

inland waterways news

IWN

VOLUME 49, NUMBER 4

Winter 2022



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AN IRISHMAN OVERSEAS
LILY IN SWEDEN**



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It's the end of another boating season and I hope that you have enjoyed the wonders of our inland waterways as much as possible during 2022. We have gone from low water levels to high water levels in the blink of an eye and it feels like the season has come and gone in the same way.

I'm delighted to report we now have a new Hon Secretary. Graham Bartlett, Chair of IWAI River Suck has stepped forward to volunteer for the role. I am sure you will join me in welcoming Graham on board. I am also delighted that

Executive have agreed unanimously to recommend Peter Maxwell for a seat on the Board of the Lagan Navigation Trust. Congratulations Peter!

You will see from the Council Meeting Report that there are a number of issues for branch committees to address and as we are now in the thick of AGM season this is a good time to reinforce them for both existing and incoming committee members.

It is important new members joining a branch are welcomed and added to the branch communication list, be that email or messaging, if they wish to receive communications. Therefore, during the year each Branch Secretary and/or Membership Secretary should check the list of branch members on the membership system, under the 'new' tab at least once a fortnight. There they will see any new members and can access their contact details and reach out to welcome them and confirm if they wish to be added to the branch circulation list.

Similarly, from the end of March onwards, they should be checking the list under the 'renewal due' tab and reach out to these members to encourage renewal of subscriptions. Unfortunately, we had over 400 members who did not renew in 2022. It would be good to find out why and we have to rely on the local branch committees to do that and perhaps use their powers of persuasion to coax them back.

It is also vitally important that those members who pay by direct debit and are moving their bank accounts from Ulster Bank or KBC Bank, complete and sign a new direct debit mandate. Unfortunately the Membership Secretary cannot do this for you. Members can download and print the direct debit form from the payments section of the membership system. Once completed and signed, the form must be posted to our Membership Secretary, Brid Joly (her address is on the form).

Along the same vein, we really need our Branch Secretaries, Membership Secretaries and Treasurers to tell us what functionality they would like to see in our new membership system. As the people who are using it on a regular basis you are best placed to know what could be improved and what would make managing the membership of your branch easier. Email your ideas to membership@iwai.ie or to any member of Executive and we will collate all reasonably practical ideas for inclusion in our tender document.

Once again, IWAI were invited by the Department of Transport to contribute to a review of the Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft. Thank you to everyone who took the time to send me their views for inclusion in our submission. It is good to see that we are viewed as a stakeholder and that our contribution is valued.

In complete contradiction to this, we have been excluded as an interested party or stakeholder in the National Strategy on Outdoor Recreation. At a recent consultation meeting, I was disappointed to discover that motorised activities are not included in the definition of outdoor recreation. In other words, our cruising activities are not viewed as outdoor recreation, which I find a bit puzzling. What else are they?

In advance of the 2023 season, Executive have taken the decision that ALL rallies must use the online registration system to register attendees at the rally. This is to ensure that all vessel skippers are members of the Association. This will be communicated again closer to the time to all rally committees.

Finally, I would like to wish our members and their families a happy and peaceful Christmas. Enjoy the festive season and hopefully I will see you back on the water in March 2023.

Kay Baxter, President, IWAI



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INLAND WATERWAYS NEWS

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NAVIGATION & WORK NOTICES WATERWAYS IRELAND

MN#118 of 11 November 2022 GRAND CANAL - GREENWAY CLOSURE, LOCK 8 TO LOCK 9 FROM 16 NOVEMBER TO 16 DECEMBER 2022

Waterways Ireland wishes to advise users of the Grand Canal Greenway that the section from Lock 8 to Lock 9 will be closed from 16 November to 16 December 2022 to accommodate services installation works. No public access is permitted during these works. A temporary Traffic Management Plan with diversions for pedestrians and cyclists will be in place.

Waterways Ireland thanks its customers for their understanding in relation to this matter.

MN#114 of 2 November 2022 HIGH WATER LEVELS - SHANNON NAVIGATION, SHANNON-ERNE WATERWAY, ERNE SYSTEM, RIVER BARROW, RIVER BANN

Waterways Ireland wishes to advise all masters of vessels and water users that the above waterways are currently experiencing high water levels which are expected to continue to rise.

Masters of vessels and water users should proceed with additional caution and bear the following in mind:

- Air draft is reduced under all bridges and power lines
- Water velocity is significantly increased
- Access to jetties can be difficult as gangways and pontoons are elevated
- Navigation markers, pontoons, jetties may be submerged
- Mooring lines should be checked regularly if it safe to do so

Waterways Ireland thanks all vessel owners and operators for their co-operation in relation to this matter.



BARROW NAVIGATION

A 3 month programme of tree pruning & branch removal will commence in November to remove encroachments to the boating channel and improve navigation sight lines. Seasonal hedge-cutting programme is underway on the trackway.

BARROW LINE

- The tree pruning & branch removal programme which focused on bridge & lock approaches last year will re-commence in November and expand to navigation channels.
- Dredging operations will focus on supply channel maintenance
- Bank reinforcement project is underway in the embanked section of canal above the 26th Lock with targeted completion by December.
- Barrow Blueway works continue, with approx. 32km of canal-side surfacing now complete.

- Restoration of the Mount Prospect Supply culvert and its ancillary structures are underway with targeted completion by February 2023

ERNE SYSTEM

- Refurbishment of Geaglum walkway leading from the shoreline to the floating jetty. These works will include the removal and replacement of sub-structure, decking and handrailing.
- Removal and replacement of Geaglum floating jetty decking.
- Refurbishment of Erneside walkway leading from the shore line to the floating jetty. These works will include the removal and replacement of sub-structure, decking and handrailing.
- Removal and replacement of Carrickreagh fixed jetty decking.
- Removal and replacement of Trory fixed jetty decking.
- Removal and replacement of Lustymore floating jetty decking.

ROYAL CANAL

Ongoing general maintenance works along the canal as well as:

- Embankment repairs East of Longwood.
- Dredging works Kilpatrick Bridge towards Belmont Bridge.
- Culvert repair works Killashee area.
- Third party works West of Grange in Charlestown, Mullingar.

SHANNON NAVIGATION

- Tree and debris removal from the Navigation channel.
- OPW Strategic maintenance works.
- Re-decking of waiting jetties North and South Portumna Bridge.
- Ongoing Navigation aid maintenance.
- Relocation of Floating waiting jetty From Railway Bridge, Limerick.
- Upgrading of Jetties in Domineer.

SHANNON-ERNE WATERWAY

- Service block refurbishment Ballyconnell (modernisation of internal layout and heating system).
- Aghoo Bridge to Lock 4 trail construction.
- Vegetation management – bush cutting from pontoons along canal.
- Upgrade to timber Walkway at Lock 16.
- Replace timber decking at Ballyconnell jetty.
- Power washing of amenity sites/jetties.
- Boundary fencing replacement at various locations.
- Navigation markers - head replacement programme.
- Remedial works to lock gates at Lock 11.
- Upgrade to hydraulic operating system (various locks).

Editor's Corner



Season's greetings...

Just like Santy's toy sack, this issue of IWN is packed to burst with content, enough to keep you amused throughout the winter and beyond.

I am delighted to introduce Damien Maddock who has kindly allowed IWN to showcase his wonderful photographs. Editorial suggests the best way to enjoy these is to snuggle into a cosy arm chair with a hot drink and browse at leisure! See page 17 and throughout this issue.

Fishing is one of the most popular sports in Ireland and the world. We take a dip into the world of the salmon with insights into poaching, snap-net fishing and historical flies. Perhaps this will encourage some to take up angling, if so, write and let us know.

Elsewhere; Denis Moffat recalls a 2014 exploration of the old Rockingham Estate Canals in Reminiscing on page 15, Brid Jolly recalls an autumn trip on Lough Allen with French visitors, Towpath Tim explores the UK canals and on page 22 there is my final voyage on Swedish waters.

Finally, winter is the perfect time to pen that feature you've always thought of writing. You do not need to be an experienced writer or photographer, this is your magazine and editorial are happy to help produce a feature you can be proud of. So do please get in touch.

Finally, thank you to all our advertisers, our IWN printing house, all our contributors and you, the readers and members.

If, like myself, you are spending the festive season afloat do stay safe on the water.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Alison Alderton, IWN Editor

E-mail: editor@iwai.ie

SHANNON LOCK & BRIDGE TIMES

LOCKS & BRIDGES

Period	Weekdays	Sundays
Mar 14-Mar 31	09:30 - 18:30	09:30 - 18:00
Apr 01-Sept 30	09:30 - 19:30	09:30 - 18:00
Oct 01-Oct 31	09:30 - 18:30	09:30 - 18:00
Nov 1-Mar 13	09:00 - 12:00	09:00 - 11:00
Lunch break:	13:00 - 14:00	

PORTUMNA BRIDGE

Period	Weekdays	Sundays
Mar 14-Mar 31	10:00, 11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:30, 17:30	10:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00, 17:00
Apr 01-Sept 30	10:00, 11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00, 17:30, 18:30	10:00, 11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00, 17:00
Oct 01-Oct 31	10:00, 11:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:30, 17:30	10:00, 12:30, 14:30, 16:00, 17:00
Nov 1-Mar 13	09:30, 10:30, 11:30	09:30, 10:30

67M, THE STORY OF A BARGE

Thirty years of dreaming, planning, sanding, welding, painting, grounding and towing. A lifetime of dreams and despairs bound into a 200 page hardback book with colour photographs for your enjoyment. The much anticipated '67M, the Story of a Barge' is now available following the launch event held during the IWAI Kildare Naas Rally in October.

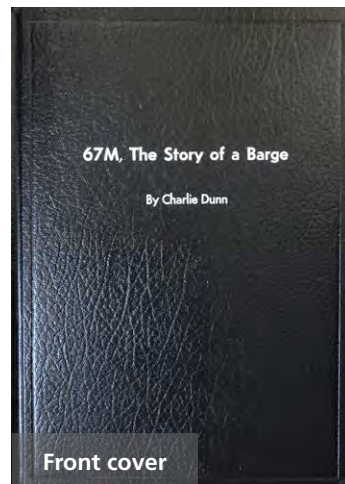
Speaking to editorial, author Charlie Dunn said, 'I am reminded that of course it is boats we should launch, not books!' Before going on to explain more about the subject matter. 'Grand Canal barge 67M was launched in 1936 and her working life ended with the closure of the Grand Canal in 1960. She has been in my care since 1992. I am only the custodian during my lifetime however, as these barges tend

to outlive us all. The Grand Canal with its locks and bridges are part of Ireland's heritage. In the same way, 67M and the Grand Canal Company barges are Ireland's floating heritage, without which the history of the canal would be incomplete. It has been an adventure to become part of this heritage story and there was much wine, pizza, friendship and laughter along the way.'

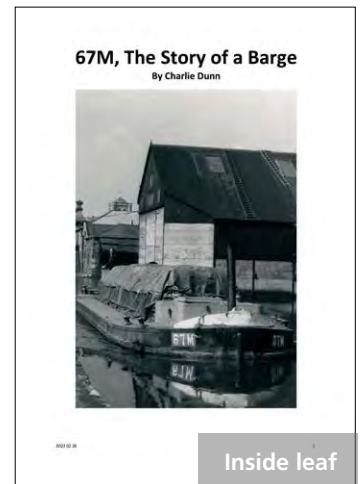
The story is related as a diary describing not just the evolution of barge 67M but also of the people, places and waterways of Ireland on which she travelled. A must have book for those interested in heritage craft and the ability they have to tug at the heartstrings.

Coming soon to: www.shop.iwai

Photos: Courtesy of Charlie Dunn



Front cover



Inside leaf



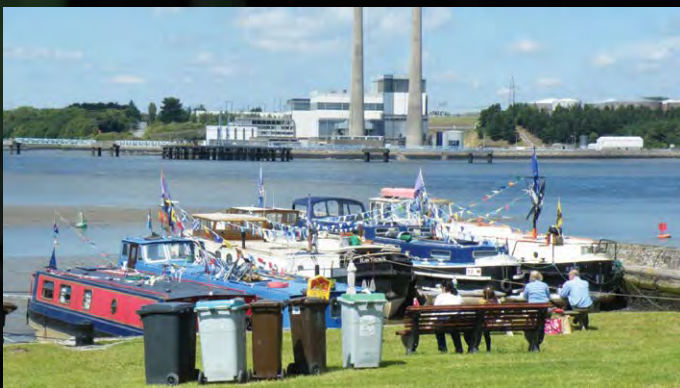
67M on the Grand Canal

MARK'S MYSTERY

Where was this photo taken ?

Some waterproof goodies from Aquapac for the lucky person to be drawn from all the correct identifications.

Email entries to: markmaguire76@gmail.com



No one correctly identified the Barrow Bridge which carries the now disused Waterford to Wexford rail line over the River Barrow in IWNI autumn 2022.

www.aquapac.net



Cover Story

Damien Maddock snapped our cover shot of Neil Barnaby and his Dutch barge *Driftin* hosting IWAI Boyle members and their French visitors during a tour of Lough Allen. Discover more in 'A very special exchange' on page 16 and view more of Damien photos in 'Picture this' on page 17.



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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GREENING THE FLEET

Following research by Fáilte Ireland, indicating a surge in domestic visitors during the health pandemic, a new study has been initiated to examine how the hire cruiser sector can be developed within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands region over the next ten years.

The aim of the study is to develop the cruiser hire fleet to provide a diversified, environmentally friendly, world-class experience along the Shannon Navigation and Shannon-Erne Waterway to enable sector growth from 2023 to 2032.

As well as providing recommendations on new cruise hire base locations and berthing within the Shannon, Shannon-Erne catchment, the final report will also explore opportunities for further diversification of the sector. These will include identifying new domestic and international market opportunities and approaches to drive revenue growth during the off-season, exploring options for operators to develop new product offerings,

such as ecotourism and day boat hire. In particular, the study will investigate the economic, technical and environmental feasibility of the renewal, revitalisation and greening of the cruise hire fleet.

Paddy Matthews, Head of Ireland's Hidden Heartlands at Fáilte Ireland stated that: *'The cruise hire offering in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands has always been positioned as a high-quality product and we want to ensure that we can grow its economic value to communities all along the Shannon while also ensuring it contributes to raising awareness of and protecting our natural environment. However, the reduction in fleet size and the increase in its age pose significant challenges for its continued success. We expect this study will provide an overview and roadmap for the future development of the cruise hire sector and identify solutions, through working with the stakeholders and industry, to support the sector to access*

sustainable options to encourage the growth and greening of their fleet and sector over the next 10 years.'

This study will deliver on an action contained in the Shannon Tourism Master Plan 2020-2030, which was

published by Waterways Ireland with the support of Fáilte Ireland and the local authorities along the Shannon and is also being undertaken with the co-operation of the Irish Boat Rental Association (IBRA).



Hire cruiser on Lough Key
Photo: Damien Maddock

KEEP ACTIVE THIS WINTER WITH IRISH SAILING

The second year of the Winter Initiative, a major national campaign to get as many people as possible exercising and participating in physical activity over the coming months, was launched by Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers, on Tuesday 1 November.

Sport Ireland and Minister Chambers are asking all National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) to promote their respective events throughout the duration of the winter months (November, December & January).

The first Winter Initiative was a huge success, with thousands of people engaging with activities and programmes organised by NGBs, LSPs and clubs in towns and communities all over the

country and that success will be built upon this winter. Winter is often a time when people become less active due to the shorter daylight hours and worsening weather. However, getting involved in sport, exercise and physical activity have huge benefits to individuals and communities and the Winter Initiative is designed to ensure that these can be felt by as many people as possible.

Irish Sailing are highly invested in keeping Ireland Active on the Water even through the colder months. You can see our events page and social pages for all events that are happening over the coming months. You can also head over to www.trysailing.ie to see what's on offer if you are new to the sport and want to get involved.

Visit: www.irishsailing.ie



COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

22 OCTOBER 2022 AT IWAI HQ DUNROVIN AND OVER ZOOM



ATTENDANCE

10 members in person, 9 on line, 5 apologies

PRESIDENTS ADDRESS

The meeting was opened by our President Kay Baxter in which she welcomed everyone to the first Council Meeting to be hosted in IWAI HQ *Dunrovin*. The President thanked those who had taken the time and trouble to travel to the site and attend in person as well as those joining via online connection.

Reflecting on a very busy year, the President offered huge thanks to her fellow Directors, elected Council Members, Branch Officers and all members for the role they have played in keeping the Association moving forward, welcoming new members, sadly saying goodbye to some of our long time members, organising events and some hugely successful rallies.

The President went on to highlight some events and work being undertaken by IWAI which included:

- IWAI HQ *Dunrovin* - By far one of the most significant events for our Association in recent years; the completion and opening of the beautiful headquarters at *Dunrovin*. The wonderful day at the official opening was mentioned as was the hard work of the *Dunrovin* sub-committee which the President commented should not be underestimated and also how fitting it was that the *Dunrovin* sub-committee were the recipients of the Endeavour Cup in 2022. The project, which was brought in on time and within budget, was the subject of an official update given by Kevin Clabby later in the meeting.
- IT - As highlighted at the AGM, there is the need to replace our membership system which is no longer fit for purpose and is definitely

not secure enough. A recently formed sub-committee consisting of our Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster Colman Byrne and chaired by Colin Becker, has been put together to tender document. All Officers should have received an email asking for input. It's important that those of you who use the membership system to manage your branch, tell us what you need the new system to do. We can then build those requirements into the system where relevant. This is not going to come cheap, so Executive will need help from branches to finance the new system.

- Charities Regulator - After more than 18 months the Charities Regulator, has reverted asking for another change to our constitution, *'I have reviewed your constitution and note that clause 11 relates to the keeping of accounts for Revenue, this is not correct as there are other bodies who are entitled to see your accounts and this may lead to confusion. In addition to this clause 86-91 relates to your accounts. Please remove clause 11.'*

Clause 11 simply states 'Annual audited accounts of the Company shall be kept and made available if and as required by legislation to the Revenue Commissioners on request.'

Please refer to AOB for more details.

- Lock and Lifting Bridge opening hours - As you all know, the lock and lifting bridge opening hours were reduced this year and we will need to see more boat traffic passing through the locks to get this reviewed. With that in mind we intend to publish our IWAI Calendar of Events for 2023 so branches are encouraged to get planning and make 2023 the best year ever.

IWN - In the same vein, if you are planning an event, or if there is something of interest planned by others in your area but related to the waterways e.g. sailing, swimming, environmental etc, why not let our IWN Editor know in advance. IWN is a great asset and can be used to promote not only IWAI but other associated activities. Publicise what is happening in your area or on the island of Ireland in advance and increase attendance. A lot of our branch reports look back at events that are concluded which is fine but perhaps we could also include a forward look at what is coming down the line. Alison Alderton is delighted to get your articles to editor@iwai.ie

- Congratulations – Congratulations were passed on to Peter Maxwell who was unanimously approved by executive as our recommendation for a seat on the Board of the Lagan Navigation Trust.

The President concluded her address by requesting a moment of silence to remember those family and friends who have left us.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was proposed by Stephen Maher, seconded by Les Saunders and adopted.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes were proposed by Kevin Clabby, seconded by Ian Craig and adopted. There were no issues raised from the previous meeting minutes.

MEMBERSHIP

Brid Joly, our Membership Secretary, spoke in detail about the breakdown of membership numbers and the decrease in membership this year. Her full report will be included in the folder sent to branches following the meeting.

FINANCE

As our Treasurer was on holiday, John Fitzgerald read out the brief

overview of our finances and her full report is in the folder supplied to all Officers.

IWAI COALISLAND

John Fitzgerald informed the meeting that the Executive was now in control of the funds of IWAI Coalisland and that it was time to make decisions on the future of the branch. An AGM of the paid up membership of the branch will need to be held and either of the following options adopted:

- 1) A new committee formed
- 2) Merge with another branch
- 3) Disband the branch

John Fitzgerald will arrange the AGM and report back to Council

CHILD PROTECTION

20 people completed training and underwent Garda Vetting in 2022. Four branches still to appoint a BCPO. Until they do they cannot hold any event at which a minor might be present.

RALLIES

From 2023 onwards, all rallies must use the online registration system to process the registration of attendees at their rally. This is to ensure only members in good standing participate in the rally and that all participants are confirming that they have their craft insured.

MANAGEMENT OF IWAI

MEETINGS

We are actively encouraging branches to hold at least some of their meetings face-to-face only. This is to try to revitalize the in person aspect of our Association and, with the AGM season upon us, to build momentum towards encouraging participation at branch committee level. We are suggesting perhaps alternating between face-to-face and hybrid/ Zoom might work.

EXECUTIVE

We are delighted that Graham Bartlett of IWAI River Suck has volunteered to step in as Hon. Secretary. Graham will be co-opted at the next Executive meeting until formally elected at the AGM 2023. However, we are still in need of more assistance. In particular, we need an Assistant Treasurer, someone who has a working knowledge of the Quick Books accounts package. Their role will be to manage the accounts associated with each edition of IWN, four times a year, invoicing advertisers and debtor control and managing the IWAI shop accounts. There will be no need to attend meetings, neither will there be any

banking involved, as they will liaise directly with the National Treasurer, Alison Maddock. If any member or any family/friend of a member is willing to volunteer some of their time please let us know.

COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS

It is vital that all Branch Secretaries and/or Treasurers regularly check their branch profile on line and make contact with any new members, welcoming them to the Association and the branch, and adding them to their preferred communication list. It's simple to do - login into your own account, click on 'my

branch' then 'members' then on the 'new' tab at the top of the page. It is also important the each Branch Secretary contact any renewal due members, also found in the same location under the 'due' tab and encourage them to rejoin the Association next year. Some members may simply have forgotten to renew their membership and may need a gentle reminder.

AOB

EGM

An EGM will need to be held to make an amendment to the Constitution of the Association

as instructed by the Charities Regulator in regard to the removal of Clause 11 from our Constitution. Unfortunately, through circumstances beyond our control, we were unable to hold it after this Council Meeting. We hope to piggy back the EGM on to one of the branch AGMs due to be held at IWAI HQ *Dunrovin* in November. We require a minimum of 33 members in attendance to make the resolution binding. All members will be notified of the date.

The President thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

John Fitzgerald, Vice President and acting Hon Secretary

EXECUTIVE PROGRESS REPORT WINTER 2022

I hope that you all had a great season and enjoyed the good weather and excellent cruising. This is my last report as your Honary Secretary and I hope you all welcome my replacement Graham Bartlett and give

him as much support as you can. The Executive has continued to meet and now broadband has arrived in IWAI HQ *Dunrovin* we were able to hold our first Council Meeting there during November 2022 and after a

few teething problems all went well. I wish to thank Kay Baxter and the Executive for all their support over my time as Hon. Secretary and look forward to taking up my new role as your Vice President



Kind Regards

John Fitzgerald, Vice President



GEAR UP FOR WINTER

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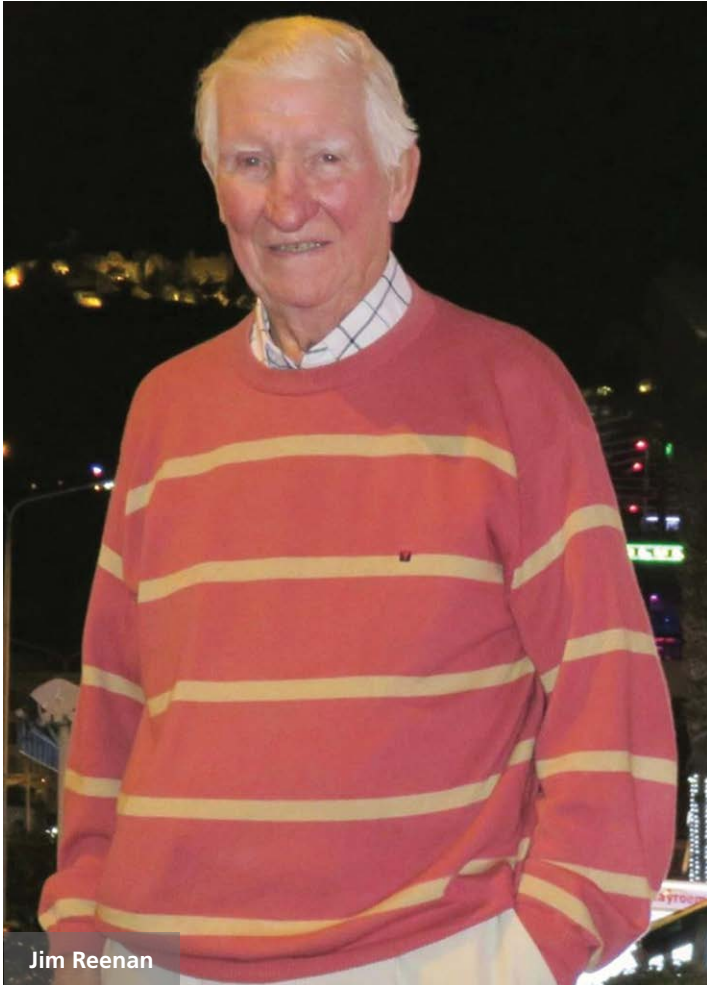
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IWAI contacts

Who's Who In The Association



JIM REENAN



It was with great sadness that Jim Reenan's many boating friends learned of his passing on Saturday 17 September. Jim was a Louth man, living just south of Dundalk though he spent much of his summer leisure time on the Shannon on his cruiser *Marama*.

On his condolence page on rip.ie the one word that appeared most often was 'Gentleman' and he certainly was that. Jim was a

Gentleman who loved meeting people and having a chat and a bit of craic. He was a charismatic character who attracted friends wherever he went. Whenever there was a party or a sing-song Jim was sure to be invited, where, with his fine singing voice he would give us, amongst others, his rendition of 'Let the Rest of the World go by'. He loved cruises in company and the highlight of his boating season

The Shannon Boat Rally where he loved to meet old friends and make new ones.

Jim was predeceased by his beloved wife Valerie who was taken from him nearly thirty years ago at the young age of 49. It was a few years after this sad loss that Jim discovered the joys of the North Shannon having previously done some boating out of Carlingford. They had no children but Jim is survived by a sister, nephews, nieces and in-laws by whom he will be very sadly missed.

Jim loved the sun and spent much of the winter in Fuerteventura in the Canaries where he had an apartment. He would come home for a few weeks at Christmas and always for a week at the end of February to attend the anniversary mass of his beloved Valerie. He, of course made many friends in Fuerteventura, mostly Irish and some British. As well as many of his boating friends, many of these friends attended his wake and funeral and one, Duncan, a Scotsman led the Funeral cortege in full regalia, playing the bagpipes, poignantly adding so much to the sad occasion.

Although in his late eighties when he passed away, Jim was a mine of information on many subjects and fully up to date with the latest technology. Up to his retirement he had worked in a managerial role for General

Electric of America who had an electronics manufacturing plant in Dundalk. His job involved quite a lot of travel worldwide, so he had a great knowledge of the world and learned much about sophisticated electronic products as those produced by the company. After his retirement he kept up to date with the latest developments so if anyone needed advice on the latest tv, mobile phone or wireless technology then Jim was the man to call. Many of us boaters in Butlers Marina, and indeed in the Carrick-on-Shannon area, also looked to Jim for advice on matters marine, well-being, and often spiritual. He had great faith. We often thought of him as being the perpetual 'Lord Mayor' of the north Shannon, not to mention being 'President for life' of the Louth Mafia.

Jim will be missed for his wit and his wisdom, his jovial personality and his general good nature. We will miss his signature greeting of 'Hello, ello, ello' and his chats and his songs. He leaves many family members and friends with a wealth of cherished memories.

On behalf of his boating friends, we extend our sincere condolences to Jim's family. May Jim Rest in Peace.

James Darby and Paddy Bowen



JAMES 'JIM' GILL (1931-2022)



James 'Jim' Gill

Jim Gill died on 24 September 2022, aged 91 years of age, at his home in Graiguenamanagh. He was one of the last of a large community of boatmen, from the twin-towns of Graiguenamanagh and Tinnahinch, who worked on the Irish waterways and particularly the Barrow for several generations.

Jim was one of the forty or so boatmen, from Graiguenamanagh, who were made redundant in 1960, when the canal transport business under Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE) finally closed down. Having started on his father's boat 67M at the age of 14, after finishing National School, Jim spent the next fifteen years on the boats, first under the Grand Canal Company (GCC) and after 1950 under CIE.

Tragedy visited Jim in 1948, when his father was drowned at Ticknevin Bridge on the Grand

Canal. After that devastating accident, Jim, a mere teenager continued on the boats but his brother Tom, who was also on 67M, went to work in England.

After the closure in 1960 Jim worked for a short period away from the river but then returned to work with the Office of Public Works (OPW) who had been tasked with the maintenance of the Irish waterways and he continued working on the rivers and canal until he finally retired in 1997.

Jim had amassed a phenomenal knowledge of the canal boating system and could recall names, places, incidences and a meticulous grasp of the workings of the barge or boat, as it was generally called, and its unique Bolinder engine. With little prompting, Jim could hold court on his boating adventures, the people he worked with, the lock keepers, relations with the canal

agents, the many hostelries on the canal; all in minute detail.

When Dick Warner travelled the canal and rivers in the TV series 'Waterways' in the early 1990's it was Jim Gill that was called on to pilot the old restored 45M for the documentaries. Jim was often called on by new, inexperienced, boat purchasers to deliver old canal boats to various locations on the waterways for their new owners and was many times interviewed by boating enthusiasts on his long experience on the Irish waterways. Nothing gave Jim more pleasure than poring forth on his beloved boating career and a visit to Jim always ended up on the river. Up to the end Jim's fascinating recall would captivate and amaze his visitors.

The Gill family had a long association with the canal boats. Jim's father, Patrick, who was born in Killina, Co. Kildare, came

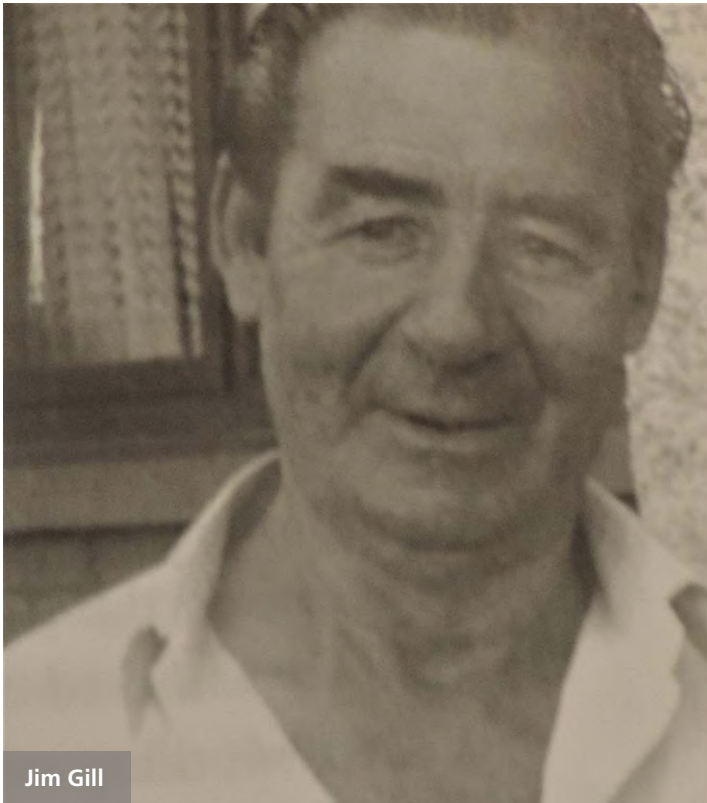
to live in the 'Hotel' area of Tinnahinch as a boatman, Jim's grandfather, Thomas, had his own horse boats on the Grand Canal delivering a variety of goods and the tradition went back the generations. It was from his uncle, Jack, who worked with Thomas, that Jim inherited his love of the waterways and his story-telling ability. Jack had a long association with the canal, could entertain with stories of his extraordinary life, including his exploits on the canal and add a song or two; a talent he also passed on to his nephew, Jim, who would often entertain with a song.

Jim married Anne McDonald, a boatman's daughter, and they first set up house in the 'Docks' area before getting a new house in 'Fairview' in the late 1950s. Jim and Anne reared a family including Patrick, who extended the family tradition, working as a Canal Ranger for 'Waterways Ireland' on the Barrow; daughters Marian, Anna, Gina and Bridget, who died as a young woman.

The demise of Jim Gill, as the last long-serving boatmen from the town, brings to an end a very long tradition of the town's relationship with the Irish waterways transport system. This tradition dates back to medieval times, and in Jim, the chronicle of that way of life was well preserved.

Text and photo: Courtesy of ENM

Edward N Moran (ENM) of Skeaghvasteen, Co. Kilkenny, is a retired farmer with an interest in local history. He graduated from a UCC outreach Local History program in 1996 and is joint author, along with Michael Kinsella and Conor Murphy, of *Kilcumney '98* and is a member of the Barrowvale Local History Group, Goresbridge, which have mounted exhibitions on aspects of local historical topics over a number of years. Edward has also had articles published in local historical publications.



Jim Gill

In a book, published some years back, Jim Gill eloquently laid out the life of a canal boatman in mid-twentieth century Ireland. Starting in the role of 'greaser' on a hard-working barge was a tough start in life. Like a big percentage of Grand Canal Company employees, Jim had family in the company and in fact started on a barge skippered by his father and with a brother as crew. The routine was an early start to a long day in all weather conditions and if time was taken off for any reason, it had to be worked up before or after. Barges kept to a strict schedule and delays were logged and sanctions imposed. Tragedy visited Jim on a dark winter evening when his father, Pat Gill, was drowned while the barge was heading towards Dublin at Ticknevin, County Kildare. Jim carried on his working

life until the final cessation of canal transport in 1960 and was one of the crew that was tasked with collecting items from company depots along the system and transporting them to Dublin for disposal. The once large transport organisation was reduced to lock keeping and maintenance staff.

Life as a young barge man was tough and the manual handling of heavy sacks and barrels came very regularly. The younger fit men were expected to work harder so that the older crew would have an easier time. Visits to the movies during a voyage were a highlight in the hard regime but travel schedules were tight and time had to be made up. The weather of course had a huge influence on how easy a voyage went and standing on the tiller on a cold

winter's night must have been very unpleasant. The stories of 'tapping a barrel' in order to get a few pints of porter are widespread and obviously a highlight of the day. Food and conditions were very basic in the small crew quarters which had to cater for cooking and heating as well as clothes drying. Lighting was from oil lamps and bicycles were carried on deck for crew to get around.

After years of inactivity the annual 'Boatman's Reunion' brought the bargemen and their families together socially and the tales of working days were told and no doubt embellished. The Gill's coming from Graiguenamanagh on the River Barrow were part of an elite amongst boatmen because of the difficult waters they worked. The stories were always good natured and the odd exaggeration was part of the mystique. The visits to surviving canal boats were treasured and enjoyed. A big disadvantage to an association like the Boatmen was that the members who had actually worked on the barges would diminish as the years went by.

The emergence of the Heritage Boat Association (HBA) in 2001 was a huge boost to canals and anything to do with them. HBA members who owned old canal boats were anxious to learn the history of their barges and those who worked them. Within a few short years the HBA had published a couple of books which mainly catalogued the canal barges, their history and the crewmembers. The Boatmen's group and the HBA began to have annual functions and with some generous sponsorship from Waterways Ireland, presentations were made

to surviving boatmen. The HBA became very active and several times each year there was a rally or local event to attend. Because these events were in places across the island of Ireland, men with connections with water transport turned up to view the surviving boats from this bygone era and of course tell a few tales from those days.

As mentioned earlier, boatmen came from families of boatmen and to a great extent were from a particular area or county. Kildare was very prominent in this regard but of course the Barrow families were strong in numbers. I last spoke with Jim Gill in early January 2020 when three of us dropped in unannounced to his home in Graiguenamanagh and were treated to an hour of magic listening to his stories of the long-gone commercial canal barge era. He was typical of his type, very generous with information and advice on canal boats and the amazing Bolinder engine. It was a common trait amongst these men to be very open about their lives working the barges and their social lives when off duty. The emergence of groups of barges at events gave as much joy to these men as it did to the current owners of these magnificent craft. A canal boat owner who had onboard a man who was part of the Grand Canal Company's infrastructure was very privileged and lucky.

The living libraries of Jim Gill and his like have all but passed on but thankfully a generous legacy of experience has been left behind. It was a pleasure to have known so many of them.

Text and photos: Courtesy of Joe Treacy, Heritage Boat Association



Boatmen at work
Photo: The Shortall collection



Jim Gill with Ed Clinton

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PROMOTING OUR WATERWAYS FOR IRISH CANCER SOCIETY WATER NYMPHS CHARITY CALENDAR 2023



Ten years ago, an idea was born from a bunch of boaters having a laugh over a pint in Portumna. From this idea came 'The River Rats' a wonderful calendar depicting the men (gloriously body painted) and their boats at stunning locations on the waterways. It was an amazing experience for all involved and we are proud to say that we raised €10,000 for Irish Cancer Society.

A decade on, after being sought out by women boaters asking, 'when is it our turn?' The Water Nymphs Charity Calendar was created. We are proud of this calendar and thoroughly enjoyed the process of bringing it all together – with each body paint taking about six hours (which has been challenging considering the events of recent times).

A big thanks goes out to the models, photographers, body painters, promoters, sellers, PR support, chefs, assistants and cup of tea makers and special thanks to Victor Henry (my partner in crime). So here we are, with around 300 calendars left to distribute and €4000 raised at the time of writing this piece, we are well on our way. I want to appeal to all reading this today to purchase one of these wonderful calendars or perhaps a few as excellent unique Christmas presents that promote the waterways we all love, the beauty of Ireland, as well as raising much needed funds, as 100% of every purchase goes to the Irish Cancer Society. It is a good cause as it is something that affects us all

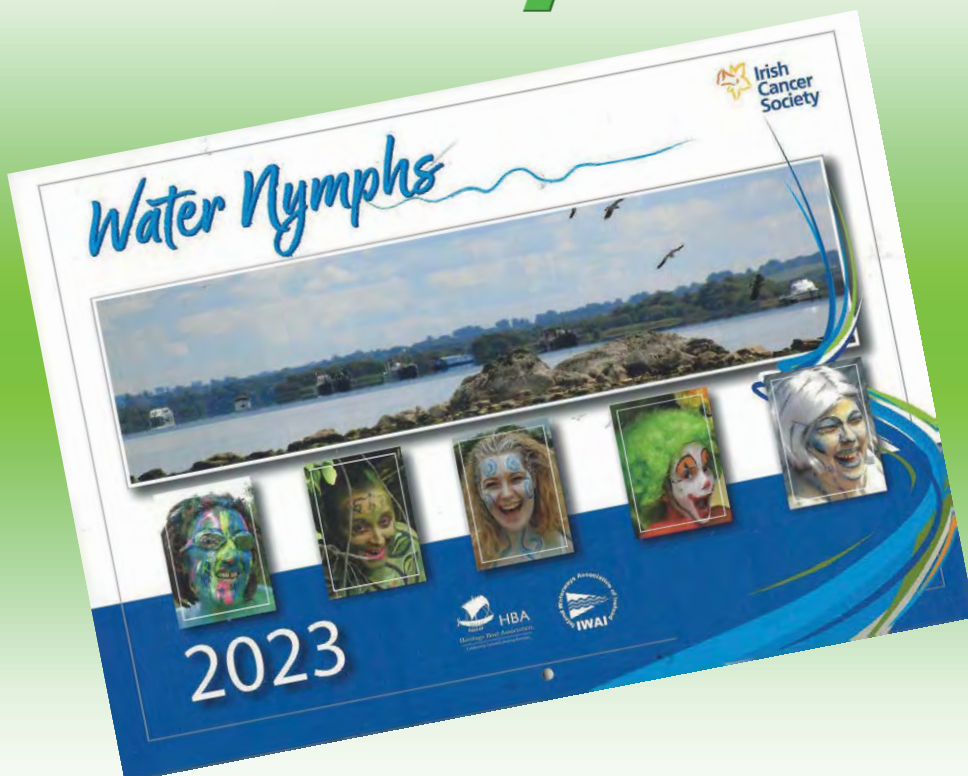
and I don't know anyone who hasn't been affected by cancer. So, I hope you enjoy the calendar as much as we did and that you're inspired even more to enjoy our wonderful waterways.

Calendars can be purchased online at the IWAI online shop www.iwai.ie then go to donations and you will see our wonderful calendars – €13 plus postage and packaging. Or if you think that you may be able to distribute some calendars yourself, please give me a call on 0861627604.

Happy Boating

Donna Pryde (Artist)

shop.iwai.ie



Water Nymphs Calendar 2023

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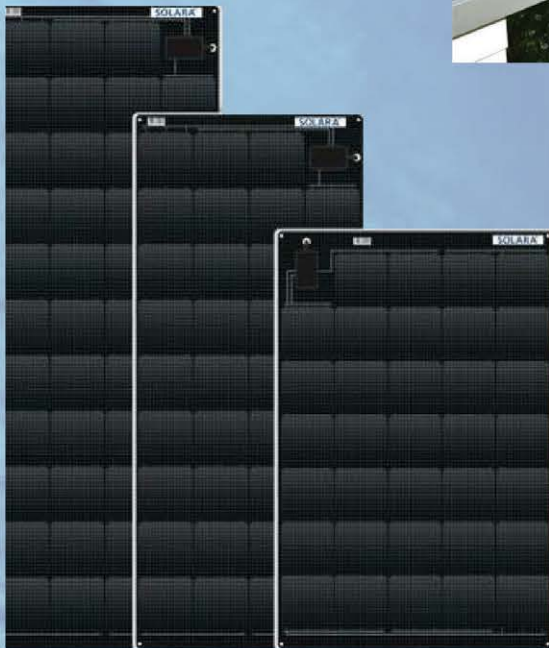
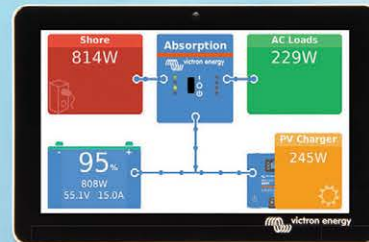
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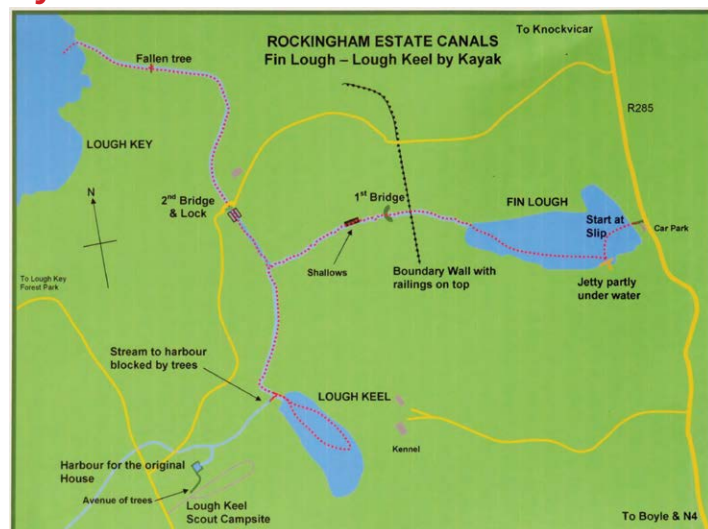
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EXPLORING THE OLD ROCKINGHAM CANALS

By Denis Moffat



Castle Island, Lough Key
Photo: Alison Alderton

Following the recent interest in the canals at Lough Key Forest Park, Denis Moffat looks back on an exploration of the old canal system on the other side of the estate undertaken by kayak with his son Andrew in 2014.

FIN LOUGH TO LOUGH KEEL AND ON TO LOUGH KEY

We started at Fin Lough on the Knockvicar Road where there is a rough slip used mostly by fishermen. A short distance out on the water there was a concrete jetty, most of which was just underwater, attached to a mound at the lakeside. At the far end of the lake, we found the canal. A kayak or canoe would be the only thing



Launch site, Fin Lough

that would go through the reeds, over branches and through the trees. After a while we came to a wall, either side of the canal, topped with an ornamental railing which we assumed marked the estate boundary. A short distance beyond we came to a canal bridge and after passing beneath, pulled into the bank to go ashore for a closer look. There were the remains of some very ornate railings on



Bridge 1

the walls of the bridge, finishing in a scroll shape as on the bannisters of a staircase, but there was no sign of a road, all was grass.

The next part of the canal looked like a ditch as it was full of tall water weeds but the kayak passed through without much trouble. Next, we encountered shallows for about fifty feet and had to get out to lift the kayak across them. After that, it was twisty for a short distance until we arrived at a T junction with the other canal, where we turned left towards Lough Keel. This canal was much wider and free of weeds, the canal took a bend to the left and we arrived at Lough Keel where we did a circuit around the lake. There were a couple of houses to the east, one was in the style of a castle marked on historic maps as 'Kennel'. As we



Inside the Lock

were leaving the lake we took a turn to the left into a river that went in the direction of an old harbour at the end of a canal but could not go far as the trees were over the channel blocking the way.

Heading back the way we had come and on past the junction to Finn Lough, the channel was reasonably clear until we reached the old lock and road bridge. The lock and canal, built for Lord Lorton around 1810, was possibly used for transporting turf to Rockingham. The lock was almost full of trees and we had to tilt the kayak over on one side to slide between them and the wall of the lock. On inspection, the bridge had closely fitted, fine stonework. We then travelled

on through undergrowth and reeds, negotiating many low branches before a fallen tree across the canal barred our way. We had no option but to pull the kayak out and over this tree. Soon after this we came to the reeds at Lough Key and were surprised at how windy it was after the sheltered canal. We paddled past Castle Island to the slipway at the visitor centre, where Andrews's family were waiting with the car.



Bridge 2

I had the opportunity to search for the old harbour in 2020. Walking into the woods, about 100yds to the left of the scout's camp entrance, on the right there is a distinct avenue of trees marking the road from the old house to the harbour. The harbour and the canal, which passes through a boundary wall just before it enters the river, could not be accessed by kayak back in 2014 and contained very little water in the drought of 2020.

Photos: Denis Moffat unless stated otherwise

There are more pictures on the Irish Waterways History website at: www.irishwaterwayshistory.com/abandoned-or-little-used-irish-waterways/midlands-turfwaterways/rockingham



The old harbour

A VERY SPECIAL EXCHANGE

By Bríd Jolly, IWAI Boyle River

On a beautiful sunny Sunday, 18 September to be exact, four boats, a Broom 38, a Haines 37, a 37' Dutch steel cruiser and a 50' barge all from IWAI Boyle River gathered to bring a group of 30 French people for a trip on Lough Allen and then a cruise on the Lough Allen Canal to Acres Lake. The French were from the village of Locquirec in the Brittany region of France. Locquirec is a small traditional village based around an equally small harbour on the northwest coast of France. The village is twinned with Drumshanbo, Co. Leitrim. During the pandemic there were no exchange visits between Drumshanbo and Locquirec, so this was a very special exchange.

The French were excited to do this trip, not from the point of view of going on a boat, many of them have boats themselves but because Lough Allen is a freshwater lake and of course, to travel on a canal. Some of the visitors were given the opportunity to steer the boat



Irish Crew members

they were on and were delighted especially as they had to keep the boat between the markers which at times marked a narrow channel. Thankfully, no markers were damaged!

Although the visitors enjoyed the cruise around Lough Allen the best was yet to come given that the weather was perfect for a trip on the Lough Allen Canal. Lough Allen is at its best in the sunshine and the sunshine showed off its beautiful autumnal colours. The French were fascinated with Drumshanbo Lock and Zoe, the lock keeper, reaching out with her pole to catch the ropes and then putting the ropes around the bollards. They were all eager to hold the ropes as the boats went downwards to the canal and they took lots of photos and videos of themselves doing this!

As the boats left the lock and turned the first corner, the visitors were stunned by what they saw ahead of them. The trees on either side of the canal created a canopy overhead with the sunshine breaking through and glistening on the water. The boats travelled very slowly so that the visitors could appreciate the peacefulness and tranquillity of the canal.

When the canal entered Acres Lake the French were disappointed as they knew their magical trip would soon come to an end. They again were eager to take the ropes and assist with mooring as the boats came to a halt on the pontoons but were not eager to leave the jetty.



Drumshanbo Lock

The trip organisers had to coax them to leave as another event awaited them.

The eight crew members of the four boats were invited to attend the official welcome dinner for the French in Henry's, Drumshanbo later that evening where the French thanked them for the wonderful trip they had had. The French did comment on the fact that it appeared the Lough Allen Canal was very underused and said it was a pity as it was a wonderful amenity to have!

Representatives from Drumshanbo will travel to Locquirec next year and the French invited the eight crew to join the trip and promised them a boat trip on the sea!

Photos: Damien Maddock



Happy faces after the trip



Locking down



Buzzard



Flight



A selection of photographs by Damien Maddock



Spencer Harbour



Wind power on Lough Allen



Red Squirrel



Autumnal foliage



Camac on the Lough Allen Canal

THE SALMON POACHER

By Martin O'Brien

The River Barrow in St Mullins teemed with salmon, up until the 1960's, you just couldn't miss, put down the net and they just jumped in, monsters they were, 20 and 30 lb enough to feed many a family. In Odlum's mills when the miller stopped milling and the sluice gates were closed on the mill race you could just walk along in the dry bed of the race and pick-up dozens of salmon. There was so much salmon a feed of bacon and cabbage was welcome for a change sure anything that is plentiful loses its attraction. But then the stocks began to decline, everybody will give you a different reason for this decline, maybe overfishing, trawlers with massive nets out in the estuary, pollution from fertilisers spread on the land seeping down into the rivers.

Whatever the reason many of the older men as they sit in Blanchfield's Pub at the top of the hill will regale you with stories of their poaching days and all the tricks they got up to, to avoid being caught by the bailiff. Hiding up in the trees for hours, waiting for the bailiff to go home. Walking down to the river with your wellies on the wrong way around so it looked as if you were going not coming. Poaching salmon was part of the local occupation and, like poteen; the spoils were shared around locally. Poaching was seen as a right in rural Ireland just taking back what was ours from the British landlord's and the Crown and in many cases the only way to feed a family. Nets were strung across the Barrow in the middle of the night and silence was observed as they waited for the salmon on their way upriver. The Barrow teemed with big salmon and nets would quickly fill, many times the poacher had difficulty carrying them back up through the woods and it was a real family affair.

Then a new business began in Ireland called tourism where the bit of wild salmon was a delicacy, poached, fried, grilled. This was a big business supplying restaurants and B&Bs who became famous the world over for their lovely salmon dinners. I must admit to myself the illicit catch always tastes the best. It's just not the same out of a plastic wrapper and sure isn't plastic the one that's doing the real damage to the world. But

as in everything man got greedy and what was a bit of craic became a commercial endeavour that was doing damage to the river. Salmon fishing is now banned on most rivers in Ireland as the numbers are so low and we are in danger of losing them all together. Now the lads sit over their pint and dream of days long since gone promising themselves that they will give it 'one more go'.

A POACHING SONG

When God created water, He must have thought of fish
And said, 'Let there be salmon to lie on Adam's dish!'
So, he created Adam, for salmon must be caught
And flies too he created, and then of rods He taught.
So, trees grew straight and slender and Adam learned to fish
And thanked the Lord each evening for the brightness of his dish.
But who created bailiffs in a dark hour of the night?
Not God, who loves good fellows and taught fish how to bite
Not God Who created the peaceful flowing stream.
The Salmon ripe for taking when he leaps for joy in spring.
A wise man, Fionn MacCumhaill, caught a salmon for his tea
That lived on the nuts of knowledge, dropped from a knowing tree.
He cooked it and he tasted and knew all men could wish
And wise men ever since then sit by a stream and fish.
But men unwise and evil, prompted by vicious greed,
Forbid good men their pleasure in doing this good deed.
Let others praise the herring, the tunny, trout or whale,
Give me the noble salmon with lightning in his tail.
To monarchs leave the sturgeon, the carp of golden hue
I'll snare the silver salmon and share the dish with you.

Donagh MacDonagh

SNAP-NET FISHING ON THE THREE SISTERS

Snap-net fishing for salmon on the tidal reaches of the Three Sister Rivers (Barrow, Nore and Suir) in southeast Ireland has passed down from father to son through the generations. The shallow nature of these rivers with strong tidal flows, muddy banks and riverbeds facilitated the development of snap-net fishing as a unique method for catching salmon. There is no other region in the country where snap-net fishing is practised and there is no other fishing method like it, except perhaps in the tidal estuaries in west Wales where coracle fishers use similar traditional techniques to fish for sea trout or 'sewin'. They were awarded special protected status by the European Commission in March 2017.

The snap-net, about 15 yards long, is mounted on a thin top rope with two stones attached each side of the net on a bottom rope. There are two sets of hauling ropes on either side tied to the top and bottom rope of the net. The net is fished between two wooden boats called cots, which are around 15 feet long, about 3 feet wide and 16 inches deep. The word cot derives from 'coite', an Irish word meaning a log boat or a dugout canoe and the use of this type of boat is largely confined to the Three Sister Rivers. Cots are built or repaired in the winter months using locally sourced larch and oak. All cots originally had two equal sterns or ends but most are now fitted with one transom end to hold an outboard motor, used to move to and from the fishing ledges. This is one of the few changes to the equipment that has been in use for centuries, which facilitated a transition from a four-man crew per pair of cots to the two-man crew used today.

The net is played out between the two cots and is fished in the direction of the tide by one man in either cot paddling with one hand, holding the ropes in the other, which ensures that the net is kept open like a purse along the



Atlantic salmon
Image: Timothy Knepp



Snap-net fishermen and their cots on the river
Photo: Patrick Browne © Brownes Photography

river bottom. The ends of the net on either side are gathered to form the purse, ensuring that any fish entering cannot escape. When a fish swims into the net, it pulls the top rope as it tries to escape, which is felt by the fisherman. The ropes are then immediately drawn to 'snap' the net closed (a couple of yards of the stone rope is drawn first), and the net and fish are drawn into one of the cots, where the fish is quickly dispatched. Once the fish is removed, the net is played out again to resume fishing. Generally, crews fish downriver with the ebb tide and then return upriver with the flood tide along different ledges, though they may return upriver to fish the same 'drift' again.

At least one fisherman from a crew of two must be in possession of a valid snap-net licence issued by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

The fishing season is now largely confined to June, July and August. All fish caught must be tagged and the fishery is subject to a quota. Once a fisherman has used his quota of tags he must cease fishing. Fishermen are required by law to fill out a logbook with details of each fish caught and tags used, which must be returned to IFI at the end of the season. Following a 'buyout' of some licences in 2006, only around 70 licences are now issued, though usually only 50 of these are actively fished. This contrasts with over 2,000 on the Suir and 1,700 from Inistioge to New Ross in the nineteenth century.

Snap-netting is an inefficient method of catching salmon as usually only one fish is caught at a time. It is associated with a very low rate of exploitation and even in the bountiful

years of the 1970s, snap-netting generally extracted only a very small percentage of the stock. Snap-netting is very weather dependent and the success of the method varies with tidal conditions so fishing for salmon using the method is self-limiting. It also provides a useful means of monitoring the run of salmon in the river each year, without having any appreciable impact on the stock. However, there has been no snap-net fishing on the Three Sister Rivers since 2014 as none of the rivers have achieved their conservation limits, as set by the fisheries scientists, therefore no surplus is available for exploitation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IWN editorial are indebted to the following for their help, assistance and kind granting of permissions to reproduce items within these pages:

Ireland's National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage
www.nationalinventoryich.chg.gov.ie

The Snap Net Fishing Practitioners (via the above)

Patrick Browne of Brownes Photography
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Niall MacDonagh (USA) and Barbara Cashin (ROI), the family of Donagh MacDonagh, for granted permission for IWAJ and IWN to reproduce The Poacher's Song in conjunction with words by Martin O'Brien.

Niall MacDonagh hosts an informative website where you can discover more about Donagh MacDonagh and his collection of written works:
<https://irishbormman.tripod.com/dmdworks.html>



Snap-net fisherman Peter Walsh based in Carrigeen, Co. Kilkenny
Photo: Patrick Browne © Brownes Photography

THE 1902 CORK COLLECTION OF SALMON FLIES



Traditional Irish salmon flies, commissioned one hundred and twenty years ago for the Cork International Exhibition in 1902, are featured in a new historical picture book.

Fly tying involves the 'dressing' of a fishing hook to create an artificial fly, which is then used by anglers at the end of a rod and line to catch fish. It's a little-known part of Ireland's heritage but many angling shops in Ireland in the late 1800s and early 1900s employed 'fly dressers.' Some were considered masters of their craft, thanks to their skills, creativity and the traditional methods that they used.

In recognition of the cultural importance of this craft and to record examples, a collection of traditional fly dressings was commissioned in 1902, with specific sets of flies collected for each of the twenty fishery districts throughout the country. The current custodians of this important collection, Inland Fisheries Ireland, have published

the '1902 Cork Collection of Salmon Flies' picture book making it freely available to new generations around the world.

Speaking at the book launch earlier this year, the manager of the project, Shane O'Reilly of Inland Fisheries Ireland, said: *'This new book offers a unique glimpse into Ireland's past, showcasing the detail and beauty of traditional Irish salmon flies and the wide range of materials and techniques used by Irish fly dressers at the time. Many of those fly dressers are now revered around the world for the quality of their craft, so this collection is of significant cultural importance too, and is now available for the next generation to discover.'*

Over 380 individual salmon flies have been catalogued for this project, representing twenty fishery districts such as Galway, Ballina, Killarney, Dublin, Ballyshannon and Lismore. These flies were often 'dressed' for use on specific rivers or lakes,

with subtle differences in hue and colour to reflect what was believed to be the best pattern on that fishery, at a particular time of year.

Suzanne Campion, Head of Business Development with Inland Fisheries Ireland said: *'As a species, wild salmon have very strong cultural connections to Ireland, featuring in Irish folklore, myth and legend. These flies remind us of the importance of salmon stocks socially, economically and particularly as part of our natural heritage and biodiversity. A hundred and twenty years after they were first displayed in Cork, Inland Fisheries Ireland together with anglers and local communities, continue to work to protect and conserve Ireland's precious wild salmon and their habitats for the benefit of future generations.'*

The '1902 Cork Collection of Salmon Flies' is available to view from the Inland Fisheries Ireland website at www.fisheriesireland.ie and from the Fishing in Ireland website at www.fishinginireland.info



FISHING - MAKING A START

If you are thinking of taking up fishing you may find the following websites and information of use:

- Waterways Ireland; www.waterwaysireland.org

Useful information on fishing the waterways which fall under the remit of Waterways Ireland. Each waterway has its own designated section with insights on locations, fish types and best baits to use. Free downloadable material for some locations with maps to help you find that perfect angling spot.

- Inland Fisheries Ireland; www.fisheriesireland.ie and www.fishinginireland.ie

Both websites contain a wealth of useful information on all types of fishing. Important information on licensing, permits, angling with flies and lures, locations and more. Numerous downloads available to help you get started and stay up to date with fishing in Ireland. Buy your licences direct from here and print at home.

- DAERA Inland Fisheries; www.nidirect.gov.uk/angling

Access to all the information needed to go angling in Northern Ireland can be found here.

FISHING FOR ALL

Less able bodied will find an increasing number of easy access craft are now available throughout the island of Ireland. Many operators of these craft not only provide scenic tours but also cater for those wishing to fish. You will find some of these boat operators mentioned elsewhere in this issue of IWV.

Waterways Ireland have installed a number of specially designed fishing stands offering access to anglers with wheelchairs at a number of locations along the Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation.

Locations suitable for anglers with a disability or restricted mobility can be found at:

<https://fishinginireland.info/coarse/disabled/>

BE RESPONSIBLE

It is important to protect our fisheries and waterways. Would-be anglers and fishermen are therefore requested to follow some simple guidelines related to the leave no trace policy. These include such items as:

- Adhering to catch and release
- Using barbless hooks
- Restrict the use of line weights which have the ability to become detached and contaminate watercourses

Find out more at: www.leaveonotraceireland.org

A responsible angler is someone that:

- Respects other angler's rights
- Buys a fishing licence/permit where appropriate
- Is aware of and adheres to fishing and boating regulations

- Respects the rights of property owners
- Catches, photographs and releases fish (CPR)
- Releases fish quickly and unharmed
- Never litters or pollutes and observes 'Leave no Trace' principles
- Shares their knowledge with others
- Learns about the different species of fish in their area
- Gives back by getting involved in conservation programmes or activities

STAY SAFE

- Keep warm and dry
- Always wear a lifejacket on or near water
- Have some knowledge of basic first-aid
- Always let someone know when and where you are going fishing
- Carry a mobile phone or portable VHF radio

Lastly – enjoy!

Photos: Damien Maddock



TOWING THE LINE

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Irish Water, Waterways Ireland, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland – these water bodies are all a bit confusing, especially to non IWAI members. Some members of the public believe that IWAI is a publicly funded government body employed to manage Ireland's inland waterways. Somehow IWAI is not recognised as the volunteer army funded by voluntary contributions which it is. So maybe it is time to rename the IWAI and to include the word 'Voluntary' somewhere in its new name. This may both improve the flow of contributions and also grow the IWAI membership. The public seems reluctant to be involved in any government funded or controlled organisation – IWAI needs to be more clearly identified as a volunteer charitable body funded by voluntary contributions.

HAMILTON BRIDGE ODDITIES

Hamilton Bridge crosses over the Grand Canal between Allenwood and Ticknevin, Co. Offaly. Somewhat off grid could best describe the area around Hamilton Bridge which is not exactly on the way to anywhere apart from the Grand Canal. There are, however, a few oddities in the area. One is the impressive 'Barracks' building alongside the canal which is far too grand to ever have been a canal building. Dating back to 1852, it predates the canal in any event. There must have been something for the forces to be guarding in the area to warrant such a substantial barracks? The building is now in residential use.



Barracks at Hamilton Bridge

Another oddity here is the site of the former Bord na Móna Lifting Bridge. The 'former' description in the waterway guide is in fact only partially correct, as although the bridge deck has been removed, the remainder of the structure still exists. Even the bog railway tracks have survived. It is certainly an item of navigational interest as the structure narrows the navigation and must be approached with caution. As to who is responsible for maintaining and monitoring the overhead structure, there is no word. The bridge has no label or ownership marker on it. Maybe the now defunct Bord na Móna was the responsible body and the structure has been left without an owner. Which is all fine until it deteriorates and collapses into the canal below.



Former lifting bridge

Bargain hunters may be interested in the beached barge nearby. More accurately defined as a lifeboat, it is engraved '12 persons' and its renovation has been well started. Alas, she has lain ashore on the Grand Canal roadside idle for many years and may need some new enthusiasm. Rainwater has filled the hull, which is good news as it means that the hull is leak-proof, that's a major plus for any future owner.



Beached lifeboat

BACK IN ROBERTSTOWN

Grand Canal barge 52M is back at Robertstown. After a voyage to the River Shannon for significant repairs to her hull and superstructure, the former *Eustace* is back in her home town for works to complete her internal fit out. The Robertstown Community Association is spearheading the project and the fundraising. Local supplier Hanlon Concrete provided seven tons of ballast. Sheets of timber to panel out the inside arrived while I was watching. There is a lot done but a lot more to do.



Eustace at Robertstown

GRAND CANAL ATHY

Situated at the critical interchange between the still water Grand Canal and the flowing River Barrow, the town of Athy remains a hub of waterways activity. A new ticket office for Blueway

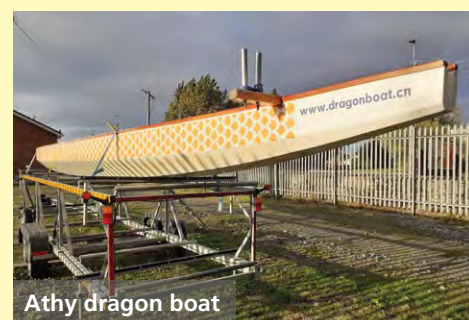
Boating and Leisure Activities has been opened alongside the canal and the dry dock receives regular use for hull surveys and blackening. The former Harbourmaster's House at Lock 27 remains vacant and presents a great opportunity for a canalside venture. There is more activity on the River Barrow below Lock 28, which marks the transition from still canal into flowing river. There is a fleet of private boats moored just south of the bridge, and www.athyboattours.ie provide day trips on their large tour boat *Saoirse ar an Uisce*, (I hear that a new operator is being sought for this venture). The annual tri-athy benefits from the River Barrow and its towpath route for the 3km swim, 80km bike and 20km running course. Over 3,000 entrants have registered for the next event planned for 4 June 2023. More on www.triathy.ie



Athy Harbourmasters House

THERE BE DRAGONS...

Upriver of the bridge, at the 'Athy Sports Hub', there is the base for a fleet of dragon boats, another sport which is flourishing thanks to the River Barrow. Traditional Hong Kong dragon boats are 40ft long with seats for 20 persons but dragon boats in Ireland measure around 30ft long with seats for 20 persons including helmsman and drummer. These large boats need much space to allow their rowers to manoeuvre and build up speed and the width of the River Barrow allows competitive racing for their fleet. The 'Plurabelle Paddlers' dragon boat fleet at Dublin's Grand Canal Basin use similar boats, however, they are prohibited from using their drumbeat due to the proximity of so many residences to their training ground. No such problem on the River Barrow, I guess?



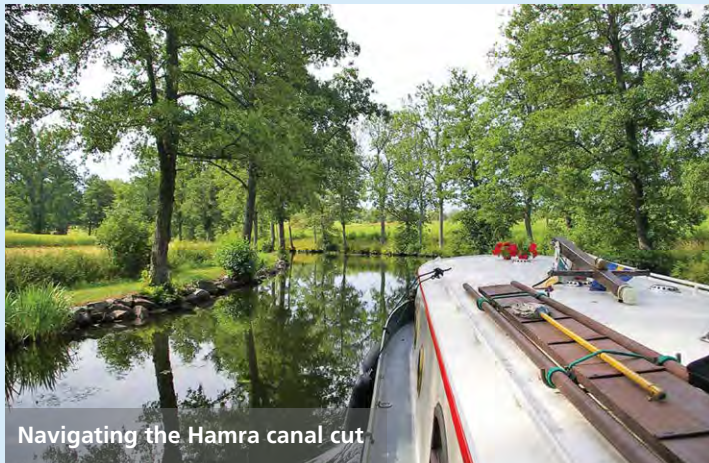
Athy dragon boat

Text & photos: Towpath Tim

Email – towpathtim@gmail.com

LILY ON THE KINDA KANAL (PART 2)

By Alison Alderton and Roger Harrington



Navigating the Hamra canal cut

The next morning, we passed through Hamra staircase locks onto a beautiful canal cut that led to a staircase three and then a single lock at Hovetorp which is, without doubt, the most spectacular flight on the Kinda system. We moored above, where Matthias, the canal foreman, gave Roger a guided tour of the canal workshops and explained how new lock gates are made on site using local larch. We enquired about having a winter mooring here – we always try to keep options open – and were told it would be possible. With a few overwintering choices to consider we had the remainder of the season to mull them over while exploring at leisure.

Matthias recommended a visit to an ice creamery on the lake of Stor Rängen. Unfortunately, the newly installed landing jetty was tiny and given the small boats which constantly buzzed in and out for a sweet treat we didn't think it fair that *Lily* should hog the area so dropped anchor in the nearby bay. This became known to us as Little Bear Bay due to a particular rock on the land which resembled a small sleeping bear cub. We stayed for a couple of days, making the most of having



Brokind Lock and Manor

the RIB, exploring the local nature reserve and consuming copious amounts of ice cream!

Our favourite lock was Brokind, which stands adjacent to the manor of the same name and links the lakes of Järnlunden and Lilla Rangen. The lock keeper also takes charge of a refuelling point and a small museum which houses a self-service canteen area where ice cream, biscuits and hot and cold drinks can be purchased by honesty box or mobile phone payment. For us, this was an ideal place to spend time; it borders a nature reserve full of ancient oak trees which provide a home for the rare Hermit beetle whose larvae develop in the hollow trees. Brokind Manor has a long history and a wealth of interesting buildings to explore. The plentiful walks and various terrains were more than enough to keep Maksi, our ship's dog, occupied.

On Järnlunden we headed north to Vasterby and found a pleasant bay with a swimming area surrounded by a floating walkway. We dropped anchor, using the RIB to reach dry land and give Maksi walks in the woodlands. We explored everywhere on this lake, discovered lots of lovely anchorages in sheltered bays

and tucked behind small islands but not so many marinas or decent jetties. It was a bit of a make-it-up-as-you-go-along trip in as far as moorings went. The best places are the trip boat halts, and on the upper reaches, the now disused ones but it wasn't possible to go rushing into them as levels on some are shallow.

At the town of Rimforsa, we received a warm welcome from the members of the local Kinda Båtklubb whose guest pontoon, which usually houses three or more boats, just about accommodated *Lily*. We stayed for two days making use of their excellent laundry and the town centre just a short walk away where all facilities are close to hand. From here, we took a day trip to Trollegater, one of Sweden's largest underground cave systems, thought to have been formed by an earthquake over 11,000 years ago. Most of the caves are named; the banqueting hall, the fishing hook and the troll alley but remember to take a torch if planning to venture underground.

Back at Rimforsa, the vintage boat club with its beautiful wooden boats is worth visiting as is the short Skedevid Canal, a rocky cut leading to Lake Ämmern. At the time of our visit,



Lily moored at the Kinda Båtklubb



Vintage boats

larger boats were being advised not to venture through as the canal had not been dredged for many years so we anchored nearby and explored by RIB. It is hoped that the canal will undergo maintenance work in the future to allow larger craft access. The Rimforsa Strand Hotel is a must if seeking luxury. We enjoyed the pretty garden overlooking Åsunden and, on one evening, a buffet-style barbecue, where staff went the extra mile to provide a dining area allowing Maksi to enjoy lounging on the soft grass.

Beyond Rimforsa the scenery is spectacular. As the land begins to rise with rocky cliffs and dense forests, the lake narrows to go through a gorge-like cutting before opening out again to reveal a small chain of islands which form an ideal anchorage. We stayed a few days, watching sea eagles and osprey, ferrying Maksi ashore to the islands for walks and toilet duties, enjoying speedy trips around the bays or just lounging on the deck. Evenings here were stunning; barbecues on deck provided long-lasting memories of amazing sunsets, however, it was obvious how much further south we had travelled as the lighter nights of locations further north, blessed by the midnight sun, had ceased to be.



Island explorers

The final lake in the Kinda Kanal system is the largest and has an extensive archipelago of islands to which locals flock. They know all the best mooring spots so taking note of these and revisiting on quieter weekdays soon paid dividend. The main port is Björkfors but there are no bright lights here, it is a small humble place which turns its back on this lake, enjoying instead one not connected to the Kinda system which is rather a shame. There is a 'vintage' garage which once a week draws owners of American cars from far and wide.

We spent Alison's birthday anchored up at Gumhem where we took the RIB ashore at Jätteudden (the Giant's Point) to explore the standing stones and, high on the lakeside cliff, a stone ship! The grassland was alive with hundreds of small insects and butterflies, baby



Stone Ship

blue-coloured harebells rang silently as our feet disturbed them to send grasshoppers leaping in all directions. The ship, made from 24 standing stones, accurately represents the Årby vessel, a small Viking ship once used on the rivers and lakes. Chilled Prosecco and pasta bake served with garlic bread as *Lily* swung on the hook made a perfect end to a special day – we all slept soundly, silently watched over by the high and dry stone ship.

There are two termini on the Kinda Kanal, Horn and Hycklinge – we visited both – the names conjuring long forgotten memories of visits to the Norfolk Broads. Horn, where the River Stångån flows in, has a good supermarket as well as several cafés and restaurants. The church is very pretty with its tall slender spire designed by Petter Frimodig who became well known for church construction throughout Östergötland. Alongside, sprawled beautifully over a rocky outcrop is Kisa Mor's Paradise – a small herb and healing garden named after Maria Jansson, the most well-known Swedish female doctor and healer of the nineteenth century, whose body is laid to rest in the churchyard. The gardens are looked after by volunteers and the public is free to enjoy them – even Maksi was permitted on a short lead. Dotted throughout the compact space, there



Horn Church

are little seating areas nestling amongst the sweet-scented herbs – it is a delightful place.

On the return trip we revisited favourite haunts before gliding into the mooring we were told we could have for the winter in September. We had, however, decided to ship out and spent the next few weeks preparing for that, visiting



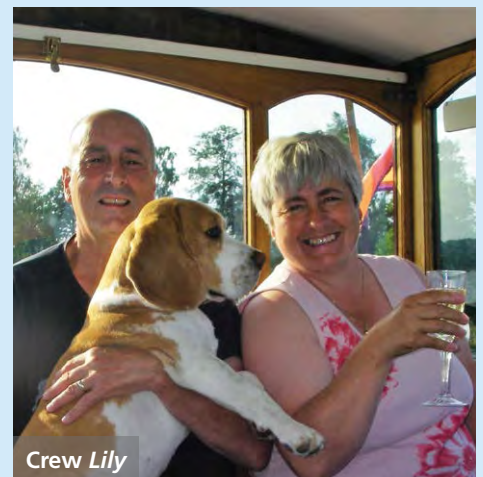
Kisa Mor's paradise

places by car, enjoying the change of seasons and finally taking a trip back to Dalshö to say farewell to friends.

The water levels were extremely low as we made our way out of the canal in October. *Lily* was lifted on the outskirts of Linköping where, with the help of the Kinda Kanal staff, a hard standing suitable for the crane had been located. *Lily* was then transported to Gothenburg where she boarded a freight ferry. She arrived home long before us and at the exact time that the transport company had predicted. Some 48 hours later, exhausted from the long drive across Europe, we were rolling into our relations home with our car bulging at the seams with belongings but it would be another 24 hours before we would be reunited with our barge.

We had been travelling with *Lily* for over ten years in Europe and Scandinavia so coming home was not a decision easily made. Many contributing factors had prompted it, adding to that some health issues, the loss of Alison's father, Brexit and all its uncertainty, made it feel that the time was right. Time to stop struggling with foreign languages, other countries' rules and regulations and return home – enjoy early retirement without facing those thoughts and, having done the travelling while young, fit and able, we remain in awe of those who seek to do so in later life. It is not the end of the story, we still have plans for *Lily*, there is unfinished business with many waterways closer to home, and hopefully, someday we will undertake them. Back home, winter came and went, we had just started to think about where to cruise in 2020 when Coronavirus hit and we will be forever thankful that we returned when we did!

Photos: Alison Alderton and Roger Harrington



Crew Lily

AN IRISHMAN OVERSEAS

By Towpath Tim



Mooring in the heart of Birmingham



Anderton Boat Lift, Trent & Mersey Canal

I had planned to cruise the UK inland waterways in a quiet and relaxed manner but my visit coincided with the Queen's jubilee party which released the nation from their covid lockdowns into full party mode with celebration and bunting everywhere.

As my mileage along Britain's canal network increases, I am finally getting used to narrowboats. I have also been surprised at how many wide beam navigations there are in Britain. The rivers Avon, Severn, and Thames, along with parts of the Grand Union Canal (GUC) are all widebeam. I did encounter one shiny new widebeam barge which was stuck in a narrow section of the GUC near Shrewley awaiting a crane and truck to resolve the issue. Of course, narrowboats also travel these navigations pairing up to handle the wide beam locks using half the effort.

It is busy here, very busy. Hire fleets make up the lion's share but there are also continuous cruisers like myself and leisure cruisers who cruise at weekends and for a few weeks of holiday each year. I started with the Pearson series of guides, which I find very useful but I continue to struggle with the Nicholson guide format. Both series provide ring-bound book format charts which are useful for opening out on the deck. There is

also a useful CanalMapApp which allows you to follow your route along the waterways on your smartphone.

Cruise highlights to date have included the Anderton Lift, through which I did not cruise but then the Canal and River Trust (CRT) museum and interpretive centre provided great (free) entertainment. An unplanned visit to Chester allowed me to cruise through a Roman city and see the planned restoration of the link to the River Dee, a massive challenge in my eyes but one which canal trusts over here are so used to taking on. Heading away from the rolling farmland of sheep and cattle into the industrial hinterlands of Birmingham was an eye opener but then canals traditionally pass through the not-so-pretty, industrial areas of cities and towns. Mooring up in Gas Street Basin was a milestone ticked off, with city shops and restaurants at my doorstep, or gangplank. As a newcomer, I was surprised at the lack of vandalism and the zero interference with boats moored up in the middle of a very big city.

The date for Crick Boat Show (see my review in IWN autumn) coincided nicely with my visit to nearby Braunston, so I diverted to Europe's largest inland waterways show and ticked another box

there. By then of course the site of the heritage inclined plane at Foxton was just too close to miss and a wonder to explore. Next off was a stop to say that I had read at Oxford, even though it was only the local newspaper! For that part of the trip, I crossed onto the River Thames under the remit of the Environment Agency, requiring another permit. While 2,000 miles of Britain's inland waterways are managed by the Canal and River Trust charity, some stretches are managed by other organisations with their own rules and permit obligations.

I have passed through long tunnels (Preston Brook 1.1km, Wast Hill 2.5km, Braunston 1.9km and Husbands Bosworth 1.2km) and over impressive aqueducts (Edstone, Dundas and Avoncliff) and up and down lock flights (Audlem 15, Wolverhampton 21, Tardebigge 30, Lapworth 25, Hatton 21 and Caen Hill 29), every one of which deserves an article on its own. Along the very busy towpaths, there are runners, walkers and fishermen, all vying for a place on the sometimes narrow, uneven and overgrown canal banks. Towpaths nearer larger populations have solid surfaces and of course see much more traffic, the management of which is often a problem. E-scooters? Don't even mention it...



Edstone Aqueduct, Stratford Canal



Chester, Shropshire Union Canal (SUC)

England's waterways have also been tinged with an Irish presence, even before I arrived. It was, of course, the many Irishmen who built the waterways and became known as navvies. Narrowboat names I have spotted included *Shannon, Clodagh, Cuillin, Tir nan Og, Bainne Bo Bleachtain, Uimhir a Se, and Clonmel*, which seem to indicate a continued Irish presence right up to current times.

CRT is omnipresent along the waterways with information, signage and guidance, helpline and internet details and hundreds of volunteers in uniform providing a welcoming and helpful presence seven days a week. This seems to improve everyone's enjoyment and satisfaction levels, keeping a lid on potential vandalism and encouraging compliance with CRT rules. Leaflets and information boards explain the funding and challenges involved in the restoration and maintenance tasks undertaken. Towpath residences, restaurants and bars open onto the canal, which makes for pretty canalside entertainment areas. Canal crafts and arts sell in canalside shops or from onboard barges, adding colour to the towpath.

I have by now accepted that there are too many miles of waterways for me to cover in one year of continuous cruising, mainly because there is so much to see and do at many locations that it is difficult to keep moving along. The adventure has been a historical and geographical tour of England, as well as a close inspection of how England's waterways were built, operated in their heyday, abandoned and later restored to



High Bridge, Woodseaves Cutting, SUC

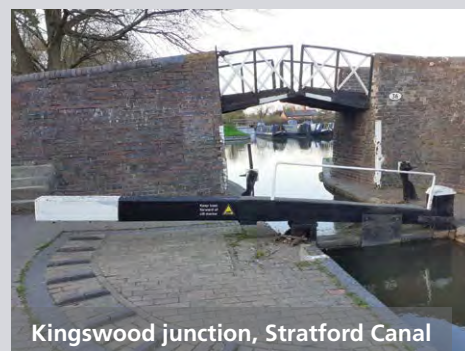
leisure use. The amount of voluntary work the Waterways Recovery Groups and Trusts accomplish is astounding, there has been a lot done, but there remains a lot more to do.

There is a 'sail rail' deal that makes it very affordable for a foot passenger from Ireland, only €52 including train and ferry. Birmingham is the epicentre with more miles of canals than Venice. A very pleasant adventure, one that is close and easy to access from Ireland.

Photos: Towpath Tim



Guillotine Lock, Kings Norton, Stratford Canal



Kingswood junction, Stratford Canal



Leam Aqueduct, Warwick, GUC



Edstone Aqueduct, Stratford Canal



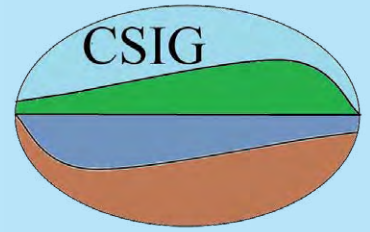
Stratford-on-Avon



Braunston, GUC

CSIG

by LES SAUNDERS, CSIG PRO



WRAP UP AND PREPARATION FOR 2023

Well, it's that time of year again, when we look back at what we did for 2022 and how we can prepare for 2023. CSIG has had the best year yet since the start of the project with a number of workshops and presentations, amazing new charts with over a million new soundings and new designs, presentations to rallies and the largest number of users on record. New technology has also been introduced in the form of robots and underwater drones, as well as new style depth sounders which make surveying even easier than before and enabling almost anyone to become a surveyor.

So what does 2023 hold for CSIG? Well, as is the custom, your existing CSIG charts will cease to operate at the end of December. We are aware that this can cause some inconvenience but this is essential to protect our surveyors and ensure that only fully paid up IWAI members can avail of these amazing charts which have no commercial competitors offering anything even close to the areas covered and/or the level of detail. The new charts will be available from early January and this year they include an additional quarter million soundings, extended coverage in bays and off piste areas and still retain that flexibility to use on many different platforms using many different apps. You will

also have plenty of time to download the new charts and get them ready for the new season.

By way of reminder, be aware of the following to use the charts:

CHOICE OF PLATFORM

Here you can choose Laptops, either Windows or Mac, or tablets, Android or IOS, or smartphones Android or IOS. We get asked can the charts run on Garmin or Raymarine Chartplotters, the answer is no, the CSIG charts do not run on those proprietary devices.

CHART SELECTION

Here we can choose from 2 types of protocol, either MBTILES or Memory Map.

The Memory Map files only run on a PC running the Memory Map App and there are 4 resolution levels but these charts are raster charts which means they are effectively a picture that you make bigger or smaller.

The MBTILES version are effectively what we call vector charts. These allow for more data to be added each time you zoom in and the full version has 19 levels of zoom, whereas the lite version has 18 levels of zoom and this lite version reduces the space required dramatically. These versions run under many different apps on different platforms, giving great choices.

Finally, you can choose either full size or lite versions of the following charts:

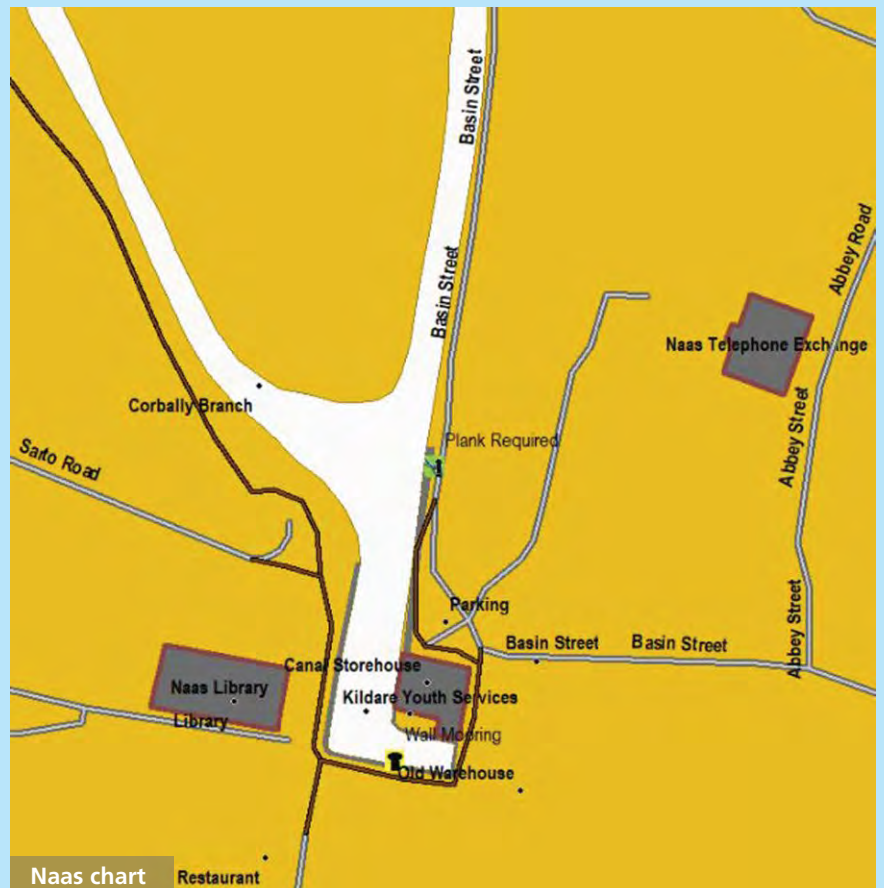
- The full Shannon, Erne, SEW and canals, but a big size of about 1.7GB
- The Erne
- The Shannon
- The Canals
- App Selection

There are quite a few apps that can be used to drive the CSIG charts on each platform, so the CSIG team have found the following Apps to be the most suitable:

- For laptops, the best app available is the OpenCPN offering. The functionality provided by this open source app is amazing and is my personal choice to run my charts but you will probably need a low cost GPS dongle to complete the installation.
- For Android smartphones and tablets, the best app is Locus Map Classic (cost €9.99). Most users are using this selection because most Android Tablets have GPS on board and the choice selection are combined into one portable unit. There are new versions from Samsung that are



Brian's underwater drone



Naas chart Restaurant

weather hardened and have super bright screens but they are expensive. Please make sure you take the classic version as some users of the free version have experienced trouble downloading.

- For IOS smartphones and tablets, the best app to use is Guru. The issue for iPads is that most do not have GPS on board and require a low cost Bluetooth GPS dongle to work.

SUMMARY

So, once again, great choice to suit equipment you are likely to already have. We have received feedback that the download process is difficult to perform but the facts are that with almost 600 downloads we have only had to assist in a handful of cases and mostly the difficulties are with the understanding of how the device works rather than the download process itself. Just remember you are downloading 'offline' charts. For Android, don't forget to press the red circle with the cross in it on first time through which you will see when you choose 'offline'. For IOS you can use iTunes to download but I prefer to use either the cloud or onedrive.

CSIG WORKSHOPS AND CANAL DEVELOPMENTS

The CSIG group ran a number of presentations and workshops during 2022. One of the biggest was run by Robert Navan (CSIG lead in Lough Erne), with Brian Willson (technical lead and mapper) in attendance, where great interest was had by all. Les Saunders (CSIG PRO) gave a presentation to the Float to the Fleadh in Mullingar, and a second one to the Naas Rally. Both these events are part of the 2020s Big Cruise series and it was fantastic to see such activity on the canals. An interesting outcome of these two canal events was that most of the attendees were liveaboards and rarely move off the canal system. Their primary interest was the fact that the CSIG charts are the only electronic charts that cover the canals and the Barrow but that it would be nice to have real time data to advise on the depths for any particular

level prior to travel. Although the CSIG does not provide for this data, the ESIG certainly does. The ESIG have developed equipment that measures the water level amongst many other sensors, is solar panel supported and transmits the data back to a central data base for real time interrogation. So, between the CSIG and the ESIG, the canal community is serviced by an unparalleled level of support. It would be really good if we could encourage some members of the canal branches to come on board and lead the rollout of these devices across the canal systems.

CSIG MEETING FEBRUARY 2023

CSIG used to hold regular meetings where all the interested users and the volunteers could discuss their issues; what needed changing and what we could do in the future. These meetings stopped during the pandemic but I am delighted to say we will be reintroducing these meetings. Place it in your diary now for the first one, Saturday 18 February at 11:30 hours in IWAI HQ *Dunrovin*. If you are remotely interested in the charts, or if you have issues, or if you feel you would like to help in any way, please come along. It will be a great few hours in our newest facility and being centrally located should be easiest for all to attend. It will not be a hybrid meeting, so physical attendance is required.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

I mentioned in the introduction about the use of new technology which CSIG has started using during 2022. One of the most interesting is Brian Willson's new underwater drone. Brian brought it to me in Terryglass during the summer to show me and put it through its paces. This drone, purchased and funded by Brian himself, has the capability to dive up to 100 metres, has very bright headlights, an excellent camera, a grab capability and unsurpassed manoeuvrability. Brian intends to use it when his surveying locates an anomaly so that he can identify precisely what that anomaly might be. For example, it will be very useful when something special is found, like yet

another WWII Sunderland which Robert located in Lough Erne this year, his third one to date.

I already mentioned in a previous article that if you are considering a new depth sounder please look at the Deeper models. These provide for an easy to mount, portable sounder that connects back to your phone or tablet and delivers depth and positional data which Brian can use directly into the charts. The model we recommend is CHIRP 2, which uses the GPS on your phone for position, more sonar beam angles, and a good battery life at 9 hours. Do not buy the Deeper Smart.

FINALLY

Well, that's it for this year. We have produced yet another number of developments from CSIG which keeps going from strength to strength. Please consider joining the team and help us to develop even more, come to the February meeting and contribute in whatever way you can. Also, for the canal branches, get your people together and drive the ESIG developments to rollout.

Have a great 2023 using your new charts.



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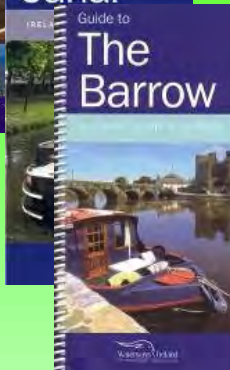
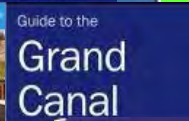
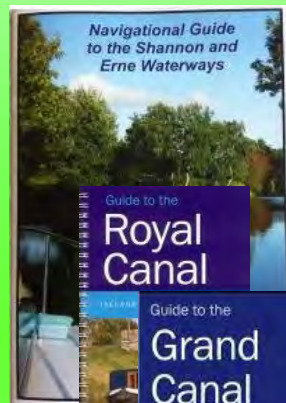
IWAI Branded Lifejackets & Spare Parts



IWAI Flags & Burgees



Water Nymphs Calendar



Charts & Guides



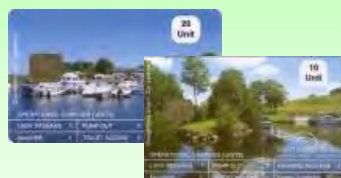
Fleeces



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XMAS POSTING DATES 2022

Orders placed before 19 December should arrive to ROI and NI addresses before Xmas.
Earlier dates apply for overseas addresses.



OFFALY UPDATE



FROM TIM MEEHAN



Attendees at Sean's talk

TRIP TO POLLAGH

Several Offaly branch members joined the HBA for a trip up the Grand Canal to Pollagh. The event was held on the weekend of 8-9 October with the aim to promote boating on the western end of the Grand Canal. The local community held a meet and greet in the Pull Inn on Saturday morning where a lavish array of food was laid on.

IWA Offaly Treasurer Tom Doheny presented the chair of the community committee with the first Offaly branch burgee. After all were fed and watered and speeches completed several members went on a site visit to investigate the condition of the closed Derrycooley feeder. Inspecting the closed penstocks, which diverted the stream away from the disused feeder to where it flowed under the canal, here Waterways Ireland had a pump which was pumping water back up into the canal – how green is that? The highlight of the weekend, was a talk given by HBA and Offaly branch member Sean O'Reilly, on the military influence and input into the completion of the Grand Canal from Tullamore to the Shannon i.e. 'The Tullamore Extension'. The level of detail, research and insight that Sean put into his talk was excellent and enjoyed by all.

NEW BURGEE AND BUNTING

Well done to Tom Doheny for his work and commitment in getting such a high quality product. The burgee (€25.00) and the bunting (€20.00) is available from Committee members and will soon be available at the IWA shop.

TULLAMORE HARBOUR

The high profile and international award-winning Grafton Architects that was co-founded by Tullamore native Yvonne Farrell have been appointed for the Tullamore Harbour master plan. The Regeneration Framework Plan for Tullamore has been awarded to Brady Shipman Martin.

With all the master plans and regeneration plans being prepared, we look forward to taking part in any consultations, as was promised by Waterways Ireland (WI) CEO Mr John McDonagh when we met earlier this year. At that meeting, we were assured that WI would be pro-active in promoting boating on the canals and that they intended to develop Shannon Harbour as one of two hubs to encourage the boating traffic. As of yet we have seen no evidence of these aspirations. On the contrary, WI by insisting that all boats attending the Shannon Harbour Rally had to apply for the free monthly permit, has had the opposite effect by reducing the number of boats attending the Shannon



Inspecting the penstocks

Harbour Rally. While attending the launch of the Shannon Harbour Community Action Plan in October some of the committee members that I spoke to were unaware of WI's intention to develop Shannon Harbour as a hub. All the evidence seems to indicate that WI and Offaly County Council have

little or no plans to encourage further use of the Grand Canal as a boating tourist destination. It seems that all the focus is on greenways, blueways and property development. I look forward to being proved wrong on this matter.

Photos: Tim Meehan

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DUBLIN DRIBBLES

FROM JIM O'RIORDAN AND REG MCCABE



Presentation of burgee (L to R) Grainne Bath-Enright, Jacky Bath-Hawkins and Jim O'Riordan

BURGEE PRESENTATION

As Chairman of IWAI Dublin, I was delighted to have been able to present Jacky Bath-Hawkins with a framed burgee from this year's Dublin Rally. The burgee which depicts Jacky's father Dr. Ian Bath was designed by her daughter Grainne and looked as good in a frame as it does flying from a mast.

GREEN AND SILVER

It was great to see such a large turnout for this year's IWAI Kildare Naas Harbour Rally. IWAI Dublin used the occasion to present Richie Rankin with his second Green and Silver award. Richie spent the summer traversing the Royal and Grand canals and the Shannon on his beautiful barge *Janey Mac*. He attended the Dublin Rally in May, the Shannon Harbour Rally in June and then

the Float to the Fleadh in August, returning to Dublin via the Royal Canal along with *Float 1* in late September. He is a great example to us all of somebody who uses and enjoys our waterways. IWAI Dublin also used the event to congratulate Ruth Moloney on her wonderful achievement in completing a charity walk from Shannon Harbour to Grand Canal Dock. The branch were delighted to be able to contribute to her fundraising for such a worthy cause.

DUBHLINN

After a hiatus of over two years, the *Dubhlinn*, IWAI Dublin's boat was launched in Mullingar for the Float to the Fleadh event. It was used by members of Clondalkin Youth, Mullingar town band and past members of Tallaght Youth band and Tallaght Festival band



Dubhlinn at Float to the Fleadh

as a floating bandstand who entertained onlookers during the Fleadh. Hopefully the *Dubhlinn* will be back in the capital by 3 December to take part in the All In A Row, Liffey challenge, an event that aims to showcase the River Liffey as one of Dublin's best amenities whilst at the same time raising funds for charity.

AGM AND DUBLIN DRIBBLES

Please keep an eye out for notification of the IWAI Dublin AGM. We are looking for people to participate and assist in branch activities. Even small contributions make a huge difference. Everything from writing a piece for Dublin Dribbles, to becoming the branch Secretary or Chairman. There is something to suit everybody and we would welcome any help we can get.

Photos: Jim O'Riordan and John Kearns

POOLBEG BOOK LAUNCH

A number of our members were present for the launch, in October, of Cormac Louth's excellent book on Ringsend sailing trawlers and shipbuilding. This presents an authoritative and no doubt definitive account of this long-neglected aspect of Dublin's economic and social history.

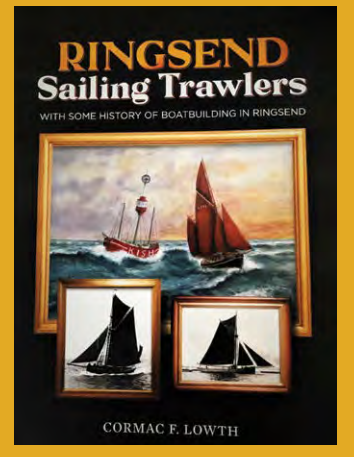
Central to the narrative is the formation in 1808 of the Dublin Fisheries Company, a joint stock enterprise that was formed from among the Dublin professional classes with the objective of exploiting the rich fishing grounds along Ireland's east coast. The formation of the company resulted in the forging of a long-term link between Ringsend, where the fishery was based, and Brixham in Devon, which by the early nineteenth century had established an unrivalled reputation as a boat building centre. Subsequently, this led to a minor maritime migration as Brixham fishing and boat building families resettled around Ringsend and Irishtown, the genesis of a Ringsend boatbuilding industry which thrived along the banks of the Dodder and also around Grand Canal Dock until the middle of the twentieth century. Of significance for IWAI is the elaboration of the early history of Grand Canal Dock where scrutiny of early maps has uncovered evidence of the location of Mr Morton's Brunswick Boatyard on a site now occupied by Boland's Mill. In addition a number of long running legal disputes relating to access to the graving docks is elaborated in some detail.



Ritchie Rankin at the Naas Rally



Janey Mac and Float 1 arrive in Dublin





KILDARE IWAI

FROM NIALL O'DOWDA



Clear water at Allenwood

NAAS 2022

At the time of writing, after a three-year absence, the Naas Rally is in full swing. It seems that branch members and friends have really missed this event as over thirty boats have made it to Naas Harbour for the October holiday weekend. Some boats travelling long distances while others have travelled from as far as the UK to attend. There will be a full report in the next issue.

2020S BIG CRUISE

With canal conditions having a big impact on the success of the goals of the 2020's Big Cruise, to have boats using the canals during the summer months, there is mixed news to report.

The success of Float to the Fleadh on the Royal Canal did bring a fleet of boats to Mullingar during July and August. This was enabled because of work done by Waterways Ireland which shows that having these events does make a difference.

Shortly after the Fleadh though, water levels on the summit in Mullingar dropped and navigation became very difficult on the Royal as a whole. While this worsened as time went on even immediately after the Fleadh the experience of boaters differed a lot depending on what direction they travelled. Those travelling west, to the Shannon, fared best as they benefitted from the work done by Waterways Ireland prior to the Fleadh. Boats which travelled east, however, via Kildare waters, encountered very low water levels and high levels of weed. This slowed progress to a snail's pace

and caused the usual problems of fouled propellers and water intakes.

On the Grand Canal water levels also dropped significantly making navigating the canals almost impossible. Possible only for boats with very shallow drafts and keel cooling, albeit, definitely not enjoyable. One Kildare boater travelling back from the Fleadh experienced eleven hours of pure grief getting across the long level from Ballycommon to Ticknevin. Definitely not conditions that would attract boaters onto the canals during summer months.

Later in the season, boats travelling east on the Grand heading for Naas experienced what can only be described as Jekyll and Hyde canal conditions. For example, from Hamilton Bridge, through Allenwood and into Lowtown the canal was in immaculate condition; weed free bank to bank and both wide and deep. From Robertstown east across the bog to Healy Bridge, however, was in an atrocious condition as what is a deep and wide stretch of canal looked totally neglected and the narrow stretch from Healy Bridge to Cock Bridge wasn't much better. While the inconsistency is puzzling, it was great to see sections of canal in better condition than they have been for years.

Research being done on abandoned feeders by IWAI members is revealing water supplies that, if restored, could go a long way to help maintain water levels on both the Grand and Royal canals during the peak cruising season of the summer months.

All in all, though, conditions are getting better. Waterways Ireland are working to improve canal conditions but there is still a long way to go. Hopefully, by the end of the decade, the 2020's Big Cruise will have achieved its goal and cruising the canals all year round will be both possible and enjoyable.

RUTH'S WALK

In aid of The Irish Cancer Society, IWAI Kildare member Ruth Moloney has recently completed a walk along the entire length of the Grand Canal. Ruth set out from Shannon Harbour on Saturday 15 October and over the next eight days walked every day to reach her goal, arriving in Grand Canal Dock at 14:55hrs on Saturday 22 October. Enroute, Ruth was joined by friends and family for most legs which undoubtedly made those kilometres pass both quicker and easier.

Ruth's husband John shadowed Ruth on their boat from Shannon Harbour to Sallins which enabled Ruth to overnight on *Lady Ruth*, thereby enabling her to recuperate



Ruth enroute

for the following mornings' trek. Ruth also returned to *Lady Ruth* in Sallins after the last two legs of her walk.

On behalf of the branch a big 'Well Done Ruth' it was a fantastic achievement.

For anyone who wishes to contribute visit:

www.justgiving.com/Ruth-Moloney3

Photos: John Moloney and Niall O'Dowda



Ruth and family at journeys end

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NORTH BARROW



FROM CLIFF REID



John and Mary on their Wedding Day

MARY & JOHN TIE THE KNOT

IWAI North Barrow would like to extend huge congratulations to members, Mary Connolly and John Fagan, who were married recently in Kilkenny. John and Mary share a great love for the waterways and are never far from the River Barrow. Known for their generous hospitality, there are few boaters on the Barrow that have not shared a mug of tea aboard with them in either Milford or Bagenalstown. Having sold their cruiser, *Milford Way* during Covid, they purchased a former Celtic Cruiser narrowboat. Since then, they've been extremely busy stripping it, carrying out structural repairs and completely refurbishing it. She is currently out of the water while the work continues but the couple hope to have her back on the water for the coming season. On terra firma, at a boatyard just outside Athy, the



John and Mary's narrowboat

couple happily work away almost daily despite the constant visits from friends stopping by for a chat and to witness the progress. While most in the boating community will know Mary and John from cruising the Barrow, John also runs a hugely popular Facebook page (River Ireland) which many members throughout Ireland are probably very familiar with. Here John showcases some of the fantastic scenic photographs and wildlife shots he captures while out and about on the waterways. If you are not already a follower of his page, we recommend looking it up at www.facebook.com/riverireland1

Lastly, all at the branch would like to wish Mary and John all the best for the future together and continued success in their undertaking of refurbishing the narrowboat. We all look forward

to seeing her on the water in the coming months and sharing many chats and cups of tea aboard once more.

FREEDOM ON THE WATER


Athy Community Enterprise Centre (Athy CEC) is currently inviting expressions of interest from suitably qualified and experienced businesses, individuals or community groups to lease the barge, *Freedom On The Water*. Currently operating as a social enterprise, Athy Boat Tours provides boat trips on the River Barrow from its base in Athy town. It is understood that Athy CEC wish to see the boat remain in Athy and provide its service from there. However, a new leasing arrangement and management structure is required and therefore Athy CEC are seeking EOI's in

this regard. IWAI North Barrow hopes that whatever future may lie ahead for the barge, that it remains in Athy and that the new management team continue to build on its success to date.





RIVERBANK WALK


A number of members took part in a riverside walk in October organised by Kildare Sports Partnership. It was part of a series of gentle walks aimed at people looking to get back out, or who hoped to up their fitness, enjoy new company, or help aid in recovery for anyone with an injury. As part of the weekly walks, a gentle 2km ramble along the River Barrow and Barrowline in Athy was included. For this, several members of the branch took part to both help guide the walk and deliver snippets of waterways history to those unfamiliar with the local heritage. The walk took in part of the route along the new Blueway, with talking points on the canal locks, the Horsebridge, Minch Malt and the former Grand Canal Hotel. Afterwards, walkers returned to the local Youth Café and were treated to a cuppa and friendly chat. Many thanks to all involved and especially the branch members that assisted and gave of their knowledge on the day.

Photos: Cliff Reid




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Freedom On The Water in Athy



BARROW BULLETIN



FROM JOHN O'GORMAN



High water at Tinnahinch
Photo: Brid O'Gorman

ALONG THE NAVIGATION

The heavy rain over the last month has seen the Barrow rise considerably. Boat owners would do well to check their craft are securely tied and bilge pumps are in working order.

Waterways Ireland are currently in discussion with Carlow County Council about their maintenance plans for the towpath along the navigation. It is reported that they are also in the process of drawing up a five year plan for the repair and maintenance of the infrastructure of the navigation. This is to include the lateral canals, locks and weirs.

BEREAVEMENTS

At the end of this summer boating season members of IWAI Barrow mourned the passing of Jim Gill and Margaret Dowse both not only well known up and down the length

of the Barrow but throughout the waterways of Ireland. Jim Gill was one of the last Barrow boatmen, a job held from the age of 17. He was on board the Grand Canal Company barge when his father was swept off the tiller and drowned on the Grand Canal.

Jim was a source of great stories, barge folklore and songs, some of which have been recorded. He also featured in the TV series 'Waterways' where he piloted the restored barge 45M along the canal to the Shannon with Dick Warner.

Margret Dowse, well known all along the waterways on board the *Caribbean Rose* with her husband Jose, always had a warm welcome and a cup of tea for all that came aboard. Her sudden death was a great shock to all and leaves a big void for Jose and the family.



Jose and Margaret Dowse in conversation with Barrow Chairman Tom Connery
Photo: John Dimond



Underwater at Graiguenamanagh
Photo: Brid O'Gorman

NEW ROSS

Those who cruise the Barrow perhaps on the way down to the recently installed pontoon berth at Checkpoint or on a daytrip on board the *Barrow Queen*, will see the new pilot boat for the Port of New Ross the (ex) RNLi Mersey class, *James Stevens*.

James Stevens was a Birmingham property developer whose legacy donated in 1894 provided the RNLi with 20 boats, (a donation which provided more boats than any other donation received). May the *James Stevens* serve the port of New Ross well.

Flashback to March 2013 as the *Eclipse Flour* made its last trip down the Barrow to the slipway at New Ross Boatyard and then off to metal recycling.

A new 25ft craft depicting William Marshal, founder of the town of New Ross, as a figurehead on the bow, sculpted by John Hayes and a team of specialist branch carvers, from a fallen 100ft tree beside the Brandon House Hotel driveway. John and his team with their chainsaws created a wonderful work of art.

ANNUAL WALK RETURNS FOR 2023

The last IWAI Barrow Christmas walk was in January 2019 at the derelict store, Goresbridge, which is now restored as the Goodly Barrow museum and café. The 2023 Christmas walk on Sunday 8 January will assemble at Ballytiglea Bridge finishing at the Goodly Barrow. Members will be notified by text and/or email closer to the date.



Last voyage of the *Eclipse Flour*
Photo: John Dimond



SLANEY SNIPPETS



FROM ENDA MURPHY AND BRIAN COULTER



Dragon boat at Killurin

SLANEY RALLY

This year we changed the format of the Slaney Rally by reducing it to one day's outing. This was mainly because we now have very few boats with accommodation but also because we wanted to liven up the rally by inviting other groups to join us. We had the canoeing contingent and other boats from Wexford Harbour Boat and Tennis Club and were joined by the Slaney Purple Paddlers along with a friend from IWAI Barrow. We even had boaters join us from far flung places like Bali and the Caribbean! Everyone was welcome and it was great to have their participation.

What a great spectacle! We had about sixty-five people leave Wexford on the morning of 21 Sept. Kayaks and members' boats moved gently upstream with the tide and the Purple Paddlers 20 seat Dragon Boat was taken in tow. Some of the Purple Paddlers even tried their hand at driving the power-boats – could these be potential new members?

The flotilla arrived at Killurin slip at about 12:15pm where a picnic was arranged. This was followed by our traditional strawberries and cream, now a staple of the occasion. This year the strawberries and cream were sponsored by the Purple

Paddlers as a thank you to all those who helped and supported them throughout the year. Following this, the kayakers and then the Purple Paddlers launched, heading downstream with the river flow behind them. Supported by a number of safety boats the flotilla made a sight as the Dragon boat graced the river with its full plumage.

The eleven boats of the main rally then headed upstream through the Patches, then a deep channel marked by IWAI Slaney buoys. They made it to the River Boro which is a deep tributary of the Slaney with trees overhanging on either side. Slow careful progress was required but the foliage did not require cutting or trimming as it usually does. The Boro was navigable up to the private pontoon (about 1km upstream). Our thanks are extended to the owners of the land and pontoon for allowing use of the site for our picnic.

Out came the barbecues and various meats were cooked to perfection, after which the remainder of the strawberries and cream were polished off. On schedule at exactly 5:30pm the first boat left to make way downstream and through the Patches. Any later and boats might have been tide-bound and aground for a while but



Rally goes after the barbecue

the neap tide was kind to us. We made it in good time and headed onto Killurin where a boat with a faulty engine was taken in tow. We then proceeded to Wexford in light misty rain. The crew were slightly damp on arrival but it was a great day and after all, this is Ireland, even in the sunny southeast! What a great day – revitalised and enjoyed by all.

DRAGON BOATS

Dragon boating is an ancient Chinese sport which dates back over 2000 years to a time of rivalry, intrigue and corruption. The dragon boat itself is deeply imbedded in China's culture, with each boat having an ornately carved dragon's head at the bow and a tail at the stern. The boat is painted with scales and the paddles symbolically represent the dragon's claws.

In the third century BC, a warrior and poet Qu Yuan committed suicide by drowning himself in the Mi Lo River after corrupt court officials removed him from his high office and banished him from the royal palace. Legend tells us that following his death local fisherman took to the water to search for his body and to protect it from being eaten by fish they beat the drums

in their boats and hit the water with their paddles.

Modern day dragon boating has evolved as a high-performance sport with over 50 million paddlers participating annually in competitions worldwide. The Irish Dragon Boating Association (IDBA) was formally launched in Dublin, October 2010. The IDBA aims to:

- Encourage the development of dragon boat clubs – Regular, mixed, junior and breast cancer survivors
- Raise awareness about lifestyle and health management
- Organise dragon boat regattas to encourage the non-athlete and athlete alike
- Promote and develop physical activity to support recovery from cancer treatment
- Improve the physical and psychological wellbeing of people who have or have had Breast Cancer. (Research has shown that repetitive upper body movement can aid those individuals suffering from Lymphoedema).

Photos: Enda Murphy and Brian Coulter



Chairman with visiting school friend



Flotilla on the Boro

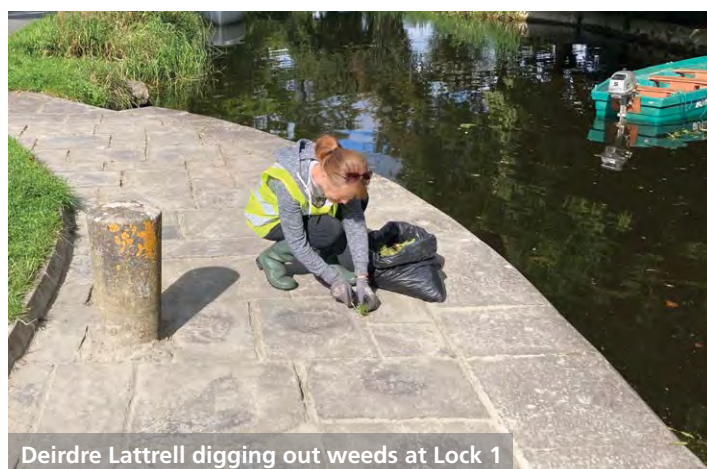


BOYNE BANTER

FROM FIACHRA DE RÓISTE AND PAUL WALSH



IWAI Boyne stand at Battle of the Boyne Centre grounds



Deirdre Lattrell digging out weeds at Lock 1

We haven't fared as well as hoped with work parties this quarter. We have been unlucky with the weather and, as of writing, things are in flood down at Lock 1, so work has been suspended.

AGM

This will be on 6 December. All branch members will be notified in advance and invited to attend.

BOYNE NAVIGATION AND GREENWAY REPORT

We are still awaiting, with frustration, publication of the report on the Drogheda-Navan greenway/navigation project, apparently still under review by Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

OLDBRIDGE SEALOCK (LOCK 1)

The channel out to the river was finally cleared of obstacles. A tree had come down the river and lodged itself in this channel. This required a couple of flushes through the lock to free it up and wash it over to the far bank of the river.

Joints in the paving bordering the lock chamber hadn't really been given great attention since they were installed about 10 years ago. These were in need of a comprehensive clear out of growth and repointing so this became the focus of work during August and our small crew of volunteers made light work of it. I'm sure all the recent rain has put it to the test!

NAVAN SECTION

Our volunteers have been working away diligently tending to growth, hedge cutting, clearing around the council installed seating and ensuring that litter was dealt with along this section. Work at Rowley's Lock continues and it is hoped soon to recover coping stones and other debris from the lock bed. It's also hoped to free up and refurbish the distinctive side ground paddle sluices too.

One of the volunteers in their group organised a trip to the Military War Museum, Louth. This was opened up to the wider group in Drogheda too. I think there might have been about 10 participants on the day. Of comments I heard, everyone was very much impressed with the museum and day out.

BATTLE OF THE BOYNE – HERITAGE WEEK EVENT

The group were uncertain about which event to do for this year's Heritage Week, however, we'd received an extremely generous offer from our great neighbours at the OPW - Battle of the Boyne Interpretive Centre, to take part in their festivities and this year's theme – sustainable heritage – nicely complimented our work too.

We couldn't have asked for a better location! We were allowed to setup our gazebo under the shade of a tree (on a very warm day), which was situated just off the path leading up from the

car park, down from the main house, restaurant, garden and walks coming back from the estate grounds. Our group's work dinghy, big map along with loads of IWAI material, were on display.

We met many people on the day and informed them about the voluntary work we are doing. They were amazed at what our group was attempting to achieve. We had a number of expressions of potential volunteer interest. Sadly I was out of practice with gathering all these peoples' information. Our lads all the same collected three expressions of volunteering. I've managed to tempt two of these people to regularly participate on Saturday mornings. I haven't yet given up on the third person!

We couldn't have asked for a better day. Some of our exhibit volunteers, who were cutting their teeth on the day, really played a blinder! We once again would like to extend our thanks to Dolores (site manager), her staff and OPW for facilitating our group with this most generous opportunity.

VOLUNTEER FROM THE 1980'S ORIGINAL BOYNE GROUP

One of the volunteers we met and who has subsequently gotten his hands dirty (once again) was from the original 80's Boyne Navigation branch. He hails from Cabra originally so clearly has Royal Canal waters in his blood.

It's amazing to hear the stories he tells about that group and see photos taken of those early days. We might also welcome back others from that group and what a privilege it would be, to show them, what fruit their early efforts have borne.

BOYNEBOATS.IE

They finished out their season with trips focusing on the mythologies of the Boyne and the origins of Halloween or Samhain.

MEETINGS

The group have decided to hold meetings at various locations along the course. Our most recent took place in Navan. The venue was great – compliments to PJ – and we look forward to holding more meetings up that end, along with various other locations, while still maintaining our hybrid option via Zoom.

VOLUNTEERS

Glad to report that we've had a number of expressions of interest, aside from our Heritage Week event. It's great to welcome new volunteers and allow them to participate in our very niche voluntary waterways restoration project!

Beir bua, Fiachra

Photos: Dolores McGovern and Fiachra de Róiste

CARRICK BITS

FROM MARGARET BYRNE



CCD guests enjoying time on the water

CARRICK CARES DAY

Carrick Cares Day (CCD) finally made a welcome return to the calendar this year! Our last CCD was in 2019 and after an enforced break for you-know-what we were back this year on Saturday 27 August in Lough Key. Members of IWAI Carrick, with other helpers and sponsors, provided water related activities, fun and games, music and singing and some barbecue food to keep the energy levels up! In compensation for the missing two years, the weather held up for most of the day with only one or two showers causing queues in the barbecue tent. Each year this event gets bigger and is a highlight for many attending guests.

You can see from the pictures (thanks to Brian Fitzgerald) that the activities were enjoyed by all. One of the highlights of the

day was the Access for All boat from Lough Ree (you've all seen the Lotto TV piece) which was kept busy for the day taking passengers round and about Lough Key. The games were hotly contested as usual, giant Jenga was very popular and the successful team was IWAI Carrick, with Sunshine Club Athlone coming in a very close second. Fishing also proved popular and the number of activities meant that there was always something to be done, or seen... or won! Before the groups headed away, there was a presentation for the teams which finished up with some singing and dancing! I'd say there were some tired people heading home that evening.

Volunteer activities like CCD cannot happen without help. Thanks to Louise Fitzpatrick (Lough Key), the Civil Defence



Pontoon fishing

Land and Water teams, Bodo Funke (Fishing), Johnson Mooney & O'Brien (burger buns and hot dog rolls), Malachy McGrane XL Drogheda (Sausages), Lorna Conroy, Appetisers (eggs and cups), Michelle Fanning of Leitrim County Council and Ciara Bohan (games), Sean Murray of Lough Rowan Angling Club (wheelie boat), Access for All Lough Ree boat and Waterways Ireland (jetty management). IWAI Athlone members joined with Carrick to provide help – team leaders, logistics, health and safety, barbecue and music. After the day was over and we had tidied up, the members had a closing pontoon party to end what was a fabulous and very rewarding day. Finally, days like these don't run smoothly without someone at the helm... Catherine Cashman of IWAI Carrick has been our CCD Captain for the last few years and, as she steps back from lead, the branch would like to thank her for her outstanding work and leadership on this very

important day in the IWAI Carrick calendar.

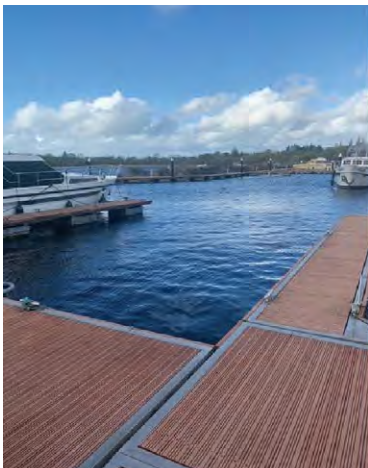
CCD signals the end of summer and, with a successful October Bank Holiday Rally just passed, it is now time for the boats to take a rest until next year. Keep checking our Facebook, and your emails, for news of future activities. Make a New Year resolution you can easily keep... join us for a rally or an outing, or assist the branch by becoming involved with its running and administration! We'd love to have you.

Photos: Brian Fitzgerald

ON A SAD NOTE

A stalwart member and supporter of IWAI Carrick, Jim Reenan, passed away on 17 September 2022. The Secretary, on behalf of the Executive and members, has sent our sympathies and condolences to Jim's family and friends. Jim's boat, *Marama*, was a frequent sight on the Shannon and a tribute to Jim is published on page 9.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.



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Lough Ree Access for All boat



ATHLONE ATTRIBUTES



FROM ALAN EUSTACE



CIC Table Quiz
Photo: Kevin Clabby

AUTUMN CIC

This was held over 14-16 October with Commodores Mary and Kieran Curley (*Saskia*).

HODSON BAY

On Friday evening, in good weather, the boats crossed Lough Ree to Hodson Bay. It was great to meet up with friends not seen for a while. As darkness fell, Paul King inspired 'pyro-wots-its' set along the quay wall, provided lighting and ambience, while fire pits kept us warm for the evening entertainment.

On Saturday we held our coffee morning and skippers' briefing. At the end of which, right on cue, the heavens opened and we were forced to abandon the planned Yew Point walk.

COOSAN POINT

With rain persisting, and a shower of hailstones as big as golf balls churning up the lake, we were blessed with the availability of the new IWAI facilities at *Dunrovin*. Having access to our own indoor venue we could keep to the schedule of planned activities without having to erect tents or other shelters. The afternoon activities began with fun and games, greatly enjoyed by children of all ages. This was followed by cheese and wine event, hosted by Mary with the help of her friends.

Lough Ree Inn was the setting for our evening meal, where Carita, Marie and their team pulled out all the stops to ensure everyone was looked after. The evening's



Inside the RNLI Station
Photo: Kevin Clabby

entertainment was the table quiz, run by the Commodores. At the end of an entertaining and competitive battle, *Dunross* just edged out *Leonie* for the top prize.

Sunday morning was bright and dry. We were treated to breakfast rolls cooked on the barbecue, after which the fleet departed for their home ports. From our point of view, we really enjoyed the whole experience of organising the CIC. We had taken part in a few previously but this is the first time we had acted as Commodores. You do need support in planning and running an event like a CIC and we were lucky to have received support from friends and branch members.

ST HILDA'S DAY

After two years we were, once again, able to take out a large group with their helpers. This time we were able to utilise *Dunrovin* as a focal point with the lifeboat station and Coosan jetties all adding to this as a fantastic location. Approximately 60 St Hilda's clients and accompanying helpers attended. The Lough Ree Access for All boat and seven crew made the trip on the morning from Lanesboro and moored at Coosan jetties. Following tea and fresh scones, the much anticipated boat trips began. The Access for All boat can take wheelchair bound people on board something that we were unable to do in the past. While the boat trips were going on, Paul Kelly of Lough Ree RNLI and his volunteer group were conducting tours of the lifeboat station. The magnificent *Tara Scougal* lifeboat was the great attraction. When all the RNLI tours were concluded and boat trips finished, sausages, chicken pieces and chips were delivered and devoured. Seeing the joy on the faces of some just doing something different was ample reward for IWAI Athlone members who assisted on the day. Thanks to the Lough Ree Access for All crew, the RNLI volunteers and IWAI Athlone members for making this event a success.



Pudding & Porter
Photo: Niamh Herraghty

PUDDING AND PORTER

There was a great turn-out of around 20 boats and the weather was excellent for the time of year. The weekend started with an acoustic music session in Coffey's on Friday night. We were joined by some great visiting musicians from the North Shannon including Graham Nolan and Liam De Renzy as well as our own local talent. Saturday morning was busy with preparations for the annual Pudding Bake Off. There was stiff competition this year and a lot of entries for the judges, Mary from *Pacific M* and Roy from *Bag Lady*, to

try. The judges came to a unanimous decision that the winning entry was Claire Fitzsimons Black Pudding Won Ton parcels. Second place went to Siobhan Bigley from *San Souci* for her unique vegetarian pudding entry. The competition was followed by a great cheese and wine spread by Commodore Niamh Herraghty. That night it was back to Coffey's for more musical treats and the cooking of the black pudding in the bar. On Sunday morning the sunshine had vanished and we were greeted by a deluge of rain so everyone packed up to head down the lake.

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BOYLE RIVER NEWS



FROM TOM AND LYN LEWIS



First Aid and Safety course attendees

After a very belated start to Ireland's summer, the weather finally bucked up in early August, allowing all boaters to enjoy the wonderful facility that the Shannon provides. The difficulty this engendered, as the fine weather coincided with the school holidays, were the many teenagers who, with the perceived invulnerability only possessed by youth, decided that jumping into the water from various road

bridges was an ideal game. On one occasion, your writer was passing under the bridge at Banagher and was horrified when a group of teenagers (who were invisible in the shaded area under the bridge) decided to swim towards our 25 tonne steel barge as it was propelling! At Rooskey Lock we experienced a similar scare, only noticing a swimmer alongside the lock waiting area within moments of crushing him.



New gates for Clarendon Lock

At Clonmacnoise, our boat was swarmed by local youths using it as a diving platform who were totally impervious to any requests to refrain. It is wonderful that the Shannon can be enjoyed by all but the glorious weather and consequent bathers does put an extra onus on boaters to keep a very keen lookout!

AUGUST CIC

Our group met up at Leitrim village jetty for snacks and socialising, then the more intrepid of our crew rented bicycles in Kilclare to have a look at the new Drumhierney woodland development near Battlesbridge. This was followed by a barbecue at The Sheemore Inn (Lynch's of Kilclare). Sunday started with a fine breakfast and then a gentle cruise home. Regrettably our photographer could not join this expedition so visual evidence is lacking.

SEPTEMBER DARTS & POOL

Very sadly, the arranged darts and pool competition with our rivals in Carrick-on-Shannon had to be cancelled due to the passing of their member, Jim Reenan. Our deepest condolences go to his family and friends – Jim was a popular and stalwart member of the IWAI who will be greatly missed. There is an obituary on page 9.

An alternative meeting of just our group, in Creightons Bar, proved an ideal opportunity for socialising, meeting new members and discovering who amongst us has any talent at throwing sharp pointed objects

at a circular board and propelling small balls into tight pockets.

MARINE FIRST AID AND SAFETY COURSE

IWAI Boyle River sponsored a Marine First Aid and Safety course for members on 25 September in King House, Boyle. Seven members participated in a very informative and interesting course delivered by Sharon Garland of Garland First Aid Training. All were delighted to accept their certificates on successful completion of the course and it was lovely to meet three new IWAI Boyle River members at the same time. See our photo, kindly taken by Sharon Garland, showing (L to R) David O'Daly, Therese O'Daly, Denis Gray, Alvin Price, Roger Conway, Patricia Kelly and Kay Baxter.

HALLOWEEN CIC

In high Spirits, Specters and Spooks made up our final 2022 Cruise in Company – appropriately with a Halloween theme – as Commodores Tommy and Kevin led a ghoulish and ghostly expedition to Leitrim (Saturday) and Carrick-on-Shannon (Sunday). Despite the inclement weather, our wraiths haunted the river in spooktacular fashion!

CLARENDON LOCK

MN#107 notified that Clarendon Lock is to close for three months to facilitate the installation of new upstream lock gates. The closure was implemented on 1 November 2022. Thanks to Damien Maddock for photos of the new lock gates.

Photos: Sharon Garland and Damien Maddock

WEAREN ENGINEERING STAINLESS STEEL FABRICATION



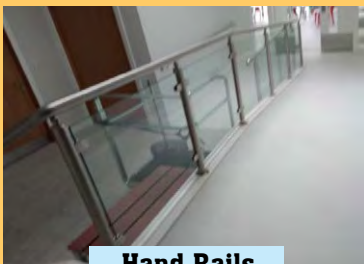
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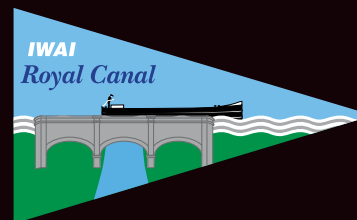
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ROYAL CANAL RIPPLES



FROM DENIS BAKER

NEWCOMEN JUNCTION RAILWAY CROSSING (LIFTING BRIDGE)*

'What bridge?' I hear you all say, because you know it as the 'Effin Bridge' – the bane of the Royal Canal! The canal officially reopened in 2010 but as we all know, is obstructed through traffic on 359 days annually by this rail line crossing the canal almost at water level. On the other six days it may be lifted, by appointment, for no less than two boats and for a brief period usually in the morning... and never at the weekend.

It's a situation that really beggars belief, considering the investment, time and labour it took to bring the canal back from the brink to a usable state. The many people now passed on who dedicated large parts of their lives to the restoration drive by RCAG, and supported by IWAI too, would roll in their graves if they knew that OPEN really only meant Only Periodically Elevated Nominally.

It's a poor engineering design attempt at a lifting bridge, originally intended to be operated remotely from Connolly Railway Station. In reality it's not fit for purpose and in its current form could never have operated remotely with the efficiency required of such a lifting bridge.

Removal and replacement with something which we can all be proud of is the only solution to finally allow the Royal Canal to proudly display the badge OPEN TO TRAFFIC! Then and only then will we see through traffic figures rise substantially and canal tourism blossom with the prospect of travelling easily between canals in Dublin and onward to the Shannon or Barrow.

DART+WEST RAIL ELECTRIFICATION

For some years now Iarnród Éireann have been planning the Dart+West electrification of the Dublin-Maynooth rail line. It will have many repercussions for the Royal Canal as it runs alongside the canal for most of its length. Spencer Dock will receive a new station, some tracks will be lowered to allow electrification to fit under existing bridges, level crossings will be erased to remove obstructions to the new DART traffic, a new tunnel will run under the canal and the Effin Bridge will have its track bed lowered by up to 385mm but will otherwise remain in its current form. *'The underside of the current bridge will remain at the level it is at currently along with the remainder of the structure other than the tracks while the bridge will continue to operate as it currently does with the same*



Bridge deck with train passing

navigational clearance that currently exist' according to the DART+West Project Team.

Two years ago IWAI Royal Canal made a submission to Iarnród Éireann in the first phase of public consultation on the project. We emphasized the obstruction which the bridge causes and outlined various options for replacement. To date these suggestions have been ignored with Iarnród Éireann opting to retain the bridge virtually as is in the future.

Roll forward to 28 October 2022, the final date for submissions to An Bord Pleanála, possibly a last chance to present observations on the project. Again, IWAI Royal Canal have made a submission, we hope that sense prevails and an appropriate lift or swing bridge can be included in the project.

*Ireland's Royal Canal - Ruth Delaney and Ian Bath, 2010

2020S BC

As the season comes to a close on our first year on the 2020s BC rest assured we'll be back next year with a bigger and better schedule of events. If your canals/Barrow based branch is planning an event in 2023 please let us know as soon as possible and we will be glad to add

you to the itinerary and place you on our 2023 map.

If you were one of the adventurous who joined the 2020s BC this year you will have received our branded bunting, burgee and flag. You will be pleased to know that you also get a fabulous pewter plaque to commemorate the 2020s BC. Mick Kinahan has your plaque and is distributing them now.

These unique pewter plaques were made for us by Mullingar Pewter as indeed were the Float to the Fleadh plaques. Now, more than ever, we felt it was important to shop local and support Irish businesses. Yes, these plaques are a little more expensive than the usual brass items, pewter though is very suited to plaques and holds much finer detail as can be seen in the Green & Silver burgee on the plaque.

The canals branches have kindly supported the 2020s BC, their contributions have enabled us to produce the excellent pack you receive for joining. A special thanks goes to IWAI Dublin who sponsored the plaques.

Photos: Denis Baker

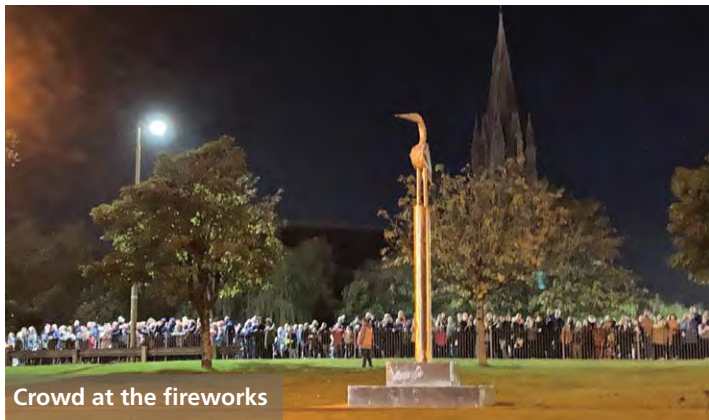
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Newcomen Rail Lifting Bridge

RIVER SUCK

FROM GRAHAM BARTLETT



Crowd at the fireworks

SO THAT'S A WRAP

As long nights draw in and the 2022 season draws to a close, we can safely say that it's been quite a year for IWAI River Suck since its creation back in late March this year. We have seen a tangible increase in traffic on the River Suck and been able to host and assist some very well-received events such as; the Heritage Boat Association (HBA) twenty-first-anniversary event, the inaugural

Freeman Boat Owners of Ireland meet-up and most recently the first ever Float to the Fair.

The Float to the Fair 2022 was well attended with 14 boats making the trip into Ballinasloe. Although the inclement weather was a deterrent we luckily had enough respite from the rain to allow everyone to enjoy the amazing fireworks display on Friday night. Hopefully next year we will have

better weather and perhaps develop the event further to cater for all tastes.

GETTING READY FOR 2023

In recent weeks IWAI River Suck was very fortunate to have been very generously donated a branch workboat which will be given all the TLC needed to have it ready for the 2023 season. We are very much looking forward to making use of this asset and more details will be revealed in a future issue. Towards the end of this year, we will be hosting our AGM and hoping as a branch to build on the success of 2022 and make 2023 an even more successful year. We would also like to promote and recommend the marina and facilities here in Ballinasloe to all other IWAI branches or other groups that are thinking about holding a CIC, a weekend trip or a get-together. It's an ideal location right in the heart of a major town with all the amenities that you could possibly wish for. We also hope to attract more members for the year ahead so if you or

anyone you know would like to join us, please feel free to make contact. It's also worth noting that an IWAI membership or indeed any of the wonderful items from the IWAI online shop would make excellent Christmas presents for anyone in your life with an interest in our waterways or why not treat yourself with one of the many items on sale.

FINALLY

We would like to thank the following people for supporting us since our formation this year and helping us on our way. In no particular order: John Dolan, John Fitzgerald, Kay Baxter, Alan Kelly, Ciaran Clinton and Joe Tracey and all the HBA Crew, Alison Alderton, Robbie and Nuala and Sinead from Freeman Cruisers Ireland, IWAI Athlone and its members, Patrick Harkin and all in Waterways Ireland and finally a big thanks to one of the friendliest lock keepers on the navigation Ruairi Ryan.

Text and photos: Graham Bartlett

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Fireworks over boat



DOWN ON DERG

FROM ANNA BURKE



Barges return to Kilgarvin

AGM

We are pleased to announce that our AGM will be held in IWAI HQ *Dunrovin* on 4 December at 11:30am. We look forward to catching up with our members as the season draws to a close and looking forward to next season.

RETURN OF THE BARGES TO KILGARVAN

On 20 August, as part of Heritage Week, an event took place in Kilgarvan entitled 'The Return of the Barges'. Everyone on Derg is familiar with the Green Shed in Kilgarvan which is now the property of Kilgarvan Angling Club (KAC) but was formerly property of the Grand Canal Company (GCC). GCC Barges would trade from here bringing their goods up the canals to Dublin and around the lake. The event was run by The Terryglass Kilbarron Historical Society and hosted by KAC. Helen Fox and Billy Ryan of the Historical Society gave a description of the goods transported into and out of Kilgarvan, which was mainly barley, and the journeys of the barges. Les Saunders of the Heritage Boat Association also spoke giving more details of the barges involved and the tragic sinking of the *45M* off Garrykennedy. Oliver Kennedy of KAC spoke of the history of the building and described how it was used during the time of the GCC. While the exact date of the building of the Green Shed is unknown the quay was built in the 1890s and it is believed that the shed was built in two stages as there are two different types of

trusses used. The shed which was painted black in those days had a large opening to the lake and the barges would load from there. The wooden jetty along the inner side of the shed was replaced in 1979 by the solid concrete jetty that you can see today. Some relics of this era still remain such as the crane on the quayside and it is possible to see the markings on the outside of the shed of the platform from which the goods were loaded for road transport. The event was very well attended by barges and also the local community who had many stories to tell of those days. It was a great celebration of local history and life on the water.

DEVELOPMENTS AT CONNAUGHT HARBOUR, PORTUMNA

The new harbour developments at Connaught Harbour are well underway. There are activities at both ends of the canal. The area between the existing old harbour and the slipway is being excavated with up to seven metres of bog being removed for the new hard section of the jetty. There will be eight new floating jetty berths in this area and our understanding is that this will be complete well before the season starts. All of the old sheds have already been removed.

The section for development at the entrance to the canal is also progressing well with the posts for the new floating jetty already in place and the old shed removed. There is also a new very interesting building that looks like just a roof on stilts. During



Works at Connaught Harbour

the removal of the old shed, the builders found 11 bats in its old roof. The authorities insisted that the bats be protected, so they came up with this structure. It is complete and can now act as a new home for the bats. Well done Waterways Ireland and their contractors.


LUA FESTIVAL, KILLALOE

The first Lua Festival was held in Killaloe from 16 to 18 September

and was attended by an IWAI Lough Derg CIC. A fundraiser held for the RNLI, Lough Derg Coast Guard, and Killaloe/Ballina Search and Recovery Unit during the weekend raised much needed funds for these services. Each group was presented with €613.00 in a ceremony attended by Sandra Lefroy and Matt Daniels of IWAI.

Photos: Les Saunders

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LOUGH ERNE NEWS

FROM ROSS MILLAR



Funnel and anti-freeze mix

SO FAR SO GOOD

It's been a busy year with several events throughout the season. The branch committee would like to thank our members for their continued support. We look forward to seeing you next year for another active season in 2023 and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ross Millar

WINTERISING TIPS

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

It is important to firstly clean down all surfaces on the boat.

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 WATER COOLING CIRCUIT INTERNAL

Replace all the coolant every 5 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.



Silica gel

RAW WATER

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.

Prepare a mix of 9 litres consisting of 1 part antifreeze to 2 parts water in a 10 litre container. That's 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.

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 tank/s. 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 be lucky to 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's best to mark the connections with tape before you start to avoid a mix up.

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 reassembling.

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, 1 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 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. Have fun!

Text and photo: Robert Maitland

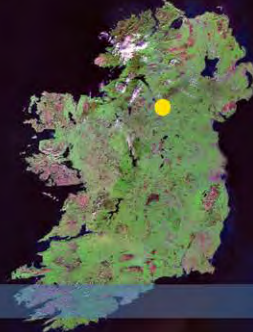
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BELTURBET BANTER



FROM PJ LEDDY



Enjoying a beer in Lisnaskea Boat club

LATE SEASON RALLY

IWAI Belturbet held their late season rally on 14 and 15 October. It started on a beautiful autumn evening by sailing to Lisnaskea Boat Club where an enjoyable night of banter and craic was had and lasted until the wee hours.

On Saturday we sailed to Enniskillen with a short stop at

the moorings for some people. Our Saturday night was spent in Magee's pub in Enniskillen where a most enjoyable time was had. Many thanks to Mark in Magee's for providing food for all who attended.

RIVERSDALE MARINA RNLI FUNDRAISER

Thanks to everyone who donated to the RNLI fundraiser on 23



Enniskillen on a Sunday Morning

July 2022 at Riversdale Marina, Belturbet. We had some very generous donations and thanks again to the brave souls who attended that wet and windy night! We raised €1,450, had a great night of music, food and drink and didn't let the weather dampen our spirits. Our thanks to Daragh Slacke and his four-piece band and of course the hard working chefs who soldiered on

through the inclement weather.

Liam D'Arcy, Riversdale Marina, Belturbet.

UPCOMING EVENTS

28 December – Post Christmas cruise to Lisnaskea Boat Club

Photos: Frankie O'Donnell and Phil Sweeney

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POWERBOAT BRANCH

FROM RICHARD ELLIS



Picture postcard Cobh

CORK COASTAL RUN (20-21 AUGUST)

Well, as the old saying goes 'third time lucky', so following two attempts which had to be aborted due to Covid we finally got to do our very much anticipated Cork Run. Full credit to the good work of Denise (our unofficial accommodation officer) and the generosity of the Carrigaline Court Hotel which, after rolling our booking over for the third time, held the rates they had originally quoted in 2019.

The official run commenced on Saturday morning but for those who were in a position to arrive on the Friday, there was a 'warmer upper' run arranged, originally to Youghal but revised to Ballycotton as the weather was a tad unfavorable. I believe a lovely lunch and early afternoon were had in the Bayview Hotel before returning to the fabulous new slipway and jetty at Paddy's Point, where we based ourselves for the weekend.

Come Saturday morning we registered 10 boats and 34 crew coming from as far afield as Antrim, Roscommon, Tipperary and Dublin. Our Commodore for the weekend, Alan Lindley, gathered the group for a briefing and unfortunately due to a SW force 5-6 we had to revise our plans to travel to Kinsale and Courtmacsherry, and stay within

the confines of Cork Harbour instead. However, this was not the hardship you might think as the extensive waters inland of Roches Point offer wonderful cruising grounds, even at 30kn. We managed to fill the day very nicely with a trip taking in Cork city moorings, Cobh, Spike Island, Haulbowline, Passage East, Aghada Quay (recommend Rosies for lunch) and finally a run out to Roches Point via Crosshaven. For those who have never explored Cork Harbour it really is a treat, you could easily spend a week there, and with the advantage that you are relatively sheltered from the worst the Atlantic's South Westerlies can throw at you.

That evening, after securing all boats on the pontoon, taking into account the changing tidal flow (not something us inland boaters have to worry about too often) we retired to the hotel. The salty air seemed to have affected us differently and some dealt with it back at the hotel by going for a shower and others by going for a pint, both solutions worked! As with everything else about the Carrigaline Court Hotel, the evening meal was fabulous. I did hear they had hosted the 'Roses' the previous week so our modest gathering was no trouble to them.

Sunday morning dawned bright and early and the persistent drizzle



Richie and Louise at Old Head

of the previous evening proved to be even more persistent than Met Éireann had predicted, forecasting a clearing by 6am. Regardless, we headed to the boats where we agreed visibility had improved enough to allow us to head to the harbour mouth where we would reassess the situation. Thankfully it dried up, albeit remaining overcast for most of the day. As we left the shelter of the harbour we started to feel that lovely long Atlantic swell which suited a nice cruising speed of about 25-30kn. Being the fine day it was, we detoured to the Old Head of Kinsale (about 20 nautical miles) before returning the six nautical miles to Kinsale where after having a photo shoot in front of the historic Charles Fort we savored the sights of the slow run into Kinsale before finding various mooring points and retiring to the town for lunch.

Following lunch we made our way back on a noticeably rougher sea as the wind had lifted slightly and the tide had turned. We were back at Paddy's Point by around 3pm and with everyone helping each other had the boats recovered in no time, heading off to our various places of abode.

Another great IWAI Powerboat weekend. A big thank you to Alan Lindley, Dominic Ryan and Denise Byrne who were the main organisers behind the event. Roll on 2023 and hopefully another great menu of events.

MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to join IWAI Powerboat or attend any events please contact us via our Facebook page or contact our secretary at: rebeccajlindley@gmail.com

Photos: Richard Ellis and Alan Lindley



Charles Fort, Kinsale



CONTINUING REPAIRS ON THE NEWRY TO PORTADOWN CANAL

Work continued over the summer on the repairs to the Newry to Portadown Canal by A.G.Wilson paid for by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council (ABC).

At McVeigh's, Lock 10, the wooden floor had been damaged due to erosion by the water falling over the cill. Quite a large section had to be replaced and the walls underpinned. The cill itself had rotted away and was replaced with concrete. The old timber was returned to its original positions, as requested by the Built Heritage Department. To reduce the risk of future erosion to the new timber, concrete slabs were cast and placed where the falling water lands. There was also a row of

large beech trees very close to the lock which had to be felled to stop the roots from causing damage to the chamber walls.

The next lock for treatment was Waddell's, Lock 9. The original wooden cill had completely disappeared except for one cross beam. Fortunately there were only a couple of scrape marks to the ancient wooden floor. The overburden of silt had protected the timbers and the lower cill was still there even though it was made of wood. A new upper cill was poured in concrete and the protective precast slabs were placed below this at the upper end of the chamber to reduce water damage.

The temporary dam had to be moved to do repairs to the next lock at Terryhoogan, Lock 13, as it is on the other side of the summit. The state of this lock was very similar to McVeigh's; with the wooden floor protected by the silt but the old wooden cill washed completely out. Once more concrete was used to rebuild the apron and cill and various loose stones in the walls were secured. The lower cill on this lock had been changed to stone and was in perfect condition. Presumably this work had been done in 1802 when the lock was deepened.

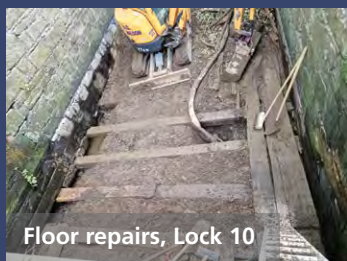
All the locks had trees growing out of them when we started work parties in 2008. By removing these

we had saved major deterioration of the stonework and greatly reduced the cost of these repairs.

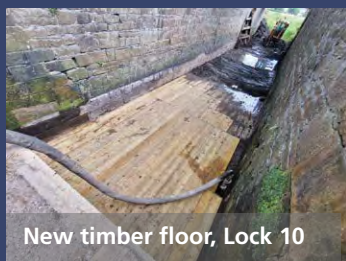
Completion of this work means that all the locks in the ABC Council area are now ready to have gates fitted to them and we wish to thank ABC Council for carrying out this repair work.

The branch receives great satisfaction from such a positive result following all our years of hard work and lobbying. We intend to start using any section of the canal which has water in to keep the focus on installing gates and raising water levels.

Text and photos:
Peter Maxwell



Floor repairs, Lock 10



New timber floor, Lock 10



Precast slabs, Lock 10



Initial clearance, Lock 13



Repairs completed Lock 10



Upper cill before repair, Lock 9



Old floor, new cill, Lock 9



Stone lower cill, Lock 13



LAGAN LETTER



FROM STEPHEN SMITH



Safety briefing with Tesco workers
Photo: Jackson Tinto



Verner's Bridge, River Blackwater

EVERY LITTLE HELPS

Having seen the notices we had posted on the locks we had cleared, which explained who we were and what we were doing, we were contacted by Tesco. They have a policy of getting involved in community and environmental projects with local groups, such as 'The Woodland Trust', 'National Trust', 'Ulster Wildlife', etc. and wanted to know if they could join us for a work party. Of course we said 'yes', so on Tuesday 13 September, seven Tesco employees from their cold storage warehouse in Belfast turned up at Lock 10, and joined us in the initial attack on the vegetation.

After listening to a brief history of the navigation, instruction in the safe use of tools, and how to remove vegetation without disturbing the stonework, they got stuck in to clearing the site. And how they worked! In one day we managed to clear the southern side of the lock, bar trees, and made an impressive start on the northern side, even though it's a bit of a safari to get to. Many thanks to Tesco for encouraging this type

of venture, and especially to their enthusiastic employees. Hopefully they may be able to join us again in the future.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

The locks on the Lagan Navigation, from Belfast to the Broadwater, are scheduled monuments and as such, permission is needed to work on them. Having made successful application to the relevant government departments, we are bound to carry out the work in a manner approved by them. This results in periodic inspections, and the most recent of these involved Lock 10. Not only did the inspector approve of our work, but has furnished us with NIEA literature on 'Dealing with vegetation on historic masonry monuments', which is full of information and tips on herbicides, health and safety, timing of treatments, methodology, etc. A must for anyone involved in restoration work.

VISIT TO RIVER BLACKWATER

On 24 September we were hosted by the newly formed IWAI River

Blackwater branch and had a very enjoyable day. We were met by Brian MacAuley and his fellow volunteers Martin, Kevin and Kevyn who provided background information about the Blackwater Community Barge Project in which they are heavily involved. We then took to the water in two boats, a traditional Lough Neagh fishing boat which had been restored by Kevyn, and a custom built 'wheelyboat'. The latter is designed for people with mobility issues including wheelchair users and has a bow door similar to those on landing craft.

We embarked from Verner's Bridge near Dungannon and went upstream towards The Argory, passing through the remains of the Blackwater Viaduct which was on a branch line of the Great Northern Railway going from Portadown to Derry and known as the 'Derry Road'. There was also an iron footbridge which provided access from the Co. Tyrone bank to The Argory on the Co. Armagh side. Built in England in the mid-nineteenth century to replace a small ferry, it was brought up

Belfast Lough and the Lagan Navigation Canal, across a short section of Lough Neagh and up the Blackwater – a piece of history which we found very interesting.

We passed the entrance to the Ulster Canal and then went through an attractive stone bridge in Charlemont. The river was very peaceful and much wider than most of us had expected. Some of us were lucky enough to see several Kingfishers in flight but the rest weren't quick enough. Before the return journey we had an excellent meal in the Portmor Hotel in Blackwatertown.

LAGAN NAVIGATION TRUST

Congratulations to Peter Maxwell who has been appointed to the Board of the Lagan Navigation Trust to represent the IWAI Executive. He is replacing Brian Cassells, their former Chairman, who has resigned after many years.

Photos: Charles Sloan unless stated otherwise.



Wheelyboat
Photo: Stephen Smith



Footbridge near The Argory



Lunch at Portmor



RIVER BANN & LOUGH NEAGH



FROM BRIAN CASSELLS



Ermintrude with her chicks

Each time I go out to Ram's Island I always get a welcome, yes my colleagues are glad to see me, but a welcome from some feathered friends, it is the rarest conglomeration of fowl, from rescued battery hens to ducks, guinea fowl, to a few odd varieties! Each time the boat arrives, they run to the jetty, clucking and squawking no doubt hoping someone will open the container door and throw some grain on the ground. One of our feathered family, 'Ermintrude' the hen, surprised everyone by introducing us to her new flock of 13 chicks, now where did she manage to hatch those? At least now they are safe from Mr Fox who in the past has decimated our flock!

This autumn saw a huge increase in visitor numbers to the island, on one particular Saturday the *Island Warrior* made four trips bringing some 50 visitors to the island, as well as 19 visiting boats, all welcome revenue. A recent inspection of fire safety equipment necessitated the expenditure of about £1000, all very necessary to ensure the safety of our visitors and comply with legislation. The glamping pod, which sleeps five people, was originally converted from Santa's Grotto and represents great value at £85 per night. Regular visitors are the 'Ghostbusters' group who stay on the campsite; they arrive with listening equipment and obviously think their visit is worthwhile! To find out more about the glamping pod visit: www.ramsisland.org/glamping/



Glamping pod

The highlight for the Island and for the branch had to be the auspicious occasion when we were presented with 'The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services'. The ceremony was held in the Old Courthouse in Antrim and our Chairman, Drew Nelson, accepted the award on behalf of the branch from the Lord Lieutenant, Mr David McCorkill. Those who spoke praised the efforts of all who had participated in the project from its inception. All present were delighted to see the attendance of our patron, Lord O'Neill, who certainly seemed to enjoy the occasion. Those present were treated to an amazing spread of food; this gave an opportunity for branch members to network with the influential invited guests. See our photo of the presentation showing from left to right Michael Stevenson, Kevin Le Quesne, Lord Lieutenant; David McCorkill, Drew Nelson and Rob McCormick.

The Lower Bann is again fully open for navigation with the lengthy repairs to Carnroe Lock being completed. For those who have never cruised this waterway it is a truly awesome experience. There are a number of hire companies offering very competitive rates for both weekend and weeklong visits in modern cruisers equipped with all necessary conveniences. This is a quieter waterway packed with interesting visitor attractions and a plethora of wildlife, all just waiting to be discovered.

Lough Neagh boasts just two large islands; Ram's along the eastern shore and Coney Island along the southern shore. In the past both



Accepting the Queen's Award for Voluntary Services

islands were used as summer residences, both have round towers among other interesting historical relics. Sadly Coney Island has been off the visitors list since the last caretaker retired and the jetties, paths etc. require urgent maintenance. While Ram's is owned by Lord O'Neill, Coney Island is owned by the National Trust and administered by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon

Council. Perhaps Coney Island needs a similar management structure to Ram's Island. Anything would be superior to what presently exists, let's face it, locally the Newry, Lagan and Ulster Canal branches have been hugely successful taking their individual projects forward.

Photos: Brian Cassells



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ROYAL CANAL REPORT

By Derek Whelan



Rowan Hamilton Walk
Photo: Fidelma Madden

As another year comes to its conclusion we can look back on what has been achieved on our waterways and what challenges still lie ahead. Covid has interrupted many of our activities over the past two years and while not as potent as it was formerly, is still with us. We have, hopefully, learnt some lessons in how to cope better in the future.

LOOKING BACK

Events of significance during the past year on the Royal Canal will include Float to the Fleadh at Mullingar in August which attracted the largest fleet of boats ever witnessed in that town. Although the weather was not always favourable (there were a few very cold and wet days) those who attended were rewarded with some great music and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Not since Tullamore last hosted the event (about 10-12 years ago), have boat owners had an opportunity to bring along their 'lodgings' to the Fleadh. The recent confirmation that the Fleadh has been confirmed for Mullingar in 2023 means that we can look forward to a repeat performance next year and that those who missed out on bringing their boats to the Fleadh in 2022 (I include myself here) can include it in their boating plans for next August.

The other important event on the eastern end of the canal was Phizzfest. This was revived after a two year absence and turned out to be a big crowd pleaser with music of a different genre.

Events which bring music and crowds to our canal side areas are to be encouraged if we are to justify the investment which has been made in restoration.

PLANS

We still have a few events before we see out the current year. First up will be our annual commemoration of the Porterstown tragedy which, at time of writing, is planned for Friday 25 November. A remembrance service will be held at St Mochta's Church, Porterstown at 10am after which we will go to Kennan Bridge for the placing of the wreath beside a plaque near where the tragic event took place. Although the event occurred 177 years ago the issue of water safety is as relevant today as then.

CHRISTMAS WALK

There is a great tradition among the various waterways branches to get outdoors after the Christmas 'excesses' and walk the towpaths. Apart from the exercise benefits, it can also be a great social occasion bringing members and friends together at the mid-winter point. RCAG will hold their 'Christmas Jumper Walk' on Tuesday 27 December. Starting at 12 noon from the harbour in Maynooth, the route will take us through the Carton Estate, on to Pike Harbour and along the canal bank back to Maynooth. The route is wheelchair accessible and also usually attracts many with buggies and/or dogs so can accommodate all the family.

ROWAN HAMILTON WALK

16 October marked the annual event to remember the great Mathematician who scratched his quaternion equation on the Brougham Bridge while walking the towpath with his wife in 1843. It is interesting that the bridge is now called Broom Bridge but who was Broom or who was Brougham? Hamilton was director of Dunsink Observatory at that time but he also held a post as professor at Trinity College so the canal towpath was frequently used by him to commute between jobs.

The event is organised by the Maths Department at Maynooth University who start the walk following a talk at Dunsink Observatory. It continues along the towpath from Ashtown and attracts many international

academics from overseas colleges along with a collection of students and some eclectic local 'characters'.

CONFHEY BOATHOUSE

The surrounds of our boathouse at Confey have been 'occupied' by contractors over the past two years while working on a major waste water project for Irish Water. This involved tunnelling under the canal and adjacent railway line while leaving several inspection wells in our garden area. The initial time estimate for the project was three or four months and although exempt from Covid restrictions our site has not been handed back over two years later! A further change that has arisen at Confey has been the arrival of many more liveaboards (15 at time of writing) to an area lacking any facilities. This is just a small aspect of a much larger problem on our waterways which WI have, so far, been unable to manage.

FILMING

Fans of Nevan Maguire's cookery programmes on RTE television can look forward to viewing the maestro practicing his skills along the Royal Canal Greenway in the coming weeks. Filming has taken place in Longford, Westmeath and Kildare recently and aside from the food preparation, Nevan gets a chance to view the Whitworth Aqueduct in Abbeysrule and to learn about the history of the canal.



The jetty at Confey
Photo: Derek Whelan

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