



Matt Thomson - Leakage Reduction Programme Regional Lead

For the last five years Matt Thomson has played a lead role in providing a more reliable water supply to communities across Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Dublin. Working as a Regional Lead with Irish Water's Leakage Reduction Programme (LRP) he is responsible for overseeing the delivery of projects tackling leakage and reducing bursts. His daily work involves co-ordinating the delivery of LRP works with all relevant stakeholders including local authorities, regional contractors, impacted customers as well as managing the forecasting, financial and output reporting.

Matt's engineering journey started in his native South Africa where his Civil Engineer father, Steve, took the family around South Africa as he worked on projects bringing essential services such as roads, potable water and sewerage treatment to rural communities. Following in his father's footsteps, Matt completed a degree in Civil Engineering and started his career working on roads and drainage schemes across Cape Town.

Speaking about the opportunities engineering gave him, Matt said, "Engineering has opened up a world of travel and the chance to work on a wide variety of projects. I've worked on wind farm projects in Kenya and South Africa engaging with local tribes to ensure traditions and land rights were accommodated. There was often very close interaction with wildlife! In London I worked as a structural engineer on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link during which we discovered incredibly well-

preserved remains of roman soldiers under an abutment of an old stone arch bridge. I also spent time working for myself running a small consulting engineering practice in Kilkenny before joining Irish Water.”

Speaking about what he enjoys most in his Irish Water role he said, “The part I enjoy the most is the interaction with stakeholders. In this job you work with so many different people from different areas that no two days are the same. On any given day I could be working with the Asset Delivery department in Irish Water or the Water Services section of a local authority or engaging with members of the public. Building good relationships is key to working effectively in order to deliver the projects of the Leakage Reduction Programme. We are making great progress and it’s very rewarding to see upgrades and improvements that are reducing leakage and improving water quality for communities across Louth, Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Dublin. An example would be the water trunk main upgrade in Skerries. For many years, the water pressure in the network there was below standard causing a number of supply issues for homes and businesses in this busy town. A water mains replacement project like this one resolved many of the supply issues and help to ensure a more secure supply of water benefiting the entire town.”

And his advice to young people interested in pursuing a career in engineering? “For anyone interested in engineering – gain a variety of experience in the many different disciplines such as consulting and contracting. Engineering is a such a varied field with so many sub-divisions, specialities and niches that you will be able to find something that you really enjoy doing. There are also many opportunities to work in interesting parts of the world that you can take advantage of to broaden your experience.”