



# ICC News

Newsletter of the Irish Cruising Club

Autumn 2024



Dear Member,

It has once again been my distinct pleasure compiling your 2024 Autumn *ICC News*. With every issue the regional editors and I wonder what it is we might receive from you and then wind up marvelling at the wide variety of excellent contributions. Thank you to all the contributors to this issue. If you haven't contributed yet, perhaps you will consider sending in some short notes in the future. I am certain that your fellow members will be interested in what you've been up to.

I would like to draw your attention to the back cover in this instance. A good deal of work has gone into updating and upgrading your website. Of particular note is the member-accessible database that enables you to update your personal information, which is what goes into the Little Green Book. Please do take a look and ensure that everything is correct and up-to-date.

Finally, I wish you all a lovely winter, full of planning the adventures for the next 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 memory stick and mailed to:

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## Closing dates for submissions:

Spring Issue:	February 28th
Autumn Issue:	September 15th

## ICC News is the newsletter of the Irish Cruising Club

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Front Cover: The historic lug-sailed Scottish Zulu *Swallow* at the 45th Cruinniú na mBád, Kinvara.  
Photo Michael Brogan.



# Commodore's Letter

By Alan Markey

It is hard to believe that Summer 2024 has already come and gone. I hope you had the chance to participate in some of the many exciting ICC events hosted throughout the season either at home or further afield.

The Northern Region had a particularly active summer, which started with their Spring Rally in Glenarm on the May bank holiday weekend. Helen and I were delighted to attend the Autumn Rally at Quoile Yacht Club on August 25th, and the hospitality and entertainment were, as always exceptional.

In June, sixteen boats made their way to the Brittany Rally. Most boats benefited from the unusually persistent northerly winds that ensured a fast and enjoyable passage to Bénodet, where the Rally commenced. Over the next ten days we enjoyed the attractive towns and islands that this excellent cruising ground has to offer. The food was also excellent.

Meanwhile, Peter Haden organised Encuentro Nautico 2024 (EN24), another very memorable event featuring a variety of excursions, scenic walks, and fantastic meals. Although I was unable to attend, having just returned from Brittany, I have heard nothing but glowing reviews.

Our Summer adventures continued with a four-day Bantry Bay Cruise which took place from July 31st starting in Lawrence Cove and included the annual Whiddy Island Chase before finishing with a raft-up in Glengarriff.

We eagerly anticipate reading more about these and other adventures in the upcoming Annual, including the many cruises undertaken by members both at home and abroad.

Your committee continues to work diligently on behalf of the Club. Plans are well underway for the remaining events this year and into the next. The East Region Committee has been quietly working behind the scenes to organise the Annual Dinner Weekend at Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar on March 28th-29th, 2025. This weekend promises to be one of the highlights of the year, and full details, including booking arrangements, will be shared in November.

In addition, Rear Commodore South, Séamus O'Connor has developed an exciting plan to commemorate the centenary of Conor O'Brien's and Saoirse's return to Ireland after his remarkable circumnavigation. The celebration will feature a 'Cruise in Company' from Baltimore in West Cork to Dun Laoghaire, with a planned arrival on the 20th of June 2025.

Looking ahead, our major club event for 2025 is participation in the Western Isles Cruise, organised in collaboration with the Cruising Club of America. Invitations have been extended to members of the Irish Cruising Club, the Ocean Cruising Club, the Clyde Cruising Club, the Royal Cruising Club, and the Royal Highland Yacht Club. With so many active cruising clubs involved, this event promises to be a spectacular gathering not to be missed.

Finally, Helen and I look forward to seeing many of you at the Christmas lunches, AGM, Annual Dinner, and other upcoming events.

In the meantime, best wishes for a healthy winter season.

*Alan Markey*  
Commodore



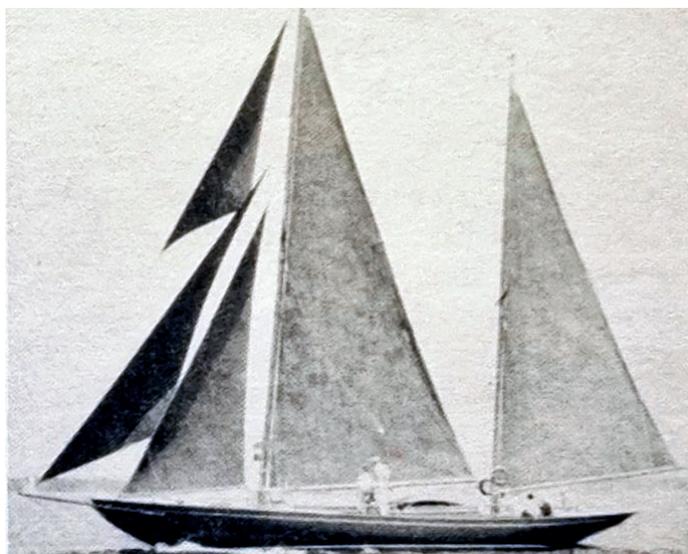
Alan Markey, Chris Otorowski (CCA), and Nick Chavasse (RCC)  
at Sa Rapita, Mallorca - See the following.

# The CCA and the ICC

Commodore Alan Markey shares some of the historical bonds between the ICC and the CCA at the recent CCA cruise in Mallorca

## Excerpted from the History of the Cruising Club of America

The ICC and the Cruising Club of America's relationship goes back to the very day the ICC was founded on July 13th, 1929. Immediately after the inaugural meeting, the founding members continued their cruise eastwards back to Cork City. The fleet of 5 ICC boats was joined by Thomas F. Cooke's 56-foot ketch *Seven Bells*, the 1928 CCA Blue Water Medal winner, who had intended to continue westwards, but was so taken with the conviviality of the fledgling Irish Cruising Club that they altered their plans to Cruise in Company with the Irish Yachts. This was the beginning of the link between the two clubs, which has grown in strength over the years.



CCA member Thomas F. Cook's 56 foot ketch *Seven Bells*, which joined the inaugural ICC cruise in Glengarriff.

From Bob Drew's written recollections: "In 1967 Richard M. (Bunny) Byrnes sailed across to Ireland in *Adele*, a 49-ft yawl. Also, that year Wright Britton cruised to the Emerald Isle in *Delight* and provided valuable cruising information to Cruising Club of America members. Bunny was our 'Ambassador.' He sailed seven times across the pond to visit Irish Cruising Club friends."

"In 1969 the ICC and CCA organized a Transatlantic Race and a Cruise in Company. The race was a way to get CCA boats to Ireland to help celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Cork Yacht Club. CCA Commodore Clayton Ewing, H.K. (Bunny) Rigg, and Porter Schutt organized the race from Newport to Cork in conjunction with The Royal Cork Yacht Club Commodore Admiral Clayton Love, Jr. The ICC organized the Cruise in Company. The CCA sponsored the Transatlantic Race, and the Royal Cruising Club actively participated in the Cruise in Company. On Jun 22nd the 26-boat fleet, including one Irish boat, Perry Greer's *Helen of Howth*, gathered



Bell given to the ICC in 1996 by CCA Commodore Bob Drew

Bob Drew's legendary keg creation providing valuable service every year at the ICC at the Annual Weekend.



in Newport for the start. The Race was won by James Kilroy's *Kialoa* while Huey Long's *Ondine* crossed the finish line 48 minutes later. After the race, a fleet of 90 boats began a Cruise in Company, a far cry from the 1st ICC cruise 40 years earlier with 6 boats including the American ketch *Seven Bells*."

Alan Markey: "During the '60s, Honorary Membership was playing an increasing part of the ICC, and by



ICC Commodore David Beattie presenting a hand carved 5,000+ year old bogwood award to CCA Commodore Otorowski, September 2022

1969 the Club's Honorary Members list included the Commodore of the CCA, Clayton Ewing. Since the '60s, every CCA Commodore has been an Honorary Member of the ICC during their term of office. Indeed, several notable CCA members became members of the ICC, including Hank du Pont, Bunny and Ruth Byrnes, and Jock Kiely. Bob Drew was elected a lifetime Honorary Member by Former ICC Commodore Liam McGonagle (CCA member Barbara Watson is an ICC member)."

"In 1979 another race to Ireland was planned, to be followed by a Cruise in Company with the CCA, RCC, and the Clyde Cruising Club to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Irish Cruising Club. This time the race was to start from Marblehead, Mass., and end in Cork. Seventeen yachts braved the cold waters of the Atlantic to participate in the legendary Irish hospitality. This same year the RCC celebrated its 100th anniversary. The presiding Commodores were Peter Comstock CCA, John Guinness ICC, and Ronnie Andrews RCC."

"In 1985 the Clyde Cruising Club held its 75th anniversary with a Cruise in Company in Scotland. Once again CCA, ICC, and RCC members were brought together. CCA past commodore Jim Pitney organized the CCA fleet. A Cruise in Company in Ireland made sense because some boats that raced to Bermuda could also carry on to Ireland, and others could sail from the East Coast."

"To celebrate The 70-year Platinum Jubilee of the CCA in 1992, the CCA organized a Transatlantic race to Spain. While no ICC boats participated in the race, several ICC yachts, including future ICC Commodore John H. Guinness, took part in the Cruise in Company

amongst the rias of northwest Spain."

From Bob Drew's written recollections: "A CCA 75th event in 1997 was a Winter Cruise in the Caribbean. The CCA chartered the *Sea Cloud* as the mother ship. ICC notables such as Bernie and Kathleen Cahill were aboard along with Clayton Love Jr. and Betty. CCA Commodore Bob Drew and Mindy were aboard the *Knight Hawk* along with ICC Commodore Liam and Barbara McGonagle. In May of 1997, Liam and Barbara travelled to Annapolis where the CCA held the gala Blue Water Ball at the U.S. Naval Academy. During a dinner meeting of the CCA at the New York Yacht Club, Liam, on behalf of the Irish Cruising Club, presented the CCA with a beautiful antique telescope to be passed on by our Commodores."

Alan Markey: "Over 170 boats attended the ICC 75th Cruise in Company in 2004. There were 23 CCA-skippered boats of which 9 had sailed over for the event. CCA Commodore Truman Casner also attended the week-long rally."

"CCA commodores and their wives are regular guests at ICC annual dinner weekends, and ICC Commodores regularly attend CCA functions. CCA Commodore Bob Drew presented the ICC with a bell in 1996 and a rum keg; Commodore Brad Willauer presented an antique compass, and most recently, Commodore Chris Otorowski gifted the Friendship Cup to be awarded annually to a member who exemplifies the values of the ICC. At the CCA Centennial, ICC Commodore David Beattie presented the CCA Commodore Chris Otorowski with a unique 5,000+ year-old bogwood carving of a sailing yacht."

**“Over the years, three ICC members have been awarded the CCA Blue Water Medal:**

- 1983 John Gore-Grimes - for a decade of adventurous cruising
- 1990 Paddy Barry - for cruising St. Patrick, a traditional timber boat, in the high latitudes
- 2005 Jarlath Curnane - for building and skippering *Northabout* in a four year east to west polar circumnavigation



The "Friendship Cup"  
Presented by Cruising Club of America  
Commodore Otorowski to the  
Irish Cruising Club,  
March 2023

ICC Commodore David Beattie has extended an invitation to the CCA to participate in a race to Ireland in 2029 and a Cruise in Company for ICC's centennial."

"We at the ICC look forward to many more cruises and interactions between our two clubs!"

Alan Markey

# What the club is all about

by Pat Fleming



Anchorage. Ile de d'Arz. Morbihan. 28.06.24

Due to Maeve's present physical limitations and the busy lives of my family and friends, I often find myself sailing on my own. While I am happy in my own skin, especially at sea, it is always nice to meet and spend time with others when ashore. In this my first season as a member of the club I have been well looked after by its members.

I attended the Brittany rally in June and very soon after my arrival I was invited aboard *Terra Nova* by Peter & Annmarie Bowring and thereafter whenever I was on my own, until we parted company in Houat I was invited to join their crew for jaunts ashore and dinner in the evening.

Later, as I was approaching Vannes, I was pleasantly surprised to see on AIS that *ReeSpray* was in port. After I was tied up, I made my way over to say hello to David & Aoife Beattie and Derek & Viv White who were sailing with them. Tom Sanders was the fifth person on their crew, and his humour hasn't been forgotten. That evening, I was invited to join them at a local restaurant for dinner. This continued into the early hours aboard *ReeSpray* and the slight headache the next morning was entirely my own fault.

My brother Declan flew in to join me for a week and the advice David provided about the anchorages in the Morbihan was very useful as we sailed around the gulf.

In July as I was making my way west and moored in Glandore, I got a phone call from Cormac O'Carroll asking if I'd like to join him for coffee ashore. Unfortunately, I had my dinghy stowed on the foredeck as I was just about to depart for Crookhaven, but I was very impressed that Cormac had seen *Eureka* and must have had the 'Little Green Book' to hand.



Michael Craughwell entertaining the crowd



Peter Bowring standing in his *Dragon*, Glandore and in *Terra Nova*, Iles de Glenan



On my way back east after John McAleer's Bantry rally I was again anchored in Glandore on a blustery evening when I got a text from Jim & Kate Corbett saying that they were going for dinner and wondering if I was coming ashore soon? Unfortunately, the wind was blowing strongly, and it would have been difficult to launch the dinghy never mind fitting the outboard, so instead of joining them ashore I had to do with a pleasant chat on the phone instead.

Firstly, I'm very impressed with member's eyesight. To be able to recognise *Eureka* out at a mooring is no mean feat so I'm glad to report there's no need to go to Specsavers yet. Secondly, the welcome I have gotten from all the members I have met in this my first year as a member leaves me looking forward to the years ahead and I'll continue to place a tick next to the names of those I meet in the 'Little Green Book'.

# The Half Bird

by Susan Smillie

Review by Daria Blackwell

21 March 2024

Michael Joseph (Penguin Random House)

224 pages

14.4 x 2.4 x 22.2 cm

Hardcover

ISBN-13 978-0241553169

Amazon: <https://amzn.to/4ejl7qD>

*The Half Bird* is a story about Susan Smillie's transformation from editor at the Guardian newspaper to an alternative lifestyle that would give her the freedom she craved and the strength she knew was lurking inside. Part ocean-sailing travelogue, part journey of self-discovery, Susan takes us from Land's End to Greece and from sorrow to joy. Beautifully written, it is tale of love and grief in a memoir that reads more like a novel.

After the death of her close cousin from cancer, the sudden loss of her brother in a car crash, and the death of her mother as well as a failed relationship and a brush with a brain haemorrhage, Susan realised she would not find solace or fulfilment in a 'normal' career living day-to-day in a city. She'd lost her connection with nature, which left her empty. She'd worked hard to progress to editor by her 40s, but a course correction was needed.

When she was a young girl, her older brother gave her his dinghy which she had been admiring. She learned to sail from a boyfriend with whom she remained close friends. She later fell in love with a little sailboat she rescued from a boatyard in Scotland and decided she would learn to single-hand and live aboard. She named her boat *Isean*, Scots Gaelic for little bird or chick.

Susan takes you on a journey of her metamorphosis from a sleepwalking consumer to independent cruiser making do with what she has, having and wanting less as time goes on. She becomes emotionally stronger and less dependent on others. She sets off with occasional help from friends and alternates between settling down in a community and setting off on her own to remote anchorages she has all to herself.

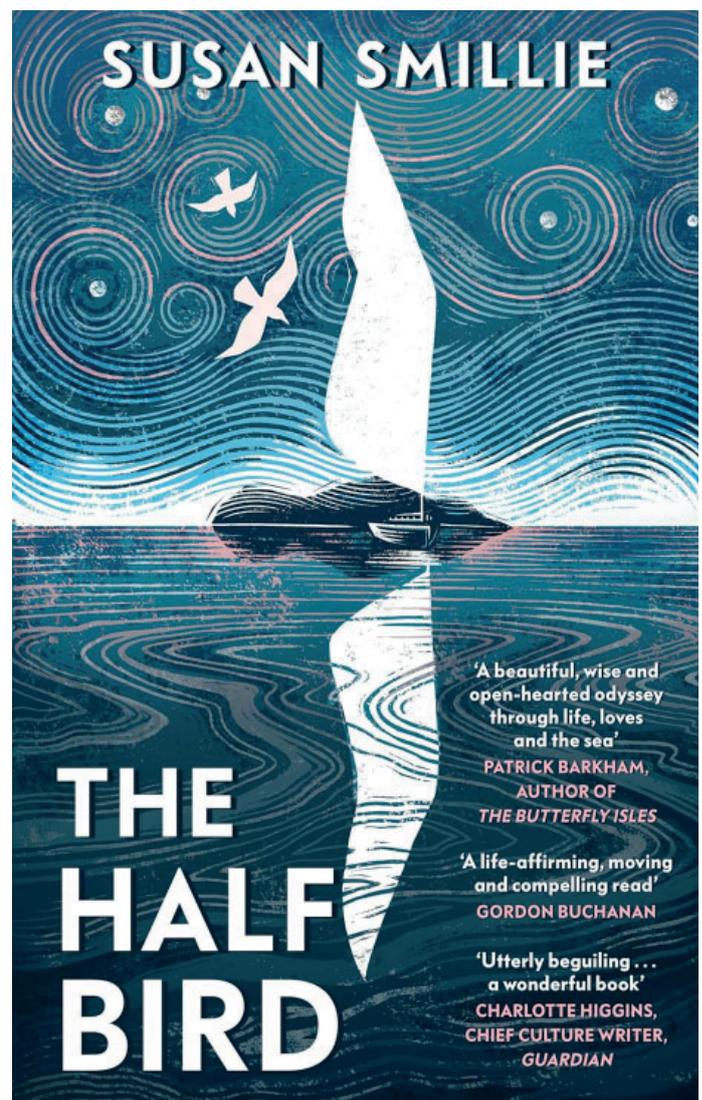
Throughout her journey south to Spain and Portugal and into the Mediterranean, she overcomes obstacles, deals with threats as a single woman on her own, and makes many mistakes from which she learns. She analyses communities from the perspective of a journalist who observes and interprets the behaviour of their residents. She describes a terrifying night-time encounter with migrants fleeing Algeria. With each new experience, she becomes more sure of herself, happier within herself, and confident of her choices.



## Book Review

Then comes Covid and she cannot escape from a place where a bullying policeman has it in for her. She decides that if she isn't allowed to sail, she'll build herself a shelter on land hidden in the natural elements away from the community. She lives like a castaway, making do with whatever floats into the cove. She reconnects with nature but is reminded of the fragility of her mobile life.

Smillie is a true cruiser. If she likes where she is, she stays put. If she doesn't, she moves on. She lives every moment to its fullest and teaches the reader that to find fulfilment you have to first let go. Along the way, she heals herself.



# The humble oyster – much more than a tasty snack...

by Bob Brown

*“O Oysters, said the Carpenter, you’ve had a pleasant run! Shall we be trotting home again? But answer came there none – and this was scarcely odd, because they’d eaten every one”* From Lewis Carroll’s, *‘Through the Looking Glass’* 1871.

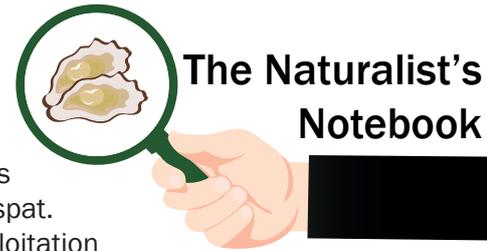
Oysters have been a cheap component of everyday diet for millennia – I have a shell from a Roman villa in Sussex dated about 250AD. And it is only in the last century that oysters, often known as ‘flat oysters’, have become the luxury item that they are now, commanding prices that would make the Victorians gasp in astonishment.

My own story with this unassuming but tasty mollusc goes back to Jamaica in the 1970s, leading a project to develop an oyster industry that low-income coastal communities could undertake. The species was the mangrove oyster, whose larvae (spat) are remarkably adaptable when it comes to settling out and growing. We exploited this by providing them with thousands of small panels cut from reject tyres passed on from the local Goodyear factory. The project was a success with our local lads achieving sales to the fancy American hotels on the island’s north coast.



*Bamboo racks for collecting oyster spat in Port Morant, eastern Jamaica*

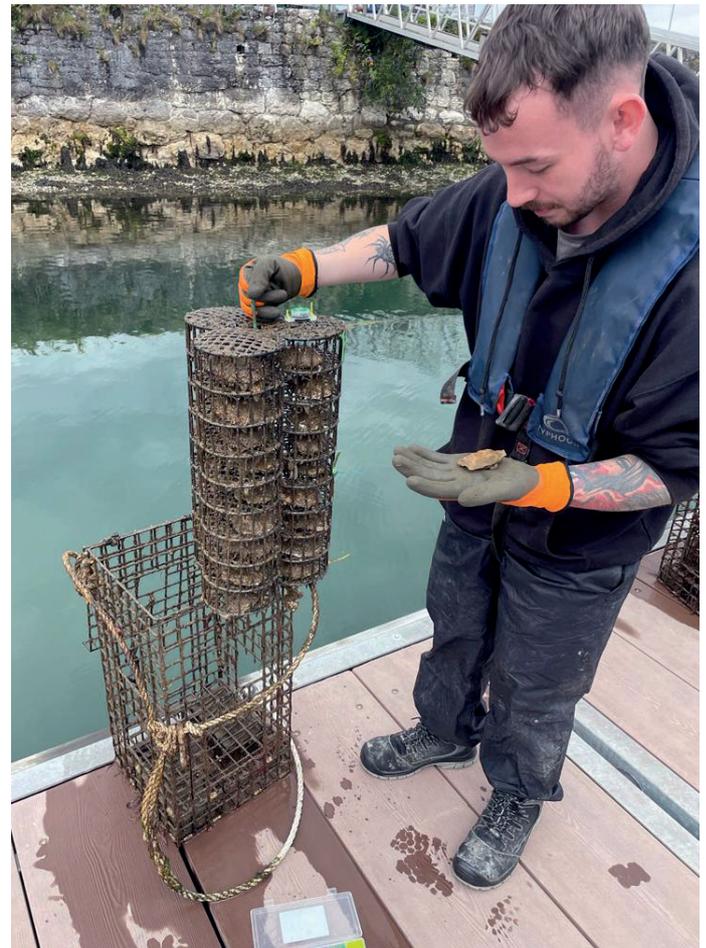
Ireland’s history of oyster consumption goes back as far as anywhere; shell middens from Mesolithic sites some eight thousand years old have been found, and evidence of consumption throughout the centuries is easy to find, including a gradual transfer from general foraging to



managed oyster beds and ‘ponds’ for fattening oysters and the collection of spat.

However, excessive exploitation and disease throughout Europe, notably in the UK and Ireland resulted in a disastrous loss of oyster beds – scarcity was followed by promotion of the humble oyster to a luxury commodity.

Today, as we sail round Ireland’s coasts, along the shore’s many inlets we can see (in addition to the numerous mussel and fish rafts) stands or frames of oysters, frequently grown in mesh envelopes to prevent loss and predation. But these aren’t the native oysters that our ancestors enjoyed, but an alien species variously called the Japanese, Pacific, or *gigas* oysters. It is somewhat more robust, grows faster and therefore commercially more viable. Sailing in Brittany with ICC member Ian Stevenson on his *Raptor* back in 2010, we conducted a blind tasting (aided by a nice French white...) of the two species, and concluded that there



*Checking an oyster cage in Glenarm Marina (Ulster Wildlife)*

was only slight gastronomic difference between them, yet the native species was almost twice the price.



Our native 'flat' oyster, *Ostrea edulis*



The alien 'Pacific' oysters covering a sea wall in Brittany

The trouble with alien species, however tasty, is that they don't play by the rules when they arrive in a foreign habitat. The predators and other constraints that control them back home simply aren't present in the new situation. When introductions of Pacific oysters into sites round Ireland and other countries were made, governments tended to give the go-ahead, despite warnings from environmentalists: the oysters would spawn in warm seasons and the resulting progeny would out-compete not just native oysters but many other types of marine life. This has now happened, and despite the recent development of infertile strains, it is too late for some areas. We saw a marina in France where the entire sea wall is colonised to the exclusion of any local animals or plants.

and Glenarm, as well as in Belfast Harbour. Cages suspended from pontoons are filled with oysters whose job is not to be eaten but to spawn happily and thereby inoculate local waters with spat that will eventually settle on nearby sea beds where once they were abundant.

That said, things are beginning to change these days. Native flat oysters aren't only good for eating, they are great engineers for the environment. An oyster bed is a rich habitat in which a range of other species including juvenile fish find suitable food and shelter. With their phenomenal filter power, they can restore water quality. A healthy bed of densely packed oyster shells is a powerful stabiliser of intertidal sediments. With climate change issues having come to the fore, oysters are now recognised as key fixers of carbon dioxide - their shell growth takes up this greenhouse gas to form calcium carbonate, and even when the oyster has died, the CO<sub>2</sub> remains locked within the shell that will eventually be smothered by sediments and successive oysters.



With Ian Stevenson, tasting aboard Raptor in Brittany: the native flat oysters are on the left in the picture

Marinas around Ireland's coast have a big part to play in this. Projects have already been developed with Dun Laoghaire, Poolbeg and Malahide marinas, as well as Galway Bay and Clew Bay, aimed at restoring native oysters into habitats they formerly occupied.

It's going to take a long time, but once foundation populations are established in their former habitats, I suspect the recruitment of new individuals will accelerate, provided of course that the sites remain protected, and they don't get out-competed by their Pacific cousins. So, given a helping hand, the humble oyster provides a win-win for humans and the environment - and it's a great accompaniment to a fine white wine!

In Northern Ireland, Ulster Wildlife, supported by Government has been working with marinas in Bangor

# Bantry Bay Cruise

by John McAleer

The ICC's annual Bantry Bay Cruise kicked off on Tuesday the 30th July at Lawrence Cove Marina, Bere Island. Coincidentally and very appropriately, this was also the International Day of Friendship. This year the weather played ball in earnest and ICC members, guests, locals and many of the international marina visitors, enjoyed an exceptionally balmy evening. A sincere thank you to Rachel and Patrick Harrington of LCM, who provided all of the necessary equipment and facilities, and a most enjoyable event ensued.



Rear Commodore, South, Séamus O'Connor

It was the only night of the year so far, when one could comfortably sit outside at 11:30 pm. An excellent and copious selection of wines, beers, and other beverages may have marginally contributed to the perceived temperature. Wednesday morning was spent in recovery with people strolling between boats for shared breakfasts and chats.

The early afternoon, saw three of the local members' boats move up the bay to Whiddy Island. Unfortunately, in line with recent trends, two days of relatively decent weather appears to be the maximum permitted. A number of members left because of their well-founded concerns of being trapped 'behind the Mizen' for a week. This was due to a forecast of force 6 to 7 on Friday, with the potential of a week of poor weather following.

Participants had some free time to explore Bantry and Whiddy on Wednesday evening and Thursday. The formal partying reconvened on Whiddy Island on Thursday afternoon, with an attendance of about 25 members and guests for an excellent dinner at the Bank House, where we were very well looked after by Kathleen and Tim O'Leary. Rear Commodore South Séamus O'Connor and Patricia were on hand to welcome everyone and the very enjoyable partying continued into the late hours.

Thank you to all members who attended, and we look forward to a similar event in 2025.

## A Solar Solution

by Fergus Quinlan

Our 3.9m FunYak boat is kept afloat during the winter to service s/y *Pylades* on its off-season mooring. To date our practice to maintain the Yak's engine overwater, we removed the bung on leaving the boat, so it only filled with rain and wave water to its natural float level. On reboarding, we replaced the bung and bailed. Over the period, we have tried and failed with many wave-activated self-bailing devices.

We have now installed an electronic 'attempt' to solve the problem. The components are: a Rule 500 gpm pump, a 12v 100 ah service battery, and a 10w solar power battery maintainer.

Only time will tell if the arrangement can stand the harsh tests of winter... A full report shall follow.



# Allegra July 2024

by Phyllis Hayes

*Allegra's* summer sailing got off to a later start due to the Leaving Cert in the house. So, I left Ireland on the 24th June for our summer base of A Pobra de Caramiñal, just ahead of the start of the Aer Lingus strike. Joined by my friend Lorraine, we started off with some easy day sails in then Ria de Arousa, and some kayaking and paddle boarding too! Then Mick joined us, once he finished his work on the Camino, where he works as a guide.

Then the temperatures jumped up to thirties, and the wind picked up from the northeast, so we sailed south to Playa de Agra, in Ria de Pontevedra, a really sheltered spot when the northerlies set in. After a couple of peaceful days there, we moved on to another old favourite: Ria de Aldan. A bit windier there initially, but it settled, and we settled in too for a few days.

A few days later, with a lovely, pleasant breeze and a flat sea and sunshine, it was time to head north again. The plan in setting off that morning, was to return to Pobra and then to sail to Muros later in the week, but the conditions were so perfect that day, we just kept going and went straight for Ria de Muros. There were numerous sightings of dolphins that day too, but thankfully no Orcas!



*At anchor off Playa de Agra*

*Ria de Muros*



With the EN 2024 approaching, we were met by *Koala* on arrival to take our lines and were delighted to catch up with *Papageno* and *Vivace* that evening. Not having been to Muros since 2019, we really enjoyed exploring the town and surroundings over the course of the next week.

In the build-up to the Encuentro there were Irish boats arriving daily. There were also a few jobs assisting Jim Sammon with ICC wine purchases (for the Pontoon Party), and some impromptu marinero duties with Jim, as Muros was short staffed. This all helped to pass the time!



*Anchored off Isla de Arousa, with 2 sailing boats passing in the evening*



*A lovely performance of Galician music and dance at Praza de Maura in A Pobra*

# Western Wanderings

by Conor O'Byrne

Western members who stayed in home waters had pretty mixed weather this summer, although as I write this, there is the makings of an Indian summer in the air. Those that did their cruising in France or Spain fared a little bit better it seems.

John Sweeney had a dramatic sail to Galicia aboard his Sadler 32 *Island Lass*. About 150 NM offshore from Ireland, two engine mounts sheered suddenly, resulting in a twisted coupling and a tough decision about whether to return to base or proceed. They decided to plough on and eventually, 430 NM later, sailed onto the pontoon in Muros harbour. A full account of this cruise will appear in the annual.



*Twisted coupling on John Sweeney's Island Lass, mid-Biscay*

David Beattie's *ReeSpray* attended the Brittany rally. They had an upwind sail over from Kilrush early in May, arriving at Camaret with 43 knots on the nose. There

*ReeSpray crew at the Brittany Rally. Derek White, David Beattie, Aoife Nolan-Beattie, Tom Sanders, Viv White.*



*Áine Dillon and golden retriever Fionn sailing/sleeping on Calico Jack, Bantry Bay, July 2024.*

they were joined by 14 other Club boats for a thoroughly enjoyable rally. From there they spent another three weeks cruising on to Morbihan, Vannes, and the Vilaine. David is planning another few weeks of late season sailing before over-wintering the boat in La Roche Bernard.

Fergus and Katherine Quinlan enjoyed a cruise from Galway Bay to the "far flung reaches" of the Isle of Man and Liverpool aboard their trusty *Pylades*. They had a few close encounters with pot markers this season and now find that their overriding criterion in passage planning is if they "can see the pot markers". They encountered pots in narrows of Dursey Sound and even in the white sector tracks of port approaches. Despite their best efforts, they became ensnared in one off Carnsore Point. While the tide was strong the sea was calm, a bit of tricky manoeuvring, a boathook, foul language, and a sharp knife managed to get them off. This continues to be a serious hazard for all sailors cruising inshore waters.

Conor O'Byrne enjoyed a wonderful June bank holiday-weekend cruise from Crosshaven to the Isles of Scilly on *Dame du Jade* with Vincent Guénebaut, Sally Cudmore, and their son Hugo. They struck it lucky with a tail wind all the way out and tropical weather when they got there.



He also had a three-week July cruise from Galway to Dunmanus Bay aboard *Calico Jack*, his Sadler 26. This year he even persuaded his non-sailing wife Áine to join him for a week in Bantry Bay. Together with their golden retriever aboard this pocket-sized cruiser it proved to be a surprisingly harmonious cruise and Áine is even threatening to join the boat again on future trips!

After not being able to get out sailing in 2023, Alex and Daria Blackwell launched *Aleria* in Kilrush and headed northwards under power in light northerlies. After stopping at Inisbofin for the night, they continued onwards towards their home in Clew Bay. On this passage, they were surprised by the lack of sea life – no dolphins or porpoises, and above all only one pair of gannets were spotted, whereas they usually see countless streams of them flying by. About two miles short of Inishoo, one of the outer islands of the inner part of Clew Bay, Alex saw smoke coming up the companionway. Fearing a fire, he quickly shut down the engine, handed Daria a fire extinguisher, and went below to investigate. The exhaust pipe had burst. The wind had by then shifted to the east, so they unfurled the headsail and started tacking in. Just when tacking was to become untenable, a neighbour arrived to give *Aleria* a tow to her mooring. Alex later brought the offending exhaust pipe section to *Mooney Boats* in Donegal, who expertly rebuilt it. It turned out that when this same pipe segment was repaired in Galicia some years prior, the mechanic there had welded the marine grade stainless steel segments with mild steel welding. All of these welds had rusted through. Alex and Daria are still hopeful of a few days out cruising before returning *Aleria* to Kilrush Marina, where she has been very well looked after for several years now.

Peter Fernie visited Pobra de Caramiñal for a late season “mooch” around Ria Arousa and then put *Mystic*, his Moody 27, to bed for the winter. He reports that it was still shorts weather there in early September. He was in Ireland for all of August, hoping to do some cruising from Rossaveal with Ray O’Toole aboard *Aoife*, Ray’s Dolphin 31, but the weather gods seemed to be against them. However, they managed a motor sail to Kilronan on the last weekend of August. Both Peter Mason and Ray were in shorts elaborately pretending it was warm. Peter says that six seasons in Galicia have made him a bit “wimpish”. Peter also reports that *Reto Astrolabio* (Spring Newsletter) protagonist Javier Bebe sadly died from a massive heart attack about 400 NM from their planned destination, about 2 1/2 days out, despite the ministrations of the medic on board. He was given a burial at sea; a sad ending but one Javier would have wished for. When they opened the sealed boxes, they were about 2 NM out in their DR position in terms of longitude.

Michael Brogan reports on the 45th *Cruinniú na mBád*, Kinvara, which took place this year despite the weather. There was a great turnout of hookers mostly crewed by a younger generation of sailors from ‘back west’ and the vibrant Galway Hooker Sailing Club based in the Claddagh. The hookers were just back from the Brest sailing festival. They were thrilled to welcome two historic Zulus: *Maggie Helen* (dark hull) and *Swallow* (white hull). These motorless lug sailers were built in Scotland 1900/1904 for herring fishing. Both have been restored and sailed by their enthusiastic crew. Real Tars (Seamen). They were delighted to hook up with traditional Bádóirí, a community group in the Claddagh, Galway city, dedicated to the restoration and sailing of the traditional Galway Hookers.



The historic lug-sailed Scottish Zulu Maggie Helen



Duncan Sclare's cutter Little Egret

With much fanfare, Duncan Sclare launched the small cutter he has been tipping away at building for more than 14 years this spring. She changed from being Gartside design #163 to be officially named ‘*Little Egret*’. This pocket cruiser is less than 20ft on deck, but the bowsprit adds another 7ft. She’s traditional Carvel construction with larch planking on oak. Above deck it’s wood epoxy. Sea trials have proved her to sail beautifully. Duncan looks forward to her being his ‘forever boat’.

# Galician Grapevine

by Peter Haden



This year our annual club sailing event in Galicia “Encuentro Náutico” was well supported and we were pleased to be able to include members of The Ocean Cruising Club who are celebrating their 70th Anniversary worldwide. Many ICC members have dual membership with the OCC including John and Susan O’Connor, s/y *Jane*, who led the celebrations at a joint Pontoon Party in Muros. As well as enjoying excellent lunches and dinners, the high point of the week’s celebrations was an invitation to visit the mountain top HQ of the Mont Enxa Traffic and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre. Beside coordinating rescues, this centre also controls the very busy shipping lanes off Cape Finisterre.

The full account of EN24 written by Peter Fernie has been submitted for inclusion in the 2024 ICC Annual.

Our club Port Officers were all busy helping members. Minia Pardo in A Coruña and Sada has a particularly important post; meeting boats that have recently crossed Biscay. Generously, Norman and Geraldine Kean take her as crew in mid-summer. Alfredo Lagos with family members escaped from his very busy boatyard to sail around the islands in August, and Carmela Nuñez in Portosin enthusiastically organised most of our EN24 events, including obtaining some sponsorship.

Marinas in the popular Rias Baixas can be quite heavily booked mid-July and through August. It is important to book a few days in advance, especially if there is a large race in progress. With a few exceptions, prices remain stable, although restaurants and shops are affected by inflation.

The marina at Combarro has been sold to new Spanish based, foreign owners who plan a large increase in the number of berths. Meanwhile, pontoon repairs and grant aided new facilities promised at Moaña, Cabo do Cruz, and Puebla del Caramiñal still await elusive completion dates.

With it’s gentle climate, predominantly fair weather, excellent sailing conditions, safe anchorages, professional boat yards, and numerous affordable marinas, the Rias Baixas continue to attract an increasing number of ICC cruising boats.

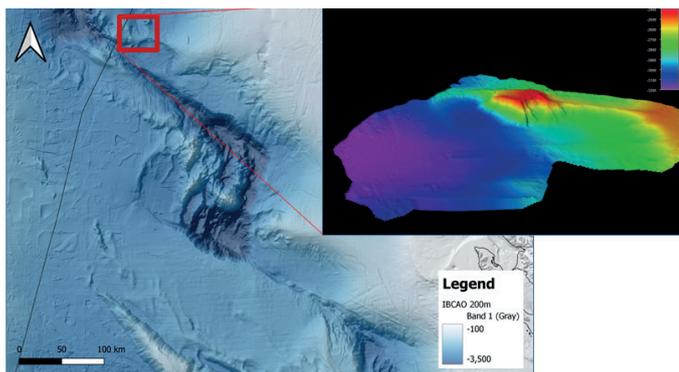
Plans are already being laid for Encuentro Náutico 2025, so stay tuned...



# The Quest to Map the World's Seabed: A Scientific Imperative

by Vera Quinlan

The absence of detailed underwater topography, or bathymetric data, significantly hampers our ability to sustainably manage marine resources and protect coastal communities worldwide. Currently, only about 26% of the world's seabed has been mapped using direct measurement techniques such as sonar, lidar, or traditional lead lines (Seabed 2030, 2023). The remaining areas have only been charted through satellite mapping, which can miss crucial features, including underwater mountains. To address this gap, The Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project (Seabed 2030) is leading an ambitious effort to create a complete map of the seabed by 2030 for the benefit of people and the planet. The anticipated resolution of this map is planned to be 100x100 meters for water depths ranging from 0 to 1,500 meters and up to 800x800 meters for the deepest areas.



500m Seamount, Arctic, NW Svalbard, INFOMAR

## Seabed 2030's Comprehensive Approach

Seabed 2030 aims not only to compile existing seabed mapping data, such as the Irish INFOMAR dataset, but also to expand new mapping efforts. One key strategy involves ensuring that vessels equipped with sonar, especially those traveling to poorly mapped regions, have a dedicated hydrographer (seabed mapper) on board. For example, a member of the INFOMAR team recently spent six weeks aboard the Swedish icebreaker *Oden* in the Arctic Circle, operating the deep-water sonar mounted on the vessel's hull to map uncharted areas. To get involved or learn more about Seabed 2030, please visit the Seabed 2030 website at <https://seabed2030.org>

## Crowdsourced Bathymetry: A Collaborative Effort

Another innovative approach, an initiative of the International Hydrographic Organisation, is crowdsourced bathymetry (CSB). By connecting small

data loggers to vessels' echosounders, depth data can be continuously recorded and submitted to Seabed 2030. However, this method's effectiveness relies on the willingness of countries to permit the collection of such data in their internal and territorial waters as well as within their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). To date, 35 coastal states have responded positively to allowing data acquisition in their waters. Ireland has not yet responded to the circular letter issued by the International Hydrographic Organisation. For scientists, researchers and marine enthusiasts interested in getting involved in installing data loggers and the crowdsourced bathymetry initiative, please see the following website: <https://iho.int/en/how-to-get-involved>

## INFOMAR: A Global Leader in Seabed Mapping

Ireland's national seabed mapping program, INFOMAR, is a prominent contributor to this global initiative. Set to complete mapping of the Irish seabed by 2026, INFOMAR has established Ireland as a leader in marine stewardship, seabed mapping, and sustainable development of marine resources. The program serves as a model for other countries aiming to enhance their marine management capabilities.

## About INFOMAR:

INFOMAR (Integrated Mapping for the Sustainable Development of Ireland's Marine Resource) is a 20-year program dedicated to mapping the physical, chemical, and biological features of Ireland's seabed. Funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), INFOMAR is jointly managed by the Geological Survey Ireland and the Marine Institute.

The quest to map the world's seabed is not just a technological challenge but a scientific imperative—one that will enhance our understanding of the oceans, improve marine conservation, and drive sustainable development on a global scale.



# Northern Notes

by Maeve Bell

The end of the month of May was full of promise for a great season. Adrian and I picked up our boat in Largs and made our way to Glenarm, Co. Antrim for the Spring Rally organised by Paul McSorley. Members came by



Paul McSorley at the helm leaving Glenarm Marina, Co. Antrim

road and sea and enjoyed an impromptu afternoon tea, visits to Steenson's jewellery workshop, Glenarm Castle Gardens, a walk up the beautiful glen, and wonderful hospitality on *Big Wig* hosted by Vice Commodore Julie and Graham Chambers. Paul and crew then set off in *Viking Lord* on their circumnavigation of Ireland, successfully completed despite challenging conditions.

The weather gods decided to make things difficult for the joint Northern and Eastern end of season rally on 25th August. The plan was to muster at Ardglass on Friday 24th and continue to Quoile on the Saturday. Ardglass had to be cancelled, but those who made it to the Quoile – including our Commodore Alan Markey



Dawn Crosby and Julie Chambers with the fantastic buffet at Quoile YC

and Helen and our Secretary, Donal Gallaher, who came from Howth – had a wonderful time with 'wild' swimming, walking, bird watching, a Pimm's reception, a buffet meal followed by a quiz, and then music. Hats off to Alan and his team who had a long, hard slog back to Howth the following day.

In early May, Clive Reeves and some friends from the CCC made a mini cruise from the Clyde to Belfast Lough, where they visited the Titanic Exhibition and dined in the Royal Ulster Yacht Club.

Aisling and Anthony McCarthy joined the tall ship *Morgenster*, a 46m brig, in A Coruña in the middle of June for a five-day trip across the Bay of Biscay to La Rochelle, arriving in time to lead the procession of sail into the harbour for the start of the Maritime Festival. 'It was fantastic', writes Aisling. 'Such a different sailing experience with new terminology to learn, lots of co-ordinated rope-pulling (no winches), and of course the thrill of going aloft and stepping out onto the yard arm as the boat 'gently rolled' in the Atlantic swell of a good force seven!'

Given the fractious weather, Bob Brown reckoned his options were limited. However, he managed a cruise with *Serenade* up and around the Mull of Kintyre via the Crinan Canal. Bob adds: 'To say the weather was variable would be an understatement, but the lovely island of Gigha came up with brilliant sunshine and lashings of ice cream and cider! Aside from that, one of our pleasures has been sitting on our deck in a rare moment of sun, with a coffee, watching our resident dolphins in Strangford village harbour circle our boat, surfacing each time with wheezy puffs. If only I could train them to nip off the weeds growing on the chain and buoy...'



Aisling McCarthy at the helm of *Morgenster*



Anthony McCarthy climbing the rigging of *Morgenster*

Andrew Kennedy has been hankering to go to Brittany and this year it all came together when he sailed from Belfast Lough in *Jacada*, having both a successful passage and a great time at the Brittany Rally. Derek and Viv White enjoyed the Rally as guests of David and Aoife Beattie on *Reepray* and then, at total odds with their usual intrepid adventures, had their summer's cruising in their home waters of Strangford Lough. Also in the Lough, David and Peter Williams made the difficult decision to sell *Reiver*. They spent eleven years building her, launching in July 1989. They say they have been lucky enough to have gone cruising for every one of the last 35 years and intend to keep boating in some form or other.

Ross Boyd and his young family cruised to Tobermory in Scotland and back stopping, to use his words, at every hole in the hedge. Daughter Isla (aged 11) says her favourite anchorage was the Fairy Isles, Tayvallich, while her twin brother Max says his was Millport, Great Cumbrai on the Clyde, where the absolute top spot on the island was 'Crocodile Rock'.

Ralph McCutcheon has swallowed the anchor. He explains: 'Last year Evelyn Willis and I greatly enjoyed our 'Whiskey Cruise' to the Inner Hebrides in *Reziki*. However, the weather had been challenging at times and, as we sailed home, reality set in – we were getting to the point of enduring rather than enjoying. So, assisted by a very enjoyable autumn ICC cruise on Lough Erne, the decision was made to look for an inland cruiser. A Pedro Kairon, 35' steel Dutch motor yacht, ticked all our boxes. She was lying in Roscommon and we took possession in November – not exactly the best time of year for boating – but a heater kept things dry and warm, and we were able to take some short trips straight away. Our old boat, renamed *Marisa*, appeared online in a series of video blogs as she toured Scotland and the Irish Sea. So, we can get all the happy memories of our own cruises from watching these videos while snugly tucked up in our saloon.'

*Muriel and Frank Smyth about to deliver goodies to the Glenarm party*



*Donal Gallagher up the mast of Altaria*

Alan Leonard enjoyed a change of scene. 'Having recently taken over as Regional Rear Commodore (Ireland) of the OCC from Alex Blackwell, I was delighted when Adrian and Maeve Bell asked me to join them in Sweden, where they had been invited to join the OCC Stockholm 70th Anniversary Cruise. We enjoyed a day sailing in the archipelago before returning to Nynäshamn for the start of the rally where we were entertained to drinks and dinner at the home of Hans Hansel, Regional Rear Commodore (Europe NW). In his words of welcome, he spoke eloquently of the importance of ocean sailors assisting each other, citing the example of two members who picked up another couple whose yacht sank in the Pacific.

'The following day, Hans organised a coach tour to some local sites of historical and archaeological interest as the weather was very unsettled, and a significant part of the cruise in company was blown out. Most of the small fleet stayed put in Nynäshamn. However, once on board after the tour, we rapidly cast off, tucked in a reef and reached north making eight to nine knots to Kirkviken on the island of Ornö – a sheltered spot where we spent the next day in calm conditions while the wind whipped past outside.

Next morning we sailed, again reefed, past Salsjöbaden where sail was handed, before motoring through the narrow Baggensstat, and then upwind to Stockholm, where we berthed in the Vasahamn. The final morning was spent in the Vasa Museum and the Cruise concluded with a dinner in a local restaurant.'

**Coming Events**

- Thursday 7th November Lunch in the Reform Club, Royal Avenue, Belfast.
- Saturday 7th December Christmas lunch at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, Bangor.
- Walks are being arranged and will be notified separately.

*Music and good craic at the Quoil*



# Eastern Epistle

by Harry Whelehan

In the Eastern region we are very honoured that Alan Markey has become Commodore, having served as vice Commodore for a number of years. After many years representing the East region on the Club Committee, Robert Michael and Sean Fergus have retired. They were replaced by Frank O'Beirne and Judy Houston.

One of the Commodore's first functions was to host the Eastern region lunch in the Royal St George Yacht Club on 26 April last. As is usual this event was very well attended and gave members an opportunity to fraternize and to discuss their hopes and aspirations for the upcoming season.

The Commodore's next, and most agreeable function was to visit our revered and distinguished member Jack Wolfe on May 31st, the occasion of his 100th birthday. Jack, having joined the club in 1959, has been a continuous and very active member both ashore and afloat for 65 years, and is still going strong! He was proud



*Commodore presenting Jack with the ICC House Flag*

to receive a letter of congratulations from President Michael D. Higgins to mark the achievement. The Commodore presented Jack with the ICC House Flag to mark the occasion on behalf of the members of the Irish Cruising Club. I did visit Jack myself on the occasion of his birthday and met many of his long-standing friends who visited him on that special day. Not surprisingly, very many of them were glamorous female admirers.

Jack's cruising achievements and exploits are well documented and recorded in many of his Logs published in the Annuals of the Club over the years. His early cruising experiences crewing with members of the Club commenced in the 1930s. His joining of the Club was delayed by the interruption to leisure sailing and cruising in particular caused by the War. I'm very happy to report, that he is "cruising" towards his 101st Birthday enthusiastically and with typical determination - congratulations Jack ad multos annos.



*Letter from President Michael D. Higgins.  
Jill Wolfe and Peter Wolfe (ICC) with Jack Wolfe*

Mark Sweetnam completed a four-month cruise aboard *Don Carlos* (a 1992 Najad 42) from Kilrush up the Norwegian coast, via St Kilda and Fair Isle. He has left the boat on the hard for the winter at Tromsø. He assures me that he will submit a Log for the Annual this year. Looking further forward, the sequel to this year's cruise should also be interesting.

William Morrison completed a very successful two-month cruise from Howth to Les Sables in France in 2023 with *Isobar* (a 40-year-old Cutlass 27). He wintered the boat there, intending to do a shakedown cruise to the Île de Ré and thence to A Coruña to join the ICC rally. Sadly, issues in the boat yard and a covid experience delayed matters, so he missed the Rally. Undaunted however, he got underway in early July. With his two cousins Robin Hegarty and Zander Mackay he tackled Biscay with mixed fortunes, he says. I hope we will read about this in the Annual. Ultimately, after a crew change, he made the Ria de Muros y Noya to be rewarded by two mighty nights of Festival "activity", the perfect antidote to the trials of the voyage. Finally, he found a home from home among fellow ICC members in Ria de Vigo.



*William Morrison and Sean Sinnott*

It is worth noting that William before all of the above in his Cutlass 27, managed travel to Australia where he squeezed in a delivery trip from Sydney to Hamilton Island on a Hallberg-Rassy 47. He must have had great fun shoehorning himself back into *Isobar* on his return to her!

Encouraged and advised by Neil Hegarty who was already in the Azores with *Tam O'Shanter*, Dermot Cronin went to the Azores with *Encore* after the 2023 Saoirse Rally in Madeira to be on station to cruise the 9 islands this year. On arriving on Terceira, his chosen "home port" for his intended lazy cruising among the



L to R Dan Jones Royal Cornwall YC, Padraig Sommers Malahide YC, Mairead Ni Chealachain RIYC, Dermot Cronin ICC & MYC, and Donal O'Brien MYC

islands, he discovered that berths were reserved solely for boats taking part in the *Atlantis Cup*, a series which involved 3 significant offshore races! He made a virtue out of necessity and dusted off *Encore* to return to offshore racing, in order to compete in the series, and thereby secured a berth on the Island (he hadn't raced her offshore since 2019). The Lord works in strange



David Lawlor, Frank Cassidy, and Andrew Collins



View of Northern Cliff, Lanzarote by Frank Cassidy

ways and rewards the just, for not only did Frank secure his berth in Terceira, but he also brushed off all the local and visiting opposition and won his class in the *Atlantis* series.

Frank Cassidy sailed *Ocean Blue* to Lanzarote from Cascais via the Algarve and Madeira. Frank had his orca experience and also gearbox issues. On board he had a new ICC member David Lawler, and a prospective candidate for membership, Andrew Collins. Frank has promised a Log for the Annual, including his analysis of the orca conundrum.



Liz hanging on aboard *Sea Dancer*

Liz and I took *Sea Dancer* to the Clyde, and had a rather fraught, cold, wet, and windy cruise, despite, we thought, playing it safe by choosing late June early July. We even had poor visibility on some days. The Clyde threw everything at us while we were at sea... But we had great times when we went ashore.

**Eastern Autumn Lunch:** The East Region Autumn lunch will be at Howth Yacht Club on October 18th 12:30 for 13:15, see email, 11/09/2024 from the Commodore for information and booking link.

# Whiddy Island by Sea Kayak

by Cormac O'Carroll

The Whiddy Island meet up event was wonderfully organised this year by John McAleer. Jim Corbett phoned to enquire if Fran and I would join him and Katie for the ICC meet up dinner at the Bank House on Whiddy on Thursday August 1st. I said we would be delighted, Jim phoned when he had their kayaks loaded and was leaving Cork, so we arranged to meet up at 13:30 on the Whiddy ferry slipway as we only had to come over from Glandore.



*Bantry Blueway signage*

*From the Left Jim Corbett, Frances Lynch, Katie Corbett*

We were unloaded and launched at the steps there by 14:30 and we set out to follow the Bantry Bay Blueway signs. The Bantry Bay Blueway was established in 2015 by the Bantry port company consisting of a 9km circuit on the sheltered eastern side of Whiddy Island, there are 9 points of interest on the full circuit. On our paddle that afternoon we checked in on four of these, first passing by the South Beach Mark 2 by the aerodrome before paddling across the narrows to the North Beach Mark 3. Then we followed the ins and outs of the shore. We did not go all the way to the fifth point on the north end of Whiddy near Horse Island. However we did stop for a picnic and a swim at the old WWI US Navy airbase, a very interesting place.

This base was commissioned as an anti-submarine reconnaissance base in March 1918 when work started. It opened in July 1918 and was operational from September 25th until Armistice Day on November 11th that year, when the station ceased operations and personnel began de-mobilizing the base. All the equipment was auctioned off or removed by January 1919. Now all that remains is the slatted concrete apron that the base was built on. This is also beginning to disappear under a carpet of weed and grass. Interestingly, one of the buildings removed from the site

has been a family home on College road in Cork ever since.

After our picnic we paddled back to the ferry landing slip at the community centre. We checked in at the School House at Tranaha, where we stayed overnight. The School House is a really good place as a base for an overnight on Whiddy and the facilities are excellent. We returned to the Bank House we were joined by Choryna Kiely and Peter Hughes for a pre-dinner drink. We then joined the rest of the group that had already gathered, many of whom had travelled by ferry from Bantry. Pat Fleming on *Eureka* was on the pontoon and Janet Woodward and Dave O'Sullivan were there on board *Shiraz* moored just inside of Rabbit Island. Dinner was served in the room adjoining the bar. We had three full tables. The TV was on for those interested in watching the Olympic boxing. The evening came to a close when the ferry for Bantry was about to depart. We did not linger at the bar late and walked back to the School House in the damp evening mist.

Friday Morning was wet as expected. We were under pressure to get off the island because we wanted to be in Bantry in time to watch the big Olympic rowing race! It was a calm wet paddle back to the ferry slip. We left the boats to be picked up later and darted off to the Marine Hotel to see the great performance by the two West Cork oarsmen Paul O'Donovan and Fintan McCarthy. Overall, a very enjoyable visit to Whiddy and we will be sure to turn up again for the next one!



*Damp departure from Whiddy*

# A Trip Across to the Isle of Man

by Peter Mullan

For a variety of reasons, I didn't have a week or two to go cruising outside Strangford Lough. The question arose, is a trip across to the Isle of Man better than nothing?

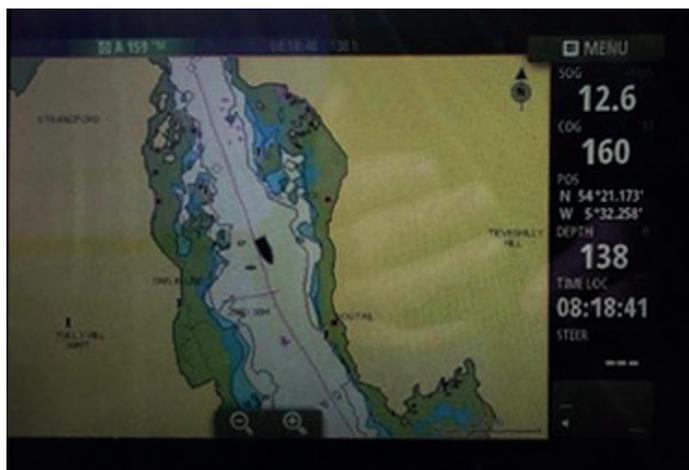
Perhaps staying at home would be better. The only way to find out was to go over and see if it had improved from my last family visit in 1984.

Peel is just 30 miles from Strangford bar or from Ardglass. Five or six hours would take us across. Peel Harbour Marina flap gate is only open for two hours either side of high water, so planning is essential. I was good at sums in primary school, so I knew to look up the time of high water at Peel and take away two hours to aim at arriving when gate had opened. Then I took away six to know when to leave Strangford bar. Then take away an hour to get down from Quoile and another hour to set the alarm to get up and have breakfast. I could and indeed did cheat by googling Peel Harbour opening times for July. I also cheated by looking up low water time for Killard point on Navionics on my phone.



Ebb tide at Angus

I prefer to whizz down Strangford narrows on the ebb and be there at or about low water. Like any good slide, a speedy run down ends with a bump. The bar can be bumpy if you arrive well before slack water, and I might be finishing my breakfast.



Luck was on my side. On the 23rd of July I entered my 75th year. It seemed a good day to go as high water in Peel was at lunchtime. I set my alarm for 6.30 am to be dressed for my brother arriving at 6:45am. We arrived at Quoile, stepped aboard, and left at 7:15am. The sun shone as we left Killyleagh. Castleward and Audleys Castle were quiet, and Strangford village was beautiful as we whizzed past at up to 12 knots SOG. This is how all our cruising adventures begin before we hit the bar and decide to turn left or right (north or south). Today, we just went straight on. The sails were up but not doing much so the motor was doing a bit as well.

We passed Saint Patrick's Rock with the Mournes behind. Blue skies and white fluffy clouds. We always pass inside Saint Patrick's Rock going south but today we just kept on for the bar buoy.

We had the usual lollopy sea which built with the wind. We rocked and rolled from side to side and decided man was not meant to sail to the Isle of Man. North yes, south yes but eastish (102 degrees) definitely not. We kept looking ahead but it wasn't even there. There were clouds ahead but no sign of land. Going north or south you have the land beside you and the pale blue of mountains far away ahead. To the east nothing but cloud. The north-westerly wind did blow a little harder



Peel Breakwater

and the engine was given a rest. Our speed built up to an indicated 9.6 knots (momentarily) so a reef was pulled down and a bit of the genoa rolled away to ease the motion. We didn't want to arrive too soon.

At noon the cloud lifted, and Peel Castle appeared. At 12:30 we rounded the breakwater and asked if we could have the bridge over the entrance opened. We were eventually welcomed into the marina and given a berth beside a nice couple from Sweden in a beautiful Arcona 400. We tied up at 13:30 in another land.

Peel has the Creek Inn on the Quay, a fantastic ice cream shop also on the quay, and friendly and accommodating

harbour staff. We had dinner outdoors and a walk back to the boat for a toot before bed.

The next day we took the bus to Douglas. Our bus passes don't work on the Isle of Man, so we bought an all-day bus ticket. We could have made it a bus and train ticket, but the train is slow. The bus is not!!

After a huge breakfast in the market hall in Douglas we bussed on up to Laxey to visit the Laxey wheel. Michael Portillo tells all about this magnificent engineering feature in his railway journeys series on BBC iPlayer. For us it was worth the walk up from the bus stop to the very top of the wheel. My brother climbed to the very top to get the excellent photograph.

We hurtled on up to Ramsey on the bus and stopped for coffee on the high stools at the very back of Costa to watch the fishermen mending their boats at the harbour.

Seats on the top deck of the double decker bus from Ramsey back to Peel give a great view as it travels along part of the TT circuit (*a motorcycle racing course, ed.*). Yes, the countryside is beautiful. You could be (and nearly are) in County Down. The road weaves through tiny villages and has long straights out in the country. How those riders average speeds of nearly 150 miles per hour on that road I do not know. Most would say madness, others would say courage. I did say a prayer for Robert Dunlop who had a terrible crash at Ballaugh Bridge.

Back in Peel, we put the pie in the oven and retired to the Creek Inn for some fine beers. Dining back on board, the pie was only a little blackened but still grand. We walked to Peel Castle in the rain to aid sleep and digestion.



*The Laxey Wheel*



*Dressed for the weather in Peel*

Again, googling the Peel Harbour website gave us a closing time for the harbour flap gate of 5am. We were up and out by 4:30 to be sure as the advertised times are not always accurate. It was still dark as we rounded the end of the breakwater and headed home. Still the usual lollopy cross sea so we rolled out the foresail. That greatly steadied the motion as we motor sailed home.

By 10 am we were back at Strangford bar. A bit too early and we had to rock hop along the Portaferry shore until the ebb eased. We picked up my grandson at Strangford pontoon. Back in flat water I cooked a full Irish. Back at Quoile, my sister-in-law joined us for lunch.

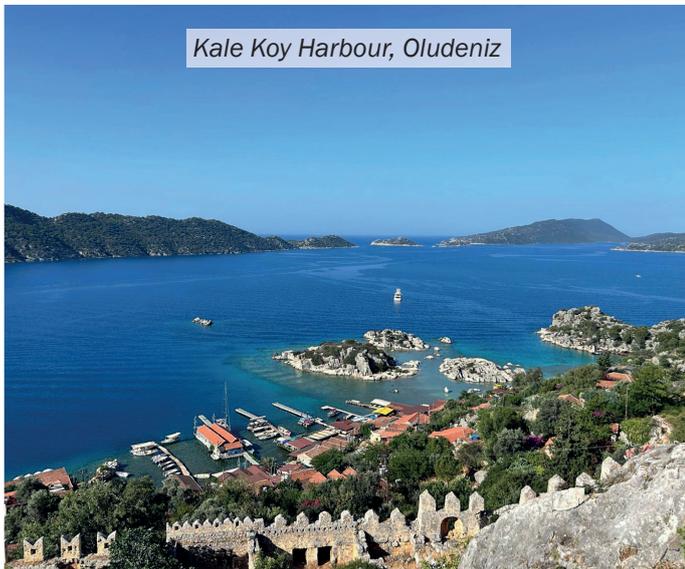
We decided that a trip to the Isle of Man was definitely better than nothing. Leave Peel nearer the top of the tide to get more easily back into the lough.

Perhaps next year we will travel a little further. North or south for sure.

## Turkey, Isles of Scilly, & Maine

by Denis Cudmore

Brid and I commenced our season by chartering a Sun Odyssey 41 *Honeypot* from Portway Yacht Charter from Gocek Harbour in Turkey for four weeks in May. Initially we headed west and were joined 5 days later by Paul and Deirdre Tingle in Ekincik and continued to cruise west as far as Bozburun and Hisaronu Limani before returning to Gocek at the end of the second week. We then sailed to Fethiyie, staying at the Yacht Classic Marina and visited the famous bazaar held each Tuesday. We sailed east of Gocek for the final two weeks and were later joined by Pat and Adrienne Kennedy at Setur Kaş Marina. Here, we discovered many quiet anchorages and were



Kale Koy Harbour, Oludeniz



Tara at anchor in Seal Bay, Vinalhaven Island

often anchoring alone or with a few other yachts around Kekova, Ölüdeniz, and Karaloz in idyllic surroundings. While early May was cool in the evenings and required jackets ashore, by the end of May the decks were hot in the morning. We had a month without rain in great sailing conditions and would highly recommend Portway Yacht Charters for the services provided and the preparation of boat. Solar powered panels provided sufficient energy to keep fridge cold and we did not require shore power for the month. The only irritant on the holiday were the swarms of flies that arrived for 10-15 minutes before sunset. We considered May a wonderful time to cruise Turkey and we got into the habit of eating late and having pre-dinner drinks aboard to avoid both the flies and the highly inflated price of drinks ashore. Inflation has doubled the local prices ashore. However, this is somewhat compensated by a better exchange rate.

In June we joined Paul and Deirdre Tingle cruising their yacht *Alpaca* (X40) to the Isles of Scilly in the company of Peter and Eleanor Morehead (*Telltale*) and Darren and Louise O’Keeffe (*Labous Gwen*). There we gathered in New Grimsby Harbour, each of us arriving a day

Group dinner ashore in the New Inn on Tresco (L to R: Brid & Denis Cudmore, Eleanor Morehead, Paul Tingle, Darren & Louise O’Keeffe, Deirdre Tingle and Peter Morehead)



apart. We arranged several day trips to many of the islands, namely Bryer, Tresco, St Agnes, and finally St. Martins, before travelling our own ways. Peter & Eleanor headed north to Falmouth, while the rest of us sailed back to North Harbour on Cape Clear. We then cruised back towards Crosshaven, making stops in Baltimore, Barlogue-Lough Hyne, and Oysterhaven.

In August we received a wonderful invitation to cruise aboard Bob and Bairbre Stewart’s *Tara* (Alden 54) for 10 days. We were fortunate to borrow all the pilot books for the area from Eddie Nichol森. Brid studied them at length and prepared an outline plan before we departed to see the best anchorages. *Tara* was based in Boston Yacht Club, Marblehead and was heading east towards Thomaston in Maine to be wintered. We arrived in the evening to heavy rain and fog and were fortunate that it cleared by the morning. We made two long passages first to Portsmouth and then Falmouth Foreside, before some leisurely cruises across Casco Bay to Sebasco Harbour and Boothbay Harbour. We then continued on as far as Penobscot Bay, anchoring in the remote Seal Bay on Vinalhaven and Bucks Harbour at the mouth of Eggemoggin Reach. On the return trip we stopped into Camden Harbour, Tenants Harbour, and finally Thomaston. Thankfully we had just one day of the notorious Maine fog on our last day and didn’t catch any of the infamous lobster pots in our travels.

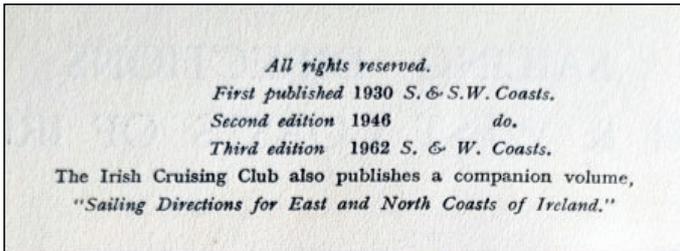
A reminder of the lobster pot buoys



# A Meaningful Gift

by Daria Blackwell

Recently, a dear friend brought us her deceased father's ICC Sailing Directions which she had come across in his library. She thought we might like it for our collection. Upon close inspection, we learned that this was the third edition from 1962 and the first edition to cover the West coast of Ireland. The prior editions from 1930 and 1946 had covered only the South and Southwest coasts.



The first two books were compiled by the first Vice Commodore, Mr. H. P. F. Donegan. The third was compiled by his son, Mr. H. E. Donegan, who had extensive knowledge of the coast. The production of a much-expanded volume proved financially challenging for the Club. That was overcome by sponsorship from The Irish Tourist Board (Bord Fáilte), Arthur Guinness, Son & Co., Ltd, Irish Shell & BP Ltd, Esso Petroleum (Ireland) Ltd, and Irish Dunlop Company, Ltd. The first supplied photographs free of charge and the latter three had two-page ads in the volume. Guinness sponsored two blank pages for Notes with the following at the bottom of the page:

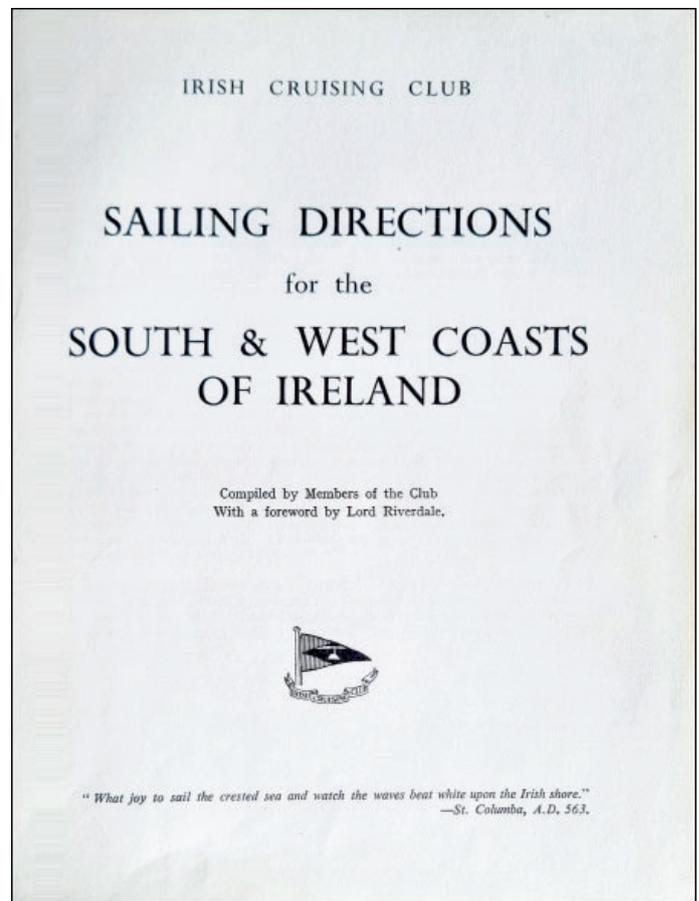
**N.B. — Guinness is good for you.**

*N.B. (nota bene) is used in writing to indicate that something is important, and that the reader should take notice of it. It worked!*

What a joy to peruse the delightful text, the B/W photos from days gone by, and the plans of harbours long since altered by man and nature. What a revelation that lobster pots were already then a challenge and fishing boats were known to lay mile-long nets and “carry no lights in order to hide their position from their rivals.”

Some places don't seem to have changed much. For example, “Bofin has always been a popular yacht anchorage, being on the direct route round Ireland and having friendly and entertaining inhabitants.” Others have taken different turns. Clew Bay warranted a fold-out plan of the approaches to Newport across the inner Bay from Westport, where few yachts venture today. Gola Island was noted to have a population of 28 families.

In the back, attached to the hard cover is a pocket for the corrections issued on tissue paper. The Corrections to April 1963 note:



“Galway dock gates have been washed away, thus reducing it to a drying harbour, dangerous should it come on to blow from the southward. It has also become polluted with tar and is definitely not recommended until such time as major rebuilding has taken place. The buoy mentioned in paragraph 4 is often absent.”

Fortunately, the construction of a new harbour was approved by the government in 1961. Erskine Childers, then Minister for Transport and Power, approved £340,000 for redevelopment of the harbour in September of 1963.

Much useful information is provided in the Appendices. As to sailing the 681 miles around Ireland, it is noted that 12 yachts from Irish and 17 yachts from British ports had been round between 1914 and 1961. The average time was 21 days from Irish ports and 25 from British ports, and nearly all of the Irish boats went anticlockwise while the British boats clockwise. The length of time it takes “fits well into a cruising holiday”.

As to facilities and services, many are listed with contact details. Alas, “There is no sailmaker on the coast, but it is worth mention that the islands of the N.W. are well equipped with sewing machines recovered from a wreck.”

*What a lovely gift.*

**Sailing Directions for the South and West Coasts of Ireland**

**3rd Edition, 1961**

7 ½ x 10 inches

Hardcover

244 pages

# Southern Soundings

by Séamus O'Connor

We commenced our season by joining *Aniar* and Richard O'Toole for the cruise to Brittany in early June, a very enjoyable cruise with good locations, we all gathered in Bénodet for the commencement of the rally. This cruise will no doubt be documented in the Annual. We returned via St. Mary's and experienced some challenging conditions and arrived back to Dun Loaghaire on June 30th.



Approaching the 'Raz' from the south



The East Choir

Next on the list was the Bantry Bay Cruise which John McAleer organised again this year, commencing in Lawrence Cove Marina on July 30th with a BYO BBQ. Thanks again go to Rachel and Patrick. The only issue we noticed was in spite of Patrick's 4-burner BBQ, the attendance and demand were such that we needed to have a second BBQ. We must remember that for next year!! Well done to John and thanks for all your efforts in organising the rally.



I was delighted that Sally Cudmore suggested and organised an autumn raft-up. This was a revival of a long-held practice, but the pandemic years had interfered. The raft-up was arranged for the anchorage north of East Ferry Marina. Here is Sally's report:

Seven boats gathered in ideal conditions on Saturday 7th September in Cork's inner harbour, beyond Marlogue. The sun shone – a rare occurrence this summer - and there were very light winds. The sheltered spot was idyllic for a relaxed and convivial afternoon.

Patrick Darcy's *Crosby* graciously acted as the lead anchor-boat, providing a solid basis for the small flotilla! Other boats that joined were Fred Cudmore's *Toirse 2*, Conor English's *Miss Demena*, Sally Cudmore and Vincent



The Cudmores on Toirse II



Preparing to 'un-raft'

Guenebaut's *Dame de Jade*, and Hugh Gibson's *Mandalay*. We were delighted to be joined by a new 2024 member Patrick Fleming, and his guests on board his boat *Eureka*. Michael Pomeroy was aboard his guest Joe Callanan's boat, *Soothsayer*. All boats had guests on board – both ICC members and other sailing folk. There were many current and previous ICC flag officers in attendance - current Rear Commodore South Séamus O'Connor was a guest on board *Dame de Jade*, as was Eleanor Cudmore. Previous flag officers Pat and Anne Lyons were hosted aboard *Crosby*.

Boats mustered at 12:30 The thirty-two attendees enjoyed lunch on their host boats. This was followed by an afternoon of meandering from boat to boat for lively conversation and copious libations. The last boats left after 19.00 – a sure sign of a successful and genial event.

As we look ahead to the autumn and winter, we have the Wednesday lunches at the Carrigaline Court Hotel. This year's Christmas dinner will be held at Kinsale Yacht Club, November 29th. Looking forward to seeing many of you and your guests at Kinsale.

## A Bridge Too Far – The Bridge at Chalkida

by Jim and Katie Corbett



Dóchas' cruise this year led us up the channel between the long island of Evvia/Evoia and the eastern coast of mainland Greece. This channel is the route north from the Athens area toward northern Greece, the Sporades, and eventually toward the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorous. The channel is about 100nm long, stretching from Cap Sounion in the south to the Volos channel in the north. It's a sheltered passage bordered by high, picturesque mountains with the wind blowing either north or south along the channel.

While the channel is many miles wide in parts, the channel narrows around the halfway point at Chalkida where it is spanned by an old road bridge that only opens once at night for marine traffic. Situated in the heart of the busy town, the bridge spans a narrow gap of about 23 metres with currents that run at up to 7 knots creating tricky





swirls, eddies, and minor whirlpools. Boats may only pass when the current slackens. It switches direction twice a day on some approximation of the lunar cycle; depending on the winds, air pressure, and other local effects. According to legend, when asked to predict the change of tidal stream in the strait, Aristotle, who died in Chalkida, threw himself into the water, exasperated by his inability to explain the phenomenon. The result is that even today the exact time of bridge opening is not known in advance within a 6-hour period.

We set off from Cap Sounion in early June heading north up the channel, taking two days to reach Chalkida. We arrived late in the afternoon and as required visited the Port Authority to register and pay a fee of approx. €30 for us. Checking in at the port kiosk, we are informed that the bridge would not be opening due to technical difficulties. This apparently is not unusual as the bridge and its mechanism date back to the 1960s. At this time, daytime temperatures were well up into the 30s. The metal in the old iron bridge expands and it cannot operate. Boats may choose to anchor off in the holding basin (Point D) or to wait or moor up to the quay wall (Point C) for an additional fee. We tied off to the long quay wall to wait and melt in the heat. The town is very pleasant for an enforced stopover.

On the third day we are finally told that the bridge will open that night. The instruction is to standby after 9:30pm and await a call on VHF ch12 at any time up to 4am, during which time the traffic controllers monitor the stream by essentially looking out the window.

There are now many boats on both sides of the bridge waiting to transit. At 1:30am the Port Authority call on VHF asking that we start our engines and prepare to transit. With a strong current sweeping past the quay, the crews assist each other to cast off as it is not easy to do this safely. Once out in the channel, we do our best to hold station against the flow. Each boat is called by name with a Port Police RIB monitoring the entrance to the narrows. With about a dozen boats going through from our side, it's a bit of a scramble and many of the boats are charters with inexperienced skippers. Imagine a racing start line in the dark with no right-of-way rules! Some of the boats do not even have nav lights turned

on. We were glad for two additional crew on board with us to keep a look out. We motor through the open bridge trying to stay out of harm's way. It's quite a spectacle with crowds of revellers lining the quay walls cheering on the procession of boats. Once we are clear, the Port Authority immediately announce on VHF that the waiting south-bound boats must not transit as there is a large cargo ship coming through. I check on AIS and can see the ship in question, still a couple of miles away and running for the narrows at high speed. The Port Police RIB patrols the entrance to make sure that nobody gets any ideas about making a run for it. After about 15 minutes the cargo ship charges through heading south toward Athens. The waiting south-bound boats now start to mill around waiting for permission to transit. At this stage the stream has turned and is flowing north. The stream builds rapidly, no Rule of Twelfths here! Two large motor yachts (who possibly knew what was coming next) make a run for the bridge and motor up against the now strong current, ignoring the Port Police RIB. At this point the Port Authority announce that the current is now too strong and there will be no further transits. To emphasise the point, the bridge motors start up and the bridge starts to close. The two motor yachts manage to only just motor through and the rest of the boats are left fuming to wait for the next opening. Many boats will by now have been waiting up to three days and as its Friday night the next opening won't be until Sunday night. We are happy to be finally clear of the bridge at Chalkida and keep going overnight to anchor at dawn in a secluded bay.



# Your Website and You

by Alex Blackwell

Over the past months, the Irish Cruising Club website (irishcruisingclub.com) has been totally rebuilt after the old backbone got corrupted and the site became unsecure. The infrastructure was rebuilt and what was still working was ported over. David Meeke then stepped in and beefed up the security even more.

Visitors to our website now see two main headings: **Main Menu** and **News Items**, where they are able to find information about our club and see a variety of posts: events, news, articles, picture galleries, and others). However, some of the posts are only accessible to members who are logged in with their username and password.

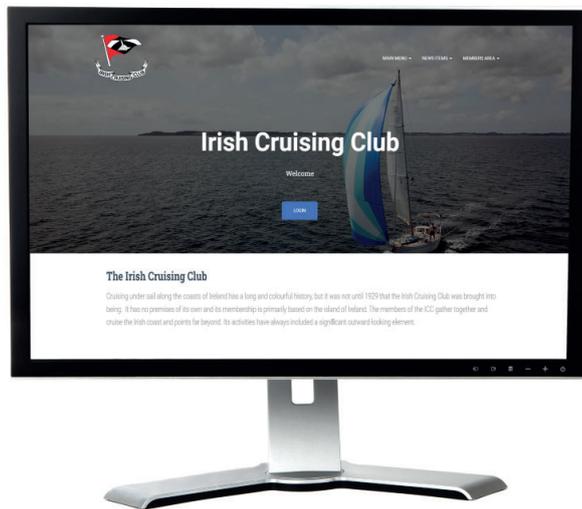
Once a member logs into the website they are presented with a third menu: **Members Area**. Here you have access to the Club Calendar, where upcoming events are ported, the Member Directory, where you may look up fellow members' contact information and also see who is in a given location using an interactive map. This is also where you may review and update your contact information. Updating this information is important to do any time something changes or is incorrect in the Little Green Book, as this is where the information in the LGB comes from.

Anyone who has difficulty logging in to the website should send in a message using the contact form on the website or email the website editor: [webeditor@irishcruisingclub.com](mailto:webeditor@irishcruisingclub.com).

Another important section are the Archives where you will find a lot of useful information; including all past Annuals, Newsletters, award winners, historical membership lists, etc.

Club Accessories may then be purchased under the 'Flags and Accessories' link. Flags and clothing items are ordered directly from the manufacturer, while there is a downloadable order form for the accessories.

And don't forget our Facebook page. This is where you may post information or photos of interest to your fellow members, and of course also join in on the conversations.



## Join The ICC Facebook Page!



For current news, information, events and some lively discussions.

Just search for "Irish Cruising Club" on Facebook, click on the link to the group page and then click on the "join" link. If you are a member, you will be admitted. This is your page so feel free to post what you think other memers might enjoy seeing.

## Little Green Book Content

Now is the time for you to check your information in your presumably well-thumbed **Little Green Book**. Are there any changes or updates you would like to make? Is there any information you would not like to have listed? If there is anything you would like changed, added or omitted, please do this on the website or email: [webeditor@irishcruisingclub.com](mailto:webeditor@irishcruisingclub.com)



### Upcoming ICC Christmas Meals

- **West Region** 19th December
- **North Region** 7th December
- **East Region** 6th December
- **South Region** 29th November



### ICC Annual Collection

Home needed for a complete set of ICC Annuals, 1988-2022. Would anybody who would like to add all or most of these Annuals to their collection please contact Andrew Somerville at [rsumrvll@tcd.ie](mailto:rsumrvll@tcd.ie) or +353 (0)86 805 4900.