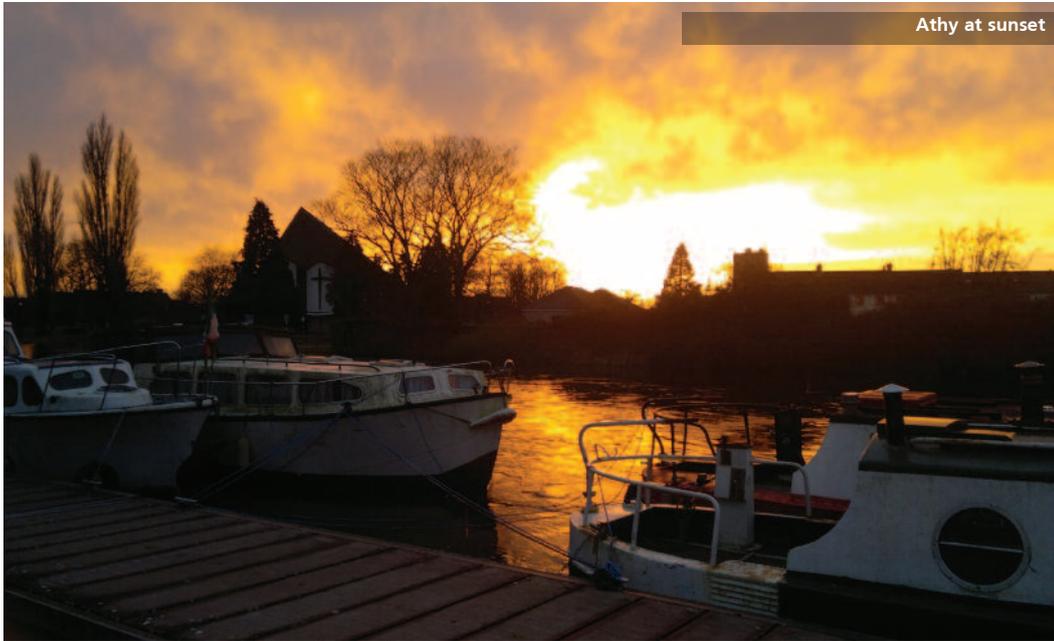




NORTH BARROW

FROM CLIFF REID



Athy at sunset

AGM

The North Barrow Branch meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 8pm in Frank O'Brien's, Athy, Co. Kildare. However, the branch had several reasons to meet more than once a month over the winter, this year. With its AGM held in early January, the following officers were elected: Chairman, Barry Keatley; Vice-Chairperson, Billy O'Neill; Secretary, Kathleen Cross; Treasurer, Aidan Perse; Safety, Jimmy Byrne; PRO; Cliff Reid. The branch gathered together again in mid-January to have their annual Christmas dinner. This was a very informal occasion and a great opportunity for the members to discuss plans for the coming spring and summer.

BYE LAW CAMPAIGN

Apart from the above, the branch was extremely busy campaigning against the proposed new charges and fees being introduced by Waterways Ireland. There is consensus throughout the branch that these new by-laws, if introduced, will have a long-term detrimental effect on the development of our canals and the Barrow navigation. During the public consultation period, branch members attended

several meetings held by the Kildare Branch in Naas and supported their efforts with the campaign. In addition, the North Barrow Branch also held meetings with local representatives to voice their concerns and garner political backing.

Holding a meeting in Athy, several local councillors and TD's gave an undertaking to lodge submissions to Waterways Ireland during the public consultation period. Each expressed their concerns publicly and congratulated the branch on their efforts to highlight the various issues. With the success of these meetings, several elected representatives from County Carlow sought an informal meeting with members of the North Barrow Branch to discuss the impact of the proposed by-laws and several members of the branch travelled to Leighlinbridge in late January to accommodate their request. Regarding this, a special word of thanks must go to Alan Kelly of the Kildare Branch, who also attended and gave a very informative presentation to not only the general public but also elected representative from both County Carlow and County Kilkenny. Again, as with previous meetings in Kildare, most

councillors and TD's gave a committed undertaking to voice their concerns with the relevant authorities, in addition to Waterways Ireland.

WATER ABSTRACTION

Aside from the campaign, the North Barrow Branch also lobbied the local authority in relation to the water abstraction facility north of Athy on the river Barrow. The branch is seeking to gain access to the metering system in place, so as to monitor the exact amounts and timings of the water abstraction occasions. This is an endeavour that the branch feels is of paramount importance and one it will continue to push for in the months ahead.

MAY BARBECUE

Lastly, the branch is looking forward to hosting a barbecue and social gathering for all members of IWAI in May. As we are in the early planning stages, dates and details will follow soon.

Photo: Cliff Reid

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