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IWNN

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 4

WINTER 2021



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49ER ROBERT DICKSON
HIGH AND DRY**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As we come towards the end of 2021, I want to welcome you all to your winter issue of IWN. As I write these words this evening, we once again find ourselves in uncertain times as we try to strike the correct balance between safe and responsible behaviour and getting on with our lives.

Thankfully, among

all this uncertainty, we can rely on the consistency of our magazine to deliver an engaging read and provide a welcome distraction. Thanks, as ever to Alison in the editorial chair and to all contributors for transporting us to our wonderful waterways world, whether we can experience it in person or not.

I am also conscious as I write that we are well into AGM season around the country. Your branch AGM provides a wonderful opportunity for you to check-in with IWAI activity in your area. You may even consider putting your name forward as a branch officer or committee member. As I have said many times previously, it is so rewarding to give something back to an organisation that has, at its core, a passion for the inland waterways. Should you choose to take the plunge, please be assured that you will be well supported both locally and nationally. To all members continuing in officer roles – many thanks and the best of luck for the coming year.

The autumn council meeting was a busy and productive affair covering a wide variety of topics. On the same day, an EGM was held to ratify minor technical changes to the constitution. The only disappointment on the day was the low numbers in attendance. I know that Zoom is tiresome and that broadband connections may not always be reliable but it is so important that delegates from each of our 24 branches make the effort to attend these biannual meetings so that you can keep your branch members informed. Minutes and documents from the meeting have been shared via One Drive and if you haven't picked them up electronically, there is a report from your Hon Secretary inside this issue.

I am proud to announce that the IWAI Strategic Partnership Project with the RNLi at *Dunrovin* is nearing completion. Once the building is handed over to IWAI, the work will continue to fit out and furnish the new home for our Association. Spring heralds rebirth and regeneration and what better way to capture this than the rebirth of IWAI in the place where it all began. The circle will be complete but the journey will continue. Sincere thanks to Martin Donnelly and his subcommittee for bringing us to this point.

I am also delighted to share the news that IWAI's Nav-Watch Report 2020 has been distributed widely to councillors and politicians along the waterways and internally within Waterways Ireland. Waterways Ireland are keen to work with Nav-Watch to find solutions to ongoing navigational problems including water supply, maintenance and weed control and the elected representatives are very supportive of this approach. Further positive signals for 2022 and beyond – one would hope. Congratulations to the Nav-Watch team for the excellent work they have done so far.

We are being told in the media that if we have not got our Christmas shopping done by now there will be nothing left! Not so I tell you, as we have Colin manning the IWAI shop, rammed full of waterways wonders. Please also consider supporting our advertisers and businesses where you can. All that remains is for me to wish you and your families a happy and safe Christmas and very best wishes for the New Year.

Alan Kelly, President, IWAI



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INLAND WATERWAYS NEWS

Magazine of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

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NAVIGATION NOTICES & WORKS

WATERWAYS IRELAND



MN#85 of 19 November 2021

Renewal of permits and removal of vessels from Grand Canal, Royal Canal and Barrow Navigation - Canal Act 1986 (Bye Laws) 1988

Waterways Ireland wishes to remind all masters and owners of vessels that all canal permits expired on 1 November 2021 and must now be renewed.

Permits can be renewed online at <https://www.waterwaysireland.org/online-services/canal-permits>

Vessels not compliant with the Bye Laws i.e.

- Vessels with no permit, Bye Law 6(8)
- Vessels non-attended and apparently abandoned, Bye Law 6(8)
- Vessels double moored and causing obstruction (sunk), Bye Law 27(3)
- Vessels likely to cause a hazard to navigation, Bye Law 33(3), will be removed from the Grand Canal, Royal Canal and Barrow Navigation as operationally convenient. Removed vessels may then be disposed of in accordance with Bye Law 34(2).

MN#83 of 12 November 2021

Royal Canal - Lock gate replacement - Lock 12 and 15 - November 2021 to January 2022

Waterways Ireland wishes to advise masters of vessels that lock gates will be replaced on the Royal Canal as follows:

Lock 15 (deep gates)

Start Date: 15 Nov 2021

End Date: 14 Jan 2022 (expected)

Lock 12 (middle gates)

Start Date: 15 Nov 2021

End Date: 14 Jan 2022 (expected)

MN#64 of 21 September 2021

Grand Canal - Naas Branch - Lock N1 closed due to damage to bridge

Waterways Ireland wishes to notify masters that Lock N1 on the Naas Branch of the Grand Canal is closed to boat passage until further notice due to a recent vehicle collision with the adjacent Osberstown Bridge. The lock cannot be operated and it is unsafe to pass underneath the bridge until repairs are carried out.

SHANNON-ERNE WATERWAY

- Hedge trimming at various locations
- Powerwashing of amenity sites/jetties
- Strip maintenance works at various locations
- Boundary fencing at various locations
- Aghoo trail construction
- Marker post replacement on navigation at Belturbet and Leitrim sites
- Resurfacing at various locations
- Dredging at various sites
- Drainage/watermain installation at Bellaheady
- Remedial works to lock gates at Lock 11
- Installation of railings at Locks 2 and 15
- New marker head replacement from Lough Scur to Belturbet

SHANNON NAVIGATION

- Clarendon Lock closed from November until January to allow for dewatering and gate measurement for lock gate replacement scheduled winter 22/23
- Commissioning of new 72m floating mooring installed at Grace Road adjacent to the railway bridge, Athlone
- Ongoing maintenance of navigation aids between Athlone and Banagher
- Removal of trees at Connaught Harbour
- Strategic maintenance works on the New Cut
- Alterations to the operating system at Athlone Lock for ongoing flood defence
- Completion of fendering at Coosan Point jetties
- Continuation of fender and jetty plank upgrades throughout North Shannon
- Navigation marker maintenance throughout North Shannon.
- Strategic maintenance works at Port, Cuilticonway, Rooskey Weir and Lock.
- The routine maintenance programme will continue throughout the winter including: bank repair, hedge-cutting, power-washing and litter removal as well as maintenance to structures
- Construction of Portumna Blueway
- Replacement of half of Dromineer floating jetties
- Replacement of WI signs across all our facilities in the South Shannon
- Cleaning vegetation from five lock chambers on the Erina Canal
- Upgrade of steel railings and stone pavers at Lock Quay, Limerick
- Cleaning grounds of Bridge House, Portumna

Editor's Corner



Another of our younger members, Rebecca Lindley of IWAI Powerboat, who is passionate about all things 'high speed', shares her memories of lockdown and how safely enjoying her new Jet Ski provided welcome respite from troubled times, see page 34.

'Every day is a school day' and as you thumb through this issue you will find plenty to educate, inform and inspire during the cold, dark days of winter. Perhaps you will be encouraged to tackle a tideway or learn to sail...

We are fortunate in IWAI to have connections with Olympian sailors. In this issue it gives me great pleasure to present a feature recalling Alf Delany's sailing life penned by his son – himself a past Olympian. Bringing it up to date; following the Tokyo Olympics and before rushing off to Oman to partake in the 49er World Championships, I was lucky enough to secure an interview with Robert Dickson. At just 23 years of age, Robert will be an inspiration to many, especially our youth members. Special thanks to David Branigan/Oceansport for some spectacular images, Irish Sailing and Siobhan Bigley, the driving force behind these features which begin on page 14.

Navigating tideways may prove exciting but there are dangers lurking no matter how experienced you are. Find out how John Dimond discovered that 'time and tide wait for no man' in 'High and Dry' on page 18. Luckily, there were no such mishaps when Sandra Willis navigated her narrowboat down the rivers Barrow and Nore, join her on page 20.

A few days after you receive this issue our Association will receive the keys to *Dunrovin*. Overwhelming generosity has been shown in regard to donations, however, we need one more push to make it over the line. Discover more on page 12.

Finally; I wish to warmly welcome Keith Bogan (of isupply) to the IWN team and thank you all for the continued support.

Have a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Alison Alderton, IWN Editor

SHANNON LOCK & BRIDGE TIMES

LOCKS & BRIDGES

Period	Weekdays	Sundays
Mar 14-Apr 3	09.00-18.30	10.30-16.00
Apr 4-Sept 25	09.00-20.30	09.00-18.00
Sept 26-Nov 1	09.00-19.30	10.00-16.00
Nov 2-Mar 13	09.00-12.30	10.00-12.30
Lunch break	13.00-14.00	

PORTUMNA BRIDGE

Period	Weekdays	Sundays
Mar 14-Apr 3	09.45, 11.00, 12.30 14.30, 16.30, 17.30	11.00, 12.30 14.30, 16.00
April 4-Sept 25	09.45, 11.00, 12.30 15.00, 17.30, 19.30	11.00, 12.30 15.00, 17.30
Sept 26-Nov 1	09.45, 11.00, 12.30 15.00, 17.00, 18.30	11.00, 12.30 14.30, 16.00
Nov 2-Mar 13	09.45, 11.00, 12.30	11.00, 12.00

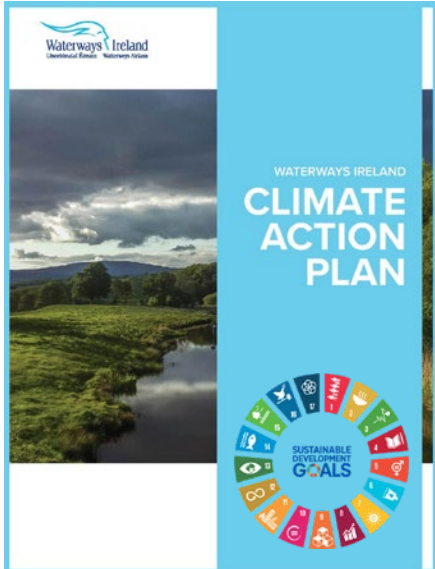
WATERWAYS IRELAND LAUNCHES PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ITS FIRST CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Waterways Ireland (WI) is calling on members of the public to have their say on its new Climate Action Plan, the public consultation for which is now open. This is the cross-border navigation authority's first climate action plan. Focused on the decade to 2030, it sets out the vision for how WI will reach its key climate action targets. This includes reducing emissions by at least 51% and improving energy efficiency by at least 50%. It also addresses WI's aim to be a net zero organisation by 2050.

Commenting, WI chief executive, John McDonagh said: *'Waterways Ireland is the custodian of Ireland's inland navigable waterways and we see climate change as a critical challenge for our organisation and its stakeholders. As the body responsible for vital shared heritage across the island of Ireland, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to take a leadership role in climate action. We will enthusiastically take on that mantle by identifying transformative and innovative ways to engage in climate action initiatives over the lifetime of the plan.'*

Under the draft plan, WI commits to considering climate action in decisions around the acquisition, operation, maintenance and disposal of its assets, as well as the procurement of energy, consumables and third-party services. These activities will be supported by targeted actions and initiatives in priority areas to implement climate mitigation and adaptation measures. Progress in achieving key results will be measured quarterly, ensuring that activities are agile and can keep pace with carbon budgets and other measures developed for the sector.

Mr McDonagh added: *'The draft plan reflects our commitment to take meaningful climate action to protect our inland waterways so they can continue to be enjoyed into the future. This includes adapting the waterways network to address climate change risks and reviewing programmes on an ongoing basis. Transport and energy are key target areas for us, and we will focus on targeting the decarbonisation of the buildings, infrastructure, assets and fleet responsible for the greatest proportion of our emissions.'*



WICAP - Public Engagement

The Waterways Ireland Climate Action Plan (WICAP) is open for public consultation until January 17, 2022: <https://www.waterwaysireland.org/about-us/public-consultations>

We would welcome your comments

- **Email:** climate.action@waterwaysireland.org
- **Post:** WICAP Consultation, Waterways Ireland, Dock Road, Drewsborough, Scarriff, Co. Clare V94 H7N1

MARK'S MYSTERY

Where was this photo taken ?

Some waterproof goodies from Aquapac for the first correct identification drawn from the bag.

Send entries to: Mark Maguire, 24 Clonkil, Callan, Co. Kilkenny, or email markmaguire76@gmail.com



Brian O'Reilly correctly identified Blackhall Bridge, Portarlington in IWN Autumn 2021.



www.aquapac.net

Cover Story

Ireland's 49er duo, Robert Dickson and Sean Waddilove, competing in the Men's Skiff event on Day 7 and winning the final race of their series at the Tokyo Olympic Sailing regatta at Enoshima Island, Kanagawa. With hard work and dedication; Robert has come a long way from our inland waterways to competing at the Olympics. Read our interview with him on page 16.

Photo: David Branigan/Oceansport©



Coronavirus COVID-19

Disclaimer: Some information regarding the current COVID-19 outbreak may be outdated at time of publication. Please follow all government guidelines relating to social distancing and self-isolation.

Continual updates on the COVID-19 virus are provided by both the HSE in Ireland and the Public Health

Agency in Northern Ireland. To access the latest information about the virus, you are advised to refer to the relevant websites:

HSE coronavirus page at www.hse.ie (Ireland).

PHA website www.publichealth.hscni.net (Northern Ireland).



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FIRST BOAT OF ITS KIND LAUNCHED ON LOUGH ERNE

Erne Water Taxi launched their new all-electric passenger boat aptly named *Island Discovery* on Lough Erne during September. The *Island Discovery* pontoon boat is the first of its kind on the island of Ireland and has already been turning heads this summer. *Island Discovery* is a four pod boat offering seating and tables for up to 12 passengers. This unique boat provides breath-taking panoramic views of Lough Erne and its shore line wowing visitors, young and old.

Speaking about the new boat, Erne Water Taxi owner Barry Flanagan said 'This has been a labour of love. It is an idea I have had for a long time and I am so proud to have launched this new experience on the Erne. Pontoon boats are popular in the US and on the continent and I am delighted to have brought one to Ireland to add to my existing Erne Water Taxi experience.'

Island Discovery offers visitors a silent, all-electric eco-friendly motor experience and is the best way to appreciate the views and hear the distinct sounds of our waterways. It is fully accessible for people who use wheelchairs, as they can embark directly from jetty to deck and into the spacious four pod compartment without the need to transfer from their wheelchair. Barry is very proud of the level of accessibility that the silent boat provides; this is the first time that this type of level access from a jetty, without the use of a ramp, has been possible on Lough Erne.

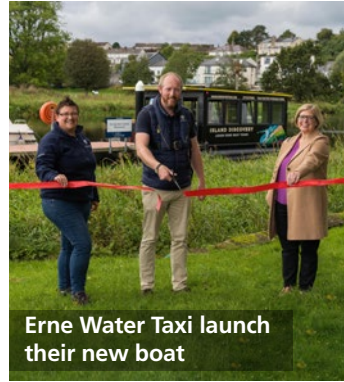
Barry continues, 'We are also taking this opportunity to officially launch the new and exclusive *Island Discovery Experiences Tours* which will be available from this Autumn, enabling visitors and locals to enjoy Lough Erne in all its autumn and winter glory in the added comfort of our all electric floating venue. We have an Autumn Cruise programme which sees the introduction of bespoke live music journeys such as a Whiskey and Blues Cruise and a Gin and Jazz night that can be booked throughout the year.'

The project received financial support from Tourism Northern Ireland's Experience Development Programme and the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership's Community Heritage Fund. Lesley-Ann O'Donnell, Head of Programmes at Tourism NI commented: 'We have been delighted to work with Barry to support the *Island Discovery* boat which is an exciting development

for tourism in Fermanagh. This unique and fully accessible boat will provide spectacular views of Lough Erne, allowing visitors to explore Fermanagh in new ways and contributing to the recovery of tourism in the region.'

For more information on our tours, cruise programme or private bookings, please contact: www.ernewater-taxi.com

Photos: Ronan McGrade Photography



Erne Water Taxi launch their new boat



Island Discovery

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COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

6 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 11AM OVER ZOOM



ATTENDANCE

18 members, 6 apologies

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

President Alan Kelly welcomed everyone opening with reflections on the effect of the Covid pandemic. He stated that despite the easing of restrictions and the largely positive impact of vaccines, Executive continues to advise caution around the holding of branch events and activities, urging organising committees to assess the local situation regarding virus transmission rates before confirming any gatherings.

Despite this meeting and the following EGM taking place via Zoom; The President remained optimistic that come 2022 we would be able to convene council face-to-face. He thanked everyone for their patience and understanding. Thanks were also expressed to all Executive Directors, branch committees and all members who have played their part in keeping IWAI alive during such challenging times.

2021 proved another busy and productive year for IWAI and a summary of the previous year (since the last Council meeting in March 2020) was given and combined with the agenda, the key points of which are detailed below:

- Insurance - At the Association AGM in April, Siobhan Cluskey stepped down as Insurance Officer and the role was taken up by Ross Millar. The President thanked Siobhan for her service and Ross for taking on this important portfolio.

Branches were reminded that IWAI holds three insurance policies that cover specific activities. The general policy covers most organised IWAI events and activities. Please note that cover for events exceeding 301 persons is currently suspended. Branches are reminded that any work parties held under the general policy are subject to the Safety Rules for Work Parties and other health and safety criteria, all of which are available in the policies section on the IWAI website. Branches were also reminded that this policy does not cover vessels.

The Marine policy covers specific infrastructure including jetties and buoys placed by branches. Any alterations or proposed additions under this policy must be notified to Ross before any changes can take effect. The Project policy covers a small number of branches involved in large scale restoration work only. A reminder will be issued in the coming weeks but if you have a query, please get in touch with him directly.

- Membership - The AGM also saw the appointment of Brid Joly (IWAI Boyle River) as Membership Secretary following Michael Geraghty's retirement from the role. The President, once again, thanked Michael and wished the best of luck to Brid who has been busy getting to know the ins and outs of her role under Michael's guidance. It is important to recognise that IWAI has increased membership this year despite the cancellation of all events. The President stated that this bodes well for the future growth of the Association and asked for support for Brid as she steers IWAI into the next phase of its development.
- Executive - The Executive Directors have held four meetings since March, along with regular phone and email exchanges. The President has also represented IWAI at the AGM of The Wheel, a support organisation for the charities sector. The President went on to announce that IWAI has filed its first Charities Governance Code Compliance Report with the Charities Regulatory Authority. This report records that IWAI is almost fully compliant with the 37 core standards and many of the additional standards in the Code aimed to improve the corporate governance of charities across the island.
- IT - Earlier this year, Executive discussed a proposal from Colman Byrne (webmaster) to implement a substantial upgrade to our online membership system and associated admin apps. This was discussed in more detail later in the meeting.
- IWAI - Communication is key and has become even more important

in recent times. The President was happy to report that Alison Alderton would be remaining on as editor of IWAI for the foreseeable future and was looking forward to many more excellent editions of our flagship magazine.

- Liveaboards - Later in the meeting John Fitzgerald made a presentation on and sought Council approval for IWAI's Liveaboard Policy and working document. This ground-breaking piece of work based on the findings of a national member's survey has, for the first time, presented an Association position regarding living aboard a vessel in Ireland. These documents have already informed Waterways Ireland's thinking around liveaboards and houseboats and the work of John and his subcommittee has been highly commended by John McDonagh WI CEO.
- WI - Positive and constructive engagement with Waterways Ireland (WI) has continued throughout the year. Meetings have included sessions with consultants on WI's brand identity, a stakeholder forum on WI's Climate Action Plan as well as informal and formal discussions with the CEO and other senior staff covering a myriad of topics including: engagement between IWAI and WI at regional and national level, Bye Laws, Houseboats, Dublin Docklands Masterplan and Strategic Long-term Planning and Maintenance.

WI have requested IWAI input on plans for the remaining WI canal boats, the provision and location of dry dock facilities in Dublin and a list of projects for future consideration. IWAI has shared its draft Liveaboard Policy and working document and the Nav-Watch report and associated survey data to better align WI's thinking regarding living aboard and preventative maintenance. The President stated that there have been serious issues with navigating the canals this summer. While we cannot expect every issue to be fixed immediately, he assured that

WI are listening more than ever before and that we are entering an era where experience on the ground will inform the approach to future proofing our inland waterways as navigations.

- Canal Bye Laws - The Canals Action Group reconvened in the summer and has been very active shaping a new set of draft Bye Laws. Once approved by WI and the Department, these proposals will go to a 90 day public consultation at which point IWAI members and branches will have the opportunity to give their view. A lot of hard work has been completed and efforts are ongoing to help ensure that these draft Bye Laws will not be contentious and will achieve their purpose of modernising the regulatory structure for navigating the canals.
- Internal IWAI projects - The President announced IWAI's first Writer in Residence will proceed with a programme of activities in 2022 (see AOB) and that The Special Branch Project Fund has received four applications from: IWAI Royal Canal (previously allocated but not awarded), IWAI Lagan, IWAI Boyne Navigation and IWAI Lough Derg (in favour of the E-SIG group). After a delay, the assessment subcommittee has been reconvened under new Chair Peter Maxwell and consists of Tony Byron, Tom Connery, Jim Henning & Thomas Meegan. The best of luck to all applicants and awards will be made in the coming weeks.
- Dunrovin - The President announced that our Strategic Partnership Project with RNLI at Dunrovin is nearing completion with a target handover date of the turnkey IWAI building of 17 December. Following the fit out of Dunrovin by continued effort of Martin Donnelly and the Dunrovin Development Subcommittee and the generous support of branches, individuals, members of the public and the corporate sector, we look forward to throwing open the doors of IWAI's new home early in 2022.

See pages 12 & 13 for the latest news on Dunrovin.

Concluding his address the President requested that a moment was taken to remember friends and family we have lost in recent months.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was proposed by John Martin and seconded by Colin Corcoran

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were proposed by Ian Craig and seconded by Peter Maxwell

CORRESPONDANCE

None

FINANCE

John Martin thanked all the branch treasurers for their hard work and hoped that they would all have the accounts ready for early January 2022. He spoke of the need to keep branch reserves low to comply with charities regulators. Also, of available grants to branches for larger works and that he could assist branches in making applications.

INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES PATHWAY ACTION PLAN FOR RECREATIONAL BOATING

As Colin Becker, who represents the Association on this committee, was unavailable the President presented a slide presentation on his behalf. He spoke of the need for vigilance with regards to alien species and

their identity. There is little progress to report, due to Covid, but a further update will be available for the next Council meeting.

DUNROVIN

Martin Donnelly updated attendees on the *Dunrovin* project and presented a picture display of where the project is now. Martin spoke of the construction being completed by December 2021. He spoke on fundraising and how that is progressing well with the second payment, due on completion of the build, already in the bank and the committee working hard to secure the final payment. He appealed to branches to continue supporting the build and maybe consider donating excess funds available to the project. He spoke of the rising costs of materials affecting the fit out but not the fixed price build.

LIVING ABOARD IN IRELAND

John Fitzgerald started his update by thanking all the members of the sub-committee for their hard work and time given to bringing the draft policy to Council. He then presented the draft policy document to Council and gave an insight of the working document behind the draft policy. Both documents will be made available to officers in the coming days to share with their branches.

Kieran Baker from IWAI Kildare proposed that the vote to adopt the

policy be postponed allowing branches to examine the documents and in the absence of a quorum. This was agreed.

CHILD PROTECTION AND GARDA VETTING

None

UPGRADE TO IT SYSTEM

The President explained the need for an upgrade to the membership system in order to make it more secure. He explained that tenders were sought but only one quote for €12,000 has, thus far, been received. As a total of three quotes are required to proceed, Executive have agreed to delay the upgrade until after *Dunrovin* is completed, that in itself might lead to higher costs due to inflation. It was suggested that circulation of the specification to Council members to try to seek interest from a wider group of consultations may prove beneficial.

AGM

The proposed date for the next AGM is **26 March 2022**

AOB – WRITER IN RESIDENCE

In November 2020 IWAI Kildare member Erin Fornoff successfully applied for Arts Council Funding as the IWAI Writer in Residence. The programme was suspended due to the Covid pandemic but the Arts Council have honoured the funding for 2022.



Erin has suggested a number of activities for consideration as part of her Writer in Residence tenure, these include:

- An inland waterways poem
- Public mural in association with artist Joe Caslin
- Travelling photo exhibit
- Photography contest
- Rally events
- Video pieces
- Inland waterways book

Branches are encouraged to incorporate Erin's programme into their own events schedule for the coming year. If you are interested please contact Erin directly on Erin Fornoff +353 (0)86 263 0885 @jarsofshine fornoff@gmail.com

A more detailed email will be issued to branch officers shortly

The President thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

John Fitzgerald, Hon. Secretary

EGM REPORT

6 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 01PM OVER ZOOM

The Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) was called to make technical changes to the constitution of the Association to reflect the charities regulations.

CHANGES

The changes were proposed by Peter Maxwell and seconded by Colin Corcoran.

MOTION

The motion was passed by 32 votes and 5 proxies making up the quorum required

The President thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

John Fitzgerald, Hon. Secretary

SAVE THE DATE NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING AGM 2022

The proposed date for the Annual General Meeting of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland is **Saturday 26 March 2022**
Details to be confirmed - *John Fitzgerald, Hon. Secretary*



Please note: In line with policy, the AGM documents will be distributed electronically, so make sure honsecretary@iwai.ie has your current email address

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IWAI contacts

Who's Who In The Association

The website includes a contact form www.iwai.ie



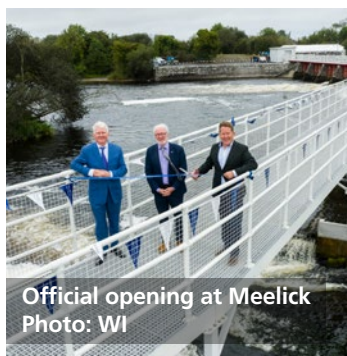
NEW WALKWAYS

MEELICK WEIR AND WALKWAY

Following a four year restoration, to repair extensive storm damage, the Meelick Weir and walkway on the River Shannon was officially opened in September by Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD and Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD.

The infrastructure links the historic village of Meelick in East Galway to Lusmagh in West Offaly and forms part of the Hymany Way and the Beara-Breifne Way walking trails. The weir, which was built in the 1840s as part of the Shannon Navigation, is more than 300 metres in length with a 12-slucie barrage used to maintain and regulate the navigation level between Athlone (Lough Ree) and Meelick (Lough Derg).

Construction work on the €3.2m Waterways Ireland project began in 2019 and included the restoration of the weir, its 300m walkway and new tilting weir gates, along with other weir refurbishment. The new mechanised tilting weir system, means that staff will no longer have to manually install and remove the sluice boards in response to changing water levels.



Official opening at Meelick
Photo: WI

Speaking at the official opening, Minister Darragh O'Brien said, 'I am delighted to be here today to officially open Meelick Weir and walkway after the completion of a hugely significant programme of work by Waterways Ireland on this state-of-the-art project. Recognising the importance of the weir and the walkway, I was pleased to support the project and to ensure funding was made available from my Department in

the amount of €3.2m. It is great to see it brought to completion and ready for its official opening today.'

'Meelick Weir has a dual purpose, not only is it a critical piece of infrastructure in maintaining the navigation level between Lough Ree and Lough Derg, it also serves to unite the communities of Meelick and Lusmagh and offers a fantastic amenity in the area. I know this is very popular with local people and also provides a wonderful tourism opportunity for Galway, Offaly and Tipperary – the three counties that it borders. The restoration of the weir and walkway opens the potential for these historic structures to play an important role in tourism in the future.'

Malcolm Noonan commented: *'This whole area is hugely significant from a heritage perspective. This project opens the walkway and allows people travelling its route to visit Victoria Lock, which was built in the 1840s also as part of the navigation system, and the famous landmark 'the three counties Shannon view,' where the counties of Galway, Offaly and Tipperary meet. In terms of wildlife, it is within both the River Shannon Callows Special Area of Conservation, and the Middle Shannon Callows Special Protection Area.'*

BOARDWALK UPGRADE AT CARRICK-ON-SHANNON

Leitrim County Council has improved shoreside access to its Carrick-on-Shannon public marina, replacing its existing fixed boardwalk with a new 340m long by 2.4m wide floating walkway.

Working with Deane Public Works, Inland and Coastal Marina Systems (ICMS), designed and manufactured the new installation which includes a 3m wide fuel berth and eight access gangways with lifebuoy housings and safety ladders, all anchored in place by a new piled mooring system.

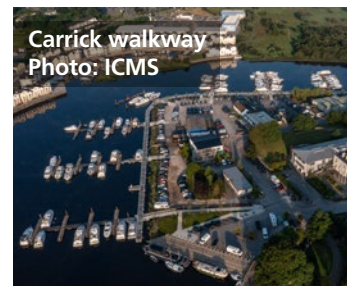
The heavy-duty pontoon system, topped with ICMS' unique glass reinforced concrete (GRC) decking, provides safe and non-slip, all year-round access to the marina's on-site facilities for the public and all leisure boat users,

which includes local boat hire companies.

'Being a very popular cruising area, it was important that we completed the installation with as minimal disruption as possible to the local access,' says Ger Buckley, project engineer at ICMS. 'We achieved this by taking a phased approach, closely liaising with all contractors and programming the activities in.'

Wrapping around the entire length of the marina site, the public boardwalk now connects the quay side to the access road and car park, allowing users to enter the marina via a new gangway on the eastern side and exit on the northern side.

'We're delighted with the quality of the new boardwalk, an attractive upgrade to the waterfront providing a strong, stable walkway for visitors,' says Shay O'Connor, senior engineer with Leitrim County Council. 'Even though conditions were challenging at times with access routes being periodically submerged, the team at Inland and Coastal completed the installation efficiently and without disrupting the activities of the regular commercial users of the marina.'



Carrick walkway
Photo: ICMS

'The boardwalk will provide a new walking route along the waterfront for both locals and visitors and new access for users of leisure vessels which cruise along this section of the River Shannon, boosting the tourist industry which plays a major role here in Carrick-on-Shannon's economy.'

ICMS specialise in the design, manufacture and installation of marinas. Clients include local and regional Government, Port and Fishery Authorities, Marina Operators, Sports and Recreational Clubs, Development Consortia, Consulting Engineers, Architects and Main Contractors. The company works internationally and has three offices; Banagher in Ireland, Lossiemouth in Scotland and Southampton, England.

For more information on Inland and Coastal Marina Systems visit: <http://www.inlandandcoastal.com>

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"Rainbow reflection"

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 which is an overnight stay for
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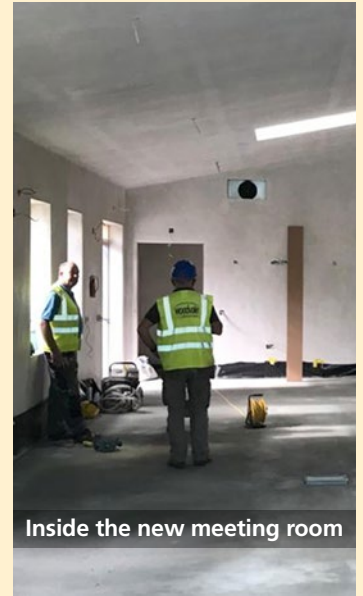
DUNROVIN

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

By Siobhan Bigley



East face of new building



Inside the new meeting room

On 17 December 2021, the IWAI will officially receive the keys to the new clubhouse, *Dunrovin*. This has been a challenging project from the outset, for a volunteer Association made up of a diverse range of people with differing viewpoints and objectives. Additionally, there were challenges in raising the necessary finance and, if that was not challenging enough, the build of the RNLI boathouse and IWAI clubhouse all happened during a pandemic.

Despite the obstacles the new building is nearing completion and thanks to the amazing generosity of the Association, its branches and individual members, the financial position is beginning to look healthy. With a final push over the next twelve months, the Association should be

able to self-finance the build. The individual members have risen to the challenge and have marked their support with financial donations ensuring the project's success. The corporate sector has also shown extraordinary generosity in these difficult times to the national project. This has been an 'Everest' like achievement and the Association can be very proud that it has both honoured the bequeath from the Rice's and secured the future of the Association and all its members.

There is still an opportunity to donate to *Dunrovin* and your donation will be acknowledged on an honour roll that will be recorded in the completed building as part of our living history in the story of '*Building Dunrovin*'.

1. To donate electronically:

Account: Inland Waterways Association of Ireland *Dunrovin* Fund

Number: 39940112 IBAN IE27 BFOI 90163439 9401 12

2. To donate by cheque please post (enclosing your details) to:

Kevin Clabby, Barrymore, Athlone, Co Roscommon N37 X073, email: iwaidunrovin@gmail.com

3. To donate online, please visit www.iwai.ie and donate through the shop.



North east corner of new building



Work in progress on new building



Dunrovin from Lough Ree's Inner Lakes

The project has been delivered by a volunteer committee who have worked tirelessly dealing with all the challenges giving of their time, expertise and energy to ensure the project reaches fruition. The committee was Chaired by Martin Donnelly and consists of Kevin Clabby, Jean Kennedy, Siobhan Bigley, Carmel Meegan, Tony Byron and the Late Tommy McLoughlin.

It has been the commitment, resolve and tenacity of each member with their own and collective portfolios who have seen the project from the very humble beginnings from the first RNLI meeting on 16 January 2015 in Drogheda to completion of the project almost six years later. At times the challenges were considerable but the resolve to plough on and overcome never weakened. This is the IWAI spirit and commitment and it is this commitment and volunteerism that makes the IWAI what it is.

Each committee member has derived great pleasure from the use of our inland waterways and celebrates in the delivery of a project that will ensure the safety of people using the waterways by having a permanent RNLI base on Lough Ree with a clubhouse that will preserve and house our archives, ensuring future generations will know our history.

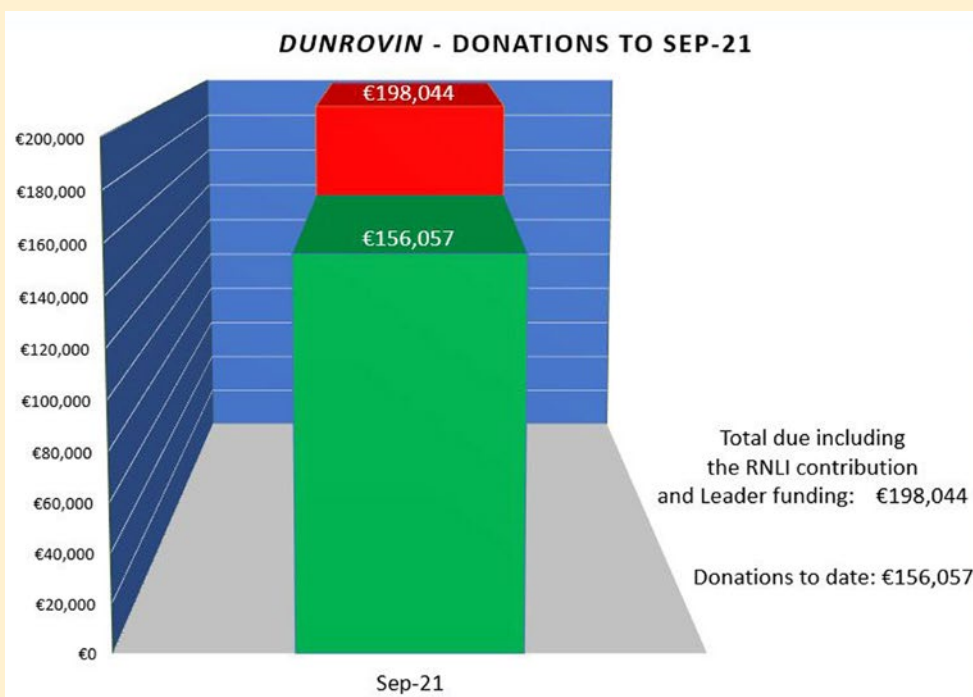
The *Dunrovin* committee encourages members to become involved in the Association, volunteer for roles in branches, serve on committees, work parties, social events and even serve as directors of the Association. The reward is delivering projects and developing strong lasting friendships in the process. The IWAI will only exist if there are new people prepared to volunteer. If more people volunteer a little of their time the burden is lighter all around for everyone.

Not everyone will see the value of *Dunrovin* today, however, the new clubhouse will

always belong to the IWAI. The members of the future will have the opportunity to choose for themselves how to use and enhance the facility as the Executive at the time deems fit. They will not have to find the funds or manage the project but will be able to fully enjoy what has been delivered both today and in the future.

We must also remember the RNLI and their role in the delivery of this national project and their commitment to a strategic alliance with IWAI. Not only their commitment to *Dunrovin*, the site and the establishment of a permanent RNLI station on Lough Ree but also the professional commitment of their staff, consultants and contractors to work with IWAI in the design, planning, build, project execution and delivery of the IWAI's new home at *Dunrovin*.

Photos and chart: Dunrovin Development Committee



Total raised from all sources: €156,057

Total due including the RNLI contribution and Leader funding: €198,044

Total Shortfall to date: €41,987

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Dunrovin Development Committee a very sincere thank you for your support.

www.iwai.ie/dunrovin/

OLYMPIC SAILORS

As an island standing on the furthest western edge of Europe, embattled by the ferocious Atlantic weather, Ireland has a long and proud sailing tradition. In this issue we explore one of Ireland's earliest Olympic sailors whose roots were firmly planted in our inland waterways. Alf Delany, one of IWAI's founding fathers, competed in the first post war Olympic Games and went on to become one of the cornerstones of the fledgling Olympic sailing community. Today Ireland is enjoying considerable success, punching far above its weight on the international stage, with its Olympian 49er duo of Robert Dickson and Sean Waddilove.

Over the following pages we delve into these Olympians, highlighting their sailing roots in our inland waterways, specifically on the Shannon's great lakes. Lough Ree Yacht Club, one of the oldest yacht clubs in the world, has been heavily involved with bringing forward young, enthusiastic sailors.

The Shannon One design and the Water Wags are still sailed competitively both on

Lough Ree and out of Dún Laoghaire. In November, LRYC held its first competitive skiff event with the 29er being most popular with youths. The 29er class is seen as a stepping-stone to the larger 49er class which bodes well for future rising stars in the Irish sailing community.

It is heartening to see such a wealth of passion, skill and determination for a competitive sport and we wish the Irish Sailing Team the very best of luck in future competitions. Our Association is quite unique in that we cover a whole host of boating and related activities. Where else could you find a single Association with such a plethora of diverse members including: heritage barge owners, canoeists, cruisers – some even venturing out onto the Atlantic, powerboaters, jet skiers and sail craft – all with one overriding passion in common – our wonderful inland waterways – a precious resource for all to make use of and cherish.

IWN Editorial



Sail boats at LRYC
Photo: Alison Alderton




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DR ALF DELANY – OLYMPIAN AND SAILOR

By Dr Owen Delany

Alf sailed in two Olympic regattas; the first regatta was in 1948 which was the first Olympics after the Second World War. The main Olympic events were held in London; the sailing events were held in Torbay on the Devon coast. The facilities in Torbay had been built to train landing craft during the war and these were used for launching boats for the regatta. Alf was selected to sail in the Swallow class which was a keelboat. As there were no Swallow boats in Ireland at the time Alf sailed one for the first time when he got to Torbay. Many of the competitors were in the same position as the Irish team. Alf was a dinghy sailor and before he went to the Olympics nearly all his sailing had been in Dublin Bay in Water Wags and on the Shannon in Shannon One Designs. The Irish team was selected following a weekend of trial races in Firefly dinghies. At the time Alf was a single-handed GP in Dublin. He was married with a family and had to arrange for a locum for the two weeks he was away. This was a period of truly amateur sports where sailing was a weekend activity. Alf enjoyed this period and made many lifelong friendships.

In 1952 Alf was again selected to sail for Ireland. These Olympics were held in Helsinki this time in the Finn class. The Finn class is a single-handed, single sail, 14 foot dinghy that was sailed in Helsinki for the first time and it is still one of the Olympic class boats up to the present day. As previously, the Finn class did not have a fleet in Ireland, Alf had to wait until he arrived in Helsinki to sail a Finn. These boats are physically and technically very testing.

In 1960 Alf was the Irish Sailing Team doctor at the Rome Olympics where the sailing events were held in Naples. He was a member of the Olympic Council of Ireland for 10 years representing the interest of Irish sailors.

Alf was born in 1911 in Longford Town; his father was a GP there and the family spent most of the summer on the River Shannon. His father, uncles and many family members were all very keen sailors and had a variety of different boats on the Shannon. They were members of the North Shannon Yacht Club and Lough Ree Yacht Club and attended the regattas throughout the summer months. Alf learnt to sail in a Shannon One Design in Tarmonbarry and spent many hours and days sailing his beloved Shannon One Design called *Kiwi* (Number 37). Alf raced many other classes but his favourites were *Kiwi* and his Water Wag *Pansy* (Number 3). It was not just sailing Alf was interested in; aged 20 he raced in Hydroplane speed boats at several venues including on the Shannon. He was Irish champion in the 250cc class.

He was a very enthusiastic sailor and most of his summer holidays away from his GP practice were taken on the Shannon at Lough Derg and Lough Ree regattas. In 1939 he won every race at the Lough Derg Regatta. His name and *Kiwi's* grace many of the trophies in both Yacht Clubs. His Water Wag *Pansy* in my opinion was his favourite boat and he was class champion 15 times. He continued to sail her well into his eighties winning his last race in her in 1988. Alf was very committed to the Shannon and all the Irish Waterways. He was one of the founder members of the IWAI and was elected President in 1967. In 1958 Alf and his brother Pompey together with Peter Denham took the tender from the Delany Yacht *La Vague* along the Royal Canal to prevent the canal from being permanently closed though sadly they failed.

Very little so far has been mentioned about his professional work as a GP. He worked single-handed and was on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week. He was often called out at night and even on Christmas day. He was extremely dedicated to his patients and worked well into his eighties looking after some families for over 60 years. He was involved in establishing the Irish College of GP's and later was elected as its President.

Alf's energy and enthusiasm meant that he participated in leadership roles across his various interests. He was very involved in the establishment of the Irish Dinghy Racing Association (IDRA) in 1946 which eventually evolved into Irish Sailing – the organisation which oversees all aspects of yachting and



The late Alf Delany

sailing in Ireland. Unsurprisingly he was President of IDRA where he encouraged dinghy sailing in boats of all shapes and sizes as well as establishing many new sailing clubs. Alf lived until he was 95 years old and his interest and knowledge of sailing was as great as it was throughout his life.

Like my father, I too sailed for Ireland, in the Munich Olympics of 1972.

Photos: courtesy of Dr Owen Delany



Kiwi



Watercolour of Alf and Pat in *Pansy*

ROBERT DICKSON – OLYMPIC 49ER



Right in the middle of it Tokyo 2020
Photo: Dave Branigan/Oceansport

49ers Robert Dickson and Sean Waddilove made their Olympic debut at the Tokyo Games. Despite missing out on a medal, the team signed off on a high winning the final race and having gained invaluable experience to stand them in good stead for the 2024 Olympics. These will be held in Paris, France with Marseille as the sailing venue.

I caught up with Robert, who started his sailing career on our inland waterways at Lough Ree, prior to him heading off to partake in competitive sailing in Oman via a training camp in Marseille.

INTERVIEW WITH OLYMPIAN SAILOR ROBERT DICKSON

By Alison Alderton, Editor, Inland Waterways News

Congratulations on qualifying and taking part at the Tokyo Olympics. Now you have had time to let the experience of taking part in the Tokyo Olympics sink in, how does it feel having had the honour of representing Ireland?

It feels great to be able to represent my country at such a high level. I felt so much pride in being a part of Team Ireland more so than any regatta I had done before this. There was such a buzz about with all the

teams wearing their national colours and getting to see all the other Irish athletes from all different sports all coming together as a team to represent Ireland was amazing. It was an incredible feeling to be a part of that.

Some of our readers may not be too familiar with the type of boat you race and what it involves. Please can you tell us a little about that?

I helm a 49er which is a two-man skiff at 4.99m long. It has a sail area of around 57m². In order to gain enough leverage to counteract the force of the wind hitting the sails we both have a trapeze wire which we hook ourselves into and stand horizontally out the side with just our feet touching the boat. All this power helps us to reach top speeds of around 22 knots. We usually have between 12-15 races at 30mins each over five to six days of racing. There is a huge amount of technique and strategy involved as well as a high level of fitness. My role as helm involves steering the boat in the right direction and decision making and my crew Sean makes the boat go fast by controlling the power in the sails.

How do you and your sailing partner, Sean Waddilove, get on; are you great friends both on and off the water, do

you have a good camaraderie and if so how important do you feel this is in the sport?

Sean and I have been great friends since we were eleven years old sailing in the Optimist class. For a team to work it takes years to build up good communication and understanding of what we both need to make the boat go fast. You don't have to be friends but it definitely helps. Training and racing at an elite level comes with its inevitable highs and lows so always having a team-mate who will back you up can be extremely helpful.

It must have taken a lot of hard work and dedication to have reached this point in your sailing career? What does both your physical and mental training regime entail?

For the last 5 years we have been training everyday with around 1 day off a month. We try to sail a minimum of 20 days per month. We cycle for aerobic fitness 3 or 4 sessions a week and do 3 gym sessions a week too. On top of that is takes hours of boat repair, maintenance, optimization and fund raising for equipment and travel. Often we have to manage logistics for several boats in several countries so we can move from one regatta



Robert (L) and Sean (R) on their 49er at Tokyo 2020
Photo: Dave Branigan/Oceansport



Jostling for position at Tokyo 2020
Photo: Dave Branigan/Oceansport



Robert and Sean lean out at Tokyo 2020
Photo: Dave Branigan/Oceansport

to the next quickly and without losing days on the water because of boat transport.

Winding back the clock – how did you first become involved in sailing. I believe there are connections with Lough Ree and the inland waterways, also that your parents are IWAI members, can you tell our readers more?

My parents have a boat on Lough Ree called Ninezick, an ex-hire boat. I was first put in a Shannon One Design when I was only a few months old but I first learned how to sail when my parents got me and my sibling 'oppies' that we kept on the roof of the boat using a DIY make shift crane to put them in and out. I'm not sure what age I was when my dad first taught me how to sail but from when I was 8, I spent many summers living on the boat and doing the youth sailing courses in a little wooden 'opyy' from Lough Ree Yacht Club.

Did you ever take part in any of the Shannon rallies or other local events?

I did the rallies on our boat Ninezick with the whole family when I was really young and sometimes our cousins, on the Dickson side of the family, joined us on their barge The Owl. I remember having a lot of fun doing all different events and challenges

along the way. I also have done a few LRYC Regattas

What advice can you offer to younger boaters and sailors?

I would say the best advice I can offer would be just to remember to have fun. We sail because we love the sport. Taking a step back and just having fun with it is important because that's why we all go sailing in the first place.

Do you have any other interests, sports or hobbies other than sailing that you partake in?

Apart from cycling, which I do for fitness, I enjoy other types of sailing in any boat I can get my hands on. I enjoy surfing and kitesurfing and I was also getting into rock climbing before Covid hit.

With all the experience gained at the Tokyo Olympics do you feel you are now in a good position for the next games and is this what you will be concentrating on going forwards?

Yes, we are still a young team, I'm only 23 so I still have a lot to learn but the Tokyo Olympic Games was an incredible learning experience. It sets us up nicely moving

into the next cycle. The next 3 years will be focused on the Paris Olympics in 2024. There are a few key regattas along the way to secure qualification again and potentially pick up a few medals to help with funding and put us into a good position heading into Paris.

Finally – Please describe one of your happiest days spent on the water.

I have had a lot of days on the water so I don't think I can pin-point one day in particular. I love being in and around water. A few hours on the water whether it's sailing or some other kind of watersport or even coaching younger sailors, it always lifts my mood, gives me energy and makes me happy.

Thank you for taking part in this interview. I and indeed the IWAI wider family wish you all the very best for your future sailing ventures.

You can follow Robert on the following social media sites: instagram @mr_robertdickson and @teamdicksonwaddilove and on facebook 'Team Dickson Waddilove 49er Ireland'.

To discover more about sailing in Ireland visit Irish Sailing at www.sailing.ie

HIGH AND DRY

By John Dimond

Birgos aground



Carrick-on-Suir

How long should one stay in Carrick-on-Suir? A week, a few days? Many have enjoyed the hospitality and friendship of this Tipperary town while moored at its marina but I say 15 to 20 minutes is too long!

THE SUIR

I've heard great talk of the River Barrow,
The Grand Canal, and Dungarvan Bay,
The River Nile, where the crocodile
And alligator do sport and play;
But of all the rivers in the Irish nation,
To hear them praised myself I can't endure,
Barring one I doats on, where boats they floats on
You know I mean the sweet River Suir.

As you can read in the verse above Phil Smith sings the praise of boats floating on the River Suir. I have to say that over the years many an enjoyable trip up and down the River Suir has been had and many more to come but I shall not be spending that '15 to 20 minutes too long' in the town again.

No stranger to the tidal navigation, even in the dark as the tide rises close on three hours before a 1am high water, in order to ensure a pint was had before the pubs closed the front door. Leaving Carrick an hour or so after tide starts to fall – no problem! Alas, this August I made a mistake...

It was a spring tide which are 3ft+ higher and go down some 4ft+ lower than normal tides having only the same six hours to go out with a high pressure over Ireland probably making it go down another 2ft+. Little or no rain fell for weeks, I spent 15 minutes too long in Carrick-on-Suir. The tide below was already falling downriver some time before the turn in Carrick. It was a 40 minute journey to Fiddown where Morris Oil tanks are below the bridge. Then down by the shallows at Rocketts Castle and the slipway at Polerone, Mooncoin, a place

known by all even though they may not have ever seen the River Suir but who have heard the Kilkenny hurling supporters in full voice on All Ireland day. You may know the second verse.

THE ROSE OF MOONCOIN

Flow on, lovely river, flow gently along,
By your waters so sweet sounds the lark's merry song.
On your green banks I'll wander where first I did join
With you, lovely Molly, the Rose of Mooncoin.

From a ballad written in the 19th century by Waterford schoolteacher and poet; Watt Murphy.

On that sunny August day the boats neither floated on Phil Smiths sweet river nor did Watt Murphys lovely river flow gently along. Below Polerone Quay my Albin 25 *Birgos*, drawing only 2ft 9ins, touched bottom and grounded. With the River Suir draining out at speed through Waterford city and on to the sea at Hook Head meant no turning back; we were left high and dry – our boat eventually sitting about 4 feet above the low water mark.

The river which was once a highway for trade used by the Dowley family with the Knocknagowns big and small, the Rocksand up to 1973 and Morris Oil shipping traffic up to their tanks to 2006, all using the tides. When the building of the Waterford Bypass Bridge downriver brought a finish to oil traffic to Fiddown; the navigation buoys, maintained by Morris Oil, gradually disappeared. Lack of navigation buoys was not an excuse for being stuck high and dry with sand everywhere as the tide flowed out. It was more to do with spending 15 minutes too long in Carrick. If it had been a neap tide with low pressure, we would have had 2ft more water and made the 30ft deep channel beyond where we grounded. Perhaps if William O'Callaghan had not stopped dredging sand in 1983, or if the

oil ships had not stopped going to Fiddown with their propellers moving the sands, a deep channel may have remained. Sad to think that in today's environmental climate with a shortage of sand for the building trade the powers that be are looking at using plastic waste to meet the demand. Meanwhile our rivers are getting choked up with the stuff and the restricted passage of the navigable waters effecting the drainage of the uplands and towns along the riverbanks.

I am delighted to report the walk about on the extensive sand bank, which extended from the Kilkenny shore on the north to the Waterford shore to the south (both shores could be reached just getting your feet wet), we recovered only three small pieces of plastic, one plastic bottle and a sardine tin (no fish to be had) in the litter pick.

On the rising tide, we made our way back to spend another enjoyable night in Carrick. Leaving on the turn of the tide the following morning we passed by Mooncoin with 6ft of water under our keel.

Lesson learnt, don't spend those extra 15 minutes in Carrick but we are not put off, plans are being made for a return journey on the June bank holiday weekend – interested in coming? It should be one of many trips and gatherings down the Barrow, out onto the tide, exploring the tidal zones including the Nore and the estuary throughout 2022.

TIDES

As the Earth rotates tides are created by the pull of the Moon and the Sun giving us two high and two low tides every 24 hours and 50 minutes. When the Earth, Moon, and Sun are aligned with one another, their gravitational forces act in the same direction causing spring tides, these tides are more extreme highs and

BOAT TRIP - CORK HARBOUR TO THE 1984 SHANNON RALLY

By Michael O’Riordan

Up early that morning we prepared to leave Cork Harbour and Butlers Marina in East Ferry for Ballycotton and then on towards Dungarven Harbour. We reached Dungarven Harbour and after a good night at the pub and too many pints, our skipper John, decided we would head for Dunmore East – bad decision as we were about to find out!

Heading out of the harbour, not following the instructions that we were given at the pub the night before and with the skipper not yet fully awake, the boat came to a sudden grinding halt.

‘What’s this, sand everywhere? John quickly wake up. The tide is going out and the boat is leaning over on to its side.’ John wakes up, shakes his head.

‘What is happening?’

‘I think we are aground’

‘How did that happen?’

‘Forget how it happened, just get us out of here, the boat is on its side, we are on an island

of sand with everyone at Dungarven Harbour watching! With not a bite to eat or drink, we will have to wait hours for the tide to come back in.’

‘What happens then?’

‘We will have to try to right the boat!’

As the tide returns with water all around us, panic sets in. Backs to the side of the boat and push up hard. Relief as the flooding tide rights the boat – thank God! We wait for a while and then with the engine running decide whether to head back.

‘John you must be joking, let’s just get out of here!’

Heading for passage east and then New Ross the following day, we then went on up the Barrow where at St Mullins Lock we had to wait for the tide. We managed to operate the lock with the aid of a vice grip. We must have hit every rock between St Mullins and Graigenamanagh. In the pub they were

talking about two mad Cork men trying to get up the river!

‘John, I think we had better try the other pub OK?’

After discussing our problem with some locals, we met Jim Guill whose father had fallen off a barge and drowned the previous Christmas. Jim promised to pilot us as far as Carlow and he must have known every ash tree and rock on the river.

Our new friend left us at Carlow but by now we were full of confidence and continued unassisted to Shannon Harbour. We passed some of the most beautiful scenery, birds and butterflies in Ireland. It was heaven on earth so we carried on northwards up the Shannon to Athlone, Sean’s Bar and the IWAI 1984 Shannon Rally. What an experience, the memories will always be with me – despite running aground!

lows. When the Moon and the Sun act against each other, the result is unusually small tides, called neap tides. High tides normally happen on a two week cycle with a full or new moon.

Wind and weather also can affect water level, low-pressure systems, heavy rain falls causing more water and higher flows downriver and strong onshore winds pushing water onto the coast can cause tides much higher than predicted. Conversely, high-pressure weather systems can push water levels down, leading to lower tides, low rain fall causing less water and lower flows downriver and strong offshore winds also affect levels as it can push water away from the coast.

The tidal range on spring tides on the Barrow, Nore and Suir would be 4.5m while the neap tides would be 2.0m. One way to gauge the tide is the rule of 12: first hour 1/12, second hr 2/12, third hour 3/12, fourth hour 3/12, fifth hour 2/12 and sixth hour 1/12. So the fastest flow is in the third and fourth hours. All tides would have approximately the same six hours whether in flood or ebb but as you work further upriver these decline in favour of the flow on the river (more time ebbing than flooding).

We would normally leave Carrick-on-Suir about one hour after high tide with about one hour journey to Fiddown and on to Polerone, Mooncoin where the tide would have turned 10 minutes before Carrick, normally no problem. With the long, dry spell, low flow and high-pressure the water was sucked out of the river and with a build-up of sand on the riverbed, much less clearance below the boat. The result was being beached, high and dry, on that nice sunny day in August!

Photos: John Dimond

SHANNON BOAT RALLY 1984

The 24th Annual Shannon Boat Rally attracted a large entry of 86 boats, from small open boats through motor and sailing cruisers to barges, which more than filled the spacious new harbour at Dromod where the fleets from Athlone and Carrick assembled on Saturday July 28th.

Not all the larger craft made it up the Mountain River to the second night’s mooring, but most made the passage into Kilglass Lake with only the largest barges having to remain below the bridge at Carnadoe Quay. Thence the rally travelled to Drumsna where the new extension to the old harbour proved both useful and comfortable.

From Drumsna the rally moved to Carrick through the Albert Lock (which, like the Clarendon Lock at Knockvicar, is now operated by an electrically driven hydraulic system, giving rise to thoughts of what might have happened had there been a power failure at either lock during the rally’s lengthy passage, for no manual fall-back system has been retained). From Carrick on to Lough Key where two nights were spent in wet and windy conditions and where much green algal pollution was noted in all parts of this beautiful lake.

Notwithstanding the poor weather there was good participation in all the traditional competitions before departure to Cootehall and thence, finally, to Carrick for the end-of-rally dinner, which was attended by the President of the IWAI, Mr John Suitor.

IWN archives

SUMMER ON THE BARROW

By Sandra Willis

Having brought a 57ft narrowboat over from the UK in early 2020 I am gradually exploring the Irish waterways. After wintering along the Grand Canal, once lockdown was lifted, I thought this summer could be the year to do the Barrow as it was such a late start to the year. So, I departed Lowtown in early May and was on the Barrow until October. I meandered everywhere taking a few days at every possible location to explore the area.



Sandra on her narrowboat

First stop was Rathangan with the help of lock keeper PJ through the locks as I singlehanded my boat. Rathangan has plenty of handy mooring spaces with nearby shops and takeaways (pubs were closed at this time). Next stop was Monasterevin after doing the two double locks again ably assisted by PJ. It's still unusual for me to see the Irish system of leaving the middle gates open in these double locks. The first time it happened I honestly thought the lock keeper had forgotten to close them!

At Monasterevin the Barrow Navigation crosses the River Barrow on a splendid aqueduct and of course there's also the excitement of the road lift bridge to navigate. It's certainly a magnificent sight to look back at the bridge with the Monasterevin church in the view behind. By now I have been passed into the hands of lock keeper Joe. There are moorings at Bell Harbour which always seem to be full but there is a spot right opposite beside the road or you can go below the lock and moor in the small harbour which I preferred.



Monasterevin

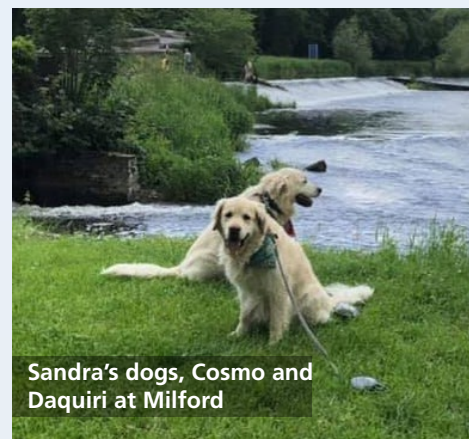
From here it was just a short hop to Fisherstown which has a quirky thatched pub, The Fisherman's Inn, which I had been told was not to be missed. Sadly, the pubs were still closed but it was great to see it from the outside and I certainly visited on my way back. Next it was Vicarstown where there's a narrowboat hire business, Barrowline Cruisers, should anyone not want to take their boat down the Barrow and then down the last three locks now assisted by Noel and out onto the river at Athy.

I moored at Ardreich just on the outskirts of Athy and was made incredibly welcome by two fellow boaters, Bernie and Charlie, who live there. And joy oh joy, the pubs opened outdoors that weekend so we sampled the food and drinks at the canalside pub of Auld Shebeen with their fantastic and innovative use of outdoor space. I had to tear myself away from Ardreich but further explorations beckoned. Now I'm ably assisted by Billy for quite a while as I move downriver. He's a font of knowledge about the Barrow with recommendations of where to moor and what to see, always on hand to assist and advise especially where care needs to be taken with the river flow. A true ambassador of the River Barrow.

I stopped off initially at Maganey Bridge and then proceeded down to Carlow. The moorings are not quite so picturesque at Carlow as you're moored by the side of buildings. Carlow is a bigger town so handy for shopping and eating out. Carlow also has Cliff running boat trips from boattrips.ie who often gave a friendly wave as he passed by, showing his next gang of

visitors the beautiful waterway. There are some fabulous jetties on the park side which sadly are too shallow to moor at which is a shame.

In need of a more rural setting, I departed Carlow cruising past I think possibly the biggest weir on the Barrow. Well, put it this way I kept well over to the right. Although I've been told it isn't possible for a boat to go over them accidentally, I'm not going to test that theory! For the whole cruise you're switching between the main river and sections of cut with locks to navigate around the weirs and river gradient



Sandra's dogs, Cosmo and Daquiri at Milford

changes. The beautiful setting of Milford was my next stop and I can see why there's many a wedding photo taken alongside the weir in front of the mill here.

Unfortunately, I had a poor internet signal at Milford which I needed for work so I only stayed a couple of nights, but my dream came true at my next stop – I moored right by a castle! Leighlinsbridge was picture perfect. The bridge spanning the river had beautiful pink flowers tumbling down, there was plenty of moorings with grassy areas again with tumbling pink flowers, friendly pubs, a fantastic corner shop and butcher who couldn't do enough to help me. It also had a working tap. Leighlinsbridge had information boards everywhere explaining its history and four themed gardens. You can probably tell Leighlinsbridge was my favourite place on the River Barrow.



Boats on the Nore



Leighlinsbridge

I finally tore myself away from Leighlinsbridge and moved onwards to Bagenalstown. Deceptively the cut section here has quite a strong flow which thankfully Billy had prewarned me about plus he was there to grab ropes as I came into moor. I got a great welcome here as Mark from the coffee shop opposite Barrow Blend brought me a complimentary coffee and local, Christy Kane, popped by to welcome me too. Bagenalstown has an extremely handy Aldi right by the moorings and an outdoor swimming pool which I must admit was not much warmer than the river. From here I dashed away on a holiday to Belfast which had been postponed from last year due to Covid, then it was onwards to Goresbridge. I stayed quite a while here as I was finally able to have family visit from the UK. It was scorching weather day after day and was a popular and handy swimming spot. There's now also a new café opened right along the river since I visited.



Goresbridge

From Goresbridge it was down to Graiguenamanagh in one hop with the help of lock keepers Paul and Pat. Here I went from one extreme to the other after barely seeing any other boats for weeks and having my pick of the mooring spots it all changed as it was rammed with boats and difficult to moor a boat of my length. It was also the only place on the whole Barrow I thought I could get a pumpout only to discover it's not worked for years so there is no pumpout on this 100km stretch! There are working taps at Graiguenamanagh but trying to get



Graiguenamanagh

moored on them with a long boat is another mammoth task as one is so shallow and tucked under the bridge and the other the trip boat operates off. I managed to get about a third of my boat moored although I must admit I had the view to die for looking back upriver. I enjoyed looking around and especially following the monks sculpture trail but must admit it's gone on my list not to revisit on a 57ft boat due to lack of moorings.

I waited here for two other narrowboats as we'd planned to do the tidal cruise to Inistioge together. We cruised down to St Mullins with the scenery getting more spectacular by the minute. Again, no room to moor so we had to tie up in the lock for the night to wait for the early morning tide.



St Mullins Sea Lock

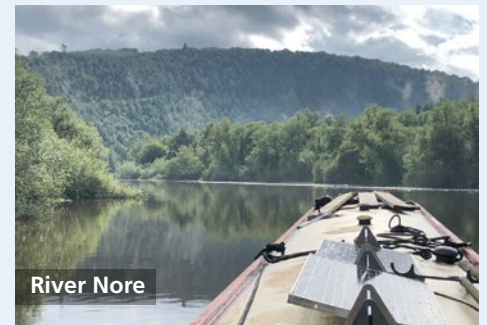
The morning dawned and I was off first, picking up my hugely knowledgeable crew of John and Billy from IWAI Barrow who I'm extremely grateful to for accompanying me. Our route was along the River Barrow past its junction with the River Nore to New Ross marina to wait for the next tide. I had done tidal cruising before but never moored up in the tide so was glad to be under John's expert instruction of how to approach the jetty to moor and ecstasy – there was a pumpout!



Sandra's narrowboat on the tideway

After a few hours stopover we retraced our route and this time turned onto the River Nore. My oh my it was stunning; I'd been told it's some of the most spectacular cruising in Ireland and I wasn't disappointed. The heavens did open big time on us but once the

rain cleared seeing the steam rising off the trees was magical. We were soon at our end destination of Inistioge. Here you can moor along the wall and as the tide goes out the boats sit on the bottom until the tide comes back in.



River Nore

With narrowboats being flat bottomed we all lined up and as night fell, we gradually dropped in the dark until we settled on the riverbed. As it was so dark by then I set my alarm for 5am and sunrise, so I got chance to see the boats in daylight and watch them gradually refloat again. What an exciting finish to my trip down the Barrow – a must do once in a lifetime trip.



Narrowboats at Inistioge

So, in summary despite it being a dry summer I managed to get all the way down the Barrow without issues in a 2ft 8in draft boat.

The Barrow is a spectacular stretch of waterway that really needs to be cruised more. It's a true escape from the busier stretches of waterways. The best bits of my trip were undoubtedly the lock keepers whose passion for the Barrow was fabulous and who made my trip so pleasurable and the trip to Inistioge is one of those very special bucket list cruises.

Photos: Sandra Willis, John Dimond, Cliff Reid and Dylan Vaughan (Fáilte Ireland)

Read Sandra's blog at: www.waterygy3.wordpress.com/



New Ross



Inistioge Crew

TOWING THE LINE

FIRE ON BOARD

There has been much publicity recently about fire on board with several investigations ongoing or awaiting publication. Our claims culture and legal system tends to prevent rapid widespread distribution of source or cause information, which can prevent us all from being prepared or avoiding fire in the future. Whilst institutions consider and debate, there are some obvious pointers that can guide us.

Any fire or explosion will require combustible fuel and, surveying your boat, you will find a lot of that about. Don't forget to consider that spare gas cylinder – and the petrol for the outboard engine. The UK Boat Safety Scheme requires regular testing of electrical and gas or fuel systems. Although this is not mandatory in Ireland, their checklist can be used to do your own safety check on your boat. The website www.boatsafetyscheme.org notes that 'most boat-related incidents involve someone on board doing something to cause it, or not doing something to avoid it'.



31B refloated after fire

The checklist is long and will lead you to some surprise discoveries on your boat. In brief, however, the check looks at all combustion fuels (petrol, diesel, kerosene, gas) to verify that they are stored safely, vented adequately, piped correctly to their appliances and have suitable leak detection and emergency disconnect systems. You can – and should – do this check yourself annually. Don't wait for an insurance survey, do the check yourself every year. It may save your life.

ELECTRIC MOMENTS

The arrival of electrical connection points on many waterside jetties has finally allowed the use of the hairdryer, microwave or a simple battery charger to top up the ship's 12 volt battery supply. Many boats now have mains 230 volt wiring installed and seek a 'hook-up point' even if staying only for one night. Some boats however, will use a simple 'trailing lead' with a portable multi-gang socket unit. Whatever system is used, it is important to note that the hook-up provides 230 volts electricity, which can present danger of electrocution even in the safety of your own home.

Adding canal and river water, and Ireland's frequent rain, only increases the danger of electrocution. Ensure that any hook-up is rated splash proof IP44 (better still to have spray

proof IP65) including not just the connectors but also the cable. Don't forget that the cable may be walked upon along the jetty, or may submerge into the waterway, and should therefore be tough and suitably rated for external use.

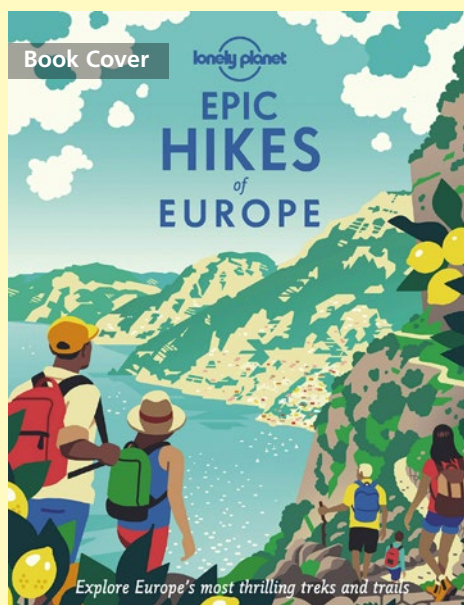


Marina electrics danger

Where mains wiring is installed inside the boat, ensure that a registered electrical contractor (RECI) installs the wiring – or at least examines the installation afterwards – to ensure suitable earthing and protective devices are installed. Anode protection should also be considered as stray currents in a waterways environment can accelerate corrosion of steelwork, notably the steel hull, propeller or shaft. When walking along the jetty, look out for cables which can present not just a trip hazard but also risk of electrocution where cables are not suited for the environment. Non waterproof plugs and also poor connections at the plug on a jetty are frequently observed but unfortunately not frequently resolved. Before touching anything on the electrical hook-up point, ask yourself – does it look safe?

GRAND CANAL IS NOW EPIC

Surely the Grand Canal is at its pinnacle now that it has achieved a place in the Lonely Planet 'Epic Hikes of Europe' publication. The eyes of the world are now firmly upon the towpath route from Dublin to the west, or turn left and head south to the Barrow. Where once the Royal Canal stole the minds of the travelling public with its new cycle route; the Grand



Book Cover

lonely planet

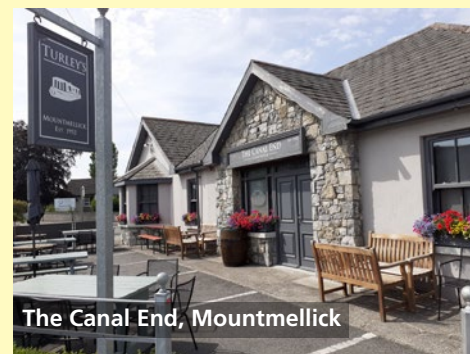
EPIC
HIKES
of
EUROPE

Explore Europe's most thrilling treks and trails

Canal has taken a leap beyond the borders to reach out to international travellers. Biking the Grand is of course already possible but some grassy stretches may require an all-terrain or mountain bike, whereas the Royal boasts solid surface all the way. The Grand Canal will soon have a solid surface to the southeast once works to the proposed new cycle lane are completed. I suppose that gives you time to get into your workshop and get your bike ready. Meanwhile though, the route is still described as 'epic'. To purchase the book visit www.lonelyplanet.com

FORGOTTEN BRANCH

It's a quick diversion off the M7 at Portlaoise to find the town of Mountmellick, terminus at one time of a branch line of the Grand Canal. The Mountmellick line has long been abandoned and is infilled for the most part. The original lock gate and lock cottage remains intact at Monasterevin, where a canalside sign indicates 'Mountmellick Branch (derelict)' by way of a predetermined death sentence for the branch. Even Google maps has erased all trace of the canal in Mountmellick and the extensive local historical signage tries hard not to mention it. Conspicuous in the town, however, is The Canal End bar owned by Turley's which displays a canal barge on its logo. The Canal End bar is located beside a house named 'Harbour View'. What appears to have been the canal basin and stores, surrounded by a high wall, is now a scrap yard. Alas, my search nearby did not reveal any trace of the canal itself and I would be delighted to discover more history or even any photos of Mountmellick basin and the canal.



The Canal End, Mountmellick

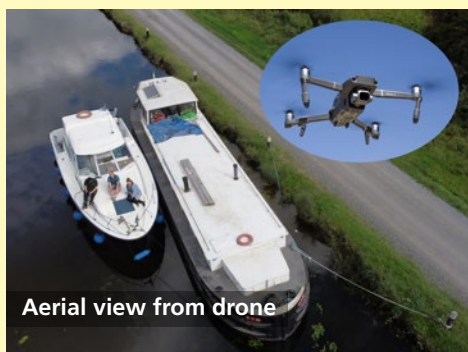
WATER WATER EVERYWHERE

But not a drop to drink. Yes it has been an awful summer – if you have been hoping for rain, that is. Ireland's waterways have suffered from the continued drought, while we basked in the fantastic dry sunny summer. The rivers Shannon and Barrow seem to have held up but according to widespread social media reports the Royal Canal and Grand Canal suffered badly from drought. Is this caused by climate change or do we have a fundamental waterways management question unresolved? The two hundred year old canals infrastructure is showing its age and leaks from culverts and canal banks may be contributing to the low water levels. That

is even before we mention the lock gates, leaky joints and faulty paddles! Lack of traffic in 2021 indicates that user behaviour is not a key cause of low water levels on the canals. An overview may conclude that there are just insufficient resources available to repair and rebuild the system. Emergency works and fire fighting disasters as they arise may be robbing the resources needed for proactive planned maintenance and replacement. I think it is time to stand back and look at the bigger picture...

DRONING ON

Some of our members have now taken off from the waterways and up into the air! Drone technology has arrived across our waterways as drone users (are they referred to as pilots?) fly their drones to bring impressive aerial video and photo shots from above. Improved technology and lower prices have made the use of drones commonplace. Previously there was a risk of drone malfunction, pilot error or communication loss resulting in the drone crash landing. Near waterways, such a landing would prove terminal for the drone. Newer drones have an autopilot facility which allows input of the required destination on a map and the drone does all the rest. Allowances for wind variations, terrain height, obstructions and communication failure are now all handled automatically by the drone itself. Piloting skills required are now minimal so a drone may be a handy device to have on board to create those cruise videos for uploading. Waterway scenes do look so much better using a birds-eye view. Put one on your Christmas shopping list.



Aerial view from drone

SHOP ONLINE

Lockdowns encouraged us to shop online but don't forget that the IWAI online shop has existed long before lockdowns. There are lots of goodies to browse through from the comfort of your own armchair as well as some basic items like lifejackets (and a very useful recharge kit) that we should all be updating anyway. The wide range of books includes the RYA Powerboat Guide (useful for any skipper) and RYA Knots (useful for any crew). The flags section includes international code flag W, which signals 'I require assistance'. The toys section disappointingly includes only an IWAI teddy bear. Maybe members could propose other items for this section? Profits from IWAI shop go towards IWAI campaigns and work to maintain, restore and improve the inland waterways. So go shopping – you are giving to a worthy cause www.iwai.ie/shop

THAT SINKING FEELING

The Royal Canal Deep Sinking, on the outskirts of Dublin City, was in the news this year with objectors raising issues about the proposed new canalside developments. However, the

Deep Sinking was again in the news in August when a cyclist fell from the towpath, some 20ft above the water level, near Coolmine. The towpath is very narrow and uneven along this stretch. There are historical reports of horse drawn barges coming to difficulty when their horses fell into the canal in the early days of the waterway. Let's hope that recent events highlighting the unsuitable towpath lead to proposals for a substantial upgrade especially as the route forms part of the Famine Way and the cycle route to the west of Ireland.

EVERY STEP WE TAKE

Covid has put a lot of pressure on us. Even without Covid, however, we are all under pressure from the demands of work and family life. Waterways and boating is sometimes about getting away from it all. 'Life is better by the water' is a refrain of Canal and River Trust UK so if you feel under pressure, escape for a while to the waterways. Chat with other boaters and locals from the town. They will appreciate your interest and may offer some valuable help and ideas. Take a moment to listen to others who might also be under pressure – a smile can relieve a lot of worries. Together we can help each other to overcome the seemingly insurmountable pressures of life. To quote a leading charity, 'It gets better with every step we take'.

LIVEBOARD DEBATE

Living on board boats – should they, shouldn't they? After years of gossip and more recent discussion on social media the debate participants now includes legislative bodies. This should finally move to regularise the living on board rules. Make sure your opinion counts. There is little point sounding off in a pub if your opinion is not heard in the corridors of legislative power so join in the debate. IWAI assembled a forum into which members contributed. The result is the basis for discussions with various authorities and there will be time to review any proposed rules and plans before they are implemented. But are there liveboard members of IWAI? Well why not? IWAI is the established body for representing waterways users, including opinions from right across the spectrum. Join IWAI and you will be kept advised of the ongoing debate and how to contribute.



Liveboards at Sallins

HOUSEBOATS

Bluefield Houseboats recently installed four new floating homes on Lough Neagh, according to a Facebook upload. Delivered for Mid Ulster District Council, the four new 'floating pods' are intended for holiday lets but do point the way ahead for using waterways not only as a solution to the housing crisis but also a solution to flooding and positive green building. The

new houseboats are moored at Ballyronan Marina and Caravan Park, near Crookstown and one of the units is fully accessible. Bluefield Houseboats (www.bluefieldhouseboats.com) has its manufacturing base near Belfast and worked closely with their flotation partner, Inland and Coastal Marina Systems Ltd (www.inlandandcoastal.com) to successfully deliver the project.



Bluefield Houseboat interior
Photo: Supplied



Bluefield Houseboat exterior
Photo: Supplied



Bluefield Houseboat bathroom
Photo: Supplied

WHO ARE THEY?

IWAI is YOU. Thanks to all the writers who contribute to IWAI, people like you. IWAI invites input from all members, to ensure a balance of opinions. Some members already do sterling work. In recent issues: Reg McCabe, IWAI Dublin, focused on the Dublin planning scene. Denis Baker wrote of the Naas Corbally Line and hopes for its reopening. Tim Meehan detailed Tullamore and the plans for its canal harbour. Mary Cox highlighted the abandoned Kilbeggan Line. Such varied and well researched articles will contribute greatly to the success of these projects. Thanks to all contributors who have helped shape the waterways plans for the future.

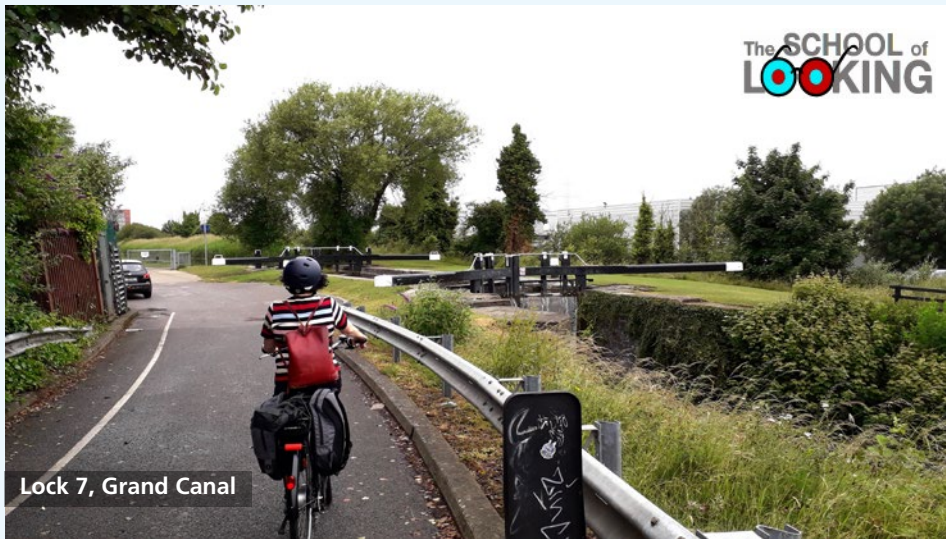
Now it is your turn. Don't just sit there fuming. If there is some waterways item on which you have strong opinion, do write, email or contribute to IWAI. By encouraging debate, you will cause action and you may find you are part of a large body which already agrees with you. Together we can improve the waterways – work with us.

Text & photos: Towpath Tim unless stated otherwise

email – towpathtim@gmail.com

THE WATERWAYS BY E-BIKE AN ECO SHOWBOAT PROJECT UPDATE

By Anne Cleary



Lock 7, Grand Canal

In early 2019 we planned a journey on the inland waterways on a carbon neutral boat to raise awareness of climate change.

Two and half years later – following a global pandemic and an international supply chain crisis – the project has experienced some delays. We are facing the same challenges as millions of people worldwide: unavailable workforce, material shortages, cost increases.

Frustrated with the delays, we decided to do what we could, and in summer of 2021 set out to cycle the interconnected network of waterways by E-bike, to prepare for the journeys on a carbon neutral boat, now programmed for 2022.

THE GRAND CANAL

On 7 July, released from pandemic quarantine, we headed off on economical, bottom of the range E-bikes to cycle the length of the Grand Canal.

On day one we cycled from Dublin to Tullamore, 90 kilometres, along paths of varying quality.

The excellent cycle paths in Dublin gave way to fragments through the Dublin suburbs and Kildare. We scrambled over gates and through long grass but finally, as we approached County Offaly, the path improved and the sun came out. The greenway lay straight and wide in front of us. Between Tullamore and Shannon Harbour the canal cuts through the Ferbane Bog which fuelled the Ferbane power station from 1957 to 2003. Much of the ecosystem was destroyed but thankfully it is now being restored. These bogs are important carbon sinks as well as rich reserves of biodiversity.



Daingean, Grand Canal



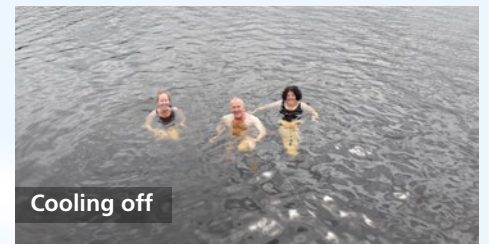
Meelick Weir, River Shannon

THE SHANNON AND LOUGH DERG

We left the Grand Canal at Shannon Harbour and followed the Shannon south towards Banagher then Portumna. A wide band of marshy land teeming with watery life – the callows – borders the Shannon. Hoping to keep close to the water's edge we took a wrong turn and came across the newly reconstructed Meelick weir and walkway which spans the callows for three hundred metres. It was breathtaking at dusk to be suspended over this extraordinary landscape.

Continuing along Lough Derg we stopped at an abandoned jetty, previously the embarkment point to visit Inis Cealtra (Holy Island), where Denis plunged into the clear cold water for a swim.

Next day we continued down through Mounshannon towards Limerick where the



Cooling off

Park bench near Glencara, Royal Canal



admirable Pat Lysaght brought us out on *The Eye of the River*. Pat at 78 is nimble and fit, on the water from morning to night, guiding boats through the treacherous waters of the Abbey River.

THE BARROW

We set out from Waterford Harbour aiming to follow the Barrow navigation from the estuary to County Kildare. This wasn't easy, the estuary is bordered by farmland, the road following a winding and hilly route far from the water's edge.

At Saint Mullin's we joined the towpath. It was an unusually hot and sometimes tropically wet summer; the landscape lush as a result. Belts of thick forest lined the river between St Mullins and Graiguenamanagh – temperatures hitting a dizzying 30.8 °C. This brought about behavioural changes in the population. Large groups of overheated people lounged in cool pools behind the Barrow weirs, children dive-bombed into the water from the bridge by Lock 20 – like scenes from 1950's Ireland.



Near St Mullins, Barrow

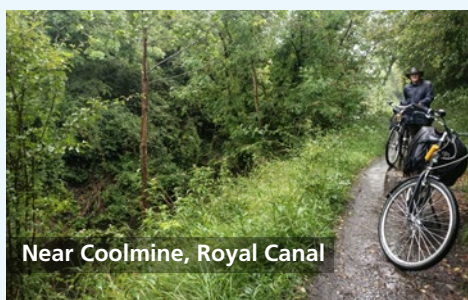
We cycled from Waterford to Sallins in this intense heat feeling privileged – it was an unusual summer in so many ways, we were very happy to be part of it.



Luke Kelly's head, Royal Canal

THE ROYAL CANAL

A few days later we repacked our E-bikes and hit the Royal Canal. It was raining heavily when we passed the giant coppery head of Luke Kelly near the Sheriff Street Lift Bridge. We persevered through the heavy drops, before being forced to descend on the rocky, slippery precipice that borders the Royal Canal near Coolmine, to carefully pick our way by foot, pushing our bikes and blinded by sheets of rain.



Near Coolmine, Royal Canal

At Maynooth Harbour the rain cleared and we were relieved to join the Royal Canal Greenway; a 130km long surfaced pathway. The harbour at Enfield has recently been beautifully restored by the OPW and there are many more interesting pieces of built infrastructure along the Royal Canal: a small aqueduct where the canal crosses the Blackwater River, the dry dock at Mullingar, elegant locks and mill houses.



Blackwater Bridge, Royal Canal

After Mullingar we passed through austere peat landscapes, bereft of human presence, with the exception of an isolated park bench somewhere near Glencara.

LOUGH REE

The Royal Canal meets the Shannon at Clondra and Tarmonbarry and the Shannon widens out into the breathtakingly beautiful Lough Ree lower down at Lanesborough.

Leaving Lanesborough we turned left and found ourselves on a rough track through the Kiltveevan peatlands. It was a hot day and this isolated pathway through wind-knarled trees was silent except for the hum of bees and a distant rumble of traffic on the Athlone road. Knotty tree roots broke our trajectory but we bumped along happily discovering small inlets with boats moored in a haphazard way including a curious bright yellow hovercraft at Gailey Bay.



Hovercraft, Lough Ree

We stayed overnight in Athlone before making a mad dash to Clonmacnoise, again in pelting rain, to meet our friend and fellow artist Kevin O'Dwyer who has photographed Clonmacnoise for many years in every season.

THE UPPER SHANNON AND THE ERNE

Towards the end of the summer we finally reached the beautifully proportioned small harbour at Dromod, near Carrick-on-Shannon, then headed north to join the Shannon Erne Waterway. We lost our way – the area is a puzzle of lakes and rivers – and had the delightful surprise of discovering Acres Lough. We entered Northern Ireland, at the Belcoo Gap, taking the main road to Enniskillen to make up for lost time.



Dromod, River Shannon

Enniskillen is a paradise for fishers, boaters and a wonderful nature reserve in itself but it is hell for a cyclist. So we ditched our bicycles to explore the rich and diverse shorelines of the city by foot.



Fishing the Erne, Enniskillen

From Enniskillen, on the final day of our recce, we cycled south along the Erne to take the bus home from Belturbet. Across from the bus stop a sculpture commemorating two young people who died in a car bombing in 1972 reminded us how far our country has come since then. The waterways are unconcerned with the artificial barriers we create as human beings, flowing from one territory to the next, sustaining life as they go. As guardians of the precious resource of water we must learn to do the same.



Memorial, Belturbet

Photos: The School of Looking©

The Eco Showboat project is supported by the Arts Council, Creative Ireland, SFI, LAWPRO and local authorities across Ireland.

PORTOBELLO

By Gráinne Bath Enright

Cycling through the bustling streets of Dublin can be a scary thought for most of us. However, when the city went into lockdown, I like many others saw the quiet streets and empty roads and took my chance.

Starting with my local neighbourhood and slowly branching out along the River Dodder, and then a little further to Portobello, I soon discovered cycling along the canal was the peace, and pockets of life, I'd been longing for.

By now, the coffee shops had quickly adapted to takeaway and it soon became the social event of the week, coffee and a walk. I cycled along the canal witnessing couples getting out of the flat they'd found themselves far too familiar with, the square eyed office workers taking retreat from endless zoom calls, the dogs overcome with joy at their second walk of the day and the wildlife, oh there was wildlife. Has it always been there?

In a vibrant city we had long been spoiled for choice, yet here we were, city dwellers whose urban jungle was shut down. And so we flocked from the buildings with an instinctual pull towards the parks, the trees, the waterways. It's not that I fell out of love with the city, I rediscovered it.

My bike wanderings had me visually taking notes of the buildings I'd never really noticed before. A greater curiosity for the architecture and cityscapes we immerse ourselves in. The buildings; hosts to

life. Living, working, dancing, creating. They hold us, and all we have. It was only now that so many of them lay vacant that I saw it. Their continuous presence, their historical foundations and shiny glass, promises for the future. I cycled down the Grand Canal and wondered at them all.

Photos: Gráinne Bath Enright

PORTOBELLO - From the collection 'Dublin - A city of villages'

Discover more and view a selection of Gráinne's artwork by visiting:

Instagram - @grainne.b.e

Website - www.gbathenright.com



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LES'S LESSONS

By Les Saunders,
41M



Mind your wash

MIND YOUR WASH

I must preface this article, as with all of these Les's Lessons, by saying they are based on the result of 45 years of experience on our inland waterways. Please bear in mind that the advice given is based on that experience and does not take away the responsibility of the skipper for the vessel and its crew in any way.

So what is 'wash' and why is it so important to be prepared in both ways – either producing the wash or handling the wash. 'Wash' is produced when certain types of vessels use a lot of power or are travelling in shallow water leaving a large deep wave behind them. When I started boating over 40 years ago, a 30ft boat with a single small engine was a large boat. The biggest 'wash' was usually produced by lake boats or speedboats and for most purposes, this was relatively easy to address by simply turning into the wave. More recently, there are a lot more boats of about 40ft length with twin very powerful turbocharged engines. These boats are very suitable for ocean travelling and indeed many of them do travel to sea but for inland waterways, they are quite unsuitable. They usually have exposed propellers, are deep in the water and the turbos require running hard to keep them from clogging up. The result is that many of these vessels travel too fast

producing too much wash which threatens the safety of other vessels and destroys wildlife. However, we have to live with the reality and so it is important to understand how to address the issue from both sides.

You might wonder why I have brought this issue up now. Well, it is because of what happened to me this year on Lough Derg. I own a 60ft, 60ton barge which is quite stable and can handle most wash if taken correctly. The weather was superb, sun shining, no wind, flat calm lake and just cruising along at my usual sedate 4kts. I did observe a rather large cruiser passing in the distance on full throttle, nose pointing to the sky and the stern buried deep in the water. To be fair to the skipper he gave me a very wide berth and probably thought this would be fine but I knew from experience that a flat calm lake is the worst state for wash as it travels just beneath the surface, with a small surface wave and a huge rotating tornado underneath, travelling for kilometres. I turned to take this wash just on the quarter as it approached a good five minutes later, when the bow of my barge completely submerged, that is 5ft freeboard, with the wash travelling right down the decks. Then the bow surfaced completely out of the water that is with a 4ft draft. A bit uncomfortable is what I would say. This wash

then travelled right across the lake and would have caused havoc to wildlife on the shoreline. An interesting historical case is when the speed king John Cobb was killed in Lough Ness, Scotland, travelling at around 200 mph on a flat calm lake when his vessel suddenly nosedived and smashed into pieces. The consensus is that the wash from a support vessel way up the lake caused the wash, which no one saw and caused the crash.

So that is the background but what can we do about it? It comes down to asking owners of these vessels to be aware of what damage they can cause and for the rest of us knowing how to tackle the result in which conditions. The single most important thing to know for both parties is that a flat calm lake is by far the most dangerous situation for travelling wash. If the lake is very calm I urge and plead with owners of such vessels to be aware that their wash can travel for many kilometres, so just slow down, take the bow out of the sky, lift the stern out of the water and enjoy the trip. You will also save a fortune on fuel. For the rest of us who have to tackle this wash, be aware that the wash travels for kilometres and the offending vessel may be gone over the horizon but watch for that small ripple coming at you and turn into it – best just slightly to one side. The issue is not so bad when the sea state is rougher since the waves will substantially break down the rolling wash; therefore giving a wide berth in this case helps.

SUMMARY

I have to admit that after my event this summer, I was more than just a little peeved and had thoughts of what I might do in revenge but of course, no one gains from that and a little education always works best. We all want to enjoy this wonderful facility we have and I am sure no one intentionally wants to upset anyone else. So, in summary for the wash producers, please give us a wide berth in rough conditions and slow down significantly in calm conditions and I don't mean just off the plane which is worse. For the rest of us, be aware that the worst part of the wash is the bit you can't see and be very aware and careful in calm conditions.

Let us all hope we can get back to normal cruising again this coming season. Stay safe.



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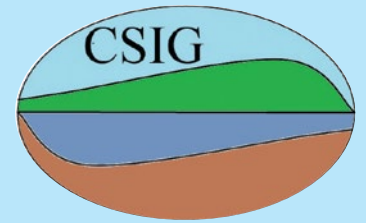
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CSIG

by LES SAUNDERS, CSIG PRO



CSIG GUIDES FOR 2022

The IWAI Charts Special Interest Group (CSIG) is, once again after almost 11 years, about to release the latest version of these fantastic guides. The group have been using the very latest technology to enable easier access to those special bays and off-beat locations that we would all like to visit. There are simply no better guides available anywhere for our inland waterways system and they are freely available if you are an IWAI member. You also do not need any special equipment to display them. They work on smartphones, tablets and laptops, Windows, android or ios. The new versions will be released in early January 2022 so please be ready to download these and have them ready for the new season.

Access to the guides is through the website <http://chartssig.iwai.ie> or it can be accessed via the main www.iwai.ie website under the projects tab. The steps involved are: choose your hardware platform, choose your navigation application, choose the guide you want, download and point the application to the guide. Details of this procedure are on the website should you need help and use the email contact charts-info@iwai.ie if you get into difficulty.

Surprisingly, given the pandemic, surveying continued through 2021 at a similar pace to that prior to lockdown. CSIG have added another 205 hours of surveying and over 740,000 soundings to an existing 9 million from the 2021 version. We have also decided to change the visual appearance of some aspects

to make for easier reading of unsurveyed areas. We have changed the unsurveyed areas from the yellow stripes to a solid grey which helps to define the area more clearly. As these unsurveyed areas shrink in size it becomes important to clearly identify them and we believe this change achieves that goal. We have also included any changes which may have occurred during 2021. Be aware, your 2021 guides will cease to operate from the start of 2022 and you must be a paid up member of the IWAI to download the latest version.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Although the technology that we have used for the last 10 years is still relevant and also still in use, new advances suggest it may be easier to migrate to these new technologies and take advantage of their abilities, particularly when surveying off-beat locations. Mike Kingston is using a new Jet RIB in Lough Erne and this enables very shallow draught surveying with little fear of damage. Mike and Robert Navan are also using their new remote controlled *Hydris*, a twin engine model fitted with surveying equipment for those special areas of interest.

Back on Derg; Brian Wilson and Eva and Colman Byrne are using a new device named 'Deeper' to great effect. Originally designed for fishermen to enable casting from a rod, this device is a small globe, not much larger than a tennis ball, which you attach to the side of your dinghy, canoe or main vessel to record the depths and your GPS track in great detail. The device transfers this data onto an app running on your smartphone via a 'wifi' connection.

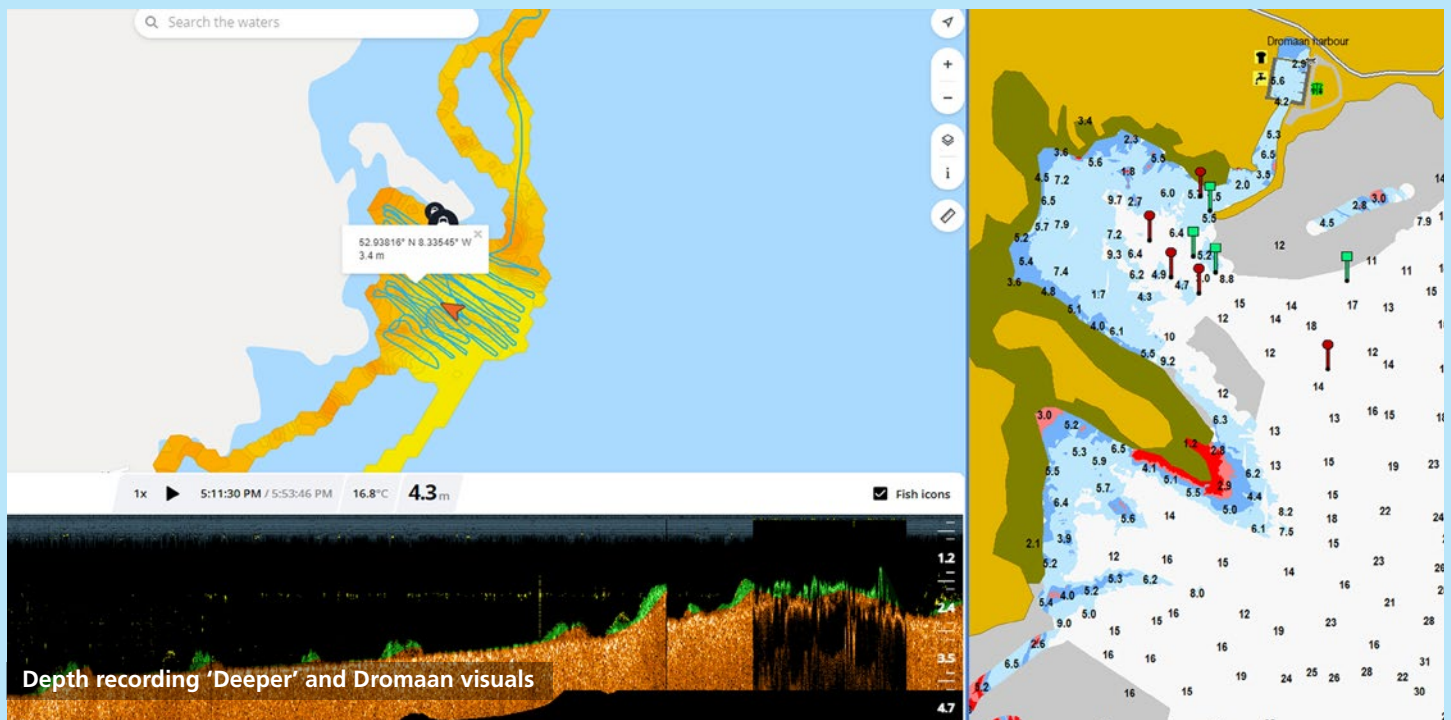
Brian has written some code to enable these tracks to be uploaded into the main program for developing the guides. The resulting pictures are astounding and it is interesting to note that 160,000 soundings from the latest collection were taken with these new devices. Great find Brian and Colman. So, if you are considering a new depth sounder for your vessel, please consider one of these 'Deeper' models, and just send the CSIG your tracks, we can use that data to enhance the guides. It couldn't be easier to become a surveyor. You can view the detail on this device at https://deepersonar.com/us/en_us

NEW SURVEYOR AROUND THE NORTH SHANNON

It is always nice to welcome more IWAI members into CSIG. This time we want to welcome Colman O'Callaghan, who is based at Cootehall Marina on the North Shannon. Colman travelled to the Lock Erne Yacht Club where Mike Kingston and Robert Navan helped him to load the surveying software onto his laptop, as well as assisting in the installation of the Garmin 451s and transducer. A demonstration on the lake completed the training. Welcome Colman and many thanks to Robert and Mike for their help.

SUMMARY

You will not want to miss these new guides so prepare to download the 2022 version with around 10 million soundings in the new year. Also, if you are in the market for a new depth sounder, consider the 'Deeper' models and help us to improve even more CSIG guides.



TECH TALK

with Matt Daniels

Winter is upon us and this is excellent news for our ESIG project because we are getting RESULTS! So all my hopes and dreams for seamless integration have been realised since the last issue of IWV. Well almost!

I had hoped to collect and compare the data from the two prototype system stations at the beta site in Gortmore but sadly, one of the units came to a premature end, just a few weeks after its installation when it stopped sending out environmental data. We had been prepared for that, expecting field trials to expose weaknesses in the design. Fortunately, the other unit is still working and proving to be resilient and reliable. The failed ESIG unit gave Anton and I a great reason to meet up and instal the new and beautifully crafted single-board system. Anton developed the latest single board to minimise wiring and configuration, which is undoubtedly why our original unit met its untimely end.

The new design is more compact and easier to assemble (73mm by 108mm with onboard connectors see image below). Because of the simplified assembly, we are working on improving the enclosure design and realising new alternatives with 3D printed parts (see inset images of STL file and machine making parts). We are getting closer to the point where we can think about broader deployment and units' installation at selected locations on the navigation. This includes the use of communications technologies such as LoRa and GSM to relay environmental information.

We are also thinking about how we can make the information accessible to IWV members. Information like water depth, air draft and flow, water temperature, wind direction and intensity. Ultimately we want some of the ESIG information to be in the same place as the CSIG charts. That place is on our members' smartphones, laptops, and devices running technologies like openCPN (www.opencpn.org).

RESULTS

We are using a service called ThingSpeak (www.thingspeak.com) to display ESIG information. Data is relayed to the ThingSpeak service, which is visualised into graphs showing the changes in intake over time.

Chart 1 displays the changes in Air Temperature.

Chart 2 displays the changes in Local Air pressure.

Chart 3 displays Humidity.

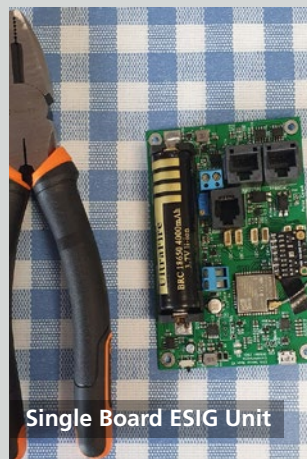
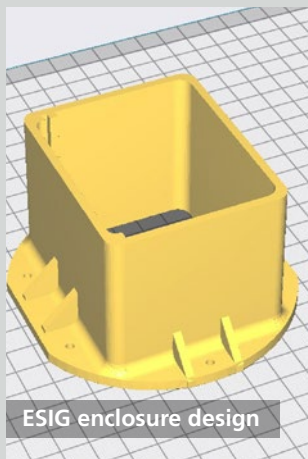
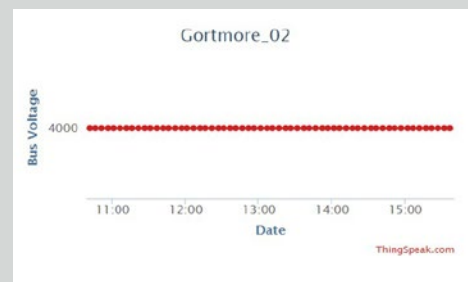
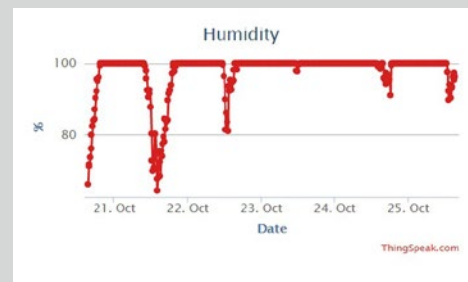
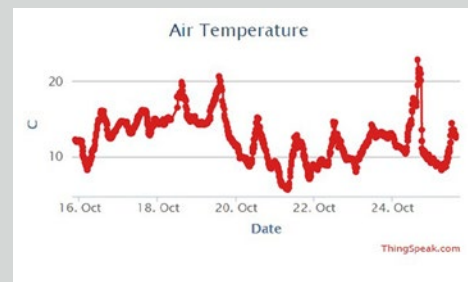
Chart 4 shows the average Water Depth.

Chart 5 displays the voltage on the board.

Chart 6 illustrates the charging cycle of the onboard battery.

CONCLUSION

In time we will be able to add different information sets to the ESIG system. The next step is to calibrate the results and test the integrity of the information before we can draw more meaningful insights from the data. The most significant achievement is that we are getting valuable data. We need help now to develop a scalable system to capture and display the results to our members. If you can help, please get in touch at esig@iwai.ie.



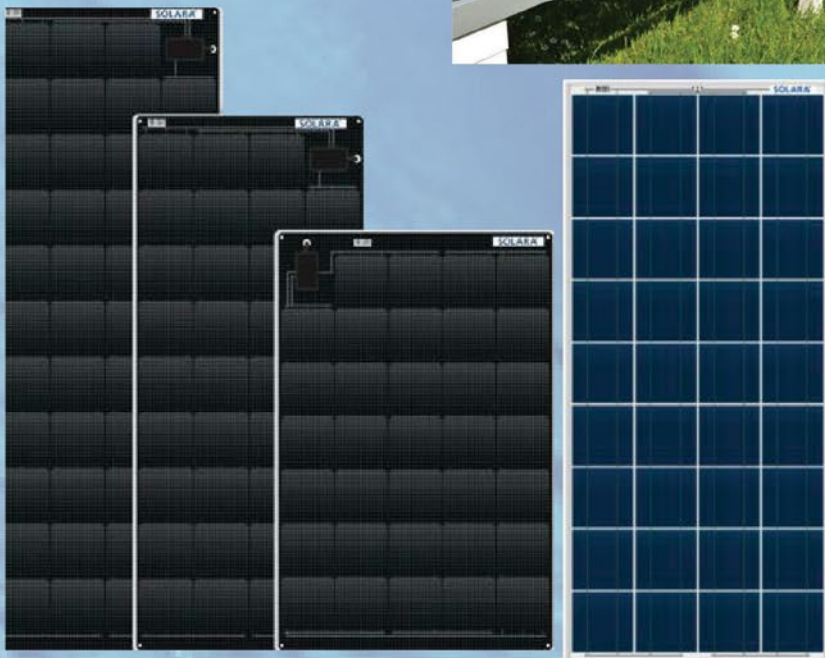
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LAGAN LETTER

FROM STEPHEN SMITH



THE LAGAN GATEWAY PROJECT

In recent issues Dr Philip Donald has reported on progress during the construction of the Lagan Gateway Project and we can now confirm that it has been brought to a successful conclusion. The 83 metre bridge, which links the Stranmillis area across the River Lagan to the Annadale Embankment and Ormeau Road, is being well used by pedestrians and cyclists. The weir gates have been in position for quite some time and are fulfilling their function to control the river levels. The new Lock 1 is fully operational and will, in due course, be the first link from the river to the overall navigation system upstream. The surrounding area has also been landscaped and murals of local wildlife have been painted on the bridge structures.

17 September by Belfast's Lord Mayor, Councillor Kate Nicholl, who said, *'the opening of this bridge is very timely. As well as improving connections between communities in South Belfast we believe that the bridge and wider improvements to the area will attract people from further afield and boost the local economy in the longer term'*.



Bridge with mural



Lagan Gateway opening
Photo: Belfast City Council

The project was financed by Belfast City Council in partnership with: Ulster Garden Villages, the Department for Communities, the Department for Infrastructure and the Lagan Navigation Trust. Without any advance publicity the completed scheme was formally opened on

Two Government Ministers, Nichola Mallon and Deirdre Hargey, plus Dr Tony Hopkins CBE, Chair of Ulster Garden Villages, also spoke and all agreed that the scheme would be a boon to walkers, joggers and cyclists; attracting tourists, enhancing the local economy and improving communications across the river.

It has been decided that the new Lock 1 will keep its traditional name – Molly Ward's but the bridge has not yet been named. Belfast City Council will organise a public vote on a shortlist of names later this year and IWAI



New Lock 1

Lagan is hopeful that something of historical interest and relevance to the Lagan Navigation Canal will be chosen.



'Chain gang' at Lock 4
Photo: Terry Needham

ROUGH GARDENING

Volunteers from the branch, assisted by members from IWAI Newry and the Lagan Valley Regional Park, have been improving the look of some of the locks on the canal, led by Jackson Tinto, who is very experienced in what he calls 'rough gardening'. We spent several days at Lock

4, otherwise known as Rosie's Lock or the Eel Weir Lock, which was very overgrown and barely recognisable. We obtained the necessary approval from the Department for Infrastructure and Built Heritage Division of the Department of the Environment and were very careful not to do anything which would disturb the structure of the lock. There was a steady stream of towpath users of various ages and many of them stopped to compliment us on the greatly improved appearance of the lock. This provided an opportunity to explain how the locks worked and a little of the history of the canal.

Our plan is to carry out similar work at Lock 5 in the near future.

Photos: Philip Donald unless stated otherwise

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NEWRY NEWS

PETER MAXWELL AND TANYA DUFFY



BACK TO LIFE

Now that there is a bit of normality again we are nearly back to our regular stream of work parties. We have been eager beavers removing debris from the water and trimming overhanging branches impeding navigation along the canal. We are also clearing small areas above Poyntzpass to help the Rivers Agency complete essential maintenance along the canal. The Agency are in the process of dredging parts of the canal to improve water flow and as an added benefit, this will allow more navigability for small boats and kayaks along areas previously so overgrown that only a single row of ducks could fit through. It also means us navvies can join the ducks for a well-deserved spin in areas we have only had the pleasure of seeing from the bank. We are also looking into the possibility of seeding the cleared banks with native wildflowers and grasses to help promote



Before dredging



After dredging

biodiversity. If successful this will reduce the risk of dredged material slipping back into the canal.

We have also been surveying and carrying out inspections to document any further deterioration of the canal and lock chambers. One area where the Rivers Agency has completed work will require assessment for a potential leak in the canal bed close to the Sluice Keepers Cottage in Acton.

On a sunny day in September we arranged a work party to carry out a review of the lock chamber at Carnbane in Newry. Sandbags were set up where the gates were originally installed and we managed to drain enough water from the cill area to carry out a thorough inspection. After a few hours we spotted a couple of small leaks but no major structural problems within the lock chamber and around the cill itself. This was documented in the event it would be needed as part of the repair to the lock at a later date.

BACK TO BASICS

We have always promoted the value of the canal, whether it be for the heritage it has or the future potential it could have. With the focus seen across the country creating new green/blue ways and improving existing ones, we have started to actively lobby and again turn the light on the canal. This could show off both its current value and the potential it could have with a sprinkle of passion and inspiration.

We are requesting both councils, who have ownership over the canal, to come together to re-establish the combined council task-force that formerly existed before the current realignment.

NARROW WATER BRIDGE UPDATE

After many long years another bridge emerges from the mists of Carlingford Lough. The Narrow Water Bridge, which would span the lough between Warrenpoint and Omeath, has been on and off the cards for nearly 40 years now.

In June, Micheál Martin announced that the Irish government would commit €3million to bring the project to tender stage. Nicola Mallon, Minister for infrastructure in the Northern Ireland Executive, also announced her commitment to furthering the project. The design that was decided 15 years ago, utilising a moveable bridge, hopefully will remain in play and allow boats to sail through Victoria Lock, up the ship canal and berth at the Albert Basin.

Photos: Peter Maxwell



Lock 5 inspection



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Disposal of Sewage Effluent from Vessels on the Erne

Owners of all vessels navigating on the Erne are asked to note the requirements of the Prevention of Pollution (Erne System) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1994.

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LOUGH ERNE NEWS

FROM ROSS MILLAR

It's been another quiet event season for the branch on the lough however, as cruising comes to an end for this year, IWAI Lough Erne member Robert Maitland has kindly offered some of his winterising tips. We look forward to seeing you afloat for what will hopefully be a more active season in 2022 and hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

WINTERISING TIPS BY ROBERT MAITLAND

The following information has been gained from my 35 years' experience of preparing a boat for winter successfully and information from others who were not so fortunate.

Mould growth is a constant battle on a boat, therefore it is important to firstly clean down all surfaces on the boat. Our boat manual states that all drawers should be left open and if you put a cover over the boat, leave all windows on vent. We prop open the anchor chain locker (front cabin) to aid ventilation.

Many people put their faith in dehumidifiers. These are not very environmentally friendly as most boats have fixed ventilators. For dehumidifiers to work on my boat I would have to seal all 11 vents with duct tape. If you do nothing the dry air produced will escape from your boat several times a day. This will also happen if you use an electric heater in

the cabins. I put a fan on timer in the front cabin (poor ventilation here) and ½ kg bag of silica gel in each wardrobe/cupboard. Silica gel turns from white to blue as moisture is absorbed. It can be re-activated (dried out) with heat from the top of a radiator or microwave.

ENGINE INTERNAL WATER COOLING CIRCUIT

Replace all the coolant every five years with 1 part antifreeze to 2 parts water. Be wary if the previous owner says the engine was fully serviced. That can mean different things to different people.

ENGINE RIVER WATER COOLING SYSTEM

I used to do this job on my own but it's much easier if you have someone to start and stop the engine (no disconnection of hoses). The job can be done in the water or on the hard.

Firstly: Prepare the mix of 9 litres consisting of 1 part antifreeze to 2 parts water in a 10 litre container. That is enough for a small engine of 80HP.

Secondly: Gain access to the engine water weed filter, shut the seacock and remove the filter element. On the tall filters I use a big heavy duty funnel and pour in the mix as your helper starts the engine and stops it when you have poured it all in. On the plastic water weed filters, the funnel is not required.



Funnel on raw water inlet

If you are winterising in the water and have an older ¼ turn ball seacock without a body drain valve, then fill the filter to the top with the mix and open and close the seacock. This means that the trapped water in the seacock body is an antifreeze mix.

DOMESTIC WATER SYSTEM

Empty your holding tanks. Pump out your domestic water through only one tap. When it starts blowing air, shut it and open another. Repeat for all hot and cold taps including electric toilets and shower mixers. Remove the shower head and leave the hose on the floor without a loop to drain.

On your calorifier you may have a drain valve fitted but if not, disconnect the cold water inlet. Take care not to lose the O ring. If the water drains very slowly disconnect the hot water outlet. It is best to mark the connections with tape before you start to avoid errors.

Next disconnect the domestic water pump discharge pipe and run the pump for a few seconds. If a water filter is fitted it's best to remove the element and

take it home. When all water has stopped running reconnect all pipework. Some people recommend blowing out all pipework with compressed air before re-assembling.

Operate all bilge pumps until the bilge is clear.

For toilets and showers make up a mix of 1 part antifreeze and 4 parts water and pump 2 litres through each toilet discharge with the water inlet seacock shut. One litre should be enough for the shower pump.

SEACOCKS

Insurance companies generally require that all seacocks are shut when a boat is unattended i.e. every time you leave the boat when it is in the water. If out of the water all seacocks should be open.

FUEL TANKS

I have heard various opinions about adding fuel stabiliser and/or filling fuel tanks for winter. I think the jury is still out on the subject so I just top off my tanks.

Photo: Robert Maitland

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POWERBOAT BRANCH

FROM RICHARD ELLIS



Nearly vertical
Photo: Alan Lindley

POWERBOATING DURING COVID

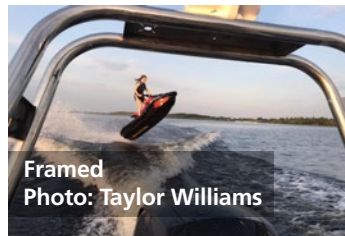
In March 2020, who would have expected what was ahead of us? College online, travel restrictions, lockdown, rallies and powerboat runs cancelled, socialising limited to the family and the cruiser stuck on the canal with the RIB parked up behind the shed. You'd swear there must have been tumbleweed hovering about!

My name is Rebecca Lindley and I am 20 years old. I was a member of the Youth Committee for the Lough Derg Rally. I attended committee meetings in person, in preparation for the summer 2020 rally and one year later, attended an online committee meeting for the summer 2021 rally. Never in my life would I have expected a rally to be cancelled, not only one but two years in a row, safe to say we made history...

Our family are heavily involved with the powerboat branch – who would have known? Alan Lindley? Speed? Power? That sounds about right... I attended my first AGM with IWAI Powerboat in November 2019. Some fantastic adventures had been planned for summer 2020, only for them to be postponed until the following year. However, with the consistent rise in cases, lockdowns and the uncertainty of restrictions, these runs were also cancelled. It seemed like summer 2021 was going to be a quiet one.

When the boating season began, our family cruiser, *Lady Lydia*, ventured down the Grand Canal to the River Shannon and moored in Terryglass Harbour. On 12 June 2021, a group of 4 to 5 RIBs headed down for a day run from

Ringaskiddy to Kinsale in Co. Cork. It was a breath of fresh air and a change of setting. It nearly felt like a holiday abroad with the distance we travelled. From restrictions of 5kms to 20kms, then progressing to a county-wide restriction, finally, the time came where we could leave the county travelling 210kms south. We stopped in Dino's, Kinsale, for fish and chips and headed back to Ringaskiddy with red faces from windburn and salt from the sea in our hair.



Framed
Photo: Taylor Williams

On the journey back, we received a phone call from Davy in Enniskillen that our Seadoo Spark Trixx Jet Ski, which had been ordered in October 2020, had finally arrived and was ready for collection the following week. Once the news reached my siblings, their screams of excitement were heard by all. Unknown of the reason why they were screaming, you would swear their enthusiasm was from the fact they had left the county...

The following week, we collected the Jet Ski and two days later we went down to Terryglass with the whole family to launch it. The weather was not fantastic so I had only intended to launch the Jet Ski and allow my sister Anna to take it for a spin on the lake. However, once the Jet Ski was in the water and the engine had started, my

opinion changed and a burst of energy came out of nowhere. Curiosity got the better of me and I headed out onto the lake. What felt like five minutes was really half an hour – it was such an escape from reality.

Over the summer months, I secured two jobs and was working seven days a week. These hours threatened to split up time spent with the family, however, the boat, the RIB and the Jet Ski brought the family together during the long summer evenings. We would spend hours on end going for spins on the Jet Ski attempting the candlestick move and hopping waves created by the RIB. It is great to see the young community out enjoying the RIBs and the Jet Ski, whilst keeping safety in mind. Rather than driving to Portumna in a car, bringing the RIBs and Jet Ski across the lake became the norm when asked to get milk or food for the barbecue. Some evenings bringing the RIBs out onto the lake and just

watching the sun setting was so peaceful that all problems were forgotten.

It all comes down to the charisma of the people you surround yourself with and the surrounding environment. Life provides us with some chances to experience meeting new people or new places out of the ordinary and they will be the memories you hold growing up.

Text: Rebecca Lindley



Ringaskiddy to Kinsale
Photo: Taylor Williams

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FROM PJ LEDDY

COME DINE WITH ME

IWAI Belturbet members, along with their friends, continue to raise money for local charity and voluntary organisations while having fun. On Saturday 4 September we held our annual (or in this case biennial) 'come dine with me' at Tiraroe, in County Fermanagh, where a host of culinary geniuses created a treat for the taste buds. After eating way more than our fill – a fabulous night of ceol and craic ensued. Thanks to the generosity of all present €500 was raised and donated to Belturbet Rowing Club. See our photo of IWAI Belturbet Treasurer, Damien Mundy, making the presentation to Tommy McMahon of Belturbet Rowing Club.



Presentation at Tiraroe

CHARITY OPEN BOAT RALLY

We set off on a beautiful autumn morning from Ballyconnell slipway; this may sound a little like Tommy McMahon's odyssey from a previous edition but we had it a lot easier than our predecessors that day. There were roughly 20 open boats, two Shetlands, two cruisers (to act as safety boats) and an inverted 1990s transit van roof powered by a two stroke mariner engine. We proceeded south towards Ballinamore around 11am, made it through Skelan Lock and on to Church Island on Garadice Lake which once had a fine jetty on its northern side or so I'm told. We arrived in time for lunch and were treated to homemade soup, brown bread and sandwiches. After lunch and a few hot beverages Micky Donohue broke out the guitar and a fine campfire singsong ensued.



Rally boats in the lock

We broke camp around 4pm and headed north for Ballyconnell. It was a beautiful day with fine boating conditions and a good flow on the canal which saw us tied up in Ballyconnell for 6pm. We retired then to the Crow's Nest where the lads and lassies from Ballyconnell Gun Club provided a full barbecue with venison burgers and skewers on the menu. After a great day's craic, food and entertainment, we held our raffle draw with some great prizes on offer.

Thanks to the generosity of the boaters and ticket buyers we raised in total €1570 and £50 sterling on the day, IWAI Belturbet agreed to round up to €2000, all in aid of Carrybridge RNLI. Thanks to: The Crow's Nest for hosting the barbecue and their generous donation, Sharon Drumm Barber for a voucher for the raffle, Crowes quality meats for help in preparing the burgers and kebabs, Ballyconnell Gun Club for the barbecue and Jim Donohoe (local business man) for his donation of 100 burger buns. It goes to show what can be achieved when we all row together.

MEETING

On 4 October, a few members of the committee met with officials from Waterways Ireland who showcased their plans past, present and future for Lough Erne and the surrounding waterways. It was a very detailed and impressive presentation and hopefully will be available for all our members to view after things return to normal. Afterwards Vice Chairman Cathal Kinney presented Francis Cahill of Seven Horse Shoes with an IWAI Belturbet pennant for his display case that houses branch memorabilia from down through the years.



Pennant presentation at the Seven Horse Shoes

LATE SEASON FAREWELL

On Saturday 9 October a few members and some regular visitors from Lough Neagh, comprising of 10 cruisers and six RIBs, headed up Lough Erne to Belleek via Carrybridge and The Moorings restaurant where we received first class service from Charlie and staff as per usual. On our way through Carrybridge, IWAI Belturbet chairperson Audrey Gaffney presented Chris Cathcart of the RNLI with a cheque for €2000 that had been raised the previous week at the Charity Open Boat Rally. We made great time to Belleek and arrived just before dark where we received a great welcome from staff at both Black Cat Cove and Fiddlestone Bar.

For most members this will probably be their last cruise to Belleek for the season but not all will be put off by winter's weather. We hope to see you all again next year on lough, river, canal and stream.

IWAI BELTURBET AGM

We are hoping to hold our AGM at the end of the year. As no date has been arranged details will be posted on the member's WhatsApp page.

Photos: Supplied by IWAI Belturbet



Presentation to RNLI

CARRICK BITS

FROM MARGARET BYRNE



Visit to the Shed Distillery

I start this piece with a quote from my last one – ‘Hope springs eternal...’ and this October bank holiday weekend our hopes were turned into an actual, live, in person cruise in company! Let that sink in for a bit. Before looking forward to next summer and all the wonderful branch activities that may be laid on for us, I am going to look back at the October bank holiday event. At the previous October event run by John and Antoinette Fitzgerald (*Cula Mor*), David Garland was appointed Commodore-in-waiting for the following one. Little did we know just how long he would have to wait! Eventually, having missed two seasons, the day arrived!

The 2021 cruise met up in The Bush Hotel on the Friday, cruised to Leitrim Harbour on the Saturday and following various events which are detailed below, back to Carrick-on-Shannon on the bank holiday Monday. Unfortunately, the author could not attend but I have been filled in by some who were there. David, no stranger to a CIC and having been practically raised on the Shannon, put together a very busy schedule for the boaters, old and new. A trip to the Shed Distillery was a highlight for many. Some very competitive darts in a local hostelry led to a win for the Carrick chairman and Paul Henry. The hotly contested table quiz was won by the Byrne family and friends (*Eos*). There was no slacking in arrangements and organisation. David even had a picture quiz and a Dingbats quiz! Winner of the picture quiz was Denise Byrne (*Eos*) and Dingbats congrats go to Adrienne Corcoran (*Aces*). If all that wasn't enough, dinner in the Leitrim Marina Hotel was also on the programme and a wonderful evening had by all. No man is an island, though, and I imagine David will be happy for me to thank his team of helpers. Having not been able to attend, I spoke to many who did and all had nothing but praise for David



David with next years Commodore Martin Byrne



Commodore and Support Team



Picture Quiz Winners

and the events arranged. We had met some new members in Albert the day before the event and we encouraged them to attend, telling them that it would be really enjoyable – I can see from the pictures that they were right at home! Before leaving the subject, Martin Byrne (*Eos*) was selected as the 2021 winner and will host the 2022 October bank holiday CIC.



Enjoying the event

We have waited many long months to enjoy organised boating in company again. I imagine some of us had begun to wonder would we ever rally again? David provided a wonderful, and timely, reminder of what is possible when boating together and the entertainment from being in one another's company. IWAI Carrick has certainly missed organising events and no doubt you, the members, have missed attending! Although most boats are asleep for the winter, we can look back on a wonderful weekend and look forward, finally, to some summer events. Look out for the Carrick events, we will be delighted to see you there and remember to contact a committee member if you wish to borrow any branch equipment.

Have a good winter, put the baby to bed safely and with a bit of luck and a following wind, see y'all in the spring.

Photos: Joe Byrne

UPDATE ON THE NEED OF NEW FLOATING JETTIES AT DERRYCARNE DEMESNE, LOUGH BOFIN

Joe Tiernan convened a meeting on 18 August 2021 at Derrycarne attended by:

Mr Brian Treacy, WI Senior Engineer
Ms Catriona McGarry, WI Area Engineer
Ms Catherine Cashman, IWAI Carrick-on-Shannon Secretary
Mr Paul Henry, IWAI Carrick-on-Shannon

Mr Treacy stated that WI were, in principle, in favour of installing floating jetties at Derrycarne subject to:

Agreement with Coillte
Planning Permission
Funding

Minister Franck Feighan TD made representations to WI supporting the jetties at Derrycarne.

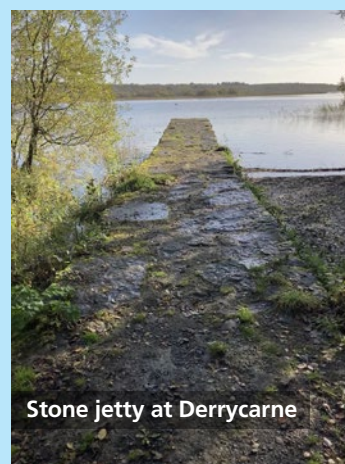
BREAKING NEWS...

In November we learnt that the design for floating jetties to accommodate 4 cruisers is complete and planning application will be lodged early in the new year.

The Waterways Ireland team are to be congratulated for their speed at moving this proposed project forward which will be appreciated by all River Shannon users.

Chevalier Joe Tiernan KC*HS.
Tel: 00353872588333
www.joetiernan.com

Joe Tiernan is a long standing member of IWAI Carrick-on-Shannon



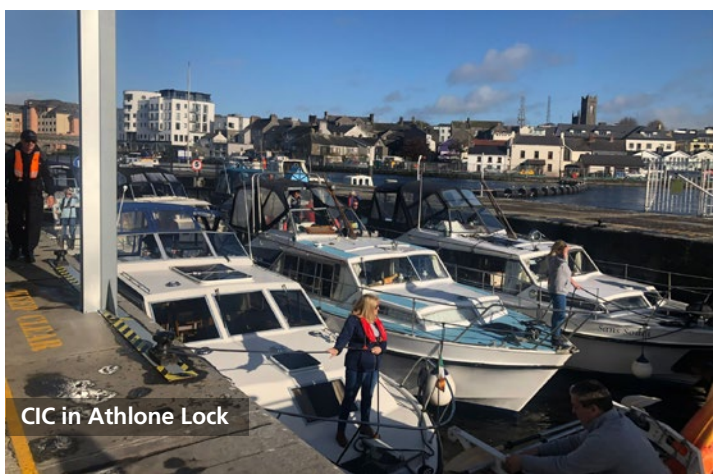
Stone jetty at Derrycarne



ATHLONE ATTRIBUTES



FROM ALAN EUSTACE



CIC in Athlone Lock

CRUISE IN COMPANY OCTOBER 2021

Finally a CIC, after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted we can have an event (with social distancing), using those boats we have kept in shape over the past two years.

This year we opted to brave the possible Lough Ree wind issues and travel to Shannonbridge but first we had a meet and greet at the Lough Ree Inn, Coosan, with some finger food and

cocktails. Due to the adverse weather, this was mostly a day for the indoors, a doubles pool competition replaced the drone flying, which was planned but cancelled due to the high winds. It was a pleasure to welcome Pat McManus, well-known as one of the stalwarts of the CSIG group, to make a presentation and launch his book 'Lough Ree – An Illustrated Guide to Tranquil Moorings' (see below for more details). The evening concluded



Pat at Book launch

with food and music from Bugsy and Patrice.

Sunday morning coffee on the Coosan jetties set up the departure of our 15 boat fleet for Athlone. With nine boats straight into the lock it was a quick en-route stop at Clonmacnoise, not to appreciate the World

Heritage Site this time, but to have a little refreshment of Bucks Fizz before getting back on board to complete the trip to historic Shannonbridge. The weather was as close to perfect as one could expect in late October for the trip.

Our arrival was marked with an Irish coffee in Lukers where the inevitable ad-hoc music session kicked off in the old bar. Pre-booked dining in our isolated area concluded the evening after which most people retired early.

On Monday the return trip was once again made in beautiful conditions on the great Shannon, through Athlone and into Lough Ree. All who attended the start (and finish) of the Cruise in Company season in this one event appreciated that we can return to something like normal and stay safe as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a concern.

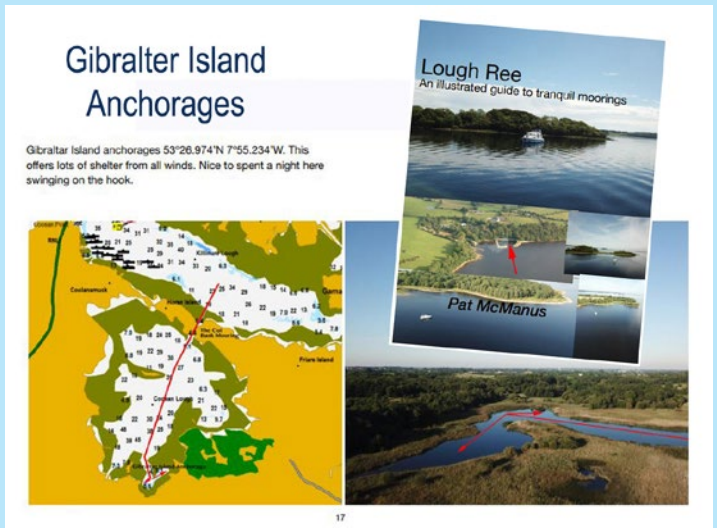
Photos: Oona Herraghty and Kevin Clabby

TRANQUILITY GUIDE RAISING FUNDS FOR *DUNROVIN*

'Lough Ree – An Illustrated Guide to Tranquil Moorings' was launched in the Lough Ree Inn on Saturday 23 October 2021 by author Pat McManus. The book is a simple but invaluable guide to both well-known and many new places on the lake. Produced in hard card format with 'splash proof' covers front and back, spiral binding to enable ease of use, maps and co-ordinates for where it is safe to moor, along with a selection of aerial images captured by drone, this is the ideal companion to those wishing to fully explore the 'Lake of Kings'.

Pat has kindly donated the book to IWAI Athlone as a fundraiser towards the *Dunrovin* project. For just €15.00 (+ PP) you'll have a valuable addition to your cruising reference library and contribute to the completion of *Dunrovin*.

To order your copy please contact Kevin Clabby, IWAI Athlone on 087 6012999 or email: kevinclabby00@gmail.com





FROM NIALL O'DOWDA



Kilglass

BRANCH MEETINGS

In recent months, thanks to the lifting of Covid restrictions, branch meetings have moved from online only to a hybrid format. This has enabled members to choose to attend meetings in person or online via Zoom. The benefits being that those members not online can now attend in person whilst those who prefer the Zoom option, due possibly to Covid concerns or distance to travel, can continue online. It is the intention to retain this hybrid format for now.

SAFETY ON BOARD

In recent months there have been several devastating boat fires on our inland waterways and it is only through good luck that no one was killed or seriously injured. To minimize the risk of fire, boat owners are strongly encouraged to have their boats regularly surveyed by a professional, especially those living on board.

These surveys are usually required by insurance companies every five years if insuring comprehensively and are more than just an inconvenience you have to go through. Essentially, a survey can alert you to any potential fire hazard on board, thereby possibly saving your life, and a comprehensive policy will protect your investment, especially if it is your home. This magazine contains advertisements for both insurance companies and surveyors.

DYING CANALS

In the last issue we reported on the huge hindrance to navigation caused by invasive weed, however, a much more serious issue has arisen. Extremely low water levels over the summer months made navigation on all canals (including the Royal Canal, Grand Canal and the Barrow Line) virtually impossible. The situation has been described as

the worst ever by those using the canals for decades. The canals are being left to perish due to lack of maintenance, why, who knows – is it a lack of interest by Waterways Ireland or a lack of funding? The low levels were a major problem for several members who could not return to their homeport after having made recreational trips or their boats dry docked for maintenance. Those living on board had to endure long journeys daily after returning to work. The Nav-Watch group is currently circulating their report; hopefully something positive will result from their efforts.

VHF TRAINING

In early October several members completed recognised VHF training delivered by branch member Pat Hartigan of VHF.ie. The course, structured to educate attendees on the correct operation of VHF radios, culminated with an exam and

the issue of the legally required operators' certificate on passing. There are many benefits to having a VHF radio on board, especially when boating on rivers and lakes and having the knowledge to use them properly can be a life saver. A big thank you to Pat Hartigan for organising the course. For more information go to: www.iwai.ie/vhf-radio and www.vhf.ie

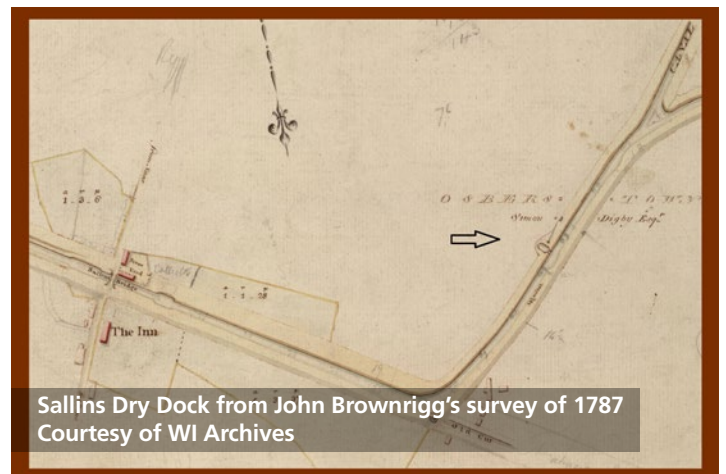
SALLINS DRY DOCK

The research into the viability of reopening Sallins Dry Dock continues with the final draft of the Feasibility Study due for completion. The study will be forwarded to both Waterways Ireland and Kildare County Council for review. Having a dry dock facility in Sallins would be of huge benefit to boaters and a huge amount of work has been done by the project group so well done to all the group members.

Photos: Niall O'Dowda unless stated otherwise



Lemon drizzle time



Sallins Dry Dock from John Brownrigg's survey of 1787
Courtesy of WI Archives



NORTH BARROW

FROM CLIFF REID



William O'Neill with Ger Cullen

WATERWAYS AMBASSADORS

A number of branch members took part in an eight week training course run in Graiguenamanagh aimed at becoming Waterways Ambassadors. Run from the newly established Waterways College, located in the grounds of the Waterways Activity Hub, the course provided training in how best to protect and promote our waterways within our local communities. This included modules on river life, citizen science and invasive species. The course blended class room study with hands-on water quality testing and local habitats assessment. Branch members and other waterways enthusiasts taking part in the course were out regularly on the River Barrow, River Nore and their tributaries; discovering and learning as they investigated river life via boat trips, kayaking trips or on foot.

The course was both funded and run by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership in conjunction with Carlow and Kilkenny Education and Training Board and specialist training firm Veri. By the end of the course, all participants were in agreement as to the value training such as this provides and were very eager to express their wish that courses such as this be extended further afield throughout the towns and communities based on Ireland's waterways. In addition, all expressed

their gratitude in having the opportunity to take part in this new initiative and look forward to both utilising their gained skills and advocating for the further protection, promotion and development of our waterways. Well done all involved. For more information of future courses, please see www.waterwayscollege.ie

SUPPORT OF BOATING COMMUNITY

A lovely word of thanks was received by the branch from local butcher in Leighlinbridge, Ger Cullen for the support shown to him by the passing boat traffic. Ger also wished to extend his thanks to the wider boating community who stopped off in Leighlinbridge and called into his butcher shop over the past year. Ger expressed his gratitude that passing boats stopped off regularly for a night or two and supported local business, such as his own, in the area. Well known for his hospitality and kind nature, it is not uncommon to be invited for a cup of tea and chat outside Ger's butcher shop, as several branch members can attest. Many thanks Ger from all at IWAI North Barrow.

BOG WALK

Having continued to meet up since lockdown for regular walks, a number of members were treated to a magnificent sight in mid-October. On a mild Saturday afternoon on



New Waterways Ambassadors on the Barrow

the Kilberry Bog in Kildare, Chris McKenna led a ramble through the cut peat landscape pointing out the abundance of wildlife and nature that make these habitats their home. Suddenly, from high above our heads, the unmistakable high pitch whooping, that often sounds somewhat like an out of tune wind instrument, descended upon our ears. Looking up, all were amazed to see the distinctive V shaped wedge of a flock of Whooper Swans as they came into land on the saturated bogland. Having travelled

approximately 13,000 kilometres without stopping, it was an incredible sight to witness as these creatures of beauty stopped off for the first time since leaving Iceland. They will now stay with us at their yearly holiday destination on Kilberry Bog or the River Barrow just north of Athy until next spring.

Winter brings many migratory birds to Ireland including ducks, geese, finches and thrushes to name a few. Many of these need extra feeding over the harsher months. For example, redwing and fieldfare will feed heavily on hedgerow fruit and berries from holly, hawthorn, rose and rowan. Unfortunately, winter is the time our hedgerows are often trimmed back or cut, limiting available food. Therefore, as Chris recommends, apples and pears left out on the ground of gardens greatly help these Nordic visitors that have depleted much of their energy reaching here. IWAI North Barrow would like to thank Chris for his guided walk through the unique wetland of Kilberry Bog and we all look forward to the next outing.


Photos: Cliff Reid



Whooper Swans on Kilberry Bog

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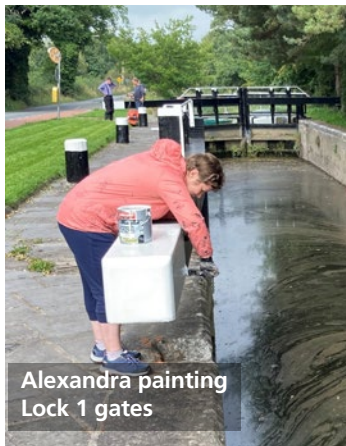
BOYNE BANTER



FROM FIACHRA DE RÓISTE AND PAUL WALSH

The Covid situation has become uncertain once again, with cases and ICU occupancies on the rise. Hopefully things will be a bit more certain, by the time you read this, as you get the last of your bits ready for the impending annual festive celebrations. Glad to report that we have continued to work, as against this time last year, where we had just completed our first month after a nine month absence. Hope this is still the case by December.

We experienced a stint of bad weather in August so we ended up only working during the Saturday of bank holiday weekend and we weren't able to work for the rest of the month, due to the poor weather.



Alexandra painting Lock 1 gates

LOCK 1 AND 2 – OLDBRIDGE SEALOCK

We continued our tidying work (cutting lawns bordering the lock, picking weeds, rubbish clearance etc) at both Lock's 1 and 2. We subsequently started working our way along the riverside cutting ivy growing on the trees bordering this section. This has been done to ensure the integrity of the trees and we made good progress. Both sets of lock gates were also given several coats of paint. Neither had been as comprehensively painted since installation.

Silt had built up directly above Lock 1. Deposited over the years, who knows when this was last shown any maintenance? As it occupied the short intermediate section of the waterway we dredged this out. The spine bank, which divides the river and navigation, had become quite weak over the years due to erosion so spoil from the dredging was used to reinforce this area.

BATTLE OF THE BOYNE MEETING

New plans are being developed for the Battle of the Boyne Interpretive Centre and Estate to enhance its tourism offering. Our group was invited as a Boyne Navigation stakeholder to a meeting regarding this which proved very positive.

NEWGRANGE SECTION – LOCK 3

Having not shown any presence on the Newgrange section since the end of September 2020, we changed focus in October.

By the end of last year's stint of work here we had completed the outstanding pointing and capping of the wash wall (stonewall canal bank) between Lock 3 and the humpback bridge above it. We have now moved above this bridge and cleared out an 'unofficial garden' from the canal bed. Our group managed to do the cutting and clearance over a stint of four weeks. We then gave the wash wall some attention exposing stonework, removing ivy and clay from some of the joints.

GREENWAY/NAVIGATION PROJECT

Meath County Council informed us that working drafts of the consultants' report have been received, though more work is still required. The Environmental Impact Assessment is expected to be completed for submission to An Bórd Pleanála next year. This is what we need to prepare planning applications for individual local projects. It is hoped that an overall planning application will be prepared for submission in Q4 2022, though this could overrun to 2023.

BOYNEBOATS.IE

They have been working away diligently on the Oldbridge section, under the various Covid restrictions but have now finished for the season. A tour through 5,000 years of history could be a unique new year treat to gift for the festive season.

NAVAN SECTION

Our key guy on the Navan section has suffered some recent ill health. We'd like to wish him well and that he makes a full recovery. The group there are still putting

content on their Facebook page, so keep an eye on what tales they have to tell along that section.

BOYNECURRACH.COM

They have brought their big boat *Bovinda* back from its sea trials for additional fitting out work and sail alterations.

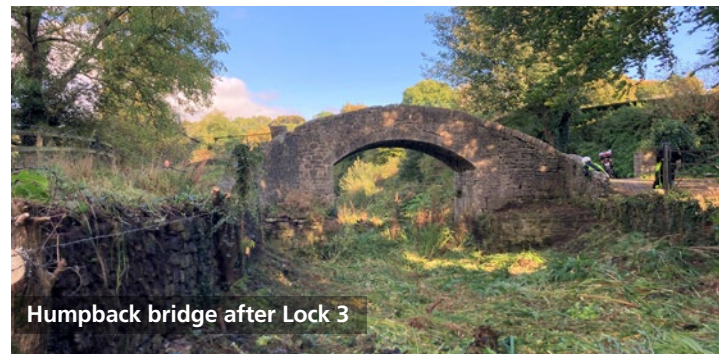
VOLUNTEERS

Glad to report that there have been a number of new faces attending our various work parties including some women and 'new Irish' as the term goes. They

have added further diversity and input to our ranks. We have also welcomed along our first volunteer via Facebook – a nice milestone to have reached. Hopefully others will be inspired to join in this way. If you weren't aware (from our articles over the years), we are always looking for new volunteers (whether on the ground or behind the scenes), so don't be shy.

Beir bua, Fiachra De Róiste

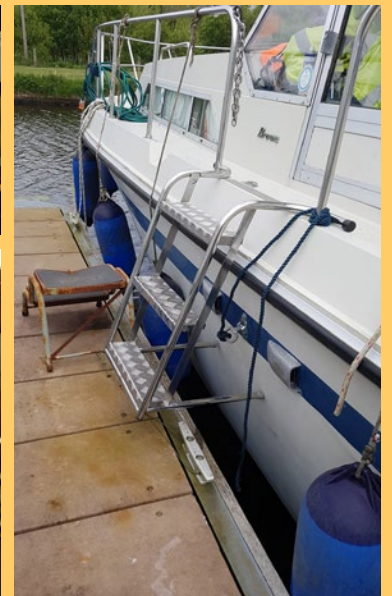
Photos: Fiachra De Róiste



Humpback bridge after Lock 3

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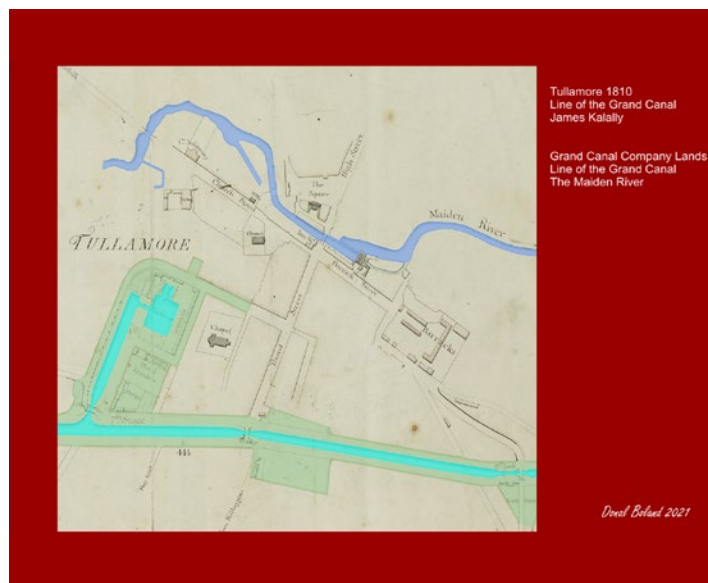
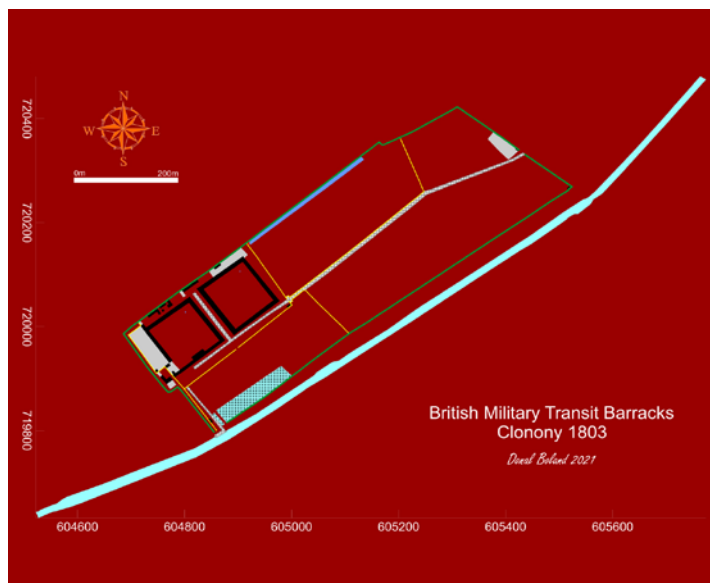
www.eweengineering.com



OFFALY UPDATE



FROM TIM MEEHAN



THE GRAND EXTENSION – PART 1

INTRODUCTION

This project stemmed from events surrounding the dry-docking of the barge *James & Mary* at Shannon Harbour and its subsequent confinement due to rising flood waters on the River Shannon and pandemic restrictions. Its skipper, though raised close to the canal in Tullamore and having spent the past twenty years living on the river, had little knowledge of the still water navigation where he found himself in lockdown.

A project-based mind dictated that a study be conducted of the navigation extending eastwards to the place of his youth at Tullamore. Research revealed that the Grand Canal was originally constructed from Dublin as far as Tullamore, following which a harbour was constructed in the town. The canal was then extended through the River Brosna valley to terminate with the rivers Shannon and Brosna at a place now named Shannon Harbour, in the townland of Clonony Beg, just up-stream of Banagher town.

A chance early morning meeting with a fellow Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWA) member, at the location of Lock 35, resulted in the development of an IWA Offaly based research

project. The project objective is to research the history and impact of the development over time with a view to promoting the navigation as a tourist entity. Thus encouraging a route way eastwards for Shannon based boaters, through the wonders and villages of the River Brosna valley, to the harbour constructed in the heart of Tullamore town.

As the research progressed the waterway was defined as 'The Grand Extension'. The route encompassed nearby villages, towns and features by the development of a 'Hull and Spoke' concept, based on the principle of exploring the surrounding landscape from a moving vessel, an adoption of the previously developed 'Hub and Spoke' concept.

A field inspection at the canalside site of a previously occupied British military barracks in the townland of Clonony More, immediately upstream of Shannon Harbour, revealed upstanding structures and a largely undisturbed site that had accommodation for some three thousand troops. An inspection of an inscription on a stone plaque, inserted in the north wall of the final Lock 36 at Shannon Harbour, recorded the construction and features of the extension and revealed that

it was completed swiftly over a period of two years (1802-1804) at the rate of one mile per month. Discussions surrounding the apparent swift construction of the extension and the canalside military barracks added a new and previously unrecorded dimension to our study. The timescale for the construction of the extension and the barracks coincided with the building of the initial British military defences along the Mid-Shannon as a deterrent to a possible French military invasion of Ireland from a point or points along the west coast. Therefore the construction of the extension may have been enabled by British military planners as part of a logistics structure to supply troops and equipment to their frontline defences.

KNOW YOUR BOAT COURSE

IWA Offaly is hoping to run the very popular 'Know your boat course' this winter, depending on the status of Covid restrictions. I would imagine people are chomping at the bit to get back to normal activities. Therefore, I think we may have a large number of people wishing to sign up for this course so early booking is advisable. If interested in this course please contact:

Tom Doheny: Treasurer, IWA Offaly

Phone: 085 8031699

E-Mail: tdoheny@yahoo.com

Alternatively via the IWA Offaly Facebook page.



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DUBLIN DRIBBLES

FROM JIM O'RIORDAN

ROYAL CANAL GREENWAY OBSERVATION

IWAI Dublin has made an observation on the proposed Royal Canal Greenway Phase 4 Application which proposes narrowing 1km of the Royal Canal by up to 2.5m in places. On reading the application what astonished us was that it was the navigation authority and the body in charge of protecting our waterways heritage, namely Waterways Ireland, which suggested this course of action. In the original scheme DCC had planned to extend the greenway into the waste ground on the other side of the towpath. Another surprising detail is that the application makes no reference to the large toxic dump in the middle of the development area and the catastrophic impact that this may have on the environment. Despite the fact that the large area of creosote waste was discovered by Waterways Ireland in 2011, also that one of the findings of a subsequent independent study on behalf of Iarnrod Eireann suggested 'it is likely that the source of the contamination within the canal is from the IE site', it is hard to believe that Waterways Ireland, to the best of our knowledge, have not sought any redress to rectify this matter.

MEETING WITH MINISTER

IWAI Dublin together with members of the GCD Residents Association was delighted to meet Minister of State Malcolm Noonan and bring him for a short tour of the Graving Docks. We availed of this opportunity, pointing out to the Minister the need to develop this site in a way that would reflect the rich maritime heritage of the area with an emphasis on boat building and repair, as well as training and associated educational programmes. We also highlighted that improved facilities in this area would support an increase in water based recreational activities. The general consensus seemed to be that Docklands has enough



(L-R) Jim O'Riordan, Malcolm Noonan, Reg McCabe



Water Heritage Day GCD

office blocks, many of which are half empty and what was needed now was a development that would enhance community and improve the lives of people living around and visiting the Grand Canal Dock.

MV NAOMH EANNA

We were recently made aware that the difficult and protracted battle to save the *Naomh Eanna* has been lost and plans are now afoot to scrap the ship. Constructed in the Liffey Dockyard, one of the last riveted hull ships to be built there, she was launched in 1958. Due to her importance in Dublin's maritime heritage and her very public working life of nearly 30 years as the Aran Islands Ferry she holds a special place in many people's hearts and her scrapping

will be seen as a tragedy and a missed opportunity. However, the *Naomh Eanna* will not go without a bit of a fight, the presence of asbestos lagging will add considerably to the time and cost of deconstruction.

WATER HERITAGE DAY

IWAI Dublin participated in Water Heritage Day (Sunday 22 August). We had planned to do a water based tour of the Grand Canal Dock but due to maintenance problems on the *Dubh Linn* (which has been out of the water for nearly 2 years) this plan was abandoned and instead we conducted walking tours, with an emphasis on the waterways heritage of the area. Thanks to the organisers, The Heritage Council and the Local Authority Waters Programme, for making



Open House Dublin GCD



RTE Nationwide team

available a grant which we used to purchase signage.

OPEN HOUSE DUBLIN

As part of the Open House Dublin event on the weekend of 16 and 17 October branch members led sold out tours of the Grand Canal Dock on the historic Liffey Ferry No.11. We would like to thank Jimmy Murray of the Irish Nautical Trust for facilitating the use of the ferry. Also a special shout out to crew members Con and David for their courtesy and professionalism. We were joined on one of the tours by the RTE Nationwide team. It was great to have the opportunity to meet in person the people behind a programme which so often highlights our country's wonderful waterways and express our appreciation of their efforts.

Photos: Reg McCabe



BARROW BULLETIN



FROM JOHN O'GORMAN

BUSY BARROW NAVIGATION

There was plenty of activity this summer, and into autumn, along the Barrow navigation with crews from the north Barrow and beyond venturing south to Graiguenamanagh and St Mullins. IWAI Barrow organised a gathering at Slyguff Lock on the August bank holiday weekend which was attended by 16 members. The usually quiet spot proved to be very busy at times with a combination of boats, kayaks, cyclists and walkers making the most of the holiday weekend.



Slyguff Rally
Photo: John O' Neill

CIC ON THE THREE SISTERS

The tidal waters of the navigation also saw a significant increase in activity centred around the Three Sisters Marina in New Ross due in no small measure to the organisational skills and local knowledge of branch member John Dimond, who lead trips to Carrick-on-Suir, Waterford, Instioge and St Mullins. These cruises were also joined by visiting crews from further afield venturing onto the tidal waters for the first time.

Keppel. Arthur was a lifelong member of IWAI Barrow and the main driving force behind the setting up of the Barrow Awards scheme where local groups along the Barrow vied for annual prizes awarded for initiatives and improvement schemes in their stretch of the river. The event was attended by his family, many friends and some of his former colleagues from Tullow Community School.



Cruising on the tidal Barrow

BÁD KEPPEL LAUNCH

Saturday 10 September saw the launch of a new boat on the Barrow in Bagnelstown. *Bád Keppel* can carry 12 passengers and is operated by a group of six volunteer skippers. The boat, built by Fitzgerald Marine Kinsale, was named after former branch president Arthur Keppel in recognition of his involvement in the project, long standing association and love of the River Barrow. The launch was attended by members of the Keppel family and his friends from IWAI Barrow.

FRTZ RINAGL

Members were shocked and saddened to hear of the passing of our treasurer Fritz Rinagl. Fritz was a prominent member of IWAI Barrow for many years and more recently took on the role of treasurer. Fritz, originally from Austria, often recalled with great fondness his first boating holidays to Ireland, initially on the Shannon and on subsequent trips, the Barrow which he loved and where he lived with his wife Josie. Their barge *Seachrán* was well travelled and always a welcome sight at many IWAI Barrow gatherings. IWAI Barrow has lost a great friend and valued member. We extend our sincerest sympathies to his wife Josie, his daughter Christine, his brother and sister and extended family. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.*

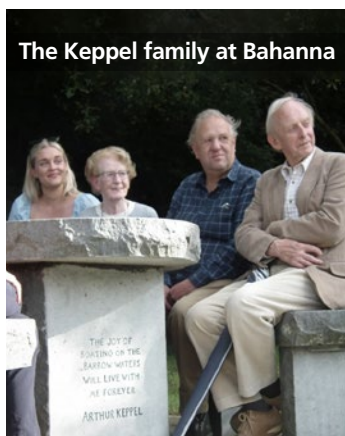


Dried out in Instioge

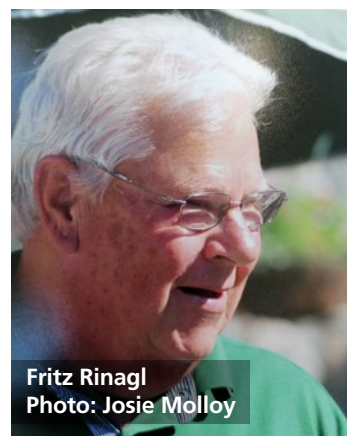
SEAT DEDICATION AT BAHANNA WOOD

The bank of the Barrow at Bahanna Wood was the setting on Saturday 18 September for a ceremony organised by Waterways Ireland. Represented by Hugh Fanning in association with Carlow Tourism and Eileen O'Rourke, the ceremony dedicated a picnic table and seats to the memory of Arthur

Photos: John Dimond unless stated otherwise



The Keppel family at Bahanna



Fritz Rinagl
Photo: Josie Molloy

ROYAL CANAL RIPPLES

FROM DENIS BAKER

RICHMOND HARBOUR – BRINGS A TEAR TO THE EYE

If you ever felt sorry for a place, given the perils of the past year, you could be forgiven for shedding a tear for poor old Richmond Harbour.

Having suffered the solitude and lack of boat traffic caused by Covid for the first half of 2021, she was then struck down by a broken pump which further assured her of restricted traffic to the harbour for the remainder of the year. Just as a semblance of normality appeared on the horizon and IWAI Royal was planning the first small rally for ages, Richmond Harbour was again punished, this time with a breach. She survived a plague and now a drought, if the new year brings swarms of locusts I'm predicting a spike in boat sales!

A BIBLICAL TALE

And so it was, on the day of Saturn (Saturday), the good people on their boats in Richmond Harbour awoke to find the morning light through their windows darkened by the mucky grey granite of the harbour's walls. 'The water is down by nearly two feet!' they declared. Having had weeks already this year when the harbour's waters rose slowly only to recede quickly again, they were unphased by this occurrence. Later that day when the drought had continued and the waters were now down by three and a half feet the people were truly worried.

The keeper of the locks, who was standing in that day, did scurry around looking for explanations but none were had. No rack was broken, no gate leaked, the waters had vanished and the vessels in the harbour lay at precarious angles surprised by the de-parting of the waters.

On the day of the Sun (Sunday) the usual keeper of the locks, who knows every inch of his three levels, appeared. He scoured the banks outside the harbour and quickly exclaimed 'It's a breach!' He sat in his blue chariot on the far bank from

us and pointed to a spot on the bank just below our feet. We bowed toward him to look, 'See the swirling water!' he said, and we did. We could also hear it gushing into the ditch behind us. We stepped away, fearing the water's might part the bank, a channel could open and we would all be lost!

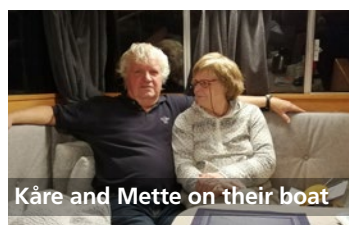
On the day of the Moon (Monday), a brace of blue chariots brought scholarly folk and manly men. They looked into the hole and formulated a plan. 'We will hold back the harbour's waters with a dam and we will plug this hole!', and so they did. The dam was quickly built and the harbour was slowly refilled. The vessels of the harbour began to nod and bob again, smaller boats first until a day later, all of their dirty bottoms were again submerged and only their brightly painted uppers were proudly displayed for all to see. The blue charioteers had promptly plugged the parting of the waters. The owners of the boats put away their tablets and all was good again in the world of Richmond Harbour... for the moment.

LOCKDOWN LOVE

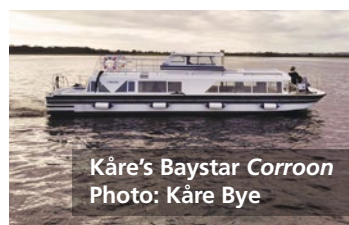
We all struggled during lockdown. Some of us managed to get in a little boating last year, while for others, getting out on the waterways this year was the first time to step aboard in over a year. Now consider the position which branch member Kåre Bye found himself in. A native of Norway, Kåre found himself well outside the 5km limit (by around 1300km!). Having bought his beautiful Baystar, *Corroon*, which he keeps on the Shannon, in 2018, it would be nearly three years before he got to see it again.

I caught up with Kåre in early November while on a pre-wedding holiday on the Shannon. By the time this edition of IWN lands in members post boxes he and his lovely partner Mette will have tied the knot. We wish them well on their new journey.

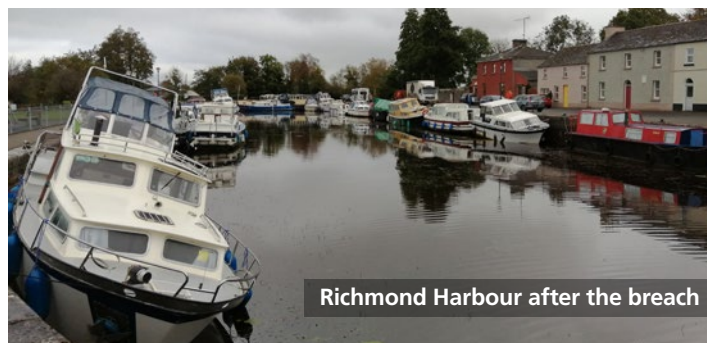
Photos: Denis Baker unless stated otherwise



Kåre and Mette on their boat



Kåre's Baystar *Corroon*
Photo: Kåre Bye



Richmond Harbour after the breach



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SLANEY SNIPPETS



FROM BRIAN COULTER AND ENDA MURPHY

VISIT TO THE SOW RIVER

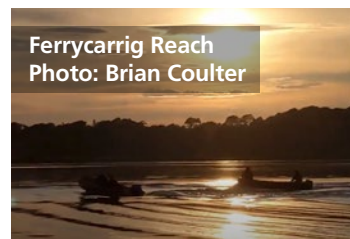
At the end of June, after lockdown, our first event back on the water was an evening visit to the Sow River. This is the lowest tributary to the Slaney and an important source of water for Wexford Town. The timing of the event was largely driven by the height of the tide at the entrance to the Sow and we got it just about right. The evening was also special as it was the first event since the loss of two former members; David Killeen, who had been a founder member, and Paul Fenlon, who had kept the Sow River navigable over the years.

Before leaving, the group heard a few words from the chairman and respected a moments silence in memory of our friends. The group of 14 boats headed out across the harbour to the entrance of the Sow. As several larger boats started to touch the Slaney mud, some participants transferred to smaller boats. Once in the Sow, the mud was only a problem for a short distance. Navigation was most difficult at the point where the Castlebridge mill-race joins the main river but everyone overcame this difficulty including the larger boats which had braved the entrance.

The river then meanders through amazing reeds with narrow bends and overhanging trees. The cry of the evening became 'duck' as boats slowly advanced upriver before arriving at Poulsac Bridge.

Smaller boats then ventured under the bridge into the narrower confines of the river towards Eden Vale. What an adventure we had as trees were avoided and the frequent bends reduced visibility. Eventually a fallen tree ended the advance and one-by-one the boats returned to Poulsac Bridge.

After a picnic and the usual upbeat banter the return journey began. The higher tide made the journey easier. Avoiding a trawler, heading into the Sow to moor for the evening, the convoy headed back across the Ferrycarrig Reach in the beautifully setting sunlight to moor up at around 10pm.



Ferrycarrig Reach
Photo: Brian Coulter

What an evening of successful exploration with just the right level of difficulty – which is what most IWAI members dream of.

BARROW AND NORE RALLY

On Saturday 3 October, a group from IWAI Slaney took up an invitation from the Drascome Association to join them on a weekend trip from Graiguenamanagh on the Barrow to New Ross and up the Nore to Inistioge. We were also joined by three currachs which added to the sight and experience as I doubt



Beautiful Barrow tidal section
Photo: Enda Murphy

that many currachs are seen on the Barrow too often. After an ideal launch at Graigue, we made our way down the canal with the currachs leading the way. The lock keeper showed us through the first lock, after that we learnt how to do it for ourselves.

After leaving St Mullins Lock at highwater it felt as if we were in an unexplored wilderness with high tree-covered cliffs climbing on either side of us. From here to New Ross the tide ran with us as we meandered through the South Kilkenny scenery. We went under the old metal lifting bridge, now rusted closed, and then through the confluence of the Barrow and Nore until we reached New Ross.

Next morning we had to wait for the rising tide to allow sufficient water to take us as far up the Nore as Inistioge. Again the scenery

was spectacular and after a break for lunch at the small Ballinagoth Quay, we headed on upriver. The weather did close in a little but we could not help but enjoy this relatively unused river. At the house, traditionally known as the red house but now white, we had to keep to the eastern shore to avoid the shallows and islands before we safely arrived at our final destination, the tidal quay of Inistioge, where the slip was perfectly sloped to assist in getting everyone out.

This trip required much planning. This was absolutely necessary to avail of the tides, progress a large group through the locks and to move trailers around but was well worth the effort. Despite using manpower rather than horsepower, the currachs got to both New Ross and Inistioge first – well done the rowers.



Entrants at the Sow Rally
Photo: Brian Coulter



Currach leading the way
Photo: Enda Murphy

DOWN ON DERG

FROM FERGUS CURTIN

AGM

The date for the 2021 AGM of IWAI Lough Derg has been set for Wednesday 15 December at 8pm. As Covid figures are rising again, the branch committee have decided that the AGM will be held as an online Zoom meeting. The format will be very similar to last year's meeting which, while not ideal, was deemed a success by all in attendance. More details will be circulated to members by the branch secretary in due course.

2022 LOUGH DERG RALLY

After a two year hiatus, the Lough Derg Rally will be back – bigger and better than ever – in 2022. The rally will take place from 9 July to 17 July 2022. The Rally Committee will be officially ratified at the AGM in December. More details will be forthcoming in the new year as the new committee start laying out their plans.

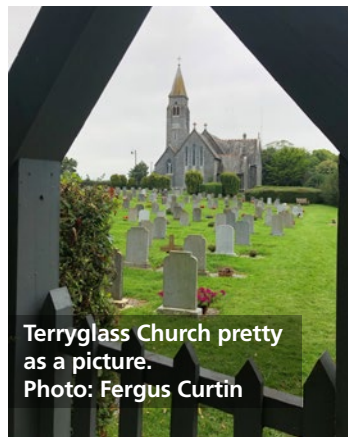
WINTER AROUND DERG

Our beloved boats may be asleep for the winter but our beautiful lake is here all year round. In fact the lake can arguably look its best on a crisp, cold and clear winter's day. There are many ways to enjoy the lake during the off-season, not least of which are the myriad of walks and hikes around its shores.

There are lots of great walks around the Killaloe/Ballina area, suitable for all fitness

levels. Almost all of these offer superlative views of the lake and far beyond. On the Ballina side, you can park at the Graves of the Leinstermen car park and either walk to the top of Tountinna, or out to Millennium Cross. Across the bridge; a short drive out of Killaloe will bring you to Ballycuggeran (Twomilegate) car park. From here one can walk up through Ballycuggeran woods for more amazing views. More energetic folks can then continue to the summit of Moylussa – the highest point in Clare.

In Mountshannon a very popular option is to walk from the village up Millpool Road and onwards to the Bohatch wedge tomb (known locally as 'The Dolmen'). These types of tombs were in use between the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in Ireland



Terryglass Church pretty as a picture.
Photo: Fergus Curtin



View from Ballcuggeran Woods near Killaloe
Photo: Fergus Curtin



Beautiful Sailing Ketch *Ilen* at Limerick
Photo: Dermot Lynch

and date to between 2,500 and 2,000 BC. This is approximately a 12km round trip with some steep sections but it is absolutely worth the effort.

In other areas there are wonderful walking and cycling trails in Portumna Forest Park and Terryglass. Further south the Sli Eala (Swan Way) links the historic

lakeside village of Dromineer to the picturesque bridge and wier at Ballyartella.

There are also several loop walks in the Scarriff/Tuamgraney/Ogonneloe area.

More details on the above, plus many more options, are available on the IWAI website: www.iwai.ie/walks-lough-derg/

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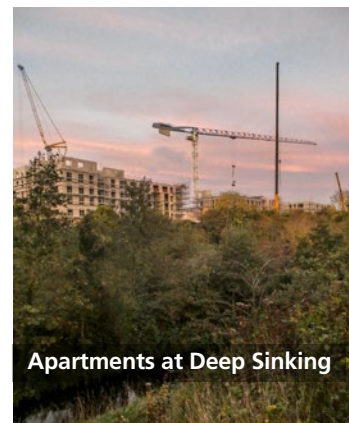
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ROYAL CANAL REPORT

By Derek Whelan



On the Rowan Hamilton walk



Apartments at Deep Sinking



New Railway Station at Pelletstown

MEETING AGAIN

After 18 months of railing against the restrictions imposed by Covid, it is good to be meeting face-to-face with fellow members again. RCAG held their first committee meetings in October and are now setting plans for 2022. The launch of the Royal Greenway earlier this year now gives us a chance to develop a number of outdoor events with a series of walks planned for Christmas, midsummer, Heritage Week and at least two other occasions.

Our Christmas walk will take place on 27 December at midday from Maynooth Harbour to Pike Bridge via Carton House Estate.

PORTERSTOWN COMMEMORATION

Due to Covid restrictions, the annual commemoration of the tragic accident of 1845 was curtailed last year. Easing of restrictions this year will allow us to return to the religious service at the local St Mochta's Church on Friday 26 November. This will be followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at Porterstown Canal Bridge, only a few hundred metres from the site of the accident.

CANALSIDE BUILDING

The pressure to speed-up housing development, particularly in the

Dublin area, has resulted in the commencement of a number of large apartments in recent months. We reported earlier this year on an application to build 169 apartments at the old Porterstown School. This proposal was rejected as having an overbearing influence on the adjacent canal corridor – some of the blocks came within 10 metres of the water's edge. However, two other similar developments are pressing ahead, each having in excess of 150 apartments.

At Reilly's Bridge (Lock 8) Ballymore Properties are constructing three blocks of at least five storeys which will dwarf the nearby lock. Ballymore have, over recent years, completed over 1000 dwellings in nearby Pelletstown along the canalside without any serious objections or opposition. The company is best known for its large scale building programmes in London's Canary Wharf and in Prague, Czechia.

A similar scheme is in progress at Carpenterstown, beside the canal at the Deep Sinking, again consisting of a number of six to eight storey high blocks. This scheme has been pre-sold to an investment fund and the apartments will therefore only be available to rent. Anyone who had ambitions to buy a pad

overlooking the Deep Sinking will be disappointed. However, this form of financing has become the norm for apartment developments in Dublin in recent times.

The proposed greenway extension, from Lock 12 to Confey, will pass in front of this development so residents are promised a safe and easy cycleway into the city.

PELLETSTOWN RAILWAY STATION

In late September, the first new railway station in Ireland in over 10 years was opened between Locks 8 and 9. The construction, financed by developers of the nearby buildings, resulted in a new pedestrian bridge over the canal allowing access to rail passengers and also creating a connection to the Ashington estate which was previously isolated from the canal by the rail tracks.

GREENWAY PROGRESS

Fingal Council's public consultation process seems to have stalled over recent months though Dublin City Council have started a public consultation process on what they term 'Phase 5' of the greenway in the city area. Their proposal will involve narrowing the channel at three pinch points to achieve a 3

metre wide path along the canal without seeking CPOs to acquire extra land. Both RCAG and IWAI Dublin will be closely examining this proposal.

ROWAN HAMILTON DAY

After missing last year's event, members of the Maths Department at Maynooth College returned again on 16 October to honour William Rowan Hamilton. Starting at Dunsink Observatory, they walked the canal bank as far as Broom Bridge where Hamilton's discovery (quaternion equation) is recalled on a plaque.

BREAKING NEWS

WI announced that as a result of a breach on 18 October, between Lock 45 and Clondara Bridge, access to Richmond Harbour has been suspended both from the Camlin River and from the eastern side of Lock 45. While no time period has been put on this closure, it is believed that it will last six to eight weeks.

It has not been a good year for navigation on the Royal as problems persist at the opposite end of the canal in Dublin with the Sea Lock out of action all year. We will hope for better times ahead.

Photos: Janet Leech and Noel Spaine

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