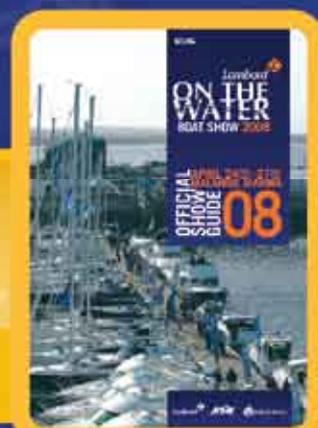


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SHOWBOATING!

MALAHIDE ON-THE-WATER SHOW GUIDE INSIDE



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Cover Caption: Coming in to port. A Bavaria motorboat passes the East pier light at Dun Laoghaire in March. Photo: David O'Brien

 IRISHMARINEPRESS

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WALKING ALL OVER WATER

It was a source of pride to the country's sailing community when Damian Foxall went to Aras an Uachtarain last month, because the visit brought State acknowledgement of the biggest sailing achievement in years.

Sailors believed it was through this epic victory – and other achievements like last year's Fastnet win – that the government (of this island nation) would respond to the call of the sea.

Instead, as it turns out, it's hard to even figure out just who's in charge of maritime affairs, now that the marine portfolio is spread over four separate government departments and the 'marine' title doesn't feature in any of them.

With 15% of all European waters surrounding our shores, the decision to break up the Department of the Marine affects more than sailing – it may be costing us all.

It's one of the reasons why Foxall lives in France and sails a French-flagged boat.

It's a far cry from 30 years ago when a politician with some vision decided to amalgamate all the marine functions in one department, a Department of the Marine.

After last year's election, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern assigned the job of Minister for Transport and Marine to Noel Dempsey.

But fisheries was assigned to Agriculture under Mary Coughlan. There were reports of disagreements between the Ministers and it didn't all go smoothly. It was several months before the formal signing-over of Fisheries to Agriculture.

Today, there is still confusion over marine responsibility. Responsibility for the foreshore has gone from Marine to Agriculture and then to Environment.

Eamon Ryan in Communications and Energy hung onto aspects of fisheries – drift nets, for example.

But the marine leisure section – where did that go?

The Marine Industry Federation found that the leisure section was missing and put out its own alert, but it hasn't been located yet. Sporting aspects of the water appear to come under the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism, and it should be fairly acknowledged that the Department is supporting Galway port's role in the 2009 stop-over of the Volvo Ocean race.

The Department of Transport would have no transport to deal with if it wasn't for the ships which bring in fuel. In fact, 95% of all goods come in to this country by boat, but it has decided it doesn't want any reference to the marine in its title, so its documentation is labelled 'Department of Transport'. All that's left is a marine division within the Department of Transport.

This, by the way, is the Department containing the Coast Guard management which wants to close down the coastal radio stations at Valentia and Malin Head (see MacSweeney page 18).

Four years ago Bertie Ahern tried to get rid of the marine department but ended up reinstating it after a campaign from different marine bodies. This time he appears to have succeeded, but what does that mean for the pride of Irish sailing?

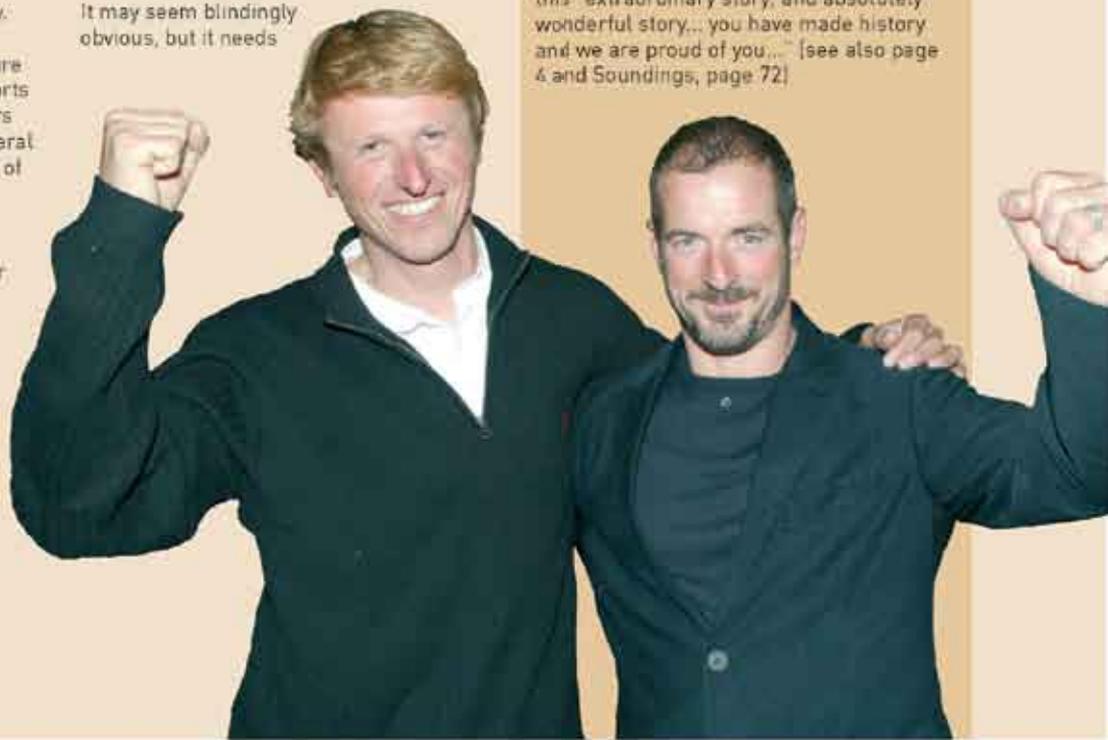
It may seem blindingly obvious, but it needs

to be said: a single maritime authority that can make decisions relating to the sea is essential for an island people. We're about to lay claim to the seabed beyond the continental shelf. This claim will be laid with the United Nations and may bring a sea area of over one million square kilometres under national sovereignty.

Now that marine has disappeared off the radar again, what lies over the horizon for Irish sailors? Maybe we are back to where we started, standing on the coast of an island nation looking inland even though, as seafarers like Foxall have shown, we could be leaders of the maritime world.

BARCELONA WORLD RACE WINNERS WELCOMED BY PRESIDENT McALEESE

The victory achieved on February 11th after three months of intense sailing in the Barcelona World Race by Ireland's Damian Foxall and France's Jean-Pierre Dick in the Open 60 Paprec Virbac 2 was honoured a week later with a reception by President McAleese in Aras an Uachtarain, attended by the two co-skippers and by Damian's wife Suzy-Anne and their seven month son Oisín. The President spoke warmly about this "extraordinary story, and absolutely wonderful story... you have made history and we are proud of you..." [see also page 4 and Soundings, page 72]



The boys are in town – World race winners Jeanne-Pierre Dick and Damian Foxall in celebratory mode at Aras an Uachtarain on February 18th. Photo: Gareth Chaney/Collins

FOXALL GOES TO EXTREMES



Damian Foxall is putting together an Extreme 40 campaign, the new generation of mid-size sports catamarans. They reach speeds of 35 knots on flat water in around 20 knot breezes. Photo: Oskar Kihlberg



ROUND THE WORLD SAILOR TO LAUNCH INSHORE CAMPAIGN

Having completed eight Round the World races in the last eight years, this summer Barcelona World race hero Damian Foxall is staying inshore.

Foxall is back in Ireland this month attending the Maritime Ball at Dun Laoghaire, hosted by the Ocean Youth trust, but also to finalise plans for an entry into the Extreme 40 circuit.

Captivated by the ultra-light catamarans that are racing in the heart of Europe's major cities, Foxall says he would like to be the first Irish entry.

The 40s are estimated to reach speeds of 35-knots on flat water when wind speeds reach 20 knots. They will also fly a hull in as little as eight knots.

Foxall believes the 'high octane' circuit has a lot of potential because racing takes place in the heart of Europe's financial districts and represents a commercial proposition for blue chip companies.

The Extreme 40, say its promoters, has been created to fill a huge gap in Grand Prix sailboat racing.

The concept is a simple easy to sail, light-weight, full carbon fibre boat. The boat will fit inside a normal 40ft shipping container on its own road trailer.

The circuit has a dozen teams – including some America's cup teams – in operation, and the high-

speed aspect of the racing really appeals to the Kerry Round the World professional.

Meanwhile, in perhaps Irish sailing's worst kept secret, Foxall is to join Ireland's Green Team boat for the Volvo Ocean race, but an official announcement of his appointment is not expected until May. (see page 30)

He says he is happy with any position he is given on the Irish entry as long as he can "contribute to making the boat go as fast as possible".

But before he heads off round the world again, expect to see him on the Liffey or the Lee at high speed if this next extreme project comes off.

LIGHT SHINES ON TWENTY ONES

Dear Sir,

I enjoyed your article on the Dublin Bay Twenty Ones. My late father Frank Ryan skippered Estelle for about 25 years and I crewed with him on many occasions.

We have recorded the Dublin Bay Twenty Ones in an illuminated stained glass panel in memory of Frank Ryan and it is on view downstairs in the National Yacht Club.

Yours, etc.
Ker Ryan
Kilmainham, Dublin 8



Estelle - memories rotting away

STOP THE NONSENSE ON MALIN AND VALENTIA

Dear Sir,



Valentia - closure shows immaturity

The slash and burn policy of the Department of the Marine and the proposal to shut the stations on Valentia and Malin Head show the immaturity of the officials – and a touching faith in technology that brings to mind the innocence of a teenager engaged in sporting activity with a Wii simulator.

The risk of the removal of seasoned weather and sea traffic observers from these two stations is the equivalent of a tyro yachtsman going to sea in a force 8 gale trusting his existence to a one inch diameter hand lifting pump. Anyone who has had experience of the south and west coast of Ireland knows that the only real guarantee of survival is a frightened crew with a bailing bucket.

Stop the nonsense and return Malin and Valentia.

Yours, etc.
Ted Crosbie,
Currabinny, Co. Cork

Boat Registration Services
Bronwyn O'Donnell
Tel: +353 87 811 0962

12 Delbrook Manor
Ballinteer
Dublin 16



ONLINE CLUB FLIES THE FLAG

Club Powerboat.ie, Ireland's first online yacht club, has just been granted a warrant to fly its own ensign by the Mercantile Marine Office of the Department of Transport.

Club Commodore Stuart McNamara expressed his delight as this latest recognition follows the recent affiliation of CPB.ie as a Category 2 Yacht Club by the Irish Sailing Association.

The club, which has free and open membership, now has over 1,500 registered members with an additional 4,500 casual viewers of the club's online forums each month. CPB's online forums now comprise over 2,500 threads under active discussion covering sailing, motor cruising, inland waterways, ribs, diving, watersports, marine electronics and mechanics as well as advice forums for beginners to boating. The club was originally set up to provide an easy entry into the world of Irish boating for people with no previous boating history who have bought – or are considering buying – their first boat. Further details at www.powerboat.ie

www.sailsoutheast.com
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Sail Training from Wicklow to all corners of the Irish Sea and beyond.....

'08 SPECIALS
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Aegean 1-week cruise – end August
See schedule for weekend and five-day trips, Jun/Jul/Aug/Sept

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UK MAY DEMAND SAILORS 'CHECK-IN'

Yachtsmen making an international voyage to or from the UK could be required to check in and out if the British government fully implements its new E-Borders scheme in two years' time. The scheme already makes it compulsory for commercial carriers to submit detailed passenger, service and crew data.

According to the Royal Yachting Association, the Department for Transport (DfT) has not yet thought in detail how E-Borders would apply to recreational boaters, but skippers could have to enter all their voyage details online in advance or, in the worst case scenario, clear in and out of nominated reporting points. This would make an impromptu crossing

of the Irish Sea to Wales, for example, impossible, and might even spell trouble for anyone hoping to sail to Northern Ireland.

An RYA spokesman appeared to hold out little hope for leniency in the application of the scheme to sailing or cruising boats. "They didn't listen to the commercial carriers in sea ports and it has been done whether they like it or not," he pointed out.

In the current circumstances it is easy to see why the arrival of commercial services such as Bronwyn O'Donnell's Boat Registration Services will become an essential part of boating here in the years ahead.

PAINTING MADE EASY

If you find painting a bit of a performance, the new Multicoat from Blakes Paints will get the job done quickly and effectively. It's maintenance made easy because it's a primer and topcoat in one. The one product system is perfect for when you want a durable satin finish with a minimum of fuss, and can be used on all areas above the waterline, including decks, bilges and lockers.



It's suitable for all sorts of leisure craft and is particularly popular with small fishing boats and utility vessels where owners want a good finish but don't want to spend an impractical amount of time on preparation.

Further information from www.blakespaints.com

DE BOARNSTREAM LOOKS TO GLASSON

Dutch boatbuilder De Boarnstream has chosen Midlands-based LoughRee Marine Services Ltd. as its new distributor for Ireland. The facilities at Quigley's Marina, Killinure Point in Glasson will also provide a back-up service for all new and existing De Boarnstream clients in Ireland.

A new Boarncruiser 43 AC Classic Line has been delivered lately, and can be seen at Quigley's Marina, along with a 35 AC Classic Line, which will serve as a demonstrator and will be part of the fleet of a boat rental company, Waveline Cruisers Ltd, also based at Quigley's Marina.

BOATS OFFERED NEW COVER

Craftinsure.com, the UK's leading online boat insurance specialist, has launched a new range of products specially designed for Ireland. Immediate quotations and cover can be obtained within a couple of minutes by visiting www.craftinsure.ie

Policies are emailed to clients within seconds of purchasing on line, with a free phone number at hand for other advice if needed.

"Craftinsure's success in the UK since it was established in 2002 has been largely down to the ease and convenience of the online facility as well as being highly competitive," says Rod Daniel, director of Craftinsure. "We want boat owners in Ireland with internet access to enjoy the same benefits and believe this new website will prove just as popular."

Other Craftinsure benefits include a monthly payment option at no additional cost for premiums over €200, and a 24-hour claims help line to ensure policy holders are back on the water as soon as possible if they are unlucky enough to suffer loss or damage.

Craftinsure.ie provides cover for virtually all types of pleasure craft, from dinghies and RIBs to yachts and motor cruisers up to a value of €500,000.

Paul Johnston in training for August



IRISH WAKE WELL

The Ireland wakeboard team finished in fifth position at the recent Europe, Africa and Middle East (EAME) Championship on the Vaal River, near Johannesburg in South Africa. This was the team's second major International competition and follows an eighth placing at the World Championships in Qatar in November 2007.

The Irish team consisted of Sian Hurst and Jacinta Connolly, in Junior Women; Paul Johnston in Junior Men; David Coates and Gavin Prunty in Open Men; and Garvan Duffy (Capt) in Masters. Sian Hurst finished in 3rd place, taking the bronze medal in Junior Women.

SB3 FLEET LINES UP FOR WORLDS



Yes, Minister – Minister for Education and local Dun Laoghaire TD Mary Hanafin with National Yacht Commodore Con Murphy at the launch of the SB3 Worlds. Photo: Michael Chester

More than 60 crews from ten countries have already entered the first SB3 World Championships, to be held by the National Yacht Club from September 20–26. Entries will close when the 120-boat limit is reached, or on June 1st.

The SB3 is the fastest growing fleet of keel boats in the world and the championship promises to be one of the most exciting sailing events ever held.

"The SB3 is an out and out racing boat which has had explosive growth since the first models were made in 2000," said NYC Commodore Con Murphy. "There are now 400 boats worldwide – raced by many national champions and Olympic sailors. This is the hottest boat in international racing and we are delighted to be the first country and club to host their world championships".

"We are amazed at how quickly the entry list is being filled – and from a long way away. We already have entries from Australia, New Zealand, USA, South Africa, France, Netherlands – not to mention big Irish and UK fleets"

"This event will be the biggest ever single make keelboat championship to be held in Ireland – and I believe it will be a great platform for us to show just how good a venue Dublin Bay is for big world class events".

SAAB POWERS CRUISER NATIONALS

Saab has agreed to sponsor the ICRA Cruiser National Championships for a fifth successive year. The event is hosted by Howth Yacht Club between May 16th and 18th and expects over 150 boats and some 1,200 sailors.

One of the major fixtures on the 2008 Irish sailing calendar, the Saab Cruiser Nationals will comprise two fleets – Divisions 0 and 1 in one and Divisions 2 and 3 in the other – in a seven-race series over round-the-cans and windward-leeward courses. Prizes will be awarded on both IRC and ECHO.

With added interest from the South Coast and from the UK, a new initiative this year is a feeder race from Cork starting the previous weekend, although it will not count towards the championship.

The event has added significance for Class 0 entries as it will act as an indicator trial which ICRA will use to select third and fourth corinthian Irish teams for the Commodore's Cup in the UK later in the season. (For more cruiser news and action see page 23)



Saab is continuing its sponsorship of the ICRA Nationals (from left to right): Fintan Cairns, Commodore, Irish Cruiser Racing Association; Emmet Hogan, Business Manager, Saab; and Gerry O'Neill, Commodore, Howth Yacht Club, with a Saab 9-3 Vector Sport BioPower at Howth Marina

BOS TO EASE BUYER STRESS

Buying a boat is quite like buying a house, and unfortunately, it can be just as stressful. Similar to any big purchase, the stress levels can be minimised if potential buyers take the time out to do some homework, assess the options, and ensure that all background information needed is in order before the purchase.

Most boat sales, whether new or second-hand, go through without any hitches; however, it makes sense to carry out a few basic checks before you commit to buying either a new or used boat.

Bank of Scotland (Ireland) has been offering marine finance since 2005, and its specialists offer a full advice service to customers on finance, registration, moorings and insurance.

"There are quite a few extra costs associated with running a boat," says Ronan Kelly, marine finance national sales manager with Bank of Scotland (Ireland). "From insurance to docking and mooring fees, registration fees, essential storage equipment and maintenance, boating costs can really add up. To make these costs more manageable it's a good idea to consider them when you go to take out your marine finance."

The bank structures financing alternatives to meet the individual needs of customers; it can, for example, structure loans in currencies other than euro and provide finance for a vessel even when it is located overseas. The bank finances a wide selection of boats ranging from small sports boats, to large motor and sail yachts. Further information from www.bankofscotland.ie

LEOPARD FOR ROUND IRELAND

Wicklow Sailing Club say Colm Barrington's unbeaten 76-hour record in the BMW Round Ireland race—set as far back as 1998—will be challenged again this summer by Mike Slade's ICAP Leopard 3 who holds the Fastnet race record. Slade has entered Ireland's biennial offshore race that starts from Wicklow on June 21.

Organiser Dennis Noonan also reports interest France in the Two Handed class. Four Prima 38s from the UK are entered. Also going round are past winners George Radley and Eric Lisson (who is looking for a third win in Cavatina).

SMALL BOATS URGED TO TAKE AIS

Small boats fitted with automatic information system (AIS) transponders will be easier to locate, and to avoid, according to the Irish Coast Guard. The AIS system has been commissioned by the Coast Guard to allow rescue craft, helicopters and shore stations to transmit and receive information from vessels that are linked into the system – and which then transmits the identity, position, course and speed of these vessels.

The information is broadcast over VHF radio through one of 16 AIS base stations around the coast. Use of the system is compulsory on ships of more than 300 gross tonnes, but is optional for smaller craft.

Transport minister Noel Dempsey has urged smaller craft to link into the new system, as craft fitted with the device are "electronically visible" to commercial traffic in locations where there is poor visibility, and missing or overdue vessels fitted with the equipment should also be easier to find.



The 100-foot yacht Leopard, holder of the Rolex Fastnet Race 2007 race record is on its way to Wicklow for the BMW Round Ireland race. Photo: Ian Borlenghi/Rolex

BROKER DIES SUDDENLY



Yacht broker Mick Loughnane died suddenly on February 13 while abroad on holidays.

The 59-year old was a well-known figure in the marine trade in both Dublin and Cork where he operated as the Dufour yachts agent with Crosshaven's Donal McClement.

Loughnane was a pioneer in the yacht charter business here, operating a fleet of yachts from the Trident Hotel Marina in Kinsale. He formed Sail Ireland Charters over 20 years ago and had built up the largest charter fleet in the country.

He had recently launched a business expansion scheme called Seven Heads Yacht Charter. He was a popular and respected figure at international boat shows where for many years he promoted Ireland as a sailing destination, accompanied on many trips by his son Justin.

He is survived by his wife Susan and three children. A Prayer Service, with many friends from the National YC and Old Belvedere Rugby Club, was held on Saturday February 23 at 12 noon in the Star of the Sea Church, Sandymount, followed by private cremation.

WET AND WINDY... IN YOUR ARMCHAIR!

You will get wet, you will get wind beaten, and you will have the time of your life! That is the promise made by Volvo when they bring their Volvo race simulator to Irish shores in May.

Its Irish tour starts in Eyre Square in Galway on the 23rd May 2008; a year to the day the Volvo Ocean Race arrives in Galway Bay. It will be open in Eyre Square until the 26th May. The simulator will then travel to Dublin where it will be the main attraction at the Maritime Festival in Dublin's Docklands, running from the 31st May until the 2nd June. It will also make an appearance at the Plaza in Dun Laoghaire (from the 28th to 29th May) and it will finish its Irish tour with a trip to the Grand Plaza in Cork (6th June – 8th June).

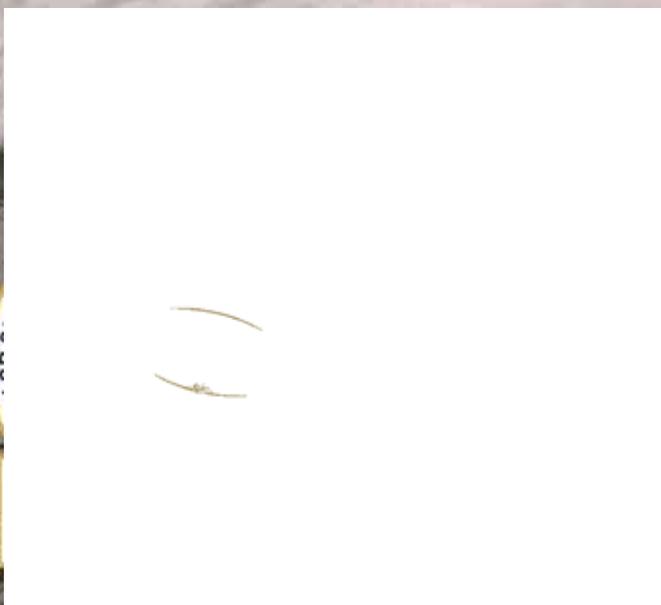
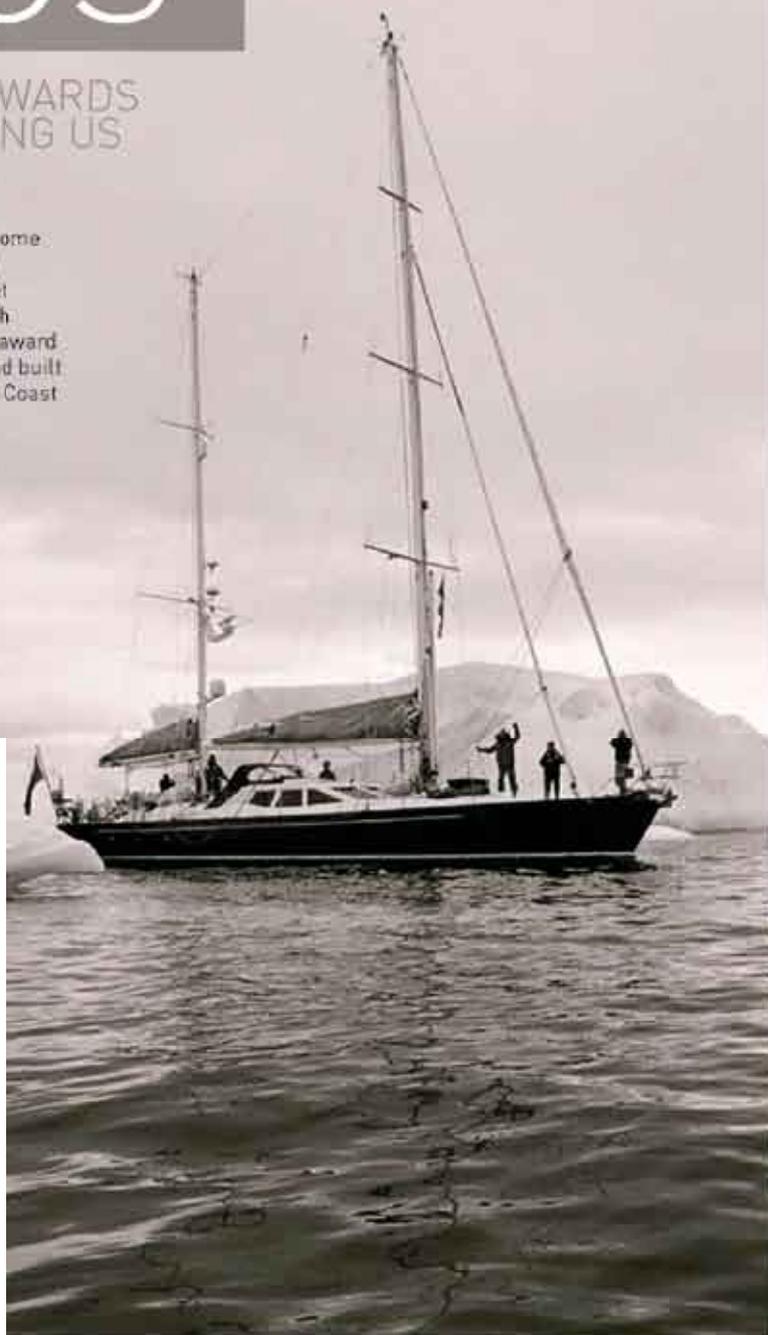
Admission is free and rain gear provided. The simulator will give everyone the opportunity to experience what life on a V70 yacht is really like.



CRUISING CLUB SPREADS ITS WINGS

WM NIXON SURVEYS THE NEW ICC AWARDS FOR THE MORE ADVENTUROUS AMONG US

The Irish Cruising Club's latest batch of annual awards reflect vigour at home and abroad. The premier trophy, the Faulkner Cup, goes to Dublin-based Michael Holland, whose alloy-built Dubois 72 ketch *Celtic Spirit of Fastnet* ranged between the Arctic and Antarctic. This was an achievement of such scope and detailed planning that it takes an effort to realise that the first award of the same trophy in 1931 went to the 26ft gaff cutter *Marie* (designed and built by Doyle of Dun Laoghaire in 1893) for a very modest venture on the West Coast of Scotland by Desmond Keatinge and Keith McFerran.



But today's cruisers are generally larger; indeed the average size increase over the past 20 years is such that finding a berth in our longer-established marinas is a bit like trying to find a city-centre parking space for a modern 4x4. Such vehicles may be past their sell-by date, but the general trend afloat towards larger boats is well represented in the ICC awards, as the Strangford Cup for an alternative best cruise goes to the 2001-built Frers-designed Hallberg-Rassy 42 Beowulf from Dun Laoghaire (Anne Woulfe-Flanagan and Bernard Corbally) which made a well-planned pattern of cruises in the eastern Mediterranean. Brendan Bradley receives the Round Ireland Cup for a detailed circuit in Afar; a Moody 47 also built 2001.

However, western owner Seamus Salmon from Clew Bay completed a notably enjoyable Atlantic circuit with his 1985 First 375 Saoirse, one of those attractive Jean Berret-designed marques which Beneteau were building 20 years ago, and the Mayo YC skipper receives the Atlantic Trophy for a log which conveys a sense of variety and enjoyment – not always the case with cruising stories.

Cork skipper Pat Lyons went east on the Dufour 38.5 Stardancer and was awarded the Fortnight Cup for a cruise to southwest Wales, the north coast of Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly.

Maeve and Adrian Bell from Strangford Lough visited much of the west of Scotland with Eala Ban, their new Swedish-built Arcona 400 (Wybrants

Cup award) while Andy McCarter of Lough Swilly's cruise with his Startight 35 Gwili 3 – marking his third and 'final' retirement – was from Donegal westward of Ireland to southern Portugal (Fingal Cup).

Veteran sailor Wallace Clark (he's a gallant 80) took his attractive Colvic 32 ketch Agivey from Ballycastle to the Hebrides, and most deservedly was awarded the Wild Goose Cup, which he – a Commodore way back in 1960-63 – presented to the ICC in 1995. Agivey is a practical sort of boat for senior cruising folk, but you don't need to have registered Clark's vintage to appreciate her. Years ago, we used to run a brokerage column in *Afloat*, but as we only included boats we liked, it was counter-productive. Typical was a Simon 32, the Colvic 32 completed by George Kingston at Kilmacsimon Boatyard. The name didn't quite set hearts alight – Kinsale 32 would surely have rung the bell – but she was a lovely motor-sailer anyway, and we said so. The end result was the owner withdrew her from sale, as he realised he could find nothing else as good, and Clark's pleasant cruising with Agivey reinforces this view.

The ICC logs have been adjudicated in crisp style by Jennifer Guinness, and the winning ones, together with many others, have been put into the usual massive ICC Annual by Chris Stillman, who somehow also finds time for the day job as a Professor of Archaeology, of which he writes in an agreeably accessible style.

'FINDING A BERTH IN OUR LONGER-ESTABLISHED MARINAS IS A BIT LIKE TRYING TO FIND A CITY-CENTRE PARKING SPACE FOR A MODERN 4X4'



Main image: Michael Holland's award-winning Cubois 72 Celtic Spirit of Fastnet under a vast Antarctic sky at Stella Creek.

Top: The 26ft gaff cutter Marie – designed and built by Coyle of Dun Laoghaire in 1893 – was the first winner of the Irish Cruising Club's Faulkner Cup in 1931. Photo: WM Nixon

Left: Away for fun – September departure from Westport on the Atlantic circuit for Seamus Salmon's First 375 Saoirse with Mick Corrigan forward, Robbie Baird at the mast, and himself at the helm.

Far left: The First 375 Saoirse from Mayo at Isla Margarita in Venezuela



CURRACH'S COMEBACK

THE TRADITIONAL ROLE FOR THE CANVAS BOAT HAS FINISHED, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN HER DAYS ARE NUMBERED



It has been said that every traditional boat is a perfect adaptation to a specific environment. This includes both natural and social environments. Instead of being museum pieces, traditional boats are therefore perfect icons of the 21st century as well as being a celebration of the genius of each of the communities who developed them.

In developing a new currach, then, it is important to understand the ingenious technology, developed over generations, inherent in the design. Firstly, they are essentially beach boats, very like Yorkshire cobbles and other types, all around the Atlantic coasts. Some communities who did not have a pier, where boats could be kept afloat, had to work from a sandy beach, launching into the surf and

later lifting the boat out of the water and carrying it safely above the high water mark.

This required special design features. The boat had to be as light as possible. To facilitate beaching in surf the boat had to be deeper towards the front and flat towards the back. As the deep forefoot took the ground, the long flat back was swung around and was driven up onto the sand, so that passengers could alight almost dry footed. The bow of the boat now faced into the on-coming waves and therefore had to be unusually high, so that the boat would not be swamped. A boat is said to be 'crochta go maith', 'crochta' in Irish meaning to be hung up – the opposite to what it means in English.



Yawls were preferred by Blasket islanders, but when boats were taxed, they changed to currachs which were not taxed. The resultant cross between the yawl and the currachs makes the 'Neamhog' the finest and most beautiful type currach ever built. This is also a classic example of how a community adapted a boat to both natural and social environments.

The working life of the canvas currach is over, and it is time for it to once again adapt – this time, to maritime leisure and maritime tourist activities.

The deep forefoot and flat of the currach and the extreme lightness of its structure, are ideally suited high-speed sailing. With this in mind, Galway boat building school has completed the prototype of the first such currach – 'An Run'.

Like its ancestors, An Run is 19' long, 4'8" wide with 3 rowing thwarts. To give the extra strength necessary to carry a large sail, she is fully planked. To maintain lightness, cedar strip planking is used. Bent oak ribs are used as in the canvas type. With about 150sq ft. of sail, this will give An Rún a potential speed of over 15 knots.

This speed can only be reached

in ideal conditions, i.e. strong winds and calm water, but these are regular conditions in Galway. There is now an area of perfect sailing water from Claddagh to Muttin Island, the new 'causeway' providing the sheltered water.

Kinvara Bay, where the 16' sailing currachs are sailing, is amazingly good, while the waters from Greatman's Bay to Cill Ciaran to Letter Mullen might well prove to be some of the best sailing grounds in Europe.

All in all, the old canvas currach seems to be entering an exciting chapter in its history. As in all areas of tradition, if the tradition is alive, it is changing and evolving. So it is with the currach – once an ingenious adaptation to a harsh political and natural environment, now a new metamorphosis filling the sporting needs of 21st century.

'An Rún' can be seen at 'Clan na Mara,' An Spiddeal, from 2-6pm on Saturdays. A similar 16' adaptation of the currach adhmaid is already in use, six in Killala, two in an Spiddeal and three in Kinvara. Two 19' versions with cabins, for lake or sea, have also been built.

Under construction – more wooden sailing currachs prepare to join an existing fleet on the West coast



FLOOD APPOINTED AS SAIL AMBASSADOR



Key role – Sean Flood

Sail Training International's Board of Trustees has appointed Sean Flood as an International Goodwill Ambassador in recognition of his long affiliation with the organisation, its mission and activities until his retirement last year. Sean Flood was the country representative for Ireland in Sail Training International, a role he held for some 14 years, as well as being a director of Coiste an Ásgara since 1998.

During his years as the Irish representative for sail training, Sean played a key role in widening the knowledge and appreciation of the benefits of sail training as well as bringing the Tall Ships' Races to Dublin in 1998 and to Waterford in 2005, and the planned visit there in 2011.

LOUGH DERG GOES DUTCH



Commodore Jack Bayly and Lough Derg YC officers take delivery of a new Tirion

Lough Derg Yacht Club recently took delivery of a new Tirion sailing boat, partially funded by the Lotto. The boat is of Dutch design with a shallow keel, ideal for sailing on the lake. It has a large cockpit area which is perfect for wheelchair access and has room below for two berths.

The boom is high so that beginner sailors can enjoy learning to sail without the fear of hitting their head. It has three sails, a jib, main and spinnaker. It comes with a road trailer so that it can be sailed at sites other than Lough Derg. The boat will be available for charter to club members or for sailing courses for adults and children.

NEW MARINE INJURY TEAM



Air aid

A team of emergency paramedics will now be available to treat people injured in marine accidents on board a Coast Guard helicopter.

Paramedics will no longer have to wait on land for those injured at sea while the Coast Guard rescues them. The Marine Ambulance Response Team will be based in Dublin Airport and its deployment co-ordinated by the Irish Coast Guard.

RECORD RIB FOR KERRY



New attempt planned

Philip Fitzgibbon and Mike Shanahan will attempt to improve on their Round Ireland speed record of 19 hours. You can read the story of their last spin in this issue of Afloat (see page 42).

The pair commissioned Martin Moriarty of Rebal Ribs based on Valentia Island to build a 9m rib for the challenge. The power source for the rib will be twin 300 Evinrude e-tec engines, thanks to sponsors Marine Motors.

The rib will be on display at Ribex on the Isle of Wight early May but perhaps more importantly can be seen at the Cahersiveen Boat Festival which will be hosted by Cahersiveen Marina over the weekend of May 16 to 18.

OPENING TIME FOR CLASSIC MALTS



Piper welcomes cruising folk

Entries are now being accepted for the annual Classic Malts Cruise – a unique two-week sailing voyage along the spectacular coastline of north-west Scotland from July 12 to 25. The UK's biggest non-competitive sailing event, the annual Classic Malts Cruise is sponsored by Diageo and was launched in 1994 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the distillery at Oban.

Participating crews sign up for outstanding cruising and the chance to explore the bays, islands and mountains on the west coast of Scotland. They also enjoy visits to the famous malt whisky distilleries that punctuate the sailing route. Information and entry details are available at www.classicmaltsruise.com

ROCKALL SET FOR TOURIST VISIT



As a desolate granite outcrop in the North Atlantic, Rockall is unlikely to challenge the Great Pyramids or Grand Canyon as a tourist mecca.

Nevertheless, the wave-lashed lump of rock will this year receive its first tourists taking part in an unusual charter trip. Andy Strangeway, a Yorkshireman, is offering

eight people the chance to join him on the seven-day trip at a cost of €2,480 each. Two places have already been booked for the voyage, which will take place between May and August.

The earliest recorded landing on Rockall was in 1810 but its ownership has been disputed for centuries with Ireland, Iceland, Denmark, the UK and most recently, Scotland laying claim to the outcrop that sits on vast oil and gas reserves worth billions of euro. Strangeway intends to spend a night on the uninhabited 70ft high and 89ft wide rock. There will be room for two more to join him while the rest enjoy the relative luxury of a night aboard a 67ft yacht he has chartered.

He plans to join the rock's only other permanent inhabitants such as periwinkles and marine molluscs by sleeping on a narrow shelf known as Hall's ledge. However, he will be exposed to the harsh North Atlantic weather as it is impossible to erect a tent.

"The plan is to spend the night on Rockall, weather permitting, but we will have to play it by ear and decide at the time of we can land with supplies," said Strangeway. "If it's stronger than gale force three, I won't attempt it." Rockall is the summit of the eroded core of an extinct volcano that is believed to be 40 million years old.

SOVEREIGN BRANCHES OUT



New dealer – James Lyons

Sovereign Yacht Sales, recently appointed Elan dealer for the south and west coast of Ireland, have just established a new brokerage office in Kinsale. They are now dealing with

pre-owned as well as new yacht sales, six days a week, from their base on Lower O'Connell Street, just behind Kinsale Yacht Club.

Sovereign Yacht Sales is a new wing of the Kinsale-based cruising school Sovereign Sailing Ltd. which was established in 2002. James Lyons, who will be managing Sovereign Yacht Sales, is one of Ireland's top professional sailing instructors and has wide experience with the Elan brand.

More information from www.yachtsales.ie

MARITIME AWARD FOR MAC

Afloat columnist and RTÉ marine correspondent Tom MacSweeney has been chosen as maritime person of the year. The award presentation was made at the recent Maritime Ball in Galway. According to the organisers, "the award is made to a person who has demonstrated exceptional performance or achievement in a marine-related field. The committee felt that Tom has made and continues to make, a significant contribution to marine issues on this island. He was instrumental in the setting up of the Seascapes programme, and has been a long-time supporter of the work of the lifeboats in Ireland and also of all those who both make a living on or simply enjoy our seas. The RTÉ news coverage of maritime affairs reflects the station's commitment. It is well deserved and it is long overdue."

Pictured below, from left: Captain Brian Sheridan, Galway's harbour master – the award is in honour of his father – with Tom MacSweeney, and another of the Sheridan family, Ken.



SAILING GETS REALITY TV SHOW

'Scoil Seol', a new six-part reality series for TG4, will show the viewing public how easy – or difficult – it is to start sailing when it follows the efforts of ten novice sailors as they learn to sail from scratch. Beginning on April 10th, the programme follows the participants as they learn the ropes on a traditional Galway Hooker, a gleoiteog.

The Endgame is a chance for four of the novices to race against the most established sailors in Ireland at the prestigious Cruinniú na mBád in Kinvara, Co. Galway.

The contestants – drawn from across Ireland and ranging in age from 22 to 62 years, had never set foot on a boat before, and spent the first ten days at bootcamp, in a custom-built sailing centre on Collanmore Island, Co. Mayo, before moving on to Connemara to hit the open seas on a gleoiteog. 'Scoil Seol' is produced by Magamedia, Spiddal, Co Galway and was filmed over the summer of 2007.

ROCNA GETS A GRIP

The manufacturers of Rocna Anchors claim they set in all ocean floors without any special tricks and are easy to use, giving maximum versatility. The anchors have self-launch capability, and its design ensures that it lands on the ideal angle for penetration, giving instant set. The chisel tip and weight distribution combine to ensure a virtual instant set in most sea bed conditions, including thick weed and kelp.

Independent testing (Sail & Yachting Monthly) voted Rocna number one for holding power. In addition, the high hold results in less dragging and therefore less seabed damage.

With an unconditional guarantee, Rocna are now available in Ireland from Boyd Boats, tel: 01 230 1230 or email info@boydboats.ie



Get a grip

WAVERIDERS TAKES TOP AWARD

The documentary feature film 'Waveriders' won the prestigious Audience Award at the recent Dublin International Film Festival. Starring Gabe Davies, Richard Fitzgerald and the Malloy brothers and featuring Kelly Slater, the documentary was directed by Dubliner Joel Conroy of Inis Films and written by Lauren Davies.

The premiere on February 22nd sold out in hours and it beat Oscar winner 'There Will Be Blood' and Colin Farrell's latest movie 'In Bruges' to scoop the top award. 'Waveriders' will next be shown at the Belfast Film Festival on April 19th before moving on to further worldwide festivals. The film is currently being scouted by distributors to determine its future release.

B35
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SEASCAPES
TOM MacSWEENEY



ISLANDERS WHO CAN'T SEE THE SEA

Life on Valentia Island and around Malin Head in Donegal is much different to that in Dublin. It is arguable that there is a better quality of life in the coastal regions, free from the everyday problems and pressures of life in the capital. People who live in the coastal areas have a pride in their home place, a love of the areas in which they live, steeped in maritime tradition.

It has been taken as an enormous insult by them that their lifestyle should have been insulted by the Department of Transport and senior Coast Guard management.

"They appear to regard us as of something of lesser standing than themselves, because they live in urban areas and we don't." I was told on Valentia Island in County Kerry. This view was echoed from Malin Head in Donegal, where the Department of Transport and the Coast Guard has recommended the closure of both locally-based coastal marine radio stations.

Not a shred of justifiable cause for the closure remains after the proposal was found to be devoid of any accuracy on its main claims, by both the ESB and Eircom, who refuted the Department and Coast Guard contention that power and communications systems were not good enough in both areas. In fact, where there have been any difficulties in the coastal areas, there have been as many at the marine radio centre in Dublin, but this was not referred to in the management document. And both regional locations stepped in to keep the marine radio system going when Dublin couldn't continue.

Seventeen people will lose their jobs at Valentia Island (main photo and inset below) in Co. Kerry or be re-located to one of the other centres if the station is closed.



Seascapes is on a new mooring – we have moved to Mondays at 10.30pm on RTE Radio 1. Tom MacSweeney is Marine Correspondent for RTE. Seascapes is repeated at 5.02am on Friday Mornings.

“THEY ARE INWARD
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THAN OUTWARD
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TO BE UNDERSTOOD
BY GOVERNMENT
MINISTERS AND CIVIL
SERVANTS...”

Having been shown to be quite inaccurate in these claims, the other main case made by management and civil servants has been that staff and their families would have a better lifestyle in an urban centre, with access to schools, shops, universities and other aspects of social life, than they would have in the coastal areas.

“This is contemptible of life in the coastal, rural regions,” I was told, but indicative of an increasing attitude of anti-rural bias perceived to be emanating from the corridors of Government and State administration. It is my duty as a journalist to reflect these views.

“There is no logic for the closure proposals, no justification for them,” said the Kerry County Manager, Tom Curran, after his Council agreed to campaign against them.

They are questionable on another aspect, as I discovered when I pursued the issue with the Minister for Transport and Marine, Noel Dempsey. He told me that there would be no job losses at the stations if radio work was not continued. When I asked how this could be justified, as there would then be station staffs at three locations – Valentia, Malin and the new urban centre in the West – he admitted those at Valentia and Malin would not have as much work as before, but they could be used for other tasks. This was suggested by management as overseeing other Coast Guard operations.

So, from their existing stations, they would do that type of work, using the same equipment that the Coast Guard management already claimed was not suitable to continue in operation?

That seems to lack logic and the proposal it is worrying also on safety grounds. Seafarers, fishermen and leisure mariners have all expressed their concern to me on Seascapes – even mountain climbers and hill walkers have written to the Minister protesting. I am a firm believer that there should be no compromise with safety. The stations have a proven record of efficiency and success. Why is it proposed to change a successful system and what is the basis for claiming that urban life is better than life in rural and coastal areas?

This controversy has led to listeners asking me to refer to what is increasingly being perceived as a lack of interest at the highest level

of government in the marine sphere. “It appears to be emanating from minds that are too concentrated on the urban experience of life in the capital and no longer see the larger picture of the reality of life in a small island nation on the periphery of Europe,” is just one description I have heard in the past few weeks as more people in the marine industry express concern to me.

“They are inward looking, rather than outward to the reality of a nation surrounded by water... We depend on the sea as our major channel of communication with the rest of the world, but that doesn't seem to be understood by government ministers and civil servants...” And so the comments go on.

When the Department of Transport issued documents, notices, information leaflets about the marine sphere, but with no reference to ‘Marine’ in the Department's title, I asked why, particularly when the Department has a ‘Minister for Transport and Marine.’ I was told that at the highest level of senior civil servant, a committee had met and decided there was no need to include ‘Marine’ in its title.

And this is the Department which wants to close the Coast Guard stations, which is responsible for maritime safety and the ports and which would have no transport to deal with in this island nation without the sea – because there would be no fuel to operate the transport if ships and seafarers didn't bring it in through the ports.

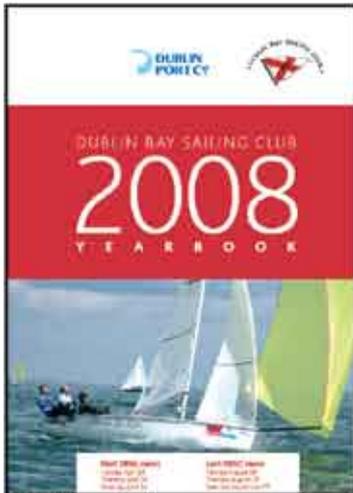
There are five government departments dealing with different aspects of the marine sector when fisheries, ports, safety, inland waters, the offshore islands and sailing are taken into account. But not a single department has ‘Marine’ in its title.

Evidently the marine sector is not considered a high priority and, in an island nation, this is regrettable.

“There are none so blind as those who will not see ...” My grandfather who first introduced me to ships was fond of making that quote when he spoke about politicians who he believed did not see reality where maritime matters are concerned. That was many years ago. Not a lot has changed. Perhaps those who ignore the maritime sphere are so busy looking inward that they don't see the sea.

ALL YEAR BAY RACING

GOING, GOING, GONE...



2008 club yearbook

In his annual address to one of Europe's largest yacht racing clubs, Dublin Bay Sailing Club Commodore Tim Costello indicated that soon the club will be running year-round sailing.

In its 117-year history it has organised summer racing, and only with the construction of the marina in 2001 did any prospect of winter racing materialise, as boats on moorings were always hauled ashore from September to April.

But now, because of the Harbour Company's major expansion of marina facilities in the Harbour



Tim Costello - 12 month racing on the bay

(see page 16 of Afloat's Christmas Annual) the club, with 1,800 members and 350 boats, are anticipating a demand for year-round racing.

They already have a foretaste of what may happen during the Club's Sunday morning winter racing. Up to this it's been a relaxed, laid-back affair, but if swing moorings disappear altogether, many regular Dublin Bay sailors - with all-year round access to the water - may well be looking for serious winter racing as an alternative to or extension of their summer programme.

This may not be such an extravagant idea as once appeared only a few years ago. The seasons appear to be changing. Irish winters don't seem as harsh as they were, and with the experience of many seasons of light, frustrating winds in summer months, many would welcome the choice to extend their racing into the winter period.

Costello reckons it will mean providing permanent racing marks in the Bay, additional expenditure on committee vessels, more race officers and volunteers to man starting lines, as well as more secretarial and results personnel, but a year-long series is only around the corner.

The last day of the Dun Laoghaire Motor Yacht Club's long-running Frostbite series ended with a dip for a Fireball helmsman. Photographer Catherine Coleman captured the 'toe strap miss' at the end of her lens. In spite of going overboard, this pair did not capsize! DBSC is now anticipating year-round racing on the bay.



PRODUCT RECALL

BOSUN'S CHAIRS

We have become aware of a possible problem with some Bosun's Chairs.

The problem involves the stitching, and the models being recalled are **No 206623 Force Chair**, which is Orange in colour, and **No 206624 Standard Bosun's Chair**, which is Blue in colour.




No 206623 Force Chair No 206624 Standard Bosun's Chair

It is clear that any failure could potentially result in serious injury, and we have therefore decided to recall them all, with immediate effect, as a safety precaution.

If you own one of these chairs, please return it to us immediately for a full refund.

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PEELO SECURES SLOT FOR IRELAND

Sarah Steyaert of France has won the 2008 Women's Laser Radial World Championship after a sensational finish to the regatta, when Lijia Xu of China was disqualified from the final race, ultimately costing her the world title.

The six-day regatta concluded off Takapuna, Auckland in March and with it a place for Ireland on the startline of the women's radial class in Beijing.

Howth's Clara Peelo secured the final place available at the Olympic regatta with a 29th overall in New Zealand after a poor start.

Anna Lise Murphy of the National Yacht Club finished fifth overall at the Laser radial youth worlds at the same venue a week later.

Selectors will now make a decision to send Peelo or rival Debbie Hanna of Belfast Lough, who finished 52nd, to the Games.

England's Matt Mee and Richard Wagstaff won the 2008 Fireball World championships in Thailand, where ten countries participated. Best of the Irish boats taking part was Noel Butler and Seamus Moore in 15th place. The ten race series was sailed in fantastic conditions with typically 12-18 knots of wind.



Clara Peelo has qualified Ireland in the Laser radial class for Beijing but awaits an ISA decision to send her or Debbie Hanna to the Olympic regatta. Photo: David Branigan



NEW RULES FOR BEGINNERS

The ISAF has produced a one-page set of introductory rules for racing to help newcomers to the sport. The move is aimed at making it as easy as possible for beginners to take up and compete in sailing, and so these introductory rules are basic. However, they remain compatible with the principles and fundamental rules in the full ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS).

Initially the introductory rules are experimental and ISAF has invited organisations involved in race training to apply to trial the rules and to provide their comments and recommendations. It's hoped that the development of the rules will progress sufficiently to make them generally available before the end of this year. Full details at www.sailing.org/contactisaf

Fireball racing in Dun Laoghaire - New rules governing racing have been simplified by international body ISAF. Photo: Catherine Coleman



FRENCH TO CHALLENGE IN HOWTH

KINSALE LEAGUE STARTS THE CRUISER SEASON

By Claire Bateman
Photos by Bob Bateman



Although a much talked-about French armada was scheduled to drop anchor off Ireland's Eye it has so far failed to materialise. But even if the prospect of French attack at the Irish championships in May was just sabre-rattling, Irish cruiser chief Fintan Cairns is taking no chances.

He has sent out an alert for G ry Trentesaux's team who plan to use several regattas in these islands in

the build-up to their defence of June's Commedore's Cup at Cowes.

Radio silence from across the channel has done nothing to dent preparations for the SAAB-sponsored Cruiser National championships that runs from May 9-16 at Howth, with boats from O'Rourke's home port of Killybegs and the Royal Western YC also expected to push the fleet over the one-hundred mark.



Dave Dwyer's Ker 39 Mariner's Cove shows her paces in blustery conditions, proving to be a deserving winner of Class 0 in the opening race of the Mathews Chandlery April League 2008



This year the emphasis is very much on all-comers, with racing provided for classes zero, one, two and three. Although class zero may yet have international participation, it is certain to feature Ireland's Commodore's Cup entries, but it will also be possible to race for championship honours without an endorsed racing certificate under ECHO handicap. There are forty entries to date.

Meanwhile, the opening race of the Mathews Chandlery April League at Kinsale was certainly one to blow away the winter cobwebs.

To put it another way, it was a good start to the sailmakers' repair service for the season. The forecast was for a blustery southerly breeze with heavy and prolonged thundery

squalls – and that is exactly what they got. Right on cue at 12 noon the first rain started to fall. There was an excellent turnout with four fleets sailing and, as usual, Alan Crosbie did the honours as Principal Race Officer, setting the committee off at the mouth of the harbour and using the Black Head as the weather mark. With the exception of two over-eager competitors in Class 2, the fleets got cleanly away. All the boats headed for the right-hand side of the course because of a natural bend in the wind as it swept in around the Old Head.

However, it was when the boats started to return on the off wind leg a squall hit the fleet. Some spinnakers were blown and very few were able to carry them. Two notable exceptions being Mariner's Cove in Class 0

and Zoom in Class 2. On the final leg, when all the boats were turning to finish, the worst squall yet hit the fleet with rain and high wind and the water showing a lot of white.

By this stage Mariner's Cove and Meridian had finished, thus escaping the worst of the weather and leaving the rest of the fleet to battle their way home. Once more it was Zoom that managed to carry her spinnaker all the way back to the finish.

It was particularly tough for the smaller boats. Graham Marron's Starflash, Flashpoint, surfed her way beautifully down the waves but did not do enough and had to be content with second place, with first going to Alan Mulcahy's Sundancer.



[Above] Close competition between the MacCarthy Brothers' First 31.7 Mac Magic and Henry Kingston's Quicksilver Shadow during Race 1

[Top right and bottom] Tom Roche's new Salona 45 – sporting state-of-the-art McWilliam One sails, and with Des McWilliam on board – sailed majestically around the course to finish second on her first outing, but she was no match for the thoroughbred racing design of Mariner's Cove

[Middle] With squalls decimating spinnakers, Nicola Harris of WHSC – sailing her Dehler DB1 – shows the boys how to do it by winning in both Class 2 IRC and ECHO



IRISH STARS LINE UP FOR BEIJING



You wait all day for a bus and then two come along at once. Just like the Number 7, there's a queue forming for the chance to represent Ireland in the men's keelboat class at the Olympics.

Slow, lumbering and short on thrills, the Star is the heavyweight of the Olympic regatta. It has taken 20 years to produce an Irish fleet but each of the three campaigns now running for China deserve support because no other Olympic class more accurately reflects Irish sailing. In fact, 70% of sailing here takes place in keelboats.

But these greenhorn teams face a far bigger obstacle than each other if they want to find themselves on the Beijing route in six months time and

continue an unbroken run of Irish representation since 1992.

Mark Mansfield raced at four Olympic regattas in the class, a boat he made his own, but his best result was at his first games in Barcelona when he finished eleventh.

Now that he has hung up his Olympic boots, the next generation is aiming to be the first to make it into the top ten. But at an estimated €250,000 per campaign, it's proving an expensive, uphill journey.

Unlikely as it may seem, a pairing of 22-year-old dinghy rookies who had Weymouth 2012 as a target is now considered to be in the running for 2008.



DAVID O'BRIEN REPORTS ON NEXT MONTH'S CLIMAX TO THE SELECTION (OR NOT) OF IRELAND'S KEELBOAT FOR BEIJING

THE CONTENDERS

**MAURICE O'CONNELL
AND BEN COOKE**

Royal St. George YC and Royal Cork YC
WORLD RANKING: 27



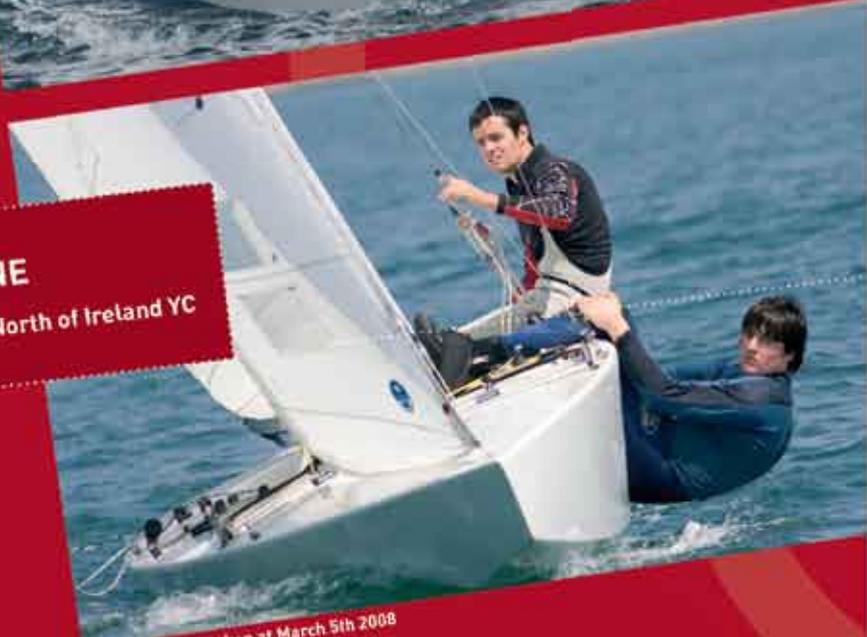
**MAX TREACY
AND ANTHONY SHANKS**

Royal St. George YC and National YC
WORLD RANKING: 34



**PETER O'LEARY
AND STEVEN MILNE**

Royal Cork YC and Royal North of Ireland YC
WORLD RANKING: NONE



World rankings taken at March 5th 2008



But first Ireland needs to have a place on the Olympic start line. The attempt to secure it was missed at the World championships last September when 75% of the Olympic fleet was picked.

Now the focus is on April where up to eight countries, including Ireland, are pinning their hopes on securing one of four remaining places at this year's World championships in Florida when the 17-boat Olympic fleet will be complete.

There are good reasons to think Ireland will get a place because of some fine individual performances, but worryingly enough at this year's only indicator event so far – January's Miami Olympic Classes Regatta (MOCR) – Ireland finished at the back of the countries in the hunt.

In Miami, on the same waters where the World championships are scheduled, Royal Cork's Peter O'Leary (22) and Royal North's Peter Milne (22) were race winners in MOCR, opening eyes with the pace of their progress in just a few short months to finish 17th. They are sailing a hand-me-down hull from British medallist Ian Percy, also their training partner. In early March they placed ninth overall in the Bacardi Cup out of 118 boats.

It's these kind of results that has raised the former Laser sailors to the status of contenders between the two other pairings of Maurice O'Connell and Ben Cooke, and Max Treacy and Anthony Shanks. But if Ireland should get a slot, there will be no trials; instead selectors look set to go with gut instinct.

Last year, O'Connell narrowly missed qualifying Ireland but posted 14th at the World Championships with a personal best. It's a result that brought official funding but little else because the pair were sidelined for MOCR, while O'Connell recovered from a hand injury. Happily this week he has been given the all clear to sail again.

Meanwhile, Treacy and Shanks from Dun Laoghaire showed good early season form last year by placing fourth in the Spring European championships, a result that proves their worth. They finished 21st in MOCR.

The Star has had an Olympic presence since 1932 and with these contenders, Ireland looks likely to build on Mansfield's pioneering efforts, but just like a bus route, it needs monitoring to run on time.

Of the eight countries looking for the four slots, Switzerland, Norway, Bermuda, Australia, Croatia, Ukraine and Russia all are single entries. Ireland has the advantage of multiple crews competing to boost its chance.

But this could also backfire if the world championship descends into an Irish dog fight where nation qualification ends up taking a back seat and all three crews end up with a one-way ticket home next April.

STAR PROFILE



The Star is one of the most prolific keelboats in the world for a reason: it is an incredible boat to sail, say enthusiasts. Designed in 1911 by Francis Sweisguth, it has proven to be a classic in every sense. It's the oldest Olympic class, having first been used in competition in 1932, and still at the heart of that competition today. Supported by a worldwide association, the Star as a class is one of the best organised in sailing, with over 7,500 yachts built over its 80-year history, and 2,000-plus actively racing today.

The Star has evolved into a craft for all ranges of competition and performance sailing: its equipment and rig is simple enough for the novice, yet versatile enough for those on the forefront of sailing. It's large, powerful sailplan, combined with a sleek hull and light weight, propel the boat in the faintest of airs, while the flexible spar can be tuned to 'de-power' when the breeze kicks up. The large main is adjustable, allowing the sailor to completely control the driving surface of the sail. Stars today are generally constructed of fibreglass, with positive flotation and an integrated keel. The design, sails, and equipment of the Star are governed by stringent class rules, created to improve competition on the basis of skill and control cost. This has also served to help the longevity of the design, keeping older boats competitive through careful evolution.

Stars are generally 'dry-sailed', that is, stored on their trailers when not in use, and with a total weight around 1,500 lbs, can easily be towed from place to place.

Many of the world's top sailors past and present have been involved in the Star Class. The list of former World Champions reads like Who's Who of yachting: other top sailors such as Colin Beashel, John Kosteki, Mats Johansson, Hans Vogt, Benny Anderson, Rod Davis and Mark Reynolds are also involved in the Star class. But the class is made up of a variety of sailors of all ages and skill levels. One race on a Star has hooked some sailors for life: they'll tell you: it's a thrill.

Despite this, except for Olympic triallists, the boat never caught on in Ireland.

APRIL/MAY 2008

VOLVO
OCEAN
RACE

2007 - 2008

U P D A T E

New beginning: The Irish hull emerges from the workshop in China in February

BUILDING UP SPEED



LOUAY HABIB LOOKS AT THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE VOLVO OCEAN RACE AS THE TEAMS PREPARE FOR THE START LINE IN A LITTLE OVER SIX MONTHS

Only time will tell which team will win the 2008-09 Volvo Ocean Race but one thing is certain; when they line up on at the start in Alicante on October 4, a huge amount of preparation and hard work will create a mesmerizing curtain-raiser. Designing and building a Volvo Open 70 is complex. The perfect boat is almost impossible to achieve. Of course, the build quality can be supreme and the attention to detail infinitesimal, but the perfect boat would need to be the fastest at every point of sail on the compass. This is not possible. Compromise has to be made and design weighs heavily on research and development. All over the world, the second generation of Volvo Open 70s are being built and their crews assembled.

GREEN TEAM IN THE GROOVE

Although Irish businessman Eamon Conneely, and skipper of the Green Team, Ian Walker, are both new to the Volvo Ocean Race, Conneely has had aspirations to be involved for some time.

Walker says Eamon's interest in the Volvo Ocean Race was sparked by competing in the Round Ireland Race on a Volvo 60 in 2004. "Ever since, he has wanted to be involved with an offshore campaign like this," says Walker.

The driving motivation to enter the Green Team was really brought about by the announcement of Galway as a stopover for the race. According to Walker, Eamon is very proud of his Galway roots and his previous boat, Patches, was named after the town in Connemara where Conneely grew up. His home and business are also in Galway. "I am sure Eamon will do some sailing in the build-up to the race and then maybe onboard for some of the in-port races." Walker had his first sail on a Volvo Open 70 during the Sydney-Hobart race last December when he was on board Matt Allen's *Ichl Bahn*, the Australian entry in the last Volvo Ocean Race.

"I gained a huge amount from the race to Hobart," he says. "I especially learned some specific sail design criteria which will go straight into the programme as well as deck layout information. But if I had to summarize, it was more useful to be out on the ocean in a Volvo 70 than sitting in the office, discussing how to manoeuvre one."

It is always a good formula to have a 'home town boat' for the public to get behind and the Irish public will be able to support their team in person when the in-port race is held in Galway. Walker is sure that the Green Team boat will be a quick one.

Although the Irish entry was a relatively late entry to the race, the build team is making up the ground at an impressive rate and Walker is delighted with the progress of their Reichel Pugh designed boat which is under construction at the McConaghy Boats facility in China.

"The hull was turned at the beginning of February ready for the deck to be fitted, and the bulkheads and structure are complete. We are now assembling all the parts as well as some of the internal fittings. Reichel Pugh and McConaghy have built many boats together and that is invaluable when time is short. We are using the North Design Group for sail design with Simon Fry overseeing the development programme. Once the hull has been completely assembled, we will ship everything to Southampton by the end of May, including the mast from New Zealand and the fin from the USA. The bulb is being manufactured in the UK."

ERICSSON RACING TEAM LIGHTS UP

It was standing room only as the first of the new Ericsson boats built for the Volvo Ocean Race hit the water for the first time in Barcelona, the Catalan capital, on February 12. Ericsson Racing Team proudly unveiled the first of their two Juan Kouyoumdjian-designed boats in Barcelona to the world's press.

PUMA OPTS FOR TWO-PRONGED APPROACH

Puma Racing Team, based in Newport Rhode Island on the USA east coast, is using a somewhat different approach from the other teams in their preparation. "Really we have had a two-pronged preparation,"

explains skipper Ken Read. "In Rhode Island we have been using PUMA Avanti, the old ABN AMRO Two, as our guinea pig, our test boat. It literally has wires coming out of it and we have been scrutinizing every piece of technology that went into the build."

"We didn't want to waste design time testing people, so when George David gave us the opportunity of using his 90ft Rambler, we saw it as a great way to train. We have sailed with the right number of people and we have encountered some pretty vicious storms, especially in the Rolex Fastnet and Middle Sea Races. It was pretty good training for the race ahead."

"When you are out in the ocean under race conditions and often in harm's way, you learn a lot more about yourself and the people around you."

"We estimate to be sailing our new race boat in May, it is difficult to say exactly. It is like building a house; some days we make a great leap forward and others we have a little trauma and have a little fire to put out. April or May would be about right."

RUSSIA LOOKS TO SPRING

The delivery of the Team Russ a boat, being built by Green Marine in Lymington, is well on course.

"The deck was joined to the hull in January and throughout February the second fit was in full swing; engine, winches and associated deck gear were all put in place," says the boat's designer, Britain's Rob Humphreys. "We plan to have the boat in the water by April and at the moment, we see no reason for any alteration to our plans."

FARR SPEAKS FOR SPANISH

Details of the two-boat Spanish team are very much unknown, however principal designer, Russ Bowler, at Farr Yacht Design suggests it will be a looker.

"You will be stunned when we finally unveil the new boats some time in April or May," he says. "The new route has made the research and design work far more complex and Farr Yacht Design has had a very new type of relationship for the next race."

"In the past we have designed boats for various clients and they have had to be somewhat guarded in our relationship, to avoid the possibility of design secrets going to other teams. This time we are working exclusively for one client which means that we can have a totally open relationship."

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

So, as we enter the final countdown to the 10th running of the most successful round the world race, all eyes are on the seven teams as, one by one, they launch their new boats and begin their on-the-water training. For all the latest news and views, log on to www.volvooceanrace.org

Ericsson 3 hits the water
Photo: Oskar Kihlberg





Flying form: Colm Barrington's Flash Glove and a fleet of TP52s will be in Cork

BOOK REVIEW

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE OUTSIDE

WM NIXON HAILS A MAJOR REVISION OF THE IRISH CRUISING CLUB'S EAST AND NORTH COAST'S SAILING DIRECTIONS

If we wanted tangible evidence of the way that Ireland is changing in prosperity, then this energetically revised 11th Edition of the Irish Cruising Club's East and North Coast Guide provides more than enough to be sailing along with. Describing it as a revision is under-stating the case. Edited with prodigious dedication by Norman Kean, the book may be in the same style as its predecessors of 2002 and 1999.

But in effect it is a completely new work, drawing on the latest official information combined with much voluntary input of local knowledge from club members along the coast, and based on thorough investigation made by Norman himself and his wife Geraldine during a detailed cruise with their ketch Xanadu in the summer of 2007, when they called at 161 places between Bloody Foreland and Carnsore Point.

Like the ICC's companion volume for the South and West coasts, the new book is greatly enhanced by the aerial photos of Kevin Dwyer. He has a deserved international reputation in this field, but it is coastal photography which is his special forte. And as he is an ICC member of long standing, he brought to this project the experienced eye of the sailor and a level of voluntary dedication which well matched the enthusiasm of the crew of Xanadu.

A handsome volume in A4 size with 214 pages, the East & North Coasts of Ireland is excellent value at €50 or £37.50 sterling. It is distributed in Ireland by Argosy Books of Dublin (tel 01 806 8466, email info@argosybooks.ie) and is available for sale through all good chandlers and bookshops.

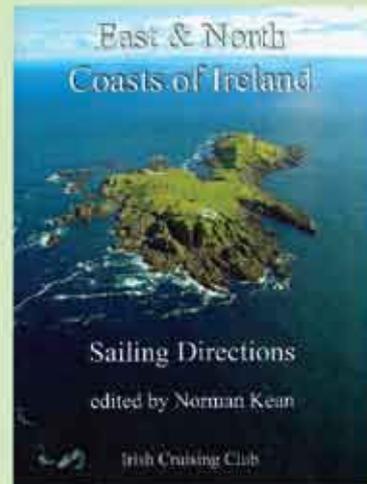


Photo: Inishrahull features on the cover of the new ICC East & North directions. Photo: Kevin Dwyer

CORK WEEK PLAYS NUMBERS GAME

WM NIXON REPORTS FROM THE MIDST OF THE MILL OF RUMOURS AND REALITY

Entries for July's ACC Bank Cork Week are already stacking up, and in addition to a rush into the Laser SB3 Class at the south end of the size band, there's a formidable line-up of seriously-raced big boats.

The word is that Numbers, Daniel Meyers' new Judel-Vrolik-designed 66-footer which was the star of Key West Regatta at the end of January (with Colm Barrington's TP 52 Flash Glove next in line), will be making the scene at the Royal Cork.

There's also distinct interest from Roger Sturgeon, the Florida-based owner of Rosebud, the 65ft Farr-designed flyer which made an impressive debut by winning the Sydney-Hobart Race. And the mighty 90ft. Rambler, which American George David enthusiastically campaigns with Kenny Read in command, is also coming to Ireland in July.

Rambler is on a roll. She became overall winner of the Buenos Aires-Rio Race in

February; the south Atlantic classic in which the big boat took line honours set a new course record, and she took the overall handicap win with other boats still at sea.

Back in November, Rambler did the same three-way slice with the Middle Sea race out of Malta. But before that, in August, she had to be content with the bridesmaid's role in the Fastnet Race, beaten by two hours for the top prize by Ger O'Rourke's Farr-designed Cookson 50 Chieftain.

There's a new Chieftain on the way. And after that great Fastnet win, it's a matter of international speculation as to which way the O'Rourke attention is focused. One line of thought is that it's going to be a Farr 66, a development of Rosebud. Others tell us that it will be a Judel-Vrolijk 68, drawing on the Numbers' success at Key West. Either way, it's going to be a massive achievement to improve on that historic Fastnet win.

ARE YOU ON THE RADAR?



DESPITE ALL THE ELECTRONIC ADVANCES, THE BEST NAVIGATORS STILL KEEP AN EYE OUT THE WINDOW, WRITES DAG PIKE

Electronic navigation has developed to the point where navigators now use electronics as the primary navigation system. The combination of radar and the electronic chart would appear to give the navigator all the information he or she needs for safe navigation. With the electronic chart, combined with GPS positioning, being used for plotting the route and the track being followed, there really is no excuse for going aground these days.

The radar gives a picture of all the targets around the vessel and so should allow all other vessels to be 'seen' and plotted even in poor visibility so that collision avoidance should be a simple operation. With these two pieces of equipment the navigator should have all the information he needs.

The electronic chart is precise and doesn't require any input from the operator except for putting in the required route to follow and the GPS positioning can be relied on to give an accurate position. However, radar is a different story; even the sophisticated modern radar requires considerable input and interpretation from the user to get the right level of quality information out of it. The trouble is that many modern boat users endow the radar with the same qualities of precision as the electronic chart – an error that can lead them into serious trouble.

Many radar users believe that if a target doesn't appear on the radar display, then it doesn't exist. They assume that all potential targets around them – including all the ships, boats and buoys – will show up on the display and, with all this electronic information about targets, there's a growing belief that there's no need to look out of the wheelhouse windows. Indeed, there are some navigators who assume that the view outside can only be a distraction and that the primary focus should be on the electronics.

This is something that is affecting both ship and yacht navigators. If you think those guys out there navigating the big ships are in full control of their navigating and acting professionally, then think again. An analysis of ship collisions has established that in approximately 30% of incidents, one of the ships had not seen the other before the collision. It's quite likely that the same applies with yachts although statistics are hard to find. Part of the cause for this can be found with the design of wheelhouses and bridges.





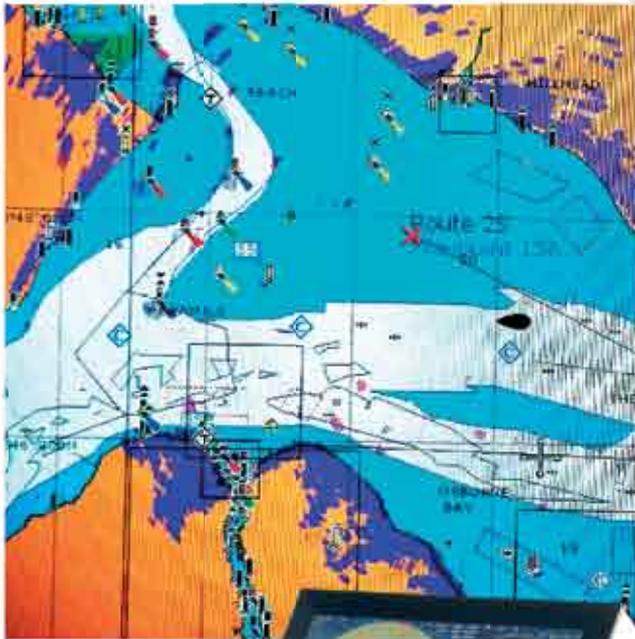
Raymarine

Raymarine's latest HD radar has a generous sized antenna for best quality displays

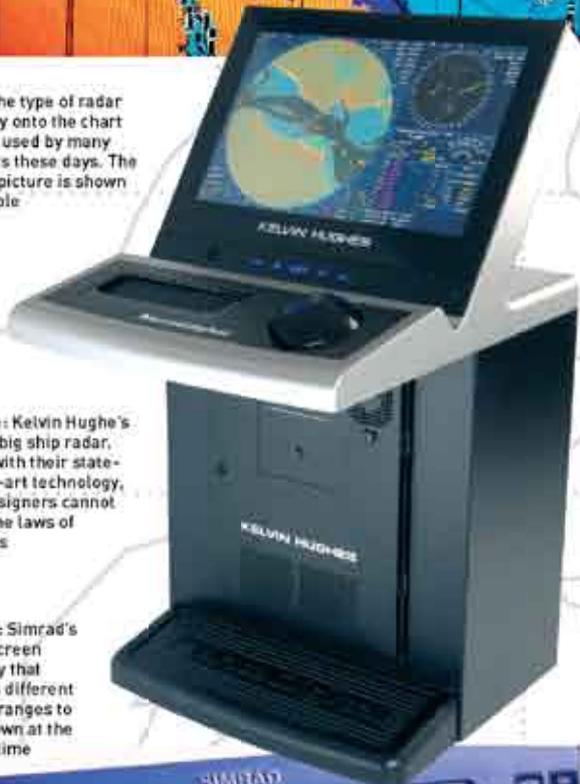
Very few ships and yachts have any view astern and even out at the sides the outside view can be restricted by wide windscreen pillars or other obstructions. Reflections on the windscreen can make life difficult and this can be a particular problem at night. Anyway, who wants to look outside at what might be any empty ocean when there is a much better view on the electronic screens?

The electronic information is presented with a precision that makes it difficult to dispute. Twenty years ago the navigator would negotiate with the electronics to find an answer but today the presentation offers little room for negotiation. But is the navigator justified in assuming that the radar is picking up all the other vessels within range? Navigators would like to believe this is the case because it makes their job so much easier. If you start to question what the radar is showing and its accuracy, then you have to go back to the basics of navigation by looking out of the windows. For many, unfortunately, that's not an attractive proposition.

The development of radar has made enormous strides since the early radars when you had to coax information out of the display. Today, advanced processing of the incoming radar signals can sort out a lot of the unwanted radar returns such as those from sea clutter. In theory, this processing should still leave the radar returns from small craft, which may be no stronger than those from the sea clutter, but because they have different characteristics this can allow them to be distinguished. Unfortunately there is no guarantee of this and small craft can be vulnerable when they are in the vicinity of shipping and there's no guarantee that they will show up on the radar display of the ship.



Top: The type of radar overlay onto the chart that is used by many boaters these days. The radar picture is shown in purple



Middle: Kelvin Hughes' latest big ship radar. Even with their state-of-the-art technology, the designers cannot beat the laws of physics

Below: Simrad's dual screen display that allows different radar ranges to be shown at the same time



Kelvin Hughes claims to have solved at least some of this problem with their Sharp Eye radar. As Barry Wade from Kelvin Hughes commented, "None of what might be termed conventional radars can offer sub-clutter visibility but our Sharp Eye does. By taking technology previously only available to the military, we can offer a greatly improved capability for detecting small targets amongst sea clutter. We can also offer a much higher level of reliability and our Sharp Eye represents a step change in radar technology. However, we cannot defeat the laws of physics and so there is no 100% guarantee that every target will be detected."

It is that inability to detect 100% of the targets out there that makes small craft vulnerable. For small craft, the best solution is to have the best quality radar available so that you can see the other ships and boats, even if they cannot see you. Raymarine has introduced a new high definition radar that offers advanced processing techniques to help differentiate between the sea clutter and small craft. Furuno has an ultra high definition radar that does much the same thing.

These radars should be capable of picking out most small craft on the display except in rough sea conditions where the sea clutter returns may be stronger than those from other small craft. Japanese manufacturer Koden has used advanced processing to create moving target vectors on the display in a radar designed to come between the small craft and the big ship units. These vector lines, which indicate the course and speed of the other vessel, can help to differentiate between small craft and waves because the waves are not moving.

Navigators on ships are placing an increasing reliance on what the radar is showing. A study of the way that ferries in the English Channel carry out collision avoidance in their busy waters revealed that manoeuvring tactics and collision avoidance are based on radar information alone, which shows an apparent disregard for the Collision Regulations. A route through the main shipping lanes is planned by using the vector lines from own ship and from the other ships to find an apparent safe route through. Such a system makes a commitment to the chosen route solely on the basis of the radar information. If everything is working according to plan, then the collision risks are removed, provided that everyone sticks to the plan. The trouble is that such a plan doesn't make any allowances for small craft that may be out there and which will only show up at short range, if at all.

Yachts tend to have a more cautious attitude towards using radar for collision avoidance, perhaps because skippers have less experience in collision avoidance techniques on radar. Small craft are also much more manoeuvrable than ships and can respond much more quickly to a changing situation. Then there is a realisation that small craft radar is less capable of picking up other small craft because of sea clutter. In addition, the wide beam angle of the small radars doesn't present the clearest of displays. Most small craft radar users are aware that their radar will not necessarily show up everything that might be in 'view' and so they use their radars more cautiously.

For yachts, investing in the cheapest or smallest radar available is not going to solve the problem. The key to radar performance lies mainly in the size of the antenna and nothing under a four-foot antenna should be considered except for small yachts. This will give a narrow beam angle that will in turn produce a sharper display. Fast craft might want to choose a radar with a faster antenna rotation that is more likely to pick up smaller targets, whilst another good solution is Simrad's dual display where two different radar ranges can be shown on the same display. Certainly the radar should have a dedicated display and the split screen displays that show chart, radar, and other information should be avoided.

Even with the best radar in the world, there's no guarantee that you will see everything out there and you cannot expect other vessels to see you, particularly in rough seas. So despite the wonderful presentation of a modern radar display, you may not be seeing everything that is out there and radar needs to be used with caution.

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HERE ARE THE NOMINEES...

JANUARY COLM BARRINGTON



The first Sailor of the Month in 2007 was Colm Barrington, with his overall win in the IRC Division in the Key West Regatta in Florida. Barrington's Magic Glove was profiled as the boat to beat in this high-powered American event, and he kept ahead of the challenge from the two newest TP 52s in the US by just one crucial point in a hectic series.

FEBRUARY CARMEL WINKELMAN



Carmel Winkelmann of Dun Laoghaire personifies the spirit of voluntary effort which is the backbone of Irish sailing, and in 2006 she was one of only eight voluntary workers in all Irish sport whose contribution to national life was recognised with a government award. Currently the ISA Volunteer of the Year, Carmel's dedication in all areas of sailing is incalculable.

MARCH PAT & OLIVIA MURPHY



The continuing round-the-world cruise of Pat and Olivia Murphy saw this remarkable couple celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary early in 2007 at sea on board their 41ft Aldebaran, voyaging from the Indian Ocean towards Oman. They then successfully transited the Red Sea, where sailing is "like trying to climb up the flames of a blowlamp which is turned off at irregular intervals", and then the Suez Canal to reach the Eastern Mediterranean.

APRIL DAVID HARTE



Schull in West Cork took centre stage in Irish sailing during April when teams from Schull Community College captured two of the top three places in the Irish Sailing Association National Team Championship in Dun Laoghaire. It brought deserved praise for all involved, and none more so than Schull's own multi-talented David Harte, who coached the developing ability of his neighbourhood to this outstanding success.

MAY CONOR PHELAN



Conor Phelan and the crew of Jump Juice, the Ker 37, won the Scottish Series Trophy in late May, getting the benefit of the closest decision the regatta has seen for many years. The former national, European and world champion had a stressful final day when he learned his sister had sustained a head injury while racing on another Class 1 boat. Both Blondie III and Jump Juice won all three races which were sailed in perfect conditions on Loch Fyne. With the north easterly breeze never dropping below 12 knots, it was a fitting climax to a memorable four days.

CHIEFTAIN LEADS THE WAY



Model Sarah Kavanagh congratulates Cork Dry Gin Sailor of the Year Ger O'Rourke



Ger O'Rourke, Ron Holland and Carsten Hvid



Andrew Fowler, who acted as MC for the awards, with Nicholas O'Leary, Leah Hyde and Stefan Hyde

Ger O'Rourke has become the first sailor to lift the Cork Dry Gin Sailor of the Year trophy for two years in succession.

O'Rourke's clear-cut victory in last August's Fastnet Race was acknowledged and rewarded at a ceremony in Dublin in March when 23 leading names from dinghy and offshore circuits were in the running for the overall prize in what has become the premier awards ceremony for Irish water sports.

O'Rourke's 24-month spell at the top of the world offshore circuit have seen victories for his 50-foot Limerick yacht Chieftain on the toughest courses, including the Sydney-Hobart race.

Lined up amongst a host of remarkable

individual performances, all of which had earned Cork Dry Gin monthly awards in Afloat magazine, the Kilrush based O'Rourke that was selected by a panel of sailing journalists and administrators for the top prize again.

A special international award was made to Carsten Hvid of Denmark who skippered the Viking Ship, The Sea Stallion, from Denmark to Dublin last summer.

Speaking after the award was made by Irish Sailing Association vice president Peter Crowley, O'Rourke, joined by his daughter Deirdre, made an appeal for all sailors to back this year's Irish bid to win the Volvo Ocean race that starts from Spain in October. An Irish entry is in build in China.

JUNE THE TYRRELLS JOHN TWOMEY



June's award was shared between John Twomey and his team from Kinsale, and the Tyrrell family of Arklow. The Tyrrells work the sea, and sail it for sport. In four days in June, their J/109 Aquellina won Class 1 at the annual Lambay Race (it was also celebrating 150 years of Howth Regatta) and then went on to win overall in the biennial Dun Laoghaire to Dingle race. Days later, at the annual ICRA Championship at Crosshaven, followed by the Sovereign's Cup series at Kinsale, John Twomey of Kinsale was absolutely flying with his 23-footer Shillelagh. The boat has been modified to his own designs to accommodate Twomey's disablement, the result of a cycle-racing accident in his teens. He won his class in the Nationals at Crosshaven and went on to clinch the overall title in the Sovereign's on the final race.

JULY TED KEELAN FERGUS O'SULLIVAN VINCENT GAFFNEY



In July, immaculately prepared classic boats from Cruisers 3 racked up the trophies. Vincent Gaffney from Howth took his Albin Express Alliance across to the West of Ireland Championship at Clifden, and won the overall prize. Meanwhile, Ted Keelan of Dun Laoghaire was readying his Impala 28 Whistlin' Dixie for the four-day Volvo Dun Laoghaire Regatta, in which Cruisers 3 provided a turnout of 38 boats, and some of the best class racing. The Keelan team was right on form, winning the class and the overall trophy. The Cruisers 3 East Coast Championship at Dun Laoghaire MYC on the last weekend of July was of hyper-interest, as time constraints meant Vincent Gaffney had elected not to do the Dun Laoghaire Regatta. Right in the groove, the Alliance crew won the Cruisers 3 championship. But despite post-regatta exhaustion, Whistlin' Dixie was runner-up.

AUGUST GER O'ROURKE



Cork Dry Gin 'Sailor of the Year' for 2006, Ger O'Rourke of Limerick had an even better year in 2007, and in August he crowned it with overall and clear-cut victory in the Fastnet Race with his superbly-campaigned Cookson 50 Chieftain whose crew of shipmates continue to sail with all the dogged determination and sheer style we have come to expect.

ERIC LISSON



Eric Lisson of Cork's Noray 38 Cavatina had already won the Azores & Back Race in June 2007 when she set off in the Fastnet, in which she had placed second overall in 2005. This time round, the rugged conditions meant that the dice was loaded against Class 3 boats, but Cavatina kept it to win Class 3 - and she beat nearly all of Class 2 and much of Class 1 as well.

SEPTEMBER

MICHAEL COLEMAN NICHOLAS O'LEARY EAMONN CONNEELY



Captain Michael Coleman of Cobh was formerly a Cork Harbour Pilot who built his own steel Roberts 45 cutter Stella Maris, which he cruised extensively in the 1990s, including a voyage to Murmansk and Iceland. He has since qualified in square rig, and has skippered several tall ships. In recent years he has been in command of the Jeanie Johnston on many varied voyages, and in September 2007 he played a key role in tracing the Flight of the Earls from Donegal to France.

Nicholas O'Leary of Crosshaven became the first Irish Laser SB3

National Champion from a fleet of 58 boats, and subsequently was the skipper of the Cork Institute of Technology crew which was runner up in the Student Yachting Worlds in France.

Eamonn Conneely of Galway brought his new TP 52 Patches 07 from the builders in China for a race against time to tune in for his defence of the world title in the rapidly developing TP 52 class. Patches still had potential to fulfil when the championship was staged in September, and her second place was a significant achievement.

OCTOBER

STEFAN HYDE



Crosshaven sailor Stefan Hyde accelerated his already remarkable year in 2007 as the season drew to a close. Having

rounded out 2006 with victory in the Student Worlds in France, he was the top European skipper in the college series in America in August, and

then in September he added the Irish J/24 nationals to the list, racing on Lough Neagh. Came October, and he transferred smoothly to the ISA's new flotilla of J/80s for the All-Ireland Helmsman's Championship in Dun Laoghaire. Crewed by Dec MacManus and Daz O'Reilly, he clinched the supreme title in the final race.

NOVEMBER

CON MURPHY CATHY MACALEAVEY



The National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire has had the good fortune to be led by one of the ablest duos in Irish sailing as the club develops to meet the needs of Irish sailing today. Con Murphy and Cathy MacAleavey are in effect the joint CEOs of a formidable organisation whose waterfront headquarters are

both a local community asset and a national and international sailing centre. Con and Cathy bring to this an effective and quietly determined management style, and successful personal sailing experience which has included being key members of Steve Fossett's crew when they established the trimaran Lakota's enduring Round Ireland Open Sailing Record back in 1993.

DECEMBER

RON HOLLAND



Crosshaven sailor Stefan Hyde accelerated his already remarkable year in 2007 as the season drew to a close. Having

rounded out 2006 with victory in the Student Worlds in France, he was the top European skipper in the college series in America in August, and

then in September he added the Irish J/24 nationals to the list, racing on Lough Neagh. Came October, and he transferred smoothly to the ISA's new flotilla of J/80s for the All-Ireland Helmsman's Championship in Dun Laoghaire. Crewed by Dec MacManus and Daz O'Reilly, he clinched the supreme title in the final race.

INTERNATIONAL AWARD

CARSTEN HVID



Carsten Hvid of Denmark was skipper of the magnificent 100ft re-creation of the Viking longship Sea Stallion of Glendalough as that most elegant of craft swept into Dublin under sail through the gap in the Eastlink Bridge on August 14th. She was returning to the ancestral home 965 years after the original Sea Stallion was crafted by master builders (for she is undoubtedly a masterpiece) on the banks of the Liffey, and Carsten Hvid was the cool commander who brought her in, having been in command of the 65-strong crew for the voyage from Roskilde in Denmark.



Cork Dry Gin's Emma Donnellan with William Nixon of Afloat, model Sarah Kavanagh and (from top) Mary Rose Barrington, Carmel Winkelmann, cruising sailors Pat and Olivia Murphy, and Vincent Gaffney

APRIL/MAY 2008

NO REST ROUND IRELAND



LAST AUGUST, AN OLD TORNADO 7.4 WITH TWIN 115 YAMAHAS LEFT CO. KERRY FOR A 19-HOUR WHITE-KNUCKLE RIDE AROUND IRELAND. PHILLIP FITZGIBBON RECALLS THE DAY THAT NOW SEEMS LIKE A DREAM



Everybody has a dream, and every record attempt starts with that dream. My dream began when I heard of the Round Ireland speed record back in the eighties. Since then I have waited for my turn. Navigating home one night last winter after a few pints in Willy Darcy's bar, using my favourite navigation device (a carton of chips), Shan (Mike Shanahan) and I came up with the notion of taking on the Round Ireland speed record. We have often come up with mad notions, but this one was different. Or maybe the only thing different about it was that I still could remember the idea in the morning. What's worse, Shan did too and that's where it all started.

First thing we had to do was find out what the record was. This was no easy task – after hours of fruitless searching on the

internet, I met with Joe from Excalibur Ribs who told me that it belonged to Garth Henry from Portrush and the time was 21 hours and 53 minutes.

Joe reckoned that less than 20 hours was the time to do it in so we had our target. Next we needed a boat with a speed of 50kts and that could take on some bad weather and still do 30kts. Happily, I knew of an old Tornado 7.4 with twin 115 Yamahas so with a few small modifications – like stripping her down to her bare hull, filling, sanding, respraying, retubing, fitting a new engine, rewiring, fitting a new console, trim tabs, a custom bulk fuel tank, Samson post, anchor locker and a bit of line tuning – we had our boat and I had an overdraft.

Mike Shanahan from Tralee and Philip Fitzgibbon from Castlegregory on their way to setting the Round Ireland record. They started from Smerwick harbour, West Kerry and raised money for Fenit RNLi Lifeboat station



SLIEVEBANE BAY
[Fuel stop and fix seat]

MALIN HEAD
[Flat seas]

BLOODY FORELAND

DONEGAL BAY
[Dawn Breaks]

BELFAST
[Top speed! 45knots]

ACHILL
[Swap over helm]

INSHARK
[Broken seat]

LAMBAY
[Three foot chop]

19hrs
13mins
16secs

START/FINISH
SHERWICK HARBOUR

KILMORE QUAY
[Second refuel of 500litres]

SKELLIGS
[Five foot swell]



Now that we had a boat and a target time, the real planning could start. So much for thinking it was going to be easy – what a nightmare! We didn't realise the work that goes into one of these attempts, like sorting out a route. Should we go clockwise or anticlockwise; where do we refuel; what are the rules; how much fuel will we need; what time do we leave; where do we leave from? Sanding the hull seemed easy now!

The route we decided on was to leave Smerwick harbour and head north for Inishark, on to Achill island, across Donegal Bay, along the top, around to Malin Head and into Slievebane bay to our first refuel, then on to Rathlin, round the north and down the east coast, past the Arklow Bank and on for Tuskar Rock, turn right for Kilmore Quay for our second refuel, then out the gap across St Patrick's Bridge and on for the Old Head of Kinsale, pass the Stags, then head north just after Clear Island, round Dursay Island, on for Valentia, then on the home straight, turn right after the Blaskets, east for one or two miles, past the line and the record is ours. Easy, or so we thought.

When we left the first time, after a fantastic send-off from the pier at Smerwick by friends and family, our tank burst after 20 minutes and we lost 280 litres of fuel, forcing us to abandon the attempt. All a bit embarrassing, but it only made us more determined. Our second attempt happened out of the blue – we had watched various weather websites for weather windows and Wednesday, August 29th 2007 looked good. We were aiming for a start on that day, but then discovered that Tuesday's weather would be better, so we decided to set off on Tuesday morning at 01.33.45am.

Heading north from Smerwick Harbour, conditions were fair F3/4 NW but we were only able to make between 25 to 35kts until we came close to Inishark where we began to take on swell on the port side. Adding to our problems were a broken backrest on the navigation seat from the constant pounding, making the trip very uncomfortable for the navigator, which was going to be me in about an hour. Around Achill we swapped Shan over to the helm and I began navigating. After ten minutes I wished I was back at the helm with a working back rest but I just had to grin and bear it so across Donegal bay as dawn broke and on to Bloody Foreland where conditions worsened with the sky turning dark behind us.

We just hoped we could stay ahead of it but coming up on Malin Head the sea finally showed us who was boss. We had to slow to 15 to 20kts until the first refuel in Slievebane bay and a chance to fix the back rest. Some 28 minutes later, we were off for Kilmore Quay on a different sea – calm, about F1/2 and no swell. We had a lot of time to make up but were making 42 /44kts with a full fuel load of over half a ton. We hit a small run of water around Rathlin Island, slowing us again, before moving around the next headland and heading south past Belfast, increasing to 43/45kts and down the east coast to our next waypoint just off the Arklow bank.





We were now 107nm away – the longest leg of the trip – off Lambay island when we hit 2/3 feet chop with no direction which slowed us up to 35/38kts for about half an hour. Then it was back up to 43/45kts all the way until our second refuel in Kilmore Quay. Seven minutes and 500 litres of fuel later, we left, and passed the Old Head just one hour and 40 minutes later.

Next it was the Stages, and then Fastnet Rock, on to the Bull where we met up with our old friend – the NW F4 wind with that swell that had grown to three to four feet. Past the Skelligs with the Blaskets ahead of us, the wind picked up to F4/5 and the swell to 4/5 feet, forcing us to slow to 20/25kts until we were mid-way past the Blaskets when the wind dropped

again to F2/3. Rounding Sybil Point, we were able to speed up again, I could see the Three Sisters and knew we had it! The foghorn blew and at 20.46.32 we passed the start line again, some 19 hours 13 minutes and 16 seconds after we had left her. What a trip!

I would like to thank everybody who helped – Kevin and Iain for driving all the way to Malin Head from Castlegregory; Jerry and his son for all they did in the North and waiting on the pier from 06.30 for us to show up over two hours late; Jammer, David and Thomas Power for the refuel in Kilmore Quay and to the staff of the marina for letting us use their facilities; Kingdom Printers for the sponsorship cards; Willy Darcy's for the t-shirts; Sean Breandain in Teach TP pub in Smerwick Harbour; and, most importantly, to Kerry Petroleum plc for sponsoring the fuel. Without their help, the event would have been a non-starter. To save my hide, I would also like to thank Helena for putting up with the endless hours of planning around her kitchen table and all the coffee. A few months later, it still feels like a daydream.



WHO HOLDS THE RECORD?

Publication of our report of the inaugural Round Ireland powerboat record in February/March Afloat brought a flurry of requests for details on how a record attempt can be made. A number of other record times from crews who had completed the 700-mile course also came forward.

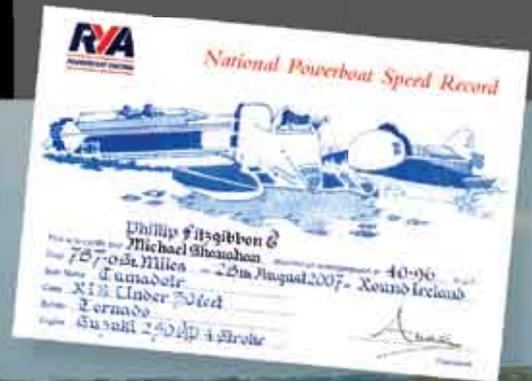
The issue for powerboaters considering a record attempt is the absence of an official Irish source to verify their efforts.

For example, ten years ago Gareth Henry, a lifeboat man from Portrush, completed the course in a Tornado RIB with a 240hp Yamaha diesel and took 21 hours 54 mins and more recently in our story opposite we publish another record run this time a sub twenty hour time frame.

As far as we are aware, no motorboat club has come forward to set the official course route (inside or outside Ireland's islands) a course time, nor is there is an up-to-date set of rules or keeper of record.

Main picture: Mike Shanahan (left) and Philip Fitzgibbon after their 28 hour trip

Inset: the certificate from the UK's Royal Yachting Association signed by HRH Princess Anne confirming their trip of 787.6 miles and average speed of 49.96 mph



BIG SISTER TURNS HEADS



Even on a dull March morning the blue hull and teak side decks make a striking image



THE AQUADOR 28 CABIN FROM MGM MARINE HAS JUST MADE ITS IRISH DEBUT INTO A MARKET THAT HAS SEEN GREAT SUCCESS FOR ITS LITTLE SISTER, THE AQUADOR 26HT



Over 150 26s have been sold, making it one of the most popular Aquadors ever built, and the big sister has attracted positive reviews from across the motorboat press since its launch.

At home in rough waters, family boaters will again be attracted to the €190,000 model because of its beamy interior, closable back waters and, most of all, the walk-around deck.

All this, and a hard top, ensure that it's particularly well-suited to Irish conditions. No surprise, given that its Finnish builders have to contend with weather conditions that are more severe.

The cockpit offers shelter, but it also manages to avoid that confined feel, thanks in part to the two sunroofs, and there's plenty of head room around the cockpit. There are also plenty of hand-holds around the side deck, which is always important.

Down below, there's an intelligent use of space and no skimping on detail. A separate cabin and an inviting drette are warm and cosy, and part of the problem on this boat will be deciding whether to spend more time up top or down below. The toilet compartment doubles as a shower.

With all this detail and luxury, you might be forgiven for expecting that the 28 Cabin would be a little sluggish in the water. Nothing could be further from the truth. Its deep-vee hull ensures a quick and easy lift onto the plane, and a soft ride thereafter.

Engine options start with the 300hp Volvo Penta D4, but you could go all the way up to the 370hp D6, giving a top speed of 40 knots. In fact, the lower range engine is probably all you need on a boat this size, and she's well able for a few sporty turns into the bargain.

Teak decking comes as standard on the bathing platform, foredeck and cockpit, which is another nice touch from the Finns. All told, the Aquador 28 emerges as a serious competitor in a class that's becoming crowded with able contenders.

AQUADOR 28HT TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LOA:	8.80m (28ft 10in)
Beam:	3.10m (10ft 2in)
Displacement:	4.4 tonnes
Fuel capacity:	380 lt (84 gal)
Water capacity:	95 lt (21 gal)
Contact:	MGM Marine Tel: 01 280 2020
Price (on water):	€189,344



There are not many 28 footers that come with a bow thruster, swim platform shower, hot water system and four speaker stereo



RIDING ON AIR



THE MONTE CARLO 37 CLAIMS TO OFFER GREAT VALUE AND AN EASY RIDE. TONY JONES ASSESSES THE LATEST ENTRANT TO AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKET

Photos: David O'Brien



Two things allow the Monte Carlo 37 to stand out from the crowd: the highly attractive starting price and Beneteau's claim that its unusual Air Step hull produces an 'air cushion' that improves ride quality.

Let's cut straight to the money. Beneteau want €241,879 for the HT version with twin Volvo D4-260/DP model and €252,744 for the D4-300/DP version (both prices include VAT at 21%). The Open models cost €189,500 and €198,480 respectively. But these figures reflect a rather sparse base specification. For example, on the Open, windscreen wipers and hood are extra! Adding some sensible optional extras, a decent electronics pack and delivery and commissioning would add about another €30,000. So a D4-300/DP with a teak deck wouldn't be much shy of €300,000.

HULL DESIGN

The Air Step hull is more contentious. Stepped hulls are nothing new but are more commonly found on fast sports boats and RIBs than sports cruisers this size with top speeds in the 3-knot bracket. A 'conventional' step is ventilated by notches in the chine and is angled slightly backwards from there to the keel, keeping the air flowing aft. Beneteau's steps not only angle the other way but are positively vented at the keel by ducts from the deck. So airflow is in the opposite direction.

Theoretically this provides a more consistent flow along the rear face of the step. Leaving the chine unbroken also helps contain the air beneath the hull for longer. If experience with the Flyer 750 is anything to go by, this should reduce drag, benefit manoeuvrability and make for very flat running.

However, ride comfort on all planing boats is largely determined by where and how the hull makes contact with the water, namely the forefoot and midsection, particularly on a flat-running hull. Forward, the Beneteau is an entirely conventional medium/deep vee, so it's difficult to see how air entrapment so far aft could help a great deal.

Beneteau have successfully blended the hardtop into the open svelte lines. But aren't those portlights tiny?



Rear cockpit showing comfy seating opposite the wet bar and wide gateway to bathing platform



Large windscreen and strong double wipers

Driving position



Dickies of Bangor tell us most 37s sold so far have been fitted with the 260hp engines, giving a top speed in cruising trim of 33kt. That makes sense when an extra €12,000 for the 300hp option increases that by just 2kt. The 65-litre fuel capacity should therefore give a range at 30kt/3,200rpm of just under 200nm and dropping back to 24kt/2,700rpm should give close to 250nm.

STYLE AND QUALITY

The Monte Carlo's build quality is up to the usual highly satisfactory Beneteau standard and the interior styling is clean, uncluttered and quite reserved – certainly without any 'in your face' luxury elements.

The accommodation layout is fairly conventional, with the double-berth master cabin forward, but the full-beam guest cabin which has its twin berths arranged fore and aft rather than athwartships as is the usual practice, is unusually spacious. However, it would definitely benefit from larger portlights in the hull sides. Beneteau have already added a skylight in the flat area behind the windscreen to lighten the saloon, but again larger, rectangular portlights would be much better than the rather small circular portholes. A rather angular settee along the port side faces a well equipped galley and toilet/shower compartment. Storage throughout is good but not spectacular.

Up top, the aft cockpit is sensibly and practically arranged with a U-shaped settee to port facing the usual wet bar. The excellent forward facing seating consists of a supportive bolster seat for the helmsperson and a 'two-persons at a pinch' bench seat inboard of that. The instrument console is well laid out with a large flat area immediately ahead of the wheel reserved for a chart plotter/radar. Instrumentation is stylish and functional. Some will like the throttles positioned raceboat-style down at thigh level, but others would prefer them up on the dash, no doubt.

RIVALS

This is a very popular size and type of boat at the moment, particularly in hard top form. Its most obvious rivals are the Bavaria 37 HT (reviewed on page 54) and the Sealine SC38.

The Sealine is more spacious internally and boasts bang up-to-date styling, whereas Beneteau have stuck with the established elliptical windows that were first introduced by Pershing over a decade ago and have since become ubiquitous.

The Bavaria is more directly comparable, with a similar cockpit and layout down below, but with a conventionally arranged aft cabin.

If you are looking to spend a little less, then the Jeanneau Prestige 34 is well worth a look. Like the Bavaria, it comes in open or hardtop form and has excellent stowage including a full-beam lazarette. With a top speed of 37kt, it also the fastest of the bunch in smooth water, but its smaller size must make it a marginally less capable cruising boat.



Galley and TV for the cook



Saloon starboard side showing companionway, settee, table and high-level storage



IPS system with vector thrusting for easy berthing

MONTE CARLO TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	
LDA:	11.29m (37ft)
Beam:	3.70m (12ft 2in)
Displacement:	6.4 tonnes light, 7.1 tons loaded
Fuel capacity:	650 lt (143 imp gal)
Water capacity:	200 lt (44 imp gal)
RCD Category:	B [for eight people]
Contact:	BJ Marine - Tel 01 806 1560
Price (on the water):	€243,994

Way back in 2004 – when Ireland was covered in trees and Dublin the domain of dinosaurs – there was a boat called the Bavaria 37 BMB. The builders thought that this popular market sector would be better served by two boats, a 35 and a 38. Fast forward to 2008 and the company has gone back to Plan A. The 35 and 38 are now being replaced by the new Bavaria 37 Sport in Open and HT (hardtop) form.

Comparing the new model with the outgoing models doesn't really work and it seems a little unfair to compare it to its ancient (in recreational motor boat terms) predecessor. But we will say that the original 37 with its long foredeck and low superstructure remains one of the best looking hardtop sports cruisers we have ever seen. This gave very spacious below-decks accommodation but a rather small cockpit.

RINGING THE CHANGES

The new boat changes the upstairs/downstairs balance in favour of the former, with seating rather than sunbathing space as the priority. Following the example of the 35, the space under the sunpad is an enormous stowage locker. This arrangement can produce problems in terms of engine access but Bavaria have fixed it for the whole sunbed, stowage compartment and all, to be hinged along the aft edge and to lift up courtesy of a pair of hydraulic rams. Excellent stuff.

The cockpit central section features a generous U-shaped settee to port, with the essential wet bar slightly forward of it to starboard behind the helm seat. On the old 37, only the helmsman had the benefit of a forward view, but the new boat's larger cockpit has allowed a very welcome two-person, forward-facing bench seat to be fitted ahead of the settee.

Down below, little seems to have been sacrificed in terms of space. The layout is conventional with the double berth master cabin forward and the guest cabin below the forward cockpit area. Here, the laterally positioned twin beds can be slid together to form a double. (Why everyone doesn't do this is a mystery, it's a highly popular feature and costs very little to implement). Despite the extended cockpit, floor space, head room and stowage also look to be good.

In the saloon, the port side is occupied by a full length settee, but to starboard, Bavaria have opted for a larger-than-average shower toilet compartment at the foot of the companionway steps at the expense of a reduced galley. This is a sensible decision in our opinion as sports cruiser galleys are mostly used for serving up simple salad lunches eaten al fresco rather than sumptuous, cordon bleu evening feasts. A good shower before going out to dinner is the important thing.



TWO BECOME ONE

WHERE BAVARIA ONCE HAD THE 35 AND 38, THERE IS NOW JUST A 37 – BUT SHE'S IMPRESSIVE, WRITES TONY JONES

BAVARIA 37
 TECHNICAL
 SPECIFICATIONS

LDA:	11.95m (39ft 2in)
Beam:	3.99m (13ft 0in)
Displacement:	9.0 tonnes light, 10 tons loaded
Fuel capacity:	720 lt (160 imp gall)
Water capacity:	250 lt (55 imp gall)
RCD Category:	B (for 12 people)
Contact:	O'Sullivan Marine and Boyd Boats – Tel 066 7124524
Price (on the water):	€256,000



Photos: David O'Brien

HEAVY METAL

The propulsion options are interesting. Diesel customers have the choice of Volvo Penta D4-300/DP or D6-330/DP. The latter provide an extra 60hp total but weigh an extra 220kg so are unlikely to add anything to the 30kt cruising speed and 35kt top whack. They also add considerably to the price. We would instinctively opt for the D4s, believing that saving a few pounds is better than adding a few horsepower, as there are often benefits in terms of handling and seakeeping. But that depends very much on the fore-and-aft CG position, so a back-to-back trial in identical sea conditions would be the only way to properly answer that conundrum.

Petrol-wise, the choice is between twin 320hp Volvo 5.7 GXI 'small block' V8s, or Mercruisers 300hp 350 Magnums. No contest on this side of the Atlantic you might think, but the Mercruisers come with the truly useful Axius joystick docking system that gives IPS/Zeus-like low speed manoeuvring including pure sideways movement – all without a bow thruster.

CONCLUSION

The new 37 Sport in both iterations is an attractive and competitive sports cruiser with a distinct design philosophy. The large cockpit, subpad stowage box and full size shower/toilet compartment will appeal to those for whom saloon space is very much a secondary consideration. And the Mercruiser Axius option is well worth considering.

THE CHALLENGERS

Although the 37 Sport Open has plenty of obvious competitors, alternatives to the 4T are thin on the ground.

The most obvious one is the Beneteau Monte Carlo Hardtop, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. The French boat is that bit smaller and lighter but a very competent and competitive package.

The same goes for the Sealine SC38, but this offers a vastly different approach with its radical styling and totally different cockpit and interior layouts. The big pluses with this boat are the full length sunshine roof and semi-ensuite separate shower and toilet compartments.

A third possibility is the hardtop version of the Windy 37 Grand Mistral, first introduced in 1998 and rapidly approaching 'classic' status. In this case it is the aft cabin that is semi-ensuite with the shower/toilet, which eats into the saloon space somewhat. Beautifully finished, excellent performance and handling – and expensive.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

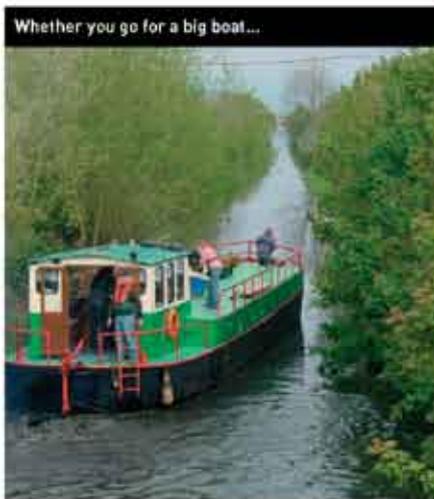
BRIAN J GOGGIN OFFERS SOME ESSENTIAL DOS AND DON'TS FOR THE FIRST-TIME INLAND BOAT-OWNER

DO ...

- Consider the needs of the whole family
- Take your time and talk to owners
- Get training
- Start early to look for a marina berth
- Join the IWAI
- Respect other waterways users

DON'T ...

- Spend too much money on a first boat
- Skimp on safety equipment
- Buy a second-hand boat without a survey
- Ignore the canals and the Barrow
- Buy a 'project'
- Damage the waterways environment



Much of the content of this excellent magazine is about happenings on that nasty lumpy salty wet stuff you get on the outside of the island. Here in this corner, we deal with boating for sane people: people who have more to be doing than to be worrying about tides and multidirectional currents and how to avoid ramming an oil-tanker. All that Man Against Nature stuff is rather tiresome: I'd prefer to be sitting on the boat, tied up in a nice harbour, with a weissbier in my hand and some interesting people to talk to.

- are they old enough to be given responsibility?
- have you room for a dinghy or a kayak the children can use in harbour?
- who's going to do the cooking and household tasks, probably in a smaller space and with less equipment than at home?

It's probably as well to think about some of those issues in advance. Going to the boat has to be enjoyable and relaxing for everyone, not just the skipper.

someone else's boat has an alternative set-up, or a different way of doing things, and you're in a better position to compare the two approaches. But it's very hard to do that with a first boat.

For that reason, it may be as well not to spend too much on a first boat. Treat it as a training boat: you'll enjoy it, yes, but you won't expect it to be perfect, and you'll intend to move on to another one after a few years.

DO

Consider the needs of the whole family
But there's another difference between inland and (much) coastal boating: inland is much more a family recreation. You don't get 15 hefty men sitting on one side of your motor-cruiser; your crew may be parents and children, possibly quite young children. That has all sorts of implications:

- who's going to be the skipper (on our boat, it's whoever fixes toilets)?
- will children participate actively, ignore what's going on or argue about everything?

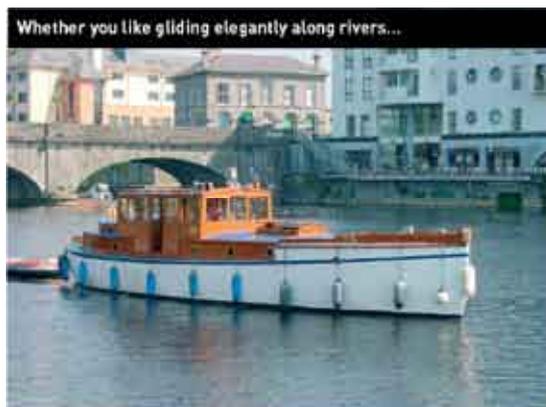
DON'T

Spend too much money on a first boat
If you have no previous experience of boating, how do you know you and the family are going to like it? You will learn a certain amount by hiring and by talking to other boaters, but some aspects just won't sink in until you're responsible for every aspect of your own boat.

There are lots of issues of layout, equipment, engine size, furnishing, systems and so on that you can't really get to grips with until you've had some practical experience. Then you find that

DO

Take your time and talk to owners
Before you buy, talk to people who already own boats. Most inland boaters are both chatty and friendly, and are only too delighted to talk to potential new recruits to the ranks of inland boaters. They're also convinced that their own boat has the perfect layout, fit-out, engine, equipment and so on, and will explain its virtues to you at great length. You can pick up a lot of information by looking at, and learning about, other people's boats — and by observing how they handle them.



DON'T

Skimp on safety equipment

The waterways have a good safety record, but they do have their own dangers. Although the big lakes tend to be deep, rivers and canals can be shallow, and can hide hazards that the seagoing skipper doesn't have to worry about, things like weeds and shopping trolleys. Currents can be strong after heavy rain; markers can be blown out of position; big lakes can be very rough at times; a moment's inattention can mean a limb squashed between boat and quay wall; floating debris (e.g. branches) can be a hazard.

So don't skimp on safety: proper lifejackets for everyone on board, including some for visitors; lifebelts; flares; a VHF radio (the Coastguard does monitor the Shannon and there are lifeboat services on the Shannon and Erne); a first-aid kit.

Children are required by law to wear lifejackets, but the best way to get them to do so is for the adults to wear them as well. Modern self-inflating lifejackets are very comfortable to wear, and it soon becomes second nature to put them on. But check them regularly and do a major check once a year.

DO

Get training

If you haven't handled boats very much

before, invest in some training: the Irish Sailing Association's Inland Waterways Motor Boat Training Scheme provides courses for both skipper and crew.

You may also need a course in handling VHF radio, and it is useful if at least one person has some knowledge of first aid.

Finally, don't forget the engine and other systems. Keeping that hunk of metal going is vital to your safety as well as to your peace of mind, so it's worth learning more about the beast.

Various IWAI branches (see below) and other organisations offer courses in VHF and engine maintenance over the winter months.

DON'T

Buy a second-hand boat without a survey

Before you buy a second-hand boat, get it surveyed properly. A good survey, done by a surveyor who is working for you and not for the seller, is well worth the money: you don't want to sink your cash into a boat that's suffering from severe osmosis (GRP) or has hazardous gas or other systems. Anyway, your insurers may well insist on seeing a survey.

Don't panic if the survey finds faults (no boat is perfect): if the list is manageable, you may be able to get the price reduced and you'll know what work has to be done

on the boat and how urgent each item is. If the surveyor will allow it (and they may hate my suggesting this), you could try to be there during the survey: you can learn a lot by watching the surveyor in action. And if there's anything you don't understand, you can seek enlightenment straight away rather than having to ask questions about the written report.

DO

Start early to look for a marina berth

Once you've bought a boat, you'll have to find somewhere to moor it. On the Shannon, that will almost certainly mean a berth in a marina, and in some areas — especially on Lough Derg — berths are getting scarce. There is no register of vacant marina berths, so there's no alternative to ringing around. The sooner you get started (possibly even before you buy a boat), the better.

On the Grand, Royal and Barrow there are few marinas; most boats are left at locations where boats congregate (e.g. Sallins, Lowtown, Hazelhatch, all near Dublin, and Shannon Harbour at the western end of the Grand). There is no formal security and there are few services but, on the other hand, the annual charge (payable to Waterways Ireland, the navigation authority) is purely nominal, although that may change when the byelaws are revised.

DON'T

Ignore the canals and the Barrow

Most people seem to think of putting a boat on the Shannon or the Erne, and most modern cruisers seem to be designed for those waters. But the canals and the Barrow offer gentle get-away-from-it-all cruising; they are well underused and could handle far more traffic than they get. They also present their own challenges to the skipper's skills and offer some fine scenery and other delights.

Obviously a steel narrowboat or broad-beam narrowboat will be able to handle those waterways, but many displacement cruisers can also cruise them quite happily. A high flybridge would rule you out, and you have to be able to cruise at four miles an hour. Some (especially older) cruiser designs will open up the whole of the waterway system to you, rather than just confining you to the Shannon and Erne.

DO

Join the IWAI

The Inland Waterways Association of Ireland is a voluntary body of waterways enthusiasts, and the nearest thing to a users' association that there is. Join it to help in lobbying Waterways Ireland (and other powers-that-be), to meet other users and join in social and boating activities, and to get access to its services.

IWAI runs the biggest Irish waterways website www.iwai.ie with a huge amount of information on it. Waterways Ireland also has a site at www.waterwaysireland.org

DON'T

Buy a 'project'

A "project" is a boat that has been badly neglected but that would be absolutely gorgeous if it were properly restored. It costs practically nothing — in fact the current owner seems to be glad to be rid of it — and you could save a lot by doing most of the work yourself.

So you buy it and park it somewhere (usually on the Grand Canal, where there is no electricity supply) and, in September, you start going down to it every weekend to do a bit of work. You also sign up for classes in welding.

The first few wet weekends don't deter you; friends occasionally come to help and you find that there are a lot of people (none of whom bought it, you notice) who know every aspect of the history of the boat, including where it was holed the last time it ran aground and what sort of bus the engine was taken out of and why there is a washing-machine hose on the water intake.

Then you notice that the work the previous owner began all has to be undone: he used non-marine plywood, which is delaminating, and windows that he got cheap from a car-dismantlers. There is mastic everywhere and the inside of the boat is getting mouldy. So you dismantle all that and invest in a large tarpaulin. By Christmas your friends are not taking your phone calls and your spouse and children haven't seen you at a weekend for some months, so you take a break and do a few jobs around the house. Then there are two very wet weekends in a row, and you're afraid that if you take off the tarpaulin it will blow away and the inside will get soaked again. So you decide to leave it until the weather improves in the spring, which it does around July, by which time you have an angry note from the Inspector asking you to remove the sunken boat from the canal.

There are people who have, after much effort, successfully restored very old boats. But far more people have started in hope only to abandon the project. Unless you are absolutely sure that you have the resources and skills to do the job properly, and you and your family find working on boats at least as enjoyable as boating, don't do it: buy something that is already in working order.

DO

Respect other waterways users

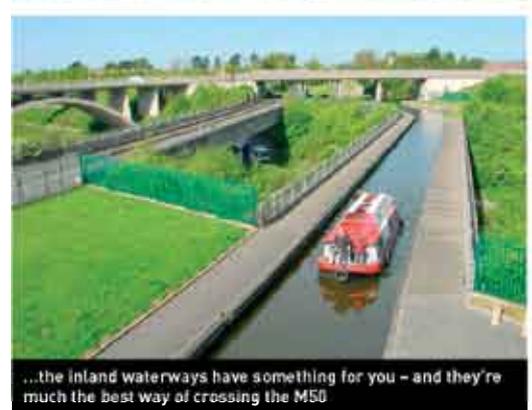
So you've bought your new boat with twin 500hp diesels and you're bombing down the river from Athlone to Portumna. Round the corner there is a canoeist, paddling slowly into the teeth of a strong southerly breeze. You see him and slow down, but it's too late: your wash overturns him.

Although cruisers are the most visible users of the waterways, they're not the only ones, and they don't own the place. There are anglers on shore and in boats, swimmers, canoeists, rowers, children in sailing dinghies As we get more boats on the system, the potential for conflict increases. It can be avoided by giving some consideration to other users and their needs.

DON'T

Damage the waterways environment

Finally, respect the waterways themselves. Keep the water clean: get a holding tank for your toilet waste and don't dump oil into the water. Keep your wash down on river sections and near the shore, especially during the birds' nesting season. Respect the waterways heritage and learn about their history. We want the next generation to be able to enjoy the waterways too.



FINAL VOYAGE

APPRECIATIONS

BRIAN HEGARTY GENTLE AND WISE SKIPPER

Ireland has lost a true sailor in Brian Hegarty – “The Heg” to friends and family – who has died aged 76. His enthusiasm for boats and sailing was central to his gentle personality, and he was cruising in the Greek Isles as recently as last May with longtime friends and shipmates. Although he had been fighting serious illness for some years, his passion for cruising remained undimmed through more than seven decades afloat as a club sailor, successful ocean racer, and cruiser both inshore and oceanic. A founding committee member of Malahide Sailing Club in 1958, he honed his skills as a Mermaid racer, and served MSC as Rear Commodore in 1960. Then from 1963 onwards, after marriage to Betty Morrison, Howth became his home port.

The Heg was a tower of strength on other people’s boats, and a skilled and thoughtful skipper on his own craft, doing meticulous research on any cruising ground he planned to visit. He played a key role in several Fastnet campaigns and the Irish Sea championships in the 1960s and ’70s, including taking line honours and winning overall in the 1966 RORC Beaurmaris-Cork Race as skipper of the 8 Metre C/R Orana. Then 1978 saw his return to ownership with the folkboat Alara, in which he won several major championships and cruised extensively too – The Heg with Alara was the very personification of the folkboat ideal. Subsequently, he cruised many miles and club raced with the Achilles 9-metre Freebird, and then on retirement took over the management of his brother-in-law’s Hallberg Rassy 42 Safari of

Howth and began his cruising in the Mediterranean, taking time out to sail thousands of miles in the round-the-world voyage of Peter Bunting’s Hallberg-Rassy 46 Gulkarna II.

In 1995 became an owner again with the 36ft Westerly Conway ketch Oleander of Howth (he was a Laurent Giles fan), and for the next decade cruised the length and breadth of the Mediterranean, spending six months on the boat every summer. Each year, after weeks of sailing in the sun, he looked like the German film star Curt Jurgens. In typically dry Heg style, he remarked that “if this Herr Jurgens insists on looking like me, that’s his problem”.

His cruising was in itself an example and service to fellow enthusiasts, but he also gave of his time in practical ways. He had become a member of the Irish Cruising Club in 1957, and served for many years on the committee. He was Honorary Secretary from 1981 to 1990, Rear Commodore in 1992, and Vice Commodore 1993-96. The Heg was a fount of wisdom on anything to do with sailing, and excellent company. He is much missed.

Left: The late Brian Hegarty in his element, at the helm while cruising in West Cork in 1992. Photo: WM Nixon

Right: Brian’s folkboat Alara – which he cruised every year – on her way to winning the Irish Sea Championship 30 years ago. Photo: WM Nixon



PAT
MOORE
LIFE OF ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM

Pat Moore lived life at full speed both afloat and ashore, and he lived several lives at once. He burned with energy and enthusiasm. From one of Howth's long-established fishing families, his exceptional abilities in and around boats soon found an additional outlet in sailing, and he quickly became a valued crewmember – and often in effect the skipper – on any seriously-raced boat. He was one of that remarkable ad hoc group with Brian Hegarty which took Johnny Pearson's 8-metre C/R Orana to outright victory in the RORC Beaumaris-Cork Race of 1966, well ahead of many internationally renowned offshore racers.

He was soon teamed up with Otto Glaser whose first Tritsch-Tratsch – an innovative George McGruer designed-and-built 43ft sloop – was the star of 1971, notching many successes. At one stage they led the Fastnet Race, and finished fifth, becoming the first winners of the Gull Salver for the best-placed Irish boat. 1973 saw Tritsch-Tratsch II, a new 47ft McGruer design, which in that year became the first Irish overall winner of an RORC Race in the English Channel, and in 1975 won the Gull Salver. In 1977, Otto Glaser changed direction to a Frers design, the 47ft alloy-built Red Rock, and with Pat Moore playing a central management role, they again won the Gull Salver.

Pat particularly enjoyed transferring his skills to the top level Solent racing, and gave as good as he got in international competition in that hotbed of sailing intensity. His repartee afloat was world class, and he partied with zest. Back in Ireland in working life, his involvement with Otto Glaser's pioneering enterprises in the national and international electronics industries resulted in the unique Moore management style being successfully transferred to a factory in the Donegal Gaeltacht in Gweedore, and he threw himself with great energy into every aspect of life in that extraordinary part of the world.

With marriage to Katie and the arrival of their son Michael, he became a boat-owner himself with the Hanse 370 Mystic Force. His debut in white sail racing in Howth was keenly anticipated, but he was suddenly taken ill last summer. Hospital visits were met with the unique Moore humour, but his condition deteriorated, and he died at Christmas aged 64, his memory cherished by all who knew him.

Below: The team – Pat Moore (right) and Otto Glaser in non-racing mode. Photo: WM Nixon



TOM
JOYCE
BREATH OF FRESH ATLANTIC AIR

The news of Tom Joyce's sudden death in the Aran Islands at the end of November was a real shock. Though aged only 48, Tom had been a leading figure in west coast fishing for many years. He became renowned in the wider maritime community in 2006 for the style and skill with which he skippered Steve Mulkerrins' Chicago-built 49ft Galway hooker Naomh Bairbre for the west-east crossing of the Atlantic in the early summer of 2006. For this achievement, Steve Mulkerrins was the winner of the Cork Dry Gin/Afloat International Sailor Award for 2006, which he shared with his crew.

It was typical of Tom Joyce's busy way of life that when he was contacted in January 2007 about his invitation to the upcoming awards ceremony in February at the Dublin Boat Show, it emerged that he was returning the call from the wheelhouse of his MFV Westward Isle a hundred miles north of Malin Head, and he soon had persuaded Steve Mulkerrins to fly home from America for the event.

Tom and Steve and Tom's wife Sile and the shipmates from Naomh Bairbre were a breath of fresh Atlantic air when they arrived into the awards ceremony just a year ago. His joy in seafaring, friendship, family and music was legendary – the Naomh Bairbre voyage had been his second Atlantic crossing under sail, he'd come across home to Killeany in the yacht Simple Pleasures with his brother Pat from Boston via Newfoundland in 2001. He was a great man, who was fishing until three weeks before his death, cruelly struck down by leukaemia. Our heartfelt condolences go to Sile and her children, Cillian and Elaine, and to Tom's many friends.

PETER
DOBBS
ACCOMPLISHED SAILOR AND CHANDLER

In his self-effacing way, Peter Dobbs (1920–2008) was active in many areas of Irish life afloat. He was a son of the rectory. His father – a Church of Ireland canon – was the incumbent at Blackrock, Co Dublin. After schooling in England, Peter read divinity at Trinity College Dublin, but did not follow the ministry in the C of I for which he seemed destined. His most memorable role in Trinity was active involvement in the early years of Dublin University Sailing Club – he had been sailing from an early age.

A chest condition precluded the active service he sought in the British Army in World War II, but his work in London with refugee agencies brought to a period of duty in the Belsen Concentration Camp in Germany, after 1945, an experience which coloured the rest of his life.

Returning to Ireland, he resumed sailing, teaming up with his friend from college days Teddy Croxon to race in the newly-established Firefly class in Dun Laoghaire. They were a successful duo, winning the George Arthur Newsome Memorial Cup for the most successful boat three years in a row. Until then it had been almost unknown for a dinghy to win the Newsome Cup, and three on the trot was unprecedented. But in typically self-deprecating style, Peter always called Fireflies 'cots', and DBSC became 'Dublin Say Bailing Club'.

Afloat will publish a page each issue dedicated to the memory of sailors. In our next issue appreciations will be published with great sadness for yacht broker Mick Loughnane, industry stalwart Jerry O'Sullivan and Dragon sailor David Nolan. We also welcome appreciations of no more than 200 words in length. Please include a daytime contact telephone number for verification purposes



THE MAN FROM DERRYYNANE

It is a place of enchantment, and best visited in a cruising boat. Derrynane in southwest Kerry sets its own style – and its own agenda. It has been the favourite place of some remarkable people over the centuries. A place where the spirit can be renewed. A place which provides much in the way of natural resources afloat and ashore. But you need to be in tune with nature, and with strong inner resources, if you're thinking of making a home there.

A rock-girt anchorage set among islands and beaches below hills and mountains on the edge of the Atlantic, Derrynane is a place of the sea. It may be small – and for sailing folk arriving for the first time, the entrance is small and then some – yet this is a place for heroes.

But whether or not it's a place to live on a permanent basis is maybe another matter. Perhaps it's too perfect. And those everyday vistas of the ocean's shining horizon, the sea in majestic mood, the purple mountains, and the spectacular and ever-changing skies of Kerry – in someone of true spirit, they'd provoke thoughts of greater things.

Certainly the sailing folk who have cherished Derrynane over the centuries made their names on a larger stage. The O'Connells are pre-eminent among them. Daniel O'Connell the Liberator had his home at Derrynane, and though his

political achievements have long been woven into the tapestry of Irish history, it is only in recent years that the active involvement of the O'Connell family in sailing development has become recognised.

The leading families of the Shannon Estuary were summer folk at Derrynane. Lord Dunraven of America's Cup notoriety – a Quin of Adare, a family which had done very well for itself – had a lodge beside the anchorage, and pursued his nautical experiments, and enthusiasm for the Skelligs and antiquities generally, while down there. He was an engineer and inventor of note, and such an interesting man generally that you begin to think that maybe the Americans might have been just slightly to blame in his notorious row while campaigning Valkyrie II for the Auld Mug in 1896.

The O'Briens of Ardagh in North Limerick also had a Derrynane summer base, and their most famous sailor, Conor of Saoirse, spent his boyhood summers learning to sail that challenging yet endlessly fascinating coast.

And now Damian Foxall takes on the role as Derrynane's top sailor. His family became Derrynane people in the 1960s, and his father Roger – a sailing architect as, interestingly enough, Conor O'Brien had been too – is best known for having

voyaged in 1987 from Derrynane to St Petersburg in his Nicholson 32 Canna. His book of the cruise – *Sailing to Leningrad* – reminds us of how much has changed since, for the Berlin Wall came down just two years after the little sloop from Derrynane arrived in the Neva. Leningrad quickly reverted to being St Petersburg in the new mood of glasnost.

There's just one tantalising glimpse of the young Damian Foxall in the Canna book. Aged 19, he arrived on board in the latter difficult stages to help get the boat home to Derrynane though autumn gales. Already he was his own man, and he has always been so though his achievements on the world's oceans. But during his recent success in the Barcelona World Race, he became all Ireland's sailor.

We followed him every inch of the way. And Paprec Virbac 2 rewarded her faithful followers with a flawless victory. Naturally Damian became the 'Sailor of the Month' in February. But in best Derrynane style, it was on a larger stage that the national spirit was best expressed, with a reception in Aras an Uachtarain by President McAleese for Damian and his wife Suzy-Anne and their seven-month son Oisín, and co-skipper Jean-Pierre Dick. It all happened within a week of the finish. As ever, Mary McAleese spoke for all of us. It was a good day for Derrynane.

Main photo: Home port for heroes – Derrynane. Photo: WM Nixon
Inset: Up at the Park just one week after winning the Barcelona World Race are Damian, Suzy-Anne and young Oisín (centre) with the President and Mr McAleese. Photo: Gareth Chaney/Collins

