



ICC News

Newsletter of the Irish Cruising Club

Spring 2024



Dear Member,

Spring is in the air, the bees are buzzing, the birds are chirping, and our boats are coming out of their winter resting places in advance of what we are all hoping will be a fantastic sailing season.

Parallel to getting this newsletter out to you, we have also been working on updating our website. John Clementson did herculean work creating and maintaining it up to now. This will always be the foundation for things to come. The ambition is to provide you with a new look and feel, plus new functionality throughout. The hope is to provide you with a resource you will want to use frequently.

Once again, my thanks go out to everyone who took the time to contribute to this edition of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did putting it together. As has often been the case, when I started assembling it, I feared I might not have enough to keep you interested. The result is what you have in front of you now.

I wish you fair winds and following seas for the coming year.

Alex Blackwell, Editor

Submission guidelines

Editorial Preferences (*please*):

Please only use standard fonts. Do please use *italics* for vessel names. Remember to check spelling and grammar thoroughly. Please do not manipulate or retouch the images - send only the high resolution originals.

Text

Articles should be in MS Word or text format only. They may be up to approximately 500 words in length, with a maximum of 1,000. Shorter articles are also very much appreciated.

Images

Images should be sent as separate files - not embedded in an email or Word document. They should be in jpeg format and a minimum of 1 megabyte each. Please do not manipulate, clean up, colour correct, retouch, or crop the images. Please send the original images straight out of the camera. Please also supply captions.

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Larger files may also be sent via Dropbox or WeTransfer.

Alternatively, the materials may be put on a CD or memory stick and mailed to:

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Closing dates for submissions:

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Autumn Issue:	September 15th

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Front Cover: *Jap*, a Cork Harbour OD, sailing in the Les Voiles de St. Tropez, photo by Chris Bateman, perched on the crane iron with his phone camera

Commodore's Letter

By Alan Markey

Thank you to all who supported my election as the 28th Commodore of our Club at the recent AGM in Howth Yacht Club. As I remarked on the evening, it is an honour and a privilege to take the helm and I am very aware I have a hard act to follow. David Beattie, hugely supported by his wife Aoife, has been an extremely hard working and dynamic Commodore. It is a credit to David's stewardship, that he managed to steer the good ship ICC through the COVID years ensuring the club emerged at the other end in such healthy condition.



At the AGM there was a changing of the watch. Our Honorary Treasurer Patrick Blaney stepped down and has started his circumnavigation on Rí Rá. Patrick made a huge contribution to the club by automating much of the club's administration and ensuring future events will run more smoothly for the organisers. I would also like to thank outgoing committee members, Meave Bell, Robert Michael, Sean Fergus, and Peter Cudmore. They all contributed enormously during their time on committee, and we owe them a big debt of gratitude. After many years, Ed Wheeler retired as Chair of Irish Cruising Club Publications DAC, and David Meeke has agreed to take on the role.

I welcome the election of new Flag Officers, Julie Chambers as Vice Commodore, Alex Blackwell as Rear Commodore West, and Kieron Guilfoyle as Honorary Treasurer. I am also pleased that Joanne Magowan, Judy Houston, Frank O'Beirne, Sally Cudmore, and Louis Keating were elected to the committee.

This January, 18 new members were elected to the club. They are all very welcome and I am delighted that I have had the opportunity to meet all but two of them either at the AGM or recent Annual Dinner weekend. I hope to meet the others at some events that are planned for the summer.

It was my great pleasure to represent the Club at the Royal Cruising Club's annual dinner and awards in London on March 6th where I was asked to present the ICC Ship's Decanter to Martin Fuller and Stephanie Connor for an exceptional cruise from Newfoundland to Iceland. The ICC was well represented on the winner's podium with Ed Wheeler receiving the Founder's Cup and newly elected member Andrew Wilkes receiving the Tilman Medal, presented by the Reverend Bob Shepton.

Our Annual Dinner Weekend took place in the Maryborough House Hotel, Cork, with 240 members and guests gathered for the Annual Dinner. Former Commodore of the Cruising Club of America, Bob Medland and his wife Sally joined us as our guests for the weekend. Bob made the inaugural presentation of the Friendship Cup, gifted to the Club in 2023 by the Cruising Club of America, to Peter Haden. Nick Chavasse, Commodore Royal Cruising Club, and his wife Margie, also joined us for the weekend and Nick kindly spoke on the behalf of the guests after dinner and gave the toast to the club.

March 4th was the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. Prior to the Annual Dinner Weekend, the Club received a letter from the Irish RNLI fundraising team requesting a donation from the Irish Cruising Club. This request was discussed at the Friday committee meeting, and it was decided to ask the members and guests attending the annual dinner to make a personal donation, if they wished, to the RNLI. On the Saturday evening a donation envelope was placed on each table. We were delighted with the generosity of the members and guests who raised over €4,000. This money, in addition to money raised by the Northern region at a recent lunch, brings the total donated to the RNLI by Irish Cruising Club members and friends to more than €4,500. The RNLI is very close to our hearts and thank you to all who contributed.

The Friendship Cup

Awarded to Peter Haden

For creating, fostering and supporting friendships amongst many ICC members through his annual "Encuentro Náutico" which also involves local sailors, sailors from other cruising clubs, and personnel at so many venues in the region.



Peter Haden receiving the Friendship Cup from Bob Medland, former Commodore, CCA

Many thanks to Rear Commodore Seamus O'Connor and the Southern Committee for organising a wonderful Annual Dinner Weekend. We will look forward to next year's event which will be held on March 28th & 29th, at the Bloomfield House Hotel Mullingar.

Happy sailing to one and all.

Alan Markey, Commodore

A Confession

by Barry MacNeaney



A number of years ago when I had my boat in Dún Laoghaire, a couple of us would dash down after work on a Friday, throw an assortment of bags, boxes, and old kit bags on board *Sunfish* and head for a Welsh port for the weekend.

On one particular weekend I was short of a member of my usual crew and asked a friend to join us on a trip to Port Dinoric. There was the normal panic to get sorted and we headed off early to get some of the journey over before nightfall.



Sunfish was only 30 feet long. So, with a number of substantially built men on board it was, to say the least, cozy at night when most of the crew were off watch. My friend was in the fore cabin for the passage. Next morning when we were safely alongside in Port Dinoric, one of my regular crew who had shared the fore cabin came to me and, embarrassed, said that our new member smelled so badly that he hoped not to have to share with him on the voyage back. I was most apologetic and resolved to have a diplomatic word in his ear.

We decided to head ashore for lunch and there was rummaging for clothes in the mixed jumble of bags we had brought aboard the previous night. When everyone looked presentable, there was a lone black plastic bag in the fore cabin. I asked whose it was, but nobody laid claim to it.

I opened it to see if I could identify the owner (thinking it might belong to the absent member of crew). The smell was overpowering! In our rush to throw everything on board, someone had picked up a bag of kitchen waste from the NYC platform. Mystery solved!

2024 New Members

Aisling and Anthony McCarthy, Belfast

Both Aisling and Anthony have been sailing since they were 5 years old. Aisling learned on the lakes of Cavan followed by junior section in Skerries Sailing Club. As a young adult she joined Howth Yacht Club. Anthony learned sailing on the shores of Dún Laoghaire in the junior section of The Royal Irish Yacht Club. His early days were defined by racing 420s. Later he moved to Howth Yacht Club,



At HYC they were both actively involved in the cruiser racing. This included ISORA racing, Round Ireland Races, and Fastnet Races. Of course, doing the Fastnet Race also involved the long delivery trips down to Cowes and back from Plymouth. They were very proud to be awarded the Hurricane Trophy in 1985 in their Shamrock 30 *Crystal Clear*, the smallest boat in the fleet.



Aisling and Anthony now cruise their First 305 from Bangor with regular trips to Scotland, Isle of Man, Wales, the Irish Sea, and the south coast of Ireland. They have also done a circumnavigation of Ireland with their young family on one of their summer holiday cruises.

Alan Ryder, Newtownards, Co. Down

Alan has been sailing and cruising since childhood, originally based in Dún Laoghaire. He has owned and sailed cruising boats since 1990. He is based in Strangford, cruising mainly in Irish home waters and West Coast of Scotland. He is currently commodore of Ringhaddy Cruising Club and owner of a Rustler 36, which he cruises with his wife Karen. Recent retirement has raised their expectation of increased cruising range.



Andrew Wilkes, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford

Andrew has owned a variety of boats from a mirror dinghy to a 20m Challenge 67. He has sailed south to Cape Horn and north through the Northwest Passage. He is the author of the RCCPF's *'Arctic and Northern Waters'* and is a contributor the *'Polar Yacht Guide'*. He is married to, and sails with, Máire Breathnach, ICC. Their current boat is a 16.5m replica Bristol Channel Pilot Cutter: *Annabel J*.

Ann and Ian Gaughan, Foxford, Co. Mayo

Ann and Ian originally became involved in water sports through windsurfing in 1982. They were introduced to the Flying Fifteen at Mayo Sailing Club and campaigned their first boat all over Ireland. In 1984 they took up cruiser racing at MSC. In 1994, Ian took part in the Round Ireland Race. They bought *Privateer*, a Works GK29, in 1994 and then *Xena*, an X332, in 2004. They have raced and cruised extensively from Sligo to Cork since that time.



Since 2015 they have been spending more time cruising locally. Comencing in 2020 they started focussing more on cruising and explored all of the Connemara coastline. They often cruise in company with Duncan Sclare (ICC, *Ean Mara*) and John Lambe (ICC, *Blue Moon*). They have also chartered in Croatia and Greece. Their first longer cruises were to Scotland in 2022 and Bantry in 2023.



Yacht racing was fading for them, and they stopped altogether in 2023. *Xena* has now been refurbished for long-distance cruising. They are now looking forward to their first trip to Spain in the coming season.

Cormorants and shags: fish-eating sentinels!

by Bob Brown



Bird Island, Strangford Lough. Seen close at hand, cormorants' 'scaly' patterned plumage is quite attractive.

We've all seen them: dark, brooding birds, perched on rocks, shipwrecks, harbour pilings, navigational beacons, and small islands. They are the archetypal residents of our coast, on exposed headlands, sheltered harbours, and even inland lakes. And, perhaps they look a bit sullen, lurking there in contrast to the moods of those of us who enjoy being out on the water.

Many people take them for granted, whilst others are frustrated by the difficulties of deciding whether that

bird is either a cormorant or a shag. So, for starters, let's clear that up. Firstly, the cormorant is visibly heavier built and larger than the shag, but unless they sit side by side, that may be difficult to judge. The cormorant often has a whitish 'chin' and a rather thick neck, whilst in the breeding season it has a white patch on the rear flank, that can be seen quite easily when in flight. They often pose with wings outstretched, apparently drying in the sun and wind. By contrast, the shag looks a little darker, although if you get a close view, it appears wonderfully iridescent. It also has a tuft of feathers on its crown, particularly conspicuous in the breeding season, or when the wind is from behind, lifting the feathers. Both species have longish sharp bills, the shag particularly so.

Another factor that helps with identification, although it's not definitive, is location. Cormorants tend to prefer the more sheltered areas of coast – inlets, bays, and estuaries, as well as harbours. A continental race of cormorants is also found in inland rivers and lakes. Shags are more a feature of exposed coasts, offshore rocks, and during nesting, low down on exposed seabird cliffs, often on islands. And, if you're visiting a derelict lighthouse, watch out from above – they like the old broken floor joists, and after inspecting you they may turn around and point the other end! Unlike cormorants, shags are hardly ever seen flying over land. But of course, exposed coasts often merge into sheltered ones, and there are occasions when the two species may be seen together. At least that gives us a chance to compare them!

Both species are well adapted for fishing in shallow waters. They float low in the water – sometimes the cormorants seem half submerged – and a dive usually starts with a brief seal-like leap, more pronounced in the shag. With legs and feet set well back on the body, these drive the bird down (the wings are not used for swimming, unlike those of puffins and guillemots) into the kelp and other seaweeds, or in the shag's case, into shoals of sand eels and other small fish a short way offshore. The kelp fringes are a particularly productive hunting habitat, with small fish and eels lurking amongst the fronds. There, the long neck, with snake-like flexibility, is ideal for



A shag on the Farne Islands; the breeze from behind has lifted its crest.

seizing prey, the razor-sharp bill holding firmly until the bird surfaces and it can manoeuvre the victim into being swallowed head first.



The last moments of an eel's life was taken by C Douglas ('Jimmy') Deane, nature correspondent for the Belfast Newsletter in the 1980s. A characteristic scene where cormorants find good hunting during high water over weedy shorelines.

Both species construct large nests of seaweed and other coastal debris. Around Ireland, the cormorants tend to nest on more level sites like low lying islands (sometimes trees inland) whilst the shags opt for ledges on cliffs. One cormorant nest I was monitoring was nicely constructed with a lady's tights wound round, binding the other materials. The nests gradually get coated in droppings and regurgitated fish, so that a visit on a nice hot summer's day is a rather fragrant experience...

And then there is the egg laying of course; the cormorants' eggs a chalky white, the shags' the palest blue, a tint which seems to fade and disappear with the sunlight



Cormorant eggs and a newly hatched chick. Note the central egg – a cheeping chick soon to enter a new world.

and general muck. But soon a chipping starts to occur, and even before the chicks have fully emerged, they are cheeping, calling for attention. When they do come out, they can't really be thought of as beautiful – a naked leathery dark grey colour, betraying the essentially reptilian ancestry of all birds. But beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and their dedicated parents ensure that growth is rapid on a diet of protein-rich fish; both striving to keep up with the chicks' voracious appetites. As they acquire feathers, and eventually make it to the

waters around the nest site, they can be spotted easily – a lighter, brownish colour, than the adults, pale on the belly.

For several years, I helped with ringing cormorants as part of an effort to understand their travels outside the breeding season, and we were rewarded with returns coming from as far from France, Spain, and Portugal, as well as more local movements. Putting a ring on a cormorant's leg is an interesting exercise (note: bird ringing can only be done under license in most European countries). The chick must be fairly mature, but not fledged, so still devoted to its nest. It has to be gently held, and here's the challenging bit – avoiding a stab in the eye, whilst you position the leg so that a colleague can attach the numbered ring, whose details are later lodged with the British Trust for Ornithology or another relevant national organisation. This process is often accompanied by projectile defaecation, or regurgitation. And, whilst the unharmed chick settles back with minor loss of dignity, the ringers are seriously unwelcome back home in the kitchen!

This recording of bird movements is vital for our understanding of all the aspects of a species' ecology. No chain is stronger than its weakest link as we all know too well. So, the benefits from preserving the habitat or key location of a species at one part of its yearly cycle are seriously undermined if key sites at all other stages of its migration are not protected. By this means, networks of key sites can be protected for a species' flyway. This is embodied under the legislation enacted under the EU Birds Directive. (The fate of such sites in the UK following Brexit worries me a lot, but don't get me started on that).

If you do find a bird (often it may be dead, washed up, or perhaps a traffic fatality) with a ring on, try to get the details (use a glove or other protective material) and submit it to the relevant organisation, giving at least date, location, and circumstances. The species will already be on their database via the numbered ring, so if you can't identify it, it doesn't matter so much. BUT, if you think there is the slightest chance it may be an avian flu victim, do not touch it.

Finally, I can't resist:

The Common Cormorant or Shag

by Christopher Isherwood:

The Common Cormorant or Shag
Lays eggs inside a paper bag.
The reason you will see no doubt
It is to keep the lightning out.
But what these unobservant birds
Have never noticed is that herds
Of wandering bears may come with buns"
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

Photographic Plate Results

And the 2023 winner is...

Quintessentially ICC, this photo by Trish Nixon (Jones) of a Howth 17 rounding the Fastnet tells it all. Never mind that the Fastnet Light is our symbol, here we have a very small and old boat, six years older than Fastnet Light, out there. It captures the essence of sailing. It tells the whole story of adventurers in a lovely small boat tackling a rounding of the Fastnet. Great colour, composition, and light. Needless to say, it scored highly with all the adjudicators.



Runners-up

Once again, we have three runners-up all placed just one point apart.

One thing all adjudicators agreed on is on is that all of these photos would be very worthy of printing, framing, and hanging on our wall.



*The sun going down over the Ross of Mull,
by Alan Leonard*



*Ilen at RIYC,
by Miguel Walker*



*Spinner Dolphins doing their thing near the equator,
by Bob Brown*

2024 New Members

Aoife Nolan-Beattie, Ballymahon, Co. Longford

Aoife started sailing as a young teenager in Dún Laoghaire. In 2001 she progressed to sailing Shannon One Designs (SODs), racing in Lough Ree on a regular basis. At this time she bought a 13m motor cruiser, which she still owns and maintains herself. She took up cruising offshore in 2012. Aoife has sailed extensively in the Mediterranean, Iberia, Brittany, and home waters. Most recently she sailed from Maderia to the Azores as part of the *Saoirse* Rally.



Brody Sweeney, Sandymount, Co. Dublin

Brody has been sailing now for over 40 years. As retirement approaches, he intends doing more adventure cruising. Brody raced in Flying Fifteens and J24s which he owned. He completed two Round Ireland and three Fastnet races. Brody currently sails a 44-year-old Jeanneau 32, on which he covered over 5,000nm in the last two years. This included a more than 4,000nm cruise to the Azores and back, which took in the *Saoirse* Rally.

David Lawlor, Rathmichael, Co. Dublin

Having learned to sail in a Wayfarer dinghy at the National Yacht Club, David began the transition to keel boat sailing in 2019 with a Sun Odyssey 29.2. Having caught the cruising bug, he upgraded to a Sun Odyssey 410 in 2021 which has allowed his sailing ambition to stretch beyond coastal cruising. He tries to sail every week with an enthusiastic group of boat owners in Dún Laoghaire.



Eugene O'Loughlin, Belgooly, Co. Cork

Eugene was introduced as a child to adventures afloat during annual holidays in Crosshaven. In 1980 he returned to Cork, where his family had come from. In 1990 he was asked to crew in the Royal Cork Yacht Club October League. Over the next 30 years he amassed extensive cruising and racing experience including cruising in Irish, Spanish, French, and UK waters. He now cruises from his base at the RCYC in his Sadler 29 *Kerensa* as much as time allows.

Evanna Lyons, Crosshaven, Co. Cork

Having grown up on her family's boats, Evanna developed a strong passion for the sea and the marine environment. She spent her teenage years actively dinghy sailing in a number of clubs around Munster and went on to work as a Fisheries Officer for the UK Government. Evanna is now starting to introduce her young children to the joys of the sea and is excited to become an active member of the ICC.



Jim Buckley, Wilton, Co. Cork

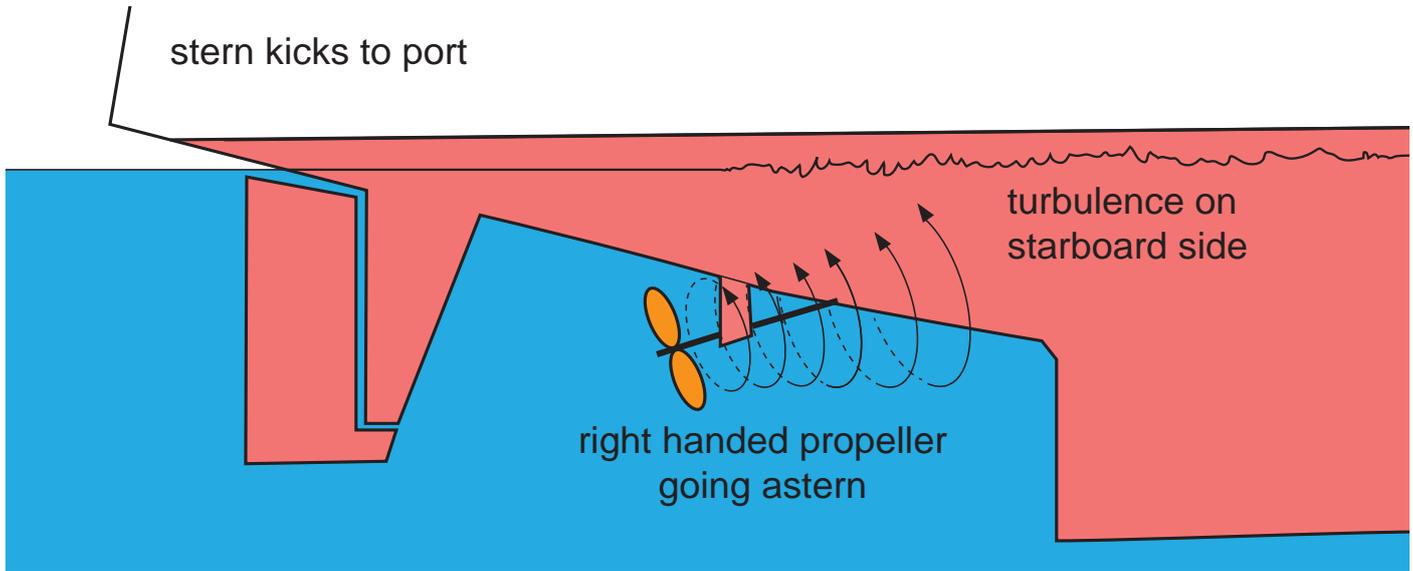
Jim Buckley has been sailing since a very young age and cruising for the last 23 years, both on his own boat and in friends' boats. In 2000 he bought a Galleon 22 and enjoyed sailing Cork Harbour and on to West Cork. In 2022 he purchased a Hanse 371 in the Canaries, which he sailed back to Cork via Madeira, Lagos, Porto, and Portosin. Jim is a member of Cove Sailing Club. His wife Katherine and family also enjoy sailing and join him when possible.

The Secret of Prop Walk

by Norman Kean



From the Chart Table



We all know and make use of the tendency of our boats for the stern to kick to one side when astern gear is engaged. There are many flawed theories on the cause: "paddle-wheel effect", "helicopter effect", the "fact" that the lower blade of the prop is in denser water, and the dissipation of energy from the upper blade thrust breaking the surface. None of them stand scrutiny.

What's actually going on? Propellers are designed first to make the boat go ahead efficiently. They work by screwing themselves through the water. But unlike a screw going into wood, the water moves the other way in reaction. This is called slip. The propeller is projecting an expanding spiral (or strictly speaking a helix) of water astern. Look at your dinghy's wake - you'll see the exhaust gas bubbles from the outboard spiralling away behind you. At cruising revs ahead, slip is at its least but it's still there - look at any boat's wake, with the prop-wash surging through the water in the opposite direction to the boat's motion. When you put the engine astern to stop, the slip is 100% - the prop's trying to go one way (usually not very efficiently) while the boat's still

going the other way. If you have a right-hand prop, the stern will kick to port, and vice versa. What's happening is that the spiral of water, thrown forward (and usually upwards) by the prop, is striking the side of the boat - but only one side. A right-hand prop, viewed from astern, turns clockwise ahead and anticlockwise astern. That means that astern, this spiral is hitting the starboard side of the boat aft of her centre of rotation - so the stern kicks to port. The diagram above attempts to illustrate this.

Sceptical? If I'm right, then a boat with a long deep keel should have pronounced prop walk, and if the shaft is steeply angled down, it'll be even stronger. That's because there's a lot of vertical surface for the wash to strike. A boat like that might be difficult if not impossible to steer going astern. Anybody got a Tradewind 33 or a Folkboat? On the other hand, if the underbody is flatter and the keel is narrower, like most modern boats, the prop walk should be noticeable but not so strong. And if the shaft is horizontal, as it is with a saildrive, there may be little or no prop walk. I once sailed a Hanse 400. She



Right-hand prop, angled shaft, long keel; the stern will kick hard to port, and she'll be hard to steer astern



Left-hand prop, angled shaft, good tip clearance, fin and skeg; prop walk to starboard, less pronounced

was like that. She'd stop and go backwards in a straight line. Hi-tech modern propellers are usually designed to go astern more efficiently (on *Coire Uisge* our three blade Flexofold is pretty amazing) and along with that, they usually reduce prop walk further.

If you're not convinced, consider a single engine propeller-driven aircraft. On take-off, the pilot has to apply some rudder (usually to the right) because when the wheels leave the tarmac, the plane tends to slew to the left. The right-hand prop, slipping under full power, is sending a spiral of air back around the fuselage. That hits the tailplane and pushes it to the right. Of course, the spiral underneath is moving to the left - but there's nothing there for it to hit bar a little tail wheel.

Prop walk is of course very useful and can be used to turn a boat in her own length, as we all know, and slot her neatly into a tight berth (but only one way round). When I discussed this article with the Editor, he told me that since they treated their Bowman 57 *Aleria* to a new Maxprop Easyprop, she has little or no prop walk and can be hard to handle in tight corners. Nothing for it (sorry Alex) but a bow thruster. Our lengthy old *Xanadu* had handy prop walk but despite that - with no thruster - we got into some predicaments, always with an audience, of course. Thankfully, *Coire Uisge* is a lot shorter, and has a thruster.

On twin screw motorboats the props usually turn outwards ahead. That arrangement makes best use of prop walk because it'll work either way depending on which engine is used. Outwards astern, there might be little or no prop walk. And the useful effect, whether single or twin screw, applies right up to the biggest of ships.

* On the subject, even Homer nods. The revered Eric Hiscock, in "*Cruising Under Sail*" (three editions 1949 to 1980) says "*Any propeller has a turning effect on the vessel owing to its lower half working in denser water than its upper half*".

Nonsense, I'm afraid. For an average yacht propeller, the difference in density is infinitesimal, about one part in a trillion. Water isn't very compressible.



Right hand modern prop, saildrive, flat underbody; there'll be little or no prop walk.

Royal Thames YC Cup

by Neil Hegarty

As part of their Grand Tour of the West Country and Ireland, the Royal Thames Yacht Club Cumberland cruising Fleet visited the RCYC. They were extremely impressed and grateful for all the assistance that the club staff provided as well as the club facilities, hospitality, and friendship they experience during their visit. The event dinner in the Members Room was a very enjoyable evening and RCYC was presented with a trophy from the RTYC to commemorate the RCYC's Tricentenary. This trophy will be presented annually to a member who submits the best cruising log of the year.



Relaxing after the excitement of the presentation.



L to R Kieran O'Connell Admiral RCYC, Neil Hegarty, Anne Kenny, Paul Tingle Rear Admiral Keelboats.

During 2023 RCYC members enjoyed cruising to the Isles of Scilly, UK, France, Spain, and the Mediterranean as well as the Azores, with Neil Hegarty and Anne Kenny sailing *Tam O'Shanter* on an eventful and unexpected voyage of 515nm visiting seven of the nine Azorean Islands. Their log of the voyage was awarded the 2023 RCYC Cruising Log of the Year Trophy.

Western Christmas Lunch

by Daria Blackwell



A Resounding Success, despite being flanked by storms *Elin* and *Fergus*!

The ICC Western Christmas lunch was held on Saturday, 9th of December, at Mayo Sailing Club in Rosmoney, outside of Westport. Storm *Elin* didn't deter too many from attending. It was quite windy but sunny, and we had a great turnout. Some members arrived early, not realising that the new Westport bypass cuts quite a bit of time off journeys from the East. Fortunately, Western Committee representative Alex Blackwell had organised a space heater to be turned on early, ordered for the bar to be opened, and hors d'oeuvres served ahead of schedule.

Commodore David Beattie presided over the event, welcoming everyone to the venue, including the Commodore of MSC Bobby Conlon and his wife Maria. After remarking that his outstanding contribution to the ICC during his term as Commodore was '*the most events cancelled*' due to Covid, David was particularly pleased that we were able to hold the lunch as scheduled. It was he who requested the special tasting menu produced by Ana Rameriz of Tia Restaurant in Louisburgh, having enjoyed it last summer at the start of the *West's Awake*

Rally. It was wonderful to be back to enjoying meeting up with fellow members in person.

Daria Blackwell next asked attendees to spend a few moments reminding themselves of all the things we have to be thankful for in this world gone mad – like the fact that we live in one of the most beautiful and secure places on earth, we have our health, and we cherish the friendships we have all nurtured through the camaraderie of the ICC.

We then enjoyed a leisurely and delicious 6-course tasting menu expertly prepared and served by Ana and her staff. The room was filled with laughter and chatter as the superb courses were served, each outdoing the last.

After dessert, Alex thanked Ana and her team for an unprecedented Christmas Lunch, and one that will be long remembered. He thanked all who came from near and far and wished all a safe journey home with storm *Fergus* due in the next day.

Quite a few members made a weekend out of their visit as Westport is a very festive town at Christmas. Storm *Fergus* did indeed whip up the weather on Sunday, but it didn't stop us at all.

A selection of some of the delicacies we were treated to



2024 New Members

Katie Corbett, Crosshaven, Co. Cork

Katie Corbett has been a boat owner since 1990 and a member of RCYC since 2019. She has cruised and raced along the south coast. She has also sailed to the Isle of Man, Scotland, France, Galicia, and the Balearics. Continuing further on into the Mediterranean, she has sailed on to Sicily via the south of France, Corsica, Elba, and western Italy. She then continued on to the Ionian Islands. Her boat is currently laid up in Aktion.



Paddy O'Keefe, Bantry, Co. Cork

Paddy's sailing life began as a small baby on his grandfather's boat. All these years later he sails a Dufour 382 and had his first baby grandson onboard last year. He is based in Bantry where there is plenty of wind to fill the sails. However, he does like to do longer cruises across waters every few years. His favourite day out includes fair winds, a picnic, and a swim with family and friends anchored off Garnish Island in Glengarriff.

Patricia and Julian Morgan, Newtownards, Co. Down

Patricia and Julian have been cruising for the past 20 years. Both have been sailing since they were young. Living in England from 2002 to 2016 they were members of Herefordshire Sailing Club where they sailed on club boats. During this time, they also cruised in the UK, Brittany, and Spain. They also chartered in Croatia. In 2010 they purchased a Castillo 385 steel cutter.

In 2016 they purchased an Allures 45.9 and in 2017 they set sail on a global cruise and reached New Zealand in 2019. Due to Covid, they spent a year and a half cruising in New Zealand. In 2021 Patricia and Julian decided to ship *A Capella of Belfast* back to Southampton. They then sailed back to Northern Ireland. *A Capella of Belfast* is now based in Strangford Lough.



In 2022 Patricia and Julian sailed to the Orkneys via the Outer Hebrides and St Kilda, returning via the Caledonian Canal. In 2023 Patricia and Julian sailed around Skye and Mull.



Pat Fleming, Cobh, Co. Cork

Pat was first taken sailing when he was about 16 years old. The following year he got his own dinghy and taught himself sailing. His first love is cruising and since 1988, when he acquired his first yacht, he has tried to go further and for longer each year. He plans an annual cruise to west Cork and has sailed up the west coast as far as the Skelligs. He has been as far north as Tobermory and as far East as Lymington.



Sarah Brown, Argyll, Scotland

Sarah grew up in and around Strangford Lough sailing a range of boats with her parents Brian and Les Black. Back in the early days there was a converted lifeboat, progressing through a series of vessels including an Uffa Fox design and a Choy Lee. Having cruised as a family throughout her formative years she took a break before coming back to boating in her late 20's. Becoming a Yachtmaster built confidence and she was delighted to meet husband Colin whilst sailing.

Did we meet the World's Greatest Cruising Sailor? – Probably.

by John McAleer

In the Winter of 2019, I attended a talk which was hosted by the Cruising Group at the Royal Cork Yacht Club, in Crosshaven. The eminent speaker, whose name I cannot immediately recall, made a statement that he and his fellow round-the-world sailing writers all had one sailing hero, who no-one in the well-attended room had most probably ever heard about.

Probing for suggestions, the guest speaker looked around the audience. Offerings, such as Chay Blyth, Ellen MacArthur, and Bernard Moitessier were put forward. Not wishing to let the golden opportunity pass, I raised my hand in the air and when I had his attention, I said with a good degree of confidence *"Trevor Robertson"*.

Almost aghast with surprise, the guest speaker looked at me and said *"Correct! How the hell did you know that?"* I responded: *"Because I recently had him aboard for breakfast."*

My story of meeting Trevor goes something like this:

In June of 2018, Catherine and I sailed up to Whiddy Island to spend a few days and tied *Shukuran* up to our usual spot on the pontoon. The following morning there was a gaff cutter at anchor in the harbour. We later went up to the Bank House for lunch and saw a wooden skiff being launched from the anchored craft. A man, of at least my own vintage, came ashore, greeted us and went into the bar. He remerged a few minutes later with a pint in hand and sat down close by.

Catherine and I said hello to the sailor and Catherine asked where had he come in from.



L to R John, Tim, and Trevor at the Bank House, Whiddy Island

In a distinct Australian accent, he replied: *"I'm just in from the Falkland Islands, after 96 days at sea"*.

Impressive, as we had just come up from Bere Island after less than 3 hours "at sea".

He went on to say that he had sailed from The Falkland Islands and in fact we were only the second and third people he had spoken to in over three months, Tim O'Leary in the bar being the first.

Tim, proprietor of the Bank House, later asked Trevor how long had he spent in the Falkland Islands, the previous stop on his voyage from Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica, the Falklands, and Ireland.

Trevor advised Tim that he had spent a total of seven hours there, just to do the necessary paperwork and pick up some fuel.

Tim: *"Trevor, why didn't you stay longer?"*

Trevor: *"Tim, Mate, you obviously have never been to the Falkland Islands."*

We spent that afternoon and evening with Trevor and invited him to join us aboard in the morning for a full Irish breakfast. During this time and supplemented with some very interesting reading since, we have come to appreciate how Trevor, who has been circumnavigating the globe almost continuously since 1974, is widely regarded as the most famous world cruising sailor.

He sails the long way around the globe, no canals for Trevor, while also regularly visiting the Arctic and Antarctic.



Trevor Robertson's Iron Bark II anchored off Whiddy Island

Trevor told us over breakfast that he has a golden rule of *"Always sailing through point Nemo"* (45°52. 6S, 123°23. 6W) where he noted, *"The closest human beings are on the international space station and that's only very infrequently"*. We were a little unsure if that was a positive or a negative aspect of being in the most remote place on earth and almost 2,700 kms from any other person. We concluded that it was more than likely positive, although he was an extremely sociable person.

He also gave us some very good advice along the lines of: *"You know it's the height of bad manners not to drop down to Antarctica for a spell when you are rounding The Horn."* We made a fast note of that, as one never knows.

Trevor was back in Bantry Bay again in August 2022. A friend of mine met him one day and asked where to next?

Trevor said that he was heading for the Arctic. A few months later, this same friend was watching *Deadliest Catch* on TV, filmed somewhere off the US Aleutian Islands, when a bright yellow gaff rigged cutter sailed by, no prizes for guessing who this was.

I am not going to write any more here about Trevor Robertson, he tells his story best himself. I can strongly recommend that ICC members read Trevor's blogs, which are excellently written and beautifully illustrated at ***"Iron Bark - Travels in a 35 ft gaff cutter from Antarctica to Greenland and places in between"***. Among his wide-ranging adventures, Trevor's excellent illustrated account of his time overwintering at the poles is a fantastic read. To visit Trevor's blog please see: <https://iron-bark.blogspot.com>.

Trevor has also achieved international recognition. From our friends at the Cruising Club of America comes this quotation: *"New York, N.Y., USA (January 21, 2010) – The Cruising Club of America has selected Annie Hill and Trevor Robertson to receive its prestigious 2009 Blue Water Medal in recognition of cruising and voyaging that best exemplifies the objects and goals of the CCA. The award will be presented by CCA Commodore Sheila McCurdy (Middletown, R.I.) during the club's annual Awards Dinner at the New York Yacht Club, in New York."* <https://cruisingclub.org/awards/2009-blue-water-medal-annie-hill-and-trevor-robertson>.

Trevor was also awarded the Royal Cruising Club's Medal for Seamanship in 2018, for his solo 16,270-mile voyage from New Zealand to Ireland, at the end of which we were delighted to cook him a hearty Irish breakfast, naturally using only the best of West Cork produce. I also donated my onboard library to him, as he told us that he had read every printed word including the ingredients on every packet aboard *Iron Bark II*.

Since then Trevor has moved from the steel hulled *Iron Bark II* to *Iron Bark III*, which is GRP. She is a gaff rigged cutter and brightly yellow in colour,

Watch out for him as he will no doubt return to Irish waters.

Fair winds Trevor.

Tobermory Race

by Flora Reeves
Hanky Panky

Out of the Clyde we sailed hale and hearty,
Just gearing up for that first aboard party.
The rest of the fleet had no trouble following,
For miles around, you could hear us all hollering!

The Crinan Canal made quite an impression,
"Heave to the bowline" or some such expression.
With pushing and jostling, t'was quite a to-do,
I think half the time, the crews were a' fu'.

So passed Corryvreckan and thru' Dons Mor,
By Scarba and Lunga onwards we tore,
Duart Castle to port and into the 'Sound',
Then northwards to Tob. where Spanish Treasures
abound.

We sailed into harbour the racing now past,
And let go the anchor, not quite the last!
Now to relax, what shall we do?
"Break out the cans – let's have a few!"

Thereafter to Coll and down past Thee,
South by Iona; it's grand to be free,
But out in mid ocean, where the gulls scream and soar,
The waves mounting higher, the wind like a roar,
Where the surf thunders by and the seas all a-foam,
My thoughts turn to comfort, to ease and to home!



Isles of Scilly 2023

by Pat Fleming



Martina, *St Martin's Bay*

Having suggested that my club do more about cruising, I found myself on a committee under the chairmanship of Jim O'Meara (ICC) and planning a few short cruises for the 2022 season. However, due to the weather, none of what we had planned took place. We had storms for each of the scheduled weekends, so when 2023 came around we were replaced in case we jinxed another season.

The offshore cruise for last season was planned to the Isles of Scilly in the middle of June. The weather was lovely and settled, but unfortunately the winds that had been easterly for weeks now decided to go SE, the worst direction for where we were going.



Traditional Scilly Ferry, New Grimsby Sound

Our little fleet consisted of five yachts of various sizes, with the smaller yachts leaving before the larger to try to coordinate our arrival and to be reasonably close overnight.

We left Cork Harbour one by one with my boat *Eureka* leaving just after noon in glorious weather. We had plenty of shipping to avoid early in the voyage and later

in the afternoon the Brittany Ferries *Pont-Aven* passed us off to the west on her way to Roscoff.

Unfortunately, the winds remained light, and we had to motor for the first seven hours with the main up, more to steady the boat than to motor sail. In the late afternoon, the wind became strong enough to sail and the engine was finally turned off as we prepared dinner. We sailed through the night with a few visits from dolphins. Dawn came without seeing any of the fleet.

The wind changed direction even more unfavourably as we closed on the islands, so we furled the genny, turned on the engine and changed course for the last few miles to New Grimsby Sound. As we entered the Sound, we dropped the main and motored past Hangman's Rock with its empty gallows at the summit. The three larger yachts had already arrived, and we exchanged greetings as we passed and found a spot further on to anchor. Finally, *Midnight Trapper* the smallest yacht arrived. We were all delighted to see them safely in.



St Martin's Bay, Scilly

We headed ashore and after a brief exploration ended up socialising in The New Inn. We discovered our waitress was Irish, but it took a while before she'd tell us exactly where from. Eventually, we found that she was from Beara, then close to Castletownbere, and finally the village of Ardgroom. At last, we had a handle on Ms. McCarthy and no, we never did get her first name.

We all slept soundly that night and were greeted by a lovely sunny morning when we awoke. We spent the day exploring Tresco. Some went south to the gardens. Others went north to the castles.

It was decided to head to the island of St. Martin's the following day. The beaches there are reputed to be the best on the islands. Before blotting paper was invented, the very fine white sand was exported to the writing desks of England.

I presumed we were anchoring in Tean Sound as that is where I usually anchor when visiting St. Martin's, so I decided to go south across Tesco Flats just before high tide and then to head north into Tean Sound. When we got around, we found none of the fleet there and thought our shortcut had meant we were first to arrive, wrong! Having made contact, we found out that they were heading for St. Martin's Bay on the other side of the island, and we soon motored around to join them.

Already in the bay was another Cork man, John O'Riordan on his Dufour 485 *Magic*. He sped around the anchorage on his rib inviting us to a BBQ. Unfortunately, we were just about to serve up dinner but we joined them later for drinks, had a great night and reluctantly returned to our own boats in the early hours.

In the morning, the various crews went ashore and explored the island. Some settled at the Seven Stones Inn and went no further, while the crew of *Eureka* walked as far as the daymark on the eastern end of the island before returning to join the other crews at the inn. The young crew of *Martina* went fishing for their dinner and returned with some lovely pollock. It was a lovely relaxing day and the fleet decided to stay put for a second night.

On Wednesday we sailed the short distance to St. Mary's harbour, where we picked up the last few visitor buoys. We went ashore and walked around Hughtown with rapidly melting ice-creams. We then climbed the hill to Star Castle, a small star shaped fort which is now a hotel. Having taken the obligatory photos, we headed to the bar in its dungeon.



Pat, Barry, & Ruairí, Daymark, St. Martin's



New Grimsby Sound, Looking South

Luckily, we had only two pints because as we were returning to *Eureka*, we discovered that the crew of *Martina* were getting ready to depart for home. The forecast had changed and instead of leaving late the following day as planned, we now needed to be home by midnight before the weather deteriorated off Ireland. The alternative was to stay another four or five days till it improved. We decided to leave after we had our dinner, as it would allow the effects of the alcohol to dissipate before we set sail.

With full bellies we slipped the mooring at 2130 and headed out to a flat windless sea hoping we weren't being too cautious as we'd have liked to stay another day or two. It was a flat calm night till about 0700 next morning when we hoisted the main as the wind slowly increased. By 1200 we had turned off the engine and were enjoying a lovely reach as we ate up the miles towards home. We reached Roches Point at 2230, tying up in East Ferry an hour later. We immediately sat down below to our dinner as we listened to the wind beginning to blow outside.

Protected Anchorages on the Clyde

by Clive Reeves



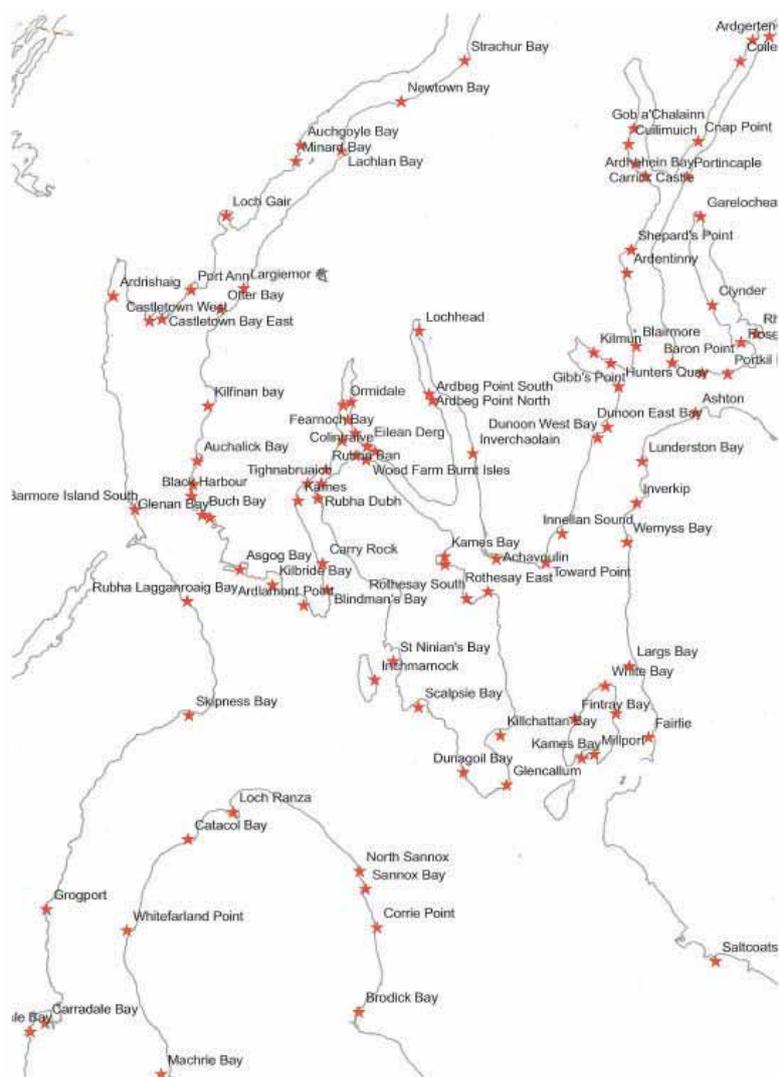
Kilchatton Bay on Bute

In 2000 I was asked by the CCC to join the Clyde Mooring Committee with a view to compiling a list of anchorages on the Clyde. In the event I was co-opted on to the CYCA Committee as Moorings & Cruising Convener to represent all the Clyde Clubs – a position I still hold.

Myself & Donald McLaren CYCA compiled a list of anchorages, in general from the CCC Sailing Directions, with a few of my own. Together with Lat & Long for all the anchorages we presented it to the committee in 2001. RJ. Korbal, the Crown Estates Mooring Officer then produced large scale charts of these areas as recognised anchorages and as a reference for the future.

Later that year a meeting was arranged at the CCC office in Glasgow with the Hydrographic Office who produce Admiralty Charts. All the anchorages were added to Admiralty Charts which are still produced today on paper and for chart plotters. These became protected anchorages – 114 in number.

It has been an honour to help preserve the wonderful, protected areas of the Clyde for boat owners and users now and in the future.



Above: Protected Anchorages on the Clyde

Left: Lyrebird on Louch Long, Ardentinn

Sailing on the Clyde 2022

As I was waiting for a new hip and in a lot of pain, we decided this year to only sail on the Clyde, something I have been doing for nearly seventy years and what a wonderful area to go sailing. You can sail to the Kyles of Bute and be sheltered in a force 8 with scenery as good as anywhere in the world. Sail up Loch Long to the Goil, Sail to Arran and go climbing (if you don't need a new hip!), up to Tarbert and Loch Fyne, Holy Loch, Rothesay & Port Bannatyne, Rhu, and the Gareloch; all in sheltered waters.



Caladh Harbour, a lovely anchorage

This year we enjoyed a few nights at the Kyles of Bute then sailing to my favourite anchorage at Caladh Harbour, plus Loch Ridden and Wreck Bay. All of these have protected anchoring areas. Close by, you have hotels at Kames, Tighabruaich, and Colintrave. All of this is just a few hours sail from the Gareloch where we keep *Lyrebird*.

My first sail to Caladh Harbour in 1959 was with my father on his motorboat *Zuleka*. We motored up the Clyde from Roseneath with a huge swell running. Most of the family was sea sick. But when we arrived at Caladh it was flat calm! I still remember exploring the wee island. It was just a lovely calm anchorage.

Unfortunately, our season was cut short at the end of July when I received an emergency operation for my second new hip. I can't wait till 2024!

Southern Soundings

by John McAleer

Seamus O'Connor Rear Commodore, South, writes:

The new sailing season is stirring on the fringes, and I am sure many of you are busy with plans and activities such as anti-fouling, checking anodes, and maybe changing oil, etc. Let us hope that the weather will be kind for our preparations and that we will enjoy the preparations.

The recent AGM was very well attended, and we welcome Alan Markey as our new Commodore. I would also like to thank David Beattie for his four years as Commodore, in what were very difficult circumstances due to the pandemic. Peter Cudmore stood down from the committee having served seven years. My thanks to Peter for all his efforts, hard work, and support to the committee and to me as Flag. Welcome to Sally Cudmore who joins the committee. Continuing on the committee are Paul Taylor, John McAleer, and Jim O'Meara.

This will be a busy year for our region, we host the Annual ICC Weekend from the 22nd to 24th March at the Maryborough Hotel in Douglas (more in this issue). We are looking forward to a great gathering and renewal of friendships over the weekend. Also, in the Autumn we host the ICC 'Out of Town' committee meeting from

the 11th to 13th of October, this will take place at the Dunraven Arms in Adare. The Dunraven is owned by the Murphy family and Iseult is the grandniece of Conor O'Brien, Iseult attended the *Saoirse* Rally in Madeira along with her sister Charlotte and her son Alex. Alex sailed with the *Ilen* from Dún Loaghaire.

In our region we plan to host the Bantry Bay Cruise from 30th July to the 2nd of August. This is being organised by John McAleer and described in detail on the following page.

Other news from Sean Norris:

There are now fuel pumps in the Centra Supermarket Carpark in Schull at the rear of the supermarket. They are self-service, pay by card. All fuels are available including white and green diesel. Pricing is competitive – so far anyway.

Tom and I have signed *Raffles* up for the ICC cruise in Brittany. We plan to go down early June and back early July. Depending on my work and family commitments, and the weather, we might make the Bere Island meet-up also.

More southern news throughout this issue.

Bantry Bay Cruise

by John McAleer

The Southern Committee has organised the annual Bantry Bay Cruise for the week prior to Calves Week.

For members who have not yet visited Laurence Cove Marina, let me say that it is a fantastic facility, especially since the replacement of the main pontoon in 2023. The facilities include electricity, fuel, and water, coupled with showers, washing machines, and dryers. It also has a boat lift. There are two ferries operating throughout the day. One goes between the pontoon on the mainland and Rerrin (Lawrence Cove) and the other between Castletownbere and the west end of Bere Island.

Bere Island has some excellent walks, and its military fortifications bear witness to its strategic location, which once saw the entire British fleet at anchor in the bay. It was one of the Treaty Ports, retained by the UK up to 1938. There are numerous interesting tales of the border outside Dessie's Pub. Not to mention stories about the man himself, whose affable nephew now owns the bar.

In fact, the island has a very long military history, and the Lonehort Viking Harbour is still clearly identifiable. In 1602, Sir George Carew used cannon fire from the western end of Bere island to attack the O'Sullivan Beara stronghold at Dunboy on the mainland. The island also boasts three Martello Towers, built to guard against a feared French invasion. It also has a megalithic tomb which is less than a ten-minute walk from the marina and is located roadside for easy viewing. There is also a very attractive sandy beach within comfortable walking distance of the marina. All in all, plenty to see for a small island.

While the 2023 Bantry cruise was a washout, the members' barbecue moved indoors to the large workshop at the marina, where ICC members and everyone else on the pontoon, enjoyed a very memorable and multinational evening of refreshments and food. The 'chef' was described by all as being very talented and I managed to avoid burning down the shed. Let's hope the weather will be kinder in 2024.

Nearby Castletownbere is an interesting place to spend an afternoon with a small chandlery and a range of shops, pubs, and restaurants. Note there are some number of accommodation options available on Bere Island for anyone with additional guests. For more information on Bere Island, please visit: <https://www.bereisland.net>. Whiddy also has a number of guest accommodation options including the family accommodation provided in the refurbished Old School House, operated by Tim and Kathleen O'Leary of the Bank House: <https://whiddy.ie/school-house/>



The planned 2024 schedule of events

Tuesday 30th July, 7pm

Barbecue at Lawrence Cove Marina, Bere Island. Please bring your own food and refreshments.

Wednesday 31st July, 11am

Sail in company to Bantry/Whiddy Island and free day with an ad hoc evening event.

Thursday 1st August, 11am

Whiddy Island Chase, followed at 7pm by drinks and dinner at the Bank House Restaurant. Plenty to do on Whiddy and some interesting walks, including an American First World War Airbase.

Friday 2nd August, 11:30am

Return to Lawrence Cove Marina, with a raft up for lunch at Glengarriff.

This is a pay as you go event with no participation fee.

If you plan to participate, please complete the booking form by the 10th July 2024: form.jotform.com/240605491808357

You will also find a link to the form in the club calendar.

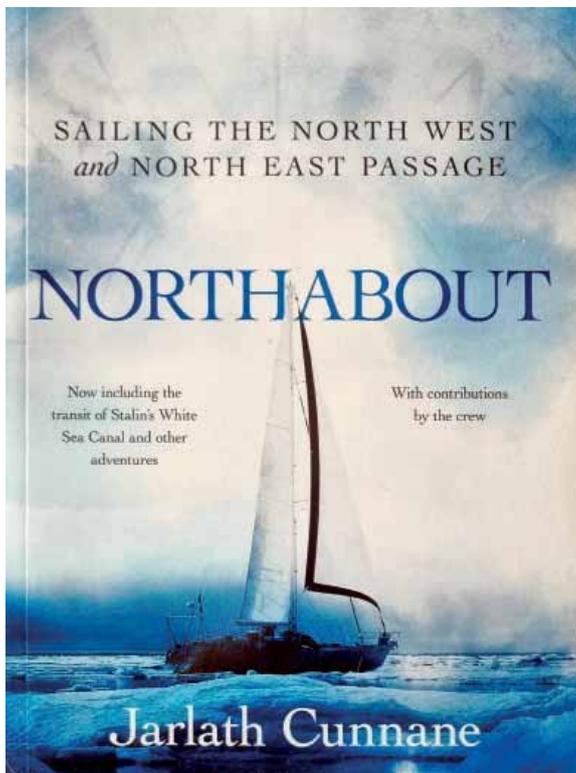
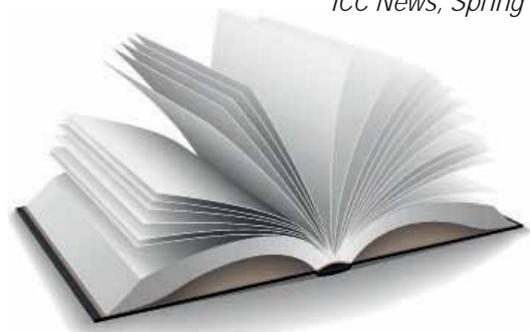
The resplendent new pontoons at Lawrence Cove Marina, Bere Island



Northabout

Revised Edition by Jarlath Cunnane

Reviewed by Michael Brogan



The stories and achievements of *Northabout* and her crew under the leadership of Jarlath Cunnane and Paddy Barry are both historic and momentous.

Many voyages are remembered for their misadventure and often disastrous outcome, especially when it comes to Polar regions. But not so for *Northabout!*

Built by Jarlath in 2000/1 with help from crew and friends, *Northabout* went on to achieve a series of Irish and world 'firsts', most notably the first sailing vessel to circumnavigate the polar ice cap in a westerly direction. For this Jarlath was awarded the Blue Water Medal from the Cruising Club of America as well as many other national and international awards.

'*Unfinished business*' is how Jarlath describes his decision to return to Russia in 2012 to sail the White Sea (Belomorsk) Canal, which brought the crew face to face with the atrocities of Stalin's notorious Gulag, a stark reminder of the direction Russia under Putin is now taking.

Russia is closed off once again. This together with climate change underlines the fact that *Northabout's* circumnavigation

will unlikely be repeated at any time in the future.

This second edition also includes cruises to the Caribbean, a mid-Atlantic rescue of a French couple from a sinking yacht, a cruise to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the story of Jarlath's 1997 South Aris expedition to recreate Shackleton's voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia. They were rolled over repeatedly in storm force winds and were forced to abandon the vessel, *Tom Crean*. Jarlath was last to leave and had to drill a hole in the hull and let her sink before getting into their support vessel.

Most recently Jarlath built a replica of the *James Caird*. Such was his attention to detail, he travelled to take exact measurements of the original on display in Shackleton's old school, Dulwich College in London. Named after Tom Crean, it is now on display at the South Pole Inn in Annascaul, Co Kerry.

Despite Shackleton's leadership qualities in saving all of the crew of the ill-fated *Endurance*, Jarlath portrays another side of Shackleton: his cavalier treatment of the crew of the *Aurora*, and his refusal to recommend *Endurance's* carpenter Henry McNish for a polar medal.

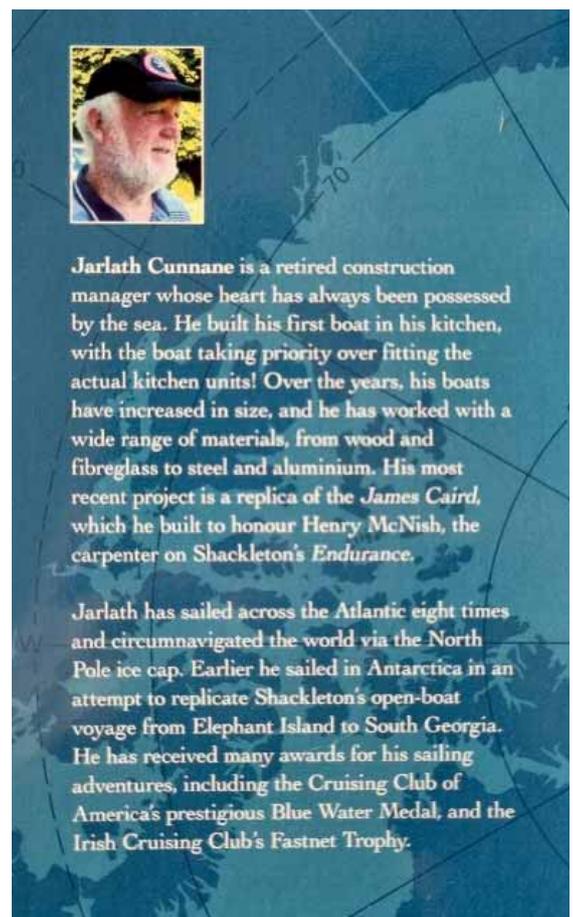
Northabout is beautifully written and illustrated, and is highly recommended as an inspiration to all sailors and readers alike.

To quote Mayo Poet Paul Durcan in his poem for *Northabout*,

"*The different shall inherit the earth, if there are any different left*".

The book *Northabout* Sailing the Northwest and Northeast Passage is available to ICC members at a special price of €25.00 plus p&p directly from Jarlath. Email: northabout@gmail.com

Also stocked in Charlie Byrnes Bookshop in Galway, cost €30.00.



Jarlath Cunnane is a retired construction manager whose heart has always been possessed by the sea. He built his first boat in his kitchen, with the boat taking priority over fitting the actual kitchen units! Over the years, his boats have increased in size, and he has worked with a wide range of materials, from wood and fibreglass to steel and aluminium. His most recent project is a replica of the *James Caird*, which he built to honour Henry McNish, the carpenter on Shackleton's *Endurance*.

Jarlath has sailed across the Atlantic eight times and circumnavigated the world via the North Pole ice cap. Earlier he sailed in Antarctica in an attempt to replicate Shackleton's open-boat voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia. He has received many awards for his sailing adventures, including the Cruising Club of America's prestigious Blue Water Medal, and the Irish Cruising Club's Fastnet Trophy.

Diving in Antarctica

by David Lawlor



In February 2024, I and a group of 8 other scuba divers lead by Brian Murphy of Oceandivers headed to Antarctica to dive in one of the world's most challenging and beautiful marine environments. Flying from Dublin to Buenos Aires via Amsterdam and then to the town of Ushuaia located on the Beagle Channel in southern Argentina, we boarded the diesel-powered electric passenger ship, *Greg Mortimer*. The ship has capacity

On a calm cloudy afternoon, the lines were slipped, and we were making 12 knots along the Beagle Channel in flat seas towards the infamous Drake Passage. The adventure had begun for real.

Preparation

Having signed up for this trip a year prior, the diving conditions and experience expected of participants were very clearly spelled out by the Australian based expedition company, Aurora. We were told to expect air



David in a dry suit

for about 130 passengers and is designed with a negative bow called the X-BOW® with side stabilisers to improve stability while underway. The Norwegian designers of the boat sought their design inspiration from nature by designing the vessel like a fish to glide through sea with least resistance.



David with ice berg under water

temperatures as low as -25 degrees with wind chill and a water temperature of -2 degrees. So, participants had to be very comfortable in diving with dry suits, diving mitts with a lot of insulating layers, and heavy lead weight (18kg in my case) to counter the extra buoyancy. Having never dived in a dry suit before, I was required to complete 30 dry suit dives and 4 cold water dives (under 10 degrees) before the trip. I had a busy summer!

The Drake Passage

We left the Beagle Channel during the night and entered the Drake Passage. Despite being in bed at the time, it was immediately obvious that we were in a different place. I had been looking forward to the Drake as much as anything else, so on deck I went. With the wind howling between 40 and 60 knots and waves on average of 4 – 5 meters, with the odd 7 meter crashing about, the sea was confused and angry. I was happy not to be skippering a small lonely yacht. Standing at the stern of the ship, the wandering albatrosses with a wingspan of 3.6 meters sweeping in and out of the ship's slipstream were a marvel to witness.

Antarctica

After a slightly longer passage than expected we reached the South Shetland Islands and mainland Antarctica. The scale and wildness of the landscape is breath-taking. Multiple pods of humpback whales fluking and breaching are a constant feature of the view. Enormous ice mountains with glaciers reaching to the sea, emitting bright blue light from oxygen compression over thousands of years creates an atmosphere of awe. The sea is littered with colossal ice bergs as if shaped by a modern artist with symmetrical lines and sharp angles, all surrounded with the remains of broken ice from last winter's fast ice freeze.



Iceberg underwater



Penguin colony

The Diving

We completed 8 dives over 4 days, with the dives lasting around 45 minutes in the morning and 25 minutes in the afternoon. We were diving under and around floating icebergs and through the swarms of krill. The seafloor, moulded by volcanic activity of millions of years ago, and the wreck of an old Norwegian whaler ship gave a real sense of presence in the moment but also one of flux and how the natural environment copes with change.

The level of fish life and the variety of species is unexpectedly low and is in sharp contrast to what a diver experiences in shallow tropical waters. Krill are the keystone species sustaining life for whales, seals, penguins, and fish. For me, the real allure of Antarctic diving are the underwater icescapes. A small unsuspecting iceberg on the surface hides the drama of what's underneath. Approaching the iceberg, the surrounding water chills and blue light envelopes the ice. The mood and atmosphere are almost haunted and eerie. But then the most beautiful shapes and textures are revealed underwater. It is like the masterpiece sculpted by the artist, bizarre and stunningly beautiful. It is hard to find the words to convey the sense of awe and wonder.

There is no question that Antarctic diving is for the hardy. It usually took me about 45 minutes to properly speak after the second dive and a couple of hours for my fingertips to stop tingling. But it was wonderful, amazing and dare I say it, life-changing.

On Reflection

At the time of writing this in late February 2024, I had arrived back to Ireland 3 days earlier. The return to work ensured that the adjustment had been sudden. But I was left with a variety of emotions following the trip. I feel enormously lucky to have had the health and means to participate in this adventure. To witness one of the last frontiers on earth has been a real privilege, the vastness and beauty of the seemingly untouched landscape will stay with me to the end of my days. But there is change, change that is happening by stealth. Fast ice doesn't really freeze back as well as it did the previous year. We were also told about a gradual reduction in the biomass of krill. I feel frightened that mother nature is losing her grip on balancing the natural world. She needs our help.

Galician Grapevine

by Peter Haden

After an especially wet and stormy winter, everyone along the Atlantic coast of Galicia is looking forward to a beautiful sailing summer as we enjoyed last year.

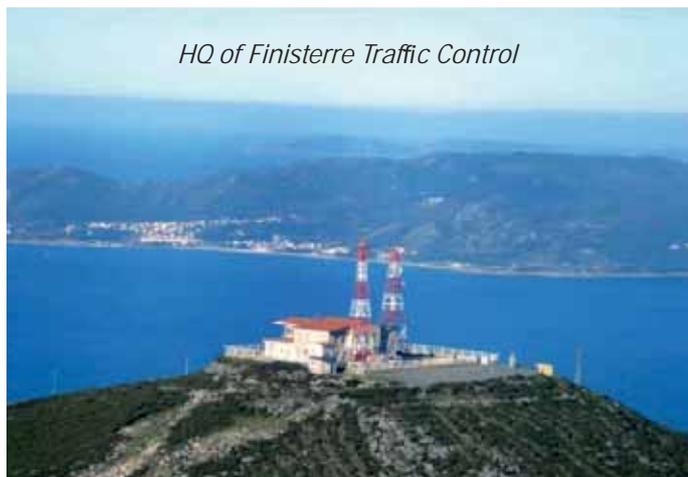
Arrangements for Encuentro Náutico 2024, our annual rally in the Rias Baixas are well in hand and interest is strong. This year our sister organisation the Ocean Cruising Club is celebrating 70 years, and we can expect any of their members sailing in the Rias Baixas in July to join us for the celebrations.



officer and a long-standing close relationship. The formal rally dinner with guests will be at the Portosin clubhouse on 16th of July.

Land excursions are being arranged as part of EN24 to visit the spectacular waterfall at Ezaro, the archaeological site at Castro de Baroña, and by special invitation the Finisterre Traffic Control Centre on the very summit of Monte Enxa. There will even be a chance at Cape Finisterre to walk a short part of the pilgrim route "The Camino". Three luncheons in well regarded restaurants have been pre-booked. Anyone who requires more detail and has not yet booked for the rally should email mr.peterhaden@gmail.com. Payment of rally participation fee and for all pre-booked meals will be arranged in April and May. Notifications will go out via email and updates will be posted on the club website and calendar, as well as on the private club Facebook page.

Meanwhile, further south in the rias, work is almost completed with development and reconstruction at Moana after a major fire. At Puebla del Caramiñal it is hoped that the rebuilt facilities will be finished for this summer, and also nearby the completely new clubhouse at Cabo do Cruz. In many marinas, including Muros, work continues apace with composite artificial material being used to replace the tops of all the older wooden pontoons. At Combarro plans are being prepared for a further enlargement of the marina.



HQ of Finisterre Traffic Control

EN24 events start on the 8th of July at Finisterre, sailing towards Muros marina. We will then continue to a raft-up at San Francisco. Next, we have been invited to the well-appointed and friendly marina at Real Club Náutico Portosin with whom our club and the OCC share a port



Local musicians playing on the pontoon at Real Club Náutico Portosin



Anchored off the main beach at Islas Cies, the Portuguese Sail Training ship Vera Cruz, is a 2002 reproduction of a 15th Century Caravel with triangular lantern sails. Very impressive detail.

What's in a Name?

by Jim O'Meara

I have always been fascinated by the names of boats. Behind each name is a story, some obvious, some mysterious, cryptic even. Many tell of the owner's emotion regarding their boat or the sea. The adjective "magic" appears frequently, it has four hundred and seventy-six hits on Marine Traffic. New member and friend Jim Buckley's boat *Magic Elfin* has in effect doubly adopted the magic theme in his boat's name.

Many are named in honour of ancient past heroes, or events, e.g. *Odyssey* (341 hits), *Odysseus* (55 hits), *Ulysses* (68 hits), *Granuaile* (12 hits), *Tom Crean* (1 hit).

Eureka (69 hits), according to the Oxford dictionary, is defined as "a cry of joy or satisfaction when one discovers something". It was originally attributed to Archimedes who while taking a bath discovered a method for determining the purity of gold by measuring its density. I hope my friend and new member Pat Fleming has many incidents of crying "Eureka" in his *Moody 36* of the same name.

I really like the wonderful *Tír na mBeo* (Land of the Living), I spotted in Xufre recently. It has zero hits on Marine Traffic. But *Tír na nOg* (Land of Youth) has 17 hits. Girl's names are particularly popular. All the older Irish navy ships bore Irish female names: *LE* (Long Éireann) *Deirdre*, *LE Aisling*, *LE Aoife*, *LE Orla*, *LE Ciara*, *LE Roisin*. The newer ships are named after male Irish literary figures: *LE Samuel Beckett*, *LE James Joyce*, *LE William Butler Yeats*, and *LE George Bernard Shaw*.

The ICC Little Green Book is a treasure trove of interesting names. Girl's names abound: *Annabel J*, *Aoife*, *Cara*, *Christina of Howth*, *Elsie*, *Freya*, *Jane*, *Jasmine*, *Kitty*, *Lady Kate*, *Lydia*, *Maria*, *Marie Claire II*, *Mary Lee*, *Mary P.*; I must stop... Running out of word count! What a repository of family and nautical history is tied up in these names. Safe to say there are some interesting and strong female characters among them.

I particularly love Irish names on boats. The Green Book again... starting from the back this time: *Toirse 2*, *Sli Eile*, *Sí Gaoth*, *Saoirse*, *Renua*, *Oisín Bán*, *Muirneog*, *Molly Bán*, *Mac Lir*, *Mac Duach*, *Inis Bearachain*, *Éan Mara*, *Dóchas*, *Danú*, *Cruachan*, *Coire Uisge*, *As Láthair*, *Ar Ais Arís*. I skipped a 'few' for brevity.

Some names are just so evocative. *Tam O'Shanter*. The Robert Burns poem described as "a celebration of the life-affirming enjoyment of the joys of this world". Well worth a read! *Cruachan* (aka *Cruachàn Déiseach*) is significant for me, my first mountain climb at age ten. It overlooks Dungarvan, my hometown.

Some names intrigued me. They have a slightly different spelling and possibly different meaning from what Dr. Google indicates. Some research needed with the owners to confirm their interpretation, e.g. *Shukuran* or *Shukran*? *Zinzaida* or *Zinaida*?

Some people go to a lot of effort to name their boat with a name of local historical significance. I remember my friends Paddy and Olga McGlade doing great research before naming their boat *Sabrone*. It derives (I think) from the Irish name for Crosshaven, *Bun an tSabhairne*, meaning the end of the river Lee. Ptolemy's Geography described a river *Dabrona* which is now considered to be the Lee. Thus *Sabharne - Dabrona*... became *Sabrone*!

Every boat name is special, even if not unique, it holds a place in our hearts. Our second home, it becomes associated with memories of adventures good and bad. Our own boat is called *Second Chance*. Angela and I did not name it, but we like it. We believe in second chances in life and from many conversations we've had about it, especially in Spain, we've found that many people agree. I suppose we could have renamed it *Sean's Eile* or *Segunda Oportunidad*!

So, what's the story behind your favourite boat name? I would really love to hear it!

Enjoy the ICC Online

For current news, information, upcoming events, and discussions

Keep up to date with all matters ICC by following the news on our updated website. Remember also to keep your information up to date, and don't forget to upload a photo of yourself and your boat. Updates to the website are posted on our private Facebook page, where you can join in the discussions. Just search for "Irish Cruising Club" on Facebook, click on the link to the group page and then click on the "join" link. (Only members will be admitted.) You will then receive notifications of new posts on our website.



The Amvrakikos Gulf, Western Greece

by Katie and Jim Corbett

A Hidden Gem

The Ionian Islands are a joy to cruise and a paradise for charter yachts. Most of our holiday last year was spent cruising from north to south and back again on our yacht *Dóchas*. The town of Preveza is on the mainland, about halfway "down" the islands. There is a large marina in Preveza with all the facilities as well as a one-kilometer-long quay wall. Preveza sits across from Aktion where there are three large boat yards right next to an airport. The waterway between Preveza and Aktion is the entrance to the Amvrakikos Gulf. The Gulf is quiet and underdeveloped, and the charter yachts rarely go there, preferring the more popular Ionian islands. It is approximately twenty miles east-west and ten miles north-south. It is quite shallow compared with the rest of the Ionian with mooring depths of less than five metres with good holding on a mud or silt bottom. The water is brackish from the many rivers that flow into it.



Katie at Koronesia Wildlife Lagoon

Along the northern shore there is a large lagoon which is a protected wildlife area. The lagoon is bounded by a causeway that serves as a road to two settlements: Saloria and Koronesia. We arrived at Koronesia in a lively afternoon F6 and moored against the new quay wall. It looked a better bet than the older marina that was in need of repair. We spent a wonderful few days exploring the wildlife sanctuary and observing a great variety of birds, including great egrets, flamingos, white storks, and pelicans. We used our bikes to cycle along the causeway with water on both sides. One day, we were accosted by a local farmer who pressed fresh oranges, lemons, and cucumbers on us. Koronesia itself has a few houses, the obligatory church, and very little else. There are no shops, and no one was in a hurry there. There is a beach restaurant that opens infrequently, and we had some very, very long lunches there overlooking



Dochas alongside the Koronesia harbour wall

the water. Entertainment was provided watching turtles chewing limpets from the marina wall. Later, we watched a procession of small fishing boats heading out before sundown.

The Amvrakikos Gulf is interesting historically. North of the Gulf is the municipality of Epirus. The origin of this name goes back to antiquity. It was the King of Epirus who fought the Romans in what is now southern Italy, giving rise to the phrase "*Pyrrhic victory*", that is, a battle won at great cost. The gulf was the site of Battle of Aktion where Octavian defeated the fleets of Antony and Cleopatra. Octavian later became Emperor Augustus and the most peaceful time in Roman history ensued. In the Middle Ages the gulf was the site of many wars between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League. As a result, there are many fortifications that are worth visiting in the area.

We also visited Markou Bay and Vonitsa on the Southern shore. Markou is a peaceful anchorage with no facilities or town nearby, so very quiet. We spent a glorious night there under a full moon.

Vonitsa is the principal town in the area and caters largely for Greek tourists. It is a lovely town to walk with many cafes and shops. On the hill behind the town is a Venetian fortress which is open to the public during the summer months. During our visit, the quay wall was full, so we anchored on the far side of town behind a causeway in three metres of water with good holding. It is possible to moor stern-to along the quay wall for free so currently it is populated by live-aboards. It is only 20 minutes from the airport which makes it desirable for those spending a lot of time there. It is also very well protected from the weather. There is a plan to construct a marina at Vonitsa.

We enjoyed our visit to the Amvrakikos Gulf and vowed to return. We left for the busy Ionian on a bright sunny day with the wind behind us.

Les Voiles de St Tropez

by Patrick Dorgan



F-A: Kate Neville, Eddie Nicholson, Harold Cudmore, and Patrick Dorgan sailing in the Les Voiles de St. Tropez

Les Voiles de St. Tropez (formerly known as La Nioulargue) is one of the most spectacular regattas in the world. It's the final party of the Mediterranean season before everyone decamps to the Caribbean for the winter.

The writer's *Elsie*, a Cork Harbour OD, hatched in 1896, may well be the oldest boat in the ICC fleet. She sails in Cork Harbour, but her younger sister *Jap*, as is so often the case with younger sisters, has much more fun, and has been taken to the ball in the Mediterranean on many occasions by her various owners since she was restored by Clayton Love some years ago.

Harold Cudmore and Donal McClement have been at the apex of the considerable logistical efforts involved in keeping even a small classic boat in commission for the Mediterranean classic regattas. This effort is greatly aided by the fact that *Jap* has her own container, into which she and her equipment can easily be loaded and then transported by road.

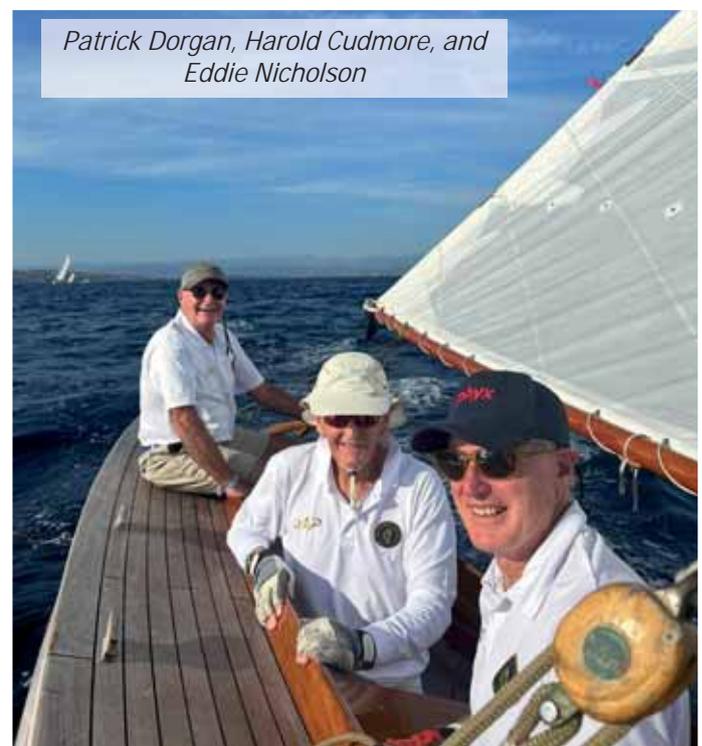
It was with some trepidation that Eddie Nicholson (ICC) – each of us being by some distance the worst Laser sailors in Cork and Kinsale 40 odd years ago – agreed to join with Harold to sail *Jap* in Les Voiles in October. We would be joined by the “pro” crew of Chris Bateman and Kate Neville, who are both of an age where the agility required at the front of the boat doesn't involve constant grunting. Having looked at the travel options, Eddie and I decided that the easiest way to get to St. Tropez with all the required gear was to drive there. So, we drove to Rosslare, got on the Brittany ferry, and sailed to Bilbao. It was a mere 1000km hop from there to St. Tropez.

The wind in St. Tropez Bay generally doesn't exist unless a sea breeze fills in, but the waiting around gives you the opportunity to see the world's finest yachts up close. Not just the maxis, Wallys and all the rest, but also their accompanying mother ships – four and five decks tall. The buzzing of helicopters was almost continuous. The bay was literally crammed with these monsters as well as all the giant classic schooners, the 12-metres, and practically every other classic yacht you ever heard of. The only drawback of all of this eye candy was that the wash from dozens of tenders, spectator and press boats made sailing quite tricky until well out in the bay.

The sailing was of course magnificent when the wind filled in each day, particularly as we won our first two races. Modesty forbids me to say who was driving. The memory of reaching at full bore into a gybe mark with the famous old Italian ocean racer *Il Moro di Venezia* with her 70' Wally chase boat to windward and the massive schooner *Elena* with 12 sails aloft thundering up to leeward will not be soon forgotten – and perhaps not by them either, as Harold urged us onwards into a narrowing gap...

Unfortunately, the logistics dictated that we had to retire from the last race – had we continued we would have won our class overall – as Eddie and I had to do the 1000k drive back to Bilbao through the night, and the non-grunting crew had to get the boat to Cogolin to be de-rigged and got into her container against a tight delivery deadline.

Pilotage note: The next day, as Eddie and I relaxed in the sun on the after deck, with a pint in hand, we reflected that if you are going to sail across Biscay in October, do it on a comfortable car ferry.



Patrick Dorgan, Harold Cudmore, and Eddie Nicholson

Exploring the Rivers Around our Coast

by Peter Mullan



River Quoile

Travel up the river Foyle or the river Boyne and your navigation has an extra challenge. What is the clearance under bridges? How high is your mast with antennae and wind sensors? As it happens, ships pass under these two bridges so there is no problem.

For me, one of the joys of cruising is to explore rivers and their towns or cities. With every bend in the river, new views open up; all sorts of craft appear. Sometimes riverside pubs bring the chance of a lunchtime pint. The major town or city will have a comfortable berth from where we can go explore, meet friends, or change crews easily.



Oyster Bay at play on river Quoile. Photo Tommy Brown

Turning left from my Strangford base at Quoile takes us up the County Down coast to Belfast Lough and the River Lagan. That should be an easy start to a river adventure as it's not far up from Bangor. Watch for the passing the big ferries leaving as they suck the water out from under you. If you are keeping close to the edge of the dredged channel, your shallow water can become very shallow and a bump on the mud is very possible. In Belfast many Titanic adventures happen. It's my home city and lovely to visit by boat.

Going on round the Antrim coast, on a visit into the river Bann, there is a very quiet anchorage behind Portstewart Golf Course, perfect for a quiet sheltered lunch. We raised a glass to the memory of Wallace Clark and his *Wild Goose*. From Greencastle up to Derry is about thirty miles. The city is well worth a visit. Mind the dredged channel as it is much narrower than the navigation buoys would suggest. Another bump on the mud is possible if you don't keep a close eye on the chart plotter.

Continue round Donegal and across the bay to Rosses Point. The *Iron Man* will point you in the right direction.



River Shannon cruising at Killinure aboard Commodore David Beattie's Schollevaer

Keep a close eye on the detailed instructions in the ICC Sailing Directions and tide tables if you want to go right up to moor beside the bridge in Sligo. Halfway up the river, we only sat in the mud long enough for tea and a Twix before the tide rose enough to get on up to the quay. Again, the town is steeped in history and has great pubs. This river exploration was not planned but a gale forecast meant Mullaghmore was not an option for my crew change.

I can digress from my coastal rambling for a while and recall mini cruises on Lough Ree on the River Shannon and on the River Erne. Beautiful scenery, good company and good food on ICC rallies

Back on down the west coast past Dingle to Baltimore for a pilgrimage up the River Ilan to Old Court to visit Hegarty's boatyard. *Ilan* was on the slip taking on ballast. We were given a tour of the boat in its fresh new paint. When *Ilan* floated off, we motored round to the quay, about a hundred yards. The shortest ever trip on *Ilan*. *Saoirse* was under cover about to start planking. A magical place. We went up to Old Court just before high water and left just after. With the tide falling, we were very careful with our navigation coming back down-river. Following our track upriver on the chart plotter made coming back down more relaxing.

Out to Clear Harbour and round the Fastnet in glorious sunshine. The golden spinnaker got an airing while we headed for Cork. A crew member from Downpatrick was due to catch the train to Belfast. Another river cruise took us right up the River Lee to the pontoon beside the Cork harbourmaster's office. The harbour commissioner's office was very grand. We were entertained to tea and biscuits and tales of the civil war!

On the water beside us, there were dragon boats racing. Loads of mad women in brilliantly coloured boats and costumes were having loads of fun. They were breast cancer survivor groups having a ball.

Further back down the river, oarsmen in eights were practising. Alan, who had rowed for Methodist College Belfast many years ago, was very impressed with their style.

With a new crew, our next river trip was up into Waterford. Another historical city which was once the wine importing

The Iron Man (aka Metal Man) is a freestanding painted cast iron statue of a Royal Navy petty officer of the Age of Sail. It is placed between Rosses Point, Sligo and Oyster Island.

*Canals are good fun too.
This is Cairnbaan on the Crinan canal*



capital of Ireland. It was historical for me too. Back in my late teens I was sailing with Alex Robinson ICC. On our cruise along the south coast, he motored us up into the town to buy presents for his children. The rest of us crew were bored, so while he was away, we put up all sail including the spinnaker. As Alex stepped back on board, we let go mooring lines and sped off down river under full sail. Luckily the wind direction was perfect.

Arklow was the next river to be briefly explored. It is so shallow right in the middle that a little ploughing of the mud is usually required. In 1971 I celebrated my 21st birthday in Arklow with Graham Chambers and his crew from *Glance* who had tied up beside us.

Another river which I cruised up a very long time ago was the Boyne. I was a member of Carlingford Lough yacht club. Too many stories attached to that wee trip, it would be a story in itself.

The one big river I have yet to explore is the Liffey. The one town I really want to get to is Dungarvan. Perhaps next time.



Western Wanderings

by Conor O'Byrne

Daria Blackwell reports that Santa was very good this year and delivered a scale model of *Aleria*, their beautiful Bowman 57 ketch. Alex has been busy refurbishing a 1934 wooden Century *Black Demon*, which is a hydroplane, with a stepped hull design. This is a boat he inherited from his stepfather in the 1970s. Following sound advice from Jarlath Cunnane, instead of replacing (all) the timber, he has sanded it down,



supplemented all the old brass screws with stainless steel and encased the hull with epoxy and fibreglass roving. The hull was originally painted, which he is replicating. Alex is benefitting from the assistance of a talented young Ukrainian cabinetmaker on this project. In other news, the Blackwells have installed a new solar photovoltaic array at their home this winter, so this



Daria's model of Aleria

StarLink system. In May he plans to sail to the Azores and spend a few weeks cruising there. Afterwards he will sail back to Kilrush if he has suitable weather, or perhaps Galicia if the weather pushes them south. If anyone is interested in joining Paul for a leg of this cruise they should get in touch with him.

Jarlath Cunnane reports that the new edition of his book "**Northabout: sailing the Northwest and Northeast passage**" is now out, and available to ICC members at a discounted price. The book is reviewed elsewhere in this newsletter by Michael Brogan, but worth mentioning here that it includes new material on the White Sea Canal (Belomorkanal), particularly relevant now during Putin's tyrannical regime in Russia. It also includes a chapter on the building of a replica of the *James Caird* (the vessel that made the famous passage from Elephant Island to South Georgia during Shackleton's

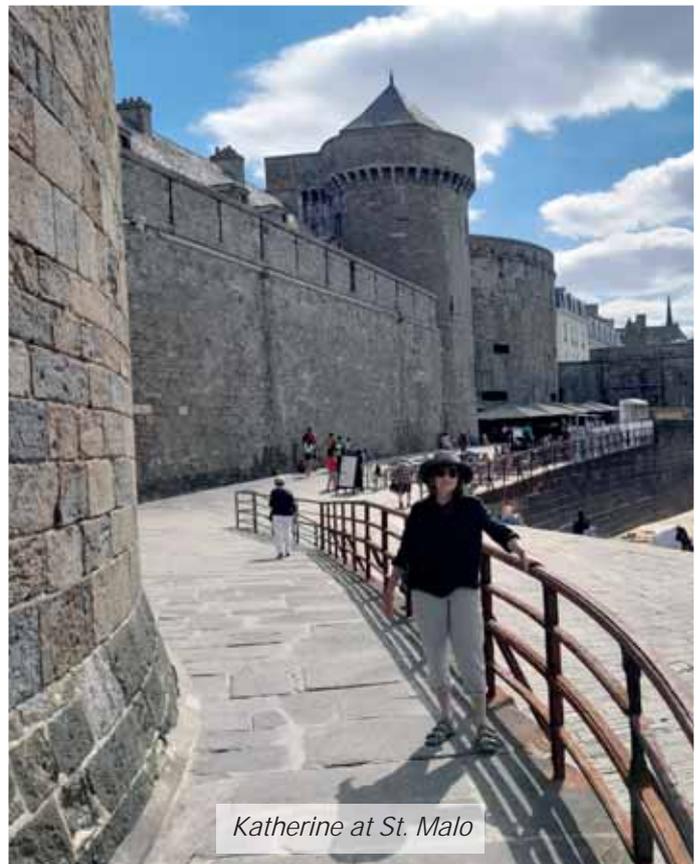
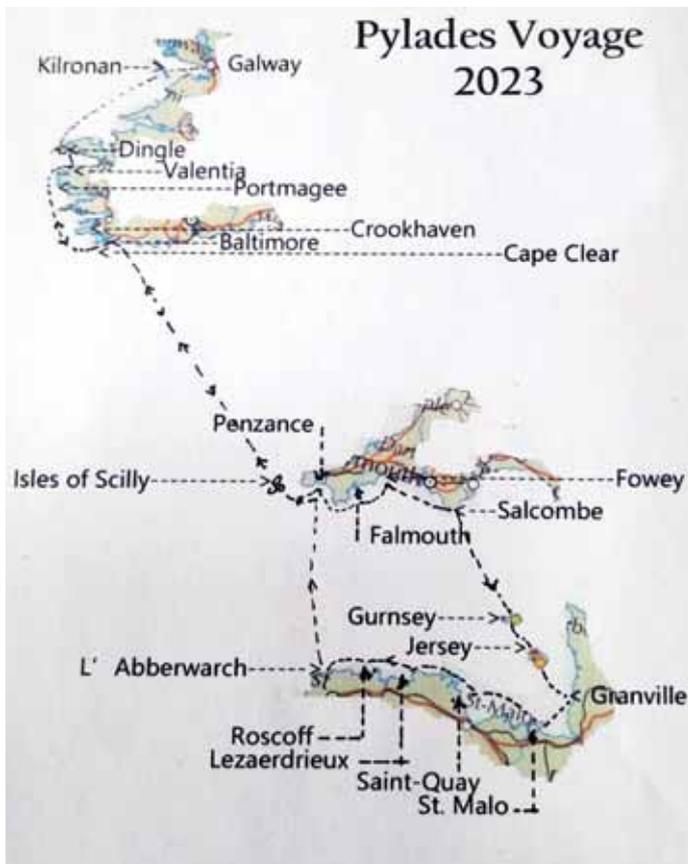


Alex's project boat is nearing completion

should help offset the electricity used in their workshop and winery. The only cruising plan they have so far is take a luxury barge cruise through the canals of France, to celebrate a significant birthday in the family.

Paul French reports that he was rejoining *Embla*, his Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 45 in Porto Santo at the end of February, where she has been on the hard since the *Saoirse* Rally last July. Following a bumpy passage to Madeira last summer the boat is in need of some upkeep and repairs. Amongst other things, the job list includes the installation of new solar panels and a





Katherine at St. Malo

expedition) to honour Harry McNish, the ship's carpenter. McNish was churlishly overlooked by Shackleton in his recommendation for polar medals after the expedition.

Fergus Quinlan reports that he and Katherine enjoyed 3 months of good cruising (1193nm) aboard *Pylades*, their self-built 12m van de Stadt-designed steel cutter. They cruised from Galway to Brittany and back, with stops in West Cork, the Isles of Scilly, Penzance, Salcombe, the Channel Islands, Normandy, and Brittany. They were joined by their 13-year old grandson Ruairí Owens for the leg from Galway to Valentia. They stopped off at St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly and report an amusing incident with a visitors mooring that turned out to be in use by a local fishing vessel. The harbour master had already collected a fee for the mooring so the skipper of *Pylades* held firm! The return passage from New Grimbsy to Baltimore saw some fresh westerly winds, a pulled hernia, and an anxious approach to the harbour entrance in zero visibility, just passing to port of the Loo Rock starboard mark with breakers visible just beyond. But the welcome they got on the pontoon more than made up for the difficult passage: "Are ye the Round-the-World Quinlans"!

Our former commodore, David Beattie reports that *ReeSpray*, his Bruce Robert's Spray 40, is currently being prepared for the season in Kilrush Boatyard. He plans to launch in late April and leave for Brittany in May to participate in the ICC rally. After that he plans to potter down the French coast eventually returning to the Vilaine River for the autumn, where he will lay up in La Roche Bernard. Impressively he is already planning a cruise to Scotland for the following summer.

Bob Earlie sends his report from a stormy Spiddal. In the years since he left his home port of Rossaveel in 2014 he has ambled south on *Modus Vivendi*. Now, having wintered in Brittany, Galicia, Algarve, Greece, and on the Guadiana, he has returned to Galicia. He changed yachts while in the Guadiana, where he acquired *B Hive*, a Moody 422. The Guadiana glue set in and they stayed two seasons on this delightful river with beautiful walks and chats with fellow yachties. There they enjoyed cruises up to Penha d'Agua, north of Alcoutim, and sorties east and west along the Algarve. Their last passage was a quickly planned road transport of *B Hive* to Galicia last December. So now they're almost ready for a new season without the need to beat northwards or beat off the odd orca!



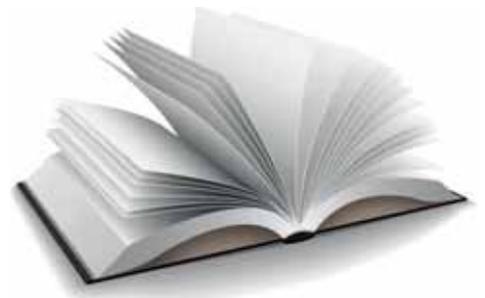
Bob Earlie's new boat, B Hive

Nautical Narrative

A review by Conor O'Byrne

The *Wager* - a Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny, and Murder

by David Grann, published in April 2023



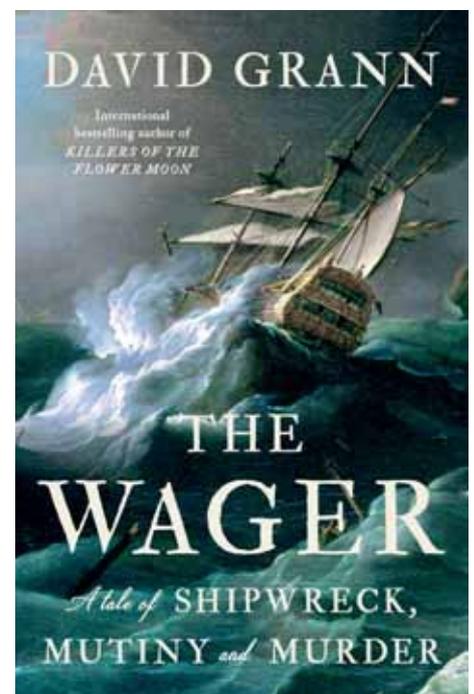
The non-fiction writer David Grann has written a dramatic historical account of the last voyage of *HMS Wager*, a sixth-rate Royal navy warship carrying 28 guns. She set sail from England in 1740, bound for Chile as part of a British flotilla whose covert mission was to take as a prize a treasure-laden Spanish galleon off the Chilean coast. She lost contact with the squadron while rounding Cape Horn and the remainder of the voyage was unaccompanied.

The hardships endured by the sailors are recounted brilliantly by the author including the savage weather and sea conditions, the cramped and soggy quarters on board, and the scurvy and typhus that plagued the ship and caused their bodies to disintegrate. Many of the sailors lose their struggle to live during the voyage. But the worst is still to come. With some uncertainty about the ship's longitude they unwittingly sail too close to the Chilean coast and become shipwrecked on a small and remote Patagonian island, now known as Wager Island.

The ensuing drama centres on the tense relationship between the captain David Cheap and the ship's gunner John Bulkeley. While the Captain remains true to his orders, he fails to inspire the confidence of all the surviving sailors. Bulkeley on the other hand is an intuitive leader who has his own ideas about how they should make their escape from the desolate island. This dynamic is at the heart of the narrative and ultimately it was for a Royal Navy court martial to decide who was responsible for the loss of the *Wager* and the fate of the crew.

The *Wager* is a riveting read that has all the elements of a great story: strong personalities, drama on the high seas, survival against the odds, all set against the backdrop of the clash between two maritime empires (Britain and Spain) struggling for global dominance. This is a book that I thoroughly enjoyed and highly recommend it to ICC readers.

Publisher: Simon & Schuster UK
Paperback, 368 pages
ISBN-13: 978-1471183706
Dimensions: 13 x 2.25 x 19.8 cm



ICC Award Winners 2023

The Challenge Trophies

- The Faulkner Cup – Ed Wheeler
- The Strangford Cup – Máire Breathnach
- The Fortnight Cup – Alan Leonard
- The Round Ireland Navigation Cup – No Award
- The Wybrants Cup – Colin Leonard
- The Fingal Cup – Daragh Nagle
- The Rockabill Trophy – Paul Conway & Gillian Fletcher
- The Glengarriff Trophy – Conor O'Byrne
- The Atlantic Trophy – Ed Wheeler
- The Perry Greer Bowl – Tony Linehan
- The Wild Goose Cup – Frank Cassidy
- The Marie Trophy – Paddy Barry
- The Dunn's Ditty Salver – Brian Law

Irish Cruising Club Awards

- The John B Kearney Cup – Ed Wheeler
- The Fastnet Award – No Award
- The Friendship Cup – Peter Haden
- The Gull Salver – the Murphy Family
- The Wright Salver – Adrian & Maeve Bell
- The Donegan Memorial Trophy – Tony Linehan
- The Waterford Harbour Cup – Tom Kirby
- The Aran Islands' Trophy – Tom Foote
- The Trans-Oceanic Pennant – No Award
- The ICC Photographic Plate (pg 8) – Patricia Nixon
- ICC Golf Trophy – Finn Lyden

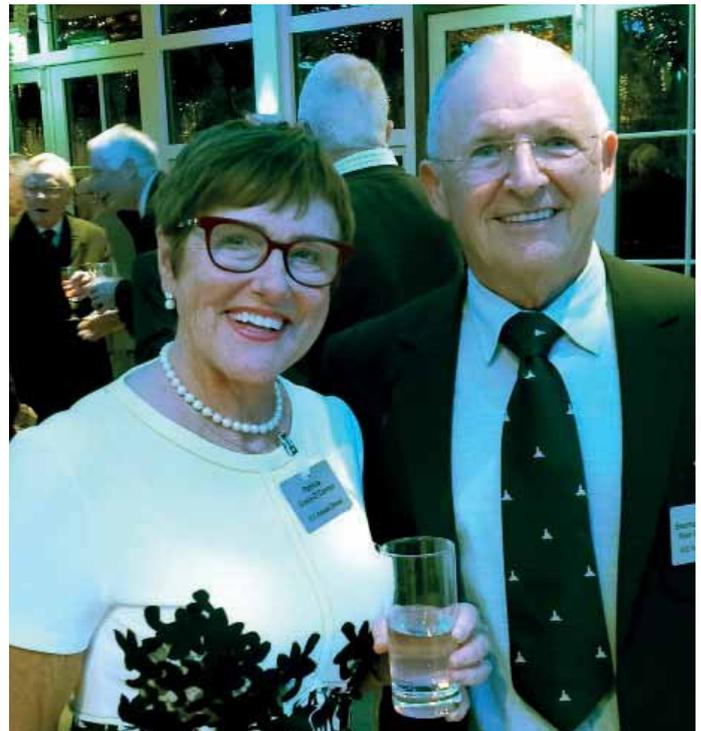
ICC Annual Weekend in Cork

by John McAleer



Nick Chavasse, Commodore of the Royal Cruising Club and Bob Medland, former Commodore of the Cruising Club of America

The Club's 2024 Annual Weekend commenced on Friday 22nd March with a new members' reception and meal at the Maryborough Hotel, Cork.



Patricia and Séamus O'Connor



Saturday 23rd March was the main day of activities. Members with their guests participated in a guided tour of Spike Island, a coastal walk in Crosshaven, or a golfing competition at the Monkstown Golf Club.

On Saturday night, 240 members and their guests enjoyed the ICC's annual dinner.

This gala event, with special guests former Commodore Bob and Sally Medland of the Cruising Club of America and Commodore of the Royal Cruising Club Nick Chavasse and his wife Margie. One of the highlights of the night was the presentation of the Friendship Cup to Peter Haden, in recognition of his work in building ICC connections and comradery, through his ongoing activities in Galicia, Spain.

The event notably raised a sum of over €4,000 to support the RNLI.



Northern Notes

by Maeve Bell

Our wet and windy winter season has been punctuated with lunches and walks. Our usual Christmas format of a members' meeting followed by Christmas lunch in the ever-hospitable Royal Ulster Yacht Club (RUYC) in Bangor was greatly enjoyed by 80 members and their guests at the start of December. This was followed after Christmas by a bracing walk at Murlough Bay on the County Down coast organised by Rear Commodore (and since the AGM Vice Commodore) Julie Chambers and her husband Graham. Next up was the train trip to Derry on Friday 26th January to enjoy a lunch expertly organised by Committee member Des Brown in Brown's restaurant (no relation) conveniently situated across the road from the train station.



On the bridge leading into Belvoir Forest Park

A further outing took place on Friday 1st March when Maeve and Adrian Bell organised a walk along the Lagan tow path and through Belvoir Forest. Despite starting in red brick suburbia, within 50 metres not a house can be seen as the path along the riverbank has Lagan Meadows on one side and woodlands on the other. Much of the island had woken up to icy conditions and a blanket of snow, but 20 members and friends enjoyed a dry morning and good shelter from the bracing NE winds. An unexpected treat was being invited into Belfast Boat Club after we finished and sitting down to tea, coffee, and an array of freshly made croissants and cream buns, all of which were polished off. Our grateful thanks to Caroline Minnis's brother, a member of the club, for organising it.

New Harbour Developments

An extension to the south breakwater of Greencastle harbour in Co. Donegal is nearing completion and there is optimism that the Council will put pontoons back in place for the season. There will be parking nearby and disabled access to the gangway. The breakwater will give more protection from the south, but it will probably still be open to wind and swell from the NE or Rathlin



At Brown's restaurant, Derry

direction. It is a good development along the north coast but its usefulness for cruising yachts may be limited if it does not offer sheltered berths in all conditions.

Meanwhile in Strangford Lough, Quoile Yacht Club is replacing its pontoons. The original pontoons have lasted nearly 40 years and, according to ICC member David McCormick who is also the QYC's Mooring Officer, are definitely past their 'sell by' date. The new structure, being supplied by Inland and Coastal, will be secured by large mooring blocks which are between 4 and 5 tonnes each. Installation took place in early March. Quoile is of course one of the ICC's favourite places to visit given the warm welcome which always awaits.

Congratulations

Many congratulations to Colin Leonard who made the trip 'Down Under' for the ICLA Masters and won a Silver Medal. Held in Adelaide, Colin describes the competition in which he raced in the Apprentice division as *"a cracker event"*. As he often had to train on his own, he describes his approach as *"...doing what you can to prepare and then playing to your strengths. I focused on boat speed and aiming for midline starts with good speed resulted in plenty of races with minimal drama!"* A mere week or so later at the Club's AGM, Colin collected the Wybrant Cup for the best cruise in Scottish waters, perhaps a first in the Club's history.

Congratulations also go to our members who won Royal Ulster YC awards for their cruising logs including Ed Wheeler and Alan Leonard (see our 2023 Annual, while Myles and Brenda Lindsay were presented with the John Thompson Memorial Trophy for their trip home from Sicily to Bangor in their new boat *Kandoo*. They had no fewer than six ICC members on board with them at various stages along the way. They plan to cruise the Clyde and west coast of Scotland during this summer.

Members on the Move

Paul McSorley managed a late September weekend trip on *Viking Lord* to Downings, Co. Donegal. He was rewarded with an exciting sail, a fine sunset, an Ireland victory in the World Cup, and a lively night in the Harbour Bar overlooking the bay, before a peaceful night on the mooring. He recommends Downings as a first class stop



in settled weather especially given the double-decker bus parked on the pier where the fish & chips are excellent, and the upper deck offers a great view of the sunset.

Having cruised in Scotland since their return from the Canary Islands, Andy and Paddy McCarter hope to head down the west coast of Ireland in *Gwili 3* while David and Lesley MacDonald are heading south towards Lagos in Portugal. Des and Mo Brown will make a decision as they leave Lough Foyle depending on the wind direction on the day. Oliver Lynas has sold *Tara of Moyle*, and she will go to a new home on the other side of Belfast Lough in Carrickfergus, while Peter and David Williams are also about to swallow the anchor and sell the well-travelled *Reiver*.

Margie Crawford is anticipating a busy season combining racing and cruising. She writes: *This will be my third season of 'growing up' from dinghy racing to join the big boats in my Impala 28, Romper, better late than never! She can hardly be called a cruising boat, more of a racer/cruiser, with all the tweaking and fine-tuning required to get the best performance out of her, but we fully intend to cruise up to Scotland and over to Peel on the Isle of Man. Although Romper is not very big, she is feisty with a powerful rig and is exciting to sail. My crew consists in the main of five enthusiastic and intrepid women and we are all still learning and developing as a team. However, as I am still recovering from a shoulder operation in November, winter work on Romper is a little behind. Our crucial target date is the weekend of 25th/26th May when EDYC is hosting the Impala European Championship on Strangford Lough. Most of the Impalas are in the south of England where the racing is highly competitive, so this is quite a feather in the cap of the Club.*

Peter Bullick has spent a hectic few years buying and selling boats: *"I bought El Torro, an Elan Impression 434, in 2006 and, over the 14 years I owned her, we cruised extensively to Orkney, the Outer Hebrides including St. Kilda, the coastal waters of Scotland and Ireland, and down to Brittany. I sold her in 2019. With the benefit of hindsight that was a mistake! I purchased Dorella, a Nelson 29, in 2020 just before the Covid19 lockdown. Dorella required a huge amount of refurbishment – my Covid project. We did a cruise over to the Clyde but the following May I sold her to ICC members in Crosshaven."*

"A month later I purchased Kittiwake, a Rustler 36. Kittiwake required a lot of TLC as she had been sitting on her berth for two or three years unused. The inside was as good as the year she was built; however, the exterior had suffered. We managed a few short cruises over two years before selling Kittiwake last summer. But I missed not having a yacht. I purchased Highlander, a 2000 Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 37 in November 2023, no refurbishment this time."

Peter along with Rosemary Stevenson intend to sail *Highlander* in Scotland this summer. Adrian and I plan to be back in the Baltic during the summer months but, before that, have plans to return to the west coast of Scotland in late May after an absence of a decade or more.

Coming events

- Spring lunch Wednesday 24th April at 12.30hrs in Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club.
- Spring rally from 24 to 26th May, venue to be confirmed.



Margie Crawford
downwind



2024-25 Irish Cruising Club Committee

Reto Astrolabio (The Astrolabe Challenge)

by Peter Fernie

Many members will be familiar with Nito Diéguez of Varadoira do Xufre in Ria Arousa, Galicia, either because his boatyard is the winter storage location of many ICC boats or because of his involvement with the Irish Curragh Camino some years ago. He also republished at the time of our Rias Baixas rally in 2017, the scholarly account of Plácido Castro's visit to the Blasket islands in 1928, to which Norman Kean wrote a Foreword.

His latest adventure is with a group of Galician sailors to sail across the Atlantic using only seventeenth Century navigational instruments. The yacht, *La Pelegrina* (The Pilgrim) will depart from Isla Arousa bound for La Gomera where the voyage will officially begin. All modern navigational aids will be formally sealed up and only an hour glass (ampolletas), a small boat log (corredera de barquilla), an astrolabe (astrolabio), and a cross staff (ballestilla) will be available. The crew also hope that their final piece of navigational equipment will be their noses and will investigate the reputed ability of sailors to smell the land when 3 or 4 days away. The destination is Isla Desirade, a small island to the east of Guadalupe in the Caribbean Windward Islands.



La Pelegrina is a handsome boat with beautiful sea going lines. Some members will have noticed her in the Xufre yard. She is a 20-metre steel, German Frers design, built in Argentina in 1984. She already has many Atlantic crossings to her name. Although all navigational aids will be sealed, *La Pelegrina* will carry a tracker, to which the crew will not have access but which will allow the outside world to follow her progress.

The Captain of the challenge, Avier Babé has a long sailing history and previously captained the first Spanish sailing expedition to Antarctica in 1982 before buying *La Pelegrina* thirty years ago as a charter boat for high latitude and diving expeditions.

The challenge commenced on late February and can be followed on <https://retoastrolabio.com>.