



Lightkeeper's grandson and political leader launches *The Lightkeeper – A Memoir*

A unique insight into generations of lighthouse keepers, told from the inside by Gerald Butler and Patricia Ahern, was launched recently by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny at the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) Headquarters in Dun Laoghaire. The author and the Taoiseach both share a long family history in the Lighthouse

Yvonne Shields, Chief Executive, CIL, added that in every generation, lighthouses have been not only beacons for mariners but also beacons for modern technology:

“Today’s lighthouses would be a thing of wonder to An Taoiseach’s grandfather and indeed even to Gerald Butler’s father. Modern LED light sources, solar power and electronic aids have transformed Aids to Navigation, delivering

New European project looks to a ‘Blue Society’

What do we know about the sea and how can we create a ‘blue society’ that benefits all our lives in sustainable harmony with the oceans? These are some of the questions being asked by Sea for Society - an ambitious three-year European project that began last October, involving 20 partner organisations and eight associated partners across 12 European countries.

The project brings together researchers; marine and land-based organisations; government and non-governmental bodies; individuals and young people for mutual learning, consultation and joint action. It considers key questions concerning sustainable ocean management and examines cross-cutting issues with a view to proposing practical solutions to the challenges facing the sustainable management of our seas.

The main objectives of Sea for Society are to increase awareness of how important the oceans are to all our lives, as well as the importance of marine research in generating the knowledge we need to take the actions required to bring about a shift in the way society views the sea.

To bring about this change, the project also aims to break down the barriers between stakeholders, citizens and young people to enable full collaboration and knowledge at all levels; to promote public engagement in research and to foster an integrated vision of a ‘blue society’, including the social, environmental, economic and cultural pillars it would take to support it.

The Irish project partners include AquaTT as area leaders, with NUI Galway and the Marine Institute - as well as the W5 Interactive Discover Centre in Belfast as an associated partner. Their responsibility has been to compile background literature reviews; create methodologies and carry out the first public consultations amongst target groups of citizen/youth - all of which have been achieved on target.

Meanwhile, across the rest of Europe, similar citizen/youth consultations are being carried out into the challenges and opportunities in six subject areas: Marine Food; Marine Transport; Marine Energy; Human Health; Leisure and Tourism and A Place to Live. In Ireland, these will be followed in the autumn by focussed discussions with marine stakeholders on the two nationally-allocated subjects of Marine Food and A Place to Live.

Armed with this information on public and stakeholder perception of the wide range of challenges facing any plan for sustainable development of the seas - as well as options to address them - the project will then move to consider practical strategies to develop the concept of a ‘blue society’.

Further information - including an Irish national blog - can be found at www.seaforociety.eu