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Shannon marks 75th birthday of turning of first sod



A Pan Am Boeing 377 Stratocruiser seen arriving in Shannon in the early 50's. One of the plane's features included a pressurised cabin and a cruising altitude of 32,000ft. These type of planes regularly refuelled during stop offs at Shannon Airport during its early years.

THE 75th anniversary of the beginning of construction work at Shannon Airport has been celebrated with the planting of an oak tree.

The oak sapling was planted near the final roundabout approaching the airport, near the spot where the first sod was turned and 12 workers began construction, on October 8, 1936.

"Little did the men who broke ground for the first time, at what were then mudflats on the Rineanna Peninsula, think that this spot would quickly become a key airport for transatlantic travel", said acting Shannon Airport director Niall

MacCarthy.

"While construction of Shannon began 75 years ago this week, the first passenger flights did not take place until the summer of 1939, and Shannon will celebrate its 75th birthday proper in 2014".

Given Shannon's rich aviation history it was appropriate to mark the beginning of the airport's construction, according to Mr MacCarthy.

Shannon Airport Authority chairman Brian O'Connell, noted that the airport is steeped in history and paid tribute to the efforts of those who had planned, designed and built it.

"Shannon was the first

transatlantic gateway between the US and Europe, and the birthplace of duty free.

"It gave rise to the Shannon Free Zone and as recently as 2009, it was still making history when it became the first airport outside North America to secure pre-clearance for the US.

"None of that would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the original construction workers and planners," said Mr O'Connell.

Shannon is the most westerly airport in Europe and was designated as Ireland's transatlantic airport on its inception by the Irish government.



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