, took us on a tour de force, as it were, of these most iconic of structures, sending to the heavens or more properly, perdition our most dearly held and totally mistaken beliefs about these truly magnificent essays in stone. We must abandon all those cartoon memories from childhood history books of monks frantically waving from lofty windows as smoke and flames billow forth from below, eternally hoping that the early medieval cavalry will somehow gallop to the rescue just in the nick of time. As I said before, it was far more exciting than that!

Mr. Grellan Rourke, Senior Conservation Architect, O.P.W., in his lecture *The Hermit: Closest to God, closer to insanity?*, took us on certainly the most dangerous of all journeys on this great adventure as we scaled

with him the cliffs and many precipices on our way to the Hermitage on the South Peak of Skellig Michael. Today we indulge ourselves in what we like to think of as extreme sports, tests of endurance and skill. We may just be giving ourselves airs! Survival on the South Peak was extreme. It can only be left to oneself to determine whether this was extreme madness, spiritual truth, or freedom. One thing is beyond doubt: Grellan and his team required extreme courage and determination to complete the task of conserving such a difficult and vulnerable monument on this World Heritage Site.

Prof. Terry Dolan, School of English and Drama, U.C.D., brought us back with a delightful and charming bump to the somewhat grubby reality of 12th century European politics in his investigation of *Laurence O'Toole: A saint by virtue or design?* Needless to say, Laurence is of particular interest to us here in Glendalough as he is our one and only officially canonised saint (Kevin, alas, must remain a saint “of Hearts”, to borrow a phrase). In Laurence's case it would seem that his place of death, Eu, Normandy, was to be as significant to his canonisation as his manner of life: his remains providing, for a somewhat impoverished religious community, the necessary primary relics for a major pilgrimage site. Laurence may indeed be an off-the-shelf saint fitting easily into the mould of 12th century sainthood, tall, good-looking, generous to the poor, he nevertheless performed one rather miraculous feat, he survived a lifetime with Diarmuid MacMurrough!

Our lecture series was rounded off in the most timely manner by Dr. Colmán Etchingham, Dept. of History, N.U.I. Maynooth, just a week before the arrival in Dublin of the magnificent reconstruction of the Viking ocean-going warship the Sea Stallion from Glendalough and the visit of the crew of the Sea Stallion to Glendalough. His lecture *The Viking World of Wave and Water* explored the concept of the sea kingdom of the Dublin Vikings and in so doing cast the vivid light of day on a world of cultural integration, shared skills of insular shipwrights and a thriving, mercenary, utterly alive city - 12th century Dublin.



Panoramic view of Glendalough

So, over the course of 5 weeks we traveled a long way from the cartoon characters in childhood histories: exploring fundamental concepts of justice in Irish society, discovering the purpose and construction of round towers, standing in awe at the extremes of danger and physical deprivation which humans will endure for their beliefs, casting a piercing eye on the making of a saint and rejoicing in the ordinary commerce, squabbles and life in early medieval Dublin. The road is long, let us hope we have just begun our journey.

Without the permission of Mr. George McClafferty, Manager of Glendalough Visitor Centre, the support of Visitor Services, O.P.W., the enthusiasm of the lecturers and above all, the endless patience and cooperation of colleagues at the Visitor Centre Lectures for the Curious would simply have remained a road untraveled.

Mary Kelly
Glendalough Visitor Centre

RELOCATION OF THE FAI FROM MERRION SQUARE

TO THE FORMER STATE
LABORATORY AT ABBOTSTOWN



The new FAI Headquarters were officially opened on Wednesday, 5th December 2007 by the Minister of Arts, Sport and Tourism, Seamus Brennan TD, with UEFA President Michel Platini. The FAI lease the premises from the National Sports Campus Development Authority (NSCDA).

The project has as its genesis the Government Decision of 15 November 2005, in which the Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism, Campus and Stadium Ireland Development Ltd (CSID – now NSCDA), OPW and the Department of Agriculture & Food were instructed to commence discussions to enable the FAI to move their Headquarters from Merrion Square to the former State Laboratory building in Abbotstown, Dublin 15. The State Laboratory had already been relocated to new premises in Backweston, Co.Kildare and the FAI have since sold their former HQ in Merrion Square which the organisation had outgrown in recent years.

The Government Decision referred, in the main, to the development of a Sports Campus at Abbotstown. In that regard, the Development Control Plan for the Campus which CSID had commissioned referred to the CSID proposal to retain certain buildings on site which might be capable of adaptation as administrative offices. The FAI had also indicated its interest in locating its headquarters in the former State Laboratory building and the two aspirations were considered complimentary.

In late January 2006 CSID formally sought OPW's assistance in undertaking the design and refurbishment of the building for FAI purposes and a brief of the FAI's requirements in respect of the relocation was subsequently forwarded by CSID to OPW. A Project Team, chaired by OPW, was subsequently established and extensive discussions ensued between the Project Team and the FAI with a view to agreeing both the scope of work involved and the budgetary provision necessary to complete it. Planning Permission was received from Fingal County Council (FCC) in November 2006, tenders were invited in October 2006 and a contract was placed with Graham Projects Ltd., in March, 2007 following receipt of NSCDA and DAST approval. (An enabling works contract which involved total clearance of the building had preceded the main contract).

NSCDA's role is one of overseeing, planning and developing a sports campus at Abbotstown and providing modern, well equipped and well managed sporting facilities for the benefit of sport and sportsmen and women. NSCDA also has responsibility for the operation of the National Aquatic Centre, which is the first element of the National Sports Campus at Abbotstown. Next year NSCDA states that it will be submitting planning applications for the rest of the Campus, which will consist of:

- A National Field Sports Training Centre catering for Rugby, Soccer, Gaelic Games and Hockey
- A National Indoor Training Centre which will provide world class training facilities for over 20 National Governing Bodies of Sport
- A Sports Science and Medical Centre, an Accommodation Block and facilities for the local community.

The floor layout of the new offices retains the existing building's concrete structure and central circulation route, which retention ensured no unnecessary structural modifications and an efficient use of the floor plate of the building. The FAI is the first National Governing Body to take up residence in the National Sports Campus, and will be joined permanently in 2008 by the Irish Institute of Sport which is housed in temporary accommodation in the former Marine Institute at Abbotstown. It is envisaged that the National Sports Campus will eventually be home to as many National Governing Bodies of Sport as possible.

The existing building had been carefully assessed to fully inform the scope of works necessary to provide an appropriate standard of office accommodation for a national sporting organisation such as the FAI. The existing U-plan fair-faced block work columns, which define the central circulation route, were retained and are clad in wood veneer panels. A mix of glass and solid screens separate the circulation route from the office accommodation. The corridor effect has been avoided by staggering the screens on the inside and outside planes of the U-plan columns and by daylight penetration through the glass screens. The variation in width of the central circulation route helps to identify access points to the various departments and provides a series of informal meeting spaces. The void of the U-plan columns also provides an opportunity to display FAI memorabilia along the circulation route. The wall surfaces at each corner of the circulation route are colour coded to help orientate the occupants.

Durable interior finishes, including hardwood, timber veneer, glass, office grade carpet tile, natural stone and stainless steel were selected for the Fit-Out in order to create a durable interior environment, minimise wear and tear and create a comfortable and pleasant working environment. Social areas are included within the building in accordance with the FAI brief and are strategically positioned with a view to enhancing the ambience of the working environment.

The bulk of the existing building entrance and exit locations have been retained; the main entrance was retained on the north face but was relocated two bays to the east to facilitate a more efficient floor plan layout. Minor changes to the parking area and pathways in front of the building help to improve pedestrian access



Internal and External views of new FAI HQ

and safety. The exterior walls have been clad in redwood to give a pleasing finished appearance.

Services distribution is via raised access floors which reduced the requirement for suspended ceilings. Perimeter heating units are located in the access floor thus avoiding the use of obstructive above-floor radiator units. Replacement of all existing building plant was required. The soffit of the existing concrete roof slab was exposed and given minor surface treatment. The exposed concrete surface will assist passive cooling of the building interior. Energy efficient light fittings are suspended from the concrete roof slab.

The environmental performance of the building envelope was improved by upgrading the existing roof finishes and by replacing the external glazing. The new perimeter glazing is designed to provide passive solar heating and passive cooling for the building.

The overgrown vegetation in the central courtyard was cleared and new hard landscaping surfaces were created. This improves daylight penetration to the office areas and assists in creating an attractive and more usable amenity for the occupants.

The FAI commenced occupation of the building on the week-end of 23-25 November 2007. The FAI is the first national governing body to move onto the 350 acre site at Abbotstown and the 3,060m² building will house the association's 167 staff in addition to organisations such as the Professional Footballers Association of Ireland, the Irish Soccer Referees' Society, the Leinster Football Association, the Schoolboys Football Association of Ireland and the Dublin & District Schoolboys League.

Willie McIntosh
Special Projects

EQUINOX SUNRISE AT LOUGHCREW



Loughcrew

At the top of County Meath's highest hills are some of the country's oldest monuments. The Loughcrew cairns are a complex of 5,000 year old passage tombs, contemporary with the great monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth at Brú na Bóinne, though on a smaller scale. There are about 30 tombs at Loughcrew, sited on four different hills shown on maps as Sliabh na Caillí, or, The Hills of the Witch.



Aerial view of cairns

Constructed during the Neolithic (New Stone Age), the monuments were used as burial places but, like those at Brú na Bóinne, they surely had a wider role. They would have been a focal point for the community, a place to honour the ancestors, a lasting symbol to their wealth and a territorial marker. The cairns probably had further functions in seasonal rituals and festivals.

Legend has it that the Hag or Witch formed the cairns when she jumped from one hill to the next dropping stones from her apron. After she had jumped onto three hills, she still had to get to the fourth and final hill in order to attain great power. In the attempt to get to the last hill, she fell and died. The story says that she is buried where she fell, on the slopes of Patrickstown Hill.

The tombs have dominated the landscape south of Oldcastle for thousands of years and they can be seen from a great distance. Cairn T, on Carnbane East, is the best known and the most visited. The Office of Public Works provides a free service there in the summer months and for many years has given free access to the public at dawn on the days of the Equinox sunrise, ie, around March 21st and

September 21st. This is the time of year when day and night are equal. The early farmers who constructed these impressive monuments would have gathered there to mark the beginning of spring and autumn and to celebrate the ever-continuing cycles of the year.

The Winter Solstice phenomenon at Newgrange on December 21st occurs on the year's shortest day and is the best known and best documented of the Neolithic alignments. The Equinox sunrise effect at Loughcrew is less spectacular. For modern archaeoastronomers the alignment at Loughcrew is considered less significant because the passage is shorter and wider. The sunlight enters the chamber at Cairn T and highlights the wonderful art on the back stone of the end recess for nearly an hour. By comparison, the Winter Solstice dawn light show at Newgrange lasts only 17 minutes.

Happily, because it lasts so long, it means that everybody who gathers at Cairn T gets the opportunity of seeing the effect at some stage. Small groups of five or six people go inside the chamber at a time, everyone cheerfully taking turns and letting others take theirs.

Attending Equinox dawn at Loughcrew is not for the fainthearted. In March, sunrise is shortly after 6:15 in the morning and in September shortly after 7:15. The difference between the two events is simply that, on March 21st the clocks have not yet gone forward to summertime, while in September, the clocks have not gone back to wintertime.

Neolithic Art

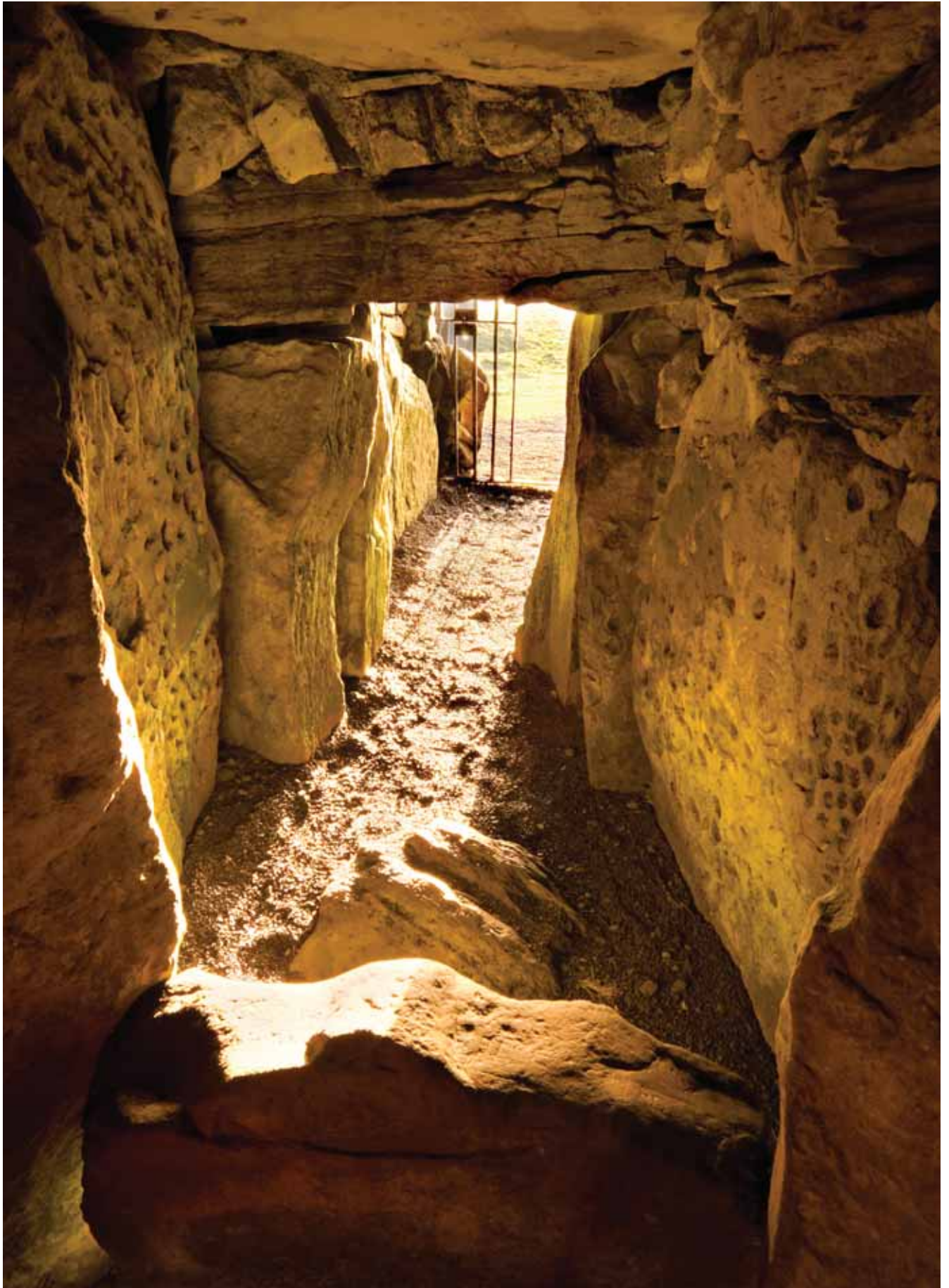


Having arrived in the car park in the darkness, there is still a very steep hill to climb. For those who make the effort the reward is great. There is a feeling of being on top of the world... climbing up in the darkness, the surrounding countryside quickly disappears in the dark and from the hill gazing eastwards only the outline of Patrickstown Hill is clear. The wind is often bitter as the visitors wait in good-humoured anticipation.

The sky brightens before dawn and first lights up the hilltop where they are standing and then the rest of the world below. If they're lucky, the sun will break through and they'll be treated to the same wonder that our ancestors were as they gathered on the same hill so long ago.

Clare Tuffy
Brú na Bóinne





The passage tomb

OPW ADVANCE DECENTRALISED OFFICES OPEN IN CLAREMORRIS



OPW Claremorris

In December 2003, the Government announced a programme of Decentralisation of up to 10,000 Public Servants to a wide range of 53 different locations outside Dublin. For OPW, this means that the office will move from its current location in Dublin to Trim, Co. Meath – which will be our new Headquarters – to Claremorris in Co. Mayo and to Kanturk in Co. Cork.

At this stage in 2007, a significant amount of progress has been made in implementing the Government's Decision. More than 150 staff have transferred into the OPW from other Departments and Offices with a view to moving to the new locations and a similar number of OPW staff have transferred out, either to positions in other Departments in Dublin or to other Decentralised locations. Work has also started on the construction of the new building in Trim, the design competition having been won by Architects of OPW AS 4; a site for the new office in Claremorris has been acquired and another identified for acquisition in Kanturk. In terms of staff actually moving to the new venues however, the way has been led by the Western contingent, with the creation of an Advance Office in Claremorris which opened for business on September 10th 2007.

Project Team

Client
OPW (Michael Fennelly,
Decentralisation Unit)

Property Management Services
Marian O' Dwyer

Architectural Services
Kate Quinn

Mechanical & Electrical Services
Keith Milsom & Sarah Ni Ruairc

IT Services
Liam Stewart, Paul Reynolds,
Ciaran Murtagh, Fergus Devereux,
Bob Brandt

Project Management Services
John Mc Mahon, Jim Roche &
John Mc Veigh

Furniture Services
Robert Guihen & Paul Biesty

The Advance Office is located in a temporary premises pending the building of a new permanent building on a site acquired at the Ballyhaunis Road in the town. The new office is located at Unit 20, Lakeside Retail Park, Claremorris. The building was rented locally by OPW and fitted out as offices for up to 40 people. Initially, 3 different work units will be located there:

- Visitor Services Section (Heritage Services);
- Publications Section (Government Supplies Agency);
- Project Management Services;

Staff of these units will move progressively to Claremorris as they are transferred to OPW from other Departments and Offices and as training and induction is delivered. At this stage, 22 staff have moved into the office, and the Visitor Services and Publications sections have now started operating fully. It is planned that Project Management Services will move progressively into the building in the next few months as staff become available.

The building in Claremorris comprises approx. 6,000 sq. ft. of office space on two floors with approx 3,000 sq. ft. of basement storage. The Architectural design, which was provided by Kate Quinn of AS 6, provides for a mix of open plan offices, meeting rooms, quiet rooms, tearooms, toilets, Comms Room, storage and Reception areas over the three available floors.

The mechanical and electrical services elements were designed by Keith Milsom and Sarah Ni Ruairc of M&E Services to ensure that modern heating, ventilation and plumbing services were provided, together with the infrastructure necessary to support high speed computer data and voice links. The Offices are fully computerised and networked with the installation carried out onsite in late August and early September by staff of OPW's IT Unit. The Claremorris system is linked to the OPW Headquarters computer and telecoms infrastructure using the available high speed data links available in the town and plans are also in train to provide a videoconferencing capability in the office in the near future.

System furniture was provided for the building by Furniture Division through Farrell's of Ardee. The normal range of furniture is being provided, but

some newer desk shapes and configurations were also provided with a view to providing variety and making the best possible use of the available space

OPW Management are using the new Claremorris office as an opportunity to experiment with some of the organisational layout and design issues that OPW will have to face on an ongoing basis as it progresses with its decentralisation plans. As mentioned above, there has been a significant input in the office in respect of IT. Live experiments in relation to various computer technologies such as the use of Linux and Internet Protocol (IP) phones are being undertaken. These experiments will at once inform management about what works best and will simultaneously provide the IT Unit with a significant opportunity to train their own staff in relation to these technologies and to assess the pros and cons of the various systems.

Experiments are also being carried out in relation to the design of the offices themselves. The Claremorris office is designed around the principle of open plan working and various configurations of desk and storage spaces are being looked at with a view to ensuring that the optimum selection is available when OPW begins the fitting out of spaces in its future permanent home in Trim and in the two provincial locations.

The Advance Office in Claremorris is the first OPW Decentralised Office outside Dublin in the latest decentralisation programme and, as such, it represents a major departure for the organisation and a big step forward for its response to the Government Decision. It also represents the first occasion when new staff transferring to OPW have been inducted and trained in situ in the new location; all the incoming transferees for Trim have been assigned to temporary posts in HQ until such time as the building in Meath is ready for occupation. This, and many other of the aspects of the Claremorris experience, will inform many significant decisions throughout the rest of the OPW's Decentralisation project.

Frank Shalvey
Heritage Services.
November 2007

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE AT TRIM



At the side of a wind swept field on a rather bleak winter's afternoon, one of the most historic chapters in the OPW's 176 year history took place early last November. A coach brought over forty OPW staff down from St. Stephens Green to county Meath to witness the official launch of their future headquarters. They were accompanied by the Minister, Chairman and board members.



The building itself was at the very early stages of construction and the general vista could have been a building site anywhere save for the surrounds of the flat Meath field hedged by local hawthorn trees and the historic River Boyne running to the right.

The sky was low and grey and threatening rain, but the inauspicious environment at the side of a small town could not hide the feeling for those assembled that something quite historic for OPW, Trim and indeed the country was happening that afternoon.

After an introduction by Chairman Seán Benton outlining the historic nature of the day for OPW, Minister for Transport and Marine Noel Dempsey, TD spoke of the significant contribution that OPW has made to the south Meath area in recent years, though its Boyne drainage schemes and excellent restoration work done on St. Johns Castle, making it a national tourist attraction. He spoke of the major benefits that the location of OPW's headquarters will have for staff and the local economy.

Minister Ahern spoke of the continued good work carried out by the OPW in the Meath area, from conserving its heritage at Newgrange to the Boyne drainage works.

After photographs from the local media and expressions of appreciation from local councillors and Trim Chamber of Commerce, the darkening sky and spits of rain obliged staff to board the coach again to retire to the Knightsbrooke Hotel for some refreshments where staff could also view a scaled model of what the current building site at Townspark, Trim will look like on completion.

Raé Kearns
Press Office

RATH CAIRN GLAS NA MÍ



An bhfuil a fhios agaibh go mbeidh ceann d'oifigí nua Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí faoin scéim dílárnú láimh leis an Ghaeltacht - sé sin taobh istigh de shé chiliméadair uaithe? Anois nuair a chloisfeá sin cheapfá go bhfuil seans go bhfuil na h-oifigí nua i gClár Clainne Mhuiris nó i gCeann Toirc buailte le ceantar Gaeltachta. Ach ní hiad atá i gceist agam. Is é an ceannáras nua i mBaile Átha Throim atá i gceist. Má theánn tú amach bóthar Átha Buí ó Bhaile Átha Throim tiocfaidh tú ar chomhartha bóthair do Ráth Cairn – ceann do dhá ceantar Gaeltachta, Contae na Mí.

Is Gaeltacht cuíosach óg í Rath Cairn. Bunaíodh í sa bhliain 1935 mar chuid de scéim a thionscain 'Muintir na Gaeltachta' ag Coimisiún na Talún. Sa bhliain sin d'aistrigh seacht gclann is fiche ó Chonamara go dtí Rath Cairn. Thainig an chuid is mó dóibh ó Cheantar na nOileán agus an Cheathrú Ruidh áit a bhí ainmnithe ag an Rialtas ag an am mar cheantair chúnga de dheasca an daonra a bheith an-ard iontu agus iad a bheith faoi mhíbhuntáiste geilleagrach.

Roinneadh talamh a bhí faighte ag Choimisiún na Talún tríd dhá estát mhóra a bhriseadh suas idir feirmeoirí ó Chonamara agus roinnt feirmeoirí ó cheantar Átha Buí féin. Ag an am sin agus ar feadh roinnt mhaith blianta roimhe sin bhíodh an sort obair seo idir láimhe ag an gCoimisiún ar fud na tíre ach is le feirmeoirí áitiúla a roinneadh siad an talamh. I 1934 thaisitil grúpa fir ar rothair ó Chonamara go dtí an Dáil i mBaile Átha Cliath le chur ina luí ar an Rialtas gur cheap siad gur cóir go mbeadh muintir an iarrthair san áireamh nuair a bhí an talamh á roinnt. Chuir siad i gcuimhne don Rialtas gur aistrigh roinnt mhaith dá muintir go dtí an taobh sin tíre i rith feachtas Cromwell i.e. 'To Hell or to Connacht'.

I 1935 shocraigh an Rialtas talamh Rath Cairn a roinnt. Bhí dhá aidhm acu leis seo - chun cuid de mhachairí na Mí a roinnt ar fheirmeoirí a chruthaigh go raibh ard-chleachtas feimeoireacht á chur i bhfeidhm acu i gConamara agus chun úsáid na Gaeilge agus saol na Gaeltachta a leathnú amach go áiteanna eile sa tír.

Tugadh teach Coimisiúin, feirm dhá acra is fiche, capall, cráin mhúice is bainbh agus uirlisí bunúsacha talmhaíochta do gach clann a d'aistrigh. Ar mhalairt ar sin thug na clainne sin a dtalamh i gConamara don Coimisiún le roinnt ar fheirmeoirí eile sa cheantar sin agus cheannaigh siad a bhfeirmeacha i Rath Cairn faoi scéim chíoscheannach. Toisc go raibh siad ag tabhairt suas a dtalamh agus a dtithe i gConamara bhí ar gach duine sa clann aistriú go Contae na Mí - seandaoine san áireamh. D'imigh dhá clann ar ais go Conamara taobh istigh d'achair gairid. Dúradh sa Dáil i 1936 nuair a chuireadh ceist faoin fáth go ndeachaigh siad ar ais gur mhothaigh siad uathu an fharraige.

Sa bhliain 1937 tháinig trí chlann déag eile chun cur fúthu i Laimbé atá mar chuid go Gaeltacht Ráth Cairn. San iomlán, d'aistrigh 443 duine ó Chonamara go gabhátais nua i gceantar Rath Cairn le linn na tréimhse seo.

Ba í an t-aon áis phobail amháin a tugadh don phobal nualonnaithe ná an Scoil Náisiúnta, Scoil Uí Ghrámhnaigh, atá in úsáid fós agus atá méadaithe go mór ón am sin. Seachas sin fágadh an Gaeltacht nua seo ar a conclán féin.

Ní go dtí 1967 a bhain Rath Cairn amach aitheantas oifigiúil mar Gaeltacht, tar éis feachtais chearta sibhialta a d'eagraigh Craobh Cearta Sibhialta na Gaeltachta Rath Cairn.

Bunaíodh Chomharchumann Rath Cairn i 1973 chun pleanáil agus forbairt a dhéanamh don cheantar. Tá Rath Cairn ina bhaile beag anois agus an Ghaeilge mar phríomh teanga labhartha ann. Bhíodh ar mhuintir Rath Cairn thaisitil go dtí Baile Átha Buí nó Cill Bhríde le freastal ar aifreann nó seirbhísí eile reiligiúnach. I 1985, tógadh Séipeal Chaitliceach i Rath Cairn féin agus bíonn na seirbhísí ar fad ansin tríd mheán na Gaeilge. Tá meanscoil againn fresin agus daoine óga ag freastal uirthi ó chuille cúinne de chontae na Mí agus tá dhá naiscoil sa baile.

Is é an clubteach – An Bradán Feasa croilár an phobal. Bíonn an-chuid imeachtaí ar siúl ann agus fáilte roimh cách. Bíonn ranganna Gaeilge, ceoil, amhránaíocht agus rince ar an sean-nós ar siúl ann go rialta. I rith an samhraidh bíonn cúrsa lae ar siúl do dhaoine óga. Bíonn dhá feilte móra sean-nós againn gach bliain – Éigse Darach Uí Chathain i Mí Deireadh Fómhair agus Féile na Mí i Mí na Samhain agus bíonn amhránaíocht ceol agus rince againn go maidin ann. I Mí Eanáir bíonn comórtas i gcomhair Siamsóir na Mí againn agus bíonn an-oíche againn ag breathnú air agus ag eisteacht le scoth na hamhránaí, ceoltóirí agus rincoirí.

Bíonn ceol ar siúl sa Bradán Feasa, nó sa chlub mar a ghlaotar ar go háitiúil, gach Satharn ó 10i.n. ar aghaidh. Buail amach chugainn agus bíodh píosa craic agat!

Una Ní Fhaircheallaigh

Seirbhísí Pearsanra

OFFICE OF THE REVENUE COMMISSIONERS

DECENTRALISATION OFFICES,
LISTOWEL, CO. KERRY



New Revenue Offices, Listowel

The typical Irish town in these times of change finds itself with a nineteenth century infrastructure trying to support twenty-first century needs. New industries generally settle around the perimeter of these towns leaving the old buildings such as dairies, mills and creameries to change or decay in the centre. The challenge for those seeking sites for decentralised government offices is to try to graft these new requirements into the commercial life at the centre of the town to help sustain it.



External shot



Minister Ahern: Paul Molloy Ronan McKeever, Greg Devlin, OPW and Cilldarrig Enterprises Ltd. staff.

The search for new sites and accommodation for the Revenue Commissioners' decentralised offices in Listowel was driven by respect for the unique characteristics of the town. Like many other Irish towns, it is full of life, full of stories, full of people, - despite the changes. It still has John B. Keane; he haunts the place; his statue is there waving to everybody. Listowel Writers' Week continues his dreams, as does Listowel Race Week. The main square in Listowel displays its interest in the real world in many ways, among which is the choice of fascinating

pieces of sculpture and street furniture. And the town still has time for a farmers' market in the square every Friday morning. The old Church of Ireland church is still there too, standing elegantly in the square where it is re-used as an Arts Centre.

The quality of these spaces is influenced by Listowel's people and reflected in the organisation and management of the town, and in the colourful expression of its shop fronts, public houses, banks and charming dwellings. People still live in the centre

Project Team

Property Management Services
Paul Molloy, Ronan McKeever,
Ronan McLaughlin

Client
Revenue Commissioners

Developer
Cilddarrig Enterprises Ltd.

OPW Monitoring Architect
Greg Devlin

OPW M&E Engineer
Jim O'Sullivan

OPW Monitoring Quantity Surveyor
Burton & O'Connor

Furniture
OPW Furniture Branch



Revenue staff at work

of Listowel. John B. Keane once said, with reference to another inhabitant of the town, "I live in the same square, - but we move in different circles"! Perhaps he was thinking of the geometry of the town and its planning. Squares and circles sometimes define towns. We once had the Market Square, - now we have the Ring Road, and if we use the ring road we may not ever see the town.

After a protracted search for a development site for the Revenue Commissioners' decentralised office, a proposal came in from a developer suggesting a two-storey re-development of an old supermarket in the middle of the town. This was subject to planning permission, was in some ways over designed (it also included a two storey car park) and in other ways was under-designed, (had a very deep plan and ignored the benefits of natural ventilation). However, as the planning process developed, the two-storey car park was omitted and natural ventilation and natural light became a reality with the use of an internal courtyard to break up the deep plan.

On receipt of planning permission, Property Management Services agreed to take a long-term lease on the building, subject to it being fitted-out by the landlord to meet the particular requirements of the Revenue Commissioners.

The fit-out brief required for the most part a flexible open plan office layout which was formed around the internal courtyard. Cellular offices were grouped within the existing narrow office zone to avail of any direct sunlight, but were enclosed with glass partitions to allow for deeper penetration of sunlight.

Externally, the building was remodelled totally: the Forticrete blockwork disappeared and in its place were provided painted plastered walls and exposed

stonework to reflect the vernacular construction of the surrounding shops, stores and warehouses.

OPW's technical team (Mr. Greg Devlin and Mr. Jim O'Sullivan) rose to the challenge, managing to retain the interest and goodwill of the developers while at the same time obtaining from them the high standard of space requirements, building services and other items which are so critical to its own clients and end-users.

The office was formally opened on 1st November 2007 by the Minister of State at the Office of Public Works, Mr. Noel Ahern, T.D.

The full Board of the Revenue Commissioners, including Chairman, Mr. Frank Daly, was in attendance.

The end result is now there in Listowel for all to see. The Kerry flag, the National flag and the E.U flag are flying proudly outside the new entrance to these offices. The grounds are nicely landscaped with a variety of low-level shrubs, and some semi-mature trees are due for planting in the autumn. New paving and bollards surround the building and an appropriate piece of sculpture is also being considered. Inside, the walls are covered with prints and graphics by emerging local and national artists and the internal courtyard includes a water feature, plants, shrubs and seating.

Greg Devlin
Architectural Services

Paul Molloy
Property Management Services.

DECENTRALISATION TO KILRUSH



Greg Devlin, Paul Molloy and Ronan McKeever, OPW with Minister of State Ahern and Frank Buckley, Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners

The Vikings settled in Kilrush in the 10th century. Saint Seanán settled there a little earlier and Mrs. Crotty and her concertina came later when she married Miko Crotty in 1914. The estuary seems to have been the big attraction for all of these people, as it looks out towards the mighty River Shannon. Mrs. Crotty's pub is still there, on a corner of the main square, providing a welcome for musicians and set dancers from far and near. One of the most recent groups to settle in Kilrush are decentralised staff from the Revenue Commissioners' offices elsewhere and from other Departments.



Kilrush Harbour



Minister Ahern with Revenue Commissioners and officials

The new accommodation for the Revenue Commissioners reflects the changes that are occurring in Kilrush. Situated on the edge of the estuary, the Revenue offices overlook a new marina of fine yachts and boats, and the colourful activities of adventure sports enthusiasts around the harbour provide further interest for the curious onlooker.

The search for sites and accommodation in Kilrush afforded another challenge for OPW. Could we find an old building which would be suitable for re-development? Could we provide the impetus for renewal in an historic quarter? Was there some land, inside or outside the town, which might be suitable? Such questions contributed to the challenge. Eventually, we found what we thought might be suitable, floor space in a building which had been erected about the year 2000 as part of a tax incentive business expansion scheme. The building was well planned with plenty of window area overlooking the estuary. However, the floor area was split, probably as a result of the designer anticipating a demand for smaller letting areas. But the staff requirements still made this an attractive possibility. The Revenue demands could be met within the space available.

The Brief required that most of the staff be arranged in open plan office areas. These areas were grouped overlooking the estuary and the harbour activity. The cellular offices also availed of this orientation despite being on the opposite side of the building. Glass partition walls were used on the inside of these offices to avail of the views. These glass walls included inbuilt blinds to allow for any privacy requirements. Small conference areas and canteen facilities were planned in such a way as to avoid obstructing the view for the majority of the staff.

The building is sited between the estuary and the public roadway, and the approach to the building through the landscaped car park screens the view of the estuary for visitor and staff alike. The final approach to the workstations within the building reveal this magnificent view across the estuary. If Mrs. Crotty was still alive, I'm sure we might have a few jigs or hornpipes to celebrate the opening. The Revenue Commissioners, including their chairman, Mr. Frank Daly, came to Kilrush on 31st October 2007 with Mr. Noel Ahern, Minister of State at OPW, to declare the building formally open, and a good day was had by all!

Greg Devlin
Architectural Services

WILDLIFE OF J.F.K. ARBORETUM



JFK Arboretum

The J.F.K. Arboretum is rich in wildlife of many shapes and forms. There are many reasons for this but almost certainly the main one being the diversity of habitat that exists in the arboretum.

From the top of Slieve Coiltia at 960ft to the lowest pond a multitude of habitats exist.

Another reason why wildlife is so prolific is the fact that changes in the natural structure of the arboretum occur slowly. This allows the wildlife of the arboretum to adapt to the evolving surroundings.

As each year goes by more trees and shrubs mature leading to more food and shelter being available to wildlife.

Mallard #1



Entrance



Mallard #2



Red squirrel at feeder

With large areas of grass let go wild huge numbers of insects are accommodated. To stop and listen on a summers day is to hear another world. The pressures of modern farming sadly does not allow such numbers of insects to exist. Many of the natural cycles of wildlife within the arboretum begin with the insects.

Bats and many of the birds rely on such insects for food themselves and for their young. These in turn provide food for the raptors (birds of prey) and some of the predatory mammals. Plots of trees and clusters of shrubs provide quality nesting sites for many species of birds. With areas of the arboretum sown down in arable crops the all important winter supply of food is guaranteed. These crops of course hold some undesirable rodents which in turn provide more food for the raptors.

The lake is the biggest body of water in the arboretum. Mallard ducks are to be found all year on the lake being joined by their migrant cousins in the autumn. Many of these migrants travel huge distances to find sanctuary at the J.F.K. Arboretum. Rudd are the main fish that inhabit the lake and are a source of food for the grey heron.

The moor hen also inhabits the lake and is not shy in eating the barley left for the mallard. The moor hen is an indicator of the presence of the undesirable mink. If the moor hen goes missing the mink has arrived and this spells bad news for all wildlife, especially along the waterways.

While the lake is the biggest body of water several ponds play host to many important species. The frog absent from many parts of Ireland is to be found along any of the ponds in the arboretum.

So much for the different habitats of the arboretum, let us now look at some of the species of wildlife found there.

From dragonflies to butterflies there is a myriad of insect life in the arboretum. This perhaps is the only adequate way of describing the multitude of insects found here.

Bird life is not any easier to describe but here are some examples found in the arboretum.

The buzzard is often heard before being seen soaring high on Slieve Coiltia, rabbits and carrion make up much of its diet. Kestrels hover over much of the open spaces on the lookout for rodents.

Sparrow hawks dash through the woods at great speed causing pandemonium among the songbirds.

The short eared owl is never in much of a hurry and must surely get fed up being mobbed by the magpies and hooded crows.

Ravens let their presence be known by their continuous cronking and nest regularly in the arboretum. Ravens won't tolerate magpies or hooded crows close to their nests so help save many songbird nests from predation.

The Irish jay is to be found in many areas of the arboretum and again it is usually its harsh screeching which gives its presence away.

Woodcock are to be seen regularly flighting at dusk in winter, but their mating flight has also been

witnessed in the spring and summer. Strange to think of woodcock flying from the Baltic and finding Slieve Coiltia an attractive place to stay awhile.

Goldfinches and siskins and many more songbirds (some in serious decline) feed in the crops especially sown for them in the arboretum. Ireland's smallest bird the gold crest has also been seen in the arboretum.

Above is just a sample of the bird life found in the arboretum.

Many of Ireland's mammals are to be found in the arboretum.

Some mammals by nature are shy and their presence is often revealed by their trademark signs or smell.



JFK Arboretum



Aerial view

Just a few of the mammals found in the arboretum are;

The stoat can be seen darting from rabbit burrow to burrow, when successful in his hunt the piercing shriek of his victim can be heard.

The badger is nocturnal but when the sides of the roads and paths are churned up he gives the game away.

Foxes are common enough but with so many hiding places it is often his particular smell that lingers, which lets us know that he is about.

A notable absentee is the Irish hare. It is hoped to reintroduce some hares on Slieve Coiltia in the near future.

Without doubt the single most important animal that inhabits the J.F.K. Arboretum is the Red squirrel.

Threatened nationally red squirrels are abundant in the J.F.K. Arboretum. Not always so, it was as the many plots of trees matured that the red squirrel prospered. Mature trees mean food and safe places for the building of dreys.

The fact that both deciduous and coniferous trees are grown means that food is available all year round for the red squirrel. Unlike many animals high summer is a lean time for squirrels but the availability of pine cones at that time in the arboretum means there is no shortage of food for them. Deciduous trees may provide better quality food in autumn but they also have a serious drawback.

Red's cannot compete efficiently with grey squirrels in deciduous woodlands for food. Food is life and the ability to produce young.

Even the presence of grey squirrels can see the onset of coccidiosis in reds. Stress causes this debilitating disease and once in an animal there is only one result – death.

To walk quietly into a wood in late August and see eleven juvenile squirrels busy in the canopy is truly an amazing sight. Such a sight should be available to the next generation but it is doubtful if that will be possible.

In the J.F.K. Arboretum daily sightings of reds are recorded. On a monthly and seasonal basis these give an indication of what the red squirrels are up to.



Red squirrels spend most of their waking hours in pursuit of food and it is great to see them change their menu on a seasonal basis.

Everything possible is and must continue to be done to help conserve the red squirrel. It is now generally accepted that greys pose the single biggest threat to the future of the native red squirrel in Ireland. It is with this in mind that grey squirrels are removed as promptly as possible from the arboretum.

All of the above doesn't do justice in representing the wildlife of the arboretum. The best way to experience the wildlife of the arboretum is to come and visit. Do not be in a hurry as nature or wildlife rarely ever is.

No Planning Required (image above)

Obviously this moorhen knows something we don't. The mink trap raft was not intended for use as a home, but the moorhen decided otherwise. She hatched out two eggs regardless of the threat of mink attack. Unfortunately neither chick survived the awful weather in June.

Bill Hurley
Kenneth Foley
JFK Arboretum

HEALTH & SAFETY OHSAS 18001 ACCREDITATION



With a workforce of more than 300 staff engaged in channel drainage operations, the Drainage Maintenance Section of Engineering Services has long had a particular focus on Health and Safety. Having achieved ISO 9001 accreditation for its Quality Management System in 2002, the Section began preparing to seek a corresponding accreditation for its Health & Safety management system, the Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series 18001 system.

What is OHSAS 18001?

OHSAS 18001 is an internationally recognised standard for occupational health and safety management systems against which an organisation's management system may be assessed and certified. It includes the organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes and resources for: developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing and maintaining the organisation's Health & Safety policy.

In the past, occupational Health and Safety management usually meant reacting to work related incidents rather than planning for the control of work related risks. Under OHSAS 18001, the emphasis is placed on practices being pro-active and preventive. This is achieved by the identification of hazards and the evaluation and control of work related risks. OHSAS 18001 can be used by organisations of all sizes regardless of the nature of their activities or locations.

System features

The OHSAS 18001 system features the following elements:

- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Planning
- Implementation and Operation
- Checking and Corrective Action
- Management Review
- Continual Improvement

OHSAS 18001 can be a stand-alone system or it may be integrated into other quality management systems such as ISO systems. Engineering Services successfully integrated OHSAS 18001 into the existing ISO 9001 Quality system to create an integrated management system (IMS)

Benefits

Because of its focus on prevention of work related incidents, successful operation of the OHSAS 18001 system can bring significant benefits including:

Organisational: reduction in lost workdays, enhanced employee awareness of and commitment to occupational health and safety, improved internal and external communication of Health and Safety management commitment and enhanced corporate image.

Staff: fewer accidents and injuries

Financial: reduction in personal injuries claims and in costs arising from production delays and interruptions.

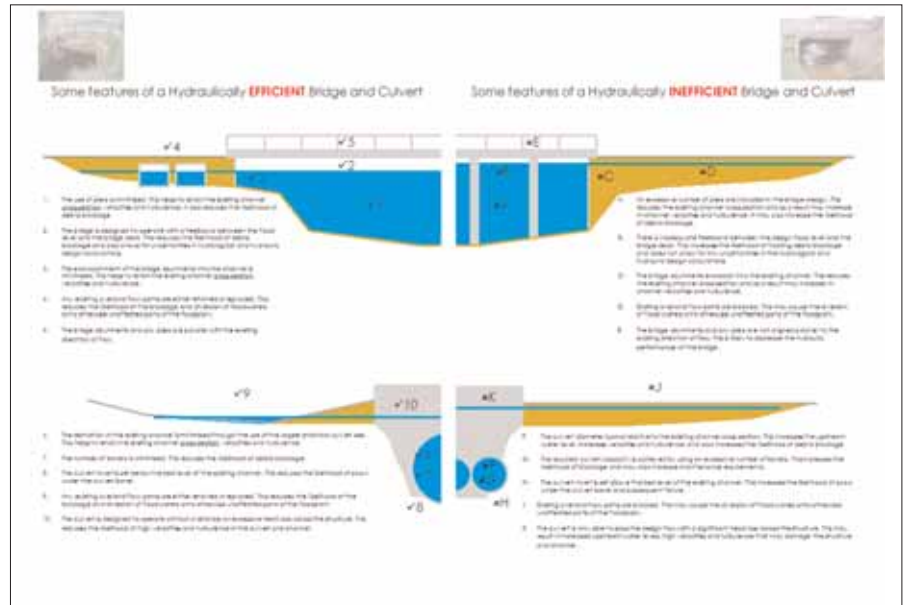
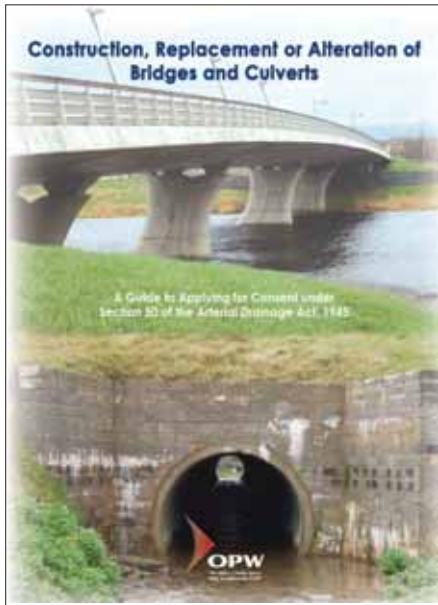
Legislative: OHSAS 18001 provides a valuable framework for legislative and regulatory compliance.

In May 2007 accreditation was received from the National Standards Authority of Ireland. OPW became the first Government Department in Ireland to achieve OHSAS 18001 accreditation.

Pat Donovan

Engineering services

APPLICATIONS FOR BRIDGE / CULVERT DEVELOPMENTS



Bridges and culverts can play a critical role in the conveyance capacity of channels. If the design or construction of these structures is unsuitable it can hinder the passage of water, especially in times of flood. This can cause or exacerbate flooding of property in areas upstream of the structure. The rapid growth in domestic and commercial development that has taken place throughout the country in recent years has increased the actual and potential future impact of such flooding and climate change is likely to compound the problem in coming years.

OPW's is centrally involved in regulating the design of bridges and culverts for two reasons:-

Section 50 of the Arterial Drainage Act 1945 requires those intending to construct or alter bridges or culverts to obtain the consent of the Commissioners of Public Works.

In 2004 the Government appointed OPW as lead agency for flood risk management in the State. In this role the Office is undertaking a range of structural and non-structural measures. Ensuring that bridge and culvert design does not contribute to increasing flood risk is an important element of this strategy.

During 2007 Engineering Services carried out a review of the system for processing applications for consent to bridge / culvert developments with the aim of raising awareness of OPW's requirements. It was felt that the volume of correspondence and

consultation required with applicants and the number of applications rejected due to poor design could be reduced by greater clarity and provision of additional information. Arising from the review the following documents have been developed and are now available for downloading from the OPW website:

- Policy Statement
- Application Form
- Guidance document
- Worked examples

The policy statement outlines OPW's role in mitigating future flood risk arising from the construction, or alteration, of bridges and culverted watercourses. The brochure and application form will direct applicants in identifying the main issues to be addressed, the appropriate level of detail and suitable approaches and methodologies. Worked examples, based on applications received in the past, have been provided, along with peer reviewed papers, to assist applicants in designing suitable structures.

These enhancements are expected to make it easier for applicants to successfully obtain consent and to aid the avoidance of future flood risk by promoting suitable design.

Vincent Hussey
Engineering Services

REMEMBERING THE WAR DEAD:

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND
INTERNATIONAL WAR GRAVES IN
IRELAND SINCE 1914



*Recruitment poster from WW I
(courtesy TCD)*

From the 1920s the Office of Public Works has been responsible for the graves of those who, dying in the two World Wars, came to be buried and commemorated in the Republic of Ireland. On the whole island there are at least 5,700 such war graves, over 3,100 in the Republic and 2,600 in Northern Ireland. The history of those 3,000 plus war dead in the Republic, how they came to be there, and how the Irish Government came to be responsible for them has not, until now, been written.

John Bowman, Prof. D'Arcy, Minister Ahern and Chairman



Richard Kellaway, Director General, Commonwealth War Graves Commission



Minister Ahern, Professor D'Arcy and piper in the Royal Hospital Cemetery, Kilmainham



The memorial wall and Commonwealth War Graves at Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin

These war dead were mostly Irish and British, but they came from twenty different nations across the world, from America and Australia, Norway and the Netherlands, to China, Japan and New Zealand.

The idea of undertaking this research came from the increased number of enquiries in recent years to the Property Maintenance Service, from members of the public seeking information on the graves of relations who had died in those wars. It often proved difficult to answer such queries given the absence of information on OPW's role in the maintenance of war graves as much of this information had long since been transferred to the National Archive.

Professor Fergus D'Arcy of UCD was commissioned to undertake some initial research and his first reports indicated that there was indeed a substantial story to be told about OPW's involvement, not only in the war graves themselves but also in such issues as the German war memorial in Glencree and the War Memorial gardens at Islandbridge.

Prof. D'Arcy's research took him to hitherto unused archival sources of the OPW in Dublin, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in England and the German War Graves Commission in Kassel, as well as the National Archives of Ireland and of the United Kingdom. Using these sources, Prof. D'Arcy assembled the unique history behind these British Commonwealth and International War Graves since 1914.

When the British left the Irish Free State in 1922, their concern for the future care of their war graves and military cemeteries led to a complex diplomatic dialogue in trying to reach a settlement with the new State on what was to be done, and decently done, and by whom, for the dead of the First World War, the Anglo-Irish War, and later for the dead of World War Two buried here. That concern became the responsibility of the Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission on whose behalf the Irish Government and its agency, the OPW, took up the challenge of locating, memorialising and maintaining these graves, in perpetuity.



Author Professor D'Arcy with Minister Ahern and John Bowman

The publication is more than a complex diplomatic and administrative story, it is also the human story behind the tragedies that brought these people to be buried, forgotten or remembered here, in every county in Ireland. Today they are commemorated in over 550 separate burial places, from isolated graves in desolate coastal graveyards of the southwest, west and northwest coasts to the major military cemetery at Grangegorman which holds over 600 dead of the two World Wars.

The remembered and forgotten were men, women, and boys; soldiers, sailors, airforce, medical and merchant navy personnel. And they were not just Irish and British: German and Austrian civilian and military internees of World War One, German soldiers, sailors and airmen of World War Two were laid to rest originally in over fifty separate burial places before being reinterred in the purpose-built German War Dead Cemetery at Glencree. The story behind the creation of that unique war grave cemetery is told in the book for the first time.

Where once and for long the graves of all these people were forgotten and their remembrance put to one side, strikingly this is no longer the case today when, throughout the country, their memory is sustained or honoured, from the modest Moyvoughley War Memorial in Westmeath to the splendour of the restored Irish National War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin.

The book was launched by Minister of State Noel Ahern, T.D. on November 2nd and has received much critical acclaim on radio and in newspapers.

The publication is for sale at the Government Publications Office at Molesworth Street, Dublin.

Ken Moore
Property Maintenance

TOP STUDENT AWARD IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT



*Enda Mulvihill at
his graduation*

Enda Mulvihill, who heads up the I.T and Legal Services area of the office has been awarded the “Student of the Year prize in Project Management, by the prestigious Institute of Public Administration, a constituent college of University College Dublin.

The part time Diploma course was run from October 2006 until May 2007 and involved distance learning and attendance at monthly seminars where numerous case studies were analysed and lessons drawn.

Asked what lessons he took from the course, Enda said that “getting stakeholder buy-in on any project was critical right from day one. In addition, having a clear and agreed specification and budget and an achievable programme of work, properly managed from start to finish, were all key ingredients”.

While it was nice to get the award, Enda saw it as secondary to the development of his understanding of why projects fail and most importantly how to avoid this happening and what remedial measures are available.

Enda would thoroughly recommend the course to those with an interest in the project management area.

US VISITORS FROM GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION COME TO OPW



*Bradley McCall and
Patrick Sclafoni*

As part of its ongoing focus on improving performance and assessing how to make more progress in relation to its modernisation aims, OPW is always on the watch for opportunities to make contact with sister organisations with a view to learning how better to deliver the many services we provide and exchange experiences with others engaged in similar work.

In the past, this has led to OPW staff participating in some very useful exchanges with other Departments and Offices within Ireland and also with foreign organisations in such places as Norway, the UK and the United States. We have done this mainly through OPW's participation in certain organised Civil Service initiatives such as the Leaders for Tomorrow Programme. However, OPW has also been open to the possibility of accommodating one-off exchanges with other organisations who want to come to study how we do things here. It was through this latter avenue that OPW hosted an 8 week visit this summer from two officials from our opposite number in the US, the General Services Administration (GSA), Mr. Patrick Sclafani of the Public Buildings Service in Boston and Mr. Bradley Mc Call from the GSA's Financial Services Centre in Fort Worth, Texas.

OPW has had a significant degree of contact with GSA over the past few years, most notably at Senior Manager / Board level and a number of reciprocal visits have taken place to and from Washington and Dublin (a future edition of *Obair* will contain a more in-depth article on the GSA organisation). This was the first occasion however that operational-level staff from the US were involved in an exchange. Under the Leaders for Tomorrow Programme run by the Department of Finance, Frank Shalvey of OPW's Corporate Services Division had been hosted for a four week placement at the GSA's Boston office in 2004 and management on both sides were anxious to explore the further possibilities of this transatlantic alliance. Mr. Sclafani and Mr. Mc Call were involved in a similar initiative within GSA called the Advanced Leadership Development Programme and, as part of the practical element of the Programme, OPW were happy to host them on a job placement in OPW Dublin for 8 weeks through July and August.

Throughout their visit, the two representatives of the GSA met with a wide range of OPW staff working in all of the major business units. A number of visits were undertaken to various sites and offices outside Dublin and a significant number of meetings were held with various officials dealing with various aspects of the work including HR Management, Architectural Services, Engineering and Flood Relief, Financial Services, Project Management Services, Property Management Services, Heritage Services and Decentralisation Unit.

The purpose of the GSA visit was twofold. Firstly, the US visitors were anxious to broaden their own management experience by studying how things are done in OPW and, hopefully, gain some knowledge by observing how things are done here. Secondly, and from the point of view of OPW equally importantly, they were able to meet with various OPW officials and give them the benefit of their own wide experience from working for many years in the GSA. These cross-organisational contacts are regarded very highly by the OPW and go a significant way to helping us achieve the strategic goal of constantly checking our performance and benchmarking ourselves against other organisations involved in similar work.

Finally, there was, of course, a strong social element to the visit and Pat and Brad were also able to, among other things, visit Croke Park for a number of hurling matches, take in personal tours of various Heritage Sites and visit many parts of the country in their free time. They also apparently visited one or two pubs during their stay, but the management experiences derived as a result of these particular visits are not, unfortunately, officially recorded! The writer, who accompanied Pat and Brad on a number of these trips can attest however that shop was, on occasion, definitely talked.

More seriously, the GSA visitors impressed all who they met with their interest and the depth of their own knowledge and experience. Many OPW staff will have gained benefit from having met them and, as this article will be sent to them in the US, the organisation takes this opportunity to thank them for their visit and all that they have brought while they were here.

Frank Shalvey
Heritage Services

Una Ni Fhaircheallaigh
Corporate Services

STAFF MOVEMENT JUL – DEC 2007

Name	Grade		Date
Beatrice O'Reilly	CO	Commenced	02/07/07
Christopher Walsh	CO	Commenced	23/07/07
William Byrne	CO	Commenced	23/07/07
Andrew Caulfield	CO	Commenced	23/07/07
Sean Fitzgerald	CO	Commenced	23/07/07
Irene Kelly	Architect	Commenced	30/07/07
David Clowry	CO	Commenced	30/07/07
Colin Kelleher	Botanist – Grade III	Commenced	07/08/07
Noeleen Smyth	Botanist – Grade III	Commenced	07/08/07
Zee Gamiet Parker	Architect	Commenced	07/08/07
Meital Ben Dayan	Architect	Commenced	07/08/07
Alexandra Caccamo	Assistant Librarian	Commenced	07/08/07
Jennifer McCord	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Adam Doyle	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Birate Jakimaviciene	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Ciaran Moloney	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Paul Kinahan	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Padraic Morley	CO	Commenced	13/08/07
Thomas Lee	CO	Commenced	20/08/07
Thomas Fannon	District Inspector	Commenced	03/09/07
Fergal Boyle	District Inspector	Commenced	17/09/07
Kieran Varley	District Inspector	Commenced	17/09/07
Paul Condon	District Inspector	Commenced	17/09/07
Dermot Foran	District Inspector	Commenced	24/09/07
Gregory Fagan	District Inspector	Commenced	24/09/07
Brendan Rooney	District Inspector	Commenced	24/09/07
Terry Murphy	CO	Commenced	24/09/07
Cathy Mahon	CO	Commenced	24/09/07
Ray Geraghty	District Inspector	Commenced	01/10/07
Susan Griffith	Engineering Tech – Grade II	Commenced	01/10/07
Cristina Armstrong	Botanical Assistant	Commenced	08/10/07
Anthony Quinn	CO	Commenced	22/10/07
Naomi Duggan	CO	Commenced	05/11/07
Charles Moore	Architect	Commenced	12/11/07
Dermot Kinane	CO	Commenced	26/11/07
Jenny Dimond	CO	Commenced	03/12/07
Denise McLoughlin	CO	Career Break	23/08/07
Caitriona Cooney	HEO	Career Break	27/08/07
Cyril McCarthy	Engineer Grade II	Career Break	01/09/07
Kellie Payne	Architect	Career Break	05/09/07
Deborah McElroy	EO	Career Break	21/12/07
Michael Collins	Engineer Grade I	Promoted to ACE	25/07/07
Barry Brennan	CO	Promoted to EO	13/08/07
Michelle Dooley	SO	Promoted to EO	13/08/07
Josephine Lawless	EO	Promoted to HEO	10/09/07
Aiden Murphy	Technical Officer	Promoted to ACTO	08/10/07
Pat Wilson	Technical Officer	Promoted to ACTO	08/10/07
Mark Hayes	Engineer Grade III	Promoted to Engineer Grade II	15/10/07
Seamus O'Neill	HEO	Promoted to APO	02/11/07
Denis Ryan	CO	Promoted to EO	12/11/07
Tommy Bowe	EO	Retired	09/07/07
Valarie Smails	Cleaner	Retired	27/07/07
Joseph Fahy	Architectural Assistant – Grade I	Retired	21/08/07
Brid Snow	HEO	Retired	19/09/07
Niall O'Brien	Technical Equipment Officer	Retired	05/10/07
Patricia Moriarty	CO	Retired	24/11/07
Rory Summerville	Engineering Tech – Grade II	Resigned	21/09/07
Andrew Caulfield	CO	Resigned	02/10/07
Noelle Henry	HEO	Return from CB	02/07/07
Mark Hayes	Engineer Grade III	Return from CB	15/10/07
Philomena Mallon	AO	Transfer In	02/07/07
Bernard Egan	EO	Transfer In	02/07/07
Joan Murphy	CO	Transfer In	13/08/07
Brid Gaynard	SO	Transfer In	03/09/07
Maria Larkin	CO	Transfer In	03/09/07
Breda McWalter	EO	Transfer In	10/09/07
Eamonn Healy	EO	Transfer In	10/09/07
Mary Gormley	CO	Transfer In	10/09/07
Sandra Daly	CO	Transfer In	10/09/07
Siobhan Lacey	EO	Transfer In	11/09/07
Jacqueline McHale	HEO	Transfer In	17/09/07
Brian O'Brien	EO	Transfer In	17/09/07
Patricia Ryan	EO	Transfer In	17/09/07
Deirdre Carroll	CO	Transfer In	17/09/07
Pauric Campbell	EO	Transfer In	17/09/07
Breda Flanagan	EO	Transfer In	08/10/07
Josephine Donnellan	CO	Transfer In	08/10/07
Kathleen Varley	CO	Transfer In	08/10/07
Patricia Ryan	CO	Transfer In	08/10/07
Thomas Monaghan	APO	Transfer In	22/10/07
Marie Duff	EO	Transfer In	30/10/07
William Tuohy	SO	Transfer In	12/11/07
Rachel Emmett	HEO	Transfer In	26/11/07
Deirbhle Hegarty	CO	Transfer In	10/12/07
John McFaul	CO	Transfer Out	13/07/07
Mary Doyle	CO	Transfer Out	27/07/07
Ciaran McCauley	EO	Transfer Out	06/08/07
Christine Brennan	HEO	Transfer Out	08/08/07
Martina Mulligan	HEO	Transfer Out	07/09/07
Catherine Gentleman	EO	Transfer Out	14/09/07
Terri Jones	CO	Transfer Out	26/10/07
Sheila Denny	CO	Deceased	23/08/07
Grace Pasley	Botanical Assistant	Deceased	24/12/07



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Office of Public Works
51 St. Stephen's Green
Dublin 2, Ireland
Tel: 353 1 647 6000
Email: info@opw.ie
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