

ATHLONE AERIAL

NEWSLETTER ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Spring 2012

www.athlone.iwai.ie

Secretary Brian Corcoran
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Greetings from the Chairman



Over the past four or five years we have all had to get used to less and less as recession bites and the weight of the gloom has taken effect across all walks of life. Through this period however the IWAI nationally and the Athlone branch in particular have upped their respective games.

Athlone members have facilitated the handover of Dunrovin for the construction of a National headquarters for the IWAI and in so doing will gain the benefit from having such property in our home patch. Athlone branch have been involved in all the stages of this project and are keeping the wishes of the late Cynthia Rice on track in providing a place of its own for the IWAI in Athlone.

Athlone members have engaged with the RNLI as a result of which a life boat station will be established on Lough Ree for the first time based temporarily at Coosan and will probably have a permanent home on the Dunrovin site. The launch is scheduled for May 2012 and we will be posting details of the event to celebrate the occasion in coming Aerials and in particular on the website and text messaging.

The branch however has other roles and none more important than providing opportunity for members to use their boats. The Shannon Boat Rally is the major boating event annually and this year is based around Athlone branch area. The details of the Rally will be available soon and we wish this year's commodore Dave McCabe well in planning and leading the event. Brendan Connolly is the Athlone nominee for vice commodore and many other Rally stalwarts make up very strong Athlone representation on the organising committee. We encourage members to take part in the rally especially if you have never done so before.

Other Athlone Cruise in Company events are as set out in the events guide in this Aerial. This year we have sought out new locations and we are open to other suggestions. These cruise in company events are focused on Athlone boat owners and we hope to grow the number of participants so as to establish and maintain a vibrant culture of cruising in company and exploring the treasures of the fantastic amenity of the Shannon and its lakes and tributaries. We will be using the different means of communication so as to alert members of events and these include (a) the Aerial, (b) the website, (c) texting members who

have subscribed, (d) using group contacts to encourage members to participate. We are looking for cruising fleets of 30 boats and such numbers provide greater opportunity for participation and involvement.

Most members are boat owners and in the times we are in we are probably stuck with the boat so we might as well use it to the full. Hopefully this year, after the mild winter, most boats need nothing more than a good clean up and service of the engine to get them into seaworthy condition. After that a tank of diesel will go a long way into the season and a well used boat provides so much more pleasure than a permanently moored one.

We are working on producing an Athlone branch burgee which will give our members an identity on the waterways and we hope that it will signal a sense of pride in membership of the branch and the IWAI generally. We will bring this burgee to a forthcoming branch meeting for approval and the input of members would be greatly appreciated on that issue.

Please be an active member of your branch this year. To make member involvement less onerous we are having only five meetings in the year and these are as published in this Aerial and on the website. Meetings purposely coincide with the cruises in company in the hope that the meetings and cruises are better attended.

Keep a watch out for future bulletins where any other information will be communicated. Take the opportunity now today to set yourself up on the text system following which you will receive free updates on branch activity and encourage your family members and friends to do the same. This will benefit all and ensure better communication at short notice. Please also consult the website regularly and make contributions to same by submitting photographs and other material to Brendan Connolly, webmaster.

I wish all members fair sailing and a successful boating season and I look forward to seeing many of you on and off the water.

Kevin Clabby
Chairman.

Reminder Text Alert Information System

We have set up a SMS (texting) information system, to allow the branch, to Text members with timely information and updates, like meeting reminders, cruise in company start dates etc. This is an OPT-IN service. **TO JOIN TEXT IWAI TO 51444.** This is a free service and costs you nothing. **Your number will never be used for anything else but branch information by text.**

Notice of Meeting

Branch Meeting Friday March 30th at 8pm, at the clubhouse Lakside Marina Glasson. Finger food and music provided.
Contact: athlone@iwai.ie

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Lifeboat station to be located Coosan Point

Coosan Point has been chosen as the desired location of the lifeboat station, subject to planning approval. The temporary station is planned to be established in a small compound in a corner of the car park in Coosan. The permanent station is proposed to be co-located at Dunrovin.

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Athlone Town Council support the set up of the new lifeboat station

At the recent budget meeting of the Athlone Town Council in January 2012 Cllr Aengus O'Rourke recently secured €1,000 from the council towards the set up of the life boat on Lough Ree. Many thanks go to the council for supporting the venture and to Cllr O'Rourke for proposing the initiative for funding.

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Lough Ree Lifeboat New web page launched

To coincide with the establishment of the process to setup the new station a new website to allow potential volunteers to register their interest and to keep up to date as to what is happening www.loughreelifeboat.com
E: volunteer@loughreelifeboat.com

Progress at Dunrovin by Dave McCabe

The Association has been progressing the "Dunrovin" project in the last few months. The primarily work has been the preliminary site work and environmental assessments needed. The site is situated in a very scenic and picturesque part of Lough Ree. The area is within the Lough Ree Special Area of Protection and as such requires careful assessment. All the necessary site investigations have been completed, and the various reports drawn up. Consultations have taken place with various engineering and planning personnel in Westmeath Co.Co.



The design, is substantially complete, Mech and Elec design remains to be completed. Other various internal features and issues are being worked through. It should be pointed out that this design has no foreshore modification or impact. It is not intended to seek water access as this is available nearby at Coosan Point.

As many will be aware, thanks to a successful local campaign, The RNLI is committed to establishing a station on Lough Ree. Following a series of meetings, the IWAI has extended the offer to co-locate a permanent station on the Dunrovin site. This is hoped to be a shared facility, thereby increasing the use the building. While no decision as to a permanent station will be taken until the service has proved itself, the fact that the temporary station is being established in the adjacent car park is a sign that the permanent station will be ultimately incorporated into Dunrovin. Given Harry and Cynthia Rice long association with the RNLI, it would be a fitting tribute to have it established there.

Outline plans of such a station incorporated into the IWAI building has been presented to the Westmeath planners and their support was forthcoming in working with us to incorporate this facility at the appropriate time. This will all be subject to negotiation with the RNLI, their agreement and a equitable division of costs, both capital and ongoing running.

The IWAI Dunrovin Building Committee and its Architect, are of the view, that formal planning will be sought in February. An information campaign has begun to inform locals and the various elected representatives. This is a very non-contentious project and to date the Association has received nothing but goodwill towards the project. In particular Westmeath County Council and its planning department have been very accommodating and supportive.

The costs and associated finance issues are now close to completion. We expect that the costs will be met by a combination of contributions from branch and central funds and the remainder from a small bank mortgage. To this end, our bank has been approached and sees no problem with such funding.

The next step will be present to the officers of each branch, the detailed funding proposals, including ongoing costs as well as the costs for erecting the building. Armed with such information, they can inform their branches as to the detail of the funding and finance arrangements. This activity will begin soon.

Given a fair wind, we would like to have a planning decision and a fully agreed finance plan for this years AGM. Of course the progress of any planning process is by no means secure or without issues. We do feel we have the issues addressed but we shall see.

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January 2012 Meeting of Athlone RNLI update in Lough Ree Yacht Club to sign up volunteers for service both on and off shore.

Progress Update LifeBoat at Coosan by Dave McCabe



The first trained recruits for the RNLI station.

Following an intensive campaign locally for the best part of 2011, the RNLI has agreed to establish a lifeboat station to serve Lough Ree. This will be situated at Coosan. Initially a temporary station will be setup in the car park at Coosan in a dedicated compound. Westmeath County Council have generously agreed to facilitate this station. The temporary period is set to last 1 year. Then the RNLI will seek to establish a permanent station in a custom building.

The IWAI has approached the RNLI and given Harry and Cynthia Rices long association with the lifeboat service, has suggested that the station could be co-located on the Dunrovin site. We hope this comes to fruition.

At present the lifeboat station has recruited sufficient volunteers to begin training. The actual lifeboat, an Atlantic 75 is expected in late February. The Lough Ree Yacht Club has generously agreed to provide storage and training facilities at their superb facilities on the Lake.

The provisional Lifeboat Station Manager, subject to RNLI approval, is Damien Delaney. We are all pleased that Damien has agreed to take on the arduous task of setting up the station and running it. He will be of course aided by RNLI staff in Swords, who provide expertise, training and station coordination. Damien is well known, a fountain of lake knowledge and the will to make this happen. We are fortunate to have a volunteer of such calibre.

We must also acknowledge the service that has been provided to lake users by the local Sub-Aqua club and others. Their rescue will continue to be necessary, especially in underwater recovery. Its grateful to see many members of the Sub-Aqua club involved in the Lifeboat.

So look out for that familiar orange high speed RIB out training in the spring. A new chapter is beginning in the Lakes history.

Start of Season Cruise in Company

Able organised by our Chairman Kevin Clabby, The Start of season cruise in company will take place on the Saturday and Sunday 5 and 6th May. The Saturday activities kick start at 10am with a branch meeting (Sat 5 May @10am) in the Radisson (tea/coffee & scones) followed directly by a briefing. The branch have not travelled in a cruise in company to Ballinasloe for some time and it was felt that it would be a good idea to leave the lake and explore locations further away for the start of the season. Contact Kevin on 086 2588334

Submission on Draft Bye-Laws

Westmeath County Council have proposed new by laws for the "use, regulation, protection, management and enjoyment of Lakeshore Areas within the functional area of Westmeath County Council" These areas include Coosan.

The branch made a submission to the council regarding the by-laws particularly in relation the more restrictive aspects.

If you want a copy go to the website <http://athlone.iwai.ie/>

Officers and Committees 2012

Chairman:	Kevin Clabby	E: kevinclabby@gmail.com
Vice Chairman:	Dave McCabe	E: davidchristophermccabe@gmail.com
Secretary:	Brian Corcoran	E: brianpacorcoran@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Brendan Connolly	E: brendan.connolly6@gmail.com
Website Maintenance:	Brendan Connolly	E: athlone@iwai.ie
PRO:	Siobhan Bigley	E: siobhanbigley@gmail.com
IWAI National Council:	Sam Herraghty	
Aerial Committee:	Siobhan Bigley, Bridie Delany, Damien Delany and Kevin Clabby	
RNLI Committee:	Dave McCabe, Brian Corcoran, Damien Delany, Vincent Rafter and Denis Bergin	
Rally Committee:	Herraghtys, McCabes, Brendan Connolly, Cliff Jeffers, Andy Fitzsimons, and R. Cullen.	
Commodore:	Dave McCabe	
Vice Commodore:	Brendan Connolly	
Dunrovin Representation:	Kevin Clabby and Dave McCabe	



Brian Corcoran



Brendan Connolly

Yearly Events & Meeting Schedule

MARCH

Branch meeting:

Fri 30 March @8pm, Lakeside, with finger food and Music.

MAY

Branch Meeting:

Sat 5 May @10am, Radisson (tea/coffee & scones) and cruise in company briefing.

Cruise in Company:

Sat 5 & Sun 6 May, Shannonbridge for lunch & Ballinasloe for evening with overnight Sun in Shannonbridge. Commodore Kevin Clabby 086 2588334.

Branch Meeting:

Sat 26 May (Date same as the RNLI lifeboat launch - to be confirmed).

Cruise in Company:

Coosan Sat 26 & Sun 27 (Precise date to be confirmed) Celebrating RNLI New Lifeboat Launch, Commodore Austin Reid 087 2587316

AUGUST

Unveiling Ceremony:

Sat 6 or Sun 7, IWAI Founding Members (during Shannon Rally). Contact Siobhan Bigley 086 8395861

SEPTEMBER

Branch Meeting:

Fri 7 Sept @ 8.30pm Kellys, Lecarrow
Cruise in Company: Sat 8 & Sun 9, Gourmet-Sur-Mer Cruise to Lecarrow & Portrunny & guided talk at Rindoon, Commodore Austin Reid 087 2587316

OCTOBER

Branch Meeting:

Sat 13 Oct @11am, Lakeside

End of Season: Sat 13 & Sun 14 'Pig on the Spit', Lakeside Marina, and Sean's Bar Athlone. Commodores Oona and Niamh Herraghty 086 8461564

NOVEMBER AGM

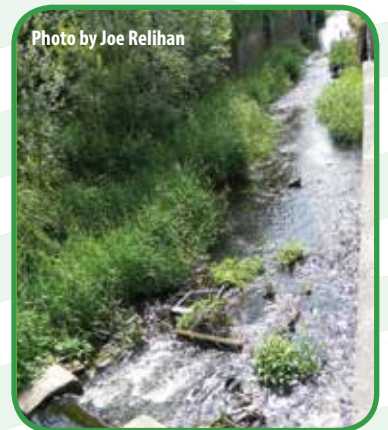
Athlone Canal Walk as part of the Athlone Canal Restoration Committee December 2011 by Dr Harmon Murtagh



Photo by Joe Relihan



Photo by Joe Relihan



Reminder Annual Subscription for 2012

Please note that subs for 2012 are due on Jan. 1st.

The IWAI sub is payable to the Membership Secretary:

*Jean Kennedy, IWAI Membership,
31 Nephin Road, Navan Rd, D-7.*

There are 3 methods of payment for your annual membership subscription, the preferred option is by Direct Debit as it reduces administration for everybody, but you can also pay by Credit or Debit Card over the web and by Cheque/Postal order.

Direct Debit Mandate

<http://www.iwai.ie/join/MEMDD-2011.pdf>

On line renewal

<http://www.iwai.ie/join/join2011.php#form>

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

(Note that membership is from January to January)

- Single Membership: €44.00
- Family Membership: €55.00