

County Clare's Industrial Heritage To Be Studied In Architectural Survey

Thursday, 24 April 2008

Clare County Council has announced that it is to compile an inventory of industrial heritage structures within the County.

The local authority's Conservation Office, with the assistance of the Heritage Council, is presently conducting a scoping and desktop survey with a view to commencing the field survey over the coming weeks.

Structures to be surveyed will principally be those that have had an industrial function or provided employment in the past for the people of Clare.

The list of structures includes *mills, mines, lime kilns, waterwheels, distilleries, canals, locks, horse drawn and steam pumps, forges, hydraulic rams, generators, ice houses, corn stores, bridges, brick pits, slate quarries, railway structures etc..*

Commenting on the survey for Clare County Council, Mr. Risteárd Ua Cróinín, Architectural Conservation Officer, stated, *"There is no doubt that County Clare has an impressive industrial landscape that it has largely been untouched by development. This is likely to change, however, due to the pressure of development and deterioration of buildings. That is why it is imperative that we make records of as many structures of heritage importance as possible."*

He continued, *"It is hoped that the project will culminate in the compilation of a comprehensive published survey (hardcopy and electronic) of all coastal structures, industrial heritage structures and stone roofed structures in County Clare. This work will pull together all previous work carried out in these areas and provide baseline information about these otherwise little known aspects of the county's Architectural Heritage."*

"Members of the public who are aware of any item or structure that should be included in the Industrial Heritage survey should contact us immediately. The assistance of the public or interested groups would be greatly appreciated and will contribute to the formulation of this unique project", concluded Mr. Ua Cróinín

It is estimated that the survey will be completed by November 2008.

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or

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Wednesday, 7 May 2008

Clare County Council has launched an education initiative based on a recently completed survey of over 200 coastal structures in County Clare.

A newsletter and poster illustrating structures along one of Ireland's longest stretches of coastline will be distributed to schools, museums and libraries throughout the county over the coming weeks. Detailed results of the two-year survey have also been published and made available to members of the public.

The survey incorporated coastal structures from the Shannon Estuary to Aughinish Point in North Clare and from the Loop Head peninsula to the shores of Lough Derg.

The surveyed structures included piers, slipways, batteries, lighthouses, Martello towers, boathouses and quays, as well as the bridges and locks of the Shannon Navigation and Hydro-Electric Scheme Canals.

Commenting on the survey, Ms. Gráinne O'Connor, Conservation Officer, Clare County Council, stated, *'The survey has highlighted the scale, variety and importance of coastal architecture in Clare down throughout the years. Their survival today is testament to the skill of the craftsmen who constructed them and to those who continue to promote and preserve them today.'*

Ms. O'Connor indicated that the diversity and sheer extent of architecture encountered throughout the progression of the coastal survey greatly exceeded what was initially anticipated.

'The condition of many of the structures and in many cases their continued use today is a legacy to the importance of the waters in and around Clare in the social, recreational and economic development of maritime activities within the county,' she added.

Using the information gathered by the survey team, Clare County Council has now produced a full colour newsletter/poster, which will be circulated to schools, museums, libraries and other relevant venues. The poster was launched this week during a field trip to Seanmuckinish Castle, near Ballyvaughan.

The Local Authority also recently organised field trips for ten schools to visit coastal architectural sites that were included in the survey. The schools were taken to the various sites including Seanmuckinish castle where they were given tours and engaged in practical activities like drawing and quizzes.

'The field trips and the poster are both methods of making the information available to the general public,' explained Mr. Tomás Mac Conmara, Heritage Officer, Clare County Council.

'The purpose of conducting surveys like the coastal architecture project is to gather information about aspects of our county's heritage. Having gathered this information, it is incumbent on us to ensure that the information gathered is made accessible in as many ways as possible. This will help to ensure that our rich coastal architecture is known, understood and appreciated,' Mr. Mac Conmara concluded.