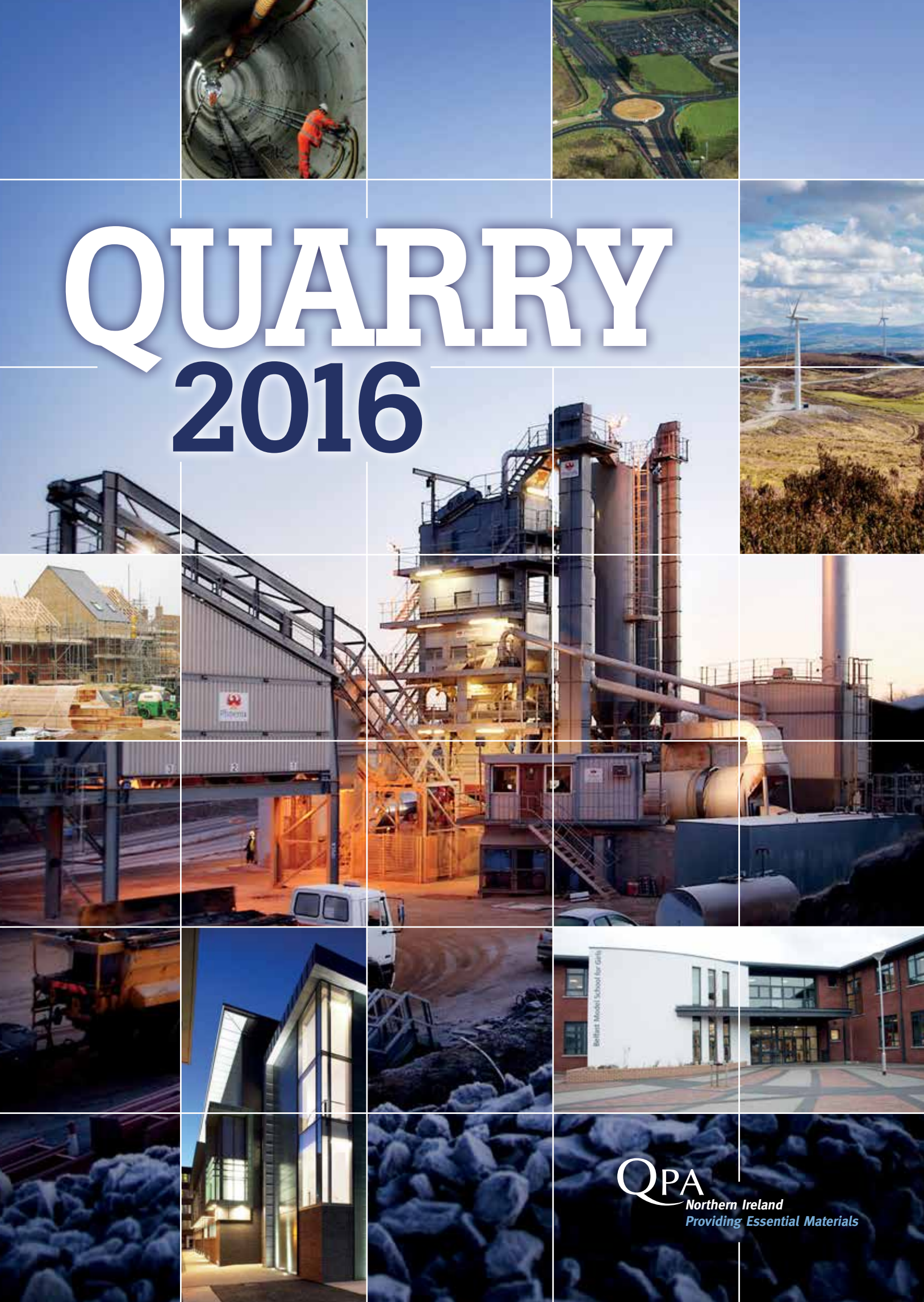


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Special thanks to our Ministerial contributors, our partner organisations, members and industry suppliers, without whose support the publication of this journal would not have been possible.

Gordon Best
Regional Director QPANI

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Foreword

The quarry products industry plays a key role in many aspects of our everyday life – some obvious and others less so.

Not only does the industry build growth by supporting our construction sector, it is also a major employer in its own right.

The quarry products industry also produces a wide range of items that are essential to modern life but often taken for granted - kerbstones, concrete floors, beams and paving slabs, not to mention concrete pipes which are used to upgrade our roads, buildings and sewage facilities.

As the economic recovery continues and we work to attract more investment, it is vital that we have a world class infrastructure.

That is why the NI Executive has allocated £57million to take key projects forward, including the New Buildings to Strabane section of the A5 Western Transport Corridor, the A6 road scheme, as well as Belfast Rapid Transit and the Belfast Transport Hub.

In addition, roads structural maintenance has received £46million capital funding.

Confirmation of this significant funding provides certainty around the delivery of these major schemes and is good news for the construction industry.

Improving our infrastructure goes hand in hand with bringing our economy to the next level and the quarry products industry will, quite literally, provide the foundations for this important future growth.

Quarries, through their products, give us places to live, places to work, places to play and much more. Every year, nearly 14 tonnes of aggregates are needed per head of population in Northern Ireland. A new house, for example, requires some 50 tonnes of aggregates.

Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland (QPANI) members are to be commended for their responsible approach to sustainability, responsible sourcing, and, crucially, health and safety.

By working in partnership with the Construction Industry Forum, QPANI has quite rightly earned a reputation for best practice.

That reputation, combined with the quality of the product, has enabled Northern Ireland's construction materials sector to grow and export – a clear indication of the expertise and entrepreneurial spirit that exists within QPANI member companies.

Invest NI works closely with the QPANI to help provide its businesses with the skills, resources and support needed to grow the sector – another example of how government and industry can work in partnership to deliver tangible results for Northern Ireland.



Arlene Foster MLA
First Minister



Martin McGuinness MLA
deputy First Minister

Arlene Foster Martin McGuinness

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Quarry Products Association (NI)

Chairman's Report

The ongoing work of the QPANI has been consistently executed with proficiency and efficiency over its two decade lifespan, and the organisation as it exists today is a widely recognised and well respected association that is headed up with excellence and professionalism by Gordon Best, whose dedication and commitment are exemplary. As always, it is crucial that we continue to offer our full support as members to both Gordon and Fiona, and empower them to continue to represent us fully and unequivocally.

Increasingly, ours is an industry that is rife with issues that require our full attention. We find ourselves obliged to keep abreast with ever changing regulations and guidelines on issues such as the aggregate levy, ALCS, energy costs, government expenditure, planning reform and public procurement, amongst others, and when these matters are coupled with an economic climate that remains in a state of constant flux, it is clear why we must stand together and present an association with an unyielding, united front.

There are so many issues with which we rightly concern ourselves, but we must not forget that one of the QPANI's central aims is to bring change and improvement to our industry, thereby encouraging and nurturing development, growth and increased profitability for all our companies. We have all weathered a long and difficult economic climate, and ultimately we must strive together for a better day when our industry and our companies can enjoy the alleviation of pressure, and the rewards of an improved economy.

Last year, our own Company celebrated 70 years in business. Although 2015 was not without its trials, we conscientiously took the time to appreciate just how far we have come since Norman Emerson Senior, my grandfather, founded his business back in 1945 with little more than an N5 Commer and a navvy shovel. Although bruised by the crushing recession of the last few years, our Company as it stands today has adapted, morphed and diversified across seven decades, as the third generation of our family steps up behind our forefathers. We recognise the importance of helping to make our Company – as well as our industry – a safer, more secure place for the generations that come behind us, and now more than ever we need to allow the authoritative, proactive voice of QPANI to speak up for us all.

It is our strongly held belief that companies and individuals deserve to be heard and have relevant issues dealt with effectively and in a proactive manner. To this end, QPANI remains committed to utilising every forum available to make our voice heard; we will champion the causes that are important to our members, because ultimately QPANI is its members, and we would cease to exist without the continued support of them. It is my personal pledge that during my time as QPANI Chairman, I will endeavour to promote, encourage and drive forward the issues that resonate within our industry and to work alongside my colleagues to promote professionalism, efficiency and betterment for us all.

I would like to thank those who have contributed to this edition of QPANI journal – partners, politicians, suppliers, advertisers, and members. I hope you will find the journal informative and supportive.

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the QPANI's biennial journal. As the recognised trade association for our industry, the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland has provided us with a unified voice for almost twenty years, and represents some 95% of local companies involved in the quarry products industry.



Colin Emerson

QPANI Chairman



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Quarry Products Association (NI)

Immediate Past Chairman's Report

In our business operations we must regularly revisit our core aims and objectives to ensure that the present strategy is appropriate for current and future challenges. So too with the QPANI, the core founding principles should be examined to ensure that they are understood and still appropriate to our organisation.

I was present at the information nights in late 1998 when a number of the principals from leading companies in our sector were proposing the formation of an association to represent the interests in Northern Ireland. Attendances were good at those meetings. The enthusiasm of the proponents was keen, yet it took some debate to convince many attending of the need for such a body.

Political change had followed the Good Friday agreement and the Stormont Executive was exercising its authority on behalf of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The quarrying industry needed to be heard by and, to be in a position to, influence the decision makers having an impact on our industry. At the same time changes were impending around procurement within the construction sector. From this need to have a unified trade lobby organisation, the QPANI was established.

Individual companies continue to make their own commercial decisions. Individuals within companies progress with personal profession development assisted by the associated Institutes (IOQ, IHT, IAT, IOD, EI, ICE etc). The industry develops and progresses through the work of QPANI.

Thus the ethos of the QPANI is to represent the needs of the collective quarrying industry of Northern Ireland. This it has done, very successfully, not only at Stormont but also in Westminster and Brussels. There is still much to be done in our ever changing environment. Through continued participation of all member companies, the influence of QPANI will grow and ensure that our industry is to the forefront of the Northern Ireland economy.

I wish Colin and Eamon every success in their tenures as Chairman and Vice-chairman respectively. With the drive and enthusiasm of Gordon and capable support of Fiona, I am confident that during the term of Colin's office QPANI will continue to thrive and fulfil the founding aim of representing our industry's needs.

As the immediate past Chairman being asked to write a report for the QPANI Journal leaves a dilemma on whether to reflect on the past or look to the future of our organisation.



John Shannon
QPANI Past Chairman



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Regional Directors 2015 Annual Report

I want to begin this report by thanking all QPANI members for their continuing support both financially and by your companies commitment through the work of our sub groups and product groups that form the engine rooms of the Association.

This support and collective action by members over the past year have helped us achieve the following:

- QPANI work with South West College, Southern Regional College and 16 Member companies to develop a Pilot Apprenticeship Framework for the Mineral and Extractives processing sector in Northern Ireland. Due for launch in February 2016.
- QPANI Age Profiling Survey highlights need to make our Industry more attractive to young people.
- QPANI Launch Communications strategy with new 11 Councils highlighting importance of our Industry in their areas, the value of the Industry and the number of employees. QPANI also in discussions with Senior Planners to have the New Institute of Quarrying Mineral Planning Qualification adopted in NI.
- QPANI publish our Agenda Paper 2016 – 2020 setting out our needs to the Political Parties in preparation for the May 2016 Assembly Election.
- QPANI a key player in developing and communicating the Cold Water Safety Strategy that was launched by the DOENI and DOJ Ministers in May 2015. QPANI also develop a partnership with NI Water to communicate dangers of trespass and swimming in cold water.
- QPANI partnerships with RSPB, Woodland Trust and NIEA sees restoration best practice adopted, significant hectares of natural woodland planted and companies sign up to the All Island Pollinator Plan..
- QPANI Concrete Development Group Launch “Concrete Built IS Better Built” campaign to promote concrete as the construction material of choice. QPANI also form alliances and regular communication with the Ulster Farmers Union , Housing Associations and The Royal Society of Ulster Architects.
- QPANI continue to work with Industry Partners on the Construction Industry Group and All Party Working on Construction to highlight the big ticket issues on skills, access to finance and delivery pipeline of construction projects.
- QPANI and NIEA relaunch “Wise Use of Water Guidance”. QPANI and NIEA hold 6 pollution prevention on site workshops to promote environmental best practice.
- QPANI and HSENI stage 6 on site Safety Workshops attended by 117 employees from 36 companies.
- QPANI Publish “60 Days to Save Our Roads Network” highlight the gross underspend in structural roads maintenance and its consequences for the economy, our roads network and road safety.
- QPANI lobbying and support from MLAs, MPs, MEPs continues the fight to secure a sustainable solution to the problems created by the Aggregates Levy in Northern Ireland. QPANI also ask the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee and Treasury Select Committee to investigate the operation of the Aggregates Levy in Northern Ireland and across the UK.
- QPANI work with other Construction organisations to push for increased infrastructure spend and fairer procurement process that rewards responsible businesses.



Gordon Best

QPANI Regional Director

This past year of 2015 has been one of immense frustration for the local Construction Industry and its supply chain. The entire Industry has been, is and will continue to be heavily dependent on the export market for construction materials. The continuing demand from the south east of England, the growing economy in the South of Ireland and the unfortunately stagnant levels of construction locally means we will continue to see the planes full on a Sunday evening and Monday morning of construction workers leaving these shores. We and others are continually warning Government that this cannot continue and will create social impact and may eventually see long established local construction companies and suppliers moving their head offices out of Northern Ireland.

While 2015 saw a fair degree of repetitive political hand bags at 40 paces up on the hill and in some of our Council chambers this past year has seen significant change in local Government with Planning Powers being given to the newly established 11 local Councils, the prospect of 12 Government Departments reducing to 9 in April 2016, the voluntary exit scheme that has seen thousands of civil servants take early redundancy, the continuing budget concerns within NI Government, the forthcoming Assembly elections in May 2016, the BREXIT vote in June and a new First Minister in the form of Arlene Foster. Yes, it certainly could be described as changing times!

QPANI have published our Agenda 2016-2020 that sets out very clearly what Politicians need to do to enable our Industry to contribute to economic growth. Other partner organisations such as CEF, FMB, ICE and Manufacturing NI have also published their own manifestos and we will be working closely



Michelle McIlveen, Regional Development Minister visiting Northstone NI North Down Quarries.



Speakers at our Precast Safety Conference.

with them to ensure a united voice on the key economic drivers. I have been doing the rounds of Political Party Policy teams with our Agenda Paper in my hand to make sure our interests are recognised in the Political Party manifestos.

The announcement that the corporation tax rate in Northern Ireland will be cut to 12.5% in 2018 has been widely welcomed by most in Northern Ireland. The major parties at Stormont believe that cutting the tax will help tackle long-term problems in the Northern Ireland economy. While there are many doubters who say that the cost of reducing CT is too much estimates by leading economists and experience in other lower CT economies indicate the medium to long term secondary benefits more than compensate for this cost. Lets hope that the setting of a date and rate will unleash an unprecedented wave of investment and growth. However, a word of caution! CT is not the silver bullet and unless we address our infrastructure and skills deficit the benefits of a lower CT will not be maximised.

On the Safety front our Industry continues to face challenges on a daily basis as we strive to ensure zero harm to our employees and all those who visit our sites. The QPANI member lost time incident reporting is improving as companies see the benefit of benchmarking themselves against national MPA KPIs. Everyone in the Industry must strengthen our efforts to improve health and safety and participate in the LTI reporting. We now have 76% reporting based on employee numbers. Lets try and get to 100% by the end of 2016.

The transfer of Planning responsibility to the local Councils in April 2015 has created the need for QPANI to build relationships with the new 11 Councils. The Association organised a number of site visits for local planners and local Councillors and we have produced 11 Council specific information booklets highlighting the importance of the quarry products industry in terms of turnover and levels of jobs in each Council Area. We have also teamed up with the



Outgoing Chairman, John Shannon; Gordon Best, Regional Director; Eamonn Finnegan incoming Vice-chair and Colin Emerson, QPANI Chairman.

Institute of Quarrying to promote and deliver the new online training and qualification "Mineral Planning for Mineral Planners. I am delighted to report that to date 30 Council Planning Staff have been registered on the Institute of Quarrying course. We hope to begin the online course for local planners sometime in March 2016.

Despite the Stormont "Fresh Start" agreement the budget uncertainties within the Executive continue. The Transport NI budget for roads structural maintenance budget is still at levels well below what is required to maintain our roads to a satisfactory standard. QPANI recently published an information leaflet "60 Days to Save our Roads Network" to highlight the current funding crisis facing Transport NI and the contractors and suppliers who work for them. While we fully recognise and appreciate the current financial pressures the Executive faces we believe



2015 AGM Guest of Honour, Margaret Ritchie MP, with Chairman John Shannon and Regional Director, Gordon Best.



Diane Dodds, MEP with Gordon Best discussing the ongoing impact of aggregates levy in Northern Ireland.



Regional Director meets with Martina Anderson MEP to discuss Aggregates Levy Challenge.



Full attendance at our managing work around utility services seminar.

it is essential and proper for us to inform MLAs and decision makers that current levels of structural maintenance funding will have serious consequences for jobs, for our economy and for safety on our roads. We have had discussions with the Regional Development Minister, the Assembly Regional Development Committee and senior DFP officials making a strong case for reducing the dependence on the in year monitoring rounds, which, as you know, in 2015 completely failed to function.

QPANI have established a new Concrete Development Group with the sole aim of raising the market share of concrete in the wider construction industry and making it the construction material of choice. We have a very close liaison with our colleagues in the Irish Concrete Federation and wish to "cement" our relationship and partnership with the Concrete Centre. We are currently preparing to launch our "Concrete Built IS Better Built" Initiative in Northern Ireland. A number of our members will be carrying this logo on their truck mixers and delivery lorries. QPANI, RSUA and the Concrete Centre recently staged two very well attended Concrete and Masonry Seminars. The feedback, from what was an audience made up of architects and engineers, was very positive. The success of these two events was totally due to the quality of our two speakers from the Concrete Centre, Andrew Minson and Elaine Toogood. We are extremely grateful to them and we are currently organising similar events to be delivered to Housing Association Design teams and Construction Students at our two Universities.

The Concrete Development Group has recently met with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations to discuss issues of concern from construction material suppliers. Among these were the use of quality assured concrete and CE marked materials, promotion of responsible sourcing and environmental best practice, use of competent and qualified concrete layers on housing association sites. We have agreed to hold regular quarterly liaison meetings, direct liaison with key personnel within the Housing Association design teams and procurement teams, facilitate regular engagement between HAs and QPANI members at a local level.

We also met with Ulster Farmers Union members

on the 16 October 2015 to discuss the new "Designated Concretes for Agriculture Guidance" and the importance of using quality assured concrete and contractors who are



QPANI members involved in Road Maintenance work take their concerns to Stormont.

competent in laying exterior concrete. We have agreed to present the case for concrete at a number of local UFU meetings in preparation for funding being released in early 2016 as part of the DARD funded Farm Improvement Scheme.

Key challenges for 2016 include reaching a sustainable solution to the long running Aggregates Levy case that will either see the levy scrapped or greatly reduced, protecting the licence to operate through engagement with local Council and Government Planners, improving working conditions and offering excellent career opportunities for young people in our Industry, energy costs and reducing the costs of doing business in Northern Ireland.

On a positive note and as we look ahead to 2016 and beyond I believe we have reason to be hopeful. The continuing dependency on the GB Construction market has its positives and negatives, the growing economy in the Republic is great news for our Industry here in the North, on the ongoing development work on the A6 and potential start date of 2017 on a major section of the A5, development at Desertcreat, improved delivery of health and education infrastructure, growing housing market, the launch of Farm Enhancement Scheme in early 2016 and the start of an exciting Apprenticeship Framework for the Aggregates and Minerals Industry here in Northern Ireland in partnership with South West College and Southern Regional College all points us in a more positive trajectory for next year.

For QPANI to continue representing the interests of all Member companies we need a team-work approach through all of our Committees and from the entire Membership. Don't think "I will leave it for somebody else".

While I, as Regional Director carry the main responsibility for the day to day operation and delivery of the Association and Sub-Committee objectives the Chairman, Vice Chairman, immediate past Chairman, members of our Committees and you the Members will play an important supportive role. This teamwork approach will undoubtedly strengthen the Association and help achieve the ultimate goals of protecting your license to operate and secure financial security of the industry.

I also want to thank all those members who do take the time to lift the phone or put a few words down in an email to thank us for our efforts or even to give constructive criticism. Remember this is your Association and for QPANI to remain effective and protect your interests we require your continuing and full support.

May I wish all our members a successful and safe 2016.

Gordon Best
Regional Director



View from our Ministerial Partners



Chris Hazzard MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



I recognize that high quality infrastructure plays a vital role in driving economic development, ensuring a sustainable natural environment and enhancing our quality of life. In the current challenging economic climate, the provision of high quality resilient infrastructure requires a delicate balance between investment in new assets and the maintenance of existing ones. As Minister for Infrastructure, with overall responsibility for one of the largest construction clients in the North, I see much of my role as ensuring that this balance is struck.

Looking ahead, the 'Fresh Start' agreement and supporting Budget Statement paved the way for investment in new assets, with the Executive committing over £650m to flagship transport projects between 2016 and 2021. These projects comprise the Belfast Transport Hub, Belfast Rapid Transit, the A5 Western Transport Corridor and the A6 route between Derry and Belfast. Conversely, the current budgetary position with respect to road

maintenance remains particularly challenging. In redressing this balance I will continue to make a strong case for an increase in maintenance budgets. I look forward to working with the Quarry Products Association (QPA) on this important issue.

Northern Ireland Water (NIW) fully appreciates the environmental, safety, quality and sustainability of use of QPANI member's products which greatly assists them as they continue to upgrade the water and sewer network. QPANI values closely align with NIW's procurement policies on sustainable construction, protecting the environment, safety and welfare of the workforce. NIW has aligned its procurement policies to promote working in partnership with quality suppliers and in collaboration with its tier one design and build contractors.

My Department highly values its close working relationship with the QPA, as well as the work the association does to promote safety at road works. During my time in office I hope to continue this fruitful partnership in delivering a sustainable and prosperous future.



Michelle McIlveen MLA
Minister for Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs



Our local quarry industry has quite literally helped shape Northern Ireland's rural and farming landscape. It interacts with every aspect of my Department.

We may not always realise just how much we rely on quarry products. Without the high quality materials the quarry industry produces much of what we take for granted such as our farmhouses, outbuildings, farmyards and roads would not be possible. The latter is critical for connecting our producers to processors and to the end consumer. A quality road network cannot be understated.

The quarry industry is a key driver and significant employer within the local economy. Like the farming industry it is also acutely aware of the pressures the economic downturn has placed on it and the wider public sector purse.

The DAERA Forest Service facilitates quarry development, buys quarry materials to build forest roads and develop timber resources, and ensures people and families have safe and easy access to forest trails.

As Environment Minister it is incumbent on me to protect our natural environment and reduce the risk of damage to our landscape, natural habitats and water from quarrying. For this reason, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is working in partnership with QPANI to minimise any adverse impact and to ensure high standards are achieved when it comes to caring for our natural environment and resources.

I believe that in working together the quarry, environment and farming industries have much to learn from each other as we strive to build a stronger local economy and enhance the way of life for this and future generations.

View from our Ministerial Partners



Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
Finance Minister



“Tá rún agam oibriú go díograiseach leis an earnáil tógála le jabanna a chothú is a bhuanú do chách.

“It is vital that government continues to work in partnership with construction sector bodies to support the industry, sustain jobs and support our local economy.

“As part of this ongoing engagement, my department’s Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) works closely with the QPANI through its membership of the Construction Industry Forum (CIFNI). This is a partnership which brings many benefits to the construction industry. For example, QPANI has contributed to the development of public procurement policy for construction, which supports local companies to successfully compete for new opportunities.

“An important element of partnership working is about achieving best practice. We can see clear evidence of this in QPANI’s contribution to the development of sustainable

construction guidance as well as the collaboration with CPD to provide training on the implementation of mandatory CE marking for construction products.

“It is also encouraging that following the successful resolution of issues regarding the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme, QPANI has been working closely with government to achieve a long term solution to its implementation here.

“The Executive’s allocation of capital funding, for key infrastructure projects identified in the Fresh Start Agreement should give some certainty to the construction industry and help companies plan ahead.

“I recognise the difficulties faced by the industry and realise there are still challenges ahead but working with organisations such as the QPANI can only benefit the industry and the local economy.”



Simon Hamilton MLA
Minister for the Economy



The quarrying industry continues to play a role in the Northern Ireland economy. In 2014 the Mining and Quarrying sector contributed £103 million in GVA to the Northern Ireland Economy and employs over 1,500 people.

My department, through Invest Northern Ireland, works closely with the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI). Northern Ireland’s construction materials sector has grown considerably, particularly in Great Britain, highlighting the entrepreneurial and professional skills which exist in Northern Ireland.

The work of the QPANI is vital as it supports the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) in helping to promote best practice in health and safety standards across the quarrying industry. In particular, I commend it for its efforts in continuing to make sure all QPANI members are provided with the necessary guidance and support to achieve compliance with the law.

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) continues its programme of geological mapping, modelling and commissioned research, all of which underpin the sustainable development and environmental management of Northern Ireland’s natural resources.

During National Science and Engineering Week March 2016, GSNI, in partnership with the British Geological Survey, Earth Science Ireland and a working group of primary school teachers and senior

management, published a new series of Earth Science resources for primary schools in Northern Ireland. This will support the Northern Ireland primary curriculum ‘World Around Us’ and go some way to enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the next generation of the value of natural resources to our society.

In providing apprenticeship opportunities and simultaneously supporting the estate management of our further and higher education sectors our construction and quarrying industries can continue to make a valuable contribution to our local economy.

Recognising that apprenticeships can deliver to the employer, the individual and the wider economy, the Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships ‘Securing our Success’ aims to reform our existing system of apprenticeships to ensure our apprentices have the necessary job focussed skills.

Apprenticeships offer progression into further and higher education and mobility across the economy. The Apprenticeship Strategy is driven by strategic partnership, putting employers at its very heart, better matching supply with demand.

My Department is committed to the provision of opportunity of both employment and skills enhancement within the quarrying and construction sectors.

View from our Ministerial Partners



Peter Weir MLA
Education Minister



As the new Minister for Education, I am honoured to undertake this very important role and I am pleased to have the opportunity to outline my priorities and goals to this year's Quarry Products Industry Journal.

Every child is different and deserves the best start in life. The bringing together of a wider range of child-focused responsibilities in the restructured Department of Education is key to delivering the Executive's commitment of supporting all of our children and young people and supporting them through all stages of development.

As Education Minister I am determined to improve educational outcomes across every part of Northern Ireland and to maintain a focus on tackling educational underachievement, particularly through early intervention. I also want to look at our current curriculum and our approach taken to qualification, in order to ensure that children are equipped with the necessary skills required by businesses.

I am acutely aware of the vast array of knowledge and experience that exists within Northern Ireland and I look forward to working with not only our education and childcare providers, but also engaging with employers in order to

ensure that together we can meet the needs and deliver the best support for our children and young people.

Businesses play a key role in our education system by providing work-related experience opportunities, providing children with the necessary information to help make informed career choices. I appreciate the support that has been provided by your industry throughout the years, in working closely with schools to ensure that pupils are equipped with the necessary skills businesses require and I hope that these important relationships will continue to flourish in the months and years ahead.

As we look ahead I am aware of the challenges facing schools however I am determined to ensure funding is prioritised. Education is at the heart of any society and has a key role to play in the future of our economic success here in Northern Ireland. Our economy relies on a high quality education system that can provide a highly skilled work force to compete with any in the world. I am ambitious for our children and young people and I am determined to drive more improvement so that more of our young people achieve and progress.



Paul Givan MLA
Minister for Communities



Partnership work to deliver - Department for Communities Minister Paul Givan MLA outlines the Executive's plans to deliver good quality housing while supporting construction.

I would like to acknowledge that the Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) plays an important role in contributing positively to our economy by helping to construct and maintain our built environment. The past number of years has been challenging for the overall economy and I know the difficulties the construction industry in particular has faced. Members of the QPANI have shown innovation and strength in continuing to deliver for Northern Ireland despite the many challenges encountered.

The need to grow the economy is an important priority for the Executive. As part of this objective the Executive has brought forward a wide range of programmes, particularly around infrastructure that will directly benefit the construction industry that depends so much on the use of quarry products.

My Department housing strategy continues to focus on the delivery of good quality housing at a reasonable cost that contributes to supporting and sustaining economic recovery, create employment while regenerating communities.

I am committed in the Social Housing Development Programme of starting an average of 2,000 new social homes each year over the next four years. This will provide a significant boost for the local construction industry as well as creating and supporting sustainable communities through housing and regeneration. Our aim is to create successful, thriving and inclusive communities in both urban and rural areas across Northern Ireland that will stand the test of time and in which people will want to live.

The standard of social housing has improved significantly in recent years and my Department continue to seek innovative solutions to improving energy efficiency as a means of addressing fuel poverty reducing carbon emissions.

The Department continues to work alongside Housing Associations to seek a reduction in carbon footprint by encouraging improvements in the sustainability and energy efficiency of the social housing stock. For example, the Department provides support for BREEAM assessments for multi-residential and domestic refurbishment schemes and requires sustainable procurement, which incorporates sustainability requirements into building contracts.

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Irish Concrete Federation

View from the South

As ever it gives me great pleasure to contribute to the annual Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland Industry Journal. At the outset I would like to thank Gordon Best of the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland for the invitation to contribute to the Journal and indeed to thank his board and his members for their continued support and commitment to the development of common approaches and partnerships on issues and areas where we share a common interest.

Our industry, while critically important in the construction and economic life of the island, is small in size and all of our resources should be pooled wherever possible in order to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our efforts. Indeed, I am happy to say that there have been many examples over the past year where the Irish Concrete Federation and the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland have co-operated to our mutual benefit.

The most recent example of cooperation between our two associations was the publication in late 2015 of a "Competitive Analysis of the Construction Materials Sector on the Island of Ireland – an Update". While it is the case that industry reviews often tend to tell those of us in the industry what we already know, it is very important that our industry has a reference to which it can point when dealing with other stakeholders whose decisions impact on our industry. The value of completing such a report was evident in the run up to the recent general election in the Republic of Ireland whereby the key messages which emerged from the review were used by the ICF in its pre-election message which we sent to all members to enable them to raise them with candidates and potential decision makers of the future. The key points emanating from the review included the strategically critical importance of the quarry and concrete products industry, the impact of the current level of underinvestment in construction in Ireland and its concentration in Dublin and Belfast and the importance of a level playing pitch in terms of regulation. Certainly the report crystallised these key issues and highlighted the realities of the marketplace in which our members operate currently.

The outlook for the remainder of 2016 remains somewhat mixed for ICF members. Investment in the foreign direct investment sector in Dublin has certainly boosted activity in that region. However it is a different story outside of the capital. The continued pressure on farm incomes combined with a low level of investment in public infrastructure and housing in the regions has dampened demand for our members' products. Indeed, the recent general election highlighted the fact that the benefits of overall national recovery have not permeated to the regions and this singularly remains the biggest threat to businesses located throughout the country. In this context, the strategic review of the industry highlighted that Government investment in infrastructure remains well below what is needed for Ireland to remain a favourable location for foreign direct investment and job creation. Currently the level of construction is approximately half of what it is in a normal developed economy and until such time as Government investment reaches a sustainable level and the constraints to house building are removed, it is unlikely that there will be any significant upturn experienced in the activity levels of our members. Notwithstanding these issues, ICF remains committed to



Gerry Farrell

Chief Executive, Irish Concrete Federation

improving the operating environment for all our members and our involvement in areas from transport and planning to technical standards and marketing are testament to this fact. In 2015 ICF launched a new certification and traceability initiative whereby members will certify the origin of the product supplied to each individual site in order to improve confidence in the supply chain. This initiative which was driven by our Business Development Committee was well received by all of the other professional bodies and representative organisations in the construction industry and was launched by the Minister of State with Special Responsibility for Housing in July. ICF will continue to promote this initiative throughout 2016.

Our Transport Committee continues to focus on safety and the cost of transport. In June we held a major seminar on safety with the Road Safety Authority which was well attended by members and representatives of An Garda Síochána and the Health and Safety Authority. This committee has also focussed on the issue of the ever increasing cost of transport and the committee produced a costing template for individual members to assist them to calculate

their own individual transport costs and gain efficiencies.

In 2015 ICF was finally successful in having legislation enacted in order to speed up the process of planning regularisation for members who found themselves in substitute consent as an outcome of Section 261A of the Planning and Development Act. The legislation was signed during the summer and a substantial number of our members are availing of the provisions of this legislation. We are strongly of the opinion that this is a major step towards putting the quarry industry on a sustainable footing for the future and in November we held a major planning policy seminar for members on the required next steps to achieve this objective.

Our Health and Safety Committee continues to focus on the issues of safety, particularly in quarries and in our precast concrete plants. Unfortunately there were two fatalities in quarries in 2015 with a further fatality recorded already in 2016. ICF has recently completed a roadshow of workshops for members in conjunction with the Health and Safety Authority on quarry safety. We also greatly welcome the Health and Safety Authority's decision to follow in the footsteps of the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland (HSNI) in auditing pre-stressed concrete operations throughout the country. Our thanks must go to Gordon Best who helped to organise a briefing for ICF by HSNI on the pre-stressing initiative in Northern Ireland in late 2014.

Our Technical Committee continues to develop standards and guidance through participation on the many industry committees of the National Standards Authority of Ireland. In particular, our members were highly involved in the development of guidance on the standard for aggregates for use under concrete floors and footpaths and are currently working on updating guidance on aggregates for concrete. The Technical

“Competitive Analysis of the Construction Materials Sector on the Island of Ireland – an Update”

Gerry Farrell, CEO of the ICF

Committee looks forward to assisting the ICF to educate all of our members and indeed other stakeholder organisations on the content and benefits of these standards and guidance.

With support from Cement Manufacturers Ireland, ICF recently reformed the Concrete Development Group to focus on the marketing and PR needs of our industry. The committee has agreed to focus on agriculture and third level education initially but will also focus on areas such as housing, education and skills and concrete design as its programme of work develops. It is a sign of confidence in the future that, as an industry, we are once again prioritising the promotion of the many benefits of aggregate and concrete products to stakeholders in order to ensure that such products remain the sustainable construction materials of choice in the future.

Finally I would like to wish all readers of the Journal a profitable and fruitful remainder of 2016 and we in ICF look forward to continuing to work with the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland towards the achievement of a brighter future for all operators in our industry.

CTS Celebrates 10 Years of Professional Service to the Industry

UKAS accredited Construction Testing Services Ltd, which provides a comprehensive range of construction materials testing, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year.

The Antrim based company has built its highly regarded reputation on offering an independent, professional, proficient and competitively priced service to a broad and varied customer base encompassing every aspect of the construction industry in Northern Ireland and further afield.

Headed up by Roy Browne and Michael Craig, both of whom have extensive experience in the industry, CTS has increasingly become the first port of call for many of our leading construction companies.

“We formed the company in 2006 after identifying a need for a fully focused and independent, UKAS accredited laboratory in Northern Ireland, initially offering onsite and in-house testing of concrete and quarry materials,” says Roy Browne.

Over the past 10 years, the company has weathered a dramatic downturn in the industry due to the recession and is stronger than ever, having successfully diversified into many other areas including aggregates, road materials, soils and bituminous mixtures testing, as well as wind

farm construction materials and slip resistance testing, and today it has never been busier.

Contributing to its continuing success is the fact that the company has built up a dedicated team of highly trained and qualified professionals with a wide range of expertise working out of its fully equipped laboratory in Antrim.

CTS also recognises the importance of prompt service and reporting, and its customer care focused staff strive to deliver this to all customers at all times.

“We listen to our customer feed back and we appreciate that our clients are very busy people who don’t want to be waiting for test results, so we will often work extra hours to provide the fastest possible service,” adds Michael.

It’s another aspect of the business that has won lots of praise from customers. Says one client: “This is a company that has the technology and enthusiasm to get the job done quickly, quietly and efficiently and the reports are regular and very prompt.” Another adds: “Their work is always meticulous and I have found their personal attention and response times exemplary.”

Michael and Roy say they are encouraged by the progress CTS have made and are optimistic for continued growth in future years.



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Irish Mining and Quarrying Society (IMQS) President's Report 2015

Construction and Quarrying Sector

As we review the 2015 period, I am pleased to report that our members are experiencing a reasonable increase in orders and more consistent output levels than those reported in recent years. However, tangible support for the Construction Industry and the Extractive industry, in particular, needs to be a priority for the incoming government (following a General Election in late February 2016).

As we review the 2015 period, I am pleased to report that our members are experiencing a reasonable increase in orders and more consistent output levels than those reported in recent years. However, tangible support for the Construction Industry and the Extractive industry, in particular, needs to be a priority for the incoming government (following a General Election in late February 2016).

The outgoing Government's Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021, announced in September 2015, needs to be realised. It is proposed as part of this plan that the programme will provide for major infrastructure projects, worth €27 billion over the next six years. Dedication to the delivery of this plan is critical to the success of our industry in the coming years.

Mining Sector

As reported previously, the mining sector which remained buoyant during some of the most difficult years of the economic downturn has slowed down since 2012 and has experienced some challenges in the last three years including a decrease in metal prices and rising operational costs.

However, based on recent results from the Comex Market in New York (February 22nd 2016), copper for delivery in May climbed 2.5% to \$2.1325 a pound or \$4,700 a tonne. Mining.com reported that the red metal is up more than 10% from a six-year low hit mid-December 2015.

Other industrial metals also gained and are very relevant to Ireland. Zinc rose to a four-month high of \$1,790 and iron ore was the biggest winner of late with the benchmark price continuing its rebound, with a 7% jump in late February 2016 to retake the \$50 a tonne level. At \$50.30, iron ore is up 36% from near decade lows hit in December 2015. However, this is compared with a peak of around \$180 per tonne in 2011, so the current price is still a serious challenge for mining operators.

"A 20% rise from near 13-year lows barely two weeks ago is convincing investors that deflation in the sector may finally be at an end."

The mining sector is vital to Ireland's economic growth and recovery. The Irish mining sector had sales of over €426 million in 2012. The overall value from the sector was estimated at €810 million, nearly double the direct



Siobhán Tinnelly

IMQS President 2014-2016

production value. Exploration and mining companies also contributed a total of €56 million in tax and other payments to the exchequer and to local authorities.

Following the announcement of the Minerals Bill in July 2015, Minister Alex White said that, in Ireland, "Over 3,000 people depend directly and indirectly on exploration and mining for their jobs and mining output earns almost half a billion Euro in foreign earnings."

The results of the Fraser Institute's Survey of Mining Companies 2015 (published in March 2016) confirm, once again, the international recognition of Ireland's value as a mining destination. The latest report ranks Ireland as 4th overall amongst 109 jurisdictions surveyed by the Institute. This highlights an increase in Ireland's "Investment Attractiveness Index" since 2014. In addition, for the third year in a row, Ireland has the highest Policy Perception Index (PPI), which is a measure of the overall policy attractiveness of a jurisdiction.

A continuing downward trend in mineral exploration expenditure of 16% is noted among the companies surveyed. This represents a serious challenge in maintaining inward investment in mineral exploration for Ireland.

Lisheen and Tynagh

For the last number of decades Ireland has been Europe's largest zinc producer and has ranked in the world's top ten producers. This year, with the closure of Lisheen Mine in 2015, Ireland fell to second position in Europe and 11th in the world for zinc production.

The downturn in our recent mining activity was also highlighted as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1965 commencement of operations at Tynagh Mine (highlighted by John Kearney, at the IMQS Annual Dinner Dance in November 2015 and showcased at the Tynagh Mine conference in Jan. 2016). ⁽¹⁾

PDAC

The Exploration and Mining Division (EMD), GeoScience Ireland and the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), all associated with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, have successfully used the annual PDAC Convention in Toronto, Canada for over 20 years to promote Ireland as a destination for exploration and mining.

The Convention, held in March 2016, was particularly important as, this year, there was a dedicated "Ireland Presentation" which focused on Ireland's potential and attractiveness for mineral exploration, the range of professional and specialist skills available in Ireland and the opportunities for industry-related research projects.

The IMQS is acutely aware of the pressing need for new discoveries to maintain output and employment and urges the Government to continue its policy of attracting new exploration investment to Ireland.

Irish Network (North and South)

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work that is carried out on an annual basis by our colleagues in QPANI and also in the IoQ and GSNI. We see numerous examples throughout the year of these organisations supporting and informing the geosciences community and the public about issues relevant to the extractive industry.

Examples of this crossover between the various members of our associations can be seen by the weekly interactions and discussions on LinkedIn (Irish Mining and Quarrying Society Group), Social Media (esp. Twitter) and the ongoing meeting of minds within the Irish Geoscience Network (IGN).

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank my fellow Council Members for their support during my two-year term as President of the IMQS. I also thank the individual and corporate members for their continuing support. Across both the mining and quarrying sectors, we have a loyal and enthusiastic membership who ensures that the Society continues to prosper.

I wish my successor for 2016/2017, Mr. Brendan Morris (ex-Lisheen Mine), every success. Brendan will bring a wealth of experience and dedication to the role of IMQS President and I am confident that the Society will flourish in his hands (further details can be viewed on www.imqs.ie).

Finally, the IMQS wish the QPANI every success for the coming year and the IMQS will continue to work with and support the association as our industry continues on the road to recovery.

Siobhán Tinnelly

BA(Mod), MSc, PDipEnvEng, PGeo

President IMQS 2014-2016

(1) The very special "silver gavel and stand" that was made by Irish sculptor Edward Delaney from the treatment of the first shipment of lead-zinc-silver concentrates from the Tynagh Mine and presented to the IMQS in 1968 by Pat J. Hughes, Chairman of the Board of Irish Base Metals Limited, is on display at this AGM and is featured on the front cover of the 2015 Annual Review.



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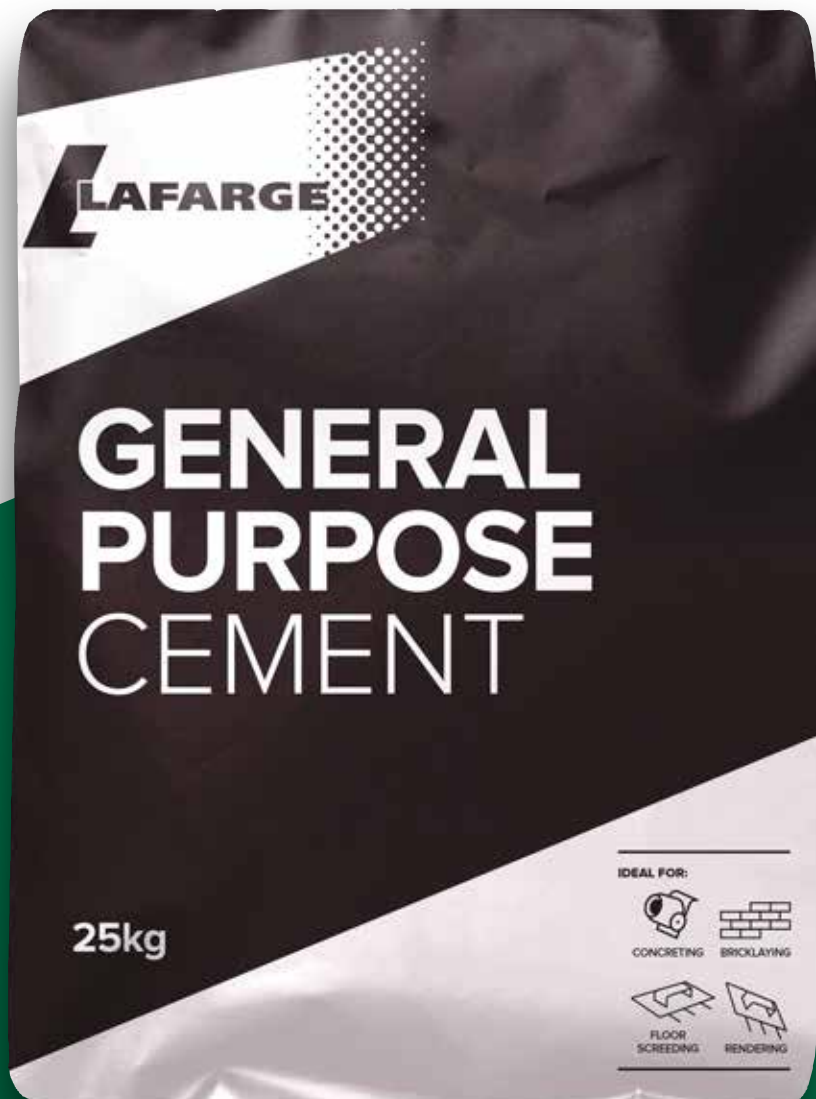


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View from the Partners



Stephen Kelly

Chief Executive of Manufacturing NI



MNI and the QPA work closely on a number of lobby areas which directly impact on the success of our members and of the economy. This partnership, and the hard work of Gordon, Fiona and the Board, is greatly valued by all of us who are interested in rebuilding the economy, creating wealth and creating work.

Manufacturing is wrongly viewed as somewhat of a sunset part of UK economy, but in Northern Ireland it remains strong and is growing impacting like no other sector of business and outperforming the UK in terms of contribution to GVA and percentage of jobs.

MNI commissioned Oxford Economics to provide insight into the sector and how it compares with other competitive markets. Initial results show that manufacturing makes a substantial difference to the Northern Ireland economy. In 2015 the sector directly provided 85,200 jobs and made a Gross Value Added contribution of £4.7 billion to GDP. This is equivalent to more than 10 percent of all jobs and 14 percent of total economic output in the region.

The report shows that manufacturing is the third largest employer and the second largest sector in terms of economic output. It accounts for a larger proportion of the economy in Northern Ireland than in the UK as a whole reflecting the strong manufacturing base that has existed there since the nineteenth century.

The impact of the sector is strongly felt throughout the economy. The contribution that the sector makes extends significantly beyond the jobs, economic activity and wages directly associated with the sector. There is an additional indirect impact which encapsulates the activity and employment supported in the supply chain as a result of the manufacturing sector's procurement of goods and services from other parts of the Northern Ireland economy. In addition, there is a further induced impact, comprising the economic benefits that arise as the people employed in the manufacturing sector and its supply chain spend their wages in the local consumer economy, for example at retail and leisure establishments.

Including all three channels of economic impact the total contribution was £9.9 billion in 2015 with every £1 billion of economic output produced by the sector, creating £1.1 billion elsewhere in the Northern Ireland economy. So, on top of the £4.7 billion direct GVA contribution that the sector made, it also supported a £3.5 billion contribution to GDP through its supply chain activities and a £1.6 billion wage expenditure GVA contribution. In total, it is estimated that the sector sustained 214,000 jobs; amounting to a quarter of all jobs in the Northern Ireland economy totally £4.2b in wages.

When we look at where these jobs are located, you really get a strong sense of how much manufacturing matters to very local economies.

This is particularly so in Mid and East Antrim and Mid Ulster, where manufacturing accounts for 1 in 5 and 1 in 4 jobs respectively.

Belfast is the main exception to this rule, being the only council area where manufacturing accounts for less than 5 percent of total employment. This is partly a feature of economic restructuring in the city which has seen manufacturing's contribution to employment halve, with jobs shifting towards IT and business services. Nonetheless, the city remains an important manufacturing location, providing 11,000 jobs—13 percent of the Northern Ireland total. Mid Ulster (18 percent), Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon (14 percent) and Mid & East Antrim (12 percent) also account for significant proportions of Northern Ireland's manufacturing employment.

Local jobs, at the centre of local economies, in places where people want to set up home, build a family life and contribute to their community.

On the whole the dispersion of manufacturing GVA broadly matches that for employment. So Mid Ulster had the largest manufacturing GVA in 2015, estimated at £823m and equivalent to 17 percent of the Northern Ireland total. Indeed the share that manufacturing contributes in terms of GVA is, in most council areas, comparable to their shares of manufacturing employment. The main exceptions are Belfast, whose share of GVA (15 percent) is greater than for employment (13 percent). These variations largely reflect the composition of manufacturing in these areas, and different rates of productivity associated with sub-components of manufacturing.

A high proportion of our manufacturers are small in employment terms - yet they make a significant contribution within the sector. Business population estimates show that there were 5,095 manufacturing businesses. Most of these are small firms (employing less than 50 people) but account for over a quarter of total employment and just under one-fifth of total sales. Larger firms (employing 250+) make a disproportionately high contribution to total manufacturing employment and turnover.

As with employment, manufacturing's share of GVA in Northern Ireland (14%) is significantly above the share for Great Britain of just under 10 percent. However, the sector's contribution to GVA is notably lower than the proportional contribution in the Republic of Ireland and the EU as a whole, at 23 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

The EU ambition is to reindustrialise. Their target is 20% of GDP. Growing from the current 14% to that EU target would transform Northern Ireland, particularly at a very local level. Surely that is an ambition which should find its way into a refresh economic strategy and the new Programme for Government?

We look forward to continuing to successfully work with the QPA to deliver real outcomes for people, businesses and for the economy.

View from the Partners



Dr Jennie Donald
Deputy Chief Executive, NIFHA



Housing associations delivering for Northern Ireland

Housing associations are among the largest and most successful social enterprises in Northern Ireland, sustaining communities and building growth.

22 housing associations work across our cities, towns and rural areas, delivering new homes, services and support to over 100,000 tenants and residents and the wider community.

Our sector is the only provider of new social and affordable housing, with over 10,000 homes delivered from 2011-2015 and another 1,950 to be started by the end of March 2016. Housing associations also work with tenants to sustain their tenancies; facilitate financial and digital inclusion; provide access to health and wellbeing services; and offer access to training, apprenticeships and employment.

In addition, Fold Telecare enables over 30,000 people across Ireland to live independently, while Telehealth allows over 2,000 people to monitor their health conditions at home rather than hospital or residential/nursing care.

Housing associations are making a real difference to the lives of individuals, families and communities in Northern Ireland. This work also contributes significantly to the local economy. Housing associations directly employ over 3,000 people at a cost of over £60m. This supports around 4,500 jobs in the

supply chain, further boosting the economic impact of local associations.⁽¹⁾ The sector has an asset base of £3.4bn, a turnover of £214m in 2015, with an 8% increase in operating surplus. Strong balance sheet capacity places housing associations in a good position to keep investing in the local economy, adding to over £800m in private finance secured to date.

Housing associations want to continue delivering for Northern Ireland by shaping places and supporting people. While associations are diversifying and gearing up for new challenges and opportunities, we recognise the value in collaboration and effective partnerships. Working with colleagues in the construction industry, particularly construction material suppliers through QPANI, housing associations can support much-needed housing supply and develop more mixed-tenure and sustainable communities. We are delighted to contribute to and wish QPANI well for this 2016 Industry Journal.

(1) The sector employs 2,954 FTEs which support 4,431 FTE jobs in the supply chain and broader economy using a multiplier of 1.5. NIFHA and PwC, 2015 Sector Global Accounts (October 2015)



John Armstrong
Managing Director -
Construction Employers Federation



As the certified representative body for the construction industry in Northern Ireland, the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) shares many common goals with the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI).

Members of both organisations will no doubt be aware that the upcoming Assembly elections come at a critical time in Northern Ireland's history.

While the last two years have witnessed a rise in cautious optimism, many challenges remain. Indeed the most recent CEF State of Trade Survey delivers a mixed bag of data. It highlights that only about a quarter of Northern Ireland's construction companies are operating at full capacity, while a fifth are operating at half capacity or less. Worryingly, data for the final three months of 2015 shows that a quarter of companies were still operating in survival mode.

Our recently published Manifesto outlines what we believe the next Executive needs achieve over the coming five year period. Included

in the document are recommendations on driving public sector reform and the procurement pipeline, unlocking housebuilding and financing infrastructure. The Manifesto also outlines key industry infrastructure priorities including a number of strategic road schemes and the call for a multi year road maintenance budget.

We welcome the Executive's recent commitment to the flagship major infrastructure projects and the progress on the York Street interchange. These projects along with other public capital construction works remain vital to the industry going forward.

We look forward to continuing to work alongside QPANI again over the following year to continue to highlight the importance of construction industry and its supply chain to the success of Northern Ireland's economy.

View from the Partners



Gavin Maguire

Director FMB Northern Ireland



The Federation of Master Builders (FMB) is the UK's largest construction trade association. For 75 years, the Federation of Master Builders has championed continuous improvement in building standards. The FMB independently inspects and vets our members to provide credible proof of their quality.

The FMB is proud to work in conjunction with the Quarry Products Association in Northern Ireland to ensure high standards are maintained within the building industry.

The FMB & QPA have worked together to advise and inform the industry regarding best practice and have jointly provided health & safety seminars. Together we speak with a united voice to represent and lobby government on many issues affecting the sector such as prompt payment to the supply chain, procurement, skills shortages and investment in infrastructure projects.

A flourishing construction industry is vital to the welfare of the Northern Ireland economy to deliver the new and refurbished homes, schools, hospitals, energy and transport infrastructure which our society requires. The Construction industry is one of Northern Ireland's biggest employers and provides nearly one in ten jobs. The FMB will continue to work with QPA and other stakeholders to ensure the construction sector is considered a priority sector within government.



Ciarán Fox

Director of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)



The last year has been a time of change for RSUA. What has not changed is our core purpose of delivering public benefit through the promotion of architecture. Indeed we are aiming to communicate that more clearly than ever.

The change has been in how we go about our work. This has taken many forms but one key priority has been 'partnership'. RSUA has been engaging with many organisations and businesses to find the win-wins and we are delighted to have had the opportunity to strengthen our relationship with QPANI over the last year.

In January 2016 we partnered in the delivery of two very successful Concrete and Masonry Best Practice Seminars in January 2016. We also valued QPANI's support for the pre-election Built Environment Debate in April. However, perhaps the most significant piece of work has been the restructuring of the Construction Industry Group, now to be called the Construction Group for Northern Ireland. We hope the new structure provides the platform for all the major construction bodies in Northern Ireland to work in greater harmony.

RSUA looks forward to continuing to build our relationship with the members of QPANI as we support local materials. In particular we look forward to organising site visits, Continuous Professional Development Events and other initiatives of mutual interest. RSUA has just established 11 local groups, primarily to liaise with local councils, that will act as CPD hubs. We have started to create a list of local suppliers, manufacturers and service providers who are interested in presenting to those groups.

The last year has been a mixed bag for architects as Northern Ireland's economic recovery has spluttered along. Many practices are reporting increased enquiries, increased workloads and the need to recruit. However for others it is a question of 'What recovery?' The overall mood is more positive but the downward pressure on fees remains problematic. Planning continues to be a major challenge but most believe that the structures are now right. We all have a responsibility to make those structures deliver a better built environment but it will take a lot of commitment, understanding and hard work to get there.

There is good reason to be optimistic about the year ahead. Initial figures on public capital spending suggest that 2016/17 will mark a slight increase in real term spending for the first time in 6 years (albeit still well below peak). Private sector spend is also expected to be up as more housing and commercial development schemes come online. At the political level we look forward to the outcome of the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union and the establishment of a new Northern Ireland Assembly. The new assembly, which will have many new faces, presents a fresh opportunity to put the built environment higher up the agenda. We look forward to working with QPANI and our other partners to make the case for a built environment that allows the people of Northern Ireland to prosper.

View from the Partners



Louise Dougan

MSc DIC BEng (Hons) CEng MCIHT



Northern Ireland has long been recognised for its high quality workforce, with a strong educational base and renowned work ethic. As a region, we have a lot to offer not just locally but also nationally and globally in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of world-class transportation infrastructure.

The provision of a safe, resilient, sustainable and effective transportation network remains fundamental to our overall success and remains a key factor as we strive to continue to recover from the global recession. We are also mindful of the need to protect our local industry skills base with ever increasing demands for a transient workforce.

As a learned society with over 13,000 members throughout the UK, CIHT is focused on bringing together industry and Government in developing shared goals and objectives to develop and deliver this transportation vision. In Northern Ireland, our regional committee brings together representation from academia, the public sector, consultancy, contractors and their supply chains; drawing upon this shared experience to provide a robust and

well-rounded industry perspective on current policy and emerging issues. We seek to meet regularly with our local decision-makers to discuss transportation priorities and the need for a balanced and long-term approach to capital and maintenance investment.

The CIHT Northern Ireland Region remains dedicated to providing support and networking opportunities to provide our members with continual professional development and offers routes to professional qualifications. Further information can be found on our website at www.ciht.org.uk.

We recognise and value the contribution of the construction materials supply chain to the highways and transportation sector and are pleased to support the QPANI and the 2016 Quarry Products Industry Journal.



Sam Eccles

MIQ, Chairman - Institute of Quarrying NI Branch



The Institute of Quarrying is approaching its Centenary in 2017 and the Northern Ireland Branch has continued to be one of the best attended and vibrant branches in the UK. I am delighted to provide a contribution to The Quarry Products Association Journal for 2016.

With my duties as Chairman of the Institute of Quarrying Northern Ireland Branch I also have the pleasure of sitting on the QPA Executive Committee with Chairman John Shannon, Regional Director Gordon Best and assistant Fiona. The Northern Ireland Branch members recognizes the tireless efforts put in by the Executive Committee members, and sub-committees for the wider quarry industry

The links forged with Government through the offices of the QPA are an extremely valuable asset to the Quarry industry in providing a key corridor to the decision makers in the Stormont Executive. At this time of local Government reform it is more important than ever that the changing faces of the public offices have a direct point of reference with Quarries to ensure views and policies are have every opportunity to be shared from both sides.

I applaud the achievements of the QPANI in 2015 with initiatives such as 'Concrete is Better Built' and 'Wise use of Water Guidance' and the '60 days to save our Roads Network' publication in which we are all too aware, with the present frequency of potholes,

highlights the gross underspend in our Roads Network.

Many from our branch share common membership with the QPANI and recognize that the core value of the IOQ and QPA remain the same:

- To meet and enhance the image and professionalism of Quarrying in Northern Ireland.
- To support, promote and encourage training and education for branch members.
- To provide a varied and topical branch programme for our members to meet the changing face of modern Quarrying.

The Institute meets on the 1st Monday of each month through the winter in The Dunadry Hotel & Country Club in Templepatrick and extend a welcome to new members and guests for branch meetings.

On behalf of the Institute of Quarrying NI Branch I congratulate Gordon and Fiona on the publication of the 2016 Journal and wish the QPANI every success in the future and the continued Support of the Institute of Quarrying.

View from the Partners



Nigel Smith
CBI Northern Ireland



The Northern Ireland economy continues to recover from a deep downturn, with job opportunities picking up and consumer confidence gradually returning. Businesses have worked hard to grow and do their part to help rebalance the Northern Ireland economy and there have been a number of notable success stories, particularly in manufacturing, agri-food industries and business services.

However, as we seek to close the gap with other regions and nations there is a great deal more to do to create a sustainable and balanced economy focused on enterprise, investment, innovation and exports.

As a first step towards closing the gap, the NI business community has unanimously welcomed the NI Executive's commitment to reduce the Corporation tax rate to 12.5% from April 2018. This measure has significant potential to increase Northern Ireland's ability to attract economic investment. However, the degree of economic benefit from the cut will be determined by a number of factors including: access to markets; political and economic stability; availability of a trained/skilled workforce, and importantly; infrastructure.

An advanced competitive economy requires first-class infrastructure which offers efficient and integrated transport systems, high quality technical connectivity, including broadband, cost effective energy, sustainable environmental solutions and an attractive quality of life for its people. The 2015 CBI/AECOM infrastructure survey reports that 94% of UK businesses describe quality of infrastructure as a decisive factor when planning future investment and infrastructure provision will remain central to the economic growth challenge facing the next NI Executive.

The fact remains that our competitors, especially our direct competitor Ireland, are not standing still and it is vital that Northern Ireland continues to enhance its competitiveness and attractiveness as a region to do business and invest. Yet after the disappointing experience of the last Assembly mandate, the next NI Executive will have to work hard to restore business confidence in the Executive's ability to take the tough decisions on how to finance and then deliver critical infrastructure projects.

The second North/South interconnector is a case in point. The interconnector is vital project which will provide Northern Ireland with security of electricity supply post 2021 but the project has been beset by delays and there is now a real danger that the interconnector will not be constructed in time to avoid an electricity supply deficit. The second North/

South interconnector's strategic importance must therefore be reflected in the planning approval process and the NI Executive must wholeheartedly commit to support its construction to furthest extent of its powers and influence.

Another area crying out to be tackled is transport. Belfast for example, according to the analysis of journey times for the TomTom Traffic Index, is now more congested than Manchester, Edinburgh and London and is the 14th most congested city in the world. Belfast drivers now face a needless extra 195 hours of travel time per year – hindering attempts to boost Northern Ireland's comparatively low productivity. In addition, failure to progress the dualling of the A6 has been one of the factors that has limited the ability of the West of the province to compete for economic investment on the same terms as the East. Transport projects that must be progressed during the next Assembly mandate include upgrading the A6 Belfast/Derry~Londonderry road, the York Street Interchange, the A5 and the Integrated Transport Hub.

The new NI Executive will undoubtedly continue to face financial pressures for the foreseeable future so it is now more important than ever that projects, once commissioned and budgeted for, are delivered successfully. The failure of high profile projects like the dualling of the A5, Desertcreat and Casement Park during the last Assembly mandate means that a new procurement and delivery agency is needed to ensure these failures are not repeated and to restore business confidence in the procurement and delivery structures behind the Executive's infrastructure programme.

The CBI has been, and will continue to be, a strong and passionate supporter of the local construction industry, keenly recognising the role it has to play both now and in the future in terms of a sustained economic recovery and in improving our competitiveness and connectivity. Alongside the CBI, the QPA has been an ardent campaigner for the need to increase investment in our infrastructure. We look forward to continuing to work together over the coming years to ensure that Northern Ireland has an economic framework in place which continues to enhance our competitiveness and attractiveness as a region to do business, encourage investment and create jobs.

View from the Partners



Paula Coopland

CEO & Company Secretary, MPA Scotland



In Scotland, sales of aggregate, asphalt and concrete have been steadily increasing, although we are yet to return to pre-recession sales figures.

There is currently major investment in infrastructure: the Forth Replacement Crossing, a £500 million investment in the motorway link between Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, for example.

The Government has also said it is committed to dualling the A9 between Perth and Inverness by 2025 and the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen by 2030. These projects will provide better transport links between Scotland's cities and are seen as pivotal to Scotland's sustainable economic growth.

That said, Government spending cuts are still a cause for concern. Local Authority roads maintenance expenditure fell by 14.2% from 2011/12 to 2014/15 and for trunk roads there was a 3.5% decrease in spend during the same period. Maintaining our transport network on a declining budget will therefore remain a challenge.

The widespread weather related issues Scotland experienced over the Christmas period, emphasised how fragile our transport infrastructure is. It is hoped that flood defence and enforced rail network improvements could help bolster trade for the industry.

Market issues aside, the challenges our industry faces in Scotland in 2016 will be varied. The demise of the opencast coal industry continues to impact on our quarrying industry, as local authorities' are – understandably – cautious when processing planning applications, legal agreements and assessing the suitability of financial provision. A recent survey by Development Intelligence also revealed that for the third year running, the public view quarrying as the least favoured form of development, with a net approval rating some 7% less than

waste facilities. The stakes to promote the economic, social and environmental benefits of our industry therefore remain high.

Adding to that, both our planning and environmental permitting systems are under review, which will lead to inevitable transitional uncertainty. With carbon reforms also featuring on the 2016 agenda, it is likely to be a busy year for Scottish operators. As a consequence, the Association's interaction with Scottish Government and regulators remain paramount to the overall health of the industry.

Despite the challenges, the industry is remaining positive. Progress has been made with Operating Companies on our initiative to improve night time roads maintenance working conditions and SEPA has indicated that it would like to enter into Prosperity Agreement talks. The experience of QPANI on the latter, has provided a valuable insight into how industry and environmental regulators can work symbiotically.

We are fortunate in that we work closely with numerous Departments within the Scottish Government and its agencies including Transport Scotland, SEPA, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and so on. Without these relationships, our business landscape would be very different.

We also benefit tremendously from our relationship with QPANI, sharing experiences relating to devolution, intelligence and ideas on all of the above - looking to the future with regards infrastructure investment and devolved local taxation implications and continually seeking ways for better collaboration with our stakeholders in efforts to drive out more efficiencies.



Alfie Watterson

Executive Secretary, SEC - Group Northern



On behalf of the Specialist Engineering Contractors (SEC) Group Northern Ireland I would like to congratulate Gordon and his team at QPANI for another excellent yearbook publication.

The Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group represent the Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Steel, and the Lift and Escalator sectors of the Construction Industry.

We work closely alongside Gordon and the Suppliers Group on the Construction Industry Group (CIG) as well as having representation on the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) and the All Party Group on Construction at Stormont.

The Construction Industry as a whole has suffered with a lack of investment since the recession, more and more Specialist

Contractors are now procuring work overseas as the sub economic tendering process continues to make local procurement, a time consuming and not a cost effective way to procure work.

Hopefully following the local elections in May an effective Executive can be formed that will put Construction at the top of its agenda.

It is important that a proper medium / long term strategy with regards contracts within the Public Sector is developed to give confidence to the local employers when considering their own investment in the future including recruitment and training.

View from the Partners



Brian Curtis
Current Chairman



Darren McMillan

Incoming Chairman Concrete Society NI Region



Serving the needs of clients, architects, engineers, specifiers, suppliers, contractors and users of concrete.

The Concrete Society is a member based body, with no affiliation to Trade or corporate organisations and is proud to be recognised as independent.

The Society is built on its technical base to become a leading provider of information serving the needs of clients, architects, engineers, specifiers, suppliers, contractors and users of concrete.

The Concrete Society's independent Concrete Advisory Service provides prompt, impartial technical advice on concrete and related matters to subscribing members of any discipline. The Chartered Engineers have wide experience in many aspects of the use of concrete.

The Society is represented throughout the UK by various regions and clubs, with Northern Ireland having its own regional membership and committee. The NI committee is represented by many disciplines including, Chartered Civil and Structural Engineers, Architects, Government Bodies, Quantity Surveyors, Universities, Concrete Suppliers, Cement and construction material suppliers, Precast companies, Building & Civil Engineering contractors, Construction materials testing companies. With the support of a large network of members and commitment from the construction industry, the NI committee organize seminars on highly topical events over the year. We would like to thank those companies who also provide additional annual sponsorship towards the running of the NI region, which is invaluable.

We are also committed to supporting our local universities, holding seminars with QUB and UUJ, with UUJ adding the seminar to their syllabus, proving very successful with a packed audience. The Concrete Society provide awards at the annual dinner to students from both universities, for excellence in civil engineering, building and architecture.

We co-host seminars with the Institute of Structural Engineers and Institute of Civil Engineers every year, on topics of interest

to many. This year's topics included presentations on "Teesport Berth 1", given by McLaughlin & Harvey and RPS Consulting Engineers and "Concrete Arch Bridges: Unlocking Their Potential, given by Prof. Adrian Long – QUB and Abhey Gupta, Macrete.

We work closely with our colleagues in the QPANI, to hold educational seminars every year where possible. A number of members are on both Concrete Society and Concrete Development Group of QPANI, presently working on topics such as "Concretes for Agricultural Use" & "Concretes for Housing."

Our annual dinner in November is well supported by the greater industry, where we hold the construction awards for projects. The awards are ongoing 5 years and the format is changing this year, similar to the UK. Letters are going to all companies on our data base with closing date of 31st July 2016. Projects must be substantially complete between October 2014 and July 2016. We are hoping for a great list of entries, which has grown yearly.

Membership is open to anyone with a construction interest and free to students. We would be happy to hear from anyone wishing to find out more information or wishing to join. The Concrete Society are celebrating their 50th Birthday and are offering an introductory 50% discount for all new subscribers.

The NI Region of The Concrete Society looks forward to continuing our close partnership with the QPANI, for the benefit of all our members and as importantly, the wider construction industry in Northern Ireland.

View from the Partners

**Nigel Jackson**

Chief Executive, Mineral Products Association



Mineral Products Association has developed a clear and shared agenda to protect its members.

Since its formation in 2009 the Mineral Products Association (MPA) has established itself as the sectoral voice of the mineral products and quarrying industry representing over 480 companies throughout the UK including 11 international businesses and 470 independent SMEs. This 'family' of common interests relies on close working relationships with MPAs affiliated members in QPA Northern Ireland, MPA Scotland, British Precast, the British Association of Reinforcement and the Refined Bitumen Association.

A strength of the MPA model is the union of thinking and dialogue which enables a common approach to strategic issues to be taken whilst accommodating local approaches within the devolved administrations. Key issues such as Health & Safety, Resource use, Legislation and Regulation, Taxation, Technical Standards, Carbon Reduction, Biodiversity require a common response if the industry is to be recognised as being coherent, competent and contemporary.

For a sector with an annual turnover of £21Bn to the UK economy each year with a GVA of £6.7Bn employing 80,000 people directly and supporting 3.3m in the supply chain, the construction industry's biggest supplier, it is important that we are well organised, engaged and delivering. As we improve our understanding of the significance of our sector we have to communicate that message effectively to key stakeholders using conventional publications, advocacy and social media.

Ensuring that we are evidence based and able to provide reliable and quality data and information covering all of our key issues is vital. Passionate assertion has a role to play in 'catching attention' but without hard evidence there is no opportunity to significantly influence public policy. There is strong evidence to suggest that the role and significance of the sector is being recognised but the process is not made any easier with so much change and loss of expertise within and across the face of Government and its agencies.

However, Government is listening and it is heartening to see that it has 'got the message' about the 'cumulative costs and

impacts' of 'red tape'. The current review of mineral extraction which started last autumn is advancing well and whilst we recognise that it may not be easy to actually 'cut red tape', the opportunities the industry has identified to employ it better and in a less burdensome way may yield results. Positive outcomes may also resonate across the devolved administrations as the process from mineral discovery to product delivery is broadly similar.

MPA is now developing its ambitions for 2025 to shape how the industry wants to be perceived and to do justice to a great industry which needs to be attractive to the brightest and best of the current and next generation of young people looking to invest their careers. We are living in an era where skills shortages are becoming increasingly evident and the presumption is that all work is inside and electronically based! This is an exciting agenda which affects all members to some degree across the UK. As the largest production industry in the UK involving 'all the talents' and 'all the sciences' we have so much to offer. Being ubiquitous, local, and covering so many disciplines how can we not be attractive!

As MPA has grown it has developed a clear and shared agenda to protect its members' interests with an unambiguous, aligned and stronger voice. QPA Northern Ireland is a dynamic and active player in the MPA family and the views of its members add real value to the development of the industry and its relationships with key stakeholders. The union we are privileged to work with reflects the inherent diversity of its membership which when harnessed for the common good is a powerful force. QPA Northern Ireland is living proof that it is possible to balance local needs whilst making a significant contribution to UK issues.

View from the Partners



Ken Hood
Chairman



It has been a great honour to be Chairman of the Northern Ireland branch of the Institute of Asphalt Technology for the past 2 years.

Although membership numbers have diminished during this period our core membership has remained strong and continue to support our many varied and interesting presentations from all aspects of the Asphalt industry.

Highlights during this period have included the following:

A Training Day held at Beechlaw Hotel in Dunmurry in conjunction with The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. The content of the course ranged from product knowledge within the aggregate, binder and additive constituents to asphalt production, layers of road pavement, laying of asphalt and their common problems within the industry. It was an immensely successful day with excellent presenters and strong support from the quarry industry within Northern Ireland.

An excellent presentation given by David Smith of FM Conway on the history of the company from its formation in 1961 by Frank Conway with one lorry to where it is today as an award winning infrastructure services company today in South East England with its own bitumen terminal and asphalt plant in Erith, South London.

A live plant demonstration by Roadmixer International held at Tullyraine Quarry where they demonstrated their mobile volumetric hot asphalt mixer. The truck mounted mixer, which

has been developed in the U.S. and similar in principal as a volumetric concrete mixer, is fabricated at the Company's Co Tyrone facility. We were able to witness production and finished product being discharged on the quarry floor, with a healthy question and answer session around the truck and mixer from the large group in attendance.

A Joint IAT North/South Conference-Paving The Way, at Druids Glen. This was a very well attended event with 150 delegates and presenters, both nationally and globally covering many varying topics, including our own Dr David Woodward who gave an excellent presentation on predicting the impact of extreme weather on surfacing asphalt performance.

These highlights emphasise the close links we have with our colleagues in the QPANI, CIHT, IOQ and our IAT southern branch. As our economy and Industry emerge from recession it is essential for the long term growth of the IAT, and the Industry as a whole, that we maintain these partnerships without which we would struggle to sustain ourselves productively as a branch. We at IAT are again honoured to be part of the QPANI Journal and we wish the Association well for the future.



Ben Collins
RICS, Regional Director, Wales and Northern Ireland



According to the RICS Construction Market Survey, 2015 ended with the workloads of Northern Ireland construction surveyors increasing. Indeed, overall workloads rose in all four quarters of 2015, which is encouraging.

However, it is clear that a significant proportion of their work is now outside of Northern Ireland. Despite the overall rise in workloads, infrastructure activity was falling, according to surveyors, making the final quarter of 2015 the 9th consecutive quarter in which Northern Ireland surveyors reported falling or flat infrastructure workloads.

Investing in infrastructure is a crucial part of rebalancing and growing the economy. We need better roads and railways, schools, hospitals, and energy infrastructure to meet our sustainable energy needs. We strongly encourage the policy makers to take a strategic view in relation to where best public money should be spent to make the most positive impact for the economy and society.

We believe that independently assessing Northern Ireland's

infrastructure needs and making strategic decisions in the public interest about where investment should go would be a very positive step towards delivering best value for money and providing a boost to the private sector.

We also believe that an introduction of domestic water charging and case-specific use of Public Private Partnerships to fund infrastructure investment should be on the table as a way to fund capital investment for the betterment of society and the economy.

Government departments and the Strategic Investment Board should also produce infrastructure Business Plans to ensure greater awareness and transparency regarding the economic, social and environmental benefits, and regional significance, of planned infrastructure projects.

View from the Partners

**Richard Kirk**

Director ICE Northern Ireland



Infrastructure can build our quality of life, now and for future generations. During the recent winter storms, we've seen the terrible impact that flooding can have on homes and businesses in Northern Ireland.

Whilst I do not want to understate the impact this has had, the effects would be much worse were it not for the flood defences already in place. In response to the floods of 1987 civil engineers developed flood protection schemes in places like Strabane, Omagh, Drumahoe and Limavady to reduce the risk of it happening again. Infrastructure like this builds our quality of life.

Let's not be under any illusion that our living standards today are purely as a result of our own efforts; civil engineers have created the structures and systems that sustain our society. Each day we rely on what they deliver: bridges, roads, canals, docks, office buildings, hospitals, schools, airports, power stations, railways, flood defences and water-treatment facilities. The recent BBC documentary, *Mud, Sweat and 400 Years* spoke of the ingenuity of our ancestors, driven by a desire to make Northern Ireland a better place to live and work. We need more of the same today, underpinned by our infrastructure.

Infrastructure and the services it provides drive the economy forward by generating jobs, productivity and well-being with every £1 of investment generating £2.84 in the wider economy. However, to deliver long-term benefits to Northern Ireland, we need to think differently about how we fund and procure projects, what areas are most in need and how we attract and develop our best people to deliver them.

In addition, 94% of businesses report that quality of infrastructure is a decisive factor when planning future investment. Infrastructure has a clear impact on businesses' competitiveness and it remains central to growth. Though we welcome the devolution of corporation tax, it is not a silver bullet. Resilient, modern infrastructure and a skilled workforce are vital to attracting investment and meeting the demands of a growing economy.

ICE undertakes a needs assessment of our infrastructure each year, identifying those areas which are at risk. In our most recent review, we found the key areas which needs addressed are: North-South interconnector, publically-owned energy from waste facility, roads maintenance and wastewater. If we do not resolve these issues, we are at risk of making Northern Ireland a worse place to live and work.

The North-South interconnector will help lower energy costs and make our supply more secure. An energy from waste facility would not only negate the cost of exporting our waste and paying for some of the highest energy costs in Europe, but would also contribute to the circular economy through the creation of jobs. We are united with QPANI in highlighting that the deterioration of our

roads network and a growing backlog of maintenance now exceeds £1 billion. The NI Executive must prioritise maintenance of our network in the next Programme for Government and not leave it to be funded by the leftovers from the financial monitoring rounds.

Whilst we have an abundance of water in Northern Ireland, making it suitable for consumption and disposing of sewage does not come without cost. Our water and sewerage services are currently funded from the taxes we pay, but without increased investment in the infrastructure which supports it, we are at risk of sewers over-flowing and pollution entering our rivers and beaches.

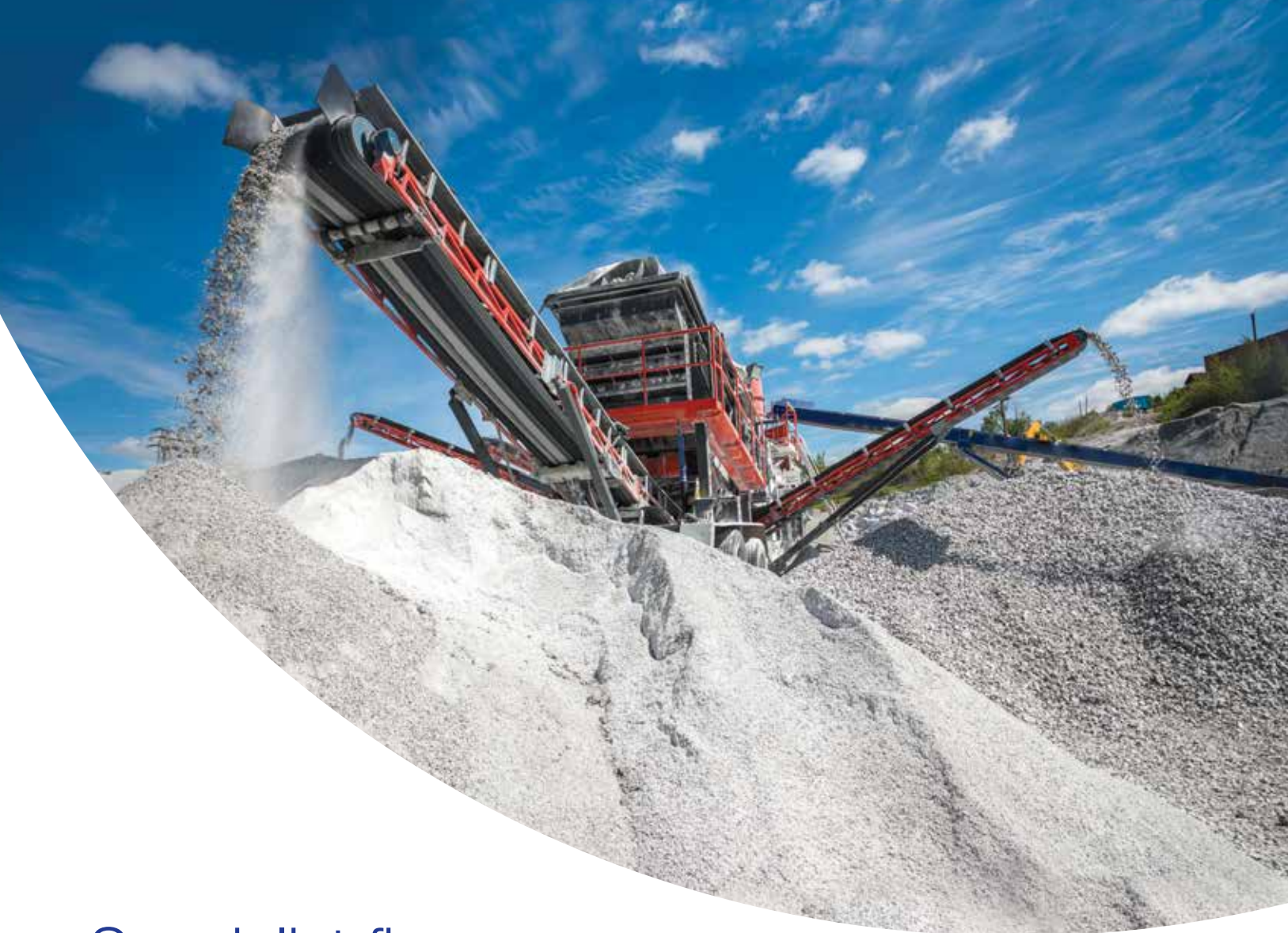
The EU recommends water charging to sustainably manage water consumption, and currently Northern Ireland is the only region in the EU to not implement this strategy. We would encourage the Executive to consider the benefits of releasing c. £280m of the block grant through the introduction of domestic water charging. With exceptions in place for those unable to pay, ring-fencing this user charge will better protect our people and environment and provide high quality water and sewerage services.

If we do not introduce alternative funding sources, Government risks having to pay more in future for problems we do not resolve today. For example, the poor water quality of Belfast Lough and other water bodies will incur EU infraction charges if we do not invest in initiatives like the Living with Water Programme.

Northern Ireland's young people will have the opportunity to get involved with flagship infrastructure projects both at home and overseas. The civil engineering sector is growing, and the recent findings of the Skills Barometer show that Northern Ireland will need more civil engineers to meet its future needs. By pursuing this new apprenticeship, our young people will have the opportunity to have a salary, no educational debt and a direct path to higher levels of professional and technical work.

ICE and the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) have developed the new apprenticeship programme in collaboration with Further Education colleges and industry partners. The scheme will be Northern Ireland-wide, with full participation from all FE colleges. 17 employers have already committed, with growing interest among other companies in the sector.

Close links between ICE and QPANI remain important to inform government of the challenges facing the construction industry and to ensure that our joint objective of maximising investment opportunities in infrastructure are met.



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Massive opportunity facing all of us in this sector

As an “umbrella body” the CIG, now renamed the NI Construction Group, is in its 17th year and represents the one true voice of all participants, large and small within the local NI construction Sector. Founded around four main pillars of the construction supply chain, we represent the key interests of Suppliers, Specialist Contractors, Professionals and Contractors.

We focus on key strategic issues of the local industry and have executive capability from key membership organisations such as the CEF, FMB, QPANI, ACE, RICS, RSUA, ICE, SEC to name but a few.

The subject of LEADERSHIP is always on the agenda at CIG as we work closely with our elected representatives, departments and local government to voice opinion, advice and collaborate on important construction industry matters, and have experienced some extremely challenging and frustrating leadership issues in recent times. Nevertheless the local construction sector has strong determination, resilience and capability many other sectors envy, with a unique economic multiplier that generates jobs, wealth and improved social wellbeing for our expanding population. We really do punch above our weight ...

With a turnover of over £2.18 Billion in 2014, the local NI construction industry is of major importance to the wider economy. In terms of employment, 66,000 people currently work in the industry representing almost 10% of the working population. Furthermore, research from Ulster University estimates that for every 10 jobs created or sustained in the local construction industry, 7 further jobs are supported in the wider economy.

Historically, we have relied heavily on public spending here to sustain the core of our industry. However, the recession, government cutbacks and the recent impasse at Stormont have driven our industry to go out and source new opportunities and markets in other regions of the UK and further afield. Not just, I must add the larger contracting companies but all types of organisations in the supply chain seeking to grow, survive and thrive on their own steam with improved conditions, contracts and rewards on profitability, customer base and steady secure order books with sustained employability. Are you aware that current almost 80% of precast concrete materials made in NI goes to GB today.

In fact, the CEF estimate that the top 20 local construction companies turnover is approximately £1.5 Billion, of which £1 Billion is now generated outside NI. Facts and figures that must be embraced and acknowledged of the change and yet massive opportunity facing all of us in this sector as the gap, left by larger companies targeting export markets opens up, to be filled by local smaller companies that can step up and secure these opportunities. This serves as a testament to the competitiveness of our local construction industry and the quality of work delivered by our NOW highly skilled workers that are forward thinking, strategic, innovative and result driven.

Growth expectations to 2019 for NI remain modest at an average of 2.2% in next few years, however GB and ROI are stronger which translate to big numbers on revenue opportunity and in particular skills required.

New housing output activity helps these stats and helps stimulate more local work on ground, but we are starting at a low base and still have a long way to go to meet demand. For example to put into context that claim..... at its height in 2005/06 there where 15,184 new dwelling starts here, in 2012/13 saw a



Stephen Kane

Chairman of the Construction Group (NI).

decade low of 5117 dwellings. The DRD strategy indicator on critical need for new homes is estimated at approx. 11,200 new homes of all types built per year!!! With less than 50% of that being achieved over last decade there is an urgent need to act now particularly in respect of private housing.

Putting this into perspective we as an Industry are still very much a force to be recognised and taken seriously by Government, our ‘get the job done’ work ethic and people skills have allowed some of us to migrate our talents for survival to new markets thus keeping our industry very much active during these tough times, but what about our future?

The current dynamic of “where and how” we work as an industry is a game changer for the current and importantly future industry participants presenting huge challenges on skills, resources and our capability to successfully manage talent, technology, finance and job pipelines with effective and sustained STRONG CLEAR LEADERSHIP!

One recent industry age profile survey by the QPANI found we have an aging workforce with low recruitment in younger age profiles, posing a significant risk that mature skills, expertise and knowledge will be lost. These findings on skills shortages were also echoed from other industry supply chain participants. We must modernise the industry image to appeal to younger age groups, with parental pull and create real trade ready development programmes and apprenticeships for a wider selection of workers within the whole supply chain including core building skills,



professional skills and in particular management and leadership skills to resolve sustainability and succession planning issues.

We have a high number of SMEs and indigenous family ran/ owned construction businesses, that, combined with an aging skilled workforce and skills migration of graduates and experienced managers, we have a responsibility to identify new emerging people, recognising that the next generation may not just be as talented or interested in construction. We must ensure that sufficient opportunity is given to breed the essential modern leadership skills into organisations to protect their sustained future in an ever changing and challenging construction market not just locally, nationally but also globally.

Our industry has changed, as has the built environment around it and people in it, as it will continue to do so for many years to come with a need to plan it's sustainable infrastructure and policies for governance.

Identifying and developing Future Leaders in Construction will be a key piece of the jigsaw as we rebuild and modernise the Northern Ireland Construction Industry and its influence on the markets and regions it operates in.

I am delighted and honoured to write this piece for the QPANI 2016 Journal. I wish QPANI every success for the future and look forward to working with you through the newly formed construction materials supply forum.

New NI Construction Group Board



From left: Gordon Best (QPANI); Eddie Weir (CIAT); Richard Kirk (ICE); Ben Collins (RICS); Stephen Kane (CG (NI) Chair); Stephen Heaney (ICE); Gavin Maguire (FMB); Jim Crooks (SEC Group); David Henry (CEF); John Armstrong (CEF)

Construction Industry United

Representative bodies from the construction industry have formed the NI Construction Group to focus on create a more prosperous Northern Ireland. Senior representatives from industry will meet with Government on a regular basis to help address the big challenges facing society and the industry.

In a joint statement, representatives of the NI Construction Group said "the construction industry enables our economy, creating opportunities and prosperity for our society which will stay in place for generations. We have begun to emerge from the depths of the recent recession and the formation of the NI Construction Group demonstrates that the industry wants to focus on a common purpose. Our initial attention will turn to encouraging young people into our industry and working with government to create a steady stream of projects which can benefit people's lives."

The NI Construction Group is a forum which comprises 2 senior representatives from the following organisations:

- Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE)
- Construction Employers Federation (CEF)
- Construction Industry Professionals Council (CIPC)
- Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
- Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
- Specialist Engineering Contractors (SEC)

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Modern expanding companies require innovative mobile business software solutions to complement their industry. Astute Software Applications makes software 'simple', tailoring our products to meet your individual needs.

Astute Software Applications have been appointed preferred UK Supplier of Herbst Software. Herbst is a leading developer and supplier of business management software for the quarry and aggregate industry amongst others. Renowned for its innovative approach to streamlining administration, Insight enables companies to review KPIs through a series of interconnected executive dashboard modules. The significant experience of our Astute team in project management, business development and quarry management enables our customers to take a strategic approach to implementing our quarry management software. Our team works with customers directly from initial enquiry sessions through to implementation of software.

Our company prides itself on our customer relations. We believe that our identified key contact policy enables customers to receive timely and accurate feedback on queries. Our software support is delivered by our professional support team,



keeping any downtime to a minimum.

Orson Herbst, Product Manager for Insight is confident that Astute can meet their needs of Herbst UK business partners. "After more than 20 years in business, we are delighted to finally have a full time presence within the UK. We have already seen the benefits of having a dedicated contact point to our developers, with bespoke requests from UK customers creating a more robust platform of products and services."

One of our more popular products in the UK market has been our mobile cloud client. This cloud based services enables employees to access our software 'on the go' whilst away from the company based. The software works in real time with the on premise software environment providing up to date information for all and has been particularly

popular with sales managers and delivery staff.

One of the recent developments to Insight has been an update in our user interface. The new software has a more user friendly icon based operation panel which can be fully customised and optimised for individual users within each company.

Our quarry management software is customer focused and undergoes continuous development. At Astute we promise a streamlined and efficient process driven system that will deliver the key management and accounting information for any business and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with current and potential customers to discuss how recent advancement can benefit their business.



Software Made Simple

- Integrated Accounts
- Business Intelligence
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Reach new career heights with IQ Academy

Providing globally recognised specialist qualifications and training for the mineral products industry. The Institute of Quarrying is the international professional body for quarrying, construction materials and the related extractive and processing industries.

We provide development and support opportunities to over 6,000 of our members in some 50 countries of the world. Our commitment extends to driving the industry and those within it forward, providing recognition, enhancing careers and delivering life-long learning and development opportunities for those who want to achieve it, no matter what stage of your career you are currently at.

A key driving force behind the Institute and encompassed in our IQ Academy brand is education, the key element to improving competence and upskilling individuals.

Growing alongside the ever-changing needs of the industry for over fifty years, our knowledge-based qualifications provide a flexible approach to learning to suit both the individual as well as the business. We can help build training options based on a

complete range of skills and knowledge an individual needs to be successful in their role.

Earlier this year, under the IQ Academy banner and working in conjunction with specialists in their field, we launched a new blended training programme to fill the fundamental training gap within the industry for Mineral Planners.

The course features a bespoke Mineral Planning unit, contributed by Heaton Planning, purpose written to cater for the distinct needs in this area. The course has additionally been peer reviewed by planning specialists to maximize its benefit and effectiveness.

Our "Mineral Planning for Mineral Planners" course provides high quality online learning content supplemented with a series of webinars and a one-day face-to-face workshop & site visit. Providing a deeper understanding of this intricate subject area, the course is additionally complimentary in knowledge areas, which include:

- Restoration Techniques
- Environmental Awareness
- Environmental Impacts of Blasting
- A Quarry Geotechnical overview

IQ developed the course to feature on the in-house virtual learning platform, allowing easier access to personal development opportunities for individuals.

As with all courses through the IQ Academy, successful completion also provides individuals with accredited CPD hours.

A range of qualifications covering the extractives industry has been developed, catering for all needs and requirements. Safety, health and environmental factors, best practice, efficiencies and sustainability have been the key industry drivers behind these. Our training is continually updated in line with current legislation and the needs of the industry. Our current courses include:

- IQ Academy Masterclass
- Managing Safety In Quarries
- Managing Health In Quarries
- Environmental Management In Quarries
- Environmental Training For Supervisors
- Supervisor Programme
- Foreman Safety Programme
- Continuous Improvement Training
- Behavioural Safety
- Blasting Knowledge Course

IQ qualifications and training add true value to a business and provide an edge in a competitive world. You can find out more about our educational offerings and benefits membership of the Institute brings to you by visiting www.quarrying.org

Learn, Develop, Excel.



IQACADEMY

Find out more at Quarrying.org

Competitive Analysis of the Construction Materials Sector

In 2012 Inter Trade Ireland, the Irish Concrete Federation and the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland published a competitive analysis of the construction materials sector on the island of Ireland. The report articulated a vision for the sector based on a combination of strong management capability, efficient use of resources/capacity, product quality and innovation. This 2015 report updates that research.

The construction materials sector reviewed in this report comprises the stone, sand, aggregates, readymix concrete, concrete products and bitumen products that form a critical part of our built infrastructure. The construction materials sector is a strategically important one, as without its products, our built environment would simply not exist in its present form. Despite the need for its output; the sector is not a significant contributor to building costs. Concrete products and stone account for less than 5% of the costs of a new house. Concrete and stone is delivered to building sites and so transport is a relatively high proportion of operating costs. Ready mix concrete has a very short usable life after mixing, so the distance from a plant to a building site must be relatively short. Consequently, the industry comprises many plants distributed across the island. Given the distributed nature of the industry, two economic conditions are essential for its continuance. First, construction activity should be at a reasonably sustainable level and, second, this sustainable level should be evident in all parts of the island. These two circumstances are not being met on the island today. Construction activity is just half of what it should be in a normal economy and, furthermore, the growth in activity in recent years has been focused on the two major urban centres of Dublin and Belfast. Outside of these centres many companies are under extreme pressures; have scaled back operations significantly, and are unable to retain experienced staff. For a sustainable future, the Governments on the island need to appreciate the strategic importance of the construction materials sector; to support it by addressing the island's infrastructural needs and making sustainable levels of capital investment in new projects together with appropriate levels of maintenance on existing and newly built infrastructure. From local authorities and Government agencies, there is a need for much improved enforcement of the regulations affecting the sector, particularly in the areas of planning regulation; product specification in construction contracts and improved monitoring of construction materials provided.



To view and download the 2015 Report go to
<http://www.qpani.org/emallers/documents/010316-ITI-ConstructionMaterialsReport-2015-final.pdf>.

If you would like a hard copy of the report please contact the QPANI office at 028 9082 4078 or on email info@qpani.org.

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Powerscreen Celebrating 50 Years of Service To the Industry

Powerscreen, one of the world's leading providers of mobile crushing and screening equipment, is marking half a century of serving the crushing and screening industry around the world.

Established in 1966, Powerscreen has achieved its five-decade legacy through industry leadership, customer input and innovation.

Powerscreen was founded in 1966 under the name of Ulster Plant in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland and today that is where the research, development and manufacturing of products continue. By the 1970's the Powerscreen name was born.

When the founders set up Powerscreen in 1966 they pioneered the concept of mobile screening, taking the machines to the quarry face rather than the expensive process of moving the material to the machine.

In 1969 Powerscreen exported their first machine to Sweden which cost £2.5k. Today Powerscreen has a true global presence, operating in worldwide scale in over 80 countries. In 1966 Powerscreen employed eight people, now that figure has risen to six hundred people producing a range of over thirty machines.

Powerscreen started out from mobile machines in a sand pit to industry leading machine designs now serving quarry, mining, C&D and recycling industries globally. Powerscreen not only pioneered the mobile machine concept but also set new standards for many products and technologies that have become widely adopted in the industry, including the Chieftain



Colin Clements, Global Product Line Director beside a 1966 MK1 screening machine. This was the sixth machine built and remains a permanent feature at the front of our Dungannon Plant.



and Warrior ranges of mobile screens. In 2015 Powerscreen launched the Warrior 600 making the Warriors the most comprehensive range of mobile scalping units in the industry.

"From Ulster Plant to serving customers around the world today, Powerscreen is the story of teamwork. Our customers have trusted us and helped us to build and define the industry, as well as creating ways for people to work safely. It is through teamwork that we will continue to find new solutions and opportunities," said Colin Clements, Powerscreen Product Line Director.

In the last 50 years, Powerscreen has gone above and beyond in its product development efforts, focusing on what customers need to be successful in their industries and applications - Powerscreen innovations are changing the market and setting the industry standard for quality, reliability and safety in crushing and screening equipment.

Key to the success of the Powerscreen brand is the global distribution network, there are over 120 distributors operating globally providing local service and support service to end users. Pat McGeary, Blue Group Chairman, said: "Powerscreen is in my blood, I joined in 1968 when it was just a little local factory and today its part of my family's life. I am proud to have been part of the success story and to see the passion and dedication that was there when I joined is still there today."



UEPG

The European Aggregates Association

The European Aggregates Industry is by far the largest non-energy extractive industry sector. Some 2.7 billion tons of aggregates such as crushed stone, sand & gravel, marine aggregates and secondary aggregates, are annually produced by 15,000 companies (mostly SMEs) at 25,000 quarries and pits across Europe, employing 230,000 people directly and indirectly.

UEPG proactively identifies EU initiatives and policies that are likely to impact on European aggregates producers. It provides Members with brief and concise information through regular publications and updates, and ensures UEPG positions are considered and acted upon by EU decision-makers.

The European Aggregates Industry supports the principles of sustainable development and is committed to operate with care and concern for the environment, for its neighbours and society as a whole. UEPG aims at a sustainable access to local resources in Europe with specific focus on health & safety, environmental, economic and technical policy. Its objectives are supplying essential building materials, retaining jobs, contributing to Europe's competitiveness, partnering with local stakeholders, contributing to Europe's heritage through sustainable production.

UEPG achievements in 2015

While still recovering from the economic crisis, the Aggregates Industry faced several challenges in 2015, arising at European level from both the pursuit of the political agenda and the political changes which led to new initiatives. UEPG addressed these challenges in order to best support its members in 29 countries.

UEPG strengthened its relationship with key stakeholders from the EU Institutions, from NGOs or from other industries. Convinced of the value of synergy when joining forces, UEPG tightened

its cooperation with Members of the Non Energy Extractive Industry Panel (NEEIP) and organised the first NEEIP Forum.

The positive aspects of the European Aggregates Industry became more visible with the UEPG Vision 2020 and its 10 concrete ambitions, with the input to position Papers and thanks to contributions to several high level meetings and conferences, including the Sustainable Development Awards Exhibition. UEPG also organises site visits for the consultants working with the European Commission so that they have a better understanding of our Industry.

The structure of the association, which core activities are led by its four Committees, allows tackling the live issues according to the priorities of the Industry.

Health & Safety priorities

UEPG Members further committed and acted to continuously improve prevention on site to reach zero accidents and a health and safety culture. UEPG contributed to several consultations on the evaluation of 24 Occupational Safety and Health Directives. UEPG lead the Explosives for civil uses Task Force to ensure a good implementation of the 'Track and Trace' Directive. UEPG promoted the EU-OSHA Campaign on Stress at work towards its Members.

Technical priorities

UEPG maintained its monitoring of the good implementation of the Construction Product Regulation (CPR). UEPG strongly supported within the CPR implementation the reduction of the bureaucratic burden for companies and especially to avoid the duplication of information provided with the Declaration of Performance (DoP) and CE-marking.

The UEPG Technical Committee kept monitoring and was actively involved in the drafting and revision of standards. A leaflet on key messages for recycled aggregates was produced, which reminds decision-makers that recycled aggregates should be fit for purpose and that recycling should be promoted when environmentally, technically and economically feasible.

Environmental priorities

The environment is a top priority for the Aggregates Industry, and UEPG is monitoring developments and promoting best practices, for example in water management. UEPG was also part of the stakeholders' consultation process for the Mining BREF Review.

Biodiversity remained high on the agenda of both the association and EU decision-makers. UEPG audited closely the ongoing process of the Natura 2000 Fitness check and promoted sustainable



Former Director of DG Environment Karl Falkenberg, at the UEPG stand at the Green Week 2015.



Jesús Ortiz, UEPG President, at a WWF event on the future of Natura 2000.

extraction of natural resources. UEPG organised national workshops on Biodiversity with the support of its members. UEPG participated actively to the 2015 edition of Green Week, the biggest annual event of DG Environment, which theme was Nature & Biodiversity. Never before the European Aggregates Industry, recognised as the biggest non-energy extractive industry, had been so visible to the highest level of EU decision-makers. UEPG promoted the compatibility of aggregates extraction with biodiversity during Green Week 2015, the biggest European Environmental Conference. This included an official satellite event (site visit), two UEPG speakers including UEPG President Jesús Ortiz, with a UEPG stand at the Green Week and many UEPG Members attending sessions and networking with EU stakeholders. For this occasion, UEPG produced a leaflet which promotes the compatibility of aggregates extraction and nature.

Economic priorities

The UEPG Economic Committee Meeting closely monitored the implementation of the Accounting Directive and positioned clearly on resource taxation and other market based instruments. UEPG contributed to consultations, studies and questionnaires from the European Commission on Raw Materials Data, thanks to UEPG sustainable development indicators and the strong contribution from UEPG members.

UEPG monitored closely the withdrawal of the Circular economy package and the opportunity to contribute to the new proposal. UEPG positioned clearly itself on resource efficiency indicators.

UEPG challenges in 2016

UEPG is pursuing the promotion of a sustainable and local access to raw materials, in close cooperation with other stakeholders. Amongst the key priorities, resource efficiency and Natura 2000 still feature high on the agenda.

The upcoming second NEEIP Forum which theme is the Circular Economy will be an opportunity to reiterate the key role of aggregates for the EU economy and society.



Site visit of a recycling facility with consultants working for the European Commission on C&DW management.

The 2016 Sustainable Development Awards will allow demonstrating the achievements and best practices of the Aggregates Industry in the environmental, economic and societal fields. It will also raise the profile of the Industry amongst decision-makers and NGOs.

Another hot topic is the potential inclusion of respirable crystalline silica (RSC) in the Carcinogens and Mutagens at work directive (2004/37/EC), which would have very practical implications for the European Aggregates Producers, including negative impacts on the image.

UEPG is finalising the development of a brochure showing the positive contribution of the Aggregates Industry to Water Management and will be working on the review of its Environmental Product Declaration, so that producers can show their real footprint in the full life cycle of the extraction site.

RESTORE

Three years working with industry to restore quarries for people and wildlife

RESTORE - the project part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the INTERREG IVB NWE programme to promote the benefits of restoring mineral extraction sites to priority habitats in Northern Ireland and elsewhere across the UK and wider north-west Europe - has now come to an end.

Here in Northern Ireland, the project witnessed and was involved with some real success stories across a total of ten sites where stakeholders worked in partnership with the RSPB to develop restoration plans which will benefit people and wildlife. This work represented some 600 hectares of land, much of which lay adjacent to or within designated sites of conservation importance/protected sites and were spread across the landscape – from limestone quarries in Fermanagh, to basalt quarries on the Causeway Coast. The potential for priority habitat creation ranged from peatland restoration to native woodland creation.

Joanne Sherwood, Director of RSPB Northern Ireland, said: “The project has been a major success and clearly demonstrates the potential for nature conservation organisations to work with the minerals industry and other key stakeholders, to restore quarries for people and wildlife.”

While some restoration work was delivered during the three year project, most conservation action will be delivered at a later stage as a result of conservation advisory and restoration plans. Not only the minerals operators engaged with the project: the RSPB also worked in partnership with the Quarry Products Association (QPA) to help deliver a workshop on biodiversity-



Demo Event 2



Demo Event 1

led minerals planning for the new councils. The aim of the workshop was to demonstrate the value of appropriate and sustainable mineral site restoration for a nature conservation end-use and to promote a more proactive approach to minerals planning to ultimately save time and money for both planners and minerals operating companies.

Over the period of the project, RESTORE saw a change in many operators' aspirations with a move away from thinking which aimed to restore land to agriculture and 'greening-up' as quick as possible, to ways which were more suitable to benefit nature in the context of the surrounding landscape. Operators were keen to learn that, very often, the best form of restoration can also be the cheapest. Targeted natural regeneration suits many of the hard-rock quarries we have in Northern Ireland and is a restoration option which can provide a greater range of benefits than those resulting on sites traditionally restored to improved farmland.

However, it is important to point out that there were already many sites where good quality restoration was being delivered without the help of RESTORE and these sites acted as a valuable



Pool Creation



Demo Event 3

resource and exemplar to demonstrate the benefits of restoring in a more sympathetic way and to share best-practice.

Indeed, the final part of the project in Northern Ireland was an opportunity to share best-practice, with the organisation of a demonstration event where representatives from mineral operating companies, consultancies, NGOs, statutory agencies, government departments and planning authorities gathered together for the first time, to discuss the mineral industry's role in restoring sites for nature conservation and biodiversity.

The event looked to inspire discussion within the sector about mineral site restoration and its potential to deliver for nature and people and to celebrate the work undertaken through RESTORE, with the Northern Ireland Environment Minister, Mark H Durkan MLA, publically recognising the innovative work already achieved through the project's work with the minerals industry. The afternoon included a visit to a nearby quarry where attendees saw at first-hand the possibilities of best-practice biodiversity-led restoration. The event showed that there is an interest and a willingness within the industry and sector, as a whole, to help protect nature and further enhance biodiversity in Northern Ireland.

The RESTORE project culminated in a final conference in Brussels in June 2015, where it was recognised as an official EU Green Week Satellite event. Representatives from all seven of the project's partners from the U.K., Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany reported on the findings and outcomes of their work across four topic focus areas (policy, restoration best-practice, on-line information and mapping and ecosystem services valuation) during the course of the project's three year life. Details of these findings, reports and speakers' presentations are available on the RESTORE website (www.restorequarries.eu). Following presentations and endorsements from key stakeholder figures throughout the day, the RSPB's Chief Executive Officer, Mike Clarke, then addressed attendees at a late-afternoon reception to formally launch the project's Manifesto and present it to Lynn Bolyan MEP and Patrick Murphy of DG Environment.

The RESTORE project has exceeded expectations on what can be achieved for biodiversity through appropriate and sustainable mineral-site restoration, particularly when stakeholders work together and share best-practice. The industry was been very receptive to the advice and we hope the trend continues.



Craigall Quarry

Investigations are underway to explore possible new funding options for a potential second phase of RESTORE. Thanks are extended to QPA, the industry and all minerals restoration stakeholders for their support throughout the project. It is hoped such successful and mutually-beneficial collaborative working can continue in the not-too-distant future.

For further information, please visit www.restorequarries.eu

Working together to give nature home



Passionate about putting trees and woodland firmly on the map.



WOODLAND TRUST

Northern Ireland, although famously green, is sadly lacking when it comes to trees and woodland. Only 8 per cent of our landscape is covered with woodland, compared to the European average of 44 per cent.

The Woodland Trust, the UK's largest woodland conservation charity, is passionate about putting trees and woodland firmly on the map.

The charity campaigns to protect precious ancient woods and to create new native woodland, with the help of communities, farmers, landowners and organisations across the country – from Health Trusts to small family-run businesses.

With over four decades of expertise in woodland creation, the Trust cites compelling reasons for landowners to plant trees. They make a huge contribution to our quality of life and offer cost-effective and long-term solutions to many of the economic, environmental and social challenges we face. They provide shelter and shade for livestock, improve the air we breathe and, planted in the right place, can help to reduce localised flooding.



Tree planting at the Craigantlet quarry.

And now, hundreds of people are avoiding the cost of traditional fuel supplies by growing their own firewood. With careful management, home-grown firewood can be available within eight to 12 years of planting, with annual sustainable supplies thereafter.

Woodland for quarries

Through a partnership with the Quarry Products Association Northern Ireland (QPANI), the Trust is offering free expert advice and guidance on funding to help quarry owners transform spare land into thriving woodland.

Gregor Fulton is the Trust's operations manager, based in Bangor.

Gregor explained: "We've worked with a wide variety of landowners over the years, including farmers, who have turned hard-to-work corners into flourishing woodland. And we're now delighted to progress our work with QPANI and its member companies, who have a commitment to conserve and enhance wildlife habitats.

"The tree-planting rewards are countless, with neighbouring communities and precious wildlife top of the list to benefit."

Trees help by:

- Enhancing the landscape. For quarries close to houses and neighbourhoods, trees can create an attractive natural 'screen'. When planted in the right place, trees greatly enhance the visual appearance of quarry sites.
- Reducing noise pollution. As they mature, a carefully-designed barrier of trees can muffle sound, helping to block out noise from busy quarries.
- Improving air quality. Trees absorb pollutants and release oxygen into the air we breathe – a benefit especially felt in built-up areas.
- Providing valuable wildlife habitats. Native trees and woods provide a sanctuary for our wildlife. New planting can be used to create valuable wildlife habitats within the boundaries of working quarries or as part of schemes to sensitively restore quarries no longer in use.

Tree planting at Craigantlet quarry

Quarry company Tarmac was the first to benefit from tree planting at its Craigantlet quarry – a working rock quarry near Newtownards in County Down.

Thousands of native saplings, almost 19,000 in total, were planted thanks to advice from the Woodland Trust and funding from Forest Service's Woodland Grant Scheme. With planting beginning in 2009, the aim was to link and buffer the existing pockets of woodland around the quarry.



Planting heather and wildflowers at Aughrim quarry.
Photo by Belfast Hills Partnership.



The Woodland Trust is creating new native woodland for the benefit of people and wildlife. Photo by Adam Burton

Stephen Horner, Zone Manager, with Tarmac said: "Our tree-planting efforts were intended to enhance this environment for the benefit of wildlife. And we're delighted, and quite honestly surprised, by just how well the young trees are doing: they really are thriving and, just now, coming into bud.

"This quarry is home to a whole range of species. We've had a sand martin colony for some time, and in recent years we've seen an increase in a variety of small birds and, in turn, birds of prey such as kestrels."

Tree disease:

An area of woodland adjoining the quarry suffered a temporary setback in 2015 as a result of *Phytophthora ramorum*.

The disease, first found in Northern Ireland in

rhododendron over 10 years ago, has now been identified in larch trees in all six counties.

At the Craigtanlet site, almost 2 hectares of larch had to be clear-felled: the most effective way of tackling and reducing the spread of this virulent fungus-like pathogen.

Gregor Fulton explained: "The larch provided a natural barrier between the quarry and the nearby homes and road. And the unavoidable felling, following a destruction notice, certainly had a significant impact on the local landscape.

"However, we have worked with Stephen and his team to replant this area with a mix of native trees. We've included Scots pine, wild cherry, crab apple, hawthorn and blackthorn. These species will hopefully encourage the red squirrel, often previously spotted among the larch.



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The vulnerable red squirrel.
Photo credit www.northeastwildlife.co.uk

"The benefits to wildlife start from the actual day of planting, with bugs and insects starting to colonise and attracting creatures higher up the food chain. And we'll soon see a change: it generally takes just 10 years for trees to grow well above head-height."

The Woodland Trust is tackling tree disease by ensuring that all trees it plants and provides have a traceable provenance and are UK or Ireland-sourced and grown. In the long term, the key to tackling tree disease is to ensure our woods and landscapes contain a mix of trees of different ages and species to create a resilient wooded landscape.

Nature restoration at Aughrim Landfill

Funding from the Woodland Trust has also supported a recent project driven by the Belfast Hills Partnership – a charity committed to caring for the chain of hills that watch over the city of Belfast.

With a helping hand from volunteers and students from Queen's University Belfast, the Belfast Hills Partnership is transforming a landfill site at Aughrim Quarry, Lisburn. The charity, along with site owner the Clearway Group, has planted over 3,000 trees to create a new woodland; restored 700 metres of native hedging; and has started work to replace non-native larch trees with native broadleaf saplings.

The mix of silver birch, hazel and rowan will provide a haven for wildlife, attracting insects, birds and mammals.

David Scott, Belfast Hills Partnership youth engagement officer, said: "Thanks to joint efforts, we have created over 2 acres of new woodland and improved much of the existing plantation. Within the stands of larch, sections of trees were thinned-out to create clearings. Here, we have planted silver birch and hazel to begin the process of diversifying the woodland while helping to mitigate any potential effects of *Phytophthora ramorum*. It is our hope that the new trees will enhance the landscape, while providing much-needed homes for many species of wildlife.

"Last year we were also involved in sowing seeds on almost a hectare of land here, with the aim of creating wildflower meadows. The wildflowers should get the seal of approval from pollinators, as well as brightening landscapes and minds. We're so grateful to all the local people who rolled up their sleeves to make this wonderful project possible."

How the Woodland Trust can help

The charity is offering free tailored advice – including site visits and advice on species selection and design. It will help you access the most appropriate source of grant-aid: either government funding or support through its own MOREwoods scheme.



For more information contact
**Gregor Fulton, operations manager
with the Woodland Trust.**

T: 028 9127 5787

E: gregorfulton@woodlandtrust.org.uk

W: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant



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The All Ireland Pollinator Plan

Pollinators play a vital role in our society. Connotations of summer's days often draw to mind images of bumblebees buzzing from flower to flower and butterflies flitting through gardens, fields and along hedgerows.

But unfortunately these sights are not as common as they once were. Sadly our pollinators are declining. They play a vital role in food production and their declines will result in a serious impact to food production and the health of our environment. The annual value of pollinators for human food crops has been estimated at €153 billion world-wide and at a more local level, the free service they provide is worth over £7 million per annum to the apple industry in Northern Ireland alone.

Bees are our main pollinators. This is because they are entirely dependent on plants for their food. The young are fed exclusively on pollen and the adults rely on nectar as an energy source. Whilst feeding on the nectar in flowers, bees also transfer pollen between the flowers they visit and so act as pollinators.

We have 98 different bee species. This includes the honeybee; 20 different species of bumblebee; and 77 different species of solitary bee. Research tells us that to maintain pollination you need healthy honeybees in combination with a diversity and abundance of wild bees. In the UK it has been shown that if only honeybee hives were used for crop pollination, they could only provide about one third of the service required by crops. The rest is provided free of charge by wild pollinators.

The major reason behind the decline in our pollinators is food shortages. Declines in wildflowers are subjecting our pollinators to starvation. Changes in agricultural practices, our tendency to tidy up the landscape rather than allowing wildflowers to grow along roadsides, field margins, and in schools, parks and gardens are all resulting in less food being available for our pollinators.

By taking small actions to provide bees with food and shelter across the landscape we can tackle the problem, but it requires all of us to help - from businesses to local authorities, schools, gardeners and farmers. We can stand back and watch the problem happen, or we can try to do something about it. The All-Ireland

Pollinator Plan is about coming together to try and create a landscape where pollinators can survive. It is a shared plan of action. By working together, we can collectively take steps to reverse pollinator losses and help restore populations to healthy levels.

The All Ireland Pollinator Plan becomes one of the first strategies in Europe developed to address pollinator decline and protect pollination services. The Plan was developed by a 15 member steering group and identifies 81 actions across five objectives. Many governmental and non-governmental organisations have come together to support the Plan, including the Quarry Products Association.



Bombus muscorum © John Breen

The Pollinator Plan proposes taking action across five objectives:

- Making Ireland pollinator friendly (farmland, publicland and private land)
- Raising awareness of pollinators and how to protect them
- Managed pollinators – supporting beekeepers and growers
- Expanding our knowledge on pollinators and pollination services
- Collecting evidence to track change and measure success

The main objective of the Plan is to start making our landscape pollinator friendly by taking actions on public land, private land and farmland. If we want pollinators to be available to pollinate our crops and wild plants for future generations, we need to manage the landscape in a more sustainable way. This will mean creating a joined-up network of diverse and flower-rich habitats as well as reducing our use of chemical insecticides. This doesn't just mean in the countryside, but in our towns and villages, businesses and schools as well.

Members of the public often have negative connotations of quarries and most likely wouldn't think they have great potential for being wildlife havens. However many quarries offer fantastic opportunities for wildlife and this has been demonstrated in the uptake of The Pollinator Plan by several quarry sites. Speaking of the important role quarries can play for our pollinators, Una Fitzpatrick, Chairperson of The All Ireland Pollinator Plan Steering Group and manager of the Irish Pollinator Initiative says;

If I had to pick a site to visit to try and see the greatest diversity of pollinator species I would choose a quarry or a species rich grassland. That's how important quarries are. Our pollinators need food, shelter and safety from pesticides to survive. By their nature, quarries provide natural nesting habitat, particularly



Don't Mow Let it Grow - Approach to Garvagh Village (Co. Derry) showing a flower-rich verge which hosts Common Spotted-Orchid, Heath Spotted-Orchid, Northern Marsh-Orchid, Oxeye Daisy, Common Knapweed, Red Clover and Meadow Vetchling.



Species rich grassland © BEC

for solitary bees. If they are managed to be rich in wildflowers they can become a vitally important bee friendly habitat in our intensively farmed landscapes. By taking small management actions, I believe quarries can lead the way in helping make the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan a success over the coming years.

Quarries are land areas where there is a lot of disturbance and this can be great news for pollinators. Plants such as gorse and bramble thrive on disturbed ground and this provides an excellent food source for our pollinators. Disturbance can also cause areas of bare ground and soil which can make fantastic nesting habitat for solitary bees and hibernation spots for mated queen bumblebees. Sand and gravel sites offer a great opportunity for solitary mining bees to nest, with an abundance of exposed, soft ground for them to burrow in. Areas left to grow wild at the quarry edge can also provide an abundance of tussocky grass for bumblebees to nest in.

Quarries are often situated in the countryside and surrounded by fields of improved grassland. As a result of fertiliser use, a lot of this land has little value for our pollinators making food sources difficult to come by. When managed for wildlife, quarries can be an oasis for our pollinators in a landscape that can otherwise result in harsh conditions for finding food sources.

Several quarries have already signed up to support The All Ireland Pollinator Plan and improve habitat and food resources for pollinators on their sites. A vast majority of these measures are incredibly simple to carry out and very often can result in cost savings as opposed to expenditure. Actions such as leaving spoil heaps for solitary bees to nest in or leaving lawn at site entrances to grow so plants such as clovers can bloom and provide food sources, can save money while also being highly beneficial for our pollinators. Sowing patches of wildflower seed on bunds is also a great way to help pollinators by providing valuable nectar sources while adding a splash of colour to the quarry site as well. As this soil tends to be lower in nutrients, wildflowers will flourish and can set seed at other parts of the site.

The first quarry to sign up to The Pollinator Plan was Patrick Bradley Ltd. Paul Callan spoke of the company signing up to The Plan saying;

My first introduction to the Pollinator Plan was through the QPANI planning and environmental committee and with my enjoyment of the outdoors I felt this would be something Patrick Bradley Limited could get involved with and play our small part in addressing the decline in Irish pollinators. We then got together

as a business to weigh up the pro and cons of implementing this plan. As far as we could see there were only positives such as improving company image, boosting employee morale, raising the general awareness of the issue and helping to protect the environment. For such a positive outcome the effort required is minimal, in fact in some areas we do less maintenance now than in previous years. For example, one of our targets is to allow a margin to grow wild around the office lawn and so allowing wild flowers to flourish, this is now our 5 star Bee hotel. We hope that by playing our part in the All Ireland Pollinator Plan we are helping to reverse the drop in pollinator numbers.

The involvement of quarries in The All Ireland Pollinator plan is proving to be invaluable and it is hoped that over time more quarry sites will sign up. If you are interested in signing up to The Plan, contact Aoibhinn at aoibhinn.corrigan@doeni.gov.uk for further details.



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Producing quality aggregate, sand and cement products is fundamentally important to both our industry and Northern Ireland Plc. Helping maintain growth in support our construction sector is one key aim; as is the protection of the Northern Ireland high quality natural environment.

Clean water supports a diverse biodiversity which benefits everyone, our natural environment significantly adds to the quality of life we all enjoy. Water management is a daily and necessary consideration in our construction materials industry, with quarrying developments and manufacturing operations impacting on groundwater, surface water and discharges to the local freshwater environment. With increased requirements on businesses to consider the environment from National and European regulation, from customers and stakeholders, it is vital that we protect this important resource by carrying our operations in a manner that not only minimises the risks of pollution but can remove them completely.

The Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) members' recognise the potential their operations have to affect the environment and are committed to minimising and mitigating such effects by carrying out their work sensitively and responsibly. QPANI welcomes the assistance and knowledge from the DAERA Water Management Unit in co-producing the 'Wise Use of Water Guidance document, and the opportunity to be able to work with our regulators in a cooperative and constructive fashion'. The full water guidance document is available on our WEB site.

It is recognised that by minimising waste and removing pollution risk, our construction materials industry will be more profitable and viewed more responsibly by our stakeholders. Implementing and adopting the best practice highlighted in this "Wise use of water" guidance will bring peace of mind for an operator and pride in our environmental performance.

This document aims to help quarry managers to improve environmental performance on their sites. It is also intended to raise awareness and emphasise the importance of water management, more specifically it aims to highlight:

the benefits of carrying out a water audit on a site specific basis;
the benefits of capturing and utilising stormwater as a resource within the quarry;
the benefits of reducing pollution risk by active pollution prevention;
implementing the use of sustainable drainage techniques (SuDs);
and the benefits of operating a pro-active maintenance and monitoring regime.

Examples of best practice for water conservation and reuse, effluent reduction, and effective treatment are also highlighted in this article as local case studies.

The key message emanating from this article is that

“Effective water management within the quarry will deliver both environmental and commercial benefits to the businesses”

Peter Close DAERA

Understand water

The recommendation is that all quarries develop and operate a system to manage water throughout the entire site i.e. within and without. Include the quarry boundary (interception and diversion), all of the points where water enters, where water moves across the site, and at locations where water is either utilised for processing or treated prior to discharge i.e. a cradle to grave approach. Having a better knowledge of water sources, of how water moves and transports sediment, and the principles of effective treatment, will provide managers with opportunities to minimise, reuse, and improve quality within their site

Rain, groundwater seepage, borehole water or diverted stream water if contaminated within the quarry is legally considered a trade effluent and must be treated and discharged back into the natural environment in accordance with a Water Order discharge consent.

The main contaminants in trade effluent from the quarrying sector are silt (suspended solids) and oil. If these are not controlled prior to discharge they can cause considerable damage to aquatic ecosystems.

Oil

1. Directly toxic to fish and invertebrates;
2. Depletion of dissolved oxygen in the water;
3. Preventing transfer of oxygen and carbon dioxide at the water surface;
4. Tainting fish flesh;
5. Creating a barrier to fish movement;
6. Endangering bird life;
7. Contaminating drinking water supplies; and
8. Very visible over large distances.

Silt

1. Clogging fish gills leading to stress, smothering and death;
2. Destroying fish spawning sites leading to a reduction in fish populations;
3. Destroying habitats for invertebrates (e.g. snails, caddis flies, stone and mayflies) which are an important food source for fish; and
4. Blanketing aquatic plants leading to reduced growth rates and reduction in dissolved oxygen levels in the water.

It is therefore essential that potential pollutants are reduced to levels that can safely be discharged to the environment.

In order to identify improvements and to better understand water, a is essential to carry out a water audit, as set out in 9 steps:

1. Investigate and understand how and where water is entering the quarry;
2. Estimate the quantity of rainfall and seepage entering the quarry, allow for seasonal variation and seepage back to groundwater;
3. Using pump records, calculate the amount of borehole and/or river water which is lifted into the quarry;
4. Collate the amount of potable water used by the quarry (only volumes used for operational purposes);
5. Calculate the volume of water utilised for on site production, washing and for dust suppression, assess the quality parameters for each use;
6. Carryout an assessment of options to divert unwanted water; plan to keep it clean;
7. Investigate the feasibility for intercepting and storing clean water at a high ground position to best utilise a clean source of water under gravity;
8. Design to infiltrate and create effective storage for settlement and reuse; and
9. Estimate the pumping and treatment costs associated with your site, make these changes and calculate your savings.

In order to aid quarry managers, the following water audit tools were jointly developed by DAERA and the QPANI. They are designed to assist with calculating 'water audits' and with the completion of water abstraction licence application forms.

For abstraction licensing purposes it is now accepted by DAERA, that groundwater seepage into a quarry void is 'broadly' balanced out by the quantity of water that then re-enters the groundwater via the quarry floor. Therefore quarry managers now need only to apply for the direct abstraction of groundwater or river water by pumping and/or diversion. DAERA will notify individual quarries of this policy change.

An additional benefit of using the tools on the DAERA website is that, not only, will quarry managers be able to determine the groundwater volume, but the process simultaneously estimates at each site, the volume attributable to rainfall including the drainage component entering the quarry. By then using the 'quarry ready reckoner' a manager can calculate the water requirement for the production of quarry products. Knowing what the quantities of water required by product and pump specifications and operating hours helps to deliver the 'pumped abstraction' figure.

Having all of the above information goes a long way to completing a 'best estimate' water audit for a quarry business. This knowledge or water balance for a site, provides a baseline for future management decisions.

3 Local Case Studies of "best practice" Industry quotes

“ On the back of advice taken from a DAERA Pollution Prevention Team presentation at a QPANI Environment Conference, we have reduced the volume of water entering the sub grades by approximately 70% and contained all the clean water from being contaminated by the working faces. The cost of the piping works was half the cost of upgrading our pump system which we would have had to do in order to cope with peak periods of rainfall.

**Alex Robinson, Director
Craigs Quarry
J Robinson & Son Ltd**

“ Keeping our vehicles, our haul roads and public highways clean are stipulations all quarry operations have to abide by. By achieving this in a sustainable manner we are putting lest pressure on the water table and preventing risk of contamination – all of which are vital importance in maintaining good relations with our local neighbours and regulators.”

**Colin Emerson,
Operations Director
Norman Emerson Group**

“ A number of lagoons have been created within the site voids created by the extraction process. There are no discharges of water from the site directly other than those which would percolate through the sand and gravel or evaporate. Water is collected, pumped, settled and reused in the washing process. Re-use is increasingly important to our operations demonstrating efficient and sustainable water usage.”

**Colm Scullion, Sand Pit Manager
Creagh Concrete Products Ltd**

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Calculating Holiday Pay – Should overtime be included?



Until relatively recently employers were free to calculate holiday pay based on basic pay only. However, recent caselaw in England and Wales (Bear Scotland -v- Fulton) and Northern Ireland (Patterson -v- Castlereagh Borough Council (2015)) would suggest that employers should now include overtime when calculating holiday pay.

The latest English decision in *White -v- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council* (2016) clarifies the position further in concluding that voluntary overtime should be included in holiday pay calculations. Voluntary overtime is work that an employee can refuse and which the employer is not obliged to offer. The *White* case involved 56 Claimants who worked on Local Authority social housing. The employees were free to work on Saturdays and could

also go on standby every four weeks to deal with emergency call outs. Dudley Council calculated holiday pay based on basic pay only however the Employment Tribunal in England concluded that because voluntary overtime had become part of the employees' normal work and therefore part of their normal pay, holiday pay should in turn reflect that.

What does this mean for employers?

1. Voluntary overtime should be included in the calculation of holiday pay if it is worked with sufficient regularity to be part of normal remuneration.
2. The recent rulings only apply to the basic four week holiday entitlement under the Working Time Directive (as opposed to the additional 1.6 week entitlement under the Working Time Regulations which can still be paid at basic rate).

3. Be mindful of time limits. Holiday pay claims can be brought as unlawful deduction from wages claims but only if there has been a series of holiday pay deductions with no more than three months between them.

In summary therefore, if your employees regularly work overtime, even on a voluntary basis, and you currently calculate holiday pay based on basic pay only, then you will need to take steps to rectify the situation in light of the caselaw highlighted above.

If you want to find out more about overtime and holiday pay calculations and need further advice please contact either Michael Black m.black@cfrlaw.co.uk or Aisling Byrne a.byrne@cfrlaw.co.uk from the Employment Law Team at Cleaver Fulton Rankin (028 9024 3141).

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Outlining your perspective on the transfer of powers to the 11 local councils

The First Part of Northern Ireland's Journey towards Stronger Democracy & Better Public Services

Claire Bradley

Regional Policy and Co-ordination Officer
Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)



One year on from the most radical reform of local government in Northern Ireland in over 40 years, it is a good opportunity to reflect upon what has brought us to this point and how things have gone so far.

The history of local government in Northern Ireland has been an interesting one. An Act of 1898 created a two-tier system of county councils, borough councils, as well as urban and rural districts. This remained largely unchanged until the 1970s. Back then there were 73 local authorities, serving a population of 1.5 million people. Council services included housing, health, education, roads, planning, water and refuse collection, with elections taking place every three years.

However, concerns were raised that the number of councils were disproportionate to the population, that they were inadequately resourced, and were overly-dependent on central government grants. The Stormont government of the time set about reforming the local government system, but efforts were eclipsed by wider political events and civil unrest. Local government was stripped of many of its responsibilities and the 1972 Local Government Act abolished the existing local authorities and created 26 single-tier district councils. Unlike any other part of these islands, local government was stifled, for many reasons, one outcome of which was communities far less connected to, and often sceptical of, decision-makers across NI. Fast-forward 40 years to more substantial reforms. The existing 26 councils have become 11, with some enhanced powers including planning, local economic development, off-street car parking and local tourism development. This reform programme was needed to modernise local government's democratic and administrative structures; to bring decision-making and delivery on local issues closer to communities; to create a stronger and more effective local democracy; and to improve service delivery. Councils now have more extensive powers with which to shape their areas and communities. However, a question mark still hangs over the transfer of urban regeneration and community development powers. The road to this point has been long and often arduous. I am sure at times, many felt local government reform would not happen at all.

The Review of Public Administration process (with local government reform being one key part) began in 2002, with the first significant announcement coming in November 2005 by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Hain MP proposing to reduce the number of councils to seven. Initial reaction from most of the political parties in Northern Ireland was unreceptive – mostly due to the fear that reduction to seven councils would lead to a reduction in local representation and a

fear that Northern Ireland would be carved up along sectarian lines. Nevertheless, legislation was passed to provide for the appointment of a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner to recommend the boundaries and names of seven districts. The Commissioner announced his provisional recommendations in November 2006. Throughout the consultation process that followed, there were only minor changes to the original scheme. The most controversial elements of the proposals were the suggested names of the new councils, with continuing disquiet regarding the number.

In July 2007, Arlene Foster, the then Minister for the Environment announced a review of local government reform proposals; and on the 13th March 2008, the NI Executive agreed proposals to create 11 new councils, rather than the originally proposed seven. The following month, Shaun Woodward MP, then Secretary of State for NI, announced that the scheduled 2009 district council elections were to be postponed until the introduction of the eleven new councils in 2011; and legislation was put in place for the creation of the 11 new district councils.

In May 2010 it became clear that local government reform was likely to be delayed due to the lack of agreement in relation to the new boundaries and in June of that year the proposed reforms were abandoned. Elections in May 2011 went forward on a 26-council basis.

After the 2011 elections, the new Executive drew up a Programme for Government for the NI Assembly's four-year term, where a commitment was made to "establish a new 11 council model for local government by 2015". Reform was back on! Local government boundaries were subsequently agreed in June 2012 and further legislation followed to provide the legal framework for new councils – including the Local Government (NI) Bill receiving Royal Assent in May 2014. The passage of the Local Government Bill was hugely significant in the history of the NI Assembly. At 130 clauses and 10 schedules, it was the largest Bill that the current Assembly mandate had scrutinised and passed. NILGA, the NI Local Government Association, the representative body for local councils, engaged in detailed and robust discussions with Stormont Ministers and officials, ensuring that the Bill was strengthened for the benefit of local government and local communities. It also successfully lobbied for substantial investment for councils to achieve this legislative requirement. Elections were held in May 2014 to councils in 'shadow mode', with the new councils going 'live' on 1st April 2015.

The new structures have been in place for almost a year at the

time of writing, and the new councils have been running their services, engaging in civic representation, reorganising their personnel arrangements, integrating administrative structures and building new working relationships internally (with other councils) and externally (with social, economic, environmental partners, as well as other public bodies including government departments).

The citizen should not have noticed any deterioration in delivery of services as the new councils emerged. There should however, be a noticeable improvement in the next few years as the councils start to use their new powers – not just run services.

The newly conferred community planning powers, for example, have resulted in those responsible for delivering public services engaging more directly with communities to deliver genuine improvements for local people. Councils are leading the community planning process with a wide range of partners, including representatives from the statutory, business and voluntary sectors, to develop a long-term vision and plan to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of their areas. The outcome will be a carefully planned and inclusive investment across the 11 council areas, in which local people help shape, and often co-deliver infrastructure with their service providers.

Furthermore, the transferred responsibility for the majority of planning functions to local government allows councils to shape how their areas grow and develop. Councils are now responsible for local development planning, which will involve creating a plan which will set out how the council area should look in the future by deciding what type and scale of development should be encouraged and where it should be located. New improvements have also been introduced to make planning a speedier, simpler and a more streamlined process. These improvements will make it easier for people to access and take part in the planning process and help deliver faster and more predictable decisions.

New local economic development powers and the ability to bring new investment to should also be seen as a huge opportunity for councils and the communities in which they serve. Councils can now, for example, create Business Improvement Districts, create commercial and retail space in localities where small businesses could flourish, as well as draw down investment from the EU and national/ transnational bodies such as the £42 billion UK Loan Infrastructure Guarantee Scheme.

The Local Government Act has also introduced a new 'General Power of Competence' for councils which, in basic terms, allows a council to do anything that a person can do so long as it is within the law. Whilst this power is largely untested in Northern Ireland (and most of the UK) to date, it has the potential to allow councils to develop innovative approaches to addressing a wide-range of issues. In England, it has allowed councils to spearhead successful schemes such as a programme to improve primary school performance, establishing funds to provide loan finance to local businesses and setting up mortgage schemes to help boost local housing markets. The former Chairman of the Local Government Association, Sir Merrick Cockell has said of the General Power of Competence that it gives, "councils greater freedom and confidence to think outside the box, be innovative and develop new services and partnerships... Local government has a track record of innovation, which pre-dates the General Power of Competence. Although it has only been in place for a short time we have seen what councils can do when they are given the trust and power to make a real difference. This is vital if we are going to be able to rewire and redesign more efficient public services and help local areas promote growth."

The Review of Public Administration, however, was not just about making local government better. It was, and continues to be about making the relationship and the structures at



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NILGA Full Members 2016.

both spheres of government more service-centred. The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 provided for the creation of a statutory Partnership Panel for Northern Ireland, comprising of Executive Ministers and Councillors from each of the 11 councils and from NILGA, as a vehicle to improve co-ordination between departments and councils and help deliver between outcomes for local communities. The establishment of the Partnership Panel, combined with the new duties of community planning and performance improvement underpin a new relationship between the Executive and local government – together they should be formidable tools in the effective delivery of better services.

Looking ahead – good government requires local decision-taking which is effective, innovative and responsive. The mechanics of change to date has worked, but a radical push is now needed to drive a new ideology, new governance and greater devolution.

NILGA is currently developing a Programme for Local Government to look at how democracy can improve; and where and how public services should be best delivered. Councils, working collectively as well as on a local basis, are often more effective as co-ordinators of key services, enablers of local decision-making, than more remote institutions.

Councils are also, for the simple reasons of geography and access, more connected with local issues and highly accountable to local people. With the reform of local government complete in terms of boundary restructuring, the impending review of the NI Assembly, with a new Programme for Government kicking in after May 2016, government in NI has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to work collectively as well as very locally, in partnership, to improve the governance, economy and quality of public services for everyone who lives, works and visits here.



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Quarry Safety Campaign “Stay Safe Stay Out”



The ‘Stay Safe... Stay Out’ campaign is an initiative run by the Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) in conjunction with our national organisation the Mineral Products Association (MPA), on behalf of the quarrying industry every year to raise awareness amongst younger children, teenagers, parents, teachers and youth workers about the dangers of entering quarries uninvited and unsupervised.

We are particularly concerned about teenagers who place their lives at risk by trespassing in both active and disused quarries. Tragically, over the past few years a number of young people have been killed or seriously injured after entering disused or working quarries and got into difficulty in deep cold lagoons or on the steep rugged quarry faces. With warm weather and the summer holidays there is concern that children, teenagers and young adults could be tempted to enter their local quarry or reservoir.

All too often after the death or serious injury to a young person in a quarry, their friends or parents say that they were not aware of the risks they were exposing themselves, they thought they were engaged in a harmless bit of fun. If the friends who were with them had understood the risks, they might have stopped them. This is why we believe that helping to raise awareness of these hazards will help to save young people’s lives.

To help prevent this, QPANI, with the support of the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI), are promoting the Mineral Products Association (MPA) national “Stay Safe” campaign to raise awareness amongst younger children, teenagers, parents, teachers and youth workers about the dangers of entering quarries uninvited.

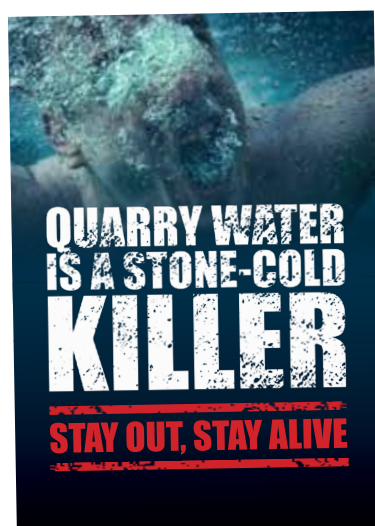
We working in partnership with the Health & Safety Executive for NI (HSENI) to highlight the issue to school principals as we believe teachers in particular can play a vital role in spreading the message to young people that quarries are not a safe place to play.

We also work closely with NI Water and the local Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

An essential aspect of public safety is ensuring that relevant signage is used at operational and non-operational sites.

The Mineral Products Association has produced a revised and extended set of Stay Safe signs which are now available for purchase by the Industry. The graphic signs and new visual impact signs have been designed to help the public understand the nature of a hazard regardless of language. They conform to British Standards.

Stay Out, Stay Alive... cold water campaign presentation material



QPANI and our Member companies deliver the Stay Safe message to young people from around Northern Ireland. In primary schools and secondary schools it is vital that our young people hear about the dangers of swimming in cold water and the risks to themselves by trespassing in quarries or construction sites. We have, in partnership with DOENI, developed a standard power point presentation as well as having access to the MPA website page on Stay Safe at http://www.mineralproducts.org/youth_playsafe01.htm to show the hard hitting DVD.

The potential hazards that people expose themselves to are:

- Swimming in quarry lakes that can have very cold water even on a hot day in the middle of summer. Strong swimmers have drowned in quarries due to the unexpected impact that the extreme cold has had on their bodies.



Bloomfield Primary School in Bangor



QPA Regional Director with pupils if Bloomfield Primary School in Bangor after hearing the Stay Safe message



Regional Director, Gordon Best visited Drumragh Integrated School in Omagh to speak to Year 10 Students about Water Safety and Quarry Trespass.

- The water in quarry lakes can be very deep and shelving, exit from the water may only be possible in a few places, there may be pumps working or currents that can drag you under the water.
- There can be concealed underwater obstructions and other hazards that can seriously injure swimmers or individuals jumping into the water – tombstoning into quarry lakes is not safe.
- Tunnelling into piles of sand or playing on stockpiles exposes you to the risk of sudden collapses or movements that can easily bury you.
- Walking near the edge of quarry faces exposes you to the risk of serious falls as the edges can be unstable and collapse unexpectedly or sheer faces be obstructed by vegetation.
- Climbing or walking near rock faces can expose you to the risk of rock falls.
- Surfaces in quarries that may look solid, such as the surface of a silt pond, can suddenly break and act like quick sand sucking you down.
- Trail and quad biking in a quarry exposes riders to risks from unstable terrain, unexpected obstructions and being hit by moving plant.
- Young people on bikes or on foot may not be visible to operators of large machinery, they may not appreciate that the driver cannot see them.
- Quarries can often be located in remote sites where mobile reception is poor and there is no one on hand to help in the event of an accident

Safety education is an increasingly important element of the National Curriculum. We believe Cold Water awareness and the effect that it can have on your body should be taught in our

schools and youth groups. We believe information about quarry safety can be built into lessons by using some of our schools resources from the MPA website. For general background on quarrying, visit our Virtual Quarry at www.virtualquarry.co.uk.

One of the most effective ways of highlighting the dangers of quarries is to arrange a supervised quarry visit or to invite the local quarry manager to visit a school. The offer is there so don't hesitate to contact us on info@qpani.org if you would like help or advice in setting up a visit or to arrange a "Stay Safe" talk to your school.

We also have copies of the posters and leaflets in the links below should you require any.

Stay Out Stay Safe - Quarry Water presentation - www.qpani.org/emallers/QuarrySafetyCampaignPresentation-Final.pptx

Stay Out Stay Safe - Quarry Water speaker notes - www.qpani.org/emallers/documents/QuarrySafetyCampaign2015-SpeakingNotes-Final.pdf

Stay Out Stay Safe leaflet - www.qpani.org/emallers/documents/1QuarryWaterleafletscreens.pdf

Stay Out Stay Safe poster - www.qpani.org/emallers/images/Quarry-water-post-600x600.jpg

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NEW SUITE OF MPA STAY SAFE SIGNS EXPANDED

An essential aspect of public safety is ensuring that relevant signage is used at operational and non operational sites.

MPA has worked with the Health and Safety Committee to produce a revised and extended set of Stay Safe signs which are now available for purchase. The graphic signs and new visual impact signs have been designed to help the public understand the nature of a hazard regardless of language. They conform to British Standards.

To ensure consistency and protect copyright, the artwork will only be made available to other sign manufacturers who sign up to being Official suppliers of MPA Stay Safe signs.

The new suite can be purchased from GSB Signs
<http://www.gsbhealthandsafetysigns.co.uk/quarry-signs/>

Please view the flyer here or on the image right, and circulate within your company (for ease, this is also attached at the top of the Direct).

For further information contact: Elizabeth.Clements@mineralproducts.org,
Kevin.Stevens@mineralproducts.org



SWC and SRC – Apprenticeships

Engineering Rocks

Level 3 GOLD Construction Products Engineering Apprenticeship



South West College in partnership with Southern Regional College and QPANI have in conjunction with the leading employers within the sector collaborated to develop Level 3 Technician Apprenticeship to support the development needs of new entrants to the industry.

As highlighted in the QPANI Survey of October 2015 our industry is an aging one and this presents a challenge to the sector; however with this challenge comes the opportunity to develop an apprenticeship programme which will attract new talent to the industry.

A working group was established which, has over the last number of months worked diligently to source curriculum and develop a coherent message to attract young people to the industry. The Level 3 GOLD Construction Products Engineering Apprenticeship provides an opportunity for young people to undertake an engineering based Level 3 BTEC National Diploma and NVQs at levels two and three whilst in employment with leading companies within our sector. This development is seen as the starting point for a suite of learning and development opportunity which will be developed by the Colleges in partnership with QPANI and the industry as we seek to provide progression pathways up to Foundation Degree and beyond. The working group has developed the brand 'Engineering Rocks' to provide a focus for information and marketing of this and future initiatives and I advise you to keep up to date with developments by following us on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/swcengineeringrocks/posts/535257923349314:0>.

The first event that officially launched the initiative was held in the Skills and Technology Centre of South West College on Wednesday 11 May. A big crowd of potential students and parents turned out to hear what the supporting companies had to offer.



Gareth Rooney (Curriculum Manager SWC), Robert Fitzpatrick (Donnelly Group), Caroline McCaffery (Quinn Industrial Holdings), Denis McKeowan (Balcas), Maria Hackett (Head of Industry and Training SWC), Ryan Donnell (Gold Apprentice with Balcas), Mairead Corr (Acheson and Glover), Lyle Cairns (Acheson and Glover), Claran McManus (Deputy Head of Training SWC) and John McTeggart (Curriculum Manager SWC).



SRC launch in Portadown Campus on 25th May 2016.

Here QPANI member companies speaking with prospective apprentice candidates and their parents.





Information evenings were held on Wednesday 18 May at 6.00pm in SWC Dungannon and on the 25 May at 6.00pm in Southern Regional College in Portadown.

You can also view the Facebook video involving Quinn Building Products explaining just how good apprentice opportunities are! The second launch event, held at SWC Dungannon Campus was another successful evening.



Linda Leonard, Jamie Leonard and Emma O'Hagan (Training Support Officer SWC).



Desmond Dolan (Principle Dealer Lochside Garages) Raymond Fitzpatrick (LVR Lecture SWC) Richard Kennedy (Service Manager Lochside Garages) and Tom Woods (LVR Lecture SWC)



QPANI Regional Director, Gordon Best, speaking to parents and prospective apprentices.



Student signing up for the Gold Apprenticeship with Emma O'Hagan

What's happening in housebuilding?

David Little

NHBC Regional Director, Northern Ireland and Isle of Man



With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the local housing market has been recovering since 2013, partially reversing the decline in starts from 2005, and in house prices from mid 2007. Over 2015, the LPS / NISRA Residential Property Price Index recorded a 7% increase in selling prices, based on Stamp Duty data.

The Ulster University Quarterly House Price Index reported a 9% weighted increase in 2015, with an average selling price of just under £155,000 in Q4. After a few years of around 5,500 completions, I believe that when the data is collated, 2015 will have seen around 7,000 completions. However it is clear that not all areas of Northern Ireland are seeing the same level of recovery.

The current Regional Development Strategy suggested that 11,200 new homes are required annually, however Department for Regional Development is revisiting the Housing Growth Indicators and it may be that 8,500 will be seen as more appropriate. Department for Social Development established the Housing Supply Forum in January 2014, with public and private sector involvement, to examine ways to increase supply of new homes, and to identify obstacles which could be removed. Their report was finally published in January 2016. The view of many contributors was that around 10,000 new homes per annum would be required to meet the need. However another credible view expressed is that we need to build even more to

allow replacement of the pre-1919 houses which represent over 10% of the total housing stock. Many of these have reached the end of their economic life – replacing even 2% of them annually would require an additional 1500 new homes.

The housebuilding sector has seen significant changes over the last two years. The purchase of assets from NAMA and the banks by private equity has led to increased movement in the development land market. However the preference is clearly to sell to cash buyers and this has led to difficulties for our long established housebuilders who have come through the recession but are unable (or unwilling) to access bank funding. A new generation of developers has entered the market, many with funding from outside the sector, and in several cases from outside Northern Ireland. It may well be that within a few years, up to half the new homes for sale will be produced by these new developers, several of whom are already active on site. As most of these new companies are developers only, opportunities have arisen for local builders and contractors to build for them.



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However the sector remains characterised by a large number of small builders, most of whom build less than 15 homes per annum. We are still hearing of a lack of support for small builders from the local banks, and partly as a result I do not see a significant increase in production from them. This will continue to be a constraint in providing the number of new houses required.

Planning

It is now a year since the 11 new Councils were established, with significant planning powers returned to Council control. No one expected that the new planning regime would be perfect right away, particularly as the Councils all need to adopt their Local Development Plans, which will take several years. However it is vital that the new planning departments develop the capability to meet the requirements of the local economy, including housing, as soon as possible.

A particular factor of the local market remains the large number of 'one off' homes being completed, usually in rural locations, amounting to probably 2,000 completions per annum. Planning statistics indicate that well over 2,000 new applications for single homes continue to be approved each year, so it seems likely that this level of activity will continue.

Department for Social Development and the Department of the Environment in February published independent research on the likely economic impact of a Developer Contributions Scheme. This research was commissioned following a public consultation in 2015 by DSD and DOE on the possible introduction of a Developer Contributions Scheme in Northern Ireland. Responses to the consultation were mixed and pointed to the need for further work. The research highlighted that housing markets in most areas of Northern Ireland could not at present sustain a scheme of developer contributions. This was not a surprise, and it is unlikely that the proposal for Developer Contributions will be revisited for several years.

Standards and design

There has been no significant change in Building Regulations since October 2012, and many new houses are now being built to the latest Regulations. The present level of thermal performance of the building envelope, together with higher efficiency boilers, has led to new home buyers and renters benefitting from remarkably low costs for heating and hot water. With the current practice being to complete homes to 'turnkey' finish internally, and with low maintenance finishes externally, running costs for new homes are probably in relative terms lower than they have ever been.

Most new homes in Northern Ireland are still of conventional masonry construction. Timber frame construction has for many years been specified by some builders and Housing Associations, but has rarely represented more than 15% of the market. This may increase if speed of build becomes more important in future, or indeed if shortages of bricklayers should become an issue.

In terms of house type, the current demand is predominantly for family orientated detached, semi detached and townhouse designs. There continues to be a market for apartments in some locations, but not in the numbers seen 10 years ago. For instance it is an indication of the present market that Lagan Homes' new Bangor developments will see 550 houses built, on sites where the previous owners had permission for 1200 homes, which were predominantly apartments.

Social and affordable housing

The future of NI Housing Executive remains under discussion, and there is as yet no political consensus on its future. Consolidation in the social housing sector has been continuing, with some significant mergers over the last two years, and more expected in the next year. The emergence of larger, financially stronger, Housing Associations will enhance their ability to develop their new build programs, and look at other opportunities which may occur, such as stock transfers from NIHE.

NI CoOwnership Housing continues to provide a route to home ownership via the shared equity route, and remains a significant support to the housing market with over 700 purchases each year. Via their subsidiary OwnCo Homes, they have just introduced a new product – 'Rent to own' – which is aimed at those with aspirations to buy their home, but who are not yet in a position to do so. A three year commitment to rent will see a 25% rebate of rent paid if a purchase is made.

Skills

I believe that, to date, skills shortages have not affected housebuilding and the wider construction sector in Northern Ireland as much as I had feared two years ago. However with the increase in housebuilding and other construction activities, it is only a matter of time before pressures emerge, as our neighbours in Ireland and Great Britain are well ahead of us in recovery in construction activity. For instance in Republic of Ireland, Hayes Ireland reported that demand for construction and property industry professional staff had increased by 46% in the year to February 2016. A quarter of these new jobs were in housebuilding. This was reinforced by the Ulster Bank Construction Purchasing Managers' Index Report (Rol) for February 2016, which reported 30 consecutive months of jobs growth, with a quarter of respondents reporting raised employment in the month. Applications for construction courses in Ireland are up by around 10% this year, clearly as result of employer demand, and students' confidence in the future prospects for construction.

I am unconvinced that there is sufficiently positive advice from our local schools to their students that construction should be seen as a desirable career, at all levels from trades to professions. We face increasing competition from our GB and Ireland neighbours for our construction personnel, and we need to be training and developing more.

Future

It is remarkable that interest rates have remained at 0.5% since March 2009, and there appears no immediate pressure for an increase. This has been positive for home buyers and we have seen improvements in availability of mortgages on reasonable terms. The low rates have also helped to lessen the effect of negative equity for some of those who bought at or near the peak of the market, and have been able to reduce their outstanding mortgage debt.

The tax treatment of purchases of 'buy to let' properties and second homes is changing from April, with an additional 3% stamp duty to be applied. It remains to be seen how this will affect the demand for new homes, and we may see a further reduction in the appeal of apartments as a result.

The May Assembly elections will be followed by a reduction in the number of Departments from 12 to 9. The responsibilities of the Department for Infrastructure, and the Department for Communities, will cover most issues affecting housing, and it is to be hoped that this will streamline decision making and development of policy.

We are in an increasingly positive environment for housebuilding, however progress of the housing market will inevitably be influenced by the performance of the wider economy. For instance the outcome of the forthcoming EU referendum is 'too close to call' at time of writing, and whatever the result, it will have an economic impact. For those of us who are not economic experts, it is regrettable that the 'debate' has not so far been conducted in a rational manner which would enable a considered judgement to be made. Similarly the implications of a future reduction in Corporation tax needs to be better explained and clarified.

As was (allegedly) said by John Maynard Keynes, 'when the facts change, I change my mind'.

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Agrigear Tyre and Wheel Specialists, located in Bailieborough, Co Cavan was established in 1980 by Fred Clarke. With 35 years' experience in the tyre industry and employing over 60 people, Agrigear is one of the largest tyre wholesalers in Ireland. The company's flagship product is the BKT range of tyres manufactured in India.

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The "Earthmax" tyre range is BKT's series of radial all-steel earthmoving tyres proficient at operating in the harshest operating conditions. The 'max' in Earthmax represents maximum performance and maximum load capacity. Available in a range of sizes, the most popular being 17.5R25, 20.5R25, 23.5R25, 26.5R25, 29.5R25, 29.5R29, 18.00R33 and 24.00R35, these Earthmax tyres are ideal for articulated dumpers, dump trucks, dozers and wheel loaders working in quarries, mines and sites.

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Helping to improve Skills and Training in local Construction Sector

Barry Neilson

Chief Executive, CITB NI



After six years of contraction, the construction industry finally returned to growth in 2015, with an expected annual growth of 3% predicted over the next five years. This growth will impact on employment within the sector with 1,760 jobs expected to be created every year over the five year period.

Developments in the commercial sector will drive growth, and the promised delivery of further investment by Government in capital expenditure projects will be vital to ensure that future growth is sustained.

Skills are widely accepted as a key driver in how Northern Ireland can achieve our economic goals, preparing our young people for work, investing in the skills of those already in work, and ensuring that we have the skills required to grow the economy are essential for all sectors, in particular construction.

It is essential that CITB NI continues to support the industry in developing the highly skilled professionals it needs to meet the immediate challenges and prepare for the future.

We encourage the industry to undertake training and make use of our £1.2m grant scheme to help improve skills and prepare for the industry returning to growth. Employers are encouraged to maximise their grant claims by an additional 5.5% by working with us online. Log onto our website www.citbni.org.uk/grants for more information.

We can help meet training requirements onsite with our Mobile Training Unit which provides short duration health and safety courses such as confined spaces, excavations and working at heights.

We have recently launched VET360 an innovative new tool that provides a unique and memorable immersive experience which gives the user instant access to construction sites in a workplace environment. Used as a training tool VET360 allows greater understanding and awareness of the work location.

Viewers can experience real time situations and identify hazards in complete safety raising awareness and understanding of health & safety issues.

VET360 will transform the way we view training in the local construction industry. It allows the user to travel through a virtual version of their site and carry out planning and design meetings, site inductions or safety



briefings. The facility allows the user to see more, save time and stay safe as VET360 is the perfect bridge between theoretical classroom training and the reality of a busy construction site. We are very excited about the opportunities VET360 will bring to the local construction industry.

In 2016 we are also developing our supervisors, leaders and managers through Site Supervisor and Leader in Construction programmes which will develop these skills areas for the industry.

We are continually talking to the industry via a series of 12 employer engagement events where we provide advice and guidance on the range of products and services we provide. These events also include Business Improvement Seminars on a range of topical issues including BIM, Credit Control, Waste Management and Tendering.

We also continually promote construction careers to the younger generation through our website, careers fairs and working closely with the Department for Employment and Learning through their careers advisors and with careers teachers in schools. By encouraging new entrants, attracting those workers who have left the industry to return and upskilling those currently in the sector, we can help deliver the upcoming projects forecast for Northern Ireland faster and better.

For information on CITB NI and more log on to www.citbni.org.uk, like us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/CITBNorthernIreland> and follow the discussion on Twitter @CITBNI and LinkedIn <http://linkd.in/1GBeyLf>



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Geological Survey of Northern Ireland

Aggregates or construction materials are quite literally the building blocks of our modern industrial society. Construction products rely on locally available sources of aggregate for concrete production and our entire transportation network would not exist without the input of local materials. In addition, aggregate products are also used in water treatment plants and drainage/sewerage systems whilst specialised aggregates are necessary for the chemical industry.

As a result of its varied geology, Northern Ireland has a diverse aggregates base upon which the construction industry has developed, with the primary products extracted including sand and gravel, basalt, sandstone and limestone.

It is this geological diversity, together with the economic benefits of such natural resources, that has led the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) to develop a number of educational resources. The purpose of these is not only to improve the understanding of the geology of Northern Ireland, but also to raise awareness of its potential uses and benefits to various target groups including schools, local councils and the general public.

Primary Schools

One of the most significant educational resources developed in the past year has been a suite of Primary School Resources. Aimed at providing teachers with the knowledge and contents to include Earth science lessons in the classroom, these resources were developed by GSNI together with Earth Science Ireland, and a select working group of primary school teachers. The resources were developed to address the 'World Around Us' element



Local primary school pupils together with Bob Dickey from Earth Science Ireland and Kirstin Lemon from the GSNI at the launch of the Primary School Resources at Parliament Buildings.

of the Northern Ireland primary curriculum that incorporates Geography, History and Science into one single subject. This curriculum element has provided the opportunity to integrate a number of Earth science topics based on four main themes: Dynamic Earth, Planet Earth, Violent Earth and Future Earth. Whilst the first three themes provide a good foundation on Earth

science and the geological history of Northern Ireland, it is the Future Earth element that educates primary school children on where our natural resources come from, including construction materials, using primarily examples from Northern Ireland.

The Primary School resources are accompanied by a number of Rock Kits that have been distributed to 15 host centres, including schools and heritage centres, across Northern Ireland and may be borrowed by any school that requires them. When compiling the Rock Kits, it was imperative that all of the rocks were sourced locally, not only to highlight the diversity of geology in Northern Ireland, but also to showcase the aggregates industry as many of these samples were sourced with assistance from the Quarry Products Association NI.

All 832 primary schools in Northern Ireland have received the Primary School Resources and to complement this, a training course was delivered to Primary School teachers by GSNI with assistance from the Earth Science Education Unit (ESEU) at the University of Keele. Hosted by the Ulster Museum, this workshop helped teachers to gain confidence in the teaching materials and formed a network of 'champion' schools that would be able to transfer that knowledge to others in their local area. It is hoped that this training will be offered again in the near future, although the Primary School Resources have been developed to be used by teachers with little or no prior knowledge of Earth science.

Targeting primary school pupils, GSNI has also developed Earth science workshops that guide a series of interactive activities for pupils to learn about the diverse geology of Northern Ireland, and to gain an appreciation of the many uses of our natural resources. These have been delivered at a number of locations, most recently at Parliament Buildings as part of British Science Week 2016 (formerly known as National Science and Engineering Week) where over 120 school children from across Belfast attended these workshops. The eight activities delivered included learning how to make toothpaste using geological materials from Northern Ireland, and finding out about gold formation and the principles behind gold panning. Since their creation in 2006, the Earth science workshops have been delivered to over 3000 school children in Northern Ireland and in the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

The new Primary School Earth Science Resources have been endorsed by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and are available to download from their website at www.ccea.org.uk. Developed by Earth Science Ireland in association with GSNI and designed by the British Geological Survey, these valuable resources are for KS2 pupils but are applicable to a broad range of educational levels and needs.

Secondary Schools

Unlike the primary school curriculum, the secondary school

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of Northern Ireland**

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Data and Services

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland provides geological expertise to government, councils, industry, academia and the public. GSNI maintains extensive digital databases and paper archives that are accessible online and through our enquiry service.

The data held by GSNI includes:

- Modern and historical geological maps including 1:10K vector map data
- Boreholes and site reports
- Tellus geochemical and geophysical datasets
- Mineral and hydrocarbon exploration licence database and open-file reports
- Mineral occurrence database
- Abandoned mines database
- Quarries database

Online data access:

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- Ground Source Heat Pump reports
- Mine abandonment plans

A new geological report writer service is also now available.

www.bgs.ac.uk/gsni/data
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A guided visit to Carmean Quarry near Moneymore led by Mark Cooper from the GSNI on behalf of the Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership.

curriculum is less open to the incorporation of Earth science. Currently, there are only two schools in Northern Ireland that teach geology as a stand alone subject so the GSNI together with a number of partner organisations have had to be more resourceful when it comes to secondary school education.

The GSNI has had a long relationship with the ESEU, an organisation funded by Oil & Gas UK to develop and deliver Earth Science training to Geography and Science teachers across the UK. GSNI has helped to facilitate training for teaching students and has delivered this to all trainee Geography teachers from the Ulster University in the past five years. This has provided an excellent knowledge base for all new Geography teachers and has provided them with the skills to educate on the potential resources that Northern Ireland has to offer, as well as an intrinsic understanding of the local geology, something that they would never have gained ordinarily in their Geography training. In the past year, the GSNI has also helped to train a number of Earth science teacher trainers with assistance from the ESEU. This has the advantage of having a pool of trained experts in Northern Ireland, with an expert local knowledge on all aspects of the geology and the natural resources available including those linked to the construction industry.

Working together with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust (CCGHT) and the Mourne Cooley Gullion Geotourism Project, GSNI has helped to develop Geodiversity Guides for both areas, aimed at GCSE and A Level Geography and Geology teachers and their students. Each guide includes ten key sites and provides a number of information sheets and guidance notes for teachers as well as student handouts and worksheets. In order to meet the relevant specifications for both Geography and Geology these include elements of 'Education for Employability' and in many instances use old quarries as key sites. These not only provide an excellent way of visualizing the subsurface, but also allow for an understanding of their economic value and their role in the extractive and mineral industry in Northern Ireland, past and present.

The format of the information sheets was initially developed by the Magilligan Field Centre, run by the Western Education and Library Board (now part of the single Education Authority for Northern Ireland). This support has enabled the delivery of a training course for the CCGHT Geodiversity Guide delivered by GSNI, the Magilligan Field Centre and the CCGHT. Training included not only the geological elements of each site, but also on good practice when it comes to taking students in to the field. The course was attended by teachers from all across Northern Ireland and has acted as a catalyst for a new generation of teachers with an understanding of Earth science and its potential as an economic resource.

Local Councils

With the reform of public administration (RPA) that took place at the end of March 2015, Northern Ireland saw the number of local councils reduce from 26 to 11. This reconfiguration brought with it a significant change in the responsibilities of each local council, including the transfer of planning powers. As a consultee in the planning process, the GSNI embarked upon an education programme with all of the new 'super councils', addressing senior council officials, including Chief Executives, Senior Planners and Directors of Services on a number of relevant issues. Each visit was bespoke to each 'super council' and included generic and particular planning issues that were relevant to each area, including the aggregate and mineral potential. RPA may have produced numerous challenges, but it has also provided opportunities to raise the awareness of the key geological issues that may affect each area. However, having visited all 11 supercouncils in 2015, GSNI is now planning and facilitating follow up meetings and masterclasses in 2016.

General Public

Finally, the GSNI has worked with a number of organisations to deliver public events designed to educate the general public in an informal environment. Such events have been based on the local geology and are often intricately linked with the local industrial history as this connects people to where they live across Northern Ireland. Examples of this include working with the Sperrins Gateway Landscape Partnership to develop public information leaflets and to deliver fieldtrips to local working quarries.

Conclusion

An understanding of what construction materials are and where they come from has undeniably been increasing thanks to work carried out by the GSNI. The impact that this industry has on the quality of life of every man, woman and child in Northern Ireland is often underestimated and the GSNI is helping to change that. This continuing education process has been delivered in schools at a number of levels, but also within local councils and with the general public all with the ultimate aim of highlighting the importance of our natural resources and the extractives and mineral industries to the Northern Ireland economy. The next generation will certainly bring about new challenges and opportunities however the strong partnerships that GSNI has built with numerous organizations, from all sectors working in Northern Ireland and in a cross-border context, will act as a strong base on which to continue to develop and strengthen the education provision and knowledge exchange offered by GSNI.



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Mattest has successfully been involved in many major projects in Ireland and the UK for many major contractors and material suppliers, and continues to do so with the same degree of commitment as ever.

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MATTEST offers its customers a professional, efficient and reliable construction materials testing service, which includes the prompt and accurate reporting of test results. Our experienced engineers and technicians can execute a range of services, to all relevant British, Irish and European Standards, with specific tests designed to suit particular materials and site environments.



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Towards a Land Strategy for Northern Ireland

Dr Jonathan Bell

Northern Ireland Environment Link



The Land Matters Task Force (LMTF), which is a coalition of cross-sectoral non-governmental organisations, has led calls for a land strategy to be progressed as a flagship policy of the soon to be established Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Mark Twain once pointed out, 'they're not making it [land] anymore'. Land is both a finite resource and one of Northern Ireland's most important assets, providing the goods and services upon which our existence depends (including food, clean water and air, and energy). The extraction of aggregates and quarry products is one of many competing land uses. We depend on our land for a series of vital services and functions, such as employment, flood alleviation, carbon sequestration, aggregates, housing, tourism and recreation.

Therefore, our future well-being and prosperity depends on our precious, but often taken for granted, land resource. As Monique Barbut, a UN Executive Secretary explained: 'when land is degraded, its people and their prospects are degraded too'. This resource is under strain from ever-increasing societal demands and pressures. One of the biggest challenges for Northern Ireland over the next decade and beyond relates to the way in which our diminishing land resource is planned, managed and used.

The planning system plays a crucial role in delivering appropriate forms of development to serve the needs of society, while ensuring that our vital land resource does not become exhausted or degraded. Aggregates and quarry products are essential raw materials for public and private sector infrastructure including hospitals, schools, homes and transport systems. In addition

to the wide range of end uses for quarry products, the industry provides jobs and direct input to local and national economies. Therefore, the planning system has an important role to play in safeguarding the supply of aggregate and mineral resources.

However, quarrying operations have a potentially dramatic impact upon the environment and landscape. The challenge for operators and regulators is to manage and mitigate against the negatives while contributing positively in areas such as land restoration, biodiversity, geo-diversity and protection of ecosystems.

In the new planning dispensation, with local Councils creating their own Development Plans, it is essential that the supply and demand requirements for aggregates are accurately assessed not only within their own council area, but also that of other council areas. For example, certain Council Areas could control a large proportion of sand extraction in Northern Ireland, with construction activity in Belfast dependent on this supply chain. The detailed mapping that would accompany a land strategy would help inform more coordinated decision making in order to sustain the vital construction material supply chain.

Decisions around the siting and scale of quarry operations should be informed by landscape capacity studies, landscape character assessments and the location of designated sites and AONBs. Indeed, landscape management arrangements in Northern Ireland are considerably under-developed compared to the rest of the UK and Ireland. For example, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (such as the Mourne AONB) suffer from limitations of both statutory funding and influence, and AONBs are afforded minimal additional protection through the planning system. The reconfigured councils have assumed new planning responsibilities without a comprehensive regional framework for landscape planning, management and protection. The implementation of a high level land strategy would partially address this gap and provide more strategic guidance to inform local level decision making. It would contribute to ensuring that the land base in Northern Ireland is maintained and enhanced to provide continued and improved public benefit.

While such a strategy could draw on the experiences of the National Landscape Strategy in Ireland and the Scottish Land Use Strategy, the approach must take account of the very particular circumstances relating to land use and patterns of land ownership in Northern Ireland. A Land Strategy would articulate a strategic vision and set of overarching principles to more effectively guide and influence decision making at local level. As in Scotland, this policy could be complemented by local authority led land use

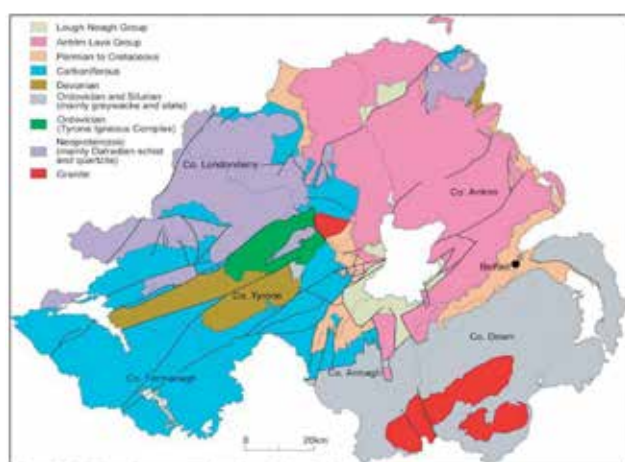


Figure 3: Basic geology map of Northern Ireland's bedrock.

strategy pilot projects (Scottish Government, 2011) which offer innovative approaches to land use decision-making and provide practical solutions to managing the multitude of pressures on land.

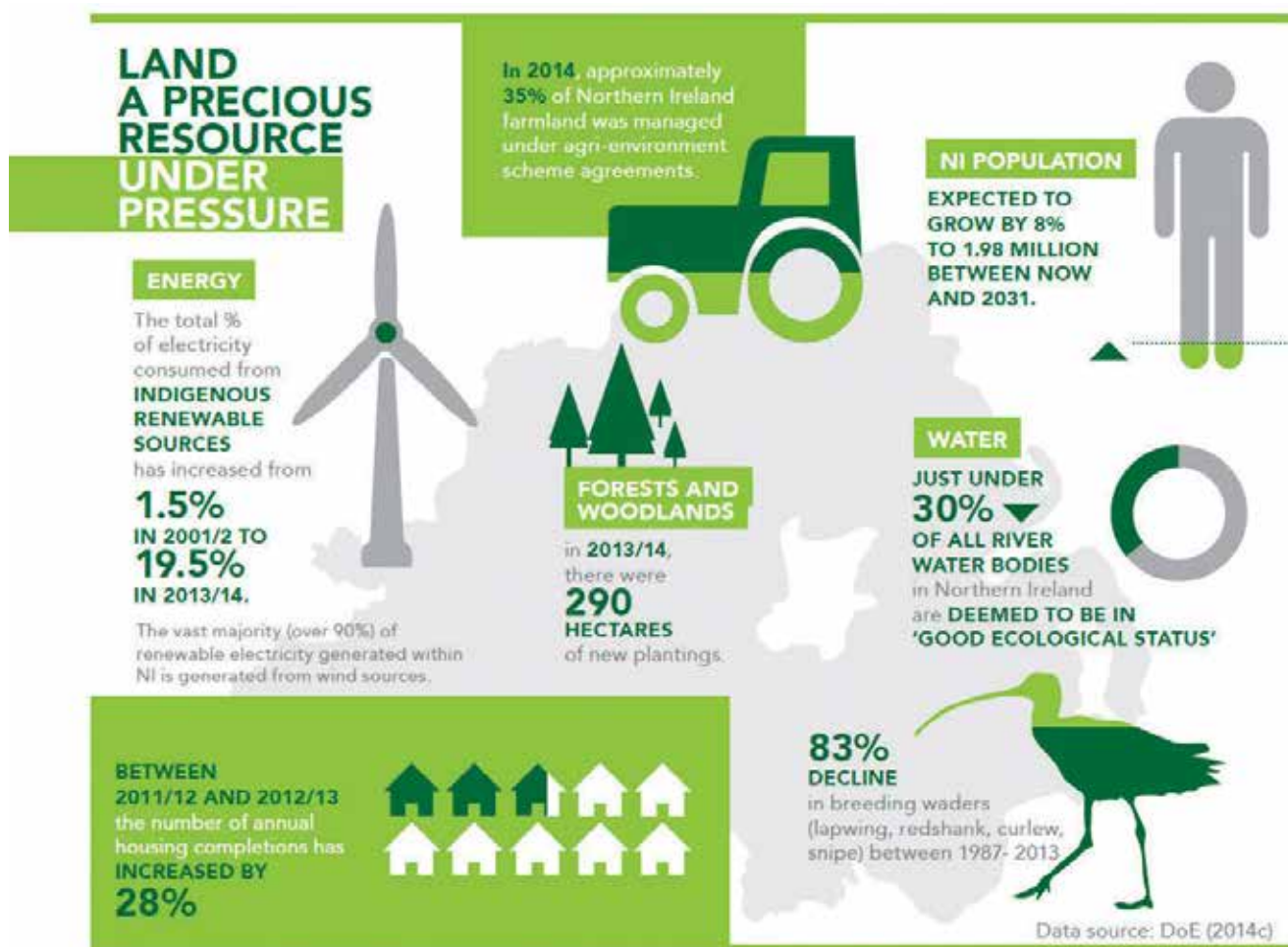
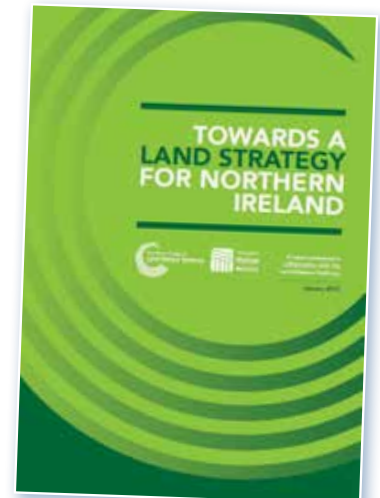
A Land Strategy is not a master planning tool and would not determine actual land use in specific localities; this should of course be informed locally by communities, groups and individuals. A Land Strategy would not result in any change to the system of land ownership. Rather, the process of developing the Strategy would seek direct input from landowners, managers and other stakeholders, paying attention to the characteristics of land ownership and tenure in Northern Ireland. There is a need for greater awareness of, and engagement from, wider civil society in land-related matters to promote a broadly based and inclusive approach to policy and decision making. The way we manage our land will be crucial to the future success of Northern Ireland and in ensuring the protection, access and enjoyment, of our rich and diverse environment.

Decisions around planning applications for mineral extraction need to balance the need for a secure supply of raw materials for the economy with the need to protect sensitive environments (e.g. water quality, carbon releases, habitats, landscape) and minimise the impact on other sectors and land uses. A land strategy would ensure that policies and decisions are informed by a strategic assessment of the role of and future requirement

for (supply and demand) quarry materials, amidst the mix of other competing land uses and pressures for landscape change.

Having gained, in principle, cross-party political support around the value of, and need for, such a strategy in Northern Ireland, the complexity of developing it should not be underestimated. It is imperative the agenda is progressed in a bottom-up and inclusive manner with cross-sectoral and cross-Departmental input. Crucially, the process of developing such a strategy, could provide the vehicle for developing greater awareness of, and engagement from, wider civil society in land-related matters.

Dr Jonathan Bell
(Northern Ireland Environment link)



Further information on the proposals produced by the Land Matters Task Force can be accessed <http://www.nienviromentlink.org/policy-hub/landscape-task-force.php>

Fermanagh-based building company adopts latest CDE Infinity screening technology

The new CDE Infinity screening range, launched at Bauma in April in Munich, Germany and on display at Hillhead in Buxton, are already being snapped up by customers worldwide.

The latest firm to be seduced by the Infinity range is Derrylin-headquartered Quinn Building Products, which manufactures a range of building materials, and also produces cement and specialist sands. With technological savvy at its heart, the company offers cost-effective, high-performing solutions to its customers.

Gerry Corrigan, Raw Materials Manager at Quinn Building Products said, "We are looking forward to our new Infinity screen being installed in our silica sand plant. The specifications of each of the Infinity screens showcase an approach to screening technology which is practical, simple, innovative and the key to stress-free sand washing. Our new Infinity screen will be the ideal addition to our existing CDE EvoWash."

The Infinity screens range is truly revolutionary: CDE has developed the unique Trilogy side wall technology, which optimises strength to weight ratio by utilising material in the side wall only where it is needed. As a welcome bonus, the Rosta suspension units deliver 98% vibration isolation ensuring protection for the supporting structure and the most efficient transfer of energy to the screening material.

The Infinity screens' bolted construction eliminates the need for welds which are prone to failure due to the high stress concentrations they create in conventional screen constructions. The U-Span cross members, in combination with the construction of the side walls, deliver higher specific stiffness that prolongs the working life of the screen.

"The Infinity range has been tested on a variety of applications", explains Kevin Vallely, Product Development Manager at CDE, "with excellent results in the treatment of sand and gravel, crushed rock, iron ore, construction and demolition waste, silica sands and more.

"The Infinity screens are also perfectly adapted to the market of replacement screens as they function autonomously, which makes them a very attractive proposition to clients wishing to invest either in a replacement screen or in a new installation. So we can now say that the future of the quarrying sector is bright and weld-free."

Find out more about the Infinity range via www.infinityscreens.global



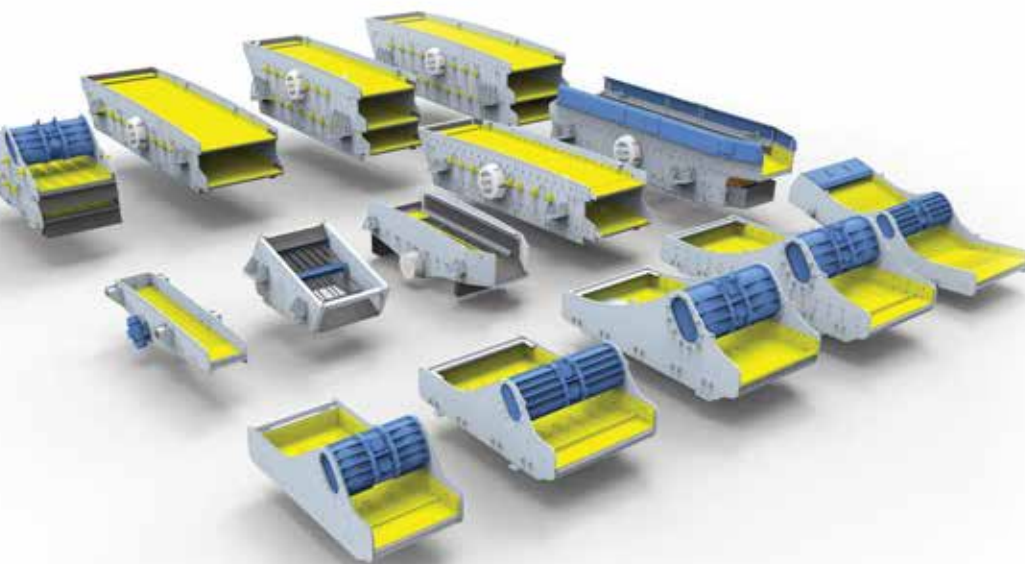
Galvanising is not an option. It's the Infinity standard - and it ensures the longest working life for your Infinity screen.





Quality. Efficiency. Reliability.

Our patented infinity screening technology allows us to bring you a revolutionary range of sizing and dewatering screens with application in the sand and aggregates, mining, industrial sands and C&D waste recycling sectors.



Key Features

Patented Trilogy side wall design.

Weld free construction.

High power to weight ratio.

Cast U-Span cross members.

Unique VibroSync & VibroCentric drive systems.

www.infinityscreens.global

Cambridge Airport Lagan Construction International

Marshall Aerospace and Defence Group awarded Lagan Construction International the £18.3 million Airfield Infrastructure project at Cambridge Airport.

The main works over the 16 month period included the refurbishment of an existing apron, construction of a new taxiway, runway resurfacing and an upgrade to the drainage and airfield lighting systems and required a combination of day-time and night-time working with over 100 workers engaged in the works.

There was approximately 25,000m³ of excavation, cut and fill on the project. Approximately 6,000 tonnes of Type 1 stone, 10,000m³ of concrete and 65,000 tonnes of asphalt used. The team re-used all excavated material within the works including the crushing and re-use of 3,000m³ of concrete.

Lagan Construction International mobilised their in-house concrete plant, asphalt plant and associated laying equipment on the project and self-performed a large proportion of the works.



There was a total of 220,000 hours worked on the project without any lost time incidents.

Lagan Construction International lands London City Airport contract

Lagan Construction International, part of the Lagan Construction Group of companies, have secured a multi-million pound airfield infrastructure project at London City Airport. The runway overlay and taxiway widening scheme is expected to start in May 2016.

The main works include overlaying the existing runway surface with grooved Marshall Asphalt, widening of the taxiways Alpha, Bravo and Charlie and reinforcement of the taxiways Delta, Kilo, Lima and Mike.

Further works detail the refurbishment of the existing drainage network, installation of a new pit and duct network as well as upgrades to the AGL system to include LED lighting and the installation of new centre line lighting. The project works will be undertaken outside of airport operating hours, to ensure there will be zero disruption to flights at the airport.

Lagan Construction International will mobilise their in house state-of-the-art asphalt batching plant and testing laboratories capable of producing 120t / hour of Marshall Asphalt and will capitalise on the Docklands location of London City Airport by importing many of the materials by boat, directly to their quayside site compound, thus minimising the impact of delivery vehicles to local residents and reducing the carbon footprint of the project.

Darren Grover, Chief Operating Officer at London City Airport said: "The runway overlay is a major project, made more complex by the unique location of our runway surrounded by water on three sides. I look forward to working with Lagan Construction International to deliver the programme and futureproof the only runway actually in London."

Steve Turner, Director of International Operations, Lagan Construction International, commented "Having completed projects on over 50 airports across 5 continents, airport infrastructure works are a core part of our business and our teams are experienced in providing the engineering skills and technologies necessary to deliver both airside and groundside support facilities. We look forward to working collaboratively with our client, London City Airport. We have a fully committed team to ensure this contract is delivered with the highest safety standards, low environmental impact, within programme and cost requirements."

The anticipated completion date of the project is November 2016 and the airport will maintain normal operations throughout the duration of the project.

Lagan
CONSTRUCTION INTERNATIONAL



New £3.8 million Park and Ride facility at Ballymartin

Whitemountain completed a new Park and Ride facility at Ballymartin, Templepatrick.

A new 4-arm roundabout was built to provide access to the site from the main A57 carriageway. This will aid the transition between carriageway and M2, as well as acting as a natural speed restraint. There is new road signage, markings and crash barriers to increase safety for road users.

Transport Minister Danny Kennedy MLA officially opened the new Ballymartin Park & Ride facility located near Templepatrick.

Offering 430 free car parking spaces, commuters will be able to benefit from frequent Ulsterbus services to Belfast running every 15 minutes at peak times commencing 1 September. Danny Kennedy said: "With the growing infrastructure and popularity of park and ride facilities across Northern Ireland, I am confident that this latest investment will encourage an even greater number of drivers to share the benefits of choosing public transport for all or part of their journey." The new facility is situated on the Ballymartin Road Junction with the A57 Ballyclare Road just off the M2 (Junction 5). Translink Infrastructure Executive Clive Bradberry said customers will enjoy great value fares and faster journeys to Belfast: "We are pleased to open Ballymartin



Aerial view - Park & Ride, Templepatrick



John Hasson, Operations Manager, Whitemountain and David Stanfield, Project Manager, Whitemountain are photographed with Danny Kennedy, MLA and Translink representatives at Sod Cutting event.

Whitemountain



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Aerial view - Park & Ride, Templepatrick

Park & Ride in time for the busy Autumn commuter period and would like to thank the Transport Minister for essential funding to complete this important project. "Our customers will benefit from free car-parking and bus services from just £4.60 per day for travel to and from Belfast with an Ulsterbus Smartlink card. Ulsterbus Services 300A, 253A and 220A will operate between 6.40am and 7.30pm, Monday to Friday, which is perfect for the work commute. "Express bus services will run every 15 minutes during morning and evening peak times and every 20 minutes throughout the rest of the day. So, we are encouraging anyone looking for hassle-free good value journeys to make smart moves by bus from Ballymartin Park & Ride. "Customers will also benefit from quick and easy access to the M2 as well as new street lighting, signage and CCTV. We would advise commuters that there is a new road layout around the site featuring enhanced safety features and a 4-arm roundabout for access from the main A57 carriageway. We've also worked hard to ensure we meet high environmental standards with attractive landscaping, natural woodland planting and flowering hedgerows plus the installation of retention pools to provide a sustainable drainage system in line with our Biodiversity Action Plan. "We would also like to thank our contractors Whitemountain Quarries Ltd who have worked hard to successfully complete this excellent new facility. We now look forward to welcoming more local people on board Ulsterbus services from September 1," said Clive.

The popularity of Park and Ride has grown significantly in recent years as more and more people see the Life's better benefits such as cost savings on fuel and parking, more productive time on the bus, opportunity to relax have an extra sleep!



David Stanfield, Project Manager, Whitemountain, Danny Kennedy, MLA, Clive Bradbury, Infrastructure Executive, Translink attending the official opening of the new facility.

Key Facts on the scheme:

- 430 Free car parking spaces
- Frequent bus links to Belfast
- Key location chosen to offer quick and easy access to M2
- More travel options for the local community
- New street lighting
- New cycle path
- New signage
- Height restriction barrier and 3m high modern fencing installed
- CCTV installed

Leading the Way in Public Realm

Over the last few years, FP McCann's Civil Engineering Division has completed an extensive portfolio of public realm projects throughout Northern Ireland, including Bangor, Belfast, Comber, Holywood, Donaghadee, Omagh, Derry/Londonderry and Portrush. Current projects include Newtownards, Cookstown and Magherafelt.

Public Realm or Street Regeneration projects can cover a broad range of activities, including paving, lighting, tree planting/ landscaping, seating and signage in a town.

The main objectives of the works on these projects are to solve traffic congestion and urban decay problems, increase the visual attractiveness of the town centres, improve the social, economic and environmental aspects and enhance the architectural landscape.

Bangor Public Realm

The £8 million Bangor public realm project included resurfacing areas with natural stone paving and kerbing, new storm drainage, installation of new street lighting with banner features, new signage, new controlled pedestrian crossings, street furniture including cycle stands, bins, bollards, etc and soft landscaping including planting of semi mature trees, hedging and remodelling central islands.

Holywood Public Realm

FP McCann completed the £2.5 million Holywood town centre regeneration project in spring 2015. Works included the upgrading of footpaths, landscaping and the installation of new street furniture and lighting, which has revitalised and enhanced the identity and character of the town; benefiting the local retailers, residents and visitors.



Donaghadee, Public Realm

Comber Public Realm

In the autumn of 2015, FP McCann completed the £2.4 million Comber town centre regeneration project. The project involved the installation of kerbs, stone paving, tree planting, signage, street lighting and much more. In an effort to capture the highlights of Comber's rich history, the scheme has incorporated the installation of bronze plaques into the paving, representing various noteworthy aspects such as Comber Whiskey and Comber Potatoes.



Bangor

Conway Square, Newtownards



Donaghadee Public Realm

Approximately £2.4 million was spent on regeneration works to the Donaghadee waterfront and the retail core to complement the town centre conservation area. Works included resurfacing areas with resin bond, exposed aggregate surfacing and natural stone paving, granite kerbing, new storm drainage, utilities installation such as under-grounding overhead services, diversion and protection of existing etc, new sea defence and seating wall, carriageway resurfacing and lining, new signage, installation of new street lighting and new street furniture including cycle stands, bins, bollards and soft landscaping - redevelopment of the Marine Garden area including planting of shrubs, semi mature trees, etc.

Newtownards Public Realm

Work is nearing completion on Newtownards public realm, which is scheduled for autumn 2016. It involves the installation of granite kerbs, stone paving, tree planting, high grade street furniture, modern street lighting and much more. The award-winning Conway Square area was completed mid 2015, the key focal point of the town. Approximately 9700m² of engraved Caithness paving stones, within the star at the centre of Conway Square, highlight the rich history and locally renowned sites and spectacles for which Newtownards is best known, including Scrabo Tower, Mount Stewart and Movilla Abbey. This feature paving, along with a bespoke feature lighting scheme, will be sure to provide a significant upgrade to the town centre.

The completed Conway Square will now host the weekly traders market on Saturdays and well as Craft Fairs and many other public events and displays.

Cookstown Public Realm

Work began on the £3 million Cookstown public realm scheme in October 2015 and will be completed in summer 2016. The works to the town centre will include new paving, lighting, street furniture, signage and tree planting.

Magherafelt Public Realm

FP McCann was recently appointed to carry out the £1.9 million works to Magherafelt town centre, including new paving, lighting, street furniture, signage and planting.

The scheme aims to contribute to the regeneration of the area, enhance its use for events, promote footfall and, in turn, boost trade in the town.

The public realm project teams work closely with the local traders by notifying each of them about the work that will be



Hollywood, Public Realm



Comber, Public Realm

undertaken in their area and, as works continue, maintain access and liaise with them on an individual level.

FP McCann also works closely with the local councils to ensure works proceed with as little disruption to the town centres as possible.

FP McCann received two awards at the 2016 Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) National Site Awards event, which recognises the UK's top-performing registered sites that have demonstrated the highest level of considerate construction towards the public, the workforce and the environment in which they operate. Achieving a bronze award for the Newtownards Public Realm and the Most Considerate Site Runner Up (upgraded from Gold) award for the Comber Public Realm.

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floor
screed**



**commercial
surfacing**



**exposed
aggregate
concrete**



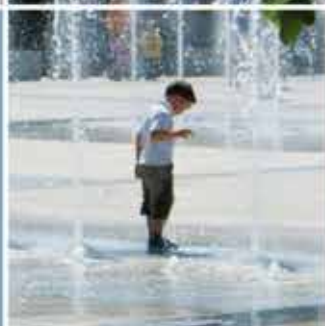
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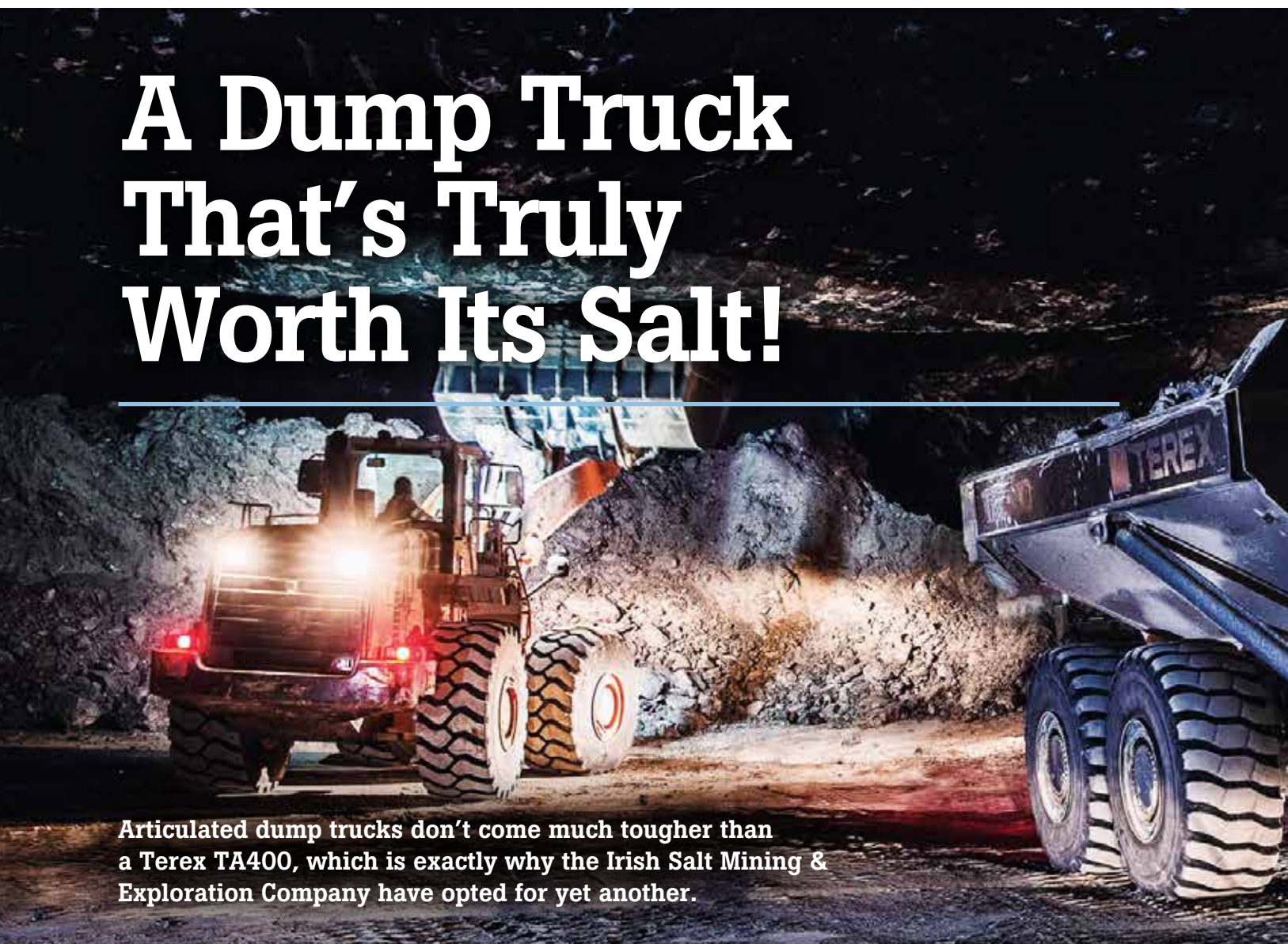
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A Dump Truck That's Truly Worth Its Salt!



Articulated dump trucks don't come much tougher than a Terex TA400, which is exactly why the Irish Salt Mining & Exploration Company have opted for yet another.

Supplied by Sleator Plant, based in Newtownabbey, the official Terex Trucks dealer of rigid and articulated dump trucks in Northern Ireland, the Generation 9 TA400 certainly has its work cut out at the mine which has been producing de-icing rock salt since 1965.

Designed specifically to meet the demands of the most extreme operations, the TA400 is one of the most robust, heavy duty, high capacity articulated dump trucks on the market and it is clearly excelling in its task at the mine, along with several other Terex ADTs.

The salt mine at Carrickfergus in County Antrim covers an area of around three square miles at around 1,200 feet (365m) underground, with salt beds varying in thickness on five separate levels.

The mine produces up to half a million tonnes of salt a year for use of in the gritting of roads, mostly Ireland and Scotland, and is produced by room and pillar dry mining.

The salt bed is undercut, then drilled and blasted, followed by roof scaling by a Webster rotary cutting head, designed specifically for the purpose. This broken salt is then loaded by front-end shovels

into the Terex dump trucks and hauled to an underground crushing and screening plant after which it is transported via a 2km network of conveyors to the surface. The salt, ready for use, is treated with an anti-caking additive and then stored undercover





for dispatch by sea or road. It's a continuous process in a tough environment that requires equally tough, and above all, reliable plant and machinery – and the new heavily-spec'd Terex TA400 is perfectly at home there. It was delivered at the beginning of the year, after some special Health & Safety design features were added in order to comply with strict underground mining regulations.

Explains Sleator Plant's Bill Henderson: "Because the dump truck is working underground in confined spaces it has to meet certain mining regulations. Protection, for example, has to be provided for the turbos and exhaust manifolds to prevent the potential for fire. The hydraulic fluid also has to be fire resistant."

In addition, a fire suppression kit has been fitted to the dump truck, while extra working lights have also been installed.

There are a number of things that make the TA400 stand out, not least its high performance, fuel efficient Tier 4 Scania engine which ensures excellent productivity, and its modulating transmission retarder which is coupled with an efficient exhaust brake and fully enclosed oil-cooled multidisc brakes to provide optimum control and increased safety in

adverse conditions such as those encountered in the mine.

The fully adaptable drivetrain is designed to maintain traction and speed on the toughest of terrains, while the planetary gear transmission provides smooth, efficient gear shifting for optimised fuel consumption and reduced cost of operation.

Operator comfort, too, takes priority. Interior cab noise levels have been reduced in the TA400, and there are new control positions for ease of operation, together with cab instrumentation that has been designed specifically for off-highway applications, and improvements, too, have been made to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

Downtime, of course, can be costly, even for service or maintenance, but this is kept to a minimum thanks to the provision of ground level service access points, and a fully tilting cab and electronic assisted hood raise for ease of access to engine.

The TA400 transmission is also installed with the latest lubrication oil specification that extends oil service periods to 6000 hours, further reducing operational costs.

Innovative Conveyor Solutions...



Conveyors have been used to transport material since the latter part of the 16th Century and have been used in transporting bulk materials since 1795. Early conveyors were manufactured with a flat conveyor belt which travelled over a wooden bed but in recent years a number of designers and manufacturers have been pushing the boundaries of conveyor design.

The 'Flying Conveyor Belt'



Conveyor Design should not only include careful study of the drive and tension configuration but the internal design of the conveyor belt can often be a major contributor to designing a successful installation.

Polyester and Polyamide belt fabrics (EP) can often be the best solution but steel cable fabrics can also provide many design advantages including allowing designers to use lower safety factors and smaller pulleys.

- 7 kilometres in length the 'Flying Belt' is the longest in the world.
- A new way to transport bulk materials with a much lower environmental impact.
- 1500 tonnes of limestone per hour, transported at a height of 36 metres.

There have been many advances over the last twenty years in conveyor belt manufacturing technology and one excellent example of this was recently installed in Brazil. The unique conveyor belt suspended on ropes connects a limestone mine in South Eastern Brazil with a cement factory owned by LafargeHolcim. The belt was supplied by Sempertrans, part of the international Semperit Group, together with the Italian ropeway manufacturer Leitner ropeways.

High Capacity Tonnages

Conveyor Belting has also evolved to offer much more flexible, yet extremely tough belt fabrics that can allow conveyor designers to utilise Pipe Conveyor Technology, Trough angles of 70 degrees and Impact Absorbing Fabrics.

Specifying the correct rubber compound is also critical when choosing conveyor belt.



70 Degree Trough Idlers can increase capacity by 15%

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ConveyorTek Launch New Metal Detector



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Concrete Built IS Better Built

Concrete products are essential to our standard of living and quality of life in Northern Ireland. Their use underpins the construction industry which employs 80,000 people and is worth some £2.4 billion for the local economy.

The Concrete products industry is totally committed to reducing its environmental footprint by investing significantly in energy efficiency measures and new innovative sustainable products. Advances in concrete technology will help design and build an "A-Rated" home where in the future, as the energy and carbon efficiency of your home could affect your heating costs, rates, insurance & home re-sale value.

Sustainability has become an increasingly wide-ranging term, as our understanding grows of the many impacts that a project and its materials may have over their lifetime.

Specifiers must consider a long list of factors – embodied impacts, in-use performance, longevity and upfront costs against those of maintaining the building over its lifetime. Environmental impacts and benefits must be weighed with social and economic issues, all without losing sight of the essential functions that a project needs to perform – for example, providing a comfortable, safe, robust shelter.

The table, below, is a guide to the inherent performance benefits that concrete and masonry can offer.



Excellent attendance at the Concrete and Masonry Seminar at the Titanic Centre in March 2016.

THE POWERFUL CASE FOR SPECIFYING CONCRETE

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Download Specifying Sustainable Concrete at www.concretecentre.com/publications

TALKING POINT

How can we develop cost-effective designs that enhance resilience and performance?



ENVIRONMENTAL



SOCIAL



ECONOMIC



FIRE RESISTANCE



THERMAL MASS



DURABILITY



ACOUSTIC ISOLATION PERFORMANCE



ROBUSTNESS AND SECURITY



FLOOD RESILIENCE

Concrete does not burn and therefore it reduces both the waste of materials and the noxious emissions caused by fire.

Concrete's thermal mass allows it to be used to reduce buildings' heating and cooling energy load.

Due to the long life of all concrete structures, material impacts on the environment are kept to an absolute minimum.

Concrete has good acoustic performance and relies little on finishes and materials that have a short lifespan. As a result, less material is used and potential waste is avoided.

Concrete structures are robust, reducing the risk of damage to finishes. Therefore, less material is used throughout a structure's lifecycle.

Concrete retains its structural integrity, resulting in minimal waste of materials following a flood.

The resilience of concrete reduces damage and limits the potential loss of livelihood or homes as a result of fire. During construction, the concrete frame presents no fire risk to neighbours.

The thermal mass inherent in concrete provides a simple and effective means to reduce overheating – a growing health and wellbeing issue, particularly among the elderly. Projections show a three-fold increase in heat-related mortality by the 2050s.

The durability of concrete structures means that, once built, they are rarely out of use for maintenance and hence cause minimal social disruption.

Concrete's mass absorbs sound, ensuring quality of life, particularly in high-density environments where noise from neighbours can be a major issue.

Solid concrete and masonry party walls provide safe, secure buildings. Prevention of intruders helps to build safer communities.

Concrete and masonry structures can be designed to resist water penetration, keeping inconvenience, disruption to business, homeowners and the community to a minimum.

Regulations require the safe evacuation of occupants but do not ensure the survival of property. Concrete structures comply with life safety regulations but also resist fire to enable cost-effective repair and re-use.

Using the thermal mass of concrete will lower the running costs of a building. It will also reduce the giant needed on site, leading to lower operating and maintenance costs.

Concrete is a very stable and durable material with an extremely long life. As a result, maintenance costs are extremely low for concrete structures.

Concrete walls and floors provide the required acoustic separation with minimal finishes, and therefore minimal costs and maintenance.

Concrete structures, particularly those with minimal finishes, will suffer less damage and cost less to repair and maintain.

Downtime of businesses, homes and essential community services is minimised if flooded buildings have been constructed in concrete.

<http://www.concretecentre.com/Publications-Software/Publications/This-is-Concrete-Ahead-of-the-Game.aspx>

Why Concrete is Best!!

Local Products:

Leading concrete products are available from local manufacturers. The energy used in transporting materials to site is therefore very low, helping both the environment and the local economy.

Low Maintenance:

The exceptional durability of concrete ensures it is a very low maintenance material.

Most concrete building components are virtually maintenance free as they are difficult to damage and require very little regular maintenance to remain in pristine condition.

Security:

High strength and impact resistance allow concrete products to provide exceptional levels of safety and security. It is very difficult to penetrate a concrete product either accidentally or deliberately.

Fire Protection:

Concrete is not capable of igniting, burning or spreading fire and so is ideal for use in locations where fire protection is required. Concrete requires no additional fire protective coverings, chemical preservatives or paint systems that may release volatile organic compounds affecting internal air quality, and which can require ongoing maintenance.

Product Life Cycle:

Concrete structures have a very long life span. Concrete structures offer long-term construction solutions that do not need additional coverings or coatings for resistance, durability or sound insulation thereby reducing the embodied environment impact of a building still further.

Thermal Mass:

The unrivalled high thermal mass of concrete can be used as an integral part of passive sustainable design solutions which reduce the need for air-conditioning in the summer and the levels of heating required in the winter.

Promoting The Use of Concrete

QPANI have established a new Concrete Development Group with the sole aim of raising the market share of concrete in the wider construction industry and making it the construction material of choice. We have a very close liaison with our colleagues in the Irish Concrete Federation and wish to "cement" our relationship and partnership with the Concrete Centre. We are currently preparing to launch our "Concrete Built IS Better Built" Initiative in Northern Ireland. A number of our members will be carrying this logo on their truck mixers and delivery lorries. QPANI, RSUA and the Concrete Centre recently staged two very well attended Concrete and Masonry Seminars. The feedback, from what was an audience made up of architects



Full attendance at our Concrete and Masonry seminar in South West College Campus in Cookstown, March 2016.



and engineers, was very positive. The success of these two events was totally due to the quality of our two speakers from the Concrete Centre, Andrew Minson and Elaine Toogood. We are extremely grateful to them and we are currently organising similar events to be delivered to Housing Association Design teams and Construction Students at our two Universities.

Concrete Built IS Better Built



The Concrete Development Group has recently met with the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations to discuss issues of concern from construction material suppliers. Among these were the use of quality assured concrete and CE marked materials, promotion of responsible sourcing and environmental best practice, use of competent and qualified concrete layers on housing association sites. We have agreed to hold regular quarterly liaison meetings, direct liaison with key personnel within the Housing Association design teams and procurement teams, facilitate regular engagement between HAs and QPANI members at a local level.

We also met with Ulster Farmers Union members on the 16 October 2015 to discuss the new "Designated Concretes for Agriculture Guidance" and the importance of using quality assured concrete and contractors who are competent in laying exterior concrete. We have agreed to present the case for concrete at a number of local UFU meetings in preparation for funding being released in 2016 as part of the DAERD funded Farm Improvement Scheme.

Thermal... Structural... Sustainable..

Spantherm is a pre-insulated precast concrete flooring system designed specifically for residential and mid sized commercial ground floors.

The composite slab combines structural concrete and high performance Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) insulation to provide a superior thermal floor. This structural flooring system is mechanically placed used lorry mounted cranes to improve Health and Safety on site.

Spantherm is more efficient than beam and block and has an excellent thermal performance with a U-value as low as 0.12 W/m²K. Spantherm is completely flat providing a level base upon which blockwork, timber framed and other types of buildings are constructed. It is a structural floor and requires only a finishing screed.

Ready to build off the next day, using Spantherm significantly reduces on site construction time, labour and waste. It provides a flat, safe working platform with all insulation below the structural slab eliminating cold bridging. There is no need for expensive storage for insulation and it can be installed with onsite plant and machinery, again reducing costs for the builder. The team offers a comprehensive design service which includes provision of CAD based drawings along with all relevant structural and thermal design calculations. On completion of the project, a design certificate will be provided along with calculations. In all instances, Creagh's team of technical experts will review each project and offer the best solution for your project. Packages can be tailored to suit ground workers, builders and self builders and include design, manufacture, delivery and install or design, manufacture and delivery.





Why use Spantherm?

- More efficient than beam and block
- Faster installation on site
- Excellent thermal performance with a U-value as low as 0.12 W/m²K
- Provides a flat, safe working platform with all insulation below the structural slab
- Eliminates cold bridging
- Significantly reduces on site construction time, labour and waste
- Structural floor ready to build off next day
- No need for expensive storage for insulation
- Install with existing plant and machinery
- The Complete Service Package

Creagh Concrete, established in 1976, is one of the largest and most innovative producers of concrete products for a diverse range of market sectors throughout Ireland and the UK. The team offers a comprehensive design service which includes provision of CAD based drawings along with all relevant structural and thermal design calculations. On completion of the project, a design certificate will be provided along with calculations for your project. With bases throughout the UK, Creagh Concrete offers rapid nationwide delivery and exceptional customer service and flexibility. This ethos is combined with a diverse portfolio of products that showcases the limitless possibilities and potential of precast concrete.

Visit www.creaghconcrete.co.uk/spantherm or email info@creaghconcrete.com for further information on Spantherm and the full product range.

Invest NI submission

Niche manufacturing in Northern Ireland generates billions of pounds for the local economy and certainly punches above its weight compared with the UK.

From companies producing machines for crushing, screening and sorting to the mining and construction industries, specialist fit-out solutions to the global marine sector, to those firms developing innovative components for the aerospace, automotive, technology, space or renewable sectors – Northern Ireland has many highly successful global players operating in this sphere.

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) offers a range of assistance, including support with research and development, training and recruitment supported through our Selective Financial Assistance and Growth Accelerator Programme, to help those focused on growing export and external sales achieve their potential. Our meet the buyer events and seminars help promote the significant business opportunities, particularly in Great Britain and a number of Tier 1 operators including Transport for London, Ferrovial and Laing O'Rourke JV, High Speed 2, Bouygues, Wates, Kier and City of London have recently undertaken scoping visits to Northern Ireland.

In a highly competitive market, maintaining operational costs at the lowest possible levels ensures businesses remain competitive and

profits are maximised. We are working to help companies in the quarry product industry achieve cost savings in the consumption of water, energy and materials and, where appropriate, invest in on-site heat or electricity generation technologies. This comprehensive support includes helping companies accurately measure their resource usage, develop improvement processes, identify the most effective technical solutions and even facilitate linkages between companies to stimulate opportunities for sharing resources and developing supply chain benefits.

Through our advice, support and assistance teamed with a calendar of events, seminars and workshops, we are helping businesses understand and address the gaps in their knowledge base and develop the skills they need to succeed.

Our support combined with the investment by local businesses will underpin the future competitiveness and growth of our local economy, allowing our businesses to compete and succeed in today's global marketplace.

To find out how Invest NI can help your business, visit investni.com.



CDE Hillhead stand from above during set up



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Advanced Mapping Technology for Integrated Quarry Development

By Six-West Ltd



Paul McCabe

BSc, MRICS, MIQ. Managing Director



Charlotte Jamison

MSc, BA. Principal Planner

Today's modern quarrying operations involve compliance with a myriad of regulatory duties. Quarry owners and managers are associated throughout the full life cycle of mineral development, from initial prospecting, through the period of extraction to restoration and ultimate after use. The basis for successful integration of these requirements is up to date detailed mapping.

Mapping is required for, but not limited to:

- The identification of mineral resources
- Negotiation of land purchase, access rights and option agreements
- The preparation of planning applications and environmental impact assessments
- Stripping and archaeological monitoring
- Quarry and tip design
- Geotechnical assessment
- Waste management plans
- Quantifying stock levels
- Installation of new plant
- Extensions to existing quarries
- Environmental monitoring
- Design and implementation of restoration and after use

Traditional topographic survey methods for quarry mapping are rapidly being replaced by cheaper, safer advanced mapping technology, generating a level of detail which, until recently, could only be achieved using manned light aircraft at significant and unjustifiable cost.

Remotely Piloted Aircraft System Surveys

Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), otherwise known as unmanned aerial systems (UAS), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones are now in common commercial use for the production of high accuracy topographic mapping of quarries, landfills and construction sites. Not to be confused with cheaper, off the shelf multi-rotor drones which capture

forward looking low resolution video and stills, dedicated UAVs for accurate mapping are considerably more expensive fixed wing units with on-board high resolution cameras which capture downward looking aerial photography.

The SenseFly eBee UAS which Six West own and operate is a fully autonomous unit with built in radio communication, GPS, altimeter and pitot wind speed sensor. It weighs less than 1Kg with a wingspan of just under 1m. Flying at regulation maximum height of 120m above take-off point, it will cruise at a speed of between 40 – 90 km/h for 50 minutes, covering 12 hectares in a single flight. It is hand launched, flies under the control of its cutting edge auto-pilot, captures images, completes its mission and lands itself. The flight plan can be altered manually during flight and it can be instructed to return to base and land mid-flight if necessary.

Commercial Operation

In order to operate a UAS commercially, the surveyor must be fully trained to the standards specified by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in the UK, or the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) in the Irish Republic.

Commercial UAV pilots must hold a Basic National UAS Certificate (Small Unmanned Aircraft) and are trained and examined in:

- Aviation safety
- Air law
- Aircraft general knowledge planning
- Flight performance and operational planning
- Human (Factors) performance and limitations
- Communications
- Meteorology
- Navigation and map interpretation
- Operational procedures

After the mission, flight data management software is used to pre-process the flight's images. The geotagged images are then imported to professional photogrammetry software and transformed into a georeferenced orthomosaic (orthophoto map), related to Irish Grid and Ordnance Survey (height) Datum. 3D point clouds, triangle models and digital surface models are generated, with levels and contours accurate to 50mm.



Using the Data for Daily Operations & Quarry Development

Leaving the technicalities behind, how can the quarry owner / quarry manager use the data from a practical point of view? Once the data has been captured and mapping generated, it can be used over and over again for a multitude of applications at no additional cost.



Routine operational tasks involving production, health and safety and environmental monitoring can be simplified by reference to mapping. Current face positions, extent of existing stripping, next blast location, proximity to surrounding residential property, blasting safety zones, look-out locations, face heights, tip heights, optimum haul routes, pumping heads – all these and more can be accurately measured, monitored and assessed using up to date mapping. When will I need to start stripping again – at what point will I need to split that bench that's getting too high – what's the volume of the waste tip I have to relocate to access new reserves?



The information is all there on the drawing. A survey every two years could be scheduled to coincide with your financial audit and accurate stock volumes could be extracted from the data flown.

Fire safety plans, internal traffic routes, water management and discharge, internal services – electric cables, fresh water pipes, waste water – all can be shown on individual drawings based on your up to date quarry mapping

Biennial Geotechnical Assessments must be based on current quarry mapping and HSENI have recently issued an informative highlighting this. Your geotechnical consultants can be supplied with modern mapping in a format to meet their needs at no extra cost. Longer term, planning applications for quarry deepening or extensions, new plant etc will require layout and detailed application drawings for submission to planning. Isometric 3D views and flythroughs can also be generated for planning visual impact assessment.

Clearly, advanced mapping technology is where integrated quarry development begins.



Footnote: Six West is a local multidisciplinary consultancy providing a full in-house range of planning, surveying, geotechnical and valuation services to the quarrying industry. Managing Director, Paul McCabe, BSc in Minerals Resource Management from University of Glamorgan, has worked in the minerals industry in Ireland for forty years. Charlotte Jamison, Principal Planner at Six West holds a BA in Planning from Newcastle University and more recently completed an MSc in Planning & Regeneration at Queens University Belfast. Our team has successfully obtained planning consent for minerals site extensions since the implementation of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. We can provide first hand advice on the changes to the planning system since April 2015, and the best approach operators can take to ensure project consent is gained.

A yellow Volvo FM truck is shown from a front-three-quarter view, driving on a muddy, rutted road in a quarry. The truck has a black grille with the Volvo logo, a license plate reading 'DRS 589', and several auxiliary lights on the roof. The background shows a rocky quarry face under an overcast sky.

Underline Commitment to Customers

Never let it be said that Volvo is not committed to providing its customers with some of the most robust and safest trucks around.

I-SHIFT TECHNOLOGY

As we were to discover during an event aptly labelled, 'Driving Impressions: Construction & Severe Applications,' Volvo Trucks employs a host of intelligent features that allow operators to get the job done quicker, safer, more comfortably and with better fuel economy.

Take its I-Shift technology, for example. It now comes with crawler gears, which are added to the automated transmission to provide exceptional stability for trucks carrying heavy loads in demanding situations.

This new version of I-Shift makes it possible to add up to two new crawler gears. This means, among other things, that the truck can move off from standstill and transport a gross combination weight of up to 325 tonnes.

I-Shift with crawler gears enables drivers to regulate their speed when crawling slowly and reversing. The driver can haul a heavy load without worrying about getting into situations that may lead to costly standstills.

With the new crawler gears, the truck can drive at speeds as low as 0.5-2 km/h; this obviously helps immensely during precision manoeuvres such as in construction and maintenance tasks.

AUTO TRACTION CONTROL

Another recent development is Volvo Trucks' Automatic Traction Control which activates the front wheel drive when the rear wheels lose traction on slippery or soft ground. It has now become standard in the Volvo FMX with driven front axle.

ATC consists of software connected to the wheel speed sensors which detect and control wheel drive. When a rear wheel starts to slip, the power moves automatically to the front wheels without the truck losing torque or speed. A dog clutch activates the front-wheel drive in just half a second. The clutch is lighter and has fewer moving parts than a traditional solution with permanent all-wheel drive. If the driver encounters particularly rough ground, then it is possible to manually lock the other differentials at both front and rear.

With Automatic Traction Control, the front tyres' grip is concentrated on the steering right up until any critical situation. Thus, the driver can take advantage of the better manoeuvrability for as long as possible.

TANDEM AXLE LIFT

Also new is Tandem Axle Lift, which makes it possible to disengage and raise the second driven axle. The new function is designed for heavy duty transports with loads being carried one way and empty return trips, for instance when hauling timber or in construction and bulk cargo operations.

"With Tandem Axle Lift the second driven axle can be disengaged and its wheels raised off the road when the truck is driven empty. This offers many advantages, of which the foremost is fuel savings. Driving with the second driven axle raised saves up to 4 per cent in fuel compared with having all the axles lowered," says Jonas Odermalm, segment manager Construction at Volvo Trucks.

"Tandem Axle Lift is perfect for transports where ground conditions or gross vehicle weights demand a tandem-drive truck, but where the vehicle returns empty or lightly loaded in the opposite direction. On slippery or

soft surfaces, the driver can increase pressure on the first axle by raising the second driven axle, which results in better grip and reduces the risk of getting stuck."

Tandem Axle Lift, available for the Volvo FM, Volvo FMX, Volvo FH and Volvo FH16, also offers the driver better comfort when the truck is driven empty, which in many cases corresponds to 50 per cent of the operating time. The in-cab noise level is lower and steering wheel vibration is reduced when only the tyres of one drive axle are in contact with the road.

DYNAMIC STEERING

Volvo Trucks has also released other new features aimed at improving operations within the construction sector, including Volvo Dynamic Steering for dual front axles and increased front axle loads.

Since such trucks often carry particularly heavy loads or superstructures, the benefits are very noticeable for the driver. In addition to far lower turning resistance at low speeds, the steering wheel returns automatically to the straight-ahead position after full lock, cutting out the need for added effort in close-quarter manoeuvring and saving the driver both time and energy.

Volvo's heavy duty trucks with dual front axles increase the maximum technical capacity from 18 to 20 tonnes. Customers benefit from both improved productivity and added flexibility. The extra load capacity translates directly into increased income-earning potential, something that is particularly valuable when transporting heavy materials in construction operations.

On a 4-axle truck with a gross weight of 32 tonnes the load bed is also longer and there is greater flexibility regarding where to place a load such as gravel in a tipper body. This means maximum load is reached more quickly when loading and that the driver can be certain about meeting weight limitations. Higher load capacity above the front axles also permits a greater variety of crane configurations and allows other applications with considerable weight on the front axles.

5-AXLE COMBINATION

In order to meet the demand for heavier applications both on highways and in construction, Volvo Trucks has introduced factory-built 5-axle combinations. The two front axles permit up to 20 tonnes maximum load and the three rear axles can handle up to 36 tonnes, resulting in both increased payload and greater flexibility for customers.

This solution is also suitable for concrete pumps and large crane trucks that need uniform axle load distribution. By reducing pressure on the axles, many of these vehicles can be transported over longer distances on regular highways.

Meanwhile, customers who specify drum brakes for operation in particularly dusty or wet conditions can now benefit from the advantages of Volvo's Electronic Brake System (EBS). The system's electronics give access to a range of intelligent functions such as Hill Start Aid for better control on steep gradients. Safety is also improved thanks to integration of engine braking and retarder function, known as Brake Blending.



The Junction



PROJECT: The Junction, Dungannon **ARCHITECT:** Hall Black Douglas, Belfast
CONTRACTOR: QMAC Construction, Pomeroy

The Junction, a new £3.5m Euro-supported community asset at Railway Park in Dungannon caters for a wide range of activities. The building, which has been created to host meetings, training, workshops and features a state-of-the-art conference space, café and casual meeting rooms, is located at the historic, 13th century Hill of the O'Neill and ancient capital of Ulster.

THE CHALLENGE

The architects' vision for the building was one that gave the impression of open access from every angle, set within beautiful grounds incorporating a pedestrian promenade and plaza. A key consideration was the need for a hard landscaped surface which would sympathetically blend into the aesthetic vision for inviting approaches and provide a durable ground cover for heavy footfall, requiring minimal maintenance, and with assured longevity.

THE SOLUTION

Architects, Hall, Black and Douglas chose AG's Granaza flag because of its distinctive textured finish that combines granite and quartz whilst offering a great look with robust durability and excellent levels of slip resistance.

In addition Xflo Plaza Silver and Xflo Plaza Slate permeable paving was chosen for both form and function.

As well as providing a proven means of controlling surface water flow, Plaza Silver and Plaza Slate's striking aesthetics acted as a perfect foil with the Granaza flags, creating the dimensional depth and enhancing the definition between the vehicular and pedestrian areas resulting in an attractive, distinctive effect.

Meanwhile AG's Terrakerb offered a reliable alternative to natural stone with which to frame the paved areas.

Within the grounds, AG's products organically link the promenade and plaza to the surrounding park and existing routes to and from the amenity, in a sympathetically appealing fashion.

Sean Mullen, QMAC Senior Contracts Manager praised AG's supply capabilities and said the finished building was a 'statement piece'.

"QMAC has a strong relationship with AG and will happily specify AG products when the opportunity presents itself.

"The collaborative approach by all parties on The Junction scheme is testament to the strong supply chain of which AG played a vital role. It's therefore not surprising that the interior and exterior brick choice has been entered into the BRICK awards 2016.

"The striking feature of the bricks gives the building gravitas and links the external façade to the internal finish. The building is quite a statement piece and has settled comfortably into its surroundings," he said.

AG PRODUCTS USED: 200x100x60 Xflo Plaza Silver
255x170/170x170x80 Xflo Plaza Slate 600x400x40 Granaza Lux,
4x4x36 Terrakerb



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Quarry Operators Make Renault Trucks Their First Choice

More and more quarry and construction operators are opting for Renault tippers and mixers, with Mallusk based dealers Diamond Trucks reporting significant new and repeat orders over the past few months.

Northstone Materials, a leading supplier of quarry aggregates, concrete products and road contracting services, who took delivery of eighteen 8x4 Renault C Range tipper and mixer chassis last year, recently ordered a further six C430.32 8x4 mixers for delivery later this year.

Northstone Materials say fuel performance was one of the deciding factors after previously asking various truck manufacturers to demonstrate mpg. They say the Range C's impressive fuel performance – averaging around 8.5 mpg - together with an additional half tonne payload and the competitive cost of leasing the vehicles determined their decision.



The Range Cs work out of Northstone Materials' bases across Northern Ireland, with the tippers primarily geared towards road contracting operations, delivering black top, stone and gravel, while the mixer units deliver concrete for customer supply.



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Average haul distances vary, with some trucks based in rural areas and other vehicles operating in urban and city environments.

Another 'repeat' customer for Diamond Trucks is contractors and quarry operators FP McCann who have recently taken delivery of another Renault C430.32 8x4 tipper, and are awaiting delivery of a Renault C430.32 8x4 chassis, complete with a demount system to suit tipping and mixer bodies.

This follows last year's order of two Renault C430.32 8x4 tippers when they said that they were attracted by the truck's ruggedness, its working comfort, excellent payload, and pulling power, as well as the new Euro 6 engines and low fuel consumption. Another key reason was the fact the company has long experience of the Renault name, and it's all been good.

Meanwhile, Portadown based company Ty-rock Products has just recently taken on a Renault C430.32 8x4 block truck, and following the acquisition of two Renault C430.32 8x4 block trucks in 2015, the Quinn Group recently took delivery of seven Renault T460.26 6x2 tractor units, and have a further 8 x rigs on order, these being split between K Range XTREM tippers, and C Range block trucks'.

Striking Features

The new Renault C range trucks, of course, have many striking features, that appeal to operators in the quarrying and construction sectors, not least the cab which is more spacious and more comfortable. The wraparound dashboard, which has been subject to many ergonomic tests, puts the driver within easy reach of all the main controls and also features a 7 inch main colour screen, the largest on the market, displaying vehicle status information intuitively.

Furthermore, the ergonomic steering wheel, with its three dimensional adjustment, plus a 200mm range of seat adjustment, ensures drivers can easily find their perfect driving position.

Heated and adjustable rear-view mirrors in two blocks guarantee optimal visibility in all weathers, vital when working on busy construction sites. In addition, the vehicles are equipped with cornering lights that provide maximum safety when manoeuvring, whatever the conditions.

Access to the cab has clearly been carefully designed to facilitate drivers' everyday work and ensure their safety, with wide, anti-slip in line steps. And because the cab sits lower to the ground, it is also easier for drivers to get into and out of their vehicle, a bonus for those making frequent deliveries.

A step on the side has also been incorporated into the design, allowing drivers to easily check the load. The vehicles offer failsafe ruggedness with reinforced protection for all exposed parts liable to suffer impacts. Obstacle clearance capacity is also impressive, making the trucks ideal for quarry and construction site applications.

Operators tell us that t C430s have plenty of power to tackle every day duties – from hauling blacktop to muck shifting. While most driving is done on-road, the trucks have taken any off-road duties in their stride, too – and they also have the capacity to tow a full range of trailers and plant, making them a great all-round addition to any fleet.

Of course, aftersales service and support is equally as important for any customer – and as new and 'repeat' clients tell us, Diamond Trucks deliver a consistently reliable and exceptionally great service on that front.

Good News

Stories that highlight the positive aspects of our Industry

Robinsons Visit local Primary Schools

The children of Broughshane PS and Moorfields PS recently enjoyed an eco-conscious reading experience when they were visited by Northern Irish author, Pauline Davison, and local businessman, Stephen Robinson, from Robinson QuarryMasters.

The Primary 5,6 and 7 children were each presented with a copy of a new educational and local publication, "Tommy the Turbine."

This local publication emphasises the key themes of renewable energy, and how important this is, not only for our environment, but also for our economy.

The book tells the fictional story of the journey of a little wind turbine from his home in Canada, to his new life in the beautiful countryside of Northern Ireland

They know that Tommy is going to help to provide a source of renewable energy which will ensure the future of energy production, and our local industries.

The children were also treated to a short presentation on how Wind, solar and Hydro energy all contribute to providing green energy in Northern Ireland

This publication has been sponsored by Stephen Robinson from Robinson QuarryMasters.



Enhancing the educational experience....

Kilwaughter Lime is committed to enhancing the educational experience of young people in the community. Every year the company open their doors and welcome pupils from local primary and secondary schools.

The visit is especially important in the run up to the summer break as it highlights the dangers of entering a quarry unsupervised. Kilwaughter Lime works in partnership with Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) to present the 'Stay Safe... Stay Out,' campaign message to all children who visit the site.

Kilwaughter Lime was also delighted to support Corran Integrated Primary School Larne, by donating K Dash decorative aggregates for their school garden. The garden is used to teach children about wildlife and nature.



Good News

Tracey Concrete

Tracey Concrete is one of the largest precast concrete manufacturers in the UK and Ireland.



Tracey Concrete: Marie Curie Cancer

One of the charity events Tracey Concrete were involved in was the lady of the lake truck run for Marie Curie Cancer care where we raised just under £1200



Tracey Concrete: LED Lighting

Environment – Tracey Concrete recently upgraded all our factories to LED lighting which has resulted in energy savings of approx. 62% in turn significantly lowering our Carbon footprint



Tracey Concrete: Omagh Hospital

Project – Tracey Concrete supplied the new Omagh Hospital working with McLaughlin & Harvey – Drainage Products – Spigot & Socket Pipes and Manhole Rings

Good News

Quinn Industrial Holdings



Charity Work: The first inaugural Quinn Industrial Holdings Charity Cycle took place on Sunday 15th May 2016 with almost 200 participants, community spirit was displayed and the event was a huge success raising £1625 for their chosen charity, NI Chest Heart and Stroke. With the total money raised being matched by Quinn Industrial Holdings the event ended on a high note and £3,330 being handed over to NI Chest Heart and Stroke.



Products used in local Community projects: Work is well underway on the £31m shared campus for Foyle College and Ebrington Primary School providing an education platform for up to 1400 pupils each year upon completion. Quinn Building Products are delighted to be providing approx 12,000m² of Hollowcore along with Precast Stairs most of which has been delivered ready for the next phase.



Parkhall Intergrated College, Antrim: Another significant investment from the Education Minister saw Quinn Building Products supplying approx. 11,000m² of Hollowcore and Precast Stairs to the Parkhall Integrated College in Antrim, we look forward to continuing to provide such high quality products from our large portfolio of locally manufactured building products and contributing strongly to the local communities within Northern Ireland.

Good News

RTU Marathon Relay Team 2016 in aid of Friends of Cancer Centre

RTU had a relay team in the 2016 Belfast Marathon on Monday 2nd May in aid of Friends of the Cancer Centre.

This charity was chosen in particular in memory of the late Frank McIlroy, former founder of Frank McIlroy Ltd, who passed away in December 2015 after suffering a short illness with cancer.

His son, Daniel and grandson Thomas McIlroy were both in the relay team.

We are raising money through donations to:

<https://www.justgiving.com/RTU1441>

Thank you.



Joint Industry Charity Golf event

Record amount raised for charities at Joint Industry Charity Golf event

As in previous years the annual charity golf day held on Monday 13 June was great success.

20 four balls competed in the event at the Hilton Templepatrick and even the weather was kind, staying dry and bright for the afternoon. To top the day off an amazing £4600 was raised for

the nominated charities, that's a fantastic £2300 each going to Guide Dogs and Macmillan Cancer Care.

The Association would like to thank all the event sponsors and those who donated prizes for the charity raffle... look out for more detailed coverage with results and photos next week!



Charity Golf day at the Hilton Templepatrick.



Tori Tennant speaks about the work of Guide Dogs focusing all present on the real reason for the event- supporting the work of local charities.

Good News

Belfast2Biarritz - Charity Cycle

Sadly, we all know people who are, or have been, affected by Cancer and the reach of Alzheimer's/ Dementia is extending in to more and more families with our increasing, ageing population.

Andrew Scurfield Director of Quarryplan Limited, in a quest to raise much needed funds for these charities is planning an epic journey from Belfast to Biarritz by bicycle.

Andrew sets off on Thursday 23rd June on his journey which will cover a total of 1000 miles which he plans to complete over a 14 day period. To start the trip some of his fellow MAMIL's (Middle Aged Men In Lycra) who have kept him company throughout the winter months of training, will accompany Andrew to Rosslare where he will take the boat to Roscoff. In Roscoff, Andrew's teenage son Christopher will join him as they follow the cycleway that generally follows the Atlantic Coastline, which will take them all the way to their final destination in Biarritz. Andrew's wife and daughter will also join him for the last 3 days to encourage him over the finish line, completing his 1000 mile challenge.



Norman Emerson Group

Supplying the new YMCA Centre in Lurgan

Norman Emerson Group supplied the 400m3 of concrete for the construction of the new YMCA Centre in Lurgan.

The project costing £1.5 million.



Good News

QPANI Publish Industry Information for Local Councillors

QPANI has recently published and circulated information brochures for the Councillors and Planning Staff of each of the 11 new Councils.

The document sets out, in what we hope is a very clear way, how important the Industry is in supporting local communities and providing the materials that help us build and maintain our infrastructure and ultimately sustaining our quality of life.

Northern Ireland's varied geology gives it a diverse aggregates base – it is upon this foundation that the Northern Irish construction industry has developed. As the Department of Regional Development's 2015 strategy puts it, "today's society requires construction aggregates and without such minerals there would be very little development."

For information brochure on your local area please go to the QPANI website at www.qpani.org.



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Northstone materials, sole supplier of Concrete to Northern Ireland's symbol of peace "The Peace Bridge" in Londonderry/Derry.



These projects were all supplied by Northstone.



Belfast Sewers.

Conexpo

Miskelly Wheel Wash

A DPS standard fixed wheel wash with optional overhead spray bar sold by Morgan Industrial Ltd to Conexpo/Miskelly Bros @ their Ballygowan location.

To reduce the quarry carryover out onto the public highway, which will greatly improve the environmental impact of the quarry to the local drivers and neighbours in the surrounding area.



Making a Difference

John McQuillan Contracts

Supplying the Dungannon Public Realm Scheme

The Dungannon Public Realm Scheme involved environmental improvement works in Dungannon town centre at Market Square, Castle Hill, Irish Street and Church Street.

Completed in early 2015, it has greatly improved the appearance of the town centre.

Project works included resurfacing of public footways and carriageway areas with a combination of natural stone materials and asphalt, provision of new granite kerbing, soft landscaping works, provision of new street furniture and an upgraded street lighting scheme. The centre piece of the project is the decorative terraced area at upper Market Square, where granite terraces and seating units with etched artwork are complemented by LED feature lighting.

John McQuillan (Contracts) was awarded with a certificate of compliance for the Considerate Constructors Scheme in connection with this project



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Application for Full Membership



NOTES FOR GUIDANCE:

1. Where a company is applying for membership this form must be completed in full by the secretary or a director of the company.
2. When completed this form should be sent to **Quarry Products Association Limited, Northern Ireland Region, Nutts Corner Business Park, Dundrod Road, Crumlin BT29 4SR**

USE BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN FULL

Company Name:

Address:

.....

.....

..... Postcode:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Contact Name:

E-mail Address:

PRODUCTION AND PROCESSING UNITS

(including details of Associated Companies)

(Details of Concrete Blocks, Cement, Quarries, Pits, Ready Mix, Black Top Processing Units)

	NUMBER OF PLANTS/OUTLETS
READY MIX CONCRETE
BLACK TOP
SAND AND GRAVEL PITS
QUARRIES
CEMENT PLANTS
PRECAST (Inc blocks, rooftiles, pavia, pipes, floors etc)
CEMENT

We hereby apply to become a member of Quarry Products Association Limited and agree to be bound by the Articles of Association and any rules made thereunder by the council of the Association.

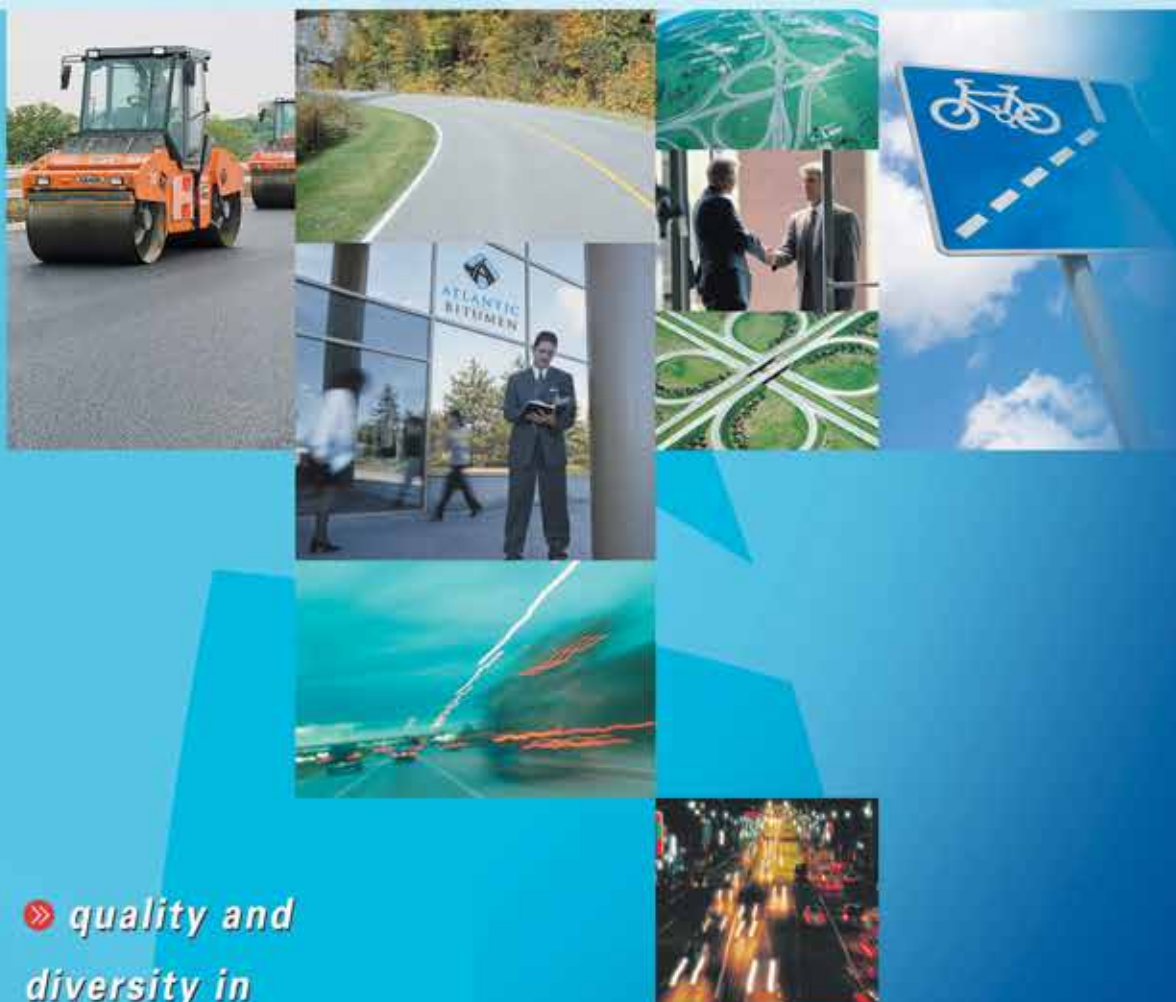
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