



ICC News

Newsletter of the Irish Cruising Club

Spring 2026



Dear Member,

My sympathies to all who live in the east and south and were inundated with rain and floods this winter. The predominantly easterly wind directions did what the usually westerlies do to us in the west in other years. Things seem to have gone back to normal now and we are seeing one gale after another come through. The good news is that means I have the time and inclination to stay inside and pull together the stories you sent in for this issue of the *ICC News*. So, thank you to those who did contribute. I have greatly enjoyed your articles and memories.

With the coming summer and sailing season, Máire Breathnach and I are looking forward to reading what you have been up to. So, please keep your camera/phone at the ready when you meet up with other members and jot down some notes as you plan your next adventure. Máire will be looking forward to your logs for the annual, as I look forward to your news, stories, and reminiscences.

I wish you fair winds, sunshine, and good times for the summer months.

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 or less, with a maximum of 1,000. Please send activity updates to your regional editor for inclusion in their notes.

Images

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

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Larger files may also be sent via Dropbox or WeTransfer.

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

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Closing dates for ICC News submissions:

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

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Front Cover: Peter Mullen's *Oyster Bay* under sail in Strangford Lough

Commodore's Letter

By Alan Markey

As we welcome the arrival of spring - after what has been a notably wet start to the year - the longer days and improving weather come as a welcome change. For many of us, this marks the beginning of a busy period, preparing boats for the season ahead.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, I hope your preparations are well underway, if not already complete, and that you are looking forward with anticipation to the 2026 sailing season, wherever your plans may take you.

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the 16 new members elected following our January Committee meeting. It was a particular pleasure to meet many of you at our recent Annual Dinner at the Lough Erne Resort - an occasion that perfectly captured the spirit of our club. We are delighted to have you join us and look forward to seeing you become actively involved, both on and off the water. Our club thrives on participation, camaraderie, and a shared passion for cruising, and I encourage you to make connections and take full advantage of all that the club has to offer.

The Annual Dinner Weekend was, once again, a highlight of the year, and it was wonderful to see such a strong turnout. We were honoured to welcome distinguished guests from the Cruising Club of America, the Royal Cruising Club, and the Ocean Cruising Club. During the evening, Alan Leonard became the third recipient of the Friendship Cup, presented by Cruising Club of America Commodore Chace Anderson. Alan delivered a very entertaining acceptance speech, concluding with the presentation or should I say the "return" of a set of commemorative glasses back to the CCA Commodore from the 1977 CCA Maine Cruise.

*L to R: Andrew Johnson, National Sales Manager MG Motor Ireland, with Alan Markey (Commodore, ICC), and Tim Carpenter (Commodore, RIYC) at this week's transfer of the MG Motor Sailing Club of the Year trophy from the RIYC to the ICC
photo by Paul Sherwood Photography*



Events such as the Annual Dinner are at the heart of our club, and it is worth reflecting that everything we do is made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Julie Chambers and the Northern Committee for organising such a successful and enjoyable weekend.

I am also delighted to acknowledge the ICC's recent recognition as the *MG Motor Sailing Club of the Year*. This marks only the second time in the 47-year history of this informal competition that the ICC has received this honour, the previous occasion being in 1989. This award is a testament to the dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment of our members, volunteers, and committees. It reflects not only the ICC's achievements on the water but also the strength of our connections within the international cruising community.

As the ICC does not have a physical clubhouse, it was particularly fitting to hold the award presentation at the Royal Irish Yacht Club, given our founding Commodore, Herbert Wright, who led the club from its inception in 1929 until 1942, was a prominent figure in Dublin Bay sailing and a distinguished member of the RIYC.

I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Frank Keane Motor Group, and in particular MG, for hosting a wonderful drinks reception to mark the occasion and present the ICC with the Ship's Wheel trophy. More importantly, we greatly appreciate their longstanding support of the Irish sailing community.

As we look ahead to a busy spring and summer programme, I encourage everyone to make the most of the many activities on offer. Whether you are joining one of our cruises to Norway, Galicia, or home waters, or simply enjoying time afloat closer to home, I hope you have a safe, enjoyable, and rewarding season.

Wishing you a fair winds for season ahead.

The 2026 Friendship Cup

by Harry Whelehan

This year's recipient of the Friendship cup is Alan Leonard. He is the third person to thus be honoured. Alan is particularly qualified to receive the award having been active both ashore and afloat during his longstanding membership of the Club (since 1964).

While quietly getting on with his sailing, he has always had time and enthusiasm to socialise among ICC club members and regularly attends Club functions. He has forged broad friendships within the ICC and also among the members of our sister Clubs: the CCA, the CCC, the OCC, and the RCC. He has sailed extensively in his home waters and much further afield, mostly on his own boat and sometimes aboard other members boats. He brought both of his sons cruising from a young age to a level where they have both become members of the ICC.

A few examples of his extensive cruising give an idea of the range of his experience:

- Scotland
- The Faroes
- Galicia
- St. Kilda
- the Atlantic Circuit
- Cruise in company in Maine with the joint CCA/ICC rally in 1997

He has had published many, many Logs in the ICC Annual, and subsequently received many of the Clubs awards for his cruising Logs, e.g.:

- The Faulkner Cup: 1977
- The Fortnight Cup: 2006 and 2023
- The Wybrandt Cup: 2005
- The Dunnes Ditty Salver: 2012, 2020, and 2024

In terms of his more formal contribution to the ICC Alan has:

- Served on the ICC Northern Committee
- Served as ICC Rear Commodore
- Served as ICC Vice Commodore
- Assisted Norman Keane in charting Strangford Lough
- He has served as Port Officer for the OCC in Strangford Lough and helped many visiting cruising visitors to navigate those beautiful, but challenging waters. More recently, he was the OCC Rear Commodore for Ireland.
- He also organized the 2013 annual dinner weekend.

All of this exemplifies how Alan fulfilled the criteria set out by the CCA in their Deed of gift to the ICC: The candidate must exemplify the highest values of the ICC i.e. Cruising/Seafaring, Friendship and Camaraderie both within ICC and with our sister Clubs.

ICC Commodore Alan Markey, Friendship Cup Recipient Alan Leonard, and CCA Commodore Chase Anderson



Chance Encounters on Inishmore

by William O'Connor - *marooned on an Indian Ocean island*

I retired in May 2025 and was up for any trip going. Val Moran duly obliged with a late spring trip to the Aran Islands on *Sattwa* a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 40DS.

We made our way to Rossbrin Boatyard and after a short delay to fit a new alternator, we were on our way in glorious spring weather. We stopped in Schull for supplies and then on to Crookhaven, where I joined the ICC zoom for new members outside O'Sullivan's pub.

We were joined by Patrick O'Donoghue (aka POD), also a new member of ICC, and headed off in glorious sunshine. Not wanting to add miles to our passage, we anchored off An Trá Bán on the Great Blasket. Dinner was taken in the cockpit with the mating seals barking on the beach.

We struck off for Inishmore at 7am and dropped anchor off the pier at 7 pm that evening. The next morning ecobikes were rented for an Island tour, including Poll na bPréist and Dun Aengus. While on the cliff edge in



Sattwa at anchor

On arrival, he was not happy to hear the bilge pump running! However, a survey via tender revealed no significant damage; only a glancing blow. Val returned for a quiet pint to reflect. There he met a local from Galway named Frank who had come over for the trad music. Frank was invited back for duck confit à la POD with a nice Pauliac. He had never set foot on a sailboat before and was very impressed especially with Val's owl.

He asked us to call if we visited Galway. We duly landed in Rossaveal, where he picked us up and put us up in his state-of-the-art hostel on Eyre square for 3 nights. He then took us to all the trad music venues and some great restaurants. We were treated to a French sea shanty from a singlehanded sailor from Lorient and yes, you have guessed it he was the perpetrator!

POD took the guitar and was received with great appreciation from the Americans present. It remained only to thank Frank for his generous hospitality and ask him if ever wanted some sailing to let us know.

Sure enough he joined me, POD, and Val in Villagarcia in Ria Arousa for a week on *Copperwynd*, which had wintered in A Coruña. As we handed him the wheel broad reaching out of Ria Arousa doing 8 knots in 28 knots of breeze, we asked him what he thought. He said: "They don't go very fast, do they?"



Billy O'Connor, Patrick O'Donoghue, and Val Moran

Dun Aengus, we were approached by a British crew who recognised us from the anchorage and passed on the news that our boat had been T-boned by a single handed Frenchman while hoisting his sail. They passed on his contact details and captain Val headed back on his bike à toutes vitesses to inspect the damage.



Frank and the owl



Val, Frank, and Patrick in the Rias aboard Copperwynd

Galician Grapevine

by Peter Fernie

Peter Haden, who for many years has penned *'The Galician Grapevine'* has finally decided to put his pen back into his pocket. We must give thanks to him for his notes over the years and for his great work in promoting ICC activities in Galicia. We understand that *Papageno* with Peter at the helm nevertheless hopes to be back sailing the Rias this summer.

The principal gathering this year, **Encuentro Náutico 26** begins on the 11th of July in Monte Real Yacht Club, Baiona with a welcome reception and dinner. The fleet will then travel independently via various favourite anchorages and watering holes to Pobra do Caraminal for a final dinner in the well-loved Entre os Rios Bodega on the 18th of July. Over 20 boats and about 80 members and guests have expressed interest so far. The booking forms will be sent out in April and remain open for 4 weeks.

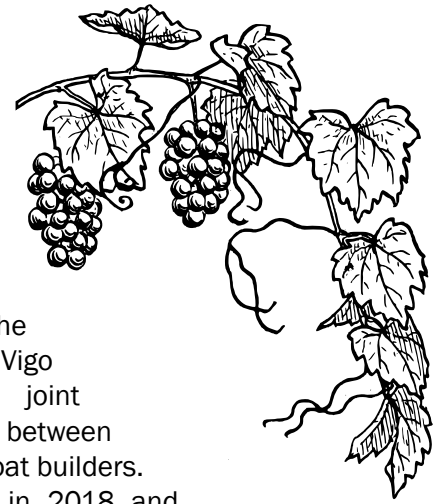
Billy O'Connor, a new member in 2025, joined the fleet at EN 25 last year and decided to stay in Galicia for the time being. He reports that with the much-appreciated help of fellow Corkonians, Freda and Colin Hayes and John and Susan O'Connor, *Copperwynd* found a new winter home in Davila Marina. Their plans for 2026 of course include EN26, together with the newly minted ICC member and talented guitarist Paul O'Donoghue.

Bob Earlie reports that his 1962 Laurent Giles 42-foot *Scythe* has now completed her refit in Varadoira do Xufre after sailing from Baltimore in 2024 (see Western Wanderings, Spring 2025) and is ready for new adventures. For more information, see: <https://share.google/F8huPh05zANdh4dz1>



Scythe underway

The naomhóg *Naomh Gobnait* which was rowed from St James' Gate, Dublin to Galicia over several summers, 10 years ago, (*The Camino Voyage* review by Daria Blackwell, Autumn 2018) and was supported and shepherded by our own Paddy Barry, came to an unfortunate end at the entrance to the Rio Miño with the sad death of Danny



Sheehy, one of the crew members.

The wrecked boat was subsequently transported to the Museo de Mar, Vigo and became a joint restoration project between Galician and Irish boat builders. The project began in 2018 and involved an inaugural visit by the Irish Ambassador at the time. The naomhóg has now been completely reconstructed and has a wonderful location within the Vigo maritime museum. The project has been supported massively by Dr. Manuel Lara even to the extent of temporarily accommodating Irish boat builders at his home. Well worth a visit to see the rebuilt craft. You can unusually sail right up to the museum – Peter Haden did so in 2018.



The naomhóg Naomh Gobnait on display with Dr. Manuel Lara in the background

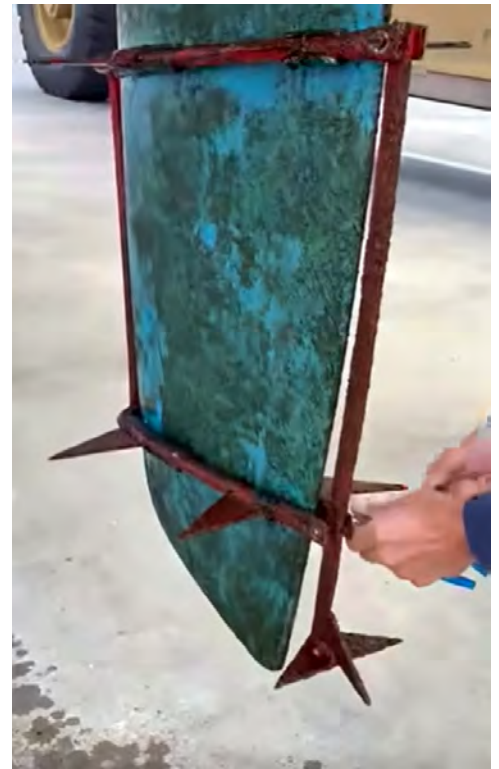
Manuel Lara, incidentally, is the President of the *Asociación Buxa* in Galicia which is an organisation dedicated to the appreciation, preservation and understanding of Galicia's past industrial heritage. Many of the fascinating articles on its website are in English and Google translate is there for those that are in Spanish or Gallego. Well worth a visit. <https://www.asociacionbuxa.com>.

For those that are looking for a more marine Galician website try <https://culturmar.org/> which is dedicated to Galicia's traditional boats.

Orca interactions continue to make the news in the Rias. A French catamaran had both rudders damaged and removed in Ria Muros late in the 2025 season but managed to anchor in San Francisco bay just outside

Muros. They were subsequently towed down to Varadoira do Xufre for repair.

Yet another possible solution to such interactions has been reported. It consists of a bolt-on spikey contraption designed and manufactured in Varadoira de Xufre. It's not very pretty but probably less hassle than bags of sand. We understand that the device can be mounted whilst the boat is afloat. The video is available on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19zGcXFQEj/>



Orca deterrent being fitted



The fierce new hound at Xufre

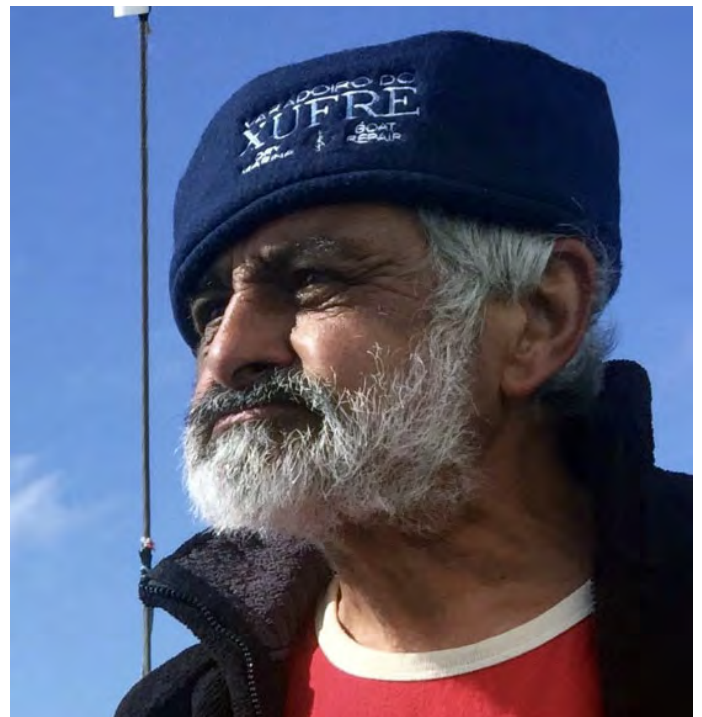
Those owners who winter their boats in Varadoira do Xufre will be familiar with the ferocious three Alsatian dogs that patrol the yard after dark. From personal experience, their bark keeps out undesirables but otherwise they are friendly to those who have a key and legitimate access to the yard. There is now a new addition to this ferocious pack. He is currently practising on seaweed.

Western Wanderings

by Conor O'Byrne

Westen members are busy getting ready for the new season.

Bob Earlie sent a short report of an interesting character he encountered while cruising in recent years. Having left Rossaveal 10 years ago, Bob sailed south keeping the land to port until "that big rock" and thence onwards to Greece. He has since sailed back to Galicia. The man he met was a kind-hearted Indian called Vijay. His parents had moved to India from Kenya after independence, crossing the Indian Ocean on a Dow. While pregnant, his mother crossed again by Dow to deliver him. After Kenya became independent and he finished his public schooling, his family moved to the UK. Now well into his 70s, this man was kind enough not to embarrass a boastful (Irish) sailor at a Xufre barbecue. Bob later found out the extent of the Indian man's feats of solo navigation. He had spent years sailing the world on a self-built steel boat



Indian sailor Vijay

John Coyne sent a short report of his sailing the Atlantic last season aboard his 11m sloop *Ocean Odyssey*. Together with his wife Mary, sister Ann, and daughter Hannah they enjoyed a fine cruise from Lagos in Portugal to Porto Santo, Funchal, and Lanzarote. They had a 4-day passage out to Porto Santo (460 NM), albeit with a low power alarm suggesting alternator problems. Their Hydrovane windvane steering "Harriet" proved a great help on this passage and throughout their cruise. On 22nd July, as they approached Funchal, engine problems meant they needed a tow in as there was

no wind. The harbour master quoted an astronomical €5000-8000 for the tow. Luckily a local yacht gave them assistance and once in the harbour the marina staff were able to help out. There they managed to solve the engine problems, which turned out to be due to a missing woodruff key for the crankshaft pulley. The final leg to Lanzarote saw winds up to 30 knots from the NW to NE and an uncomfortable 2m swell. The original plan was to head for the island of La Graciosa (north of Lanzarote) but with the testing conditions they elected to go to Arrecife on Lanzarote instead. A well-earned Asian dinner in Arrecife rounded off a nice two-week cruise. John plans to visit the Azores next.



Nigel Moss (GBSC and Board of Irish Sailing), Vera Quinlan (ICC), Alex Blackwell (ICC), and Simon Parker (CAI)

Galway sailor Cormac MacDonncha organised a gathering of western sailors at Galway Bay Sailing Club on 28th February, under the holding name of *Fánaithé Atlantacha* (Atlantic wanderers). The purpose was to develop ideas and strategies for improving the facilities for cruising sailors on the western seaboard. Similar events have been held by eastern sailors and southern sailors will be following suit shortly. The event was very well attended, with sailors from Kerry, Clare, Galway, Mayo, and Sligo. A number of ICC members also attended, including, Alex Blackwell, Conor O'Byrne, Damian Cashin, Vera Quinlan, John Lambe, and John Coyne. The top priorities to emerge from the discussion were lack of Government strategy for marine tourism, lack of infrastructure, poor management of existing state infrastructure, hazards arising from fishing gear and debris, and the need for a national small craft register. These issues will no doubt be familiar to most ICC members cruising in Ireland and abroad. In related news, Cormac MacDonncha recently won the Cruiser of the year award (Irish Sailing Awards), in recognition of

his outstanding contribution to the cruising community on Ireland's west coast.

Damien Cashin reports that Mayo Sailing Club (Rosmoney, Westport) have, after a protracted process, secured a MAC (Maritime Area Consent) through the relatively new legislation enacted to facilitate the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA). The club plans to extend its existing hardstanding, widen the club slipway, and install a floating pontoon off the hardstand. The granting of the MAC is a significant step towards progressing these plans.

Mayo County Council have engaged a contractor to do remedial works at Rosmoney Pier during April and May. The works include underpinning the head of the existing pier to address the serious erosion that has occurred over many years, address the previously inadequate works to the resurfacing of the slipway and maintenance works on the existing pontoon, which includes reinstating power and water supply. ICC members are actively involved in pushing to progress these works.

John and Mary Coyne aboard Ocean Odyssey



2026 New Members

Annamarie Fegan, Crosshaven, Co. Cork

For over two decades, sailing has been the heart of Annamarie's family life, bringing unforgettable adventures, friendships, and experiences from her early days with *Molia* to her current yacht, *Nieulargo*. What began as family cruising and white-sail racing grew into a shared love that fostered camaraderie, confidence, and independence - especially for her daughters as they took the helm. Today, she is drawn to longer voyages and new horizons, continuing a lifelong journey of freedom and discovery on the sea.



Brian D'Arcy, Glenageary, Co. Dublin

Brian began sailing in Dunmore East (WHSC) when he was less than 10 years old. There he grew a love of the sea and all things to do with boats! His first boat was a Mirror dingy. He has owned a number of boats, Leisure 20, Albin Ballad, Moody, and now he has a Jeanneau 42i called *Margaux*. He has Cruised in Croatia, Caribbean, Australia, Asia, UK, Ireland, and Europe. He is a member of the RStGYC.

Daniel Walsh, Rye, NY, USA

Having grown up in Cork, Dan spent his early years sailing out of the Royal Cork Yacht Club, progressing through Cadets, National 18s, and cruising with his father. His adult sailing years were based in NY where his wife Claire and he cruised extensively with their children. He have been fortunate to have been able to combine family time on the water with a number of offshore races and passages.



David Leonard, Yeadon, Yorkshire

David grew up sailing at Strangford Lough Yacht Club. He has cruised extensively in Scottish and Irish waters, mostly aboard *Ariadne*, a Starlight 35, often combining sailing with some (arguably foolhardy) objective in the mountains. He has also sailed in Brittany, Norway, and the U.S. Eastern Seaboard. Now based in Yorkshire, his local sailing is on the shifty waters of Yeadon Tarn, but his base for family cruising remains Strangford Lough.

Desmond Kelliher, Tullyvale, Dublin

From his first cruise, aged 12 with his father in a Dragon from Dublin to Belfast, Des was bitten by the bug. He has spent over 60 years since then cruising all over Europe and the Caribbean. His favourite cruising grounds are Corsica and Barbuda. His ideal cruise has deserted anchorages, warm waters, good friends, and cold beer.



Eamonn Doyle, Sandymount, Dublin

Eamonn began youth sailing on dinghies and later in the 1980s took up sail training on *STV Creidne* and ultimately joining *STV Asgard II* for an eastbound transatlantic voyage. Eamonn has raced and cruised on various boats around Ireland and abroad. In 2016, he purchased his current yacht *Shearwater*, a Dehler 36 SQ, and undertook a delivery cruise from the Netherlands. He continues to sail in Ireland, the UK, and Europe and he is a Flag Officer in his home club, the RStGYC in Dún Laoghaire

The Alternative Life of the Octopus

by Bob Brown

Last Autumn, I was at the bottom of the slipway at the Quoile Yacht Club in Strangford Lough, sorting my trailer for haul-out. Narrowly missed by my trailer wheels, was a splodgy lump of something lying amongst the slime and seaweed bits. It was a small octopus, its rounded sack-like body about 13cm (5 inches) long, and a tangle of tentacles, difficult to measure because it kept extending and contracting them.

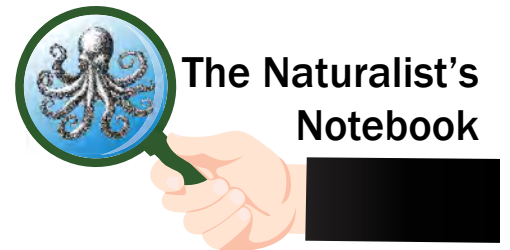


*Curled octopus, Red Bay, Co Antrim.
By Bernard Picton*

I felt sympathy for this creature, so clearly out of its depth in a bad way. I scooped it up, ready to return it to the water, and for my pains received a large dollop of extremely viscous black ink all over my hands. Back in the water, it moved slowly over the mud, and I rinsed my hands beside it, and returned to my trailer.

This is hardly the stuff of octopus legend, not like the mythical 'Kraken' that would seize ships and pull them under, or the very real giant Pacific octopus that has achieved a tentacle span of 9m (29ft). But my small encounter does reflect the relative abundance of octopuses (yes that's right, it's not 'octopi') in our waters.

We have two species regularly occurring in NW Atlantic waters: the curled octopus, so called because of the curling of its tentacles as it sits on the sea bed, the species that I'd found, and the larger common octopus which, contrary to its name, is the rarer of the two around Ireland, reaching its northern limit in our south-west. This is the species that recently 'boomed' off the Devon coast, much to the concern of crab fishermen. If you find an octopus, look at the underside of the eight



tentacles, and the rows of round suckers – if it's a zig-zagged single row you have the curled octopus, if it's paired suckers in a double row, you have the common.

Those of us who enjoyed the 2017 Rally (or any of the Encuentro Náutico events) in Galicia's Rias Baixas may well recall the inevitable tasty 'Pulpo', or octopus, on almost every restaurant menu (think garlic, roasted



*Close encounter in Strangford Lough, 1984.
By the late Peter Paice*

peppers, and rich tomato sauce). Despite this slaughter, the common octopus really is common in Galician waters, but I've since come to reflect a little sadly about how us foodies mistreat this complex and interesting animal. Let me explain why.

Octopuses are molluscs, in the class Cephalopoda (ie "head-foot" from Greek) but they far outstrip their fellow clams, snails, and squids in sophistication. The sack-like body (mantle) contains all their vital organs like stomach, gills, and brain, including a siphon that supplies water to the gills, provides jet propulsion to speed the beast backwards when evading predators, and squirts ink to confuse such predators and any slipway yachtsmen. There is a central mouth, largely defined by a chitinous beak capable of breaking up crabs (including Devon crabs in creels), fish and even shelled molluscs like mussels. That beak is somewhat venomous, but in our species not enough to do harm to humans. It has two eyes with slit-like pupils, and some species are thought to perceive colour. They are amazingly flexible – a large individual can squeeze through a gap of only a few centimetres.

The eight tentacles are truly remarkable. Not only do they provide the means of crawling around the seabed, but they are autonomous, capable of independently moving around, tasting what they touch, and responding to light. And here's the thing: each has its own ganglion, or nerve centre, so even if a tentacle gets chopped off, it is still capable of responding to stimuli. Effectively the octopus learns with its central brain, but the arms use the information from the brain to make their own 'decisions'. It is a nervous system completely unlike our own, and it is extremely effective.



'Pulpo' in a Galician market. By Linda Brown

One tentacle has a particular function. Mating and courtship in octopuses is a somewhat distant affair, involving timid inspection and gentle tentacle touching. When this desultory activity reaches a certain ecstatic level, the male uses this tentacle to carefully pass a small package of sperms across to herself, which she then uses to fertilise her eggs. That's the end of his role, and he crawls off to die. The female retreats to her den, and eventually lays the eggs which will hatch into drifting planktonic larvae before settling on the seabed (some species directly hatch as mini adults). She stays guard over her eggs. But once her task is done, she too dies in a slow process of decay. Maybe some of us have seen the 2020 documentary "My Octopus Teacher" by Pippa Ehrlich and James Read, documenting the life of one individual – it's a tear-jerker and available on Netflix.

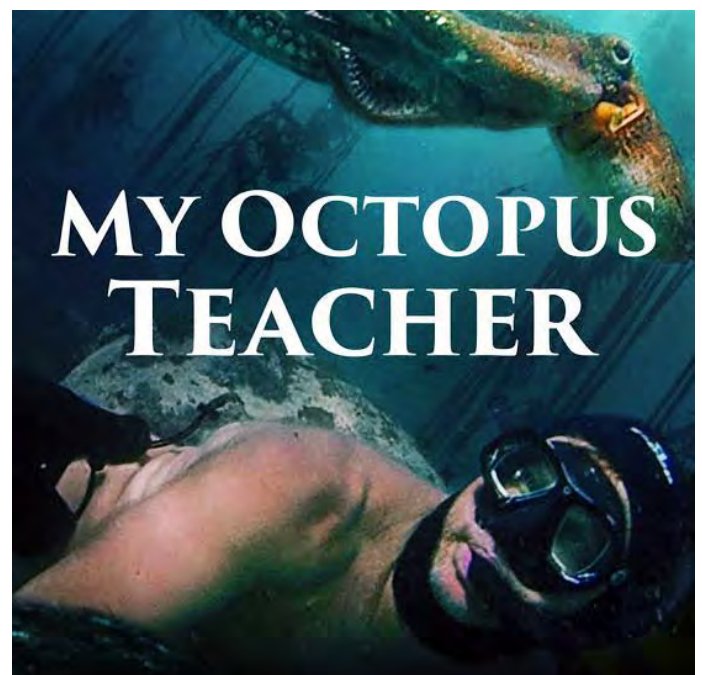
Octopuses are also some of the best camouflage experts on the planet. They can survey their surroundings and with the aid of chromatophores, coloured cells on the

surface of the mantle that expand and contract, can change colour to blend in with the locality. If they move to another habitat, they'll change again. If they are feeling aggressive or scared, they can produce a frightening series of colour waves over their body, and if they are in seductive mood, a spectacular colour display to attract the opposite sex before all that tentacle business happens.

Finally, octopuses are smart. They have both short- and long-term memories, they learn about patterns and how to open boxes of different shapes and colours to obtain treats, how to unscrew jars, navigate mazes, and they frequently fool curators in public aquaria by escaping even from the smallest gap in their tank cover, in a hunt for food. It is even reported that they can recognise individual people. There is an increasing body of opinion that believes they are sentient, i.e. aware of their own existence and feelings. I cannot judge this myself, but I do recall encountering a curled octopus in Strangford Lough on a dive to about 15m and watching it watching me and extending a tentative tentacle to touch (and taste?) my mask. Those eyes were looking at me, not merely seeing me...

Recognition of octopuses' intelligence is now embedded in law. Until 2012 the common octopus was the only invertebrate protected under the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. This was extended to all cephalopods under an EU Directive and is surely reflected in Irish legislation too. That relates to scientific experiments and does not cover culinary matters.

So that's my case for recognising the special qualities of our eight-armed companions. It is clear that we humans shouldn't subjectively assess animals' intelligence from the limited context of our own nervous systems. If you next order 'Pulpo', spare a thought for a sophisticated and complex animal that just might have feelings like us, only playing by very different rules.



Grandpa, What's a Chart Table?

by Norman Kean - Part 2



From the Chart Table

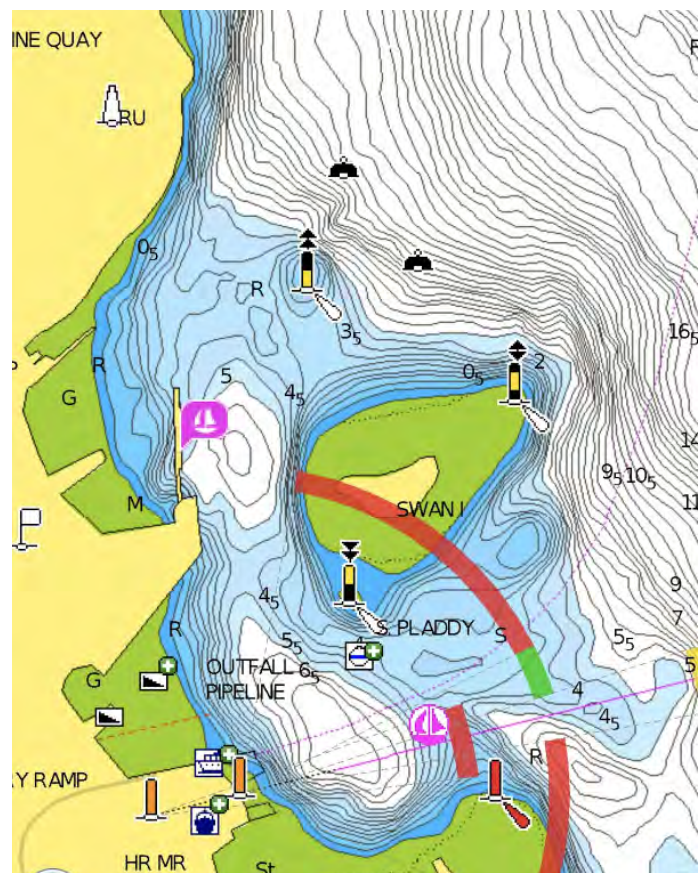
In the autumn 2025 edition of the *ICC News*, I described the issues facing us as paper charts are in decline, while our vector charts (Navionics, CMap, et al) have room for improvement. I was a member of a RIN working group tasked with recommending minimum standards for these, for non-commercial leisure vessels like ours.

Our basic objective was to specify charts that are “functional, safe, easy to use, and affordable” and which can be officially certified for Primary Navigation. One major issue is that providers of training and qualifications, such as the RYA, struggle to devise training courses when everybody's charts and equipment are different - and the range of options is multiplying.

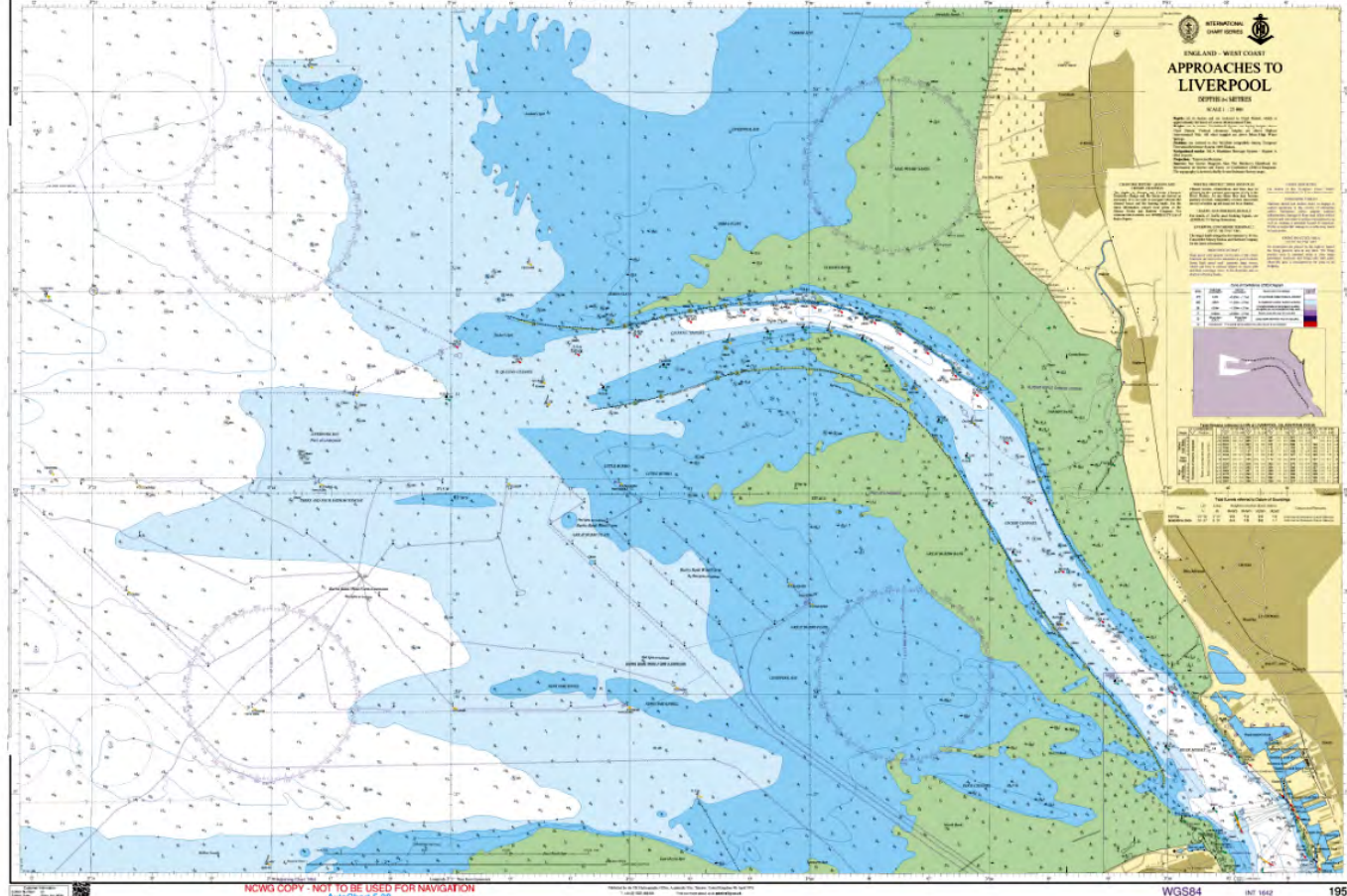
Key to our recommendations is the proposal of an industry-agreed “Standard” or “S” mode option which all hardware should have. Press the S-mode button and everybody's display, on any hardware, and it will revert to a presentation that looks pretty much the same. No restrictions, of course, on all the bells, whistles, and

overlays that the providers also offer to differentiate their products. But, if you had to take over an unfamiliar boat in an emergency, (for example) you could, with the press of a button, have a trustworthy chart presentation that should be familiar and easy to operate. It would also be one that the RYA and other educators can use for training. Systems and chart displays meeting the standards can then be certified for primary navigation use.

The chart and hardware companies - Navionics/Garmin, CMap/Navico, Raymarine, Furuno, and others have participated, and agree that this is a good idea, but it would take some time to implement. We recommended improved clarity in things like presentation of sectored lights and transit lines. Also new features, among them the facility to place several bearing lines, as measured by compass, on a chart on screen. This requires the display of many more land features (most leisure charts are blank on land). We want to see a Dead Reckoning mode using compass and log inputs if available, in case



Three examples of presentations on screen, two “bad”, one “good”. The “chart” of Sligo (top left) gives up at Rosses Point and prints Google Maps instead, and in Lofoten (left), you're blinded by the lights, so to speak. But the Navionics chart of Strangford (above) closely matches a survey carried out in 2022 on behalf of the local authority. A “trusted source”.



The UKHO's recent example of a traditional chart presentation "automatically" generated using their latest technology.

GNSS (eg GPS) is compromised. There should in any case be a continuous indication of GPS accuracy or loss (since HDOP is not always understood) via a "traffic light" display on the screen.

A flag should appear to warn of over-zooming. Significant hazards should continue to be displayed when zooming out ["significant" requires judgement built into the software; could AI help?]. Laptops and tablets used for navigation should have the chart data installed and not be dependent on external sources like the internet. A minimum screen size of seven inches is proposed but twelve inches recommended, which excludes phones.

An indication of data quality like CATZOC on paper charts is needed. Data for approved S-mode displays should be from only three categories:

- Official Hydrographic data
- Data from other "trusted sources" such as harbourmasters and port authorities, surveys done in connection with (for example) engineering projects, and (in the case of Ireland) the INFOMAR project
- In the absence of comprehensive data in these two categories, crowd-sourced data is acceptable provided it has been through a validation process.

A fourth category: non-validated crowd-sourced data, should not appear in approved S-mode displays. Training programmes such as those of the RYA should teach users how to discriminate between "good" and "bad" information on charts.

This discussion is taking place under the aegis of the

UK Safety of Navigation Committee (UKSoN), who commissioned the RIN working group. Britain no longer holds quite the commanding position it once did in the world of hydrography, but it is still in the top echelon worldwide. The International Hydrographic Organisation is headquartered in England, and the British authorities are held in high regard.

Our report, of which the above is a very brief summary, was submitted in October 2025. Meanwhile, interesting developments are afoot in response to serious concerns from the commercial small-craft sector, which is legally obliged to use officially approved charts but can't afford or accommodate big-ship systems. At the RIN Small-Craft Group's biannual Electronic Navigation Conference in February, the UKHO revealed some new work to use all available "official" data to generate, almost automatically, a raster product virtually indistinguishable from a traditional chart. An example is shown. They said "UKHO has invested in new ways to produce and ultimately maintain our paper charts."

This doesn't address our group's proposals, but it's a big step forward for charting in general. We must wait and see.

Meanwhile, dear grandchild, the best advice I can give you hasn't changed. Your two most important navigational tools are conveniently situated to port and starboard, just above your nose. Keep looking where you're going, by land or sea.

My thanks to Ed Maggs, Aedan Coffey and Paul Bryans for these chart examples and thanks also to Aedan and Paul for their comments on the text.

2026 New Members

Fergal Stynes, Quinn, Co. Clare

Fergal came to sailing later in life, beginning in Kilrush, Co. Clare, where he quickly developed a lasting fascination with the sea. After purchasing a Porter Wayfarer, he spent time honing his skills along the Irish coastline. Chartering abroad further broadened his sailing experience and maintained his interest in cruising. He then became part-owner of a Beneteau 411, *Veillela*. With her, he embarked on one of his most ambitious journeys: sailing from Ireland to France, and then around the Iberian Peninsula into the Mediterranean.



Gareth Higgins, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford

Gareth's sailing journey spans fourteen years, progressing from a Laser 16 on Dungarvan Bay and Lough Derg through Beneteau 211 and Spirit 260 keelboats to his current Hunter Legend 36 twin keel yacht. He has completed solo coastal passages along Ireland's south coast, two crossings to France, a Cornwall cruise, and four Croatian and one Italian charter - building experience from sheltered waters to offshore passage-making across international waters.

Gerard Jones, Glenageary, Co. Dublin

Gerry has cruised the south & west coast of Ireland, south of the UK, France, Spain, Croatia, Turkey, and Portugal over the last 40 years. Most of these cruises were as skipper, mainly on one designs such as X34, First 31.7, Jeanneau One Design (JOD), Figaro 2, and Sunsail charters. He has also sailed, as crew and skipper, on *Palynodie 6* (Sparkman & Stephens designed) - this was one of the largest vessels in the Glenans fleet of offshore sailing vessels.



Heather King, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Heather is a prominent member of the Royal St. George Yacht Club. She has spent much of her life cruising, initially aboard her family's Nicholson 35 and, more recently, with friends. Notably, she completed a voyage from the Azores to Dún Laoghaire, further demonstrating her experience and capability at sea. In addition to her cruising credentials, she is also an active dinghy sailor.

Jenny O'Leary, Howth, Co Dublin

Jenny grew up in Howth and was introduced to sailing at a young age, racing dinghies and cruising with her father. She has owned and skippered various boats including Mirrors, a Fireball, an Enterprise, a Beneteau 33.7, an Outremer 45, and currently an electric Arcona 385. Her cruising adventures include visiting the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Baltic seas, as well as crossing the Atlantic.



John Murphy, Ballyboughal, Co. Dublin

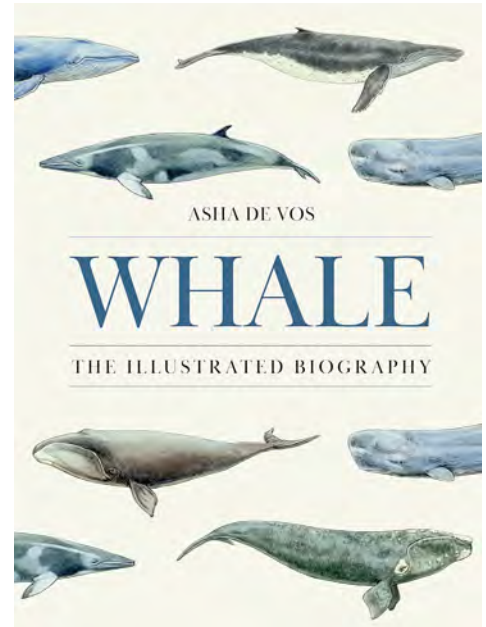
John cruises extensively with his wife Suzie & 4 young children. He learned his craft at Waterford HSC with his father and friends. He qualified as a Yachtmaster Offshore at age 25. With over 23,000 miles of cruising experience, he is a passionate cruising man who just happens to also enjoy winning races and has become fairly proficient at it. John prides himself on immaculate boat preparation. He was nominated for Sailor of the Year 2024.

Whale: The Illustrated Biography

By Asha de Vos, Illustrated by Adam Hook
Review by Daria Blackwell

Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2026
Hardcover, 223 pages, with Appendix
ISBN: 978-0-691-27321-1
eBook: 978-0-691-27322-8

Have you ever wished you could learn more about whales but couldn't stand the thought of the scientific jargon that usually accompanies such works? Fear no more. Whale is written in plain English and is a marvellously illustrated book about the lives of whales.



The author, Asha de Vos, is a marine biologist and pioneer of blue whale research in the Indian Ocean. She is the founder of *Oceanswell*, and her work has been featured in National Geographic, The New York Times, BBC, and TED. In 2024, Asha was invited to join the UN Secretary General's Scientific Advisory Board. Yet her book is more of a naturalist's take on cetacean life.

For example, Asha explains that cetaceans experience menopause and are among the few species that do. Orcas may live 20 years of their lives after childbearing years, and during those years, when they are not burdened with their own children, they spend time passing on their knowledge to their grandchildren, mostly their grandsons. This is perhaps a behaviour witnessed off the Iberian Peninsula.

And did you know that when whales sleep, they only shut down half the brain at a time? That's because breathing is not involuntary as it is for us humans, they must think about every breath they take. So, they rest half the brain at a time so the other half can remember to breathe.

Now here's an interesting titbit: Male whales do not have external genitalia. Their genitals are contained within a genital slit below their bellybutton to reduce drag. The penis emerges only when necessary, which can make identifying gender tricky.

So, there you go, learn about how whales, live, eat, and procreate, how they learn, and how they interact with other species. This is about the lives of whales, not about their biology. Enjoy!

ICC Award Winners 2025

The Challenge Trophies

- The Faulkner Cup - Brody Sweeney
- The Strangford Cup - Mark Sweetnam
- The Fortnight Cup - Conor O'Byrne
- The Round Ireland Navigation Cup - Robert Henshall
- The Wybrants Cup - Julian & Patricia Morgan
- The Fingal Cup - Frank Cassidy
- The Rockabill Trophy - No Award
- The Glengarriff Trophy - Donal Walsh
- The Atlantic Trophy - No Award
- The Perry Greer Bowl - Brody Sweeney
- The Wild Goose Cup - Sam Davis
- The Marie Trophy - Conor O'Byrne
- The Dunn's Ditty Salver - Donal Gallagher

Irish Cruising Club Awards

- The John B Kearney Cup - Bill O'Hara
- The Fastnet Award 2025 - No Award
- The Friendship Cup - Alan Leonard
- The Wright Salver - Frank Smyth
- The Donegan Memorial Trophy - Dick Lovegrove
- The Waterford Harbour Cup - James Lyons
- The Aran Island Trophy - No Award
- The Trans-Oceanic Pennant - No Award
- The Gull Salver - Michael O'Donnell
- The Photographic Plate - Jimmy Houston
- The Golf Trophy - Frank O'Beirne

Fray Bentos – A Town, Pies, and the 20th Century

by Paul McSorley



Sunset over Uruguay River, Fray Bentos

Mention “Fray Bentos” to anyone of a certain age – mainly the post war generation – and they are sure to crack a smile. Memories of a tasty meal in leaner times bring back happy memories. There can be few cruising sailors who have not savoured the delights of a crusty golden Fray Bentos meat pie, served piping hot at the end of long day thumping along a damp coastal passage. Healthy living aside, there can be few sailors who have not woken in their cosy bunk with relish at the thought of a hot tasty, corned beef hash ahead of another day in their oilies. And when provisions are meagre and there’s no chance of a visit ashore, an Oxo cube added to the last of the rice will elevate a paltry supper.

October past found us in Punta Del Este, southeastern Uruguay, while following our middle daughter, Aoife, on the Clipper 25-26 fleet. Uruguay is notable for one of the highest ratios of cattle (and horses) to people in the world, and I recalled that it had, at a time, been a major supplier of food to Europe. Fray Bentos was a household name, and it was a revelation to find that the brand derived from a town in Uruguay where canning had taken place. I mentioned to our very friendly Punta Del Este hosts that our next stop was Fray Bentos. This was met by with a general shrug and a bemused “*why would you be going there?*”.

The factory closed in 1979 and even though it has been a world heritage site since 2015, the town is still somewhat off the top 10 list of attractions in South

America. Our hosts did recount, again with a wry smile, that their relatives had driven their cattle (and other livestock) to Fray Bentos in former times and were generally pleased with the business. The town of Fray Bentos sits on the banks of the navigable Uruguay river and borders with Argentina. Like many South American cities, Fray Bentos reflects times of past colonial affluence. Once splendid buildings are in obvious decline. Accommodation is scarce and the tourist market has yet to grasp the significance of this fascinating location.

The story began in 1863, when the German-owned Liebig Extract of Meat Company (LEMCO) founded its meatpacking plant next to Fray Bentos, for the export of a new product which was to become known as Oxo. Thirty-

two kilogrammes of boneless meat were reduced into a flavoursome single kilogramme. This was marketed as a “nutritious food” with the flavour of beef and soon became the stuff of legend. As a “food” which could withstand a wide range of temperatures, it was easily packaged and transported. Oxo cubes were rapidly incorporated into military rations and were sought by expeditions. Oxo saw service in Boer war, in WWI, with Florence Nightingale in Crimea, Stanley in Southern Africa, Scott in the Antarctic, and Sir Edmund Hilary on Everest. Although of dubious nutritional value, when served as a hot broth, Oxo was undoubtedly a boost to morale and must have been a welcome relief for weary soldiers and explorers. During WWI it was supplied to troops with a charcoal cube. The cube burned without a glow, so troops could enjoy a hot brew under shelter without giving away their position.



LEMCO (later known as Anglo) moved on to mass production of canned products for which Fray Bentos has since become synonymous - corned beef and meat pies. These were to become household staples, particularly in the UK during the middle parts of the last century. They do retain a very legitimate claim to forming an organic part of the 20th Century and leaving a lasting legacy on our culture. The company had a clever marketing strategy. In the domestic realm their products were promoted as tasty convenience foods. Tins could be kept on a shelf and served quickly as a delicious treat. A housewife's time in the kitchen was thus reduced, and female emancipation took a step forward (or so they claimed). Fray Bentos' peak was during WWII and ensured food security for the Allied effort. In 1943 over 16 million cans of corned beef were exported to Europe. The factory at its height, employed over 5,000 workers and processed 400 cattle an hour. Lean times continued for people after hostilities ended, and demand for preserved foods remained high.

Many of the post war generation will fondly recall corned beef at mealtimes before the advent of the fridge. Steak and Kidney pies or mince beef and onions were treats for special occasions. With greater availability of fresh meats, demand for their products fell. The standing of tinned meats on the consumer palate was reduced, and the company's fortunes were not helped by a typhoid outbreak in Scotland in 1964. Contamination during the cooling process was linked to the use of untreated water from the Uruguay river. Although the parent company has changed hands over the years and production moved from Uruguay, meat pies marketed as Fray Bentos are still available (now produced by Baxter's in Scotland). Indeed, our recent lock-downs during COVID19 brought a brief resurgence in demand for the hearty canned offering.

The extensive complex next to the town of Fray Bentos is now largely derelict. A massive concrete cooling plant for storage of unprocessed carcasses bears the ANGLO logo and stands next to the docks where ocean-going cargo ships once loaded preserved delights, bound for faraway homes, distant wars, and expeditions of discovery. The museum comprises administrative



El extracto y los famosos



Fray Bentos produjo el alimento para los primeros astronautas...

...evaluated the food for the first astronauts...



... "El desayuno será compuesto por tres tazas de un caldo excelente, debido a la licuefacción en agua caliente, de esas preciosas tabletas Liebig, preparadas con las mejores carnes de rumiantes de las pampas sudamericanas..."

"Au détour de la lune" Jules Verne

... "Breakfast will be composed of three cups of an excellent broth, due to the liquefaction in hot water, of those precious Liebig tablets, prepared with the best ruminant meats from the South American pampas." "Au détour de la lune" Jules Verne

32 kilos de carne sin hueso eran condensados en un kilo de extracto de carne! Por ser poseedor de los principales nutrientes y el sabor de la carne, el extracto pronto se impuso, en especial, como vital en los ejércitos y en la marina, en la dieta de los marinos y expedicionarios, en cualquier clima, donde el producto se conservaba en perfectas condiciones. Usado en los hospitales de campaña por Florence Nightingales, Stanley en su expedición al centro de África, fue comida esencial en la guerra de los Boers de Sudafrica. Lo usó el cap. Scott en la Antártida, cruzó el Atlántico en el vuelo con Alock y Brown así como más adelante lo llevaron los tres conquistadores del Everest en 1953.

32 kilos of boneless meat were condensed into one kilo of meat extract! As it possessed the main nutrients and the flavor of meat, the extract soon imposed itself, in particular, as vital in the armies and in the navy, in the diet of sailors and expeditionaries. In any climate, where the product was preserved in perfect conditions. Used in field hospitals by Florence Nightingales, Stanley on his expedition to central Africa, it was essential food in the Boer War in South Africa. It was used by Capt. Scott in Antarctica, it crossed the Atlantic on the flight with Alock and Brown as well as later by the three conquerors of Everest in 1953.



Florence Nightingale en la guerra contra los Turcos.

** Florence Nightingale in the war against the Turks.*



Stanley en el rescate de Livingstone en el centro de África.

** Stanley on Livingstone's rescue in central Africa.*



Scott en las heladas llanuras de la Antártida.

** Scott on the frozen plains of Antarctica.*



Alock y Brown en su vuelo Trans Océánico.

** Alock and Brown on their Trans Oceanic flight.*

offices, a canning room with displays of the product range (e.g. corned beef, lambs' liver, and tongue) and a power plant with a fascinating ensemble of generators. Production was extremely needful of electricity, mainly for cooling of carcasses. The plant was at the time innovative in using both hydro and diesel generation. Most of the plant bore manufacturers plates from the north of England - reflecting the UK's once glorious industrial past. There weren't many other visitors but it was an interesting glimpse into the fabric of our food history and bygone times.

Fray Bentos, a brand and a town with a legacy and definitely worth a visit, if you happen to be passing. Whatever your cruising plans this season don't forget to pack an Oxo and a canned pie. You're sure to get a smile.

Memories of the South Rock Lightship

by Ann Clementson



The LV Gannet as she was in the day

The South Rock Lighthouse was built in 1797, said to be the first wave-washed lighthouse in Ireland. It had to be replaced with a light vessel nearly two miles further out to sea in 1877, as vessels were grounding outside the lighthouse. More recently, on 25 February 2009, the light ship, the *LV Gannet*, was itself to be replaced with a super buoy. I asked the Irish Lights if I could join them for the decommissioning ceremony, as the 'lightship' had been a big part of my childhood, and they kindly invited me to do so.

In 1930 my grandfather bought one of the South Rock lighthouse keepers' cottages. It had been many years since they were used to house keepers. Alongside the cottage is a small harbour originally built to provide a base for the boats used to build the lighthouse back in 1796, and it was in this harbour that the tender to the Lightship was kept. The old black wooden boat called *Paddy*, with a bluff bow, a flattish bottom, and roughly tarred topsides took men and supplies out to the ship every ten days, depending, of course, on the weather. I think she had previously been a fishing boat and the smell still lingered. She was half decked with a big well for the cargo.

My family spent most of our summers there, and during the bombing raids on Belfast in World War II, we stayed for a whole year together with my cousins and grandfather. The cottages had no electricity and no running water. It was one of my daily tasks to pump water up from the well. The cottages are quite isolated even now, and were even more so then, as there were

few cars and petrol was scarce. The excitement therefore was tremendous when the men and supplies arrived for the lightship, mostly by bicycle.

If we children were 'very good', and if the weather was fine, we were allowed to go out in the 'big boat'. First the shore crew pumped the water down a wooden channel from our well into wooden barrels aboard *Paddy*. The parcels for the men who were to stay on the boat were then stowed, the crew boarded and we followed. The shore crew consisted of the *Paddy's* skipper, John Bailey and old George Drysdale and his son. They were very good to us children and entertained us with wonderful tales.

It seemed a very long way out to the lightship, although it was only just over three miles. The sea often seemed

rough to us, with a big swell. Many pladdies (*islets, ed*) and rocks disturb the tidal flow. The *Paddy* had an engine, although it was not totally reliable. When we had a fair wind, the crew hoisted the sail. The old boat lit up as she gathered speed under the faded red canvas, although she creaked and groaned like an old woman. When we reached the lightship the crew of the tender lifted us up on the swell of the wave and handed us over to the lightship crew who caught us and lifted us to safety. What would the health and safety people say about that today?

Once aboard, the crew allowed us to explore the ship. I remember well the smell of paraffin from the signal lamp, mixed up with the smell of tarred rope, damp clothes and bacon. Down the steep companionway

LV Gannet in more recent times. The wheelhouse and masts have been removed. Photo credit Nigel Eves, Member of Lighthouses & Lifeboats of the UK & Ireland



we scrambled. The great excitement was to see the Captain's cabin. Actually, he had two, a day cabin and one for sleeping. The latter had a very cosy looking bunk guarded by shiny mahogany leeboards and sheltered by green curtains on a gleaming brass rail. He really needed the boards as the seas were often rough and they said the boat rolled like a pig!

One of the men gave us hunks of soda bread with jam, a great treat as sugar was still rationed then. Apparently, each man brought his own food aboard and they all cooked separately. I could imagine that this arrangement might have caused all sorts of arguments, as the ships company was, I think, seven including the captain. I suppose they probably had a watch system of some sort, so they weren't all trying to cook at once.

The men spent their time during the calmer weather making things. I was given a lovely ship in a dimpled Haig bottle, a clothes brush with my name in white on the black bristles, and a very fine plaited rope mat. They never would tell us how the boat got into the bottle!



Paddy alongside



As a child I used to lie in bed in our cottage and watch the loom of the light moving across the ceiling and think of the vessels it was warning. At that time, we could still see the remains of two wrecks from the shore at our house, so a shipwreck was more than a theoretical concept.

We used to play on the rocks at very low tide looking for crabs and mussels and catching shrimps and tiny fish. We would look out at the ship to see when the tide had turned, as she always had her bow facing into the tide. Then we knew it was time to go home.

In 2009, it was time for the *Gannet* to go home too. She must have been far too expensive to maintain. The new super buoy is self-sufficient with its solar panels and wave technology, but I still miss the *Gannet* whenever I look out to sea from that shore.

Sixtieth Membership Anniversary

by Kevin Dwyer

With great Sailing and Cruising taking place from the Royal Munster Yacht Club Crosshaven, a number of young new members were proposed for the Irish Cruising Club joining in 1966. The Cudmore family proposing Brian, Fred, Peter, and Richard. Tom and Denis Doyle proposed Conor and Frank Doyle and Kevin Dwyer. They were all invited to the Southern Region lunch on Wednesday 4th February 2026. Kevin was unfortunately unable to attend (photo inset).



2026 New Members

Maurice Cooney, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Maurice is an experienced sailor, with over 30 years sailing various boats up to 50 ft. His skills include coastal and offshore navigation, sail handling, docking, anchoring, passage planning, watch keeping, and sailing in various weather conditions. He is a member of the Royal St. George YC and the Ocean Cruising Club. In the last five years he has logged over 11000 miles. His current boat is *Inari*, a Jeanneau 36i, which he has owned and maintained since 2009.



Patrick O'Donoghue, Cork

Since 1988 Patrick, otherwise known as Pod, has extensively cruised the coasts of Ireland, France, Spain, Turkey, Greece, and Cuba. He now sails with ICC Members Val Moran and Billy O'Connor. He owns a 5-metre sailing catamaran and a 6-metre rib. He holds a shore based Coastal Skipper and Yacht Master Offshore, ICC, RYA Skipper, VHF licence, and National Powerboat Certificate. On board, he has strong diagnostic and technical skills.

Rhys Walters, Macroom, Co. Cork

Rhys began sailing at 17 in Baltimore, later crossing the Atlantic in 2017. He and his wife Niamh fitted out their boat *Zora* (2018–2021) and cruised Spain, Portugal, the Med, and the Canaries before crossing the Atlantic again in 2022. They explored the Caribbean, the Bahamas, USA, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Greenland, Iceland, and Scotland, facing challenges from ice, weather, and gear failures, before finally returning home to Kinsale in 2024.



Winifred Kelliher, Tullyvale, Dublin 18

Winifred's first cruise was from Carlingford to the Isle of Man on a Dufour, this was followed by various cruises covering Irish Waters (West Cork, Kerry), Scotland, Channel Islands, Brittany, Mediterranean, and the Caribbean, primarily on-board *Galileo* a First 47.7. She especially enjoys anchorages with early morning swims and a brief run ashore to provision and enjoy local hospitality. Her favourite cruising grounds include the Aeolians, Corsica, and Isles des Saintes.

The 2026 Little Green Book

Accompanying this issue of the ICC News is your copy of our Little Green Book, or LGB. This is your member handbook or yearbook. It is chock full of information about your Club, your fellow members, and their yachts. New this year is the club calendar of upcoming events.

Of particular note is that this booklet is strictly for members of the ICC only. It should not and must not be given to non members, clubs, or any other entity, or for that matter be left lying somewhere that someone might pick it up.



News from the East

Harry Whelehan has been informed by the Howth YC's Commodore that that club's marina and facilities will welcome visitors as usual this season. The proposed dredging of Howth harbour will not commence before the end of the 2026 season.

Magnetic Variation

by Alan Leonard

I greatly enjoyed reading Daria Blackwell's informative article on migration of the Earth's magnetic Poles. In her paragraph on traditional navigation, she raises some points which warrant further exploration. We are all familiar with the Compass Rose printed on paper charts (Fig1), which gives variation for the year of publication and a figure in minutes for annual change in variation. Quite often, a smaller scale chart will have more than one Rose, with different figures on each.

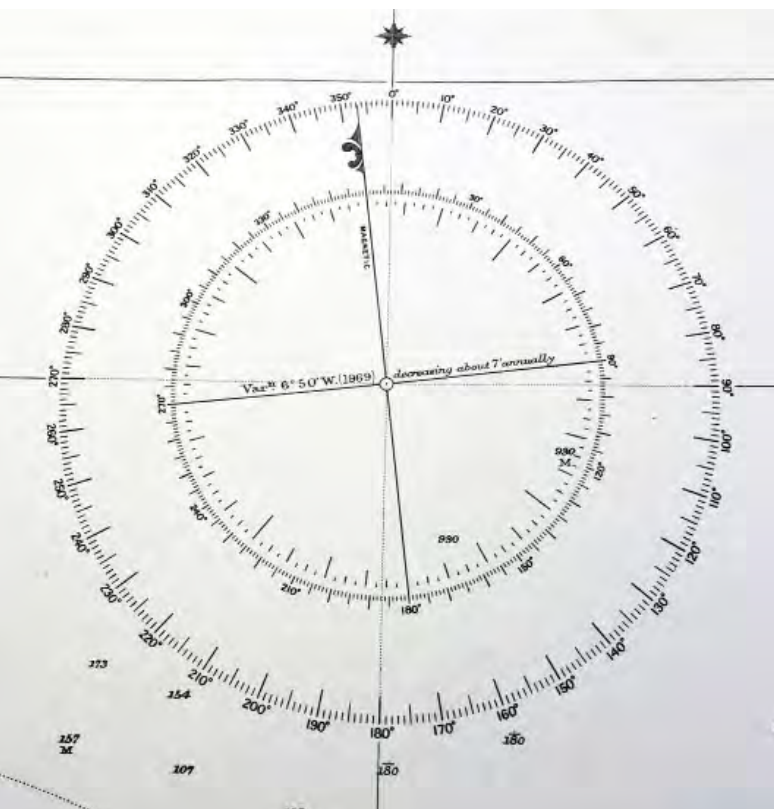


Fig 1: Traditional compass rose, showing figure for variation, date of publication, and annual correction to be applied.

She rightly points out that a cruiser using a 20-year-old chart might face a declination error of several degrees, leading to navigational drift over long distances. However, there is also the question of major changes in variation over long distances. The answer to this used to lie in the Magnetic Variation Chart (Fig 2). After working out the position on a large scale plotting sheet (either by Sun/Run/Meridian altitude, or an EP if overcast) it was then transferred to the Magnetic Variation Chart and the variation read off the nearest Isogonic line. This gives the correction to apply to the true heading obtained from the Gnomonic chart. (on which great circles appear as straight lines) to give the Magnetic Course to Steer

Referring to Fig 2, the Agonic line (Zero variation) runs from Hudson Bay, west of Florida, and across the Caribbean Sea to Columbia. It can be seen that for the

outgoing passage, the variation started at 11° west, south of Tenerife, rising to 18° in mid-Atlantic, before falling again to 12° approaching Antigua, while on the return voyage it started at 11° west off Cape Cod, rising to 25° west off Newfoundland, before falling again to 12° west, off the Fastnet Rock.

The broad red lines in the north east Atlantic labelled in Minutes Easterly are lines of equal change in variation. Where red and blue lines intersect, the minutes of easterly change multiplied by the number of years since publication, should be subtracted from the westerly variation. Because the passages shown were on the year of publication, no such correction had to be applied.

If you look in the Pacific (bottom left-hand corner) west of the Agonic line, note the fine red lines of increasing easterly variation as you move west.

The fine blue lines show the Westerly correction to be applied. Between the Agonic line and the Isogonic line for 15° westerly variation, the situation is a little confusing, with dark blue lines for westerly variation and light blue lines for westerly change (i.e. westerly variation increasing) if you follow them up over Canada where they diverge, it may be easier to separate them.

If, as Daria recommended, you run the animation on the NOAA website but stop it at 1975, you will see a picture identical to Fig 2. (<https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/wandering-geomagnetic-poles>)

How fortunate we are now to have chart plotters and computers to perform these calculations for us. I hope that a look at the "Analogue" way of doing it may aid understanding of what is going on.

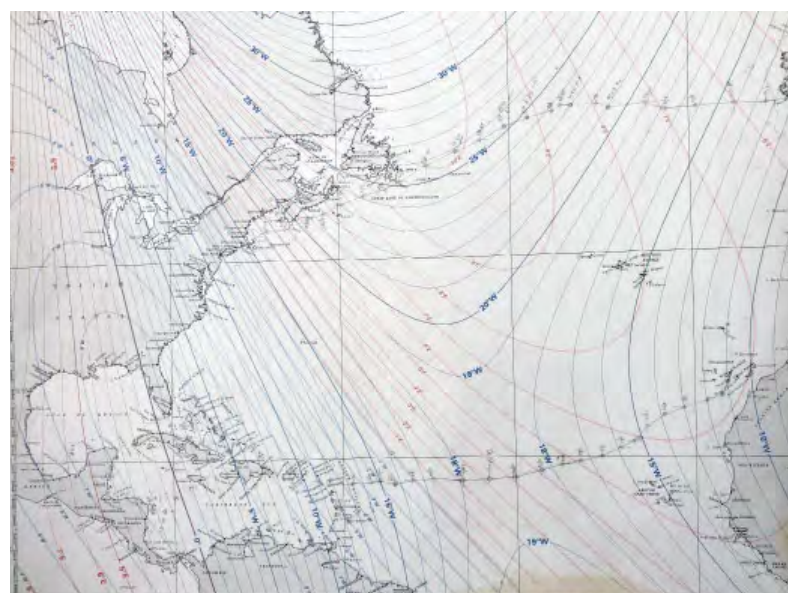


Fig 2: Part of the variation chart of the North Atlantic, 1975, showing plots of two Atlantic crossings, in 1975-76

Dead Reckoning

by Hugh Barry

We were five cocky lads! Four of us were competent dinghy sailors, the fifth was a non-sailor. Some of us had attended an evening class on navigation, given by a retired naval officer at the RMYC during the winter months. The previous year we had taken the boat to Cape Clear but this year we were going offshore!

The boat was entrusted to us by a parent. It was a Bermudan sloop which had begun life as a gaff-rigged cutter with a fine bow but big “hips”, tiller steering, and built of tree wood. Navigation equipment was scant: a compass, which was originally an aeronautical one and was slid into the companionway when in use and a patent Walker log. Our destination was Port St Mary on in the Isle of Man.

The year was 1962 and consequently, some of the details are vague, plain wrong, or completely lost. As I remember, our first port of call was Arklow and then Howth where we were made welcome in the Club. We had an uneventful passage to Port St Mary which we made our base for the tourist thing. We hired a car, drove the TT course, visited Douglas and Ramsey, and played a round of golf with rented, hickory-shafted clubs at the municipal course. We were treated hospitably in the IOMYC.

All good things come to an end. We left one afternoon, heading for Howth. I don't remember the conditions being other than fair as we settled into our watch pattern. I do remember that a passing fishing boat confirmed our position as being 40 nm northeast of Howth. Darkness fell and the watch changed as we steadily made our way.

We were approaching land as the day dawned. And then, the sun rose from behind the land and a puzzled inspection of the chart followed. Where on the east coast



A similar aeronautical compass as had been used here.

does the sun rise behind the land? The emergence of a large ferry from behind a nearby headland provided the answer. We were off Anglesey and Holyhead was around the corner! Another yacht club to visit and a phone call home. To make up the time we sailed to Dunmore East and then home to Crosshaven.

I met with two of that crew at the 2025 annual ICC dinner: one a widely experienced cruising skipper, the other a vastly experienced navigator. Inevitably we reminisced about that eventful cruise of our youth. We were unanimous in our verdict. The aeronautical compass had had a three-armed needle like an inverted T! It was lit by a handheld torch. In the dark at least one watchkeeper had used the wrong arm of the needle and had effectively sailed a course at 90 degrees wrong but probably on a comfortable reach

Congratulations to Norman Kean and Geraldine Henigan

As Norman put it himself, he and Geraldine received an invitation from the Royal Cruising Club (UK) about six weeks in advance of a random Thursday. They were to be awarded the RCC Medal for Services to Cruising and thus enter the ranks of a pretty illustrious group. It had previously been awarded to (among others) Jimmy Cornell, Tom Cunliffe, Mike Peyton, Olin Stephens, Bob Bradfield, Maurice Griffiths, Blondie Hasler, Eric Hiscock, and all the cruising clubs you can think of, including (in 1979) the ICC. It's an open award, that can be given to anyone.

Quite coincidentally, and at much shorter notice, on the very same day Norman Kean also received the prestigious Irish Sailing President's Award in recognition of his exceptional contribution to cruising and maritime knowledge.

Raised in Argyll, Scotland Norman taught himself to sail before moving to Ireland in 1980. A respected maritime writer and contributor to international navigation guidance, Norman's work is widely used by Irish Lights, the Naval Service and the RNLI, and has had a lasting impact on cruising in Irish waters and beyond.



Norman Kean and Geraldine Hennigan receiving the RCC Medal for Services from Margie Chavasse, wife of RCC Commodore Nick Chavasse

In 1984 Norman surveyed Fahan Creek in Lough Swilly using lead line and sextant, work that still underpins the Admiralty chart today. As Editor of the Irish Cruising Club Sailing Directions since 2006, Norman and his wife Geraldine personally visited and researched all 400 harbours, ports and anchorages featured in the guides, and documenting nearly 100 more. Over two decades he produced multiple updated editions, incorporating hundreds of photographs and pioneering the use of drone imagery and INFOMAR seabed data.

Congratulations from all at the ICC are in order for Norman and Geraldine and a massive thank you from the Irish and international sailing community!



The Irish Cruising Club's President's Award

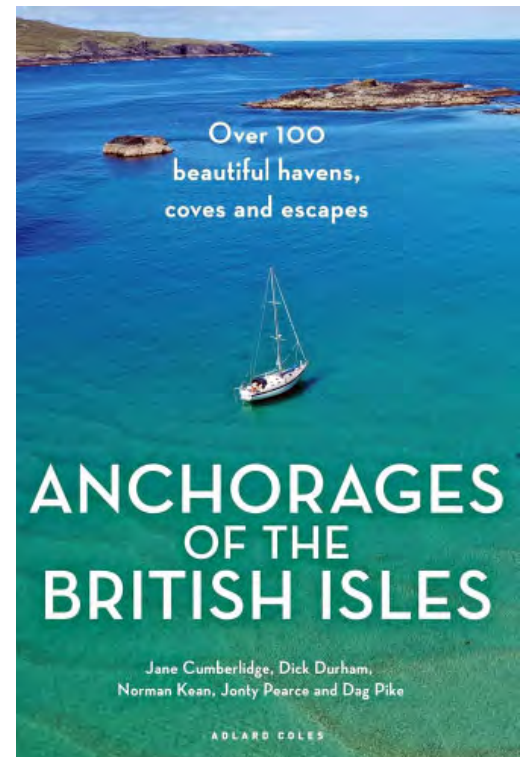
Anchorage of the British Isles

by Jane Cumberlidge, Dick Durham,
Norman Kean, Jonty Pearce, and Dag Pike
Review by Alex Blackwell

A very nicely written, eclectic selection of anchorages around the British Isles. The accounts of the chosen anchorages have been authored by distinguished cruising sailors and experienced journalists. The two-page description of each anchorage is brief, accompanied by coloured chartlets and photographs throughout, giving enough information to entice a sailor or other visitor to call into these places.

This is a book worth including in a cruising yacht's on-board library, so that it might be dipped into while planning a cruise or exploring around the British Isles.

Adlard Coles
Paperback, 256 pages
ISBN: 978-1399423540



Member boat for sale

Oyster Bay

This beautiful 2016 Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 389 from Quoile Yacht Club has cruised up to Tobermory and down to Baltimore in fine style. Very well presented and maintained and can be seen on the MGM boats website.

<https://www.mgmboats.com/> Tel: 353-1-280-2020

Galway Port Update



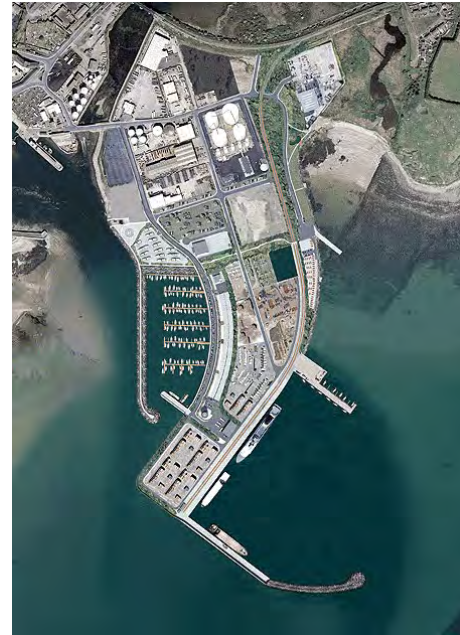
Galway Port today

Galway Harbour Company has been granted planning permission for the development of an extension of Galway Harbour at Renmore and Townparks Townlands and on lands to be reclaimed from the foreshore and the sea in Galway Bay to the south of the existing Galway Harbour Enterprise Park. The works will include re-development of some of the land at Galway Harbour Enterprise Park. The cost is now estimated to be about €290 million.

Galway Harbour Company has said it “warmly welcomes the decision of An Coimisiún Pleanála to grant planning permission. This represents a major milestone in the long-term development of the harbour and in the economic future of Galway and the wider west of Ireland. The approved extension will transform the capacity and capability of the port, enabling it to accommodate larger vessels, enhance operational efficiency, and strengthen maritime security, while supporting the evolving needs of maritime trade. The project is a critical piece of infrastructure that will underpin sustainable regional economic growth, strengthen supply chains, and improve Ireland’s international connectivity.”

Access to the development will be via the existing access at the junction of Lough Atalia Road and Bóthar na Long. The proposed development will include the relocation of the majority of the existing harbour related activities and businesses to the new deep-water berths, quays, jetties, and yards to be located at the harbour extension.

The proposed development is largely in an area which is designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation [cSAC] and a Special Protection Area [SPA] and includes works on Lough Atalia Road Rail Bridge [a protected structure].



Planned development of Galway Port

The planned development will include:

- Quay walls, breakwaters and wave walls to create commercial quays and a deep-water docking facility, extending southwards into Galway Bay
- Dredging to create a new approach channel to the commercial quays and deep-water docking facility berths
- Reclamation of approximately 27ha from the foreshore and seabed
- Construction of new oil and bitumen transfer pipelines, road improvements, rail link, harbour related buildings, and landscaped areas

The development proposed as part of the planning application will allow the following to be available to Galway Harbour Company:

- 23.89ha reclaimed as quays and back-up land and consolidated during construction and available for industries such as those listed in the introduction of this report
- An 8m controlling depth channel and an 8m controlling depth, 400m diameter turning circle.
- 660m of sheltered quays with berths of 12m controlling depth
- Western Marina with 216 berths
- Naval wharf, fishing pier, and slipway
- Nautical centre slipway
- Freight rail link to enable freight and cargo to be efficiently transported to and from the harbour resulting in positive road traffic and environmental benefits.

Barring a judicial review application of the planning decision, design and procurement is expected to take 24 months and construction around three years.

2026 Bantry Bay Cruise

by John McAleer



The ICC Annual Bantry Bay Cruise will take place between the 28th and 31st of July 2026. Boats will assemble on the 28th July at Lawrence Cove Marina, Bere Island.

Festivities will kick-off at 7p.m. on the 28th, with the annual barbecue at Lawrence Cove. Please bring your own food and refreshments.

On Wednesday 29th, boats will sail in company to Bantry, followed by a free evening to explore this very attractive West Cork Town. Attendees are recommended to make an advance booking for berths at the Bantry Marina.

On Thursday 30th, we plan options of an 11a.m. sail around Whiddy Island, or a walking tour of Whiddy Island.

We will have drinks, followed by dinner at 7p.m. at the Bank House Restaurant. This is a pay as you go event. Please send your booking to John McAleer by 28th July.

Regular ferries ply between Bantry and Whiddy. The ferry docking location is directly outside the restaurant. A ferry will bring members and guests back to Bantry after dinner.

Friday 31st July 1:30p.m. raft up for Lunch at Glengariff and return to Lawrence Cove Marina, with a possibility of traditional West Cork activities that evening.

Note: For members and guests who are not in a position to sail to Bantry Bay, all locations covered have guest accommodations and the cruise provides a great opportunity to explore and experience some of the most beautiful locations in West Cork. The Murphy family operates the ferry from the pontoon, with a car park at Felane West. For exact location please see <https://maps.app.goo.gl/JF9imj8UDtMhdDr56>

On Bere Island, the ferry landing and a B&B are within a short walk of Lawrence Cove Marina. There are hotel and other accommodations on Bere, please see link below.

ICC South would really enjoy the company of members from all regions for this event and if you need any assistance, please email to mcaleerje@gmail.com and I will do my best to help.

Useful contacts:

- <http://www.lawrencecovemarina.ie/>
- <https://www.bereisland.net/bed-breakfasts/>
- <https://murphysferry.com/>
- https://www.bantrybayport.com/bantry_harbour_marina
- <https://whiddy.ie/>
- <https://www.bantry.ie/>

Avoiding the Orcas – Overland from Spain to France

by Jim and Katie Corbett



Katie & Jim Corbett in front of Dóchas

Our 2025 cruise on *Dóchas* finished in La Ràpita on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, with the intention of eventually bringing the boat back to Ireland. In 2019, we had cruised the entire coastline from Galicia, south around the Portuguese coast and northward up the Spanish Mediterranean coast. While the journey was interesting and exciting on the way out, we were less enthusiastic about committing all our 2026 cruise to a return journey along the same route. And of course, there is the issue of the ongoing orca activity around Gibraltar and along the Portuguese coast.

In the Med we had often seen trucks arriving and departing from marinas with yachts in transit and we started to investigate the possibility of transporting our boat by road from La Ràpita to the Atlantic coast of France, thereby bypassing the entire Iberian Peninsula. A few things became clear early on in our research. The biggest centre of yacht manufacture by far is in La Rochelle where Dufour, Jeanneau, and Beneteau are based. Strictly speaking, most yachts leave the factory on a truck. Few are launched into the water directly. Most French-build yachts are launched at ports in the south of France en route to the charter fleets of the

Med. Logistically, this demands many trucks and indeed we found that there are several companies dedicated to yacht transport. Above the truck companies, there are brokers who will undertake to transport a boat from A to B and then contract a transport company to fulfil this. Having researched various blogs, we sent out a dozen or so emails to various companies seeking quotations. Loads that are '*convoi exceptionnel*' require different permits in each country and many of the French companies would only service French pickups and delivery. Dutch and German companies were more flexible, covering most of Europe. However, we eventually went with a UK company (Boat Transport Limited), recommended in various Cruising Association (CA) blogs. We decided on La Rochelle as a destination because it would provide us with a good starting point for next year's cruise along the French coast.

Selecting a transport company was only the start of the process. Our chosen transporter sent us a 'to-do' list of to prepare the boat for transport. This included removing the mast and all loose items on deck including sprayhood and bimini frames. They reminded us that the boat would be travelling at speeds up to 80 kph on

motorways so any canvas or loose fittings would likely be lost or damaged. We needed to inform our insurance company. The yard in La Rápita agreed to schedule a boat lift to place the boat on the trailer on the agreed date. The Spanish yard would not remove our mast themselves but provided details of a local rigging company who would do so. A significant issue turned out to be finding a location in La Rochelle to receive the boat at the other end. Not having any luck through the port authority or marina company, we contacted the CA again who put us in contact with their HLR (local representative) in La Rochelle. He came back with two names, one of which agreed to take our boat on arrival and put it into storage. This small private yard (CNM) is in the centre of Les Minimes next to the large marina. They provided us with a price list up front for all their services including preparing and re-stepping the mast.

In September, Katie and I flew down to La Rápita to prep the boat. Apart from storing and securing everything below deck, we also removed the anchor from the bow roller. The rigging company disconnected and lifted the mast ok but then left the mast on a set of trestles next to the boat and departed, leaving us to deal with the dismantling. I checked with the transport company who clarified that, yes, the spreaders, radar, lights and antennas all must be removed for transport. We spent two days in the yard working on the mast. We cut up large empty plastic water bottles to protect the ends of the mast and fittings. Removing the spreaders and rigging proved straightforward, presumably because the boat had been re-rigged the previous year in Greece. Getting the radar dome off proved more troublesome, particularly getting the complex wiring loom disconnected without damaging it. We bought industrial width shrink-wrap and bubble wrap in the local hardware store and wrapped the entire mast from top to bottom.

It is not obligatory to attend the collection and delivery of the yacht, but it is advisable. Checking the boat at each end eliminates any argument about where and when any damage might have occurred.

Dóchas was duly lifted from La Rápita a couple of weeks later with the transport company providing a narrative on progress by way of photos on WhatsApp. We flew to La Rochelle in early October to oversee the arrival of *Dóchas* into the La Rochelle yard. The lift off went well and *Dóchas* was dropped into the yard on a set of cradles in double-quick time. The following day the mast was re-assembled and stepped by the skilful yard-hands. We fitted the winter covers and closed up the boat for the winter.

Coincidentally that week, La Rochelle was hosting a large outdoor boat show. The weather was sunny and all the new yachts on display were afloat on the marina pontoons. There were a large number of visitors, and we met other Irish sailors also enjoying the event.

In summary, while overland transport is not cheap, offsetting the cost are the costs of sailing and motoring the yacht around the Iberian Peninsula over a season; fuel, marinas, wear-and-tear, crew, food, etc. Oh, and the orcas.....!

Dochas packed up and ready for departure



Editor's note:

For more on this story, please visit our website

Northern Notes

by Maeve Bell

A warm welcome to our new Rear Commodore, Paul McSorley.

Paul writes: *'During the winter we had several notable gatherings. In December, the Christmas lunch was well attended with fine fayre at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club, Bangor. Unfortunately, a New Year's walk at Quoile was cancelled due to severe frost and the Met Office's advice against travelling. However, an excellent day out was had at Portrush on 6th February with members arriving by train. After an informative guided walk around the town, including a visit to the fascinating Coastal Zone, lunch was enjoyed at The Quays. Many thanks go to Robin Ruddock for the heritage walk and David and Caroline Meeke for all the other arrangements'.*

'My wife Sandra and I have been travelling in the Far East on the trail of the Clipper Fleet as our daughter, Aoife, is on board GOSH, (standing for Great Ormond Street Hospital). GOSH has been dominating the race and is definitely the boat to beat. In May I am looking forward to setting off for Norway with Rob Henshall in Maria and meeting up with the ICC fleet in Lofoten Islands in June. After that, in July I hope to rendezvous with the returning Clipper fleet in Oban and Portsmouth and then to take Wild Cat, my 27' H Boat, on a tour of the north before attending Northern autumn rally at the end of August'.

Our congratulations go to Frank Smyth, a very popular winner of the Wright Salver, our regional award, and to Alan Leonard, who was awarded the Friendship Cup at the Annual Dinner at Lough Erne. It was a very much a family occasion as Alan, who joined the Club in 1964, received his award at the same time as his son David was being introduced as a new member, while his 8-month old grandson, Hugo, whose father is Colin, a member



Frank Smyth

since 2014, made his ICC debut at the weekend. Colin and his wife, Olivia, hope to introduce Hugo to cruising in Strangford Lough this summer and, weather permitting, may even make a passage from Whiterock to the Quoile.

Andrew Kennedy is planning a busy summer afloat. Sailing *Jacada II*, he is looking forward to the Royal Ulster YC Spring Series in April followed by a two week jaunt north towards Skye in June aiming to be back to race in the Bangor Regatta from 25th to 28th June. Attention will then turn to 'the big trip' south to Baltimore in July. After Calves Week at the beginning of August, he will meander north to be back in Bangor for the beginning of September.

Margie Crawford also intends to combine racing and cruising. She competes regularly in her *Impala*, *Romper*, at East Down Yacht Club in Strangford Lough and will head for a cruise in Scotland, possibly in the Clyde, between race series. Julian and Patricia Morgan will also head north. Despite being gale-bound on numerous occasions during their cruise to the Faroes last summer, they intend to go north again. They plan to leave Strangford in late June and sail to Orkney, Fair Isle, and the Shetlands and to spend time in the Outer Hebrides on the way back south during August/September.

After many years in the Canaries, Andy McCarter now keeps his *Starlight 35*, *Gwilli 3*, in Fahan Marina on Lough Swilly. Having taken *Gwilli's* hull down to the gel coat in 2019 and applied a couple of coats of Hemple Silic One, he finds that, seven seasons on, it only requires a bit of a power wash to remove any stuff that gained a foothold during a winter. Weather permitting, he and Paddy will most likely head down the west coast and spend some time exploring Mayo, Galway, Clare, and Kerry. They will also join John Harkin in the Algarve for a trip on *Santana* from Lagos to the Spanish border and as far up the Guadiana River as they can safely go.

Another Lough Swilly sailor, Brian McDaid, who 'emigrated' to Galicia last summer, is planning to keep *Briomhar* based in the Rias and will return there after participating in the cruise-in-company in northern Norway.



The Northern Committee l to r David Meeke, Joanne Magowan, Paul McSorley (incoming Rear Commodore), Julie Chambers (outgoing Vice Commodore), and Andrew Kennedy



Members and guests at Portrush station, the Station Master is in the front row, first on the left

Closer to home, Ross Boyd has his Elan 40 *Evenstar* ready for the racing season; this year his cruising may be limited to some shorter trips to the Clyde and the Isle of Man as his regular crew, young son, Max, and daughter, Flo, are racing Toppers and Optimists respectively. He says that Irish Ferries will be doing the navigation when the family heads to the Topper worlds in Quiberon in Brittany in July.

Several members are keeping their options open. One of these is Gary Sims. As he is tied to a two to three week window in June, he says that the jury is still out on whether they turn right or left when exiting Strangford Lough. Peter Mullan has *Oyster Bay* on the market with MGM Boats, but reckons Carrickfergus is a perfect jumping off point for a short trip to Scotland. Then, if not sold, he will take her to Dún Laoghaire and explore the east coast. Ed Wheeler is reluctant to say too much about his plans in case they are scuppered by the weather but admits to intending to head westwards along the north coast exploring all the shallow anchorages in his Sadler 26, *Compass Rose*, that were previously off limits because of *Witchcraft's* draft.

Adrian and I plan to attend the Spring Rally in Carlingford before flying to Stockholm at midsummer to be reunited with *Oisín Bán* for the remainder of the summer in the balmy Baltic.



The Leonard family on the occasion of the award of the Friendship Cup.

Commodore Chase Anderson, CCA, second from the right

Upcoming events

- Friday 24 April: Fitting out lunch in the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club, Cultra.
- 22-25 May: Joint Spring Rally with Eastern region to Carlingford Lough.
- 28-31 August: Autumn Rally in the NE coast/ Strangford Lough (venue to be confirmed).
- Saturday 12 December Christmas lunch at the Royal Ulster Yacht Club.

Editor's note: these events and those of other regions can be found on the website and in the 2026 LGB.



Oyster Bay under sail in Strangford Lough

Optimising Energy Production Aboard *Varuna*

by Michael Sadlier

From Lead Acid to Lithium and Beyond

I sail a Hallberg Rassy 43, *Varuna*, currently based in Mediterranean France. Like many cruisers, I spend a surprising amount of time thinking about onboard energy. Modern sailing depends on it: autopilot, radar, AIS, plotters, water makers, Starlink, refrigeration, and all the new gadgets that quietly sip - or loudly gulp - power. On long passages, comfort and safety hinge not only on wind and sea, but also on a reliable energy system.

When I bought *Varuna*, the setup was modest: a 110 amp alternator, a Mastervolt charger, and a small lead acid bank. Ahead of sailing from Ireland to warmer waters, I wanted much more capability without adding a generator. I installed two fixed solar panels and a folding array for use at anchor but held off on a stern arch. The real upgrade began with the batteries.

Moving to a Modern 12 Volt System

My goal was greater capacity, speed, and efficiency. I installed a Victron Smart system consisting of:

- Three 200Ah Smart Lithium batteries
- A Multiplus inverter/charger
- An MPPT solar controller
- A Lynx 500 BMS
- A Cerbo GX paired with a GX Touch 50

The integration is excellent: all charging sources, storage, and loads can be monitored from a single display or remotely.

Why Lithium Instead of Lead Acid?

Though expensive, LiFePO_4 batteries transformed my electrical system. Key advantages include:

1. Usable Capacity

A 100Ah lead acid battery reliably offers only 30–50Ah of usable energy before voltage sag becomes problematic. An equivalent lithium battery can regularly deliver 90–100Ah. The difference is dramatic underway.

2. Long Cycle Life

Quality LiFePO_4 batteries can deliver around 2,000 cycles at 80% depth of discharge, far outperforming the 500–1,000 cycles typical of good deep cycle lead acid units.



Varuna underway in the Med

3. Minimal Voltage Sag and No Peukert Losses

Lithium batteries maintain a nearly flat voltage curve, whether at 80% or 20% charge. Peukert losses - where lead acid batteries lose capacity at high loads - are essentially absent, meaning lithium delivers its full rating even under heavy draw.

4. Size and Weight

For the same capacity, lithium batteries are roughly half the size and one third the weight of lead acid - helpful on any boat, especially a cruising yacht with limited storage.

5. Fast, Efficient Charging

Lithium batteries accept high charging currents and can be charged to 100% without the slow absorption phase required by lead acid. Even partial charging is fine - something that short solar days or brief engine runs make unavoidable. Lead acid, by contrast, ages quickly if not fully charged.

6. Energy Efficiency

Lithium batteries charge at close to 100% efficiency versus roughly 85% for lead acid. When chasing photons late in the day, those extra gains matter.

7. Better Performance Across Temperatures

While both chemistries lose capacity in cold conditions, lithium performs far better. Although heat is more of a concern in the Mediterranean, it's still a notable advantage for high latitude sailors.



8. Flexible Installation

Lithium batteries do not require vented, upright only installations. Their modular design allows fitting them into spaces that would be awkward or impossible with lead acid.

9. Low Maintenance

A good BMS automatically balances cells - no topping up, no venting, and almost no maintenance.

The Search for a Better Alternator

To match my new bank, I explored high output alternators. This led me to Balmar's XT 250, a 250 amp alternator paired with an external regulator. Unfortunately, the regulator performed poorly, and the alternator's internal regulator - never meant for continuous high loads - failed after three months. Halfway across the Golfe de Lion, I switched back to the original 110amp alternator and began rethinking everything.

Enter the Arco Zeus

In Lisbon, I had met a Portuguese engineer who told me his Arco Zeus regulator had been "transformative," giving generator like power from his propulsion engine. The logic of requiring two diesel engines on one boat - one for moving the vessel and one for electricity has always bothered me. If the propulsion engine could efficiently generate power, the generator would be redundant.

I ordered a Zeus from Greece, reinstalled the repaired Balmar alternator (with a new internal regulator), and then installed the Zeus in the engine room.

The result has indeed been transformative.

The Zeus integrates cleanly with my Victron system. I can monitor it from both the GX Touch 50 and the Zeus app, which is essential for setup and useful for ongoing monitoring. I've seen the alternator output 175 amps at

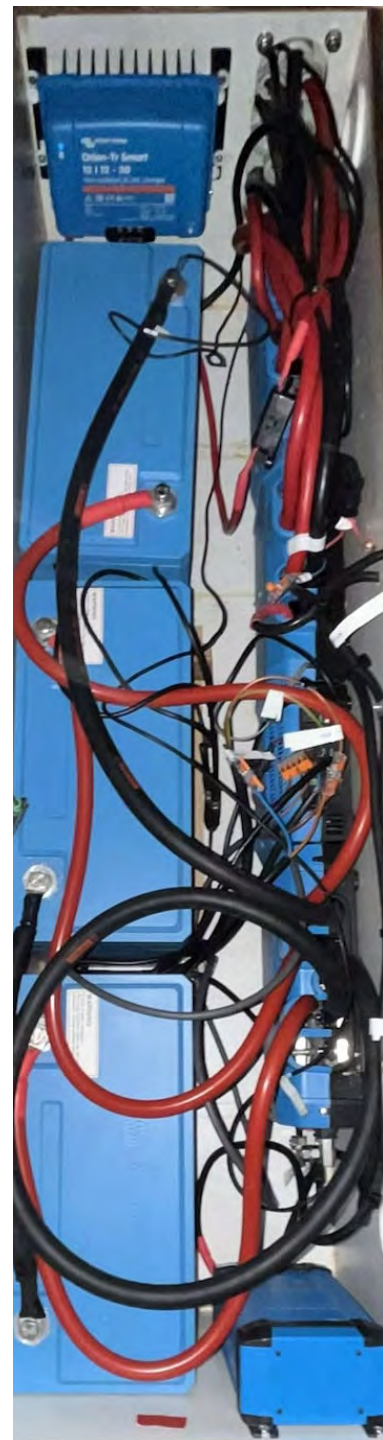
just 1,200 RPM. Charging while motoring is now extraordinarily efficient.

The Zeus uses two wiring harnesses - one for the alternator and one for the battery bank. A shunt on the positive cable from the alternator improves data accuracy but is optional. Firmware is still evolving, and integration with Victron has had some teething issues, but Arco Marine's support has been outstanding. Their technical staff in Pensacola actually answer the phone and know what they are talking about - an increasingly rare experience.

Ready for the Season Ahead

As spring approaches, we are preparing to sail from southern France toward the Ionian Islands, this time with confidence in our energysystem. With lithium storage, solar, and the Zeus controlled alternator working together, I finally feel that my propulsion engine can double as an efficient, reliable power generator. However, I have not got rid of my old 110 amp alternator yet!

I will report back after the season, but for the first time, I am genuinely optimistic that the power system aboard *Varuna* is ready for what lies ahead.



2025 Photographic Plate Winner

Traigh na Margaidh on the Ross of Mull by Jimmy Houston



The selection of photos from 2025 were of such a calibre that the adjudicators could have picked any one of about a dozen. So, for the first time in a while we are only presenting the one that was first past the post by a small margin. The adjudicators loved the composition of this photograph, which highlighted the waves in the sand in the foreground, while portraying a lovely image of a boat at anchor off the beach.

Your Website

irishcruisingclub.com

Did you know that the private and secure section of your website is chock full of useful information that you can have at your fingertips and access from your computer or phone? Here are some examples:

- ICC Calendar
- Upcoming ICC Events
- Member Information
 - Member Directory
 - Edit My profile
 - ICC Flag Officers and Committee
 - Introducing New Members
- ICC Archives
 - Lists of Members Current and Past...
 - ICC Annuals Archive
 - ICC Newsletter Archives
 - Past and Present Officers of the Club
 - Irish Cruising Club Awards and Winners

And much more

Help Wanted

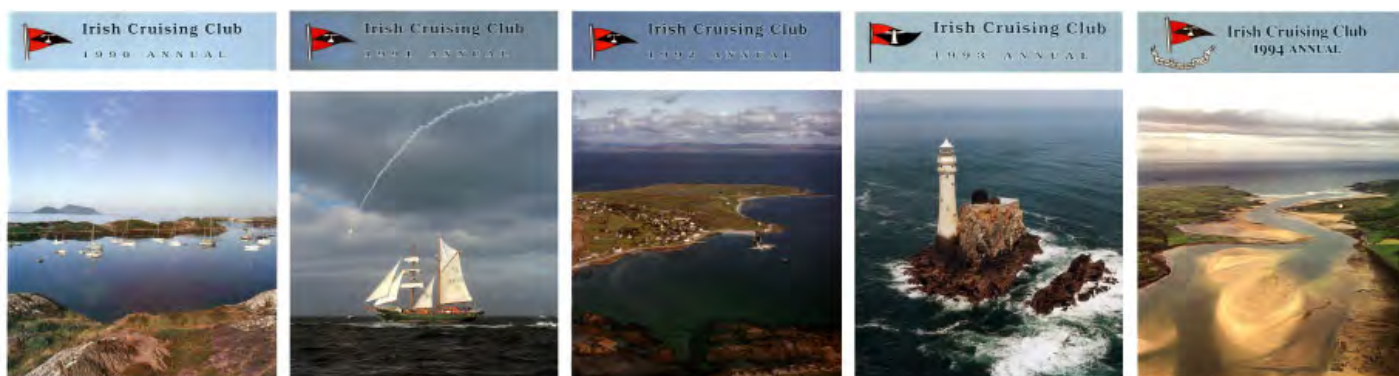
Honorary Trophy Secretary

To manage the arrangement of the ICC trophy collection, including cleaning, engraving, and assembling of the trophies for the annual awards presentation.



Looking Back Over Sixty Years

by Kevin Dwyer



Superb sailing and social events take place, magnificent publications appear, all as if by magic. In reality of course it is the amazing work of the dedicated people in the background who voluntarily give of their time to make the Irish Cruising Club what it is today.

Seven of us from the Southern region joined the ICC in 1966. I have made some memorable cruises over the years as recorded in various Annuals. My sailing would be minimal in comparison to the others. Membership of the club offered me something else.

From 1929 to 1989, all publications of the club were monochrome or Black & White. Colour printing was complicated and expensive. Within my marketing-based career, I had a substantial knowledge of photography and colour printing. I was able to persuade my primary print supplier to give us CMYK colour separations for a full colour front cover for the ICC Annual which they did from 1990 to 1995.

A number of yachts sailed on to Derrynane Harbour after the 1990 Cruise-in-company. My photo became the cover of both the 1990 Annual and also the 8th Edition of the South and West Sailing Directions published in 1993.

The Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race called to the Port of Cork in 1991. I was fortunate to capture the flare sailing over Asgard II at the start of the race from Cork to Belfast.

In 1992, I was given a wish list by Arthur Orr, compiler of the Sailing Directions, of preferred anchorages and harbours that he would like to have photographed on the South and West coasts. From the photographs taken during the Summer, Kilronan on the Aran island was used for the cover of the Annual to give members a taste of what to expect in next edition of the Sailing Directions, complete with aerial photographs for the first time!

The cover for the 1993 Annual was probably indulgence on my behalf. That summer I had been photographing fish farms and during the day flew out to and landed on the Fastnet Rock - I brought our Burgee alive!

Having flown and photographed required targets on the East and North Coasts, Trawbreaga Bay was used as the cover for the 1994 Annual. In the Forward to the 8th Edition of the Sailing Directions, Robert Drew, Commodore of the Cruising Club of America wrote: Here in the United States, I know of no cruising guide that provides the pictorial quality and detailed information that the Irish Sailing Directions provide.

My final cover for 1995 included a montage of photos from the 1965 Cruise to Brittany which Conor Doyle kindly invited me on. The photos taken sixty years ago show rather younger versions of the two of us! The cruise became our introduction to the ICC.



The 2026 Annual Weekend

by Julie Chambers



Our Annual Dinner Weekend was held this year at Lough Erne Resort and by all accounts it didn't disappoint. The weekend is one of the highlights of the year. Old friendships are rekindled and new friendships born.



Commodore Nick Chavasse RCC, Commodore Alan Markey ICC, Commodore Fiona Jones OCC, Commodore Chase Anderson CCA

Members came from all over Ireland and beyond - 170 in total. Paul & Sandra McSorley flew in from Korea, having waved off their daughter Aoife who is competing in this year's Clipper Round The World Race which is now on the 8th leg of the race.

Joining us for the weekend were our guests from our sister clubs: Commodore Chace and Josie Anderson, Cruising Club of America, Nick and Majorie Chavasse, Royal Cruising Club, and Fiona & Chris Jones, Ocean Cruising Club.



Attending newly elected members and some of our Flag Officers

The weekend commenced on Friday evening with our Commodore Alan Markey welcoming all present and introducing our newly elected members to the club. Congratulations to them all. We look forward to getting to know them over the coming months.





Our whiskey barrel, which was presented to the ICC by the CCA "on the occasion of our cruising in company with the RCC in 1969"

The evening ended with members enjoying a tippie or two from our whiskey barrel, which this year had been kindly sponsored by Copeland Distillery. Many thanks to Joanne Magowan for her part in this.



To our amazement the weather broke on Saturday morning, the sun was shining, and we had blue skies overhead. The Gods were on my side at last!

Rob Henshall had arranged a most interesting archaeological walk, which was a first for us. It was led by and assisted by members from the Fermanagh Ramblers. The chat from all those who took part was very positive so many thanks Rob.

Another group led by Andrew and Lisa Kennedy made their way to the jetty and embarked on a cruise on board

MV Kestrel (Erne Tours) to Enniskillen and then stopped off at Devonish Island on the return. They also saw Vice Commodore Sally Cudmore out rowing with Portora rowing club.



16 members, including Derek White and Kieron Guilfoyle, took part in our annual golf competition on the beautiful Nick Faldo designed course. This year's champion was Kieron.



We mustered in the bar that evening before being called for dinner. The chat was non-stop. Following dinner, the highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Friendship Cup. Chace Anderson presented the cup to our very worthy recipient Alan Leonard. Alan has been a member for 64 years and was VC last time the Annual Dinner was held in Lough Erne. His enthusiasm, support, and knowledge are second to none.

Devonish Island as seen from the M/V Kestrel





*Alan Leonard receiving the Friendship Cup
from CCA Commodore Chase Anderson*



*The view out over Lough Erne
from Lough Erne Resort*

Special thanks to Aoife Beatty and David & Caroline Meeke for all their help and support which often goes unseen. David's last job before leaving for the event was out cutting eucalyptus at dawn for the floral decorations!

Fond farewells were exchanged on Sunday with many plans being finalised for the upcoming season.

To the staff at Lough Erne 'thank you for looking after us so well'.

Wishing you all fair winds for the coming season and the best friendships always.

The Boy from the Sea

by Garrett Carr

Review by Daria Blackwell

When Alex and I crossed the Atlantic, we read books non-stop, hundreds of books. Yet when we remain fixed to land, there seems to be little time to spend with books until something anchors us to one spot. And so, last week, a little carpal tunnel surgery gave me several days of respite from chores. And glory be, I read a book. In two days, cover to cover, I devoured the words of Garrett Carr's *The Boy from the Sea*. His debut novel, a masterpiece.

Garrett hails from Donegal and teaches creative writing at the Seamus Heaney Centre of Queen's University Belfast. Although not a book about sailing, the theme is nautical, and it is most certainly a book highly recommended to take along on a summer cruise.

A fisherman walking along the shore encounters a baby in a barrel on the rocky shore near Killybegs. Without any thought, he snatches the baby up and takes it home to his wife and tells her they are going to keep it. They already have a son, but they soon adopt this mystery child as their own. As this child matures, it becomes clear that he is 'special' and makes people feel content. Things go well for a spell, when the fishing is good.

But the story takes many twists as the family struggles with declining fishing stocks, competition from ever larger vessels, lack of money, jealousy for attention, animosity between the 'brothers', and demands from other family members. The style of writing is evocative and the reader becomes engrossed. Halfway in, I couldn't put it down.

It's a novel of self-discovery for all involved, compassionate and lyrically written. For a few days, I forgot about my pain as I bathed in theirs. It ends on a hopeful and quiet note, with much to be considered.

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