



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After a wonderful summer and autumn the boating season has come to an end for nearly all of our members with the exception of a few hardy souls. Most members are in the process of winterising and wrapping up their boats until springtime

The Association concluded its 60th Anniversary celebrations with the launch of its book

IWAI and the Waterways of Ireland. The three launches, in Lisburn, Dublin and Athlone were a great success.

Sincere thanks to our sponsors, local branches and members who helped make the launches so successful and last but definitely not least a huge thank you to our author Brian Cassells, OBE

Branches are asked to purchase copies of the book and sell them on to members and also promote the sale of the book at their AGM and other branch events. The book is also available for sale on the IWAI website.

A review of the book was screened recently on RTE's *Nationwide* Programme. See full report on the launches on page 9.

The Association continues to seek a meeting with Minister Heather Humphreys TD, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht on the Canal Bye-Laws.

We continue to highlight the importance of proper Canal Bye-laws and call on the Minister not to impose bye-laws that will impede the tourism potential of the canals to the detriment of the local communities and economies.

Following on going negotiations with Armagh City Council, IWAI (with the help of Peter Maxwell and the Newry Branch Executive) have secured a lease on a Sluice Keepers Cottage/Interpretive Centre at Acton on the Newry/Portadown Canal. The cottage will be run as an interpretative centre promoting IWAI and hopefully there will be a possibility to recruit new members. The building is in an ideal location to promote the restoration of the Newry Canal. While Newry Branch will be the custodians of the building, the cottage will be available for use by all branches of the Association

It is disappointing to note that our membership is down on last year but I am not giving up, once again I am appealing to every member to sign up just one new member, what a difference that would make to the Association. We didn't make it this year but let's put it on the top of the list and do better in 2015. What better way to increase membership for next year is with an ideal gift for family and friends in the form of membership vouchers which are available in the IWAI Shop

Several of our IWAI Policies are in need of updating and Executive are currently working on updating the Branch Rules and Officers Handbook, Health & Safety Policy and the Child Protection Policy. The Articles of Association are also under review

Preparations for Branch AGM's are currently being finalised. Please go along to the meeting and support your branch. A very warm welcome to newly elected branch officers and a huge thank you to officers who are stepping down

Very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Carmel Meegan
President, IWAI



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