

INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

LOUGH ERNE BRANCH

Report from Mervyn Rolls for IWN Magazine - 27 July 2015

This report is more personal than I usually try to be, due to sickness and holidays abroad meaning that the boat I crew on, Greyabbey Pilot, was unable to attend the events held during the last months. Also with the indifferent weather we have had this year, there doesn't seem to have been the appetite to hold events, boat owners preferring to do their own thing as conditions suited them.

But having returned from an 18 day trip to Athlone and back, it was pleasing to see many boats from the Erne System area prepared to venture south. Among these are; Shearwater, Treva, Escapade, Jomani 3, Ces-May, Woodpecker, Mai-Lin, Meander, Ta-Ra-Lea, A Little Nauti, Maeve, The Other Woman, Aquarius, Steelaway, Quivvy Water, Latitude, Lazy Witch, and Greyabbey Pilot. Some of these had reached Lough Derg and Killaloe.

Conditions for cruising were to the usual very good standard, but something needs to be done urgently to deal with the overgrown trees, particularly in the Ballinamore area. At times the waterway is reduced to single navigation. Also on Lough Ree, the red marker buoys need refurbished and clearly numbered. We find these invaluable to be sure of the boat's direction and position when navigating in difficult weather conditions in mist and gloom, as it was this year when heading north.

On our way south on 16 July there was a strong easterly wind blowing across Lough Ree, which meant a lot of rocking and rolling on the boat, and at times impossible to stand up. Over the VHF radio we heard the RNLI being called out by Lough Ree Coastguard to assist a hire cruiser aground near Red Buoy 6. This was sorted out, and the RNLI rib accompanied the cruiser into Lanesborough. Then we noticed another hire cruiser seemingly in trouble aground in St John's Bay near Red Buoy 5. Our captain contacted Lough Ree Coastguard, and as the RNLI rib was returning to Athlone, the crew diverted to the cruiser. The last we could see and hear was that the hire boat owners were coming out to tow their boat off the rocks.

While we were at Althlone Marina, the boats attending the Lough Derg Rally came in filling every bit of the available space until overflow. A spectacular sight!

While travelling the Erne and Shannon we would recommend for interest and diversion stopping at Battle Bridge and Quivvy Marina.

We are now looking forward to an event being organised by Lough Erne Yacht Club, but involving Lough Erne Branch IWA members, most being members of both clubs. This will be from 06 to 09 August 2015, a cruise-in-company around Lough Erne taking in Crom, Belturbet, Knockninny, and Carrybridge. Start and Finish at LEYC.



Athlone in the evening



Athlone Marina and Bridge



Waterways Ireland crew removing branch in water near Ballinamore



RNLI to the rescue - Lough Ree



RNLI to the rescue - Lough Ree