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## Editorial

We are marking the date of publication of this issue of *Archaeology Ireland*, just before St Patrick's Day, with a photo feature on sites and landscapes associated with Patrick. St Patrick's Day is an occasion for festivities for Irish people everywhere. As Dean Swift wrote on 17 March 1713, recording events of the day in London, the celebrations were such 'that I thought all the world was Irish'. St Patrick's Day sees the first major annual influx of visitors to Ireland who come to enjoy the festival and increasingly to see our rich historical and archaeological heritage. This must be seen as an asset to be properly presented and exploited and there is surely the potential for those with the combination of expertise and an entrepreneurial spirit to tap the market for specialised archaeological holidays.

St Patrick's Day is traditionally seen as the middle day of spring, the time by which spring crops should be in the ground. There is a general expectation of improved weather from now on and an upturn in work. The pace of activity in construction work also tends to increase. Inevitably when this work involves alteration or improvement of existing landscapes or townscapes the archaeology of these areas may be affected. In large-scale projects, such as road construction, unless provision is made for archaeological work at an early stage in the project many sites, particularly low-visibility sites with few surface traces, may be removed without any record of their nature or potential in telling us more about the past. Newspaper reports indicate that at Stansted Airport in Essex archaeological survey and excavation being carried out in advance of the expansion of the airport facilities has revealed the presence of 14 previously unknown sites of various dates. In the near future visitors flying in on jets carrying the symbol of St Patrick will land on the new runway at Dublin Airport, which is presently under construction. Was the land that they touch down on really devoid of archaeological sites or does that appear to be the case simply because of the lack of an archaeological input into the construction project for the runway and associated buildings?

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*Front cover shows St Peter's Church, Waterford, from the east.*