



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The boating season for 2015 is drawing closer and I am looking forward to removing the green goo and grime and getting the boat shipshape again. The Calendar of Events is looking good with lots of events to suit all waterway users. Enjoy and be safe.

Before Christmas, Ram's Island on Lough Neagh was turned into a wonderful

Santa's Magical Island. 260 children and adults visited the island for a memorable outing organised by the River Bann and Lough Neagh Branch. Congratulations to Michael Savage and his team of helpers for organising this very successful charitable event.

The IWAI web forum is a valuable resource for those interested in our waterways and a place where all topics of waterways interest are up for discussion. The forum is a public face of IWAI and it is important for users to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Following increasing complaints about the tone and nature of some contributions, new Terms and Conditions (see www.iwai.ie/forum/about.php) were implemented by the Executive. The basic rule is simple – 'Be Nice'

We ask for the cooperation of all users in helping to improve the forum, protect the good name and the interests of IWAI and protect the Association from legal action.

The Charts Special Interest Group was formed in 2011 for the purpose of creating accurate charts of the Irish waterways to make the waterways safer and more enjoyable for all users.

CSIG recently announced that they have completed surveys covering the system from Limerick to Beleek. This is a great achievement for a group of volunteers involving endless hours of work. Raising funds to purchase equipment is always a challenge and many IWAI branches have contributed so far. The group is confident that further funds will come from the other branches.

The group would very much welcome input from members who want to become involved and a surveyor's course is planned for later in the spring. See chartssig.iwai.ie.

After several failed requests in 2014, IWAI continues to seek a meeting with Minister Humphreys to clarify our position on the proposed amendments to the Canal Bye-Laws and to highlight the effect that these changes will have on canal users, tourism and communities. To date there is no indication as to when the proposed amendments will come into law.

I would like to thank the executive members who have driven many miles to meetings at their own expense throughout the winter and to thank branch officers and members who are doing the same thing.

The next big event for the Association is the Annual General Meeting in the Radisson Hotel, Athlone on Friday 17 April.

The AGM is open to all members, please come along, your support would be most welcome. It is also an opportunity to meet up and chat with members from various other branches on the night

Many thanks to members of the Executive who are stepping down this year. The Association has benefited greatly from their contributions, time, knowledge and skills over the past number of years.

Carmel Meegan
President, IWAI



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