

Architectural Lighting Scheme and Pedestrian Walkway on the New Bridge over the Cathaleen's Falls, Ballyshannon

& The Official Unveiling of the Art Project On the N15 Bundoran/Ballyshannon By-Pass

By Cllr Enda Bonner, Mayor of the County of Donegal

On Wednesday 27th September 2006



Cathaleen's Falls Bridge, Ballyshannon Lighting Design: Speirs and Major Associates, Edinburgh Studio

When Speirs and Major Associates were appointed as Lighting Architects on this project, we set out clear design objectives for the night time visual image. We wanted to create a dramatic and striking view of the new bridge from Ballyshannon. We were also interested in encouraging people to walk up to and across the bridge to look back towards the town and up to the Cathaleen's Falls dam.

Due to the location of the bridge there was no requirement for street lighting. This allowed greater creative freedom to focus the lighting on enhancing the beautiful arched form of the bridge. The underside of the major arch of the bridge was carefully illuminated to minimise any upward spill of light beyond the bridge into the sky, thus avoiding unnecessary light pollution.

The ribs supporting the main road bridge were lit with luminaires which were fitted with special lenses that spread the light evenly onto the axis of the bridge, creating a continuous glowing line. These luminaires allow linearity, without any hotspotting marks that would detract from the form of the bridge.

We wanted to express the pedestrian walkway in a completely different way to the main structure of the bridge. We chose to use blue light to create a dramatic experience for pedestrians. The reference for the blue shade used was the deep blue of the sky as it is heading towards dusk. Finally, the gateways below the bridge leading into and out of Ballyshannon were illuminated evenly so that the walls and the ceilings appear to glow.

Design Team:
Jonathan Speirs, Principal,
Francis Milloy, Senior Designer,
Melanie Rosenthal, Project Designer

Speirs and Major Associates

Originally established in 1992, Speirs and Major Associates was formed from the merger of Jonathan Speirs and Associates and Speirs and Major (Lighting Architects Group).

From our two studios in London and Edinburgh we offer a full range of professional lighting design services from daylight and sunlight analysis to artificial lighting design and specification.

We have completed a wide variety of award-winning projects for both public and private clients. They include corporate headquarters, museums and exhibitions, hotel and retail developments, transport projects and religious buildings.

We also have extensive experience of working on lighting masterplans, public realm and landscape projects, bridges, towers and other special structures and have been commissioned to produce a number of light art installations.

We strongly believe that our reputation has been built not only on our creative ability but also our skill in contributing to a project far beyond the capital investment in the lighting systems.



Siac Wills JV are proud to have been associated with the installation of the architectural lighting scheme on Cathaleen's Falls bridge. We would like to acknowledge the major contribution made by the scheme architects Speirs and Major, the electrical contractor Eamonn Mc Gauran and Son Ltd., and Siac Wills JV management and staff. We trust the lighting scheme will enhance the beautiful town of Ballyshannon.
Eamonn Mc Gill

ART PROJECT

"Between the Known and the Unknown"

Joint Collaboration/Public Art Commission with Artists Sean Campbell and Elizabeth Caffrey

In developing a sculpture form for the N15 ByPass Elizabeth Caffrey and Sean Campbell initially focused on the "living landscape"; particularly an area called Rathmor, which lies central to both towns of Ballyshannon and Bundoran.

Unified by location, from this site you are aware of the greater context of South Donegal, North Sligo and Leitrim.

The most distinctive aspect to this site was how it has been modelled over time by the prevailing elements, with clear indications of the passage of time evident in it's botanical, geological and historic structures.

Both artists share a huge commitment towards the natural environment and used this opportunity to encourage and turn peoples "gaze" towards their "living landscape".



Wax twig model coated in ceramic shell | The pour | The bronze

They settled on a form which is found in abundance on the site and which clearly indicates the presence of the prevailing dynamics of the area...that of a windswept Hawthorn Tree, a form familiar to all living in this geography.

By incorporating a natural windswept Hawthorn Tree on site and fabricating a "reflected" form in bronze, they created an arc or bridge. Working in some part as an optical illusion, this connection is brief but clear to those observant enough to notice, engaging the viewer with their environment - both in natural and historic terms. Traditionally by pagan belief the Hawthorn Tree was a marker for the bright half of the year, as it is called as gaelige, An Sceach Gheal "the Bright or Whiten Bush". At night when the Artwork is illuminated, it looks just as it's name suggests. It is also regarded as a prime symbol of fertility having numerous beneficial medicinal properties, other references allude to ceremonial and religious traditions.

The aim of "Between the Known and the Unknown" is that through local community and wider general public's interaction with the artwork, interest will be reactivated in the traditions associated with the native Irish Hawthorn Tree and it's connected living landscape.

The Artists would like to take this opportunity to thank Martin O'Mahoney and Anne Lewis at Leitrim Sculpture Centre, Rory McLaughlin(Engineer), Con Lynch, Tom Currid at Ballinfull Co-Op, Tabet Truu, Brendan Gallagher, Reggie and Michael Connolly, Eddie Davenport, Michael McHugh, Donegal County Council and very special mention to Hugh Fox, Maire Little and "Metal Man" Dave Kinane.

