

Leitrim Homes attract visitors from far & wide: Green-Door Weekend

Jo Lewis

FOR THE SECOND YEAR running Green-Door Leitrim was another great success. Thirty five homes and buildings were open to the public and attracted hundreds of visitors to Leitrim. People travelled from as far away as London for this event and came from all walks of life: from architects and architecture students through to builders, artists and the general public. Everyone made the most of this unique opportunity to see inside the homes and buildings on view, and availed of the chance to find out first hand about alternative and sustainable building methods and materials.

The weekend kicked off with a bat talk by Will Woodrow, an environmentalist, who explained about the benefits of bats, and how they should and can be encouraged to live alongside us. This talk was teaching participants about how our buildings can also help to house nature—a good start for Green-Door 2012!

A debate on Friday evening hosted at the Dock in Carrick-on-Shannon, launched the weekend with a brilliant line-up of speakers which included architects, Mike Haslem, Steve Larkin, Deirdre McMenamin and Dominic Stevens, who presented on the topic *Sustainability and Aesthetics: how do our future needs affect the aesthetics of architecture?* It was chaired successfully by Sandra O'Connell who



▲ Dominic Stevens at the Mimetic house (Grace Weir & Joe Walker)



▲ Mud workshop at the Leitrim Sculpture centre with Natalia Beyliss & Kevin Callaghan



Young architects

ensured that the audience had a great opportunity to have their say. It was filmed by the skillful Johnny Gogan of Bandit Films for the digital TV station: www.studionorthwest.tv

Saturday saw bus tours leave from the Dock to take visitors to various houses, while others used their cars for trips around south Leitrim, visiting and viewing. On Sunday it was turn of North Leitrim with twenty homes open for viewing. Here cycle tours were led by architect Colin Bell, while bus tours again took visitors to see various homes. Each of the buildings and homes were visited by between 10 and 100 people during the day, so everyone was kept very busy!

All home-owners and architect's gave their time freely over the weekend. Feedback indicated that everyone had genuine reasons for visiting, and were very grateful for the opportunity to view and discuss a variety of building and renovation techniques, designs, and materials. The home owners and architect's were also delighted with the chance to pass on their experience and knowledge in order to help others make the right choices relevant to their own conditions, situation, and budgets.

The tours of the various buildings led by architects gave a rare opportunity to hear from the designer about their original intention for the build.

Children had the opportunity to play with original building material in the mud workshops, led by 'builder in Leitrim' Kevin Callaghan with artist Natalia Beylis, at the *Leitrim Sculpture*



▲ Green Door in the Forest



▲ Green Door house under discussion

Centre. The Leitrim Sculpture centre also hosted the exhibition 'MADE', which comprised four beautiful architects' models; and The Dock showed panels by 'LiD' architects, rounding off a weekend, which set architecture and building design firmly within the arts. During the weekend creativity was shown to compliment and work well alongside, sustainable and future proof models.

Green-Door Leitrim facilitated the sharing of information about alternative and sustainable building methods, and created a wonderful and positive event that truly showcased Leitrim in its best

light. We are very grateful to all those who gave of their time to make this event such a success. The whole weekend was funded by Leitrim Development Company, Leitrim Arts, Fáilte Ireland and our main sponsor Forbo Flooring.

More information and photographs can be seen on the website www.inspirationalhomes.ie info@inspirationalhomes.ie.