



Chief Executive's Diary

CRH has made a number of recent organisational changes within the Europe Materials Division, of which Northstone (NI) Ltd is a part. These changes have been made to better position the Division for future performance and growth. There is now a Regional Director for Europe West and Asia (Ken McKnight), for Europe Central (Owen Rowley) and for Europe East (Declan Maguire). Jim Mintern, to whom I report, is now Regional Manager for Europe West, comprising Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the Benelux countries, and reports to Ken, who remains as Chairman of the Northstone (NI) Ltd Board. I know that I speak for everyone at Northstone when I wish them all success in their new roles and assure Ken and Jim that we will continue to do our bit to ensure the future growth and performance of CRH. We also wish our own Jay Wasson success in his new role with CRH in India. Jay's appointment

is a very significant milestone for Northstone and is in itself evidence of the opportunities that do arise within the wider CRH family for those personnel who are both willing and capable of taking on such roles.

Northstone remains profitable, despite the continued and indeed increasing market pressures, and I do sincerely wish to thank you all for your part in that notable achievement. Cubis got the year off to a great start by securing a very significant order in France. This has created a very positive energy within the Company and has generated its own challenges, particularly at the Liverpool factory, where the pressure is on to meet the orders. The opportunities for that business, both through expansion into Europe and further afield, and for new products, are huge. Michael, supported by CRH, will be submitting a business plan for future expansion and we are targeting this to be submitted and approved before the Year End.

Farrans continues to outperform its peer companies, both in N.Ireland and in the rest of the UK, with a greater proportion of its contracts now being undertaken across the Irish Sea. Eamonn continues to put a high priority on large infrastructure projects in N.Ireland, but also realises the importance of securing new markets further afield to sustain growth. Despite the pressure on lower prices, it should be recognised that Farrans continues to win contracts, often when not lowest price. This speaks volumes for the estimating teams, assisted by the contracts personnel, who are submitting highly

professional, considered and technically competent proposals to Clients. The 'feel good' factor, when a large contract is secured, at a sustainable price, runs right through the whole group.

The Materials Division continues to work its way through these difficult times, and healthy volumes are being achieved, particularly in blacktop, whilst concrete volumes are also holding up well. It should never be forgotten that a lot of people are working very long hours, often at night or at weekends, to open up quarries, get the product made and out the gate, and to get it delivered and laid on the ground, in all weathers, and my thanks go to all of you that make this happen. Nevertheless, the pressure of the sharp increases in commodity prices, particularly oil, continues to put even greater stress on margins, and Graham is putting a lot of effort into trying to recover these increased costs in the market, with some success, whilst also lobbying Government for increased rates on the framework contracts. It never fails to amaze me that we, as an industry, undervalue ourselves so much in N.Ireland. For example, ready mixed concrete sells for 40% more just a few miles away in Scotland. This differential has to be closed to enable us to invest and sustain businesses into the future, but for now, we are well positioned compared to many other companies, benefitting as we do from the diversity of our business model.

Great progress has been made over several years on our safety

performance, yet more needs to be done. Simply put, if the poorest performing operations were to raise their game to the level of our current highest performing operations, Northstone would have taken a hugely significant step towards the goal of zero preventable accidents. This is entirely in our own hands, not just management, but everyone that works at our locations and sites. For this to happen, it is up to all of us, from me down, to stop finding excuses as to why things are the way they are. We must get out there and change both culture and behaviour to one where we ensure that the environment in which we work is safe, for both ourselves as individuals and also for the people working alongside us. To this end, I am looking at some new initiatives along with Jim, Graham, Eamonn and Michael, which will include independent performance measurement at locations, unannounced, and also trying to reduce the burden of administration to allow managers more time to be more pro-active in taking this next step. I would welcome any constructive suggestions that you may have on the matter.

Summer holidays are looming for most of us, a great family time, especially for the many of you that are temporarily based away from home, something that is also very much appreciated by all the Directors. To everyone, I wish you a great holiday and want you to come back to work after the break with fully charged batteries to ensure that we have a strong second half to 2011, and can set a budget for growth in 2012.

Declan Maguire
July 2011

Hard Hats, Steel Toe Cap Boots and a New Life For Helen

Helen Murdoch is currently working on the Farrans joint venture project at the East End Regeneration site in Glasgow. The contract contains a community benefits programme which promotes the recruitment of local young people to undertake various roles and trades on the project. Helen has been employed as an Engineer's Assistant on the £24m contract.

On finishing her studies at St Andrews High School in the East End, Helen initially started to study beauty therapy but then certain issues caused her life to spiral downwards. After dropping out of her course and with little prospect of employment, Helen heard about the Action for Children Youthbuild Programme and signed up. It offers unemployed and vulnerable 16 to 19 year olds a job opportunity in the construction industry by way of 6 weeks of initial training followed by a six week trial period with a construction company.

The Farrans contract in the East End is the second construction company which Helen has worked for.

The Farrans Site Manager, Ian Waugh, told Northlink a little of Helen's experiences to date:

"Helen has done really well in coping with the challenges on site. I think at the start she felt a little out of place but as she got to know the guys she settled in really well. Helen regularly reminds us all that she is looking forward to the East End Regeneration site being completed so that she is able to say "I built that". She really enjoys the banter on site and a laugh with the lads. The East End Team are looking after Helen and she knows that if she needs help she tells us that the guys are there for her. Helen has certainly made the most of her opportunity with Farrans and I know that her family are extremely proud of her as are we all."

Helen recently exchanged her boots and high visibility vest for a glamorous evening dress to pick up the Action for Children Community Award after being nominated by the Youthbuild Programme.





Northstone Materials Target Self Builders!

Over the weekend of 18th to 20th February 2011 the Northstone Sales Team made their usual appearance at the Kings Hall in Belfast at the largest Self Build Show in the Province. Over 30,000 members of the public pass through the doors of the Kings Hall during this weekend in pursuit of fulfilling their dream of building their own home.

This event provides an opportunity for the Northstone Sales Team to promote the full range of products on offer across the Materials portfolio. This year almost 100 sales leads were generated from the two and a half day event, ranging from people wanting to gravel their driveway from the vast selection of coloured gravels available from Northstone to choosing a high quality Northstone roof tile that sets their home apart from the rest and creates pride and confidence in their building which is without doubt the biggest investment that they will make.

One member of the public commented "Northstone can certainly provide the complete



Keith Wood (centre) explains the features and benefits of Northstone products to prospective customers.

package when it comes to building your own home"

The Self Build Show also provides an opportunity for the sales team to work together using their combined expertise in each of the Northstone products providing guidance and information on technical matters as well as details on depot locations and contacts as the potential clients make their first steps in constructing their own home.

Keith Wood, Northstone Materials Sales Director commented that "The self build market provides a large part of the overall Northstone customer base and the Self Build Show in February every year creates the opportunity for Northstone to reinforce its position as the Self Builders first choice for building materials"

INDUCTION DAY at FARRANS

The talent pipeline that is Farrans Construction continues to recruit placement students and graduates in technical disciplines and in June some 23 new Farrans people attended a day long induction session.

The day began with an overview of Farrans Construction work activities by Kevin Corley, who deputised for Managing Director, Eamonn Sweeney. Barry McKinney then provided details of the Farrans computer system. The longest session of the day was given over to health and safety as presented by Brian Hill. Jim Leitch then delivered a session on the wider CRH family and employment related policies and procedures at Northstone.

After a break for lunch, Brenda Gregg outlined the information required for salary administration. Alex Anderson then concluded the day with a description of the Farrans quality and environmental management systems.

Alex Anderson, the Farrans Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality Manager, organises the induction session and is committed to the delivery of a thorough induction as he explained; "Farrans is a complex business and it is vitally important that new employees receive as much information as possible on commencement. There is no doubt that this allows them to settle into the Farrans way of doing things quickly. They also feel part of the Farrans family from their first day of employment. It is usual now for some time to be spent on FOCAL, the Farrans information management system during the first week of employment as well as delivery of Construction Skills Register (CSR) training for those who require it."

Northlink welcomes our new colleagues to Farrans and wishes each of them every success in their respective roles.

New starts at Farrans get ready for work with the Contractor of Choice



JOHN BROWN 1924 TO 2011

It is with great regret that we report the passing of John Brown, the former Chief Executive of the Farrans Limited Group of Companies, on 25 April 2011.

John saw service in the Second World War with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in which he commanded a minesweeper. In 1946 he was demobilised and joined Farrans as an apprentice and from that developed his career to contract manager level. In 1955 he was responsible for the construction of Killylane Reservoir in east Antrim which had a contract period of 4 years. John made no secret of the fact that he was extremely proud of this project which today supplies Larne, Ballymena, Ballyclare and parts of Antrim with up to 3 million gallons of water a day.

In 1960 John joined the management team at HAC Catherwood and Scott (Toomebridge) Limited to manage a joint venture company known as Pre Mix Concrete which was based in Glengormley. In 1961, Pre Mix Concrete was sold and John was asked to manage the HAC Catherwood quarry and block plant in Portrush.

In 1972 John returned to the Farrans fold to manage Ready Use Concrete Company Limited and initiated a growth strategy which saw the Company develop into the leading ready mixed concrete supplier in the Province.

In 1973 John's talents were recognised and he was invited to join the board of Farrans Limited

and also became the director and general manager of Ready Use Concrete Company Limited.

Over the years, John had developed many contacts in the materials supply sector in Northern Ireland and was instrumental in the purchase by Farrans Limited of Scott (Toomebridge) Limited and North Down Quarry Limited in the early 1970's.

In 1976 John again played a pivotal role in the acquisition of the Farrans business by T.B.F. Thompson (Garvagh) Limited and this created the largest construction, plant and materials group in Northern Ireland. He then became the Managing Director of Farrans Limited and a board member of T.B.T. Thompson (Garvagh) Limited. John held this position until his retirement in 1985.

John was a man of great foresight, intellect and ability which sat easily with his tremendous work ethic. He will be remembered for always being first in and last out of work and also the man who introduced owners drivers to our Scott business. There were also many all night sessions with Ralph Clarke, Raymond Reilly and the late George Smith with the introduction of computerisation into Ready Use and Scotts as well as his steadying influence during the overhead reduction processes required by the difficult market conditions in the early 1980's. John's efforts did much to develop the foundations of the Northstone business of today.

Those of us who had the privilege to work under John's leadership remember him as a quietly spoken, precise and extremely determined person who showed great loyalty to those who worked for any of our companies. In retirement, his interest in the development and progress made by our business never waned.

Our thoughts are with John's family circle at this time.

EAST MEETS WEST

Visitors from Japanese distributor DOI Seisakusho, got a master class in gaelic games when they visited the Cubis Industries site in Roscommon recently.

Company Vice President Takashi Kaetsu (pictured far right) was put through his paces by Colman Cooney and Cian Cantwell, both of whom are former minor county hurlers (for Galway and Waterford respectively).

DOI are promoting Cubis products in utility markets across Japan and have reported increased opportunity following the recent earthquake disaster in the country. We believe that Takashi and his team will be a 'safe pair of hands' for Cubis in the rebuilding

programme which has been likened to reconstructing a country the size of Scotland!



More About CRH



The interim management statement, as issued by CRH in May of this year, indicated that like for like global sales for the four months to the end of April were 6% ahead of 2010. This trend is expected to continue for the first half of 2011 with EBITDA (Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) expected to exceed the 2010 level of €0.52 billion.

More specifically, in the CRH Europe Materials business of which Northstone is part, the challenging market conditions continue especially in countries experiencing austerity measures such as Ireland, Portugal and Spain. This is countered by more positive trends in the stable developed markets in Switzerland and Finland. While in Poland and the developing economies of Eastern Europe and beyond, demand for construction related products is picking up. All of this has meant a 4% increase in like for like sales in the first four months of 2011 compared to the same period in 2010. Price increases for CRH products are also being achieved to recover the higher energy input costs.

Acquisition and investment activity to the value of €135 million was completed by CRH in the first four months of 2011. This comprised of 6 bolt on transactions by the Americas Materials business in the

United States, a precast business also in the United States, a masonry business in Canada and 5 other acquisitions which strengthen the CRH Products and Distribution businesses in Europe.

At the start of the year, the Yatai Group Building Materials in China, of which CRH owns 26%, completed the acquisition of the Tieling Tiexin Cement Company. Tieling is located in the north of Liaoning Province in the north east of China (pictured above). It operates one cement plant with annualised clinker capacity of 3.6m tonnes and additional grinding capacity of 2.4m tonnes. Liaoning Province is the largest cement market in northeast China and the acquisition consolidates Yatai Cement's position as market leader in the region as well as providing support to the establishment of its downstream building materials business.

More about CRH next time.



Launch of Safety Handbook at Toome Tile Factory
(l-r) David Smyth, William Wylie, Sorais Downey, Stevie Kidd, Noel Davidson, Willie Gilbert, John Ferguson, Robert Nichol, Brian Watt, Sean Kearney, Philip Weir, John McMullan, Robert Crossett

New Employee Safety Handbook at Materials

The health and safety team at Northstone Materials of David Smyth and John Evans have been hard at work in recent months producing a new employee safety handbook.

The purpose of the handbook is to provide basic and clear instructions to ensure safe working in all operating environments across the Division. The text includes full details of the all important CRH Fundamentals for Fatality Elimination at the outset. These are followed by key messages in a "Do's" and "Don'ts" format under each of the subject areas with useful photographs to illustrate particular learning points.

David Smyth, the Northstone Materials Divisional Health and Safety Manager, was instrumental in producing the new handbook and he feels it will do much to continue to raise awareness of the importance of health and safety

among our people.

"The handbook is in an easy to read format and draws its content from our risk assessments, work instructions and other documents. It is pocket sized and will serve as a ready source of reference for all employees. The content encapsulates what health and safety is all about in our Division."

Northlink congratulates both David and John on their efforts in producing an excellent handbook which no doubt will play a part in preventing accidents.



L-R, Johnny Douglas, Nathan Douglas and Mark Lowry.

Nathan's World Challenge

Nathan Douglas, son of our highly respected Farrans colleague, Johnny Douglas, is preparing himself for the trip of a lifetime in the summer of 2012.

Nathan is a fourth year pupil at Royal Belfast Academical Institution and he will be taking part in a four week educational expedition to China next year. The aim of the expedition is to teach useful skills and provide insights into life outside of the classroom. The learning experience will also no doubt be very beneficial for his studies at school.

Nathan's expedition involves a trek at altitude and working within a local community to refurbish facilities in a school or orphanage.

Away from his studies, Northlink understands that Nathan is a more than useful hockey player and in addition to playing for his school team he has also had trials for the Ulster age group side.

It was with great pleasure that Northstone Chief Executive, Mark Lowry, presented Nathan with some sponsorship for his World Challenge.



Farrans Boys rise to the Challenge

Farrans people are renowned for never shirking a task and on 11 June 2011 four intrepid employees completed the Ben Nevis Challenge in aid of their chosen charity, the Ulster Cancer Foundation. They were Donald Doyle, Sean O'Neill, Lee Simpson and Neil McStravick.

At 4406 feet (1,343 metres) the Ben is Britain's highest peak and rises from sea level some two and half miles south east of Fort William. On a clear day the views from the summit are awe inspiring, the most immediate being to the east, over Aomach Mor and Aomach Begg beyond. To the south beyond Glen Nevis lies the rocky ridge of the Mamores, and still further the mystical mountains of Glencoe. Most people complete the walk in around 5 hours.

"It took four hours to go up and 3 hours to come back down again." said Neil "We got a great day for the event and the visibility at the top was very good which is not always the case. There was also some snow on the slopes as we approached the peak which was great. Even better is the fact that we have a current total of £5,785 in sponsorship for the Ulster Cancer Foundation and the figure is still rising. On behalf of the Farrans team I would like to thank all who provided sponsorship."

The Ulster Cancer Foundation is Northern Ireland's leading local cancer charity and it has a vision to see the day when cancer is no longer a life threatening disease. The Foundation's activities include funding research into new and better treatments for



Enjoying unseasonable conditions on Ben Nevis, L-R, Neil McStravick, Sean O'Neill, Lee Simpson and Donald Doyle.

cancer, educational initiatives to allow early detection of cancers and also to help those with cancer cope with the physical and physiological effects of the disease in order to lead their lives as normally as possible.

Any of our readers who wish to provide sponsorship to the Farrans team can do so via the following link:

<http://www.justgiving.com/Neil-McStravick0>

'It's the Best Day at School I have ever had'

Paul Sheppard and his team at Dundee Waterfront were hunting recently for mini steel-toed boots for engineers of the future as Farrans Construction supported a challenge at Grove Academy that put all 220 first-year pupils in the position of responding to a crisis-hit country devastated by a hurricane.

Part of the prize for the five-pupil winning team was a visit to the Farrans Construction site close to the Tay Road Bridge in Dundee, which will involve the young winners being kitted out with full safety gear, including hard hats, fluorescent jackets and steel-toed boots.

The object of the school's exercise, called Hurricane Day, was to introduce young people to the principles of engineering required when responding to a country's needs following a hurricane. Recent high winds in Dundee caused devastation as trees were ripped from the ground and roofs were lifted off buildings, which gave the youngsters an inkling of what the reality might be like in a hurricane-hit country. Their day started with photographs and reporters from the local newspaper, The Courier, before the pupils were allocated into teams to

an imaginary emergency in Honduras. The event was run with the assistance and guidance of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

Farrans had been asked to donate materials such as pipes, bricks, mini cones and hi vis jackets. Members of the site team were also invited to come along on the day and share their engineering expertise with the pupils. Mark Crawford and Sean Connolly, both of whom are working on the Dundee Waterfront Project, volunteered, their time to help pupils in constructing temporary shelters, water transportation and water filtration methods. Other tasks involving site layouts, weather monitoring and food preparation were also undertaken. Our two colleagues were given the difficult task of scoring each team's completion of the tasks and overall effort. A prize giving presentation was organised at the end of the day with Paul Sheppard and Patrick Murray being invited to present the



prizes to the runners up and the winning team. Mrs King, the teacher in charge, said

"The Hurricane Day has proven to be so popular and a really high quality learning experience for the pupils we feel we must repeat it and make it an annual event. It has been a resounding success thanks to Farrans and one pupil even said to me that "It is the best day at school I have ever had"."

The winning team was made up of Isabelle Rice, Fraser Ross, Niamh Shiel, Joseph Sweeney and Sarah Thomson all of whom are looking forward to meeting up with Paul and the site team at the Waterfront Project to learn more about civil engineering in practice.

Mark Crawford and Sean Connolly with the winning Grove Academy Team.



Cubis makes an Exhibition of Itself

CUBIS Industries new exhibition stand has had a baptism of fire with three trade fairs attended in a three month period.

CUBIS operates in a wide range of international markets and so far this year the new stand has graced exhibition halls in Birmingham (Traffex), Cologne (Anga Cable) and London (Railtex). The modular design means the structure can be built up in a day and the graphics can be adapted for the different products and the unique requirements of the different industry sectors.

The exhibition stand features two touch screen computers that operate as a sales tool with photographs, in-depth product information, videos, case studies and a feature that allows supporting documents and drawings to be sent to customers while they are on the stand. The old structure, which was built with wooden panels and required plenty of bolts and a couple of tins of paint, has thankfully been consigned to history!

'A' Team Win the M80 Cup



As the Farrans civils team on the M80 Steps to Haggs Motorway in Scotland work towards completion of the Scheme, a well deserved diversion came recently in the form of a five a side football tournament. Eight teams from all four corners of the site and beyond entered the tournament. These included a Farrans 'A' and Farrans 'B' team. The eight teams were then split into two leagues of four, with the top team from each of the four team leagues competing in the final.

The Farrans 'A' team consisted of the younger, fitter individuals who work on the M80, and the 'B' team consisted of the more experienced and somewhat rotund individuals.

The pre-tournament favourites, the 'Online Team', had a goalkeeper who had previously played for a German Second Division team and along with the East End Regeneration Project, were in the same league as the 'Farrans B' team. To everyone's amazement the experienced and well rounded individuals of the Farrans 'B' team topped their league.

The Farrans 'A' team also won their league, which had also included the Grahams of Dromore team; although it is said with a little help from referee Tom Murphy from Farrans.

It was a closely fought final, for the first minute at least, but then the extra years and weight took its toll, and the Farrans 'A' team won easily in the end.

The manager of both teams, 'Special One' Simon 'Mourinho' Aiken, who was also a player in the Farrans 'B' team, said "that the final result did not matter because Farrans collectively were the best and beat the rest".

The tournament was a great success all round and enjoyed by everyone who took part and hopefully Farrans can retain the cup next time.



The victorious Farrans A Team: L-R: Simon 'Mourinho' Aiken, Tom Murphy (referee), Gary McCormack, Ryan Rogan (back), Seamus Shovelin, Lorcan Gill and Fiachra Woods.

TOOME'S GOT TALENT

Many of us thought that the search for new acts to appear on the Britain's Got Talent television show had finally reached Toome when a camera crew appeared at the Northstone Hutchinson's sand production site to film a television programme on 10 June 2011.

Admittedly, there was some disappointment when it was discovered that singing, dancing or joke telling would not be required but nevertheless, our own two class acts, Paul Toal and Michael Sexton, stepped forward to appear in front of cameras.

The actual purpose of the visit was to film an episode of the BBC 2 Irish Language programme called Sruthanna which charts the progress of two kayakers, Antaine Ó Donnaile and Cormac Ó hAdmaill, on their journey from Portstewart up the River Bann



Learning the Tricks of the Retail Trade with Sheila

Sheila McGuire, the Human Resources Manager at Cubis Industries, has done much over the last few years to develop links with schools in the Craigavon area of County Armagh. This includes promoting employment opportunities within Cubis and more recently, enhancing the business skills of 15 to 19 year olds.

Earlier this year, Sheila gave up her weekend to join the judging panel at a trade fair for local schools participating in the Young Enterprise Company Programme. The Programme encourages pupils to set up and run a company to manufacture and then sell their products. In doing so the pupils learn much about the commercial realities of business as well as the skills and attributes required to be successful in all the functional areas of a company. Cubis Industries are a partnering organisation of Young Enterprise.

The venue for the trade fair, at which participating schools sold their products to the public, was the Rushmere Shopping Centre in Craigavon. Readers may be interested to know that Farrans constructed the building which contains the Centre in the late 1970's.

Sheila recently told Northlink

Sheila McGuire (centre) presents certificates to two budding entrepreneurs. about the rigours of judging a large number of excellent entries from the participating schools;

"In total, the judging panel had to decide on award winners in 16 different categories with the products on sale ranging from artwork and clothing to gifts and jewellery. It was a very competitive environment on the day. To be honest it was extremely difficult to decide on the winners because each and every young person had put so much effort into their own company. Nevertheless, eventually the judges arrived at their decision after much thought, discussion and often, heated debate."

Northlink congratulates Sheila on her efforts to work with schools and local communities in the immediate area of the Cubis business in Lurgan.

Young Enterprise is Northern Ireland's foremost business and enterprise education charity. Its programmes are based on the principle of "learning by doing" in order to promote a culture of enterprise in school children from an early age. All activities are delivered by fully trained business volunteers from partnering organisations.

through Lough Neagh and along the Blackwater River to the town of Benburb in County Tyrone.

The filming took place on the Rams Island barge on its journey from Hutchinson's site to the sand pumping grounds and was skipped by Paul Toal. On board were the two kayakers, who interviewed another barge operator, Michael Savage, about the sand pumping process on the Lough. By all accounts Antaine and Cormac were fascinated by the whole production process as described by Michael, who is an authority on sand production on Lough Neagh down through the years.

Needless to say, Paul delivered a flawless performance in the wheelhouse while Michael confirmed what we all know already, that he is a natural in front of the camera.

Who said there was no talent in Toomebridge?



Our talented duo, Paul Toal (middle) and Michael Savage (far right) get ready for filming with the BBC production team.



Paul Bowls Them Over

According to the good book, seven is the number of perfection and certainly Farrans engineer Paul Darrington (pictured left) had perfect bowling figures when he recently claimed a career best 7 for 28 as his club Cambourne triumphed over Witcham in Division 1A of the Cambridgeshire Junior Cricket League.

Paul joined Farrans in July 2005 and in that time has worked on many contracts which include RAF Lakenheath, Burdens Warehouse, Leonard Cheshire Homes and for the last three years or so, on the Suffolk Fire Stations project. In the

last six months he has been working on the Farrans Healthcare contract at Addenbrookes Hospital and no doubt coming to terms with the Irish accents on site.

Away from work, Paul clearly enjoys his cricket and the Cambourne Cricket Club website lists his specialisation as "bats, bowls and goes to fine leg". However, Northlink was convinced that there was more to Paul's cricketing skills than this and so it turned out when Paul spoke to our reporter recently;

"I have been playing cricket since I could hold a bat and over the years have played for a variety of clubs and my university" explained Paul.

"I have played for Cambourne since they formed in 2005. As a team we have progressed through the leagues and now play in the Cambridgeshire Junior League. I took over the captaining of the side this season and we have had a mixed bag of results, winning two and losing three. I remain hopeful for the rest of season. If I keep getting figures of 7 for 28 we should be fine."

Northlink understands that Paul is very much a team player on the pitch, an excellent organiser and willingly does his share of the hard work. In fact, perfect attributes for the Healthcare team at Addenbrookes.



A New Family Takes Up Residence at Carmean

The Northstone Materials Division set up a database some three years ago to assist in recording the wildlife found at our quarry locations for biodiversity purposes. Since its inception, peregrine falcons have featured on it. They have been recorded at our quarry locations at Carrickmore, Croaghan, Ballymena, North Down, Carmean and Mountfield. Nesting and breeding success has been recorded at Ballymena, North Down, Carrickmore and most recently in June this year, at Carmean (a limestone quarry), where three downy chicks were spotted in an abandoned raven's nest on the quarry face.

The peregrine falcon (*falco peregrinus*) is an impressive bird with a slate grey back, white front with black barring, and a dark head with white cheeks and black moustachial stripes. The female is bigger than the male. It has a wingspan of around one metre.

The peregrine is a bird of prey and it takes a wide range of other birds in the open, often after a spectacular closed-wing dive from way above the target bird. Estimates of the speed of a stoop vary from 150 mph (British Trust for Ornithology) to 240 mph (various other web sources). Whatever the speed, it is fast. If on target, the blow delivered is usually sufficient to kill the prey outright in mid-air. They will

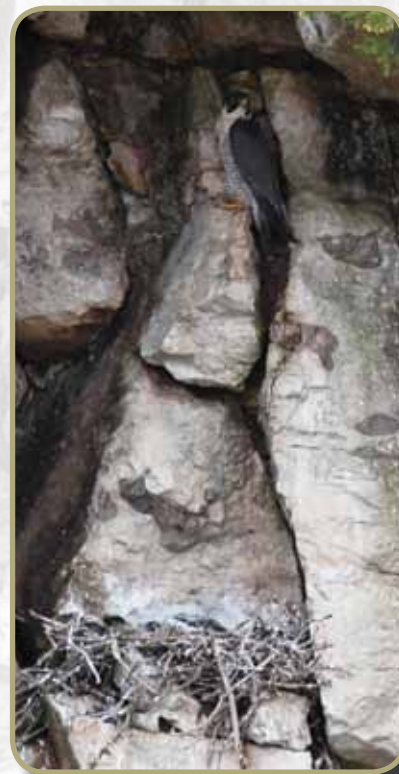
usually predate medium sized birds such as pigeons, jackdaws, duck and game birds.

From near extinction in the 1960s due to a combination of persecution and cumulative poisoning associated with the then large-scale use of insecticides, peregrine numbers have recovered to around 1400 breeding pairs resident in the United Kingdom. The current peregrine population in Northern Ireland is estimated to be seventy breeding pairs.

Its natural haunts are uplands and rocky coasts with cliffs for nesting. Its recovery has been greatly helped by its taking to man-made cliff-like nesting sites as diverse as window sills on high rise buildings and ledges on quarry faces. Up to 40% of nest sites in the Province are in quarries.

On the day they were identified at Carmean, the peregrines' mewing calls were heard first; the female then flew over with around twenty mobbing jackdaws trailing in her wake. The male gave away the nest position by calling from his perch just above it. The young were large and appeared to be well-fed, no doubt from dining on some of the scores of jackdaws that nest in the numerous cracks and crannies of the very same quarry face. Such feeding should stand these young peregrines in good stead as around half of all birds of prey die within their first year of life.

Peregrines are still persecuted in the Province. The Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group (NIRSG) reported in November 2010 that seven peregrines were known to have been killed by poisoning or shooting that year. The peregrine is protected under The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. It is a Schedule 1 bird protected by special penalties at all times.



NIRSG monitoring results have shown a 20% decline in the number of breeding pairs of peregrine in Northern Ireland in less than 20 years and the number of young successfully fledging has declined by 35%.

Our quarry managers closely monitor nesting peregrines during the breeding season to avoid any disturbance to the birds. Over time, the birds become habituated to the regular activities of an operating quarry and take the presence of the excavator, dumper and quarry personnel in their stride.

It is against this background that the Materials Division is especially pleased that our quarries have for many years provided safe nesting havens for such splendid birds.

Angus Kennedy, who very kindly contributed the above article and photographs, maintains the biodiversity database at Northstone Materials. He would welcome details of any new sightings of flora and fauna within our quarries. Angus can be contacted on 028 9055 1346 or email akennedy@mattest.com



STOP PRESS!
As we go to print, Northlink now has a confirmed report of nesting peregrines high up on the face at Ballymena quarry with at least one chick being clearly visible.

Sean Brennan (left) receives his prize from Michael Wightman.



Sean's Energy Saving Idea

There was an excellent response from Northstone people across our three operating divisions to the fourth Energy Saving and Efficiency Suggestion Scheme with many ideas being received.

The adjudication team of Brian Watt, Alex Anderson and Jim Leitch again had to think long and hard before deciding on the winning entry. After much deliberation, it was decided to award the prize to Sean Brennan who works at the Cubis Industries plant in Roscommon.

Sean's idea, which was one of four he submitted, suggested that we replace the existing combined screen head and mixer unit on the 300 tonne injection moulding machine in the factory with a standard one metre length of metal pipe. This relatively simple idea has significantly reduced the amount of energy required to heat the machine for each cycle of operation.

It will also produce a saving of €952 on electricity costs at the plant each year.

After presenting the prize to Sean recently, Cubis Managing Director Michael Wightman told Northlink of his support for the Energy Suggestion Scheme; "Sean is to be congratulated for his commitment to energy saving at Roscommon. His ingenuity in identifying a relatively simple idea has produced a saving which helps to make our products more competitive in the market place. Every one of us needs to follow Sean's example and be continually looking for ways to save energy as it is fast becoming one of the major costs in our business. The Energy Suggestion Scheme provides the perfect vehicle for this"

Accolade for Brian

Brian White is certainly a very able Enabling Manager on the Farrans Watermain Rehabilitation contract as he has just won the prestigious Young Engineer of the Year title of the United Kingdom Society for Trenchless Technology (UKSTT).

Brian joined Farrans in June 2007 on graduating from Queens University, Belfast with a civil engineering degree. Since then he has been involved in the tendering and construction processes within the Farrans Utilities division. His current roles include responsibility for design co-ordination, gaining client approvals and programming.

Brian provided Northlink with some details of his recent award;

"In March of this year I submitted a report on my duties and responsibilities as an Enabling Manager over the previous twelve months to the United Kingdom Society for Trenchless Technology (UKSTT) after a recommendation from my Contracts Manager, Gerard McGirr. My submission was then shortlisted by the Chairman of UKSTT and I was invited to attend an annual dinner and awards night in Birmingham in April. I was delighted to receive the award but really it is also recognition for the magnificent efforts of



L-R Chris Packham (TV presenter), Brian White and Colin Tickle (UKSTT chairman)

the entire team at Farrans Utilities. The prize is sponsorship of up to £2,000 to fund travel and accommodation to any part of the world to undertake further research within a chosen area of study in trenchless technology."

Northlink congratulates Brian on his success and no doubt we will again be reporting on the exploits of our Young Engineer of the Year in future editions.

CLIFFORD RETIRES

Clifford Spence, the Farrans Civil Engineering Director, has decided to hang up his boots, safety helmet, high visibility vest and laptop and retire after some 35 years of loyal service to the Company. Over the years Clifford became one of the most familiar, respected and well liked people not only at Northstone but in our industry across the Province and beyond.

Clifford joined Farrans on 1st October 1976 as an engineer and progressed through a number of roles which culminated in him becoming a director of the Farrans Civil Engineering Division in 1994. During his employment he was involved in most of the major contracts successfully delivered by Farrans which did much to enhance our reputation as the "Contractor of Choice" especially for technically demanding projects. His roll of honour includes Westlink (1980), Crowe Road, Glasgow (1985), Kilroot Power Station (1987), Victoria Terminals in Belfast (1988), Cross Harbour Road and Rail Links (1993), Belfast Sewers (2006) and the M80 project in Glasgow (2008).

Clifford also did much to develop the Farrans business and its systems such as his involvement in the formation of the Farrans Utilities Division, his role as the first Farrans Health and Safety Director and as the Farrans Plant Director.

Clifford's forte was very much

being able to get the best out of the people who worked for him, as recently described by Farrans Managing Director, Eamon Sweeney;

"Clifford was a master craftsman at getting the best out of people and in ensuring they felt cared for. He had a gift of using humour to take the aggression out of a situation but at the same time letting that humour emphasise the real points of issue he wished to make. He had the ability to use a turn of phrase to identify the points that others were failing to see – always to focus on the big picture. He had some great techniques such as focusing on say 3 or 4 key deliverables on a project, deliverables which weren't always obvious to others as being key, and to relentlessly focus on these to drive the programme and to cut through all excuses.

He was also always prepared to knock people (myself included) out of our comfort zone. At many meetings, particularly Directors' meetings, he would ask the questions others were afraid to ask. The questions that were extremely hard to answer, the questions on issues that someone had tried to gloss over. Not



everyone could handle this and many saw this as being disruptive – but, that was people not understanding Clifford Spence's real agenda, which was always to ensure the continuous improvement of Farrans and the welfare of our people."

Clifford's many other skills and attributes are the stuff of legend and these include a generosity of spirit, being a loyal supporter of those employees who are required to work away from home for long periods and relationship building with clients.

He will be sadly missed throughout the Farrans family and the rest of Northstone for his anecdotes, his challenging of the status quo, his relentless pursuit of continuous improvement, his advice, his humour, his support and as a confidant and friend.

All at Northstone wish Clifford a long, happy and healthy retirement and we understand he will be busying himself spending time with his first grandchild, Sebastian, who was born in March of this year.

Thanks Clifford for all the memories.

On the audit trail at Toomebridge, L-R: Naomi Cooper (CRH), Nili Safavi and Priti Nigam (DNV), Brian Watt, Ryan McQuillan and John Evans.



Materials Hosts CSR Verification Visit

On 1 April 2011, the Northstone Materials Division hosted an independent verification audit of our submissions to the CRH Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report 2010. CRH is fully committed to operating ethically and responsibly. It is based on these values that CRH is focused on integrating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into all aspects of its operations relating to employees, customers, other stakeholders and the wider community. More specifically, the four areas of the business impacted by CSR are corporate governance, environmental, health and safety and also social.

CRH chose Det Norske Veritas (DNV) to undertake the audit visit at Northstone Materials as well as other locations in Europe and the United States.

The aims of the verification visit were to:-

- assess the level of awareness of CRH's CSR related policies and processes;
- identify the CSR issues considered relevant at each location;
- review the management of CSR issues at each location;
- review CSR related data management processes;
- check the accuracy of a sample of CSR related data.

The visit was organised by Naomi Cooper, the CRH Group Environmental Officer and she accompanied Nili Safavi and Priti Nigam from DNV to Toome. The Northstone Team was led by Brian Watt with David Smyth, John Evans, Angus Kennedy, Ryan McQuillan and Jim Leitch in attendance.

Brian Watt provided Northlink with an insight into the visit;

"The visit from DNV was very thorough and I think it is fair to say that we learnt much about the emphasis placed on CSR by CRH and its investors. I believe that in the years that lie ahead, CSR will become more important as institutional investors will only want to be associated with companies with the highest ethical and operating standards."

The report on the DNV independent verification visit to the Northstone Materials Division will be published in August 2011.

Construction Manager of the Year Award for Glenn

The superior skills and attributes of the Farrans site teams have long been recognised by clients and competitors alike. As a consequence, Farrans people tend to perform exceptionally well in awards competitions run by the various professional bodies within our industry. This summer we are delighted to report that Glenn Gilmore was named as a category winner and silver medallist in the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Construction Manager of the Year Awards. The Awards recognise the ability of managers to deliver construction projects within budgets and to very demanding standards.

Glenn was nominated for the award by his contract manager, Darrell McGuckian, in respect of his performance during the construction of the Trauma and Orthopaedic Theatres at Craigavon Area Hospital. A project report was



Recognition for Glenn (l-r) Peter Jacobs (CIOB Senior Vice President), Glenn Gilmore and Dermott Russell (Chairman of CIOB, Ireland).

then submitted by Glenn to provide the judging panel with an overall appreciation of the management challenges and construction issues on site. This enabled the panel to assess Glenn's performance against the award criteria of management skills, development of good relationships, planning of the works, innovation and personal initiatives.

The Awards dinner was held in Dublin on 10 June 2011 when Glenn was shortlisted in the category of projects valued under €10 million along with five other nominees from major contractors throughout Ireland. After an anxious wait, Glenn was named as the winner of his category and an overall silver medallist. He was narrowly piped at the post for the overall gold medal by the manager of the impressive €200 million National Convention Centre in Dublin. Glenn is very much one of life's good

guys and his comments on the award were typical of the man; "I would just like to thank Darrell and my director, John Wilson, for their support throughout the awards process and also giving me my first position as a construction manager on the Lurgan project. I would also like to thank my wife for her patience and understanding of the rollercoaster lifestyle of a construction manager."

It is perhaps fitting that we leave the comments on Glenn's capabilities to the judging panel who said; "His approach to quality was of an excellent standard and contributed greatly to the Craigavon facility being shortlisted for several worldwide architectural achievement awards for hospital projects. He demonstrated particular skills in his client relationships by working with the clinical staff keeping them informed on a daily basis of all aspects of the works. Indeed such was his ability in this regard that the client has requested that Glenn would be the Project Manager for the next phase of the scheme. Glenn Gilmore delivered a high quality, complex project, safely, ahead of time and within budget." Praise indeed for Glenn.

Work Gets Under Way to Double What Rosie Can Do

The Farrans Healthcare team has made an excellent start to The Rosie Perinatal Maternity Building, which is part of Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge. The new unit will almost double the number of cots from 33 to 58 which will increase capacity from 3,000 births to 6,000 births a year. It will also focus on the care of mothers in labour, those who need ante natal care or have sick or premature babies.

The Farrans Healthcare team, which is headed up by Contracts Manager Darrell McGuckian and Project Manager Neal Lynch, have been on site since January 2011. It is the division's first project outside the shores of Northern Ireland. The scheme is valued at £30 million. Neal was only too delighted to tell Northlink something of progress so far on his project; "The early phases of the project focused heavily on service diversions and moving a live emergency vehicle access road which transverses the centre of the site effectively splitting the project into two work zones. These diversions were crucial to maintain the works programme and allow possession of the main site. This phase of the work was ably managed by Construction Manager, Jonathan Collins and Mechanical and Electrical Co-ordinator, David Agnew."

"Associated with the main build scheme is the construction of a basement and three upper floors along with a 120 metre long link tunnel between two live buildings." added Neal, "This will allow a link to the main hospital infrastructure to facilitate the movement of clinical waste and act

as a services corridor via the maze of underground tunnels linked to it on the hospital site."

Northlink can report that the main build works are well underway with the basement works now completed, the ground floor slab cast and the rising elements to the upper floor ongoing. The Section Manager, Adrian Fuller and Martin Holmes, are also hard at work mobilising for the enveloping which will commence in a few months to allow for the full fit out and completion of the project in June 2012.

We also have it on good authority that the younger members of the team, consisting of Rudi Moore (Design Co-ordinator), Declan Doherty (Senior Engineer) and Paul Darrington (Engineer) have really risen to the task of dealing with a challenging programme in such a confined site. The Healthcare site team at Addenbrookes also welcomed two new members Stephen Smyrl and Noel Cosgrove on 6 June 2011 and Northlink wishes both men well in their careers at Farrans.

The Rosie Maternity Hospital is a technically demanding scheme involving diversions of 'live' services (including mains gas, water mains, LV cables and two foul pumping stations), diversion of an existing access road, the construction of a service tunnel between two live

L-R: Martin Holmes, Stephen Smyrl, Adrian Fuller, Vicky Cranswick, Darrell McGuckian, Paul Darrington, Neal Lynch, Noel Cosgrove and Declan Doherty.

buildings, with the basement and 3 upper floors all to be completed within an ambitious 18 month programme. The site team are excelling themselves and have certainly created a positive impression with the Addenbrookes Trust.

Outside of work the guys have undertaken to restore a dilapidated courtyard area within the existing Hospital as a goodwill gesture to our new neighbours in recognition of their patience during the construction process. The works in the courtyard are to be completed with labour being provided on a voluntary basis. To raise funds for the project Farrans have assembled a team to take part in a 112 mile cyclosportive event known as 'Flat out in the Fens' on 26 June 2011. The team including Darrell McGuckian, Rudi Moore (Farrans Healthcare), Jason Denly and Ray Gambell (Farrans Cambridge) along with friends of the team Neil Gooden, Matthew Palmer and Steve Barker will spend over 6 hours in the saddle.

Northlink congratulates Farrans Healthcare on further promoting the Farrans brand in the healthcare sector in England.





Flying Down to El Salvador

At this time of year most of us are looking forward to a relaxing two weeks of holidays in the sun somewhere by the sea. However, Kieran McElmeel who works at Dunmurry with the Farrans estimating team, has other ideas as he will be flying down to El Salvador in Central America to help build homes for the less well off in the country.

During his two week work period, Kieran will be attached to the Habitat for Humanity charity which has a vision of a world without poverty housing. The charity is a non denominational Christian housing ministry. It has been operational in El Salvador since 1993 and has built homes for 7,100 local families and touched the lives of more than 35,500 Salvadorians. A high proportion of Salvadorians have no homes at all while others live in inadequate housing or in shelters made of corrugated metal and discarded wood.

Kieran and eleven other volunteers from across the Province will be doing their utmost to help address this housing crisis which is the result of poverty, population density and growth as well as natural disasters such as earthquakes, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions.

Our photograph shows Kieran getting his fundraising off to a flying start recently with a sponsored bungee jump from which family and friends raised over £850.

Kieran first came to Farrans as a placement student in June 2005 spending most of his time in the estimating function learning much about the skills and art of estimating. He also worked on site as an assistant engineer on contracts at Tesco in Dungannon

and the enabling works at Lisburn Institute.

Kieran returned to Farrans in June 2007 as an honours graduate in Construction Engineering and Management, as he explains;

"On coming back to Farrans after university I was assigned to the estimating department as a Junior Estimator working on various education projects such as Templepatrick Primary School and the Belfast and Scottish Schools Projects. In late 2008 I was seconded to Lisburn Institute to organise the furniture, fixtures and equipment package on the Scheme before returning to the estimating team in the summer of 2009. Since then I have been working as an estimator on a diverse range of tenders some of which have been successful and others, unfortunately have not. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far with Farrans and hope the relationship lasts well into the future."

Northlink wishes Kieran every success in his charitable endeavours in El Salvador and no doubt he will put his construction skills, learnt at Farrans, to good use.



Kids learn more about Sand Production on Lough Neagh

Dessie McGuckin and the children wave to the camera.



In early June, the Northstone Materials Division had a visit from the primary 5 children of Oliver Plunkett School in Toomebridge. The hosts were Sand Production Manager, Dessie McGuckin, and Health and Safety Advisor, John Evans. The purpose of the visit was to allow the children to find out more about the sand which is found in Lough Neagh, how it is recovered and processed and its uses thereafter.

The visit commenced with the all important health and safety induction which included a brief overview of the arrangements for the visit and the paramount importance of health and safety. Each child was then given a high visibility vest for the visit and to retain thereafter to use when cycling or walking to school.

The children then boarded their bus along with Dessie, John and their teachers to travel to Hutchinson's sand production depot which is just outside of Toomebridge.

On arrival, Dessie provided an informative and interesting guided tour of the Lough shore location and its production plant and processes. There was certainly a lot of excitement generated when skipper Paul Toal brought his barge, the Sandy Bay, alongside the quay wall.

Dessie went to great lengths to explain the dangers of working

at sand production locations as exemplified by the size of the wheels of the loading shovel used at the depot compared to the height of a child.

The next stop on the visit was to the concrete tile plant to explain how sand is used in tile manufacture as well as other products. This was followed by the showing of the DVD "Play Safe - Stay Say" as produced by the Quarry Products Association, which warns children never to be tempted to enter and play at locations such as Hutchinson's depot. The children were also warned never to be tempted to dig tunnels through sand stockpiles due to the risk of the stockpile collapsing.

It was a happy and tired group of children which left Northstone that afternoon complete with high visibility vest and posters warning of the dangers to be found at quarry locations.

Mark is Re-elected for Second Term

At the Construction Employers Federation (CEF) Annual General Meeting on 18 April 2011, our Chief Executive, Mark Lowry, was elected for his second year of office as CEF President. In accepting the position, Mark pledged to continue to participate in the Federation's lobbying of the Northern Ireland Assembly to make the case for investment in infrastructure and the construction industry's unique role in stimulating economic growth in the Province.

Over the last year, Mark has been at the forefront of the Federation's lobbying on alternative sources of finance for infrastructure projects. This will be particularly beneficial for our industry in the light of the 40%

cut in capital spending recently approved by the Assembly's Executive for the next 4 years.

Since the autumn of last year Mark has also been involved in the 'Manifesto Group' of the Business Alliance which consists of a number of employer organisations and other representative bodies including the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Institute of Directors (IOD) and the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce (NICC). The Manifesto Group has published proposals outlining ways of stimulating Northern Ireland's economic recovery and emphasising the vital role to be played by the construction industry in providing the necessary infrastructure.

Planning reform and the reform of

local government is another issue that the CEF will be heavily involved in over the year ahead and Mark is very keen to see the roll out of the reforms in public administration that will hopefully see planning powers transfer to the new local authorities by 2015.

As CEF President, Mark is also supporting the Business Alliance proposals for the devolution of power to vary corporation tax, which would be an important tool in the whole process of rebalancing the economy away from its dependence on the public sector. This would attract inward investment which in turn will create much needed construction work in Northern Ireland.

It is reassuring to all at



Mark Lowry (2nd from left at back) promotes the Business Alliance's manifesto with other industry leaders

Northstone and also in the wider industry to know that someone with Mark's capabilities and enthusiasm is at the forefront of lobbying and influencing government and others of the uniqueness and pivotal role of our industry within the local economy.

Addressing Unemployment the Northstone Way

Northstone is actively supporting and also sponsoring the efforts of local charity, Business in the Community, in its efforts to help address unemployment in West Belfast and Greater Shankill. The unemployment rate in these areas of Belfast is at 40% despite their having one third of Belfast's working age population.

It was against this backdrop that Business in the Community founded its Employers Forum Construction Cluster to bring together major construction companies to deliver various

initiatives to provide employment and training opportunities in the construction sector in the area. Northstone Human Resources Director, Jim Leitch, chairs the Cluster.

In 2010, the Construction Cluster delivered a Supervisor Development Programme accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management, to twelve long term unemployed persons drawn from both sides of the community. The seven module format is the same as that developed and delivered within Northstone. The topics covered include health and safety, managing performance, problem

solving and team leading. Representatives from each of the companies in the Cluster delivered the modules. Of the twelve trainees who completed the course in 2010, there were eight who moved into full time employment, thereafter.

The course was again delivered in 2011 and the success of 2010 was repeated.

"The real success story of the Northstone course is that it builds self confidence in the trainees," said Jim.

"As part of the course assessment process, the trainees are required to take part in a recorded interview of their experiences on the Programme. The feedback provided by Mary Evans, one of the trainees on the course, makes the

efforts of the Cluster worthwhile. In it she said,

"I've been out of work for 14 years and my confidence was at rock bottom, but now its built up. Prior to the course, I wasn't going out of my house at all, but now I do and my medication has all been cut down. The course helped me change within myself - I'm not afraid anymore, and aim to get a job. My attitude now is.....you don't know until you try. When I get my SDP certificate, I will be so proud to add that to my CV."

The Construction Cluster have already decided to again borrow the Northstone Supervisor Development Programme in 2012 and deliver it to another group of long term unemployed people in West Belfast and Greater Shankill.

The smiles of success - unemployed Programme attendees complete their training in June 2011



CUBIS Secures Major French Expansion

CUBIS Industries has reinforced its long-standing relationship with France Telecom with the telecommunications operator now exclusively specifying preformed composite access chambers for all of its footway boxes.

Since January CUBIS has delivered 12,000 access chambers to be used as cable turning and joint boxes on the network.

CUBIS' widely-specified range of STAKKAbox™ access chambers were first approved for use on the network in 2005 alongside other competing products but is now the only accepted method of construction.

Andrew Wright, CUBIS Industries' Sales and Marketing Director, said *"This is a process that began in 2003 with Graeme Pringle and myself but the catalyst for our success in France has been Remi Beauhaire; his commitment, belief in us and our products, tenacity and overall positive energy have made this possible."*

"We are delighted that we were able to persuade an organisation such as France Telecom that our system was superior to the traditional preformed concrete chambers," he said.

France Telecom, who operate the third-largest telecommunications network in Europe, specify nine clear opening sizes of the Ultima and Modula product, which is manufactured at the CUBIS Liverpool site.

France Telecom were keen for a product that was fast to install, strong and safe to use on site. Approving CUBIS products met that criteria and will ensure the operator makes whole-life savings due to extended life cycles and reduced installation costs.

CUBIS already has a well established presence in France, with customers such as the rail operator SNCF and the Veolia, Saur and Lyonnaise des Eaux water authorities.

Remi Beauhaire is joined in the business development team by Yann Canonne and Nathalie Kermerac, while Marie Vaucheret and Caroline Glon-McKenny provide sales support from manufacturing sites in Roscommon and Liverpool respectively.



L-R: Yann Canonne, Remi Beauhaire and Marie Vaucheret.





FUEL EFFICIENCY TRAINING FOR LORRY DRIVERS

Attendees pose for the camera after the training session
L-R: David Thompson, Sean Harkin, Noel King, Peter Clarke, George Irwin, David Luke (Northstone Divisional Transport Manager), Gareth Dunn (Lecturer), Alan Johnston, Steven Sharp, Alan Kerr and Mark McKeown.

A pilot training course was delivered to lorry drivers drawn from both Northstone Materials and Farrans in June 2011 to raise awareness of how easily the fuel efficiency of lorries can be improved through driver behaviour.

The available statistics make a very convincing case for better fuel economy in lorries which estimate that by reducing fuel consumption through better driving by just 10% a year will produce a saving of £2,200 per vehicle and also save 5.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year.

The course content included optimum use of the revolution counter, gear selection, the use of cruise control and forward planning during driving. There were also useful sections of the course given over to the importance of correctly inflated tyres, vehicle maintenance and driver daily checks of his/her vehicle.

David Luke, the Northstone Materials Divisional Transport Manager, was complimentary of the course content;

"The elements of the course were all directly relevant to the drivers who attended. I liked the use of the video case studies from our industry. More importantly, the course dispelled the misconception that safe and fuel efficient driving adds extra time to journeys. I have no doubt that this course will be delivered to more drivers throughout Northstone as it certainly illustrates how better driving makes economic sense."

All drivers on the course passed the challenging question paper at the end of the session.

CRH SAFETY AWARDS 2010

Health and safety continues to be of the highest priority across the Northstone Divisions and this emphasis was recognised recently with three CRH Safety Awards for 2010.

The roll of honour is as follows:-

Category	Winner	Details
Significant safety performance - Non cement business	Cubis Industries (Roscommon)	600 accident free days
	Farrans Utilities	Sustained decline in accident frequency rate
Safety excellence in project management	Farrans England	Suffolk Fire Stations Project – zero accidents

The Farrans awards were presented at Dunmurry by Jim Mintern who is Regional Manager for CRH Europe Materials West comprising of Ireland, Spain, Portugal and the Benelux countries. In presenting the awards Jim reaffirmed his commitment to continuous improvement and the value of the annual CRH awards.

"I congratulate all those at Farrans Utilities and Farrans England on their 2010 performance but we can never become complacent and all of us must strive for continuous improvement in health and safety. The awards are a great way to recognise superior performance. Hopefully our new initiative to be launched later in 2011 to address health and safety issues among sub contractors will mean more awards next year for Northstone."

The Cubis Industries award will be presented to the team at Roscommon at a later date.



L-R: Jim Mintern presents the Farrans England Award to John Clarke with Mark Lowry in attendance.

Visible Felt Leadership at Northstone

The Northstone board introduced Visible Felt Leadership into the Company's health and safety management systems in June 2007. The purpose was to engage more of our employees and sub contractors in health and safety discussions and thereby develop an improved safety culture in our business through greater team work.

Chief Executive, Mark Lowry, is an ardent supporter of the concept of Visible Felt Leadership and the benefits that arise from it. In June he organised two management seminars to review the effectiveness of the Initiative with the assistance of Professor Peter McKie, who is a former Chairman of the Health and

Safety Executive in Northern Ireland. A total of 55 directors and managers from across the Northstone divisions attended the seminars.

Mark opened each seminar by indicating that our target is for zero lost time injuries at Northstone stressing that it can be achieved by a teamwork approach or as he put it "I am my brother's keeper." He then detailed the human and financial cost of accidents. Mark made the case that to achieve our target of zero lost time injuries will require a change in the culture and behaviour of all employees and sub contractors working in the Company.

It will also require a refusal to accept unsafe working conditions under any circumstances.

Peter McKie then provided an overview of the Visible Felt Leadership process as well as his findings following previous visits to our work locations.

Each of the two seminars concluded with the attendees making suggestions as to how we improve Visible Felt Leadership. Each and every suggestion made was logged and Mark has undertaken to review them and develop a strategy in which we improve our Visible Felt Leadership to achieve zero lost time injuries.

L-R: Mark Lowry, Professor Peter McKie and Eamonn Sweeney at the end of one of the VFL Seminars.





Considerate Constructors Success at Farrans

Farrans Construction have been participating in the Considerate Constructors Scheme since 2000. Compliance with the Scheme's Code of Considerate Practice indicates that a registered company is achieving a standard of performance which is beyond statutory requirements. The Scheme is concerned about any area of construction activity which may have a direct or indirect impact on the image of the industry as a whole.

Each year all registered construction sites are monitored on their compliance with the Scheme's Code of Considerate Practice and its eight elements which are:-

- Considerate
- Environment
- Appearance
- Good Neighbour
- Respectful
- Safety
- Responsible
- Accountable

Gold, silver or bronze awards are then presented annually to the top performing 10% of sites across the United Kingdom.

Three Farrans sites were recognised for their performance against the Scheme's Code in 2010.

They were as follows:-

Silver Award

Altnagelvin Hospital Phase 3.2b



L-R: John Wilson and Darrell McGuckian with their Silver Award for the Altnagelvin Hospital project.



L-R: John McReynolds, Clara Kelly, Andrew Connolly, Stephen Reville (Client Representative) and Kevin Corley with their Bronze Award for the Belfast Streets Ahead project.

Bronze Award
Belfast Streets Ahead Phase 1

Bronze Award
Normanhurst Fire Station, Suffolk

Eamonn Sweeney, the Farrans Managing Director, provided Northlink with his views on the value of the Considerate Constructors Scheme to his Division.

"The Scheme shows that we are committed to achieving standards of neighbourliness, cleanliness and environmental care which go beyond legal compliance. The awards received this year by our sites are a well deserved recognition for the site teams involved. All of these awards will have an impact on tendering success and as such are vital to our business. I commend those involved for their efforts as together we continue to build on the Farrans reputation as the Contractor of Choice."



L-R: Keith Dorling, Phil Brown, Alan Prime, David Winch (Client Representative) and Brian Hill with their Bronze Award for Normanhurst Fire Station.

Delivery of the CRH Transport Safety Campaign

The launch of the CRH Transport Safety Campaign across the Northstone Divisions was reported in the December 2010 edition of Northlink.

Northstone Materials have provided details of the delivery of their Campaign which focused on three key activity areas, namely;

- off site - public roads and customer sites
- on site - contract works
- on site - quarries, depots and factories

At the forefront of the Campaign in the Materials Division has been the health and safety team of David Smyth and John Evans.

The roll out of the Transport Campaign began on 7 January 2011 with David and John liaising with the managers in each functional area to agree on the training materials to be used and the dates of training sessions.

A total of 39 sessions were then held covering all those involved in transport activities in respect of road contracts, fixed locations, product delivery and factories with a total of 211 employees and hauliers learning more about transport hazards. Each session was led by the relevant divisional manager with either David Smyth or John Evans also in attendance. Full use was made of the extensive CRH information pack during the training.

John Evans told Northlink a little of the follow up to the training sessions in his division; *"The CRH Transport Awareness posters are still on display at our locations and these are interchanged regularly. The learning of those who attended the sessions is also assessed on an ongoing basis during our periodic health and safety audits and inspections. We have now collated all the feedback and comments received during the Campaign together with the suggestions as to how safety standards can be improved and these will be implemented or further reviewed by the management team. All in all, it was a very successful Campaign and I know it has done much to raise awareness of transport hazards in our division."*

Learning More About Transport Hazards (L-R) David Glasgow, Willis Neeley, Stephen Neeley Jackie Hall and John Evans.



The Safety Factor

There has not been a good start to the CRH overall health and safety performance in 2011 with the reporting of three work related fatalities in various locations across the world.

The first occurred in India when an operative fell while descending from a scaffold during construction works. The other two occurred in the Netherlands with one relating to guarding and isolation issues at a brick production unit and the other resulting from an incident with an electricity supply cable at a precast concrete factory. In the light of these tragic events we would again draw your attention to the CRH Fundamentals for Fatality Elimination and the importance of implementing them fully at all times while at work.

In the light of the fatality at the brick production unit this year, Northstone commenced an immediate review of the isolation

standards at production plants in the divisions. This is to ensure that:-

- isolation procedures are being implemented.
- risk assessments are being carried out before work commences
- guarding prevents access to hazardous machine areas without exceptions.

Detailed below is a brief overview of the Northstone health and safety performance in the five months to 31 May 2011 compared to the same period last year. The improvement in our accident frequency and severity rates is commendable but there is no room for complacency as together we strive for zero lost time accidents.

The work of the Northstone Safety Practitioners and Safety Directors continues under the leadership of Chief Executive, Mark Lowry. It is recognised by these groups of committed people that our ongoing commitment to safety

training and encouraging safety observations by employees has a positive effect on health and safety performance. In the five months to 31 May 2011 we have delivered a total of 11,342 safety training hours which equates to 7.11 hours per direct employee and 3.94 hours per sub contractor. There have also been 807 safety observations logged by our people in the same period.

In relation to the remainder of 2011, we understand that CRH are planning an initiative to improve health and safety performance among sub contractors and Northstone will play a full and active part in this.

As reported elsewhere in this edition of Northlink, Mark Lowry is leading a review of the Company's Visible Felt Leadership Initiative in the second half of the year in our quest for zero lost time accidents using a team work approach.

It only remains for the Northstone Safety Team to wish you all an enjoyable, restful and safe summer holiday.

	Lost Time Accidents	Days Lost	Accident Frequency	Target	Accident Severity	Target
Year to 31/05/2011	7	22	0.34	0.30	1.05	2.50
Year to 31/05/2010	11	89	0.46	0.30	3.73	2.50