

Chief Executive's Diary

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of Northlink and my thanks go, as usual, to our correspondents throughout Northstone who contribute to its pages. Their input is key to the success of our magazine.

As you all know, health and safety is always the top priority for the senior management team at Northstone. It disappoints me that in the first five months of the year our statistics have deteriorated. We have already had 19 accidents in the year to 31st May 2008 and these have resulted in 181 lost days. Although the reason for this downturn cannot be readily identified it is imperative that we all use our best efforts to reduce the risk of accidents across all Northstone divisions. The four fatalities in CRH plc since the start of this year serve as a timely reminder of the potential for serious injury in our industry.

Near miss monitoring indicates that on occasions we are only a one step away from a serious injury or worse.

On a more positive note, there were many locations in our Company which had an accident free year during 2007 and in the case of the Mattest laboratories, there have been no lost

time accidents recorded in the last five years.

It cannot have escaped your notice that there has been a significant decline in house building across the Province, which has adversely impacted on volumes of products and services being sold. The poor level of government spending in roads and infrastructure has continued into 2008 and this has unfortunately reduced civil engineering activity in the Province. Overall I would expect this general market downturn to continue for some time to come. This is very disappointing and we continue to lobby to have this situation reversed.

In January 2008 we acquired C4 Industries in Liverpool which has created, with Salmor Industries and Carson Industries, a very significant development platform in respect of access chambers and associated accessories under the direction of Michael Wightman. On your behalf I would like to welcome everyone at C4 Industries to the Northstone family. I look forward to keeping you advised of the progress of this new Northstone business, as we seek to develop markets for its products in Western Europe and beyond.

In the Northstone Concrete Division the past six months has featured a lot of activity as we move towards the commissioning of the new roof tile plant. This is a superb modern



facility and a credit to all worked on its delivery. There has also been investment in upgrading and developing the sand and gravel locations which were acquired recently.

In our quarrying and blacktop business, volumes and prices are under pressure. Nevertheless, it is good to see our blacktop crews hard at work on the M1/M2 motorway in Greater Belfast from Stockman's Lane to Sandyknowes. Our Quarry and Asphalt Division will also be hard at work until Christmas at City of Derry Airport and by all accounts the site team are doing an excellent job there. On the supply side, the Division's Long Mountain quarry has to date supplied 38,000 tonnes of crusher run and type 3 material to a contract to construct 5 wind turbines and associated access roads at Dunloy.

At Farrans the very impressive Victoria

Square Development has been handed over to the Client and the Westlink urban motorway contract is ahead of schedule. We are also hard at work seeking to secure more contracts, in both Northern Ireland and Scotland, for the construction of new schools and hospitals. The Kiln 3 contract at Irish Cement in Drogheda is also progressing well with the civils work now virtually completed. This is a great example of partnering with our Irish Cement colleagues in successfully delivering a world class facility.

Our construction materials testing business, Mattest, continues to establish itself as the premier provider of testing services to the industry in Ireland. The capability of the business and its people is exemplified by the excellent performance of the site testing team on major contracts using on site testing laboratories.

At Beckett Construction Solutions I can report that the accessories side of the business is well established now with comprehensive sales coverage throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. There has also been excellent performance in the roofing and interior fit out activities and the site team is currently installing its first KeyBEMO metal roof.

It only remains for me to wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer holiday and to thank you for your work and commitment to Northstone over the last six months - most of all "Stay Safe".

Noel Quinn
July 2008

Another Day, Another Division For Northstone

Following the acquisition of Salmor Industries in Lurgan, Carson Industries in Roscommon and most recently C4 Industries in Liverpool, Northstone has created a new Utility Chamber Division to bring together these three companies into a single reporting group.

The new division, which will be headed by Michael Wightman, who originally joined Northstone as the Managing Director of Salmor Industries, will seek to continue its upward growth curve in the sale of access chambers and access covers for utility projects across Europe. The use of preformed access chambers is growing rapidly as contractors seek to take advantage of the flexibility offered, reduce dependence on skilled labour and speed up construction times.

Commenting for Northlink on the creation of the new division, Michael said, "I am confident that there are

exciting times ahead for this new Northstone division and we have set ourselves some challenging growth targets over the next five year period. By bringing together three of the market leaders in the access chamber industry we now have a talented management team, an unequalled range of products and technical leadership across a wide range of markets".

The new division is already amongst the market leaders in UK telecoms, with Salmor Industries being particularly strong thanks to its links with British Telecom, but equally interesting is the fact that the new division generates close to 40% of its overall sales outside the British Isles. The new division even makes sales as far away as the Middle East where both Carson and C4 operate through distributors in Oman and United Arab Emirates.

"The Salmor management team, headed by Derek Williamson and Patricia Burns has settled well into the Northstone way of life and relish the fact that they form the foundation of the new division", said Michael.

"Carson Industries, under the leadership of Michael Kelly and supported in particular by Cian Cantwell and Colman Cooney, is already the market leader in European water and irrigation markets and has strong sales in Scandinavia, Czech Republic, and Slovakia."

The latest acquisition by the Northstone group, C4 Industries, is the market leader in UK highways but is fast developing a strong presence in Europe where it already supplies France Telecom and the French rail company, SNCF. The C4 team, led by Andrew Wright and Graeme Pringle, is brimming with confidence and full of exciting ideas and plans for the future.

Michael Wightman continued; *"Network development in rail markets, the thirst for faster broadband speeds across Europe and the rapid expansion of infrastructure in recent EU entrant countries all represent significant opportunities for our new division. The challenge facing our management*

team will be to make the 'whole greater than the sum of the parts', but I feel that through a mixture of progressive integration of the three separate businesses and innovative market/product developments we have the potential to double the size of our current business during the coming years."

Northlink wishes Michael and his team every success as they continue to make their mark in the utility chamber market.



KeyBEMO Takes a Bow

Beckett Construction Solutions, as reported in a previous edition of Northlink, have been busy in recent months quietly adding high quality products and services to their portfolio. One of these was KeyBEMO, the multi metal, built up roofing system. KeyBEMO has many advantages over traditional standing seam roofing and these are not limited to speed of construction and quality of finish. The thermal and acoustic performance of KeyBEMO leaves other metal roofing systems in its wake. Another aspect of the KeyBEMO system is that the material is roll formed in a container which is suspended by a crane at roof level and secured to the building.

This summer, the Beckett site teams are putting their recent training in the installation of KeyBEMO to good use with the installation of their first roofs using the system. Becketts have been appointed by Farrans to use KeyBEMO to roof six buildings on the Belfast Model School for Boys project which amounts to some 8,000m². The Beckett site team is led by Denis Gilloway who is ably supported by contract manager, Damien McCann. The contract programme is, as usual, demanding with all roofing on the Boys as well as the nearby Girls Model School to be completed by April 2009. The Girls school requires 2,000 m² of KeyBEMO to be installed. The reports from site are that good progress is being made and soon the technology block and the sports hall at the Boys Model will have a modern, state of the art roof to be proud of.

Jonathan Holmes is the manager of the Roofing and Interior Fit Out Division of Becketts and he recently shared his thoughts on what KeyBEMO will mean to his business with Northlink;

"KeyBemo provides Becketts with a standing seam roofing system for a wide range of commercial applications. The system is BBA Agrément certified and our site teams are all approved and trained KeyBEMO installers. This enables our business to offer clients and contractors both traditional and modern systems of standing seam roofing. As



Hard at work on site (left-right) John Scullion, Tony Drain and a KeyBEMO technical representative install the first Beckett KeyBEMO roof.

a KeyBEMO installer we are now providing principal contractors with a full working drawing package for each and every project which includes all design details and dimensions as well as the fastener and materials schedules which are to be used by the Beckett site teams. This means that we ensure compliance with the specific project specification. The addition of KeyBEMO has also meant a lot to our site teams and it is refreshing to see many of our most experienced men showing great interest in the product and the technologies involved in its installation. It was very much a matter of not being able to wait to get up on the roof at the Boys Model. I truly believe that KeyBEMO will do much for the performance and growth of our roofing business."

Northlink congratulates Jonathan on adding another new product to the Beckett portfolio.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT FARRANS

Three new directors have been appointed recently at Farrans Construction with Sean Bradley, Alvar Kenwell and John Wilson joining the senior management team.

Sean Bradley holds a masters degree in Civil Engineering from Queens University, Belfast and is also a chartered member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Engineers of Ireland. He joined Farrans Construction on graduating as a site engineer. Sean's site level work experience was gained on a wide variety of major projects such as the Cross Harbour Road and Rail Bridges as well as Duncrue Sewage Works. On the commercial level, Sean has been involved in many major contracts including the Aquarius Water Projects, Glasgow Off Site Highways and Kiln 3 for Irish Cement.



Northlink was able to catch up with Sean recently and found out more about life as one of the new directors at Farrans;

"My role includes effectively managing any contractual disputes which occur in the civil engineering side of the Farrans business although to be quite honest, I much prefer partnering" said Sean. "I am also involved in the development and implementation of the Farrans cost management systems where I have found my experience on a wide range of different types of projects to be invaluable. I am looking forward to the new challenges which lie ahead for me in my new role and I would like to acknowledge the help and assistance I have received to date from the people I have worked with over the years".

Sean lives in Belfast and is married to Barbara. The couple have three children, Caoimhe (14), Shannon (10) and Shane (2). Northlink is reliably informed that he has taken up playing the guitar again after a gap of some twenty years and is an aspiring Paul Weller. Away from work, Sean likes nothing better than to unwind with a good run.

Alvar Kenwell comes originally from Londonderry and on graduating in civil engineering from Queens University, Belfast he joined Farrans in 1987 with a view to relocating to work with our Civil Engineering Scottish Division. His first project involved the reconstruction of a section of the A82 in Criannlarich at the northern end of Loch Lomond. He attributes the famous Scottish midgie as the reason why he headed for the relative safety of the city of Glasgow. It was here that he met his wife Louisa and the couple now live on the outskirts of the city with their three children; Lucy (11), Robert (9) and Abigail (5).



Alvar has worked at all levels on site with Farrans where he gained experience on a wide range of civil engineering projects ranging from roads, bridges and marine works to water and sewerage projects. These projects have taken him to all parts of Scotland including the Western Isles and the Isle of Aran. Alvar's progress with Farrans has been sustained and in 2001, was appointed Scottish Regional Manager which is a reflection of not only his technical and managerial ability but also his people management skills.

Since 2001, Alvar's focus has been on winning and successfully delivering technically demanding projects in the Central Belt region of Scotland.

Alvar's commitment to Farrans and his team in Scotland is absolute and it is not surprising when he spoke to our reporter recently, that the subject was about our business and its people rather than himself;

"The market in Scotland is still showing strong signs of economic growth with Glasgow being particularly buoyant after winning the prize of hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Private developers are still being attracted to Glasgow and Edinburgh and we aim to continue our relationship with existing clients as well as to develop new markets. We have been tendering for work recently for projects associated with renewable energy such as wind farms, biomass plants

and active compost technology. Our team is also delighted to be part of the Farrans school building operations in the Dumfries area and again we, as a team, aim to further develop our involvement in the education sector of the economy in the future".

John Wilson holds an honours degree in civil engineering from the University of Ulster. He joined Farrans Construction in 1987 as a site engineer, after having spent a placement year with the Company. Along the way to his current post, John has worked with a wide range of managers who have all had an influence on him.



John has worked on most of the prestigious building contracts undertaken by Farrans over the last two decades or so. His list of credits includes the Yorkgate Development, the Flagship Shopping Centre in Bangor, Duncrue Incinerator, Custom House and the Odyssey. His experience was further broadened by a spell in Farrans Homes. More recently, John has managed the Farrans Healthcare Division and he is justifiably proud of the progress made by this part of the Company;

"Healthcare is a great place to work as we always have to be on top of our game to win contracts and deliver them on time. Our focus at the moment is on increasing our market share. Our bids must be of the highest quality, in every way. I know that with the team I have in Healthcare, we can look forward to future projects from a position of strength".

John lives in Larne and is married to Sharon. The couple have four children; Jonathan (15), Michael (12), Stephen (10) and Lauren (2). Away from work John is a part-time farmer in East Antrim and as well as being a custodian of the countryside, he tries manfully to make a few pounds from his cattle and sheep. Apparently his eye for quality, attention to detail and value for money approach are similar to his day job!

All at Northlink congratulate Sean, Alvar and John on their appointment and wish them every success in their new and enhanced roles.

More About CRH

The news this summer from Belgard Castle is that CRH plc delivered another very strong performance in 2007 with full year profits before tax of euro 1,904 million, a 19% increase on 2006 (euro 1,602 million). Earnings per share increased 17% to 262.7c (2006: 224.3c). This represents CRH's 15th consecutive year of profit and earnings growth. Acquisition activity by CRH in 2007 was also at record levels for the second year in succession.



Harbin Sanling employees enjoy a race at their annual sports day on a track beside the cement plant.

In the December 2006 edition of Northlink we reported on the acquisition by CRH plc of the Harbin Sanling Cement Company in north east China. We can report that the integration of Harbin into the CRH plc family is going well and as our photograph above shows, it is not all work and no play for our new colleagues in China.

In the first half of this year it is very evident that the quest by CRH plc for performance and growth on a global scale continues with the announcement of more acquisition activity.

In March 2008, CRH plc signed an agreement to acquire the Pavestone Group in the United States for US\$540 million. Pavestone is headquartered in Dallas, Texas and operates a national network of 18 concrete paver plants at 16 locations across the United States. It also has decorative stone bagging plants at 14 of these locations. The Group currently employs 1,300 people across its operations.

In the same month, CRH plc announced the agreement to

acquire a 50% shareholding in My Home Industries Limited (HMIL), a privately owned cement company with its head office in Hyderabad, India. The CRH plc investment will be €290 million.

The MHIL operation consists of three cement production units at Mellacheruvu village in central Andhra Pradesh with a separate grinding plant under construction near Vishakhapatnam on the coast of Andhra Pradesh. Current annual cement production capacity is 3.2 million tonnes, which will increase to 4.2 million tonnes on completion of the grinding plant in early 2009. Commenting on the development, Liam O'Mahoney, the CRH Chief Executive, said;

"MHIL is one of the most modern cement producers in India with excellent reserves and a strong management team and is a market leader in the dynamic Andhra Pradesh market. As a first investment in India, we are delighted to be associated with such a strong company and look forward to developing the business with our partner as the India economy expands".

In April of this year, CRH plc also announced that it has reached agreement with Tyco International Ltd to acquire Ancon Building Products for euro 109 million.

Ancon is based in Sheffield and has operations in continental Europe, the Middle East and Australia. The business designs and manufactures a range of stainless steel fixing systems and other accessories for the construction industry. CRH's existing Construction Accessories business, which was formed in 2003, is the market leader in Western Europe with sales in 2007 of over euro 400 million.

More about CRH plc next time.

Martin Measures Up



Martin Gilpin (pictured left) is another young construction professional who is developing a career at Farrans Construction. He joined the quantity surveying team at Dunmurry in March 2006 and almost immediately was asked to work on the Victoria Square Development in Belfast where he reported to senior quantity surveyor, Walter Robinson. Martin told Northlink a little more about his role at Victoria Square;

"Victoria Square was a massive contract. My role was primarily being involved in the pulling together of the various work packages and related prices from sub contractors. I have certainly learnt a lot as a result of implementing the Farrans systems in this regard".

Martin is currently working on the Lisburn Institute project reporting directly to Surveying Director, David Megaw. His main tasks include cost comparisons, preparing and submitting valuations as well as paying sub contractors.

Martin holds a BSc degree in Quantity Surveying from the University of Ulster. He brings to his job some 13 years of work experience after working for a fencing contractor and then a small building contractor. He has a wide experience of estimating, purchasing, programming and also health and safety.

Away from work, Martin is very much a family man, living in Ballinderry with his wife and three children. His main interests revolve around his local church where he is a leader in the senior youth club. He is also involved in a charity which seeks to help and support street children in Romania.

Northlink has it on good authority that Martin is certainly measuring up when it comes to effective quantity surveying on major building contracts.

HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

Many large companies in our industry are holding out for a hero. The one person, from their senior management team who can, through their personal commitment and enthusiasm, take health and safety management to the next level.

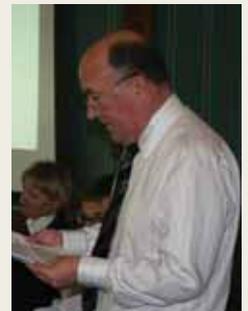
In 2007, as reported previously in this magazine, Northstone launched its Visible Felt Leadership (VFL) Initiative which requires managers to spend time talking to our people on construction sites and at production locations about health and safety as well as learning from them about ways in which we can improve our performance in the Company. Visible Felt Leadership was introduced to Northstone by Willie McNabb, the Managing Director of the Quarry and Asphalt Division, and through his commitment and enthusiasm, the initiative was launched and is proving a success.

Willie followed this up last summer by agreeing to host a Health and Safety Awareness Day at our Croaghan Quarry on behalf of the Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland. The day provided local industry with the opportunity to improve their safety knowledge by observing best practice and concentrated on providing practical solutions to managing health and safety in quarries. A total of 85 directors, quarry managers and health and safety professionals from 32 companies attended a very successful event. The topics featured at Croaghan included machinery guarding, workplace transport, safe working at heights, employee involvement, respirable crystalline silica and occupational health. There was also a guided tour of the quarry and a question and answer session aimed at sharing as much knowledge as possible about best practice in health and safety.

Pride of place at the event went to Willie who began the day by speaking to those gathered on the topic of "Leadership in Creating a Safety Culture." It is fair to say that Willie spoke from the heart and with no little emotion when he described an example of the devastating long term effect that a work related accident can have not only on those directly involved but also on their families. He appealed to the directors and managers present to do more to promote and establish health and safety as a key result area in their respective organisations. Nobody in the audience could have failed to have been impressed by Willie's personal commitment to do all in his power to prevent accidents at Northstone which after all is what Visible Felt Leadership is all about.

This spring, Willie (pictured below) has already been leading from the front by hosting one of the CRH Continuous Professional Development courses in health and safety in Coleraine. Willie's measured views and encouragement set the scene for a successful session for those in attendance.

The news this summer from the Northstone boardroom is that the search for a hero has been called off as Willie fulfils all elements of the job description.



PERFORMANCE and GROWTH in SCOTLAND

"Performance and Growth" is the overriding objective of the global business that is CRH plc. On a more local level, the Farrans people in Scotland have certainly taken this objective to their hearts if their performance in recent months is anything to go by.

Under the guidance and leadership of recently promoted Farrans director, Alvar Kenwell, the team in Scotland have really done us proud. Contract Manager, Paul Magowan and

his team at Glasgow Harbour have just celebrated putting the finishing touches to the Off-Site Roads Contract, the major infrastructure project including bridges and roadworks neighbouring the busy Clydeside Expressway. The Farrans relationship with Glasgow Harbour commenced in June 2003 with the latest contract award from this particular client being the River Kelvin Quay Wall, a 290m cofferdam wall required for future retail development. Steel sheet piles have just arrived from Luxembourg

and project is due to be completed later this summer. Tristram Browne and Thomas Philibeau will carry out this contract which will allow Ian Waugh and the rest of the Glasgow Harbour team to relocate the offices some 500 metres further east along the road to undertake a new project for the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre known as the SECC. This £5M scheme includes infrastructure and service diversions required to allow the construction of a new indoor concert arena. The local knowledge gained by Ian and his team played a major part in the award of this contract and should allow the usual successful delivery of the project.

With a view to building relationships with Scottish contractors similar in size to Farrans we have been awarded a scheme in Falkirk to build a reinforced earth bridge. Farrans have teamed up with a main contractor traditionally involved with major earthworks projects and will construct the concrete bridge for them which spans 18m over Westquarter Burn. Helen Young and her team have just commenced the works with completion due in the autumn.

Works in the east of Scotland are focusing on the long awaited

Edinburgh Trams Project. The Farrans section of this large scheme is about to get under way with a team being led by Neil McDonald formed to take on a 2.5km section of the tramway which includes a reinforced concrete bridge, box culverts, soil nailing, reinforced earth embankments as well as three tram stops. The tramway network will be a huge benefit to the travelling public of the city of Edinburgh running from Edinburgh Airport to Leith Docks with the Farrans section of the system due to be completed in mid 2009.

Working alongside Tony Fry for Scottish Water is Bob Dooner who returned to the Farrans fold earlier in the year. Bob is fulfilling the role of design co-ordinator and looking after the many individual projects being allocated to us by Scottish Water. Works are continuing apace within the central belt of Scotland with the installation of some 35km of pipeline to date and also some 2000 existing service connections already transferred over. The Farrans Utilities team in Scotland is also on the move as it relocates to new accommodation within the plant yard at Oakbank.

The Scottish Schools Project in Dumfries and Galloway is very much a Farrans internal joint venture between the Scottish Civils Division and the Northern Ireland Building Division and is also progressing well. The two largest sites which commenced in February this year, at Moffat and Thornhill, will accommodate both primary and secondary pupils on completion. Earthworks and foundations on both sites are substantially complete which allowed the erection of steelwork to commence in May with brickwork, flooring and roofing following on in accordance with programme. The teams led by Jerome Curran at Moffat and Cathal Montague at Thornhill, under the guidance of Contract Manager Warren Wright are hoping for a good summer in order to complete the enveloping of the buildings. The third school at Dumfries, incorporating a primary school, is due to commence in July with the hand over date similar to the larger projects in early 2010.

With the soccer season now ended Northlink feels it would be fitting to pass on our congratulations to Bathgate Thistle Manager, William Hill. William operates HF Developments, who have engaged Farrans on various recent civil engineering projects. Bathgate successfully ended their 30 year quest last season for the Holy Grail of junior football, the Scottish Cup. Bathgate played the best football on the day and their efforts were rewarded with the spoils at Rugby Park in early June.

All at Northlink acknowledge the performance and growth of the Farrans Scottish region and wish them every success in current and future contracts.



The new school at Moffat takes shape.

Northstone People Support Local Charities

Northstone people in the Quarry and Asphalt Division are well known for their charitable giving and this year the Division donated £2,500 for charity in lieu of festive gifts to customers and clients at Christmas 2007.

The two worthy charities, which each received £1,250, were Marie Curie Cancer Care and Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY).

Marie Curie Cancer Care provides nursing care, free of charge, to terminally ill people, giving them the opportunity to be cared for and die at home. The charity currently has 200 nurses working in Northern Ireland going to the homes of patients at 10.00 pm and working through to 7.00 am. This gives much needed care to patient and respite for carers. Our donation provides 65 more hours of specialist nursing care to terminally ill patients.

Marie Curie Cancer Care also have specialist nurses, doctors and therapists who can help people, on a day patient basis, to manage pain, breathlessness or other symptoms and thereby enhancing their feeling of wellbeing.

Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) is the charity which seeks to raise awareness of Sudden Cardiac Death and Sudden Death Syndrome among young people.

It also offers support to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one through a network of affected families and counselling. One of the primary aims of CRY is to promote

heart screening among, apparently very fit, young people.

The charity came to prominence in Northern Ireland in March 2004 with the death of rugby player John McCall while representing Ireland in South Africa against New Zealand at the under 19 World Cup. John had died suddenly from a cardiac condition of which he had no symptoms. In the same month, Cormac McAnnellan, the 24 year old captain of the Tyrone Gaelic football team died in his sleep from an underlying heart complaint.

Since John McCall's death, Ian, his father, has been involved with CRY. On being presented with the Northstone cheque, John said;

"All families with young people should consider screening as it is not only sporting young people who are affected, all young people are at risk. CRY supports cardiac screening at the University of Ulster Clinic at Jordanstown. It is available to all 14-35 year olds, it takes 15 to 20 minutes and costs £35.00. The screening can identify existing conditions which can then be treated".

Any Northstone person interested in booking a screening session can do so on line at www.c-r-y.org/ec.htm or by phoning 01737 363222.

Northlink commend our Quarry and Asphalt Division in supporting two such worthwhile causes.

Quarry and Asphalt Division Director, Richard McDermott, hands over a cheque to Ian McCall in support of Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)





Horse Racing Or Roof Tiling A.P. Makes The Right Choice

Anthony Peter "A.P." McCoy MBE, the Irish horse racing jockey, is widely regarded as the greatest jump jockey ever. He rode his first winner, "Legal Steps" at Thurles on 26 March 1992. Continued success in Ireland soon led to a move across the Irish Sea to ride in England and the rest, as they say, is history.

'A.P.' or Anthony McCoy was born in Moneyglass, a townland close to Toomebridge in County Antrim and as we know, Toomebridge just happens to be where the head office of the Northstone Concrete Division is located. Although Anthony moved to England in 1994 and now lives in Lambourne, Berkshire, he still has

family and friends in the Toomebridge area.

Our story begins earlier this year when our roofing services team was contacted by Barry Murray, who is Anthony's brother-in-law. We roofed a dwelling for Barry and in turn, he recommended us for the contract of re-roofing Anthony's house in England which is called 'Lodge Down'.

As always, our Roofing Services department responded to the challenge and within a few days, an estimate of the likely cost was on its way to Anthony McCoy in Berkshire. A positive response was received and soon our estimator at Toome, Roisin

Roof Tilers Extraordinaire (left-right) Ian McKeown, Mark Whyte and Richard McKeown.

McErlaine, had photographs and relevant drawings to enable her to confirm the price for the work.

Customer care is always to the fore with the Northstone Roofing Services people and it was suggested to Anthony that he consider a Forticrete double cambered Gemini tile. We also provided advice on stripping the existing roof covering, the provision of scaffolding and the necessary alterations to the roof and the wall plate.

The deal was then agreed with Anthony and our roof tilers started on site on 18 May 2008. Liam Johnson, our supervisor on the re-roofing of Lodge Down, provided an insight into the project;

"The contract was completed two weeks after commencement, which was well ahead of the timeframes proposed by the local builders in Berkshire. The roof was very steep at 47° and was hipped in several areas which, along with the valleys and roof windows, did not make it an easy job for our tilers. However, the experience of our tilers shone through as they completed the many cutting operations and onerous fixing specification with some aplomb. Everybody was impressed with our



A.P. McCoy MBE, in familiar pose, in the winner's enclosure

work and I know that Anthony intends building some additional stables at his home in the future and will again use Northstone for the roofing. It would be remiss of me not to mention the welcome and hospitality extended to our tilers by the McCoy family in England".

Northlink is reliably informed that Anthony told our tilers that he thought their line of work was dangerous just as he left once again to compete in a series of races over hurdles at speeds over 30 mph. Needless to say, none of the Northstone squad decided there and then to give up the scaffolding for the saddle.



Victoria Square opens for business

VICTORIA SQUARE OPENS FOR BUSINESS

As reported in previous editions of our magazine, Farrans Construction formed a joint venture partnership with local contractor, Gilbert Ash, to construct Victoria Square, the £400 million plus retail led urban renewal scheme in central Belfast. The construction work was divided into six zones with Farrans Construction having responsibility for three of these. Two Farrans people, Mark Lowry and Robert McAlister, sat on the Farrans Gilbert Ash board.

Victoria Square provides more than 800,000 square feet of retail space combined with a residential zone that will contain 116 apartments and a leisure element that includes an Odeon cinema, restaurants, bars and cafes. Major retail names such as the House of Fraser, Virgin Megastore, Top Shop, Urban Outfitters and H&M, the Swedish fashion giant, are amongst the leading brand names attracted to Victoria Square.

The development features a combination of glazed streets,

stone and brick facades along with a new square and garden with all of this 'capped' by the architectural piece de resistance, a 36 metre diameter glazed dome which rises to a height of some 44.5 metres.

Victoria Square opened its doors for business on 6 March 2008 and more than 17 million people are expected to visit the complex over the next twelve months.

Work started on site back in 2003 and a topping out ceremony, in recognition of the project having reached its highest point in the construction process when the dome was completed, was held on 21 June 2007. After this, construction activity was at its most intense as the 29 February 2008 deadline for contractual handover loomed. At this time there were upwards of 1,500 people on site. As completion drew near, one of the last pieces in the contractual



The Victoria Square dome in all its splendour.

jigsaw was the reinstatement of the Jaffe Fountain close to the Vitoria Street entrance to the development.

It is fitting that we leave the last word on Victoria Square, to Robert McAlister, the Farrans Project Director on the contract;

"It has been an honour and a privilege for Farrans to be involved in such a prestigious and high profile urban regeneration project in Belfast. I would like to pay tribute to our team who gave many long hours of endeavour to successfully deliver this project in such a professional manner".



JOINS NORTHSTONE FAMILY

C4 Industries are the latest addition to the Northstone family having been acquired by our Company on 31 January 2008.

C4 is headed up by a young and dynamic senior management team of Andrew Wright as Managing Director and Graeme Pringle as Financial Director. It is based in Liverpool and employs 55 people manufacturing the well known preformed access chamber range known as STAKKAbox™.

The STAKKAbox™ is a highly successful family of sectional preformed underground access chambers for buried network, duct and equipment access. The STAKKAbox™ range provides a means of constructing chambers quickly and inexpensively, without having to compromise on build quality. The product also comes with a complete range of covers and accessories to provide all that is needed to construct complete chambers.

The sectional design of the STAKKAbox™ means that the chambers can be constructed to whatever depth is required. The sections are also easy to handle and are lightweight which means that mechanical plant is not required to move them on site. The lightweight nature of the product also means that there are no health and safety issues on site with regard to manual handling.

The strength of the STAKKAbox™ is derived from its twin wall design and castellated interlock which allows the product to take unsupported vertical loadings up to and in excess of 40 tonnes. This capability has led to widespread use of the product in the telecommunications, rail, motorway communications, traffic signalling and water industries not to mention the local authorities sector.

C4 Industries also have a sizeable export market for its products with sales being made into France, Holland, Scandinavia and the Middle East.

The people at C4 Industries are multi talented and capable

Lee Cassidy, who holds a further degree in aeronautical engineering, is developing the capability of the C4 technical department. This includes designing products to suit the specific needs of customers using 3D part generation and finite element analysis. Lee's department can also physically prove products on a purpose built load testing rig.

New products are continually being developed at C4 Industries and these will be sold by the C4 Business Development Team. The team includes **Paul Lighton** who is responsible for the UK Rail and Motorway Communications, Irish and Scandinavian markets. **Stuart Davies** spends most of his time developing markets in the Middle East. **Remi Beauhaire** looks after the French market with **James McNaught** being responsible for sales in Scotland and managing the distributors in the United Kingdom and the Benelux countries.

The engine room of any manufacturing business is invariably its production people and C4 Industries is no exception in this regard. A team of 44 make up the production team at C4 and they are led by Operations Manager, **Charlie Gibson**. Charlie holds a degree in International Business Administration and is fluent in French. He came to C4 originally to develop the steel frame fabrication department after many years in the factory maintenance and steel fabrication industry. Charlie is ably assisted by Works Manager, **Mark Devereux**, and by Engineering Manager, **Alan Cordingly**. The men who deliver, day in and day out on the shop floor include **Darren Molyneux**,

Tony Childs, Paul Hampson, Robert Pugh and Peter Cane to name but a few.

The production process at C4 Industries includes the compression moulding of glass reinforced polyester resin, injection moulding and sheet extrusion to manufacture the product components. The chambers are also fitted with various elements to meet customer requirements in the fabrication and assembly department. Surface frames are also manufactured in a steel fabrication shop.

Last, but by no means least, are C4's unsung, forgotten heroes who run the very busy office. They include **Ian Goodwin, Leigh Roberts and Angela Pringle**. They ensure that our customers are always in receipt of the maximum level of service.



Like Child's Play - another STAKKAbox™ is assembled and installed on site

All at Northlink welcome our new colleagues at C4 Industries to the Northstone family and look forward to reporting on their successes and achievements in the years which lie ahead.



Children and nursing staff are presented with toys by Farrans Healthcare people. Holding the computer games and monitor are (left-right) Maggie Conway, John Wilson and Daryl McGuckian

Our people in the Farrans Healthcare Division are all dedicated, hard working construction professionals who operate in a competitive market which requires highly technical and innovative bid presentations and expert delivery of construction solutions for clients in the health sector of the economy.

However, they are also committed to helping others in society and last year the Healthcare team took part in a raft race in Craigavon in aid of MacMillan Cancer Care raising over £5,500 for this very worthwhile cause.

Any of us who have visited a children's hospital ward cannot have failed to be touched by the serious illnesses and conditions bravely borne by some of children there as well as the trauma they suffer as a result of being away from home in unfamiliar surroundings. Our Healthcare team decided earlier this year to try to do something to make the stay of the children at Altnagelvin Hospital in Londonderry a bit more enjoyable. Healthcare Director, John Wilson, takes up the story;

"As a parent myself, I know that children need toys and activities

to take their minds off things and to pass the time when they are in hospital. Last Christmas we decided to do something practical to help the kids at Altnagelvin. We purchased a range of toys, both modern and traditional, and donated these to the children's ward for the kids there to have some fun during their stay. Needless to say, the toys we provided had a certain bias towards construction and who knows, this could well lead to some young people choosing construction as a career in the future. As for my team, the happy, smiling faces of the kids was the best Christmas present any of us could have had."

Have a look at the expression on the face of the young boy in the pram in the centre of our photograph and you will understand what John means.

All Our Yesterdays

Leadership of an organisation is not all about achieving financial targets or selling products and services. It is also about taking an interest in the work, families and activities of employees. A past master of leading in this way was the late Sam Taggart, the former owner and founder of Farrans Limited.

The telegram reproduced below was sent by Sam Taggart on 30 January 1974 to John Rodgers who was employed as a bricklayer by Farrans Limited for some 16 years on private development sites. John was an amateur boxer and was representing Northern Ireland at the Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, New Zealand. He had just won the bronze medal at the Games at light welterweight. This telegram has been cherished by John down through the years, long after the death of Sam Taggart. John is now 61 years of age and he recounted to our reporter the time he was asked to go and see Sam at Dunmurry.

"I was asked to go to see Sam Taggart in his office shortly after I was selected to go to New Zealand with the Northern Ireland boxing team. I was in my working clothes and I was shown into Sam's office by his secretary. The office was wood panelled and I sat down on one of the chairs. We talked about boxing. I told Sam that I would be away for six weeks. Sam looked at me for a while and told me not to worry about money as he would make sure my wife got my wages each week. He was true to his word and I will never forget this as in those days there was no commercial sponsorship for amateur boxing and I would have had no wages for the period of the trip".



John enjoyed a distinguished career in the ring for Northern Ireland and Ireland. His list of credits includes two Commonwealth Games (1970 and 1974) the European Championship (1966), the Olympic Games (1972) and the World Championships in 1973 which were held in Havana. While in Cuba, John met Fidel Castro. However, it was while on tour with the Irish boxing team in the United States that he met the ultimate icon of the twentieth century, Mohammad Ali, during a visit to the famous Madison Square Garden in New York City. As our photograph below shows, Ali was clearly having a word in John's ear. According to John, Ali said;

"You would make a good fireplace fitter".

Northlink is delighted to report that the Sam Taggart method of leadership is still alive and well at Farrans today.

Farrans Homes have just sponsored a local boxing club in Lisburn with tracksuits as one of our operatives, Noel Reynolds, is actively involved in the club.

As for John Rodgers, he is now a successful self employed fireplace fitter, just like Mohammad said he should be.



Meeting Mohammad Ali (left-right) Gerry Storey (trainer), John Rodgers, Ali, Jim McLaughlin, Charlie Nash and Jim Montague.

PINS IN PLACE PLEASE

The Northlink safety message to all Northstone excavator drivers and sub contract plant operators is that safety pins must always be in place in quick hitch devices on mobile plant.

Quick hitches are used as a convenient method of attaching buckets, rock breakers and other items to excavators. Hitches operate on positive hydraulic pressure or use locks / safety pins to hold the attachment securely in place. In 2007, sadly, 4 construction workers lost their lives as a result of accidents caused by safety pins not being used on the quick hitches which secured buckets to excavators. We also know of one serious accident in Northern Ireland this year caused when a bucket suddenly and unexpectedly became detached from an excavator during a loading operation.

The Health and Safety Executive were so concerned about the matter that in 2007, they issued a guidance document to prevent accidents and instructed their inspectors to issue enforcement notices where quick hitch devices were not being properly used.

Alex Anderson, The Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality Manager at Farrans, immediately took up the challenge to raise awareness of the need to properly secure quick hitches among our plant operators and sub contractors as he explained;

"Plant operators are, like the rest of us, prone to take shortcuts and



Learning More About Quick Hitch Devices
(Left to Right) Aiden McClelland, Ricky Guy, Brenda McCann, Stephen Mulholland, Jonathan Mulgrew, Sam Evans, James McKenna, Vincent Hall, Joe Taylor, John McAuley, Ivan Smyth

may take the chance of not inserting safety pins in the manual and semi-automatic quick hitch devices on their machines, particularly if the work with the attachment is of short duration. Unfortunately, when we looked at the issue at Farrans we discovered that there were no specific training courses dealing with the issues. We then decided to develop our own course in collaboration with a local training provider, EPS. Our course programme also extended to cover the use of excavators as cranes. The course has been rolled out to all regions in Farrans and in August it will be delivered to all engineers".

Northlink commends Alex on his commitment to site safety and who knows, he may have just prevented a serious accident as a result of his quick hitch course.

Business Development with Jay

Another important new appointment has been made in Farrans Construction with the promotion of Jay Wasson to the role of Business Development Manager.

Business development is one of those terms which we all think we know what it means so who better than to tell us about it than Jay;

"My new role is all about keeping up to speed with developments in the industry, maintaining relationships with our clients and identifying opportunities for Farrans in the future. I still also look after the estimating function for our Scottish operations".

Jay joined Farrans just over five years ago and worked on site on utilities contracts as well as Aquarius 3, the Mourne Water Treatment project, before moving to Dunmurry as an estimator.

Jay is not the first member of his family to have worked for Farrans as he explains;

"My grandfather was the Plant Manager with Farrans Limited back in the 1950's and my dad remembers coming into the yard to get his bike painted and to pick up a new cricket bat as a birthday gift from the men in the joiners shop".

Over the past few years, Jay has worked as an estimator on some prestigious projects like Glasgow Harbour Off Site Highways, the Belfast Tunnel and the M80 DBFO Motorway. He finds it personally rewarding and encouraging when Farrans do well when tendering for high profile contracts such as these.

"We regularly outperform rivals on these projects who can outwardly show much more muscle than we do" said Jay. "This speaks volumes for the experience, expertise and performance of our team".



Before joining Farrans, Jay graduated from Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh and after spending a short spell at home, set sail for Australia on a twelve month backpacking tour. While in Australia, he worked for a large contractor called Transfield on engineering projects all over New South Wales and enjoyed the experience so much that he stayed for 5 years.

Australia certainly seems to have agreed with Jay.

"I was in Sydney for the 2000 Olympic Games and had the time of my life although since I am not exactly a passionate sportsman, it was more the social side of the event that sparked my enthusiasm. I used the rest of my time in Oz to do plenty of travelling and to take advantage of Sydney Harbour where I learnt to sail and scuba dive".

Jay is married to Farahanaz and the couple have two children, Zavin (3) and Zaira (1). Farahanaz is Australian and the Wasson family travel back fairly regularly to visit family there.

Northlink congratulates Jay on his well deserved appointment.



Joe Delivers Environmental Improvement At Salmor

Joe Brankin joined Salmor Industries in July 2004 as a Business Improvement Agent which in essence means making sure we do things quicker, better, more effectively and more economically to maintain our competitive position. His qualifications include a primary degree in mechanical engineering and a further degree in manufacturing management.

Joe's exceptional talents and capabilities are well known not only in Salmor but also across Northstone, but what sets him apart is his attitude, drive and enthusiasm for the business. His latest exploit was to set himself the

target of achieving accreditation under the demanding ISO 14001 Environmental Management Standard in less than a year. He began the process with the usual blank page and before long, an environmental manual appeared

complemented by operating procedures and the delivery of environmental training sessions.

On Friday 13 June 2008, Joe went through a gruelling full day session with two external environmental auditors to determine if Salmor had met the 14001 standard.

At the end of the day, Joe received the auditors' report and, as expected, Joe had not only met the standard with the Salmor environmental management system but significantly exceeded it in many elements.

Joe took time out from his busy schedule to tell Northlink something of what ISO14001 accreditation will mean for Salmor;

"The accreditation means that Salmor is now recognised as carrying out its activities in an environmentally responsible way. We are aware of our aspects and impacts on the environment and as such we ensure compliance with environmental legislation. The standard also gives us a route map and plan to achieve ongoing improvements in our environmental performance. It also means a lot to our customer and client base that we are conducting our business in an environmentally sound way. It must be said that the achievement of the 14001 accreditation at Salmor was very much a team effort with Derek Williamson, Damien Murphy, Sheila McGuire

and our supervisors very much to the fore with regard to implementation of the procedures. Special mention must go to our internal auditor, Kyle McConville, who made sure we did things correctly".

In 2006, Joe became the Salmor Production Manager, incorporating business improvement and two years later, as a reflection of the growth of the Company, Joe was asked to focus primarily on business improvement as manager of that functional area.

Joe's typical day includes looking after the Salmor quality system, liaising with customers, developing supplier relationships, managing health and safety as well as ongoing efficiency improvements. He has also done much to improve the use of energy at Salmor Industries. Joe is also responsible for the delivery of capital expenditure projects.

Joe lives in Glenavy in County Antrim with wife Alison. Away from work he spends his time working on the family farm, specialising in market gardening.

All at Northlink congratulate Joe on his achievement and we look forward to hearing of the next successful initiative launched, led and delivered by one of Northstone's most able young managers.

Ongoing Development Of Expertise In Farrans Safety Team

The Farrans Safety Team, under the guidance of manager, Alex Anderson, continues to develop its knowledge base to enhance the service level delivered to site teams in Ireland, Scotland and England. Alex explained the concept to Northlink recently;

"My objective is to have at least one member of the safety team as our recognised internal expert in key activity or high risk areas such as confined space working, working at height, road works, legal issues and other areas. In doing this we will more easily adopt best practice, develop better management systems and react more quickly to the specific needs of our individual sites or clients".

One example of Alex's vision is Brian Hill (pictured above) who joined Farrans in December 2006 and since then has been based on the Belfast Sewers Project where Farrans are partnering with Morgan=Est in a joint venture to upgrade the sewerage system of Belfast. The project involves sinking 20 different shafts of up to 34 metres deep and the construction of 6 miles of tunnelling of varying diameter under the city from Fortwilliam to Broadway. Brian looks



after all aspects of health and safety on the project and as a consequence has built up significant knowledge and experience in the complex and often technically difficult area of tunnelling and confined space working.

Brian is a vibrant, enthusiastic health and safety professional who brings to the post an HND in Building Studies and eight years health and safety experience in the construction industry. He has a wide knowledge of the implementation of quality, environmental and safety systems from a principal contractor perspective. His

enthusiasm for his role was very evident when he took time to talk to Northlink last month;

"On the sewers contract I get involved in all aspects of health and safety and at all levels. My typical day can involve anything from delivering inductions to sub contractor employees, reviewing emergency procedures and drawing up risk assessments to attending meetings with the client representatives and liaising with our occupational health specialist. I am also currently working on a safety awareness campaign that we hope to deliver to local primary schools warning the children of the inherent dangers of construction sites and to keep away".

Away from work, Brian has a full and active role looking after his 5 year old twins and 2 year old daughter as well as modernising his home. Brian has also trained in Reki, a holistic therapy and is a Neuro Linguistic Programming Practitioner.

In Dublin's Fair City with Catherine



When Farrans won the premier contract in the Dublin Region Watermains Rehabilitation Framework in June 2007, Utilities Director, Kevin Corley, had no hesitation in asking graduate engineer, Catherine Cunningham, to work on the project.

Catherine comes from Atticall which is near Kilkeel in South Down. She joined the Farrans Utilities team in 2007 on graduating with an Engineering Management degree from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown. Catherine also spent her placement year with Farrans in 2005/06 and it was during this time that she developed her technical skills and management experience of city centre watermain installation.

It is now over a year since Catherine relocated to Dublin to work on the contract and Northlink was interested to find out more about life in the fair city;

"I manage the work centred primarily along the Old Kilmainham Road which is one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city centre of Dublin" said Catherine. "We are installing 3 kilometres of new polyethylene watermains of varying diameters from 90mm to 250mm. Our squads are working in such close proximity to the public and consumers, that there is little room for error in the planning and notification processes. Each and every polyethylene main we install must be chlorinated, sampled and passed in time for each day's shut off to achieve the required installation target of 100 metres of pipe per day. This also includes moling for service tappings, mains connections and testing. It is also a requirement on occasions to complete same day reinstatement. In addition to this schedule we must ensure that the works are snag free to avoid having to disrupt the water supply to consumers for a second time".

Over the past year or so, Catherine has worked tirelessly alongside Mark Cunningham, Tomas McElmeel, Brian Duggan and Seamus McGillion.

Thankfully it is not all work and no play for Catherine and the rest of the Farrans team in Dublin. Northlink understands that there have been a few concerts attended, the odd international soccer game, visits to restaurants and a couple of nights on the tiles along the way.

Away from work, Catherine's main interests include sport, travel and community youth work and this activity has taken her to Eastern Europe on several occasions.

Catherine is clearly developing her skills and expertise in the demanding area of utility installation in urban areas as she explains;

"Working in Dublin has been a huge challenge and it has been a steep learning curve for me. However, the job satisfaction for me has been enormous and to work with such a dynamic Farrans team has been tremendous. I have learnt a lot from the team in a short period of time and this hopefully will stand me in good stead as I develop my career in civil engineering with Farrans".

Such has been the success of the Utilities team in Dublin that the city council has awarded three further contracts to Farrans in excess of €3.8m in value.

Things are certainly looking well for Catherine and the Farrans team in the fair city.

Maiden City Airport Development Takes Off

The City of Derry Airport has its origins in World War II when in 1941, the RAF Eglinton Air Base was home to 133 Squadron RAF which flew Hurricane fighters in defence of the city. In 1943, the airfield became a Fleet Air Arm base called HMS Gannet which provided convoy air cover as part of the second Battle of the Atlantic. In 1978, Londonderry County Borough Council decided to purchase the airfield with a view to improving the transport infrastructure for the north west of Ireland. There followed various development initiatives and if we fast forward to 2007, some 427,586 passengers used the airport flying to and from destinations in the United Kingdom and beyond.

In late September 2007, the airport authorities made the right choice and awarded the contract for the next stage of its Derry airport development to the Northstone Quarry and Asphalt Division. This prestigious contract involves the construction of a new concrete apron hardstand, a new taxiway and a turning circle at the end of the main runway.

As Northlink goes to press, we can report good progress on the contract with 100,000 tonnes of aggregates and 4,000 tonnes of asphalt now laid.

Richard McIlroy, the Division's Contract Manager, provided Northlink with an insight into the work at the City of Derry Airport.

"We engaged a specialist contractor to slip form pave the new aircraft apron with pavement quality concrete (PQC). This is an important and fascinating part of the works at it involves pouring and compacting 315mm deep and 5 metre wide lanes of concrete in a matter of minutes without the need for formwork. The new apron extends to some 15,000m² in size and provides an area some three times the size of

the existing apron allowing the airport to commence flying to new destinations.

As with most major projects, there are always teething problems and City of Derry Airport was no different in this regard. We had difficult soil conditions to contend with not to mention the flooding of excavations during high tides in the nearby Lough Foyle. Luckily, this was solved by using de watering equipment.

To date my staff have done a great job working day and night to complete the first phase of the contract on time. The remaining two phases are on schedule and I have no doubt that the City of Derry Airport will be enhanced by our works".

Our Quarry and Asphalt Division contracts team as well as all sub contractors deserve great credit for another excellent project. The roll of honour at City of Derry includes not only Richard McIlroy as Contracts Manager but also the site engineering team of Andrew Delargy, Gregory McDaid and Stephen Ward not forgetting the Northstone crews, led by Derek McKendry and Willie McGaw.



Commercial flights make good use of the new apron and taxiway at City of Derry Airport

Derek saves the day

N.I. Water called it “the worst of bursts”. The drama began on the 24 January 2008 when a 15” diameter trunk main that serves Fintona and parts of Omagh fractured close to the Camowen River, threatening the water supply to more than 3000 homes. The site conditions could not have been worse as the burst main was located at the bottom of a 10 metre high embankment. A landslide above the breach had also occurred which threatened the stability of the embankment and the safety of the site.



Derek Lyttle hard at work on site

N.I. Water undertook repairs and returned the main to service a short time later but unfortunately it breached again on two separate occasions after this. It was on 29 January 2008 that Farrans arrived on site, led by Site Agent, Derek Lyttle, to commence both temporary and permanent works in a bid to restore the water supply to all consumers who had been affected in the area.

Derek’s initial task was to establish safe access to the area of the breached water main and recommence the water supply to the consumers by way of a 250 mm diameter ‘overland’ pipe. His next task was to protect the Camowen River and reinstate the slipped embankment.

The work also involved the placing of stone filled gabion baskets along the affected stretch

of river together with stone filter drains and bio matting to prevent silt entering the watercourse.

Derek also arranged for the failed embankment to be excavated of all slipped material and replaced with a geotextile membrane filled with over 3500 tonnes of stone.

Needless to say, Derek completed the work with the minimum of fuss and disruption and the water supply to the residents of Omagh was returned to normal on 6 February 2008.

Derek Lyttle joined Farrans in 2000 after spending two years working on major civil engineering projects in Nigeria and Ghana. He is a native of Ballinamallard in Co Fermanagh although he has lived in Carrickfergus for the past few years. He lists his interests as photography and flying model aircrafts.

Derek is quiet and unassuming but has a ‘can do’ philosophy to his work and a steely determination which is typical of Farrans site people.

Northlink congratulates Derek on his work to restore the water supply to the residents of Omagh earlier this year after the “worst of bursts”.



Rules and Regulations with Jonathan



Jonathan Hunter, the Northstone Employee Relations Manager, has been hard at work in recent months telling our managers about statutory disciplinary and grievance procedures. Northstone is committed to best practice in each and every aspect of our business and none more so than in how we deal with disciplinary and grievance issues in our workplaces.

The statutory procedures ensure principles of consistency and fairness are adhered to when it comes to implementation of an organisation’s disciplinary system and how grievances are dealt with when raised by employees, which has to be a good thing.

As usual, Jonathan’s sessions were precise and included many real life examples to illustrate important learning points as he explained to Northlink recently;

“The statutory procedures are really an aid to management to ensure that issues at work are dealt with effectively and

within a reasonable timeframe. They provide a route map for consistency at every stage and ensure that as much information as possible is provided and considered to ensure a resolution of the matter is arrived at which is to the satisfaction of the parties. The procedures are very much based on the concept of natural justice”.

The Northstone disciplinary and grievance procedures are available from line managers on request.

Away from work Jonathan is spending his time preparing for his forthcoming wedding to fiancé, Mairead. All at Northstone wish Jonathan, who just happens to be one of our most likeable and popular employees, and Mairead every happiness and success for their future together.

Matteest People learn more about our procedures (left-right) Paul McMenamin, Gerard Madden, Jonathan Hunter, Gordon Ellis, Neil Cooke, Deborah Adair and Michael McCusker.



Northstone Concrete Division people at the Airfield Site, Toomebridge celebrate the success of the Simon Community initiative

In the first nine months of the initiative commencing on 1 July 2007, we have accrued a total donation of £93,192 for the Simon Community. This has been made up as follows:-

Donation Earned	1/07/07 to 31/03/08
	£
Farrans Construction	59,248
Northstone Quarry	
+ Asphalt Division	13,860
Northstone Concrete Division	13,460
Mattest	2,310
Salmor Industries	2,898
Beckett Construction Solutions	1,416
Total	93,192

Our donation for the year will certainly be put to good use by the Simon Community as the scale of the problem of homelessness in Northern Ireland shows no sign of diminishing. The following summary shows the level of need referred to the charity in 2007:-

- 3,784 individuals and 189 families approached the Simon Community in need of emergency accommodation.
- 1,067 individuals were accommodated and supported in the 279 bed spaces managed by the Simon Community.
- 160 adults and 132 children were accommodated and supported in 48 bed spaces managed by the Simon Community across 3 sites.
- just over half (51%) of Simon Community residents were 16-25 year olds.

- the main reasons for coming to the Simon Community were homelessness as a result of family conflict (31.9%), a dispute with a partner or spouse (13.7%) and intimidation (9.3%).
- over 17% (669) of all people coming to the Simon Community, slept rough at some point in the previous 2 weeks.

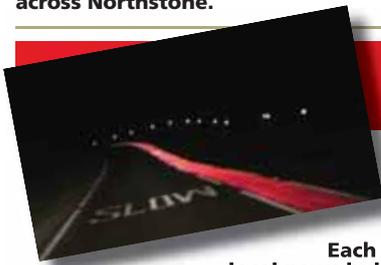
David Smyth, our Health and Safety Manager in the Northstone Concrete Division, succinctly described the benefits arising from the Working Safely with Simon initiative, in his Division;

"The Simon Community initiative has further invigorated the personal motivation of the people in our Division to work safely. We have various other initiatives within the business, such as the quarterly audits and the Safety Location of the Year competition which serve to keep health and safety at the forefront of our minds from an internal perspective. However, Simon gives us a new dimension in that the safer our workplaces and activities become, the more money is donated to addressing homelessness. I for one, know a lot more about the work of Simon and we all would like this charity to benefit as much as possible from our safe working".

The latest news from Belgard is that CRH plc intend continuing their support for the Simon Community for a second year, commencing 1 July 2008.

Working Safely For Simon

The first year of our health and safety initiative with the Simon Community ends on 30 June 2008. As reported in a previous edition of Northlink, the Simon Community benefits from each accident free quarter achieved by a total of 24 stakeholder locations or participating groups across Northstone.



A Red Line which Saves Lives

Each and every weekend, the local news bulletins in the Province increasingly report serious road traffic accidents which invariably have led to a fatality. This trend is sadly replicated across all regions of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Those of us who have travelled along the A24 between Belfast and Newcastle recently cannot have failed to have noticed the red line which has appeared in the centre of the road at a well known accident black spot about four miles south of Ballynahinch in County Down.

As and from 13 May 2008, the roads of Northern Ireland look set to become a lot safer with the laying of the very first Prismo Colourbright retro reflecting material in Ireland by the Northstone Special Products team. The team, which is part of our Quarry and Asphalt Division, is led by manager, Paul McBride.

The road chosen for the trial of Prismo Colourbright in South Down is notorious for traffic accidents.

Paul's team laid the product on a polymer modified bitumen scratch coat and used Clusterbead[®] technology embedded in a pigmented two part epoxy resin. After the application of the Clusterbeads[®] with a special bead distributor, the resin is dressed with a pigmented resin coated grit. The colour of the Clusterbeads can be varied to match the surface colour and reflect back that same colour. In the case of Ballynahinch, the colour chosen was red but the beads are also available in blue, yellow or green.

Paul is enthusiastic about the benefits which will accrue to road users of laying the Prismo Colourbright system as he explains;

"This new product provides drivers with a warning of and critically, demarcates road hazards and accident black spots during daylight and also at night in poorly lit or unlit areas. The Clusterbeads are retro reflective which means that they reflect light from the headlights of oncoming vehicles thereby illuminating the road hazard in a very visible way to the vehicle driver".

Similar recent trials of Prismo Colourbright in other parts of the United Kingdom have proven successful, most notably in county Durham. At one location in the county, road fatalities and serious injuries reduced from ten in the two years immediately prior to the application of Prismo Colourbright to zero in the two years immediately following it.

Northlink congratulates Paul and the team with their involvement in the introduction of another innovative special product to the roads of Ireland which will undoubtedly reduce accidents and save lives.



Prismo Colourbright is applied at the accident blackspot on the A24 south of Ballynahinch



Wetsuits and smiles all round on the Croaking Crusher
 Front Row (left to right) - Gilmore Crowe, Julie Irwin, Michael Black
 Back Row (left to right) - Trevor McKay, Carol Canning Smyth, Major Barnett

SHIP AHOY at PORTRUSH

It was a case of rafting for a lifeboat when the good ship "Croaking Crusher" took to the waves on 24 May 2008 to compete in the annual Portrush Charity Raft Race in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

Portrush is on the famous Causeway Coast in County Antrim and is just a few miles from the Giants Causeway which is a world heritage site. This picturesque part of the world is often swept by Atlantic gales. In January of this year the previous Portrush lifeboat, the Katie Hannon, ran aground off Rathlin Island while responding to an emergency. The extent of the damage was such that the Katie Hannon was withdrawn from service

and a new lifeboat had to be built and commissioned.

This year's raft race and the resultant sponsorship was dedicated to assisting with the cost of the new Portrush lifeboat, the "William Gordon Burr" which was on display on the day of the race. Our Northstone Quarry and Asphalt people at Croaghan are well known for their public spirited attitude and their willingness to support good causes. It was no surprise then that a team of able seamen was recruited to construct and sail the 'Croaking Crusher' at Portrush. The reports we have on our Northstone people was that all ably played their part and it was more Steve

Redgrave than Captain Pugwash when it came to propelling our vessel across the water.

All involved had a super day as the sun shone and the craic was mighty. Our raft was narrowly beaten in its quest for victory but our people from the Quarry and Asphalt Division lifted the prize for their efforts in raising the highest level of sponsorship in the sum of £1,600.00. A magnificent feat.

Northlink congratulates our people on their efforts to ensure the life saving facilities on the north coast are fully supported.

From Our Cambridge Correspondent

Our Farrans correspondent in Cambridge reports on a significant milestone for our construction people in England with the signing of a new contract for ten new or upgraded fire stations for the Suffolk Regional Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS). The contract, which is worth approximately £18m, has been under negotiation for almost four years and is being carried out under a Public Private Partnership arrangement. Construction Director, John Clarke and Regional Manager, Alan Prime, signed the contract at a recent event in London. After the signing of the contract, Lee Marshall from SFRS said;

"This is excellent news for our crews and I am pleased that they will be able to see the first brick and mortar of the project being put in place".

Farrans will commence the contract with sites at Lowestoft South, Needham Market and Felixstone. The SFRS contract will provide ongoing

core activity for the Farrans team in England for the next three and a half years.

Other notable recent successes for the Farrans people in the region have seen two new projects, secured under the Norfolk Framework Contract get underway. One is a new primary school at Epping for Essex County Council and valued at £6m while the other is an extension to a caravan park site at Mildenhall in Suffolk for £1m.

The current contract for Marshall Aerospace in Cambridge is making good progress with a new hanger nearing completion. The hanger is one

of the first Canadian Sprung Structures in the United Kingdom. After Farrans constructed the concrete base the structure, which essentially consists of aluminium frames covered by a Teflon fabric, is erected by Freespan who are the European agents for the system. Northlink readers may be interested to note that this type of building was used at the K Club for hospitality facilities at the recent Ryder Cup event. The building was so successful that the owners of the Club asked that it be retained as a permanent structure.

Northlink wishes the Farrans team in England every success in their recently awarded contracts.



Architects impression of the Canadian Sprung Hanger at Marshall Aerospace

Sheila showcases her skills at Salmor



Sheila McGuire, the Salmor Human Resources Manager, is in the business of delivering effective and innovative people solutions.

She is an honours graduate of the University of Ulster and also holds a post graduate diploma in Human Resource Management from the same institution. Sheila brings to her current post a wide commercial experience which includes periods of employment with Northern Ireland Generators, Fujitsu Telecommunications and Sainsbury plc.

Our editor was interested to find out more from Sheila about her role and she was only too happy to oblige;

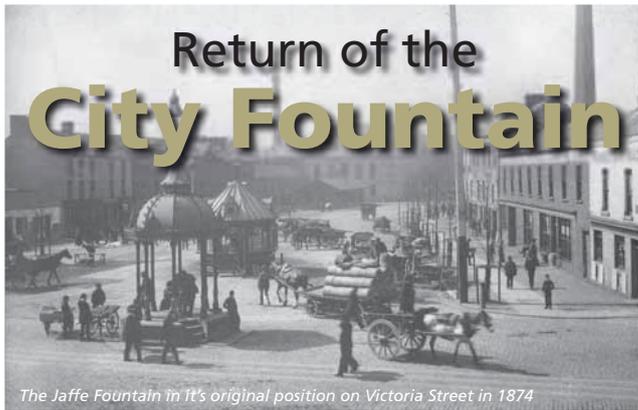
"I am responsible for recruitment and selection, training, absence management, performance management and also the effective implementation of employment related policies and procedures at Salmor" said Sheila. "I also assist and provide advice and guidance on all aspects of human resource management to my new colleagues in the management teams at Carson Industries and C4 Industries".

Sheila has also recently played a pivotal role in the development and delivery of the successful Salmor Supervisory Development Programme which has recently been accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Recently, Sheila's talents were recognised outside of Northstone when she was invited by Young Enterprise to become a judge at the NI Southern Area Cross Border Trade Fair 2008 where teams of school pupils organised the sales and marketing of a product of their design. Young Enterprise is a national education charity founded in 1963 to forge links between schools and industry. Sheila has also formed important relationships with local schools and as a Young Enterprise Business Partner, attends careers conventions and interview skills sessions.

Away from work, Sheila is a dedicated family person and likes nothing better than spending time with husband Stephen and her four year old daughter, Hollie. When time allows, she also enjoys catching up with friends.

Looks like Sheila's showcasing of her skills is set to continue.



The Jaffe Fountain in its original position on Victoria Street in 1874

Return of the City Fountain

Nearly every major city in Europe has a fountain which is loved and cherished by residents and visitors alike. The most famous of these can be found in places like Rome, Granada, Versailles and St Petersburg.

Within recent months a new, yet somewhat familiar, structure has appeared as part of the new streetscape outside of the Victoria Square development in Belfast. If the magnificent glass dome is what makes Victoria Square iconic, then the Jaffe Fountain looks set to be its hallmark.

In an acknowledgement to the social history of Belfast and its architectural

past, the impressive Jaffe Fountain has been restored by Farrans and repositioned in its original location in Victoria Street at the entrance to Victoria Square. This work was overseen by our External Manager, Ronan McVeigh and Design Co-ordinator, Felim Blaney. Ronan takes up the story;

"The Fountain was first constructed back in 1874 to honour leading linen merchant, Daniel Joseph Jaffe. It was commissioned by Daniel's sons, one of whom was Sir Otto Jaffe, who was later to become Lord Mayor of Belfast. In 1933 the Fountain was relocated to the Botanic Gardens, close to the King's Bridge, where it remained

a drama studio and sports hall. The teachers at the school had a lot of input into the design and we have regular briefing meetings with them as construction proceeds. The new school will be completed in early 2010 and will accommodate 950 pupils. As soon as the new school is ready, all pupils and staff will be decanted into the new building and we will demolish the old school and form the sports pitches by the end of May 2010."

Spencer Williams joined Farrans in June 2005 after graduating from the University of Ulster with a degree in Construction Engineering Management. He brings to his role at the Girls Model School some 20 years of experience as a skilled finishing joiner. Spencer's list of credits with Farrans includes the Tesco store in Dungannon and the Victoria Square development. He comes from Norfolk in England but is now married and settled in Newcastle, Co Down.

John Cooper, is the Farrans Contract Manager, for the Boys and Girls Model Schools.



(Left - right) Spencer Williams and Neal Lynch on site at the Girls Model School in Belfast.

ignored and largely neglected for more than 70 years. Farrans Gilbert Ash and the developers of Victoria Square, Multi Development, decided to facilitate its restoration and relocation in conjunction with Belfast City Council, who owned the monument. This was to coincide with the opening of Victoria Square".

In July of last year the Fountain was transported to England where it underwent a full restoration by Telford based company, Eura Conservation. The fragile state of the monument meant that it had to be dismantled piece by piece to facilitate the work. Extensive research and scientific analysis was also carried out on the

metal structure to uncover the original paint colours which were used back in 1874. The results of the restoration were superb and the Fountain is now bedecked in its original yellow, white and gold livery, just as the original designers intended.

"Who knows" said Ronan "with 20 million visitors expected to come to Belfast city centre every year, we could be in for a lot of coin throwing. Perhaps the Jaffe Fountain will be to Belfast what the Trevi Fountain is to Rome."

Julie McGuigan from Farrans applies the finishing touches to the Jaffe Fountain prior to its official unveiling at Victoria Square.



Farrans Construction are part of a construction joint venture with two other local contractors, H + J Martin Limited and the Patton Group, which is undertaking the Belfast Schools Partnership project. The project, which involves the construction of five schools in the Greater Belfast Area is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract valued at £102 million. The two schools allocated to Farrans under the contract are the Girls' and Boys' Model Secondary schools in North Belfast which have a combined value of £51.31m.

Work at the Girls Model got underway on 10 March 2008 with Neal Lynch, Project Manager, and Spencer Williams, Construction Manager, managing the project on site.

Neal joined the Farrans English Division in January 1998 as a site engineer. Over the past decade he has worked on numerous prestigious projects including the Odyssey Arena, London Luton Airport and Victoria Square. Neal told Northlink something of the Girls Model School project; *"The new school we are constructing is a steel frame design and will include*

Apprentices hone skills with Northstone Mortar

In May of this year, Northstone once again supported the Skillbuild Northern Ireland Competition by supplying mortar to teams of young bricklaying apprentices competing for honours in the only two day regional competition in the UK for construction apprentices. This high profile event has been running for a number of years and Northstone mortar has always had a presence at the event. The young apprentices from Northern Ireland also have had a proud record of success in the UK finals taking an average of 20% of the medals on offer. Northlink have been informed that Skillbuild Northern Ireland, the organisation which promotes skills training in the construction industry, is about to launch a new web site and photographs taken at this year's event will be used to promote the competition nationally and these depict the bricklayers of the future using Northstone Mortar.

Northstone Mortar - nothing but the best for the apprentices at Skillbuild.



The Safety Factor

Health and Safety will always be the top priority at every level and at each and every site, depot, factory or office in Northstone. In our last edition of Northlink, dated December 2007, we reported on the improvement in our accident statistics in the eleven months ended 30th November 2007 when compared to the same period in 2006. Sadly, as our table below indicates, this improvement has not been sustained in the first five months of 2008.

	Fatalities	Lost Time Accidents	Days Lost	Frequency Rate	Severity Rate
5 months to 31/05/08	0	19	181	0.63	6.06
5 months to 31/05/07	0	18	72	0.56	2.27

The reason for the deterioration in our accident frequency and severity rates in 2008 cannot be easily identified. However, what we are sure about is that this downward trend must not continue as it is an indicator that we are not doing our utmost to prevent accidents and improve safety standards.

CRH plc, our parent company, have also had a sad start to 2008 on a global basis with four men losing their lives as a result of work related accidents.

Our accident frequency and severity targets for 2008 are 0.50 and 5.00 respectively and these will prove challenging especially when one considers that in Northstone

we have had 42 near misses in the year to 31 May 2008 in addition to our 19 lost time accidents. A near miss is an incident which could have resulted in a death, serious injury, injury or disease but did not.

In our last edition of Northlink we reported on the benefits accruing from our Visible Felt Leadership (VFL) initiative which requires managers to visit their locations to review implementation of safety management systems and talk to their people about suggested improvements. VFL was implemented on 1 June 2007 and since then, our managers have undertaken a total of 510 safety related visits to locations. An analysis of the non compliances reported would indicate that we still have problems with wearing personal protective equipment, housekeeping, unsafe working at height, inadequate planning for safety and mobile plant issues.

On a more positive note the work of the Northstone Safety Directors, under the leadership of Noel Quinn, continues with no little enthusiasm. Their recent achievements include:-

- the successful completion of the second year of the Northstone Safety Location of the Year Initiative.
- the delivery of three elements of the CRH Health and Safety Continuing Professional Development Programme for Managers.
- the delivery of a total of 13,949 safety training hours to Northstone employees and sub contractors in the year to 31 May 2008.

Special mention in this regard must go to Quarry and Asphalt Safety Director, Richard McDermott, who has led the process which resulted in his Division being accredited under the Occupational Health and Safety Assessment System BS OHSAS 18001: (2007) standard.

Our end of term safety report from Northlink to us all would read "could do better" and as such we all must renew our efforts to maintain and improve safety standards across our Company.

We owe it to our work colleagues, our families and ourselves.

Roll of Honour

The Northstone Safety Location of the Year Initiative, which was launched by Noel Quinn, our Chief Executive, in January 2006 is now very much part of the health and safety management process in our business. It recognises superior performance across the depots in our materials business.

January of this year was a tense time for our Concrete and Quarry and Asphalt Divisions as our people awaited news of the outcome of the 2007 competition.

The Concrete Division combines the scores of the quarterly health and safety audits which are undertaken at all depots over the year. In the Quarry and Asphalt Division, the winners are determined by the level of improvement shown in health and safety standards.

Northlink can announce that the winners of the 2007 competition are as follows:-

Concrete Division

Sand Depot Category - Sandy Bay Depot
 Barge Category - Toomebridge Boat
 Small Plant Category - Glenwherry Depot
 Large Plant Category - Carryduff Depot

Quarry and Asphalt Division

Most Improved Location - Mountfield Quarry
 Squad of the Year - Mervyn Speers

In the spring, Noel took time out from his busy schedule to present the awards to our people at the various depots and locations. As ever, he was delighted with the performance and the improvements shown by the winners during 2007 as he explained recently to Northlink;

"The initiative provides some additional motivation for Northstone people to do well when it comes to health and safety. It also provides an accurate assessment of actual performance over the course of a year and not just a picture in time. I commend the winners on their commitment to health and safety and I know that competition for the top positions will just be as fierce in 2008".

It would also be remiss of Northlink not to mention the hard work of Craig Chisholm and David Smyth, our Health and Safety Managers in the materials divisions, in making the initiative a success.

Well done to all.

Award Winner - Mervyn Speers and squad



Award Winner - Toomebridge Barge



Award Winner - Sandy Bay Depot



Award Winner - Mountfield Quarry



90 Years of Experience at CARSON

Northlink readers over the years have become accustomed to hearing of the long service records of our people at every level across the Company. Well, it looks as if one of the newest members of the Northstone family, Carson Industries in Roscommon, has just joined the club. Each and every member of the production management and supervisory team at our Roscommon location joined the business in 1993, which was the year Carson Industries was established in Ireland.

The team is led by production and safety manager, **Charlie Dunne**, who brings practical experience, a commitment to improvement and an eye for detail to all aspects of the production process in the factory. Charlie, in his safety role, also delivers forklift truck driver,

manual handling and other safety critical training.

Charlie's supervisory team are all committed, thorough and methodical men who lead by example. **Paddy Donnelly, Gerry Casey** and **Alistair Kilmartin** are production shift supervisors, **Sean Brennan** is the maintenance electrician and **Dominic McDonnell** is the assembly department supervisor.

Charlie clearly thinks a lot of the capability of his team as he told Northlink recently;

"My supervisory people have a great team ethos and nothing seems to phase them or divert them from their safety and operational priorities each day. Their experience means a lot when it comes to effective supervision on the factory floor. Above all, they

are all genuinely good guys".

Northlink looks forward to carrying regular articles on our people in Roscommon in future editions.

Carson Supervisors enjoy the limelight (left - right) Charlie Dunne, Paddy Donnelly, Sean Brennan, Gerry Casey, Alistair Kilmartin and Dominic McDonnell.



All CRH companies in Ireland are being asked to increase their focus on delivering savings and economies in energy usage this year and we at Northstone are targeting a saving of 3% in 2008. Northlink can report that the good work of our recently formed Energy Management Group continues apace.

Each of our operating Divisions is implementing an energy action plan and one of the main benefits arising from the group is that

it offers the opportunity to share expertise and knowledge on the implementation of best practice across Northstone.

The Group meets every quarter with the last meeting being held in May of this year. At this meeting our Chief Executive, Noel Quinn, who also chairs the group, heard of the work done to date in respect of deriving benchmarking data which will allow accurate measurement and assessment of the energy consumption of various activities and items of plant.

The reports delivered by the Divisional representatives also included updates on discussions with energy providers, progress on sub metering, fuel efficiency in mobile plant as well as detecting and repairing leaks and malfunctions in fixed plant to increase energy efficiency.

One interesting innovation reported on was the use of an infra red camera to identify areas of significant heat loss in buildings and fixed plant.

Comprehensive energy awareness training is also well underway at Northstone with courses being delivered both externally and internally. This is also complemented by a poster campaign.

It was no surprise that at the end of the meeting, Noel thanked all in attendance for their contribution and noted the excellent progress to date in respect of energy management across the Company.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT GROUP CONTINUES TO STRIVE FOR SAVINGS



Men on a mission (left - right) Brian Watt (Concrete Division), Joe Brankin (Salmor), William Stewart (Concrete Division), Noel Quinn (Northstone), Trevor McKay (Quarry and Asphalt Division), Angus Kennedy (Quarry and Asphalt Division) and Sam Deane (Quarry and Asphalt Division). Missing from the photograph is Alex Anderson (Farrans).

The SECRET LIFE of BALLYMENA QUARRY



A Ringed Plover sits quietly on her nest

Most Northstone people when they think about our quarry locations tend to visualise crushers, coating plants, conveyors, large dumper trucks and haul roads. However, what we do not realise is that our quarries have a secret life all of their own. Quarries are in fact a haven for wildlife and the Northstone depot at Kells in Ballymena is a prime example.

The working history and development of our Ballymena quarry was featured in a previous edition of Northlink, but few of us realise that its natural history is just as spectacular. This spring, two pairs of ringed plovers graced us with their presence. The ringed plover has been given amber status by the Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB), which means that its numbers are slowly increasing but the species is still vulnerable. At the last count there were 8,540 breeding pairs in the United Kingdom. It is mainly found in coastal habitats and around lakes and flooded gravel pits. A small, dumpy, short legged wading bird, it is mainly brownish grey above and white below, with an orange beak and black and white markings on its head and breast. Ringed plovers do not build a nest, preferring just a scrape on stony ground. The eggs are perfectly camouflaged. The one remarkable aspect of our plovers is that they are nesting on the bare quarry floor



amid the hustle and bustle of the usual quarry activities. If their nest is threatened by a predator, they will fly a short distance away and perform a distraction display by sounding alarm calls and pretending to be injured, moving about as if they have a broken wing. Attracted by the prospect of an apparently easy meal, the predator will follow the bird feigning injury. When it thinks it is a safe distance from the nest, the plover will then fly away.

Birds of prey also find the quarry to their liking as we have peregrine falcons and buzzards in residence. Peregrines naturally nest on coastal cliffs, but find steep quarry faces offer the same advantages of nest security and a perfect vantage point from which to hunt their prey. These birds have long suffered persecution as a result of their predation on racing pigeons and game birds, with poisoning being the main method of control. Peregrines were

also targeted by egg collectors in the past. Our peregrines at Ballymena are under no such threats and their haunting calls have made them very much part of the fabric of the quarry environment. Peregrine falcons remain on the RSPB amber list.

A pair of buzzards soar over the quarry each day in a continual hunt for prey. Their main prey items are rabbits, hares and other small mammals. Not so very long ago, there were relatively few buzzards in Northern Ireland, but greater protection and public awareness has seen them spread from their traditional upland habitats to low lying farmland and along motorway corridors. The call of our Ballymena buzzards has been likened to a mewling, and as with the peregrines, they are now adding to the sights and sounds of one of our busiest quarry locations.

Even the bleakest of quarry landscapes at Ballymena holds a wildlife secret and the dust stockpiles are no exception. Each spring sees the return of a colony of sand martins from their African wintering grounds. Our stockpiles offer a perfect nesting environment and closely replicate the conditions found in more natural environments where sand martins usually nest, such as along river and lake banks. The sand martin is the smallest member of the European swallow and martin family. These little birds add vitality to the quarry and their arrival each year is always welcome at Ballymena.

Each of the Northstone quarry locations has settlement facilities and other water impoundments which attract a wide variety of invertebrates, amphibians and bird life. At Ballymena the tranquillity of these areas is disturbed on a regular basis by one of

our nosiest residents, the little grebe. This small, dumpy water bird is mainly brown in colour and has a bright chestnut coloured throat and cheeks. It often appears to have a fluffy rear end. If disturbed, the little grebe dives underwater immediately, surfacing unseen some distance away. It has a distinctive whinnying trill.

Ballymena hosts many types of plants and trees with perhaps the most showy of these being the northern marsh orchid. It is an upright plant up to 25cms tall and tends to occur in the damper areas of the quarry. It has deep purple flowers which are in full bloom as we go to press. In Northern



Ireland the distribution of the northern marsh orchid is extremely localised and we are delighted that Ballymena is one such location.

Biodiversity in quarries is not only good for wildlife but also indicates to the wider world that our production processes adhere to best practice as required by our ISO 14001 Environmental Management System and by the Aggregate Levy Credit Scheme (ALCS) Environmental Code of Practice as administered by the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland. Maintaining our ALCS accreditation is vital in developing our competitive position in the Province.

Next time you are in a Northstone quarry take a few moments and try to identify the secret life of that location. You will be pleasantly surprised.

Photo captions:
Left: A Peregrine Falcon takes a rest on a rock pile on the quarry floor
Above: A Northern Marsh Orchid in its full glory

Play Your Part – Save Energy

The increasing globalisation of world markets cannot have escaped the notice of any of us in recent months. This is where increasing demand for natural resources and higher standards of living in some of the most densely populated countries in the world, primarily China and India, has resulted in spiralling energy costs across the world.

Oil and wholesale gas prices have hit record highs on world markets and we all face the prospect of household energy bills possibly increasing by 40% this winter. The average price of a litre of petrol and diesel across the United Kingdom is now 118.16p and 131.56p respectively.

It is in this climate, that Northstone has launched its War on Waste – Energy Campaign. The message is quite simple, we all must play a part in saving energy at our offices and various workplaces across the Company. Our business is a significant user of energy so any savings are also significant.

If we all play our part, together, we can realise immediate energy cost savings across the business.

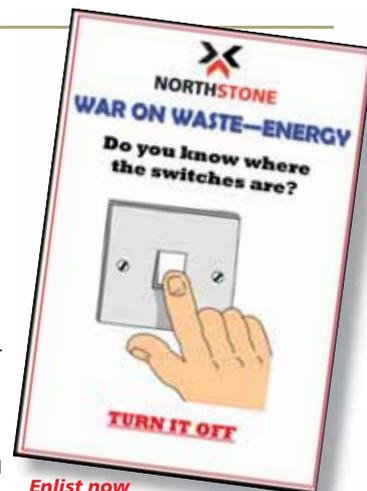
Northern Ireland Electricity have advised us that if we all do simple things like switching off electrical equipment before leaving work in the evening, we can achieve the following savings over a twelve month period:

Annual Energy Savings	£
A photocopier	90
A personal computer & monitor	40
A printer	20
A 100 watt light	55
A convactor heater	300
A welding fan	220

Another interesting statistic from our Salmor business is that if we allow a metal working machine to idle over for 2 hours each day, this costs us £295 each year. We have eight metal working machines at Salmor so eliminating idling time would save us from £2,360 per year.

Just think how much we could save if we reduced idling time in our vehicles.

Various posters have now appeared across Northstone and these serve as a reminder to us all to do more to save energy.



Enlist now and play your part in the War Against Waste.