

DOWN ON DERG

FROM NATALIE MC GOWAN & CARMEL BYRNE

HOLY ISLAND

Clare County Council has confirmed that it is in an advanced stage of negotiations to purchase Inis Cealtra or Holy Island. The island is one of the most important historical and ecclesiastical sites in Ireland with important links to Brian Ború. The OPW already owns the 4 acres containing the monuments and the council is seeking to buy the remaining 50 acres. WI is very supportive of the move and will work closely with Clare Co. Co. to improve public access to the historic site. Any development of the island will be done in public consultation with all the stakeholders including IWAI.

RNLI

Last year in Ireland the RNLI lifeboat crews launched 1,089 times from its 45 Lifeboat stations bringing 1,414 people to safety. The charity is calling for the public to think ahead and never underestimate the strength and power of the sea and inland waters. The figures show more people are getting into difficulty on leisure craft and the charity has advised that proper safety advice and maintenance is vital to ensure people stay safe on the water. The call outs last year included: aid to leisure craft (536), assistance to fishing vessels (140), help to people in difficulty along the shoreline (119), and to people in the water (185). Lough Ree was the busiest station, launching 69 times and bringing 142 people to safety. Lough Derg RNLI Lifeboat launched 18 times last year, and brought 43 people to safety. Of course the Irish Coast Guard have a station in Killaloe which also responds to emergency callouts. Lough Derg RNLI Lifeboat is currently looking for new volunteers, no previous boating experience is required, all training is provided. If you are living close to Dromineer and would like to be a part of a great team, give them a call at 087 2514517.

DISCOVER LOUGH DERG

www.discoverloughderg.ie is a new tourism site dedicated to the promotion of Lough Derg. It gives valuable information on events and activities around the lake and is well worth a look for anyone planning a visit to the lake or indeed regular visitors who want to try something new. Keep an eye on its special offer section, you might get a cheap dinner in your favourite restaurant around the lake!

BRANCH NEWS

IWAI Lough Derg held their AGM in Dromineer on 29 November. The Vice-Chairperson and Secretary positions remain vacant, any interested members who would like to take on either role please contact Carmel Byrne or Daniel Burke. Thanks to all branch members for their help and support during 2014.

Activities for 2015 include three cruise in company events: June bank holiday weekend; late August; October bank holiday weekend. The 40th Lough Derg Rally takes place in July (see below). Branch meetings will take place in March, June, July, August and October and the AGM will take place in November. All of these events take planning and organising and members are always welcome to help with branch events throughout the year.

Although some members have continued with their boating activities throughout the winter, many others are planning their return to the waterways. Now is the time to think about all those jobs that need to be done on the boat and more importantly make a plan to get them done, don't be caught out doing the work too late in the year and lose out on good boating time.

As always don't forget to keep an eye on the Lough Derg Facebook and webpage for up to date information.

LOUGH DERG RALLY 40



The Commodore's Barge on Rally 39
Photo: Alan Lindley

The Lough Derg Rally will be held this year from 11 to 18 July. As this is the 40th rally, some special events will be taking place throughout the week. The rally will be starting on the spectacular shores of Lough Derg and moving up the river, to commemorate the special occasion.

All IWAI boats are welcome to join us for the week, and I would love to see boaters who have never experienced the event to join us this year, in order to make it one of the most memorable to date. Every year we have members of branches outside of Lough Derg attend the event and they hugely add to the experience for everyone, bringing knowledge and stories to boaters who they would not normally meet. I feel that this is an integral part of the rally experience, and with every new attendee to the rally, so much is gained. In the current climate many people who have been boating for years have been forced to leave the scene. I have personally extended an

invitation to this year's rally to many of them, with the hope of seeing them return. We have had a large turnout for many of the rallies in the previous few years, and it would be great to continue this tradition, introducing more and more boaters to the rally community spirit.

Although there are plenty of activities to take part in, and plenty of entertainment will be on show, there is also a serious side to the week. There is plenty of silverware on the line, the most prestigious trophies being for the Man Overboard, Boat Handling, Barge Handling and also our overall competition, in which boats compete together in teams. As always there will be a number of competitions and sports events run for boaters of a younger generation throughout the week.

I look forward to seeing you there, Thank you.

Daniel Burke
Commodore