

# CSIG UPDATE

By LES SAUNDERS, CSIG PRO



It's very hard to believe that yet another year has gone by, but what a year for boating! A summer arrived in 2013 that we all waited for years to greet, and now we have almost completed a winter with no frozen rivers or harbours and even the dehumidifier hardly being used. But what about the Charting Group, they seem to have gone very quiet lately. But that impression is far from the truth.

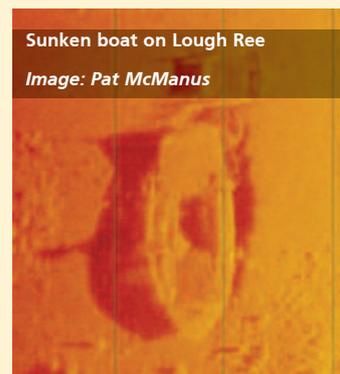
Like all groups that are long lasting, special interest groups move through phases, and that is what has happened to the Charts SIG (CSIG). We have lost some key members, but we have also gained some new ones, and the CSIG is fully operational with all functions now active, and skills have been upgraded, particularly in the surveying and the mapping functions.

The next Presentation is on 6 March in Lisburn, where Les will be updating the Northern Ireland branches on the activities and the output from the CSIG.

A question that is continually asked is 'when will the charts be ready?' The answer is soon. A major problem we have had is that although significant areas of the Shannon basin have been surveyed, the charts we had produced were deemed to be unsafe because large areas of the map were displayed in white even though they had not been surveyed, and white could be assumed to be safe. We have now overcome that issue with the latest iteration of the charts where the surveyed areas have depths, colours and contours, and the unsurveyed areas have unobtrusive hatching which clearly identifies where it is safe. BUT, and a big BUT, please remember the surveyors could easily have missed a spike or poor area, so although we believe an area to be safe, you enter at your own risk.

I have asked two of our surveying groups to give us an update on what they have been doing and the following

paragraphs come from Pat McManus in the Lough Ree area, and from Brian Willson and Fergal Kerney in the Lough Derg area. There is a large cost in both time and money for the surveyors. The rewards are high, but the costs really hurt, so if we had more surveyors this would help greatly. Don't be shy, come aboard the CSIG group and help us in this fantastic project. We will kit out your boat and make it suitable for surveying. The surveying process is very defined and we will train you as well to ensure you don't waste any effort.



Sunken boat on Lough Ree  
Image: Pat McManus

## FROM PAT:

I began surveying with the CSIG in March 2012. Using a Garmin 451s and Dr Depth software to gather depth and position bathymetric data which could be used to create current navigation charts. Having spent almost forty years cruising and fishing Lough Ree, I thought that I knew the lake really well, but surveying opened up a whole new world for me, I started seeing shallows in areas where I never believed there were any, and I also found channels and perfectly good routes through areas which most navigators would have considered dangerous.

Recently I purchased a Humminbird 898CX S side scan unit. This unit measures depth and position, but also gives sonar images of the lake bottom. This unit enables faster scanning of safe areas and can be useful to highlight danger

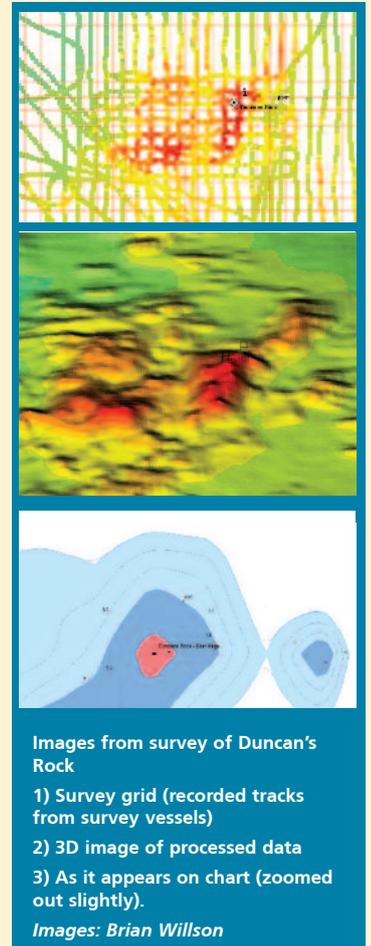
areas, but more than that it introduced an interest extending to finding archaeological information, sunken boats, man made channels and so on. But with only an unclear image it was difficult to be sure what I may have found, so with that in mind I approached our friends in Athlone, namely the Sub Aqua Club. I should say the Athlone Sub Aqua Club have been very kind to the CSIG allowing us to use their premises for meetings etc, and once again they were very keen to help. But it is not a one way street, the CSIG have been able to identify interesting places to dive and the Sub Aqua Club have dived on these areas in return, a real bonus in that shallows, boats, pinnacles, and more have been found and identified.

The RNLI also approached us with a view to using the detailed charts we have produced, and they are using restricted versions in their practice runs, and in return they check out the areas for us to ensure we have valid data.

We have now dived almost twenty sites and to date have found three wrecks. One identified as a Harvey Eastwood cruiser lost on December 12 1989, the second is a steel open boat lying in 20 metres but not as of yet identified, and the third is an old sailing vessel, again unidentified. We continue to dive each weekend, even through the winter, and we await the next big find.

## FROM BRIAN:

In the last year Brian and Fergal



Images from survey of Duncan's Rock

- 1) Survey grid (recorded tracks from survey vessels)
- 2) 3D image of processed data
- 3) As it appears on chart (zoomed out slightly).

Images: Brian Willson

have clocked up over 400 surveying hours between them. They have covered much of the main navigation in Lough Derg, and quite a few areas outside of the marked navigation – to help open up some areas that are quite safe, but un-marked by current navigational aids. They are also identifying areas that are definitely not safe to navigate in.

Whilst the marked navigation can be done relatively quickly and in most weather conditions with a cruiser, the areas outside

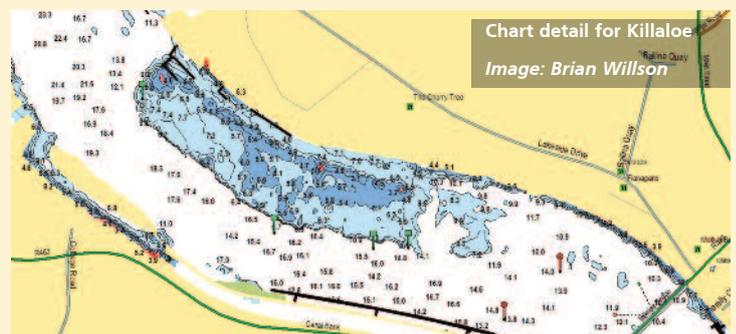


Chart detail for Killaloe  
Image: Brian Willson

of this require a more delicate approach, often in a dingy and in only very calm (and preferably dry) conditions.

A detailed survey of a bay is typically done with lines no more than 30 ft apart and when potential hazards/shallows are noted this is reduced to 15ft or less with further lines done at right angles to get the full extent of the shallow. As an example, the survey of the bay outside Castlebawn took three days and the survey of Middle Ground took two days. In each instance it meant waiting until conditions were perfect to enable the accurate and safe survey to be completed.

During the last few months the surveying has slowed due to weather conditions and shorter days so Brian has turned his attentions to mapping the data. It has been a long and steep learning curve, but he can now produce good quality, high resolution vector charts that can be converted for use in Memory Map, and is currently running tests on Lowrance chart plotters.

Brian has developed a colour scheme that is not dissimilar to the admiralty charts, but enhanced for safer inland use. Custom navigation symbols have also been created to better reflect what you see on the lake.

Due to the nature of the chart design it is easy to alter the look and feel if required. We have just started testing the suitability of the design so there may be some visual tweaks required. Its modular design means it is also easy to update and open up more areas as new data comes in.

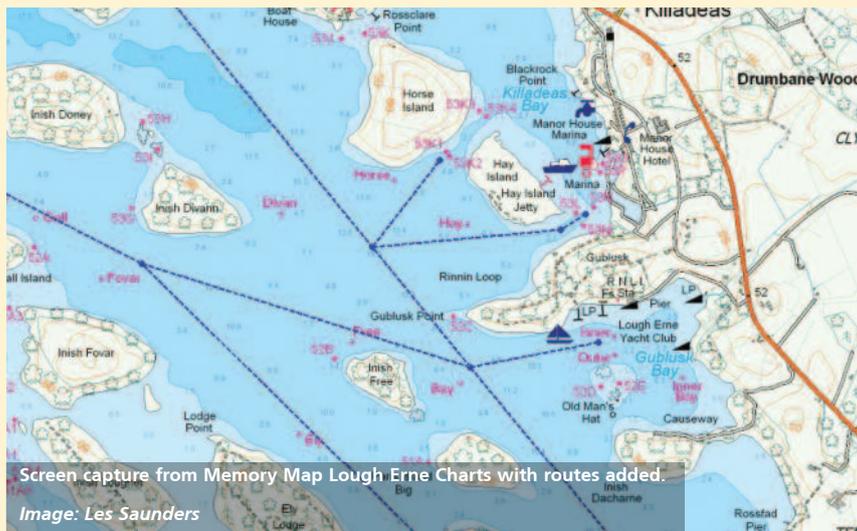
### LOUGH ERNE CHARTS

Finally, for those of you who navigate the Lough Erne lakes, there is an excellent chart produced by Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland with assistance from Waterways Ireland which can be purchased from

the IWAI shop for €9.10 +p&p. It is very detailed and excellent for navigation. But better still, a MemoryMap version is available for laptops, tablets and smartphones from MemoryMap, the cost might seem steep at £100 sterling, but that cost is only about 2 weekends surveying or one good meal for two, and the map is simply superb on the electronic units enabling zoom in and assisting those of us slightly age challenged to read the

marker numbers easily. I also have produced a set of overlays for this map, which contains a good sample of routes and some safety warnings. A copy of these can be obtained from me ([barge41m@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:barge41m@yahoo.co.uk)) to add to your Lough Erne Activity map should you decide to purchase.

See you on the river and hopefully we can have another great year boating.



Screen capture from Memory Map Lough Erne Charts with routes added.

Image: Les Saunders

# WINEPORT WINNING SHOT



Artistic merit, the technical quality of the photography and the interest of the subject will be taken into account. Please ensure your name and contact details are attached. The judges decision is final.

Send entries to [editor@iwai.ie](mailto:editor@iwai.ie) or by post to  
**Inland Waterways News**  
 2 Kylemore Park, Taylor's Hill, Galway

**Mike Farrell, Galway**  
 wins the Midweek VIP Experience which  
 is an overnight stay for two people  
 including Breakfast with a half  
 bottle of bubbly, flowers and chocolates  
 in the room on arrival.

Available Sunday through Thursday.

