

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH OF THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

January 1999

*A Very Happy Healthy
and Prosperous New Year*

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Athlone on Monday, 11th January 1999 at 8.30p.m.

Membership Subscriptions

Along with the new year, we once again look for your subscription for 1999 and to avoid the awful red X your prompt payment would be very appreciated.



Coming Events

January 16th.

Our fund-raiser for RCAG will take place in the Lough Ree Inn, Coosan Point, Athlone, at 9.00p.m.

February 12th.

Walter Borner Slide Show.
This very enjoyable show will take place in the Jolly Mariner, Athlone at 8.30pm. SHARP!!

March 17th/21st.

Dublin Boat Show at the Point Depot.

March 19th.

I.W.A.I. Annual General Meeting at the R.A.C., Dublin at 8.00p.m.

March 26th.

Ruth Heard film show and Harry Rice Competition at Jolly Mariner at 8.30pm



For Sale

*British Leyland Diesel Engine
1.5L. Fully Marinised with Bell
Housing, Starter, Water Pump
etc.*

*In perfect condition £1,000.
Contact Fred or Margaret at
0902 -75593.*



Shannon Rally.

This year's Rally will have Fiona Furey as Commodore and Athlone's Vice Commodore will be Nora Sleator. The committee will be formed by the two branches, Athlone and Carrick, so Athlone members interested in being a member of the committee, please get in touch with your Branch at our meeting in Sean's Bar on the 1st Monday of the month, as advised in this Aerial.

Athlone Branch AGM.

I have been at some lively AGM's but I think this one was one of the best! Thanks to the generosity of Margaret Guildea, the wine and cheese was sponsored by the Prince of Wales Hotel, where our meeting took place.

There was a very good attendance and much interest in our Chairman, Harry Nugent's comprehensive report on the past year's work by the branch. (See below).

Our officers remain the same, Chairman, Harry Nugent, Secretary Evelyn O'Connor, Treasurer Sean Fitzsimons, ably assisted by Reggie Redmond!

Two other committee members should be mentioned here, Damien Delaney and Declan Welsh, who do tremendous work in keeping our branch in touch with local authorities by making themselves available to attend meetings where the interests of inland waterways are concerned.

One new item has been arranged by our Chairman, Harry and that is an Anniversary Mass for deceased members of our Branch. Sadly in the last two years, we have lost some of our most active and long serving members and this annual remembrance of our friends will be most welcome.

As the night wore on, many tongues were loosened, and many suggestions made and advice given from the floor, and nothing that needed a seconder was left unattended by our generous hostess, Margaret, to whom many sincere thanks.



Festivities in Cloondra

On December 12th, a bus left Sean's Bar and called to Glasson, Ballymahon, Foiagh and then on to Cloondra, where we all went into Richmond Harbour Inn Pub.

We were the first to arrive and there was plenty of time for the Royal Canal Band to set up their sound equipment and settle in. The doors kept opening as more and more people arrived and the atmosphere got livelier and the band played magnificently, as usual, and with a little coaxing, we had some great singers entertain us, some from our Athlone members, and some from the local supporters. We were also well entertained by an excellent display of dancing by a young couple, who deservedly won the Waltzing competition, hands down. There was a very generous amount of spot prizes and many went home with a little Christmas cheer tucked under their arm.

Altogether, it turned into a lovely party before Christmas as well as raising about £250 towards the development to the Royal Canal in the area. It seems as time goes on, we are getting nearer and nearer to the completion of this great Canal, and soon the whole length will be open to navigation. It will be certainly worthwhile and many people will, by the many small events like ours, truly say "we did our bit in it's restoration".



CHAIRMANS REPORT IWAI ATHLONE BR. 1998

On behalf of the members of the Athlone Br. of IWAI I wish to thank our President, Mr. Liam Darcy, his committee, and the Council members for their assistance and guidance over the past year.

I wish to thank and congratulate all members of the various committees involved through out the year. On behalf on myself and our members, I wish to congratulate and thanks Mrs. Eileen O'Brien who has worked tirelessly over the years unaided producing your Aerial,

Branch Matters.

The branch committee had a fruitful year working on your behalf on matters relating from, Rallies, Planning, water pollution, and discussing various Government documents pertaining to our waterways. etc.

The Br. Executive constantly keep themselves apprised of the various Co. Co. planning and future developments within our area. We have an excellent working relationship with the Lough Ree Conservation Group, in harmonizing our interest of the waterways.

As stated last year, the attendance at our monthly meetings are still dismally low. We cannot put your views forward or make Policies without your voice.

Developments

With the Celtic Tiger well up and ROARING we should be very vigilant that it does not impede our waterways by over development in certain areas. I feel that there is plenty of scope for good and well planned developments, e.g. the east shore of Lough Ree is void of any good harbour.

The Athlone Chamber of Commerce commissioned a study on a future development plan for the Lough Ree Area in 97, to date the environmental side of this study has just been completed, this now has to be integrated into the overall strategy. I have been informed that this study will be completed by years end.

Consultative document on the Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways.

The Heritage Council requested a response from IWAI to a consultative document on the future of Ireland's Inland Waterways. At a meeting of the Council of IWAI it was agreed that the Heritage Council had correctly analysed the situation and identified the right issues. Mr. Colin Becker Vice President compiled a response on behalf of the IWAI. Correlating these two documents I feel that we now have a bases for a Policy Working document for the IWAI on Inland Waterways.

Pump out stations

This situation has not changed since last year, and I do not envisage any improvement in the coming year, however we will persist in requesting Local Co. Co. to upgrade the present infrastructure.

Safety

Water related sports has over the years always claimed its victims, and again this year. We, as a body, will have to improve our safety standards, before they are imposed upon us. We need to encourage the use of personal buoyancy aids. Rally organizers will have to insist on the wearing them.

The Celtic tiger has shown it's face on our waterways with a influx of boats and in particular jet skis and power boats, consequently the Department of Marine and Natural Resources have issued a notice to users of (jet Skis) and other fast recreational power craft. This is a **DO, DON'T**, document, it will be issued with your next aerial. It is recommended that a copy be kept on board in case of confrontation. The IWAI as a body should be aware of the dangers of speed in confined waters.

ISA/IWAI SCHEME.

I'm pleased to inform you that the ISA/IWAI training and certification scheme for boat handlers for all types of craft is well up and running. This is the culmination of perseverance and hard work, I would like to congratulate Stuart Mc'Namara on his achievements. I would recommend that every one undergo this training course and get their certificate. I feel that someday it will be compulsory

Harbour Hoggers.

I have been informed that there was increase of 400 boats onto the Shannon river system this year, where are all the beats or moorings of them, unfortunately this has increased the number of HARBOUR HOGGERS. This problem is getting out of hand and we a body should advise others to restrain from this practice.

ROYAL CANAL FUND RAISING,.

Over the past few years this Athlone Br. under the guidance of Damien Delaney have very successfully organized fund raising nights in aid of the Royal Canal Restoration Fund, I wish to thank the ladies, and some men who put their culinary skill into practice that helped make these nights very successful. I and on your behalf wish to thank sincerely all the sponsors too numerous to name right now, that gave very generously, and without their generosity, these fund raising nights would not have been as successful. What may I say about the wonderfully talented and charismatic members of our Br. The Royal Canal Band as they are aptly named Billy Henshaw Michael Martin Joe Lacken Larry Benson and other artist, who have through their

charisma and charm delighted us and ensured that the fans would appear. We owe them a debt of gratitude. We look forward to your support at all future events.

DUNROVIN TRUST

The late Mrs Cynthia Rice RIP. Passed away Aug 97 in her will she bequeath the property of DUNROVIN at Coosan Point to the Athlone Br. of IWAI ,

In Oct. of 97 a Sub-Committee was formed to investigate into the implications for the Br. This report was put forwarded to an EGM in Feb. 98 . After some discussion and deliberations voting took place there was 2 votes put forward

Vote 1

I direct the sub-committee to proceed with all investigations required to clarify the implications for the Branch with a view to accepting the Bequest and to incur whatever expenses that are necessary

Vote 2

I direct that the Br. does not accept the bequest.

Vote 1 was carried ,54 for and 2 against.

The Sub-committee further deliberated on matters such as legal , financial and Tax implications.

Tax implications were taken on board by R. Regmound and he ensured we had no liabilities. I wish to congratulate Regie Redmound on achievements.

DEED OF TRUST Document drawn up based on our Rules and Memorandum of our Association.

The sub-committee report was presented at an EGM in June 98

After discussions on Tax, implications, Management of the property, and the Deed of Trust, voting taken place there was 4 ballots put forward.

- A. To accept the Bequest
- B. Agree to the resolution that the Br. accept the Deed of Trust as presented
- C. Agree to the following members Mr. Liam Darcey President IWAI Mr. Damien Delaney Mr. Michael Martin of IWAI to fill the appointments as the original trustees of the Dunrovin Trust.
- D. Agree that Dunrovin remains as it is i.e. the Property, Main House and Grounds be rented. The PAD used as a meeting house on dates as directed by the executive for at least 3 years and not more than 5 years and a further plan be implemented thereafter

Result of the vote was 23 for nil against

Deed of Trust, and the results of the Branch decisions were put to the Council for ratification. This was approved and the President congratulated the Br. on their decision.

Present Position.

Probate of the will has not been granted, when this happens you will be informed through your Aerial

The expenses that the Br. have incurred at present is £ 590. There may be further expenses during the signing over of the property.

On behalf of the members of the Br. I thank Mr. L. Darcey President IWAI Mr. D. Delaney Mr. M Martin for allowing their names to be put forward as trustees and congratulate them on their appointments.

I wish to thank sincerely the Committee Mrs. Rosmary Furlong Mrs. Evilen O'Connor Mr. Regie Redmound Mr. Damien Delaney Mr. Sean Fitzsimons Mr. Declin Walsh. For their input, hard work and dedication in bringing this project to its conclusions.

Membership.

I have noticed over the years that our membership has not increased in line with the influx of so many new boat owners coming onto our Waterways. Members should canvass and publicize our association and encourage new boat owners in joining the IWAI.

Conclusion.

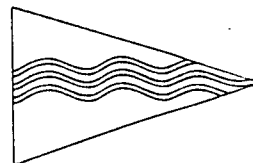
The foregoing is just a part of the workload the various committees get through . We are constantly seeking assistance and if you feel that you can contribute please don't be shy.

On behalf of the Br. I wish to thank the Proprietors of the Prince of Wales Hotel for the facilities, and Mr. Guildea for supplying the wine, also I wish to thank the Management and staff for their assistance to night

I wish to thank the Committee for their hard work dedication and support over the year , that ensured my Task to be a very pleasant one

**HENRY NUGENT
CHAIRMAN**

ATHLONE BRANCH I.W.A.I.



Income & Expenditure A/c - year ending 30th September 1998

INCOME	1998		1997
	IR£	€	IR£
Subscriptions	2,001	2,501	1,890
Functions	-	-	29
End-of-Season Dinner	43	54	-
Surplus on Sales	660	825	167
Deposit Interest	55	69	70
	<u>2,759</u>	<u>3,449</u>	<u>2,156</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Athlone Aerial (inc. postage)	543	678	551
Stationery	91	114	-
Loss on Functions	123	154	-
Meetings	97	121	-
Insurance - I.W.A.I.	609	761	609
Capitation Fees - I.W.A.I.	235	294	228
Audit Fee - I.W.A.I.	30	38	30
Harry Rice Competition	60	75	30
Legal Fees	590	737	-
Donations	-	-	119
Bank Charges	55	69	54
Sundries	95	119	103
Depreciation on Computer	300	375	320
	<u>2,828</u>	<u>3,535</u>	<u>2,044</u>
Surplus (Deficit) to Accumulated Fund	<u>(69)</u>	<u>(86)</u>	<u>112</u>

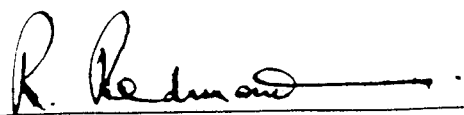
DEVELOPMENT RESERVE

Balance 1.10.97		IR£ 5,400
Grants - R.C.A.G.	1,000	
L. Ree Conservation	<u>200</u>	<u>1,200</u>
Balance 31.9.98		<u>4,200</u>

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 1998

ASSETS	1998		1997
	IR£	€	IR£
Bank - Current A/c	209	261	749
Bank - Deposit A/c	-	-	567
Building Society A/c	9,889	12,361	9,268
Cash on hands	110	138	-
Debtors	96	120	96
Stock for sale (at cost)	930	1,162	1,182
Prize Bonds	105	131	105
450 Shares - First Active	1,012	1,265	-
Computer & Printer	600		
Less Depreciation	300	375	600
	<u>12,651</u>	<u>15,813</u>	<u>12,567</u>
LESS LIABILITIES			
Creditors	859	1,073	518
NET ASSETS	<u>11,792</u>	<u>14,740</u>	<u>£ 12,049</u>
REPRESENTED BY			
Accumulated fund at 1.10.97	6,456	8,070	6,344
Surplus (Deficit) for 1998	(69)	(86)	112
Development Reserve	4,200	5,250	5,400
Simpson Bequest Fund	193	241	193
Exceptional Item (Issue of Shares)	1,012	1,265	-
	<u>11,792</u>	<u>14,740</u>	<u>12,049</u>

Certified Correct



Reginald Redmond, B. Comm.
Hon. Auditor
4th December, 1998

IR£1 = €1.25

Athlone Aerial

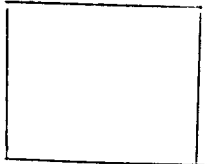
NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH, INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Dare we say it - it's

Spring

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 1st February 1999 at 8.30pm.

This is the first of the red X's as a reminder to those of you who have forgotten to pay the 1999 sub. for membership of our Branch. The sub is still £12.00. To you who have already paid -our thanks.



Coming Events:-

Feb. 12th -

Walter Borner's Slide show will be held in the Jolly Mariner at 8.30 SHARP. This is a wonderful evening of slides showing the Shannon to it's fullest advantage through the lens of a remarkable camera man. All are very welcome and do bring a friend.

Feb. 20th -

A fund raiser for the Royal Canal Amenity Group will be held in the Lough Ree Inn, Coosan Point at 9 'ish in aid of the Keanagh Group. Music and raffles and nosh and waltzes are the order of the night. See you there!

February 1999

Mid Feb.

A VHF course will be run in the Lough Ree Yacht Club. Date is not yet finalised. If you are interested, please phone Damien Delaney at 0902 75620.

March 17/21

Dublin Boat will take place at the Point Depot - a date not to be missed!

March 19

Inland Waterways Association of Ireland's Annual General Meeting.

March 26

Ruth Heard Film Show and Harry Rice Award. If you want your masterpieces entered into this competition, now is the time to get your entries ready for presentation by the 28th. February. Your entries can be sent to Mrs. Rosemary Furlong, Coosan Point, Athlone. This competition is open to everyone, and an essay, picture, ships-log or a painting - all with an inland waterway's theme is the rule.

April 2/4

Easter weekend cruise-in-company.

May 1/3

Cruise-in-company.

May 21

Mass for deceased members will be celebrated in Sts. Peter and Paul's Church, Athlone at 7.30p.m.

Sept 15/19

Southampton Boat Show.

Our branch is organising a visit to this prestigious boat show in September, full details below.



1999

**SOUTHAMPTON BOAT SHOW
15 SEPT. – 19 SEPT.**

**Travel to the Southampton Boat Show by Luxurious Coach and Ship
Spend 2 Overnights in Hotel and 3 Full Days at Show.**

Date and Timing of Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
15/9	1600	Depart	Seans Bar Athlone.
15/9	2000	Board Ship	Rosslare Harbour.
16/9	0800	Arrive	Southampton Nova Hotel
16/9	1000/2100	Visit Show	Southampton Boat Show
17/9	1000/2100	Visit Show	Southampton Boat Show
18/9	1000	Visit Show	Southampton Boat Show
18/9	1400	Visit other yards	Southampton
18/9	2100	Depart	Southampton
19/9	0100	Board Ship	Pembroke
19/9	0900	Arrive	Seans Bar Athlone

**COST INCLUDING 2 OVERNIGHTS B/B IN NOVA HOTEL
SOUTHAMPTON PLUS COACH AND FERRY FARE**

Hotel beside Southampton Boat Show.

£185.00.

**Bookings from Harry Nugent at 0902 89080 Home
(Booking Deposit 50% by 31 March) 0902 21142 Work
086 8339026 Mobile**

Ye Iron Lung Crew Overrun

Fresh from their triumphs at the North Shannon Rally, the Lung crew broke new ground (or water) at the end of August 1998, in joining the Sail Training Ship "Mir" when the Tall Ships Race reached Dublin.

What a time we had for the following 8 days!

Many IWAU members will have visited the Liffey quays over that never-to-be-forgotten weekend, when more than a hundred awesome craft lined the quays from Mat Talbot Bridge to the East Link, in some parts rafted out five abreast, Dublin looked eighteenth century again, a forest of masts, dinghies buzzing around, thousands of people promenading.

The intrepid Athlone ditch-crawlers joined the Mir on Monday night, resplendent in their red-and-blue striped jerseys, instantly distinguishable from the 'suits' who were attending a Dublin Chamber of Commerce Function on board. Among the motley crew were Sean Fitz, Tommy and Bernadette Henshaw, Johnny and Nora McGonigal, Sainnbe Hoare, Brendan Thompson, Timmy and Ashley Donohue, Pat O'Meara and Jim Murray, along with fellow trainees from Cork, UK and Germany.

The Tuesday morning parade of Sail into Dublin Bay was headed by the doyen of the Irish contingent, Asgard 11, escorted by L.E. Ashling. How proud she must have been to show the way to such as the Libertad, Kruzenshtern, Sedov and the Mexican Cuachtemoe, which had received the Premier Award for it's crew's contribution to the whole Falmouth-Lisbon-Vigo-Dublin trip.

We were three days at sea, heading down the East coast, round Land's End and reaching Portsmouth late Thursday. During the voyage, we 'trainees' had specific duties, serving a couple of meals, helping with the bewildering array of ropes to rearrange sails, and doing four-hour watches. Your scribe had the graveyard watch (0400 to 0800). It was just gobsmaking on deck at 3am., no land in sight and a myriad of stars at every point in the firmament.

There was a resident Russian crew plus about fifty cadets from the Merchant Naval Academy in St. Petersburg. The cadets could speak some English. They all received one U.S. Dollar a day and were pretty impoverished. However it was slightly better than being paid in roubles!

Russian Tall Ship

We were accommodated in kubriks (cabins) of twelve bunks. Food was fairly basic but welcome when you had nothing else. We had a makeshift bar below decks - don't ask ... we drank them dry - and some mighty singsongs.

A lot of the Lung crew (led by the skipper) climbed the mainmast by rope-ladder. Others of us didn't even think of it, being subject to vertigo when standing on a chair to change a light bulb.

Whilst the trip was no luxury cruise, when the weather turned sunny as we neared the English coast, there was some sun-bathing on the aft deck. A million photos were taken, a thousand conversations had; we'd like the whole thing to have gone on longer.

On disembarking in Portsmouth on the Friday morning, we received passes to the four-day International Festival of the Sea. This huge event took place in the 300 acre Navel Dockyard. Apart from many of the Tall Ships from Dublin, we could tour historic ships like Nelson's HMS Victory, modern aircraft carriers and submarines.

There were four separate stages around the site, featuring a vast range of music from morning till late. Each night finished with a stupendous fireworks display.

Happily, we were able to continue using the Mir and Kruzenshtern as our base for the duration of the festival. How well they looked against the background of the harbour, filled as it was with private yachts and cruisers of every size - down to a four-foot wide coracle.

As I said at the start, what an eight days. Still an' all, I'd swap the lot for Blackbrink Bay anytime....

[Ed. Thanks to Jim Murray for the above very interesting report. As the song say's "How are you going to keep 'em down on the river when they've seen 'Mir']



Regeneration officer for the Grand Canal?

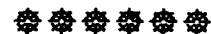
We must admit that due to the branch's involvement with fund-raising for the Royal canal we have been a little lax in our attention to the Grand Canal - what's new is always more eye-catching! However a recent article in the Westmeath Independent caught our eye. Under the heading "Another Boost for Offaly Tourism" it seems that the people of Offaly and Kildare have formed the Grand Canal Liaison Group and this group has announced the appointment of a regeneration officer.

The group is composed of the Kildare and Offaly Co.Cos; Ducas, the Waterways Service; Offaly and Kildare Leader 11; Action South Kildare and OAK Partnership.

The regeneration officer will be responsible for promoting the use of the canal for educational, recreational and tourism pursuits and will work with all sections of the local community. Small projects will be undertaken this year at Daingan and Edenderry in Offaly and at Rathangan, Athy and Monasterevan in Kildare. It is hoped this new appointment will assist in the future development of both the Grand Canal and the Barrow Navigation.

This group was formed because of the Brady Shipman and Martin Report and was launched in the summer of 1998 by the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gealtacht and the islands, Sile de Valera.

We wish this group every success, and that local communities along this canal will, by their involvement, ensure the continued viability of the canal.



For Sale

"Razor Bill" - 31' Motor Sailor.
Carvel/pitch pine on oak.
4108 Perkins Diesel engine.
£6,950.
Phone 01-4532549.



Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Spring is Sprung - the

Grass is riz -

I wonder where the sun is?

The next meeting of the Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 1st March 1999 at 8.30pm.



1999 Membership Subscriptions.

Last reminder for your 1999 sub of £12.00 - we regret this will be the last Aerial, until we receive your membership subscription. To those of you who have paid - Thank you.

March 1999

Coming Events:

March 13th

RCAG outing to Keanagh. Bus leaving Sean's Bar, Athlone at 8.00pm. Phone Damien Delaney at 0902-75620 to book place on Bus.

March 17th/21st

Dublin Boat Show will take place in the R.D.S. Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, and as the event will be an extra day Dublin Branch would appreciate help on the IWAI stand, so if you can give an hour or two please phone Donal O'Siochain at 01-2896478.

March 19th.

IWAI. Annual General Meeting will be held in the R.I.A.C., Dawson St., Dublin at 8.00pm.

March 26th.

Ruth Heard will give her show of films from the IWAI archives followed by the presentation of the Harry Rice Cup. Please get your entries in as soon as possible to Mrs. R. Furlong, Coosan Point by at least 10th March (just a little extension allowed!) This will all take place in the Jolly Mariner, Athlone at 8.30pm.

April 2nd/4th

Cruise in Company for the Easter weekend to Ballykeeran, Lecarrow and Hodson Bay.



Welcome Home!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome home from hospital, Jimmy Redmond, Norman Furlong and Margaret Guildea. Hope you all make a complete recovery and we'll see you back on the Shannon again.



Thanks Walter!

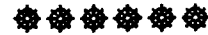
Walter Borner's slide show was, as usual, excellent. A very good turnout enjoyed the evening, including the lovely chocolates! Walter's slides of the flood's affect on the Shannon-Erne Waterway were very dramatic and showed how nature makes man-made structures look very vulnerable. In contrast, the slides showing the peaceful springtime on the Woodford River were the "get away from it all" kind of views we all like of our inland waterways. Thank you Walter and Ruth for your generosity to our Branch over the years.



Royal Canal Fund-raiser

We had a very successful fund raising evening in The Lough Ree Inn on Saturday, 20th February - the first of the year. Our friends from Keanagh arrived in a large bus and together with our own local and loyal supporters we made a good noisy crowd. As usual we had the magical music of the Royal Canal Band to egg us on to great heights of singing and there were some great performances from the Keanagh contingent. Pat Newman, on receipt of the money raised, said how much the re-watering of the Canal into the Longford

county marked the progress of the revitalisation of the canal, and gave continued encouragement to the people who have worked to make use of the canal for the enjoyment of all who live near this marvellous amenity.



THE GREAT PORTUMNA RACE

The opening time of Portumna Bridge on a Sunday morning has been a topic of discussion at our Branch meetings.

The problem seems to be the late opening time, 11.00am.

During the height of the summer season, the volume of upstream traffic is so great that a wild race ensues, with boats trying to get to the top of the queue at Meelick Lock. Someone gets to be at the end of the queue, logically speaking, and it can be impossible for the later craft to reach Athlone Lock before it closes for the night.

As we know only too well, the mooring facilities below the Athlone lock are neither adequate nor safe, so our query is - have any one of you suffered from this problem.

If you have, would you please drop a polite line to the Commodore Lawn, Waterways Service, Athlone Lock, The Docks, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, and state when this happened, date and time and request an earlier opening time for the Bridge at Portumna on a Sunday morning.



Lough Ree - Lake of Kings

The Athlone Chamber of Commerce sponsored a report on the future development of Lough Ree.

The final draft of this plan has just been published and a copy can be obtained from the C. of C. by contacting Siobhan Bigley at Phone No. 0902 73173 or Fax 0902 73326 or e-mail athcci@iol.ie

Our branch have not yet discussed this report, but future Aerials will have our comments on this lengthy document.



Wet Bikes

These craft are causing considerable controversy among users of inland waterways - our area of interest - and also at seaside resorts.

On the one hand the users of these craft think heaven has come, especially if the age of the user is very young, like 10 years, I know if I was that age I would certainly love to have been able to use one of these craft. And maybe I would have used it well and sensibly, away from other people, aware of safety of myself and others - - I think not!

There is no doubt that these craft give great

pleasure to users, the speed of increase of numbers is a witness to this fact, and also unfortunately, the nuisance caused by uncontrolled behaviour is as widespread as the craft.

As usual, getting governmental authority to take an interest in this growing problem is only now happening, both here and across the water in the UK

Here Minister Michael Woods, of the Marine and Natural Resources has issued a code of conduct for users of Wet Bikes and other fast recreational power craft.

However, neither licensing or age of users is mentioned. Nor is the necessity for proper instruction in the use of fast power craft mentioned.

Why do authorities take such a long time to realise that eventually these problems have to be addressed?

We in the I.W.A.I. are not against the use of Fast Recreational Power Craft, but we are for Safety, Responsibility, Care for others, Care for ourselves and the environment we share.

New VHF Licence

“The Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) is being implemented presently and is compulsory for vessels which are required to comply with the provisions of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Safety of life at sea (SOLAS) Convention.

Recognising the need for non SOLAS vessels, such as pleasure craft and certain fishing vessels which are not required to comply with any International agreements, to take part in the GMDSS to enhance the safety of those vessels and to enable those vessels install the necessary radiocommunication and radio life-saving equipment, it is necessary to revise the Radio Operator Examination Syllabi.”

The changes in the regulations are being implemented in coastal and international waters during this year, and it is likely that they will also apply to inland waterways later this year.

Put simply, the technology available, and in use, is getting more and more sophisticated, consequently the syllabus for the Operators Certificate is being updated to cover the advances in the technology and the associated regulations governing their use.

A new range of certificates is introduced to cover the full range of systems in use. So how will this affect people who already have the Restricted Certificate of Competency in Radiotelephony VHF only (VHF operators licence), I hear you ask. ?? – Very little, your current operators licence is still valid, **unless** you have occasion to: -

- (a) operate the new technology such as Digital Selective Calling equipment (channel 70 replaces channel 16 as the emergency channel); Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB); Search and Rescue Radar Transponder (SART); Maritime Safety Information system (Navtex); or
- (b) Install and operate any of the above equipment on your vessel.

In either case you will need to upgrade your current operators licence, and in the case of (b) you will also need to upgrade your “Ships Licence”.

The new certificate for VHF operators is called the **Radio Operators Short Range Certificate (SRC)** and the syllabus consists of two modules which may be taken separately or as a combined examination.

Module 1 (Only), is an updated version of the current licence, and is in three parts: -

- (A) Rules and Regulations governing the exchange of marine radiocommunications, and Distress, Urgency, and Safety procedures, using VHF.
- (B) Radio communications, candidate demonstrates ability to send and receive messages using correct procedures on VHF.
- (C) Operational Performance Test using VHF equipment, EPIRB, SART, and Radio Battery set up.

Module 2 (Only), is an oral and practical examination to demonstrate the candidates ability to operate Digital Selective Calling equipment (DSC) ; EPIRB; SART; Navtex; Radio Battery:

- Candidates who pass the examination for Module 1 (Only) will be awarded a Restricted Certificate of Competency in Radiotelephony (VHF Only). (The new equivalent of the current licence)
- Candidates who pass the examination for Modules 1 and 2 will be awarded the Short Range Certificate (SRC) of Competency in Radiotelephony. (The new updated licence to operate the new technology)
- Candidates who already hold a Restricted Certificate of Competency in Radiotelephony (VHF Only), i.e. the current licence, who wish to upgrade to the Short Range Certificate, will be examined in the sections relating to the GMDSS in parts A,B,C of Module 1 in conjunction with the examination for Module 2 (Only), and on passing, will be awarded the Short Range Certificate (SRC) of Competency in Radiotelephony.

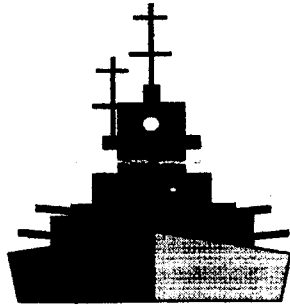
Course Providers are also required to upgrade their qualifications and facilities, which must be approved by the Director of Telecommunications Regulation, and this may have implications for the availability of courses in the future, due to the capital cost of the facilities required.

There is no need to panic yet, your existing VHF set will still work, channel 16 will still be monitored, until there is a total changeover to GMDSS. We will keep you informed of developments.

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

April 1999.



We still can't trace the cojit who faxed the U.S. Navy requesting details for a Med. cruise, like the Mir one mentioned in this publication recently - God, some people can be so *jealous!*



The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 12th April at 8.30pm.



Membership Subscriptions.

We should like to thank all of you who have paid the 1999 membership subscriptions.

Mr. Sean Fitzsimons, our esteemed Hon. Treasurer asked us to thank you for the many letters expressing appreciation for our Aerial Newsletter.

It is lovely to hear from you and get some feed back, and if you feel strongly about something, please don't hesitate to let us know about it. We would be pleased to air your concerns and opinions in this newsletter any time.

Coming Events.

April 17th

RCAG night in Duffy's, Coosan Pt., at 9.30pm. Ballynacargy is the visiting crowd - so another good night at Duffy's.

May 1st - 3rd.

Cruise in Company - Ballykeeran, Lanesboro, Portrunny. Phone Sean's Bar for details of starting time and venue.

May 21st.

For the first time, Athlone Branch have organised a Mass for the deceased members of our Branch. This Mass will be celebrated in St. Peter and Paul's Church, The Square, Athlone at 7.30pm. It is a sad fact that many of our very active members have passed away recently and this is a time to remember them together.

June 5th - 7th.

Cruise in Company to Hodson Bay, Lecarrow and Portrunny. Details later.

June 26th - 27th.

People's Regatta, Athlone.

July 23rd - 31st.

Shannon Boat Rally.

With Sympathy

It was with great sorrow that we learned of the death of Eddie Slane.

Eddie was a true waterway's man, and was an enthusiastic and hard working member of the Royal Canal Amenity Group and at the time of his death was chairman of the group.

In spite of his growing health problems, he attended any of our local functions, where we raised funds for the various branches of the RCAG, who were involved in the task of regenerating the Royal Canal all the way from Dublin to the Shannon.

He will be a big loss to all who shared in the dream of the completed work, which he has seen almost to a finish, through many exasperating stops, hold ups, problems, he dealt with them all and stayed smiling throughout.

We send our deep sympathy to his wife and family. May he rest in peace.

Council AGM

Congratulations to Colin Becker, new President and Donal O'Siochain, new vice-president of council, new Secretary Roseleen Millar, and Treasurer Reggie Redmond. Thanks to outgoing Liam D'Arcy for all his hard work and commitment to his term as President of Council.

***** Keanagh Outing

We had an enjoyable evening in Newman's Pub, Keanagh, although the Athlone contingent was reduced, as the evening clashed with very important local functions.

However, those of us who travelled, had a pleasant evening of great music and many excellent individual "acts" entertained the audience. It is amazing how much a couple of drinks, some fresh sambos and some cocktail sausages can produce such great talent!

As usual, the Royal Canal Band anchored the night in some sort of sanity - and this newsletter would like to pay tribute to the members of the band, who faithfully turn up at all our fund-raising functions.

On fiddle we have Larry Benson, and David Henshaw, on guitar we have Michael Martin and Joe Lacken and Billy Henshaw Snr., on Banjo Billy Henshaw Jnr and Mark Henshaw and on vocals we have the smooth voice of Joe, the deadly "wildwest" toons of Michael and the Irish ballads of Billy Snr.

Ruth Heard Film Show.

We had a very pleasant evening in the Jolly Mariner where we watched the films of past rallies, shown by Ruth.

As usual, it was revealing how much some of us have matured gracefully into middle-age - but as most of us were in the same boat, so to speak, the rude remarks about grey hair or no hair were muted.

We all appreciated the record of events that these films contain, not only are they a record of inland waterways, but also of the infrastructure of the city and towns where these films were taken.

Ruth showed the first rally to take place on the Grand Canal in Dublin. This represented the largest number of boats ever on the canal. The weather at the time was not very good, but it did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the people.

Ruth also showed us the disused canal at Coalisland, in Northern Ireland, which was built to allow coal to be drawn from Tyrone for Dublin. It never really worked, but its remains are of interest, and who knows, maybe, like the Erne/Shannon waterway, we might have a new waterway to explore in the future!

On the same evening, two young girls were presented with prizes in the Harry Rice Competition, Oonagh Herraghty, who came first and Valerie Casey who came an excellent runner-up. Well done girls!

We would like to also thank the ladies who provided lovely high-fat creamy, alcoholic cakes - they were sinfully delicious!



St. Patrick's Day

Someone on the Newery Canal put us all to shame by having a "procession" of boats on the canal on St. Patrick's day. Around this neck of the woods, some can't remember where

they left the boat, yet alone have it ready on the water.

Maybe next year, we'll try to be ready earlier - for the millennium?



A view from the Bridge

Last year in this publication we remarked on the ugly sites left undeveloped near the river in Athlone.

Well, we are very glad to say that one of the sites, the old Palace bar and hardware shop has been transformed into a new "Palace Bar and Restaurant". It is a very impressive structure; the Square/Pearse St corner, is like a Norman tower, square shaped and stone faced and the rest of the building has lovely windows and lamps along the front. It is in good scale with the rest of the buildings, ie. the castle and the church and already looks as if it was always part of the scenery. One of the classiest developments in Athlone and we wish Paddy McCaul and Partners all the best. Maybe the old Silverlee site will be developed soon. There are rumours..





Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

MAY 1999

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 10th May 1999 at 8.30pm.



May 21st.

A Mass for the deceased members of Athlone Branch will be celebrated in St. Peter and Paul's Church, Athlone at 7.30 p.m.. We hope as many of you as possible will attend.

Coming Events

May 22nd - RCAG Fundraiser

Our last outing of the winter season in aid of RCAG will take place in Ballinacarrigy. Please contact Damien Delaney at 0902-75620 to book a seat on the bus leaving Sean's Bar at 8.00pm.

May 14th-16th - VHF Course

A VHF course will be held in the Lough Ree Yacht Club on

Friday 14th May from 20.00hrs to 22.00 and on Sunday 16th May from 11.00hrs. to 13.00hrs.

Examination will be held on Monday 17th May at 14.00hrs in the same venue.

If you are interested phone Vincent Rafter 0902-93192 or Damien Delaney 0902-75620 as soon as possible as places are limited.

June 5th - 7th.

Cruise-in-company to Hodson Bay, Lecarrow and Portrunny. Phone Harry Nugent at 0902-89089 for details.

June 26th-27th.

Peoples Regatta, Athlone.

July 23rd-31st

Shannon Boat Rally.

Sept 15th-19th.

Southampton Boat Show. See full details below.

Athlone Area News.

Silverlee Site

This site, which is just behind the Marina above the bridge in Athlone, is still in an appalling condition.

It is in this state for a third summer!

It appears, according to rumours, that various reasons have caused the hold up in development, from "protection of remains of the old wall of Athlone" to various people not being available to do the required work, to unacceptable changes in the planning conditions.

These are only rumours, and we are sure there are many more in circulation especially as the site is so obvious to all Athlone people whether interested in the river and tourism or not.

Whatever the "reasons/rumours", surely this very important site, both from the point of view of Athlone town and of the River Shannon, should be dealt with in a professional and speedy way by our town councillors and planners.

It certainly may not be a fault of the Urban District Council that the site has ended up like this but maybe a lesson could be learned from whatever caused the hold-up in the development.

If, for instance, like travel agents have to have a bond which covers their clients from loss if they go out of business, a council could ask a developer to carry a bond which would enable an uncompleted site to be restored in an acceptable way, even if the developer

concerned could not complete the work.

We wish the Athlone Urban District Council every success in finding a suitable development for this site as soon as possible; and may we ask that such development be in harmony with both the River Shannon and the town.

Athlone Pump-out Station

We are glad to say that the buildings beside the Athlone Marina, containing the pump-out station, toilets and washing facilities are near completion and very unusual looking they seem to be and could go some way to distracting the eye from the eyesore mentioned above.

RNLI-Flag Day.

The recent flag day in Athlone raised about £2,500 - well done to the Sean's Bar team, much reduced this year due to clash of events, the money raised was only fractionally down on last year.



Athlone's Evil Kneivel

It is with relief that Sean Fitzsimon's many friends learned that he had made a remarkable recovery from what could have been a very serious accident recently.

While doing some repairs to the flat roof at the back of the pub, Sean, missing the ladder held by Frank Sherry, went directly to the ground, giving Frank the fright of his life and giving himself many cuts and bruises and a fractured toe.

However, never one to let such happenings deter him from a rally, Sean arrived in Lecarrow, in his newly acquired 4 berth cruiser "Lizy D" for the May Bank holiday weekend.

We suppose he'll put a sticker on the cruiser "My other boat is a Barge"!

It was uplifting to hear the many sympathetic remarks of Sean's friends - "Evil Kneivel", "Superman" and "Flights of Fancy".

Making a first appearance on the river, on this rally, was the young (6months) and beautiful Orla, granddaughter of Margaret and Fred Guildea. Congratulations to proud parents and grandparents.

In very pleasant weather conditions, a relaxed rally took place over the weekend with many newly spruced-up boats appearing back after a long winter lay-up. We all hope that this will be the start of an long and enjoyable summer.

Local Student looks at Job potential of Shannon

RTE ran a program showing the River Shannon from the point of view of university student Gordon Brett, whose interest, along with any student, is in the jobs available in their own home area.

Most jobs are connected with the tourist industry and are short term.

Many stretches of the Shannon are just farm land with a few small villages, and a handful of towns and only one city - Limerick.

Boat-building was an obvious enterprise, and one on the Shannon Estuary was featured, but ideas seemed to be thin on the ground as shown in the half-hour program.

The IWAI would like to see more job opportunities in the Shannon Area, as long as the creation of these jobs does not do environmental damage to the river.



Athlone Aerial

June 1999

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in September 1999.

We take this opportunity to wish all our members a very safe and enjoyable summer on our inland waterways, no matter what the weather brings!



Current Membership Badges

Enclosed, you will find a stick-on badge for your boat. This is an new requirement, brought about by IBRA's introduction of mooring charges of £5.00 per night. If you are a current paid-up member of the I.W.A.I. and have this badge displayed on your vessel, you will only be charged £3.00 and will be eligible for a small discount on diesel fuel.



Remembrance Mass.

This remembrance Mass was attended by a good number of local members of the Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. and we would like to thank Sean Fitzsimons, for providing light refreshments in "Sean's Bar" after Mass.



Coming Events:-

June 5th - 7th

Due to some strong discussions at our May branch meeting, it was agreed that a double cruise-in-company (cruises-in-company?) should happen, one on Lough Ree, going to various places on the lake, and the other going down river at least as far as Shannon Bridge, with maybe an trip up the Suck. Take your pick. Chairman Harry Nugent will have particulars. Phone 0902-89089.

June 26th-27th.

People's regatta, Athlone.

Boats assemble at Hodson Bay on Saturday, 26th and on Sunday, 27th cruise to Athlone Marina at 12.00pm.

July 26th - 1st August.

Shannon Boat Rally.

This year's rally will include a visit to Ballinasloe on the final two nights of the rally for the first time in the rally's history. A definite must for all who collect "Firsts".

The Southampton Boat Show seems to have been cancelled due to lack of interest, but rumour has it that our intrepid Sean Fitzsimons, and gang-in-a-Van are mounting an onslaught on the poor innocent show!

October 23rd.

Annual Dinner Dance in the Lakeside Hotel, Ballykeerin, Athlone at 8.30pm. Tickets £20.00 ea.



Athlone Area News.

We are a bit bemused on hearing of the strange happenings to another of our venerable members.

Last month, we mentioned Sean Fitzsimon's lucky escape from a fall from a roof, having declined use of a ladder - well this month we have to again say another lucky escape from injury or more was avoided by Sid Shine, who was painting his barge and took a quick dip into the Shannon. It was a clean plunge, and being the riverman he is, he calmly swam around the barge and shook himself off, none the worse for ware!

Is it something in the air??

More new buildings! This time at Fry Place, near Sean's Bar - according to the architect's drawing in the local Westmeath Independent, it looks a very large development, but if it goes ahead, will improve a very run down area in the town.

Having been empty most of the winter months, it is good to see boats coming and staying and going at our marina, bringing back life to the river.



RCAG Fund-raising Night

The final fund-raising night was held in Ballinacarrigy. The evening started our quietly enough, locals being few. But this was due to clashing events happening around, including a local wedding. Eventually the evening heated up, helped by a fine local talent, a young man whose voice was just great to hear. We raised nearly £300.00 and as usual enjoyed the evening.

Jet Ski Users

In July 1998 the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Dr. MI Woods, T.D. launched an 11 point safety code for users of jet-skies and other fast recreational craft. *Under the code Users of the craft are advised to keep at a safe distance from other water users and not to operate at unsafe high speeds, not to drink and drive or to create unnecessary noise or disturbance.*

The following are the 11 points of the code:-

Do

Keep a safe distance from other water users and do not endanger their lives.

Learn how to operate your machine

Know your own and your machine's capabilities and limitations.

Wear an approved and suitable lifejacket or buoyancy aid.

Check weather forecast and tides

Have a suitable means of attracting attention in an emergency.

Advise a person ashore of your expected departure and return times.

Don't

Operate your machine in the vicinity of other water users e.g., swimmers, divers, craft such as angling boats, canoes, sailing boats, etc.

Cause a safety hazard by high speed use

Create unnecessary noise and disturbance to other people or wildlife

Drink and drive

We all hope a code of practice will be sufficient - it's up to you who love these craft to prevent a code becoming a law.



Royal Canal 25th Anniversary Rally

Date	Itinerary	Events
Sunday 8 th August	Launching at Confey and Maynooth	Proceed to 12 th Lock at Castleknock for get-together.
Monday 9 th August	Castleknock-Leixlip-Maynooth	Opening Ceremony & Reception at 11.00 Depart 14.00 – Stop at Confey. Bankside entertainment and facilities at Maynooth.
Tuesday 10 th August	Maynooth to Enfield	Pageant & Parade followed by entertainment at Bridge House Enfield.
Wednesday 11 th August	Enfield to Kilcock	Eclipse Reception. Departure at 14.00. Entertainment at Canal Bar Kilcock.
Thursday 12 th August	Kilcock to Moyvalley	Afternoon sports at Moyvalley. Followed by pub evening.
Friday 13 th August	Moyvalley – Longwood – Hill of Down - Thomastown	Stop at Boyne Aqueduct. Picnic lunch at Hill of Down. Evening entertainment at Thomastown.
Saturday 14 th August	Thomastown	Passage through 8 lock flight. Gather at McNea's bridge.
Sunday 15 th August	Mc Nea's Bridge - Mullingar	Ecumenical Service Cruise in convoy to Mullingar. Dance at Greville Arms.
Monday 16 th August	Mullingar	Bus tour of unrestored sections of canal to Richmond Harbour. Irish night at Greville Arms.
Tuesday 17 th August	Mullingar to Ballynacargy	Pub Evening
Wednesday 18 th August	Ballynacargy to Abbeyshrule	Closing Dinner Royal Canal Band.
Thursday 19 th August	Slip out at Ballynacargy	SLAN ABHAILE !

For further details contact :-

Allen O'Leary, 9 Great Western Avenue, Phibsboro, Dublin 7.
Telephone 01 8680586; Fax 01 8362597:

(Entry form enclosed.)

Royal Canal

The Royal Canal Amenity Group was founded in April 1974 and is a voluntary restoration group dedicated to the restoration of the Royal Canal and the provision of canal related amenities.

In August this year the R.C.A.G. celebrate their 25th Anniversary and their success to date by running a rally on the restored section of the Royal Canal from Castleknock in Dublin to Abbeyshrule in County Longford.

It has been a long and frustrating journey to have this 60 mile section canal restored, and while the success to date must be applauded, the remaining 20 mile section could prove even more frustrating in the absence of sufficient funding and the political will to see the project through to it's completion.

The remaining unrestored section is all in County Longford, and the main obstacle to be overcome involves raising 8 road bridges to allow for navigation clearance along the canal. Estimates vary from £10 million to £15 million, depending on the source, and the debate as to whether the money should be provided from structural funds via Duchas or via the National Roads Authority, drags on. Either way, a ministerial decision is required, and soon, in addition to a political will in County Longford, from both Councillors and County Council Executives to have the roadworks started without delay.

The Local and European elections in June could be your opportunity to influence the politicians towards making the right decisions, so don't be shy when they come canvassing for your vote.

Much is to be gained in Co. Longford from the full restoration of the Royal Canal from the added angling, walking, boating, and general recreational tourism spin-off. Restoration of the Clondra to Longford town section could bring an immediate tourism boost as an additional stopping off point for Shannon boating traffic.

While the Royal Canal communities living along the restored sections can bask in the fruits of their success as they watch the boats go by, and benefit from the angling and boating tourism which has developed, we must spare a thought for the communities who are still waiting patiently to see measurable progress along the unrestored section. You can imagine how difficult it must be for them to keep a level of interest alive in these local communities in the absence of visible evidence of progress, or even to have water in the canal, and still they persevere, buoyed by the support they receive from Athlone Branch IWAI from the proceeds of the sales of Green and Silver, and from the Royal Canal Band and their supporters, whose tremendous voluntary contributions through their music night fundraisers over the years have provided much needed funds and a social uplift to otherwise sagging spirits.

The IWAI have placed the restoration of the Royal Canal at the top of their priority list with Duchas and the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, and Athlone branch will be actively promoting the project at whatever occasion presents itself. We need your support and you now have an ideal opportunity with the elections in June to extract a commitment from your local politician to use his/her good offices to persuade the relevant ministers to provide the funds and the resources to finally complete this restoration project.

Royal Canal Amenity Group - Jubilee Rally

8th to 19th August 1999

Entry Form

RCAG Membership - It is important that all participants are members of the RCAG.

Insurance - Every boat on the Rally is required to be properly found and in sound condition and to be covered by an adequate Third Party Liability Insurance Policy.

At the suggestion of The Wilderness Boat Club, UK, who are coming in force, we plan to have an illuminated boat parade on at least one occasion, so be prepared!

Fancy Dress - The theme will be 'Celtic Traditions'.

A commemorative plaque will be provided free to each entrant, additional plaques, burgees and Guides will be available for sale during the rally.

Entry fee £ 20.00

Please complete the form and return with entry fee to:-

Allen O'Leary
9 Great Western Avenue
Phibsboro, Dublin 7

If you have any queries please phone Allen at 00 353 1 8680586

RCAG Jubilee Rally 1999 Entry

Name _____ Skipper _____

Address _____

No. of Entrants Adults _____ Juniors under 14 _____

Boat Name _____

Entrants Signature _____

RCAG Branch _____

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS

Hello Again! No need to ask how the summer went - the best for a long time. All good things must come to an end, they say, so it's back to work - so much easier after a good summer

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, IWAI will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St, Athlone on Monday 6th September 1999 at 8.30pm.



Coming Events

Sept. 24th - 26th
End of Season Rally
To Shannon Bridge.

Oct. 23rd.
Annual Dinner Dance at
The Lakeside Hotel,
Ballykeeran, Athlone
Tks. £20.00 from Harry
At (0902 89089).
*N.B. As distinct from
previous years when
held in conjunction
with End of Season Rally*

Dec. 3rd
A.G.M. of Athlone
Branch IWAI.



B & P Rally

The annual Black Pudding and Porter Rally will take place in Lecarrow on 18th September 1999.

September 1999

Lough Ree- Polluted!

The best warm hot sunny summer weather we have had for quite a while has done more eloquently than all the words of warning spoken and written, to show us just how badly polluted Lough Ree is now.

The sight, long after the algal bloom has disappeared, of a sort of yellow gunge lying in clumps on the surface of the water in the various sheltered bays and inlets, is a huge shout of shame to us all.

So many activities by so many people are blamed, and certainly we all have to accept a share in that blame, but it is only those with clout, who can get anything done about the problem, ie the elected government of the day, who can really get people to do the right thing - it's an unfortunate fact that the more we advance in upgrading our standards, whether of personal life or in production of agriculture or manufacturing, the more we downgrade nature.

Could we use our imagination to protect our environment as much as possible, and still reach even better heights of human achievement.



ROYAL CANAL RALLY - 1999

"Well what can I say?" to quote Chairman Noel Spaine, about the 25th Anniversary Royal Canal Rally. Words like euphoria, and jubilation spring to mind to describe the welcome the rally received everywhere along the route from the 12th lock at Castleknock to Abbeyshrule. While there was a total entry of 27 boats, a core fleet of 19 boats completed the full distance, led by Commodore Allen O'Leary, the remainder joined in for shorter trips along the route.

The fleet consisted of 4 Leisureways Holiday canal boats, 1 private Narrow boat, a variety of private cruisers and 9 Wilderness boats, brought over from England by the Wilderness Boat Owners group, who promote and support waterway restoration projects throughout the UK. It took the Wilderness group a while to figure us out, with all this hospitality, entertainment and sing along sessions, but they are fast learners, and by the time we reached Enfield, Noel had taught them the words of "The Auld Triangle", which was performed at every opportunity and they joined in with such gusto that they became the life and soul of the rally for the remainder of the journey to Abbeyshrule.

The aqueduct carrying the canal across the M50 provided the stage for the photocall at the opening ceremony, and some light hearted relief for the frustrated motorists above and below. John Martin of Ducas cut the ribbon and assured us that full restoration of the Royal was high on the Minister's list.

Maynooth was our next stopover, a warm welcome at their fine harbour, entertainment in the GAA Club, and a tour of the University before moving on to Enfield on Tuesday.

Enfield left us breathless, - the huge crowd that greeted us at the harbour in the beautifully landscaped amenity park; the band, the marquee and the carnival atmosphere; the Eclipse Pageant and the Celtic Fancy Dress which carried the theme through to the traditional Irish Night in the Bridge House. Wednesday morning we had the Eclipse, a computerised view in the marquee, a televised view, and as if by

magic, the sky cleared and we had a live view for those with the special glasses. Later, two trees were planted in the amenity park, one to the memory of Brigid Pender who was deeply involved in community developments in Enfield, and the other to the memory of Eddie Slane. Those of us who worked with Eddie on the Royal spoke our tributes, but the most poignant tribute by far was paid by Eddie's grand-daughter, Gemma (aged 6) who, in a few simple words, urged us to be happy and shed no tears. Nobody spoke after that, we were all too overcome by the emotion of the moment. What a great pity that Eddie couldn't have lived to join us on this rally to celebrate the completion of this phase in the Royal restoration history.

From Enfield we backtracked to Kilcock where the Wilderness group gave us a magical illuminated display with their boats. Each boat was decorated with arrays of Christmas fairy lights arranged in various designs and flashing sequences. The boats literally waltzed around the harbour, delighting the crowd surrounding the harbour. Since being bypassed, Kilcock has made great progress in becoming a very pretty village, with a fine harbour, well maintained banks, and cobblelock paving. What a pity if this was spoiled by allowing the proposed incinerator to be built so near the village and the canal.

(continued in next Aerial)



Presentation

There will be a presentation to Athlone Sub-Aqua Club of £1,000 by Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. in the Palace Bar, Athlone on Friday, 3rd. September, 1999 at about 9.00pm.



Athlone's Evil Kneivel

It is with relief that Sean Fitzsimon's many friends learned that he had made a remarkable recovery from what could have been a very serious accident recently.

While doing some repairs to the flat roof at the back of the pub, Sean, missing the ladder held by Frank Sherry, went directly to the ground, giving Frank the fright of his life and giving himself many cuts and bruises and a fractured toe.

However, never one to let such happenings deter him from a rally, Sean arrived in Lecarrow, in his newly acquired 4 berth cruiser "Lizy D" for the May Bank holiday weekend.

We suppose he'll put a sticker on the cruiser "My other boat is a Barge"!

It was uplifting to hear the many sympathetic remarks of Sean's friends - "Evil Kneivel", "Superman" and "Flights of Fancy".

Making a first appearance on the river, on this rally, was the young (6months) and beautiful Orla, granddaughter of Margaret and Fred Guildea. Congratulations to proud parents and grandparents.

In very pleasant weather conditions, a relaxed rally took place over the weekend with many newly spruced-up boats appearing back after a long winter lay-up. We all hope that this will be the start of an long and enjoyable summer.

Local Student looks at Job potential of Shannon

RTE ran a program showing the River Shannon from the point of view of university student Gordon Brett, whose interest, along with any student, is in the jobs available in their own home area.

Most jobs are connected with the tourist industry and are short term.

Many stretches of the Shannon are just farm land with a few small villages, and a handful of towns and only one city - Limerick.

Boat-building was an obvious enterprise, and one on the Shannon Estuary was featured, but ideas seemed to be thin on the ground as shown in the half-hour program.

The IWAI would like to see more job opportunities in the Shannon Area, as long as the creation of these jobs does not do environmental damage to the river.





Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

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

Coming Events

October 23rd.

Annual Dinner Dance in the Ballykeeran Hotel. This is an event NOT to be missed! For full and explicit details read further into this Aerial -

Annual General Meeting

The A.G.M. of Athlone Branch will now not take place until next year, on Friday 4th February, 2000. This is to bring Athlone financial year in line with the calendar year and has come at the request of Council.

End-of - Season Rally.

Over the years this rally has been the source of light hearted argument, - do we go north of Athlone or south?.

The arguments for north were that it suited those with sailing cruisers, there was the chance of a good blow and thus a good end of season sail, plus masts wouldn't have to be lowered.

But for that very reason of the possibility of a good blow, cruisers, and gin palaces and barges, felt a quiet and gentle voyage downstream would be more in keeping.

October 1999

So it was agreed there would be two rallies, one upstream and one down. This year, the members agreed to go together down stream and so it was settled, or was it?

No way, the elements played a trick and because of heavy flooding the rally had to go upstream. Ah well, it's pretty pointless to fight with nature.

Annual Dinner - Dunrovin Trust.

Because Athlone Branch will finally own the Dunrovin Property, as willed by the late Cynthia Rice, R.I.P., the committee decided to set up the Dunrovin Trust to raise funds towards future development and so we are launching this trust fund at our annual dinner. Harry Nugent, our chairman, has arranged an extra special night and we hope that as many as are free will support this event. We would also like to remind you that this will be a long weekend, and maybe some of you could combine a glamorous weekend with winterising your boat!

If you are really unable to support the evening, tickets at £5.00 ea. may be purchased, which will allow you to enter the draw for the lovely 1st prize of a weekend for two in London for the Boat Show which will take place from 7th to 16th January, at Earl's Court. Harry's phone No. (0902) 89089

"Cruisers Covered in Dust from Plant"

The above headline appeared in the Topic Newspaper on 12th August 1999 and the article stated - *"A number of cruises were covered with emissions from the Masonite plant when there was an accident at the plant.*

Up to 20 boats moored overnight near Albert Lock were covered with wood dust and 10 cars parked nearby were also coated with the dust."

The article went on to state *"There have been problems with objectionable smells from the plant and emissions of formaldehyde but these have been rectified."*

We are aware that the E.P.A. is keeping a close eye on this plant, what a pity such a good employer had to place their manufacturing plant in such a sensitive place.

New Marina for Lough Ree.

Ms. Sile de Valera, Minister for Arts Culture and the Gaeltach, has applied to Roscommon Co. CO. to build a new £800,000 marina at Ballyleague on Lough Ree.

Ballyleague is the west part of Lanesboro, and from the view of a boat going upstream, is a dull shore on the left hand side just before the lake becomes the river again.

It is to have 32 berths and if permission is given soon, the project could be completed by 2001.

Ducas' Waterways service took the decision to go ahead with this marina as it was found that the existing facilities could not cope with the increased number of tourists.

The lake bed will be dredged to 35.3m and a fixed breakwater projecting 100m into the lake will be constructed along the western edge

of the marina. A floating breakwater will be built for the southern edge.

The moorings will be floating moorings on guide piles with access ramps to the shore.

There will be a 1.4m high wave wall on the fixed breakwater.

A very welcome announcement, we certainly need another marina on Lough Ree, and wouldn't it be great if Glasson could be the next Lough Ree development!!

The Law and Water Safety

In a recent article in the Irish Times it was reported that the Minister of the Marine has established a new department to deal with regulations regarding water safety among pleasure craft.

Where laws regarding safety in the use of fast craft like speed boats and jet skies is welcomed by most of us, especially where their use by untrained and underaged people is concerned, we hope that whatever laws are deemed necessary to be enacted for ours and the environment's safety, that these laws will not interfere with the safe and free enjoyment of our inland waterways or make access to these enjoyments only available to the well-off.

At present the Greek Supreme Court is considering a total ban on wet bikes.

Cyprus is considering a law which will introduce zoning to keep wet bikes away from bathers and other water users and in Spain there will be a 200m wet bike exclusion zone around all beaches, and wet bike owners will be required to register their bikes with the relevant port authorities and that they will be properly insured.

The greatest cause of death and injury is speed in the hands of untrained and immature people, and we hope that any laws which are made in this country are made specifically to control only those vessels and their owners and not interfere in an unnecessary way with craft which are already subject to registration and which are not in themselves lethal dangers to others.

Royal Canal Rally 1999 by Damien Delaney

Continued from last Aerial

Across the Blackwater Aqueduct to Fureys of Moyvalley which produced the best sing-along of the rally, with Jim Murray and Sean Fitz in full flight, and the Wilderness group becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves".

Longwood greeted us with a lunchtime reception and ceremonial anointing of all the skippers, while granting them the right to cross the Boyne and through that region without fear of molestation, pillage or plunder. Hill-of-Down looked splendid, and again crowds turned up to greet us and tell us how great it was to see boats on the canal again. Thomastown for the night in their fine harbour, with music, craic and as many barbecued burgers as you could eat. Up the flight of 8 locks to Knead's Bridge and another night of music and song in Mary Lynch's

Following an Ecumenical service and blessing of the boats we set off on the 10 mile stretch to Mullingar. It was unbelievable - crowds greeted us at every bridge and access point along the route, more boats joined in to swell the fleet entering Mullingar. Three Army pipers joined the leading boat, and piped us to Moran's Bridge (Dublin Rd bridge) where a stone seat to the memory of Eddie Slane was unveiled. Then on to the harbour to music and formal greetings, and the crowd got bigger. By popular request the Wilderness group repeated their illuminated boats display at 10p.m. to a packed and very appreciative audience.

Monday we did a coach tour of Longford, Keenagh, Clondra, and Ballymahon to show our visitors what remains to be done to fully restore the Royal, and to meet the unsung heroes who still toil and sweat and wait for the water to reach them, all because successive administrations have failed to get on with the job of replacing the culverts with proper bridges with navigable headroom.

Ballynacargy and the crowds waited patiently, despite the impending thunder storm, while the boats formed in line astern before entering the harbour, to allow pride of place to local heroes Watson Mills and Tom Shanley. As if by magic or divine intervention the storm moved away and the sun shone again as the fleet arrived. Food was laid on in the community hall for everyone on arrival; free barbecues and music in every pub; music and dancing in the village square and an atmosphere of excitement that one would only expect on winning the All Ireland. Again, by popular request, the

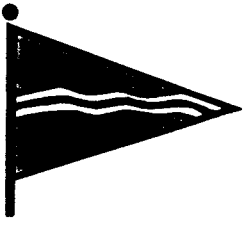
Wilderness group gave their illuminated display much to the delight of the huge crowd that surrounded the harbour.

Abbeyshrule, and again the impending thunder storm moved away allowing Gabriel McGoey and Co. to lead the fleet to the sunny reception at Abbeyshrule Airport. Tea and cake and an aerobatics display, followed by more music on the canal bank, before moving on to the end of the line, - for the time being! The boats approaching the culvert were like horses sizing up the fences before a race, the great pity being that this is all that prevents us reaching Ballymahon, what progress that would be.

The closing Dinner and compliments to all concerned - to Commodore Allen O'Leary, Committee Noel Spaine, Padraig O'Brolchain, John Bowler and many others who helped along the way, to all the RCAG branches who entertained us "Royally" throughout the rally, to FloGas, the main sponsor and to the many other sponsors, to Duchas and the staff of Waterways Service who manned the locks and gave support all the way, to our own Royal Canal Band of Billy Snr., Billy Jnr., and David Henshaw, Larry Benson, Michael Martin, Joe Lacken and Frank Reid, who had them singing and dancing in the aisles as they have been doing without charge, for longer then I care to remember.

Overall reflection - the canal is in very good condition, and travels through beautiful countryside. Some slight weed problems between Confey and Castleknock, and between Ballinea and Coolnahay, and two isolated obstacles near Enfield Station, all of which could easily be remedied. Some mindless individual ran off the water in the level below the 36th lock, but the Waterways staff were on hand and solved the problem quickly with no disruption to the rally.

Now that the rally is over, what does the Royal need to sustain the momentum that has been generated. Boats need to be visible in the towns and villages along the canal and suggestions that more hire fleet, more private boats, Flotel boat supported by minibus to cover a wider corridor deserve consideration and support. What can we do to help? More activity on this stretch strengthens the case to complete the restoration to the Shannon. This was a brilliant rally which will be impossible to repeat, but already plans are being prepared for next year which may consist of a number of smaller rallies, so watch this space for details. It's well worth a visit just to see the tremendous work which has been done by the voluntary groups along the route. Well, What More Can I Say!!!



Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

Cumann Uiscebhealaigh Intire na h-Éireann.

Athlone Branch.

New Park
Kiltoom
Athlone
0902 89089

Please reply to:

DUNROVIN TRUST

ANNUAL DINNER

LAKESIDE HOTEL BALLYKEERAN ATHLONE

23RD OCT 1999 8pm. for 8 30.pm.

Dear *Member*

The late Mrs. Cynthia Rice RIP. Bequeathed her property of "Dunrovin" at Coosan Point, Athlone to the Athlone Br. of I.W.A.I. This was the house that the IWAI was founded in 1954 and is part of our National Heritage. A **TRUST FUND** has been set up to insure that the property does not fall into disrepair. Our Annual Dinner has now been renamed as "**DUNROVIN TRUST ANNUAL DINNER**". It is at times like this that we need your firm support and assistance, I have no doubt that your support will be forthcoming and I look forward to seeing you at the dinner. I have arranged a lavish evening of entertainment for you.

SUMPTUOUS SIX COURSE MEAL and WINE

MUSIC by HEATHWAVE

1ST SPOT PRIZE FLIGHTS, HOTEL ACCM., 2 NIGHTS, TICKETS TO THE 2000 LONDON BOAT SHOW for TWO (2)

FREE

LOTS MORE SPOT PRIZES.

TICKETS £20.00

I NEED YOUR SUPPORT

**HENRY NUGENT
CHAIRMAN ATHLONE BR. IWAL**

**Mr. Henry Nugent
NEW PARK
KILTOOM
ATHLONE**

I WILL ATTEND NAME _____
ADDRESS _____ NO _____

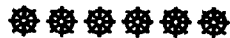
I REQUIRE _____ TICKETS

CHEQUE £ _____ ENCLOSED.

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

The next meeting of Athlone Branch, IWAI will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 1st November 1999 at 8.30p.m.



Annual General Meeting

The Branch A.G.M. will take place on 4th February 2000. We would like to again draw the attention of all our members to the change of date from our usual December date to next February 2000.



Dunrovin Trust Fund Dinner Dance

This turned out to be one of the best evenings for quite a while. Almost 100 members and friends enjoyed an excellent dinner in the Lakeside Hotel, Ballykeerin, with wine and good conversation, as only members of the inland waterways can do.

This was followed by the main draw of the evening, the trip

November 1999

for two to the London Boat Show which was won by a person at the dance, and then great dancing to Heatwave commenced, and even our Reggie Redmond was heard to express his approval of the music, so together with two further draws for many more great prizes, the dancing continued until the early hours of the morning.

This scribe, who won a wonderful prize of 4 Grand Enclosure Tickets for the Budweiser Irish Derby, 2nd July 2000, would like to express her thanks to Andrea Nugent, who collected the prize amidst the usual calls of "fix" from the Eric Hensy table!!

Rosemary Furlong was called to draw the winning ticket for the London Boat Show, which was a lovely connection, as Rosemary and Norman Furlong were life long friends of the late Cynthia Rice, whose bequest to Athlone Branch, was the Dunrovin Property.

We wish to thank the following for helping to make the night

such a great success as we raised about £1,000.00, thanks to all who bought tickets and attended the night, to those who purchased £5.00 to be included in the main prize draw, to all those who sold the tickets; to the management and staff of the Lakeside Hotel, especially Maureen who managed the whole dinner so well; to the band who played tirelessly, and to the following sponsors of the many prizes:- Trip for two to London Boat Show - Elan Pharmaceuticals, Athlone; 4 tickets to Grand Enclosure Irish Budweiser Irish Derby - Budweiser (Ireland) Ltd.; Dinner for two at Hudson Bay Hotel - Hudson Bay Hotel; Dinner for two at Shamrock Lodge Hotel - Paddy McCaul; Lovers Night at Renville House Hotel, Connamara, including Dinner and wine and Breakfast - Guinness Group Ireland; Dinner for two at Le Chateau Restaurant - Le Chateau; Dubarry Shoes - Dubarry, Ballinasloe; Dinner for two - Pavarrotti's, Fry Pl., Athlone; Voucher from McCormack's Man's Shop, Athlone; Voucher from Dolan Marketing, Athlone; Hamper from Dunne's Stores, Athlone; Pen from A.T.Cross, Ballinasloe; Bottle of Gin from Timmy Donovan, Sean's Bar, Athlone; "Welding" from Liam

Madden, Athlone; "Gift" from Mrs. T. Sloyne, Midland Alterations, Athlone; Bottle of Champagne from Alan Algeo, Athlone; Bottle of Whiskey from Tesco, Athlone; Cake Voucher from Delice de France; Bottle of Liquor from Killeen's Shannon Bridge; to all our very heartfelt thanks.



End of Season Rally.

The end of season rally finally took place up river and all together, in spite of Sean Fitz's valiant efforts to get the rally to go down south to Shannonbridge, but because of high river levels, the jetty at Shannon-bridge was under water.

Friday/Saturday night was spent at Sean's Bar and then the rally made it's way into Lough Ree, and based itself around the Hodson Bay area. The main of activity of the rally was the "I told you it was better to go up river than down" variety of slagging. Don't be disheartened, southerners, next year it will probably be blowing a gale, and it's Shannonbridge here we come!!

Silverlee Site Athlone

It is with great pleasure we can report that, at last, work is progressing on the development of the old Silverlee site, so long an eyesore on the bank of the Shannon, behind our new marina in Athlone.

Unfortunately the beautiful new toilet and launderette facility, is yet to be commissioned, in spite of the publicity of a formal opening last summer, is still only partly operating.

We also hope that the pumpout station will be operating next summer.

It was noted that Councillor Mark Cooney asked questions of the Town Clerk, Mr. J. Walsh, , Athlone UDC as to the reasons why the pumpout station was not in operation, nor was there hot water in the showers nor was the launderette in operation.

Maybe by next month's Aerial, we and Councillor Mr. Mark Cooney will have a positive answer to report.

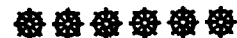


Millennium Fountain for Athlone?

It's been reported in all our local newspapers that a floodlit fountain will be placed in the Shannon as a way for Athlone to celebrate the millennium.

The fountain will have four separate plumbs, operated independently representing the four counties of which Athlone is the centre point. It will be placed in the River Shannon outside the navigation, between the eel nets and the weir, and will be anchored to the river bed in such a way that the fountain will rise and fall with the river levels, and will be vandal proof as well.

Our own IWAI branch member, Mr. Don Carr is in charge with the technical details, and the man behind the scheme is Mr. Jim Kearns, of the Thatch Pub in the Square, Athlone.



Royal Canal

To all of the Athlone members of I.W.A.I. who have a great interest in the Royal Canal, it may be of interest to you that there will be a Heritage Council Regional Forum in Longford on 1st December 1999. Details may be obtained from Beatrice Kelly, Heritage Council, Kilkenny (tel 056 - 70777).



Lough Derg & Lough Ree Catchment Monitoring and Management System.

Management Proposals;

Sewage Discharges

- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC):
- Provide Phosphorous reduction facilities at Wastewater Treatment plants of less than the population equivalent threshold specified by the Directives at locations where sewage discharges significantly contributes to the eutrophication of rivers or lakes.

Industrial Discharges

- Review licence conditions for industries whose discharges contribute to the eutrophication of rivers or lakes, or otherwise impinge upon the relevant quality objectives of the receiving waters;
- For those industries, specify measures to upgrade waste treatment facilities and/or reduce Phosphorus inputs at source.

Nutrient Losses from Agriculture

Measure 1 Storage and Management of Wastes.

- Make Bye-Laws under the Water Pollution Acts requiring:
 - adequate manure storage capacity for animals housed during the winter period. Guidance in relation to slurry storage requirements is available in the “Code of Good Agricultural Practices” published by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (1996). It is likely that a minimum of 20 weeks storage capacity will be required for farms within priority risk areas. Local Authorities may decide to accept less than 20 weeks storage capacity in situations where farmers can demonstrate a lesser requirement through the preparation of an approved Nutrient Management Plan;
 - the minimisation of farmyard wastes by the separation and control of extraneous water;
 - that in a normal year, at least half the manure produced during the winter housing period is landspread by 1 July and the remainder by 30 September;
- Provision to be made for the phased compliance with the requirements for slurry storage (3 years maximum while working to a local authority approved plan);
- Apply to extensive agricultural risk areas.

Measure 2 Areas of Excess Soil Fertility.

- Make Bye-law under the Water Pollution Acts requiring:
 - mandatory nutrient management planning and adherence to current Phosphorus guidelines (Teagasc 1998);
- Apply to extensive agricultural risk areas where available indicators suggest excessive soil fertility.

Measure 3 Intensive Agricultural Enterprises (IAE's)

- Serve notice under the Water Pollution Acts requiring:
 - ‘existing’ pig installations exceeding 1,000 units on gley soils and 3,000 units on other soils and ‘existing’ poultry units exceeding 100,000 units not currently subject to IPC licensing, to prepare a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP);
- Make Bye-law under the Water Pollution Acts requiring:
 - that landowners not accept waste from Intensive Agricultural Enterprises except in accordance with a Local Authority or EPA approved NMP;
- Apply to extensive agricultural risk areas;
- Alternatively, the implementation of IPC Licensing may be accelerated for ‘existing’ Intensive Agricultural Enterprises activities.

Measure 4 Farmyard Surveys

- Undertake farm surveys and appropriate follow-up action where agriculture is a likely source of water pollution, in localised risk areas

Measure 5 Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS)

- Actively promote the uptake of REPS throughout the catchment.

Reference: Extracts from Lough Derg & Lough Ree Catchment & Management System Management Proposals –July 1999

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

*We wish all our
members a very
happy Christmas and
a prosperous and
healthy new
millennium*



The next meeting of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 6th December 1999 at 8.30pm.



Coming Events

Our usual list of events are in the process of being arranged. We hope that by our January 2000 Aerial all will be revealed, well almost all.

We do again bring to mind that our AGM has been deferred to February, 4th 2000.



December 1999

Stolen

It is with regret that we have to relate that a boat was stolen from the inner lakes, Lough Ree at the beginning of November and driven aground on the west shore of the Shannon just opposite the white buoy. The boat was run hard aground, then vandalised in such a way that the boat was gutted. Also attached to the boat was an inflatable dingy, a black Avon, about 8' long with a rounded stern. The name "Talip" was just visible under a light coat of black paint. This dingy is still missing. If any of you should see or be offered for sale such a dingy, please inform the police in Athlone.

We have also heard that someone has driven four stakes into the River bed at a place called the stank, which is outside the Jolly Mariner.

The Athlone Boat Club launch had the engine caught in one of the stakes. They are being used for eel nets and are in the main navigation of the Shannon. We hope that they will be removed. Just because it's not tourist season, does not mean a total end of boating on the river.



Athlone News

As mentioned in our last Aerial we were delighted to say that work had begun on the old Silverlee site on the banks of the Shannon above the road bridge in Athlone.

We, along with most of the people in Athlone, are delighted that the remaining large derelict site, that of the old Ritz cinema is in the process of being demolished to make room for a development of a pub, restaurant, retail units and upmarket apartments and penthouses costing £2.5m. This development has been designed by a local architect, Angelo Magliocco's firm Creative Design.

The main mover behind this development is a Loughrea business man, who was best known for his association with "Mother Hubbard" on the main Dublin/Galway road near Enfield.

It is hard to believe that the Ritz Cinema was designed by the late Michael Scott, who was one Ireland's best known architects, who also designed Busarus in Dublin. The Ritz building was never completed and after it ceased being a cinema, it had been used as an amusement arcade and some alterations were made to the front of the building which certainly did nothing to enhance the property.

There is also going to be proper development of Burgess Park, which has been let get a very neglected air about it. Local residents have got together to get the park properly maintained and patrolled, so that cider parties and other unsociable behaviour is ended and tourist and

locals can once again enjoy walks along the banks of the Shannon.

Athlone Sub-Aqua Club.

The local Sub-aqua Club is starting the building of their new club house in the Wansboro field on the banks of the Shannon beside the Jolly Mariner. The turning of the sod was performed by Minister Mary O'Rourke, T.D.

This Club was founded in 1972 and has trained more than 500 divers and saved many lives in that time.

Mrs. O'Rourke told Mr. Jim Campbell, Chairman of the Sub-Aqua Club, that the work done by his life-saving team was of enormous benefit to the local community... "It is in the truest sense, a noble and worthwhile commitment". We of the Athlone Branch, IWAI would certainly echo these sentiments.

Planning permission has been sought by Heavey Architects, Athlone for a development of houses on the meadows below the lock on the west bank. Hope the builders are good swimmers!

And we know what our wishes are for the new year! A clean Lough Ree, where we can once again swim to our heart's content, and an operating pumpout station in Athlone - Lord, our cup will really run over!



Boats for Sale

The following boats are for sale at Portaneena Co. Ltd. (tel. 0902 85116; Fax 0902 85533:-

21' Squib, Fin keel, Trailer	£3,000
22' Mariah, 2 berth, Mercruiser	£22,000
24' Darragh, 4 berth Hydro/Diesel	£ 9,000
24' Freeman, 4 berth Perkins	£14,000
26' Freeman, 4 berth Perkins	£11,500
26' Colvic, 4 berth B.M.C.	£16,000
27' Seamaster, 4 berth Perkins	£14,000
8m Seamaster, 4 berth BMC.	£22,000
8m Seamaster, 4 berth BMC.	£21,500
27' Elysian, 4 berth Perkins	£13,000
30' Ocean, 5 berth Mercedes	£22,000
30' Seamaster, 6 berth Perkins	£22,000
30, Seamaster, 6 berth BMC	£24,000
31' Project, 5 berth Twin Volvo	£19,000
31' Project, 5 berth Twin Volvo	£22,000
36' Carvel, 7 berth Twin Volvo	£24,000
38' Steel, 6 berth BMC	£21,000
37' Broom, 6 berth Twin Perkins	£65,000

Some nice preseys for Christmas for some lucky punter, woops, what a pun!

And for further sales, one can do no better than visit Sean's Bar, Athlone where Sean has some very seasonal gifts, admittedly the summer season, for sale, but why quibble:-

Green & Silver by LTC Rolt @ £16.00ea
IWAI Tie @ £7.00ea.
Burgee @ £8.00ea.
IWAI Badges @ £2.00ea.



Life Jackets

I suppose you will have heard the Minister of the Marine, stating that all people under the age of 16 would be required by law to wear a life jacket whether in a boat at sea or on the inland rivers and lakes of Ireland.

A very good idea, especially as many modern life jackets are no longer the cumbersome things they used to be!

Even better is the recent announcement that all school children must be taught to swim before they are adults and that is the best solution to the many fatalities which could have been easily avoided if the person had been able to swim. Knowing how to swim still does not negate the necessity of wearing a life jacket all the time. Even adults!!!



Pollution

Will we ever get away from this awful word, it seems not. Reading a foreign newspaper, we came across the following - Plastic balls coated with bacteria could be the key to cleaning up waterways polluted by dyes. We are not aware of dyes being dumped into our waterways at present, but if it can be dumped, no doubt it will or is being dumped in this ecologically unfriendly country of ours.

The solution which scientists at Leeds University have come up with is bacterium found in rivers which will in a few hours change a flask full of red dye into colourless water.

The scientists' problem was to keep the bacterium in the one spot near the dye while it gobbled away at the dye, but of course being in a river the bacterium would be washed away. Hence the bright idea of attaching the bacterium to plastic balls which could be anchored in the dye until the job was done.



Boyle & Lough Key Forest Park

Last summer a couple of people visited Lough Key Forest Park, and were most disappointed with the condition of the Fairy Bridge. In fairness bridge was OK but it was almost lost in the huge amount of growth of the surrounding trees, which obviously thrived in the cool wet soil of the canal which the bridge crossed. Years ago that bridge was really fairy-like with the full sun shining on and through the beautiful river sculpted rocks which decorate the bridge.

All is not lost. as the people of Boyle have raised their collective voice in complaint that Boyle has been left behind in the development stakes and are demanding big improvements in the town and forest park.

Coillte is taking over the management of the Park, and plans for the future development have been submitted to Coillte by Roscommon and the local people. Some of the things which need upgrading to modern expectations, like visitor centre, bar, restaurant, first class accommodation and varied sport facilities on land and water.

All the walks have become overgrown and dark, the buildings in use at present are from the 1970's and look very well worn-out.

The caravan and camping sites will be upgraded, 20 chalets will be built and designed to fit in with the natural surrounding, and a hostel catering for families and independent travellers will be developed at the existing stable buildings.

The stone stables, with cobbled courtyard will house leisure facilities, shower and changing rooms, and a regional Coillte office. The cafe will be developed into a visitor centre with restaurant and bar and will also house information on forestry and the environment.

Tennis courts, walking trails, and orienteering course, mountain bike trails and barbecue sites will be developed.

Unfortunately, the ugly Moylurg tower would be too costly to demolish. Maybe with de-commissioning, a bit of free samtex could be donated as a gesture of good will!

The ideas put forward by Roscommon Co.Co. and local interests were included in the plans drawn up by Duncan Steward, of "Our House" fame, which will allow for the integrated development of the park and will cost in the region of £5m.

For all this work to commence, Coillte is looking to Bord Failte for the funding, and if it come through, work would commence in 2000.

An action which will bring the lake to Boyle is the building of a new canal, the first new canal to be built in Ireland for 200 years, which should be completed by next year. This work is being undertaken by the Shannon Navigation Team in the Department of Arts and Heritage. The canal will arrive into a newly constructed 50 berth harbour located just outside the town, making it easier for water based visitors to see the town of Boyle and the marvellously restored King House and the Boyle Abbey ruins.

This is all very welcome news, as Lough Key is nearly always at the top of the list of favourite places on the Shannon/Boyle rivers.



E-Mail

We now have an e-mail address if you would like to contact us, like sending items for the Aerial, or you congratulations on our Aerial - needless to say any criticism will be deleted! No. seriously, we would like to hear from you no matter what. Our address is iwaiathlone@eircom.ie.