

Chief Executive's Diary



Welcome to our fifth edition of FarransLink and my first Chief Executive's Diary.

My first overwhelming impression since succeeding Ernie McClure in January of this year has been the scale of our operations in terms of geographical spread and range of activities, the complexity of projects undertaken as well as the size of our production facilities. I have been trying over the past few months to visit as many of our locations as possible to meet as many Farrans people as I can and talk to them to find out more about the functions and processes that come together to make us the business that we are today. I intend to continue to get out and about on an ongoing basis, to keep in touch with our activities at the 'sharp' end.

It would be wrong if I did not mention my predecessor, Ernie McClure, who was the longest serving Chief Executive our business has had. Ernie was quiet and unassuming and never lost sight of the responsibility he had as the leader of the largest materials and construction business in Northern Ireland. He succeeded in keeping our Company in a market leading position as Sam Taggart and John Brown had done before him. My mission is to follow Ernie's example, and through performance and growth, maintain and develop our business from this strong foundation. I feel very privileged to lead a business which is so highly regarded in every market and community in which it operates.

I have also been extremely impressed by the long service, technical abilities and commitment of Farrans people. I am very committed to the ongoing development of the skills and competencies of our employees at every level, as this is the only way to continue to deliver the level of service our customers demand.

It is also my sad duty to report the tragic death of Gregg Cousins on one of our construction sites last December. Gregg was employed by one of our sub contractors and lost his life as a result of an accident. We all have a moral and statutory duty to do everything we can to prevent workplace accidents and because I feel contractors are one of the most vulnerable groups in the industry, I have asked for a Safe Pass Scheme to be introduced to ensure that contractors who work at our locations are provided with effective and detailed safety induction. I can assure you that all of my colleagues on the Board are fully committed to improving health and safety standards and I will be personally involved in initiatives to achieve this goal.

It just remains for me to wish you all an enjoyable summer holiday and I hope to meet many more of you in the future.

NOEL QUINN
June 2002

Liam Goes Back to the Floor

Earlier this year, CRH plc Chief Executive Officer, Liam O'Mahony, set aside a day from his busy schedule to take part in the 'Back to the Shop Floor' initiative in support of the Irish Cancer Society.

The initiative required chief executives to perform tasks which were synonymous with the day to day running of their company's business. Liam decided to spend the day on a road surfacing contract and have a bit of fun as he explained;

"I started my career as a young roads engineer and it was good to discover that my hard hat still fits".

There has always been a strong tradition of charitable giving among the CRH companies and Liam was delighted to support this worthwhile cause.



Liam O'Mahony, CRH plc Chief Executive flanked by Roadstone Provinces' Oliver Mahon (l) and Pat Purcell (r).

Dedication and Commitment Personified

The pages of this magazine, since its inception, have always acknowledged the common traits of Farrans people. There have been frequent references to commitment, pride in being associated with the various businesses and technical expertise but arguably the greatest attribute of our people is long service.

Take a look at Managing Director Willie McNabb in our photograph and you cannot help but notice the satisfaction he obviously feels from being part of the team at Maxwells. The event depicted was the group photograph at the recent presentation of watches at Coleraine quarry to recognise those people who have each served our business for over twenty five years. There are lorry drivers, directors, face shovel operators, contract managers, squad foreman, quarry managers and roller drivers in the photograph which says everything about Team Maxwell.



Savings-Related Share Option Scheme

The UK CRH Share Save Scheme has again done well in difficult market conditions.

The table below traces the progress of the shares from the date of issue with the FTSE (Financial Times Share Index) shown as a market indicator to provide Farrans people with information as to how the shares have been doing generally. The performance of the shares comparing the share exercise price to current market values would represent a return on your savings of 40%.

	Euro	Sterling	FTSE
1 December 2000	16.74	10.21	6,172
1 June 2001	21.19	13.00	5,896
27 November 2001	17.95	11.19	5,307
10 May 2002	19.80	12.40	5,202
Share Exercise Price		8.77	

Two new CRH Share Save Schemes have been made available to Farrans people with effect from 1st June 2002, one in the United Kingdom and the other in the Republic of Ireland, with an option price of £10.08 and €16.09 respectively.

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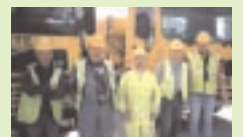
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More about CRH



The growth of CRH plc as an international building materials group continues apace with some 43,861 people now employed by the business as at 1st March 2002, an increase of 3,400 on the previous year. The profit before tax earned by the business in 2001 was €862 million, which represented an increase of 16% on 2000.

The United States of America is a vibrant area for the business which accounts for approximately 60% of all CRH plc worldwide sales. One of the development highlights in the States during 2001 was the acquisition of the Mount Hope Rock Products business which employs some 440 people at its single location some 25 miles west of New York City. Each year it produces 4.5 million tons of aggregates and 1.5 million tons of asphalt. Some idea of the scale of the operation can be gained from our photograph of the quarry which works on a 24 hours per day basis.

This year another acquisition in the USA has just been announced with the prestigious US Aggregates Inc. joining the team. The purchase price was 160.3 million for an organisation which last year sold 6.9 million tons of aggregates, asphalt and ready mixed concrete in the strategically important states of Alabama and Tennessee.

More about the success story which is CRH plc in your next FarransLink.

Ready Use Block Stars

The Ready Use Concrete plant at Carryduff is to be found in Lisdoonan quarry about a mile from the roundabout on the Saintfield Road on the outskirts of south Belfast. It is one of the Company's busiest area depots as it is also the site of the main block production facility for the Greater Belfast Area. The truckmixers, block making plant, offloaders and a steady stream of ex works customers make the yard a hive of activity even in the depths of winter.

The Ready Use story in Carryduff began with the purchase of a concrete plant back in 1986 with the block making unit not arriving until later. Operations Director Brian Thompson explained the history to our FarransLink reporter;

"The original concrete plant was operated on a one man basis until 1992 when we

were then faced with the challenge of finding a new home for our block production facility as this had to be relocated from Dunmurry with the development of the MAKRO hypermarket by Farrans Construction. Various alternatives were considered and the best option was a 2.5 acre site at Lisdoonan Quarry but this was in a different part of the quarry to the concrete plant. We decided to move to Carryduff because logistically it was the thing to do."

David Luke, Production Manager, was then, as he is now, responsible for block production and he recalls the excitement of the move to Carryduff;

"Block production at Dunmurry had to cease by January 1993 and so for a period of some two months we were servicing our customers from stock. All concerned with the move put in a Herculean effort to have the new plant operational in early March with the former Dunmurry people transferring the short distance to Carryduff."

The people at Carryduff who manufacture and move the product are typical of Farrans people with long service being a defining characteristic. Despatch controller Michael Gregg, batcher Jim Gyle, yard operative Albert Gordon, loader operator Alan Murray and block machine operator Colin Walker have in total some 60 years of service. FarransLink readers may also remember Alan's late father, Tommy, who operated an excavator with Farrans Construction for many years. It is also interesting to note that the block production shed was formerly the joiner's shop at Dunmurry.

The team at Carryduff is also made up of a large number of owner drivers who no doubt are familiar to lots of our Farrans Construction people. Jimmy Coulter leads the pack with a 27 year association with Ready Use and he is closely followed by block offloader drivers Alan Boles and Terry Hickland who have 24 and 16 years service respectively.

The team at this busy plant also find time and the energy for leisure activities and provide the cream of the talent for the Ready Use soccer team.



Harry Comes Ashore

This September will witness the end of an era at Scotts when long serving barge operator, Harry Brazier, ties up alongside from the final time after 34 years of service on Lough Neagh.

The Brazier family have always lived by the Lough shore and during the sixties, three of Harry's brothers, Tom, Billy and Gerard worked for the Company. Harry's association with Scotts of Toomebridge began with a chance encounter when he was on the water tending his family's eel nets one bright August morning back in 1968. The story goes that Harry met Jimmy Bothwell who was the skipper of the 'Ellen May' and was asked if he would be interested in a job on a sand barge. Harry replied "It would be better than fishing for eels". The next day, Harry was in a barge wheelhouse, learning the techniques of sand recovery from the bed of Lough Neagh.

In 1968 the standard navigation equipment on a Scott barge amounted to a compass and a watch. The passage of time has seen many technological improvements to enhance the safety of our barge operators with radar, depth sounders, VHF radios, automatic pilots and floatation suits being added to the Scott barge specification. Harry has many memories of his career with the Company on the Lough, but the most vivid, as he explained recently to our FarransLink reporter, illustrated the sometimes hazardous nature of the work;

"I remember setting off to work one morning and the weather seemed fine. All of a sudden it deteriorated and without warning I was caught in a storm in 'Ellen May' some miles from shore. The weather was so bad that the barge turned over 360 degrees, with me in the wheelhouse, and I lived to tell the tale".

Harry has always had an affinity with the outdoor life and his hobby of breeding and racing greyhounds has brought him many trophies with famous dogs such as Camlin and Crumlin Star. He intends to devote more time to this past time during his forthcoming retirement.

The Brazier tradition at Scotts will live on after Harry's retirement as we also employ his son David on the Lough.

FarransLink wishes Harry a healthy and happy retirement and it is perhaps fitting that we leave the last word to celebrated Irish Poet William Butler Yeats;

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree (1893)

Taking Off in England

Our FarransLink correspondent, Andrew Butcher, reports an increased order book for the Farrans Construction team in England. This has meant that several Northern Ireland based people have crossed the channel to assist with the workload. Three such people, Stephen Foster, John Ferguson and Greg Holland, have just started a new £4.3 million extension and refurbishment contract at Luton Airport where they would work under Jason Denly.

Readers may be interested to know that the airport is currently featured in the 'fly on the wall' documentary 'Airport' which is televised each week. However, our three Northern Ireland parties on site are shunning the publicity and hoping not to appear on our screens too often as they go about their work.

Airports certainly appear to be fast becoming a speciality for the team in England with the recent award of a new design and build contract a Mildenhall valued at £10 million and which commenced at the end of May.

Site Agent, Andrew Fuller, is also cutting his teeth on what is the first contract on which he is in charge of all day to day operations. The office block project is at Newmarket in Suffolk and is worth £800,000 with a challenging contract period of 24 weeks. The project is for a new client and validates the Region's efforts to extend and develop its client base.

photo to come

The scale of our partnering projects with clients in England continues to grow with the commencement of new school complexes at Brentwood and Harlow, which have a combined value of £3 million. Not to be outdone by the Company, Contract Manager, Keith Dorling, and Engineer Mark Kendle will also continue the partnering theme with their forthcoming marriages this summer. All readers of FarransLink wish them well.

Out of Africa

Africa was formerly known as the Dark Continent in the early part of the last century and with the more recent advent of Aids, poverty and civil strife, the ordinary people of many of its countries have very little to be happy about. However, W.H. Beckett General Manager, Gary Moore, and his colleague Norman Graham, certainly brought



smiles to the faces of some local people recently. This Easter, when most Farrans people were enjoying a well deserved holiday, Gary and Norman were on their travels to continue the charitable work which is fast becoming a tradition in our Beckett business.

Norman headed for the sub Saharan country of Niger, which just happens to be the second poorest country in the world, after war torn Afghanistan. Norman's challenge was to withstand the blistering temperatures and work as part of a team to repair the electricity supply in a hospital at Danja, which specialises in the treatment of Leprosy, and then replace the roofs on two hospital buildings which are used to house hospital staff. In all, Norman's team spent two weeks working in temperatures of up to 42°C in the shade .

The roofwork at Danja was particularly demanding as all of the rafters were manufactured from local mahogany and fixed without power tools or lifting tackle. Needless to say, the job was completed on time and as Norman explained recently to our FarransLink reporter it was worth all the effort;

"The living conditions endured by the people of Niger are far removed from our expectations of what is acceptable. The facilities are poor and the equipment is basic and out of date. The hospital is the only one of its kind in a vast area and the local people will walk for miles to obtain treatment. One look at the smiling faces of the locals made our work worthwhile".

Gary Moore's journey took him to Senegal a country and is probably best know to us as the finishing point of the Paris to Dakar rally. Gary's task was to lead a team of six joiners to erect a roof on the dining room block of a new missionary school some two hours drive from Dakar. Unfortunately, on arrival, Gary discovered that the project was drastically behind programme.

Undeterred, Gary and his team, got their coats off, and working in temperatures of up to 44°C, they erected the formwork for a classroom block, mixed and poured the concrete base and floated the slab, all by hand. The formwork for two large septic tanks was also built as were all the timber members for a workshop roof. On the last few days before departure, the team also constructed the roof trusses for the dining room block. On Gary's return to Dunmurry, our FarransLink reporter asked him for a view on why he does this sort of work. Gary response was quite succinct;

"I do this because I believe that people in such needy circumstances should be given a helping hand from time to time. I have never experienced such abject poverty and I am privileged to be undertaking this work.. It certainly keeps you feet on the ground."

Both Norman and Gary are involved with the LIFT organisation which seeks to undertake construction work for the underprivileged anywhere in the world.

Any reader wishing to assist this worthwhile cause, please contact Norman or Gary on 028 9055 1219.



David's Mix Of Skills Meets Specification



David Luke, Production Manager at Ready Use Concrete, joined us in 1988 and after an initial spell in the Dunmurry laboratory, moved into the production function. These early days for David in blocks and concrete despatch provided the customer focus which is so much an essential attribute of every Farrans Manager.

David's potential and management to the business was recognised in 1990 with his promotion to Assistant Operations Manager and with an ever expanding portfolio of responsibilities developed very quickly became operations controller. David now realised that this was an area of construction in which he could make a career as his skills and attributes met the requirements demanded by this challenging role. His brief included cement distribution for the Company, support for Dunmurry despatch and block production, working with owner drivers and Company Insurance.

In the last 4 years David has devoted much of his energies toward increasing block production at both Carryduff and Strabane, and indeed at the former he has achieved and produced an increase of 60% with the block production last year beating the 4 million barrier.

As Production Manager the day to day planning, control and organisation of 14 site locations for concrete production keeps David extremely busy. This also includes some notable challenges, namely the organisation of an 1 140m3 continuous concrete pour at Larne Harbour Halloween 1999 and more recently two 500m3 concrete pours to the Farrans Construction contract at Banbridge Sewerage Works.

Throughout his busy period David never lost sight of the fact Health and Safety is paramount throughout the business and he recently came up with a snappy message to promote the Company's Safety Scheme - Ready Use LAWS - Live and Work Safely.

Recognition for More Farrans People

Three well known Farrans people recently joined the growing ranks of those employees who have received recognition for their loyalty and long service.

Company Secretary and Director Raymond Reilly, Group Finance Director Edward McBriar and Carol Dawson from the Insurance Department all received watches from Noel Quinn to mark over twenty five years of service with the business.



Young Managers Kick Off Development Initiative



This Spring twenty of our young managers from all operating divisions commenced the initial Farrans Personal Development Initiative. The initiative was formulated some months ago as our senior managers were of the opinion that Farrans people need as wide a range of skills as possible to cope with the demands of the markets we operate in.

Early in the January, the search began to find a suitable provider who could deliver the practical and experience based learning that our people need. Lots of lengthy meetings and discussions took place at Dunmurry with several potential providers. The Irish Management Institute were finally chosen to become our partners in the Initiative as they could deliver consistently high quality training to our specification.

The first module of the Initiative took place in Toomebridge during May and these will continue for this particular group of Farrans people for two years.

This initial pilot initiative will be repeated again for other Farrans people as we seek to build capability throughout our organisation.

Brian's Master Class

Scott's Concrete Products Director Brian Watt knows a thing or two about the concrete pipes produced at Ballymena Construction Company. This spring, he shared his knowledge with the sales team from Toomebridge to enhance their understanding of the technical specification, capability, and applications of our pipes.



The instructional session included a tour of the production plant and an insight into quality assurance procedures from raw material to finished product.

Alan Hewitt, Scott's Sales Director, was enthusiastic about the value of such product awareness events, as he explained;

"I am responsible for the sales of concrete pipes and as such I need my sales team to be able to display detailed product knowledge to customers to stress the features and benefits of concrete pipes. Technical expertise is a vital attribute of every sales executive in our business. Thanks to Brian, my people are now better equipped to deliver the level of assistance, and customer care required in the market place."

239 years and counting...

Over the years our Ready Use Concrete business has rightly gained a reputation of being an organisation where long service among its staff is common. The group of eight people who gathered at Dunmurry Head Office on Tuesday 7 May were certainly a testament to this.



The event was a presentation lunch organised by the Company at which long service awards were given to the following 8 members of staff:

Adrienne Graham	(Purchase Accounts)	30 years
Tom Graham	(Accounts)	32 years
Gerald Woods	(Technical Dept)	29 years
Roy Browne	(Quality Manager)	30 years
Bob McGrugan	(Area Sales Manager)	31 years
Brian Thompson	(Operations Director)	27 years
Ronnie Murphy	(Moneymore Plant)	34 years
Johnny Halligan	(Dunmurry Plant)	26 years

We make that a massive 239 years in total and, considering the range of departments and job roles covered, its probably fair to say that this group have played a large part in making Readyuse the business it is today.

After the meal, Managing Director Ralph Clarke began the formalities by explaining how the lunch had come about. "In recent months, it became apparent that our various Group businesses were presenting long service awards to their people after different numbers of years, so the decision was taken to standardise things and make 25 years the benchmark across Farrans Limited. At Ready Use, 8 staff members had passed the 25 year mark but not yet received an award so, in order to catch up, it was decided to organise a lunch to honour those people."

Ralph said a personal tribute to everyone in turn, giving a brief overview of the duties they had undertaken over the years and the contribution each had made, before presenting a 'Rotary' watch as a token of the Company's appreciation of their loyalty and dedication over many years.

FarransLink was on hand to capture the occasion and each individual presentation was photographed before the group posed together with their awards. Johnny Halligan, who could not make the lunch, was presented with his award at Dunmurry plant. Congratulations to all those honoured at what was a very memorable occasion.

Drawing On Experience



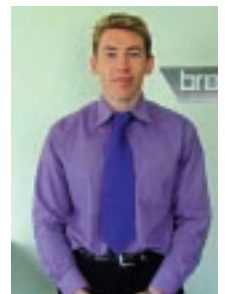
The drawing office in any precast business is the hub which designs products to customer specifications, liaises with external architects and engineers on design considerations and then puts on paper specification which production people can manufacture.

Recent promotions in our Breton business at Duncrue have seen Martin Fegan (left) take over as Drawing Office Manager where he leads our team of four able people who get involved in everything from sales support and design detailing to delivery planning and despatch. Martin joined us in 1989 as a draughtsman technician and progressed to Chief Draughtsman in 1991. His competence and technical abilities were recognised in January 2002 with promotion to his current post where he takes over responsibility for all design support activities for contract in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

Away from the drawing board, Martin is a family man who lives in Belfast. He has also recently discovered a passion for golf.

Ken Ross (right), our new Chief Draughtsman, joined Breton Precast in 1995 as a structural detailing draughtsman under Martin's guidance. His role is now to produce detailed working drawings and any associated design to facilitate the erection of a flooring solution package to meet the customer needs and expectations.

In his spare time, Ken is a keen motorcyclist and has just completed his first marathon.



Peter's World of Survival

There are some Farrans people who will try anything once and Maxwell Contracts Director, Peter Doherty, is one of them as he was only too happy to volunteer for a team building exercise in the Hebrides as organised by our Human Resources people in Dunmurry. In the run up to the event the talk was of leadership competencies, people development and bonding but, interestingly enough, no mention was made of abseiling down a coastal cliff, attempting a 'death slide' over a river or erecting a telephone mast on a windswept hillside and sending a signal from it.

Peter's adventure began on a damp Friday evening in mid April when he joined 63 other hardy souls from a wide range of businesses and professions in boarding the ferry in Belfast bound for the west coast of Scotland. The ferry docked at 1.00am and then it was off to the assembly point for briefing. A beef stew breakfast followed at 5.30am before setting off at dawn with a rucksack and a map.

The group was divided into eight teams of eight people with each person having an opportunity to lead on one of the many tasks. When Peter was leading he had to collate and memorise all of the information on a task and then communicate it effectively to the team. He also had to allocate work and equipment effectively to ensure the task was completed within the given time frame. Leaders were not allowed to take part in any physical work as they were required only to supervise. Our FarransLink reporter has it on good authority that Peter's team completed all of it's allocated tasks on time and flawlessly. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind during the weekend with lots of rain, wind and soaking sleeping bags but as ever, Peter's enthusiasm could not be dampened as he explained;

"I found the whole experience very enjoyable and I particularly liked the responsibility of leading my team through a task which involved controlling them, understanding the individual strengths and weaknesses of those involved and motivating them accordingly. I feel these outward bound learning events have a lot to offer when it comes to developing people skills. The main attribute the weekend emphasized was being able to manage under pressure and survive. In fact it sounds very like civil engineering contracting in Northern Ireland. One thing is for sure, I will not forget my weekend in Scotland in a hurry."



Edward Relishes The Challenge

Edward Kelly, our Breton Roconcrete Contracts Manager, certainly has a wide and varied brief. He is responsible for all transport and precast product erection activities throughout the Republic of Ireland. The role involves liaising with the sales and production teams to programme the site work, managing the erection sub contractors to deliver to the customer specification and time frame as well as overseeing the safe erection of the product in what is one of our most hazardous activities.

In this regard Edward has played a leading role in raising the profile of health and safety with our customer base as our erectors depend heavily on the facilities and standards they provide. He has also spend a lot of his time in organising safety training for the erectors and was instrumental in developing a specific precast erector's element in the Safe Pass training initiative in the Irish Republic.

Edward, who holds an honours degree in Building Engineering and management from the University of Ulster, comes originally from Banbridge in County Down. He worked extensively in Great Britain before deciding to settle in Dublin.

Edward, who joined us in 2001, recently explained his priorities to our FarransLink reporter;

"My top priority is the promotion of health and safety on site and to this end I work very closely with our transport and erection contractors to ensure they know what is expected. We have a first class team at Roconcrete and although my work can be challenging at times, I am relishing the exciting times which lie ahead."



Anita Breaks The Mould

Anita McParland, Design Manager at Northwin, was recently invited by the Construction Industry Training Board to become a role model and participate in a conference to raise awareness of gender issues, to challenge stereotyping and to promote job opportunities for women in non traditional careers, particularly in construction.

The conference, organised in partnership with Opportunity Now and Equality Now, was held at St Malachy's High School, Castlewella and attended by over one hundred Year 11 girls.

Ten women from various occupations were selected as role models for the day to promote positive images of women who are successfully working in non-traditional areas and to challenge common misconceptions of women's capabilities and work.

On the day, after a brief introduction to all the role models, each was assigned as a leader of a group of 8 to 10 girls to facilitate a discussion workshop designed to develop awareness and to dispel some of the myths and perceptions that some non-traditional careers are not appropriate for women.

Some of the interesting facts arising included:

- By 2011, 1.7 million jobs will come into existence, of which women will take an estimated 1.4 million.
- Girls outperform boys at school. 53% achieve 5 or more Grades A-C at GCSE compared to 43% of boys. 25% of girls achieve 2 or more GCE 'A' Levels compared with 21% of boys. In 1998 more women than men were enrolled in both Further and Higher Education.



- In 1999 women less than 10% of modern apprenticeships in construction, electrical, motor industry and engineering were held by women
- Women comprise just 22% of managers in the UK and only 9.6% of directors are women.

A lot of interest was generated in the seminar and to highlight some of the more unusual occupations Anita was selected to be interviewed in the workplace by Pamela Ballentine from Ulster Television. The interview was aptly held on Northwin Developments newly launched 'Wellington Square' residential development site. Pamela was given a guided tour of the demolition works and the new marketing suite which houses the scaled model of the development.

So what did Anita make of it all; "Being interviewed for TV was quite a nerve-wrecking experience but a great opportunity to highlight opportunities in the construction industry which young women should consider as exciting and rewarding careers."

Construction Breathes Life Into Former Steel Town

At its height, the Scottish town of Ravenscraig with it's state of the art steelworks was one of the rising stars of the heavy engineering industry in the United Kingdom. Countless numbers of people worked at the 1,125 acre plant. However, the late eighties and the early nineties saw increasing volumes of cheap or subsidised imports entering the country with it's inevitable effect on jobs. Restructuring followed downsizing and before long the plant closed with devastating results for the local communities who depended on it.

Our people in the region, led by General Manager Alvar Kenwell, have played their part in revitalising one of Scotland's industrial heartlands with the successful completion of the environmental works to transform the former steelworks into a dynamic economic centre. The performance of our people was recognised on 12th April when the First Minister for Scotland, Jack McConnell, opened Ravenscraig Parkway which is the first stage of a £860 million investment plan. There was praise all round for Construction's effort in contributing to the sustainable redevelopment of the area and the support given to the local economy. It was noted also that some 65% of the workforce on the contract came from the surrounding area with many being new employees.

Ravenscraig was one of the first 'social redevelopment' projects in Scotland in which the Government seeks to transform former industrial heartland to counter



structural unemployment. The Farrans people involved deserve great credit and will no doubt build on their experience as we commence a similar project at Granton with the Waterfront Edinburgh Project.

Focus on Farrans People: Senior Appointments

At the start of this year nine Farrans people became directors of the business. This continues the Farrans policy of promoting from within and recognising superior performance at all levels. The FarransLink feature below provides a brief insight into the careers to date of our recently promoted colleagues.



Eamonn Sweeney

Eamonn Sweeney becomes a director of Farrans Construction. He joined us in 1978 after graduating as a civil engineer from Queens University and his first job was setting out the taxiway at Belfast International Airport and there quickly followed a wide range of practical experience on both large and small civil engineering contracts. Eamonn became a contracts manager in 1994. His biggest project to date has been the impressive Belfast Wastewater Treatment Works at Duncrue, which was priced at £23 million and completed in 1998. Eamonn manages a total of 55 graduates, site engineers, agents and contract managers.

Richard McDermott

Richard McDermott left the world of auditing in an accountancy practice behind in 1979 to take up the post of assistant accountant with R.J. Maxwell at our Ballymena Quarry. Some two decades on he is now the Division's Administration and Finance Director. Like many other Farrans people, Richard is committed to life time learning and he is currently completing a masters degree in Business Improvement at the University of Ulster and hopes to graduate in 2003. Our FarransLink reporter caught up with Richard recently in his Coleraine office at which he gave an insight into life at Maxwells;

"My 23 years with the Company have been an immensely enjoyable and memorable time. I have been very fortunate to have worked in a successful business. Maxwell people are a breed apart with exceptional loyalty to the Company and work ethic. It is this which gives us a competitive edge".

Richard is also the director at R.J. Maxwell with responsibility for health and safety which he fits into a busy schedule which includes a human resource brief as well as the usual administration and finance functions.



Robert McAlister

Robert McAlister joined Farrans Construction in 1979 as a site engineer and is now a director of the business. He is a civil engineering graduate who achieved chartered status in 1980. In 1983, Robert was promoted to site agent and sent to North Devon to look after a contract. This was quickly followed by a three year stint on Unst, which is the most northerly island in the Shetlands. Following this, Robert's list of clients reads like a who's who of local business, with names such as Tesco, Sainsbury's, Belfast International Airport, Andras House, Short Brothers, LA Leisure, Halifax plc and many more featuring.

David Megaw

David Megaw also becomes a director of Farrans Construction. He joined us as a quantity surveyor in 1979 at a time when we were heavily committed to the rehabilitation of existing social housing stock in the greater Belfast area. Working with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, David was also pivotal in the development of a bespoke form of contract and customised bills of quantities for housing association contracts. David is very much in favour of partnering as an approach to projects and will continue to grow this aspect of our construction business. In addition to his role as a director of Farrans Construction, David also sits on the Northwin Construction Joint Venture Board and the Construction Employers Federation Public Authority Housing Committee.



Mark Lowry

After graduating in civil engineering, **Mark Lowry** emigrated to South Africa, where he worked on bridge and highway design and was the assistant resident engineer on a 40 km motorway scheme near Johannesburg. Mark returned to Northern Ireland in 1987 and joined Farrans Construction as a setting out engineer at Kilroot Power Stations. He was promoted to civil engineering estimator in 1995 and since that time, has been proactive in developing the estimating systems towards computer based estimating and electronic trading.

As a director of Farrans Construction he will continue this work into the future.

Brian Watt



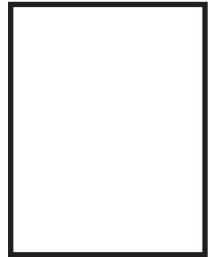
Brian Watt becomes Production Director - Concrete Products in respect of our Scott and Ballymena Construction Company business. His brief will be to further develop the recent good work at our Ballymena and Toomebridge plants. Brian is also the director with responsibility for health and safety at both locations.

Brian, who has featured previously in the pages of the magazine, holds primary and further degrees. He joined us in 1994 having previously worked with Shorts Missile Systems.

Away from work, Brian lists rugby, golf and meeting people as his main interests.

David Blake

David Blake is based at Construction's Cambridge Office. He joined us in 1968 and worked on construction sites of all sizes for the following ten years. On the opening of a permanent office at Wivenhoe, near Colchester, David took on the central support role of buying and client liaison. When the Cambridge office opened, he was asked to relocate there as contracts manager. David's appointment as a director recognises the Farrans Construction achievements throughout England and he will be leading the team as the English market is further developed.



Gordon Ellis



Gordon Ellis becomes a director of our materials testing business, MATTEST. Over the past decade Gordon has developed and expanded MATTEST into the leading construction materials testing house in Ireland with a battery of tests unrivalled in the industry.

Gordon is a civil engineer who, since graduating, has worked in both construction and design. He joined the Company in 1991 as General Manager of MATTEST and is now responsible for a total of 25 people at laboratory in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. A detailed feature on MATTEST can be found in this edition of FarransLink.

Our readers may be interested to know that while at university, Gordon worked as a placement student on the Farrans Construction motorway contract at Dungannon.

Keith Wood

Keith Wood who becomes Sales Director of our Ready Use business began his career with us on leaving school in 1982. At that time he started off strapping blocks and working on the ridge tile machine at Scotts. There followed a short period as a despatch clerk with Ready Use before moving into his true vocation of sales in 1985 under the guiding hand of the late Sam Hill. Keith was promoted to Company Sales Manager in 1998 with responsibility for all sales and credit control at Ready Use.

Ready Use naturally takes up a fair amount of Keith's time but he still makes space for jogging and following rugby. Keith who is well liked throughout the industry with his quiet, unassuming style, was keen to acknowledge his colleagues support in his interview with FarransLink;

"Throughout my career so far at Ready Use I have had the privilege to work for, and alongside some very well known and experienced individuals who have guided and supported me through an increasingly competitive market place"

He is currently on the Farrans Limited Personal Development Initiative.



MAKE THE CALL

In a previous edition of our magazine we carried a feature on the logos used by our various businesses to promote their products and services. This time we are going that little bit further and providing all FarransLink readers with defined points of contact for each of our product and service lines.

The aim of the illustration below is to encourage Farrans people to make the call and find out more about what CRH companies in Northern Ireland can do for their business. Every effort should also be made to specify and use CRH products at our locations and on our projects with no opportunity missed to communicate sales leads and business opportunities to the relevant point of contact listed below.

Company	Products & Services	Point of Contact	Telephone	Mobile	E-mail
Aerobord Limited	Insulation Products	Andrew Rennie	00353 4383550	07831 176400	arennie@aerobord.ie
Ballymena Construction Company Limited	Flexible Jointed Concrete Concrete Pipes, OG Pipes and Concrete Tiles	Alan Hewitt	79 650461	07808 865690	ahewitt@scottrroofiles.com
Breton Precast Limited	Precast Concrete Products	Cyril Irvine	90 351711	07860 576670	cirvine@breton.co.uk
Farrans (Construction) Limited	Building and Civil Engineering	Gary Blair	90 551225	07867 521240	gblair@farrans.com
MATTEST	Construction Materials Testing	Gordon Ellis	90 791336	07831 284471	gellis@mattest.com
Ormonde Brick	Clay Bricks	John Milligan	87 723421	07836 790648	
Premier Cement	Cement	Colin Higgins	90 381067	07860 746220	chiggins@irishcement.ie
R.J. Maxwell & Son Limited	Aggregates, Bituminous Coated Materials and Associated Special Products, Civil Engineering	Raymond Moore	25 898151	07741 052006	rmoore@rjmaxwell.com
Ready Use Concrete Company Limited	Ready Mixed Concrete, Trowel Ready Mortar and Blocks	Keith Wood	90 551314	07785 293370	kwood@readyuse.com
Roadstone Dublin	Paving Bricks	Alan Summerville	003531 4041296	07764 197824	a_summerville@hotmail.com
Scott (Toomebridge) Limited	Concrete Roof Tiles, Sand, Gravel, Concrete Blocks	Alan Hewitt	79 650461	07808 865690	ahewitt@scottrroofiles.com
Springvale EPS	Insulation Products	Paul Frazer	93 340203	07768 648873	p.frazer@springvale.com
Tyrone Brick Limited	Clay Bricks	Harry Martin	87 723421	07703 210464	sales@tyrone-brick.com
W.H. Beckett & Company	Copper and Trocal Roofing, Shop Fitting, Partitions, Suspended Ceilings, Hardwood and Decorative Flooring, Computer Flooring and PVC Handrailing	Gary Moore	90 551219	07901 711140	gmoore@whbeckett.com

Northwin's Golden Jubilee Occasion

It was perhaps fitting in the Golden Jubilee Year that Wellington College in Belfast, which was designed and constructed by Northwin, was officially opened by Prince Andrew. FarransLink readers may remember that Northwin is the joint venture between Farrans Construction, Grahams of Dromore and the McGinnis Group which has been actively involved in Private Finance initiative schemes within the education sector in the Province.

On Tuesday 16th April, all classes at the college came to a halt with the arrival of Prince Andrew in a helicopter. The Royal visitor spent an hour touring the facility and chatting to pupils before delivering the official opening address in which he paid tribute to the quality of the new building.

In June, Northwin reached another milestone with the official opening of its Balmoral High School, again in Belfast, by the Rt Honourable David Trimble, the First Minister.

The Farrans team at Northwin are now turning their attention to private housing and on 17th April this year, another milestone was reached, with the opening of the new marketing suite at Wellington Square to enhance the level of customer care delivered to potential purchasers. This is another 'first' for the Province and the feedback generated to date has been very positive. Farrans people should pay a visit to the suite the next time they happen to be in the Annadale area, you will be suitably impressed.

The photograph shows Prince Andrew meets pupils and staff at Wellington College.



Roll of Honour

A number of Farrans people are continuing the tradition of training and development in our organisation by achieving academic success in higher education. The roll of honour is as follows:

Ken Anderson Area Sales Manager at Scott Toomebridge	BA (hons) Business Studies
Tommy Henry Site Engineer at R.J. Maxwell	B Eng (hons) Civil Engineering
Jim Leitch Group Human Resources Manager	MA Human Resource Management
Philip Shields Contract Manager at R.J. Maxwell	Master of Business Administration
Brian Thompson Operations Director at Ready Use Concrete	BA (hons) Business Studies

All of the degrees were taken by way of part time study at the University of Ulster and FarransLink sends its congratulations and hopes all five on our Roll of Honour have an enjoyable graduation day this summer.

Gallivantors Get Going



Farrans people from Coleraine to Oakbank are sociable individuals and it was no surprise that recently the Gallivantors Social Club was formed with a view to putting away the laptops, accounts and theodolites for a short while and enjoying each other's company at organised social events. A recent day at the Ayr Races proved to be a big success with two Construction people, Jim Smyth and Colin McCaffrey, even managing to win a few pounds from their wagers.

The Gallivantors committee have a busy schedule of events planned for the coming months and these include a quiz, a

barbeque and a Halloween fancy dress disco.

Further details on joining the Gallivantors can be obtained from JoAnne Colgan at Dunmurry on 028 9055 1276 and perhaps you too can be a winner, just like Jim and Colin.

John Signs on the Dotted Line

Construction Director, John Clarke, was delighted recently to be asked to put his name to a formal training partnership agreement with the Chartered Institute of Building on behalf of Farrans Construction and thereby make a formal commitment to further develop the technical skills of our construction people in Northern Ireland and England.

The Institute will shortly be undertaking a review of the qualifications, training and experience of our people on the building side of the business with a view to advising on their continuing professional development.

Our photograph depicts John (seated) signing the agreement on our behalf in the presence of Bob Heathfield, President of the Chartered Institute of Building.



Ballymena Ladies Take a Bow

Ballymena Construction Company's office administration function, like the location's tile plant, is smooth running and problem free. This is in no small way due to the competencies and abilities of Martha Anderson, Louise Crawford and Nicola McCord who work at the Montague Avenue plant. The ladies look after everything from raw material administration and product despatch to customer care and the production of sales information.



Martha joined the Company in 1997 and looks after the monitoring and ordering of raw materials. She also has that vitally important role of prospecting for concrete pipe and tile sales opportunities by telephone. Martha lists gardening as her principal spare time activity.

Louise, who was recruited around the same time as Martha, is responsible for the despatch of roof tiles to our customers. This involves planning the daily delivery schedule for five offloader lorries as well as liaising with customers and our sales team to ensure total customer satisfaction. Louise's skills in this area are first class and she made useful and practical suggestions to our sales forum which was held earlier this year. Outside of work, Louise enjoys going along to the cinema and the occasional girls' night out.

Nicola, who lives close to the plant, joined us on a part time basis last year. Her role is to produce the daily and monthly sales returns as well as assisting Louise in handling sales enquiries and despatching lorries. Nicola, who is a working mum, still finds time to continue her education at the local college where she is taking a course in word processing.

Ronnie Receives Deserved Recognition

Maxwell Contracts Director is another one of those Farrans people whose work and dedication is recognised not only within our own business but also among his peers in the industry.

Earlier this year he was appointed Chairman of the Northern Ireland Branch of the Institution of Highways and Transportation and will preside over a series of events to promote greater awareness of transportation issues in the Province. Ronnie will also play a pivotal role in liaising with Government policy making units at national level.

Ronnie is one of the really 'nice guys' in our business and Farranslink wishes him well in his role as he strives to promote the interests of the industry and raise professional standards.

Ronnie joined us in 1984 as a Contracts Engineer based at our Moneymore location and succeeded Contracts Director Jimmy Telford in 1995. He is responsible for all Maxwell contracts in the north of the Province as well as leading the airfield division.



Sales Teams Come Together

This Spring CRH sales people who operate throughout the Province came together in a Sales Forum which was hosted by Noel Quinn and Farrans Limited.

In all we had almost ninety people in attendance who market and sell everything from bricks, precast units and concrete to roof tiles, insulation products and construction services. In addition, all representatives from the Farrans Limited board of directors were in attendance.



The objectives behind bringing everyone together in this way were to actually meet each other and then through group exercises learn more about how each of the businesses represented goes about meeting the needs of their respective customers.

The event commenced with a series of short product presentations and was followed by group exercises led by selected Farrans people.

After the event our FarransLink reporter caught up with Noel and asked him how he felt the day went. Noel was very enthusiastic about the outcomes as he explained;

"We are a sales and marketing organisation and as such it is essential that we capture and use all of the customer information that is available in our business. I would like to have a system whereby sales leads which are generated by one sales executive are made available to others in our business. In this way we can deliver a total package, win new business and build on our relationships with existing customers. I was amazed that there were some Farrans people in attendance at the Forum who had dealt with each other for decades yet had never met."

It may just be that we will have more sales and marketing get togethers in the future.

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Sam and Peter Lead the SMA Fightback

In recent months there has been a concerted campaign in the Irish Republic against the use of Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) on primary or secondary national routes unless inside a 30 MPH speed limit. FarransLink readers may remember that SMA is one of the products in the Maxwell portfolio and it is our experience that it represents an appropriate, desirable and realistic option for Clients when compared to hot rolled asphalt.

Sam Deane, Special Products Manager and Peter Doherty, Contracts Director, were recently invited to address a gathering of Senior Design Engineers from all over Ireland to explain the benefits of SMA as a road construction material. Sam kicked off the session and drew heavily from published research on skid resistance as well as structural, noise and spray reducing benefits of SMA. Peter discussed the operational benefits of laying over 10,000 tonnes of SMA to date in Donegal as well as the positive reaction to the product in the Province.

The session went well and there is no doubt that everybody in the gathering learned a little about what we feel is a reliable and hardwearing road surfacing material.

G'Day from Carrickmore

Our Carrickmore location is now ringing with the tones of a Perth accent. Perth, Western Australia, that is!

Elaine Caldwell, whose family come originally from Omagh, joined our team last summer as Contracts Director Peter Doherty's personal assistant leaving behind the beaches and barbeques for the quieter life of County Tyrone.

Elaine's role involves organising meetings, keeping Peter's diary up to date, secretarial duties and lots more as she explained recently to our FarransLink reporter;

"My family emigrated to Australia in 1984 and last July I decided to come back to Omagh to experience life in what I still feel is my home town. I think the rest of the girls in the office, not to mention our customers, find it a little bit strange when they hear my voice. They also have a good laugh when I try to translate local phrases and ways of describing things. I have to admit that I also have to smile because that is the sort of team we are at Carrickmore. Working for Peter is great as he is so enthusiastic about the business and I have learnt a lot from him in my short time here as the work is so varied. The rest of the people at the location have really made me feel at home and they think nothing of spending time to explain things to me if required.

Fitting into the Irish way of life has been a very easy transition for me as the people are very similar in that they both enjoy a bit of fun and a good beer.

Omagh is very like an Australian country town with lots of friendly people, not enough shops and a pub on every corner!"



Neil Does The Double

Move over Thierry Henry and Dennis Bergkamp from the triumphant Arsenal football team, our own Neil McStravick was also a double winner this year.

Neil is employed as a site engineer by Farrans Construction on our Glenwood Court private development site on the outskirts of Lisburn in County Antrim. Our photograph shows Neil being presented with a cheque by Construction Director John Clarke on behalf of The Chartered Institute of Building in recognition of his best in year performance on the Construction Engineering and Management Degree course at the University of Ulster. Neil followed this success up with a trip to London to receive another Institute prize for the best final year dissertation in the United Kingdom. The title of the dissertation was 'The Ability of Timber Framed and Masonry Construction to Meet Forthcoming Building Regulations'.

Needless to say we are all delighted with Neil's academic achievement and no doubt Neil can put his expertise to good use as Farrans Construction continue to develop the private house building element of their portfolio.



Debbie Hits the Wall

One structure that Farrans Construction definitely did not build was the Great Wall of China. However, this did not stop one of our intrepid people finding out more about the Wall, which just happens to be one of the wonders of the World as well as the only man made structure which is visible from the moon.

Debbie Sloan, our site secretary at Tillysburn, decided to participate in this year's MENCAP trek to China which involved walking along the Wall. This was no jaunt for the faint hearted as walkers had to resort to climbing the Wall on their hands and knees in places as the gradient was so steep.

MENCAP is the national charity which supports people with learning disabilities and Debbie has given of her time in previous years in aid of this very worthwhile cause.

Eagle eyed FarransLink readers cannot help but notice the logo emblazoned on Debbie's shirt which is indicative again of the pride and commitment our people feel in being associated with the Farrans family.



Quality Counts in Scotland

Our Scottish correspondent, Alvar Kenwell, reports that the construction market in his region is changing to reflect the increasing importance Clients are now placing on quality and moving away from lowest price tendering. Two contracts recently awarded to Farrans Construction, one at Dundee and the other in Edinburgh, are examples of this market development.

The £11.3 million scheme at Dundee was awarded to design, supply and construct a 26 kilometre watermain from Lintrathen Reservoir to Dundee with the methods of work to be employed drawing heavily from those used on the Aquarius contract in Northern Ireland. The Farrans site team is looking forward to the challenge and Project Manager, Tony Fry, is eager to place the first pipe into the ground as he explains,

"The pipes are now being shipped from France as we speak and all agreements with landowners are in place to allow us to commence the pipelaying operations. We are currently organising the crushing and screening plant to enable us to re-use the natural material removed from the way leave. Our aim, as always, is to be as environmentally friendly as possible."

Bob Dooner, the site agent at Dundee, has been asked to fulfil the all important role of land liaison office and this involves dealing with landowners, archaeologists, and all other interested parties. Bob's easy going but precise style is perfectly suited to the role and he is keen to make a start as he explained recently to FarransLink;

"There is a great deal of focus on the Project from the local community at the moment and our aim is to facilitate a smooth passage of information between the Client, Farrans and all other stakeholders. In this regard, the experience gained by our people at Aquarius, has been invaluable, we are raring to go!"

The contract at Granton in Edinburgh involves the regeneration of an area in which disused buildings are to be demolished, contaminated land is to be treated and an infrastructure constructed to allow the land to be handed over for development.

Our £7.5 million contract was won on a quality bid which Project Manager, Alan Roberts reflected on recently;

"We are about to construct a project in which the Client has spared no expense when it comes to the finishing works including the use of high quality granite kerbs and Appalachian flags. We are looking forward to the challenge of leaving the Farrans name on a high profile scheme in the centre of Edinburgh".

The Farrans Construction ethos relating to quality certainly seems to be working for the team in Scotland.



Gordon Takes Materials Testing to New Standards

There are probably lots of Farrans people who do not know that we have a growing construction materials testing business in our portfolio of products and services. Highly equipped laboratories are now operational in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. That business is known as MATTEST.

The MATTEST story began for us in 1992 when the Pioneer Concrete business was acquired by the group. The acquisition included a stand alone materials testing organisation which was known as Pioneer Testing Services Limited and was managed by a young, energetic civil engineer called Gordon Ellis.



The new management structure and operating environment at Farrans has evidently suited Gordon as he has developed the renamed testing service into a market leading position offering a battery of tests unrivalled in the Northern Ireland construction industry from its base in east Belfast. Testing services are now available to our customer base in everything from concrete and aggregates to

soils and asphalts. A consultancy and technical advisory service managed by our Technical Manager, Neil Cooke, completes the package offered by the UKAS accredited facility.

Before long, thoughts turned to expansion and market development. Phase 1 of the expansion was the opening of a laboratory in Feltrim, on the outskirts of Dublin where the accommodation is shared with our Breton Roconcrete people. The last four years has seen the laboratory go from strength to strength with work having been successfully undertaken for major contractors on many prestigious projects. The Dublin laboratory is managed by Area Manager, Declan Murphy and is accredited to the recognised UKAS standard for concrete testing and has just been granted extensions to its UKAS accreditation in aggregates, soils and asphalts.

The second stage of the plan was to have a presence in the Cork market and this was achieved late last year with the setting up of a laboratory in the city. The Area Manager in Cork, Rory Egan, joined us from our associated company, John A Wood. Rory and his staff have just obtained accreditation to the UKAS standard for concrete, aggregate and soil tests with asphalt being added to the list later on in the year.

When asked by our FarransLink roving reporter to comment on the development of the materials testing aspect of the Farrans Limited business, Gordon responded;

"The success of MATTEST is all about the commitment, skills and enthusiasm of people at our three locations. They all have an inbuilt desire to deliver a quality service and no little technical expertise to back it up. Our people provide a construction materials package which is second to none in Ireland and we are setting new standards in the industry and I am immensely proud of them."

Julie Puts People First

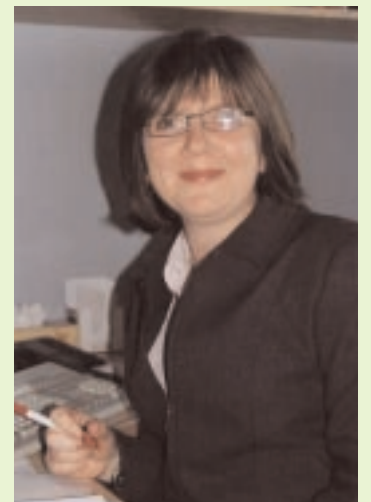
Julie Irwin, our Maxwell Human Resources Manager, joined us in 1996 and since then has successfully managed, recruitment and selection exercises, people development and personnel issues as well as handling liability claims.

Julie is a graduate and holds a post graduate diploma in personnel management from Strathclyde University. Her role is both challenging and varied as she explains;

"I am in the extremely fortunate position of interacting on a daily basis with Maxwell people across all of the locations. We have a very committed and skilled workforce which is vital to our continued success in the market place. The main focus of my job is to develop all of our people to the maximum of their potential through not only conventional training but also by encouraging managers to develop the skills of their people through on the job experience."

Julie is also continuing with her own personal development as she awaits the award of Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development.

Most of Julie's spare time is taken up by her family and in particular her eight month old daughter, Emily, although she still finds time for the odd round of golf as well as leading her local girl guide company.



John Continues Tradition

John Gillvray, Construction's Managing Director, has continued the tradition of Farrans people holding senior positions in influential organisations with his acceptance of the prestigious post of President of the Construction Employers' Federation. John's predecessor, Dennis McClure, also undertook this role in the recent past.

The President's two year term of office began in April and true to form, John already has a busy schedule of engagements planned which will take him to events throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland. His acceptance speech struck a chord with those in attendance as he stressed the need for further investment in the Province's infrastructure and public services. John also clearly identified the need for a cultural change in the industry to promote and maintain health and safety while at the same time challenging Government to introduce legislation to require safety training for every person in construction. His speech also outlined his vision for the industry where 'Best Practice' will become second nature.

FarransLink wishes John well in his Federation role in the knowledge that the industry is now sharing one of our prized assets and will benefit greatly from the experience.



Cubes, Cones and Colourful Shirts



Ready Use is known throughout the Province as a supplier of quality concrete. Indeed, our depots are consistently placed amongst the best performers in the UK in the audit ratings of the independent Quality Scheme for Ready Mixed Concrete. This reputation has not come about by chance and it is down in no small part to the efforts of Roy Browne's Technical Department. Roy was profiled in a previous FarransLink so for this issue we are focusing on his team at Dunmurry.

Gerald Woods can rightly be described as the 'daddy' of the team. Based at Dunmurry, Gerry, who has been with the Company since 1973, looks after the administration side of the department. Among his many responsibilities are mix designs, collating test results from the laboratory and dealing with incoming specifications which is a very important role as it ensures that the mix the customer gets is the one he actually asked for. A keen biker, Gerry also is the choirmaster at his local church and brightens up many a drab Monday morning in the office with his brightly coloured shirts.

Once the mixes have been designed and the Operations Department have batched the materials and got the product out the gate, the quality control function kicks into gear.

Our FarransLink reporter caught up with the team of field technicians recently as they unloaded their vans after a day out around the sites. Head Technician, Derek Kearney, explained what happens.

"Our job is to randomly test the concrete we deliver from all our plants. A sample of concrete is taken from the truck mixer and tested for workability using a piece of apparatus called a slump cone. To measure the all important strength of the mix, we use special moulds to make cubes which are marked and taken back to the laboratory at the end of the day. Once in the laboratory the hardened cubes are extracted from the moulds and stored in water before being tested after set periods of time using a special crushing machine to measure the strength of the concrete. All of our Field Technicians are involved in these activities to an extent but Tony Brown would be our main man here. With depots as far flung as Strabane and Banbridge to cover, Tony certainly clocks up the miles. As well as testing concrete, Richard Gawley samples the blocks produced at the our Carryduff and Strabane depots"

Stephen McCutcheon, as well as carrying out tests in the laboratory where he has been based for many years, now spends some time out on the road keeping tabs on the Ready Use mortar product. The rest of the laboratory work is covered by the newest member of the team, Aaron Craig. In addition to storing and testing cubes, blocks and mortar samples, Aaron and Stephen test the raw materials from all our suppliers for strength and grading so the laboratory can certainly be a busy place.

Other vital areas covered by the Technical Department include handling of quality complaints on those rare occasions when the system falls down and providing a constant monitoring presence at large pours. This aspect, more than any other, brings the technician into direct contact with the concrete layer, so how does Derek rate the level of technical knowledge out there?

"The main problem we come up against is when laying the squad wants to add extra water to our mix in order to get a really wet concrete, which is easier to place. It is our job to advise them of the implications this has for the strength of the product so that they know and accept what they are doing to the mix. However, technology is definitely helping to improve things as the latest plasticising admixtures for concrete mean that a really workable mix can be produced without any adverse effect on the final strength and as such we are finding more and more layers tuning in to these benefits and requesting suitable mixes for the largest pours which can only be a good thing!"

A Perfect Seven

The Bible refers to seven as the number of perfection, well, the news at Farrans is that we have our own perfect seven who are taking our business to a new level with the introduction of COINS computer software.

Our team is made up of Raymond Reilly, Richard McDermott, John Clarke, Paul Graham, Colin Allen, JoAnne Colgan and last, but not least, Ian Dove. Ian Dove works for the consultancy who are assisting us with the implementation and has become an honorary Farrans person for the duration of the project.

The team's initial task was to identify and implement a new computer software package which will greatly improve the way in which the Farrans divisions can capture information and transactions in one common system. The team have decided on the COINS system, which stands for CONstruction INDustry Solutions, after a wide ranging search.

Raymond, who is the team leader, recently told FarransLink a bit more about COINS;

"In choosing COINS, our aim was to make the capture and use of business information much more efficient and gradually extend access to that information to all employees who need it, from Carrickmore to Cambridge. The team needs to do a lot of planning over the next few months for the implementation and this will entail involving those Farrans people who will be using the system to ensure that when it becomes operational it actually meets their needs. COINS is their system after all".

By the time this edition of our magazine goes to press may Farrans people will have had their first introduction to COINS, and before long it will have become another tool to assist our people in their day to day activities.

FarransLink will carry regular updates on the implementation of COINS but it certainly looks like another perfect Farrans team selection for the job.



Larry Sullivan (Left) of CBS Limited and Raymond Reilly shake on the COINS software contract.

Bill Leads Province's Stonecrushers

Bill Weir, our Maxwell Production Director, has been with the quarrying side of our business for over twenty years having started off in finance before moving into the cut and thrust of producing aggregates and coated materials. He has one of the sharpest analytical minds in the industry and has led the safety, environmental, quality and efficiency initiatives which has maintained our market leading position in a fast changing environment.

This year, like colleagues Ronnie McKee and John Gilvray, he also will lead a highly respected professional or employer body, as he has just become chairman of the Institute of Quarrying in the Province. Bill has



always been committed to improving safety standards in quarrying and this year he will preside over the delivery of the Institute's 4 day accredited health and safety course for quarry managers as well as a safety competition for quarry operators of all sizes. His piece de resistance will be co hosting the annual Quarry Health and Safety Conference with the Health and Safety Executive where Institute members will chair two sessions. FarransLink wishes Bill well in his role and no doubt he will further enhance our reputation throughout his two year term of office.

Competition for Ready Use Safety Awards Hots Up

The Ready Use Concrete plant safety award initiative is proving to be very popular and much sought after. The competition was introduced last year with the objective of creating a safer working environment for our people and to measure and strive for improved safety performance. The standard in the most recent round was generally very high with the depots at Kells, Banbridge, Moneymore and Mallusk were chosen for awards.



Top of the tree was Jack Davies at Kells who took the 'Best Overall Plant' award with a perfect aggregate score of 200.

Equal second with aggregate scores of 197 were the one man plants at Banbridge and Moneymore. In the subsequent tie break, Operations Director Brian Thompson decided to award the prize to Johnny Wilkinson at Banbridge. However there was some consolation for Moneymore depot controller, Ronnie Murphy, who lifted a special award for the most improved plant.

The award under the category of 'Best High Volume Location' went to the Mallusk/Glengormley production and despatch team of Terry Moylan, Mark Porter and Stephen Morrison who achieved a very commendable score of 190 in what was an exceptionally busy period.

Farranslink asked Brian for a view on how he felt the competition was benefitting the business and it's people to which he responded;

"The peer group pressure and competitive spirit engendered by the awards is helping to raise the averages in almost every plant, which is very pleasing. We are now hitting average scores of 93% whereas when we started it was only 83% and that has to be a good thing. I congratulate all our winners on their excellent work."

By the time we go to press, the June audits will have been completed and the competition looks set to be as closer than ever

Brenda Represents Farrans People in Finland

Brenda Gregg, our Group Salaries Administrator, as usual, gave a good account of herself when representing Farrans people on this year's Euro Forum which was held recently in Helsinki.

The Forum is a grouping made up of elected employee representatives from across all CRH businesses in Europe. Its function is to enhance communication at all levels in the business and offer an opportunity for dialogue on developments which are of common interest.

Our FarransLink reporter called into Brenda's Dunmurry office recently to ask about the conference. Brenda found the whole event worthwhile as she explained;

"We arrived in Helsinki in the afternoon and got to the hotel in good time for the CRH Finland presentations. These were given by the respective Managing Directors of Finsementti and the Rudus Group. A welcome dinner followed where we all had an opportunity to sample the focal cuisine which included reindeer.

The next day was the real business aspect of the trip when we travelled to the Rudus offices and heard presentations from CRH plc people on finance, safety, the environment and specific business challenges. After the presentations, the employee representatives came together to discuss the issues raised before meeting again with the rest of the Forum for questions.

After lunch there was a trip to one of the Rudus ready mixed concrete plants in Helsinki where we learnt more about quality, production and customer service issues in this part of the world. I was amazed at the scale of the operation and the fact that in winter the concrete is made with hot water.

We were issued with comprehensive notes at the Forum and I will gladly make these available to any Farrans person on request and talk them through the points raised."

There is no doubt that Brenda is an excellent employee representative for our people as we are reliably informed that she made a significant contribution to the Forum discussions.



The Safety Factor

As we near the middle of 2002 the effort and commitment of Farrans people at every location to ongoing improvements in our health and safety practices continues unabated.

Following the successful introduction of C.A.R.E.S. (Consider Accidents Respect Everybody's Safety) in our construction business and the Maxwell T.A.S.K. (Think, Avoid Accidents, Safety First, Know Your Procedures) acronyms, our Ready Use and Scotts people have introduced their own to clearly signify our overall mission on health and safety.

David Luke of Ready Use Concrete came up with the suggestion of L.A.W.S. which denotes Live And Work Safely, a very appropriate statement. At Scotts and Ballymena Construction there was a competition which was jointly won by Louise Crawford and Heather Walls. The girls suggested the acronym S.A.F.E. which stands for Safety Awareness First Everytime.

These acronyms should help keep the safety message to the forefront of thinking and will be displayed in each Company's safety documentation. So if you work for one of these businesses, remember what the words stand for.

Detailed below are the accident statistics for 2002 up to the end of May. As you are aware we finished 2001 on a very sad note, with the fatal electrocution of an 18 year old sub contractor on the Farrans Construction M1 bridge replacement contract in Belfast. This happened when the 3600 excavator he was standing beside came into contact with 33 kv overhead lines. All the acronyms detailed above send out a strong message to all of us to always think of what can happen when we undertake a task. The following statement used by John Gillvray, Managing Director of Farrans Construction, in recent correspondence to his site teams, is worthy of repeating to all Farrans people at all locations;

"Nothing we do is so important that we cannot take the time to do it safely."

ACCIDENT RATIOS LEAGUE TABLE 2001 (Priority is based on Accident Frequency Ratios) (AFR)

Company	AFR	ASR
1. R.J. Maxwell & Son	1.05	31.75
2. Scott (Toomebridge)	1.18	10.02
3. Farrans Construction	1.43	20.72
4. Breton Roecrete	1.81	11.45
5. Ready Use Concrete	1.84	44.32
6. Breton Precast	4.59	57.03

Within these Companies the following locations or divisions were 'accident free' in 2001 and are to be congratulated.

R.J. Maxwell	Coleraine/Croaghan Quarry
R.J. Maxwell	Northern Division Contracts
R.J. Maxwell	Ballymena Quarry
R.J. Maxwell	Eastern Division Contracts
Ballymena Construction Company	
MATTEST	
Ready Use Concrete	Strabane Depot

Lets hope we have more locations to report as 'accident free' in 2002.

Latest accident frequency and severity rate in 2002 up to end of May

Company	AFR	ASR
1. Ready Use Concrete	0.65	3.27
2. Farrans Construction	1.09	6.17
3. R.J. Maxwell	1.46	12.11
4. Breton Precast	1.56	17.19
5. Scott Toomebridge	1.56	23.44
6. Mattest	4.76	4.76
7. Breton Roecrete	7.35	30.88
Group Overall	1.46	9.80
Targets 2002	1.45	19.00

HSE warning: children playing on construction sites

In Northern Ireland a 5 year old boy was killed recently when he gained entry onto a construction site and was apparently playing in and around pipes.

We must all endeavour to ensure children do not access our works or locations and if you see a child on your site or in your location stop work and move the child to safety preferably off site. Also managers must ensure that sites and locations are secure as far as is reasonably practicable, at the end of the working day and especially when closed for annual holidays.

Always remember the Group Health and Safety Department is available for advice or guidance on any health and safety matter, we are here to help you.