



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

January 1996.

A VERY HAPPY AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE.

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday, 8th January, 1996 at 8.30 pm.

<><><><><>

## Membership Subscriptions.

Membership subscriptions - £12. are now due and should be sent to the Treasurer, Sean Fitzsimons, C/o Sean's Bar, Athlone. Next month will see the appearance of the dreaded red 'X'. Don't say you weren't warned!

<><><><><>

## Competition for Harry Rice Cup.

By popular demand the committee have agreed to extend the closing date to 28th February 1996. This competition requires an essay or a painting with a waterway theme. There are categories for adults and children, so include your age with your name and address when forwarding your entry, which should be sent to Rosemary Furlong, Coosan Point, Athlone before 29th February 1996.

<><><><><>

Report of A.G.M. Athlone Branch.

Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. held their A.G.M. in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel on Friday 8th December 1995. The officers for the coming year are as follows:-

Chairman	Damien Delaney
Vice Chairman	David Dickson
Secretary	Evelyn O'Connor
Treasurer	Sean Fitzsimons
Hon. Auditor	Reggie Redmond.
Development Officer	Declan Walsh.
Lough Ree Conservation Society delegate	Declan Walsh.

Elected members of Committees:-

Shannon Rally: P.Brady, D.Skehan, D.Treacy, S.Herraghty, L.Sleator, D.Delaney, C.Furey, F.Furey, M.Lynch.  
Shannon Rally Vice Commodore: D. Treacy.

Aerial Committee: D.Delaney, R. Redmond, R.Furlong, D.Walsh, B.Delaney, E.O'Connor.

Branch Membership payment to stay at £12.00

Meetings:- A new format for branch meetings will be tested during the coming year. Watch the Aerial for details.

Grant:- Athlone Branch agreed to grant £500 to the Shannon Harbour Development fund.

Chairman's Report.

Acting Chairman, Damien Delaney thanked the members for their attendance and their support during the year.

The Masonite planning application and its conclusion was one of the most important landmark events for the waterways in recent times, in so far as it highlighted the absence of a co-ordinated planning strategy to address the conflicts or co-existence of industrial development, tourism development and environmental protection. At the risk of becoming unpopular in certain sectors, the association fought this application through all the channels at its disposal but An Bord Pleanala overruled the recommendations of their own Inspector and upheld the application. The Council of I.W.A.I. have

recommended that each Branch should appoint a development officer to monitor planning applications for developments in the waterways corridor, and that each branch should make submissions to the relevant county development plans.

The pump-out station network is still far from satisfactory despite representations by the association to all the relevant authorities. The bye-laws come into full effect in April 1996 but there will still be only one pump-out station (Lanesborough) in operation in the whole "Lough Ree" area!

The Environmental Protection Agency report on the Shannon and its catchment from Ck-on-Shannon to Athlone has not been completed. We understand that some outstanding data has to be processed before the report can be finalised.

Some progress has been made with the Marina development at Athlone which is now in the planning process. All going well, work should commence during 1996.

The branch continues to support the RCAG branches in the area through fundraising events. Good progress has been made by all the RCAG branches, and the work continues. Alterations to road bridges will be the major obstacle remaining to be overcome between now and the forecast 1999 re-opening date.

<><><><><>

#### Royal Canal Fundraiser.

Another great night's entertainment was enjoyed by Athlone Branch I.W.A.I. and a huge contingent from Ballymahon branch, R.C.A.G. in Duffy's Lough Ree Inn on Saturday 9th December. The Royal Canal Band of Billy Henshaw, Michael Martin, Larry Benson and Joe Lacken, with guest artists Billy Henshaw Jnr., Sam Herraghty and Pauline Downey kept the hands clapping and the feet tapping, while the ladies committee fed the multitudes and sold raffle tickets for a huge selection of prizes, donated by local sponsors. Sam Herraghty won the best male singer but the best female singer and the Old Time waltz prizes went to Ballymahon, we will have to do better next time. £285 profit on the night was presented to Pat Kilduff, Chairman Ballymahon Branch, R.C.A.G.

The next outing is to Abbeyshrule in February, the date is not finalized but keep your dairy free, another great night is promised and a bus will be arranged as usual.

<><><><><>

A Reminder of "Summer Rally 1995"

Just to cheer us up in the middle of a very cold winter spell, the following poem came to hand, bringing a whiff of Ambre Solar, and boating and laughter, in other words the Shannon Rally of 1995 -

"A Marvellous Party"

We've been to a Marvellous Party  
 I must say the fun was intense  
 we all had to do what the people we knew  
 would be doing a hundred years hence.  
 We talked about growing old gracefully  
 And Bridie who's never a bore  
 Said A. It's a question of being sincere  
 and B. if you're supple you've nothing to fear  
 So she swung upside down from the mast by her rear  
 We couldn't have liked it more.

We've been to a marvellous Party  
 It went on all day and all night  
 It was in the fresh air and we went as we were  
 And we stayed as we were; what a sight!  
 The green-house effect is quite marked now  
 'Twas as sunny and as hot as can be  
 and now that it seems the good weather's assured  
 Most people entered the beacon award  
 for the reddest and shinniest person aboard  
 We couldn't have liked it more.

We've been to a marvellous Party  
 Where "Horror" was at it's utmost  
 Meave it was feared had quite disappeared  
 But came back as a friendly Ghost.  
 The Beer Busters rampaged around us  
 But Sean as a lamb was quite quiet  
 The Lough Ree Monster came out for a fight  
 His many green legs encompassed in lights  
 It was Eddie and Betty much to our delight  
 We couldn't have liked it more

We've been to a marvellous Party  
 Eric Timon that great author came  
 We all took a look in his latest book  
 to see if he'd mentioned our name.  
 The Commodore came with his hat on  
 He gave us a good talking to  
 He lectured us all on our safety needs  
 And told us to keep all our dogs on a lead  
 -But his own life-jacket was not to be seen  
 We couldn't have liked it more

We've been to a marvellous Party  
 With Sam and Kieran and more  
 Denis started singing at mid-night  
 And didn't stop singing 'til four.  
 The barbecue it was quite brilliant  
 With salads going down quite a treat  
 Denis Skehan got sozzled, fell over the side  
 Damien jumped in to the rescue with pride  
 The rest of us stood by and laughed 'til we cried  
 We couldn't have liked it more.

<><><><><>

### "Green" Policies

Mr Martin Lynch in his column in a recent edition of the Irish Independent, noted how 1995 was a "very good year for talking about caring for the environment."

However when it came to doing any thing about the environment and its protection, other values availed as he pointed out "Leitrim residents were outraged that the green wellie brigade would risk their chance of 300 jobs at the proposed Masonite factory. Even the Bord Pleanala's inspector's reports admitted that the factory was in the wrong place, but the collective wisdom of the board decided in the interests of job creation that the factory could go ahead."

At the end of his article, Mr.Lynch noted "Some of the mystery in planning decisions was removed by the Minister for the Environment Brendan Howlin. He had the planners' professional reports made about an Bord Pleanala appeals and local authority decisions open to the public.

Openness and transparency will not solve environmental problems but at least they allow people to know what the real rules of the green game are".



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

February 1996.

## Next Meeting.

The next meeting will be more of a social night out than a formal meeting and it will be held

on: Friday, 16th February at 8pm  
at: The Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone

followed by an historical talk entitled "The Saint and the naughty Lady" by Gearoid O'Brien.

This is a departure from the usual branch meeting format in an effort to improve attendance and to encourage more member participation in branch activities.

The meeting will start at 8pm sharp, and finish at 9pm. The Agenda will include:- Pumpout stations and Holding Tanks; Glasson harbour proposal; Athlone Marina and moorings; Athlone River Festival and Rallies.

A historical talk by Gearoid O'Brien will start at 9pm and finish at 10.30pm approximately.

It promises to be an interesting night and we hope to see a large attendance.

<><><><><>

## Reminder:

### BRANCH MEMBERSHIP - £12.

Subscriptions were due on the 1st January '96, so if you haven't already paid, your subscription is now due, and should be paid immediately to the treasurer Sean Fitzsimons, Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone.

Yes it is the first of the Red X's! Summer's coming!

<><><><><>

HARRY RICE CUP

February 29th is the closing date for the Harry Rice Cup Competition. Open to all age groups. Send your essay, log, painting etc. to Rosemary Furlong, Coosan Point, Athlone.

<><><><><>

Complaints and Suggestions - A Season Re-viewed

by Roving Reporter

Having availed of Christmas Holidays to read the ships log-book and to refresh the memory of a memorable season (not least the weather), we thought we should go public on some of the comments and gripes in said log in the hope that the branches concerned and/or National Council would put them on the agenda for the attention of the powers that be (O.P.W., Shannon-Erne Waterway or D.A.N.I. ).

So here goes:-

Speeding

The old familiar complaint! Speed limit signs are needed at many places, most notably at Levinge's Cut, Lecarrow Canal, Carnadoe Quay, Jamestown Canal and through Carrick-on-Shannon. Above all the signs must be BIGGER than the miniscule ones to be seen in Athlone currently. The skiers and speed boats on Lough Erne have to be seen to be believed! They are literally everywhere - even at the nicest little jetties at the back of islands. Designated areas are a "must".

Barley Harbour

The nice stone work badly needs repair and cars must be prevented from driving over the grass right to the water's edge, by chains, low walls or large boulders. What are the possibilities of getting the "Rock" removed from the bed of the harbour - it shouldn't be too difficult.

Lanesboro Harbour

A Mooring Bollard is missing in the centre - facing the entrance. Because of the high wall behind, no alternative is available and it is very difficult to moor at this spot i.e. one mooring space is lost.

**Carnadoe**

A red stake has been missing for some years now at the entrance to Carnadoe Waters. The E.S.B. wires which cross the navigation at Carnadoe Quay are a menace and a danger to yachts coming in from Lough Boderg. Surely it should be possible to re-route them over the bridge.

**Old Stone Cairns**

Many of these 150 year old granite markers are in bad condition all up and down the navigation. They are part of our heritage and part of the history of the Shannon Navigation. If some of them are not repaired very soon they will be lost for ever.

**Carrick-on-Shannon.**

With the removal of the wooden jetties on the Cartober side of the river, the installation of pump-out stations at the town quays and the presence of huge tripper boats, there is now practically no mooring space for private boats. During the season large numbers of private boats pass through Carrick looking for an overnight mooring or even a space for an hour or two in order to shop. Surely they deserve better! How about it Carrick Branch, O.P.W. and Co. Council?

**Ballinamore Ballyconnell Canal. (Shannon-Erne Link)**

We have just two suggestions and they both relate to mooring facilities. 1) Keshcarrigan Harbour is widely used as a half way stop and is packed every night. It must be enlarged. This could be done by building out two wings from the existing harbour wall and thus trebling the number of berths. 2) Simple overnight jetties are required at numerous places along the Waterway - not everyone wishes to halt at the harbours and towns. These should be situated at lots of spots along the "riverine" stretches and at sheltered corners of the numerous lakes. The facilities on Lough Erne are a perfect example of what is required.

**Conclusion**

So there it is - all off our chest. Now lets hope that our Association can use its influence to get some real action on all these necessary and urgent improvements.

<><><><><>



Coming Events.

Saturday 2nd March: Royal Canal fundraising Music Night in the Rustic Inn, Abbeyshrule. Music by Billy Henshaw and his Royal Canal Band. Bus will leave Sean's Bar at 8.30pm. Contact Damien Delaney at 0902 75620 for booking.

Friday 22nd March: Ruth Heard Film Show, with film from 1983 and 1995. Details later.

<><><><><>

For Cool Days.

Here is a lovely soup for the flask, now that the days for working on the boat are round the corner, so to speak. Much safer warm in the flask than warmed up on the gas cooker!

Tomato Soup

1 lb tomatoes, 1 onion, 1 carrot, 1, stalk celery  
a little fat bacon or bacon rinds  
One and a half pints stock or water  
Salt and pepper, a bouquet garni  
3 oz Milk  
1oz flour  
chopped parsley

Prepare and slice the tomatoes and vegetables. Fry the bacon to extract the fat, add prepared vegetables and saute them together for about ten minutes. Add liquid, seasoning and herbs, bring to boil and simmer gently until vegetables are tender. Add milk and flour and put into processor or liquidiser and whizz. Return to sausepan and bring to boil. Test the seasoning. Serve with chopped parsley sprinkled over.

<><><><><>

# *Athlone and the Corrib.*

## *Nineteenth Century Insights.*

Extracts from "*Reflections on Lough Corrib*"  
by Maurice Semple.

By kind permission of the author

In looking through the records of the Corrib Club, it is noticeable that Club boats were purchased in Athlone. In 1872, the Captain of the Club was instructed to "close with Mr. Norton of Athlone for two river boats at the limit of £11 delivered at rail at Athlone." In 1877 we find an order going to Norton for two river boats each 16 feet long, 4 feet 2 inches beam, 17 inches high " from keel to gunwale with oak ribs, white deal sheeting, double knees, well coated with best oil and varnish, with a coat of thick varnish between the laps, with suitable oars and rudder and plain round moveable tholepins finished in the best manner, half round iron on the keel from stem to stern for the sum of £11."

Four oared pleasure boats were also built to take people to Menlo. In 1877 the club gave the following order to J. Ward of Athlone : " Length 24 feet, beam 4 foot 8 inches, 21 inches high from keel to gunwale, copper fastened throughout, double knees and side seats, double pair of oars and rudder, oiled and varnished, all for £10."

In June, 1868, a resolution was passed by the Committee of the Corrib Club " that proceedings be instituted against the Treasurer of the Athlone Regatta 1866 to recover the prize of £10 won by this Club, and that a sum of £1 as expenses and £3 as a bonus be given to a Solicitor to prosecute same, the £3 to be withheld if he do not succeed."

In May, 1875, we find a Henry Cloherty being fined 6d. for " bringing a non member in a club boat : 1/- for taking out the wrong oars ; 2/6 for offensive language ; 2/6 for bathing in the middle of the day within sight of the Club ; 1/- for interrupting a meeting ; and 1/6 for leaving his crew in Menlo and returning alone."

" *Reflections on Lough Corrib* " published 1974, a fully illustrated gem .Ed.

By the same author

### *Some Galway Memories* *By the Corrib Side* *Where the River Corrib Flows* *Around and About Galway*

Available from

Mr Maurice Semple  
Rock Lawn.  
Taylor's Hill.  
Galway.

or

Easons  
Galway

# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

March 1996.

The next meeting of Athlone Branch IWAI will be held on Monday 4th March at 8.30pm in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone.

<><><><><>

2

**Reminder!!!**



Branch membership subscriptions -f12- are now overdue. If there is a double red X in the box, your subscription is overdue and should be paid immediately to the treasurer Sean Fitzsimons, Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone.

Regretfully, this Aerial will be the last sent to you until we receive your subscription, as the cost of postage is too much to carry. So please, send on your subscription and stay in touch with us for another year!

If there is no red X in the box, your subscription has been received and we thank you.

<><><><><>

## **Coming Events.**

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Sat, 2nd March  | Royal Canal Fundraiser in the Rustic Inn, Abbeyshrule. Music by Billy Henshaw and his Royal Canal band. Bus leaves Sean's Bar at 8.30pm. For booking ring Damien Delaney at 0902 75620 |
| Fri, 22nd March | Ruth Heard presents her films from the archives in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel at 8.30pm.   |
| Sat, 23rd March | Greenpeace Concert Hodson Bay Hotel. More details attached further on.   |

<><><><><>

Attached to our Aerial, is a copy of the Greenpeace brochure and we would draw your attention to the dates when events are being run in the Athlone/Lough Ree area:-

Athlone March 22nd/23rd, Quaker Island March 24th, Lanesborough March 25th.

We have no times, but as soon as we hear more we will let you know.

\_ç\_ç\_ç\_ç\_ç

### Glasson

Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Michael D. Higgins visited Athlone on Friday 9th February to meet the local Glasson Harbour Action committee and representatives of local interest groups, including Athlone Branch I.W.A.I., regarding the proposal to provide a harbour at Glasson Village, with a navigable channel linking it to Killinure Lough at Wineport.

The Minister said he would consider the proposal provided that he was satisfied that the harbour would not detract from the unique character of the village and that the environmental impact requirements could be met.

The committee assured the minister that the proposal had full support in the locality, and that they were also conscious of the environmental requirements and would be pressing Westmeath County Council to have these services provided in conjunction with the harbour. The proposed location of the harbour is approximately half a mile from the lake and would not be visible from the lake.

The Minister promised to give his response in 3 weeks.

On the following pages, we have reproduced extracts from a very professional presentation made by the Glasson Committee to the Minister, Mr. Higgins which we hope will give you a flavour of the local input and enthusiasm of the people involved in getting this project up and running. We in the Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. wish them all the best in their efforts and hope the news from the minister will be positive.

# **GLASSON HARBOUR PROPOSAL**

## **The Proposal**

Provide a navigable channel from Wineport to Glasson, and provide berthing facilities at Glasson.

A possible option would be to dredge a navigable channel along the line of the existing Bunown river which runs through Glasson village and enters Killinure Lough in the Inner Lakes of Lough Ree at Wineport. The harbour should be located as close as possible to Glasson village. The project should also include facilities for angling and day tourists such as walkers and picnickers.

A technical feasibility study would be required to determine the most suitable method and location for the provision of this facility, which would be undertaken by the Waterways Service.

Support for this proposal is expressed in the recommendations of the National Canals and Waterways Strategy study which was prepared by Brady, Shipman, Martin, for the Office of Public Works; in the Westmeath County Development Plan; by the Ballykeeran, Tubberclair, Glasson Social and Economic Development Committee; and by the Athlone Branch of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland.

## **The Reason**

Lough Ree is the greatest natural amenity with the potential to attract tourists into the area. Examine the chart of Lough Ree and you will see that there are five public harbours/jetties at Athlone, Hodson Bay, Lecarrow, Portrunny, Lanesborough and only two of these venues offer the full range of services that tourists require - Athlone and Lanesborough. There is no public facility on the eastern shore between Athlone and Lanesborough.

There are approximately 10,000 boat passages through Lough Ree each year but boating tourists tend to pass quickly through Lough Ree, sometimes due to weather difficulties, but mainly due to the lack of suitable facilities offering a full range of services, such as restaurants, pubs, groceries, butcher, fuel, and entertainment. This results in a loss of tourist revenue to the area.

The reason for this proposal is to create a further venue on Lough Ree to attract boating tourists to spend more time in the area, and consequently improve the revenue from tourism in the region.

## **Why Glasson?**

Glasson is uniquely situated between Athlone and Ballymahon, within close proximity to Lough Ree, on the N55 route from Athlone to Cavan and Northern Ireland. It is also ideally located on Lough Ree to benefit from the increased boating traffic arising from the new Shannon-Erne Waterway. It offers a multiplicity of services, giving a choice of top class restaurants, supermarkets, pubs, souvenirs, fuel, boat and engine repair, bed and breakfast accommodation, post office, garda station, top class golf course, Goldsmith trail and cultural centre.

Glasson has become a major centre for tourism due to its proximity to Lough Ree. The reputation of its restaurants and pubs is firmly established both in Ireland and Internationally, attracting anglers and boating tourists for night time entertainment and relaxation, even though the nearest access point is almost two miles away from the village. Better access would improve the revenue from this aspect of tourism.

Glasson has active and energetic Development, and Tidy Town Committees working on various projects designed to promote tourism in the area. Restoration of the old schoolhouse as a Visitor and Cultural Centre, which will be completed in 1996 will provide a focal point for visitors to the area. There are many historic landmarks and scenic walk within easy reach of the village. Glasson, which was made famous as the Village of the Roses in Goldsmith's poetry, is the beginning of the Goldsmith Trail which attracts many literary people to the area.

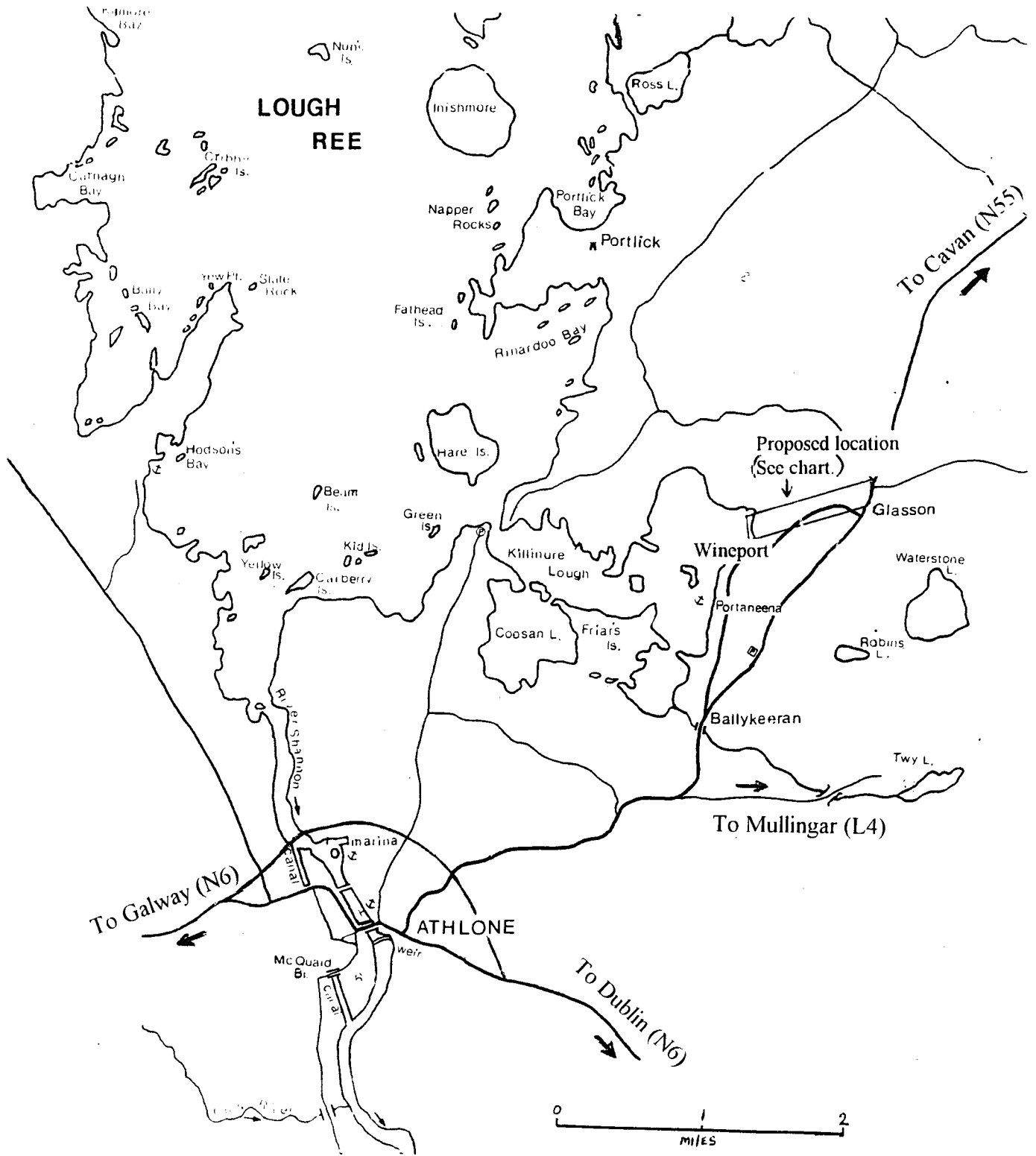
A feasibility study has been carried out by the Development Committee to identify areas with the potential to improve the revenue from tourism, and many of the areas identified in the report are being acted on. The fact that so many people participated in carrying out the study indicates a village which is prepared to help itself.

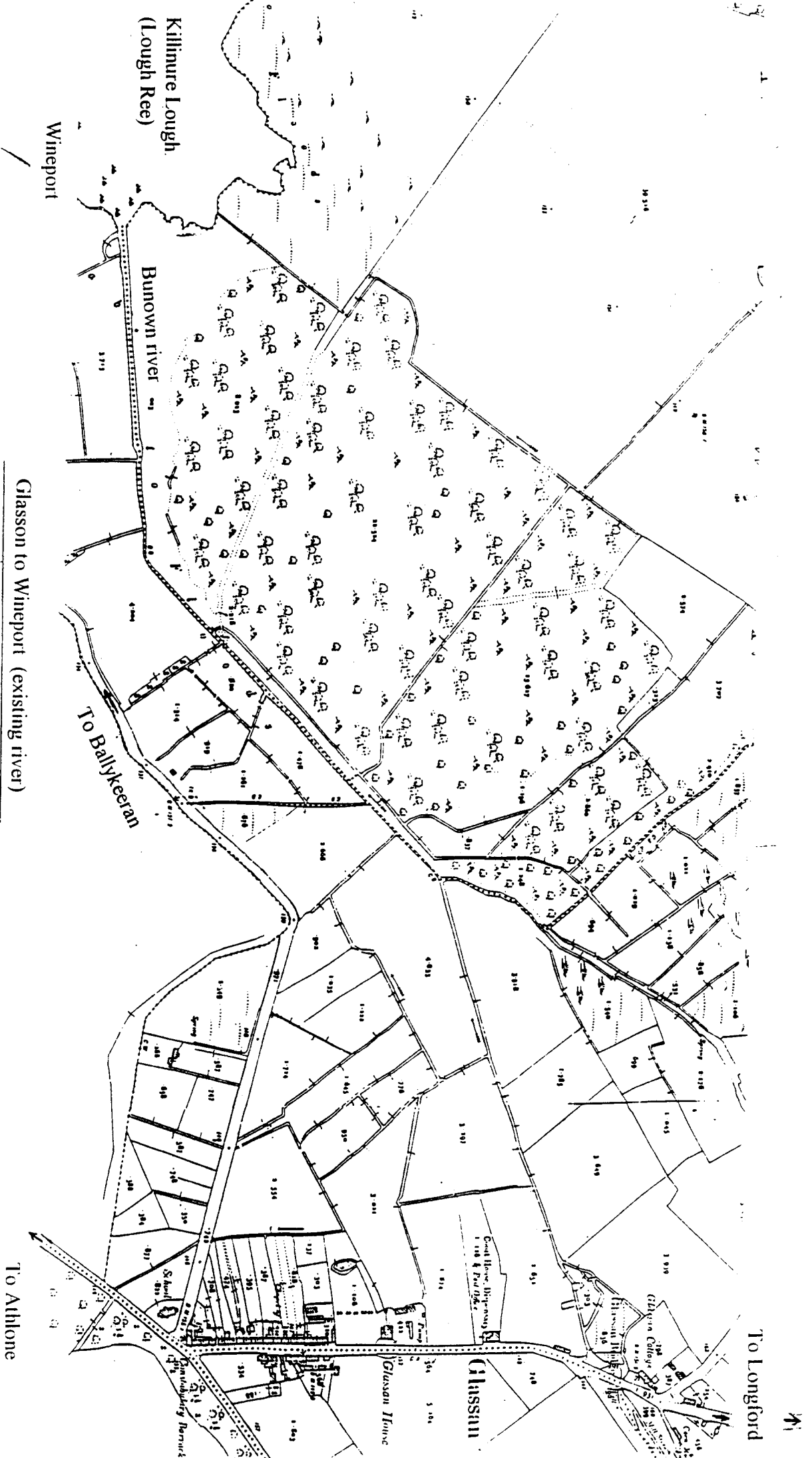
The Tidy Towns committee are continuing to upgrade the roadsides leading into the village, and much improvement is taking place in the village raising local peoples pride in their area, thus increasing its attractiveness to visitors.

## **The Cost**

The exact cost of this project could only be determined following a technical feasibility study, but a reasonable estimate would be £1.5 million, based on comparable projects. The project would involve acquiring land, dredging approximately a half mile of navigable channel, build a harbour to accommodate approximately 40 boats, with a slipway for launching small cruisers and angling boats, and provide services such as toilets, showers, sewage disposal, water etc.

The cost could best be estimated by the Waterways Service following a technical feasibility study. It is most important therefore that a technical study should be commenced as soon as possible, and that the proposal would then be submitted for structural fund support.





Killinure Lough  
(Lough Ree)

Wineport

Bunown river

Glasson to Wineport (existing river)

To Ballykeeran

To Athlone

Glasson

To Longford

Scale

1/2 Mile



### Branch Meeting & Social Evening.

Our Meeting and Social Evening held in the Prince of Wales hotel on the 16th February was well attended, the meeting part less so than the Social Part! Our sincere thanks to Gearoid O'Brien who gave a very illuminating talk about "the Saint and the Naughty lady". Many interesting facts about the older part of Athlone were received by a very attentive audience.

We had some new members at our meeting and their presence was very welcome. The main discussion centred on the Pump-out Stations on the Shannon, especially in the Athlone Area. Correction - the lack of pump-out stations - how on earth the law forbidding the use of Marine loos will be effected, if there are not facilities in place is an interesting problem for the coming summer. We may have to hold on a bit longer for a solution!

There was discussion regarding the registering of all boats, excluding open-boats and other categories, this year. Boats unregistered will not be allowed to pass through Locks.

Rallies, especially the small weekend ones, were criticized as being a water born pub-crawl, and other activities were suggested, i.e. visits to historical points of interest, etc. People were asked to volunteer to organise even one weekend rally, instead of letting a rally "just happen".

The news that the marina in Athlone has got the go ahead at last was greeted with enthusiasm by all present.

With regard to the Peoples regatta, Damien asked for more volunteers to help with the actual running of events, as the same few people were doing all the work.

==\_ç\_ç\_ç\_ç\_ç\_==

### Greenpeace - Shannon Celebration 1996

This year being the 25th Anniversary year of Greenpeace, a voyage will set out along the Shannon.

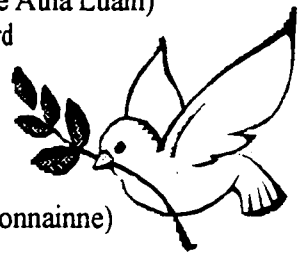
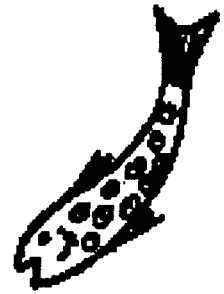
The reason quoting from their brochure is that "Today the Shannon, though much-loved, is a threatened waterway, a toilet for wastes, effluent, leachate, and run-off."

The ancient Irish recognised the importance of the Shannon. They settled on its banks, fished in it, swam in it, but above all respected it. Over the centuries the Shannon has played a pivotal role in Ireland's history and has entered into the psyche of the Irish people as a potent expression of our natural heritage.

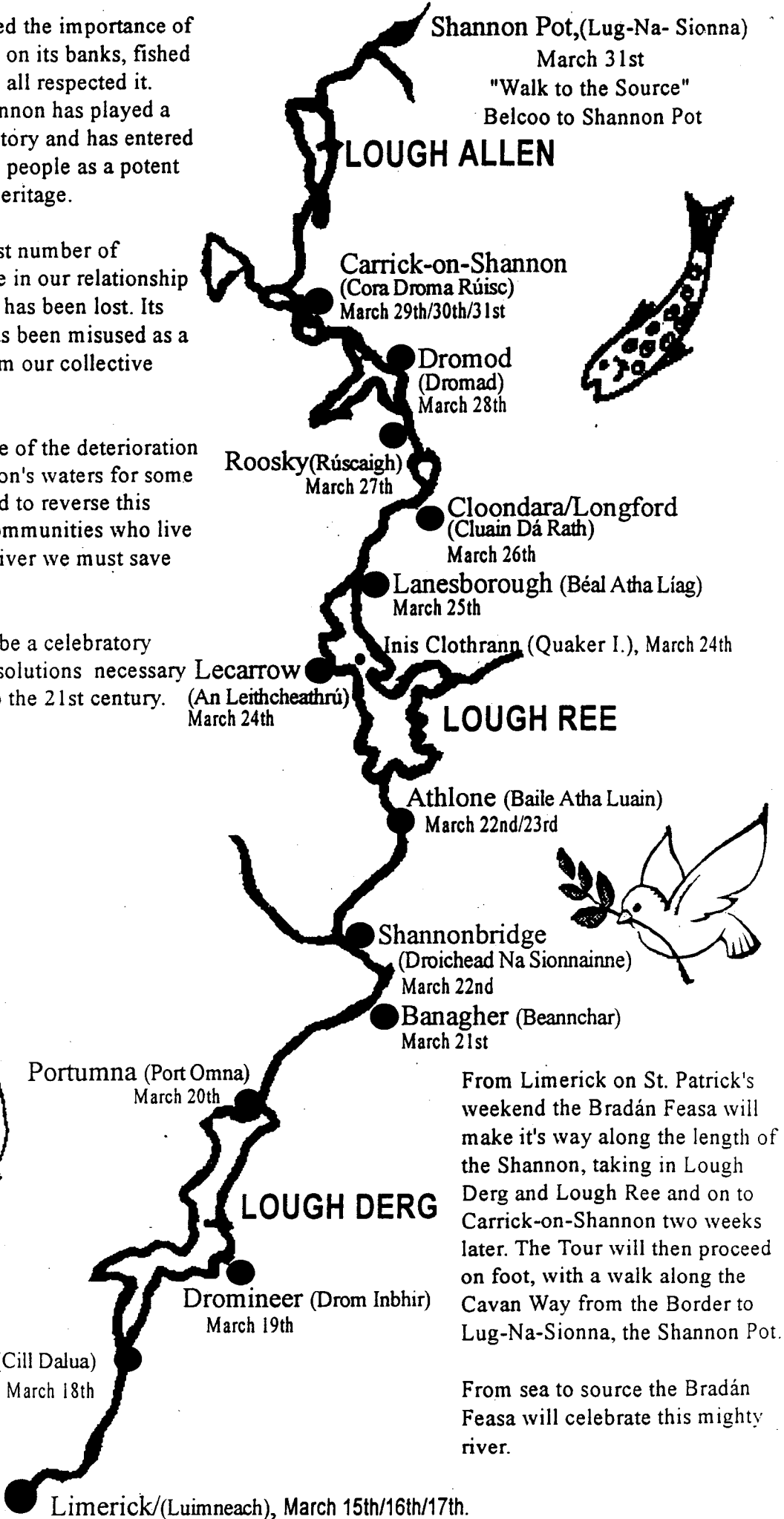
Unfortunately, over the past number of decades the natural balance in our relationship with the majestic Shannon has been lost. Its powerful and even flow has been misused as a sewer to take pollution from our collective backyards.

Greenpeace has been aware of the deterioration in the quality of the Shannon's waters for some time and is now determined to reverse this trend. Together with the communities who live on the banks of this great river we must save the Shannon.

Greenpeace's journey will be a celebratory one and will highlight the solutions necessary to protect the Shannon into the 21st century.



Grand Opening Concert  
UCH Limerick, March 14th.



From Limerick on St. Patrick's weekend the Bradán Feasa will make it's way along the length of the Shannon, taking in Lough Derg and Lough Ree and on to Carrick-on-Shannon two weeks later. The Tour will then proceed on foot, with a walk along the Cavan Way from the Border to Lug-Na-Sionna, the Shannon Pot.

From sea to source the Bradán Feasa will celebrate this mighty river.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland is a Limited Company and as such we are legally obliged to keep an up to date record of our membership.

We are asking all members, existing and new, to complete the "tear off" form below and return it to Sean Fitzsimons, Treasurer, IWAI Athlone Branch, Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone.

---

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND  
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I \_\_\_\_\_  
OF \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

HEREBY APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: / /19\_\_

I wish my membership to be handled by: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

April 1996.

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, IWAI will be held on Monday 1st April at 8.30pm in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone.

2

<><><><><>

## Coming Events.

- 29th March. A.G.M. of the I.W.A.I. Council will be held in the R.I.A.C., Dawson St., Dublin at 8.00pm.
- 13th April. Royal Canal Fundraiser in Duffy's Lough Ree Inn, with Abbyshrule RCAG Branch and Billy Henshaw's Royal Canal Band. Usual good evening guaranteed!
- 25th April. VHF Course - See Item below  
2nd May. " " " " "
- 9th May. VHF Operators licence examination.

<><><><><>

## VHF Course and Exam.

A VHF Course is being arranged to be held over 2 sessions on 25th April and 2nd May to prepare people for the examination for the operators licence, i.e. restricted Certificate of Competency in Radiotelephony (VHF).

The examination will be held on the 9th May 1996.

Anyone interested should contact Damien Delaney at 0902 75620 immediately please.

<><><><><>

## Sympathy

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the death of Thomas Gibbons, a member of the Waterways Service (formally O.P.W.) who died in an unfortunate accident in Blackbrink Bay on Thursday 21st March. To his family and colleagues in the Waterways Service we extend our deepest sympathy.

We also extend our sympathy to the family of Mike Thomas of Celtic Cruisers and Offaly Branch, I.W.A.I. who died recently.

<><><><><>

## Greenpeace.

The Greenpeace crew on board the Bradan Feasa arrived in Athlone on Friday 22nd March, and were welcomed by Mr Kieran Temple, Chairman of Athlone U.D.C., members of Athlone U.D.C. and Westmeath Co.Co. and representatives of I.W.A.I., Athlone Sub Aqua Club, Lough Ree Conservation Group and Lough Ree Yacht Club, along with a large assembly of interested people, who were entertained by the music of Coosan School band and street theatre by Tounta.

Clare O'Grady Walsh replied on behalf of Greenpeace and outlined their programme for the weekend and the purpose of the trip on the Shannon.

Schools along the Shannon catchment are working on "Living Downstream", the Greenpeace water education project. Youth workshop sessions were organised for young people to discuss the future protection of the river. Concerts would celebrate the importance of the river in the life and culture of the Irish people. This trip is to mark the beginning of their clean water campaign and a five year project to celebrate the waterways of Ireland in the run up to the millenium.

The fundamental solution to the problems facing the Shannon system is the formulation of a land use policy for the whole catchment, incorporating environmental and planning issues for an "holistic" policy which should include:-

- \* a reduction in agricultural wastes through a move to sustainable agriculture,
- \* tertiary sewage treatment for full treatment of sewage and the promotion of constructed wetlands as a clean alternative, as well as the promotion of dry toilet technology.

- \* licensing of industry which requires pollution prevention and clean production and an end to discharges to sewers.
- \* sustainable use of Irish bogs and the elimination of milled peat reaching the waters
- \* an end to dangerous dumps through an amendment to the current Waste Management Bill to focus on waste prevention.
- \* an end to monoculture forestry and a move to sustainable forestry which preserves bio-diversity.
- \* a nationwide ban on phosphate based detergents.

Luka Bloom, members of De Dannin and the Connaught Ramblers entertained the large attendance at the concert in the Hodson Bay Hotel on Saturday night.

On Sunday the Bradan Feasa moved to Quaker Island to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the foundation of Greenpeace which was helped by fundraising from the Quakers. A celebration concert was arranged for Sunday afternoon in Barley harbour, and the trip upriver continues on Monday 25th March.

We wish them success on their voyage.

<><><><><>

### Royal Canal Fundraiser, Abbeyshrule.

We had a great night in the Rustic Inn, Abbeyshrule, thanks once again to the host of musicians who gave freely of their talent - Billy Henshaw, Larry Benson, Michael Martin, Joe Lacken, Billy Henshaw Jnr. and Flan Fogarty and guests Pauline Downey, Noel Breen and Flan Barnwell. Our thanks also to all the people who travelled to Abbeyshrule to support the good cause, and helped make the fundraiser a success, and to Gabriel McGeoy and Abbeyshrule Branch RCAG who organised the raffle prizes and food. £320.00 was raised which will help the landscaping programme at the new slipway which will be officially opened on the 9th June '96.

Abbeyshrule Branch. RCAG are paying a return visit to Duffy's Lough Ree Inn on Saturday 13th April, so we hope to see you there.

### Ruth Heard Film Show.

Our thanks to Ruth Heard whose films brought back memories of the great summer of 1995 and of the activity on 1983 on the Grand Canal and River Barrow when many of us had less girth and more hair! A most enjoyable trip down memory lane which was appreciated by the large attendance. Thanks also to all the people who provided the deserts, sandwiches and cakes which were very welcomed and enjoyed.

Great to see Shelia Redmond out and about again, Shelia was given a special welcome by everyone at the filmshow.

<><><><><>

### Harry Rice Awards.

The judges had a most difficult task this year to select the winner of the Harry Rice Trophy. All the entries were paintings, and the standard was so high and so close that the judges finally selected one winner - James Webb, who received the Trophy, and four entrants shared a very close second place, - Valery Casey, Billy Henshaw, Eva Henshaw and Zara Henshaw, all of whom received gift vouchers.

The prizes were presented at the film show by Cynthia Rice. Our thanks to Rosemary Furlong and Cynthia Rice who organised the competition and to all the entrants who put so much work into their entries.

<><><><><>

### Stop Press

Noticed report in the local press (W.I.8/3/96) of some local Politicians making remarks about the delay in publishing the EPA Report on Lough Ree. The report referred to, if published now, is very out of date as its input was obtained about 3 years ago. Where environmental matters are concerned, we're not sure that even "better late than never" is of much use!

<><><><><>



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

May 1996.

Due to the May Bank Holiday the next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will be held in Sean's Bar on Monday 13th May at 8.30pm. and as usual everyone is welcome to attend.

<>-<>-<>-<>

## SHEILA REDMOND R.I.P.

It was with deep sadness and shock that we learned of the death of Sheila Redmond. Just a few weeks ago Sheila attended the Ruth Heard film show in Athlone and the I.W.A.I. A.G.M. in Dublin and we admired her courage and had great hopes that she was well on the road to recovery from recent illness. The Almighty had other plans and Sheila was called to her eternal reward on Friday 12th April.

Sheila was a person of many talents with a wide variety of interests which included motor sports, gardening and the beauty of nature, boating, the waterways and the environment. She loved to meet people and to entertain, and her hospitality was widely acknowledged and appreciated. She was a great supporter of the Inland Waterways Association, its aims and its activities and her wide knowledge of all the waterways, accumulated from her extensive cruises, was a valued contribution to any waterways debate. Sheila had great artistic talent and flair and could always be relied upon to produce something extra special to highlight any occasion.

A wonderful person has "sailed past" and she will be sadly missed by her family and her friends throughout the waterways of Ireland.

To Reggie and their family Barry, Deirdre, Maeve, Fiona and Nuala we extend our deepest sympathy.

May she rest in peace.



The loves of Sheila's life were beautifully summarised in the prayers of her grandchildren at her Requiem Mass and we reproduce them here by kind permission of Reggie

GRAND-CHILDRENS' PRAYERS

In Memory of Sheila

Let us pray for our Gran  
That she may live with God  
Free of pain and in peace  
For ever and ever

*Lord hear us*

Let us pray for all those who  
Cruise on our waterways  
That they may arrive safely  
And enjoy fair sailing,  
Like our Gran.

*Lord hear us*

Let us pray for all those who  
Enjoy motor sport  
That they may do so safely  
And take the chequered flag  
Like our Gran.

*Lord hear us*

Let us pray for all those who  
Love gardening and flowers,  
That they may enjoy God's Gift of nature,  
And have green fingers,  
Like our Gran.

*Lord hear us*

Let us pray for all those who  
Love family and home.  
That they may take pride in God's gift  
Of children and grand-children  
Like our Gran.

*Lord hear us*

<>-<>-<>-<>

Coming Events.

June 1st-3rd. Whit Weekend Rally. Details in next Aerial.  
 June 30th. Heineken Peoples Regatta at Athlone.  
 July 26th - Shannon Boat Rally - details and entry forms in next Aerial.  
 August 4th.

&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;

2

Lough Allen Re-opened.

Lough Allen Canal was re-opened amid great pomp and ceremony on Easter Saturday by Michael D. Higgins, Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

The ceremonial entourage travelled on board the Inishee from Acres Lake, through the refurbished canal and the new lock at Drumshambo to cut the tape at the stroke of noon, in front of a large gathering of public representatives, local people, waterways enthusiasts and media personal.

The project, costing £1.5 million, extends the navigation into Lough Allen for the first time in over sixty years. The navigation is marked, and in addition to the splendid facilities at Drumshambo, floating jetties have been located on the lake at Spencer harbour and Cleighran More.

The Shannon Boat Rally will visit Lough Allen this year and this promises to be an historic occasion so don't miss it.

&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;-&lt;&gt;

For Sale

CARAVAN: Sprite Alpine 3/4 berth. Cooker and Gas Fridge in 100% working order. 12 v. lights internal and external. Wired for 220 v. including sockets, charger and 12 v. battery. £950. o.n.o.

Contact Reggie Redmond phone 01 4555329

**For Sale.**

*Mermaid* (day boat) - clinker built, new sails, new trailer, ready to launch.  
 Best offer secures. Tele 0506 - 31106.

Correspondence from Abroad  
- Well, from past Banagher!

"Moondrifter"  
Scull

The Editor,  
Athlone Aerial.

Dear Damien,

I have been instructed by the real skipper to write and express our thanks to you and all the members of the I.W.A.I. and L.R.Y.C. for their many expressions of Goodwill and fair sailing. We really enjoyed the night in Sean's and appreciated all your efforts on our behalf. So far we have had a really enjoyable sail from Valentia to Scull in beautiful, if cold, sunshine and fair winds - the way things should be. At the moment we are waiting for a few depressions to sort themselves out before heading on.

Again Miss Casey interjects "Tell them every now and again we will give the Aerial an update on our progress or lack of it".

Once again sincere thanks for all your good wishes - we really suffered from a large variety of mixed feelings as we headed South from Athlone.

Greetings to all our friends from a showery Schull.

Yours sincerely

Mick and Ruth.

ED.- Great to hear from you both and we look forward to hearing from you about those foreign parts. Wishing you well until Banagher again.

<>-<>-<>-<>

Royal Canal

A great nights entertainment was enjoyed by Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. and a huge contingent from Abbeyshrule Branch, R.C.A.G. in Duffy's Lough Ree Inn on Saturday 13th April. The Royal Canal Band of Billy Henshaw, Michael Martin, Larry Benson and Joe Lacken, supported by the Abbeyshrule band and a host of guest artists from Athlone and Abbeyshrule kept the feet tapping and the hands clapping, while the ladies committee fed the

multitudes and sold raffle tickets for a huge selection of prizes, donated by our generous sponsors in Athlone and Abbeyshrule. £335. was raised and presented to Gabriel McGeoy, Chairman Abbeyshrule Branch, RCAG to help their restoration project.

Damien Delaney, Chairman Athlone Branch I.W.A.I. also presented £1,000 to Eddie Slane Chairman RCAG, towards their central restoration fund.

<>-<>-<>-<>

Athlone Boat Club.

Athlone Boat Club paid a fitting tribute to Billy Henshaw (Snr.) when they presented Billy with an Athlone Crystal plaque, in appreciation for all the help and support that he gave to the club over the years. Billy was taken completely by surprise, because he had arranged the night himself, thinking it was to raise funds for the Boat club, with the Royal Canal band and Skillet Pot.

The tributes and the stories, the music and the crack were mighty, and the froth was blown off a good few pints, "in any case". A fitting tribute and well deserved.

<>-<>-<>-<>

Editor's Note.

In the 1950's Harry Rice wrote a weekly column "Coosan Comment" in the old Westmeath Independent. In late November 1953 news broke that Westmeath Co. Co. and the Dept. of Local Government had agreed to erect a fixed span on Athlone Bridge in place of the swivel. Harry launched a bitter attack on the proposal, and an edited version of his column is reproduced here and in succeeding months by kind permission of Cynthia Rice.

### Coosan Comment

Here I go - jingle, jangle! I bet you have already guessed what I'm after - The freedom and liberty of the Shannon river. But please give me a chance before you turn to something else. Already, I may have argued to the point of tediousness. You have given me a patient and a fair hearing during the past few weeks. Be indulgent and bear with me for a few columns more.

That all the Lough Ree yachts men view with extreme concern the proposal to install a fixed bridge at Athlone is evident by the unanimous installation of such a structure, at their last meeting.

At the time of writing this, three of their members have already written in the correspondence columns of the "Independent". and have signed their names to weighty arguments against the closing of the Shannon.



### In The Dail

On November 17th, Mr. Oliver Flanagan, T.D., had occasion to voice his concern in the Dail about the proposed erection of fixed bridges at Banagher and Athlone. The Minister for Local Government, Mr. Smith, remarked; "The open span has not been working since 1937. Why do they want it now?".

The inference would appear to be that we have no need for a swing bridge. I suggest that, if such an inference was intended, it is quite wrong.

The swing bridge was not opened because some cogs in the winding mechanism are broken and it will not work.

### Reduced Clearance.

We then have the cabin cruisers of the not so wealthy. They are not yachtsmen in the true sense and, so far, have not created an association to protect their interests. Each year sees more and more of them upon the Shannon. They leave much money all the way along the stream, from Killaloe to Boyle.

At present they can navigate their boats under the dilapidated swing bridge, for it affords an exceptional amount of clearance. If the proposed new fixed structure is installed, the clearance shall be considerably reduced and many of them shall be compelled to leave Athlone and Lough Ree, never to return, for who would wish to have his boat locked away on the wrong side of a ferro concrete structure? Are we not committing the height of folly as Mr. Sean McBride recently declared?  
To be continued.

# LOUGH REE ! LOUGH DERG ! WHATS THE DIFFERENCE ?

## DERG

### Major Milestone

The publication of the 1993 Water Quality Report on Lough Derg by the Lough Derg Working Group was a major milestone in a positive turnaround for action.

It's findings showed that in a ten year period from 1980 the water quality had decreased on a scale of 1 to 10 from 8 to 4 (10 being excellent and 2 unable to sustain life. )

This statement sunk home.

It was identified that the cause was brought about by the fertilization effect of phosphorous and nitrogen in algae and plants.

To turn back the clock and bring water quality standards back to the level of the late 1970's requires a reduction of about half of the volume of nutrients now going into the lake.

It was estimated that some 50 tons of phosphorous are discharged annually through the industrial and municipal waste discharges at the towns on the lake and its tributaries

In this years Annual Report by the Department of the Environment funding has been provided to ten of the locations identified.

That's action.



### *REE'S FUTURE*

*TO GO FORWARD WE MUST*

*KNOW THE WATER QUALITY*

*IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS*

*HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS*

*PROVIDE FUNDING*

*IMPLEMENT*

*WE NEED THAT REPORT*

*NOW*



## REE

### The History

Concern had been expressed at the apparent deterioration in the water quality of Lough Ree and prompted the Local Authorities to initiate a detailed water quality investigation of the lake which commenced in 1992. This investigation has been continued by the Environmental Research Unit of the Environmental Protection Agency since June 1993.

In addition to the lake survey the water quality of the principal inflowing rivers viz, Rivers Shannon, Rinn, Camlin, Hind, Inny, and Tang were included. The investigation was expected to continue until late Autumn 1994.

An Interim Report to Dec. 1993 was published in Jan. 1994 .

At that time it was stated that "the lake is now in an enriched and strongly eutrophic condition. "

Thats the last we have heard. Despite umpteen requests and as many promises the final report and its crucial findings and recommendations are still awaited. That's inaction.

## A REPORT ! THATS WHAT

## Declaration

I declare the boat described to be properly found and in sound condition and during the period of the rally will be adequately insured for Third Party Liability.

Signed.....

Date.....

If the committee should have reason to believe that the applicants boat is not properly found and in sound condition, they may request permission to inspect said boat prior to the commencement of the Rally. Following such inspection the committee may at their discretion prohibit said boat from entering rally and refund entry fee. Evidence of current third party insurance may be requested. In the interest of safety or otherwise the committee reserve the right to refuse entry or debat entrant at any stage.

**LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF ENTRIES:**

**FRIDAY 5th JULY, 1996**

*Please send completed entry form to:*

From Secretary,  
Fiona Furey,  
Sycamore Lodge,  
Bally Shannon,  
Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.  
Tel. 015 485185

## Itinerary

**Friday 26th July, 1996**

*Get-together*

Carrick: Mariners Reach  
Athlone: Sean's Bar.

**PLEASE BRING  
ALONG A GIFT  
FOR THE**

**Saturday 27th July, 1996**

**ROOSKEY**



**Sunday 28th July, 1996**

**DRUMSNA**

**R. N. L. I. AUCTION**

**Monday 29th July, 1996**

**CARRICK-ON-SHANNON**

**Tuesday 30th July 1996**

**DRUMHARLOW**

**Wednesday 31st July 1996**

**LETRIM**

**Thursday 1st August 1996**

**ACRES LAKE**

**Friday 2nd August 1996**

**ACRES LAKE**

**Saturday 3rd August 1996**

**LOUGH ALLEN**

**- THE FINAL FRONTIER**

**Sunday 4th August, 1996**

**CARRICK-ON-SHANNON**

*Subject to alteration at the discretion of the Committee.*

**COMMODORE:**

Kieran Walsh

**CHAIRMAN:**

Bernard Delaney

**SECRETARY:**

Fiona Furey

**THEME FOR FANCY DRESS:**

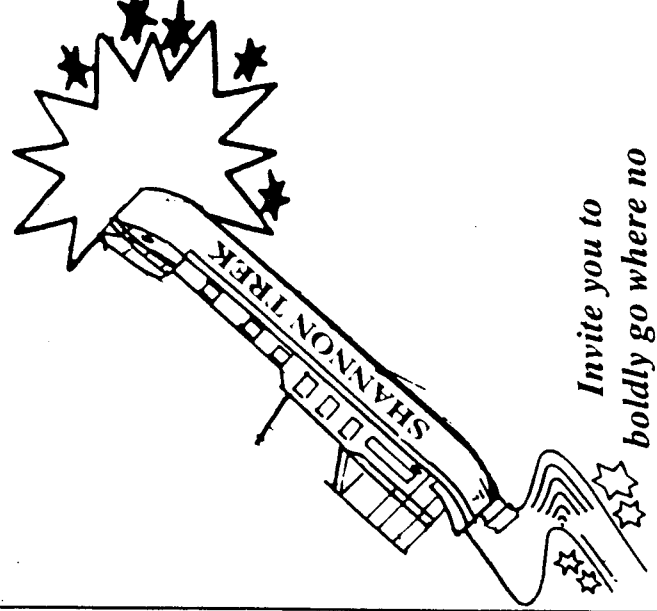
**ROCK 'N' ROLL**

**36TH SHANNON BOAT RALLY**



**1996**

**THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMODORE**



*Invite you to  
boldly go where no  
Rally has ever gone before.*

**Lough Allen - The Last Frontier**

**Friday 26th July**

**to**

**Sunday 4th August, 1996**

# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

June 1996

The next meeting of the Athlone Branch of I.W.A.I. will be held in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 2nd September 1996 at 8.30 pm.

In the meantime the branch executive committee will deal with any matters that may arise.

The Aerial committee are taking a summer break, so the next Aerial will be distributed in late August.

We wish all our members and sunny, safe and super summer.

<><><><><>

## Coming Events.

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| June 1st - 3rd           | Whit Weekend Cruise-in-Company to Lecarrow. Commodore: Denis Treacy. Meet in Lecarrow on Saturday 16.00 ish.                     |
| June 22nd-23rd           | Shannon Harbour Rally. Celebration of 25 years of this rally, - not to be missed!  |
| June 30th                | Heineken "Peoples Regatta". Boats assemble at the Apparel Jetty before 14.00 hours on Sunday 30th June. Commodore: Denis Treacy. |
| July 26th-<br>August 4th | Shannon Boat Rally. Itinerary on last page of May Aerial with all other details.   |
| Aug 4th- 10th            | Lough Derg Boat Rally. Details below.  |

<><><><><>



Lough Derg Rally

Unofficial Start:	Sunday 4th Aug	Terryglass
Official Start:	Monday 5th	Gortmore
	Tuesday 6th	Mountshannon
	Wednesday 7th	Scariff
	Thursday 8th	Killaloe
	Friday 9th	Dromineer
	Saturday 10th	Dromineer

If you have not received an official entry form, contact Mrs. Maureen Duffy, Lindesfarne, Nth Circular Rd., Limerick Phone 061 451478.

Entry Fees: Open Boats	£12.00
All other Boats	£30.00

<><><><><>

Coosan Comment

Harry Rice's Column of November 1953 continued from last month's Aerial

"Fixed Bridges""The Ratepayers

"That brings me to a point which concerns not only them but every taxpayer in the country.

The ratepayers of Westmeath have, through their county council, been warned that they shall be required to find money for the proposed new fixed span of Athlone bridge.

The matter was raised at a council meeting when only six were present. A brief discussion - very brief for such a grave issue - followed. A point which I think swayed the members to vote by four to two in favour of a fixed bridge, was a statement that Shannonbridge has already been permanently closed.

Unfortunately, this was a misconception. Shannonbridge has not been closed. Indeed it was opened for a masted yacht last year. I wonder, had the members been aware that the fixing of Athlone bridge would be the FIRST of the irrevocable steps in abandoning the existing Shannon navigation facilities, would they have voted differently? Whether it shall be fixed or whether it shall be mobile, the ratepayers of Westmeath have been directed to provide a structure to facilitate the egress of the tourist from Athlone, in the most expeditious manner possible!

We are informed that the approaches to the bridge must be widened so that the traffic can move all the faster, out of Athlone!

#### An Attractive Autobahn

It seems to many people that we are creating a very attractive autobahn by means of which visitors can leave their six-storeyed hotels in Dublin, after breakfast, sink back in the cushions of their high-powered cars and be in Galway in time for lunch! Poor Westmeath must pay for this attraction. Why? There's a six mark question for somebody to answer. Should not the cost be met out of our national road fund?

The man for whom the liberty of the Shannon is essential, seems to have been given no consideration as yet.

I refer to the working man - the man who toils all the week and who is well entitled to rest and entertainment on holydays and Sundays. Such men do not own boats of any kind. They cannot afford such luxuries. Their knowledge of our river may indeed, be limited to the glimpse they get from the town bridge on their way to work.

They have no motor cars. They cannot bring their families on the carrier of a push bike, yet none can be left behind. They probably have never seen Clonmacnoise, nor Rindoon, nor St. Dermot's Inch Cleraun, or the churches of St Patrick's nephew upon Inch Bc Fin. The beauties of our lakeside woods have been denied to them.

Once upon a time, not so long ago an enterprising garage proprietor brought all his employees on a picnic in his boat. Did they enjoy it? Ask any of them who were so fortunate as to have had the opportunity to tour the Shannon on that summer's day.

#### Passenger Service

Why haven't we a passenger service right here in Athlone? An entertainment as an alternative to the cinema? We must send a great deal of treasure out of our town each week to help to keep the film stars in luxury. Would it not be a good thing to spend some of it on the Shannon instead?

Why can't our visitors go up to view the lake, without having to charter a cabin cruiser for a week or more? Even of those tourist facilities, there are, alas! far too few.

The answer to these questions is very obvious. We have no money to venture upon such a project."

Correspondence from Abroad

Rumour has it our intrepid Moondrifiers were last reported in the Bordeaux region of France. Isn't that where they make the wine? makes sense.

<><><><><>

Sales of Inland Waterways Paraphernalia.

Sean's Bar and Emporium has as usual items which no self respecting member of the Inland Waterways Association should be without while journeying on our beautiful rivers and lakes. Apart from the obvious products sold in a pub, Sean also will part with, for a consideration, official I.W.A.I. badges, burgees, Irish Tricolours, Charts of the Shannon, Ordnance Survey Maps of Loughs' Ree and Derg. He also has a limited supply of the following books, "Green and Silver" by R.T.C. Rolt; "Silver River" a Celebration of 25 years of the Shannon Boat Rally; and the Athlone Branch publication of the "Silver Jubilee 1954 - 1979" of the I.W.A.I. Green and Silver costs £16. and the other two books £2.00 ea.

<><><><><>

Speech by Minister Michael D. Higgins,  
Dept. of Arts, Culture and the Gealtacht.

Roving Reporter managed to get an invitation to a Dublin Rally reception held in the Dept. of Arts and Culture on behalf of the Waterways Service last month. The following is an edited version of the speech made by Mr. Michael D. Higgins on that occasion.

"As I stated in my forward to your official programme for the rally, I have on many occasions since I became Minister with responsibility for inland waterways readily acknowledged in my public speeches the past and continuing contribution of the I.A.W.I. to the preservation and development of our inland waterways as an important part of our industrial heritage, as an amenity available for the enjoyment of the Irish people and as a tourist attraction. All of us who have an interest in our inland waterways are indebted to the I.W.A.I.

Co-operation between the Inland Waterways Association and my Waterways Service has been a significant factor in promoting development and usage of our waterways.

#### Waterways Development

In your rally programme I said that I looked forward to meeting with you at my Department and sharing with you details of what has been happening over the last few years to augment the development of our waterways. My commitment and the commitment of the Government to the development of our waterways is evident from the National Plan, which is providing the largest ever expenditure, (in excess of £20m) by Government on our Waterways. In addition to restoration and preservation, primary policy objectives are to increase use of our canals and to exploit their tourism and jobs potential having regard to Waterways Standards, environmental control, fishing and community interests and involvement.

Just some of the projects being or to be funded from my allocation of Structural Funds are as follows:

- \* I have provided for the extension of the Shannon Navigation to Ballinsloe through the development of the River Suck and also extending the navigation to Boyle.
- \* On the Barrow, work is ongoing towards improving the navigation and towpaths, developing the fishing and the provision of a boating centre.
- \* Preparatory studies towards the restoration of the sea locks and the provision of moorings in the Claddagh Basin in Galway have been completed and plans include the cleaning and landscaping of the Eglinton Canal and the establishment of a permanent Galway Waterways Exhibition Centre.
- \* There is the provision of a new pier at Lanesborough and the extension of the Quay at Shannonbridge to improve visitor facilities.
- \* The preparatory work has begun towards the restoration of the Tralee Ship Canal.
- \* I have allocated £1.1m towards the excavation of the river bed and the construction of a lock and weir in Limerick which will increase the Shannon navigation by 30% and increase the tidal window at Baals Bridge from 20 minutes to 17 hrs.
- \* The navigation on the Royal canal is being extended from Mullingar to the River Shannon at Clondra; You will be pleased to hear that the difficulties in

respect of the lifting bridge at Spencer Dock have been resolved and this work should commence shortly.

- \* Last January, I published the RPS Cairns report on the Royal Canal Corridor and I look forward to the implementation of this Strategic Plan. One of the recommendations in that plan was that a marina be situated at the 12th Lock.
- \* On most waterways, there are ongoing environmental works and landscape development.

### The Grand Canal

However, we are here to celebrate the Bicentenary of the opening of the Grand Canal Dock, and in that context I would like to talk a little bit about what is happening on the Grand Canal. A number of developments have taken place since you last travelled the stretch in Dublin. As you looked in you will have noticed the new jetty's at both Portobello and Mespil Road. A similar facility is planned for Grange. Possible locations are being examined for the "Safe Haven Mooring" as recommended in the B.S.M. report. Many of you will have moored at the temporary mooring chains in the Grand Canal Basin. These were necessary because of the numbers and also because of the amount of building work going on in the area. You will be pleased to hear that I intend shortly to advertise the opportunity to interested parties, to develop and operate moorings in the basin.

### Other Developments

Returning to the good news about the canals, I have allocated a substantial sum for miscellaneous angling development on the waterways. I was delighted recently to visit one special project under construction in Ballyteague in Co. Kildare and to see the beginning of an innovative mixed fishing facility which will lead the way for similar ventures across the country. Twenty mixed fishing stands are being built there to enable both able and disabled fishing enthusiasts to pursue the sport and similar facilities are to be provided on all of our inland waterways.

When I reflect upon the history of the canal and consider its future, it is clear to me that if the future of the Grand Canal and of our other inland waterways is to be guaranteed, increased usage as well as development and preservation will be necessary, making the canal a living part of our heritage. The Inland Waterways Association have been a vital part of this approach and I look forward to their continued involvement in the years to come.

<><><><><>

# The Lough Ree Report now published

On the 20<sup>th</sup> May last, in the form of a media information release, the Environmental Protection Agency published its Executive Summary entitled,

## Lough Ree An Investigation of Eutrophication and its Causes

Whilst the full report at this stage has not been seen by us we expect to have same soon. As expected the report is very similar to the Lough Derg Report in its thrust and findings. Given here is an edited version of the executive summary.

### 1: Background.

Lough Ree, the second largest lake on the Shannon in more recent times has become a major centre for such aquatic recreational activities as pleasure cruising, sailing, angling and swimming. Considerable pressures have been imposed on the water quality of Lough Ree in recent years through raised standards of living of the population, industrial development and intensification of agricultural activities. Increased inputs of nutrients to the inflowing rivers of the lake have resulted in its enrichment over the last two decades placing the lakes many uses at risk.

### 2 Eutrophication

The greatest threat to the quality of surface waters in Ireland is eutrophication which is defined as the enrichment of waters, beyond natural levels, by the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen. This enrichment commonly results in excessive production of cyanobacteria (formerly blue-green algae) and planktonic algae in open waters and larger attached algae and other rooted plants on the shorelines and shallow areas adjacent to enriched inputs.

It is now well established that phosphorus and nitrogen are the principle nutrients controlling algal and rooted plant growth in water. As phosphorus is normally less abundant than nitrogen in the aquatic environment relative to plant needs, its concentration is often reduced to very low levels by uptake during the growing season and it is frequently the "growth limiting" factor regulating the extent of algal and plant development. In lakes and rivers an increase in the input of phosphorus will normally result in an increase in algal and plant biomass. Waste discharges resulting from mans activities contain a high proportion of phosphorus.

### Sources of Nutrients.

In Ireland the principal sources of biologically available phosphorus and nitrogen are agricultural activities and discharges of domestic and industrial waste. These sources are conveniently divided into "point" and "non-point" categories. The "point" sources include sewered discharges of municipal and industrial wastes, whereas the "non point" category includes the run-off from land and other such diffuse sources.

### Restoring Water Quality.

A reduction in the levels of enrichment in lakes is normally attained by reducing the

phosphorus content of waste discharges. This is most easily achieved when remedial measures are applied to large single point emissions. Reductions of 90 per cent in the phosphorus content of such waste discharges are attainable and are currently being achieved at the Mullingar Sewage Treatment Plant.

### 3: Lough Ree.

#### The Investigation.

The investigation of Lough Ree was carried out between June 1993 and October 1994. Data arising from physico-chemical and biological examination of the lake waters, performed on 16 occasions during this period at 18 locations (including Loughs Killenure, Coosan and Ballykeeran known as the "Inner Lakes") and from chemical examinations of the main rivers in the catchment are presented and compared with previous measurements made on these waters in 1979-82. The principal municipal and industrial waste discharges in the catchment are listed and estimates were made of the quantities of nutrients in these discharges.

#### Principal Parameters.

The water quality of Lough Ree has deteriorated in recent years as a result of increased amounts of nutrients in wastes discharged to or entering surface waters in the Lake catchment. The principle parameters used to detect the presence and effects of such waste discharges, and which were measured in this survey, are as follows:

Dissolved oxygen; Biochemical Oxygen Demand; Total Phosphorus; Molybdate Reactive Phosphate; Morgans Soil Phosphorus Test; Oxidised Nitrogen; Chlorophyll "a"; and Water Transparency.

*Don't lose faith now, above listed for the record and for those of you with a flair for the pipette and Bunsen burner. Simply the report identifies Phosphate as the evil and its reduction as the quick fix, o.k. ?*

### 4. Results of Investigation.

#### Lough Ree.

In layman's terms the present survey when compared with the previous 1979 - 1982 survey shows a significant increase in the levels of phosphorus and chlorophyll (i.e. the main pigment in algae) and a marked reduction in water transparency. Without going into the nuts and bolts of it, in general the lake is now eutrophic with results of the upper section showing a strongly eutrophic status. The condition of the Inner Lakes is satisfactory.

#### Inflowing Rivers.

Consistent organic pollution and nutrient enrichment were recorded in the Rivers Camlin, Hind and Eslin during the period of examination. Marked increases in yukkies concentrations were recorded downstream of municipal and industrial effluent discharge points at Longford and very high values at corresponding locations at Dromod and Roscommon. In fact all the tributaries entered the Shannon and Lough Ree with excessive nutrient concentrations.

#### Annual Inflows to Lough Ree.

retention times, that is the length of time a particular sample of water spends in the lake, obtained by dividing the lake volume by the annual inflows, were in the range 66 to 77 days. The values will vary considerably throughout the years as they are dependant upon the inflow volume and it was estimated that the lake water changes approximately four times during the period November to April and once during the remaining months.

#### **Annual Nutrients Inputs to Lough Ree.**

The annual inputs of Molybdate Reactive Phosphate to Lough Ree have been estimated to be 56 to 61 tonnes for the three year period 1979 to 1981 and 94 and 110 tonnes for 1993 and 1994 respectively. It is estimated that 97 percent or more of the above inputs are attributable each year to loads carried by the inflowing rivers of which 52 percent was derived from the River Shannon catchment and 39 percent from the Inny River. It is also estimated that the greater part of this loading takes place during the months November to April and the total inputs of 21 to 27 tonnes (average 24 tonnes) only of M.R.P. occurred in the period May to October in 1993 and 1994.

#### **Sources of Nutrients.**

The greater proportion of the nutrient loading to Lough Ree is derived from non-point sources in the catchment. It is estimated that of the mean annual loads for the 1993-94 period 50 tonnes of M.R.P. are currently derived from non-point sources associated with man's activities, primarily agriculture. Background loads of 23 tonnes were estimated. It is further estimated that approximately 29 tonnes of phosphorus are discharged annually from point sources in the catchment. Of this loading 16 tonnes are derived from the effluent discharges from the 21 municipal sewage treatment plants serving a sewered population of approximately 25,000.

#### **Reduction of Nutrient Inputs.**

The critical phosphorus inputs for phytoplankton growth in Lough Ree occur during the months of May to October. It is therefore suggested that to restore the lake to a satisfactory condition in respect of its multipurpose uses it may be sufficient to reduce the phosphorus inputs to Lough Ree during the period May to October only. This would require a decrease in the M.R.P. from the present average May to October level in excess of 24 tonnes to less than the 17 tonnes estimated for the earlier period or a reduction of 7 tonnes in the input of M.R.P.

#### **5 Recommendations.**

The important inputs of phosphorus to Lough Ree, in respect of algal growth in the lake occur during the months of May to October. An integrated approach to reducing and controlling phosphorus discharges from municipal, industrial, agricultural, public and domestic sectors is proposed.

#### **Sewage Discharges.**

The installation of phosphorus removal facilities are recommended to be operated between May and October for the following sewage treatment plants: Longford and Roscommon.

#### **Industrial Discharges.**

The installation of phosphorus removal facilities are recommended to be operated between MAY AND October for the following industrial effluent treatment plants: Avonmore Irish Country Meats and Clondra Industries.

Through the above measures it is hoped to reduce the existing phosphorus discharge from these sources by approximately 7 tonnes.

In future new municipal sewage treatment plants in the Lough Ree catchment, downstream of Carrick-on-Shannon, should have phosphate removal facilities incorporated. In relation to new industries, classified as scheduled activities under the EPA act will be required to meet a specification regarding phosphate control.

#### **Agriculture.**

A wide range of recommendations are proposed to reduce phosphorus losses to water from the agriculture sector. These are principally concerned with the spreading of artificial fertilisers and the disposal of animal manure wastes on land.

#### **Other Measures.**

Further small reductions in the phosphorus inputs to Lough Ree, designed to reduce localised pollution, are to be achieved by:

- a) Use of phosphorus free detergents in lakeside dwellings.
- b) Improved efficiency of the peat silt entrapment structures at the Bord na Mona workings in the Shannon catchment.
- c) The completion of the installation of on-shore pump out facilities, including sluice tanks, at the designated harbours on the river Shannon to receive waste from cruisers.

\*\*\*\*\*

*We welcome this report and trust that the recommendations are taken on board immediately. However let us not be under any illusion that there is going to be a time element in seeing results. Remember the Derg Report whilst published in 1993 it is only now funding is being provided for its recommendations.*

*We note with some anxiety that unlike the Derg Report which was launched at Ministerial level amid great fanfare this report was forwarded with the minimum of publicity.*

*Congratulations to Dr. Jim Bowman and all concerned at the EPA for bringing this report to a successful launch. The very best tribute we can now give is an unwavering lobby by all to have it implemented. Meanwhile;*

*We urge Mr. Brendan Howlin, Minister for the Environment to have a serious think tank on the following,*

1. *Prioritise the allocation of funding to the Inland Waters treatment in preference to coastal.*
2. *Legislate for the use of only phosphorus free detergents, now.*
3. *Put all possible available manpower and resources into the Environmental Protection Agency to enable them to encourage us all to clean up our act. One feels that we have turned the corner ?*



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

September 1996.

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, IWAI will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St, Athlone on Monday, 2th September at 8.30pm.

<><><><><>

### Coming Events.

14th Sept.	Eric's "Blackpudd'n & Pawter" Rally.
27th Sept.	End-of-Season Dinner & Rally. More details in the next Aerial.

<><><><><>

We hope everyone enjoyed the summer season, admittedly not as good as last year, but still a very nice summer with plenty of sunshine and heat. The Shannon Rally certainly got another great week's weather as our roving reporter tells below. The season isn't ended yet and if it is anything like last year, there may be many more boating and sailing days yet to come.

<><><><><>

### Sympathy.

It was with deep sadness that we learned of the death of James Brady, following a short illness. James was a great supporter of the Inland Waterway events and activities throughout the country over many many years where his wit and exuberance was always welcome.

To his family and friends and his colleagues in Belturbet branch, I.W.A.I., we extend our deepest sympathy.



Low Water Levels.

For the umpteenth time, the saga of low water levels is repeated again this season. Lough Derg had its problems in the early part of the season but it has since recovered to manageable levels to date. Lough Ree was maintained at summer level to date, so well done for that.

The levels from Tarmonbarry to Rooskey and from Albert Lock to Leitrim/Lough Key were low during late July and early August which resulted in boats drawing in excess of 3 feet 9 inches hitting bottom in these levels during the Shannon Boat Rally. This is not an acceptable depth of water, particularly at high season, when one would expect to be able to travel through these stretches without suffering the fright, or the damage or the injury that a sudden unexpected grounding can cause.

Surely these isolated hazards should be dredged to give a minimum depth of 1.7 meters at Low Water thus eliminating this problem.

One must accept that rainfall plays a major role in the ability to maintain adequate levels throughout the system and consequently there will be periods when the water level will fall below the mythical "summer level". Sufficient data exists to establish a low water level for each section and an acceptable navigation channel should be designed with reference to this level.

Its time to put an end to this saga for once and for all.

<><><><><>

News from Abroad.

A brief bulletin has been received from Mick and Ruth, our intrepid sailors from Cadiz, on 17.8.96., apparently they couldn't contact us for a while as they didn't know where they were themselves because they had problems with their G.P.S. (Global Position System to you!). Painful!! But to the rescue, came Suki with a spare part, and now all is well and hence the communication. We're glad to hear from them and hope they will tell more about where they were when they were lost.

<><><><><>

Lough Ree Pollution.

The Minister for the Environment Mr. Brendan Howlin, T.D. has announced that grants amounting to almost £12 m. in E.U. Cohesion funds will be allocated to sewerage schemes in the counties of Roscommon and Longford.

This is very welcome news following the publication of the EPA report on the Lough Ree catchment area, which indicated that point sources in both these counties were the main contributors to the pollution problem in Lough Ree. Effective treatment and phosphate removal at these point sources would allow Lough Ree to recover in a relatively short period of time. Hopefully, these schemes will be implemented without delay. The extent of the algae blooms observed on Lough Ree this summer gives justifiable cause for concern regarding the overall and the localised water quality of the lake. The blooms observed on the swimming area at Hodson Bay must cast doubts on the effectiveness of the treatment plant in that area.

Unfortunately there is no allocation for county Westmeath, where the Inner Lakes would benefit from treatment plants and sewerage schemes in the Glasson, and Ballykeeran areas.

<><><><><>

36th SHANNON BOAT RALLY

BY

ROVING REPORTER

This year's Rally was notable in many respects - it had the biggest entry (69) for many years, which included a welcome 3 open boats, a record 6 hire-boats, and 2 narrow boats from the U.K. (the first such visitors for many decades) and of course it was the first rally to reach Acres Lake and Lough Allen. The weather was reasonably good - most of the rain fell during the nights - and there were many fine dry days.

The rallyistes assembled in Roosky where the first formality was Mass on the quay following the usual address by the Commodore, Kieran Walsh, and then a wine reception.

The next day major competitions commenced in earnest as these had to be finished by mid-week to allow time for the busy days spent locking up to Acres Lake and "down" to Lough Allen. The only alteration to the schedule caused by the weather was on Tuesday when due to high winds the anchoring overnight in Drumharlow was cancelled and Cootehall had some unexpected visitors!

Earlier the Fancy Dress Competition had seen Andy Fitzsimons take first prize in a Rock 'n Roll theme, dressed as "The King" himself.

In Leitrim a most enjoyable Bar-B-Q was held on the jetty and exceptional high quality and good value was provided by caterers Cafreys? of Keshcarrigan Restaurant. At it's conclusion the time-table was announced for the next day's big locking operation and first boats were moving at the unearthly hour of 7.30am.! However, thanks to the military efficiency of organisers Conor Furey and Mick Lynch, about 60 boats were moored in Acres by 5.30p.m. - an astounding performance. Thanks are due to the Waterways Service and all the volunteers on the locks. The R.N.L.I. Auction that night raised the now usual four figure sum for the lifeboats under the baton (and voice) of Sean Fitz.

Friday was a day of rest for the boats but a bundle of activity for the crews with briefing, coffee morning, jumping castle, Novice Ladies Boat handling, shopping in Drumshanbo, swimming competitions in the pool, Talent contests and fishing, all packed into the day.

On Saturday the rally departed for the historic day trip to Lough Allen - enjoyed by all - but what a shame that the two new jetties up there have no access to the land! Bureaucracy rules supreme!

At the general prize giving on Sunday morning at the new lock it was obvious that at least 3 or 4 boats were well in the running for the Premier and speculation was rife. At the closing dinner all was revealed and in the open boat class young David Brody not only won but came 4th overall. The new class for small cruisers (up to 27') competed for the Shiela Redmond Trophy and this was won by Paddy Hatton of Wexford. However, the big announcement was the Premier Award and there was a big cheer when Tom and Margaret Murphy of "Corbiere" were declared worthy and popular winners.

Our congratulations to Bernard Delaney and his hard-working committee.

RESULTS OF SHANNON RALLY 1995

<u>Premier Award:</u>	Tom & Margaret Murphy ( <i>Corbiere</i> )	583 marks
2nd overall :	Anne Hollinshead ( <i>Eastrogen Tara</i> )	579 marks
3rd overall :	Tom Meegan ( <i>Misty Dawn</i> )	555 marks
4th overall :	David Brody ( <i>Hibernian</i> )	540 marks
5th overall :	Jasper Coyle ( <i>Jarra</i> )	532 marks

Class Awards:-

Barge Class	<i>Jarra</i>
Cruiser Class Over 27'	1st <i>Eastrogen Tara</i> 2nd <i>Misty Dawn</i>
Cruiser Class Up to 27'	1st <i>Lady B Paddy Hatton</i> 2nd <i>Sea Change Denis Dunne</i>
Sailing Cruisers	<i>Pirate Robert Hall</i>
Open Boat	1st <i>Hibernian</i>

Starred and other competitions:-

Man Overboard	1st <i>Corbiere</i> 2nd Colm Carroll ( <i>Sweet Dreams</i> )
Inspection of Boats	1st <i>Corbiere</i> 2nd Colm Carroll ( <i>Sweet Dreams</i> )
Open Boats	<i>Hibernian</i>
Time Reliability	1st <i>Emerald Star Werner Theide</i> 2nd <i>Westrogan Donal McCarthy</i>
Mooring Comp.	1st <i>Coosan Lady Billy Henshaw</i> 2nd <i>Corbiere</i>
Navigation Comp.	1st <i>Sweet Dreams</i> 2nd <i>Coosan Lady</i>
1st Mate Comp.	1st <i>Eastrogen</i> 2nd <i>Pirate</i>
Rescue of Cruser (Over 27')	1st <i>Seoda Paul Bird</i> 2nd <i>Sweet Dreams</i>
(up to 27')	1st <i>Sea Change</i> 2nd <i>Lady B</i>

Boat By Canal	
Grand	<i>Corbiere</i>
Shannon/Earn	<i>Lady B</i>
Ladies Boat	
Handling	1st <i>Lady Ailleach</i> Margaret Groarke
Young Mariner	1st David Brody <i>Hibernian</i>
Sailing Races:-	
Boderg Cup	<i>Gillaroo</i> David Killeen
Bacardi Cup	<i>Philos</i> Damien Delaney
L. Ree Cup	<i>Philos</i> Damien Delaney
Doc. Farrell Award	<i>Crannagh</i> Reggie Redmond
Denis Byrne Award	<i>Shantrak</i> Cindy Nolan
Visitors	1st <i>Emerald Star</i> W. Teide 2nd <i>Surveyor</i> John Beaney
Charter Boat	1st <i>Eastrogan</i> 2nd <i>Westrogan</i>

<><><><><>

21st Lough Derg Rally - 1996.

Lough Derg seems to have just missed the good weather this year, but still the spirit of the rallyistes and organizers rose to the effort and bettered the elements. We wish to single out Michael O'Riordan, *Early Dawn*, who took part in the Shannon Rally then dashed the length of the river, and took the Premier Award in this rally. Well done, Michael, we taught you well!

<><><><><>

# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

October 1996.

The next meeting of the Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 7th October at 8.30pm.

<><><><><>

## Coming Events:-

- 27th Sept - End of Season Dinner in Wineport Restaurant, Glasson on Friday at 8.30pm. Tickets £15.00. Booking essential from Sean Fitzsimons 0902-92358 or Bridie Delaney 0902 75620. On Saturday morning, Traditionalists depart for Shannon Bridge returning on Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, or??? The rest, will cruise in company on Lough Ree, details of itinerary will be announced at the Dinner and will be subject to weather conditions.
- 6th Dec. Athlone Branch Annual General Meeting. Details of venue will be given in next Aerial.

<><><><><>

## News from Abroad.

After total silence during the spring and summer, at last our voyagers have contacted us. They seem, in spite of some adventures, to be in great form.

We received a report, which was heavily censored we suspect. But, not content with a written report, our fellow ditch crawlers, Chris and Kay Deacy, from the Corrib are on their way to Spain to meet up with Ruth and Mick Webb and "Moondrifter", so we'll get the real truth. This newsletter spares nothing in the effort to get the "inside" story, read on...

"Our story begins with a great farewell party in Sean's Bar after which we left Athlone the next day with a strange mixture of emotions - sadness at parting from good friends and yet anticipation and hope as we entered another phase in our lives. Even though both Ruth and self had retired several months previously we felt as if this journey down the Shannon marked the start of a new phase. Past the sainted and hallowed grounds of Clonmacnoise to the slightly less sainted harbour of Banagher. A long and recuperative sleep later and the world seemed a better place!

We successfully negotiated the dreaded Baals Bridge passage and rigged in the wet dock in Limerick. On our way to Kilrush, we stood by an engine failed cruiser with 8 very green-sick and worried people on board while the Kilrush lifeboat came to their rescue. No real danger but a nasty enough situation with a 5 - 6 westerly over a west going tide.

We coastal hopped from Kilrush to Valentia, to Crookhaven to Baltimore. At this stage the weather had been mostly easterlies or N.E. so we had to wait a few days for a "window" when we left for the Scillies.

I received a 5 day forecast via Valencia and later got a bill for £37., seems a bit prohibitive and not a little foolish if one considers the cost of search and rescue should things go wrong! We had a bumpy passage to the Scillies which took approx. 32 hours. I have never seen as much salt caked on the superstructure as when we arrived - but then for most of the journey we had spray flying over the deck. Just one heavy wave which tested some of the ventilators and found them wanting.

We had a few sunny/windy days in the Scillies, riding on a mooring between Tresco and Bryher - safe but just close enough to the weather to realise what was going on outside. During all this time the nights were best described as "brass monkey-ish" and we were delighted to have our diesel stove which kept the cabin cosy at night. Fishermen certainly earn their living in winter months!

We crossed the English Channel to Cameret in France and got the tides all wrong - mainly because we made too good progress early on we arrived in the Chanel de Four where tides run up to 7 knots at springs - when did we do it? Right first time - at the top of spring tides. Because of our good progress we arrived in the head of the Channel with just 1 hour of favourable tide left. There was not much choice really - press on! We flew past the buoys until with about 70% of the passage through the channel completed somebody pulled the plug! With the

against us we were down to 0.5 over the ground and at one stage I felt we went backwards until I gained a quieter patch with a "side slide". Some you win, some you lose. We eventually arrived on a fine sunny Saturday afternoon.

Good planning dictated that you do not bring coals to Newcastle - or wine to France. Great, you might think, but we failed to get any wine until Monday morning. Neither pubs nor restaurants would sell a bottle of wine - Sean could give marketing courses in Cameret!

We spent 3 weeks of May going down the west coast of France. The weather remained cold despite the lengthening days. Most of our stops were in marinas as nearly all the good anchorages at this stage have been developed into marinas, particularly towards the Biscay area. We spent over a week in the Morbihan, a series of huge sea loughs where the tides run up to 10 knots - a sight to behold! It was here that we experienced the only real fright we had so far! Picture the scene - sunshine - cold evening sunshine - but sunshine never the less. We drop the anchor with plenty of chain well outside a trot of moorings. Wind N.E. 3 and we are well sheltered in the lee of an island. By this time adequate wine supplies ballast the bilges. A bottle of best white is produced and not to put a tooth in it - it was laid into. This is the life, brochure stuff, great! While we were busy discussing and partaking of the local produce, unnoticed, the wind shifts to the west, the boat starts to rock and within 10 minutes we have a westerly 6 and developing! Before you could say Muscadet, Moondrifter had ridden over a dinghy buoy and was knocking chunks out of the gel coat with the dinghy stem-head fitting. With buoy on one side and dinghy on the other I could not engage the engine in gear for fear of fouling the prop. and being driven ashore.

"Oh bother!" I said. Eventually I was able to cut the dinghy painter and tow it about a mile across the lough to the sheltered side where we spent an uneasy night. In the morning, the dinghy owner, who had been watching the performance, reclaimed his dinghy non the worst for wear but you should have seen the side of Moondrifter.

"Bother it again" siz I. We eventually made our way up to Vannes at the head of the system. Vannes is a beautiful Medieval city with it's marina right in the city centre. There, between visits ashore, I repaired the gel coat so in a few days we were back on the road non the worst of the wear - but chastened and wiser - never drop your guard at sea.

Our travels through France continued. We tended to travel anywhere between 20 to 90 miles a day and if we liked the place stay a few days, explore and generally browse about the place.



Towards the end of May we were well into Biscay, down at the Ile de Yeu. We had intended staying a few days and await a favourable forecast. Up to now the weather was cold, showery and blustery; we had arrived with a 6/7 pushing us well reefed down at 6 knots + - great sailing but tiring after 10 or 12 hours. We enjoyed France, the services for yachts are really terrific - I'd say there were more yachts around in the Morbihan alone than exist in all of Ireland north and south. Its an unbelievable sight to view the masts in a mooring from the distance. The cost of living was not much different from Ireland. Booze was cheap but meat etc was dear or so Ruth tried to make out when I went to increase our wine stock.

After 1 day in the Ile de Yeu, just as Ruth had completed a formidable shopping list and was ready to go, a favourable forecast came through giving the first high pressure area we had seen since leaving. "Right" say I "We're off" - " You always do that" sez she, standing on the foredeck with her bag in her hand and several francs in the other. The high pressure came and we motored through the first day in warm, repeat warm sunshine. Towards evening a westerly breeze afforded several hours of sail until about dawn the wind left us again. Never mind, progress was good with just over 130 miles after 24 hours at sea. Again we motored and towards late afternoon the wind returned this time from the N.E. We were doing over 7 knots motor sailing when I did the sums. If we could hold this speed we would not as I had thought have to spend a second night at sea. And so it was, at 22.30 we crept into the yacht club moorings at Santender 39 hours out and 206 miles under the keel. As usual I was knackered and fell into a deep sleep soon after arrival, Not so Ruth! She was just drifting off when suddenly there was this loud flash and a bang. The local saints day was being celebrated and of course the fireworks launching pad was just across the harbour from where we lay. It did not disturb me but Ruth was a bit edgy for a few days after.

We loved the N.W. coast of Spain, beautiful sea scapes and beautiful helpful people who could not do enough for you. We day sailed across the top of Spain. In Gijon we met a red republican Scot who entertained us with stories over dinner. One night during dinner there was a tap on the hull - "Is this boat really from Dublin?" The query came from an Irishman named Buckley-O'Halloran who had lived there for 20 years as a pharmacist (his politics were of a more blue-ish variety). There was great crack over dinner and well into the small hours of the morning.

On to La Coruna, one of the cross roads of the yachting scene where the big guys on world trips meet the little fellows on their way to the Med., etc. Another minor

catastrophe. I was filling our big tank with water. It is situated under the quarter berth and must be filled via a hose in the cabin, hence it must be carefully watched when filling otherwise it overflows under the bunk and into the cabin. The tank was nearly empty and I seemed to spend hours watching it as it filled. Just at the critical moment a nubile French girl appears on the jetty - you know the rest - water all over the place, more "Oh, bother's" and Ruth, with that superior tone she can occasionally adopt, "That's what you get when you leave an adolescent to do a real man's job". I was in the dog house!

The rias of Spain are fantastic, a little like the Kenmare river, Bantry Bay area except we had warmth, sunshine and occasional fog. Fishing is the local industry from large trawlers down to day boats. The best Spanish wines are made here and of course purely for educational purposes we had to familiarise ourselves with each and every one of them. Again the format was sail a day and if you liked the place stay a few. Bayonna and the Isle de Ceis rated high on our list - a nice place to spend a week or two if the heat of the Med. did not appeal!

Portugal is really one long beach with the mountains further inland but oh! the bureaucracy! Each port you have to report to three different authorities, answer the same questions in writing. Everyone looks after their own patch and nobody seems to talk to each other. It just gets to you in the end. You arrive into a port maybe quite tired, and you have to go through these meaningless, stupid questionnaires again, and again, and again. That's the down side. A great plus are the Portuguese Trades, NW to NE winds that blow day after day and give great sailing provided you are going the right way - south. We met a few yachts heading north to the U.K. and it is really hard work. They usually get up around 0300 hrs. and sail until about 1200 when the wind really starts to pipe up. In the old days the sailing ships used to sail west out into the Atlantic 600 to 1000 miles looking for the S.Westerlys before turning north for the U.K. Overall we thought the Spanish were a lot friendlier and certainly sailed more. Having said that Oporto and Lisbon are beautiful cities - a little down at the heel but full of fantastic buildings and street-scapes. We anchored out alot in the Algarve. There is a chain of islands off the coast that allow yachts to do this - going into the marinas for the occasional shower and water etc. Again the marinas seem to be distanced to allow day sailing between 30 and 80 miles. The cost of marinas varies between £8 and £20 per night depending on how up market they are. Again there is not really any great difference in cost of living, as we experienced it. Some items were cheap, while others,

electrical for example, are much dearer than in Ireland. Wine and drink are cheaper as is eating out but then their restaurants by and large, would not compare with those in Ireland.

Back in Spain again, we really loved Cadiz and its surroundings. Cadiz is a real, non-touristy Spanish city. Untouched by world war two, the narrow streets and plazas all survive. We even came across a Calle O'Reilly - now who the hell was O'Reilly? An evening here at a street side cafe watching the world go by in the evening sunshine - it beats cycling up Ballykeeren hill with the wind and rain in your face.

Gibraltar we found dirty and disappointing, it looks as if progress somehow eludes it and yet the port was chock-a-block full of shipping. They boast duty free shopping but cruiser-mart would beat it hands down for yachting equipment. Having said that it is a lot easier to shop and find your way around when English is the means of communication, though it's amazing how easy it becomes to shop in sign language - point at what you want and they write down the price, bingo! Ruth was shopping in Safeways, the big supermarket in Gib. when she looked down one of the isles only to see a familiar face, Eric, a German friend of ours who visited us in Ireland in '94. He had just arrived from Turkey via the Balearics. We exchanged many tales over dinner and no doubt will meet soon again as both of us are booked into Almerimar for the winter.

The winter storms in the Med. are really something so a safe harbour is essential and from what we have seen and heard Almerimar is one of the safest. It's about 200 Kms. east of Malaga and we hope to be there by 1st Oct. As I write this in Estapona we have been gale-bound for the last three days with no sign of a let up. It takes some getting used to - the sun keeps shining but the wind would have you over. Better in here than outside. We are only about 30 miles north of Gibraltar and local knowledge is that you can always add at least two wind strengths when you consider what's going on in the straits - today they have forecast a 9 with very rough seas.

Give our regards to all our friends,

All the best for now

Mike and Ruth.

<><><><><>

Letters to the Editor.

5 Central Tce.,  
Northgate St.,  
Athlone.

21.8.96.

Dear Editor,

To-day, I have to put pen to paper in sheer frustration, having just returned from a visit to the Hodson Bay area of Lough Ree. This visit was the straw that finally broke the camels back!

On frequent occasions during this summer, I have visited the carpark at the north bay, a very pleasant area, beautifully maintained by Roscommon County Council, having a roomy carpark, picnic tables and a lovely view out over the lake.

This bay is horseshoe-shaped, each side having reed beds, and on the right hand side, the tastefully designed toilet block.

The water level in this bay is very shallow, making it an ideal place for young people to swim in safety.

Ideal you might say. Not so, I'm afraid.

During the month of July, the whole "U" shape of the bay was covered by a "side to side" carpet of green gunge, while, on every visit - approx. 12 or more over the season, the smell from the reed bed on the right hand side of the bay was appalling!

Why?

Sincerely,

Eileen O'Brien.

<><><><><>

## New Marina, Athlone.

The news that Athlone's Marina which will be situated at the old Apparel building above the bridge on the Leinster side of the river, will commence building in early October and should be completed by next summer. We have also heard that the hotel/apartment block which is planned for the Apparel site on Northgate Street has got planning permission approval from the U.D.C., and if there are no objections lodged, this development should go ahead soon. This development should be a very attractive addition to the riverscape of Athlone. We further understand that the current public access to the river from Abbey Road will continue to exist.

<><><><><>

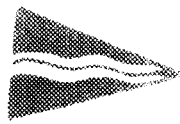
The following recipe could help us to get over the rigours of a hectic summer on our inland waterways:-

## Creme de cassis.

2lbs. blackcurrants, stalks removed.  
One and three quarter pints Red Wine.  
2 lbs. sugar  
About one and a quarter pints Brandy.

1. Puree the blackcurrants briefly in a food processor or blender and transfer to a glass or china bowl and pour over the wine. Stir well, cover and leave to marinate overnight.
2. Next day tip the contents of bowl into a jelly bag set over a large heavy pan or preserving pan and leave to drip through.
3. Stir in the sugar into the juice and set the pan over a low heat, continuing to stir until all the sugar has dissolved. Leave the pan uncovered on the lowest heat setting for about one and a half hours so that the contents barely simmer. (the idea is to thicken the syrup very slowly without evaporating the alcohol). Leave to cool.
4. In order to get the right balance of syrup to brandy, measure three wine glasses of syrup into a large jug and add one wine glass of brandy, and so on until syrup is used up. Stir well and pour into clean bottles, cork firmly and store for at least 2 weeks before using. Consume within a year.

<><><><><>



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

November 1996.

The next meeting of Athlone Branch of I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday, 4th November at 8.30pm.

<><><><><>

## Notice of Annual General Meeting.

The A.G.M. of Athlone Branch, Inland Waterways of Ireland, will be held in the Prince of Wales Hotel on Friday 6th December 1996 at 8.30pm. All members are invited to attend.

<><><><><>

### Coming Events.

Sat., 16th Nov.

Royal Canal music night in Pat Newman's Pub, Kenagh, with Billy Henshaw's Royal Canal Band. Another great night is promised. Bus will leave Sean's Bar at 8.30 sharp. Contact Damien Delaney at 0902-75620

Fri., 29th Nov.

I.W.A.I. Extraordinary General Meeting at 8pm in the Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar. (see below).

Fri., 6th Dec.

Athlone A.G.M.

Remember! Remember! Remember!!!!

I.W.A.I. Extraordinary General Meeting.

An E.G.M. of the Association will take place on Friday 29th November 1996 in Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, at 8pm.

The Agenda:-

Special Resolution to alter certain provisions of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in accordance with the requirements of the Revenue Commissioners Charities Section, and as notified to the Chairman and Secretary of each Branch in compliance with Article 15 of the Articles of Association of the Company.

The proposed alterations are technical in nature and are necessary to enable the Company to obtain charitable status.

This will be on the Agenda of the next branch meeting on the 4th November, so anyone interested in further information should attend this meeting.

<><><><><>

Grand Canal Closure.

The Grand Canal will be closed to Navigation from the 1st January 1997 to the 31st March 1997 to facilitate bank repair in the Edenderry area.

Boat owners are advised to complete their passage to winter moorings before this period.

<><><><><>

Royal Canal.

Killucan Branch of the Royal Canal Amenity Group have successfully moved a full size Canal barge by road from Killucan to a F.A.A. workshop in Mullingar. The Barge, known as the "Killucan Barge" was awarded by the Waterways Service to the Killucan and District Development Group, comprising the Killucan, Raharney and Rathwire district associations in addition to R.C.A.G.

The Barge will be restored and fitted out for use on the Royal Canal by youth groups and for other social functions. The project is assisted by a £2,000.00 donation from Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I., but a lot more funding is required.

Ballymahon branch, R.C.A.G. are planning to restore the old ticket office at Brannigan harbour. This project will also receive assistance from the proceeds from sales of Green and Silver, which were donated to the R.C.A.G by Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I.

As mentioned above, the Athlone Branch are organising another music night in Pat Newmans in Kenagh to raise funds for the canal restoration in the Foigha/Kenagh area. Your support for this worthy project would be most welcome. A bus will leave Sean's Bar at 8.30pm on Saturday, 16th November. Book your seat with Damien Delaney 0902 75620.

<><><><><>

Coosan Comment.

Harry Rice's Column of November, 1953 - part 3 - continued from June Aerial.

"Passenger Service".

"A "Steamer" suited to our great inland seas, Lough Derg and Lough Ree, would have to be stoutly built. Many safeguard for passengers would have to be supplied - life-saving equipment, guard rails to stop the young, and not so young, from falling overboard, ample hatches to allow people to get out on deck should someone start a panic, a staff with the requisite knowledge to run a boat.

"The project was once discussed at a public meeting. More power to its sponsors. The difficulties of procuring a suitable vessel, with the small capital available proved too great.

"Nobody outside Athlone joined in. Perhaps the project did not receive sufficient publicity, for surely every town upon the Shannon, from Killaloe to Boyle, would have equally benefited. If we are interested in "tourism", to borrow an An Tostal term, and if - as has been recently stated - we collect £25 million pounds a year from our visitors, it is a matter that concerns the Nation as a whole.



"It could be achieved if we had a passenger service on the Shannon. A vessel suitable for such a project would require 17 feet of clearance from the waterline. That is three feet more than the proposed fixed bridge affords.

"Every citizen in this country has an equal right to share in its delights. It is for all that we should keep the Shannon open.

#### New Legislation

"The necessary sanction to put a fixed bridge on the Shannon requires new legislation in the Dail. That it shall meet with bitter opposition, there seems little doubt. There are T.D.'s who have weighed the consequences and who realise that its passing would prove a major tragedy for Ireland. We must not leave them, so many voices crying in the wilderness.

"Is there nothing left out of the annual twenty-five million pound tourist assets top save the Shannon?

"We spent, wisely, some people consider, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds to bring new blood to our horse breeding industry. We spent over a million pounds to provide shelter for bus passengers in Dublin. We spent a very considerable sum to remove a bump off the street in Moate. And why not, if it is considered essential? But isn't a swing bridge across the Shannon essential too?

"Are we such paupers that Dark Rosaleen must see her beautiful river strangled? If so, that God Save Ireland.

From me to you

Harry Rice,  
Coosan Point."

<><><><><>

#### To the Rescue of the Rescuers.

On Saturday morning, 26th October, Sean Fitzsimons lent his premises to a Coffee Morning and Sale of Christmas Cards in aid of R.N.L.I. a cause very close to Sean's heart. He has, over many years, run the very successful raffle on the Shannon Rally, which raised many thousands

of pounds towards this worthy cause. When Sean was asked how the morning had gone he said he was still counting, and selling more Christmas Cards and said a big Thank You to all who called into the pub and to those who could not come but sent donations instead.

<><><><><>

### Recipe.

We happen to have to hand another marvellous recipe from our Coosan Kitchen Galley slave. We hope you all enjoyed last month's cookery recipe and that the hangovers were not too bad. The following recipe is great as it requires no cooking.

#### Italian Biscuit Cake.

4oz Butter,  
 4oz Amaretti biscuits  
 2oz stem ginger in syrup drained.  
 4oz plain chocolate  
 1 tbsp. golden syrup  
 3oz dried ready to eat apricots chopped  
 2oz glace cherries  
 2oz raisins  
 2oz hazelnuts.

1 Line a 1lb. loaf tin with plastic film, leaving a large enough overhang on each side to fold over the top. Roughly crush the Amaretti biscuits and set aside. Chop the ginger.

2 Break the chocolate into a pan over a medium heat, add the syrup and butter and stir until melted and well blended.

3 Stir the biscuits, stem ginger, apricots, cherries, raisins and hazel nuts into the pan.

4 Pack the mixture into the tin and level the top. Fold the plastic film over the cake and leave in the fridge to set for at least 1 hour. Remove from tin, peel off the film and serve in thin slices.

ENJOY.

<><><><><>

End of Season Dinner and Rally.

The Dinner was a great success both as regards venue, a first for us and as regards numbers in the 80's. The best turn out for a good while. Everyone had great praise for the food and as usual at our gatherings there was plenty of conversation. The Rally was another thing. The southern section were definitely the better off, as the sheltered river section to Shannon Bridge was easily a winner. The Northern section were storm bound in Hodson Bay, having made a perilous dash into the harbour, where they languished in the luxurious surrounding of the Hodson Bay Hotel, and, we believe, gate-crashed two weddings.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;

Riverfront, Athlone.

This past summer, many voyagers of the Shannon will have noticed the building going on on the west bank of the Shannon behind the Lock in Athlone, and surely have applauded this development, which replaces the awful derelict site which existed for so long and was such an eye-sore on the southern aspect of the town as seen by approaching craft from the south.

Now we are glad to say, on the East bank of the river, above the Athlone Bridge, the new marine is to begin in a short time and behind this marina on the old Silverlea site, planning permission has been granted to a developer who is putting a very attractive four star hotel.

The hotel will have 97 bedrooms with many extra facilities, including a swimming pool, conference centre and other leisure facilities like an aerobics room, sauna and steam-room.

Apart from the immediate developments on the riverfront, a new shopping centre has already commenced building at Golden Island, and another shopping centre is to commence in Pearse St.

All this new development can only improve the image of Athlone, and afford our visitors, by road, rail or river, a warm and lively welcome in future. Nearly forgot to mention the new Hostel beside the Rail/Bus Station should a crew member have to wait overnight for your arrival in Athlone.

&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;&lt;&gt;



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

December 1996

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will be our Annual General Meeting and will take place in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone, on Friday, 6th December 1996 at 8.30 pm. All members are very welcome.

Because this is the A.G.M. a large turnout is expected. There will be a cheese and wine reception before the meeting.

We would appreciate your active interest in this meeting and maybe you could find some spare time during your busy lives to help out in the running of our Branch.

You are all very welcome.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Coming Events.

Sat., 14th Dec. - Royal Canal Night - a return match! - at the Point! Honest, it's true, Coosan Point. In the Lough Ree Inn at 8.30 for 9.00pm. All in aid of the Kenagh/Foigha RCAG restoration Fund.

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*Christmas\*\*\*

The committee of Athlone Branch wish everyone of you a very happy Christmas and New Year.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lough Ree Yacht Club.

Lough Ree Yacht Club are planning a First Aid Course (Certificate) and a Yachtmaster (Certificate) Course. Anyone interested in either of these Courses should contact Damien Delaney - 0902-75620. A.S.A.P.

\*\*\*\*\*

Christmas Gifts.

A copy of "Green and Silver" by L.T.C. Rolt @ £16.00 or an I.W.A.I. Burgee @ £9.00 or an I.W.A.I. Badge @ £2.00. All available in Sean's Bar, Main St. Athlone.

\*\*\*\*\*

Royal Canal N i g h t.

"I hope this bus isn't going to be late coming home" was heard as we boarded the bus at Sean's Bar and set off for Pat Newman's in Kenagh on Friday, 16th November. Pat's newly refurbished lounge looked splendid, very tastefully fitted mahogany timberwork and comfortable seating, doubling the capacity of the old premises, which soon filled up with Athlone I.W.A.I. and Kenagh/Foigha R.C.A.G. supporters.

Billy Henshaw and his Royal Canal Band, (Larry Benson, Michael Martin, Joe Lackin, Billy Henshaw jnr and David Henshaw) got the music going with all the old familiar favourites, which livened the spirits. Guest artists, Pauline, Flan and Noel answered the noble call, while Kenagh, not wanting to be outdone, produced Siobhan, Tony and John.

Food was served and as we all munched merrily the raffle netted over £200.00.

More music and craic built the momentum to a magical jam session finale which brought the crowd to their feet

yelling for more! And more they got, and it was brilliant.

The Kenagh people demanded a return session, which was duly arranged for the Lough Ree Inn, Coosan Point on Saturday 14th December - a night not to be missed.

While the fund raising aspect of these music nights is very important for the ongoing restoration projects, what is equally important is the bond of friendship and support that is developed between the I.W.A.I. and the R.C.A.G. people.

Our thanks to the musicians, guests and supporters, and to the Kenagh/Foigha branch for organising the food, prizes, etc. We are hoping to have an even bigger night in the Lough Ree Inn on the 14th December.

The bus was late leaving Kenagh! .... but nobody cared.

\*\*\*\*\*

From Coosan Kitchen: Now that all the Christmas Cakes and Plum Puddings are all cooked and maturing, the following treat can be enjoyed with a clear conscience.

Scone Roll-Ups.

1 tsp. Baking Powder; Half tsp. ground cinnamon;  
8 oz self-raising flour; 2 oz Butter, diced;  
1 or 2 oz castor sugar; 2 oz chopped hazel or almond nuts  
Quarter pint milk; 4 ozs mixed fruit (raisins, sultanas etc.)

1 Preheat oven to 200c/400f/6 gas. Grease a 8 in shallow round cake tin.

2. Sift flour and cinnamon into a bowl. Add butter and rub into the flour, stir in sugar. (This can be done in a food processor), add a few of the nuts.

3. Mix to a soft dough with milk and turn out on to a lightly floured board and knead very lightly. Roll out to a 8" by 10" rectangle, scatter over the fruit and then starting from one short side roll up the dough.

4. Cut withways into eight rounds and arrange in the tin. One in the middle and seven around it, sprinkle over the rest of the nuts. Bake for 30 mins. or until risen and golden. Transfer to a wire tray and brush with a little honey and leave to cool. Pull or cut the scones apart and serve.

\*\*\*\*\*

# The Shannon Forum meet to discuss The Bowman Report on The Lough Ree Water Quality Survey

On Wednesday , 20<sup>th</sup> November last, at the request of The Lough Ree Conservation Society, a special sitting of the Shannon Forum was held to deal with the Water Quality Survey Report of Lough Ree.

Guest Speakers included the author of the Report, Dr. Jim Bowman of the Environmental Research Unit , Department of the Environment, Mr. James Coyle, Regional College, Athlone, and Mr. Jim Devlin, Executive Secretary, IFA, Environmental Committee.

The meeting , held in the Council Chambers of the Athlone Urban District Council, was well attended and the proceedings were covered by representatives of RTE and the Media.

The seriousness of the deterioration of the water quality on Lough Ree , as is the case on the sister lake Lough Derg, hopefully, is now acknowledged and every effort must be made to implement the recommendations of the report. Namely the installation of tertiary treatment at all municipal sewage disposal points and the rigid enforcement of control of disposal of commercial waste. It is felt that this is achievable in the short term providing that the funding is put in place and that the Environmental Protection Agency is given the resources to monitor and control the licences now mandatory for waste disposal.

The fact that it is estimated that almost half of the molybdate reactive phosphate, the main pollutant factor, is derived principally from agricultural activity is a much more complex issue and more problematic to resolve. The real success in

the recovery of the water quality of the lake will hinge on the response from the farming community .

Mr Andrew Fogarty of the Lough Ree Conservation Society in his presentation stated that there is increasing evidence that farmers could significantly reduce phosphorus inputs in their farms without reducing production. This would lead to increased profit for the farmer and at the same time reverse the trends of eutrophication in Lough Ree. The problem of eutrophication in Lough Ree needs an integrated approach which must include watershed management plans.

Mr. Jim Devlin , Executive Secretary, IFA, Environmental Committee stated that this is being taken on board by its members and that the IFA realises the way forward is by the Green and Environmental approach. However he does acknowledge that it will take a while for this to succeed. The take up on the number of farms participating in the REPS scheme is encouraging and through this every incentive is available to promote the protection of the environment. Whilst at present Dairy Farmers are ineligible to participate in the scheme this is being pursued with the Department of Agriculture. Should the Dairy farming be eligible it would have a significant impact.

It was decided by the Forum to make representation at Ministerial level to seek financial support from the Manufacturers and Suppliers of detergent and fertilisers to fund a major promotional drive in the use of phosphate free products.

## **Press release on Behalf of the Lough Ree Conservation Society**

**( On the occasion of the Shannon Forum Nov 96 debate On The Bowman Report of Lough Ree Water Quality )**

Those of us who live by the shores of Lough Ree and avail of it as a facility for recreation and livelihood have noted with horror its accelerated deterioration. In an effort to co-ordinate local concern and to direct this concern to promote action which would save the lake, the above mentioned society was founded. Founding members were co-opted from The Lough Ree Anglers, Inland Waterways, An Taisce, Irish Wildbird Conservancy, Athlone Historical Society and Longford Historical Society. The membership also includes individuals who, because of their concern or professional expertise, lend assistance.

The group wholeheartedly endorses the finding of Dr. Jim Bowman's report entitled "Lough Ree An Investigation of Eutrophication and its Causes." The biggest threat to the water quality on Lough Ree is Eutrophication. Lough Ree has been recently quantified as being strongly eutrophic. Eutrophication is the enrichment of waters by inorganic nutrients, principally phosphorus and nitrogen. The principal sources of these nutrients are agricultural activities and waste discharges from municipal and industrial waste treatment plants. Essentially the water is fertilised by inorganic nutrients resulting in excessive plant growth which may be either microscopic free floating forms (planktonic) or larger macroscopic plants. This increased growth of plants in the lakes leads to a reduction in the quality of the lake water, putting many of the beneficial uses of the lake at risk. The deleterious effects of eutrophication include the following:-

Deoxygenating of the water leading to the reduction of commercially important species such as salmon and trout.

Increased vegetation may impede water flow and navigation .

The water may be injurious to health due to the presence of potentially toxic algae

Treatment of potable water may be difficult and costly

Planktonic algal blooms may occur turning the lake a pea soup green

The amenity value of the water may decrease with a knock on adverse effect on the tourist industry

Water transparency is a good indicator of the trophic status of the water body. In unenriched waters, the transparency value is greater than 3 meters. Transparency of 0.3 meters have been reported in certain parts of Lough Ree i.e. a ten fold reduction in water clarity. In addition to the aesthetic pollution caused by eutrophication, some of the algae may be toxic. In Caragh lake in Kerry, several dog fatalities were reported due the dogs coming in contact with toxic algae. Algal toxins can also kill larger animals, including cattle, sheep and horses. In Lough Ree the potentially toxic algae, *Anabaena* spp., *Microcystis aeruginosa* and *Oscillatoria* spp. were, recorded.

The Bowman report highlights the contribution of the tributaries, the Camlin, the Hind and the Eslin to eutrophication observed in Lough Ree. These tributaries contain excessive concentrations of nitrogen and



phosphorus as well as high organic loading, especially downstream of municipal and industrial discharge points. These point sources of pollution require urgent attention particularly in regard to their high phosphorus content. A high proportion of the nutrients that cause eutrophication in Lough Ree are derived from diffuse sources principally of agricultural origin. In Lough Ree it is estimated that 50 tonnes out of a total of 110 tonnes of Molybdate reactive phosphate in the lake is derived principally from agricultural activity. Molybdate reactive phosphate is a measure of the phosphorus most readily used by aquatic algae. However there is much that the farmer can do to reduce the phosphorus load in particular, by following codes of good practice for safe collection, storage and spreading of animal manure's and by avoiding overuse of phosphorus fertilisers. In an article published in the Irish Journal of Agricultural Research, a Teagasc researcher demonstrated that over 40,000 tonnes of phosphorus accumulates in Irish soils each year due to the fact that inputs are approximately twice the amount which are taken from the farms in agricultural products. The build up of soil phosphorus is almost certainly contributing to increased run-off of soluble phosphorus inland waters and is unsustainable (Tunney, H. 1990). Although farmers have been told for several years that they are generally using more phosphorus than is necessary, there is little evidence that they have availed of this opportunity to reduce their costs and concomitantly reduce eutrophication (Sherwood, M. 1996). One control strategy, successfully adopted in other countries is to provide farmers with free soil phosphorus testing and to only add phosphorus as needed. In another recent paper published by Teagasc researchers (Tunney et al. 1996), it was recommended that strategies be adopted by the agricultural sector to reduce the diffuse loss of phosphorus. This would involve careful management of fertilisers and slurry. Nutrient balance studies have shown that there is a large annual surplus input of phosphorus compared with the output which is leading to a continuing build up of phosphorus in the soil. There is increasing evidence that farmers could significantly reduce phosphorus inputs in their farms without reducing production. This would lead to increased profit for the farmer and at the same time reverse the trends of eutrophication in Lough Ree.

The problem of eutrophication in Lough Ree needs an integrated approach which must include watershed nutrient management plans.

#### References

- Sherwood, M. (1996). The quality status of Irish Waters. Proceedings of Tyndall School, Carlow, Environmental Conference, 8-9th May 1996 on Water Quality and Wastes.
- Tunney, H. (1990). A note on a balance sheet approach to estimating the phosphorus fertiliser needs of agriculture. Irish Journal of Agricultural Research 29:149-154.
- Tunney, H. R.H. Foy, and O.F. Carton. (1996) Phosphorus inputs from diffuse agricultural sources. Proceedings of Royal Irish Academy seminar 12-13th March 1996 on Eutrophication in Irish Waters.

JAN. 1997.



# Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

*A very happy New Year to all our Members.*

*The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone at 8.30pm. Monday 13<sup>th</sup> JANUARY*

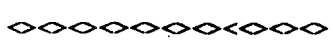
### Coming Events:

*Saturday 25th January.*

*Royal Canal Music Night in Ballymahon. Bus leaves Sean's Bar at 8.30pm. Contact Damien Delaney 0902-75620.*

*Friday 7th February.*

*Walter Borner Slide Show. In the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone at 8.30pm.*



### Greetings from our New Chairman.

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for electing me as 1997 Chairman on your behalf and wish to thank the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Damien Delaney, his committee and the various committees for their dedication to the association and their achievements over the year. I assure you the incoming committee and sub committees will aspire to your goals. These Aspirations can be achieved by your support and participation, I look forward to your attendance at our monthly meetings and various functions, where you can air your views and ensure that the committee are kept on their toes. As you sit by the fire on these cold winter nights reading these few lines, spare a thought for your Aerial committee, the editor and member would also enjoy reading about your adventures or plans for the year. We wait in anticipation for your letters, or articles, or criticisms, or anything printable.*

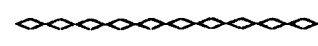
*I also take this opportunity to wish you a Happy, Safe and Enjoyable Sailing season in 1997.*

### Subscriptions

*This X means that the £12.00 membership subscription is now due. As you can see, we are keeping our sub. the same as last year, and we would be very pleased to receive early payment.*

### Harry Rice Competition. Reminder

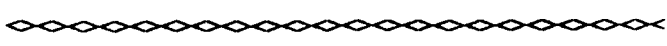
*Now is probably a suitable time to remind you that the Harry Rice competition will be held again this year and is open to all age groups. Essays, Log books, paintings, etc., should be submitted to Rosmary Furlong before the end of February, so get cracking! Please include your name, address and age with your entry. Children have been the best supporters of this competition, but we would also like to have some adult entrants (you needn't give your age, "adult" will suffice.*



### A new Arrival.

*A thlone Branch, I.W.A.I wish to announce the arrival of our new AST. PC., which will bring us into the 21st century. We hope to provide a more professional newsletter: to give and receive information pertinent to inland waterways and eventually surf the net. (sorry about the jargon, just showing off!).*

*In time we would like to compile a directory of E-Mail addresses for our members, so if you have one, please let us know.*



### Mick and Ruth.

*Great to see our intrepid voyagers, Mick and Ruth, who paid a flying visit for a week in December. Both looking tanned, relaxed and healthy. Mike sporting a nautical beard, and Ruth sporting a beaming smile. makes you wonder where*

*and places visited kept us all agog and envious of their care free lifestyle. Alas, father time and a busy schedule of other appointments cut their stay with us too short, but they promised to keep us updated on their progress in '97.*

*They are wintering in Almerimar, which is on the south eastern coast of Spain until May. They then will sail down the coast of Italy, stopping off as the mood and the venues take their fancy, hoping to winter somewhere in or near Malta. Wouldn't you 'hate that'.*

*We will keep you posted.*



### **Royal Canal Night.**

They surpassed themselves again! The Royal Canal Band consisting of Billy Henshaw ,snr, Larry Benson, Michael Martin and Joe Lacken, ably supported by Billy Henshaw, jnr, David Henshaw, Paul Fogarty, Noel Breen, Flan Barnwell, Pauline Downey, Tony Moran, John Tanner and a host of other talented guests put on a great show in Duffy's Lough Ree Inn on the 14th December. Another very successful night which raised £300 for the Foigha/Fenagh branch of R.C.A.G.

Honor was upheld when Pauline Downey won the ladies talent contest amid fierce competition from a very strong Kenagh team. John Tanner won the mens talent contest. Pat Newman and Evelyn O'Connor won the old time waltz competition, which all agreed was a very satisfactory result. Our thanks to the loyal supporters from Kenagh, Foigha and Athlone whose participation made a great success of the night.

Our thanks to the doners of prizes for the raffle:- D. Yeats, S. Bradbury, P. Brady, D. Griffin, B. Delaney, E. O'Connor, J. Nicholson, B. Henshaw, D. Henshaw, M. Breen, N. Duffy, P. Newman, D. Walsh, Eastern Electrical, Mallinckrodt, Dooley's, Chadwicks, Hodson Bay Hotel, Dunnes Stores, Dolan Marketing.

Also thanks to the people who organised the food:- B. Delaney, G. Walsh, M. Breen, K. Brady, M. Pragnell, E. O'Connor, M. Nugent and M. Horan.

Our next outing will be to Ballymahon on Saturday 25th January. A Bus will be arranged so we hope to see you there. A good night out is guaranteed.

### **A.G.M. REPORT.**

The A.G.M. of Athlone branch, I.W.A.I. was held on Friday, 5th Dec, in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone. The meeting was preceded by a cheese and wine reception, compliments of Quinnsworth and Alan Algeo respectively.

Out going Chairman Damien Delaney complemented the branch officers and the members of the Shannon Rally and Aerial committees for their work during the year. He paid special tribute to the Royal Canal Band and their loyal supporters for their valuable contribution towards the Royal canal restoration fund. Sales of "Green and Silver" also contributed to the Royal Canal and Shannon Harbour development funds, in addition to building a healthy branch development reserve thanks mainly to the efforts of Sean Fitzsimons.

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland are expected to be granted Charitable Status by the Revenue Commissioners in the near future, which should benefit the association as a whole, thanks mainly to the efforts of Reggie Redmond in his capacity as treasurer of I.W.A.I. Council.

The E.P.A. report on Lough Ree was published and indicated that Lough Ree was at a critical stage and required urgent remedial action to reduce the input level of phosphates from both urban and agricultural sources. Declan Walsh, acting for the Branch, and the Lough Ree Conservation Group generated most of the drive to get action on the recommendations of the report, with some success, but these things take time, and hopefully will not be too late.

Progress was reported on the new Marina at Athlone which is expected to start early in '97 and be in service for the coming season.

Work has started on the new lock at Ballinasloe but it may not be in service during the '97 season.

Finally, our thanks to Eileen O'Brien who does all the hard work in putting the Aerial newsletter together each month.

Secretary Evelyn O'Connor reported that attendances at monthly meetings were small and suggested that better

attendances would have the two-fold benefit of a better

cross-section of views and a more equitable sharing of the work load

The Officers for the coming year are:

*The Treasurer's Report showed the branch to be in a healthy financial state, with a good development reserve from sales of "Green and Silver". Our thanks to Sean Fitzsimons and our Honorary Auditor, Reggie Redmond.*

*Shannon Rally Committee:- Commodore: Denis Tracey; Vice Commodore: Sam Herraghty; D. Skeehan, P. Brady, B. Henshaw, N. Tracey, E. O'Connor, C. Furey, F. Furey and M. Lynch. S. FITZSIMONS, D. DELANEY,*

*The Officers for the coming year are: Chairman: Harry Nugent; Vice-Chair: Declan Walsh; Secretary: Evelyn O'Connor; Treasurer: S. Fitzsimons; Development Officer: D. Walsh; Hon. Auditor: R. Redmond*

*Aerial Committee:- H. Nugent, E. O'Brien, D. Delaney, B. Delaney, R. Furlong, S. Fitzsimons, D. Pragnell.*