

Athlone Aerial

January 2000

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

*Happy Millennium (sic),
pardon!*

Changes

We know how much has changed in this the beginning of the 3rd Millennium, no winter floods, no back to the same work, no hangovers, all is new and bright and fresh, and a whole lot of you are going to put your names forward to take up the vacant places in the Athlone Branch which will come up at the AGM in February, like Chairman; - our present Chairman, Harry Nugent, a very able and hardworking member of our branch, is going to serve his country abroad, and we take this opportunity to sincerely thank Harry and his wife Mary for their hard work on our behalf, especially in regard to the finalising of the Dunrovin Estate and the setting up of the Dunrovin Trust Fund; we will also be looking for someone to take over the 'Aerial' as Eileen O'Brien feels that someone who is actively a boating person would be more in touch and certainly more interested in waterway matters.

Whether the Treasurer and Secretary are prepared to put their name's forward is something we all hope they will do.

Maybe, in this new millennium, some of you may find that you have some time to spare, to be able to take an active role in your branch. Your branch really needs you now.



The next meeting of Athlone Branch, IWAI, will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 10th January, 2000 at 8.30pm.

Coming Events

15th Jan Royal Canal Night

We will be having a fund raising night in Foxes Pub in Ballymahon. You've all had a good rest, so get your dancing shoes polished and your res-a-ma-tations learned and off we go! Don't forget a spot prize or two.

4th Feb. Athlone Branch. A.G.M.

The AGM will take place in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Church St., Athlone, at 8.30pm.

5th Feb. Walter Borner's Slide Show.

This always looked forward to show is again on our events calendar, thanks to Walter and Ruth Borner. We will publish time and venue in next Aerial.

Ruth Heard's Film Show

Details to be announced.



The Heritage Council

A seminar, titled "User Forum on the Future Development of Ireland's Inland Waterways: *Royal Canal and Boyne Navigation*", was held on December 1st 1999 in the Longford Arms Hotel, Longford and was attended by a very large group of people interested in the inland waterways, not only the above mentioned waterways, and, as was revealed, by the very vociferous discussion at the end of the seminar, a lot of exchange of ideas between the excellent speakers and the audience was the order of the day, no shrinking violets there!

Ruth Delany was the first speaker who briefly outlined the Heritage Council's policies and further uses of the inland waterways. Mr. John McKeown, Duchas - Waterways spoke most clearly and with excellent slides, on the restoration of the Royal Canal. The next speaker was Mr. P. Coyne, who spoke of the Dublin Dockland Development Authority and the link of the Royal Canal and the Grand Canal. Dr. Ian Bath, spoke on the Royal Canal and Longford town, and new waterway corridors, and other restoration projects around the country.

Ruth Delany. Heritage Council

Ruth Delany said that this was a very exciting time for the Inland Waters section of the Heritage Council, as part of the peace agreement in Northern Ireland would see Enniskillen becoming the town where the new crossborder body for inland waterways would be sited.

In regard to the Heritage Council, it hopes to get involved in collecting Data, providing advice and encouraging pride in our Heritage, especially in our inland waterways.

The Heritage Council is running 4 seminars in connection with inland waterways, the first was in Tullamore, this in Longford and a 3rd in March, 2000 on Lough Ree and the final in May 2000, in Ballyconnell.

Mr. John McKeown. Duchas -Waterways

Mr. J. McKeown's talk on the restoration of the Royal Canal was received with concentrated interest by it must be admitted a very partisan crowd.

Mr. McKeown very effectively explained how the money provided for the full restoration of the canal from Dublin to the Shannon was over run. Three major unforeseen events occurred, it can happen in the most planned of exercises, Moran Bridge, Mullingar where the National Roads Authority required extensive extra work by Ducas, where the new raised bridge over the canal was built, this work was paid for out of the restoration money, with no help from the NRA's funds!, a much deeper drainage hole in the bog alongside the canal, and breaching of the canal where turf cutting had come too near the canal bank.

The remaining 22 Km., which includes the Longford branch, will require 12 to 15ml punts. to complete the job.

Ducas feel that they will not incur an overrun on the outstanding work, as they have learned by experiences on the completed work, so making allowances for any similar problems.

Mr. McKeown paid tribute to Westmeath and Longford

Co.Councils. and to the R.C.A.G for their co-operation with Ducas.

Mr. Peter Coyne, DDDA.

Mr. Coyne, speaking very much from a developer's point of view, did seem to have taken on board the necessity of including the older developments, like the Royal Canal at Spencer Dock, into the new developments proposed along the River Liffey, unlike the bad old days, when developers got a very bad name because they wanted a "clean site" to work with and thus destroyed so much of what we now know is irreplaceable heritage.

Dr. Ian Bath, RCAG.

Dr. Ian Bath then talked about future developments of our Inland Waterways. He also touched on the restoration of the Royal Canal Harbour in Longford town, saying that the harbour was in existence, and had only been filled in so that the harbour walls were still intact and could be easily watered providing the town with a beautiful new amenity and also bringing the fruits of new and increased tourism right into the heart of the town. There were no obstacles to this development, both CIE and the town Council were behind this development and were only awaiting the provision of the additional monies required to finish the restoration of the Royal Canal.

The Dr. Bath went on to startle us all with his vision of a fully restored navigation of the Boyne River which could be connected to the Grand Canal via the already huge drainage system of the Boyne river, to the Royal Canal at Longwood and via the Royal Canal to Mullingar, from Mullingar to Lough Ennel and from Lough Ennel via the Brosna River to

the Kilbeggan Branch of the Grand Canal to the Shannon. (And it's about as impossible as the restoration of the Grand Canal was way back in the early 60's or the Royal Canal in the 70's.)

The meeting was much impressed by the whole concept and maybe, in the not too distant future, such an undertaking will be possible.

In the meantime, Dr. Bath asked that all the local authorities who have jurisdiction on any part of the proposed line of this development, avoid giving planning permission to permanent developments which could cause unnecessary future difficulties and expense to the development of such a waterway.

A "Policy Paper on the Future of Ireland's Inland Waterways" has been published by the Heritage Council and can be obtained by phoning 056 70777 or e-mail: heritage@heritage.iolie, or write to The Heritage Council, Kilkenny, Ireland. Price £7.00



Athlone Town News.

The development at the old Ritz and Silverlee sites is going ahead full tilt and both should be finished in the year 2001, making an enhanced frame for the Shannon as it goes through Athlone town. The local council together with local residents are tackling a very rundown Burgess park and will restore it to an amenity suitable for all ages.

At present the Shannon is very high, in fact it is looking to be a record height and flooding is expected to be very extensive. It has already caused hardship for the people

of Clonown over the Christmas and New Year, and we were shown flood waters across the main Galway road into Ballinasloe where the Suck has badly flooded the surrounding area.

The millennium water fountain was very successfully installed and was in fine working order on New Year's eve, but because of strong winds, had to be turned off as mourners at the nearby funeral parlour were drenched by the spray from the fountain. As the fountain is movable, a new site will no doubt be found when the river level drops.

In spite of the awful weather, Athlone Town has never looked so well, lots of colour in the street lighting, and the Golden Island Shopping Centre and the surrounding shops were like Mecca to shoppers from all over the midlands and beyond.



Ballykeeran Village

Downright opposition by the residents of the beautiful village of Ballykeerin to a proposed development of a holiday village at the edge of Ballykeerin itself.

The development would consist of a three story guest house, 52 houses, some terraced, some single and some two-storied, and 14 dormer chalets, plus various leisure and service areas.

This development would take place on sites in Ballykeerin Big and Ballykeerin Little.

These sites are very adjacent to the junction on which Ballykeerin village

is built. According to a recent survey, 4000 cars and 600 lorries a day use this junction, also there is an average of 10 accidents a year. As it is, the residents feel such high density housing on these particular sites will endanger the lives of not only the residents, but also of the holiday makers.

On another level, local residents point out that there is a bird sanctuary in the "inner lakes of Lough Ree" as this area is called.

The Chairman, Mr. Frank O'Neill, pointed out that the area is a SAC, Special Area of Conservation, and that the local Authority has a legal obligation under Irish Law to consider the conservation and protection of Habitats re: EU (Natural Habitats), 1997, Regulation 26.



Berths for Private Boats

Because of the huge increase in private holiday craft on the Shannon, berths are in very short supply.

This was in the past dealt with, by boats mooring alongside each other.

However, things are critical and anyone thinking of purchasing a new vessel, will also have to secure a private berth, that is if they wish to leave their craft afloat during the boating season.





Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

Annual General Meeting

Our A.G.M. will take place on Friday, 4th February 2000 at 8.30pm in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone. We would like as many of you to attend as possible to help us to get the best input for the Athlone Branch's activities for the coming year.

Membership Subscriptions

Due to the change of date of our AGM, from December to February, the cost of membership subscription to the branch will not be decided until the AGM. The subscription may be changed, so we would ask anyone who has a direct debit payment for membership to take this into account. In case it has been forgotten all members are entitled to attend the meetings of the branch as Athlone runs an open door to all members of Athlone Branch IWAI. Please become an active member, if you have a spare evening once a month, for 10 months only, your attendance would be appreciated by us all.



Inside...

They're back again - those intrepid sailors in the Med, from near sinkings to equipment troubles to physical attacks, it's a hard life. But read all about it inside

February 2000

Coming Events

4th Feb. AGM

Details as above.

5th Feb. Walter Borner's Slide Show.

This very popular event will take place in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone, at 8.30pm. Please arrive on time and get the best seats.

26th Feb. R.C.A.G. Nite

The return match of the Ballymahon team will undertake to annihilate us in the talent competitions, watch out in the waltz competition, very sharp manoeuvres can take place here. The evening will, we hope, raise very necessary funds to help the ongoing efforts of a hard working group, who are firmly behind the Royal Canal's complete restoration to the Shannon. So we hope to see a good support at the Lough Ree Inn at about 8.30 and we'll raise the roof with the help of our very own Royal Canal Band!

March 25th

Ruth Heard's Film Show and Harry Rice Competition.

This always entertaining and interesting evening will take place in the Shamrock Lodge, Athlone followed by the presentation of the Harry Rice Cup. So, children and adults get your entry in to Rosemary Furlong by the end of February. Remember, a poem, essay, project, painting or extract from a ship's log on the subject of the inland waterways will get you in with a chance to win. So, get your entries ready.

Mrs. Gertie Walsh RIP

On the 6th January 2000, we learned of the very sudden loss of a long time friend of many of us in Athlone Branch, IWAL. Gertie was not a member of the IWAL, but was a long time member of the Athlone Sub-Aqua Club, of which many IWAL people are also involved in over the years.

The following is some of the appreciation shown towards Gertie by her fellow members in the Sub-Aqua world

"Word's cannot describe the loss we share at the recent passing away of our long standing club Secretary, National Delegate to the Irish Underwater Council, friend and colleague, Gertie Walsh, wife of Michael former R.D.O. (Midlands) and mother to Ariann and Michael Junior.

Gertie served for almost two decades as Club Secretary and National Delegate. Her dedication, loving nature, and social communication skills have made a lasting impression on her local friends and divers in every County in Ireland. The flag of the Irish Underwater Council draped Gertie's coffin for the first time in the organisation's history and caused deep emotion to all divers and friends present.

Gertie's work in the development of Athlone Sub-Aqua Club when at it's peak of 80 members in the '90's will always be remembered and appreciated through her welcome for new member's, her friendly consideration of others, and the development of junior membership will be sadly missed. Her involvement in the development of voluntary search and recovery operations and fund raising was exemplary.

Farewell Gertie, we will miss you terribly in all respects."

All of us in Athlone Branch LW.A.L, who knew Gertie will join in these respects and we wish to express our sympathy to Michael and their family.



Letter from the Med

If memory serves me right we left you in the Autumn of '98 wintering in the Marmaris. It seems along time ago, and a lot has happened since then. We tried to sink the boat on one occasion, while on another we lost our steering, luckily we were able to anchor in a sheltered bay while we sorted it out! When you add to that a potential knifing incident, Suki's wedding in Newmarket, the PPK, earthquakes etc., etc., then yes a lot happened in '99.

We enjoyed our winter in Marmaris. The enclosed bay on which the town is built is surrounded by pine-clad mountains and unlike the Greek islands close-by, there is plenty of green as a result of a coastal micro-climate that ensures plenty of rain during the winter months. On a few occasions we thought there was a little too much rain but then the sun would re-appear to add a genuine sparkle to the scene. We took a 17 hour bus trip to Cappadocia in East Central Turkey which gave us a good sample of the central area of Turkey. There was plenty of evidence of early Christian influence and even of much earlier civilisations. This was the area where Christianity really took root even before it's influence was felt in Rome and the West.

We visited an underground city - eight levels deep which accommodated people and animals, particularly in winter (very cold here), and when invaders threatened. We visited an ancient, fortified B & B that offered protection, food and a good night's sleep to the caravans transiting the Silk route from China. The whole area was dominated by the strange shapes of rock formations

where rain has acted on volcanic tufa over the centuries. Some of the scenes of "Star Wars" were filmed here. Overall a weird and wonderful mix of impressions and sensations.

After Christmas, your scribe because of his beard was forced to act the part of Santa. He received a drink with most presies given out - what a mixture - what a hangover. It pains me to even think about it. Anyway, after Christmas we took another long bus journey, this time 13 hours, to Gallipolie and Istanbul. We loved Istanbul with its huge bazaar and whole streets dedicated to selling buttons, scarves, hardware, gold, spices etc. It's a place where East meets West with a rich mix of commerce, religion, colour, humanity, castles, palaces and of course dominating everything, the Bosphorus. We visited Topkapi in a snow storm. Istanbul has a totally different climate from the coastal region of the south. We hired a flat over a carpet shop overlooking the Bosphorus. We watched the world sail up and down from the Black sea, knackered after days of sight-seeing. Gallipoli we found - difficult to put into words - we found it sad, exasperating, at times unbelievable, frustrating but the overall impression we had was the futility of it all, the slaughter, the pain and the carnage. Please bear with me while I try in a few sentences to put Gallipoli into context. The first world war was going no where, bogged down in France. The allies decided to invade Turkey and Central Europe by running through the Dardenelles and shelling Istanbul. At the time most of the buildings in Istanbul were made of wood so the carnage can easily be imagined. The Royal Navy sent minesweepers to clear a passage for

the capital ships. But unknown to them the Turks with a small "Thomas The Tank Engine" tug relaid the mines and next day the Brits and French lost six battleships/Cruisers before the Admiral in charge chickened out and retreated. In the meantime the Australians and New Zealanders landed in the wrong place and were beaten in a race to the highest ground that dominated the peninsula. In ten months of fighting, sometimes the opposing trenches were no more than 10 feet apart, stalemate ensued! With both sides enduring slaughter and deprivation the various hills soon turned into cemeteries that still exist today - a testimony to - what? In one small cemetery we found the graves of 3 Webbs aged 18, 21, and 26. As I said at the outset a difficult mix of emotions. The Aussies lost 8,000, the New Zealanders 6,000, the Brits and Indians 30,000 and the Turks? - No one knows but its reckoned about a quarter million. All within a few miles and over 10 months.

We returned to Marmaris exhausted and after a short period of rest and recreation started to prepare "Moondrifter" for the season. One major difference between boating on the Shannon and the Med. is that at least once a year the complete toilet system including pump has to be dismantled and thoroughly de-scaled. It's amazing how quickly a 37mm pipe will close up. I think I went 10 - 12 years on the Shannon with no real toilet problems.
[Continued in next Aerial]



Canals of Dublin Millennium Rally

A joint venture between the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland and the Royal Canal Amenity Group

Hon. Sec.
Ilona Delargy
11 Riverwood Park
Castleknock
Dublin 15

ENTRY FORM

Rally Duration

Saturday 13th to Sunday 28th May 2000

This will be a very unique event, as we intend to bring some boats through Spencer Dock to meet boats from the Royal Canal in the Shandon Park area. This will take place on the week-end of 20th/21st May.

The rally will therefore be in two parts, starting on the Royal and the Grand Canals.

For this reason it is vital that intending boats apply as soon as possible, as there will be a limit to the number of boats which we can accommodate on the Royal.

Fee £ 20.00

All boat skippers must have their boats adequately insured and must be members of the IWAI.

Complete and send with £ 20.00 fee to Ilona Delargy at above address
I wish to enter my boat for the Canals of Dublin Rally.

I will be starting from	Hazelhatch (Grand Canal)	YES	NO
	Maynooth (Royal Canal)	YES	NO

If it is possible I would like to travel up the Royal from the Liffey.	YES	NO
I intend to remain on the Royal Canal after the Rally.	YES	NO

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Entrant's name _____

Address _____

Phone(s) _____

Boat name _____

Boat dimensions Length _____ Beam _____ Draft _____

I am a member of IWAI and
confirm that my boat is properly insured

Signed _____



Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND **March 2000**

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

Annual General Meeting of I.W.A.I.

This meeting will take place on 31st. March 2000 at 8pm in the RIAC, Dawson St. Dublin 1. The meeting will be preceded by an E.G.M. to discuss changes to the to the articles of Association of the company.

Annual Subscription

At long last! We can announce that you may all pay your annual subscription on receipt of this Aerial. A slight increase has been allowed at our A.G.M. so we are requesting £15.00. We know you have been waiting with baited breath for the news. Those who are really goody-goodies, and have already paid £12.00, thank you, but we are looking for a further £3.00.

(Fort Knox we're not, although we're not so sure that our Hon Treas. doesn't think so!) For those of you who really must have a red X the first will appear in the April Aerial and the double (horrors) will appear in May and that's your lot, sorry no further X's will be allowed!

e-mail address

iwaiathlone@eircom.net

Annual General Meeting

We had a very good attendance at our A.G.M., (Maybe we should always hold our A.G.M. every 14 - 15 months). Our outgoing Chairman, Harry Nugent gave a good account of the Branches activities during the past "year" mentioning the finalisation of the transfer of The Rice bequest of the Dunrovin property to the Athlone Branch of I.W.A.I. Harry was also pleased to say his effort to start a maintenance account was up and running with an initial amount of £1000.00 from proceeds of the Dinner dance held last September. We as usual, gave our support to the RCAG, by the many winter fund raisers held in various pubs along the western end of the Royal Canal, and he thanked Damien Delaney and the Royal Canal Band for their continued support. Harry also had great thanks and praise for our outgoing Hon. Secretary, Evelyn O'Connor who did trojan work for the past many years. Just because we were few in numbers at our meetings, that did not mean that the minutes were lacking in number or content. Also the hard and dedicated work done by Declan Walsh, our Development Officer was acknowledged not only in Harry's words, but also by the sincere applause of the members. Harry also said some kind words of appreciation for the Aerial crew which were received by us with thanks.

Because Harry goes to serve his country abroad for a few years, our new Chairman is Kieran Spollen, and as Evelyn is going state side to greet her new Grandchild, Aisling Donovan will be our new Hon. Secretary. Fitz was forced to remain on as our very hard-working! Treas. and amid sighs of relief, Reggie agreed to continue to hold Fitzes hand when Hon. Treasurers Report comes up at next year's A.G.M.

It was with mixed feelings we wished Harry and Evelyn best wishes for the future because we will miss them in our Branch, but we know that their replacements will rise to the occasion with the help of us all in the Branch.

Coming Events

March 25th.

Ruth Heard's Film Show from the IWAJ Archives, will take place in the Shamrock Lodge Hotel at 8.30pm. - always a very social evening - even if some of the "stars" of the past are a little faded, though not the films! Also, the results of the Harry Rice Competition will be announced.

It's not too late to send in your effort!

April 21/23rd.

Cruise-in-Company, Easter weekend to Ballykieran, Lecarrow and Hodson Bay.

May 4/6th

Cruise in Company to Ballykieran, Lanesboro and Portrunny.

May 19th.

Mass for deceased members of Athlone Branch, I.W.A.I. St. Peters Church, Athlone at 7.30pm.



Letter from the Med.

By the end of April we were ready for off. This year I purchased a second furling gear for the Geni. This I hoped would give me more options, as we always seem to have too much, too little or no wind. We tried it out on the way over to Rhodes and initial tests proved satisfactory.

Avast ye varmints!

Rhodes has a small yacht harbour with pressure on mooring space but eventually a place became vacant and we transferred from a temporary berth to it. Some hours later we were hailed and told to move by a locally crewed boat. Now we were on a public quay and had no alternative

on offer. We pointed this out and said we were not moving unless told to do so by the port police. That's when we became "Italian Basxxds" and more. At one stage a knife was produced but an old Bridie Delaney trick came to our aid and quickly defused the situation. I produced a camera and started snapping - the knife disappeared and they beat a bad tempered retreat. After that we spent 5 days enjoying Rhodes with small pre-season crowds before heading on.

As a result of Suki's planned wedding in July, our itinerary was changed to facilitate a trip home.

The Diplomacy lark!

We decided to leave the boat at the Kusadesi Marina while we flew to the UK via Munich. As most Aerial readers know Turkey is not yet in the EU so travel between the two is restricted and controlled.

When you sail in Turkish waters you "clear into Turkey" at specified ports and must bring a transit log with all crew members and boat details declared. This log must then be produced if required by coast-guard, police etc. In reality the system works without too much intrusion and a fair degree of "country hopping" takes place between Turkey and the off-lying Greek islands. As we made our way up the Turkish coast - occasionally going "off-shore" we ran into various boats we had wintered with and of course each meeting had to be "celebrated" in an appropriate manner - so from reading the log it appears for some unknown reason that the trips were short and the stay-overs long.

Balancing the books in Turkey!

Each bay in Turkey at this stage seems to have at least 1 or 2 restaurants of varying quality and prices. When you live abroad you are more aware of prices than if you are out for a week or fortnights holidays. In Turkey the day to day economics are different from at home. By and large there is no fixed price on anything! Each time you buy a commodity or service and ask the price and bargain as necessary. A lot of times we have been caught where we got, say fruit at a certain price and when you go to repeat the order the price has risen, even doubled. The result is you can take nothing for granted. Each time you have to put yourself in "haggle mode" before purchasing - a lot of times you say "what the heck". Overall it can be a pain in the stern if you are having an off day, but that's the way things work out here and the Turks readily admit they have at least three pricing structures, for foreigners, for strangers (Turkish) and for friends.. A few miles across the water on the Greek islands its quite different. The Greeks are inclined to be more laid back and more structured in their approach. Not that you won't be taken in Greece, but more that the Turks look on each encounter with the foreigner as an opportunity for financial advancement. Having said all that, prices are cheap out here but if you don't observe local business rules, you end up paying 2 - 3 times over the odds.

Some flies in the ointment!

Towards the end of May we were approaching Kos town. We had left the island of Symi that morning in flat calm but through-out the morning the wind continued to rise. By 1500 hours it was blowing a good force 5 - 6, on the nose of course. We were motoring about 100 - 200 yds. off a lee shore almost 3 miles from Kos harbour when the oil pressure started to vary. -Panic - engine off, put her through the wind, out the jib and head for deep water. Raise the cockpit sole. Panic is a mild term to describe the reaction -"Pump, Ruth! we're sinking- oh Bother!" By now we were in deep water only to discover the reason for water in the bilge was a burst water hose in the new water circuit. The observant among you will ask "what about the oil pressure?" When I investigated, the wire came away from the sensor - nothing to do with the water - someone was praying for us! We ended up that night anchored off Bodrun where I was able to get a new Temperature sensor and fix up the cooling circuit before we continued our "leisurely" journey northwards.

Within a week I was in bother again. "Who did the maintenance on this vessel?" said the skipperess, using that imperious voice that she reserves for special occasions. Suddenly the steering had gone dodgy as we went about, again in a rising wind. This time the trouble was traced to the emergency steering I had installed in the Coosan workshops before leaving. The grub screws had become undone. We limped into port and in the absence of wave motion, what had previously seemed impossible became easy!
(continued next Aerial!)

Walter Borner's Slide Show

As usual, this event was well attended, and Ruth's lovely Swiss chocolates, were devoured by the early birds! We had a very good attendance, and at long last the penny has dropped and we nearly all arrived in time! We also had the use of a bigger room - the ballroom no less - much to Walter's delight. As usual Walters' and Ruths' skills as a photographers was evident in all the slides also their love of the waterways and their eagle eyes which showed aspects of neglect and beauty of the waterways. There are always some moments when we can feel some shame but there are many more moments of humour and we thank these two friends for their real interest in our Shannon River.



The Tigh na Mara

All of us who live in Athlone are very familiar with the Tigh na Mara, for many years the headquarters of Athlone Sub-Aqua Club.

Well, we heard that this same old boat, caused some choppy moments in a certain family when the fear an thi announced he had bought it! However all is calm again and we would like to wish the Carr family all the best for the future!



The Royal Canal.

We were all relieved to learn that the government has sanctioned the £12. million needed to complete the restoration of this Canal all the way to the Shannon at Clondragh. We are not sure if the Longford branch is included in this, but we are delighted to see that the complete restoration of this beautiful canal is in sight.

Flooding of the Shannon.

This year's flooding of the Shannon, by all accounts was the worst for a long time, and as usual the media had a field day. The destruction of people homes and the added difficulties for the farming community cannot be denied. Another unfortunate case was also brought to light - the building and selling of houses in area's which locals would know to be to close to flood danger, but when did greed ever get stopped by common sense?

The area covered by the Shannon floods is always going to be subject to natural flooding, this year the rain that fell on Christmas eve was unnatural! Some said it was the closer to a tropical rainfall than to heavy Irish rain, and on top of the normal winter river levels the damage was done. Was that dreadful rainfall a freak of nature or was it caused by global warming and can we expect more of the same?



Remember

iwaiathlone@eircom.net

You can send by e-mail -
letters, articles, gossip, facts,
etc., all very gratefully
received!



Income & Expenditure A/c - 13 months to 31st October 1999

INCOME	1999		1998
	IR£	€	€
Subscriptions	2,322	2,948	2,501
Dinner	-	-	54
Surplus on Sales	824	1,046	825
Deposit Interest	24	30	69
Dividends	17	22	-
	<u>3,187</u>	<u>4,046</u>	<u>3,449</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Athlone Aerial (inc. postage)	825	1,048	678
Stationery	32	41	114
Loss on Functions	3	4	154
Meetings	66	84	121
Insurance	638	810	761
Capitation Fees	248	315	294
Audit Fee	30	38	38
Harry Rice Competition	30	38	75
Legal Fees	-	-	737
Grants	2,000	2,539	-
Bank Charges	65	82	69
Sundries	95	120	119
Depreciation (note 1)	290	368	375
L. Ree Conservation Group	240	305	-
	<u>4,562</u>	<u>5,792</u>	<u>3,535</u>
Deficit for Year	(1,375)	(1,746)	(86)
Transfers from Reserve			
R.C.A.G.	1,000		
Sub-Aqua	<u>1,000</u>	<u>2,539</u>	
To Accumulated Fund	<u>625</u>	<u>793</u>	

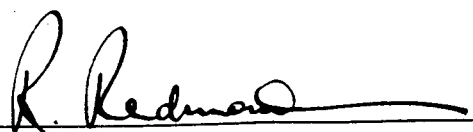
Balance Sheet as at 31st October 1999

ASSETS	1999		1998
	IR£	€	€
Bank – Current A/c	901	1,144	261
Savings A/c	7,530	9,561	12,361
Cash on hands	185	235	138
Debtors	578	734	120
Stock for sale (at cost)	427	542	1,162
Prize Bonds	105	133	131
Shares – First Active	1,012	1,285	1,265
Computer & Printer	10	13	375
	<u>10,748</u>	<u>13,647</u>	<u>15,813</u>
LESS LIABILITIES			
Creditors	331	420	1,073
	<u>10,417</u>	<u>13,227</u>	<u>14,740</u>
NET ASSETS			
REPRESENTED BY			
Accumulated Fund 1.10.98	7,399	9,395	9,335
Transfer from I.&E. A/c	625	793	(86)
Reserves (note 2)	2,393	3,039	5,491
	<u>10,417</u>	<u>13,227</u>	<u>14,740</u>

NOTE 1		IR£
Computer & Printer	Opening Balance	<u>900</u>
Depreciation	Opening Balance	600
	Charge for year	<u>290</u>
		<u>890</u>
Net Book Value at 31.10.99		<u>10</u>

NOTE 2		
Reserves	Development	2,200
	Simpson Fund	<u>193</u>
		<u>2,393</u>

Certified Correct



Reginald Redmond, B. Comm.
Hon. Auditor
21st January, 2000

€ 1.00 = IR£0.787564

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND
April 2000

The next meeting of Athlone Branch IWAI will take place in Sean's Bar, Main St., Athlone on Monday 3rd. April 2000 at 8.30pm.



Membership Renewal

If there is a red X in the above box, or in rugby terms, sin-bin, your membership has so far been overlooked so please do send the £15.00 fee and if there is no X, thanks for your prompt payment.



Final Chance!

Sean Fitzsimons, he of 70 years - just celebrated in style, wishes to let you all know that only 25 copies of 'Green & Silver by L.T.C. Rolt' are left. When Sean has done all the figuring, we will be delighted to publish the full amount raised by this effort. Until then, well done Sean on fine work on behalf of the Athlone Branch, IWAI and the Royal Canal Amenity Group.



Canals of Dublin Millennium Rally

From 13th - 27th May 2000.
Details from:-Ilona Delargy, Hon. Sec.
11 Riverwood Park, Castleknock,
Dublin 15.
Ph. 01 8203546



Coming Events

April 1st.

RCAG event in Kenagh. Bus will leave Sean's Bar at 8.30pm. Phone Damian Delaney at (0902) 75620 if you want to book a seat. The last event in Lough Ree Inn was massive, and so will the next one! The Royal Canal Band and Noel Breen will attract even more groupies, isn't that right, Noel!

April 21st - 23rd

Easter weekend Cruise-in-Company visiting Ballykeerin, Lecarrow and Hodson Bay.

May 4th - 6th

C-In-C. Itinerary will be announced in the May Aerial.

May 19.

Mass for deceased members of Athlone Branch, IWAI will be celebrated in St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Athlone at 7.30pm.



For Sale

Cruiser "A Winter's Tale"

Elysian 27' - 4 Berth; Perkins Diesel; Central Heating (newly installed); Toilet and Fridge. Standing on the hard at Portancena. Details Phone (0902) 94126.

Also for sail a Mahogany Boarding Ladder, Folding, 6 rungs; suit 20' -30' Cruiser. £75.00 or o.n.o.
Phone Dave at 0902 75025.



Ruth Heard Film Show

The evening turned out to be a great success, despite the fact that a misunderstanding about the date of the event as published in the March Aerial and we apologise to anyone who may have missed this event. We're blaming it all on the March Hare!

It was one of the best crowds we have had, and also the greatest number of entries from young and adult to the Harry Rice competition!

Ruth showed us films from 1979 and more recent footage, all of interest to us in the Athlone area. It was very amusing to see all the 'suits' from various Government and Local Government departments, being brought on a trip on the Royal Canal, definitely not boating wear! However the effort paid dividends even though the wait was long and now at last, the money has come on hand so the canal will be restored to the Shannon at Clondragh.

The winners of the Harry Rice competition were then announced by Damien Delaney and our Chairman, Kieran Spollen thanked Ruth for her presentation and we all stuffed our faces with the abundance of sticky 'buns' provided by the ladies of the Branch!

Winners of Competition:-

Adult Section.

- 1st Billy Henshaw (Jnr) - Harry Rice Cup
Essay "The Early Days"
- 2nd Josephine Hanley,
Watercolour "Sailing at Barrymore"
- 3rd Oona Herraghty
History of Rally and suggestions for 2000.

Junior Section.

- 1st. Naomi Algeo
Poem "The Shannon"
- 2nd. Zara Henshaw
Watercolour of River
- 3rd. Joseph Hanley
Essay "A day to Remember".
- 4th. Tristan Couper
Essay "A day on Inchbofin"
- 5th. Elaine Couper
Essay "A camping trip on the lake"

We are publishing the one poem we received now and we hope to publish some of the essays later.



The Shannon

by

Naomi Algeo aged 9

When I look at boats
I see some are tied up or on floats
Sometimes they go through locks
And you may find them down in the Docks

Sometimes the Shannon is very rough
And for the boats it's very tough
In winter the river will rise
And in summer it'll be the right size

People fishing with their rods
And people racing in their S.O.D.'s
The Shannon is an ideal holiday
That's what I hear the tourists say

Barges moving up and down
Past the lock and into town
Always wear your lifejacket on a boat
Because when you fall in you'll stay afloat.



Letter from the Med.

We continue with Mick Webb's report of his and Ruth's journey around the Med.

"We continued Northwards hopping occasionally from Greek island to Turkish mainland. We visited the ruins of a complete Greco/Roman town at Iassos, the monastery of St. John of the Revelations at Patnos, the home of Pythagorus- him of the right angled triangle. The layers upon layers of history visible here is truly impressive - even to a cynic like myself!

By the end of June we were back in the UK for Suki's wedding with "Moondrifter" safely in customs bond at Kusadasi. People kept asking us about the PKK and the problems in Turkey. In reality it was a bit like the N. Ireland situation at home, it's there, it's real, and occasionally something happens to remind you of

the reality but overall nothing has really changed. There are a few more soldiers on the streets and around public buildings but otherwise very little else has changed. The tourist figures are obviously down which means hard times for the Turks - a bonus from our point of view is less pressure on the well known anchorages and I must admit we enjoyed this.

Away, Away across the bonny Sea!

When we returned in July the Meltimi was well established. This is a strong wind that blows each summer from the general area of the Balkans down the Aegean towards the Red Sea and Pakistan. We had some wonderful sailing as we made full use of a free wind and uncrowded anchorages. The new furling gear, installed during the winter from end-of-bowsprit to mast-head, proved it's worth. The ease of reefing while running with both jibs, wing on wing, was a real joy. I remember one particular day we started out with less than 10 knots of wind and finished up with 35 -40 knots. We handled all the conditions with steering wind vane and reefing both jibs as required, without hassle - a real plus, even herself was impressed and that says something! The cruising areas between Marmaris and Antalya are fantastic, good safe anchorages with breath-taking scenery. by the time we reached Finike, September was nearly over and we looked forward to meeting old friends and new ones when we booked into a marina for the winter.

Winter and Cyprus

This year we chose Larnaca in Cyprus. This involved a 200 mile journey from Turkey. We had wind for almost 80

miles, the rest was a case of motoring or motor-sailing. The 200 miles took just less than 48 hours partly because we did not wish to enter Larnaca at night, not having been here before. Consequently we reduced speed to come up on the marina at 0600 hrs. just as night turned to day.

We have enjoyed our stay in Cyprus. It's different from most of the other Greek islands. The scenery is not as attractive but it's nice in a scruffy sort of way - not unlike Athlone and the Midlands. Larnaca is a "working" as distinct from a "tourist" town with all services available, but with the Cypriot pound equal to IR£0.70 it's not all that cheap, especially for imported goods. Since coming here we have refurbished the lead lining in the main cabin, toilet and forecabin, a messy job now thankfully behind us. We hope to do the aft cabin in the new year. So when you add that project to the normal annual maintenance, a few exploratory trips around the island and to Israel and Egypt - you can see there are not too many dull or idle moments.

Before concluding Ruth and I would like to wish all our IWAI friends every good wish for 2000. Fair winds and safe voyages to you all."

[Ed. Thanks Mike for your, as always, interesting and informative report. Hope you both enjoy the coming summer and have many more adventures and places of beauty to describe.]



Irish Heritage Council Seminar

On March 8th, 2000 the 4th and final seminar took place in the Ballykeerin Lakeside Hotel under the auspices of the Irish Heritage Council, Waterway's

Irish Heritage Council, Waterway's division. This seminar dealt with the development to the Shannon Navigation.

Ruth Delaney opened the seminar by presenting the Heritage Council's policies and future uses of the inland waterways. Liam Lysaght spoke on designated areas and nature conservation along the Shannon Navigation, Paddy Mathews spoke about planning problems regarding development on the Shannon and Ray Dunne of Duchas spoke about major works on the Shannon/Boyle and the ongoing maintenance undertaken by Duchas all year round.

One problem seemed to raise its ugly head with many speakers, i.e. the welcome fact that many new Bye-laws were being passed and the unwelcome fact that these same laws were being ignored or not policed by the local authorities who have the responsibilities to enact them. Some local government personnel who were present, stoutly defended themselves, saying that manpower and money had not been forthcoming to ensure the laws were applied.

Mr. Paddy Mathews told the other side of the Planning Board, what pressures the personnel are under due to the huge increase of both new planning applications and the number of objections to these same applications. On top of the applications themselves, other criteria have to be taken into account, like SAC's, monuments, wild life conservation, scenic considerations and the E.P.A. The time lag between receiving an application and giving permission is stretching because of lack of manpower and money. There is also the problem of lack of co-ordination between various Government bodies, e.g., a rep scheme approved the spreading of fertiliser on a farm which came too near a waterway and resulted in fish kills.

Ray Dunne of Duchas showed excellent slides of Duchas' work on 3 major developments nearing completion on the Boyle/Shannon navigation.

1. The new Boyle canal connecting the Boyle river with the new harbour near Boyle town. (see Aerial December '99). The ground conditions here proved very difficult to keep stable and 1,100 mattress like structures made of Geo-type material

had to be filled and placed into position along the side of the canal.

2. The completion of the Suck navigation into Ballinasloe including the new harbour in the town. In this development, 10,000 cu.mtrs, of rock were removed to allow the building of the lock at Poolboy. Also because the river banks had silt like soil, geo-nets had to be laid to give protection to the banks, and nearly 85 acres were covered by soil removed from the river.

3. The extension and improvement of the navigation into the tidal waters of the Shannon at Limerick. An innovative solution to the problem of changes in water levels was the building of a new weir on top of the existing sewerage pipe in the river bed. The Sarsfield lock has been completely restored and also floating moorings will be in place. Mr. Dunne said the mooring got wholehearted support from the people and local authorities for this marina which will bring boats into the heart of Limerick City.

The above projects should be finished as follows:- Ballinasloe June/July 2000; Boyle August 2000 and Limerick by the end of the year. Athlone members in attendance were delighted to be assured that the Glasson extension is "in the hat" for future development, but were not happy that Duchas still have to retain the riverside shed on the docks in Athlone as they need it to service their work boat.

Happy Birthday, Fitzer!

Our esteemed Hon. Tres. celebrated his 70th birthday in style with a huge party on Friday, 25th March and managed to fill in the rest of the hours until Monday 27th March, his real birth date in full enjoyment with his many friends from the town of Athlone and others from faraway places. And many happy returns.



The Ben Allen Project

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, Cork

The Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind was founded in 1976 in response to a demand for a mobility service by members of the blind and visually impaired community throughout the country. The purpose of the Association is to provide a constant supply of dogs, a breeding scheme, training of dogs and instructing blind and visually impaired people in their use. Also the Association provides training in long cane and Orientation skills. All services are provided free of charge. The work of the Association is supported by voluntary public subscriptions. All funds raised go directly to the Association.

Fighting Blindness

What does fighting Blindness do?

1. Promotes Research
2. Creates Public Awareness
3. Provides Support Network

Over 200,000 people suffer from visual impairments in Ireland. Fighting Blindness is the only charity in this country which promotes research to find treatments and cures for these conditions. We need to inject substantial funding into existing and new research projects with a view to developing therapies for blinding conditions.

There is an answer if only you will help us find it. Website: www.fightingblindness.ie

ROYAL CANAL AMENITY GROUP
ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND AND THE
ORGANISED BY THE INLAND WATERWAYS
COMMENCING MAY 13TH 2000
CANALS OF DUBLIN MILLENNIUM RALLY

For information about the Ben Allen Project or the Rally, please contact Allen O'Leary 01-8680586

Sponsorship money

Cheques and money orders should be made payable to The Ben Allen Project c/o Mrs P. O'Leary, 9 Great Western Avenue, Phibsboro, Dublin 7.

The Ben Allen Project

In conjunction with the Canals of Dublin Millennium Rally which commences on May 13th 2000, a sponsored boat trip will take place from Richmond Harbour, Clondra, down the Shannon, along the Grand Canal to Dublin and as far as possible up the Royal Canal. The purpose of this trip is twofold. Firstly, it aims to highlight the importance of the restoration of the final twenty miles of the Royal Canal to the Shannon, which by making it possible to do a Grand/Royal circular tour will give a much needed boost to the tourist industry in Counties Westmeath and Longford. Secondly, the trip aims to raise funds for two organisations catering for the blind: **Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, Cork and Fighting Blindness.**

THE BEN ALLEN PROJECT

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Phone

Sponsor Name & Address

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The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland

The IWAI was founded in 1954 to promote the development, use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals. Since its foundation it has been closely involved in firstly, preventing closure, and then in the development of many parts of our waterways which would otherwise have been irretrievably lost.

Now that our waterways have been established in the public awareness as a viable and valuable resource, the IWAI operates a bigger scale, continuing the earlier work by promoting and encouraging further development, and where necessary fighting less desirable activities, which may affect our waterways. The IWAI is a voluntary body, with branches throughout Ireland, runs its own web-site at www.iwai.ie and publishes a quarterly newsletter. Membership is strongly recommended for any one with an interest in the unique Irish waterways heritage.

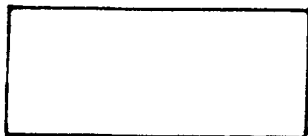
The Royal Canal Amenity Group

The RCAAG was founded in 1974 with the aid and support of the IWAI. Its aim was the restoration of the then derelict Royal Canal, from the Liffey to the Shannon, as a navigation and linear park. Branches were formed in the various centres of population along the canal. These work with great diligence and dedication for the enhancement of their own areas. In 1986 the canal was taken over by OPW Waterways Service, now Dutchas, and great progress was made. 70 of the 90 miles are now open for navigation. This leaves twenty miles to be restored at the western end, and Spencer Dock at the eastern end. The RCAAG has a web-site at www.rcag.8m.com. New members are always welcome.

Athlone Aerial

NEWSLETTER OF ATHLONE BRANCH INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION **May 2000** IRELAND

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



Dear Member,

If there is a double red X in the above box, we are sure you will send your membership fee of £15.00 for this year immediately. If you should forget, this will be the last Aerial we can send you. If there is nothing in the box, thank you for your prompt payment.



Dear Editor,

I would like to thank all my kind friends out there who sent me cards and letters of condolence for making the 3 score and ten.

There were far too many to reply to (2), no seriously 72.

Bless you all.

Sean Fitzsimons.

Coming Events

28th April - 1st May.

Cruise-in-Company. Ballykeerin,
Lansborough, Portrunny.

13th - 27th May 2000.

Canals of Dublin Millennium Rally.
Further information from Ilona Delargy
Ph. no. 01 8203546.

19th May.

Mass for deceased members of Athlone Branch, IWAI will be celebrated in St. Peter and Paul's Church, Athlone at 7.30pm.

27th May

RCAG night in Ballinacarig. Bus leaving Sean's Bar at 8.00pm. To Book seat on bus phone Damien Delaney at 0902 -75620.

3rd - 5th June

Cruise-in-Company To Be Announced.

RCAG Outings

Two very good outings were held during April, the first in Kenagh and the second in Lough Ree Inn, Coosan, Athlone. Both were great nights and funds were raised for Kenagh. The second night in Lough Ree Inn, was packed as a party was also there and the sum of £285.00 was raised.

Don't forget our E-Mail Address:-
iwaiathlone@eircom.net

London Boat Show - New Venue?

The Sunday Times had an item of interest to Irish boat-owners, who regularly visit the London Boat Show in Earls Court.

The Show's organisers have signed a 10-year deal with Excel, the company behind a new £250m exhibition venue currently under construction in London's Docklands at the Royal Victoria Docks. The move will become effective from January 2004.

The key attraction of the 100 acre site is its docks, which have access to the Thames. This will allow more than 1,000 yachts and power cruisers to be delivered by water and shown off in their natural environment under a huge marquee.

Excel has teamed up with British Telecommunications to create the world's first technologically smart event venue. This will allow visitors to access events and information from anywhere in the world via the Internet.



HELP!

Does anyone know someone called "David Breen". He has paid Sean Fitz., our Hon. Treas. £15.00 to join the Athlone Branch, IWAI, but Sean does not know his address, so if David could get in touch with Sean and give his current address we will put him into our mailing list.

We are delighted to print here the winning entry to the adult section of the Harry Rice Competition:-

The Early Days

by

Billy Henshaw (Jnr.)

For weeks now the excitement had been building up. Lists were made and remade. Plans were made and remade. Maps were taken out and studied at length. I was reminded daily by my father that we were travelling light and to be selective with my packing. I had been in boats as long as I could remember and had made the long trip to Lough Key the previous year with my father and my brother Tony. But this was to be different.

The year was 1963. The Shannon Rally was in its infancy when my father announced that he was bringing my brother and I on it for our holidays. I was nine years old and my brother Tony was eleven. Our boat was an eighteen foot larch open boat. Michael Martin was to be our first mate and we were to use his five and a half horse power Johnson sea horse outboard engine. Our accommodation was to be a tent, very sturdy but extremely heavy.

Our Rally began at six o'clock on a bright Saturday morning as we left the shore just north of Lough Ree Yacht Club. The long haul to Carrick-on-Shannon lay ahead. We could see at least twenty boats of all colours and sizes on the lake all heading the same direction. The lake was calm so the crossing was very pleasant indeed. My father cooked breakfast as we passed Quaker Island and very soon we had another open boat alongside for tea. Our two-ring gas cooker was being used to capacity as a pan and a kettle were singing away while some hungry sailors and guests waited expectantly. As the rasher sandwiches and tea were consumed with gusto by all present compliments were made to the chef for an excellent breakfast. My father who loves to cook assured our guests that he had some culinary delights that he would offer in the coming week. As we passed through Lanesborough at approximately 9 o'clock in the morning most of the boats had formed into a flotiful

of sorts. On we went and through the BNM bridge until we reached Tarmonbarry at approximately 11 o'clock. This was to be our first stop. As the bigger boats waited to be called into the lock we were able to fit between two large boats and so did not have to wait. Next was to be a stop at Keenans "shop" for supplies. Away then after refreshments to Rooskey where the obligatory visit was paid to the widow Reynolds hostelry. Through Albert lock and the wonderful Jamestown Canal and so on to Carrick, arriving ar around six o'clock in the evening tired and hungry. camp quickly and as my father cooked dinner my brother and I explored the town. When we arrived back within the hour a tented village had sprung up around us. We introduced to new friends many of whom were to become good lifelong friends. Sleep came easy to us that night.

Next morning saw all boats proceeding downstream to where an oil tanker was distributing petrol and oil to the rally participants. This was a truly amazing sight as the queue formed with people carrying containers of all shapes and sizes to be filled by the Esso oil company who were the main sponsors of the Shannon Rally. My brother and I were more interested in the Esso caps that were being given out and succeeded in securing a couple each. Safety during these early years was quite obviously not a priority as most of the boats were floating bombs for the rest of the rally. Thankfully there were no accidents with the petrol containers on board.

Later that day we proceeded to Cootehall through the majestic Drumharlow where, after setting up camp, most people visited Jim Henry's pub. The weather was warm and sunny so a musical session started out on the street where new and old talent was heard and appreciated. I remember vividly Mrs. Henry coming out to the street and taking my brother and I into her kitchen where she sat us down to a feed of cooked ham, tomatoes and brown bread washed down with a mug of hot sweet tea. This was generosity personified and it was an act that had a profound effect on me and something that I think about as I near Cootehall now.

Lough Key was next on our itinerary and we were glad to know that this would be a twonight stop so we were spared the task of having to break camp for one day at least.

We pitched our tents under the old Rockingham house which gave us a magnificent view of Lough Key. This was a wonderland to the youngsters on this rally and many hours were spent exploring the house and tunnels which we were convinced were used for smuggling. We spent hours fishing in Lough Key where we caught some big lake perch which were skinned and fried for lunch. We also set a long line for eels at night and were out of our beds at dawn to lift this line. Breakfast of rasher and eels never tasted better and my father introduced many doubters to the rich taste of fried eels. He also made an eel stew called groule (pronounced growlye) which was made by skinning and cutting the eels into sections. This was then boiled in milk with onions, potatoes, various herbs, salt and pepper. People who heretofore had been squeamish about eating eels were instant converts when they tasted this dish. Often times I saw my father fool people who swore that they would never taste such a disgusting slimy thing. However when the flesh of the eel was disguised as another food these same people raved about how delicate the flavour was. We really had some great laughs about this when an unsuspecting victim would be caught out. My father said that this feed would make cripples walk.

I remember some of the competitions that were on that rally. There was a water Treasure Hunt held in Lough Key. Here clues were put into bottles and these were dropped overboard from a dingy before the start of the hunt. This was great fun as boats sped around picking up the bottles with fishing nets and looking for clues. We picked up a few bottles with no clues in them but eventually found the clue "splice" inside a bottle. Michael Martin decided that we would take a chance on the answer being "Splice the Mainbrace". We sped back to the judge only to find that another competitor had beaten us to it. The outboard motor race was another exciting spectacle for a nine year old to be involved in. Excess weight was taken out of our boat including floorboards, oars etc., in order to get more speed. This was a handicap race with the smaller starting first, followed by the larger engines. It was a great spectacle and marvellous fun as most of the competitors threw buckets of water at one another as their boats passed.

There was marvellous talent on this rally. This was evident at the bonfires which were very popular especially in Lough Key. Everyone had a party piece or two and were willing to perform. Sean Fitzsimons with "Carrickfergus" and Dermot O'Brien with "The Queen of Connemara" are but two of the songs that have stuck in my mind. There were also some great characters on this rally. Billy Downey and Mick McCormack in their open boat "Sweet Marie", Dermot Glynn and Johnny Westlake in their cruiser "Tania" and Mickey Foy in his speedboat. Fergus Cahill had a "Steamboat" of sorts that drew great attention everywhere it went. Sean Fitz and Dermot O'Brien in the open boat the Spailpin as Sean had hired The Lung to some sea scouts. St. John Earle had his boat "The Blue Waterman" hired to the sea scouts also. Dan Benson in "Ramona" and the Commodore Paddy Flynn in "The Barracuda" were some of the names embedded in my mind.

After Lough Key the rally proceeded south with stops in Carrick, Roosky, and Lanesborough until eventually it made its way back to Athlone where many weary sailors were glad to be back in their own beds.

I have been on many rallies since that in various boats but none of them had the same magic as that first adventure in '63.



Turnip Carving!

Well how about that! Turnip carving competition on the Millennium Rally on the Canals of Dublin. Where did this idea come from?

St. Cas was a sixth century Irish monk in the monastery of Fore, who became disillusioned with the wars over the ownership of various annals and with the conduct of St. Colmcille and others, so he left his monastery and went to a spot called Suas in the mountains of Morne where he became

a hermit of great note. He did not take to writing annals, but for recreation would carve figures out of turnips. The local people coveted these, and after his death they would hold a yearly competition in turnip carving with prizes for the most meritorious. This custom has fallen into disuse for many centuries. We would like to restore it, thus during the rally there will be a turnip carving competition. Entry is open to all. The classes will be class 1 - religious objects, class 2 - non-religious objects, class 3 - Nautical objects, and class 4 Miscellaneous. There will be prizes for each group and a special prize for best overall carving.



Power Boats.

Because of the Emerald Tiger, larger boats are appearing on the Shannon, and other inland waterways.

These craft are marvellous out at sea, but are not so good an idea in inland waterways, even on Lakes they can cause big problems for other users of our waterways, both human and animal.

These power boats cause big disturbance by both their bow wave and stern wave. When these waves meet up with other boats or hit river banks, damage can be very bad.

So please, if you are the owner of a Power Boat, show care of other users of the waterways, and slow down.

If speed is your enjoyment, please stay a sea, where you will enjoy your craft in full.