



ICC News

Newsletter of the Irish Cruising Club

Spring 2025



Dear Member,

The weather here lately has been nothing short of sublime. In fact it seems more like summer already!, Our boats are coming out of their winter resting places in advance of what we are all hoping will be a fantastic sailing season. We do deserve that after all the rain last 'summer'.

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.

Do please keep your camera/phone at the ready and jot down some notes as you go out cruising this summer. Máire Breathnach will be looking forward to your logs as I look forward to your news, stories, and reminiscences.

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 ICC News submissions:

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Commodore's Letter

By Alan Markey

Spring is in the air, the days are growing longer, and your committee has been hard at work preparing a full and varied programme for 2025.

Our first key event of 2025 was the New Members' Election Meeting, held on January 10th at the Royal St. George Yacht Club. I am delighted to welcome fifteen new members to the club, and I had the pleasure of meeting all but two of them either at the AGM or during the recent Annual Dinner weekend in Mullingar. I look forward to meeting the remaining new members at some of our upcoming summer events.

At our AGM, held at the National Yacht Club, we marked the retirement of Séamus O'Connor as Rear Commodore South. Seamus has been an invaluable member of the Committee for the past seven years, including two years in his current role. His contributions, particularly in establishing the highly popular Bantry Bay Rally and leading the Conor OBrien Centenary celebrations, including the memorable Madeira Rally, have left a lasting impact. A heartfelt thank you to Séamus for his dedication.

We also extend our gratitude to Des Brown, Jim O'Meara, and James Cahill, who are stepping down after many years of service. Their commitment and efforts have been instrumental in shaping the club, and we sincerely appreciate their contributions.

I am pleased to welcome Sally Cudmore as our new Rear Commodore South, along with Andrew Kennedy, Phyllis Hayes, and Cormac O'Carroll to the Committee. We look forward to working with each of our new Committee members.

Following the AGM, our annual awards ceremony took place, expertly hosted by this year's adjudicator, Peter Killen, whose wit, insight, and charm made for a memorable evening. Congratulations to all award winners and contributors. A special thank you to Máire Breathnach, editor of our Annual, for another outstanding edition, and to Gillian Fletcher for her invaluable assistance with the trophies handed out on the night.

Helen and I had the privilege of representing the Club at the Royal Cruising Club's Annual Dinner at the New Club, Edinburgh. On the night we had the pleasure of presenting the ICC Ships Decanter to David Mitchell for his exceptional cruise from New Zealand to Tonga. As always, we were warmly welcomed, and the evening provided a great opportunity to discuss plans for the ICC Centenary in 2029.



Helen Markey presenting the ICC Ships Decanter at the RCC annual dinner

For our 2025 Annual Dinner, at the end of March, we had the pleasure of hosting one hundred and eighty members and guests at the Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar. We were delighted to welcome twelve of the newly elected members, along with esteemed guests from our sister clubs: the Cruising Club of America, the Royal Cruising Club, and the Ocean Cruising Club.

Hilary Keatinge was honoured with the Friendship Cup, presented by CCA Commodore Jay Gowell, and she delivered a heartfelt acceptance speech. Gerry Jones accepted the Fastnet Trophy on behalf of Tom Dolan, who was unable to attend.

Exciting Plans for 2025

- **Conor OBrien Centenary Celebration**

Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore has planned a special event to commemorate the centenary of Conor OBrien's return to Ireland aboard *Saoirse*

after his remarkable circumnavigation. The celebration will feature a 'Cruise in Company' from Baltimore, West Cork to Dún Laoghaire, culminating in a grand arrival on June 20th, 2025.

- **Western Isles Cruise**

The Western Isles Cruise, organised in collaboration with the Cruising Club of America, will be a highlight of the year. Invitations have been extended to members of ICC, CCC, OCC, RCC, and the Royal Highland Yacht Club. It is promised to be a wonderful event.

- **Encuentro Náutico 2025**

Plans are being finalised for EN 25, with 30 boats already registered for this exciting rally. You will find more information elsewhere in this issue.

All regional lunches and club events are now listed on the Events Section of the website, and invitations will be posted there as soon as they are circulated. As mentioned at the AGM, all future events will now be managed through ICC Events.

Wishing you all fair winds for the season ahead, and I look forward to seeing many of you on the water!

INFOMAR Data Interpretation

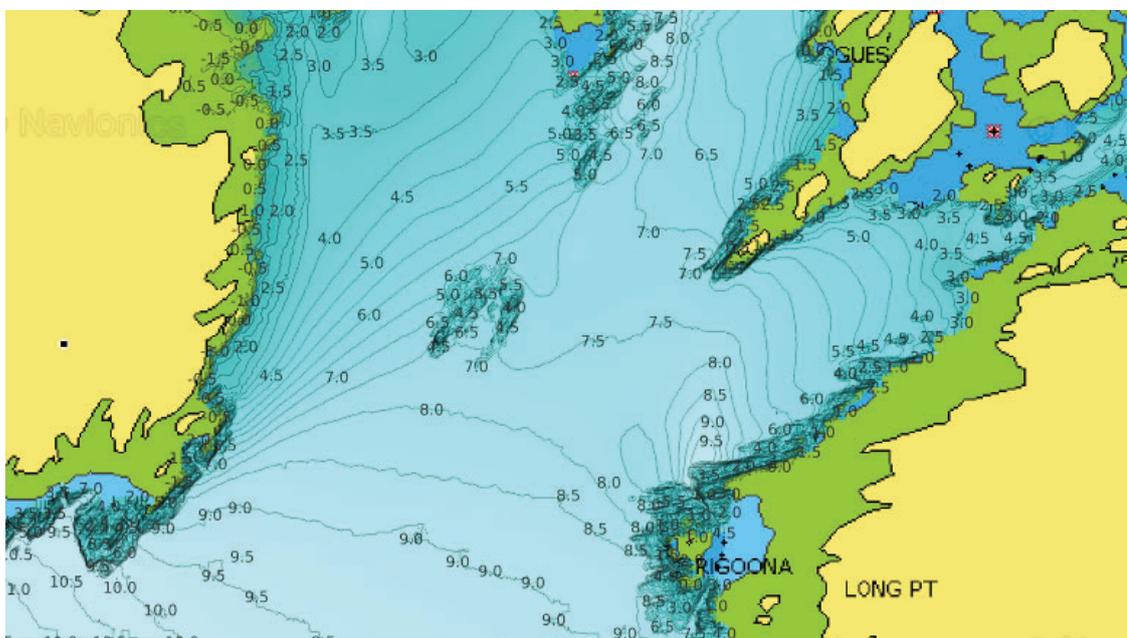
by Aedan Coffey

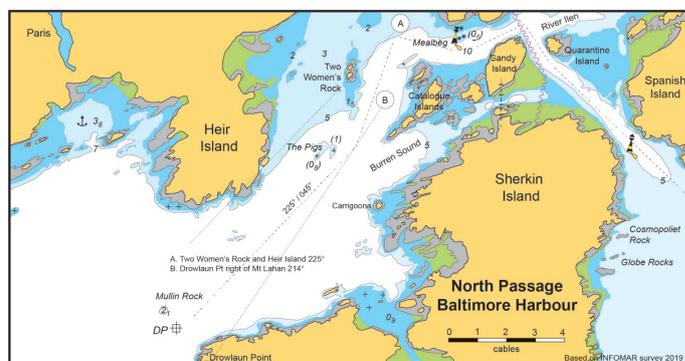
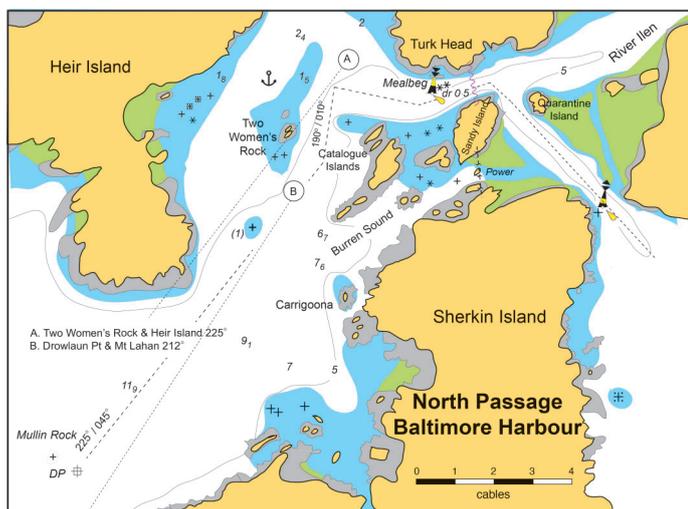
Ireland's marine territory is ten times larger than its land area. The details of its topography are largely unknown. Some of the charts we use regularly are based on surveys done with hand bearing compasses and lead lines in the 1840s. In 1996 the Irish Government funded the Marine Institute and the Geological Survey of Ireland to survey the deep waters, and then from 2006 the areas inshore of the 50m contour. The latter project is called INFOMAR. The part of this survey that interests us leisure sailors is closest inshore, and if we can read this data, we have much more detailed and reliable information than before; most of it is unpublished anywhere else.

The task of converting the INFOMAR data into something that can be useful for small craft has been ongoing since mid-2022, involving ICC members Vera Quinlan, who works for the Marine Institute in Galway, Norman Kean, who edits the Sailing Directions, and me. Various other staff in the Marine Institute and the Geological Survey of Ireland are also assisting.

Status

Not all of the Irish inshore coastline has been surveyed yet and there is considerable work to be done before any survey data can be made available to us. All surveys released by May 2024 have been converted into contour plots and given to Norman to update the plans for the next edition of the Sailing Directions (we don't call them charts because they are strictly not for navigation). Each location is given to Norman as a set of six plots with different contour intervals and shading. He then uses these to painstakingly redraw the plans in the Sailing Directions, including names, bearings, transits, and spot depths in a conventional chart-like form. A small part of just one of the plans sent to Norman is shown here.





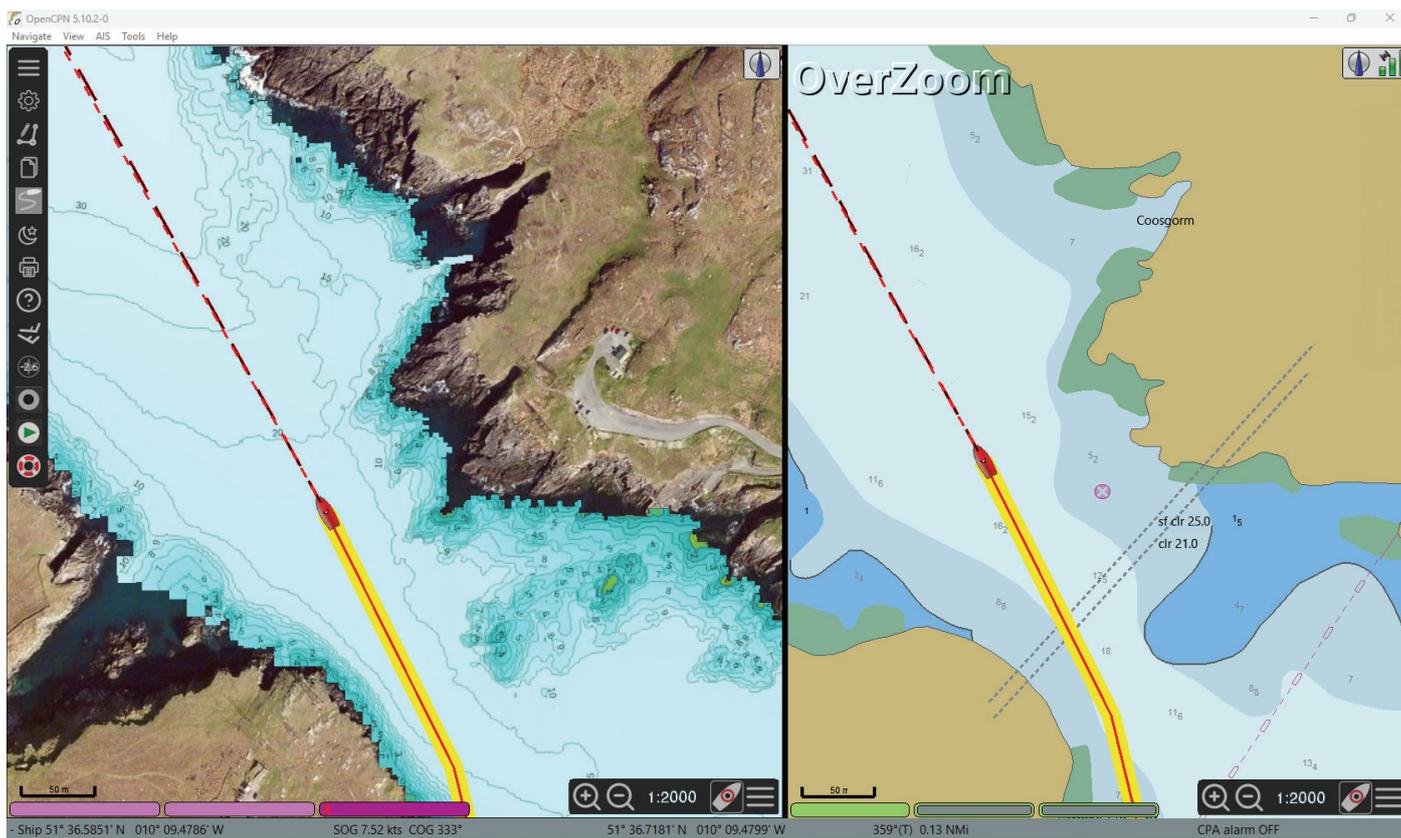
Above: Plan from South and West 2025 edition

Left: Plan from the 2022 edition

The North Passage in Baltimore is shown above from the current and next editions as an example of the increased precision and accuracy.

Next steps

I have now moved on to creating plans for much larger areas in a “raster-chart” type format that can be read by some plotting software. This data will be strictly bathymetry (depth) only, no names, no navigational aids, no tidal information, etc. A working example of Dursey sound is shown below, together with satellite imagery of the land area.



INFOMAR derived mbtiles displayed in OpenCPN, overlaid on satellite photo, with vessel transiting Dursey Sound.

Admiralty electronic chart.

Significant hazards discovered by the INFOMAR survey vessels are routinely reported immediately to the UKHO and included in Notices to Mariners. But not always! In the course of our work, a rock off Killybegs was spotted to be 1.1m deep rather than the charted 4.8m. Now in the NtoMs.

I'm looking for sailors to test these files. If you are computer literate, use plotting software that can read mbtiles format and would like to sign up as a tester, please contact me. The OpenCPN software works well but there are others that should too. Finally, this task is quite demanding on computer hardware. If anyone knows of a business disposing of a server class computer, could they please contact me.

The Wreck of the Hesperus

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea;
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The smoke now West, now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailòr,
Had sailed to the Spanish Main,
"I pray thee, put into yonder port,
For I fear a hurricane.

"Last night, the moon had a golden ring,
And to-night no moon we see!"
The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe,
And a scornful laugh laughed he.

Colder and louder blew the wind,
A gale from the Northeast,
The snow fell hissing in the brine,
And the billows frothed like yeast.

Down came the storm, and smote amain
The vessel in its strength;
She shuddered and paused, like a frighted steed,
Then leaped her cable's length.

"Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr,
And do not tremble so;
For I can weather the roughest gale
That ever wind did blow."

He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat
Against the stinging blast;
He cut a rope from a broken spar,
And bound her to the mast.

"O father! I hear the church-bells ring,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!" —
And he steered for the open sea.

"O father! I hear the sound of guns,
Oh say, what may it be?"
"Some ship in distress, that cannot live
In such an angry sea!"

"O father! I see a gleaming light,
Oh say, what may it be?"
But the father answered never a word,
A frozen corpse was he.

Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark,
With his face turned to the skies,
The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow
On his fixed and glassy eyes.

Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed
That savèd she might be;
And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave
On the Lake of Galilee.

And fast through the midnight dark and drear,
Through the whistling sleet and snow,
Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept
Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe.

And ever the fitful gusts between
A sound came from the land;
It was the sound of the trampling surf
On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.

The breakers were right beneath her bows,
She drifted a dreary wreck,
And a whooping billow swept the crew
Like icicles from her deck.

She struck where the white and fleecy waves
Looked soft as carded wool,
But the cruel rocks, they gored her side
Like the horns of an angry bull.

Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice,
With the masts went by the board;
Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank,
Ho! ho! the breakers roared!

At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach,
A fisherman stood aghast,
To see the form of a maiden fair,
Lashed close to a drifting mast.

The salt sea was frozen on her breast,
The salt tears in her eyes;
And he saw her hair, like the brown sea-weed,
On the billows fall and rise.

Such was the wreck of the Hesperus,
In the midnight and the snow!
Christ save us all from a death like this,
On the reef of Norman's Woe!

WYSIATI

by Norman Kean



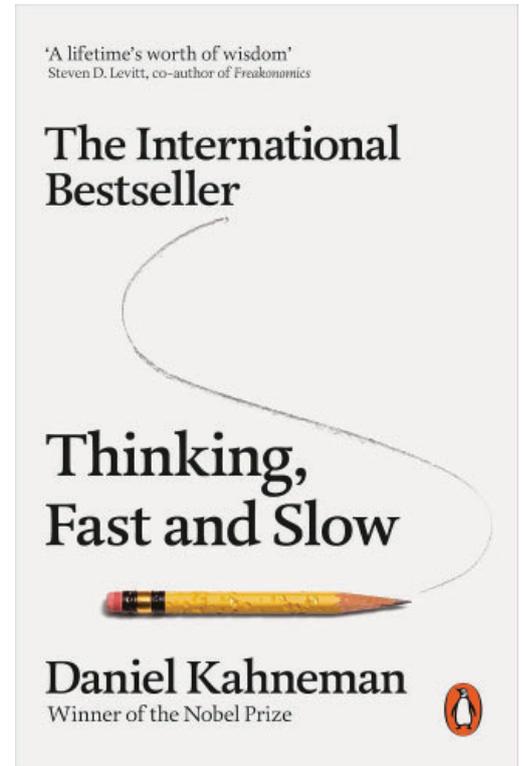
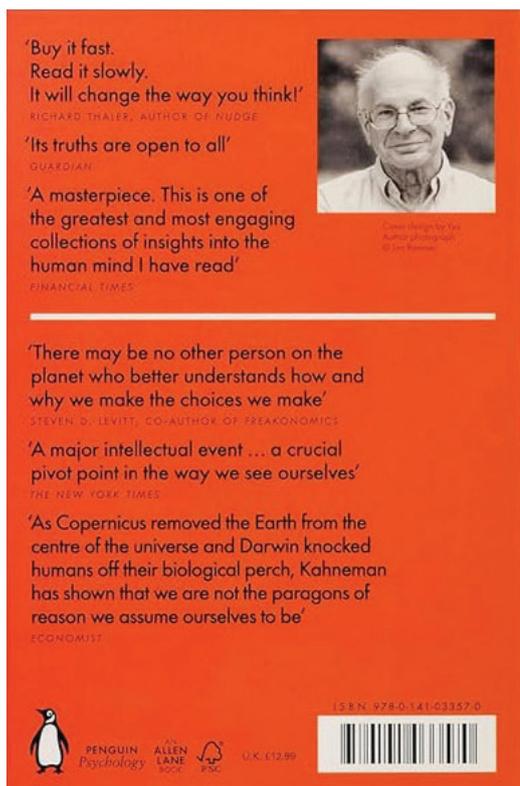
From the Chart Table

You are probably familiar with the abbreviation WYSIWYG, meaning *What You See Is What You Get*. The psychologist Daniel Kahneman, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2002, despite not being an economist, coined the analogous term WYSIATI. Kahneman and his academic collaborator Amos Tversky (who had died in 1996) were key players in debunking - on excellent scientific evidence - the accepted wisdom that *“the agent of economic theory is rational and selfish, and his tastes do not change”*. Not so, not even when he’s the highest-paid fund manager or CEO.

Kahneman and Tversky were among the founders of what is now called behavioural economics. WYSIATI stands for *What You See Is All There Is*. They applied the idea - with icy scientific rigour - to the psychological phenomenon of conclusion-jumping, but it applies equally well to many aspects of navigation.

WYSIATI means that the instinctive side of your brain takes into account only what you can see (or otherwise sense), and your decisions are based only on that. You don’t consider the possibility that there is something else there that you don’t know about. The simplest example is perhaps in the behaviour of someone who, when faced with a stretch of wide-open water, concludes that he can sail safely straight across it. This led, on a calm and sunny day in June 2010, to the grounding of no less than four Princess 57 motor yachts on rocks in West Cork: Belly Rock accounted for two, Mealbeg and Gascanane Rock for one each. The damage was spectacular, but mercifully nobody was hurt. None of these accidents was deemed to merit investigation by the MCIB, although the insurance bill must have run into millions. This was paid, ultimately, by the rest of us.

WYSIATI also comes into play in the interpretation of AIS signals. It is all too easy to fall into the assumption that because out there in the dark or the fog nobody is transmitting AIS, there’s nobody there. Not everybody transmits AIS. The arrival of the cargo vessel *Alta* on the shore west of Ballycotton in February 2020, after drifting abandoned around the Atlantic for 16 months, reminds us that there may be hazards out there that we must look out for, by all possible means. The voyage of the ghost ship *Alta*, without accident, was described in the media as “miraculous”, but it wasn’t really. It was just fairly lucky, and it’s a big ocean. The horror of an invisible container, floating awash, probably haunts all those crossing the ocean in little ships. It certainly gives me pause for thought. To quote Kahneman, “Both in explaining the past and in predicting the future, we focus on the causal role of skill and neglect the role of luck. We are therefore prone to an *illusion of control*.” (his italics).



WYSIATI covers the case where you turn the breakwater end and find a fishing boat heading straight for you, the possibility of uncharted rocks, the idea that the chart is infallible, the possibility that downwind of that pot buoy there’s another one (I speak from bitter experience), and the tendency to head for the middle of the distant island, when in fact that’s the top of the hill, the rest of the island is below the horizon, and the harbour is ten degrees to starboard.

Kahneman died in March 2024 at the age of 90. His book *“Thinking, fast and slow”* is fairly heavy going, but it’s worth it as an insight into human foibles.

2024 Photographic Plate Results



And the 2024 winner is...

The above photo is of *Jap* and was taken by Chris Bateman, perched on the crane iron of *Jap* with his phone camera. *Jap* is a Cork Harbour One Design, and is seen here, sailing in the Les Voiles de St. Tropez. Chris was crewing for Harold Cudmore.

Fore - Aft: Kate Neville, Eddie Nicholson, Harold Cudmore, and Patrick Dorgan.

2024 Runner-up

Engen, under the watchful eye of the Svartisen Glacier - the second largest in Europe.

The photo is by Mark Sweetnam.



2025 New Members

Andrew Collins, Killiney, Co. Dublin

Sailing since the age of 4, Andrew has sailed many thousands of miles in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Pacific, and South China Seas. He is a veteran of one of John Gore-Grimes epic Arctic challenges and a survivor of an Orca attack in 2023. A passionate cruiser his ultimate goal is a circumnavigation.



Bernard McGranaghan, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Bernard learned to sail in the late '70s in Wexford Harbour. Cruising began in the early '90s, building a Van de Stadt Offshore 8m from hull and deck and venturing to Wales, the West of Ireland, Cornwall, and Brittany. In 1997 he took a sabbatical and cruised the Caribbean for a year. In addition to cruising, he is also an offshore racing enthusiast and has competed a number of Round Ireland, Middle Sea, and Caribbean 600 races.

Billy O'Connor, Cork

Billy is a retired dermatologist with time for sailing on *Copperwynd*, his 2022 Sun Odyssey 410. He previously held the position of IYA Grade A sailing instructor in both Cork and the USA. He was a team member Irish Universities team at worlds Hyeres France and was Dragon national champion 1990 (foredeck). Billy holds a skipper license and a shore-based yacht master's. He was skipper on rugby world cup cruises to France and Spain. He is looking forward to learning from fellow ICC members and hopes to participate in social land and sea-based events.



Brian McDaid, Derry, Northern Ireland

Brian has been sailing since the mid 1980s and was an active member of Lough Swilly Yacht Club for many years. Brian and his wife Cathleen own *Briomhar*, an Oceanis 411. They have sailed around Ireland, Scotland and to most of the Scottish Islands and chartered in Turkey, Greece, and New Zealand. *Briomhar* is currently berthed in Combarro, Galicia and has participated as a guest in Encuentro Náutico de Galicia 2024.

Choryna Kiely, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Choryna has had a love affair with sailboats and everything to do with sailing since Bere Island in 1989. Initially, she honed her own dinghy sailing skills, before moving on to instruct others. Then she discovered bigger boats. It is the constantly evolving variety of learning, challenges, and (betimes exhilarating) experiences that appeals to her so much about sailing, and that includes racing and cruising boats.



Conor Barry, Kinsale, Co. Cork

As a child, Conor grew up racing dinghies and progressed from the Optimists to Mirrors and then Laser 2s. He continues to race dinghies, sailing the ILCA (Laser) as a Masters sailor. For the past 10 years, he has been keenly developing his experience and skills as a cruising skipper with the aim of more ambitious cruises in the coming years.

Nature's Navigators: Millions of Years of Experience...

by Bob Brown



Green turtle on Ascension Island, returning to the sea after egg-laying. Between such visits she will travel thousands of miles before returning to the same beach.

Navigating near or distant waters is the stuff of our floating life. Irrespective of whether we are coast-hopping or traversing great tracts of ocean, the same principles apply: *knowing where you are, where you want to be, how to get there, and when.* We have compasses, echosounders, charts, and a range of GPS-related gizmos; plus good honest dead reckoning, often based upon coast topography. Celestial observations with sextants were essential for any navigator from centuries ago but used much less these days.

A remarkable number of these methods are also employed by birds, whales, fish, and even butterflies and moths. And, whilst we humans have been navigating over the last few millennia, these critters have been adept at getting across the oceans with considerable accuracy for millions of years.

There are innumerable examples, but just a few:

- Humpback whales undertake seasonal migrations from specific summer areas in Arctic and northern latitudes, down to Caribbean and west African waters for the northern winter. Their southern counterparts travel in virtually straight paths from Antarctic waters to coasts of Argentina and Brazil during the austral winter.
- Waders undertake enormous migrations. A recent example was a bar tailed godwit (quite common on Irish coasts in winter), travelling without stops from South Korea to New Zealand. Wandering albatross regularly circumnavigate Antarctica in search of food before returning to tiny islands and their young. And once fledged and matured, the offspring often return to their natal islands to breed, without any parental guidance.

- Our own basking sharks migrate from our summer coasts to equatorial areas. Of course the movements of salmon and eels, covering vast tracts of ocean to arrive at specific bays and rivers, is well documented.
- Painted lady butterflies 'erupt' each spring in north Africa. Succeeding generations are born en route northwards until a generation arrives on our shores. They then reverse the process going southwards. Monarch butterflies do something similar from central America through to the USA. Although largely land based, I would argue that for an insect weighing little more than a grain of rice, it is spectacular.
- Arctic terns enjoy more sunlight than any other animal. They repeatedly fly from Arctic breeding islands south to S Africa, S America, and even the Antarctic to winter in the austral summer. Some have even been tracked to Australia before returning home.

Migration and navigation by birds, at least, has been known for centuries. Aristotle puzzled over it for years, recognising that some species got fat before disappearing, and were thin when they reappeared, as you would expect at the beginning and end of a migration. A knight gambling on chariot races in the 1st century AD, released translocated crows carrying race results to his mates 137 miles away, confident the birds would get back home.

Gilbert White, one of the most renowned 18th century naturalists, was having none of it. He believed swallows hibernated in mud, re-emerging in the spring. *"But what difficulties attend that [migration] supposition! That such feeble bad fliers (who the summer long ever flit but from hedge to hedge) should be able to traverse vast*

seas and continents to enjoy milder seasons amidst the regions of Africa!”

We humans have been re-inventing an ancient navigational wheel. Our various methods of orienting, locating, direction-finding have been used by oceanic wildlife millions of years before we came along.

Our first and most obvious is dead reckoning, using coastal topography. Bird observatories record seasonal migrations of sea-going waders, terns, auks, and petrels working their way round headlands before making the jump to the next landmass. Tiny, isolated islands en route offer refuelling stops. Sometimes they take short cuts: in Iceland with the late Brian Black, we noted brent geese going up into dense cloud straight over a high peninsula rather than take the long way round.

How about compasses? It is known that both birds and whales orient according to the earth's magnetic field. Precisely how is still under debate, particularly the role of an iron oxide called magnetite in their beaks and brains. However, it has been found that they don't respond to any north/south magnetic line (just as well, as these vary considerably) but they determine their latitude from the angle of the magnetic forces interacting with the earth's surface – the steeper indicating higher latitudes.

Sextants? Migratory songbirds that are subjected to planetarium displays attempt to fly in directions related to projected star assemblies and formations. In particular Polaris, the pole star, is important, its fixed position giving a clear north pointer. I haven't yet found what the equivalent southern hemisphere guide is (southern cross?), but there surely will be one.

Tristan albatross circling tiny Gough Island in the Tristan da Cunha group where almost the entire world's population nest, when they aren't traversing the oceans for food.



Chinstrap penguins hitching a ride on an iceberg. They can't control its travels, but wherever they hop off, they navigate back to their nesting colony which could be hundreds of miles away.

As to longitudinal position, birds, like human navigators of old, use the height and timing of the sun. This implies having some type of body clock – birds' physiological answer to the problems of reliable timepieces that bedevilled early 18th century seafarers. Moreover, unlike the latter, birds can perceive polarised light, enabling them to get a sighting even in cloudy weather.

Echo sounders? Finding shallows (or avoiding them) on a regular basis is relatively easy. Sharks, whales and seabirds use sea mounts – deep sea mountains that rise from the abyss to 'shallows' of a few hundred feet depth that are highly productive of habitats, species, and all-important food. A ship's passage along the mid-Atlantic ridge will encounter a number of these, invisible to us on the surface, but whose presence far below can often be detected by flocks of feeding seabirds, with whales and dolphins chasing on dense shoals of fish.

Smell! I'm not aware of any of our skippers using this as a navigational tool, so we are well behind other creatures in this respect. Ocean navigators like albatross and penguins, in addition to sensing wave patterns and wind directions, can locate themselves according to scents that humans cannot detect – perhaps most notably, the distinctive aroma (for them) of krill, small shrimp-like crustaceans that swarm in their billions in the vast expanses of the southern oceans. Closer to home, the migrations of salmon, trout and eels focus on the unique chemical trace elements that characterise their home rivers.

There is so much more to this subject that it would overflow my space in this august journal. Not least because it isn't all plain sailing even for oceanic wildlife. Things go wrong for all oceanic navigators. Perhaps with the editor's permission, I'll continue the topic in the next issue. In the meantime, summer is coming, and once again we'll fiddle with our charts, GPS, and chart plotters. But our whales, seabirds, turtles, and fish really don't need that sort of kit.

Quantum Navigation: A route to GPS-independent navigation?

by Conor O'Byrne

Most of us now rely heavily on satellite-based global positioning systems (GPS) for navigation on our passages. This incredibly useful technology depends on the availability of signals from a number of dedicated satellites to a receiver, which integrates the signals and triangulates our position on the surface of the globe. However, the GPS satellite signals can be easily jammed or “spoofed”, where false signals are transmitted by malicious actors. This is something that has been reported by numerous pilots flying close to the Russian border in recent years. As recently as January this year a Ryanair 737 flight from London to Lithuania had to be diverted to Warsaw due to a “GPS signal interference” incident as they were making their descent. Therefore, despite the incredible utility of GPS it can't be fully depended on for navigation, as of course every cruising sailor knows.

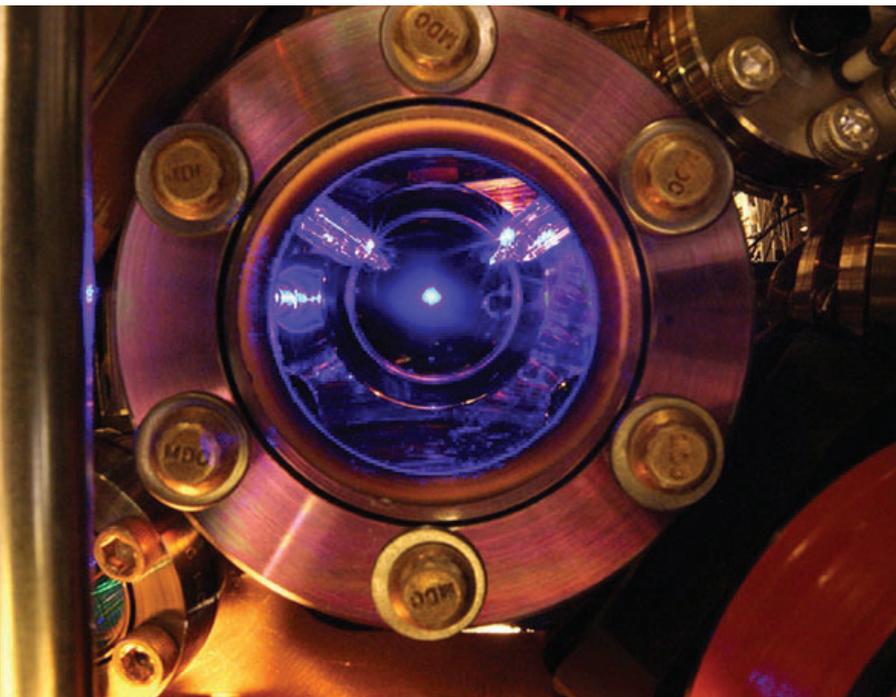
what if there was a highly accurate instrument that could record your absolute speed and direction at every instant of your passage? This is the goal of the researchers working on the development of quantum navigation systems.

Some readers might already be familiar with atomic clocks, which are used on board GPS satellites to keep very precise time, necessary for the accuracy of the positional fix. The current atomic clocks are based on caesium atoms, and they typically lose about 1 second every 10 million years or so. This is good enough to ensure a positional fix down to about one meter. Accuracy down to a single cm requires an even more accurate measurement of time. The latest generation of precision clocks that can achieve this are called “optical clocks” as they rely on frequencies (around 400 THz) in the optical range to measure time. This is much higher than the microwave frequencies used in atomic clocks – about 9 GHz. They are still experimental, and the technology is evolving, but they can be based on the atoms of strontium, ytterbium, or aluminium.

The development of truly GPS-independent navigation systems is being explored using atomic interferometry. Using the interference pattern of atoms, acceleration (which is just a change in speed in a given direction) and rotation can be measured very precisely; essentially acting as an atomic inertial navigation unit (INU). INUs are already widely used on ships and planes and even on our mobile phones, but they are typically based on mechanical accelerometers and gyroscopes, which can be prone to errors. Atomic interferometry has the potential to deliver extremely precise measurements of acceleration and rotational movements, and these measurements can be used to compute position, provided the initial position is known.

The way that the atomic interferometry works is beyond the scope of this article, but it is a fascinating subject and there is lots information available online if anyone wants a deep dive into the topic.

While the nautical chart, magnetic compass, and GPS will likely remain as essential navigation tools for many years to come, the quantum revolution is poised to guide us into uncharted waters. The prospect of precise navigation, independent of the global satellite network, would surely be a welcome addition to our navigational armoury, especially in these geopolitically uncertain times.



*Strontium optical lattice clock at JILA
Credit: The Ye group and Brad Baxley, JILA*

Traditionally, navigation was based on dead reckoning, where time, estimated speed (from a trailing log), and course (from a compass) can be used to calculate an approximated position. The problem with this approach is that the measurements of speed, time, and course have inherent errors, which can compound uncertainty over a long passage. Furthermore, the leeway of the vessel and the presence of ocean or tidal currents are often uncertain. This error can confound the calculation, making the position only marginally better than an educated guess (especially over long distances). But

2025 New Members

Conor Haughey, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Conor has been cruising the coast of Ireland since 1975. This includes (as crew) being shipwrecked off Mizzen Head in 1985. He has cruised extensively in both Europe and the Caribbean and has crossed the Bay of Biscay 6 times; twice in heavy weather. Conor has crossed the Atlantic 5 times; three of those as skipper. He is currently cruising between the Canaries in winter and Galicia in summer.



Deborah Evers, Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare

Since 2000, Deborah has sailed the west of Ireland, England, Channel Islands, Atlantic France, Spain, and Portugal. She has cruised in the Mediterranean, Atlantic Spain, Portugal, and the Canaries on *Xavantes a Rival 41AC*. She holds a Yachtmaster and has been responsible as skipper for safety gear, navigation, radio, sail setting, and watches. She has been involved in inspections of all onboard systems, arranging repairs or technicians as needed.

Gary Sims, Bangor, Co. Down

Gary was brought up with boats, sailing for many years on his father's *Kerry 27, Kerrykeel*. Racing on Belfast Lough followed. Since being married to Lorna, the couple have cruised Scotland and Ireland for the past 20 years, firstly on their *Gladiateur 33*, then with teenage kids on a *Moody 44*. In more recent years they have been sailing *ForeRunner*, a Sweden Yachts 42.



Hugh Friel, Tralee, Co. Kerry

Hugh lives in Tralee, Co. Kerry and has been sailing keelboats for 40 years, predominately racing on the southwest coast. Since retirement he has had the opportunity to do more long-distance cruising around the Irish coast, the south of England, the Algarve, and the Caribbean. He has known many members of ICC for a long number of years.

Joe Callanan, Limerick

Joe Callanan is a member of RCYC. He holds a Yachtmaster Offshore (RYA). In 2002 he purchased *Soothsayer of Hamble II* a 40-foot ketch built 1978, which he extensively upgraded and has maintained since then. His cruising experience is in waters from west coast of Scotland to east and south coasts of Ireland, including Brittany and northern Spain. He has enjoyed chartering yachts in his 20s and crewing on cruiser/racers in his youth. He was introduced to sailing by a 2-week cruise on *Asgard II* at 17.



Katherine Quinlan, New Quay, Co. Clare

Katherine has been sailing for 35 years. In that time she has crossed most of the world's oceans on *Pylades*, her 12m Van de Stadt yacht, which she built with her husband and subsequently launched in 1997. Other voyaging has been through the seas of the Baltic and Europe north and south, logging around 80,000 miles.

Who is Pulling the Strings?

by Stephen Hyde

This is a story that was related to me by my mother and father when I was very young. The event happened when I was about 6 or 7 years of age.

It includes a lot of coincidences, and being a little religious, I think the title of this article is quite appropriate.

Back in the year 1952 my father and mother, John and Gladys Hyde, went cruising west from Cork with Teddy Pope and one or two others on Teddy's boat called the *Suzette* - a classic six-metre yacht. They spent the first night in Kinsale and the following day headed out towards the Old Head of Kinsale under spinnaker as the wind was northerly.

My Old Man, John Hyde, was steering the boat from the cabin top with ropes down through blocks on the deck and back to the tiller, as you do. This part of the story was related to me by the Old Man sometime later; that could have been a few weeks, a few months or a few years later.

Anyway, a big wind shift caused the boat to jibe, and the Old Man was hit on the head by the boom and naturally fell over the side of the boat.

Now, John Hyde could not swim so he held onto the ropes for as long as possible while the boat sailed along merrily in beautiful sailing conditions. Eventually, the ropes cut through to the bones of his fingers, so he let them go and was left behind, bobbing along just under the surface with the sun shining down through the waves.

As he could not swim, he knew he was finished unless he got help from somewhere so he prayed to Our Lady



John and Gladys Hyde in later life

and asked her to intervene with the Lord to save him as he had small kids. In return, he promised he would go to Mass and holy communion every day for the rest of his life.

Meanwhile, (related to me by Gladys) on board *Suzette* there was a mad scramble to start the engine, take down the mainsail and then the spinnaker, turn around and head back in the general direction of Kinsale. No such thing as a man overboard button in those days. Neither were there any lifelines or life jackets on board for good measure. They were nearly out by the Old Head at this stage so when they turned around there was a big open sea with no sign of John; naturally as he was sub surface.

Eventually, Teddy Pope stopped the boat and told Gladys that she was now a widow as he presumed John Hyde was gone to heaven.

At this point, Gladys was standing on the side of boat holding onto the rigging listening to all this when she suddenly looked down. Lo and behold there was John right beside the boat just under the surface!

They hauled him aboard, pumped him out and he survived.

What are the chances of that? Or was someone else pulling the strings? That is the real question.

Conclusion

John Hyde went to Mass and holy communion every day for the rest of his life. A promise made is a promise kept. He lived to be 81.

Suzette today, having seen better days



Maria's Hopes

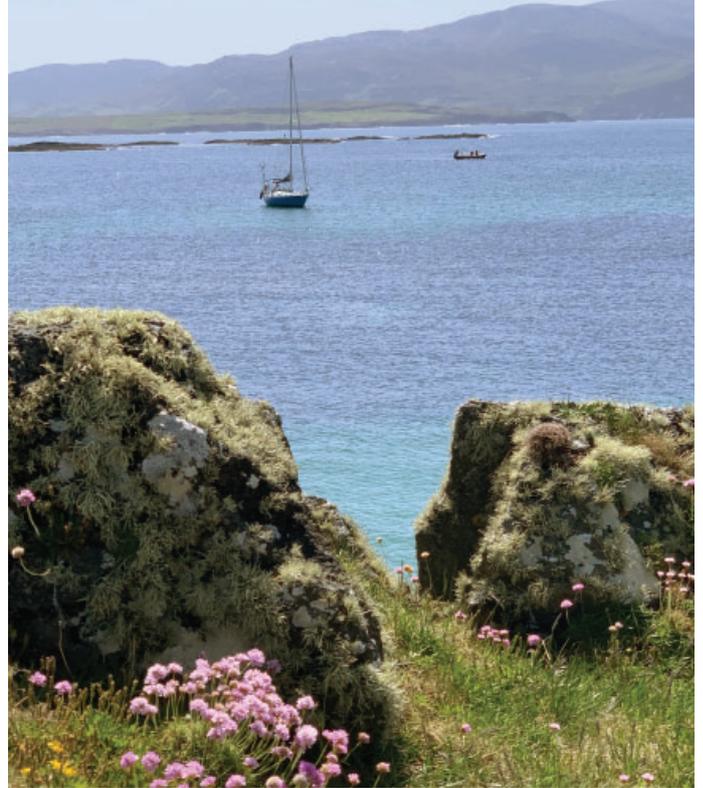
by Rob Henshall

I'm *Maria*, a Contessa 32. I'm 51 years young now, but there's plenty more years in me yet – probably plenty more than my owner. I've weathered a few storms standing firm on my cradle in Sligo this winter. Storm Éowyn did no damage to me, but it unfortunately did lay over one boat. Jobs inboard and outboard are numerous, but I sense there is a treat for me on the way. There's a struggle to remove my half-century old prop shaft clamp coupling. My old prop is off, it isn't the correct pitch for the gearing of my engine, and my shaft is going to have come out somehow. I reckon, despite my age, I'm going to feel in fine fettle beneath my waterline with the expensive treat of a Darglow Featherstream propeller on a new shaft and coupling.



I sat idle last season at the pontoon going nowhere as my skipper's family commitments prevented any adventure. Hence my antifouling is still sound with my hull having experienced only the mainly fresh water of the Garavogue River estuary.

This year I have a feeling of anticipation that adventure is afoot. I'll cruise under sail better than I have ever cruised before in my long life with minimal drag, and motor when needed with less strain on lower revs. My topsides don't matter at present as there is other work underway above deck. Sure, my lines look pretty enough to distract from the odd scratch and scuff mark on my Empress Blue hull! I'll look forward to a dashing repaint next year, perhaps. Above deck, my ancient teak woodwork is splintered, shattered and cracked in many places. It's all being taken off or falling off – taff rail, cap rails and handrails are coming off between showers.



I sense I'll never see teak again. However, I'll be grand, adorned with Keruing timber, cut and routed, then steamed and fitted to grace my handsome lines. The course that I'll steer will hopefully be accurate and true with a new Raymarine Evolution tiller autopilot, which will not fail as with their ST2000.

I hope the adventure afoot will be a long and slow one, taking in peaceful, sheltered and unknown anchorages around the coast of Ireland. My skipper, Rob, thrives on solitude. He tends to venture alone, and we have gotten on well together since he brought me to Ireland from some distance away under difficult circumstances. He's circumnavigated Ireland numerous times in varied craft but has only once been around counterclockwise. He hopes, weather permitting, to sail me to places he's never been to before, but from a different direction, perspective and with a different intention – exploring the coast slowly in greater detail, visiting any and every nook and cranny he can find when weather permits, and at the same time visit old favourites. I'll endeavour to look after him if he keeps guiding me true and caring for me so that our adventurous partnership can continue for years to come.



Western Wanderings

by Conor O'Byrne

Sailors from the west were surprisingly quiet this spring. No doubt preparing themselves and their vessels for great adventures in the coming months.

We would like to welcome three new members from the west: Katherine (Kay) Quinlan, Deborah Evers, and Joe Callanan.

Some western sailors are planning a cruise in company to Cornwall in early July. Galway sailor Cormac McDonagh is organising the cruise together with Galway Bay



Calico Jack on a mooring in Adrigole

Sailing Club. They are planning informal get-togethers in Falmouth (July 4th), Fowey (July 6th), and Plymouth (July 8th). This follows the success of their cruises to Brittany and Scotland in 2019 and 2022, respectively.

David Beattie reports that *ReeSpray* wintered on the River Vilaine in South Brittany. He plans to sail home from there to the south coast via the Isles of Scilly, leaving late May. They will then join the Conor OBrien centenary return cruise in company to Dún Laoghaire and onwards to Oban where they will join the Cruising Club of America Western Isles cruise in company. This will be followed by a leisurely return to Dún Laoghaire via a protracted visit to Strangford Lough.

Michael Brogan reminds us that the 46th Cruinniú na mBád will take place in Kinvara on the weekend of 8-10th of August. Started in 1979 Cruinniú is the longest running traditional (maritime) regatta on the Island. There will be lots of family-friendly events for all age groups, including a marquee by Cuan Beó with emphasis on fish cookery, oyster farming, and all things related to the sea. All ICC members are welcome by land or sea especially to the BBQ at 1400 hours in Parkmore on Saturday 9th August.



Scythe underway

Bob Earlie enjoyed a great sail last July aboard *Scythe* (1962 Laurent Giles) from Baltimore to Galicia via Brittany. Twenty years ago, *Scythe* made it to Brest for the Tall Ships Regatta enduring 52 knot winds. Last July the conditions were delightful with a maximum Force 6 just ahead of SW gales. After arriving in Ria de Arousa, they took part in several classic regattas. Although they managed 7.4 knots on a beat, just missed pole position by 4 seconds in one of the races. Bob is now preparing *B-Hive* for the coming season.

Daria and Alex Blackwell are having some work done by Steve Morris in Kilrush on *Aleria* in preparation for launching in May. They then intend to sail to Cork to join



Conor O'Byrne and Fionn heading in for shore leave in Adrigole

the Conor OBrien cruise to Dún Laoghaire. From there they plan to sail to Valencia in southern Spain, where they hope to find a new caretaker for *Aleria*.

2025 New Members

Michael Sadlier, Ranelagh, Co. Dublin

Michael grew up in Blackrock Co. Dublin and developed his love of the sea as a Sea Scout in Dún Laoghaire Harbour. Work and other sporting pursuits got in the way for the next 10 years, but a year spent in Australia delivering yachts, including a Sydney Hobart race in 1991, kept the flames of interest alive. He is now the proud owner of *Varuna*, an HR43 that he has sailed around Ireland, up into the Hebrides, and now taking the slow route to the Mediterranean.



Peter Maher, Sandymount, Dublin 4

Peter is the third generation of his family to have learned how to sail in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. He has owned a variety of boats since his youth ranging from a Mirror, a Fireball, a Drascombe Longboat, a RIB, to his current yacht, a Hallberg Rassy 43, *Radiance II*. In *Radiance II*, his sailing ventures have included sailing the Irish coastline, sailing to mainland Spain and Portugal, Madeira, the Canaries, the Azores, and in to the Mediterranean. He principally sails with his wife, Ruth, but also with sailing friends and family.

Philip Hutchinson, Belfast

Philip has sailed all his life, cruising extensively with his father Alan Hutchinson (ICC) as a child and then on his own yachts as an adult. His summer holidays growing up were always spent cruising the West coast of Scotland or sailing around Ireland. Throughout those formative years, he remembers the camaraderie of encountering ICC yachts. He has attended ICC events at QYC and beyond and would greatly enjoy sharing cruising experiences and forging new friendships.



Wanted

Irish Cruising Club Historian & Archivist

Do you have a passion for Irish Cruising Club history and a keen eye for preserving the past? The Irish Cruising Club is seeking a dedicated Historian & Archivist to safeguard and promote our club's rich History

About the Role:

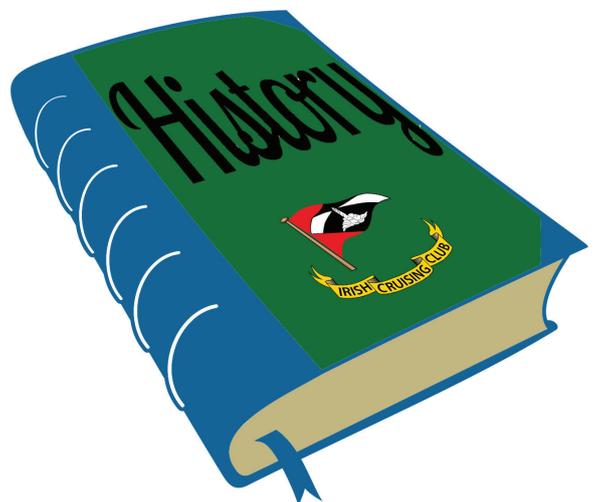
The Club Historian is responsible for preserving, documenting, and promoting the rich history and traditions of the Irish Cruising Club. This role involves maintaining historical records, curating memorabilia, and ensuring that the club's legacy is accessible to current and future members.

Ideal Candidate:

Passionate about maritime history and archival preservation

This voluntary, non committee role is a fantastic opportunity to immerse yourself in the club's fascinating past while shaping how its legacy is remembered.

Interested? Contact: commodore@irishcruisingclub.com



The Friendship Cup

by Harry Whelehan

It is timely to reflect on the Friendship Cup, the magnificent trophy gifted to us by our sister club the Cruising Club of America three years ago.

The two outstanding recipients to date, Peter Haden and Hilary Keatinge were, in each year, chosen from among nine nominees proposed by members of the Club.

In June this year, as in previous years, the Honorary Secretary will invite nominations from members for next year's award. The nominations received this year will be considered alongside the unsuccessful nominations, which were received in the previous years.

The criteria laid down by the CCA in the Deed of Gift requires us, in making the award, to have regard to each nominee's:

- Cruising background
- Contribution to Friendship and Camaraderie (within the Club and with our interaction with our sister clubs and their members).
- Exemplification of the highest values of the ICC.

While the Club already has many awards, each one with its own set of criteria as detailed in the LGB, and its own method and standard of adjudication, we did not have, until receipt of this gift, an award specifically and primarily dedicated to the notion of Friendship and Camaraderie, and to be awarded, pursuant to the deed of Gift, "to a member or the spouse of a member".

The Committee, being anxious to honour the spirit of the Deed of Gift, and to ensure that this new award would, in each year, find a particularly special club member, or the spouse of a member, who would meet the requirements' of the Criteria, decided to seek nominations from the general membership of the Club with the following reservations:

- The office of Commodore is the highest accolade that the members can bestow on a Club member, thus ex-commodores while not excluded, should only be considered for the award in very exceptional circumstances.
- Similarly, members who have already been awarded either the Fastnet Award or the J.B Kearney Cup should only be considered for this award in exceptional circumstances.

The reason for this reservation is: it is implicit that in electing a member to be Commodore or making either of the above awards to the members concerned, by reason of the accolade bestowed on them, they have been

recognised acknowledged and rewarded by the Club for their exceptional qualities and achievements.

Noting that friendship and camaraderie are such important and fundamental elements of our Club's ethos, and also their importance to our interaction with our sister clubs, I encourage each member of the Club to help identify and nominate for this award any member, or spouse of a member whom it is felt meet the above criteria in a sufficiently strong and special way so as to be worthy of consideration for this award.

Many of our members, and indeed some spouses of members, sometimes in a quiet and effective way, and over a long period of time contribute enormously to the success of our Club, its social ethos and its interaction with our sister clubs' and their members'.

It is to identify, recognise and reward such persons that this Cup is established.

If you have a person who you feel merits nomination for this award the proposal will need to include the following information:

1. Name of the nominee and date of joining the Club, (If the nominee is not a Club member, but the spouse of a member, the name of the nominee's spouse and date of joining the Club).
2. Name of proposer and date of joining the Club.
3. Cruising background of the nominee since becoming a member of the ICC. (If the nominee is not a member, but the spouse of a member of ICC, a summary of cruising experience of the spouse (inter alia) should accompany the nomination.
4. Details of the contribution by the nominee in terms of Friendship and Camaraderie within the ICC.
5. Details of interaction with other relevant sailing organizations.
6. The extent to which the nominee, in a special way, exemplifies the highest values of the ICC.
7. If your nominee is an ex-Commodore or has already been a recipient of the Fastnet Trophy or the J.B Kearney Cup you will need to detail the "extraordinary circumstances" on which you rely to justify by-passing the reservation outlined above.

The information supplied should clearly demonstrate why you believe your nominee stands out above all other members as being worthy of this very special award. All information will be received and treated in the strictest confidence.

Sadly, some of the nominations received last year and the year before did not do justice to the persons nominated and so did not make the "short list" for consideration by the Committee.

Adjudication process:

1. Nominations are invited from members in June by email from Honorary Secretary.
2. A template for the guidance of the Nominator, along the lines set out at 1 to 7 above will be provided, to be filled out and returned to the Hon. Sec. by October 31st.
3. The Commodore with the approval of the Committee nominates a Committee sub group of 4 members (one from each region) to examine, in confidence, all of the nominations with a view to recommending a short list of 3 candidates to the Committee for consideration and decision by the Committee.
4. Candidates who are short listed in a year but are not successful that year will have their nomination deferred for further consideration in the following year, alongside any new nominations received, after the second year, if unsuccessful their nomination will lapse.
5. The name of the successful nominee will be announced at the AGM, and the presentation of the Cup will take place at the Annual Dinner and be made by the Commodore of the Cruising Club of America or their representative if either happens to be present or failing that by the current ICC Commodore.



New AIS device rule will make some MOB units illegal and fishing vessels detectable

by Daria Blackwell

The rapid proliferation of AIS devices has caused congestion in the tracking and monitoring of the AIS systems. New European safety rules to address congestion of automatic identification system (AIS) frequencies used by Autonomous Maritime Radio Devices (AMRDs) have already taken effect in some countries, including Ireland. Devices that mark fish farm boundaries and pot buoys or track hire boats and various other marine objects will have to use Ch2006 and not AIS 1 and AIS 2 frequencies. Ch2006 will effectively become a new low-power AIS frequency for such objects.

MOB devices, like those fitted to life jackets, will also be restricted. The only MOB AIS devices allowed will be those that incorporate

digital selective calling (DSC) on Ch70 – so called Class-M compliant.

New regulations governing fishing vessels' use of AIS went into effect 1st January 2024. Under this regulation, vessels over 15 metres' length overall must be fitted with AIS, and this must be in continuous operation. The master of an EU fishing vessel must report when they switch off their AIS and their reason for doing so. Only in exceptional circumstances, when the master considers the security of the crew is in imminent danger, may AIS be turned off. No longer can fishing vessels be 'dark' when fishing in Irish waters.



The Ocean Signal RescueME MOB1 with DSC is permitted.



The volume of Marine Traffic in coastal regions is mind-boggling.

For more information, visit <https://gmdsstesters.com/radio-survey/general/a-new-european-regulation-comes-into-force-which-ais-mob-devices-will-survive-after-january-1-2025.html>

Northern Notes

by Maeve Bell



Here in the North, we got the year underway with two walks. The first was in Belfast organised by Adrian and Maeve Bell with a choice of routes through Barnett's Park and the Lagan Towpath finishing with the all-important coffee in Malone House. Fresh sea breezes greeted us in Whitehead for the second walk when Tony and Rosemary Irwin organised it to go along the shores of Belfast Lough to Black Head Lighthouse and back, coffee in the Bank House this time.



Black Head lighthouse

In February the regional committee bid goodbye to Desmond Brown and welcomed Andrew Kennedy on board. While Andrew may not have been a member for long, he has been associated with the Club since early days – read his very enjoyable log Return to Benodet in the recent Annual – through his family connections including Neil Hegarty and the late Hugh Kennedy (Commodore 1990-92). Andrew decided to take his committee duties



The schooner Adela

seriously and go winter sailing, but in the Caribbean where he enjoyed sparkling conditions on board *Adela*, competing in the Antigua Superyacht Challenge and the St. Barts Bucket. *Adela*, a 55 metre schooner, was designed by Dykstra and built by Pendennis in 1995 and Andrew's daughter, Anna, is the Chief Steward on board. Andrew assures us that hard work was involved: "There are no furling sails on this boat; it takes the full crew of 37 to get her around!"



Alan in his CCA sweatshirt

Also getting in some winter competition was Colin Leonard, who attended the European ILCA Masters Series event in Malta, winning with a race to spare. He reckons that conditions favoured him but admits to being very pleased to beat some of the top UK Masters sailors. Meanwhile, his father, Alan Leonard, is getting *Ariadne* ready, hoping to head to Scotland to take part in the Cruising Club of America (CCA) rally in July. Alan's preparations have included finding and sprucing up his 28-year-old sweatshirt, a souvenir of the CCA rally he attended in Maine in 1997.

Frank Smyth writes: "As we all know 2024 was not a great summer for cruising. However, I reckon Muriel and I (two auld codgers) made the best of things. Having downsized from an S&S 38 four years ago to *Wild Otter*, a Vancouver 32, our adventures are somewhat curtailed; we didn't get very far, but nevertheless we had an enjoyable summer". The 'auld codgers' took

advantage of favourable weather-windows making no fewer than four mini cruises and hope to do much the same this coming season.

This summer Bob Brown expects to cover big distances in far flung locations starting with five weeks on the ship *Hondius* in the South Atlantic, giving lectures on the wildlife to cruising naturalists. Bob continues: "We'll be calling in on South Georgia, Tristan da Cunha, St Helena, Ascension Island, and the Cape Verde Islands. Then in the autumn, Linda and I will be travelling with my brother and his wife to the French Polynesian islands and sailing around some of the small islets, coral reefs, and volcanos. Hopefully, I'll return with some interesting tales to tell."

Change is in the air for Paul McSorley who, after completing a great cruise around Ireland last season which was awarded the Glengarriff Trophy, has sold *Viking Lord*. Paul acknowledges having very mixed feelings about it, but says it is time to move on. In the meantime, he is getting his other boat, *Wild Cat*, (an International H-Boat) ready to go back in the water and hopes to do some interesting back-to-basics cruising along the North and West coasts.

As usual, quite a number of members plan to head north. Julian and Patricia Morgan will head for the Faroe Islands in *A Capella of Belfast*. They plan to leave Strangford Lough in mid-June and sail up the west coast of Scotland as quickly as the wind, tide, and their energies will allow. They are hoping for some great wildlife and walking while in the Faroes before returning home via the Shetland Islands and west of Scotland.

A warm welcome to our three recently elected members: Philip Hutchinson, Brian McDaid, and Gary Simms. Philip hopes to head north on the 6th of June with a rough plan to do a circuit around Skye and back. As yet, he is not sure which way round he'll go, but he has allocated four weeks and is hoping that the coming season will be better than the last. Gary Simms will also head north with a quick dash to the Clyde at Easter to get some new canvas fitted and then back to Scottish waters for a few weeks in June. He is also keen to get a trip to Dublin and the Isle of Man into this season as work and diaries allow. Gary went to London over the winter to attend a Cruising Association seminar on the Baltic, which has whetted his appetite for future seasons.

Matthew Wright has also been eying Scandinavian waters. But, at the same time, he is looking south to Galicia. There has been no decision at the time of writing. However, Brian McDaid's *Briomhar* is already in Galicia; currently on the hard at Combarro. Brian will travel to Spain in early May to get the boat re-launched, returning in mid-June to participate in the Encuentro Náutico in mid-July, and generally cruise around the Rias Baixas until mid-September.

Finally, Tom Andrews is looking for a home for his charts. He has about 200 – mainly Scottish and Irish ones of different vintages, some antique, but also some of the English Channel, the Caribbean and Norway. He would be happy to give them to anyone interested (maybe a donation to RNLI?) and reflects that so much work and information goes into charts it seems wrong to take them to the skip.

Coming events

Saturday 25 April – Fitting out lunch in the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club, Cultra Co. Down.

Friday 23 to Sunday 25 May – Spring Rally to Belfast harbour Abercorn basin, free time for various suggested activities, a drinks reception in the marina on Saturday evening followed by a BBQ in the Marriot Hotel.

Friday 29 to Sunday 31 August – Autumn Rally, probably to Carlingford Lough.

Save the date: **21 to 23 March 2026** Annual Dinner weekend at the Lough Erne Resort Hotel, Enniskillen.

Galician Grapevine

by Peter Haden

In Galicia a good welcome is always a certainty for early season arrivals with plenty of berths in the large number of marinas and the early season weather warmer than at home. The winter, whilst very wet at times, had passed without the extremes that affected Ireland in January.

Surprisingly good news comes from Ana at Pobra do Caramiñal that after a delay of twenty years, new bathroom facilities have finally been completed. Bea at Cangas reports that



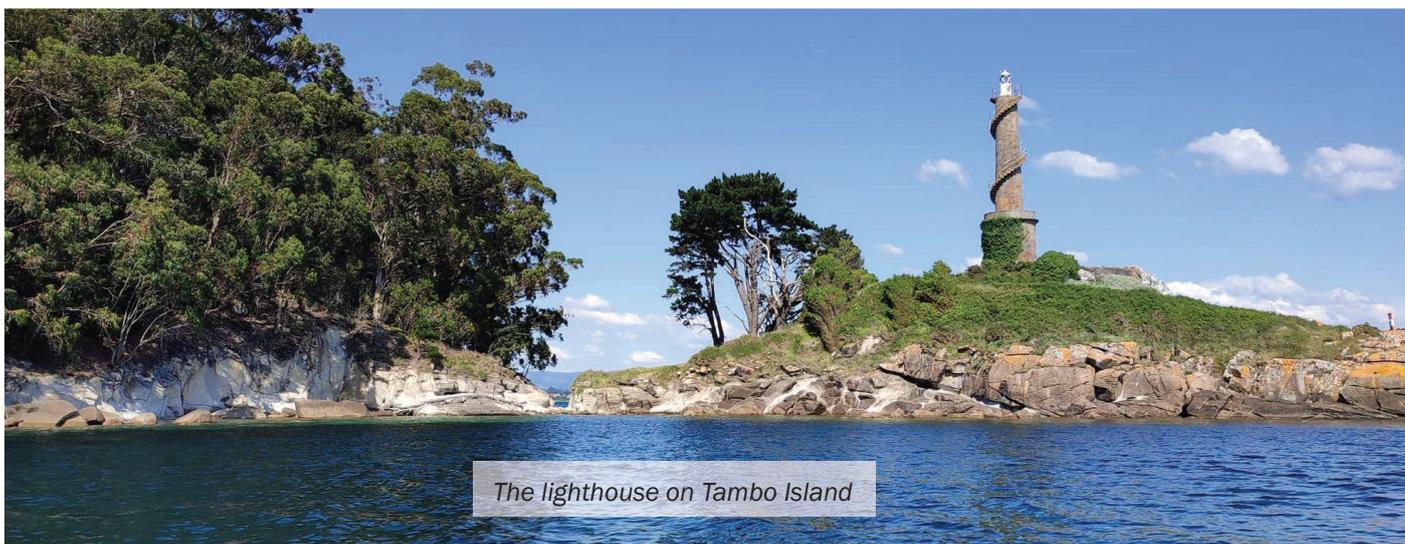
this year the long closed “El Faro” cafeteria on the pier, a popular ICC “watering hole”, is expected to re-open for the summer. ICC members can also benefit from a new range of discounts for berths. The fire damaged facilities at Moana have not yet been rebuilt. Minia Pardo our Port Officer in A Coruña has negotiated a 25% discount for members using Viviera and A Coruña marinas (shared ownership) for five days or more.

One of the marinas most favoured by ICC members is Monte Real at Baiona. The club have issued a calendar of events at the club, and this can be obtained by email.

A useful list of regattas throughout Galicia can be found on-line enabling sailors to choose the quieter times to visit all the Galician marinas: <https://escora.rfgvela.es/calendar>

The principal ICC event in Galicia this year will be Encuentro Náutico 2025. This will start around 10-12 July at Combarro and continue for a week. Most popular will be a return excursion to the famous Gran Bazan Winery with a vineyard tour, a luncheon in the beautiful dining room, and plenty of opportunity to taste their excellent wines.

There will also be an excursion to take the beautiful Pedras y de Agua walk alongside the Armenteira river climbing up to the c12th century Cistercian Monastery. The week finishes with a sail and then dinner at a highly regarded restaurant beside the beach at Beluso. Various other activities and entertainment are planned, and we will be especially welcomed at a reception given by the local mayor.



The lighthouse on Tambo Island

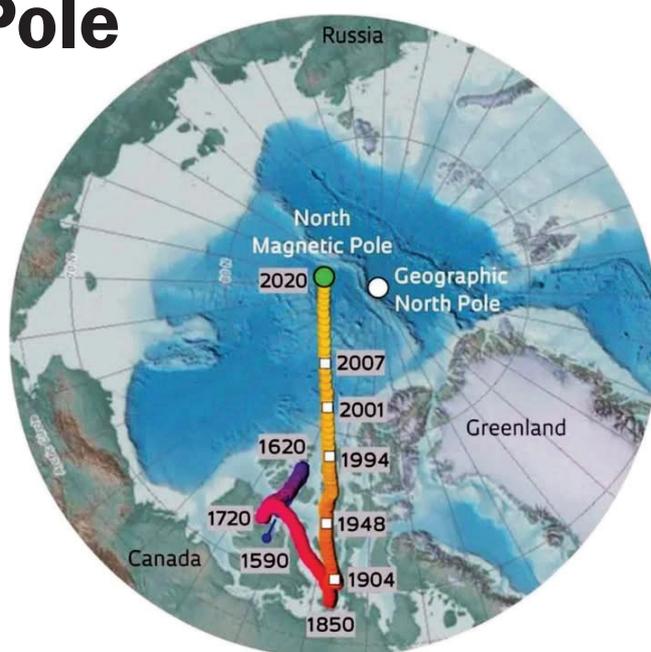
The North Magnetic Pole is on the move!

by Daria Blackwell

The North Magnetic Pole has always been on the move, but it is now shifting at an unprecedented rate — 34 miles per year — from Canada toward Siberia. It has already moved back past geological north, a place it has not been for thousands of years.

Has someone developed a new weapon that can accelerate the movement of the earth’s core? Are the Russians stealing the North Pole? Scientists are concerned and are studying the potential consequences to navigation by ships, planes and migrating species.

Stay tuned for more in the next issue.



Estimated course (1620–1850) and measured positions (white squares) of the North Magnetic Pole
Simon Wakefield/Wikimedia Commons

Bantry Bay Cruise 2025

by John McAleer

The ICC Annual Bantry Bay Cruise 2025 is planned for Tuesday 29th of July to Friday 1st of August, 2025. Members, friends and guests will gather at Lawrence Cove Marina, Bere Island on the 29th of July.

On that evening at 7 pm, we will have the Annual Barbecue. We had a great attendance last year, with a second barbecue being brought into service to keep up with the demand for burning the food.

It's a case of Bring Your Own, so please come prepared, with food and drinks.

On Wednesday 30th, after a hopefully leisurely morning of recovery, the fleet will move up to Bantry, where there is a free evening for members to enjoy this very attractive West Cork town.

On Thursday 31st, the annual Whiddy Island Chase will start at 11 am. This is usually a fairly leisurely sail around Whiddy Island.

This will be followed at 6 pm by a gathering for drinks, followed by dinner at 7:30 pm at The Bank House Restaurant, Whiddy Island. There will be a ferry service to and from the event.



On Friday August 1st, a raft up for lunch will take place in Glengarriff Harbour, at 1 pm.

As Bantry Bay may be a bit off member's usual sailing grounds, please consider for anyone who might think of attending by road, that there is accommodation available at many locations around Bantry Bay, in the town of Bantry and on both Whiddy and Bere islands. Whiddy Island has a passenger ferry, while Bere Island has two regular car ferry services.



Members are also asked to note that there is no charge for this event, where the barbecue is self-catering and they will have to pay for their own drinks and food at the restaurant on Whiddy Island.



The planned 2025 schedule of events

Tuesday 29th of July, 7 pm

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

Wednesday 30th of July, 11 am

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

Thursday 31st of July, 11 am

Whiddy Island Chase, followed at 6 pm 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 1st of August, 11:30 am

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 which will be issued in due course.

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

Following the salt Trail Around Europe's Coastline

by Katie and Jim Corbett

In 2017 we started to journey away from Irish shores, travelling over the following years to Atlantic France, Northern Spain, Portugal, Mediterranean Spain and France, western Italy, Sicily, and onwards to Greece. Although we have a fridge on *Dóchas*, most of the foods we carry are preserved: cured meats, pickled (and fresh) vegetables, hard cheeses, long-life-milk, dried herbs, jams, legumes, pastas, and rice. This is food preservation at work in many forms. Traditionally, salt was one of the most common methods of food preservation and one of the common threads of our journey has been visiting areas where salt is harvested along this long coastline. I do not set out to name all the salt works around this coastline, just those what we visited. As these countries are hotter and drier than Ireland, they have traditionally been able to seasonally dry salt water to produce salt. In Ireland some salt is harvested in Achill and recently in County Louth.

Nowadays, the vast majority of the world's salt is gathered through mining and by evaporating seawater and comes in crystalline form. Our bodies require salt to live as we lose salt through perspiration. However, when

There is a wide variety of sea salts. The flavour of salt varies depending on where the saltwater is found. Traditionally, salt is evaporated in shallow lagoons or pans called salterns using the heat of the sun. Sea salt produced via natural evaporation can have a variety of textures. As the water evaporates the salt concentration rises, coarse salt crystals are formed and these sink to the bottom of the salt pools. Salt from the top of the pans is usually white and known as fleur de sel or flower of salt. Meanwhile, salt from the bottom of the pans usually has some colour and more nuanced flavour picked up from the pan, called sel gris or grey salt.

ATLANTIC FRANCE : Île de Ré

There are many salt works across the western French coastline. Benedictine monks began to transform the island's wetlands into salterns, known in France as salines, through major drainage work in the Middle Ages. 3,000 tonnes are harvested here in a normal year. Having locked into the harbour at St. Martin de Ré on the north coast, we visited the salterns where you can see a tractor moving crystalline salt around. When



we think of salt, we usually think of it as something to use for seasoning food. Preserving food was the most important use of salt long before refrigeration and other modern preservation methods were discovered. Salt is also used as a cleaning agent and to kill garden pests. It is used extensively in medicine, manufacturing, and de-icing roads in winter.

the summer is at its hottest and hot winds blow, delicate crystals of fine sea salt, fleur de sel, float on the surface. These are dried on tables at the edge of the salterns and have a unique flavour. Traditionally, sea salt is not washed or processed. It is naturally rich in iodine, magnesium, sodium, potassium, calcium, as well as trace amounts of manganese, iron, and zinc.

PORTUGAL: Alvor

There are salt marshes along the south coast of Portugal in the Algarve region known as salinas. We entered the extensive lagoon of Alvor, just a couple of miles east of Lagos. The Alvor lagoon is the entrance to the towns of Faro and Olhão, which are very popular with yachts. During our time there we visited Culatra, a large sandy island without roads. Olhão has a large saltworks. The



Salines on Ile de Ré

salt from Olhão has its origins dating back to Phoenician and Roman times when it was sold throughout the area. Salt was used as currency to pay wages to soldiers and craftsmen. Indeed, the word salary derives from the Latin word for salt: sal.

EASTERN SPAIN: Ebro Delta

Due to Covid we spent a lot of time at the Ebro delta. The river Ebro is the longest river in Spain originating in Burgos province and runs for nearly 1,000 km to the Mediterranean. *Dóchas* arrived at La Rápita in the delta in July 2019 and finally left in April 2022. Although, in 2021 we did manage to make a trip to Mallorca and Barcelona when restrictions were lifted. The Ebro delta is known for its salt production called Flor del Delta. The delta is also one of the largest producers of rice in Spain. This short grain rice is grown close to the sea and, although mildly salt tolerant, the salinity is moderated with fresh water from the river and is commonly used to make paella. For us it was quite a sight to see eight-wheeled combine harvesters harvesting the ripe rice from the paddies.

FRANCE MEDITERRANEAN: Aigues-Mortes

The salt marshes of the Camargue are the biggest in Europe. Its name comes from Occitan, meaning “dead water”. Aigues-Mortes is a fishermen and salt workers’ village that was protected by Charlemagne’s Matabère towers. Salt tolerant plankton containing beta-carotene grow in the medium salinity marshes. These plankton

give the water an unusual pink colour. This was our first chance to see flamingos. Plankton is a major part of their diet giving their feathers the pink colour. The other tourist attraction in the area are the wild white horses.



Salines d'Aigues Morte

SICILY: Stagone Island

Located on the NW corner of Sicily, Stagone Island is the site of the largest salt lagoon works in Italy. We did not visit here, although we over-wintered on the east coast near the Strait of Messina. The production method is different to the more traditional methods used in other countries. Here, when a certain salinity is reached, the water is pumped away from the sea for further evaporation inland.

GREECE : Messolonghi

The town of Messolonghi is located in the middle of a lagoon. Salt produced here became a significant export commodity with the first written record of Messolonghi’s salt trade appearing in Venetian archives from 1418, detailing ships from Ragusa (modern-day Dubrovnik) arriving to load salt. Messolonghi was the western centre of the Greek war of independence from the Ottoman Empire. The celebrated English poet Lord Byron came to devote his talents and fortune to the Greek revolutionary cause, and he died here of fever on April 19, 1824. In recognition of his financial help during their war of independence, Messolonghi gifted him the proceeds of an area of two of the salt marshes there.

With the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the salt industry has become less important. Around the 1820’s, Nicolas Appert sealed food tightly in a jar and heated it thus destroying ferment, as he called it, which caused food rot. He persuaded Napoleon’s navy to try his broth, beef and vegetables, and they adopted this type of preservation as it improved the flavour. Simultaneously, the use of ice instead of salt to preserve fish transported from distant fishing grounds spelled the beginning of the end of salt’s dominant place in food preservation. Today, salt is still extensively used in brines for curing meats and pickling vegetables. On our voyages on *Dóchas*, we have collected salt from all over Europe.

New Sail-training Boats for the Spanish Navy

by Peter Haden

Since 2017, we in the Irish Cruising Club have been privileged to have the Lagos family in Galicia representing our interests. Alfredo who is ICC Port Officer and his brother Alberto who represents the OCC have now succeeded their late father.



Alfredo Lagos

Since 1915, their renowned yard has been welcoming internationally known cruising yachtsmen including Humphrey Barton, Robert Somerset, Stanley Livingston Jr., and Donald Street among many others, and of course well known Irish and Spanish sailors.

Tucked into a corner of the shipbuilding area of Vigo, work continues building and repairing in wood and maintaining traditional working practices, whilst at the same time respecting new systems and materials as they become available.

After a number of private commissions for fast power boats, in 1922 seven years after opening the yard, Lagos built a commuter vessel, for the Vigo Naval Authority. Many different projects followed.

From these early days, all Lagos boats were built in the traditional plank on frame method. Then in 1982

after sixty-seven years, the introduction of glass fibre, diagonal planking, plywood, and cold moulding led to further changes.

Now another 45 years later, Lagos wooden boats built by traditional methods have again found favour. This is mainly because of their highly regarded building and aesthetic characteristics when combined with the new technique of strip planking wood and epoxy.

The Spanish Naval Academy for training officers is at Marin, just a few miles from Vigo. For the past ninety five years the navy have maintained rowing and sail training boats of the special design “Bote Reglamentario de 9.5m”, for the instruction of their cadets. A very recent graduate of the college is Leonor, Princess of Asturias and Crown Princess of Spain.

The design of these training boats has been so successful that no changes to the method of construction has ever been made, and even the newest boats built in 2024 keep to the same design.

These new boats are still built in wood but with the modern technique of strip planking of wood and epoxy. The longitudinal structure of stern, keel and stem are built in high-density Afzelia wood in laminated pieces.

The wooden strips that make up the hull are of Oregon Pine previously milled and glued together with epoxy resin. Externally the hull is coated with a layer of Epoxy-laminated fibreglass to protect against abrasion All the bolting and fastenings are made in silicon bronze. Several bronze manganese aluminium fittings have been cast at a local foundry using original moulds.



Sail training boat in Astilleros Lagos yard before turning



Sail training boat after turning with thwarts

Each boat, with a beam measurement of 2.5m, has seven thwarts on risers giving seating for fourteen rowers and an aft bench for the helmsman and instructor. In addition, there are two masts for lug sails as traditionally used by fishermen along the south coast of the Bay of Biscay and in the rias of Galicia.

For the protection of all the wood, epoxy primers covered by topcoat finishes are used in the inside and acrylic paint on topsides. The transom and covering board are

varnished for aesthetics,

In 2017, as part of the ICC Rias Baixas Rally, we were fortunate to be invited to, and made especially welcome at the college viewing all the facilities and enjoying their extensive Naval Museum.

This year 2025 we will be nearby at Combarro for our annual Encuentro Náutico event and perhaps we will be able to see the new training boats.

Southern Soundings

by John McAleer

Southern members have given their new Rear Commodore Sally Cudmore a warm welcome and know that her enthusiasm for supporting the club is a continuation of a distinguished and long Cudmore family tradition of ICC membership. Sally follows in her mother Eleanor's footsteps as Rear Commodore South.

Sincere gratitude is extended to outgoing Rear Commodore Seamus O'Connor for his endless enthusiasm and leadership and his always steady hand on the Southern helm.

In late November, members and guests enjoyed an excellent Christmas Dinner at the Kinsale Yacht Club and were honoured by the attendance of Commodore Alan Markey and his wife Helen.

The south luckily survived the worst of winter storms and members are looking forward to a good sailing year in 2025. Two events of note are currently planned, which you may read about elsewhere in this issue: The Bantry Bay Cruise, and the Conor OBrien Cruise.

Members' plans for 2025

Some of our members are making exciting plans for 2025.

Lonan Lardner writes that *Minerva* is presently on the hard in the boatyard in Xufre on Illa de Arousa. Lonan is planning to be in Galicia the first week of April to prepare the boat for the Summer. There are 15 to 20 Irish boats wintering there so he expects to meet other members doing the same thing. Lonan will return to Galicia early June to join Tony Linehan on *Seawitch* for an eight-day cruise from Ria de Arousa to La Coruna and back (hopefully). He is planning to launch *Minerva* Mid-June and sail in the Rias to the end of July. They will also take part in EN 25 during this time.

Neil Hegarty and Anne Kenny update their plans with news that they have chartered a Hanse 345 and are joining the RCYC Ionian Sea Cruise in June accompanied by Neil's daughter Patricia, granddaughter Sophie, and



Southern Christmas dinner at Kinsale Yacht Club

son Neil. Anne is joining her son Ian and his family for a week's cruise, beginning in Bodrum Turkey, in September.

Hugh Friel acquired a Sun Odyssey last year and plans to bring her to Lagos at the beginning of April. There are a few Irish boats and members of ICC there already. He is hoping to get in some good sailing there before the heat of mid-summer. Hugh has retained an interest in his previous boat, a Contessa 32, *Calypso*, which is currently in Lough Swilly marina. He plans to sail the northwest and northeast coasts during the summer, stopping off each night at one of those attractive places along the coast. He will try and incorporate a short trip to Tarbert into the plan.

Eddie Nicholson plans to cruise *Mollihawk's Shadow* to Skagen located on the northern tip of Denmark in June and then head over to Kristiansand and cruise the southern coast of Norway. He will then head up the west coast to Bergen in July and beyond if he doesn't get too distracted in the fjords along the way!

Mark Whitaker has recently purchased a Saare 38 in Helsinki in Finland and is planning to cruise the Baltic this summer, then France and Northern Spain over the following two years.

Old Autopilot Blues

by John McAleer

My Hallberg Rassy 36, came to me with a disconnected Navico Autopilot, which was accompanied by a note from the previous owner stating "Autopilot disconnected as it can be untrustworthy".

This was a disappointment, to say the least, as the beast looked very impressive, consisting of a large Linear Hydraulic Actuator (LHA), an independent dedicated fluxgate compass, a rudder position sensor, together with a feedback unit and most importantly, a black box crammed with connections to electronic circuits. It was completed by a large quadrant attached to the rudder post, which was pushed, or pulled by the LHA.

Being an eternal optimist, I reconnected it and confirmed its lack of steering abilities. Every year for the past 12 years or so, I vowed to tame the beast and have it steering us in a manner that one could safely duck down to put on a kettle. I didn't need it to take me for a three-week voyage across the Atlantic, just steer straight for 15 minutes, or enough time to make a cup of tea and a sandwich. The coasts of West Cork can be fairly rocky in spots.

Indeed, sometimes it did steer a course straight and true, but the rub comes, no pun intended, when sometimes it did not steer at all. It could wander in any direction it fancied. Hence its absolute uselessness. One might put up with many wanderers in one's life, but a boat at the mercy of a dodgy autopilot, is not one to be recommended.

I had tried absolutely everything to fix it. It was operated by a cockpit control, which allowed the addition and reduction of gain and a couple of buttons to incline it to steer more to Port or to Starboard. All of these were checked for loose wires etc. but all seemed fine. A prime suspect was the fluxgate compass, however, manually rotating the fluxgate to mimic a change of course in the ship, had the desired effect of correctly turning the rudder. The black box which was its "brain" had to be a major suspect and remains so! Only the LHA appeared to be innocent. Independent testing demonstrated that it moved smoothly in both directions - so it was off the hook.

Naturally, I was not alone in my quest to find a solution and constant advice from the international and apparently knowledgeable but also demented group of obsolete and broken Navico Autopilot owners, was simply to give up. I was more than ready to fully accept their collective wisdom, as it had me completely beaten down.

Then out of nowhere, hope dawned! It was about a month ago, I entered a search term something like 'Much Cursed Navico Old Autopilots' on YouTube and suddenly there was light. I discovered a new autopilot video, put up by a young University Researcher in the Netherlands, who was also a sailor. He figured out that if a small box of electronics knew in what direction it was pointing and could be told where it wanted to go, it could signal the Linear Hydraulic Actuator to move and thereby change its course to the desired direction. No fluxgate compass, no rudder position sensor, or sender, no huge bundle of twisted cables were involved. It was pure electronic simplicity, driven by an open-source software programme, which can be updated in the future over the internet and linked by Bluetooth to a mobile phone app, or to a dedicated handheld controller.

A further great feature is that it has just four wires. It takes a positive and negative 12V DC feed from the battery and sends out two signal wires to the actuator. It comes in a box and ready to install, no soldering, no programme tweaking, nothing, just a small screwdriver is required. I might add a 20 amp in-line fuse on the DC feed - but that's it. There is a mobile phone application to control it. It is designed to communicate with an NMEA signal and can also correct the course for the influence of wind.

The fluxgate compass, the rudder sensor, the remote cockpit buttons and most especially the Black Box can all be, well let's say recycled with a certain degree of vengeance.

As I write, it's on its way to me by courier and with the Help of God, I will have an entire new set of yachting technical worries shortly. I will be happy to provide a progress update in due course.

In the meantime, for obvious reasons - Please stay well clear of me!



A Touch of Nostalgia

by Sally Cudmore

We are in the throes of buying a new yacht, trading in for a younger, longer and beamier model. While the whole family is excited, the transaction is also bittersweet. Our current vessel, *Dame de Jade*, a Beneteau Oceanis 321 affectionately known as *DDJ*, has been our steadfast, reliable and forgiving companion for 18 years and truly feels like a member of the family. She was the first (and only) yacht we have purchased, when our kids Léna and Hugo were 5 and 3 (now 22 and 21). Not only have



Hugo and Léna winching

our kids grown up on *DDJ*, so have we as seafarers, because nothing beats having your own boat to truly learn the ropes. Through the initial years of miraculous near-misses and a few “boating bumper cars” we have learned to come into marinas without requiring too many Lara Croft (aka Tomb Raider) jumps, plan family cruises to keep all members of the crew happy, and how to cope when you suddenly lose steering or the throttle cable snaps as you are approaching Cape Clear’s crammed inner North Harbour at speed.

DDJ has seen 2-week family cruises to West Cork with kids, teddy bears, and blow-up orca whales in almost non-stop rain, pirate-themed birthday parties, swimming with basking sharks, midnight phosphorescent trails left by dolphins as they played with the bow wave near Dingle, and unadulterated views of the milky way from



Hugo and Léna with the Astrid in the background



Hugo’s birthday party

mid-channel crossings with no light pollution. We have had family cruises to Westport and all the islands en route from Cork, trips to the Isles of Scilly – one particularly memorable over-canvassed broad reach 30+kn wind with Léna happily reading books below deck, while the adults struggled to helm after Otto (our autohelm) had thrown in the towel. Such was the physical strain, that we brought Vincent to the hospital on St Mary’s, worried about heart-attack symptoms that turned out to be carpal tunnel syndrome.

Hugo still talks about the “oh-shit wave” - age 8. On a lumpy passage home from Baltimore with Vincent, he was leaning over the leeward side feeling unwell, when a mountainous wave hovered about to engulf the boat. Vincent and he looked at each other and simultaneously cried “oh shit”. Next time Vincent saw him, Hugo had been washed down the deck and was up against the pushpit (thank goodness for harnesses). He turned to Vincent and said, I don’t feel sick anymore!

Co-incidentally this mirrors my experience as a kid, because for 18 of my formative years from age 8 to 26, my parents, Brian and Eleanor Cudmore, owned *Anna Petrea*, a 26’10” Grinde with a very distinctive red hull. We raced her competitively, and Brian was well known for his protesting skills! But we also cruised – with family holidays every summer in Roaring Water Bay. I have vivid memories of our first cruise to the Scillies, probably etched in my mind because we got our first oilskins (the old plastic kind), which were made locally – Dad had white, and Mum and 3 daughters (ages 10, 8 and 6) were decked out in royal blue.

How poignant it is to part with a boat that has been such an integral part of our family for so long, brim-full of such happy memories. It’s been great reminiscing, and perusing photos to accompany this article. I hope the next lucky owners, whoever they may be, will enjoy *DDJ* as much as we did.

You're never the first until you are the first

by Pat Flemming

When I began sailing in 1977, I thought I was the first member of my family to sail or to make a living on the sea, but I was to find out otherwise. When my mother died in 2008, she left a partial family tree that she had begun on her father's family who had emigrated from the UK to Dublin around 1902, when he was a child. I continued the research and soon discovered I had a great granduncle, Guy Buckeridge who had been in the British Royal Navy. But not only that, in the years leading up to the Great War he was stationed in Haulbowline right across the water from where I now live and there was me thinking I was the only family member to have anything to do with Cobh.

So, I wasn't the first.

While stationed in Haulbowline he married a local lady. They later had a child in my hometown Cork, before they moved to the UK. He ended up a Rear Admiral by the time he retired. His wife's family home later became the American Consulate and is now the Cobh Town Hall. Having an admiral in the family put me in the shade, but another ancestor put the final nail in the coffin as I looked down from my lofty rank of leisure sailor.

My seven times Great Grandfather, Nicholas Buckeridge (c.1625-1685), a merchant from London, turned out to be the greatest sailor of the family. I discovered that he made many voyages to Africa and Persia and at least one to India between 1647 and 1664. I have seen replica sailing vessels from this era and they are tiny for the voyages they made. He was involved in setting up trading posts in the early days of the East India Company long before they lost the run of themselves in India.



Guy Leslie Buckeridge (1877-1944), National Portrait Gallery

The final member of my family indirectly involved with my sailing was a three times Great Granduncle, Henry Buckeridge (c.1796-1821). He was in the army and was returning to his regiment in Malta following his marriage in England when he died in Gibraltar in 1821.

After purchasing *Eureka* in Italy in 2016, I stopped at Gibraltar on the way home to see if I could find his grave. Having berthed at Alcadesa on the Spanish side of the border, I walked the short distance to Gibraltar and

asked a policeman if he knew where Sandpits cemetery was. When he replied he didn't my heart sank. If a policeman didn't know, how was I going to find it in the few hours I had, before setting sail again early next morning.

I walked further on and asked at a bar. Luckily the landlady knew and told me that it was now better known by another name which may have been why the policeman didn't know. I quickly walked in the direction I was given and after a couple of wrong turns I eventually came to the entrance only to find it was locked!

I tried to climb over the wall topped with a nasty looking railing with upward facing spikes.

After a few attempts I decided that my inside leg measurement wouldn't allow me to safely get over. On the far side of the cemetery the ground was much higher surrounded by a low wall but with a drop of about 15 meters down into the cemetery. There was a step like rock formation where I thought I might be able to climb down, maybe this is the time I tell you I'm afraid of heights!

As I probably was never going to be this way again, I forced myself to climb down and soon reached the bottom. A bit late for wondering if I would be able to get out again.

The cemetery was old and overgrown with many of the tombs and headstones damaged or unreadable. I was pessimistic about being able to locate the grave, but I surprised myself by finding it within the first ten minutes. Luckily it was one of the better-preserved tombs. Its inscription was on the side rather than the top, so it hadn't been weathered and was legible. After introducing myself and saying a wee prayer, a shiver went up my back as I stood there and realised that given the difficulty in travelling in the 1800s, I was probably the first family member to have visited his grave in the 195 years since his death.

Sometimes it's not good being the first.



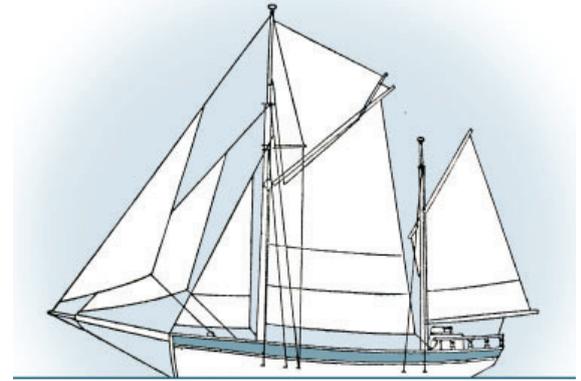
Thomas Dalrymple Buckeridge (1806-1859) Potrait c. 1827

ICC Cruise to commemorate Conor OBrien's return from his circumnavigation on *Saoirse* – June 13-20, 2025

by Sally Cudmore

Conor OBrien was the first amateur skipper to circumnavigate the globe south of the great Capes in his 42ft ketch *Saoirse*. His circumnavigation commenced on June 20th, 1923, from Dún Laoghaire and he returned to Dún Laoghaire exactly two years later on the 20th of June 1925. ICC will mark the centenary of his return by organizing a 'Cruise in Company' from Baltimore in West Cork to Dún Laoghaire, culminating in a Parade of Sail and celebratory dinner co-hosted by ICC and RIYC in the RIYC on Friday June 20th. ICC member and guests are welcome to join the dinner.

OBrien designed and commissioned the *Saoirse* for the circumnavigation, which was built in Baltimore in West Cork. He was a member of the Royal Irish Yacht Club, but he sailed under the burgee of the Royal Cruising Club and the ensign was the tri-colour of the Irish Free State and that was a first in every respect!



The sailing vessels associated with OBrien are the *Saoirse* and the *Ilen*, both designed by him and built in Baltimore in West Cork. The original *Saoirse* was lost but a faithful replica has been built in Hegarty's of Old Court near Baltimore under a commission from Fred Kinmonth. The *Ilen*, a 54ft Auxiliary Ketch, was delivered to the Falkland Islands Company in 1927 and remained working there for about 90 years. The *Ilen* was restored over several years, also in Hegarty's Boatyard.

Both the *Ilen* and *Saoirse* will join the ICC's cruise in company, with the *Ilen* planning to do the full cruise and the *Saoirse* will participate in the first leg to Kinsale.

For more information on Conor OBrien's circumnavigation, there is his book, "Across Three Oceans" (republished in 2023 by the ICC, available in hard and soft-cover from Amazon). There is a comprehensive article by WM Nixon in Afloat (<https://afloat.ie/sail/offshore/solo-sailing/conor-o-brien>) as well as reports on the ICC Centenary cruise to Madeira (<https://afloat.ie/sail/offshore/solo-sailing/conor-o-brien/item/59686-conor-o-brien-two-year-saoirse-circumnavigation-centenary-celebration-now-well-under-way>)

Programme:

- Friday June 13th** Fleet assembles in Baltimore. Shoreside dinner @5.30pm in La Jolie Brise
- Saturday June 14th** Kinsale (40nm from Baltimore).
- Monday June 16th** Kilmore Quay (80nm from Kinsale). Shoreside dinner @7pm in Mary Barry's pub, Kilmore village. Approx 3km away, but they have a shuttle bus which can transport the group 8 at a time.
- Wednesday June 18th** Arklow (47nm).
- Thursday June 19th** Greystones (23nm).
- Friday June 20th** 2pm Assemble at Sorrento Point (7nm from Greystones), with a Parade of Sail to Dún Laoghaire (2.5nm). ICC and local boats are invited to join us. 7pm concluding Conor OBrien Centenary dinner, co-hosted by ICC and RIYC. Booking information will follow via email. Bookings are on a first-come first-served basis. Dress: Jacket and tie.

We have contacted the relevant marinas with an aim to securing berths, ideally close to each other.

If you would like to join any part of the cruise, please contact Sally Cudmore, Rear Commodore South (sallycudmore1@gmail.com)

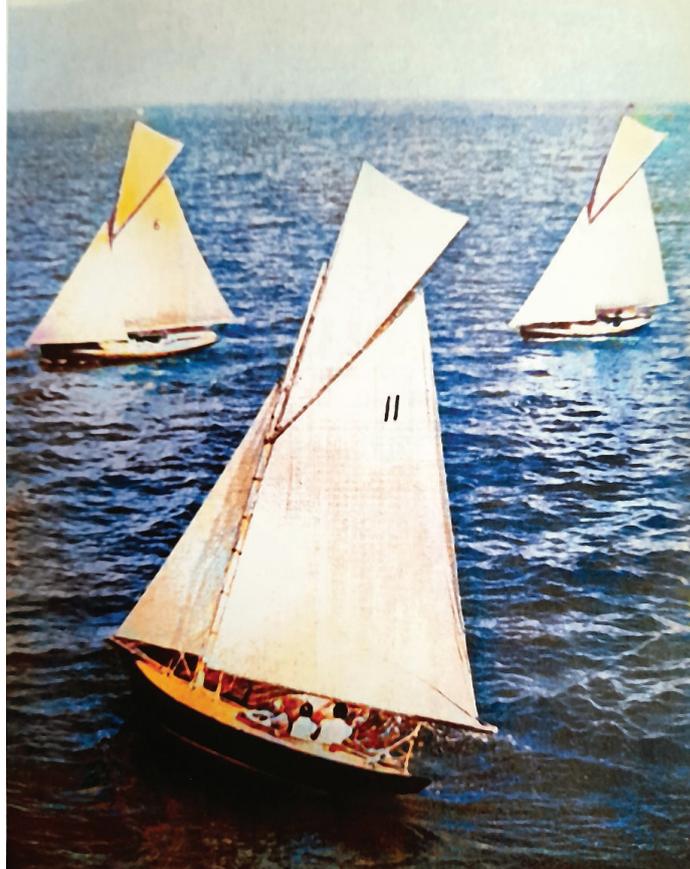
Eastern Epistle

by Harry Whelehan

2024 ended with the very well attended and enjoyable lunch in the Royal Irish Yacht Club on December 6th. Members exchanged memories of their good and bad experiences in the 2024 season and discussed possible adventures for 2025. The proceedings were greatly enhanced by an after-lunch presentation by Winkie Nixon on the subject of the exploits of Conor OBrien and his circumnavigation of the world in 1923-1925.

Members will be aware that the Club is organising a flotilla from West Cork to Dún Laoghaire June 13th to the 21st to arrive in Dún Laoghaire at the exact time and date to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the completion by Conor OBrien of his remarkable circumnavigation of the world. The arrival of the flotilla will be celebrated in the Royal Irish, with a special lunch to commemorate the completion of the circumnavigation which both started and ended with OBrien having lunch in the club.

At the election committee meeting in January, five new members were elected from the eastern region: Bernard McGranaghan, Andrew Collins, Conor Haughey, Michael Sadlier, and Peter Maher.



Historic Howth 17s sailing on Dublin Bay

The AGM was held in the National yacht club and was attended by just under 100 members, most of whom stayed for dinner in the club and were joined by their



Irish Cruising Club

Jay Gowell, Commodore of the Cruising Club of America presenting the Friendship Cup to Hillary Keatinge



spouses/partners. The attendance comprised a good representation of members from each of the regions.

At the AGM the Commodore announced that the Friendship Cup had been awarded by the Committee this year to Hillary Keatinge, who joined the club in 1996 and has been a very active member both socially and afloat. Over the years she has sailed extensively in many parts of the world with her late husband Bill. This included the waters off the coasts of Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia, and the Netherlands. She also compiled and edited *The Irish Cruising Club 1979-2004*, a companion volume to follow on from Winkie Nixon's "*To Sail the Crested Sea*". Hillary is also a member of our sister club Royal Cruising Club and is an effective "bridge" between the two clubs. The presentation of the Friendship Cup took place at the annual dinner in Mullingar.



Current Howth 17s sailing on Dublin Bay

Brodie Sweeney has plans to take *Wodan* to the Canaries, taking in the coast of Spain, Portugal, and Morocco. I wish him 'bon voyage' and look forward to reading his log in the 2025 Annual. Peter Maher, who is a new member of the Club, has an ambitious programme for his cruise starting in Marbella in late March/early April. He plans to visit and spend time in the Balearics, then to Corsica & Sardinia, before finishing and wintering in Sicily. William Morrison is chartering a J80 to do the Round the Island race from Cowes, before heading to Galicia in *Isobar* for the EN25, and then onwards to Lisbon.

The Cruising Club of America in conjunction with the Clyde Cruising Club have invited members of the ICC to join them to cruise in company to Scotland, July 19 to the 29th. To date, 10 ICC boat owners have expressed an interest in accepting the invitation and as I write six members boats have been registered to take part: The Commodore *Altaria*, Peter Killen *Pure Magic*, Donal Gallagher *Catalina*, Mike Pomery *Conundrum*, David Beattie *ReeSpray*, and Derek White *Ballyclaire*.

Modestly permits me to share with you that I have been elected president of the Howth 17-footer Association. All but 3 of the Howth 17s are over 120 years old and have been racing continuously in Dublin Bay since the launch of the first 5 boats in 1892. The fleet is the oldest racing keel boat class in the world.

In Howth over recent years there has been concern about silting in the fishing harbour, the mooring area, and the marina. The Department of Fisheries has plans to dredge the fishing harbour and the dredging is expected to include the area presently leased by HYC for moorings and the Marina. The dredging project will require the dismantling of the Marina. However, I am reliably informed that the work will not commence until perhaps the middle of the 2026 season so there will be no disruption during the 2025 season and it may be mid-season in 2026 before there is any disruption of the mooring/marina facilities. I understand that when the dredging is complete, new marina furniture will be installed.

The Eastern committee hosted the Annual Dinner week-end March 28th-30th at the Bloomfield House Hotel in Mullingar. This was led by the Commodore and his wife Helen who were greatly supported by Tony Linehan and Judy Houston.

Twelve of the recently elected new members attended and were formally introduced to the Club at an informal dinner on the Friday night, which was attended by 160 members and guests, while the Dinner on Saturday was attended by 180 members and guests which included guests of honour: Jay Gowell Commodore of the Cruising Club of America and his wife Elizabeth, Nick Chavasse of the Royal Cruising Club and his wife Margie, and Fiona Jones Commodore of the Ocean Cruising Club and her husband Chris.

East Region upcoming events:

- April 25 Spring Lunch Howth YC
- June 13-21 OBrien cruise West Cork - Dún Laoghaire.
- June 21 lunch in the Royal Irish Yacht Club to celebrate the return of Conor OBrien on June 21, 1925.
- July 19-29 joint cruise in company Cruising Club of America/Clyde Cruising Club Scottish cruise.
- East region autumn rally to be arranged.
- October 24 East region autumn lunch Royal St George YC
- December 12 East region Christmas lunch National YC

Saol Nua meets Tango

by James Cahill

As I begin this Report on the 21st of January, we are 20 days out of (5° north) Fogo (Fire) Island in the south of the 10 Cape Verde inhabited islands. Having left on the 13th of January, we sailed across the equator and at 27° west. Rio de Janeiro is a few hundred miles to the west of us.



*Swimming on the equator:
Ann Caulfield, James & Katherine Cahill*

Saol Nua cruised the Azores during the summer of 2024. Upon my retirement after 47 years ‘lawyering’ in County Mayo, I’ve been trying to acclimatise to a more leisurely pace which has been a bigger challenge than I expected. We flew to the island of Terceira near the end of October. After launching and getting ready for sea, we departed for Grand Canaria with ICC member

Tony Linehan and Sylvia Trentin of the Galway Hooker Club. After further preparation in Las Palmas, we sailed for Cape Verde, where we arrived after seven days. We cruised among those islands and finally set out on the nonstop 29-day journey to Piriápolis, on the south coast of Uruguay on the Rio de la Plata estuary.

It’s surprising how glorious weather and fair but gentle breezes become monotonous. One could have sailed the last 3000 miles in a GP14! We are on a slow boat to Uruguay and Argentina ambling along in our Amel Mango ketch (50ft) at 130 miles per day.

We had regular salads and fish for evening dinner in the cockpit following a rest in the late afternoon. We were very lucky to have fresh fruit and vegetables until day 29 of our crossing.

Our 1986, 19-ton ketch, built in La Rochelle and purchased there seven years ago, is now, at long last in very good shape. This beautifully built and laid out Amel Mango, number 45 out of a total of 46 such models built, is very comfortable, practical and is fully recovered from years of gentle neglect in the south and west of France. She was never abused, but little was spent on her by the previous 2 owners. For example, all ropes were original, and many are still in use.

This morning, I got rid of a little squeak in the stairs which few but an owner like me would notice! So maybe it’s just as well that I’m finding it difficult to be a retiree.



Saol Nua

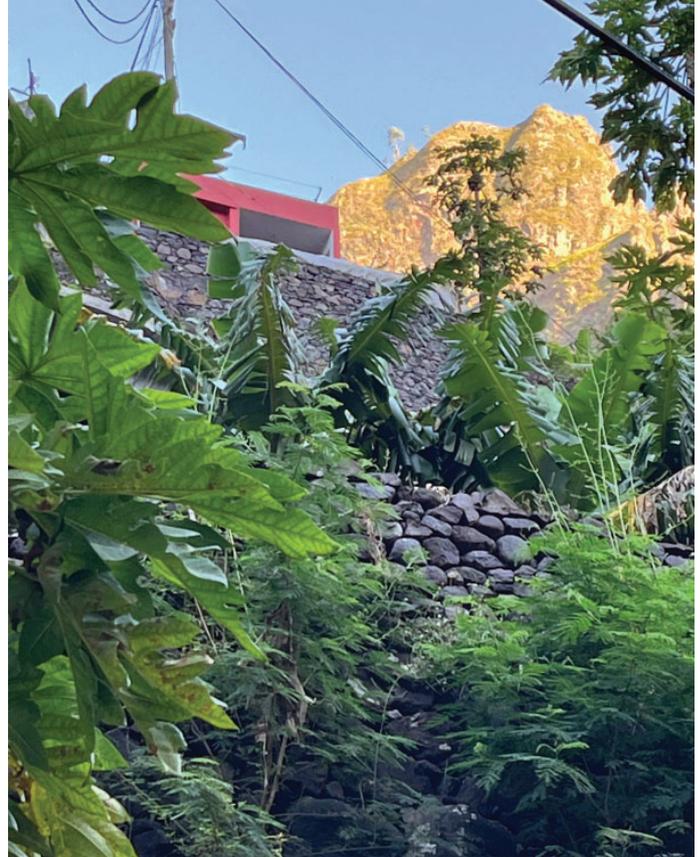




Cabo Verdes

While there, I gained an enormous admiration for the people of Cape Verde. We may think Ireland had a difficult history. The amount of food and water deprivation its population endured right into the 1960s is unbelievable. All the stone-built walls, bridges and cobbled roads and tiny terraced fields supported by more stone walls in the ravines is remarkable. The terraces continue to be farmed exclusively by hand. I didn't see a single tractor on the five islands we visited. I hope the few photos taken in Sao Antoine and in the volcano of Fogo gives you a sense of challenges the people face with very little rainfall. It's a testament to the human spirit to survive. The terraces are sometimes less than 2 meters wide, and those terraces are among the most productive land.

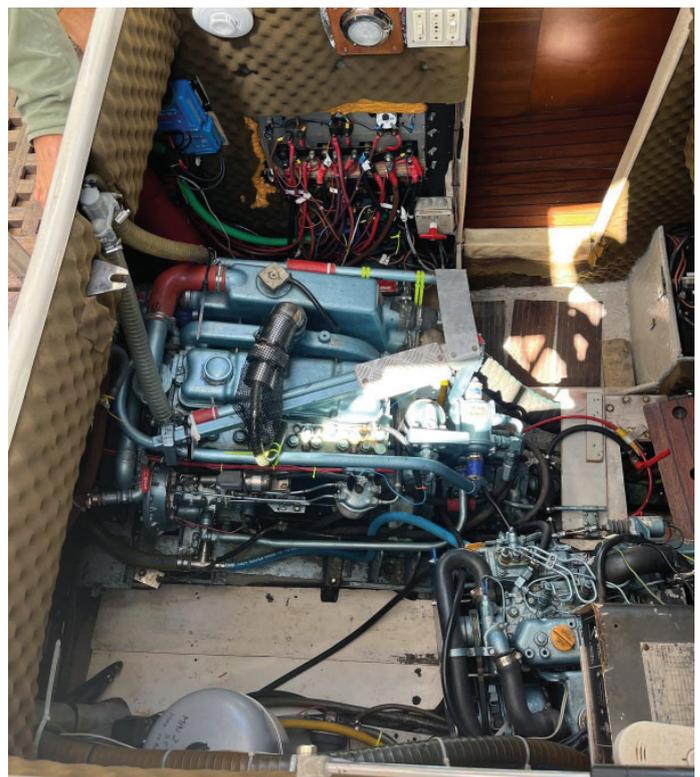
The population is about 400,000 and the people are



proud of their independence from Portugal. Their government has made wonderful strides with education and human services. The islands have few natural resources, but tourism is becoming an industry there. The islands are not likely to experience mass tourism.

Temperature Issues

Boats like *Saol Nua* are built for temperate climates with fridge, freezer, water maker, and many other conveniences. I wondered why the battery bank was losing power despite having 3 solar panels, a large



Engine room below the cockpit floor

and was still 27.2°C at 23° south. Skin temperature was 33.3° and the boat's deck was about 29°C.

I lifted the large engine room hinged lid in the cockpit floor to 150mm and opened the internal door to the engine room. That kept the battery temperatures at 34°C after running the engine for half an hour.

Needless to say, we quickly ate all frozen food and switched off the freezer.

Nigel Calder also noted that an increase in alternator temperature of 10°C over 20°C reduces its lifespan by half and so forth. Meanwhile the engine normal water temperature is 65°C and it remained at that. Its rocker cover maintained a temperature of 50°C. So, unlike in our cars, the boats alternator needs an ample supply of external air to maintain its temperature as close to 20° as possible. These are stark figures indeed but worth noting. Lithium batteries present their own issues.

Navigation Notes

Just as the North Atlantic has the Azores High Pressure system, the South Atlantic has its high on a line roughly between Uruguay and South Africa. It moves north and south with the seasons. We crossed the equator on day 9 (21.1.2025) at mid-day, 27° 34' west.

Cornell's Ocean Atlas (2023) draws its Wind Rose sources from 184,000 references he says, which is incredible I suppose, but not in this computer age. It is a very useful tool to navigate through the Trade Winds. We hit the Doldrums twice, both north and south of the equator. Between both belts we had a gentle breeze from the south. According to the Atlas, the wind never blows from the south in this part of the Atlantic during the months of December to April inclusive. Our experience was different.

Cornell describes the

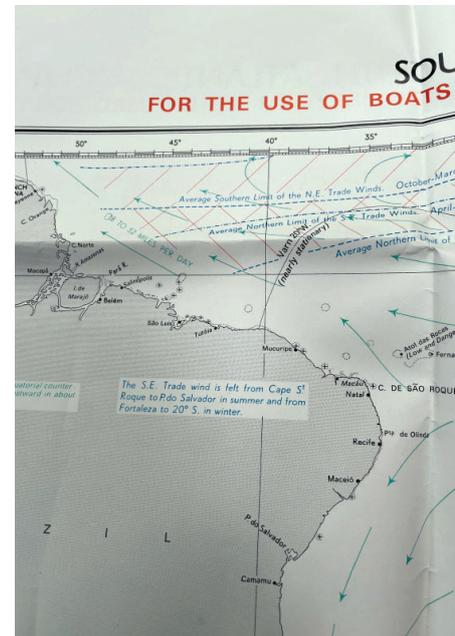


Living in an active volcano – Fogo (Fire)

alternator, and a generator. I could not keep them charged at night without running the generator. Some research in Nigel Calder's Mechanical and Electrical Manual revealed many interesting facts. In particular, for every 6°C rise in temperature over 20°C the battery running cycle is reduced by half, yes half!

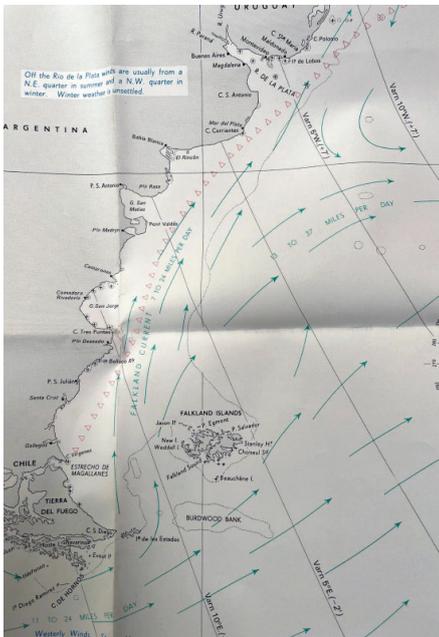
My battery temperatures were 42°C and the unstarted engine was 45°C. So, if in a 10-hour battery cycle at 20°C the battery is flat at 11.4 volts, 26°C reduces the cycle to 5 hours. At 32°C its cycle is 2.5 hours and so on. At 44°C its cycle is 37 mins. At 50°C battery is likely to explode! So, the use of one fridge with battery temperature of 44°C uses as much battery power as 20 fridges at 20°C.

I diverted the air intake for the engine room directly over the batteries and reduced their heat to 30.5°C. The battery temperature reached 34°C after half an hour of motoring. Puffs of wind in the Doldrums blew from the south. Sea water temperature reached 28°C on equator



Admiralty lifeboat chart 1975- above
Cornell Ocean Atlas - below





southwest flowing currents off the coast of South America as between 0.1 and 0.2 knots. The current Admiralty chart for the South Atlantic (number 4020) shows the Brazil current as 1 to 2 knots.

I opened my 1975 edition, waterproof wallet containing Ships Boats Charts etc. It was developed for ships lifeboats and contains very interesting navigation information. Its chart of the south Atlantic shows the Brazil Current running at between 10 and 18 miles per day. It also shows the Falkland north going current closer to the coast. That counter current runs from west of the Falklands to Rio de Janeiro (where it tapers out) at between 7 and 24 miles per day. So, if you sail to Argentina remain at least 120 miles off the coast south of Rio to avoid that current not noted by chart 4020 or Cornell.

Interestingly the current off NE Brazil south of the Amazon delta runs NW at a rate of between 18 and 50 miles per day according to the Admiralty lifeboat documents and is in line with the current chart 4020 showing 1 to 2 knots. This was generally confirmed by the experience of sailors I spoke to in Piriápolis Uruguay. Cornell's Atlas shows the current speed as 0.4 to 0.8 knots. I don't know if the Admiralty still publishes the lifeboat wallet.

On page 205 of his book, Conor O'Brien made the following observation: "The ship took it on her beam, for so she was on her course for Dublin (and if anyone cares to work out this course he will see that the North East Trade is sometimes no more northerly than the South East Trade is southerly). She went from her sober five knots in one jump to eight and then"

South America

It is now 13th March, 2025, and we have returned from a fascinating visit to the institute and by appointment Museum and Research Centre, situated in the replica house of Admiral Guillermo (William) Brown, located on his former orchard.

Saol Nua is in the Yacht Club of Argentina in the old harbour of Buenos Aires, having sailed for 30 hours across the Rio de la Plata, renowned for its shallow waters.

Buenos Aires translates to Good/Sweet Air. I will give more detail on this in a follow up article, which will also include Katherine's relationship to Admiral Brown of Foxford.

The crew for the whole Atlantic cruise from the Azores, in November to Buenos Aires in March, were my wife, Katherine, Ann Caulfield, and myself, members and founders of Mayo Sailing Club.

ICC Award Winners 2024

The Challenge Trophies

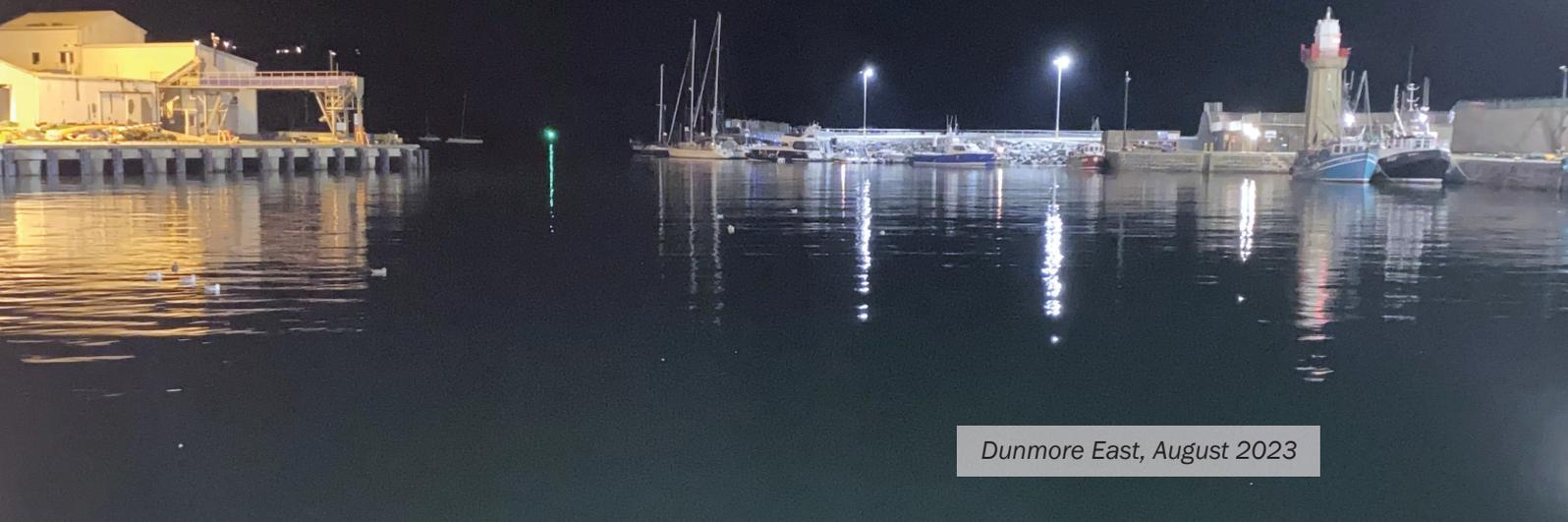
- The Faulkner Cup – Andrew Wilkes
- The Strangford Cup – Donal Walsh
- The Fortnight Cup – Dermot Cronin
- The Round Ireland Navigation Cup – Matthew Wright
- The Wybrants Cup – Harry Whelehan
- The Fingal Cup – Jim & Katie Corbett
- The Rockabill Trophy – John Sweeney
- The Glengarriff Trophy – Paul McSorley
- The Atlantic Trophy – No Award
- The Perry Greer Bowl – Mark Sweetnam
- The Wild Goose Cup – Andrew Wilkes
- The Marie Trophy – Conor O'Byrne
- The Dunn's Ditty Salver – Alan Leonard

Irish Cruising Club Awards

- The John B Kearney Cup – John P. Bourke
- The Fastnet Award – Tom Dolan
- The Friendship Cup – Hillary Keatinge
- The Wright Salver – Peter Mullan
- The Donegan Memorial Trophy – Seán McCormack
- The Waterford Harbour Cup – Stuart Musgrave
- The Aran Islands' Trophy – Michael Brogan
- The Trans-Oceanic Pennant – No Award
- The ICC Photographic Plate – Chris Bateman
- The ICC Golf Trophy – Frank O'Beirne

The Odyssey Begins

by Michael Sadlier



Dunmore East, August 2023

As a newly elected member of the Irish Cruising Club, I would like to thank the Committee for considering my application so favourably and to introduce myself to my fellow members. My wife Judith and I sail a Hallberg Rassy 43, *Varuna*, along with the occasional assistance of one or more of our four children and a variety of extended family and friends. *Varuna* is the latest of the boats we have owned, and we bought her in Holland in 2021. We sailed her back from Bruinisse to Waterford as Covid restrictions were being lifted around Europe. We had issues getting marina berths along the south

coast of England with one marina after another refusing to let us in, even to refuel. We contacted Berthon marina in Lymington and their response was unforgettable - *"We are all men of the sea so come in and if there are any Covid issues, we will find a place to put you in strict isolation."*

We finally came ashore in New Ross in late September 2021 and left her on the hard that winter. That summer we sailed her anticlockwise from Waterford, via Dublin to the Hebrides, including an interesting but never to



Varuna in Port Magee, with *Valentia* behind, July 2022

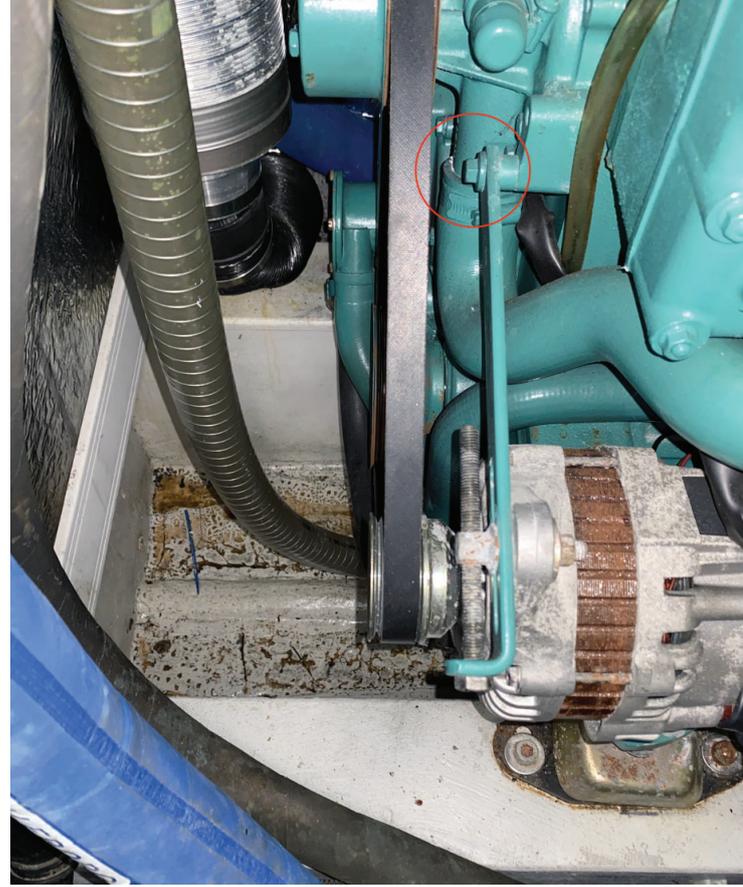


Judith and myself offshore

be repeated journey through the Crinan Canal. From Islay, we took her back to Dun Laoghaire, via Tory, Inis Boffin, Portmagee, Baltimore, our mooring inside Helvic Head and back up the Irish Sea to her berth in South County Dublin. In 2023, I had the opportunity to complete an Atlantic crossing west to east, so before I left for the Caribbean, we took *Varuna* down to Dunmore East in April and left her again in the capable hands of the Keogh brothers in New Ross.

We launched her late July 2023 and spent a very frustrating August going from Dunmore East, to Helvic and back to Waterford as one south-westerly weather system after another played havoc with our plans to take her west. Finally, a high-level decision (by Judith and our offspring) was made to head for the sun.

And so began our odyssey, also known as the Voyage to the Sun. With a handpicked crew we departed Dunmore East on a sunny afternoon in late August and headed south. With a Force 4/5 on the beam, we sailed overnight and arrived in the Scilly Isles the following afternoon in heavy rain and a Force 5/6 on the nose. We battled to pick up a mooring buoy in the swell and the pouring rain and eventually retired below for refreshments and sleep.



The infamous bolt before it sheared

The best method we have found to pick up a mooring buoy is 3 metres of 8mm chain, tied to the bow cleats with 2-3 meters of mooring ropes each side. One volunteer, on the pulpit, holds the mooring chain in both hands, spread well apart and when helmed almost on top of the buoy, the highly trained volunteer drops the chain on the windward side of the buoy, and the yacht is then allowed to drift downwind. Once attached under the mooring buoy, we attach the mooring warp to the buoy at our leisure. Once attached we normally leave the chain loosely around the mooring rope/chain as insurance.

The following day we went ashore, explored St Mary's and had lunch in the Foredeck pub. Some crew members went for a swim, and we all partook in a brisk walk around the island before returning to the yacht. We left in the early evening so that we could cross the shipping lanes south of the Scillies in daylight and also to get to the Chenal de Four on slack tides, the following day.

Winds were with us again for the first part of the trip but died overnight. With the engine clonking away, we continued south. Approaching the shipping lanes north of Ile d'Ouessant, the engine pitch suddenly changed. A quick visit to the engine room revealed that a bolt had sheared on the alternator mounting bracket, the alternator had moved, and the belt was no longer driving the alternator or more critically, the water pump. We stopped the engine and thankfully had the tools on board to perform a running repair. We drilled out the remnants of the bolt that was in the threaded section of the engine block, rethreaded the engine block, and refitted the bracket with a slightly larger bolt. With the alternator back in position and a tightened belt, the engine started, and we continued the passage none the worse for the experience.

We entered the Chenal de Four and slowly made our way through this impressive rock-strewn channel arriving at the Phar de Kermorvan bang on slack water. The passage through was uneventful and we rounded Pointe Sainte Mattieu and headed across the bay into Camaret-sur-Mer. We had supper in La Thalassa Restaurant on the Quai du Style where we met a wine grower from Bordeaux whose business model was direct sales to selected hotels. He treated us to an impromptu wine tasting tour of his vineyard and we staggered back to *Varuna* carrying probably half the contents of his small Renault van.

Next morning, we saw it: the Sun. We left Camaret and hoisted sails, sailing back and forth across the glorious Anse de Camaret awaiting the tides flooding into the Goulet de Brest. We sailed in with the current and entered the Rade the Brest, the large, protected bay that has been home of the French Navy since navies were invented. We dropped the sails, and in bright sunshine with a clear blue sky, with the French courtesy flag flying aloft and the Irish Tricolour elegantly streaming at the stern, we went through the breakwater into the port of Brest as a French Navy frigate was heading out to sea. We headed for the narrow entrance into the cavernous Marina du Chateau and tied up at the fuel berth to refuel and to await our appointed berth. The odyssey had begun.

ICC Award Collection



2025-26 Irish Cruising Club Committee



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