

# FARRANS Link

DECEMBER 2003

ISSUE 8

## Chief Executive's Diary



**As another successful year for Farrans Limited and its people draws to a close, it is a good time to reflect on the many achievements of our business during 2003.**

There has been an unprecedented amount of safety training delivered over the year, with our commitment that each and every person who works on, or visits a construction site, must have the appropriate grade of Construction Skills Register card. Our Divisional safety directors have also attended a recognised senior managers safety training course, as I firmly believe that effective leadership is vital as we endeavour to

reduce our accident frequency and severity rates. We have also focussed on health issues and I was delighted to support the Action Cancer initiative which assisted us in raising awareness of the importance of early detection of cancers.

I am pleased to report that our statistics again show a downward trend in both accident frequency and severity. However we must all continue to be vigilant to ensure that we maintain this momentum.

We have also had a busy year in our sales and marketing function, with the delivery of practical skills training to our sales executives and the development of a common Customer Care Policy which will also require a large amount of training to ensure effective implementation.

A comprehensive customer survey will also be undertaken in the early part of 2004 as we seek to develop stronger relationships with our customers and find out more about how we meet their requirements.

I am also glad to report that there is an increasing level of communication between the sales executives across the product lines, which I am convinced will continue to result in further business development opportunities. It is vital that we are aware of and act on every opportunity to sell our products and services.

Our most significant capital development in 2003 has been the construction and commissioning of the new quarry and asphalt production facility at Croaghan which, although featured elsewhere in this magazine, I feel deserves a special mention. We now have a truly world class quarrying and coated materials production location which will serve us well, as we continue to grow this aspect of the business. I would like to congratulate Willie McNabb, Bill Weir, Finn McCrory and Robin Christie as well as all other Farrans people who were involved in this project. We have also significantly improved the production capability at North Down and Ballymena quarries, which will reduce production costs and at the same time, open up further opportunities for business growth.

At Scotts, the thin leading edge Galloway roof tile production line is now fully operational and producing quality roof tiles which have received excellent reviews in the market place, with order levels continuing to increase month by month. This product allows us to compete in a new market sector and hopefully realise better prices.

Plant refurbishment at Ready Use continued during the year with the depots at Moneymore, Ballynahinch and Strabane being upgraded with new bins as we continue to meet the challenges of the market place and improve our production efficiencies. There are similar initiatives planned at other depots in 2004.

A successful supervisor training initiative was also piloted this year at Ready Use with a view to rolling it out to our other Divisions during 2004.

Farrans Construction is now firmly back in quality home building, led by David Craigan, at sites in Lisburn and Craigavon and we have a good land bank for further growth in this sector. Recently awarded contracts include Fofanny Water Treatment Works and we also have secured preferred bidder status on the prestigious Victoria Centre development in Belfast.

I was also very impressed with what I saw when I visited the Farrans Construction English Division project at Mildenhall during November. The dedication of the site team as well as the quality and technical complexity of the work being delivered to our Client was first class.

Maxwell are also completing the refurbishment of runways at Belfast City Airport, and have started a busy programme of measured term road maintenance which will last for at least three years.

Materials Testing goes from strength to strength with an ever increasing number of customers choosing to avail of the extensive range of tests available through Gordon Ellis and the rest of his team in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. To meet demand in Dublin, new premises have been secured at Baldoyle which are currently being prepared.

Our COINS computer software implementation is now well advanced and it will move into the final implementation stage during next year, with it being rolled out to Scott and Ready Use. Around the same time we will commence the replacement of our location despatch system with Command Alcon, an American system, which is also being installed in all Roadstone-Wood locations throughout Ireland.

I am committed to our ethos of Continuous Improvement in everything we do, because I feel we cannot effectively grow our business if we do not look for ways of improving how we do things. For this reason a number of Directors will look at specific areas of activity and generate practical ideas as to how we can improve. Once this process starts, my hope is that it will become an essential part of everybody's day to day role, to examine ways of improving performance at Farrans.

It only remains for me to thank you all for your efforts over the year and wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe New Year!

NOEL QUINN, December 2003

## Aggregate Tax Victory

Hot off the press is the Chancellor's pre budget statement which confirmed the long awaited news that Government has decided to reduce the aggregate tax levy in Northern Ireland by 80% of the rate applicable in the rest of the United Kingdom. Critically, this reduced rate will be held until 31st March 2012 subject to a Code of Good Environmental Practice being adopted by the industry and approval by the European Union. It will apply to both processed products and virgin aggregates.

This momentous achievement is due in no small way to the work of the Quarry Products Association in Northern Ireland and in particular, to the determined leadership of our own Willie McNabb, who chairs the Association.

No doubt there will be a few glasses raised in celebration over the festive period by people across the industry.

## Edward Retires

**The end of this year will bring to a close the career of one of our most senior and respected employees with the retirement of Edward McBriar, the Group's Finance Director. It will certainly be the end of an era at Dunmurry as Edward has been a main board director of our business for 29 years.**



Edward attended Methodist College in Belfast where he developed an aptitude for facts and figures which was to lay the foundation of his future business career. He also played for the school's first fifteen rugby side where undoubtedly his team working ethos was honed.

After leaving school, Edward went into an accountancy practice where he excelled in his professional examinations and was admitted as a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland in 1968. Following that he held several accountancy positions in local industry before joining T.B.F. Thompson in 1973. Edward's stewardship of the financial side of our business over the years has been top class and many of us, at every level, have benefited from his advice and guidance. There is no more fitting tribute to Edward's abilities and contribution to Farrans than that given by Noel Quinn at a recent senior management get together;

"I have known Edward since I joined the Group in 1989 and over the last two years I have worked very closely with him. Edward is the epitome of a Financial Director in that he provides clear, concise and accurate information when required. He also has absolute integrity and reliability."

Edward will certainly not be idle in his forthcoming retirement as he tells us he will be walking more and taking time to swim and play tennis on a regular basis. He is also an elder of Ballynahinch Baptist Church as well as being a family man with two grandchildren who no doubt have their own plans for his retirement. There is even talk in the McBriar household of an extended holiday to Australia and New Zealand.

All Farrans people wish Edward a long and healthy retirement.

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## King of the Cobblestones

Farrans Construction site operative, Gary Millar, certainly made the headlines earlier this year when he was pictured working on a pile of some four million cobblestones at Glasgow Harbour.

The stones had originally formed the foundations of the famous Clydeside shipyards and date back to the mid 19th century. Gary's task was to clean down sufficient quantities of stones so that we could re-use them as part of our contract to construct roads, parking bays and pavements as well as other infrastructural works to facilitate the redevelopment of the Victorian landscape within the docklands.



*On Top of the Pile – Gary Gets to Work*

Our £2m project commenced in July of this year and is programmed to be completed in May 2004. It will facilitate the construction of three large residential developments which will in total consist of 650 apartments.

The on site team is led by Site Manager, Paul Magowan who is ably supported by Ian Waugh, Derek Matthewson and Thomas Philliben. Our FarransLink reporter managed to catch up with Paul recently and asked for an update on the job;

“The contract is going well”, said Paul, “our main challenge is to be as unobtrusive as possible to the other contractors who are working in the harbour area as this is a really massive regeneration project and in the coming months we could have as many as 500 construction workers in the vicinity of our works as they commence building the residential units. We have to make sure we liaise effectively with everybody who may be affected by our activities. The cobblestones we have been using are not only very hard wearing but also create a visual link to the past consistent with a dockside environment. I have to say that Gary did a great job for us in retrieving and preparing the stones for the roadways which were part of our works.”

Over the last few years Farrans Construction have gained a well deserved reputation for providing their clients with innovative solutions for the recovery and use of materials to produce superior levels of finish and also minimise any adverse effects on the environment. Clearly we are impressing our clients and our own King of the Cobblestones has added to this reputation.

## Construction Scoops Safety Excellence Award



*All Looking Well (left to right): David Smyth, Brian Beattie (Sponsor), Clifford Spence, Leslie McLaughlin, Alex Anderson.*

**It was dinner jackets and black ties all round when the guys from Construction's Safety Department were asked to attend this year's Construction Excellence Awards event which was held in Belfast at the end of October. The event was jointly sponsored by the Construction Employers' Federation and Specify Magazine.**

We had entered the Health and Safety award category and put together two colourful display boards which told the Construction safety story and, in particular, the improvements in our performance over the past year. We also outlined the CARES Safety Management System as well as our ongoing commitment to safety training.

After the dinner and the usual speeches, there followed an anxious wait for our team as health and safety was one of the most keenly contested categories. However, there was no need to worry and Clifford Spence, Construction's Safety Director, accepted the award on behalf of everyone in his Company.

The following day, back at Dunmurry, our FarransLink reporter got an opportunity to speak to Clifford, and as usual, the response was enthusiastic.

“This award makes all the hard work over the year worthwhile. I felt really proud to accept it on behalf of everyone in the Company and in particular the health and safety team without whom we would not have made the same degree of progress. Our challenge is to retain the award next year”.

Well done to everyone at Farrans Construction on winning another trophy for the cabinet at Dunmurry.

## New Faces at Ready Use

**Elaine Burns** joined in September and takes over from Eddie Walsh as our credit controller. She brings to the role a wide experience base in our industry having previously worked for a large builders' merchant. Elaine comes from Kilcoo in County Down and lists walking and keeping fit as her principle pastimes. Elaine reports to Sales Director, Keith Wood, and will work closely with the sales team in dealing with customer accounts. Everything has gone well for Elaine, as she explained recently to our Farranslink reporter; “It's hard to believe I am here three months because everyone is very friendly and helpful and, as they say, ‘Time flies when you are having fun.’”



**Rebecca Drury** also joined the Company in September and takes over as our representative in the Ballynahinch and Banbridge sales areas. She previously worked in a sales role with a local company which supplied roller shutter doors and, as such, is very familiar with the needs of our customers. Rebecca lives in Ballynahinch and likes nothing better than meeting and negotiating with customers. Away from work Rebecca enjoys shopping and socialising. Recently Rebecca took time out from her day to day duties to reflect on her first few months with the Company. “I love getting out and about meeting the customers and promoting Ready Use products. The boys at the plants have made me feel at home and most importantly, I'm really enjoying the job.”

**A number of new faces have joined the team at Ready Use further strengthening the capabilities in a number of functional areas.**

**Nigel Mairs** is our new representative in the Coleraine and Moneymore sales area. He brings to the role a lot of experience in the minerals processing industry having been previously employed as the Regional Sales Manager for a large crushing plant manufacturer in the north east of England. Nigel lives in Aghadowey and is overseeing the building of a new home in his spare time. He is married with twin sons. Away from work Nigel likes a round of golf and playing five-a-side football but his real passion is supporting and travelling to watch his beloved Chelsea Football Club. Nigel has clearly settled in well at Ready Use; “I am enjoying working for a large organisation and I have found everyone at the plants and at Dunmurry very helpful. The training I have received has been extremely useful and informative.”



**Niall Fulton** is the new administrator in the garage at Dunmurry. He holds an NVQ Level 2 in mechanical engineering. He has worked in our industry in the past and his willingness to accept and successfully complete new challenges has made him a popular member of the team. Niall comes from Broughshane in Ballymena and his outside interests include rallying and he is particularly proud of his recent success in the Mid Antrim Championship. Niall is clearly one for new challenges as he outlined to Farranslink recently; “It's great to be part of a prestigious company which has such a good reputation. I'm finding that after six months I still learn things each day and undertake new challenges, which is the way I like it”.

**Farranslink wishes all four of our new people at Ready Use a long and successful career with the Company.**

## A Hard Act to Follow



Jeff Weaver (left) and John Gillyray (right) share a joke at Jeff's retirement bash.

Jeff Weaver, our long serving Site Agent in Construction's English Division, has retired after 35 years of distinguished and unbroken service with the Company.

In his time Jeff worked for us on a Sultan's palace in Saudi Arabia and there were also spells in Northern Ireland where he worked on major supermarket developments in Belfast and Coleraine. However, Jeff's speciality was delivering superior levels of customer care to the United States

Airforce at Lakenheath and Mildenhall as well as other bases throughout East Anglia. As usual Jeff received great praise from the Client for his final project which was the construction of a £23 million accommodation block at Mildenhall.

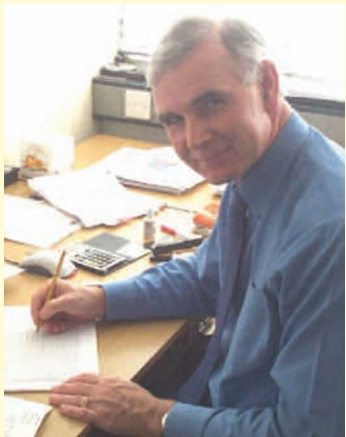
Jeff was a Farrans man through and through who took great pleasure in developing the site skills of our young engineers and passing on a few tricks of the trade honed over three decades on construction projects. Those who worked with Jeff would all report that he was a hard person to keep up with in not only enthusiasm and building knowledge but also walking around the site.

All at Farrans wish Jeff a long and healthy retirement. He will definitely be a hard act to follow.

## Brian's Professionalism comes to the Fore

**Brian Gordon, our Development Manager at Farrans Construction, is one of those Farrans people whose commitment and professionalism underpins a lot of our commercial success.**

He joined us way back in 1979 as a senior quantity surveyor having previously been with another major contractor. At that time there were some 23 people in the surveying department and Ken Walker was the director in charge. Over the years Brian has worked on many multi million pound public and private sector projects.



Brian Gordon hard at work at his desk.

In December 1996 Brian became Construction's Development Manager and began to work closely with the Northwin Consortium in preparing and submitting our bids for the six Educational Sector Pathfinder Projects. His role was to collate and co-ordinate our submissions. At that time we secured four of the projects.

However Brian's contribution did not end with the bidding process as he was also the Consortium's representative during the construction phase in liaising with the Client and handing over the completed project to the service provider.

At the moment, Brian is continuing his work on our own Private Finance Initiative submissions and he tells us that there are two bids now in preparation.

More recently Brian has become involved in a commercial and quantity surveying role at Farrans Homes where his professionalism has added to the skill base of the evolving management team in this newly created Division. Brian certainly seems to be enjoying the Farrans Homes experience as he explained recently:

"My role is both challenging and enjoyable at Farrans Homes where I help to ensure that we effectively meet the needs of our customers."

Brian is married with three children and lives in Newtownabbey. He lists his interests as walking, church work and angling. He is currently treasurer of Glengormley Methodist Church and has recently completed a 10-mile walk on behalf of local charity, Action Cancer.

Brian is a chartered quantity surveyor and chartered builder.

## Lifetime Learning at Farrans Limited

**Our Company has always had a reputation for training and developing its people and each year Farrans people commence a wide range of part time courses with a view to not only developing themselves but also enhancing their contribution to the business.**



Standing (left to right): Richard McDermott, Brian Thompson, Philip Shields, Gareth Telford. Seated (left to right): Jimmy Totten, Tommy Henry, Kara Cunningham, Jim Leitch, Ken Anderson.

In the early autumn nine of our most recent graduates and professionally qualified people came together for a photocall at Dunmurry. What sets this group of people apart is that each and every one of them holds down a responsible position with the Company and each has made personal sacrifices to achieve their qualifications. Our FarransLink reporter was keen to find out what benefits have accrued to them from achieving their qualifications and detailed below are their responses.

**Brian Thompson**, Production Director at Ready Use Concrete, was awarded a BA honours degree in Business Studies from the University of Ulster. His comments on his newly acquired qualification were very positive; "The degree has broadened my horizons. It was good for someone like me from a purely production background to learn more about the other functional areas of a business and in particular the financial aspects of running a company".

**Tommy Henry**, Site Engineer at R J Maxwell was awarded a B.Eng honours degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Ulster. "The degree gives me more self confidence in my dealings with Clients and their professional representatives", said Tommy, "I certainly got a big buzz when I graduated because of the sense of achievement after many years of part time study."

**Jimmy Totten**, an Assistant Accountant at Scotts, graduated with a BA honours degree in Business Studies from the University of Ulster. He was enthusiastic about what the degree has done for him; "Studying for the degree has given me self confidence in my own abilities to work under pressure and meet deadlines. I now have a greater appreciation of the wider business perspective in terms of understanding where the information I produce goes to and how it is used."

**Philip Shields**, a Contract Manager with R J Maxwell, graduated with a Master of Business Administration Degree from the University of Ulster. Again Philip was keen to stress the benefits of his degree; "My MBA allowed me to get into the various elements of running a business in some detail. The case studies were excellent in terms of allowing me to understand the day to day problems and issues facing today's manager ranging from finance and business strategy to human resources and operations management. I certainly feel more self confident now than before I commenced my studies."

**Richard McDermott**, the Administration and Finance Director at R J Maxwell was awarded an MSc in Business Improvement from the University of Ulster. He was keen to stress the practical benefits of his course as he explains; "My degree was particularly relevant as it gave me access to a wide range of business improvement approaches as well as training in separating those which suit our particular situation. I would recommend this degree to anyone else in my sort of role."

**Kara Cunningham**, Company Accountant at Ready Use Concrete is now a passed finalist leading to membership of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. To her, the qualification was all about broadening her professional knowledge as she explains; "The qualification has trained me in the tools and techniques which will assist me in doing a better job for Ready Use. I can now get a better insight into the key factors affecting the performance of a business. In addition, the sense of achievement in passing my examinations was exhilarating."

**Jim Leitch**, Human Resource Manager at Farrans Limited was awarded an MA degree in Human Resource Management from the University of Ulster. He was only too pleased to describe why he embarked on a long course of study, as he outlined. "My motivation in taking the degree was to learn as much as I could about the subject area in which I am involved in at Farrans while at the same time achieve a recognised qualification. It is vital for me to keep at the leading edge of my subject area and in doing so I can maximise my contribution to the business."

**Ken Anderson**, Area Sales Manager at Scotts, was awarded a BA honours degree from the University of Ulster. Ken stressed the personal development aspects of his degree; "My degree has allowed me to develop personally in terms of learning more about various aspects of a business as well as how they all link together. The rigour of doing research, analysing data and submitting reports has done me no harm whatsoever in terms of developing the core skills required for my own role at Scotts."

FarransLink congratulates all nine of our people showcased above and looks forward to describing more personal success stories in our future editions.

# Focus on Farrans People – Tom’s Typical Day

**Tom Murphy has been with Farrans Construction for over twenty years having worked on most of our major projects in that time including Kilroot Power Station, the Cross Harbour Bridge and the new Bleach Green Railway Line. He is currently the General Foreman on the Aquarius 3 Project in County Down.**

FarransLink is always keen to provide an insight into the jobs our people undertake day in, day out, and Tom was only too happy to oblige as he explained recently;

“The first thing I do every day is carry out an inspection of all scaffolding and ensure that it is sound for use that day. I then check all plant and health and safety equipment and prepare a report if any excavation work has to be done that day. A big part of my job is organising the labour on site and making sure that there is sufficient plant and manpower for specific jobs. I prepare a schedule of work in conjunction with the site engineers and stay in close contact with them throughout each day via the walkie talkies to ensure that resources are working to plan. Like all of Farrans’ jobs there is high priority on health and safety at Aquarius 3 and so on a weekly basis I am involved in giving ‘Toolbox Talks’. These talks form part of the Farrans ‘CARES’ Safety System and help to monitor what is happening on site and make sure that all the men



Tom pictured hard at work at Aquarius 3

understand how equipment should be used in a safe manner. There is also a good sense of teamwork and a particular feeling of enjoyment on this job. People understand each other’s level of skill and so each respects what the other is doing. It is also clear to see that people

are learning from each other every day, which is an important part of personal development”.

Tom is also clearly one of the thinkers on the project as he recently won the site’s ‘Idea of the Month’ Award. Modestly he described his idea to our reporter;

“Being on site day in, day out you get to see how the various construction processes are carried out and how long each operation takes. It became evident to me that when cutting or grinding work was being undertaken, time was being wasted as men went to find safety glasses. Also, more frequently the glasses were being damaged as they were taken off periodically and left at on the ground. I therefore came up with the idea of supplying the men with special hard hats with visors attached, an all-in-one piece of safety equipment”.

Tom is married with two children and lives just outside of Markethill in County Armagh. His other passion, away from family and work, is rearing game birds for his local shooting club. Each year he looks after 350 pheasant chicks from the egg until they are about six weeks old and ready for release.

Tom Murphy is typical of those unsung heroes who are found across the business and who make Farrans what it is today.

## Bob’s Efforts are Rewarded



Bob Smyth (far right) pictured at the launch of the 6th ARENA Network Environmental Management Survey, receiving his First Quintile plaque from Jim Shields, Waste Control Manager, Belfast City Council and George Dawson, Director of ARENA Network.

**Bob Smyth, our Technical and Environmental Manager at Scotts, has undertaken lots of work over the past few years to maintain and improve our environmental performance.**

We were all delighted to hear recently that his dedication and commitment were recognised when he received an award from Arena Network on behalf of the Company.

The award confirmed that Scotts are among the top performing companies in the Province in terms of environmental performance and management. It is to the credit of Farrans Construction and R.J. Maxwell that they also are included in this category.

Proof indeed that environmental issues are high on the list of priorities of all our operating businesses.

## Maxwell Golden Girl Beats Men to the Punch

**Carol Canning Smyth, one of our secretaries at Maxwell’s Coleraine office, has just won a gold medal at the World Self Defence Federation Championships which were held in Southend on Sea.**

What makes Carol’s performance even more remarkable was that she was the only lady entered in the competition and had to fight male competitors to scoop the coveted first prize. Competing in martial arts competitions at the highest level is a world away from Carol’s work activities of preparing training matrices, dealing with job application forms and all the other usual office administration tasks so our intrepid Farranslink reporter was keen to find out why a quietly spoken, young married woman from Coleraine got involved in martial arts.

Carol admits she enjoys the never ending process of learning the techniques and skills associated with this demanding sport.

“I have always had an interest in martial arts and quite by chance, about

two years ago, I was speaking to our security guard and he encouraged me to go along to a club in Ballymoney to find out more. I did this and before long, I was training two nights a week. I immediately discovered that the self defence discipline helps to develop one’s attitudes, concentration and focus,” said Carol.

“I find also it is a great stress reliever and not only does the sport build self confidence it also helps to improve physical fitness and control. The feeling of a sense of achievement is tremendous. I really do get so much from the activity.”

As a result of her achievements, Carol is one of only two people from Northern Ireland who have been invited to apply for an all expenses paid trip to Japan, the spiritual home of martial arts.

Doubtless we will be hearing more about Carol who has successfully turned the tables on men in a traditionally male dominated sport.



Carol gets to grips with her instructor at a recent training session.

## 89 Employees Cash In

The 1st of December 2003 saw the end of the 3-year CRH Share Save Scheme which was launched in 2000 with 89 Farrans people being eligible to participate in the 2% month bonus and a potential profit per share of around £2.60 at the time of going to press.

However, employees must remember to wait until they receive their share certificate before selling their shares. The actual selling price will be dependent on the day of the sale and a quarter end, especially a year end, holds much share price volatility. Details of option prices under the Scheme are as follows:

	Option Price	Share Price @ 3/12/03
Year 2000	£8.77	£11.40
Year 2002	£10.08	£11.40
Year 2003	£7.18	£11.40

# Focus on Farrans People: The Estimating Team at Farrans Construction

Effective estimating is the life blood of Farrans Construction. The article below provides an insight into the changes which have occurred in tendering over recent years and of the Farrans people who have adapted to them to secure the quality work which is so important to our business.

In the estimating department at Farrans Construction we process over 300 tenders per annum, in Northern Ireland, Scotland and England, of which we selectively target about 50 as high priority bids. The whole nature of tendering has changed dramatically over the last 5 years. The majority of the larger tenders are now tendered as design and construct schemes, for which we must assemble design teams, often multi-disciplinary. Most of our 'high priority' tenders are now judged not only on price, but also on the quality/technical aspects of the proposals. Huge amounts of

information now accompanies most tenders, including details of resources, key personnel, programmes, method statements, quality assurance and health & safety issues. In line with these changes, the role of the estimator is also evolving. No longer should an estimator simply be a 'number-cruncher', churning out priced Bills of Quantities, but also a bid co-ordinator, co-ordinating the bid process and the bid team. Bid teams include, from time to time, personnel from other departments within the company, most notably construction, planning, buying, plant, health &

safety, quality, environmental and human resources. Without this valued input, proper tendering is impossible. We are now integrating more closely with the quantity surveying and cost departments in order to learn from our experience on contracts. This is most evident in our tenders for works in the water industry, where the cost department has developed an extensive database of historical costs, with assistance from the contracts staff. This information is fed back into tenders. Another notable evolution in the last 5 years has been the successful

integration of both building and civil engineering estimating, using common estimating systems and supplier databases. Efficiency is always our goal, as resources are regularly stretched. We maximise the use of electronic trading, and are continuing to strive towards the goal of full electronic tendering. There is a good teamworking spirit within the department, and, despite the heavy workload, a pleasant working environment exists on the floor, with regular meetings and informal discussions forming a key element of this.



## Nigel Paine

Prior to Nigel's recent office based experience he was involved in several types of civil engineering works including marine works, water treatment and distribution and road works projects. Over a 5-year period on site he developed from Site Engineer level to Site Agent. This valuable experience on site has been very useful in allowing him to tackle his current planning and estimating roles.

During Nigel's period under an ICE training agreement with Farrans, he was seconded to Ferguson & McIlveen where he obtained the vital design experience to allow him to obtain Chartered Membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers. This design experience has also been utilised throughout the design and construct contracts, which he has been involved in at both the tender and construction stage.



## Ronald Sullivan

Ronald arrived at Farrans Construction in November 2002 to become part of the estimating team, after having worked for the previous fifteen years with McGaffin Contracts Limited from Duncrue Street, Belfast.

Since joining he has been involved in numerous forms of contract and many challenging projects, learning new skills in the time period and enjoying the great network within the Company. Ronald graduated with a civil engineering degree, before moving into the building side of construction, and finally into estimating where he has been involved over the last twelve years. Outside of work he has a keen interest in sports, hillwalking and playing music, and is married to Lois with two young children at primary school age.



## Kevin Kennedy

Kevin joined Construction from Breton in 1999. "When I joined Farrans it appeared daunting at first, being on the other side of the fence so to speak, so I had a very steep learning curve but I had a lot of experience both behind me and around me and it certainly helped".

Kevin was fortunate to be involved from the start when the Company embarked on Computer Aided Estimating and invested substantially in the Conquest Estimating

Software, the knowledge he gained enabled him to provide assistance to the senior members of staff.

In estimating Kevin believes that the easy bit is the pricing, however, it is the people and processes behind the estimate that are really important. "Our aim is to secure work for the Company through a professional and qualitative approach to tendering. The people I work with everyday in Farrans are what goes into making each tender a quality submission – success is measured in many ways – without the support and dedication of the whole team then it would never be achieved – so thank you!"

Outside of work Kevin is keen on rugby, football and squash but his main interest is quality time with his family.



## Jerome Curran

Jerome recently joined Farrans as a Building Management Graduate after studying and completing a BSc Hons in Construction Engineering and Management at the University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

He was previously employed by Farrans during his industrial placement as a Junior Site Engineer. During this time he worked on the Lincoln Centre Budget Hotel, and also for a brief while at Malone Apartments.

His placement year provided him with invaluable insight and experience into the engineering and management of a construction project. At present his position within the Company is as an assistant estimator. "This opportunity has allowed me to broaden my construction knowledge, and appreciate the work required pre-award in securing a contract."



## Elaine Martin

Elaine has worked in the Estimating Department since she joined the Company in October 1987. John Sloan was the Director in charge of the Department until he retired in 1996. John Clarke took over the role until January 2003.

Mark Lowry was then made head of the Department from January 2003, when the estimating team from both Civil Engineering and Building were moved together to the ground floor. Elaine administers the estimating department and tendering process. She has seen huge changes in the estimating computer software over the years from the old fashioned IB6 program introduced seventeen years ago to the very modern Conquest System of today.



## Ross McWha

Ross has recently joined Farrans Construction as a 'Civil Engineering Graduate' after graduating from Queen's with a Masters degree in Civil Engineering. His present position is in the estimating department as an assistant estimator for Civils jobs in both Northern Ireland and Scotland. This role has given him the opportunity to work on many different projects, and allowed him to appreciate the work required in winning a tender. In July his design team from Queen's University won the undergraduate steel bridge design award, which is a National

competition run by Corus. For the competition he had to design a steel flyover and plan the construction works.

Ross's role is a one year rotating role, whereby we take on a new graduate engineer every June, initiating them into estimating before moving out for further vocational training on site.



## Lisa Lean

Lisa joined Farrans in January 1999 where she worked with Gary Blair in the Buying Department issuing drawings to different sites. In late 2000 she moved to the Estimating Department where she assists in editing and importing Bills of Quantities into the Conquest System. Recently Lisa has moved on to a more technical role, entering comparisons into the Conquest System and she is now learning to resource bills of quantities, and is really enjoying this work.

# The Farrans Homes Story Continues



Articles on the growth of the Farrans Homes Division have appeared regularly on the pages of previous editions of this magazine. This time we showcase the team at Moyraverty which is our most recent development and consists of the construction of 71 homes in the Craigavon area.

Farrans Homes General Manager, David Craigan, reports that sales at Moyraverty are making steady progress since commencement of the site and we currently have 22 units booked with 15 of these due to be handed over before Christmas. Construction on site is keeping pace and by the end of the year we will have completed 49 foundations and roofed 40 houses. David is obviously delighted with the progress as he explained to our reporter;

“We have made excellent progress this year and if purchaser interest keeps up at the current level, we would intend to build out the remainder of the development over the coming months. The guys on site have certainly pulled out all the stops.”

The site team at Moyraverty is made up of Stephen Foster, George Grant, Jim Burke and Gareth Wilson.

**Stephen Foster** spent many years supervising our commercial building contracts before joining the Homes Division at the start of the year. He is the site manager at Moyraverty and has put his undoubted skills to good use in making sure we meet handover dates and the quality standards expected by our customers.

**Jim Burke** looks after the ground works on site where his 40 years experience in the industry have proved invaluable in ensuring that our foundations and drainage are placed where they are shown on the drawings! His leadership of the groundworks package has certainly worked well.



Stephen Foster says it with flowers to another happy purchaser at Moyraverty

**George Grant** is one of the Company's most experienced site based members of staff. He has recently joined the team at Moyraverty and is already hard at work in monitoring and controlling the quality of work produced by the various trades.

**Gareth Wilson** is a placement student and the baby of the team. He is quickly gaining experience and contributing well to the site activities under the watchful eye of Jim Burke.

The team at Moyraverty with it's blend of experience and enthusiasm is indicative of those found elsewhere in the Division and it looks like the success story, that is Farrans Homes is likely to continue for many years to come.



Left to right: Gareth Wilson, Stephen Foster, George Grant and Jim Burke.

## Sales Training Initiative Keeps Going



Back row (l-r): Nigel Mairs (Ready Use), Paul Roberts (R.J. Maxwell), Richard Wilson (Scotts)  
Front row (l-r): Rebecca Drury (Ready Use), Bronagh McIlroy (Scotts)

The latest stage of our Company wide sales training initiative has just been completed with the delivery of another two day strategic selling skills course for our sales executives by Latchkey Training. The session consists of a wide range of practical elements including territory planning, negotiation and dealing with the competition as well as the all important setting of individual objectives. Day two of the course is always rounded off by a visit to one of our locations to learn more about how our products are manufactured.

Over the coming months there will be further training as we implement a new customer care policy. The policy was developed by Alan Hewitt from Scotts, Keith Wood from Ready Use and Raymond Moore from Maxwells. It includes individual responsibilities as well as standardised arrangements for ensuring that each and every existing or potential customer receives superior levels of service as we seek to maintain and grow our customer base and also to explore opportunities to increase the volume of business undertaken with individual customers

Looks like exciting times ahead for all of us who are involved in sales and marketing within our business.

## Tom Takes on Vital Role



Tom Sweeney hard at work in Dunmurry

**Tom Sweeney** has just joined the team at Dunmurry to undertake the vital role of Business Development Manager. His brief is to seek new business opportunities, primarily outside of our existing product portfolio, but complementary to Group activities, so that we can continue to grow and ensure we meet the ongoing challenges of the market place.

This will include assessing the CRH product portfolio to evaluate their suitability and compatibility with our own business. Tom will report directly to Noel Quinn and also looks forward to working closely with senior managers at our locations and draw on their expertise and experience as required.

Tom is certainly the man for the job as he brings to it over twenty five years experience in our former Breton precast business where he held the position of Director and General Manager, as well as a fine academic and commercial capability, as befits someone with a Master's Degree in Business Strategy.

Tom is married with three children, twin boys and a girl, and lives in Crossgar in County Down. Nowadays he is limited to just watching football, and also plays a little golf in his spare time.

All at FarransLink wish Tom well in his new and demanding role.

## Suggestions, Suggestions and More Suggestions...



Crawford Baird (right) proudly displays his safety suggestion to Production Manager, David Luke

The Ready Use Safety Suggestion Scheme has had a successful first year with the number of entries received from our people exceeding our expectations. The safety committee certainly had a very difficult job deciding on the top three suggestions but after much deliberation it was announced that Crawford Baird, who looks after the depot at Kells, should take first place.

Crawford came up with a very innovative way of preventing sand from blocking in the load chute of the truck when producing screed by using a plastic liner. The safety committee were extremely impressed with this simple idea as it eliminated the potential hazard of climbing the truck's ladder to clear the blockage. Crawford's prize was a 28 inch television set.

Alan Boles, who is one of our owner drivers at Carryduff, took second place for his well thought out ideas to prevent potential collisions between forklift trucks and other vehicles at the depot.

Third place went to John Halligan, our batcherman at Dunmurry, who identified a potential hazard for ex works customers at the plant and suggested ideas on how the situation could be alleviated.

Thanks to everyone who took part in this year's scheme and our safety committee are again looking forward to an overflowing suggestion box next year and the rumour around the plants is that Crawford is already working on a new idea.

## Craig Receives National Recognition

Our Health and Safety Manager at R.J. Maxwell, Craig Chisholm, recently received national recognition for his work at the prestigious Quarry Products Associations Health and Safety Best Practice Awards evening in London.

The R.J. Maxwell entry was based on the system we have in place to control hand arm vibration and reduce the possible ill health effects on our people arising from the use of vibrating equipment such as vibrating plates, hand held rollers and pneumatic drills.

R.J. Maxwell was highly commended at the awards event and Craig received the award on our behalf.

Well done to all involved in this very worthwhile initiative.



Craig Chisholm (left) receives congratulations from Martin Isles of The Quarry Products Association.

# Croaghan Development is Completed



Lorries loading at the new plant at Croaghan

**As we go to press we can report that our Croaghan Quarry development, our most significant capital investment project for many years, is completed. The £3.5m investment at Shinnay Road, on the outskirts of Coleraine, was necessary to continue to provide superior levels of customer care and also to replace the Bushmills Road production unit, also in Coleraine, which had come to the end of its working life.**

The project involved the commissioning of new crushing and screening installations as well as a new asphalt coating plant together with all necessary improvements to the quarry's infrastructure to allow for effective operations and future expansion with minimum disruption.

Work began in mid May of this year with the connection of the generator switch room to all fixed items of plant which involved the laying of some 5,500 metres of duct work across the quarry floor. Less than a month later we were pouring the first load of concrete for the foundations of the new asphalt plant. Two weighbridges were also installed at the same time.

On 5 July, the asphalt plant foundations were handed over to the plant installation contractor, Amman, which was two days ahead of schedule and quite a feat bearing in mind the high level of precision engineering required.

The retaining walls for the plant's cold feed bins were completed on 2 August and by 18 September we were producing the first trial batches of blacktop and surfacing the area around the plant.

In September we also commenced work on the aggregate storage bays, which each hold 15,000 tonnes of materials for use in the asphalt plant. The design of the bays was carefully considered and eventually the solution agreed upon was one of steel stanchions and pre stressed concrete wall panels.

Our suppliers began delivering the new crushing plant on 1 September and by 25 September the primary crusher was commissioned with the secondary and tertiary crushers following on 17 October. The siting of secondary and tertiary installations has meant that we have more than trebled the stockpiling capacity for aggregates at the location.

In addition to the major plant installations, the drainage network, dust suppression and road networks at Croaghan have also been significantly developed.

The drainage network has been improved to slow the rate of any waste water leaving the premises and allowing greater settlement of suspended solids within the holding lagoons. Some 1,000 metres of water pipes have also been laid to supply the new dust suppression system with the water coming from 2 boreholes which in turn fill storage tanks of some 70,000 gallon capacity.

The Croaghan road network has been enhanced to ensure the safe routing of vehicles and efficient work practices.

The quantities of materials used in the project were immense, and the following details may give FarransLink readers an idea of the scale of operation:-

- 4,500 tonnes of rock used for the level area to accommodate the asphalt plant and storage bays
- 5,500 tonnes of rock used to form the ramp to the cold feed bins
- 2,500 tonnes of 150mm crusher run to create the base for the secondary and tertiary crushers
- 500 tonnes of 100mm spalls to form the new drainage
- 600 tonnes of blacktop laid around the new asphalt plant
- 1,910 m<sup>3</sup> of Ready Use concrete
- 120 tonnes of steel reinforcement
- 150 tonnes of structural steel
- 1,500 m<sup>2</sup> of pre stressed concrete wall panelling

Croaghan is also our first quarry which is wholly self sufficient in energy with the design concept being that of a mini powerstation using 4 synchronised generators to supply the needs of the asphalt and crushing plants. Each genset has its own intelligent controller, which monitors and protects the generator using a control system which is the same as that used at Leeman Brothers Bank in London.

All in all the Croaghan development was a great effort by R.J. Maxwell people under the leadership of Production Director, Bill Weir.

## End of an Era at Coleraine Quarry

**It was an emotional afternoon in late October when the last load of coated material left Maxwells Bushmills Road Quarry and the conveyors and mixer came to a stop for the final time after almost 67 years of production. As referred to elsewhere in this magazine, the quarry has come to the end of its working life and production has shifted to the nearby location of Croaghan. However, it is right that we take time and space to chronicle what was our flagship quarry location and remember the various events and people which gave Bushmills Road its unique place in our history.**

The 44 acre site was opened by the late Robert John Maxwell in 1936 and at that time the quarry was worked in 18 foot benches with each driller having a set of 1 1/2 inch diameter drills from 2ft 3 ins to 18 feet in length. The shot rock was placed in bogies and pushed to a central point from where it was hauled by ropes to the crusher. The crusher was manufactured by Broadbent and ran on white metal bearings. Robert John and his son, Howard Alexander were always at the forefront of innovation and in 1946, a new Pegson Telsmith gyratory crusher arrived at the quarry direct from America. At the time, the crusher was the largest available in Europe. A conveyor system had to be constructed to feed this massive machine and thus began the programme of mechanisation and best practice which we see in evidence today at Croaghan. There was also investment in a new 37RB electric face shovel and 4.25 cubic yard Aveling Barford dump truck

complete with swivelling driver's seat, which was hailed as a great innovation at the time. The end result of this significant investment was to increase daily production from 250 tonnes to 800 tonnes.

Howard was also an innovator in his own right and in 1941 he brought the first mechanical spreader into Ireland. It was a Barbour Green 25B.

Tragically, Robert John and Howard Alexander died within a year of each other in the early 1950's but their Coleraine quarry was to continue to flourish when William Bolton of Kilrea acquired the business from Howard's widow in 1953. In 1956 asphalt was manufactured at Coleraine for the first time which meant investment in a new coating plant, quality control procedures and staff training.

In 1971 Coleraine quarry passed into the ownership of TBF Thompson, who along with Ken Cheevers and the late Bertie Gillanders, used their business acumen to further develop the operation. TBF Thompson sold Coleraine quarry together with other locations to CRH in 1978 and the rest, as they say is history. The next twenty five years saw the quarry produce and supply quality road building materials to our own contracts division and other customers which could not be matched for quality or performance in the north west of the Province.

The people who have graced the Bushmills Road quarry over the years have all played their part in providing it with its defining characteristic which was being a successful large business but still maintaining its family run atmosphere. Although too numerous to



Robin Christie (left) and Sam Boyd (right) pose with the last load before it leaves the quarry.

mention them all, some who come to mind are Tommy Leighton (retired Production Director), Jimmy Telford (retired Contracts Director), Tom Gaston and George McDowell (retired Divisional Quarry Managers), the late Roy Brown (Quarry Manager) and last, but not least, Ronnie McIntyre (retired Managing Director).

The Maxwell legacy is set to continue in the Coleraine district for many years to come with our Croaghan development and no doubt Robert John and Howard Alexander would have approved.

## Clocking on with our Maxwell Nightshift Team



*The Maxwell Team on site pose for the camera*

**Maxwell's Airfield Division personnel have been having regular nights out in Belfast for the past four months but not of a social nature. The latest Airfield contract is well under way at Belfast City Airport where the Maxwell team have focussed their skills and expertise on the refurbishment and strengthening of the main runway.**

The contract involves night working with the laying of approximately 45,000 tonnes of blacktop in three layers consisting of a regulating layer, a 50mm deep Heavy Duty Macadam (HDM) base course layer and a 50mm deep wearing course layer of Marshall asphalt grooved to provide drainage and storm water runoff.

The story begins with the negotiations to secure the work which were ongoing over an eighteen month period and involved various surfacing options. At one stage the project looked unlikely to proceed when the owners, Bombardier Aerospace, decided to sell the Airport. By this stage, Maxwell had secured preferred bidder status with Bombardier. The new owners, Ferrovial, a Spanish construction company moved quickly to award the contract to Maxwell just prior to the July holiday period.

Maxwell personnel were busy during the July holiday preparing the site at the Ballymena Depot for the installation of the coating plant, which was to be dedicated to the City Airport contract. The plant with a mixing capacity of 80 tonnes per hour was set up near to the existing mixing unit at Ballymena thereby allowing for a standby facility in the event of a breakdown.

Night work commenced at the City Airport on 4 August with the installation of seventeen duct crossings across the runway for the new aircraft ground lighting system. This involved saw cutting through the existing 375mm deep concrete slab and punching the concrete with a rock hammer. A tracked excavator removed the concrete and underlying material to the required depth. Ducts were placed and the trench backfilled with lean mix concrete to within 100mm of the runway surface. The final 100mm was reinstated with close graded bitmac to provide a clean sound surface on which planes could land the next morning when the Airfield became fully operational.

A critical factor on the contract was the narrow window available each night for the laying crews to achieve the target for the surfacing operations.

Possession of the runway is handed over nightly to Maxwell by the Operations staff at BCA on arrival of the last flight. This is usually around 2200 hours when permission is formally given to enter Airside and set up the surfacing operation for the shift. The runway has to be handed back to Belfast City Airport at 0600 hours. Careful planning and co-ordination is vital to maximise the progress on each shift. Fourteen portable lighting sets are used nightly to illuminate the working area. Each night the convoy moves out on to the Airfield in precision fashion, each team member going about his specific task in order to achieve an early start to the surfacing activities. The ramp formed at the end of the previous shift is planed out and while this activity is ongoing the engineering team mark the extent of the surfacing for the shift, identify the level dips for the paver operators together with the driving lines. The tack coating operation takes place simultaneously and as soon as the tack coat has broken the crews are ready to proceed. The two paving teams operate in echelon and pay careful attention to levels and quality of finish.

The works are carefully supervised from a Health and Safety perspective with special attention being given to the fact that the operations are taking place at night. Particular care has to be taken in regard to FOD (Foreign Object Damage) which could have serious consequences on an operational airfield with potential damage to aircraft engines.

While surfacing operations were ongoing the civils work in relation to the new airfield ground lighting was proceeding with Fox Contracts installing a new pit and duct system in the verges along both sides over the full length of the runway. ATG Airports, a specialist firm, have been entrusted with the installation of the new airfield ground lighting system.

The secondary cabling to the new lights was installed in the existing concrete surface of the runway using saw cutting equipment to form slots in the surface. The cables were laid out to the runway edge and the slot then sealed with hot bitumen prior to the regulating layer of Heavy Duty Macadam being laid. Care was taken to ensure that the cables were installed to avoid damage by the planer during the construction of the ramps in the surfacing at a later stage.

At the end of each shift an extensive inspection of the runway is conducted to ensure that no objects, tools, equipment or foreign materials have been left lying on the runway. Often this entails an inspection on foot by the supervisory team using towed lighting sets to provide illuminations. In addition extensive sweeping by suction sweepers throughout

the surfacing operations and civil engineering operations is essential to eliminate all risk of debris being left on the runway. A joint inspection by Maxwell and Airport operations personnel takes place at the end of each shift and the runway is then formally signed over to the Airport. By Christmas works will be well progressed with the surfacing, grooving of the wearing course, lining and airfield ground lighting at an advanced stage. The contract is expected to be completed in February 2004.

The Project has been characterised by excellent teamwork and co-ordination within the Maxwell organisation with the Production and Contracting Teams working closely together. The Client, Belfast City Airport and the Project Manager, Babtie represented by Roy Thompson, have been extremely satisfied with the commitment to quality by Maxwell.

The Production team led by Raymond Stirling and Derek Dougherty combined with the Site Management team of Richard McIlroy, Paul McBride, Ryan McDermott, Michael Scullion and Jonathan O'Connell and the Paving teams led by Hubert Leighton and Derek McKendry, have once again demonstrated the Maxwell capability to successfully undertake a major project during night working winter conditions while simultaneously meeting the operational requirements of a busy Airport.

Looks like our Airfields Division can chalk up another satisfied customer on their list of credits.



*Paver crews hard at work at Belfast City Airport*



## Andrew Takes It All In His Stride

**Andrew Donnan joined Farrans Construction in April 2000 as an assistant accountant and earlier this year was promoted to Company Accountant. He is a chartered accountant and also holds an honours degree in finance and accounting as well as a post graduate diploma in accounting from Queen's University.**

After training with Price Waterhouse Coopers in Belfast, Andrew joined a local computer software company as their financial controller and when that business was taken over he became the Group Financial Controller for the enlarged organisation. Our FarransLink reporter caught up with Andrew recently to find out more about his role and the challenges of the job at Construction;

"The construction industry is very different from the world of information technology where I began my career in business. In fact there is no other business sector like it for complexity. When I started at Dunmurry I realised I had to learn as much as

I could about the industry and in this regard my colleagues throughout the department were invaluable. They always had time to answer my questions and show me how things were dealt with. I will always appreciate this," indicated Andrew.

"This year I have spent a lot of time on the COINS initiative and this I feel is vitally important as the software provides easier access to improved management information. My people have really pulled out the stops in making Coins work and they deserve great credit for all their efforts. The challenge for my department is to make sure that we provide the management team with the highest quality information as quickly as possible and also to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as it can in all the other day to day operations undertaken by the department. My team has yet to let me down in any aspect of their work and I never fail to be impressed by their abilities and commitment."

Andrew is married to Siobhan and lives in Ballynahinch.

## Promoting Good Health at Farrans

Employee welfare has always been high on the agenda within Farrans and this autumn we decided to invite a health promotion team from local charity, Action Cancer, into the business to raise awareness of the importance of early detection of cancers in increasing survival rates.



The Farrans Construction team at Knock Valley find out more about male specific cancers

Statistics show that one in three people will suffer from cancer during their lifetime with approximately 275,000 new cases of cancer being diagnosed each year in the United Kingdom. Prostate cancer is the most common form of the disease in men and represents some 20% of new cases diagnosed. Breast cancer is by far the most prevalent form of cancer in women accounting for 30% of all new cases.

The Action Cancer awareness seminars for both male and female employees commenced in Farrans Construction during October and will be delivered elsewhere in the Company over the coming months. The content includes prevention strategies as well as a discussion of the early stage symptoms of testicular, prostate, breast and bowel cancers. Life style and healthy eating issues are also covered.

Emily Magrath, the Health Promotion Co-ordinator for Action Cancer was delighted with the response and support she received from Farrans people during the seminars as she explained;

"We're delighted that Farrans have taken the step of inviting us to speak to their employees. It is estimated that two out of three cancers can be prevented and these seminars are designed to educate people to protect themselves from a cancer diagnosis."

Other services offered by Action Cancer include early detection services, cancer research and counselling.

## More about CRH

The news from Belgard Castle this Christmas is that CRH plc is just about to complete its largest ever acquisition with the purchase of the distribution and building products operations of Cementbouw in the Netherlands for a total cash consideration of €646 million.

In addition, CRH plc will also acquire a 45% stake in Cementbouw's materials operations for a total of €47 million. As well as being involved in builders merchanting and the DIY sector, Cementbouw also manufacture and supply ready mixed concrete, bricks and clay products. They are also the largest independent player in the Netherlands in the cement trading sector.

On a more local level, Irish Cement have constructed two new 10,000 tonne capacity bulk cement silos at their Platin plant near Drogheda (pictured above). The €6 million investment allows fully automated driver operated loading using a swipe card system. This means that customers can collect their cement 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the year. This highly flexible system is geared towards meeting customer needs more effectively as part of the ongoing commitment to customer care throughout CRH plc.

More about CRH next time.



## All our Yesterdays



Our aerial photograph above was taken in the summer of 1966 and depicts the newly built head office of Scotts in Toomebridge which served as the administration centre of the growing business. Our existing office occupies the same site today.

It was where the famous Scott brothers, Oswald, Rennie and Walter had their desks and ran the business. The rumour is that Walter was a cautious man and built the office so that it could easily be converted into a bungalow and sold if the business did not prosper. However, history has shown that he had no reason to worry.

In 1965, Scotts employee numbers increased to about 100 with the opening of the tile plant. This was also the year in which the lough shore sand site at Sandy Bay was developed and this was followed with the opening up of the site at Ballyginniff in 1969. In 1971, the site at Hutchinson's quarry was purchased by the brothers. They also had operational sand sites at Tobermore, Limavady, Traad and elsewhere around this time.

The Scott brothers, and Walter in particular, always had an eye for business and readers will notice the white walled building to the left hand side of the office as we look at the photograph. This was the roof tile display unit which during the summer was loaded onto a lorry and taken to the various agricultural shows across the Province promoting Scott roof tiles.

In the 1960's, Scotts was very much a family run business but the foundations were laid at this time for the development of the multi million pound organisation that we know today.

Readers may be interested in the fact that Walter Scott was in the Royal Airforce during the Second World War and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his exploits as a squadron leader with bomber command. It is therefore no coincidence that there are many linkages between Scotts and aircraft but, as they say, that will keep for another day.

## Roy Campbell Brown

### 1945-2003

It is with great regret that we report the death of Roy Brown who passed away suddenly on 18 June 2003.

Roy joined R.J. Maxwell in October 1982 as assistant to the then Coleraine quarry manager, George McDowell. His talents were quickly recognised and in 1984, Roy succeeded George as quarry manager. He went on to become one of the best quarry managers we have had.

Roy was a loyal and faithful employee who always put the Company first. He had many and varied skills ranging from shotfiring and coating plant operation to crusher maintenance but perhaps his greatest attribute was his relationship with the people who reported to him. Roy was a people person, first and foremost, who always had time for a word of encouragement or guidance to his men. Harsh words were seldom in Roy's vocabulary.

Roy was involved in the planning of the new crushing and coating plant at Croaghan and was immensely excited at the prospect of having the opportunity to work with modern, new equipment.

Away from work, Roy was a family man who enjoyed nothing better than to be at home and pursue his other great passion of raising game birds and training spaniels.

The thoughts of all Farrans people are with Roy's wife, Betty, daughter, Caroline and sons Colin and Gary on their sad loss.

Roy will be greatly missed by us all.



## Our Man in Letterkenny



Ryan Lindsay (pictured left) joined Scotts in 2000 on a part time basis, dividing his time between our roofing services despatch depot in Letterkenny in the morning and the family farm in the afternoon. His role has since become full time as we continue to develop our business in this north western corner of Ireland and Ryan has played his part in this expansion.

Ryan's role is to look after the storage yard and facilitate customer collections and he has certainly proven to be the man for the job as he effectively juggles the tasks of stock control, loading and unloading

lorries, dealing with telephone enquiries as well as greeting customers. He has quickly embraced the principles of customer care as he explains;

"Keeping customers happy is the main part of my job. If I achieve this, then they will keep coming back to us for their roof tiles".

Ryan has worked with farm machinery for many years and when it came to him achieving his Safe Pass certificate and forklift truck driving licence, he passed with flying colours.

Away from the despatch depot and the farm Ryan relaxes with his music, as he is a piper in the Letterkenny Caledonian Pipe Band. He is particularly proud of competing with the band at this year's world championship in Glasgow. No doubt Ryan, being a modest man, did not want to make a big noise about their performance.

## Children Dress for the Occasion

Farrans Construction's most recent pipeline contract was officially opened on 1st December this year by Shona Robinson, the local Member of the Scottish Parliament, who took time out from her busy schedule to attend the ceremony at Clatto on the outskirts of Dundee.

However, the real stars of the show were the children from primary 5 of Mill O'Mearns Primary School who donned Victorian dress for the event as the original pipeline was first laid some 130 years ago when no doubt some of the work methods were a little different from today.

The Client for the project was Scottish Water and the work included the design, procurement and installation of 26.5 kilometres of 1,000mm diameter trunk main which involved crossing through 118 fields of which all have been reinstated and handed back to landowners, a major part of the Client satisfaction on the contract.



Children dressed for the occasion together with (left to right) Bob Dooner (Site Agent), Shona Robinson (MSP) and Andy Ducat (Scottish Water)

## Site Staff Learn More About Employment Procedures



Left to right: Kevin Corley, Warren Wright, Brian Gormley, David Parr, Jonathan Hunter, Henry Doyle, Martin Conlon, Duncan McAlister, David Craigan and Robin Kirkpatrick.

This November two groups of our site staff came together on successive afternoons at Dunmurry to learn more about our employment procedures and in particular, how they apply to health and safety issues.

The sessions were led by Jonathan

Hunter, our Group Human Resources Officer, and covered all necessary procedural matters as well as current legislation and cases. There was also a strong interactive element to the delivery.

The reports we have are that this internal course was enjoyed by all in attendance as the emphasis was very much on the practical application of our procedures.

## Three Smiling Ready Use Faces

Take a look at our photograph and you cannot fail to be impressed by the three smiling faces beaming out. Their reason for being cheerful is that they have just received their Quarry Products Association Safety Awards.



Left to right: Gerald Doyle, Nigel Galbraith and Paul Rodgers

Gerald Doyle collected the award for our Dunmurry

plant in respect of the best concrete plant. Nigel Galbraith accepted first prize in the block plant category just edging Paul Rodgers' Carryduff plant into second place.

All three of our award winners are also currently taking part in the Ready Use Supervisory Development Course and it may well be that when it comes to the health and safety module that we hand over delivery of the session to Gerald, Nigel and Paul as they clearly have an excellent grasp of the subject.

Congratulations to all involved at Dunmurry, Strabane and Carryduff.

## Laying the Foundations for Career Success

Farrans Construction have again supported the National Construction Week initiative to promote construction careers among school leavers. The construction industry is one of the largest and most important employers in the Province offering a wide range of opportunities for those interested in craft, technical or professional careers.

Our event involved a visit by sixth formers from Aquinas Grammar to our site at



Students learn more about building services from one of our site team

Hollywood Arches where the itinerary included a safety induction and description of the key elements of the project. There was also a tour of the site which was hosted by the site manager, Ken Meaklim.

All in all it was a successful event and judging by the questions and feedback from the young people there are likely to be several more recruits to our industry over the next few years.

## Keeping Things Tidy On Site

Farrans Construction again supported the European Health and Safety Week by inviting the press and the Construction Industry Training Board to our site at Hollywood Arches to find out more about our housekeeping training initiative which is designed to stress the importance of keeping our sites tidy and reducing the risk of slips, trips and falls which are the cause of over one third of all reportable accidents in the industry.

The sessions were delivered in Construction by our Health and Safety Manager, Trevor Hutchinson and these mirrored similar sessions which were held at our other operating locations in Ready Use, Scotts and RJ Maxwell.

The theme of the sessions was 'A Place for Everything, Everything in it's Place', and we have produced a standardised poster which is on display at our various locations and sites to reinforce the message.



Leading from the front: Construction's Divisional Director, John Gillyvray (right), tidies up with Len Kelly from the Construction Industry Training Board.

## Leading the way with the Scott Galloway

**Scotts, who have always been at the forefront of product design and innovation, have just launched their new thin leading edge roof tile to compete with fibre cement slate alternatives which are becoming more widely available in the market place.**

The story begins in June of this year with the installation of the Galloway tile production line at our Ballymena factory. This part of the project, including the plant installation and commissioning, took only five days to complete and was led by our own maintenance team who worked with external sub contractors. The installation programme was supported, as usual, by detailed method statements and risk assessments to ensure everything went according to plan.

The core elements of the installation included accommodating one large tile machine complete with a new cutting knife to provide a consistent, faster and more accurate cut for all profiles of the tiles manufactured at Ballymena. Significant modifications to the production lines were also required as well as changes to the computer software needed to run the plant.

The success of the installation can be judged by the fact that full capacity standard tile production commenced at Ballymena on day two of the project.

The manufacture of a consistently high quality roof tile just does not happen, it requires dedication and commitment on the part of our production people. In this regard, Alan Taylor and his team deserve great credit for the time and effort they put into ensuring that we manufacture the new Galloway tile to our production schedules and returning the plant to its previously high efficiency levels. This view was endorsed by production director Brian Watt recently;

"I was delighted with the high levels of team work which were evident from the commencement of the project. Everyone did their job extremely well, from installation to operation and the support from people like David Smyth in Group Health and Safety and Bob Smyth, our Technical Manager, was superb. The production guys have done a great job in terms of taking production back to full capacity and still maintaining our stringent quality standards".

FarransLink readers may be interested in the main features of the Scott Galloway tile. They include:

- **having a 16mm leading edge which is 40% thinner than a standard tile.**
- **weighing only 4.5 kgs per unit.**
- **not requiring specialised fixing methods.**
- **having lower fixing costs than standard tiles.**
- **being suitable for roof pitches from 22 degrees to 54 degrees.**

Best of all, the reports that FarransLink has received would indicate that our customers like them.



Scott Galloway tile production underway at Ballymena

## Tile Plants Come Out On Top

The management team at Scotts had a rare afternoon off this November when they were called upon to receive their Quarry Products Association Health and Safety Awards for the tile plants at Toome and Ballymena. The Toome tile plant received a first place with Ballymena running them a close second.

Our three supervisors, Philip Weir, Mark Evans and Alan Taylor deserve great credit for their efforts in fulfilling the demanding award criteria which involved showing that their risk assessments were effectively communicated and were linked to safe working procedures as well as training.

Congratulations to everyone involved at Toome and Ballymena.



Left to right: Mark Evans, Alan Taylor, Brian Watt, Brian Monson (Health and Safety Executive) and Philip Weir

## Maxwell's Ton Up Predators

**Quarries are generally perceived to be drab, dirty places which are completely devoid of wildlife. Well, nothing could be further from the truth.**

Our quarries at Camean, Coleraine, Croaghan and Ballymena play host to a significant breeding population of peregrine falcons. This year a total of 6 chicks were successfully fledged from nests on ledges along the quarry faces at our locations.

The peregrine is the largest of the British breeding falcons. It is 38-48 cms long with a wingspan of 95-110 cms. The female is considerably larger than the male. The predominant coloration of the bird is dark blue/grey. Due to persecution and the effect of pesticides, the birds are now protected. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds monitor the nests in our quarries each Spring and the reports we have are that we have a healthy population of these magnificent birds of prey.

The peregrine is designed for life as a hunter, relying on skill and speed to catch its prey which is usually made up of pigeons and other birds. The kill is made in the air typically by means of a swift dive with wings folded, called a 'stoop'. Some peregrines have been measured flying at speeds of up to 180 kph during their hunting stoops.

Peregrines normally pair for life and begin their mating cycle in late winter. If you happen to be at one of our quarries in March this year look out for our ton up predators against the back drop of coating plants and quarry faces as you may just be lucky enough to witness one of the wonders of the natural world.



## Andrew Returns to Work

Farrans people on both sides of the Irish Sea were delighted to hear the news recently that Andrew Butcher, Construction's Divisional Quantity Surveyor in England, has returned to his desk after illness and is starting to feel like his old self again.

Andrew is one of our longest serving people in England having joined the Company in 1979. His other claim to fame of course is that he is also the FarransLink correspondent for the region.

Good to have you back Andrew.

## Achieving Environmental Excellence

Our Maxwell and Ready Use people collected a total of six awards at the Quarry Products Associations awards event this autumn.

In the large quarry section, Carrickmore quarry achieved first place for water management with North Down quarry taking a first place in waste management and a second place in dust reduction.

Ready Use's Dunmurry plant was awarded first place for its dust reduction arrangements with Ballynahinch and Dunmurry achieving first and second place respectively under the environmental innovation category.

Farranslink would like to congratulate all concerned on their tremendous achievement in this increasingly important aspect of our business.

More details on our entries can be obtained from Bill Weir (Tel: 028 7032 1100) at R.J. Maxwell and Roy Browne (Tel: 028 9055 1328) at Ready Use Concrete.



Declan Close and Ann McMillan from North Down quarry with their awards

## Maxwell retain Investor in People status

The latest piece of good news from our correspondent at R.J. Maxwell relates to the successful retention of the Division's Investor in People status.

The assessment process took place last September and involved the auditor travelling around all of our locations to conduct interviews with a wide range of employees to find out more about our people development processes.

The assessment, unsurprisingly, was a total success and the report which followed included many complimentary remarks including;

"The greatest testimony to top management commitment at R J Maxwell is the volume and quality of development activity that has taken place over the past two years. There is a genuine belief in the Company that senior management is fully committed to people's learning and development, and the general improvement in working conditions".

What particularly impressed the assessor was the employees' obvious pride in being a Maxwell employee and knowing that the Company values them, which after all is what investing in people is all about.

## Men from Munster

Visitors to Maxwell's Ballymena Depot or Belfast City Airport site are likely to encounter a Munster brogue breaking the resonance of the Ulster accent. In September of this year, two young and, ladies beware, eligible engineers joined R.J. Maxwell from our associate company, John A. Wood Ltd, in Cork. Sharing a flat in Belfast, Jason Murphy and Jonathan O'Connell have found the natives a friendly bunch and are slowly coming to terms with the vagaries of the Belfast accent, mind you, 'je t'aime' is the same in any language.

Jason Murphy (right) is a native of Ballydesmond, and joined John A. Wood Ltd direct from college in 1998 and has worked on major road contracts in and around County Cork. At Maxwells he is enjoying the challenge of working on smaller scale maintenance contracts located anywhere between Ballymena, Larne and Belfast North. "I've covered almost 10,000 miles in under 3 months!" exclaimed an astonished Jason. "but I find the work interesting and everyone is very helpful".

An avid Gaelic football fan, Jason played for his local Ballydesmond club at home and is now keeping fit by training with a local club in Belfast.



Jonathan O'Connell (left) hails from Ovens near Cork City and, like Jason, joined John A. Wood Ltd direct from college cutting his teeth as a training surveyor and setting out engineer. "Working on the City Airport contract has given me a valuable insight into civils works and drainage over and above my experience to date of blacktop surfacing", says Jonathan. Working at Maxwells hasn't given Jonathan much free time to explore Belfast and its environs, but he has found time to travel up the Antrim coast and visit the Giant's Causeway.



A keen rugby player, Jonathan played centre for his local Ballincollig Club, but is hoping to follow up contacts with the Malone, Ballymena and Larne clubs and start playing again once the Airport contract finishes. On completion of the airport scheme he will work out of North Down Depot and be involved with Measured Term Maintenance Contracts.

FarransLink joins with all our colleagues in welcoming the Munster Men to their new positions with R.J. Maxwell.

## The Safety Factor

Another year has quickly passed by and on reflection there has been a lot of activity on the health and safety front.

Our commitment to providing health and safety training to all levels of our people is being realised, for example the registration of all our site based operatives on the Construction Skills Register in Northern Ireland or the Construction Skills Certification Scheme in Great Britain requires the attendance on a full day of health and safety training. However, training is of no value unless the knowledge gained from attending courses is transferred into action in the workplace, therefore we ask you to use what you have learnt to improve health and safety standards in your workplace.

It is always pleasing to report good news in this column and we would like to congratulate the following companies for receiving health and safety awards during the latter part of the year:-

**Farrans Construction:** CEF Construction Awards, Overall Winner in the Health and Safety Section.

**R.J. Maxwell:** QPA GB Health and Safety Awards – Commendation for Best Practice in Control of Vibration White Finger. NI Institute of Quarrying Health and Safety Awards, Best Large Quarry – North Down Quarry for the Traffic Management system.

**Scott:** QPA NI Health and Safety Awards – Tile Plant Section – 1st, Toome Tile Plant; 2nd, Ballymena Tile Plant.

**Ready Use Concrete:** QPA NI Health and Safety Awards – Block Plant Section – 1st, Strabane; 2nd, Carryduff. Concrete Plant Section – 1st, Dunmurry.

These awards are given in recognition of best practice in health and safety and are due to the enormous efforts that our people have made to make their locations a safer place to work. Again congratulations to all involved, and the challenge is laid down for those locations that did not win this time to do something about it for next year's competition.

As always every month a review of all the lost time accidents is completed and our usual accident frequency and severity ratios are calculated. We can assure you that these figures are reported on, and discussed in detail at every monthly management meeting by the Divisional Directors chaired by our Chief Executive.

The latest Accident Statistics for the period ending 30th November 2003 are as follows:

Company	Accident Frequency Ratio (AFR)	Accident Severity Ratio (ASR)
Farrans Construction	1.01	5.36
R J Maxwell	0.56	1.57
Ready Use	0.99	4.30
Scott (Toomebridge) Ltd	2.05	73.63
MATTEST	0	0

Congratulations to Mattest for being accident free for the year to date but special mention must go to our Maxwells and Ready Use businesses for having an Accident Frequency Ratio below 1.0.

Our housekeeping initiative has been delivered since our last FarransLink report and it is great to see the involvement of all our people in ensuring that our workplaces are kept in a tidy condition and that we are eliminating the risk of slips, trips and falls. The overlap of health, safety and environmental systems is no where better illustrated than in good housekeeping. Putting waste into proper containers, cleaning up any spillages, storing equipment and materials in their correct places will not only prevent accidents but also reduce our impact on the environment. Remember our motto 'a place for everything and everything in its place'. The challenge is there for everybody to ensure everything has a place.

As we enter the New Year we are determined to keep reducing the number of 'lost time' accidents on our sites. We will only be satisfied when this becomes zero. This is not impossible but will require hard work and a vision to ensure that, if you are a manager or supervisor, your work areas are free from hazards and that regular inspections are carried out to ensure all control measures put in place are working, or if you are an employee, to report any hazards that you think can cause harm and to suggest ways of improving health and safety in your workplace. Safety is a team game, everybody has a part to play. Don't leave it up to somebody else.

Merry Christmas from everyone at the Group Health and Safety Department!

## Robert's Retirement

Robert Thompson, our Sales Administrator at Ready Use, retired this autumn after 40 years of dedicated service. The occasion was marked by the presentation of two water colours of one of Robert's favourite places, the North Antrim coast.

Robert's role was to ensure that all quotations to customers met the standard in terms of mix design and also to collate market information in support of the field sales team. It goes without saying that Robert undertook these tasks in an impeccable manner and his expertise was often called upon by sales people from other Divisions within the Company.

His early days at Ready Use were spent in the technical department and it was here that he developed his interest in technical standards which was to be his trademark in his future career.

Robert's position has been filled by Eddie Walsh who is an equally experienced person in the concrete industry. Eddie joined us in 1999 as a credit controller and brings to his new role lots of relevant experience.

All at FarransLink wish Eddie every success in his new job. He can be contacted on 02890/551330 or ewalsh@readyuse.com. As for Robert, we all wish him a long and healthy retirement.



Ralph Clarke (left) Ready Use's Divisional Director and Robert Thompson pose for the camera