

FARRANS Link

DECEMBER 2004

ISSUE 10

Chief Executive's Diary



Welcome to the tenth edition of Farranslink which again focuses on ensuring that you are all well informed about developments in the Company, as well as the achievements of the various Divisions and their employees over the past six months or so.

The major news feature in this edition is the decision to bring together our supply businesses of Maxwell, Scott and Ready Use under the new name of Northstone. Two pages of this magazine have been given over to fully explaining why we have

taken this decision and the benefits which will accrue from it. I have always stressed that Farrans Limited is a sales and marketing organisation and to continue to be successful, we must be responsive to the needs and preferences of customers. Our new identity will greatly facilitate this.

Our commitment to improving Health and Safety standards across the Company continues with an encouraging downward trend in accident frequency being evident this year. However, this is countered by a deterioration in our accident severity statistics. Each of our Divisions has appointed a Health and Safety Director and I am encouraged by the amount of sharing of ideas, best practice and experience which takes place on an ongoing basis between them. I will ensure that Health and Safety continues to be given the appropriate level of importance, as we all strive to reduce the number of accidents and resultant work related injuries that occur each year within the business.

We now have centralised the administration and accounting functions in Dunmurry, which means that wages, payments to suppliers and production of management accounts are now looked after by one team of people, which is in keeping with our single company outlook. This will make the handling of our back office administrative functions more efficient.

Ralph Clarke, Managing Director of Ready Use Concrete, will effectively retire in May 2005 after which he will work in a part-time capacity in a new position. Ralph has made a tremendous contribution to this business over the past 43 years and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank him for his efforts. I previously announced the decision to merge the Ready Use and Scott businesses under Graham McQuillan. This will take effect from 1st March 2005. We wish Graham every success with his new role.

Ready Use achieved record volumes in a highly competitive market this year. Particular thanks must go to Brian Thompson and the rest of his operational team for the magnificent job that was done in the installation of the new Craigavon plant, which now exemplifies best practice in terms of layout and technology. Brian has been involved with best practice groups within CRH plc for many years and certainly he has implemented many of the ideas and concepts into this innovative plant design.

Scotts have had another good year in most products. The concrete pipe market has been extremely competitive but hopefully this situation is improving. Sales of the new Galloway thin leading edge tile product are meeting our expectations and are now well established in the market. Roofing contracts have been particularly busy, with activity levels being up on last year, providing high quality roofs to a wide customer base.

Materials Testing have successfully established a site laboratory on the new Dundalk Bypass contract where the contractor is Celtic Roads. The relocation of the Dublin laboratory to larger premises in Baldoyle will happen in the New Year and enable Gordon Ellis and his team to further develop the business in the Dublin area.

Maxwells had a busy first half to the year especially in the blacktop and contracts divisions, with records being broken in blacktop production. Things have slowed a little in the second half, but overall a successful year. In the people development area, Maxwell again have set the standard with the launch of an NVQ pilot programme, in which 50 employees have commenced training for recognised work related qualifications. The capability to offer and deliver qualifications is vital if we hope to encourage young people to choose quarrying or road surfacing as a career. It is also good to have Willie McNabb back at his desk after his recent illness.

At Farrans Construction the handover from John Gillvray to Mark Lowry and Eamonn Sweeney is complete. John retires at the end of the year and there is a special feature in this magazine to mark his contribution to the business over the years. John has been responsible for making Farrans Construction the market leading construction company that it is today and has continuously focused on the development of its people. Best wishes to John on his retirement.

The Farrans Construction team at Coolkeeragh, led by John McReynolds and Paul McClements, are to be congratulated on recently handing over the building and ancillary facilities to meet a very tight programme. The new Radisson SAS hotel is a very impressive addition to the Belfast landscape and credit goes to John Cooper, Warren Wright and the rest of the team for another successful completion.

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

NOEL QUINN, December 2004

A Key Fob With A Difference



Key fobs are something that we all have and if truth be told they are of little practical use. Well, our ever resourceful and innovative Maxwell people have just changed that with the launch of a First Aid Key Fob.

We have long held the view that there is a certain amount of uncertainty in hospital accident and emergency departments as to how bitumen burns should be treated. There have been situations in the past where bitumen adhering to the skin has been pulled off and several layers of skin come with it. The key fob is designed to go along with any person who receives a bitumen burn on a Maxwell site so that those administering medical treatment can open it and have an immediate source of information on limiting the extent of the injury.

Naturally our risk assessments and safe working procedures are designed to reduce the likelihood of bitumen burns but if the worst happens, at least our people are assured that those treating them will receive the correct information to limit the extent of any injury. The key fob has certainly been well received in the industry as it won a safety innovation award at this year's Quarry Products Conference.

Another job well done by the Maxwell Safety Team.



Supporting Local Charities

Noel Quinn, our Chief Executive, is committed to supporting local charities.

Action Cancer has just completed a series of informative talks around our locations to raise awareness of the importance of early detection and diagnosis of cancers among both male and female employees.

Fiona Brown from the charity recently provided Noel with a summary of the talks and briefed him on other initiatives currently available through Action Cancer. Noel also took the opportunity to present Fiona with a cheque in recognition of their efforts at Farrans Limited.



Noel learns more about Action Cancer from Fiona Brown

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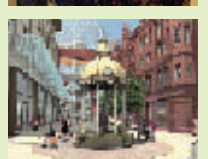
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Denis Personifies Craftsmanship and Dedication

Denis Gilloway joined Farrans Construction back in 1973 as a joinery foreman and worked on all of the Company's prestigious contracts in the north west of the Province. At that time he formed a formidable team with general foremen Hugh McLarey and Billy Quinn, who are both now retired.

In 1982 Denis moved across to W H Beckett where he diversified into looking after sub contracts which included everything from the installation of computer flooring and suspended ceilings to copper and PVC single membrane roofing.

Over the years Denis has shown himself to be one of our most skilled and dedicated people. This was recognised in 1992 when he became a contract manager. Denis has boundless energy and through his practical skills, abilities and willingness to get involved in the work himself, has the respect of not only his team but also those principal contractors who engage W H Beckett to undertake specialist sub contracts. More recently Denis has become more associated with the copper roofing side of the Beckett business where he and his team of Ian Whiteside and Paul Rea have gained a deserved reputation for their superior levels of craftsmanship.

Denis received great praise recently from the Farrans Construction team for his copper work at the newly completed Radisson Hotel in Belfast.

Denis is a native of Dungiven but now lives in Maghera. He is married to Marie and has two grown up daughters.



Denis hard at work at the Radisson Hotel in Belfast

Maxwell Long Service Awards for 2004



Award recipients from left to right: Richard McDermott, Bill Weir, David Donaldson and Roland Johnston pose for the camera with Managing Director, Willie McNabb.

During 2004 R.J. Maxwell recognised four employees for their continuous long service to the Company.

David Donaldson received special recognition for thirty five years exemplary service in his role as Quarry Manager at Carmean Limeworks. At the recent presentation Willie McNabb, Managing Director, thanked David for his hard work and continuous dedication. David is well respected by his team at Carmean and carries out his role in an unassuming way with the minimum of fuss.

Twenty five year service awards were also presented to Roland Johnston, a lorry driver based at the Ballymena depot and a well known character in Maxwells. Roland has worked on many major contracts and is a familiar face around the contract sites and is always available for a good 'old yarn'.

Fellow Directors, Richard McDermott, Director of Administration and Finance and Bill Weir, Production Director, also clocked up 25 years service during 2004. Willie congratulated both Richard and Bill on their dedication and commitment to the Company. He went on to say he had watched their careers develop over the years in Maxwells and was delighted that they now formed such an integral part of the Maxwell senior management team.

Plenty of reminiscing was done at the awards presentation with over 100 years of work collectively behind these men. Congratulations to them all.

New Faces at Ready Use

Michael Craig joined us as Assistant Technical Manager in September and will report to Roy Browne. He is certainly looking forward to his role as he told our FarransLink reporter recently;

"My initial responsibilities include the analysis of concrete and aggregate testing undertaken by field and laboratory technicians. This allows us to adjust mix designs to ensure that we comply with European and British Standards as well as individual customer requirements for both strength and conformity. I am also getting involved in offering technical support to the sales team and customers. Since joining the Company I have been made to feel very much at home and I must say there are no dull or gloomy faces at Ready Use even on a Monday morning."

Michael previously worked for a local concrete and mortar supplier. He has just commenced a City and Guilds Concrete Technology course through Doncaster College as part of his development programme with the Company.



Shane Kealey also joined the Company in September. He is a depot controller and is based at our Londonderry depot.

Shane has strong connections with the industry as his father has spent his entire working life to date with a local concrete supplier and Shane worked for several years with one of our competitors. He lives locally and has a good knowledge of the area which assists with daily shipping and liaising with customers. Away from work,

Shane is a devoted follower of Gaelic football and is club captain of Faughanvale, his local team. Shane certainly seems to have settled in well as he explains;

"There is a great team spirit at Ready Use and the work is both challenging and enjoyable. I am looking forward to being in the Company for a long time."



Over recent months four new employees have been recruited into the team at Ready Use.

Eamonn Kelly is the new production controller at the Company's Craigavon plant having joined us in July after having previously worked for a concrete pipe manufacturer in the area. Eamonn certainly joined us at the right time as he has been part of the team involved in the installation of the new plant as he outlined recently;

"It was really amazing to witness the transformation of the old manual dry batching plant to a modern, highly sophisticated production unit. We have been in production for some weeks now and things are really going well. My depot supervisor, Noel Malcolm, has really gone out of his way to help me and make me feel at home."

Eamonn's main past time is to have a round of golf at his local courses in Lurgan and Loughgall.



Jose Chu is the new garage workshop operative and is based at Dunmurry. Jose comes originally from Sines which is close to the Algarve in Portugal. He came to Northern Ireland back in 2001 to work on a sub contract at Ballylumford Power Station and liked the Province so much that he decided to make it his home. On completion of the Ballylumford sub contract, Jose worked for a local plant hire company before joining Ready Use in August. He currently assists the fitters in many of the mechanical engineering tasks that are required around the plants on an ongoing basis. Jose certainly seems to be enjoying life at Ready Use;

"Things at Ready Use are great and I like the varied nature of the work especially the welding. One thing is for sure, it is certainly a lot colder here than in Portugal."



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

David Notches Up 25 Years



David Smyth, our Group Health and Safety Manager, has this year completed 25 years of service with the Company and the occasion was marked by Noel Quinn.

David joined Scotts straight from university in 1979 and worked initially in production under the direction of Barry Bamber, who was production

David Smyth (right) receives his long service award from Noel Quinn

director at that time. A short time later he gained valuable experience in sales. In 1985 he joined the Company's roofing services division looking after contracts in the east and south of the province.

David moved into his current post in 1989 and since then has done much to develop our health and safety management systems where his experience in production and contacts has proven invaluable.

Away from work, David is currently involved in coaching at Ballymena Rugby Club following on from his successful rugby career where he represented Ulster on many occasions.

David lives in Broughshane and is married with two children.

John Gillvray – A Tribute

John joined Farrans in 1985, succeeding Bill Toner as the Managing Director of the civil engineering division. He brought with him 20 years of experience, 16 with John Graham of Dromore, where he became Managing Director of Graham (Contracts) Limited at the age of 33, and 4 years as Managing Director of JMJ, where he worked in the Middle East to a large extent.

When John joined the Company, the general economic environment was very depressed, and the annual turnover in the civil engineering division had slipped to approximately £1M. John set about the task of re-establishing Farrans as one of the premier civil engineering contractors in the Province, and further afield.

Initially, John won several contracts in the Glasgow area, which has since developed into our current successful civil engineering division in Scotland, with a current turnover of £12M per annum.

In Northern Ireland, his first major tender success was the oil to coal conversion at Kilroot Power Station, value £5M. This contract was somewhat of a watershed for the Company, as it established Farrans as a marine works as well as a general civils contractor. This project would eventually lead, over the subsequent 15 years, to Farrans being the largest marine works contractor operating in N. Ireland, with almost non-stop marine works in Belfast Harbour up to 2002.

Probably the most significant single scheme with which one could associate John would be the Belfast Cross Harbour Road & Rail links (CHRR), at the time the largest single transportation scheme in the Province, value £33M, which Farrans undertook in joint venture with John Graham of Dromore. Interestingly, this reunited John with a lot of his old work colleagues from Grahams! The CHRR scheme lasted 3 years, finished ahead of time and within budget, and put Farrans into the top tier of 'design & build' contractors in the civil engineering sector in Northern Ireland.

In 1995, under John's leadership, Farrans re-entered the water sector, where major investment was required to bring the infrastructure up to EU standards. This kicked off most significantly with the first phase of the Aquarius scheme in the Mourne Mountains. This has since led to the current position of Farrans as the largest civil engineering contractor in the water sector.

At that stage the civil engineering division had increased its turnover from £1M in 1985 to approximately £40M in 1995, and Farrans were once again the largest civil engineering contractor in Northern Ireland.

In 1996, John was appointed as successor to Dennis McClure as the Managing Director of Farrans (Construction) Limited.

In the succeeding nine years, John, driven by a high work ethic and immense enthusiasm, has transferred all his efforts into bringing Farrans forward into the 21st century, as a modern, efficient, caring construction firm. He has prioritised health & safety within the Company, being the driver of the in house CARES initiative and our current accreditation to the OHSAS 18001 standard.

John is very much a people man, believing that they are the Company's greatest asset, and was the main driver to Construction becoming one of the first to be accredited to the Investors in People standard. This included instigating personal development reviews for all members of staff in the Company, as well as staff appraisals.

On the company development front, during John's tenure as Managing Director, Farrans (Construction) Limited have been accredited to the quality and environmental standards of ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001 respectively, being one of the first construction companies to achieve these standards.

Landmarks of note during John's time as Managing Director have been:

- The Odyssey Millennium Project in Belfast, Northern Ireland's flagship Millennium project.
- The increasing establishment of Farrans in the water sector, particularly on water and wastewater treatment works, of which we have now built nine.
- The further development of the English Division, particularly on projects at RAF Lakenheath and the construction of schools.
- The development of Farrans as a contractor in the private finance sector, particularly in education.
- The development of Farrans Homes into one of our most profitable divisions.
- The establishment of Farrans Utilities into a division with a £13M turnover.
- The establishment of Farrans as a contractor in the health sector.
- The further development of the Scottish Division, particularly in the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas.

In the last eight years, a theme running through the market generally, but particularly at Farrans, has been to partner with Clients, subcontractors, design professionals and suppliers alike. John has promoted this philosophy throughout the Company, believing that this is the key to the future and to better performance.

John throughout his career has championed the cause of the professional engineer and has been associated with various professional bodies within the construction industry. He has held several high profile positions including Chairman of the Institution of Civil Engineers in Northern Ireland in 1995/1996 and President of the Construction Employers Federation in 2002/2004. John has used these positions of influence to promote the construction industry within the local political arena. The ultimate accolade for him was being appointed OBE in 2003, a just reward for his contribution to our industry.

John will be greatly missed by his colleagues and friends alike at Farrans and we all wish both he and Norma a very happy and healthy retirement.



Robert Alexander Holmes (1933–2004)

It is with great regret that we report the death of Bob Holmes who passed away on 1st September 2004 after a long illness.

Bob entered the industry in 1949 and served his joinery apprenticeship with a local contractor in the north west of the Province. In 1959 he moved to W J Taggart (NI) Ltd where he began working on road and bridge construction schemes. It wasn't long before Bob's talents were recognised and he became a general foreman. In the early sixties, ready mixed concrete and sub contractors were still a long way off and general foremen were expected to do everything from setting out and measurements to construction management and formwork design. It was at this time that Bob's all round skills, for which he would later become renowned, were honed. Bob's speciality became his ability to plan and design shuttering on major civil engineering contracts.

Loyalty, commitment, reliability and dedication are all words which come easily to mind when one thinks of Bob Holmes and true to form, he stayed with Taggarts some 22 years. In 1981, Bob joined Farrans Construction working initially on the Westlink in Belfast at a time of major civil unrest in the city. There followed a period working on a new sewage works at Stonehouse in Scotland. On both contracts, Bob is remembered by colleagues as an extremely capable man with a great sense of fun.

Bob joined R J Maxwell in 1989 where he is spoken of with great affection by all those who had the pleasure of working with him. He was always a man of few words but he was a tremendous listener and when he spoke, everybody paid attention. His combination of vast knowledge of construction techniques and superior man management skills meant that he could bring contracts in on time when others may have struggled. Colleagues at R J Maxwell remember his sterling work on difficult projects in Strand Road and the Creggan in Londonderry to name just two. Bob certainly left his mark on young engineers who learnt much from his way of doing things on site. He was always there for them when they had a problem with a measurement, were unsure about a method statement or just needed some practical advice.

Bob has left R J Maxwell a tremendous legacy as two of his sons, Robert (Junior) and Anthony, are forging careers with the Company and the signs are certainly there that they have inherited many of their late father's traits.

The thoughts of all Farrans people are with Bob's wife, Lily, his daughter Gillian and sons David, Robert and Anthony as well as the wider family circle. Bob will be greatly missed by us all.



Bob Holmes (centre) in his element on site discussing the job with two colleagues

Scotts and Ready Use Come Out on Top

Scotts and Ready Use have again come out on top in this year's Quarry Products Association Health and Safety Awards event which was held in Cookstown in November.

The Scott tile plants at Toomebridge and Ballymena and the block plant at Toomebridge won the pre cast concrete section for effective communication of health and safety to employees at every level in the Company. This award was particularly pleasing as many accidents are caused not because of a lack of proper procedures but because of a failure to effectively communicate them to the people who need the information. In this regard the work of production supervisors, Philip Weir, Mark Evans and Alan Taylor was exemplary. All three have taken a leading role in the design and delivery of tool box talks which were based on their excellent risk assessments. These were complemented by posters and videos as well as the outstanding work of the factory safety committees. Each and every production employee has also played his or her part in the success by realising the importance of health and safety in every task undertaken and applying safe working procedures.

Space in the trophy cabinet at Ready Use is now at a premium after the awards event as the Company picked up three prestigious accolades. We were overall winners in the



From left to right: Alan Taylor, Kevin Toner (Health and Safety Executive) and Mark Evans at the presentation

concrete plant section, runners up in the pre cast category and placed second in the innovation section in which our depot audit scheme clearly impressed the judges. The award entries were compiled by David Luke, Gerald Doyle, Nigel Galbraith, Paul Rodgers and Terry Moylan with great credit going to them for a magnificent effort all round. However, our often unheralded people at the depots were the real stars as without their commitment to continually enhancing the safety culture in the Company, nothing can be achieved.

Last word goes to Jim Leitch, the Company's Human Resource Manager, who attended the awards ceremony in his capacity as chair of the Quarry Products Association Health and Safety Committee;

"I was delighted and extremely proud to be present when our Scott and Ready Use people received their awards as I know how much effort has gone into reaching the required standard. They fully deserve the recognition they have achieved. Over the years I have observed our

supervisory and management teams at Scotts and Ready Use not only accept and manage their health and safety responsibilities but excel at them. Congratulations to all involved at every level in the business."

Anita Leads the Way for Construction Professionals



Smiles all round as Anita McParland receives her medal and certificate from a CIOB Representative

Anita McParland, Construction's Design Manager, has just become the first female construction professional to win the coveted Chartered Institute of Building Silver Medal for outstanding performance in the Institute's direct membership examinations. This year, 168 candidates from Ireland, the United Kingdom and overseas sat the examinations and Anita was the top performing student.

Anita's course is designed to meet the needs of mature students and is the experienced professional's route to becoming a chartered builder. She was clearly delighted with her award as she indicated recently to our FarransLink reporter;

"It is a great honour for me to have received the silver medal. The qualification has certainly made me more confident in my own abilities and also recognises my work experience to date. I would also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement I received from the management team at Farrans without which my achievement would not have been possible. I have already put some of my recently acquired skills into practice."

Anita is currently heavily involved in the preparation and submission of tender bids for large projects in the health sector within Northern Ireland.

Congratulations to Anita from all at FarransLink on her success.

From Ballymena to the Baltic



Anita Jungar and James Patterson pose for the camera in Finland.

It is a long way from our quarry in Ballymena to the shores of the Baltic in south west Finland but despatch controller, James Patterson, made the journey back in August to take in a round of the world rally championship which is held in and around the town of Jyvaskyla. When James heard that CRH owned a cement company, Finnccent, in the nearby town of Turku, he expressed an interest in visiting the location along with his two friends who were accompanying him on the trip.

Our head office staff at Dunmurry arranged the plant visit and when the day came for James to go to the plant he

received tremendous hospitality from our colleagues in Finland. His host was Anita Jungar, Finnccent Human Resource Manager, as James explains;

"My first impression on arriving at the plant was the size and scale of the operation and its nearby quarry. Some two hundred people are employed at Turku and sales are in excess of 1.6 million tonnes of product each year with 90% of these sales being in the home market. I was then given a brief introductory talk about the Company and its history before a guided tour of the production facility. After the location visit Anita took me for light refreshments on a river boat in the nearby town which was the perfect end to a thoroughly enjoyable day. The whole trip gave me an insight into the sheer scale of CRH operations worldwide, employing many thousands of people, and I felt a sense of pride and belonging in being part of a successful organisation whether it is based in Ballymena or Finland."

James, who lives in Broughshane, joined us in January of this year and is typical of the customer focused despatch people now found throughout the business. In his spare time, James does some long distance lorry driving and in the recent past was prominent in the amateur dramatic productions presented by his local Young Farmers Club.



An aerial view of the Cement Plant at Turku

On the Waterfront with the Scottish Team



Construction work underway at Granton Harbour

Alvar Kenwell, Construction's Regional Manager in Scotland, reports excellent progress as his team continue with construction activities in and around the Granton area of Edinburgh, where we were awarded two separate contracts. The infrastructure works was for the Waterfront Development while the marine piling works at Granton Harbour was for Forth Ports.

Two phases of the four phase Waterfront Development contract were completed in early August this year, allowing the site team to concentrate on construction works within the Granton Harbour Development Area. This involved the construction of a 200 metre long sheet quay wall across the harbour to allow the reclamation of land behind it for development purposes. Our design and build contract commenced in May of this

year with the necessary piling and filling operations being successfully completed within the challenging timeframe required by the marine piling licence. The cutting edge design was carried out on our behalf by Arch Henderson of Clydebank.

The work entailed driving 18 metre long piles to the rock head through weak silts and necessitated the installation of rock anchor dowels to retain the toe while a tie bar restrained to a back anchor wall was installed to retain the top of the wall.

Our site team did not have it easy at Granton as high winds, rough seas at times and tidal working within the harbour made life difficult on occasions. However, they battled through and did us proud again using the full range of our marine plant including the Claude Monique barge, work boat, rescue boat and floating pontoons. The works in the harbour will continue in the early spring with further reclamation activities and the Claude Monique and the site team eagerly await the challenge.

As the works in the Harbour were finishing this year, phase 3 and 4 of the Waterfront Development recommenced in

September. This involved the demolition of part of the National Museum of Scotland to facilitate the construction of a footpath and cycle path from Granton to the shore. Our landscaping works included the planting of over 300 hand selected semi mature trees and 1800 linear metres of beech hedges.

We are now also refurbishing part of the Waterfront Lighthouse, which is one of Scotland's leading music and multi media production facilities with completion to be carried out in good time for the St Andrews evening celebrations.

Great credit goes to the site team of Paul Magowan, Robert McVitty, Padge McGinn, Raymond Millar, Michael Varney, Tony Mulholland, David McCulloch, Samuel Weldon, James McGinn, James Casey and Paul McGuinness.

Phase 3 and 4 of the Waterfront contract will be completed in May 2005 and we are currently discussing with the Client's Team, the option of a Joint Venture to build 200 apartments on a prime site within the development area.

Darrell's Superior Performance is Recognised



Darrell McGuckian (far right) receives his award from a CIOB representative. Mary Harney, Government Minister in the Republic of Ireland, was also in attendance.

Darrell McGuckian, Construction's Site Manager at the Victoria Square Development in Belfast, has just received deserved recognition in the 2004 Construction Manager of the Year Award for his work on the Regional Distribution Centre for Lidl at Nutt's Corner on the outskirts of Belfast. Darrell received the Crystal Award in this Chartered Institute of Building sponsored competition for projects valued between Euro 15 and 30 million.

Darrell's Lidl contract was nominated for the award because it involved delivery of a new build project valued at £11,600,000 in just 27 weeks. The site had a total area of 17 acres and involved the construction of a warehouse, office block, service yard and car park. Some idea of the scale of the work can be derived from the quantities involved which included 166,000 m³ of bulk excavation, 12,000m³ of insitu concrete and 16,000 tonnes of structural steel frame. Quite a feat.

Darrell began his career with Farrans Construction as a placement year student in 1995 and worked on building projects at Customs House in Belfast and Sainsburys Supermarket in Coleraine.

After graduating in civil engineering from the University of Ulster in 1997, Darrell became a permanent member of staff as a site engineer working on several fast track projects with Tesco and progressing to the position of site agent. In 2000 Darrell's talents were recognised and he became a Site Manager with day to day responsibility for projects such as Danesfort Office Refurbishment and Yorkgate Alterations which together were valued at £5.2million.

Darrell is now working at Victoria Square where he reports to Contract Manager John McReynolds. He joins a long list of other current Farrans Construction employees whose performance has been recognised by professional and civic bodies. Our FarransLink reporter managed to catch up with Darrell recently to find out more about how he felt about the award and his experience to date at Construction. As usual Darrell was quick to recognise the performance of the team at Lidl;

"I was obviously delighted to be nominated for the award and to actually win something was fantastic. It would not have been possible without the leadership of John Cooper, my Contract Manager and Robert McAlister, the Contract Director as well as every other member of the team on site. John and Robert have always looked after me and given me great encouragement to take decisions and get involved in as many things as possible. All of this gives me great work experience and a tremendous sense of achievement.

Although lots of hard work and long days went into the Lidl project, the site team never lost its togetherness or sense of humour. My award is really for the team."

Darrell lives close to Lough Neagh in County Antrim and in spite of his work commitments with the Company has still found time to build his own home and get married.

Safety Directors Share Ideas and Best Practice

The commitment to higher health and safety standards in our business continues with the appointment of directors in each of our Divisions as having specific responsibility for health and safety.

They are as follows:

R.J. Maxwell	Richard McDermott
Scott	Brian Watt
Ready Use	Brian Thompson
Farrans Construction	Clifford Spence
Materials Testing	Gordon Ellis

The Safety Directors meet formally twice a year to discuss common approaches and strategies towards improving our performance. They also use the opportunity to share ideas and experience from their own Division. Chief Executive, Noel Quinn, chairs the meetings.

There is ongoing dialogue between the directors as we move towards the implementation of best practice and common approaches in this key result area of our business.



Safety Directors pose for the camera. Seated (l-r): Noel Quinn and David Smyth. Standing (l-r): Gordon Ellis, Clifford Spence, Brian Thompson and Richard McDermott.

NORTHSTONE

The Right Choice

Introducing NORTHSTO

Historical Background

Over the past fifty years or so our business has grown under various ownerships into an organisation which leads the market in a number of sectors within the construction industry in Northern Ireland. This success has been due in no small way to the efforts, commitment and loyalty of our subsidiary companies and their employees. Maxwell quarry products, Ready Use concrete, and Scott roof tiles are well known brands in the Province and they are synonymous with quality and customer service of the highest levels.

In recent years there has been a natural coming together of these separate identities within Farrans Limited with our materials businesses becoming ever more closely aligned. Currently we trade under the name of Farrans Limited, which includes our major construction business at Farrans (Construction), our three materials supply businesses as well as W.H. Beckett. We also file statutory accounts and report to CRH plc as Farrans Limited.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Editor: Why have we decided to bring our materials businesses together under the new name of Northstone?

Noel Quinn: There is no doubt that Ready Use, Maxwell and Scott have, over the years, developed into extremely strong brands in their own right within the materials supply sector of the construction industry. The establishment of the Northstone name will strengthen these former brands through a common identity. This common identity will enable us to maximize the potential of future developments in our marketplace. All aspects and implications of the Northstone name have been carefully considered by a representative team of senior managers from our materials businesses. They have also identified and planned the necessary actions in great detail.

The Right Mix

Editor: What do you think the benefits to our customers of dealing with Northstone will be?

Noel Quinn: We are primarily a sales and marketing organisation offering a wide portfolio of construction activities and products. I feel there will be many advantages accruing to our customers from the Northstone identity. It will mean that we can offer them a wider range of products and services from one source

The Right Mortar

whereas in the past we have had, perhaps, a less co-ordinated approach under three

separate trading styles. We want customers, existing and new, to choose Northstone as their preferred supplier of quality materials and services. Customers will also benefit from our new single identity because it simplifies purchasing, invoicing and payment procedures. Our sales people will also have more opportunity to develop relationships with existing customers in promoting and selling the full range of products from the Northstone portfolio. In the early stages of the Northstone launch, we will still maintain reference to Scott, Ready Use and Maxwell on promotional literature, which places Northstone into context for the customer.

However, as time goes on and the Northstone identity becomes established with our customers, the importance of these references may well diminish.

Editor: What will be the benefits of Northstone for our business?

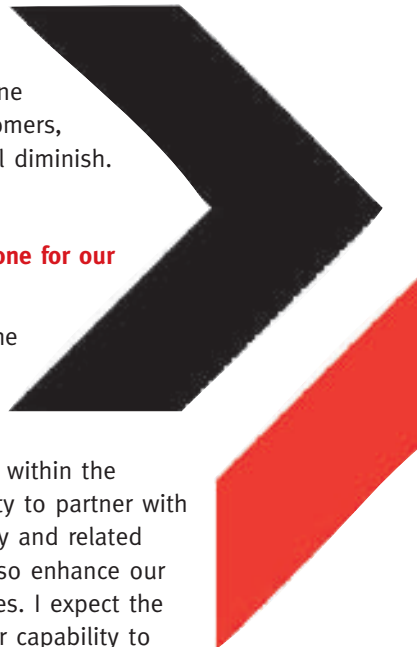
Noel Quinn: The main business benefit of the new Northstone identity will be to allow us to exploit a wider range of sales opportunities than in the past. The new single identity will improve communications within the selling context and provide us with an ability to partner with customers in respect of their material supply and related contracting requirements. Northstone will also enhance our customer administration and support services. I expect the Northstone identity to generally increase our capability to grow the business, both organically and by way of acquisition.

The Right Sand

Editor: What is the likely initial timeframe for the introduction of our new Northstone identity?

Noel Quinn: This feature is the first stage of the launch process as our employees must be the first to hear of our plans. In the first few weeks of the New Year we will be writing to each of our customers to introduce the new identity and explain what we are doing. Around the same time we will launch the new name to the industry through the trade press and updated promotional literature. On 1st April 2005, all statements and invoices to customers for purchases of construction materials and related services will carry the Northstone name. Our letterhead will also have the logo with effect from this same date. As the weeks and months go on we

The Right Concrete Block



NORTHSTONE


The Right Choice

NE – Our New Identity

In order to maximise market opportunities within our Concrete Products and Quarry businesses we have decided to re name them under the name of Northstone (NI) Limited (Northstone). This will give us the opportunity to develop Northstone into the leading construction materials supply company within our market area. The name Farrans, which is totally synonymous with civil engineering and building contracts, will remain unchanged but will be

associated solely with our civil engineering and building activities business. W.H. Beckett will continue to trade under it's existing style.

As we enter this new and exciting phase in the development of our Company, FarransLink has dedicated this two page article to a transcript of a recent interview with our Chief Executive, Noel Quinn, to find out more about Northstone and what it will mean for our customers, the business and our employees.



will begin to display the Northstone logo on signs at our locations and on vehicle livery as well as other items as we further establish the identity in keeping with our implementation plan.

However, we do not expect the full benefit of the single identity to be realised until our new information technology system is fully operational.

The Right Roof

Editor: What will the Northstone identity mean for our employees?

Noel Quinn: The introduction of the Northstone name will have no appreciable effect on the existing structure of the operational side of the business. We will continue to have a strongly focused road contracting and quarry products

division and this will be mirrored by our new concrete products division.

The necessary centralisation of the administrative systems required by the new single

The Right Surface

company identity is largely now in place at Dunmurry. I feel it is important to stress the opportunity which Northstone will create for us all to be part of a vibrant and growing business.

Editor: What will Northstone mean for Farrans (Construction)?

Noel Quinn: Although Northstone is concerned primarily with merging the previous Maxwell, Scott and Ready Use brands into one identity, Farrans (Construction) will remain a very important and integral part of the overall business and retain its existing trading style for commercial reasons.

The Right Aggregate

Editor: What is your vision for Northstone over the next five to ten years?

Noel Quinn: Our new company identity will play a pivotal role in shaping the future success of the business. It brings together the materials production and marketing functions under a single overall identity. However, more importantly in my view, is that it allows the pooling of the talents and energies of our people at every location with a common purpose of making Northstone a market leading business, which is ultra responsive to the needs of the customer. This will be vital as we face a future in which our competitors are becoming more efficient each year within an increasingly competitive market for construction materials and services. On taking up my current position

The Right Material

some three years ago, I was struck almost immediately by the commitment and loyalty of our employees, which set us apart from competitors. This same level of commitment and loyalty to Northstone (NI) Limited and its exciting new identity will leave us well placed to meet the competitive challenges which lie ahead. My vision is that Northstone will become the supplier of choice within the construction industry and with this will come further opportunities to invest and expand the business. With your commitment and loyalty we can, together, make this vision a reality.

Editor: Where can our employees find out more about Northstone?

Noel Quinn: I understand that some of our employees may have questions as to how our new single identity will affect them. These questions should be directed to the Director in charge of their particular operational area. I have asked that future editions of this magazine should report on progress with regard to implementation of our new identity.

The Right People

Experience, Expertise and Performance Come Together at Tarawood



The promotional and advertising material produced by Farrans Construction for almost the last twenty years has focused on the experience, expertise and performance we bring to any project we are involved in. This is no idle boast as it is these characteristics that set the Company apart from the competition. An excellent case in point is the latest Farrans Homes development at Tarawood, which is

just off Black's Road in Belfast and not so very far away from head office in Dunmurry.

The site team at Tarawood, which is made up of Morris Gilmore, Gerry Doyle and Ken McDonald, has well over 100 years of experience in the construction industry. The average age of the site team is reduced somewhat as we have two very able placement students, Enda Quigley and Lorna O'Hare, supporting Morris, Gerry and Ken.

Tarawood is a unique private development site in that for the first time the Client is not our own company. We are building the dwellings for Northwin Developments who will then sell them to the public. Northwin are a partnership that consists of Farrans Construction and two other contractors.

Farrans Homes are building 119 units at Tarawood, which comprise of 78 townhouses, 37 apartments and 4 detached houses with prices starting at £110,000. The site layout and individual house design has been based loosely on the successful Northwin



Work underway at Tarawood

site at nearby Wellington Square. Work commenced at Tarawood in January this year with the general site clearance and it wasn't long thereafter before Gerry had the piling rig in the foundations and the superstructure started to spring up out of the ground. A short time later, Morris joined the team after completing the impressive Villa Marina project on the Isle of Man. Ken McDonald then moved to Tarawood after completing his work at the Company's Glenwood Court Development.

The word from the site is that Morris, Gerry and Ken along with the rest of the team at Tarawood are delivering as usual as befits a Company which, after all, has as its motto 'Experience, Expertise and Performance.'

More Success for Farrans Ladies in Professional Examinations



Left to right: Samantha Gillespie, Lynn McWatters and Denise Geddis

The Farrans ongoing commitment to staff development continues with three of our ladies achieving notable success recently in their respective professional examinations.

Samantha Gillespie, Construction's recently appointed Health and Safety Adviser, successfully passed her NEBOSH Certificate in Health and Safety which is the first stage in her becoming a Registered Safety Practitioner. Already Samantha is working extremely well with our site people and providing an excellence service by way of her inspections and audits. The practical advice and guidance she gives to our management teams is highly regarded.

Denise Geddis, our Assistant Company Secretary, has just completed her Post Graduate Diploma in Administration and Law at the University of Ulster which allows her now to apply for membership of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators. Over the past few years, Denise has become more heavily involved in the legal and contractual aspects of our business and her course has certainly assisted in this regard.

Lynn McWatters, our Personnel and Safety Administrator, has completed her Diploma in Personnel Management at Queens University and is now a graduate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development which is the recognised professional qualification for practitioners in her area of work. Lynn's course, in addition to the normal examinations, required her to submit a detailed management report on a business related issue and she chose to review our internal Supervisor Development Programme as her topic and whether or not it met its objectives. The management report produced by Lynn was of the highest possible standard and already we have integrated her recommendations into the next course programme, which will be delivered in Scotts in the New Year.

FarransLink congratulates Samantha, Denise and Lynn on their success as they build careers within our business and use their new found skills to good effect.

Drugs and Alcohol – Some Sobering Facts



Left to right: Linda McCorriston, Kara Cunningham, Jonathan Hunter, Jim Wilson, Jimmy Totten and Joanne McKibbin

We all know that drug and alcohol abuse is increasing at an alarming rate and it can have a devastating affect on the lives of those addicted and their families. Recently published statistics indicate that 800 people die each year in Northern Ireland as a result of alcohol related conditions with 400,000 working days also being lost annually due to illness caused by excessive alcohol consumption. Each year, some 10,000 working days are also lost in the Province due to the affects of drug abuse.

Jonathan Hunter, our Group Human Resources Officer at Dunmurry, has just completed a programme of 14 awareness sessions for all employees at Scotts. These were designed to highlight the risks to health associated with drug or alcohol abuse as well as to improve understanding of the affect it can have in the workplace. Each session provided information on sensible alcohol consumption limits and the problems that drugs and alcohol abuse can lead to which include an increased risk of accidents and lower productivity as well as poor time keeping and attendance.

In total some 158 employees attended the sessions and anyone who felt they had a problem was encouraged to talk to their line manager. This is part of the Company's commitment to providing advice and guidance to assist individuals in resolving their drug and alcohol problems. Jonathan also outlined the duty of care the Company has to other employees in terms of protecting them from the actions of fellow employees who may have drug or alcohol problems.

All in all, the sessions were well received. Many thanks to Jonathan for his commitment to the welfare of our employees and taking time to tell us more about this increasingly common social problem which can have such an adverse affect on individuals and their families.

Safety Award Winners

The superior health and safety performance of our business has again been recognised with Farrans Construction, R.J. Maxwell and Ready Use collecting prestigious 2004 National Occupational Safety Awards as sponsored by the Northern Ireland Safety Group.

R.J. Maxwell won the Construction Award for Northern Ireland and Farrans Construction were Highly Commended. Ready Use collected a Certificate of Merit.

Congratulations to all involved in their excellent achievements.



Left to right: Samantha Gillespie (Farrans Construction), Philip Shields (R.J. Maxwell) and Sarah Kennedy (Ready Use) pose with their awards

Everything Under Control in England

The news from our correspondent in the Farrans Construction English Region this autumn is, as usual, a record of fine achievement and people interest.



The Mildenhall Control Tower Complex in all its glory

The Division has successfully handed over the Control Tower Complex at RAF Mildenhall, a project which was valued at £11m. The facility included a 9 storey brick clad, reinforced concrete control tower and an 18 bay fire station complete with accommodation for 26 fire crew as well as an operations and weather centre. This technically difficult project was further complicated during the construction phase by major security changes at the Base, which resulted from the 9/11 tragedy in the United States, producing delays in getting into the site for up to 3 hours each day. Programme chaos often ensued because of this. It is very much to the credit of each and every Farrans person who was involved in the project that the complex was handed over to the Client in time.

Some 300 guests attended the grand opening ceremony for the complex and this coincided with the re opening of the adjacent runway and a plane returning during the ceremony to mark the event.

Norman Lawrie, our site manager on the Mildenhall project, is retiring this Christmas after some 22 years with the Company. His contribution on Mildenhall and many other prestigious contracts over the years has been invaluable and he has done much to enhance the Farrans reputation in the market place. One of Norman's greatest attributes has been his willingness to spend time with younger members of staff and share his experience and knowledge with them. Many of our current management team in England have benefited greatly from Norman's coaching. Norman certainly appears to have been looking after the younger members of the team at Mildenhall because we now have two of them, Jason Starling and Dan Moore, running projects in their own right. All at FarransLink wish Norman a long and happy retirement.

Congratulations also go to quantity surveyor Ray Gambell and his wife, Jenny, on the recent birth of their son, Elliot.

Finally, our correspondent sends greetings from the Region to John Gillvray, who also retires this Christmas. All at Cambridge Office and the sites wish John a long and happy retirement and record their thanks for his immeasurable assistance and guidance in recent times.

Bob Retires After 33 Years of Service

Bob McGrugan, our sales manager at Ready Use Concrete, has just retired after over 33 years of service to the Company. Bob became one of the best known sales people in the industry and had developed long standing relationships with many large customers particularly in the north and west of the Province.



Bob McGrugan (fourth from left) was joined by past and current colleagues to mark his retirement

In the early 1980s Bob spent some time as a sales manager with our then associated company, T B F Thompson (Garvagh) Limited, and was involved in the marketing and selling of construction plant and machinery. After this short period on secondment with Thompsons, Bob returned to his first love of selling concrete.

Bob has done much to develop and enhance the profile of the Company in the market place and in particular spent a lot of time developing the younger sales people who reported to him. His retirement was marked by a lunch in a local hotel where current and past employees joined him to reminisce about old times.

All at FarransLink wish Bob a long and healthy retirement.

Scott Pipes Receive European Mark of Approval

Our Scott pipe production plant in Ballymena has been awarded the prestigious Kite Mark in respect of their famous socket and spigot concrete pipes.

This confirms that our methods of production and testing during manufacture, as well as the quality of the finished pipes and joints, conform to the new European Standard EN 1916:2002. This also incorporates all factory process control measures, tests and physical checks. It is likely that this new European Standard will replace British Standard BS 5911 -1: 2002, which Scotts also hold, in the future.

Great credit goes to Bob Smyth, Joe Pollock, Sam Rea and the rest of the production team for their efforts in continually ensuring that we produce pipes to the highest possible standards.

Scotts also manufacture OGEE pipes for agricultural and drainage use in a range of diameter sizes from 300mm to 1200 mm.

Why not give our pipe sales manager, Peter McClure, a call on 02825 656381 or 07786 115543 and obtain a price for the pipe requirements on your next contract, irrespective of size? Peter will be only too happy to tell you more about what Scott pipes have to offer.



More Scott pipes are placed on a Farrans Construction site

NVQ Qualifications for Maxwell Employees

Maxwell has recently joined forces with Edutrain International Limited, who are an approved NVQ Centre based in Armagh, to introduce National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) into our Quarrying Division.

Phase 1 of this project includes the registration of 50 skilled employees to undertake a range of NVQs and the development of 18 in-company NVQ assessors.

The range of NVQs which are being undertaken by Maxwell employees includes Road Building, Highways Maintenance, Quarry Process Operations, Specialist Plant and Machinery, Laboratory Activities and Construction Plant Maintenance.

Julie Irwin, Human Resources Manager for Maxwell commented, "this is a very exciting project for Maxwells. We feel it is important that all our employees get an opportunity to work towards industry recognised qualifications such as NVQs. It is also part of our training plan to continually develop and recognise the skills of our employees at all levels."

In hailing the initiative as an 'absolute must' for any progressive company, Managing Director Willie McNabb added, "This is only Phase 1 of an ongoing project and it already represents the largest Quarry and Road Building related NVQ assessment project in Northern Ireland to date. We are delighted to be associated with Edutrain International Limited and I look forward to presenting NVQ and Assessor certificates to the first batch of our people next summer."



Embarking on the NVQ route (left to right): Jimmy Mawhinney, Peter Winters, Declan Close, Sam Christie, Ray Davis, Alistair McCahon and James Buchanan.

Trevor's Four Star Performance



Left to right: Gerald Doyle, Roy Browne, Johnny Halligan and Trevor Crichton

Ready Use have again excelled themselves in this year's Quarry Products Association Environmental Awards with the performance of the depots at Ballynahinch, Moneymore and Dunmurry all being recognised. Quality and Environmental Manager, Roy Browne compiled the entries.

Pride of place this year went to Dunmurry which received a prestigious 4 star award which indicates superior performance against eight rigorous environmental criteria which included dust, noise, transport management and action in the community. On hearing of the award, Roy was quick to attribute the success to the team of dedicated employees who work at Dunmurry and in particular the contribution of Trevor Crichton;

"Trevor joined the Company in 1999 and has a wide brief of duties at Dunmurry which includes the control of waste disposal and maintenance of water quality. However, what makes him special is his genuine interest and commitment to reducing waste and keeping the yard area tidy. In the past he has come up with some great ideas on how we can reduce waste levels. The Dunmurry award is a fitting tribute to Trevor and the rest of the guys at the location"

Trevor accompanied Roy to the awards ceremony in Cookstown and collected the award on behalf of the Company. Trevor is a married man with two children, Lindsay and Jamie, and lives in Lisburn. He is also an ardent football fan and has supported Liverpool for many years. The rumour is that on his return to Dunmurry with the award his colleagues remarked that this was the first time in many years that a Liverpool fan had seen a trophy. FarransLink readers may be interested to know that Trevor's wife, Angela, worked for both Farrans Limited and Ready Use in the past.

Ballynahinch and Moneymore also received awards under the innovation category for control of dust and storage of fuels and chemicals.

Congratulations to Roy, Trevor and everyone else at Ready Use who were associated with this year's awards.

Kathleen Retires After 43 Years of Service

Kathleen Hamilton, Noel Quinn's secretary, retired this summer after 43 years of service and it was with some emotion and sadness that a small group of friends and colleagues gathered to have lunch with Kathleen on her last day at work to mark the occasion.

Kathleen's employment with the Company spans five decades and during that time she has devoted herself to Farrans Limited and its people. Loyal, dedicated, trustworthy, capable and committed are all

apt descriptions to include in any profile or tribute to Kathleen but to those of us who know her well she is much, much more. To any aspiring secretary, Kathleen is the perfect role model combining shorthand and keyboard skills, which were honed in the days of the famous typing pool at Dunmurry, with the ability to meet challenging deadlines. We could all learn much from Kathleen's patient and understanding manner which led to her being regarded as a friend by everyone who had the pleasure of working with her.

Down through the years Kathleen has worked for many senior managers including two former Chief Executives, John Brown and Ernie McClure, who both regarded her as vital to the smooth running of their offices and someone who could be relied upon to get the job done. The accuracy of her minute taking at main board meetings was renowned. Perhaps it is fitting that we leave the last word with Chief Executive, Noel Quinn, who worked more closely with Kathleen than anyone else over the last three years;

"Kathleen was everything that I expected when I came to work at Dunmurry some three years ago. Her support and guidance to me in the first few months of taking on the role of Chief Executive were invaluable. Over the years Kathleen has seen many developments at Farrans Limited with people coming and going and the ownership of the business changing on two separate occasions. However, Kathleen the person, never altered with her efficient, friendly and considerate manner remaining constant. I speak for every employee in our Company in wishing Kathleen a long and healthy retirement."

Best Wishes Kathleen from all at FarransLink.



Kathleen (centre, right) is congratulated by colleagues past and present

Professional Recognition for Clifford

One of the best known personalities in our business, Clifford Spence, has been admitted to the award of Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers in recognition of his outstanding contribution to civil engineering over the years.

Clifford joined Farrans Construction in 1976 as a site engineer. In 1978 he became a site agent progressing onto a number of prestigious road, bridge and sewage treatment works. He was promoted to Contract Manager in 1990 and was responsible for a large portfolio of contracts that included several marine works projects in Belfast Harbour. In 1992 Clifford became the Deputy Project Manager on the Belfast Cross Harbour Road and Rail Links which was a joint venture with Graham Contracts and valued at £35m.



It was on this contract that Clifford's senior management skills and abilities really shone and in 1994 Clifford became a director of the Company with responsibility for civil engineering contracts in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Clifford has many skills and attributes but perhaps his greatest are people management and relationship building with Clients. Civils Managing Director, Eamonn Sweeney, was only too delighted to tell us more having worked with Clifford for over 25 years;

"Clifford is one of the cornerstones of the Civil Engineering Division at Farrans, whether it is undertaking the role of Safety Director, looking after contracts or coaching other members of the management team. He has that uncanny knack of getting the best out of the people around him by firstly understanding their perspective and then forging them into a team to work towards a particular goal. His commitment and loyalty are there for everyone to see. Clifford's ability to build excellent working relationships with Clients and their representatives has done much to enhance our reputation in the market place. These skills will be vital to the success of the Company as we will encounter more major Private Finance Initiative projects in the future in roads and water infrastructure and seek to partner, in every sense of the word, with a wide range of clients. Clifford's recent recognition is a fitting award by his professional institution for someone who has done nothing but enhance the reputation of the Company and civil engineering for over thirty years. I congratulate Clifford on his achievement."

Talking to our Customers

Tom Sweeney, our Business Development Manager at Dunmurry, has just completed a survey of forty six of the biggest customers of our concrete, roof tile and quarry products businesses to find out more about how we can deliver the superior levels of service which are required in today's market place for construction materials and related services.

Tom, along with Keith Wood of Ready Use, Raymond Moore of R J Maxwell and Alan Hewitt of Scotts spent many hours pouring over the design of the survey, the choice of questions and most suitable scoring framework. Their excellent work produced a comprehensive document which provides data not only on how we currently perform but, crucially, also on our weaknesses and how we can improve. The survey also sought to gather data on further business opportunities which would be available to us in the future with each of the customers who took part in the survey. There were also questions on how we compare to the competition in the service level and customer care we deliver.

At an early stage in the design process, Tom, Keith, Raymond and Alan were convinced that the only way to obtain the quality of information we needed from the survey was for Tom to visit the decision makers in each of the customer organisations and ask the survey questions personally. This would allow clarification of the questions and further development of the answers as well as indicating to the customers that their comments and concerns are of critical importance to our business development. In an interview with one major customer, Tom spent over two hours with eight of their senior managers and directors discussing our service level which illustrates the importance given to the exercise by our customers.

We have learnt many things from the survey and, in particular, that our strongest competitive advantage is achieved when our customers perceive that:

- they are receiving high quality products at relatively competitive prices from us;
- we are responsive to their needs and consistently provide a high level of customer care;
- we have developed strong personal relationships with them and they know they can rely on key individuals within our business;
- we appreciate the business they give us;
- we provide them with a high level of administrative, technical and marketing support.

The survey also provided vital information on specific areas of customer dissatisfaction and inconsistency in performance in areas such as product quality, response to problems, delivery service, contract works and the standard of sub contractors. There was excellent information obtained also on areas in which we are being outperformed by the competition.

Tom's survey report is now in the hands of the directors and already they are working on how we can build on the strengths identified by the survey and address those areas where customers are dissatisfied with the customer care they receive from us.

There is no doubt that Tom, simply by talking to our customers, has obtained high quality feedback which will be an important tool in the developing of robust competitive strategies as we all move forward and develop our new identity in the market place.

Farrans Team Powering on at Coolkeeragh

At the end of 2002 Farrans Construction was awarded the design and build sub-contract for the construction of all civils work associated with the new Gas Fired Power Station at Coolkeeragh in County Derry. Our employer was VA Tech Hydro, an Austrian contractor, who were providing a turnkey project to ESBI.

Our works included the construction of two steel framed turbine buildings, one to house the Gas Turbine and the other for the Steam Turbine. Two other buildings made up the power island. These were the Auxiliary Building, which contained all the electrical control equipment as well as providing accommodation, stores and facilities for the power station employees, and the HRSG (Heat Recovery Steam Generator) Building. Two transformer compounds, two tank bases and five other new buildings along with the refurbishment of two existing pump houses and all siteworks including cable trenches and roadways completed our contractual obligations.

Over 700 continuous flight auger piles were installed in early 2003. This was followed by an extremely intense period of concrete works when over 13000m³ of concrete was placed in a six month period.



The Farrans team hard at work at Coolkeeragh

Two of the largest pours were required for the turbine tables. In the case of the Gas Turbine Table, this involved the placement of over 1100m³ of concrete in one continuous pour while the Steam Turbine Table pour, even though it was smaller at 750m³, was more complicated as it was located on top of eight 13m high columns. Great credit must go to the site team for a magnificent effort in this regard. Immediately following the construction of the tables, the Turbine Building envelopes were completed. These were steel framed buildings of 30m high which were clad with composite acoustically rated panels.

At this stage things on the project got somewhat crowded as we were joined on site by over 600 workers employed by VA Tech Hydro who were involved in other aspects of the power station construction. Many of these workers had only a minimal knowledge of English and it took all the negotiating skills of our site team, not to mention a few phrase books, to ensure our works were effectively co-ordinated into the overall project. Needless to say our team came through this difficult period with flying colours.

Following cladding works and internal works, the siteworks became our priority along with work to the other satellite buildings.

As we go to press the works are substantially complete and the gas supply, via the North West Gas Pipeline, is due to arrive on site shortly. FarransLink managed to get some comment from Contract Manager John McReynolds, who is normally a man of few words;

"Coolkeeragh was a steep learning curve for the site team. At the busiest time on site we had a team of 27 staff and each and every one of them was tremendous. They all worked long hours and the commitment they showed to the contract was superb. One of the things which pleased me most was the number of young technical staff who were on site and certainly they have all benefited, both professionally and in terms of practical knowledge, from the experience and this augers well for their future careers."

The Farrans Construction team will be off site by Christmas safe in the knowledge that they have done a great job in challenging circumstances.

Building Careers at Maxwell

Our Maxwell Division continues its tradition of encouraging employees to achieve relevant and further qualifications. This year we have 4 employees who have completed further education courses.

At a recent presentation Willie McNabb, Managing Director congratulated the four men on their achievement and in recognising their performance said; "The development of our people is vital to the prosperity of R J Maxwell. I congratulate you on your success that has not been achieved without a lot of hard work and personal sacrifice. I know there have been times when you have had to study at night and at weekends, in addition to holding down responsible positions within the Company. I look forward to you putting your new found knowledge and skills to immediate use as you continue to build careers within the business. My vision for Maxwell is that we become a learning company where everyone is encouraged to achieve their full potential and we learn not only from each other but also from our previous experience. I want Best Practice to become second nature to us all because it is this that will differentiate us from the competition."

Detailed below is a brief profile of our four talented employees.

Geoffrey Davis



Geoff is a Laboratory Technician based at Carrickmore. He completed a Foundation Degree in Building Engineering on a part time basis at Omagh College of Further Education and University of Ulster at Jordanstown. He commenced with Maxwell in June 2002 and was already part way through his course, having previously worked as a fitter / welder for the past 10 years. He continued with his studies and we are delighted that he is graduating in January.

Ciaran Cunningham

Ciaran commenced with Maxwell in September 2000 and was initially employed as a Laboratory Technician. He has subsequently been promoted to Assistant Quarry Manager for Carrickmore and Mountfield, assisting Liam McKenna. Ciaran has successfully completed the 3 year Institute of Quarrying, Diploma in Quarrying on a correspondence basis from Doncaster College.



Ian McIntyre



Ian is a Site Agent based at our Ballymena depot and has been employed by Maxwell since May 1995. He has recently completed an HNC in Business and Finance at the North East Institute of Further and Higher Education and has now enrolled on the BA (Hons) Degree in Business and Finance. He has worked on many large projects for the Company over the years including the M77 Glasgow, Eastern Approaches, Belfast City Airport redevelopment and more recently Junction One and the A8 Dual Carrigeway surfacing.

Jason Murphy

Jason moved from John A Wood in Cork to join Maxwell in August 2003. At that time he was part way through the Diploma in Asphalt Technology course at Doncaster College. He continued his studies last year and successfully obtained the qualification this year. Jason is employed as a Site Engineer at our Ballymena depot and is mainly working on DRD Measured Term contracts.



FarransLink congratulates Geoffrey, Ciaran, Ian and Jason on their success and commitment to their own personal development.



Kevin Gains Promotion

Kevin Corley has been promoted to Director at Farrans Construction. Kevin will join Clifford Spence in reporting to Eamonn Sweeney, Managing Director of the Civil Engineering Division.

Kevin is an honours graduate from the University of Ulster Jordanstown and a Chartered Member of the Institution of Engineers of Ireland. He lives in the country near Aughnacloy, County Tyrone. He is married to Kate and has four children.

He joined the Company fourteen years ago and has worked as a site agent and contracts manager on various contracts over that period. Prior to joining Farrans, Kevin worked in the public sector for five years, with a building contractor for four years and the remainder of his career he has worked within the civil engineering industry.

With Farrans he has been involved on major projects such as the Stena High Speed Ferry Terminal in Belfast, the Aquarius Water Projects and the Valley Distribution Project. The Aquarius and Valley Contracts were pioneering partnering contracts with the Water Service, which gained high recognition for their success throughout the civil engineering industry in Northern Ireland and further afield. Over this last four years Kevin has concentrated his efforts on the development of the Utilities department where Farrans carry out a range of work on maintenance, rehabilitation and new capital works contracts on water mains for the Water Service.

Kevin would like to thank all those who have worked with him in the past and present and who have helped him in his achievements to date. He is now looking forward to working with fellow director Clifford Spence in assisting Eamonn Sweeney, in the further development of the Civil Engineering and Utilities departments at Construction.

Victoria Square Starts to Stir

Farrans Construction have formed a joint venture with local contractor, Gilbert Ash, to undertake the Province's largest building contract, which will be known as **The Victoria Square Regeneration Project**, located in central Belfast. The scheme, when under full construction, will be the largest in Europe.

The initial phase, valued at £37 million, involves the demolition works, the substructure works and the construction of a huge basement car park. When completed, the scheme will provide an extension to the existing prime retail areas of Donegall Place, Castle Lane, Castle Place and Royal Avenue.

The Victoria Square development will provide extensive retail and leisure space with a design concept which is unique to Belfast in that it will not be an enclosed mall type shopping centre. Instead, it will provide a covered pedestrian street scape over four levels which consist of:

- **800,000 square feet of retail space over three floors**
- **2 levels of basement car parking for 1,000 vehicles**
- **leisure units including restaurants, bars and cafes**
- **70 shop units ranging in size from 100 square feet to 60,000 square feet.**

The design concept is based around 17 contextual different buildings with public spaces interspersed between them. There will also be a return to the grandeur of the department store look of the early 1900s with the House of Fraser building even having its own elegant roof garden. Victoria Square will give to Belfast a new impressive landmark in the form of a 35 metre diameter glass dome from which the public can enjoy breathtaking views across the city.

The Farrans Gilbert Ash joint venture team has made tremendous progress on the project as we go to press with the demolition of existing buildings and site clearance now virtually complete. The most dramatic aspect of the demolition took place on Sunday 21st November with the destruction of the 19 storey Churchill House Office Block using controlled explosions. About 90 kg of explosives were used which made up 2,500 individual charges spread throughout the building to ensure that when the 10,000 tonnes of material came down, it did not damage neighbouring buildings, some of which were no more than 10 metres away. Needless to say the demolition went according to plan in front of a bank of television cameras and large crowds – in fact, not a single window pane was broken!

Farrans have already completed two advance contracts. Firstly, Farrans' Utilities have completed the major task of permanently diverting all the services in the area. Secondly, Farrans have also completed the refurbishment of AM House, the existing Victorian brick building on the site, which included the relocation and fitting out of the famous Kitchen Bar.

Our site team is currently involved in the construction of the basement car park and are ably led by John McReynolds, Contract Manager and Stephen McCaffrey, Project Co-ordinator, who along with Site Agents Martin O'Neill and Darrell McGuckian, are honing a group of extremely able technical people who have already done much to enhance our reputation. The rest of the site team is made up of PG McKernan, James Smyth, Ross McWha, Shane Daly, Matt Dickson, Paul Sheppard and Lisa Mooney. Completion of the basement is expected in March 2006.

Future editions of FarransLink will carry regular progress updates on Victoria Square.



Artist's impression of Victoria Square

Noel Meets the Ready Use Team at Craigavon



Left to right: Noel Malcolm, Noel Quinn and Eamonn Kelly in front of the new Craigavon Plant

The latest news from Ready Use is that we have erected and commissioned a new plant at the existing Craigavon depot which will further expand the geographical spread and availability of our range of high quality building mortars and plasters.

The original, standard dry batch Stothert and Pitt plant in Craigavon was erected in the 1970s and this has been replaced by a state of the art wet batch unit which will produce both mortar and concrete products to exacting specifications. The design and specification for the new plant were drawn up by Operations Director, Brian Thompson and Maintenance Manager, Colin McCall who also undertook the role of project manager during the erection process. The design, which mirrors other plants we have in the Province, has a two door discharge static mixer to accommodate ex works customers who visit the plant. Other features include high powered jet sprays within the mixer unit to facilitate cleaning and closed circuit television cameras to monitor stock levels in storage bins. There is now a water recycling facility at the depot which ensures that no water is discharged thus reducing our costs. Contractors for the project were McCrory Engineering, PIL and Peter Lappin.

Work began on 2nd August with a flurry of activity which involved cranes coming and going as well as low loaders delivering everything from chutes, switch gear and conveyors to aggregate bins, fixed ladders and guarding arrangements. Colin and his contractors really excelled themselves and as a result the new plant was producing by 16th September which was one full week ahead of schedule.

On completion of the project our Chief Executive, Noel Quinn, made a surprise visit to the plant and met the people who would operate it. Noel Malcolm is the depot supervisor and he is assisted by Eamonn Kelly, who joined the Company in July of this year. FarransLink has it on good authority that the Chief Executive was suitably impressed with what he saw as well as the enthusiasm and commitment of Noel and Eamonn.

Congratulations to Colin McCall and his team of contractors on a job well done.

The Safety Factor

European Week of Safety 18-20 October 2004

As part of the Farrans Limited European Week of Safety campaign that focused on the theme 'Building for Safety', a number of initiatives were undertaken throughout our divisions.

Farrans Construction successfully launched their new Health and Safety Handbook, with the launch being attended by Tony Doran, Chief Executive of CEF, John Robinson, Past Chairman of the Build Safe Initiative and Brian Walker from the Construction Industry Training Board.

The handbook contains valuable information on health and safety issues and all construction site employees have been issued with a copy.

We would encourage all those who received the handbook to keep it safe and read it regularly as it may prevent you, or somebody else, from



Left to right: Brian Thompson, Gordon Best (Quarry Products Association) and Stephen Smyth review the Ready Use Suggestion Scheme

having an accident in the future. Construction also communicated their revised procedure for the reporting of accidents to contract managers, site managers, agents and engineers. This will help with identification of root causes to accidents so that improved safe systems of work can be introduced and lessons learnt.

Ready Use Concrete launched their annual Safety Suggestion Scheme. This allows employees and owner drivers the opportunity to suggest improved ways of carrying out an activity or a piece of equipment that will eliminate or reduce risk.

Scotts roofing division have introduced a safety audit marking scheme among its roofing squads. This will introduce a competitive element between the squads to find out who is the safest team.

R.J. Maxwell embarked on further risk assessment training for their civil and surfacing engineers. The nature of their work is such that engineers need to be constantly completing specific risk assessments for work activities. The training courses, run by Craig Chisholm, the Company Health and Safety Manager, will deal with the main hazards associated with Maxwell activities and review the control measures required in the risk assessment to ensure safe working.

All the initiatives that have been completed will be collated as the Health and Safety Executive have a recognition scheme for those companies who have been committed to the 'Building in Safety' campaign.



Left to right: Brian Walker, John Robinson, Tony Doran and John Gillyvray



David Smyth (left) explains the new audit marking scheme on site

Accident Statistics

To the end of October, there has been a reduction in the total number of lost time accidents in the year compared to last year. Thirty nine 'lost time' accidents have been recorded compared to forty three for the same period in 2003. Any reduction is to be welcomed but we will not be satisfied until this figure is in the long term reduced to zero.

Despite having fewer 'lost time' accidents the number of days lost through these accidents is higher for this period compared with last year. Some of the accidents that have happened have been serious and this has led to greater time lost.

Congratulations to Mattest who are 'accident free' for the year. Although the smallest of our units, their employees are exposed to construction site hazards on a regular basis through their consultancy and testing services. Ready Use has the next lowest Accident Frequency Rate (0.60) closely followed by R.J. Maxwell (0.72). R.J. Maxwell has the second lowest Accident Severity Rate (1.93) with Ready Use following on at 2.09.

Accidents Statistics – End of October 2004

	AFR	ASR
Mattest	0	0
Ready Use	0.60	2.09
R.J. Maxwell	0.72	1.93
Farrans Construction	1.11	13.91
Scotts	1.60	20.80
Group	1.01	10.71

On a serious matter we reported in the July edition of FarransLink that 4 people had lost their lives in CRH locations, and it is with sadness that we report a further 4 fatalities have occurred. The latest fatality happened in the South of Ireland in Tipperary. The foreman of a road surfacing squad with 32 years experience, stepped out of the hopper of a spreader he was cleaning, and into the path of a wheeled 3600 excavator ('rubber duck') that was filling the chipping spreader with coated chips. The excavator ran over his leg and it is believed that this caused a fracture of his pelvis and resulted in severe internal bleeding. He died shortly afterwards at the site while awaiting an ambulance.

This terrible loss of life should constantly remind us of the dangers that exist in our business and that everybody, whether a new graduate or operative, through to our most experienced people, must act safely at all times and be aware of what could happen if we try to take a shortcut or not follow the devised safe systems of work. We also have a duty to look after our fellow workers and remind them to work safely and follow safety procedures.

Finally, everyone in the Health and Safety Department thank all of you who have participated in the safety initiatives that have been completed this past year and wish you all a very Happy Xmas and safe New Year.