

# ATHLONE AERIAL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

NOVEMBER 1975

Dear Members,

Athlone leaps into the lead once again - being the first Branch to attempt a monthly newsletter. As you are aware our annual subscription increases to £2 next year and already the P. Agnew is taking steps to eat into a vast proportion of this. It is hoped that through this medium Members will air their views on any matter of interest. (All editorial comment will be purely personal opinion and not I.W.A.I. opinion unless expressly stated). The quality of print-out will improve if the Newsletter is accepted after two or three trial runs.

We hope to run a letters section to express individual points of view (whether from Members or non-Members); a question and answers section - for general waterways questions; a topical section - inland gossip; and a goods for sale and wanted column. Any contribution, however small, will be very welcome. And if any Member would be keen to help with the running of the Newsletter, do contact the Committee.

**MEETING** Branch Meeting on Friday,  
7th November at the Solly Mariner at  
20.30 hrs. (8.30 p.m.)

## CROWS NEST LOOK-OUT.

THE SHANNON WATCHDOG.

**Shannon Harbour:** Big things afoot down in Shannon Harbour. The Shannon East Coast Yacht Brokers, 58 Harrington Road, Dublin 4., tel: 6055 (with Duncan "the polish" Bain mainly looking after the Inland Waterways side of the venture) are setting out to fulfill a badly needed facility on the River (Canal): a covered work-shop where boat owners will have access to power tools etc. to do their own running repairs, or repairs can be contracted out by Shannon & East Coast for owners. Sailing dinghies can be wintered there for a very modest fee. They will also get you a quote for your next insurance (boat) Policy. One drawback at the moment is that C.I. have a one ton restriction on the lifting gear at the moment, hopefully this will be put right soon. If you would like to see their brokerage list, drop them a line at the above address.

**Lough Derg Rally:** (at one time it was named after a traditional Irish beverage - now it is described as the 'original and best'). This rally was held on Lough Derg from 10th - 10th October and there was a great deal of speculation as to whether Lough Derg would survive the

Kraut", unquote. It is rumoured that some hire boat operators put Lough Derg out of bounds for the duration of the rally and Lloyds have expressed concern about insuring boats for this rally next year!!

**Grand Canal:** Vol. 11, No. 9 of "Build", the building activity supplement, has a very interesting article on the Canal entitled "The Grand Canal - do we really care?". It argues on the architectural importance of waterways and the great buildings which were enhanced because of their aquatic aspect; i.e. Powerscourt, The Four Courts, Carton House, Rockingham - to name but a few and goes on to ask if Ringsend Basin will end up like St. James's Harbour (R.I.P.).

F.N. A photostat copy of this article may be obtained by sending an S.A.E. to: The "Crows Nest" Lookout.

## SIGNALS RECEIVED; LETTERS.

### Banker's Order?

Dear Sir,

I have been a Member of the Athlone Branch on and off for some years now, I say on and off because I can never remember if I paid up last year or not. Surely it's high time that a Banker's Order was introduced to ensure that we are all paid up. It would save some of us having to join



the Dublin Branch just to get the Newsletter.

Yours etc.,  
P.S., Dublin.

(ED: Ask Sean "The Purse" Fitz or read the next issue).

# RALPH (RIVER AND LAKE PERSONAL HELP)

Plans for RALPH were drawn up about 900 years ago to control Viking Victimisation on the Shannon but he was "Sacked" before he could get to grips with the task.

At enormous expense we have resurrected "him" from the depths and replaced all the worn parts, disguised "him" as Colombo, bought "him" a boat and cast "him" adrift on the upper reaches of the Shannon to wander forever on the inland waterways of Ireland storing all sorts of information in his many brains to enable him to answer any questions put to him by the Branch Members.

oooooo

### Diesel

Dear RALPH,

What price should marine diesel be sold at as there seems to be a great deal of speculation about this?

ANS: 27p per gallon.

(ED: This was RALPH's first assignment and he went straight to the heart of the matter - the Dept. of Industry and Commerce. They informed him that the Boat Hirers Association have given them an undertaking that boat owners will be served with marine diesel @ 27p per gallon. RALPH would therefore like to hear from any Member encountering breaches of this undertaking giving: date, place and price - a receipt would help RALPH to tackle this tricky problem).

### Deck Covering

Dear RALPH,

There is a new deck covering on the market which seals decks, is anti-slip and just paints on. Do you know if it is effective, where I can get it and what colour it is?

Yours. etc..

ANS: While I know of no-one who has used it yet, I do know of some who plan to do so, it is called "Decolay" and all details are available from Liquid Plastics Ltd., Ashworth Street, Preston, Lancs., England. Or can be ordered from: P.D.M., Merchants Quay, Dublin 8. Price: approx. £6.50 per 5 litres which should cover 6 - 9 sq. yds. 7 different colours are available including black and white.

oo

THERE has been some discussion recently regarding flag signalling on the Shannon. We know it's early days yet but here is an extract from a popular boating monthly:

"..... A French boat had left that port (Shoreham) homeward bound, and was about an hour out when one of the chaps on board had a heart attack. So they turned back, and as they entered the harbour lock there was an ambulance waiting for them. The patient was whisked away to hospital, and three days later was fit enough to travel home by less strenuous public transport.

The happy ending reflects credit on the Coastguard and the British Health Service, and it shows the use of simple signalling methods, for no radio telephone or other expensive gear was needed to whistle up that ambulance. The vessel herself was flying the signal NC from her backstay as she came back towards Shoreham, and the coastguard picked it up. N.C. means "I am in distress and require immediate assistance." It would have been better had it been flown from a cross-tree, and better still if they had flown the single letter W, meaning "I require medical assistance". But it seems there was no flag W on board."

oo

## CHANDLERY; (ARTS. FOR SALE & WANTED).

Two-man inflatable DINGHY with engine brackets and foot pump - hardly used - great Christmas present - any reasonable offer to: Christa of "Hein Goodewind", Quay Wall, Athlone.

oo

STOP PRESS: Welcome to Athlone 102B and 103B.

# ATHLONE AERIAL

1975

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland. DECEMBER

## DITCHCRAWLER WRITHES AGAIN?

Instead of an editorial this month we reprint the following manuscript which was found in a plastic bag below the railway bridge addressed "An Eagarthoir, Aeróg an Athluein" and we print what is left of it after it was unwound from a propellor.

Settled into retirement in a puddle in the County Leitrim, old Ditchcrawler's nautical excursions are now but faint echoes of a past glory.

Did not each separate Commissioner of Public Works once quail at his invective?

Did not his minions spend hours erasing postmarks from Saorstát Éireann penny-ha'pennies in order to keep him posted with CIE's latest infraction at Tinnahinch or with news of ESB being found in flagrante delicto (no worse place) upstream of Tomgraney?

And when his gnarled hand, more accustomed to the oar, reaches again for the quill and vitriol, what does he find? CIE running the canals like a clockwork railway, the smoothies! Nothing to grumble at there. Plastic bathtubs (centrally heated forsooth) on the Barrow of all places. They even tell me the city fathers of Graigue-managh are working on ideas for something easier on the hirer's ear, like Krieg-von-Mönnen perhaps.

And even in that seething hotbed of discontent which the Gwaligores so aptly named the Ford of the Loonies, they are hard put to it to find anything to say against the thirsty ESB, who actually got twinges of conscience about sluices in this, the driest year since whenever, and Sowed the Level at the last minute. Or was it a threat of anarchy?

Isn't the world (as the poet so neatly remarked) dull and flat / With nothing at all to grumble at? And yet..... and yet..... there's always Public Works, that great exponent of Public Relations. They tell me now that they're going to find work for the Mountshannon Men (those who are still alive) supposed in 1978 taking all the market from the east of Lough Ree and putting them on the west. And there's a clear scheme afoot to stop people complaining about the quay below Athlone lock: close the lock for four months and who'll need a silly old quay anyway? It's simple when you come to think about it.

A passing fly told me he settled on a wall in Kildare Street one Wednesday in late November and heard a thing or two about those emissaries that wouldn't bear repetition. Apparently there were two Doctors (one quite a Royal looking fellow) and a happy fellow with a beard interview-

a Grand old time soon enough and he'd railroad the other lot into keeping their ditch well drained and safe from floating detritus like boats.

This fly tells me there was a good deal of embarrassment until at some point the light dawned. Apparently from the goodwill floating around at the end these clergymen are unaccustomed to being asked to do nothing, but like nothing better. He even asked the Doctors-and-Beard outfit round again after Christmas - could be to see what's left of the Commissioners' cold turkey.

Well Mister Editor I reckon it's time to pump the oil from the bilges. It's unaccustomed I am to this writing business since I got the sack from that hoity-toity newsletter they put out in Dublin to teach us all our business, the snooty lot of west-briton boll.....

(Editor's note: here the manuscript becomes illegible, but we have printed what we could decipher in case it means something to someone. The best reading we can provide on the last word is "bollards", but members may have other suggestions. In the meantime, Ditchcrawler, welcome (back) aboard and we hope that you'll surface again to air your views before the New Year is weaned.)

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## SIGNALS RECEIVED; LETTERS.

Dear Sir,  
I used DECOLAY on a plywood deck which had been covered with canvas and paint



and ultimately I had to complete this. It came off like sunburnt skin.

Decolay requires a special primer. I think if the deck had been better sanded to give a key it might have lasted longer. It was certainly far cheaper than TRAC-MARK. However, I never used it again.

One precaution - you MUST be sure of about six hours without rain (or be under cover) to allow curing. Also, use a new brush, which you must wash in water after use.

With best wishes to the "Aerial".

Sincerely,  
E.G., Kildare.

oo

**RALPH** (RIVER AND LAKE PERSONAL HELP)

Dear RALPH,

My boat travels at about 7 mph; how fast is this in knots?  
D.B., Dublin.

(Reply: .08 knots - 1 knot = 1 nautical mile = 6080 ft. = 1.15 m.p.h.)

RALPH has had three queries regarding the difficulty in getting marine insurance. So we have engaged the help of a land-based Deputy for RALPH, to investigate and report back. We call him CID (Commander of Insurance Duties).

\*\*\* MEETING: Branch Meeting on Friday, 5th December at the Jolly Mariner at 20.30 hrs. (8.30 p.m.).

**CROWS NEST LOOK-OUT.**

THE SHANNON WATCHDOG.

ERNE: Our very own Sean Fitzsimons has accepted an invitation from Lough Erne Branch to become their Rear Commodore next year. Hopefully our Branch will give him good support on the forthcoming Rallies - congratulations Sean.

BARGES: Is there any truth in the rumour that the "Shannon Harbour Barge Rally" will be held in Athlone next year? (Jan-Dec)

SECURITY: In view of the increasing number of boats being interfered with, we advise that any interference, however

KILCLEAGH: Over 70 people had a great night out at Kilcleagh Park last month and over £50 was collected towards the "Enfield Engines". What would the members think of finding a cause and making this an annual event?

SHANNON BOAT RALLY: The Committee for next year are: =

- Chairman: Bill Childe
- Secretary: Doc. Farrell
- Treasurer: D. O'Riordan
- P.R.O.: Tom Maher
- Prop. Officer: Sean Fitzsimons
- Commodore: J. Lynch
- Vice-Commodores: Declan Walsh  
Donnaca Kennedy
- Marks Officer: Mick Webb

**CHANDLERY; (ARTS. FOR SALE & WANTED).**

BARGE - unconverted wanted. Cash customer. Replies: M.R. c/o Editor.  
\*\*\*\*

WANTED: "boat with character"; 4/5 berth, 25'/30'. Anything considered.  
D.C., Dublin  
(Replies to Editor)  
\*\*\*\*

WANTED: 26' fibre glass sailing cruiser. Replies to: Carrie Morrissey, Markieviz House, Sligo.  
\*\*\*\*

FOR SALE: 10 gallon copper hot water tank. Any offers? Christa, c/o Hein Goodwind, Quay Wall, Athlone.

oo

CONGRATULATIONS to Donal Gleeson and Renee Byrne (c/o The Fox), married last month.

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We see that pollution in Athens has caused sexual frigidity among 75% of the residents and the birth rate has declined alarmingly. Now there's a novel contraception method!

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We are waiting to hear from George Spears about when the "Exodus" of barges for his rally will begin as some may require crews. If you need a crew - barge owners, or would like to help crew - hard workers, please let us know.  
.....

xx  
The Aerial would like to wish one and all a VERY HAPPY and ENJOYABLE CHRISTMAS and see you next year.

# ATHLONE AERIAL

1976 Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland. JANUARY

JAN

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Dear Members,

Well here we are again starting a new 12 months and the water is still seething in Athlone from the pen of Ditchcrawler last month. RALPH has gone off to the London Boat Show because there's no Dublin Show this year, CROWS NEST had too much to eat and drink over Christmas with the result that he missed most of the activity.

So the Editor would like to thank Hibernia Publications who came to the rescue and gave us the "Shannon Ditty" by Hugh Leonard.

In this issue you will find a letter from our Branch Chairman (Pat Benson) and to assist our Members included with the newsletter you will find two Membership forms (one for you and one to encourage a friend to join us) and also a self addressed envelope for you to return your subs. to our Hon. Sec., Declan Walsh early.

XX

### SIGNALS RECEIVED

Dear Members,

As you know the "Aerial" is not available to 'anybody'. The only requirement is that you are a member of the Athlone Branch I.W.A.I. and as the Newsletter and postage are paid from the funds available at the time, the Branch would benefit if your subscription was paid early.

In theory, the 'Editor' should only post the 'Aerial' to paid-up members. This hasn't happened in the past and we hope that it won't happen in the future, so the earlier we receive the 1976 subscriptions the better all round.

For this reason we include with the Newsletter a 1976 renewal form - get them back into us as soon as you possibly can and help get the New Year off to a flying start.

P. BENSON, Chairman,  
Athlone Branch, IWAI.

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### THERE WAS AN ANCIENT MARINER by HUGH LEONARD

Call it the Ancient Mariner in me, but I am incorrigibly drawn towards the River Shannon. Which is why, on Good Friday, I elected to defy not only a blizzard, but the endless caravanserai of mechanised maniacs, all screeching southwards on balding tyres towards the bucolic fleshpots of Shneem and Ballycretin, and pointed my nose - Roman-retrousse, if you must know - past the Slieve Blooms to the fair harbour of Portumna. Here a sleek cruiser lay waiting and, falling headlong through the open hatchway, I had time to notice that she was already furnished with the bare necessities which would enable us to

several flares - each guaranteed to be visible to any publican within five miles, a transistor radio which received R.T.E. whenever the vessel keeled over and not otherwise, and a tape player with - and I quote from the inventory - "selected tapes".

The Guinness disappeared mysteriously even before the first time-honoured cry of "Did we hit a row-boat or are these men bathers?" was uttered, and shortly afterwards one member had to be forcibly restrained from firing off all the flares at once on discovering that the selected tapes included a pianoforte selection by Liberace. Otherwise, all was bliss, even if the liveliest thing in Banagher on that Good Friday evening proved to be a deceased cat in the main street.

Understandably, the neophyte helmsman may take to the river with visions of watery disasters undreamed of by Nordoff and Hall: splintering encounters with lock gates and piers re-enacting "The Poseidon Adventure" on Lough Derg, or running aground on a shoal by dint of mistaking a red buoy for a drifting rubber duck. In fact, I know of one couple whose nerve failed them at the outset and who spent their entire fortnight moored to the jetty at Portumna. My own worse experience came last year when the electricity, and therefore the pumps, failed. We sat in the dark, quite literally up a creek, waiting until a sufficient quantity of soft Roscommon rain had fallen to provide water for our whiskey. It is during such dark nights of the shoal that true river-farers are born.

Actually life aboard a Shannon cruiser is



sight to include a brace of teenagers in the ship's company. A 15-year-old will happily stand on deck for hours in a downpour, fending off with a broomstick and hitting lock-keepers in the eye with lengths of wet rope - particularly if one gets him or her obviously drunk beforehand. And, of course, there is the feeling of high adventure, even when one is pusillanimously sticking to the recommended course, as indicated by a red dotted line on the charts provided. It is whispered in the Shannon pubs that a certain Dutch tourist studied the said charts in advance of his voyage, then set sail, only to return, white-faced, to port a few minutes later, shrieking that there were no red dotted lines on the river.

On this trip we paid a return visit to that most hospitable of pubs, Michael Killeen's in Shannonbridge, where the dentifrice smile of its most famous son, George Brent, still flashes winningly from the wall. We returned past flocks of superbly unconcerned wild geese to spend the Saturday night at Banagher, and were intrigued to observe that the dead cat was still lying in state, although its pristine charms had by now lost their initial appeal. There was nothing dead about Johnny Hough's hostelry, however, where the entertainment, if not quite "paté de fois gras", was good home-made meat-loaf, consisting of piano, guitar, tin whistle and the meanest bodhrán north of Eamonn O'Sullivan's in Listowel. Next morning the Sunday, we paid a last sentimental pilgrimage to Banagher's other tourist attraction, the cat, before sailing for Killaloe.

It would weary my readers were I to dwell on the minor embarrassment which befell us while rounding Parker Point on Lough Derg. My thanks are, however, extended to the crew of the Dromineer lifeboat, the Irish Red Cross, the Killaloe helicopter team and priest who shouted the Prayers for the Dying from a nearby dinghy. Come to think of it, I should also offer condolences to the family of the German gentleman whose rescue attempt was foiled by a stiff nor'westerly, and who was last seen shouting "Schweinhund!" (the German for "farewell") from a capsizing row-boat.

And by now it will be obvious that where the Shannon is concerned I am an unabashed nonnaoandist. The hire fee of a cruiser

operates out of Portumna and Carrick-on-Shannon, is excellent, as are Athlone Cruisers. And, if you make a fool of yourself by attempting to berth with the current, instead of against it, remember that your ignominy will pale alongside that of the gentleman (not me) who ran aground and fired off a flare inside the cabin, reducing the entire vessel to a charred hulk.

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I see one of our Members, Enda McLoughlin from the Prince of Wales Hotel, has big plans to have an airfield operating just outside Athlone by next May. We'll try to keep you posted on the progress.

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A magnificent gesture was made by Malachy Kelly before Christmas. He donated a lake boat, a 7 h.p. Mercury engine and a complete set of life jackets to the Athlone Boat Club.

There are some who could take a leaf from his book! Well done Malachy!

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Hoping to run a 1976 Diary of events for next issue. Anybody with any dates, please drop us a line.

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ATHLONE BRANCH A.G.M.: Jolly Mariner \*\*\*\*\*  
8.30 p.m. on 9th January 1976. \*\*\*\*\*

Note: this is not the first Friday. \*\*\*\*\*

The Dublin Branch is having another photographic slide competition this year. As before it will be held in the Clontarf Y.C. on the 23rd February.

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ANNUAL DINNER, ATHLONE: 19th March \*\*\*\*\*

A country cousin tells me that the Athlone Sub-Aqua Club have got the Tignemara off the rocks in L. Derg and is now in Shannon Harbour.

\*\*\*\*\*

TIDY LOCKS: Bord Failte's lock-keepers competition has been won for the second year in succession by Mrs. Esther Conroy at Loughton Lock.

	Marks
Results: Overall winner: Loughton	90
Best, River Shannon: Albert Lock	88
Best, Barrow Navg. : Carlow Lock	88
Best, Grand Canal : No. 15	88

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There is talk that the Athlone Branch is to go on the look-out for Reesiteras Rhombopteryx (L. Ree Monster) next year.

That should be interesting for I believe

FEB

News Letter:

# ATHLONE AERIAL

1976 Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

FEBRUARY

Well Members,

Your new Committee begins a term of office under the Chairmanship of B. Hannin, assisted by Damien Delany, with Mick Webb as Hon. Secretary and Mrs. E. O'Neill as Assistant Hon. Secretary, and the financial responsibility once again falls on the shoulders of Sean Fitzsimons as Hon. Treasurer, and Damian Byrne scraping in for a 2nd year as P.R.O.

They are faced with a formidable task, following in the footsteps of Pat Benson and Declan Walsh who have worked as a terrific team and a great deal of credit must go to them for helping to make the Athlone Branch a leader in I.W.A.I. circles.

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This issue is an unusual one in that the newsletter policy is to print every genuine letter it receives and amongst the fan mail we found what can only be described as a manuscript. We have attempted to authenticate it but we are unable to say that it's 100% genuine. (May be some members could help). It goes to bed in its entirety and we have not edited it in any way and in publishing it we leave ourselves very short of space.....

Dear Sir,

I come over from my home in New Zealand every ten years to spend Christmas and I enjoyed reading a copy of your newsletter which I found on the bar here. (Ed.'s Note: "here" being the Sail Inn, Dromineer). I was deeply interested in your little item about "monsters" particularly the one sighted on Lough Ree. Perhaps your readers would be surprised to hear of a strange experience I had - not on the beautiful stretch of water I see through the window as I write - but under it!

Let me explain: I am retired from the Royal Navy and during the war I was involved in a special secret weapon development unit based at Plymouth. During the Battle of Britain when Hitler's boys were giving our South coast ports quite a hammering, our unit was moved for safety and secrecy reasons. At this stage in history I don't suppose I will spring any surprises or raise any hackles when I say we set up base in Youghal Bay on Lough Derg, on the property of a retired R.N. Commander, a long time resident of the area, now deceased. When I say 'we' I refer to our unit and our task was to test, adjust, and modify two-man submarines which were being supplied to the Navy by the U.S. as part of the land-lease deal. (As the damn things were still in the embryonic stages of development I presume the yanks were happy to use us chaps as guinea pigs.)

The unassembled craft arrived in crates by flying boat at Foynes in Co. Limerick, were collected by us in an old Crossley

Most people will be familiar with the craft to which I refer as they have appeared in war films from time to time. A torpedo with two seats would be a simple way of describing one, with the crew sitting astride in the fashion of an underwater bucking bronco! Besides myself, our team consisted of an electronics officer, petty officer, two ratings and the usual whizz-kid from the ministry, a bod by the name of Chiselwick (known to us all as "Cheesey" Chiselwick because of a tendency to overuse Brilliantine in his hair). On average we managed to complete one minisub every two weeks, then tested it and corrected any faults as best we could. Whenever two were ready for service they were shipped down river to Limerick by canal boat and transferred to a coaster for delivery to H.Q. at Portsmouth.

Besides being I.C. operations at Youghalarra my main function was taking the infernal gadgets for trial runs, generally accompanied by one of the ratings. We always took the same route out through Youghal Bay past Garrykennedy around to Parker Point (the deep water here being ideal for our advanced testing). Once this was completed and performance monitored, we returned to base by the same route. It was on one of these runs that the incident I am about to relate occurred.

The particular tube we were using the day in question had been giving us trouble - in fact it was a "mongrel



To avoid detection by German Embassy staff out for a walk and for fear of terrorising the natives, we always carried out proving tests at dusk or dawn and remained submerged at all times. As we limped back to base we were in about five fathoms and practically bouncing along the floor of the lake. Every now and then she would touch bottom forcing us to use a kicking action with our legs to get her moving again. We had just come to rest on the lakebed once more when I caught sight of something which fairly made the bristles of my moustache stand on end.

Dead ahead, about 150 feet away in the murky depths the beam of our powerful headlight picked out a greyish black boulder. Nothing unusual in that you may say - and you would be right - but I was already noticing that this rock was slowly moving from side to side for no apparent reason. I sensed the rating, a Lancashire lad called Entwistle, had seen what I'D seen as his arms tightened round my waist in nervous apprehension. What then occurred before our very eyes I shall never forget till the day I die. I must state here that I am a man of the world having been out East and seen service in many corners of the Empire. I switched off the engine and we watched motionless, aware that she might not start again and we were using up our valuable air supply. What first appeared as a rock was now clearly visible as an animal - call it that - about the size of a large sow but resembling for all the world a gigantic american cockroach. It lifted itself slowly off the gravel bottom and began to swim towards us at amazing speed. It had six legs, short and hairy, the ends of which were ragged and frayed as if they had been chewed off or damaged in some way. It was obvious, however, that it did not depend on legs for movement as it sped to and fro in short darts. Its body was like a huge black plum horizontally sliced in half out of which grew a head of greenish brown with two huge unblinking fish eyes. A tentacle protruded from each side of this hideous cranium. It then glided directly toward us stopping suddenly about ten feet ahead. Despite my naval issue thermal underwear and rubber diving suit it was cold. My body was

The beam of our lamp seemed to influence the creature. For what seemed like Eternity - though I suppose it could not have been more than three or four seconds, it hovered there, trembling as the light glinted on its slimy walnut-shell-shaped back which now at close-up looked leathery and imperfect. Its tendrils moved about hypnotically and still the staring eyes did not move. THEN IT LEAPT. I tried to scream but couldn't. My stomach turned inside out as it sailed up over us, propelling itself by some sort of jet action; I got a quick glance of its underneath as it passed overhead. It was not a pretty sight. In the crannies and folds was a shoal of demented perch biting and picking at the soft pink underbelly of the creature. Then it disappeared, monster and parasites, into the murky weedy waters astern and I was aware only of a horrific stillness.

I was brought back to reality by Entwistle's vulgar expletive of relief. In a way I was glad the common fellow hadn't heard me scream and so sensed the fear of an officer. (Any showing of terror in the presence of an enlisted man detrimentally affects morale in the ranks). "Come Ernie" I said, "Let's go home, let's go home and have some tea."

It was all I could think of. That was around 8.00 a.m. on a Wednesday morning in July 1943, two months later we were all moved out to North Africa and Entwistle was killed in action off Malta in November 1943. In those five months we never discussed what we saw that morning in Youghal Bay beneath the chilly waters of Lough Derg. In fact I was prepared to take the yet-vivid memory of that incident with me to the grave but for the recent sightings and verification of the Lough Ness Monster's existence.

I have corresponded with Sir Peter Scott with whom I drank tea at a Buckingham Palace garden party in 1959. He accepts my story and goes as far as suggesting the creature may have been HYBRIDYPSOS TURTLEOSIS EIREBUS, a thought-to-be extinct species of ice-age freshwater turtle. The only living creature I can compare it to is the american cockroach with which we are quite familiar in N.Z. but of course hundreds of times





species inhabit moist or wet places and are frequently called "Waterbugs". They can be picked up in bars along the River especially in hot summer when their predatory habits become quite unbearable. They are noted for a keen sense of hearing and I remember once in Graces Bar in Dromineer watching dozens of the blighters scurry out under the door when I shouted "Who's round is it? Mine's a large Johnny Walker", to my colleague "Cheesey" Chiselwick. They can do the damnest trouble onboard a boat. Whilst attracted by damp conditions, the filthy little beggars lose all sense of balance and equilibrium once afloat however, and may be seen running hither and thither, throwing themselves against the hull, running up your legs, nesting in your bunks, foraging into your rations and creating general havoc. This is particularly true of the German species.

However, I am digressing from the real purpose of my letter and I am due at Dublin Airport in six hours for the first leg of my flight home to the Antipedes. I have written of my experiences because I feel there are others like myself who have seen strange unaccountable phenomena on Lough Derg and being wary of the cynical, materialistic age in which we live, keep quiet about such happenings. To them I say :  
 "There are more things in Heaven and Earth Horatio \_\_\_\_\_".

I shall be home enjoying summer cruising aboard my cruiser KIWI if and when you print this. My best wishes go to The Aerial (keep it up), to the Shannon I know and love, the IWAI and all my friends in the Emerald Isle.

See you all in 1985.

I remain sir,  
 Yours respectfully,

Captain T.R. Connell-Parke, R.N. Retd.  
 (Signed)

+++++

Well, there it is for what it is worth!  
 We shall wait and see what replies we get.

As we have over-run our budget with 3 pages some of our Dublin-based members

C R O W S N E S T - Gossip Column

This old crow would like to wish GILLIAN McGREGOR a speedy recovery. Ward 3, Cherry Orchard Hospital, Dublin 10 will find her for any get well cards.

=====

A jackdaw arrived in my nest last Monday and after a nibble of corn he told me that Frank Burrill is selling his boat the "Adventurer". I shall get the details for next month but in the meantime you can contact him at (Dublin) 854655 any morning.

+++++

A passing sparrow mentioned that the Chatterton family won a Bord Failte prize last year, any information?????

\*\*\*\*\*

A migrating Kittiwake I met in the bird bath said there was a good write-up of 45M (resurrected Derg barge) in the November issue of Waterways World complete with a photograph taken just after she was raised. If you would like to have a photo copy of this article, drop me a line.

oooooooooooooooo

I heard that the head eagle and his aide de plume are going to print the names of all the paid up Athlone members in next month's issue, so get your subs. in quick!!!!!!

oo

NEXT MEETING: Friday, 6th February at \*\*\*\*  
 The Jolly Mariner at 8.39 p.m. \*\*\*\*

oo

LOUGH REE by M. Geraghty

Ripple through breezes and roaring sea  
 Inland Lake called Lough Ree

Stautly bitter, the wind lived wave  
 To quiet waters of Black Queen Maeve

Islands bleak and wild in heart  
 Enrich the soul with natural art.

Daunty cottages, palaces so fair  
 Odours of turf freshen the air.

Quiet evenings, long nights in dreams  
 Whispering breezes with ghostly teams.

# ATHLONE AERIAL

APRIL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

1976

All correspondence to: Athlone Aerial, Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone

Hi,  
Well, what has for years been the suspected headquarters of the Athlone Branch is now official. For all communications from now on the address is:  
Inland Waterways Association (Athlone Branch), c/o Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.  
To facilitate the staff who will so kindly be forwarding the mail, please mark the envelope for the Attention of the Chairman or Secretary, etc.

A bomb-shell was dropped at last month's Meeting when it was announced by the Harry Rice Slipway Committee that handover of the slip to the Branch (as promised) was looking decidedly dubious for various reasons. The Aerial will keep you informed about progress in this important matter but refrains from comment at this stage as our Main Committee have just taken on the problem and will need the backing and confidence of all the Members in setting out to try and find a solution acceptable to all involved.

Rumour has it that some Branch Members feel that the Branch is in danger of becoming a body of "knockers" - doing nothing constructive and opposing anything that requires effort or involvement. It is true that the accusing finger can be pointed at the odd individual but this is certainly not the case with many of our Members who take on more than their fair share of the workload. May be some of the dissenters would like to put their names down for some of the 1976 action: laying of moorings, boat activity survey, Lecarrow Rally (Whit w/e), Lough Ree Rescue (see Crows Nest), People's Regatta, etc. etc.

As we warned - this issue is only going out to paid-up Members and at this

(Cont'd from previous column)  
stage in 1976 we are fairly well up on last year at the same time. But we are 50% down on overall Membership - so some Members have not rejoined. In order to combat that we are offering a surprise prize to the Member who can bring in the most Members in the next two months. (For this we enclose Membership Forms) and in the next issue we shall give you the "Top Ten" promoter.

SIGNALS RECEIVED

Monsters?

Dear Sir,  
Many thanks for sending me a copy of your February News Letter. I found the letter from the Captain very interesting reading, but am afraid that that is all there is to it! I have been unable to find the remotest confirmation of the story. I have not only sounded out those of our members who were likely to be able to help but I have talked the story over with the local lads (and grandads) in the area that is covered in the letter, i.e. Garrykennedy and Youghalarra (in the pubs naturally - where better places?) and no one, but no one could give any credence to the report.

Strange to say, there is a retired R.N. Commander who is living just about where the fictitious headquarters were reputed to be, but not only is he very much alive but has not been there all

To my mind the monster's description accredited to Sir Peter Scott just about puts the seal on this fiction!

Turning to our own Branch news your members will probably be interested in our Rally plans; the dates are fixed as August 3rd to 8th but the itinerary is yet to be finalised although the briefing point will again be Portumna.

Like everything else these days the entry fees have gone up, only slightly, to £2, £5, and £7 instead of £2, £4 and £6 respectively.

I hope this is enough information to whet the appetites of the Rally-goers and I will try and feed you more dope as it develops.

With all good wishes,

Yours etc.,  
FRANK NEWMAN

(Hon. Sec. Lough Derg



SIGNALS RECEIVED (Cont'd)

Dear Sir,

Re. the letter on underwater monsters in Lough Derg from Capt. T.R. Connell-Parke R.N., I was wondering is he any connection of the O'Connell Parks in Tralee, Dungarvan and other towns?

He may also be interested to know that I observed an EIREBUS (there is such a transport outfit) in the middle of Longford, full of women off to Bingo in Mohil, only recently.

I am still NOT clear if the good Captain was leg-stretching, but if not perhaps he would fill in these questions:

1. Does he seriously believe that six Englishmen would have passed unnoticed in a country area, particularly in 1943? Equally, everything passing through Foynes, or any other port, labelled "beans" was well noted, reported, checked, etc.

2. Where did he get petrol for what must have been the only running Crossley in Ireland?

3. How did he arrange a Ration of ESB supply - tightly rationed at the time here? I presume he had to charge batteries. (Alternatively fuel for a generator).

4. Where now is the slipway in Youghal Bay at which they launched the 1½ ton CHARIOTS? Where the crane, or even the derrick, which lifted on to the barge for Limerick? (What a pity we are not given the barge number - who knows who might not have been a crew member, still sailing?).

5. Why was the op. not done in one of the West coast inlets in salt water, which would surely be a better testing ground? Surely there were retired British NO's living on at least some of them too? Why NOT indeed in Scotland, where much of this work was done?

6. Can we be told what American Company made these machines? My reading suggests that the Americans never developed chariots or X-craft. In fact the Royal Navy supplied several units on loan to the U.S.N. for the Pacific campaign between V.E. Day and V.J. Day.

7. On the special occasion we are told that the time was "8.00 a.m." in July 1943, which would have been well after dawn. (We are told earlier

value lamps are in "murky weedy waters" even in darkness, no more than car head-lamps in fog. Also, at what point was the 150-foot visibility at 30 feet down obtained? You won't get 10 feet at 5 feet as a general rule in the Shannon.

8. In any case, would the "powerful headlight", even at 30 feet, not reveal itself to people ashore? (No photos etc. I have seen show chariots with head-lamps).

A final question - considering the make-up of the good Captain's party - two officers, one P.O., one civilian from whatever Ministry it was, and two ratings, must they not have been the two hardest-worked ratings in the Royal or any other Navy - unless the retired Commander cooked the meals, made the beds, washed the stairs etc.?

Yours etc.,  
E. GREGAN  
Battlebridge.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your note and for letting me see an example of the famous 'Aerial'.

One suggestion I would like to make is that IWA organise some sort of 'school' for people who have really no idea of all the excitement that inland waterways can offer. Believe me, there are still a lot of people around who think that cruising on the Shannon or canals involves slopping about in badly converted old barges. It should ideally be something which people pay for - such as a weekend in a Shannon-side Hotel with lessons in rowing, motor-boat handling, basic navigation, ropes and knots, etc.

A lot of help would be needed for such courses and perhaps some of the boat-hire people would chip in with loans of boats and premises. Ideally you should aim to break even but better still attract people to the water who would otherwise stay away for fear of making complete fools of themselves. And who knows - maybe Bord Failte are very keen to include such a venture in their Weekends in Ireland Programme?

Yours etc.,  
GERRY BYRNE  
c/o Business & Finance



# ATHLONE AERIAL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

1976

MAY

*THAXA*

All correspondence to: Athlone Aerial, Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone

In last month's issue it appears that as Editor I was misread: I stated that the "handover of the slip to the Branch ..... was looking decidedly dubious". For those who were at the meeting in question, this is in effect true and had it not been for an item in the local paper, put there by some misguided person who used the Association's name to further his own personal aims, I'm sure the correct interpretation would have been grasped.

Ownership of the slipway by the Branch, and I repeat ownership, has been taken out of all proportions for if and when the agreement being negotiated at present between all interested parties is accepted, then we as a Branch should be much better off. This fact was patently obvious to those members who attended the meeting in question and indeed accounted for such an overwhelming vote in favour of the motion.

\*\*\*\*\*

At the A.G.M. of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland Council Meeting held in Dublin on 14th April, Pat Benson from our Branch was elected as Secretary. Our loss - but a big gain for the Association!

Declan Walsh has also joined the Council Committee and knowing what a formidable pair they are, we should see some interesting developments from the National Council!

Our competition for new members is in full swing with a fierce battle at the top between Christa Lilge (M.V. Hein Goodewind) and Des Barry (M.C. Exeroto).

For those who do not remember - we have a competition in progress at the moment to see who can encourage either new (Cont'd top of next column .....)

members or past members to rejoin. The marks are awarded as follows:

- Renewal: 1 point
- Family renewal: 2 points
- New member: 3 points
- New family member: 4 points

Having been overwhelmed by the response I am unable to give an exact "top ten" of the close contenders but a few new family members will put anybody up among the top three - so let's see some local members out their fighting and not let first prize go to a "Jackeen"!

## CROWS NEST

I stopped off last week in C-on-S for some bird seed and met Eugene Gibney of Emerald Star Line who informed me that he has a large winch installed at the slip in Carrick which is capable of taking large boats. So if you're stuck, give him a shout.

\*\*\*\*\*

Party and day trips on the Shannon this year can be had from either Tom Furey or Paddy Dolan, prices are reasonable (£1 per head for 1½ hours, £1.50 for 2 hours, or £2 for 3-4 hours).

They are both filling an important void now that C.I.E. are gone from the River. With the cost of hiring boats going outside most of our pockets, this is the only opportunity that the average person

For advance booking ring:  
Tom Furey (0902) 2894  
Paddy Dolan (0902) 4077

\*\*\*\*\*

Ralph was telling me that over the Easter he noticed the Matthews Family giving their father swimming lessons at Clonmacnoise. Ralph was also saying that contrary to all beliefs Anna Fitzsimons does not have any fishing rods for sale (at the moment).

\*\*\*\*\*

Stopping to air my wings at Tarmonbarry recently I noticed that there is another (making two) hydraulic sluice there - Athlone lock take note!!!

\*\*\*\*\*

My bird eye has caught sight of the new



numbered - now nobody will get lost (in theory!).

\*\*\*\*\*

The weather was fair to everybody at the Royal Canal outing and there was a good turn-out of boats and for the length of canal I flew over I must congratulate all concerned with the clear condition of the waterway.

=====
NEXT BRANCH MEETING is at the Jolly Mariner at 20.30 hours, 7th May.

- Agenda: Minutes
Finance & Subs.
Moorings
Slipway
Rallies
Any Other Business

We deeply regret the death of Mick McCormack, Secretary of Athlone Anglers and for many years a helping hand at Athlone Lock. Knowing that he'll be sadly missed by one and all, we offer condolences to his family and friends.

Now is the time to get yourself up to date for the summer while stocks last:

- IWAI Tie: £2.00
IWAI Burgee: £2.50
IWAI Enamelled badge: £ .70
Guide to the Grand Canal: £ .75

All the above are available at Seans Bar, Athlone, or by post through the Newsletter (remember to allow for postage).

Jimmy Crean from the Five Arches Pub in Vickarstown has extended a welcome to those who might like a stop for some refreshment on the way to the Athy Rally. He is a member of the Athlone Branch and might like to hear some first hand gossip.

CANALIANA - The Annual Bulletin of Robertstown, Muintir na Tine, Tonnanta

Grand Canal. The current issue contains news of plans for the restoration of the Royal Canal, opening up the exciting possibility of a 200 miles long cruising circuit from Dublin via the Grand Canal, River Shannon and Royal Canal. Of the 18 pages devoted to the Royal Canal, nearly half are a photographic record of its structures. Additionally another six pages are concerned with the Royal Canal Hotel, which was based on the designs of similar ones owned by the Grand Canal at Robertstown and Tullamore.

There is a new monthly boat book on the market and the following features are being published in the May issue (exceptional value):

- The Sailing Barge Scene: A review of the growing fleet of Thames Spiritsail Barges which have been restored to sailing condition in recent years;
Britain's Excursion Vessels: A summary of the varied fleet of passenger vessels which will operate excursion services round the coast of Britain this Summer;
Bristol Channel Pilot Cutters: The first part of a history of these sturdy sailing craft a few of which are now preserved or are still in use as yachts;
The Last of the "Puffers": The story of the "Auld Reekie", the last of a once numerous type of steam coaster operating off the western coast of Scotland;
Cruisers' War: Some exploits of HM cruisers during the Second World War.

"Ships Monthly" may be obtained direct from Waterway Productions Ltd., Kotttingham House, Dale Street, Burton-on-Trent DE14 3TD., price 50p inc. postage.

SIGNALS RECEIVED

Dear Sir,
I would like to congratulate Des Dolan on his new Company "Lockside Cruisers" or should we call it "Lopsided Cruisers"???







# ATHLONE AERIAL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

October 1976.

All correspondence to: Athlone Aerial, Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone

1. Well! we are off on the second edition of the Aerial, the new team are open to any letters, suggestions or comments which may be sent to the above address.

Our congratulations are extended to Damian Byrne who did a wonderful job, virtually on his own, in creating and producing the Aerial, the magnitude of our inheritance is only now being realised.

2. It is a favourite pastime of many to criticise public bodies whilst at the same time overlooking many of the excellent structures which they have erected. It is therefore welcome news and to their credit that the office of Public Works have plans to construct a new harbour at Hodson Bay and are planning to enlarge the harbour at Lecarrow which may also include the provision of a slipway for small boats.

It is hoped the I. W. A. I. will be able to see the plans of these works with a view to offering any constructive assistance which may be of use to the O. P. W.

Westmeath Co. Co. also intend to extend the Woollen Mills jetty in a northerly direction this will greatly relieve the mooring problems in Athlone. Due to the restriction of private boat mooring space at the height of the tourist season it is desirable this jetty will not be handed over to the O. P. W. who impose these limitations.

### 3. DROPS OF WATER:

How quickly the boating season passes, end of season rallies upon us again. If you haven't already partaken, do, it's generally a synopsis of the years tricks and treats. Vice Commodore of the Erne John Svitov will be the guest of the Erne Rear Commodore Fitzer for the Shannon-bridge weekend. Commodore Francis Farrelly and Cox will lead (the original and the best, an opinion of course) end of season Derg Rally from Shannonbridge south. Diddle-idle, obviously not! Last years brochure similar to Mad magazine, Johnny Gleeson the Editor, it figures. 14 entries to date.

Sat. 2nd October Shannonbridge  
Sun. 3rd " Banagher.

For those who are free for the rest of

Mon 4th Oct. Rossmore or Dromineer - depending on Weather. Finishing at Terryglass on Fri 8th Oct. Mountshannon Garry Kennedy, & Killaloe sometime in between.

Following projected movement of Barge craft for wintering.

a) Lung expected in Drommeer to have a new engine room fitted. Expected redundancy of at least five Marine engineers in '77. Possible re-employment in the Big House when the Lord leaves Gills.

b) Sequoia to leave Shannon Harbour for Clondra for the Holy Season.

c) Webber and 103 B awaiting the monsoons to get into Shannon Harbour dry dock. He hopes to have the bottom overhauled and then to Athlone.

A ferro-Concrete superstructure planned. Great work done to raise, moterise her and brave the Dundalk to Dublin passage. Dubliners will remember the Baggot St., picnic.

d) The Owl is at present being preened in Athlone and heartily welcome.

Speaking of Barges, Frank Burell, the story goes, invested in a new boat, a nice fibreglass job and was quite content. However he, one afternoon some days later, "stormed", (discriptive) into his suppliers office and quote "My Boat, do something with it, I've jussed been passed by a barge". Frank's old boat Adventurer is back on Ree and looking her own proud self.

George Spiers new harbour is coming along very well according to latest reports. It's situated a few hundred metres south of Terryglass Harbour the latter at present being dredged.

Athlone contributed in excess of £300 each to the R. N. L. I. flag day and the Athlone Boat Club Church gate collection on w/e 11th & 12th Sept. Well done and Thanks.

### 4. Conference of the Management of the River Shannon in the 1980's



all the expectations of the organisers, The Institute of Engineers of Ireland (Midland Region) and the Midlands Region Development Organisation, over 180 participated, representing all organisations and public bodies with interests in the River Shannon and surrounding Countryside.

The papers presented at the conference covered tourism and recreation, power generation, fisheries, water supplies, commercial development, navigation, agriculture, drainage and the role of the local Authorities.

The conference was reported at length in the National papers (and undoubtedly will be also in the Local papers before this appears). However here are a few items chosen at random which may be of interest to members of the Athlone Branch.

a) Pollution.

The Shannon was said to be unpolluted over the greater part of its length. Cases where there is deterioration in water quality are very localised and not of a serious nature. In Lough Derg there is a "tendency to excessive enrichment" and Lough Key is "doubtful".

b) Marine Toilets

Mr Carty of the O. P. W. said that it is likely that future regulations would include a requirement for holding tanks on boats for sewage rather than discharging directly into the river. However, boatowners would be allowed a long period to adapt their vessels to any new requirements.

c) Policing

A suggestion was made that there should be river police to enforce speed regulations on the river and lakes. (SOD's exempted).

d) Zoning

Mr. Byrne Co. Mang. Roscommon said that it might be necessary to introduce zoning for particular types of use on the river and lake, similar to the zoning on land. For instance, certain parts of the lakes might be put aside for the use of speed boats, which would then be confined to these areas.

e) Registration

The present "informal" conditions are

5. Tips

We hear that the latest piece of yachting gear currently in use is a Construction Site hard hat. It's light, waterproof, keeps Baccie and matches dry, protects your head, can be used as a bailer and as a -----.

6. Safety

Thoughts on fire in the galley. Some methods of dealing with Frying pan fires, there is a very simple precaution for this problem. Buy a tin or enamel plate which completely covers the frying pan, this plate should be next to the cooker. In the event of fat catching fire simply cover the fire with the plate. An asbestos blanket 3ft x 3ft is also most effective in dealing with a small galley fire. It can be stowed in many places close to the cooker. Using the plate or blanket saves your fire extinguisher refill which of course can be brought into action to deal with more serious out breaks.

7. Chandlers Corner.

For Sale. As new 18 foot Larch Boat and 4. H. P. Evinrude Engine. Only one season in use.  
contact N. Griffin (0902) 2423.

B. Hannin (0902) 2105 wants to purchase 4½ H. P long shaft outboard also has for Sale 3½ H. P. Johnston Long Shaft in good working order.

Buying or Selling a boat or marine fittings?  
Send details to the Aerial.

8. Hear & Then / Now & Soon.

The Harry Rice Memorial Slipway was cleaned out on Sat 11th Sept by members M. McKiernan, T. O'Neill and M. Martin aided by the strong arm of a J. C. B. Most of the unwanted contents of the slip were made up of rocks, concrete blocks and odd oil filtre. Slipway users are kindly asked to remove any trailer wheel blocks which they might use during launching and taking up.

The Athlone Anglers Association current project for the Small Yellow Island is now well under way. The



shelter on the clearing surrounded by a picnic area. These facilities would be available to all small craft and the Anglers Assoc. would appreciate any financial support.

Grateful thanks to Lough Ree Yacht Club for holding the Cruiser and Sundry sailing races during the season this is the third year these confrontations have been held, at the moment no one, but no one knows the winner. There are at least 30 sailing craft eligible for these races and it is hoped there will be an increased turn out next year.

Seen at least twice this year on Lower Lough Ree an Athlone based lake boat occupied by yobbos shooting Seagulls and finishing them off with their oars.

Please fill in questionnaire enclosed concerning I. W. A. I. register of boats, no bureaucratic entanglement involved.

9. The October meeting of the Branch will be held in the Jolly Mariner on Fri. Oct 1st. at 8.30p. m. sharp.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of last meeting.
2. Correspondence.
3. Slipway.
4. Moorings.
5. Report on "Management of the River Shannon in the 1980's" Convention.
6. Any other Business.

# ATHLONE AERIAL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

All correspondence to: Athlone Aerial, Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone

Nov '76.

The object of the Association shall be to advocate the use, maintenance and development of the inland waterways of Ireland, and in particular, to advocate and promote the restoration to good order, and maintenance in good order of every navigable waterway; and the fullest use of every navigable waterway by both commercial and pleasure traffic.

At a recent Council meeting the objects of the Association were discussed. How do we see the future role of the I.W.A.I. ? and, in particular our own branch. Bearing in mind the role the branch has played in the past, the results can be seen in the activities of Public bodies in erecting new Harbours, Jetties, Navigation aids etc. ,

We also have done our own thing, i. e. The Slipway, Public Moorings, Book publication Rallies etc. However the big question is where do we go from here? Work-ins bring members together so too do Socials and Rallies but is the Branch getting a name for members disappearing on "lost weekends"? Are we becoming apathetic, losing our sting, if so, what are the answers? Think about this and the associations objects, and note the item covering same on the Agenda.

## Drops of Water.

On the spot reports on Rallies are probably the most difficult type. However, from recollection, starting with the Athlone end of season, this flotilla converged (especially the Harp) on Shannonbridge for the Sat. night. The light sleepers or the port or starboard home berthing in the cut whilst the Pirates eyed Lukers. Lough Derg ralliers angered the God's or maybe the man at Meelick. Same end product anyway of high winds, high stools for most of the week. Dromineer and Terryglass the main ports of call. Emerald Star recalled their fleet mid week due to the rough weather. The Sail Inn kindly laid on special rate evening meals for ralliers.

Carrick on Shannon end of season ralliers (who sent us down the water after they've finished with it) moved eighteen boats to Grange River for the weekend. Minor competitions were held. (Athlone please note) and a meal available at the Silver Eel, a new hotel in the Carnadoe waters. On the return leg to Carrick, we had two baptisms by total immersion in Jamestown Lock. Offsprings off the Geraldine. Serious note, cockpit covers up partly to blame. Again no life-jackets worn. We all do it, don't we?

XXXXXXXXXXXX

## Tips

Laying up time is gone but have you done the unpleasant chores.

- a) Removed Blankets, Sleeping Bags etc, to a warmer climate - like Australia.
- b) Cleaned those Water Tanks, Pots and

to the North Pole to do the latter, or Burgess Park, !!!.

- c) Bring that Outboard and Battery home also any waste oil- The Arabs may need it soon.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

## Safety

Can you swim? You can't? Then the water is no place for you. You can? Good, but remember drowning is still your greatest hazard. Drowning is caused, not only by not being able to swim, but also by heavy clothes or by not wearing a life-jacket or buoyancy aid, also by exhaustion due to exposure in cold water. Over heavy boots are a danger, only light weight footwear should be worn when boating. All members of the family should be able to swim well. Life saving practice should also be encouraged.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

## Chandlers Corner

For Sale:

20 ft Mahogany hull, 2 berth cabin cruiser ex. engine, suitable for o/b engine. First £530 to Bill Downey, 26, Parnell Sq. Athlone.

For Sale:

6H. P. long shaft o/b Perkins. needs slight repair, first £40 to Michael Webb.





# ATHLONE AERIAL

Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

All Correspondence to: Athlone Aerial, Sean's Bar, Main Street, Athlone

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DECEMBER '76

No editorial this month. There are plenty of controversial topics to discourse on, however, variety is the spice of life. It was felt a short history of Barges might be interesting to one and all since they dominate the local scene and are generally the focal point of hospitality on rallies which is typical of Bargees. It is hoped one a month will be "discovered".

## Barge 102 B

"This is your life"

Commissioned by Wallers of Banagher, 102 B took to the water in 1910 for the first time to carry grain from Lough Derg (mainly Kilgarven Pier) to Wallers granary in Banagher. 102B then brought the malt to Dublin via the Grand Canal returning with general cargo. The engine at that time was a Bollinder powered by Diesel and water. During the 1939-45 War the same journey was undertaken by both Power and Sail where possible. In general for most or all of this time 102B was skippered by Mr. Donlan and his son. The Barge was laid up for some time in the Old Canal harbour in Banagher. In the 1950's, Ted Barrett purchased the Barge and called it "The Jolly Swagman" and had her converted to basically the outline it is now. Sean Fitz and John Connon bought her around 1963 renaming it "The Harp". She was sold in 1967 to persons unknown and then to Jeremy Addis. In 1975 she came into the hands of Dermot O'Brien.

The Harp as she is now has a number of interesting aspects the most ferocious being a scalp removing wheelhouse and 'Strings' a shoe lace, crisp eating watchdog, he also drinks porter!!

The interior has a most comfortable saloon with sketches of the Pool of London and the entire Shannon running its length on the Port and Starboardsides. A well stocked cellar is concealed in a beautifully hinged Cask. The Galley is compact yet spacious, complete with Cooker, Fridge, Worktops, Hand C running water etc., The large Throne is reputed to be the highest on the Shannon and would be the envy of many householders

Dermot is completing the conversion of the forward Cabin and when finished, the Harp, powered by a 60 H. P. Thornycroft, will be one of the finest Barges on the River. One could not write about the Harp without mentioning the hospitality extended by Eileen and the willingness of Dermot to make his home available for workins etc., Truly this is a Barge owned by a Bargee in the real Shannon tradition.

## Drops of Water.

### London Boat Show by Bus.

We are at present pressganging a crew for a voyage to Earls Court. When? We think the 1st Thurs. in Jan. depart Dublin returning the following Sunday evening. Trip and B&B for £27.50 (approx). This will leave two whole days shore leave to see the show and or London. This will be recognised as the first official rally of '77. getting us off to a flying start. A qualified skipper and current A. A. (Automobile Association) certificate will be present. No previous experience recommended.

**A. B. C. Annual Dinner.**

The Boat Club Annual Dinner held in the Shamrock Lodge on Friday 12th Nov. Roast beef and plenty for over 150. sub at £3.25 would appear to be this year's going rate. The President of I. R. U. attended and support was mooted for making Athlone the National water-sports centre. Obvious choice surely.

**Story:**

Overheard at the North Pole- Son "Daddy am I really a polar bear? "Father" Of course you are. Son, look at your white coat and little black snout, its obvious surely. " Days later Son " Mother are you sure that I am a polar bear? "Mother "Why yea dear, here we are at the North Pole, but why do you ask? " Son "In F----- freezing

**B'rrr Boat Trips.**

Tom and Philiis Furey are still booked for weekend day trips at Athlone as part of their successful Chamber of Commerce weekend package deals. Tom in conjunction with Athlone Cruisers had a busy season running these trips and it is gratifying to see the season extended to November.

**Frankfurthers.**

Wilhelm and Medina Petrat who most of you will remember after their three weeks July boating holiday returned for an Autumn visit last weekend. As guests of Damien and Bridie Delaney they treated us to good cognac and slides of the '76 Boat Rally

**David Goliath Wheeler.**

Of 34B fame is back in the barge business again. Syd and himself brought her from the Bandon River into New Ross and up to New town all in a few days. These inland sailors never cease to amaze. The Barrow in flood and all not to mention the sea trip of over ninety miles.

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The Branch extends its deepest sympathy to the Wife and Family of the late Tim Curly: also to Sean McBride on the demise of his Wife. To Kitty and family of Tony Conroy may we extend our sincere regrets. May they rest in peace.

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**Athlone Sub-Aqua Club.**

The A. G. M. of the above took place in the Jolly Mariner on the 19/11/76. New Officers for the incoming year are Chairman: R. Walsh. Vice Chairman: P. Benson. Secretary: H. Reid Treasurer: D. O'Brien. Diving Officer: M. Martin Equipment Officer. G. McCabe.

An interesting fund raising idea came up during the meeting which could fulfil a need for boatowners. The idea being that a boatowner would donate a sum of £10 to the Sub Aqua. Then at a later date, should the need arise and the boatowner require the services of a diver, the club would "donate" two divers for an hours diving for the boatowners requirements.

It seems like a good idea and the Editor of the Aerial would like to have the comments of boatowners

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Congratulations to Deirdre Martin on winning the Harry Rice Cup for her wonderful Essay on a trip to Shannon Harbour, also to John Hannin runner up.

Many thanks to Cynthia Rice for judging same and Rosemar Furlong for her assistance.

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Just a thought: How about some of our readers joining Shoreline, the Branch of The Lifeboat Institution, where small boatowners can show their appreciation in tangible form, of the work done by our Lifeboatmen. Subscription £3. per year to Cynthia Rice, Rosemary Furlong, B. Hamlin.

Whilst on the subject of Lifeboats, Mrs Joan Corcoran of Ballinasloe has agreed to represent the Irish Lifeboat Institution in Ballinasloe and will be running a flag day shortly. Mr. and Mrs Corcoran own the cruiser "Anna Christina" based in Athlone.

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### Research.

Our Research Staff has been inundated with queries regarding the possibilities of converting high powered O/B motors from Petrol to T. V. O. or Paraffin. This no doubt follows the ever increasing costs of petrol.

Well I am afraid we had no great joy here. Some O/B motors were produced to run on T. V. O. but none were successful. Some years ago OMC produced a kit to modify their larger O/B models, but considerable loss of power resulted and the only recent design to succeed has been the "Yamaha" which is designed for T. V. O./Petrol from the start. Although at slow running there is a lot to be desired.

The chief problems created in trying to convert a large petrol O/B are, loss of power, overheating, plug fouling, dilution of the lubricating oil, unvaporised fuel, and extra pollution caused by inefficient combustion - all in all, - not worth the risk.

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### Chandlers Corner

Wanted: Stern Mounted "Z" Drive to suit 20ft G. R. P Cruiser.  
also 10 to 15 H. P. Diesel Engine to drive same. Details to  
M. Martin. Phone Athlone 2453.

For Sale: Where the River Shannon Flows.	£2. 75
Thanks for the Memory.	£3. 75
Green and Silver.	£5. 25
Grand Canal Guide	75p
I. W. A. I. Ties	£2. 00
Burgess	£2. 50
Badges	40p

All the above are available at Sean's Bar Main St. Athlone.

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### Here and Then / Now and Soon.

At the last Branch Meeting, it was unanimously agreed as a matter of principal to counter any effort either by the Council or any other body to support Boat Registration. On the subject of the rule of the I. W. A. I. The general consensus felt the first policy should be to concentrate on the interests of the private boat owners. This is not to say other aspects will be ignored but it is a indisputable fact that since the birth of the I. W. A. I. some 23 years ago, the facilities on our waterways have improved beyond all recognition thanks to the work of the O. P. W. Local Councils etc: as to have the operation of Hire boat operators.

A deputation from the Athlone Canal Committee attended the meeting and the Branch wished them the best of luck in their efforts. Save the Canal has aroused a great deal of discussion, all of it controversial. It would be of interest if both the U. D. C. and the Canal Committee explained EXACTLY what their plans entailed.

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### Agenda.