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 an Irish Marine Federation Event 

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Cover Caption: All aboard one of SeaRay's new sports yachts for the 2007 season

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COMMERCIAL MARINE LEISURE AND BOAT SHOWS



### Making a date for Valentine's Day

John Beatty of Allianz (left), model Samina, and Gerry Salmon of the Irish Marine Federation brave January's storm for a photocall to roll out the country's biggest-ever show.

The Allianz boat show runs from February 14-18 at the RDS, Dublin. The Guide to the sell-out show is in the centre pages of this bumper edition

## BRIGHT SPELL, BUT CLOUDS SPREADING

It's a time for some celebration, and yet a little foreboding in the marine sector.

There is no greater indicator of buoyancy in the marine market than a sell-out boat show. The 24th Irish boat show, staged by the Irish Marine Federation, is the biggest in the history of the Dublin event.

From its small beginnings at Busarus in the 1960s, the show has grown to become one of the country's largest consumer exhibitions boasting over 7,000 square metres of stand space.

The four-day show, sponsored by Allianz, is bigger than any hall the RDS can provide so the organisers have bolted on a 500 square metre marquee to the Simmonscourt Pavilion to cater for the extra demand. Even so, the show officially 'sold out' to exhibitors two months before it opens on February 14th.

But the positive news ends there. The marine sector has been hit in recent weeks with the gradual realisation that the end may be in sight for 'green diesel'. The derogation on green diesel, which gives pleasure craft up to a 20 per cent reduction in the price of diesel, is likely to end following an EU Commission decision to withdraw the derogation in five other countries including the UK.

It's not officially gone in Ireland yet and the Irish Marine Federation (IMF) is still holding out hope that a last-minute lobby by user groups, supported by the Department of Finance, could be successful.

Obviously powerboats will be hardest hit if the derogation ends. The cost to sailing craft is expected to be minimal, reckoned at an extra €40 or €50 per season.

And the news comes at a time when the marine sector is already facing a crisis – of berths. Dún Laoghaire marina, the largest in the country with 530 berths, is set for expansion with the addition of a further 290 berths in April. It's a welcome addition but given that there's a waiting list of over 209 boats to get into the marine leisure port, it's hardly a solution to the shortage of berths in the capital and around the country.

In what is being termed a 'crisis' situation by industry head Brian O'Sullivan, the lack of berths has led to IMF meetings with Government to address the issues.

Users are calling for government action to cut the bureaucratic red tape that surrounds foreshore development for marine leisure usage. The trade body fears that the run of new boat sales could be short-lived as a shortage of berths around the coast hampers the growth of the sailing industry.

In the major sailing centres on Dublin Bay and Cork Harbour – representing 3,000 craft – all five marinas are full to capacity. Even with its expansion to 820 berths, Dún Laoghaire will be full this time next year.

As the Taoiseach might say, a lot done, but a lot more to do.

# RAISING SALES AT THE RDS

BIG DEALS EXPECTED AT DUBLIN SHOW



Bernard Gallagher – biggest ever show in Dublin

There will be over a dozen Irish debuts for international craft – both sail and power – when the Allianz Boat show opens its doors in a week's time, but such is the buoyancy in the marine market a lot of marine companies have had to leave the biggest stock back in their showrooms.

Ireland's prime exhibition venue at the RDS at Ballsbridge in Dublin is just too small to accommodate some of the big boats now being sold by Irish dealers.

Bernard Gallagher, Managing Director of BJ Marine, one of the biggest and longest established firms, will be exhibiting 11 craft from the new SeaRay, Beneteau and Cranchi ranges – almost more than a €1.5m in stock. On the BJ stand alone five models make their Irish debuts (see show supplement in this issue).

BJ Marine – it recently quit Dublin's docklands for bigger premises in Malahide – has been the backbone

of the marine industry for some time. Gallagher was one of the prime drivers of the biennial show since the early days which, at one stage in the 1980s – when VAT was 35 per cent – couldn't even fill a single hall of the RDS complex.

Now the 24th show has packed out over 7,000 square metres of space at the Simonscourt extension where more than 150 types of powerboat models alone are on offer. It has become one of the country's biggest consumer exhibitions.

Just back from January's London boat show with sales of over €10.5 million, as reported in the Sunday Times on January 22nd, Martin Salmon of MGM Marine is predicting a bumper year even before the Irish Marine Federation show opens its doors.

The Dún Laoghaire company has the leading British Sunseeker brand and sold an 82' yacht valued at £2.5m stg plus tax.

MGM will be exhibiting the 43 foot Superhawk at the show.

In spite of the glitzy dominance of imported craft, Irish boats continue to make their mark in the crowded marketplace. O'Sullivan Marine of Tralee will have the biggest range and its managing director, Brian O'Sullivan, who is the current chairman of the IMF, will be exhibiting his OSM range with a dozen models of motorboats that the company have been building since 1966. Alongside this the company will also be showing the German Bavaria motor and sailboat range.

Other Irish builders among the 150 exhibitors include RIB builders Lencraft from Waterford, Gaelforce and Fitzgerald Marine from Cork. Motor cruiser builder Ernecraft from Fermanagh is exhibiting the ISIS range.

The Salmon brothers Gerry (left) and Martin – celebrating record sales in London, and (inset) the Sunday Times report of January 21 with the €37m Sunseeker purchased by Eddie Jordan





## NEW STUDY TO FOCUS ON DUN LAOGHAIRE BERTHS

Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company has appointed consultants to undertake a new study to evaluate the potential future demand for marina berths the harbour and to identify possible locations for future marina development.

The study will include an extensive consultation process with harbour stakeholders and other interested parties, and it is expected to be completed by late Spring.

The study is separate to the planned expansion of the current marina by 240 berths on which work will begin shortly. When completed, the marina will be the largest in Ireland.

The Harbour Company has been at the forefront of marina development in the country and its decision to undertake the study is driven by the significantly increased demand for marine leisure activities in recent years. This growth is projected to continue. Ireland's marine tourism industry is estimated to be worth 7631 million, and the Irish Marine Federation forecasts that the marine leisure sector in Ireland could grow by 30% between 2005 and 2008.

The study will be made up of a number of elements:

- a market study to examine current and likely future trends and demands
- identification of the short, medium and long term scope for development in terms of what capacity can be provided and when
- examination of issues and priorities on hydrographic and navigation issues
- identification of infrastructural options, associated requirements and environmental impact
- consultation meetings with stakeholders in the Harbour including the yacht clubs, Commissioners of Irish Lights, Stena Line, the Naval Service, the marina operating company and existing marina berth holders' representatives

Commenting on the study, Michael Hanahoe, chief executive of the Harbour Company, said: "There is clearly a high demand for marina space and this important study will allow the company to consider future developments in the Harbour in an integrated and planned way."

Dún Laoghaire harbour on Ireland's east coast is set for further expansion as Ireland's largest boating centre. A study into marine leisure possibilities in the Victorian harbour is underway. Dún Laoghaire Marina, the largest in the country with 530 berths, is currently being expanded with the addition of a further 290 berths in two months time to accommodate a waiting list for berths

Photo: David O'Brien

## NEW LIFE FOR MARITIME MUSEUM

Long awaited structural work has begun on the building which houses the National Maritime Museum of Ireland at Dún Laoghaire in Co. Dublin.

The museum and library are located in the unique Mariners' Church which served sailors and crews of ships visiting the port town during the 19th and 20th centuries. This is one of the few mariners churches in the world and maritime enthusiasts from around the world have come to Dún Laoghaire in increasing numbers in recent years to visit it. The church is still fully intact and includes numerous attractions including docks where prisoners from the ships were seated for religious services.

I R I S H W A T E R S A S S E E N F R O M



# HOIST THE ASGARD SAILS



## M T H E B R I D G E O F A S G A R D I I



A week on a tall ship brings excitement and enjoyment, coupled with lessons on the power of the wind and the sea, seeing the wonders of sunrise and sunset, and the joys of visiting different ports. A trainee becomes part of the family of the sea.

Asgard, the national sail training vessel, whose gallery of photos by Bosun Fin Goggin is reproduced here, is offering places to trainees from the age of 16 upwards. No previous experience is necessary and adults are as welcome as younger people. It offers an opportunity to get experience of sailing.

The sea, in all its moods, brings different experiences – from pleasant sailing conditions to the demanding ones of heavier weather. Overall it teaches self-dependence.

If you are interested, contact the Asgard office at Coiste an Asgard, Coláiste Caomhin, St Mobhi Road, Glasnevin, Dublin 9 - phone 01 6792169 or look up their website [www.asgard2.ie](http://www.asgard2.ie)



Photos: Courtesy of Fin Goggin, Asgard

## LETTER

# RESCUE ANGER OVER SURFERS

Dear Sir,

At the recent meeting of the Irish Marine Search and Rescue Committee (IMSARC), an incident which occurred near the Cliffs of Moher, Co Clare on 24th November 2006, was reported to the Committee and discussed.

The incident in question involved three surfers who were reported to be in difficulty, resulting in the Shannon Coast Guard helicopter, the Aran Islands lifeboat and Doolin Coast Guard Unit being tasked to assist. The Committee was informed that the surfers refused assistance from the helicopter, because the crew would not recover their surfboards. Eventually the surfers were rescued by the Doolin Coast Guard Unit boat and transferred to the Aran Islands lifeboat.

During the course of the attempted helicopter rescue, the pilot and crew had displayed exceptional airmanship and courage in manoeuvring the aircraft into position to carry out the rescue. They were operating close up against the cliff face and succeeded in lowering the winch man on a 260-foot cable to recover the surfers who had become stranded on rocks below.

The Committee expressed its deep concern in relation to this incident and wishes to state in the strongest terms that the behaviour of the surfers involved was completely unacceptable to the rescue agencies and to the maritime community that it represents.

The Committee stressed that the rescue services in Ireland never fail to give assistance to any person in distress at sea or elsewhere. Therefore, there is an obligation on the public firstly to exercise prudence, and secondly to respond to the reasonable requests made by the rescue units at the scene of any incident in an effort to save life.

Yours, etc.,

Veronica Scanlan  
Irish Marine Rescue Committee



## COAST GUARD MAY PENALISE SURFERS

Surfers rescued off the Cliffs of Moher in November could face penalties from the Irish Coast Guard Service for refusing assistance in a rescue effort (see letter, left).

The rescue operation was launched after two surfers got into difficulty while surfing the 30ft Aill na Serracht wave off the Cliffs of Moher. As part of the rescue effort which involved 40 people, a winch-man from the Irish Coast Guard helicopter descended to rescue the two surfers and one other man on a jetski.

However, they refused help as they did not want to lose their jetski and surfboards.

## INSHORE CHARTS 'OUT OF DATE'

The charting of Ireland's inshore waters will be stepped up dramatically in coming years, according to a hydrographer from the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Sean Cullen was responding to recent criticism that much of the information on charts for these areas was out of date. Cullen admitted the problem existed, and said the GSI was in the process of buying a boat to collect further information on inland waters. The issue arose after a UK visitor to Youghal Harbour realised that the information on the chartlet for the harbour differed considerably from that shown on the Admiralty chart.

## HOLLAND DESIGN IN TRIALS

After an efficient 18-month construction programme, the 45-metre Transocean Explorer yacht Marco Polo, designed by Ron Holland in Cork, was launched in November and carried out initial trials during the last week of December.

Commissioned by Hong Kong based company MCC, Marco Polo is the first of their Transocean Explorer series to be launched from the Cheoy Lee Shipyard to designs by Ron Holland Design, with interior decoration by London-based KCA International.

Commissioning, detail interior fit-out and MCA certification will take place during January and February and in March Marco Polo will be presented to the world during a special event to be held in Hong Kong.

(left) **Marco Polo at 13.5 kts on the Pearl River Delta**

## DUBLIN SAILOR KEY IN AMERICA'S CHALLENGE

Dún Laoghaire sailor Leslie Ryan (40) is to play a leading role in Britain's next America's Cup team.

Sir Keith Mills, the British businessman who ran London's winning bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, announced he is to create a €150 million British Americas Cup sailing team with Ryan, of the Royal St George Yacht Club, as one of its management team.

Britain has had a poor record in the America's Cup over the last 155 years, with the last British challenger being the GBR Challenge led by Peter Harrison who committed a personal fortune of €20 million to the failed attempt.

The current line up of challengers in Valencia in June – who will battle it out to determine which team challenges the Swiss team Alinghi, holders of the Cup – does not include a British team.

The new team, to be named Origin, will comprise some of the world's leading sailors and boat designers but these will not necessarily be British, says Ryan. The aim is to win the America's Cup and bring the world's longest running sporting event back to British shores.

Ryan, as the new head of marketing and branding, was involved in Harrison's GBR campaign and she personally raised €10 million in private sponsorship. The Origin budget, says Ryan, is now over €30 million per annum and it will need to run, if necessary, until 2011 as the next cup date after July 2007 is not yet fixed.

Ryan learned to sail in Mermaids with her late father, Willie Ryan, and also sailed with her uncle Ken, the ISAF vice president. She progressed from Mirror dinghies to Firefly dinghies, sailing with Sean Craig of the Royal St George YC.

"We intend to build a team capable of winning the America's Cup to ultimately bring the Cup back to Britain for the first time since 1851. Britain is the world's leading sailing nation and we hope this is the dawn of an exciting venture that will create sporting history," said Mills.

Talks are being held with potential skippers including Ian Walker, the skipper of GBR challenge and the current skipper of Galway's TP 52 world championship winner Patches owned by Eamon Conneely. However, the talks will ultimately focus on how Origin can sign Ben Ainslie, Britain's Olympic Gold medallist, if he is not tied to another campaign.



**New role:** Leslie Ryan (left) of the Royal St George YC, Dún Laoghaire; with Rod Carr, Chief Executive of the Royal Yachting Association; Sir Keith Mills, Team Principal of Origin; Nick Masson and Andy Green, Origin team members, at the announcement of Britain's challenge for the America's Cup in London

## JURY CALLS FOR ACTION ON JETTIES

Recommendations from a jury at an inquest into a drowning on the river Erne at Belturbet could, if implemented, have repercussions for all jetty owners nationwide.

The inquest followed the drowning of Tony Brennan (54) of Picture Hill, Drogheda at a jetty on the Erne on August 26 last year. A jury of three men and three women returned a verdict of accidental death due to drowning in accordance with the medical evidence.

The jury recommended that the Health & Safety Authority, Cavan County Council and Waterways Ireland investigate and make good all health and safety requirements at their jetties on the Erne in Belturbet, to avoid any further tragic loss of life. They also recommended that permanent barriers be erected on all jetties, that lighting should also be improved and that large barges should not dock between two jetties. Finally they recommended that there should be a review of all jetties throughout the country.

The inquest heard that Mr Brennan was in Belturbet with friends to participate in a boating weekend on the Erne. His friends had gone to a Heritage Boat reception in the Harbour Bar and when he came out of his boat, he walked along on the jetty adjacent to the boat.

Various witnesses told the inquest that Mr Brennan then walked into the gap between two jetties, one belonging to Waterways Ireland and the other belonging to Cavan County Council.

The fact that there were so many boats and barges in town that weekend and that they were all moored in close proximity was also a contributory factor. Another crucial point highlighted in evidence was that one long barge was moored alongside the two unlinked jetties. This may have given the illusion at night to anyone walking along one of the jetties that it was one complete walkway and the gap between the jetty structures may not have been apparent to the deceased.



*There are things in life that bring pleasure, happiness and a sense of achievement. To spend time surrounded by water and enjoy the freedom and luxury of your own yacht or cruiser is one of those. Visit our stand at the Dublin Boat Show (Stand F1) where we can help you realise these dreams.*



*We offer only the best in class products to our clients and we personally test each boat that we consider. If we wouldn't buy it ourselves, then we wouldn't sell it to one of our clients.*

*At Sonas Marine we aim to exceed your expectations with carefully selected models and a service to match.*

*We understand your aspirations and will help you find the boat that fulfils your needs. From a quality day boat or exciting offshore cruiser, to ocean-going super yacht, we will provide the right vessel for you.*



Sonas Marine, Dublin

T: 01 676 5415 - E: [info@sonasmarine.com](mailto:info@sonasmarine.com) - W: [www.sonasmarine.com](http://www.sonasmarine.com)



## BOAT JUMBLE FOR LIFEBOATS

A boat jumble in aid of the RNLi will be held in Howth Yacht Club on February 24th, from 11am to 3pm. There will be a fee of €10 per table, and 25% of sales will also be donated to the lifeboats. For further information contact Barbara Sargent on 01 832 5392.

## SAIL TO HELP ANIMALS

The Irish Blue Cross invites you to take part in a sponsored sailing adventure in aid of pets in need. Raise €1,500 in sponsorship and join us on the last weekend in April, learning to sail aboard a 40-foot yacht on the Atlantic between Kinsale and Cork Harbour.

The Irish Blue Cross is a registered charity that helps needy Irish pets every year through subsidised veterinary care and mobile clinics. Further details from 01 4163030

## ALERT OVER LIFEJACKET

Irish Water Safety has issued a consumer alert to sailors and other water users about a lifejacket that failed during testing in Britain recently.

The lifejacket was a Commodore 1, 150 N Automatic Inflation, serial no. 259020, manufacture date III/06 and was fitted with a 38gm CO2 cylinder, serial no. ISI/36203 Austria.

The inflator was a UML-5, serial no. 40298256 and was fitted with an automatic cartridge serial no. 50194107 with an expiry date of 0409. The inflator had not operated although the green saddle had fallen away from the body of the device. The automatic cartridge was intact.

The firing head failed to operate at the maximum allowable force of 120 N [+2N]. The testers were also unsuccessful when trying to inflate the lifejacket manually.

## GREEN DIESEL IN DANGER

The derogation on green diesel, which gives private pleasure craft up to a 20 per cent reduction in the price of diesel, is likely to end soon, writes Brian Goggin.

Under the EU Energy Tax Directive, fuel used for navigation within EU waters is exempt from taxation, but that does not apply to private pleasure craft. In 1992, five EU countries – including Ireland – were granted derogations that allowed them to charge a lower rate of taxation on fuel for private pleasure craft. These derogations were due to expire in 2000 but were extended to 31 December 2006.

Finland decided not to apply for a further extension, but in mid-October 2006 the UK, Belgium and Malta did seek extensions. On 30 November 2006, their applications were roundly rejected.

Ireland (through the Department of Finance) did not apply for an extension until mid-December. There has not yet been a response to the application, and the Irish Marine Federation (IMF) is still hoping that a last-minute lobby by user groups could be successful.

Even if it fails, there will have to be a transition period during which the Department of Finance, the Revenue and fuel suppliers can make the necessary arrangements. Diesel used for cooking and heating might still be taxed at the lower rate, but would have to be kept in a separate tank.

Obviously powerboats will be hardest hit if the derogation ends. The cost to sailing craft is expected to be minimal, reckoned at an extra €40 or €50 per season.

## MARINA BACKS DISABLED SAILORS

Irish disabled sailing received an important boost last month with the news that Dún Laoghaire is to provide sponsorship through the provision of a berth at the marina.

The marina is wheelchair accessible and has shower and toilet facilities for sailors with disabilities. A hoist is due to be fitted on the marina early next year.

"We are very grateful to Dún Laoghaire Marina for their sponsorship of a berth," said disabled sailing association chairman Kevin Downing. "Its convenient location and excellent facilities will allow us

an ideal base from where we can expand our programme in Dublin."

Marina General Manager Hal Bleakley said it was proud to help the association.

"Personally speaking, having been involved in sailing since 1956 and by participating in the race management teams for the IDSA Championship some years ago in Dublin Bay and more recently with the Special Olympics, it has been a privilege to see sailors with disabilities participating fully and enjoying the pleasures of sailing. It is a sport for life and it is, can and should be, a sport for everyone"

# DUBLIN MOVES OUT OF THE BACKGROUND



Dublin Bay Sailing Club is the Mitsubishi Motors/Irish Independent 'Sailing Club of the Year' for 2007.

The Club came into being in a modest way – a very modest way – back in 1884. Its revolutionary objective 123 years ago was to foster small boat sailing at a time when giant yachts and conspicuous expenditure were the focus of attention.

Today, DBSC thrives. Yet its main role is the co-ordination of the weekly racing programme – between April and September – for the large number of sailing boats based in Dún Laoghaire.

This is a long way indeed from the staging of a few races for boats which were small enough to be rowed if the wind failed, and then hauled up the shore at Seapoint or Sandycove. These days, regardless of the size of your boat, if you wish to race in the bay in the busy programme – and it gets very busy at mid-week – then it is Dublin Bay Sailing Club and its many volunteers you'll be relying on to select the courses, set the starts, and tabulate

the results for upwards of 400 boats.

It would be a prodigious organisational challenge in any setting in the world. But in Dún Laoghaire, right beside Ireland's busiest port in Dublin, and in the heart of one of Europe's most affluent regions, it is uniquely challenging. It is something which has had to find its own special solution. And that has been the emergence of Dublin Bay Sailing Club as the umbrella body to which all four Dún Laoghaire waterfront clubs defer when it comes to the administration of the weekly sailing programme.

Dublin Bay SC became this overall administrative body for Dún Laoghaire sailing many years ago, and it is maintained through its own separate existence as a club in its own right, and as an organisation which effectively represents sailing with the harbour and port authorities.

Long-serving Honorary Secretary Donal O'Sullivan, part-owner of the Ruffian 23 Rila, also acts as club archivist – he compiled the club's history for its

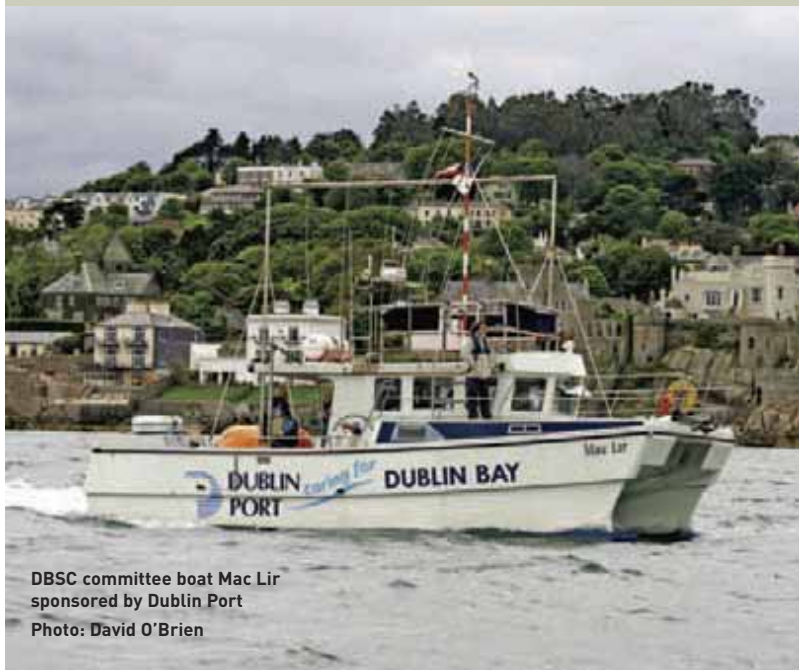
Centenary back in 1984. As for the numerous volunteers, they are personified by Carmel Winkelmann, who most deservedly is the latest Irish Sailing Association Volunteer of the Year.



But it could well be that our perception of Dublin Bay SC as an essentially background organisation is changing. The current Commodore is Tim

Costello (above). Back in June last, Costello's Mills 40 Tiamat won the British IRC Open Championship in the Solent, with a crew almost entirely from Dún Laoghaire, including helmsman Brendan Foley.

Different waterfront clubs were represented on board. But there wasn't time to explain these local allegiances at the hectic post-championship dispersal. It simply became a Dublin Bay victory, won by the Commodore and his crew from DBSC. So perhaps another evolutionary stage is developing in the story of Dublin Bay SC, 'Club of the Year' for 2007.



DBSC committee boat Mac Lir sponsored by Dublin Port

Photo: David O'Brien

## BOYD BOATS LAUNCHED

O'Sullivan's Marine Ltd have appointed the recently-established Boyd Boats Ltd to market primarily the German-built range of Bavaria yachts and motorboats and Starfisher motor cruisers along with other brands from the O'Sullivan's Marine portfolio: Gemini RIBs and inflatables, Linder aluminium boats, Tohatsu outboards and inflatables and the OSM range of Irish-built boats, on the east coast.

Operating from the Carlisle Pier in Dún Laoghaire, Boyd Boats, set up by Paddy Boyd, has been appointed UK and Ireland distributor for Rocna Anchors of New Zealand and Irish marketing agent for Key Yachting, distributors of J-Boats, the 1720 Sportsboat.

Derg Marina, Killaloe, Co. Clare, the country's largest fresh-water marina with over 300 berths – but we need more

Photo: David O'Brien



## MARINA BERTHS 'IN CRISIS'

Dún Laoghaire Marina, the largest in the country with 530 berths, is set for expansion with the addition of a further 290 berths in April.

The expansion is a welcome addition but given there is a waiting list of over 209 boats to get in to the marine leisure port, it is hardly a solution to the shortage of berths in the capital and around the country.

In what is being termed a 'crisis' situation by industry head Brian O'Sullivan, the lack of berths was discussed at January's Irish Marine Federation (IMF) agm.

Users are calling for government action to cut the bureaucratic red tape that surrounds foreshore development for marine leisure usage. The trade body fears that the run of new boat sales could be short-lived as a shortage of berths around the coast hampers the growth of the sailing industry.

In the major sailing centres on Dublin Bay and Cork Harbour – representing 3,000 craft – all five marinas are full to capacity. Even with its expansion to 820 berths, Dún Laoghaire will be full this time next year.

## NEW GUIDE TO MAN

Manx Sailing & Cruising Club has revised, updated and republished the booklet "Sailing Directions, Tidal Streams and Anchorage of the Isle of Man", originally produced by the club over ten years ago. The new edition includes annotated aerial photographs of all the island's harbours, tidal stream maps for every hour for six hours plus chartlets for all harbours and high-angle photographs of key locations for visitors.

The quality and content of this booklet takes this type of locally produced publication to a new level, making available detailed information about local sailing conditions and anchorages that far exceeds that of the popular almanacs and guides.

The booklet is available in two forms – standard and heavy duty. For further information on ordering, phone +44 (0)1624 812345 or email [lloyd@manx.net](mailto:lloyd@manx.net)

The crowds were down at ExCel but you wouldn't know it in some cases... the UK marine industry is now turning over £2.8 billion but not all of it at the Guinness stand

Photo: David O'Brien



## £2.8BN TURNOVER IN UK SECTOR

Total turnover in the UK leisure marine industry was £2.8 billion in the 2005-2006 financial year, according to a report launched at the London Boat Show in January. In terms of value added contribution, the principal measure of national economic benefit, this equates to just over £1 billion.

With the industry having grown consistently at a rate of 7.8% per annum since 19972, there are over 4,300 businesses involved in the leisure marine market, employing in excess of 35,000 full-time staff.

The manufacture and distribution of leisure and small commercial craft accounts for £1.01 billion of the industry's total turnover. The next largest contributors are the providers of consumer services (£944 million) and the manufacture and distribution of equipment (£540 million).

## FINE GAEL TO RESTORE MARINE POST

Fine Gael would restore the marine as a full Cabinet post if returned to Government, under the party's new marine policy.

It would also abolish the Central Fisheries Board, transfer its research function to the Marine Institute, and move towards an all-island inland waterways management structure. The policy also notes that marine tourism has enormous potential, and focuses on development of more marinas and on developing game and coarse angling.

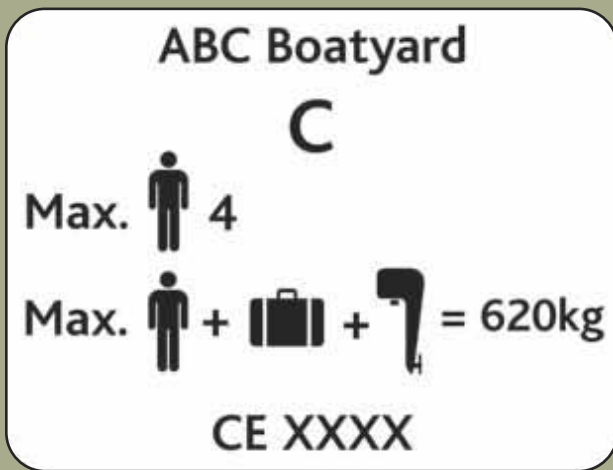
Fine Gael claims the marine sector is one of the State's greatest but most neglected resources. The party's marine spokesman, John Perry, said an additional 3,000 jobs could be created on the coastline through the implementation of the party's plans.

The policy is costed and includes a commitment to increase budgetary funding by €25 million

in the first year of government, and to draw down an additional €75 million annually from the National Development Plan.

As part of re-establishment of a full marine department, marine safety and environment sections would be reintegrated – safety was transferred to the Department of Transport last January. Fine Gael would also liaise with industry bodies to ensure the sector is represented on social partnership structures. The policy supports fishing fleet decommissioning, but says that crews should be compensated.

It promises more resources for the Marine Institute for research. It commits to investment in the aquaculture sector, including a minimum of €70 million annually in funding. Environmental monitoring of aquaculture will be "intensified" and the issue of sea lice will be addressed, it says.



CE plate – it must be on all new hulls sold

## BUYERS WARNED ON CE PLATES

The Irish Marine Federation (IMF) has warned buyers to be on the look-out for boats offered for sale that have either arrived in this country without CE plates or have been modified to appear that they meet the requirements laid down by the Irish government.

Full details of the Government requirements are published as a special notice in the IMF's boat show catalogue.

The government requirements cover boat construction and stability.

"We are getting reports that certain companies are offering boats for sale which have either no plate or are being offered for sale as CE compliant having had only some basic items changed such as fuel lines," said Steve Conlon of the IMF.

It is an offence to offer for sale a boat without a CE plate. Conlon suggested that buyers look for hull identification numbers burnt into the hull and report any suspicious matter to the Department of Transport.

## DEATH OF DANFAY FOUNDER



As Afloat went to press, the death was announced of Danny Keany, (left) the founder of the Yamaha importer, Danfay Ltd. Mr Keany's burial took place in Shanganagh cemetery on January 17th.

## NEW AWARD FOR GORE-GRIMES

Irish Arctic voyager John Gore-Grimes has been honoured in London with the announcement of his award of the Juno's Cup of the Royal Cruising Club for his high latitude ventures in 2006 aboard the Najad 440 Arctic Fern.

The judging of the historic trophies of the RCC (which dates back to 1880) was undertaken by sailor-author Clare Francis, who commended the Gore-Grimes venture in the ice, highlighting the fact that he and his crew had spent 23 days within the Arctic Circle, reaching a furthest north of 81-15-49.

In all, Arctic Fern covered 5,055 miles on this cruise, which also received Ireland's 'Sailor of the Month' award for August 2006. The achievements of John Gore-Grimes in high latitude sailing have been internationally recognised since 1983, when he was awarded the supreme global trophy, the Blue Water Medal of the Cruising Club of America.

## ROSSBRIN WELCOMES MARINER



Rossbrin Boatyard in Schull, West Cork has added the Mariner brand of outboard engines to its existing Mercury/Mercruiser dealership.

The latest computer diagnostic system and ongoing training assure first class professional service, and all the usual spare parts are always available, says Rossbrin's Edmund Krugel.

Further information on outboard and inboard engines from [www.rossbrin-boatyard.com](http://www.rossbrin-boatyard.com)



## BOWEN JOINS BJ MARINE

Paul Bowen has joined BJ Marine's new office in Cork which opens this month at Crosshaven Boatyard. Bowen is the son of recently retired Union Chandlery director Michael.

The move gives BJ Marine a presence in Dublin, Belfast and Cork. Here Bowen (left) is welcomed on board by BJ managing director Bernard Gallagher at ExCel in London.

## POLICE MAY SCRAP DIVERS

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is considering scrapping its underwater search unit. The unit has been involved in many high-profile investigations and is staffed by seven officers who carry out dives in between other policing duties. However, the PSNI is now seeking to have the role performed by a commercial company.

In early 2006, the PSNI embarked upon a major review of operational underwater search capabilities. A police spokesman said there had been extensive research and widespread consultation with key stakeholders, including operational commanders and senior investigating officers.

## NEW CLUB FOR GREYSTONES

Details have been announced of the newest club to appear on the Irish watersports scene – the Greystones Motor Yacht Club. For many years, motorboat users in the Greystones area were forced to go elsewhere to berth boats, but now – thanks to the prospect of a new harbour in the town – members will be able to berth near to home.

The founding members of Greystones Motor Yacht Club say there is early interest in membership. A web site, [www.greystonesmyc.ie](http://www.greystonesmyc.ie) has been set up to facilitate interested parties and an e-mail address [info@greystonesmyc.ie](mailto:info@greystonesmyc.ie) is being used to register interest in becoming a member. There is also a contact number – 085 788 9544.

Applications are invited from keen sailors who cannot keep their sailing boats at Greystones to local powerboat owners who are forced to trailer their boats. Founding members are particularly pleased at the applications from families interested in enrolling the whole family.

Spokesman and acting commodore Michael Quinn has confirmed that an initial meeting will be held in the coming weeks, along with the appointment of an interim committee.

## LIFEBOATS TO GET CARTOON TREATMENT

Lifeboats will feature heavily on children's television later this year, following the signing of a new deal between RTÉ and a Belfast-based animation house. Banjax Studios signed a 52-episode deal for a new animated children's show, 'Lifeboat Luke'.

Aimed at kids aged 4–7 years, 'Lifeboat Luke' will follow Luke the lifeboat and his friends in the mad magical Irish fishing village of Donaghadoo. The stories touch lightly on the life and death issues of water safety, with each episode featuring at least one rescue.

An artist's impression of the new clubhouse



# DOUBLE OLYMPIAN AND WATERWAG CHAMPION

"A fast boat makes a chap look good," was always an Alf Delany dictum. The veteran Olympian, who died on December 13th, was in more ways than one the sage of Irish dinghy sailing.

He knew a thing or two about how to make a boat go fast and, as recently as 2004, the 96-year-old was winning races in Pansy, the 14-foot dinghy he first sailed in 1925. He

had just completed his 81st sailing season and had packed Pansy, the clinker Waterwag dinghy he had owned since he was 17, away for the winter.

A committed small-boat sailor for 80 years, Alf was an honorary member of the Royal Saint George and National Yacht Clubs in Dún Laoghaire.

Pansy had won races every single year since she was built in 1906, and while it's no news that Pansy and Alf were waterfront legends in their home port, the real story is that there has never been any better advertisement for sailing as a lifelong sport than this hardy pair.

Alf, a retired general practitioner, celebrated Pansy's 100th birthday during the summer at a special party, attended by close

friends and family, in the Royal St George clubhouse.

He was a competitor in the 1948 London and 1952 Helsinki Olympics, and won over a dozen Irish national championships in many classes.

Alf was a top sailor and administrator of Irish sailing. He served on the Irish Olympic Council representing sailing for more than ten years.

As a former president of the Irish Waterwag class (reputedly the oldest one-design class in the world), Alf was a forceful promoter of the class and, in this context, put most other dinghy associations to shame. His careful stewardship is one of the reasons the class, with a fleet of as many as 22 boats, remains so strong today.

Alf married in 1942, and throughout his sailing career his wife, Pat, was also his loyal crew until her death in 1988. He is survived by five children, and it comes as no surprise that not only his children but his grandchildren are all active and successful sailors.

Curiously, the highlight of his sailing career was not his double Olympic Games participation (racing against such legends as Denmark's Paul Elvstrom), or any of his national championships wins. It was instead a third overall at the 1963 British Firefly National Championships, because – the Clontarf helmsman maintained – the competition there was the toughest he had ever experienced.

During an interview in 1993, Afloat asked Alf, then aged 82, would he ever consider retiring from the rigours of dinghy sailing?

"Only when I have to," he replied with a grin.

Alf Delany; a lifetime afloat

Photo: Brendan Fogarty

Glenans base on Clew Bay in Co. Mayo. For H el ene Viannay (right) Ireland became a symbol of rediscovered roots and freedom. She received state assistance from Bord Failte and remained very positive that Ireland – a nation that has, ironically, largely turned its back on the sea – helped a French woman realise her maritime dream

Photos: Bob Hobby and Jean-Louis Gu ery



## GLENANS FOUNDER DIES IN PARIS

The founder of the Glenans sailing movement has died in France, aged 89. H el ene Viannay, who died on Christmas Day, devoted her life after the second World War to sail training. The movement she founded, Les Gl enans, spread to Ireland and introduced more than 40,000 people here to sailing.

Born on July 12th, 1917, as H el ene Mordkovitch in Paris, she was the daughter of Russian emigrants. She was the co-founder of the underground second World War resistance newspaper *D efense de la France*, which was secretly printed in her Sorbonne laboratory of geology. That newspaper was renamed *France Soir* after the end of the war.

She married resistance journalist Phillippe Viannay in October 1942. They had two sons: Pierre, born July 14th, 1943, and Fran ois, born in 1947, who died tragically in 1970.

After the end of the war, H el ene, her husband and several other left-leaning intellectuals decided to create an activity camp in west Brittany to help disaffected Parisian youths regain a sense of community.

Les Gl enans was born, but there was little sign then – other than H el ene’s vision – that the club would grow to become the largest sail training organisation in Europe, with an emphasis on team work, learning to sail and, most importantly, learning about life.

When she established the Centre Nautique des Gl enans (CNG) in 1947, it was at a time when there was little French commercial traffic around the coast and very few pleasure craft at all. In occupied

France, German forces had put an exclusion zone around the French coastline. Getting out on a boat was a novelty and using the sea environment for social rehabilitation was a popular idea that took hold.

H el ene was convinced that showing confidence in people and expecting high standards were the pillars of responsibility. She attached great importance to finding those she could trust and giving them great responsibility. She took risks by entrusting a cruising boat and its crew to a 20-year-old skipper. She was proud of such initiatives, and they worked.

H el ene wrote in 1990: “For us, the seas were empty and free; with our little cruising boats we could venture where we willed, there was always space in the harbour, foreign moorings were deserted, everywhere a friendly welcome. At that time, Brittany was extraordinarily beautiful.”

During the 1960s, Gl enans in France expanded greatly; new bases were opened, one after the other. The CNG had an ambition to become truly international, and encouraged the opening of bases in Italy (at Arosa and Caprara) and in Spain.

But it wasn’t only Gl enans that was growing. So was the French economy, and H el ene became disillusioned. The movement which she had launched started to disappear; the coastline was built up, marinas were opened. Increasing regulations, she said, was “souring their dream”.

“It was then we started to dream about Ireland. Our imaginations were fired by

reports of skippers who since 1961 had been coming back with stories of good and bad weather, sailing conditions which were sometimes difficult, the most beautiful countryside and a warm Irish welcome,” she told *Ireland Afloat* magazine in 1976.

The first Gl enans base was set up in Baltimore, west Cork, in 1969, the second in nearby Bere island, in 1971. A west coast base was established on Collanmore Island in Clew Bay, Co Mayo, in 1979. Since 1969 more than 40,000 people have attended Gl enans courses in Ireland and 320,000 in France.

For the Viannays, Ireland became a symbol of rediscovered roots and freedom.

In 2001, H el ene was awarded the *Commandeur de la L egion d’Honneur*, France’s highest civilian award.

Several hundred people paid homage to her at a ceremony on January 4th at the Cupola of P ere Lachaise cemetery, Paris.

Her family, friends and many members of Gl enans were present.

Gerry Jones, the Irish Gl enans club treasurer and a personal friend of H el ene’s, represented the Irish club at the ceremony. In recognition of her strong links with Ireland, a eulogy was read in English.

Her husband, Phillippe, died in 1986. She is survived by her son, Pierre.

**H el ene Viannay: born July 12th, 1917; died December 25th, 2006**

Ireland is to have an entry in this year's two man Barcelona world race in a co-skipper capacity. It was announced in late January that Kerry's Damian Foxall will partner Frenchman Jean-Pierre Dick in the latest non-stop race round the world race.

With only a few days to go before launching the 60-foot yacht Paprec Virbac in New Zealand, Jean-Pierre Dick (41) revealed the name of his Irish co-skipper.

"When Jean-Pierre asked me I didn't need to think hard about it! For me, he is one of the favourites." Foxall said

The pair, one of nine entries to date, will spend most of 2007 preparing for November's start to the gruelling 25,000 mile voyage that rounds three capes: Good Hope, Leeuwin and Horn.

Foxall has competed in two Volvo Ocean Races in 2005/06 onboard Team Ericsson responsible for bow, mast and rigging; in 2001/2002 with Team Tyco. He was part of the America's Cup 2004 K Challenge crew for Acts 2 and 3 and was one of the Cheyenne crew for their successful assault on the Jules Verne non-stop crewed round the world record, setting a new time of 58 days, 9 hours, 32 minutes and 45 seconds.

Foxall is one of a few Irish sailors who have made it on to the professional circuit most recently hitting the international news headlines in 2005 for all the wrong reasons.

The Caherdaniel sailor was evacuated by helicopter from his stricken trimaran Foncia following an Atlantic capsizing that hurled the 37-year-old into the rigging of the 60-foot craft. He broke three ribs, a shoulder and collar bone.

The accident kept him out of the opening leg of last year's Volvo round the world race and he will be keen to avoid any mishaps this time.

Dick is a double winner of the Transat Jacques Vabre, the race in which Damian capsized, and was sixth in the Vendée Globe 2004/2005.

The Barcelona race aims to bring together the two worlds of extreme solo and crewed 'Volvo Ocean Race' style competitions onboard high-performance IMOCA Open 60 monohull racing boats.

# FOXALL SET FOR ROUND THE WORLD VOYAGE



**PAPREC VIRBAC DUO****JEAN PIERRE DICK**

BORN: 8 October 1965 in Nice  
Double winner of the Transat Jacques Vabre in 2003 and in 2005.

3rd in the Route du Rhum – La Banque Postale 2006  
6th in the Vendée Globe 2004/2005.

**DAMIAN FOXALL**

BORN: 7 March 1969 in Ireland  
5th Around the World of which:  
Volvo Race in 2005/2006 and 2001/2002, Jules Verne Record on Cheyenne, 58 days 9hrs 32 mins 45secs (2003/2004), The Race in 2001.

2nd Transat Jacques Vabre in the 60 foot multihull class (with Karine Fauconnier in 2003 and with Armel Le Cléac'h in 2005).

**THE BARCELONA RACE  
WHAT'S NEW?**

- 25,000 miles over three months across the planet's most hostile and challenging oceans.
- A first in the sport of offshore sailing – two crew, non-stop around the world race for monohulls.
- First edition of the Barcelona World Race will start on Sunday, 11th November 2007 from Barcelona.
- Racing 25,000 miles over three months across the planet's most hostile and challenging oceans.
- The Barcelona World Race is now officially part of the IMOCA circuit, a four-year cycle of high profile events. This circuit is a unique, relatively low-cost event yet it offers high returns, providing boat sponsors with one of the best value for money products ever seen in offshore sailing.

# RATE YOUR MARINA

IF THE COST OF YOUR MOORING HAS INCREASED, THE MARINA OWNER MAY BE ABLE TO BLAME 'THE RATES', WRITES BRIAN J GOGGIN

Has the cost of your mooring gone up? Perhaps the reason for it is the operation of a five-year-old piece of legislation. And if a marina across the river is charging less, the implementation of the same legislation might be to blame.

The Valuation Act 2001 says that "relevant property" is rateable; Schedule 3 of the Act lists "relevant property for the purposes of this Act", including:

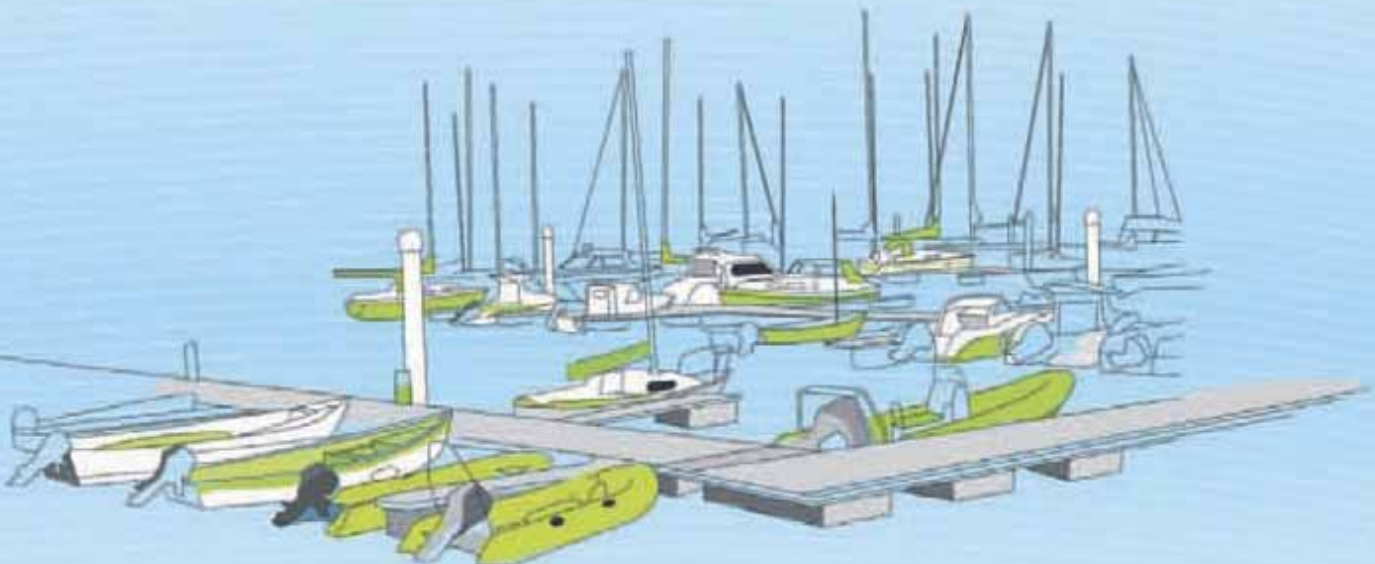
- (a) buildings,
- (b) lands used or developed for any purpose (irrespective of whether such lands are surfaced) and any constructions affixed thereto which pertain to that use or development,
- (c) harbours, piers, docks and fixed moorings,
- (d) canals, navigations and rights of navigation,
- (e) docks, cooling towers, embankments, canals (head race, tail race), locks, penstocks and surge tanks,
- (f) dams, weirs, bridges, jetties, railways, roads and reservoirs,
- (g) all ancillary on site developments, and many more. So marinas and similar boat-parks, including the moorings, as well as workshops and boat-sheds, are subject to rates; the amount charged will, of course, eventually be passed on to boat-owners in their annual bills.

## How rating works

Rates are property taxes collected by local authorities and used to fund their operations. They are applied to commercial and industrial property, but not to residential property. The valuation of a property is defined as "an estimate of the annual rental value of a property at a specified valuation date on the assumption that the occupier is responsible for the commercial rates, repairs and building insurance of the property".

The valuation is assessed by a revision officer from Valuation Office Ireland. The assessment may be carried out at the request of the owner or occupier of the property, the rating (i.e., local) authority, the Commissioner of Valuation or "an occupier of other property appearing on the valuation list". There are appeal provisions all the way up to the High Court (and the Supreme Court on points of law).

The valuation is the basis of the rating system. Each year, the owner or occupier pays rates to the local authority; the amount payable is the valuation multiplied by the local authority's annual rate on valuation (ARV). So if the valuation is set at €100 and the ARV is 50, the annual rates bill is €5,000.



## Valuation Office website

The Valuation Office website [www.valoff.ie](http://www.valoff.ie) contains much useful information — including the valuation of any rateable property in the state. So you can go and check the valuation of the marina you're based in. Then find out the ARV for the local authority and you'll know how much your marina is paying in rates. And you can do the same for any other marina, or indeed any other enterprise.

You start by selecting the county. You can then select an individual local authority (eg a town council) or choose "any" to get results for all within the county. After that you can select by street or townload or occupier — or just by Property Type. One of those types is Leisure and one of its subsets is Marina, but there may be relevant entries under other headings too: Quay/jetty, Pier, Harbour, Port and Mooring, for instance, all come under Misc, while Canal comes under Utility.

## Shannon marinas

It is clear from a search of the database that there are inconsistencies in the way the legislation is being applied, putting some marina-owners under a competitive disadvantage. Of eight counties along the Shannon, five — Leitrim, North Tipperary, Offaly, Roscommon, Westmeath — are charging rates to marinas. However, the other three — Clare, Galway, Longford — are not.

So at the bottom end of the Shannon, for instance, a marina in Ballina on the Tipperary side of the river would pay rates but one in Killaloe, across the bridge in Clare, would not.

are not listed as rate-paying marinas. Some of these may be paying for land-based facilities (offices, workshops, carparks, etc.) under some heading other than Marina.

Furthermore, there are huge differences in the valuations applied to different marinas, ranging from €19.05 to €370. The annual rates bills for those two marinas are €1,151.76 and €21,837.40 respectively: one marina's bill is more than €20,000 greater than the other.

Here are the entries I was able to find for Shannon-side counties under the Marina heading. I calculated the rates bills by multiplying the valuations by the ARVs.

Anyone familiar with the Shannon will notice immediately that, even in the five counties listed, there are more marinas than appear here. It may be that some of them are categorised under other headings and are paying rates on shore facilities; it is not clear whether they are paying rates on their moorings.

## Shannon hire-firms

Two of the 12 rate-payers are hire-firm bases. Other hire-firms are listed under other headings: for instance, Emerald Star in Carrick-on-Shannon is listed as paying rates on houses, offices, out-offices, land, a boathouse and a carpark, while in Portumna it's listed as paying on land, a factory, workshops, out-offices and a carpark. Moorings are not mentioned in either case.

COUNTY	LOCATION	MARINA	DESCRIPTION	ISSUE DATE	VALUATION	ARV	RATES BILL
Leitrim	Ballinamore	Locaboat Ireland	Marina	15/03/2005	€161.00	€59.02	€9,502.22
Leitrim	Carrick-on-Shannon	Michael Butler	Marina, Store, Land	23/01/2006	€370.00	€59.02	€21,837.40
North Tipperary	Portland	John Madden	Marina	24/08/1999	€19.05	€60.46	€1,151.76
North Tipperary	Killaloe	Derg Developments Ltd	Marina	11/05/1999	€63.49	€60.46	€3,838.61
North Tipperary	Dromineer	Edward Knight	Shop, Workshop, Marina, Pier	13/12/2004	€173.00	€60.46	€10,459.58
Offaly	Lusmagh	Owen Newcombe	Marina, Store	11/04/2006	€34.00	€51.48	€1,750.32
Roscommon	Battlebridge	Joseph Beirne	Caravan Park, Marina	06/12/2002	€23.00	€70.53	€1,622.19
Roscommon	Oakport	Patrick Gilboy	Marina, Land	07/02/2002	€110.00	€70.53	€7,758.30
Roscommon	Lough Key	Shirldom Ltd	Licensed Shop, Marina, Land	07/02/2002	€100.00	€70.53	€7,053.00
Roscommon	Jamestown	Michael Bourke	Marina	21/07/2006	€123.00	€70.53	€8,675.19
Westmeath	Killinure	Waveline Cruisers Ltd	Marina	12/12/2005	€70.00	€48.31	€3,381.70
Westmeath	Killinure	Peter Quigley	Marina, Workshop, Yard	12/12/2005	€100.00	€48.31	€4,831.00

## Annual rate on valuation (ARV)

Even in the counties where rates are being charged, there are wide variations in ARV:

	NORTH				
	LEITRIM	TIPPERARY	OFFALY	ROSCOMMON	WESTMEATH
	€59.02	€60.46	€51.48	€70.53	€48.31

So on two marinas with the same valuation, one in Roscommon would pay almost 50% more than another across Lough Ree in Westmeath.

## Further oddities

And that's not all. In some of the counties that do charge rates on marinas, there are things that look like marinas (with boats tied up and all), walk like marinas and talk like marinas, but

## Rates and boat-owners

The current rating situation is most unfair to those marina-owners who are paying rates on their moorings to have competitors who are not; the unfairness also affects their customers. And even amongst the small group who are paying, the differences in bills seem unfair. Certainly a smaller marina should pay less than a larger one, but the differences in valuations and in ARVs are producing remarkably large differences in rates bills.

It seems that the rating of moorings will eventually be extended throughout the country. That will no doubt reduce the unfairness of the present system, but it will add to the costs of marina-owners and thus to the bills of their customers; it is also likely to inhibit development. And, for boat-owners, it is just one amongst several sources of increased costs that are likely to hit their pockets in the years to come.



World class achievements by Justin Slattery (above) and Eamonn Conneely's Patches (right) were all but largely ignored by the national media

## SAILING DESERVES MORE AIRTIME

It may be considered sporting heresy by those who love the camán, but I believe that there are boats sailed in more counties in Ireland than there are counties in which hurling is played. That's not to be critical of the game which I played myself at one stage and which I still enjoy watching. I admire the skill of those who wield the hurley, but there is a reason to compare the two sports in the context of the media coverage which sailing achieves.

I don't expect pages and pages of sailing coverage in the general media, but there are as many places in the country where boats are sailed as there are where soccer and rugby – my own winter game – are played.

In its participatory nature, sailing holds interest for many thousands of people. Additionally, it is a sport in which the family can participate together, on the same team, should they wish to do so.

Why then, does sailing continue to be ignored by the mass media?

Listeners to Seascapes raised the issue in the aftermath of the Sports Stars of the Year Awards on RTÉ Television in December. It has also

been regularly raised with me in the course of my own leisure-time involvement in sailing.

I don't have any involvement in RTÉ Television Sport nor any influence over their decisions. But in a year when Irish sailing had at least two unique achievements, it surprised those who contacted me that the sport didn't merit a nomination for the national sporting awards and that, in general terms, the marine sphere seems to be regularly ignored where national awards are concerned.

In 2006, an Irishman, for the first time ever, won the toughest sailing race in the world, as a member of the crew of ABN Amro One. Justin Slattery was the Bowman, the toughest place to be on the boat, which was very demanding to sail. He achieved a huge victory, creating awareness of Ireland in ports around the world that were staging points for the race. That followed several other achievements in his career as a professional sailor, in which he has made a big impact on the world sailing scene. Justin is a native-bred star, who grew his career out of Ireland, from Cork Harbour where he first sailed dinghies.



PERHAPS IT'S TIME FOR A WIDE-RANGING EXAMINATION OF THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE SPORT AND WHAT ITS AIMS SHOULD BE FOR THE FUTURE

Furthermore, the boat which won the race was built by another Corkman, Killian Bushe from Crosshaven.

Another man who deserved recognition is Eamon Coneely from Galway who made a huge impact on the TP52 circuit with Patches, at the top level of international, professional sailing. He only started sailing four years ago and his success in business has enabled him to stamp his mark on the professional circuit. The tricolour displayed his national identity and Galway Bay Sailing Club proclaimed his West of Ireland origins on the boat's stern, which she showed to many of the top competitors in several international events where she beat them.

It is not to be critical of sports such as hurling to observe that it has no impact outside of Ireland and to wonder why marine sportsmen who have done so well by carrying Ireland's reputation successfully abroad, have not been given any acknowledgement.

For my own part, RTÉ News/Sport is generous in the coverage it allows me to give sailing, at events such as the All-Ireland Sailing Championships in Dún Laoghaire, Cork Week, the Junior Laser Nationals, the Fastnet Schools

Internationals in Schull and several others.

But listeners and readers tell me they feel sailing doesn't get sufficient attention from the general media, despite the excitement of participation and how tough and demanding it can be. Unlike most other sports, in sailing there is never a level playing pitch and the conditions of one day can vary widely for the next. It is also a sport where competitors must often depend on their own resources and abilities to solve problems.

However, it is more a participatory than a spectator sport, so sailing can be boring sport to watch and difficult to understand at times. But other sports have their boring moments, it all depends on how they are treated and sailing seems to come up short in this regard. The Irish Sailing Association, as the sport's governing body, has advanced the cause of sailing as "a sport for all," but sailing doesn't seem to be near that pinnacle yet.

Perhaps it's time for a wide-ranging examination of the present status of the sport and what its aims should be for the future. What can sailing offer to gain more attention and to generate more public recognition?

IT'S NOT JUST THE PRESS COVERAGE THAT NEEDS A LIFT...

AT THE ISA ALL-IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS, AFLOAT ASKED SOME OF THE COMPETING HELMSMAN FOR THEIR VIEWS ON THE STATE OF IRISH SAILING AND - MORE IMPORTANTLY-HOW IT CAN BE DEVELOPED...

Overall, there was a general consensus for greater participation in the sport, a need for better training and to seek more support nationwide. In addition there

were calls for much more funding from the Government at both junior level and international competitive sailing.

### What will change in Irish sailing in the next ten years, and what's the next big thing to happen in Irish sailing?

There will be a lot of one-design racing and the SB3s will kick-off. Hopefully the J24 fleet will also be strong on the Irish Sea as well as the J35's with their larger sails. **David Taylor**

It would be nice to see Ireland entering a team for the 'Round the World Race' and something high-profile like the Volvo 70 with an Irish corporate sponsor.

**David Crosbie**

I think our performance in the Olympics will increase and become better. It would probably require people to become full-time earlier and commit to a career in sailing. I think that also the performance of Irish boats in offshore events will increase as they are now in terms of the TP52's, and at events such as Cowes Week and the Sydney-Hobart race.

This is partly due to the increased wealth in the country that allows those to run campaigns like that and also access to the pool in talent in Ireland is increasing. There are a lot of Irish people going into the professional sailing world and these people will be able to contribute to those campaigns. **Noel Butler**

### You're put in charge of the ISA and given €10m to change Irish sailing. What would you do?

We need good quality coaching for the juniors right up to the seniors with a lot more money to be spent on that. I think we need some 'centres of excellence' for sailing. **Mark Mansfield**

I think there are a lot of people, players of my age in their 20s, who are really good sailors but have fallen out of sailing because they went from dinghies to really big boats and were not really getting enjoyment out of it. There is a lot of talent out there but that is not recognised and they don't have their own boat.

Try and get a couple of classes going and make a push for their involvement by getting them back on the water. Provide funding for the Olympic classes, pump more money into not just the junior classes but also for the 'Joe Soap' you'd want going to the club. **Mary O'Loughlin**

Buy a proper fleet of one-design boats that can be used by every sort of sailor and try to make sailing more attractive – not to make it as a snooty sport. **Paul McCarthy**

### Name Ireland's most important sailor and why you rate them so highly?

I would say Eamonn Conneely, from the point of view that until four–five years ago, he had not sailed. From there to go running and funding a campaign of the intensity and profile of the TP52 class and delivering the goods by winning!

There are others, but in terms of world-wide acclaim and putting Irish sailing on the map, albeit using international crew, I would say that Conneely has

achieved the most impact on Irish sailing. **Noel Butler**

I think a lot of people look up to Harold Cudmore, when he was doing all the international events and being very successful. He would be the Pele of Irish Sailing, even though there are a lot of other competitors, he would be the one I stick to. **Neil Hegarty**

### In what areas do you think the Government can help with Irish sailing (at national level and competitive level abroad)?

Firstly to increase participation in order to get the results as in any other sport, as sailing you need huge numbers to get involved and support from which talented individuals are selected.

In New Zealand, which has a similar population and is an island nation, the amount of participation and contact of the sport at child/school-going level is huge compared to Ireland. Sailing in Ireland it is restricted to Dublin, Cork and some parts of the country but every school in every town should have some opportunity to try sailing as a PE activity and the Government should do something to make it happen.

**Noel Butler**

At national level we need better professional race officers, more money put into sailing and marine sports in general.

Abroad, we need more funding and better coaching. It is important to look around, see what works well in other countries and maybe copy it to get out there sailing internationally. **Mark Mansfield**

Funding and better publicity to a wider community, not just in the strongholds of Dublin and Cork but to make it nationwide. **Peter O'Leary**

### What would your new year's resolution be for Irish sailing?

More events in more places, and an increase in high-profile racing in the country. **Peter O'Leary**

To ensure that sailors of international level have the support, coaching and funding for them to go to the UK and Europe more often. To maybe have boats kept for them in the UK, so that they can arguably sail with the best sailing nation at the moment.

They've got a very good RAYC squad set-up, sailors with whom you could say are unbeatable, we've got to follow that and equal that so hopefully in the future we can beat them! **John Driscoll**

I'm sailing in a classic class, the IDRA 14s. My resolution would be that through my involvement of the class, its continuing growth would be supported because I think they are beautiful boats, like the Shannon-One design, the Waterwags and the Mermaids. **Alan Carr**

Try to get more people to sail in the J24 class, more development in the class and get more people to take part in championships. **David Taylor**

To qualify for Beijing and train harder and find a sponsor! **Paul McCarthy**



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BOAT TEST  
NAJAD 332



## N FOR NAJAD AND NICE – VERY NICE

AFLOAT'S REGULAR BOAT TESTER GRAHAM SMITH CERTAINLY ENJOYED PUTTING THE NEW NAJAD 332 THROUGH ITS PACES IN A BRISK BREEZE AND FLAT SEAS OFF HOWTH

Think Swedish and the mind (depending on your generation) may spring to ABBA, Bjorn Borg or Saab and Volvo cars, with the latter being synonymous with wonderful engineering and build-quality. Well, when it comes to matters maritime, Swedish boatbuilder Najadvarvet AB has been quietly forging a name for the quality and dependability associated with its national car-makers with its Najad range of cruisers.

The fact that the Swedes have availed of the services of the renowned designers Judel/Vrolijk to add to their own undoubted construction skills is a measure of their attitude in producing even better boats.

The 332 – the baby of the current selection of ten boats – is available from Irish distributors HM Yachts in Cork and is marketed as a genuine blue-water cruiser at 33ft.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This is a traditional cruiser, in the very best sense of the word 'traditional'. An attractive hull shape and a coachroof that clearly indicates no shortage of space and headroom below are reminiscent of earlier designs yet it is still distinctively modern in its overall look. A permanent windscreen with moveable canopy offers variety in the protection stakes but doesn't detract from the style of this fine 33 footer while teak decks add an extra touch of class.

### ON TOP

Unlike other models in the Najad range which sport a centre cockpit, the 332 has an aft cockpit, and with the large steering wheel as far back as possible, there is plenty of room for four or more adults to relax.

There's a cleverly designed moveable cockpit table and the test boat owners, Paul and Fiona Newport, had opted for various extras that enhance the cruising experience. Among the most obvious were the teak finish on the decks and coachroof, two seats incorporated into the pushpit and a sprayhood extension that encloses the entire cockpit to provide a very cosy extra room if weather dictates.

The steering position gives the helm a clear view over the canopy, unlike some larger boats, and the instrument panel above the companionway is ideally placed – not right under your nose and not attached to the mast where some of us might need binoculars to read it!



### DOWN BELOW

Extensive use of West African mahogany is the immediate, striking feature once you go below deck and while some might find it a little dark, it is undoubtedly a warm and welcoming environment. From the varnished teak plywood with holly inlay flooring to the vinyl covered headlining panels with mahogany strips, the attention to detail is excellent.

There's loads of storage space and the settees around the saloon table can double up as sizeable extra berths, while the forward and aft cabins provide comfortable accommodation for two adults each. Standing headroom is 1.86m and even in the well-appointed head, that height is only reduced by a few centimetres.

The L-shaped galley features twin stainless steel sinks, twin burner gas cooker with oven, large work area and an insulated icebox including a fridge unit.

Central heating, somewhat unusually, is a standard specification.

### UNDER SAIL

The 332 really comes into its own under sail. Standard specification provides tri-radial laminate sails with a fractional rig

configuration and with a full main and a working jib, the 332 powered along at up to 6 knots in a 12-knot westerly breeze.

The large wheel was particularly comfortable and the boat was so well balanced that even in the brisk conditions – admittedly in a flat sea – she could literally be sailed with fingertips.

She was a joy to helm and I would go so far as to say that of the seven boats tested in 2006, the Najad ranks among the best for sheer responsiveness and ease of handling. She could be a useful performer in the growing white sail cruiser racing class too.

### UNDER POWER

All cruising enthusiasts like the comfort factor of a good, reliable engine, especially when entering strange harbours or inlets or when they need to get from A to B in a hurry. The 332 isn't lacking in this regard and boasts a powerful Volvo Penta 28hp engine with a 2-blade fixed prop.

It has plenty of zip when you need it, either forward or reverse, and its turning circle is about the length of the boat, which is pretty impressive.

### ✓ TO BUY FOR

For a boat that is marketed as a cruiser, it has a definite racing feel on the helm and the performance on test in fresh enough conditions was, as the brochure claims, 'sparkling'.

### ✗ TO CRY FOR

The throttle lever is rather strangely placed on the steering wheel column, requiring your hand to either go through, or over, the top of the wheel to operate it. You would also expect 'neutral' to be centred and vertical but it isn't – another awkward minus point.

### 📍 GO FOR MORE

The standard spec on the 332 is very impressive (eg central heating) but extras such as teak decks should be given serious consideration to finish off the whole visual (and practical) appeal.

### € HOW MUCH?

From €140,000 ex-VAT but with all the added extras, it can get closer to €185,000 (which is not cheap for a 33-footer but you get a lot for it)

### 🚢 AFLOAT VERDICT

One of the best we've sailed and if you want to enjoy cruising with a bit of performance in a well-built and carefully thought-out boat, then the Najad 332 would go a long way to satisfying your needs.

Najad is distributed in Ireland by HM Yachts in Cork, tel: 021 483 1352

### NAJAD 332 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	9.98m
BEAM	3.26m
DISPLACEMENT	5.3t
SAIL AREA	116.40m <sup>2</sup>
FUEL TANK	92l
ENGINE	Volvo Penta 28hp

BOAT TEST  
BENETEAU 50

# 50 FEET OF SHEER CLASS

AFLOAT'S 2006 TEST PROGRAMME WAS COMPLETED WITH OUR CORRESPONDENT GRAHAM SMITH TAKING BENETEAU'S OCEANIS 50 FOR A SPIN AROUND DUBLIN BAY



To paraphrase a well-known advertisement, 'Mr Beneteau makes exceedingly good boats' and the new Oceanis 50 is no exception, being the latest in a long line of striking looking cruisers.

While the glossy brochure gushes about a 'prestigious yacht that heralds a new era in the history of blue water cruising yachts', there is no doubt that the Oceanis 50 has a real, head-turning presence.

Hull and deck plans are the work of the Berret Racoupeau design office whose brief was to create an aesthetically powerful and attractive yacht with outstanding sea-going qualities. The interior design by Nauta Design of 'super yacht' fame gives the 50 its own very special personality.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The promotional brochure describes the 50 as having 'a truly striking presence at anchor' and while the sun-kissed waters

of the Mediterranean are probably its more natural habitat, even a dull day in Dún Laoghaire cannot minimise the visual effect.

For a change, we met the test boat at sea rather than on a marina, and the immediate impression is one of power and elegance, with a contemporary hull shape (with three hull ports on each side) allied to an ultra-modern coachroof treatment that gives it a distinctive racy profile.

Our test boat was the first to be sold by Beneteau's Irish distributors BJ Marine and there are about three more sales in the pipeline. As this report will show, it is hardly surprising. If you can afford it – it starts around €264,000 – you are gaining 50 feet of sheer class, with remarkable attention to detail.

## ON TOP

Boarding the 50 from a moving RIB in fresh conditions certainly underlines the sheer size and power of the boat. With a

4.5m beam, a spacious cockpit (even allowing for the fixed table) and positively acres of deck, this is a big craft in every sense.

The blue sprayhood is probably its least attractive feature as it detracts from the flowing lines of the coachroof, although it is a highly useful and practical addition if the crew need protection from the elements. Personally, I would opt for the grey pearl coloured sprayhood instead of the blue as it would blend better with the boat's attractive lines.

The classic, 9/10 fractional rig has a deck-stepped mast with twin aft-swept spreaders. With all the lines neatly led back to electric winches in the cockpit, the foredeck and side-decks are clear and uncluttered.

There is also easy access to the bathing platform with a pivoting gate incorporated into the aft seating layout between the two helming positions.



### DOWN BELOW

If the Oceanis is impressive on deck, it is just amazing below. This is luxury par excellence. The companionway leads to saloon that looks like it should be in an interiors magazine, with soft lighting, plush upholstery, and oodles of natural light through numerous hatches and ports.

Stainless steel handrails on the saloon roof at the foot of the companionway that extend to the centre of the saloon give an added sense of security. To port is a U-shaped galley that is particularly well-equipped and behind it, one of the two more-than-ample aft double cabins. The other one is next to the head compartment, complete with separate shower and double-folding shower screen.

The saloon features a two-seater settee with fold-away central armrest to starboard, while to port is a U-shaped 6-8 seater settee and table that provides real comfort at meal-times.

The owner's cabin forward is vast – it has an island double-berth, giving access on three sides (which you don't usually see on a boat!), loads of storage space and then a separate shower en-suite. If you own this boat, you deserve these little luxuries.

### UNDER SAIL

With a 14.75m hull length and over 116 sq.m of sail area on the fractional rig, the Oceanis 50 can shift and accelerates well for a big, heavy boat.

In a south-easterly Force 4 in Scotsman's Bay, she was tramping along upwind at over 7 knots without being put under any real pressure and she glided effortlessly downwind.

If there was any disappointment, it was perhaps the handling which seemed a little stiff and unresponsive, but then you don't buy a boat like this for out-and-out performance – it's much more than that.

### UNDER POWER

There is absolutely no shortage of power on the Oceanis. A Yanmar 110hp diesel engine with drive shaft transmission comes as standard, as does the fixed 3-blade propeller, and that's more than enough oomph for anyone.

That means ease of access to a berth or moorings and the ability to cover a lot of ground if conditions require extensive motoring. A well-soundproofed engine compartment is accessed under the companionway steps with a gas-strut supported opening.

### ✓ TO BUY FOR

The classy looks, the stunning interior, the remarkable standard specification and the sheer opulence of the 50 are to die for.

### ✗ TO CRY FOR

For such a big boat, I would have thought slightly bigger twin steering wheels would have been more appropriate. As it was, she was somewhat heavy on the helm and not quite as responsive as you would imagine.

### ⚓ GO FOR MORE

As you would expect with an Oceanis, the standard specification is outstanding but an impressive list of optional extras are worth considering. If you can afford this boat in the first place, you can afford the extras!

### € HOW MUCH?

The Oceanis 50 starts at €263,720 with delivery to Dublin, launching and commissioning adding another €17,000. Optional extras such as teak decks, electric winches, leather saloon upholstery, air conditioning, a 5.5kva generator and a multi-functional display chart table could easily add another €80,000 to the price.

### 🌀 AFLOAT VERDICT

The Oceanis 50 deserves to be sailed in sunnier climes (the Med springs to mind!), but no matter where you keep it, it is a stunning mix of luxury, build quality and outstanding design that will be enjoyed by discerning owners.

The Oceanis 50 is distributed in Ireland by Beneteau's local agents BJ Marine, based in Malahide Marina. Tel: 806 1560. Email: sales@bjmarine.net

### BENETEAU OCEANIS 50 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH	15.10m
BEAM	4.49m
DISPLACEMENT	12935kg
SAIL AREA	116.40m <sup>2</sup>
FUEL TANK	235l
ENGINE	110hp

BOAT TEST  
SEARAY 250

# FOXY LADY IS A WELCOME ARRIVAL

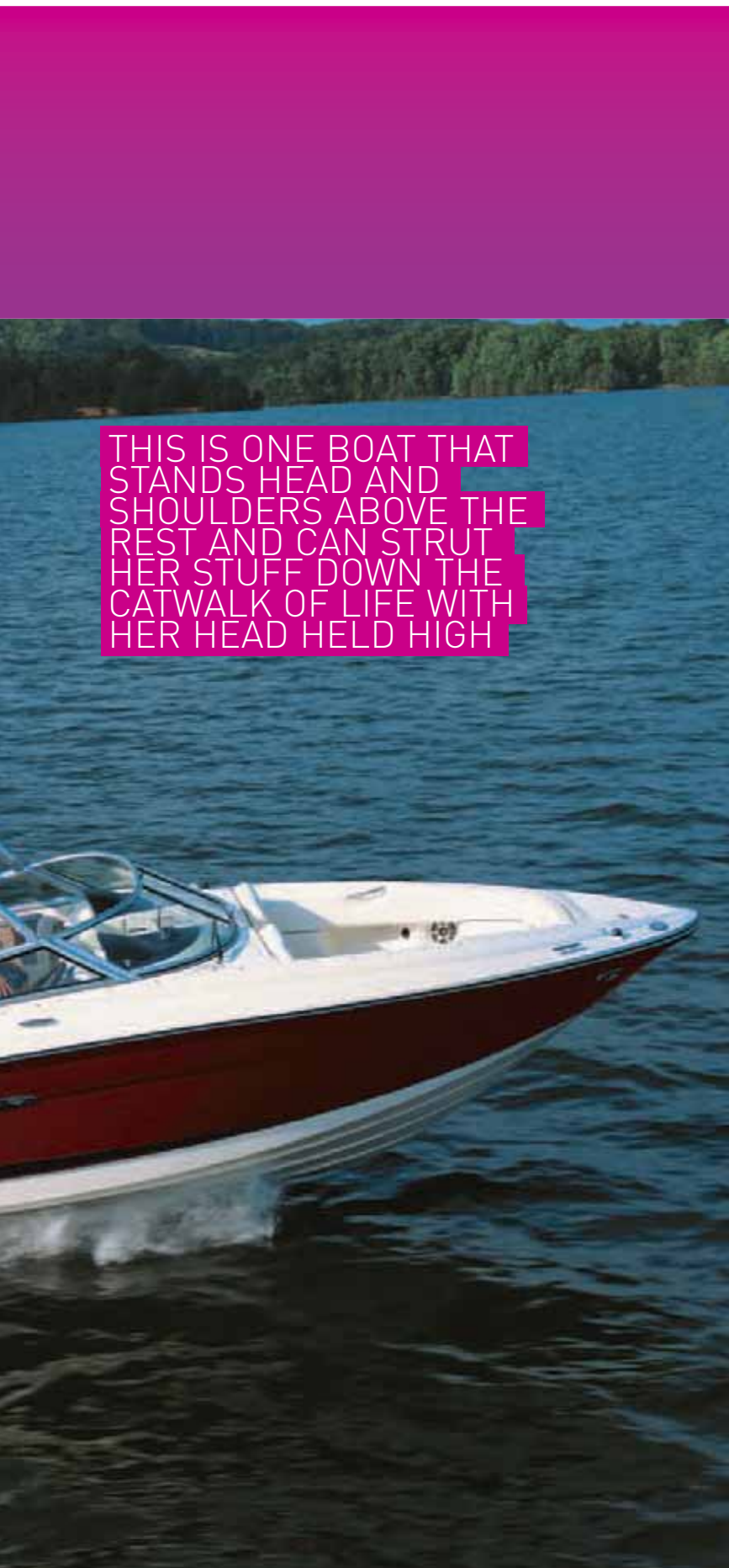
YOU CAN'T BUY A SEARAY 250 SLX HERE YET BUT SIMON EVERETT SAYS SHE WILL BE THIS SEASON'S HEAD TURNER

It's funny, every now and again things come together to produce an outstanding specimen of the species. Curves of the right proportions, in all the right places. The 250 SLX is like that, she is in a class of her own. This is one boat that stands head and shoulders above the rest and can strut her stuff down the catwalk of life with her head held high. In boating terms what we have here is the world's next supermodel.

I am not talking about Kate Moss or Naomi Campbell, I am talking about refined beauty of Claudia Schiffer. This is a boat that will not look out of place in any harbour or marina, her elegance and style will ensure she is accepted into any social circle.

Sea Ray have taken the bowrider concept a step beyond the standard and elevated it into a new class. With the introduction of several new models, including the 250SLX it seems that Sea Ray have a Don Quixote ploy of windmill tilting at some of the established niches in boating. The SLX is aimed squarely at the high end market and is built to take on that sector in a serious manner. This is a boat to rival hand built, custom boats and her performance is nothing short of superb. The execution of the design into reality has been done extremely well and the materials match the expectations of buyers of this type of boat. John Dunphy of Irish SeaRay distributors BJ Marine expects the first model in early 2007 but you may have to join the queue.





THIS IS ONE BOAT THAT STANDS HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST AND CAN STRUT HER STUFF DOWN THE CATWALK OF LIFE WITH HER HEAD HELD HIGH



The layout is that of a deep bowrider with seating for five, or loungers for two using the main bulkhead as the back support with well-padded upholstery. Unusually for a bowrider, or many other sports boats come to that, she is fitted with a stemhead roller and electric windlass. This gives an insight into the serious boating capabilities of this fabulous boat. The bulkhead is split into two consoles by the walkway, complete with a wind gate. In the starboard, helm, console there is an ice chest and plenty of stowage space for personal gear. In the port side there is a pump out head. It is fairly tight but there is room to make use of the inconvenience facility which should see the girls happy, or use it as another great stowage compartment for foulies, wetsuits and bags with changes of clothes for the evening in.

The main seating for two in the front of cockpit is on pedestal seats with lift up squab extensions. These seats swivel to face the L-shaped, cockpit settee when at rest. The lift up squab section turns the seat into a well padded leaning post for high speed runs in choppy water. The seats are beautifully covered and feature high backs with plenty of padding all round and grab handles on the top of the back. The L-shaped settee is wide, high backed and extremely comfortable.

The 250SLX is aimed at serious boaters who spend every spare hour on the water. The wet bar in the cockpit with its built-in fridge will keep the Margueritas flowing in the evening while the huge sunpad atop the engine hatch cover will ensure you lose those lilywhite legs in next to no time. The stern is given over to watersports, from simply swimming to cool off through to high adrenaline wakeboarding. The sunpad lifts, gull-wing fashion to reveal two wet lockers and a walkthrough to the swimming platform. Putting your skis or board on was never better catered for, even on a tournament boat and the fresh water shower will rinse off the fast drying salt crystals and sand.

At the helm you are greeted by a rich, wooden steering wheel and dash panel housing the full row of switches, in polished stainless, naturally. The clocks are housed in a shrouded panel on the console with a non-glare panel above, to prevent that eye strain that comes from long hours looking over a white helm area. The steering position is akin to a new Jaguar and anyone who drives a quality car will not feel out of place. It is purely an extension of the land based equivalent that is worthy of the glorious silhouette of this boat.

SeaRay have produced a beauty here, she is well finished and they haven't skimped on details. Added to that there is the fact that this baby goes – exactly where you point her. Her glorious looks are matched by long legs and an easy gait. She rides chop smoothly and carves turns like a champion slalom skier. Her response to the helm is immediate and it only takes the gentle stroke of a couple of fingers to get her doing what you want her to. This is a gentleman's sporting conveyance with the associated mild manners that such stature demands. Fast driving in the 250SLX is a refined activity without any sudden surprises. The hull is as balanced as it is possible to get, you can put her into impressive turns with the throttle nailed and still not spill your gin. She simply cuts her path smoothly and with purpose, glued to the water. There is none of the bucking and skipping of previous models of this nature.

It is no good having a boat with all show and no go. If you are going to have a sleek, purposeful looking boat then you had better back your statement with the ability to travel at high velocity, or forever look a prat. The 250 SLX is given a line up of motors that will ensure your credibility remains intact, regardless of the company you keep. The test boat was fitted with Mercruiser's 8.2 litre 496 MAG DTS giving 425hp through a Bravo III drive. This is at the upper end of the power options, and should be made mandatory for anyone purchasing one of these boats. Putting anything smaller in should be treated as a crime – for the cold blooded murder of a red hot boat.

With the V8 singing a happy tune I got her running at a constant 55mph with the time taken to get from planing speed to maxed out, just 25 seconds! That will earn you some serious respect, or get you plenty of waved fists from snotty yotties. If you think that kind of true top speed is impressive, the acceleration will leave stains in your shorts. From standstill to plane, at 20mph, took just 6 seconds and once on the plane you had better hold tight, or she'll rip the handle out of your hands, 35mph came in just another 6 seconds. 12 ticks of the hand from standstill to 35mph, it took you longer to read it!

At last there are some boats coming out that appear to break the nasty old moulds. With quality and performance like this, provided it is maintained, the Americans are rivalling the best of the European boats and at competitive prices too. I think this is the beginning of a revival and I, for one, welcome it. Good on you Sea Ray, now bring back the Pachanga and show you really mean business.



**SEARAY 250 SLX**  
TECHNICAL  
SPECIFICATIONS

Length	8.08 m
Beam	2.59 m
Draft	0.92 cm
Deadrise	21 degs
Dry Weight	2,290 kgs
Fuel tank	75 gal
Water tank	21 gal
Holding tank	10 gal
Max passengers	7
Max power	425 hp
Price	TBC

**ACCELERATION**

0-Plane (20mph)	6 secs
0-35mph	12 secs
20-55mph (max)	25 secs



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**BLAKES**  
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BY SHANE STOKES

G E R O ' R O U R K E

# HAIL TO THE CHIEF

**It's been some year for Ger O'Rourke, recording wins in Chieftain everywhere from Hobart to Cowes. He tells Shane Stokes that running a boat is a lot like running a business.**

Success in this sport is heavily dependant on a strong relationship between crew and craft, with a very good synergy helping to secure top results. One clear example of when everything gels together is the achievements of Chieftain in 2006, with Ger O'Rourke and his crew posting a very strong run of performances in the Cookson 50 boat.

The list is an impressive one. In January they were first in Class 0 in the 700-mile Rolex Sydney Hobart, then scooped three strong results in April. Overall wins and Super Z Class victories in the Cowes – Leharve Cervantes Trophy and Le Harve – Cowes plus second place in the Red Funnel Race in Cowes (Super Z) were followed by first and third respectively in Overall and SZ classes in May's Cowes – Dieppe Myth of Malham and Cowes – Cherbourg De Guingand Bowl.

As the summer continued, the results kept rolling in. June brought SZ class victory in the UK IRC Nationals, while July saw Chieftain win the SZ class of the BMW Round Ireland race and finish second in Cork Week. Two more overall and SZ class wins were to follow; the 50-foot boat was first in the Seven Star Round Britain and Ireland in August, then repeated the feat in September's Cowes to Cascais.

It was, to say the least, a mightily impressive campaign. The story of this successful partnership between crew and craft first began in July 2005 when Limerick businessman O'Rourke took delivery of the Cookson 50. He had previously been a guest on Mick Cookson's boat at a regatta at the Bay of Islands, joining Cookson, Erle Williams (watch captain of the Pirates of the Caribbean) and several ex-America's Cup sailors there. That trip made a big impression.

"It was some experience," O'Rourke said. "Here was I from Limerick, on a 40.7, wondering what the heck I was doing with this crowd of very talented individuals. But I kept my mouth shut, sat on the rail and listened and learned and sailed."



Swingin' times:  
Ger O'Rourke in final  
preparation for last July's  
BMW Round Ireland race  
Photo: David Branigan



"I managed to get the helm between races going up and down while we were eating sandwiches, and doing nine knots. It was basically a fun boat. We did 25 knots that day downwind on a gib top alone, and we also did about 27 knots with a number 3, which is a reaching kite, a fully canted keep and spray coming off the edge, making us wet. It was good fun."

That made up his mind. He signed up for a boat from Cookson, sending his boat captain Mark Tighe from Dublin to Auckland to oversee the construction. The building was completed in July 2005 and they quickly got in action, putting Chieftain through its paces in the Hamilton Island race. Things clicked straight away.

"We were racing against the best boats in the Southern Hemisphere, including Admirals Cup winner Bob Oatley's Wild Oats, plus some others from the Northern Hemisphere," he said. "We took two days to get up to speed with the boat, but ended up doing very well, beating Wild Oats a few times on the water as well as over time. We got 27 knots out of her at one stage. It was awesome sailing, really fantastic. We came fifth overall after shockers on the first two days, times when we were getting used to the boat and had equipment issues. But once we got into the flow of things, it was much better."

Next step was to head back to Auckland to get a canting keel and canard fitted, then on to the Sydney Hobart race in December. More of O'Rourke's Irish regulars flew in for the competition, as did Dutch pro Jochem Visser, beginning what would be a successful collaboration with the crew. Things gelled very well, the net result being an excellent class win and fourth overall in the 628 nautical mile event. After that, it was on to the start of the 2006 season, and the beginning of that very strong run of results.

Forty-four-year-old O'Rourke is owner of Limerick company Chieftain Construction, a property development and construction company with 200 staff and 25 ongoing projects in Ireland, the UK, South Africa and Chicago. He sees strong parallels between the skills required in his job and in successful racing, believing that there is a clear overlap.

"The same principles that would apply to running a construction or development project or overseeing crowd of business people also apply [to sailing] – the same disciplines are used," he said. "There are very strong parallels and very strong principles, in that you have got to be able to make an instant decision and also to cut your losses sometimes."

He came into the sport "14 to 15 years ago," cruising for a few years and buying his own boat to use around the south and west coasts. "I got bored of that, though, and then went into racing. For a while I started racing dinghies to try to get up to speed as regards my experience level. The learning curve has been quite steep over the last 15 years... in fact, it's still steep."

O'Rourke sailed in classes three, two and one in IRC and Echo. He won his class in the Round Ireland race back in 2004. He and his crew also sailed the Commodore Cup but had a tough campaign, experiencing a rig failure on the final day. Returning to the race and performing well was a big goal for 2006 but that target had to be sidelined when it emerged that new RORC rules banned shifting ballast, eliminating the canting keel-equipped Chieftain.

"I registered my boat with IRC rating office and by coincidence, there was an amendment to the rules... no canting keels were allowed," he explained, a hint of frustration in his voice. "That came under the rating. They were expecting me to come over the rating because we were a canting keel. They capped the rating in the 1300s – 1350 or 1340 or whatever it was, and basically I came in ten points under."

"They amended the rule and basically I was a bit disappointed with that. But you know what? They may have actually done me a favour in the end, as I went away and concentrated on off-shores. That worked out well. In the end, I did about two thirds offshore this year and that helped a lot to improve my boat handling and experience levels. I felt that I needed more hours at sea to get my boat handling levels up to the standard that a Class Zero pro might be around the cans, and it would help the rest of the crew as well.

"If you go out round the cans, you have four hours at Class Zero and then you are back in. But if you go offshore, you are 24 hours every day. Okay, you might be sleeping but you are actually out driving the boat 24 hours...whether you like it or not, you are actually out there. So I felt that we really got to know the boat this year offshore, in that we had all different types of conditions, from heavy airs to light airs, running and reaching. Everybody had to do everything so we really had to get to know the boat quite well."

This struggle to deal with adverse weather conditions and to get the best out of the boat is part of his appreciation of sailing. The sense of reward is all the stronger because it's a hard sport. "I think it's the only sport that I know that gives you all the challenges, from team, mechanical engineering, aero engineering, electronics – from the point of view that if anything goes wrong in the boat, you have to fix it."

"Dealing with hydraulic engineering, foils and sails is also crucial. So you have got everything, in terms of all the possible challenges you could have from things going wrong in a race. I really enjoy that challenge. In addition, you are meeting and sailing with like-minded, technically-minded people that have the same outlook as you. They are usually a chilled bunch of people and we enjoy each other's company."

O'Rourke has a clear philosophy about the way he approaches regattas. "What I like doing is trying to run a current team campaign as much as possible. I am not interested in paying professionals to drive my boat for me. I like to drive it myself and would rather finish second than coming first with a pro. But at Super Zero level you are up against guys

who have maybe six or seven professionals on their boat, so that makes things harder.

"What I do is put one on the back to do tactics around cans or maybe nav off shore. Perhaps a bit of coaching, too, in order to work with the overall team and try to build up the level. For example, Jochem (Visser) has fitted in very well. Initially there was a learning curve due to the fact that he speaks a bit differently, so it took a race or two to get used to each other. But after that it worked out very well for us.

"I strongly believe that you can get a lot out of a group of very good amateur sailors, not necessarily best friends, but putting them together on the basis of ability. So long as there are no egos on board and everybody is racing to make that particular boat go as fast as possible, then with the right electricity between the crew I strongly believe you can get them up to a level which is nearly as high as a pro crew. Once the electricity, the excitement is there, they can do very well."

O'Rourke favours the use of two crews, due partly to the difficulty of amateurs getting time off work, but also to develop specialist skills. "Where possible, I try to run a round the cans crew and an offshore crew," he said. "I find they are different disciplines and the offshore crew have to be more broad in terms of experience, in that they have to do a little bit of bow work, a little bit of trimming, whereas your round the cans are specialised. It doesn't always work out exactly, sometimes you've got to mix things around. But the crew themselves have all learned an awful lot this season and so have I."

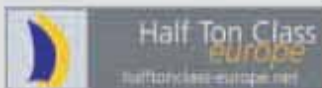


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It was a very successful year, and for him there are two big highlights. The first was doing 28 knots on the Tasmin Sea in January. The second was their experience down the east coast of England in the RBI race.

"We were flying there. It was a different type of 26 knots in that it was... I don't know if the air is more dense up here but it felt stronger, it felt faster, it felt more dangerous than during the Hobart. The waves were shorter and sharper. I think we had a tide against breeze situation there and we were burying the nose quite often. We were going downwind, reaching and running, with about 145 to 150 wind angle. That's the ideal place to keep her steady, but if you keep it at that your problem is that you bury the bow in the following waves, because you catch and crash into them.

"We didn't want to speed up the boat, but we had no choice but to bear off five degrees and sail at 145 or 150. Add another three or four knots to your speed and now you're doing 28 knots. You don't want to be doing that speed, you're trying to slow the thing down in case you have a wipeout, but you actually have to run at that speed and angle to keep her safe. That was pretty scary. That was going for 40-odd hours nonstop, day and night, changing the helm every half hour. It was very demanding but it's definitely a highlight."

As regards the future, he says there will be a change of emphasis. "We know the boat now quite well. I'm a little tired of so many offshores. So next year I will do two thirds inshores and see how we get on with that, mixing it a small bit. We will work up that side of the team. We will maybe do one third offshore, depending on which one we will do, either the TP or else we will do the Newport - Hamburg race. The latter depends on the competition... if the standard is good enough, we will go.

"Next season we also have Key West, Miami, Antigua and Transatlantic. We would like to win all those. We think it is possible to do it, if the proper conditions come and we don't have very light air. The boat is more or less a heavy airs boat rather than a light airs boat, so we think it is possible to do it in the right conditions. Of course, it depends on our crew's performance and how things slot in."

The right backing is also important. "We are looking for sponsors for all of this. We believe that we give good value for money... For the sponsorship we can give naming rights, different master hull or transom banners, twilight packages for staff or clients, learn to sail packages, stuff like that. They can use the boat - my attitude is that the boat is only racing for 50 days of the year, there are 300 days left after that, so the boat is available to the sponsor for any reasonable amount of time. I would love to get one sponsor for the whole season, to be honest with you. You never know."

He is also taking delivery of a SP3 and with two of his three children showing an interest in the class, he'll spend some time out on the waves with them. "I'm campaigning in SP3 and I would like to get my own skills up in match racing. I'm looking forward to doing that next year, and maybe spending a bit of time with the kids as well. Two of them are coming sailing with me in the SP3 too, so that will be great."

## PASSED OVER BY RORC?

Despite Chieftain's excellent performances in 2006, the boat was controversially passed over for the RORC Somerset Memorial Trophy Yacht of the Year. Although he was very frustrated by the decision, O'Rourke told Afloat that he preferred not to dwell on the matter, choosing instead to focus on the future. But an analysis of the table below shows that Chieftain performed better than the winner Slingshot in each of the races the two were entered.

Slingshot is a two-handed boat, and the RORC press release emphasised this is their choice for boat of the year. However, the previous winner, Aera, was fully crewed, like Chieftain.

### 2006 Racing comparison of Chieftain & Slingshot

	Chieftain	Miles	Slingshot	Miles
<b>December</b>				
Sydney-Hobart	1st Class, 4th Overall	750nm	DNS	
<b>14 - 16 April</b>				
Red Funnel	2nd SZ	120nm	DNS	
<b>29 April</b>				
Cevantes	1st	160nm	33rd	160nm
<b>30 April</b>				
LeHarve Cowes	1st	160nm	DNS	
<b>12 May</b>				
De Guingand	3rd	160nm	12th	160nm
<b>27 May</b>				
Myth of Malham	1st	180nm	7th	180nm
<b>9 June</b>				
Fortis UK IRC	1st SZ	120nm	DNS	
<b>17 June</b>				
Morgan Cup	DNS	9th	180nm	
<b>1 July</b>				
Around Ireland	1st SZ & 19th Overall	750nm	DNS	
<b>13 July</b>				
Dinard	DNS	10th	160nm	
<b>22 July</b>				
Channell	DNS	12th	180nm	
<b>6 August</b>				
La Rochelle	DNS		1st	450nm
<b>7 August</b>				
RBI UK & Ire	1st SZ & 1st Overall	1760nm	DNS	
<b>26 August</b>				
Ouistreham	DNS	3rd	110nm	
<b>1 September</b>				
Cascais	1st SZ & 1st Overall	750nm	5th	750nm
<b>Total Miles Raced to September</b>	4,910nm			2,330nm

### 2006 Season Results:

<b>Jan</b>	700-Mile Rolex Sydney Hobart	Class 0	1st
<b>April</b>	Red Funnel Race Cowes	Class Super Z	2nd
<b>April</b>	Cowes - LeHarve Cervantes Trophy	Overall & SZ Class	1st
<b>April</b>	LeHarve - Cowes	Overall & SZ Class	1st
<b>May</b>	Cowes - Cherbourg De Guingand Bowl	Overall & SZ	3rd
<b>May</b>	Cowes - Dieppe Myth of Malham	Overall & SZ	1st
<b>June</b>	UK IRC Nationals Cowes	SZ	1st
<b>July</b>	BMW Around Ireland	SZ	1st
<b>July</b>	Cork Week	SZ	2nd
<b>Aug</b>	Seven Star Round Britain & Ireland	Overall & SZ	1st
<b>Sept</b>	Cowes to Cascais	Overall & SZ	1st



# TWO ENGINES ROUND IRELAND


RORY BOLTON REALISED HIS DREAMS THIS SUMMER WHEN HE TOOK A RIB AROUND IRELAND OVER SIX DAYS

Powering around Ireland was something I had wanted to do for many years. Together with Jim Keegan from the newly-launched Dún Laoghaire Powerboat School, I finally saw the dream realised this summer.

We planned the trip for a number of months, focussing on trying to overcome the range of issues that could potentially cause us problems during the trip. We planned to spend at least a week at sea, and knew this would grow if we hit bad weather. Major problems to be overcome included where to stop for fuel and overnight, the boat's range, its capabilities and those of the crew, the best route to take, essential kit and where to carry it, the best time to start the challenge, the types of conditions we were likely to encounter, communications with our shore team, the availability of fuel and what spares to bring.

All of these issues had to be sorted if the trip was to go ahead, and we discovered the answers to most of our questions through research and practice runs. We went out on two runs before the trip – one to Wicklow and the other to Arklow. This gave us some idea of what our fuel consumption would be, along with the boat's range, the kit needed and our own capabilities.

Three months of planning suddenly became reality a week before the planned departure as we began to prepare the boat in earnest. The evening before our start, the boat was fully loaded with all equipment and the support jeep – with Kyron O'Gorman of Irish Youth Sailing Club on board – was loaded with enough to nearly rebuild the two engines.



^  
Arriving into Killary from Dingle on the longest leg (12 hours) and the wettest day

< All charged up and ready to go for the start of the trip at Dún Laoghaire

## > DAY 1

Day one would take us from Dún Laoghaire to Crosshaven in Co Cork, a distance of 168.5 miles over 8.5 hours. We departed Dún Laoghaire at 8am in ideal conditions – flat seas and light winds. We couldn't believe our luck as we glided on down the coast, passing our practice grounds and venturing into new waters.

We arrived in Kilmore Quay at 1pm where we were met by Kyron. After taking fuel on board, we headed back out to sea, gliding on into Crosshaven in perfect conditions. We arrived alongside the marina at 7.30pm and pulled the boat up alongside the marina. Fuel for the next day proved a problem initially – our first stop was the Royal Cork Yacht Club but they wouldn't supply us with fuel because we weren't members of the club. Happily, the local petrol station in Carrigaline was happy to serve us, even if they were a little suspicious of our request for 200 litres of fuel and a lighter.

## > DAY 2

Our planned leg for day two was from Crosshaven to Castletownbere. Looking at the weather forecast and the sea state, we decide to attempt a longer leg from Crosshaven to Dingle. Our original estimate on time was just four and half hours to Castletownbere but the longer leg to Dingle would bring it to about six and half hours. We left at 9am that morning and the sea conditions were still light. We stopped for a short spell two miles off the Fastnet to top the tanks and our own stomachs. It was a bit bumpy crossing the main bays such as Bantry and Kenmare but overall we enjoyed a relatively smooth trip. The shorter distance – of just over 124 nautical miles – meant we didn't have to pull in to refuel, so we arrived in Dingle at around 4pm and got a berth on the crowded marina.

Departing Killary to Sligo. The punt is an expedition in itself



## > DAY 3

The day began with clouds and wind – not good news for our trip. Drizzly rain and a force six from the North West left us feeling nervous, and the forecast didn't hold out too much hope for an improvement. The tail end of tropical storm Debbie was due to hit the following day, so we decided to alter our plans once more, aiming to push on for Killary Harbour instead of stopping off in Kilrush as planned.

We left Dingle at 7am and even got an escort out of the harbour by Fungi, the famous dolphin. It was tough going once we rounded Sleah Head and passed the Blaskets. The sea was rough but we continued on, knowing that we had the option to stop at Kilrush if we felt the weather was taking a turn for the worst. Once we reached Loop Head we had to make a decision whether to stop at Kilrush or continue on. We took the decision to push on to Kilkee, where we planned to refuel and take on some food.

At this stage in the journey the two of us were soaked to the bone, with the wet gear only lasting about three hours. After some time we stopped to check our position, and realised that we had actually passed Kilkee by about five miles. This brought one of the lowest points in the trip, as we travelled back in worsening conditions to the seaside town.

We arrived at Kilkee at around 1pm, stopped for a short break to refuel and eat and then carried on. Most of the local mariners were staying ashore because of the worsening conditions. In the support jeep, Kyron was having a worse time than us – even if only for a few minutes. As we left Kilkee, he heard a message on Channel 70 calling Kilkee coastguard together. He feared the worst for us, as we were the only vessel at sea in the area. However, after five minutes he managed to contact us via mobile phone and we later discovered the call was for a person who had fallen from a cliff.

We arrived in Killary at about 8.30pm, after over 12 hours at sea. Stepping ashore, we looked like two drunks, staggering with jelly legs. Both of us wanted to collapse but we had to take the tanks up to the local petrol station/pub in Leenan which luckily had enough fuel to give us. After refuelling we put the boat on a mooring kindly offered to us by Killary Adventure Company and went to get some food and collapse into bed. Day 3 was without a doubt the toughest one of the trip.



## > DAY 4

We checked the forecast and discovered, incredibly, that the tropical storm had passed to one side of Ireland, leaving us with weather much the same as the last day. We departed at 11am, later than usual following to a well-needed lie-in. The planned route was from Killary to Sligo. The first half of the trip was quite lumpy as the wind was still around a force six and coming from the North West. We got a short break from the pounding passing on the inside of the Inishkea Islands. We stopped here for quick snack and to pour some fuel from the jerry tanks to the tank.

Once we got up and around Erris head and the Stags and started to travel east, the ride wasn't so bad because we had it mostly behind us. The last leg from the Stags to Sligo bay felt like it went on forever – in fact, it was one of the longer legs at about 40 miles. We arrived into Sligo harbour at about 6pm and managed to find our way through the harbour and alongside a trawler. After meeting up with a member of Sligo Yacht Club, who helped organise fuel and a berth for the boat, the accommodation proved the next problem. The hotel we had booked had come down with an outbreak of 'flu, and we were advised to stay elsewhere. But the only place available was the Radisson SAS Sligo. In we arrived to the Radisson, still dressed in our soaking foul gear. After a quick dip in the Jacuzzi we went back to our rooms to see the tariff on the wall. €400 a night! Oh shit! Happily, we were to discover later that Kyron had cut a deal with the hotel.

## > DAY 5

The forecast was looking kinder than in previous days, with lighter winds and a little rain in the afternoon. Kyron advised us to sleep on and get a good breakfast. At this stage we were over half way round Ireland and were making good time. We left Sligo at 11am, still recovering from the bouncing we suffered on the previous day. Sea conditions were generally quite smooth. It started drizzling rain once we rounded Bloody Foreland and by the time we hit Malin Head it was pouring. Visibility started to close in with the low lying cloud. Seeing lobster pots, we altered course to starboard to give them a wide berth but we were snagged in a long trailing line. After a short stop to unwind (not in the relaxed sense) we continued on our course, keeping a close eye out for further obstacles. Visibility continued to close as we progressed and it was down to about a half mile by the time we reached the safe water mark at the entrance to Lough Foyle. Happily, it was only a short hop from there to the entrance of the river Bann. We cruised down the river at about 5 knots, taking around 20 minutes to reach the marina. Again Kyron met us on the marina to take our ropes as we were weather beaten.



## > DAY 6

We fuelled up at the marina and started up the engines for the final leg home. Again the forecast was in our favour with the wind from the west due to swing southerly later. We got out of the river at 9.30am and off we went, keeping relatively close to the coast for protection from the wind. There was more traffic to be aware of on this part of the journey, especially the fast ferries operating between the North and Scotland (those P&O ferries are fast!). The most surprising thing was the fact that you could see Scotland so clearly – at one stage we were just 13 miles from it.

We stopped in Carlingford Lough for fuel and some lunch, before getting away again, pushing further down the Irish Sea and getting closer and closer to familiar territory. Both of us were relieved to see the Rockabill, a well known landmark in North Dublin. As we approached Skerries we saw something odd appear and disappear in the water. The second time we saw it, we both knew it was a whale. This was one of the highlights of the trip. We made our final pit stop off Lambay, and knew we were near home when Kyron told us he was stuck in traffic on the M50.

The last hours were on familiar water but increasingly tough as the wind had swung around to come from the south and had started to pick up. The worst spot came as we were rounding the Baily, a place known to be rough at the best of times. We arrived at the Irish Youth Sailing Club in Dun Laoghaire at 7pm, to be met by a small welcoming party.



Sligo to Coleraine. Final pointers from the metal man

## THE LESSONS

For anyone considering a trip like this, a number of lessons learned from our experience may be useful. Firstly, our ground crew's insistence from the start that we have separate rooms really paid off, as no-one suffered cabin fever and we were still talking and planning right to the end.

With a helmsman and engineer on board, we both had separate and dedicated responsibilities, making for an easier and conflict free voyage.

Although we wouldn't have left on the journey without pod seats on the boat, we didn't sit down once during its entire duration. That's a lot of time on your feet! The advantage of pod seats, however, is that even if you don't sit on them, they are very useful for stabilising yourself in heavy weather.

The one item that was missing from the boat was a visor, which would have made the journey a little more comfortable and a good bit drier.

We carried enough spares between the boat and jeep to almost rebuild two engines. But Murphy's Law applied – because we had it, we didn't need any of it!

## SPONSORS

BIM kindly provided us with their rib for the challenge – a 7.4 metre tornado powered by twin 100hp four stroke. They upgraded a lot of the equipment on board for the challenge, including the GPS and an emergency positioning beacon (EPIRB). Without BIM and the support of their staff, the challenge wouldn't have happened. Special thanks to Donal Maguire, Declan O'Donoghue and Ray Murray.

Killen Marine provided a full service on the two engines, including timing belts, oil change, etc. They also gave us a large number of spare parts and had expertise on standby (just in case). Taylor Signs provided us with financial support, as did David Court. Solas Marine helped us with a safety check and offered safety equipment. Western Marine provided us with clothing.

For two decades between 1968 and 1998, the Half Ton Class was very strong in Ireland. This was because the boats – which were between 29 feet and 32 feet overall, and designed to the IOR Rule – were considered to be a manageable and economical size.

During that period many Half Tonners were both designed and/or built in Ireland. Some were one-off or Prototypes, while others were production cruiser racers.

Among the most remarkable boats built during that period was Brainstorm, designed by George O'Brien Kennedy in 1973. She was home-built by Donal Conlon and Bert O'Mahony in plywood in a shed on Lough Key in Co Roscommon,

with double chine layout similar to an Enterprise dinghy. It was the most economical material for one-off boats at a time when there was not enough funding to construct a mould to be reused for a subsequent production.

O'Brien Kennedy is well known in Ireland for his more orthodox designs such as the IDRA 14. Brainstorm incorporated all the ideas of the day which were either 'rule beating' or performance enhancing. She had a masthead rig with the mast located exactly midships. The IOR rule at the time penalised boats with large mainsails and small headsails. This idea worked well for windward work but she performed poorly on reaching and running.

AS DÚN LAOGHAIRE PREPARES TO HOST THE HALF TON CLASSICS CUP, ORGANISERS ARE TRYING TO TRACK DOWN MANY POTENTIAL ENTRANTS

# NO HALF MEASURES



**King One** This 30-footer – long based in Ireland – won the Half Ton Worlds for multiple Olympic medallist Paul Elvstrom of Denmark a very long time ago. New owner Dave Cullen is re-vamping her for the rapidly reviving Half Ton Worlds, which is going to be staged next year in Dublin Bay as part of the Dún Laoghaire Regatta, and will in itself attract a large and glitzy fleet. It is hoped that Paul Elvstrom will make an appearance. Sailing history anoraks will recall that the 'Ton Cup' series started with a revival of the One Ton Cup, the original of which was presented a zillion years ago by Ireland's own Earl of Granard, later to be Commodore of the National YC. Evidently a man for good deeds, unfortunately he is best remembered as having something to do with the calamitous introduction of the grey squirrel to Ireland in 1911

Photo: David Branigan

The next brilliant idea was to have two rudders, one near to bow and one near the stern. The bow rudder or 'canard', which was quite small in surface area, was controlled by a pegstay mechanism in the cockpit to give the hull lift. It is said to have worked well but would have benefited from a better control mechanism.

This idea is still being used by some America's Cup boats. Where is Brainstorm now? What is most remarkable is the fact that the winner of the Ecover Half Ton Classics Cup in 2006 at Dinard was a similar hull form to Brainstorm but with a more conventional sailplan and mast location.

Another of the remarkable boats built during that period was Silver (Mackerel) Shamrock, designed by Ron Holland in 1975. She won the Half Ton Cup in Trieste, Italy in 1976. She is a remarkable boat, both for her colour scheme and for being a centreboarder with a lifting keel. She was last heard of in north county Wexford, where she was being renovated. What is she called, and where is she now?

One of the most successful Half Ton boats was neither designed nor built in Ireland. Swuzzlebubble, designed by Bruce Farr in New Zealand, was also built in plywood but with a curved hull form and campaigned by such people as Robert Dix and Bruce Lyster, who won most of the ISORA trophies in her. She was one of the most remarkable boats because of her high performance and unusually wide stern configuration. But what is she called now, and where is she?

A successful Irish designed and built boat of 1984 was Sk'Boo, designed by

Chris Boyd of Belfast and built by Harland and Wolff. She was constructed from the same mould as the better-known Puppeteer 3300, but with reduced freeboard. She competed in the Half Ton Cup in Troon, Scotland in 1984. The construction was much lighter than the production model and had a unique deck moulding with a tiny coachroof. She was a remarkable boat. The lightest of her day, she excelled in light airs due to her low wetted surface area. Her sail number was 1690 and she carried a battle flag with King Billy on his white charger. When sailed by Jim Poole she won the Irish Half Ton Championships. She was renamed Renegade and was last seen on the Royal Irish Yacht Club moorings. Where is she now?

Feenor won every ISORA trophy in the Irish Sea when sailed by Jim Poole. She was a Ron Holland design from 1977, and was described as a Silver Jubilee. She competed in the Half Ton Cup in Poole in 1978 but didn't perform well against the one-off designs such as Waverider, which has competed in the last two Ecover Half Ton Classic Cups. Feenor has not been seen sailing in Irish waters since Jim Poole died in an accident. Where is she now? Her sister ship, Silver-Mite, is still racing out of Crosshaven.

Golden Shamrock was the pre-production plywood version of the Club Shamrocks, designed and built by Ron Holland at Southern Boatyard. Challenge was a Nicholson 30, campaigned with great success in Dublin Bay in the 1970s. Where is she now?

Flash (now Hurricane Humphrey) was designed by Rob Humphreys and was the most successful UK boat in the Half

Ton Cup in Troon where she finished second. She performed well in Ireland in the 1990s after John Corby designed a new keel for her. She was used as the mould for the MGHS30 series of production boats. Humphrey Go Kart, winner of Cork Week, was one of this series, as were Redeye (aka Big Picture), and Linn Hi Fi, which was winner of the Irish Half Ton Cup in the 1980s when sailed by Robert Dix.

Silver Shadow was one of the largest Half Tonners built by Ron Holland. She carried a small keel to ensure that she stayed within class. This resulted in her being nicknamed Silver Broach. She was ultimately given the keel which she deserved. Where is she now, and is she still called Silver Shadow?

Stephen Jones was a leading British designer, and he designed Eliminator as a pre-production version of the Eliminator 32. She is currently based in Lough Derg.

Little Egypt, designed by Norlin, was a Scandinavian Scampi design which won the Half Ton Cup in 1969, 1970 and 1971.

Country Girl, designed by Doug Pederson, was campaigned with much success by many owners such as Sean Flood and Oliver Sheehy. At 29', she was a small Half Tonner, but could out-perform boats much larger than herself. She was last seen racing out of Arklow.

Space Odyssey was designed by Joubert Niveltdt and sailed in the UK as Ace and also under the name Tom Bombadil. She won the Howth ISORA week.

All of these boats will qualify to compete in the Ecover Half Ton Classics Cup in Dún Laoghaire in 2007.

## MANY PRODUCTION BOATS DERIVED FROM THE ONE-OFF RACEBOATS SUCH AS:

Albin Ballad, Armagnac, Arpege, Banner 28S, Beneteau First 30, First 30 E (based on King One which won the Cup in 1981 in Poole) and First Envol, Club 86, Comfort 30, Contention 30, Contest 31HT, Delph 28, Dione 980, Elizabethan 29, Feeling 850S (based on Freelance, which won the cup in 1983), Finnflyer 31, Folie Douce, Gib'Sea 90 Plus, Golden Shamrock, Van de Stadt HB31, Hustler SJ 30, Hustler 32, Impensable, Jeanneau Rush, Joker S30, Kalik 30, Kloopmans 31 Nova, Mach 1, Maestro 31, Mallard 9m, Mistral 31, Mistress 32, Nicholson 30, Pion, Quasar 31, S+S6.6, Scampi, She 31, Silver Shamrock, Starlight, Still 900, Super Arlequin, Super Challenger, Trapper 950, UFO 31, Waarship ton, Wavelength 30, Westerly GK29, X Yachts X-95.

**Many people in Ireland own boats of these designs, and they are welcome to take part in the Ecover Half Ton Classics Cup**



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300-mile coastal race from Dun Laoghaire  
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**Starts Dun Laoghaire on Sunday, 10 June 2007**

Prize giving Gala night at the Dingle  
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Ideal start for a summer cruise  
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The Dun Laoghaire to Dingle Race is run by the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire in association with Cumann Bádóirí Naomh Bhréanainn, Dingle, under the IRC handicapping system and is open to Monohull yachts of 30ft. LOA or over.

For Notice of Race and Entry Form see [www.nyc.ie](http://www.nyc.ie) or contact:

Race Organiser, Dun Laoghaire  
to Dingle Race, National Yacht Club,  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

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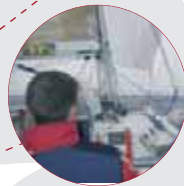
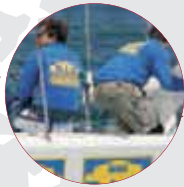
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A MORE VARIED TEST OF PURE SEAMANSHIP THAN ITS TRANSATLANTIC COUNTERPARTS, THE SHETLAND ROUND BRITAIN & IRELAND DRAWS THE TOP NAMES IN OCEAN SAILING. TRADITIONALLY, WHEN THE WEATHER DETERIORATES, THE SAILOR STANDS OFFSHORE IN DEEPER WATER, BUT THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE WHEN THE COURSE IS AROUND OUR ISLANDS. WITH OUR CHANGES OF WEATHER AND LARGE TIDAL RANGES, THE RACE IS ACCEPTED AS A UNIQUE 2000 MILE CHALLENGE TO THE SHORT-HANDED SAILOR.



# ISLAND HOPPING

THE ROUND BRITAIN AND IRELAND IS NOT FOR THE FAINT-HEARTED, WRITES MICK LIDDY.



Established in 1966, the event is held every four years, starting and finishing in Plymouth. There are four compulsory stops of 48 hours which provide the opportunity for competitors to rest, make repairs and socialise.

The race, which began last year on June 11, is open to all yachts and multihulls between 30' and 50' in length, crewed by two people only. The course is clockwise around all of Great Britain & Ireland, and there are compulsory stops at Kinsale, Barra, Lerwick and Lowestoft.

I am again very grateful to Stuart Fogarty and AFA O'Meara Advertising for sponsoring me in this event. AFA O'Meara had also sponsored me last year for my round Ireland record and I was delighted to be working with them again. If it were not for people like Stuart, sailors like me would not have the opportunity to take part in such amazing challenges.

We started with an impressive line-up, including Pete Goss and speed record chaser Paul Larsen in their new 30 FT trimaran. Our Open Class also contained a pool of talent with Hans Plans and his new yacht, Roaring Again (RA). Roaring Again is a newer and improved version of our yacht, Roaring Forty (RF). It has a deeper keel, taller mast, lighter weight and more water ballast. JanKees Lampe was also entered in his new La Promesse (LP) and this talented sailor politely informed us that he was going to push his boat all the way around the course.

Getting to the start line had been tough for Michel Kleinjans and I as we had suffered engine trouble on the delivery trip to Plymouth. Having consulted a mechanic there he assured us that he would have it fixed for the start, which he failed to do. So with only two of three cylinders firing the engine was running for emergencies only but could not be relied on for charging our batteries and, more importantly, driving the pump for the 1,000kg of water ballast. A solution had to be found and that came in the form of a petrol-powered water pump and separate petrol-powered generator. But both items had to be contained outside the cabin due to fumes and all attachments had to be led into the cockpit. So with this set in place and much sticky flex and cables we had a fully working if not ideal system. A new engine was ordered for Kinsale.

For the monohull start, we began alongside Roaring Again (RA). They held a narrow lead over us as we led the fleet through Plymouth Harbour Mouth heading for Wolfe Rock. On reaching open water the breeze was light with small choppy seas. Halfway to the Wolfe Rock we had passed all but three of the multi fleet and passed just inside RA at the rock to take the lead of the mono fleet.

Our first night of the race was frustrating as we battled strong tides, lumpy seas and little winds. Twenty sail changes in the first night, good for breaking the hands in! As we rounded Bishop Rock on the South West corner of England the breeze picked up to a fetch as we set course for Bulman Rock, Kinsale. This breeze angle favoured the multi and within hours they came from the horizon to overtake us while we held onto our lead in the mono fleet.

Many of the yachts were using a tracking device from [www.oceanracetrack.com](http://www.oceanracetrack.com). It gave a position report on all yachts from the tracker every two hours. It's a simple device that only uses 1.5 amp for 8 seconds every two hours while it is transmitting and needs no human interface. From all levels I found this a great system – family members had peace of mind as they got real time position updates and friends who know nothing about sailing could enjoy checking our progress. But it had its disadvantages in that we could see our main competitors catching up on us as we approached Kinsale. We finished only 20 minutes ahead of RA and just under an hour ahead of LP. It was a great feeling to be the only 'Paddy' in the race leading the mono fleet into Kinsale.

With just 12 hours to the restart, our new engine arrived from Holland and Hugh Cassidy, in true form and style, completed the change in less than two hours. No more engine worries for the rest of the race.

Leg two to Barra, West of Scotland, started again in steady light air. In this straight line sailing we were beaten for pace by RA but only just. A fetch up that west coast to Eagle Island finally saw the breeze turn to the south west and increase to 40 knots at times. Here we were recording highs of 22 knots in great sailing conditions. RA was still ahead but we were closing all the time as we rallied in the heavier airs. LP, who had gone 65NM west of Eagle and who was at one stage 45NM behind us, was now flying in her favourite conditions. On reaching Barra we were 30min behind RA and 40min ahead of LP. The other 3 opens were now about five hours behind and a gap was opening.

Barra was an enjoyable stop and a great chance to meet the other competitors. It was also our first chance to get some R&R after the panic of pre start and the engine change in Kinsale. We completed some minor boat repairs and got our head around the weather for the next leg which was indicating a big blow.



Again we all started close together in the light airs, 70 minutes separating the three of us. Our next turning point was the old British Military Isle of St Kilda. Approximately 50NM south of St Kilda the breeze increased to 40-45 knots. We had gone from beating in light airs with a head sail to fetching with Code Zero, to Big A-Sail, to Heavy A-Sail and finally onto No 4 and two reefs all within two hours. This was not an uncommon practice throughout the race as we desperately tried to keep the boat going at 100% all of the time. The racing was just too close not to make every little bit count.

At St Kilda we turned the corner and headed north east to Shetland Islands. As we passed St Kilda we retook the lead. We were now heading into a depression of L988 midway between St Kilda and the Shetland Islands. The fleet had broken into two groups, those who decided to leave Barra and those who stayed to avoid the heavy airs. As we headed into the depression the breeze blew up to a max of 50 knots as we routed slightly north of track to stay out of the centre of the low. These were easy miles in this boat as the auto pilot had no problems steering with two reefs and No 4 up to 40 knots.

On converging at the most northerly point on the course, Muckle Flugga on the north of the Shetlands, we were 3NM behind LP, while RA had dropped 15NM behind us. The breeze was now southerly which meant a beat to Lerwick which would suit our Open 40 better than LP who had just had 300NM of favourable downwind conditions. Four hours later we were back in the lead after LP made a mistake with the tide. We arrived at Lerwick with the narrowest of leads and crossed the finish line just four minutes ahead after nearly 1400NM of ocean racing.

Lerwick was a very welcome stop. It was a busy time and I spent nearly eight hours on the first day repairing a blown Code Zero, which was going to play a big part in the final two legs to the finish.

The fourth leg was a slow battle to Lowestoft, on the south east corner of England. We had little over 8 knots in the first 36 hours of the leg but a north easterly eventually filled in to carry us south into warmer conditions. In the light downwind conditions LP again got ahead of us but only just. Twenty minutes separated LP and ourselves as we crossed the finish line, whilst RA was 90min behind in what had been a disappointing leg for them. Lowestoft was a quiet stop and our focus was fully on the weather for the final leg.

The last leg was going to be a painful affair with an extremely slack high pressure. The big decision was whether to go inside or outside the shallow banks on the English SE corner. Factoring in tide and a shorter distance to travel, we headed inshore while LP went outside looking for more breeze. On converging after the banks we were only 1min behind them. We traded gybes with them inshore in a land breeze that was producing up to 25 knots from behind. Neither of us dared to take down our big kites and pushed our boats to the limit.

At 0300 hours that morning, we saw LP's green nav light as they pass behind us on opposite tack, we were on a starboard tack heading inshore out of the tide. We were ahead again but only just. The next day we had to make our final big decision, stick with LP who seemed to be heading inshore as we approached the Isle of Wight or head out into the Channel where we expected slightly more breeze. The high pressure was now slack with little or no pressure gradient. If we went offshore we would have to sail a greater distance than LP but we believed that we would be able to avail of slightly more breeze. So south to France we proceeded with our fingers crossed.

Things were not going our way when we became caught on a 30M drifting net which took some effort to detach. But our gamble paid off as we arrived east of start point to discover we were now 8NM ahead.

Eventually, we made to Plymouth under full kite, finishing at 1701 hours in front of the Royal Yacht SQN, taking mono line honours and winning the Open Class fleet. LP followed us in at 18.53, behind them followed RA at 19.27 hours and then the rest of the fleet.

It had been an exciting hard race with a little bit of everything in it. We had competed against some of the top short handed sailors in the world. I had been very lucky to have the chance to race with someone like Michel Kleinjans, who is at the top of this sport and I wish him well for his single handed round the world trip next year.





AN OUTSTANDING REPUTATION FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE, DIRECT AGENCIES FOR SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING BRANDS AND UNRIVALLED RELIABILITY IN THE AREAS OF SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE ARE AMONG THE FACTORS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ONGOING SUCCESS OF MGM BOATS, NOW WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF IRELAND'S LEADING BOAT DISTRIBUTORS.

Operating from offices and boatyard at Dún Laoghaire's Coal Harbour (and an office in Belfast too), the company was established in 1997 by brothers Martin and Gerry Salmon, both of whom had extensive previous experience in boatbuilding, servicing and sales.

MGM has since grown to a staff of 12, a 2-acre yard that can accommodate up to 45 boats of varying sizes, the biggest boat travelhoist (40-ton capacity) on the East Coast and direct-from-factory dealerships for such major international brands as Sunseeker, Aquador, Jeanneau and Maxum. In addition, the company is an approved Volvo Penta marine engines dealer and service agent.



Concentrating initially on servicing from a base in Malahide, MGM gained its first dealership in its second year with the agency for Aquador Boats which has since become one of Ireland's biggest selling range of powerboats.

Support from the Dublin City Enterprise Board allowed the company to grow further and the Northern Ireland connection began in 1999 when Killyleagh-based boat dealer John O'Kane joined the team. A year later, Ross O'Leary brought his sailing experience to the company as it added sailing craft to its powerboat selection.

In 2003, MGM was appointed as a main distributor by Sunseeker, a move that coincided with its move to its present site at the Coal Harbour. A year earlier, the company beat 14 other bidders for the rights to provide a boatyard to service the new Dún Laoghaire Marina berth-holders, a decision fully endorsed by the Harbour Company.

Since then, MGM has grown steadily, providing a unique 7-days-a-week facility all-year round and building on its reputation for selling high quality boats from the world's top manufacturers. The company has a 100% Customer Satisfaction Policy and all boats sold come complete with full nationwide product support, backed up by MGM's factory-trained engineers.





TRUSTED BY THE  
INDUSTRY'S LEADERS



#### SUNSEEKER

MGM became a main Distributor for Sunseeker International in 2003. A British company based in Poole, it has been developing for over 30 years under the leadership of Robert Braithwaite, one of the most respected figures in the global marine industry. The company has aimed to continually push design and technology forward with inspirational innovation and exceptional quality and so respond to customers' demands.

Although Sunseeker today may be producing boats that are bigger, better and faster, one thing remains constant. Each boat retains the traditional values of craftsmanship and attention to detail for which Sunseeker is renowned.

Sunseeker currently builds craft from 35ft up to 125ft. In 2000, it successfully entered into the development of craft over the 100ft mark with its superb 105 Yacht and this year will see the launch of a new 37-metre Trideck Yacht.

A global leader in the design and build of luxury motoryachts, Sunseeker is widely recognised as the pre-eminent marine brand in the world today, with a name for comfort, performance and innovative design.

"I am very selective when it comes to appointing Distributors. MGM Boats are true connoisseurs in all departments and I am proud to have them as part of the Sunseeker family. They provide a top class service to our clients and have excelled in boat sales well beyond our expectations."

**Robert Braithwaite MBE, MD, Sunseeker International Ltd.**



Jeanneau yachts



Jeanneau powerboats



Maxum sportsboats and sportscruisers



Aquador motorboats



## AQUADOR

Built in Finland and now one of Scandinavia's growing boat brands, Aquador represents the high-end powerboat sector up to 10 metres in size.

Ideal for Irish weather and sea conditions and for use on both rivers and sea, Aquador has been a notable success in Ireland over the years.

The Aquador range, combining Scandinavian design and thinking with high quality materials and workmanship, includes sports boats and mini cruisers between 21 and 32 feet. Distinctive deep V-hulls give a low centre of gravity and exceptional stability, making them suitable for such diverse uses as skiing and fishing as well as leisure cruising.

Subsidiary ranges within the Aquador family are the more budget-orientated Bella and Flipper models which have also proved particularly popular across all markets. The range includes runabouts, day cruisers and live-on-board cruisers, all designed to withstand the rigours of northern European sea and climate conditions.

"We are very proud of MGM Boats who are one of our longest-serving dealers. They are solely responsible for the sale of over 200 of our products in Ireland to date and this was achieved through their strong commitment to customer care".

**Raimo Sonninen, Founder and MD of Aquador, Bella, Flipper Boats**

The Sunseeker Portofino making its Irish debut on the MGM boats stand at the Dublin Boat Show



## MAXUM

Premium materials, intelligent design and engineering, and superior craftsmanship are the foundation stones of Maxum, now considered one of marine industry's greatest success stories.

Its growth dates back to 1987 with the formation of US Marine which created brands such as Bayliner and then adapted to market opportunities to introduce new product lines such as Maxum to meet customer demand.

Today, Maxum boats range from 18ft. runabouts to 42ft cruisers and everything in between.

MGM has been the Irish distributor of its range of sports boats and cruisers since 2005 in a relationship that has seen impressive sales of the US-built craft.

"When we went searching for a dealer to serve us in Ireland, we looked for a company with long standing in the industry and a good reputation in service and after-care. MGM Boats has the perfect team in place to nurture and advance the Maxum brand in Ireland".

**Katie Hansen, Maxum Boats USA**

## JEANNEAU

One of the largest leisure yacht builders in the world, Jeanneau was established in 1957 and is simply one of the best known names in the global industry. Over time, it has developed an extensive choice of sailing and powered craft which have proved popular in every market.

MGM has had outstanding success with the Jeanneau range, with sales per capita of population well ahead of the European average.

On the sailing front, Jeanneau offers a dozen yachts in Sun Odyssey range of cruisers, from 29ft to 54ft, the Sun Odyssey 36i in the intermediate size, and the Sun 2000 and 2500 at the smaller end of the scale. Jeanneau boats can be seen in every major marina and harbour in Ireland, such has been its success in the market here.

The power selection offers three ranges. The Leader is a range of powerboat runabouts with either outboard or inboard engines. The Merry Fisher range is ideal as a sports cruiser, especially if fishing is an important consideration, while the Prestige range includes six sports cruisers with high levels of comfort and accommodation.

"MGM are excellent ambassadors in Dublin for Jeanneau and have evolved to become one of our most successful European dealers. Their strong investment in after-sales Service has truly paid off."

**Michel Francois, Jeanneau Export Department**

# DON'T SP LASH OUT!

BRIAN J GOGGIN OFFERS SOME  
TIMELY ADVICE TO ANYONE  
THINKING OF STARTING OUT ON  
INLAND WATERS

You have some money to spare and you think it would be nice to buy a boat. You don't want to be bothered about tides and navigation and all that stuff, so you reckon you'll get something to use on the inland waterways. But there's a huge range of boats, and some of the prices are fairly huge too. So where do you start?

First of all, welcome to the inland waterways community. On the whole, the waterways are a friendly place, where people are happy to help — and especially to offer advice to newcomers. And much inland boating is a family activity, with something to offer everyone. The good news is that you can get started a lot more cheaply than you might expect.

There are all sorts of activities on the inland waterways, including dinghy-sailing, angling, scuba-diving, water-skiing, rowing and canoeing. But this article concentrates on cruising: going off on a boat and sleeping aboard, whether for a short weekend trip or for several weeks (or months, if you're lucky).

## THE NATURE OF INLAND WATERWAYS

Seven Irish inland waterways are managed by Waterways Ireland: the Shannon (river, lakes large and small, some short canalised sections, a few locks), the Erne (mostly island-studded lakes), the Barrow and the Lower Bann (rivers with locks), the Grand and Royal Canals (stillwater canals with many locks), the Shannon–Erne Waterway (a bit of everything). Other navigable waterways include Lough Neagh, the Corrib, the Suir (up to Carrick) and the Slaney.

A small fast cruiser at Killaloe on the Shannon



A small fibreglass cruiser



A well-cared-for wooden cruiser



A well-equipped family cruiser



Aquarelle, a large home-built steel cruiser seen shortly after launch in Carrick-on-Suir



Cruiser Leitrim Star on the Grand Canal

The Irish inland waterways offer a wonderful mixture of rivers, lakes and canals. Within a couple of hours you can be tied up in a different harbour in a different county, meeting a different group of people, and (in most cases) with no need to worry about tides or large commercial vessels.

There are some differences between boating at sea and boating inland. An inland boat may spend more of its time in contact with the infrastructure than a seagoing boat: it is more likely to be tied alongside in a harbour or marina than to be moored or anchored out; it will often have to tie up while waiting to go through locks and while in the lock; because the waterways are shallower, there is more chance of touching the bottom (gently or otherwise).

The infrastructure also imposes limits on the sizes of vessels: their draught, their length and beam (if they're going to fit through locks) and their air draught (if they're to fit under bridges). Large sailing boats, for instance, may be happy on Lough Derg but may have to take down their masts to travel upstream through Banagher — and may be too deep for some stretches of river.

The range of boat types available  
There is a huge range of boats available, both new and secondhand. As current owners trade up, their old boats come on the market, and because a well-cared-for boat can last for many years, there is no need to be afraid of starting with an older, secondhand boat.

The numbers of registered inland boats have been increasing for some years. Some of that increase comes from new boats, but secondhand fibreglass (GRP) boats are being imported from Britain and elsewhere, while secondhand steel cruisers from the Netherlands, and narrowboats from Britain, are becoming more popular.

The three principal boatbuilding materials are wood, GRP and steel. A wooden boat that is well looked after can be a thing of beauty, but it does demand a considerable amount of time and attention, so it might not be the best choice for a beginner.

That leaves GRP and steel. The GRP cruiser and the steel narrowboat are very different types; looking at them can illustrate some of the issues involved in choosing a boat.

## THE GRP CRUISER

The vast majority of registered Irish inland boats are GRP cruisers; they're also the most common types of boats in the Shannon and Erne hire fleets. Hulls can last for a very long time, so an older second-hand boat may be good value, but if you insist on spending half a million euro there are new boats available at that price too! Prices will reflect age and condition, including equipment and comfort.

The relatively wide beam enables the cruiser to stand up to waves on the big lakes, as well as providing comfortable accommodation inside. A single-screw boat (as used by most hire firms) has some protection for its propeller; some twin-screw boats have propellers exposed to either side, and are therefore more likely to be damaged in shallow waters or along canals. That said, cruisers of suitable draught and air-draught can cope successfully with the Grand, Royal and Barrow.

## THE STEEL NARROWBOAT

The narrowboat has a beam of about 6' 10" or so, designed to fit on England's narrow canals; length can be up to 70', but 60' is about the maximum for the Grand Canal. As with cruisers, internal fit-out of a modern boat can give very fine accommodation and good facilities; older boats may be less well fitted. There are some wider-beam vessels constructed along the same lines as narrowboats, but with perhaps 10' in the beam and correspondingly more accommodation.

The all-steel construction and relatively shallow draught make a narrowboat very well suited to the Grand, Royal and Barrow (which can be shallow), and able to stand up to occasional contact with lock walls or other structures. However, the narrowboat owner needs to be very careful about weather for crossing the large lakes; winds are often lowest early in the morning.



A Dutch steel cruiser in Carrick-on-Suir



A large barge imported from Holland



A ketch sailing on Lough Derg



A large fibreglass cruiser at Portumna on the Shannon



A narrowboat on the Grand Canal



A new barge at Monasterevin

### THE OTHER COSTS

Once you've bought a boat, you'll have to find somewhere to moor it. On the Shannon, that will almost certainly mean a berth in a marina, and in some areas berths are getting scarce. There is no register of vacant marina berths, so there's no alternative to ringing around. There are few marinas on the Grand, Royal and Barrow; most boats are left at locations where boats congregate (eg Sallins, Lowtown, Hazelhatch, all near Dublin, and Shannon Harbour at the western end of the Grand). There is no formal security and few services but, on the other hand, the annual charge (payable to Waterways Ireland) is purely nominal, although that may change when the byelaws are revised.

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

So don't skimp on safety: proper lifejackets for everyone on board, including some for visitors; lifebelts; flares; a VHF radio (the Coastguard monitors the Shannon and there are some lifeboat services on the Shannon and Erne). If you haven't handled boats very much before, invest in some training: the Irish Sailing Association's Inland Waterways Motor Boat Training Scheme provides courses for both skipper and crew.

Amongst the running costs, you must provide for insurance, and it is usual to have quite a high figure for third-party cover: if your boat goes on fire in a crowded harbour, it could do a lot of damage.

### TAKE YOUR TIME

Finally, how to buy. The first lesson is to take your time: talk to boat-owners, look at boats, read the 'For Sale' ads in *Afloat*. Most boat-owners are only too delighted to talk about their own boats, and to tell you how they're better than everybody else's boats, so chat to owners at inland harbours.

If you haven't done much boating previously, consider hiring a boat for a week or two. This may be especially useful if you have a family: it's better to get them enthusiastic about owning a boat before you spend the money. And remember that the kids (if any) are likely to enjoy using a dinghy; can your ideal boat tow one or carry it on deck or on davits?

Your first boat doesn't have to be perfect, and in fact it probably won't be, but owning and using it will give you ideas about what you would like on the next boat. That suggests that you might be best not to spend too much on a first boat.

Before you buy, get the boat surveyed properly. A good survey is well worth the money: you don't want to sink your cash into a boat that's suffering from severe osmosis (GRP) or has hazardous gas or other systems. Don't panic if the survey finds faults (no boat is perfect): if the list is manageable, you may be able to get the price reduced and you'll know what work has to be done on the boat and how urgent each item is.

Waterways Ireland (tel 0719 650 898 Rol, 028 663 23004 NI), the main inland navigation authority, has information on its website [www.waterwaysireland.org](http://www.waterwaysireland.org) about the waterways and has brochures it can send to you. An even bigger website is maintained by the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (tel 1890 924991 Rol, 028 383 25329 NI), a user group, at [www.iwai.ie](http://www.iwai.ie). It includes charts, books and a huge collection of boating links listing surveyors, marinas, diesel suppliers, insurers and everything else you need to buy and run a boat.

## RACING ROUNDUP



## FLORIDA VICTORY FOR BARRINGTON

IRC 2 class at Key West, Florida came down to the wire in the last race with Dún Laoghaire skipper Colm Barrington steering Magic Glove to a second place finish in Race nine to secure overall victory. Barrington was making his Key West debut with his 2006 Ker 50 and placed first or second in six of nine races against a loaded fleet.

"I am absolutely ecstatic about this result," Barrington said. "We made a lot of changes to the boat over the last few months. We tweaked the rig and got some different sails and it all seemed to work out."

Robert Greenhalgh, a member of the victorious ABN AMRO crew in the last Volvo Ocean Race, called tactics aboard Magic Glove, which opened the regatta with a sixth then reeled off three straight bullets. Samba Pa Ti and

Windquest, skippered by John Bertrand, a pair of TP 52s, placed second and third, respectively.

"We came out of the gate with an awful finish, but Robert kept us on the right track and we were fairly consistent the rest of the way," Barrington said. "It was interesting because the TP 52s are so much lighter and quicker. We had to really focus on staying close and saving our time on them."

Magic Glove managed to do exactly that on the last day on Friday January 19th finishing second behind Samba Pa Ti on corrected time. "Today was champagne sailing in every respect. You're out there on emerald waters with the sun shining brightly and the wind blowing strong. It's all quite breathtaking."

Ger O'Rourke's Chieftain from Kilrush (see feature in this issue) finished fourth in the eight boat fleet.

## HANDICAPPING LEAVES CORK DIVIDED

The mismatch between the performance of the Grand Prix boats and the local fleet racing together at home since July was top of the agenda at the Royal Cork in November where plans for next season were announced at a sailing forum.

In an effort to placate owners of production boats who have been outpaced by Commodore's Cup one off designs in class one, the South Coast Offshore Racing Association (SCORA) voted to follow the example of Royal Cork and Kinsale Yacht clubs and separate production and grand prix boats.

"It's a legitimate request for them to have a separate division" said sailmaker Des McWilliam.

At RCYC's October league an arbitrary hull factor number was used to separate the boats while KYC chose to identify production boats by the quantity built.

Now SCORA are to implement a more uniform system for 2007 that will keep production and one offs apart but the contentious issue is defining a 'production' boat.

Whether such a split is a good or a bad thing depends on individual viewpoints but it is clear that the majority of cruiser racer sailors on the south coast were fed up being beaten by the racing machines.

"SCORA has made the right decision because we need people sailing and the situation up until now has discouraged production boat owners" said McWilliam.

Handicapping was a topic at November's ICRA conference in Galway and the fact that Cork has made a class one split might cause other fleets to look at similar solutions to iron our club situations.

The fourth Saab sponsored ICRA nationals are to be held next June and will be held for the first time in Crosshaven.

## RACINGROUNDUP

WEST SERIES ENDS  
IN DISARAY

The inaugural Dubarry West Coast Super League 2006 was a major success with over 70 boats taking part from ten clubs. The league is an extracted series of three events to count from six events on the west coast, which nicely dovetail together. Boats from Foynes Yacht Club, Western Yacht Club, Sligo Yacht Club, Mayo Sailing Club, Clifden Boat Club, Galway Bay Sailing Club, Howth Yacht Club, Royal Cork Yacht Club, Iniscaltera Sailing Club and Tralee Bay Sailing Club competed in the event.

The six events were the Northwest Racing Association annual meet, the West Coast Championships, O'Sullivan Marine 100-mile race, Clifden Regatta, Galway Bay Sailing Club cruiser regatta and the October Series at the Western Yacht Club.

Overall, Disaray led the series, taking the Dubarry trophy and perpetual cup, while all the crew received Gortex Dubarry boots. In Class One, Thomas and Kieran Whelan's X332 Chaos from the Western Yacht Club was the class winner in IRC and Echo with Glenn Cahill's Joie De Vie, one of Galway's J109s, finishing a very close second in IRC and Echo. Also from Galway Bay Sailing Club, Le - Team Midnight finished third on IRC with Rob Allen's Marissa IX finishing third in Echo.

In Class Two, Disaray, racing under two club burgees - the Western Yacht Club and Tralee Bay Sailing Club - dominated with straight wins in all events that counted. They won their class with five firsts and the overall at the West Coast Championships, becoming the West Coast Champions for the second time.

This year there was a radical shake-up in the after guard with Brian O'Sullivan and Peter Clifford co-skippering the Dehler 34 with the McGibney brothers, Raymond on main sheet trim, Rory moving from the cockpit to do bow and Simon looking after where the boat should be going; Rory's son, Fionn, age eleven, looked after the new crew on board as ballast manager, who included Francis Clifford Martin McNamara, Brian Mc Elligiot (Scorpio II) Marcella Dorothy, Bernard Enright, Seanie Callaghan and Denise Twomey.

Garry Fort's K Vector from Tralee Bay Sailing Club finished second in class two with an overall win in the OSM 100 mile race, with John and Edward Conway in Golden Kopper from Foynes Yacht Club finishing third.

Echo in class two was a different story with Golden Kopper finishing first ahead of David Buckley's Boojum from Tralee Bay Sailing Club and Peadar O Laughlin's Sigma 33 Reconnaissance. More information on [www.wiora.org](http://www.wiora.org)



Fintan Cairns - 2007 will be another busy year for ICRA

SPEAKERS DELIGHT  
CRUISER CROWD

A fascinating line-up of guest speakers made the fourth annual conference of the Irish Cruiser Racing Association, held in Galway in November, one to remember.

Jochem Visser spoke on swing keels and race preparation and tuning. David Branigan gave a photo presentation on his tour of duty with the Volvo Ocean Race, complementing some breathtaking footage of the boats in action which featured in Visser's keel presentation. Ireland's participant in the race, Damian Foxall, was his usual modest self in giving recognition to his past achievements, focusing instead on his future goal of the Vendee Globe

and gaining sponsorship for this programme when giving his own presentation. John Corby explained his design philosophy and gave a visual presentation on the building of one of his yachts.

The presentations were interspersed with policy discussions, including 'high tech vs. high spec', in Division 1, a review of the Irish participation in the Rolex Commodores Cup, the announcement that the 2008 ICRA Nationals will be held in Fenit, and the presentation of trophies for ICRA Nationals Division 2 by WIORA. The day ended with the presentation of the Boat of the Year trophy to Ger O'Rourke and the crew of Chieftain.



## NEW RULES FOR COMMODORES

The Royal Ocean Racing Club (RORC), together with Rolex, has announced details for the 2008 Rolex Commodores Cup to be held in Cowes, Isle of Wight.

Once again this tough mix of inshore and offshore races will be compacted into a challenging seven-day racing schedule on the testing waters in and around the Solent. As in 2006 the handicap system will be IRC (rtdorsed) and there will be three rating bands. The international teams will consist of three boats, with one boat from each of the following bands:

### Class 1

1.120 – 1.230 DLR  
(Displacement Length Ratio) 200

### Class 2

1.075 – 1.119 DLR 200

### Class 3

1.025 – 1.074 DLR 215

Within these bands, each boat must also comply with STIX and AVS (Safety and Stability Indices) requirements.

A significant change for 2008 is in the racing programme for the week. Again, in an effort to evolve the regatta in line with the wishes of the main stakeholders – the competitors – RORC has carried out a thorough review of the weeklong schedule and made some bold decisions.

Most striking is the positioning of the offshore race in the middle of the week and the short passage race, provisionally a round the island course, towards the end. The removal of one of the inshore races offers crews greater breathing space during an intense week of racing, but the final inshore race of the series carries double points adding to the excitement at the event climax.

Nationality rules remain as per 2006, with a 50% requirement. The relationship between professionals and amateurs has been reviewed in some detail, with considerable attention paid to competitors from both sides of the sport.

## O'LEARY TO DEFEND TITLE

Anthony O'Leary, who sold Antix in December and bought Simon Coveney's Dark Angel, will be back in Scotland to defend his Bell Lawrie title from May 25 to 28 this year. Details of the event were announced at a reception during the London Boat Show, at which O'Leary and his crew was presented with Bell Lawrie Scottish Series Trophy (pictured left). The 2ft high silver trophy, which dates back to 1830, has been refurbished by Glasgow specialist silversmiths.

Sunsail Yachts at Largs has made

its fleet of Sunfast 37 yachts available for the Scottish Series, offering businesses and other groups the opportunity to charter a yacht and compete at Scotland's biggest race week.

The Bell Lawrie Scottish Series attracts around 200 visiting yachts to the picturesque West Coast village of Tarbert, plus 1,200 crew who bring the normally quiet village to life over the racing weekend.

Further details from [www.clyde.org](http://www.clyde.org)

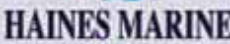

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<b>Bayliner Capt 1952</b> 1991, 19' Sports boat + cabin, Mer 3.0, 130hp, trailer	<b>£8,495</b>
<b>Fisher 30</b> approx 1980 30' Cabin cruiser, 1.8 BMC diesel in shaft, low hours, many extras	<b>£21,500</b>
<b>Brown 25 Sedan</b> 1982, Perkins 4108, 4 + 2 berths, blue vinyl and deck, recently re-upholstered	<b>£43,000</b>
<b>Regal 2465</b> 2006, 2 + 2 berths, Volvo E40 32 diesel, 53 hours, inboard, trailer	<b>£48,950</b>
<b>Brown 22</b> 1986, 4+2 berths, Mermaid diesel, low hours, VHS, depthfinder	<b>£52,500</b>
<b>Intercept 30'</b> 1995, 30' steel cruiser, 4+2 berths, Sole 400hp, low hours, very clean, few hours	<b>£62,500</b>
<b>Sealine 300</b> 1995, 2 + Volvo KAMD 42, many extras	<b>£118,950</b>
<b>Haines 30</b> 1997, Perkins 5790, 6+2 berths, low hours, top air heating, immaculate condition	<b>£172,995</b>
<b>Brown 25-2000</b> Perkins 135hp, 4 berths, canopy + vinyl helm, side cabin, immaculate	<b>£155,000</b>
<b>Wendou 200 Commander</b> 2005, 2x Volvo KAMD 42, very full, many extras, fresh water only. Condition as new	<b>£229,950</b>


PROUD SUPPLIERS OF:




**Flipper 717s** 1991, 25' 4+2 berth, had topdressing mod, Volvo 4041 (200hp) diesel, 500hrs, low hours, immaculate

**£33,995**



**Storebro Biscay 31** 1979, 2 + Volvo 200hp, 4+6 berths, aft cockpit/canopy, immaculate condition

**£37,500**




**Sealine 436** 1999, 2 + Volvo KAMD 42, generator, many extras, fresh water only, immaculate

**£135,000**

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SAIL	
32' Troll Class Motorsailer Larch on oak (1973), 32hp Ruggerini diesel (2003)	29,900
30' Tidewater Cutter Mahogany on oak (1966), M. Griffith design, 25hp Volvo diesel	17,500
26' Oyster Fibreglass (1979), 8hp Volvo diesel saildrive	17,000
26' Norfolk Knight Fibreglass (1984, hull mid-70s), 15hp Yanmar diesel	16,000
25' Fisher Motorsailer Fibreglass (1989), 25hp Yanmar diesel	TBA
24' J24 Fibreglass (1983), Yamaha 5hp outboard, extensive sail wardrobe, trailer	15,000
23' Ed Burnett Gaff Cutter Timber (2005), 20hp Beta Marine diesel	39,400
22' Dehler Fibreglass (1993), Honda 5hp outboard engine (2003), trailer	16,900

MOTOR	
23' Geary Lee Fisherman Fibreglass (1992 approx), 72hp BMC diesel engine, trailer	15,000
20' Searay (1996 approx), Mercruiser 220 engine, trailer	9,000
14' Darragh Boat Fibreglass, open boat with cuddy and trailer	2,500
13' O'Sullivan Marine Boat Fibreglass, open punt	700
13' Avon RIB Mariner 40hp outboard engine, trailer	5,000
13' Avon RIB (1988 approx), Yamaha 25hp outboard engine, trailer (2002)	3,950
10' Tender Fibreglass	600

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## SOUNDINGS WITH WM NIXON



Sailing? Boats? Are we liking this? We'll give it a go... mixed emotions in an introductory group with the International Sailing Centre on Cork Harbour



# SAILING STILL OFFERS MYSTERY

Once upon a time, osmosis was how you learned about boats and sailing – its days of recognition as a threat to fibreglass construction had yet to arrive. Osmosis has long since become something which can be prevented, or cured. However, when Soundings was but a little lad and supposedly learning to sail, fibreglass was likewise only in its infancy, yet it was already seen as the enemy by timber traditionalists.

So although positive scientific analysis was gradually emerging, the relatively new material was prone to imaginary horrors invented by paranoid wood enthusiasts. The most plausible was the polyester mite, which reputedly digested the new fibreglass material with the same gusto as gribble consuming boat timbers.

In those days, osmosis was something else altogether. It was the process through which beginners seemed to learn about boats and sailing. Well, whatever it was, it might as well have been called osmosis, for it was a mysterious system for the transfer of knowledge, experience and skills.

You could gravitate towards boats through family or friends, or simply by living somewhere coastal, or around inland waterways. Or perhaps you first became aware of boats at a special childhood

moment, and were smitten. But there was very little available in the way of any organised teaching and training structure. It was assumed that being on boats in the company of experienced sailors would result in the skills being absorbed by osmosis, for want of a better word.

Of course, you might have been lucky enough to meet up with a natural sailing teacher at some early stage. Formal teaching of sailing, though, was very rare. It might be done by sea scouts, or at naval academies. But such a structured approach was thought of – by the old stagers at any rate – as being at odds with the dogged freedom of spirit and total individuality expressed in true amateur sailing.

It was said that the three things you should not have in your boat for your comfort and safety were a wheelbarrow, an umbrella and a naval officer. And as for someone showing talent as a sailing teacher – well, any thought of teaching as a noble art in itself was still blighted by George Bernard Shaw's horrible throwaway line of 1903: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches."

Other sports had training coaches, but boats and amateur sailing were still largely un-trained mysteries. And although there are now many introductory

and teaching programmes and organisations in place, a certain air of mystery still persists. Perhaps that's part of the attraction.

It's not a spectator or arena sport, so it takes forever to explain to a non-sailor what is going on in most sailing races. And a technical video on why a boat actually sails would have a limited appeal – in any case, the true aficionados will always continue to argue about it.

So today, we may have excellent sailing schools, and talented teachers, and able coaches, and effective national training programmes with recognised qualifications, and it's genuinely a wonder to behold. But most wonderful of all at boat show time is people's enduring enthusiasm for buying boats and equipment, and their zest for everything to do with boats.

Getting started may indeed have been made easier, and more accessible. However, there continues to be a glorious and inexplicable mystery about the attraction of it all in the first place. Once you're into boats, you'll find you cherish this mystery as central to the entire experience. Take it away, and a significant part of the attraction will be gone.