

# THE INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

## LOUGH ERNE BRANCH

Report from Mervyn Rolls for IWN Magazine - 06 May 2015

As in recent previous years, the weather over this winter past has been rather damp, and relatively mild. Disappointing, as when we get some prolonged frosty periods the opportunity is there for some very pleasant cruising on the Erne System, with flat calm waters, and more to see without leaves on the trees. We will just have to wait to see what next year brings.

We are pleased that we have a full team on our committee agreeing to continue at least until the end of this year. We must wish MTL Marine based at Carrybridge the best of success in their venture, namely Tom Leonard and his family.

At long last there is activity at the marinas, with boats getting lifted out for cleaning, some being re-painted, others being prepared, and stocked up with supplies. There are new boats about, and some boats with new owners, all to be encouraged. Let us hope we get some prolonged sunny periods for summer 2015.

Our first main event of the year has been our branch meeting at their HQ in Enniskillen with representatives of Waterways Ireland, Joe Gillespie Regional Manager, and Phil Cargill, senior engineer. We were joined by some members of our sister branch of Belturbet.

As expected the main topics were the shortage of funds limiting improvements, and the proposed new bye-laws. But it was pleasing to know that efforts are in hand to carry out necessary work to make the facilities more user friendly. Members stated that they would like to see actions to deter harbour huggers, and also the power supply systems at jetties are in need of improvements. It was agreed that there are no technical problems in having power points on every pillar, instead of every other one, and it is unfair that electricity paid for could go unused because of timing factors. Some of these factors can be discouraging to the all important tourists using hire boats, as are some of the proposed new bye-laws, so there must be a balance. It was encouraging to learn of WI's intentions to improve access for walkers and wildlife enthusiasts, as this helps to justify the maintenance of the waterways. Also that the much delayed works to open up part of the Ulster Canal from Lough Erne to Castle Sanderson are to proceed.

Our next event has been the annual Cruise-in-Company when we invite members of other branches to come on board our member's boats to cruise with us from the Ardhoven jetties to Lough Erne Yacht Club and back, having a full lunch at the club provided by Rose Gilroy and team. This took place on 02 May this year, and unfortunately was in awful cold wet and windy weather. In spite of this there was a very good turn-out and every body seemed to have a pleasant time, and was much appreciated by members and visitors alike. Howard Marshall was present and we were all shocked to learn that on the previous day, on their way to the event, he, his wife Deidre, and Terry Needham from the Lagan Branch, had a most awful accident when a box van swerved into them from the opposite lane. Terry and Deidre needed hospital admission and treatment, mainly for bruising, but Howard was 'walking wounded'. All are expected to make a full recovery with our full wishes for such.

We have to thank Waterways Ireland and Lough Erne Yacht Club for their support and use of their premises.