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Welcome to Issue 19 of Obair, the Office of Public Works' bi-annual magazine.

The legendary Irish summer is upon us and it's time to reflect on some of the projects that the Office has been working on in the first half of 2008.

During this period the OPW was assigned a new Minister and we welcome Dr. Martin Mansergh T.D. to his new position. His predecessor, Minister Noel Ahern T.D. was reassigned to the Department of Transport and Marine and we wish him well in his new post.

Some of the projects highlighted in this issue are the rollout of a new Energy Awareness Campaign both in OPW offices and in other civil service offices throughout the country. We also feature significant events such as the opening of the new Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre in May of this year, the launch of the new Phoenix Park Shuttle Bus, details of the Clonmel Flood Relief Scheme, the unveiling, by President McAleese, of a new “Peace Bell” sculpture in Aras an Uachtarán and conservation work at both Charles Fort and Dungarvan Castle.

The decentralisation programme continues to be rolled out around the country and this issue features details of the new Headquarters of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in Wexford Town.

Also in this issue are details of new office accommodation for OPW staff in Ardee, County Louth, works being undertaken in Glasnevin cemetery - including the lighting-up ceremony of the O'Connell Monument - and details of some important safety equipment that might just save your life.

A big thank you to all our colleagues who provided articles for inclusion in this edition. It is your contributions that keep Obair looking fresh and relevant so please feel free to contact us if you have any projects that you are working on that you feel deserve mention. No projects are too big or too small and don't forget we also welcome articles 'as Gaeilge'.

We hope you enjoy this edition of your Obair magazine and thanks once again for your co-operation.

George Moir, Kevin Kennedy, Jenny Dimond
Obair Editorial Team

Obair is produced on recycled paper: 75% Revive Matt.
The opening of the Mid-Louth Civic Services Centre marks a new chapter in the Office of Public Works’ long association with the town of Ardee. It is from Ardee that OPW oversees the maintenance of the Glyde and Dee, and Monaghan Blackwater Catchment Arterial Drainage Schemes. This involves the routine maintenance of over 1000 km of channels and associated drainage works including over 1200 bridges, and over 30 km of embankment.

The Office is the contact point for a number of OPW regulatory functions in relation to planning, and, bridge and weir construction in the North East. In addition, the local headquarters of the OPW hydrometric section which measures and monitors river flows over a large area for flood management, is based in the new offices.

From an OPW perspective, the new offices and workshops replace accommodation which not only was in poor condition but also failed to meet current Health and Safety standards. OPW has acquired its portion of the development by way of a 900 year lease, at a cost of just over one million euro.
Background

The opportunity for a joint development with Louth County Council and the Courts Services Board arose from a need by both OPW and Louth Co. Co. to replace the accommodation that both bodies shared on the Fairgreen site. The Courts Services Board also needed to move from Ardee Castle where the facilities did not meet the Board’s requirements.

Louth Co. Co., OPW and the Courts Service formed a tri-party partnership to develop the existing site which was in the ownership of Ardee Town Council. The project’s objective was to deliver a facility that would offer improved service delivery to the clients of the partnership and compliment the adjoining public park.

Louth Co. Co. provided the project management services for the development and the design team was led by Van Dijk Architects. Peter Rogers, Senior Architect provided monitoring services on behalf of OPW.

Brief

The brief was for a ‘Green’ building that would be inviting to the local community and well integrated into the adjoining Fairgreen public park. The final product is a building with a dynamic architectural design coupled with impressive sustainable credentials. The building was also designed to be accessible and inviting to the public and to become a focal point and part of the local community.

Concept and Design

The architectural, landscape design and the removal of the existing boundary security fence separating the site from the public park allows the building to merge seamlessly into the public park and metaphorically into the wider community. The building was designed with the use of sustainable materials and technologies, creating a healthy and comfortable environment for the occupants. The use of a Sedum roof and the installation of a wind turbine are novel yet very practical innovative ideas which while enhancing the building are also unique features and a talking point for users of the facility and park alike.

The extensive use of timber and natural materials reinforces the connection between the building and its surrounds whilst reflecting the occupants environmentally friendly intentions. The concept of having three combined buildings rather than three separate buildings resulted in short and long term cost savings and a much more sustainable approach to the buildings construction and use, post occupancy.

The new development not only meets the accommodation needs of the Court Services Board, Louth Co. Co. and OPW but also provides a state of the art facility which enhances the town of Ardee. It was officially opened on 6th June, 2008 by Mr. Dermot Ahern T.D. Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform accompanied by Dr. Martin Mansergh, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Finance with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works.

Niamh O’Regan
Property Management Services
An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern TD, and First Minister of Northern Ireland, Dr Ian Paisley, MP, MLA, officially opened the new visitor facilities for the historic Battle of the Boyne site at Oldbridge, Co Meath, on the 6th of May. The occasion had a special resonance as later that day the Taoiseach tendered his resignation to the President at Áras an Uachtarán after almost 11 years in office. First Minister Paisley had also announced his retirement earlier.
The attendance included a large gathering of Ministers, dignitaries and invited guests from North and South. In his address, which was broadcast live on television by RTÉ, the Taoiseach recalled the symbolism of Dr Paisley’s previous visit on the 11th of May last year, his first visit South in an official capacity. The Taoiseach complimented OPW’s role and said that the site would stand testimony to respect for all traditions in Ireland and symbolise the Peace Process. The First Minister charted the historic context of the Battle of the Boyne and looked forward to a bright future for the whole Island.

The occasion was marked by a symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony, orchestral music and a colourful ‘living history’ pageant. Later, Baroness Eileen Paisley gave an informal address which was warmly received.

The 18th century Oldbridge House has been adapted as the battlesite Visitor Centre with exhibitions of models, maps and graphics, a display of 17th century artillery and associated equipment, original artefacts and an audio-visual show. Of particular note is the innovative laser projection demonstrating the complex military manoeuvres in 1690, which was inspired by a presentation at Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, USA. The adjoining stable-block has been refurbished to house further exhibits, a theatre, a new tearoom pavilion and toilets. The first stage of restoration of the gardens has been completed and car/bus parking provided.

Visitor numbers in excess of 100,000 are anticipated as the Battle of the Boyne becomes a tourism, heritage and recreational attraction and an iconic symbol of the Peace Process.

Eugene Keane
Heritage Services
Climate change is potentially the most serious man-made problem to affect human civilisation in the history of the planet. The latest scientific research predicts that the consequences of rising air temperatures will have devastating social and economic consequences on a truly global scale. One of the main drivers of climate change is the over production of harmful greenhouse gases, of which Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) is the most significant. Over 40% of the CO₂ produced in Ireland is from buildings. The primary source of CO₂ emissions from buildings is due to energy consumption in order to provide heating, cooling, lighting and electrical power.
The Office of Public Works (OPW) is responsible for one of the largest property portfolios in the State. Among the larger buildings the vast majority provide office accommodation for the various Civil Service departments. The OPW is in a key position to achieve significant energy savings and consequently reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in its existing building stock. The OPW is spearheading a major staff energy awareness initiative in 250 large State buildings.

Highly motivated and energy conscientious staff offer the single largest opportunity for zero-cost energy savings in office buildings. The ethos of “Switching Off” equipment when not in use when applied across a large number of people will lead to substantial energy savings. In 2007 the OPW conducted 2 pilot staff energy awareness campaigns in 10 buildings. The target was to reduce energy consumption in each building by 10% through local energy conservation campaigns, energy workshops and close monitoring of the performance of heating/air conditioning equipment. The results of the pilot studies showed that annual energy savings of up to 16% were achievable. They also demonstrated however, that in buildings where there was no buy-in from senior management/no motivated energy officer, energy consumption could just as easily increase. Based on the success of the pilot studies, in January 2008 the OPW launched a State-wide staff energy awareness campaign in 250 buildings, entitled “Optimising Power @ Work.”

The aim of the campaign is to reduce Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions from each building by an average of 15% over an 18-month period. The target for each building has been set in terms of CO₂ emissions as opposed to energy consumption (kWh) reduction. This is due to the fact that staff have the ability to directly influence electrical consumption by switching equipment off when it is not in use. As CO₂ emissions per unit of electricity are significantly higher than per unit of natural gas/fuel oil, small savings in electrical consumption lead to large savings in CO₂ emissions. By setting the targets in CO₂ emissions, staff can readily influence the performance of their building.

It was noted in the pilot studies that staff were not aware of the amount of CO₂ that is produced by electricity. In a typical building fumes are observed emanating from the boiler flues and people can equate this to CO₂ production. The perception however is that electricity is a much cleaner fuel as there are no obvious local emissions. A simple explanation of power station efficiencies and transmission losses, as part of the presentation to staff, illustrates the importance of using electricity efficiently. Each presentation is also tailored to show the actual electrical load profile in the building over the previous week and an explanation is given as to where there is potential for savings, i.e. reducing the night load, reducing the base load and switching off equipment as soon as possible when it is no longer required. The graph can then be compared week on week as the campaign progresses, to monitor the results of the efforts in the building.
There are a number of key elements to the campaign in each building: (1) meetings and regular reporting to senior management, (2) energy officer appointed in each building to coordinate key stakeholders, (3) bi-monthly staff lectures and regular energy reports illustrating progress against benchmarks, (4) staff competitions and inter building emissions league tables, (5) preliminary energy audit and analysis of the various timeclock and set-point settings on the BMS & (6) customised “switch off” posters and stickers.

The kernel of this campaign is the ability to report on how individual buildings are performing and improving. Over the past 4 years the OPW’s Energy Conservation Unit has been installing highly sophisticated web based Energy Monitoring Units (EMU) in all the buildings included in the campaign. In each building the EMU is connected to either the main utility meters (in the case of electricity and natural gas), or sub metering is installed (in the case of LPG and Oil). The EMUs monitor and record electrical and thermal fuel consumption on a 15-minute basis. Graph 1 illustrates a typical electrical load profile in OPW HQ over a 7-day period. Graph 2 illustrates a typical gas consumption profile over a month in the heating season. On a daily basis, using either telephone lines or wireless GSM technology, the collected data is automatically transferred via the Internet to a dedicated energy server database where it can be instantly interrogated via the OPW’s Energy Monitoring Bureau website.

The collected data is used to generate both the management and staff reports for each building. A typical staff fortnightly report contains the latest CO₂ performance indicator (kg of CO₂/m².year), the target figure i.e. 15% reduction on previous years CO₂ performance indicator, and details of whether emissions are up/down over the past fortnight. The report also contains specific information on the electrical and thermal energy consumption over the past fortnight and details of how the building is performing compared to other buildings of similar age, type and occupancy profile. A separate report that is issued to the management team provides, in addition to the above, specific details on energy data and lists recommended actions and improvements.

The feedback from the various Departments has been generally very positive. The results to date show that through the efforts of staff, significant CO₂ reductions have already been achieved. It is important that we lead by example in our own buildings and meet or exceed the 15% target over the coming months.

Conor Clarke
Engineering Services
A “Peace Bell” designed to mark the 10th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement was unveiled in the grounds of Aras an Uachtarain by President Mary McAleese on Thursday, May 22nd 2008.

About 200 guests involved in community groups from north and south of the Border who have been involved in the reconciliation process attended. After the unveiling ceremony the Bell was blessed by representatives of different faith groups in Ireland. Poetry was read by the poet Theo Dorgan and a specially composed piece called ‘Siochan’ was played on the uileann pipes by Peter Browne from RTÉ.
The Aras “Peace Bell” sculpture is rich in symbolism and was commissioned and dedicated by President McAleese. The Bell is suspended from a central piece of oak from the grounds of Aras an Uachtarain and is supported by two oak tree trunks – one from Northern Ireland (Shane’s Castle demesne, Co. Antrim) and the other from the Republic of Ireland (from the environs of Glencairn/ Leopardstown Park Hospital in south Dublin). Apart from the bronze bell (which dates to the middle of the 19th century and most likely comes from the Aras clocktower in the courtyard) and lighting, only natural elements of wood, earth and rock are used.

The focal point of the sculpture is the bell which symbolises peace which is highlighted in the “window” created by the oak supports. The use of wood from the Common Oak (Quercus robur) is also highly symbolic as well as being our National tree. The oak is deeply rooted in our language, poetry and place-name tradition e.g. Derry, Kildare – Doire from the gaelic dair for oak. Oak also represents longevity, strength and from a wildlife point of view plays host to hundreds of species.

The sculptural piece is c.2 metres high and is placed on a bed of quartz (from the environs of Glendalough) on top of a grassy mound which emerges from the landscape. This part of the sculpture is evocative of Newgrange in the Boyne Valley.

The sculpture is located on a secluded grassy area with a backdrop of mature trees and shrubs close to the Douglas Hyde building in the grounds of Aras an Uachtarain. The sculpture is “washed” with gentle light on the exterior and is lit on the interior from the top and base of the bell.

The sculpture is inscribed on a raised pedestal in Gaelic, English and braille with the following inscription:

Clog na Síochána
ama choimisiúin agus ama thiomnú ag
Uachtarán na hÉireann, Máire Mhic Ghiolla isosa
ar Ócáid Chomórtha Deich mBliana
Chomhaontú Aoine an Chéasta
Bealtaine 2008
- Síocháín Linn -

Peace Bell
Commissioned and Dedicated by the
President of Ireland, Mary McAleese
on the Occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the
Good Friday Agreement
May 2008
- Let there be peace -

John McCullen
Heritage Services
Automatic external defibrillators, or AEDs, are pieces of equipment that are becoming more common in a variety of public places and small communities. But what is an AED and why should OPW be installing them on some of their sites?
We are all familiar with the concept of a defibrillator from TV programmes showing the doctor dramatically applying the “shock paddles” to a patient to resuscitate them, and that’s exactly what the AED does. The concept for a small portable machine that was completely user friendly is actually an Irish one and is credited to Dr. Frank Pantridge, MD, CBE, from Northern Ireland who transformed emergency medicine and paramedic services with the invention of the portable defibrillator.

Developments in the equipment have now made them very user friendly and anyone can be trained in their use. Units now come with voice commands to tell the person administering emergency care what to do. The modern AED will only administer a shock if the patient has no heart beat. You can if so inclined, attach it to yourself and push the red button and nothing will happen - presuming of course you have a heart beat in the first place.

OPW’s programme for installing AEDs is aimed at the larger workplaces and sites that would draw large numbers of visitors. The initial units have been installed at

- OPW Headquarters, 51 St. Stephens Green, Dublin
- OPW Engineering Branch, Hatch St., Dublin
- Dublin Castle Conference Centre
- Farmleigh Estate, Dublin
- Rock of Cashel, Co. Tipperary
- Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny
- Battle of the Boyne site, Oldbridge, Co. Meath
- Botanic Gardens, Dublin
- OPW Western Drainage HQ, Athenry, Co. Galway

Safety Managers have been asked to nominate other potential sites within their remit that might meet the criteria for installing AEDs so over time, this list will grow. OPW has also recently gained approval as an Irish Heart Foundation approved trainer site. This is a substantial achievement and all training for the programme is being conducted using in-house trainers. Both Paul White and Tony Mahon have successfully completed their AED Trainer courses and the first phase of the programme is now well under way.

Our aim is to have as many OPW staff as possible trained in these skills. They are not just useful in the workplace but could in fact save a life in your own home.

Paul White
Corporate Services
As part of our ongoing sustainability programme in the Phoenix Park, the OPW have recently issued a contract (after a very competitive tendering process) to Aircoach Ltd., to provide an LPG environmentally friendly shuttle bus service.

This new public transport service will greatly enhance public access to the Park and its many amenities. It was launched on the 2nd May 2008, at the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre, by Noel Ahern T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Finance with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works.
All staff working in the various institutions of the Park and members of the public are encouraged to do their bit for the environment, leave their cars at home and get on board and enjoy, in comfort, all the amenities the Phoenix Park has to offer.

In the interest of protecting the Park environment, an important feature of the new service, is that low emission LPG powered buses are being utilised. The buses also facilitate wheelchair access and provide storage for children's buggies.

The all day ticket works on a hop on / hop off basis for the entire day, so that all ticket holders can choose from any of the facilities the park has to offer and board at any of the 11 bus stops around the Park. The public have been showing a huge interest and delight in this new facility, which saw 1,500 plus individuals availing of the service over its first 21 days in operation.

Indeed, on any given day, a trip to the Phoenix Park could include a visit to Dublin Zoo, partaking of the Summer Programme of events in the Phoenix Park Visitor Centre with its new universal access playground and Victorian kitchen gardens, visiting Farmleigh Estate, enjoying a meal at the Phoenix Café or taking tea in the Victorian Tearooms while enjoying music on the bandstand or a stroll around the 1,752 acres of parkland enjoying the peace, tranquillity, landscape, wildlife and historical features the Park has to offer.

It really is so easy to forget you are in the middle of Dublin city, in a Park that is larger than all of London’s city parks put together, and more than twice the area of New York’s Central Park!

There is also the option of a round trip which lasts about 40 minutes and the shuttle bus features a very informative and enjoyable on-board commentary giving passengers all the cultural and historical information on the many sites, lodges and institutions within the Park and, of course, the fallow deer herd.

The Phoenix Park Shuttle Bus departs from Parkgate St every 20-30 minutes, depending on the time of day. Maps, leaflets and flyers are all available on each of the two buses. Tickets are purchased from the driver at €2 per adult, €1 per child or €5 per family. The bus runs 7 days a week and provides a 7 am start Mon-Fri for all those working in the various Park institutions and a 10 am start at the weekends.

The introduction of the shuttle bus is just one part of the sustainability programme for the Phoenix Park, which has also seen the recent introduction of a new hybrid powered car for the Phoenix Park Rangers. The Park Rangers have also taken to their bicycles as an alternative way of patrolling the Park and this has proved extremely popular both with the Rangers themselves and Park users.

In order to further encourage the public out of their cars and experience the Park, a new bicycle hire franchise has opened just inside the main Park gates. A wide range of bikes are available for hire and are designed to cater for all ages from kiddies bikes to hybrids, tandems and tag-alongs, and can include baby seats and baby carriers. The concession was awarded to Paul McQuaid, who comes from a family with a long history in the world of cycling. The newly extended network by Engineering Services of over 14 km of cycle lanes makes this a safe and enjoyable way for people to experience and explore the Park.

So this summer, “Go wild in the Park” and experience one of Dublin’s favourite places, The Phoenix Park.

Raychel Coyle
Heritage Services
Ten years before 1916, the Dublin Cemeteries Committee issued a book of bye laws for Glasnevin Cemetery, illustrated by an impressive array of black and white photographs showing what the cemetery looked like at the time – a fine Victorian-style garden cemetery with manicured grass and carefully cobbled paths flanked by well-pruned hedges. Being a not for profit organisation and registered as a charity, the Committee was not able to maintain the grounds to the same standard during the century that followed.
Only a year younger than the Office of Public Works, the cemetery came into being under the aegis of Daniel O’Connell, whose remains (minus his heart which he donated to Rome) repose in the vault of the Round Tower. In June 2006, the Cemeteries Committee petitioned the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern to provide funding so that the cemetery would be a prime tourist attraction but also a centre of national pride where the centenary of the Rising could be suitably celebrated in 2016.

The government duly obliged by including the cemetery in the National Development Plan as an Office of Public Works project. The Office of Public Works is making an important contribution towards restoring this great necropolis to its pristine glory of the early 1900s and the results are very much beginning to show.

The general public may see little of the valuable work done to date to improve the century-old drains, yet the man-holes sunk into them will greatly help their maintenance during the present century - and beyond. But much more vivid to the naked eye are the startling improvements made in recent months to the trees and monuments of the cemetery, thereby enhancing it sufficiently to provide our first initial vision of what the whole cemetery will look like when completed in 2016.

Some of the cemetery’s great trees go back to the nineteenth century and still offer shady sylvan strolls particularly near the original entrance from Prospect Square at the eastern end of the cemetery. Part of the ongoing work has been to remove many of their lower branches in order to provide better visibility for mourners and tourists alike. It is also remarkable how the removal of ivy from the tree-trunks and monuments changes the aspect from a Rip-van-Winkle jungle of neglect to a friendly forest feeling where the trees are seen to add dignity and height to a well-wooded landscape. This goes not only for the yews which contribute to the melancholy atmosphere, but also to the noble beeches which are such a feature of the place.

Recent OPW assisted restoration work has managed in a short space of time to change the eastern end of the Cemetery from something of an untamed wilderness to a must see attraction, particularly among the tall limestone monuments, including the Monaghan Chapel, which are now revealed as the venerable memorials they were designed to be when erected a century and a half ago by the affluent citizens of Dublin. Old railings which enclosed some of these monuments have also recently been replaced in an ancient style which will doubtless earn many plaudits from conservationists in the years to come.

The opening up of the Finglas Road in the mid-nineteenth century gave the Cemeteries Committee the opportunity to create a new axis of orientation for the Cemetery, with the creation of the present gates (on which Padraig Pearse’s father worked) providing a whole new entrance giving onto the O’Connell Tower and a much larger chapel.
The restoration work has brought pulsating new life to this area, not only by re-locating the beautiful Sigerson memorial honouring the dead of 1916 and placing it dramatically to the left of the entrance, but also by landscaping and lighting the foot of the Round Tower to show off for the first time in many years the superb masonry of its base.

Equally striking is the way in which many of the monuments close to the O’Connell Tower have been cleaned to reveal the fine-quality craftsmanship seen, for instance, in the Meade monument topped by the archangel Michael, the Sir Thomas Farrell statue of the actor Barry Sullivan playing the role of Hamlet, and the beautiful Boland chapel which had suffered so unhappily from vandalism.

To paraphrase the now-famous political slogan, much has already been done, but even more remains to do. Some of the headstones which had been sloping or even falling, have been placed upright and provided with new foundations to prevent a re-occurrence. But this is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the total number of old tombstones which require similar attention. The praiseworthy grassing begun at the eastern end will have to continue westwards. The important Chapel, The Church of the Resurrection – a rare Romanesque essay among the Gothic output of the famous Victorian architect J J McCarthy – is in serious need of repair, particularly the roof which has caused dampness that urgently needs eradication. The O’Connell Tower itself is in need of conservation, as is the one surviving gate lodge and its attendant structures. The resurfacing of the eight kilometres of paths, already begun, will have to be intensified to face further centuries of use, and the railings along the perimeter wall, together with the interspersed watch towers built to counteract body-snatching, will need much care and attention if they are to survive and impress all the passers-by.

What has already been achieved in these few short months already foreshadows the vast contribution the OPW is making to the transformation of this National Cemetery into a worthy centre for the celebration of those heroes of the War of Independence whose graves lie within its walls. The Cemeteries Committee, for its part, is committed to the building of an exciting new Heritage Centre beside the Finglas Road entrance which will be proceeding hand in hand with the OPW work in illuminating the history of the Cemetery and its occupants, and will form a suitable introduction to the Cemetery which on completion, should bid fair to become one of Dublin’s – and the country’s – major tourist attractions and, indeed, one of the worlds major attractions to see before you die.

Dr. Peter Harbison
Glasnevin Cemetery
On Monday 21st April 2008, Minister of State Noel Ahern, T.D., launched the 2008 €10 Silver Proof Coin and the 2008 €20 Gold Proof coin at the Erin Room, Dublin Castle. Both of these coins celebrate European Cultural Heritage. The design of these coins feature Skellig Michael, the UNESCO heritage Site located off the coast of Kerry.
Mr. John Hurley, Governor of the Central Bank & Financial Services Authority of Ireland, presented the Minister with the first set of these coins. Speaking at the launch the Minister thanked the Central Bank for deciding to use another OPW Heritage Site on their coins and extended his best wishes to them for its success. The Minister assured the Governor that if he decides to feature another OPW Heritage Site that we would be delighted to take part again as we have plenty more wonderful sites in our portfolio.

OPW has been working closely with the Central Bank since 2003 on the Annual Mint Sets, which formed the Heritage of Ireland Series. The Heritage of Ireland series was initially to run for a five-year period but due to its popularity it was extended for another year into 2008. The following are the Heritage sites that were featured in this series:

2003  Casino Marino, Dublin
2004  Reginald’s Tower, Waterford
2005  Heywood Gardens, Co. Laois
2006  Glenveagh National Park and Castle, Co. Donegal
2007  Dún Aonghasa, Aran Islands, Co. Galway
2008  Newgrange, Co. Meath

The 2003 and 2004 Annual Mint Sets are sold out and there is only a limited quantity of each of the other sets available. This is clearly a testament to the popularity of these wonderful Heritage Sites and the great esteem in which they are held worldwide. The linking of these Heritage Sites with the coin sets has been of major benefit to both OPW and the Central Bank and has played a pivotal role in contributing to raising awareness of some more of our magnificent but lesser known Heritage Sites.

Details of how to purchase the above coins and other commemorative coins are available on www.centralbank.ie.

Denis Murphy
Heritage Services
Background

Clonmel Town suffers severe flooding on a regular basis from the River Suir and also as a result of floodwaters overflowing the banks of the tributary streams - the Whitening Stream and the Auk Stream. The local authorities along with the Office of Public Works (OPW) over the past number of years have been investigating ways to reduce the damage that is caused by the flooding. This resulted in two schemes being brought forward to statutory public exhibition, the original scheme in 2002 and a later revised scheme in 2005.
Original Scheme

The original scheme was based on substantial excavation being undertaken to enlarge the river channel and thus to provide adequate in-bank conveyance through the town for a flood. The Scheme provided for protection against a 1 in 50 year flood. The local authority had confirmed that it would only approve a scheme with a 50 years protection level for Clonmel as public feeling did not support the higher walls required for 100 year protection. Following concerns raised during the statutory exhibition of the Scheme in December 2001/January 2002, it became clear that the Scheme would have to be revised. The issues raised, included the concerns expressed by both Waterford and South Tipperary County Councils that there could be contaminated material in the riverbed. In addition there were general concerns over archaeological and environmental issues involved in dredging the river, and the expressed fear that the height of the proposed walls would ruin the high amenity value of the river.

Revised Scheme

OPW re-examined the original scheme and, with increased knowledge and confidence in demountable defences internationally, proposed a revised Scheme involving the use of demountable barriers, walls and embankments, and storm drains and pumping stations and this revised scheme was successfully exhibited in 2005. The revised scheme will prevent or substantially reduce the periodical localised flooding of lands and properties in the area and will have the added benefits outlined below.

Benefits

• No dredging of the river
• Reduced environmental impact
• Most of the high walls have been removed, with the use of demountable flood barriers on top of low level walls instead. The demountable barriers are only erected when the flood warning system indicates that water levels are likely to approach flood condition and are removed when levels have receded. Thus when the demountables are not in use the scenic outlook and aesthetics are not compromised, as would be the case with permanent flood defences (Some photos of demountable defences showing the before and after situation are included in this article).
• An improved level of protection against higher floods (the revised scheme will give protection against the 1 in a 100 year flood) and greater benefits – over 400 properties (including 250 residential) are affected by the 100 year flood
• The scheme is very economically viable - benefits of some €148 million (for the overall entire scheme)
• High amenity value of the river is maintained
• Development of a flood warning system for the people of Clonmel

When completed, the Clonmel Flood Relief Scheme will have a significant positive impact on the town (and also, of course, on those properties in Co.Waterford immediately adjacent to Clonmel) through reducing or eliminating the following difficult problems, which are caused by flooding:

• economic damage to residential and commercial properties vulnerable to flooding
• stress and anxiety experienced by residents and property owners as a result of the threat from future flooding events
• economic loss to traders in vulnerable properties during flood events
• social disruption to the local community
• disruption and delays to traffic in the town

Phased Approach to Construction

The flood relief works will be constructed on a phased basis. There will be 3 phases overall:

• the Clonmel West Drainage Scheme
• the Clonmel North Drainage Scheme
• the Clonmel East Drainage Scheme

Each phase when complete will increase the level of flood protection within that phase area. Following the completion of all 3 phases, the town of Clonmel will be protected from the flood event which has 1 in 100 chance of occurring in any given year.

An earlier phase of preliminary works, involving (a) the removal of vegetation from Dudley’s Weir and (b) clearing out the channels of the Auk Streams and the Whitening Stream has already been carried out.
Clonmel West Scheme To be Constructed First

The first of the schemes to be constructed will be the Clonmel West Scheme which stretches from the Marlfield area in the west of the town to the Oldbridge area of Clonmel. The main items in this phase are:

• Protection to properties in Marlfield
• Protection to properties on the Convent Road
• Protection to properties on Stretches Island, Green Lane
• Embankments and walls protecting properties in the Oldbridge area
• The removal of the constriction on the right bank of the South Channel
• Walls protecting properties along the Whitening Stream

Advance work on the construction of the earthen embankments in this phase is now almost complete. Also, necessary tree felling operations have now been completed. Following an EU tender process, SIAC Construction Limited was appointed to carry out the other main civil engineering works in this phase. SIAC mobilised to site in late April 2008 and works commenced at the beginning of May. SIAC has estimated that the works will take approximately 17 months.

Construction of the Clonmel North Scheme will follow upon completion of the West Scheme, and similarly the Clonmel East Scheme will follow completion of the North Scheme. A summary of the main works to be carried out in these later phases is given below.

Clonmel North Scheme

• The replacing of the Dry Bridge and the bridge between Suir and Stretches Islands
• Protection to properties on Suir Island
• The extension of the quay wall from Riverview Court to Anglesea Street
• The opening of the dry arch of Gashouse Bridge to flows in time of flood
• The widening of the South Channel of the Suir in Denis Burke Park
• The construction of walls and embankments to the north of the tow path between Gashouse Bridge and Mulcahy Park
Clonmel East Scheme

• The protection of properties on the right bank of the Suir in Croan, Kilgainy and Poulboy.
• Walls protecting properties along the Auk Streams East and West.

It is expected that the entire Clonmel Flood Relief Scheme, encompassing all phases, will take approximately 5 years to complete.

Environment

A full Environmental Impact Study was undertaken in respect of the Clonmel Flood Relief Scheme and was included as part of the successful statutory Exhibition stage of the scheme in 2005. The revised scheme minimises the impact on the environment. In particular, this scheme, unlike previous schemes, does not need any dredging of the River Suir and therefore avoids the environmental disruption associated with dredging and disposal of river bed material on lands in the area.

Communications

The following communication initiatives are in place:

• A Steering Group comprising representatives of OPW, OPW’s consulting engineers for the scheme, and the local authorities will manage and monitor progress on the implementation of the scheme. The Steering Group meets at regular intervals and will continue to do so for the duration of the scheme works.

• A Flooding Sub-Committee comprising councillors from the three local authorities involved meets at regular intervals with OPW officials to receive progress reports. The most recent such meeting held on 3 June 2008 was also attended by OPW Minister of State, Dr. Martin Mansergh, T.D.

• A Newsletter is being produced at regular intervals for the duration of the works until the entire scheme (all 3 phases) is completed. The purpose of the Newsletter is to provide the local authorities concerned (Clonmel Borough Council, South Tipperary County Council and Waterford County Council) and the people of the Clonmel area with an information update on the progress of the works associated with the implementation of the flood relief scheme. The Newsletter will detail progress to date and also outline the activities which are scheduled for the immediate period ahead.

• A Senior Resident Engineer and a Clerk of Works have been appointed for the Clonmel West Scheme and these will liaise on the ground with individuals and local interest groups in relation to day to day routine queries about the works.

• Copies of drawings and photos of the proposed Clonmel flood relief scheme are available for inspection at the offices of Clonmel Borough Council.

• Useful websites:
  www.flooding.ie
  (This website aims to provide practical help to all those whose homes or businesses may be at risk from flooding and is intended to enhance public access to information about flooding. It is based on a PLAN / PREPARE / PROTECT approach.)
  www.floodmaps.ie
  (National Flood Hazard Mapping Website)

Joe Pat O’Donnell
Engineering Services
Fruit and vegetables have featured as part of the displays at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin for more than 200 years. Over the past ten years however the vegetable plots have had to share space with other collections displaced due to much needed restoration work. This has meant that the emphasis that the Gardens has been able to give to growing vegetables was less that we wanted in recent years. Two and a half years ago we began to plan an entirely new and innovative display of fruit and vegetables for the Gardens, responding to the growing revival in interest throughout Ireland in growing home produce. Since then work has been undertaken to restore Glasnevin's fruit and vegetable growing to its former glory.
On Sunday 8th June 2008 the new Fruit and Vegetable Garden was opened by Mr. Bertie Ahern T.D. Mr. Trevor Sergeant, T.D, Minister of State for Food and Horticulture also attended. More than a hundred guests at the opening were welcomed by the Director, Dr Peter Wyse Jackson who said ‘the National Botanic Gardens has increasingly been developing as an important national and international environmental centre, supporting sustainability, biodiversity conservation and promoting the wise use of the Earth’s resources. We hope that this new fruit and vegetable garden will provide an important new resource for this on-going work as we endeavour to become ourselves a model for sustainability’.

The new Fruit and Vegetable Garden has been located within an area called the Enclosed Garden. This was formed when an area was acquired from the adjoining cemetery in 1839 and enclosed with 5 metre high walls to match the remaining garden walls. This area has had a varied history since its acquisition, being a trial ground for new plant introductions to the Gardens, to housing some nursery stock including an old orchard. Latterly it was used as a modern-style orchard primarily for the instruction of students and outside groups. These fruit trees had become diseased and were beyond rescue.

The new garden has therefore been created to display a comprehensive selection of fruit and vegetables that can be grown in the average garden in Ireland. It features both common and unusual varieties. The idea is to provide inspiration and guidance for home gardeners on food that they may grow in their own gardens, helping to promote both sustainability and a healthier lifestyle. It is further planned to create a small raised bed that will relate to the modern home garden. This will be intensively cropped with a tally kept of what was harvested over the growing season. It is hoped that this will encourage many families to give over precious space in their gardens to produce healthy food for the dining table.

The garden has taken two years to construct, allowing for the fact that the busy Gardens’ schedule was also maintained. It was managed entirely using in-house expertise from both the OPW Building Maintenance Services under the leadership of Mr Bernard O’Brien, Service Manager and the staff of the Gardens under the leadership of Foreman Denis McNally. The design created by Curator Paul Maher is formal in design with broad walks radiating from the entrance through plots with ample growing space.

The garden is being managed following organic principles and within it no herbicide, insecticide or fungicide will be used. Soil improvement will be achieved by the use of compost made in the Gardens’ own composting facility.

A new herb garden features in the design. This replaces the existing herb garden that was in an area that is now being redeveloped. Work there has commenced on the construction of a new native Irish plant conservation area, which by 2010 will include a diverse range of Ireland’s natural habitats.

The new herb garden fits well alongside the fruit and vegetables within the walled garden. It will include as wide a variety of aromatic and culinary herbs as space will allow. Its design is reminiscent of a medieval herb garden with a modern twist.

The main vegetable growing plots will be managed on a three year rotational basis. These will contain crops such as peas, beans, potatoes, cabbages, carrots, parsnips, turnips, all the salad crops and one plot allocated to perennial vegetables such as asparagus and artichokes.

The walled garden sits alongside the main composting facility for the National Botanic Gardens and also in time a display area will be created from the fruit and vegetable garden to view composting in action. This further addition will include demonstration home composters to promote and provide guidance to gardeners on how they can recycle organic waste more effectively and efficiently at home.

The new fruit and vegetable garden has quickly become a considerable success with visitors to the Gardens showing the great range of fruit and vegetables that can be grown for food in Ireland. Visitors have been amazed to see the more than 200 different crops and varieties that are already being grown.

Paul Maher and Peter Wyse Jackson
National Botanic Gardens
Between 1679 and 1680 an earthwork fortification was laid out which replaced earlier fieldworks at Ringcurran Castle, Kinsale. William Robinson, architect of the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham and Superintendent of Fortifications, is credited with the design of the new fort. In 1680 the fort was named Charles Fort and the fort as seen today is, for the most part, unchanged from its 17th-century layout.
The base of Charles Bastion, the quay wall, an adjoining retaining wall to the sea and a footbridge, all located at the south-eastern corner of the fort, had incurred damage from the wave action of the sea over time. Walkers also used the area as part of the Scilly Walk, which links Charles Fort with Kinsale town. Conservation and consolidation works were urgently required to prevent further deterioration and loss of masonry and to provide safe access for the public to the monument and adjoining areas.

The total length of masonry wall for consolidation from the bastion to the footbridge was approximately 57.0 metres. This required a specialist scaffold design and erection on site. Scaffold for the works to the quay wall was cantilevered using a system of aluminium beams counterweighted with concrete blocks (kentledge) to suspend the working platforms over the sea. Scaffold to the retaining wall adjoining the quay wall consisted of aluminium beams anchored with 'platypus' ground anchors. Work on site was planned to coincide with low tides (the working platforms were submerged at high tide) and rigorous inspection of the scaffold was essential prior to every use. The works were carried out during the summers of 2005, 2006 and completed in 2007.

A large number of pointing and core mortars were tested to establish the original constituents. It was agreed, based on the results of these tests, that as the repair mortars would be subject to water ingress and percolation, the replacement mortars should be hydraulic based, to resist lime leaching from the mortar before the mortar had carbonated.

NHL 5 type mortar was used for the very exposed areas such as the quay wall, the buttress to Charles
Bastion and the retaining wall to the embankment below the high tide mark. All other areas such as those above the high tide mark, the steps, the bridge and the counterscarp wall were a NHL 3.5 type mortar. Aggregates were a combination of locally sourced sandstone and shale.

The quay wall, of roughly coursed squared sandstone, was reasonably tightly jointed at the base of the wall. The joints were, for the most part, washed clean of any mortar. However, localised cement pointing was still evident in some joints (this work was probably contemporary with the pouring of the un-reinforced concrete slab at the quay surface level). Much of the original stone was recovered from the beach so very little new material was used.

Works also included the provision of some new railings and uprights to the bridge based on the originals by Francis Morton & Co. Ltd, Engineers, Liverpool, 1848 – 1992.

Under archaeological supervision, an existing flight of stone steps was relocated closer to the retaining wall of the glacis to afford safer access to the public.

The workforce of the O.P.W. Heritage Services sub-depot located at Charles Fort Kinsale carried out all the works, except for the scaffold erection.

John O’Connell
Heritage Services
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WEXFORD
Description of Project

The Development of new Headquarters office accommodation for approximately 290 staff of the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government to be based at Carricklawn, Wexford. The 2.025 ha. site was acquired by the Office of Public Works from the local authority and ownership was officially transferred from Wexford County Council to the Office of Public Works on 12th February 2008. The works consist of the construction of 6586m² of offices in the form of two curved blocks, one of 3-storeys in height and the other of 4-storeys in height linked by a glazed atrium together with ancillary roads, pathways, service yard, attenuation pond and parking for 300 cars.

Procurement Process

Following a pre-qualification stage, seven firms were invited to tender for the Design & Build of the proposed development. A contract in the sum of €18.6 million was awarded to Pierse Contracting Ltd on 20th June, 2007.

Current Position

The building is due for completion in December 2008. Following building completion, the furniture fit out will be carried out by OPW Furniture Branch and the IT installation will be carried out by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. The OPW will be in a position to hand over the building in Q1 2009.

Ann Corrigan
Project Management Services
Dungarvan Castle was in existence by 1215 and the site continued in use by the military and the Royal Irish Constabulary until 1922. The Gardaí then occupied the site until 1987. The barracks dating from the 18th century were converted for use as a visitor reception and exhibition centre in 2000. The workforce of the Heritage Service of the OPW is currently employed in re-roofing the large circular tower located at the southwest angle of the ward.

The original slated roof had been removed in the 18th century during the construction of the barracks but it was re-roofed again in the 19th century and recommissioned as a hospital. However, this roof also fell into ruin but photographs and material evidence on site provided enough information for the reconstruction of a 19th-century replica pine and slate roof.
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We also remember our friend and colleague Pat Byrne, who worked for many years in the IT Unit, and sadly died in January 2008.