

By Edwin Hancock



FINGAL

The Call of the Sea

Edwin S. Hancock

*I must go down to the sea again, for the call of the running tide
is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied,
From Sea Fever by John Mansfield.*



Explorer - below Kitten Hill on the Isle of Gough, Isle of Scilly

St. Brendan the Navigator, the Patron Saint of Sailors was born in Fenit, Co. Kerry in 484 and died in 578 at the ripe old age of 94, in the words of Garda Chaplin Father Joe Kennedy "sailing obviously did him no harm at all". The intrepid sailors of the I.P.A. and An Garda Síochána who have answered the call of the running tide may have unwittingly discovered the elusive secret of longevity.

Martin Landers a sailing enthusiast stationed in Blarney gathered members together who shared a similar interest. This resulted in the formation of The "Garda Sailing Club" on 10th October 1993 at a

meeting held in the Garda Club, Harrington Street, Dublin. The title of Garda Yacht Club was, after due consideration, deemed to be somewhat too pretentious.

The first yacht they purchased was a 30 foot Jeanneau called "In a Rush", which alternated between Dublin and Cork, being the two main centres of club activity. In time as the membership increased in both the east and south so did the logistical problems



Breakfast on board Explorer - 100 nautical miles off Crosshaven, J.J. O'Keefe in red life jacket, Pat Hayes in blue life jacket, both IPA and Bob Thompson 80 year old fisherman (wearing glasses) whose father served in the DMP

associated with the sharing of one vessel. In the year 2000 it was decided, if I may use fingerprint terminology, that "bifurcation" of the club was necessary, consequently the Garda Sailing Club became two separate entities, the East Coast Garda Sailing Club based in Dublin and the South Coast Garda Sailing Club based in Cork. Both clubs enjoy a very close bond of friendship and participate in joint activities; they are members of the Irish Sailing Association, (ISA) the national governing body for the sport in Ireland. The Commodores and Secretaries of both clubs are IPA members and so are some of the "ratings." They each have their own websites, ECGSC at www.ecgsc.com and SCGSC at www.gardasailing.org and both clubs are seeking new members.

The East Coast Garda Sailing Club (ECGSC) has a membership of 107 which includes 10% ladies and 20% civilians. Leo Mac Cormac IPA is the Commodore, Eugene Gilligan IPA is Secretary, Julie McCormack IPA and Declan Fallon IPA are both on the committee; Assistant Commissioner Mick McCarthy IPA is also a member. When asked if a Commodore outranks a Commissioner Leo was his usual modest self. Their "fleet" comprised of two yachts is based in the Marina in Dun Laoghaire Harbour, Dublin;- BLUE SPIRIT

is a 27 foot Beneteau racer/cruiser and KHAMSIN B is 46 foot Amel cruising yacht, both vessels were made in France. Blue Spirit is primarily used for day sailing; racing is growing in popularity and the club is developing the skills of members in this area. The average race in Dublin Bay takes about the same length of time as a round of golf followed by the nautical equivalent of the "19th Hole", so is ideally suited to those on a rest day.

Khamsin-B is used for cruising from port to port, can sleep up to 8 persons in single berths and cater for a mixed gender crew. Apart from sailing to Irish ports and up the Clyde in Scotland, La Rochelle in France is the most popular destination with 10 trips scheduled for summer 2007. Khamsin is named after a hot Saharan wind; the name is derived from the Arabic word for "50" as it tends to blow for an average of 50 days each year.

The South Coast Garda Sailing Club (SCGSC) has a membership of 43 which includes 6 ladies and 12 civilians. Paddy Allen IPA is Commodore and Editor of their Newsletter and Website, J. J. O'Keefe IPA, (Anglesea Street) is Secretary. They have one yacht EXPLORER a Beneteau 393 which is based in Crosshaven during the sailing season and in the Naval Base at Haulbowline in the winter months. They enjoy an excellent relationship with the naval base and are also members of the Irish Naval Sailing Squadron. In September they are holding a sea survival course for their members in the Irish Marine College in Cork. Apart from sailing in home waters,



Commodore Paddy Allen IPA Et SCGSC looking for treasure on the Isle of Tresco, Isles of Scilly



Garda chaplain Joe Kennedy blessing the fleet, Dun Laoghaire 12th May 2007

Brest in Brittany, France is a popular destination with a stop over in St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. Penzance in Cornwall is another location enjoyed by members.

The club is actively involved in continuing with a project started six years ago, where members engage with young people at risk from substance abuse and teach them the art of sailing. The idea for this originated from a police project in Australia where a group of young offenders and a police crew participated in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race. This is an

interesting concept in police social interaction where one has to sleep, eat and converse in a confined space with others that you may normally have difficulty in getting on with, this applies to both sides of course.

The Europol "Coppers Cup" formerly "Interpol Coppers Cup", is an international sailing regatta for members of law enforcement agencies; the 10th regatta is being held on the IJsselmeer Lake in the Netherlands from the 15th to 21st September 2007. A minimum of 31 teams will be participating from 13 different European countries including a Garda team and one from Australia. Gardaí from both clubs previously competed in 1999, 2001 and 2003. Crews will sleep on their yachts at night and dine in the regatta restaurant at Medemblix. The social side will be hectic, two nights of live music and a special 'Dutch Night' with herring and jenever, which is the juniper flavoured strong traditional alcoholic beverage of the Netherlands and Flanders.

In the late 16th century a Dutch alchemist by the name of Sylvius de Bouve or Franciscus Sylvius to use his Latin title invented Jenever as a medicine, but which later became a popular beverage. When Jenever is drunk in combination with cold lager beer as a



Two IPA Commodores, Leo Mac Cormack & Mick Quinn



The fleet

chaser it is known as a "kopstoot" (headbutt), sounds like the perfect tippie for a policeman. Sleeping below decks with a bunch of police who have dined on herring washed down by copious quantities of Sylvius' ancient brew is not for the faint hearted. One can only presume that the degree of ventilation provided by the opening of portholes will be adequate to cope with the inevitable consequences of secondary fermentation.

Every sport has its own unique vocabulary bewildering to non aficionados and sailing is no exception in this regard. Nautical nomenclature and police phraseology share some common words, but with entirely different meanings; - (1) "All Standing"- no his Honour is not about to enter but to

have all sails flying when running before the wind. (2) "Bail"- no not to avoid incarceration but to get rid of water accumulated in a boat, better out than in.(3)."Foil"- doesn't mean you have prevented a crime but is an attachment on the forestay comprising a groove into which the Luff of the Jib can be fed; now landlubbers work that one out. (4) "In Irons"- no the prisoner has not been handcuffed or shackled but having turned onto the wind or lost the wind, stuck and unable to make headway. (5) "Heads-" no it doesn't refer to a bunch of gougers, but is the seafaring term for toilets, incidentally in the old sailing ships the captain's private toilet was located below the *poop* deck, I jest not.

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted by both clubs while sailing that must wait till arrival in port. The sea has no respect for mariners but the wise sailor respects the sea in all her many moods whether calm and docile or wild and tempestuous; in the words of Eugene Gilligan, "pleasure cruising is the key note of Garda Sailing, we don't go out in bad weather".

The sun shone brightly on the calm waters of Dun Laoghaire Harbour on Saturday 12th May 2007 for the annual blessing of the boats by Father Joe Kennedy, Garda Chaplin. The boats present were; - Blue Spirit and Khamsin-B from the ECGSC under the command of Commodore Leo Mac Cormac IPA, Osprey from the Garda Sea Angling Club commanded by Commodore Mick Quinn IPA and GWU3 a rigid inflatable boat (RIB) from the Garda Water Unit manned by Glenn Brady and Brian Breathnach. The Sergeant i/c of the Water Unit is IPA member John Connelly. Those attending the ceremony and the subsequent refreshments, included club members and their families, local Superintendent Jim Fitzgerald, Superintendent Liam Hogan, himself a sailor and Bernadette Fox representing the Irish Sailing Association.

The ceremony conducted by Father Joe was short but moving. He read the appropriate Psalm 120 and finished with the prayer "We sprinkle these vessels with holy water and we ask God's blessing on them. May the Lord be the guide on your journeys, so that you may travel in peace and reach eternal life". St. Brendan, had he been present, would have been impressed, perhaps as Patron Saint he was there.

*The anchor heaves, the ship swings free
The sails swell full, to sea, to sea.
Thomas Lovell Beddoes.*

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Kevin Brooks & son Taidhg



ECGSC Committee

Back: Eugene Gilligan IPA, John Cantwell, Caron Lynch, Declan Fallon IPA, Leo Mac Cormack IPA.

Front: Kevin Brooks, Nigel Carron, & Derek Dempsey



Happy nautical couple Eugene Gilligan IPA with his wife Marion