

# Mizen Head Footbridge voted Engineering Project of the Year

Release date: Monday, 7 November 2011



The Mizen Head Footbridge in Cork has been voted Engineering Project of the Year by the Irish public in an online vote as part of the second Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards in association with ESB.

Speaking at a special ceremony in the Four Seasons Hotel, Dublin, Noel O'Keeffe, Cork County Council county engineer, who collected the award on behalf of RPS/Carillion Irishenco who were behind the project, said winning the award was welcome recognition for a collaborative initiative that overcame significant challenges before completion. "This footbridge is the culmination of a lot of team work allied to what we believe is the best in engineering creativity. This is a great example of engineering excellence as a driver for economic recovery. It is a landmark structure in terms of using reinforced concrete as a construction material and is now a noteworthy facility for the locality as well as a valuable tourist attraction. That this has been acknowledged today by Engineers Ireland is extremely rewarding."

Congratulating the winning RPS/Carillion Irishenco team, John Power, Engineers Ireland Director General, also said there was a continuing need for Government to support excellence in engineering by properly regulating the sector: "The Mizen Head Footbridge, and indeed all the projects highlighted in the awards, are the very essence of all that is good about engineering. But the ongoing High Court proceedings around the Priory Hall debacle are a reminder of what can happen when building standards and controls are not robust enough. Engineers Ireland believes that only Chartered Engineers within a regulated environment should have the authority to sign off on any projects that have a public health and safety dimension."

"Engineers Ireland has been in discussion with relevant Government departments on this issue for several years and is continuing to emphasise the need for progress. Regulation would also provide a return in terms of job creation but also as a signal to foreign investors that Ireland's standards of engineering are second to none internationally."

Mr Power continued: "In truth, all the short-listed entries showcase all that is good about the engineering sector and the value, both economically and socially, that engineers create for this country."

The 'The Mizen Head Footbridge' came from a final shortlist of projects that also included the 'Aeroneb Solo II project', 'Great Northern Haven', 'Trinity College Biomedical Sciences Institute', 'M50 PPP Scheme', 'The Peace Bridge, Derry', 'NUI Galway Engineering Building' and the 'Road Services DBFO Package 2'. The winner resulted from a process that allowed the public vote online to select what they considered to be the project that has most benefited Irish society.

Other award winners on the night included

- Chartered Engineer of the Year, won by Louise Connolly from Innishannon, Co. Cork;
- Engineering News Story of the Year, won by the Irish Examiner;
- Best Paper or Presentation of the Year, 'The Design and Construction of the New Mizen Head Footbridge' nominated by the Cork Region;
- the new Engineering Education Award, won by Cork Institute of Technology;
- the new Environmental Infrastructure Award, also won by RPS;
- the Volunteer of the Year award, won by Michael Loughnane
- and the ESB Award for Outstanding Contribution to Engineering won by Sean O'Leary of Cork

## **Mizen Head footbridge making waves**

By Jennifer Hough

Monday, November 07, 2011

THE €1.8 million reconstructed Mizen Head footbridge connecting the country's southernmost lighthouse to the mainland has scooped two major engineering gongs at the Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards.

The dramatic construct, which opened on St Patrick's day, was voted Engineering Project of the Year by the Irish public in an online vote and also won Best Paper of the Year for a presentation given about the project.

A near-replica of the original Victorian steel structure which was completed in 1909, the bridge has attracted 55,000 tourists to its West Cork location since March.

Cork county engineer, Noel O'Keeffe, said it was not only a feat of engineering but had created jobs and attracted tens of thousands of tourists.

Mr O'Keeffe said the views from the bridge and two viewing platforms are magnificent and applauded all those involved in its construction.

"Cork County Council appointed RPS consulting engineers to design and oversee the reconstruction of this spectacular heritage structure. The contractor for the complex project was Carillion Irishenco. Without these three parties coming together this would

not have happened," he said.

"The footbridge is the culmination of a lot of teamwork allied to what we believe is the best in engineering creativity.

"This is a great example of engineering excellence as a driver for economic recovery. It is a landmark structure in terms of using reinforced concrete as a construction material and is now a noteworthy facility for the locality as well as a valuable tourist attraction," Mr O'Keeffe said.

Other awards on the night, held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Ballsbridge, included Engineering News Story of the Year for the Irish Examiner and the Chartered Engineer of the Year Award, given to Louise Connolly from Innishannon, Co Cork.

Ms Connolly graduated from CIT in 2004 with an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering and joined ESB International as a graduate engineer. She is currently a consultant engineer in ESBI.

Read more: <http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/kfqlmhauausn/rss2/#ixzz1d1b9oVcM>



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# **Mizen Head Footbridge**

**Structural Designer: RPS Consulting Engineers**

Mizen Head Footbridge is located at the south westerly tip of Ireland. It spans 50m across a dramatic sea gorge. The original structure was built in 1909. It was considered to be the longest reinforced concrete bridge of its type on completion.

The structure is a through arch comprising arch ribs supporting a pedestrian bridge deck. In 2010/11 the original structure was carefully removed and a new, replica structure in reinforced concrete was constructed. The successful completion of the project has preserved a landmark structure on the coast of Ireland for future generations to enjoy.



**Client:**  
Cork County Council,  
Failte Ireland,  
Commissioners of Irish  
Lights

**Architect:**  
RPS

**M&E Engineers:**  
N/A

**Contractor:**  
Carillion Irishenco Ltd.

**Other sub-contractors**  
N/A

**Location:**  
Cork, Republic of Ireland

# WCDP Mizen Head Footbridge has won the 2011 Engineers Ireland Engineering Project of the Year Excellence Award!

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Mizen Head Footbridge has won the 2011 Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards Engineering Project of the Year! The award ceremony was at The Four Seasons, Dublin on November 4. It was so exciting! The award was judged by public choice with an online vote. Mizen Head Footbridge won by a mile! Thank you so much for your vote!

Best Paper or Presentation of the Year went to 'The design and construction of the new Mizen Head Footbridge' Authors: Noel O'Keeffe, Cork County Council, Eoghan Lehane, Commissioners of Irish Lights, Kieran Ruane and Ross O'Donovan, RPS Consulting Engineers and Enda Collery, Carillion Irish Enco.

Six years ago the old Bridge was condemned just short of 100 years after its completion in 1909. A temporary scaffolding kept it open for 5 years. The diligence and perseverance of the Commissioners of Irish Lights, Cork County Council and Failte Ireland in finding the funding for the Bridge reconstruction has been remarkable.

From the engineers' and construction company's point of view, the complexity of the location, site and job is recognised in these awards. The demolition and reconstruction of the Bridge *in situ* are outstanding engineering feats. Well done to all involved!

To visit and cross the Bridge during the winter, Mizen Head Signal Station is open at weekends 11-4 and from mid March – October it is open daily.

## **Derry's Peace Bridge loses out to Cork in engineering awards**

Fri, 11/04/2011 - 23:42 -- Editor



Derry's Peace Bridge has won third place in the prestigious Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards.

The Peace Bridge was pipped to the post by the Mizen Head Footbridge in Cork and the new engineering building in NUI Galway.

The awards were open to the public to vote, and the winning project was judged on the largest number of online votes received last night, Thursday 3rd November. Over 16,000 people voted for the projects with votes coming from Ireland plus 35 other countries.

The winning entry was the new Mizen Head Footbridge a reinforced concrete through arch structure that spans 50m across a sea gorge to connect the island of Cloghan, at the tip of Mizen Head, with the mainland in southwest Cork. It replaced an ageing bridge which stood at the same location.

Derry's Peace Bridge was shortlisted in the Engineers Ireland Excellence Awards, which showcases engineering at its best.

Costing over £14m to build, the bridge crosses the river from behind the Guildhall to the former Parade Ground at Ebrington Barracks – linking the Walled City to the new

developments at Ebrington and St Columb's Park. Some 250,000 people have crossed the bridge since its grand opening in the summer.

The bridge physically and symbolically unites both sides of the River Foyle and is conceived as two distinct structural systems that work in harmony, a pair of identical curved suspension structures, each allied to opposing banks, in a fluid S-shaped alignment. At the middle of the river both structural systems tangibly overlap, boldly interacting to create a single unified crossing – a structural handshake across the Foyle and an embrace in the centre of the river.

Illuminated at night the Peace Bridge is fast becoming a major landmark in the city and is constructed in such a way that it allows leisure craft to pass safely below it at high tide.

Derry online paper