



COURTS SERVICE NEWS

Nuacht na Seirbhíse Cúirteanna

Criminal Courts Complex gets the green light

Dr. Harry Kennedy interview

Tullamore & Bray Courthouse openings



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Now that summer is upon us there is a definite outdoor feel to this issue of Courts Service News. Our main feature is on the contract signing for the Criminal Courts Complex in Dublin (pages 19 to 22). This is the largest courts building project undertaken since the foundation of the State. We also feature recent courthouse openings in Tullamore (pages 23 and 24), Bray (page 17) and the commencement of the Blanchardstown Courthouse project (page 18).

It has also been a busy time on the appointments front with 18 new judicial appointments, a new County Registrar in Galway, a new Northern Regional Manager and 5 Circuit and District Court Chief Clerks taking up their posts (pages 30 to 33).

We also feature the annual "Summer Evening in Smithfield" for retired judges and staff that took place towards the end of May. A great evening was had by all and it's great to see so many happy faces enjoying the event.

Finally, you may have come across the Reader's Survey that we published in the March issue. We have re-printed the survey on page 27 of this issue just to give you a second chance to send us your comments. Our generosity knows no bounds.

Tony Lawlor



Mary Murphy

It is with sadness that we announce that Mary Murphy (left), Deputy Editor of the newsletter has gone OA (that's the Official Assignee's Office!). Mary was our Deputy Editor for the last 4 years. Best of luck in the new post, Mary. You are missed by all in Corporate Services.

New-look production team



Tony Lawlor, Catriona Nangle, Helen Priestley, Catherine O'Leary, Gerry Curran

regular features

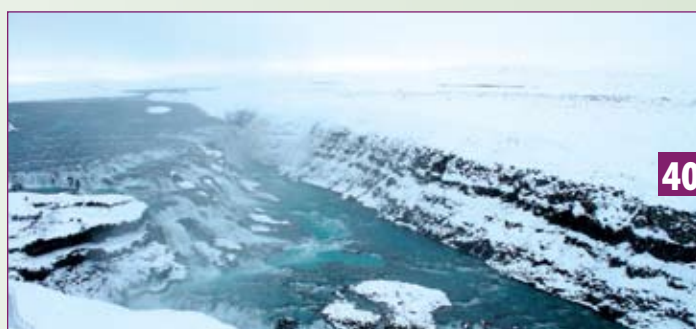
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Practice and Procedure

District Court Rules

S.I. No. 82 of 2007 District Court (Small Claims) Rules, 2007

These Rules insert a new Order 53A to facilitate maintaining records electronically.

S.I. No. 97 of 2007 District Court (Mental Health) Rules, 2007

These Rules insert Order 84A to prescribe procedures and forms in respect of applications under section 25 of The Mental Health Act, 2001.

S.I. No. 152 of 2007 District Court (Children Summonses) Rules, 2007

These Rules amend Order 37 to provide a form of Children Summons for issue under the Petty Sessions Act, 1851 and a form of Children Summons for issue under the Courts (No. 3) Act, 1986 both of which, in accordance with section 64 of the Children Act, 2001, specify the provision of section 91 of that Act.

S.I. 203 of 2007 District Court (Criminal Justice Act, 2006) Rules, 2007

These Rules amend the Orders 13, 14, 17, 26, 31 and 100, and insert a new Order 28A to provide forms and procedure in respect of changes arising from the entry into force of certain provisions of the Criminal Justice Act, 2006.

Circuit Court Rules

S.I. No. 169 of 2007 Circuit Court Rules (Criminal Justice Act, 2006), 2007

These Rules amend the Circuit Court Rules by the insertion immediately following Order 68 of Order 68A which prescribes procedures as outlined in the Criminal Justice Act, 2006.

Practice directions

The High Court

The following practice direction has issued from the High Court Central Office. It is also available on the Courts Service website www.courts.ie

Judicial Review, Asylum and Immigration Legal submissions and papers for hearing.

These directions shall apply from the Easter Term 2007 to the hearing of all applications for leave pursuant to s. 5 of the Illegal Immigrants (Trafficking) Act, 2000 and the hearing of all applications for judicial review in respect of which the leave has been granted in the Asylum and Immigration List.

1. Applicants shall deliver outline legal submissions 21 days prior to the hearing date. Where an applicant is not pursuing leave on one or more of the grounds set out in the statement of grounds the outline legal submissions shall so state.
2. Respondents shall deliver outline legal submissions fourteen days prior to the hearing date. Where a respondent does not oppose leave on one or more ground in the statement of grounds the outline legal submissions shall so state.
3. Failure to file and deliver such submissions may result in the loss of a hearing date or adverse costs consequences.
4. Papers for the hearing, to include the written submissions shall be lodged by the applicant's solicitors in the list room of the Central Office of the High Court three working days in advance of the hearing date.
5. Practitioners are reminded that in applications on notice for leave to issue judicial review the purpose of the applicant's outline legal submissions is to identify the substantial ground for contending that the challenged decision is invalid and not to set out in full the arguments in support of the relief sought. Similarly the purpose of the respondent's submission is to set out the basis for contending that no substantial grounds as contended for exist and not the arguments in support of the contention that the applicant is not entitled to the substantive relief sought.
6. Save in exceptional cases the outline submissions lodged pursuant to this practice direction should not exceed three pages.

The District Court

The following practice direction has issued from the District Court. It is also available on the Courts Service website www.courts.ie

Adjournments

1. When fixing a case for hearing the parties in the case must indicate to the Court the estimated time that the hearing will take.
2. Where the estimated running time of a case will take more than two hours the case will be specially fixed for hearing. Cases which require more than two hours will be put in for mention four weeks before the hearing date, when the Solicitors for each party to the action will certify that the case is ready to proceed.
3. No adjournment or remand will be granted where a case has been fixed for hearing. In exceptional circumstances only, application for adjournment or remand may be made to the Court at least 7 DAYS prior to the hearing date on 48 HOURS notice to the other party.



Small Claims Online wins a big award

The champagne was flowing as *Small Claims Online* scooped a major award at the recent 'Innovation through Technology Awards' sponsored by Eircom. For Project Manager, Michael Byrne and all associated with the project, it was due recognition of a job well done. We spoke to Michael after the event.

"It was a great honour to win this award", Michael says. "It recognised the outstanding effort by many people in the delivery of *Small Claims Online*, our first electronic service. It was a great recognition for the Courts Service as an organisation and of our commitment to developing new ways of service delivery to the citizen. It will encourage us to deliver even more valuable and innovative services to our customers". The 'Eircom Innovation Through Technology' awards seek to recognise excellence and creativity in technology initiatives right across the public sector. The awards showcase across seven categories the quality and variety of some of the very best technology innovation projects undertaken within the last twelve months in Ireland. Any public sector project could enter and lots did which made the win all the more impressive.

"We entered *Small Claims Online* in the category "Best project Government to Citizen", Michael explains. "This recognizes a project that demonstrates effective service delivery or interaction to citizens. We felt that our system was an excellent example of how you can provide effective services to the citizen over the internet and introduce a new level of customer service. We wanted to highlight our commitment to the delivery of electronic services and to acknowledge the diligent efforts of the cross directorate project team. We also wanted to highlight the Courts Service's commitment to the Government's policy on e-Government".

The *Small Claims* system was traditionally paper based. A person wishing to make



Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey, T.D., Michael Byrne (ICT Directorate) and Ms. Leonie Lunney, Chief Executive of Citizens Information.

a claim usually had to attend at the local District Court office to lodge a claim. "With the introduction of our online system, the user can now complete the application and pay the court fee online from the comfort of their own home or office at any time of the day or night", Michael points out. It's a 24/7 facility. "They can also track the progress of their claim online. If there is a connection failure at the users PC while making the application, details of data entered are saved and an email issues automatically to the user with a link to their saved application. This allows them to complete the original saved application within fourteen days".

Available in both the Irish and English languages, the system provides a user friendly, easy to use online application. "It is a convenient service in a mobile and continually changing society", says Michael.

As Project Manager, Michael may be doing the talking but he is quick to point out that this was a great team effort. "The project was originally initiated by Audrey Cadden, now joint Chief Clerk in Trim District Court. The project team members were Patrick Johnson (now in Human Resources), Jim Finn (now Examiner of the High Court), Noel Brennan (Chief Clerk in Cavan District Court), Brian Battelle (now in Dublin Metropolitan District Civil Office), Mary O'Mara (now in the Eastern Regional Office) and Anne Marie James (District Court Family Law Office) with assistance from Mary Murphy and Sile O'Neill of the Website Team. Not forgetting In.vision Research Limited who developed the system, Fujitsu Services who contributed to the implementation of the project and the staff of offices in Dublin and all around the country who helped test the pilot project".

Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey, T.D. was on hand to make the presentations on the night. "I'm talking to the experts here" he admitted acknowledging the many achievements the public service continues to make to improve the range and quality of eGovernment services to the citizen.

Courts Service News says a very big 'well done' to all involved in the development of *Small Claims Online* to date. We look forward to following its further progress around the country as time goes on...

(see also page 11 for details of a further award)



From left to right: John Coyle (ICT Director), Mark Krawczyk (In.Vision Research Ltd.), Noel Brennan (Cavan District Court Office), Brian Battelle (District Court Civil Office), Michael Byrne (ICT Directorate), Helen Priestley (Information Office), Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey, T.D.



From left to right: Mary Murphy (Official Assignee's Office), Michael Byrne (ICT Directorate), Brian Battelle (District Court Civil Office), Patrick Johnson (Human Resources Directorate), Noel Brennan (Cavan District Court Office), Anne Marie James (District Court Family Law Office), Mary O'Mara (Eastern Regional Office)

Evidence by video... the future comes to the courtroom

What does the installation of 21st century technology in the courtroom involve? We asked Ciaran Caverly of our ICT Directorate to tell us about the drive to improve the facilities that enable witnesses give evidence remotely:

Giving evidence by video link allows vulnerable witnesses participate in court proceedings by giving their evidence outside of the courtroom from a remote location. As part of the major construction and refurbishment of court buildings, the Courts Service has been installing the necessary equipment in courtrooms in Dublin and around the country. "In recent months we replaced old equipment in five courtrooms in the Four Courts", Ciaran says. "We had to work around the court sittings. Installation work typically started at 4 p.m. on Friday and continued on Saturday. We had to install special video conferencing equipment in the attic along with the equipment to link the five courts with the two special witness rooms in Áras Úi Dhálaigh".



The old...

Video link equipment is now installed in Courts 12, 13 and 16 in the High Court and Courts 23 and 29 in the Circuit Court. New equipment was also installed in the two witness rooms in Áras Úi Dhálaigh and in the attic in the West Wing. These courts also provide for video conference and video display.

Video display equipment was also recently installed in seven courts in

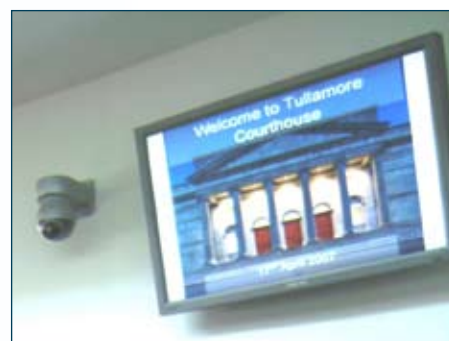
the Four Courts. The new facilities are in Courts 1, 2, 3 and 15 in the High Court and Courts 24, 25 and 26 in the Circuit Court. "The Gardaí don't have to move bulky equipment to display CCTV in the court room any more", says Ciaran explaining that each court now has an easy to read and follow set of instructions which details how to use the equipment to display VHS Video tapes or DVD discs. A laptop can be connected and all material is displayed on large 46" screens.

"We have also installed equipment at a number of venues around the country", Ciaran tells us. "Recent installations include the newly opened courthouses in Tullamore and Bray. The new courtroom in Tullamore has equipment which allows for video link, video display and video conferencing. The twin 46" monitors were used at the opening ceremony to show photographs of the fantastic new courthouse. Bray also has video display equipment and again this equipment displayed photographs of the very attractive new court building during the recent opening ceremony".

Ciaran has a special thank you for the staff of the court offices. "We'd like to acknowledge all the assistance we received while we 'took over' court rooms". He pays special tribute to Eugene Lynch in the Four Courts. "Can I assure everyone that any inconvenience has been worth it as the new equipment improves the capability of the Courts Service to deliver quality services. "It's all about improving facilities for all users of the courts", says Ciaran reminding us that the programme of work will continue at a variety of venues in the coming months.



Ciaran Caverly of the ICT Directorate



... the new

The Video Conferencing Project Board

- Margaret O'Neill, Circuit & District Court Operations (Business Sponsor)
- Darach Green, ICT Directorate
- Ciaran Caverly, ICT Directorate
- Derek Bunyan, Custody Office, Dublin Metropolitan District Court (Business Co-ordinator)
- Mick Brady and Tom Fitzsimons, Four Courts
- Wayne Font, Circuit Court Civil Office
- Colm O'Tuathail, Damovo Project Manager
- Liam Walsh, Chief Engineer, Fitting Image

Central Criminal Court adds two more venues



Court number 1, Four Courts.

Galway

History was made recently when the first murder trial to be held in Galway since the foundation of the State got underway. Kieran Lynch, a native of Askeaton, Co. Limerick was charged with the murder of his partner, Catherine McEnery.

The trial was the first to be heard in Galway since the infamous Maamtrasna murders in 1882. In that case ten people were brought before a court in Galway and tried for the murder of five members of the Joyce family in Connemara.

Cavan

For the first time since the foundation of the State the Central Criminal Court sat at Cavan recently to hear a murder trial in which a Lithuanian national was charged with killing a fellow national in 2005.

Mr. Justice Paul Carney commented at the outset of the Court that "this is a historic occasion for County Cavan as it is the first time the Court has sat in the County". He also stated that "the Central Criminal Court is the criminal division of the High Court and that the Court deals exclusively with the most serious crime which is murder". On

this occasion the Court was dealing with Laimonas Mackevicius who was charged with murdering Mindaugas Janavicius on July 24, 2005.

According to the archives of the Anglo Celt there were many murder trials in the 1890s in Cavan followed by many executions. Those convicted were executed by hanging in the grounds of Cavan jail now the site of the De La Salle Boys School. The last murder trial in the County took place in 1920. It began in Ballyjamesduff

but it ultimately ended up at the Ulster Assizes sitting in Belfast. The case concerned a Mr. Brendan Farrelly who was charged with murder. Having been acquitted on December 11, 1920 he was back before the Court on January 21, 1921 charged with the murder of John Joe Smith.

The trial of Laimonas Mackevicius lasted a week and on the fifth day of the trial Mr. Mackevicius pleaded guilty to manslaughter.

Central Criminal Court Countrywide

The Central Criminal Court traditionally sat only in Dublin. In recent years, in an effort to reduce waiting times for trials, the Court has located in a number of venues around the country. In 2006, the Court sat at six venues outside Dublin – Ennis, Waterford, Tralee, Cork, Limerick and Cloverhill – for a total of 52 days. Sittings in local venues greatly reduce travel and other costs associated with sittings in Dublin for many involved in the trial process, including solicitors, barristers, Gardaí, The Prison Service, and witnesses and victims. They allow for earlier hearing dates thereby reducing waiting times.

The programme of the Central Criminal Court locating around the country would not have been possible until recently because of the poor state of much of the court building stock. The new system has been greatly assisted by the major court building construction and refurbishment programme completed over the last seven years. "It means that in the vast majority of counties we now have a sufficient number of modern courtrooms and associated facilities to accommodate increased sittings of the courts", says Courts Service CEO, P.J. Fitzpatrick.

Sharing ideas with colleagues from the Northern Ireland Court Service

The Slieve Russell Hotel in Cavan was a convenient half way point for senior managers from the Northern Ireland Court Service to meet colleagues from the South recently. The issues faced by both have a lot in common and opportunities to compare experiences and hear of future plans are always welcome.

The day long session included presentations by Courts Service CEO, P.J. Fitzpatrick, on establishing an independent agency to manage the Courts. This was followed by details from the Northern Ireland Court Service of key priorities for the courts in Northern Ireland in light of the changing political landscape. Managers availed of the opportunity to discuss a variety of issues with their counterparts. Matters discussed included court operations, buildings, information and communications technology, governance, human resources and financial management.

"We learn a lot from talking to each other.", P.J Fitzpatrick says "We have much in common and much to share".



From left to right: John Coyle (ICT Director), Nuala McLoughlin (Director of Operation Supreme & High Court) and David Thompson (Finance Director, Northern Ireland Court Service)

Where are we with our civil process review?

In our last issue we spoke to Angela Denning of the Civil Case Management System (CCMS) Project Team, who explained the background and purpose of the project. We caught up with her colleague, Jim Finn recently to find out how the project is progressing. Jim started by reminding us why the project is being undertaken:

The Courts Service ICT strategy for the period 2006 – 2010 recommended that as a first step towards an integrated case management solution, civil and family law processes be reviewed with the objective of standardising, in so far as possible, processes across regions and jurisdictions, improving efficiency and customer service. The review will also re-design processes so as to support the introduction of a single integrated case management solution and the delivery of eServices.

The Courts Service has engaged consultants to carry out the following work:

- Document our existing civil and family law processes (the "as is")
- Make recommendations for simplification and standardisation where appropriate and feasible for consideration by the Courts Service
- Document the processes we should use in the future, as agreed with the Courts Service (the "to be")

Workshops and interviews to document the "as is" processes started in March. We have worked with staff in Dublin offices as well as Naas and Limerick District Court offices and Cork and Roscommon Circuit Court offices. We have drafted detailed descriptions of civil and family processes for managers and staff to validate. This validation exercise is well underway across the offices involved. The helpful and enthusiastic approach taken by staff and managers involved in the workshops and interviews has ensured that the final "as is" report will be of a high quality and will contain the required level of detail.

We expect that the second stage of the project – the development of a high level series of "to be" processes through workshops with senior managers and the project board will commence in June 2007. The project will culminate in the development of a detailed set of "to be" processes.



For further information or to forward ideas on improving processes contact Jim Finn at 01-888 6711 or Angela Denning at 01-888 6833.

Management training – who gets to go and why?

In our March issue we told you about a recent initiative that has seen groups of Courts Service middle managers go to Henley Management College in England for some very interesting training. Should you feel left out if you weren't asked to go? And why do we need management training anyway? And most importantly, is it any good? We asked CEO, PJ Fitzpatrick to answer some questions for us.

We started by asking why it was necessary to send staff to a management college?

"We felt that given the challenges the Courts Service faces going forward that manager's needed exposure to the latest thinking on organisational development, strategic leadership and change management. The Courts Service Change Programme is been driven by a series of transformation projects (Courts Accounting System (CAS), Funds Accounting System (FAS), Criminal Case Tracking System (CCTS), Criminal Courts Complex (CCC), Business Planning, Performance Management & Development System (PMDS) which are and will change the way we do our work. In particular these projects raise significant challenges for the organisation particularly in the manner in which the change is managed internally and externally.

"The programme challenges individual senior managers to reinvent the way they interact with key stakeholders."

The programme challenges individual senior managers to reinvent the way they interact with key stakeholders. It also asked them to build commitment among staff to move to the next level.

Change is not easy for any organisation or individual. Building personal confidence among our managers that they have the ability to make the changes is the key to success. This process can only happen when managers believe that they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to provide the leadership to make the change happen. Using a well recognised management college is, in the view of myself and the Senior Management Team, the start of the process to provide people with the skills and knowledge.

There are other initiatives which will support the development of managers.



P.J. Fitzpatrick, C.E.O. Courts Service

These include executive coaching, attendance at conferences, workshops and seminars and the encouragement to undertake individual development.

Sounds like a tall order indeed. Why was Henley chosen for the training?

"The challenges are great. A large investment of public monies are being made in all of the projects we are undertaking. We felt that if we were to make an investment in the development of key managers it should be with a college of the highest international reputation and one which has a track record of delivering successful programmes to both public and private organisations. Henley had developed an open programme which we examined along with other colleges programme which we believed best fitted our needs as an organisation.

"Henley is ranked in the top 10 management colleges in the world."

Henley is ranked in the top 10 management colleges in the world. It is also one of the leading research organisations in the world in the area of work. It provided us with a range of tutors and guest speakers which gave our staff the exposure to the tools and thinking which will help them meet the challenges of the transformational programme we are currently undertaking. On an individual

level using a college with the reputation of Henley encourages participants to embrace the learning process".

"There have been and will be opportunities for all managers to gain the skills and knowledge they need"

Not all middle managers attended Henley. So who attended and why were they selected?

"As I stated previously the Courts Service Change Programme is being driven by a series of transformation projects, CAS/ FAS/ CCTS/ CCC/ Business Planning/ PMDS. We decided that the key group to commence the programme should be the key managers involved in these projects. People who are Project Sponsors, Project Managers, Business Leaders and Project Board members and have the responsibilities to implement these projects. The challenge of our people is take these projects through their various stages and to bring them to a successful conclusion.

What does it say about those who weren't selected?

"It doesn't say anything about those who were not at this time selected to attend the first two programmes. We are totally committed to the development of all our managers. There have been and will be opportunities for all managers to gain the skills and knowledge they need to help them reach their potential and develop their careers".

It sounds like it was an interesting venture. Are you finished with Henley?

"We are currently reviewing the first two programmes with Henley and are examining the possibility of a third programme in September".

So get those boaters ready, you may be on the next Henley list!

Modernisation in the Courts Service: 'Sustaining Progress' and 'Towards 2016'

Modernisation of the public service is high on the agenda of every Government. Every Government wants better value for money, more streamlined practices, improved customer service – and every public body does its best to deliver them. So how does the Government go about outlining what it wants? And how do public service bodies outline what they have done to deliver? And what reward is there for the staff who deliver? We asked Lauri Walsh of our Human Resources Directorate, the coordinator of modernisation reports for the Courts Service.

"Public service reform is high on everyone's list", Lauri explains. "The Government, the public, corporate Ireland, the public service itself – they all want to see improvement. Every three or four years for the last twenty years, the Government has sat down with the social partners (these include trade unions, employer organisations, and groups who represent wider civil society and a range of interests). Eventually the negotiations result in a social partnership agreement that sets out agreed targets under a range of headings. Among other things, national agreements set out a list of requirements for the Public Service to pursue and these usually include value for money and quality public services."

"Public service reform is high on everyone's list", Lauri explains. "The Government, the public, corporate Ireland, the public service itself – they all want to see improvement."

Lauri gives the years 2003–2006 as an example. The National Agreement for that period was called 'Sustaining Progress'. One of its three broad aims was 'Delivering a Fair and Inclusive Society'. This included a commitment to modernisation of the Public Service and a major focus was access to quality public services. The Courts Service and many other public bodies were required to produce an action plan to implement the aims of this agreement.

Many of the objectives in our 'Sustaining Progress' action plan were already part of our strategic thinking. "We were modernising anyway as part of our drive to create a world class Courts Service", Lauri reminds us. "The agreement gave us a further opportunity to highlight the progress we have made, and continue to

make, in areas such as new technology and eGovernment, better regulation and infrastructure and planning."

Among the items achieved were a customer charter, a complaints procedure and the establishment of various court user groups. Other good examples was the use of information technology in developing services and improving customer service (for example the Criminal Case Management System, the *Small Claims Online* Project and the website), the establishment of procurement and public private partnership structures, the Central Funds Office which now handles the management and investment of funds of Minors and Wards of Court and the provision of a range of information for the public.

'Towards 2016'

Towards 2016 is the National Agreement which covers the years 2006 to 2015. It is a ten-year framework for economic and social change, with services being designed around the requirements of people. The emphasis is firmly on modernisation and flexibility.



Lauri Walsh, Human Resources Directorate

"We're consolidating and building on the work done and our 'Towards 2016' Action Plan reflects this", says Lauri.

'Towards 2016' places a lot of emphasis on modernisation and flexibility and you can see the results of some of these commitments already.

Staff are certainly aware of the new model of the Performance Management and Development System. The Courts Accounting Office has been established to deal with the centralised processing of financial transaction in District and Circuit Court offices. This office has already absorbed the Fines Office and staff of the Dublin Metropolitan District Court. Two groups of senior managers have already undergone intensive training in change and project management (see page 9). A process review for all civil and family law litigation (excluding licensing) is under way. The review is being done with a view to standardising and redesigning processes to improve efficiency and support automation. It will feed directly into the design of the new Civil Case Management System." These are only a few of the projects now under way.

What's in it for us?

"Like every other public body, the Courts Service reports on progress every few months. Pay increases provided for in 'Towards 2016' will not be paid unless progress has been made and all concerned have co-operated with the modernisation agenda".



Where does the report go?

"Our Central Partnership Committee chaired by our Chief Executive Officer examines it first", Lauri explains. If the Committee is happy, the CEO forwards the report to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform indicating whether he considers payment of the next pay increase to our staff is justified."

"Like every other public body, the Courts Service reports on progress every few months."

"The Department carries out a preliminary assessment and then forwards the report to the Secretary

General for final assessment. The report is then forwarded to the Civil Service Progress Verification Group. This Group assesses the progress made and decides if the progress achieved in relation to the commitments made warrants payment of a general round pay increase."

So how has the Service fared with the Group so far?

"Well so far we have performed very well", Lauri assures us. "Increases have been sanctioned to date thanks to the huge efforts that staff have made and continue to make. Our last 'Towards 2016' Action Plan Report was submitted in early March and the pay increase which was implemented on 1 June 2007. This amounts to a 2% increase in pay (2½ % for those whose full-time rate is less than €400 per week.) Two further pay increases will be due on 1st March 2008 and 1st September 2008

and further updates will be submitted approximately three months before each one."

"The Department carries out a preliminary assessment and then forwards the report to the Secretary General for final assessment."

And looking to the future?

"We've made detailed and comprehensive commitments to modernisation, restructuring and the provision of a world class service", concludes Lauri. "This will take a lot of hard work from all of us but on the evidence to date we will get there".

Meet... Mr. Innovator

You've heard of Mr. Motivator? Now meet Mr. Innovator. John Coyle, Courts Service Director of Information and Communications Technology received a merit award in the 'Innovator of the Year' category of the recent 'Innovation Through Technology' awards. This award recognises an individual within the public sector who has been a champion in the use of innovative technology within the public sector.



Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey, T.D. and Cathal McGee, Managing Director of Retail Eircom present John Coyle, ICT Director, with his merit award in the "Innovator of the Year" category.

John accepted his award from Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey, T.D. at the same function that saw *Small Claims Online* carry off the top prize in the 'Best Government to Citizen' category.

CEO, PJ Fitzpatrick paid tribute to John's success. "I am delighted that John Coyle's enormous contribution towards the modernisation of the Courts Service through, in particular, the implementation of a major information technology programme over the past seven years has been recognised and rewarded. John is a modest man and his selection as an Eircom Public Service ICT 'Innovator of the Year' is a just reward for his tremendous achievements in bringing the Courts Service from very much a paper based organisation to a position where we now rely on information technology for most of our daily work", he said.

As for John himself, in typically modest fashion he said "I was very pleased to receive this award. I consider it recognition for all those who have worked in the IT Directorate over the years and who have contributed so much to the progress we have achieved since the establishment of the Courts Service in 1999".

Old Bawn Community College visited by Ireland's most senior criminal Judge

Ireland's best known criminal judge recently paid a visit to Old Bawn Community School, in Tallaght. Mr. Justice Paul Carney, the judge in charge of the Central Criminal Court, agreed to speak to the transition year students about the function of the Courts.

Judge Carney outlined the role and jurisdiction of each of the courts – District, Circuit, High, Special Criminal Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. He gave the class a clear explanation of what each court does. He spoke of the involvement of drink and drugs in bringing people into situations whereby they end up 'snapping' and ending up with the serious charges of rape and murder – matters which his court tries.

The transition year students followed in a long tradition of students from Old Bawn visiting the courts, when they recently sat in on a trial there. Judge Carney agreed to visit the school when he responded to a letter from the students disassociating themselves from the 'messaging' of a small group of young people in court the day they visited.

The judge told them that the reason he 'gave out' that day, and why he came out to talk to them, is that the High Court was the highest court of trial in the land and more importantly they were attending at a murder trial – the most serious of crimes. In such circumstances he told them witnesses and victims were very sensitive and the court room has to be operated in a quiet and organised manner. He explained that he had been a judge for sixteen years and for over twelve of these he had been running the Central Criminal Court. Every murder and rape case in the country comes before him to try or to assign to other judges.

The students asked the judge about the average length of a life sentence and the meaning of contempt of court. In explaining the many changes in the operation of the courts the judge recalled the old practices of 'Jury Money', where the victors in a personal injury case – before a jury at the time – traditionally handed over a bag containing twelve half crown coins to the jury. He also remembered that women had to wear a head scarf when they gave evidence, a practice he did not agree with.

In response to questions from one of the students he said he didn't find it

hard to give sentences as at 4.10 p.m. each day he leaves behind everything which happens in court. "I am able to

switch off. I wouldn't be able to do what I do if I couldn't", he said.



Mr. Justice Paul Carney, senior judge of the Central Criminal Court, sits amongst the transition year class of Old Bawn School with transition year coordinator Susan McCabe.



Mr. Justice Paul Carney and Susan McCabe are joined by two students who asked questions of the judge – Luke Fogarty and Kevin Rushe.

The students of Old Bawn Community College visited the Four Courts as part of the School Tour programme organised by the Courts Service Information Office.

Tours take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during the Law Terms. We can accommodate a maximum of 24 students and two teachers per tour. Tours commence at 10am and 1pm on each of these days. To book a tour you can contact Catriona Nangle at 01-888 6457 or email: schooltours@courts.ie

Healthy Thinking in Dundrum

In Ireland mental health has traditionally been treated as the poor relation of the general medical health service. Lasting impressions of squalor and draconian conditions have been associated with the physical conditions and regimes within which patients have been held and treated in the past. With the passing of the Criminal Law (Mental Health) Act, 2006 and the introduction of the new defence of diminished responsibility Gerry Curran paid a visit to the Central Mental Hospital to see for himself how we treat those who suffer from acute mental illness and need secure care. He spoke to Dr. Harry Kennedy, Director of the hospital:



Dr. Harry Kennedy, Director of the Central Mental Hospital.

Passing through the gates of Dundrum Central Mental Hospital is certainly a step back into another, probably half imagined, era. This large urban open space is behind tall walls, fences and gates. It houses a mid 19th century building which immediately seems incongruous with the treatment and betterment of the mentally ill, and is at once very peaceful – almost the type of place they use for retreats. All Dr. Harry Kennedy's colleagues call him 'Harry' and any of the patients we encounter call him 'Doctor'. He is an 'at ease' and quiet individual who is as talkative as you want him to be – an interviewer's dream subject.

So what is mental health or mental illness?

"Mental illness is a disorder of the mind which like any other illness has a natural history and in general has known approaches to treatment. Like other illnesses, the causes are both physical and social. For example everyone remembers that tuberculosis was caused by tuberculosis bacillus. It affected people who lived in overcrowded conditions or there were other reasons why they were the ones who developed it. Mental illness has a physical cause but it is more likely to affect people who for various special reasons are vulnerable to the illness".

In explaining who comes to this specialist hospital he says, "we operate

"Mental illness is a disorder of the mind which like any other illness has a natural history and in general has known approaches to treatment"

a service for people with severe and enduring mental illness. We provide a service to those with illnesses such as schizophrenia and bi polar effective disorder, which are amongst the most devastating illnesses. They cause more long term disability – more misery – probably more in the way of premature death than many other illnesses, which people more readily accept as illnesses such as cancers".

The difference with mental illness is that "severe mental illnesses are very disabling, but they are different from other illnesses in that they impair a person's ability to act in their own best interest, and they sometimes impair the mental capacity to make choices".

He puts into context the legal framework within which the hospital operates by saying "people with severe and enduring mental illnesses are in need of special protections and rights. For this reason Ireland enacted two mental

health acts in recent years: the Mental Health Act, 2001 – which we can think of as the civil mental health act – and the Criminal Law (Insanity) Act, 2006. In other jurisdictions there is a single mental health act covering both civil and criminal. It's unfortunate that Ireland has two different acts, which contain different definitions in some respects, because this can make it more difficult to de-stigmatise those detained under the Criminal Law (Insanity) Act".

When asked about a cure he says "There are very few areas in modern medicine where we think of cure as a goal. For example we cure acute pneumonia or acute appendicitis but we don't cure diabetes mellitus, we don't cure multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease, but we help people to work towards recovery. In severe and enduring mental illness that's the model we are following. Recovery is an active process. You have to keep working to stay well. Keep working at your own health in order to stay well".

Who are the Patients?

"At the moment about a quarter of the people here are detained under the Mental Health Act, 2001. That

"We don't cure multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease, but we help people to work towards recovery"



means that either they have been transferred here from mental health services around the country because they needed special treatments that could only be obtained here, or in some cases they have ended a long sentence and required further treatment which could not be provided by their local mental health service”.

Is there a difficulty integrating the civil and the criminal?

“No, not at all. They are detained under two different laws but the same protections and standards of care have to apply to both. It is actually very helpful – if we had no civil patients here the danger is that a kind of prison culture could take hold and that would be the worst possible thing for a hospital. He is strong in pointing out that “this is a hospital not a prison and has never been a part of the prison system. This has been a hospital since 1850. And all the same standards of treatment, care and protection of rights apply here that apply in any mental health service around the country”.

“If we had no civil patients here the danger is that a kind of prison culture could take hold”

Mental Health... Prisons... Criminal Justice System

To explain the ‘always full’ hospital population he produces the results of a comprehensive survey of the psychiatric morbidity of the Irish prison population. “We found that about 3.8% of people committed to prison have



a psychosis. 7.6% of men on remand have a psychosis and just over 3% of sentenced men have a psychosis. A person with an active psychosis should be in hospital, not in prison. They should be either in a local hospital or in a secure hospital like this. There are about 340 people per year committed to prison who have a psychosis, a large proportion of whom are charged with very minor offences and really ought to be looked after in their local service. If you look at international comparisons the international average is that about 3.5% of men on remand have a psychosis. The Irish figure of 7.6% is twice the international figure. Clearly we have a problem in Ireland”.

Probed for his thoughts on the reasons for this he said, “The move to community care has been a good thing for the majority of patients. But in places where there is only community care, places where there are not adequate hospital facilities, the result is the inappropriate imprisonment of some patients – clearly young men with acute psychosis”.

If the services were there would these guys be breaking the law?

“It’s not that. It’s that they would not be arrested. They would be looked after in their local services. The problem I think is that the gardaí are exasperated or frustrated by not having any alternative but to charge someone and land them up in a remand prison which is not really designed for that. D2 landing in Cloverhill prison is one of the busiest acute psychiatric units in Dublin. In effect prisons are used as the psychiatric equivalent of A&E trolleys”.

“... prisons are used as the psychiatric equivalent of A&E trolleys”

Progressive hospital routines

“The daily routine here would be like any psychiatric hospital – it is rapidly modernising actually. In the acute units people recently admitted with a short attention span might have therapies on the wards appropriate for their needs and their ability on the day. For instance they might do a lot of art work. People who are here a little longer and where their mental state has improved with medication would begin to engage in psychological therapies for insight, and relapse prevention and specific problem behaviours like anger, sexual behaviour and so forth. In the rehab or pre discharge units the emphasis during the day would be on occupational therapies – learning how to look after yourself, learning to look after a budget, learning to manage your own medication, learning to stay well.

Patients here have access to a range of things. We have our own school on site. We have various types of industrial therapy for example a sophisticated wood turning shop for patients with an aptitude for that type of work. Actually it’s quite creative work.”

What about the criticism that mental hospital rosters don’t allow for a therapeutic milieu within for example which the person who puts you to bed would wake you up, a lack of a continuum exists – and this infringes on the development of relationships



and on getting better. Is this a valid criticism?

“Yes it is and I’ll tell you what we have done about it here. We have introduced a system of primary nursing so that every patient has a primary nurse and a co-worker. So there is always a nurse on shift who has a therapeutic relationship with that patient. That involves the primary nurse being involved in drafting the care plan with the patient. We work in a multi disciplinary way, so that at the moment there are five consultant lead multi disciplinary teams – each contains a consultant, a non consultant hospital doctor, a clinical psychologist, a social worker, an occupational therapist and a community psychiatric nurse. They make sure the patient has what we call ‘achievable goals’ – something that they know they are working towards, with a view to achieving their own recovery. We talk about stratifying according to need. The emphasis is on the individualisation of care”.

“There has been a huge amount of investment by the Health Service Executive in the hospital. When I came here in 2000 there were two consultants, one social worker, one psychologist, no occupational therapy (some occupations or industrial therapy) and no primary nursing system”.

There is an impression of mental hospitals using protection rooms and seclusion – an especially bad impression. Has that lessened here and most importantly is there a post mortem undertaken afterwards as to “why we needed to do that?”

“Seclusion is now very properly governed. Remember this is an approved centre and the patients who are here under the Criminal Justice Act are still protected by the provisions of the Mental Health Act. Also the Mental Health Commission regulations for approved centres concerning the use of seclusion and restraint apply fully here as they apply anywhere else.

The use of seclusion has been substantially diminished by greatly increasing the number of staff on duty during the day, whereby patients can be safely managed without having to use seclusion. The second is by setting up a special psychologically orientated behaviour management unit for those with continuous challenging behaviour.

So people who used to spend long, long periods in seclusion for being



Grounds of the Central Mental Hospital

repetitively assaultive are now managed without dependency on seclusion, due to very high levels of ‘ratio of staff to patients’ and an emphasis on psychological management.

We aim to further reduce seclusion, but the next way to further reduce seclusion is to build high observation units in the acute units, and at the moment we are prevented from doing that by the building.

The case for a new Central Mental Hospital

“We reckon we need about 200 secure beds. We currently have 83. We are increasing. The Government plan to build a 120 bed secure hospital will go a long way towards solving the problem.

If local services were to develop a proper range and diversity of services, then 120 might be enough.

We also need substantial community facilities for after care which we are also developing at the moment. But these are in the early stages. We have an outpatient’s clinic on Ushers Quay. What we really need are high support mental health hostels for aftercare for people who no longer need to be in the hospital”.

But what of the proposed location of the new hospital in the curtilage of a prison?

“That we need a new hospital is absolutely clear. This building has twice been condemned by the Committee for

the Prevention of Torture from the Council of Europe. It was built in 1850 and interestingly it was already out of date in 1850. It was built as a trial run for Broadmoor and when Broadmoor was built a few years later it was built to a completely different plan. The English tried out this design in Ireland and dumped it, as it was such a bad design – even in 1850. We badly need a purpose built modern hospital. We had extensive discussions about whether it could be on this site or another site. We made it clear that it should not be on a prison site”.

“The real reason for not co-locating a hospital beside a prison site is the stigma. This is a hospital not a prison. It’s a secure hospital. Secure hospitals around the world are located with other hospitals not located with prisons.

One has to have a humane regard for the patients and their families. The majority of the patients here were found not guilty by reason of insanity. They have not been convicted of a crime. They are not criminals. It is very important for their dignity that a clear distinction is made between this hospital and a prison”.

The new Act and diminished



responsibility, will this bring more people to the hospital?

“I am very conscious from the prison survey that there are substantial numbers of people serving life sentences or long sentences in prison who have severe mental illnesses, who probably should have been found ‘not guilty by reason of insanity’. But because the old legislation was so unsatisfactory I believe they chose to plead guilty when they might otherwise have pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.

I expect that in the future far more people will raise the defence and there will be more people found not guilty by

reason of insanity and therefore that particular group whom are serving long prison sentences with severe mental illness will be smaller.

“I expect that in the future far more people will raise the defence and there will be more people found not guilty by reason of insanity”

Should or is there a set time for them having to be here when found not guilty by reason of insanity?

“There is no tariff, their pathway through care should be determined by their needs for treatment and therapeutic security. In other words their needs should be kept safe and managed in a safe way”.

Do you think there is a pressure on society or elsewhere to keep somebody in?

“That is perhaps one reason why it’s important that there is a legal process, because that sort of societal pressure has to be mediated through a judicial process and that’s the way it should be done. We are very conscious of the requirements of the Act which are that we treat people for their own safety and for the safety of others. We are very conscious of the European Court of Human Rights and the related conventions regarding prisoners and the rights of the mentally ill.

It is also right and proper that the final decision for the final discharge of those not guilty by reason of insanity are made by the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board – chaired by a judge. It is a three man panel chaired by retired Supreme Court Judge Brian McCracken, a consultant psychiatrist and a lay member. The Act only commenced in June 2006.

The Board review everyone detained every six months and has the power to make no change, give a conditional discharge or give an absolute discharge”.

He concludes on the positive note that “previously, I led a large mental health service in London, which I greatly

enjoyed. It was quite difficult leaving there in 2000 to come home. But I am extremely fortunate here in the colleagues that I find here. People working in Irish mental health services are very committed, hard working and progressive.

The interesting thing about being a forensic psychiatrist is the opportunity to act as a kind of interpreter between psychiatry and the law. You find yourself being bi-lingual. There are times when you are trying to reconcile the two mind sets which are sometimes different. You find yourself being not only being bi-lingual but split as a personality”.

Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board



Judge Brian McCracken, Chairperson of the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board.

The final decision for the final discharge of those not guilty by reason of insanity are made by the Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board – chaired by a judge. It is a three man panel chaired by retired Supreme Court Judge Brian McCracken, a consultant psychiatrist and a lay member. The Act only commenced in June 2006.

Bray gets new courthouse

The Chief Justice Mr Justice John L. Murray presided over the opening of the new Bray Courthouse recently. The courthouse opening was attended by Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. Dick Roche T.D., and the official party also included the President of the District Court, Judge Miriam Malone.



Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray and Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. Dick Roche T.D., cutting the ribbon at the Official Opening of Bray Courthouse.

Chief Justice Murray said that this “new modern space is an innovative and accommodating facility – reflecting the seriousness of the work of the courts, and a merging of the functional with the attractive. It brings to Bray the benefits of a 21st century courthouse with the necessary security, universal access, information technology and accommodation for all court users”.

The opening was attended by many local dignitaries and the ceremony was opened by the Cathaoirleach of the Town Council Cllr Anne Egan who spoke of the centrality of the new facility to the provision of public services in the town. Minister Roche recalled that he had voted against the provision of a supermarket on this location a number of years back and he felt the decision was vindicated by the presence of the new court building amidst a new centre of Bray. He praised the Courts Service for the effectiveness of its capital building

and modernisation programme over the past seven years and held it up as a success story of a changing public service.

The provision of the new court for Bray is part of the Courts Service seven year building strategy which has seen the completion of 48 new or totally refurbished courthouses throughout the State, and the upgrading and/or major maintenance work undertaken in 100 more.

When planning for the provision of new court facilities such as this one, the Courts Service takes into account the greatly increasing population of the greater Dublin area and the national spatial strategy: with the objective that new or greatly expanded court facilities should be provided in the large suburban centres and satellite towns near Dublin. This new facility in Bray is in keeping with this objective.

Staff of Bray District Court



Gerry Curran (Media Relations Advisor) introducing members of the clergy prior to the opening of the Courthouse.



Back Row from left to right: Rosemary Lambe, John Green, Judge Miriam Malone President of the District Court, Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. Dick Roche T.D., Michael Considine, Alan Donnellan and Margaret Lester.

Front Row from left to right: Elizabeth Pluck, Maria Vines, Bernadette Healy, Elish Kavanagh and Deirdre Cullen.

Facilities in Bray

The new courthouse has within its walls:

- three courtrooms with adjoining judges' chambers
- a jury room
- legal practitioners' room
- consultation rooms
- offices for the staff of the District Court
- victim support room
- media room
- holding cells for prisoners with direct access to both of the main courtrooms
- the building is supported by the latest information technology

Bray Courthouse in a central venue - The Cualann Centre

The new courthouse forms part of the recently developed Cualann Centre. The centre also contains new offices for Bray Town Council, new headquarters for the Health Service Executive, restaurants, the Mermaid Arts Centre and the Department of Social and Family Affairs offices for Bray and Wicklow. Further development will involve the construction of residential units together with a 31 bedroom hotel and the renovation of the existing St. Cronan's House.

Start of Blanchardstown Courthouse Project

With the construction of the building now complete, the fit out of the court facilities is now about to commence. The courthouse will cater for District Court cases from the West Dublin area, and Circuit Court cases and trials. Full-time court offices will be based in the new town centre location. Small claims and family law matters will be also dealt with locally. Court sittings in the new Blanchardstown Courthouse will commence in 2008.



As the developer Mr. Bernard McNamara hands over the keys of the new Blanchardstown Courthouse to Courts Service CEO P.J. Fitzpatrick, the Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan, T.D. (recently appointed Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform) and District Court Judge Catherine Murphy lend a hand.



Courts Service CEO P.J. Fitzpatrick, District Court Judge Catherine Murphy and Shay Kirk (Estates and Buildings Unit).



Shay Kirk (Estates and Buildings Unit) outlines the plans for the Courthouse to the Minister for Children, Mr. Brian Lenihan, T.D. (recently appointed Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform) and District Court Judge Catherine Murphy.

All is well in Belmullet

Judge Mary Devins praised the new court facilities in Belmullet when the District Court sat there for the first time recently. The new purpose built courtroom is part of a multi-million euro new civic centre accommodating the Courts Service, Udarás na Gaeltachta, Mayo County Council and an arts centre.

"The new surroundings are wonderful and no less than the people of Erris deserve", commented Judge Devins. Her comments were echoed by the local Bar Association, local Gardaí and court staff. "This is a most magnificent building", said solicitor Patrick Durcan. "The Courts Service and Mayo County Council are to be complimented for providing such fine facilities".



CRIMINAL COURTS COMPLEX COURTS SERVICE



Justice in the round

Work has commenced on the dedicated Criminal Courts Complex for Dublin. The complex is to be delivered by way of a Public Private Partnership with a consortium headed up by Babcock and Brown. This consortium's design,

delivery and ongoing management of our complex will see the Courts Service involved with them in a 28 year relationship. Construction costs will be €120 million. Work on the site and complex began recently and will take

34 months to complete, with plans to move business into the complex in the first quarter of 2010.

In this special supplement we look at the essential elements of the project, the design and construction of it and we report on the launch and presentation of the project.

Handing over the keys for the Complex site



Left to right: John Baker (Babcock & Brown), Peter McGovern (Architect, HJ Lyons Architects), Sam Lyons (HJ Lyons Architects), John Curtain (PJ Hegarty), Kevin O'Brien (PJ Hegarty), PJ Fitzpatrick (CEO, Courts Service), Brendan Ryan (Corporate Services Director, Courts Service), John Mahon (Project Manager, Courts Service), Cillian Smith (Estates & Buildings Unit, Courts Service)

Our “once in a century” courthouse

History and Modernity backdrop to launch

There will be “a great change in the axis of activity in our capital’s legal quarter”. So heard the audience at a ceremony held in the Four Courts, as they listened to the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice John L. Murray, officially launch the project to construct the €120 million, 25,000 sq metres, Dublin Criminal Courts Complex.



Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray

The Chief Justice said the complex will be the first State building of such monumental proportions to be built since 1922. “It is unique in design and concept providing facilities which will more than match those which one could find in any first world court complex. It is uniquely conceived to cater for the needs and organisation

of all those involved in the criminal trial process such as witnesses, jurors, victims or defendants. It will house all the state-of-the-art facilities and support services necessary to enable the judiciary to introduce improved case-management and more efficient listing of trials under one roof”.

As Chairperson of the Courts Service Board the Chief Justice thanked the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform for his assistance with the project – and he introduced an architectural presentation outlining the scope, design and details of the complex.

Attendance at the event included many members of the judiciary, representatives of the design team, financiers, builders and legal teams who successfully put together the winning proposal. The large number of national media present reported extensively on the project in the national media.

Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform Michael McDowell, T.D., said “the development of this new complex will have a major impact on the criminal justice system in terms of the more effective and efficient logistical operation of trials. The centralising of all criminal business in the new complex will also mean that this historic Four Courts building will be ‘freed’ up for civil business and will be the subject of a modernisation and redevelopment project of its own”.

He continued by praising the efforts and results of the Courts Service. He said “Not so long ago, many of our



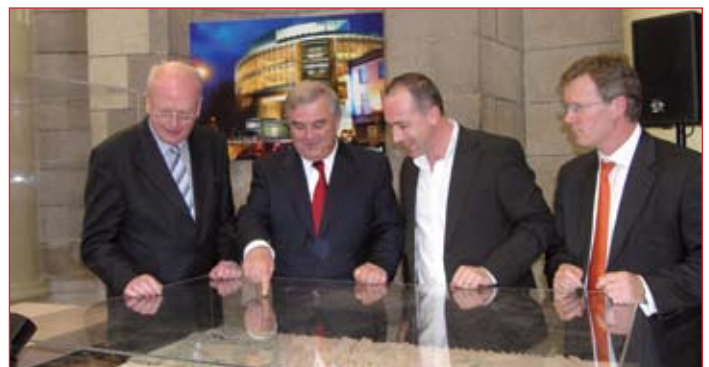
From Left to Right: Mary Feerick (Central Criminal Court Registrar), Bernadette Smith (Former Central Criminal Court Registrar), Sean Clerkin (Central Criminal Court Registrar).

courthouses provided their users with a dismal experience. In a relatively short space of time, the Service has undone much of the legacy of decades of neglect throughout the country”.

The pillars of the Round Hall acted as a historic frame to the modernity of the plasma screen presentation of the new vast 21st century complex. An audio-visual presentation of the design and position of the great new complex accompanied the speech of the designer Peter Mc Govern, from Henry J Lyons architects, who designed the building following an international competition. He spoke of the huge and daunting task of designing a building in the shadow of James Gandon and the Four Courts. Hugh Bradley of Babcock and Brown said how proud they were to have been awarded this contract and praised the young, local design team who had created a unique solution to meet the 21st century needs of our criminal courts.



Peter McGovern (Architect, HJ Lyons Architects) and Hugh Bradley (Developer, Babcock & Brown), Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform Mr. Michael McDowell T.D., Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray.



Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform Mr. Michael McDowell T.D., Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray, Peter McGovern (Architect, HJ Lyons Architects) and Hugh Bradley (Developer, Babcock & Brown) viewing the model of the Complex.



Need for a large, unique building in central location

Over the past number of years a major need has emerged for a dedicated Criminal Courts Complex for Dublin. The criminal courts across the city centre and the Four Courts complex have struggled to cope with the levels of business presenting itself. This project will provide a centralised facility to cater for all criminal court business in Dublin. Nearly 200,000 criminal matters are handled in Dublin each year. It will bring to the nation's capital the modern and world class facilities which have been provided in county towns around Ireland.

It is being developed on the western side of the city's 'Legal Quarter', close to current court buildings, the Luas line and Heuston station. The complex will house the Court of Criminal Appeal, Special Criminal Court, Central Criminal Court, the Circuit Criminal Court, the District Courts and associated facilities.

The site is on the corner of Parkgate Street and Infirmary Road, an important gateway to the city's civic and business area. The complex will

act as a punctuation mark joining the Phoenix Park and the urban landscape. Its position on Parkgate Street, a continuation of the city's quays, will follow the tradition of the provision of great public buildings along the Liffey or visible from the quays. This relationship with the river as a central vein of the city, and at the point of entry into the city centre, will ensure it will play a landmark and central role in city life and the cityscape.

Design highlights

The new complex is designed in an iconic format which will come to symbolise the modernity of our courts system – just as the Four Courts represents its great traditions. Its functionality will be of great use in the effective delivery of court services through the use of innovative design features.

The public plaza at the entrance to the complex signals and literally displays the accessibility of the courts – upon entrance the Great Hall is the living heart of the complex and will provide a very accessible and navigable access to the expanse and levels of the building. First time users will be aware of the important function of the courts as they enter the building but will easily navigate its public routes due to the accommodating design. The Great Hall is reminiscent of the Four Courts Round Hall but, at

twice its diameter, is more like Rome's Pantheon in terms of scale.

The use of indigenous and quality materials throughout the complex reflects the dignity and importance of the courts and will ensure the privacy and comfort of those who seek redress or have cause to appear before them. Light will be filtered into the courtrooms by means of an external bronze screen which will highlight the solid oak furniture and oak fittings.



Facilities

Entranced via a new public plaza, the Criminal Courts Complex will contain 22 courtrooms, which will be enabled for video-conferencing, digital recording, and electronic display of evidence.

Great public spaces, first class consultation rooms and waiting areas, modern and various sizes of courtrooms and facilities for jurors will be provided. Accommodation for witnesses, victims, relatives etc. will be greatly enhanced in terms of privacy, security and comfort. There will be dedicated facilities for legal practitioners and the media.

This complex will set a new standard for criminal justice facilities in Ireland, operating with a flexibility and security which provides security and accommodation for all court users.

It will provide for the separation, privacy, security and protection of different court users such as witnesses, jurors, and the judiciary.

Our team putting the final touches to historic contract

Courts Service CEO P.J. Fitzpatrick signing the contract for the Criminal Courts Complex as Director Brendan Ryan, Chairperson of the Project Board, and John Mahon, Project Manager keep a watching brief while Clare Lenny of McCann Fitzgerald ensures the legalities are in order. Mr. Fitzpatrick, who has had a long career as a public service leader, said that it was the biggest contract he had ever signed.



Building Facts

The Criminal Courts Complex will:

- be an 11 storey building, approx 25,000m² of floor area
- have over 450 rooms including 22 courts
- occupy a site area of almost 2.5 acres
- incorporate approx 25,000 cubic meters of concrete
- have a diameter of 75m
- house a 'Great Hall' of 40m in diameter
- be clad with 12,000m² of glazing
- have 250 stair flights and 27 Lifts

The project to be completed in approx 34 months with a peak labour force of 300 people.

Major midlands Courthouse opens in Tullamore – following €14 million refurbishment

A great sense of both occasion and celebration filled the air as the Garda Band led the way for the Garda Mounted Unit and a guard of honour. The music continued as the gathered guests awaited the ceremony to open the newly refurbished Tullamore courthouse. It continued as the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform inspected the guard of honour – the second such inspection the line up of Garda had received that day – as our pictures show. It concluded with a fanfare for the cutting of the ribbon – an act jointly conducted by the Minister and the President of the Circuit Court, Mr. Justice Matthew Deery.

Other members of the official party were Circuit Judge Anthony Kennedy, Minister for Finance Mr. Brian Cowen T.D. and Minister for the Office of Public Works Mr. Tom Parlon T.D.

President Deery in outlining the major modernisation aspects of the project welcomed the fact that the “inherent character, quality and presence of the existing building has been respected and retained. Considerable care and attention was taken to conserve the existing fabric including stonework, timber windows and doors”.

Minister McDowell was congratulatory in his speech not just for the success of this project but for the ongoing efforts of the Courts Service in improving the experience of people who need to use our courts through world quality buildings and organisational changes and improvements.

Designing a future for an old courthouse

The inherent character, quality and presence of the existing building has been respected and retained. The new parts of the building have been designed to reflect the contemporary image of a modern Courts Service. The new building element is separated from the existing building by glass bridges and shows a clear distinction between old and new. All of the building's mechanical and electrical services have been completely upgraded. The Grand Jury Room in the original 1832–1835 building has been re-instated.

Historical Background

The recently completed works represent the third major building project at the courthouse. A competition for a new courthouse held in 1832 was won by John Benjamin Keane architect. The courthouse was opened in 1835. The first meeting of ‘Kings County’ Council

was held in the building in 1899. Kings County Council changed its name to Offaly County Council in June 1920. The building was burned to its masonry shell in July 1922.

Refurbishment works were undertaken in 1925–1927. The architect for these works was T. F. McNamara. These works substantially altered the original building. The building was shared by the Courts and the County Council until 2002 when Offaly County Council moved to new offices nearby.

Art

The Courts Service intends that courthouses and public spaces should not only be accessible, practical and excellent in terms of providing for the accommodation of their users: they need to be more than utilitarian. Around the courthouse there are several art depictions and outside is situated a modern depiction of ‘Justice’ by the artist Michael Burke.



Tánaiste and Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform Mr. Michael McDowell T.D., cutting the ribbon with Minister for Finance Brian Cowen T.D., Mr. Justice Matthew Deery, President of the Circuit Court.



The first inspection of the day of the guard of honour!



Tullamore Courthouse

New Facilities

The new building provides significantly more accommodation and facilities than were available in the old building and allows for universal access. The accommodation includes:

- Three courtrooms equipped with the latest technology
- judges' chambers
- office accommodation – Circuit Court Office, District Court Office, Regional Office
- a jury suite
- a family law suite
- a victim support suite
- a video evidence suite
- 12 consultation/waiting rooms
- a media room and probation office
- facilities for An Garda Síochána and the Prison Service
- prisoner accommodation including six cells and a secure interview room
- accommodation for legal practitioners



Minister McDowell inspects the guard of honour



The top table



Left to right: Sean Benton (Director, OPW), Minister for Finance, Mr. Brian Cowen, T.D. and Mr. PJ Fitzpatrick (CEO Courts Service) at the opening



Inside the Courthouse



Dignitaries on the steps of the Courthouse

Talking to court users... always a good thing

The Annual Central Customer Forum was convened recently. Almost 40 representatives of organisations with whom the Courts Service interacts turned up as the convener of the event, Nuala McLoughlin, Director of Operations, Supreme and High Court, tell us:



Nuala McLoughlin, Director of Operations, Supreme and High Court

We aim to operate in partnership with other organisations in the justice sector and those representing various court users to ensure that both criminal and civil business is processed professionally and without delay. One of the initiatives we adopt to assist in this regard is the establishment of the Central Customer Forum.

The 3rd annual meeting of the Forum was held in the Park Inn, Smithfield recently. The attendance ranged from the Court Support Service which provides a court accompaniment service for the victims of crime and their families, to the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement.

The CEO, Mr P.J. Fitzpatrick, addressed the guests who then received up-dates on a number of our key projects which will impact on customers and customer service.

Shay Kirk outlined the **Courts Service Building Programme** which in 2007 will focus on courthouse refurbishments in Monaghan, Kilkenny, Wicklow and Mullingar and new facilities for the growing population centres of Blanchardstown, Maynooth, Swords and Tallaght. A key feature of all new and refurbished court facilities is the provision of consultation rooms, victim support facilities and state of the art in-court technology. Shay also described the new Criminal Courts Complex, which is now under construction at a site on the corner of Infirmary Road and Parkgate Street and will provide 22 Courtrooms and all the necessary ancillary facilities.

Helen Priestley outlined our approach to the **provision of information on the courts system** which is one of the Courts Service's statutory mandates. Helen demonstrated some of the features of the website, and described the Courts Service publications and the outreach programme for community groups.

In the same vein, Angela Denning spoke of the soon to be launched **online search facility** for the High Court case tracking system. This new facility will allow for easy access to the read-only tracking system which is already successfully used by a large number of our customers. The on-line search facility will have built-in help for users. It will also provide for advanced searches, and it will be easier to use

than the existing search facility.

Michael Byrne's presentation was on the **Small Claims online**, which was launched on a pilot basis in 16 District Court offices in November 2006. Michael explained how small claims can now be made on line, in English or in Irish. In the first three months of the pilot, 40% of new claims were made using the on-line system which will shortly be available nationwide.

The final presentation was from Shay Keary on the new **Courts Accounting System**. The pilot phase of this system will allow customers to make fines and Poor Box payments for selected offices to the Courts Central Accounts Office. There are many benefits of this system for customers who will, for example, no longer have to call to the Fines Office for a refund of cash bail. Where bail is entered into on or after 2nd April, the refund cheque will be automatically sent out by the Courts Central Accounts Office, and details of the new arrangements are printed on the back of the new bail bonds for ease of customers.

There was a lively open forum for questions and answers from the floor following the presentations. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our customers in making these meetings meaningful.



Delegates at registration.



Delegates at the forum.

All rise for the lawyers of tomorrow



These are the excited faces of Ann O'Donovan and Aibhlín O'Leary, from Coláiste na Toirbhirte, Bandon in County Cork the winner of the 2007 Mock Trial competition.



The team from Presentation College Athenry, Runner up in the 2007 Mock Trial competition, have a consultation during the trial.



A "line-up" of students involved in Mock Trials.



Participants in Mock Trials semi-finals are ready for take off.

Making sense of Procurement

John Cleere of our Finance Directorate outlines the new Procurement Policy and User Guidelines recently produced for Courts Service staff.

The Courts Service has a budget of €131m for 2007. A significant element, approximately €70m, relates to the procurement of goods and services from third parties. With potential expenditure of this magnitude it is essential the Courts Service, as an independent State Agency governed by public law, demonstrates compliance with EU procurement directives and Government guidelines, together with the application of best practice in the area of procurement.

Since our previous policy document in this area was published there have been a number of changes. For example EU Directives and National Regulations have been updated, and we are now using Public Private Partnerships as a means of implementing elements of our capital building programme. These, together with the ongoing need to foster best practice and achieve value for money, have necessitated the updating of our procurement policy.

To this end revised Procurement Policy and User Guidelines were published

recently. They update and replace our previous procurement guidelines. They have been prepared to ensure that all Courts Service procurement activity meets the objectives and key principles of competitive process, equal treatment, transparency, non-discrimination and proportionality which underpin the national and EU rules and require to be observed when conducting a procurement exercise.

To support the use of the policy and the promotion of procurement generally training was conducted in conjunction with Achilles Procurement Service Ltd, specialists in public procurement.



Staff at a recent training course



Three separate training sessions were held during March and April with additional training being organised as required later in the year. Feedback from participants has been very positive and has broadened the awareness of procurement within the Service.

The procurement policy and relevant templates are all available on the Courts Information site. If you have any queries in relation to procurement please consult the Procurement Policy and User Guidelines in the first instance. For further assistance contact either John Cleere on 01-888 6054 or John Mahon on 01-888 6593.

Do us a favour and complete our survey – go on, go on, go on...

We got a healthy response to our survey in our March issue. We'd love some more forms this time. Help us out and we'll enter you in a draw for a special prize:

1. Please indicate which Readership Category that you belong to:

☐ Staff Member

☐ Solicitor

☐ Barrister

☐ Other (please specify):

2. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about *Courts Service News*:

	Strongly agree	agree	disagree
(i) 'It has improved communication between the Service and its staff and users'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) 'It is informative and interesting'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) 'It is well laid out and attractive to look at'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) 'It keeps me updated on developments in the Courts Service'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) 'There is a good balance between heavier and lighter material'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please indicate which of the following articles/ features that you read:

	Almost always	occasionally	rarely	never
(i) Staff News (e.g.: appointments, retirements,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(ii) Organisational Articles (e.g.: I.T. , Training,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iii) Courthouse Buildings (e.g.: History, modernisation,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(iv) Wider Public Service Developments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(v) Features (e.g.: Interviews, around the world,...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(vi) Social and Personal (including Competitions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What would you like to see more of?

.....

5. What would you like to see less of?

.....

6. Please suggest some topics that you would like to see an article about in *Courts Service News*:

.....

7. Overall how would you rate the *Courts Service News*?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very Good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor



Thank you for completing this survey. Please detach (or photocopy if you do not wish to damage your Newsletter) and return to: Courts Service News, (Reader Survey), The Courts Service Information Office, Phoenix House, Smithfield, Dublin 7. Or email your replies using the question numbers to provide your answers to: co'leary@courts.ie

European Court of Justice visits Ireland

Following 34 years of European Union membership Ireland has received its first ever official visit of the European Court of Justice. Gerry Curran tells us about this historic occasion:



Members of the European Court of Justice with members of the Irish Judiciary in Farmleigh.

The mid May visit was hosted by the Chief Justice Mr. Justice John L. Murray and involved the European judges in many meetings, seminars and events – in venues such as Dail Eireann, Iveagh House and Farmleigh.

A hectic business schedule was adhered to and included a meeting with the Chief Justice and members of the Superior Courts, where a paper was given on the topic of “Remedies available to the individual in Irish law against the State and state agencies”, by Mr. Justice Hugh Geoghegan. Judge Jean Claude Bonichot, European Court of Justice, (ECJ) spoke to the title “State liability including liability for damages arising under EU law for non-implementation of directives”.

Other papers included “The scope of the duty not to apply national law which is

in conflict with EU law” delivered by Judge Thomas von Danwitz, ECJ and “The scope of the duty of national courts to make a reference pursuant to Article 234 and the implications for such courts of restrictions on that duty under the Treaty of the European Union” prepared and spoken to by

Advocate General Eleanor Sharpston, ECJ.

Part of the visit included the presence of the Lord Chief Justice and senior judges from Northern Ireland.

The highlight of the diplomatic and social aspect of the visit was dinner in Áras an Uachtaráin, hosted by her Excellency the President of Ireland Mrs. Mary McAlesse. The Cean Comhairle Dr. Rory O’Hanlon also hosted a lunch in Iveagh House.

The tight and full schedule was remarked upon as being extremely well organised and this major international event was praised by the participants for the manner it was professionally managed by the Judicial Support Unit of the Courts Service.



Judge Pernilla Lindh (left) and Mrs. Justice Mary Finlay-Geoghegan

Remembering Sean Browne



Sean was the Chief Clerk in Doire an Fhéich District Court for the six years before his death. Before that he worked in Galway Circuit Court, Tuam District Court, taking up duty as Chief Clerk in Ballinasloe District Court, before taking up duty in Doire an Fhéich.

In Doire an Fhéich Sean took over responsibility following the death of his renowned colleague Paddy Carty. He faced an enormous challenge which he overcame with style and skill. He

commenced his Irish Diploma to further improve his fluency in our native tongue and set about meeting the various court users in the clerkship. He quickly established a great rapport with all. His active interest in all things legal established him as a font of knowledge in the area.

Doire an Fhéich can be a tough assignment as there are long days on your own away at outside courts. Sean however was ably assisted in his task by both Roisin Uí Neachtain and Mary Corduff. Both worked with Sean to ensure that Doire an Fhéich provided a first class service to its users. Roisin and Mary together worked very hard to maintain this service while Sean was ill.

Sean had a great love for IT and modern technology. Indeed he represented the region on Criminal Case Management System users committee before he became ill. Frequently on visiting Doire an Fhéich Sean would have fresh ideas on improving our service and also advice on how to get

better value from IT packages.

Sean's family were a constant source of pride and inspiration to him and music was very much part of the household. I remember him at a Mass for deceased members of the legal profession and Courts Service, introducing with pride his son Brendan who was beginning to 'devil'. He spoke frequently and almost enviously of his daughter Maureen who was travelling the world with a prominent Irish dance troupe.

There was a huge gathering both at the removal and burial. On both occasions his colleagues marked their respects by forming a guard of honour to accompany Sean.

To Noreina, Brendan and Maureen, we extend our deepest sympathies.

May he rest in peace

Brendan McDonald

Sadness at the passing of Eugene Green



Eugene Green who worked in the Four Courts with Judge Carroll, Judge Barr and Judge Barrington for many years passed away on the 14th March this year.

Four Courts Hall Porter, Tommy Barnes remembers Eugene as a gentleman's gentleman. "Everyone who came in contact with him always had a kind word to say about him". Before joining the Courts Service Eugene worked in England and around Dublin. The fact that he worked with three judges is a testament to his ability and affability. Eugene retired from the Courts Service

in July 1999. His retired life was equally as full as his working one. He was heavily involved in coaching at St. Anthony's Boys Football club in Kilcoole. He passed away peacefully in his sleep after a long illness in St. Michael's hospital, Dun Laoghaire.

Eugene will be greatly missed by his friends in the Courts Service especially Tommy Barnes and Josie Kehoe. We extend our sympathy to Eugene's wife, Paddy and his family.

May he Rest in Peace.

Copies of Courts Service News

If you would like to receive additional copies of *Courts Service News* or any Courts Service publications, you can contact **Catherine O'Leary** in the Information Office at the following number:

01-888 6459

or you can write to:

**Courts Service,
Information Office,
15-24 Phoenix Street North,
Smithfield, Dublin 7**

or email:

publicationsunit@courts.ie





Mr. Justice John Hedigan, High Court



Mr. Justice Bryan McMahon, High Court



Mr. Justice Garrett Sheehan, High Court



Mr. Justice George M. Birmingham, High Court



Ms. Justice Mary C. Irvine, High Court



Mr. Justice John A. Edwards, High Court



Mr. Justice Patrick J. McCarthy, High Court



Judge Petria McDonnell and Judge Gerard Griffin, Circuit Court



Left to right: Judge Rory P. McCabe, Judge Anthony G. Hunt, Judge Martin E. Nolan, Circuit Court



Judge Anthony J. Halpin, District Court



Judge John Lindsay, District Court



Judge Eamon O'Brien, District Court



Judge David McHugh, District Court



Judge Denis McLoughlin, District Court



Judge Elizabeth MacGrath, District Court

New County Registrar for Galway

Marian Chambers-Higgins has been appointed as County Registrar for Galway. Marian is a Batchelor of Civil Law and also has the Law Society of Ireland's Solicitors Professional Course qualifications. Prior to her appointment as County Registrar, Marian was a Solicitor for 27 years.

Marian's interests include reading, hill walking, swimming, horseriding and promoting youth activities. She is involved as a coach and fundraiser for Ladies GAA and as an organiser and team manager for both local and national Community Games. Within the last year she took part in a fundraising

trek in Peru in aid of Concern. The trek lasted 10 days and she raised €15,000 for the organisation. Marian felt that "It was a tremendous experience and a great leveller to see everyone covered from head to toe in mud"

New Northern Regional Manager



Paula Lyons recently joined the Courts Service as Northern Regional Manager. Paula previously worked in the Department of Social and Family Affairs. She is married and has two children aged six and nine as well as a dog, a cat and a pony called "Popcorn" – handy for negotiating the roads of Cavan and Monaghan! Paula's hobbies include swimming, dog walking and horseriding.

Paula says "I am really looking forward to my new post as Regional Manager for the Northern Region and to working with all the staff involved in the Service. Everyone that I have been in contact with so far in the Courts Service has been exceptionally friendly and helpful, especially the outgoing incumbent here in Monaghan, Olive Caulfield".

New Chief Clerk Cork Circuit Court



Mary Crowley has been appointed Chief Clerk in the Circuit Court in Cork. Mary has had a varied career in the Courts Service, having worked in the Central Office of the High Court, the Finance Directorate (including in the Accountants Office) and more recently in the Circuit and District Court Directorate.

Project Manager, Criminal Courts Complex



Olive Caulfield has been appointed as Project Manager in the office established to oversee the Unified Criminal Courts Complex project in Dublin. Until recently, Olive worked as Northern Regional Manager based in Monaghan. Prior to that, she worked in the Reform and Development Directorate, was Deputy Chief Clerk in Cloverhill Courthouse and worked in a number of offices within the Dublin Metropolitan District. She also acted as Secretary to the District Court Rules Committee.

David is new Bankruptcy Inspector



David O'Carroll has recently been appointed as Bankruptcy Inspector in the Office of the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy. David spent 36 years as a member of An Garda Síochána during which time he was stationed in Dublin and around the country including a stint on the border in the village of Blacklion, Co. Cavan. Following his retirement David acted as crier to the President of

the Circuit Court, Mr. Justice Esmond Smyth between 2002 and 2004.

"It's great to be back in the courts", David told us. "I'm enjoying the new job. It's a fresh and interesting challenge for me. I've been made very welcome in the Official Assignee's Office. There's great staff and a great atmosphere here".

New District Court Chief Clerks

Dundalk District Court



Brendan Cleary is set to return to Dundalk District Court as Chief Clerk having spent the past five years as Chief Clerk in Monaghan. No stranger to Dundalk having been born and reared there, Brendan served a ten year stint in Dundalk District Court office

between 1980 and 1990. Since then he has been in the Circuit Court in Dublin, the Circuit Court in Cavan, the Central Criminal Court and the Human Resources Directorate. Brendan said he was "looking forward to going back to the old sod".

Monaghan District Court



Bernadette Smith has been appointed as Chief Clerk in Monaghan District Court. She has been a Registrar in the Central Criminal Court for the last 4 years, having previously worked in both Cavan and Monaghan Circuit Court offices.

Bernadette recently received a Diploma in Professional Legal Studies from Griffith College, Dublin.

Doire an Fhéich District Court



Michael Considine has been appointed as Chief Clerk in Doire an Fhéich District Court. Michael has previously worked in Wexford and Gorey District Court offices and more recently served in the Circuit Court in Dublin. He worked in Bray prior to taking up this post. Michael is also a qualified solicitor and worked for a time with the Legal Aid Board.

Swords District Court

After tours of duty in the Finance Directorate and the Accountant's Office, Dermot O'Byrne took up duty as Chief Clerk in Swords District Court Office on the 14th of May. He replaces Mary Bennett who is decentralising to Navan with the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform.

news

Courts Central Accounting System goes to Sligo

Following a successful piloting exercise with selected offices in Dublin the Courts Accounting System with a link to the new Courts Central Accounts Office (CCAO) was deployed in Sligo District Court office as part of a pilot exercise recently. Fines, poor box payments, bail and family law maintenance payments

will be processed using the new system. Payments will be receipted in Sligo and the cheques issued from the CCAO in Dublin.

Family law clients in Sligo can also opt to have payments paid directly to their bank accounts using electronic

funds transfer. "The response to date has been very positive", says Shay. "40 people (over 30% of those who were offered the option) expressed an interest in availing of this facility following the first communication from the court office".

We'll have a further update in our next issue.



Pictured following the recent deployment of the Courts Accounting System and new payments processing arrangements in Sligo District Court Office are: (extreme left) Sean Quigley (Director of Finance), (extreme right) Shay Keary (Project Manager Courts Accounting System) and Sligo District Court Staff.

Wishing Marian the best of luck

Marian Quinn of Cork Circuit Court Office retired recently. Marian's career started in Dublin in 1973. She moved from there to Waterford, Buncrana, Cork District Court and Cork Circuit Court. Throughout her career Marian's work was characterised by courtesy and professionalism in her contact with all court users. At her retirement function the very large gathering included judges, courts' staff and many former

colleagues who travelled long distances to be with her on her special evening. There was a large representation of solicitors, barristers, Gardaí, Probation Service and representatives of many different groups including Victim Support and the Rape Crisis Centre.

Her husband Joe and family were on hand to hear County Registrar Deirdre O'Mahony refer to Marian's helpfulness



Deirdre O'Mahony (County Registrar) & Marian Quinn.

and courtesy, unfailing kindness and understanding. Deirdre remembered the Trojan work Marian had undertaken over the years in many parts of the courts and remembered the enthusiasm she instilled in all. She had embraced "IT" long before "IT" became a general courts policy. Marian was respected both for her expertise and especially for her kind and compassionate nature.

Marian thanked everybody for their generous tributes, acknowledged the efforts of the party organisers on the day and promised she would keep in touch.

We wish her all the best for her retirement.



Back Row: L-R Margaret O'Halloran, Paddy Whelan, Martin O'Donovan, Helen Smith, Sinead O'Brien, Kevin Cahill, Anne Kissane, Helen Linehan, Richard O'Connor, Claire Donegan, Maurice McCarthy (all Cork Circuit Court) & Dermot O'Connell (Probation & Welfare Service); Front Row: L-R Hazel McCarthy (Circuit Court), Joe Quinn (Marian's Husband), Deirdre O'Mahony (County Registrar), Marian Quinn, John Quinn (Marian's Son).

Michael Bolton retires as Bankruptcy Inspector



Michael (pictured) with his wife Helen and former colleagues

Staff, former and present, of the Official Assignee's Office together with colleagues from other offices, assembled in Phoenix House to pay tribute to Michael Bolton on his recent retirement. This was his second retirement, having retired eight years previously from a distinguished career with the Garda Síochána, latterly in the Fraud Investigation Bureau. Former Official Assignee, Noel Rubotham, thanked Michael for his great assistance to him in discharging the duties of the office which by its nature involved dealing with people at a vulnerable time. The present Official Assignee, Tom Tynan, praised Michael for the experience and

knowledge which Michael shared with him, not to mention the friendship which has developed between them. Andy Smyth, solicitor, paid tribute on behalf of the legal practitioners who practised in the bankruptcy field and emphasised the humane manner in which Michael performed his duties, never forgetting that the personal nature of bankruptcy made it a difficult situation for the bankrupt, his or her family and creditors. Andy, being aware of Michael's golfing prowess, was also somewhat concerned that Michael would now be in a position to play a long awaited golf match with him.

Michael responded in typical fashion, thanking each person individually for their assistance to him over the past eight years and paying tribute to the organisers of the retirement party. Geraldine Hurley, Deputy Official Assignee, performed the duties of MC, paid

her own tribute to Michael, and with Tom Tynan made the presentation of a number of gifts. Also in attendance were Pat Stephenson, Court Auctioneer, and Bill Holohan, solicitor.

We know that Michael will have plenty to occupy him in his retirement with the competing demands of grandchildren, his DIY expertise, his golf and his bridge. I think the Mediterranean cruise is on hold. We wish Michael and his wife Helen, every happiness in the future and Michael, don't be a stranger.

Noel A. Doherty

Farewell to Vincent Coleman



Left to Right: Tommy Barnes (Hall Porter), Richie Corcoran (Service Officer), Eugene Lynch (Head Service Officer), Vincent Coleman, Johnny Dylan (Service Officer), Peter McGuigan (Tipstaff), Tom Dwyer (Service Officer), Dan Boland (Service Officer).

Eugene Lynch spoke to us about Vincent Coleman who retired from the Courts Service recently. "Vincent worked for twenty years and five months in the

courts under different guises", Eugene recalls. "He worked for many years with Judge Spain in the Circuit Court. It was in this role that he travelled around

the country meeting the various Circuit Court staff. Before joining the courts, Vincent had a chequered career. He worked in the Merchant Navy and in many of the pubs around Dublin". It was working in the Merchant Navy that made Vincent a precise time keeper. "You could set your watch by him", Eugene says. "Vincent would be at the Four Courts gates at precisely 6 o'clock every morning and even on some bank holidays! He was a very reliable worker and did any job he was given well."

Courts Service News would like to wish Vincent a very long and happy retirement.

visitors

Magistrates say thanks for a visit well done



A group of 24 Magistrates from England and Wales recently visited Dublin. Tour leader Matt Preston, JP, tells us more about their work and what they learnt from their visit



Magistrates from England and Wales on their recent visit to the Courts Service.

Comprising Magistrates and Witness Support Service volunteers from five courts in South West London area, our group represented some of the busiest benches in England.

Many of you will know that English Magistrates are lay volunteers. There are over 30,000 Justices adjudicating in about 450 courts in England and Wales. We also sit alongside around 300 professional Magistrates (called District Judges) who tend to be used in longer cases. As the lower criminal court, we fulfil a similar role to your District Courts, although we noted that your judges had wider sentencing powers. Spending the first half of our week in Dublin, our goal was to compare and

contrast the criminal justice system in the Republic of Ireland with our own, before taking the opportunity to travel north to observe proceedings in Belfast. Northern Ireland also has a legal system and judicial organisation that differs slightly from ours.

Our interest in your work was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the tour was self-funded and undertaken in addition to our judicial duties and employment or business commitments. In this regard, we were amply rewarded by the wealth of information we gained from visits to the Courts, Probation, Gardaí and Prison Services. It was fascinating to discover more about the challenges you face – many with a

familiar ring – and your achievements in delivering a professional service to meet the needs of your community. I particularly enjoyed seeing how you had integrated your court services as we have only just started this process. It seems that change is a constant factor in any jurisdiction!

Overall, we were enormously impressed by the warmth of the welcome we received and the amount of preparation and effort put into accommodating our interests. Even the weather was kind to us and I think we'll remember your wonderful hospitality for a long time to come.

Visitors from Family Law Court of Australia



Left to right: Diarmaid MacDiarmada (Director of Operations, Circuit and District Court), PJ Fitzpatrick (CEO, Courts Service), Richard Foster (CEO, Family Court of Australia), the Hon. Diana Bryant (Chief Justice, Family Law Court of Australia), Carol Coulter (Family Law Reporter), Angela Filippello (Principal Registrar, Family Court of Australia), Noel Rubotham (Director of Reform and Development)



PJ Fitzpatrick (CEO, Courts Service) making a presentation to the Hon. Diana Bryant (Chief Justice, Family Law Court of Australia)



Finland



Noel Rubotham (Director of Reform and Development) and Noel A. Doherty (Reform and Development Directorate) giving a presentation on "an outline of Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction and Procedure in Ireland" to our visiting judges from Finland.

Norway



Michael Byrne (ICT Directorate), Diarmaid MacDiarmada (Director of Operations, Circuit and District Court) and Mary Crowley (formerly Circuit and District Court Operations Directorate) explaining the *Small Claims Online* system to Norwegian judges.

Outreach programme goes from Strength to Strength

Following another busy few weeks, Courts Service News caught up with the outreach co-ordinator Teresa Brophy and asked her about the visits that took place in April and May.

Foroige Youth Group



The Foroige youth group from Newbridge with their leader, Noreen Maye, were given a unique insight into life within a courtroom from both the point of view of court staff and also for accused persons when they visited the Four Courts and the Bridewell District Court recently.

Netherlands Law and ICT Students



Students of Law and Information Communications Technology in the Rijks University of Groningen in the Netherlands agreed that their visit with the Courts Service was an "outstanding success". The group of ten was given a talk on the Commercial Court by High Court Registrar Angela Denning and Michael Byrne of the ICT Directorate. They were especially interested to hear about the recently piloted *Small Claims Online* Project. The group also had the opportunity to view cases being heard in the Bridewell District Court and the High Court.

Active retired group, Virginia, Co. Cavan



Probate got the thumbs up from active retired groups from Virginia in Cavan and Clara in Offaly. The groups, numbering fifty, were given talks by Probate Officer Annette O'Connell and Edel Thompson from the Probate Office and had lots of questions for both Edel and Annette on making personal applications for probate.

In the Four Courts Mr. Justice Paul Carney spoke to the groups about criminal proceedings in Ireland and even fielded questions from his enthusiastic audience. Concluding the day one lady from Clara said "it was the best day out our group ever had".

Thanks to Heather and Leah from Mount Anville Secondary School for their great assistance to Teresa on the day.

Active retired group, Clara, Co. Offaly



Information on outreach programme

The programme takes a break for the summer months but it will be back up and running in October. For further details contact Teresa Brophy on 01-888-6463 or tbrophy@courts.ie.

Meeting old friends at a “Summer Evening in Smithfield”

“Another great success” is how one of the attendees described the event. Calls were received from people thanking Teresa Brophy and her crew for a most enjoyable night. People travelled from as far afield as England to attend the occasion.

“What you might ask was this exciting event that may have slipped from my social diary?”. It was none other than the sixth annual Summer Evening in Smithfield. Guests were treated to fine wine accompanied by fine music courtesy of The Courts Service Choir, under the baton of Owen C. Lynch. Owen even sang a song of his own and followed with a violin instrumental piece played by Owen and Ann Cullen.

The Summer Evening is an opportunity for retired judges and staff members to meet up with old friends and, in some cases, to make new friends. Current members of staff can take time-out to catch up with their former colleagues over a sandwich and cup of tea or a glass of wine. It's an opportunity to reminisce about times past and the fun that was had during working days. Others can share stories about all that has happened in the year since they last met. Others are here for the first time. But all are agreed that the Summer Evening is great fun. Roll on next year!



Susan and Dermot Farrelly enjoying their night.



Liam Bates and Benny O'Sullivan (Examiners Office)



From left to Right: Bridget McArdle, Magdalen McGonigle, Margaret Murphy and Myra Cunningham catch up



From left to Right: Eileen Collins, Helen Waldron, Tony Behan, Phyllis O'Donoghue, Kevin Waldron, Chris Lehane (Probate Office), Sean O'Broin (Internal Audit).

The next date for the diaries is the annual Mass for deceased members of the judiciary and staff in November. If you are a retired judge or staff member (or know a retired judge or staff member) and would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Catherine O'Leary at (01) 8886459 or Information Office, Phoenix House, 15/24 Phoenix Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7. You can email: co'leary@courts.ie

The signs are good for

ZODIAC

Director David Fincher finally ends his five year hiatus with a new masterwork in his take on the American Zodiac murder case. In *Zodiac*, Fincher still clings to his dark, thrilling roots, yet expands his horizons in presenting the majority of the film from the perspective of a newspaper room.

Unlike his previous notable works, (*Se7en*, *Fight Club*, *Panic Room*) Fincher is not trying to be overly flaunting with the camera. Instead, he focuses on the details. From the opening vintage Universal and Warner Brothers logos to the pens the characters use, we are completely thrown into the '60s-'70s time period that *Zodiac* predominantly encompasses. The film nails the mood and details of turn of the decade 1970's San Francisco with cunning accuracy. Right down to the ads on the radio and the various TV personalities.

Throughout the film, we are introduced to four major characters who become obsessed with the Zodiac killer, one of whom ends up devoting all of his time to the case, neglecting his family in the process and potentially risking his life to identify the murderer. This character, Robert Graysmith, the writer of the book the film is based on, is played neurotically by Jake Gyllenhaal. Robert Downey Jr. shows that he's still one of Hollywood's top actors in his dry, witty, self-destructive portrayal of reporter

Paul Avery. Anthony Edwards plays William Armstrong, a detective partnered to Mark Ruffalo's David Toschi.

One thing about this film is that it is not your typical serial killer thriller. Nothing like *Se7en*, so don't go with that expectation. This is a film with facts, a film that educates as well as entertains. One thing this movie did was keep me and most of the people in the theatre glued to the screen. Fincher's style is mesmerizing, something that grabs your attention above all else.

The movie takes place across a span of about 20 or so years, jumping forward as new evidence emerges. It's based quite faithfully on the real Zodiac killings and the investigations that followed.

At nearly 3 hours this film is long – but that is my only complaint. The obsessive second half really has some



chilling moments and I didn't feel it dragged.

We will never know exactly who the Zodiac was/is. This is one true psycho that beat the system.

Ronan Power

book review

Minor Offences

As we, unfortunately, have become familiar with the sight of young people appearing on the most serious of charges – indeed some of the biggest crime stories to have emerged in recent years have involved young people – we tend to forget just how young some of these children are.

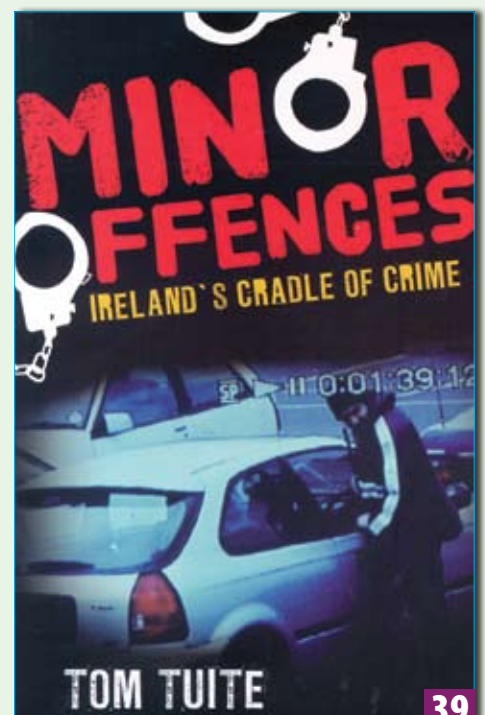
Teenagers involved in killing Gardaí by the act of joyriding, being involved in rape and gang assaults, going on campaigns of illegality and being so vulnerable that 13 year olds are prostituted – one even by her mother.

This new book gives a snapshot of the teenagers who spend more time in the courtroom than the classroom – where the experience of the Children Court is seen as a rite of passage and the likelihood of an ASBO a potential badge of honour.

Minor Offences explores the tragic litany of hurt, crime and degradation which blights the lives of our damaged children and those they are a nuisance to.

Authored by Tom Tuite, who works full-time in covering the Children Court for the national press, this Gill and Macmillan book is one not just for the research shelf but for a challenging read and for a real understanding of the experience of the children the courts try to deal with.

Gerry Curran



Iceland... looking for a cool place to visit?!

OK so the sun wasn't splitting the stones and maybe it is very expensive. But Iceland has a lot to offer as Mary Murphy of the Official Assignee's Office (and until recently the Deputy Editor of Courts Service News) recently found out.

The time of year can make an awful lot of difference, such as Paris in the springtime, or the Scottish highlands in the autumn and so on. Iceland in March doesn't really have the same ring to it, which is why a lot of our recent trip there was spent admiring stunning scenery... in our guidebook.

In typical Icelandic fashion, we arrived to freezing winds, lashing sleet and plunging temperatures. We woke to snowy cityscape and drove southwest past the capital's uninspiring suburbs to its striking volcanic landscape. Our first stop was Pingvellir national park, location of Iceland's historic Viking assembly, before stopping for a look at the spectacular Gullfoss where a river tumbles 100 feet down a ravine with a deafening roar. The end of the road (literally!) on this trip was also the best part – Geyser – the place which gave the phenomenon its name, to watch boiling water spring 66 feet into the air from the ground every five minutes or so. This was incredible to watch if a bit smelly – sulphuric fumes are a small price to pay for unlimited hot water.

The 'Blue Lagoon', is an artificial by product of a nearby geothermal station. Here's the science bit... water is run off from a nearby power station which pumps it 2 kms from under the earth's surface at a temperature of 240° C. The water then passes through a process where the hot water is used to generate electricity and heat fresh water. Essentially, it's like taking a nice hot bath outside surrounded by the surreal and snowy volcanic landscape. The water contains minerals, which promise to help skin conditions but obviously, the main thrill is being outside in your swimming gear in snowy weather, albeit in hot water. Unsurprisingly, the short walk from the changing room to the pool is a lot harder than the return



Useful info

It's not currently possible to fly direct from Dublin to Reykjavik. Instead, we flew to Stansted and then got a flight from there to Reykjavik with Iceland Express. We then flew north to Akureyri with Icelandair. Car and jeep hire is cheaper (albeit more exciting/dangerous!) than organized trips. For more information have a look at: <http://www.visiticeland.com>

trip when you're slightly poached from the warm water.

The snowy conditions in Lake Myvatn, even by Iceland's standards, made us feel like frontiersmen negotiating hostile terrain. A blizzard (by our wimpy Irish standards) the next day, meant we had to revise our plans to explore the area but on our last day, we did manage to get as far north as Husavik, 20 miles from the Arctic Circle.

Our last night by Lake Myvatn turned out to be our only chance to see the lights. We sped off into the frosty night where our first, none too obvious stop, was another lagoon and back

into the swimming gear again. From what our guide told us, Icelandic families head off to lagoons about as regularly as, well, Irish people go the pub! This lagoon was even more spectacular than the Blue Lagoon because of the almost complete darkness and starry skies. It was all very idyllic until the moisture on my hair froze, leaving me completely 'grey haired' with my eyelashes frozen solid... I found out later that it was minus 16!

Later that night we valiantly peered through the icy windows with our guide trying to spot the lights. He even phoned his granny along the way to check if any lights were visible where she lived. After 40 minutes or so, we stopped, got out and amazingly, did see some very pale green movement in the night sky. Success at last!

Iceland is an amazing country – in particular, it's a geography enthusiast's dream with virtually every vista recalling long ago school classes. The scenery, even covered in snow, is stunning; its relative 'youth' in geographic terms giving it a strange almost moon like quality. Although we only spent a short amount of time in Reykjavik, it's a pretty and eccentric capital city in a Northern Exposure or The Shipping News way with picturesque squares, a striking harbour and a good selection of museums and art galleries.



Keeping the social side up

New Courts Service Social Club Chairperson, Finn Ryder, gives us an update on what's been happening on the social scene

Over 40 members went to the dogs (not literally of course!) in **Shelbourne Park** in March in what has become a yearly event for the Social Club. As usual, the ladies cleaned up. However for a change some of the lads actually made it home with enough money to cover their bus fares. A lady from the 6th floor Phoenix House was apparently giving out tips for the races. Funny, when I asked for one her luck ran out and I lost my €1 bet!

We had our first ever **Comedy Night** in May. Ross Brown was the MC on the night which included performances from Robbie Bonham, Eric Shantz and Keith Anderson. The audience barely managed to go to the bar for fear of missing the comedy and the abuse that would ensue from these hilarious comedians. All proceeds from this great night went to Special Olympics Ireland. Many thanks again to all who attended!

Events to look forward to:

There will be a **Race Night** in July for charity and our **BBQ**

in August/September. Also on the cards is a **Pool Competition**. Then coming to the end of the year we will be having our **Annual Quiz** and to finish off the year of course will be the **Christmas Party**.

The Social Club has doubled its committee membership this year so we will be able to put on bigger and better events for your enjoyment.

Remember that it's YOUR CLUB so if you have any ideas or suggestions for events or any comments in general, e-mail us at Socialclub@courts.ie

I'd just to say a big thank you to George Hanlon for all his work during his (long) tenure as Chairperson. George put a lot of effort into organising events and worked tirelessly for the Social Club. The Social Club would not exist if it was not for him. Cheers Geo!



Eric Shantz

Special Olympics World Games 2007

The Special Olympics World Games are being held this year in October 2007 in Shanghai, China. George Hanlon of the Circuit Court Family Law Office in Dublin and long time contributor to *Courts Service News* has been chosen to assist in the Games and is looking for your help.

This is the first time the games will be held in Asia and only the second time the games will be held outside the U.S.A. with the other of course being Ireland in 2003. I have been a Special Olympics volunteer for over five years and work as a coach for Stillorgan Rangers Football Club. I also worked as a Family Services Co-ordinator at the World Games in 2003, I have also been chosen as one of 200 Irish volunteers who will assist at the games in Shanghai. I have made many new friends, travelled to all four corners of Ireland and shared many wonderful experiences over the



past five years and can safely say that being a volunteer with Special Olympics Ireland has greatly enhanced my life.

In the build up to the world games in 2007 I have agreed to raise sponsorship money and will be involved in a number of fund raising events so please keep an eye out for upcoming functions. The Courts Service Social Club is holding a race night in the Park Inn, Smithfield in August. If you would like to assist with fundraising please contact me. A Bank of Ireland, Smithfield Bank Account No. 67128201 Sort Code 900092 has been set up and anybody requiring acknowledgement can forward deposit



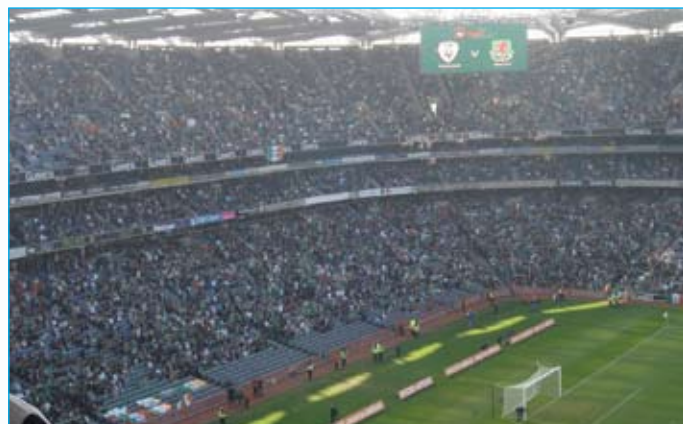
slips and contact details to me at Circuit Court Family Law Office, Phoenix House, Smithfield, Dublin 7.



Gerry Flanagan and the legend that is Croke Park

To great acclaim, the GAA opened the gates of Croke Park to rugby and soccer internationals earlier this year. This was praised as a great sporting and indeed national event. We were intrigued to hear that it was a current member of the Courts Service that started the ball rolling way back in 1982:

Gerry Flanagan, tipstaff to Supreme Court Judge, Mrs. Justice Denham, was Chairman of Dunshaughlin GAA Club in 1982. He proposed "that the GAA examine their position in relation to the playing of international soccer at Croke Park" to a club meeting prior to the County Board Convention that year. His idea was to foster better community relations between sports.



Ireland -v- Wales, first ever soccer game in Croke Park.



Ireland - v - France, first ever rugby game in Croke Park.



Gerry was also a football coach at underage level with both club and county in Meath during the 80s' and 90s' and continues to coach the adult team in his local club in Dunboyne, Co. Meath.

"The Club agreed and were the first to put forward such a motion to a County Board Convention", Gerry tells us. "The original motion was put before the Meath County Board in 1982 but was ruled out of order as no rule had been quoted". Undeterred, the motion was again raised at the 1983 Convention. It created a lively debate at the time but was rejected. And on and on it went until the matter came to a conclusion last year. For Gerry, it's been a long time coming. But as he says "I'm very proud to have initiated a discussion which resulted in other counties bringing forward motions last year".

And do you know something Gerry, you're probably not the only one!

Football club news

The Courts Service Football Club has entered a team in the Inter-Firm League for the 2nd year. They reached the quarter-finals last year and are hoping to go one, two or even three better this season.

If you are interested in joining the team, you can contact Andy Cleary at 01-888 6208 or Rob Rogers at 01-888 6207. The team will also be competing in a tournament against the Courts Services from Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales in Newcastle in September.

Supporters are more than welcome to attend the league matches. All games will take place in the Law Society Sports Grounds in Blackhall Place.

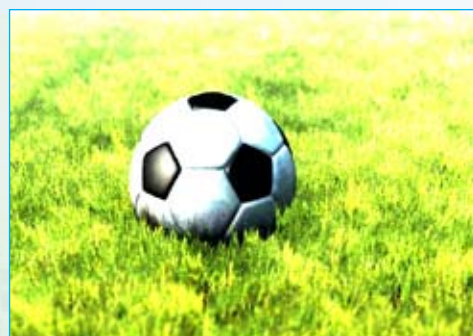
The fixtures for this season are:

July

Wednesday, 11th at 8pm v DE
Friday, 20th at 6.45pm v SF
Wednesday, 25th at 8pm v LA
Monday, 30th at 8pm v MHC

August

Monday, 6th at 6.45pm v BCS
Wednesday, 8th Quarter Final
Monday, 13th Semi Final
Thursday, 11th at 7pm Final



The above fixtures are subject to change. Keep an eye on the Courts Noticeboard for updates.

Quiz... With your Quizmaster, Tony Lawlor

In this issue I want to appeal to the couch potatoes out there. I want to concentrate the minds on television for our quiz. A few soap and general TV questions to set the mind racing:

1. Name the actor who plays the part of Gil Grissom in CSI: Crime Scene Investigation?
2. Can you name the fictional town where Fair City is based?
3. Trevor Welch presents which sports programme on TV3?
4. Wysteria Lane is the base for which series?
5. Who hosts the RTE series "Show me the Money"?
6. What is the name of Chesney's dog in Coronation Street? (clue: he was a Great Dane in a former life!)
7. Who presents the weather on TV3?
8. What was the original title of Emmerdale?
9. The evening news on BBC 1 goes out at what time?
10. Who scored the only goal in this year's F.A. Cup Final at the new Wembley? (come on, it was on the telly.)



Disclaimer: The questions above in no way reflect my taste, or lack thereof, in television viewing.

And by the way, in case you're wondering, the answer is yes, I do go out now and again!

Send your answers to: Tony Lawlor, Courts Service Information Office, Phoenix House, 15/24 Phoenix Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7, or by e-mail to alawlor@courts.ie

The answers to the music quiz in the March issue were:

Simon & Garfunkel
James Taylor or Carole King
Bob Dylan
Bruce Springsteen
Bruce Springsteen
Billy Joel
Christopher Cross or N sync
Meatloaf
Police
Snow Patrol
Fleetwood Mac
Cold Play
ABC
Supertramp

- Homeward Bound
- You've got a friend
- The times they are a changin'
- The River
- Born to run
- Piano Man
- Sailing
- Bat out of Hell
- Message in a Bottle
- Chocolate
- Go your own way
- Clocks
- Poison Arrow
- The Logical Song



and the lucky winner is: Ms. Ita O' Neill,
Legal Executive, J.B. Hickey & Associates, Solicitors, 10 Blessington Street, Dublin 7.

Up Close and Personal with Elaine Jones, Southern Regional Office

Which fictional character (film/ book/ TV...) do you most closely identify with?
Angelica (*Rugrats*)

What is your favourite film and why?
'Happy Gilmore' - I'm laughing just thinking about it.

Favourite book?

Most recent favourite - 'We need to talk about Kevin' by Lionel Shriver

Favourite song?

'Don't Speak' by No Doubt - Reminds me of a great Summer.

Who would you most like to be stuck in a lift with and why?

Morgan Freeman - I could listen to his voice forever.

Name five people you would like as dinner party guests.

David Walliams and Matt Lucas ('*Little Britain*'), My youngest sister Jackie (obsessive *Little Britain* fan - she'd never forgive me if I didn't invite her), Eamonn Dunphy and Mick McCarthy (You can't beat a good argument over the dinner table).





Noel Brennan, Chief Clerk in Cavan District Court and his band The Midnighters recently released a CD titled "Memories". The band performed together from 1966 to 1973 and have re-formed several times since to perform for charity. The songs are a mix of Country and Western and hits from the 60s'. Noel sings and plays the accordion and organ on two of the tracks.

The CD was produced to raise funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Association in Cavan. €2,500 has been raised from sales to date. It costs €10 and copies can be obtained by contacting Noel at 049 4331585.

Courts Service Charity Football Tournament

The tournament will take place this year in the Law Society Sports Grounds in Blackhall Place on Thursday 28th June. The fun starts at 5.30pm. The pain about 5 minutes later. Come along and support this worthy cause. The charities to benefit from the fundraising are the "Jack and Jill Foundation" and the "Make a Wish Foundation".



Presentation College Athenry on a recent tour to the Four Courts.



Eamonn Kiely (Southern Regional Manager), presenting the Dickens Quiz winner Shay Bowen (Cork District Court Office) with his prize.



District & Circuit Court staff at the function for the new Roscommon State Solicitor Kieran Madigan. Left to right: Mairead Conway (Roscommon District Court), Ita Scanlon (Roscommon District Court), Kieran Madigan, Mary Raftery (Roscommon Circuit Court), Willie Lyster (Roscommon County Registrar)



"Baby Power" - Amy Power, baby daughter of Ronan (Taxing Masters Office and resident Film Reviewer)



From left to right: Judge Catherine McGuinness, Judge Alison Lindsay, Justice Elizabeth Dunne, Judge Katherine Delahunt at the International Women's Day Breakfast.

If you have a photo you'd like to include in *Through the Lens* please post it to:

Tony Lawlor, Information Office, Courts Service, 15-24 Phoenix Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7
or email it to: alawlor@courts.ie