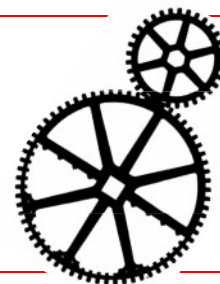


INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND **NEWSLETTER**

www.ihai.ie

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March 2011



DIARY DATES

9 March	IHAI Awards, Dublin
26 March	IHAI AGM, Dublin
7 May	Spring Tour, Co Wicklow
26 Aug/ 1Sept	AIA Conference, Cork
1-2 Oct	Autumn Tour, Co Limerick/Clare
<i>Items in bold are organized by the IHAI</i>	

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first IHAI newsletter for 2011. It brings you news of forthcoming events and a review of several past ones that escaped your editor's radar!

This newsletter also introduces a discussion on various issues arising from the restoration of the Ulster Canal. The views expressed are those of the protagonists and your editor would welcome further contributions to this debate.

Speaking of canals, last year saw the re-opening of the Royal Canal between Dublin and the Shannon, but more of this in the next Newsletter.

IHAI AWARDS

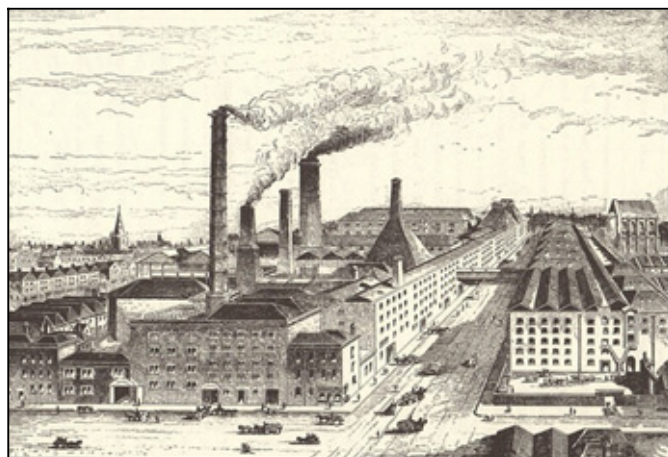
The sixth annual Industrial Heritage Awards ceremony will take place at ESB headquarters, 29 Fitzwilliam St, Dublin on Wed 9 March, starting at 5.30pm. This event recognises individuals and organisations that have contributed to the preservation and promotion of Ireland's industrial heritage. The awards will be presented by Brid Horan, Executive Director, Energy Solutions & Services, ESB.

Apologies for the short notice, but details have only just been finalised. Hopefully those of you on email or with access to the IHAI website will have been notified. For further information contact brendan.delany@esb.ie.

IHAI ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM will take place at the Old Jameson Distillery, Bow Street, Dublin on Saturday 26 March, starting at 11am; tea/coffee will be served from 10.30am. The venue is convenient to the Smithfield halt on the LUAS. The meeting will be followed by a short talk by Mary McMahon, a guided tour of the heritage centre and then lunch. An agenda and programme of the day's events will be mailed to members separately. The cost of the tour and lunch, both of which are optional, is €20, payable on the day.

The Bow Street Distillery was established in the late 1700s and acquired by John Jameson in 1805. When



Jameson's Bow Street Distillery as illustrated by Alfred Barnard in his *Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom* (1887).

visited by Alfred Barnard in the 1880s, it had expanded to five acres and the workers are described as "*hale and hearty old men; one old veteran was over eighty-six years of age*". There is obviously some truth in *aqua vitae* being the elixir of life!

In 1966 Jamesons amalgamated with Cork Distillers and John Power of Dublin to form the Irish Distillers Group (now owned by Pernod Ricard). In 1971 whiskey production was moved from Bow St to Midleton (venue for our 2008 AGM). Some of the defunct buildings were demolished and others converted to apartments and commercial use.

At the Smithfield side of the site, the top of an 185ft high chimney of 1895 was, until the closure of the adjacent hotel to which it now belongs, accessible by a glass lift.

One of the original buildings in the heart of the former distillery has been fitted out as the 'Old Jameson Distillery' heritage centre. Here the site's history is recounted, the process of making whiskey explained, and the company's products - Paddy, Powers, Jamesons etc - showcased. See it for yourself at the AGM!



SPRING TOUR

A one-day tour of some industrial sites in the Wicklow Mountains will take place on Saturday 7 May. We will be visiting the Dublin Waterworks at Roundwood in the morning and given a guided tour by Ned Fleming.

After lunch in the village, we will travel on to Glendalough and Glendasan for a walking tour of old mining sites. We will be led by Martin Critchley of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland.

Travel will be by private car (a car pool will be arranged). The cost will be €15 for members (€20 non-members), including lunch and tour notes. IHA members will be circulated in due course with full details and a booking form

AUTUMN TOUR

Plans are well advanced for our autumn tour of industrial heritage sites in counties Limerick and Clare. Led by Brian Goggin, it will take place over the weekend of 1-2 Oct. It will be possible to travel by train to/from Limerick and onward travel will be by coach. Full details and a booking form will be in a forthcoming Newsletter.

LIVING HISTORY

By way of a follow-up on the article on Ballincollig Gunpowder Mill in the last Newsletter, Catryn Power, Cork County Archaeologist, recalls several innovative events which took place last year at the mill complex.

As part of the Association of Young Irish Archaeologists' 2010 Conference, held at University College Cork, a visit was arranged to the mills. The group, from all over Ireland and Britain, were given to a tour by Jenny Webb, author of *Ballincollig Royal Gunpowder Mills: a Hidden History* (Nonesuch Publishing, 2006). Alex Manteiga Brea, a PhD student from UCC, gave a demonstration on the manufacture of stone tools from flint. Elaine Lynch, also a UCC postgraduate, demonstrated how pottery could be produced from local clay. Her special area of interest is Neolithic Grooved Ware and she showed the group some reconstruction pottery which she had made as part of her thesis research.

The heritage centre, at the east end of the regional park, was also opened for the day. Although officially closed since 2007, it continues to be maintained by Cork CC and it is hoped that it will eventually be reopened and give Ballincollig a much needed boost.



Jenny Webb (foreground) conducts the group around the mill complex



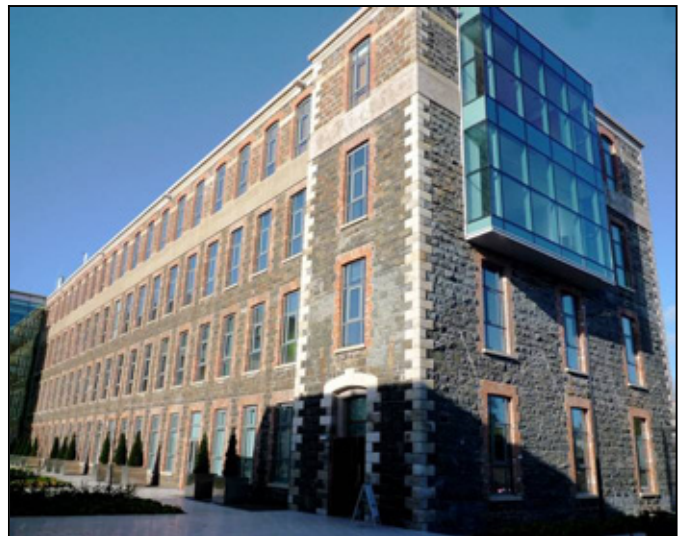
Scoil Eoin's 6th Class at the mills.

During the year Catryn also organised a 'living history' programme for local primary schools. Almost 400 pupils were given conducted tours of the vast mill complex by Rod MacOnail (Ballincollig Heritage Association), Jenny Webb and Catryn.

Part of this project also entailed living history re-enactors visiting the schools. Issue 1 of Scoil Eoin's e-newsletter carried a short report on their visit, organised by Catryn in conjunction with Martin MacAree of Legion Ireland. Martin was accompanied by Alex the Russian Viking, Eoin a US airman, and Donnachadh, a member of American Civil War Reactors. Each soldier told the class about his weaponry - muskets, rifles, swords etc. Rod MacConaill from the Ballincollig Heritage Association also explained the importance of the gunpowder mills in the history of European warfare.

MUSEUM AT T'MILL

A new museum with an industrial theme was officially opened at the former Mossley Mill on the northern outskirts of Belfast by the Mayor of Newtownabbey, Alderman Paula Bradley on 12 November last. The mill was established by Edmund Grimshaw in 1834 for the spinning of yarn from flax. It was bought by Henry Campbell & Co in 1859. They expanded the mill to its present form and built houses for their employees (now Mossley village). Thread production from flax yarn also started in the 1880s.



The new mill museum is on the ground floor, with a conference centre and offices on the floors above.

In the 1970s, Campbells amalgamated with Barbour's of Hilden (near Lisburn) and thread production subsequently transferred to there. Mossley Mill was sold to Herdmans of Sion Mills in 1993 and closed two years later. Were it not for its acquisition by Newtownabbey Borough Council in 1996, the mill would almost certainly have been demolished.

The Council drew up an imaginative conversion plan, the first phase of which was completed in 2000 with the opening of the front block as a Civic Headquarters.

The £20 million second phase entailed the building of a new theatre in the back courtyard and the conversion a wing of the old mill to a museum and civil centre.

Under the direction of Samantha Curry, the Council's Museums & Heritage Officer, the wing's ground floor has been fitted out with artefacts and documents which illustrate the story of the mill and those who worked in it.

Besides the usual text panels, numerous interactive audio-visual touch screens give an added dimension to the story. A wet spinning frame salvaged from Sion Mills is also on display and a room is set aside for temporary exhibitions and educational purposes.

More details on the museum and its opening times can be found on the Council's website <www.newtownabbey.gov.uk/MuseumAtTheMill/mossleymill.asp>. This also has a link to a downloadable history of the mill and an MP3 podcast.



Its opening marks the culmination of ten years of dedicated work by Lagan Legacy, a charitable company set up by the Lagan Boat Company in 2002. Four years later, the group had raised sufficient funds to purchase the *Confiance*, a 600-tonne, 55m-long barge built in Holland in 1960. Having sailed it across the North Sea to Belfast, and with funding secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund, N. Ireland Tourist Board and Arts Council of Northern Ireland, they then set about fitting it out as a maritime museum.

Billed as "the greatest story never told", this permanent exhibition focuses on all aspects of life in the shipyards using artefacts, documents, videos, photographs, models and recordings. What's on display is actually just the tip of the iceberg (sorry!) of Lagan Legacy's vast archive which it has collected over the years. It also places the city's ship building in its wider industrial context, touching upon other major industries such as rope making, aircraft, linen and engineering.

One thing missing is the story of the *Titanic*. Arguably the world's most famous ship, she is viewed by Charlie Warmington, Lagan Legacy's researcher, as a "weapon of mass distraction" in the sense that it tends to overshadow everything else that Belfast's shipyards ever produced. We will be hearing plenty more about her next year when the *Titanic* signature building opens on Queen's Island to mark the centenary of its launch.

Besides fitting out the hold as a museum, the *Confiance* also has a multi-use performance space (available for hire) and a café.

The museum is open from 10am to 4pm daily. Tailor-made guided tours are available and can be booked in advance. For further information contact admin@laganlegacy.com, phone +44 (0)28 9023 2555 or visit <www.laganlegacy.com>.

LIMERICK'S MARITIME HERITAGE: THE 'GARRYOWEN'

Norman Campion

The movement of materials and goods on the Shannon Estuary and by canal and was vital for Limerick's industries. Two vessels in particular were of great importance to the city's economy in the 20th century - the *Garryowen* and the *Eclipse Flower*.

For over 60 years a familiar scene in Limerick Docks was the discharging of grain by the combined tug and pneumatic ship, the *Garryowen*. And like all other familiar things, it is only when they are gone that we begin to appreciate them. Although she acted as a tug for general traffic on the Shannon, the *Garryowen* also



Samantha Curry, the mastermind behind the new museum.

BELFAST MARITIME MUSEUM OPENS

January 21st last saw the official opening of Northern Ireland's first (and only) floating maritime museum. It is housed in the *M.V. Confiance*, moored on the River Lagan at Lanyon Quay, Belfast, in the shadow of the Waterfront Hall.



This photograph by George Spillane shows the *Garryowen* doing the reverse of what it normally did – sucking grain out of Rank's silo at Limerick Docks and blowing it into the coaster at right.

unloaded millions of tons of wheat and maize that fed Limerick's mills over the decades.

Fortunately, thanks to Limerick photographer George Spillane, we have a visual record of the *Garryowen* in the 1960s and '70s. The recent donation to the Limerick Archives of the personal papers of Cecil Mercier, a mill superintendent at Rank's Mill for over 40 years, allows the story of the *Garryowen* to be told (see Dec 2010 IHA Newsletter for details of the Mercier Papers - Ed).

The *Garryowen* first arrived in Limerick Port in 1921 having been bought by J. Bannatyne and Sons Ltd. After 1930, she was owned by Ranks Ireland Ltd. Designed and built on the Clyde, she was 160 feet long and could travel at a speed of 11½ knots. She was unusual in being both an ocean-going tug and a pneumatic unloading plant.

At Limerick the depth of water at high tide was insufficient for ships drawing more than 18ft of water to enter. The nearest point to which such vessels could be allowed was down near Shannon Airport.

In order to bring large ships alongside the quay in Limerick, where their cargo could be discharged into the grain silos, the *Garryowen* towed a lighter with a capacity of 1600 tons down to the ship. She then positioned herself between the ship and the lighter and sucked the grain from one to the other, a process which could take up to 12 hours. The *Garryowen* and lighter then proceeded back to the Docks. The lighter tied up on the far side, while the *Garryowen* was beside the silo to await the arrival of the ship with its lightened load. The grain was sucked out of its hold on to an underground belt conveyor which ran into the silo. Once discharged, the ship departed the Docks at high tide. The waiting lighter was then brought alongside the *Garryowen* and its cargo emptied into the silo as well.

The *Garryowen* had a 950hp triple expansion steam engine which also powered the suction equipment. In its later years the engine was replaced and electric motors powered the suction equipment. With the opening of the new entrance into the Docks in 1978, there were fewer depth restrictions and the *Garryowen* was no longer needed. However she is still fondly remembered by those who witnessed her as she steamed up and down the Shannon.

The *Eclipse Flower* was a trading barge that began operating on the Shannon Navigation between Limerick and Killaloe (at the south end of Lough Derg). She was bought in England by Harry Maunsell to distribute grain and transport product to Limerick for Bannatynes' Mills. She is recorded as 72ft long with a beam of 15ft and 11ft high at the stern. After the new cut opened via Ardnacrusha in 1929, the *Eclipse* had her own jetty on the Abbey River in Limerick. She had a crew of two - the 'Captain' and his helper. In the 1940s and 1950s the captain was an English engineer Henry Franklin. Sadly he fell between the barge and quayside at Killaloe one night and drowned.

Ranks took over Bannatynes in 1930, and also the *Eclipse*. The barge operated the length of the Shannon Navigation between Limerick and Drumshambo, Co Leitrim, making one return journey per week. She brought Rank's flour for distribution by Lairds of Drumshambo and made other deliveries en route. On the return, jam was brought back from Laird's factory, much of it in 7lb stone jars. The *Eclipse* sometimes also acted as a tug and would often tow a stranded yacht or cruiser.

I once travelled on the *Eclipse* with the intention of going all the way to Drumshambo. However, when we reached Killaloe the weather on the lakes was so bad we could go no further. (The 45M, a motorised Grand Canal Company barge, sank in Lough Derg in 1946 with the loss of three crew members).

Eventually the *Eclipse's* engines began to fail and she was withdrawn from service in the late 1950s. She was tied up at a jetty in Limerick but was sold off and brought to the River Barrow. She sank in New Ross but was subsequently raised and sold by the authorities. At present she is in a mud berth at Ferrymouth Bridge.

BRUNEL'S VIADUCTS IN IRELAND Alan Birt

The famous English engineer (though of French ancestry) I. K. Brunel built three main timber viaducts in Ireland. Two were south of Bray, on the original alignment of the Dublin & Wicklow Railway. There was also a piled trussed timber viaduct over the River Dargle and three small timber bridges elsewhere on the line.

Brunel built many timber bridges and viaducts in England and Wales for the various railways which he designed and constructed. His finest achievements in timber engineering were undoubtedly the massive viaducts in Devon and Cornwall constructed between 1848 and 1859 but these developed from his early use of timber for such structures from 1838. Other railway engineers used timber for bridges and viaducts but Brunel's work surpassed all the others. Even the great Royal Albert Bridge, which crosses the River Tamar from Devon into Cornwall, was originally planned as a timber structure.

Building bridges and viaducts using timber had many advantages in the mid-Victorian period. Compared with iron, stone and brick, it was a much cheaper material especially as huge baulks of timber were being imported from Scandinavia and Canada. The ready availability of long and thick squared beams made the use of timber an economic choice. Many of the beams were used in laminated form, thus enhancing their strength. Speed of

erection, a plentiful supply of the material and its ease of transport, and the relatively unskilled labour for some of the work were also attractive aspects. These advantages outweighed the problems of greater maintenance and eventual decay. In any case, the main priority was to get the railway line quickly constructed and so become revenue-earning with the plan being for these temporary structures to be replaced with permanent ones later.

Various patented methods of wood preservation were used by Brunel. Kyanising was a procedure which used mercury perchloride and Burnett's process with zinc chloride were utilised but Brunel eventually used Bethell's system which employed creosote. Well-seasoned timber was placed in a large retort from which the air was then pumped out to a vacuum, thus extracting air and any moisture from the wood. Then creosote was speedily injected into the retort under high pressure so forcing it into the timber.

The Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow & Dublin Railway was incorporated in 1846. This was sponsored by the Great Western Railway (a Brunel creation) and I.K.B. was appointed as its engineer. This Irish railway was planned as an extension to the South Wales Railway (another Brunel creation and closely allied to the GWR) which was attempting to reach Fishguard in south-west Wales, from where a ferry service would sail to Waterford or Wexford. This would provide an alternative route from London to Dublin as a rival to the one via Holyhead. Financial difficulties in England in the late-1840s caused a suspension of the work to reach Fishguard and the Irish famine and its resulting problems also affected the development of the W&D Railway. This ambitious scheme was curtailed to become the Dublin & Wicklow Railway, eventually opening in 1855.

At Bray Head, Brunel constructed two timber viaducts for the D&W Railway, one of which was known as the Ram's Scarp Bridge at Brandy Hole. It was about 50 yards long and consisted of two timber trestles supported on piles. This viaduct is notable as the scene of an accident on 9 Aug 1867 when a train left the rails and fell onto the beach below. A drawing from the *Illustrated London News* in August 1867 shows the scene (below). The only damage to the viaduct was the superficial dislodgement of the wooden parapet and in the accident report no comment was made about the bridge itself. The cause of the calamity was stated to be unevenness in the rails due to different types of rail



being used on the viaduct! This information comes from the accident report by Colonel Yolland, of the Railway Inspectorate, dated 20 Aug 1867.

Brunel's wooden bridges and viaducts served their railways well. Some were repaired in timber several times but all were eventually rebuilt, either in iron or steel, masonry or brick reconstructions or by being replaced with embankments. (The final one in England lasted until 1947). Although there was discussion about replacing these in 1868, the Bray Head timber viaducts were maintained as originally built until 1876 when they were eliminated as the line around Bray Head was diverted a short distance inland.

OLD BREAD OVENS IN WICKLOW TOWN Alan Birt

When I was in Wicklow a couple of years ago and had viewed the old harbour and other interesting industrial archaeological sites, I decided to have my evening meal. I found the 'Old Bakery' in Church Street, Wicklow which, as its name implies, is situated in a vintage building which was formerly the town's bakery.

Much of the old infrastructure has been incorporated into the restaurant's dining area. To my surprise, when I looked at the equipment adjacent to my table, I saw two old cast-iron bread ovens clearly labelled "T. Collins & Co. Bristol Bakery Engineers". Explaining my IA interest and especially old equipment when still in situ, the management kindly allowed me to take photographs, one of which is shown here.

As I was born and brought up in Bristol and am a member of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society, I placed a note in the BIAS Bulletin asking for any information about Messrs Collins. The only response I got was from someone whose father had worked for the company but he could give me no further information.



THE ULSTER CANAL

The Ulster Canal was built by the Ulster Canal Company between 1831 and 1841 to link Lough Neagh with Upper Lough Erne.

Starting at Charlemont, on the River Blackwater, Co Armagh, it runs for 46 miles (74km) to Wattle Bridge, Co Fermanagh, where it enters a navigable section of the River Finn leading into Upper Lough Erne, from which Enniskillen and Lower Lough Erne are accessible.

In order to make savings, it had been decided to construct all the locks to a nominal width of 12ft (3.66m). Indeed, some were even narrower: Lock 26, at the Erne end, has the dubious distinction of being the narrowest in Ireland at only 11ft 8½in (3.57m). Unfortunately, the minimum lock width on the Lagan and Newry canals was 15ft (4.57m). Despite short-term savings, the narrowness of the Ulster's locks would ultimately lead to continual expense in transshipping goods and materials to narrower lighters

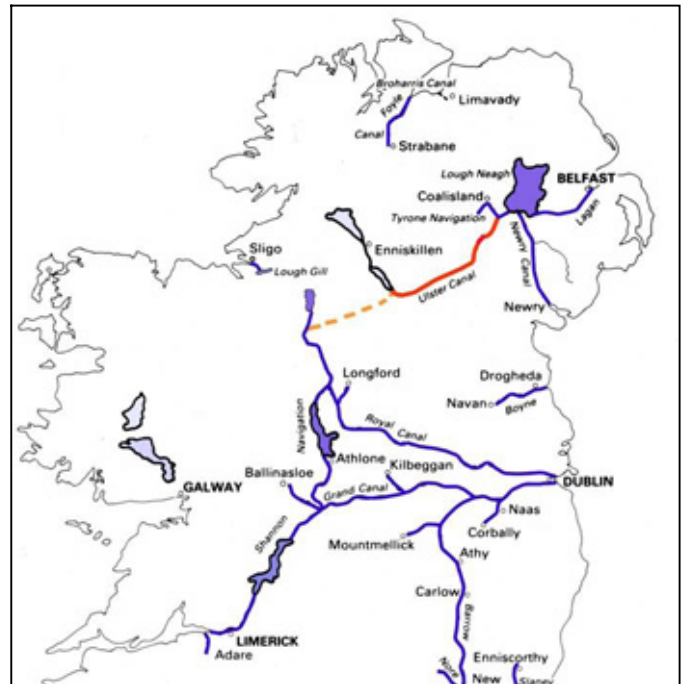
In 1859, the Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal was opened, thus establishing a link between the Erne and Shannon and the entire Irish waterway network. By then, however, railways were in the ascendancy and the anticipated traffic from the west of Ireland failed to materialise. Running costs were always significantly higher than the revenue generated by tolls from the 26 locks along the Ulster Canal. Matters deteriorated further with the imposition of customs duties after the partition of Ireland in 1921 and the last lighter plied the canal on 29 October 1929. It was subsequently de-watered and officially abandoned in 1931.

Following the opening of the Shannon-Erne Waterway in 1994 along the line of the former Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal, attention once again focused on the Ulster Canal as the 'missing link' between North and South. An official study concluded that it would be possible to reopen, albeit on a different line in places.

Since 1999, responsibility for Ireland's inland waterways, both north and south, has been in the hands of Waterways Ireland. More detailed feasibility studies have since been carried out and the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland has also been vociferous in promoting its reopening.

In July 2007, a North-South Ministerial Council announced that the Clones-Erne section of the canal would be restored. Waterways Ireland was assigned responsibility for the implementation of the scheme, the cost of which will be fully met by the Irish Government. The proposal is to follow the original line west of Clones then cut a new canal to the River Finn in order to avoid several road bridges. Waterways Ireland is now in the process of acquiring the land along this route.

The new locks are to be built at a width of 15ft and this will obviously entail widening the original ones where the old route is followed. The impact of the scheme upon the existing canal heritage has generated much debate and will be explored further in the next Newsletter. As always, there are many sides to such a discussion and we begin with one advocating the benefits of the canal's full restoration and another which argues that it would be more cost-effective just to restore the towpath.



The line of the Ulster Canal is shown in red. The Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal (dotted line) subsequently linked it with the Shannon.

THE ULSTER CANAL: TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Brian Cassells (Past President IWAI)

Controversy abounded in the 19th century whether or not a waterborne link between the Erne and Lough Neagh should be built. Controversy still abounds today as to whether or not this now-defunct waterway should have a second chance.

Then, as now, the dream was to link Limerick with Coleraine, Belfast and Newry. Obviously the reasons are different, the logic is alike, but the prize still eludes all. Our vision has been whetted, the arrival of the canal to Clones in 2013 is indeed welcome but the complete dream needs to become a reality. We need leaders with vision, the canal needs a political champion, and someone to make this their swansong. So far no one has emerged.

The phenomenal success of the Shannon-Erne waterway is largely down to the far-sighted vision of the late Charles Haughey who had the dream of what has become an enormous tourist success. Once dilapidated and neglected towns such as Ballyconnell, Ballinamore and Leitrim, not to mention Keshcarrigan, have been revitalised, and job opportunities were created in areas where the only future was emigration.

The reasons for the demise of the original Ulster Canal were many: a shortage of water supply, pint-sized locks, the onslaught of the railways, cheaper and quicker road transport to name but a few. But the fundamental reason was lack of finance, lack of foresight and poor planning, not to mention the creation of the border. In a nutshell, many of those who were supposed to be visionaries were blinkered.

Let's not see history repeat itself. Dimensions for the new waterway will be compatible with the Shannon-Erne Canal, locks will be automated and operated by a smart card, and all the necessary infrastructure that the modern tourist demands will be provided. Co-operation

and goodwill between North and South has never been more positive.

We must also remember the re-opening of the Ulster Canal is not only about boats, it is for walkers, ornithologists, and fishermen. The boat is the catalyst in providing interest for those who enjoy the great outdoors. There is an interesting statistic from British Waterways that for every boat on their system, there are 84 people associated with it, those whose experience is enhanced by merely seeing it. The majority of those people spend money - financial investment badly needed in this neglected border area.

What political party and what individual champion is going to deliver the dream for this forgotten border area? I've heard it said the last major financial investment for the border was the building of the canal itself. Give these people their pride back, give them something to develop, give our young people the opportunity of work. This is an area populated by small farmers genuinely struggling to make ends meet. This project will create farm diversification and part-time employment necessary to keep families on the land and small shops open.

What then are we waiting for? The political champion to step up to the mark, to deliver the re-opening of the complete canal, and to complete the missing link in the waterway chain.

THE ECONOMICS OF THE ULSTER CANAL

Brian J Goggin

I know that some IHA members have had reservations about the proposed restoration of the Ulster Canal. I too have reservations, but they are based on the economics of the proposal. It would undoubtedly be nice for Clones and for boat owners if the Ulster Canal is restored, but it would, in my view, be a very poor investment for taxpayers. Of the many reports commissioned on this subject since 1994, not a single one has shown that this would be a worthwhile investment. That has been pointed out by successive Northern Ireland Executive Ministers for Culture, Arts and Leisure and by the British Labour Party's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 2004.

By that stage, the southern government had stopped talking about complete restoration: it spoke of a "phased or partial approach", restoring sections at both ends of the canal. The Northern Ireland ministers still wouldn't bite, so the southern ministers decided that they would pay the full costs of the restoration of the section from Lough Erne to Clones, even though about half is in Northern Ireland.

I do not believe that the canal will ever get beyond Clones — if it gets that far. Although no full costing has been carried out recently, a cost of €35 million has been quoted, with annual running costs of €300,000 a year. However, the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs refuses (even in response to a Freedom of Information Act request) to say where it is going to get the €35 million. I presume it will be added to the national debt: there is not enough in the department's budget to pay for it, and its proposed sell-off of Waterways Ireland property seems unlikely to raise anything like enough money.

I also believe that the benefits of restoration to the local economy have been overstated. No Irish canal outside Dublin has sustained a trip-boat for very long. A boat-hire firm is unlikely to set up at the end of a cul-de-sac (and anyway the Irish boat-hire business is contracting). And if you owned a boat, would you keep it at the Clones end of the canal, when the first and the last two and a half hours of every trip would be over the same stretch of water? Comparisons with the Shannon--Erne Waterway are not valid (a better comparison is with the Lough Allen Canal, whose Drumshanbo Lock is the least used on the Shannon) and tend to ignore the contribution of Sean Quinn to the prosperity of the area along the SEW.

This project is being pushed by the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs, which funds the position of the Clones Regeneration Partnership's Project Coordinator. It seems to be their equivalent of the Bertie Bowl: it makes no economic sense, and we can't afford this sort of prestige project any more. Furthermore, I suggest that potential investors should be very careful about accepting rosy estimates of the business opportunities from canal restorations.

But I do not want to see Clones lose out. According to the most comprehensive economic appraisal, over 80% of the canal's economic benefits would come from non-boating users, especially walkers and cyclists. And the land could be acquired and a towpath built for about one fifteenth of the cost of full restoration. Boaters would contribute very little extra but cost a huge amount more.

And if that isn't enough, I suggest providing a free taxi service from Belturbet to Clones for any boaters who want to visit the town. For the 600 boat crews expected each year, that would cost about €30,000: one tenth of the running costs of a canal, and with no capital spending required.

--- REVIEWS ---

A GUIDE TO THE LAGAN CANAL: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE. Lagan Canal Trust, 2010.

The Lagan Canal Trust (LCT) was founded in 2008 to further the restoration of the Lagan Canal between Belfast and Lough Neagh. This 43km (26ml) long waterway was built in two phases: along the River Lagan from Belfast to Lisburn in 1756-63 (under the direction of Thomas Omer), and as a still-water canal from Lisburn and Lough Neagh in 1779-93 (under Richard Owen).

Although the canal was abandoned in 1958, virtually the entire towpath survives and three sections are now public rights of way: (1) Annaghdroghal Bridge to Lock 26, (2) Aghalee Bridge to Lady's Bridge, Moira, and (3) Union locks to Belfast. Many original buildings and structures also survive such as the restored lock house at Newforge, Lock 12 at Lisburn, the four-lift Union Locks at Sprucefield, and the summit level reservoir at Broadwater.

This ring-bound pocket guide is the LCT's first publication and presents an overview of the canal's history and its surviving features, both man-made and natural. The bulk of it is given over to detailed walking routes, starting at the Lough Neagh end and working towards Belfast.



Each walk is accompanied by a large-scale map showing what is accessible to the public, notes on the built heritage, flora and fauna, and nearby sites of interest (e.g. the 1841 Moira Station, the oldest surviving railway station in Ulster). The book concludes with a review of LCT's work, other canals in Ireland and links to relevant websites.

Author Cathy Burns is to be congratulated on her well researched text and the LCT for its initiative in bringing the canal to a wider audience. Copies can be downloaded (for free) from the Trust's website <www.lagancanaltrust.org> or obtained from the Trust's office at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre, Craigavon, Co Armagh BT66 6NJ (tel +44 (0)28 3831 1675; email info@lagan.canaltrust.org).

DUN LAOGHAIRE EAST PIER TOUR Mary Mulvihill

Dun Laoghaire is steeped in history – from the 5th-century fort supposedly built by the high king, Laoghaire, to the 19th-century engineering that transformed the small fishing village into the world's largest asylum harbour and brought in its wake Ireland's first train and the Holyhead mail boat.

The great engineering works lasted from 1817 to 1833 and resulted in two long piers - the East Pier, reaching into the sea for 1.3 km (or 4231 feet in old money); and the West, which stretches over 1.5 km. Between them, these two stone arms embrace over 100 ha of calm water, providing a safe haven from treacherous seas.

Today, Dun Laoghaire is home to yacht clubs and every year hundreds of thousands of people walk the popular East Pier. Yet, most visitors are not aware of the stories and history around them. So, last year, a colleague at Twintrack Media suggested that we produce an audio



Wired for sound! The East Pier Heritage Audio Guide was officially launched as part of Heritage Week on 26 August last by Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport, Mary Hanafin, seen here with Aileen O'Mara of Twintrack Media and Mary Mulvihill of Ingenious Ireland.

guide for the East Pier and, thanks to a Heritage Council grant, a free 'podcast tour' is now available.

The half-hour commentary covers 14 stops along the pier, to the Battery and back, and all told will take about one hour. It covers some stories that will be familiar to IHA members – notably the engineering of the harbour, the funicular railway that brought granite to the works from Dalkey quarry, and the coming of the railways – but hopefully also other stories you might not know, such as the world's first sports radio transmission (when Marconi reported on the 1898 Regatta in Morse code), some maritime history, and the ingenious Irish device to measure wind speed.

To take the tour, simply download the audio file to your MP3 player, phone or computer and away you go. For more information and to download the tour and leaflet, go to <www.ingeniousireland.ie/podcast-audio-tours/>.

-- IHA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2010-11 --

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